

OXFORD

# CATEGORIES AND CONTEXTS

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDIES  
IN CRITICAL DEMOGRAPHY

*Edited by*  
*Simon Szreter, Hania Sholkamy,*  
*and A. Dharmalingam*



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN DEMOGRAPHY

# CATEGORIES AND CONTEXTS

The International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Problems was set up in 1928, with Dr Raymond Pearl as President. At that time the Union's main purpose was to promote international scientific co-operation to study the various aspects of population problems, through national committees and through its members themselves. In 1947 the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) was reconstituted into its present form.

It expanded its activities to:

- stimulate research on population
- develop interest in demographic matters among governments, national and international organizations, scientific bodies, and the general public
- foster relations between people involved in population studies
- disseminate scientific knowledge on population.

The principal ways through which the IUSSP currently achieves its aims are:

- organization of worldwide or regional conferences
- operations of Scientific Committees under the auspices of the Council
- organization of training courses
- publication of conference proceedings and committee reports.

Demography can be defined by its field of study and its analytical methods. Accordingly, it can be regarded as the scientific study of human populations primarily with respect to their size, their structure, and their development. For reasons which are related to the history of the discipline, the demographic method is essentially inductive: progress in knowledge results from the improvement of observation, the sophistication of measurement methods, and the search for regularities and stable factors leading to the formulation of explanatory models. In conclusion, the three objectives of demographic analysis are to describe, measure, and analyse.

**International Studies in Demography** is the outcome of an agreement concluded by the IUSSP and Oxford University Press. The joint series reflects the broad range of the Union's activities; it is based on the seminars organized by the Union and important international meetings in the field of population and development. The Editorial Board of the series is comprised of:

John Cleland, UK

Henri Leridon, France

John Hobcraft, UK

Richard Smith, UK

Georges Tapinos, France

# Categories and Contexts: Anthropological and Historical Studies in Critical Demography

*Edited by*

SIMON SZRETER  
HANIA SHOLKAMY  
A. DHARMALINGAM

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP  
Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.  
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,  
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Bangkok Buenos Aires Cape Town Chennai  
Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata  
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi  
São Paulo Shanghai Taipei Tokyo Toronto

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press  
in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States

by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

© IUSSP, 2004

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

Database right Oxford University Press (maker)

First published 2004

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,  
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,  
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,  
or as expressly permitted by law, or under terms agreed with the appropriate  
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction  
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,

Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this book in any other binding or cover  
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 0-19-927057-0

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

# Foreword

Demography has in many ways been a great academic success story. Coming of age as a modern scientific pursuit in conjunction with rising concerns in the richer countries about a multiplying world population that seemed to threaten future prosperity, if not world famine and misery, it offered apparently objective methods for describing and explaining population dynamics. The sharp decline in fertility in much of the world over the past couple of decades has reduced alarm over the prospect of population explosion, but other population problems have quickly taken its place among both the general public and the world's power-holders. Most of the wealthier countries today are gripped with worry about perilously low fertility rates and ageing populations, while international migration produces its own anxieties in these countries; and horrific prognostications of devastation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa lead to a whole new field of demographic study.

Yet if demography has been a 'can do' of discipline, one that has not in the past overly troubled itself with the kinds of epistemological questions that have, during the past few decades, so exercised anthropologists, among others, recent years have seen a crack in the positivist façade. The rise to dominance of the national sample survey in demography, which on the one hand is one of the clearest signs of this positivism, has on the other led to some cries of concern from within the demographic community. Can one really claim to have knowledge about demographic behaviour and its causes in a society about which one knows almost nothing other than what is provided in the machine-readable data provided by a Demographic and Health Survey? Other cracks have appeared in the dominant theoretical stance that formerly helped define demography. Demographic transition theory—seeking to explain the course of fertility decline—embarrassingly failed to be supported by empirical study, leading some of its former champions to call for more 'cultural' explanations of demographic behaviour, although exactly what this might entail was unclear. Indeed, things have gotten to the point where two American demographers recently published a book titled *Demography in the Age of the Postmodern* (Nancy Riley and James McCarthy, Cambridge University Press, 2003), calling for a radical reappraisal of the epistemological tenets of demographic study.

*Categories and Contexts* offers an invaluable entry point to these new perspectives by focusing on the nature of the categories employed in demographic analysis and the quandaries faced by a discipline that seeks objectivity and the meta-language of science, yet is by its very nature rooted in a highly politicized process of knowledge construction and the wielding of power. The book addresses issues that reflect the conundrum of sophisticated demographic research: comparative research and theory-building would appear to require the construction of standard categories for analysis, yet the categories actually employed in demography are for the most part western folk categories dressed in scientific garb.

Influenced by a variety of important recent theoretical developments in anthropology and cultural studies, and informed by a historical perspective, the studies in this volume suggest an exciting intellectual agenda that promises to help reinvigorate demography while drawing demography more closely to anthropology and history. *Categories and Contexts* also helps show anthropologists and historians how important the work done in demography is, while arguing for the centrality of politics to the understanding both of demographic behaviour and of its study.

From racial pigeon-holing in Brazil to the construction of 'nationality' categories in the USSR, from the English General Register Office in the nineteenth century to Mozambique in the aftermath of its civil war in the late twentieth century, the frenetic process of dividing people into categories is here revealed in all its complexity, and the consequences of this process for our understanding of culture and behaviour are brought provocatively into view.

David I. Kertzer

# Acknowledgements

We, the co-editors of this volume, have a wide range of persons to thank. They fall into two categories and contexts.

First, we wish to thank all those who were involved in bringing about the most enjoyable and lively seminar in Cairo in September 1999, where all of the chapters and the ideas which inform this book were first debated and discussed. All of those who gave the many stimulating papers and who acted as discussants and moderators of sessions are listed separately in the brief Record of Papers and Participants, which follows on p. xiii. In addition, we would like to record our thanks to the staff of the American University in Cairo and Population Council, Cairo, to the IUSSP officials who managed the seminar, Jane Verral and Christiane Turco, and to Rolla Khadduri, the nominated Junior Demographer for the seminar. Rolla saved the day on many occasions and displayed great organizational and social skills for which she was appreciated by organizers and participants. We also thank the International Population Council MENA regional office and its director Barbara Ibrahim for lending the organization's support and for organizing and supporting the special session on Youth.

Second, we wish to thank individually each one of our fellow members of the IUSSP Anthropology and Demography Committee, the staff of IUSSP and Oxford University Press and the two anonymous readers appointed by IUSSP, who were also helpful influences on the volume's overall shape and content.

Most of the work in preparing this volume for publication was completed while one of the editors, Simon Szreter, held an Economic and Social Research Council Fellowship, Award Number R000271041.

Simon Szreter

Hania Sholkamy

A. Dharmalingam



*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	xi
<i>Record of Papers and Participants at the IUSSP Seminar on Social Categories in Population Research, Cairo, Egypt, 15–18 September 1999</i>	xiii
<i>List of Tables</i>	xvi
PART I. THE HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEMOGRAPHY AND ITS CATEGORIES	
1. Contextualizing Categories: Towards A Critical Reflexive Demography <i>Simon Szreter, Hania Sholkamy, and A. Dharmalingam</i>	3
2. Objectifying Demographic Identities <i>Philip Kreager</i>	33
3. Malthus' Anti-Rhetorical Rhetoric, or, on the Magical Conversion of the Imaginary into the Real <i>Charles L. Briggs</i>	57
PART II. CATEGORIES AS POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS	
4. Editors' Introduction <i>Simon Szreter, Hania Sholkamy, and A. Dharmalingam</i>	79
5. The Linguistic Construction of Social and Medical Categories in the Work of the English General Register Office, 1837–1950 <i>Edward Higgs</i>	86
6. Racial/Colour Categorization in US and Brazilian Censuses <i>Melissa Nobles</i>	107
7. Towards a Soviet Order of Things: The 1926 Census and the Making of the Soviet Union <i>Francine Hirsch</i>	126
8. Making up China's 'Black Population' <i>Susan Greenhalgh</i>	148
9. Internal Diaspora and State Imagination: Colombia's Failure to Envision a Nation <i>Santiago Villaveces-Izquierdo</i>	173
10. Users, Non-users, Clients, and Help-seekers: The Use of Categories in Research on Health Behaviour <i>Carla Makblouf Obermeyer</i>	185

11. Etic and Emic Categories in Male Sexual Health: A Case Study from Orissa <i>Martine Collumbien, Nabesh Bobidar, Ram Das, Braj Das, and Pertti Peltó</i>	199
PART III. CONTEXTS AS CRITIQUES OF CATEGORIES	
12. Editors' Introduction <i>Simon Szreter, Hania Sholkamy, and A. Dharmalingam</i>	223
13. Measuring the Population of a Northeast Thai Village <i>Aree Prohmno and John Bryant</i>	234
14. 'Un noviazgo después de ser casados': Companionate Marriage, Sexual Intimacy, and the Modern Mexican Family <i>Jennifer S. Hirsch</i>	249
15. Gender Roles and Women's Status: What They Mean to Hausa Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria <i>Elisha P. Renne</i>	276
16. Re-contextualizing the Female-headed Household: Culture and Agency in Uganda <i>Paula Jean Davis</i>	295
17. Demography's Ecological Frontier: Rethinking the 'Nature' of the Household and Community <i>Brian Greenberg and Margaret E. Greene</i>	322
18. Spillovers, Subdivisions, and Flows: Questioning the Usefulness of 'Bounded Container' as the Dominant Spatial Metaphor in Demography <i>John W. Adams and Alice B. Kasakoff</i>	343
19. Situating Migration in Wartime and Post-war Mozambique: A Critique of 'Forced Migration' Research <i>Stephen C. Lubkemann</i>	371
<i>Index</i>	401

# List of Contributors

**Adams, John W.**, Professor of Anthropology, University of South Carolina

**Bohidar, Nabesh**, Researcher with AIMS Research, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

**Briggs, Charles L.**, Professor and Director, Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, University of California, San Diego

**Bryant, John**, Analyst, Policy Coordination and Development Section, New Zealand Treasury, Wellington

**Collumbien, Martine** (Formerly at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) Consultant, Reproductive and Sexual Health Research, 133 Grosvenor Ave., London N5 2NH

**Das, Braj**, Researcher, AIMS Research, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

**Das, Ram**, Researcher, AIMS Research, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

**Davis, Paula Jean**, Assistant Professor, Department of Africana Studies, University of Pittsburgh

**Dharmalingam, A.**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

**Greenberg, Brian**, Director, Environmental Social Science, Innovative Resources Management, Washington, DC

**Greene, Margaret E.**, Research Associate, Center for Global Health, George Washington University, Washington, DC

**Greenhalgh, Susan**, Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine

**Higgs, Edward**, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of Essex

**Hirsch, Francine**, Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison

**Hirsch, Jennifer S.**, Assistant Professor, Jointly Appointed in the Departments of International Health and Anthropology, Emory University

**Kasakoff, Alice Bee**, Professor of Anthropology, University of South Carolina

**Kreager, Philip**, Lecturer, Human Sciences (Demography), Somerville College, Oxford and Senior Research Fellow, Oxford Institute of Ageing, Oxford University

**Lubkemann, Stephen C.**, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, George Washington University and Adjunct Assistant Professor of Research, Watson Institute for International Studies and Portuguese and Brazilian Studies Department at Brown University

**Nobles, Melissa**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Obermeyer, Carla Makhlouf**, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Population, Harvard University and Scientist, World Health Organization

**Pelto, Pertti**, Consultant, Johns Hopkins and Ford Foundation, Maharashtra, India

**Prohmmo, Aree**, Population and Health Consultant, Wellington, New Zealand

**Renne, Elisha P.**, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology and Center for Afroamerican and African Studies, University of Michigan

**Sholkamy, Hania**, Research Faculty, The American University of Cairo

**Szreter, Simon**, Reader, History and Public Policy, University of Cambridge, and Fellow, St John's College, Cambridge

**Villaveces-Izquierdo, Santiago**, Advisor, Law Reform and Conflict Programs, The Asia Foundation, Indonesia

# Record of Papers and Participants at the IUSSP Seminar on Social Categories in Population Research, Cairo, Egypt, 15–18 September 1999

CO-SPONSORED BY THE IUSSP COMMITTEE ON ANTHROPOLOGICAL DEMOGRAPHY AND THE NEW ARAB DEMOGRAPHY PROJECT OF THE SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

## *Papers presented*

Racial/Color Categorization on American and Brazilian Censuses

*Melissa Nobles*

Ethnic Category in Population Studies in China

*Yan Hao*

Towards a Soviet Order of Things: The 1926 Census and the Making of the Soviet Union

*Francine Hirsch*

Meaning, Functions, and Implications of Social Categories

*Saad Nagi*

Measuring the Population of a Northeast Thai Village

*John Bryant and Aree Prohmmo*

Registered Households and Micro-social Structure in China: Residential Patterns in Three Settlements in Beijing Area

*Zhongwei Zhao*

Demography's Ecological Frontier: Rethinking the 'Nature' of the Household and Community

*Brian Greenberg and Margaret Greene*

Community and Community Development in Egypt

*Reem Saad*

Youth in the Population Agenda: Concepts and Methodologies

*Sabar El Tawila*

Object or Subject? The Paradox of Youth in Turkey

*Leyla Neyzi*

By Way of Land or Citizenship: Exile and Return in Palestinian Popular Memory

*Randa Farah*

Caught Between Two Worlds: Youth in the Egyptian Hinterland

*Hind Wassef*

The Linguistic Construction of Social and Medical Categories in the Work of the English General Register Office, 1837–1950

*Edward Higgs*

Objectifying Demographic Identities in India

*Philip Kreager*

Malthus' Anti-rhetorical Rhetoric, or, on the Magical Conversion of the Imaginary into the Real

*Charles Briggs*

Some Unofficial Risks and Unintended Consequences of Safe Motherhood Programming

*Denise Roth*

Who Counts? Knowledges of Fertility

*Naomi Pfeffer*

Users, Non-Users, Clients, and Help-Seekers: The Use of Categories in Research on Health Behavior

*Carla Makhlouf Obermeyer*

Planned Births, Unplanned Persons: Contradictions in China's Socialist Modernization Project

*Susan Greenhalgh*

Categorizing the Need for Family Planning: A Story of Evolution

*Leila El Zeini*

Regrouping and Reinterpretation: Fertility in Arab countries

*Hoda Rashad*

Male Sexual Health Concerns in Orissa—an Emic Perspective

*Martine Collumbien, Nabesh Bobidar, Ram Das, Braj Das, and Pertti Pelto*

'Un Noviazgo después de ser casados': Companionate Marriage, Sexual Intimacy, and Contraceptives in Modern Mexico

*Jennifer Hirsch*

New Approaches to Studying Young People's Sexuality and Reproductive Health Behaviour. A Case Study from Indonesia

*Iwu Dwiseyani Utomo and Peter McDonald*

Who is the Head? An Anthro-demographic Perspective on Female Headship

*Khadr Zeinab and Iman Farid*

Gender Roles and Women's Status: What they mean to Hausa Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria

*Elisha Renne*

Social Categories in the Study of Masculinity and Men's Roles in Reproductive Health. An Analysis of PRODIR Projects

*Axel Mundigo*

Re-contextualizing the Female-headed Household: Culture and Agency in Uganda

*Paula Davis*

Historicity and the Reframing of Social Categories: The Case of Iraq's Population Under Siege

*Sobeir Morsy*

Marital Status and Reproductive Age as Social Categories in Population Studies

*Tulsi Patel*

Gender and Life-course Mobility among Fulani in Greater Accra, Ghana: The Inadequacies of Voluntary/Forced & Permanent/Temporary as Categories of Migration

*Pokuia Oppong Yaa*

Internal Diaspora and State Imagination: Colombia's Failure to Envision a Nation

*Santiago Villaveces-Izquierdo*

Questioning the Usefulness of 'Place' as a Concept in Demography

*John Adams and Alice Kasakoff*

Situating Migration in Wartime and Post-war Mozambique: A Critique of Analytical Categories in Migration Research with Special Attention to 'Forced' and 'Return' Migration

*Stephen Lubkemann*

***Discussants and moderators***

Anthony Carter

Barthélémy Kuate Defo

Arunachalam Dharmalingam

William Hanks

Nick Hopkins

Barbara Ibrahim

Philip Kreager

Stephen Kunitz

Rana Nashashibi

Cynthia Nelson

Hoda Rashad

Hania Sholkamy

Tim Sullivan

Simon Szreter

Susan Watkins



# List of Tables

6.1. US census race categories, 1790–2000	110
6.2. Brazilian colour questions and categories, 1872–2000	117
8.1. Official rates and numbers of unplanned births, selected years, 1981–99	162
8.2. Estimated number of unplanned births, 1979–99 as proportion of total 1999 population	163
11.1. Most commonly mentioned sexual health problems in free listing	205
11.2. Rank order of salience of sexual health concerns among informants and survey respondents	210
11.3. Differentials in reported personal experience of <i>dbatu padiba</i> , <i>swapnadosh</i> , and <i>jadu</i> (%)	211
13.1. Distribution of ‘official’ villages by their relationship to ‘indigenous’ villages	239
13.2. Individuals living or registered in Sala village during the year to March 1998	240
17.1. Mean number of people and animals per household	329
17.2. Average number of animals by extent of landholdings	330
17.3. Per cent of animals of each breed and sex by what they provide to Humans: <i>desi</i> male animals plough and pull, females of all breeds provide milk	330
17.4. Per cent distribution of sources of fodder, by season: crop residues are relied on year-round, trees are lopped in winter	331
17.5. Average age of animals by breed and sex: males are younger and fewer in number, with the exception of working male <i>desis</i> and horses	332
17.6. Survival indicators of male livestock: males kept and cared for less than females	333
17.7. What happens to male animals if farmers do not keep them? Per cent reported to meet each fate, by breed of animal: an emerging market for male animals?	334
18.1. 1860 residences of men born in small towns in New England	356
18.2. Men born in small towns in New England who entered different migration streams	357
18.3. Characteristics of families of origin of men born in small towns in New England who entered different migration streams	358
18.4. Rich and poor streams of men born in New England small towns moving to cities	359

# PART I THE HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF DEMOGRAPHY AND ITS CATEGORIES

*This page intentionally left blank*

# 1 Contextualizing Categories: Towards A Critical Reflexive Demography

SIMON SZRETER, HANIA SHOLKAMY, AND A. DHARMALINGAM

## THE CURRENT CONTEXT: A GROWING DIALOGUE BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND HISTORY

During the last several decades a steadily growing community of scholars interested in demographic problems have produced a number of monographs and collaborated in groups and networks to produce edited collections, which have increasingly opened up a dialogue between demographic approaches to the study of population and the range of questions and perspectives that the disciplines of anthropology and history bring to this same field of problems. Productive sparks fly from this engagement because anthropology and history are committed to the study of human and social variation over space and time, respectively, whereas demography seeks to elucidate that which can be usefully rendered general and universal in the analysis of population change.

Demography's 'vital events' commonly are celebrated by anthropology's 'rites de passage'. The 'social reproduction' of anthropology has much to do with the 'population growth' of demography. Given these and other common interests, not to mention the magnitude of demographic changes during the period since the mid-nineteenth century when disciplinary formation occurred, it is not surprising that early, ethnographic anthropology incorporated census-taking into its primary field methodology (Kertzer and Fricke 1997: 3–4). As well as some explicit synthesis studies of anthropological demography, such as those of Arsène Dumont (1890) or Raymond Firth (1936), a great many ethnographic and anthropological studies routinely recorded demographic features, as a number of twentieth-century surveys have

confirmed (Carr-Saunders 1922; Krzywicki 1934; Himes 1936; Ford 1945; Devereux 1955; Nag 1966). During the first two decades following the Second World War there were renewed attempts to mount studies of demographic issues informed by a genuinely anthropological approach, notably the collection of work by eminent anthropologists brought together at the initiative of the demographer, Frank Lorimer (1954), the research in Puerto Rico and Latin America of Stycos (1955, 1968) and Hill *et al.* (1959); and the classics of 'urban anthropology' by Elizabeth Bott (1957) and Lee Rainwater (1960, 1965).

On the other hand, history and demography had a slow start, mainly because of perceived problems with sources of evidence apart from those emanating from official institutions, most of which were pre-processed by government departments whose organized labours individual academics could not hope to emulate, let alone challenge in the era before personal computers could substitute for armies of clerks. By the beginning of the 1960s there had been published only a tiny handful of demographic monographs employing a thoroughgoing historical approach (i.e. interpreting demographic change through the analysis of other historical primary sources from the place and period in question), although these few are now rightly recognized as classics (Banks 1954; Henry 1956; Goubert 1960). Consequently, when Hauser and Duncan published their encyclopaedic *Inventory and Appraisal* of the study of population in 1959, there was no place among its thirty-three thematic chapters (including seven on demography's relationship with other individual disciplines) for a treatment of history and demography (Hauser and Duncan 1959).

Of course, we can see with hindsight that historical demography at the beginning of the 1960s was on the cusp of a veritable international explosion of highly productive intellectual activity, which has continued unabated ever since (early important compilations of key studies appeared in Glass and Eversley 1965 and Glass and Revelle 1972; for an account of the field's emergence, see Dupâquier 1984; Rosental 2003). Meanwhile, following Frank Lorimer's initiative in 1954 which was sponsored by the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the relationship between anthropology and demography also fructified during the 1960s and 1970s. A shared interest in the family household provided a common context for work of relevance to both disciplines (as well as history), notably stimulated by John Hajnal's seminal article on the demographic significance of the west European family household since the seventeenth century, which provoked much comparative work by, among others, the anthropologists, Jack Goody and Alan Macfarlane, and the sociological historians, Peter Laslett and Mike Anderson (Hajnal 1965; Anderson 1971; Laslett and Wall 1972; Goody 1976, 1983; Macfarlane 1978). General interest in demographic and ecological perspectives was also strongly kindled throughout the social sciences and among funding bodies in the aftermath of the international salience achieved in 1968 by the 'Population Bomb' issue (Ehrlich 1968; National Academy of Sciences 1971; Polgar 1971). Two major monographs of demographic anthropology (Macfarlane 1976; Howell 1979) and two of demographic history (Drake 1969; Wrightson and Levine 1979) were followed by an increasing flow of studies appearing in the 1980s, which were genuine methodological fusions of demography,

history, and anthropology;<sup>1</sup> and this flow became too numerous to cite during the 1990s.

During the 1980s anthropology was also clearly influenced, first, by the pan-humanities 'linguistic turn', which, with its hermeneutic emphasis on discourses and linguistic negotiation, has encouraged anthropologists to argue for a more culturally sophisticated approach to demographic change (Carter 1988; Hammel 1990; Greenhalgh 1995; Lockwood 1995) and to the evolution of demographic and cultural regimes (Howell 1986; Hammel and Howell 1987; Lesthaeghe 1989). Second, there was the impact on anthropology, along with all the other social sciences, of the resurgence of a feminist agenda (Chodorow 1978; Ortner 1984; Moore 1988), which has led anthropologists to argue for the importance of complementing demography's focus on the measurement of determinants of female fertility, with a wider approach, comprehending all aspects of 'reproduction' and gender.<sup>2</sup>

From the demography side, the robust championship from the beginning of the 1980s of the virtues of 'micro-demography' and the importance of attention to social and cultural contexts by Jack Caldwell and a number of associates (Caldwell *et al.* 1987, 1988*b*) resulted in early institutional support from IUSSP for this approach, with the convening of a Working Group on Micro-Approaches to Demographic Research from 1982 (Caldwell *et al.* 1988*a*) and a full Committee on Anthropology and Demography in 1992, of which, of course, this volume is itself a distant product. The impressive flow of volumes since 1992 from the IUSSP committee itself, have been accompanied by support from the Mellon Foundation for an Anthropological Demography programme at Brown University and have encouraged at least four separate sets of editors to issue recent volumes of essays, which gather together several dozen scholars, who are collectively outlining the subject matter and the methods for 'a new synthesis' of anthropological demography (Greenhalgh 1995; Jones *et al.* 1997; Kertzer and Fricke 1997; Basu and Aaby 1998; and see Obermeyer *et al.* (1997)).

Another distinctive and highly relevant set of developments, which has emerged during the last two decades, has been that of historians of demography interested in a critical account of the discipline's theories, models and associated statistical tools and institutions. This is an approach which has drawn sustenance from the enormous growth in the field of the history and philosophy of science (Kuhn 1962 was, of course, the seminal text here), including statistics and social science and much associated research on the social construction of all forms of scientific knowledge.<sup>3</sup> A number of carefully documented historical case studies have appeared since the late 1970s, demonstrating the importance of a critical and reflexive awareness of the wider ideological and political provenance of demography's most influential models, theories, tools, and ideas.<sup>4</sup> It is on the basis of this rich and diverse intellectual inheritance from demography, anthropology, demographic history, and the history of demography that the current volume was conceived.

In the closing section of her incisive, critical survey of the outstanding issues in bringing together disciplines such as anthropology and history with demography, Susan Greenhalgh noted that sensitivity to the importance of power relations and politics was a critical issue (Greenhalgh 1995: 26). She detected a disjuncture between

those demographically oriented studies which had previously taken this on, principally by addressing the impact of the formal politics of governmental and international organizations, and anthropological work, which had sought to demonstrate the importance of the informal politics of agency and social interaction in influencing and constructing demographic processes, such as that of reproduction. By focusing on the problematic dialectic between analytical categories and their application to specific contexts, it is hoped that the contributions in this volume will enable us to examine more closely the relationship and interchange between these two forms of politics. In the highly informative introduction to their volume, Kertzer and Fricke (1997: 22) cited approvingly Philip Kreager's call for demography to pay more attention to the process of identity construction which is necessarily prior to all demographic 'data'. They also noted that despite McNicoll's long-standing championing of the importance of the politically negotiated historical inheritance of institutional structures (McNicoll 1980), even among the anthropologically inclined, 'few have extended dynamic notions of context to the ideational realm' (Kertzer and Fricke 1997: 17). By focusing on the often-contested political contexts surrounding the production of categories in population studies and also the problematic nature of their application in specific contexts, this volume aims to contribute further to our understanding of these important, dynamic ideological, and political processes of identity construction in demography.

## CATEGORIES, LANGUAGES, COMMUNICATING COMMUNITIES

This volume examines the implications, both to fields of knowledge and to policy, of the use of highly general, 'scientifically' defined categories in population studies. The contributions assembled here demonstrate that such categories need to be seen as ideologically and politically charged acts of representation and intervention. Bringing pre-formed analytical categories to bear on 'study populations' implicitly makes strong a priori claims that the society, community, or context in question is constructed in certain ways already known to the researcher, without this having been verified—a startlingly unscientific procedure. It also actively seeks to manipulate and define real social relationships according to these prescriptions, with inevitable consequences in terms of the suppression or marginalization—whether intended or not—of other possibilities and configurations. Yet, the use of categories, of many kinds, is unavoidable when we research and communicate our work.

*Categories and Contexts* therefore addresses the intellectual enigma of the necessary use of categories in population studies and the need for reflexivity—critical awareness of the intellectual opportunity costs—in their use. The chapters that follow demonstrate in many different ways how categories, some of which have long been the basic building blocks of demographic understanding and knowledge, can obscure as well as reveal how people socially construct the world. The contributors come from a wide range of disciplinary, professional, and cultural backgrounds.

Hence, the multiplicity of debates and discourses voiced in this collection are the pronounced multi-disciplinary nature of the conference in Cairo at which the following chapters, as well as a number of other valuable contributions, were discussed.<sup>5</sup> But, rather than simply stressing the differences and disparities that are revealed, this chapter will commence by pointing out some of the common themes.

First, all of the chapters illustrate the historical construction of categories. Thus, each voices an implicit belief in the immanence of change in the content and meaning of even the most basic of categories. Motherhood, mobility, household, race, and community, are all questioned and reinterpreted in light of first-hand and first-rate field research. The people described and ordered by these and by other categories have often reconstructed and given them new, quite different meanings, sometimes even contradictory of their original, analytical intention.

The inevitability of change points to a second common feature of the chapters in this collection. This is the all-importance of context, including historical provenance. Change describes the trajectory of social categories. Context defines their meaning, relevance, and significance. Different contexts endow the same category with diverse meanings, both in the eyes of agents and communities and in the hands of officials and the social scientists who document and analyse population processes using the 'official' categories. A simple story may make this point more eloquently than the specialized language of social science theories.

Père Ayrut, a Jesuit priest whose life was devoted to the study and support of Upper Egyptian peasants, recounts an incident that took place during his sojourn in Upper Egypt during the early twentieth century (Ayrut 1963). He was playing a game with some peasant children in an Upper Egyptian village. He etched the outlines of a house with a stick in the dirt floor and asked the children to guess what was missing. One bright little girl ventured an answer immediately. 'It's the neighbours she said, that is what is missing!' He had expected the answer to remain within the confines of the house itself and to express an intrinsic part of the house such as windows, doors, animals, or household members. His, young respondent expressed a much more profound and culturally constructed social reality. That which is intrinsic to a house in rural Egypt are the neighbouring houses, which physically define the house with their adjacent walls and socially define it as part of a community.

Our contributors have followed a similar route. They have looked beyond their categories of choice to the social, political, economic, and historical forces, which shape and define them.

A third point that many chapters have elaborated on, concerns the relevance of field research (or archival research in history) to theory building. 'The Field' or the archive has each been reconstructed in most of the chapters that follow not only as the site of data collection and observation but also as the space where theory is critically examined and reformulated. The authors in this collection approached their respective 'fields', whether a village, an archive, or a project, with the intent to theorize the categories that they investigated. This open approach yielded innovative challenges to processes of category delineation and definition. Our hosts at the Cairo conference, the New Arab Demography project, also exemplify this approach to demography.<sup>6</sup>



The fourth point concerns the interdisciplinarity of the meeting from which this volume originated. This was a meeting across cultures and disciplines and across the boundaries that can separate academics from policy oriented researchers. The ensuing debates and discourses served our understanding of social categories in two ways. The first was the challenge posed by disciplines to one another. For example, the presence of anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and demographers created a continuous debate concerning the most basic of categories. For some the individual is unquestionably a clear unit of analysis, for others he/she is a highly problematized notion. Some of our contributors still relied on the notion of the nation state while others, in light of their disciplinary orientations, have long been considering populations using the grid of region, community, and other boundaries that classify people regardless of state and country. A second way in which cross-disciplinary perspectives operated at our meeting was to provide support for unconventional notions. Thus, the historians frequently found resonance for their findings from anthropologists who could corroborate and lend further credence to their ideas from their contemporary research. Simultaneously, the breadth and depth of historical research dispelled myth and a misunderstanding perpetuated by social research that only confronts the present. Discussions across disciplines continuously operated at these two levels and enriched our understanding of each other's work and of our subject matter.

The fifth and final point concerns language and the levels at which it can elucidate or obscure meaning. At our meeting, we often confronted questions of language, translation, and translatability. The presence of Bill Hanks was much appreciated in informing this debate with current perspectives from the field of social linguistics. Hanks explained to the conference that demography, in common with most of the applied social sciences, faces a highly general problem in linguistics. This is related to the tension between the intrinsic ambiguities and complexities of the use of language in any observable community of speakers and the analytical demands of scientific knowledge for clarity and unambiguity of definition. The problem follows from the fact that virtually no word in any language has only one singular meaning. Students of linguistics therefore prefer to talk of a range of 'semantic potential' (possible meanings) for any specific 'linguistic form' (the spoken, acoustic, or written visual entity which we call 'a word'). It is therefore only through familiarity with the precise 'pattern of use' of any specific 'word' among the members of a communicating community that we can reliably know that it refers to a particular object (an aspect of the world perceived by our senses). This then becomes a 'pairing' of the 'label' (word) with its 'object' or referent (for further amplification of this approach, see Hanks 1995: chs 1 and 9).

For a discipline such as demography it is essential to its success as a branch of systematic analytical knowledge that its linguistic community of practitioners (demographers and those officials charged with collecting demographic 'data') 'fixes' meanings by mapping specific words on to specific agreed aspects of the messy social world of flowing events and processes. Demography has necessarily relied on the administrative power of the state to accomplish much of this linguistic work for it.

Indeed, official linguistic categories are a special case of this process where there is an explicit intention to construct authoritative and uniform patterns of usage on the part of the state. Its aim is to inculcate a ‘naturalizing’ of the terms of demographic science through a programme of state-sanctioned ‘education’. Through politically managed, historical processes of ‘objectification’, terms such as ‘household’, ‘caste’, and ‘class’ have been given apparently precise, official technical definitions, which then makes them available for discussion and manipulation among a community of skilled users, who can pick up and utilize the term, quite detached from its original conditions of production, and use it with a range of other associations. Well-established and widely used categories of this sort can become so conventional as to seem ‘natural’, or ‘universal’. It is one of the principal aims of this volume to raise the visibility of these officially created, scientific social categories and bring them back into question. At the conference we debated how categories are labelled and how these labels translate from the language of lay people to the language of social science, and from the indigenous to the western languages that prevail in academic publications and other venues of dissemination—an issue explored at greater length in the second of this committee's seminars (Carter 2005, forthcoming). The significance of the way in which language is simplified into ‘categories’ in order to reach a wider, trans-local audience, and the ambivalent implications of this process, was a point of agreement among participants. There was also an agreement on the importance of confronting the political and social processes that determine how we label categories and the need to render problematic the translation of these labels, a frequent requirement for international, scientific, and policy discourse.

## THE COMMUNITY AND LANGUAGE OF DEMOGRAPHY

The importance of taking into account the contexts of communities and their power relations does not, therefore, begin and end with the constituted objects of demographic study, its categories. The discipline of demography is itself composed of a large network of agents forming a trans-generational, historical communicating community of sorts. To understand its business and the categories of thought that it deploys, it is helpful to start by adopting an anthropological and historical disposition towards this community and its formation.

Demography is an international community which has a disciplinary interest in rendering terms such as ‘the family’ and ‘the household’ into a set of standard categories, thereby providing it with a transnational language for communication and for scientific specification of population problems. Indeed, among the social sciences it is probably the single community that has been most committed, as a discipline, to the statistical language of coding and the mathematical procedures of quantification. It is clear that the general form that most of demography's categories take is determined by this disciplinary self-identity as the quantitative social science par excellence: as analytical as economics but blessed with much more tractable data. It is therefore appropriate in a volume such as this, which is aiming to promote demography's

self-critical awareness of the categories which it uses, that we commence with a discussion of the sources of this collective identity, its interests in quantification and the associated methodology.

Here we are fortunate in being able to draw upon a highly apposite current debate among the leading historians and philosophers of science over the professional and political reasons for any discipline adopting a predominantly scientific and quantitative disposition. Ian Hacking, confessing himself much in debt to the intellectual *oeuvre* of Michel Foucault (on which, see Note 8), views demography's categories as a paradigm example of the rise of statistical forms of official knowledge in modern, liberal, democratic societies. According to Hacking, this constitutes an aggressive institutional move, of 'making up people' by labelling them and placing them in moral categories for purposes of administrative control (Hacking 1986: 226; and see Hacking 1990 for much on nineteenth-century 'demography'). Following Foucault's notion of the 'constitution of subjects', Hacking refers to this as 'dynamic nominalism', meaning that such authoritative labels tend over time (though not invariably) to enter into persons' descriptions of themselves and others, so affecting the whole disposition of relationships and the constitution of the society in question (Hacking 1986: 222, 229–31).

Ted Porter, by contrast, has argued that disciplinary communities working with knowledge production become committed to 'scientific quantification' and an associated 'mechanical objectivity' as a defensive strategy in two senses. First, where they constitute a large and diverse body of practitioners working on a broad knowledge field they cannot establish relationships of personal trust with each other. It therefore remains extremely difficult, without personal contact and knowledge of each other, to verify the truth claims of different empirical researchers' results, unless these findings are known to have been produced using a strict protocol of impersonal rules, which today includes, for instance, rigid insistence on statistical tests of so-called significance (Porter 1995: ch. 9). The purpose of this standardization is to avoid unspoken, subjective judgements and idiosyncratic manipulations creeping into the procedures. It is also to facilitate replication and verification without the necessity of close personal relationships. The unintended but direct consequence is to produce a field of scientific discourse exclusively characterized by an unquestioning commitment to the quantitative methods of nomothetic, hypothetico-deductivism: scientific work in such a field is only deemed legitimate when communicated using 'crisp' categories standing in carefully calibrated relationships to each other. Porter's crucial point is that this is not the *only* way of doing good and important science, though there are many working in the empirical social and policy sciences who may be under that illusion.<sup>7</sup>

Second, there is the question of the external relationships of such a knowledge community. Porter argues that where disciplinary communities are unable, or have no interest in maintaining strong boundaries between their own specialist knowledge area and access to its understanding by a wider public, 'Such a situation encourages the greatest extremes of standardisation and objectivity... most evident where knowledge is to be shaped for public purposes' (Porter 1995: 229). This is because 'Applied

fields... are exposed to scrutiny and criticism by the interests they affect' (Porter 1995: 229). Hence,

Strategies of impersonality ... take the form of objectivity claims. Objectivity means knowledge that does not depend too much on the particular individuals who author it. This is why the language of objectivity has been most compellingly attractive to people like intelligence testers, applied social researchers and cost-benefit analysts. We find there a pervasive dread of 'the prejudice of the investigator', often a willingness to leave untouched the most important issues in order to deal objectively with those that can be adequately quantified ... Rules must rule even if accepted truths must be supplemented by conventions. (Porter 1995: 229–30)

There is much truth and valuable insight in both of these distinctive positions in the debate. Hacking and Porter each in their own different ways have identified the encompassing socio-political environment and the nature of the 'market demand', from official and other agencies, for the intellectual wares of demographers, as having great significance in determining its strongly statistical character, its disciplinary commitment to the scientific, the quantifiable, the 'objective'. However, neither of them has quite gone on to explain this more fully, by considering the requirements and needs of the final consumers of demographic knowledge themselves, and how this influences the character of demographic social science (except to the extent that Hacking subscribes to the rather indiscriminating 'early' Foucauldian view that the state's interest is primarily in command and control, an assertion which may be generally true but which is certainly not the whole truth, as the later Foucault, himself, intimated).<sup>8</sup> In fact demography offers its wares to a range of agencies. Demographers constitute a community, which finds it extremely important for its survival to present its knowledge according to the rules of trade governing exchange with this rather diverse range of customers, other transnational 'knowledge' communities, or tribes.

These other tribes, who 'buy' demographic knowledge, go by the various names of policy scientists, government administrators, economists, sociologists, development workers, NGOs, foundation officers, politicians, and their advisers. The whole set has a vocational action-orientation. That is to say that their fundamental disposition towards knowledge and 'science' is an instrumental and utilitarian one. Their primary goal and activity is to devise and implement various schemes of intervention designed, ultimately, to advance 'development', however they may define it (on the history of ideas of development, see Arndt 1987; Cowen and Shenton 1996). Such a role carries an enormous weight of moral responsibility. Indeed, for some—but by no means all—of the members of these tribes, this also amounts to having to take directly personal, professional or political (electoral) responsibility for the consequences of their actions. Their principal interests in the products of demographic social science therefore lie in its promise to enable them to formulate more effective and reliable policies. Note, however, that this interest in reliability and effectiveness is, in fact, derivative from a more truly primary concern in being able to justify their actions and policies. This follows from the position of responsibility in which they choose to place themselves.

The issue of justification raises a number of complex issues, which cannot be fully explored here (see Douglas and Ney 1998: ch. 5). However, we do need to emphasize that this is a much more pervasive and important issue in the social sciences than is generally appreciated, with long-running and profound epistemological and methodological implications. It is certainly not something which Hacking or Porter dwell on, except implicitly. Throughout history it has always been necessary in human society to be able to justify actions and interventions in terms of the recognized ultimate sources of authority at the time. The key questions, of course, are: to whom does one have to justify the actions? And on what grounds, by what criteria? Political systems and their accompanying ideologies have varied enormously through time in this respect. Religious communities and colonial empires have typically required theological and cosmological justifications. Under a monarchy or other absolutist regime it may be enough, as a policy-maker, simply to have the personal confidence of the sovereign or leader and to be able to justify actions to that individual as the expression of their personal will, with all its caprices and inconsistencies.

The moral universe of justification in which demography has had to operate, throughout most of its disciplinary existence during the last two centuries has, of course, been rather different from either of these two contexts and has increasingly approximated to that of a formal representative democracy, of a relatively international kind. In such circumstances executive agents can be held to account by a relatively wide range of agencies wielding a variety of axes. In this context there is a powerful imperative among policy-makers to base their policies as much as possible on ‘impartial’ or ‘objective’ forms of advice and evidence—information that can supposedly be considered valid and applicable regardless of viewpoint and interest. It is therefore this vulnerable position of accountability, which the principal ‘purchasers’ or consumers of demographic knowledge are themselves in, which lies behind the strong demand for forms of advice and expertise which can apparently claim to be offering findings derived from a ‘scientific’ or ‘rigorous’, ‘systematic’ or ‘objective’ and ‘impartial’ methodology.

Thus, the social science practices and disciplinary methodology, which is necessarily favoured by the political circumstances of accountability under conditions of liberal democracy, tend to be generalizing and universalist, abstract and given to mathematical tractability. This results in a profound bias against the utility of merely locally-valid knowledge because of its dangers as an ‘unscientific’ (not universally valid) and therefore unaccountable form of knowledge. Those with executive responsibility for policy interventions always need to be able, ultimately, to have a justifiable answer to the hostile question, ‘Why did you do that? (And not this?)’. Their best response is always going to be that ‘reputable scientific advice’ was consulted and indicated that the path taken was the appropriate one. This defence, on grounds of ‘science’, immediately involves the opponent in having to consider taking on the whole incubus of what it is to be judged ‘scientific’ in order to further dispute the wisdom of the policy taken—normally (though not invariably, of course) a very effective defence!

The precise, self-defeating policy problem that follows from this general strategy, however, is that such methodologies, in their requirement for quasi-universal validity,

neutral of context, and ideology, inevitably must produce highly abstracted and generalized forms of ‘social science’ evidence and policy advice. This renders them invalid as detailed guides to practical action with respect to any particular social context or local environment. The trouble with this limitation is that politics and public policy is usually all about devising practical means to change conditions in specific places (or to maintain them in the face of changing circumstances) and to affect the lives and incentives of specific persons in a particular time and place! Hence, part of the reason for the somewhat frustrating and chequered history of policy interventions in the field of population studies, and more generally in the applied social sciences, throughout the last half-century and more. Hence also, the focus of so many of the contributions to this volume on the widely repeated experience of mismatch between standard, ‘scientific’ categories and the contexts in which they have been applied.

## THE HISTORICAL CONTEXTS OF DEMOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

As the other contributions to Part I of this volume, by Philip Kreager and by Charles Briggs, both discuss in more detail, there are also deeper historical reasons for demography's strongly ‘scientific’ disposition. The practice of demography has evolved within the wider ideological and historical complex, referred to in shorthand as ‘the project of modernity’ (Foucault 1970). This term refers to a way of thinking, scientific rationalism, which, in the hands of Francis Bacon in the sixteenth century, had been a historically novel way of both viewing and constructing the world (*Representing and Intervening* as Ian Hacking titled his seminal analysis of 1983), but which, by the beginning of the twentieth century, had become the normal, authoritative thought system among all those educated within the globally dominating ‘western tradition’. The chapter by Charles Briggs summarizes some of the important work by intellectual historians exploring the rise to ascendancy of this mode of thought and locates the founding text of the demographic perspective, the polemic first edition of Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* of 1798, within this account. Briggs offers an analysis of the ‘metadiscursive’ practices in the Malthusian polemic—the rhetorical means Malthus deployed by which alternative modes of discourse to those of Malthus's own explicitly Newtonian definition of ‘science’ and ‘reason’ were demeaned and rendered less authoritative. Malthus was certainly highly influential in thoroughly infusing the demographic perspective with this ‘scientific rationalist’ epistemological disposition and with the closely associated individualist ontological assumptions, which it holds in common with the enormously powerful discipline of economics (in both its classical and neoclassical forms). It is well to remember that Malthus viewed himself as a first-generation disciple of the paradigm classical economist, Adam Smith, and held, for three decades until his death in 1834, the first ever endowed Chair in Political Economy at the East India Company's Haileybury College. This institution was the British Empire's leading centre for training its overseas administrators. Both economics and demography have been principal

disciplinary vehicles for implementing the international policies entailed by ‘the project of modernity’.

As Briggs' chapter shows, the effectiveness of Malthus's rhetoric depended on its underpinning in the developments during the eighteenth-century Scottish Enlightenment of Bacon's and of Locke's earlier epistemological insistence that rational science must be a de-contextualized form of knowledge, preferably of universal application; and capable of clear and logical expression in ‘plain speech’. The motives for expounding these criteria lay as much in the historical socio-political interests of Bacon, Locke, and others of their class in later generations, such as David Hume and Adam Smith in the eighteenth century. They represented a *parvenu* class of intellectually able men of modest property and often dissenting religious convictions. Their historical fight for recognition and status was with the incumbent political ascendancy of the theologians of the Established Church and with notions that authority resided in the person of the aristocrat and in the family contacts enjoyed by the wealth-owning landed elite. To oppose the established hierarchy of status and its legitimating moral code of *noblesse oblige*, they successfully constructed an ideology of ‘scientific reason’. This was concerned to deny scriptural prescription, personal attributes, wealth, connection, emotion, or incumbent belief as legitimate grounds for claiming authority; and to deny passion and rhetoric as a valid form of communication. So successful was this ‘common sense’ philosophy that all displays of human emotion and passion, considered manly and appropriate by all classes, especially the aristocracy, in the eighteenth century, had come to be reviled as weak, child-like, and ‘female’ by the early Victorian era (Hirschman 1977; Collini *et al.* 1983: ch. 1; Mintz 1983: chs 1–3; Tosh 1998: ch. 5).

Such a formulation privileged, as deserving the accolade of ‘scientific’, only forms of knowledge constructed as abstract ‘laws’ over concrete ‘details’; global and general propositions over merely ‘local’ understandings. Mathematics was increasingly revered as the language of true scientific knowledge. Ian Hacking has memorably written of an ‘avalanche of printed numbers’ from the 1820s and 1830s onwards, as the eventual harvest of this new ideology of power and authority (Hacking 1986: 222; 1990; see also Cullen 1975). Malthus was not the only early student of population problems to fantasize over the possibility of becoming the Isaac Newton of the social world. The immensely intellectually influential Belgian astronomer and statistical mathematician, Adolphe Quetelet (inventor of the pregnant concept of ‘*l’homme moyenne*’, the average or—more accurately—‘normal’ man), and William Farr, the Statistical Superintendent of England's path-breaking General Register Office, both entertained such visions long into the nineteenth century, whilst Comte's compatible social philosophy of Positivism enjoyed a great vogue on both sides of the English Channel at mid-century (Annan 1959; Eyles 1979; Porter 1986: 60–5; Stigler 1986: ch. 5; Cashdollar 1989).

But in many ways the most profoundly influential creation of this generation's rationalist ideology was the ultimate rhetorical device of the male-gendered concept of ‘*homo economicus*’. This is the curiously a-social and emotionless (and yet supposedly ‘hedonistic’), calculating, independent individual, who, as producer and

consumer, rationally makes and takes prices in the liberal market place of exchange on the criteria of sovereign self-interest or 'utility'.<sup>9</sup> This radically reduced model of man, without a specific history or culture, enables humans and human societies to be treated as invariant categories and hence permits maximum scope to the elaboration of a logico-mathematical analysis of selected aspects of human behaviour and social change, with all the virtues, in terms of analytical 'control', and all the weaknesses, in terms of the synthetic capacity to understand 'others', which such an approach entails. Furthermore, it was by taking this, the classical economists' paradigm economic agent, as his representative bourgeois type in an age of industrial capitalism, that Karl Marx bequeathed all the premises of the rational, materialist, scientific approach to the critical Marxist tradition as well. As a result, for all its aspirations to a revolutionary catharsis, Marxist ideology and political practice remained firmly locked into 'the project of modernity', as we can see in the contributions to this volume by Francine Hirsch and Susan Greenhalgh, documenting significant episodes of demographic category formation in Bolshevik Russia and Maoist China, respectively.

During the last century and a half, there has, however, also been a significant rival, with which the 'scientific', 'nomothetic', or hypothetico-deductivist approach has had to contend when it comes to the understanding of human affairs. This has been the quite distinct secular and humanist approach, and its hermeneutic or interpretative method (Winch 1990). Eschewing the direct focus of the Scottish materialist tradition and of classical economics on the question of man's interaction with the material environment and his interest in the goal of control over it, this approach departs, instead, from the premise that the most significant general characteristic of humans, from which all else follows, is that they are both formed and live as participants of historically formed communicating groups. They construct diverse moral worlds of relationships, through language and culture, and live in uneasy balances of cooperation and conflict. This is not a methodology which has developed from its success in manipulating and controlling the material environment, nor from reflecting on the nature of the divine, but whose principal goal is the exploration and attempt to understand the myriad complexities of human communication and exchange, as a historically formed and politically flawed process (not as an ideal—that being the preserve of philosophy).

The hermeneutic approach leads to an emphasis on contexts and description, the hypothetico-deductivist on categories and analysis. In reality most forms of enquiry in the humanities, including demography, pay respect to both of these important principles in their knowledge-creating practices. But different disciplinary approaches tend to exhibit an imbalance or preference towards one or the other approach. As a gross generalization history, anthropology, and the exegesis of works of literature favour the hermeneutic emphasis, while economics, behavioural psychology, political science, demography, and the biomedical sciences favour the nomothetic style.

There are broadly two ways of explaining this divergence in approaches, corresponding to the two approaches themselves. The nomothetic favours an essentialist explanation in terms of the nature of the questions and subject matter addressed



by each discipline, claiming that it is integral to economic, psychological, and demographic phenomena, for instance, that they can be classified into well-defined, discrete categories, rendering them amenable to the 'scientific' forms of analysis, which result from confronting rigorous theoretical frameworks of thought with appropriately quantitatively categorized evidence ('data'). According to this viewpoint the subject matter of history, literature, and social and cultural anthropology is too 'soft' to yield 'scientific' insights, composed, as it mostly is, of literary forms of subjective testimony, reporting unique contingencies. Interesting, diverting, exotic, perhaps, 'makes you think, yes' is the judgement of those committed to a systematic scientific approach, but not 'really useful': not something which gives you knowledge of a calibrated cause and effect relationship which you can reliably apply somewhere else in another context.

On the other hand, the hermeneutic approach rejects the assertion that there is any fundamental, intrinsic difference in subject matter, since all human knowledge is the product of linguistic negotiation within and between agents in cross-cutting linguistic communities. However, these communities and their purposes, their languages, constitutions, structures, and relative powers all differ to a quite extraordinary extent. It is here that there have been important systematic differences between the community of language users who speak 'economics' and 'demography', and those who speak 'history' and 'cultural anthropology'. There are profound historical, political, and professional reasons why the disciplinary communities of economics, demography, and political science subscribe to a self-consciously 'rational scientific' approach to human affairs. These are disciplines whose *raison d'être* is 'to speak to power', in other words to provide instrumental, predictive, and 'useful' knowledge for a wide range of executive agents and institutions, including both government and business interests. These particular forms of instrumentalist social science have played a much more intimately involved role in delivering the 'project of modernity' over the last two centuries. Disciplines such as history, anthropology, and the study of literature have been, by contrast, relatively removed from the seats of power and influence at least during the twentieth century (which is not at all the same thing as saying that they do not have a political and ideological content and intent, as they undoubtedly do).<sup>10</sup> They have a much less urgent need to construct their knowledge claims to authority on grounds of their 'scientific' or 'objective' nature, or their practical usefulness in an instrumental, policy-oriented sense.<sup>11</sup>

The history of anthropology during the twentieth century presents something of a hybrid case between these two polar types of the quantitative, policy-oriented discipline, pursuing its strategies of impartiality and objectivity, as Porter has put it, and the more openly subjective, qualitative, specialized academic discipline. This helpfully underlines the fact that actual evolving disciplines have a more complex, nuanced, and changing character. It is quite clear from much recent self-critical research that has been undertaken into the history of anthropology that in all the colonial states of Europe early ethnology and anthropology was officially perceived as having a potential administrative utility by the imperial powers in assisting with their efficient government in alien conditions.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the ideological categories and assumptions and

administrative procedures of the high colonial era, c.1880–1940, have certainly had an influence over the practice of the western discipline of anthropology, though a far from determinative one, as Goody has pointed out (Goody 1995).

There is, then, a similar fundamental point of critique at issue here with both demography and anthropology. Many of the preoccupations and basic analytical categories of each discipline are the products of a historical inheritance, which has to a greater (demography) or lesser (anthropology) extent incorporated certain ideological components of a past (and in many ways continuing) practice of government and administration. It is relevant to note two significant differences between them, however. First, the historical period in which anthropology was most closely engaged with government and during which it experienced its own disciplinary formation, c.1870–1940, was much later than in the case of demography and political economy, where the relevant period of institutionalization and disciplinary formation, in close contact with the agenda of nation-building and government, was during the period c.1780–1900 (Glass 1973; Cullen 1975; Eyster 1979; Cole 2000; Schweber 2004). Second, the purpose for which anthropology has typically been used by governments was very different from those uses which it found for demography. This is highly relevant in explaining, in terms of the issues which Ted Porter has raised, why anthropology, unlike demography and economics, has not derived a vocational commitment to the ‘objective’ and ‘the quantitative’, from its various encounters with servicing the demands of government and policy.

During the all-important colonial era, European metropolitan governments commissioned anthropological knowledge to inform them about peoples and cultures, on the crucial presumption that these were ‘others’ (Fabian 1983). The knowledge required from anthropology was absolutely premised on the assumption of difference. Within the context of the colonial relationship, this difference almost invariably meant ‘lower’, ‘less civilized’, or ‘less developed’ in the dominant metropole's discourse.<sup>13</sup> The most generous variant of this position was the paternalistic one, which viewed ‘the natives’ as suitable subjects for improvement and remedial work, children who would grow up in time given the benefit of the appropriate guidance from the colonizers. By contrast, demography's constitutive disciplinary interest, as a servant of government and policy, has been to provide information about society on an implicitly ‘democratic’ and egalitarian agenda. Like classical political economy, its assumptions are the Lockean, liberal ones, foundational of the ‘project of modernity’, that each individual, in principle, counts as an equivalent. This is a crucial premise for all disciplines aspiring to provide a ‘scientific’ and ‘objective’ study of human society.

The central point of difference, therefore, is that anthropology was not expected to be providing information about universally valid economic or socio-demographic phenomena, relating to ‘standard’ human traits. Quite to the contrary, it was valued by government for the insights it could offer into the idiosyncratic, the local, the exotic, the different. Going along with this special licence to produce a category of non-standard, non-universal knowledge, went the legitimacy of very different methods of observation and modes of relating to its human subjects. Demographers have coded, classified, and analysed data collected by others on individuals and groups

they may well have no acquaintance with at all. Indeed in the more extreme version of the ‘impartiality’ strategy, such acquaintance could be deemed suspect and contaminating, on grounds of imparting bias to the demographer's analysis of ‘the data’! This position would seem to be the antithesis to the appropriate conditions for creating knowledge from an anthropologist's perspective, and also for colonial policy-makers and governors wanting to know about communities they found incomprehensible. To have authority to give advice on the peculiarities of remote, distant, and unknown peoples, colonial rulers expected their informants to have extensive first hand experience—relying on traders, missionaries, and their own local administrators initially (many of whom provided among the earliest, avowedly ethnographic studies of these peoples). As anthropology formed itself as a discipline, this form of knowledge, ‘fieldwork’, became its defining professional ‘rite de passage’ and primary methodology of inquiry.

Thus, the application of an anthropological and historical perspective to the discipline of demography can help to place its formation and practices within an understanding of the evolving political and ‘market’ context in which population studies have operated. This provides an account of its particularly strong commitment to the production of a ‘scientific’ form of knowledge, meaning an aspiration to deliver information rendered into a quantitative format, which has been generated by the ‘impartial’ and ‘objective’ methods of standardized coding and analytical protocols. This in turn ensures its attachment to the construction and deployment of categories with a high degree of analytical clarity of definition, designed for universal application and mathematical tractability. However, this frequently results in the drawback of empirical research characterized by a limited degree of detailed descriptive fidelity or plausibility, which is something of a paradox as a systematic feature of a strongly policy-oriented and practical discipline.

Official census enumeration and vital registration exercises are now routinely undertaken by all developed nation states. A critical issue surrounding these processes relates to what Philip Kreager terms ‘objectification’, following Bernard Cohn's usage of this term (Cohn 1987*b*). Building on the pioneering work of Ghurye (1932), Thorner and Thorner (1962), and Srinivas (1966), Cohn showed the manner in which between 1872 and 1931 the category of ‘caste’ was transmuted from something which had previously been almost unconsciously embedded in a whole matrix of custom, ritual, and religious symbol. Caste now became an object for official recording and administrative, legal specification, something different and conscious, an object of explicit thought and negotiation. The complex, flexible and nuanced relationships of the caste system thereby became ‘hypostasized’, as would-be fixed social categories. A loose and complex system of negotiated status relations and social identities, which had previously functioned for centuries in a relatively fluid and flexible manner corresponding more closely to the analytical notion of ‘fuzzy sets’, gradually, over the space of two generations, came to be administratively defined more as a social system of ‘crisp’ categories, with exclusionary boundaries (for more on the concepts of crisp and fuzzy sets, see Chapter 13 in this volume by Prohmmo and Bryant).

Kreager notes that Cohn's analysis of how this happened in India appears to have been a textbook example of Hacking's theory of 'dynamic nominalism'. Social science, in the service of the state, has the power to create, or at least to authenticate and endorse, categories of people by naming them and ordering them into a specific relationship with the rest of society. Hacking envisages this as an open-ended dialectical process with a unique outcome in each case. Each category of 'person', or officially recognized social group, and each social classification system has its own political history. This history involves a process of negotiation and compromise between, on the one hand, the agencies of the state, whom, it is recognized, may provide a forum for internal conflict between various 'expert' interest groups (avoiding the crude notion of a monolithic 'controlling' state), and, on the other hand, the varying powers of self-organization and self-representation possessed by different groups in society attempting to insist on their own definitions of their identities and relationships (Hacking 1986: 234).

In the Indian case Cohn shows how, following initiating moves from the colonial authorities to construct an ordered territorial map and social grid upon the vast and complex subcontinent, paradoxically it was actually through a two-generations-long process, whereby Indians themselves questioned and negotiated that grid—justifying modifications and adjustments to it—that caste categories became officially hypostasized (Cohn 1987*b*: 229–33, 248–50). An essentially similar process of multi-generational 'objectification' has been reconstructed in the case of the important French social category of 'les cadres' (Boltanski 1987) and with respect to the British state's 'professional model' of social classes, a classification scheme which stood as the official representation of the social structure of England and Wales from 1911 until it was finally superseded in 2001 (Szreter 1984, 1996: 67–282; Rose and Pevalin 2001). A highly emotive and tragic, extreme example of this same process would be the way in which German officials and their academic advisors in the Nazi state put so much energy into constructing and enumerating the separate 'scientific' category of Jews, imposing with great persistence and speed a segregationist classification in a society where there had been so much cultural integration and intermarriage (Hilberg 1985). Of course, an official, scientific category system, no matter how long it remains in use, can never finally determine the changing perceptions of the great diversity of peoples and communities comprising an entire nation, but it can constitute a powerful polarizing influence, around which the dialectic of debate and negotiation is focused, as shown by Cohn in India.

The contributions in *Categories and Contexts* document in many different times and places what is at stake in this perennial struggle. The established inheritance of the analytical models and fixed categories of the discipline of demography comprise a language which has facilitated international communication and trust between students of population problems and both policy-makers and politicians. The importance of this dialogue is not to be lightly discounted, considering the significance of the problems of health, reproduction, population growth or decline, and migration, which this dialogue attempts to address. However, this necessarily simplifying and abstracting language does inevitable violence to the complex, variable, and ever-changing

meanings of demographic processes, which real communicating communities, in all their extraordinary diversity, actually experience.

There is an unavoidable tension between demography's historically formed project of seeking forms of knowledge which can offer practical and authoritative policy guidance and its necessary alliance with state administrative machinery in order to generate the required evidence, and the less time-constrained, open-ended, more academic project of seeking to understand, on their own terms, something of the variety of social processes of relevance to population change, which different human groups are engaged in. While the community of policy-oriented students of population problems cannot be expected simply to abandon their use of an inherited set of fixed categories to inform their judgements, research such as that reported here should encourage a much greater awareness of the limitations of the 'scientific' knowledge they are using and a greater humility, caution, and sense of the provisional nature of the policies they might pursue. The (often implicit) claim that any category in the field of population studies has 'scientific' or 'universal' validity must be more clearly understood as a purely rhetorical statement about its utility for an action-oriented, international community of policy-advisors. The studies collected here repeatedly show that the more genuinely scientific process of testing such categories against the empirical reality of observed, social contexts, disproves their general applicability. They indicate that what is required, instead, is the formulation of contingent, context-specific categories, the more accurately to 'translate' between the relevant experiences of persons in their multiple communities and the analytical agenda of demography.

## CONCLUSIONS: AN AGENDA FOR FUTURE RESEARCH IN CRITICAL, REFLEXIVE DEMOGRAPHY

A primary purpose of this volume is, of course, to encourage further research in the field of critical and qualitative demography, which will further explore the dialectic of tension between categories and contexts. It is hoped that the reader, after considering the studies collected here, will be left with a set of provocative questions to ponder; and a number of signposts towards important further work.

Can there be any realistic possibility of a productive harnessing together of quantitative and qualitative methodologies in the study of population problems? Or must individual researchers in the end make a straight choice between working with categories or working with contexts? The long-standing, deeply rooted prejudice among those who aspire to a 'universal' and 'scientific' knowledge, against the status of research, which 'merely' aspires to produce knowledge of 'local' validity, creates a profound problem for a policy-implicated discipline such as demography. However, one way forward, which would make a lot of practical sense given the current state of general ignorance concerning the provenance of most social categories currently in use in the field of population studies, would be to propose that a research programme to study critically and reflexively the history of categories and their applications, including

their contemporary usages, should be launched. This would, perhaps, provide a model for combining work on both the quantitative and the qualitative dimensions of demography, continuing to focus on general categories and their central importance to the discipline while seeking to place them in context, rather than using them out of context.

The chapters that are presented here clearly indicate that many histories of categories in the field of population studies could be written, from a plurality of perspectives. Through work of this kind we might look forward to being able to map out and understand the nature of the different categories currently in use, their relationships to each other, and to the greater variety of actual practices, which they mask through their coding and standardizing technology. This will enable us to see in critical perspective the kind of knowledge of population problems we can produce using these scientific constructions. It may be possible to envisage a typology of categories, each requiring a range of different histories to be researched. There are, for instance, foundational categories constitutive of the discipline, such as the notions of fertility and fecundity, mortality and morbidity, and the idea of a population itself. In fact Norman Ryder, alone among demographers, long ago contributed some wonderfully clear and perceptive philosophical and methodological reflections on certain of these categories (Ryder 1959, 1964, 1965). But his approach is in need of a complementary updating to embrace the perspectives of the sociology of knowledge, and the history and philosophy of science and technology, which have arisen since he wrote and which provide critical vantage points from which to view the history of these categories and their associated practices and concepts (see references listed in Notes 3 and 4).

Second, there are a set of non-demographic (strictly speaking) but nevertheless fundamental social categories which frequently appear in population studies, several of which provide the subject matter of some of the studies in this volume, such as 'the household', 'the family', 'the nation', 'marriage', 'occupation', 'class', 'race', and 'gender'. These are categories which population studies shares with other disciplines in the social sciences and which have consequently received some critical historical treatment already, but rarely explicitly addressed to the peculiarly international and policy-oriented perspective of demographic social science. The category of social class has been the subject of an in-depth excavation of its Anglo-Saxon genesis in Britain and the United States, though its subsequent adoption in a wide number of other contexts has not as yet been much studied (Szreter 1993*a*, 1996: 67–282). Many of the contributions to this volume indicate that the complex cluster of interrelated categories of 'family', 'household', 'family household', and 'household head' would be a high priority for such a programme of research, though there is already much available for demographers to learn from in the work of historians and anthropologists. Indeed, exactly three decades ago, Jack Goody, in his contribution to one such collection of research, drew attention to the need for careful attention to this issue, merely with respect to the English at home in their own culture:

The English term 'family' is a polysemic word used to describe a conjugal pair and their young ('starting a family'), the members of a household ('one of the family'), a range of bilateral kin ('relatives'), or a patronymic group, usually associated with a title ('The Churchill family'). And there are wider semantic usages, extending to the human ('the family of man') and the non-human ('the family of sweet peas') species. (Goody 1972: 103)

Third, another kind of category which has been highly influential but not foundational has been supplied by the sequence of policy-related concepts which have each been fashionable for certain important periods in the discipline's history, such as 'national efficiency' and 'race' at the beginning of this century, 'class-differential fertility', 'the optimum population growth rate', and 'replacement rates' during the interwar decades, or, more recently, those, some of which have been subject to attention in this volume, such as 'users and non-users', 'unmet need', or 'maternal health'.

Critical and reflexive histories of any of the categories within each of these three different types, the disciplinary foundational, the socially fundamental, and the policy-derived, will immediately raise fascinating and no doubt surprising issues relating to what can be called the 'indigenization' of 'western' social science categories. Researching the reasons for the acceptance, modification, or rejection of different elements of demography's 'scientific' framework among the many peoples to which they have been applied will provide much food for thought. For instance, it tends to be rather simplistically assumed that the non-western cultures of the diverse Eurasian land mass in Russia, the Islamic Middle East, China, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia, which between them contain such a large proportion of the world's population, have always been resistant to the 'western' secular and 'rational' modes of thought, partly no doubt because of the obvious differences not only in religious traditions but even in the scripts of their written languages. According to this viewpoint it has only been the recent spread of the liberal market and its official acceptance by the state, first in Japan and Taiwan, but only in the last decade and a half in the major demographic centres of the ex-Soviet Union, China, and much of the subcontinent that has finally resulted in the incipient 'westernization' of many of these cultures, equated in a rather facile manner to the adoption of the commercial trappings of contemporary capitalist consumerism. But two of the studies offered here, Francine Hirsch's study of the first Soviet census and Susan Greenhalgh's account of census-taking in communist China, provoke the arresting observation that long before the arrival of liberal capitalism in the 1980s and 1990s, Marxism-Leninism and Maoism had already imposed upon each of these two large populations of 'the east' the actuarial census grid of the modernist project.

In both the Soviet Union and China this 'great process of conversion we know as "modernisation"' (Asad 1994: 79), has been initiated through the actions of their own indigenous revolutionary elites, acting in the name of an ideology explicitly antithetical to the liberal, market ideology, which most people today would understand by the term 'Western power'. It can sometimes be overlooked that Marx's thought was every bit as much a quintessential product of post-Enlightenment western secular rationalism and every bit as rigorously materialist as that of Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, or Charles Darwin, Marx's contemporary. Economic liberalism entails a prescriptive, teleological directing programme which lays down how the future should unfold, a project popularly termed 'modernization' in the post-war era until the 1990s and now often referred to loosely as 'globalization'. But so, too, regimes

espousing Marxist ideologies endow their societies with a secular, materialist programme of directed change or ‘development’. It is this which produced the detailed requirements by Moscow and by Beijing each to enumerate and classify the populations of the Soviet Union and China in the ways documented by Hirsch and Greenhalgh, mirroring the similar efforts expended by the British Raj in the Indian subcontinent—another imperial, metropolitan power, imbued with an evolutionary ideology trying to impose its own form of order and ‘developmental’ change on other peoples. Thus, it is in this sense that Talal Asad has discussed the project of statistics, of which the statistical discipline of demography is a paradigm case, as an example of what he terms a ‘strong language’: one which acts as a discursive intervention whereby non-European peoples have had their modes of life radically transformed ‘by Western power’ (Asad 1994: 78).

By exploring critically the history of categories and their uses we open up a dialectic between the perspectives and aims of those with the power to engage in exercises of interventionist classification and study of ‘others’, and the interests of those on the receiving end of this knowledge-power technology. Such historical reconstructions should also, ideally, enable us to explore the hidden complexities of ‘indigenization’, as emic categories respond to and adapt and change the meaning of ‘scientific’, etc terms.<sup>14</sup> This will require a methodology which can capture and analyse changes in discourse in a changing material context. The chapters here by Jennifer Hirsch and by Elisha Renne, although they do not specifically examine this process of adoption and adaptation of official categories, provide case studies of what such a methodology requires. In so doing they also exemplify the value for this kind of research of the social linguistics framework set out at the conference by Bill Hanks, demonstrating in their chapters the changing meanings of the key linguistic terms of ‘*respeto*’ and ‘*mutunci*’, respectively, as the patterns of usage, association, and reference changed in the two different linguistic, or communication communities, which they have each studied.

Thus, there is no reason why the tension between analytical, quantitative approaches and interpretative, qualitative perspectives should not be viewed as a potentially productive one, rather than as something unbridgeable. It is hard to see as credible an intellectual position which would seek to reject thinking with categories outright, a sort of purist contextualism. Some of the more naïve and dogmatic variants of the diverse post-modernist movement may appear to entertain such an aspiration but it is difficult to see how anything meaningful can be communicated without the use of categories. All language is replete with embedded categories of many different kinds. Of more practical and ethical value is the demand that all social categories should, in principle, be treated as equal. The importance of this follows from the post-Foucauldian perception that the forces of power and domination act insidiously and semiotically to control the acceptable and the valued in language (in fact, within the canon of radical and critical thought, this most important political insight was originally Antonio Gramsci’s—the problem of ‘commonsense’ as he called it in his inter-war *Prison Notebooks*). This egalitarian and radical political aspiration requires some further elaboration, however, before it can be used as a helpful methodological guide for students of population problems in the humanities dealing critically with the world of knowledge and power as we have it.



The most general methodological principle, which this position would seem to sanction is that research in population studies might be more able to accommodate the tension between categories and contexts if it placed its practice on a more equitable footing. What does this mean? This could happen if the process of research was understood to be fundamentally a process of reflexive *exchange*, rather than 'study' (avoiding the latter notion's implications of the active, 'knowledgeable' inquirer and the passive, 'ignorant' object of inquiry).

By exchange we mean to construe research as primarily an exercise in two-way communication, or dialectic: a dialogue of cultural, linguistic, diplomatic exchange. According to this understanding it is seen to be a centrally important part of the process of study that there is a bilateral effort made to translate and examine, mutually justify and understand each other's categories, those of the 'community' of 'scientists' and those of the communities of 'subjects'. If carried out properly this would, without doubt, ensure that demographers would become much more self-critically and reflexively aware of the intrinsically problematic and 'violent' nature of the categories that they use in their research. It would bring home to them at all times the fact that their work is an act of highly selective, artificial ordering and representation of a much more complex and fluid social world of negotiated meanings and motives. It would school them to appreciate that the categories for classifying evidence, which may seem only 'natural' or reasonable within their own 'scientific' community's terms of discourse, in fact constitute an act of intervention, not one of mere impartial and objective 'scientific' description. Researchers would devote a much greater proportion of their effort and time in any specific project to a process of active modification and adaptation of any analytical categories, which they bring with them to their fieldwork, as Collumbien et al. report themselves doing in Orissa. Any study that simply reported its results using the same categories that it began with and without having apparently learned anything new from the context in which it was working, would be treated with the utmost suspicion, as a mere act of naïve, unilateral imposition, not a true, reflexive exchange, and therefore not to be treated as having a claim to being a genuine form of rigorously produced knowledge.

What we are proposing here is a new set of reflexive and self-critical methodological criteria for any item of social scientific knowledge in the field of population studies to press its claim to 'scientific' authority. It must have been generated through a research process of equitable exchange, thereby giving an assurance that the social categories informing both its descriptive and its analytical content have been subjected to the test of verification in context. This is an agenda for the future of a critical reflexive demography.

## Notes

1. Netting (1981), Hareven (1982), Schneider and Schneider (1984), Alter (1988), Lynch (1988), Knodel (1988), Kertzer and Hogan (1989), Viazzo (1989), and many of the contributions to Gillis *et al.* (1992), Kertzer (1993), and Schneider and Schneider (1996).
2. McCormack (1982), Handwerker (1986, 1990), Watkins (1993), Greenhalgh (1995), Ginsburg and Rapp (1995), Szreter (1996: chs 9 and 10), Bledsoe *et al.* (2000), Bledsoe (2002).

3. Following the early work of Barnes (1974), Hacking (1975), and Latour and Woolgar (1979), this has become an extremely diverse field, as can be gauged from the following selection of important contributions: Hacking (1983), Kruger *et al.* (1987), Latour (1988), Gigerenzer *et al.* (1989), Wagner *et al.* (1991), Hopwood and Miller (1994), Shapin (1994), Hacking (1998), Mackenzie and Wajcman (1999), and Bowker and Star (1999).
4. Significant studies have included: Eyler (1979), MacKenzie (1981), Le Bras (1981, 1991), Soloway (1982, 1990), Hodgson (1983, 1988, 1991), Szreter (1984, 1993*a,b*, 1996), Teitelbaum and Winter (1985), Kevles (1985), Cohn (1987*b*), Anderson (1988), Hacking (1990), Higgs (1991), Kreager (1992), Desrosières (1993), Ipsen (1996), Patriarca (1996), Greenhalgh (1996), Labbé (1998), Beaud and Prévost (2000), Kertzer and Arel (2002), Schweber (2004).
5. The other papers which were given at the conference are listed at the beginning of this volume, in the record of the IUSSP Seminar on Social Categories in Population Research, Cairo 15–18 September 1999.
6. The New Arab Demography project defined its ‘field’ as existing data sets and census materials that have created the demographic image of the Arab World in the twentieth century. The project rejected established wisdoms on the region and has encouraged participant researchers to question taken-for-granted categories that have defined the transitions experienced by Arab populations. Nuptiality and fertility have been two of the main themes that the project has questioned and reinterpreted. Several examples of the project's work were presented at the conference, in addition to the overview paper by Huda Rashad (see the Record of Papers and Participants at the IUSSP Seminar on Social Categories in Population Research, 15–18 September 1999, pp. xiii–xv).
7. It is crucial to Porter's argument that he can establish that such practices are not synonymous with the practice of ‘science’. He does this most effectively by pointing to the well-documented examples of nineteenth-century geologists, and perhaps more compellingly for a contemporary audience, to today's high-energy physicists. In both cases they have been shown to work with little apparent regard for explicit rules for standardization of their procedures and results. Instead ‘intense socialisation combined with a tight network of personal contacts permits the high-energy physicists to operate with an astonishing degree of informality’ (Porter 1995: 222). Long ago Michael Polanyi emphasized the crucial role of ‘tacit knowledge’ in the practice of science (as opposed to the public communication of its results): Polanyi (1958).
8. Michel Foucault's highly influential early studies of the 1960s and 1970s, denounced the ‘knowledge-power’ nexus of the ‘disciplining’ processes involved in administering the nineteenth-century institutions for maintaining order of the asylum, the prison, and the medical clinic. In doing so, Foucault argued powerfully for a rather one-sided view of the state as exclusively a disempowering entity, rather than as, equally, a potentially empowering force in persons' lives. This was an imbalance which Foucault himself strove to correct in his later work. See McNay (1994: 118–29), citing in particular Foucault (1991).
9. The expression of utility is supposedly regulated by the ‘natural’ or physiological laws of a hierarchy of ‘wants’ which are subject to marginal decreasing returns, according to which the individual's demand for essential goods such as food takes precedence over higher goods such as books, with willingness to pay for additional units of any commodity falling as satiation occurs. (Douglas and Ney 1998: ch. 2).
10. For instance, in its origins, ‘The social function of history was, for centuries, to legitimate... the prevailing hierarchies’ with ‘The argument that “it has always been thus”... acceptable even in courts of law’ (Kula 2001: 1).

11. However, it would be only fair to point out that right up until the fall of the Berlin Wall, which completely redrew the realities underlying our political and ideological map, most of the practitioners of the more academic arts disciplines, whether on the left or the right, in the west or the east, were as much operating within the epistemological confines of the Modernist myth, as were the purveyors of useful and practical knowledge. Hence, the radically relativist message of postmodernism only made a major impact in the humanities and in western culture during the course of the 1990s, despite the much earlier publication of its defining text, Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* (published in France in 1979 but not translated into English until 1984) and its vigorous discussion during the 1980s in the fields of architecture, the fine arts and film. See Lyon (1999: ch. 2).
12. For an important recent contribution, see Sean Hawkins (2002). The early seminal contributions here were: Gough (1968*a, b*), Leclerc (1972), Asad (1973); other influential contributions have included Fabian (1983), Cohn (1987*a*), Stocking (1991), and Thomas (1994). The following paragraphs draw from this literature and also from Wooten (1993) and Pels (1997). It is also, incidentally, clear that later in the century US administrations called increasingly upon the services of anthropologists, both to manage American native Indians and when they found themselves increasingly embroiled in overseas incursions, acting in both contexts in a neo-imperialist fashion. Indeed, Kathleen Gough's critiques were originally provoked by this.
13. Blaut (1993). It is worth noting, however, that the European governing class had not always and uniformly made the racist assumption that different meant inferior. This was a specific, social darwinist development of the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, replacing a diametrically opposed late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century position associated with 'monogenism' (the view that racial differences were merely superficial variants of a single humanity, consistent with Enlightenment principles): see Szreter (1996: 129–30, note 2). Also it does not, of course, mean that a number of individual colonial administrators on the ground and individual anthropologists cannot be found during the high imperial age who did not genuinely endorse the position of 'different but equal'—but they remained mavericks in a wider, racist consensus. For examples, see Wooten (1993).
14. On emic and etic distinctions, see Headland et al. (1990).

## References

- Alter, G. (1988). *Family and the Female Life Course. The Women of Verviers, Belgium 1849–80*. Madison, WIS: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Anderson, M. (1971). *Family Structure in Nineteenth-century Lancashire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1988). *The American Census: A Social History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Annan, N. G. (1959). *The Curious Strength of Positivism in English Political Thought*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Arndt, H. W. (1987). *Economic Development: The History of an Idea*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Asad, T. (1973). *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. London: Ithaca Press.
- (1994). 'Ethnographic representation, statistics and modern power', *Social Research*, 61(1): 55–88.
- Ayrut, H. (1963). *The Egyptian Peasant*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Banks, J. A. (1954). *Prosperity and Parenthood. A Study of Family Planning Among the Victorian Middle Classes*. London: Routledge.

- Barnes, B. (1974). *Scientific Knowledge and Sociological Theory*. London: Routledge & K. Paul.
- Basu, A. M. and Aaby, P. (eds.) (1998). *The Methods and Uses of Anthropological Demography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Beaud, J.-P. and Prévost, J.-G. (eds.) (2000). *L'ère du chiffre/The Age of Numbers. Systèmes statistiques et traditions nationales/ Statistical Systems and National Traditions*. Sainte-For: University of Quebec Press.
- Blaut, J. M. (1993). *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Bledsoe, C. (2002). *Contingent Lives. Fertility, Time and Ageing in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lerner, S., and Guyer, J. (eds.) (2000). *Fertility and the Male life-cycle in the Era of the Fertility Decline*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Boltanski, L. (1987). *The Making of a Class. Cadres in French Society* (trans. A. Goldhammer). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; first published in French 1982.
- Bott, E. (1957). *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families* (2nd edn. 1971). London: Tavistock.
- Bowker, G. C. and Star, S. L. (1999). *Sorting Things Out. Classification and its Consequences*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Caldwell, J. C., Caldwell, B., and Caldwell, P. (1987). 'Anthropology and demography: the mutual reinforcement of speculation and research', *Current Anthropology*, 28: 25–34.
- Hill, A. G., and Hull, V. J. (eds.) (1988a). *Micro-approaches to Demographic Research*. London: Kegan Paul.
- Reddy, P. H., and Caldwell, P. (1988b). *The Causes of Demographic Change: Experimental Research in South India*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Carr-Saunders, A. M. (1922). *The Population Problem*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Carter, A. T. (1988). 'Does culture matter? The case of the demographic transition', *Historical Methods*, 21(4): 164–9.
- (ed.) (2005). The production and circulation of population knowledge (forthcoming 2005).
- Cashdollar, C. D. (1989). *The Transformation of Theology, 1830–1890: Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Chodorow, N. (1978). *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cohn, B. (1987a). *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (1987b). 'The census, social structure and objectification in South Asia', in B. S. Cohn (ed.), *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*, pp. 224–54. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cole, J. (2000). *The Power of Large Numbers: Population, Politics, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Collini, S., Winch, D., and Burrow, J. (1983). *That Noble Science of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cowen, M. P. and Shenton, R. W. (1996). *Doctrines of Development*. London: Routledge.
- Cullen, M. J. (1975). *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain*. Hassocks: Harvester.
- Desrosières, A. (1993). *La politique des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique*. Paris: éditions la découverte.
- Devereux, G. (1955). *A study of Abortion in Primitive Societies*. New York: Julian Press.
- Douglas, M. and Ney, S. (1998). *Missing Persons. A critique of the Social Sciences*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Drake, M. (1969). *Population and Society in Norway 1735–1865*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dumont, A. (1890). *Dépopulation et civilisation: étude démographique*. Paris: Lecroimier et Babé.
- Dupaquier, J. (1984). *Pour la Démographie Historique*. Paris: PUF.
- Ehrlich, P. R. (1968). *The Population Bomb*. New York: Sierra Club-Ballantine.
- Eyler, J. M. (1979). *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas and Methods of William Farr*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fabian, J. (1983). *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Firth, R. (1936). *We, the Tikopia: A Sociological Study of Kinship in Primitive Polynesia*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Ford, C. S. (1945). *A Comparative Study of Human Reproduction*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (first published in French as *Les Mots et les choses* in 1966).
- (1991). ‘Governmentality’ (trans. R. Pasquino), in P. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, With Two Lectures By and an Interview with Michel Foucault*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester, pp. 87–104.
- Ghurye, G. S. (1932). *Caste and Race in India*. London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd.
- Gigerenzer, G., Swijtink, Z., Porter, T., Beatty, J., and Krüger, L. (1989). *The Empire of Chance. How Probability Changed Science and Everyday life*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ginsburg, F. D. and Rapp, R. (1995). *Conceiving the New World Order. The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gillis, J. R., Tilly, L. A., and Levine, D. (1992). *The European Experience of Declining Fertility. A Quiet Revolution 1850–1970*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Glass, D. V. (1973). *Numbering the People. The Eighteenth-century Population Controversy and the Development of Census and Vital Statistics in Britain*. Farnborough: DC Heath.
- and Eversley, D. E. C. (eds.) (1965). *Population in History. Essays in Historical Demography*. London: E. Arnold.
- and Revelle, R. (eds.) (1972). *Population and Social Change*. London: E. Arnold.
- Goody, J. (1972). ‘The evolution of the family’, in P. Laslett and R. Wall (eds.), *The Family and Household in Past Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 103–24.
- (1976). *Production and Reproduction: A Comparative Study of the Domestic Domain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1983). *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1995). *The Expansive Moment. Anthropology in Britain and Africa 1918–1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goubert, P. (1960). *Beauvais et les Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730*, 2 vols. Paris: SEVPEN.
- Gough, K. (1968a). ‘Anthropology: child of imperialism’, *Monthly Review*, 19(11): 12–27.
- (1968b). ‘New proposals for anthropologists’, *Current Anthropology*, 9: 403–7.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (eds. and trans.): London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Greenhalgh, S. (ed.) (1995). *Situating Fertility. Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1996). ‘The social construction of population science: an intellectual, institutional and political history of twentieth-century demography’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 38: 26–66.
- Hacking, I. (1975). *The Emergence of Probability*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- (1983). *Representing and Intervening. Introductory Topics in the Philosophy of Natural Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1986). ‘Making up people’, in T. Heller, M. Sosna, and D. Wellberry (eds.), *Reconstructing Individualism*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, pp. 222–36.
- (1990). *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1998). *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hajnal, J. (1965). ‘European marriage patterns in perspective’, in D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley (eds.), *Population in History*, London: E. Arnold, pp. 101–43.
- Hammel, E. (1990). ‘A theory of culture for demography’, *Population and Development Review*, 16(3): 455–85.
- and Howell, N. (1987). ‘Research in population and culture: an evolutionary framework’, *Current Anthropology*, 28: 141–60.
- Handwerker, W. Penn (ed.) (1986). *Culture and Reproduction: An Anthropological Critique of Demographic Transition Theory*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- (ed.) (1990). *Births and Power: Social Change and Politics of Reproduction*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Hanks, W. F. (1995). *Language and Communicative Practices*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Hareven, T. K. (1982). *Family Time and Industrial Time. The Relationship Between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hauser, P. M. and Duncan, O. D. (eds.) (1959). *The Study of Population: An Inventory and Appraisal*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hawkins, S. (2002). *Writing and Colonialism in Northern Ghana. The Encounter Between the LoDagaa and ‘the World on Paper’*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Headland, T. N., Pike, K. L., and Harris, M. (eds.) (1990). *Emics and Etics. The Insider/outsider Debate*. Newbury Park, Calif: Sage.
- Henry, L. (1956). *Anciennes Familles genevoises. Étude démographique historique: XVIe–Xxe siècle*. Paris: PUF.
- Higgs, E. (1991). ‘Diseases, febrile poisons, and statistics: the census as a medical survey’, *Social History of Medicine*, 4: 465–78
- Hilberg, R. (1985). *The Destruction of the European Jews*. New York: Holmes and Meier.
- Hill, R., Stycos, J. M., and Back, K. (1959). *The family and population control*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Himes, N. E. (1936). *A Medical History of Contraception*. Baltimore: The Williams and Wilkins Company.
- Hirschman, A. O. (1977). *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before its Triumph*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Hodgson, D. (1983). ‘Demography as social science and policy science’, *Population and Development Review*, 9: 1–34.
- (1988). ‘Orthodoxy and revisionism in American demography’, *Population and Development Review*, 14: 541–69.
- (1991). ‘The ideological origins of the Population Association of America’, *Population and Development Review*. 17: 1–34.
- Hopwood, A. and Miller, P. (eds.) (1994). *Accounting as Social and Institutional Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Howell, N. (1979). *Demography of the Dobe !Kung*. New York: Academic.
- (1986). ‘Demographic anthropology’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 15: 219–46
- Ipsen, C. (1996). *Dictating Demography. The Problem of Population in Fascist Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Jones, G. W., Douglas, R. M., Caldwell, J. C., and D'Souza, R. M. (eds.) (1997). *The Continuing Demographic Transition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kertzer, D. I. (1993). *Sacrificed for Honor. Italian Infant Abandonment and the Politics of Reproductive Control*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- and Arel, D. (2002) *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Census*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- and Fricke, T. (eds.) (1997). *Anthropological Demography. Toward a New Synthesis*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- and Hogan, D. P. (1989). *Family, Political Economy and Demographic Change. The Transformation of Casalecchio, Italy, 1861–1921*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kevles, D. J. (1985). *In the Name of Eugenics. Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Knodel, J. E. (1988). *Demographic Behavior in the Past. A Study of Fourteen German Village Populations in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kreager, P. (1992). 'Quand une population est elle une nation? Quand une nation est-elle un état? La démographie et l'émergence d'un Dilemme Moderne, 1770–1870', *Population*, 6: 1639–56.
- Krzywicki, L. (1934). *Primitive Society and its Vital Statistics*. London: Macmillan & Co.
- Kruger, L., Daston, L., and Heidelberge, M. (eds.) (1987). *The Probabilistic Revolution*, 2 vols. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kula, W. (2001). *The Problems and Methods of Economic History* (trans. R. Szreter). Aldershot: Ashgate, first published Warsaw: PWN 1963.
- Labbé, M. (1998). "'Race" et "Nationalité" dans les recensements du Troisième Reich', *Historie et Mesure*, XIII: 195–223.
- Laslett, P. and Wall, R. (eds.) (1972). *Household and Family in Past Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Latour, B. (1988). *The Pasteurisation of France*. Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press.
- and Woolgar, S. (1979). *Laboratory Life. The Construction of Scientific Facts*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Le Bras, H. (1981). *L'invention de la France*. Paris: Hachette.
- (1991). *Marianne et les Lapins. L'obsession démographique*. Paris: Olivier Orban.
- Leclerc, G. (1972). *Anthropologie et colonialisme*. Paris: Fayard.
- Lesthaeghe, R. J. (ed.) (1989). *Reproduction and Social Organisation in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lockwood, M. (1995). 'Structure and behaviour in the social demography of Africa', *Population and Development Review*, 21: 1–32.
- Lorimer, F. (1954). *Culture and Human Fertility*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Lynch, K. A. (1988). *Family, Class and Ideology in Early Industrial France. Social Policy and the Working-class Family, 1825–1848*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Lyon, D. (1999). *Postmodernity*. 2nd edn. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Macfarlane, A. (1976). *Resources and Population. A study of the Gurungs of Nepal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1978). *The Origins of English Individualism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mackenzie, D. A. (1981). *Statistics in Britain 1865–1930*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- and Wajcman, J. (1999). *The Social Shaping of Technology*, 2nd edn. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Malthus, T. R. (1986 [1798]). *An Essay on the Principle of Population: The first Edition (1798)*, edited by E. A. Wrigley and D. Souden, London: Pickering.

- McCormack, C. P. (ed.) (1982). *Ethnography of Fertility and Birth*. Santiago: Academic Press.
- McNay, L. (1994). *Foucault. A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- McNicoll, G. (1980). 'Institutional determinants of fertility change', *Population and Development Review*, 16(3): 441–62.
- Mintz, S. (1983). *A Prison of Expectations. The family in Victorian Culture*. New York: New York University Press.
- Moore, H. L. (1988). *Feminism and Anthropology*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Nag, M. (1966). *Factors Affecting Human Fertility in Non-industrial Societies: a Cross-cultural Study*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- National Academy of Sciences (1971). *Rapid Population Growth: Consequences and Policy Implications*. Report prepared by a Study Committee of the Office of the Foreign Secretary, National Academy of Sciences, with the support of the Agency for International Development. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Netting, R. M. (1981). *Balancing on an Alp. Ecological Change and Continuity in a Swiss Mountain Community*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Obermeyer, C. M., et al. 'Qualitative methods in population studies: a Symposium', *Population and Development Review*, 23(4) (December 1997): 813–53.
- Ortner, S. (1984). 'Theory in anthropology since the sixties', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26: 126–66.
- Patriarca, S. (1996). *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth-century Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pels, P. (1997). 'The anthropology of colonialism: culture, history and the emergence of Western governmentality', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26: 163–83.
- Polanyi, M. (1958). *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-critical Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Polgar, S. (ed.) (1971). *Culture and Population*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman.
- Porter, T. M. (1986). *The Rise of Statistical Thinking*. Princeton.
- (1995). *Trust in Numbers: Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public life*. Princeton.
- Rainwater, L. (1960). *And the Poor Get Children: Sex, Contraception and Family Planning in the Working Class*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- (1965). *Family Design: Marital Sexuality, Family Size and Contraception*. Chicago: Aldine.
- and Weinstein, K. K. (1960). *And the Poor get Children; Sex, Contraception, and Family Planning in the Working Class*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- Rose, D. and Pevalin, D. J. (2001). 'The national statistics socio-economic classification: unifying official and sociological approaches to the conceptualisation and measurement of social class', Institute for Social and Economic Research Working Papers, No. 2001–4. Colchester: University of Essex.
- Rosental, P.-A. (1999). *Les sentiers invisibles: espace, familles et migrations dans la France du 19e siecle*. Paris: Editions de l'EHESS Recherches d'histoire et sciences sociales 83.
- (2003). 'The novelty of an old genre: Louis Henry and the founding of historical demography', *Population-E*, 58: 97–130.
- Ryder, N. B. (1959). 'Fertility', in P. M. Hauser and O. D. Duncan (eds.), *The Study of Population: An Inventory and Appraisal*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 400–36.
- (1964). 'Notes on the concept of a population', *American Journal of Sociology*, LXIX: 447–63.
- Ryder, N. B. (1965). 'The measurement of fertility patterns', in Sheps, M. C. and Ridley J. C., (eds.), *Public Health and Population Change: Current Research Issues*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburg Press.



- Schneider, J. C. and Schneider, P. T. (1984). 'Demographic transitions in a Sicilian rural town', *Journal of Family History*, 9: 245–73.
- (1996). *Festival of the Poor. Fertility Decline and the Ideology of Class in Sicily 1860–1980*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Schweber, L. (2004). *Disciplining Statistics: Demography and Vital Statistics in France and England, 1830–1885*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, forthcoming.
- Shapin, S. (1994). *A Social History of Truth. Civility and Science in Seventeenth-century England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Soloway, R. A. (1982). *Birth Control and the Population Question in England 1877–1930*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- (1990). *Demography and Degeneration. Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-century Britain*. Chapel Hill.
- Srinivas, M. N. (1966). *Social Change in Modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stigler, S. M. (1986). *The History of Statistics*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Stocking, G. W. (ed.) (1991). *Colonial Situations. Essays on the Contextualisation of Ethnographic Knowledge*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Stycos, J. M. (1955). *Family and Fertility in Puerto Rico. A Study of the Lower Income Group*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- (1968). *Human Fertility in Latin-America: Sociological Perspectives*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Szreter, S. (1984). 'The genesis of the Registrar-General's social classification of occupations', *British Journal of Sociology*, 35(4): 522–46.
- (1993a). 'The official representation of social classes in Britain, United States and France: the professional model and "les cadres" ', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 35: 285–317.
- (1993b). 'The idea of demographic transition: a critical intellectual history', *Population and Development Review*, XIX(4): 659–701.
- (1996). *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Teitelbaum, M. S. and Winter, J. M. (1985). *The Fear of Population Decline*. Orlando: Academic Press.
- Thomas, N. (1994). *Colonialism and Culture. Anthropology, Travel and Government*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Thorner, D. and Thorner, A. (1962). *Land and Labour in India*. Bombay: Asia Publishing House.
- Tosh, J. (1999). *A Man's place. Masculinity and the Middle Class Home in Victorian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Viazzo, P. P. (1989). *Upland Communities. Environment, Population and Social Structure in the Alps since the Sixteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wagner, P. et al. (eds.) (1991). *Social Sciences and Modern States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Watkins, S. C. (1993). 'If all we knew about women was what we read in *Demography*, what would we know', *Demography*, 30: 551–77.
- Winch, P. (1990). *The Idea of a Social Science and its Relation to Philosophy*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
- Wooten, S. (1993). 'Colonial administration and the ethnography of the family in French Sudan', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 31: 419–46.
- Wrightson, K. and Levine, D. (1979). *Poverty and piety in an English Village. Terling, 1525–1700*. London: Academic Press.

## 2 Objectifying Demographic Identities

PHILIP KREAGER

By its title alone, Yukio Mishima's great tetralogy, *The Sea of Fertility*, might be expected to attract demographers' attention. The first novel opens with a reminiscence, which serves neatly to situate the role and influence of modern demographic knowledge in the interpenetration and conflict of cultures. As the author observes, the values different cultures place on reproduction and life are conditioned by the rather different estimates people make of the incidence of death. In the Asian communities of which he writes, the timing and significance of death are moments in a vast system of reincarnations. With the emergence of modern state bureaucracies in Asia in the late nineteenth century, however, individual and collective mortality also came to be moments in interpretative systems of the kind familiar to demographers: the probabilistic models of population known as life tables. The juxtaposition of these systems of life and death may at first appear puzzling. They share, however, a common function: to discern, beneath the surface flow of events, the presence of essential, pure, and abstract regularities which act on people's lives whether or not they are aware of them. The appropriateness of different behaviour may then be judged in terms of such deeper strata of reality, whether spiritual or mathematical.

Mishima intended the contrast between such systems to stand for wider opposing attitudes he considered characteristic of Western and Eastern traditions. In his work, every death and every ensuing life become the object of attempts to accommodate these opposed traditions. Introducing demographic knowledge adds new quantitative information, but need not change local and national traditions, at least to begin with. The new identities people acquire as objects of quantitative record appear at first merely to coexist with, and supplement, prevailing values. They are one more part of the status quo. As data systems and their analysis come increasingly to provide definitive parameters of public and corporate policy, however, they gain a more profound impact. What people perceive as their own identities may then be altered radically, yet this change proceeds incrementally and imperceptibly. Mishima's reminiscence runs as follows.

The setting is the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war, a conflict generally regarded as marking the entry of Japan—the first modern Asian power to be reckoned with—onto

the world stage. Mishima's protagonist, Kiyooki Matsugae, lost two uncles in that war, in which Japan humiliated the Russian navy and went on to consolidate its control over a number of contested Pacific territories, to the considerable astonishment of Europe. By the turn of the century, Japan had assimilated not only Western arts of military technology, but also its elaborate bureaucratic mode of government. It therefore provided Kiyooki's grandmother with a pension, in view of her sons' deaths. The cheques arrived every month, but were never encashed. Why? The grandmother apparently found them incomprehensible, or, rather, as indicating the utter failure of the state to comprehend her family's loss. Can sums of money compensate for the destruction of life? Can they compensate for the trajectories of those lives, the loss of two of the family's three lines of descent, with all their implications down ensuing generations? The cheques piled up, unopened, on a ledge of the household shrine. Next to them, prominently placed, was a war photograph depicting crowds of young men milling around a memorial to the war dead.

The 'sea' in Mishima's title refers not just to fertility in the demographic sense, but to the transmigration of souls, taken over directly from Hindu eschatology. The soul we first meet as Kiyooki is heir to a minor Samurai lineage, and reappears in successive volumes as a right-wing terrorist, a Thai princess, and a naval signalman. The changing course of Japanese and wider Asian culture in the twentieth century unfolds in this sequence as each personality is caught between archetypally Western and Asian modes of experience, and propelled forcibly and unknowingly through the confused permutations of racial, class, military, political, religious, and sexual identities that we have come to recognize as modern. The milling crowds of young men in the war photograph on the Matsugae family shrine embrace all such transformations. They are at once the living *and* the dead, signifiers of all destinies transformed by the war and wider engagement of Asian and Western cultures.

The grandmother's simple act of placing the pension slips on the shrine poses succinctly the dilemma of coextant and contrary objectifications of life and death. On one hand, she remains powerless to alter the system which produces the slips and defines her as a pensioner. Yet, on the other, her act transforms these products of an impersonal and alien system of mortality and fiduciary statistics into objects of a very different kind. Their value in the actuarial systems in which they originated (whether we view them as Western, or as Japanese adaptations) is flatly denied. Placed on the shrine, the pension slips become her humble devotional offerings, icons of transcendental loss and, possibly, tokens of the modern state's admission of guilt for all the displaced individual, family, and national destinies depicted in the photograph.

## OBJECTIFICATION

Until recently, demographers have been inclined to dismiss what, following Mishima, we might call the 'Japanese grandmother problem'. The role which demographic constructs come to play in the wider social process of identity construction, their

interaction with existing identities, and how they come to influence people's lives are rarely considered critical to demographic change. The early post-war synthesis of economic development and demographic transition theory doubtless encouraged this attitude. It presumed that traditional belief systems would only be able to resist forces of modernization for a time: the spread of rational western thinking, a new demographic 'calculus of conscious choice', would sooner or later simply displace people's traditional attitudes towards their lives and children. Hence, demographers' main energies were directed to improving formal methodology, data, and programmes that would promote this displacement. We know now that matters did not turn out as expected. As the post-war era wore on, demographers found themselves unable to agree on which classifications and measures best capture critical modern trends, such as patterns of fertility and mortality decline, or how to disentangle putative causes. In the context of such mainstream disagreements, the need to understand cultural logics has become much more widely appreciated, yet the manner in which formal and institutional demographic knowledge, or aspects thereof, come to be integrated into such logics has received very little attention. Frequent involvement in policy issues has meant that demographers need few reminders that their methods often meet with incomprehension amongst a wider public, and are subject to multiple and conflicting interpretations. The contrary sense that Japanese grandmothers and others can make of demographic constructs seems, however, to be merely a kind of 'noise' generated in the course of social change. Statistics, after all, are social facts: they need to be developed with all due scientific rigour, but once they enter wider social discourse, they are bound to have a life of their own.

In recent years, this matter-of-fact and scientifically normative attitude has increasingly come to be recognized as unrealistic, whether as an account of how scientific methods initially develop or of how demographers and others use them. The problem, in short, is that the products of formal description and analysis do not begin their life as social facts *after* the demographer has compiled and analysed them. Their very construction, however apparently objective and standardized, and however pure and abstract the mathematical models underlying them, constitute social relationships. The grandmother's pension slips are a case in point. Let us assume that the actuary on whose analysis her pension was based drew upon the accepted methods of the time. He would have had statistics of the number of casualties, the existing age/sex structure, and financial data on the flow of tax and other monies into existing or projected government welfare funds. Other demands on these funds, and the competing expenditures of different government departments, would have had to be recognized as primary constraints on his analysis. The actuary would have constructed a life table, adjusting it in light of the factors just mentioned. He would have calculated the range within which the flow of monthly sums for the group of war pensioners as a whole would have to fall, also taking into account whatever sufficed at the time as cost of living indices. Only then would he have calculated the individual pensioners' benefits as proportions of the changing composition of the fund.

Yet the demographic component of this exercise was for the most part almost entirely imaginary. Japanese pension funds, to the extent that they existed at all,

could not have been of more than one or two decades standing. Centralized vital statistics and census-taking were of similarly short duration and not as yet comprehensive. The period of experience being inadequate, data would have had to be adjusted to life tables drawn from other sources. These were probably German, as Japanese bureaucratic models were strongly shaped by German precedent. Whether German mortality provided a realistic guide to Japanese life expectation would have been, at best, unclear. At least, Japanese actuaries should have been well advised methodologically, since the technical analyses of mortality carried out in the German Empire by Lexis, Zeuner, Knapp, and other official statisticians, were the most advanced of their era.<sup>1</sup> The ground for estimating other constraints would have been even less certain. The demand of various government departments, for example, reflected continuing political and military aspirations. The demography underlying Japanese pensions was, in sum, composed of a series of ostensibly safe guesses on the basis of incomplete enumerations, abstract models, and uncertain competing interests.

The outcome of this whole procedure was, nonetheless, unambiguous as to the objects it constituted and the social identities recognized in them. The pension slips that arrived each month gave explicit material and monetary expression to a whole set of categories and statuses. From them the modern Japanese state could be seen to exercise its statutory responsibilities to individuals. The proper every-day functioning of the state was manifest in the ability of its institutions to carry out the specific measurements and related technical procedures that the disbursement of pensions required. The actuary assumed the role of a professional authority within and of this structure, as did to a greater or lesser degree all of those functionaries who compiled and transmitted the numbers on which his technical expertise supposedly relied. And of course, the grandmother to her astonishment attained the status of a pensioner. Pension slips are but one small exemplar of this manifold of institutions, statuses, and techniques as they became conventional to Japanese culture. Yet none of this normative structure had existed twenty years before. Its existence could only be constituted by the sustained exercise of its technical functions, at once quantitative, scientific, and administrative.

## REPRESENTING VERSUS INTERVENING

All scientific and administrative disciplines, as they come to establish themselves, gradually constitute their own distinctive objects of inquiry. Such objectification, as we have seen, entails technical procedures for generating, storing, and arranging data; criteria of well-formed statements regarding the truth and falsity of data and procedures; and the growth of institutional structures and sanctions necessary to support this exercise. The objectification to which Mishima alludes may be called *the actuarial matrix*. Its historical role has been fundamental to the rise of modern culture in two senses. First, actuarial reasoning, and more specifically the formal methodology of data collection and analysis necessary to life table models, played a crucial role in the rise of population statistics as a characteristic institution of the

modern state in nineteenth-century Europe. In the hands of government statisticians like Quetelet (1851) and Farr (1837), these methods provided definitive criteria of what a population is, and therefore of how national populations should be represented: what sorts of groups in society are officially recognized; which components and structures within them are primary; and the strictly formal procedures dictating how data on them should be specified and compiled. Strictly actuarial human accounting confined itself, of course, to age, sex, and mortality classifications; but its formal criteria for specifying events and classifications was quickly extended to cover a much wider range of reproductive, occupational, class, caste, and other variables. In this way the wide brief of what began, in the 1850s, to be called demography, became essential to constituting the modern state as an identity founded on a specific national population sharing detailed vital, territorial, economic, cultural, and other structural characteristics. As the century proceeded, the methods evolved in the European metropole were adapted and further developed in colonial states like India, Malaya, and Canada, and were also taken up in emerging nation-states, like Japan.

Actuarial models were formative, second, because they enshrined an attitude to demographic practice which has come to prevail not only in scientific and governmental institutions, but in popular perceptions of statistics worldwide. As a practical methodology of data collection and analysis, this attitude may be called *formalism*. Its acceptance has made customary the view that the *representative* function of statistics is separable, at least for purposes of compilation and analysis, from the uses of statistics in public *intervention*. The wider process of *objectification* is set aside in favour of the more limited task of assessing the *objectivity* of statistical representations. Objectivity is defined for demographic purposes on heuristic grounds, primarily in terms of the accuracy and consistency of data and measures specified by the limited goals of a given formal methodology. Thus, the hypothetical Japanese life table noted earlier would have remained formally correct even if subsequent experience showed that the German tables on which it was based were entirely inappropriate to Japanese longevity. Observed error does not discredit formalism, it simply requires recalculation of life tables on a modified set of assumptions, or redoubled efforts to make enumerations conform to formal specifications.

A substantial historical literature now exists describing how social and health reformers in the nineteenth century touted statistics as an objective method, and gained its general acceptance (e.g. Cullen 1975; Porter 1986; Desrosières 1993). Objectivity was conceived on two mutually reinforcing levels, by analogy to the natural and physical sciences. At a theoretical level, the calculus of probability was believed to provide the means of transcending cultural values: social facts, when reduced to numerical relationships and massed in large aggregates, would reveal a deeper structure of reality composed of statistical regularities answering not to partisan human interests, but to mathematical 'laws of large numbers'. At an empirical level, data would be compiled according to the ideals of precise numerical observation originally laid down by Bacon. Units and measures of population (age and sex characteristics; the incidence of deaths, births, and marriages; the rates and structures calculated from them) were taken to constitute an underlying physical and

biological stratum of social events, an objective social morphology in which the composition and structure of national and constituent populations would be revealed without taint of partisan influence. These mathematical and empirical strata were held to be mutually reinforcing: numerical objectivity would provide the evidence on which powerful mathematical hypotheses would be tested, whilst advanced mathematics would stimulate data collection and provide checks on its accuracy.

Like the nineteenth-century statisticians, demographers today take some pride in noting that the founding actuarial model, the life table, was amongst the contributions of famous physicists and mathematicians of the Scientific Revolution and Enlightenment, men like Huygens, Halley, Leibniz, Euler, and LaPlace. When Quetelet first generalized the statistical approach as the basis of a general social theory, he called it 'social physics' (Quetelet 1869). When the principal mathematical demographer of this century, Lotka, came to redevelop life table models to embrace fertility as well as mortality functions, he conceived this project as a form of mathematical biology, and turned to thermodynamics for basic equations which showed the tendency of modern populations to stabilize (Lotka 1907, 1925). The methodological foundations of population statistics, in other words, claim kinship to a vast framework of mathematical applications in the biological and physical sciences.

The nineteenth-century rise of bureaucratic government added to this foundation another scarcely less formidable policy—the role of the state as the primary institutional matrix of data collection. The statisticians' image of a formal, physical, aggregative, and value-free method of social inquiry proved very suitable to the bureaucratic ideal of a non-partisan professional civil and health service. Henceforth the state would preside over the main sources of quantitative documentation on human populations. According to the main democratic, nationalist, and socialist theories of government which have come to prevail in European culture since the early nineteenth century, demographic accounting systems have a fundamental role to play in allocating the rights and responsibilities of governments and citizens to each other (Kreager 1992). Between the vaunted formality and universality of its methods, its analogy to 'hard' scientific and mathematical foundations, its public institutional footing, and the vast quantitative compendia that are its most visible products, population statistics have come, not surprisingly, to have an apparently monolithic character.

The sheer scale of the methodological footing claimed for population statistics is not to be taken lightly. It entails nothing less than the principal institutions and theories of government and mathematical science in European culture. In retrospect, the ambitiousness of this claim may perhaps be seen as necessary to anchor the doctrine of formalism with which the promulgation of statistics was bound up. We should not underestimate the feat of imagination this entailed: first, to imagine society as consisting of an idealized and discrete physical substrate of events; second, to create a formal mathematics of this imagined substrate; third, to present the products of these abstract considerations not only as pertaining to real world events, but as a deeper reality in some way capturing the inherent structure and nature of events; and, finally, to introduce these constructs into society in a way that ordinary

people—bureaucrats, physicians, householders, grandmothers—would use them to identify themselves and everyday features of their lives.

Most people, like Mishima's imagined Japanese grandmother, could never know entirely what hit them when the products of these statistical systems began to arrive. They appeared, for all the world, to be mere slips of paper with numbers written on them. En masse, they became large volumes (censuses, parliamentary inquiries, scientific monographs) filled with numbers. Some people, like Mishima's grandmother, were seemingly well armed to withstand the assault of quantitative modernity: they had their own deeper, a priori reality (in which fertility, for example, is really about the reincarnation of souls) to pit against the hypostatized formal and physical substrate of the actuarial matrix. Refusing to encash pension slips, however, pretty quickly came to appear in the glaring negative light of economic irrationality. Meanwhile, a no less glaring refusal (from the standpoint of other systems, like reincarnation) to countenance the significance of life and death except as a function of mortality tables and flows of money was attaining its legitimate and normative role as a formal and professional task. Contrary claims to true knowledge about deeper structures of life and death do not meet on equal terms.

The status which technical practices like actuarial models have obtained in modern society is clearly central to the inequality at issue here. Once formalism was accepted as integral to the state and social scientific inquiry, demography acquired an agenda of a generative (and one might almost say, predatory) kind. Henceforth any human trait might be examined as characteristic of a particular population, and whole populations might be constituted in terms of selected traits. The actuarial matrix enjoined a regular programme for objectifying traits and populations: first, definition of a physical substrate of essential features which would enable phenomena to be isolated (if only in a completely idealized way); second, improvement of formal measures to refine these features as general social and temporal forms; and third (usually after some period of initial exploration), the employment of larger public and scientific research organizations to establish general documentation, and to carry out further refinements. Although this programme, as applied for instance to specific causes of death in the nineteenth century, or to fertility in the present one, has almost always been developed with reference to possible national and local policies, formalist doctrine has accustomed us to seeing social *intervention* as separable from technical and formal *representation*. Attempts to accommodate formal methodology to the beliefs and practices of ordinary people, like Japanese grandmothers, appears from this point of view to run the risk of subverting the objectivity of demography's mathematical and physical foundations.

## REPRESENTING AS INTERVENING

As the example of the grandmother's pension slips reminds us, the formalist separation of representation and intervention is clearly much more than a heuristic methodology. It has played a fundamental role in defining the individual and collective



identities recognized in modern science, society, and government. We may accept its value as an analytical postulate which has proven immensely useful in formulating and solving mathematical problems within the actuarial matrix. But we need not accept it as a guide to the history and uses of demography.<sup>2</sup> To understand the process by which methods evolve in a succession of specific contexts, we shall need to hold in abeyance the ideal of *objectivity* as defined by conformity to a given formal methodology, and examine instead the wider practice of social and personal *objectification*, which the actuarial matrix fostered. Two centuries of the statistical movement in modern culture provide an ample record in which to explore the evident capacity of ‘merely formal’ representation to entail whole structures of intervention.

Two aspects of this process may be highlighted. Historians' attention to date has focused on some fairly sensational cases in which it is possible to show that formal methods evolved in direct response to partisan agendas. The discredit into which Social Darwinism and Galtonian eugenics have rightly fallen has provided telling instances: fundamental techniques of statistical correlation and regression (MacKenzie 1961), schema of social classification (Szreter 1984), and concepts like fecundability (LeBras 1981), have all been traced, at least in major respects, to the development of formal methods designed to promote genetic engineering on a national scale. The second aspect, posed by the ‘Japanese grandmother problem’, is perhaps of more general significance, since in this case there is no overtly partisan period subtext of a racial, eugenic, or class kind. The objects (age and sex structures, mortality rates, etc.) and the identities (bureaucrats, professionals, pensioners, the role of the state) employed in life table and pension calculations continue to be widely seen today as normative means and ends of demographic practice. The Japanese grandmother became a new statistically determined social object—a pensioner with a specific life expectation—not as a result of eugenic biases or other factors external to analysis. Her new identity arose from technical procedures internal to formal demographic methods as employed by generally accepted institutions of state and science. Her refusal to recognize this identity, however, brings us up abruptly against what we do not expect: on the one hand, the novel rather than normative character of generally accepted formal statistical constructions; and, on the other, the artificiality of the norms and identities so constructed.

Deeply rooted assumptions of modern culture, like the formalist ideal separating representation and intervention, or the idealized existence of a pure yet physical substrate to demographic analysis, are notoriously difficult to rethink because they require us to deny conventional supports of our own identities. Hypostatic realities emanating from other cultures, like reincarnation, are commonly dismissed by those who have no serious knowledge of them. But the same is not true of formal demographic hypostases, even though they are no better understood. Most Europeans today, even though lacking detailed knowledge of population analysis, have no difficulty identifying themselves with a specific number calculated as the years a person of their age may be expected to live. The monumental footing of population statistics, outlined above, has accustomed people to accept statistical representations as objective fact, even though they are at best estimates, and even though we know they

are frequently revised. Such representations are not considered interventions, that is, constructed realities which shape the actions we take and the range of events and relations we consider possible. And so we proceed (as do our relatives, friends, businesses, health bureaucracies, and so forth) to take out pensions and make other plans for the future according to the constructed statistical identities which life table and other formal devices provide for us.

There are three main reasons why the formalist doctrine that representation is separable from intervention does not hold. Put more positively, these are reasons why the representations which comprise vital and related statistics are by their very nature interventions of an ontological kind. The source of their impact on the world arises not from period partisan factors, like eugenic or class biases, but in the capacity of statistical representation to shape what counts as real, what facts and factors are possible, what relationships can in the end be countenanced.

First, take the formalist proposition that population data comprise an independent observational record in the manner of the natural and physical sciences. There can be little ground for faith in this convention, at least for the vast majority of census, vital registration, and survey data. The central role of the state in the collection and compilation of vital data has removed any possibility that these data could have an independent scientific status. Demographic units and measures, as products of national institutions, constitute members of the body politic: citizens with attendant rights and responsibilities of taxation, political representation, access to healthcare, pensions, and other state benefits. Vital trends condition estimates of national and sectoral revenue, manpower, productive performance, and capacity. They provide major criteria of international funding. Academic and corporate bodies commonly play an influential role in this process, and are highly dependent on official resources. The choice of units of classification and measurement, in short, answers to primary purposes other than those of providing a purely physical or biologically based substrate. Employing demographers, biologists, and other experts has significantly improved vital representation in many ways, but cannot re-establish it as a body of independent data.

Second, one of the main objectives of formal methods of data collection and analysis is to ensure that the demographic record is uniform, continuous, and internally consistent. When we begin to examine the way states have compiled their demographics, however, the facts, which compose the vital record, turn out to be of a decidedly composite character. From their nineteenth-century inception, national statistical offices were subject to a number of competing voices which often disagreed sharply over what the correct form and content of the formal record of vital and social events should be (Kreager 1997). The logistical concerns of registrars and census-takers, the criteria which medical, linguistic, ethnographic, and other scientific experts regarded as essential, the real-politics of existing administrative units employed by national and colonial governments, and the reasoned arguments of local authorities (scholarly, religious, political, and so forth), led to an inconstancy of classifications and measures which has plagued demographic analysis ever since. Successive censuses are usually thought to provide a continuous record, but in practice there are often marked

variations in the way units are defined (see, for instance, E. Higgs, Chapter 5, this volume) which confound the construction of consistent long-term series. Many units, of course, were recorded in one or a number of censuses only to be dropped subsequently. The need to establish international standard classifications to which all national demographic systems would conform was recognized in the nineteenth century, but the recommendations put forward to achieve this end by no less than eight international statistical congresses of the period were never uniformly adopted. Formalism, in short, never arrived at an agreed canon of what counts as an objective record of the natural and social worlds. The demographic record is not a unified corpus of objects, but a set of imperfect conventions. Viewed over time and across the differing practices of statistical offices, the demographic record presents not a uniform picture of vital events and relations, but a plurality of pictures.

Finally, we may note that the idealized separation of representation and intervention rests on a misunderstanding of the methods of the natural and physical sciences. Hacking (1983), for example, has noted that techniques of observation and experiment used to isolate events in the natural and physical sciences commonly require formal specifications of a not only abstract but manifestly impossible kind. This has always been the case, of course, with Newtonian concepts of mass and velocity, which has not kept them from attaining the status in Western culture of commonsense. However, Hacking draws his examples, appositely for the probabilistic subject of demography we are discussing, from more recent developments in wave mechanics. He notes, for example, that observational and methodological limitations require physicists to assume that nuclei have infinite mass, that molecules behave in a completely rigid manner, and that electrons have no spin. The accepted nature of physical matter is nonetheless guided by research grounded in such impossible premises. Analogous postulates in actuarial models come readily to mind. In constructing a life table, we assume that all members of a population were born at the same instant, that their deaths are evenly distributed over annual durations, that the rate of fertility regulating entry into the population remains constant, and that migration never occurs. Popular as well as scientific discussion nonetheless regards estimated life expectations as data. Ironically, the analogy to physical and natural science thus turns out to be of genuine value, but in a way opposite to what its nineteenth-century progenitors believed. The most ordinary classificatory and quantitative procedures used to construct series of vital events, no less than the manipulations scientists carry out in isolating phenomena for experimental purposes, decide the identity of objects countenanced as real, the events that may be used to characterize them, and the structures in which they are in consequence distributed.<sup>3</sup>

## ENFRANCHISEMENT

The 'Japanese grandmother problem' is not, therefore, a marginal issue that may be pushed aside from the practice of normal demographic science. The questions it raises are arguably the central ones which the history and practice of demography

raises. These questions may be put very simply. The first is demography's role in constituting collective and personal *identity: who we are, and who others are in relation to us*. As we have seen, demography has conventionalized modern answers to this question by erecting a complex structure of *ontological intervention*: who we are depends on *what there is*. The objectification of the real is achieved in demography by shifting sets of homologies between three elements: an idealized biological and/or physical substrate; the mathematical formalism used to describe this substrate; and the classifications by which this substrate and its formalism is identified with persons and collectivities. Ontological intervention evidently presupposes answers to a third question: *what the nature of method in demographic inquiry is*. The conventional answer, reiterated in the course of the last two centuries, is that of *formalism* or *hypostasis*: mathematical entities may be identified with or used to construct individual and collective identities to the extent to which these identities are codified in terms of the idealized substrate.

Asking about identity (who we are) and ontological intervention (what there is) leads, however, to a fourth question: *what can people do?* Formalism, as a stylized account of what demographers do, is plainly insufficient here since, in setting aside the Japanese grandmother problem, it sets aside the whole normalizing function of demographic practice and the institutional supports it has developed. I would suggest that the core of demographic practice is not formalism but *enfranchisement and disenfranchisement*: demography shapes what people can do and is itself an example of people's actions because formal practices function to admit events, individuals, characteristics, and aggregate structures into institutional and scientific records of demographic, social, and personal fact.

Dictionary entries for 'enfranchisement' define it as an act that brings individuals and groups into public recognition and, in so doing, admits them to membership in a polity with attendant rights and responsibilities. The term is apt to the history of demography since the new national statistical offices and international congresses of the nineteenth century developed the doctrine of formalism in part as a response to the role, which their population data and analyses occupied in political, social, and health enfranchisement. As noted above, in the section titled 'Representing versus Intervening', the nineteenth-century analogy between demographic methods and those of the physical sciences encouraged statisticians and social reformers to imagine that formalism transcends period and partisan influences. The historical research noted in the section titled, 'Representing as Intervening', however, confirms that this fiction has not worked as intended in major historical conjunctures. Formal distinctions made for ostensibly limited and objective scientific and administrative purposes are inevitably introduced at the expense of other distinctions: official social enfranchisement of certain individuals and groups entails the disenfranchisement of others. Enfranchisement and disenfranchisement do not arise, however, solely or primarily from period and partisan biases: *they inhere in the ontological interventions effected by formal practice itself*. In exploring and writing the history of population statistics in modern culture, one of the central questions is why and how certain ontological interventions come to be widely accepted as definitive of people's identities,

and why and how others do not. In answering this question the influence both of partisan interests and the supposedly 'merely technical' operations of formal analysis must be given due weight.

In exploring the development of demography as a history of methods of enfranchisement, particular interest attaches to societies having long statistical traditions, since a longitudinal perspective enables us to trace successive formal interventions as they have built up and revised social morphologies, and allows us to consider their varying role in the making of modern collective and personal identities. India stands out as one of the most important cases. The British colonial administration carried out the first census of India in 1871, a date which makes its national record as early as major European states, like Germany. Provincial and local censuses in India go back in several areas to the 1860s, and sometimes earlier. Multinational empires (Austria–Hungary, Russia, and several of the states making up the British Empire) are notable because, unlike most of Europe, they made serious attempts to develop systems of classification based on native criteria of linguistic, ethnic, and religious identity, as advocated by the nineteenth-century statistical congresses (Kreager 1997). Only India provides us with a series for the whole census era. India also stands out for another reason: Indian historians, sociologists, and anthropologists have long recognized that the social morphology devised by census-takers in the late nineteenth century played a formative role in the construction of religious and caste identities as they exist today on the subcontinent (Ghurye 1957; Srinivas 1966). The study of formalism and its impact in India is thus not confined to a specialist interest in the history of statistics; it has for some time been recognized as one fundamental factor in the making of modern India.

Caste evolved as a central classificatory framework of the Indian census over the long period 1871–1931. Its development returns us, aptly for this chapter, to the significance of reincarnation, encountered earlier as a dimension of the 'Japanese grandmother problem'. That colonial census-takers should choose to focus on caste is not surprising, since caste differences carry major demographic implications as a framework within which people make decisions about the timing and incidence of marriage, the choice of partners, and the possibility of remarriage, which in turn condition attitudes to procreation and child survival. People's conduct in all of these matters may also be determinant (if that is the right word) of the paths souls take. If the Indian census materially shaped personal and collective behaviour and, more particularly, became a factor conditioning transcendental values of life and death, then we can begin to examine in some detail the impact of the statistical movement as an integral component of cultural change.

First, we may ask what relations emerged over time between the hypostatic realities postulated by the markedly different cultural traditions represented by the statistics of colonial administration and Indian castes. A second question is whether the role of formal and quantitative methods in defining castes and their members was chiefly to articulate the predispositions of existing caste entities, or to create a system composed of what were in effect new castes restructured in a modified hierarchical framework. Did the ontological interventions effected by formal methods

actually create caste as we know it today, or did it, as Desrosières (1990) puts it, serve chiefly to ‘harden’ certain structures already extant in the system? A third question is how we may understand this process over time, that is, the incremental impact of formal constructions on Indian identities. Approaches to these questions in the literature on the subcontinent and elsewhere may be summarized under two headings: demographic nominalism and dynamic nominalism.

## DEMOGRAPHIC NOMINALISM

The prevailing historiography of caste is well summarized in standard sources like the *Cambridge History of India* (III, 1989: 184): ‘The concept of religion as a community grew from the introduction of a decennial census in 1871. The census defined religious communities, counted them, and examined their characteristics as social and economic units. The granting of separate electorates linked religion, the census reports, political power, and political patronage.’ The main units of social classification which made up the broad distinction of Hindu and Muslim communities, were defined by caste (Barrier 1981). However, the system developed in the census (and the Ethnographic Survey of 1901, which adopted census definitions of caste), differed from the role which caste had played historically, as a long line of scholars beginning at least as early as Ghurye (1957) have remarked. Caste was treated by early census-takers and administrators as a system which was in essence suitable to a standardized regimen: a rigid hierarchy dictating an absolute and permanent ranking for every individual according to the ritual and occupational group into which he or she is born and worships. In practice, however, caste was not so rigid. It functioned in the manner of prescriptive kinship systems now familiar to anthropologists: a fluid set of arrangements, characterized by considerable regional, local, and situational variation, which nonetheless presents itself, both to the outside world and to those participating in it, as an unchanging and obligatory hierarchy of collective identities.

Colonial population statistics, in its attempt to devise a standard classification applicable at provincial and national levels, took what was prescriptive at the level of ideology as real in practice. In so doing, it transformed caste arrangements, fixing upon a limited set of units, which tended to privilege some groups, failed adequately to recognize others, and in many cases constituted as empirical entities sets of people that had previously been loosely configured. Most research to date has concentrated on different strategies of naming employed in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century controversies. Religious sects petitioned the census commissioners variously for a separate identity in the hierarchy, for revision of their allotted place in the overall scheme, and for correction of enumerations (Jones 1981; Cohn 1987). Groups frequently put forward competing interpretations of the enumerations. For example, classification on religious grounds called attention to the phenomena of religious conversion, the significance of which came to be hotly contested as an issue reflecting on racial origins of higher and lower castes (Viswanathan 1998). Even though caste identities were recognized as often deriving from classifications of language groups and occupations,

census commissioners like Risley annexed racial and eugenic interpretations to caste differences, taking caste as a framework in which to apply anthropometric measurement (Inden 1990). Claims of the racial precedence and the relative purity of caste groups also arose, as Burghardt (1993) notes, on philological principles: 'ethnographers and census officials like Grierson invented classifications to identify groups where no local consensus existed'; these constructs, however, proved to have little chance of acceptance, either in the census or by local groups, as the only hypostatic logic to which they accorded was that of philology. Imbalances in the sex ratio and in mortality data were used to stigmatize certain caste groups, and to legitimize policies to alter their behaviour (Pant 1987; Guha 1996). The spatial distribution of groups was likewise reordered statistically to ensure colonial revenue (Smith 1984; Appadurai 1993). Caste classifications were adopted as a general framework for identifying criminal groups, a procedure that once again reflects racial and eugenic criteria (Nigam 1990). Many other debates over census nomenclature and its uses could be cited.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the frequency with which caste nomenclatures were contested and revised, the entities adopted in the census became the official and scientific units in terms of which fertility, mortality, and other vital data were collected and tabulated in conjunction with sanitary, tax, legal, and other matters. The statistical morphology of caste became, in short, the normative model of Indian social structure adopted in official publications. As the nineteenth century proceeded, this model became a primary framework for representing Indian population in gazetteers, settlement reports, and health inquiries, and this role has continued in this century up to the monographs of social anthropologists in the 1960s and 1970s.

Historical sociology provides us with a fairly straightforward account of how and why this process occurred. The British, as Srinivas (1966) remarked, in effect took over the prerogative of the highest caste groups to arbitrate people's status in society. The hypostatized physical substrate, which population statistics was supposed to constitute, was interpreted by some census commissioners in terms of the fitness of races, as in Europe. In this they were not alone: local caste and religious communities also had racial ideals, and interpreted the statistically hypostatized substrate provided by the census as documenting their own and others' racial origins. In this way groups legitimized claims to priority in the scheme of incarnations, and the higher or lower status in society that such origins implied. Caste, at least as a matter of doctrine, provided a framework in which scientific, administrative, and religious hierarchies appeared to compose one vast homology. Objectifying caste quantitatively also turned out to have a kind of fluidity not unlike the system as it had operated before the British came upon the scene: the scheme of castes put forward by the colonial state was frequently contested and had repeatedly to be revised. What began as a framework of a little less than two dozen entities had by 1901 grown to several hundred.

## **'MAKING UP PEOPLE'**

Historical analysis of the Indian census, like research on the development of population statistics in Europe, has come to be absorbed increasingly into a second and wider set of perspectives on the history of modern science and culture. The capacity of

demographic methods to help encode and institutionalize particular moral, racial, sexual, and political values is here seen to make it an instrument of state power, particularly in the context of nationalism (Anderson 1993), colonialism (Guha 1963; Inden 1990), and public hygiene (Foucault 1991*a*). More generally, statistics, as a broad social, scientific, and administrative movement, is taken to be a ‘dynamic’ factor shaping popular notions of causality in Western culture, and hence as having a deeper capacity to alter how people conceive of society: ‘what we choose to do, who we try to be, and what we think of ourselves’ (Hacking 1991: 3). The historical sociology of Indian statistics has been strongly influenced by dynamic nominalism, as the papers cited above by Appadurai, Nigam, Pant, Smith, and Viswanath acknowledge. All of these perspectives reflect the influence of Foucault's late work on disciplinary power and sexuality (1977, 1978), although not, it should be noted, Foucault's own subsequent critique and revision of the method he employed in these works (1991*b*).<sup>5</sup>

Such perspectives tend to treat the formal methodology of population inquiry synoptically. Aside from Smith (1984), there are few sustained analyses of specific quantitative practices as developed by particular census, registration, or related statistical institutions over time.<sup>6</sup> The sheer scale of public statistical inquiries, the redevelopment of formal nomenclature to specify identities, and even the many false starts and revisions of census procedure, are all presented *ipso facto* as manifestations of ‘the secular state's authoritarian grid-map’ (Anderson 1993: 169). Even probability theory has an authoritarian role, as Hacking remarks:

most of the law-like regularities [to which mathematical statistics gave rise] were first perceived in connection with deviancy: suicide, crime, vagrancy, madness, prostitution, disease. This fact is instructive. It is now common to speak of information and control as a neutral term embracing decision theory, operations research, risk analysis, and the broader but less well-specified domains of statistical inference. We shall find that the roots of the idea lie in the notion that one can improve—control—a deviant subpopulation by enumeration and classification. (1991: 3)

In this respect, dynamic nominalism goes much further than demographic nominalism. Statistical formalism does more than codify populations and frequencies of events relating to them. It does not stop at ‘hardening’ or fixing certain existing classifications at the expense of others. The characteristic feature of population statistics is its usefulness as a means of targeting problem groups in society or, rather, providing respectable scientific methods for objectifying the existence of groups whether or not they have been previously recognized. It is of course open for people to recognize themselves and others in terms of such newly objectified realities. But they are so identified whether they like it or not. Hacking calls this ‘making up people’ (1986). Or, as Anderson puts it, “the state imagined its local adversaries, as in an ominous prophetic dream, well before they came into historical existence” (1993: xiv). Hacking's *Taming of Chance* is in part a catalogue of collective identities which the ‘avalanche of printed numbers’ contained in nineteenth-century scientific and official reports made imaginable: waves of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe; sub-populations with regular propensities to commit suicide, to write



poetry, or to die of particular illnesses; the existence of criminal races; laws of mortality; and so forth. Hacking notes that as often as not the quantitative data were significantly lacking, but this served to energize scientists and bureaucrats to organize the evidence. Where ‘categories had to be invented into which people could conveniently fall in order to be counted’ (Hacking 1991: 3), the susceptibility of demography to partisan influence is clear. As such data were compiled, new probabilistic methodologies became means of carving out and refining more precisely the nature and characteristics of problem groups as scientific and social realities. The symmetry which Risley found between Indian caste and European eugenic ideas of racial purity, noted earlier, is an example of how there were plenty of class and racial values with which new hypostatized physical and biological substrates could be found to coincide. Thus

the claim of dynamic nominalism is not that there was a kind of person who came increasingly to be recognized by bureaucrats or students of human nature, but rather that a kind of person came into being at the same time as the kind itself was being invented. In some cases, that is, our classifications and our classes conspire to emerge hand-in-hand, each egging the other on. (Hacking 1986: 228)

What is striking about dynamic nominalism is the direct manner in which Hacking and other proponents have moved from the monolithic claims of nineteenth-century statistical reformers (i.e. that statistics can provide the state with comprehensive and value-free data) to the view that such monolithic ambitions regularly realize their totalitarian potential. The conjunction of nationalism and eugenics under Mussolini and Hitler, or of empire and theories of racial superiority in colonial states, appears to provide archetypal instances in which quantitative practices constituted local populations as objects for subjugation. As a general account of the capacity of population statistics to assist the construction of new collective identities, or as an assessment of the place of population statistics in cultural change, however, such instances are likely to be extreme. The extent to which caste nomenclatures were quickly contested in India, for example, suggests a need for caution. The accounts of Jones (1981) and Cohn (1987) suggest that quantitative data on castes served to foster the formation of diverse ethnic and national groups; and, as Foucault (1991*a,b*) suggests, numerical methods contributed not to one but several competing strategies of public health in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One of the interesting issues which dynamic nominalism helps to open up is the extent to which population and related statistics undermined and revised sweeping doctrines of nationalism and public hygiene by exposing their inherent contradictions.<sup>7</sup>

## BEYOND NOMINALISM

Recent attention to the history of statistical classification systems marks a major departure from the formalist separation of representation and intervention. There can be little doubt that, in the context of nationalism, colonialism, class, or racial

enemies, and of major public reform movements, demographic techniques commonly play more than a limited scientific role. Many more detailed studies of particular historical instances will be needed before the role of demographic practice in such contexts can be properly assessed. Demographic nominalism (the effects of fixing the flow of vital and social events into discrete classificatory schemes) and dynamic nominalism (the potential of such procedures to generate effectively new collective identities) are significant steps toward a historical framework in which we may be able to compare the differing ways in which population statistics have participated in the enfranchisement and disenfranchisement of past and present populations. To date both approaches have taken the influence of period and partisan biases as their major concern, so they are perhaps better described as tendencies in the current literature rather than separable approaches.<sup>8</sup>

As we have seen in the preceding pages, however, partisan and period limitations of classificatory schemes account for only part of the interventions which formal methods like demography effect. Formal description and analysis enfranchise particular social and vital entities ontologically, assigning them general and supposedly uniform properties supposed to inhere in deeper, essential strata of life and death. In Europe this methodology became the norm in population research in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as public and private institutions compiled and analysed mortality and other vital data, conceiving them as a hypostatized physico-mathematical substrate analogous to models employed in physical and biological sciences. Even though the analogy on which this matrix rests is seriously discredited, it has continued to provide a normative basis for demographic inquiry to the present day. Integral to this matrix is the widely accepted convention that it is possible in everyday demographic practice to keep formal description and analysis completely separate from applied population research. However helpful this formal ideal may have been to developing abstract population mathematics, it has regrettably also served as an effective block to historical examination of the actuarial matrix as a social fact. Demographic knowledge may act as an influence on social and cultural change not simply or primarily because formal methods come to be caught up in period and partisan agendas. The adoption and development of demographic data and techniques became crucial to such agendas because modern societies accepted that statistical methods are a privileged form and method of understanding.

A critical distinction will be helpful, therefore, between formalism as a scientific and popular doctrine (in which the hypostatized physico-mathematical substrate which formal methods construct is a universal and value-neutral ground of population description and analysis) and formalism as a convention (the limited claim that description and analysis in terms of this substrate defines not populations but the limitations of our knowledge of them). Failure to take seriously the conventionality of demographic description leaves two opposing myths to compete endlessly with each other. The first, as we have seen, is the supposed opposition of representation and intervention: that formal methods, although applied extensively to real populations, can somehow also remain purely mathematical. The second is that this methodological separation is in fact an authoritarian con-trick: formal methodology

really serves as a targeting procedure which enables the state and its professional cadres to intervene into any denumerable phenomena without responsibility for the 'merely technical' methods it uses. 'By covering opinion with a veneer of objectivity', as Hacking puts it, 'we replace judgement by computation' (1991: 4).

There are many specific procedures within the actuarial matrix, and it is rash to assume that their employ in all historical contexts may be described and judged in terms of such a sweeping historical verdict. Establishing an ostensibly uniform statistical record suitable to administration and control does not mean that records will necessarily be employed as steps on the road to totalitarian agendas. Nor does people's acceptance or rejection of such accounting systems enable us to decide whether a particular set of formal representations is fair or accurate. On one side, Risley's anthropomorphic measures and caste classifications are an example of a close fit between formally derived population measures and the cultural identity of local (higher caste) groups. We cannot say, however, that because this scientific model conforms to local experience it is valid. On the other, the intentional use of measurement and classification as a basis of authoritarian intervention into local behaviour is often unsuccessful. The attempt of colonial administrators to group castes in terms of particular indices, like the sex ratio, and to use them to stigmatize particular castes (Pant 1987) never succeeded in removing the phenomena of female child neglect (Das Gupta 1987).

Examples already available in the Indian literature thus enable us to go beyond stereotypes of population statistics as an apparatus of state and professional control. Demography does not make up people, although it does in many cases invent populations and sub-populations with which people may or may not identify. The freezing or fixing of one selection of collective identities in a privileged position relative to others has the capacity to stimulate much further social realignment, in which people (whether or not they accept their formal depiction) may play an active role. There appear to be several sorts of displacement effected by formal methods, which have a bearing on people's collective and personal identities. To begin with, four dimensions of enfranchisement/disenfranchisement may be postulated:

- (1) formal specification of units and measures may put in one class social groups and vital phenomena not customarily taken together;
- (2) formal specification of units and measures may separate social groups and vital phenomena customarily regarded as belonging to the same class;
- (3) formal specification may wholly fail to countenance customary groups and vital phenomena relevant to them; and
- (4) formal specification may invent altogether new collective identities, and assign vital and other phenomena to them.

Whilst logically separable, in practice these modes usually occur together, in differing combinations, and in different sequences. Enfranchisement/disenfranchisement is a compound social process. What is at issue is not only inclusion or exclusion from a given nomenclature, but all the alterations of status in a wider social structure which may arise in consequence of changing the identity of any one group, or of

changing the significance of vital events and relations which groups and individuals use to identify themselves. We need to keep in mind, too, that people employ several different collective identities according to situation.<sup>9</sup> By way of conclusion, we can turn to another instance in the history of the Indian census for examples of how these several dimensions of enfranchisement are simultaneously in play.

Surely one of the most sensational and bizarre uses of formal methods for purposes of disenfranchisement in the nineteenth century was the notion that there are identifiable groups in society composed of born criminals. The Indian Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 legally established the monitoring of such groups; by 1947, as Nigam remarks in his detailed study (1990), there were in Uttar Pradesh alone a million and a half persons belonging to forty-seven caste groups originally designated, or subsequently recognized, to conform to the Act: Bhudduks, Berias, Bawriaahs, Aharias, Sunorias, Kunjars, Nuts, and others. We can supplement Nigam's account by turning to the *Census of the North West Provinces* for 1865 (1867), where we find all of these groups listed amongst many others in the lowest caste category ('soodras'). Those that are described in any detail are characterized broadly as 'nomadic'. Of course, neither the census nor the Act of 1871 were extant at this date; the 1865 provincial census does not group these castes as criminal, nor group them together amongst the 'soodras'.

The 1865 *Census of the North West Provinces* was one of the few province-wide compilations conducted before the all-India census of 1871, and served as an important precedent. In it we find, prominently displayed, two classic icons of the actuarial matrix: long extracts from an article on mortality by British actuary Joshua Milne, recounting the historical development of the principal population model, the life table, from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century; and extracts from William Farr's British census report of 1861, detailing Farr's occupational classification scheme (into which the several hundred castes in the Northwest Provinces were arranged; the effort was not repeated). Much of the textual discussion in the census report, however, is given over to attempts by various district commissioners simply to list major caste groups and provide some description of them. The discussion is acknowledged as unsystematic. No two lists are the same and much of the material is anecdotal, being a recitation of local folklore on caste origins. Yet six years later the Criminal Tribes Act put forward an institutional logic capable of discriminating specific criminal castes for all of India. How was this possible?

Legal arguments for the Act, cited by Nigam, reasoned that the innate criminality of certain castes necessitated their surveillance (they were required to register with local authorities), and justified policies to eliminate traditional criminal occupations. The central policy was to be sedentarization. Returning, then, to the 1865 provincial census, we may look more closely at what 'nomadic' implied for the several castes in question. Interestingly, it is used interchangeably with 'gypsies', an identity which, reflecting common British perceptions to this day, is tantamount to 'criminal'. Gypsies figured amongst the innately criminal in nineteenth-century European social and medical writings; as in the treatment of nineteenth-century occupations in Europe and those of caste in India noted earlier, there are doubtless significant parallels here

between metropolitan and colonial discourses. The diverse composition of 'nomadic' castes, however, made impossible any uniform application of European agendas to these groups.

Explicit criminal identities are indicated for several castes in the 1865 census. Thus:

Sunorias are a class of wandering thieves, who for ages have had their head-quarters in Chundeyree and Banpoor. They leave their homes at certain seasons and go all over India for the purpose of plundering travellers and others. They are all more or less under police surveillance, but their deprivations are committed at a distance, so that convictions are rare. But it is hoped that when the next Census is taken the profession will have ceased to exist. (1867: 87)

The 'Nuts', in contrast, although also 'wandering tribes' and even 'savages', turn out to be dancers, acrobats, and jugglers (1867: 116; 43 [Appendix B]). 'Bhudduks' refers to yet another mobile identity: they were mercenaries active in Northern India earlier in the nineteenth century; as Nigam remarks, these castes found regular employment wherever landowners were locked in struggles with local Mughal states over land, taxation, and rights over production. In some cases their activities were sufficiently established to be closely associated with those of local police. The 'Bhudduks' situation changed, first as the British acquired the powers of former Mughal leaders, and subsequently as the British found local landowners and their supporters more reliable allies. 'Bhudduks' apparently acted sometimes within, sometimes without the law; many subsequently became loyal colonial troops. No wonder they were hard to classify.

In retrospect, the provincial census appears to have provided a kind of workshop in which criminal groups, amongst others, could begin to be identified for the purposes of the colonial legal system. Nigam treats the emerging legal structure as an exemplar of the colonial state's attempt to devise a comprehensive surveillance system. He does not, however, attribute the basis of its operations to caste classifications provided by the census. The attempt to derive an embracing criminal classification scheme from census caste categories is an example of a 'made-up' population, but hardly an entity that either bureaucrats or caste members themselves would have recognized as composed of 'a kind of person'. The inclusion of diverse castes under a common heading did not displace the identity of each group, but affected each in different ways. All four dimensions of enfranchisement and disenfranchisement noted earlier need to be considered to understand the effects of such a schema.

Thus a category of born criminals, which embraces the diversity of Sunorias, Nuts, and Bhudduks, conforms to the fourth mode of enfranchisement by invention. But it exemplifies the other three modes as well, whilst conforming broadly to indigenous classification, which placed the Sunorias and others amongst the lowest of the Sudras. Where the first mode is concerned, although the provincial census gives us only a glimpse of the several castes in question, the constitution of an englobing class which brings together dancers, mercenaries, and thieves seems *prima facie* a lumping together of different and incommensurate entities. Yet the notion of a criminal stratum of humanity also appears to involve, *a la mode 2*, the need to separate castes

like the Bhudduks from military, police, and landowning groups with which they were, at least, closely associated. Such a separation will also require us to give close attention to mode 3: as in many societies, collective identities in which group members are supposed to combine criminal and police activities can never be admitted as such into officially sanctioned formal records.

## CONCLUDING NOTE

Demographic methods are but one accounting system that may be applied to the ‘sea of fertility’. The changing relationships between demography and other systems of life and death, like reincarnation, may tell us a great deal about the role of technical knowledge in the construction of collective identities and cultural change. There is no doubt that the methods, models, and associated institutional structures of population inquiry have played an important role in objectifying many collective identities we find in the world today. But the classifications of people and events, which are in many ways the most familiar aspect of census and other inquiries, are merely the end products of a long history of objectifying and normalizing functions which formal practices of demography carry out for modern societies. As yet demography has no agreed historiography for the study of this process. My hope is that the set of concepts introduced in the course of this chapter (enfranchisement, identity, representation/intervention, the actuarial matrix, ontological intervention, and formalism or hypostasis) may help to lay the basis for such a history, or at least provoke sustained discussion of the need for one.

## Notes

1. Few if any major chapters in the modern development of formal demographic analysis are as little recognized or understood as these late nineteenth-century writers' works, although a recent workshop suggests that this situation may be changing (Lexis in Context: The Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, 28–29 August, 2000).
2. Few demographers today would appear to accept the nineteenth-century fashion of reasoning directly from mathematical physics to human relationships, yet important techniques still employed in population research, like some projection methods, continued to be developed in this way well into the twentieth century (Kreager 2003). The current attitude to method is ambiguous. A guarded defence of the formalist ideal has recently been argued by my distinguished Oxbridge colleagues Schofield and Coleman (1986), whilst other demographers increasingly question what Hill (1998) refers to sceptically as ‘life as usual on the Lexis plane’.
3. Bacon observed long ago that a crucial element of experience shapes the making even of the most minimal compilations of events: record keeping presupposes a plan, and what counts as an accurate unit or class of observation often changes as inquiry proceeds. In this respect the earliest population arithmetic of Graunt, which eschews any ideal of an objective physical substrate and adheres closely to Bacon's concept of natural history, provides arguably a more realistic, or at least more candid, account of what happens when we use arithmetic and algebra to reconstitute events (see references to Bacon and Graunt in Kreager 1988).

4. One interest of Indian Census treatment of caste is that it parallels debates over criteria of occupation and class taking place in European statistical offices and scientific circles at the time. Census officials in the Northwest Provinces, as we shall remark in the section titled 'Beyond Nominalism', below, were cognizant of the tentative occupational classification put forward in the English Census of 1861. On the background to this classification, see Higgs (1988) and Szreter (1996). Desrosières (1990) gives an excellent introduction to the Durkheimian tradition addressed to occupational and industrial human accounting systems. The 'social history of statistical coding' is there conceived as a long-term process in which quantitative methods function as instruments of objectification, 'hardening' or fixing wider social customs, laws and institutional relationships in specific collective representations. As in India, demographic nominalism was part of the process by which professional groups (physicians, lawyers, bureaucrats, actuaries, scientists) came to exercise increasing authority over state policy. The artificial and novel character of the objects they constructed is evident, as Desrosières observes, in the diversity of the schema they established. It was never possible to standardize the social morphology of European societies to conform to a single unified substrate and, as already noted, there is clear evidence of partisan eugenic, class, and other influences on the schemes that were devised.
5. The general shift in Foucault's analysis, notably in his discussion of 'governmentality', is discussed by McNay (1994). Neglect of this major transition in Foucault's work would appear to point to major limitations in the treatment of population statistics and probability by Foucault's better known followers, notably Hacking (1991).
6. Contrast may be made here to the detailed analysis of classificatory and quantitative practices in, for example, Higgs (1988) or Hirsch (Chapter 14, this volume).
7. These contradictions and the general implications of statistics for them are considered elsewhere (Kreager 1992, 1997). The tendency to view nineteenth-century sanitary and hospital reforms chiefly as an exemplar of the authoritarian contradictions of liberalism (e.g. Hacking 1991: 119) may be contrasted to evidence that improved health and longevity, at least in countries like Britain, would not have happened without specific political arguments and arrangements developed at the time (Szreter 1997).
8. As summarized above in the section titled 'Enfranchisement', population statistics, and more particularly the conventions of formalism and ontological intervention, have become general features of modern culture, widely accepted as normative not only at an institutional level but in individuals' recognition and construction of their own and other's identities. The emphasis which both demographic and dynamic nominalism have given to gross cases of racial and political bias, like eugenics, may be helpful in pointing to extremes to which formalism may at times lead. There is an evident danger, however, that these approaches will take attention away from studying enfranchisement and disenfranchisement as an ordinary and general function of demographic and related statistical practices. The historical role of the census in reconstituting Indian castes, and Francine Hirsch's study of the Soviet census of 1926 (Chapter 7, this volume), gives an example of the far-reaching significance of ostensibly minimal, formal procedures of classification and analysis. We need to see careful study of the actuarial matrix itself more fully developed.
9. As Pant (1987: 156) pointedly remarks, 'a Brahman who in Kumaon was a Pant, in Benares would refer to himself as a "Deshashtha Brahman"; while a Joshi Brahman of Kumaon could in Benares call himself by his section and geography as "Kanoujya Kurmachali"'. Rather than providing a uniform schema, the successive classificatory frameworks put forward by the census added options, as well as reducing them.

## References

- Anderson, B. (1993). *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (1993). 'Number in the colonial imagination', in C. A. Breckinridge and P. van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 314–39.
- Barrier, N. G. (ed.) (1981). *The Census in British India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Burghart, R. (1993). 'A quarrel in the language family: agency and representations of speech in Mithila', *Modern Asian Studies*, 22(4): 761–804.
- Cambridge History of India* (1989). Vol. III. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Census of the North West Provinces, 1865*. (1867). Vol. I. *General Report* (compiled by W. Chichele Plowden). Allahabad: Government Press, Northwestern Provinces.
- Cohn, B. (1987). 'The census, social structure and objectification in South Asia', in B. Cohn (ed.), *An Anthropologist amongst the Historians and Other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 224–54.
- Cullen, M. (1975). *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain*. Hassocks, England: Harvester Press.
- Das Gupta, M. (1987). 'Selective discrimination against female children in rural Punjab', *Population and Development Review*, 13(1): 77–100.
- Desrosières, A. (1990). 'How to make things which hold together: social science, statistics and the state', in P. Wagner, B. Wittrock, and R. Whitely (eds.), *Discourses on Society*, 15: 195–218.
- (1993). *La politique des grands nombres*, Paris: Éditions la Découverte.
- Farr, W. (1837). 'Vital Statistics', in J. R. McCulloch (ed.), *A Statistical Account of the British Empire*. Farnborough, Hants: Gregg (reprinted 1974).
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and Punish* (trans. A. Sheridan). New York: Pantheon.
- (1978). *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley). Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- (1991a). 'The politics of health in the eighteenth century', in P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- (1991b). 'Governmentality', in G. Burchell et al. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester.
- Ghurye, G. S. (1957). *Caste and Class in India*. Bombay: Popular Book Depot.
- Guha, R. (1963). *A Rule of Property for Bengal*. Paris: Mouton.
- Guha, S. (1996). 'The unwanted pregnancy in colonial Bengal', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 33(4): 403–35.
- Hacking, I. (1983). *Representing and Intervening*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1986). 'Making up people', in T. C. Heller (ed.), *Reconstructing Individualism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- (1991). *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Higgs, E. (1988). 'The struggle for the occupational census, 1841–1911', in R. M. McLeod (ed.), *Government and Expertise*, pp. 73–86.
- Hill, A. (1998). 'Breaking free—alternatives to the Lexis diagram', in A. Basu and P. Aaby (eds.), *New Approaches to Anthropological Demography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Inden, R. (1990). *Imagining India*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jones, K. W. (1981). 'Religious identity in the Indian Census', in N. G. Barrier (ed.), *The Census in British India*. New Delhi: Manohar.
- Kreager, P. (1988). 'New light on Graunt', *Population Studies*, 42: 129–40.



- Kreager, P. (1992). 'Quand une population est-elle une nation? Quand une Nation est-elle un état? La Démographie et l'émergence d'un Dilemme Moderne, 1770–1870'. *Population*, 6: 1639–56.
- (1997). 'Population and identity', in D. I. Kertzer and T. Fricke (eds.), *Anthropological Demography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- (2003). 'Keynes, Cannan, Fisher, Yule: contrasting styles of population forecast in inter-war Britain', in J. Fleischhacker, H. A. de Gans, and T. K. Burch (eds.), *Populations, Projections and Politics: Critical and Historical Essays on Early Twentieth Century Population Forecasting*. Amsterdam: Rozenberg.
- LeBras, H. (1981). 'Histoire secrète de la fécondité', *le Debat*, No. 8, Janvier. Paris: Gallimard.
- Lotka, A. (1907). 'Studies on the mode of growth of material aggregates', *American Journal of Science*, 23: 199–216.
- (1925). *Elements of Physical Biology*. New York: Dover.
- MacKenzie, D. A. (1961). *Statistics in Britain, 1865–1930*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.
- McNay, L. (1994). *Foucault: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Mishima, Y. (1985). *The Sea of Fertility*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Nigam, S. (1990). 'Disciplining and policing the criminal birth', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27(2): 131–64 and 27(3): 257–88.
- Pant, R. (1987). 'The cognitive status of caste in colonial ethnography: a review of some literature on the NorthWest Provinces and Oudh', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 24(2): 145–62.
- Porter, T. M. (1986). *The Rise of Statistical Thinking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Quetelet, A. (1851). 'Nouvelles tables de la mortalité pour la Belgique', *Bulletin de la Commission Centrale de Statistique*, Bruxelles.
- (1869). *Physique Sociale*, 2 vols. Paris: Bachelier.
- Schofield, R. and Coleman, D. (1986). 'Introduction', in D. Coleman and R. Schofield (eds.), *The State of Population Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 1–13.
- Smith, R. S. (1984). 'Rule-by-records and rule-by-reports: complementary aspects of the British Imperial Rule of Law', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, New Series, 19/1: 153–76.
- Srinivas, M. (1966). *Social Change in Modern India*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Szreter, S. (1984). 'The genesis of the Registrar-general's social classification of occupations', *British Journal of Sociology*, 35(4): 522–46.
- (1996). *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain, 1860–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1997). 'Economic growth, disruption, deprivation, disease and death: on the importance of the politics of public health for development', *Population and Development Review*, 23(4): 693–728.
- Viswanathan, G. (1998). *Outside the Fold: Conversion, Modernity, and Belief*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

# 3 Malthus' Anti-Rhetorical Rhetoric, or, on the Magical Conversion of the Imaginary into the Real

CHARLES L. BRIGGS

The histories of mankind that we possess are histories only of the higher classes. We have but few accounts that can be depended upon of the manners and customs of that part of mankind where these retrograde and progressive movements chiefly take place. A satisfactory history of this kind, on one people, and of one period, would require the constant and minute attention of an observing mind during a long life.

Malthus, *Essay on Population* (1970[1798]: 78)

The role of Thomas Malthus in generating both the problems of population and the social categories in which it is formulated and investigated has long been appreciated. David Harvey (1996), David McNally (1993), and others have recently emphasized the profound role of social class relations and ideologies in shaping these categories. This paper approaches many of the same questions from a different angle. I suggest that his call for worldwide study of the lower classes, which he himself took up in the second edition of his *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1803), links his famous theory of population and his political economy with two less known dimensions of his *Essay*, a theory of mind and what I will refer to as his anti-rhetorical rhetoric. The claim is that these aspects of his thinking were equally fundamental in shaping how Malthus and many subsequent students have formulated population issues.

In presenting this argument, I run the risk of committing epistemological heresy in suggesting that a theory that helped launch the empirical study of the relationship between political economy and population rests on such 'immaterial' phenomena as conceptions of language, rhetoric, and mind. Work that I have conducted in collaboration with Richard Bauman suggests, however, that this implicit inclusion of immaterial assumptions in categories of the real has been a basic feature of modern thinking since the seventeenth century (Bauman and Briggs 2003). We link explicit ideologies of discourse—of language, speech, communication, text and intertextuality, and the like—to practices that centre on controlling the production, circulation, reception, and legitimization of discourse, which we refer to as *metadiscursive practices*.

Detailing this connection is crucial for analysing the work of Malthus for three reasons. First, some ideologies (say those of John Locke and Johann Gottfried Herder) depict language, speech, text, and tradition in highly contrastive ways at the

same time that they use these notions in justifying similar metadiscursive practices. Second, discursive practices have material underpinnings and effects, as Bourdieu (1991) and others have argued; ways of controlling discursive practices shape and are shaped by other forms of social control, including techniques for conducting surveillance and regulating populations. Thus, authors who eschew interest in language and condemn overt intrusions of discursive techniques in the production of knowledge often find themselves proposing discursive means of constructing and controlling Others—including women, the poor, and non-Europeans—and use these mechanisms to exclude individuals placed in such categories from political participation.

Third, analysing the social categories imagined by Malthus can be usefully seen as forming part of the project of ‘provincializing Europe’ proposed by Dipesh Chakrabarty (1992, 2000) and Partha Chatterjee (1993). Chatterjee (1993: 238) argues that ‘One can see how a conception of the state–society relation, born within the parochial history of Western Europe but made universal by the global sway of capital, dogs the contemporary history of the world’. These writers reposition the colonial history of the Indian subcontinent and research on the subaltern in general not as the extension of a supposedly universal historiographical and social scientific project to spatio-temporal coordinates that lie on the geopolitical margins but as a means of X-raying and challenging the hegemony of European (or, perhaps, Euro-American) constructions and projects: ‘For the point is not that Enlightenment rationalism is always unreasonable in itself but rather a matter of documenting how—through that historical process—its “reason,” which was not always self-evident to everyone, has been made to look “obvious” far beyond the ground where it originated’. (Chakrabarty 1992: 23)

The effectiveness of this universalization process cannot be explained by reference simply to the pretensions of its proponents to speak for all time and all humanity rather than their own class, country, and time alone. To be sure, possession of guns, capital, and ships played a major role in this story. But de-provincializing Europe and naturalizing the position of its elite also involved metadiscursive practices that regulated the production, circulation, and reception of discourse and the infusion of social and political-economic power into particular discourses and practices. Therefore, analysing discursive ideologies and metadiscursive practices forms a crucial facet of the project of *re*-provincializing Europe.

Malthus is an especially challenging and interesting focus of inquiry in connection with such a project. He disclaims any interest in ‘a question merely of words’ (1970[1798]: 202), and his focus lies squarely in political economy and population. At the same time, the powerful realism that he constructs depends on the discursive ideologies and metadiscursive practices that are built into the modernist concepts he utilizes and how he transforms them. Analysing the manner in which Malthus constructs and authorizes his discourse thus forms a necessary part of the task of scrutinizing how he imagines populations and turns this imaginative act into a centrepiece of science and social policy. A host of critics have wondered at the power of the hastily written first edition of the *Essay* to shape research and policy agendas, in his time and far beyond, suggesting that the work does not possess sufficient

originality or logical force and consistency to warrant such prominence (McNally 1993) and (Collini *et al.* 1983) place Malthus in a long tradition of Anglican apologetics for inequality and poverty. I hope to demonstrate that Malthus' influence in his day and his legacy for our own is based, in part, on the way he advocated and modelled a set of metadiscursive practices that constrained how debates about poverty, social inequality, and population could be waged and who would be authorized to participate in them. The metadiscursive dimensions of his *Essay* have profound implications for the political location and effects of contemporary social scientific research.

## LOCKE'S THEORY OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

These dimensions of Malthus' work can be brought more easily into focus by placing Malthus in dialogue with John Locke, the seventeenth-century thinker whom Malthus cites as a central influence on his theories of inequality and mind. One parallel between Malthus's *Essay on Population* and Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and his *Two Treatises of Government* lies in a striking similarity in the historical contexts in which they were produced; in each case, the historical juncture was obliquely incorporated into the argument. Locke was reflecting on the profound social disorder that had been produced by the English civil wars and the other cataclysms of his time, including those in which he had participated as a close associate of Shaftesbury. For his part, Malthus condemned the French Revolution through an analogy with the way that selective breeding might produce a plant with blossoms so large that the calyx would burst:

In a similar manner, the forcing manure used to bring about the French Revolution, and to give a great freedom and energy to the human mind, has burst the calyx of humanity, the restraining bond of all society; and, however, large the separate petals have grown, however strongly, or even beautifully, a few of them have been marked, the whole is at present a loose, deformed, disjointed mass, without union, symmetry, or harmony of colouring. (p. 171)

For both writers, an explanation of social inequality and a theory of mind emerged from these reflections on a social and political cataclysm that had seemed to undermine assumptions about political structures and faith in social institutions.

Macpherson (1962) presents a strong case for the central role of Locke's construction of social inequality in his political theory, and a wide range of political theorists have taken up his argument and its implications. Locke follows Bacon in suggesting that God confers upon individuals the right and the moral obligation to subdue the earth by making it serve human ends, thereby appropriating it. Locke argues that although the earth was given to 'men' collectively, inequality seems to have been divinely decreed in that 'He gave it to the use of the Industrious and Rational' (1959[1690]: II.v.34). Once money is created through general agreement, inequities in the appropriation of land and other property are not limited by the moral injunction against spoilage and waste; subsequently and consequently, the land mass in England becomes entirely appropriated. At that point, those individuals who possess

inferior 'degrees of Industry' (II.v.43) fail to appropriate land and can consequently only derive their subsistence by selling the sole form of 'property' that they have left to alienate—their labour. Locke contends that the landless retain 'that equal Right that every Man hath, to his Natural Freedom, without being subjected to the Will or Authority of any other Man' (II.vi.54), since they are free to act as individual agents in selling their labour; this assertion assists Locke in hiding from view the power over labourers that he, as a landowner, enjoyed. Inequality thus emerges as a result of individuals' own actions while still living in the state of nature; it is thus natural rather than being a product of social or political institutions.

Property, as embodied in substantial material differences in the circumstances of rich and poor and the unbridled accumulation fostered by the emergent capitalist order, had similarly been seen as morally, socially, and politically problematic. The *Treatises* (Locke 1960[1690]) stripped property of these negative connotations, thereby not only removing a constraint on the development of capitalism but construing it as a quintessential embodiment of modernity and rationality. Social inequality is thus morally neutral, being a product of natural laws; society, including its institutions and laws, simply enlarges freedom (II.vi.57)—it does not produce, nor can it be blamed for, social inequality.

Only rarely do commentators on Locke's political theory explore the deep parallels that exist between his property theory of inequality and the views explicated in the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1959[1690]). Both language and property become key means of marking the positionality of individuals and societies in terms of rationality, morality, and modernity. Just as relying on plain speech that uses purely referential signs with clear and consistent meanings in a civil fashion constitutes an outward sign of rationality, knowledge, and aptness for participation in civil life, the possession of property displays an individual's rationality and his (and I do mean to invoke the masculine form here) possession of the full rights of citizenship. Having been construed as key markers of the inability or unwillingness to assimilate emergent codes of pious gentility, a lack of property and either deliberate or inadvertent engagement in the 'cheat and abuse' of words (as associated respectively with Scholastics and the poor, merchants, and women) displays an inability to embrace the modern code—or an attitude of resistance.

Reason not only plays a key role in both arguments but is used in effecting a similar discursive move. The capacity to reason renders all humans naturally equal, being the law of nature (II.ii.6) and 'the Rule betwixt Man and Man, and the common bond whereby humane kind is united into one fellowship and societie' (II.xv.172). But Locke goes on to note that while the law of nature teaches all who heed it, some do not: 'Thus we are born Free, as we are born Rational; not that we have actually the Exercise of either' (II.vi.61). While this passage deals specifically with the ontogenetic emergence of reason through education and maturation, both texts provide ample evidence that Locke credited gentlemen with carrying out the process of acquiring reason to such a different extent that it results in profound qualitative differences between them and women, the poor, laborers, merchants, and non-Europeans. The majority of human beings live in circumstances that tie them to concrete interests

and/or leave them too little leisure time to develop their reasoning. The arguments for both property and language thus begin with a notion of natural equality that invests reason and the right to acquire property in all persons and yet end in a vision of radical social differentiation that includes two distinct—and distinctly unequal—types of rationality, relationships to property and language, and types of consent (tacit and partial versus explicit and full). Carole Pateman (1980, 1988) has written eloquently on the way that Locke's universal subjects of political participation were theoretically sexless, thereby rendering women—who always bear a specific and subordinate gendering marking—subject to political society without forming part of it.

## MALTHUS' RECONFIGURATION OF THE THEORY OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Malthus' theory of inequality springs from a similar starting point to that of Locke in that the former argues that inequality arises through the operation of natural laws. This is, of course, one of the major points on which he attacks Condorcet and Godwin, his adversaries in the *Essay*. For both of these utopian writers, social inequality was not natural but was rather the product of social and political institutions. Condorcet (1955[1795]) drew attention to the concentration of property in the hands of the wealthy, primogeniture, the consolidation of industrial wealth, and placement of the burden of taxation on the backs of the poor (see Schapir 1963). While Condorcet saw laws and political structures as exacerbating social inequality, Godwin (1946[1798]) characterized political institutions in negative terms as the forces that created poverty and social inequality. Social difference, for Godwin, was a question of life circumstances rather than of differential endowment or drive. Firm believers in the perfectibility of humans and society, both Godwin and Condorcet saw the advancement of reason, as strengthened by popular education, as leading to the eradication or at least substantial levelling of social inequality.<sup>1</sup>

In his attack, Malthus followed Locke in exempting society and social institutions from any role in creating differences in wealth and power (see 1970[1798]: 133). But while Locke deems social inequality to be a secondary effect of natural laws and of the introduction of money, Malthus sees inequality as written deeply and intrinsically into natural laws themselves. 'Population, when unchecked, increases in a geometrical ratio. Subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio' (p. 71). In effect, even if one deemed the effects of institutions to be negative, their role would account for very little in that, according to Malthus, their effects are miniscule in comparison with those of natural law, particularly biological drives and their demographic consequences (see Collini *et al.* 1983: 70). This opposing construction of the causes of social inequality provided Malthus with a key basis for criticizing Condorcet's and Godwin's belief in progress and perfectibility. Levelling social inequality would simply prompt the lower classes to increase their numbers so quickly that food shortages and price increases would lead to greater poverty, misery, and suffering. This process is, he argues, a pervasive and fundamental aspect of human existence. 'A large portion

of mankind' naturally falls into misery, given the inability of the earth to support the growing population. Once the necessity of securing property, which is needed to induce individuals to increase their yield and thus add to the collective production of food, and the institution of marriage have been established, 'inequality of conditions must necessarily follow' (Malthus 1970[1798]: 142). Social inequality is further exacerbated by vices and self-love, both of which are also characterized as being natural and universal. As David Harvey (1996: 141) suggests, class relations are thus deeply inscribed into Malthus's argument; he argues that this foundation is often overlooked by critics.

Malthus' perspective on social inequality is not consistently one of approval. He states that inequality is 'an inconvenience greatly to be lamented' (1970[1798]: 140), and he draws attention to 'the evil of hard labour' (p. 179) that is continually faced by the lower classes. Moreover, he modified his position on these issues in the 1803 and subsequent editions. Adding a less pessimistic component to his list of checks on population, Malthus suggested that the lower strata of society could voluntarily lessen the threat of population increases that outstrip resources by exercising moral restraint. He similarly argued that it is not wise to lay all the blame for the suffering of the lower classes on them or on the laws of nature, in that such a position could invite governments to oppress their subjects (book VI, chs 6 and 7; see also Collini *et al.* 1983: 76). Nevertheless, 'the grinding law of necessity, misery, and the fear of necessity' (Malthus 1970[1798]: 133) stand as the central means by which population growth is restrained, thereby preventing the much *greater* evils associated with overpopulation. The 'evil' of population pressure thus serves as the wellspring that generates 'the necessity of constant exertion' and of morality and moral authority: 'It is not only the interest but the duty of every individual to use his utmost efforts to remove evil from himself and from as large a circle as he can influence' (p. 217).

Knowledge and reason, the driving forces for Condorcet and Godwin, could not serve as principal means of changing population dynamics or relations of inequality; the interplay between biological drives and attempts to avoid their demographic consequences take the place of knowledge and reason in Malthus' scheme. Passions do not give way to reason, as for Condorcet and Godwin; they can rather only be curbed by interests, particularly interest in self-preservation and self-advancement. Malthus thus contributes centrally to the line of thinking that envisioned displacement of passion by interest and the reconfiguration of the rational pursuit of interest as positive, an egoism that can produce social order and collective benefits (see Hirschman 1977). Population theory is thus a new means of legitimating and naturalizing capitalism. While this process of conversion seems to come naturally for the propertied classes, according to Malthus, the poor take this step only partially, generally under the immediate force of misery and hunger. In later editions, Malthus became more generous in his assessment of the capacity of the poor to exercise moral restraint.

The positive moral status of both inequality and misery is also apparent, according to Malthus, in the way that they spur the growth of mind. Malthus notes that he had intended to 'have entered at some length into this subject as a kind of second part of the *Essay*. A long interruption, from particular business, has obliged me to lay

aside this intention, at least for the present' (p. 203). This statement suggests that we should view the 'sketch' of the theory of mind that he offers as being of some importance to his theory of population rather than simply a side issue that is irrelevant to the main argument. This feature of the text constitutes a similarity with Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1946[1798]) and Condorcet's *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1955[1795])—both of these works also present theories of mind. According to Malthus, reason and mind must grow and mature just like the body. Unless they are cultivated, individuals would retain 'the sluggishness of original matter' (1970[1798]: 203) with which they were born. Here Malthus draws explicitly on Locke's theory of mind, citing with approbation Locke's (1959[1690]: II.xx.6) claim that the greatest stimulus to action is the desire to avoid pain rather than to pursue pleasure. Given that 'man' is essentially 'inert, sluggish, and averse from labour' (Malthus 1970[1798]: 205), only physical necessities can rouse him from this stupour and keep him from sinking 'to the level of brutes' (p. 203). On a collective level as well, it is precisely population pressure that enabled humans to emerge from a 'savage state' (p. 206); without it, we would have been too lazy to civilize ourselves.

Since 'the lower classes' are faced with the greatest misery, the 'exertion' that leads to cultivation of the mind would seem to be most concentrated there. Yet Malthus follows Locke—and, indeed, the prevalent wisdom among the English bourgeoisie—in asserting that 'the principal argument of this essay tends to place in a strong point of view the improbability that the lower classes of people in any country should ever be sufficiently free from want and labour to obtain any high degree of intellectual improvement' (pp. 148–9). This is, of course, where he parts company with the liberal views of Condorcet and Godwin, who argued that all sectors of society could profit from a progressive embodiment of reason. The argument runs as follows: 'The laboring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention, and they seldom think of the future'. Here we have the Lockean theory of concrete, local knowledge. Malthus contrasts a person who, in retirement, spends all of his time cultivating a small garden; his ideas, therefore, 'scarcely soar above or extend beyond his little garden' with 'the philosopher whose range of intellect is the most extensive, and whose views are the clearest of any of his contemporaries' (p. 156). Nature challenges 'the fastidious microscopic eye of short-sighted man' by providing an infinite variety of stimuli (p. 211), but only some individuals respond by increasing the breadth of their knowledge. Ironically, Malthus published, as Smith (1984: 108) points out, in the midst of the active suppression of attempts to use popular texts to increase knowledge and expand the limits of political participation. This projection of the supposed lack of interest and ability in education on the part of the 'lower classes' thus helped rationalize a suppression of access to literacy.

This dichotomy between local and concrete versus global and abstract knowledge, which plays a key role in Locke's epistemology, ultimately divides human beings into two groups: the 'enlightened' and the 'unenlightened' (p. 180). The Enlightenment roots of the local/global dichotomy points to the powerfully problematic implications



of linking academic enterprises to notions of 'local knowledge', as Clifford Geertz (1983) once proposed for anthropology, or in charting research agendas for the new millennium as cartographies of points of intersection between local traditions and globalizing forces (see Giddens 1994). Zygmunt Bauman (1998) has recently argued that globalization fixes some people in space and restricts their access to the globally circulating capital and culture that others enjoy; getting localized while others get globalized 'is a sign of social deprivation and degradation' (1998: 2). This process of stigmatization and exclusion is, however, far from new; constructing regions, peoples, epistemologies, and cultural forms as 'local' has served since early modernity as a key mechanism for using perceived differences in knowledge as a means of projecting vast social gulfs between the enlightened and the unenlightened and thus limiting the political and social participation of persons placed in the latter category—if not excluding them altogether. Studies that deem the distinction between 'the global' and 'the local' as laying at the centre of contemporary social, cultural, and political-economic processes (see Sklair 1995[1991]; Appadurai 1996; Bauman 1998), might bear in mind these long-standing political uses of the category of 'the local'.

Mere observation of nature and experience in the world—which would presumably be accessible to members of 'the lower classes' as well—do not confer knowledge; humans must discover how things operate, must discern relationships of cause and effect. Malthus writes that the diversity of nature not only produces a variety of impressions that stimulate the mind but 'opens other fertile sources of improvement by offering so wide and extensive a field for investigation and research' (1970[1798]: 211). Rather than reflecting on nature per se, mental exertion must lead to that sine qua non of abstract, decontextualized, ahistorical, universal knowledge, the laws of nature; these constitute, in Malthus's view, 'the foundation of the faculty of reason' (p. 205). Misery and want only provide routes to knowledge once the path to nature is mediated by the scientific epistemology outlined by Bacon and systematized by Boyle, Newton, and the Royal Society (see Shapin and Schaffer 1985; Shapin 1994). As Winch (1967) and McNally (1993) have observed, Malthus shifted debates about poverty and social inequality from the realm of political debate, where they were located by such conservative critics as Burke, into a seemingly dispassionate, neutral, and empirical scientific realm. One of the most high stakes political debates could thus be transferred to an authoritative domain in which politics and class interests could be disavowed.

In invoking the cachet of science, Malthus converged with Godwin and Condorcet; the latter in particular constructed science as the primary means of driving out ignorance and superstition, thereby promoting human progress. Malthus' mathematical training at Cambridge would seem to be reflected in his ability to encapsulate his theory of population in a succinct mathematical relationship that laid a claim to universal applicability. As Avery (1997: 64) points out, a central goal that lay behind the extensive research that Malthus put into the second edition of the *Essay* was to show that the principle of population was universal, which applied everywhere and at every point in history, not simply a description of one period in one country. When it came to political economy, however, Malthus resisted Ricardo's programme that

sought to turn the field of study into 'a strict science like mathematics' (Ricardo, quoted in Collini *et al.* 1983: 79). Malthus rejected Ricardo's more deductive approach to political economy in favour of deriving laws from the analysis of particular examples.

Physical wants and population pressure can only lead an individual to knowledge if he or she enjoys access to the discursive tools that are afforded by education. And, like Locke, Malthus is very clear on the class and gender distribution of education. Women's intellects cannot be excited to mental exertion in that they only have access to a 'different education' (1970[1798]: 157), while the transition from the rank of gentleman to that of 'moderate farmers and the lower class of tradesmen' constitutes the 'round of the ladder, where education ends and ignorance begins' (p. 90). Malthus, like Condorcet and Godwin, argued in favour of popular education; but rather than promoting equality, as the other two writers believed it would, Malthus seems to view education not as thrusting the masses into the realm of enlightened minds but in enabling them to better resist the temptation to submit to demagogues (see Collini *et al.* 1983: 77). In taking up the question of the growth of mind, Malthus becomes the champion of the bourgeoisie—as opposed to the landed gentry—that Locke never was, Macpherson's (1962) conferral of the honour on the latter writer notwithstanding: 'The middle regions of society seem to be best suited to intellectual improvement', since they are driven by the 'hope to rise or fear to fall, in society' (Malthus 1970 [1798]: 207). Backing off from any potential use of this statement in prompting a radical restructuring of society, Malthus argues that the lower and upper classes are needed to prompt those in the middle to constantly exert themselves. Extending this dominance of the middle in spatial terms as well, Malthus asserts that the 'temperate zones of the earth' are similarly more conducive to the growth of mind than tropical or frigid regions (p. 207).

At first glance, Malthus' reliance on theories of mind as means of explaining social inequality would seem to bring him close to the positions taken by Condorcet and Godwin, particularly in that all three base their models in part on Locke's theory of the sensory basis of experience. But constructions of mind take Malthus to a very different theoretical and political position. For Condorcet and Godwin, developing knowledge and reason will prove attractive and accessible to members of all social sectors once social, political, and economic impediments are removed and education becomes universal. For Malthus, on the other hand, the incentives for intellectual development are negative—the desire to avoid misery, want, and labour; paradoxically, these motives prove the least effective in prompting the mental development of the people who suffer these conditions the most. Thus, the theory of mind provides Malthus—at least in the first edition of the *Essay*—with a basis for undermining Godwin's and Condorcet constructions of the nature and future trajectory of social inequality.

As David McNally (1993) suggests, Malthus' attack on progressive approaches to questions of social inequality seem to have had broader targets than the two liberal utopians. At the time that Malthus published the first edition of the *Essay*, a radical plebian movement that erupted in riots against grain shortages, hunger, and inflation

was in full swing. The movement was supported not only by Thomas Paine's (1791) *Rights of Man* but Thomas Spencer's and his followers' assertion that economic inequalities formed the root of political injustice and corruption (McNally 1993: 71). The shadow of the French Revolution and its egalitarian ideology loom large in British discussions of inequality, as Malthus' *Essay* demonstrates. Particularly after Malthus influenced the policies of William Pitt's Tory government, the *Essay* provided a scientific basis for preserving the very relations of inequality that it purported to analyse. Poverty had become a scientific question that could, it seemed, be resolved in a neutral, objective manner.

## LOCKE'S ANTI-RHETORICAL RHETORIC

In turning to questions of language ideology and metadiscursive practices, here too we find that Malthus both drew on the Lockean legacy in important ways and also transformed it. For Locke, the discursive practices that are antithetical to rationality and science are embodied in the *bête noire* of rhetoric, particularly as it emerged in the Scholastic 'art of disputation'. Bacon's *Novum Organum* (1620) circumscribed the place of rhetoric in education and social life, but Bacon hardly sought to demonize or expunge rhetoric as a whole (see Jardine 1974). Coming more than half a century after, Locke's *Essay* greatly extends Bacon's demotion of rhetoric while at the same time seeking to severely limit the practical applicability of rhetorical training to civil discourse. Bacon uses rhetoric in confirming his view of language as essentially flawed; for Locke, on the other hand, rhetoric, particularly as embodied in the discursive practices of the 'school-men', serves as a foil to bring into high relief what he viewed as the core of language: abstract and decontextualized signs with precise, non-overlapping, stable meanings arranged in logical relations. According to Locke, rhetoric fosters unexamined, imprecise uses of language that are ordered through intertextual and other types of indexical linkages. It builds authority, the intertextual production of knowledge by drawing on the words of others, rather than individual efforts to reflect on both nature and language. Since it confounds rather than clarifies meaning, 'the admired Art of Disputing hath added much to the natural imperfection of languages' (1959[1690]: III.x.6) and kept 'even inquisitive men from true knowledge' (III.x.10). While the use of such epithets as 'the admired Art of Disputing' are hardly original to Locke, in post-civil war seventeenth-century England they must have evoked powerful moral and political associations between rhetoric and civil disorder, and Locke seems to have mustered these overtones in advancing the metadiscursive practices he championed and suppressing their competitors. The attack on rhetoric thus underlines the need to reform existing discursive practices as a whole.

Rhetoric becomes the foe of rationality and knowledge through its connection with interest, passion, emotionality, and belief. Locke's ideal discursive type—plain speech that conveys information with maximum economy through referentially stable signs—engages the rational capacity of the mind in an active process, one that

enables it to create and evaluate clear arguments. Rhetoric rather renders the mind passive and fosters an emotional attachment to the words of others; rhetoric thus engenders social as well as intellectual dependence. Controlling the disorderly effects of passions was a key concern in tumultuous seventeenth-century England. While Bacon suggested that passions could be regulated by setting one against another in order to achieve a sort of balance (see Hirshman 1977: 21–3), Locke called for the displacement of passion and emotion by reason, and the suppression of rhetoric played a key role in pursuing this goal. As Barilli (1989: 78–81) notes, Locke echoed the Baconian dichotomy that opposes the universality of logic versus the particularity of rhetoric. Reason needs only the discursive common denominator, stable signs, to convey it, and it is accordingly free from all of the indexicality or context-dependence that links rhetoric to texts, personal authority, and discursive interactions. Drawing on Shapin (1994) we can grasp the way that this model of knowledge, language, and rhetoric was deeply grounded in emergent class relations, in that the social construction of a man, literally, who stands free of the influence of other persons is precisely the image of the gentleman.

This anti-rhetorical rhetoric contributes directly to the political project of the *Treatises* by virtue of its use as point of attack on Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, the foil of the first *Treatise*. Locke seems to lavish praise on Filmer's virtuosity as a writer: 'I never, I confess, met with any Man of Parts so Dexterous as Sir Robert at this way of Arguing' (1960[1690]I. xi.137), and he calls Filmer a 'Master of style' (I.xi.110).<sup>2</sup> Having set up plain speech as a model of truth and rationality in the *Essay*, however, this is faint praise indeed. Locke criticizes Filmer repeatedly for failing to define his terms and for using words in multiple and shifting senses, thus enabling him to 'say any thing' (I.vi.63). Locke suggests that this practice is no oversight but a means of hiding objectionable notions in fine words. Locke places arguments and reason on one side of a dichotomy that lumps fancy, passion, imagination (I.vi.58), and the 'intricacy of words' (I.vi.21) on the other. Rhetoric goes together with attempts to mislead readers (I.xi.141) just as naturally as 'clear and distinct Speaking' (I.iv.23) is tied to 'the force of reason and argument' (I.ii.13). The former will only be effective with people who have an interest in believing, probably meaning in this context a political interest in Absolute Monarchy, while it is naturally repugnant to the minds of rational and disinterested men. Here epistemology and political theory are tightly interwoven as Locke asserts that clarity, precision, and semantic stability serve as markers of the political importance and advisability of a position (see I.xi.108, 109), while imprecise, shifting terms, intertextuality, and rhetorical flourish signal a lack of adequate rational foundations—and the potential to create disorder and destroy government (I.vi.72; I. xi.106). This critique is not merely rhetorical, as it were, but constituted a broadside against a text that had been recently reprinted in order to provide a Tory charter for defending the monarch against Shaftesbury and the Whig Exclusions—who in turn claimed Locke as a crucial theoretician and propagandist (see Cranston 1957: 208; Laslett 1960: 64).

A fundamental modernist move lurks within this anti-rhetorical rhetoric, and Hayden White's (1978) discussion of the rhetoric of historiography provides a useful

framework for characterizing its 'tropical' constitution. White argues that historians first create a new way of imagining the past, a series of social constructions that are narratively configured through particular modes of emplotment, explanation, and ideology; a discourse of realism then hides this rhetorical process from view, asserting that the author is simply revealing what actually exists and transparently projecting it into the reader's field of vision. While White's analysis is in many ways penetrating, his historiography seems limited—this strategy was used extensively in the seventeenth century as a means of constructing modernity, science, and civil society in particular ways that project them as universal and rational. Indeed, the anti-rhetorical rhetoric that Locke articulated provided the perfect cover: attacking the legitimacy and even the political and moral value of rhetoric and intertextuality provided an excellent means of authorizing a new social construction by declaring it to be a true picture of the real.

## MALTHUS' ANTI-RHETORICAL RHETORIC OF THE 'MANLY' STUDY OF THE LOWER CLASSES

Just as Locke's *Treatises* were linked inter- or perhaps anti-textually to Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*, Malthus's *Essay* engages critically the utopian reflections on the French Revolution presented by William Godwin in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1946[1798], originally published in 1793) in the interests of building a markedly realist discourse. Like Locke, Malthus damns his foil with faint stylistic praise:

In reading Mr Godwin's ingenious and able work on *Political Justice*, it is impossible not to be struck with the spirit and energy of his style, the force and precision of some of his reasonings, the ardent tone of his thoughts, and particularly with that impressive earnestness of manner which gives an air of truth to the whole. (1970[1798]: 132)

Malthus proceeds to accuse Godwin of lacking logical consistency, plausibility, evidence, and 'the caution that sound philosophy seems to require'. Godwin's schema elicits strong, if positive, emotions rather than the conviction that follows from the reception of logically persuasive evidence; accordingly, 'The whole is little better than a dream, a beautiful phantom of the imagination' (p. 133). Without naming Godwin in particular, Malthus sexualizes attempts to hide the realities of population pressure with illusory schemes for improving society: 'The most baleful mischiefs may be expected from the unmanly conduct of not daring to face truth because it is unpleasing' (p. 199). Here Malthus seems to reflect the way that Bacon and others construct science as masculine and virile, while rhetoric, like nature, is construed as female and passive (see Merchant 1980; Keller 1985; Bauman and Briggs 2003). Malthus would similarly hardly be likely to have shared Condorcet's positive evaluation of poetry, letters, and 'the power of persuasion' in politics (1955[1795]: 92). Pursuing flights of rhetorical fancy, as does Godwin, constitutes one of the two major means of thwarting the perfection of mind and knowledge.<sup>3</sup> Malthus constructs scientific authority and truth through a negative economy of pleasure and desire. That which is pleasing and enticing is superficial, false, misleading, and

unmanly; what is unpleasant, pessimistic, and cold is truthful and scientific. It is small wonder that Carlisle characterized the field that Malthus helped shape as 'the dismal science'.

As with Locke, dismissing rhetoric does not seem to deprive Malthus of the ability to construct a new social and scientific rhetoric. He draws deeply in some passages on powerful images that depict the dangers that would come of utopian attempts to banish social inequality through a spirit of reason and benevolence:

The temptations to evil are too strong for human nature to resist. The corn is plucked before it is ripe, or secreted in unfair proportions, and the whole black train of vices that belong to falsehood are immediately generated. Provisions no longer flow in for the support of the mother with a large family. The children are sickly from insufficient food. The rosy flush of health gives place to the pallid cheek and hollow eye of misery. Benevolence, yet lingering in a few bosoms, makes some fair expiring struggles, til at length self-love resumes his wonted empire and lords it triumphant over the world. (p. 138)

Here Malthus' own style seems not only to be spirited and ardent but to anthropomorphize the abstract principles he is debating and cast them in an epic struggle that evokes tear-jerking images that would seem more at home in the latest UNICEF appeal than in the classic 'Malthusian' treatise. The powers of Malthus' imagination and the exoticizing power of his rhetoric are put to good use in his portraits of the manners and customs of the peoples of the Americas, Asia, the Pacific, and ancient and modern Europe that emerge in the 1803 and subsequent editions of the *Essay*. Just as Malthus violates his own injunction against rhetoric, his empiricism does not keep him from falling back on deductive reasoning. As Harvey (1996: 141) notes, Malthus derives his famous natural law of population deductively from assumptions regarding the constancy and universality of human dependence on food and on passion between the sexes. In spite of his rejection of rhetoric and literary flourish and his celebration of the cold facts of science, Malthus' *Essay* does not rely on experimentation. He rather draws liberally on intertextual criticism, recontextualizing texts both critically as foils and positively as proof. His method, in the end, is less science than a mixture of textual criticism and theodicy. As many critics have suggested, Malthus the scientist and Malthus the Anglican minister are closely conjoined in the *Essay*.

The power of Malthus' anti-rhetorical rhetoric is apparent in the manner in which he creates a new social imaginary, accords it a position of epistemological privilege, sets himself up as its Newton, its chief cartographer, and then denies his own performative skills as a master magician of the real. In countering Godwin's attack on the injustice of social institutions, Malthus suggests that

though human institutions appear to be the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief to mankind, yet in reality they are light and superficial, they are mere feathers that float on the surface, in comparison with those deeper seated causes of impurity that corrupt the springs and render turbid the whole stream of human life. (1970[1798]: 133)

Over and over in the *Essay*, Malthus suggests that commonly perceived social facts are epistemologically superficial; attempting to base an explanation of the fundamental

workings of society on them accordingly results in distortion. 'Misery', 'evil', 'vices', 'war', 'pestilence', and 'manners and customs' as a whole are then cast as manifestations of the more fundamental process of population pressure and productive capacity. Taking a clue from his hero Newton and drawing on his achievements as a Cambridge Wrangler (i. e. the recipient of distinction in mathematics), Malthus uses the language of mathematics in lending his new domain an aura of abstraction, universality, precision, and certainty. This transformation of questions of poverty, population, and social inequality into phenomena that could be authoritatively represented in quantitative terms played a key role in shaping the emerging statistical imagination of society (see Hacking 1990). Malthus' contention that population and poverty could be measured empirically was enacted as state practice in 1801, just 3 years after the publication of the *Essay*, in the guise of the first national census.

This mathematical and empirical validation helped secure the authority of the work. I want to stress that part of the plausibility and authority attached to this model emerged from Malthus' invocation, through his criticisms of Godwin, of a Lockean philosophy of language. Ways of writing and speaking that seems to strip ideas of attachments to particular times and places, thus enabling them to embody universal and permanent truths, had become models of social order, rationality, truth, education, and elite status. Malthus used a reified and mathematical discourse in constructing the study of population as an autonomous scientific endeavour and seemingly purifying it (see Latour 1993) of its connections to politics and history.

A philosophy of the social world is thus recast in the privileged rhetoric of science. What greater claim can be made for one's authority in this realm than to have identified, codified, enumerated, and explained a new set of natural laws? Malthus frames his central point regarding population fluctuations in these terms: 'This sort of oscillation will not be remarked by superficial observers, and it may be difficult even for the most penetrating mind to calculate its periods' (1970[1798]: 77). As readers and potential followers, we are invited to join Malthus in seeing what has been hidden from less penetrating gazes; if we are able to visualize a world that would 'elude our grosser perceptions' (p. 96), we are provided with a marker of our own observational and explanatory powers and the authority of our own discourse.

This new realm is, it will be recalled, one that was highly inflected in terms of class, gender, and race. The key to population pressure lies not in the lives of the enlightened, as did Locke's programme for the cultivation of linguistic and political rationality, but with the numerically predominant masses, the class most susceptible to the misery that overpopulation produces. To be sure, Malthus is preceded here by his opponent, Condorcet, who argued that history focuses on only a few individuals, the rulers: 'the vast mass of families living for the most part on the fruits of their labour, has been forgotten' (1955[1795]: 170). He proposed an inquiry that focuses on the daily lives of the masses and professional classes, endeavouring to measure each discovery, theory, legal system, or political revolution in terms of 'its consequences for the majority in each society' (1955[1795]). While Condorcet would seem to envision this inquiry as a means of tracing and encouraging the progressive enlightenment of the masses, Malthus, at least in the first draft of the *Essay*, did not have

equality of opportunity and the attenuation of social inequality in mind. As I suggested earlier, Malthus did not deem the lower classes to be intellectually equipped to reveal the workings of the realm that was produced by their own bodies through labour and reproduction. Rather, the enlightened philosopher ‘who sees a little below the surface of things’ is provided with a new research programme, the one cited at the beginning of this essay, the elucidation of ‘the manners and customs of that part of mankind where these retrograde and progressive movements chiefly take place’ (p. 78). Having announced the discovery of a new set of discursive objects, Malthus proposes a metadiscursive regime designed to chart this new realm. Both scientific and social progress seem to hinge on its implementation. After publishing the first *Essay* in 1798, Malthus himself undertook a literary and geographic journey aimed at launching this effort, and he presented the first tome in this new archive of knowledge in the 1803 edition of the *Essay*.

It is rather ironic that Malthus would assert that ‘The histories of mankind that we possess are histories only of the higher classes’ (1970[1798]: 78), echoing Condorcet. At the same time that Locke and Newton were exploring linguistic, political, and experimental philosophy of modernity, other members of the Royal Society, such as John Aubrey, were actively compiling histories of the people they positioned within the lower classes, the humble folk of the countryside (see Bauman and Briggs 2003). Their researches were supplemented by the work of the philologists, who combed ancient texts (or, in some cases, purportedly ancient texts) for information on exotic manners and customs. This work helped shape the discourse of the Scottish Enlightenment that had such a direct effect on Malthus, via the writings of Adam Smith, David Hume, and others (which is another story—see Burrow 1966; Collini *et al.* 1983). Even though they generally shared the Baconian spirit that animated Locke, Newton, and Malthus, the latter's assertion that histories of the lower classes had not been written would seem to erase the contributions of the antiquarians as he launched his own science.<sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSION

I would like to move towards conclusion by citing the opening lines of the *Essay*, given their almost uncanny similarity to the sorts of perceptions one hears at present as people use constructions of the present in creating projections of the coming millennium:

The great and unlooked for discoveries that have taken place of late years in natural philosophy, the increasing diffusion of general knowledge from the extension of the art of printing, the ardent and unshackled spirit of inquiry that prevails throughout the lettered and even unlettered world, the new and extraordinary lights that have been thrown on political subjects which dazzle and astonish the understanding, and particularly ... the French Revolution, ... have all concurred to lead many able men into the opinion that we were touching on a period big with the most important changes, changes that would in some measure be decisive of the future fate of mankind. (1970[1798]: 67)



Let's change a few details, say substitute 'genetics and medicine' for 'natural philosophy', 'global media flows' for 'the art of printing', and 'the end of the Cold War' for 'the French Revolution', and we could easily transform Malthus' statement into one of the Great Pronouncements that emerged so frequently with the opening of The New Millennium. As a testament to the degree to which we continue to use classically modernist discourses in constructing the postmodern world, current celebrations of Democracy, the Global Marketplace, and the New Scientific Revolution get mixed heteroglossically with the dire predictions regarding the proliferation of Genocidal Nationalisms, Transnational Terrorisms, Global Warming, and the Triumph of Viruses over the Human Species. (Post)modern narratives continue to seek audiences and authority by juxtaposing the benefits of science, technology, and civil society with pessimistic portraits of social conflicts and environmental constraints.

The free markets, deregulation, privatization, and globalization that are always about to drive down prices, increase productivity, and help us live better are increasing income disparities worldwide. Take oil-rich Venezuela, until a decade ago one of the richest country in Latin America which had one of the lowest rates of social inequality in the region. Now some 80 per cent of the population lives 'in poverty', half described as faced with 'dire poverty'.<sup>5</sup> It should hardly surprise us that in this context new combinations of old discourses of inequality are coming to the tropological rescue. Here Malthus' rhetoric concerning the positive effects of misery seems to emerge from all sides. The World Bank tells 'Third World debtors' that the 'pain' associated with structural adjustment is temporary and unavoidable and that it can stimulate healthy competition and creativity. Etienne Balibar (1991) argues that cultural reasoning has largely replaced biological rhetorics as a means of rationalizing racism and inequality. But let us remember that both Locke and Malthus themselves drew on a language of 'manners and customs', not biological heredity, in rationalizing poverty and social inequality. Emily Martin (1994) warns us sagely of new hybrids between biological and cultural reasoning that rationalize differential access to health care, food, good housing, and the like and the concentration of toxic waste sites and other environmental hazards in neighbourhoods predominantly occupied by racial minorities as simply the natural benefits that accrue to the cultural practices through which middle-class white North Americans 'train' their immune systems (see Bunyan and Mohai 1992; Bullard 1994). But the prestige of immunological rhetoric is fading as genetic research is producing a plethora of new eugenic schemes.

It would be reasonable to object to any projection of Malthusian modernism into this discussion, in that the postmodern era has precisely turned Malthus on his head; imaginative schemes seem to be hotter commodities in the global marketplace than realist discourses. Indeed, Appadurai (1996) has argued that the global era is best characterized by multiple, overlapping, fragmented, deterritorialized, and contested social practices of the imagination. Clinging to discourses of the concrete, the bounded, the stable, and the real effectively places anthropologists, folklorists, and other scholars whose fortunes were long tied to the research focus that Malthus proposed out of the academic and social game. And certainly many social scientists have been struggling for several decades now to find a new 'field for investigation and

research', one that does not serve agendas for surveillance and social control of the lower classes. Indeed, social science research—and anthropology in particular—had focused so specifically on 'the lower classes' that Laura Nader (1969) had to remind practitioners of the need to 'study up', to engage elites in their research.

But we would be poor readers and social theorists if all we took away from our discussion of Malthus was the notion that the rhetoric of the real won over that of the imaginary in his day and that he extended the power of science and cachet of natural law into the study of the lower classes. It is also important to keep in mind the broader modernist strategy of attacking the reality and the authority of competing formulations, 'discovering' a new social domain, elevating it to epistemological and political priority over other domains, creating new regimes of research and investigation, and making them the basis of social policy. Like Harvey (1974, 1996) and McNally (1993), I have suggested that Malthus created a powerful new way of constructing social inequality, one that helped protect the social and political-economic status quo when it was under attack and to further legitimate practices of capital accumulation. What I have hoped to show is that Malthus' metadiscursive method played as important a role in creating the cachet of the *Essay* and shaping academic and policy debates as the content of his formulations. McNally argues that the tremendous impact of this work is ironic, in that it was a 'meandering, second-rate performance, full of self-contradiction, which scarcely deserves mention alongside Smith or Ricardo' (1993: 75). But Malthus' re-positioning of a post-Lockean theory of mind and anti-rhetorical rhetoric in hiding the politics of emergent shifts in ideologies and practices for constructing and naturalizing social inequality are, it would seem, hardly second-rate, given that their descendants are alive and well and hard at work today. Particularly since academicians form part of the cultural economy of the global age and help to shape the discourses that define, legitimate, and or challenge its ideologies and institutions, it behoves us to reflect critically on the discursive moves pioneered by Locke, Malthus, and other theorists of modernity.

Indeed, claims to have discovered the realm of the global can constitute an ideal juncture for reproducing this discursive and political move. Territorially bounded social and political structures and Fordist, vertically integrated centralized economic modes of production turn out to be superficial and increasingly outmoded phenomena in comparison with new questions regarding deterritorialized global flows of capital, culture, ideologies, people, and germs. All claims to the 'real', to authenticity and traditionality, are revealed to be equally invented. If we accept the notion that fantasies produced and marketed by the Disney Corporation and the identities and histories performed by subaltern communities are equally imaginary, then assessments of the significance of cultural narratives boil down to the share of the global market commanded by the cultural forms in question—and this playing field is certainly not level (to use a favorite neoliberal metaphor). By setting ourselves up as the cartographers these new realms, we once again promulgate strategies for maintaining the authority of elite discourses at the expense of the individuals and communities who, as in Malthus' day, have the most to lose from new world orders; we could unwittingly help to ratify assertions that such populations cannot see the constructedness

of their own constructions or how the objects they produce and consume are located within this global flow. If critics simply superimpose a new set of metadiscursive practices without challenging the gatekeeping mechanisms that limit access to the production of scientific and other elite discourses, they run the risk of simply extending Locke's and Malthus' success in naturalizing relations of inequality. Since the power, visibility, and effectiveness of these exclusionary mechanisms are being rapidly extended, this subject deserves our utmost attention. I speak here as a resident of California and a faculty member at the University of California, where the dismantling of affirmative action has led to a precipitous decline in African-American and Latino enrollments.

Many social scientists reject Malthus' formula for legitimating the status quo of social inequality, including the notion that the 'manners and customs' of the lower classes and the workings of natural laws are responsible for the growing misery of the poor and for social and political-economic woes in general. But we must remember that the 'Malthusian' applications of the *Essay on the Principle of Population* far exceeded Malthus' interpretive claims and his own efforts to shape public policy, such as his attack on public assistance. Since we do not dictate the uses that will be made of our formulations, our efforts to create, privilege, and control new discursive domains or to critically and intertextually transform old ones should be carefully scrutinized for their potential utilization as means of supporting schemes of social inequality. Otherwise, we may unwittingly help sustain the hegemony of elite discourses and the gatekeeping mechanisms of the institutions in which we work and, more broadly, promote the 'Malthusian' ideologies and political-economic technologies that many of us presume to oppose.

## Notes

1. This is not to say, however, that Godwin was terribly egalitarian in terms of his ideology of language. As Olivia Smith (1984: 18) points out, Godwin dismissed earlier writers (including Shakespeare) for adopting too colloquial a style, using 'a relaxed and disjointed style, more resembling the illiterate effusions of the nurse or rustic, than those of a man of delicate perception and classical cultivation, who watched with nice attention the choice of his words and the arrangement of his phrases' (quoted in Smith 1984: 18). Indeed, we might credit Malthus for pointing out the contradiction between Godwin's (relative) political egalitarianism and the way that he displayed his elite status linguistically—and converted the linguistic marking of class status into a language ideology. Smith (1984: 64) argues that Godwin was not prosecuted, unlike Thomas Paine (1951), because the price of his text and his style suggested that its intended readers were fellow members of the elite; its style suggested that it was not subversive.
2. I will cite the *Two Treatises* and the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by placing the Book number in upper-case Roman numerals, followed by the chapter number in small Roman numerals, followed by the section number in Arabic numerals. All emphasis is in the original.
3. The other obstacle is the stupor and idleness that comes from too much leisure and comfort (1970[1798]: 202–12).

4. To be sure, Malthus drew extensively on sources that documented the lives of persons who did not figure in 'the higher classes' in the 1803 and subsequent editions of the *Essay*.
5. This figure is currently used frequently by government officials and social scientists. Some economists believe that the percentage is around 60%, as projected for a decade ago (see Márquez *et al.* 1993).

## References

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Avery, J. (1997). *Progress, Poverty and Population: Re-reading Condorcet, Godwin and Malthus*. London: Frank Cass.
- Bacon, F. (1860). 'Novum Organum', in J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (eds.), *The Works of Francis Bacon*, Vol. 4. New York: Garrett Press.
- Balibar, E. (1991). 'Is There a "Neo-Racism"?' in E. Balibar and I. Wallerstein (eds.), *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*. London: Verso, pp. 17–28.
- Barilli, R. (1989). *Rhetoric* (trans. G. Menozzi). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bauman, R. and Briggs, C. L. (2003). *Voices of Modernity: Language Ideologies and the Politics of Inequality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power* (trans. G. Raymond and M. Adamson). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bullard, R. D. (ed.) (1994). *Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color*. San Francisco: Sierra Club.
- Bunyan, B. and Mohai, P. (eds.) (1992). *Race and the Incidence of Environmental Hazards: A Time for Discourse*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Burrow, J. W. (1966). *Evolution and Society: A Study in Victorian Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chakrabarty, D. (1992). 'Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?', *Representations*, 37: 1–26.
- (2000). *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Chatterjee, P. (1993). *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Collini, S., Winch, D., and Burrow, J. (1983). *That Noble Science of Politics: A Study in Nineteenth-century Intellectual History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Condorcet, A.-N. de (1955[1795]). *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*. (trans. June Barraclough). New York: Noonday Press.
- Cranston, M. (1957). *John Locke: A Biography*. London: Longmans, Green.
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Giddens, A. (1994). 'Living in a Post-Traditional Society', in U. Beck, A. Giddens, and S. Lash (eds.), *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 56–109.
- Godwin, W. (1946[1798]). In F. E. L. Priestley (ed.), *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on morals and happiness*, 3 Vols. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Hacking, I. (1990). *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hall, A. R. (1963). *From Galileo to Newton, 1630–1720*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Harvey, D. (1974). ‘Population, Resources, and the Ideology of Science’, *Economic Geography*, 50: 256–77.
- (1996). *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Hirshman, A. O. (1977). *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jardine, L. (1974). *Francis Bacon: Discovery and the Art of Discourse*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Keller, E. F. (1985). *Reflections on Gender and Science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Laslett, P. (1960). ‘Introduction’, in P. Laslett (ed.), John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15–135.
- Latour, B. (1993). *We Have Been Modern*. Catherine Porter, trans. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Locke, J. (1959[1690]). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 2 Vols. New York: Dover.
- (1960[1690]). *Two Treatises of Government*. New York: New American Library.
- MacPherson, C. B. (1962). *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Malthus, T. R. (1970[1798]). ‘An essay on the principle of population’, in A. Flew (ed.), *An Essay on the Principle of Population and A Summary View of the Principle of Population*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.
- (1803). *An Essay on the Principle of Population; or, A View of Its Past and Present Effect on Human Happiness; with an Inquiry into Our Prospects Respecting the Future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils which it Occasions*. London: Printed for J. Johnson by T. Bensley.
- Márquez, G., Mukherjee, J., Navarro, J. C., González, R. A., Palacios, R., and Rigobón, R. (1993). ‘Fiscal Policy and Income Distribution in Venezuela’, in R. Hausmann and R. Rigobón (eds.), *Government Spending and Income Distribution in Latin America*. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank, pp. 145–213.
- Martin, E. (1994). *Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- McNally, D. (1993). *Against the Market: Political Economy, Market Socialism and the Marxist Critique*. London: Verso.
- Merchant, C. (1980). *The Death of Nature*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.
- Nader, L. (1969). ‘Up the Anthropologist—Perspectives Gained from Studying Up’, in D. Hymes (ed.), *Reinventing Anthropology*. New York: Pantheon, pp. 284–311.
- Paine, T. (1951). *Rights of Man*. New York: Dutton.
- Pateman, C. (1980). *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Polity.
- (1988). *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Shapin, S. (1994). *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- and Schaffer, S. (1985). *Leviathan and the Air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Schapiro, J. S. (1963). *Condorcet and the Rise of Liberalism*. New York: Octagon.
- Sklair, L. (1995[1991]). *Sociology of the Global System*, 2nd edn. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Smith, O. (1984). *The Politics of Language, 1791–1819*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- White, H. (1978). *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Winch, D. (1967). *Malthus*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# PART II CATEGORIES AS POLITICAL INTERVENTIONS

*This page intentionally left blank*

# 4 Editors' Introduction

SIMON SZRETER, HANIA SHOLKAMY, AND A. DHARMALINGAM

The study of population change has always been constructed to speak to power. Indeed, from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century students of population problems and interested officials had been using the administrative machinery of local and central government literally to construct, through increasingly ambitious apparatuses of national and civic enumeration and registration, the demographic 'facts', long before the term 'demography' was coined by Achille Guillard in 1855 (Glass 1973; Buck 1977, 1982; Kreager 1988). The systematic study of population was first given permanent institutional form as an intelligence exercise undertaken by officials of certain European states, ostensibly for either public health or political economy purposes (Cullen 1975; Eyller 1979; Hacking 1990: chs 3–5, 15 and 16; Szreter 1991; Desrosières 1993; Schweber 2004).<sup>1</sup> The disciplinary study of population, demography, was, then, born into a world already populated with officially constructed social categories.

In his contribution to this volume, using the example of the nineteenth-century British census apparatus, Eddy Higgs demonstrates the manner in which not only officials in the central processing departments but also a whole army of house to house enumerators in the provinces had to be entrained into the recognition of these officially sanctioned definitions of categories. They all had to become proficient participants in a particular linguistic community, in order for the nationwide census exercise to be possible. Higgs describes a complex exercise in discursive standardization that every effective national enumeration and registration system in the modern world has had to meet. And yet this process is rarely considered worthy of comment (see Bowker and Star 1999 for amplification of this theme). Some of the problems encountered seem to be strangely perennial. Apparently both the English liberal state's officials in 1881 and the Bolshevik state's Soviet census takers in 1926 (F. Hirsch, Chapter 7, this volume) were equally prim and proper when faced with the quandary of whether to allow 'prostitute' to be designated as an officially recognized occupation!

It is not surprising, of course, that categories such as 'occupation' and 'relationship to head of household' should provide ambiguities requiring much careful work of official adjudication. But, even much more fundamental categories, the demographic basics of births and deaths, were not simply a straightforward matter of recording a natural event. In fact, it required careful consideration to police and 'create' even



these category boundaries, as Higgs so effectively and elegantly demonstrates with respect to both birth and death with the single example of the protracted deliberations over several decades in Britain as officials ruminated on how to classify and register stillbirths.

The various chapters in this section show, in many different ways, that social categories, as well as comprising linguistic innovations, are intrinsically political constructions. Furthermore, so many of the categories used in population studies are the product not merely of 'social construction' in a general sense but of explicit, purposeful, official state construction, as in the taking of the census. These categories are even more directly political in their provenance and signification (Alonso and Starr 1987; Kertzer and Arel 2002). 'Official categories matter in ways that social categories do not', as Melissa Nobles pithily puts it.

Nobles provides a discussion of the manner in which social movements for ethnic recognition and for ethnic rights in United States and in Brazil have each responded differently to the realization that their legal positions and their wider socio-economic status can be strongly influenced by the way in which they are classified by the state's decennial census. Important government policies (and often, indirectly, all sorts of commercial activities, too) are routinely premised on the categories they deploy—and this can be as true in liberal democracies as in one-party states. In the United States this became crystal clear when the Office of Management and Budget issued its Statistical Directive No.15 in 1977, which mandated just five officially recognized ethnic categories. This 'makes clear what has existed all along: race and ethnic statistical categories are political categories as much as they are enumerative ones' (Nobles, Chapter 6, this volume). It is intriguing to reflect on the fact that it took until 1977 for US officials in a liberal state to publicly acknowledge this, whereas Soviet officials in 1926 were already quite clear that this was precisely what they were doing: politically creating ethnic and 'nationality' categories.

Francine Hirsch's archivally based, historical study of the fate of the survey of 'nationality' populations conducted at the Soviet state's first census of 1926 fully illustrates not only the political nature of official categories but also the grand classical themes of hubris and irony in this enterprise. Just as the ideologists of the European Romantic movement at the turn of the previous century had wanted to use the idea of nationhood as a social movement to change history, so, too, the leaders of the Soviet empire had, by 1924, come to see nationhood as something to be used to engineer collective consciousness among disconnected aggregates of peasantry and as a half-way house to full class consciousness. Sustained by the energy of their revolutionary ardour, over the next three years these Soviet census organizers confronted and attempted to solve a whole complex sequence of technical and methodological issues regarding phrasing of questions, units of inquiry, and linguistic terminology, as if almost a century of census-taking lessons, learned slowly and gradually in the histories of other countries, as Chapter 5 by Eddy Higgs shows, was all being compressed into a single burst of activity in the new Soviet empire. Inevitably, many of the compromises and stumblings, which characterized the history of census-taking elsewhere, were repeated in the Soviet census of 1926.

Most

poignantly, two different terms for the central concept of 'nationality' itself had to be deployed to suit different parts of the Union. Using the telling case study of the Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Sarts, Hirsch explores the unintended consequences of this Soviet strategy, in effect an effort to rerun, within the vast Eurasian lands and peoples ruled from Moscow, the history of populist nationalism which had been unleashed by the Enlightenment and the Romantic reaction throughout western and central Europe over a century earlier. Perhaps they should have known better! This explicitly political categorizing initiative, driven from the centre by the Bolshevik state, both created nationalist identities and provoked powerful local, popular movements of protest and negotiation among dissatisfied constituencies. In the Soviet case, as in the British Indian case (see below), it is a high irony that it has been those provoked to self-assertion and self-definition, whose 'nationalist' claims have outlasted the designs of the hubristic imperial regimes which attempted to impose their preferred categories upon them in the first place.

Like Eddy Higgs' chapter, Hirsch works hard to excavate and make visible once again early stages in this process of objectification in demography: the pairing of new linguistic forms with the objects. Both chapters give crucial insights into the actual bureaucratic procedures of linguistic audit and central verification, which literally 'embodied' the process of objectification, as the central authorities in each case strove to create a uniform set of definitions and linguistic standards by 'educating' a large national network of provincial enumerators and registrars.

Many of the contributions here document the emergence of specific social categories and classification systems in the field of population studies. But there is also implied in these accounts a reciprocal history of the un-categories and the un-recognized in each national or local context. Susan Greenhalgh (Chapter 8, this volume) shows that this is much more than merely a nice logical point. Her focus is the Communist Chinese state's creation of 'un-persons', the so-called black population of unplanned births. These are individuals whose lack of legal status and civic rights as a category is not dissimilar to that of those 'illegitimates' who were born out of holy wedlock in European society and whose treatment has in some cases only very recently improved (Kertzer 1993). In communist China the 'unplanned' are radically disenfranchised from the important range of positive freedoms, which a communist state confers upon its citizens. As a very large number of persons, running into the tens of millions at least, and suspected to comprise a large proportion of the unregistered, vulnerable immigrant urban workforce which is currently powering Chinese economic growth on the basis of exploitatively low wage rates, they are a very substantial and potent embodiment of what might otherwise seem a rather abstract and philosophical point. Social categories, especially official ones, are political interventions through the objectification process, both by virtue of the social entities and identities that they positively endorse but also through what are in a sense the political acts of violence which they commit in suppressing other alternatives and thereby socially excluding individuals who do not 'fit'.

However, Santiago Villaveces' chapter on contemporary Colombia strongly suggests that the absence or breakdown of a state machinery capable of enregistering the

population may, paradoxically, result in even more or equally catastrophic, general, and random forms of 'violence' than those perpetrated by a strong state intent on imposing its discriminatory categories on the populace, as in communist China. Although Villaveces, justifiably, expresses deep frustration with the Colombian government's evasive approach towards the 'dispossessed', this is of course, symptomatic of a well-known general problem of the state in Colombia. Indeed, Colombia is a paradigm, extreme case of a weak and powerless, nominally 'liberal' state. The consequences of this are clearly tragic for large sections of its 'invisible' population, so exploited and terrorized by local barons who have arisen in the resultant power vacuums in the extensive regions where the state's writ does not run. Thus, it can be seen that when the fundamental capacity of the state is seriously compromised, one of the most likely first casualties is the capacity of the state to adequately enregister its population, because this is quintessentially dependent on maintaining the loyalty of the most extended and peripheral network of minor officials. Once this capacity has fallen into abeyance in certain regions or for certain marginal groups, such as shanty town dwellers, this renders nugatory the possibility of the state guaranteeing even the negative freedoms to its poorer citizens, let alone the more important positive ones.

The Colombian context raises some highly instructive general issues of great relevance to the principal themes of this volume. It has been pointed out that all categories are, ultimately, politically and ideologically charged. As Nobles and Greenhalgh certainly demonstrate in their contributions, official, state-sanctioned categories are to be treated with particular respect and suspicion in this regard. However, the Colombian case, perhaps somewhat disconcertingly for some, suggests the practical futility and delusion of aspiring to the diametrically opposite conditions of a liberal Utopian state of unlimited intellectual liberty in which both citizens and social scientists, including demographers, would be free to express and construct their own favoured social identities and categories at will. This may represent a desirable Platonic ideal of semiotic equality, one that would seem to be entailed in the more radical relativist formulations of postmodernism. However, the Colombian case-study brings us down to earth in our critiques and reminds us that the oldest political problem known to human groups, that of power, cannot be simply wished away. It seems, then, that the laudable postmodernist relativist demand, that the polyphony of human values and identities be accorded equal status, may only be realizable within certain politically privileged and 'protected' environments, which paradoxically correspond, in some key respects, to those of the strong (though not too strong!) state, able fully to guarantee its citizens' security and both their negative and their positive freedoms. As Chapter 6 by Nobles underlines, this should be a moderately strong state that is liberal, pluralistic, and highly accessible to citizens with heterogeneous identities and minority interests, petitioning for rights to recognition and representation.

As Melissa Nobles shows, and as Villaveces's analysis logically implies, state power can be positively empowering, even to underprivileged categories of citizens, if society is so constituted as to make it possible to negotiate and bargain for the devolution and dissemination of such power. After all, even the dreaded medical profession, the

*bête noire* of the early Foucauldian denunciations of the Victorian liberal state's knowledge/power discourse, in fact rose to high status and power from a position of relative obscurity in the preceding era of the landed aristocratic Ancien Regime (Porter and Porter 1989). In Britain it rose to social recognition and power precisely because of its successful bargaining strategies, whereby, as a state-registered profession, it annexed to itself a degree of state power (Reader 1966; Peterson 1978). A genuinely emancipatory, postmodernist position, therefore, requires much attention to be devoted to the important political accomplishment of how to create, defend, and maintain constitutional arrangements for a 'strong' state, which, alone, can provide the design and framework for a widely tolerant and respectful society—a genuinely empowering state, which can deliver widely diffused power with safety. This is a historically rare achievement.

The contribution by Carla Makhoul Obermeyer (Chapter 10, this volume) is the first of several here, which examine African contexts. It provides a case study, also exemplifying the central themes of this volume, regarding the problematic nature of the imposition of a priori categories by the state or other agencies of power and authority. It shows how in each of two different North African Arab societies, Egypt and Morocco, the dichotomous policy science categories of 'user/non-user' of modern health technology, perpetrates a systematic misreading on the societies in question. It construes people's attitudes as either 'traditional' and superstitious or 'modern' and rational. However the author finds that all users of health services in both of these different contexts in fact have an entirely distinct disposition. They view both their own bodies and the clinics and other institutions offering medical services 'as a moral universe defined by mutual obligations'. Examining their behaviour through the imposed bifocal prism of the user/non-user dichotomy simply makes a nonsense of the analysis. Of course the user/non-user categories of policy science derive their primary currency from the political support they enjoy among the international community of funders and official institutions, for whom these terms make sense, rather than from their claims to represent accurately the nature of the communities to which they are applied.

In the final chapter of this part (Chapter 11), Collumbien *et al.* provide one further and very different illustration of this general theme, regarding the fundamental misreading which is likely to occur when the indigenous, or 'emic', reproductive or health practices of any society are rigidly interpreted through the simplifying grid of 'western' scientific, or 'etic', categories and the powerful ethnocentric cultural assumptions which lie behind them.<sup>2</sup> In this case Collumbien and her colleagues were commissioned by the UK government's Department for International Development to conduct an apparently routine piece of policy-implementation research concerned with the social marketing of contraceptives in relation to the AIDS threat in the relatively poor state of Orissa in southeast India. One of the virtues of the 'marketing' disposition is that it can be conducive to placing an emphasis on 'finding out' what the market wants. Consequently Collumbien's team made it their business to embark on an investigative enquiry to seek some knowledge, in respondents' own words, of indigenous understandings of sexual risks and sexual health issues. As their

results show this methodology uncovered a substantial divergence between the priorities of the Indian communities studied and those which western science would privilege.

In order to understand the Indian priorities manifest in their findings the investigators were able to draw on the ethnography of sexual cosmology, which explains how these emic sexual health categories are arranged according to principles enshrined in the Vedic texts and in Ayurvedic medicine. This envisages human individuals as vehicles for spiritual energy exchanges with their environment, through the medium of the transformational properties of food, health, and sex. Semen, or 'Virya', is defined as a direct currency of this vital and spiritual force, which should only be expended with care and prudence (and there is a female equivalent 'sexual ecology' centred on the vagina's secretions, but this was not the focus of Collumbien's research). A further thought-provoking set of associations in the indigenous linguistic community's patterns of use of terms emerged in the equation between sexual vigour and money and wealth. As in many African polygenous societies, the poor man in Orissa is considered manifestly weak in vigour in all senses and only the wealthy can 'afford' the demanding life of many wives (Bledsoe *et al.* 2000: chs 6, 8, and 14). Many features of the Hindu belief in an economy of erotic energy are in fact replicated in Chinese sexual cosmology. While this may seem exotic to contemporary western eyes, it should be recalled that such views were absolutely commonplace for centuries in Europe, including among leading men of sociological and biological science (such as Herbert Spencer and Francis Galton) until the early twentieth century (Szreter 1996: 263). Quite correctly, the conclusions drawn by Collumbien *et al.* from their new knowledge and understanding are not to debate the relative merits of the Ayurvedic, as against western 'scientific' medical viewpoints, but simply to point out that reproductive and sexual health policy and research which fails to comprehend and engage with the meanings and categories of Virya philosophy will quite simply remain irrelevant and ineffective in an Indian context.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the chapters in this part demonstrate the manifold ways in which the categories used to study population problems scientifically have been produced through various complex historical processes, all of which are strongly political in their character. They document a number of ways in which intrinsically ambiguous linguistic forms are fixed and objectified to render them amenable to demographic analysis, often through the mediation of state apparatuses. They have shown that this has typically entailed significant 'opportunity costs', in terms of the alternative meanings that are closed-off, and, where designation of categories of people by the state are concerned, in terms of the rights of real persons. As Ian Hacking has put it, representing is intervening; categories impose on contexts.

## Notes

1. Note that although the United States instituted in 1790 the first regular decennial national census in the world—for constitutional apportionment reasons—the US Census Bureau was given no permanent establishment until the twentieth century—see Anderson (1988).

2. On emic and etic distinctions, see Headland *et al.* (1990).
3. It is certainly the case that in the enormously complex area of psychosomatic sexual medicine that 'western' medical textbooks accept, the individual's beliefs are of an equivalent importance to strictly physiological matters (Bancroft 1989: ch. 8, 656–8).

## References

- Alonso, W. and Starr, P. (eds.) (1987). *The Politics of Numbers*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Anderson, M. (1988). *The American Census: A Social History*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bancroft, J. (1989). *Human Sexuality and Its Problems*. 2nd edn. New York: Churchill Livingstone.
- Bledsoe, C., Lerner, S., and Guyer, J. (eds.) (2000). *Fertility and the Male Life-cycle in the Era of the Fertility Decline*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bowker, G. C. and Star, S. L. (1999). *Sorting Things Out. Classification and its Consequences*. Cambridge MA.: MIT Press.
- Buck, P. (1977). 'Seventeenth-century political arithmetic: civil strife and vital statistics', *Isis*, 68: 67–84.
- (1982). 'People who counted: political arithmetic in the eighteenth century', *Isis*, 73: 28–45.
- Cullen, M. J. (1975). *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain*. Hassocks: Harvester.
- Desrosières, A. (1993). *La politique des grands nombres. Histoire de la raison statistique*. Paris: Editions la découverte.
- Eyler, J. M. (1979). *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas and Methods of William Farr*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Glass, D. V. (1973). *Numbering the People. The Eighteenth-Century Population Controversy and the Development of Census and Vital Statistics in Britain*. Farnborough: DC Heath.
- Hacking, I. (1990). *The Taming of Chance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Headland, T. N., Pike, K. L., and Harris, M. (eds.) (1990). *Emics and Etics. The Insider/Outsider Debate*. Sage.
- Kertzer, D. I. (1993). *Sacrificed for Honour: Italian Infant Abandonment and the Politics of Reproductive Control*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- and Arel, D. (2002). *Census and Identity. The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- and Fricke, T. (eds.) (1997). *Anthropological Demography. Toward a New Synthesis*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kreager, P. (1988). 'New light on Graunt', *Population Studies*, 42(1): 129–40.
- Peterson, M. J. (1978). *The Medical Profession in mid-Victorian London*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Porter, R. and Porter, D. (eds.) (1989). *Patient's Progress. Doctors and Doctoring in Eighteenth-century England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reader, W. J. (1966). *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-century England*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Schweber, L. (2004). *Disciplining Statistics: Demography and Vital Statistics in France and England, 1830–1885*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press.
- Szreter, S. (1991). 'The G.R.O. and the public health movement 1837–1914', *Social History of Medicine*, 4: 435–63.
- (1996). *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# 5 The Linguistic Construction of Social and Medical Categories in the Work of the English General Register Office, 1837–1950

EDWARD HIGGS

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CENSUS ENUMERATOR

On the morning of Monday, 4 April 1881, Mr Charles James White, a census enumerator in the Mile End Road district of London, was collecting household schedules. He had delivered these to each of the households in his enumeration district the week before so that their heads could fill in the details of the members of their households on Census Night. In England and Wales in 1881 these details included name, relationship to head of household, marital condition, age, sex, occupation, birthplaces, and medical disabilities (Higgs 1989: 124). White's job was now to copy these schedules into his enumerator's book before forwarding the latter to the Census Office at the General Register Office (GRO) in London. Here the results of the decennial enumeration for the whole of England and Wales were to be tabulated prior to being published in the *Census Reports*. The GRO was the government department that had been responsible for the taking of the census in England and Wales since 1841. The Office had also administered the civil system for registering births, marriages, and deaths based on a network of local registrars established in 1837. The information generated by civil registration, including data on cause of death, was used by the GRO to compile demographic and medical statistics, which were published in the *Annual Reports of the Registrar General* and associated volumes (Nissel 1987: 1–74).

Mr White's work, however, was not proceeding smoothly that day. At one particular house he was handed a schedule by the female household head containing her name and details, and those of two small boys. White knew that the two boys in fact lived in Deptford, another part of London, but also, more importantly, that this was the local brothel and that there were women on the premises plying their trade. 'Where are the girls?', demanded White. 'They are in bed', retorted the indignant madame. Unabashed, White insisted on calling the prostitutes down, marshalling them along the passage, and noting down their particulars. White was obviously a forceful and determined character, which may explain why he was called as an expert witness before an interdepartmental Civil Service committee on the census in 1890,

at which he described his encounter. He also explained to the committee that the street he was enumerating contained, ‘several persons who had been locked up for assaults, and some questionable characters’ (*Report of the 1890 Treasury Committee on the Census*: questions 1850–1). There were thus occasions when an enumerator had to have a strong personality in order to obtain information. Local knowledge was also plainly necessary, although White never explained exactly how he knew that the house in question was a brothel.

But White also went on to explain to the committee that when filling in the prostitutes' particulars, ‘instead of having those girls down as servants or needlewomen, they were simply unfortunates’. He plainly did not regard being an ‘unfortunate’ as an occupation, however, since his enumerator's book, now held at the Public Record Office (part of the National Archives, London, hereafter TNA), does not contain any women so described, although it reveals a number recorded as ‘servants (out of work)’ or ‘needlewomen’ (TNA, RG 11/481: enumeration district 16). Other contemporary enumerators, however, did describe such women as ‘prostitutes’, ‘unfortunates’, ‘fallen’, or even ‘nymphs of the pavé’, in the occupational columns of their returns. This raises a different question—how were such gainful employments treated when the enumerators' books were processed at the Census Office in London? Here, clerks took the thousands of occurrences of the differing occupations recorded in the books and placed them under the hundreds of headings to be used in the published reports. This the clerks did with the help of occupational dictionaries, examples of which still survive in the TNA and elsewhere. The dictionary for 1881 certainly has no entry for prostitute, or for its synonyms (TNA, RG 27/5: Item 69). Were such women simply counted as unoccupied, or were they slid over into the census category of those ‘Providing personal services to men’, that is, servants?

## THE LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF STATISTICAL DATA

This vignette exemplifies in microcosm many of the issues that will be addressed here. The manner in which the statistics published by the GRO related to an underlying social or biological reality needs to be seen within the context of the methodologies for collecting and manipulating data. These methodologies were not directly quantitative or mathematical, rather they were concerned with the use, understanding, and processing of language. People were asked questions and gave answers, or not as the case may be. The latter were usually in the form of terms that signified social relationships, occupations, causes of death, and so on. Such terms were transcribed, and then sorted using dictionaries, thesauri, and classification systems. These were pre-mathematical processes, which offered up phenomena to be subsequently counted and manipulated quantitatively.

Articulated in these processes were what Barry Hindess has described as ‘conceptual instruments’ of statistical production (Hindess 1973), which can be seen as determining the form and scope of phenomena for analysis. These include the definitions of units of analysis; the determination of characteristics of these units deemed worthy of



study and the asking of specific questions about them, which elicit answers in a certain form; the classification systems, which structure these replies; and the development of selection criteria for determining priorities in cases of the use of multiple terms. White, for example, had a very fixed idea of what constituted the madame's household, what questions he had a right to ask, and what was or was not an occupation. Other enumerators interpreted an 'occupation' somewhat differently, whilst the Census Office did not see 'prostitute' as a term signifying an occupation at all.

Such 'conceptual instruments' are plainly concerned with definitions, meanings, and discourse, rather than with mathematical logic. As such, they fall within the province of what might loosely be described as the social construction of knowledge. This covers a number of approaches to the acquisition of scientific understanding which are not always compatible but share a common belief that human beings do not have an unproblematic and immediate relationship with 'states of affairs', this being mediated by cultural and methodological systems (e.g. Kuhn 1962; Foucault 1970, 1972; MacKenzie 1981; Pickering 1992; Jordanova 1995). Diseases may be regarded as real, for example, but how they are conceived off intellectually at any particular time depends very much on the currently accepted models of disease causation—religious, humoral, bacterial, genetic, and so on (Aronowitz 1998). Such an approach to 'knowledge' is useful in focusing attention on the techniques and assumptions used in research. However, it is sometimes difficult to determine what is the exact relationship between cultural models of reality and reality itself. Are scientific models either good or bad approximations to the underlying structures of objective reality, or do they create a structured reality from what is in fact a formless stream of events and transmutations, as a nominalist influenced by the work of philosophers such as Nelson Goodman might suggest (Goodman 1954, 1978)? Can one distinguish between cases where scientific models are a poor approximation to reality, and those where the 'something' to which they refer does not exist?

Greater clarity might be achieved here if one spoke of language as opposed to culture, or, more precisely, saw the latter in terms of patterns of meaning articulated in language. But what is the 'meaning' of language? In the nineteenth century, crudely speaking, thinkers such as John Stuart Mill tended to see the relationship between names and things as a two part system of labelling—names were attached to things like price tags in a shop (Dummett 1992: 96–7; Skorupski 1998: 36–40, 72–7). However, since the work of Gottlob Frege (1848–1925), modern linguistic philosophers have taken the use of names as comprising three distinct elements: the linguistic sign; that to which it refers; and the manner in which it refers—loosely speaking, the sign's sense (Dummett 1992: 54–203). Each and all of these elements can vary over time and from community to community. In addition, such terms can be grouped under categories that further modify their meanings. Thus, in Victorian England the term 'prostitute' was plainly not seen by the Census Office as included in the category 'occupations'. Indeed, much of what women did, and still do, is not categorized in this manner.

A few simple examples may be of use here. Thus, in the discipline of paleoanthropology, the term 'Piltdown man' referred to the same object both when it was believed

to be the skull of the ‘missing link’ found in England in 1908, and after it was subsequently discovered to be an elaborate hoax (Spencer and Langham 1990). Here the sign and referent are the same but the way in which they are linked changed over time. Similarly, the term ‘dropsy’, referring to fluid retention, had a very different meaning in nineteenth-century Western medicine depending on the conceptual medical framework within which it was used—it was a cause of death from a humoural standpoint, but only a symptom in the specific-disease-entity understanding of illness (Emery 1993: 11). This model of language allows for the existence of terms whose use would make perfect sense within modern sentences but for which no actual referent would be recognized today—the term ‘miasma’, used to describe the Victorian concept of an air-borne causal agent in the spread of disease, might be a suitable example.

But if the various elements of language can change in this manner, how could one recognize that a sentence using a term was true or false? This is a question that has formed the substance of much Western linguistic philosophy since Frege's day (Miller 1998). For Michael Dummett, the sense of a term, very loosely speaking, is that which allows one to grasp its referent when one understands that term (Dummett 1992: 93). But this interpretation of Frege's linguistics is, potentially, fraught with difficulties, and leaves it uncertain how people using the same term in a discussion can be guaranteed to be using it in the same manner (Miller 1998: 42–54). A radical solution to this problem is to see the sense of a term as being made up of all the true sentences in which it can appear within a particular language community. Sense therefore depends upon the conventions used in a particular language community at any one moment in time. In turn, knowledge of the conventions depends upon training within that community. This is an insight provided by Saul Kripke in his interpretation of the linguistic philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein (Kripke 1982). Such a way of looking at the sense of terms is controversial but would certainly help to clarify what the ‘social construction of knowledge’ means.

It should also be noted that this way of thinking about the meaning of terms used in the social sciences does not necessarily preclude the concept of ‘Truth’. The ‘reality’ of a social form or entity may indeed be captured, or at least in part, by the way we can talk about it. As in the natural sciences, our hypotheses may be borne out with an engagement with reality by experimentation. Languages may map on to reality, although they might not do so exhaustively. Indeed, the whole point of using particular forms of conventional speech may be to allow us to navigate complex situations without having to process all the possible meanings available to us—they truncate information flows and so save on processing (Higgs 2003). This distinguishes the model of language used here from that of a postmodernist such as Michel Foucault for whom meanings, and changes to them, are always at the level of discourse (Foucault 1972: 167–8). This may be because Foucault's models of discourse tend to work at the level of categories rather than of words. But in the linguistic models of meaning discussed above there is always a certain disjuncture between language and things—meaning is a property of words not of objects. There is thus always a possibility that our language about things does not capture reality, or captures only part of it, and is subject to improvement and, indeed, wholesale revolution (Kuhn 1962).

These considerations lead to various propositions:

- (1) the ‘meaning’ of categories and terms within the social sciences can only be understood in terms of the discursive processes articulated in the forms and instructions used in the collection and analysis of data—indeed, data is not ‘the given’ which is ‘collected’, it is actively constructed in the process of investigation;
- (2) since the sense of terms is inherently social rather than objective, their meanings can, and do, change over time;
- (3) there is always the possibility (likelihood?) that the meaning of terms will differ between lay and expert language communities, and between differing expert language communities, leading to ambiguities in the final statistics, or struggles over the meaning of social categories by differing groups;
- (4) as a consequence, accepted meanings reflect the power and authority of bodies such as the GRO which can insist on the use of their definitions of terms; one of the most crucial aspects of the work of bodies such as the GRO is the construction of language communities through the discursive processes of data collection and analysis.

These propositions will be illustrated here by examining the conceptual instruments of statistical production, as discussed above, which were used by the GRO. Particular attention will be paid to the shifting definitions of the ‘person’ and census household, and the meanings articulated by the classification systems it used to analyse occupational and cause of death data.

This is a study of the construction of social science categories in the historical past but there is no reason to assume that such processes are not at work in the modern social sciences. This would only be untrue if we can assume an ‘objectivity’ for our own thought processes which sharply differentiates us from all previous historical periods and cultures. It should also be noted that this analysis is not directly concerned with the ‘reliability’ of the data derived from such processes. In a sense, statistical data is always reliable within the context of the linguistic conventions, which give them meaning. The problem is that such conventions differ between individuals, communities, and over time, and thus one is not always comparing like with like. This is not a trivial question of ‘error’, or ‘inadequacy’, or the need for ‘progressive’ improvement but of fundamental incompatibility. We are concerned here not with the workaday application of time series to empirical research but more generally, and more interestingly, with the epistemological status of knowledge.

## CONCEPTUAL METHODOLOGIES OF DATA PROCESSING: THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

The selection of units and variables of analysis in survey work is often an unconscious, ‘common-sense’ activity, which hardly merits comment in the literature reporting the statistical results based upon such techniques. In the secondary analysis of datasets such pre-structuring of data has often to be accepted as a *fait accompli*, always assuming that

researchers even recognize this as a constraint (Schürer 1990: 74–82). But this process has profound effects on the form and content of the phenomena that come to be analysed quantitatively in the social and medical sciences. The unit of analysis used in the collection of data in the GRO's medical, demographic, and census work, is a case in point. At first sight, one might imagine that the person who is born, gets married, dies, or appears as a member of a census household, was a fairly concrete entity but even here one can see the processes of linguistic construction at work. The definitions of the person implicit in these processes did not relate to a single self-evident and residual object/subject but were defined in various differing ways depending on the context within which the process of data capture was carried out.

At the outset, it should be noted that this is not something that is confined to the work of the modern statistical bureaux. Thus, the system of ecclesiastical registration in England and Wales, which preceded the introduction of civil registration, was not concerned principally with the physical body but with the rites of passage of the Christian soul. Thus, baptism, as the ceremony of initiation into the Christian fellowship, rather than the physical birth of the body, was the event recorded. The distinction drawn between physical and spiritual birth amongst Nonconformist sects practising adult baptism was only an extreme example of the fundamental dualism with respect to the relationship between the body and soul in Western Christian thought. Today one can speak meaningfully of the 'soul' in this context even if one personally does not believe that such an entity exists. Using the term in sentences that denied the reality of the entity in premodern England would, however, have brought one into conflict with the authority of the Church and State. The mismatch between physical birth and spiritual baptism is, of course, a source of endless frustration for historical demographers, who have to make assumptions respecting the intervals between the two events in order to convert the date of one into that of the other (Wrigley and Schofield 1981: 100–2).

But the system of civil registration established by the 1836 Registration Act did not simply record the physical body either. The main reason for the introduction of the system was to improve the recording of lines of descent and thus improve the security of title to property (Higgs 1996*b*). As a consequence, civil registration recorded the legal rather than the biological person, or, perhaps more accurately, the person was defined legally rather than within a medical discourse. This distinction came into sharper focus in doubtful cases where the two concepts overlapped. Thus, in July 1880 the Registrar General, the head of the GRO, wrote to the Treasury to get a legal opinion from the Treasury Solicitor on the definition of a 'stillbirth'. This arose from the distressing case of a baby suffocated in the act of being 'extruded from the mother's body', on which a coroner's inquest had brought in a verdict of accidental death. The Registrar General considered that the child was stillborn, basing his view on a legal judgment that in English law a woman who had killed her child which had breathed, but which was not completely extruded from her body, could not be found guilty of murder. This meant, 'in short that complete extrusion and not the setting up of respiration constitutes birth, legally if not medically'. The local registrar, therefore, could not register the birth of the child in question, since, under section 1 of the

1874 Registration Act, registration of births was limited to children born alive. But he had to register its death under section 16 of the same Act because an inquest had been held. As the Registrar General noted, this meant that the system would be creating the record of the death of a person who had never been born, which was an obvious absurdity in common-sense terms (TNA, RG 29/2: 288–9).

On a number of occasions medical bodies called upon the GRO to include the recording of stillbirths in the registration process for purposes of improving medical knowledge. However, at least in the Victorian period, the senior officers of the GRO rejected these requests on strictly non-medical grounds. William Farr, the GRO's medical statistician from 1839 to 1879, advocated the registration of stillbirths for statistical purposes in the *Annual Report* published in 1866. However, his superior, George Graham, the Registrar General from 1842 to 1879, blocked the proposal. As the latter explained to the Home Office the following year, he believed that to 'investigate every miscarriage and every abortion and the exact time of conception and the precise period of gestation appears to me an indelicate, indecent, nasty enquiry', and he feared that the inception of such a policy would undermine the willingness of parents to register births at all (General Register Office 1866: 191; TNA, HO 45/8044). This was not only the rejection of a particular registration procedure but also of the medical community's authority to determine what should count as a person in the civil registration process.

The registration of stillbirths was only introduced in 1927 after the passing of the Births and Deaths Registration Act of the previous year. Stillbirths were now being integrated fully into the developing twentieth-century medical definitions of infant mortality—the distinctions between infant mortality (under 1 year), neonatal mortality (under 4 weeks), and stillbirths, eventually being joined by the concept of perinatal mortality (stillbirths plus neonatal or early neonatal deaths) in the post-Second World War period (Peller 1947–8: 405–56). By this date one also finds the GRO discussing the concept of 'reproductive wastage'—'the loss to the community of potential human life during pregnancy and labour and in the first year of life', which also included miscarriages and abortions (General Register Office 1954: 26–8). The concept of life within the GRO was being extended back into the pre-partum period. This greater susceptibility of the GRO to medical definitions of the person may reflect the administrative subordination of the GRO to the Ministry of Health in 1919. Modern debates over the status of human foetuses, and the point at which they can be said to have human rights in law, reveal that the definition of the 'person' is still far from straightforward.

The manner in which social phenomena were linguistically constructed can also be seen in the units of analysis used in the census. As in the case of civil registration, the taking of a census was an act of state authority mandated by Acts of Parliament, and the rules for this activity and the definitions to be used were laid down by the GRO as the properly constituted legal authority. Due to the prescribed manner in which the enumeration was taken, the individual in the census was a person resident in a house on census night. This was most obvious in 1841, when those people sleeping in barns, sheds, tents, or in the open air, or who 'from any other cause, although

within the district, have not been enumerated as inmates of any dwelling-house', were not specifically recorded in the census. Individuals on board ship, on barges, or theoretically even those working on night shifts, were also omitted. Special arrangements had to be made for the enumeration of such people in later censuses but many may still have slipped through the census net (Higgs 1989: 37–46).

The nature of the social context in which the census individual was placed was made still more ambiguous by the uncertainties as to the boundary of the census household. The rules governing the manner in which enumerators were to identify 'householders' to whom a census schedule was to be given were complex, and changed over the course of the Victorian period. The GRO based its concept of the household on a commonsense mixture of commensality and the payment of rent for a distinct space within a house. There was, however, always a shadowy penumbra of boarders, lodgers, and visitors over which the administrative boundary of the household shifted from census to census. Whether an individual was recorded as a lodger, or the head of a household with a sole member, might depend on the changing instructions governing the distribution of schedules rather than any shifts in the underlying social structure. The overall trend in the official definitions constituting the household was to elevate the person living alone to the status of a distinct 'householder' rather than treating him or her as a boarder or lodger in another household. The use of the terms 'household' and 'family', almost interchangeably on the census schedules may also have created ambiguities which gave enumerators and householders ample opportunity to impose their own definitions of social reality on the census-taking process. In practice, many Victorian enumerators appear to have been as confused by these ambiguities as modern historians (Higgs 1989: 57–62).

## CONCEPTUAL METHODOLOGIES OF DATA PROCESSING: THE VARIABLE

The individual items of information 'captured' by the GRO on these units of analysis also reflected the administrative and conceptual contexts within which census-taking and registration were carried on. The specific questions asked precluded certain answers, or encouraged answers that took a certain form. The requirement to provide the name and occupation of the father of the bride and groom on the Victorian marriage certificate, but not that of the mother, reflected a view of proper lines of descent, and of parental authority. The lack of requests for information on the mother's age, or of siblings, on the Victorian birth certificate reflected the legal origins of civil registration, and their insertion in the twentieth century reveals the increasing importance of research into fertility and population trends. As will be described in more detail below, the instruction in the Victorian period that occupations given in the census should be qualified with the materials worked upon, reflected a particular view of how work affected health. The requirement to place the residence of individuals on census night, or at the time of their death, in defined administrative units, was derived from the need to provide accurate mortality rates for these areas.

Much of the information given on the census schedules and registration forms probably reflected a conscientious attempt by respondents to give appropriate answers to questions, although it is plain that some Victorians had only the haziest of ideas as to their place and date of birth (Higgs 1989: 63–77). Very few respondents were as cavalier as Oscar Wilde who claimed, ‘When I had to fill in a census paper I gave my age as 19, my profession as genius, my infirmity as talent’ (Wilde 1995: 122). On the other hand, what respondents actually meant by their replies is not always easy to discern. On occasion the mismatch between the question asked and the reply given was almost comical. For example, the meaning of the term ‘relationship to head of household’ could be hopelessly misconstrued. The GRO plainly meant it to refer to kinship terms, or the relationships of boarder, lodger, servant, or visitor. But in 1861 one farm labourer living in a shed at the bottom of a farmer's garden merely described his relationship to the head of the family as ‘friendly’ (TNA, RG 9/1783: f. 35, p. 22).

Similarly, what exactly did the term ‘cause of death’ imply? When a non-medical respondent during the early years of registration gave the cause of death of a person as, ‘Accidentally killed by a blow from the bob of a steam engine’ (Nissel 1987: 34), modern historians of medicine would no doubt regard this as an example of defective reporting but it was a perfectly meaningful use of language within a lay context. It should be noted, however, that the GRO's development of medical classification systems (nosologies) to structure cause of death data in the early Victorian period constrained how one could talk about disease. This is very important given the influence of the nosologies developed by William Farr on the International Classification of Diseases. By assigning death to a single ‘primary’ cause in the GRO's publications, Farr reduced the scope for seeing death in Galenic terms as the action of a multitude of external factors—cold, heat, moisture, aridity, diet, activity, or sedentary life-style (the ‘regimen of the non-naturals’)—on differing individual constitutions (Niebyl 1971; Smith 1985). Farr's zymotic theories further undermined constitutional or humoural medicine by conceiving disease in terms of the invasion of the body by distinct chemical or biological pathogens (Eyler 1979: 95–108). On the whole Farr's nosologies called for the assignment of death to specific diseases rather than allowing for causation in terms of the general effect of environment on the body, or an enumeration of symptoms.

According to Christopher Hamlin, this can be seen as part of a political process whereby radical demands for better diet, housing, and working conditions—a holistic attitude to well-being—could be countered. Reforming civil servants such as Edwin Chadwick, secretary of the Poor Law Commission from 1834 to 1846, and a member of the General Board of Health from 1848 to 1854, could present the removal of noxious matter by the establishment of proper legal and administrative structures for the provision of improved sanitation as a panacea for all social ills (Hamlin 1998). The issues at stake here can be seen in a case where Farr erred on the side of general causes of death—in the case of starvation. When Farr claimed in the first *Annual Report of the Registrar General* that sixty-three people had died from ‘starvation’ in England and Wales in 1839, he was attacked by Chadwick both in print

and through official channels (General Register Office 1839: Appendix P, 106). The controversy was essentially over whether or not cause of death might include the circumstances of death as well as the immediate medical condition. Farr believed that starvation in the broadest sense of social deprivation could be seen as a cause of mortality whilst Chadwick wished to employ the much narrower concept of cause-specific mortality, which Farr more usually deployed. This was essentially a political struggle over who should define what a 'cause of death' should mean, and in this specific case Chadwick the bureaucrat was victorious (Hamlin 1995, 1998: 143–6).

However, the GRO was successful in asserting its own authority within the medical community with respect to the terminology that could be used to describe mortality. The narrowing of the scope of disease causation was certainly not something that was immediately accepted by medical practitioners. Farr, for example, had to use the fourth official *Annual Report of the Registrar General* to refute the recommendation of a sub-committee of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, chaired by William Pulteney Alison, that causes of death should be classified according to the general seat of disease—'acute disease of the windpipe', for example—rather than under specific names (General Register Office 1842: 206–16). Similarly, despite the publication of an official nosology in the first *Annual Report* (General Register Office 1839: 95–8), informants continued to provide cause of death data in terms of general environmental effects rather than specific diseases. In 1842, Farr published in the *Annual Report* an 'Alphabetical list of diseases, nearly all of which have been met with in the registers' in which such vague terminology was critiqued from the point of view of disease-specific mortality. 'Cold' was described as, 'A vague term. Was it a disease? What? Bronchitis? Pneumonia? Was it the direct effect of exposure to frost or snow?' Similarly, beside the entry 'Damp clothes, (putting on, or sleeping in) (vague)' appeared the urgent note, 'What disease was caused by this?' (General Register Office 1842: 166–86).

In 1845, the GRO sent out standard medical certificates for doctors to fill in when certifying death, and encouraged them to use the terms in a 'statistical nosology' which was available gratis from the Office (General Register Office 1846: 249–314). But even after the introduction of compulsory medical certification of deaths in 1874, there were still problems with the terminology used by medical practitioners. The Office had to resort to sending thousands of death certificates back to doctors in order to get them to provide replies that conformed to the models of disease causation implicit in its classifications (Hardy 1994: 476). As late as 1911, however, as many as 9.67 per cent of all reported causes of death were considered 'ill-defined' by the GRO (General Register Office 1923: 87). These activities can be seen in terms of the creation of a particular specialized language community on terms enforced by an organ of the state. The concept of a scientific paradigm as the language officially sanctioned in a particular professional group, and how changes to paradigms reflect changes in power structures within such groups, can be found in Thomas Kuhn's description of scientific revolutions (Kuhn 1962).

Anne Hardy has also noted that increases or decreases in the reported incidence of some diseases simply reflected changes in the use of terminology, and increasing



discrimination between symptoms. She points specifically to apparent increases in mortality from cancer, diabetes, and urinary disorders (Hardy 1994: 484–92). Linda Bryder has also claimed that the figures for deaths by tuberculosis published by the GRO were an underestimate well into the twentieth century, due to difficulties of medical diagnosis and the reluctance of some doctors to place a social stigma on their patient's families by the use of the term (Bryder 1996: 253–66). The GRO was itself conscious of the effects of the inculcation of new paradigms of disease causation on the form of returns of cause of death. Thus, in 1923 when discussing the sharp fall over the previous half century in the rate of infant deaths from tuberculosis, the Office placed considerable emphasis on the effect of the discovery by Koch of the tubercle bacillus in 1882, and concluded:

Thenceforth a certificate of tubercle committed the certifier to a definite opinion as to the cause of the illness—that it was due to the presence of the tubercle bacillus—in a way which cannot have applied before, when tubercle might mean one thing to one practitioner and another to another. As a generation of practitioners trained on the basis of the new knowledge has gradually replaced its predecessors the proportion of infantile deaths attributed to tubercle has rapidly and progressively declined, and the process is still going on. (General Register Office 1923: 19)

The changing rules governing the use of terms had direct effects on statistical production.

In addition, the use of the terms 'primary' and 'secondary' in relation to cause of death on death certificates from the late Victorian period onwards allowed considerable latitude of interpretation on the part of medical practitioners. Doctors defined 'primary' in several ways, either chronologically, or in terms of the most important with regard to the termination of life (*First and Second Report of the Select Committee on Death Certification*: xvii). The introduction on the death certificate of the term 'contributory' as a variant of 'secondary' caused even more confusion, since it then became difficult to tell whether any 'secondary' cause was regarded as a consequence of the primary, or as of independent origin, but contributing appreciably to the death. These difficulties led the GRO to begin to doubt the very objectivity of the concept of a primary cause of death, which had been the basis of its statistical analysis of mortality for nearly a century. As it noted in the *Statistical Review* for 1927: 'it was very difficult to say, in any instance, how far the quest for the "primary cause" should be pushed. If a cancer, for instance, could be referred to some definite irritation, as by tar or oil, was the cancer or the irritant the primary cause?' (General Register Office 1929: 145).

In that year the order of the statement on cause of death in the death certificate was changed, by calling for the 'immediate' rather than the primary cause first, and then, in order, for any others of which it was the consequence. This then provided a more definite starting point for an analysis of the train of related causes (General Register Office 1929: 145). The GRO believed that this innovation led to significant changes in reporting. There was, for example, an increase of 20 per cent in the number of maternal deaths registered as from non-puerperal causes associated with childbirth in the period after 1927 (General Register Office 1938: 122).

In a similar manner, many Victorians took the term ‘occupation’ in the census to refer to the social designation of the full-time male breadwinner, thus excluding much of the casual, seasonal, and perhaps socially unacceptable, work of women and children (Higgs 1995: 700–16). This was encouraged, no doubt, by the GRO’s practice of heading the relevant column in the census schedule, ‘rank, profession, or occupation’. As will be discussed below, this definition of an occupation was also implicit in the occupational classification systems used in the GRO after 1871. To use the aggregations of these terms, as given in occupational tables in the *Census Reports*, as if they recorded all paid work in the economy, is probably to underestimate levels of economic activity, or at least to accept a limited definition of what that implied.

## CONCEPTUAL METHODOLOGIES OF DATA PROCESSING: CLASSIFICATION SYSTEMS

The influence of conceptual models articulated by linguistic practices on the statistical work of the GRO is also seen in its use of classification systems to group, and thus create distinctions between, terms supplied by respondents. In many ways the Victorians were preoccupied with creating such categories, through identifying and grouping racial types and social classes, or creating all-encompassing distinctions between children and adults, criminal and non-criminal classes, men and women, the sane and insane, and so on. To a certain extent the use of classification systems is, of course, inevitable in quantitative research, given the need to reduce the complexities of observed phenomena to a manageable level. An alphabetical list of the thousands of occupational titles in a census with the numbers of cases of each abstracted from the census returns would be difficult to interpret. This was, in the main, what the GRO did with occupations in 1841 census tables (*1841 Census: Occupations*). But reduced to a smaller number of headings, grouped in classes according to certain classificatory principles, and a data structure ‘emerges’.

The key question is, of course, the extent to which such classificatory exercises *create* structure rather than simply *reveal* it. Thus, in biology, animals are assigned to groupings such as phyla, classes, orders, families, and genera, according to anatomical similarities. All beetles and ants, for example, are placed in the class of insects, as they all have six legs, but a spider, having eight legs, is classified as an arachnid. It is assumed today that this classification captures, in a summary fashion, certain affinities of evolutionary descent—insects all have six legs because they evolved from a common ancestor. In fact, as newspaper reports of recent revisions to the grouping of plants in botanical classifications, based on new work on the DNA of plants, has shown, such assumptions may be misguided (*The Independent*, Monday 23 November 1998: 3). But this concept of classification is rather different to the grouping of stars in the traditional Western constellations—the Plough, the Great Bear, Scorpio, and so on. Here the linking of the stars in a spatial classification is merely conventional, since differing civilizations have projected different patterns of constellations onto the same skies. The spatial patterns would also disappear if viewed from another part of the galaxy. Of course, someone who did not believe in

the theory of evolution, and who also believed in astrology, might take a rather different view.

It should be noted, moreover, that classification systems can operate not only by grouping terms, but also by their subsumption. The occupational designations that appeared in groups and classes in the published tables were themselves merely the headings under which other occupations were grouped for the purposes of counting cases. Thus in England and Wales in 1861, the terms ‘cloth bleacher’, ‘cloth boiler’, and ‘cloth brusher’ appearing in the census schedules of households would all have been counted as items of data to be added to the running total under the published heading, ‘Woollen Cloth Manufacture’. The ‘meaning’ of an item in the census occupational tables depends, therefore, on the manner in which it serves as a broader or preferred term for other occupational titles. An example—that of ‘scientific persons’—might help to clarify the general point being made here. In the instructions to the clerks abstracting occupational data in 1871 can be found the following list of occupational terms to be placed under this general heading (TNA, RG 27/4: Item 85, 21):

Agricultural chemist	Laboratory assistant
Analytical chemist	Lexicographer
Antiquarian	Mathematician
Astronomer	Metallurgist
Botanist	Microscopic anatomist
Chronologist	Mineralogist
Entomologist	Naturalist
Experimentalist	Nosologist
Expert	Observatory assistant
Fly gatherer	Ornithologist
Genealogist	Philosopher
Geographer	Doctor in philosophy
Geologist	Professor in philosophy
Geometer	Philosophical practitioner
Hydrographer	Phrenologist
	Physiologist
	Statist
	Topographer

The definition of ‘science’ here is plainly different to that in educated Western circles in the early twenty-first century, including disciplines which do not fall into the modern category of the empirical and applied sciences. Terms such as ‘chemist’, ‘biologist’, and ‘physicist’ are conspicuous by their absence, as is, of course, ‘scientist’. The classification is inconsistent in that it includes professors of ‘philosophy’ in this category whilst professors of ‘natural philosophy’ (i.e. modern science) were abstracted as teachers. The equivalent list in 1881 includes the terms ‘scientist’, ‘physicist’, and ‘biologist’, whilst ‘genealogist’, ‘topographer’, and others had disappeared. This reflected a linguistic change as the meaning of a ‘science’ narrowed in the late nineteenth century. Originally the term simply meant a body of knowledge and practice

worked out on rigorous principles, hence the ‘science of art’, or ‘scientific socialism’. But in the course of the Victorian period the use of the term was increasingly restricted to the natural sciences and applications of the ‘scientific method’. Such changes make it unwise to use the published tables from the various *Census Reports* to reconstruct the changing size of the scientific community over time (Higgs 1985).

The cultural specificity of systems of linguistic ordering can be seen in still broader structures within the occupational classification systems used by the GRO in the Victorian period. These were not based on self-evident and concrete economic practices but arose from particular ways of talking about the consequences of work that appeared relevant at the time. In the mid-Victorian period, the occupational classification systems developed by William Farr were based, to a considerable extent, on the grouping of occupational titles according to materials being worked up. These, in turn, were taken as affecting the morbidity and mortality of those who undertook these occupations. Such information was to be used to compile occupational life-tables for the purposes of industrial life insurance (Higgs 1991). As already noted, such conceptions informed the nature of the questions asked of householders, who were to state the materials being worked upon in the occupational information they provided. The use of raw materials to classify labour can also be found amongst other contemporary English social investigators, as in the case of Henry Mayhew (Thompson and Yeo 1971: 77).

In addition, Farr also appears to have followed classical precedents in believing that working with particular materials affected the character of workmen. As he noted in the *1851 Census Report*:

In conformity with the first notions of mankind of which we have record, the greatest weight has been given to the materials in which people work, as they generally imply important modifications not only in the tools, in the machines, in the processes, and in the products, but in the characters of men. By his trade, and by the matters which surrounds him, how different is the blacksmith from the tailor; the shoemaker from the hairdresser; the butcher from the baker; the horsedealer from the grocer; the sweep from the navvy; the fisherman, the waggoner, the peddler, and the cotton-spinner, from each other! (*1851 Census Report*: lxxxiii)

Occupational terms implied certain human attributes in a manner that appears rather odd to modern eyes, and led Farr to claim of his tenth occupational class—persons employed about animals (including such diverse occupations as vet, horse-breaker, stock dealer, gamekeeper, fisherman, and mole catcher)—that they were

a peculiar race of men; silent, circumspective, prompt, agile, dextrous, enduring, danger-defying men, generally—but modified variously by the classes of animals which occupy them. They contain the representatives of the hunting tribes of old, when wild animals abounded, and men lived off the produce of the chase. ... By their habits many of the class must be well adapted to the purposes of war; they are sometimes idle, and in a militia they could be turned to account .... (*1851 Census Report*: xcii)

This is not a manner of speaking which would ‘make sense’ to men and women educated in the modern Western social sciences.

Those who failed to indicate the material upon which they worked in the census schedule, or those, such as clerks, who did not shape or tend particular substances or animals, were fitted into the material-based classification in residual categories. Thus 'labourers' who neglected to indicate their branch of employment were abstracted under the heading 'General Labourers'. This occupational category included over half a million men in 1871 (Armstrong 1972: 274). Similarly, clerks, warehousemen, and many dealers, were placed in the material categories relating to the establishments within which they worked. Thus a clerk in an iron mill would be abstracted under the heading 'Iron Manufacture Service', rather than under 'Commercial Clerk'. The retirement of Farr in 1879, and his replacement as superintendent of statistics by William Ogle, led to an important shift in the principles of occupational classification used in the 1881 census, with clerks, and other tertiary workers, now being abstracted under their own distinct headings. This may be responsible, in part, for what economic historians have described as a 'tertiary economic revolution' in late Victorian England (Higgs 1996a: 161–6).

Another example of the importance of classification systems in the reinforcing of cultural norms, and thus of social 'reality', can be found in the treatment of women in the occupational tables of the *Census Reports*. In the censuses from 1851 to 1871, Farr included the work of women in the home in the main body of his occupational tables. He established special categories for the wives of farmers, dealers, and lodging housekeepers, who were assumed to be helping their male relatives in the family business, as well as for housewives. Indeed, Farr could wax lyrical on the productive role of motherhood, as when he noted in the *1851 Census Report* that, 'The child receives nurture, warmth, affection, admonition, education from a good mother; who, with the child in her arms, is in the eyes of European nations surrounded by a sanctity which is only expressed in the highest works of art' (*1851 Census Report*: lxxxviii).

In 1881, however, Ogle summarily abolished the headings for the wives of farmers and similar occupations, and removed them, and all housewives, to a new 'unoccupied' category at the end of the occupational tables (Higgs 1987: 69–71). Simon Szreter sees this change as reflecting successful campaigning in the 1870s by working-men's associations for trade union recognition and the restriction of the work of women and children by the Factory and Workshop Acts, which led to the privileged recognition of the organized male 'breadwinners' (Szreter 1996: 123–8). The relationship between classification systems, language, and cultural norms has also been brilliantly dissected by Szreter in his work on the GRO's elaboration of the system of social-economic groupings in the Edwardian period (Szreter 1996: 1–282).

The manner in which certain cultural assumptions are constituted by the language of such classification systems was not a distinctly English phenomenon. In the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, the fundamental issue around which the census classification of work revolved was the concept of skill. This reflected the fear that the new wave of immigrants arriving in the country from southern and eastern Europe had low educational and productive endowments, and were thus reducing national efficiency. Echoes can be discerned here of the struggle over eugenics in Britain at the same period, and indeed the occupational

classification developed in the United States leaned heavily upon theories of race and gender. In the absence of an adequate definition of skill, the social characteristics of those pursuing an occupation were taken as a proxy for the former. Thus, occupations recruiting mature, male WASPs (white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants) were assumed to have a higher skill content than those recruiting juveniles, women, recent European immigrants, or those of African origins. Women and non-WASPs were invariably regarded as being unskilled because they held jobs that employed large numbers of women and non-WASPs—a somewhat circular argument (Conk 1978). The language of race and gender also informed the activities of European census-takers in colonial situations (Anderson 1983: 164–70).

It might be assumed that such considerations do not apply to the GRO's use of medical nosologies, since these reflected concrete natural phenomena rather than cultural forms such as social class or occupational designations. The manner in which such cause of death data have been socially constructed has, however, been recently noted by Günter B. Risse (1997). However, unlike the classification procedures used in respect of census occupations, there appear to have been no dictionaries used to subsume minor under major nosological headings. As already noted, the GRO's favoured method of dealing with causes of death that could not be fitted into its nosologies was to refer them back to the certifying doctor for 'clarification'. This was plainly something that could not have been contemplated in the case of census householders, who were far more numerous and mobile, and far less motivated to provide 'accurate' replies.

In addition, as Anne Hardy has noted, the placing of distinct causes of death under particular subdivisions of the GRO's nosologies changed over time. Thus, the aetiologically distinct diseases typhus and typhoid were abstracted together under the heading 'typhus' until 1869. Similarly, diphtheria, which assumed a much more virulent form in the mid-nineteenth century, was initially categorized as scarlet fever, and only listed separately from 1868 (Hardy 1994: 478). She also highlights problems with 'diarrhoeal diseases', which in the Victorian period comprised diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera, whilst gastritis and enteritis came under 'diseases of the digestive organs'. There was also confusion between 'English cholera', that is, diarrhoea, and 'Asiatic cholera', until the latter was distinctly classified in 1900 (Hardy 1994: 486).

One could argue, of course, that all these examples do not reveal the conventional nature of the classification but the gradual perfection of a system reflecting the underlying structure of disease causation. However, the allocation of particular medical terms within such nosologies could still necessitate an act of arbitration on the part of the GRO's clerks. This is brought out in the 'rules of selection' drawn up in the early twentieth century to control the choice of the particular cause to be tabulated in the published reports from amongst multiple causes of death given in death certificates. Classification systems inevitably simplify reality by insisting on the complex phenomena of death being placed under one heading. By 1935 a sampling exercise undertaken by the GRO revealed that multiple causes of death were given by medical practitioners in 43 per cent of cases (General Register Office 1938: 55). According to the 1911 instructions to the GRO's clerks, when abstracting the preferred cause of death from such data, violence was to be preferred to general diseases as a cause of death, general

diseases to local diseases, and local diseases to ill-defined causes. Terms for general diseases were then placed into four classes in order of preference for selection: smallpox, for example, came in Group I, scarlet fever in II, influenza in III, and diabetes in IV. Where multiple causes of death came from the same group, then those of the longest duration were to be given precedence. Chronic diseases were to take precedence over non-chronic, and if all else failed the first given was to be taken as the cause of death for the purposes of abstraction.

This particular formal specification of the rules appears to have been put together in 1900 but there must presumably have been informal 'rules of thumb' before that date (TNA, RG 26/88). Similar 'rules for choice', possibly based on English models, were also being used in Ontario at this date (Emery 1993: 123–4, 170–9). Such usages might certainly help to explain the large proportion of deaths attributed to violence in the Victorian *Reports*. The replacement of this system by the acceptance of the order of 'immediate' causes of death given on death certificates after 1927 caused considerable changes in the number of deaths classified to certain causes. In the case of heart disease, for example, the numbers of deaths so classified in 1936 was 22.4 per cent less than under the selection system (General Register Office 1938: 109).

The extent to which such conventions varied between national bureaux may also have had a profound impact on international comparisons of mortality. As the US Census Bureau noted in correspondence with the GRO in 1909, the problem of the joint causes of death, 'presents great practical difficulties, and variations in methods may be responsible for apparent differences, to a considerable extent, in statistics of causes of deaths as compiled in various offices' (TNA, RG 47/1: 129). International harmonization of these rules with the adoption of the International List of Causes of Death was designed to lessen these problems. But was this the removal of the conventional nature of classification, or merely the imposition of a single convention?

As in the case of causes of death, difficulties also arose when the GRO attempted to fit complex occupational descriptions into its predetermined classification systems. This is especially evident in the case of multiple replies, where respondents attempted to indicate the complexities of phenomena by giving a number of 'portfolio' occupations such as 'farmer, maltster, and publican'. The need to pigeon-hole replies into a single space in a table called for the making of decisions which sometimes bordered on the arbitrary. In the case of occupations, the census clerks were instructed to abstract the occupation that appeared 'most important', usually the first one given (TNA, RG 27/5: Item 69, p. 2). Alternatively, unspecified occupations would be counted to the most common branch of trade in the district. Thus, a 'weaver' would be placed under cotton manufacture in Lancashire but under woollens in Yorkshire (TNA, RG 27/5: Item 69, p. 4). It is difficult to see how such conventions could be applied to areas of mixed manufacture. Classification systems worked, therefore, by assuming that significant terms were singular in form rather than lists.

## CONCLUSION

The arguments deployed here should not be taken to imply that human beings, families, or diseases, are linguistic artefacts of survey methodologies. But most social

scientists, and certainly historians, do not deal with such entities in their research. Rather, they study linguistic representations of such entities contained in current questionnaires, or those preserved from the past. After all, there are no actual people or families inserted in the civil registers of births, marriages, and deaths, or residing in the census schedules currently held in archival repositories in London. Nor, thankfully, can examples of disease-generating viruses and bacteria, or clinical symptoms of cholera and diphtheria, be found in death certificates. All that exists are names and descriptive terms amassed by various processes of data collection, whose meanings were determined by linguistic practices.

It is possible to argue, of course, that the ‘nature’ of human beings, families, and diseases has been constant throughout history, but how these have been conceptualized in language has plainly undergone marked changes. But the extent to which one can make a distinction between entities ‘in themselves’, and such phenomena constituted ‘for us’ in language is, of course, debatable. As Ian Hacking has argued, social identities are not fixed but roles that people take upon themselves (Hacking 1986). To what extent, therefore, did the official assignment of the roles of household head, next of kin, and ‘responsible person’, to individuals affect how they saw themselves, their relationship to others, and thus how they acted? Similarly, how did the use of occupational classification systems that designated women as ‘unoccupied’, contribute to the creation of the generally accepted ideology of separate gender spheres in late Victorian England? Lastly, with regard to medical knowledge, how far did the official circulation of standard nosologies, and the GRO’s policy of returning ‘unsatisfactory’ death certificates to doctors for emendation, help to spread modern scientific models of disease causation amongst the medical profession and educated society?

As Anthony Giddens has suggested, there is a ‘double hermeneutic’ at work in the reception of the theories generated by the social sciences—formal descriptions of social ‘reality’ being fed back into society and affecting how social actors behave and speak, thus altering that reality (Giddens 1995: 348–54). In this he is merely reiterating a point originally made by Talcott Parsons (Parsons 1951: 38). It might even be claimed that knowledge about the physical world is affected in a similar manner. Indeed, it has been argued here that the GRO helped to create that physical and social reality by using its authority to determine meaning within a series of statistical processes and specialized language communities.

## References

- Manuscript sources* The National Archives (hereafter TNA), Home Office Registered Papers, HO 45/8044.  
 — 1861 Census Returns, RG 9/1783.  
 — 1881 Census Returns, RG 11/481.  
 — General Register Office, Population and Medical Statistics, Correspondence and Papers, RG 26/88.  
 — Census Returns, Specimens of Forms and Documents, RG 27/4.



The National Archives, Census Returns, Specimens of Forms and Documents, RG 27/5.

— General Register Office, Letter Books, RG 29/2.

— General Register Office, International Section, Correspondence and Papers, RG 47/1.

**Newspapers** *The Independent*, Monday 23 November 1998.

**Parliamentary papers** 1841 *Census: Occupations*, PP 1844 XXVII.

1851 *Census Report*, PP 1852–3, LXXXVIII, Pt 1.

*Report of the 1890 Treasury Committee on the Census*, PP 1890 LVIII.

*First and Second Report of the Select Committee on Death Certification*, PP 1893–4, XI.

**Articles and books** Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Armstrong, W. A. (1972). 'The use of information about occupation. Part 2. An industrial classification, 1841–1891', in E. A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth-Century Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 226–310.

Aronowitz, R. A. (1998). *Making Sense of Illness: Science, Society, and Disease*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bryder, L. (1996). "Not always one and the same thing": the registration of tuberculosis deaths in Britain, 1900–1950', *Social History of Medicine*, 9: 253–65.

Conk, M. A. (1978). 'Occupational classification in the United States Census: 1870–1940', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 9: 111–30.

Dummett, M. (1992). *Frege. Philosophy of Language*. London: Duckworth.

Emery, G. (1993). *Facts of Life: The Social Construction of Vital Statistics, Ontario 1869–1952*. London: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Eyler, J. M. (1979). *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas and Methods of William Farr*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Tavistock.

— (1972). *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.

General Register Office (1839). *1st Annual Report of the Registrar General for 1837–38*. London: HMSO.

— (1842). *4th Annual Report of the Registrar General for 1840–41*. London: HMSO.

— (1846). *7th Annual Report of the Registrar General for 1843–44*. London: HMSO.

— (1866). *27th Annual Report of the Registrar General for 1864*. London: HMSO.

— (1923). *Registrar General's Statistical Review for 1921*. London: HMSO.

— (1929). *Registrar General's Statistical Review for 1927*. London: HMSO.

— (1938). *Registrar General's Statistical Review for 1936*. London: HMSO.

— (1954). *Registrar General's Statistical Review for 1950; Medical*. London: HMSO.

Giddens, A. (1995). *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity.

Goodman, N. (1954). *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*. London: Athlone Press.

- (1978). *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.
- Hacking, I. (1986). ‘Making up people’, in T. C. Heller *et al.* (eds.), *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pp. 222–36.
- Hamlin, C. (1995). ‘Could you starve to death in England in 1839? The Chadwick–Farr controversy and the loss of the “social” in public health’, *American Journal of Public Health*, 85: 856–66.
- (1998). *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800–1854*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hardy, A. (1994). “‘Death is the cure of all disease’: using the GRO cause of death statistics for 1837–1920”, *Social History of Medicine*, 7: 472–92.
- Higgs, E. (1985). ‘Counting heads and jobs: science as an occupation in the Victorian census’, *History of Science*, 23: 335–49.
- (1987). ‘Women, occupations and work in the nineteenth century censuses’, *History Workshop Journal*, 23: 59–80.
- (1989). *Making Sense of the Census*. London: HMSO.
- (1991). ‘Diseases, febrile poisons, and statistics: the census as a medical survey’, *Social History of Medicine*, 4: 465–78.
- (1995). ‘Occupational censuses and the agricultural workforce in Victorian England and Wales’, *Economic History Review*, 48: 700–16.
- (1996a). *A Clearer Sense of the Census: The Victorian Censuses and Historical Research*. London: HMSO.
- (1996b). ‘A cuckoo in the nest?: The origins of civil registration and state medical statistics in England and Wales’, *Continuity and Change*, 11: 115–34.
- (2003). ‘The General Register Office and the tabulation of data, 1837–1939’, in M. Campbell-Kelly, M. Croarken, R. Flood, and E. Robson (eds.), *The History of Mathematical Tables: From Sumer to Spreadsheets*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 209–34.
- Hindess, B. (1973). *The Use of Official Statistics in Sociology*. London: Macmillan.
- Jordanova, L. (1995). ‘The social construction of medical knowledge’, *Social History of Medicine*, 8: 361–81.
- Kripke, S. (1982). *Wittgenstein On Rules and Private Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kuhn, T. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- MacKenzie, D. (1981). *Statistics in Britain*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Miller, A. (1998). *Philosophy of Language*. London: University College London Press.
- Niebyl, P. H. (1971). ‘The non-naturals’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 45: 486–92.
- Nissel, M. (1987). *People Count. A History of the General Register Office*. London: HMSO.
- Parsons, T. (1951). *The Social System*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Pickering, A. (1992). *Science as Practice and Culture*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Peller, S. (1947–8). ‘Mortality, past and future’, *Population Studies*, 1: 405–56.
- Risse, G. B. (1997). ‘Cause of death as an historical problem’, *Continuity and Change*, 12: 175–88.
- Schürer, K. (1990). ‘The historical researcher and codes: master and slave or slave and master’, in E. Mawdsley, N. Morgan, L. Richmond, and R. Trainor (eds.), *Historians, Computers and Data. Applications in Research and Teaching*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 74–82.
- Skorupski, J. (1998). *The Cambridge Companion to Mill*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Smith, G. (1985). 'Prescribing the rules of health: self-help and advice in the late eighteenth century', in R. Porter (ed.), *Patients and Practitioners: Lay Perceptions of Medicine in Pre-industrial Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 249–82.
- Spencer, F. and Langham, I. (1990). *Pitldown: A Scientific Forgery*. London: Natural History Museum.
- Szreter, S. (1996). *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, E. P. and Yeo, E. (1971). *The Unknown Mayben: Selections from the Morning Chronicle 1849–50*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Wilde, O. (1995). *The Epigrams of Oscar Wilde*. London: Bracken Books.
- Wrigley, E. A. and Schofield, R. S. (1981). *The Population History of England 1541–1871*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# 6 Racial/Colour Categorization in US and Brazilian Censuses

MELISSA NOBLES

This chapter analyses the history of racial and colour categorization in American and Brazilian censuses. It argues that censuses have, in both countries, helped to constitute racial discourse. Census-taking, through the process of categorization itself, contributes to the formation and perpetuation of racial ideas. This racial discourse has, in turn, helped to shape public policy. Contrary to the conventional view of census-taking, this chapter supposes that race and colour categories are themselves the products of ideas, politics, and institutions and not of nature.

For most of their countries' histories, state officials, (social) scientists, and politicians tightly controlled American and Brazilian census-taking. Over the past 30 years in the United States and the past 20 years in Brazil, however, groups within civil society have organized and lobbied to have methods of categorization altered. Because of these organized efforts, American and Brazilian Census Bureau officials work today within political and institutional constraints unknown to their predecessors. Categorization is now a 'bottom up' process and not only a 'top down' process.

This chapter is organized in three main parts. The first part explains the American and Brazilian comparison. It shows that the American and Brazilian experiences are comparable not merely because of historical slavery and the large number of persons of African descent, but because racial discourse has organized society and politics in both countries. The second part provides an abbreviated history of racial/colour categorization in the United States and Brazil. It argues that the categorization and changes of such are best understood in terms of racial ideas and the political uses of racial/colour data. The third and final part analyses the recent successes and failures of organized groups in both countries to change methods of racial and colour categorization on the 2000 censuses. Here, the role of the census in upholding racial discourse is clearly shown as groups seek to change the boundaries and content of racial identifications through categorization. In other words, racial identifications are given meaning, in large part, through discourse, and the census is one creator and sustainer of racial discourse.

## WHY COMPARE THE UNITED STATES AND BRAZIL?

Along key dimensions of political and economic analysis, the United States and Brazil hardly seem comparable. The US's history of democratic and constitutional governance (albeit with long-restricted electoral participation for nonwhites and

women and non-white racial subordination) and twentieth-century economic and military world dominance contrasts starkly with that of Brazil. Brazilian political history is a story of highly concentrated elite governance: nineteenth-century monarchical rule followed by twentieth-century oligarchical and military rule, though this pattern has been disrupted periodically in the twentieth century by multiparty politics and elections, first from 1945 through 1963, and then from 1985 to the present. Although Brazil's economy is currently the world's twelfth largest, its income distribution is among the most unequal in the world. Indeed, in terms of political economy and politics, the United States and Brazil occupy two discrete, if connected, universes.

On the axis of race, however, comparison has been unavoidable and has seemed utterly appropriate. It is also a comparison that scholars have judged Brazil to have 'won', in that Brazilian race relations appear far more harmonious and less rigidly stratified than those of the United States. The basis for this comparative scholarship is slavery and its aftermath. The economies of both countries were rooted in African enslavement, European settlement, and indigenous dispossession. Brazil was dominant among Latin American and Caribbean sugar producers in the nineteenth century and was also the 'largest single participant in the transatlantic slave trade, accounting for 41 per cent of the estimated ten million people transported' (Fogel 1989: 18). The United States, by comparison, imported approximately 693,000 slaves, 7 per cent of the ten million. Although the United States imported far fewer slaves proportionally than Portuguese colonists in Brazil or English colonists in Jamaica, it came to have the largest slave population in the Western Hemisphere by the 1850s, due, in part, to the fostering of slave reproduction by slave owners (Kolchin 1993: 94).

American slavery was finally abolished in 1865 by way of a bloody civil war. After abolition, the Congress passed three constitutional amendments that fundamentally altered American citizenship and politics by formally removing race and former status of servitude as the basis for membership in the political community. The thirteenth amendment abolished slavery, the fourteenth made American citizenship a birthright, and the fifteenth amendment extended the franchise to black males. Constitutional amendments and Reconstruction, however, were unable to prevent the reconstitution of white political, social, and economic supremacy in the country's southern states especially or to ensure equal enjoyment of the rights and privileges of American citizenship (Smith 1997: 286–336). By the early twentieth century, racial segregation by law was firmly entrenched in the south; racially discriminatory policies (i.e. in labour, housing, and education) and social customs were widespread throughout the rest of the country. These political, economic, and social arrangements would last, more or less intact, for nearly 70 years until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

In contrast, Brazilian slavery was peacefully abolished by Princess Isabel by decree in 1888, making Brazil the last country in the Western hemisphere to abolish the institution. There was neither *de jure* nor widespread *de facto* racial segregation in Brazil following slavery's abolition. However, there was neither Reconstruction nor

any other state-directed efforts to ease the transition for freed people from slavery to freedom. Instead, ex-slaves were left to their own devices. Brazil's rural landowners chose to subsidize the immigration of Southern Europeans, mostly Italians, to work on the country's coffee plantations, rather than employ newly freed slaves (Holloway 1980: 42). Coffee cultivation was the foundation of Brazil's export economy and the motor of the first stage of twentieth-century industrialization (Fausto 1999: 170).

Comparative scholarship has generally focused on the evident differences in political outcomes after slavery: racial segregation in the United States and its absence in Brazil. Moreover, such scholarship has usually equated the study of 'race' with the study of 'blacks' and 'racial politics' with the existence or absence of discrimination against blacks. These approaches have been profoundly misleading precisely because they have obscured the commonality of race as a fundamental organizing principle of politics and society in the United States and Brazil. The idea of race and racial categories has applied to everybody in these two societies. Race has been the language for establishing membership, both in groups and within the national community. Brazilians are becoming, so the story goes, one 'whiter' race due to extensive racial mixture. In the United States, Americans are presumed to be forever racially distinct, and it is on this distinction that privilege and subordination in American society have turned. Comparative scholarship has also obscured the shared role of the American and Brazilian census bureaus in constituting race ideologically and politically. Racial and colour categories have not appeared on American and Brazilian censuses as mere demographic markers. Rather, their appearance is tied directly to shifting ideas about race and race's political and social significance. Their appearance is also tied to larger political and institutional processes. In short, conventional comparative scholarship has dwelled on the evident differences in racial politics in the two countries. This chapter directs our attention to the hidden similarities.

## AMERICAN CENSUSES: RACE IS FUNDAMENTAL

The race question and racial categories have appeared on every US decennial census, from the Republic's first in 1790 to the 2000 census. Although the term 'colour' was used in nineteenth-century American censuses, it was synonymous with 'race' in meaning. Racial categorization may be divided into four periods (see Table 6.1). The first period is 1790–1840 when representational apportionment and racial ideas shaped categorization. The second period is 1850–1920 when categorization was used expressly to advance the racial theories of scientists. The third period is 1930–60 when census definitions of racial categories were identical to the race laws of southern American states. The fourth and final period is 1970–2000: the 1970 census was the first after the formal dissolution of the Civil Rights movement and the first for which self-identification (as opposed to enumerator identification) was uniformly used. Since the 1970s, the implementation of an official standard of categorization, Civil Rights legislation, and the lobbying efforts of organized groups have shaped categorization most profoundly. Each of these periods will be discussed in turn.

Table 6.1. US census race categories, 1790–2000<sup>a</sup>

1790—Free White Males; Free White Females; All Other Free Persons; Slaves
1800—Free White Males; Free White Females; All Other Free Persons, except Indians Not Taxed; Slaves
1810—Free White Males; Free White Females; All Other Free Persons, except Indians Not Taxed; Slaves
1820—Free White Males; Free White Females; Free Colored Persons, All other persons, except Indians Not Taxed; Slaves
1830—Free White Persons; Free Colored Persons; Slaves
1840—Free White Persons; Free Colored Persons; Slaves
1850 <sup>b</sup> —Black; Mulatto
1860 <sup>c</sup> —Black; Mulatto; (Indian)
1870—White; Black; Mulatto; Chinese; Indian
1880—White; Black; Mulatto; Chinese; Indian
1890—White; Black; Mulatto; Quadroon; Octoroon; Chinese; Japanese; Indian
1900—White; Black; Chinese; Japanese; Indian
1910—White; Black; Mulatto; Chinese; Japanese; Indian; Other (+write in)
1920—White; Black; Mulatto; Indian; Chinese; Japanese; Filipino; Hindu; Korean; Other (+write in)
1930—White; Negro; Mexican; Indian; Chinese; Japanese; Filipino; Hindu; Korean; (Other races, spell out in full)
1940—White; Negro; Indian; Chinese; Japanese; Filipino; Hindu; Korean; (Other races, spell out in full)
1950—White; Negro; Indian; Japanese; Chinese; Filipino; (Other race—spell out)
1960—White; Negro; American Indian; Japanese; Chinese; Filipino; Hawaiian; Part-Hawaiian; Aleut; Eskimo, etc.
1970—White; Negro or Black; American Indian; Japanese; Chinese; Filipino; Hawaiian; Korean; Other (print race)
1980—White; Negro or Black; Japanese; Chinese; Filipino; Korean; Vietnamese; American Indian; Asian Indian; Hawaiian; Guamanian; Samoan; Eskimo; Aleut; Other (specify)
1990—White; Black or Negro; American Indian; Eskimo; Aleut; Chinese; Filipino; Hawaiian; Korean; Vietnamese; Japanese; Asian Indian; Samoan; Guamanian; Other API (Asian or Pacific Islander); Other race
2000—White; Black, African American, or Negro; American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian Indian; Chinese; Filipino; Japanese, Korean; Vietnamese; Native Hawaiian; Guamanian or Chamorro; Samoan; Other Asian (Print Race); Other Pacific Islander (Print Race); Some other race (Print Race)

<sup>a</sup> Presented in the order in which they appeared on schedules.

<sup>b</sup> In 1850 and 1860, free persons were enumerated on schedules for ‘free inhabitants’; slaves were enumerated on schedules designated for ‘slave inhabitants’. On the free schedule, enumerator instructions read (in part): ‘In all cases where the person is white leave the space blank in the column marked “Colour.”’

<sup>c</sup> Although ‘Indian’ was not listed on the census schedule, the instructions read: “‘Indians’.—Indians not taxed are not to be enumerated. The families of Indians who have renounced tribal rule, and who under State or Territorial laws exercise the rights of citizens, are to be enumerated. In all such cases write “Ind”. opposite their names, in column 6, under heading “Colour”. Similar to the 1850 census, enumerators were instructed to leave the space blank when the person was white.

Source: US Bureau of the Census (1989*b*); [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

## 1790–1840

The initial reasons race appeared at all are not transparently connected to demographic concerns, because the principal impetus for US census-taking was political. The US Constitution mandated that ‘an actual enumeration’ be conducted every 10 years for the purposes of representational apportionment. How slaves would be counted was especially contentious. Delegates of the Constitutional Convention eventually agreed upon the 3/5 compromise, meaning that for apportionment purposes, slaves would count as 3/5 persons. The question remains, then: why did the census count by race? After all, representation depended upon civil status, whether one was free or slave, and whether one was taxed or not. That is, the questions—‘Free or Slave?’ and ‘If Free, Taxed or Not?’ would have satisfied the Constitutional mandate. Representational apportionment did not depend upon racial status. The race question was included on the census because race was a salient social and political category. Political elites regarded race as a natural component of human identity, although the political and social significance of racial differences in the new republic was still being sorted out (Horsman 1981: 98–115). Yet, as the nineteenth century began, it was clear that ‘free blacks’ and ‘free whites’ would have contrasting political and social experiences. Free whites enjoyed the full entitlements and responsibilities of American citizenship and free blacks did not. Although ‘free’, they were not full members of the American political community. The censuses from 1790–1840 asked few inquiries beyond those related to population. They counted free white males and free white females, subdivided into age groups; free coloured persons, and/or all other free persons, except Indians not taxed, and slaves.

## 1850–1920

The 1850 census marked a watershed in US census-taking in several ways. For our purposes, a large part of its significance rests in the introduction of the ‘mulatto’ category and the reasons for its introduction. It was not added because of demographic shifts; rather, it was added because of the lobbying efforts of a prominent racial scientist of the US Senate and the willingness of certain senators to do his bidding (Nobles 2000: 35–43). By the 1850s, polygenist thought was winning a battle that it was losing in Europe. The ‘American School of Ethnology’ distinguished itself from prevailing European racial thought by its tenet that human races were distinct and unequal species. There was, however, considerable resistance initially to polygenism. Although most American monogenists were not racial egalitarians, they were unwilling to accept claims of separate origins, permanent racial differences, and the infertility of racially mixed persons. Polygenists deliberately sought hard statistical data to prove that mulattos, as hybrids of different racial species, were less fertile than their parents of pure races and hence lived shorter lives.

Racial theorist, medical doctor, scientist, and slave-owner Josiah Nott purposefully lobbied certain senators for the inclusion of several inquiries on the census, all designed to prove his theory of mulatto hybridity and separate origins



(Congressional Globe 1850; Horsman 1987: 81–103). In the end, the senators voted to include only ‘mulatto’, although they hotly debated the inclusion of another inquiry, ‘[D]egree of removal from pure white and black races’, as well. Enumerator instructions for the slave population read: ‘Insert in all cases, when the slave is black, the letter B; when he or she is a mulatto, insert M. The colour of all slaves should be noted.’ For the free population, enumerators were instructed to: ‘... in all cases where the person is black, insert the letter B; if mulatto, insert M. It is very desirable that these particulars be carefully regarded’ (US Census Bureau 1989*b*).

The 1850 census began a pattern, especially in regard to the mulatto category, that lasted until the census of 1930: the census was deliberately used to advance race science. Far from being a mere counter of race, the census was helping to create racial thought by assisting scientists in their endeavours. Although scientific ideas about race changed over those 80 years, the role of the census in sustaining and furthering those ideas did not.

The abolition of slavery and the reconstitution of white racial domination in the south were accompanied by an enduring interest in race. The ideas that race scientists and pro-slavery advocates had marshalled to defend slavery were now used to oppose the recognition of black political rights. Blacks were naturally inferior to whites, whether as slaves or as free people, and were thereby disqualified from full participation in American economic, political, and social life. Although scientists, along with nearly all whites, were convinced of the inequality of races, scientists continued in their basic task of investigating racial origins. Darwinism presented a challenge to the still dominant polygenism. However, the mulatto category also retained its significance. Such data were needed to prove that mulattoes lived shorter lives, and thus blacks and whites were different and unequal races, if not species. Both the 1870 and 1880 censuses were designed to amass statistical proof for this theory, as the enumerator instructions reveal. For example, the 1870 instructions read:

It must be assumed that, where nothing is written in this column, ‘White’ is to be understood. The column is always to be filled. Be particularly careful in reporting the class *Mulatto*. The word here is generic, and includes quadroons, octoroons, and all persons having any perceptible trace of African blood. *Important scientific results depend upon the correct determination of this class in schedules 1 and 2.* (US Census Bureau 1989*b*) (Italics added)

Schedule 1 was for population; Schedule 2 was for mortality. The 1880 instructions for ‘colour’ were nearly identical. ‘Chinese’ was also added to the 1870 census for the first time, under ‘colour’. Contemporaneous congressional records do not provide a full explanation for the addition. They opaquely state: ‘that [inquiry] relating to colour has been made to include distinctively the Chinese, so as to throw some light on the grave questions which the arrival of the Celestials among us has raised’ (US House of Representatives 1870). The Chinese category was apparently added in response to the arrival of Chinese immigrants. Approximately 325 Chinese immigrants arrived in California during the 1849 Gold Rush. By 1870, there were 63,000 Chinese people in the United States, 77 per cent living in California (Takaki 1989: 79). The ‘grave questions’, in the

Census Report's words, which the Chinese arrival posed were not specified in the Report itself. However, by the late 1860s, there was a growing anti-Chinese sentiment among Americans, especially in California, where the majority of Chinese immigrants worked and settled. American labourers feared that they would eventually be pushed out of their jobs by 'coolie' labourers. American scientists and politicians warned of impeding social decline, if the degenerate Chinese became too large in number (Salyer 1995: 7–16). These fears of economic competition and racial and societal degeneracy eventually led to the legal prohibition of Chinese immigration.

Chinese immigrants, like European immigrants, came in search of work. And, in sharp contrast to European immigrants, their numbers were quite small. According to the 1870 census, there were 5.5 million European immigrants versus 63,000 Chinese (Thernstrom 1992: 86). European immigrants, no matter how loathed, feared, and mistreated, were enumerated as 'white' and 'foreign born', and were eligible for citizenship. Chinese was a race category, and because naturalization privileges were restricted to 'whites', Chinese immigrants were ineligible for naturalization and hence citizenship (Haney-Lopez 1996: 37–44). With the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Chinese immigration was barred altogether. 'Japanese' was added to the 'colour' inquiry on the 1890 schedule with no mention in congressional records. Finally, 'Filipino', 'Hindu', and 'Korean' were added to the 1920 census, with no mention in the Census Bureau's Advisory Committee records. Scholars have assumed that they were added in response to immigration. However, the Immigration Act of 1917 expressly barred immigrants from the 'Asiatic Barred Zone', which included India and the most of the Polynesian Islands (Salyer 1995: 133). Like Chinese and Japanese before, these new categories were used to track and record Asian residents as 'races'. Naturalization laws applied only to 'whites' and would remain thus until 1952 (Haney-Lopez 1996: 1).

In contrast to census-taking in the nineteenth century, censuses of the twentieth century ceased to play such a prominent role in the formation of racial theory itself. Instead, they have mostly counted by race, presuming race to be a basic fact. Of course, theorizing about race continued in (social) scientific circles, but (social) scientists did not deliberately enlist the census as they had in the past (Nobles 2000: 63–4). Census categorization continued to sustain racial discourse inasmuch as categorizing and counting by race gave race an official existence. The use of the census 'mulatto' category in racial theorizing until the 1930 census was, however, an important exception to this overall trend.

In December 1928, the Census Bureau's Advisory Committee voted to remove 'mulatto' from American census schedules (Nobles 2000: 68–9).<sup>1</sup> After seven censuses, the Committee decided that past mulatto data had been inaccurate. Had they had confidence in the mulatto data's accuracy or the ability of the census to secure it, the category may well have remained on the census. It is important to note that the Committee made no reference to race science or to the mulatto category's evident inability to settle race science's central, if shifting, questions: first, did 'mulatto' prove that whites and blacks were different species of humans and then, were mulattos weaker than members of the so-called pure races? Instead, the Committee's stated reasons rested solely on accuracy. The mulatto category's exit from the census was

markedly understated, especially when compared to its entrance in 1850 and its enduring significance on nineteenth-century censuses.

## 1930–60

With the permanent elimination of ‘mulatto’, US census categorization came in line with southern race laws and the ‘one-drop’ rule of black racial membership. According to the rule, ‘one-drop of black blood’ made a person black and conferred all of the legal, social, political, and economic disabilities associated with the designation. As importantly, race laws codified ‘white racial purity’ according to which one was either purely white or one was not. Blood droplets were literally the standard, and this standard guided federal census-taking by 1930. Enumerator instructions for the 1930–50 censuses explicitly used a terminology of ‘blood’ in their definitions of ‘Negroes’ and ‘Indians’. Enumerator instructions have never included a definition of ‘White’. Although ‘Japanese’, ‘Filipino’, ‘Hindu’, and ‘Korean’ were also included on the 1930 and 1940 schedules, enumerators were not provided specific definitions and instructions. The 1960 census defined ‘Negro’ without an explicit reference to ‘blood quanta’ at all. However, it still defined as Negro anyone with at least one Negro parent. Enumerators were provided the following three definitions for the 1930–50 censuses:

1. Negroes—A person of mixed white and Negro blood should be returned as a Negro, no matter how small the percentage of Negro blood. Both black and mulatto persons are to be returned as Negroes, without distinction. A person of mixed Indian and Negro blood should be returned a Negro, unless the Indian blood predominates and the status of an Indian is generally accepted in the community.
2. Indians—A person of mixed white and Indian blood should be returned as Indian, except where the percentage of Indian blood is very small, or where he is regarded as a white person by those in the community where he lives.
3. Other mixed races—Any mixture of white and non-white should be reported according to the non-white parent. Mixtures of coloured races should be reported according to the race of the father, except Negro-Indian (see definition of negro) (US Census Bureau 1989*b*).

The Civil Rights Movement and resultant civil rights legislation of the 1960s dramatically changed the political context of census-taking. That political context had been one of bold stratification of privileges and penalties along racial lines in virtually all aspects of American public life. Laws spelled out the boundaries of racial membership; institutional mechanisms and social customs reinforced them. It was also a context in which the process of racial categorization in the census had been largely out of public view. Politicians, (social) scientists, and later Bureau officials decided on race categories with little public attention, input or accountability. Enumerators categorized persons by observation, according to the instructions provided to them.

Federal civil rights legislation sought to dismantle the most egregious racially discriminatory mechanisms; namely, black disenfranchisement in the south, rigid segregation and wholesale exclusion from certain occupations and American institutions. In addition to the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, there were several important Executive Orders (E.O.) issued by the President, such as the Equal Opportunity in Housing Order of 1962 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Order of 1965. These new laws and programmes required racial and ethnic data for monitoring legislative compliance and the delivery of new social services and programmes. For example, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 requires population tabulations by race at the level of city blocks for the purposes of redistricting plans and the possible creation of ‘minority–majority’ congressional electoral districts.

## 1970–2000

The race categories of the 1970 census were nearly identical to those of the 1940, except that ‘Hawaiian’ replaced ‘Hindu’. Yet, the 1970 methods differed radically from the 1940 in that self-identification, or more precisely, what the Bureau had defined as such, was uniformly introduced. Persons could now identify themselves according to pre-codified choices. However, enumerators were still allowed to assign a racial category by observation when possible or necessary. As in the past, responders could only select one race. The 1980 instructions were even more explicit in informing enumerators on how to handle responses that did not fit within the fifteen pre-codified options. If a person offered a non-listed identity, enumerators were instructed to ask, ‘Is the response you have given ...’, and to then read the fifteen pre-codified categories—in the manual’s words—‘until the person answers “Yes”’ (US Census Bureau 1980). For persons who continued to give a non-listed identity or reported ‘other’, enumerators were to refer to their race tables. These tables, six pages long, were arranged alphabetically beginning with Abenaki and ending with Zuni. In between was a list of possible responses and how they were to be reclassified. Persons of mixed race were to be classified according to the mother. However, if the mother’s identity was also mixed, then the person was to be classified according to the first race declared. The 1990 census used the same methods as the 1980 (US Census Bureau 1989*a*).

Perhaps most politically consequential for census-taking in the post-Civil Rights era has been the issuance of Statistical Directive No. 15 by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of the Executive Branch in 1977. The Directive mandates the five official racial/ethnic categories to be used in all statistical reporting by all federal agencies, including the Census Bureau. The five standard categories are defined as follows:

1. American Indian or Alaskan Native—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliations or community recognition.
2. Asian or Pacific Islander—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands.

This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippine Islands, and Samoa.

3. Black—A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
4. Hispanic—A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
5. White—A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East.

The Directive defines 'Hispanic' as an ethnic category; meaning that there are, for example, 'white' hispanics and 'black' hispanics. As for persons of 'mixed racial or ethnic origins', the Directive instructs that such persons be classified according to '[T]he category which most closely reflects the individual's recognition in his community...'. According to the Directive's preamble, these categories were devised to standardize 'record keeping, collection, and presentation of data on race and ethnicity' for administrative and statistical purposes. The definitions, the Directive cautions, 'should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological in nature', rather they have been developed to meet expressed congressional and executive needs for 'compatible, nonduplicated, exchangeable' racial and ethnic data. Thus, these categories are both statistical markers and political instruments. Federal agencies require racial and ethnic data not only for collection, but also for the measurement of compliance with civil rights legislation. This apparent conflation of statistics and politics has made the Directive both a powerful and highly contentious policy tool. Yet in a crucially important, if disquieting, way the Directive makes clear what has existed all along: race and ethnic statistical categories are political categories as much as they are enumerative ones. Today the political context is significantly altered; the intrinsically political nature of the categories remains.

In 1993, the OMB began a comprehensive review of the Directive. According to the OMB officials, this review was prompted by growing public criticism that the Directive is incapable of accurately measuring new immigrants or offspring of interracial marriages. In its review, the OMB actively sought public comment through congressional subcommittee hearings in 1993 and 1997 and by notices posted in the Federal Register. Not surprisingly, well-established civil rights organizations lobbied against major changes in the Directive while newly formed organizations of 'multiracial' Americans lobbied for the addition of 'multiracial' to the Directive. Also, at the OMB's request, the National Academy of Sciences' Committee on National Statistics conducted a 1994 workshop that included federal officials, academics, public policy analysts, corporate representatives, and secondary school educators. In March 1994, the OMB established the Interagency Committee for the Review of Racial and Ethnic Standards. This Committee included representatives from thirty federal agencies, including the Census Bureau, Department of Justice, and Department of Education. In the end, this Committee's recommendations to the OMB ruled the day.

In October 1997, the OMB announced its final changes to the Directive and to census methods. Most significantly, the OMB decided to allow respondents to choose

more than one race on their census schedules, for the first time in the history of US census-taking, while also deciding against the adoption of a multiracial category. It also added 'Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander', making it the sixth racial classification. The OMB slightly altered the wording of existing categories, adding, for example, 'Latino', thus making the category 'Hispanic or Latino'. The issue of racial categorization is temporarily settled, until preparations for the 2010 census begin.

## BRAZILIAN CENSUSES: WHITE IS BETTER

When compared with the American experience of census-taking, Brazil seems relatively simple, if erratic. The colour question has appeared inconsistently on Brazilian censuses from the first modern census in 1872 up to the 2000 census (see Table 6.2). The two nineteenth-century censuses, 1872 and 1890, had a colour question. Of twentieth-century censuses, the 1940, 1950, 1960, 1980, and 1991 censuses all asked a colour question, although the 1960 colour data were never fully released. The 1900, 1920, and 1970 censuses did not have a question. There were no censuses at all in 1910 and 1930. Categorization has itself been more consistent, with the three colour categories of white (branco), brown or mixed (pardo), and black (preto) used in nearly every question. Categorization can be divided into three periods. The first is from 1872 to 1910, when categorization largely reflected elite and popular conceptions of Brazil's racial composition. The second is from 1920 to 1950 when census texts actively promoted and happily reported the 'whitening' of Brazil's population. The third is

Table 6.2. Brazilian colour questions and categories, 1872–2000

1872—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Pardo (Brown); Caboclo (Mestizo Indian)
1880—No census
1890—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Caboclo (Mestizo Indian); Mestiço (mixed white and black)
1900—No colour question
1910—No census
1920—No colour question, but extended discussion in census text about 'whitening'
1930—No census (Revolution of 1930)
1940—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Amarelo (Yellow). If the respondent did not fit into one of these three categories, enumerator was instructed to place a horizontal line on census schedule. These horizontal lines were then tabulated under 'pardo'.
1950—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Pardo (Mixed); Amarelo (Yellow)
1960—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Pardo (Mixed); Amarelo (Yellow); Índio (Indian)
1970—No colour question
1980—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Pardo (Mixed); Amarelo (Yellow)
1991—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Pardo (Brown); Amarelo (Yellow); Indígena (Indigenous)
2000—Branco (White); Preto (Black); Pardo (Brown); Amarelo (Yellow); Indígena (Indigenous)

Source: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE); Nobles 2000: 104.

from 1960 to the present when categorization methods have themselves been openly questioned and contested by statisticians within the Census Bureau and by organized groups within civil society. Each of these three periods will be discussed in turn.

Brazilian censuses have included a colour question for the same basic reason that American censuses have included a race question. Brazilian elites viewed race as a natural component of human identity and as an independent factor in human affairs (Skidmore 1993: 38–64). Brazilian censuses have not counted by race as such, but by colour. Colour has referred to physical appearance, and not to racial origins. Racial origins, however, are not disconnected from colour because colour is derived from the ‘mixture’ (or not) of Brazil's three original races: Europeans, Africans, and Indians. Brazilian censuses have registered colour, as it was and is understood. Colour and race are conceptually distinguished, but related: colour refers to appearance, race refers to origins. While this distinction is hardly unambiguous, it is the basis of colour categorization on Brazilian censuses.

The thinking behind the distinction has gone as follows: Brazilians are racially mixed, of different colours. Such racial mixture has made counting by race exceedingly imprecise. Yet, the census question and categories have themselves organized the fluid boundaries of the very racial mixture presumed to exist. Brazil's intelligentsia, political elite, and census officials have emphasized racial mixture with the same vigilance that their American counterparts have emphasized racial purity. Brazilian social scientists largely accepted the ‘scientific truth’ of races and their inequality, though not with the same intensity as Americans and Europeans (Skidmore 1993: 64–77). Like American elites, Brazil's elite too obsessed over racial mixture, but they concluded that Brazilians were becoming a ‘whiter’ race, not a racially degraded and disadvantaged one.

## 1872–1910

Nineteenth-century Brazilian censuses were neither involved in slavery debates nor directly advanced scientific racial thought, unlike nineteenth-century American censuses. Although the 1872 census was conducted a year after the passage of major abolitionist legislation, neither census inquiries nor census data were marshalled for slavery debates. Likewise, although Brazilian intellectual and political elites were preoccupied with the perceived calamity of racial mixture, they did not use the census to examine the problem. Paradoxically, the census was one of the few late-nineteenth-century undertakings that was not preoccupied with or used to discern the national disaster that Brazilians were convinced would accompany racial mixture. As the Brazilian historian Lilia Moritz Schwarcz has richly documented, museums, historical societies, law schools, medical schools, and scientists all fixed on racial mixture because it was the key to understanding Brazil and its national possibilities (Schwarcz 1993). The silence of the census was due, in part, to the fragile institutionalization of the statistical apparatus and the underdevelopment of statistical methods. The establishment of the General Directory of Statistics (DGE) accompanied the abolition of slavery in 1888 and the founding of the Old Republic in 1890. Historical demographers consider all three of the censuses conducted by the DGE (1890, 1900, and 1920)

unreliable (Goyer and Dornschke 1983: 83–4). Brazil's modern federal census bureau, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), was established in 1938.

## 1920–50

The role of the census and elite ideas about racial mixture changed dramatically in the twentieth century, however. In a sharp reversal, intellectuals posited that the disastrous consequences of racial mixture would be averted through racial mixture itself: Brazilians would become whiter over time. Racial mixture was not degenerative but fortifying for whites and cleansing for non-whites. For example, the literary critic Sílvia Romero argued that racial mixture enabled whites to thrive in the tropics. Through the mixing of Brazil's three founding races, the white race would 'predominate through natural selection until it emerges pure and beautiful as in the Old World' (Eakin 1985: 163). Census methods and texts actively promoted and sustained the dominant racial discourses first of 'whitening' and then of 'racial democracy'.

It is hard to overemphasize the centrality of census data in the twentieth century to claims of a racially mixed Brazilian people and the political and social arguments that have flowed from such claims. In the first half of the century, census texts happily reported that Brazilians were becoming whiter. The 1920 census included an extended discussion of the whitening of Brazil's population, although the census itself did not even include a colour question. In a section of the census text entitled 'Evolution of the Race', the political and social theorist Oliveira Vianna explained that the 'aryanization' of Brazil's population was underway (Vianna 1956: 140–89). According to Vianna, within *mestiço* groups the 'quanta' of 'barbaric bloods' was decreasing while the 'quanta' of 'white blood' was increasing, each time refining the Brazilian race.<sup>2</sup> Given the pervasiveness of the elite's belief in whitening, it is not surprising that this belief was communicated in the census text. However, the text is surprising because the census did not itself include a colour question. Therefore, its predictions of whitening were not based on data collected contemporaneously, however unreliable and ambiguous such data undoubtedly would have been. Vianna most likely wrote the whitening text to assure elites that Brazil's future as a white country was certain, thereby making the continued recruitment of European workers unnecessary. By 1920, Brazil's industrialists and politicians were fed up with the militancy of immigrant workers: the honeymoon was over. In short, the 1920 census was a primary creator and communicator of the idea of Brazil's 'whitening' and not a mere register of 'whitening's' progress.

The 1940 census was the first twentieth-century census to ask a colour question. Census enumerators were to check white, black, or yellow. If the respondent did not fit into one of these three categories, the enumerator was to place a horizontal line on the census schedule. These blank lines were later tabulated under 'pardo', meaning 'brown' or 'grey'.<sup>3</sup> Like the 1920 census, the 1940 also celebrated whitening. The author and esteemed educator Fernando de Azevedo wrote the census text, which was also published separately as a book, just as Vianna's 1920 census text had been. Azevedo concluded the chapter entitled 'Land and Race' (race, like land, was assigned



a fundamental and natural status) with the observation that '[I]f we admit that Negroes and Indians are continuing to disappear, both in the successive dilutions of white blood and in the constant progress of biological and social selection', Brazil would soon be white (Azevedo 1950: 41).

## 1960–2000

From the mid-1950s onwards, census texts spoke little about whitening. The profound shifts in scientific racial thought after the Second World War largely account for this change. Like American censuses, Brazilian censuses supported and advanced a new racial discourse. Census texts spoke less aggressively and frequently of both 'whitening' and of the regenerative and redemptive powers of mixture. Instead, racial mixture was reported in a matter-of-fact way and was not equated automatically with whitening. With science repudiating inherent racial superiority and inferiority, elites could safely abandon the idea of racial betterment through whitening. However, they still believed that races were distinct, if not unequal.

Moreover, Brazilian elites have used colour data to promote Brazil as racial democracy. Racial democracy has meant that Brazilian citizenship has been neither enhanced, diminished, nor stratified because of race. Presumed racial differences are not a way of distinguishing between Brazilians because they are racially mixed. The racial democracy idea, then, bears very little resemblance to any standard definition of democracy. Racial democracy is constituted primarily in human bodies themselves, not in the body politic. Brazilians are simply Brazilians; racial differences have been gotten rid of through racial mixture, and colour differences are inconsequential. The census, in counting by colour (and not race), has thus been instrumental to the discourse of racial democracy. Moreover, the Statistical Institute has been reluctant either to cross-tabulate colour categories with socio-economic variables or to release colour data in a timely fashion. The lack of such socio-economic data has made it impossible to test the claim that colour is economically and socially inconsequential in Brazil. It has also stymied scholars, policymakers, and activists in their efforts to push for remedial and positive public policies. Not until the 1976 Household Survey (PNAD) did the Statistical Institute produce data that pegged colour to income, health, education, and housing. Using data from the PNAD, Brazilian sociologist Nelson do Valle Silva found that 'substantial differences in economic attainment between whites and nonwhites' could be attributed to discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion (Silva 1985: 46).

The National Census Commission, appointed by the Military government, removed the colour question from the 1970 census, against the solicited recommendations of two experts. In the late 1970s, scholars and black activists lobbied to have the question restored to the 1980 census. It was restored, although the Census Institute's President remained opposed and called the question 'unconstitutional' (Latin American Regional Report 1980: 4). Since Brazil's redemocratization in the mid-1980s (after 21 years of military rule), the discourse of racial democracy has been aggressively challenged by a growing number of Brazilian activists, scholars,

and politicians. They have also challenged census methods of colour categorization: Should the census use the term 'race' rather than 'colour'? What will the choices be? (e.g. black and/or brown; white or non-white).

With the unravelling of racial democracy, the question of who Brazilians really are racially has emerged powerfully (however dubious the question). There is clear reason for this connection. The image of a racially democratic and non-discriminatory society has hinged on the idea of racial mixture. In fact, a causal link was drawn that was often presented tautologically: Brazilians are racially mixed and therefore there can be no discrimination, or there can be no racial discrimination because Brazilians are racially mixed. The acceptance of discrimination's existence—an existence proven by census data—has led unavoidably to the abandonment of racial democracy and to a rethinking of census terms. The discourses of whitening and of racial democracy have resided in census methods and texts as much as they have existed (or not) out in the real world. As Brazilians now consider whether their society is composed of distinct racial groups, census officials must now consider whether new methods of categorization will or should be adopted. The colour question in the 2000 census, however, was the same as that in 1991 census.

## ORGANIZING AROUND THE CENSUS

Recently organized collective actions by the American Multiracial movement and the Brazilian Black movement drew popular attention to the historically overlooked preparations for decennial censuses. Both movements sought to alter the ways in which their fellow citizens self-identified and associated socially and politically. The desired result was and remains the emergence, or some would say re-emergence, of America's 'mixed race' population and the awakening of Brazil's 'black' majority. These larger political ambitions would seemingly dwarf in importance mobilization for and around a census category and census methods. Yet, the census is crucially important for the very creation and cohesion of the groups themselves. The groups have identified the census not only as an arena where racial identities are mobilized, but also as an arena where racial identities are partly constructed. The most recent efforts of the multiracial and black movements directed towards the census resulted, in part, from changing political opportunities in the United States over the past 30 years and in Brazil over the past 20 years.

As mentioned, the US Civil Rights Movement transformed most consequentially the structure of political opportunities. Resultant civil rights legislation and social policies rely heavily upon census data. Such legislation and policies, in turn, have led groups to protect and defend the census categories and resulting data upon which these laws and policies depend. The OMB's issuance of Statistical Directive No. 15 in 1977 represents an even more specific shift in political and institutional arrangements. The Directive standardized the classifications and publicly disclosed the political rationale for them. The Directive in its creation and subsequent recognition of official races and ethnicities acts as a 'gatekeeper' to an official statistical existence.

Invested with this power and visibility, the Directive has become a referent for groups seeking official recognition. Finally, the OMB's public review of Directive No. 15, initiated in 1993, provided the most immediate impetus for the multiracial movement's efforts to have 'multiracial' made the sixth official classification. Numerous other groups also presented the OMB with their own suggestions. For example, the Celtic Coalition, the National European American Society, and the Society for German-American Studies all called for the disaggregation of the white category. The Arab American Institute lobbied for the reclassification of persons of Middle Eastern origin from 'white' to a new 'Middle-Eastern' category.

Brazilian democratization was itself the impetus for the black movement's activities. Brazil's transition from authoritarian to democratic rule began in 1979 with the *abertura* (opening), the military's allowance of multi-party competition. It ended with congressional elections in 1982 and popular election of the President in 1985. This transition set the broad political parameters for the black movement's efforts. In 1978, the *Movimento Negro Unificado* (United Black Movement) was founded in São Paulo, and during the 1980s black activism increased over the whole country, in the midst of growing organized popular opposition to military rule. Brazilian democratization, however, did not generate legislation or social policies that stipulated the use of racial census data as had US civil rights legislation. Without significant demographic shifts caused by either immigration or public pressures, as in the US case, the Brazilian Statistical Institute did not initiate a very public review of its colour classifications, methods, and rationale as had the US Office of Management and Budget.

In 1991, the black movement organized a grassroots campaign around the census. With the slogan, 'Don't Let Your Colour Pass in White: Respond with Good Sense', the campaign urged Brazilians to check a 'darker' colour on their census schedules—meaning a person should either self-select '*pardo*' instead of 'white', or 'black'. For activists, the aim was to flatten the distinction between '*pardo*' and black; African origins, and the presumed correspondence with the 'black' category, should be the primary ties that bind. Unable to force the Brazilian Statistical Institute to change their methods (i.e. using the term 'race' instead of 'color', and eliminating the *pardo* term), campaign organizers attempted to influence the evident preferences of Brazilians to choose 'lighter' colours rather than 'darker' ones (Wood 1995). Judging from the 1991 census results, the campaign had a negligible impact on the colour choices made by Brazilians. Yet, that census methods of colour enumeration are now widely discussed in print and radio media suggests strongly that the campaign's message was not lost. However, persuading Brazilians to think of themselves as 'blacker' rather than 'whiter' people is another task entirely. Given the still deeply negative meanings attached to 'blackness' and the positive meanings attached to 'whiteness' (as revealed in past census texts), self-selecting black was not then or is not now an obvious or easy choice.

Both movements perceive census categorization as a necessary component in their attempts to create group boundaries in racial terms and to press demands on the groups' behalf. Both movements are concerned, of course, with getting the 'right'

numbers. But to attain such numbers they must first secure the proper categories and census inquiries. Racial data, in turn, help to realize both material and symbolic aims. In the United States, the wide range of public policies that use census data make clear the political and material benefits of an official category. In Brazil, new census terms and the resulting numbers are important because they help to advance calls for a redistribution of political power and economic resources in ways that would benefit Brazil's purported but heretofore unacknowledged black majority. Official categories matter in ways that social categories do not. Activists in both countries have recognized this and have organized accordingly.

## CONCLUSION

The American and Brazilian experiences show clearly that censuses do much more than simply count by using purportedly objective categories. That racial data are used for numerous and various public policies, many of which are politically controversial, does not exhaust such data of their political significance. They are political in their origin as well as in their consequence. Racial and colour categorization must itself be accounted for through careful historical examination. Such examination reveals that categorization helps to shape and is shaped by broader ideological tenets and political developments. In the United States nineteenth-century census-taking directly supported and advanced racial science. Such science, in turn, justified first slavery and then racial segregation. By 1930, the very definitions of racial categories on the census were identical to those of race laws of the segregated American south. With the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, racial data were the raw materials for various public policies and legislation aimed at remedying deeply rooted and enduring racial disadvantage. In contrast, in Brazil, census categories and colour data have long sustained the ideas of whitening and racial democracy. Indeed, these ideas have enjoyed a transhistorical status in the twentieth century as they have been employed by oligarchical, authoritarian, democratic, and military regimes. Beginning in the 1960s, however, both the ideas of whitening and racial democracy have been steadily challenged by activists and academics. Central to these challenges has been the aggressive questioning of census methods and official interpretations and uses of census colour data. Brazilian census data have upheld these ideas; activists and others seek to introduce new census methods that will finally undermine them.

## Notes

1. The Census Bureau's Advisory Committee was formed in 1918 to provide clear policy direction for the Bureau, in the absence of strong Bureau leadership. The Census Bureau was established as a federal agency in 1902. The Committee was composed of three members of the American Statistical Association and three members of the American Economic Association (Anderson 1988: 128–9).
2. In 1956, Vianna's 1920 census text was published unaltered as a separate book, and it is from this book that these quotations are taken.

3. The meaning of 'pardo' was ambiguous in 1940 and remains so. Portuguese language dictionaries define it as both 'grey' and 'brown'. The term's connotations are equally vague because Brazilians infrequently use it in common parlance. Its most significant use is as a census term.

## References

- Anderson, M. (1988). *The American Census: A Social History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Azevedo, F. (1950). *Brazilian Culture: An Introduction to the Study of Culture in Brazil*. New York: Macmillan.
- Congressional Globe (1850). 31st Congress, 1st Session, Washington, DC.
- Eakin, Marshall C. (1985). 'Race and Identity: Silvio Romero, science, and social thought in late 19th century Brazil', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 22: 151–74.
- Fausto, Boris (1999). *A Concise History of Brazil*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Finkelman, P. (1986). 'Prelude to the fourteenth amendment: black legal rights in the Antebellum North', *Rutgers Law Journal*, 17: 415–82.
- Fogel, R. (1989). *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*. New York: WW Norton.
- Goyer, D. and Dornschke, E. (1983). *The Handbook of National Population Censuses: Latin America and the Caribbean, North America and Oceania*. Greenwood, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Haney-Lopez, I. (1996). *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race*. New York: New York University Press.
- Holloway, T. P. (1980). *Immigrants on the Land: Coffee and Society in São Paulo, 1886–1934*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Horsman, R. (1981). *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- (1987). *Josiah Nott of Mobile: Southerner, Physician, and Racial Theorist*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press.
- Kolchin, P. (1993). *American Slavery: 1619–1877*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Latin American Regional Reports (1980). No. 4.
- Nobles, M. (2000). *Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Salter, L. E. (1995). *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Schwarcz, L. M. (1993). *O Espetáculo das Raças: Cientistas, instituições e questão racial no Brasil, 1870–1930*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- Silva, N. (1985). 'Updating the cost of not being white in Brazil', in P. M. Fontaine (ed.), *Race, Class, and Power in Brazil*. Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies.
- Skidmore, T. (1993). *Black Into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Smith, R. (1997). *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in US History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Thernstrom, S. (1992). 'American ethnic statistics', in D. L. Horowitz and G. Noiriel (eds.), *Immigrants in Two Democracies: French and American Experience*. New York: New York University Press.
- Takaki, R. (1989). *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian-Americans*. New York: Penguin Books.

- US Census Bureau (1980). *Questionnaire Reference Book—20th Decennial Census—1980*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- (1989a). *Questionnaire Reference Book—21st Decennial Census—1990*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- (1989b). *200 Years of US Census Taking: Population and Housing Questions, 1790–1990*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office.
- US House of Representatives (1870). Report of the Ninth Census, 41st Congress, 2nd Session Washington, DC.
- Vianna, O. (1956). *Evolução do Povo Brasileiro*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio.
- Wood, C. and Carvalho, J. (1995). 'Census categories and racial-ethnic identity in Brazil', Paper presented at the Population Association of America Annual Meeting, San Francisco, CA.

# 7 Towards a Soviet Order of Things: The 1926 Census and the Making of the Soviet Union

FRANCINE HIRSCH

Many of these peoples have nothing in common except the fact that before they were all parts of the Russian Empire and now they have all been liberated by the revolution, but there are no internal connections among them.

Semen Dimanshtein, *Commissariat of Nationalities* (1919)<sup>1</sup>

Complete enumeration, and the possibility of assigning at each point the necessary connection with the next, permits an absolutely certain knowledge of identities and differences...

Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (1970)

The break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 and ensuing nationalist conflicts have inspired a wave of research focused on early Soviet nationality policy. In the past decade, important new works (Simon 1991; Suny 1993; Slezkine 1994) have critiqued the traditional historical narrative with its focus on the Bolsheviks' repression of non-Russian peoples, and have suggested that the Soviet regime 'made nations'. My chapter builds upon this literature, while also borrowing insights from scholars of the colonial census (Cohn 1987, 1996; Anderson 1991; Appadurai 1993) to examine the relationship between census-taking and identity formation in the Soviet context and to interrogate the nature of Soviet rule. Focusing on the All-Union Census of 1926—the first census to categorize the entire population of the former Russian Empire according to 'nationality'—I analyse the processes through which official nationality categories were created and contested in the Soviet Union. I argue that nationality categories were labels that became meaningful through a combination of official policies, expert input, and local initiatives. I further contend that while the Soviet regime (government and Party institutions) aspired to control the work of census-taking and act upon its population through official nationality categories, in practice these processes were replete with unexpected outcomes.

The process of census categorization highlights important similarities and differences between the Soviet Union and other modernizing empires. The Soviet regime, like the Western European colonial empires, used the census to become the intellectual and actual master of a complicated landscape. Soviet ethnographers, like British and German anthropologists, used their expertise to ask questions, make lists, and place

their subjects into standardized knowable categories. But there is also an important distinction between Soviet-style classification and the classificatory projects described by most scholars of the colonial census: Several decades after Europe's so-called 'age of empire', the Soviet regime used the census *deliberately* to recreate its subjects as people with 'modern' identities. In his study of British census-taking in India, for example, Bernard Cohn suggests that the British used caste categories at least in part because they thought that each Indian had a true caste: British anthropologists believed that their census categories mirrored sociological truth. By contrast, Soviet administrators and ethnographers understood that nationality categories were not meaningful for many of the peoples they were categorizing. They registered the Union's purportedly 'feudal' clans and tribes—that is, peoples *without* national consciousness—as members of official nationalities in an ambitious effort to speed them along an imagined trajectory of development from feudalism to capitalism to socialism. Characterizing 'the nation' as a transitional stage on a Marxian evolutionary timeline (a stage associated with the capitalist and early-socialist eras), they envisioned the mature Soviet Union as a socialist union of denationalized peoples.

In the pages that follow I look at the consequences of the decision to include a question about 'nationality' in the 1926 All-Union Census. First, I analyse the process through which ethnographers and statisticians (for the most part, holdovers from late-Imperial Russia) used their expertise to formulate a census question about nationality and to create an official definitional grid. I discuss deliberations among ethnographers, statisticians, government officials, and local elites about: (a) How to define 'nationality' (as a biological or cultural construct?) and (b) How to ascertain an individual's nationality (through 'objective' criteria or through self-definition?) I also look at census-taking in practice. In particular, I discuss how local elites attempted to influence the enumerative process. Representatives of the Soviet Union's 'titular nationalities' (peoples with their 'own' national territory such as the Uzbeks of the Uzbek national republic and the Ukrainians of the Ukrainian national republic) saw the census as a means to maintain their group's supremacy and secure a monopoly on land, water, schools, and other resources. Representatives of 'national minorities', tribes, and clans imagined the census as a vehicle for national realization with its concomitant economic and cultural benefits. Finally, I include a short section about the activation of official nationality categories 'on the ground'. I focus on the highly politicized interrelationship between census-taking and border-making in contested border regions, demonstrating how the census classification of the population by 'nationality', together with policies that entitled nationalities (as opposed to clans and tribes) to territories, encouraged people to rearticulate their identities and concerns in 'national' terms.<sup>2</sup>

## THE DEBATE ABOUT CLASSIFICATION

The first All-Union Census of 1926 was a critical instrument of Soviet power and guarantor of Soviet knowledge. Attempting to rule an expansive land mass and establish a viable administrative framework, the Soviet regime sought to classify all the



peoples within its borders under a number of standardized rubrics, including gender, age, place of residence, nationality, native language, occupation, and marital status. The census question about 'nationality' was especially fraught with difficulties. Censuses under the late-Imperial regime had classified most of the Russian Empire's subjects according to religion and native language, which contemporaries had characterized as the essential components of nationality. With the delegitimization of religion after the October Revolution and with the Soviet regime's recognition that many peoples of the former Russian Empire had 'lost' their native languages as a result of the Tsarist government's policies of linguistic and cultural Russification, it was no longer clear what constituted 'nationality'.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, the Bolsheviks had their own theorists, who wrote extensively about the 'nationality question'. And, of course, the slogan 'all nations have the right to self-determination' (popularized throughout Europe during the First World War) was a key element of early Bolshevik propaganda (Carr 1950, Blank 1994). But by 1924 it had become apparent that Stalin's earlier 1913 definition of a nationality (later cited as his definition of a nation) as a 'historically developed stable community with a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture' (Stalin 1950: 51) was hardly relevant for most of the peoples within the Soviet Union's borders. In a climate of much uncertainty, Soviet officials turned to professional ethnographers, asking them to come up with a new definition of nationality and to recommend a formula for ascertaining the nationality (actual or potential) of 'backward' peoples without national consciousness. Presumably, such information would help the Soviet regime accelerate the 'natural' evolutionary development of the Union's peoples without accidentally creating 'false' nationalities.<sup>4</sup>

In response to official requests, a sub-commission of Academy of Sciences ethnographers, members of the Leningrad-based Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of the USSR and the Borderlands (KIPS), attempted to work out instructions for registering nationality in the census.<sup>5</sup> Most of these ethnographers had been members of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society before 1917. Some had lived or travelled abroad in the 1890s; most continued to correspond with colleagues in Western Europe. All were well versed in the language of nationality and in the politics of empire and brought their knowledge to bear in their own discussions about the upcoming census. The head of the sub-commission, the ethnographer-geographer Veniamin Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, had been active in the production of the 1897 All-Russian Census; his father, Petr Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, had led census proceedings in 1897.

Faced with an urgent assignment from Moscow, the Academy of Sciences' ethnographers immediately turned their attention to finding a workable definition of nationality. At the sub-commission's first meeting in 1924, Veniamin Semenov-Tian-Shanskii suggested that nationality could be likened to a collection of traits 'arising under the joint influences of anthropological, geographical, and historical causes'. He noted that from a 'strictly scientific point of view' there were two possible ways to define nationality: as an 'anthropological concept, indicated by a given person's physical breed' or as a 'cultural concept, indicated by the type of geographical and ethnological environment

in which a given person lived and lives his or her mental life'.<sup>6</sup> Each definition had its own set of implications. Members of Russia's educated elite had pondered such issues before. But the creation of a census category, which would become a basic rubric of official classification and establish people's rights to economic and cultural resources, increased the stakes of the debate.

In preparation for the sub-commission's first meeting, Semenov-Tian-Shanskii had circulated a proposed formula of five questions to help census takers ascertain respondents' nationalities:

1. To which nationality [*natsional'nost'*] does or did (if they are not alive) the given person's father and mother belong? (to determine the person's anthropological type).
2. To which religion was the given person born?
3. Does the person regard himself or herself as a member of any religion today? If yes, then to which one in particular?
4. What conversational language did the given person speak in childhood, and which does he or she use today at home?
5. Is the given person able to express himself or herself in Russian?<sup>7</sup>

This proposed formula, with its focus on religion, language, and anthropological type, inspired spirited debate among ethnographers and statisticians. A number of experts maintained that Semenov-Tian-Shanskii's approach was 'too scientific' and the suggested questions too diffuse. The Leningrad-based statistician Andrei Dostoevskii suggested that 'if in fact Moscow wants the Academy of Sciences' opinion about how best and most precisely to determine through the census the national composition of the state's population', it should try a more direct approach. According to Dostoevskii, census takers should pose a straightforward question: 'In which nationality do you include yourself?'<sup>8</sup> Dostoevskii assumed that people throughout the Union would understand how to answer the question. But ethnographers who conducted fieldwork were not as optimistic. They argued that in many regions 'nationality' was not a meaningful or readily translatable category. Experts on Central Asia insisted that religion and clan were the fundamental components of local identity, while experts on Siberia maintained that tribal identities were most significant. In the late nineteenth century, Russian ethnographers had dismissed outright the idea that the indigenous peoples of Siberia could be categorized under the same rubric as the peoples of 'European Russia'; the 1897 census had enumerated the former under the rubric *inorodtsy* or 'others'.

Closely connected to the debate about definitions was a debate about which term to use for 'nationality' in the census questionnaire: *narodnost'* or *natsional'nost'* (the indigenous term with the Russian root *narod* or the foreign term with the root *natio*). For decades, educated elites had used the terms interchangeably to signify nationality. But in the aftermath of the Revolution, some ethnographers suggested that the terms corresponded to two different places on a timeline of evolutionary development. They argued that *natsional'nost'* was a meaningless concept for the more 'backward' peoples they encountered since it implied 'an understanding of one's

cultural-historical development'.<sup>9</sup> (The Soviet city census of 1920 and partial census of 1923 had used *natsional'nost'*, defining it tautologically as 'a population group united into a nationally self-conscious community' (Melik'ian 1994: 581).) Semenov-Tian-Shanskii suggested that perhaps both terms should be used in the census to differentiate between 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' peoples. The members of a 'civilized' *natsional'nost'* could identify themselves through a direct census question, while the members of an 'uncivilized' *narodnost'* could be identified through an 'objective' assessment of their 'tribal origins'. Other ethnographers disagreed, maintaining that the division between the 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' did not follow national lines. Some noted that the 'general masses' of the Russians and Ukrainians had as much trouble with direct questions about nationality as their neighbours. When the ethnographer Vasilii Chernyshev complained about the 'uncivilized folk in our midst' in central Russia, for example, he was referring to Russian and Ukrainian peasants. In Chernyshev's account, the peasants lacked 'national consciousness and an understanding of the connection between large historical occurrences and developed tribal groups'.<sup>10</sup> Ethnographers who did fieldwork in European Russia noted that peasants often did not distinguish among Belorussians, Great Russians, and Ukrainians, but simply called everyone 'Russian' or named the town they were from; the ethnographers had encountered a number of 'Vladimirians' and 'Kostromians'.

While most sub-commission members doubted the population's ability to answer a direct census question about 'nationality', they also rejected the idea that census takers could determine respondents' nationality on the basis of 'objective criteria'. Some insisted that local conceptions of identity were far too particularistic to apply one formula to all the Union's territories. After extensive discussion, the sub-commission suggested that limited self-definition—that is, self-definition circumscribed by regionally specific directives and control questions—might be an effective approach. The census taker would ask each individual to state his or her *narodnost'*. Then, with the aid of detailed explanatory materials, census takers could make sure that responses were appropriate. In keeping with these recommendations, the sub-commission members drafted regionally specific materials for census takers. The ethnographer Ivan Zarubin, for example, prepared notes for the territories of former Turkestan (in Soviet Central Asia), citing about twenty special cases in which census takers should ask respondents control questions about native language, conversational language, religion, and kinship group in order to ascertain whether they had given 'correct' responses to the question about nationality. To differentiate between Iranians and Tajiks, Zarubin recommended that census takers 'pay attention to the religion of the subject'; he noted that in these regions most 'Iranians are Shiites and Tajiks are Sunni'.<sup>11</sup>

According to the ethnographers, census registration would be particularly challenging in the territories of former Turkestan due to the fact that many of the region's inhabitants identified with several (official nationality) categories at once. In Ferghana, for example, communities of people called themselves 'Kirgiz-Kipchak' or 'Uzbek-Kipchak'. Until the national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia in 1924 (which had eliminated Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khiva, and redistributed their

territories among a number of new national republics and districts), the terms ‘Uzbek’, ‘Kirgiz’, and ‘Kipchak’ typically denoted linguistic or kinship affiliations, not nationality. Zarubin suggested that census takers ask respondents a series of direct questions, including: ‘Are you Kirgiz? Are you Uzbek?’ He advised them to register only people replying ‘no’ to both questions as ‘members of the Kipchak nationality (*narodnost*)’.<sup>12</sup>

Complicating census registration even further, the ethnographers also noted that not all answers to the question about nationality were acceptable. The term ‘Sart’ was one such example. Zarubin and his colleagues maintained that ‘Sart’ was not a suitable response to the census question, arguing that the term designated people of a particular economic orientation and not a nationality or ‘ethnographic group’. The ethnographers, nonetheless, predicted that there would be ‘many cases’ in which respondents ‘call themselves Sarts’ either ‘in separate instances or in entire regions’. Zarubin recommended that census takers register self-identified Sarts who speak Uzbek as Uzbeks, adding ‘the term Sart in parenthesis’.<sup>13</sup> The question of the Sarts became extremely controversial in the late 1920s as Uzbek-identified representatives from the new Uzbek national republic (the Uzbek SSR) and Tajik-identified representatives from the new Tajik national district (the Tajik ASSR) vied for contested territories in and around the important cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. Both sides claimed the Sarts as their own in order to establish their right to regions that self-defined Sarts inhabited.

In preparation for the census, the ethnographers put together similar explanatory notes and instructions for the ‘European part of the USSR’, Siberia, the Far East, and the Caucasus. In the months before the census, the ethnographers combined the regional lists, turning them into a first draft of the ‘List of Nationalities of the USSR’. Copies circulated around the Soviet Union and were returned to the Academy of Sciences covered with comments and question marks in the margins. The list was revised more than a dozen times. Up until the day of the census—and even after—peoples were added, crossed out, and pencilled in again.<sup>14</sup> The fate of a number of peoples remained undecided.

The actual formulation of census questions and the compilation of an official list of nationalities took several years and involved continual correspondence among institutions and individuals throughout the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup> Between 1924 and 1926 Academy of Sciences ethnographers were in constant communication with statisticians at the Central Statistical Administration's Sector of Social Statistics, officials from the Soviet of Nationalities and the Central Executive Committee (the two branches of the Soviet government), economists at the State Planning Commission, Party and government officials in Moscow and the regions, ethnographers at Moscow State University, cartographers at the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), and specialists at countless local institutions.<sup>16</sup> In February 1926 these individuals and institutions came together at the Fourth All-Union Statistical Conference in Moscow to discuss the production of the census. Entire sessions were devoted to establishing an official lexicon of identity categories. Beginning with the nationality question, statisticians and officials from different regions debated which

term to use in the census forms: *natsional'nost'* or *narodnost'*. In the end, the statisticians and ethnographers settled on *narodnost'*, maintaining that unlike *natsional'nost'* it did not presuppose national consciousness and was therefore more inclusive. Statisticians also hashed out the language of class, defining 'worker', 'peasant', and 'kulak'. In addition, they debated the language of language, asking: What is a native language and how is it different from a conversational language?<sup>17</sup>

Although the Central Statistical Administration originally had not planned to include a question about language in the census, Soviet officials had argued that information about language was critical for 'the practical implementation of nationality policy'. Administrative organs sought a breakdown of the population's 'native languages' in order to establish schools and print books. Statisticians wanted data about 'native languages' in order to put together a 'more accurate' picture of the Union's national composition. Participants in these deliberations attempted to define the term with both ends in mind: While some statisticians suggested that 'native language' should be understood as 'the language of [the respondent's] mother' or 'the language of [the respondent's] nationality', others suggested that it was 'the language in which the respondent speaks with the people closest to him' or 'the language in which he thinks'. Several statisticians proposed that respondents define the term for themselves, but this suggestion was dismissed as 'dangerous and unacceptable'.<sup>18</sup>

Discussions about terminology had serious implications for the shape of the Soviet Union. Consequently, representatives from the localities (especially nationally conscious government administrators and statisticians) approached issues of categorization with interests to defend. Representatives from Ukraine and Transcaucasia campaigned against proposals to use the term *narodnost'* in the census questionnaire. Georgian representatives from the Transcaucasian government preferred the term *natsional'nost'*, maintaining that 'the Georgians are already a developed nation [*natsiia*].'<sup>19</sup> Many Georgian government and Party elites, who had opposed Georgia's inclusion in the Transcaucasian republic (the TSFSR) in 1922, were still bristling about Georgia's diminished status. Ukrainian elites expressed similar concerns, insisting that the Ukrainians were a *natsional'nost'*, and not a *narodnost'* (Osinskii 1927). They undoubtedly remembered the 1897 census in which the 'Little Russian' (Ukrainian) language was included as a sub-language of Russian and did not want the Ukrainian *narodnost'* to be categorized as a subgroup of a Russian *natsional'nost'*.

Several statisticians from the Ukrainian Statistical Administration protested the very inclusion of a direct question about nationality (*narodnost'* or *natsional'nost'*) in the census. Arguing that 'native language' was the most reliable indicator of nationality, they recommended that census takers inquire about a 'respondent's self-consciousness' only in 'extreme cases'. In order to make their point, the statisticians compared data about self-reported *natsional'nost'* from the 1920 partial census with data about 'native language' from the 1897 All-Russian Census. They maintained that the 1920 census, taken in a time of difficult 'political conditions' (i.e. civil war), had seriously undercounted the number of Ukrainians. They asked: Was it really possible that two million Ukrainians in the Kuban region alone had 'become Russians' between 1897 and 1920? The Ukraine-based statisticians implied that people could

not have been expected to give accurate answers to a highly sensitive question about national identity while under duress. Moscow-based statisticians offered an alternative explanation for the discrepancy in population totals. They argued that the 1897 census had conflated nationality with native language, and had therefore produced inaccurate data.<sup>20</sup>

As the scheduled census date approached, ethnographers and statisticians reached a consensus that the principle of national self-definition should be understood as an extension of the principle of national self-determination. They noted that in the broad sense nationalities might be differentiated from each other on the basis of 'tribal' or 'cultural' characteristics such as physical type, language, and everyday-life particularities. In other words, experts could describe 'the Ukrainians' or 'the Turkmen' in general terms. But they also maintained that the nationality of an individual could not be ascertained through a formula of 'objective traits'. The statistician Aleksei Volkov presented the most eloquent exposition of this argument, explaining that national self-determination had been a political ideal 'from the start of the Revolution' and should translate into self-reporting in the census. While arguing for 'subjective testimony', the experts also acknowledged the hazards of such an approach. Volkov warned of 'different dangers in different territories', including 'divergent, strong economic and political interests'. He elaborated on political tensions in Ukraine, noting that minorities such as the Bulgarians, Poles, Rumanians, and Jews 'each have their own special concerns', such as whether they will get their own national territories or be included in Ukrainian regions. Recognizing that the dominant nationalities often pursued a nationalist agenda through the census, Volkov suggested that the regime choose its census takers carefully.<sup>21</sup>

There were, however, some cases in which national self-determination and national self-definition did not necessarily coincide. Representatives of the national minorities suggested that only the registration of 'national origins' (and not the registration of 'nationality') could counteract both the 'legacy of Russification' and the ongoing attempts of dominant nationalities throughout the Soviet Union to forcibly assimilate neighbouring peoples. Explaining that the nationality question had 'colossal importance' for the distribution of resources and the delimitation of borders, representatives of the national minorities suggested that the regime should take special measures to protect the 'national rights' of the Union's less-developed peoples. Vasilii Mikhailovskii, a statistician with the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic (RSFSR) Statistical Administration, agreed that peoples without national consciousness often 'confuse residence in a national republic with *narodnost'*'. Furthermore, he argued, census takers from the titular nationalities encourage respondents to make such mistakes.<sup>22</sup> Other experts such as the Moscow-based ethnographer Aleskandr Maksimov were skeptical about the idea of 'national origins', expressing concern that such an approach would lead to an archaic 'picture of that which had existed thousands of years ago'. Maksimov gave two examples. First, he explained that the inhabitants of Smolensk province 'had been Ukrainians in the seventeenth century' but since then have become Russians. He argued that it would be wrong to register them as Ukrainians 'on the basis of historical memory'. Next, he recounted how the

Mordva of Nizhegorodsk had forgotten the Mordvinian language and ‘in fact became Great Russians’. Emphasizing the dynamic nature of nationality, Maksimov suggested that national identity could and would change as a result of cultural contact.<sup>23</sup>

The issue of Russification was highly politicized for a regime which repeatedly expressed its commitment to an ‘emancipatory’ nationality policy. Most officials and experts who participated in census deliberations shared Maksimov's reluctance to rely on ‘national origins’. At the same time, however, they dismissed Maksimov's assumption that all forms of assimilation were alike. In particular, they suggested that the (presumably forced) Russification or Ukrainization of an undeveloped nationality was qualitatively different from the (presumably natural) assimilation of a dominant nationality such as the Ukrainians. The ethnographers faced the issue of Russification head on in Bashkiria, in their attempt to sort out the ‘Meshcheriak and Misher question’. The Meshcheriaks and Mishers both derived from the ‘Meshars’, which were a subgroup of the Mordva subject to Volga Tatar influence. The Meshcheriaks of Bashkiria had been linguistically and culturally Russified under the late-Imperial regime; they had adopted the Russian language and Orthodox religion, and referred to themselves as Russians (Wixman 1984: 133). By contrast, the Mishers of the region spoke the Tatar language and practised the Sunni Muslim religion. The question was as follows: Should the two groups be unified, so that the Meshcheriaks could ‘reclaim’ their lost identity? Or were the Russian-speaking Meshcheriaks a separate nationality (*narodnost'*)?<sup>24</sup> In the end, the ethnographers concluded that the Meshcheriaks were a subgroup of the Mishers. The ‘List of Nationalities of the USSR’ reflected this decision, noting Meshcheriak as a possible synonym of Misher. Census respondents would have the right to define themselves as Meshcheriaks, even as census enumerators counted them as Mishers. This was not seen as a betrayal of the idea of self-determination, since the people in question supposedly had been deprived of their ‘true identities’ through Russification. Significantly, the memo made no note of the fact that the Mishers had been ‘Tatarified’, reflecting the assumption that some forms of assimilation did not require official intervention.

## CLASSIFICATION IN PRACTICE

In early December 1926 the Soviet government and Party approved the census questions and instructions, accepting the case for the subjective self-definition of nationality and native language, albeit provisionally. In most regions, the census taker was to ask each household member: ‘In which *narodnost'* do you count yourself?’ and record the answer as given (TsIK 1929: 98, 99). In some regions, in response to protests, the Central Statistical Administration approved a slightly different version of the census question. In Georgia, census takers would ask respondents to state their ‘*narodnost'*, *natsional'nost'*, or *plemia* [tribe]’.<sup>25</sup> In Ukraine, census takers would ask respondents to state their ‘*natsional'nost'* (*narodnost'*)’.<sup>26</sup> In both cases, responses would be recorded in a standard form under the heading *narodnost'*. Ethnographers and statisticians had noted in their deliberations that the ‘ideal’ answer to the census

question was a ‘completely heartfelt one’ in which the respondent answers ‘without any sort of difficulty and doubt’.<sup>27</sup> But the ethnographers and statisticians also had prepared for all sorts of contingencies. If the respondent clearly ‘did not understand what was expected’ the census taker was to intervene. For example, he was to prevent people from answering the question about *narodnost'* with testimony about their native language, religion, place of residence, or *grazhdanstvo* (roughly translated as ‘citizenship’). The census taker also was to suggest that respondents (especially children) with parents of different nationalities who were unsure how to answer the question take their mothers’ *narodnost'*.<sup>28</sup> After ascertaining a respondent’s *narodnost'*, the census taker was to move on to the next question: ‘What is your native language [*rodnoi iazyk*]?’ Defining ‘native language’ as the language which the respondent knows best, the directives noted that *narodnost'* and native language need not correspond (TsIK 1929: 98, 99). Together, the census questions about nationality and native language were supposed to shed light on the Union’s ‘ethnographic composition’ and reveal which peoples had been victims of linguistic Russification.

As an acknowledgment of regional particularities, the Central Statistical Administration approved supplementary census materials for different localities. These materials included detailed directives, excerpted from ethnographers’ notes and designed to help census takers navigate through potential pitfalls. The instructions for the new Turkmen SSR, for example, adopted most of Zarubin’s recommendations for former Turkestan. Directives for Kirgizia emphasized the importance of differentiating among Kirgiz, Kazakhs, and Kara-Kirgiz, and noted that a ‘Uighur *narodnost'*’ does not exist.<sup>29</sup> While some directives circumscribed self-definition, others reaffirmed it. Supplemental instructions for several regions, including the Caucasus, stipulated that if parents and a son identified as members of different nationalities [*narodnosti*], ‘the son should be registered as a member of that *narodnost'* to which he counts himself’.<sup>30</sup>

Detailed directives did not always help census takers circumvent problems. The census takers, a veritable army of 150,000 people, were for the most part teachers and students from Moscow and other cities. Many were self-defined Russians with a halting command of local languages. The Central Statistical Administration organized seminars to train census taker, but noted low attendance rates. These factors, along with time constraints (each census takers was expected to conduct 100 interviews a day in the countryside or 75 a day in cities) complicated the registration process.<sup>31</sup> Administrators complained that census takers often rushed through interviews, neglecting to ask respondents to state their nationality (TsIK 1927: 227). Moreover, ethnographers acknowledged that in the absence of translators, a number of embarrassing ‘blunders’ were made. Confounded by the communication barrier, census takers unwittingly recorded as nationalities the local language equivalents for ‘I don’t know’ and ‘God knows’.<sup>32</sup> More egregious, however, were active campaigns for assimilation that the titular nationalities launched through the census. In regions where members of the titular nationalities served as census takers, a disproportionately small number of people were registered as members of minority nationalities. In Bashkiria, for example, Bashkir-identified instructors from the local statistical



administration told census takers ‘not to ask who is which nationality’, but to register everyone ‘as Bashkir’. The Central Statistical Administration reprimanded those responsible for the ‘premeditated falsification of census data’ and directed census takers to redo the census in affected regions.<sup>33</sup>

Particularistic understandings of identity also complicated census registration. Statisticians in Siberia speculated that census takers had received neither the official instructions nor the supplementary materials; they described how census takers in one region had allowed respondents to register themselves as ‘Sibiriaks’—a name not included on the official ‘List of Nationalities’.<sup>34</sup> Census takers in and around Tashkent noted the tendency of Kurama, Tajiks, and Kazakhs to identify themselves as Kurama-Uzbek, Tajik-Uzbek, and Kazakh-Uzbek. According to the census takers, if they registered someone as ‘Kurama’ without adding that he or she was also ‘Uzbek’, they risked ‘insulting not just the head of the household but all of his relatives’.<sup>35</sup> In some instances, rifts between official and local identity categories were settled by compromise: In Kirgizia, so many people had asked to be registered as Uighurs (a group originally excluded from the list) that the Central Statistical Administration eventually added the category to a special list of ‘provisional nationalities’ (TsIK 1929: 101, 107).

It was not just in response to the question about ‘nationality’ that respondents gave undesired or unexpected answers. Census takers in Ukraine explained that data about ‘literacy’ were inaccurate since Ukrainians ‘understand literacy as literacy in Russian’.<sup>36</sup> The question about ‘occupation’ also was cause for concern. Census takers from one region noted that they were unsure what to do when a group of women gave the answer ‘prostitute’.<sup>37</sup> In some regions it proved impossible to secure an accurate population count at all. Census takers in Central Asia explained that the presence of the Basmachi movement, an anti-Soviet resistance campaign, impeded census-taking. In one instance, they noted, the local population is ‘so terrorized by the Basmachi’ that ‘one part lies in hiding’ and another part has migrated to different regions.<sup>38</sup> Census takers in contested border regions reported similar difficulties. Kazakh-identified census takers in the Uzbek SSR and Uzbek-identified census takers in Karakalpakia noted that local populations (regarding them as outsiders) refused to answer any census questions at all.<sup>39</sup> Even in peaceful localities census takers reported obstacles to counting. They complained, for example, that men hid wives and children in regions where polygamy was common.<sup>40</sup> Of course, it is difficult to know how much these accounts reflected or misrepresented local life. They do, however, give a sense of the frustration and mistrust, on the part of census takers and respondents, that accompanied the registration process. Anxieties about the ‘nationality question’ complicated census-taking in general and exacerbated misunderstandings.

National self-definition in the census was not only circumscribed by difficult interactions between census takers and respondents. It also was limited by an important tool of census registration: the ‘List of Nationalities of the USSR’. The list, which had some 200 official entries (along with synonyms, local names, and subgroups), was the product of intense Union-wide negotiations among experts, officials, and local leaders. The list had real implications for peoples’ lives. Those groups (clans,

tribes, nationalities, etc.) which were included would receive separate status as official nationalities (at least for the short term). Those groups which were excluded would be consolidated into other nationalities (often as subgroups)—not just on paper but in real life. In 1926, the Central Statistical Administration had distributed regional versions of the list to census takers to help them ensure that responses to the ‘nationality’ question were acceptable. In practice, as we know from the example of the ‘Sibiriaks’, census takers often ignored the list and recorded responses as given. Statisticians in Moscow then used the list to re-categorize respondents into official nationality categories—as illustrated by the case of the Mishers and Meshcheriaks.

In January 1927, as census takers finished collecting data in most regions, statisticians, ethnographers, and government officials gathered in Moscow to discuss the official list of nationalities. Much of the meeting was devoted to deliberations about a special sub-list of ‘questionable nationalities’. This list included groups such as the Uighurs, Teptiars, Chala-Kazakhs, and Sarts, whose fates were still in question. According to ethnographers, most of the groups on this list were ‘mixed peoples’ without clearly identifiable national or tribal origins.<sup>41</sup> The Chala-Kazakhs, for example, were in their estimation ‘a mix of Kazakhs with Russians or with Tatars’. While some experts and officials maintained that these groups should be omitted from the final list, others argued for their inclusion, noting that ‘mestizos or mulattos’ were counted in the American census.<sup>42</sup> The classification of Jews also was discussed at the January meeting, but was considered ‘questionable’ for the opposite reason. Ethnographers maintained that all Jews shared the same tribal origins. Nonetheless, they were unsure of how to enumerate them since Georgian Jews, Central Asian Jews, Crimean Jews, and European Jews (from Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia) spoke different languages and had different customs. Some statisticians and ethnographers argued for the unification of all Jews into one census category. Others argued for separate categories and even recommended adding another group, the ‘Mountain Jews’, to the final list.<sup>43</sup> The so-called ‘Jewish question’ was already a subject of much contention. Between 1924 and 1927 the Soviet government officially opposed the creation of a Jewish national republic, but sponsored the establishment of Jewish agricultural settlements in south Ukraine, the Crimea, and Belorussia (Kagedan 1985). While some Soviet officials advocated the creation of a separate Jewish territory, others argued that the Jews, as a dispersed people, were not entitled to ‘national rights’ (Reisner 1925).

The classification of the peoples of Transcaucasia was the most controversial topic in discussions about the official ‘List of Nationalities’. Georgian representatives from the Transcaucasian government complained that a number of peoples designated as separate nationalities on the list (such as the Mingrelians, Svans, Laz, and Adzhars) were really subgroups of the Georgians. They berated central authorities and experts for attempting ‘to break-up the Georgian nation’, maintaining that the ‘false division’ of the Georgians was reminiscent of Tsarist colonial politics. The Georgian representatives maintained that Adzhars were Georgians who had once been Moslems; they asserted that the Soviet regime had created an Adzhar national district (the Adzhar ASSR) with the goal of promoting ‘Adzhar’ separatism. They further argued that

Mingrelian and Svan were regional names for Georgians from different localities. As it turned out, more than half of the people thought by ethnographers to be Mingrelians had registered themselves in the census as Georgians. Ethnographers wondered aloud whether census takers in Transcaucasia had engaged in foul play or whether the census results reflected the population's self-definition. The national-political stakes gave these discussions a high emotional pitch.<sup>44</sup>

As Soviet experts and officials finished revising the list of nationalities, they gave some 172 peoples official recognition. They eliminated from the list a number of smaller peoples (groups with fewer than 50 registered members); in the census results these peoples were consolidated into neighbouring groups. The fate of a number of larger 'questionable nationalities' also was settled. The Mingrelians, Adzhars, Svans, and Laz were included as subgroups of the Georgians. The Jews were not consolidated (yet) but were divided into five nationalities (*narodnosti*) based on geographical location. The Sarts were omitted from the list (although the Sart-Kalmyks were temporarily included), and self-identified Sarts speaking Uzbek were counted in the census as Uzbeks. Teptiars who had given a secondary *narodnost'* upon request (e. g. Teptiar-Bashkir) were counted as members of the second (presumably more legitimate) nationality. Those who insisted on being counted as Teptiars were included, along with the Uighurs, on a list of provisional nationalities and census figures were tallied for them (TsIK 1929: 106, 107).<sup>45</sup> The provisional nationalities were the subject of further ethnographic research during the late 1920s.

The inclusion of a group on the 1927 'List of Nationalities of the USSR' did not ensure its continued recognition as an official nationality. But peoples with slots on the census list *and* national territories of any size (republic, district, region) fared better in the 1930s, when the Soviet regime began a process of consolidating the 172 *narodnosti* identified in the 1926 census into a significantly smaller number of larger, 'economically developed', and historically 'evolved' *natsional'nosti*.

## CENSUS-TAKING AND MAP-MAKING

I have thus far discussed how a definitional grid of *narodnosti* was set up and implemented through the All-Union Census of 1926. But what were the consequences of using nationality as a basic rubric of state organization at a time when many people lacked 'national' consciousness? How did nationality categories become meaningful for people who previously did not define themselves in 'national' terms? Through one-on-one interviews with census takers—and through the institutionalization of a multitude of official documents asking for one's *narodnost'*—Soviet citizens learned that they were supposed to define themselves as members of an official nationality. But it was the creation of new national republics, districts, and regions that helped activate nationality categories, by demonstrating that nationality and land were officially linked. Indeed, it was against the backdrop of Soviet border-making (the national-territorial delimitation of the Soviet Union) that local elites throughout the Union came to see the All-Union Census, with its question about nationality, as

instrumental to their struggle for land and power. Representatives of the Union's titular nationalities used coercion and deception to manipulate the census registration of nationality, affirm their dominant position, and maintain a local monopoly on resources. Representatives of *narodnosti* without national territories or with small national territories saw the census as an opportunity to increase their group's official numbers, document that their group lived in a 'compact mass' in particular regions, and lay claim to desirable land. It was in this context that the Soviet population learned the extent to which national categorization could affect their day-to-day lives.

Census-taking and border-making were identity-transforming processes throughout the Soviet Union. This was most apparent in regions where 'non-national' identities previously had prevailed. The example of 'the Tajiks' and 'the Uzbeks' is a case in point. The Soviet regime had established the Tajik national district as a sub-region of the Uzbek SSR in 1924, during the first phase of the national-territorial delimitation. In subsequent years, self-identified Tajiks in the Uzbek SSR sent central authorities letters and petitions that addressed the problems of discrimination and forced linguistic and cultural assimilation. In 1929 the Soviet government agreed to hear the case for secession, on the grounds that the Tajik district was 'by economic, national, and geographical indications isolated from Uzbekistan'.<sup>46</sup> A short time later, the government created a new border dispute commission to determine which territories might be included in a new Tajik SSR.<sup>47</sup> The border dispute commission held a series of closed sessions with high-ranking officials from the Uzbek SSR, the Tajik district, the NKVD, and Moscow-based Party and government institutions. The Party and NKVD official who presided over the commission (Iakov Peters) was in frequent communication with Joseph Stalin during this period. Deliberations about the proposed republic's borders proved complicated, as the Tajik representatives requested not only the Tajik district, but also a number of territories in the Uzbek SSR. The most controversial regions were Samarkand, Bukhara, Surkhan-Dar'ia, and Khodzhent.

In order to assess Tajik and Uzbek claims to disputed regions, the border dispute commission collected information about the contested regions' ethnographic composition, geographical make-up, and economic orientation. In particular, the commission attempted to determine which official nationality, Uzbek or Tajik, was 'indigenous' to disputed regions and which currently constituted a majority.<sup>48</sup> The commission used ethnographers' reports and maps and old census data during its deliberations. It also listened to presentations from self-defined Uzbek and Tajik elites (usually representatives from the regions' local government and Party organizations). Significantly, ethnographer-consultants to the commission and officials representing the Tajiks and the Uzbeks gave contradictory analyses.

Ethnographers' reports maintained that the Uzbeks and Tajiks were 'mixed peoples', and that the relationship between them did not correspond to clear ethnic, linguistic, and religious divisions. Zarubin noted in a report, for example, that the Uzbeks were not 'a unified and separate ethnic group' but included a diverse mix of Turkic peoples. The Tajiks, too, he suggested, were not a coherent whole. According to Zarubin, the term 'Tajik' sometimes referred to a non-nomadic Moslem (regardless of language) and sometimes referred to a person who spoke a dialect of the Farsi

language (regardless of religion). He maintained that settled Tajiks had little in common with 'mountain Tajiks', aside from a shared base language. Settled Tajiks, he suggested, had more in common with the part of the region's settled Turkic population 'that lack clan ties, are known as Sarts, and presently comprise the main core of the Uzbek nationality' (Zarubin 1925: 6). Zarubin and his colleagues emphasized that before the advent of Soviet power and the establishment of official nationalities the 'Tajik' and 'Uzbek' identities were fluid.

The question of Sart identity was especially complicated, according to the ethnographers.<sup>49</sup> Zarubin reiterated the position that the Sarts were not a distinct nationality or ethnographic group. Describing the Sarts' ethnographic make-up, he characterized them as an Uzbek-Iranian mix: Uzbek in culture and Iranian in origin. He noted that when 'Turkicized Iranians were surrounded en masse by long-settled Uzbeks who did not differ from them culturally', the former would sometimes take the name of the latter, but remain outside of the clan structure. In other instances, he explained, the Turkicized Iranians called themselves Turks or accepted the name 'Sart', which is what their neighbours often called them (Zarubin 1925: 14, 15). The so-called 'Sart question' became a point of contention in border disputes between the Uzbek and Tajik representatives. Since self-identified Sarts comprised a sizeable population in disputed regions, and since a 'Sart nationality' did not officially exist, Uzbek and Tajik leaders attempted to claim the Sarts as their own.

Whereas ethnographers emphasized the 'mixed' nature of the Uzbeks and Tajiks, high-ranking local elites, fighting over land and other resources, attempted to establish their group's distinct 'national' origins. Arguing for disputed territories, representatives from the Tajik government portrayed the Tajiks as the 'aboriginals' of Samarkand, Surkhandar'ia, and Bukhara, directly descended from ancient Iranian tribes. They argued that the Tajiks had historical claims on disputed regions. According to Nisar Mukhamedov, a leading Party and government official in the Tajik ASSR, the Tajiks had not left these regions voluntarily; several hundred years ago Uzbek invaders had forced the Tajiks into the mountains and 'Turkicized' the ones who remained (presumably turning them into Sarts).<sup>50</sup> Uzbek representatives, by contrast, were pleased with existing borders and emphasized the present. They maintained that 'currently Uzbeks and not Tajiks live in compact masses' in the disputed regions. Some territories such as Samarkand might have been Tajik regions some 300 or 400 years ago, but 'there is no reason to return to the past'.<sup>51</sup> In an effort to conceptualize Uzbekistan as an Uzbek state, the Uzbek leaders did not acknowledge that some of the 'Uzbeks' currently living in contested regions were Turkicized Iranians.

The Tajik and Uzbek elites' disputes over territories were reflected in disagreements about census data. The government's border dispute commission used census figures to evaluate the national composition of contested regions. But discussions about census data were filled with accusations of falsification and forced assimilation. The Uzbek representatives maintained that the 1926 census, taken in 'Soviet conditions', was more accurate than past population counts.<sup>52</sup> They argued that censuses under the Russian Empire had given false results because of the earlier

'Tajikification' of the Uzbek population. The fact that old censuses in the region had measured nationality on the basis of native language complicated matters further. Faizulla Khodzhaev, a leader in the Uzbek government and early proponent of national-territorial delimitation, maintained that although Bukhara had been an Uzbek protectorate before the Revolution, the official language had been Tajik and 'everyone in every village was supposed to study it'. Therefore, just because people spoke Tajik 'does not mean they are Tajik'. Khodzhaev noted that the Uzbek language was not officially recognized in the region until 1920, which could explain the growth of Uzbek consciousness in 1926.<sup>53</sup> Other Uzbek government officials also maintained that the Soviet regime had helped redress the mistakes of the past: People who had been recorded as Tajiks 'turned out to be Uzbeks'.<sup>54</sup>

The Tajik representatives, by contrast, maintained that data from the 1926 census were 'biased and unfair'. Shirinsho Shotemor, a Tajik Party official, described local efforts to categorize all the tribes and clans of Uzbekistan as Uzbek. In 1924, during the national delimitation, Uzbek newspapers 'claimed that Tajiks existed only in Pamir' (in the official Tajik district of Uzbekistan) and that people 'who believe there are Tajiks in the rest of Central Asia are insane'. At the time of the 1926 census 'it was impossible to step forward and say that Tajiks existed in Uzbekistan' let alone tell a census taker that you were one.<sup>55</sup> He and other Tajik representatives suggested that such circumstances had led to false census totals. 'Old Bukhara is famous in all the countries of the east as a Tajik city, with a Tajik literature, culture, and language. But the 1926 census recorded it as a city with an Uzbek population.' Samarkand showed similar results. 'Did all the Tajiks in Samarkand die?' asked one official from the Tajik government. 'If so, it must be a result of non-Soviet policies.'<sup>56</sup> In connection with the debate about census figures, some Tajik officials presented themselves as the hapless victims of forced assimilation. One such official argued that although he was '100% Tajik' he too had been 'Uzbekified' in the 1926 census. He suggested that if members of the local elite had been registered falsely, the 'dark masses' no doubt also had been duped. The Tajik representatives preferred pre-Soviet figures, but suggested that the 1917 census was probably most accurate since it was taken at a time 'when there was neither Uzbek nor Tajik chauvinism among local leaders'.<sup>57</sup>

Claims about forced Uzbekization become more complicated in light of other narratives that implicated Tajik leaders as former 'Uzbek nationalists'. Mukhamedov, for example, outlined in an official statement to the Soviet government how 'historical circumstances' had prompted the 'Tajik intelligentsia' to help Uzbek leaders assimilate the Tajik population of currently contested territories into the Uzbek nationality in 1924 during the first phase of the national-territorial delimitation. As recounted by Mukhamedov, at the start of the First World War Tajik leaders had supported the pan-Turkic movement, which aspired to unite the countries of the east under Turkic power and end European domination. After the Bolshevik Revolution, the pan-Turkic forces united with anti-Soviet forces (the Basmachi movement), which 'resisted Soviet infiltration into Turkestan'. Yet, when it became clear that former Turkestan would become part of the Soviet Union, local elites shifted alliances and began to collaborate with the Soviet regime. He recounted how the pan-Turkic

movement evolved into a pan-Uzbek movement: Turkic leaders 'put on a Soviet mask' and promoted the idea of an autonomous Uzbek nation within a Soviet federation. According to Mukhamedov, members of 'the Tajik intelligentsia' soon 'renamed themselves Uzbeks', supported the Uzbek movement, and encouraged other Tajiks to define themselves as Uzbeks.<sup>58</sup>

In Mukhamedov's account, as long as borders were unfixed, the Uzbek and Tajik tribes and clans could unite for common goals. It was in large part the establishment of permanent political boundaries that made people conscious of the relationship among national identities, access to resources, and political power. Mukhamedov described how the Tajik leaders had joined the Uzbek movement in order to pose a united front of 'eastern' peoples against 'western' forces. But in the aftermath of the national-territorial delimitation, the Uzbek leaders asserted that 'Uzbekistan was a place for Uzbeks' and that people who claimed Tajik as a native language or 'considered themselves Tajiks' had to leave. Teachers, officials, doctors, and other professionals who did not 'accept Uzbek as their official language' were dismissed and assigned to menial labour. According to Mukhamedov, Tajiks did not define themselves as Uzbeks out of confusion, but out of fear of being deported. Tajik Party workers in Uzbekistan 'began to call themselves Uzbeks' because they wished to remain in Uzbekistan. The Tajik masses saw such behaviour and 'began to conceal their nationality'.<sup>59</sup>

The Tajik and Uzbek leaders constructed narratives about nation formation that portrayed the Uzbeks and the Tajiks as two distinct nationalities. But these narratives often obscured what ethnographers saw as the real complexities of contested territories. In arguments about census figures and national composition, the national elites refused to concede the very point that ethnographers stressed: It often was impossible to make a clear distinction between 'Tajiks' and 'Uzbeks'. For example, when pre-Soviet and post-Soviet census figures for Kashkadar did not match up, Tajik and Uzbek leaders maintained that 'long-standing hostilities' between the two nationalities had led to the falsification of data. But the ethnographer Mikhail Khudiakov suggested that the divergent figures really resulted from the fact that most respondents were uncertain what to do when told to register themselves as members of one nationality or another. In a 1929 report to the border dispute commission, he speculated that the inhabitants of Kashkadar included Tajik tribes 'at a state of Turkization' and Uzbek tribes 'who had acquired the Tajik language'.<sup>60</sup> According to Khudiakov, the peoples of the region had lived intermixed for so long that they themselves did not know exactly how the processes of linguistic and cultural exchange had transpired.

The case of the Tajik and Uzbek national republics demonstrates how even a partially successful campaign to adjust borders could have long-term effects. In late 1929 the Soviet government and the Party declared that the Tajik district should receive the status of a national republic. Several months later, the border dispute commission concluded that Samarkand and Bukhara should remain part of the Uzbek SSR, and that Surkhan-Dar'ia and Khodzhent should be transferred to the new Tajik SSR. According to the border dispute commission, Tajik claims to Bukhara and Samarkand

could not be ‘justified’, even though majorities in both cities ‘speak Tajik’ and data from pre-Soviet censuses and ethnographic materials suggested that the cities ‘have large, perhaps predominant, Tajik populations’. The commission maintained that the unification of ‘Uzbekistan’s largest cities’ with Tajikistan would create ‘chaos and disorder’ and ‘would bring benefit to no one, including the Tajik population that lives there’.<sup>61</sup> The commission initially planned for the transfer of Surkhan-Dar’ia and Khodzhent. In the end, only Khodzhent was transferred (Masov 1991). But even as Moscow-based officials and members of the Party elite made the final decisions about disputed territories, hostilities between the Uzbek and Tajik governments escalated. Moreover, as local elites argued about the national identities of ‘mixed peoples’ living in contested territories, these ‘mixed peoples’ came under increasing pressure to define themselves as either ‘Uzbeks’ or ‘Tajiks’. Clans and tribes continued to exist, but local conflicts were reconfigured along national lines. Indeed, if census-taking and border-making contributed to a rise in ‘national’ sentiment in the 1920s, the failure to implement border changes after extensive appeals processes often set the stage for future ‘national’ conflict.<sup>62</sup>

This chapter has examined the role of census-taking in the creation of official national identities in the Soviet Union. It has demonstrated how Soviet leaders, local elites, ethnographers, and statisticians worked with each other and often against each other in the 1920s to create an official definitional grid of nationalities and assimilate ‘unconnected’ peoples into a greater ‘Soviet’ whole. In ideological terms, the Soviet regime viewed nation-making as a necessary step on the road to communism. Indeed, what is most striking is the colossal effort that the regime made to ‘grant’ nationhood to people without national consciousness, hoping to push them ‘forward’ on an imagined path of evolutionary development. Almost as striking, perhaps, is the amount of work that professional ethnographers and statisticians put into determining the number of people that ‘belonged’ to each official nationality<sup>63</sup>—all the while acknowledging that their work of counting and categorizing was a catalyst to national identity formation.

This chapter also has demonstrated that in spite of the Soviet regime’s efforts to guide and control the process of nation formation within its borders, nation-making efforts took on a life of their own ‘on the ground’. As ‘nationality’ was linked to land and resources, official nationality categories gained political and practical significance for people in the localities. The delimitation of national–territorial borders, for example, rapidly changed the political and social terrain of many regions, by creating dominant nationalities and minority nationalities within each official national territory. It was in this context that local elites began to see the census—with its question about ‘nationality’—as an important instrument in the struggle for economic and political power. And it was in this context that official nationality categories became more fact than fiction for people who previously had not expressed national sentiment. Soviet leaders had theorized that ‘nationality’ was a historically specific construct, which would lose its significance and wither away as the Soviet population approached the socialist future. But the Soviet Union withered away first, leaving in its wake a collection of nationalities and very real ‘national’ tensions.



## Notes

1. The quote is cited in Slezkine (1994: 420). For the original see Dimanshtein (1919).
2. Many of the examples in this chapter have been taken from Hirsch (1997: 251–78; 2000: 201–26).
3. The late-Imperial regime's approach to its population varied considerably. In some regions and time periods, it endorsed a policy that combined religious and cultural toleration with administrative integration. In other regions and time periods, it advanced a policy of Russification, characterized by linguistic and cultural assimilation. Soviet officials emphasized the coercive aspect of Russification in their attempts to prove that the Soviet regime was more enlightened than its predecessor. For an excellent discussion of late-Imperial policy see Geyer (1987).
4. A number of Soviet officials discussed the danger of dispersing the population into 'random configurations'. See, for example, Reisner (1925: 192–207).
5. The Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of Russia and the Borderlands formed in February 1917 in order to study the ethnic composition of Russia's European and Asiatic borderlands in anticipation of the end of the First World War. After October, the commission's responsibilities were extended to include the ethnographic study of the Soviet population. After the formation of the Soviet Union, the commission changed its name to the Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of the USSR and the Borderlands.
6. The St Petersburg Branch of the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences (PFA RAN) f. 135, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 115, 116.
7. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 115, 116.
8. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 11, l. 117.
9. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 109–11.
10. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 11, ll. 134–7.
11. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 42, 42ob.
12. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 42, 42ob.
13. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 42, 42ob.
14. For an example of one such list see PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 23, ll. 247–61.
15. For a discussion of the relationship between centre and regions in the formulation of the 1926 census see Cadiot (1997: 601–16).
16. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 23; Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Modern History (RTsKhIDNI) f. 17, op. 3, d. 546, 599, 601, etc. Valerian Osinskii (Obolenskii), candidate member of the Central Committee of the Party, and head of the Central Statistical Commission, gave briefings about the census at Party and government meetings.
17. The Russian State Archive of the Economy (RGAE) f. 1562, op. 1, d. 433, ll. 1–71.
18. RGAE f. 1562, op. 1, d. 433, ll. 25–7, 63–4.
19. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 8, l. 114; op. 1, d. 433, l. 177ob.
20. RGAE f. 1562, op. 1, d. 433, ll. 79–81.
21. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 8, l. 110.
22. RGAE f. 1562, op. 1, d. 433, l. 195; op. 336, d. 8, ll. 108–9ob.
23. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 8, l. 114ob.
24. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 21, l. 107.
25. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 44, l. 177ob.

26. RGAE f. 1562, op. 1, d. 433, ll. 155, 157.
27. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 11, l. 117.
28. This recommendation reflected the belief that women, who did most of the childraising in traditional households, passed on language and customs (*byt*) to the next generation.
29. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 26, l. 157; d. 47, l. 51.
30. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 26, l. 151ob.
31. RGAE f. 1562, op. 1, d. 433, l. 3.
32. PFA RAN f. 135, op. 1, d. 38, ll. 5, 5ob.
33. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, l. 123; d. 10, l. 2.
34. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, l. 112.
35. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 47, l. 77.
36. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, l. 97.
37. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 47, l. 61.
38. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 48, ll. 3, 7.
39. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, l. 102.
40. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 9, l. 19ob.
41. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, ll. 4–6.
42. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, l. 36.
43. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, ll. 29–30.
44. RGAE f. 1562, op. 336, d. 4, ll. 30–2, 158ob.
45. The census explanatory notes state that there were 184 *narodnosti*. This figure includes the 12 smaller nationalities that had been eliminated from the list in 1927.
46. The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF) f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, l. 38a. On the delimitation see Vaidyanath (1967).
47. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 9; d. 127, l. 132.
48. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, ll. 256–63.
49. On ‘Sart’ identity also see Schoeberlein-Engel (1994). On the relationship between the Uzbeks and Tajiks see Fragner (1994) Brower (1997), and Khalid (1998).
50. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 42.
51. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 16.
52. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 23.
53. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 24.
54. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 35.
55. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 26. Shotemor was chief secretary of the Tajik oblast committee of the Uzbekistan Communist Party and a member of the TsIK of the USSR. This information is from Levytsky (1974: 303–6).
56. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, ll. 203, 204; d. 129, l. 18.
57. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 129, l. 34.
58. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, ll. 204–7.
59. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, ll. 204–7.
60. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, ll. 161–2. Khudiakov served on the Commission for the Regionalization of Uzbekistan in 1925 and 1926.
61. GARF f. 3316, op. 22, d. 127, l. 274.
62. For a discussion of the legacy of Soviet census-taking in Uzbekistan, see Abramson (2002).
63. Alain Blum (1994) and Gousseff (1997) have argued, for example, that demographers and statisticians from the late-Imperial regime continued to operate in a positivistic fashion in the 1920s and that data from the 1926 census were largely accurate.

## References

- Abramson, D. (2002). 'Identity Counts: the Soviet Legacy and the Census in Uzbekistan', in D. I. Kertzer and D. Arel (eds.), *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 176–201.
- Anderson, B. R. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (rev. edn.). New York and London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (1993). 'Number in the Colonial Imagination', in C. A. Breckenridge and P. van der Veer (eds.), *Orientalism and the Post-Colonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 114–35.
- Blank, S. (1994). *The Sorcerer as Apprentice*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Blum, A. (1994). *Naître, vivre et mourir en URSS, 1917–1991*. Paris: Plon.
- and Gousseff, C. (1997). 'La statistique démographique et sociale, élément pour une analyse historique de l'état russe et soviétique', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 38/4: 441–55.
- Brower, D. R. (1997). 'Islam and Ethnicity: Russian Colonial Policy in Turkestan', in D. R. Brower and E. J. Lazzerini (eds.), *Russia's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Cadiot, J. (1997). 'Les relations entre le centre et les régions en urss à travers les débats sur les nationalités dans le recensement de 1926', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 38/4: 601–16.
- Carr, E. H. (1950). *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1. London: Macmillan.
- Cohn, B. S. (1987). 'The Census, Social Stratification and Objectification in South Asia', in B. S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*. New Delhi and London: Oxford University Press, 224–54.
- (1996). *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dimanshtein, S. (1919). 'Narodnyi komissariat po delam natsional'nostei', *Zbizi'n' natsional'nostei*, 41/49.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Fragner, B. (1994). 'The Nationalization of the Uzbeks and Tajiks', in A. Kappeler, G. Simon, and G. Brunner (eds.), *Muslim Communities Reemerge: Historical Perspectives on Nationality, Politics, and Opposition in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 13–32.
- Geyer, D. (1987). *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860–1914*. Leamington Spa and New York: Berg.
- Hirsch, F. (1997). 'The Soviet Union as a Work-in-Progress: Ethnographers and the Category Nationality in the 1926, 1937, and 1939 Censuses', *Slavic Review*, 56/2: 251–78.
- (2000). 'Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities', *The Russian Review*, 59/2: 201–26.
- Kagedan, A. L. (1985). 'The Formation of Soviet Jewish Territorial Units, 1917–1934' Ph. D. thesis, Columbia University.
- Khalid, A. (1998). *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Levytsky, B. (ed.) (1974). *The Stalinist Terror in the Thirties: Documentation from the Soviet Press*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press.
- Masov, Rakhim (1991). *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*. Dushanbe: Irfon.
- Melik'ian, G. G. et al. (ed.) (1994). *Narodonaselenie, Entsiklopedicheski slovar'*. Appendix 3. Soderzhanie programm i formulirovka voprosov perepisi naseleniia Rossii. Moscow: Great Russian Encyclopedia.

- Osinskii, N. (1927). 'Printsipy i praktika vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia'. *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo*, 3–4: 36–52.
- Reisner, M. (1925). 'Sovet natsional'nostei: Natsional'nost' i natsional'nye edinitsy', in *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo*, Sbornik 1. Moscow: The Communist Academy, pp. 192–207.
- Schoeberlein-Engel, J. S. (1994). 'Identity in Central Asia: Construction and Contention in the Conceptions of "Ozbek", "Tajik", "Muslim", "Samarquandi" and Other Groups'. Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University.
- Simon, G. (1991). *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Slezkine, Y. (1994). 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism', *Slavic Review*, 53/2: 414–52.
- Stalin, I. V. (1950). *Marksizm i natsional'nyi vopros*. Moscow: State Press of Political Literature.
- Suny, R. G. (1993). *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Tsentrāl'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie (TsIK) (1927). *Zasedanie. 3 sessiia. Stenograficheskii otchet*. Moscow.
- (1929). *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 g.*, Vol. 17. Moscow.
- Vaidyanath, R. (1967). *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics: A Study in Soviet Nationalities Policy, 1917–1936*. New Delhi: People's Publishing House.
- Wixman, R. (1984). *The Peoples of the USSR: An Ethnographic Handbook*. Armonk: M E Sharpe.
- Zarubin, I. I. (1925). *Spisok narodnostei Turkestarskogo kraia. Trudy Komissii po izucheniiu plemennogo sostava naseleniia Rossii i sopredel'nykh stran*, Vol. 9. Leningrad: Academy of Sciences.

# 8 Making up China's 'Black Population'

SUSAN GREENHALGH

A New Problem Brought About by Out-Of-Plan Childbearing: About 1,000,000 Children Nationwide Lack Household Registration. Today there are over one million 'black children'. Because they were born outside the plan, these children have no household registration. This information was obtained yesterday from the Public Security Bureau.

*People's Daily* (1988)

This ominous-sounding headline and lead paragraph of a news article, culled from the archives of the official newspaper of the Chinese communist party, hint at some of the unintended consequences of China's planned programme of population modernization: a 'black population' of 'unplanned children' over 1 million strong. The strangeness of the Chinese categories draws our attention: What is 'out-of-plan childbirth'? Who are 'black children'? Why is the Public Security Bureau involved with childbearing?

Today, state-created, bureaucratically elaborated social categories are so normalized a feature of our daily lives that we usually ignore them. When we think about them, we think of them as simply statistical classifications the government uses to gather the data needed to manage modern society. Unexceptional though they may seem, however, such categories are critically important, for they participate in the construction of social reality. Inspired by Foucault's writings on social normalization and government rationality in modern society (Foucault 1975, 1978, 1979, 1991), a new body of work has traced the modernist discourses and governmental technologies through which such normalizing categories are formed and made effective (Rabinow 1989; Ferguson 1990; Horn 1994; Bowker and Starr 1999). Once bureaucratically embedded in society, this work suggests, these categories have far-ranging effects on the distribution of material goods, the allocation of social power, and the subjectivities of those inhabiting different categorical positions. Just as the practice

of counting creates new ways for people to be—effectively ‘making up people’, as Ian Hacking (1986) has provocatively put it—so too do the bureaucratic categories of state programmes work to ‘make up’ persons, who in turn come to fit their categories. Yet the process of making up persons often brings surprises, for the forms and politics of personhood that emerge may be quite different from those intended by the bureaucrats in the state.

Students of colonialism have uncovered the role of such state-created categories in constituting the ethnic–religious groups that make up ‘the nation’. Benedict Anderson (1991: 163–85) has shown how the technology of the colonial census created a grammar by which the nation was constructed of hierarchically ordered ethnic–racial categories. As these groupings got adopted by the bureaucracies of education, law and order, public health, and immigration, the colonial state’s imaginings took on a socio-political life and longevity that the census-makers could hardly have envisioned. A striking example of the ‘censorial formation of the nation’ comes from British colonial India. Bernard S. Cohn (1987: 224–54) and Arjun Appadurai (1996: 114–38) have illuminated the ways in which the census categories devised by the colonial rulers exoticized, classified, and then quantified indigenous caste identities, creating new groupings and new politics that eventually undermined colonial rule.

In the postcolonial era, some of the most efficacious social categories are those emerging from the developmental projects of third world states, which, in turn, are embedded in modernist discourses of ‘development’ (Ferguson 1990; Escobar 1995; Gupta 1998). (Here and below, I use quotation marks to indicate figures of discourse.) Motivated by Malthusian concerns, most third world governments have made programmes for population control components of their larger strategies for economic development and social modernization. Despite the pervasiveness of the discourse on third world ‘overpopulation’ and the prevalence of family planning programmes in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, little attention has been devoted to the role of population control categories and programmes in the construction of third world modernities.

The social productivity of population categories emerges with particular force in China, home to the world’s largest national population. A master of the arts of government, the post-1949 Chinese state has made extensive use of the technique of social categorization for socio-economic modernization and socio-political control. Yet the effects have often been quite different from the party-state’s stated intention of creating a ‘socialist modernity’ marked by a rapidly industrializing economy and an egalitarian socialist society. Students of the Maoist era have shown how state-created, arbitrarily imposed ‘class status’ (*jieji chengfen*) categories (poor peasant, lower-middle peasant, landlord; worker, cadre, intellectual, over sixty designations in all) profoundly reordered Chinese society. Though designed to reduce the gross disparities of pre-communist Chinese society, the new labels introduced a harsh new system of inequalities that made life extremely difficult for the ‘bad classes’ (Billeter 1985). Equally consequential were the categories embedded in the household registration (*hukou*) system, which was established in the 1950s to limit cityward migration and ensure that the fruits of development went to the urban areas and heavy

industries. During the Maoist years, the *hukou* classification peasant/nonpeasant household (*nongye/feinongye hu*) created a virtual two-caste society that left the peasant majority, Mao's 'revolutionary creators', poor and village-bound (Potter 1983). Stimulated by the rise of the 'floating population'—supposedly short-term peasant migrants to China's cities—students of the post-Mao era of reform have traced the impact of that same household registration system on the distribution of citizenship rights and life opportunity in China's cities (e.g. Cheng and Selden 1994; Chan and Zhang 1999; Solinger 1999; Zhang 2001). Lacking an urban *hukou*, Dorothy J. Solinger (1999) has argued, peasant migrants in China's main cities constitute a vast underclass that face levels of discrimination and social, economic, and political exclusion so severe as to make them virtual foreigners in their own country.

Despite the equally monumental significance of China's fertility control efforts—which, official estimates suggest, have 'averted' over 300 million births since the early 1970s, with profound effects at every level of the social system—the literature on the categories embedded in the birth control programme is minuscule compared to writings on the programme's demographic effects (on the programme's categories, see White 1994*a*; Anagnost 1995; Greenhalgh 2001*a,b*). Students of reproductive politics in China have examined the politics of policy formulation and implementation, but they have largely neglected the conceptual categories over which those struggles are waged.<sup>1</sup> More than neglect, the planned birth character of China's fertility control project has been camouflaged by the official (and often also scholarly) (mis)translation of that programme as a 'family planning program'. This English rendering of *jihua shengyu* (literally 'planned childbirth') implies the existence of a liberal, individual-centred family planning programme rather than the 'radical' (i.e. Marxian) state-run birth planning programme China actually has. Politically consequential if not motivated, translations matter more than we think.

This chapter argues that the planned birth programme, with its core category planned/unplanned births (*jihuanei/jihuawai shengyu*), has inadvertently created a huge outcast group known as the 'black population' (*bei renkou*). This 'black population' (which includes a few other categories of individuals as well) is not only less visible than the 'floating population', its life chances are also much bleaker. For while the peasant members of the urban floating population possess valid household registrations in their home villages, members of the 'black population' are not registered anywhere. Members of an illegitimate category, 'black persons' are denied access to schooling, healthcare, and other state-supplied benefits of citizenship. To understand this unintended product of China's population modernization programme, we must attend to the discursive concepts and categories in which that programme is framed. In China and elsewhere, population discourse establishes categorical norms—socially desirable ways of being—and deviations. When put into bureaucratic practice, those categories create new types of personhood—normative and deviant—which carry very different sets of life opportunities. China's population discourse is particularly important because, as part of a larger official discourse of Marxist–Leninist–Maoist Thought, it is the hegemonic discourse, the only 'correct' and thus politically safe way of viewing China's population problems and their solution. Its

hegemonic status has meant that its social effects were all the more powerful. We also need to attend to the socialist character of China's population discourse, something that has been virtually ignored in the vast demographic literature on that country's population control programme. Although China's Marxist development discourse shared with capitalist (or liberal) development discourses concern with 'development', 'progress', and 'modernity', it was also distinctive in ways that matter. To understand those differences, we must delve into the seemingly arcane but actually critically important topic of the history of population control discourse in Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought.

The planned/unplanned birth category is rooted in the ideological construct of 'birth planning', China's distinctive Marxist–Leninist–Maoist approach to population control work. In the chapter's first section, we trace the genealogy of that term, uncovering the historical and political context from which it emerged. We find here that the birth-planning construct was historically contingent, arising in the particular mid-1950s climate of Great Leap enthusiasm for comprehensive planning, and kept alive in good part because it was Mao, the Great Helmsman, who had proposed it. In the chapter's second section, we see how the 'birth planning' formula was made hegemonic and then secured from political attack. By around 1970 it had become linked to the primary function of the socialist state—national economic planning—consolidating its position in Chinese communist thought and practice.

In the 1970s, the distinction gained theoretical elaboration in the form of Engels's 'twofold character of production'. This process is explored in the chapter's third section. Building on Marx's materialistic vision of society, this notion provided theoretical justification for treating the production of human beings like the production of material commodities, subject to overall coordination by planners in the state apparatus. The theory also construed the communist party as the major agent of reproductive change. While the optimistic tone of the birth planning discourse was undoubtedly good for political morale, the party was represented as omniscient and omnipotent, sure eventually to succeed in planning births countrywide. No theoretical provision was made for the possibility of planning breakdown, systems engineering failure.

In the fourth section, we see what happened when the discourse of birth planning was translated into political practice. Initiated in the 1970s, the bureaucratic planning of births was intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, after the introduction of the 'one-child-per-couple policy' in 1979–80. In the countryside the state planning of one-child families was highly unpopular, leading to widespread resistance to the policy and the multiplication of unplanned births. Unless their parents could somehow legalize their status, those unplanned infants became part of a 'black population' who faced a wide range of difficulties that are rarely acknowledged in official discourse. Although little is known about them, estimates provided in the fifth section suggest that their numbers may be huge. Gaps in bureaucratic coverage of Chinese citizens work to erase this category of persons from official discourse and practice. Yet, I argue, China's 'black persons' are a product of the very discourse and practice of state planning that invisibilize them. The 'black population' is a result of the process



of categorization (planned/unplanned births) and normalization (planning) by which the Chinese state sought to create Chinese socialist modernity. Social normalization was incomplete, in part because of overly optimistic political assumptions, leaving a huge group of 'unplanned' deviants whose existence state planners could hardly admit. Devised to modernize the population, the concluding section argues, the birth planning programme appears to have created what it sought to eliminate: a substantial class of 'backward' persons who will certainly complicate China's modernization.

## MAOIST CONCEPTION: SOCIALIST DREAMS AND THE ORIGINS OF THE ANARCHY/PLAN FORMULATION

For all the cultural disruption and political tension it has caused, China's birth planning project was based on a deeply appealing dream. Created in the early years of the People's Republic, it was a dream of transforming a poor, backward, agrarian nation into a prosperous, modern, industrialized power in a short period of time. Such aspirations are shared by modernizing states around the world. But China's utopian project differed from most in its socialist character. Under the leadership of the Chinese communist party (CCP), and guided by its Marxist–Leninist–Maoist understanding of historical development, the Chinese state would undertake comprehensive state planning, subjecting everything to the coordinated control of social engineers in the state (Lardy 1978; Howe and Walker 1989). Comprehensive state planning would enable China to accelerate its industrialization and modernization, reach parity with the West, and achieve its rightful place of wealth and power in the world within the imaginable future.

China's scheme for accelerated modernization entailed the planning not only of production, but also of reproduction. When they assumed control in 1949, however, China's new leaders had a theoretical problem with 'population'. As Marxists, they had to avoid the Malthusian construction of excess population as a problem of resource shortage, even though, in the view of many, that formulation fit China well. At mid-century, though, no Marxian formulation of the population problems of a poor, crowded country such as China yet existed. Indeed, in classic Marxian theory an agrarian society like China was not even supposed to be candidate for socialist transformation. Over the first decade of CCP rule, China's leaders worked out a distinctive Marxist–Leninist–Maoist formulation of China's population problems. The solution they devised—to avoid the Marx–Malthus conflict by framing China's population problem as a problem of order, whose solution lay in subjecting it to the plan—was exceedingly astute and exceedingly consequential. In this section we trace the political origins and history of that formulation. Born of the creative imagination of one man, Mao Zedong, operating in a politically charged historical moment—the mid-1950s transition to socialism—the anarchy/plan formula came to be embedded in the party-dominated political discourse of post-1949 China in a way that made it highly resistant to challenge and change.

Had Robert Malthus stood atop the gate at Tian'anmen when the communists celebrated their victory on 1 October 1949, he would have wrung his hands with despair: after decades of famine, floods, depression, and war, China was the very embodiment of the Malthusian nightmare of population growth outstripping increases in production. Karl Marx would have seen something altogether different. For Marx, the relations between population and economy were never absolute, but always relative, or specific to the mode of production. He would have seen China's vast, impoverished population of the late 1940s as a product of a century of what the Chinese called 'semi-feudal, semi-colonial rule'. With the establishment of a new, socialist mode of production, China's half-billion people would become the labouring masses, the key to a bright future in which all economic hardship would vanish forever.

In 1949, Mao Zedong, China's paramount leader, was of course a staunch Marxist. Thus, when US Secretary of State Dean Acheson predicted that the communists would succumb to the same problem that had brought previous Chinese dynasties to their feet—too many people with too little to eat—Mao reacted with Marxist denial and optimism:

It is a very good thing that China has a big population. Even if China's population multiplies many times, she is fully capable of finding a solution... (In short)... revolution plus production can solve the problem of feeding the population... Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. Under the leadership of the communist party, as long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed. (Quoted in Tien 1980: 8)

Over the next few years China's leaders were preoccupied with issues of social order, political control, and economic reconstruction. Population was a low priority item of governance. In the early to mid-1950s, however, public health officials, urban women cadres, and population specialists in the social sciences began to draw attention to various problems surrounding population (for details see, *inter alia*, Aird 1972; Tien 1973; White 1994a). Alarmed by the results of the 1953 census, which showed a population much larger than had been thought, the top leadership began to take note. By 1954, the state had accepted the idea that births needed to be controlled, and pronatalist talk of the preciousness of people faded away. As top leaders imposed their own definitions on the issue, discussion outside the state was closed off. In an important speech delivered in late 1954, Liu Shaoqi announced that public debate on the population issue must stop: '[Because] the difficulties of giving birth to many children are very great ... we should endorse birth control, not oppose it. None of the opposing arguments holds water. It is incorrect to say that birth control is immoral' (Liu 1985: 4–5).

In the mid-1950s, the political centre began to construct the discourse that would become the hegemonic view on population matters and the basis for numerous interventions in decades to come. In initial formulations such as that of Liu, the population problem was defined in a general way as one of 'many difficulties', the solution 'birth control', that is, individual access to contraception. By 1956–7, however, a new formulation of the problem and solution had emerged, apparently from the

fertile mind of Mao Zedong himself. In an important paper, Tyrene White has shown how, in the context of a nationwide campaign to promote comprehensive socialist planning, a combination of Soviet-style systematic planning with Chinese-style mass mobilization, Mao reformulated the population problem as one of anarchy, chaos, and disorder, something that was anathema to the good socialist (White 1994*a*: 265–74). In a major speech delivered in February 1957, Mao reframed the population problem in these terms: 'I think humanity is most inept at managing itself. It has plans for industrial production ... [but] it does not have plans for the production of humans. This is anarchism, no government, no organization, no rules. If [we] go on this way, I think humanity will prematurely fall into strife and hasten toward destruction' (Mao 1989: 159).

The solution, Mao implied, was a matter of elementary socialist logic. In a socialist state, where the means of production are owned by 'the people as a whole', and planned for the greater good of all, clearly such a basic element as population cannot remain outside of the plan. In January 1956 Mao had already called for promoting 'childbirth according to plan' (Zhang 1998: 66). In late 1957 he elaborated this idea of planned births: '[As for] population control, [if we] have three years of experimental propaganda, three years of popularization, and four years of universal implementation, this is also a ten-year plan.' Revealing his statist ambitions to gain control over the whole realm of reproduction, he said in a separate set of comments delivered at the same occasion: 'In the future ... [we] must ... gradually achieve universal planned births' (Mao 1977: 471). Mao's reformulation allowed him deftly to sidestep the Marx–Malthus conflict: by defining the problem not in Malthusian terms of overpopulation or resource shortage, but in the Marxian language of anarchy in the 'production' of human beings, he could construe unregulated human reproduction as anti-socialist, contrary to the fundamental interests of the Chinese state. This construction of the problem allowed him to reframe the solution as one of socialist planning. In a stroke Mao had redefined the planning of births as an irrefutable task of the socialist state.

## 'FORBIDDEN TERRITORY' AND THE POLITICAL CONSOLIDATION OF THE BIRTH PLANNING FORMULA

In early 1958, a mere 3 months later, Mao reversed himself. Frustrated by the slow pace of economic development and by the myriad problems generated by entrenched bureaucratic methods of governance, Mao decided to launch a 'Great Leap Forward'. The Leap was to rely on mobilizing the entire society to exert extraordinary effort to turn labour power into capital and, in this way, 'leap over' the normal stages of economic development. Such a vision required an about-face on population. In January 1958 Mao posed the rhetorical question: 'Which is better, to have more people or fewer people?' The answer was obvious to him: 'At present it is still good to have more people' (Wang 1991*a*: 45). Mao did not repudiate birth planning, but he stopped advocating a reduction in population size.

In the context of officially mandated Great Leap enthusiasm for the productive powers of the people, promotion of birth control in any terms became politically dangerous. Encouraged to speak their minds during the Hundred Flowers Movement announced in the spring of 1957, many population specialists had urged the institution of population control. During the anti-rightist campaign that followed close on its heels, espousal of population control was associated with the serious political mistake of 'rightism'. Prominent population specialists were silenced and persecuted, demography was abolished, and population thought was declared 'forbidden territory' (Wang 1991*a*: 45; also Aird 1972; Tien 1973). As the state took over and occupied this strategic zone, other views on population were lost to public consideration.

By 1960–1 the Great Leap Forward had collapsed, leaving widespread famine and economic devastation in its wake. Facing an urgent economic situation, in early 1962 China's leaders revived the notion of birth planning and made it the conceptual core of a new, long-term commitment to the state planning of births. This time not just Mao, but the leadership as a whole endorsed the anarchy-plan formulation of the issue. The Instructions on Serious Advocacy of Birth Planning, issued by the Central Committee and State Council in December 1962, solidified the anarchy-plan formulation of the issue and defined the further elaboration of population planning, as discourse and as practice, as a long-term, unquestionable project of the party and state during the long period of socialist development (CC&SC 1985*a*: 14). This document made the centre's commitment to state birth planning abundantly clear.

According to official sources, birth planning work was largely suspended during the height of the Cultural Revolution (1966–9), when widespread social chaos disrupted almost every government function. But the notion that birth planning was a fundamental task of China's government remained alive to receive official endorsement at a national planning meeting held in March, 1969 (Wang 1991*a*: 47). As the chaotic phase of the Cultural Revolution was brought to an end, the serious economic consequences of once more failing to take decisive control of population growth began to claim the attention of China's leaders. The frustration was expressed by Zhou in the draft outline programme for the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1970–4) issued in 1970: 'If you can't even plan the rate of population increase, how can you have any national plan?' (White 1994*a*: 276). As White argues, Zhou's authoritative statements, at this and other important forums at the time, cemented the shift to the birth planning solution to the population problem and secured it from ideological attack. In declaring population planning to be a prerequisite to economic planning—after all, population was the crucial denominator in key economic targets—Zhou linked birth planning to the central function of the socialist state, making it impossible for leaders to ignore. Central Committee and State Council documents issued in 1970, 1971, and 1972 transformed discourse into practice, making birth planning a demand of cadres not only in the cities and densely populated rural areas, but in every Han Chinese village in the country (Wang 1991*a*: 48).

This protracted political struggle over the conceptualization and implementation of population control, sketched in bare outlines here, had critical long-term

consequences for population thought and practice in China. One consequence was that the subject of population belonged firmly to the party and state. Important controls on demographic discourse were lifted in the mid- to late 1970s, when population was removed from the list of 'forbidden zones' and the field of demography was recreated to serve a new project of state-directed population control. Yet new restraints on demographic discourse were effectively imposed in 1978, when birth planning was made a constitutional obligation, and again in 1982, when the planning of births was declared a 'basic state policy', off limits to criticism on fundamentals. Certainly, the climate for debate is much more open today than it was at any time during the late Maoist or even Dengist eras. Since the mid-1990s, the State Birth-Planning Commission (SBPC) has been reorienting the birth control programme along lines inspired by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo (Zhang *et al.* 1999; Gu 2000; Winckler 2002; Greenhalgh and Winckler 2004).<sup>2</sup> Yet despite the important changes underway, population remains a sensitive and somewhat risky subject to this day.<sup>3</sup> Their grip is loosening, but the subject of population still belongs to the party and the state.

A second legacy of those decades of political struggle was the secure position of the population anarchy/plan construct in the Chinese political lexicon. This understanding of China's population problem and solution was to become the centrepiece of an elaborate conceptual apparatus that has guided thinking about population in China to this day, shaping even the way the Cairo agenda is implemented. (At the same time, however, the meaning of population planning is now changing, on which, there is more given below.) The significance of the birth planning formulation cannot be overstated. In the more familiar Western liberal notion of 'family planning', births are planned in a voluntary way by the couple on the basis of their individual circumstances as they themselves perceive them. The role of the state is largely limited to the provision of education and contraception. In the Chinese notion of birth planning, births are planned by the state on the basis of the collective good, as determined ultimately by a small number of top party leaders.

## THEORETICAL ELABORATION: ESTABLISHING THE RATIONALE FOR, METHOD OF, AND AGENT IN CHARGE OF BIRTH PLANNING

Mao and Zhou died in 1976, but the concepts of birth planning they evolved remained alive to gain fresh life and urgency. In 1978 a new leadership coalition took over, with Deng Xiaoping as its head. Determined to overcome decades of sluggish economic growth and low living standards, China's new leaders rewrote the script for the nation's future, placing the development of market socialism and the transformation of China into a modern nation within decades at the top. Of course, China was to remain socialist and the communist party was to remain at the helm. Indeed, the new economic goals were to provide a fresh basis for party legitimacy, which had been badly eroded during the 10 years of political chaos. But the Chinese people were

to get an appealing new goal to work towards: achieving a 'comfortable standard of living' (*xiaokang shuiping*) by the year 2000. Since economic goals were expressed as per capita targets, population control—drastic population control—was to be a key item on the new agenda.<sup>4</sup>

Between mid-1978 and late 1980, a bold new strategy for restricting population growth was put together and announced to the Chinese people in an unusual Open Letter from the Party's Central Committee calling on all couples to have but one child (CC 1985). Between the mid-1970s and early 1980s, discursive elements from many sources were drawn together and elaborated into a complex conceptual apparatus that served to legitimize and later, in the 1980s and 1990s, guide the enforcement of the one-child policy.<sup>5</sup> This discourse established the basic rationale, goals, and methods of birth planning under reform socialism. The Marxist ideology in which the population discourse is framed has lost its dominant position in reform-era Chinese politics, yet ideology retains a critical role in shaping policy options and choices (Kelly 1991; Zhang 1996; Misra 1998). The continued salience of Marxian constructs is clearly evident in the population domain. Although problems encountered in the enforcement of birth planning have forced modification of concrete methods and targets, and the larger discursive framings in which population control practice is set have been altered to fit changing ideological orthodoxies established by successive Party Congresses ('primary stage of socialism', 'socialist market economy', and so on: Zhang 1996; Misra 1998), the political ideas about the proper rationale, means, and agent in charge of birth planning that were worked out in the late 1970s remain in place to this day. These political basics remain in part because they got built into the institutionalized programme and political practice of birth planning in a way that rendered them difficult to dislodge.

The most fundamental notions underlying the birth planning formulation were Marx's materialist vision of society and the related idea of historical movement of society through successive modes of production.<sup>6</sup> In that vision, population was part of the economic base, to be planned and manipulated like steel, grain, or any other commodity. This radically dehumanizing concept was to have serious consequences for the humans subject to the planning of their births. In Marxist teleology, society progressed through the stages of slavery or primitivism, feudalism, and capitalism (a phase China largely missed) to socialism and, finally, communism, each one superior to its predecessor. Each mode of production had its own laws of population. China was determined to be in the stage of socialism (and, in 1987, the primary stage of socialism; Zhang 1996: 160–5), having emerged from its historical semi-feudal, semi-colonial state with the assumption of power by the communist party and the collectivization of the means of production in the early to mid-1950s.

China's population theorists in the 1970s drew on Engels's notion of the 'twofold character of production'—of the means of production and of human beings themselves—to explain why, in a developing socialist country, population growth must be controlled (Engels 1972: 71). Chen Muhua, Vice Premier and Head of the State Council Birth Planning Leading Group (forerunner of the SBPC), spelled out this Marxian-theoretic rationale in an important article published in the *People's Daily*

in August 1979:

Marxism holds that there are two kinds of social production... [O]n the basis of public ownership of the means of production, our national economy must follow the law of proportional and planned development. This law demands not only a planned production of material goods, but also the planned reproduction of human beings; therefore, a planned control of the population growth of our country is ... determined and demanded by the form of socialist production. (Chen 1979)

Vice Premier Chen not only made birth planning central to China's definition of its national purpose and identity, she also removed it from the trivial arena of individual decisions, placing it squarely in the 'serious' realm of China's historical evolution toward economic modernization and communist utopia.

The major method by which births were to be planned was 'propaganda and education', a fundamental element of general party practice. Construing history as progress from 'feudal' to 'socialist', 'backward' to 'advanced', and 'traditional' to 'modern', the discourse framed the project as one of political education designed to transform the old into the new, thereby propelling China into the next stage of historical development. Although the population as a whole was treated as part of the material base of society, individual couples' views about marriage and children were seen as 'organic components of the superstructure' (Liu *et al.* in Tien 1980: 63). Matters of thought or ideology, these notions were subject to political transformation (see esp. Liu *et al.* in Tien 1980: 63–70). The primary ideological obstacles to the spread of the single-child family were the remnants of 'feudal' culture that, despite China's socialist political economy, had not yet been eradicated. These 'feudal ideas'—that many children bring much happiness (*duoziji duofu*) and that males are more valuable than females (*zhongnan qingnu*)—were routinely described as deeply rooted in centuries of Confucian thought (e.g. Hua 1985: 21).

These elements of 'feudal culture' were viewed as especially problematic because they persisted most stubbornly in the countryside, where 80 percent of the population lived. Indeed, those 'feudal' reproductive values were seen as not only persisting, but also being reinforced by the introduction of the household responsibility system in agriculture (esp. CC&SC 1985*b*: 45–6). This construction of the obstacles to rural enforcement was significant for a number of reasons. By labelling the preferences for several children and for sons over daughters as 'feudal' in origin, the discourse rendered unthinkable the possibility that contemporary forces might have inadvertently reproduced them. And by tagging the ideas of the peasants 'feudal' and in need of transformation into 'socialist', the population discourse turned the rural masses into the primary objects of reproductive intervention and control.<sup>7</sup>

As for who should be in charge of this task, it was the Leninist vanguard party, which through superior training in Marxian thought, represented the leading edge of society. Politically far-sighted, party members could see above their own petty personal interests to the interests of society as a whole. Top party leaders would be in charge of important policy decisions, while rank-and-file members and party-affiliated

mass organizations at all levels of society would ‘take the lead’ in carrying it out. Government officials at each administrative level were to ensure policy implementation and fulfilment of the population plan. Because the task was defined primarily as one of changing ideas, the project for the party membership at large was to transform their own reproductive views so as to convince the masses to follow suit. The Open Letter issued in September 1980 makes this charge to the party and mass organizations clear:

The Central Committee demands that all members of the Party and the communist youth league, particularly cadres at all levels, set a good example and have a thorough understanding of the significance and necessity of this important task... Cadres who are party members ought to take the lead in getting rid of feudal ideas... Young comrades themselves should respond to the call; old ones should advise and urge their own children to do so. Every comrade should do publicity work patiently and enthusiastically among the people round them. (CC 1985: 29)

The party was portrayed as not only all-knowing in its comprehension of the reproductive desires of the masses, but also all-powerful in its ability eventually to alter their childbearing preferences and accomplish the goals set by the top leadership.<sup>8</sup> Suffusing the discourse on birth planning, then, was a striking optimism that the party could do whatever it set out to do. Although the task of planning all the births in a country as large and heterogeneous as China was seen as monumental, there was no hint of doubt about whether it could be achieved. As the 1980 Open Letter put it, ‘The goal can be attained provided we make concerted efforts’ (CC 1985: 28). Nor was there any fallback plan, any theoretical provision for failure, for inability to plan. The solution to poor planning performance was for cadres to redouble their efforts, to work harder to achieve the targets established by the political centre. This resolutely optimistic attitude, while good for motivating party cadres and legitimating party practice, would have unintended consequences when party rhetoric met up with social reality.

## FROM DISCOURSE TO POLITICAL PRACTICE: THE PRODUCTION OF ‘BLACK CHILDREN’ AND BLACK LIVES

In the 1970s the Marxian-theoretic discourse on birth planning was transformed into policy and programmatic practice countrywide. Described elsewhere (e.g. see, Chen and Kols 1982; Wang 1991*a,b*), the governmental planning of births involved the creation of a hierarchy of birth planning committees, centred in the SBPC, which was established in the early 1980s. Under the direction of the Commission and its organizational forerunners, the construct ‘birth planning’ was converted into a bureaucratic category and inscribed in the apparatus guiding national economic planning. Population planners created population control measures, the most important of which was the ‘planned birth rate’. They developed short- and long-term population control targets. And they devised population policies to guide reproductive behaviour. In the 1970s the guiding policy called for late marriage, long spacing, and few births



(*wan xi shao*). In 1979–80 that was replaced by the ‘one-couple-one-child policy’ advocating ‘late marriage, late childbearing, few births, quality births’. All couples were encouraged to have one child, second births were to be ‘strictly limited’, and third ‘resolutely prohibited’. It hardly requires stating that these norms, combined with the injunction that all births must be planned, drastically restricted individuals’ reproductive choice.

In the mid-1970s population control quotas were handed down to local cadres throughout the country, inaugurating the nationwide planning of births (Wang 1991*a*: 48). The organization of urban life made it relatively easy to carry out state birth planning in the cities. In the villages, however, the introduction of economic and political reforms in the late 1970s and early 1980s dismantled the rural collectives, undermining the power of local officials (e.g. White 1991). Peasants responded by resisting the onerous one-child policy in every way imaginable.<sup>9</sup> The result was a veritable flood of unplanned births.

One large group of resisters concealed their pregnancies from local officials, had their babies in distant hospitals, and then either hid them at home or placed them with relatives elsewhere to raise a few months to a few years. A second substantial group of resisters came to be known as ‘excess-birth guerrillas’ (*chaosbeng youji dui*) for their practice of fleeing their home areas and moving elsewhere, often to locations along provincial borders or the peripheries of large cities, to have children. A third sizeable group of evaders married and had children before reaching the legal ages (under the 1980 Marriage Law) of 20 for women and 22 for men. Those children were by definition ‘illegal’. At birth, all of these categories of unplanned offspring (and many others too numerous to elaborate here) were ‘black children’, ineligible for inclusion in the household register. What happened to these children? Some—probably a very small minority—met an early death. More ended up abandoned and, for the lucky ones, adopted. The majority were probably raised by their birth parents, either as unregistered ‘black children’ or as legitimate offspring whose parents succeeded in removing that status by somehow acquiring registration for them. Among those raised, the oldest would be young adults of about 20 years of age in the year 2000.

The unintended proliferation of unplanned births matters because, unless they can legalize their status, unplanned infants become long-term members of a ‘black population’ who face a wide range of difficulties that are rarely acknowledged in official population discourse. Who belongs to this stigmatized group and what problems do they face? Given the strong son preference in rural China, and the gender negotiations surrounding contraception, abortion, and post-natal child management, there can be no doubt that the vast majority of these unplanned children are girls. Whether girl or boy, the unplanned infant is at greater risk of abandonment, a fate that may result in death, institutionalization in a state-run orphanage or, for the fortunate ones, adoption (see esp. Johnson *et al.* 1998). If she survives—and most probably do—the unplanned infant may grow into a ‘black person’. Yet that person is legally and socially a non-person. Ineligible for household registration, she has no right to schooling, health care, state-sector employment, and a host of other state services and benefits (Fan and Huang 1989). Certainly, some ‘black’ children and young people

are obtaining these services from the market—though at higher cost and lower quality than if they had been provided by official sources. But we have no idea how many are getting services in unofficial ways.

In trying to ascertain the numbers and fates of unplanned children, it is useful to distinguish between the rural and urban situations. The evidence available suggests that most of the unplanned children are probably the offspring of peasants living in the rural areas or of peasant migrants in the cities.<sup>10</sup> We know less about those residing in the countryside. In the rural areas, the household register appears to be a less important mediator of services such as education and health care than it was in the past. In addition, registration for the unplanned child may be bought or otherwise negotiated with sympathetic local officials. Articles by grassroots birth planning officials suggest that in some rural areas children are legalized—that is, entered in the register—after payment of a fine. In others, however, cadres deliberately keep unplanned children out of the register to make their planned birth rates appear higher than they actually are (e.g. Fan and Huang 1989; Wang 1989).

In the cities, by contrast, registration remains a critically important route to the acquisition of a full range of state services, welfare benefits, and health measures such as essential inoculations. As a result, unregistered children and young persons enjoy much less than full citizenship rights (Johnson 2003; also Solinger 1999). Schooling is a case in point. The *New York Times* journalist Erik Eckholm has described the emergence of a vast network of unofficial, substandard schools to serve the unregistered children who are effectively excluded from the public school system by steep fines (Eckholm 1999). In late 1999, Eckholm reports, the most fortunate of Beijing's estimated 100,000 children of migrant workers, perhaps the majority of who were 'black', attended the city's 100-plus unlicensed schools. Run by teachers who largely lacked certification, these makeshift schools were always at risk of being shut down. Graduates of such schools had difficulty gaining entry to high school. Lacking urban registration, their migrant parents were subject to outright discrimination in employment, wages, housing, and health care in their new urban homes. Lacking registration anywhere, the 'black' children may well be treated even worse as they move from childhood into adolescence. On top of this are the psychological problems suffered by 'black children' who are often made to feel inferior by other children and even teachers. Some report having to spend their entire childhoods proving they had a right to exist (Johnson 2003).

## THE 'BLACK POPULATION': UNCOUNTED AND UNCOUNTABLE

How big is China's 'black population'? To answer this question we need to calculate, first, the number of unplanned births that have taken place since childbirth became subject to state planning, and second, the proportion of unplanned births that become 'black' children and adolescents. Although this sounds straightforward, a lack of basic statistics makes it impossible to answer the critical first question of how

many unplanned births have taken place. Indeed, because of extensive under-reporting of births, birth statistics in China are in frightful disarray. Problems of what Chinese birth planners call statistical leakage, serious all along, grew much more so in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when responsibility for reaching quotas was placed firmly in the hands of leading cadres at all levels, from the village to the province. Discussions with Chinese demographers reveal a widespread belief that, due to under-reporting and other forms of manipulation, the number of births counted in surveys is understated by as much as 30–35 per cent (e.g. IF,11/23/99,BJ; IF,3/24/00,LA). Unreported births are virtually all unplanned births.

Given these uncertainties, it is not surprising that statistics on the total number or overall proportion of unplanned births are scarce. One study, citing an authoritative *People's Daily* article, put the planned birth rate in the 1980s at 50–60 per cent (Han 1991). Some surveys suggest that the proportion of unplanned births ranged from 42 to 49 per cent during 1980–90, falling to 31–37 per cent during 1991–2 (Scharping 2003: 232). Single-locality surveys give unplanned birth rates of 50–67 per cent, suggesting that the aggregate number of unplanned births may be huge.<sup>11</sup>

The official figures on planned and unplanned births are published, albeit sporadically, in the annual yearbook of the SBPC.<sup>12</sup> Given the Commission's mandate, one can only assume that its figures understate the number of unplanned births, probably by a wide margin. The official figures, reproduced in Table 8.1, range from 1 to 5 million unplanned births per year. Articles published in the late 1980s and early 1990s put the number closer to 9.6 million a year (Han 1991).

Table 8.1. Official rates and numbers of unplanned births, selected years, 1981–99

Year	Official number of births	Official planned birth rate (%)	Official number of unplanned births
1981	15,341,248	68.1	4,893,859
1982	16,006,873	69.7	4,850,083
1983	12,990,503	74.8	3,351,550
1987	16,500,175	82.7	2,862,272
1988	16,153,145	84.7	2,475,323
1989	16,710,702	84.2	2,643,229
1990	18,949,472	81.2	3,568,362
1996	20,670,000	90.7	1,922,310
1997	20,380,000	93.0	1,426,600
1998	19,910,000	93.1	1,373,790
1999	19,090,000	94.1	1,126,310

*Notes:* The planned birth rate is the proportion of all births that are within the state population plan. These numbers greatly understate the true number of unplanned births. See text for explanation.

*Sources:* State Birth Planning Commission, *Birth Planning Yearbook of China*, various years; Scharping (2003: 232), Website of China Population Information and Research Centre, table titled Major Figures of Population and Family Planning (1994–9).

Table 8.2. Estimated number of unplanned births, 1979–99 as proportion of total 1999 population

	Estimated number of unplanned births (million)	Percentage of 1999 population
Reported unplanned births		
SBPC figures	82.31	6.5
Unreported unplanned births, under different assumptions		
If 25% births unreported	112.41	8.9
If 30% births unreported	134.89	10.7
Total unplanned births (reported + unreported)		
If 25% births unreported	194.72	15.5
If 30% births unreported	217.20	17.3

*Notes:* Figure for reported unplanned births is based on Table 8.1, with extrapolation for missing years. China's total population in 1999 was 1.259 billion. Detailed figures available from author on request.

*Sources:* See Table 8.1 and text.

Given the absence of many key figures, I can only compute a rough-and-ready estimate of the number of unplanned births that have occurred during the one-child policy period, in hopes that others, perhaps statisticians in China's State Statistical Bureau, State Development Planning Commission, or Public Security Bureau, might be motivated to improve upon it. Table 8.2 suggests how one rough order-of-magnitude estimate can be obtained, using as the base figures those given in Table 8.1, filling in the years that are missing by extrapolation. The table suggests that, for the 20 years from 1979 to 1999, the official number of unplanned births reported by the SBPC is on the order of 82 million. For purposes of discussion, we can call this the estimated number of *reported unplanned births*. If we follow Chinese demographers in assuming that perhaps 25 or 30 percent of births overall are not reported, and that all unreported births are unplanned births, then the number of additional *unreported unplanned births* taking place during 1979–9 would range from 112 to 135 million. Adding the unreported unplanned births to the reported unplanned births, we get totals of 195 or 217 million unplanned births taking place during those 20 years. That works out to somewhere between 15 and 17 per cent of China's 1999 population of 1.259 billion. In other words, roughly one-sixth of China's population may have come into the world unplanned.

Our second question is: How many children who are unplanned at birth remain outside the register to become 'black persons'? Not surprisingly, statistics on the 'black population' are exceedingly hard to find and interpret. In one village survey conducted in two Shaanxi counties in the late 1980s, 72 per cent of unplanned children, some as old as school age, remained 'black children' (Wang 1989). Another article published in 1989 presented an estimate of 20 million black persons countrywide, but then added

that specialists believed the real number was much higher (Fan and Huang 1989). Reflecting a general frustration, one author commented: 'We have no idea of the accumulated number of black children in all the provinces' (Han 1991: 16). Chinese population specialists interviewed in 1999 suggested that most unplanned babies probably eventually obtain official registration (IF,9/15/99,CR; IF,11/25/99,BJ). Some, perhaps a great many, were registered in the "clean-ups" and "amnesties" offered to birth offenders in the 1982, 1990, and 2000 censuses. How many did so, however, we have no idea. Yet even if a small proportion of those estimated 195–217 million unplanned infants failed to obtain official registration, the absolute numbers of black persons would be very large.

Ironically, the proliferation of unplanned births, and thus of this group of 'black persons', was a result of the classifying practices of state birth planning itself. In creating the social norm, of planned births, the official population discourse also created the deviation, of unplanned births, so that the production of one inevitably entailed the production of the other. The gap between the planners' intentions and the programme's outcomes was so wide in part because of the overly optimistic political assumptions built into the birth planning discourse. (Another major factor was the introduction of marketizing economic reforms, which weakened the apparatus of policy enforcement among the rural and migrant populations.) The assumption was that the party, because of its grounding in Marxist fundamentals, understood the interests of the people and, through 'meticulous ideological and political work', could persuade them that party thought on population was not only 'correct' but also right for them. What these assumptions of an all-knowledgeable and persuasive party did not anticipate was the sizeable number of resisters whose interests could not be made to conform to those of the party and who refused to accept the party's version of correct thinking to the end. A second problematic political assumption was that the male-oriented, familistic reproductive culture that promoted more births was 'feudal', a holdover from the old society, rather than a product of contemporary political economy. As discussed elsewhere (Greenhalgh and Li 1995), what the discourse labelled 'backward' was as much a product of reform-era social and economic policy as a remnant of the past. A final, more general problem was the totalistic assumption of the planners that society could be made to bend to their will. By failing to make theoretical, bureaucratic, and/or political provisions for some degree of failure, other than constant exhortations to fulfil the plan, party theoreticians and state planners ended up creating a new set of problems—and a new type of 'black person'—that they found difficult to acknowledge, let alone address.

## THE OFFICIAL PRODUCTION OF NEGLECT AND OTHER CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Despite the size of this population and the severity of the problems they face, little is known about this dark underside of China's planned programme of population modernization. As we have seen, the official discourse on birth planning works to

deflect attention away from the problems of the 'black population'. The discourse is matched by an official attitude that appears neglectful at best. A search of the periodical literature at the nation's leading population research library turned up but one official statement about the problem of the 'black population'. This appeared as an article in the *People's Daily* in 1988 (*People's Daily* 1988).<sup>13</sup> (There may well have been others that were not caught by the search.) Since social science research in China generally follows state-established concerns, there has been very little research on these persons by Chinese social scientists, though many are aware of and concerned about the problem.<sup>14</sup> Chinese population specialists I have spoken to described unplanned childbearing and the 'black population' as highly sensitive subjects, ones they are reluctant to pursue without explicit political (and financial) support. Foreign scholars have been even less attentive.

Perhaps what appears to be bureaucratic neglect is, instead, a bureaucratic absence. From this point of view, the 'black population' is a product of a gap in bureaucratic coverage of Chinese persons. The SBPC is in charge of births. For it, the planned/unplanned category is highly meaningful, so it maintains data on planned and unplanned births. After the birth occurs, however, the Birth Commission no longer has bureaucratic responsibility for it. The unplanned-turned-'black' child and then young adult becomes the responsibility of other bureaucracies, whose records appear to have no place for persons who exist outside the household registration system. This bureaucratic anomaly may help explain why there exist neither measures of, nor official solutions to, the problems of this category of persons.

With little acknowledgment of this bureaucratic gap, the treatment accorded the hapless young person who came into the world unplanned can seem punitive. At times, the official stance at the Birth Planning Commission seems to be that unplanned births are a result not of overly totalistic planning assumptions or overly optimistic political assumptions; they are a result of citizens failing to heed the clearly stated law that all births must be planned. When unplanned-turned-'black' young people do not cause obvious social problems, the response of state agencies appears to be to ignore them. Where these persons cause problems—crime, social disorder, urban blight, and so forth—the approach appears to be more punitive (cf. Eckholm 1999; Solinger 1999). While official disregard may appear better than punishment, state neglect leads to further problems, for 'black' children have the same needs for social services that registered children have.

Created to modernize the population, the birth planning programme has had the perverse effect of creating a substantial, albeit unenumerated, class of unplanned, distinctly 'unmodern' persons.<sup>15</sup> Given the uncertainties surrounding their numbers and life conditions, I can only lay out some likely scenarios. In the worst-case scenario, this group includes precisely the types of persons the birth planning programme sought to eliminate: 'backward', poorly educated individuals who are a drain on the socio-economy and saboteurs of present and future modernization. (They may, however, actually enhance economic growth by providing cheap, unskilled labour and by taking the kinds of jobs official citizens shun.) In the best-case

scenario, the life chances—and thus societal contribution—of the ‘black’ person must surely be dimmer than those of the planned person who is showered with state support. Although their status as outsiders offers the ‘black population’ opportunities to develop alternative lifestyles and to escape official constructions of proper personhood that may be limiting, overall their marginal status must be viewed as more liability than opportunity.

Since around 1993, when China achieved something like replacement-level fertility of 2.1 children per woman, important changes have been occurring in the birth planning programme (Winckler 1999, 2002; Greenhalgh and Winckler 2004). Although the birth planning construction remains the official one and China has affirmed its commitment to the planning of population growth (IF,11/4/98,PT), the meaning of ‘birth planning’ is being redefined in practice. At the macrolevel, the planning process is moving from a more mandatory to a more indicative style of target setting. At the microlevel, many of the micro-managerial practices surrounding childbearing are falling away.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps equally important, recent village ethnographies suggest that peasant family size preferences are growing smaller and son preference is weakening (e.g. Yan 2003; Zhang n.d.). If this trend is more general—and considerable evidence suggests that it is—the number of unplanned births may be on the decline. For Chinese development planners and social scientists, now may be a good time to attend to some of the unintended consequences of the birth planning formulation that was applied much more literally in the past.

For students of population more generally, this slice of Chinese political life is of interest because it produced a new kind of person, whose incumbents face troubling existential dilemmas. Although they bear certain resemblances to illegitimate persons of other times and places—bastard babies in historical Europe, perhaps also ‘crack babies’ in the contemporary United States (Laslett *et al.* 1980; Roberts 1997), among others—‘black’ Chinese persons are probably historically unique in their sheer numbers. The China material also invites comparison with other cases of the legal and political construction of graded forms of citizenship, in which some categories of persons come to be excluded from the political community. South Africa's apartheid regime is one of the more obvious cases, but the great number and variety of such exclusionary practices—from Mussolini's ‘dictated demography’ to the British Virgin Isles's racial and genealogical routines—make clear that such practices are quite general (e.g. Ipsen 1996; Maurer 1997).

More generally, the Chinese material underscores the importance of taking social categories, and the larger population discourse in which they are embedded, more seriously. Population specialists have devoted enormous attention to the demographic effects of state-run programmes for population control, but they have generally taken the state and its classifications as givens. In so doing, they may have missed important categories of personhood that are rendered invisible by (even as they are simultaneously produced by) the state discourse. In slighting processes of categorization and normalization, students of population have also missed the capacities of states to ‘make up’ new kinds of person, both ‘normative’ and ‘deviant’. Especially in societies like China, where the official discourse on population is

hegemonic, we need to take the state and its discursive categories as objects for scholarly scrutiny. By looking more closely at this discourse, we can see how state projects for population control, usually undertaken in the name of such lofty goals as ‘modernity’, ‘development’, and ‘national progress’, can produce contradictory effects that may thwart the goals of the state planners, even as the thwarting remains hidden from view.

## Notes

1. A rare exception is Tyrene White (1994a). See also Greenhalgh (2001b).
2. The Cairo Conference shifted the means and ends of international population policy from concern with demographic targets to concern for women's reproductive and sexual health, choice, and rights.
3. It is hemmed in by the specific constraints just mentioned and by the general restraints imposed on all political discourse by the ‘four cardinal principles’ laid down in 1979: commitments to party leadership, socialism, the existing state structure, and Marxism–Leninism–Mao-Zedong Thought.
4. For more on the reasoning that lay behind the adoption of the one-child policy, see Greenhalgh (2003). On the elite politics of population policy in the 1980s, see White (1994b).
5. Key texts were *Renkou Lilun (Population Theory)*, produced in the late Maoist era and parts of which are translated in Tien (1980), and *China's Population Problems and Prospects* (Liu *et al.* 1981), written in the early Deng period and in a decidedly more urgent tone.
6. The arguments developed in this section are based on reading of hundreds of official birth planning documents and speeches by top party and government leaders, as well as Chinese works on population theory. Some of the key documents are cited below. For more on the fundamentals of Chinese Maoist-Marxism, see, for example, Schram (1969) and Meisner (1982).
7. This represented a dramatic change from the Maoist era, when the peasants were invested with revolutionary virtue. For more on the shifting representations of the peasantry in the reform era, see Kelliher (1994).
8. Such representations of the party are no doubt standardized conventions in all party-produced discourse (cf. Schoenhals 1992).
9. For entrées to the huge literature on resistance to the policy, see, for example, Wasserstrom (1984), Greenhalgh (1994), and Johnson *et al.* (1998).
10. In 1990, for example, Shanghai and the relatively urbanized province of Zhejiang claimed planned birth rates above 95%, whereas the rural provinces of Fujian and Jiangxi reported rates of around 60% (SBPC 1991).
11. In one Guangdong city, the planned birth rate was an abysmal 48% (Lu 1992). In Fujian's Xiamen City, 34% of the births of migrant women were unplanned (Zhuang 1994).
12. It is probably the Commission's inability to maintain high levels of planned births, in the context of growing political pressure to do so, that explains why, in 1992, it stopped publishing the planned birth rate in its yearbook. Mysteriously, the rate reappeared in the late 1990s.
13. The same library search turned up roughly 100 articles in birth planning and population journals dealing with ‘unplanned’ or ‘excess’ childbearing and, much less frequently, the ‘black population’. The period searched included the 10-plus years between the mid-1980s and late 1990s. The great majority were written not by social scientists, but by local birth planning officials seeking ‘counter-measures’ to control the phenomenon. This search was conducted at the library of the China Population Information and Research Centre (CPIRC).



14. In China, virtually all social science research is conducted by scholars employed in state-run organizations, whether universities or social science academies. For most of the post-Mao period, research topics have generally been assigned to research units by central-level agencies, with financing attached to specific projects. Lack of funding makes it difficult to work on topics that fall outside the purview of state concern.
15. They may be enumerated as members of the school population, work force, and so on, but to my knowledge they are not classified as 'black persons'.
16. For example, in many places the practice of passing quotas down to the grassroots level is dropping away; in others newly-weds no longer need apply for permission to have a first child.

## References

- Aird, J. (1972). 'Population policy and demographic prospects in the People's Republic of China', in *People's Republic of China: An Economic Assessment: A Compendium of Papers Submitted to the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, pp. 220–331.
- Anagnost, A. (1995). 'A surfeit of bodies: population and the rationality of the State in post-Mao China', in F. D. Ginsburg and R. Rapp (eds.), *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 22–41.
- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (1996). 'Number in the colonial imagination', in A. Appadurai (ed.), *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 114–35.
- Billeter, J. F. (1985). 'The system of "Class Status"', in S. R. Schram (ed.), *The Scope of State Power in China*. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, pp. 127–69.
- Bowker, G. and Starr, S. L. (1999). *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Central Committee of the Communist Party (CC) (1985). 'Zhonggong zhongyang, guanyu kongzhi woguo renkou zengzhang wenti, zhi chuantu gongchandangyuan, gongqing tuanyaun de gongkaixin (Open letter from the Central committee to All Communist Party and Communist Youth League members on the Question of Controlling China's Population Growth)', in Population Yearbook of China Editorial Committee (ed.), *Zhongguo Renkou Nianjian (1985) (Population Yearbook of China, 1985)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, pp. 27–9.

- Central Committee of the Communist Party and State Council (CC&SC) (1985*a*). 'Zhonggong zhongyang, guowuyuan guanyu renzhen tichang jihua shengyu de zhishi (Central Committee and State Council, Instructions on serious advocacy of birth planning)', in Population Yearbook of China Editorial Committee (ed.), *Zhongguo Renkou Nianjian (1985) (Population Yearbook of China, 1985)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, p. 14.
- (1985*b*). 'Zhonggong zhongyang, guowuyuan guanyu jinyibu zuohao jihua shengyu gongzuo de zhibiao (Central Committee and State Council, targets for doing a better job in Birth planning work)', in Population Yearbook of China Editorial Committee (ed.), *Zhongguo Renkou Nianjian (1985) (Population Yearbook of China, 1985)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, pp. 45–8.
- Chan, K. W. and Zhang, L. (1999). 'The Hukou system and rural–urban migration in China: processes and changes', *The China Quarterly*, 160: 818–55.
- Chen, M. H. (1979). 'To realize the four modernizations, it is necessary to control population increase in a planned way', *Population and Development Review*, 5/4: 723–30. Originally published as 'Shixian sigе xiandaihua, bixu yao jihuade kongzhi renkou zengzhang', *Renmin Ribao*, 11(August): 2.
- Chen, P. C. and Kols, A. (1982). 'Population and birth planning in the People's Republic of China', *Population Reports*, J(25): 577–618.
- Cheng, T. J. and Selden, M. (1994). 'The origins and social consequences of China's Hukou System', *The China Quarterly*, 139: 644–68.
- Cohn, B. S. (1987). 'The census, social structure and objectification in South Asia', in B. S. Cohn (ed.), *An Anthropologist Among the Historians and Other Essays*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp. 224–54.
- Eckholm, E. (1999). 'For China's rural migrants, an education wall', *New York Times*, 23(December): 1, 8.
- Engels, F. (1972). *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. New York: International.
- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fan, X. G. and Huang, Y. (1989). 'Zhongguo 'hei renkou' (China's 'Black Population')', *Xin GuanCha (New Observer)*, 4: 28–32.
- Ferguson, J. (1990). *The Anti-politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1975). *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*. New York: Vintage.
- (1978). *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, Vol. 1. New York: Random House.
- (1979). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage.
- (1991). 'Governmentality', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon, and P. Miller (eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. London: Harvester, pp. 87–104.
- Greenhalgh, Susan (1994). 'Controlling births and bodies in village China', *American Ethnologist*, 21(1): 3–30.
- (2001*a*). 'Fresh winds in Beijing: Chinese feminists speak out on the one-child policy and women's lives', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 26(3): 847–86.
- (2001*b*). 'Managing "the missing girls" in Chinese population discourse', in C. M. Obermeyer (ed.), *Cultural Perspectives on Reproductive Health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 131–52.
- (2003). 'Science, modernity, and the making of China's one-child policy', *Population and Development Review*, 29(2): 163–96.
- and Li, J. L. (1995). 'Engendering reproductive policy and practice in peasant China: for a feminist demography of reproduction', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 20(3): 601–41.
- and Winckler, E. A. (2004). *Population and Power in Post-Deng China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gu, B. C. (2000). 'Reorienting China's family planning program: an experiment on quality of care since 1995', Paper presented at Annual Meeting of Population Association of America, Los Angeles, CA, March.
- Gupta, A. (1998). *Postcolonial Developments: Agriculture in the Making of Modern India*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Hacking, I. (1986). 'Making up people', in T. C. Heller, M. Sosna, and D. E. Wellbery (eds.), *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 222–36.
- Han, C. S. (1991). 'Woguo jihua shengyu gongzuo: Guanjian shi chaosheng, wenti zai nongcun (In our country's birth planning work, the key is excess births, the problem resides in the villages)', *Renkou Xuekan (Population Journal)*, 91(4): 15–18.
- Horn, D. G. (1994). *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Howe, C. and Walker, K. R. (1989). *The Foundations of the Chinese Planned Economy: A Documentary Survey, 1953–65*. London: Macmillan.
- Hua, G. F. (1985). 'Shuji guashi, quandang dongshou, jinyibu gaohao jihua shengyu (with party secretaries in command, all party members [should] join the effort to do a better job in birth planning)', in Population Yearbook of China Editorial Committee (ed.), *Zhongguo Renkou Nianjian (1985) (Population Yearbook of China, 1985)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 20–22. Originally published in *Renmin Ribao*, 8 July 1978.
- IF,11/25/99,BJ (1999). Discussion with Chinese demographer, 25 November, Beijing.
- IF,3/24/00,LA (2000). Discussion with Chinese demographer, 24 March, Los Angeles.
- IF,11/4/98,PT (1998). Discussion with leading official of the State Birth Planning Commission, 4 November, Princeton.
- IF,9/15/99,CR (1999). Discussion with Chinese demographer, 9 September, Cairo.
- IF,11/23/99,BJ (1999). Interview with top birth planning official, 23 November, Beijing.
- Ipsen, C. (1996). *Dictating Demography: The Problem of Population in Fascist Italy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnson, Kay (2003). 'Chaobao: the plight of Chinese adoptive parents in the era of the one child policy', Paper Presented at Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, New York, 27–30 March.
- Johnson, K., Huang B. H., and Wang L. Y. (1998). 'Infant abandonment and adoption in China', *Population and Development Review*, 24(3): 469–510.
- Kelliher, D. (1994). 'Chinese communist political theory and the rediscovery of the peasantry', *Modern China*, 20(4): 387–415.
- Kelly, D. (1991). 'Chinese Marxism since Tiananmen: between evaporation and dismemberment', in D. S. G. Goodman and G. Segal (eds.), *China in the Nineties: Crisis Management and Beyond*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 19–34.
- Lardy, N. R. (ed.) (1978). *Chinese Economic Planning: Translations From Chi-hua Ching-chi*. White Plains: ME Sharpe.
- Laslett, P., Oosterveen, K., and Smith, R. M. (eds.) (1980). *Bastardy and its Comparative History*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Liu, S. Q. (1985). 'Tichang jieyu (Advocate birth control)', in Population Yearbook of China Editorial Committee (ed.), *Zhongguo Renkou Nianjian (1985) (Population Yearbook of China, 1985)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, pp. 4–5.
- Liu, Z., Song, J. et al. (1981). *China's Population: Problems and Prospects*. Beijing: New World Press.
- Lu, G. C. (1992). 'Qianxi Qingyuan Shi nongcun chaosheng de yuanyin (Simple analysis of the causes of excess childbearing in the villages of Qingyuan city)', *Guangdong Renkou Qingbao (Guangdong Population Information)*, 6: 22–3.
- Mao, Z. D. (1977). *Mao Zedong Xuanji, No. 5 (Selected Works of Mao Zedong, Vol. 5)*. Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe.
- (1989). 'On the correct handling of contradictions among the people (speaking notes)', in R. MacFarquhar, T. Cheek, and E. Wu (eds.), *The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao: From*

- the Hundred Flowers to the Great Leap Forward*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University. Distributed by Harvard University Press, pp. 131–89.
- Maurer, B. (1997). *Recharting the Caribbean: Land, Law, and Citizenship in the British Virgin Islands*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Meisner, M. (1982). *Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Misra, K. (1998). *From Post-Maoism to Post-Marxism: The Erosion of Official Ideology in Deng's China*. New York: Routledge.
- People's Daily* (1988). 'Jihua shengyu dailai xin wenti: Woguo yue baiwan haizi wu hukou (A new problem brought about by birth planning: about 1,000,000 children without household registration)', *People's Daily*, 30 June: 3.
- Potter, S. (1983). 'The position of peasants in modern China's social order', *Modern China*, 9(4): 465–99.
- Rabinow, P. (1989). *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Roberts, D. (1997). *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Pantheon.
- Scharping, Thomas (2003). *Birth Control in China, 1949–2000: Population Policy and Demographic Development*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Schoenhals, M. (1992). *Doing Things With Words in Chinese Politics: Five Studies*. Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, CA.
- Schram, S. R. (1969). *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, revised edn. New York: Praeger.
- Solinger, D. J. (1999). *Contesting Citizenship in Urban China: Peasant Migrants, the State, and the Logic of the Market*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- State Birth Planning Commission (1991 and other years). *Zhongguo Jihua Shengyu Nianjian (1991) (Birth Planning Yearbook of China [1991])*. Beijing: State Birth Planning Commission.
- Tien, H. Y. (1973). *China's Population Struggle: Demographic Decisions of the People's Republic, 1949–1969*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.
- (ed.) (1980). *Population Theory in China*. White Plains, NY: ME Sharpe.
- Wang, H. (1991a). 'Population Planning in China', in J. Y. Wang and T. H. Hull (eds.), *Population and Development Planning in China*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 42–67.
- (1991b). 'The population policy of China', in J. Y. Wang and T. H. Hull (eds.), *Population and Development Planning in China*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, pp. 68–87.
- Wang, X. Z. (1989). 'Dui nongcun baihu 'jihuwai shengyu hu' diaocha de fenxi (Analysis of a survey of 100 rural unplanned birth households)', *Renkou Yu Jingji (Population and Economics)*, 4: 36–7.
- Wang, Y. C. (1991). 'Jihuwai shengyu ji duice fenxi (Analysis of unplanned births and their countermeasures)', *Renkou yu Fazhan (Population and Development)*, 1: 18–20.
- Wasserstrom, J. (1984). 'Resistance to the one-child family', *Modern China*, 10: 345–74.
- White, T. (1991). 'Birth planning between plan and market: the impact of reform on China's one-child policy', in *China's Economic Dilemmas in the 1990s: The Problems of Reforms, Modernization, and Interdependence*, Vol. I. Study Papers submitted to the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, pp. 252–69.
- (1994a). 'The Origins of China's Birth Planning Policy', in C. K. Gilmartin, G. Hershatter, L. Rofel, and T. White (eds.), *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 250–78.
- White, T. (1994b). 'Two kinds of production: the evolution of China's family planning policy in the 1980s', in J. L. Finkle and C. A. McIntosh (eds.), *The New Politics of Population: Conflict*

and Consensus in Family Planning. Supplement to *Population and Development Review*, 20: 137–58.

Winckler, E. A. (1999). 'Re-enforcing state birth planning', in E. A. Winckler (ed.), *Transition from Communism in China: Institutional and Comparative Analysis*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 181–203.

— (2002). 'Chinese reproductive policy at the turn of the millennium: dynamic stability', *Population and Development Review*, 28(3): 379–418.

Yan, Y. X. (2003). *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zhang, E. L., Gu, B. C., and Xie, Z. M. (eds.) (1999). *Guojia Jihua Shengyu Weiyuanhui Diyipi Youzhi Fumu Shidian Xianqu (1995–1998) Pinggu Baogao Ji (Evaluations of the First Set of Quality of Care Pilot Projects Conducted by the State Birth Planning Commission, 1995–1998)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Renkou Chubanshe.

Zhang, H. (n.d.). 'Bracing for an uncertain future: new coping strategies of rural parents under China's one-child policy—a case study from a Hubei village', Unpublished Manuscript.

Zhang, L. (2001). *Strangers in the City: Reconfigurations of Space, Power, and Social Networks Within China's Floating Population*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Zhang, W. Q. (ed.) (1998). *Zhongguo jihua shengyu gailun (Overview of Birth Planning in China)*. Beijing: Zhongguo Renkou Chubanshe.

Zhang, W. W. (1996). *Ideology and Economic Reform Under Deng Xiaoping, 1978–1993*. London: Kegan Paul International.

Zhuang, Q. H. (1994). 'Xiamen tequ wailai renkou guanli wenti (Problems of managing the migrant population in Xiamen special economic zone)', *Zhongguo Renkou Kexue (Population Science of China)*, 41: 31–8.

# 9 Internal Diaspora and State Imagination: Colombia's Failure to Envision a Nation

SANTIAGO VILLAVECES-IZQUIERDO

As we move *from signification to its cause*, signification is conceived of as the *effect-of-sense*: it is the imaginary experience-of-meaning whose inherent constituent is the misrecognition of its determining *cause*, the formal mechanism of the signifying structure itself.

Slavoj Žižek

The increasing intensification of Colombia's internal wars since 1990 has exacted a heavy toll in uprooting large segments of the country's rural population. As of 2002 it was estimated that 2.9 million Colombians (of a total of 42 million) had become internally displaced. Despite its magnitude and durability the lack of any sustained official acknowledgement of the depths of the crisis has led to few, if any, viable policies or consistent governmental assistance to the displaced. The weakness of the governmental response, as national and international agencies suggest, stems from the 'official invisibility' of the crisis. The lack of census variables that capture the dynamics and impact of such dramatic demographic flux has produced a statistical conundrum that hides the crisis from policy-making spheres as well as from political debates, creating an 'official invisibility'.

In this chapter I explore the way in which an official 'narrative' can obliterate the political standing of the forms of 'otherness', which it creates, through such state classificatory devices as the census, vital statistics, laws, and maps. As Žižek argues, through these tools the state constructs stories about the nation and its peripheries, about violence and its consequences.<sup>1</sup> Displacement is 'authenticated' by the state as a politically meaningful term while the vast numbers of the displaced are simultaneously kept 'officially invisible' from the state's own systems of classification. By connecting the use of census variables to the state's own narrative construction of the nation, I attempt to show how the official grammar of statistics is used to maintain both a vision of a state that can control widespread political violence, as well as an image of a nation as not as fragmented and chaotic as it really is. Overall the construction, use, and interpretation

of census variables constitute a symbolic space of permanent tension and negotiation between the state and the diverse social actors, hegemonic and marginalized, which inhabit the nation and its peripheries. Throughout this chapter I attempt to draw attention to the urgent need for census strategies and categories to be more sensitive to the social dynamics of these heavily politicized issues. After all, demographic variables depart from and feed structures of power and knowledge that constitute fields of political contest and, in some cases, desperate attempts for human survival.

## CONTOURS OF A SILENCED TRAGEDY

'In 1998, for every Colombian assassinated in a massacre 75 others were displaced, mainly women, children and adolescents'. (CODHES)

Colombia during the 1990s was known, in the society of nations, as the western hemisphere's most violent country. Illicit drug processing and distribution, in alchemy with poverty and a legacy of acute and unresolved political violence, have triggered increasingly virulent waves of terror. Political violence has been a founding problem throughout the history of the country, one that became endemically visible in Colombian modernity with the coming of the era known as *La Violencia* (1945–65). As Colombia enters the twenty-first century the attempts to consolidate a nation-state based on democratic principles of national integration have been blurred systematically by authoritarian practices that have shaped the social, cultural, and political landscapes of the country for the last 50 years. Today the situation could not be more complex: a territorially fragmented country in search of itself, with no cohesive national project and torn apart by a visceral war between the Armed Forces, drug cartels, paramilitary organizations and guerrillas. Indiscriminate killings, kidnappings, bombings, torture and disappearance, equally perpetrated by all the actors in conflict, have left the country in a collective numbness. The macabre dance of fear, silence and in some cases indifference has paid a heavy toll in the lives of rural and urban populations. National and international health observers highlight that the highest rates of mortality in Colombia today come from violence (Pan-American Health Organization 1998; Villaveces *et al.* 2000; World Health Organization 2002).

The deep fragmentation of the country as well as a problematic and at best only partial presence of the state in most of the nation's territories has given way to a political geography, murky and in cases too obscure to be completely understood, that nurtures an increasingly virulent and decentred violence. In many rural and urban communities today, frequently in the presence of anonymous armed men, the civilian population feels powerless and fragmented, for they cannot identify who they are, why they find themselves where they are, or what to do in their predicament. Throughout Colombia these spaces have become liminal zones, constantly shifting with the tides of rapidly mutant political topographies.<sup>2</sup> In these liminal zones the inhabitants have constantly learnt to live with an existential uncertainty, not knowing clearly to what order they should subscribe. The dwellers of these zones have become strangers in their own land: always suspicious of one another, with their

communal ties cracked, with fear at hand. When the structural instability becomes unbearable, that is, when threats, political persecution, disappearances, and massacres invade the daily life of these people, forced displacement occurs. Within such liminal zones the most vulnerable populations are without doubt the rural communities of peasants and waged land workers. Punished by both the miseries of poverty and the brutality of abject violence these communities, caught between wars long foreign to their own struggles, have been left with the sole option of embarking on an endless exodus.

It is estimated that in the period 1985–2002, 2.9 million people (close to 7 per cent of the country's population) have been displaced by violence. In 1996 the independent *Comité Consultivo para los Derechos Humanos y los Desplazados*, CODHES (an independent Non-government Organization committed to the development of a statistical methodology for the tracking of forced displacement) estimated that 53 per cent of the displaced were women, 55 per cent of the displaced were underage, and 32 per cent were unemployed. While there was only a slight preponderance of women among the displaced, in total 86 per cent were living in areas defined as urban misery belts (*Consultoría para el Desplazamiento* 1997). Human rights advocates believe that many of the displaced are widows and orphans, who, after losing all, have to resort to whatever meagre opportunity for survival is available to them. Dispossessed of their land and of their life-worlds these outcasts fill the paths of a silent geography that takes them from one place to another, in a tragic pilgrimage that usually finds its journey's end in the urban underworlds of city slums.<sup>3</sup> The overwhelming emotional and psychological toll on the displaced, particularly on children, widows and the elderly, places them in a specially vulnerable position: besides carrying the burden of broken lives and traumatic memories the displaced lose a sense of belonging, of collective and individual identity. This deep fragmentation of the self, together with the loss of all communal and societal references, brings about a paralysing sense of uprootedness, often too powerful to allow for a reconstruction of fully significant life-worlds. Having lost all their rights as individuals and as citizens, the displaced are doomed to become later stigmatized as sources of social disorder and barbarism, inhabiting a hidden geography of fear in which daily survival would seem only to be postponing a death in tortuous silence. A vicious circle without doubt, that constantly re-inscribes a ghostly existence for these populations as well as an extended public amnesia of their whereabouts.

Since the mid-1990s, the intensification of the conflict led to large-scale displacements. Tens of thousands of Colombians have fled towards the neighbouring countries of Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. At their new destinations foreign authorities have insisted in regarding them as mere undocumented immigrants and denying them any protection and assistance, not to mention any consideration as refugees or political exiles. Not much is known about the fate and number of Colombian refugees in neighbouring countries except when flash and massive migrations occur.<sup>4</sup> For the majority of the Colombian population, too battered with the endless war and too concerned with their own survival in the midst of a deep economic recession, the problem of forced migration enters tangentially if ever into



their world. It is particularly telling that up to now little has been known about the social, cultural, and communal reconstitution of the displaced populations.

It was not until recently that an effort to raise public awareness of the situation of the displaced was launched. In 1995 a report sponsored by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Colombia revealed that one out of every forty Colombians was forced to migrate due to political violence. The report stressed that in the ten-year period of 1985–95 586,261 persons were forced to leave their households (Conferencia Episcopal Colombiana 1995). Since the times of *La Violencia* Catholic priests have been known to be active witnesses of rural violence, and at times some have dared publicly to denounce human rights violations. The Catholic Bishops' Conference, relying on the extended networks of parishes throughout the country, constructed preliminary surveys in what were already known to be war zones of the country. By gathering this information the 1995 report became a landmark, as it was the first serious attempt to understand, at a national scale, the magnitude of forced displacement. The report also mirrored the increasing interest of religious and civilian independent organizations in the crisis. The Bishops' report provided data that expanded the analysis of the human rights research unit of Centro de Investigaciones para la Educación Popular (CINEP) (a very active Jesuit NGO), complemented the preliminary findings of CODHES, and gave new resources to the *Comisión Andina de Juristas* (an independent association of lawyers engaged with the defence of human rights). Today these three independent organizations together with the more recently created *Grupo de Apoyo a los Desplazados* (Support Group for the Displaced) offer, at their own risk, more comprehensive landscapes of the problem.

Since the adoption in the 1960s of the US doctrine of national security by Latin American states, social activism has been relentlessly linked with subversion. Today in Colombia NGO activities still suffer from the burdens of a deeply rooted stigmatization: with visceral and irrational passion the security apparatus of the state sees human rights activism as a façade of the leftist guerrillas. Despite such a hostile environment, NGOs have learnt to manage their risks, in particular through their own visibility in international circles and, most recently, among sympathizers in foreign political forums (US Congress, EEC Parliament). The NGOs' international networking has not only voiced the crisis to important foreign pressure groups, but has also provided access to a pool of funds that ensure the continuity of statistical efforts designed for tracking the dynamics of forced displacement.<sup>5</sup> It is fair to say that thanks to the efforts of NGOs such as CINEP, the depth of the Colombian crisis is known within international circles. Indeed, the escalation of the crisis was followed by an intensification of international and diplomatic pressure that resulted in the opening, in 1997, of a field office in Bogotá of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Since then the United Nation and the European Union, together with important European aid agencies, have intensified their efforts in the allocation of human and financial resources to the displaced populations. Unfortunately international attention has not contained the harassment, threats, detentions and, in cases, assassinations of human rights activists and academics that dare to speak against atrocities, as well as local, regional, and at times national

government officials 'compromised' with humanitarian work. Today the displaced in Colombia are not only the rural communities from borderlands but the whole of Colombian society as well.

Such a picture is quite ironic when one considers that the state itself supposedly possesses an extensive human rights apparatus. Independent agencies, not subject to the executive's interference, include the national human rights Ombudsman and its corps of public defenders, the Prosecutor General's office and its human rights unit, and the Attorney General's office and its bureau for human rights. Additionally, the executive branch includes the Office of the President's Adviser for Human Rights, directed by Colombia's Vice President, and a human rights office in the Ministry of Defence. Overall, however, the responses of these state agencies have been at best timid and partial, exhibiting a lack of commitment and characterized by mistreatment of the displaced populations. In fact, during the last three administrations prior to 2002 the state's response to displacement was practically non-existent. Left as a problem to local or regional authorities, the displaced populations were abandoned to their fates by the central state.

In 1997 high hopes were raised when the National Council for Economic and Social Policy (Conpes) approved the creation of the System for the Integrated Attention to the Displaced by Violence and the Office of the President's Adviser for the Integrated Attention to the Displaced. Guidelines for a comprehensive articulation of policy at national, regional, and local levels, as well as precise lines of action for humanitarian emergency aid, socio-economic assistance, and contingency programmes, were expected to follow. But once again the state's response to the crisis remained unaltered. Direct government assistance to individuals was limited to a wholly inadequate 90-day period of humanitarian aid, after which the displaced were either left to their own devices or encouraged, without the necessary safety guarantees, to return to their places of origin. In March 1998, the Bogotá office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) strongly criticized the Samper administration (1994–8) for its irresponsibility in managing the crisis. With the coming to office of Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002) policy guidelines for a dignified return of displaced populations to their places of origin was meant to be implemented. However, Pastrana's administration has been criticized by NGOs and by the displaced themselves for building up a policy framework too general and abstract that lacks sufficient clarity to enforce the practical accomplishment of state actions towards the displaced.<sup>6</sup>

Behind these levels of abstraction and ambiguous government commitment lies a statistical conundrum that hides the real magnitude of the crisis from policy-making spheres as well as from open and informed political debates. As reported by one NGO, the main recent concern of government officials has been the lack of a comprehensive database functional for the quantification and identification of displaced populations (Grupo de Apoyo a Organizaciones de Desplazados 1999). The administration has finally come to realize that without such statistical tools the actual implementation of programmes for land distribution, physical and psychological rehabilitation, and socio-economic assistance is hardly viable. Furthermore, such a statistical vacuum keeps hidden from public debate the deep ramifications that the

crisis has on other major social and political fronts, the most dramatic of these being the effects of a lack of adequate information on lands abandoned by displaced populations in furthering an already extended agrarian counter-reform.

The real impact of war and displacement over rural economies is yet unknown as well as the long-term effects over agricultural supplies. The connections between the official marginalization and stigmatization of the displaced and their extreme poverty with the increments in urban violence are also still to be addressed. The most comprehensive database is that of CODHES, which is still partial and incomplete, as it was never designed to fill the vacuum left by the state's desertion of its responsibilities.<sup>7</sup> Today the challenge is that of constructing 'official' statistical devices that would provide the government with a comprehensive map of the crisis and thus, a concrete ground for political negotiation and action. But why has the state been so slow in recognizing the value of at least mapping the crisis? What is the cultural engagement of government institutions and policy-making spheres with the displaced?

## CENSUS AND STATE IMAGINATION

'Like other aesthetic forms, the nation-state too promises to bring forth order out of disorder, mold form from that in which form is absent' (Daniel 1997).

As Benedict Anderson noted, since the times of the European colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Americas the practices of mapping territories and its peoples have been at the centre of state formation and nation building. Together with laws and maps, the census has been a fundamental tool for ordering otherwise unseen fluxes of social and economic forces that are constantly moulding what we render as 'national'. As such it might be safe to ascertain that the census is a symbolic construct, a form of conceptualizing a territory by bringing to life an ontological landscape (the nation) through the means of quantitative and numerical relationships. The demographic topography that results from such an exercise provides not only a particular lens through which reality is read, but, foremost, a charter that informs the structural and functional unfolding of state institutions. For the state 'the census fills in politically the formal topography of the map' (Anderson 1998: 174). Indeed, the census is a tool through which the state envisions and acts upon the nation.

From anthropological and sociological perspectives a nation can be understood as a complex system of cultural signification. The nation, as a map of meaning, stitches together institutions and social actors hence producing a mosaic, fashioned in time and space, of a single totality. This sense of continuity in history, of temporal unfolding of national progress, is constructed through narratives that depart primarily, although not exclusively, from the state. As Bhabha (1990) points out, the state, in constructing narratives of the nation, constructs subjects and objects that inhabit those narratives. These subjects and objects become then the legitimate receptacles and constituents of the nation; that is to say, the pieces of a puzzle that fit together to bring form and order to what otherwise would seem to be an amorphous and chaotic existence. In pursuing such a train of thought Bhabha is pushing us to think about

the ‘complex strategies of cultural identification and discursive address that function in the name of “the people” or “the nation” and make them the immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narratives’ (Bhabha 1990: 292). And what is the census but yet another device through which the state identifies and addresses the nation and its people? But this rhetorical question has not a single answer. It seems far more productive to think of the census also as a regulating valve, as a double-edged political construct that functions simultaneously as a window as well as a door.

As a window, the census frames for the state a particular view of the nation, that is, it constitutes an eye of the state as well as a mirror of the state's own cultural and political values. Through the use of census variables the state determines what it sees, how it sees and most importantly, what it chooses not to see. And it is through the intertwining of this trilogy that policies are designed, resources allocated, problems perceived, and solutions conceived. But as I suggested before, this is only a partial answer. For all other social actors census variables function as a doorway, as a threshold that ensures visibility and thus political leverage, as a site of political struggle and negotiation. In times where full access to citizenship and its correspondent rights are not to be taken for granted, the points of interface between the state and other social actors become arenas for political contest. The census as a doorway is one of those arenas. As such, the census can be thought of as a point of entrance to the field of vision of the state; that is, as a device that locates, fixes, and ensures the existence of social actors as legitimate political agents.

The census as a doorway ‘authenticates’ the subject's agency by providing it with a recognizable representation, intelligible for the state, that grounds political negotiation. In this case the subject is, ideally, *seen* to count as a valued unit: as an active participant in the unfolding of the narratives of national progress, as a recipient of rights, as a full citizen with political standing. But this is just one of three possible scenarios. The other two lie in the unstable terrain of political struggle. By unveiling the construction of a census through placing its evolution in the context of a national history, it can be perceived how the inclusion of certain variables marks the coming of age of emergent political actors. Post-colonial histories are full of such examples: indigenous or black communities, women, religious minorities, subjects long erased by colonial authorities, re-emerge as political agents, as actors that indeed form a now ‘authenticated’ part of the political topography of the nation (often only after a complex struggle, as exemplified in Chapter 6 in this volume by Melissa Nobles). The third scenario is that of the internally displaced, the case of the wretched of the earth, as F. Fanon called the peripheries of our nations (Fanon 1969). For these doomed outcasts the doors are all shut: their physical and social marginalization enhanced and reinstated by exclusionary cultural and symbolic orders. Stripped of their rights, of their citizenship, of their agency, these outcasts become unseen burdens that never quite fit the parameters of the imagined community. At best, the ‘wretched of the earth’ are timidly recognized by the state, not without doses of shame, as those unavoidable stains in the mosaic of the nation. And as stains these outcasts are literally thrown to the margins of the mythical tales of nation building, of the contemporary narratives that account for the unfolding of a project of nation, of the envisioning prospects of the nation's future.

On 14 October 1953 the Rojas Pinilla administration created Colombia's Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística (DANE), in charge of defining and developing the national statistical system. Before then different sectors of the state collected their own statistical information but never before had a socio-demographic statistical system been enforced. Since then the state has recognized and collected basic socio-demographic indicators, which include population census by sex, age, residence, education and economic activity, birth and death registration, and migratory flows (these last registering only the actual place of residence, the place of birth and the place of residence five years before the survey). The censuses of 1951 (carried out by the Contraloría General de la Nación), 1964, 1973, 1985, and 1993 picture a nation with the expected demographic fluxes of modernization. But the censuses fail to capture the migration turmoil triggered by constant waves of political violence in rural Colombia. Albeit recognizing expected increments in the flow towards the urban centres, the statistics lacked the sophistication to reveal the causes of such movement (in particular those pertaining to fear, threats, and violence) and hence to disclose the actual geography of forced displacement. As the intensification of war progressed the reliability of the statistics has become ever more degraded. While larger segments of the country are plunged into a chaotic war and more municipalities fall under the control of paramilitary or guerrilla groups more restrictions are imposed on state employees and survey teams. The DANE has recognized that the last agricultural and stock census was incomplete due to threats and, on occasion, disappearances of its employees; and as the escalation of conflict continues the population census scheduled for 2001 has been postponed. As it is, little has changed in the last 50 years in Colombia in the way that socio-demographic statistics have been constructed. If it was fair to say that in the 1960s the regions of the Colombian Amazon and Orinoco basins were invisible to statistical surveying, today the situation is no better. As the wars in Colombia deepen, more than a third of its territory seems to be off-bounds for any type of data recollection.

In 1967 the Colombian novelist Gabriel García-Márquez evoked in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the miseries of peripheral communities, drifters from the unfolding of a national project. The mythical Macondo, a powerful metaphor of what has become of Colombia today, is made barren by a mysterious pest that brings about a collective amnesia. In their attempt to hold on to the world as they knew it, the inhabitants of Macondo try desperately to capture reality by naming it.

On the advice of his son Aureliano, one of the first to contract the disease, José Arcadio Buendía began to label all the things of the house, and later the town. With an inked brush he marked everything with its name: *table, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan*. He went to the corral and marked the animals and plants: *cow, goat, pig, hen, cassava, caladium, banana*. Little by little, studying the infinite possibilities of a loss of memory, he realized that the day might come when things would be recognised by their inscriptions but that no one would remember their use. The sign that he hung on the neck of the cow was an exemplary proof of the way in which the inhabitants of Macondo were prepared to fight against the loss of memory: *This is a cow, she must be milked every morning so that she will produce milk, and the milk must be boiled in order to be mixed with coffee so as to make coffee with milk*. Thus they went on living

in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by words, but which would escape irremediably when they forgot the values of the written letters. At the beginning of the path that followed the swamp they placed a sign that said *Macondo* followed by a bigger one, in the main street, that said *God Exists*. In all the houses reminders were written so as to help in the memorizing of objects and sentiments. But the system demanded so much vigilance and moral strength that many surrendered to the bewitchment of an imagined reality, invented by themselves, that ended up to be less practical but yet more comfortable.<sup>8</sup> (García-Márquez 1967: 48)

It is with bewilderment that one finds that the Colombian state, perhaps as bewitched as the inhabitants of Macondo, opts to forget; but forgetting is not an innocuous act, and in a case such as this it is not an innocent one.

During the last 10 years NGOs have been bringing to national and international attention what they have named the 'official invisibility' of Colombia's forced displacement.<sup>9</sup> A profound disruption of the nation's social, cultural and demographic texture has come about with Colombia's internal diaspora. Shifts of such a magnitude can no longer pass as simply 'unnoticed'. The statistical quest by NGOs has provided a starting point for acknowledging the quantitative dimensions of the crisis. Fortunately this effort has been accompanied by qualitative attempts to render visible the effects of displacement in the construction of new communal ties (Cardozo 1997), in mental health (Castaño 1997), in the lives of women (Otero 1995; Universidad Nacional de Colombia 1996), and in public memory (Villaveces 1997). Nevertheless an in-depth understanding of how the lives of these communities are structured by the displacement is still unknown. Political observers agree that one of the major challenges for Colombia at the dawn of the twenty-first century is that of coming to terms with the political and social consequences of such massive internal refugee migrations (Pecault 1999). Why is this dramatic demographic flux kept hidden from the scrutiny of official statistics? Why is it that the displaced are alienated from being part of the unfolding project of the nation? Why are they displaced from the symbolic and representational fields of the state apparatus? What are the political effects of such effacement?

In trying to understand the undercurrents of this effacement I find it useful to ask: What would it mean for the state if the displaced were included as active subjects in the making of a project of the nation? First, it would mean recognizing the territorial and political fragmentation of the country and, with this, implicitly accepting the state's own cultural failure for envisioning a viable 'imagined community'; that is, understanding the nation as a space of estrangement, difference, fragmentation and exclusion, and not as an intelligible, ordered single totality. In political terms it would mean recognizing that the nation is in civil war. But such recognition appears too threatening for the maintenance of an increasingly unstable status quo, too disruptive of visions that hold on to a world long lost. As in Macondo, the state, too, constructs representational devices, lexicons through which realities are ordered, recognized, and addressed. In denying entry to the displaced into the realms of such official lexicons the state safeguards its vulnerability from the public gaze. Without the disruptive force of the anomaly, the mirage of a state in control can still apparently hold together,

supporting an official image of a nation as less violent and fragmented than it really is. As in Macondo, the state's political myopia rewards surrender to the bewitchment of living in illusion. But such bewitchment comes with a heavy price in terms of the possibilities of democracy. The 'official invisibility' of the crisis, while underestimating the magnitude of internal displacement in Colombia, has been functional for disempowering the already marginalized agency that human rights advocates have, not to mention that of the displaced themselves. Indeed, the lack of official statistics while postponing political debates about the crisis, its origins, and its consequences, has made the state impermeable to public accountability.

Within these intricate webs of culture and power, where structural invisibility serves a multiplicity of purposes, could census variables provide tools for the inscription of the outcasts as political agents? In mid-June 1999 an estimated 10,000 refugees fled from the Catatumbo area to neighbouring Venezuela in an attempt to escape paramilitary violence. This new massive displacement of Colombian civilians brought again to international attention the vulnerability of rural populations in the country. The Venezuelan government soon referred to the situation as the Latin American Kosovo, adding a new dimension of diplomatic pressure to the already rarefied relations with Colombia.<sup>10</sup> Cases such as this have placed forced displacement onto the country's political agenda, unfortunately not with the necessary seriousness that such complexity would demand. The increasing expectations of a recrudescence of political violence, and thus of internal displacement, ironically provide the only hope for a comprehensive engagement of state agencies and decision-making spheres with the depths of the crisis. For such engagement to occur the 2.9 million displaced would need to surmount the barrier against their entrance into the field of vision of the state. This change of status of the displaced would necessarily lead to their re-inscription as social actors with political leverage, as recognized makers and markers of a new demographic topography of the nation. For such topography to be adequately understood it would irrevocably have to take into account the profound political, cultural, social, and economic effects of forced displacement. Only then, one hopes, a new project of nation could be thought of, one that would break away from that Macondian curse that mixes in tragic alchemy the amnesia of the many with the comfort of the few. As in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the attempt to regain the collective memory of the world comes by naming, and in the worlds of bureaucracy and policy-making, naming comes, among other things, through the grammar of the census.

## Notes

1. Zizek (1991; 1994).
2. Here I understand liminal zones as spaces in which the social and existential conditions of individuals and groups are unfixed, left in a sort of ambiguous suspension in which social order is subverted by parallel yet undetermined, paradoxical and, not self-evident emergent power structures.
3. According to CODHES, in 1996 Bogotá, the country's capital, hosted 27.3% of the total displaced, followed by Medellín, the country's second largest city, which hosted 19.66%.

4. See for example the 19 April 1999 edition of the Colombian weekly *Semana*.
5. In 1998 CODHES received international funds for the production of two reports on forced displacement and human rights in Colombia. Funds were provided by UNICEF, The Humanitarian Aid Department of the EEC (ECHO), Christian Aid, and The Norwegian Fund for Human Rights. Pax Christi, the Swiss and Belgium governments, the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have provided assistance to other NGOs engaged with human rights in Colombia.
6. See *Bulletin No. 7* and *Bulletin No. 11* of the Grupo de Apoyo a Organizaciones de Desplazados (GAD/ Exodo).
7. CODHES relies primarily on information gathered during 1996 and 1997 from 1,020 households of those displaced by violence. Data gathering was done with the help of local social workers, NGO functionaries, parishes and local authorities.
8. My own translation.
9. See *Bulletin No. 7* and *Bulletin No. 11* of the Grupo de Apoyo a Organizaciones de Desplazados (GAD/ Exodo). Also see Amnesty International Report 23/48/97, 'Just what do we have to do to stay alive?' October 1997.
10. The reference to Colombia as the next Kosovo is been increasingly used in international circles, adding a twist to the already popular fashion for talking of the country's political turmoil as the 'Balkanization' of Colombia. In late June 1999 a Colombian journalist reporting for the country's *El Tiempo* newspaper quoted Paul Coverdale, a Republican senator in the US Congress: 'We are seeing a balkanization of Colombia. President Pastrana continues to make concessions to the guerrillas who in turn have increased their efforts to undermine peace and stability. At the end of the year we are leaving Panama [referring to the closure of the US military South Command at the Canal Zone] and this will affect dramatically our ability to fight narco-traffic as well as to guarantee the security and stability of the region' (Gómez Maseri 1999: 1A). Echoing arguments of this type, the US Congress approved earlier this year a significant increase in military assistance to Colombia. In 1999 Colombia was among the top three countries that received most military assistance from the United States, only topped by Israel and Egypt (Peñaranda and Zuluaga 1999). It is worth highlighting how the image of a 'balkanized' Colombia has recently paved the way for the increasingly popular image of the 'Colombianization' of Latin America, an image that captures the region's fear of institutional if not societal collapse under the pressure of parallel systems of order and justice distribution. Balkanization of Colombia, Colombianization of Latin America, and both images powerfully capture the limits of local explanations to disseminated violence, both images crudely evoke the failures of a nation-state as exposed by the increasing impact of globalization and neo-liberal adjustments, as well as by its incapacity to consolidate its primary functions of provider of justice and security (failures that indeed crosscut all Latin American nation-states and have an extreme manifestation in the Colombian case).

## References

- Amnesty International (1997). 'Just what do we have to do to stay alive? Colombia's internally displaced: dispossessed and exiled in their own land', *Amnesty International*, Report 23/48/97.
- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bhabha, H. (1990). 'DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation', in H. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration*. London: Routledge, pp. 291–322.



- Cardozo, R. J. (1997). 'Experiencia en la recepción de una comunidad desplazada por la violencia en Ibagué', Typescript.
- Castañón, B. L. (1997). *El Desplazamiento y su Problema Psicosocial*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
- Cinep (Centro de Investigaciones para la Educación Popular) (1998). 'Testimonio. El éxodo paso a paso', *Alternativa*, 18.
- Conferencia Episcopal Colombiana (1995). *Los Desplazados por la violencia en Colombia*. Bogotá: Editorial Kimpres Ltda.
- Consultoría para el Desplazamiento (1997). 'Desplazados: Entre la violencia y el miedo', *CODHES*, Boletín 6.
- Daniel, V. (1997). 'Suffering Nation and Alienation', in A. Kleinman, V. Das, and M. Lock (eds.), *Social Suffering*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 309–58.
- Gómez Maseri, S. (1999). 'Panamá amenazada por Colombia', *El Tiempo*, June 23: 1A.
- Fanon, F. (1969). *The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- García Márquez, G. (1967). *Cien Años de Soledad*. Bogotá: Oveja Negra.
- Grupo de Apoyo a Organizaciones de Desplazados (1998). 'Informe sobre desplazamiento forzado en Colombia', *Exodo*, 7.
- (1999). 'La superación de la crisis de derechos humanos y la política frente al desplazamiento interno no deben supeditarse al proceso de negociación política', *Exodo*, 11.
- Otero, Y. (1995). 'Diagnóstico urbano y primera interpretación de los cambios socioculturales de las mujeres desplazadas en la ciudad de Montería', Typescript. Montería: Corporación María Cano.
- Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) (1998). *Health in the Americas, 1998 Edition*. Washington: PAHO.
- Pecault, D. (1999). 'Los Desplazados: Un problema social y político', *Colombia-Thema*, No. 5. Web page: <http://colombia-thema.org/mai99/pecault.html>
- Peñaranda, R. and Zuluaga, J. (1999). 'La guerra se intensificará', *Colombia-Thema*, No. 5. Web page: <http://colombia-thema.org/mai99/coyuntura-primero99.htm>
- Semana (1999). 'Alerta Máxima', *Semana*, 885: 13–14.
- Universidad Nacional de Colombia (1996). *Mujeres Desplazadas y Violencia*. Bogotá: Universidad Nacional de Colombia.
- Villaveces, S. (1997). 'Art and mediation: reflections on violence and representation', in G. Marcus (ed.), *Cultural Producers in Perilous States*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 233–54.
- Villaveces, I., Cumminngs, P., Koepsell, T., McKnight, B., and Kellermann, A. (2000). 'Effect of a ban on carrying firearms on homicide rates in 2 Colombian cities', *JAMA*, 283/ 9: 1205–9.
- World Health Organization (WHO) (2002). *World Health Report*. Geneva: WHO.
- Zizek, S. (1991). *For They Know Not What They Do. Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. London: Verso.
- (1994). *The Metastases of Enjoyment. Six Essays on Woman and Causality*. London: Verso.

# 10 Users, Non-users, Clients, and Help-seekers: The Use of Categories in Research on Health Behaviour

CARLA MAKHLOUF OBERMEYER

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with some of the categories that are used in studies of health behaviour. Research on health at the level of populations is usually carried out using one of three sources of data: vital statistics that provide the material for demographic analyses of mortality levels and trends, facility-based data on the incidence and prevalence of specific diseases, and survey-based research. Morbidity surveys, demographic and health surveys, and utilization surveys typically collect data from respondents and their families about various indicators of current fertility and health, reports of past and future encounters with health service providers, and attitudes towards health and family planning services. In this chapter, I focus on measures of health behaviour (rather than of health as such) that are used in these surveys. I examine the categories in which individuals are classified according to their behaviour regarding health services and their attitudes towards healthcare, the assumptions these categories make about human behaviour, and the extent to which such assumptions are tenable in view of the reality that is being studied. To illustrate these points, I make reference to examples drawn from two of the research projects I have worked on over the past few years, the first on the use of health services in Egypt, and the second on the use of hospital facilities at birth in Morocco.

## CATEGORIES TO STUDY HEALTH BEHAVIOUR

The frameworks underlying the design and analysis of surveys of health behaviour cluster around three main types. One stems from predominantly economic models that consider individuals in terms of their so-called preferences, their demand for particular goods and services related to health or family planning, their ability to pay for these, and the extent of their satisfaction after they have used them. Surveys of the utilization, cost, and quality of health services tend to be designed on the basis of such frameworks, as are most satisfaction surveys. The (implicit or explicit) model of individuals is that of consumers who make rational decisions and select among alternatives with the goal of maximizing utility. It is assumed that their choices and their

willingness to purchase goods and services express stable preferences, and that indicators of satisfaction provide measures of their valuations (Grace 1994; Lupton 1997). Surveys that make these assumptions are usually undertaken by those responsible for managing health services, with the goal of measuring levels and determinants of utilization, ascertaining preferences and valuations, and accurately predicting future behaviours related to health services.

Another categorization of health behaviour is apparent from an examination of research projects on family planning. There, a 'correct' goal—a relatively small family size—is associated with a set of behaviours—the adoption of contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted births. In the resulting formulation, individuals are classified into 'users' of contraceptive methods who appropriately link desirable goals and means, and 'non-users' who fail to do so, either because they hold traditional norms of large family size, or because, although they may agree that fewer children are desirable, they fail to implement their preferences as a result of ignorance, socio-economic or logistic obstacles, or the opposition of individuals in their social environment. While the user/non-user dichotomy was at first used primarily in surveys of fertility and KAP surveys on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to contraception, it continues to influence the frameworks of demographic and health surveys, in the sense that individuals are expected to avail themselves of particular health services such as child immunization or the use of prenatal care, and that where they do not, this is seen to result from technical and management barriers, the social influence of key individuals, or culturally based resistance. In other words, the assumption is that rational actors would follow a set of correct behaviours, and that deviations from expected behaviours are attributable to the management of the services, the characteristics of individuals, or socio-cultural obstacles.

In this chapter, I illustrate each of these two frameworks with reference to an example drawn from a research project. The first is an experiment in using qualitative methods to provide information to policy-makers on the utilization of health services in Egypt, the second is an investigation of patterns of (non-)utilization of health services at the time of birth by women in Morocco. The first example shows the difficulties that emerge when problematic assumptions are used in categorizing individuals, and the implications of these choices for both research and policy. The second example demonstrates the way in which ethnographic research can question the relevance of surveys categories, and how its findings can be used to redefine those categories and to reformulate research questions, thus leading to very different policy recommendations.

I should mention here that it is possible to find yet another framework for categorizing health behaviour, one which represents an interesting alternative, because it makes very different assumptions. In this conceptualization, individuals are construed as 'help-seekers' who become aware that something is wrong, and turn to experts to obtain the advice and care that will improve their condition. This categorization stems from a tradition in medicine, psychiatry, psychology, and social work, which focuses on the interaction between provider and patient (Mechanic 1982; Turner 1995). Unlike the other two frameworks that are referred to above, this one does not treat health as just any other commodity, nor does it view doctors as simply supplying a service, or

patients as consumers who shop around and actively evaluate doctors' services. Rather, it emphasizes the role of the provider as the representative of a benevolent institution who performs a needed service. Conversely, as help-seeker, the patient has a limited role, which is to request medical advice and to follow directions, thus making it possible for the doctor to act in his or her best interest. Although this formulation overlooks the important element of patients' decision making (Donovan 1995), it tends to be used in studies that are based at health facilities, usually with the goal of improving communication between patient and doctor. The help-seeking categorization has some general appeal because it is consistent with traditional images of the medical profession as both powerful and compassionate. As a result, it does at times have an indirect influence on research that is predominantly guided by other frameworks, such that it may, for example, temper some of the consumerism of the market model, or introduce the notion of hierarchy into the analysis of health decisions. In general then, and as will be apparent from the examples in this presentation, the study of health behaviour frequently reflects a mixture among different typologies of health behaviour.

## UNDERSTANDING USERS' PERSPECTIVES: HEALTHCARE IN EGYPT

Like many of the projects that are initiated to redesign the way in which government health services are provided, the project on which I recently collaborated with colleagues at Harvard and in Egypt sought to reduce the inefficiencies of an existent system and to recover costs, while continuing to offer at least some free preventive services to all, and curative care to those among the population who do not have the ability to pay for services (Data for Decision Making 1998). The principal component of the project was financial: the goal was to measure the costs of healthcare and the relative contribution of the government and private sector, and to assess the financial sustainability of policies to provide preventive and curative care. It was however thought important to also gain some insights into the perspective of users of health services, principally to identify the willingness of different groups to pay for various services, and to assess the needs of those unable to pay. Thus I was asked to design a so-called qualitative component that would provide information about users' motivations to have recourse to different sorts of services, the reasons for their choices regarding the services they purchase compared to those that they obtain without charge, and their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current system.

It was clear at the outset that Egypt had a wealth of medical personnel, and does not suffer from the physical obstacles that hinder access to healthcare in other countries—reports published several years before the project commonly cited the statistic of 99 per cent of the population having access to a health facility (World Bank 1993). There are, however, major problems in the provision of adequate healthcare to the population. As in many other countries, health services are frequently of poor quality, as a result of inadequate training and motivation of personnel, insufficient material resources, and ineffective management. It was also feared that disparities between

rich and poor, urban and rural, which had been amply documented by earlier research (El-Messiri 1980; Morsy 1993; Soliman 1994), had been further worsened by the structural adjustment programme that the country had embarked on (Hassanin 1996). This may have resulted in what has been referred to as a polarized epidemiologic transition, where the more privileged part of the population suffer from the predominantly chronic and degenerative diseases of affluence, while the less privileged continue to die of easily preventable infectious causes (World Bank 1997). One of the concerns of those among my colleagues who were involved in the project was that the poorer segments of the population would suffer unduly from the shift to a system which did not provide as many free services, and that preventive care would not be adequately covered. These concerns defined the goals of the qualitative component that I would be responsible for, namely to assess the extent to which different strata in the society availed themselves of government, as opposed to private, services, and to throw light on users' motivations to obtain preventive, as compared to curative services.

## FIGURING OUT THE SYSTEM

Several factors (some of which, interestingly, also had to do with categories and their definitions) made this apparently simple mandate quite complicated. The first and most obvious one is that the categories of private and public are only theoretically separate in Egypt. Given the very low pay that physicians can obtain from government appointments, the vast majority practise for part of the day at a public facility, and spend the remainder of their time at a private practice, so that patients who initiate care at a government facility are invited to use private facilities for their follow-up visits, and those who can afford it do so, in order to avoid the waiting times at public facilities (Partnership for Health Reform 1998). Statistics at the aggregate level confirm that the proportion that is spent in Egypt from what economists refer to as out-of-pocket expenditures is more than half of total spending on health, and that even the poor use private health services for outpatient care (Data for Decision Making Project 1995, 1997, 1998; World Bank 1998). While there is no doubt that in this situation, the task of disentangling private and public healthcare is very complicated for the researcher, what is even more intriguing is how the boundary between the two sectors is constructed by users and how they compare the care they receive from the different facilities.

Understanding this distinction is further complicated by the definition of health insurance and whom it applies to: in addition to public hospitals, the government provides social insurance to civil servants and maintains special health facilities for the military. Moreover, the regulations regarding insurance are such that the coverage of the head of a family may not necessarily apply to his spouse, and duplicate insurance is frequently necessary for complete family coverage, with members of the same household often belonging to different insurance plans. In view of this, it became clear that an overarching question for the project ought to be precisely how

individuals understand such a complicated and fragmented system and make decisions about using its different components.

A third pattern that characterizes healthcare in Egypt and that is apparent from statistics at the aggregate level is the very high level of expenditure that is devoted to medications—more than half of the out-of-pocket expenses go to the purchase of drugs, and this represents more than half of private sector expenses (World Bank 1997). With 50 per cent of medications said to be dispensed by pharmacists without prescription (AbuZaid and Dann 1985) it is obvious that this raises questions regarding the role of pharmacists, the degree of self-medication, and the consequences of the inappropriate use of drugs. Given these patterns, a key question that needed to be addressed by the project is the process whereby individuals decide to obtain medications, whom they consult, and how the use of medications is associated with the use of other healthcare services.

Aware of the problems of low quality, fragmentation, and inefficiency of the healthcare system, policy-makers at the Ministry of Health expressed interest in a project that would measure the degree of satisfaction of users, identify the worst problems, and ascertain the receptivity of the population to a different way of organizing healthcare. Obtaining the views of the population regarding health and investigating consumer satisfaction appeared especially appropriate in a democratic country that was showing its commitment to the principles of the market, and given the increasing legitimacy of qualitative methods, they seemed the right choice. There was however a degree of ambivalence among managers and policy-makers at various levels of the system towards the value of this goal. This ambivalence was manifested in two ways. On the one hand, there was a diffuse expectation that perhaps qualitative methods of data collection would serve to reveal obstacles to healthcare that had until then been hidden, for example, some particular beliefs or traditional practices among the population. On the other hand, I also sensed a certain scepticism that anything could come from this research project, since the major problems of healthcare were thought to be both well known and largely intractable, principally the poverty and illiteracy that characterize those groups in the population who use government services, and also the high costs of healthcare and the weight of the bureaucracy in the country as a whole.

I mention these points not merely because I believe they will resonate with those who have had the occasion to bring their social science expertise to collaborate on applied projects, but also because they illustrate the way in which so-called users are implicitly classified into contradictory categories: on the one hand, they are seen as primarily 'rational', as citizens who can give leaders an opinion about healthcare and as consumers who compare services and choose the one that fits their needs; on the other hand, they are considered as individuals whose motivations are poorly understood and whose judgements may be clouded by tradition or ignorance. The two methods that presented themselves for the collection of data on user perspectives also seemed to correspond to these two categorizations: the satisfaction survey, which fits with the construction of users as citizens or consumers who can articulate opinions in response to clear questions, and the focus group, which is thought to provide

a sometimes indirect means to uncover commonly held attitudes among specific groups whose preferences are concealed and whose beliefs are obscure.

## ELICITING THE VIEWS OF CLIENTS: THE SATISFACTION SURVEY

Theoretically, the satisfaction survey, which asks respondents to rank their opinions on simple scales, should yield results that are easy to interpret. But in many parts of the world, these surveys have been remarkably useless. A recent study in Indonesia, for example, found that 95 per cent of respondents were fully satisfied with the health services they used, a result that was inconsistent with what was known of services in the study site (Bernhart *et al.* 1999). Similarly in Egypt, despite the obvious malfunctioning of the healthcare system, surveys that seek to obtain a measure of users' satisfaction do not yield informative results: the proportion of individuals who appear satisfied with the care they receive at public facilities—nearly three-quarters of rural residents in a study in Ismailia (AbuZaid and Dann 1985)—is impossible to reconcile with the obvious underutilization of these facilities. In addition, the findings of satisfaction studies are frequently inconsistent with what is known of differences among various segments of the population: for example, the rural poor who are known to have access to fewer services of poorer quality, generally tend to express much greater satisfaction than populations in urban areas, who have access to better care (AbuZaid and Dann 1985).

Beyond the particular methodological problems of satisfaction studies, the fundamental reason why they are not useful is that their underlying theoretical frameworks are inconsistent with the notions that prevail among the populations they seek to study. Reviews of the results of a number of satisfaction studies indicate that their tendency to overestimate satisfaction may be due to a 'diplomatic bias' such as is found in Indonesian culture, whereby individuals are taught to be polite to strangers and not to express overt criticism, as well as by what has been referred to as the 'gratitude bias' which results in lower expectations for services that are provided free (Bernhart *et al.* 1999). Both of these explanations are probably relevant in Egypt where respondents who appeared, based on their description of their medical encounters, to have received suboptimal care, would nevertheless reply '*alhamdulillah*, [thank God] very good' to questions about what they thought of the health services they used.

The extent to which surveys overestimate satisfaction is also a function of the users' perceptions of whether health professionals have a duty to provide them with competent care, and of their sense of who is responsible for inadequate care. As a study carried out in Wales suggests (Williams *et al.* 1998), respondents will tend to express satisfaction when they are not really convinced that they are entitled to good care, or when it is not clear to them who is to be blamed when they do not receive such care. This also applies to Egypt where, underlying positive responses regarding healthcare, users express a diffuse awareness that they have little recourse and that

it is futile to complain. In other words, whereas the satisfaction survey construes respondents as consumers driven by the pure rationality of the market, capable of shopping around and comparing alternatives, in much of the world, this categorization is not relevant. Users do not perceive the clinic as a place to buy a service, do not view healthcare personnel as selling them a good or commodity, and do not have a sense that they can demand more for their money. That most users do not conceive of healthcare as simply a commodity is documented by the findings of a study in Australia that respondents do not tend to position themselves as consumers of a service, and are very reluctant to approach the medical encounter from the assumption that they distrust their doctor (Lupton 1997). This can be partly explained by the asymmetry in knowledge and status that is inherent to the encounter between doctor and patient. Where a subservient patient temporarily gives up control of his or her body, and allows another to gaze at it and touch it (Foucault 1980; Lock 1993; Lupton 1994), it becomes especially important to be able to assume that the other is benevolent and will not abuse that power. Hence health encounters are inevitably endowed with a moral quality, and providers with ethical attributes.

These findings are directly relevant to the situation in Egypt, and fit well with the findings of the pilot study that I carried out for the project (I mention parenthetically that despite the inclination of those who had asked for my expertise to use satisfaction survey or focus groups, I chose to follow neither of these methods, but rather carried out semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of thirty individuals representing different age and sex groups, and different social strata, and it is from the analyses of data from these interviews that my insights are derived). The analysis of the results from the pilot study showed that in speaking about the physicians who treated them, the most salient attribute that individuals referred to was trustworthiness: the doctor could be trusted because of his training and his prominence (*daktor kebir*, a great doctor), the recognition that he receives (some informants proudly mentioned that their physician had been on television) or his personal characteristics (he is a good man, a kind man, he can listen, and he talks to you). Respondents also prefer it if they can chose a physician with whom they can make some kind of a personal connection, for example, someone who is a relative, or who is known by the family, or if these direct links do not exist, someone to whom one of their acquaintances has had recourse previously. In the confusing world of health services, these personal connections serve to introduce a moral element into the interaction, and help reassure individuals that they will receive better care than they would from complete strangers.

Another finding that emerges from reviews of research on user perspectives, and that is also confirmed by my own pilot study is that the ability to adopt a consumer approach to healthcare is not uniformly high or low in a given population. Rather, there are considerable variations by class, gender, and education. The study by Lupton showed that among Australians, individuals with more schooling and from more privileged circumstances were more likely to consider medical care as consumers, to challenge the authority of their physician, and to seek detailed information on their medical condition (Lupton 1997). My findings in Egypt also show major



differences by class and education in users' knowledge of healthcare alternatives, their understanding of the way the system functions, and their ability to select the appropriate entry point. The narratives of respondents from less privileged strata were remarkably vague when it came to describing where they went for care, whom they interacted with, what their diagnosis was, and how long treatment was to be followed. More educated respondents could name their physician and his specialty, they could explain where they went for different medical visits, and how they decided on a given option—in other words, they had some kind of a mental map of the healthcare system that corresponded to the way in which services were organized, whereas their less privileged compatriots were literally and figuratively lost and did not have the information or resources to identify and obtain appropriate care. In addition, in Egypt (as in Wales—see Williams *et al.* 1998) social groups differ in the extent to which they feel entitled to care and perceive health personnel as having a duty towards them. It is in fact unfortunate that those social groups who, because of their limited resources, have the greatest need to obtain care from the public sector, are precisely those who are in the least advantageous position to demand adequate care from it.

Thus the analysis of data from Egypt helps identify inconsistencies, both in the construction of the user category—consumer-clients, citizens, or somewhat confused individuals trying to figure out a complicated system with their limited resources—and in the construction of health—as a commodity, a right, or a value. The divergences that we have briefly identified contribute to explaining some of the difficulties of reconciling the perspectives of users and policy-makers on health services. They draw attention to the political context of health encounters, not only at the microlevel where the patient attempts to bring the provider into a moral relationship in order to ensure better care, but also at the macrolevel of politics, by showing that the expectations users have from public services and their attitudes towards them are determined by their interpretation of the implicit contract that ties them to their government.

## MATERNAL HEALTH IN MOROCCO: USERS VERSUS NON-USERS

The second example I wish to draw on comes from a project I carried out over several years on patterns of use of health services in Morocco. The project was motivated by the need to understand the reasons for the high maternal mortality rate in the country, which was estimated at more than 300 per 100,000 live births in the early 1990s when I started to work on this topic (Labid 1991; Ayad 1992). I had begun with an analysis of national survey data to identify patterns of healthcare during pregnancy and at the time of birth, and to investigate the role of socio-economic, educational, and household factors in explaining differentials in the use of healthcare. The Demographic and Health Surveys of 1987 and 1992 indicate that the proportion of births attended by trained medical personnel was only about 30 per cent, of which the vast majority (79 per cent) took place at a government facility and were attended

by a nurse midwife. Two-thirds of births took place at home, mostly with the help of a traditional midwife, and only a third of women received prenatal care from trained personnel (DHS 1987, 1992).

A closer examination of these survey data showed that women who resided in urban centres, had a higher standard of living, were more educated, and who were more exposed to the media were more likely to give birth at a health facility and to have received prenatal care, whereas women who were married early, had higher parity, and lived in large households were less likely to use these services. Statistical analyses contrasting 'users' and 'non-users' to measure the role of various determinants of health service use indicated considerable contrasts between these two groups: for example, the odds ratio for giving birth at a health facility was 3.1 for women with secondary education compared to those without schooling, and 2.4 for women living in households that had a higher, compared to lower, standard of living (Obermeyer 1993).

The construction of these two separate categories, users versus non-users, is based on the assumption that behaviours towards health services are associated with stable and invariant characteristics of individuals such as their socio-economic status or their level of schooling, and that they express profound orientations about healthcare. It also implies that efforts to improve health should target special groups, for example, women without schooling, to change their views of healthcare, and convince them that they ought to consult medical personnel. And indeed, in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Morocco as in other countries, the Ministry of Health sought to encourage women to use prenatal care in order that high-risk births may be identified and that more women could be advised to give birth at a health facility. There was also an interest on the part of policy-makers and managers in uncovering exactly what it was about non-users that made them recalcitrant to the use of modern health facilities: was it that they were unaware of the dangers of pregnancy and birth, or that they were attached to traditional practices, or perhaps hostile to modern healthcare? The notion of cultural obstacles to care had some appeal to health professionals who were convinced that the physical obstacles of mountainous terrain and inadequate transportation provided only a partial explanation for low levels of utilization, since in urban centres, which did not lack health facilities, close to half of women delivered at home.

My own motivation though somewhat differently formulated, was based on similar assumptions about the differences between users and non-users: I was intrigued by the way in which the risks of childbirth might be construed by women who gave birth at home compared to those who gave birth in the hospital, and wanted to explore the possible differences in notions of risk between these two groups, and the extent to which their perceptions and attitudes fit with those that were at the heart of the Safe Motherhood Initiative.

Thus, over a period of four years, I was able to carry out field research in different sites in the country, to observe women at health facilities in both rural and urban settings, to have discussions with a variety of individuals working at health facilities, and to interview 126 women of different backgrounds and educational levels about

the conditions surrounding pregnancy and birth. The project was carried out in four different sites ranging from Rabat to remote rural areas of the Marrakech province, from the very poor setting of a bidonville of Casablanca to the more affluent quarters of the capital.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RISKS OF CHILDBIRTH

In the early part of field research for the project, I asked women to tell me about their last birth, and I approached the topic of risk by directly asking them about the problems that they knew about that could complicate a pregnancy or a birth. Women's responses to these questions about risk were unsatisfying: many replied that they did not know the reasons why some pregnancies were difficult and some deliveries dangerous, and that God knew best. At first such responses seemed to demonstrate a lack of awareness of risk, and fit with those I obtained from traditional midwives who said that all they did was help deliver the baby and that everything was in the hands of God. The hypothesis that women were unaware of risk was also congruent with theories that link the lack of attention given to women's health with their lower valuations in societies characterized by gender inequality. I was not however fully convinced that this explanation was sufficient, especially since I was beginning to learn about some of the traditional practices that surround delivery and the post-partum, and which conveyed a different view of the safety of birth.

I also thought that I had perhaps been naïve in expecting that women who were not used to be listened to would allow themselves to speculate about their views of the risks of birth to an outside 'expert' as I appeared to be. I tried to find different ways to ask women about their perceptions of those factors that influence the unfolding of labour and delivery. In doing so, I broke the rule that I had started with, which consisted in asking women about the last time they gave birth. This strategy had been inspired by demographic surveys that attempt to minimize recall bias by asking women about more recent events because it is thought that they tend to remember them more precisely than earlier ones. After I weighed the trade-offs of consistency and accurate recall, however, I decided that perhaps one way that women would be encouraged to share their views of differences between births was to ask them to compare the experiences they had had with their own different births. It was this somewhat clumsy attempt that resulted in one of the most revealing insights I gained from this research project.

Indeed, if one considered not just the last birth but the sequence of births, then a very different picture emerged, which called into question the dichotomy upon which my previous statistical analyses were based. It turned out that while some women were consistent in always giving birth at home or in the hospital, the largest group in the study were those who alternated between the two. Among women who had given birth more than once, about one-fifth used medical facilities only, a third gave birth at home every time, but almost half had experienced both. In other words, the dichotomy between users and non-users that was so crucial for statistical analyses crumbles in

light of evidence regarding what the majority of women do. If the choice of where women give birth is not invariant but rather changes over time, then it is not a function of a permanent set of characteristics, or the result of a fundamental attachment to traditional or modern care. This key finding could only come as a result of combining the statistical and the ethnographic in seeking to understand individual health behaviour.

Further analyses of data demonstrate that Moroccan women are not users or non-users, but rather pragmatic individuals who make decisions in light of past experience, current circumstances, and available resources (Obermeyer 2000*a*). While there are two groups of women whose circumstances dictate that they use one type of care—women living in remote rural areas without access to health facilities who have no choice but to give birth at home, and also women who because of their socio-economic situation, know that they will receive top quality care at a hospital and who would therefore not consider giving birth at home—the majority of Moroccan women have to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the options available to them in light of their own experience or that of women in their environment.

In explaining the reasons for their choices, different women give more weight to certain factors. For example, some of them want to avoid being subjected to an episiotomy or a caesarean section, others worry about being left alone or treated rudely by hospital personnel, and others are especially afraid of the stories of haemorrhage or undelivered placenta that they hear about. But none of the women interviewed for the project spoke about a generalized fear for hospitals or a special attachment to traditional practices. Similarly, my analysis of local notions of the risks surrounding childbirth (Obermeyer 2000*b*) shows that medical and public health principles are not incompatible with the knowledge and practices surrounding traditional home birth, and that women frequently hold both sets of beliefs and follow both sets of practices simultaneously.

Moreover, whereas data from the survey make a rigid distinction between home and hospital birth, the reality of birth is not so clear-cut, and the boundary between the two is not always precise. Indeed, the conditions of birth are frequently a mixture of these two ideal types. The traditional birth attendant assisting in a home birth may borrow techniques such as injections, vitamin pills, or rubber gloves, and conversely, hospital staff may let women squat rather than lie in bed, or allow relatives to bring special foods to the new mother. As I have documented (Obermeyer 2000*a*), pluralism and syncretism characterize birth in Morocco as they do patterns of healthcare in many other contexts. Both health providers and individuals who seek their services combine elements from different contexts in their attempts to preserve or restore health, and there are numerous examples of such creative mixtures. The women I interviewed for my project saw no contradiction between traditional and modern healthcare providers, and many sought care from both simultaneously, going to a private physician for prenatal care to make sure all was fine with the pregnancy and then delivering at home, or seeking care from the *fqiib* (traditional healer) and burning incense at the onset of labour, before going to the hospital. Thus the constraints of statistical analyses make it necessary to force reality into categories that are rigidly

separated, whereas in real life, individuals manifest a great deal of flexibility and constantly reinterpret the elements that constitute different systems.

An analysis of the birth narratives of women demonstrates that women frequently adjust their preferences in light of the immediate circumstances of birth. I have numerous examples of women who had planned to give birth at home but ended up at the hospital because the *qabla* (traditional birth attendant) was away when she was sent for, or labour was prolonged or the contractions slowed down, so that the woman giving birth had to reassess her situation and go to the hospital. I also have the reports of many women who expected to deliver in the hospital but did not, because at the onset of labour there was no one to accompany them or no transportation available; others tell how they went to the hospital but did not find health personnel at their post, or were turned back because their labour was not sufficiently advanced and told to return later, and then it was not possible to go back, so that they ended up giving birth at home. Thus, women's decisions about where they give birth reflect not only their opinions of the quality of healthcare they may receive at home or at the hospital, but also the uncertainty of the circumstances surrounding the onset and development of labour. The flexibility with which they approach their choices and their hesitations clearly demonstrate that they are not devoted a priori to one option, and hence that their decisions are based on a comparison of different possibilities rather than an irrational attachment or blind loyalty to one system or the other.

The implications of these redefinitions of the relevant categories are considerable. Rather than trying to change the users, they redirect attention to the circumstances of birth and to the services that are available to women. If the factors that actually determine the place where women give birth are the immediate circumstances of labour and delivery and the accessibility, cost and quality of the services, then policies ought to target improvements in services rather than changes in women's views. It is in fact interesting that as a result of research on maternal mortality in Moroccan hospitals and on the social conditions of birth and delivery, a shift took place in strategies to improve maternal health in Morocco: whereas earlier efforts had been directed primarily towards increasing the proportions of women who use prenatal care, more recent strategies focus on the conditions at health facilities, and seek to improve the care that is provided to those women in labour who arrive at the hospital, in addition to increasing awareness of the importance of appropriate care. This approach appears to have yielded results and maternal mortality in Morocco is showing signs of decline.

## CONCLUSION

In these two examples, I have tried to show the multiple connections between the categories used to understand health behaviour and the explanations that are provided for patterns of healthcare utilization. I have focused on the potential contradictions among categories and argued that these represent fruitful area for exploration, because they reveal different constructions of health behaviour, and have different

implications for interventions. I hope to have demonstrated the potential for research that is attentive to these discrepancies, and mindful of the links between local categories and those of the researcher. The analysis also suggests that the choice of categories is in part a function of the political context in which the research is carried out, and of the implicit 'contract' linking policy-makers/professionals/providers on the one hand, and citizens/clients/users on the other hand. These factors exert a powerful influence on expectations, incentives, and the resulting quality of the services provided.

A question that arises from these examples concerns the role of information in shaping the decisions related to healthcare. The topic is one that has preoccupied researchers and policy-makers alike, and there have been continuing debates regarding the extent to which more complete information leads to more 'rational' use of services (Dominghetti *et al.* 1993; Hibbard *et al.* 1997). The analyses presented here have provided some insights into the ways in which individuals use information about health services and their probable quality, in making their decisions regarding care. They suggest that these choices are 'rational' even if their implications are not always beneficial in terms of public health.

## References

- AbuZaid, H. and Dann, W. (1985). 'Health services utilization and cost in Ismailia', *Egypt Social Science and Medicine*, 21(4): 451–61.
- Ayad, M. (1992). 'Maternal Mortality', in *Enquête Nationale sur la Population et la Santé (ENPSII)*, Rapport Final. Columbia, Maryland. IRD/Macro Systems, Inc.
- Bernhart, M., Wiadnyana, G., Wihardjo, H., and Pohan, I. (1999). 'Patient satisfaction in developing countries,' *Social Science and Medicine*, 48(8): 989–96.
- Data for Decision Making (1995). 'Egypt: strategies for health sector change', Unpublished report.
- (1997). 'National health accounts of Egypt', Unpublished report.
- (1998). 'Report on the use of health care in Egypt', Unpublished report.
- Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) (1987). *Enquête Nationale sur la Planification Familiale, la Fécondité et la Santé de la Population au Maroc*. Rapport Final. Rabat, Maroc et Columbia, MD.
- (1992). *Enquête Nationale sur la Population et la Santé (ENPSII)*, Rapport Préliminaire. Columbia, Maryland. IRD/Macro Systems, Inc.
- Domenighetti, G., Casabianca, A., Gutzwiller, F., and Martinoli, S. (1993). 'Revisiting the most informed consumer of surgical services', *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, 9(4): 505–13.
- Donovan, J. (1995). 'Patient decision making, the missing ingredient in compliance research', *International Journal of Technology Assessment in Health Care*, 11(3): 443–55.
- Foucault, M. (1980). 'Body/power', in C. Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews 1972–1977*. New York: Pantheon.
- Grace, V. (1994). 'What is a health consumer?', in C. Waddell and A. Petersen (eds.), *Just Health: Inequality in Illness, Care and Prevention*. Melbourne: Churchill Livingstone, pp. 271–83.
- Hassanin, M. (1996). *Effects of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) on Population in Some North African Countries (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco)*. Arab Regional Conference, Vol. 2, Cairo: IUSSP.

- Hibbard, J. H., Slovic, P., and Jewett, J. J. (1997). 'Informing consumer decisions in health care: implications for decision making research', *Milbank Quarterly*, 75(3): 395–414.
- Labid, A. (1991). 'Estimation de la Mortalité Maternelle au Maroc', Paper presented at the Conférence Maghrébine sur la Maternité Sans Risques. Marrakech, 23–26 October.
- Lock, M. (1993). 'Cultivating the body: anthropology and epistemologies of bodily practice and knowledge', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22: 133–55.
- Lupton, D. (1994). *Medicine as Culture: Illness, Disease and the Body in Western Societies*. London: Sage Publications.
- (1997). 'Consumerism, reflexivity and the medical encounter', *Social Science and Medicine*, 45(3): 373–81.
- Mechanic, D. (ed.) (1982). *Symptoms, Illness Behavior, and Help-seeking*. New York: Prodist.
- El-Messiri, N. N. (1980). *Rural Health Care in Egypt*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre.
- Morsy, S. (1993). *Gender, Sickness, & Healing in Rural Egypt*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Obermeyer, C. Makhlof (1993). 'Culture, maternal health care, and women's status: a comparison of Morocco and Tunisia', *Studies in Family Planning*, 24(6): 354–65.
- (2000a). 'Pluralism and pragmatism: knowledge and practice of birth in Morocco', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 14(1): 1–22.
- (2000b). 'Risk, uncertainty and agency: culture and safe motherhood in Morocco', *Medical Anthropology*, 19: 173–201.
- Partnership for Health Reform (1998). *Report on the Cost of Health Services in Egypt*. Bethesda, MD: Abt Associates.
- Sholkamy, H. (1996). *GOBI-FF, Strange Names, and Amulets: The Health and Well-being of Children in Upper Egypt*. Arab Regional Population Conference, IUSSP, Cairo: IUSSP.
- Soliman, A. A. (1994). *Health Status and its Regional Disparities in Egypt*. CDC 23rd Annual Seminar on Population and Development Issues in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. Compiled by Cairo Demographic Centre, 1994.
- Turner, B. (1995). *Medical Power and Social Knowledge*. London: Sage Publications.
- Williams, B., Coyle, J., and Healy, D. (1998). 'The meaning of patient satisfaction: an explanation of high reported levels', *Social Science and Medicine*, 47(9): 1351–9.
- World Bank (1993). *The World Development Report*. Washington: The World Bank.
- (1997). *Health, Nutrition, and Population in the Middle East and North African Region*. Washington: The World Bank.
- (1998). *World Development Report*. Washington: The World Bank.

# 11 Etic and Emic Categories in Male Sexual Health: A Case Study from Orissa

MARTINE COLLUMBIEN, NABESH BOHIDAR, RAM DAS, BRAJ DAS, AND PERTTI PELTO

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a case study from intervention research on male sexual health in eastern India. The research was commissioned by the Department for International Development (DFID) who started funding contraceptive social marketing in the state of Orissa in 1995. Making use of commercial distribution channels, the intervention sells branded condoms and oral contraceptives at subsidized prices. The focus of the advertising campaign was on the promotion of the concept of child spacing and the increased use of reversible methods of contraception. Research among the target group in urban areas showed that men reported higher levels of condom use than women (AIMS-Bhubaneswar 1996). Male use for extra-marital sex and under-reporting by women due to cultural sensitivities were suggested as reasons for this discrepancy. With the rising concerns about the growing AIDS epidemic in India, there was need for more research on sexual behaviour, condom use, and the perception and recognition of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Starting from the public health paradigm of control of STD/HIV, a study was designed to learn about the sexual health problems as perceived by men in the community and to measure the need for condoms by identifying and quantifying sexual risk behaviour among single and married men.

The data presented focuses on sexual health concerns, and on the way the local, emic perspective of male sexual health is at odds with the biomedical model of sexual health, which underlies current public health efforts to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS. Based on focused ethnographic research which preceded a carefully constructed quantitative survey, we show that men's concerns about sexual health comprise a complex array of symptoms, of which a major portion are not directly related to sexual transmission, but rather a reflection of their worries about semen loss. On the other hand, the data indicate general, widespread awareness of sexually transmitted



infection, including at least superficial knowledge of AIDS. The study suggests that programmes of sexual health information, as well as clinical services for males, should be equipped to provide counselling and other services that go beyond simply concentrating on diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).<sup>1</sup>

We start by describing the setting of the study, followed by a discussion of the focused ethnography methods and the survey data used in the research. We then set out the biomedical model of sexually transmitted diseases, as currently used in public health interventions of STD control, with details on the Indian context. The data collected reflect the emic perspective, using men's own vocabulary and criteria for categorizing illness. The symptoms and perceived causes of the main conditions are described and the local categories of sexual health concerns are analysed. The prominence of psychosexual concerns of semen loss in the qualitative data are confirmed with use of the population based survey data and differentials in reported experience of semen loss are presented. Semen anxiety is then discussed in the context of the ethnophysiology of sex as understood in South Asia, drawing on the existing anthropological and psychiatric literature. The chapter concludes by challenging the categorical paradigms adopted in international health, and calls for more holistic healthcare.

## THE SETTING

Orissa is a state in East India, with a coastline on the Bay of Bengal. It borders West Bengal and Bihar in the North, Madhya Pradesh in the West, and Andhra Pradesh in the South. Its coastal plains have for centuries served as a link between north and south India and are a more developed region than the mountainous areas. Of all states in India, Orissa has the second highest concentration of tribal people: the sixty-two different Scheduled Tribes make up 22 per cent of its population. Of the total population of 32 million enumerated in the 1991 census, 86 per cent was classified as rural.

Orissa is one of poorest the states in India. Using the Planning Commission poverty line, Datt (1998) estimated that over 40 per cent of Orissa's urban and rural population was living in absolute poverty,<sup>2</sup> compared with a national average of 35 per cent. The adult literacy rate is one of the lowest at 49 per cent, though rates are higher in the coastal developed districts (60 per cent). Women are less likely to be literate than men and strong social norms on women's mobility prevail. About 95 per cent of the Orissa population is Hindu, with 2 per cent Muslim, and 2 per cent Christian. The general condition of poverty in Orissa contributes to poor reproductive and child health. The total fertility rate (TFR) in urban areas is 2.5, and around 3 for rural women. Infant and child mortality rates in Orissa are among the highest in India. Morbidity in small children is equally high, with diarrhoea and malaria as main contributors (PRC Bhubaneswar and IIPS 1993).

The study area for the research on sexual health and behaviour was limited to the four coastal districts<sup>3</sup> with low concentrations of tribal people: Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, and Ganjam districts. The distinctly different cultures of the scheduled

tribes in Orissa suggest the need for a separate, in-depth study in the tribal areas. Such study was not feasible in the project reported here.

## METHODS AND DATA

The strategy adopted for the qualitative data collection broadly followed the guidelines for doing Focused Ethnographic Studies (FES) (Pelto 1994; Pelto and Pelto 1997). The focus of the data gathering was on information needed to answer programmatic questions in sexual health and condom promotion interventions. The fieldworkers were trained in in-depth interviewing, social mapping, and the various structured interviewing techniques.

In total, 17 sahis (localities: colonies, neighbourhoods or hamlets) were studied in-depth by a study team of four male and two to three female researchers. The average number of days spent in one location varied from 7 to 10 days, depending on the availability of the informants, and initial time taken for rapport building. Though locations were studied in all four districts, nine were in Puri district, in and around the state capital Bhubaneswar and Puri town, famous for its beaches and the Lord Jagannath Temple, which attracts thousands of pilgrims and tourists throughout the year. Certain sahis in Puri are known to have a high prevalence of casual sex and men having sex with men. Sahis were thus selected according to expected variations in sexual behaviour and access to condoms. Four localities studied were rural. Each sahi was treated as a separate case and a detailed study of the various role players in each location was carried out. Data gathering and analysis took about four months to complete from May to September 1997.

Participatory mapping exercises were carried out with informal groups of men and women in the community. It was used for introducing the research topic in a sahi and for motivating local people to participate in ongoing activities. Mapping involved drawing a social and resource map of the community with identification and marking places of health providers, places of recreation, places where liquor is available, where condoms are available and places where men go to find or meet partners for sex (Pelto *et al.* 1998). Other informal group discussions were held to obtain further situational data and to identify appropriate key informants for more in-depth interviews.

In-depth individual interviews were done with both key informants, and case study informants. Key informants were selected for their extensive knowledge about local cultural beliefs and practices and the conversation focused on local perceptions and behaviours. They included ordinary community members, outreach workers, medical practitioners, traditional healers, and retailers selling condoms. Case study informants included individuals who had experienced sexual ill-health and others who engaged in risky sexual behaviour. The conversation focused on their personal lives, to elicit illness episodes, case histories, and sexual histories. Each case was contacted several times in order to build up rapport and to permit probing of sensitive issues.

Information on peoples' own explanatory models of sexual illness and local vocabulary was generated through various structured qualitative techniques like free listing, pile sorting, rating and ranking, and time-lines (Weller and Romney 1988). This chapter draws heavily on these data for understanding the cultural perceptions of men's sexual health problems.

Free lists were done to help isolate and define the domain of sexual illnesses. By asking key informants and case study informants during in-depth interviews 'what are all the sexual health problems men experience in this community?' a list of sexual health concerns is defined by the informants in their own language, using culturally relevant categories. Given that there is no exact Oriya term for 'sexual health concern', it was defined as 'problems relating to, or affecting, the genital area'. The usual key terms in Oriya language included *asubidha jounanga* (problem of sexual organs), *jouno rog* (secret disease), and *jouno sambandhya rogo* (disease relating to sex).

Pile-sorting was the next step. A selection of conditions produced by the free lists were written on slips of paper and informants were asked to sort the conditions into separate piles of similar illnesses. The criteria for similarity were left to informants to decide and the reasons mentioned for grouping revealed details of explanatory models. After the pile sort exercises the same cards were used for severity ranking of sexual health concerns. The men were asked to group the concerns/illnesses into three groups: 'severe', 'intermediate', and 'mild, not severe'.

Fieldworkers took notes during the group and in-depth interviews. These were expanded and written out immediately afterwards. Transcripts of all interviews were coded and analysed in Ethnograph. The software program ANTHROPAC (Borgatti 1992) was used to analyse the free list and pile sort data. The Multi-dimensional Scaling procedure was adopted to provide a visual representation of how conceptually close or far the different illnesses were. Cluster analysis was a second method used to interpret the pile sort data.

The structured survey to estimate the extent of sexual risk behaviour and the need for condoms in the general male population followed the qualitative fieldwork. The findings from the qualitative study were used in the design and refinement of the survey instrument, mainly in terms of using the correct local vocabulary and defining coding categories (e.g. categories of partners, locations where people have sex). A free listing question on sexual health concerns in the community was also included in the questionnaire. The free list was included towards the beginning of the interview, mainly as a rapport-building question before moving on to the more sensitive personal questions on sexual behaviour.

This survey covered a large population-based random sample ( $n = 2087$ ) of single and married men in urban and rural areas of the four coastal districts in Orissa. A multi-stage random sample was obtained by randomly selecting two community development blocks and two urban areas in each district; the second stage listed the villages in the blocks and the wards in the urban areas and from these four sampling clusters (villages or wards) were selected with a probability proportional to size. In each village/ward all houses were mapped and numbered. After enumeration, thirty-two households in each sample cluster were randomly selected. All members

aged 15 or over in the household were listed. All eligible members for individual interview—men aged 18–35—were ranked by age. According to the number of eligible men in the household, the youngest, second youngest, etc. ... was selected in strict rotation in consecutive households to ensure randomization.<sup>4</sup> The selected respondent was then invited for an interview in privacy outside his home. The pretest indicated that the interview needed to be preceded by a rapport-building chat of about half an hour. Refusal rate for interview was as low as 1 per cent.

The statistical analysis of survey data was done using SPSS software. The data file was weighted according to urban/rural residence and the size of the district, to make it truly representative of the four coastal districts.

## THE ETIC PERSPECTIVE OF SEXUAL HEALTH IN THE HIV/AIDS ERA

Sexual health has been defined as the integration of the somatic, emotional, intellectual, and social aspects of sexual being (World Health Organization 1975). However, this holistic definition of sexual well-being is in practice not adhered to by public sector health programmers and health planners. Before the emergence of AIDS as a serious public health problem, the sexual health of men in low income countries received very little attention indeed. While sexual health gained attention since the AIDS pandemic, the focus has been primarily on disease transmission. There has been increased interest in the public health importance of the 'classic' STIs since they are shown to facilitate the transmission of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (Laga *et al.* 1991; Grosskurth 1995). Control and prevention of these STIs are also important goals in their own right. According to the World Development Report of 1993, STIs are the second most important cause of loss of healthy life years in women of childbearing age worldwide (World Bank 1993). In India, there are an estimated 40 million new STI infections a year; prevention programmes and facilities for diagnosis and treatment are seriously neglected (Ramasubban 1999).

While HIV/STIs are a major burden to health in India and elsewhere, the control of these infections has been problematic, even from a purely clinical point of view (let alone the social barriers to access of care). There are no simple accurate diagnostic tests, and comprehensive laboratory services for microbiological diagnosis are very expensive. Common reported symptoms can be caused by different pathogens. To address the problems of clinical diagnosis and low specificity of symptoms, syndromic management has been widely propagated, and WHO developed standardized protocols for the treatment of men and women in basic health care services in less developed countries (World Health Organization 1997; Mayaud *et al.* 1998). These flowcharts of clinical algorithms offer diagnosis on the basis of syndromes (group of symptoms and easily recognized signs) reported by the patient, and treatment is recommended for several possible causative organisms.

International planners and donor agencies now tend to regard STD control and syndromic management as a valuable strategy for HIV control, partly because of the

challenges faced in trying to enforce condom use (Lambert 1998). In India, the use of the syndromic approach has been opposed by qualified medical practitioners who consider it as not comprising 'real' medicine, and because of competitive concerns about training practitioners who are not biomedically qualified (Lambert 1998). According to Indian guidelines, clinicians diagnose cases on an aetiological basis only and they do not recommend co-treatment when the aetiology is uncertain. A study on the adequacy of STD case management in public and private health facilities in India (Mertens *et al.* 1998) shows that only 10 per cent of the STD patients were satisfactorily managed. The study concludes that by promoting the syndromic approach to STD management and thereby simplifying existing guidelines, doctors in India could provide better care.

With the introduction of STDs into the framework of reproductive healthcare, the provision of syndromic STD management for women attending family planning or antenatal clinics has received high priority on the international health agenda. However, in general populations with relatively low STD prevalence the indiscriminate application of syndromic management may lead to overtreatment on a large scale (Hawkes *et al.* 1999) and more recently the integration of family planning and STD treatment has been critically reviewed (Lush *et al.* 1999; O'Reilly *et al.* 1999). The diagnosis of STIs in women is very complex, not only because of the relatively low specificity of symptoms of possible infections, especially vaginal discharge, but also because of the high rate of asymptomatic infections. Fifty per cent of women with STIs will not have any symptoms, whereas their infected male partners will usually experience pain and other signs of infection (Hook and Handsfield 1999; Stamm 1999). Consequently, it has been concluded that the resources for STD control should be concentrated on individuals at higher risk and men should be targeted (Cleland and Lush 1998; Hawkes 1998). Symptoms are more specific in men compared with women, and the cost associated with overtreatment is therefore likely to be lower in men than in treating equivalent symptoms in women. Policies to provide clinical services for men may as a consequence reach asymptomatic but infected women through partner notification strategies. Moreover, it is reasonable to assume that in South Asian societies, men are the ones who are more likely to initially contract STDs and transmit them to their wives (Mundigo 1995).

From the discussion above it is clear that the rising concern and need for HIV/STI control programmes provided a biomedical rationale to target men with sexual health services (Collumbien and Hawkes 2000). However, the public health paradigm focuses quite narrowly on the disease category of sexually transmitted infections. Within the biomedical treatment framework subcategories are thus identified as syndromes, or symptoms of disease: for example, 'urethral discharge and pain passing urination' as the syndromic diagnosis of gonorrhoea and chlamydia, and 'genital ulcers' as an indication of syphilis or chancroid. The incidence of these syndromes are also used to monitor the success of AIDS programmes in reducing risk behaviour by increased condom use and adoption of other safe sex practices. Two standard questions on self-reported symptoms of STIs are routine in national HIV/AIDS monitoring surveys. One question asks about the incidence of sores and ulcers on the penis, the other about pain during urination with discharge from the penis.

This etic framework of STD case management, a problem-frame defined by biomedicine and based on a symptom-based syndromic approach informed our research design. Despite this predetermined focus on sexually transmitted diseases, as relevant to the intervention of condom social marketing and STD treatment seeking, we started the fieldwork by investigating the local categories of sexual health concerns to ensure the correct use and understanding of the local terms for the symptoms we wanted to capture.

## THE EMIC CATEGORIES OF SEXUAL HEALTH IN ORISSA

To define the boundaries of the cultural domain of sexual health concerns in local terms, free lists were obtained from thirty-five male informants deemed knowledgeable about sexual health related issues. The most commonly mentioned problems are presented in Table 11.1. The concerns are ranked by the number of informants listing them, and the local terms have been given an approximate English 'equivalent'.

The number of respondents mentioning a condition—or the frequency—is one indication of the importance of a health concern in that community. When a condition is mentioned first or second it is also more 'on the person's mind' than when it comes lower down the list. The frequency and rank order combine in a measure

Table 11.1. Most commonly mentioned sexual health problems in free listing

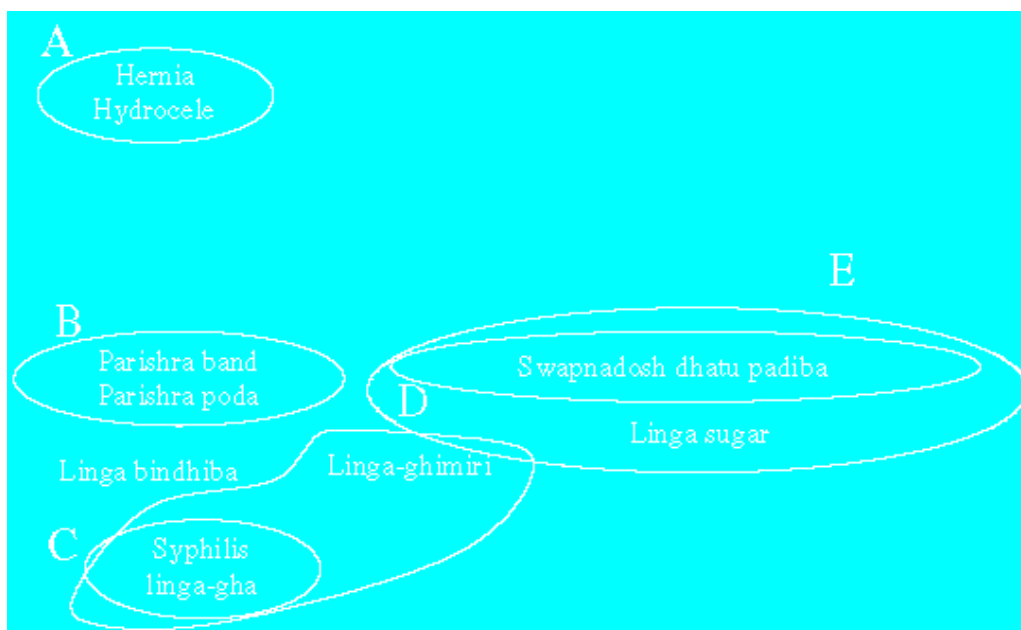
Sexual health problem	Frequency ( <i>n</i> = 35)	Average rank	Salience	
Local term	English translation			
Dhatu padiba	Semen discharge	28	2.750	0.424
Jadu	Itching	22	4.636	0.195
Swapnadosh	Nocturnal emission	19	3.211	0.242
AIDS	AIDS/HIV	17	2.529	0.353
Handling	Masturbation	14	5.000	0.106
Gonoriha	Gonorrhoea /generic term for STI	13	2.231	0.285
Linga-gha	Ulcer/sores on the penis	9	3.222	0.106
Parishra poda	Burning during urination	9	3.333	0.095
Hernia	Hernia	7	4.714	0.093
Fileria	Swollen penis, scrotum, leg, and foot	6	5.500	0.035
Hydrocele	Swollen scrotum	6	5.333	0.066
Katchu	Itching—scabies	6	3.667	0.090
Syphilis	Syphilis or generic term for STI	4	3.500	0.061
Bata	Rheumatism	4	3.250	0.040
Linga-ghimiri	Eruptions on penis □ herpes	3	1.000	0.086
HIV	HIV	2	5.000	0.024
Ulcer	Ulcer	2	4.000	0.014
Malakantaka	Fistula	2	2.000	0.046
Chau	White patches—skin infection	2	3.500	0.029

of salience. *Dhatu padiba* (semen discharge) was the most frequently mentioned problem, with 80 per cent of informants listing it. On average, it was the second or third concern mentioned by the individual informant and it is thus clearly the most salient concern. Although *jadu* (itching) was the second most listed concern, on average it was further down the lists than *swapnadosh* (excessive nocturnal emissions) and AIDS. In fact, AIDS comes out as the second most salient concern.

From this simple listing exercise it is clear that the emic perspective of sexual health in Orissa includes sexually transmitted infections. However, it is also evident that there are a range of other conditions that seem important concerns. Most items on the list refer to symptoms rather than specific diseases. To avoid mistranslation from local into biomedical terms we need to explore the categories in terms of the local understanding of disease aetiology. How and why men perceive different conditions to be related to one another can illuminate local explanatory models of disease.

Pile sort data give a better understanding of categories of 'similar' diseases. The more often two illnesses or symptoms are grouped together by different informants, the closer they are conceptually. In multidimensional scaling (MDS) similarities are translated into distances and concerns considered very similar appear close to each other while illnesses that are not related will be furthest apart. Figure 11.1 gives one example of such a cognitive map by two-dimensional scaling of sexual health concerns (note that some terms in Figure 11.1 do not appear in Table 11.1 nor in the text here, as they were rarely-used terms). The encircling of the four groups of illnesses/conditions is based on cluster analysis (Johnson's hierarchical clustering). The multidimensional scaling picture (stress <0.15) together with the cluster analysis indicate that the Orissa men make fairly clear distinctions among the types of sexual problems, particularly separating the infectious conditions (group C) from the non-contact, semen-loss problems in group D. They also recognize that hernia/hydrocele (group A) are a different kind of problem, with different aetiology.

Figure 11.1. Multidimensional Scaling of Sexual Health Concerns in Orissa



These maps are a means of exploring patterns among illnesses and this is supplemented by the information given by the sorters on reasons for grouping items together. In other localities other cards were sorted, which resulted in different conceptual maps (not presented). One common feature to all maps was the clear distinction men had made between sexually transmitted diseases and others. In their mind they have no doubts that *linga cancer* (wounds on the penis) and *jouna gha/linga gha* (*jouna gha* can be translated as sores on the penis) can be clubbed together with *syphilis* or *gonoriba*.

Five broad categories emerged from these data: sexually transmitted conditions, conditions related to semen loss, skin infections, anal conditions, and a final category grouping other diseases which affect other parts of the body besides the genital area. We discuss these categories in more detail, especially the first two, giving indications of reasons why conditions were grouped together, mainly reflecting indigenous explanatory models of disease aetiology.

Starting with the sexually transmitted diseases it is clear that local Oriya vocabulary is influenced by allopathic terminology, with the use of medical terms like *Gonoriba* and *Syphilis*. However, these terms do not necessarily translate directly into the specific medical diseases. They more broadly indicate conditions which are sexually transmitted, and can thus be understood as generic terms for STDs. When probed with questions about sexual diseases (*jouno rog*), most informants directly mentioned 'gonorrhoea'. They described the symptoms like *linga-gha* (ulcers on penis) or *ling-ghimiri* (small eruptions on penis) which correspond more to the medically defined infections syphilis and herpes, respectively. Men did attribute symptoms within this group to sex with sex workers.

AIDS was frequently mentioned in the free lists and came up as the second most salient concern. Sexual transmission was clearly understood, though many informants stressed the fact that it was due to sex with 'many' partners: 'If a person is having sex relation with many women then AIDS may be transmitted (*jadi kehi adhika mahila sange samparka rakhe, tebe aids heba*)'. It is generally described as dangerous and very serious. There are indications, however, that the term 'AIDS' is becoming another generic term for sexually transmitted disease. This is illustrated by an informant expressing anxiety about having AIDS:

I had Lingare Gha (sores on penis) which used to be painful. It also had pus. Now there is no pus but the Gha is still there. It is not getting healed. I do not know what to do. ... when I got this disease, I went to Dr Nanda, he said and wrote on my prescription that it was AIDS. He then prescribed both medicines and injections and said it can be cured.

The contradiction of 'curable AIDS' suggest that the informant suffered another STD which was labelled as AIDS. In locations where AIDS had been mentioned, most informants in the pile-sorting exercise grouped it as a separate category. When it was associated with other items, it was grouped with sexually transmitted illnesses, and this was confirmed by in-depth interviews.

A second category of concerns are related to semen loss. The most salient condition was *dbatu padiba* (or *meha padiba*), which is best described as involuntary semen loss.



Symptoms include secretion of semen during urination or defecation, and secretion of semen during erection. It is associated with thinning of semen or the quality of semen. Men mention *dhatu padiba* as a secretion of milky, or chalky watery or semi-liquid substance from the penis. Several informants relate their personal experience and the following extract points to the fact that it 'overcomes' men as they seem to lose semen 'without their knowledge'.

*informant:* During defecation dhatu comes out. Not all the time but some time even a large amount of dhatu comes out during urination. Even I am having this problem. Most of the time dhatu comes out without my knowledge.

*interviewer:* How long you are suffering from this problem?

*informant:* It will be around last seven year I have been suffering from this dhatu padiba.

In the same category, men mentioned *swapnadosh* or nocturnal emissions which are thought to be abnormal if they occur more than two or three times a month. It is a common concern among youths. Men associate *swapnadosh* with both *dhatu padiba* and with *bandling* (masturbation). The difference with *dhatu padiba* is that *swapnadosh* occurs during sleep and after erotic dreams. An informant asked to differentiate between the two said: 'in both the cases dhatu comes out spontaneously without our knowledge, but night fall sometimes is related to dream problem (Swapna pai)'. The link with masturbation follows from this quote: 'since boys watch blue-films and always think about erotic acts, they indulge in masturbation when alone. Excessive dwelling on sexual thoughts results in erotic dreams and seminal emissions.' The result is weakness, loss of weight, and memory loss.

Most people attributed *dhatu padiba* to various physiological factors. The general causes stated are: excessive heat in the stomach (*peta garam*), improper diet, and strain due to hard physical labour. Other informants attributed semen loss to excessive masturbation. One of the key informants states: 'Excessive masturbation cause widening of the urethral opening making dhatu padiba easier (Besi muthimariley parisra dwara chouda hoi jaye o dhatu padiba sahaja huey)'. Another explanation for *dhatu padiba* is the absence of sex because of which the accumulated semen gets discharged. One informant states: 'Long days of abstinence causes accumulation of semen which produces heat in the body and semen discharge occurs during urination (Bahuta din kichi nakaley bija jami jaye o deha heat hoijaye. Parisra kala bele dhatu padey)'. The immediate result of this situation is irritation and pain during urination, physical emaciation, weakness, body pain, head reeling, or even 'death'. One respondent states: 'Dhatu padiba results in complete loss of physical power (Dhatu padiley deharu sabu bala palai jaye)' and thus it interferes with a healthy sex life. Many of the informants indicated anxiety over the loss of *dhatu* (semen) and perceived it as affecting their married life.

Skin infections formed a third emic category of disease. *Jadu* was most frequently mentioned as a very common skin infection, usually affecting the inner thigh and groin. It also affects the testes and leads to severe itching. Other skin infections are *chau* and *kachhu*. Men made a distinction between *bayasa chau*, which is common

among elder people, and not perceived as an illness and *dbala chau*, which are white patches on the skin. *Kacchu* is scabies and this can affect any part of the body. Skin infections generally are explained by unhygienic conditions: 'If a person doesn't clean his body after the day's hard work then there are chances of having these problems.'

A fourth group are anal conditions, such as *malakantaka* which are wounds (fistula) and *arsa* which leads to severe pain during defecation. In contrast to *malakantaka*, bleeding occurs in *arsa* and this agrees with the medically recognized piles or haemorrhoids. The final group of concerns affecting the sexual organs are *filaria* (elephantiasis) with swelling of the feet and legs which extends to swelling of the penis and scrotum. In *hydrocele*, there is enlargement of the testicles due to water accumulation.

The severity of illnesses was elucidated by ranking exercises. Informants were asked to rank order the sexual health conditions in terms of severity as follows: 3 = 'severe', 2 = 'intermediate' and 1 = 'mild, not serious'. All informants rated AIDS as severe, so it has a mean severity of 3.00. Other conditions suggesting sexually transmitted infections, such as *jouna gha*, *linga cancer*, *sypbilis*, *gonorrhoea* with mean values of 2.00. The various psycho-sexual concerns received more varied severity rankings. Among them *dhatu padiba* was considered most severe with a mean ranging from 1.50 to 2.42. For *swapnadosh* it ranged from 1.50 to 1.92. Skin infections like *jadu* and *kacchu* were generally ranked as not severe (a mean ranging from 1.00 to 1.38). With average ratings between of 1.50 and 2.00, the anal conditions were considered more severe than skin infections.

These relatively simple structured qualitative methods taught us a lot about the emic categories of sexual health. It also drew our attention to conditions we had not anticipated and indeed had not incorporated in our conceptual model of sexual health concerns. The dominance of involuntary semen loss problems was so striking that it needed further exploration in the survey data.

## Relative importance of sexual health concerns

The informants contacted in the qualitative phase of the research are a 'convenience sample' of men who are probably more knowledgeable and approachable concerning sexual matters. While we believe the main culturally constructed ideas to be broadly applicable to the population, we also collected free lists from the respondents in the quantitative survey. The results of this large-scale collection of free lists was expected to be somewhat different from the qualitative phase, mainly because less time was given to building of rapport and probing for further responses. Thus, we anticipated shorter lists, but we still expected that the same general picture would emerge concerning types of sexual health problems. Table 11.2 compares the lists of items from the qualitative phase with results from four different groups of respondents in the survey: single and married men in urban and rural areas. The table shows the differences in the salience ranking (salience is the frequency of mention of each item, weighted by the average rank order in which it appeared in peoples' lists).<sup>5</sup>

Table 11.2. Rank order of salience of sexual health concerns among informants and survey respondents

	Informants ( <i>n</i> = 35)	Survey respondents			
		Urban		Rural	
		Single ( <i>n</i> = 196)	Married ( <i>n</i> = 203)	Single ( <i>n</i> = 189)	Married ( <i>n</i> = 202)
<i>Dhatu padiba</i>	1	5	8	6	6
<i>AIDS</i>	2	3	5	7	11
<i>Gonoriba</i>	3	4	3	11	8
<i>Swapnadosh</i>	4	11	15	12	>15
<i>Jadu</i>	5	2	2	1	1
<i>Handling</i>	6	>15	>15	>15	>15
<i>Linga-gha</i>	7	12	12	10	10
<i>Parishra-poda</i>	8	>15	>15	14	13
<i>Hernia</i>	9	9	9	8	7
<i>Kachhu</i>	10	6	10	5	5
<i>Linga-ghimiri</i>	11	>15	>15	>15	>15
<i>Hydrocele</i>	12	1	1	2	2
<i>Syphilis</i>	13	14	11	>15	>15
<i>Bata</i>	14	>15	>15	>15	12
<i>Filaria</i>	15	>15	>15	>15	>15
<i>Malakantaka</i>	>15	7	4	4	3
<i>Machala</i>	>15	8	7	3	4
<i>Arsa</i>	>15	10	6	9	9

We note immediately that *dhatu padiba*, which was the most salient item in the qualitative sample, falls to lower salience (from fifth to eighth on the lists of survey respondents). AIDS, which was second in salience in the qualitative sample drops slightly for urban single men, but drops more sharply among rural men (seventh and eleventh). Thus, the survey results give a clear indication of the greater impact of AIDS information programmes in the urban sector. In a similar way, *gonoriba* salience drops quite sharply in the rural population. Overall, the free lists in the survey give more prominence to several types of itching (*jadu*, *machala*, and *kacchhu*). *Jadu* (itching) turns out to be the most salient item in rural populations, and ranks second in the urban population. In addition the salience of *hydrocele* in both urban and rural populations is notable. Since they affect the genital area, the inclusion of *hydrocele*, *hernia*, and *filaria* among men's reported sexual health problems is widespread in India. Perhaps the most striking result of the triangulation is in the salience of *swapnadosh* and *handling* (masturbation). These are somewhat more sensitive or embarrassing, we believe, and most of the respondents in the surveys did not mention them in their lists. In this part of the study we feel that the qualitative data give a more realistic measure of salience of those items. The concerns and anxieties about nocturnal emissions confirm the preoccupation about sex among youths and

unmarried men. This is understandable given the patterns of late marriage and the fact that more than 70 per cent of men in the general population sample experience their first intercourse at marriage. It was estimated from the data on age at first intercourse that 80 per cent of men are still virgin at age twenty, and 44 per cent at age twenty-five (Collumbien *et al.* 2000).

## Reported experience of semen-related concerns

Some further questions on sexual health concern in the questionnaire included the personal experience of *dbatu padiba*, *swapnadosh*, and *jadu*. These questions were added because of the anxiety expressed among the qualitative informants about semen loss and to test whether survey respondents would report on their own experience of it. *Jadu* was added since it is a prevalent rash, which is 'innocent' and considered not severe. When asking about the nocturnal emissions, the question referred to 'excessive' *swapnadosh*, that is, more than two to three night emission a month. Table 11.3 presents the differentials in reported life time experience of these three conditions.

The first observation is the relative lack of differential observed. On average 27.4 per cent of men reported personal experience of *dbatu padiba*. Though it was

Table 11.3. Differentials in reported personal experience of *dbatu padiba*, *swapnadosh*, and *jadu* (%)

	N <sup>a</sup>	Dhatu padiba	Swapnadosh	Jadu
<i>Total</i>	2,087	27.4	52.3	40.1
Marital status				
Single	1,054	26.7	55.6	39.6
Married	1,033	28.2	49.0	40.5
Residence				
Urban	296	25.4	51.7	33.2
Rural	1,791	27.8	52.4	41.2
District				
Puri	513	34.2	69.6	36.6
Ganjam	386	34.8	52.7	34.2
Balasore	400	25.7	46.1	44.7
Cuttack	788	20.3	44.0	42.8
Education				
No/primary education	679	29.7	50.8	41.7
Secondary education	723	29.3	51.7	40.8
Higher education	685	23.2	54.5	37.7
Household income				
Low	1,110	29.0	52.2	40.9
Medium	658	26.6	52.1	39.2
Higher	319	23.6	53.3	39.0

<sup>a</sup> Weighted number in each category.

experienced less among the more educated, richer and urban, the differentials were not stark. The district-wise variations were the largest: nearly 35 per cent of men in Puri and Ganjam reported they had ever had *dhatu padiba*, compared to 20 per cent of men in Cuttack. Since men in Cuttack have a better education and are more likely to live in urban areas, multivariate analysis was done to look at the independent effect of these factors (not presented). For *dhatu padiba*, district was the only factor which had an independent effect. For *swapnadosh*, both marital status and district had an independent effect, with single men reporting more problems of excessive nocturnal emissions than married men. In Puri nearly 70 per cent of men had a lifetime experience of night emissions compared to an overall average of about 52 per cent.

Drawing on the existing psychiatric and anthropological literature, we will now discuss semen anxiety in the context of the ethnophysiology of sex as understood in South Asia, looking at Ayurvedic and folk explanatory models.

## Ethnophysiology as explanatory model for semen loss

The ethnographic and psychiatric literature documents other studies which relate the importance and associated anxieties of involuntary semen loss in South Asia (Bottero 1991; Caplan 1987; Dewaraja and Sasaki 1991; Edwards 1983; Kakar 1996; Malhotra and Wig 1975; Nichter 1981; Weiss *et al.* 1986). Semen leakage is often referred to as 'Dhat Syndrome' and invariably associated with fears over weakness. *Virya*, the Hindi word for semen, also means 'vigour'. Among slum dwellers in Mumbai, *virya* was also equated to money, and *dhat girna* (the local term for semen loss) was referred to as 'loss of money' drawing a parallel between a poverty stricken man without money and a sexually weak person without semen (Verma *et al.* 1998). The sexual anxieties about loss of strength are encoded in the ethnophysiology of sex in South Asia, which bears similarity to the Chinese concepts of health and sex (Kleinman 1980; Edwards 1983). Semen is considered to be the ultimate vital force, the source of physical as well as spiritual strength. Mahatma Gandhi, India's great political leader and social reformer, was preoccupied with the transformation of sexual potency into psychic and spiritual power, a core issue of Hindu metaphysics. For this reason Gandhi took the vow to observe celibacy at the age of thirty (Caplan 1987). The loss of *virya* through sexual acts or imagery is thought to be harmful both physically and spiritually (Nag 1996). Contemporary beliefs about the power associated with seminal fluid are based on Vedic scriptures. They all link food to health and sex through transformational processes. It is believed that the consumption of 60 lb of food is needed to replace the loss of semen in each ejaculation. Another variant of this age-old belief is that each coitus is equivalent to an energy expenditure of 24 hours of concentrated mental activity or 72 hours of hard physical labour (Kakar 1996).

In Ayurvedic medicine, health depends on the balance of three body humours, and sexual health may be seen to depend both on a proper diet and an appropriate use of semen (Edwards 1983). Bottero, who studied Ayurvedic doctors in an Oriya town, reports that the main cause of *dhatu padiba* is overheating due to an unbalanced diet of too many heating foods, such as meats, fish, garlic, pepper, and eggs. These foods

increase the internal fire which burns the semen and melts it as ghee (clarified butter). As a result of becoming liquid, the semen is discharged spontaneously, without the patient being aware of it. And semen is all the more vulnerable to this overheating as it is not localized in the testicles but stored throughout the body. ... Thus they believe that 'sperm is in the body as butter is in milk', i.e., as a dissolved constituent which is expelled through a churning-like process at the moment of the ejaculatory convulsion. (Bottero 1991: 307)

The general cultural ideas of relationships between pervasive hot–cold qualities/ events and conceptualizing of semen as distributed widely in the body, give us a clearer perspective on the indigenous models of semen loss. Pool (1987) has pointed to the central importance of the hot–cold belief system in organizing understandings of physiological processes, particularly those related to disease. While the folk medical discourse is only partly related to the Ayurvedic theory of humours they are rooted in the same Hindu cosmology (Lambert 1996). In our data from Orissa—as presented above—multiple aetiologies were suggested for semen loss, with excessive heat, improper diet, and masturbation as frequent explanations.

Semen as a vital essence and refined form of life energy exists in both sexes and indeed there are strong parallels between Dhat Syndrome in men and vaginal discharge (leukorrhoea) in women (Nichter 1981). The local terminology for several discharge complaints in women included the term *dbatu* or semen (Patel and Oomman 1999). *Dhatu* is an essential body humour associated with vitality and a source of positive health. According to Nichter, *dbatu* has a role in the control of emotions:

In the body, *dbatu* controls heat and thus all processes of transformation. In the mind, *dbatu* facilitates *buddhi* (intellect) which controls and gives direction to *manas* (desire) which is provoked by a quantum of heat. In order to be able to think clearly, focus one's attention, or have control over one's emotions, enough *dbatu* must be present to counterbalance heating influences. (Nichter 1981: 390)

Complaints of excessive heat often communicate an unbalanced emotional state and serve as a sign of general distress, as explained in the psychiatric literature. 'Emotions are exacerbated by heating influences such as heating foods, alcohol, and sexuality. Conversely suppressed emotional states are expressed somatically by reference to overheat' (Nichter 1981: 390).

The association of semen loss with excessive heat indicates that the emic category of white discharge may be more related to psychosocial problems rather than infection. Indeed, white discharges in both men and women are now recognized as idioms of distress and associated with feelings of weakness. Complications of supposed consumption by semen loss are mental exhaustion with constant negative thoughts (or depression) and hypochondria, mainly due to the extreme anxieties a diagnosed patient suffers about his condition (Bottero 1991). The complaints of weakness are the same as the diagnostic symptoms of anxiety and depression (Patel and Oomman 1999). Somatization seems an important idiom through which both men and women communicate distress, but an important distinction is that vaginal discharge does not interfere with sexual capacity, whereas semen loss does (Edwards 1983).

For the lay person, feelings of weakness and distress are attributed to or explained by the loss of vital fluid. In a comparative study among psychiatric patients in Sri Lanka and Japan, Dewaraja and Sasaki (1991) show how attitudes and cultural beliefs become incorporated into patients' explanations of their subjective feelings of distress and anxiety, both to the therapist and to themselves. In Sri Lanka, psychological problems were self-attributed to semen loss, whereas in Japan stress and overwork prevailed as explanations. Similarly, women presenting at psychiatric clinics in Bangalore frequently attribute their physical problems to the passing of vaginal fluids leading to depletion of energy (Chaturvedi *et al.* 1993).

Although our data found little evidence of social differential in the experience of semen loss (Table 11.3), Edwards (1983) reported that lower socio-economic groups were more likely to consider semen loss as harmful to health. He notes that recommended foods for maintaining semen and health are the more expensive ones, while the prohibited ones are the staple foods of the lower castes (Edwards 1983: 61).

Malhotra and Wig (1975) describe semen loss as a specifically Indian culture-bound syndrome, while Edwards (1983) sees it as a South Asian syndrome affecting Muslims and Buddhists as well as Hindus across the subcontinent. Bottero (1991) points to a much wider distribution of semen anxiety beyond South Asia, at least in earlier history. He goes back to Hippocrates on 'consumption of the back', but the most striking parallel he quotes from the work of Tissot in 1760. This French physician became famous for his work on diseases caused by masturbation. He describes something very similar to *dhātu padība*:

loss of 'a very liquid seminal liqueur' during urination, defecation and nocturnal emissions, masturbation and also through spontaneous discharges, which constitute 'gonorrhoea simplex', 'a flow of semen without erection', described in 'true gonorrhoea' as opposed to 'bastard or catarrhal gonorrhoea' (which corresponds to our modern blennorrhagia, a purulent urethritis). (Tissot in Bottero 1991: 312)

Edwards notes that sexual anxieties, regarding masturbation and semen loss are still present in contemporary Western societies, but that 'revisions in the "scientific" medical interpretation of sexual physiology have reduced and altered its manifestation and severity' (Edwards 1983: 60). One could argue that if AIDS had been around in the eighteenth century with the corresponding interest for STD control, Tissot might have made the point we want to make about syndromic management.

## ETIC AND EMIC CATEGORIES: CONFOUNDING INFECTION WITH DISTRESS?

So what are the implications of this emic category of semen anxiety for syndromic management of STIs? Men in Orissa did not associate *dhātu padība* with sexual transmission, but another concern sometimes mentioned in conjunction with *dhātu padība* was *parishra-poda*, denoting a burning sensation during urination. Both conditions are believed to be caused by *peta garam* (heat in the stomach) as a result

of excessive heat. One respondent states: 'Parisra pada occurs due to peta garam. Prolonged parisra pada leads to dhatu padiba'. As discussed above the cultural hot/cold belief system underlie the physiology of leaking semen. Of course a white discharge together with painful urination is the syndromic diagnosis for gonorrhoea and chlamydia, raising the potential for confounding semen loss with pus discharge.

It is important to consider how *dhatu padiba* gets diagnosed and whether men suffering from it will consult allopathic providers. As Bottero (1991) points out *dhatu padiba* is diagnosed either directly or indirectly. In the first case the patient reports a white discharge from his penis while urinating or defecating, or the discovery of a stain on his clothes. In the other case the doctor diagnosed it on the basis of a set of complaints about weakness, persistent fatigue, and skinny appearance, a combination of mental and physical weakening. Semen loss is thus implied during indirect diagnosis. The indirect diagnosis of semen loss through complaints about weakness was far more common than the direct diagnosis of reported white discharge (Bottero 1991). This leaves us pondering whether the 27 per cent of men in our survey who reported personal experience of *dhatu padiba* actually observed a discharge or attributed an episode of weakness and fatigue to semen loss.

When asked about self-reported symptoms of STIs in the survey, men who reported painful urination together with discharge, were probed to distinguish between semen discharge, *dhatu padiba* and pus discharge, *pujo padiba*. In total 132 men reported ever experience of pain during urination (*parishra pada*) concurrent with discharge: 110 specified *dhatu padiba* with painful urination, 15 *pujo padiba*, and 7 reported both *pujo* and *dhatu*. So when probed more on the nature of discharge, 87.7 per cent reported semen discharge and only 16.7 per cent specified the discharge as pus. This raises the question of whether there is a huge over-reporting of penile discharge, and also the extent to which men confuse pus and semen in the discharge. Men with semen loss were more likely to report having sought medical treatment (30 per cent versus 26 per cent for pus discharge). Among those going to a provider, men complaining about semen loss were as likely as those with a pus discharge to have consulted an allopathic provider (68 per cent: doctor or medicine store), while 8 per cent went to see folk healers and 24 per cent Ayurvedic doctors. Modern Ayurveda is less involved in the treatment of mental disorders than other healing traditions (Weiss *et al.* 1988) and despite popular ethnomedical understanding based on humoral aetiologies, Western biomedicine was often shown to be the first preference in the pluralistic system in rural Rajasthan (Lambert 1996). Thus when clinical services for men become more widely available in the public sector, men will present with these psychosexual concerns.

As we have seen before, more often than not semen loss is *implied* in the diagnosis of *dhatu padiba*. In the assumption of a move towards adopting syndromic management in primary healthcare settings in India, the implications could be twofold. There is the potential for both under- and overtreatment. Reported or implied discharge could be treated as gonorrhoea and chlamydia, leading to overtreatment. Good training of health workers with insistence on substantiating evidence of discharge, that is, observed during consultation through milking of the urethra (Mayaud *et al.* 1998) may overcome this. Another suggestion could be to



include a 'risk assessment step' based on sexual behavioural risk factors similar to those proposed by WHO to reduce the overtreatment for vaginal discharge (Mayaud *et al.* 1998) though this has not proven successful among women in South Asia (Hawkes *et al.* 1999). Men may also confuse discharge due to infections with semen loss. If those men with white discharge diagnose themselves as having *dhatu padiba* and they do not seek appropriate care, this would result in undertreatment. With the benefit of the research experience on self-reported symptoms of gynaecological morbidity over the past decade,<sup>6</sup> further research on male sexual morbidities needs to consider both pathological and somatic causes.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study on male sexual health in Orissa started off with a clear assignment to learn more about the local perceptions of sexually transmitted infections in order to inform condom promotion and sexual health services. We discovered that the focus of Oriya men was clearly more towards non-infectious conditions, that seem to reflect psychosexual concerns and psychosocial distress. The salience of involuntary semen loss in the minds of Oriya men is unmistakable in these data. The frequency and promptness with which *dhatu padiba* emerged in the process of free association when men were asked about sexual health concerns is reinforced by the survey results. More than a quarter of men in a representative sample reported personal experience of the condition.

Although we started from the categorical frameworks of biomedicine and public health interventions in HIV/STI control, the deceptively simple structured qualitative methods adopted in this study have proven invaluable in getting at the emic categories of sexual health. The free listing and pile sorting exercises were very useful for beginning to understand the local explanatory models. We also relied heavily on the existing ethnopsychiatric literature to interpret the importance of semen loss, linking it to the ethnophysiology of sex and understanding it as a somatic idiom of distress. That we did not know this literature before the study reflects the narrow paradigms adopted in international sexual health research.

The biomedical reductionism employed in current sexual health interventions, especially when focusing on syndromic management, is inadequate to understand and treat sexual health problems of Indian men. From a clinical STD and biomedical perspective *dhatu padiba* may not be seen as a 'real' disorder since there is no organic pathology. From the psychosomatic perspective in contemporary psychiatry it is real, as indeed from the more holistic viewpoint of Ayurvedic and folk perspective of humoral balances in health. Public health interventions aimed at HIV/STD control will benefit from considering the Indian holistic view of sex, health, and well-being. It goes beyond treatable symptoms and draws attention to the root causes of ill-health.

We thus challenge the categorical paradigms of sexual health in current programmes and clinical services. What Patel and Oomman (1999) point out for women

'health needs increasingly involve problems beyond reproduction, and it is our contention that mental health already is and will continue to grow to become a core health issue for women. The intersection of reproductive health and mental health provides an avenue for exploring these issues ...', it is equally valid for men. Health needs of men go beyond prevention and treatment of infections, and addressing semen anxiety may provide the opportunity to discuss issues of sexuality and sexual behaviour. Because of the inherent conceptual link of health with sexuality communication about sex and sexual behaviour can most appropriately be done through the language of health (Lambert 2001).

More flexible models of sexual healthcare incorporating physical symptoms as well as their psychosocial context are called for. We would urge that programmes that pay adequate attention to those other aspects of men's sexual health concerns will have a stronger likelihood of success in dealing with new ideas of safer sex, use of condoms and other messages relevant to the campaign against STIs and the spread of HIV infection. Presentation of information about these 'facts of sex life' can be effectively integrated with HIV/AIDS health promotion. From within the STD/HIV paradigm we will be tempted to advocate communication strategies that would bring men's concepts of sexual health problems into a more realistic relationship with biomedical facts about male physiological/sexual processes. The understanding of normal psychosexual development may take some fears away about masturbation, nocturnal emissions, and involuntary semen loss.

It is important not to dismiss the concerns about semen anxiety since mental health forms an integral part of (sexual) health. We are at the initial stages of recognizing the magnitude of mental ill-health, and starting to think about potential interventions (Patel and Oomman 1999). Since common mental disorders in women have been shown to be associated with poverty—not only in India (Patel *et al.* 1999) but also in Britain (see the pioneering study by Brown and Harris 1978)—cultural expressions of psychosocial distress and the implications of mental ill-health need further exploration.

## Notes

1. For the purpose of this chapter the terms STIs and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) are considered synonymously and used interchangeably.
2. The poverty line was defined as the per capita monthly expenditure of Rs 49 for rural areas and Rs 57 for urban areas at 1973/74 prices. There are Rs 42 to 1 US \$.
3. This refers to four of the thirteen un-divided districts. In 1992, the thirteen districts were divided into thirty new districts.
4. This does mean that we under-sampled men living in larger households, and effectively under-represented single men in the sample: they make up 56% of the de facto household sample, whereas only 50% in the sample of individual respondents. However, since most results are presented separately for single and married men, this does not greatly influence the results.
5. Not all freelists from the survey were entered, limiting the analysis to 50 per category (urban/rural and married/single) in each district. Freelists are considered stable from 30 to 50 respondents.

6. Following a pioneer study in rural Maharashtra showing the hidden burden of reproductive tract infections (RTIs), including STDs, in rural women (Bang *et al.* 1989), several community-based studies of women's reproductive ill-health showed high level of self-reported vaginal discharge, which were interpreted as an indication of RTIs. Levels of gynaecological problems were believed to be underestimated by self-reported symptoms due to the culture of silent suffering among Indian women (Koenig *et al.* 1998). However, there is very poor agreement between reported morbidity and clinically diagnosed STI/RTIs (Hawkes *et al.* 1999), and now part of the aetiology of 'medically unexplained' vaginal discharge is suggested to be a somatic idiom for depression and psychosocial distress (Patel and Oomman 1999; Trollope-Kumar 1999).

## References

- AIMS-Bhubaneswar (1996). 'Barriers and opportunities to contraceptive social marketing', Unpublished report submitted to DFID Delhi.
- Bang, R. A., Bang, A. T., Baitule, M., Choudhary, Y., Sarmukaddam, S., and Tale, O. (1989). 'High prevalence of gynaecological diseases in rural Indian women', *Lancet*, 1: 85–7.
- Borgatti, S. P. (1992). 'ANTHROPAC 4.00 methods guide.' Columbia: Analytic Technologies.
- Bottero, A. (1991). 'Consumption by semen loss in India and elsewhere', *Culture Medicine and Psychiatry*, 15: 303–20.
- Brown, G. W. and Harris, T. (1978). *Social Origins of Depression: A Study of Psychiatric Disorder in Women*. London: Tavistock.
- Caplan, P. (1987). 'Celibacy as a solution? Mahatma Gandhi and brahmacharya', in P. Caplan (ed.), *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 271–95.
- Chaturvedi, S. K., Chandra, P. S., Issac, M. K., and Sudarshan, C. Y. (1993). 'Somatization misattributed to non-pathological vaginal discharge', *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 37: 575–9.
- Cleland, J. and Lush, L. (1998). 'Prevention of unwanted pregnancies and of sexually transmitted infection: the linkages', Paper presented to the International Conference on Reproductive Health, March 1998, Mumbai.
- Collumbien, M. and Hawkes, S. (2000). 'Missing men's message: does the reproductive health approach respond to men's sexual health needs?', *Culture Health and Sexuality*, 2: 135–50.
- Das, B., Bohidar, N., and Pelto, P. (2000). 'Male sexual behaviour in Orissa', Workshop on Reproductive Health in India: New Evidence and Issues.
- Datt, G. (1998). *Poverty in India and Indian States: An Update*. Washington: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Dewaraja, R. and Sasaki, Y. (1991). 'Semen-loss syndrome: a comparison between Sri Lanka and Japan', *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 45: 14–20.
- Edwards, J. W. (1983). 'Semen anxiety in South Asian cultures: cultural and transcultural significance', *Medical Anthropology*, 7: 51–67.
- Grosskurth, H. (1995). 'Impact of improved treatment of sexually transmitted diseases on HIV infection in rural Tanzania: randomized control trial', *Lancet*, 346: 530–6.
- Hawkes, S. (1998). 'Why include men? Establishing sexual health clinics for men in rural Bangladesh', *Health Policy and Planning*, 13: 121–30.
- Hawkes, S., Morison, L., Foster, S., Gausia, K., Chakraborty, J., and Peeling, R. W. (1999). 'Reproductive-tract infections in women in low-income, low-prevalence situations: assessments of syndromic management in Matlab, Bangladesh', *Lancet*, 354: 1776–81.

- Hook, E. and Handsfield, H. (1999). 'Gonococcal infections in the adult', in K. K. Holmes, P. F. Sparling, P. Mardh, S. M. Lemon, W. E. Stamm, P. Piot, and J. N. Wasserheit, (eds.), *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publications, pp. 451–66.
- Kakar, S. (1996). *The Indian Psyche*. New Delhi: Viking Penguin.
- Kleinman, A. (1980). *Patients and Healers in the Context of Culture. An Exploration of the Borderland Between Anthropology, Medicine and Psychiatry*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Koenig, M., Jejeebhoy, S., Singh, S., and Sridhar, S. (1998). 'Investigating women's gynaecological morbidity in India: not just another KAP survey', *Reproductive Health Matters*, 6: 84–97.
- Laga, M., Nzila, N., and Goeman, J. (1991). 'The interrelationship of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection: implications for the control of both epidemics in Africa', *AIDS*, 5(Suppl. 1): S55–S63.
- Lambert, H. (1996). 'Popular therapeutics and medical preferences in rural north India', *Lancet*, 348: 1706–9.
- (1998). 'Methods and meanings in anthropological, epidemiological and clinical encounters: the case of sexually transmitted disease and human immunodeficiency virus control and prevention in India'. *Tropical Medicine & International Health*, 3: 1002–10.
- (2001). 'Not talking about sex in India: indirection and the communication of bodily intention', in J. Hendry and C. W. Watson (eds.), *An Anthropology of Indirect Communication*. London: Routledge, pp. 51–67.
- Lush, L., Cleland, J., Walt, G., and Mayhew, S. (1999). 'Integrating reproductive health: myth and ideology', *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 77: 771–7.
- Malhotra, H. K. and Wig, N. N. (1975). 'Dhat syndrome: a culture-bound sex neurosis of the orient', *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, 4: 519–28.
- Mayaud, P., Hawkes, S., and Mabey, D. (1998). 'Advances in control of sexually transmitted diseases in developing countries', *Lancet*, 351(Suppl. 3): 29–32.
- Mertens, T. E., Smith, G. D., Kantharaj, K., Mugrditchian, D., and Radhakrishnan, K. M. (1998). 'Observations of sexually transmitted disease consultations in India', *Public Health*, 112: 123–8.
- Mundigo, A. I. (1995). *Men's Roles, Sexuality, and Reproductive Health*. Chicago: John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.
- Nag, M. (1996). *Sexual Behaviour and AIDS in India*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.
- Nichter, M. (1981). 'Idioms of distress: alternatives in the expression of psychosocial distress: a case study from South India', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 5: 5–24.
- O'Reilly, K. R., Dehne, K. L., and Snow, R. (1999). 'Should management of sexually transmitted infections be integrated into family planning services: evidence and challenges', *Reproductive Health Matters*, 7: 49–59.
- Patel, V. and Oomman, N. (1999). 'Mental health matters too: gynaecological symptoms and depression in South Asia', *Reproductive Health Matters*, 7: 30–8.
- Araya, R., de Lima, M., Ludermit, A., and Todd, C. (1999). 'Women, poverty and common mental disorders in four restructuring societies', *Social Science and Medicine*, 49: 1461–71.
- Pelto, P. J. (1994). 'Focused ethnographic studies on sexual behaviour and AIDS/STDs', *The Indian Journal of Social Work*, 55: 589–601.
- and Pelto, G. H. (1997). 'Studying knowledge, culture and behaviour in applied medical anthropology', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 11: 147–63.
- Pelto, P., Lakshmi, R., Lakhani, A., Sharma, S., Das, B., and Das, R. (1998). 'Where do men go for sexual contacts? a social mapping approach', Unpublished.

- PRC Bhubaneswar and IIPS (1993). *National Family Health Survey (MCH and Family Planning) Orissa 1993*. Bombay: Population Research Center, Bhubaneswar and International Institute for Population Sciences.
- Ramasubban, R. (1999). 'HIV/AIDS in India: gulf between rhetoric and reality', in S. Pachauri (ed.), *Implementing a Reproductive Health Agenda in India: The Beginning*. New Delhi: Population Council, pp. 357–86.
- Stamm, W. E. (1999). 'Chlamydia trachomatis infections in the adult', in K. K. Holmes, P. F. Sparling, P. Mardh, S. M. Lemon, W. E. Stamm, P. Piot, and J. N. Wasserheit (eds.), *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publications, pp. 407–22.
- Trollope-Kumar, K. (1999). 'Symptoms of reproductive-tract infection—not all that they seem to be', *Lancet*, 354: 1745–6.
- Verma, R. K., Rangaiyan, G., Narkhede, S., Aggarwal, M., Singh, R., and Pelto, P. (1998). 'Cultural perceptions and categorization of male sexual health problems by practitioners and men in a Mumbai slum population', Paper presented to the International Conference on male as supportive partners, June 1998, Kathmandu.
- Weiss, M. G., Sharma, S. D., Gaur, R. K., Sharma, J. S., Desai, A., and Doongaji, D. R. (1986). 'Traditional concepts of mental disorder among Indian psychiatric patients: preliminary report of work in progress', *Social Science and Medicine*, 23: 379–86.
- Desai, A., Jadhav, S., Gupta, L., Channabasavanna, S. M., Doongaji, D. R., and Behere, P. B. (1988). 'Humoral concepts of mental illness in India', *Social Science and Medicine*, 27: 471–7.
- Weller, S. C. and Romney, A. K. (1988). *Systematic Data Collection. Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- World Bank (1993). *World Development Report: Investing in Health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- World Health Organization (WHO) (1975). *Education and Treatment in Human Sexuality: The Training of Health Professionals*. Geneva: WHO.
- (1997). *Management of Patients with Sexually Transmitted Diseases*. Global Programme on AIDS Geneva: WHO.

# PART III CONTEXTS AS CRITIQUES OF CATEGORIES

*This page intentionally left blank*

# 12 Editors' Introduction

SIMON SZRETER, HANIA SHOLKAMY, AND A. DHARMALINGAM

An important methodological limitation, which follows from demography's disciplinary commitment to its 'actuarial matrix', to use Philip Kreager's apt phrase, is that it analyses population problems through sets of 'fixed' social categories, which have to stand proxy for what are known to be much more dynamic relationships and processes. This is a perfectly understandable and, for purposes of using the advantages of mathematical tractability, a justifiable and legitimate methodological option to take in the appropriate circumstances. But the key point, which emerges from the critical and reflexive standpoint of this volume, is to stress that it is by no means the only methodological option justifiable when studying the central demographic problems of reproduction, health, and migration. Demography has, for the century or more of its institutional existence, been closely associated with an exclusively quantitative methodology for studying population change and is considered by some to be the only relatively successful instance of the thoroughgoing application of this 'hard science' approach to the study of human societies. But the contributions to this volume, in line with those of several important recent collections seeking a productive exchange between anthropology and demography, indicate that it is also an exciting and viable disciplinary aspiration to seek to promote 'qualitative demography', to complement and balance the important but de-limited range of insights available from the field's impressive quantitative technology (see Greenhalgh 1995; Kertzer and Fricke 1997; Obermeyer *et al.* 1997; Jones *et al.* 1997; Basu and Aaby 1998; Bledsoe *et al.* 2000).

Prohmmo and Bryant's opening chapter in Part III illustrates many of these themes. Their field work in northeast Thailand has documented at least four distinct types of definition of the population of a village, concurrently in use. The concept of a population lies, of course, at the heart of the discipline of demography and its practical relevance depends on its capacity to define and measure plausible 'populations'. This contribution provides a valuable exploration of the context-dependent variability of the discipline's central category.

In Thailand the registration system of the central state's Ministry of the Interior generates an official definition through village membership lists; but these lists are the most likely of all to be out of date in what is a highly mobile community with many families dependent on remittances from urban workers and where there are also reasons to avoid official registration. Much more accurate is the electricity firm's



current list of houses which have address numbers for the very important reason that households without a number on their door cannot get an electricity supply—and almost everybody wants that! Third, there is the local community's own definitions of who really belongs.

This third type comprises, in itself, a whole range of further gradings of membership, multiple identities and loyalties relating to the extent of perceived participation in the community's life. These different degrees of membership involve negotiated assessments according to criteria such as birth and kinship claims, worship in the village temple, donations to its upkeep, and contributions to the local funeral societies' mutual funds. Thus, the Thai villagers deploy and play with several overlaid and interlaid definitions of their community's complement of persons. Fourthly, there is the observing social scientists' definition of the village and its population. Too often this seems to continue to reflect rather out-dated, romantic notions of 'community', as a locally rooted and territorially discrete residence group with relatively homogenous interests. This provides social scientists with a handily 'crisp' definition, but one which in no way reflects the 'fuzzy' set of overlapping understandings which Prohmmo and Bryant have uncovered in northeast Thailand. The authors significantly conclude by showing that the interpretation of some influential recent demographic research, on the diffusion of contraception in Thai villages, is highly sensitive to these differing definitions of village membership.

There have of course been a range of more advanced theoretical understandings and more sophisticated formulations of the complex relationship between community, space, and power. Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined community' is probably the most well known of these alternatives (Anderson 1991). Several of the others, some long-antedating Anderson's work, are helpfully reviewed by Adams and Kasakoff in Chapter 18, such as Hagerstrand's space-time geography, social network analysis (on which see also Bott 1957; Calhoun 1980; Wetherell 1998), 'shared space', 'communication communities', and the concept of 'flows and spillovers', which Adams and Kasakoff themselves favour. A community is in fact 'an uneasy truce rather than the embodiment of altruism' (Robertson 1984: 146). This means that external interventions almost always disturb this uneasy peace; and so policies, no matter how well meaning, will frequently experience 'project pathology' as a seemingly inevitable part 'of the physiology of development' as they clumsily disturb and disrupt these fragile local truces (Sholkamy 1988: 118).

In addition to questioning the categories of 'population' and of 'community', Prohmmo and Bryant's chapter underlines in so many ways the startling difference between the conceptual worlds of the Thai villagers' diversity of meanings and the stripped down conceptual world of demographic social science. For instance, 'the household' answers to three different local Thai terms, *bee-en*, *bahn*, and *lung*, each dependent critically on context. Demography's insistent representational need to reduce these overlapping meanings to a single precise entity, a clearly defined social category with unambiguous relationships with a range of other similarly precise entities, constitutes a very dramatic intervention and radical re-specification of these phenomena. Within the analytical field of demography and its global, linguistic

community of practitioners, a social category, such as 'household', has been invested with a considerable amount of intellectual work to endow it with a precise and unambiguous meaning, relating it to the rest of the discipline's terms. Yet once it is put to work in an empirical research context, the descriptive limitations and non-universality of any such fixed meaning becomes manifest to the observant researcher.

In Part III of categories and contexts, there then follow four contributions, which offer particularly full and evidentially rich examples of what a qualitative demography can offer. These are the chapters by Jennifer Hirsch on 'transnational' Mexicans in Mexico and the United States (Chapter 14), by Elisha Renne on Hausa Muslim communities in northern Nigeria (Chapter 15), by Paula Davis on the Baganda clan-system in Uganda (Chapter 16), and by Stephen Lubkemann on the migrant Machazi in southern Africa (Chapter 19). In addition to their common ethnographic approach these four chapters all exhibit three other methodological characteristics in common. First, they all study directly the issue of physical and geographical mobility as a fundamental fact of human existence, especially—and perhaps increasingly—important in the lives of the world's poor as they struggle to make a living in a 'globalized' world of free trade. Second, the dialectic of gender relations, and its power gradients, is central to the stories they have to tell about how these very different communities organize themselves with respect to the kind of activities which demographers study. Third, they all utilize, to a lesser or greater extent, what can be called life-histories or a life-cycle approach, in order to make sense of their detailed findings, which exhibit both historical differences between generations and varying strategies among individuals across their lives. Each of these three features demonstrates how a more qualitative approach to demographic issues can 'dynamize' the subject, providing perspectives which act as an important corrective on the artificial fixity of quantitative demography's reliance on hypostasized categories.

Through the detailed life histories, which her oral history project has compiled, Jennifer Hirsch is able to offer a fascinating reconstruction of the changing motives lying behind a classic demographic phenomena, the sharply reduced fertility of Mexican in-migrant marriages in Atlanta, Georgia. Her qualitative evidence forensically reveals the key change associated with reduced family size. This lies in the transformed meaning which respondents of different generations attribute to the central concept and term regulating gender relations in marriage, '*respeto*'. Hirsch is able to show that '*respeto*' for the younger generation settled in Atlanta has now been supplemented with the practice also of '*confianza*' (confiding in each other) as a highly valued aspect of the marital relationship. This was absent under the previous generation's understanding of the notion of '*respeto*', which envisaged strictly demarcated marriage roles for the two sexes. Frequent, highly expressive exchanges of intimacy between partners are now seen as being just as important as the dependable bringing home of the wage packet in return for a well-run home, as the valued methods of demonstrating mutual support and love between the sexes within marriage. Too many children are now seen as getting in the way of a good marriage, defined in terms of the two principals' highly valued '*confianza*', rather than children being seen as 'what marriage is for', as under the previous cultural dispensation (with

the implication in many cases that it was not possible to have too many). Hirsch's methods, though 'qualitative', are systematic and scrupulous in producing findings of vital demographic importance, which would have remained opaque (and certainly unverifiable) to a purely quantitative approach, no matter how rigorous.

Elisha Renne's chapter similarly pinpoints significant shifts in Hausa society in the practices associated with the word, '*mutunci*', meaning a woman's honour or respectability. Mexican-Americans modified their understanding of '*respeto*' as an adaptation to the changing opportunities and aspirations consequent on placing themselves in a more affluent environment. Respectable Hausa Muslim women in northern Nigeria have been adapting to an undesired change in their circumstances, 'because of money' as so many of Renne's respondents put it—the lack of which is an all too common experience for so many of those now living in the many weakened economies of sub-Saharan Africa. Hausa men and women have been forced to modify their culture's emphasis on the virtues of female seclusion (indigenously understood as a positive privilege and not as a form of 'household detention', as the practice may appear to untutored western eyes). Even respectable women must now countenance going out to work to supplement their husbands' meagre earnings. Renne found a new ideology of seclusion being actively negotiated between respectable husbands and wives involving the use of the 'Hijab' dress, defined as a kind of 'mobile home' allowing women to combine continued symbolic 'seclusion' with income-earning activity outside the home.

This is unlikely to be a stable cultural solution and Renne notes that Zaria 'feminists' are already actively questioning their circumstances—but, interestingly, they argue for separate, not equal rights.<sup>1</sup> In this society, the 'seclusion' gender ideal is too powerful and valued by women to be ignored or rejected outright, even by feminists. It is poor women who could never afford seclusion and, as in many parts of Africa such as in Kampala—as Paula Davis shows—those poor women who must abandon 'seclusion' most completely, engaging in open work in the markets, are widely regarded as on a par with prostitutes—available for proposition, regardless of the exact nature of their commercial business. Renne points out that surveys operating a western definition of women's emancipation, in terms of freedom of personal movement and degree of participation in the labour market, fail to identify correctly which women in this culture are in fact the more privileged and which are the more exploited.

Paula Davis's ethnographic study of town women in Kampala also shows that it can be extremely misleading to count households according to any standard demographic accounting method. Once again it is demonstrated that this basic social category of practical demographic enumeration, the household, is highly culturally variable. Due to the Baganda's patrilineal clan system, the brother–sister relationship is crucial in Baganda society. Women working and living alone in Kampala are not straightforward 'female headed households' because in most cases many of their children live in the countryside and much of their earnings goes directly there, to support their children under a brother's care. In return for looking after her children, as 'senga aunt' to her brother's daughters, she, is expected to perform a crucial practical and

ceremonial mentoring role during their adolescence. Among the Baganda, consanguinal ties between brother and sister therefore displace husband–wife relations, in terms of both symbolic and functional importance. Measures and evaluations derived from the conventional western notion of ‘the’ singular family household with a single ‘head’, as a generalizable category, are therefore fundamentally inapplicable to many of those living in the Kampala region and can only result in a complete misreading of family structure and economic relationships there. The women traders of Kampala have dual household and dual place membership and any form of demographic analysis that fails to accommodate this will produce systematically misleading statistics and ‘knowledge’.

Greenberg and Greene also present a case that the category of the household needs to be much more variably understood. They reassert the continuing importance of a perspective which would be self-evident to economic historians of the pre-industrial farm or anthropologists of rural societies, but which has become rather lost to view in official censuses of the household. The demography of the household needs to be able to incorporate the socially constructed interaction of its human with its non-human, animal members. In making this proposal they extend E. P. Thompson's celebrated notion of the ‘moral economy’, originally applied to the changing socio-political relations of a society undergoing the pressures of commercialization in eighteenth-century Britain (Thompson 1971). Greenberg and Greene argue that households working on the land in India's northern state of Himachal Pradesh operate a ‘moral ecology’ of balance in the age and sex-ratios of their human and animal stocks, adjusting these to their aims for a balanced and sustainable exploitation of the land. The Indians of Himachal Pradesh rationalize their practices within a set of principles sharing many similarities with the cosmology which Collumbien *et al.* found to be so important in their research on male sexual health in Orissa, at the other end of the Indian subcontinent. These Indian belief systems would seem to eschew ‘western’, humanist propositions that rational humans are a privileged moral and ontological category, separate from the rest of nature, envisaging instead the daily and generational recycling of people, animals, land, and plants through the ingestion of food and the processes of reproduction as a unified ‘chain of being’. This reminds us, once again, of the significance in the West of the Cartesian intellectual rupture separating thinking, active man from passive, acted-upon ‘nature’, the rupture which Briggs' chapter surveys in Part I of this volume. The metaphor of ‘a Great Chain of Being’ was also prevalent in the medieval and early modern West. It referred to a divinely instituted and hierarchical cosmology, in which men of different social ranks took their graded places within an ordering of all of Nature (Lovejoy 1936).

The need for a more holistic, comprehensively ecological and less exclusively humanist definition of the family household in fact has an almost universal range of historical and geographical applicability. In addition to all the households of the still strongly agrarian societies currently in existence in the three less-developed continents of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, the importance of the integration of animal with non-animal populations in households also applies to all of Europe's agrarian past.<sup>2</sup> But it also applies to Europe, North America, and Australia during

their industrializations, when we know that urban cow-keeping and pig-keeping survived as a general practice until the twentieth century in many industrial communities, while the entire initial phase of industrialization in these three continents, until the First World War, was reliant on an enormous and growing population of urban-stabled horses for the expanding intra-city transport of goods and persons (Evans 1987: 111–16). This not only meant that horse and animal keeping was directly relevant for the household demography of the ‘peculiar race of men’ employed about animals, whom William Farr commented on in his British census report of 1851 in the passage reproduced above in Eddy Higgs’ chapter. But the presence of animal populations in such abundance in the packed urban communities, and their attendant swarms of summer flies, was almost certainly a direct influence on the overall demography of these ‘modern’ urban populations, particularly their notoriously high infant diarrhoeal mortality (Buchanan 1985; Morgan 2002).

Furthermore, it is still the case in the affluent societies of the twenty-first century that the option of ‘sharing’ one’s household with non-humans remains a highly prevalent practice and this is not simply an aspect of consumerism or a minority rural practice of no central interest to demography. Pets often form an important and integral component of the twenty-first century household’s ‘moral economy’ or its ‘psychological ecology’. It is not clear, for instance, that the household category of solitaries ‘living alone’, so increasingly numerous in the most developed countries, would be a psychologically viable option for the large numbers who choose this lifestyle without the company provided by sharing their domestic space with non-human members; the demography of these societies would undoubtedly be significantly different without pets. The case for the need to integrate more closely the demographic, with the zoological and ecological perspectives may, indeed, be a strong and highly general one.

Adams and Kasakoff in chapter 18 address most explicitly the general issue of the problems due to the ‘fixity’ of many of demography’s social categories, as against the fluid nature of the processes and relationships demography seeks to capture and analyse. They argue that demography should abandon the static spatial concept of a population as a ‘bounded container’, a closed system. Certainly, they must be right where studies of local populations are concerned, since they are generally much subject to ‘spillovers’ or exchanges, through the normal processes of mate selection (apart from some religious sects which tend to ban this practice, though these religious communities are rarely also tightly geographically bounded communities; the much-studied Hutterites of North America being an important exception). Adams and Kasakoff provide an example of their preferred alternative of a more dynamic analysis of population change in terms of socio-politically differentiated ‘flows’ across the life-cycle of successive generations, drawn from their project of analysing New England genealogies 1650–80. They concur with Paul-André Rosental in making the important point (in a sense a logical extension of the Sharlin thesis on early modern urban demography) that, wherever migration flows exist, the decision to stay needs as much consideration as that to move. In view of this, there are likely to be important, systemic interrelationships of power and social differentiation

between the two 'streams' of movers and stayers (or residents and in-migrants in Sharlin's exposition).<sup>3</sup>

Stephen Lubkemann's closing chapter in the volume adds further important perspectives on issues of mobility, and also gender relations, through his novel approach. He also studies migration in terms of flows, but in his case he focuses on flows of information between individuals. Where Adams and Kasakoff's analysis provides a discriminating account of observable demographic behaviour, events, and processes, Lubkemann's approach, which encompasses the kind of ethnographic evidence which is harder to find for historians, offers a complementary focus on the range of intentions, values, and forms of communication which motivate these differentiated life courses of mobile individuals, responding variously to the challenges and threats of dynamic environments. This shows that the category of 'migration' is several different things and not a generic process.

Lubkemann documents how 'displaced' and refugee families from Mozambique have attempted, under extremely adverse circumstances, to deploy migratory strategies to construct viable life courses for themselves and their families in ways which conform to their culture's gender roles. Distribution of information is patterned by the agents involved in order to maintain and reproduce particular power and gendered role relations, with male migrant workers taking great care to attempt to restrict the availability of certain crucial kinds of information, so as to maintain their 'male provider' roles. This approach problematizes the category of 'information' and 'rationality' in ways which the conventional 'kinetic' theory of migration, long influential in demography, simply ignores. The latter tends to bestow causal agency only upon the impersonal environment of economic conditions, casting migrants as, at best, 'respondents' to these forces, endowed with a very simplistic reflex 'economic rationality'—the ever present shadow in demography of the modernist project's 'homo economicus'. Lubkemann, however, is able to show how thoroughly active, within their capacity, these relatively independent and dispossessed migrants are, in trying to manipulate their environment to their best advantage. The Machazi's adaptive strategies of migration result in wives and children often remaining in Mozambique in United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) camps while husbands may be absent for years and may even have second family households where they can get employment in South Africa. The paradox is that although this may result in long-term and prolonged separations between marriage partners, it is actually undertaken in order to avoid a sense of psychological or cultural displacement from 'home'. Physical separation is endured in order to maintain the network of desired obligations and duties which enable the Machazi to believe that they are preserving their social world and its meanings, particularly its respective gender roles. This is the only way that the men can maintain their Machazi sense of identity as material 'providers' for their families and kin, while also ensuring that their wives remain in the approved role of providers of domestic services to the men's dependents.

This focus on the importance to the Machazi of preserving their 'imagined community', as Benedict Anderson would put it, or 'espace de vie' to use a French formulation of a similar notion, rather than preserving a physical community of

stable co-residence, brings us to a critical methodological issue, alluded to in a slightly different form at the beginning of this introduction. What happens if demography abandons the mathematically helpful myth that population processes typically occur to the nicely bounded geo-political units which are 'visible' (or at least visualizable), such as national populations, or their territorially fixed subunits such as villages, towns, cities, or regions? These territorial entities have dominated the literature as the spatial units of demographic accounting partly because governing administrations have typically found this to be the most practical way to collect data from their populations. It is also partly because demography, in order to deploy its powerful accounting framework with relative ease, needs to be able to set stable boundaries (i.e. incorporating unambiguous rules of entry and exit) to the populations it is analysing; and these requirements can most often be claimed to be satisfied—or most nearly approximated—when working with national or administrative populations.

It would be going far too far, however, to assert that these political and administrative units of jurisdiction are entirely arbitrary or simply irrelevant to people's actual demographic experiences and behaviour. This is because the idea of nationality (and also civic citizenship, and even county or provincial place of residence in many cases) has undeniably been the source of important historical forms of consciousness during the last two to three centuries of human history. It would be otiose, therefore, to insist on a radical position, which denied, a priori, all relevance of nationality, national or other administrative units for demography. After all, nationalities were Benedict Anderson's paradigm imagined communities! Many of the territorial boundaries which come built-in to demographic data do, more or less, correspond to some forms of historical, political, or administrative divisions and, consequently, often also conform to genuine cultural demarcations of social identity with demographic implications. Where, for instance, important public health, educational, welfare, or other social policies have been implemented by nation states or by municipalities, this might well contribute importantly to a distinctive 'demographic regime' for the populace of that territory. The point, however, is that this is probably not the *only* important influence; and research should be open to other relevant forms of cultural differentiation within a populace. While Adams and Kasakoff may be correct that in many circumstances the conventional bounding of populations in received data sets does not reflect the dynamic flows of demography, it does not necessarily follow that those studying population problems should eschew all such entities and seek only to study patterns of flows of individuals or kin-units, such as genealogies, 'dynamized' in their life-courses.

Lubkemann's approach, along with that of many of the other chapters here, would seem to counsel a somewhat different conclusion, leading to a more complex and less clear-cut methodological injunction for the study of demographic problems. It is a direct implication of his work, as well as that of Paula Davis, Jennifer Hirsch, Elisha Renne, and so many of the chapters here, that the socio-demographic options and strategies that families and individuals pursue are powerfully influenced by the 'social worlds' or 'imagined communities' to which they owe allegiance and from which they draw their values and define their primary goals and priorities. Persons do not

respond, like *homo economicus*, to the varying challenges of their environments with a standard form of 'economic rationality'. This is because the goals towards which their reasoned activity is directed vary so enormously depending on the cultural and linguistic communities—or contexts—within which they are embedded. Thus, if we are to attempt to study problems of population change through the more dynamic methods of 'flows' and life-courses, ideally we will also need to invest in substantial anthropological and historical investigations to achieve an understanding of the relevant characteristics of the various different value systems or 'communication communities' that exist, often side by side and overlapping as a social palimpsest, in any social context or 'place'.<sup>4</sup> For, it is socialization into these different discursive communities and their diverse evaluations of such features of crucial demographic importance as gender roles, courtship practices, norms of marital relations, kinship obligations and parenting duties, which will powerfully influence the 'rationality' which individuals and family groups apply to their demographic options, as Lubkemann's case study so clearly demonstrates. It is the aggregated average of all these diverse communities' observed behaviour, which then produces the national aggregate trends of conventional demographic analysis and also the observable flows of mobility.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, if students of demographic problems are to take seriously the methodological implications of this volume's critical approach to the many social categories which pervade the discipline's current practice, the injunction to pay greater attention to contexts will require much more investigative, ethnographic work and a much less rapid move to quantification and comparisons which deploy 'scientific' categories, taken off the peg. In direct practical terms this methodological injunction would also equate to a reflex suspicion of the value of any national aggregative measures of demographic trends. Commitment to a flexible and discriminating disaggregation would be a high priority in any and all empirical research when constructing observational tools and interpreting their meanings. As Sheila Ryan Johansson and others have recently argued, to put it into statistical language, there should be less preparedness to work with the mean values of demographic measures and far more consideration and greater status and value placed on the process of exploring the underlying structures of variance and dispersion and compositional effects requiring partition of data sets (Johansson 2000).

Both space and time need to be conceptualized as inherently more problematic, and non-uniform in their nature, and therefore of more central importance in demography, requiring the development of techniques which can cope with the episodic and discontinuous nature of both personal and political time and its interaction. Demography's distinction between period and cohort effects is a start in this direction but needs to be supplemented by life-course approaches and explicitly historical understandings of the uneven chronology of significant political and cultural change (Elder 1994). Similarly the work done on multiregional demography as a way of conceptualizing space in a more complex fashion provides an example of initial steps in this direction, but also indicates the scale of the technical problems involved and the distance which demography would have to travel to grapple with



these issues from within its accounting framework (Rogers 1975). By combining quantitative with qualitative methods, Caroline Bledsoe's (2002) most recent work, *Contingent Lives*, exemplifies yet another, practical methodology for meeting this challenge of studying demographic problems such as fertility, with a more context-sensitive, supple, and reflexive approach to our own analytical categories, even our sense of time.

## Notes

1. In fact this precisely mirrors an influential strand of the early feminist movements in the West, such as in Britain at the end of the nineteenth century. See Banks (1981), Caine (1992).
2. See, for instance, Slicher Van Bath (1963) and de Vries (1974) who focus on the importance of seed-yield ratios and the animal stock carrying capacity of differently sized and configured farm households.
3. Rosental (1999); Sharlin (1978). Sharlin argued that early modern cities were composed of at least two distinctive sections or 'streams' with quite different demographic characteristics. The need for large flows of in-migrants was due not only to the migrants' high mortality on arrival, but also to their low fertility, due to the constrained marriage options which in-migrants frequently faced in an environment of unavoidably high living costs and relative scarcity among them of the high-premium urban skills, which residents already possessed.
4. A 'communication community' is a collectivity of similarly socialized persons and families, sharing in the dialect, body language, manners, norms, and values of a specific vernacular. The concept of communication community is therefore an attempt to emphasize the significance of the range of characteristics given prominence in Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus': Bourdieu (1977). For further elaboration of the concept of communication communities, see Szreter (1996: 546–58).
5. See Szreter and Garrett (2000) for an application of this viewpoint to the interpretation of British demographic history since 1750.

## References

- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities*, revised 2nd edn. New York: Verso.
- Banks, O. (1981). *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Basu, A. M. and Aaby, P. (eds.) (1998). *The Methods and Uses of Anthropological Demography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bledsoe, C. (2002). *Contingent Lives. Fertility, Time and Ageing in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lerner, S., and Guyer, J. (eds.) (2000). *Fertility and The Male Life-cycle in the Era of the Fertility Decline*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bott, E. (1957). *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*. (2nd edn 1971). London: Tavistock.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (first published in French in 1972). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Buchanan, I. (1985). 'Infant feeding, sanitation and diarrhoea in colliery communities, 1880–1911', in D. J. Oddy and D. Miller (eds.), *Diet and Health in Modern Britain*. London: Croom Helm, pp. 148–77.
- Caine, B. (1992). *Victorian Feminists*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Calhoun, C. J. (1980). 'Community: towards a variable conceptualisation for comparative research', *Social History*, V: 105–29.
- De Vries, J. (1974). *The Dutch Rural Economy in the Golden Age 1500–1700*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Elder, G. H. (1994). 'Time, human agency, and social change: perspectives on the life course', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 57: 4–15.
- Evans, R. J. (1987). *Death in Hamburg: Society and Politics in the Cholera years 1830–1910*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Greenhalgh, S. (ed.) (1995). *Situating Fertility. Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johansson, S. (2000). 'Macro and Micro perspectives on mortality history?' *Historical Methods*, 33: (2): 59–72.
- Jones, G. W., Douglas, R. M., Caldwell, J. C., and D'Souza, R. M. (eds.) (1997). *The Continuing Demographic Transition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kertzer, D. I. and Fricke, T. (eds.) (1997). *Anthropological Demography. Toward a New Synthesis*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Lovejoy, A. O. (1936). *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Morgan, N. (2002). 'Infant mortality, flies and horses in later nineteenth century towns: a case study of Preston', *Continuity and Change*, 17: 97–132.
- Obermeyer, C. M. *et al.* (1997). 'Qualitative Methods in Population Studies: a Symposium', *Population and Development Review*, 23(4): 813–53.
- Robertson, A. F. (1984). *People and the State: An Anthropology of Planned Development*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rogers, A. (1975). *An Introduction to Multiregional Mathematical Demography*. New York: Wiley.
- Sharlin, A. (1978). 'Natural decrease in early modern cities: a reconsideration', *Past and Present*, 79: 126–38.
- Sholkamy, Hania (1988). "'They are the government": bureaucracy and development in an Egyptian village', Unpublished MA thesis, American University in Cairo.
- Slicher Van Bath, B. H. (1963). *The Agrarian History of Western Europe A.D. 500–1850*. London: Arnold.
- Szreter, S. and Garrett, E. (2000). 'Reproduction, compositional demography, and economic growth: family planning in England long before the fertility decline', *Population and Development Review*, 26(1): 45–80.
- (1996). *Fertility, Class and Gender in Britain 1860–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, E. P. (1971). 'The moral economy of the English crowd', *Past and Present*, 50.
- Wetherell, C. (1998). 'Historical social network analysis', *International Review of Social History*, 43(Suppl.): 125–44.

# 13 Measuring the Population of a Northeast Thai Village

AREE PROHAMMO AND JOHN BRYANT

## INTRODUCTION

A recurring theme in this volume is the contrast between the way that members of a social category define that category in their everyday life, and the way that administrators and social scientists define the category in their formal enumerations. Compare, for instance, the complex ideas on race and ethnicity found in American and Brazilian popular culture with the simple categories used by census officials in the United States and Brazil (Chapter 6), or compare the definitions of the household used by villagers in the western Himalayas with those found in standard social surveys (Chapter 17).

This chapter compares four ways of defining and enumerating the population of a northeast Thai village. The first section looks at the definition and enumeration method used by northeast Thai villagers in everyday life. The two subsequent sections look at the definitions and methods used by government and village administrators. The definitions and methods of the administrators, including village administrators, diverge substantially from those of everyday life. Some of the divergence is avoidable, but much is not. We conclude by looking briefly at how social scientists represent the population of a northeast Thai village, and by drawing some general lessons about the representation of social categories.

## NORTHEAST THAI VILLAGERS' EVERYDAY DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION OF A VILLAGE

People in rural northeast Thailand often refer in conversation to ‘the people of our village’.<sup>1</sup> How does a person come to be included among ‘the people of our village’? Though we asked a few villagers this question, we did not receive any clear answers,

which suggests that the criteria are largely tacit. However, by combining people's reports with evidence on how they put their definition into practice, it is possible to identify at least some of the villagers' criteria. Most of our first-hand observations come from one province in northeast Thailand.<sup>2</sup> We have, however, been able to draw on the extensive secondary literature on the rest of the Northeast and on lowland Laos, whose population belongs to the same ethnic group. Based on these sources, the criteria for village membership seem to include the following.

*Residence.* Anyone who lives for long periods in the village has a strong claim for village membership.

*Participation in community life.* Taking part in village activities also counts for a great deal. Middle-class people who buy a house in a village but who commute to the city for work and school, and who do not interact with their neighbours, are unlikely to be considered full members. Conversely, people living and working in distant provinces can preserve their membership status by returning to participate in a *bun kathin* ceremony, in which they donate money to a village temple.

*Place of birth.* People often state that they are a member of a village because they were born there.

*Kinship.* Some people pointed out to us that members of a village usually have relatives living there. There is no doubt that kinship and village membership are closely linked. Announcements over village loudspeakers are usually addressed to 'fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters of our village'. In many northeast Thai villages, the majority of residents are descended from a few founding families, so that many villagers are relatives in a literal sense (Keyes 1975: 278; Moerman 1976: 252; Fukui 1993: 46–8; Utong 1993: 56).

*Attendance at a village temple.* Early anthropological work in Thailand and Laos emphasized this criterion strongly, subsequent work less so. Note that it is necessary to refer to *a* village temple since many village have more than one (Wijeyewardene 1967: 73; Tambiah 1970: 54; Condaminas 1975: 254; Moerman 1976: 252; Turton 1976: 280; Taillard 1977: 75).

*Registration in the village.* The Thai government operates a household registration system (which we will discuss in detail later). Some people told us that being registered in the village was part of being a village member.

The nature of these criteria and the way they fit together mean that pinning down a person's exact membership status is difficult. None of the criteria are necessary or sufficient. Residence comes closest to being necessary. Yet few people would refuse membership status to a person who had spent several years working in Bangkok, but who was born in the village, had close family there, and returned regularly to participate in village ceremonies. Residence also comes closest to being sufficient. Yet many would express doubts about someone who lived in the village but played no part in village life.

Apart from birth in the village and having a name on a household registration form, fulfilment of all the criteria in our list is a matter of degree. People can live outside the village for one year or twenty. They can have many relatives in the village or only a few.

They can spend almost all their time in the village, or visit only at New Year. The absence of sharp cut-offs in the criteria for membership is passed on to people's membership status, which is also a matter of degree. Every village has a core population who fulfil many criteria completely or almost completely: people who were born in the village, have lots of relatives there, attend village ceremonies, and spend most of their time there. Every village also has a peripheral population that only partly fulfils the criteria: young people who have been working in central Thailand for several years and may or may not return to the village after marriage; people who work in the village and attend the temple but have their house in the neighbouring village; or recently arrived illegal immigrants from Cambodia, Burma, or Laos.

The populations of northeast Thai villages can evidently be represented more accurately by 'fuzzy' sets than by classical 'crisp' sets. Whereas in crisp sets, elements can by assumption take only two values—'member' and 'non-member'—in fuzzy sets elements are allowed to hold intermediate grades (Klir *et al.* 1997). Village membership is also not exclusive. As one villager told us, a person's membership status in the old village is 'not all used up'<sup>3</sup> when the person moves to a new village, and since people retain the right to claim some form of membership in their birth village throughout their lives, northeast Thais are apparently able to belong to more than one village at one time.<sup>4</sup>

In northeast Thailand, the main reason for people fulfilling criteria less than completely, for fulfilling some criteria but not others, and for having membership of more than one village, is the high levels of migration. If no one migrated, then people who were born in one particular village would live there all their life and would have most of their kin there. In general, however, fuzziness can arise from factors other than migration. For example, in the sharply hierarchical society of colonial northern Vietnam, village residents whose names were not on the village's membership list were prohibited from participating fully in village events and welfare schemes, and were considered only part-members (Popkin 1979: 92).

Detailed analysis would almost certainly show that different people in northeast Thailand use slightly different rules to assess the membership of their villages. For instance, members of villages that have a great deal of migration presumably assign a somewhat different weighting to residence than do members of villages that have little migration. Even within the same village, a family with several people working overseas could be expected to understand village membership differently from a family with everyone at home.

The extent to which a person fulfils a particular criterion of membership can change over time. People can attend the temple less and less frequently; the time since they have last been to the village can lengthen; or they can suddenly increase their participation in village ceremonies. As the degree to which they fulfil the criteria rises and falls, so does their membership status.

The lack of necessary and sufficient conditions, the fuzziness, and the non-exclusivity might seem to mark village membership out as something exotic. However, cognitive scientists now generally agree that many of the categories through which people view the world share these same characteristics. These characteristics enable us, for instance,

to consider a robin to be more 'birdlike' than a penguin (Medin 1989; Gentner and Markman 1997). The propensity of village borders to change over time and to be construed differently by different people are also perfectly ordinary: most people used to think that whales were fish, and some still do. Many of the social categories discussed in this volume owe some of their complexity to the same fuzziness, non-exclusivity and changeability as that characterizing northeast Thai villagers' conception of village populations.<sup>5</sup>

Just as the complexities and ambiguities underlying people's conceptions of birds do not generally cause them problems in daily life, so the complexities and ambiguities underlying the villagers' definition of village membership do not generally cause them problems in their daily lives. People do occasionally have to assess the extent to which particular individuals belong to the village, such as when they are deciding who to invite to a wedding or when they are picking someone to lead a village ceremony. Making these assessments can be difficult—people may have to discuss a person's credentials at great length before their minds are made up. But the villagers rarely have to justify their decisions to the whole village, and they never have to assign a numerical value to their evaluation.

## HOW GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATORS MEASURE THE POPULATION OF A VILLAGE

Before the late nineteenth century, the Thai<sup>6</sup> government showed little interest in enumerating village populations, enumerating only those which sold special handicrafts or forest products. Tax officials prepared lists of households in these villages, and each household was required to contribute set amounts of the goods in question, or the equivalent in cash (Bowring 1967: 204; Terweil 1989: 98). The main form of population registration at this time was the compilation of lists of *phrai*. All men aged 18–60 who were not slaves were required to register as *phrai*. These men were supposed to carry out 3–6 months of corvée labour each year for local nobles or the king, and to serve in the army during times of war. Noblemen and government departments all had their own lists, which seem to have never been centralized. The *phrai* system was not territorial. Different men in the same village, or even in the same household, could owe their services to different masters (Piyachat 1983: 13, 19; Terweil 1989: 277–8).

Enumeration of villages began during the 1890s, when the Thai government dismantled the *phrai* system and introduced a system of territorial government modelled on the examples of colonial Burma, Malaya, and the Netherlands Indies. The government established official boundaries for villages, appointed village heads, introduced a registration system, and in 1899 passed a law requiring people to register in their place of residence and to update their registration whenever they changed residence (Piyachat 1983: 155).

Thailand's current system of vital registration is based on a 1956 Act. Every household is supposed to have a household registration form, listing all members. Individuals must carry personal identity cards, based on the information given in the household

registration form. One copy of the form is held by the household, and another at the district office. People are legally required to update their form within 15 days of moving house (Division of Health Statistics 1985: 7–8). Although the government has other methods of measuring village populations, such as the Census and the Ministry of Interior's Basic Minimum Needs system, the household registration system figures much more prominently in the lives of villagers and local-level officials. Rights to schooling, healthcare, and voting are all established using household registration forms, as are liability for taxation and conscription.

The household registration system's use of the 15-day residence rule implies that, in the eyes of the state, current residence is the necessary and sufficient criterion for claiming membership of a village. This exclusive concern with current residence is an important difference between the government's definition of village membership and the villagers' ordinary definition. As discussed earlier, the villagers' ordinary definition of village membership treats residence as an important criterion of membership, but not as a completely decisive one.

Another difference between the two definitions is the way that the villagers' ordinary definition treats the population as a fuzzy set, while the government's definition treats it as a crisp one. From the government's point of view, a person belongs to a village or does not. Yet another difference is the way that the villagers' ordinary definition permits membership in multiple villages, while the government's definition restricts membership to one. Together, the differences in definition mean that, even if the official definition were scrupulously implemented, the official population of a village would not in general match the population that the villagers refer to in everyday life.

There is something undemocratic and intrusive about the government imposing a definition of village membership that differs systematically from the definition used by the villagers themselves. The government's definition can, however, be given a pragmatic justification by pointing to great differences between the constraints facing officials carrying out government administration and the constraints facing villagers chatting about their neighbours' village affiliations. Administrators must work from much scantier local information than villagers. This counts heavily in favour of the simple residence-based definition and heavily against villagers' complex multi-criteria definition. Government administrators' decisions on village membership have important consequences for access to rights and resources such as schooling, health, and the vote. To avoid argument, the rules on membership should be unambiguous. Ambiguity is avoidable when the rules specify a single necessary and sufficient condition such as residence, but is almost inevitable when they specify multiple non-decisive conditions, as the villagers' everyday definition does. Administrators must present their criteria and their decisions clearly, in writing, and often with numbers, something which is easier for crisp sets than for fuzzy ones.

Use of the residence-based definition does not, however, rescue government administrators from all difficulties. Administrators still, for instance, have to establish a reasonable match between the official geographical boundaries of villages and the geographical boundaries recognized by local people. Having official villages match the 'indigenous' ones is useful to the government, since it allows the official

villages to take advantage of the systems of cooperation and control which already exist in the indigenous ones—though administrators prefer to split villages in two if they grow larger than about 200 households.

A distinction between administrative and indigenous villages is maintained in spoken Thai and Lao. Administrative villages are referred to as *mu*, which translates literally as ‘group’. Indigenous villages are referred to as *mu ban* or simply *ban*. The word *ban* has a variety of meanings, including ‘household’, ‘home’, and ‘house’, as well as ‘village’. When the proper name of a village is used, it is always done so with the word *ban*, as in ‘Ban Sala’ or ‘Ban Din Daeng’. Using the words *mu* and *mu ban* or *ban* it is relatively easy to inquire about the fit between indigenous and official villages. Any local person would, for instance, be able to answer the question ‘how many *mu* does this *mu ban* have?’

Table 13.1 summarizes data collected by anthropologist Shinichi Shigetomi on the fit between indigenous villages (*mu ban*) and official villages (*mu*) in northeast and central Thailand. As the second row of the table shows, the division of large indigenous villages is quite common. As the fourth row of the table shows, the boundaries of official and indigenous villages are more likely to be mismatched in central Thailand than in the Northeast. The borders of indigenous villagers are less distinct in central Thailand than they are in the Northeast, and attempts to match them up with clearly defined official villagers are bound to be less satisfactory.<sup>7</sup>

The difficulties of aligning official boundaries with indigenous boundaries are, in a sense, alleviated by the process of ‘objectification’ discussed in the introductory chapter. In a nice demonstration of how ordinary people adopt categories invented by officialdom, northeast Thai villagers sometimes change the boundaries of indigenous villages to conform more closely to the official ones. This process appears to be occurring in the village where we conducted most of our fieldwork. A few years before

Table 13.1. Distribution of ‘official’ villages by their relationship to ‘indigenous’ villages

	Central Thailand	Northeast Thailand
Official village matches indigenous village	49	47
One complete indigenous village is composed of two or more complete official villages	26	51
One complete official village is composed of two or more complete indigenous villages	17	2
No simple relationship between official and indigenous villages. For instance, one official village is composed of two and a half indigenous villages	8	0
Total	100	100
<i>N</i>	84	49

Source: Shigetomi (1998: table 3.2). The classifications were made by Shigetomi, based on visits to the villages between 1989 and 1995. Shigetomi does not say how he selected the villages.



our first visit there, Sala had grown to more than 200 households and had been divided into two official villages. Although people still generally refer to themselves as belonging to a single village called Sala, one of Sala's temples has become identified almost exclusively with one of the official villages.

The difficulties in setting geographical boundaries and the necessary simplifications in the official definition are both important sources of discrepancies between the villager-defined and official-defined populations. But a second important source of discrepancies is people's reluctance to update their household registration forms. As stated earlier, Thai law requires citizens to update their registration forms if they change their residence for more than 15 days. Survey data shown in Table 13.2 give some indication of compliance levels in Sala. Of the 1,271 people we surveyed, the 884 people who were registered in Sala and who had spent more than 11 of the previous 12 months there are fairly certain to have kept within the letter of the law. Most of remaining 387 probably had not. Sala is typical of the Northeast. Ordinary people and officials all recognize that villages in the Northeast contain far fewer people than the household registration system shows, while Bangkok and the wealthy coastal provinces contain far more.

People whose residence form is out of date face various disadvantages. For instance, children and old people who would otherwise receive free care at public hospitals usually have to pay. Many villagers nevertheless defer updating because the updating procedures require visits to district offices. Staff at district offices tend to be rude and slow, particularly with villagers, and especially with villagers who neglect to provide the officials with a 'white envelope'. Some of our informants said that staff often make mistakes while writing down people's names. Anyone who is illiterate or not brave enough to check the officials' work must pay a correction fee when the mistake is eventually discovered. These fees are often equal to a day's agricultural wages, and occasionally much higher. People who spot the mistake when it happens are reportedly told to wait until the end of the day to have the mistake corrected, or are told to return the next day. Notification of change of residence currently requires visits to district offices in both the sending and receiving areas. The Ministry of Interior is computerizing the registration system, so that

Table 13.2. Individuals living or registered in Sala village during the year to March 1998

Number of months spent in Sala	Registered in Sala	Not registered in Sala, but spent at least 1 month there	Total
<1	221	—	221
1–11	78	33	111
>11	884	55	939
Total	1,183	88	1,271

*Source:* Authors' 1998 survey. Interviewers asked how long each person on a house's household registration form had been away since the previous New Year (which was slightly less than 1 year earlier). The interviewers then requested the informant to list everyone who had stayed for at least 1 month in the house since the previous New Year, and asked how long each of these people had stayed. We were able to obtain data from approximately 90% of the houses in the village. The table shows the results for these houses.

people can update their registration from any district office. Thais will eventually be able to update their forms via the World Wide Web, though it remains to be seen how many villagers will avail themselves of this service (*The Nation*, 18 August 1998).

Meanwhile, many people have a personal interest in the law not being implemented too scrupulously. Government officials, village heads, Members of Parliament, and ordinary people all exploit weaknesses in the household registration system. People in one village we visited, for instance, told us that their village head had transferred the names of about 100 relatives and friends from southern Thailand on to local household registration forms in order to secure his election. An official in another district explained that the official population was much larger than the resident population because, in response to a series of occupations and public protests, the government had ceded substantial areas of reserved forest land in the district over to people who were registered in the surrounding villages. Since that time, large numbers of people living in other districts have moved their names onto household registration forms in this district in the hope of benefiting from future handouts.

## HOW VILLAGE ADMINISTRATORS MEASURE THE POPULATION

Villagers in northeast Thailand carry out a certain amount of administration for themselves. They mobilize community resources to clear roads, clean wells, raise money for the temple, host visits from other villages, and fulfil other community goals. Support is often requested and provided on a purely voluntary basis. But for many projects, there is also an element of compulsion, with village administrators assigning and enforcing contributions from village members. On these occasions, village administrators must perform the same task as government administrators: they have to make and justify explicit public pronouncements on who precisely is a village member.

The villagers' everyday definition of village membership is unsuitable for village administration, just as it is for government administration. It is true that the villagers hold all the information required to assign membership status under their own everyday definition. But if village administrators were to use their usual criteria they would still not avoid the problems of reconciling the different interpretations, recording and processing very complex data, and working out how to match rights and responsibilities to varying membership grades. Using the everyday definition would be less difficult for village administrators than for government administrators, but it would still be difficult.

What village administrators in northeast Thailand do instead is to count up the number of *bee-en*, *ban*, or *lung*, and assign contributions to them. The words *bee-en*, *ban*, or *lung* are somewhat ambiguous. Although all three can mean physical house, the first two can equally well mean 'household' in the sense of 'domestic group'; and, as mentioned above, *ban* can also mean 'village'.<sup>8</sup> The villagers we talked to about village administration definitely meant physical house, however, since they referred

to the *bee-en*, *ban*, and *lung* as having street numbers. Village administrators, in other words, enumerate the population of the village by counting physical houses.

When counting houses, the villagers apply a rule that for every house there is a street number. Virtually every occupied building in Thailand does have a street number, because the electricity organization insists that only buildings with street numbers can be connected to the mains. Some very poor people do not have electricity, and the electricity organization occasionally violates its own rules, but the number of exceptions is small. In Sala only two occupied houses of the 265 we surveyed did not have street numbers. When exceptions are this rare, village administrators can deal with them on a case by case basis.

Deciding whether or not a house has a street number is easy. Deciding whether or not a house is located within the boundaries of the village is not much harder, at least for northeast Thailand, where houses from the same village tend to be bunched together in a group. Populations of houses in northeast Thailand are therefore usually crisp. Because houses are slow to be built, rarely lose or gain street numbers, and rarely move, populations of houses are also relatively fixed. This means that defining the village population in terms of physical houses makes the enumeration of the population cheap and easy.

Though some authors have reported different practices in other areas (Moerman 1976: 258), all the villages that we are familiar with usually ask for equal contributions from each house. This means that the size of the contributions people make to village activities have a fairly arbitrary relationship with their degree of membership in the village. An individual's share of the total burden depends far more on the number of people he or she co-resides with than it does on his or her membership status. Concessions to house membership and wealth are sometimes made by expressing the contributions as minimums and encouraging those who can to contribute more. There is always a risk, however, that people take advantage of the flexibility to contribute too little. When we conducted fieldwork in Sala in 1998, the villagers were in the process of building a new temple. People were supposed to provide labour, money, or building materials. The organizing committee read out contributions almost daily, calling on others to do their share. The amounts received were, however, insufficient. When we returned to the village in 1999, we were told that, to pay for the final stages of the construction, the villagers had agreed to levy a 50 baht charge on every house, with no exceptions.

The tension between administrative simplicity and faithful representation of the ordinary conception of the village population is greatest in the case of village funeral societies.<sup>9</sup> Whenever a person covered by a society dies, the society collects money from its members and makes a payout to the family of the deceased. Many societies' pay-outs are equivalent to several months of household income. With pay-outs so large, funeral societies need to define their membership clearly, or risk acrimonious disputes over eligibility. Contributions are levied on households, and are generally the same for all. Unlike the case of other village organizations, however, a simple list of houses does not contain sufficient information. Pay-outs are triggered by the death of individuals, so the societies need a list of individuals.

Village funeral societies obtain such a list by borrowing it from the state. They allow people to join if their name is on a household registration form for that village. Everybody on the form who is older than a certain age—usually around 5 years—is covered by the society. People whose name is on the form but who do not live in the village are covered. Conversely, people who do not have their name on a household registration form but who live there cannot join and cannot obtain coverage. The ensuing slippage between the registered population and the villagers' everyday definition of the population can be large.

The data on Sala shown earlier in Table 13.2 illustrate the extent of slippage there. Many of the people shown in the table who were registered in Sala but who did not live there had kept in contact, planned to return, and would be credited with a high degree of village membership by most villagers. However, many others no longer belonged in any significant sense, including an entire household that had been living outside the village for 8 years, and several people who had been living in different countries for more than 10 years. (Relatives had paid these people's dues for them.) The inhabitants of Sala are perfectly well aware of these discrepancies. Indeed, one of the funeral society committee members asked us how the rules could be changed to close the loopholes. (We could not think of anything.) People have decided to tolerate these discrepancies to keep enumeration simple.

## HOW SOCIAL SCIENTISTS MEASURE THE POPULATION

The enumeration practices of social scientists in Thailand are no different from those everywhere, and would probably seem familiar to most readers of this volume. Social scientists carrying out a survey typically measure the population of a village by trying to count all the people who are in the village on a particular day, or by obtaining the names of everyone who 'usually' lives in the village, with the meaning of 'usually' left for respondents to decide. Social scientists without access to survey data generally quote household registration statistics. Regardless of how the population was measured, the results are usually presented in the form 'Village X has a population of 1215', which creates the impression that Village X's population is crisp and fixed.

Social scientists' use of simplified definitions of village membership can be given the same pragmatic justification as the administrators' use of simplified definitions. But when social scientists give insufficient emphasis to the complexity of village boundaries, they can overlook important questions, or even misinterpret their data. One example is the innovative and widely cited study by Entwisle *et al.* (1996) on patterns of contraceptive use in fifty-one villages in Nang Rong District, northeast Thailand. Using data from an unusually thorough survey in 1984, the authors show that, while overall rates of contraceptive use did not vary markedly between villages, couples in the same village tended to adopt the same method. The authors interpret this as evidence of diffusion through social networks. As Carter (2001: 24) points out, however, it is difficult to judge the significance of Entwisle *et al.*'s findings without more information on how the characteristics of Thai villages shape social

networks and diffusion. Characteristics mentioned by Carter include social stratification, family systems, and the match between administrative and indigenous villages. Here we follow up on Carter's point about administrative and indigenous villages.

Entwisle *et al.* (1996) leave the term 'village' undefined. Various statements in the article make it clear, however, that they are dealing with administrative villages.<sup>10</sup> As discussed earlier, administrative villages in Thailand often correspond to indigenous villages, but not always. Indeed, citing data from focus groups which they conducted in the district, Entwisle and coworkers note that administrative villages occasionally form larger units:

Residents of neighbouring villages engage in a variety of common activities, in part because they may share a school or a temple. Many ties of kinship and friendship link such villages (Entwisle *et al.* 1996: 9).

But Entwisle and coworkers never acknowledge that local people may in fact see these neighbouring villages as belonging to a single indigenous village. This failure to distinguish between indigenous villages may have led to some confusion. Entwisle *et al.* (1996: 9) claim, based on their focus group data, that 'village boundaries largely coincide with the boundaries of social networks'. This claim is entirely plausible if by 'villages' they mean indigenous villages, but not if, consistent with their statistical analysis, they mean administrative villages. We suspect that the discussants actually asked the focus group participants about *mu ban* (indigenous villages) rather than *mu* (administrative villages), but that this distinction was lost when the discussions were translated into English. The phrase *mu ban* is the usual Thai or Lao translation of the English word 'village'.

If the discussants were indeed referring to indigenous rather than administrative villages, then the indigenous villages would have been a more appropriate unit to use in the statistical analysis. Obtaining information on the geographical boundaries of the indigenous villages would not have been particularly difficult—perhaps a day's work. It is hard to say whether the use of indigenous rather than administrative villages would make much difference to the results of the analysis, since this depends on the fit between indigenous and administrative villages in Nang Rong District. Research on social networks in Nang Rong district has continued, yielding interesting results (Godley 2001), but no progress appears to have been made towards clarifying the definition of a village.

Although most social scientists treat the boundaries and definition of villages as unproblematic, there are exceptions. Some writers within the field of Southeast Asian Studies have, for instance, described how Southeast Asian settlements often merge into one another, and have noted that one indicator of village membership such as temple attendance does not always map neatly onto another indicator such as residence.<sup>11</sup> But the revisionist literature has limitations of its own. Many writers imply that the fuzziness of the village populations, and the absence of necessary and sufficient criteria for membership, is somehow mysterious. Some even hint that the villages they are discussing have no boundaries at all, and therefore only a shadowy existence. As the cognitive science research mentioned above has shown, such arguments are

misplaced; they would imply, for instance, that there is no such category as 'birds'. Another limitation of the revisionist literature is that it destroys without creating. Few of the critics offer survey takers any suggestions for how village populations ought to be measured.<sup>12</sup>

## DISCUSSION

In this chapter we have described how four different types of enumerator—villagers going about their everyday life, government administrators, villagers carrying out local administration, and social scientists—allocate the people of rural northeast Thailand to villages. The nature of the allocations varies. Ordinary villagers allow a great deal of fuzziness and variability, whereas the other three groups seek crispness and uniformity. Because the allocation systems are based on different criteria and use different sources of information, they generally produce different representations of the population of the same village.

Some of this divergence could potentially be reduced. Improved service at district offices, for instance, would make people more willing to update their household registration forms, which would bring official representations of village populations somewhat closer to the villagers' informal representations. It must be recognized, however, that the four types of enumerators we have discussed are trying to solve different problems under different constraints. Ordinary villagers, for instance, have all the necessary information at hand, and are rarely compelled to make their allocations explicit, whereas government officials are much less familiar with local conditions and are expected to produce an explicit total. The methods of enumeration will always be different, and the results will never agree completely.

What lessons should social scientists draw about the measurement of northeast Thai villages and other populations? One obvious point is that the populations that people refer to in their everyday life do not necessarily have the crisp, well-defined boundaries that the populations of demography textbooks do. Social scientists have to accept that any measurements they make of such populations are inevitably approximations. When it is important that the social scientists' representations conform to those of the villagers, social scientists should explicitly state that the population statistics they are reporting are necessarily imperfect, and should explore how the use of differing definitions affect their conclusions.

As noted earlier, northeast Thai village populations can be represented more accurately using fuzzy sets than they can be using conventional crisp sets. It seems likely that demographers will begin to draw more heavily on fuzzy set theory for representing a variety of populations over the coming years. The availability of cheap, user-friendly computing power means that the heavy computational demands of fuzzy set theory are no longer the obstacle they once were. At the same time, the move by some countries' statistical offices to allow people to provide more complex responses such as multiple ethnicities has led to the creation of large datasets that may lend themselves to analysis using fuzzy set theory. The availability of large datasets requiring new analytical tools has traditionally been a spur for innovation among demographers. Techniques for analysing

fuzzy population data developed at national statistical agencies may eventually trickle down to fieldworkers.

A final lesson to draw from the example of northeast Thai villages concerns the appropriateness of simplification in population enumerations. Having shown that a social category is more complex than survey or administrative definitions imply, many social scientists draw two conclusions. The first conclusion is that the people responsible for the definition persist with the simplification because of a lack of familiarity with life at the grass roots, or a hidden political agenda. The second conclusion is that the simple definition should be replaced with a complex one. As many contributions to this volume show, both of these conclusions are often warranted. But in some instances they are not. Consider the case of village administrators in northeast Thailand. As we have shown, the definition of the village population that these administrators use is very much simpler than their own everyday definition. Yet no one could accuse the village administrators of being unfamiliar with village life. Nor, so far as we could tell, did their enumeration techniques advance any political agenda. It would be presumptuous to suggest that the villagers administrators ought to replace their simple definition with a more complex one. They are aware of the distortions the definition creates, but have decided, on practical grounds, that a simple definition is nevertheless appropriate. In this case at least, simplification is not to be confused with over-simplification.

## Notes

1. The original Lao terms for the 'people of our village' are *thai ban bao*, *chao ban bao*, and *khon ban bao*. Lao, which is closely related to central Thai, is the language most commonly spoken in northeast Thai villages.
2. The province is Khon Kaen. The first author grew up in a village in this province, and we have both conducted extensive fieldwork here.
3. In Lao: *yang bo perf*.
4. However, non-exclusivity and fuzziness should in general be distinguished, since crisp sets are not always exclusive. One can, for instance, be a citizen of two countries, or a member of both the International Union for the Scientific Study for Population and the American Anthropological Association.
5. One further example is that of kingdoms in pre-colonial Southeast Asia. Rulers and their subjects considered kingdoms to be composed of cores surrounded by concentric layers. The greater a layer's distance from the centre, the less directly it was governed by the centre, in practice and in theory. People in the outer layers could simultaneously owe allegiance to more than one regional power, as the people of northeast Thailand did to the rulers of Siam and Vientiane (Wyatt 1984: 158–9; Terweil 1989: 239). The classification rules changed over time. During the nineteenth century and early twentieth century the Siamese elite put their kingdom through the same transformation as European elites had carried out during the previous century, mapping the borders and rendering the population crisp (Anderson 1991; Winichakul 1994). The reclassification is, however, incomplete. People in northeast Thailand still commonly refer to themselves in private as 'Lao', reserving the term 'Thai' for the population of central Thailand, the core region of pre-colonial Siam.

6. Strictly speaking this should be the 'Siamese' government. Siam changed its name to Thailand in 1939.
7. The second and third rows of the table show that it is more common for 'indigenous' villages to be composed of two or more 'administrative' villages in northeast Thailand than it is in central Thailand, and vice versa for administrative villages. Northeast Thai villages tend to be larger than central Thai villages.
8. Complicating matters further, censuses and surveys in Thailand use the very formal phrase *kebrua ruen* to refer to households as domestic groups.
9. For a more detailed discussion of northeast Thai village funeral societies, see Bryant and Prohmno (2002).
10. For instance, in Table 13.1 of the article by Entwisle *et al.* (1996) they refer to the proportion of village committees that include women. Administrative villages have village committees; indigenous villages do not, except when they coincide with an administrative village.
11. Examples include Geertz and Geertz (1975: 1–45); Evers (1977); Kemp (1988, 1991); Breman (1988); and Rigg (1994).
12. Though there are exceptions, such as Kemp's (1982: 113) suggestion that membership was based on the combination of kinship and propinquity.

## References

- Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bowring, J. (1967 [1857]). *The Kingdom and People of Siam*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Breman, J. (1988). *The Shattered Image: Construction and Deconstruction of the Village in Colonial Asia*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.
- Bryant, J. and Prohmno, A. (2002). 'Equal contributions and unequal risks in a Thai village funeral society', *Journal of Development Studies*, 38(3): 63–75.
- Carter, A. (2001). 'Social processes and fertility change: anthropological perspectives', in J. Casterline (ed.), *Diffusion Processes and Fertility Transition: Selected Perspectives*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Condominas, G. (1975). 'Phiban cults in rural Laos', in G. W. Skinner and A. T. Kirsch (eds.), *Change and Persistence in Thai Society: Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Division of Health Statistics (1985). *Kan Ork Nung Su Ruprong Kankert Kantai lae Kankamnot Sabet Kantai* [Certifying Births, Deaths, and Causes of Deaths]. Bangkok: Ministry of Public Health.
- Entwisle, B., Rindfuss, R., Guilkey, D., Chamrathirong, A., Curran, S., and Sawangdee, Y. (1996). 'Community and contraceptive choice in rural Thailand: a case study of Nang Rong', *Demography*, 33(1): 1–11.
- Evers, H. D. (1977). 'The culture of Malaysian urbanization: Malay and Chinese conceptions of space', *Urban Anthropology*, 6(3): 205–16.
- Fukui, H. (1993). *Food and Population in a Northeast Thai Village* (trans. P. Hawkes). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Geertz, H. and Geertz, C. (1975). *Kinship in Bali*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gentner, D. and Markman, A. B. (1997). 'Structural mapping in analogy and similarity', *American Psychologist*, 52(1): 45–56.



- Godley, J. (2001). 'Kinship networks and contraceptive choice in Nang Rong, Thailand', *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 27(1): 4–10.
- Kemp, J. H. (1982). 'Kinship and locality in Hua Kok', *Journal of the Siam Society*, 70(1): 101–13.
- Kemp, J. (1988). *Seductive Mirage: The Search for the Village Community in Southeast Asia*. Dodrecht: Foris.
- (1991). 'The dialectics of village and state in modern Thailand', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 22(2): 312–26.
- Keys, C. F. (1975). 'Kin groups in a Thai-Lao community', in G. W. Skinner and A. T. Kirsch (eds.), *Change and Persistence in Thai Society: Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Klir, G. J., St. Clair, U. H., and Yuan, B. (1997). *Fuzzy Set Theory: Foundations and Applications*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall.
- Medin, D. (1989). 'Concepts and conceptual structure', *American Psychologist*, 44(12): 1469–81.
- Moerman, M. (1976). 'A Thai village headman as a synaptic leader', in C. D. Neher (ed.), *Modern Thai Politics: From Village to Nation*. Cambridge: Schenken Publishing.
- Pitawan, P. (1983). *Rabob Phrai nai Sangkhom Thai 2411–2453 [The Phrai System in Thai Society 1868–1910]*. Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.
- Popkin, Samuel L. (1979). *The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Prasaavinitchai, U. (1993). 'The Thai village from the villagers' perspective', in P. Hirsch (ed.), *The Village in Perspective: Community and Locality in Rural Thailand*. Chiang Mai: Social Research Unit, Chiang Mai University.
- Rigg, J. (1994). 'Redefining the village and rural life: lessons from Southeast Asia', *Geographical Journal*, 160(2): 123–35.
- Shigetomi, S. (1998). *Cooperation and Community in Rural Thailand: An Organizational Analysis of Participatory Rural Development*. Tokyo: Institute of Developing Economies.
- Taillard, C. (1977). 'Le village Lao de la région de Vientiane—un pouvoir local face au pouvoir étatique', *L'Homme*, 17(2–3): 71–100.
- Tambiah, S. J. (1970). *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in Northeast Thailand*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Terwiel, B. J. (1989). *Through Travellers' Eyes: An Approach to Early Nineteenth Century Thai History*. Bangkok: Duang Kamol.
- The Nation* [online] [www.nationmultimedia.com](http://www.nationmultimedia.com)
- Turton, A. (1976). 'Northern Thai peasant society: twentieth century transformations in political and rural structures', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 3(2): 267–98.
- Wijeyewardene, G. (1967). 'Some aspects of rural life in Thailand', in T. H. Silcock (ed.), *Thailand: Social and Economic Studies in Development*. Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- Winichakul, T. (1994). *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.
- Wyatt, D. K. (1984). *Thailand: A Short History*. London: Yale University Press.

# 14 'Un noviazgo después de ser casados': Companionate Marriage, Sexual Intimacy, and the Modern Mexican Family

JENNIFER S. HIRSCH

J: ... for example, now that [your daughter] is going to get married ... soon, what do you advise her to look for in marriage?

E: What I advise her, all the time, is that she not get pregnant right away when they are just married. Later, if they can't get along, I don't want her to say 'I am just here for the kid'—that is, that she would feel tied, bound. On the contrary, she has hardly gone out to dances, she has never had any fun, so ... [she should have] a year or two, if they have any money, to have fun, to get out, to enjoy what you could call a courtship after marriage. If they get married and are then tied down by a baby on the way, they will be thinking all the time, well, if it hadn't been for that, I wouldn't have gotten married ...

A woman in her mid-thirties from Degollado, Jalisco, interviewed in Atlanta, GA.

## INTRODUCTION

Young women in rural Mexico continue to dream—as did their mothers a generation ago—of marriage and motherhood, both of which continue to be the primary route to adult personhood for women. However, beneath the apparent continuity of

universal marriage lie two important breaks with the past. On the macrolevel, there has been a significant fertility decline over the past 30 years, as reflected in the total fertility rate (TFR), which fell from between 7 and 8 before 1970 to 2.6 in 1997 (Secretaria de Salud 1989; Juarez, Quilodran, and Zavala de Cosio 1996; Consejo Nacional de Población 1997). Ethnographic research suggests that beneath this fertility decline lies a second discontinuity: in the space of a generation, the meaning of marriage has changed dramatically. Young men and women talk of finding a partner with whom to share love and intimacy, rather than seeking a husband or wife who will fulfil his or her role in a sharply gendered division of labour. This transition from marriages of duty and obligation (conceived of locally as marriages of *respeto*, respect) to marriages of intimacy (which people discuss as relationships of *confianza*, of trust and closeness) has important implications for understanding fertility decline.

This chapter presents ethnographic evidence of this change in the meaning of the marital relationship and discusses cohort differences both in the marital ideal and in specific practices such as decision-making, the gendered division of labour, patterns of socializing, and the meanings of sexual intimacy. Ethnographic research revealed marked cohort differences in family building strategies: these young couples are much more open to the idea of delaying the first birth in order to *convivir*, to enjoy living together, rather than cementing the marriage immediately through the birth of a child, and they want smaller families than their parents had. Furthermore, the focus on the affective aspects of family relationships extends beyond the marital dyad: young mothers and fathers spoke earnestly of striving to create emotionally warmer relationships with their children than the ones they had had with their own parents. They are striving, it seems, to build families which are not just smaller but which are also qualitatively different.

This description of generational change in Mexico speaks to more general issues about the ideological transformations that underlie fertility decline. This chapter contributes to the discussion of social categories in population studies by highlighting the ways in which marriage is socially constructed. This point is relevant both specifically to discussions of demographic change in Arab countries (Inhorn 1996 has described quite similar changes in marriage among working class couples in Cairo; see also Ali 2002) and more broadly to discussions about the cultural transformations accompanying fertility decline, as part of our growing understanding of the role of individual agency in demographic transformation.

The fieldwork on which this chapter draws began as an exploration of how the cultural constructions of gender and sexuality differ in two locations of a transnational Mexican community—the sending community in western Mexico and the US-based community in Atlanta, GA—and of the implications of those changes in gender and sexuality for reproductive health practices. During the course of the fieldwork, it became clear that while there were some notable differences in gender between the two locations, significant transformations in gender and sexuality had also taken place in the sending community over the past generation. Accordingly, the research question shifted from how gender changes with migration to how the migration-related

changes can be understood in the context of the broader historical transformations taking place in the sending community. The larger study did find differences in reproductive practices between the two locations (Hirsch and Nathanson 2001; Hirsch *et al.* 2002), but the cohort differences in the ideology of marriage seemed much more broadly significant. Young women in both the US and Mexico field sites shared similar ideals for marriages of *confianza*; the key difference was that women in Atlanta have more leverage to negotiate towards that ideal—or perhaps that men are more willing to adopt this new paradigm away from the watchful eyes of their fathers and uncles in Mexico.

In looking at marriage as an institution that is created by—and in turn recreates—gender, I take my lead from Connell (1987), who suggests that a complete examination of such institutions should include discussions of power, labour, and affectivity. In particular, I focus on the last category; the emotional aspects of heterosexual relationships have been neglected by scholars interested in the way these relationships reproduce unequal power relations. After some background on companionate marriage, I present the transition from marriages of *respeto* to those of *confianza*, explore some of the reasons for this generational paradigm shift, and discuss how these changes in marriage have shaped ideas about the first-birth interval and ideal family size in this transnational community.

## METHODS

The data were collected over 15 months of participant observation in this community, whose members migrate between rural western Mexico and Atlanta, GA. Data collection focused primarily on thirteen pairs of women between the ages of 15 and 50; one of each pair was living in the Mexican sending community, while the other was living in Atlanta. Throughout the chapter, references to ‘younger women’ mean the younger of the life history informants; ‘older women’ refers to those life history informants over age 40 and to their mothers. Elsewhere I have described the process of finding the communities and constructing the sample of women for the interviews (Hirsch and Nathanson 1998) and the methods used in data analysis (Hirsch 1998, 2003).

The primary method was life history interviews, consisting of six interviews with each of the twenty-six primary informants on the following topics: (a) childhood and family life; (b) social networks and stories of US–Mexico migration; (c) gender and household division of labour; (d) menstruation, reproduction, and fertility management; (e) health, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, and infertility; and (f) courtship and sexuality. Interviews were also conducted with eight of the life history informants’ mothers and nine of the husbands. During the 15 months of fieldwork, I participated in informal conversations regarding marriage, gender, family life, and migration with many more people in this community. This time in the field, moreover, provided ample opportunity to watch what people actually did, because it is one thing for a man to say that he shares the housework with his wife and a very different thing to see him pick up a broom; observations of the domestic division of

labour and of marital interactions provided a key source of data to triangulate findings from interviews.

The sending communities were Degollado, a town about 2 hours from Guadalajara, Jalisco, with a population of around 15,000, and El Fuerte, a small agricultural community outside of Degollado. In Atlanta, some informants lived in Chamblee, an urban neighbourhood of small apartment complexes with a heavy concentration of Mexican and Vietnamese immigrants, while others lived in trailer parks on the outskirts of the city. Migration from Degollado and El Fuerte is hardly a recent phenomenon: many of the women interviewed had grandfathers who worked on the railroads and fathers who worked in the lettuce fields in the United States. These towns, which are intensely tied into migrant circuits, form transnational communities characterized by social ties and identity construction across national borders, as well as by frequent back and forth movement of people and gifts and a lightning-fast flow of information (Massey *et al.* 1987; Rouse 1991, 1992; Glick Schiller *et al.* 1992). Distinct locations of these transnational communities present an opportunity to explore the relative force of cultural and social influences on ideology and behaviour, since first generation migrants in *el norte* are quite similar culturally to their *compadres* in Mexico but live in very different social settings.

To some it may seem overly bold to draw conclusions about a shift in the Mexican marital ideal and about the fertility implications of that shift from interviews with thirteen pairs of women, plus assorted mothers and husbands, even when combined with 15 months of participant observation. In light of this small (from a demographic point of view) sample, it may be helpful to review the arguments made in greater detail elsewhere (Hirsch 2003: 30–3) about the difference between demographic and ethnographic generalizability. Survey sampling contributes to demographic generalizability through breadth and representativeness. Ethnography, on the other hand, makes claims about generalizability based on depth and the internal coherence of a narrative. Cultural constructions (such as ideas about sexuality and marriage) are social phenomena rather than individual attributes, and thus presumably shared (though certainly with internal disagreement) by members of a society. It is thus perfectly possible to construct a generalizable portrait of Mexican ideas about marriage or sexuality by speaking with a relatively small number of people in great depth. Some have done this masterfully with a sample of one: Sidney Mintz, for example, in *Worker in the Cane*, tells the story of Don Taso's life in a way that is certainly 'generalizable' to broader discussions of how colonialism and cash-crop agriculture have shaped the life of the poor in the Caribbean (1974).

Rural western Mexico, however, is certainly different from the cosmopolitan *Distrito Federal*. Furthermore, even relatively small towns such as Degollado and El Fuerte are far from homogeneous; residents' experiences and ideas are shaped in important ways by their social position, so it is necessary to be a bit more specific about who is speaking in the pages that follow, and for whom they are presumed to be able to speak. The thirteen women in Atlanta were systematically selected to represent a wide range of diversity in terms of time in the United States, legal status, social status and education in Mexico, and marital experience. They varied in age from their late teens to mid-forties. One had

almost finished college, while several had not finished primary school, and one was illiterate. One woman had eight children (and has gone on to have a ninth), while several others had none. Many had worked outside their homes either in Mexico or Atlanta; a few had had white-collar jobs, but more typical was sewing piecework, raising animals, or small commercial ventures.<sup>1</sup>

I chose the life history informants slowly, as I became familiar with key axes of diversity within the sending and receiving communities. As I learned more about Degollado, for example, it became clear that there were clear differences in social status and resources between those living in different neighbourhoods of Degollado (i.e. between the older *pueblo* and the newer *colonia*), and so life history informants in Atlanta were selected to maximize diversity in terms of the location of the house in which they grew up. Over time I learned the value of a driver's licence and access to a car for migrant women in Atlanta, and so took care to include both women who drove and women who did not in the interviews. The 'matches' to the women in Atlanta were chosen from among the available sisters or sisters-in-law in the Mexican communities, with the goal of constructing a sample that closely resembled the one in Atlanta in terms of age and marital experience.<sup>2</sup>

The most serious limitation to the generalizability of the conclusions I draw here is due not to the sample size but to other aspects of the research design. I attempt here to make an argument about historical change based on a cross-sectional study, which is always a sketchy endeavour. I use several strategies to try to ensure that I am not mistaking an age-effect for real change. First, I look at the marriage narratives that women share; the underlying logic in their stories of courtship and marriage suggest that it is unlikely that even with the passage of time the younger women will grow to think in ways more similar to their mothers. Although older and younger women shared the long-term goal of finding a spouse, the older women's brief and distant courtships were structured by an underlying narrative about family honour, while the younger women's more pleasure-oriented and individualistic narratives imply an entirely different kind of relationship.

Second, it is not necessary to be naive about the relationship between discourse and behaviour to believe that these younger couple's marriages really are different from those of their parents: older and younger men and women certainly shaped their stories of courtship and marriage bearing in mind what might or might not impress a young, light-skinned gringa, but the direction in which they exaggerated differs. The older women made sure that I knew that they did not speak back to their husbands, but the younger women, for the most part, made sure that I knew that they did. Participant observation—during which I saw that the younger women and men do things that their parents say that they never did—strengthens my argument for actual change. Finally, reference to the macro-structural changes that have promoted those cultural transformations supports my claim for real change over time, as does the fact that many other authors have found similar transformations in gender and marriage in other parts of Mexico (de Barbieri 1990; Hubbell 1993; González-Montes 1994; Montesinos-Carrera 1995; Gutmann 1996; Vásquez-García 1997; Grimes 1998; Amuchástegui 2001).<sup>3</sup>

## COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE

The parallels between the Mexican shift from marriages of *respeto* to marriages of *confianza* and transformations described by others in Africa, Europe, and North America (e.g. see Bott 1957; Simmons 1979; Stone 1979; Gillis *et al.* 1992; Inhorn 1996; Smith n.d.) suggest the value of exploring links between widespread processes such as industrialization and technological change and ideologies of the nuclear family. At first glance the emphasis on intimacy, choice, and cooperation that run throughout younger women's and men's descriptions of their marriages might seem to be directly influenced by North American ideals of companionate marriage (see Simmons 1979; Giddens 1992), and in fact I borrow the term 'companionate marriage' from scholarship on American social history. Simmons, for example, writing about the early twentieth-century United States, notes that 'a spate of literature outlining the new "companionate marriage", one based on friendship and sexual satisfaction, appeared in the 1920s, followed by more technical marriage manuals and popular medical advice in the next decade' (1979: 54–5).<sup>4</sup>

Mexicans are not, however, mimicking a gringo ideal of family relations; rather, they are transforming a globally available ideology into a specifically Mexican companionate marriage. Giddens argues that the focus on intimacy and pleasure as key criteria for successful relationships is part of a broader shift towards a modern form of voluntary (and quite unstable) kinship, based on affect rather than blood or obligation (1992). Indeed, as Giddens suggests, the idea that sexual intimacy and affection lie at the core of the marital bond seems to have become a sort of grassroots theory of kinship on an increasingly global scale. Anthropologists and historians working on marriage in locations as diverse as Egypt, Sicily, China, Nepal, Brazil, Papua New Guinea, and Nigeria have noted this focus on sexual closeness and emotional intimacy as critical characteristics of successful relationships (Inhorn 1996; Schneider and Schneider 1996; Yan 1997, 2003; Ahearn 1998; Rebhun 1999; Wardlow 1999; Smith n.d.)

Skolnik (1991), writing about the United States, discusses how structural transformations have promoted this shift towards companionate marriage. First, she notes the effects of the shift from an industrial to a service economy and the concomitant feminization of the workforce, increasing opportunity costs of fertility to women, and later age at first marriage for both men and women.<sup>5</sup> Second, she notes that declines in infant mortality and increased adult life expectancy mean that most adults who marry will survive their children's childhoods, and thus spend a greater portion of their adult life as a married couple without children. Third, she discusses 'psychological gentrification'—a sort of change in mentality, due in part to rising rates of higher education and a variety of other cultural and economic changes, in which Americans became 'more introspective, more attentive to inner experience .... Above all, they became more attentive to the emotional quality of relationships, not just in the family but at work as well' (1991: 17).

John Caldwell was among the first to describe similar changes in the developing world. Discussing Nigeria in the 1970s (Caldwell 1976), he notes 'the emotional nucleation' of the family, attributing this ideological change to cultural influences such as

European religious missionaries, the social effects of education, the media, and the transformation of sexuality into a domain for consumer satisfaction. He asserts that these cultural influences, rather than any economic or social change, were the key precondition for fertility decline. Lawrence Stone (1979), writing about England centuries earlier, makes an argument similar to Caldwell's about the rise of affective individualism as a force reshaping English families.

In an insightful critique, Veena Thadani (1978) discusses at some length how, although Caldwell and Stone perceptively describe changes in the emotional texture of family life, it seems illogical to privilege ideology as the driving force behind social and demographic change. Rather, she notes how 'relationships between ideas and social structure are reciprocal, as are the causal connections between them' (1978: 486). Similarly, Yan, in his exploration of the shift towards a companionate ideal in China, shows how political and economic elements such as changing conditions of land ownership and the state's family planning policy have combined with women's growing desire for spouses who are good conversationalists to reorganize family life in rural China (Yan 2003). Following their lead, as I sketch out in the pages that follow the Mexican companionate marriage, I also discuss some of the economic and social factors that have promoted this new ideal, taking the structural and cultural changes to be mutually reinforcing.

The ethnographic challenge, of course, is to explore the locally specific ways in which people use and transform what seems to be part of a global ideology of modernity. The comparative perspective employed here highlights the way that transnational linkages and social processes within Mexico have contributed to cultural changes in this community. These Mexican companionate marriages share with the North American construct an emphasis on the importance of sexual intimacy, but they manifest at the same time a number of uniquely Mexican features, such as a continued emphasis on maternity (albeit redefined) and an ongoing distinction between women of the street and of the house. It is to the task of exploring Mexican marriage that I turn now, describing the generational shift from an ideal based on obligation to one based on desire.

## GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN MARRIAGE: LAS MUJERES DE ANTES

Doña Elena is in her sixties and has been a widow now for several years, but she still remembers vividly what her grandmother told her more than 40 years ago when she was about to marry: to get along with her husband, her grandmother instructed her, 'just be quiet—don't answer back ... You need to serve them with love.'<sup>6</sup> Her grandmother said that marital happiness was out of one's hands—'the first thing', she told me, 'is to ask G-d for good luck'—but to the extent that a woman could do anything to ensure marital success, the path lay in hard work rather than sweet words. Doña Elena worked to 'have his food ready for him, his clothes all nicely ironed, and all mended like we used to do, and ... take care of him as best I could' and she expected



that Don Miguel, in turn, would ‘provide all that one needs, food and clothes, and not run around misbehaving’.

The marital bargain (Kandiyoti 1996) into which Doña Elena entered was based on the idea of separate spheres (with women in the house and men in the street) in which men and women showed respect for a spouse by fulfilling their gendered obligations. There was certainly warmth and closeness in some of these marriages; Doña Elena and Don Miguel enjoyed being together, and she cried while telling me how she missed him. The emphasis on men's and women's duty to *cumplir*, to fulfil a set a gendered responsibilities, does not mean that warmth and intimacy were not present—just that the presence (or absence) of these qualities was not the criterion along which marital success was evaluated.

In these marriages of *respeto*, challenging one's husband's will directly was an affront; women relied on more indirect strategies to achieve their goals. Doña Elena credits her marriage's success to her husband's gentle character—she notes that he never hit her—and to her own ability to get what she wanted ‘*por las buenas*’ (through his good side), which meant managing her speech so as to stay within the bounds of respect. To prepare her for a marriage of respect, Doña Elena's grandmother would not let her cut her braids, wear short skirts, or leave the house much; if she were unaccustomed to freedom she would be satisfied with even a very strict husband, whereas if she were spoiled as a child she would be unfit for all but the most indulgent men. Doña Elena was also lucky enough to marry a kind man. Women who were less lucky knew that the onus was on them to *saberse llevar*, to learn how to get along. A woman's parents would not take her back once she married: ‘*mi'ija*,’ they would say, ‘*es tu cruz*’ (my daughter, it's your cross to bear).<sup>7</sup>

To explore how women manoeuvred within these gendered expectations, I asked about the ways they might use the appearance of respect to carve out a space for their own autonomy (Renne 1999). Women with husbands who were violent or drank too much or never earned enough to support the family said that even when they would try to get their way *por las buenas*, they still had precious little autonomy. They said that perhaps it had been their destiny to suffer in marriage, or perhaps they had not known how to get along, to *comprenderse* and *saberse llevar*. Other women, though, would smile conspiratorially in response. As long as you let him think he is in charge, they would tell me, you can do what you want.

## From respeto to confianza

Younger women, in contrast, focus on *confianza* (trust) in addition to *respeto* as a key scale along which to evaluate a marriage. *Confianza* could be translated as trust or intimacy, but its meaning is broader, suggesting a kind of unguarded honesty among social equals. People will sometimes invite a guest to sit down, or to serve him a second helping of food, *con confianza*. *Confianza* also implies a relationship in which one can share secrets, knowing the secrets will remain in confidence. *Confianza* suggests equality (or at least a momentary setting aside of concerns about hierarchy), whereas one shows *respeto* by acknowledging hierarchy.

*Confianza* also refers to appropriate management of sexuality. Women say that they did not ask their mothers about menstruation because they had a lot of respect for them, and not enough *confianza*, and it is a mark of that same *confianza* to tell a sexual joke with other married women. Young women say that they waited until they had *confianza* with their boyfriends before giving in to their requests for a kiss, and they talk about how a woman must have *confianza* with her husband before she can initiate sexual intercourse. When older women used it in the context of describing their marriage, it meant specifically the idea that one's partner would not be unfaithful. Younger women do use the word that same way, but they also use it to describe the freedom to be oneself in a relationship and the idea of a special, shared, sexual intimacy.

The younger women still value *respeto* as a characteristic of marriage, but they use the word to claim new areas of power in marriage—saying, for example, that it would be disrespectful and a breach of *respeto* if a man were unfaithful. For younger women, *any* infidelity was inherently disrespectful, whereas their mothers emphasize that infidelity showed a lack of respect when a man's lack of discretion forced his wife to acknowledge his misbehaviour—when, as they say, he would ‘throw it on her face’ (*echarle en cara*). Younger women talk about expecting the basic ‘respect’ of being able to voice an opinion or disagree, whereas for their mothers direct disagreement with one's husband was hardly an indication of respect on anyone's part.

These marriages of *confianza* have four distinguishing features from those of *respeto*: joint decision-making, heterosociality, more cooperation in social reproduction (Hirsch 1998, 1999, 2003), and a new understanding of the function of marital sexuality. Younger men and women were likelier to say that they make decisions together, so that in response to the question ‘*quién manda en su casa?*’ (who gives the orders in your house?), they would each (separately) say that that they both do, or that neither one does. Some couples even seemed proud that they did not always automatically do what the man said. Second, younger men and women called my attention to the way they socialized with each other, as a couple and as a family, describing a gender order in which men do not constantly prove their masculine power by showing that they can come and go as they please while their wives live in a Mexican version of *purdah*, leaving the house only to buy food, visit female relatives, or take a sick child to the doctor—and only then with permission, *si piden permiso*.<sup>8</sup> The idea that husbands and wives are fit companions for one another lessens some of the social distance implied in the hierarchy of *respeto*.

Third, younger men claim to help their wives with domestic tasks much more than was common for men of their fathers' generation, and women suggest that they are helping the family by working for money. While ‘helping’ does not change the gendered primary responsibility for certain tasks, offering to help—or accepting an offer—no longer casts feminine virtue and masculine power in doubt. While women of the older generation certainly worked, both for money and at home, men's behaviour does seem to have changed: a number of the men interviewed commented on how different their own behaviour was from their fathers, and (although women continue to do the lion's share of domestic work) I observed differences between older and younger men's behaviour that validated these claims.

The fourth feature of these Mexican companionate marriages is that younger men and women's ideas about the role of sexuality in marriage are very different from their parents'.<sup>9</sup> For the older women, the marital bargain entailed mutual respect and an exchange of a woman's best efforts at social reproduction for her husband's productive efforts. The younger women, in contrast, saw the exchange of pleasure and sentiment as the foundation for a successful marriage. When I asked them about the role of sex in marriage, women in marriages of *confianza* would make comments such as 'sex is one of the most important things. For me personally, I think that the intimacy I have with [my husband] was worth a lot, to carry us through the big problems we have had ... Perhaps it wasn't so much that we cared for each other, that we loved each other, not even the kids, as it was the sexual relationship that we have.' Another woman in her early thirties in one of the Mexican field sites talked about how satisfying sex strengthened the conjugal bond, saying that, 'If you feel good in terms of intimacy, you will feel good in [the rest of] your life ... Because when you come, you end up happy, you get up in the morning happy, you have energy for things—I think it's what helps keep us going.' Older women, who emphasized a more reproductively oriented understanding of sexuality, tended to answer the question about the role of sex in marriage by saying that if a man were not satisfied sexually he would look for another woman.

Together, these qualities (an emphasis on a new kind of *confianza* in addition to respect, more room for explicit disagreement, a growing heterosociality, increased 'helping', a new focus on sexual pleasure) combine to form a new marital ideal. These historical changes in the marital idea are the product of both structural changes (in particular the increasing integration of this community into migrant circuits) and of the ways that people have responded to those changes. In the sections that follow, I explore how the perceived strategic advantages of these modern marriages have combined with structural changes to promote the development of these new constructions of gender and marriage.

## Factors promoting the shift towards an ideal of *confianza*

Some of the younger men credit the change to their experiences as migrants in the United States, but their fathers were just as likely to have lived without women for some time in the north, and some of the men who 'help' their wives have spent little or no time in *el norte*. In combination with the ground that men have ceded in decision-making and the fracturing of the sharply gendered distinction between the house and the street, men's willingness to pitch in domestically is part of a larger project of inserting themselves more closely into the day-to-day functioning of the family—men sweep not for the pleasure of a floor well swept, but as a gesture of generosity to their wives, a trade of some power and authority for warmth and closeness. For men, the benefits of relationships of *confianza* are emotional; they demand less respect than their fathers did, in order to have more intimacy. This reconstruction of marriage can also be understood as a strategy for social mobility. Couples in both the Mexican sending community and the Atlanta location described this newer masculinity as modern, and thus implicitly higher prestige (Hirsch 2003).

The perceived benefits of companionate marriage encourage women to press their husbands as far as they can towards this model. As women laughingly say about men inviting them to share in decision-making, or letting them spend more time visiting their relatives: *'si te da la mano, tomas el pie'* (if he gives you his hand, take the foot—in other words, if he gives an inch, take a mile). Women see companionate marriage as inherently more pleasurable—they talk about men's physical affection, and how their husbands are (or are not) *'detallista'*, thoughtful, at expressing their love through the giving of small gifts. Women also suggest that these companionate marriages are potentially more equitable: women feel freer to speak their minds, and to disagree. Women do seem to have marginally more autonomy in these marriages, and companionate marriage can give women a moral language with which to define the limits of acceptable behaviour rather differently than it was defined for their mothers.<sup>10</sup>

The idea that marriage is primarily about emotional satisfaction rather than kinship and economic security, however, has real costs to women. Women may see a promise of power in these new ideas about *confianza*, but the companionate ideology has more to say about the emotional intimacy couples can achieve through talking than it does about who gets the last word. Furthermore, women who embrace the idea that marriage is a bond of desire rather than of obligation may forget that obligation is easier to enforce than desire through collective social pressure.

The strategic advantages that men and women perceive in these new marriages should be understood in light of the structural changes that have made them possible. As a consequence of Degollado's strong insertion into migrant networks, younger married couples are more likely than were their parents to live alone—either in their own one-room brick house in one of the new *colonias*, or in a small trailer or apartment somewhere in the United States. As Inhorn has pointed out in very different circumstances (1996), neo-local residence forces (or allows) a couple to rely much more heavily on each other both socially and emotionally.<sup>11</sup>

For couples in this community who live primarily in Atlanta, a number of factors combine to give women the leverage to push their husbands further toward the companionate model. The privacy, legal protections against domestic violence, and economic opportunities of life in *el norte* combine to give women more bargaining power than their sisters in Mexico have (see Hirsch 1999). While women in communities on both sides of the border may share these companionate dreams, Mexicans say that *en el norte, la mujer manda* (in the United States, women give the orders); what they mean when they say this is that women in the United States have the social and economic resources to live without a husband, and thus the power to press for a marriage that is a bit more egalitarian.<sup>12</sup> For men who migrate to Atlanta, spending time with their families also has a protective advantage: men who are safely at home watching TV with their families are less likely to be picked up by *la migra*.

Even beyond the way that migrant remittances have promoted neo-locality and the way that migration changes the lives of those actually living in the north, there are other ways in which migration has affected ideas about marriage and sexuality. As increasing numbers of married and single women have migrated north over the past decade,

slipping off to *el norte* has become firmly established as an option for women whose behaviour does not conform to community standards. Further, female return migrants parade their superior status as *norteñas* by dressing less modestly, smoking in public, driving, and in general going out of their way to show townspeople how things are done on the other side (*al otro lado*). For the women who stay behind, the young men who go back and forth put some pressure on them to make courtship at least a bit more similar to United States customs; hand holding, which a generation ago was a stain on an unmarried woman's honour, is now widely regarded as innocuous. Women insist on sticking to all the old customs at their peril: most of the year there are many fewer young men than women in the town, and in fact the town is full of '*quedadas*' (literally, leftover women) in their thirties and forties.

The shift towards a companionate ideal, however, is not only a product of the social, economic, and cultural aspects of US-Mexico migration. Mexican cultural influences such as satellite TV, the video-cassette recorder, and pop music have also reshaped the context in which women and men construct their marriages (see also Carillo 2002). Satellite TV arrived in Degollado and El Fuerte in the mid 1980s, and rather than spend the day in the plaza or visiting with family, many young people now spend a good part of Sunday afternoon watching Televisa's variety shows, in which popular songs about sex and love are promoted through a brazen reliance on barely dressed women which stands in strong contrast to more traditional ideas about modesty.<sup>13</sup>

Education has played a role as well: in the rural area that includes El Fuerte, the percentage of the population over age 15 that is illiterate fell from 48 per cent in the 1960 census to 24 per cent in the 1990 census, and in Degollado illiteracy declined from 32 per cent to 11 per cent over the same time period (INEGI, Estado de Michoacan 1960*a*: 375; 1990*b*: 46; INEGI, Estado de Jalisco 1960*b*: 445; 1990*a*: 18). Rising literacy means that people with access to printed materials can seek out information about their bodies, sex, and reproduction, as a number of the younger life history informants recounted doing. Furthermore, all of the younger life history informants were exposed to some kind of information about reproduction in primary school. Regardless of what specific messages they might have received, the provision of information about reproduction to children in schools suggests that it is something about which it is appropriate to be educated. In contrast, the older women—many of whom attended school only for a year or two, if at all—grew up with the idea that sex and reproduction were topics about which respectful people did not speak in public.

Another demographic change has been the rising age at marriage. The 1987 Demographic and Health Survey reports that in Zone V (which includes El Fuerte and Degollado), the average age at first union was 19.7 among women whose ages were 45–49, while it was 20.8 among women whose ages were 25–29. In areas with a population between 2,500 and 19,999, the change was even more marked, from 18.9 to 20.6 (Secretaría de Salud 1989: 24). In the past it was not uncommon for women in Degollado and El Fuerte to marry when they were 15 or 16, but a marriage at 15 is increasingly a cause for comment or even criticism: When the 15-year old sister of a life history informant ran away with her boyfriend, her older and wiser sister in

Atlanta repeatedly referred to her sister and brother in law in Degollado as *'un pinche par de crias'*, a pair of damn kids.

In tracing out the matrix of structural and strategic factors that have contributed to this shift in conjugal ideals and practices, my goal is to situate theoretically the transformation of a demographic category such as marriage. Given how frequently demographic research has been framed by unarticulated assumptions grounded in modernization theory (Szreter 1993; Greenhalgh 1995), it seems critical here to be clear that this is not a story about how people's ideals for family life are automatically transformed by technological and economic change. Furthermore, it seems equally important to avoid the modernist assumption that change necessarily implies progress, and so I have taken pains to point out the potential costs to women of these cultural changes. At the same time, of course, while the men and women with whom I lived are remaking their intimate lives, they are not remaking them just as they please, and so I have noted how structural factors have combined with ideological changes to transform the range of options available to women and men as they create relationships with each other.

## COMPANIONATE MARRIAGE AND THE MODERN FAMILY

The new ideal of *confianza* is essential for understanding how these younger couples build their families. While they agree with the older generation that *'los hijos son la felicidad de la casa'*, that children make for a happy home, they do not wish for nearly as much 'happiness' in that regard as did their parents. The life history informants' mothers had an average of almost nine surviving children each. The life history informants, though some are admittedly much earlier in their reproductive careers, have an average of three children each, and none of the younger ones want more than four or five. These changes can only be understood in light of how the modern Mexican ideal *confianza* emphasizes socially constructed (as opposed to blood-based) ties between spouses and between parents and children, thus promoting smaller families with different kinds of relationships. The ideal family has become one in which the primary bond is the relationship the parents build together, and the secondary bonds are those that the parents deliberately construct through giving their children love and understanding (*cariño* and *comprensión*).

### Delaying the first birth

In 1983, Rindfuss and Morgan suggested that the interval between union and first birth merited further investigation. Discussing data from several Asian countries, they argued that 'the shift from arranged to romantic marriage and resultant increases in coital frequency have shortened the length of the first birth interval' (1983: 273). In spite of the Rindfuss and Morgan paper, little attention has been paid to the interval between union and first birth as an indicator of changing attitudes towards marital fertility—perhaps because a significant percentage of first births take place outside of or before marriage, or because researchers have been unsure how to measure the period of 'exposure' leading up to the first birth. The global trend

towards companionate marriage, however, provides a compelling theoretical reason to explore changes in the first-birth interval, which could be seen as a demographic 'leading edge' of changing ideologies of marriage and a herald of future fertility decline. A further advantage of studying first birth, of course, is that it is a closed period that occurs years before completed fertility.

In the United States and many other parts of the world, women are delaying their first birth until later in life *and* until later into the course of marriage (National Center for Health Statistics 1986; Wineberg 1988). Many have examined birth spacing for both the demographic and health consequences (Whelpton 1964; Coombs and Freedman 1970; Bumpass *et al.* 1978; Trussell and Menken 1978; Teachman and Schollaert 1989; Yamaguchi and Ferguson 1995), but spacing usually addresses the distance between first and subsequent births rather than the time between marriage and first birth. The few who have specifically looked at the first birth have focused on the experience of the couple through the pregnancy and birth (Rainwater 1965; Entwisle and Doering 1981), or have examined the psychological and marital repercussions and consequences of a larger union—first-birth interval rather than the *causes* of such an interval (McLaughlin and Micklin 1983; Wineberg 1988). Another small set of studies have examined the time lapse between union and first birth in societies in which contraceptive use is not prevalent, but in these studies the timing of the first birth is considered a measure of fecundity (Bloom and Reddy 1986; Kallan and Udry 1986; Singh *et al.* 1992).

In contrast to the older informants who were eager to conceive as soon as possible after marriage, some women in this transnational community have begun to talk about delaying the first birth. The idea that it might be desirable to spent the first year or two of marriage alone as a couple only makes sense to young men and women in this community because of their ideas about what it means to be married. The older life history informants say that it never occurred to them to delay the first birth because the whole point of marriage was to have children. When I asked Mariana, now living in Atlanta and, at 48, pregnant with her ninth child, why she thought the local government in her *rancho* sponsored family planning campaigns, she responded that she did not know 'why the president [of Mexico] worries so much about us—if you get married, you know what you are headed for'. Several younger women, in contrast, wanted to delay the first birth and explained their desire in terms of their marital aspirations. Isabel, for example, got pregnant soon after her marriage but she explains that they had wanted to wait: 'well, to enjoy life at first, like that, alone and recently married and all—supposedly we were going to wait four years, that was always the plan, that after four years we were going to get pregnant with the first, to enjoy ourselves and all that'.

Beneath the idea of enjoying oneself as a couple lies the suggestion that there is relationship work to be done in these first few years, that a reasonable way to lay the foundation for marriage is through investing time in getting to know one's partner. I asked Mercedes if she wanted to have a child right away after marriage, and she said no, that they wanted to have time to '*conocerse*', to get to know each other. When I questioned her on what it meant to 'get to know each other', her immediate response

was *'todo'*—everything. She explained that some time without a child can help 'you know if you are going to get along (*congeniar*) with your partner (*pareja*) ... Because if you get married, and get pregnant right away, you don't get to know each other, you don't get to know him as a spouse, but rather you get to know him right away as a father.' Mercedes recommended that women delay a first birth until they can say 'he's a good husband, I've known him for three years as a spouse and he's the greatest, ... we can get along, we agree on a lot of things, we have the same opinions and everything. Then that's the moment to get pregnant with a child.' Her words imply that marriage takes conscious effort, that 'getting along' (*congeniarse*) is something that young couples need to learn to do rather than an automatic product of work well done and roles respectfully filled. Blanca echoed her concerns; she said to me in the months before her marriage that she and her husband wanted to 'get to know each other better, to enjoy being a couple, because they say—and I know—that it's hard to settle in together, and just imagine having a child right away'.

The idea of having time to enjoy being together before becoming parents may be evocative for younger women, but it is not something that all or even most of them are actually doing. How, then, do those who did delay differ from the others? The strongest patterns observable seem to be the combined effects of cohort and migration (given the sample size, of course, all generalizations here are somewhat exploratory in nature). First of all, all six of those who delayed or tried to do so are under 35. They spoke strongly to the ideal of the companionate marriage, though this should be seen as perhaps necessary but not sufficient condition since many of those who wanted to get pregnant right away did so as well. Clearly, though, the very fact that some women can articulate this desire to delay a first birth is integrally related to the ideology of companionate marriage, based as it is on the idea that the deepest bonds of marriage are those of emotion and intimacy. Second, all three of those who delayed live in Atlanta (though Patricia was already pregnant by the time she moved there), as do four of the six women who say that either they or their husbands wish they had. Women in Atlanta are perhaps readier to talk about the benefits of *convivencia*, even if they did not always follow through on their actions, because they may have experienced a slackening of the intense social pressure to produce a first child that many women feel in Mexico.<sup>14</sup>

That women in Atlanta are more willing even to entertain the idea of delaying suggests that motherhood and adulthood might not be so tightly woven together for women in Atlanta as they are for women in Mexico. These young migrant women are the same ones who prefer the risk of contraceptive side effects (including infertility) to the risk of unwanted births (Hirsch and Nathanson 2001). Women in the United States lean more towards affective strategies for building the companionate marriage, while their sisters in Mexico have woven together the use of affective bonds with the traditional reliance on the bonds of parenthood.

Interestingly, the two studies that have examined the first-birth interval as a socially constructed phenomenon (Rindfuss and Morgan 1983; Feng and Quanhe 1996) found that it had actually *decreased* significantly. Feng and Quanhe write that a prominent feature of the Chinese demographic regime before the 1970s was a first-birth interval that averaged well over two-and-a-half years, despite very low rates of contraception.



Over the course of three decades, the interval has shortened dramatically, from 34 months in the 1950s to less than 18 months in the 1980s. Concurrently, overall fertility declined sharply and age at first marriage rose.

Feng and Quanhe argue that the shrinking first-birth interval in China was propelled by broad social changes, including fundamental transformations in the marriage system (with far fewer arranged marriages), a massive expansion in formal education and non-familial employment, and significant changes in young couples' sexual behaviour, which was intentionally assisted by the government family planning programme's wide dissemination of information on sexuality and reproduction. The authors document that premarital sex, strictly prohibited in China's past, is now commonplace, suggesting that shorter first-birth intervals are an outcome of increased sexual activity among young couples, independent of the effect of later marriage. As noted above, Rindfuss and Morgan use data from Korea, Malaysia, and Taiwan, to show a shrinking first-birth interval, which they explain by arguing that romantic marriages would have a higher initial coital frequency than would arranged marriages.

The only two studies, therefore, to link the first birth interval to more widespread changes in the meaning of marriage have found that in Asia more companionate marriages have tended to create smaller first-birth intervals. Here, ethnographic research in this Mexican community suggested the opposite—that changing ideas about marriage may be used to justify a somewhat longer delay before the first birth. On the simplest level, the difference in the direction of change in the birth interval is perhaps explainable in terms of contraceptive use: couples in Asia were presumably not using contraceptives while enjoying higher coital frequencies earlier in marriage, while those couples in this study who did manage to lengthen the interval between union and first birth spoke explicitly about how they had used a variety of methods to do so. More profoundly, however, the difference between the examples from Asia and Mexico speaks to the local malleability of demographic categories and to the need for ethnographic research to uncover the variability in the microlevel strategies through which people produce macrolevel phenomena such as changes in the interval between union and first birth. The ideological construct (romantic or companionate marriage) shaping these changes in both regions is quite similar, but only by exploring the specific local practices of sexuality and contraception can we understand how similar cultural forms come to have opposite demographic effects.

## Imagining the family: wanting fewer children

A much more widespread change, notable among almost all the women under 40, is a precipitous decline in the number of children they say they would like. This corresponds to the declining TFR in Mexico, which were between 7 and 8 before 1970 and had fallen to 2.6 by 1997 (Secretaría de Salud 1989; Juarez *et al.* 1996; Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) 1997). The western region, in which Jalisco and Michoacan are found, was among the latest to experience falling fertility. As late as 1976, for example, this region had a TFR of 6.3 (compared, for example, to 4.4 in central Mexico or 5.3 in northern Mexico, Juarez *et al.* 1996: 134). More recently fertility in the western

region has fallen to levels comparable to national levels, but significant rural–urban differentials still exist: the same 1986 survey found an average of 4.42 live births per woman in large metropolitan areas, whereas in areas with a population between 2,500 and 19,999 the average was 6.17 live births per woman (Secretaría de Salud 1989: 37).<sup>15</sup>

Some women who spoke about reasons to limit their family size to three or four explain the change in terms of the high costs of child rearing, of wanting to give their children things (like shoes and education) which were beyond their parents' reach. Even more intriguing, however, are those who argued that the most compelling reason to limit family size is to enjoy a new model of family relations. These women (eleven of the eighteen who expressed a definite preference for a family of between two and five) wanted to have time to talk to their children, to get to know them as people, help them with their homework and guide their developing personalities, without having their attention distracted by an endless round of diapers and bottles. Some explicitly contrasted the kind of time they would like to spend with their children with what their mothers could give them, while others spoke about how much children need love and attention. They wanted to limit their fertility to have time for their children, but also to make sure that they had time for their husbands. Whatever their specific explanation, these women's words suggest an important dimension of fertility decline which has received scant attention from observers of such changes: the link between a desire for smaller families and the desire for different sorts of relationships among people in those families.

The difference between the older women, described here, and the younger women should not be understood as the transition from a state of 'natural fertility' to one of controlled fertility.<sup>16</sup> All of the older women tried at different points in their marriages to manage their fertility. When I interviewed Mariana in 1995 she told me that she was still hoping to have another child, but was waiting until they had paid off their trailer; sure enough, when we spoke in the spring of 1998 she told me she was expecting her ninth child in June (they had taken out a 3-year mortgage). Furthermore, many of these women's mothers, though claiming that they welcomed all the children that God sent them (as they had promised to do when they were married), saw no contradiction in using prolonged breast-feeding or surgical sterilization to shape divine will. The change, rather, is that these older life history informants and their mothers wanted to space children because of the physical difficulty and economic burden of having children at 1-year intervals, but they did not see compelling reasons for having smaller families. If having children is the physical and social act that lies at the heart of constructing a family, then it is hard to imagine a good reason to limit births, short of dire health consequences for not doing so.

The younger women also see having children as an integral part of family building, but on a much more limited scale. Again and again, they emphasize an affectivity that is framed as only possible with smaller families; as Juana, mother of four, said, 'to give fewer children more love (*entre mas poquitos darles mas amor*)' or as Isabel, mother of three, noted, 'I think that with fewer, you enjoy them more'. Lourdes, eager as she was as a 15-year old newlywed to make sure that *jalaba la maquinita*, that the machinery

was working, is now just as sure that she wants to wait a good while before having the next one, and not have more than four or five altogether. She explains their preferences by talking about her in-laws: 'his mother never hugged them, and his father even less, he didn't love them at all ... he [her husband] says their parents never paid any attention to them'.

Life history informants in all the field sites noted this same theme of wanting to create different kinds of relationships than in their families of origin. As Beatriz, Lourdes' sister, said:

we grew up without a lot of things—never lacked for food or clothes, thank G-d, but we did miss love and attention ... If you have one child there on the side, and another crawling, and a third in bed, and you are pregnant again, which of all of them are you going to pay attention to? Ultimately, to none of them, because you are trying to take care of all of them. When my mother was pregnant, and had one still in her arms, and another crawling and a fourth just barely learning to walk, she would get really anxious (*nerviosa*). Sometimes the oldest would scream, and wake up the little one, and then it was just anger and mistreatment (*corajes y maltratos*) instead of attention and tenderness. So I don't know, but that's why I would like my son to be two or three, so that he could talk and take care of himself a little bit, and not have them a year apart ... that seems really hard to me.

The kinds of relationships that women wanted with their children echo the ideal of *confianza* they seek with their husbands: there is the same emphasis on spending time together, on open communication, and on emotional support.

Finally, women talk about having fewer children than their mothers did so that they will have time to continue with what Eva referred to '*un noviazgo después de ser casados*', a romance (or a courtship) after marriage. The affectionate marriage, it seems, is a relationship that needs constant maintenance in order to succeed. Esperanza, who at the time of the interview was trying to get pregnant with their first child, feared that after having a child their marriage might change:

I wouldn't like to stop paying attention to my husband because of my child. I'd like to be able to divide things well, make time for my child without neglecting him ... It would be really bad (*muy feo*) to ignore him, to leave him alone because all day the child needs one thing or another, and to neglect my relationship as his spouse.

The idea that a child could get in the way of a married couple's relationship—or even, as several women articulated, that a woman might feel jealous of the attention her husband pays to the children—is only possible within this new paradigm of the companionate marriage.

Ethnographic research is ill-suited to discerning whether Mexican women in Atlanta have lower fertility than their peers in Mexico. The fieldwork, however, pointed to a number of immediate economic and more long-term social influences which shape couples' fertility preferences. In Atlanta, paid labour outside the home is much less easily integrated with the work of child rearing. In Degollado and El Fuerte, women who work, like Isabel, can bring their children to play while they mind the store, while others can have their older children or another relative watch the younger ones. It is also, as several women noted, more expensive to raise children in the United States than in Mexico; not

only must one provide the same basics of food and clothing as in Mexico but children are also likely to develop more expensive 'whims', such as for Nintendo games and rollerblades.

Social pressures for higher fertility in Mexico and lower fertility in the United States also come into play. In Mexico, the pressure to have a first child is more acute than it is in the more diffuse Mexican community in Atlanta. Women are also aware that fertility norms in the United States are different. Patricia, for example, says that while she would like to have four children, she will wait and see how it feels to have two or three, 'because sometimes they say that four is a lot—in this country, to have four children is like having a lot'. It is possible, then, that women who migrate have fewer children not just to help ensure their children's upward mobility but for their own.

In summary, the marked decline in desired fertility among women and men from this rural, migrant-sending community suggests a re-evaluation of how people are constructing families. They are having fewer children, and at least considering having them later, in order to create solid ties based on a new kind of *confianza* relationship with their husbands and children. Women who migrate are perhaps a bit bolder in adopting these new strategies than their sisters; the few who actually delay a first birth rather than just talk about it are migrants, and it seems possible that they will have lower fertility as well.

## CONCLUSION

Women and men in this transnational community are imagining families united by bonds of love and *confianza*, and they are building those families in ways that make room for the conjugal intimacy that nourishes those bonds. These cohort differences, however, are cross-cut by differences in the social settings in which the two groups of women in this study live. Mexican women in Atlanta were as a group more likely to try to delay the first birth, while the comparison group in Mexico seemed less committed to a firm separation of sexual intimacy from reproduction and more invested in emphasizing the shared control of fertility. Both approaches to building a marriage and a family fit squarely within the discourse of the Mexican companionate marriage, but at the same time they show how women highlight those aspects of the discourse most useful to them, given their circumstances and resources.

I touch here on several larger questions relevant to discussions about social categories in population studies. First of all, I have provided examples of how marriage, a socially constructed relationship, is subject to transformation, so that the meanings of a marital relationship vary locally and over time. A marriage of *confianza* is *not* the same as a companionate marriage in the United States, and so while we should acknowledge that the similarity is more than accidental—that related structural changes may have promoted the development of similar ideals—we should also be careful to explore the differences. The changes described in this Mexican transnational community do not indicate that Mexico is 'catching up' with the United States in some kind of oversimplified, evolutionary fashion. The similarities should serve, rather, as

another example of the way people deliberately shape demographic categories such as marriage: discussions of companionate marriage in the United States have been more popular than academic (Simmons 1979; Trimberger 1983), and my review of them directs the reader's attention to the similarities and differences in the concepts people use to make sense of their lives.

This insistence on ethnographic particularity reveals one of the tensions that is at the heart of research in anthropological demography. Demographic research methods draw power from their ability to focus our attention on a level in which local variation is invisible so that we can make broad comparisons. To calculate age-specific fertility rates, one must avoid getting bogged down in a discussion of the ways in which being 15 in Los Angeles is different to being 15 in rural Guatemala. By separating women into 'women in union' and 'single women' to calculate the fertility of married and unmarried women, we deliberately ignore the complexity and messiness of actual relationships, and indeed it would be impossible to produce demographic data if we insisted at all times and places in focusing on local variation.

In contrast, by questioning the applicability of established categories (such as natural fertility (Bledsoe *et al.* 1994)) or by looking at the specific concepts people use to make sense out of their social world, we find information that is potentially rich in explanatory power but that is more complicated to compare (see Greenhalgh 1995; Kertzer and Fricke 1997). Bits of ethnographic data by themselves do not make for nearly such easy comparisons as bits of demographic data, because the facts that in some places women plough while in other places they do not, or that in some places a food is considered hot while in other places it is considered cold, are meaningless if stripped of social and theoretical context. Ultimately, then, these differences in approaches to categories relate to epistemological differences between anthropology and demography.

In addition to having presented an argument for looking at the non-universality of categories, I hope to have drawn the reader's attention to the processes through which these social categories change. Change happens at the individual, relationship, and wider structural level; women construct marriages of *confianza* by reinterpreting words in their speech (such as expanding their definition of *respeto*), by negotiating with their husbands, and by taking advantage of opportunities for education and paid work. The change is dialectic, incorporating the influence of Mexican social processes, transnational linkages, and individual agency.

Finally, there are winners and losers in this tussle over meanings: women may push for companionate marriage because they believe it will provide a moral framework within which they can better defend themselves against persistent gender inequality, but it can also be used against them—it does not seem an accident that divorce rates have risen in the United States in the same century as a successful marriage has been redefined as one that provides emotional satisfaction. We should look, then, not just at the role of individual agency and structural change in shaping these categories, but at the struggles over meaning between social groups. Over time, no doubt, the majority of Mexican women (whether in Mexico or abroad) will still respond to a surveyor's question about marital status by proudly claiming to be *casada* (married),

but what they mean by that, and the work they do to be good wives and mothers, has changed significantly, and will in all likelihood continue to do so.

## Notes

1. To protect the anonymity of the life history informants, it is not possible to present extensive information about their demographic characteristics, but see Hirsch (2003: 36–9) for more biographical information (some details have been changed to protect their identities).
2. Given the discussion of marital ideals that follows, it is important to explore whether there might be a bias towards ‘happy marriages’ among the women interviewed here. Because generational changes in marriage was not initially among the central questions of the study, none of the women knew beforehand that that would be a key focus in the research. Furthermore, none of those invited to be life history informants declined. Finally, a number of women in the study had gone through difficult times in their marriage: five had been separated, and of those one had divorced and remarried. Those whose marriages showed more conflict embraced the companionate ideal as strongly as their peers, although they acknowledged that they may have failed to realize it in their own lives. The opening quote, for example, is taken from a woman who has suffered domestic violence, rape, and other repeated humiliations from her husband, and has been separated from him several times.
3. For a more detailed discussion of this methodological problem, see Hirsch (2003: 157–79). Another limitation of the study design has to do with those who are missing from the sample due to the social organization of migration—that is, older women migrants. Although many fewer women migrated in the past than in the recent post-immigration reform era (Cornelius 1991), there were some older women who migrated away from Degollado, and it is certainly possible that women who migrated to the United States a generation ago did so in search of a marriage of *confianza*. Unfortunately, the Atlanta immigrant community is relatively new and so very few older women migrants could be found to interview. I hope to follow this issue up in the future by working with immigrants from Degollado to older, more established migrant receiving communities such as Chicago or Los Angeles.
4. For a discussion of the changing political valences of these companionate ideals in the twentieth-century United States, see Hirsch (2003: 1–56), Trimberger (1983), and Gordon (1990).
5. While Skolnik focuses on the implications for marriage of the transition from an industrial to a service economy, it is also true that industrialization had a key role on shaping the family as a historically specific unit of production and consumption (see Tilly and Scott 1978; Connell 1987). The way the social organization of production influences the gendered division of labour and shapes households as viable economic units for production and consumption and—thus for survival—is a topic that has been discussed by many dating back to Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884; reprinted in Tucker 1978). Marriage is no longer such a key strategy for survival in urban industrialized societies (although women and children continue to benefit from the social and economic shelter of the institution (see Waite 1995)). It is certainly the case, however, that women in Degollado and El Fuerte continue to depend on men for social status and economic security in a way that their sisters in the United States may not. As I discuss elsewhere (Hirsch 1999), marriage may not be necessary for survival in rural Mexico, but it certainly makes a woman's life easier.
6. For a more extensive discussion of generational changes in marriage, see Hirsch (1998, 2003).

7. Doña Elena's story should not distract from the fact that older women's discussions of marriage were rich in metaphors of suffering, powerlessness, and disappointment. In addition to describing marriage as a cross to bear, older women frequently referred to marriage as *un albur*. *Albures* are joke games involving a form of Mexican pun (see Hirsch 1990) in which men (and, less frequently, women) use words without sexual meanings (such as banana, chile, etc.) to stand in for sexual words (penis, anus). The game is an aggressive one, in which there is clearly a winner and loser, so women's comments that marriage is an albur could be interpreted to suggest that it is a game that is revealed to be more sexual—and aggressively sexual—than one had expected. At the very least, describing marriage as *un albur* suggests that it turns out to be not quite what women had expected. Furthermore, the emphasis some older women place on suffering as necessarily a characteristic of marriage has a religious quality. In addition to being 'a cross to bear', I have also heard older women describe their marriages as '*mi calvario*', my calvary. All these discussions of suffering seem to invoke both the Virgin Mary, and how she suffered through the loss of her son, as well as obviously Jesus' suffering on the cross. In effect, women almost seem to be making themselves into martyrs for their children's sake, and to feel that they derive a certain amount of comfort or even power from this construction. There is of course a large literature on Mexican womanhood and images of the Virgin, particularly the Virgin of Guadalupe (Mexico's patron saint; e.g. Rodriguez 1994).
8. For a more extended discussion of the gendered division of social space (men in the street, women in the house), see Rouse (1991), Gutierrez (1991), and Gutmann (1996).
9. Differences emerged in younger and older women's responses to questions on the following issues: whether they feel they can say no to having sex; whether they initiate sex; if they have been forced by their husbands; what they say about pleasure; their attitudes towards sexual activities other than vaginal intercourse; and the kind of verbal and non-verbal communication they have with their husbands (see Hirsch 1998). In this chapter I paint the generational contrast with a fairly broad brush, but it is worth noting that not all of the younger women embraced the companionate ideal, and elsewhere I explore differences in younger women's experiences (Hirsch and Nathanson 2001; Hirsch 2002, 2003; Hirsch *et al.* 2002).
10. Women talk about 'having a right' (*tener el derecho*) to go see female relatives or friends as long as they do not neglect their other duties. Their mothers talk, in contrast, about getting permission (*pedir permiso*). Women also use the ideology of companionate marriage to claim access to previously male privileges, such as working outside the home for money (which women then justify as helping the family get ahead, *trabajando para salir adelante*) or going north as migrants with their husbands, rather than staying in Mexico with the children as their mothers might have. On this last point, women explicitly frame their desire to migrate in terms of their marriage; they say, '*no me case para estar sola*', I did not get married to be alone.
11. Increased neo-locality due to wages earned through transnational labour migration contributes, of course, to increased expectations that couples will begin their married lives alone. This is a good example of the reciprocity between structural and cultural factors, noted above and discussed by Thadani (1978).
12. There are important lines of stratification within the migrant community, so that although the refrain implies that all women are better off in the United States, this is far from true. For a discussion of the specific factors that shape migrant women's resources in Atlanta, see Hirsch (2002, 2003).

13. The other more commercial force that has grown visibly in recent years are local establishments such as the disco in Degollado and a number of bars featuring 'los table-dance' on the highway just outside El Fuerte. In the disco, unmarried people from Degollado and the surrounding *ranchos* gather to dance, or to slip into a dark corner to kiss. The 'table-dances' are rumoured to feature commercial sex, though as I never entered one I could not substantiate this. In spite of their obvious differences, both types of locations have created new settings which are neither private and protected like the home, nor public (and thus under the community's vigilance) like the plaza. It is of course nothing new to have commercial sex establishments. What is new is their visibility: the signs say 'table-dance aquí!' in bold letters for all to see.
14. The methods that couples use to delay a first birth are worth noting briefly. One reason not to delay a first birth, of course, is so that a woman can demonstrate her fertility, and so all of the women who talked about or actually tried to lengthen the first-birth interval discussed the tension between controlling their fertility and impairing it. As Potter (1999) has noted, that idea that hormonal contraceptives are dangerous is widespread in Mexico and continues to be promoted by physicians. It is not surprising, then, that women explain that if they were to try to delay a first child, they would be more likely to use rhythm and withdrawal because pills—as one woman said—'rot your uterus'. Women expressed a sense of moral as well as physical danger, as if to use a technological method without first having had at least one child is an act of hubris too blatant not to provoke divine wrath (expressed as primary infertility). In the case of all but one of the women who tried to delay her first birth, then, women used rhythm or withdrawal; the acknowledged inefficiency of these methods seemed to make them more palatable morally (for more on this, see Hirsch and Nathanson 2001).
15. Elsewhere I discuss at much greater length the issue of migration and fertility change (Hirsch 1998). Space considerations make it impossible to do justice to that topic here, so suffice it to say that this study was not designed to generate conclusive data on how fertility changes with migration on a macrolevel, but rather to provide a more microlevel view of some of the changes in social context that could be understood to influence gender and sexuality (as well, of course, as fertility). Given that I am not discussing the effect of fertility on migration, I present background data here only on Mexican women's fertility in Mexico.
16. See Bledsoe *et al.* (1994).

## References

- Ahearn, L. (1998). "'Love keeps afflicting me": agentive discourses in Nepali love letters', Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Anthropological Association of America, Philadelphia, PA.
- Ali, K. A. (2002). *Planning the Family in Egypt: New Bodies, New Selves*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Amuchástegui, A. (2001). *Virginidad e iniciación sexual en México: Experiencias y significados*. Mexico: EDAMEX.
- Bledsoe, C. H., Hill, A., D'Allessandro, U., and Langerock, P. (1994). 'Constructing natural fertility: the use of western contraceptive technologies in rural Gambia', *Population and Development Review*, 20(1): 81–113.
- Bloom, D. E. and Reddy, P. H. (1986). 'Age patterns of women at marriage, cohabitation, and first birth in India', *Demography*, 23(4): 509–23.



- Bott, E. (1957/1971). *Family and Social Network: Roles, Norms and External Relationships in Ordinary Urban Families*. New York: The Free Press.
- Bumpass, L., Rindfuss, R., and Janosik, R. (1978). 'Age and marital status at first birth and the pace of subsequent fertility', *Demography*, 15: 75–86.
- Caldwell, J. C. (1976). 'Toward a restatement of demographic transition theory', *Population and Development Review*, September/December: 321–66.
- Carillo, H. (2002). *The Night is Young: Sexuality in Mexico in the Time of AIDS*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) (1997). *Planificación Familiar*. Mexico City: Consejo Nacional de Población.
- Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Coombs, L. C. and Freedman, R. (1970). 'Pre-marital pregnancy, childspacing, and later economic achievement', *Population Studies*, 24: 389–412.
- Cornelius, W. A. (1991). 'Los migrantes de la crisis: the changing profile of Mexican migration to the United States', in M. González de la Rocha and A. Escobar Latapí (eds.), *Social Responses to Mexico's Economic Crisis*. San Diego: Center for US–Mexican Studies, University of California at San Diego.
- de Barbieri, T. (1990). 'Sobre géneros, prácticas y valores: notas acerca de posibles erosiones del machismo en México', in J. M. Ramírez-Sáiz (ed.), *Normas y prácticas: Morales y cívicas en la vida cotidiana*. Mexico City: Porrúa/Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- Engels, F. (1884/1978). 'The origin of the family, private property, and the state', in R. C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edn. New York: Norton.
- Entwisle, D. R. and Doering, S. G. (1981). *The First Birth: A Family Turning Point*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
- Feng, W. and Quanhe, Y. (1996). 'Age at marriage and the first birth interval: the emerging change in sexual behavior among young couples in China', *Population and Development Review*, 22(2): 299–320.
- Giddens, A. (1992). *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gillis, J. R., Tilly, L. A., and Levine, D. (eds.) (1992). *The European Experience of Declining Fertility, 1850–1970*. Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., and Blanc-Szanton, C. (eds.) (1992). 'Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity and Nationalism Reconsidered', in *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 645. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- González-Montes, S. (1994). 'Intergenerational and gender relations in the transition from a peasant economy to a diversified economy', in H. Fowler-Salamini and M. K. Vaughan (eds.), *Women of the Mexican Countryside, 1850–1990*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Gordon, L. (1990). *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America*, revised edn. New York: Penguin Books.
- Greenhalgh, S. (1995). *Situating Fertility: Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grimes, K. M. (1998). *Crossing Borders: Changing Social Identities in Southern Mexico*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Gutierrez, R. (1991). *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1846*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Gutmann, M. C. (1996). *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hirsch, J. S. (1990). 'Between the missionaries' position and the missionary position: Mexican dirty jokes and the public (sub)version of sexuality'. *Critical Matrix, Princeton Working Papers in Women's Studies*, 5, 1–27.
- (1998). 'Migration, modernity and Mexican marriage: a comparative study of gender, sexuality and reproductive health in a transnational community', Unpublished Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD.
- (1999). 'En el norte la mujer manda: gender, generation and geography in a Mexican transnational community', *American Behavioral Scientist*, 42(9): 1332–49.
- (2002). *Que, pues, con el pinche NAFTA?: gender, power and migration between western Mexico and Atlanta*, *Urban Anthropology*, 31(4): 351–88.
- (2003). *A Courtship After Marriage: Gender, Sexuality and Love in a Mexican Migrant Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- and Nathanson, C. A. (1998). 'Demografía informal: cómo utilizar las redes sociales para construir una muestra etnográfica sistemática de mujeres mexicanas en ambos lados de la frontera', in *Estudios Demográficos y de Desarrollo Urbano*. Mexico, DF: El Colegio de Mexico, 12(1&2), pp. 177–99.
- — (2001). 'Some traditional methods are more modern than others: rhythm, withdrawal and the changing meanings of gender and sexual intimacy in the Mexican companionate marriage', *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 3(4): 413–28.
- Higgins, J., Bentley, M. E., and Nathanson, C. A. (2002). 'The cultural constructions of sexuality: marital infidelity and STD/HIV risk in a Mexican migrant community', *American Journal of Public Health*, 92(8): 1227–37.
- Hubbell, L. J. (1993). 'Values under siege in Mexico: strategies for sheltering traditional values from change', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 49(1): 1–16.
- Inhorn, M. (1996). *Infertility and Patriarchy: The Cultural Politics of Gender and Family Life in Egypt*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) (1960a). *VII censo general de población, 1960, estado de Michoacán*. Mexico: Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Secretaría de Industria y Comercio, Dirección General de Estadística.
- (1960b). *VII censo general de población, 1960, estado de Jalisco*. Mexico: Estados Unidos Mexicanos, Secretaría de Industria y Comercio, Dirección General de Estadística.
- (1990a). *Jalisco: Resultados Definitivos, Datos Por Localidad (Integración Territorial), XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda*.
- (1990b). *Michoacán: Resultados Definitivos, Datos Por Localidad (Integración Territorial), XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda*.
- Juarez, F., Quilodran, J., and Zavala de Cosío, M. E. (1996). *Nuevas Pautas Reproductivas en México*. Mexico City, Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico.
- Kallan, J. and Udry, J. R. (1986). 'The determinants of effective fecundability based on the first birth interval', *Demography*, 23(1): 53–66.
- Kandiyoti, D. (1996). 'The paradoxes of masculinity: some thoughts on segregated societies', in Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (eds.), *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kertzer, D. and Fricke, T. (1997). *Anthropological Demography: Toward a New Synthesis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Massey, D. S., Alarcon, R., Durand, J., and Gonzalez, H. (1987). *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- McLaughlin, S. D. and Micklin, M. (1983). 'The timing of the first birth and changes in personal efficacy', *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 45: 47–55.
- Mintz, S. (1974). *Worker in the Cane: A Puerto Rican Life History*. New York: Norton.
- Montesinos-Carrera, R. (1995). 'Cambio cultural y crisis en la identidad masculina', *El Cotidiano*, 11(68): 20–7.
- National Center for Health Statistics (1986). *Vital Statistics of the U.S., 1982, Vol. 1., Natality*. Hyattsville, MD: Public Health Service, DHHS Pub. No. (PHS) 87-1100.
- Potter, J. E. (1999). 'The persistence of outmoded contraceptive regimes', *Population and Development Review*, 25(4): 703–39.
- Rainwater, L. (1965). *Family Design: Marital Sexuality, Family Size, and Contraception*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
- Rebhun, L. A. (1999). *The Heart is Unknown Country: Love in the Changing Economy of Northeast Brazil*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Renne, E. P. (1999). 'Gender roles and women's status: what they mean to Hausa Muslim women in Northern Nigeria', Paper presented at IUSSP workshop, Social Categories on Population Studies, 15–18 September, Cairo, Egypt.
- Rindfuss, R. R. and Morgan, S. P. (1983). 'Marriage, sex and the first birth interval: the quiet revolution', *Population and Development Review*, 9(2): 259–78.
- Rodriguez, J. (1994). *Our Lady of Guadalupe: Faith and Empowerment among Mexican–American Women*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Rouse, R. (1991). 'Mexican migration and the social space of postmodernism', *Diaspora*, 1(1): 8–23.
- (1992). 'Making sense of settlement: class transformation, Cultural Struggle, and transnationalism among Mexican migrants in the United States', in N. Glick Schiller, L. Basch, and C. Blanc-Szanton (eds.), *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration*, Vol. 645, Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Schneider, J. and Schneider, P. (1996). *Festival of the Poor: Fertility Decline and the Ideology of Class in Sicily, 1860–1980*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Secretaría de Salud, Dirección General de Planificación Familiar (1989). *Mexico: Encuesta Nacional Sobre Fecundidad y Salud 1987: Informe Preliminar*. Institute for Resource Development, Columbia, Maryland.
- Simmons, C. (1979). 'Companionate marriage and the lesbian threat', *Frontiers*, 4(3): 54–9.
- Singh, K. K., Suchindran, C. M., Singh, V., and Ramakumar, R. (1992). 'Age at return marriage and timing of first birth in India's Uttar Pradesh and Kerala states', *Social Biology*, 34(3–4): 292–8.
- Skolnik, A. (1991). *Embattled Paradise: The American Family in an Age of Uncertainty*. New York: Basic Books.
- Smith, D. (n.d.). 'Sexual relationships and social change: linking fertility preferences and contraceptive use to the social (Re)Construction of gender and the individual', Unpublished Manuscript, Emory University Department of Anthropology.
- Stone, L. (1979). *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Szreter, S. (1993). 'The idea of demographic transition and the study of fertility change: a critical intellectual history'. *Population and Development Review*, 19(4): 659–701.
- Teachman, J. D. and Schollaert, P. T. (1989). 'Gender of children and birth timing', *Demography*, 26: 411–23.
- Thadani, V. (1978). 'The logic of sentiment: the family and social change', *Population and Development Review*, 4(3): 457–99.
- Tilly, L. and Scott, J. (1978). *Women, Work, and Family*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Trimberger, E. (1983). 'Feminism, men, and modern love: Greenwich village, 1900–25', in A. Snitow, C. Stansell, and S. Thompson (eds.), *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality*. New York: Monthly Review Press, pp. 131–52.
- Trussell, J. and Menken, J. (1978). 'Early childbearing and subsequent fertility', *Family Planning Perspectives*, 10: 209–18.
- Vásquez-García, V. (1997). 'Mujeres que "respetan su casa": Estatus marital de las mujeres y economía doméstica en una comunidad nahua del sur de Veracruz', in *Familias y mujeres en México*. Mexico: El Colegio de México.
- Waite, L. J. (1995). 'Does marriage matter?', *Demography*, 32(4): 483–507.
- Wardlow, H. (1999). 'All's fair when love is war: attempts at companionate marriage among the Huli of Papua New Guinea', Paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Anthropological Association of America, Chicago, IL, November, 1999.
- Whelpton, P. K. (1964). 'Trends and differentials in spacing births', *Demography*, 1: 83–93.
- Wineberg, H. (1988). 'Duration between marriage and first birth and marital instability', *Social Biology*, 35(1): 91–102.
- Yamaguchi, K. and Ferguson, L. R. (1995). 'The stopping and spacing of childbirths and their birth-history predictors: rational-choice theory and event history analysis', *American Sociological Review*, 60(April): 272–98.
- Yan, Y. (1997). 'The triumph of conjugality: structural transformation of family relations in a Chinese village', *Ethnology*, 36(3): 191–212.
- (2003). *Private Life Under Socialism: Love, Intimacy, and Family Change in a Chinese Village, 1949–1999*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

# 15 Gender Roles and Women's Status: What They Mean to Hausa Muslim Women in Northern Nigeria

ELISHA P. RENNE

You shall surely see it with the eye of certainty.  
Sura (102: 7)

The social category, gender, came into vogue with studies in the 1970s that focused on the roles of women in society, specifically, in work attempting to show how the term, sex, implied a biological determinism. Women's alleged universal subordinate status had been explained by their biology, particularly their closeness to nature by virtue of giving birth (Ortner 1974). The use of the term, gender, was considered preferable as it emphasized the social basis of this status and hence presented a situation amenable to social change (Rosaldo 1974). Research in gender studies thus focused on considering women's social roles outside of motherhood, an interest shared by feminist scholars and demographers who envisioned expanded women's roles—through education, increased income-earning capacity, and political participation—as a way of bringing about gender equality and lower birth rates.

## MEASURING WOMEN'S STATUS

In order to measure progress towards gender equality, the term women's status, encompassing a range of variables, has been used in survey-based research. As a result of this interest, UN studies on methods for identifying social indicators of women's status were formulated in the mid-1980s (United Nations 1984*a, b*). While some

demographers recognize that there are problems with these measures as they presume a universal definition of what women's status means to a diverse group of women, such measures continue to be used, as in a Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) analysis of women's status in twenty-five countries (Kishor and Neitzel 1996). One of the main difficulties in defining a universal measure of women's status relates to the idea of gender equality; in some societies, women's status derives from their role in complementary gender spheres of activities and influence which may be but are not always hierarchically ranked. While the social indicators used in UN and DHS surveys may be appropriate measures of women's status in these societies, they are not necessarily so. Furthermore, particular measures, for example, personal autonomy, may have quite different meanings in different cultural contexts. How women's status is perceived also depends to some extent on viewers, who tend to 'see it with the eye of certainty', reflecting their particular cultural background. Consequently, when considering women's status, it is important to delineate clearly these different perspectives. The following discussion does this by comparing characteristics associated with women's status commonly used in demographic surveys with local assessments of women's status from women's own perspective (cf. McDougall 1998: 286), in the particular socio-cultural and historical contexts of Northern Nigeria. This chapter considers the term, women's status, *matsayi mace*, as it is defined by a group of Hausa Muslim women in the northern Nigerian town of Zaria. Their distinctive visions of appropriate gender roles and what constitutes 'women's status' suggest that while religious beliefs are important in these definitions, a certain congruence with the 'social indicators' used in standardized surveys exists as well.

## DEMOGRAPHIC AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S STATUS

Anthropologists and demographers tend to have different views on the adequacy of discussing women's status quantitatively. The demographer Mason (1984, 1986) acknowledges that the problem of measuring 'women's status' is complex and further complicated by the use of alternate terms such as 'female autonomy', 'sexual stratification', and 'female dependency'. As a consequence of these various meanings, a wide range of demographic, family-kinship, and economic indicators have been used to measure the elusive concept, 'women's status'. Some of these indicators include female age at marriage, sex preferences for children, property inheritance, patrilocal marriage, arranged marriage, women's education, concentration of women in the informal sector, and access to credit.

Yet these indicators often do not vary in tandem. Instead, in any given society, women's situation might be characterized by an indicator suggesting low status while other indicators might suggest high status (Mason 1984: 10). The fact that women's status cannot be captured by a single variable (or even a small number of them) but rather is a multidimensional phenomenon led Whyte (1978: 170) to conclude that 'there is no such a thing as *the* status of women cross-culturally'.

There are other problems associated with measuring 'women's status' that Mason (1986: 294–7) cites including: (a) the arbitrary choice of indicators; (b) the different social contexts affecting how women's status is defined; (c) the difficulties in comparing different gender systems; and (d) the multiple aspects of some measures of women's status such as education (e.g. it can reflect socio-economic background as well as potential economic autonomy). As a way around some of these difficulties, Mason suggests that the meaning of 'women's status' be clearly delineated, in fact she suggests jettisoning this term altogether in favour of 'gender inequality, or better still, specific types of gender inequality' (Mason 1986). Such a strategy would restrict the variables selected to those most appropriate universal indicators for measuring the specific definition being used.

Another somewhat different approach to examining women's status, focusing on women's empowerment and health, has been developed by Williams *et al.* (1999). Using a confirmatory factor analysis of survey data from rural Bangladesh, they identified five contextually specific indices of women's empowerment, including women's mobility, visibility, ability to make purchases, participation in decision-making, and interaction with women in other compounds. While the precise impact of these empowerment variables on women's health is unclear, this type of demographic approach has the benefit of identifying empowerment variables that relate to local conditions. Nonetheless, the selection of these empowerment indices depends on standard survey data that tends to reflect values of Western society. For example, not wearing head covering ('veiling') around men in public is assumed to be an indicator of women's empowerment. The problem here is that Williams *et al.* may not have captured all the important aspects of women's status in Bangladesh because the method used in *collecting* the data was already filtered through a Western lens rather than through local ones, regardless of improvements in analysing the data.

For anthropologists, use of the term 'women's status' is problematic because it implies certain preconceived, universal characteristics that may have distinctive cultural interpretations in different cultures (Riley 1997: 120; see also Sanday 1973). Further, because of the problem of equivalence, anthropologists (Quinn 1977; Rogers 1978; Epstein 1982; Di Leonardo 1991) are more hesitant about the suitability of the survey approach (whether one selects any particular definition of women's status or not) because of the contextual particularities of women's situation, both within a culture and cross-culturally (cf. Entwistle and Coles 1990).

Rogers (1978) rejects the prospect of finding a universal set of 'objective' criteria for defining women's situation for comparison using quantitative analysis because she believes that the assumption of universal women's subordination (and gender inequality) reflects an ethnocentric bias of Western researchers. For example, in societies where complementary gender roles prevail, separate gender spheres do not necessarily imply the subordinate status of women. She does, nonetheless, propose a general framework for an examination of women's place in relation to men within particular societies. By questioning both women and men about gendered ideologies and behavioural roles (Rogers 1978: 154), an estimation of their relative power (which Rogers 1978: 155 defines in terms of 'control over significant resources') in a

particular socio-cultural and historical context can be made. She hypothesizes that in societies where men and women have distinctive ideologies and behavioural roles that give them 'control over significant resources, a balance of power is most likely to occur' (Rogers 1978: 155). Alternately, where behavioural roles are different but a single ideology prevails, there will be power asymmetry.

One critical aspect of this analysis is identifying just what 'significant resources' are in a particular society and examining whether women or men control them. As Rogers (1978: 155) explains, these 'significant resources' are not necessarily 'economic resources (e.g. land, labour, food, money), but also include such resources as ritual knowledge, specialist skills, formal political rights, and information'. While such a broad definition of resources—variables that affect women's status—might be viewed by some as arbitrary and as obfuscating the search for universal measures, an analysis based on such variables is in a better position to uncover the basis of women's status from a local perspective. In the sense of being context-dependent, this approach is similar to the demographic analysis of women's empowerment described above (Williams *et al.* 1999). However, the methods for identifying variables are distinctly different, the demographers use regression analysis of survey data, the anthropologists use their cultural and linguistic knowledge to analyse long interviews and informal conversations. The following discussion of the preliminary findings of an anthropological case study of women's status in the Hausa Muslim community of Zaria City in Northern Nigeria, suggests how such an analysis might be done.

## HAUSA MUSLIM WOMEN IN ZARIA CITY

### Study setting and methodology

This study was conducted in Zaria City, the old walled section of the larger town of Zaria in Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria (Campbell 1959). Zaria City, or Birnin Zaria ('old Zaria') as it is sometimes called, is identified with tradition, partly because of its association with the past (of which the wall is evidence) and partly because of its association with Hausa practices such as the production of hand-embroidered robes and Eid-el-Fitr processions. Indeed, there is a certain satisfaction taken by Zaria City residents in maintaining their traditions, related to their sense of history as one of the seven Hausa-Fulani emirates (Hausa Bakwai; Smith 1960) and their observance of Islam which they view as most strictly following Muslim precepts, particularly when compared with other parts of the town of Zaria.

Zaria City, the former capital of the old Hausa Emirate of Zazzau, consists of approximately forty wards dispersed over 10 square miles—with open stretches of land devoted to farming on the edges of the more congested city centre (Urquhart 1970). It is presently divided into two local governments (Zaria East and Zaria West); local government offices and a local government clinic, along with the Emir's palace and the adjacent Friday mosque, dominate the central area of the city. There is also a large market place renowned throughout Northern Nigeria for the production and sale of embroidered robes. This central section of Zaria City has paved roads, a fairly



regular supply of electricity, and until recently, pipe-borne water while the outlying, more rural wards are served by winding dirt roads, household wells, and kerosene lanterns. Zaria City residents practise a range of occupations. Most married men work as farmers, although some are traders, government workers, teachers, and drivers. Married women, who are secluded, prepare foodstuffs and snacks, repackage bulk commodities (both sold outside by young girls), and embroider or sew to generate income, although a few younger women now go out to work as nurses or teachers. The population of the former Zaria Local Government was provisionally estimated from the 1991 census to be 277,187 although the population of Zaria City itself may only include up to a third of this figure.

In early November 1994, I took up residence in a house in one city quarter (Kwarbai) in which family relations of the house owner also resided. With the help of this family and a woman research assistant, we initially interviewed 100 women ages 15–55+ living in this quarter during the period November 1994–January 1995. Some of these original survey women were later questioned in January to April 1995, using open-ended interviews on a range of topics including their explanations of the use of midwives and hand embroidery work. The group of women interviewed regarding hand-embroidery work was expanded to include women living in other quarters of the city—the main requirement being that they were actively involved in hand embroidery as an income-generating activity. Sixty women were initially interviewed; from this group, twenty-five women were re-interviewed by Hassana Tanimu in April–May 1999 regarding their views on men's and women's roles, respectability, and present problems of women in Zaria City. (These interviews are identified in the text as short interview [SI]1–25.) Additionally, I spoke with five women acquaintances living in Kwarbai Quarter whom I have known since 1995 for further explanations in July 1999 (indicated as long interview [LI]1–5).

## Local measures of women's status

This section examines the term women's status, *matsayi mace*, as defined by this group of Hausa women, based on their assessments of their situation, the 'significant resources' that they control, and their views of appropriate gender roles. The Hausa word, *matsayi*, is translated as '1. Position, post. 2. Status. 3. One's proper place' (Newman and Newman 1979: 89) and may refer to persons or things (Bargery 1993: 784). For married women in Zaria City, this place is in their husband's house. Depending on the wishes of her husband, on her family's position and wealth, and on her educational background, she may be in a type of marriage known as *auren kulle*—secluded marriage (literally, 'locked marriage') that prescribes her movements in various ways. For most women living in Zaria City, this means that they stay in their homes during the day but may go out at night to visit family and friends who might be ill or recently delivered, contrary to what is sometimes imagined by outsiders when one speaks of seclusion (see also Coles 1991: 169). With their husband's permission, they may go out at other times, particularly during weekend rounds of visiting, often in attendance at naming ceremonies and wedding celebrations. More

recently, married women have begun to attend Islamiyya schools (mainly in the evening) where they attend classes in Islamic knowledge, reading, and for some, math and Hausa. A small group of women who have secondary and post-secondary education also work outside their homes as teachers or nurses.

While these women should have their husband's permission and should go directly to where they have said they were going (and not be seen 'just walking around'), they have some autonomy in making social visits, in going to school, and for a few, working outside their homes. However, in some cases of secluded marriage, as one woman explained, 'the woman doesn't go out at all, so even if her father dies, they will send someone to tell her'. In Zaria City, these women would be wives of royalty (*sarauta*); the Emir's wives are said to be so secluded (Mack 1991: 115). The women interviewed in this study represent the majority of women living in Zaria City, that is, the commoner (*talakawa*) class. For these working class women, 'going out' most often means by foot. When travelling longer distances, they usually travel by public transport, which—although uncomfortable and crowded—is seen as a relative luxury. Thus while these women's proper place is in their husbands' homes, they have various legitimate opportunities to go outside although some husbands are more restrictive than others. Furthermore, restrictions on women's movements may be mandated by husbands but they also derive from women's assessments of each other—of their *mutunci*, of their self-respect.

## Local interpretations of women's situation

Hausa Muslim women in Zaria City questioned in this study had a somewhat different assessment of their situation compared with assessments informing standard survey questions on 'women's status'. In particular, they frequently mentioned respect, *mutunci*, as an important aspect of married women's situation. The term, *mutunci* (or *mutunci kanta*) may be translated as '1. Decency, dignity. 2. Humaneness, respect for others' (Newman and Newman 1979: 93) and as 'Self respect; humanity' (Bargery 1993: 808). This much valued characteristic, self-respect, merges with the idea of being respectable as in women's remarks that 'It's more respectable for a woman to stay at home than to be going out in Zaria City'. In a sense, this respectability is a 'significant resource' for women, on which their self-esteem and dignity (*daraja*) depends, conveying a force of moral authority in certain situations and which, to a large extent, is controlled by women themselves. The importance of preserving one's self-respect, of being respectable, by remaining within the family compound means that husbands are largely responsible for providing food, clothing, and basic toiletries for their wives and children. When asked about qualities in men they admired, most women preferred men who worked hard for their families and fed them well. However, this does not mean that Zaria City women should not work in order to provide some income to support themselves and their children. Indeed, having work to do that contributes to the support of one's family is another valued measure of *matsayi mace*—women's status or situation. A woman who works hard to feed her family is respected, she will not have to ask others for things that might,

on their reclaiming, damage her self-respect. Working in one's own compound potentially provides more protection for one's respect, in part, by reducing the risk of damaging it through contact with men-strangers: 'The proper work for women, they should work in their houses—doing things like sewing. She should not go out so that no one will disturb her or put pressure on her. For example, if she comes to school late, the headmaster can put pressure on her. It is better to work in the house if she has capital' (LI-3).

Other types of work deemed appropriate included various forms of food processing (such as making groundnut oil), snack preparation (e.g. bean cakes, roasted groundnuts, and sesame seed sweets), embroidering, and knitting, all of which may be done within the household. Husbands may purchase raw materials at the market while daughters hawk the final products, a process mentioned in studies of Hausa women throughout Northern Nigeria (Hill 1977; Schildkrout 1983; Coles 1991; Cooper 1997). The proceeds from sales belong to women themselves (Coles 1991: 181). They are used to buying food and clothing for themselves and their children as well as to buying new supplies for their businesses. These small home-based businesses are another 'significant resource' that women in Zaria City largely control.

Yet some women may go out and still maintain their respectability if they are careful to *kare mutunci*, to 'shield or screen from view; guard or protect' (Newman and Newman 1979: 63) their self-respect through modest dress (the *hijab*) and comportment (*tana da kunya*, modesty; Trevitt 1973; see Sura 24: 30 on modesty). For example, married women who work as primary school teachers often wear a *hijab*, a cape-like garment that entirely covers the head (except for the face) and body (see also Ahmed 1992; MacLeod 1992; Bernal 1994; Cooper 1997). The popularity of the *hijab* in recent years corresponds with the increased movement of a small number of educated Zaria City women who work or school outside; it serves as a sort of mobile home that shields the woman from view and that guards her self-respect (Ahmed 1992: 224). As MacLeod (1992: 549) similarly notes for working lower-middle class women in Cairo, wearing a *higab* (or *hijab*) provides a solution for women 'face[d] with a loss of respect and resources', who are 'caught in a double bind of economic and gender ideologies'.

Furthermore, modest deportment (displaying *kunya*) discourages direct eye contact, thus avoiding the dangers of *kyafuce*—eye contact (particularly, 'come-hither looks') and *yafuce*—beckoning hand-gestures; the use of scent is also discouraged as the mixing of essences (men often wear cologne) suggests sexuality. 'If the husband tells his wife to go outside, she should just go outside and do [what she needs to do], she should protect her respect' (LI-1), one older woman explained. Should she misbehave or act stupidly (*ta yi shashanci*) and her behaviour is seen, she not only diminishes her own self-respect (*mutunci kanta*) but also humiliates (*ci mutunci*, literally 'eats the respect'; 'appropriates' the respect; Gouffé 1966: 92) her husband.

Respect for one's husband is manifested in various ways. Women mentioned 'being patient with one's husband', 'living peacefully with one's husband and co-wives', 'working to help one's husband', and 'caring for the family'. One woman described how this respect could be shown: 'What I admire most in women is the

work we are doing, especially the embroidery work. Women are doing work to take care of themselves and their children, they don't wait for their husbands to do things for them. And nobody will know that it is not the husband who did this for her, unless she says it' (SI-7). By showing respect to her husband, a woman demonstrates her own respectability.

Yet despite this ideal of wifely respect, several women mentioned 'lack of support from husbands' as a major problem for women in Zaria City presently. Whether it is because their husbands do not have money themselves or do but do not want to give it to them, this lack of money (*ku'di*; or working capital, *jali*) is the major problem these women see for themselves. The contradictory pressures on married women who must maintain their respectability but who do not have support from their husbands—who may also not allow their wives to go outside their homes to look for work—is causing much suffering for women in Zaria City, as one woman explained:

*Auren kulle* is a type of marriage where husbands will provide for their wives and will not allow them to go out. Some of the men will provide for their wives and they will not allow them to go out—they provide things like soap, cream or good food, though some of the men are cheating their wives because they will not provide them with good food. Sometimes you will see a woman, you will think she is enjoying her husband's house but she's not, *she's just trying to protect her respect (tana 'ko'kari ne, ta kare mutunci kanta)*. Things like that are common for women here in Zaria City. (LI-1)

## 'BECAUSE OF MONEY'

This problem for women—their need to maintain their respect (in part, through the practice of seclusion) and their need for work, for income to help support themselves and their families—was mentioned by almost all of the women interviewed. A respectable married woman should both practise seclusion *and* work to help support her family. Yet this is becoming increasingly difficult to do, particularly when husbands themselves may not have work or money to help their wives working at home. Thus the respectability that married women value and have a part in maintaining actually hampers their ability to control other significant resources—particularly work opportunities and money.

Yet 'Because of Money' (*Saboda da Ku'di*), as the title of one popular Hausa song suggests, all sorts of unusual behaviour may be explained. Some married women, desperate to feed themselves and their children, are beginning to question the strictures of the seclusion relationship in which a husband supports his wife in exchange for her obediently staying in her place. As one woman explained, 'If a husband will provide for the wife, she must be patient and stay in the house. But if he doesn't provide, in this modern time, no woman will agree. She will go, whether he agrees or not.' For married women, particularly those without children, a strategy of instigating divorce is one available solution to this problem since, 'The Islamic religion didn't say that a man should keep his wife without providing for her.'

Most women, however, recommended less drastic measures for addressing this problem. While no women questioned the practice of secluded marriage per se ('We were brought up seeing this type of marriage—it came from the Prophet Mohammed'; LI-5), several mentioned ways by which women could enhance their situations, particularly through education:

Really, women have a lot of problems between them and their husbands. There is also lack of work to do. Between them and the husband, there is lack of education that brought the problem even though there are some who are educated. But there are some who are not educated in their religion, talk less of Western education. The big problem is lack of education. If they are well educated even if there is no money they will know how to live with their lives; some men even have enough but they will not provide enough for their wives. There is this type of problem in most cases. (SI-15)

Many women are beginning to see education as a 'significant resource' that not only enhances their work possibilities (Adamu 2000), but also teaches them correct behaviour and knowledge of their rights within Islam. This is exemplified in one woman's comments, 'According to Islam it is compulsory for a man to educate his wife and to give her food and care for her health and where she will sleep. And he should know who is coming to his wife and the woman should take care of the husband well, his property and should respect his relatives. And she should take care of his children' (LI-3). This woman, a primary school teacher, is referring to a verse in the Qur'an (Sura 2: 233) that stipulates this care for wives ('The family head must support women and clothe them properly'). And as she later observed, 'If the woman ... doesn't know her rights, she will stay with him. If she knows her rights, she will try to protect her rights.' Married women have begun to attend Islamic study classes, particularly at schools founded in the late 1970s under the auspices of the *yan Izala* movement (Bakindo 1993: 103; Lomeier 1997: 237). This development has important implications for women's reassessment of their situation within their households as Pittin (1990: 31) has observed: 'The discussions presently taking place among women permit access for the first time to varying interpretations of the Koran, and demonstrate a real questioning of heretofore assumed values and practices associated with control over women in daily life, with profound effects on household and conjugal relations' (see also Yusuf 1991: 93). For example, it opens up the possibility of alternate interpretations of prevailing Islamic ideology, as in one woman's description of the debates among Islamic scholars regarding seclusion suggests: 'Some of the Islamic scholars (*mallamai*) are saying that it's not good for women to go out to look for money or work. Some of the *mallamai* are saying it's not forbidden in Islam as long as they protect their self-respect' (LI-1). Through their exposure at Islamiyya classes to new interpretations of proper Muslim behaviour and because of economic constraints on families due to the deteriorating Nigerian economy of the 1990s (Pittin 1991), women are anxious to find work whether it means going outside their homes or not, particularly if their husbands were unable or unwilling to provide support. As one woman remarked, somewhat contemptuously, 'Some husbands don't allow their wives to go out because of ignorance, illiteracy

(*saboda jabilci*). This behaviour is not correct Islamically (*ba kyau a addini Musulminci*)' (LI-1).

## What women say needs to be done

In private, many women were critical of husbands who did not support their wives when they were able yet did not allow them to go outside their homes to look for work:

Really, women are facing a lot of problems such as a lack of work to do—what prevents them from doing work is lack of money. And God gave us husbands who will not at all or will hardly allow their wives to go out and look for money, to look for her right. Some of the men will not allow that because they think the women are just walking around, this is why they don't allow their wives to go out and look for themselves. They will only depend on what the husband brought them, also the children. This is the problem we are facing. (SI-12)

Others criticized husbands who did not allow women to attend schools:

There are some women who want to go and read but the husband will not allow them—they are saying that they don't want them to be educated like them. Women can solve the problem if they have work to do. About education they should just be patient, they can't do anything [if their husband disallows it]. But the community can make the situation better in a way—so that any one who wants to marry a girl, the parents should tell him to allow her to look for education. (SI-13)

Other women criticized men who took money from their wives without repayment:

She is the one who will take care of the children, yet some men because of their wickedness will not allow the wife to do work or if she did he will collect the money and he will not help her or if he borrows the money from her he will not pay it back. If she talks it will lead to misunderstanding between her and the husband. A lot of women are facing this problem in Zaria City. (SI-20)

This last woman, who has supported herself and her children through her expert embroidery of men's robes (*babban riga*), sees the solution to this problem in work—for both women and men: 'The remedy to this problem is that both the husband and the wife should wake up and work for themselves. One should not leave the other to work alone. If they both have work, there is not that kind of problem.'

Similarly, some women advocated the provision of more government loans for women. One woman embroiderer described how a government loan (through the federal government's Family Economic Advancement Programme micro-credit scheme) was obtained by a work group that she belonged to:

The remedy of this problem is for government to give us loans so we can help ourselves. We put our heads together and formed an organization to get a loan so that women who don't have work to do will have work to do. The thing began step by step... We got N200,000 [approximately \$2,000 US]. We used the money for business. As you know, we are embroiderers. We bought *shedda* (cotton damask) with part of the money. Then we were doing the embroidery and some we gave some out to women to do for us. We are 45 women in that organization. (SI-18)

Another woman recommended talking to one's husband as a way of persuading him to contribute to the family's welfare: 'The way women can solve this problem is by giving the men advice and making the men to understand. A woman knows the advice she will give the husband and the right time she will advise him. Some women's failure to give advice to their husbands is what has brought this problem' [SI-14]. Her comment implies a certain confidence in women being able to persuade their husbands to carry out their responsibilities, suggesting that women's moral authority in family matters carries a certain weight. Indeed one woman noted that in this way they are better than men: 'Our teachers taught us that we have more dignity (*daraja*) than the men. The men are the ones who will go look for the women and bring things to them. The men are the ones who will protect them' (LI-5).

Thus despite that fact that the dominant Islamic ideology was, until recently, solely under the purview of men, married women seem to have their own interpretations of Islamic ideology (Bernal 1994) reflected in their ideas of proper behaviour—maintaining their self-respect, working for their children when their husbands are unable to or fail to support them, and now, schooling. These three characteristics are all embodied in the person of Hajiya Mahadiya, a woman whose name was frequently mentioned when women were asked to name an important woman living in Zaria City whom they respected: 'Mahadiya has a school that she built to teach children and married women. The children are learning Islamic and Western education, the married women are learning Islamic studies and Hausa. That is why she is considered to be an important woman in Zaria City' (SI-24). Hajiya Mahadiya was admired not only because she was helping children and married women to obtain an education but also because she has used her wealth to give work to local teachers and she helps parents to find placements for their children. She works outside her home and travels, yet, because of her education, her work for others—especially children and married women—and her accomplishments, she has maintained her 'self-respect'.

## DISCUSSION

Cooper (1997: 171) has noted 'the dominant ideology of female respectability in marriage' for Hausa women living in Maradi in southern Niger. As has been discussed, this respectability is based, in part, on married women's observation of seclusion (*auren kulle*). For Hausa women living in many parts of northern Nigeria and southern Niger, including Zaria City, 'the normative expectation for this practice is so strong that few women admit that they are not secluded' (Coles 1991: 168). This view of seclusion as something vitally important for a woman's respect (Cooper 1997) and prestige in the community is one aspect of women's status that runs counter to current Western conceptions that emphasize gender equality and economic autonomy. Mason (1984: 13) has noted these two interpretations in the demographic literature: 'Authors who emphasize purdah's salutary effects for women's status tend to focus on prestige ... while those who emphasize purdah's liabilities

focus on women's control of material goods.' Yet Callaway's (1987) study of Muslim Hausa women in Kano, Nigeria suggests that seclusion may be reinterpreted to include both of these aspects of women's status. For example, the practice of *kulle zuɓi*, 'seclusion of the heart', is a form of seclusion agreed upon by husband and wife. This agreement expects 'wives themselves to behave in a manner befitting their status' (Callaway 1987: 58), using judgement 'of the heart' to determine appropriate behaviour outside the house. Such an interpretation of seclusion allows for considerable mobility and economic opportunities for women while maintaining their ideal of respectability.

In Zaria City, a similar reassessment of the practice of seclusion appears to be taking place, although the term *kulle zuɓi* is not used. Rather, the term *tsaka tsaki*, 'in between', is used to refer to a form of seclusion in which married women are neither strictly confined as in *auren kulle* ('locked marriage') nor entirely free to go out as in *kulle zuɓi*. Furthermore, a combination of economic pressures and increasing knowledge of different interpretations of women's rights in Islam (Esposito 1982) is encouraging some women to try to persuade their husbands to allow them to acquire education and to go outside their homes to look for work. The seriousness of their efforts should not be underestimated. Men's resistance, in the late 1970s, to their wives' attendance at newly opened Islamiyya schools in Zaria City, was overcome by women who insisted on their rights as Muslims to an education (Renne 2003), as one woman explained: 'A woman should have equal education with the man—because the Prophet said we should look for education in every place and he didn't say that it was a man or a woman who will look for the education. But only if the woman will protect her self-respect' (LI-4). Her reference here is probably to Sura 20: 114, which, referring to reading the Qur'an, states, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge!' These women's insistence on maintaining self-respect, while at the same time demanding certain autonomy is a particular strategy that some women seem to be following to avoid criticism and censure from men. Cooper noted a similar strategy among Muslim Hausa women in Maradi, Niger:

To secure their rights to trade in the home and to gain greater access to public sector employment, larger-scale trade, and significant education, women in this region must first fight for their right and their daughters' rights to conduct their lives openly beyond the confines of their homes. ... It is therefore a fight best fought obliquely, through modifications and recalibrations of existing social forms, and through co-optation of sanctioned social and political discourses rather than through direct confrontation. (1997: 171)

## Women and politics in Zaria City

One consequence of this strategy seems to be that Zaria City women are selectively choosing their battles. Thus, they do not openly involve themselves in public politics, seen as the domain of men, nor are they pressing to do so. Married women engaging in such activities would be viewed as having lost their respect because as politicians,



they would be constantly going outside and mixing freely with strange men. Indeed, Mack (1991: 114) suggests that an association between the nineteenth century Islamic jihad led by Shehu dan Fodio, women's loss of political leadership roles, and an increase in seclusion (dan Fodio 1975) can be made:

Queens and women warriors also vanished under increasing Islamic influence, which, in northern Nigeria, carried with it the practice of wife seclusion. Although the influence of Islam on women's roles began during the fifteenth century, it has had its most profound effect since the nineteenth-century jihad, which spread the practice of wife seclusion dramatically, extending it eventually to rural areas. (Mack 1991: 114; see also Hill 1977).

In Zaria, 'the last women to hold the titles of *Iya* and *Magajiya* in Zaria were the daughters of Malam Musa Atu' (1804–21; Mack 1991: 114), after which these titles were given to men. The lack of titled positions for women in Zaria (which differs from other Hausa communities, for example, Maradi, Niger; see Cooper 1997) is reflected in one woman's comments about politics: 'There are no women's titles in Zaria City. The politicians are prostitutes and they don't have respect. If there is a married woman who is a politician, I will respect her if she is only mixing with other women' (LI-4). This woman's contempt for women politicians reflects the continued importance of separate gender roles for women and men. Zaria City women who are pushing for more tolerant interpretations of seclusion and for more work, education, and loans are not asking for equal rights with men. Rather, they are interested in separate rights for men *and* women, based on their understandings of a particular gender ideology reflecting local interpretations of Islam.

## Gender ideologies in Zaria City

Knowledge of the Qur'an, acquired through Islamiyya class discussions or through actual reading of the Qur'an itself, has not led to the view that women and men are equal, although such an interpretation could be made. Rather, each is viewed as having distinctive responsibilities to the other, as one woman explained:

According to the Islamic religion, man and woman are not the same. Man has more strength [and] because [of that] he is asked to be her head but in their lives they are the same. For example, God will give the woman money without giving the man. And there is one sura in the Qur'an meaning that men are the head of the woman, but in the Qur'an God didn't say that because he's her head, he should beat her or do something bad to her. (LI-3)

The sura (or Qur'anic verse) that she is probably referring to is Sura (4: 34):

Men are the ones who should support since God has given some persons advantages over others, and because they should spend their wealth [on them]. Honorable women are steadfast, guarding the Unseen just as God has it guarded. (*The Qur'an*, translated by T. B. Irving; translation 1)

Men are in charge of [are guardians of/are superior to/have authority over] women [*a rijalu qawwammuna 'ala l-nisa'*] because God has endowed one with more [because God has

preferred some of them over others] (*bi-ma faddala Allahu ba'dabum 'ala ba'din*) and because they spend their means (*wa-bi-ma 'anfaqu min amwalihim*). Therefore the righteous women are obedient, guarding in secret that which God has guarded. (Stowasser 1998: 33; translation 2).

While classical interpretations of this verse emphasize men's 'superiority over' women (Stowasser 1998: 33), several very different readings of this verse and its implications for gender relations have emerged in recent Islamic scholarship. These include functionalist approaches rather than literal readings (e.g. men's 'superiority' is a matter of economics and if women are economically self-sufficient, then this superiority does not exist; Stowasser 1998: 38) and literary critiques (e.g. that the majority of Qur'anic verses support gender equality, while only a small number—such as Sura 4: 34—support inequality; Stowasser 1998: 42). Indeed, the two English versions of this verse given here indicate the variation in meanings that can be derived from it, simply in translation.

However, the majority of Zaria City women would not have such sophisticated analytical or translational skills. Rather, they would be more likely to rely on what their teachers, who are mainly men, tell them. Nonetheless, women are aware that different teachers have different interpretations, suggesting that with further education and knowledge they will be in a better position to read the Qur'an for themselves and for their own interpretations to become a 'significant resource' for Zaria City women, a resource that until recently was solely controlled by men. For example, if, as Mack (1991) suggests, a particular understanding of Islam, reflecting local economic and cultural practices, is associated with increased seclusion in Northern Nigeria, changes in these practices may also be associated with a reinterpretation of seclusion. Specifically, the second phrase of Sura 4: 34, 'Honorable women are steadfast, guarding the Unseen just as God has it guarded', may be interpreted to support strict seclusion, yet it supports other, more tolerant interpretations of 'guarding' as well. If the practice of seclusion associated with the cultural politics of nineteenth century Islamic jihad in Northern Nigeria has become more prevalent and more strictly enforced in the last two centuries, there is no reason why it cannot continue to change but in a different direction. Furthermore, it is important to note that seclusion is interpreted differently in different Muslim communities in Northern Nigeria and Niger, with their own political and historical backgrounds. For example, seclusion is less common in Muslim rural Borno in northeastern Nigeria compared with Hausa-Fulani Muslim communities in northern Nigeria. This difference reflects Borno's distinctive political and religious past (the strictures of Islamic jihad were less widely accepted) as well as economic (need for women's agricultural labour), demographic (less populated), and environmental (fewer wells) factors (Fisher 1991: 131). It is likely that Islam will be reinterpreted to legitimate new gender roles (Bernal 1994: 62) in the future as has been done in the past, within the rubric of particular local contexts.

Thus any reconceptualization of seclusion that is likely to take place in Zaria City will be practised in ways that emphasize a woman's respectability. Such a reinterpretation not only serves as a means of shielding her from gossip but also

serves as a way of women's asserting moral authority and righteousness in relation to men. Women's status, as Rogers has rightly observed, is not something that operates in isolation but rather reflects local relations between women and men. In Zaria City, women view their situation as hampered by economic and physical constraints and the lack of support by husbands. Men, on their side, fear that the unconstrained movements of their wives will result in adulterous misadventures and divorce (Renne 1997: 168); many of them also see themselves as constrained by the economic difficulties of the times and are unable to care for their wives and children.

The reaction of some men against allowing their wives greater freedom of movement may be related to another aspect of Zaria City social life. Tremendous changes have occurred in Northern Nigeria during the 40-year period of independence—from the influx of oil boom wealth of the 1970s to the economic austerity that followed the introduction of a structural adjustment programme in the mid-1980s to the political and economic uncertainties of the 1990s. With all these changes and uncertainties as well as Zaria City men's increasing participation in wage labour, the continuity of women's seclusion offers men some sense of control in their lives. As Delaney (1991: 323) noted with regard to rural Turkey: 'It appears that woman is the linch-pin keeping the cosmos on its ordered course, a function she accomplishes by being invisible and staying in her place. To change her place and thus the perception of her nature would be equivalent to unhinging the world and letting it spin off into chaos.'

Some women concur with this male view of women's proper place because of the importance of maintaining their self-respect, which may have worked to their personal benefit. Other women with other life experiences and personalities may have very different views. For example, when asked whether women and men should have equal access to work, education, and loans, two co-wives living in the same compound had distinctive responses. The senior co-wife explained her view that men should be given an advantage:

Really, I like men to have more work than women, even in their education, too. Because there are men who will take care of the family. For example, if we are four [wives] for our husband—if one among us has money or is educated or is going to work, then she will look down on them and the other [wives] will not be able to endure it. Because the husband will respect the wealthier or better-educated woman more than the others. (LI-4)

Her co-wife had a different view:

Women should have equal education with men. My daughter, if I had money, she would be educated like men. A woman, she should [be given] ... more credit than the men, because she will try to repay the money and will know how to use the money. A man, if he gets credit—he will just spend it without thinking of paying. There are even men who will get married with the money. The women should have work—because there are some women who can do work [just] like a man can do. (LI-5)

While these divergent views indicate the difficulties in women's organizing as a group to bring about changes in their situation (Cooper 1997), they also suggest the liveliness of the discussions taking place over these issues in Zaria City today.

## CONCLUSION

In considering women's status from the perspective of Zaria City women, similarities and differences with standard measures used in international surveys may be seen. Using the concept of 'control of significant resources' as a way of ascertaining relevant local measures of women's status, it was found that women have varying degrees of control over several 'significant resources' in their lives. These include their respectability (a form of 'cultural capital' or prestige which legitimates their moral authority), their work (which provides economic support for themselves and their children), and their education (which allows for new interpretations, by women, of the Islamic texts).<sup>1</sup> Of the three, two—work, *aiki*, and education or knowledge, *ilimi*—are variables commonly included in standard surveys of women's status. Zaria City women would agree that women's status—*matsayi mace*, the situation of women in Zaria City—would be improved when women have access to more work opportunities and to more education.

Yet this concurrence with international measures is countered by a distinctively local third variable—respectability, *mutunci*—which Zaria City women consider to be as critical to their well-being as work and education. Indeed, this variable, respectability (and its connection with seclusion), counters several measures of women's status frequently referred to in standard surveys such as autonomy, mobility, and visibility—which Zaria City women would view, if practised openly by married women, with considerable disdain. While some demographers interested in fertility and mortality have recognized 'respect' or prestige to be one aspect of women's status, it is considered epiphenomenal by most (Mason 1984: 14), who have not appreciated its importance for more commonly accepted aspects of women's status. Yet as Zaria City women's comments make clear, they are not opposed to changes in women's education and work when they see them as improving their situation, particularly if these changes are framed in terms of Islamic practice. Without taking a blindly culturally relativist stance and recognizing that some local practices do undermine women's 'control of significant resources', this chapter argues that researchers concerned with the social categories of gender and women's status need to examine women's local constructions of these categories in order to understand the logic behind their reconstructions.

## Notes

1. Other 'significant resources' may be identified—such as women's social networks (Cooper 1997), women's economic decision-making (Robson 1994), and healthcare behaviour (Mu'azu 1992)—in a study of married women and Islamic education of which this chapter is a preliminary step.

## References

- Adamu, H. A. (2000). *The North and Nigerian Unity: Some Reflections on the Political, Social and Educational Problems of Northern Nigeria* rev. ed. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.

- Ahmed, L. (1992). *Women and Gender in Islam*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bargery, G. P. (1993). *A Hausa–English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. Kaduna: Ahmadu Bello University Press.
- Barkindo, B. (1993). ‘Growing Islamism in Kano City since 1970’, in L. Brenner (ed.), *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. London: Hurst and Co., pp. 91–105.
- Bernal, V. (1994). ‘Gender, culture, and capitalism: women and the remaking of Islamic “tradition” in a Sudanese village’, *Comparative Study of Society and History*, 36: 36–67.
- Campbell, M. J. (1959). ‘The walls of a city’, *Nigeria*, 60: 39–59.
- Callaway, B. (1987). *Muslim Hausa Women in Nigeria: Tradition and Change*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Coles, C. (1991). ‘Hausa women's work in a declining urban economy: Kaduna, Nigeria, 1980–1985’, in C. Coles and B. Mack (eds.), *Hausa Women in the Twentieth Century*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 163–91.
- Cooper, B. (1997). *Marriage in Maradi: Gender and Culture in a Hausa Society in Niger, 1900–1989*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- dan Fodio, U. (1975). ‘Islam and women’, in T. Hodgkin (ed.), *Nigerian Perspectives: An Historical Anthology*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 254–55.
- Delaney, C. (1991). *The Seed and the Soil: Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Di Leonardo, M. (1991). ‘Introduction’, in M. Di Leonardo (ed.), *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 1–48.
- Entwisle, B. and Coles, C. (1990). ‘Demographic surveys and Nigerian women’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 15: 259–84.
- Epstein, T. S. (1982). ‘A social anthropological approach to women's roles and status in developing countries’, in R. Anker, M. Buvinic, and N. H. Youssef (eds.), *Women's Roles and Population Trends in the Third World*. London: Croom Helm, pp. 151–70.
- Esposito, J. (1982). *Women in Muslim Family Law*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Fisher, H. (1991). ‘Slavery and seclusion in northern Nigeria: a further note’, *Journal of African History*, 32: 123–35.
- Gouffé, C. (1966). “Manger” et “boire” en Haoussa’, *Revue de l'Ecole nationale des langues orientales*, 3: 77–111.
- Hill, P. (1977). *Population, Prosperity and Poverty: Rural Kano 1900 to 1970*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Kishor, S. and Neitzel, K. (1996). *The Status of Women: Indicators for Twenty-Five Countries*, Calverton, MD: Macro International, DHS Comparative Studies, No. 21.
- Loimeier, R. (1997). *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- MacLeod, A. (1992). ‘Hegemonic relations and gender resistance: the new veiling as accommodating protest in Cairo’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 17: 533–57.
- Mack, B. (1991). ‘Royal wives in Kano’, in C. Coles and B. Mack (eds.), *Hausa Women in the Twentieth Century*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 109–29.
- Mason, K. (1984). *The Status of Women: A Review of its Relationship to Fertility and Mortality*. New York: The Rockefeller Foundation.
- (1986). ‘The status of women: conceptual and methodological issues in demographic studies’, *Sociological Forum*, 1: 284–300.
- McDougall, E. (1998). ‘A sense of self: the life of Fatma Barka’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 32: 285–315.

- Mu'azu-Alti, M. (1992). 'Women as providers and consumers in the traditional birth delivery system', in M. Kisekka (ed.), *Women's Health Issues in Nigeria*. Zaria: Tamaza Publishing Co., pp. 149–68.
- Newman, P. and Newman, R. (1979). *Modern Hausa–English Dictionary*. Ibadan: University Press.
- Ortner, S. (1974). 'Is female to male as nature is to culture?', in M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds.), *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 67–88.
- The Qur'an (1985) (trans. T. B. Irving). Brattleboro, Vermont: Amana Books.
- Pittin, R. (1990). 'Selective education: issues of gender, class, and ideology in northern Nigeria', Working Paper, Women, History and Development: Themes and Issues, No. 13. The Hague: Institute of Social Studies.
- (1991). 'Women, work and ideology in Nigeria', *Review of African Political Economy*, 52: 38–52.
- Quinn, N. (1977). 'Anthropological studies on women's status', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 6: 181–225.
- Renne, E. (1997). 'The meaning of contraceptive choice and constraint for Hausa women in a northern Nigerian town', *Anthropology & Medicine*, 4: 159–75.
- (2003). 'Changing assessments of abortion in a northern Nigerian town', in A. Basu (ed.), *Abortion in a Changing World*. Westport CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 119–38.
- Riley, N. (1997). 'Similarities and differences: anthropological and demographic perspectives on gender', in D. Kertzer and T. Fricke (eds.), *Anthropological Demography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 115–38.
- Robson, E. (1994). 'The economic activities and status of rural Muslim Hausa women in northern Nigeria', in P. Makinwa and A.-M. Jensen (eds.), *Women's Position and Demographic Change in sub-Saharan Africa*. Liège: IUSSP, pp. 313–36.
- Rogers, S. C. (1978). 'Women's place: a critical review of anthropological theory', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 20: 123–62.
- Rosaldo, M. (1974). 'Woman, culture, and society: a theoretical overview', in M. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (eds.), *Woman, Culture, and Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 17–42.
- Sanday, P. (1973). 'Toward a theory of the status of women', *American Anthropologist*, 75: 1682–700.
- Schildkrout, E. (1983). 'Dependence and autonomy: the economic activities of secluded Hausa women in Kano', in C. Opong (ed.), *Female and Male in West Africa*. London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 107–26.
- Smith, M. G. (1960). *Government in Zazzau, 1800–1950*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Stowasser, B. (1998). 'Gender issues and contemporary Quran interpretation', in Y. Haddad and J. Esposito (eds.), *Islam, Gender, and Social Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 30–44.
- Trevitt, L. (1973). 'Attitudes and customs in childbirth amongst Hausa women in Zaria City', *Savanna*, 2: 223–6.
- United Nations (1984a). *Compiling Social Indicators on the Situation of Women*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 32. New York: United Nations.
- (1984b). *Improving Concepts and Methods for Statistics and Indicators on the Situation of Women*, Studies in Methods, Series F, No. 33. New York: United Nations.
- Urquhart, A. W. (1970). 'Morphology of Zaria', in M. J. Mortimore (ed.), *Zaria and Its Region*, Occasional Paper No. 4. Zaria: Department of Geography, Ahmadu Bello University, pp. 123–8.

- Whyte, M. K. (1978). *The Status of Women in Preindustrial Societies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Williams, J., Menken, J., and Khan, N. (1999). 'Education, empowerment, and health of women in rural Bangladesh', Paper presented at the annual PAA meetings, New York City.
- Yusuf, B. (1991). 'Hausa-Fulani women: the state of the struggle', in C. Coles and B. Mack (eds.), *Hausa Women in the Twentieth Century*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 90–106.

# 16 Re-contextualizing the Female-headed Household: Culture and Agency in Uganda

PAULA JEAN DAVIS

## INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists and demographers have been in dialogue around the category ‘female-headed household’ for at least 25 years (Nash 1976; Harris 1981; Youssef and Hetler 1983; Wilk and Netting 1984; McGowan 1990). This dialogue has faltered for several reasons, perhaps most importantly because demographers have proceeded as if the fundamental issues are those of measurement and enumeration, while anthropologists have tended to see them as more deeply conceptual and theoretical.

Conceptual difficulties with the category ‘female-headed household’ reflect a more general problem of theorizing gender and agency. Formulations of gender in demography are typically ahistorical and fail to situate gender relations within political economy and culture (Greenhalgh 1995). Demographers theorize human agency as entirely separate from culture, resulting in a binary formulation of opposition (Carter 1995). ‘Passive agency’ implies that culture or tradition is operative, while ‘active agency’ acknowledges the role of rational planning or decision-making in human action. This signification of human agency produces a concept female-headed household such that women are either poor and vulnerable victims, or autonomous and economically rational innovators. Both of these conceptual problems may be addressed by paying closer attention to the local context in which we find the female-headed household.

This chapter describes a process of re-contextualizing the category ‘female-headed household’ in one particular local context. First, I will examine previous discussions around the related concepts of ‘household’ and ‘household head’. This section includes a brief review of the literature on female-headed households. Second, I outline briefly my research experience in Uganda with women traders who were heads of households in an urban setting. Here, I identify some specific problems of representation that arose during my research that highlight the difficulties of deploying this concept—difficulties that are routinely ignored in survey research. In the third



section, I propose a re-contextualization of the category ‘female-headed household’ using the case study of my Kampala research to demonstrate the process. This process involves: (a) a more reflexive relationship to the history of the category in place; (b) a more substantive notion of the category in relation to local political economies; and (c) situating the category within local kinship and marriage systems. In the fourth and final section, I summarize the implications of this reflexive approach to the demographic conceptualization of the female-headed household.

## ‘THE HOUSEHOLD’ IN DEMOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

My purpose for examining the current state of the debate around the concepts of ‘household’ and ‘household head’ is not to propose a specific resolution. Rather it is to use it as a barometer for the state of the larger debate between anthropologists and demographers. Their main differences regarding these concepts centre squarely upon the problem of representation, or the validity of the concept. While this is a central concern for the anthropologist, a crisis situation and an untenable position epistemologically, it is usually dismissed as insignificant (statistically or practically) by demographers. Thus we have a stalemate, talking past one another, and continuing with our research agendas in mutual disregard. In turning to the concept ‘female-headed household’ we find much continuity in the problem of representation, but it seems that the differences between demographers and anthropologists surrounding its use are even greater and of more concern.

To the extent that demography focuses its efforts on explaining why some ‘traditional’, high-fertility populations have undergone a demographic transition while others have not, a remarkable volume of demographic research on ‘the household’ has as its subject the African family. Likewise, much of the classic anthropological theories of kinship were developed from ethnographic data gathered on African families. Given this shared history one would expect more traffic on the border between demography and anthropology than is actually observed. For this reason, I will direct my comments on the concepts of ‘household’, ‘household head’, and ‘female-headed household’ to the literature on African families.

### ‘The household’ and the ‘household head’: an update on the stalemate

Anthropologists and demographers have been debating the merits and demerits of the term household for many decades. At one extreme end of this debate we find demographers who would like to use the concept as a proxy, both for the family and for the basic economic unit of a society. At the other extreme we find anthropologists who argue that the concept is essentially a useless or empty one because it does not in any way represent the entities that demographers use it to represent, that is, whole families or independent economic units. While it may be true that Western biases in conceptualizing the family, in particular the nuclear family form,

have misguided demographic theories of households, I think there is more at stake here than ethnocentrism. Here I believe that Anthony Carter's argument about human agency in demographic theory provides a useful lens for understanding these two very different positions. Demography theorizes human agency as separate from culture while anthropology holds that the two are inseparable and mutually structuring. Let us now look at 'the household' in Africa with these distinctions in mind.

It is common practice among census takers and survey researchers to define households as units that share resources, reside together, and perform certain activities together like eating, cooking, sleeping, and farming (Shryock and Siegel 1976; Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 1995, Household Schedule). For demographers, the household is a physical site, a geographic location where we find the overlap of two separate structures, that is, family and economy. Moreover, the routine practices of sampling employed in the typical household survey assume that this overlap is quite large, if not a perfect fit. Family size and family formation are theorized to be governed by norms or shared expectations about how people with certain statuses should behave, with sanctions against deviations. In traditional or pre-transition societies, as demography classifies much of sub-Saharan Africa, 'passive agency' is operative in the process of family formation, residence pattern, and family size. Thus culture, norms, and 'passive agency' are the means through which people create families and they tell us what households are. What households do—that is, organizing the processes of production, consumption, and distribution of resources among its members—is governed by 'active agency' or instrumental rationality. Thus we have the separation of the social situation, that is, the family, or what households are, and cost-benefit accounting, the economy, or what households do.

For anthropologists 'the household' represents a particular point in time of a continual process in which people, located in the structures of kinship, politics, and economy, actively produce and reproduce the domestic group. A reflexive agency, or the continual monitoring and rationalization of flows of conduct, is operative in the realms of kinship, politics, and economy. This conceptualization of agency suggests that 'the household' is a more permeable entity, and seriously questions the assumption that family formation, family membership, and family size are not subject to human action and management to the same extent as are the economic processes of production or consumption. Thus human agency in anthropology is theorized as:

[the] reflexive monitoring and rationalization of a continuous flow of conduct, in which practice is constituted in dialectical relation between persons acting and the settings of their activities. In this way, both cultural concepts—the values assigned to different behaviors and political economy—the forces creating the setting—become ingredients to, rather than external to, action, and the human agent is placed center stage. (Greenhalgh 1995: 19)

This same reflexive agency characterizes all human societies, whether or not they have experienced a fertility transition.

From the point of view of anthropologists, there are many problems with the use of 'the household' as a proxy for the family (Yanagisako 1979; Harris 1981; Guyer 1984). The most important of these is the gap between 'the household' as defined by demographers and the concrete networks of kinship relations that extend beyond the household and connect certain households to one another, such as the lineage (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Fortes 1953). Furthermore, the mere presence or absence of a particular individual in the household (e.g. husband) cannot be equated with that individual's structural role in the family (Smith 1956). Neither is 'the household' a useful approximation for the basic economic unit of a society. Numerous examples from Africa demonstrate that household members, even when co-residing, do not necessarily pool resources nor perform basic 'domestic' functions together (Harris 1981; Robertson 1984; Westwood 1984; Dwyer and Bruce 1987). Indeed, the economic relations within a household in many African societies, that is the exchanges between husband and wife, may resemble commodity exchange more so than the sharing of resources (Edholm *et al.* 1977; Caplan 1984; Clark 1995).

These gaps are particularly important in the case of African societies, because of the enduring importance of the lineage system in the organization of social, political, and economic life. In other words, households or domestic groups are not discrete family units but are parts of larger and encompassing structures such as clan, ethnic group, religion, and class that are important sources of identity and status. In analysing 'the household' in African societies, we must pay close attention to its connections with these encompassing structures at various levels of organization: 'That is, one does not privilege "the household" in analyses of socio-economic transformation and class formation or of gender differentiation. The units analytically designated as households have to be understood as part of broader processes and structured hierarchies that cut **across** and **through** those units' (Guyer and Peters 1987: 211).

These broader processes and hierarchies are theorized to extend from the level of the individual to that of the state, the region and the world system. In spite of these well-recognized gaps between the concept of 'household' and its referents in many societies, however, demographers and survey researchers have continued to use it without reformulation.

A similar state of affairs exists surrounding the use of the concept of 'head of household'. At one extreme of this debate are demographers and survey researchers who are interested in identifying a specific individual who is clearly the authority figure and breadwinner within the household. At the other extreme are anthropologists who again think that this concept is empty because it does not represent the referents that demographers use it to represent—political authority and economic power:

In formal terms, then, it is general to identify domestic units with a male head, and the identification is guaranteed by endowing this figure with the ideology of paternal authority. Both the source, the content and the effectivity of that authority must be investigated if we are not to fall here too into naturalistic assumptions that eternalise the concept of the household. Even in cultures where patriarchal ideology has been extremely fully developed, the household head only enjoys unwavering power in certain conditions. (Harris 1981: 60–1)

Once again we have a major gap developing between a key demographic concept and real experience. Anthropologists and others have consistently shown that in many cultures (including the United States) it is impossible to accurately identify such an individual. This problem has become so acute that in several countries reliable sources report the conventional assigning of headship (Nash 1976; McGowan 1990; Lloyd and Brandon 1991).<sup>1</sup> Such practices raise the question of what this concept is really representing. The fluidity and imprecision of the concept were further exposed by feminist critiques in the 1970s that pointed out the male biases in the concept as it encouraged assigning of male household heads when in fact they were *not* the breadwinners. In some national censuses the category has been removed because of these criticisms and in some cases legal actions (McGowan 1990).<sup>2</sup> These factors clearly demonstrate the representational problems that for a long time have been associated with the concept 'head of household'. In spite of their severity, it has remained in use among demographers at the same time that it continues to be critiqued by anthropologists. Hence the stalemate in the exchange between these two groups of scholars.

## Female-headed households

Because demographers theorize human agency as entirely separate from culture, a binary formulation of opposition is set up in which action is based either on tradition and norms, or upon rational maximization. This conception of human agency in demography produces a binary formulation of concepts like female-headed household, such that women are either poor and vulnerable victims, or autonomous and economically rational innovators. A recent analysis of social policy discourses in Britain regarding lone motherhood reflected this binary formulation of women's agency. Lone mothers were represented in policy circles and in academic writing either as a social threat or social problem, or they were romanticized as the architects of social change, presenting a formidable challenge to patriarchy (Duncan and Edwards 1996).

In reviewing the literature on female-headed households in Africa we can identify similar strands of discourse, perhaps because the research agendas, methodologies, and theoretical perspectives are determined within Northern academic institutions (Parpart and Marchand 1995). Some women-headed households are regarded as poor, vulnerable, and socially isolated, providing inadequate environments for children to grow up in because tradition or societal norms sanction the independence of widowed, divorced, separated, and single women. This position has its roots in the 'culture of poverty' theory formulated by Oscar Lewis (Lewis 1966) and continues in the current 'feminization of poverty' literature, which highlights the economic vulnerability of women (Folbre 1991; Moser 1993; Parpart 1995). Other women-headed households are viewed as social and economic innovators, survivors, or pioneers who have broken with tradition and succeeded. Research on credit schemes for small businesses and self-help housing projects suggests that women heads of households exercised more conservative and responsible business practices and investment strategies than either their counterparts, that is, women living in male-headed households, or male participants in such projects (Larsson 1993; Clark 1995; Crehan 1997). Furthermore, a large

body of research exists demonstrating that female-headed households devote greater proportions of income to food, that the intra-household distribution of resources is more equitable among members, and that the rates of child malnutrition are lower than for two-parent households (González de la Rocha 1994; Kennedy 1994; Moore and Vaughan 1994; Duncan and Edwards 1997). The problem with such binaries, that is, poor and vulnerable versus innovative entrepreneur, is that the diversity and variation among women becomes obscured as we collapse data measured on a continuous scale into a dichotomous distribution of success or failure.

These binaries also restrict the range of questions posed in research on women-headed households. A number of authors have recently reviewed this literature, and their analyses tend to be organized around such binaries as to target or not to target (Appleton 1996; Buvinic and Gupta 1997), victim or survivor (Chant 1997), vulnerable or resilient (Folbre 1991; González de la Rocha 1994). While many of these reviews also carefully argue for considering variation and the diversity of women's experiences, the presentation is typically arranged around myths to be dispelled. These reviews present analyses of secondary data from national level surveys, although several have included parallel ethnographic research that is used to contextualize and situate the findings and conclusions of the statistical analyses (González de la Rocha 1994; Chant 1997). In spite of these methodological innovations, however, the primary aim of such reviews has been to facilitate global comparative studies of 'female-headed households'. Their emphasis on cross-national comparison deflects attention from these issues of representation, and directs it instead to the project of creating further sub-categorizations and refining definitions.

As I will argue in this chapter, a more reflexive approach would move beyond the binary formulation of women's agency and the efforts to discover new ways of categorizing national level statistics that will somehow 'explain' the variation. This approach would address three issues that have not yet been adequately dealt with in critiques and reviews of research on 'female-headed households'. First, the history of the category in context has not yet been written; existing work relates life histories of people who fill the category, but not of the category itself. Second, the political economy of 'female-headed households' has emphasized class differences and contrasts between insider/outsider or emic/etic perspectives, but no real analysis exists of the political consciousness, the political action or the political organization of female heads of households (with the possible exception of Mullings 1995). Third, a discussion is required of how the 'female-headed household' is part of the larger kinship and marriage system rather than an anomalous and separate category.

This brief discussion of the concepts 'household', 'head of household', and 'female-headed household' points to the theoretical and conceptual problems that continue to divide anthropologists and demographers. As in the case of the more general concept of 'head of household', the concept of the 'female head of household' is also plagued by many of the problems of representation discussed above. Further, the polarized discussions around this concept between demographers and anthropologists tend to rigidify along similar lines. In this case, however, we have additional problems arising from different theoretical conceptions of gender in the two disciplines. What is even

more disturbing is that the quality of the exchange does not seem to be improving progressively over time. For example, the discussion over the impact of Gary Becker's notion of household economics (1981) resulted in more fruitful exchanges from which both disciplines benefited. In the present case of the gendered notion of female-headed household the results so far have not been as fruitful and have tended to get stuck in well-recognized tracks. The tensions between these tracks have increased to the point of mutual disregard. This is indicated by the fact that demographers continue to use unreconstructed notions of 'female-headed households' while for the most part anthropologists have ceased to use the concept. What I am suggesting here is that in the current period the general state of the exchanges on the interface between anthropology and demography is very accurately reflected in the state of the debate around the concept of 'head of household' and 'female head of household'.

## FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS IN KAMPALA: PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTATION

My work in Uganda extended over a period of 2 years (1993–4) and focused primarily on women in the informal economy in the capital city Kampala. The informal economy of Kampala is driven by an expanding retail sector in which people are selling a wide variety of foods, household goods such as cooking utensils, second-hand clothes, second-hand shoes, traditional medicines, and cosmetics. The ballooning of this retail sector since the late 1980s occurred in the context of the devaluation of the shilling as part of the IMF's structural adjustment programme. In the ensuing economic collapse, a wide variety of consumer goods such as soap and sugar and even the staple foods were unavailable in spite of persistent demand. Among the entrepreneurs who attempted to fill this demand were many of the women who became traders in the informal economy of Kampala. These women secured stalls in the major marketplaces in Kampala and from there sold their goods. My research focused on several markets including Nakasero Market, Wandegeya Market, and Owino Market, the largest in the country.

The specific problem that my research addressed was the ways in which women market traders combined their entrepreneurial activities with infant care and feeding. In particular, I was interested in the extent to which women experienced time as a resource to be managed, spent, and saved. I approached this problem by using both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. First I did participant observation in several markets and then I interviewed a select group of older women traders about how they coordinated their business practices with childcare and family responsibilities. Based on preliminary findings of the ethnography, I designed an observational study of women's time use in which 92 mother/traders were visited repeatedly over a nine-month period. I used extended observational visits in which women's activities were recorded for four-hour blocks of time. This study was quantitative in nature and made use of several standard statistical techniques. Alongside this quantitative component of the study I continued the ethnography of

women mother/traders, including some of the 92 mothers who were participating in the observational study (Davis 1997).

In the course of completing this research project three factors emerged that I think are important for quantitative researchers who are attempting to theorize the female-headed household specifically or, more generally, the interface between kinship and economy. These are: the problem of household membership given the reality of urban residence and continuing ties to the home village; the relational quality of the interview situation; and the duration or stability of conjugal relationships. Each of these factors identifies problems of representation when applying the concept of 'female-headed household' in Kampala.

## Female-headed households: Kampala and the home village

First, although I did not set out to study female-headed households, the majority of the women in my research fit the minimal definition for this category as it is used in censuses and survey research. That is, most of the women were the main breadwinner and the authority figure for the residential group living with them in Kampala. However, in spite of this *prima facie* fit, I would be reluctant to call these women heads of households within the Baganda kinship system. In this kinship system, the ties to home village are quite strong and enduring, and link these women heads of household to the rural households of their parents, brothers, grandparents, and other relatives. Because of the new economic role of these women as traders they reside in Kampala with their children. However, in spite of their establishing this Kampala residence, it neither breaks or minimizes their responsibilities to, nor their identification with their home village. Consequently, if these Kampala residences are considered not as 'whole families' but as parts of the women's larger system of kin, then the earlier *prima facie* fit collapses. In other words, categorizing them as female-headed households in Kampala prevents researchers from theorizing the significant kinship relationships that exist between residential units in Kampala and the woman's relatives residing in the home village. The importance of these relationships was revealed by the fact that the majority of the women regularly sent resources to relatives in the home village and had several of their own children residing there (Davis 1998).

A more accurate way of conceptualizing these women traders is one in which they belong to at least two residential units, sometimes located at great distances from one another. In the urban residence they function as authority figures and breadwinners. In the home village this authority may or may not translate into comparable positions of influence within the family because of hierarchies of age and gender. To assign one meaning to these women's activities as breadwinners and authority figures would be misleading. While it would be equally relevant to conceptualize male-headed households in Kampala as belonging to at least two residential units—that is, the urban residence and the home village—the translation of male status and authority from one setting to another is more consistent and predictable. The implication of this finding for demographers and survey researchers is that any project

concerning female headship may require collecting data from more than one residential location.

## On the relational quality of the interview situation

The second factor of importance for demographic research that emerged from my study concerns the ability of the interview situation as practised in survey research to generate true statements about intimate relationships. This issue emerged out of conversations with women traders who initially gave me inaccurate information about their marital status when first interviewed. In the course of subsequent interviews, they revised significantly the accounts of their sexual relationships and marital status that they had given earlier. Many confessed that they were not really married, and were more open to discussing their personal lives. I attribute these shifts in position to the greater trust that these women developed in me over the course of the research. Had I left after the first set of interviews I would be reporting a very different picture of these women.

These types of revisions in the representation of self over the course of this research are crucial for studies of female-headed households. Individuals are classified as female-headed households based on their responses to a standard set of questions, including: Are you the main breadwinner? Are you married? My research and that of others show that initial answers to such questions in the survey situation are often false. This strategic presentation of self is related to two issues: (a) normative expectations regarding female identity and female sexual behaviour, and (b) the relational quality of the interview situation, which includes social, cultural, and linguistic distance between interviewer and respondent, and low levels of trust (Kvale 1996). Some researchers assume that qualitative research methods will automatically resolve these issues. However, as the example above makes clear, misrepresentations of self were given to me in the context of in-depth interviews with women I had met two or three times prior to conducting the interview.<sup>3</sup>

The implications of this for survey research are that its practitioners and consumers must recognize the crucial role of trust in doing research about intimate relationships and the time that it takes to generate trust. Without attention to this factor, the data routinely collected by survey questionnaires on intimate relations such as marriage, sexual relations, and mothering becomes highly questionable.

## Classifying marriage and conjugal relations in Kampala

The third factor of importance that emerged from my work has to do with the nature and duration of marriage and conjugal relationships. Among the women/infant pairs in my study, there were a significant number of cases in which the conjugal relationship that produced the infant ended before the conclusion of my research. Censuses and conventional survey research would not have categorized these women as female heads of household. In these types of research it is customary to assume that the marital status recorded at the time of the survey holds for the next 10 years. Although



cross-sectional surveys (e.g. census) tend to be less responsive to the fluidity of marriage and conjugal relationships, even retrospective surveys like the DHS are not sensitive to such relationships when they are non-cohabiting and of short duration.<sup>4</sup> The results of my field research suggest that this is a very problematic assumption. Given that marital relationships in Buganda have been described as remarkably unstable and short-lived since the 1940s, this assumption is even more problematic (Mair 1940; Southall and Gutkind 1956; Mandeville 1975; Obbo 1980). It grossly underrepresents the fluidity and changing dynamics that are characteristic of conjugal relations in Kampala.

Further, there are categories of conjugal relations that have emerged in Kampala and other African cities that standard survey research techniques consistently misrepresent. These are categories of consensual and contractual relations in which men exchange material resources for the domestic services of women. In Kampala these forms of conjugal relations have been referred to as *mukwano* relationships (friendship union), *malaya* (prostitution), and as 'free marriage' (Southall and Gutkind 1956; Mandeville 1975; Obbo 1980; Ogden 1996; Davis 2001). These relationships differ from formal or customary marriage in that they are entered into without the sanctions of bridewealth or the protective authority of parents or lineage groups. This leaves the relationship very much in the hands of the contracting parties. Furthermore, each of these categories has its own conventional practice in terms of economic exchange, childbearing, and parenting. Very often women are without recourse to institutions of redress and are thus completely vulnerable to the exercise of male hegemony. To mistake these kinds of relationships for marriage, or to group them all together as 'consensual union' constitutes a major error in categorization, and obscures our understanding of marriage in many African cities. Likewise, to theorize them only as sexual liaisons distorts our understanding of conjugal relations (and of fertility) and simply perpetuates the 'African promiscuity' thesis (Caldwell and Caldwell 1987; Heald 1995).

The above three factors point clearly to the representational problems associated with both survey research and its deployment of this concept of 'female-headed household'. The severity of these problems makes it clear that they cannot be resolved through strategies for refining the operational measures of the concept. They suggest that resolution will only be achieved with much more careful attention to the conceptual and theoretical issues surrounding both the construction and use of the concept. With regard to the problems with the interview situation in survey research, their severity also suggests that they will not be resolved by improvements in the wording of questions or in the overall ordering of the interview schedule. Neither will they be resolved by the addition of one or two very clever questions. On the contrary, they indicate the need for an improvement in the qualitative aspects of the relationship between interviewee and interviewer. From my field experiences, there seems to be no way to avoid the time investment that allows a relationship of trust to develop and that the gathering of information on intimate relations require. These are the conceptual and theoretical issues that I want to address through my three-tiered strategy of re-contextualization.

## RE-CONTEXTUALIZING THE FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLD

In my view what is urgently needed at the interface of demography and anthropology is a more constructive pattern of intellectual exchange. As noted earlier, the two sides in this dialogue have often retreated to positions of mutual disregard. This is neither healthy nor productive. To move beyond this stalemate, I will propose a radical re-contextualizing of the concept of the female-headed household. This will be a three-tiered re-contextualization in which I will make use of my case material from Kampala to facilitate the reformulation. First, I will make the case for historicizing the concept in place. That is, I will trace the history of female-headed households in Kampala in order to demonstrate the importance of the reflexive relationship that researchers should have to this concept. Second, I will locate women who fit the category female-headed household in the political economy of Kampala. Specifically, I will examine the political and economic discourses that define the public identities of women in this category as poor and vulnerable. I will compare these official discourses with the life experiences of these women with regard to issues such as poverty, political participation, economic organizing, and their ability to constructively engage development programmes to achieve their own agendas. Third and finally, I will argue for a radical re-contextualization of the concept of the female-headed household that locates it squarely within the Baganda<sup>5</sup> kinship system. Rather than viewing the female-headed household as either a very recent phenomenon, or as an anomalous and incomplete household type, I describe it as present in Baganda culture since the fifteenth century (Musisi 1991) and reaching greater frequency in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Roscoe 1911; Mair 1934). As part of the larger kinship system, I suggest that urban female-headed households are more accurately theorized as but one location of a multi-sited household, its members maintaining enduring ties and social identification with kin in their home villages.

### Historicizing the female-headed household in Kampala

The importance of a local historicizing of the concept female-headed household derives from the fact that it is a transcultural theoretical construct that is being imposed on already established local constructions of the status of the single woman. It is at this point that issues of fit and the need for contextualization arise. Elsewhere I have argued that the single woman in Kampala, as a category, exists within the binary opposition married woman/prostitute (Davis 2000). In the sense that binary oppositions often privilege one half over the other, the prostitute can be understood as the socially rejected 'other' of the married woman. Sylvia Wynter has theorized this concept of the 'other' through the anthropological notion of the liminal category, emphasizing aspects of the liminal that represent a state of chaos, or anti-structure to established orders (Wynter 1984). In Uganda the single woman has occupied a variety of intermediate positions along this binary opposition that sometimes bring her closer to the prostitute (the liminal category, the 'other') and sometimes closer to

the married woman (Davis 2000). In other words, there are some conjugal practices of single women in Uganda that can analogically be labelled ‘marriage’ and, at the same time, some which might be labelled ‘prostitution’. Consequently, any attempt to impose a transcultural unitary concept like female-headed household runs the risk of erasing these categorical subtleties. My call for a more reflexive relationship to such concepts emerges out of the need to keep open an exchange between them and such local categorical subtleties.

This more reflexive approach to the female-headed household takes as its starting point a critical exploration of local constructions of both the married woman and the single woman in postcolonial Kampala. Such an approach requires, at the same time, a discussion of how these local constructions of women in Kampala have changed over time. This exploration proceeds by describing the range of options and possibilities for women in Kampala with regard to conjugal practices, the economic transactions that accompany them, and the ways that women engaging in such practices are represented in the media, in social research, and popular discourse. Historicizing the female-headed household in Kampala must be done against the background of these changing constructions of female identity. To do so, I will focus on three distinct constructions of the female-headed household that have existed in Kampala: *abambejja* (princesses); *banakyeombekedde* (independent women); and *abakazi be tawuni* (town women).

## Female-headed households in precolonial Buganda

In precolonial Buganda, it is possible to distinguish two distinct types of female-headed households—*abambejja* and *banakyeombekedde*. The former were women of the ruling class, while the latter were members of the peasant class. *Abambejja* (princesses) were descendents of the *kabaka* (king), born into the royal family as either sisters or daughters. They were allotted land and independent residences by the *kabaka* and were assigned to rule over specific regions of the kingdom, but were barred from marriage and reproduction for reasons of security and rules of succession. For these women, both marriage and childbearing were punishable with death. *Abambejja* governed their designated areas of the country, commanded chiefs, and were expected to have large numbers of male lovers (Sacks 1979; Musisi 1991). They were the only women who were addressed as ‘sir’ and to whom chiefs kneeled in greeting. Unlike the princesses, *banakyeombekedde* were independent female householders of the peasant class who either left marriages or chose not to marry (Obbo 1980). These women did not have strategic ties to the state, hence their lives were not constrained in similar ways. However, in constructing their identity as female-headed householders, they adapted patterns and practices from the *abambejja* just as peasant men modelled their practice of polygyny on that of the *kabaka*.

At the time of the first European contacts in the mid-nineteenth century, Buganda was the largest and most powerful of three bantu kingdoms that became part of the British Protectorate of Uganda (1894) and later the independent state of Uganda (1962). The Baganda were agriculturalists and the society was organized into patrilineal clans, which had in earlier centuries been territorially based corporate kin

groups that owned and controlled land. Throughout their lives women retained membership in their natal clans. Marriage gave women access to their husbands' land and property only through rights of usufruct. From around the fifteenth century up until the nineteenth century, the political and economic power that had been held by the patrilineal clans was slowly consolidated into state power, embodied by the *kabaka* (monarch), the royal family, and a small group of bureaucratic chiefs (Fallers 1964). This consolidation of state power produced a class society, divided into an unproductive ruling class consisting of the royal family and the bureaucratic chiefs, and a peasant producing class, *bakopi*. The political and economic power that had once been organized through kinship within the clans, was instead distributed by the *kabaka* and his chiefs through patron–client relationships (Fallers 1964). Buganda was a powerful and predatory state, frequently conquering neighbouring peoples, confiscating land and cattle, and enslaving the women and children. In a period of rapid expansion during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *kabaka* gained considerable wealth from plunder and the control of trade routes to the coast (slaves and ivory), making patronage an even more important route to class mobility for *bakopi*.

In this system, ruling class and peasant women were denied political leadership roles and could obtain land and houses only through their husbands or some other male guardian (brothers). In the sense that all men of the peasant class were clients of patrons, women became clients of the patron's clients (Sacks 1979; Musisi 1991). Women were valued as cultivators and the bearers of children, and in the system of 'elite polygyny',<sup>6</sup> women were also valued as objects of exchange (Musisi 1991). The patrilineal clans, although decorporatized, continued to be an important source of identity in the Buganda state because they served as a type of affiliation for establishing patron–client relationships. Marriage was one of the means available to peasants for securing patrons, and clan membership offered some peasants greater options in this arena since ruling class men preferred wives from certain clans. As both fathers and brothers, men could arrange marriages for their daughters and sisters with important chiefs and within the royal family itself. Thus the *abambejja* (princesses) were both the 'other' of the married woman and liminalized, in that their sexual and political identities defy the established order for the construction of 'women' in Baganda society. It is for this reason that Musisi (1991) suggests they were an ambivalent gender category.<sup>7</sup>

For most women in precolonial Buganda, wifehood was their basic relation to the productive means. This placed a premium on women's sexuality and reproductive capacities, domains which were given extensive cultural elaboration such as institutionalized instruction by kin (*ssenga*, or father's sister), ritualized conjugal practices, and proverbs or sayings that idealize these practices. Motherhood was central to women's identities as adult members of society such that childlessness was despised and barren women were badly treated. Marriage partners were chosen by a woman's family, the criteria for selection being class mobility and the principle of clan exogamy. That is, the appropriate husband could not belong to the woman's own clan (that of her father) nor the clan of her mother. The *ssenga* (father's sister) served as

matchmaker and lifelong mentor for her niece in performing her role as wife, while a woman's brother negotiated the brideprice and received the payment from the groom at the time of the marriage. Polygyny was common among the peasant class, but few men could afford to have more than one wife until they were quite old. While it was acceptable for men to have mistresses as long as their wives were informed, husbands did not tolerate adultery and were within their rights to punish their wives with beatings and even death. Men of the peasant class and ruling class alike modelled their practice of polygyny on that of the *kabaka*, giving titles to certain wives, taking concubines and bringing their wives' relatives into the home as servants. When women felt they were being mistreated by their husbands, it was their brother to whom they turned for assistance and protection.

Although wifhood was the more common status for women of the peasant producer class, as already indicated there was a form of female-headed household existing in precolonial Buganda among the peasant class. *Banakyembekedde* were independent female householders, a category that included never-married women as well as widowed and divorced women and those who had deserted their husbands because they were simply tired of being married. Such a woman could escape marriage or the prospect of remarriage (levirate) by seeking the allegiance of a chief in another village, thus acquiring rights to land where she may cultivate and build her own house. This was a well-known category of women, and men courted them to prevent them from 'shutting in' or having nothing more to do with men (Obbo 1980: 88). *Banakyembekedde* were economically self-sufficient, and were often stigmatized because they enjoyed sexual freedoms that married women did not. As independent women, they were liminalized, the 'other' of the married woman, and so were subject to negative stereotyping, gossip, and suspicion.

Research conducted in the early twentieth century documented considerable numbers of female-headed households in various parts of rural Buganda, ranging from 12 to 29 per cent of all households in the villages that were surveyed (Mair 1940; Richards and Reining 1954; Taylor 1958; Southwold 1959).<sup>8</sup> Missionaries and travellers in the nineteenth century also remarked upon the instability of marriage among Baganda and the tendency for women to leave a husband who treated her poorly. Because the existing historical documents describing Buganda before the nineteenth century do not adequately address such issues, it is difficult to identify the origins of this pattern of spousal separation. Scholars have attributed this trend to various causes, including: the efforts of Christian missionaries to curtail the practice of polygyny (men were required to marry one wife in church and send the others away)<sup>9</sup>; a marked reduction in the male population due to frequent wars with neighbouring peoples; and an overall decline in the importance of marriage as the means of securing a patron. Whatever the cause, by the mid-nineteenth century it was apparently common for women who were dissatisfied in their marriages to leave their husbands and refuse to return (*okunoba*, to leave, to desert) even with the brother's intervention.

Although most of Buganda was sparsely populated agricultural villages, the residence of the *kabaka* and the royal family was large enough in terms of people,

buildings, and infrastructure, to constitute an urban centre. The royal enclosure, or *kibuga* (town, settlement), the capital of the Buganda state, was a movable one for reasons of both security and hygiene. The *kibuga* was always located on a hilltop, and could change sites as many as ten times in the reign of one *kabaka*. At the time of the first European contact, the *kibuga* was quite large, housing the *kabaka*'s 1,784 wives, 1,000 concubines, and hundreds of maiden servants, plus the bureaucratic chiefs and their families. Mengo, the capital of Buganda at the time the British Protectorate was established, was an urban centre of more than 20 square miles and inhabited by 3,000–34,000 people (Gutkind 1963).<sup>10</sup> Kampala was established by the British in 1890 adjacent to Mengo Hill, on a plot of land measuring 3 square miles that was a gift of the *kabaka*. The growth of Kampala Township and the legal system of the Protectorate Government transformed in a profound way the opportunities and options for women.

## Female-headed households in Kampala

Two types of female-headed households were associated with the growth of Kampala—*banakyeombekedde* and *abakazi be tawuni* (town women). The latter, our third category of female-headed household, ‘town women’ emerged in the period of colonial urbanization and capitalist development in Kampala. After the Buganda Agreement of 1900, which gave Baganda women the right to own land in their own names, the numbers of *banakyeombekedde* grew and many migrated to urban centres like Kampala where they built houses and rented rooms (Halpenny 1975; Obbo 1980). In contrast to the *banakyeombekedde*, town women came to Kampala in response to the demands for domestic services by the immense pool of male migrant labourers who were building the infrastructure of the colonial city. ‘Town women’ provided the domestic labour required for the social reproduction of male migrant labour in exchange for money (White 1990). These domestic services included such things as cooking food, brewing beer, serving tea, and washing clothes right through to marriage. Because these labours frequently included sex, and because they were all commodified, the labour of ‘town women’ became analogous to prostitution (Davis 2000).

In addition to their work, the other distinguishing feature of the female-headed households created by town women was the conjugal practice called *mukwano* (friendship union). Within *mukwano* relationships, couples may or may not have cohabited, they were sexually intimate, and commitments could be provisional and non-exclusive (Mair 1940; Southall and Gutkind 1957; Halpenny 1975; Obbo 1980; Bakwesegha 1982). In addition to their own earnings, *mukwano* relationships gave town women more reliable access to men's wages. Further, men were expected to give their *mukwano* partners gifts and to entertain them. These aspects of *mukwano* relationships, and the fact that town women often engaged in them with multiple partners, either concurrently or serially, was the source of the mis-labelling of town women as prostitutes or *malaya*.<sup>11</sup> Some couples viewed *mukwano* relationships as trial unions, however, the birth of a child tended to transform the provisional nature of these unions and brought them closer to ‘free marriage’. Unlike *mukwano* relationships, in free marriage commitments were more long-term, and the couple as

well as neighbours, parents, and friends recognized the couple as married although no legal or customary rites were performed (Mair 1940; Southall and Gutkind 1957; Mandeville 1975). Both *mukwano* and free marriage are defined against the prostitute or *malaya*, on the one hand and formal marriage on the other.

The provisional nature of *mukwano* relationships has contributed to the persistent negative stereotyping of town women (Kilbride and Kilbride 1990; Ogden 1996; Davis 2000). The most common stereotype of town women is the claim that they are able to support themselves lavishly through gifts from lovers. Mandeville (1979) is one of many who has set out to question whether it is the case in Kampala that town women or female-headed households could successfully devote their efforts to maintaining relationships with lovers, to the exclusion of employment, as a means of supporting themselves. She measured the living standards of households in a particular Kampala suburb, comparing women's households in which men co-resided to those without men. The presence of a man in the household resulted in overall better living standards for the women and their children; although the women were themselves employed, the financial help from lovers was necessary to maintain themselves above poverty level. For two decades after independence the above pattern of conjugal relationships remained essentially intact, with the *mukwano* form constituting a significant number of female-headed households in Kampala.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1990s the social form of *mukwano* relationships have remained essentially the same but with significant changes in their economic foundations. Although the income of town women still derives from the social reproduction of labour, that labour is no longer predominantly male. The rise of an informal economy in the late 1970s created many opportunities for female traders to supply a wide variety of goods, which changed the financial foundations of the households created by town women. This shift took on added importance as Uganda underwent structural adjustment in the 1980s. As a result of this policy, the civil service was reduced by more than half and the currency significantly devalued. These consequences of structural adjustment resulted in high levels of male unemployment, which made the incomes of female traders extremely important for the economic stability of *mukwano* relationships (Davis 2000). This shift demonstrates the falsity of the claim that town women can support themselves on gifts from lovers, but the myth persists at the level of popular culture and in some social research. Surprisingly, there is no corresponding mythology or classification system for describing the current situation in which men accept money and gifts from their female lovers.

In a recent study, Appleton (1996) analysed the first nationally representative household survey of Uganda and concluded that, at a national level, women-headed households were not poorer than households headed by men. However, this research did report that women-headed households in urban areas and those headed by widows had significantly lower levels of economic welfare. The assessments of poverty were based on both household income and consumption. The study concluded that it was the receipt of remittances by women-headed households that is responsible for their economic equivalence with those households headed by men. The survey

only recorded remittances received (not those paid out by the household), and these tended to be a larger percentage of the total income for women-headed households than for those headed by men.

This discussion of the history of female-headed households in Uganda has demonstrated the antiquity of the concept, its changing nature, and its capacity for diverse cultural constructions. As we saw in the postcolonial period, the concept was as dynamic as it has ever been, experiencing significant changes in its economic foundations. However, very little change has occurred at the level of popular discourse surrounding the female-headed household. Thus, regardless of the economists' or demographers' optimism vis-à-vis women's autonomy or empowerment, the local construction of female-headed households in Kampala remains the category 'town women', with all its negative associations. What is significant for the dialogue between anthropologists and demographers is the fact that all of these local constructions of the female-headed household differ significantly from those generated in standard census and survey research. In the survey situation, it is likely that the interviewee will be embedded in the culture and language of these local constructions while the interviewer will be rooted in those of demographic discourse. Unless the researcher is very familiar with these local constructions, and the instrument is flexible enough to accommodate them, the answers obtained may be poor representations of the female-headed household in Uganda.

## Political economy and the female-headed household

As in the Ugandan discourse about the single woman, the conception of the single worker is not an isolated concept in the Western discourse of political economy. The single worker is a construction that emerges out of the binary, entrepreneur/unemployed or entrepreneur/welfare recipient. In this binary the entrepreneur is the privileged figure and the unemployed or welfare recipient the conceptual other. Between these polar extremes a number of intermediary positions can be identified. Thus the representation and evaluation of a particular worker will vary with how closely his or her categorization approaches either of the extreme points of this continuum. Within this system of categorization, political economy reserves specific places for the female head of a household. On the one hand, because she is often an entrepreneur many political economists read this very positively and associate it with qualities like agency and drive for success. On the other hand, because of her gender some economists see her as an inadequate breadwinner and associate this inadequacy with poverty, economic vulnerability, and social failure.

The discourses of development agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and government departments routinely assume these constructions of the female head of household. Consequently, many survey researchers and demographers have uncritically adopted these assumptions about the agency of the female who heads a household. Because of the extensive use of these assumptions by census takers and demographers, it becomes necessary to re-contextualize the concept of female-headed household in terms of local political economies.



In the case of Uganda, the economic discourses of development agencies, NGOs, survey researchers, and demographers are present, and also make use of the above constructions of the female who heads a household. My observations of the economic activities of women entrepreneurs in Kampala suggest that there is a major gap between them and the constructions used by demographers, development agencies, and other researchers. Although these women traders can be classified as entrepreneurs, their trading activities are very fragile and unstable undertakings. They carry with them high possibilities for failure and for widely varying degrees of success. Consequently, we cannot invest them as a group with the neo-liberal mantle of private sector initiative which, when uninhibited by the state, brings both individual success and economic development. At the same time, we cannot divest them of all economic agency as many critics of female-headed households who see them as incapable of achieving individual success and contributing to economic development.

My observations revealed widely varying degrees of success in the trading business among the women in Kampala. The higher end of this continuum consisted of those women who made enough money to pay for the secondary education of their children, to build a concrete house, build a house for their own mothers, and to start their children in the trading business. At the lower end, there were women who were not able to feed their children two meals a day, were not able to keep their children in school, and who were not even able to maintain a rented dwelling. In between these two extremes, women occupied widely varying positions of success or failure. Given this diversity, the bipolar concept of the female-headed household in standard demographic analyses is clearly inadequate. Once again, it points to a problem of representation as it becomes questionable what these concepts are representing in the case of these female traders in Kampala.

This crisis of representation can be thematized on at least three different levels. As already noted, female traders in Kampala derived widely varying amounts of income from their activities. This variation is such that any bipolar categorization of this group has to be problematic. For example, it neither supports the categorization of these women as innovators in the Schumpeterian sense of the term nor does it support the view of them as abject and vulnerable failures.

Second, these variations in earned income are most likely to produce similarly wide variations in the degree of agency exercised by female traders. This is not just a logical deduction but a phenomenon I observed in the course of doing fieldwork. Some traders were able to successfully acquire start-up capital, secure market stalls, mobilize labour, and other resources through kinship ties. In addition, they were also able to earn and maintain the respect and business of suppliers and customers. On the other hand there were women who did not display these skills and abilities to the same degree. Again, this variation in agency creates problems for any bipolar representation of the economic capabilities of these women.

Third, these variations in both income and economic agency were reflected in widely varying levels of political action. Some women were great group leaders, taking leadership roles, negotiating the world of NGOs, organizing workplace security, childcare, and tax resisting groups. For example the Owino Women's Group, initially

formed in 1987 by six traders at Owino Market, managed to formally register with the National Association of Women's Organizations in 1995, which allowed thirty traders from Owino to participate in the PAPSCO loan programme in 1997. Others participated in TASO (The AIDS-Support Organization), using the resources of this indigenous HIV-AIDS control programme to manage the illnesses of relatives and to access other resources for the orphans that the women had in their care. In contrast there were women who did not know how to use the free pediatric clinic at Mulago Hospital, the government hospital. Once again, we are confronted with a range of complexity and variation that does not 'go into' the bipolar constructions of female-headed households without major remainders. In the case of the women traders in Kampala, the remainders are so large that they cannot be ignored or rounded off as in a decimal. They must be dealt with in a meaningful way and this can only be done through a practice of greater reflexivity and more sensitive contextualization.

## Kinship and the female-headed household

As in the case of the political economy of demographic concepts of the female-headed household, their kinship dimensions do not adequately represent the kinship relations of female traders in Kampala. The gap between the demographic images of these women as autonomous (albeit empowered), isolated social actors and the specific realities observed in Kampala is just too great. Hence, the need to reconstruct and re-contextualize the kinship dimensions of the concept. On this point, I have already noted the importance of the kinship ties that these women maintained with their home villages. There I emphasized the fact that the concept of the Baganda family implies a connection between several households, including the ones female traders of Kampala occupied. Reinserted in the larger kinship system, these women cease to be the solitary, autonomous breadwinners and authority figures assumed by demographers.

## The relative significance of consanguinal kin and conjugal bonds

In the Baganda patrilineage, women belong to their father's lineage throughout their lives, never joining their husband's lineage. Particularly in the case of the women traders in Kampala, relationships with their brothers are extremely important—economically, emotionally, and socially. This fact emerged in stark contrast to the emphasis that demographers typically place on both marriage and the conjugal relationship. This is a particularly deep-seated misrepresentation as it is also quite common in anthropological and sociological studies of kinship. In all of these literatures it is particularly noticeable when examining women's power and authority in the kin system. In lineage-based societies, emphasizing marriage and conjugal relations minimizes or under-represents women's power and authority within the larger kinship system (Strathern 1988; Weiner 1992). The basis of this misconception could be the inability of Western scholars to distance themselves from their own kinship systems in which lineage does not play an important role in everyday life.

In many instances among women traders that I interviewed, the brother–sister relationship was crucial. Most importantly, brothers are obligated to be a primary

source of support to their sisters. For example, brothers provided housing for their sisters who were leaving unsatisfactory marriages, or sisters who experienced serious financial crises. Brothers gave their sisters start-up capital for trading businesses, housed children to facilitate their schooling, and were obligated to contribute money when women undertook 'fund-raising' to acquire the school fees for their children. These practices point to a very strong kinship tie that directly contradicts the image of these women traders as isolated female heads of households lacking access to male income and support.

Additional support for the strength of the brother–sister relationship can be found in the obligations of sisters to their brothers. Most importantly, sisters were obligated to perform the role of *ssenga* or paternal aunt. In that role she served as her nieces' primary authority figure, initiator into puberty and marriage. Starting around age 9, it is the *ssenga* and not a girl's mother who begins her education in the process of becoming an adult. This includes such everyday things as cooking, housecleaning, and childcare. In addition, the *ssenga* teaches and guides the pre-menstrual girl to create the elongated labia minoris. At her first menstruation, the niece was required to go and live at her *ssenga*'s house. In earlier times she would live with the *ssenga* until marriage, but the current practice is for her to live with the *ssenga* the week before the marriage. In the past, on the wedding night the *ssenga* would even accompany the bride to the husband's house and had the authority to monitor the sexual performance of the couple. Throughout the marriage, the *ssenga* is the primary source of support and guidance.

As sisters, women traders were obligated to adopt the 'orphaned' children of brothers who died in order to ensure that the children remained within the lineage (Ankrah 1993). This may or may not imply shared residence. It is her money that 'adopts' the child, and that money can pay the expenses of a child who resides in someone else's home. In the time of AIDS this particular obligation has been put to the severest of tests. Again, the manner in which these sisterly obligations are being performed does not support the image of these women as socially isolated and autonomous individuals. Few are able to refuse these identities and the responsibilities of kinship. Furthermore, when alluding to networks of kin, it is a misrepresentation of the lived reality in Uganda to suggest that women-headed households only receive remittances or resources from their kin. By not theorizing flows of economic and other resources *out of* the female-headed household towards her kin we greatly diminish the power and authority that women may exert with their earnings.

Earlier I suggested the tendency of Western scholars to place more emphasis on marriage and conjugal relations than consanguinal relations in assessing women's place in kinship systems. The reasons for this suggestion should now be much clearer as well as its implications for studying societies like Baganda in which the lineage is still important in organizing social relations. The major point of difference with Western systems of kinship is the displacing of mother and father or the conjugal unit by the consanguinal ties of brother and sister in the roles of paternal aunt and maternal uncle. Western readings of this displacement of the father tend to make

female-headed households appear to be more separated from male support than they really are. These readings of 'absent' male support suggest that it is simply being perceived as coming from the *wrong* men. It is this categorization of the male support that these women are in fact getting that indicates the presence of the deep-seated bias in favour of Western concepts of marriage and conjugal relations. It is also interesting to note that the corresponding displacement of mothers by paternal aunts has never generated a similar set of concerns.

## The recent significance of the mother–daughter relationship

The consanguinal ties of brother and sister are not the only ones that are important in the lives of the women traders I interviewed in Kampala. Mothers have also become important relatives that women traders relied on for childcare and economic support. Mothers and daughters sometimes conducted their businesses together and resided together in Kampala. Women traders said they are obligated to visit their mothers and provide support to them either in the form of money or goods such as clothes, soap, and sugar. Some women that I interviewed, the more successful entrepreneurs, had even built houses for their mothers in the village. This reliance on and support of mothers was characterized as a new phenomenon by the women I interviewed, something they attributed to men's inability to meet their responsibilities. In the Baganda kinship system women are not technically 'related' to their own mothers since a woman belongs to the clan of her father. This new tendency towards elaborating matrifocal ties, especially childcare and co-residence, may be interpreted as a response to economic crisis and the social dislocation caused by HIV-AIDS.

This analysis of kinship demonstrates the need to reconstruct and re-contextualize the kinship dimensions of the concept of female-headed household. Emphasis on conjugal relations in both the definition of female-headed household and in theorizing the agency exercised by such households is problematic. This focus leaves untheorized the potentially more consequential relationships such as brother/sister and *ssenga*/niece in a patriline. Furthermore, the emergence of new forms of kin associations such as the matrifocal ties mentioned above, which in some cases represent relationships between female-headed households, will remain undetectable.

## CONCLUSION

The above suggestions for re-contextualization demonstrate clearly the problems with demographic usage of the concept 'female-headed household'. In particular, I tried to show the severity of the representational problems associated with its use. The severity of these problems is such that it requires demographers to rework the concept beyond surface issues, such as the refining of operational measures. More than such refinements, the problem of representation requires that we re-think demographic practices such as household surveys that make no effort to link households whose kinship ties create bonds of economic, political, and social cooperation. Along with re-thinking survey practices, demographers must also pay more careful

attention to the ways in which they deploy transcultural concepts. My examination of the concept of female-headed household revealed many of the difficulties that accompany automatic and decontextualized applications of transcultural concepts. As I suggested, these concepts need to be contextualized along several dimensions in order to be meaningfully applied.

The difficulties demonstrated with the concept of the female-headed household extend to other areas of exchange between anthropology and demography. For example a similar set of difficulties can be seen in exchanges over household, head of household, marriage, migration, and fertility between demographers and anthropologists. In the case of fertility, lines of polarization have developed around the emphasis that demographers have placed on marital fertility to the exclusion of non-marital fertility. For anthropologists the exclusion of the latter has raised serious doubts about the accuracy of demographic accounts of fertility that are indeed only measuring marital fertility. These examples suggest that many of the categories deployed by demographers do not represent what they want them to represent.

To move past the current stalemate will require significant changes in patterns of interdisciplinary exchange. Other authors, such as Nancy Folbre, Mayra Buvinic, and Sylvia Chant, who have reviewed the literature on the female-headed household, have also stressed the need for more intensive interdisciplinary work. These authors emphasized the need for closer cooperation between historians, sociologists, political economists, anthropologists, and demographers to resolve the problems currently plaguing the concept of female-headed households. This kind of interdisciplinary cooperation would also be useful in resolving the tensions between anthropologists and demographers over a number of other concepts as they are currently used in censuses and survey research.

## Notes

1. Nash (1976) and McGowan (1990) report problems of conventionally assigning headship to men, despite evidence to the contrary regarding income and authority. Lloyd and Brandon (1991) report the conventional assignment of the eldest person living in the house, regardless of sex. While the conventions in various settings reflect hierarchies of age and gender that would be of interest in themselves, this has not yet been pursued.
2. The seminar series held in 1988–91, sponsored by the UN and the ICRW, reviewed the cases of Canada, in which a legal decision removed this question from the national census, and the United States, where the threat of massive non-compliance in the 1980 census led to its removal.
3. I met all of the women traders in my research through various market officials, specifically the women section leaders who tended to know personally the individual traders in their particular sections. I was introduced to each respondent at her place of work in the market. On the first meeting, I and one research assistant explained the study and what was required of the participants (e.g. repeated interviews, visits to their homes, extensive observations). We returned a few days later to answer any further questions about the research and to make an appointment for the first interview.

4. Although the DHS contains a marital history, it is impossible to attribute children to any man besides the current husband. The nebulous categories 'regular partner' and 'other partners' are only recorded as sexual liaisons, not fathers or contributors to the household in which the woman is attached.
5. The Baganda are the dominant ethnic group in the district of Uganda in which Kampala, the capital city, is located. Baganda refers to the people as a whole or the ethnic group. A person is referred to as *muganda* (singular) or *baganda* (plural). The country or land has the prefix bu—as in Buganda. Languages have the prefix lu—as in Luganda. Customs or cultural practices have the prefix ki—as in kiganda.
6. 'Elite polygyny' in Buganda refers to the grand scale polygyny practiced by ruling-class men who had large numbers of wives in contrast to the 'small polygyny' of peasant men with four or fewer wives. Women taken captive from conquered peoples were given by the *kabaka* as rewards to loyal chiefs and soldiers. Peasants sent their daughters to become the untitled wives or handmaidens (concubines) of important chiefs or even the *kabaka* himself. Men gained status both by accumulating wives and by bestowing daughters and sisters as wives.
7. In the later history of the Buganda state, the *kabaka* decided that marrying the *abambejja* to powerful chiefs (the *lukiiko*, parliament members) would strengthen his own position as a bestower of wives. Subsequently, the princesses were allowed to marry and bear children.
8. These surveys also found surprisingly large percentages of men living alone, even though they might be married. In 1932–3, Mair reported that nineteen out of fifty-eight households in Bowa consisted of men living alone (33%), nine of these men were married but their wives were away for various reasons. The same survey reported seven women living alone (12%).
9. Since the mid-nineteenth century, both Catholic and Protestant (Church of England) missionaries have been very active in Uganda. Initially, schooling (writing) was only available through the missionary churches, and was highly valued among the Baganda. Church affiliation has since been an important identity in Ugandan politics. The Battle of Mengo in 1892 was a civil war in Buganda that pitted Catholic against Protestant and Muslim, vying for political control. The divisive force of religion in Ugandan politics continued after independence in that political party membership was based on religious affiliations.
10. The total population of the *kibuga* at the time of European contact varied greatly according to different sources. These differences were later attributed to the practices of the *kabaka* in maintaining the *kibuga*: labour was recruited for building projects; taxes were paid in labour annually; men were recruited for military service; women and men were sent to the *kibuga* as house-servants (Gutkind 1963).
11. Social research in Kampala has always made the distinction between 'true prostitute' and *malaya*. The 'true prostitute' regarded sex as a business, received men in her room and charged a flat fee per occasion for sex. The *malaya*, by contrast, thought of herself as having multiple husbands and never asked for money but expected gifts and monetary support in return for sex and other domestic services (Southall and Gutkind 1957, 1980; Halpenny 1975; Bakwesegha 1982).
12. Both prostitutes and *bamalaya* accounted for quite a small proportion of women in the various residential areas studied in Kampala, and thus a smaller number of female-headed households can be attributed to these categories of women (Southall and Gutkind 1957; Halpenny 1975; Mandeville 1979; Obbo 1980).

## References

- Appleton, Simon (1996). 'Women-headed households and household welfare: an empirical deconstruction for Uganda', *World Development*, 24/12: 1811–27.
- Ankrah, E. Maxine (1993). 'The impact of HIV/AIDS on the family and other significant relationships: the African clan revisited', *AIDS Care*, 5/1: 5–22.
- Bakwesegha, Christopher J. (1982). *Profiles of Urban Prostitution: A Case Study from Uganda*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Becker, Gary S. (1981). *A Treatise on the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Buvinic, Mayra and Gupta, Geeta Rao (1997). 'Female-headed households and female-maintained families: are they worth targeting to reduce poverty in developing countries?', *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 45: 259–80.
- Caldwell, John C. and Caldwell, Pat (1987). 'The cultural context of high fertility in sub-Saharan Africa', *Population and Development Review*, 13: 409–37.
- Caplan, Patricia (1984). 'Cognatic descent, Islamic law and women's property on the East African coast', in Renee Hirschon (ed.), *Women and Property, Women As Property*. New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 23–43.
- Carter, Anthony T. (1995). 'Agency and fertility: for an ethnography of practice', in Susan Greenhalgh (ed.), *Situating Fertility: Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 55–85.
- Chant, Sylvia (1997). *Women-Headed Households: Diversity and Dynamics in the Developing World*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Clark, Gracia (1995). *Onions Are My Husband: Survival and Accumulation by West African Market Women*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Crehan, Kate (1997). *Fractured Communities: Landscapes of Power and Gender in Rural Zambia*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Davis, Paula Jean (1997). 'Time is money? Women's time allocation to market trading and to infant feeding in Kampala, Uganda', Doctoral dissertation, Johns Hopkins University.
- (1998). 'Market mamas, orphans and school fees: gender and the cultural (Re-)construction of fertility in Kampala', Paper presented at the 97th Annual Meeting of the American Anthropology Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- (2000). 'On the sexuality of "town women" in Kampala', *Africa Today*, 47/3: 45–88.
- Duncan, Simon and Edwards, Rosalind (1996). 'Lone mothers and paid work: neighborhoods, local labour markets, and welfare state regimes', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 3/4: 195–222.
- (1997). 'Lone mothers and paid work: rational economic man or gendered moral rationalities?', *Feminist Economics*, 3/2: 29–61.
- Dwyer, Daisy and Bruce, Judith (eds.) (1987). *A Home Divided: Women and Income in the Third World*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Edholm, F., Harris, Olivia and Young, Kate (1977). 'Conceptualizing women', *Critique of Anthropology*, Volume 3, Number 9/10: 101–30.
- Fallers, Lloyd, A. (1964). *The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Folbre, Nancy (1991). 'Women on their own: global patterns of female headship', in Rita S. Gallin and Anne Ferguson (eds.), *The Women and International Development Annual*, Vol. 2. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Fortes, Meyer (1953). 'The structure of unilineal descent groups', *American Anthropologist*, 55: 17–41.

- González de la Rocha, Mercedes (1994). *The Resources of Poverty: Women and Survival in a Mexican City*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Greenhalgh, Susan (1995). 'Anthropology theorizes reproduction: trans-disciplinary views', in Susan Greenhalgh (ed.), *Situating Fertility: Anthropology and Demographic Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3–28.
- Gutkind, Peter C. W. (1963). *The Royal Capital of Buganda: A Study of Internal Conflict and External Ambiguity*. The Hague: Mouton and Co.
- Guyer, Jane I. (1981). 'Household and community in African Studies', *African Studies Review*, Volume 24, Number 2/3: 87–137.
- and Peters, Pauline E. (1987). 'Introduction. Workshop titled, "Conceptualizing the Household: Issues of Theory, Method and Application"', *Development and Change*, 18: 197–214.
- Halpenny, Philip (1975). 'Three styles of ethnic migration in Kisenyi, Kampala', in David Parkin (ed.), *Town and Country in Central and Eastern Africa*. London: Oxford University Press, pp. 276–87.
- Harris, Olivia (1981). 'Households as natural units', in Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz, and Roslyn McCullagh (eds.), *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective*. London: CSE Books.
- Heald, Suzette (1995). 'The power of sex: some reflections on the Caldwell's "African Sexuality" Thesis', *Africa*, 65/4: 489–505.
- Kennedy, Eileen (1994). 'Development policy, gender of head of household, and nutrition', in Eileen Kennedy and Mercedes González de la Rocha (eds.), *Poverty and Well-being in the Household: Case Studies of the Developing World*. San Diego: Center for Iberian and Latin American Studies, University of California Press, pp. 25–42.
- Kilbride, Philip L. and Kilbride, Janet C. (1990). *Changing Family Life in East Africa: Women and Children at Risk*. University Park, PA: The University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Kvale, Steinar (1996). *Inter Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Larsson, Anita (1993). 'The importance of housing in the lives of women: the case of Botswana', in Hemalata Dandekar (ed.), *Women, Shelter and Development: First and Third World Perspectives*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: George Wahr Publishing Company, pp. 106–15.
- Lewis, Oscar (1966). 'The Culture of Poverty', *Scientific American* (October): 19–25.
- Lloyd, Cynthia and Brandon, Anastasia (1991). *Women's Roles in Maintaining Households: Poverty and Gender Inequality in Ghana*. Population Council Resource Paper No. 25. New York: Population Council and the International Center for Research on Women.
- Mair, Lucy P. (1934). *An African People in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Russell and Russell.
- (1940). *Native Marriage in Buganda*. London: Oxford University Press for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures.
- Mandeville, Elizabeth (1975). 'The formality of marriage: a Kampala case study', *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 31/3: 183–95.
- (1979). 'Poverty, work and the financing of single women in Kampala', *Africa*, 49/1: 42–52.
- McGowan, Lisa A. (1990). *The Determinants and Consequences of Female-Headed Households: Notes from the Seminar Series*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women.
- Moore, Henrietta and Vaughan, Megan (1994). *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990*. Portsmouth, NJ: Heinemann.
- Moser, Caroline (1993). *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*. London: Routledge.



- Mullings, Leith (1995). 'Households headed by women: the politics of race, class and gender', in Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp (eds.), *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 122–39.
- Musisi, Nakanyike B. (1991). 'Women, "elite polygyny," and Buganda state formation', *Signs*, 16/4: 757–86.
- Nash, June (1976). 'A Critique of social science roles in Latin America', in June Nash and Helen I. Safa (eds.), *Sex and Class in Latin America*. New York: Praeger, pp. 1–21.
- Obbo, Christine (1980). *African Women: Their Struggle for Economic Independence*. London: Zed Press.
- Ogden, Jessica (1996). "'Producing" respect: the "proper woman" in postcolonial Kampala', in Richard P. Werbner and Terence O. Ranger (eds.), *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*. New Jersey: Zed Books.
- Parpart, Jane L. (1995). 'Deconstructing the development "expert": gender, development and the "vulnerable groups"', in Jane L. Parpart and Marianne H. Marchand (eds.), *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*. New York: Routledge.
- and Marchand, Marianne H. (1995). 'Exploding the canon: an introduction/conclusion', in Jane L. Parpart and Marianne H. Marchand (eds.), *Feminism/Postmodernism/Development*. New York: Routledge.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. (1952). *Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Richards, Audrey I. and Reining, Priscilla (1954). 'Report on fertility surveys in Buganda and Buhaya, 1952', in Frank Lorimer (ed.), *Culture and Human Fertility: A Study of the Relation of Cultural Conditions to Fertility, in Non-Industrial and Transitional Societies*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Robertson, Claire C. (1984). *Sharing the Same Bowl: A Socioeconomic History of Women and Class in Accra, Ghana*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.
- Sacks, Karen (1979). *Sisters and Wives: The Past and Future of Sexual Equality*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Shryock, Henry S. and Siegel, Jacob S. (1976). *The Methods and Materials of Demography*. New York: Academic Press.
- Smith, R. T. (1956). *The Negro Family in British Guiana*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Southall, Aidan W. and Gutkind, Peter C. W. (1957). *Townsmen in the Making: Kampala and Its Suburbs*. *East African Studies No. 9*. Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research.
- (1980). 'Marriage', in E. Muga (ed.), *Studies in Prostitution (East, West and South Africa and Nevada)*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, pp. 36–69.
- Southwold, Martin (1959). 'Community and State in Buganda', Doctoral dissertation, Cambridge University.
- Statistics Department [Uganda] and Macro International Inc. (1996). *Uganda Demographic and Health Survey, 1995*. Calverton, MD: Statistics Department [Uganda] and Macro International Inc.
- Strathern, Marilyn (ed.) (1992). *Reproducing the Future: Anthropology, Kinship and the New Reproductive Technologies*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.
- (1988). *The Gender of the Gift*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Taylor, John V. (1958). *The Growth of the Church in Uganda: An Attempt at Understanding*. London: SCM Press.
- Westwood, Sally (1984). "'Fear woman": property and modes of production in Urban Ghana', in Renee Hirschon (ed.), *Women and Property, Women As Property*. New York: St. Martin's Press, pp. 140–157.

- Weiner, Annette B. (1992). *Inalienable Possessions: The Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- White, Luise (1990). *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilk, Richard R. and Netting, Robert McC. (1984). 'Households: changing form and function', in Robert McC. Netting, Richard R. Wilk, and Eric J. Arnould (eds.), *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Group*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 1–28.
- Wynter, Sylvia (1984). 'The ceremony must be found: after humanism', *Boundary 2*, 12 (Spring): 26–37.
- Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko (1979). 'Family and household: the analysis of domestic groups', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 8: 161–205.
- Youssef, Nadia and Hetler, Carol (1983). 'Establishing the economic condition of women-headed households in the third world: a new approach', in Maya Buvinic, Margaret Lycette, and William McGreevey (eds.), *Women and Poverty in the Third World*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 216–43.

# 17 Demography's Ecological Frontier: Rethinking the 'Nature' of the Household and Community

BRIAN GREENBERG AND MARGARET E. GREENE

## INTRODUCTION

Recent demographic research has become increasingly sensitive to the cultural and historical factors that shape social life, and to the relationship between Western cultural values and the understandings and assumptions that orient the discipline. The particular influence of anthropological discourse is evident in demography's enhanced appreciation for the ways social power plays out in gender, racial, ethnic, and economic relationships. In most of the social sciences, a widespread engagement with the intellectual and ethical issues surrounding economic equity, social justice, and human welfare is visible in an evolving set of research priorities and analytic strategies (Greenhalgh 1990). Consistent with this set of sometimes unstated ethical concerns, demography and its sister disciplines have generated data and interpretation that help to illuminate comparative human welfare and inequality in various facets of economic and social life. Environmental change, however, is an area where social scientific categories of analysis have evolved less quickly, and where the traditional focus on social relationships limits their incisiveness and scope.

The challenges for ecological demography posed by our field research site in India's western Himalayas led us to explore an analytic approach that is inclusive of cultural, historical, and ecological factors. We offer this example as an effort to show how demographic methods can be deployed beyond the traditional set of human subjects in the assessment of anthropogenic environmental change, that is, environmental change brought about by human activity.

In 1996, we conducted a survey of 200 households, obtaining demographic information on human and livestock members of each compound, sources of and time spent in the collection of fodder, perceptions of environmental change, and soil

samples. These are the data on which the empirical portion of this chapter is based. Our household survey relied upon demographic household survey methods supplemented by livestock demographic and ecological information. The inclusion of livestock in our household survey initially was a response to the accounts farmers offered of household composition. During extended anthropological fieldwork, it became clear that unless we asked only about family members, or specifically about people, farmers often included livestock when asked introductory questions such as 'who lives in your household?' Studies of the agricultural ecology also established that livestock are central to the farming and subsistence system, as well as to the history of ecological change in the Himalayan region. In preparing for a subsequent detailed household survey in the area, we began to think in terms of expanding our concept of 'family' members to more closely reflect farmers' rather inclusive understanding of their households.

Given the crucial importance of livestock to household welfare and to ecological change, we came to believe that there was potentially more at issue here than simply a semantic slippage between 'family' and 'household'. Livestock densities, nutrition, reproductive health, and survival patterns became pivotal issues for us in assessing agricultural ecology and environmental change. In considering ways to express the resonance between the ecological embeddedness of Himalayan agriculture and of economies everywhere, we began to think in terms of a wider 'community' of life involved in agricultural production. We also came to realize that conventional measures of household welfare would likely miss the considerable stress we saw in the livestock herd and local ecosystems. The senses of 'family' and 'community' we hope to convey are of connectedness and interdependence, concepts we feel are also appropriate for understanding our relationship to the environment.

## A BRIEF REVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHY'S APPROACH TO POPULATION, FOOD SUPPLY, AND ENVIRONMENT

The ideas of Thomas Malthus continue to shape the ways that the social sciences view the relationship between populations and environmental change. Analytic and rhetorical positions on population are often contained within a concern for excessive population size, usually seen as affecting developing countries, and a critique of unreasonable affluence in the northern or developed countries, which are usually seen as having 'acceptably-sized' populations.<sup>1</sup> The relative roles of consumption and population remain the focus of debate between these positions. Although social scientific analyses of environmental issues may not explicitly identify with this dualism, a closer look suggests that this pattern carries through into a great deal of disciplinary work on environmental issues.

The social sciences, including demography, tend to address environmental issues through four basic 'models' of the population–environment relationship (Jolly 1993). Though not meant as an exhaustive cataloguing, Jolly's analysis points to consistent patterns of ideas and interests in most research and discussion of population–environment

issues. Neoclassical economics, the first, argues that output and substitutability can keep pace with population growth, and that environmental degradation can occur when markets are not working efficiently. The second theory, shaped by classical economics, assumes finite resources, and a Malthusian inability to balance resources with growth. This reasoning focuses policy formulation on fertility reduction. A third approach directs attention to regional political ecology by linking poor resource management—seen as the result of poverty—to ecological degradation. This suggests possible solutions based on social and economic reforms and the alleviation of poverty. Finally, a fourth group of researchers sees population as an intermediate variable, where population growth intensifies root causes of unsustainable economic practices and fertility reduction buys time to deal with them.

All four currents focus on people and their resource needs and reflect strongly anthropocentric assumptions and interests.<sup>2</sup> Another generally shared, key assumption underpinning these debates has often been that an ongoing race exists between population growth and food production. This line of thinking, which Malthus first articulated, assumes that high rates of population growth will inevitably outstrip food production, resulting in eventual checks to population size. For Malthus, the natural world was primarily a backdrop for society, its processes and changes largely outside human influence or control. The natural world figured significantly for human populations—at least as Malthus saw it—as a source of food and other economic goods, and as the unpredictable source of disruptive disease, pest visitations, and crop failures. An ecological understanding of nature as an interwoven system whose properties can be fundamentally altered by agriculture and other resource demands was not part of Malthus's conceptual vocabulary. From the contemporary perspective of concern for the health, fertility, and regenerative capacity of nature—worries which Malthus did not share—his focus on the food-producing ability of nature rather than its overall health represents a serious limitation. Within much social scientific and demographic discourse, the logical consequence of Malthus's viewpoint has been implicitly to treat the food-producing ability of nature as a proxy for the health of the environment.<sup>3</sup>

Our own study of Himalayan agriculture, for example, was initially focused on human food supply and food security issues. We now view those Malthusian food supply concerns as having temporarily deflected our inclination to inquire about the way food production systems in the Himalayas have brought about fundamental environmental change.

Although, as we have suggested, the overall disposition of demography's population–environment debates has been dualistic, shifts have occurred in the substantive focus of demographic research over the past few decades. The capacity of natural resources to sustain economic growth and food production was the focus in the 1940s and 1950s, the environment's ability to absorb the products of modern production technology in the 1960s and 1970s, and global scale changes such as acid rain, global warming, and ozone depletion in the 1980s and 1990s (Pebley 1998). Also prevalent within the social sciences in recent years has been concern for the way environmental deterioration differentially affects various

groups of people. Consistent with this prevailing concern, global consensus of opinion at the 1997 Kyoto conference emphasized human equity issues as they relate to environmental deterioration.<sup>4</sup> Themes common in this research include the general acceptance of growing human economic demands, the separability of human society from nature, and the assumption that nature exists primarily as a resource for human consumption.

Other methodological and analytic characteristics of the social sciences likewise currently confine our approaches to the population–environment relationship, for example, the traditional demographic emphasis on events rather than interactive social processes, and on social relationships between people, not between people and the rest of nature. Demography also has a tendency to wrest people from their social institutional and environmental surroundings, decontextualizing them and treating them as atomized individuals (see Greenhalgh 1994; McNicoll 1994). For the most part, the social sciences have viewed relationships between people and nature in rather ahistorical terms, and in terms of classes of relationship types such as ‘agricultural,’ ‘nomadic,’ or ‘urban’. Relationships with nature tend to be viewed as stable, thus maintaining the rationality of consistent differences between types of environmental relationships. Nature as something regularly transformed by human action and remade in culturally determined ways has not been well understood or described.

Though social scientists have been alert for the impacts of anthropogenic environmental changes on people, delineation of the precise social and economic relationships that produce ecological deterioration has received less attention. The social relations of production between *people and non-human nature* typically have not figured in the ways social scientists describe society and its environmental problems.<sup>5</sup> To better understand and describe human-caused environmental change, we will need to acknowledge that though socially constructed, human relationships with nature are *direct*. In much social scientific writing, as within most demographic discourse, the interconnections between categories of analysis are apprehended not as direct relationships, but with at least one step of remove as correlations or ‘*co-relationships*’. Analyses are usually couched, for example, in terms of ‘weakly’ or ‘strongly’ correlated changes between population and environment.

Comprehension of direct environmental relationships will need to be built, at least initially, on a much better understanding of their *qualities* rather than on the beguilingly quantifiable but inexplicit basis of ‘*co-relationships*’. Studies of historical technical and production changes in the modern world as well as the variation in subsistence strategies among traditional societies are captured imperfectly and incompletely by the framework of indirect or co-variant analysis. We do not wish to reduce the issue of our understanding of anthropogenic environmental changes to a linguistic determinism about the difference between ‘*co-*’ and ‘*direct*’ relationships. The point here is simply to suggest that our linguistic choices reflect ethical, ideological and analytic preferences. The credibility within demography of current approaches has more to do with our intellectual inheritance, and with whether or not as technicians we are able to incorporate new analytic realizations

into handed-down models, than with their adequacy for purposes of assessing anthropogenic environmental change.

Social scientific studies have also been strongly shaped by the use of national units and nation states as units for analysis, a practice that conditions even international topics such as migration studies. Yet unlike issues such as human health, which is more closely shaped by national policies and resources, environmental issues are only weakly contained within national borders (Greenberg 1998). The upstream diversion of the waters of the Ganges River by India and its impacts on subsistence farmers, for example, may have prompted substantial migration of Bangladeshis (Swain 1996). A clear understanding of the situation would involve the collection of data from multiple communities in two countries, as well as hydrological information. If transnational or ecoregional geographic frames were more commonly applied, social scientists might be able to contribute more significantly to the debates surrounding national and international environmental policy.<sup>6</sup>

The lingering intellectual effects of Malthus also remain visible in the deployment by many demographers of the IPAT formula as an analytic and explanatory mechanism for the impacts of population and consumption on the environment.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps as a consequence of demography's preference for quantifiable and formulaic relationships in the construction of disciplinary knowledge, the IPAT formula has precluded the development of more sophisticated models.<sup>8</sup> The IPAT's essential weakness as a model is that it reduces the complex social, historical, cultural, and ecological relationships of human economies with local environments to a simple mathematical equation where environmental impact (I) is a function of population (P), affluence (A), and technology (T).

In selecting human numbers as the core of the formula, the IPAT is simply unable to cope with the complex social and economic causality underlying environmental change. With its all-encompassing categories, the reductionist and mechanistic formula does not begin to capture the complexity, variability or the quality of the relationships between people and ecosystems. As John Holdren observes, 'I know of no analysis that has begun to quantify in any comprehensive way the role of population growth... in the role of associated environmental damages. Policies, technologies, and institutions determine the impact of population growth' (Sagoff 1993: 8). R. Paul Shaw, Lead Economist at the World Bank Institute, goes as far as to suggest that it is a mistake to blame environmental deterioration simply on either population or affluence. Rather, Shaw explains, factors such as 'distortionary pricing policies, urban bias in development expenditures, half-hearted agrarian reforms, and failure to establish rights of land tenure, mismanagement of common lands, protectionism, massive international indebtedness, inter-group conflict, ethnocide, and genocide have all contributed to the vicious downward spiral of poverty and environmental degradation' (cited in Sagoff 1993: 8). To Shaw's list we would add the specific ecological qualities of industrial production and agricultural systems.

The shortcomings of the IPAT formula are much more profound and fundamentally more political than simply the condensing of extraordinarily complex contributing factors into three reductionist categories. To begin with, the IPAT formula

captures very imperfectly the actual interaction of the factors in the formula, and it represents those three categories as of equivalent weight. This has both empirical and ideological consequences. On the one hand, the formula shields growth-oriented industrial capitalism from adequate scrutiny of its disproportionate environmental impacts. On the other, it creates the appearance that population growth in less affluent parts of the world is somehow as significant a cause of environmental harm as industrial production and affluent consumption patterns. This has tended to convey the idea that population growth in developing countries somehow brings about a magnitude of environmental degradation comparable to the impact of consumption in affluent industrialized countries. Conversely, because its general terms lack contextual specificity, IPAT tends to obscure the relationships and mechanisms through which poverty can interact with high population densities and population growth to cause environmental deterioration. On both counts, the Malthusian legacy of a consistent mathematical relationship between population, consumption, and the environment underpins the formula's approach to population impacts.

## AGRICULTURAL ECOLOGY IN INDIA'S WESTERN HIMALAYAS

The empirical point of departure in this chapter is our anthropological demographic study of small farmers in India's western Himalayas. The background we offer here on our field research is intended more to illustrate our approach to the issues than to provide complete findings, which we have tried to do elsewhere (e.g. in Greenberg and Greene 1998). The methodology we adopted in our field site builds on demographic understandings of the ways that human population data are complex social products. Our research design hypothesized that livestock population data are, similarly, a social product in any intensive agricultural setting. Following that idea, we designed a household demographic survey that incorporated household livestock. Placing our household survey data alongside extensive anthropological fieldwork and archival research on local ecological history, we were able to connect farm management with the record of regional anthropogenic landscape change. Our research effort was to create culturally contextualized, environmentally inclusive, and historically deep information.

Our research was positioned within the well-developed literature on Indian agriculture, but also sought to engage new areas of inquiry and explanation regarding environmental change. A great deal of attention has been directed to the social and economic effects of intensive Green Revolution agriculture in India. However, the agricultural ecology of the approximately 80 per cent of India's land and farmers that have *not* been affected by modern high-input agriculture has received much less attention. Similarly, though the environmental impacts of intensive commercial farming have been rather well described, the dynamics of environmental deterioration in traditional agricultural areas has attracted much less notice. The deterioration of non-Green Revolution agricultural lands has different causes and consequences



than on Green Revolution farms, but has been as pronounced and much more widespread.

India's subsistence agricultural systems have been in place for centuries, and prominently feature an enormous livestock population. The pivotal role of livestock in India's traditional farming systems helps to account for the region's ecological change, though the dynamics of this process have only recently begun to attract research attention. Despite the attention directed to the growth of India's human population, the expansion of the *livestock* population over the last two centuries has, until quite recently, proceeded considerably more quickly (Greenberg 1997). The need for fodder to provision those animals far outstrips the biomass needs of the human population. As cultivation has intensified in response to human population pressures, livestock fodder requirements have become more difficult to satisfy. The need to use any available biomass from fields or forests to feed the livestock herd has produced denudation, soil erosion, and biodiversity loss, which environmental historiography has only recently begun to understand and document.

The Kangra valley in Himachal Pradesh is hilly and terraced, making the area more ecologically fragile than India's cultivated plains. But as elsewhere, patterns of ecological stress in the mountains relate primarily to the long-term intensification of indigenous farming. Our findings suggested a close relationship between environmental changes and the agricultural resource demands structured by human and livestock populations. Findings also documented that the livestock herd has, in turn, been shaped by ecological deterioration, and its overall welfare diminished. As across the Indian subcontinent, anthropogenic landscape change, including massive deforestation and declines in topsoil, has occurred over a period of many centuries. These changes are virtually continental in scale, and far antedate colonial administrative and commercial penetration. The deforestation, landscape change, and soil loss that result from traditional farming and livestock management systems are visible throughout the region. These changes have been extended and made more comprehensive by more recent demographic changes and the intensification of agriculture (Sinha *et al.* 1997).

## ‘FAMILY’, FARM, AND ‘COMMUNITY’ IN THE KANGRA VALLEY, HIMACHAL PRADESH

Earlier fieldwork by Greenberg (1997) suggested that north Indian farmers tend to view their household livestock as family members, much as many Americans might report feeling their pets are ‘part of the family’. A later survey confirmed that if people are asked about ‘who’ lives in their house, they often included mention of the household animals. The inclusion by farmers of animals in the category of ‘household’ marks a wider concept of the household or family than is often used in surveys, and indicates a local index of relative prosperity. A larger number of cattle generally is seen positively, at least up to the point at which the labour and management demands of owning livestock exceeds the benefits. Beyond that point, much as

Table 17.1. Mean number of people and animals per household

Variable	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
<i>People—total</i>	6.46	1.00	10.00
Women	3.10	1.00	7.00
Men	3.35	0.00	7.00
<i>Animals—total</i>	4.46	1.00	12.00
<i>Desi</i>	1.57	0.00	6.00
Jersey	1.28	0.00	5.00
Buffalo	0.53	0.00	5.00
Sheep	0.49	0.00	6.00
Goat	0.36	0.00	3.00
Horse	0.10	0.00	4.00
Red Sindhi	0.08	0.00	3.00
Holstein	0.03	0.00	2.00
Mule/Donkey	0.02	0.00	2.00

Source: Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996; N of households = 200.

farmers report that too many children can be a burden on a family and may even exacerbate its poverty, livestock represent a backward bending benefits curve for most families because of the management challenges.

Since farm families rely on a stream of benefits from livestock, farmers act with the awareness that farm operations and family welfare are at stake in livestock ownership. In distributing the labour burden and the benefits of livestock, farmers understood and managed their households as single, integrated units. In Table 17.1 we present the mean number of people, by sex, and animals, by breed, in each household. These data show a strong preference for certain breeds of animals, particularly the *desi* (used primarily for ploughing) and Jerseys.

The number of animals in each household varies considerably as a consequence of several important factors. We find that the number of women in the household is positively correlated with the number of animals at the 0.24 level ( $p = 0.001$ ), while the number of men is positively correlated only with the number of *desi* animals (not the total number of animals overall) at 0.19 ( $p = 0.007$ ). This suggests the importance of gender roles in determining a household's capacity to raise animals, and to make use of male animals of specific breeds.

Another important dimension determining the number of household livestock is the extent of its land holdings. Table 17.2 shows the average number of animals by categories of landholdings. What we see here is a steady positive relationship: as landholdings increase in size, so does the number of animals in the household. But this suggests a more straightforward and uni-directional causal relationship between landholding size and livestock numbers than other farm management data would allow us confidently to assert. In addition to the effect of landholding on livestock ownership, for example, factors such as proximity to forests and the amount of irrigated land also condition the number of household livestock.

Table 17.2. Average number of animals by extent of landholdings

	Cultivated land in <i>Karnals</i>				
	0–4.9	5.0–9.9	10–19.9	20–29.9	30+
Animals	3.5	4.1	4.4	5.2	5.9
N households (200)	38	50	58	33	21

Source: Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996.

In some cases, the causal effect seems to be reversed, such that large numbers of livestock establish a family's wealth and allow them to acquire additional land. As landholdings increase in size, and as cultivation becomes commensurately a larger task, many households respond by raising the number of *desi* or 'local' animals, particularly the bullocks used for ploughing. The correlation between cultivated land and number of animals is 0.29 ( $p = 0.000$ ) (and for *irrigated* landholdings the figure is 0.33,  $p = 0.000$ ). Having more animals, particularly bullocks, is an advantage in households with irrigated land because it allows for ploughing-intensive rice cultivation. At the same time, the additional yields of fodder and crop by-products on irrigated land may allow families to support more animal per unit of land than is possible on unirrigated land.

Table 17.3. Per cent of animals of each breed and sex by what they provide to Humans: *desi* male animals plough and pull, females of all breeds provide milk

	Too young to work		Ploughs		Milch		Other work		N Row = 100%	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	M	F
Buffalo	0	13	0	7	—	78	100	2	3	90
Jersey	25	18	65	2	—	79	10	1	40	168
Holstein	0	29	0	14	—	57	0	0	0	7
<i>Desi</i>	3	13	94	7	—	80	3	2	167	91
Red Sindhi	12	33	84	0	—	58	4	8	25	12
Sheep	33	8	4	0	—	23	63	68	24	63
Goat	13	12	0	19	—	48	86	21	15	52
Horse	0	0	0	0	—	0	100	1	16	1

Source: Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996.

In order to learn more about the roles of specific animals in ploughing, milk production, transportation, and so on, we analysed our data by breed, sex, and the benefits each category of animal provides to the household in which it lives. These results, which appear in Table 17.3, are striking as an indication of the lack of any role for male cattle other than *desi* bullocks,

which are used for ploughing. *Desi* bullocks have the distinctive hump on their upper backs and necks that lends itself to the stable placement of a yoke. Although there is considerable male migration out of the Kangra valley, the majority of men who migrate return each year to plough, since this is not something that may be done by women. The use of *desi* bullocks for ploughing, and the exclusively male responsibility for that work, helps to account for the correlation between the number of men and *desi* animals.

Were this description to end here, we would effectively have represented animals in ecological, economic, and moral terms simply as resources for the humans in whose households they live. But the basic survival of farm animals, as well as the potential for them to make an economic contribution to farm families, hinges on their nutritional well-being. Ensuring adequate nourishment for farm animals is a fundamental challenge for most families, and imposes on them fodder production and gathering strategies that have a major impact on the local environment.

When we asked about how people feed their animals, we learned that in all seasons, crop residues are the most heavily used single source of fodder, followed by hand-cut grass, often from land that is not their own (see Table 17.4). During the winter, however, most households turn to lopping branches from trees on common lands to provide at least part of their fodder needs. Lopping of tree branches often prevents trees from setting seeds and allows a point of access for diseases, resulting in shorter life span and lower reproductive chances for lopped trees. The number of animals in a household is positively correlated ( $0.23, p = 0.007$ ) with a household's likelihood of lopping trees on forest land that is not their own. In other words, while having more animals increases the land that a household is able to cultivate, it also increases the fodder needs of the household and puts pressure on nearby common lands. Twelve per cent of those surveyed admitted to lopping trees that grow on common land more often than they

Table 17.4. Per cent distribution of sources of fodder, by season: crop residues are relied on year-round, trees are lopped in winter

	Crop residue	Hand-cut grass	Lopping	Free grazing	Purchased supplements	N
Winter	81	7	11	1	1	200
First choice						
Second choice	10	46	40	1	4	195
Third choice	3	12	52	16	18	148
Summer	80	12	5	3	2	195
First choice						
Second choice	15	54	10	6	15	167
Third choice	7	7	28	21	38	87
Monsoon	45	46	2	5	2	196
First choice						
Second choice	18	58	5	11	8	151
Third choice	3	7	22	30	38	60

Source: Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996.

lop on their own property. Ten per cent conceded that they lop trees higher up the trunk on common land than their own land, a practice that sharply reduces the healthy tree canopy. The impact of lopping is recognized by many families: 29 per cent of survey respondents said that lopping hurts trees in one way or another. At the same time, families that plant additional trees on their own land to lop for fodder tend to lop less on common forest land (correlation  $-0.21$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ).

Given the extra effort required to obtain fodder for animals, particularly in the winter, and the relative uselessness of non-*desi* male cattle, there are clear disadvantages to keeping non-working males. In earlier work we explored in detail the implications of the 'unemployability' of non-*desi* males for their mortality or presence in farm households (Greenberg and Greene 1998). Our research revealed that stressed environmental conditions in the area have reduced the subsistence safety valve for abandoned male animals that used to survive on forest lands or roadside grazing. A compensating force is that the veneration of cattle, especially cows, is espoused strongly as an element of Hindu faith in the Kangra valley. Yet in spite of a special reverence for cows, animals perceived as less productive experience strong discrimination in the distribution of food and care. This pattern is sharpened in the conditions of resource scarcity that affect most of the region, most of the time, and which are becoming worse.

The animals whose welfare suffers most are males, particularly those that do not plough (see Table 17.5). The point that emerges here is that livestock survival chances as observed in the Kangra valley are determined, much as in the human population, by the socially constructed, gendered relations of economic production. The favoured status of female livestock results in far greater numbers and longer lives than males, with *desi* males—which plough—and male horses—also preferred over females—being the notable exceptions to this rule.

Despite chronic fodder scarcities, local farmers do not slaughter their own animals and rarely sell them, though an undeveloped market exists that does move small numbers of young male animals towards the leather factories on the nearby plains. Table 17.6 illustrates that the patterns of household management and care are

Table 17.5. Average age of animals by breed and sex: males are younger and fewer in number, with the exception of working male *desis* and horses

Animal breed	Sex of animal			
	Males	N	Females	N
Buffalo	4.3	4	7.4	89
Jersey	4.7	46	5.0	190
Holstein	—	0	6.5	7
Sheep	2.0	26	3.3	63
Goat	2.5	14	3.1	45
Horse	7.2	18	3.0	1
<i>Desi</i>	8.6	183	6.0	96

Source: Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996.

Table 17.6. Survival indicators of male livestock: males kept and cared for less than females

Animal breed (N hholds)	N Males	N Females	% Households that keep male livestock off-spring	Sex ratios F/1000 M	% respondents saying males not cared for die
<i>Desi</i> (114)	189	9	64	48	8
Sheep (50)	26	64	52	2,462	7
Goat (48)	15	47	50	3,133	—
Jersey (109)	47	193	40	4,106	13
Buffalo (72)	4	92	31	23,000	40

*Source:* Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996.

*Note:* The households included are only those with one or more animals of that breed.

significantly different for male and female non-ploughing animals. In the past, the neglected males could roam freely, feeding themselves at the edge of the road and on unused plots of land between houses or fields. With increasing development of land, the erecting of fences, greater numbers of domestic livestock, and the intensification of farming to include strips between fields, among other changes, these 'free' sources of food for animals who are set loose by former owners are much reduced or are no longer available. As a result, the setting loose of non-productive animals is more likely to lead fairly swiftly to their death by starvation or disease. The dilemma faced by farmers in reconciling the subsistence burden imposed by their animals with Hindu respect towards cattle is reflected in the different management patterns for male and female animals. In results not shown here, we found a clear hierarchy of farmer preferences regarding different kinds of male animals. Less than one third of households keep male buffalo, only half of households keep male goats and sheep, while nearly two-thirds keep *desi* males. Households with larger landholdings are more likely to keep male animals in general, and this effect is more pronounced for *desis* because of their utility in ploughing.

In interpreting our informants' responses to questions about household composition we have tried to trace the implications for the management of various categories of animals. We are not suggesting in any way that the farmers with whom we spoke were somehow confused about the difference between people and livestock. Rather, we feel the evidence suggests that farmers would probably view as somewhat inappropriate Western assumptions of household composition and livelihood strategies based on an absolute separation, distinction, or discontinuity between people and their livestock. We have suggested also that in the Indian context household livelihood strategies are significant not only in terms of how they support people, but livestock as well. These household decisions are played out in conditions of increasing fodder demands and deteriorating fodder resources, a situation resulting from the intensification of local subsistence farming.

Table 17.7 presents the reported fate of animals by breed, with a distribution of animals sold, set loose, or dying while still young on the farm. The remarkable point

Table 17.7. What happens to male animals if farmers do not keep them? Per cent reported to meet each fate, by breed of animal: an emerging market for male animals?

Animal Breed	The reported fate of males				
	Sold	Set Loose	Die	Other	N-hholds**
Buffalo	8	1	8	2	40
Jersey	24	1	5	9	68
Goat	6	0	0	1	11
Sheep	7	0	1	2	15
<i>Desi</i>	15	1	2	3	37

Source: Household and Livestock Survey, Kangra, 1996.

Note: Households are likely to have more than one kind of animal.

\*\* Includes only households that do not keep their male animals.

made by these data is the disparity between farmers' accounts of how relatively infrequently they dispose of male animals in ways that lead to their deaths, and the actual sex and age distributions of animals. Farmers' self-reported disposing of unwanted male animals—a socially stigmatized event—cannot account for the distorted sex ratios and overall youthfulness of the male livestock population. Male animals must be suffering all three fates at considerably higher rates than is acknowledged.

## ETHICS AND ECONOMY IN THE EXPLANATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: THE 'MORAL ECOLOGY' OF AGRICULTURE

One of the most influential interpretive frameworks for social justice and equity issues has been referred to as 'moral economy', after the term coined by E. P. Thompson (1971). Amartya Sen (1981) and others who began using this term in the Indian context were interested in how the distribution of India's economic resources reflected an implicit social hierarchy and a legitimization of economic inequality. Just as has proven to be the case with Sen's work, our findings reflect processes of socially determined selection and survival pressure that are likely also operative in other settings with domestic livestock. Sen's work revealed that under conditions of social stress such as famine, access to economic resources determined both the ability of families to remain intact, and the survival chances of various categories of people. Sen found the poor, lower caste, women, and young children were most at risk in conditions of poverty and social disruption. Males and those with greater social networks and property ('entitlements'), by contrast, could acquire the money needed to buy scarce food and thereby managed to survive. Among the findings that interested Sen and other observers of the 'moral economy', was that the ethical and ideological underpinning of these social practices was largely unstated or unstatable by those whose action they informed. As elsewhere, most social actors in

India operated within a system whose basic values and priorities they took for granted, and were usually unable to formulate them consciously. Culturally patterned principles, in other words, created quite rational behaviours that to observers oriented by values of social equity and justice, seemed immoral or unjustifiable.

Further analysis by Sen and others has moved beyond the crisis conditions of famine to help reveal the everyday, socially constructed patterns of unequal treatment and discrimination that structure demographic patterns in India and elsewhere. For example, the reduced survival and life chances of women in India make sense, Sen has argued, as an outcome of patriarchal values and the prevention of access to food and healthcare faced by girls from a young age (Sen and Sengupta 1983, Sen 1990). The illuminating insight in Sen's work—that a broad range of social, economic, political, gender, and cultural forces shape demographic profiles—is by now scarcely novel. *That these same forces shape survival chances for much of the rest of non-human nature, far beyond the boundaries of human society, is, by contrast, scarcely recognized.*

Sen's insights have been profoundly influential in many areas of the social sciences. Yet our field research in India raised intriguing questions about the conceptual limitations of moral economy—as it has been understood—for an explanation of the linkages between the economy and environmental degradation. The agricultural setting of Himachal Pradesh state is resource-scarce, though not as poor as other regions of north India. Although economic conditions and the status of women are better there than elsewhere, our field survey revealed the poor condition of domestic livestock and a noticeably stressed agricultural ecology. Widespread malnutrition, pervasive disease, and distorted survival patterns in the domestic livestock herd, along with landscape denudation and deforestation signal environmental scarcities resulting directly from activities in the agricultural economy.

Interviews with farmers helped us to understand that they are aware of this process. Their explanations of local farming knowledge and natural processes helped us to comprehend their decision-making strategies under scarcity conditions. Farmers conveyed that they believe their actions are informed by a sense of moral propriety, even as they recognize certain contradictions between human interests and the health of the agricultural ecology. Farmers conveyed that they prioritize household interests when making farm management decisions that can result in paradoxical gains and losses. Often, farmers explained, they feel forced to make short-term land management decisions to ensure returns from farming. But those decisions also result in negative outcomes for their animals and land, and have repercussions for the stability of agriculture. At the same time, farmers expressed culturally informed ideas about the proper moral and practical continuum extending from people to animals and the natural world.

The trade-offs in welfare that farmers described are consistent with the taken-for-granted social, moral, and spiritual hierarchies of the Indian subcontinental cultural context. In the South Asian setting, the idea that hierarchy and continuity links people and the non-human more holistically than in western cosmologies is widely reported in anthropological fieldwork (e.g. Marriott 1976; Wadley 1983). As elsewhere in India, farmers in Himachal Pradesh conceived human superiority as fitting



within a hierarchy that extends from a divine pantheon through people to the plant and animal world. This contrasts distinctly with the more pronounced nature– culture or human versus nature distinctions of western cultural common sense (Greenberg 1997).<sup>9</sup>

Early anthropological fieldwork by Greenberg with farmers in Kangra district revealed that farmers believe that connections—a ‘chain of being’—links people, livestock, soil creatures, and plants. In contrast to Western notions of enduring, separate ‘individuals’ and society, Indian cultural understandings assume that people are continually changing through interaction with the world around them. This constant flux or ‘re-making’ of people is understood to occur through such events and processes as daily contacts with other people, the ingestion of food, and interactions with non-human nature. In India, anthropologists have found, the assumption is that such ‘dividual’ or divisible people are constantly taking things from the local environment into themselves through food, transforming themselves as they transform their surroundings. This belief allows people to conceive a ‘chain of being’ as essentially looping back on itself so that a succession of life flows through people and their animals, back into fields in the form of composted manure, into creatures responsible for decay of organic matter, into plants, and back into people and their animals.<sup>10</sup> This set of ideas is strikingly similar at a formal level to contemporary ecological understandings of cycles and recycles in ecosystems. It also contrasts rather sharply with the demographic emphasis on discrete, stable social categories, and relatively atomized individuals.

This ethnographic finding also helps provide some context for the western Himalayan region's agricultural and ecological dilemma. On one side, the welfare of farm families has been gradually improving, while on the other, stressed conditions are becoming worse throughout the agricultural ecology. It is at this point—assessing the disparity between human and ecological outcomes—that moral economy's conceptual framework becomes rather limiting. Moral ecology was intended as an interpretive framework that could help reveal how cultural values and socio-economic inequality shape relative human well-being. Though never conceived for the purpose, it has little to say about the well-being of non-human nature, or about the cultural, moral, and economic values that shape its use. We have therefore extended moral economy's ambit, usually limited to discussions of comparative human well-being *within* society, to include the socially constructed relationships *between people and non-human nature*. Similarly, we have extended moral economy's concepts of equity, justice, and entitlement, to what we call ‘moral ecology’. By ‘moral ecology’ we mean the patterns of culturally informed understandings and land management practices according to which local people organize their farming and other relationships with the local ecology.

Our research in the western Himalayas revealed that under the conditions of resource scarcity and economic stress typical of much of India's rural farming communities, local resource-management patterns have profound impacts on the local ecology (Greenberg and Greene 1998). It also documents that the well-being of the livestock herd has been reduced by ecological deterioration. This is evidenced

by the herd's species composition, sex ratios, productive capacity, health and reproductive status. These negative impacts are unequally distributed among the animals, and the sex patterns of relative survival advantage for livestock are roughly the inverse of what one sees in the human population (Greenberg and Greene 1998). The scarcity conditions of the agricultural economy help to shape the life chances of male and female livestock in dramatically different ways, in a kind of mirror-image analogue to the pattern Sen has shown in the shaping of the relative welfare of Indian men and women. More fundamentally, the demands of the agricultural economy mean that the survival and life chances of animals and vegetation not considered essential to the farming system and human welfare are dramatically reduced.

While a western Himalayan case study provides a particular context for this discussion, the theoretical implications of this approach for the social sciences are considerably further-reaching. Global ecological deterioration is now generally recognized as the outcome of unsustainable or exploitative relationships between people and the non-human world. Yet the social sciences generally index ecological deterioration primarily in terms of its impacts on human welfare. By extending social science paradigms to encompass the notion of 'moral ecology'—the local cultural understandings that underpin the human appropriation of resources and structure the relationship between people, livestock, and non-human nature—this analysis offers additional conceptual tools for understanding human relationships with nature, and for exploring through demographic methods the implications of environmental deterioration.

## BEYOND THE ECOLOGICAL FRONTIER: EXTENDING DEMOGRAPHY'S INTELLECTUAL AND ETHICAL AGENDA

Though an ethical commitment to human well-being tacitly informs much contemporary social research, the social sciences in general have paid relatively little attention to the nature of relationships between people and the rest of the natural world. The social sciences have long been sensitive to the nuances of disparities in social equity and justice among humans. Yet the realization that similar but *greatly exaggerated* patterns of inequality, exploitation, and destruction exist in human relationships with nature on a global scale remains largely unexplored. The planetary scale of human-induced environmental change now challenges the social sciences to expand their concerns and methodologies in response to the reality that human populations determine the welfare, survival, and population profiles of *non-human species and nature as a whole*.

Our observations are not meant to suggest the desirability of some sort of pan-species holism as new analytic standard for demographic survey work, or that simply including livestock as household members will sufficiently extend our thinking. Our experience did, however, provide us with an entrée into the ways agriculture, including animal husbandry, is structured by the number and organization of household

members. This in turn offered us a way to explain the nature of demands on local agricultural resources made by farm families. Given the volume of fodder required by livestock each day, the amount of greenery consumed by animals is far, far greater than the biomass required to feed people. This makes an understanding of livestock numbers and provisioning, as well as human numbers and agricultural density, central to any explanation of agriculture's ecological impacts. The relationships people maintain with the land *through their livestock* fundamentally conditions the burden agriculture imposes on the local ecology.

One of the founding principles in the social sciences has been that human exceptionalism—perceived differences and boundaries of one sort or another between people and the rest of nature—justifies the exceptional focus and priority accorded to human society. As elsewhere in the social sciences, demography has tended to assume that non-human nature is a relatively stable backdrop for society, and that nature is significant primarily as the source of resources for human use. The conventional conceptual and moral boundaries constructed around human populations by the social sciences have reinforced the idea that people are analytically separable from and superior to the rest of nature. This key assumption has roots in venerable western cultural understandings, but is challenged by an un-demonstrated and empirically elusive separation between society and nature. Similarly, the traditional focus on *human* outcomes of social action brackets the systematic ways that social and economic relations also condition outcomes for the non-human world. Rather than the nature–culture duality of traditional western thought, the model suggested here assumes crucial links between farm families and the local landscape. When pursued methodologically through analysis of the ecological relationships structured by livestock fodder demands, the links between farm families, local landscapes, and ecological change becomes clearer.

The new research frontier for the environmental social sciences lies in the relationship between people, limited natural resources, and the deteriorating global environment. Since the ways people transform nature are structured by society and culture, ethics, politics, and economics, social scientists are well-positioned to understand and explain these processes. We hope that the intention of this chapter has been clear: to demonstrate the validity and practicality of defining ‘human social relationships’ so as to allow the incorporation of more of what happens between people and the non-human world. Our further hope is to point to constructive steps by which demographers and other social scientists might move away from the stalled and stale population-affluence debate. A first step towards that goal is an understanding of socially constructed relationships sufficiently broad as to include those between people and non-human nature. This helps to establish a less human-centred and epistemologically dualistic understanding of humanity's relationships with the natural world. Our aim in pointing out the implications of species-chauvinism in social science categories has been to help redirect the ethical and methodological force of the discipline, so that it can better characterize and react to the destructive relationships between people and non-human life.

## Notes

1. An example of the oscillation between these two politically charged and incomplete arguments is captured in Shrivastava's (1992) critique of Ehrlich's hypothesis that population growth is the prime mover of the environmental crisis, and that population control is therefore the policy solution. Shrivastava concludes that Ehrlich's is a neo-Malthusian approach emphasizing population control, will not address the 'real' roots of the environmental problems, and will lead to human rights abuses. Shrivastava's critique, like so many others, is silent on the issue of the environmental consequences of dense populations and rapid growth rates in traditional subsistence agricultural systems.
2. As an intellectually permeable discipline, the social sciences inherit ideas and assumptions from other fields. One of economics' foundational assumptions, for example, of the desirability and feasibility of endless economic (not population) growth, has been accepted almost as uncritically within demography, as elsewhere. Some social scientists concerned with the environment have identified neoclassical economics, with its emphasis on growth-based economic systems, as the main ideological source of the present environmental crisis (e.g. Smith and Sauer-Thompson 1998). In this critical view, the power, interest structures, and momentum of global capitalism are seen as impeding the 'steady-state' economy and restrained resource consumption advocated by environmentalists. In the ironic light of demography's assimilation of economic premises, some critics have noted that economics seems unable to or does not address many of the central facts of population issues (e.g. McNicoll 1995).
3. The discipline of economics often most clearly reflects this approach to the natural world. Julian Simon (1981) was perhaps the most prominent demographic proponent of this view, in which nature is little more than raw material for human uses, and has little value other than that given by market price signals. Resource exhaustion and environmental destruction was not a problem for Simon, whose optic of worry-free expansionism relies upon simplistic and misleading measures of recent increases in human economic well-being. The destruction of nature in that process was for Simon, as for most economists, irrelevant or unmeasurable, an 'externality'. Until quite recently, economic models have ignored the myriad species and natural processes that provide a huge range of essentially free environmental services to humanity. The systematic destruction of these services by economic systems, if included in GNP measures, would drastically change our perception of the growth of wealth and the consequent erosion of 'natural capital'. Cairns (1997), for example, estimates the cost of replacing ecosystem services by technology at \$9 million/person/year. Myers (1998) argues that accurate valuation of ecosystem services and species could translate into efforts to preserve their economic 'value', thus preserving ecosystems. Though alluring, the likelihood of success for a strategy of preserving species according to whether or not they are valued by 'the market' is speculative at present. A countervailing tendency to harvest rather than preserve pockets of financial value created by nature constitutes the basic principle of contemporary economies.
4. The Kyoto Conference in 1997 was called 'The Third Conference of the Parties', and addressed the United Nations Framework Convention on Global Climate Change.
5. As Hauser (1992) notes, even classic demographic transition theory needs to be modified to reflect the effects of the worldwide ecological crisis, since ecological relationships did not figure in its prevailing formulations. However, for an important anthropological endorsement of this perspective, see Rappaport (1968).

6. The implications for environmental management of a more global view would, of course, suggest management structures within world government bodies rather than national governments (Tinbergen 1985).
7. The IPAT was probably first formulated by Ehrlich and Holdren (1971) in a simpler phrasing in which Environmental Impact = Population \*  $F$ , where  $F$  is a function measuring per capita effects on the environment. Ehrlich and Ehrlich (1990) update the formula, restating the IPAT in its full form. The IPAT formula continues to influence discussions of the relationship between population dynamics and environmental change (e.g. Homer-Dixon 1993).
8. Demographic techniques favour working with clearly defined populations, and standard quantitative methods can minimize complexity rather than modelling it fully (Johansson 1995).
9. Value systems that assert human interests over the rest of nature are, of course, more the rule than the exception in most cultures. However, the notion of a hierarchical continuum typical of Hindu belief systems differs fundamentally from the sharper dualities of western cosmology.
10. This continuum suggests other possible frameworks for establishing more inclusive and ecological concepts of poverty. Kusumayati and Gross (1998) find that soil type is an important predictor of poverty, but say little about the relationship or the ways people actually create soil types through use in intensive agricultural contexts. By extending the concept of 'nutritional status' to the soil, we gain insights into the causes of local poverty and environmental relationships, the fertility capability of the soil conditions, the relationship between human nutritional status, and other ecological characteristics of that environment. If we are able to model the mediating role of animals in affecting quality of soil, then we further enrich our understanding of the causal relationships involved.

## References

- Anonymous (1984). 'On changing climate', *Population and Development Review*, 10(1): 161–7.
- (1993). 'Expert group meeting on population, environment and development', *Population Bulletin of The United Nations*, 34–5: 19–34.
- (1998). 'Population and ecology issues crucial for survival in the 21st century', *Religious Consultation Report*, 2 (2 October): 1–2.
- Cairns, J. Jr. (1997). 'Environmental monitoring for sustainable use of the planet', *Population and Environment*, 18(5): 463–71.
- Caldwell, John C. (1998). 'Malthus and the less developed world: the pivotal role of India', *Population and Development Review*, 24(4): 675–95.
- Cramer, James C. (1998). 'Population growth and air quality in California', *Demography*, 35(1): 45–56.
- Dove, M. R. (1993). 'The coevolution of population and environment: the ecology and ideology of feedback relations in Pakistan', *Population and Environment*, 15(2): 89–111.
- Eckholm, E. (1983). 'The growing legions of the landless', *People*, 10(1): 6–7.
- Ehrlich, P. and Holdren, J. (1971). 'Impact of population growth', *Science*, 189 (5 September): 764–70.
- Ehrlich, P. R. and Ehrlich, Ann H. (1990). *The Population Explosion*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- European Population Conference (1993). 'Recommendations of the European Population Conference', *Population and Development Review*, 19(2): 406–17.

- Galloway, P. R. (1986). 'Long-term fluctuations in climate and population in the preindustrial Era', *Population and Development Review*, 12(1): 1–24.
- Greenberg, Brian (1995). 'Beyond "PAT" Formulas in the understanding of environmental change', Paper presented at Population Association of America annual meeting, San Francisco, April.
- (1997). 'An ecology of harm and healing: agricultural intensification and landscape transformation in the Western Himalayas', Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago.
- (1998). 'Separate nations in an integrated global ecology: transnational challenges for the old world order', Invited lecture in seminar series 'Transnationalism in a Post-Colonial World,' University of Chicago, 3 February.
- and Greene, Margaret E. (1998). 'A "moral ecology" of sex ratios in India: the divergent fates of women and female livestock', Paper presented at Population Association of America annual meeting, Chicago, April.
- and Sharma, Pritam (1999). 'From resource scarcities to soil regeneration: the mediating role of livestock in the Kangra Valley', Unpublished manuscript. Department of Soil Science, Himachal Pradesh Agricultural University.
- Greenhalgh, S. (1990). 'Toward a political economy of fertility: anthropological Contributions', Working Paper No. 12. New York: The Population Council, Research Division.
- (1994). 'Anthropological contributions to fertility theory', Working Paper No. 64. New York: The Population Council, Research Division.
- Hauser, J. A. (1992). 'Population, ecology and the new economics: guidelines for a steady-state economy', *Futures*, 24(4): 364–87.
- Homer-Dixon, T. (1993). 'Physical dimensions of global change', in N. Choucri (ed.), *Global Accord: Environmental Challenges and International Responses*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: 43–66.
- Jeong, D. Y. (1997). 'A sociological implication of environment in social development', *Korea Journal of Population and Development*, 26(2): 1–13.
- Johansson, S. R. (1995). 'Complexity, morality, and policy at the population summit', *Population and Development Review*, June 21(2): 361–86.
- Jolly, C. L. (1993). 'Population change, land use, and the environment', *Reproductive Health Matters*, (1 May): 13–25.
- Kusumayati, A. and Gross, R. (1998). 'Research report: Ecological and geographic characteristics predict nutritional status of communities: Rapid assessment for poor village', *Health Policy and Planning*, 13: 408–416.
- Mann, Charles C. (1993). 'How many is too many?', *Atlantic Monthly*, February: 47–67.
- Marriott, McKim (1976). 'Hindu transactions: diversity without dualism', in Bruce Kapferer (ed). *Transaction and Meaning*. Philadelphia, PA: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, Inc., pp. 109–42.
- McNicoll, Geoffrey (1994). 'Institutional analysis of fertility', Working Paper No. 62. New York: The Population Council, Research Division.
- (1995). 'On population growth and revisionism: further questions', Policy Research Division Working Paper No. 72. New York: The Population Council.
- Myers, N. (1998). 'Overview: securing the fabric of life', *People and The Planet*, 7(4): 6–9.
- Pebley, A. (1998). 'Demography and the environment', *Demography*, November 35(4): 377–89.
- Rappaport, Roy A. (1968). *Pigs for the Ancestors*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sagoff, Mark (1993). 'Population, nature and the environment', *Report from the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy*, 13(4).

- Sen, Amartya (1981). *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- (1990). 'Missing women', *New York Review of Books*, December 20: 37(20).
- and Sengupta, S. (1983). 'Malnutrition of rural children and the sex bias', *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 18(19/21), 855–64.
- Shivakoti, G. P., Axinn, W. G., Bhandari, P., and Chhetri, N. B. (1999). 'The impact of community context on land use in an agricultural society', *Population and Environment*, 20(3): 191–213.
- Shrivastava, A. (1992). 'Overpopulation: the great red herring?', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Sept. 19, 27(38): 2, 32–8.
- Simon, Julian L. (1981). 'Environmental disruption or environmental improvement?', *Social Science Quarterly*, 62(1): 30–43.
- Sinha, Subir, Gururani, Shubra, and Greenberg, Brian (1997). 'The "new traditional" environmentalism in India', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 24(3): 65–99.
- Swain, A. (1996). 'Displacing the conflict: environmental destruction in Bangladesh and ethnic conflict in India', *Journal of Peace Research*, May 33(2): 189–204.
- Thompson, E. P. (1971). 'The moral economy of the English crowd in the eighteenth century', in *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies*, 50 (February): 76–136.
- Tinbergen, J. (1985). 'Comment', *Population and Development Review*, 11(1): 137–39.
- Usher, A. D. (1992). 'After the forest. AIDS as ecological collapse in Thailand', *Development Dialogue*, (1–2): 13–49.
- Wadley, S. S. (1983). 'The rains of estrangement: understanding the Hindu yearly cycle', *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 17(1): 51–86.
- Wiman, Ingela M. B. (1990). 'Expecting the Unexpected: some ancient roots to current perceptions of nature', *Ambio*, 12(2) (April): 62–8.

# 18 Spillovers, Subdivisions, and Flows: Questioning the Usefulness of ‘Bounded Container’ as the Dominant Spatial Metaphor in Demography

JOHN W. ADAMS AND ALICE B. KASAKOFF

The emergence of a *space of flows* ... dominates the historically constructed space of places, as the logic of dominant organizations detaches itself from the social constraints of cultural identities and local societies through the powerful medium of information technologies. Castells (1989)

## INTRODUCTION

Population statistics originated in the seventeenth century as a very practical ‘political arithmetik’, one form of the modernist enterprise, seeking a way for nation states to estimate the potential number of taxpayers and soldiers within their boundaries.<sup>1</sup> Its task, essentially that of a census, was to enumerate people within crisply bounded places, and eventually, the births, marriages, deaths, and migrations which would alter that total. These data together with the study of the factors that make populations increase or decrease—all within particular places—has long constituted the foundation of the science of demography. In this form, and with these goals, the metaphor of ‘bounded container’ was appropriate.

Flows through time were important for this enterprise and have long been a part of demography. The life table, one of its earliest and most basic tools, displays individuals over time as they age. On an aggregate level, these individual events result in changes over time for the population as a whole. So each stable population implies a temporal flow, either of growth or decline. But these changes are assumed to occur within bounded populations. Indeed Lotka wrote: ‘By a very natural abstraction, demographic analysis envisages as a point of departure the case of a *closed* population, that is to say, a population whose numbers receive new accessions only through births and suffer losses only through deaths, immigration and emigration being excluded’



(1998: 53, italics in the original). Such spaces tend to be treated as if they were internally undifferentiated, and externally impermeable, hence they mask very real spillovers outside the borders and subdivisions internal to the boundaries, inclusion of which would change the nature of the demographic task.

This chapter is a critique of the usefulness of the metaphor of space as 'bounded container', which has long constituted an axiomatic category of demographic analysis. We offer, instead, the metaphor of spatial 'flow', which we feel leads to a better approximation of the processes demographers study; and demonstrate this turn with a concrete example from the perspective of genealogies based upon the migrations of nineteenth-century New Englanders.

## PART I: SUB-DIVISIONS AND SPILLOVERS

While post-modernists have become fascinated with subdivisions and spillovers as properties of a new sense of space, the interesting question for the historically minded is whether these are, in fact, new phenomena. Our own reading of them as anthropologists is that they have always existed in contra-definition to boundaries of whatever sort, but that a lack of sources and methods for studying such processes have usually prevented them from being recognized.

Demographers have been aware for some time that before modern communications were developed there was great spatial variation in vital rates within nation states. But they often assume, by contrast, that populations today are more homogeneous, hence that a mean index number is increasingly able to encapsulate the experience of the citizenry. Thus the typical comparison of national means, upon which so much demography in the past has depended, has presupposed an 'efficient', unified demographic process, one which represents a common experience of all its citizens (Watkins 1991; Levine 1998; Johansson 2000.) This was part of a grand meta-narrative of modernization, exemplified 50 years ago in the model of Notestein and subsequently modified by Coale who shifted the emphasis from nations to subcultures (Kreager 1997). But though the component statistics of these national indices are typically drawn from various regions within the state, there is seldom any theoretical model of how the local-level units are related to each other within their regions, let alone on a national level (Levine 1998). Even if sub-populations within the nation appear to be the same by having the same demographic rate, they may actually have reached the same level of fertility or mortality through different processes or paths, evident only through micro-analysis (Szreter and Mooney 1998; Szreter and Garrett 2000.)

## INTERNAL SUBDIVISIONS

### The problem of endogamy

We ourselves are anthropologists whose interest in marriage rules led us into problems involving historical demography. Several American historians, modelling their work on the projects of Laslett's Cambridge School, and before that of Louis Henry

in France, conceptualized New England villages as closed, corporate units. They thought of culture as people-in-bounded-places, and drew on synchronic village models which Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski had proposed 50 years before in reaction to the diachronic studies of L. H. Morgan and W. H. R. Rivers. Even the American culture and personality school as exemplified in the work of Ruth Benedict took the bounded model for granted, though her co-worker and protégée, Margaret Mead, demonstrated in her ethnographies a clear awareness that cultural process overflowed the barriers of both space and time, and that internally cultures contained alternative behaviours.

We began our own demographic work by studying the topic of endogamy, that is, the boundary of the group within which people find their spouses. We concluded from our fieldwork on seven closely related tribal villages along the Northwest Coast of North America, and from a lengthy search of the ethnographic literature, that those single villages of from 200 to 300 people that we had studied were not, and perhaps could not, have been endogamous, but that the larger local communities of three or four villages were roughly 80 per cent self-contained insofar as finding a spouse was concerned. Further study suggested that something like an 80 per cent group or circle was the practical outer limit of investigation; that, indeed, when one looked closely at the data, there were no 100 per cent endogamous groups at all in the literature, not even the Hutterites, though it was sometimes possible to find a group which was 90 per cent enclosed (Adams and Kasakoff 1975). Since we first published our findings 25 years ago, no completely closed (100 per cent) groups have come to light. Even islands, it turns out, are not bounded and separate from other regions.

This is the conclusion also of many population geneticists who inevitably are obliged to worry about the degree of relative openness or closure of the groups they study. For example, Cazes (1986: 97), in an exemplary study of a group of 15 Dogon villages in Mali, reports that the largest village, which comprises 1,063 inhabitants, is only some 45 per cent endogamous, while the four major subdivisions (each living on its own *massif*) is roughly 84 per cent so, on average. Thus, she avers (1993: 479), there are actually four isolates here. Yet, she goes on (1986: 108) to write that even though they are effectively shut off to a large degree genetically from neighbouring tribes, internally they are not homogenous, and by no means what geneticists call panmictic. Most genetic variation in mankind, she continues (p. 109), is not between different groups, but *within* them. This is, of course, a classic formulation in the study of human populations.

Lotka recognized that migration across borders would complicate demographic analysis but he thought that as the size of the spatial unit increased the problem would correspondingly decrease. He reasoned that, since emigration and immigration occurred largely along the border or periphery of the space occupied by the population, the assumption that the population was closed would be increasingly valid, the larger the spatial unit because the area near the border would be a smaller proportion of the whole (Lotka 1998: 53). But it is not at all clear that most human migration occurs along the border. His observation seems to apply more to animals.

Still, this reasoning suggests that migration is probably quite important when the unit of analysis is small. As anthropologists and others advocate smaller and more relevant cultural units for demography, then, it becomes even more necessary to deal with flows between them. There is a connection, then, between subdivisions and spillovers: the more subdivisions, the greater the potential for spillovers.

## The inevitability of demographic difference

Although national politicians saw the need for dividing internal populations into ethnic categories over a century and a half ago, just as Ansley Coale more recently saw the importance of cultural units in estimating fertility regulation (Kreager 1991, 1992), both of these projects, like their predecessors, were conceived in terms of crisply bounded, 'container-like' population units. Yet it has long been apparent to population geneticists and to anthropological demographers that demographic processes do not coincide with political units in any convenient and easily measurable way. As Mol and Law write (1994: 646): 'When a region is defined, the differences *inside* it are suppressed. They are minimized or marginalized.' No matter how small the place anthropological demographers typically study, even just a village, it invariably turns out to be internally divided into two or more subgroups, each with slightly different opportunities and strategies (Adams and Kasakoff 1977; Saad 1999). This, we think, poses a basic challenge to anyone interested in investigating demographic processes.

When demographers have been interested in differences, they often held up the national patterns as a standard and treating differences as social problems. How, for example, could out of wedlock births be eliminated? Or early deaths prevented? Moreover ideologies about the existence of a 'pure stock' of true nationals opposed to all foreigners often confused or even prevented the collection of good statistical information (Bertaux 2000). When historical demographers created long series of national demographic statistics and then asked why rates rose or fell when they did, their answers often referred to a fictional scenario shared by hypothetical average citizens, or *hommes moyens*, which were a statistical mirage. Or demographers treated differences among subpopulations as variations on the national story.

Our approach to subdivisions regards them as necessary and omnipresent bi-products of social, political, and economic forces. Demography of nation states (or whatever container is used as a unit of analysis) must seek out differences. Theories need to be developed which regard them as part and parcel of demography. In a very real sense every single population must be decomposed into at least two competing ones. Perhaps it is the fact that nations strive towards consensus and demography's origins as political arithmetik that has led to their neglect.

But more importantly, dealing with the inadequacy of the metaphor of the nation state as bounded container by subdividing the population into smaller, but nevertheless still bounded units only continues the problem at a lower level of analysis. No matter how small the subdivision, the problem of bounded containers remains. And there is no end to the possible subdivisions. Recently Szreter and Garrett (2000) have

used the term 'compositional demography' to describe attempts to decompose long national series and thereby discover which subgroups were responsible for the changes. This is very much needed but it is only one part of the effort required because the subgroups themselves were not closed. It is also necessary to examine their degree of closure, the entries and exits from these subgroups, the origin of new subgroups, and the flows between these units.

## SPILLOVERS

### Migration

While it is easy to comprehend that the smallest island, village or barrio, spills over into its neighbours' political units, at the other end of the scale, it is hard to imagine that nation states cannot contain their populations. But demographic processes observably spill over the boundaries of even the largest nation states. Think of those national diasporas involving not only slaves but elites and ordinary people, within historic times. They seem to have attracted little attention from historical demographers until very recently, though there is much interest now in the African diaspora and discussion of a project on the British diaspora as well. The recently founded topic of transnationalism, of course, is based on a notion of spillover, though here, too, transnationalism is sometimes conceived in a closed way, as the study of a single community that stretches across long distances, with feet, perhaps, in two (or more) continents. There is still the assumption of a more or less closed community, or politicians from the sending areas would cease trying to reassure the people who leave that they can maintain ties with their natal countries. Think of the chartered flights of Israeli citizens back to Israel from New York City to participate in important elections.

Migrations across the borders of nations, migrations that are troublesome and dramatic, certainly receive their due, but the more mundane ebbs and flows, even though they also involve movement into new economic niches, formation of new communities, dislocations of families in which elderly parents and their children live hundreds of miles apart, these are somehow taken for granted as unimportant, by contrast.

### Stochastic effects on population size

Though it is not always possible to discern the process, let alone to quantify it, there is a general assumption in demography that people adjust their fertility to their local circumstances, ecological and/or social. But adjustment of fertility is a parlous undertaking. When seen in the light of these micro-movements, we realize that populations are chronically over- and under-shooting their limited local resources (of farm land, jobs as servants, or of suitable spouses), which fosters a perpetual motion of people across the landscape. Often we see the beginnings of this structuring within the family. Some siblings are excess, because of the human

inability to get the numbers of surviving children precisely right that would be needed to maintain equilibrium. Or parents with large families move so that all sons may have access to cheap land (Easterlin 1976; Easterlin *et al.* 1978). Furthermore, families can hardly predict the life-chances their children will experience as adults, even though these will be affected by the parents' own decisions about fertility.

Such stochastic effects have received some attention because they create opportunities for social mobility upwards (Kopytoff 1986) or downwards towards disaster because of orphanhood (Kaelble 1986). Not infrequently, this in turn leads to migration to replace the people lost because of family disruption.

## STRUCTURED SPACE

In historical demography, English-speaking researchers in their family reconstitutions assumed that out-migrants from a village could be easily replaced by in-migrants. The model supposed that migration in the countryside was repetitive and occurred only in response to life course events such as finding a spouse and thus that migrants were, again, demographically the same as people who stayed in one place their entire lives. As Kusmaul put it (1981: 67–8 *our italics*): ‘mobility occurred as if in a *closed container* of customs and agricultural practices. Within that container, servants moved from place to place and permitted the most efficient allocation of labour in agriculture.’<sup>2</sup> The underlying depiction was of a stable and unchanging pre-modern landscape of interchangeable towns, which was then contrasted with the modern flows to cities as represented by social gravity.<sup>3</sup> In fact, it is often proposed that the smaller the place, the more interchangeable are its inhabitants, though there is abundant data to support the opposite idea: that it is precisely from the smaller units that inhabitants are most likely to emigrate permanently.

But if the small units in the countryside are thought of as being isomorphic and interchangeable, migration may be assumed to be irrelevant. In an important sense, then, to postulate isomorphic, Cartesian space is a way of asserting the homogeneity of life within political boundaries. But the geographers at least do not believe that actual real-world space is uniform, let alone identical from one point to another: there are always small differences in the terrain within which a population lives. These micro-variations of terrain and of demographic life-chances inevitably produce differing circumstances for human beings, one from another, no matter how closely related (Cazes 1993; Kaplan 1994).

Like cultural processes, demographic ones have regional dimensions, too. People and ideas do travel in space. Nowadays we tend to criticize diffusion as a theory of dispersion because we think it always assumes just such an isomorphic space, and within it, a somehow natural, and inevitably uniform dispersion of ideas and culture-ways. Hagerstrand (1957), however, long ago demonstrated that space is shaped by historical forces, so that some, particular interactions are more likely to occur than others. (See also Kreager 1998 on diffusion.)

## Other conceptions of space

If, then, the current ‘bounded container’ model of space appears to be inadequate, what shall we use as a substitute? We found important suggestions in an article describing changes in the field of economics and their impact on economic geography by Thrift and Olds (1996: 321; following Mol and Law 1994.) They propose four types of spatial models, which they term ‘topological presuppositions’, or ‘rules for localizing through which the social performs itself’. In addition to ‘space as bounded container’, which we have just critiqued, they offer three additional concepts, those of (a) two-places-at-once, (b) networks, and (c) flows. These three concepts all help to address the problem we have called spillovers. To address the idea of subdivisions, we have added a fourth model we call ‘shared space’, and there are doubtless others, but all of them, separately or combined, could be useful in demography, especially when thinking about migration.

### Concept number 1: two-places-at-once

‘Two-places-at-once’ is useful for describing ways in which space has been ‘annihilated by time’, a phrase originally from Marx. Harvey returns to it to show that postmodernity is simply a further extension of the kinds of changes Marx was writing about over a century ago (Harvey 1985: 35–50, 1989). An individual can actually be ‘present’ in two different physical locations at the same time through virtual means. Indeed Virillio (1993) foresees an era when physical mobility will not exist, when we would all become like the handicapped (or internet browsers) are now, mobile though artificial means.

This concept of ‘two-places-at-once’ has also been claimed by the transnational literature, with place being the nation state. Here there is a more direct connection between the two places so the situation could be seen as a special sort of circulation or flow, a back and forth movement between two places. In fact, we know quite a bit about it due to the exhaustive descriptive and theoretical literature on transnationalism. Other forms of circulation directly related to demography on a smaller spatial scale also have this quality of having feet in two camps: as for example an analysis of seasonal workers in the mill villages in New England (Dublin 1979) or the lower tier of dual labour markets (Piore 1979). Jan Lucassen's work (1987) on how seasonal migration to the Netherlands fitted into a broader set of economic patterns including proletarianization of cloth production, provides yet another example, as do the more recent investigations of Lourens and Lucassen (1999) on German migrant brickmakers. Indeed a quarter of a century ago, Andrei Rogers (1975) developed the mathematics of multi-regional lifetables in order to capture the effect of population spillover from political units into spaces outside their boundaries. In doing so, he utilized a variant of ‘two places at once’.

Indeed if migration is conceptualized as a process there is probably always a beginning stage when the migrant's feet are in two camps. When this phase ends is never entirely clear, so trying to distinguish temporary from permanent migration, one can only know for certain that a migrant will not return when he dies, hardly

a useful definition of permanent residence except eschatologically! But the dilemma does call attention to the ways in which migration changes its character over time and makes the 'at once' part of 'two places' problematic.

As currently theorized, one of the (usually two) locations is somehow the stronger, the more complete, the true 'home'. The other has been added by the actors for economic purposes. Indeed Piore defines the second tier of the dual market as being inherently temporary. It is composed of people who are unable, for structural reasons, to make a career out of the job they have or who do not want to do so. In transnationalism the primary location is the one that confers fuller rights of citizenship. This two-camp concept is certainly useful in demography and migration research (see the Chapter 13 by Bryant and Prohmmo in this volume; and also Wilk and Miller 1997, for a census of a village that would incorporate different sorts of members to include people who were not full time residents). Borderlands research is also a form of this two-camp situation created by the spatial overlap between two larger units. However, in this model the old problems of bounded units are implicit, the only difference being that in this latter case the 'bounded' space exists in two physically separated places (Lotka 1998; Rogers 1975.)

'Folding' is a variant of 'two-places-at-once' (Murdoch 1998; Serres 1995: 60–1), and refers to how a surface may be folded to bring points together that were previously far apart. Conversely a surface may be torn in such a way that previously close points become distant.

Bohm (1980: xv) makes use of folding in a somewhat different sense in his description of 'the implicate order' in which 'space and time are no longer the dominant factors determining the relationships of dependence or independence of different elements'. From the paradox of 'non-causal correlations' in quantum physics, he conjures up the example of an aquarium being photographed by two video cameras, each in a different position. The resultant videos bear a relationship to each other, but it is not causal because there is no physical connection between the two cameras: they are related solely through a third item, the aquarium (Bohm 1980: 187).

## Concept number 2: networks

In Latour's Actor Network Theory (Mol and Law 1994), folding describes the existence in distant locations of identical behavioural complexes, usually scientific, but increasingly commercial. That is, in certain important respects, physically distant locations are conceived to be 'the same', postulating an identical structure of activities in a series of unconnected spaces. So in addition to laboratories run according to similar scientific protocol, MacDonald's burger stores furnish a good example because they explicitly emphasize uniformity of product, as do most multinational enterprises. Distant spaces are thus 'folded' (topologically) into a single homogenous, imaginary space created by the 'corporate headquarters'.

The very collection of demographic data itself is another such 'network' activity, as for instance by the World Population Survey, where identical questions were asked of respondents in different cultures. (The same was true of the International Classification of Diseases undertaken by the World Health Organization.) Both

projects, of course, have been greatly criticized for their modernist, universalistic approaches. These are constructed, ritualized behaviours and as such have little to do with empirical reality as typically experienced by demographers or local physicians.

Unlike Latour's Actor Network Theory, the better known 'network theory' of Social Network Analysis (SNA) is not a 'topological presupposition'. However, to the extent that the connections included in a network are considered to exist in space as a kind of grid, it can become one. Indeed, though Thrift and Olds (1996) describe four-ways networks that have been used in economics, their examples ignore the type of network studied by Latour.

There are many instances when local groups look to other groups far away in space to make decisions that affect demographic growth or decline—yet another reason why national statistics, in isolation, are often misleading. Schneider and Schneider (1996) have described such a process in connection with fertility in Sicily in the twentieth century. Rather than explaining the high fertility as the cause of emigration to the United States, they suggest that the high fertility may be the *result* of opportunity when Sicilians realized that the United States could absorb any excess. So the type of transnationalism that seems recent existed at least in the early part of this century. Sicilians perhaps used the United States as a reference group for their own levels of fertility. This is another example of folded space in which areas that are physically far apart are actually the same in interaction with each other.

In cases of folded space, flows become identities, a way of being in two worlds, or at least that is the way many writers on transnationalism conceive of the identities of people in those systems. (They may also, of course, be examples of 'shared spaces' at either end—see below.) But often flows are way stations between identities associated with clearly bounded spaces.

### Concept number 3: flows

Although some authors use flow and network interchangeably (Castells 1989, 1996), the third 'uncontained' spatial model, flow, is, we feel, different from networks. Mol and Law emphasize the adaptability and transformability of flows, with their leakage and mergers, compared with the rather rigid notions of Latour's Actor Network Theory (1994: 662 ff.).

To us, flows are different from two-places-at-once because they have a direction, rather than being a perpetual oscillation between two places. They resemble a sort of social network with directionality. Unlike the networks of Actor Network Theory, which are universal, however, flows are inherently related to local places; they have origins and destinations. Also, flows, as opposed to networks in Actor Network Theory, are not timeless, they are inherently temporal in three ways. First, they begin and end in time as well as space. Second, there can be changes in the tempo or volume of the flow within a stream either over time or over space. Third, a stream can branch. This characterizes them as inherently different from the universalistic character of networks-in-folded-space.

Ravenstein (1885, 1889), of course, pioneered the flow metaphor to describe migration. Each stream would create a counter-stream of lesser volume, and so on,



but his Laws of Migration were very much laws of urban growth in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, so not as universal as many who drew from him believed. Still, his formulation calls attention to another useful aspect of flows: their interconnectedness. The idea of a counter-stream seems valid but there are other connections as well. When one place is vacated, do other people flow in? And if so, where do they come from? A further useful idea is that flows of people may create other flows, of information, goods, money, etc. These flows may make migration less necessary: if remittances allow old age care to be hired in the village then the elderly might not have to move to be near kin in cities. There is, moreover, almost certainly some sort of flow succession in which information flows first, then people can move to the new place, then they might send money back to the old one etc.<sup>4</sup>

Recently it has been the geographers who have theorized flows, drawing from a variety of work in other disciplines, especially French social criticism and philosophy. Most of this work is about flows on a very large scale, between nations or global cities, a scale that has, until recently, been quite foreign to anthropologists. Moreover, this literature sometimes has an apocalyptic quality, forecasting the end of space and time themselves. Nevertheless, we shall draw on their discussion in what follows since it provides some useful language for discussing flows.

Tester (in Newman and Paasi 1998) expresses the discomfort that accompanies the concept of flows for many researchers: 'without boundaries, without direction and location, social and cultural activity would itself be a simply pointless thrashing about in the world'. As we define them, flows do have direction and location. Nevertheless uneasiness like this evokes a need for structure, at least on the part of theorists, though perhaps not on the part of the people whose lives are being theorized.

Indeed much of the geographical and philosophical literature on flows is either concerned with their control or ontologically opposes flow and structure. Lefebvre has predicted that the greater the volume of flow, the more the power of the state would grow to provide the infrastructure needed for the flows to occur in the first place. He opposes the fixed and immobile state to the increasing transience of labour power, commodities and capital both within and beyond state borders (Brenner 1998: 469). Harvey, too (1985, 1989), locates the recurrent crises of capitalism in the contradiction between mobility and immobility. Value is created in fixed locations but capital is always seeking new forms. 'In the current stage of "flexible accumulation" there is at once an emphasis culturally on the new, the fleeting, the ephemeral, the fugitive, and the contingent and, in reaction to this fragmentation and insecurity, a search for authority and stable values' (Harvey 1989: 171).

Since people are moving so often among and between places, continually crossing borders as they do so, should we continue to make our analyses as though the globe were a set of discrete spaces each of which has a self-contained community living upon it? If, instead of bounded locations or administrative units, the units of analysis were migration streams themselves, we would ask different questions. To the fore would be such questions as: how are they generated, how long do they last, and how do they affect culture, that other unit that is also so very difficult to locate and define? Courgeau (1998) has identified flows as one of the assumptions underlying new directions in French demographic research.

This would be an inherently historical project because streams do originate, dry up or become torrents. Hence space regains more of its temporal implication, which isomorphic models have tended to eliminate. There are also some inherently temporal processes within the flows themselves, as have, for example, been described by Massey (1987) for Mexican migration, where the first to come were the better-off and only later established the networks that poorer people could exploit. Would this turn out to be the case for all flows? Whether a group will be allowed, at least in theory, to disintegrate, or to transform itself into something quite different as a result of such flows, and whether in studying a remnant after people have left, we are still studying the same thing is an important issue, one that anthropology and demography, at least, have yet to face.

### Concept number 4: shared space

We add yet another spatial formulation to those described above by Thrift and Olds (1996), namely ‘shared space’. This occurs when the same physical space is used by people of different cultures or subcultures and thus has different demographic meaning for each group because each group has different vital rates, which are, nevertheless, a function of each other's. For example, Philippe Bernard (1987) proposed that two populations, especially if related as immigrant conquerors and resident natives mutually structure their fertility in such a way that the politically and economically dominant group lowers its fertility, while the under-group raises theirs, in effect becoming the work force for the dominant group. Jeffrey and Jeffrey (1997) note a similar process in Northern India. These examples, by the way, are a good illustration of the *opposite* of the idea of folded space; they are examples of the multiple occupancy of what appears to be the same space, resulting in different histories, and different cultures. So these examples suggest that for demography, regions be seen as systems of reference groups, whatever their spatial extent.

We could add to these two examples by noting the several attempts by researchers on migration to subdivide populations into stayers and movers, as well as the discussions of ‘turnover’ in the British historical demography literature. The elegant hypothesis of Allan Sharlin (1978, 1981; Finlay 1981), which suggests different contributions of ‘recent immigrants’ versus ‘established residents’ of early modern London to the fertility and mortality regimes of the city is a further, more complicated example of ‘shared space’.<sup>5</sup>

Undoubtedly there are many more ‘kinds of space’, which have yet to be theorized, but these examples that run counter to the traditional model of ‘bounded containers’ are sufficient to suggest the richness of representations which are already available to demographers.

## PART II: AN EMPIRICAL EXAMPLE OF FLOW

Unfortunately, data on demographic flows have been scarce. The difficulties of following individuals over space and time were, at least before the days of the computer and national registration, daunting. Hagerstrand (1969) was perhaps the first to

analyse the movements of individuals systematically and diagram them in his notion of lifeline. His analysis was made possible by the excellent records for Sweden in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where people signed out of parishes and into new ones when they moved. However, given the computer, plus the existence of national registration in some countries, as well as intrepid genealogists in others (see, for example, Adams and Kasakoff 1984, 1992; Dribe 1995; Bouchard 1996; Kok 1997; Pooley and Turnbull 1998; Rosental 1999) it is now possible to gather systematic historical data on migrants and to follow them over their life courses, and over generations, even if scientific units and modes of analysis have hardly adjusted to the new materials.

Our personal work is based upon genealogical data. We had wondered how the 80 per cent group we had described for a Native American population might change over time, but realized that because ethnographers usually have produced only synchronic snapshots, ethnographic data would not allow us to study this. So we turned to the longitudinal data of New England genealogies that by now extend almost 400 years. Our study became an investigation into all types of migration, not just migration at marriage, and a demonstration of the difference that the inclusion of migrants makes to demographic understanding (Yankee destinations, 1820 to 1860: Ruggles 1992; Kasakoff and Adams 1995, 2000).

Until recently most detailed historical studies of migration had focused either on the sending or receiving communities, but rarely encompassed both. A few designs have linked two communities, an origin in Europe and a destination in America, of a one-to-one design (see Ostergren 1988, for example), but such transplanted communities in which the American community came almost exclusively from one Old World community are special cases. More often there was dispersion to a variety of locations in the New World, sometimes of the one-to-many sort, as well as many-to-one. So if the design is limited to only two communities this dispersion cannot be seen.

In *Yankee Destinies* Knights (1991) explored the lives of 2,808 ordinary Bostonians in the mid-nineteenth century who were all born in New England, and were of English descent. Most of these had come from the countryside to find their luck in the city.<sup>6</sup> So he studied a destination. Such studies of receiving communities ('from many to one') are not ordinarily able to ask which subgroup from the origin chose the destination. Conversely, studies of the sending community have difficulty following the people who left to see what became of them and their children in their new locations.

## OUR TASK, OUR DATASET

Our genealogical database allows us to study both the sending and receiving communities. The genealogists saw their basic task to be the linking together of everyone with the same surname wherever they might have lived, in order to produce a history of the descendants from a founder in the male line. Thus the genealogy follows migrants and their families as they moved across the entire American North. This has allowed us to conceptualize space as consisting of flows rather than as bounded units.

To look at migration this way obliges us to see New England (and beyond) as a system of simultaneously occurring migration alternatives. To aid us, we employ a computerized dataset on a group of men—similar to those whom Knights studied—taken from nine published genealogies of New England families. Linked in the patriline, it tracks their migrations over a 250-year period between 1650 and 1880. They are all descended from men who embarked from England, and their surnames were virtually unique in the census records until 1860. These data allow us to situate migration in the life course and give us access to such conditions of the family as the size of their sibling set, their birth order, the number of their children, age at their father's death and so on. By then linking to the Federal census, we are able to gain additional information on wealth and occupation.<sup>7</sup>

## WHAT WE DO DIFFERENTLY

We were curious about how Boston looked as a destination for New Englanders. So we focused on the percentage of men who had been born in the rural areas of New England who had moved there. To our surprise, while 78 per cent of the men we were studying had left their birthplaces in rural areas, a mere 3 per cent of them went to Boston. By contrast, 77 per cent of the native born men living in Boston whom Knights had sampled had moved there. At a destination like a growing city, migration looms large, but at the origin any particular stream is not that important (Rosental 1999: 36). We decided to focus on all the migration streams that competed with Boston at the time (1820–60) rather than on a particular destination, and attempted to place Boston, known locally to its inhabitants as the hub of the universe, within the wider set of opportunities available to New Englanders during the years just before the 1860 Federal census.

Table 18.1 shows where the adult men (over age 20) who had been born in New England towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants were living in 1860. Overall, 57 per cent were still living in small towns in New England, but these men were not always stationary, since 61 per cent of those had moved from one small town to another. Thus only 22 per cent of the men who had been born in small towns had remained in their birthplaces. About 30 per cent had left New England and lived across the American North as far west as the Prairies where this population's movements would pause before entering the Great Plains. Twelve per cent had moved to larger settlements in New England and were no longer farming, though the small towns also contained several men who were not farming as well. Boston (including Dorchester and Roxbury), together with other cities,<sup>8</sup> however, accounts for only 7 per cent of the total. Clearly, there were many streams in existence, and few migrants had actually contributed to the grand narrative of growth of the cities.

Now we look at six of these streams more closely. In the first, (*a*), were the men who did go to cities (i.e. men who left the small towns in New England for settlements with more than 10,000 inhabitants in 1860); in the second, (*b*), men who left for what we call medium-sized towns (i.e. settlements with from 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants);

Table 18.1. 1860 residences of men born in small towns in New England

	N	Per cent
Remained in New England		
Living in a small town		
Living in birthplace	298	22
Living in another small town	390	29
Left birthplace and returned	85	6
Total in small towns	773	57
Total in medium-sized town	6	5
Living in a city		
Boston and environs	38	3
Other cities	56	4
Total in cities	94	7
Total remained in New England	932	69
Left New England		
Living in a small town		
New York, Ohio, or Penn.	204	15
Indiana, Michigan, or Ill.	58	4
Wisc., Minn., Missouri, or Ia.	67	5
Total in small towns	329	24
Total in medium sized towns	22	2
Total in cities	27	2
Other regions in or out of US	48	4
Total left New England	426	31
<i>Total</i>	1,358	100

*Note:* This table includes men who were at least age 20 in 1860. Cities were places with more than 10,000 people in the 1860 census. Medium-sized towns had 5,000 to 100,000 people. Small towns had less than 5,000 people in 1860. Those living in other regions in or outside of the US lived in California, other western states, the south or Canada. Boston included Roxbury and Dorchester as well as Boston.

then, (c), men who left New England, at first for New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania (in the 1810s and 1820s) and later to the two areas more recently settled, namely (d) the states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and (e) those of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Iowa. We compare these, finally, with (f) men who remained in the small towns in New England.

Geographically there were some interesting differences between these streams. Migrants to cities and to medium-sized towns came disproportionately from Massachusetts and from Maine, while it was mostly men from New Hampshire and Vermont who still went to the frontier at this time (stream e above). So rural New England was dividing into regions: some areas sent migrants to cities while more recently settled areas farther from the core sent migrants West.

Table 18.2 represents a short summary of New England flows. The streams reached their peaks at different times. The average ages of men in the different streams in 1860

Table 18.2. Men born in small towns in New England who entered different migration streams

	Remained in NE			Moved to small town outside NE		
	Small town	Medium town	City	NY, OH, PA	IL, IN, MI	WI, MO, IA, MN
Mean age in 1860	42	36	41	52	41	42
Median miles moved	11	37	52	147	634	791
Out of farming	32%	75%	80%	26%	30%	31%
Fertility	4.2	4.0	3.3	5.1	4.1	5.0
<i>N</i>	773	65	94	204	58	67

*Note.* Streams are taken from the 1860 residences of men who were over age 20 and born in small towns in New England. Distance is the ‘crow flies’ distance travelled in the move which brought them into the region where they lived in 1860; only moves over 4 miles are included. In the case of men living in towns with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, those who remained in their birthplaces are not included in the distance figures. The per cent out of farming is a lifetime designation. Men who were noted as both in and out of farming during their lives are counted as farmers. Fertility is the number of children ever born to married men.

are evidence of this. In 1860 migration to medium-sized towns was just starting, while migration in New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, the areas which opened for settlement after the Revolution, was largely over and men who had moved there were, on average, 10 years older in 1860 than the men who had remained in New England's small towns. As far as distances moved, they are what one would expect from the spatial positions of the areas entered, except that the medium-sized towns drew from a smaller radius than did the cities.

Occupations are also what one would expect: cities and towns drew more men out of farming. What is not apparent from Table 18.2, however, is the fact that the medium-sized towns had more men who were artisans while the cities had more men in commerce. (Our occupational codes are lifetime designations. Many men shifted work during their lives. A person who had done both farm and non-farm work is considered a farmer.) In the rural areas across the North between 26 and 32 per cent of adult men were not farmers.

Were there any differences between these streams in their families of origin and the families they themselves were producing? In Table 18.3 we see the extremely large families from which these men came—remember that they all had been born in rural areas. There are, however, some interesting differences. Those who moved to cities were from the smallest families. Men who remained in the small New England towns were also from smaller families, indicating that the stream which remained, even in rural areas, had already reduced their fertility in the previous generation. The other four streams attracted men from larger families. Labour at the frontier was very expensive and men would move west with several sons capable of clearing the land. But men who moved to medium-sized towns were also from much larger families than those who moved to cities. Their families of origin were as large as the families of men who left the region.<sup>9</sup>

Table 18.3. Characteristics of families of origin of men born in small towns in New England who entered different migration streams

	Remained in NE			Moved to small town outside NE		
	Small town	Medium town	City	NY, OH, PA	IL, IN, MI	WI, MO, IA, MN
Mean father's fertility median in '( )'	7.8(8)	8.9(8)	7.4(7)	9.1(9)	8.9(9)	9.2(10)
Male sibs surviving to age 20	3.7	4.4	3.3	4.6	4.6	4.5
Median father's real property in 1850	\$1,000	\$800	\$300	\$900	\$1,000	\$200
Fathers with no real property in 1850	26%	39%	47%	28%	31%	43%
Median wealth of propertied fathers in 1850	\$1,414	\$1,650	\$1,500	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$1,800
Fathers out of farming	13%	21%	33%	13%	2%	18%
N	773	65	94	204	58	67

Note: See Table 18.2.

As to the question of the wealth of the fathers of these men, it is unfortunate that all that the 1850 census—the first census to note wealth—recorded was real property. In 1850 the men would have been, on average, in their 30s and most of their fathers in their 60s. Some had probably died and others given their farms to their sons. So this is an inexact measure at best. Still, the figures indicate that the men who remained in small towns in New England and those who had moved to Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan came from families with the most real property followed closely by men who had moved to New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Men who had moved to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Iowa, however, came from much poorer families.

These figures suggest important wealth differences between the migration streams to the two most recently settled areas. Men moving to Minnesota, etc. came largely from New Hampshire and Vermont. They were from quite poor families since the average farm there was worth quite a bit more than the median wealth of the fathers of these migrants—only \$200.<sup>10</sup> The question arises whether men born in New Hampshire and Vermont came directly to the newest areas or had stopped off along the way. Only about a quarter of these men had lived in the more prosperous region of New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania before moving further west. But a larger proportion—about 40 per cent—of the men moving to Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan had done so. In most cases the men who had lived in the New York region had been taken there as children.

Thus the decision of their fathers to move to New York, Ohio, or Pennsylvania put some men in a good position to prosper in the next round of settlement. The men whose parents had remained in New England, however, had to jump over the more prosperous New York and Illinois to the newest regions where land was cheaper. They were also arriving earlier in the settlement process. Yet looking at the sons' property (real and personal which was recorded in the 1860 census), having come from poor backgrounds in Northern New England made very little difference in the wealth of the men themselves. In Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, men who came from the poorer area of Northern New England actually were more wealthy in 1860 than the men who had come through New York, etc. and had gained an enormous amount over their fathers. Interestingly, even the men who had lived in the New York region before moving further west divided into rich and poor streams: men who moved to Minnesota, etc. were from poorer families than were those who moved to Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan.

The fathers of men who moved to medium-sized towns and to cities were also poorer than the fathers of men who remained in small towns in New England. The fathers of nearly half the men who went to cities had no real property, but those with real property had about the same amount as did property-holding fathers in the other streams. This has led us to postulate that there were actually two migration streams to cities: rich and poor (see below).

Men in all of the streams had, on average, lower fertility than their fathers, but the streams differed (compare Table 18.2 with Table 18.3 and 18.4). The men who moved to cities had the lowest but those who had moved to Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, and Iowa had nearly two more children than did the city dwellers, as did the men who had moved to New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, but remember that these men were about 10 years older than the men in the other streams so they were not as far along in the secular decline as were men in the other streams.

Table 18.4. Rich and poor streams of men born in New England small towns moving to cities

	Fathers without real property	Fathers with real property
Mean father's fertility median in '( )'	8.5(10)	6.6(6)
Male siblings surviving to age 20	4.5	3.5
Mean age in 1860	35	35
Median distance moved	43 miles	60 miles
Fathers out of farming	32%	25%
Out of farming	73%	83%
Own fertility	2.4	2.4
N	25	28

Note: Fathers' real property taken from 1850 census.



We can also discern the outlines of different streams even within the group that remained in the small towns of New England. Here it is the men who remained in the town where they were born that stand out, not only in their lower fertility but also in the low proportion out of farming. These were men who must have decided to stay, and so as not to suffer a decline in their standard of living, had smaller families (Easterlin *et al.* 1978), a process which had begun in the previous generation. Men who moved from their birthplaces were slightly poorer than men who stayed and they came from larger families. A higher proportion of the men who returned to their birthplaces were living in Massachusetts; this is, perhaps, a hint of a circulating proletariat forming there.

As we have seen, nearly half the men who had migrated to Boston from small towns had fathers with no real property but the fathers of the rest were nearly as wealthy as the fathers of men who stayed in the rural areas. So we decided to look for other differences between the two groups. The poor stream came from large families, larger than the group that remained in the rural areas, while the rich stream came from quite small families.<sup>11</sup> There was a convergence by both poor and rich migrants to the city on a common low fertility regime, suggesting that it was arguably environmental factors—namely the increasingly specialized economy—that motivated the change.

There are other intriguing differences between the two streams. For example, the poor stream came from closer by, largely from Southern New England, and their fathers were more apt to have left farming, another hint of a proletariat from which they were drawn. About 30 per cent of the richer stream, by contrast, came from New Hampshire and Maine. There are some hints that more men in the richer stream indeed continued to be richer than the poor stream in the city—in 1860 when the census asked about both real and personal property—half of the sons of poor men had none while somewhat fewer (44 per cent) of the sons of men with property had none. Also a larger proportion of the sons of the poor men were artisans in 1860, but actually the differences were surprisingly small.<sup>12</sup> All in all, the two groups did not differ a great deal judging from these fragmentary bits of information.

In summary, the evidence that the people we are studying were dividing into different streams based on family wealth, location, their father's family size, and their own family size, suggests an increasing socio-economic differentiation in this period of intensifying urbanization and industrialization. But this was a time when social mobility was possible and did occur for many, especially those who moved.

In our scrutiny of these data, we have also used event history analysis to explore differences between the streams. This technique permits us to quantify the probability of entering a particular stream on the basis of the number of children, siblings, father-alive versus -dead, etc. and to test for the significance of each of these factors.<sup>13</sup> This is one method for analysing the division of a sending population into different streams and, together with the descriptive statistics we have just described, indicate the following.

## ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGRATION STREAMS

1. Movement to the frontier *directly from New England* was a relatively rare choice at this late date because of burgeoning opportunities in cities and medium-size towns. However, it shows the most clustering of kin, that is, of a potentially large supply of family labour. These migrants were mostly poor farmers, indeed often temporarily out of farming, who did not live near large-size towns. We suggest that they were trying their luck out West.
2. The movement to medium-sized locations seems to represent an overflow of excess fertility from the countryside. The fathers were often prosperous, and the sons moved close by. There were also more pronounced suborder effects in this stream: middle siblings were more likely to leave for the medium-sized towns, while first siblings were more likely to stay, influenced, no doubt, by the prospect of inheritance. Large families located near medium-sized towns were able to make adjustments without moving West, in contrast to the large farm families in more remote parts of New England. The adjustments were the responsibility of individual siblings rather than orchestrated by the fathers' decision to move the entire family. The rosters of movers show that men who moved to medium-sized towns had brothers or cousins there, more so than did movers to cities, but this could, perhaps, reflect the clustering of several related families nearby who were part of the same stream; it may not necessarily reflect a desire to move *with* kin nor any mutual coordination of their movements. In the movements from one small rural town to another in New England, having more siblings speeded up the migrations, especially before one began to have children of one's own.
3. Migration to the cities displayed a modern pattern with respect to family ties and age patterns. Movers were young and came from both rich and poor families (two streams, in fact), both out-of-farming, who came from a wide radius, and who generally travelled by themselves, not in family clusters.
4. We should add that Boston itself does not really stand out in our data from the other cities over 10,000 people in size except that migration there was more pronounced in the 1830s, whereas migration to the other cities was strongest in the 1840s. *And Boston drew from a larger spatial field.*
5. Finally, a reminder that the migration of New Englanders to Boston took place at the same time as immigrants were arriving from Ireland and Germany. Some of these men took the lower-paying jobs in cities and this must have made it easier for some of the native-born, even from poor families, to rise.<sup>14</sup>

## SOME SUBSTANTIVE CONCLUSIONS ABOUT FLOWS

It has often been difficult to see the need for a concept of flows except in cases of extreme social disruption such as warfare, internal civil war (Lubkemann, Chapter 19 and Villaveces-Izquierdo, Chapter 9, both in this volume), or of ethnic groups defined in terms of being mobile, such as the Fulani (Oppong Yaa 1999). Yet, here we

have a case that, we hope, demonstrates the utility of employing a flow model in a much more 'normal' situation. (See also Prohmmo and Bryant, Chapter 13 in this volume for Thai villages.)

Spillovers and subdivisions are connected, as indeed they must be if there is to be any selectivity in migration. Certain types of families, localities, or individuals who are different from others are more apt to contribute to flows of particular types. Some of these are subdivisions, such as localities or classes, for example. Others are hard to see in this way because they represent individual characteristics, such as sibling differences, or large versus small families, and a group of such people is rarely visible. But to the extent that they are selective for migration, the migration stream may make them more visible. Of course, what we have described are not the more absolute differences between localities, or occupations. Not everyone who went to the frontier was from a very large family. And, not all very large families went to the frontier.

We have demonstrated that some of the differences we have pointed out seem to have lasted only briefly. But in our view the differences that occur within populations are possible points of fissure that could last a longer time. In some historical situations they may become 'real subdivisions' sometimes through flows to 'new' places in the opportunity space. Those that are more temporary were still important since they may have been channels through which particular subpopulations were formed or social roles fulfilled.

Even in culturally homogenous groups, like the Yankees, there can be many different migration streams, that is, ethnic subdivisions. These streams often have different demographic regimes (except that as the component members join or hive off, they may have different demographic beginnings or ends). Staying put is a choice (Wolpert 1965; Uhlenberg 1973), and we have treated it accordingly as an additional stream, but there are obviously many different actual regimes among stayers, especially depending on where they lived. There were too few stayers in medium-sized towns and cities in 1860 for us to be able to analyse them.

The lifetime of a flow may be longer than a single generation. But it is difficult to conceptualize flows across generations in demography. Sometimes the next generation simply continues the flow of the previous as did, for example, the children brought to new places by their parents. Indeed, looking at the data retrospectively, some of the streams are the result, not simply of prior moves, but also of demographic choices in the parental generation; for example, of very high fertility. Matters of health and mortality are also important factors in producing circumstances which children must adjust to, such as orphanhood. Other affecting decisions include the fact of having left the occupation of farming in the previous generation which positioned children to take advantage of urban opportunities, but also excluded them to a large extent from taking up farming. But, we also have examples of convergence such as rich and poor to frontier or to cities.

An important consequence of migration is the positioning of children; that is, the effect, indeed cumulative, of moves in one generation on the social status and biological health of the next (Kok 1997). The beneficial frontier lifestyle enjoyed by

one generation was also the result of the previous generation's decision to move while the poor health of adults in cities could be offset by being brought up in the country.

Migration streams age, like the demographic process itself. For example, the farmers who stayed on in New England's small towns had lower fertility. It would seem that these prudent fathers would not be the source of new migrants to the frontier or even to medium-sized towns, but rather to the cities (the rich stream).

One stream—to the Frontier—may be seen as continuing a similar demographic regime of high fertility even though it is in a different place. They had to move to stay 'the same' demographically, that is, maintain higher fertility than those who stayed in New England, another example of folded space, perhaps also folded time.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ABOUT SPATIAL UNITS

*Chaque homogénéisation réécrit l'histoire en termes téléologiques. Milo (1991: 103)*

While a unit with fixed boundaries, whether local community or nation state, is useful as a heuristic device when raw numbers of a population are all that is required, index numbers for such units do not lead to useful models of the parameters of the demographic processes within them. One cannot map demographic processes onto bounded political space successfully, because there are at once subdivisions within as well as spillovers across those boundaries. In its origins, the study of populations was clearly political in nature, indeed it was called 'Political Arithmetik', and, as such, was part of a mercantilistic desire to count noses for purposes of the state. This still remains part of a grand narrative of competition between nation states of differing economic, political, and moral philosophies, as well as of local communities competing with each other for the largesse of central governments. However, demography in its most sophisticated forms today is an enterprise distinct and separate from the mere counting of noses. What has remained most notably of its origins, unfortunately, is the foundational model of bounded, 'container-like' spaces.

As people move over their lifetimes, events in their demographic history will occur in different locations. Thus their entire life history may not be visible in any one place. So while we might want to know something about a place to plan for its future, to truly understand demographic processes as such we must reach beyond a particular location to the origins and destinations of people who happened to be contained within them at any given moment, and look as well at processes that define it as a place within a larger system.

This goal, however, bears a genuine impracticality. We are under no illusion that it is impractical to expect demographers simply to abandon working with the assumption of bounded units—because of the enormous difficulties of assembling the requisite data, a problem well-known to the countless researchers of migration.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, better estimates of the processes within boundaries can be obtained by adjustments of all sorts, such as allowing for partial memberships, censusing the 'second' residence of people in 'two places at once', for example. The science seems to work quite well except in those instances where ideological preoccupations blind it to more accurate

representations of its data. So the discipline has long recognized the limitations of the bounded-container model and been very adept at circumventing them.

Turning away completely from things which can be counted, now, we have looked to the work of a French psychologist because the metaphor of the bounded nation state as container not only has found a place in topologies of space (Taylor 1994, 1995) but it has also been theorized as a phantasy in the discipline of psychology, one among a series of 'psychic envelopes', which act as the interface between self (or group, or nation) and others (Anzieu 1989, 1990). These phantasies perform three functions, according to Anzieu, which are (*a*) to contain the self (or group), (*b*) to keep out invasive experiences of the world-out-there, and (*c*) to carefully regulate the flow of materials in and out. In this respect, the nation-state may be seen as one more instance of psychic envelope, an interface with the outside world of other nations. They are simultaneously institutionalized as real, but may be interrogated as phantasies.

But people and groups do not have just one such envelope: there are always many. Thus such diverse attributes of culture as cuisine, aroma, comfort, colour, space, oratory, music, sports, cleanliness, etc.—and fertility patterns, as well, insofar as these are all ideologically driven—are the direct equivalents in cultural terms of the multiple envelopes which Anzieu postulates that everyone constructs to serve as an ego-skin between his/her self and the world outside.

These envelopes may be conceptualized in the domain of culture as a set of containers within which there is postulated to exist some sort of homogeneity, and between which there is meaningful difference, generating in many instances a decided competition. No matter how real the state, it is also a social and ideological skin. This notion of psychic envelope seems to capture the flavour and appeal of the nation state as bounded container.

We would add that culture may also be conceptualized as a set of differences rather than a set of homologies, and that one learns the double values of contrasts and comparisons, such that there never exists one uniform set of cultural values, but that any value must exist in contrast to some other, both of which are actually held by individuals simultaneously. In other words, cultural values are always contested. The demographers' 'container models' do not regularly allow for such contestation.

So if the container model is now challenged as inaccurate, and too ideologically loaded with the concerns of statecraft, three questions suggest themselves. First, is demography, as a naturalized subject, or object, of knowledge, as we know it, so entirely constituted historically by the nation state as to be quite literally inseparable from it, not existing otherwise in its own right? Or, second, is there nevertheless perhaps a 'shadow' or 'real' entity (that we have been referring to in this chapter as a set of distinct demographic processes), which we might now call the object of inquiry of 'demography' (or perhaps of a 'new demography', or even the 'real' demography,) which exists, ontologically, outside the nation state and which is not constituted by it which we may theoretically, academically constitute to replace the 'old' nation state demography? Third, is such a new demography anything more, given the nation state, than an academic critique, one divorced from real-world practical concerns,

but by means of which we may envisage the discipline and its purposes more fully? Such questions problematize the function of academic enterprises, as much as they problematize the current state of demography.

The task of demography in a post-modern world will almost certainly become more complicated as it tries to include in its models processes such as two-places-at-once and other such ‘topological presuppositions’. We certainly do not expect that the demand for traditional sorts of political and economic statistics about populations will suddenly cease. It is, after all, the bread-and-butter of countless demographers, and the life-blood of innumerable politicians. But we do think there is a need to begin theorizing certain presuppositions and underlying axioms of the field. So with this chapter we put forward the concept of spatial flow as a useful concept, and towards this end we have included an empirical example. But we do not delude ourselves nor wish to mislead others as to the inherent difficulties of such a troublesome and often nebulous perspective. On the other hand, this perspective, so effectively hidden from us by politically motivated metaphors, certainly deserves closer scrutiny than it has received so far.

## Notes

1. The early term *statist* was coined for those workers we now call statisticians.
2. There are several issues of importance here. First, the issue of how migration affects the estimates of parish vital rates for ages at marriage and death derived from stayers (Ruggles 1992; Wrigley 1994; Kasakoff and Adams 1995; Levine 1998). The second concerns local circulation, especially of servants (Kusmaul 1981; Plakans 1982). A third is village ‘turnover’ (Prest 1976; Laslett 1977).
3. See Rosental (1999: 48–51) for a critique.
4. There are also opportunities for new ways to structure information flows, flows which Szreter (1996: 546–58) feels were crucial in the British fertility decline. One could expect ever finer differentiations comparable to the communication communities he has described within each occupation, since the new system is now capable, indeed must exploit, small differences between spaces and subcultures (Harvey 1989). Already in the early twentieth century Szreter emphasized that these groups did not necessarily depend upon propinquity. Also he notes that individuals were usually socialized into at least two, one of their family and one of their neighbourhood, in which case neighbourhoods were two (or more) places at once.
5. In reference to the Sharlin hypothesis, which divided Londoners into two groups according to their length of residence there, we have some data from Boston and other cities in New England over 10,000 in population: the mortality of men in the city varied according to when they had arrived there. The men born elsewhere lived longer as adults compared with the men who had been born in the cities. But instead of a continuous effect—the longer one lived in the countryside the greater the advantage later—there was a threshold at age 10. Men who came before that age were no different in their life expectancies after age 20 than men who had been born in a city, but men who had come after age 10 were significantly longer lived than men who had been born there. Those who came in their teens were also longer lived than men who had been born there but the difference is not statistically significant. (These results are based upon event history analysis, see Kasakoff and Adams 2000.)

People in one location, in this case cities, were, thus, divided by their histories into groups with different death rates. This is a further reason why migration streams are useful units of analysis. In this case there would have again been repercussions over the generations; men born in cities would have left more orphaned children than the men who came to cities as adults. Sharlin's hypothesis suggested that city dwellers be subdivided into two distinct populations: temporary in-migrants and permanent residents (Sharlin 1978, 1981; Finlay 1981). We found an entirely different situation in New England.

As we suggest in Part II below, in general the population was very long-lived: men born between 1740 and 1840 had a life expectancy of 45 years after age 20 (Kasakoff and Adams 2000). Thus the opportunity to move late in life was present for many and doubtless contributed to high migration rates overall. However, the different streams experienced different death rates as adults. As might be expected, those men who went to cities had much higher death rates as adults than did the men who stayed in small towns. Mortality in medium-sized towns was also low, in fact indistinguishable from that in small towns surrounding them. The different rural areas closer to the frontier were not any less healthy than rural New England for adult men.

6. Knights had finally judged as too difficult a task to follow the mostly foreign-born immigrant 'men in motion' of the earlier essay he had written with Thernstrom and Knights (1970). Though trying to follow them would have contradicted their much-heralded 'gas molecule' analogy. How do you keep track of people who are always moving about? Knights sought to do this in *Yankee Destinies*. Indeed, keeping track is both the problem and the method.
7. We were unable to include women in the analysis because genealogists did not always follow them after marriage. They tended to lose those who had moved the farthest.
8. Bangor and Portland ME; Lowell, Lynn, Springfield, Salem, Fall River, New Bedford, Taunton, Gloucester, Lawrence, Newburyport, Cambridge, Charlestown, Worcester, and Chelsea, MA, Providence, Smithfield, Newport, RI; Hartford, New Haven, Brockport, Norwich, Watertown, and New London, CT; Concord and Nashua, NH.
9. We did not find two-step migration to cities or medium-sized towns as Anderson has reported for England (1974). It is possible that our data on migration is too coarse to discern it since we observe people only when there is a vital event or a census. But we think that this type of migration requires a more developed central place system than existed in New England at the time. The middle-sized towns, in fact, were in the process of growing while most of the cities had existed as cities from colonial times. But Rosental (1999) also found few cases of step migration in France in the nineteenth century.
10. We report wealth in three ways. First, the median wealth, then the percentage reporting no wealth at all and then the median of those who do report wealth, the wealthholders. In this case the median wealth is greater for the fathers of migrants to Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan but this is due to the percentage of fathers with no wealth at all.
11. It is they who drive down the overall figure of family size for the group going to cities. However, small family size was not due to the early death of the father.
12. The interpretation is complicated by the fact that we were able to include only men whose fathers were still alive in 1850 in this analysis. It was the wealth of these men which determined whether their sons were in the rich or poor stream.
13. These findings are provisional as there remain a number of technical issues to be worked out. A more complete analysis will be published later.
14. Ferrie (1997) found that the unskilled native-born benefited from the presence of foreign-born immigrants. Unskilled labourers in places where immigrants were concentrated

earned more after their arrival than unskilled labourers elsewhere. But the opposite was true for skilled native-born labourers, who, he speculates, may have migrated West to escape the competition.

15. This brief against space-as-container models also has implications for cultural theories of demographic change to which demographers have turned following the relative failure of traditional methods of inquiry. But this turn has left several anthropologists wondering about the nature of culture as demographers define it (Hammel 1990). It often seems to imply a bounded homogeneity, which is clearly at odds with the experience of anthropological fieldwork. This is not a recent development in the history of ideas about culture, and has been traced back to the ideas of Herder, for instance, as part of the Romantic reaction to French universalism (Kreager 1997). But there are other ways of talking about culture; we do not think that such a notion stands up very well to empirical scrutiny because it is too 'crisp', to invoke the terminology used in Prohmmo and Bryant's Chapter 13 in this volume. The 'fuzzy sets' of the geographer Plane (1996) are far more useful and appealing as a helpful description. There is no isomorphism of culture, genes, and geist within neatly bounded spatial units. Societies are not clearly bounded in empirical fact.

## References

- Adams, J. and Kasakoff, A. (1975). 'Factors Affecting Endogamous Group Size', in Moni Nag (ed.), *Population and Social Structure*. Mouton: The Hague, pp. 147–74. Reprinted (1976) in Carol Smith (ed.), *Regional Analysis*, Vol. II. New York: Academic Press, ch. 6, pp. 149–73.
- (1977). 'Spatial location and social organization: an analysis of Tikopian patterns', *Man*: 12: 48–64.
- (1984). 'Family and community in colonial new England: the view from genealogies', *Journal of Family History*, 9: 24–43.
- (1992). 'The farm family economy in the American North, 1775–1875: an exploration of sibling differences', *Continuity and Change*, 7: 357–75.
- Anderson, M. (1974). 'Urban migration into 19th century Lancashire', in M. Drake (ed.), *Historical Demography. Problems and Projects*. Open University: Walton Hall, Milton Keynes.
- Anzieu, D. (1989). *The Skin-Ego*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Anzieu, D. (ed.) (1990). *Psychic Envelopes*. London: Karnac Books.
- Bernard, P. (1987). 'A dialectic of immigration: acculturation and demographic transition', *European Journal of Population*, 2(3–4): 387–405.
- Bertaux, S. (2000). "'Processus" et "populatio" dans l'analyse démographique de l'immigration en France (1932–1996)', in H. Le Bras (ed.), *L'Invention des populations*. Paris: Editions Odile Jacob, pp. 241–54.
- Bohm, D. (1980). *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bouchard, G. (1996). *Quelques arpents d'Amerique*. Montreal: Les editions du Boréal.
- Brenner, N. (1998). 'Between fixity and motion: accumulation, territorial organization and the historical geography of spatial scales', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 16: 459–81.
- Bryant, John and Prohmmo, Aree (1999). 'Measuring the population of a northeast Thai village', Chapter 13, this volume.
- Castells, M. (1989). *The Informational City: Information Technology, Economic Restructuring, and the Urban–Regional Process*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cazes, M.-H. (1986). 'Genetic origins of the Dogon population in the arrondissement of Boni (Mali)', *American Journal of Human Genetics*, 39: 96–111.



- Cazes, M.-H. (1993). *Les Dogon de Boni: approche demo-genetique d'un isolat de Mali*. Paris: PUF/INED.
- Courgeau, D. (1998). 'New methodological approaches in the social sciences. An overview', *Population: An English Selection*, 10(1): 1–9.
- Dribe, M. (1995). 'Migration, security and economic fluctuations: family migration from Halmstad 1801–1860', in *Lund Papers in Economic History No. 40*. Lund: Department of Economic History, Lund University.
- Dublin, T. (1979). *Women at Work: the Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826–1860*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Easterlin, R. (1976). 'Population change and farm settlement in the northern United States', *Journal of Economic History*, 36: 45–83.
- Alter, G., and Condran, G. (1978). 'Farms and farm families in old and new areas: the northern states in 1860', in T. Hareven and M. Vinovskis (eds.), *Family and Population in 19th Century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 22–84.
- Ferrie, J. (1997). *Yankeys Now: Immigrants in the Antebellum U.S., 1840–1860*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Finlay, R. (1981). 'Natural decrease in early modern cities', *Past and Present*, 92, pp. 169–74.
- Hagerstrand, T. (1957). 'Migration and area', in D. Hannerberg, T. Hagerstrand, and B. Odeving (eds.), *Migration in Sweden: A Symposium*, pp. 27–158.
- (1969). 'On the Definition of Migration', *Swedish Population Studies*, 1: 63–72.
- Hammel, E. (1990). 'A theory of culture for demography', *Population and Development Review*, 16(3): 455–85.
- Harvey, D. (1985). *The Urbanization of Capital*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Jeffery, R. and Jeffrey, P. (1997). *Population, Gender and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johansson, S. (2000). 'Micro mortality transitions in England's historical experience', in S. Johansson and A. Kasakoff (eds.), *The Misleading Mean: The Importance of Sub-National populations in Mortality Transitions. Historical Methods*, 33(2).
- Kaelble, H. (1986). *Social mobility in the 19th and 20th centuries. Europe and America in Comparative Perspective*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Kaplan, H. (1994). 'Evolutionary and wealth flow theories of fertility: empirical tests and new models', *Population and Development Review*, 20: 753–91.
- Kasakoff, A. and Adams, J. (1995). 'The effect of migration on ages at vital events: a critique of family reconstitution in historical demography', *European Journal of Population*, 11: 199–242.
- — (2000). 'The effects of migration, place, and occupation on adult mortality in the American North, 1740–1880', in S. Johansson and A. Kasakoff (eds.), *The Misleading Mean: The Importance of Sub-National Populations in Mortality Transitions. Historical Methods*, 33(2).
- Knights, P. (1991). *Yankee Destinies: The Lives of Ordinary Nineteenth-century Bostonians*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Kok, J. (1997). 'A youth labor migration and its family setting, the Netherlands 1850–1940', *The History of the Family*, 2: 507–26.
- Kopytoff, Igor (1986). *The African Frontier*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kreager, P. (1991). 'Early modern population theory: a reassessment', *Population and Development Review*, 17(2): 207–27.
- (1992). 'Quand une population est-elle une nation? Quand une nation est-elle un état?', *Population*, 6: 1639–56.

- (1997). 'Population and identity', in D. Kertzer and T. Fricke (eds.), *Anthropological Demography: Towards a New Synthesis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 129–74.
- (1998). 'The limits of diffusionism', in A. Basu and P. Aaby (eds.), *Methods and Uses of Anthropological Demography*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 298–322.
- Kussmaul, A. (1981). *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laslett, P. (1977). 'Clayworth and Cogenhoe', in P. Laslett (ed.), *Family Life and Illicit Love in Earlier Generations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 50–101.
- Levine, D. (1998). 'Sampling history: the English population', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 28: 605–32.
- Lotka, A. J. (1998). *Analytical Theory of Biological Populations*. New York and London: Plenum Press, translation of a work that first appeared in French in 1934.
- Lourens, P. and Lucassen, J. (1999). *Arbeitswanderung und berufliche Spezialisierung*. Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch.
- Lubkemann, Stephen (2003). 'Situating Migration in Wartime and Post-war Mozambique: A critique of "forced migration"' research, Chapter 19, this volume.
- Lucassen, J. (1987). *Migrant Labour in Europe 1600–1900*. London: Croon Helm.
- Massey, D. (1987). *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Milo, D. (1991). *Trahir le temps (histoire)*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- Mol, A. and Law, J. (1994). 'Regions, networks and fluids: anaemia and social topology', *Social Studies of Science*, 24: 641–71.
- Murdoch, J. (1998). 'The Spaces of actor-network theory', *Geoforum*, 29: 357–74.
- Newman, D. and Paasi, A. (1998). 'Fences and neighbours in the postmodern world: boundary narratives in political geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, 22: 186–207.
- Oppong Yaa, Pokua (1999). 'Gender and life-course mobility among Fulaani in Greater Accra, Ghana: the inadequacies of voluntary/forced & permanent/temporary as categories of migration', Paper delivered at the IUSSP Seminar on Social Categories in Population Research, Cairo, 1999.
- Ostergren, R. (1988). *A Community transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835–1915*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Piore, M. (1979). *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labor and Industrial Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Plakens, A. (1982). 'Ties of kinship and kinship roles in an historical Eastern European peasant community: a synchronic analysis', *Journal of Family History*, 7(1): 52–88.
- Plane, David A. (1996). 'Fuzzy set migration regions', Paper delivered at the 92nd Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, April 1996.
- Pooley, C. and Turnbull, J. (1998). *Migration and Mobility in Britain Since the 18th Century*. London: University College London Press.
- Prest, W. (1976). 'Stability and change in old and new England: Clayworth and Dedham', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6: 359–74.
- Ravenstein, E. (1885). 'The laws of migration', *Journal of Statistical Society*, 48: 167–235.
- (1889). 'The laws of migration', *Journal of Statistical Society*, 52: 214–301.
- Rogers, A. (1975). *Introduction to Multiregional Mathematical Demography*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rosental, P.-A. (1999). *Les Sentiers Invisibles: Espace, familles et migrations dans la France du 19e siècle*. Recherches d'histoire et sciences sociales, 83. Paris: Editions de l'EHESS.

- Ruggles, S. (1992). 'Migration, marriage, and mortality: correcting sources of bias in English family reconstitutions', *Population Studies*, 46: 507–22.
- Saad, R. (1999). 'Community and community development in Egypt', Paper delivered at the IUSSP Seminar on Social Categories in Population Research, Cairo, 1999.
- Schneider, J. and Schneider, P. (1996). *Festival of the Poor: Fertility Decline and the Ideology of Class in Sicily, 1860–1980*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.
- Serres, M. (1995). *Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time (with Bruno Latour)*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Sharlin, A. (1978). 'Natural decrease in early modern cities', *Past and Present*, 79: 126–38.
- (1981). 'A rejoinder to an article by R. Finlay', *Past and Present*, 92: 175–80.
- Szreter, S. (1996). *Fertility, Class, and Gender in Britain, 1860–1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- and Garrett, E. (2000). 'Reproduction, compositional demography, and economic growth: family planning in England long before the fertility decline', *Population and Development Review*, 26: 45–80.
- and Mooney, G. (1998). 'Urbanisation, mortality and the standard of living debate: New estimates of the expectation of life at birth in nineteenth-century British cities', *Economic History Review*, 50: 84–112.
- Taylor, P. (1994). 'The state as container: territoriality in the modern world-system Progress', *Human Geography*, 18: 152–62.
- (1995). 'Beyond containers: internationality, interstateness, interterritoriality', *Progress in Human Geography*, 19: 1–15.
- Thernstrom, S. and Knights, P. (1970). 'Men in motion: some data and speculations about urban population mobility in nineteenth-century America', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1: 7–35.
- Thrift, N. and Olds, K. (1996). 'Refiguring the economic in economic geography', *Progress in Human Geography*, 20: 311–37.
- Uhlenberg, P. (1973). 'Noneconomic determinants of nonmigration: sociological considerations for migration theory', *Rural Sociology*, 38(3): 297–311.
- Virilio, P. (1993). 'The third interval: a critical transition', in V. A. Conley (ed.), *Rethinking Technologies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 3–12.
- Watkins, S. (1991). *From Provinces into Nations. Demographic integration in Western Europe, 1870–1960*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wilk, R. and Miller, S. (1997). 'Some methodological issues in counting communities and households', *Human Organization*, 56: 64–70.
- Wolf, E. (1982). *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wolpert, J. (1965). 'Behavioural aspects of the decision to migrate', in *Papers*. Regional Science Association, No. 15.
- Wrigley, E. (1994). 'The effect of migration on the estimation of marriage age in family reconstitution studies', *Population Studies*, 48: 81–97.

# 19 Situating Migration in Wartime and Post-war Mozambique: A Critique of ‘Forced Migration’ Research

STEPHEN C. LUBKEMANN

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses the causes, organization, and impact of wartime migration during and since Mozambique's recent civil war (1977–92), in order to challenge theories that establish categorizations of migration based on the degree of its ‘forcedness’. It demonstrates how these predominant demographic theories of forced migration rest on a highly reductionist model of migratory decision-making in acute crisis contexts that fails to adequately examine actor agency and the social and cultural factors that inform agency in producing demographic outcomes.

Drawing on a case study of Mozambicans from the district of Machaze, this chapter demonstrates how wartime and post-conflict migratory patterns were influenced by more than the macro-political and military dynamics of the war itself. Well before the war migration was already ‘situated’ as a strategic option used in an array of local-level social struggles over the rights and obligations that defined social relationships within households, extended kinship networks, and the local community. These culturally specified social struggles in which migration was already implicated prior to the war, significantly shaped wartime migration in ways that ultimately resulted in a highly gendered demographic distribution. This study focuses in particular on how struggles over the gendered configuration of power relations within marriage, affected wartime and post-war Machazian migration. More broadly, it challenges theoretical models of so-called forced migration that privilege the analysis of macro-political struggle in explaining the causes and organization of wartime movement and proposes steps towards developing alternative theoretical approaches to the study of crisis migration.

## KINETIC MODELS: THE ERASURE OF AGENCY IN EXPLANATION

Most explicit models and implicit approaches used to analyse so-called forced migration have a ‘kinetic’ understanding of migratory behaviour that is undertaken under conditions of extreme duress. In ‘kinetically structured’ models the behaviour of

populations subjected to crisis conditions, is explained in terms of forces that are analytically conceptualized as external to and largely beyond the influence of the actors themselves.

The term 'kinetics' was formally articulated in the rather abstract models produced by Kunz (1973, 1981) in his creation of a formal typology of refugee flows. Kunz contrasts 'kinetic' with 'dynamic' models of behaviour. In a 'kinetic' model, forces external to the migrants themselves are seen as determining the actors' migration behaviour largely apart from their own internal motivations. By contrast in 'dynamic' models the internal motivation of the migrant is seen as playing a far more significant role in shaping migration behaviour and outcomes. Kunz explained his understanding of forced migration behaviour as 'kinetic' by using the following analogy: 'an inner self-propelling force is singularly absent from the movement of refugees. Their progress more often than not resembles the movement of the billiard ball: devoid of inner direction their path is governed by the kinetic factors of inertia, friction, and the vectors of outside forces applied on them' (Kunz 1973: 131).

Kinetic models eliminate the need to investigate actor agency altogether, by reducing the interest of all 'forced migrants' to a singular and universally generalizable 'survival-utility'. In other words, in the throes of war, people are seen as having no life projects other than bare survival itself. This formulation is implicitly premised on the assumption that in the face of sheer terror, violence somehow renders all 'normal' concerns for engagement in ongoing, culturally defined, social life-strategies virtually insignificant in shaping behaviour. The presumption is that the singularly overriding concern of those threatened by violence is to avoid it. Since the motivational basis for migration has been operationalized a priori in a socially undifferentiated form (as the desire to avoid violence), there is no need to examine how it is that people make sense of the violent context in which they find themselves. Nor is it necessary to investigate whether such culturally shaped or socially specific understandings affect their migratory conduct in those situations.

Instead, the explanations for patterns and effects of forced migration are sought through the analysis of the dynamics and variation in forces conceptualized as external to, and unaffected by, the agency of migrants. Political forces receive privileged attention in these analyses since they are the most visible macrolevel forces implicated in coercive violence. 'Violence' itself is conceptualized as a phenomenon that is directed solely by the interests and agendas of the highest organizational level at which political struggle is being carried out—typically those political actors with national political pretensions. 'Violence' is thus also implicitly conceived of as a phenomenon whose meaning is generated by forces external to its victims, and that therefore acts on them in uniform ways and with uniform effects.

Variation among migrants themselves, in terms of their own motivations and the factors that inform those motivations, is largely neglected. To build on Kunz's own billiards analogy the emphasis in kinetic analysis is centred on the 'cue' rather than the 'ball', that is, on analysing ball movements by examining what types of 'cues' (larger political forces) are 'forcing' the 'balls' (migrants) to behave in particular ways, and not on how the properties of different balls might effect varying reactions to the cue's force.

In its simplest form, these approaches model wartime migration in the following manner: war or the threat of war occurs in area 'A' and acts as a force akin to a billiard cue that drives actors from area 'A' of violence to the nearest area 'B' without violence. This process may be replicated in a series of stages producing a variety of refugee 'vintages' (Kunz 1973, 1981), each the product of different military-political actions (Wilson and Nunes 1992). Differences between successive vintages are attributed to their political affiliation, on the assumption that political affiliation will affect the relationship of a populace to a military force and thus their exposure to the risk of violence as the military fortunes of war change. Wilson and Nunes (1992) describe how refugees who were politically aligned with FRELIMO (the government) fled across the Malawian border in the face of a RENAMO (the insurgency) offensive. This initial wave was later followed by refugees from the same area who were politically aligned with RENAMO, when FRELIMO succeeded in recapturing the area it had lost.<sup>1</sup>

These behavioural models assume that the extreme threat faced by these populations has entirely stripped away their concern with 'normal social concerns', leading then to focus exclusively on what are implicitly viewed as more 'fundamental' and culturally undifferentiated 'needs'. In conceiving of 'culture' as simply another set of variables distinct from economic and political ones, yet hierarchically subordinate and without the same level of influence on behaviour, these approaches are similar in many ways to the concepts of culture often deployed by demographers in the study of a variety of demographic processes, including (but not limited to) migration (Kertzer 1997).

## AGENCY AND THE 'FORCED' MIGRATION PARADOX IN SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

Anthropologists have increasingly critiqued certain aspects of kinetic models of forced migration. The depiction of wartime displacement as 'involuntary' has drawn some criticism for depicting refugee behaviour as a merely passive by-product of larger political processes and for neglecting to examine how refugees shape their own outcomes as agents who draw from their own culturally specific values and frameworks, and who are motivated by socially differentiated interests in creating and implementing their life strategies (Colson 1971; Harrell-Bond 1986; Hansen 1992; Wilson 1994; Malkki 1995; Indra 1999; Lubkemann 2000; Sommers 2001; Matsouka and Sorenson 2001).

Gender differentiation has been the most important focus of this critique (Koenig 1995; Colson 1999; Indra 1999). Several studies have demonstrated how gender-power relations affect the distribution and effects of humanitarian aid (Harrell-Bond 1986; Daley 1991; Matlou 1999) and the assignment of political status (Gilad 1999; Giles 1999; Macklin 1999). Other important studies have shown how the impact and meaning of forced relocation can be highly gender-differentiated (Moussa 1993; Moussa and McSpadden 1996; Indra 1999; Matsouka and Sorenson 2001), and can result in the significant renegotiation of gender roles (Daley 1991;

Krufeld 1994; McSpadden 1999). Significantly, however, these works tend to *start with the movement itself as a fait accompli*. While numerous studies examine how the experience of movement affects gender relations and identities, there is a noticeable paucity of research on how struggles over the constitution of gendered roles and relationships may influence the organization of movement itself.

Consequently refugee, or more generally wartime migration, is still typically categorized as ‘involuntary’ (or more recently as ‘forced’) in order for it to be able to be explicitly theorized (Stein 1981; Oliver-Smith and Hansen 1982; Scudder and Colson 1982; Rogge 1987; Richmond 1988, 1994; Zolberg *et al.* 1989; Black and Robinson 1993; Indra 1999) as an analytically separate phenomenon from ‘voluntary’ (labour) migration. In fact this dichotomy defines an increasingly institutionalized sub-field of study itself—it is *forced* migration (and thus presumably *not* ‘un-forced’ migration) that is the object of study. Indra clearly reiterates the idea that migration in crisis can be distinguished from other forms of migration by the restricted volition migrants exercise, when she states: ‘a key dimension of forced migration—whether politically, economically, environmentally, or developmentally driven—is just that: it is *forced*’ (Indra 1999: 18).

There is clearly an implicit (and somewhat ironic) logical contradiction in arguing for the investigation of agency in a process and population while defining that process and population a priori precisely by its lack of agency. This contradiction arises out of the failure of social analysts to fully apply their critique of the premises that inform kinetic models to *all* aspects of crisis migration processes—including movement itself. Agency is not only a factor in how the displaced react to relocation but also in the *causation* and *organization* of actual movement itself.

As Richmond (1988, 1994) has pointed out, kinetic models of ‘forced migration’ cannot explain the fact that a variety of different (migratory) behaviours occur among people who are exposed to the same macro-political conditions. They cannot adequately explain social and demographic variation in specific direction, scale and socio-demographic composition of particular flows, or the existence of a variety of simultaneous flows.

Moreover, in the absence of political differences, kinetic models have difficulty accounting for why some people move and others do not. After all if the migration is ‘compelled’ by larger external forces how can some people *not* move? As Richmond notes (1988: 14) migration is *not* the only choice that so called ‘forced migrants’ face when confronted by forms of economic, environmental, or political crisis. Other options may include those of staying and actively fighting, of passively resisting, or of accommodating to new regimes (Hansen 1982). Richmond is therefore correct in arguing that: ‘migratory decisions, even those taken under conditions of extreme stress, do not differ from other kinds of decision governing social behaviour. The same sociological model of motivation is applicable ... the distinction between “free” and forced, or “voluntary” and “involuntary” is a misleading one’ (Richmond 1988: 17).

Yet despite noting that a typology of behaviour based on a dichotomy between freedom and lack-of-freedom in the exercise of volition (‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’) is fallacious, Richmond's own alternative formulation simply converts the differentiation

from a *dichotomy* into a *continuum*. He argues for conceptualizing all migration along a continuum: ‘at one end of which individuals and collectives are *proactive* and at the other end *reactive*’ (1988: 17).

Drawing on Giddens' theorization of ‘agency’ Richmond derives the conclusion that ‘choices are not unlimited but are determined by the structuration process’ (1988: 17), from the fact that ‘all human behaviour is constrained’.<sup>2</sup> Yet I would contend that it is more specifically the *consequences* of choices that we are referring to, rather than the process of choosing or even the range of choices per se that are being constrained. It is the *consequences* rather than the *array of choices* themselves that are determined by factors largely outside of the power of the agent making the choices to influence, and despite their explicit intentions.

Thus as Colson (1971, 1999) has described in her study of the ‘forced resettlement’ of the Gwembe Tonga in Zambia, the action of larger and more powerful forces such as the central state confronted locals with an array of choices with consequences not of their own choosing. They could comply with government directives to relocate and face social and economic disruption as a result. Conversely they could resist relocation and face drastic forms of repression from the state with its far greater coercive capacity.

It is such dramatic differences in power and the drastic nature of the consequences that can result from the exercise of that power that make choices that avoid such consequences seem ‘involuntary’. Thus, as Fischer *et al.* note: ‘we perceive what one may call “involuntary” migration as extreme situations where the decision to go is “self-evident”’ (1997: 50). However, the theoretical point is precisely that such decisions are *not* so ‘self-evident’ but must rather be problematized in light of the multidimensional concerns of socially and culturally situated actors.

Colson's study is often considered as one of the ‘purest’ examples of the ‘forcedness’ of ‘forced migration’. Yet in reviewing this study over a quarter century later Colson points out that there were those among the Gwembe Tonga who resisted resettlement and died as a consequence of the Zambian state's reaction (Colson 1999). She thus empirically establishes that even in the most extreme cases the relationship between a choice and the degree of drastic consequences related to that choice, does not predetermine the decisions made nor establish the choice of one option or another as a self-evident or foregone conclusion.

So-called forced or involuntary migration is thus not the result of a constrained capacity to exercise one's own volition, such that behaviour is the inevitable result of the decision-maker pursuing a choice that is a foregone conclusion dictated by environmental factors. Rather it is the result of a weighing of multiple options and the exercise of the decision-maker's *full* volition, albeit in circumstances in which the *consequences* of choice have often become drastically radicalized and reduced to outcomes that the chooser/s would rather not have to face.

The most fundamental consequence of classifying migration behaviour in terms of ‘degrees of freedom of volition’ is that it precludes a priori an investigation of whether people in those migratory processes pre-classified as ‘forced’ actually do shape their own movement with reference to a broader array of concerns than those visible at the



macro-political level. It presents a drastically oversimplified and reductionist picture of the context in which crisis migration occurs, depicting the displaced as entirely powerless in the face of military and political might. Yet as Foucault (1972) has argued, power is pervasive and multidimensional in its forms. Even where extreme forms of power difference exist forms of resistance are likely to emerge. This subversive power is a critical element in the constitution of social process.

By contrast, the highlighting of agency in *all* aspects of the migration process (including the causes and organization of movement itself) demands an investigation of how culturally specific social interests shape the motivations that inform migratory decision-making. This is also the only analytical route that can place migratory choice and behaviour in crisis into a proper comparative context that encompasses decisions to engage crisis through strategies other than migration. Within such an approach alternative options such as ‘staying’ can also be fully examined.

The following analysis demonstrates how gendered struggle over the definition of rights and obligations within households, and most specifically between spouses within marriage, influenced migratory dynamics and demographic distribution outcomes during (and after) the war in central Mozambique. More than simply investigating the gender-differentiated impact of the war and of wartime migration, this study investigates how the process of what I term ‘engenderation’ (i.e. the ongoing struggle over how relationships and power between and among men and women in Machaze should be defined) influenced the organization of wartime migration and population distribution as well as post-wartime patterns of ‘return migration’. The objectives of different categories of social actors engaged in the process of ‘engenderation’ were ones largely generated prior to, and apart from, those of the larger political conflict.

This case thus demonstrates how wartime migration decision-making, organization, and socio-demographic outcomes can be shaped by social struggles other than those operating at a macro-political level and that larger political–economic forces are not *determinative* of migratory behaviour. Rather, the influence of larger political–economic forces on migration can be better understood by examining how larger changes affected the redistribution of power in the culturally specific social struggles in which migration was already implicated as a strategy of engagement.

## THE MACHAZIAN CASE STUDY

This case is based on approximately 2 years of research among Mozambicans, loosely definable as ethnically Ndau (a subgroup of Shona speakers), all originally from an area in the south central part of that country (the Machaze district).<sup>3</sup> This is a region in which labour migration to South Africa and present-day Zimbabwe has been engaged in since at least the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Under the Portuguese colonial regime, migration developed as both a strategy for social reproduction and as a form of resistance against the colonial state's pursuit of particular interests at odds with those of the population (such as forced labour)

(Lubkemann 2000*a*). The structure of migration and the relationship between local and national-level institutions were influenced by the very contradictions of a colonial rule not unlike that in other settings (Berry 1993; Young 1994). The colony's internal need for labour (which frowned upon migrant labour to South Africa) was pitted against its needs for tax revenue (which migrant labour provided) and for maintaining political order with a skeleton bureaucratic apparatus. These circumstances required forms of indirect rule and moderation in state attempts to contest local norms. In this context migration developed as a particularly powerful 'weapon of the weak' (Scott 1985) in resisting forced labour practices, and consequently as a particularly central force in the organization of local social institutions and identities (Lubkemann 2000*a*).

At the same time that migration allowed Machazians to resist the power of the coercive power of colonial state, it also became implicated in strategies of local socio-economic differentiation, intergenerational struggle, and in the struggle over gendered power distribution within households. Throughout the first half of the century migration became an increasingly important way for younger men to attain greater independence for senior kin through wage earnings that afforded them the ability to pay brideprice without relying on their fathers. This line of intergenerational struggle resulted in the increased nuclearization of what had at one time been far larger extended households (Lubkemann 2000*a*).

Even as it enabled the subversion of generational hierarchies, from the perspective of gendered 'micro-politics' migration increasingly became a 'tool for the strong' in Machaze's patriarchal society. The reorganization of co-residence, the shift in power relations between senior and junior kinsmen, the higher rate of migrant earnings, and the heightened consumerism of migrant men from Machaze had a profound effect on the meaning of marriage in Machaze, and consequently on the status and power of Machazian women. In particular throughout the last three decades of colonial rule marriage became an increasingly 'commodified' relationship in which women were treated as the commodities. The power of decision-making regarding marriage partner's choice increasingly became a choice negotiated by husbands in their own individual interest rather than by senior men in the interest of kinship alliance.

Migration was centrally implicated in strategies of local socio-economic differentiation, inter-generational struggle, and in the struggle over gendered power distribution and the definition of rights and obligations within marriage. Migration has thus been continuously 're-situated' as a strategy in multiple simultaneous forms of social struggle well before the civil war started in 1977.

Within 3 years of its independence in 1975, Mozambique began to experience a civil war, largely spurred on by the aggression of the hostile neighbouring Rhodesian and South African apartheid regimes. By late 1979 Machaze was fully embroiled in the war between the Rhodesian (and later South African) supported anti-government faction RENAMO and the government forces of FRELIMO. During the conflict (that lasted until the end of 1992) somewhere between 40 and 70 per cent of the population is estimated to have left the district, many to South Africa and Zimbabwe, and some to internal destinations elsewhere within Mozambique (GTZ 1993, 1995, 1996; CARE 1994).

## Explaining engendered patterns of initial out-migration from Machaze

As the armed conflict developed and intensified in Machaze district during 1979–82, some form of migratory response was engaged in by virtually the entire population of the district. These movements were patterned in highly gender-specific ways. Machazian women were far more likely than men to either remain in the district, to move to adjacent areas within Mozambique, or to move to Zimbabwe to resettle in refugee camps.<sup>4</sup> Men, on the other hand, particularly if they had migratory experience in South Africa and had not yet retired from their careers as labour migrants, were likely to flee to South Africa. A very small percentage of women ever went to South Africa.

One of the factors conducive to the gender selectivity of out-of-district migration involved the very different ways in which women and men were targeted by the military forces involved in the conflict. When women and children were found by either RENAMO or FRELIMO troops in their opponents' territory they were generally compelled at gunpoint to relocate into the area under the control of the troops that found them. Men on the other hand tended to either be forcibly conscripted into military service or be killed on the spot. Consequently men had more motivation than women to flee out of the district and, if possible, across international borders.

However, gendered differences in initial out-migration patterns also reflected an attempt by both men and women to engage in long-established strategies of economic and social reproduction. International migration has been implicated in the organization of social life in Machaze for demonstrably over a century. The pre-war experience of subsistence involved a social division of labour between female non-migratory agricultural subsistence labour and male migratory cash-earning labour. Male migration was virtually universal and incorporated as an informal and yet strongly socially marked rite of male passage. Male participation in economic life was embodied first and foremost in the form of migration-based wage-labour, and only secondarily and peripherally in very specific and sporadic tasks in the subsistence agriculture arena (mostly clearing new fields). The vast majority of men spent most of their migratory careers in South Africa. Moreover, international migration had long been the preferred strategy for dealing with the periodic intensifications in colonial labour recruitment and taxation (which the Portuguese had only levied against men in this area). The flight of men to South Africa during the beginning of the war thus reproduced historically established models for dealing with coercive political authority.

By contrast, female non-migration in Machaze has been historically virtually universal (unlike the experience in other areas of Mozambique) and their economic activity was relatively rigidly circumscribed to non-cash subsistence agriculture. It is thus unsurprising that women who were forced to relocate early in the war moved within the district where they could still pursue subsistence agriculture—an option that would be difficult to realize if they engaged in international migration.

Early Machazian migratory and non-migratory reactions to the war can thus be seen as primarily attempts to reproduce ongoing strategies of social and economic

reproduction in a novel environment rather than as attempts to reconfigure those life strategies themselves. The initial gendered pattern of the Machazian population's wartime demographic distribution reflected an attempt to adjust pre-war socio-economic strategies to the heightened dangers and new problems of a wartime environment. It also reflected attempts by different categories of social actors to reconstitute central features of the socio-economic realities with which they were most familiar.

## Engendered social struggle: men protecting established life strategies

Ultimately however, migratory patterns and population distribution outcomes were not only the result of socially situated attempts to reproduce a culturally defined socio-economic 'order'. They were also shaped by continuing struggles over the meaning of relationships and the configuration of social interaction. These struggles had already characterized Machazian social process prior to the war and as this case study will demonstrate they were neither suspended nor eclipsed by it.<sup>5</sup>

By 1984 when the war was aggressively spreading into other areas of the country for the first time (such as Cabo Delgado and parts of Zambezia and Niassa provinces) it had already raged in Machaze for half a decade. As the war dragged on year after year it became less and less possible for Machazians to treat the new problems and opportunities that the conflict presented as temporary factors in the calculation, imagination, and implementation of their life-strategies.

The interrelated problems of wartime violence, successive displacement, and chronic drought within Mozambique during the 1980s increasingly rendered subsistence strategies less tenable for those remaining in Mozambique. Early in the war many men attempted to continue to provide assistance in the form of remittances to family members who remained in Mozambique. With the intensification of the war, the polarization of population concentrations, and the collapse of regular access to the district, remittances became more and more problematic. Money sent with migrants who attempted to make their way back into the district was lost as many of those individuals were killed and/or robbed.

Consequently, many Machazian men abroad either sent instructions or else personally returned to help family members move into safer areas within Mozambique or across the border to the refugee camps established by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). While they generally then returned alone to South Africa, many of these men sent financial support and maintained communication channels with their families in these 'surrogate home bases'. However the overwhelming majority of these men *systematically resisted* having family members, and spouses in particular, join them in South Africa. In fact husbands quite actively discouraged their spouses from coming to join them in South Africa even if they expressed a desire to do so.

Keeping dependants, and in particular wives, in the UNHCR camps allowed men to continue to pursue long established life-course strategies in important ways that would have been far more difficult if their wives had joined them in South Africa. One important benefit was that the humanitarian aid provided in these camps

reduced the cost for maintaining their families much as subsistence production had done back in Machaze. Subsistence cultivation in the township areas in which most Machazian migrants lived in South Africa was impossible. The townships in the Vaal region in which many Machazian men had resettled consisted of small houses and shacks, with tiny yards generally less than 10 m<sup>2</sup> in area, sprawled from horizon to horizon. Even small garden plots and animals such as chickens were rarely seen since these were likely to be stolen. Consequently many men whom I interviewed argued that having a Machazian wife move to South Africa would drain their earnings because she would become a dependant herself:

M: 'What could she (my Machazian wife) do here except "eat my money?" There is nowhere to plant a *maachamba*. She could not sell fruit because she does not know the language or the Rand (the South African currency) and these South African women are very clever and would deceive her so she would lose everything. Even to cook here you must have money. You must buy charcoal. It is not like Machaze where she can go and find firewood snap snap ... she would not want to eat *sadzza* only anymore because the South African women also want to eat (corn)flakes and cakes and this would eat my money because she would stay at home all day sitting.'

The claim that Machazian women would have inevitably become an economic burden on their husbands in South Africa is somewhat questionable. Migrant women to South African township areas have been shown by a considerable body of research to be quite successful participants in the flourishing informal economy in these areas (Bozzoli 1991<sup>a,b</sup>; Preston-Whyte 1991). In my own fieldwork in these townships those few Machaze women who actually had joined their husbands in South Africa proved to be quite successful entrepreneurs. In two cases Machazian wives provided the sole income for their entire households and supported their unemployed Mozambican husbands. In 1997, I conducted a small survey-based review of the economic situation of thirty-one households in the townships in which wives from Machaze were present. On average these women earned at least 44 per cent of the total reported monthly household budget. All of these households included more members than just the husband and wife. Furthermore 30 per cent of these households contained one or more adult men who were being supported at the time as dependants since they were unemployed and contributed nothing to the household expenses (Lubkemann 2000<sup>a</sup>: 417–19).<sup>6</sup> The effect that a wife's services had on other dependent family members that remained with them in refugee camps (such as small children and aged parents) probably provided husbands with a more important economic motive for preventing wives from leaving those camps and joining their husbands in South Africa. Such dependants would most probably have been economically unproductive in South Africa and represented a substantial drain on income.

As my fieldwork in South Africa progressed 'non-economic' reasons increasingly surfaced as playing an important role in Machazian men's efforts to prevent their spouses from joining them in South Africa. Machazian men in South Africa frequently express longing for aspects of their life in Machaze which they miss in South

Africa—the fact that in Machaze they do not need to pay for cooking or heating fuel, that most food is produced rather than paid for, that one can live with little money. The ability of men to pursue these life strategies was (and even today remains) dependent on two factors: control over the labour of wives who provide all these services free of cash, and on women's willingness to accept the culturally sanctioned gendered division of labour, power, and authority which define social roles within marriage and the family.

Women historically have and still do provide virtually all of the labour for the practice of subsistence agriculture in Machaze. In Machaze poor land quality and acute water scarcity make domestic and agricultural tasks highly labour intensive. Women perform most of these labour-intensive tasks. For example, the average woman walks over 8 km per day to get water. Although men may participate in all parts of the agricultural cycle, they are often only expected to participate in the initial clearing of fields—a labour intensive but fairly short exercise that may occur every 2–5 years. The rest of the agricultural activities are culturally prescribed as primarily ‘women's work’.

Throughout the twentieth century Machazian men's life strategies have depended on rather acute culturally prescribed asymmetries in gender relations that allow them to exploit women's labour for their own benefit. Keeping women in Machaze and preventing their out-migration has served as a major mechanism for preserving this asymmetry. The virtually complete restriction on female migration has thus served other purposes besides those of colonial governance and capitalist accumulation. The asymmetry of power that men achieved through their gendered monopoly on (migration-based) sources of cash has played an important role in their ability to control women's labour and foster relationships of female dependence on men. The recognition by Machazian men of the importance of controlling female migration in order to reproduce this social order played a significant role in shaping wartime migration in and from Machaze, and ultimately in the demographic distribution of Machazian refugee populations.

Most men I interviewed expressed a strong desire to keep Machazian women unaware of ways of life in peri-urban South Africa (in which very different gender roles prevailed) that would put in question women's willingness to engage in the labour or level of deference upon which men's ease of life back in Machaze depended. Although not always the case, most Machazian men felt that a sojourn in Zimbabwe would not have the same negative effect on Machazian women that time spent in South Africa would since movement outside the camps was restricted by the authorities, and the cultural setting in rural Zimbabwe was less drastically different than that the peri-urban townships of South Africa

Wives also contributed substantial labour to their husband's parents—in particular to their mothers-in-law. This labour was crucial in sustaining a man's relationship with his mother. As documented more extensively elsewhere (Lubkemann 2000a, 2002) the mother–son relationship had increasingly gained importance for migratory sons during the post-Second World War period as homesteads tended towards greater nuclearization. Mothers had become the overseers of their son's social and

economic affairs in Machaze during their migratory sojourns abroad, safeguarding his interests in his absence. The importance of this mother–son relationship was strongly sustained by beliefs about the ways in which ancestral spirits were implicated in its safeguarding. At least three men I interviewed admitted returning to Mozambique to procure a wife and leave her with their mother with no other purpose than the aversion of problems with ancestral spirits. One man described his own situation as follows:

G: ‘When I first heard that my mother was complaining I was worried. I went to the *profeta* (prophet) who gave me this “charm” so that the *mudzimu* (family spirits) would not trouble me after I sent her money. After a year I was getting very very ill and the *profeta* said that no, I must go back to visit. When I returned I saw that my mother could not get water ... I paid the *lobola* (brideprice) for a woman so my mother could “lean on her” and then (after three months) I came back to South Africa ... my life is mostly here now...’

## Engendered social struggle: men pursuing new opportunities

Whereas preventing Machazian women from joining them in South Africa played a role in protecting already long established life-strategies for many Machazian men, it also allowed these men to take advantage of new social opportunities in South Africa itself. Prior to the civil war a whole series of significant regulatory, labour-market, social and demographic changes in South Africa had established new social and economic possibilities for migrant Machazian men. The most important of these changes involved the shift from legal and regulated mine labour participation to illegal participation in the secondary or tertiary labour sector starting in the decade following the Second World War. Whereas 76 per cent of migrants surveyed were involved in mine labour in the migrant labour trips undertaken prior to 1950, by 1977, 62 per cent of migrant labourers were now involved in the secondary/tertiary sector and only 44 per cent in mine labour (Lubkemann 2000a: 118–19). Mine labour involved deferred payment and obligatory return home after 18 months for 6-month (minimum) leaves. However, other forms of employment did not have these time restrictions, nor did they involve deferred pay schemes. Unlike the highly state-regulated mine-labour wages, full salaries were thus received in South Africa. Finally wages in service and industrial jobs rapidly outdistanced mine wages so that by the early 1970s they stood at more than double on average (Crush and Yudelman 1991; Lubkemann 2000c).

As more and more Machazians had pursued these better-paying jobs throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many obtained either forged South African identification documents or bribed officials for legal ones. Such individuals could then ‘pass’ as ‘legal’ South African citizens.

The widespread emergence of township and township-based (hostel) housing as a replacement for compounds for migrant men during the 1960s and 1970s also created new social opportunities in South Africa for Machazian men. Starting in the mid-1960s the peri-urban township areas in the industrial heartland of South Africa experienced a massive explosion of illegal squatter settlement that overwhelmed any

official attempts to thwart or check it (Schlemmer and Moller 1985). Meanwhile the growth of (South African) female migration to these peri-urban areas vastly improved the ‘conjugal market’ for men in these urban areas (Smit 1985: 116–17). These changes opened up new social possibilities and widened the array of possible social relations to increasingly include more involved forms of conjugal union. The move to the hostels in the 1960s thus opened up new sexual, domestic, and economic relationship possibilities for Mozambican men with South African women.

The economic downturn and resulting employment crisis in South Africa during the late 1970s gave employers considerably more power over employees that they did not hesitate to exercise to their advantage (Crush *et al.* 1991: 127–30). Up to the time of Mozambican independence Machazian men reported that they often overstayed official leave times, or even left employment in one company in order to seek employment elsewhere without having a definite alternative already established. As unemployment rose Machazian men began to comply with these stricter requirements in order to maintain their jobs. The average leave time of 2 weeks granted by employers and its stricter enforcement strongly discouraged these men from being able to easily or as frequently visit their families and homes back in Machaze while further encouraging the establishment of stronger residential ties in South Africa (Lubkemann 2000c).

All of these pre-conflict changes created conditions that encouraged Machazian men to establish denser social and economic ties and commitments in South Africa. As the war in Mozambique intensified and eventually started to drag out for years on end, South African options became more and more attractive to many Machazian men who had initially expected the war to blow over quickly and allow them to return to their regular patterns of circular labour migration. More and more Machazian men began to consider the possibility that they might never be able to reconstitute their lives back in Mozambique:

L: ‘At first I did not think about the war so much. I did not visit Machaze because it was too “hot” there. Some went back but never returned so I was afraid to go because I could be killed. Later I heard that my father had been killed but I did not hear about my mother or my wife so I thought they were dead too. I started to think that the situation in Mozambique would be too hot because FRELIMO and RENAMO never wanted to stop fighting even after President Samora was killed. So I said this war will not stop—I must stay in this place.’

For some the war had partially or thoroughly disrupted their contact with some or even all their family members back in Mozambique. Consequently the possibility of developing alternative ways of realizing their own life-course strategies through involved conjugal relationships with South African women proved an increasingly attractive option.

Whereas among those Machazians surveyed who had been employed in non-mine migration from 1970 to 1978, 30 per cent reported being engaged during that time in a conjugal relationship with South African women. In an additional survey of over 200 Machazian men living in the townships in 1997 over 79 per cent reported being in (or having been in) such a relationship during the previous decade (Lubkemann 2000c).



However, Machazian men were aware that South African women were not generally receptive to the idea of polygyny in general and adamantly opposed in particular to the presence of a Mozambican wife in their homes in South Africa. These men also feared that Machazian women would become discontent at the discovery of South African counterparts resenting their lack of authority over these supposedly ‘junior’ wives. Husband feared that they would be more likely to be exposed to *uloi* (witchcraft) as a result. The physical proximity of the Machazian woman was believed to amplify the effect of that *uloi*:

J: ‘If she (a Machazian wife) comes here (to South Africa) then there can be big problems with *uloi* because the (South African) woman does not want her to be in her house. Everyone will suffer then.’

Interviewer: ‘Do you mean that the South African woman will cause *uloi* that will harm the Machazian woman?’

J: ‘No, that is not the case. The South African woman cannot cause the *uloi*. But she will suffer because the Machazian woman will cause *uloi*. Then the husband can suffer too. This is what happened with M.’

N: ‘The two children died and then his (South African) wife went to the police and reported him because she did not want more of her children to die. So he had to take his (Machazian) wife (to another township).’

The presence of a Machazian wife in South Africa could also threaten to expose the Mozambican identity of these illegally settled men, subjecting them to greater risks of deportation. Many of these men had concealed their Mozambican identity even from their South African spouses, presenting themselves as Shangaanas from the Giyani area in South Africa.

Machazian men consequently went to considerable lengths to minimize the possibilities for Machazian wives to join them in South Africa. Some men refused to respond to letters from spouses who requested assistance that would allow them to join their husbands in South Africa, sometimes under the pretext that they had never received these letters in the first place. Others provided dubious and misleading reasons why spouses should not come to South Africa, or else promised what eventually became indefinitely delayed decisions—a more passive and yet nevertheless effective form of preventing women from coming to South Africa: ‘A: “Initially I wrote back (to his wife in the UNHCR camp) that it was not possible for her to come here because I was living in a hostel and women were not allowed. After I bought this house I continued to say I was living in the hostel so she would not come.”’

Some exceptional women managed to make their way to South Africa despite the lacking or misleading information and resistance from husbands, by availing themselves of the services of *boomuchas*—a ‘profession’ that experienced spectacular growth during the war. *Hoomuchas* were paid professionals who specialized in smuggling people, messages, and sometimes things back and forth across international borders for a fee. Sometimes they would be paid by a Machazian in South Africa to bring back a specific family member to South Africa—almost always a male relative. However, at times these *boomuchas* would drum up business in the UNHCR camps, or among self-settled Machazians in Zimbabwe or Mozambique, by claiming to know

where a person's family members were in South Africa (sometimes truthfully and sometimes not) and offering for a fee to take the person back to that family member even if the relative in South Africa had not solicited this service. These cases are very few but they are illustrative because of the response that they sometimes produced. In some cases wives were actually sent back by their husbands to the camps in Zimbabwe and in two interview cases actually back into the war-zone in Mozambique itself!

Thus the gendered demographic distribution among residents from Machaze largely resulted from the way in which men manipulated information and guarded historically gendered 'experience capital' (related to migration) in order to further their own agendas. 'Gender politics' thus clearly played a significant role, entirely apart from the macro-political agenda of the war, in shaping the organization of Machazian wartime migration.

## PROBLEMATIZING MACHAZIAN 'RETURN' MIGRATION

### The humanitarian community's understanding of 'return' migration

In 1993–5 the UNHCR in conjunction with various humanitarian relief and assistance organizations carried out in Mozambique what has been widely regarded as one of its most successful repatriation efforts ever. Over 1.6 million Mozambican refugees were estimated to have returned either spontaneously or through the organized efforts of the humanitarian community, from Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa. UNHCR estimated that it had assisted in the organized return of approximately 320,000 people (UNHCR 1995*a*).

The repatriation effort was generally assessed as a successful realization of the humanitarian community's estimation, planning, and implementation efforts in all of these countries ... with the notable exception of the repatriation from South Africa. The repatriation of Mozambicans from South Africa was considered to be a rather frustrating case in which results fell far short of expectations. UNHCR originally estimated that over 200,000 (of an estimated total of 250,000) self-settled Mozambicans in South Africa would return during 1994–5. However, only a fraction of the total number of returnees expected (31,589 to be exact) ever actually returned, at least with the assistance of official humanitarian efforts (UNHCR 1996).

It was not only the failure of totals to materialize that plagued the South African repatriation operation. Throughout 1994 and into 1995 the problem of distinguishing between 'economic' migrants and 'genuine refugees' came to be seen as one of the other major problems faced by UNHCR in the organization of Mozambican return from South Africa. Numerous reports surfaced throughout 1994, noting that the vast majority of those Mozambicans whose return was being assisted by UNHCR and its implementing partners were in fact single males. These single males were suspected of being 'labour migrants', rather than 'genuine refugees', who were taking advantage of the opportunity for a free trip home for themselves and for their luggage. In two convoys from South Africa in November of 1994, consisting of a combined total of 183 returnees, 78.6 per cent of all returnees were single males (UNHCR 1994*d*)!

Furthermore, the returnee population from South Africa was attempting to bring back a volume of luggage far in excess of that of the other Mozambican refugee populations being assisted by UNHCR, such as those returning from the camps in Zimbabwe. In a UNHCR mission report to South Africa dated 17 January 1994 the following point was made:

There was considerable discussion on how to deal with ‘economic migrants’ compared to the more deserving ‘refugees’ in South Africa. It was suggested that these two groups can be separated based on their stated reason for leaving, what they did in the RSA, and where they lived in the RSA. It seems unlikely that anyone will say they went to the RSA for work once the benefits of being a ‘refugee’ are known. (UNHCR 1994*a*)

Throughout 1994 and into 1995, UNHCR, its implementing partners, and its Mozambican counterpart Nucleo de Apoio ao Refugiado (NAR) continuously attempted to seek ways to distinguish between ‘economic’ migrants and ‘genuine refugees’ in order to focus assistance on the latter. These efforts generally met with limited success. It was believed that most of these economic migrants returned to South Africa after receiving transportation for their baggage, and that often this was a procedure repeated by the same individuals more than once. This so-called ‘revolving-door syndrome’ was seen as challenging UNHCR's attempt to channel its assistance to those who were regarded as ‘really needing it’. This problem also became a concern which increasingly implicated the UNHCR's own public image in the media. In late 1994 the following observations were made in a UNHCR–RSA report on Migrant Labour and the UNHCR Repatriation Operation (RSA/MOZ):

measures to tackle the revolving door syndrome are being taken ... However, and despite our best efforts, it has become evident during the last few months, that the revolving door is close to spinning! Our own observations at the transit facilities, through field-level contact with the local ‘network’ of community knowledge and from comments and questions directed to us by organizations, agencies and general observers, suggest that the number of single young males traveling with convoys across the border has increased significantly. (UNHCR 1994*b*)

A barrage of reports and assessments ultimately produced an array of different and sometimes contradictory answers and explanations for the unexpected problems and unfulfilled expectations regarding Mozambican repatriation from South Africa. These explanations tended to focus on three different types of factors—*organizational*, *economic*, and *political*.

In one mid-1995 UNHCR–RSA report on ‘lessons learnt’ the general explanation for the low rates of return was listed as the ‘much stronger socio-economic situation in South Africa. Why leave a country where there are plenty of job opportunities, health care and schools?’ Secondary issues of importance were interrelated political and organizational ones, namely: the fact that UNHCR had been denied a presence in South Africa until 1991 and had only created a field presence in refugee areas as late as 1994, and the weakness and inexperience of (South African-based) implementing partners. Nevertheless, and in a somewhat contradictory vein, the same report also commented that ‘the operation contained strong elements of information campaign and well-functioning logistics structure, in reality door-to-door service...’ (UNHCR 1995*c*).

Another report prepared on the basis of informal fieldwork by a UNHCR official in South Africa in mid-1994 concluded that the low rate of Mozambican participation in UNHCR repatriation efforts was in large part a matter of timing. Mozambicans were reported as struggling, under the adversity of their illegal status, to earn enough in South Africa in order to be able to re-establish their homesteads when they finally did return to Mozambique. Those who returned before being 'fully prepared' in terms of having sufficient resources for fully re-establishing their homesteads reportedly returned to South Africa highly discouraged. These individuals in turn influenced others to delay or forgo their own plans to return. The same report listed other reasons for non-return as uncertainty over the political climate, fear of corruption and landmines, and the extreme degree of trauma that some had suffered in Mozambique leading them to desire a total cut-off with their past (Rodgers 1994).

Other reports produced other explanations such as a lack of knowledge about how to go about registering for repatriation assistance or even of the existence of these services (UNHCR 1994*d*). One report stated that South African farmers and industries had organized misinformation campaigns about the state of political and economic affairs back in order to protect their source of inexpensive Mozambican labour (UNHCR 1994*e*). These reports called for better public education and information. However only a few months later (February 1995) another mission dismissed this factor as irrelevant to the low rate of Mozambican participation in organized return from South Africa, stating that:

The refugee communities are 100% fully aware of the end date for the repatriation operation ... it was interesting to note that throughout the whole mission *none of the old reasons (emphasis in the original)* (political uncertainty in Mozambique, physical security, mines, banditry, food security, elections in the RSA and in Mozambique, the planting season and harvest etc. etc.) were presented by the refugees as to why they couldn't return to their places of origin. (UNHCR 1995*b*)

The overall degree of confusion and uncertainty over 'what went wrong' in the South African repatriation effort was perhaps most revealingly articulated in the final report on the Reintegration Program's Evaluation Mission for Mozambique's Southern region:

The operation in the South was geared for an expected high number of refugees returning from South Africa. This did not happen. However, the reasons for the 'no show' of an estimated 200,000 plus Mozambicans expected to return from the RSA have been well documented and debated long into the night! The question that comes out in the end is, how did the UNHCR get its estimates so wrong? Perhaps not a question for this evaluation team? (UNHCR 1996)

The one striking commonality in all of the explanations of why refugees refused to return was the degree to which kinetic assumptions implicitly informed their analysis. All of the factors that were analysed—organizational, political, and economic—were treated as aspects of the environment, which were seen as acting *upon* refugees. Expectations that refugees would return to Mozambique from South Africa after the war were generated from an analysis of changes in the political climate and the

negotiation of a military settlement. When people did not 'react' to 'peace' by returning as expected explanations were sought in other macro-environmental differences such as those in the organizational structure of intervening institutions, or the larger economic settings within which migration took place.

There was never, however, any examination of differences that in a heuristic sense might be seen as 'internal' to the refugees themselves—for example, those aspects of social organization that might differentiate these refugees from others and affect their movement choices. Culturally defined differences in gender relations, socio-economic organization and the division of labour, in household and co-residence structure, and the ways in which interrelationships among these factors might inform *the agency* of these particular refugees—all remained virtually unexamined. Moreover, no investigation was made of whether transformations in pre-war baselines of social and economic organization might have played a role in shaping patterns of return.

The humanitarian community's framing of the very problem of 'return' itself was structured by assumptions that critically misled their analysis, at least as it applied to the Machazian population. In particular the options of 'return' and 'non-return' were implicitly structured as mutually exclusive options. This understanding informed their concern with the 'revolving door' syndrome and their attempts to define 'refugees' and 'economic migrants' as separate categories.

## Machazian men's understandings of 'return'

The ideas about 'return' to Mozambique that shaped the behaviour of most Machazian men stood in stark contrast to the understandings that shaped the humanitarian relief community's efforts. To most Machazian men living in the peri-urban townships in South Africa, returning to Machaze was generally not seen as an option that was as mutually exclusive as the option of maintaining a household in South Africa.

The cash-dependence and high cost-of-living in the South African townships continued to make the possibility of an eventual option of re-establishment in Mozambique well-worth preserving. A concern with rising violence in the townships throughout the 1980s, and after 1990, the increased targeting of foreigners in township crime, heightened their interest in re-establishing Mozambican residential options. Moreover, the illegality of their status in South Africa made Machazian men vulnerable to crime, given that it was known that they would not report it to authorities. It also made them vulnerable to extortion on the part of corrupt officials.

Yet the very possibility of men pursuing their life strategies in Machaze had been premised for decades on the possibility of working in South Africa. The wartime devastation of Mozambique and these men's continuing uncertainties about the post-war political situation in the country only reinforced the importance of links to economic options in South Africa after the war. However, in contrast to the time period preceding the war, many of these men no longer saw South Africa as, necessarily, merely a place of employment, nor Machaze as the only place in which to constitute families and long term or even permanent forms of residence. For

Machazian men South Africa had become a location in which to potentially pursue a 'total social life' that paralleled and complemented, rather than simply contributed to, their social lives back in Machaze.

The most important factor in reconfiguring Machazian men's understandings of the meaning of 'return' was the wartime emergence of strategies of 'transnational polygyny' (Lubkemann 2000*c*). In a 1997 survey of over 200 Machazian men engaged in non-mine employment and resident in the South African townships, 23 per cent were involved in conjugal relations only in Mozambique, 26 per cent were involved in conjugal relations only in South Africa, *while 37 per cent were involved in conjugal relations in both South Africa and Mozambique*. Another 2 per cent were involved in conjugal relations in three countries (South Africa, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe) (Lubkemann 2000*a*, 448–9).

The transnationalization of polygynous marriage has radically transformed the meaning of marriage for Machazian men (and women).<sup>7</sup> Pre-war polygynous marriage was used by men to ensure the quality and success of those aspects of their life strategies that had been exclusively carried out in Machaze. These aspects included their concerns with reproduction, labour, comfort, and security in old age and eventual retirement, and the struggle with other men for social status in the local community. In this sense 'marriage' (polygynous or otherwise) dealt with men's 'Machaze-specific' problems.

Transnationalized polygyny after the war was used by men to ensure that all aspects of their life strategies, including those that they used to pursue exclusively in Machaze, could also be pursued in South Africa. By maintaining households in both South Africa and in Mozambique men engaged in transnational polygyny diversified the risks to their life strategies.

In one extreme case one Machazian man whom I interviewed in 1996 had four wives living in three different countries. Two of his wives lived in Machaze, another lived in South Africa, and a fourth one lived in Zimbabwe. In Machaze his wives each tended *maachambas* and his son engaged in trading activity with products, which he brought or occasionally sent back from South Africa. He himself did odd jobs on occasion for an international humanitarian organization that was active in Machaze district after the war. In Zimbabwe another wife (originally from Machaze) traded in the market and lived with another son who was an artisan selling his stone carvings to tourists. In South Africa, he shared his house with a Xhosa woman who had never been to Mozambique and who at the time was working as a part-time domestic worker. Two of his sons also lived in South Africa, the younger one with him tending to his small 'tuck shop' (one room convenience store). Another wife who had lived in yet another location, the city of Chimoio in Mozambique, had died the previous year!

Men such as this one, used transnational polygyny to ensure that their entire life-course strategies were not necessarily vulnerable to any one national context's political or economic instability. The meaning of polygyny and of the institution of marriage had thus changed in a significant way for men, becoming the central and indispensable form of relationship that enabled their new risk-diversification strategies.

Such men have reconfigured their lives in ways that are premised on the idea that ‘total social lives’ in Machaze and in South Africa are *not* mutually exclusive options. To ‘return’ to Machaze for these men is not necessarily (or even likely) a matter of ‘leaving’ South Africa, even in the same way that it was for Machazian men prior to the war. One interviewee explained the difference in his own perspectives prior to and following the war in this manner:

S: ‘Before the war I had two stores here (in South Africa) but I always was thinking of going back to Machaze ... I would have taken my (South African) wife with me or else she would have stayed if she refused to come when I went ... Now I must also go back (to Machaze) because that is my place of origin ... I want to set up a tuck shop there. I will still have this tuck shop and house here (in South Africa) and must come back also because I must collect my pension (myself) ... In Machaze food and firewood are free. (But) my children (two sons and a daughter) are also here and they are married here and so I must have a house here too and this (South African) wife who must stay here.’

The terms in which these men conceived of and enacted their own lives thus defied the hegemonic pretensions of an international political system that privileges the idea that citizens ‘belong’ to one and only one nation state and which strives to map this exclusivity onto the residence, social lives, legal status, and often the economic activity of populations. Clearly, from the perspective of those Machazian men involved in transnationally polygynous unions, the assumptions of the humanitarian community and of regional national governments that posit ‘return’ and ‘non-return’ as mutually exclusive options, did not capture the reality to which they aspired. Machazian men were highly resistant to the imposition of state-level notions of ‘return’ which threatened to ‘displace’ them from their own pretended transnational life-strategies. This resistance was evidenced in the low rate of participation in official UNHCR return efforts, in the preference for self-organized return beyond the pale of official scrutiny, and in the ‘revolving door syndrome’ as men continuously crossed back into South Africa (Lubkemann 2000*c*).

By ignoring the culturally informed agency of Machazian men and privileging macro-political factors in their explanations of migration behaviour, kinetic approaches implicitly reproduce the hegemonic socio-political pretensions of the international state system in their very terms of analysis and identification of the object of study. Consequently analysis comes to be structured in terms of a series of a priori mutually exclusive dichotomies such as ‘internally displaced’/‘refugee’ (similar to ‘internal’/‘international’ migration); ‘economic migrant’/‘refugee’ (‘voluntary’/‘involuntary’ migration) and ‘returnee’/‘stayee’. Ranger's deconstruction of the implications embedded in one of these dichotomies is more broadly generalizable to all of them:

The concept of ‘repatriation’ derives from the idea of a ‘patria’ and this in turn implies that an individual's primary identity, rights and obligations derive from the membership of a ‘nation’. The nation encapsulates ‘home’ in terms of language, culture, rights to citizenship and land. Yet this is precisely what is at stake in many countries which generate refugees and returnees ... Even where the idea of return to one's ‘country’ is a national as well as a local sentiment, that

idea co-exists and sometimes conflicts with many other senses of identity and entitlement ... Any study of return needs, therefore, to look closely at such multiple ideas of identity and entitlement. (Ranger 1994: 289)

While these dichotomies reflect and reproduce the pretensions of a global system based on the 'hegemony of the state' (Young 1994) they clearly fail to represent the understandings to which migrants themselves are often primarily responsive in shaping their own behaviour as both others (Hansen 1982, 1992; Harrell-Bond 1986; Daley 1991; Allen and Turton 1996; Bascom 1996, 1998; Indra 1999) and this analysis show. These categorizations are critical ones in determining how displaced people are engaged by larger state and international-level political actors. Such definitions affect how larger political power is formulated and exercised through policies that determine: who receives assistance or conversely is targeted for coercive measures; the legality of resettlement status; the ascription of civil and even human rights; and the division and assignment of spheres of governmental and civil responsibility and of non-involvement.

Demographers must be attentive to how these systems of classification generally reflect and reproduce the hegemonic pretensions of an international system based on the idea of the state as the 'natural' social entity, rather than the social or economic realities which forced migrants perceive they must respond to. Inasmuch as demographic processes are the result of socially and culturally situated challenges to these pretensions, demographers should reassess their use of analytical categories that derive from and reinforce them. Clearly, the a priori application of these dichotomies ultimately fails to adequately account for the empirically observed patterns of behaviour observed on the ground.

## DEVELOPING 'AGENCY-RICH' APPROACHES TO ANALYSING CRISIS MIGRATION

In order to understand the way in which so-called forced-migration decisions are made analysis must attempt to 'situate' migration (Greenhalgh 1995). Migration must be situated in a first sense that refers to its position as *a particular option among an array of other options* for responding to a complex and multidimensional environment as experienced by culturally and socially differentiated actors. Thus understanding the meaning and causes of wartime migration as an option also requires that it be studied relative to its alternatives, *including therefore the study of non-migration options*. It thus proposes that the study of migration in crisis contexts must include the investigation of non-migrants and thus of a larger population than that which have been typically studied in the analysis of so-called forced migration.

The array of options perceived and weighed by actors must be examined in light of the social roles and cultural understandings *of the varied social categories of actors* involved in making these decisions. Rather than assuming that the actors involved in decision-making perceive no other options other than migration this alternative



approach empirically investigates which options they do perceive and the cultural terms in which such understandings are cast.

In this approach the analytical focus shifts from how the environment constrains actor volition ('forced' migration) to how actor agency is exercised in an environment of changing qualities and characteristics. Rather than understanding violence as having uniform characteristics for all of those who are exposed to it, an understanding of the environment's 'quality', and thus by extension of a sense of crisis itself is assumed to be defined in socially specific ways. What movement or non-movement itself implies in terms of the life strategies and strategies for engaging in multiple forms of social struggle is differentiated among categories as social actors. As the Machazian case demonstrates women may perceive aspects of the environment as deteriorating while men perceive them as stable or as rendering positive new opportunities. Non-migration may be more attractive to those with higher socio-economic status or local political power, while the opposite may be true of those with lower socio-economic status. Furthermore the multidimensionality of life strategies and of social roles implies that an individual's own interests may be contradictory and ambiguous. Migration and non-migration decisions must be analysed as the result of culturally and socially situated actors' attempts to negotiate, use, and react to forces impinging on their lives with categories meaningful to them in formulating action. It is thus necessary to examine the whole array of concerns of socially specific categories of actors and their interrelationships.

Migration must also be understood as 'situated' in a second sense—as implicated in a specific array of social struggles that are likely to differ immensely from context to context. As this case study shows, at an individual level, migration may serve simultaneously as a tactic employed in struggles against state authority, for subsistence, in intergenerational contests for power within kinship networks, and in struggles over the rights and responsibilities that different marriage partners have towards each other.

While highlighting the issue of power differences in determining outcomes (as Richmond and others have pointed out, it is crucial in the analysis of 'forced migration'), this re-formulation relocates the analytical place where power differences are analysed. It examines power as a matter of difference *between agents* in their ability to influence the effects of their actions and others' reactions on interactional outcomes, rather than as a matter of difference *within individuals* in the degree to which they exercise their own will in making choices.

At a structural level migration's significance must be examined in light of an understanding of the full array of processes of social contestation in which it is implicated within a society. Migration's historical development as a strategy used in multiple forms of social and political struggle shaped the changing structure and meanings of migration itself in Machaze in critical ways throughout the century. It is only by understanding migration's implication in this full array of social struggles, that the factors that shaped wartime migration decision-making and produced gendered patterns of demographic redistribution can be accurately assessed. Such an approach demands a historical perspective that analyses the course of social process

prior to the migratory and non-migratory processes of most specific interest. It thus challenges the deployment of frameworks that delimit the temporal parameters of analysis in terms of a 'refugee cycle'—of flight, various stages of resettlement, and finally adaptation (Stein 1981). Finally, it suggests that rather than being treated as an abnormality in the course of normal social process (as structural–functionalist anthropology in southern Africa was meant to do) crisis itself should be reinserted into the broader study of social process (Ranger 1994; Bascom 1998).

## CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO MIGRATION THEORY

Richmond's prescription for theories of international migration can be applied more broadly to what all migration analysis should be capable of addressing:

theories of international migration (including refugees) should be capable of explaining the scale, direction and composition of population movements that cross state boundaries, the factors which determine the decision to move and the choice of destination, the characteristic modes of integration in the receiving country and the eventual outcome, including remigration and return movement. (Richmond 1988: 7)

In those 'theories' that aim to be applicable to a wide variety of migration processes there is a tendency to focus on factors of analysis that are deemed to be non-context specific. The objective of theory building in this mode is to identify universally applicable variables. Explanations are sought by drawing comparisons and looking for differences in factors that are assumed to operate under structurally similar principles and terms regardless of context—such as the macro-political or economic factors, or the organizational structure and procedures of humanitarian organizations or other international institutions.

Once the analyst is familiar with the terms of analysis and relevant principles by which such factors are assumed by the theory to universally operate, he or she knows to and can selectively focus on identifying these, and only these, aspects of any particular context in constructing an explanation, while disregarding the rest of that context as irrelevant 'noise'. In practice, this type of analysis involves approaching any specific context or problem with a set of pre-established variables that are assumed to be applicable to the problem at hand (as to any other problem of the same order). In other words the analyst already assumes that he or she knows which variables are relevant.

By contrast I argue that migration must be studied as a process situated in culturally specific forms of social struggle. An approach that emphasizes the need to consider socio-cultural factors, suggests that it in some sense it is impossible to know a priori all the relevant variables that matter in shaping behaviour. The terms of some of those variables must be defined and understood at a much more context-specific level since they apply only in that context itself. An approach that emphasizes the need to consider socio-cultural factors, suggests that it in some sense it is impossible to know a priori all the relevant variables that matter in shaping behaviour. In fact

the assumption that guides such an approach is that the researcher's own social and cultural difference precludes him or her from knowing to a large extent what all the variables that will be relevant even are—that is, he or she does not even know what he or she does not know. The terms of some of those variables (transnational polygyny, *uloi*, etc.) must be identified and understood at a much more context-specific level since they apply only in that context itself. By implication I am suggesting that universal theories of migration processes are not really possible—since those processes, and thus the ‘work’ migration is doing, differs in significant ways from case to case (Bjeren 1997: 221).

The development of an approach that thoroughly integrates cultural specificity into the analysis of forced migration suggests that we devise a ‘theory of method’ rather than a theory of universally applicable variables. In such an approach, the investigation of the specific socio-cultural configurations in any given context becomes part of the standard operating procedures for analysis. What therefore becomes standardized is a methodological approach used to identify relevant variables, rather than merely a set of pre-defined variables themselves.

At the broadest level the prescription for such an approach involves the identification and analysis of social struggles as the central focus in what must be more than simply a study of migration patterns or movement decision-making, but must in fact be a study of social process. It prescribes the empirical identification and privileging in analysis of ‘key social struggles’ in specific contexts. ‘Key social struggles’ are those that have historically served as the critical lines for defining the way in which power is distributed and social differentiation is culturally constituted in specific contexts of social interaction.

This approach thus appropriates and extends Geertz's (1973) notion of ‘thick description’ by examining how symbols and practices are given meaning not only by how they are suspended in webs of other symbols, but also how they are implicated in power configurations and contestations over power. In identifying the range of key social struggles and their structural interrelationships, the cultural terms of their expression, and the historical genealogies of their production and transformation, this approach delineates the field of power relations in which migration is situated as a strategy for engagement.

Migration itself is investigated primarily as a strategy for engaging in these social struggles as they occur in a particular power field. The analytical focus is thus on migration not as an ‘end’ but as a ‘means’. Too often ‘demographic behaviour’ is studied as if it were an end in and of itself in what is an inaccurate projection of a discipline's categories onto the interests of actual subjects. Social scientists must thus identify the intentions of actors in order to avoid conflating disciplinary focus with actor intentionality. People migrate in order to accomplish other goals. They do not move in order to migrate, much less be tallied in the migration column of a social scientists study. Movement is ultimately a ‘side-effect’ of, or ‘means’ to, the other culturally defined projects of socially specific agents.

Migration is thus best conceptualized as a means to engage in other projects, thus suggesting that those projects themselves should be the central focus for research and

analysis. In this sense there is no ‘demographic’ behaviour in the sense of behaviour directed solely at those aspects that interest demographers (anymore than there is ‘anthropological’ or ‘cultural’ behaviour in this same sense that behaviour is generally not undertaken with the goal of actually constituting culture).

A ‘theory of method’ in this vein is also critically reflexive, in that it presumes that the methods, concepts, and theories that are being used must be constantly subject to critical scrutiny. It assumes that they are not only vulnerable to continuous reinterpretation and revision but *should* also suffer such revision as new cultural insights emerge and more social differentiation is identified. It is suspicious if there are no surprises when cultural difference is investigated. Such theoretical reflexivity should operate at all levels of analysis ranging from how data is collected, to how it is subject to reinterpretation after collection, to the constant reconsideration of our categories and larger theoretical concepts.

## Notes

1. In privileging macro-political processes these analyses arguably admit a narrow ‘political’ basis for migrant agency as relevant to the analysis of migratory patterns and outcomes. Yet this agency only influences migratory outcomes indirectly, since it is exercised with the intention of engaging in macro-political contests rather than with the intent of directing migration *per se*. The decision to migrate is not made as a ‘political act’ (i.e. in order to, and as a way to, support one political faction or the other) but only as a result of a prior political act (supporting one faction or another) in which migration was not directly a considered objective.
2. Richmond explicitly draws on the concept of ‘agency’ used by Anthony Giddens. According to Giddens, ‘Agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place (which is why agency implies power)’ (1984: 96). He argues that ‘agency refers to “doing” ’ whether with intended or unintended consequences (1984: 97), arguing that agency thus encompasses what an actor does in the sense of the fact that ‘what happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened’ (1984: 96). Frankly, this definition does not seem to separate ‘agency’ from ‘action’ itself, or even at times in his argument, from ‘outcomes’. A notion of ‘agency’ that distinguishes it from ‘action’ is better served by two of the meanings that Sciulli (1986) has identified as characterizing Parson's notion of ‘voluntaristic action’, namely: ‘the capacity to make choices despite constraints; and a capacity for self-initiated action whether or not this capacity is realized’.
3. The research on which this study is based was conducted with people all of whom originally came from Machaze district prior to the war. Some of those interviewed (1996–7) had remained in the district or returned to it after the war. I also interviewed others who had resettled the town of Chimoio in Mozambique, and in two township areas south of Johannesburg in South Africa. The methods employed in researching these questions included informal interviews and forms of participant observation along with extensive oral life-history interviews, life-history matrix and other forms of surveys, and review of quarterly and annual historical documentation (primarily from colonial administration) on a district level dating back to 1898 (Lubkemann 2000*a*).

4. The exact gender distribution of the wartime population is difficult to determine because of the difficulty of reconstructing a population dispersed and decimated by over a decade of war. However, several sources of independent evidence all establish that the gender difference in population distribution was at the very least dramatic. The 1980 census which took place in Machaze as the war was underway (and was actually interrupted by it) verified a female to male ration in the district of 1.6 : 1 (GTZ 1995). A 1993 survey of the population in several communal villages counted only 2,087 men in the 16–64 age group, with almost twice as many women (3,839) (GTZ 1993). In my own 1997 survey of over 200 Machazian household in South Africa I found that only fewer than 5% had a Machazian wife present (Lubkemann 2000a: 432). Prior to the unfortunate disposal of most records at the UNHCR district office at the time of the organization's departure, I was able to obtain a sample of these records for over 5,000 different returnees, from several different convoys. For purposes of this chapter I drew on a subsample of 123 households from the official UNHCR return convoys from Tongogara to Machaze in early 1996. More could easily be examined at a later date. In my subsample I found that a total of forty-six households were classified as female-headed along with six solo females—which if counted together comprise 42% of the total returnee households in these convoys. Two other studies, one conducted in Tongogara camp (of which Machazians were only a part of the total camp population) (Tandai 1992) and one in Machaze itself (CARE 1994) both verified high levels of female-headed households (Tandai—20%; CARE—30%). In the CARE study only 2% of households that were not female-headed had no adult women in the household.
5. It is important to note that the Mozambican civil war spanned nearly a decade and a half. It would be naïve to assume that change in 'everyday' social process was suspended or stood still during such a long time period. Despite the fact that most major displacement-producing civil wars in Africa have persisted for at least this long (Angola, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Rwanda, and Eritrea), most analysis of forced migration still tends to conceptualize displacement as a momentary 'event' that is a disruption in the normal course of life rather than as a long term and sadly enough, even trans-generational process 'process'.
6. It is important to point out that this survey highlights the situation in 1997 and not necessarily throughout the 1980s when the war was in full swing.
7. Primarily due to space limitations I have focused in this chapter on men's life strategies. In both my dissertation and elsewhere (Lubkemann 2000a, 2002) I deal with Machazian women's strategies at length. Ultimately both migration organization during the war and refashioned marital roles and relations must be analysed as the outcome of negotiations between and involving *both* men and women. Machazian women have by no means remained passive towards the transnationalization of polygyny given the generally negative implications for their own social and economic status that this development has implied. Furthermore, women have also exploited opportunities presented by wartime circumstances to innovate in the development of social relations in ways that represent bids to enhance their own position relative to men and spouses.

## References

- Allen, T. and Turton, D. (1996). 'Introduction', in T. Allen (ed.), *In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight, and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp. 1–22.
- Bascom, J. (1998). *Losing Place: Refugees and Rural Transformations in East Africa*. New York: Berghahn.

- (1996). 'Reconstituting households and reconstituting home areas', in T. Allen (ed.), *In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight, and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp. 66–79.
- Berry, S. (1993). *No Condition is Permanent*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bjeren, G. (1997). 'Gender and reproduction' in T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas and T. Faist (eds.), *International Migration, Immobility and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives*. New York: Berg Press.
- Black, R. and Robinson, V. (eds.) (1993). *Geography and Refugees: Patterns and Processes of Change*. New York: Bellhaven Press.
- Bozzoli, B. (1991a). *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa 1900–1983*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- (1991b). 'The meaning of informal work: some women's stories', in C. Rogerson and E. Preston-Whyte (eds.), *South Africa's Informal Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 15–33.
- CARE (1994). *Baseline Nutritional Survey-Machaze District (March, 1994)*. Maputo, Mozambique: CARE.
- Colson, E. (1971). *The Social Consequences of Resettlement*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press.
- (1999). 'Gendering those uprooted by development', in D. Indra (ed.), *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 23–39.
- Crush, J., Jeeves, A., and Yudelman, D. (1991). *South Africa's Labor Empire: A History of Black Migrancy to the Gold Mines*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Daley, P. (1991). 'Gender, displacement and social reproduction: settling Burundi refugees in Western Tanzania', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 4(3): 248–66.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Fischer, P., Martin, R., and Straubhaar, T. (1997). 'Should I stay or should I go?', in T. Hammar, G. Brochmann, K. Tamas, and T. Faist (eds.), *International Migration, Immobility and Development*. New York: Berg, pp. 49–90.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilad, L. (1999). 'The problem of gender-related persecution: a challenge of international protection', in D. Indra (ed.), *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 334–42.
- Giles, W. (1999). 'Gendered violence in war: reflections on transnationalist and comparative frameworks in militarized conflict zones', in D. Indra (ed.), *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 83–93.
- Greenhalgh, S. (1995). 'Anthropology and fertility: culture, history, gender, and power in reproductive life', in S. Greenhalgh (ed.), *Situating Fertility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- GTZ (1993). *Projecto de Reintegracao, Reassentamento e Reconstrucao do Distrito de Mossurize*. Chimoio, Mozambique: GTZ-MAARP.
- (1995). *Manica Province, Mozambique: Population Structures and Migration: Modern Development Trends*. Osnabruck, Germany: GTZ.
- (1996). *Conflict Driven Migration, Post-Conflict Reintegration, and Rehabilitation 1984–1996*. Chimoio, Mozambique: GTZ-MAARP.
- Hansen, A. (1982). 'Self-settled rural refugees in Africa: the case of Angolans in Zambian villages', in A. Hansen and A. Oliver-Smith (eds.), *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement*. Boulder CO: Westview Press, pp. 13–36.

- Hansen, A. (1992). 'The long-term consequences of two African refugee resettlement strategies', in M. Hopkins and N. Donnelly (eds.), *Selected Papers on Refugee Issues II*. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association, Arlington, VA.
- Harrell-Bond, B. (1986). *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Indra, D. (1999). "'Not a room of one's own' engendering forced migration knowledge and practice', in D. Indra (ed.), *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 1–22
- Kertzer, D. (1997). 'The proper role of culture in demographic explanation', in G. Jones, M. Douglas, C. Caldwell, and M. D'Souza (eds.), *The Continuing Demographic Transition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Koenig, D. (1995). 'Women and resettlement', in R. Gallin, A. Ferguson, and J. Harper (eds.), *The Woman and International Development Annual*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 21–9.
- Krufeld, R. M. (1994). 'Buddhism, maintenance, and change: reinterpreting gender in a Lao refugee community', in R. M. Krufeld and L. A. Camino (eds.), *Reconstructing Lives, Recapturing Meaning: Refugee Identity, Gender, and Culture Change*. Basel, Switzerland: Gordon and Breach Publishers, pp. 97–128.
- Kunz, E. (1973). 'The refugee in flight: kinetic models and forms of displacement', *International Migration Review*, 7: 125–46.
- (1981). 'Exile and resettlement: refugee theory', *International Migration Review*, 15: 42–51.
- Lubkemann, S. (2000a). *Situating Wartime Migration in Central Mozambique: Gendered Social Struggle and the Transnationalization of Polygyny*. Ph.D. Dissertation for the Brown University Department of Anthropology, Providence, RI.
- (2000b). 'Other motives, other struggles: gender politics and the shaping of wartime migration in Mozambique', in E. Godziak and D. J. Shandy (eds.), *Rethinking Refuge and Displacement: Selected Papers on Refugees and Immigrants*, Vol. VIII, 2000. Arlington, VA: American Anthropological Association, pp. 343–68.
- (2000c). 'The transformation of transnationality among Mozambican migrants in South Africa', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 34(1): 41–63.
- (2002). 'Where to be an ancestor? Reconstituting socio-spiritual worlds and post-conflict settlement decision-making among displaced Mozambicans', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 15(2): 89–212.
- Malkki, L. (1995). *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Matlou, P. (1999). 'Upsetting the cart: forced migration and gender issues, the African experience', in D. Indra (ed.), *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 128–45.
- McSpadden, M. A. (1999). 'Negotiating masculinity in the reconstruction of social place: Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in the United States and Sweden', in D. Indra (ed.), *Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice*. New York: Berghahn, pp. 242–60.
- Moussa, H. (1993). *Storm and Sanctuary: The Journey of Ethiopian and Eritrean Women Refugees*. Dundas, Ontario: Artemis Press.
- and McSpadden, A. (1996). 'Returning home? the decision-making processes of Eritrean women and men', in H. Moussa Giles and Van Esterlik (eds.), *Development and Diaspora: Gender and the Refugee Experience*. Dundas, Ontario: Artemis Press.
- Oliver-Smith, A. and Hansen A. (1982). 'Involuntary migration and resettlement: causes and contexts', in A. Hansen and A. Oliver-Smith (eds.), *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 1–12.

- Preston-Whyte, E. (1991). 'Invisible workers: domestic service and the informal economy', in C. Rogerson and E. Preston-Whyte (eds.), *South Africa's Informal Economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 34–53.
- Ranger, T. (1994). 'Studying repatriation as part of African social history', in T. Allen and H. Morsink (eds.), *When Refugees Go Home*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Richmond, A. (1988). 'Sociological theories of international migration: the case of refugees', *Current Sociology*, 36(2): 7–26.
- (1994). *Global Apartheid*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rodgers, G. (1994). 'Mozambican refugees' attitudes to repatriation from South Africa', Nelspruit, South Africa: UNHCR.
- Rogge, J. (ed.) (1987). *Refugees: A Third World Dilemma*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Schlemmer, L. and Moller, V. (1985). 'Constraint, stress and reaction: the responses of migrant contract workers to their situation', in H. Gilomee and L. Schlemmer (eds.), *Up Against The Fences*. New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 167–92.
- Scott, J. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sciulli, D. (1986). 'Voluntaristic action as a distinct concept: theoretical foundations of societal constitutionalism', *American Sociological Review*, 51(6): 743–66.
- Scudder, T. and Colson, E. (1982). 'From welfare to development: a conceptual framework for the analysis of dislocated people', in A. Hansen and A. Oliver-Smith (eds.), *Involuntary Migration and Resettlement*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 267–87.
- Smit, P. (1985). 'The process of black urbanization', in H. Gilomee and L. Schlemmer (eds.), *Up Against The Fences*. New York: St Martin's Press, pp. 114–25.
- Sommers, M. (2001). *Fear in Bongoland: Burundi Refugees in Urban Tanzania*. New York: Berghaha Books.
- Stein, B. (1981). 'The refugee experience: defining the parameters of a field of study', *International Migration Review*, 15(1): 320–30.
- Tandai, S. (1992). *Mozambican Refugees: Preparing for Repatriation*. Harare, Zimbabwe: CIES/School of Social Work.
- UNHCR (1994a). *Mission Report to RSA (Logistics Officer-Maputo), January 17, 1994*. Maputo, Mozambique: UNHCR.
- (1994b). *Migrant Labour and the UNHCR Repatriation Operation (RSA/MOZ), December 1994*. Giyani, South Africa: UNHCR.
- (1994c). *File Note—Economic Migrants and the RSA Repatriation Operation, November 25, 1994*. Giyani, South Africa: UNHCR.
- (1994d). *Report on Mission to South Africa, March 3, 1994*. Maputo, Mozambique: UNHCR Regional Program Office for Women and Children.
- (1994e). *Report on UNHCR Meeting in Nelspruit, South Africa, May 27, 1994*. Maputo, Mozambique: UNHCR.
- (1995a). *Mozambique: Repatriation and Reintegration of Mozambican Refugees—Progress Report, June 8, 1995*. Maputo, Mozambique: UNHCR.
- (1995b). *Mission Report—Joint NAR/UNHCR/Moz. Gov't Mission to RSA, February 14, 1995*. Maputo, Mozambique: UNHCR.
- (1995c). *Note for the File: Lessons Learnt—Voluntary Repatriation of Mozambicans from RSA*. Giyani, South Africa: UNHCR.
- (1996). *Reintegration Programme in the Southern Region Report, March 26, 1996*. Mozambique: UNHCR.
- Wilson, K. (1994). 'Refugees and returnees as social agents', in T. Allen and H. Morsink (eds.), *When Refugees Go Home*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp. 237–50.



- Wilson, K. and Nunes, J. (1994). 'Repatriation to Mozambique', in T. Allen and H. Morsink (eds.), *When Refugees Go Home*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp. 167–236.
- Young, C. (1994). *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Zolberg, A., Suhrke, A., and Aguayo, S. (1989). *Escape From Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Index

- Acheson, D. 153  
Actor Network Theory 350–1  
actuarial matrix; role of 36–9  
Alison, W. 95  
American Multiracial movement 121–2  
Anderson, B. 47, 145, 178  
animals; classification of 97  
anthropological approaches to demography 3–6, 18  
anthropology; evolution of 16–18; impact of feminist agenda on 5  
Anzieu, D. 364  
Appadurai, A. 72  
Appleton, S. 310  
Asad, T. 22–3  
Aubrey, J. 71  
Avery, J. 64  
Ayrut, P. 7  
Azevedo, F. de 119–20  
Bacon, F. 13–14, 37, 66–7  
Balibar, E. 72  
Bauman, R. 57  
Becker, G. 301  
Bernard, P. 358  
Bernhart, 190  
Bertaux, S. 346  
Bhabha, H. 175, 178  
Bledsoe, C. 84, 237  
Bohm, D. 350  
Borderlands research 350  
Bottero, A. 212–14  
bounded models 343–5; problems of 346, 363–4; substitutes for 349  
flows 351–3  
networks 350–1  
shared space 353  
two-places-at-once concept 349–50  
Bourdieu, P. 58  
Brazil; census(1872–1910) 118–19(1920–1950) 119–20(1960–2000) 120–1  
colour categories 117–19, 121  
importance of 123  
promoting racial discourse 119–21;  
economic history 108–9; income distribution 108;  
political history 108; racial mixture 118–19, 121;  
slavery 108; whitening of population 119, 121  
Brazilian Black movement 121–2  
Bryder, L. 96  
Buvinic, M. 316  
Caldwell, J. 5, 254–5  
Callaway, B. 287  
Carter, A. 243–4, 297  
caste, 18–19, 44–6, 127, 149  
categories; need for research to study the history of categories and their applications 20–4; political history of 19  
cause of death data 94–6, 101–3  
Cazes, M.-H. 345  
census; role in state formation and nation building 178–9; *see also* Brazil; census enumerators; census procedures; Soviet Union; United States  
census enumerators; role of 86–7  
census procedures 86–7; boundary of the census household 93; misinterpretation of questions 94; persons not resident in a house 92–3; wording of questions 93, 103  
Chadwick, E. 94–5  
Chant, S. 316  
Chen Muhua 157–8  
Chernyshev, V. 130  
China; birth control programme 150, 155–60 implementing 158–60  
methods of 158  
origins of 152–4, 155; ‘black population’ 148, 164

- access to citizenship benefits 150  
 consequences of 160–1  
 extent of 161–4  
 household registration 150  
 official attitude towards 165  
 societal contribution of 165–6; effects of social categorization 149–50; scheme for accelerated modernization 152; trends in population growth 166
- Coale, A. 344, 346
- Cohn, B. 18–9, 48, 127
- Colombia; developing the national statistical system 180;  
 displaced population 173, 175–6  
 extent of 174–6  
 help for 176  
 lack of data about 177–8  
 publicizing 176  
 state response to 177, 181–2; human rights 176–7; impact of war and displacement 178; lack of census variables 172; structural instability 175; violence in 174–6
- colour categories; Brazil 117–19, 121
- Colson, E. 378
- communication communities 231
- companionate marriages 254–5, 268; *see also* Mexican communities
- compositional demography 346–7
- Comte, 14
- Condorcet, A.-N. de 61–5, 68, 70
- Connell, R. 251
- Cooper, B. 286–7
- Courageau, D. 352
- crisp sets 236, 238
- dan Fodio, S. 288
- Darwin, C. 22
- data collection and compilation; role of the state 38, 41–2
- Delaney, C. 290
- demographic flows; problems of obtaining data 353–4
- demographic nominalism 45–6
- demography; anthropological approaches to 3–6, 18; disciplinary community of 9; enfranchisement and disenfranchisement 43–4, 50–52; environmental concerns 323; evolution of 13, 17–8, 79; external interests in 11; foundations of 36–9; generalization, problems of 13; hermeneutic approaches to 15–16; historical approaches to 4–5, 18; justification 12; nomothetic approaches to 15–16; problem of linguistics 8–9; role in constituting collective and personal identity 43–4, 53; use of scientific/objective methodology 12; use of trans-national language 9
- Dewaraja, R. 214
- Dimanshtein, S. 126
- disciplinary communities; commitment to scientific quantification and mechanical objectivity 10–11; external relationships 10–11; objectivity 10–11; standardisation 10–11
- Dostoevski, A. 129
- Dummett, M. 88–9
- Duncan, O. 4
- dynamic nominalism 47–8
- ecclesiastical registration 91
- Eckholm, E. 161
- Edwards, J. 212–14
- Egypt; access to health facilities 187; aim of health services project 189; design of health services project 187; expenditure on medications 189; health insurance 188; healthcare system 189–92; problems in provision of healthcare 187–8; use of private health services 188
- endogamy 345
- Engels, F. 151
- engenderation 376
- Entwisle, D. 243–4
- Fabian, J. 17
- families; as categories 21–2
- family household; definition of 227–8
- Fanon, F. 179
- Farr, W. 14, 51, 92, 94–5, 99–100
- female-headed household 295; local historicizing of the concept 305–6; political economy and

- 311; representation problems 296, 299–300, 302–4, 315–6;  
 review of literature on 316; *see also* Uganda
- feminist impact on anthropology 5
- Feng, W. 263–4
- Filmer, R. 67
- first-birth intervals 262–4
- ‘folding’ 350–1
- forced migration; approaches used to analyse 371, 375–6,  
 391–5; gender differentiation 373–4; kinetic models of  
 371–4; *see also* Mozambique
- formalism 37
- Foucault, M. 10, 13, 47–9, 89, 126, 148, 376
- foundational categories 21
- Frege, G. 88–9
- French Revolution 59
- Fricke, T. 6
- fuzzy sets 236, 238, 245–6
- Gandhi, M. 212
- Garcia-Marquez, G. 180–1
- Garrett, E. 346–7
- Geertz, C. 64, 394
- General Register Office (GRO), London 86–103
- Ghurye, G. 45
- Giddens, A. 103, 254, 375
- globalization 22, 64
- Godley, J. 244
- Godwin, W. 61–5, 68
- Goodman, N. 88
- Goody, J. 17, 21–2
- Graham, G. 92
- Gramsci, A. 23
- Greenhalgh, S. 5–6
- GRO *see* General Register Office
- Gullard, A. 79
- gypsies 51
- Hacking, I. 10–11, 14, 19, 42, 47–8, 50, 84, 103, 149
- Hagerstrand, T. 348, 353–4
- Hajnal, J. 4
- Hamlin, C. 94–5
- Hanks, B. 8
- Hardy, A. 95–6, 101
- Harris, O. 298
- Harvey, D. 62, 69, 349, 352
- Hausa Muslim women *see* Nigeria
- Hauser, P. 4
- health; research on 185–6; *see also* Egypt; Morocco; sexual  
 health
- help-seekers 186–7
- Henry, L. 344–5
- hermeneutic approaches to demography 15–16
- Himalayan farmers; agricultural and ecological dilemma 336;  
 benefits each category of animal provides to household  
 330–1; distribution of food and care for animals 332–3;  
 families' view of livestock as family members 328; fate of  
 animals by breed 333–4; households' managed as single,  
 integrated units 329; number of animals by extent of  
 landowning 329–30; number of cattle owned 328–9;  
 number of people and animals per household 329;  
 research study 327–8; sources of fodder 331–2; survival  
 indicators of livestock 332–3
- Hindess, B. 87
- historical approaches to demography 4, 5, 18
- Holdren, J. 326
- ‘homo economicus’ 14–15
- household; representation problems 296–8
- household head; representation problems 296, 298–9
- human relationships with nature 337–8
- Hume, D. 14
- ‘imagined communities’ 230
- India; born criminals 51–3; caste 18–19, 44–6, 127, 149;  
 contraception, use of 199; control of HIV/STIs 203–4;  
 economic inequality 334; environmental impact of farm  
 management decisions 335–7; spiritual hierarchies  
 335–6; survival and life chances of women 335; *see also*  
 Himalayan farmers; Orissa
- Indra, D. 374
- Inhorn, M. 259
- intimate relationships research; role of trust 303

- IPAT formula 326–7  
 IUSSP 5  
 'Japanese grandmother problem' 34–6, 42, 43  
 Jeffrey, P. 353  
 Jeffrey, R. 353  
 Jolly, C. 323–4  
 Jones, K. 48  
 Kakar, S. 212  
 Kampala *see* Uganda  
 Kertzer, D. 6, 81, 373  
 Khodzhaev, F. 141  
 Khudrakov, M. 142  
 kinetic models of forced migration 371–4  
 Klir, G. 236  
 Kreager, P. 6, 18–19, 38, 41, 44  
 Kripke, S. 89  
 Kuhn, T. 95  
 Kussmaul, A. 348  
 Kvale, S. 303  
 Lambert, H. 203–4  
 language; changing elements of 89; construction of language communities 90; meanings of categories and terms 90; sense of a term 89–90  
 Laslett, P. 344–5  
 Law, J. 346  
 Lefebvre, 352  
 Lewis, O. 299  
 life tables 33, 35–6, 38, 343  
 Locke, J. 14, 59–61, 63, 66, 70, 72  
 Lorimer, F. 4  
 Lotka, A. J. 38, 343, 345  
 lower classes; histories of 70–1; *see also* social inequality  
 Lupton, D. 191  
 Machaze *see* Mozambique  
 Mack, B. 288–9  
 MacLeod, A. 282  
 MacPherson, C. 59, 65  
 Maksimov, A. 133–4  
 Malhotra, H. 214  
 Malthus, T. 13–14, 22, 57–9, 61, 68–74, 153, 323–4, 326  
 Mandeville, E. 310  
 Mao Zedong 152–4  
 Martin, E. 72  
 Marx, K. 15, 22, 153, 349  
 Mason, K. 277–8, 286–7, 291  
 Massey, D. 353  
 Matsugae, K. 34  
 Mayhew, H. 99  
 McNally, D. 65–6  
 McNicoll, 6  
 metadiscursive practices 58  
 Mexican communities; age at marriage 260; fertility rates 250, 264–7; first births 262–4; marriages of *confianza* 256–8, 267–8; factors promoting the shift towards 258–60; primary bonds 261; marriages of *respeto* 256; meaning of marriage 250, 254–5; research methods 251–3  
 micro-demography 5  
 migration 345–8, 362; adjustment of fertility 347–8; effect on positioning of children 362–3; factors affecting choice 375; motives for 394; problems for researchers 363; theory and methodology required 393–5; *see also* forced migration; Mozambique; New England  
 Mikhailovskii, V. 133  
 Mill, J. S. 88  
 Milne, J. 51  
 Mintz, S. 252  
 Mishima, Y. 33–4  
 modernization 22  
 Mol, A. 346  
 moral ecology 336–7  
 moral economy 334–6  
 Morgan, S. 261, 264  
 Morocco; births attended by trained medical personnel 192–3; healthcare project 192–4; maternal mortality rates 192, 196; prenatal care 193; use of medical facilities at births 195–7; women's awareness of risks of child birth 194  
 Mozambique; gender differentiation in migration motivation 378–9; meaning of marriage 389–90; men protecting established life strategies 379–82; men pursuing new social opportunities 382–5; migration history

- 376–8; repatriation 385; from South Africa 385–91; transnational polygyny 389–90
- Mukhamedov, N. 140–2
- multi-regional lifetables 349
- Nader, L. 73
- New England; characteristics of migration streams 361; fertility rates of migration streams 357–8; genealogical databases 354–5; groups remaining in small towns 360; men born in small towns who entered different migration streams 356–7; residences of men born in small towns 355–6; wealth differences between migration streams 358–9
- Nichter, M. 213
- Nigam, S. 51–2
- Nigeria; balance between seclusion and need for work 283–5; gender roles 288–90; lack of support from husbands 283; secluded marriages 280–1, 287, 289–90; study setting and methodology 279–80; women and politics 287–8; women's answers to their problems 285–6; women's own assessment of their status 281–2, 286, 290; women's respect for husbands 282–3
- Nissel, M. 86
- nomothetic approach to demography 15–6
- Nott, J. 111
- Nunes, J. 373
- Obermeyer, 195
- occupational dictionaries 87
- occupations; classification of 87–8, 97–103
- Ogle, W. 100
- Olds, K. 348, 351
- Oomman, N. 216–17
- Orissa; background information 200; local sexual health concerns 205–9, 216; relative importance of sexual health concerns 209–11; research methods 201–3; research study area 200; semen-related concerns 211–2, 216; *see also* semen loss
- Ortner, S. 276
- Paine, T. 66
- Parsons, T. 103
- Pastrana, A. 171
- Patel, V. 216–17
- Pateman, C. 61
- Peters, J. 139
- Piore, M. 350
- plain speech 66–7; advocating 66–7
- policy-related concepts/categories 22
- population-environment relationship 323–7
- Porter, D. 83
- Porter, R. 83
- Porter, T. 10–11
- 'psychic envelopes' 364
- Quanhe, Y. 263–4
- Quetelet, A. 14, 38
- Ranger, T. 390–1
- Ravenstein, E. 351
- religious communities 45–6
- representation and intervention; supposed opposition of 49–50
- rhetoric; criticisms of 66–71; role of 66–7
- Ricardo 64–5
- Richmond, A. 374–5, 392–3
- Rindfuss, R. 261, 264
- Risse, G. 101
- Rogers, A. 349
- Rogers, S. 278–9, 290
- Romero, S. 119
- Rosaldo, M. 276
- Ryder, N. 21
- Sasaki, Y. 214
- satisfaction surveys; usefulness of 190–1
- Schneider, J. 351
- Schneider, P. 351
- Schwarcz, L. 118
- scientific authority and truth; advocating 68–70
- semen loss; association with excessive heat 213; diagnosis of 215; healers consulted 215; problems associated with 214; South Asia 212–14; under- and overtreatment 215–16

- Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, P. 128  
 Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, V. 128–30  
 Sen, A. 334–5, 337  
 sexual health; definition of 203; proposals for 217; *see also*  
 Orissa  
 Shaoqi, L. 153  
 Shapin, S. 67  
 Sharlin, A. 353  
 Shaw, R. P. 326  
 Shigetomi, S. 239  
 Shotemur, S. 141  
 Silva, N. 120  
 Skolnik, A. 254  
 Smith, A. 14, 22  
 Smith, O. 63  
 Smith, R. 108  
 Smith, R. S. 47  
 social categories 10, 21; differences in definitions between  
 members and social scientists 234; importance of 148–9,  
 166, 197; methodological limitations of 223–5; need for  
 research to study the history of categories and their  
 applications 20–24; origins of 79; political history of 19;  
 problems of classification 79–80  
 social inequality 61–6, 72–4  
 Social Network Analysis (SNA) 351  
 Solinger, D. 150  
 Soviet Union; 1926 censusascertaining nationality 128–31con-  
 sequences of nationality categories 138–43nationality  
 questions 134–5problems in census process 135–8ques-  
 tions about language 132, 135used to categorize respond-  
 ents into official nationality categories 137–8; nationality  
 categories, use of 127  
 Spencer, T. 66  
 Srinivas, M. 46  
 Stalin, J. 128, 139  
 stars; spatial classification 97  
 state; constructing narratives of the nation 178  
 statistics; acceptance of, as objective fact 40–2; imperfections  
 of 245–6; linguistic construction of data 87–90;  
 objectifying the existence of problem groups 47–8;  
 objectivity 37; representative function of 37; role of  
 343; use of in public intervention 37  
 stillbirths; definition of 91–2  
 Stone, L. 255  
 sub-populations; study of 344  
 survey work; selection of units and variables of analysis 90–91  
 Szreter, S. 346–7  
 Tanima, H. 280  
 Thadani, V. 255  
 Thailand; patterns of contraceptive use 243–4; village  
 population definitions 239–41government administra-  
 tors' 237–9social scientists' 243–4Thai villagers' 234–7vil-  
 lage administrators' 241–3  
 Thompson, E. P. 334  
 Thrift, N. 349, 351  
 transnationalism 347, 349–51  
 Uganda; conjugal relations 303–4; female headed house-  
 holdsbelonging to more than one residential unit  
 302–3economic welfare 310–11town women 309–10types  
 of 306–8; informal economy of Kampala 301; research  
 method 301–2; women traders in Kampaladegrees of  
 success of 312kinship relations 313–15mother-daughter  
 relationships 315problems of representation 312–13  
 United States; census(1790–1840) 111(1850–1920)  
 111–14(1930–1960) 114–15(1970–2000) 115–17

census definitions 114  
 Chinese category 112–13  
 choice of more than one race 116–17  
 citizenship issues 113  
 formation of racial theory 112–13  
 importance of 121, 123  
 mulatto category 111, 112, 113–114  
 one-drop rule of black racial membership 114  
 purposes of 111  
 racial categorization 109–10, 115–116  
 self-identification 115  
 slaves, counting 111; citizenship 108; economic history 108; race relations 108–9, 115; review of colour classifications 121–2; slavery 108; *see also* New England  
 US Civil Rights Movement 121  
 Verma, R. 212  
 Vianna, O. 119  
 Virillio, P. 349  
 Volkov, A. 133  
 Wang, H. 155  
 Wang, X. 163  
 White, C. J. 86–8  
 White, H. 67–8  
 White, T. 154–5  
 Whyte, M. 277  
 Wig, N. 214  
 Wilde, O. 94  
 Williams, B. 190  
 Williams, J. 279  
 Wilson, K. 373  
 Winch, P. 15  
 Wittgenstein, L. 89  
 women's status 276–9, 291; *see also* Nigeria  
 Wynter, S. 305  
 Xiaoping, D. 156  
 Yan, Y. 255  
 Zaria City *see* Nigeria  
 Zarubin, I. 130–1, 139–40  
 Zizek, S. 173