CHAPTER 17

Anthropological Demography

DAVID I. KERTZER

In the last dozen years of the 20th century anthropological demography as both a specialty within anthropology and as a recognized part of demography began to come into its own. Special graduate programs sprang up, a regular committee of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population devoted to the field, begun somewhat earlier, attracted an increasing number of anthropologists, and meetings of the Population Association of American began to feature sessions focusing on anthropological work. Yet obstacles remained. Anthropologists working in demography often found themselves caught between those anthropologists for whom *positivist* was the worst epithet imaginable and those demographers suspicious of ethnographic research and uncomfortable at the relentless deconstruction of analytical categories that characterizes anthropology.

The development of anthropological interests in demography has a much longer history, going back well into the 19th century. In this longer view, the renascence of the field in the late 20th century was simply a move to return demographic research to a prominent place it had earlier occupied in anthropology. This chapter briefly sets out the nature of this history and also discusses the forces within demography that have led in recent years to an ever greater interest in anthropology. While anthropology's methodological emphasis on ethnography has received much of the attention when demographers have referred to the potential contributions of anthropological demography, this chapter emphasizes the theoretical contributions that anthropological demography can make, partially by exploring contemporary cultural theory within anthropology insofar as it relates to the explanation of demographic behavior. In this respect, the chapter addresses various kinds of anthropological research, ranging in focus from work on fertility to studies of marriage and household, as well as migration.

In this manner, the chapter covers examples of innovative demographic research done recently by anthropologists.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Anthropology's intersections with demography are many, although often anthropologists working on issues of demographic interest are unaware of the connections. American anthropology consists of three principal subdivisions (four if anthropological linguistics is considered): sociocultural anthropology, archaeology, and biological anthropology. The largest of these, and the one that has thus far drawn the greatest attention in the demographic world, is sociocultural anthropology, the comparative study of cultures and societies. It is to the demographically relevant works in this subfield that this chapter is dedicated, and "anthropology" is here used as shorthand for sociocultural anthropology. For an introduction to work in archaeological demography, see Hassan (1979) and Paine (1997). For an overview of the different ways in which biological anthropologists have been engaging in demographic study, see Wood (1990), Ellison (1994), Gage (1998), Voland (1998), and Meindl and Russell (1998).

History

Demographers and, indeed, many anthropologists themselves are unaware of how important demographic topics were to many of the pioneers of modern anthropology. The kind of anthropology that developed in Britain beginning in the late 19th century, focusing on documenting the diversity of human societies, turned its attention to issues of social organization and kinship at a time when American anthropology was developing its distinctive focus on culture. The British focus, along with the developing emphasis on prolonged, intensive fieldwork, led to a concern for documenting family processes that lie at the heart of demography. In the late 19th century, the classic British manual of anthropological investigation, *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*, called on field workers to conduct censuses to provide the framework for their investigations. Many of the most influential British anthropologists of the first decades of the 20th century attempted population surveys or estimates of one kind or another, Radcliffe-Brown's (1922) Andaman Island work notable among them.

By the 1930s, anthropologists such as Meyer Fortes and Raymond Firth, sharing a strong interest in kinship systems, began to work on population issues. Firth (1936) devoted a whole chapter of his classic study of the Polynesian island of Tikopia to "A Modern Population Problem," while Fortes (1943) examined fertility among the West African Tallensi, concluding that due to the lack of reliable demographic data, "anthropologists have had to be their own demographers, in however a rough-and-ready fashion." British social anthropology continued for decades to show great interest in the study of marriage, divorce, household dynamics, and fertility.[1]

For a variety of reasons, American anthropology took a different path, one in which demographic issues were not as central. Partly this had to do with the heavy emphasis that American Indian studies had in the first decades of the 20th century.

[1] For a fuller account of this history, see Kertzer and Fricke (1997).

Studying people on reservations whose lives were radically different from that of their grandparents, anthropologists placed greater emphasis on oral history, mythology, and ritual and showed less interest in the actual population processes at work in the present. However, some strands of American anthropology did lend themselves to demographic topics, including work in cultural ecology (Steward 1936) and the study of foraging (hunting and gathering) peoples (Lee and Devore 1968). Cultural materialism, pioneered by Marvin Harris (1966), similarly highlighted demographic questions (Harris and Ross 1987) and the use of scientific paradigms, although this approach has remained controversial in American anthropology.

The growth in interest in anthropological demography among demographers over the past two decades has sprung from various sources and has found its center in the United States. Partly the interest derived from social organizational issues once largely identified with British social anthropology: questions of domestic group dynamics and marriage in particular (Hammel 1972; Kertzer 1989). Partly they have come from some feminist concerns that have strongly influenced anthropology in this period (Greenhalgh 1995b). Here studies of fertility and of women's positions in their households have been prominent. Likewise, the influence of cultural ecological and materialist concern—renewed by John Bennett (1976)—can be seen in the work of a number of anthropologists involved in demographic study (Fricke 1994). But, in addition, a huge amount of demographically related work is being done by anthropologists under the general rubric of medical anthropology. This, the largest subfield within sociocultural anthropology, has a long tradition of studies of childbirth, menstruation, morbidity and mortality, yet has had remarkably little contact with demographers.

Interest in anthropology among demographers similarly goes back quite a way. Emblematic, and influential, was the work of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) Committee on Population Problems of Countries in Process of Industrialization, founded in 1951, which counted Raymond Firth among its most active members. The influential literature synthesis which the Committee commissioned Frank Lorimer (1954) to do on the "social and cultural conditions affecting fertility in nonindustrial societies" turned out to be very largely a survey of the existing anthropological literature.

More recent interest in what anthropology could contribute to demography has been triggered by two developments within demography, one theoretical and the other methodological. Theoretically, demography came by mid-20th century to be dominated by modernization theory in general and demographic transition theory in particular. It was within this paradigm that the ambitious and influential Princeton European fertility history project was launched by Ansley Coale in 1963. In their attempts to test the paradigm by using historical provincial-level European data, Coale and his colleagues came to the surprising conclusion that demography's reigning paradigm did not hold. The course of fertility decline in Europe did not follow the path suggested by such standard predictor variables as urbanization, literacy, infant and child mortality, or industrialization. As two of the core members of the project put it: "Cultural setting influenced the onset and spread of fertility decline independently of socioeconomic conditions" (Knodel and van de Walle 1986: 412).

Likewise, based on the Princeton findings and also work coming out of the World Fertility Survey, demographers John Cleland and Christopher Wilson (1987: 20) concluded that "the most striking feature of the onset of transition is its relationship to broad cultural groupings." A series of critiques of the reigning theoretical paradigm

resulted (e.g., McNicoll 1980). All of a sudden, that hoary concept of culture had placed itself at the center of demographic discussion, and with it the need for anthropological work and for an infusion of anthropological theory came increasingly to be recognized.

The methodological impetus for paying attention to anthropology came from a different quarter, although around the same time. By the 1970s the sample survey had become the dominant methodology in demography. But while it offered the prospect of gaining nationally representative data, and furnishing straightforward means for cross-national comparison, the limitations of the approach soon became apparent. The most influential voice within demography proved to be John Caldwell, whose critique of survey methods was based initially on his exposure to village studies and his reading of the anthropological ethnographic literature on West Africa. He pointed out in 1982 that "Most demographers work on large data sets, often with little contact with the people whom the statistics describe."

Believing that such first-hand understanding was essential, Caldwell undertook a series of projects involving, as he wrote, "borrowing methodology from the anthropologists (and reading them) and becoming intimately acquainted with each village and its families in turn" (Caldwell 1982: 4). Not only were surveys limited in the kind of data they could collect, the responses they generated were of questionable validity, for, as Caldwell later wrote with Allan Hill (1988: 2), "the tendency is to obtain normative responses or reflections on the rules, particularly on sensitive topics." To remedy this problem they called for greater adoption of what they termed, more or less without distinction, *microlevel*, or *anthropological*, approaches.

In somewhat parallel fashion, studying migration rather than fertility and mortality, Douglas Massey and colleagues (Massey et al. 1990; Massey and Zenteno 2000; Kandel and Massey 2002) criticize the tendency of demographers to rely solely on survey methods and argue vigorously for the adoption of qualitative and ethnographic methods to complement quantitative approaches. An influential product of this movement, as promoted by Caldwell in particular, was the establishment by the IUSSP of a Committee on Anthropological Demography. Yet, until an anthropologist (Anthony Carter) took over the chair of this committee in the late 1990s and turned it in more cultural and theoretical directions, anthropological demography was in effect defined in terms of methodology—referring to all qualitative, microlevel, nonsurvey demographic research.

The Problem of Culture

Put crudely, there are two ways in which anthropologists and nonanthropological demographers can collaborate. One is to employ anthropologists to assist mainstream demographic research. This follows from an emphasis on anthropology's methodological contribution. In this context, anthropologists can be employed to do fieldwork which will allow survey researchers to design better questions or feed ethnographic information that can be used to contextualize the results of demographic studies. Ethnographic work can, along similar lines, be used to generate variables at an ethnic group level which can be entered into statistical models in which populations are compared.

While this use of anthropology in demography can lead to significant improvements in mainstream demographic research, it is understandably not a model that has great appeal to anthropologists. Anthropologists in general have a different way of

viewing the world than do most demographers. The implicit assumptions behind survey research—rooted in a focus on the individual—conflict with anthropological emphasis on social organization and on culture. And while not all mainstream demographers embrace a rational choice model, something quite similar to an assumption of economic rationality is widely found (e.g., Sigle-Rushton and McLanahan 2002; Oppenheimer 2003) and conflicts with most anthropologists' understanding of how culture works.

Anthropologists tend to view culture not as a set of norms or a laundry list of customs. Gene Hammel (1990) makes the distinction in this regard between "culture for the people" and "culture by the people." The former, a more traditional view now rejected by many anthropologists, sees people as the products of their culture, simply following the norms that have been handed down to them. The latter approach, by contrast, focuses on individual agency, with culture seen as offering a stock of symbols that are invested with moral weight, but which people are able to manipulate for their own ends. Through this continuous process of manipulation culture itself changes. Bledsoe (1990) has employed this approach in her work on the Mende of Sierra Leone. She argues, for example, that "cultural labels such as kinship and fosterage are best viewed not as relationships that compel future support, but as idioms for making demands or asserting claims with respect to children" (1990: 82). For Kreager (1985: 136), at the heart of culture is "the application of criteria of right and wrong." Cultures, however, do not dictate a particular code of conduct, but instead involve "an endless process of negotiation."

Yet this negotiation itself involves the individual in a larger social, economic, and political context. A number of anthropologists working on demographic topics have called attention to the importance of this context. This has, on the one hand, put them in conflict with the more extreme cultural determinist wing of anthropology, those who stress human behavior as the product of the symbolic construction of reality. However, a focus on this larger institutional level also moves anthropology away from survey approaches to understanding demographic behavior. Greenhalgh (1995b: 20, 17), calling for a "culture and political economy perspective," argues that "the real challenge is to construct whole demographies that illuminate mutually constitutive relations between culture and political economy, and the implication of these relations for reproductive actors."

An example of this approach is found in Kertzer's (1993) study of large-scale infant abandonment in 19th-century Italy. Kertzer tries to explain a variety of demographic outcomes (abandonment, infant and child mortality) in terms of the action of the Roman Catholic Church and the civil authorities, while considering the impact of cultural beliefs about illegitimacy and the effects of a particular kinship system. He argues that while people's interests are defined for them by their culture, and their menu of choices is heavily constrained by their culture, their behavior must also be viewed as constrained by a variety of political economic and institutional forces (Kertzer 1997).

THEORETICAL MODELS

Fertility

Not unlike demographic research more generally, the bulk of anthropological demography to date has concentrated on fertility and related issues. This can be roughly

divided between those studies that directly engage the larger demographic literature and those that deal with fertility and reproduction without great familiarity with or interest in the work of nonanthropological demographers. The latter tends to fall into two categories: work stemming from a medical anthropology tradition and that arising from feminist anthropology.

Anthropologists have typically been critical of notions of "natural fertility," and a good deal of their work in predemographic transition populations has been devoted to showing that fertility is the result of a series of culturally influenced behaviors and decisions. More generally, anthropologists have tried to explicate the links between various kin systems and fertility. A classic argument here regards the impact of polygyny on fertility (Borgerhoff-Mulder 1989), an issue that continues to generate disagreement. In a remarkable study, Skinner (1997) examines the various ways in which family systems shape demographic processes, with evidence ranging from Europe to China. He views causation operating in both directions, with the demographic regime constraining and shaping family systems. Using historical demographic data, Skinner adduces evidence in support of his argument that "family system norms imply, if not specify, the relative desirability of differently configured offspring sets and that, in many if not most populations, families did what they could (and do what they can) to shape the size and configuration of their progeny accordingly" (1997: 66).

Rather than respect the classic compartmentalization in mainstream demography between fertility and mortality, Skinner insists that the key phenomenon for study is reproduction, not fertility, and hence neonatal and early childhood mortality must be examined together with fertility in the context of family strategizing behavior. A similar argument is made by Scrimshaw (1983), who objects to traditional demographic theory, which sees high infant and child mortality rates as supporting high fertility rather than vice versa. As Carter (1998: 257–258) points out, there is considerable evidence that the sex composition of the offspring set affected the timing of the decision to stop having children in such "traditional" populations as the 18th-century Japanese (Smith 1977). All these studies call into question the concept of natural fertility.

The importance of the larger kinship system is also highlighted in Caroline Bledsoe's work on child fosterage in West Africa. As the title of one of her pieces (Bledsoe 1990) suggests—"The Politics of Children: Fosterage and the Social Management of Fertility Among the Mende of Sierra Leone"—she argues that fertility in many Western African societies can only be understood in light of the widespread practice of child fosterage. Women can regulate the number of their dependent children without necessarily regulating their fertility. Bledsoe's more recent work in The Gambia, which will be discussed later, in parallel fashion shows how women use contraceptive methods in order to facilitate fertility, as they see it, rather than as a means to limit births.

Another strand of anthropological work on fertility flows from basic ethnographic research on folk systems of belief regarding reproduction, women's bodies, and related matters. From the time that Malinowski argued that Trobriand Islanders recognized no role for men in reproduction, there has been interest in these issues. Much of the recent literature here comes from a medical anthropology tradition (e.g., MacCormack 1994; Davis-Lloyd and Sargent 1997). Here there is little direct engagement with the larger demographic literature on fertility. Typical of this tradition is a recent collection on *The Anthropology of Pregnancy Loss* (Cecil 1996), which in reviewing fields that have something to contribute to the anthropological study of this topic focuses on literary studies and does not mention demography.

Yet even in the field of reproductive ethnography there have been collaborations between anthropologists and demographers. A good example is provided by anthropologist Elisha Renne and demographer Etienne van de Walle (2001), who co-edited a collection on menstrual regulation. The rich historical and ethnographic studies in the volume provide a glimpse into a phenomenon that has great implications for fertility. Nevertheless, it had been little considered by demographers and had been examined by anthropologists mainly in symbolic terms, as part of that complex of rites associated with a belief in female pollution.

Anthropologists have also tended to show more interest than most demographers in problems of infertility in high-fertility societies. While from a traditional demographic transition theory perspective, this issue is of only marginal interest, in an anthropological perspective it sheds light on the central importance of childbearing to people's lives (Inhorn 1994, 1996; Becker 1994).

Among the most recent directions in anthropological research on fertility has been a focus on men (Bledsoe, Guyer, and Lerner 2000). This work builds on classic anthropological research on kinship systems, which places considerable emphasis on theories of paternity, on which parent children are thought to belong to, and on distinctions between biological and social paternity (Guyer 2000). While much of the literature on the implications of unilineal (especially patrilineal) kinship systems for fertility behavior concerns Africa, such studies as that by Setel (2000) on fertility and the male life course in Papua New Guinea show just how widely we find the strong male belief in the need to produce children to have a proper claim to rights in one's kinship group.

But not all of this literature, even in Africa, emphasizes corporate kin groups. In a series of publications, Townsend (1997, 2000) looks at male responsibility for children in the United States and in Botswana. In the latter case, he shows the importance, in understanding fertility, of viewing not only the father's role but also that of the woman's brother, who may often be the most reliable male source of support. Townsend also shows that a man's age at marriage and his desirability as a partner may be closely linked both to his own father's situation and to that of his sisters and brothers. Townsend (1997: 108–109) concludes, more generally, that an individual's fertility, rather than being viewed in individual terms, should be seen as "a description of a place in a web of relationships with offspring, with other kin, and with a range of social groups and institutions."

Interest in the male role in fertility decisions has also sprung from the medical anthropology tradition, itself influenced by feminist anthropology. In a comparative study of various Hispanic populations, for example, Carole Browner (2000) tries to disentangle the interaction of structural and cultural factors that affect a man's ability to influence his partner's reproductive decision making. She places special emphasis on the importance of changing gender ideologies.

Feminist influence can be seen in a variety of studies of reproduction that focus on how fertilization itself is conceived. In two influential publications, Emily Martin (1987, 1991) used methods of cultural analysis to probe how contemporary Americans' views of ova and sperm, and of male and female reproductive biology, are influenced by the metaphors that guide modern Western medicine. Part of the science studies movement, this work challenges naïve views of medical science and reveals how important it is to investigate the ways in which science and medicine create their own symbolic systems that influence people's perceptions and behavior.

But people's symbolic understandings of procreation involve much that goes beyond science or medicine, extending to religious and other cultural influences. In a study of a Turkish village, Carol Delaney (1991) focuses on the key symbolism of seed and soil. Although her study is set in Turkey, she sees this symbolism as of much broader and deeper significance. The image of the man as planting the seed and the woman furnishing the nurturing soil in which it can grow has biblical antecedents and is widespread in the West. Delaney, following a now well-developed line of work in feminist anthropology, examines how this central reproductive metaphor has much broader and more socially consequential ramifications. Men are the creators and thus are linked to God. Women, providing material sustenance to support life, are reduced to what God created, the earth.

Feminist anthropologists who have turned their attention to reproduction have often cast their work in terms of the study of sexual politics. In an influential volume, *Conceiving the New World Order: The Global Politics of Reproduction*, editors Ginsburg and Rapp (1995a) draw not on demography but on feminist studies in order, as they put it, "to transform traditional anthropological analyses of reproduction and to clarify the importance of making reproduction central to social theory" (1995b: 1). They fault traditional ethnographic approaches to the study of fertility, infanticide, and child care for ignoring larger, nonlocal, and even global forces that affect reproductive behavior. Focusing on what they term "stratified reproduction," they look at the power relations that help empower some people to make their own reproductive decisions and disempower others. They are especially interested in how cultural images related to reproduction are produced and become broadly accepted in a society. Influenced by Foucault, they examine the influence that the dominant culture's categories have, even for those who seek to rebel against them.[2] Like feminist anthropology more generally, their scholarly agenda is combined with explicitly political aims, using research to help map a path of political activism.

Feminist inspiration can also be found in the research of anthropologists working on fertility who are more closely tied in to the demographic research world. Candace Bradley (1995), for example, has examined the relationship between the empowerment of women as a result of recent social and economic changes in Kenya and the beginnings of fertility decline. Here she examines the context in which women are able to exercise greater influence over social, political, and economic decision making, both within their own households and beyond them. Based on ethnographic research conducted in the hills of western Kenya, as well as census and survey data, Bradley examines the onset of fertility decline. However, she provides a nuance lacking in most survey-based studies in showing the complexities of the female life course and exactly how it is that a woman reaches a point in her reproductive, family, and socioeconomic career in which she can exercise greater influence over reproductive decisions.

Among those anthropologists who have directly taken part in the larger interdisciplinary demographic research community, perhaps the most influential theoretical perspective on fertility to emerge has been one that combines political economic and cultural analysis. Greenhalgh brought attention to this approach in a 1990 article in *Population and Development Review*, calling for a "political economy of fertility."

[2] Kertzer and Arel (2002) employ an anthropological perspective to examine the power of state-backed demographic categories and bottom-up resistance to them in the context of the use of ethnic, racial, and language categories in national censuses.

However, by this she did not mean political economy in the most commonly used sense. She referred to "a new analytic perspective . . . with a new research agenda that has the potential for appreciably enhancing our understanding of the sources of fertility decline". Such an approach, she writes, "directs attention to the embeddedness of community institutions in structures and processes, especially political and economic ones, operating at regional, national, and global levels, and to the historical roots of those macro-micro linkages" (1990: 87). Following this approach, rather than seeking to identify a single set of factors to explain fertility decline, the researcher tries to shed light on the combination of institutional, political, economic, and cultural forces that bring it about. She draws attention to the failure of demographers to pay sufficient attention to political factors and calls for an emphasis on the political-economic dimensions of social and cultural organization (1990: 95).

Renne's work on the impact of government land tenure policy on fertility among the Yoruba in Nigeria offers an example of this approach. She finds that, paradoxically, while the government has been engaged in attempts to encourage smaller families, its rural land tenure policies have the opposite effect. By generating uncertainty regarding land tenure, Renne finds, the Nigerian Land Use Act has led many people to seek alternative means of security through having many children. Moreover, among the rural population, "ideas about the reproduction of family houses and names, like ideas about land tenure and children, are intimately linked, thus underscoring the inappropriateness of analyzing fertility levels in abstraction from this broader social context" (1995: 123).

The political implications of fertility have been cast in a somewhat different way by Handwerker, who begins his introduction to a volume of anthropological studies of fertility by writing "The birth of a child is a political event. So is its absence, for any part of all of the events that comprise human reproduction may be part of a strategy to acquire or extend power, may create new ties of dependence or may provide a means to break ties of dependence" (1990: 1). Here Handwerker draws on a definition of the political in terms of the distribution of power among people. Anthropologists following this perspective show special interest in how people's fertility reflects strategizing behavior that seeks to maximize resources. However, rather than see this in narrowly economic terms, they try to contextualize behavior in terms of culture, social organization, and political power structures.

Anthropological attempts to combine political economic and cultural analysis in understanding fertility behavior have often turned to historical rather than ethnographic sources of evidence. Part of the reason for this is that the kinds of theories of change they champion are best examined by use of data that cover a relatively long period. Jane and Peter Schneider's (1996) historical demographic research in Sicily focuses on a community they had previously studied ethnographically, and their interpretation of the historical evidence is informed, in part, by that intensive involvement with the population. In showing that the decline in fertility that occurred there took place at different historical moments for the three broad social classes under study—the elite, the artisans, and the peasantry—they examine not only larger political and economic changes that affected these classes differently, but also how people's cultural understandings and social relations changed.

Kertzer (1995) explores these issues theoretically in examining the relationship of political-economic and cultural explanations of demographic behavior. Focusing on an urbanizing, sharecropping town outside Bologna, Italy, in the period 1861 to 1921, he finds that there is no simple relationship between economic change and change in

demographic behavior. In the case of fertility, he found a pattern similar to that described by the Schneiders in Sicily. Different economic segments of the population reduced their fertility at different times, in reaction to changes in their own family economic situations. Hence sharecroppers kept up high fertility throughout the period, despite the falls taking place in fertility of the rest of the population, because pressures on sharecroppers to have numerous sons continued and even increased, while the cost to them of raising children in households that remained large and complex remained modest (Kertzer and Hogan 1989). On the other hand, despite massive economic changes, very little change was observed in age at marriage, suggesting that here cultural norms proved resilient, a finding of other historical European studies of marriage age as well.

There is some irony here, for it seems that while an increasing number of demographers are expressing dismay about the possibility of explaining fertility decline based on economic factors, and pointing instead to culture, most of the anthropologists with the greatest involvement in demography continue to stress the importance of economic forces. This is certainly true of one of the most influential anthropologists to work in demography, Gene Hammel. Putting the matter boldly, in a piece titled "Economics 1, Culture 0," Hammel (1995) urges demographers not to reject economic factors in explanations of historical fertility decline in Europe. Examining data from the northwest Balkans over two centuries—1700 to 1900—he finds that neither religious lines of difference nor linguistic borders (often used by demographers as proxies for lines of cultural difference) correspond to fertility differentials. By contrast, he concludes that "variables apparently more closely related to the activities of extracting a living from the land and the exchange system, such as female labor-force participation, the strength of the primary sector, and the kind of agriculture, seem strongly predictive of fertility differences" (1995: 247).

Anthropologists' growing interest in state-level politics—a relatively new development—has produced other recent work related to reproduction. Most notable is Kligman's (1998) study of the politics of reproduction in Romania under Ceausescu's regime (1965 to 1989). It turns an ethnographic gaze on state policy, examining the rhetorical and institutional practices of the state in the public sphere and their integration into local life. It is a work that builds as well on the concept of reproduction in terms of politicization. As Kligman (1998: 5) puts it, "the politics of reproduction center attention on the intersection beween politics and the life cycle, whether in terms of abortion, new reproductive technologies, international family planning programs, eugenics, or welfare." The study examines the extreme pronatalist policies of the Romanian government, their rhetorical symbolism, and the effects all these had on individuals.

Marriage and Households

Although not for the most part viewing the issue in demographic terms, anthropologists have long been interested in marriage and domestic groups. Moreover, having developed this expertise in important part through the study of marriage in societies having corporate kin groups, especially those following unilineal descent rules, anthropologists have often theorized relationships between marriage systems and broader kinship systems.

Probably no aspect of nonwestern marriage systems has so struck western observers as polygamy, which anthropologists divide into two types. Polygyny, by far the

more common, involves men having multiple wives and continues to be widespread today in sub-Saharan Africa. Polyandry, which entails a woman having two or more husbands, finds its *locus classicus* in the Himalayas but can be found in parts of sub-Saharan Africa. While the nature and dynamics of these systems have long fascinated anthropologists, demographers' interest in these systems has tended to focus on two issues: (1) the impact that plural marriage has on fertility and (2) the implications of plural marriage for concepts of household. The latter question derives its demographic interest not simply from the desire to better understand household relations but, at least as importantly, from its implications for survey research methods.

Polyandry has received considerable anthropological attention for the theoretical questions it raises. A recent spike of interest can be traced to its relevance to sociobiological theory (Levine and Silk 1997), for it seems, at least at first glance, to contradict the basic tenets of sociobiology. By contrast, polyandry has been largely ignored by demographers because of the small numbers of peoples who practice it.

Given the ever greater prominence that sub-Saharan Africa has achieved within demography, anthropological theorizing on marriage relations—including but not limited to plural marriage and the relationship of marriage to formalized kin systems—takes on ever more relevance. Guyer (1994), for example, notes that Nigeria alone has 250 different ethnic groups and two world religions—each with various distinct subgroups—and each of these has its own norms regarding marriage. In such a context, how can one define marriage? Nigerian law largely leaves such questions to local "customary law," resulting in marriage statistics that violate basic demographic principles of comparability and standardization.

What is most worrisome to demographers about all this is that marriage may be a much less clear-cut status in these societies. There is often no single event one could call a wedding, no single date at which one changes marital status, either in marrying or in divorcing. Marriage is often described in Africa as a process, and the fact of widespread polygyny makes the situation all the more complex (Bledsoe and Pison 1994: 2). In her study of the Yoruba in Nigeria, Guyer (1994: 247) finds that informality of first marriage has a long history and that such informality has been the prevalent form of higher-order marriages throughout Yoruba recorded history. She concludes that the formality of first marriage was partially an imposition of colonial powers, which tried to formalize bride-wealth payments and place them into a European understanding of marriage.

Although marriage has not been a major focus of anthropologists working in western societies, no discussion of anthropological theory and marriage in the context of demographic study can fail to mention the work of Jack Goody. Like many of the anthropologists with demographic interests who have worked on Europe, Goody takes a broad historical perspective, although in his case the history has unusual depth. In his influential *The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe*, Goody (1983) looks at European marriage systems from the perspective of an anthropologist who has specialized in West Africa. He seeks to explain the broad and deep differences he observes, many of which he attributes to the impact and development of Christianity in Europe. Among the features of the European family system Goody tackles are bilineality; strength of the conjugal pair bond; lack of lineages among the bulk of the population; lack of rigid separation of the sexes; monogamy; absence of adoption (until recently); absence of provision for divorce and remarriage; the banning of marriage with kin. His explanation for these distinctive patterns rests on his argument that they all

served the purposes of the Church, partly by undermining alternative institutions (e.g., the lineage) and partly by funneling property over the generations into Church coffers.

Mortality

Anthropological theorizing on mortality remains poorly developed—in contrast with the robust anthropological interest in funerary rites. Aside from recent work in anthropology on HIV-AIDS, most of which has little articulation with demographic research (Herdt 1997), most anthropological theorizing on mortality has involved work on infant and child mortality. The literature that most closely engages the larger demographic literature in this regard is that which examines the impact of various kinship and marriage systems on infant and child mortality in general and on sex-selective survivorship in particular (Skinner 1993). We will look at one example of this, the work of Monica Das Gupta, in a later section of this chapter.

Within anthropology in general the most influential recent theoretical work in this area has been Scheper-Hughes' (1992) *Death Without Weeping*, based on ethnographic work done in a northeastern Brazilian town. Seeking to position herself between what she calls the "mindlessly automatic 'maternal bonding' theorists," on the one hand, and those like Edward Shorter, who write historically of maternal indifference, on the other, Scheper-Hughes (1992: 356) takes the unpopular position that in the area of extreme poverty she studied, "mortal selective neglect and intense maternal attachment coexist." She finds that women in this environment regard those small children who are weak and fragile as doomed and so do little to try to keep them alive.

Branding theorists such as Nancy Chodorow and Carol Gilligan, who speak of a universal female ethos as suffering from a culture- and history-bound perspective, Scheper-Hughes argues that the "invention of mother love corresponds not only with the rise of modern, bourgeois, nuclear family . . . but also with the demographic transition." It was only with the sharp decline in infant and child mortality, she argues, that a new reproductive strategy arose, one involving bearing few children but investing heavily in each of them. Where high mortality and high fertility are found, as in northeastern Brazil, "a different, or a pre-demographic transition, reproductive strategy obtains." This entails giving birth to many children but investing emotionally and materially in only those who are seen as the best bets for survival (1992: 401–402). This thesis has produced a heated debate within anthropology, primarily in the confines of medical anthropology, with Scheper-Hughes accused of blaming impoverished mothers—at least in part—for the death of their children (Nations 1988).

Migration

Although its initial focus on isolated island communities can be exaggerated, anthropology did long have what Malkki (1995: 508) has called a "sedentarist analytical bias." The prototypical anthropological study was based on participant observation in a single locality; the main kind of movement envisioned was that of pastoralists who moved seasonally in repetitive fashion. Since the 1960s, however, anthropological interest in migration has mushroomed, although until recently little of it articulated directly with mainstream demographic research.

Brettell (2000) has recently provided an excellent overview of anthropological migration studies. Anthropologists have come to the study of migration via different routes. Some, seeking to undertake more traditional forms of rural community study, have found that local life has been dramatically affected by out-migration and by return migration, necessitating the study of population movement that was not originally envisioned. Others, part of the now 40-year-old tradition of anthropological studies of urban life in nonwestern societies, found that the lives of the urban dwellers they studied were lived not only in the cities but in rural areas of origin as well. Moreover, the lives of many of these people in the city appeared to be organized by social networks involving ties to such home areas.

Early migration study in anthropology was influenced by Redfield's (1941) rural-urban continuum, which portrays rural life as traditional and urban life as modern. Among the early concerns of migration study in anthropology was the likelihood of return and its social and cultural implications both for the migrant and for the home community. In more recent years, there has been considerable emphasis on the question of how migrants see themselves and whether they envision themselves as having given up their former residence and taken on a new identity in their new home. While paying attention to economic factors of push and pull, anthropologists typically place greater emphasis on understanding the social and cultural context in which decisions to migrate and decisions to return are made. These tend to involve a focus on household decision making and on kinship bonds and obligations, as well as analysis of the cultural norms and social arrangements surrounding property transfer, including inheritance.

Today anthropologists study migrants in the receiving community, those who have returned to their original homeland, and those in the sending area who themselves may never have migrated but who are affected by migrant kin and neighbors. Some anthropologists follow migrants, generally between a home area and a single other destination. It is not uncommon for an anthropologist to begin her or his career working in a nonwestern society and then subsequently studying migrants from that society closer to (the anthropologist's) home. While some anthropologists engaged in these studies do surveys and examine quantitative data, most rely largely if not entirely on qualitiative methods. Typical of the latter is George Gmelch's (1992) study of the lives of migrants from the Caribbean island of Barbados. His book is based largely on oral histories collected from just 13 return migrants who had lived portions of their lives in Britain or North America. There is not a single table in the book.

While a good deal of the most recent anthropological work on migration has focused on migrants in the West, an older anthropological research tradition continues to focus on the role of migration in nonwestern countries. Here Africa has received the greatest attention. Anthropologists working in this area are apt to criticize various aspects of reigning social science theory on urbanization and migration. Cliggett (2000), for example, shows the inadequacies of an exclusive focus on economic factors in explaining who moves in Zambia and when and why they do so. By examining the nature of control over farming resources and its link to social support networks, she shows the importance of understanding the dynamics of local power relations. She concludes that "social organization and social conflicts over access to resources play as great a role in migration decisions as do economic and ecological factors" (2000: 125). This also leads her to emphasize the diversity of situations found among migrants, some of whom in fact did not want to return to their home communities, nor did they send remittances there.

In a different kind of study in the same country, James Ferguson—whose intellectual links are closer to postmodernism and postcolonial studies than Cliggett's, which lie closer to the traditions of British social anthropology and demographic anthropology—looks at urban life on the Zambian Copperbelt. Showing the cruel delusions suffered by Zambians who bought into the myth of "modernization," Ferguson identifies two different cultural patterns in the city that reflect people's migration strategies. He found that discussions of the urban dwellers' decision of whether to retire back in "home" rural communities "centered less on such straightforward social and economic matters than on what we might call the cultural characteristics necessary for successful rural retirement." In considering what life would be like for them in rural retirement, people "turned quickly from questions of remittances or visits to matters of dress, styles of speech, attitudes, habits, even body carriage" (1999: 83). Curiously, while Ferguson himself rejects modernization theory, his informants all embraced it, lamenting the fact that their lives are suspended between two worlds, one modern, industrial, urban and western, the other traditional, rural, and African. In coping with this divide, people in the city adopted either what Ferguson terms a "localist" cultural style, more in harmony with rural norms and signaling a commitment to continued attachments to rural communities, or a "cosmopolitan" style, including characteristic modes of dress, speech, and behavior, signaling a rejection of such ties.

The large and rapidly growing body of anthropological studies of immigrants in the United States and other western countries has focused on a variety of issues, including the importance of immigrant networks in social, economic, and cultural adaptation, the changing nature of gender norms, and the role of religion and religious institutions. Among the most active researchers in this area is Leo Chavez (1991), whose studies of Mexican migrants to the United States have given special emphasis to the plight of illegal (or "undocumented") migrants. Here he shows the importance of studying the reception that migrants receive in the host community as a means of understanding the nature of their adaptation.

Taking this approach a step further, Cole, in his study of immigrants in Sicily, focuses attention on what he calls "everyday European responses to immigrants" (1997: 130). He finds that the Sicilians, contrary to some expectations, did not exhibit marked racist views. Based on participant observation and related qualitative methods, he unearths a much more subtle dynamic in the tensions that beset relationships between the immigrants and the "natives." Such anthropological studies have increasingly come to focus on questions of changing conceptions of national identity in the receiving societies, as in the case of the reception that the large population of Turkish immigrants has experienced in Germany (White 1997).

New York City is the site of an especially large number of anthropological studies of migrant adjustment, with research on Dominicans and assorted other Caribbeans, Russians, Chinese, Koreans, West Africans, Indians, Mexicans, southeast Asians and others (Foner 2000, 2001). A good example is offered by Margolis's study of Brazilians in New York. Motivated in part by the fact that Brazilians were a largely invisible minority in New York, lost amidst the sea of "Hispanics," Margolis combined a survey based on snowball sampling with informal interviewing and participant observation to produce an ethnography of "Little Brazil." She was particularly interested in examining the permanency of the migration. While people mainly viewed themselves as "sojourners," in the U.S. only temporarily to make money before returning to Brazil

(a status reinforced by the fact that many lacked legal migrant status), she found that, as in so many other similar migrant cases, many of these sojourners became permanent migrants. Moreover, she also identified a pattern she termed "yo-yo migration" (1994: 263), the remigration to the U.S. of people who had said they were returning to Brazil "for good."

Of special interest to a number of anthropologists working in this area is the question of women's lives and the relation of gender norms in the sending and receiving societies. Typically a contrast is found between more patriarchal norms prevailing in many nonwestern or poorer sending societies and norms favoring greater gender equality in the major western receiving societies. Rather than viewing women as more traditional than men—a classic view in western social science—this line of work has viewed women as less eager to return to the home community insofar as such a move would mean giving up a degree of autonomy only available in the destination society (Gmelch and Gmelch 1995). Hirsch (1999), in order to get a better handle on these issues, studied Mexicans both in their home community in western Mexico and in the receiving community of Atlanta, comparing pairs of sisters or sisters-in-law living on either side of the border. She found that the women in Atlanta were better able to achieve their goal of a companionate marital relationship.

In recent years, a growing number of anthropologists have called for a reconceptualization of migration study—away from a dichotomous notion of sending and receiving communities and toward a transnational model of life lived across national boundaries (Kearney 1995). "Transmigrants," as such people who maintain multiple familial, social, religious, and political relationships across borders are called, "take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously" (Glick-Schiller, Baseh, and Blanc-Szanton 1992: 1–2; Glick-Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton 1995). Whether this phenomenon is as new as some of its students suggest may be questionable. However, it is clear that recent developments in communication and transportation, as well as increased levels of wealth, have greatly facilitated it. The emphasis of transnationalism studies is on the network of relations tying people across national borders, viewing migrants not as situated in a geographical community (even an ethnic enclave), but rather as situated in transnational space.

The recent demographic interest in refugees has links to this transnational perspective, for the anthropologists who have turned their attention to refugee studies have emphasized the importance of examining just such transnational social networks and called for revision of common images of society as a territorially based entity (Marx 1990). Rather than view people in refugee camps as having their entire social lives circumscribed by their location, anthropologists have argued that people maintain important links with kin and others in a variety of locations, including their areas of origin. Without analyzing these links and these networks, studies of refugees will continue to produce unsatisfactory results. Lubkemann (2000), examining Mozambican refugees produced by the civil war, found that their lives and decisions could not be understood apart from an understanding of preexisting patterns of migration and gender relations. Moreover, their decisions as to whether and where to move following the ending of the war could similarly be understood only in terms of this larger understanding of cultural norms, social organization, and the meaning of geographical mobility.

METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

Anthropologists have had mixed feelings about the way in which the larger demographic community has viewed anthropological methodology. The fact that demographers, in discussing what anthropology might contribute to demographic research, often seem to have in mind only methods, and not theory, has been a sore point. However, the loose use of the term "anthropological methods," when qualitative methods in general are intended, similarly provokes dismay among anthropologists. Furthermore, anthropologists, in their recognition of the cultural construction of analytical categories, see an important potential contribution to be made in critiquing and improving survey and other quantitative methods of research.

The cornerstone of anthropological methodology has long been participant observation. Since the time of Malinowski, the goal has been total immersion in a culture and in people's daily lives so that their understanding of the world and the nature of their social relations can be understood in holistic context. A corollary of this is a focus on the difference between what people say they do and believe on the one hand and what they actually do and (more problematically) what they actually believe on the other. The implications of this emphasis for a field like demography, which is heavily dependent on survey research methods, are enormous. A survey researcher can ask a respondent how often she goes to church but rarely checks this against actual church attendance. For an anthropologist, it is just this disjunction that is of particular interest. Nonanthropological demographers have sometimes turned to focus group methods to deal with some of these issues, but while a kind of informal focus group approach is often used by anthropologists in their research, much greater weight is placed on observing behavior in normal social contexts.

In historical demographic studies, as well, differences are evident between the work done by anthropologists and nonanthropological demographers. In the latter (the Princeton European fertility study being a good example), heavy emphasis is placed on machine-readable data and statistical analysis. Anthropologists working on historical demographic topics, while typically employing such data and statistical methods, also tend to place heavy emphasis on qualitative archival sources aimed at explicating the political economic and cultural context (Kertzer 1993, 1997).

Anthropologists have challenged the use of standardized terms for cross-cultural or cross-national research. Typically, such concepts are based on western folk terms and then given the status of scientific instruments. What is meant by a household may be (relatively) straightforward in a western context (though becoming less so with children of divorced parents moving between two residences), but it is much more problematic in polygynous societies and where great population flux is endemic (Hollos 1990). Van der Geest (1998: 41) points out that even such a seemingly simple question as "Are you married?" may entail a series of assumptions that mean that the answer given is based on considerations that the survey researcher never had in mind. Such concerns have led some survey researchers to call on anthropologists to do preliminary research on cultural and social context and meanings that would allow them to construct better survey questions. However, this skirts the more fundamental problem of a lack of cross-cultural comparability in survey data.

Many anthropologists have been influenced in recent years by an interpretivist approach. This focuses on local knowledge and the cultural construction of reality and generates deep skepticism regarding the use of standard social categories for compara-

tive purposes. Some of its practitioners marry this approach to a concern for power relations, in which case the standard categories of social scientific analysis are of interest principally as objects of study in their own right, part of the dominant ideology that serves certain vested interests. Such a perspective tends to reject quantitative research, and, as is the case of Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1997), results in a call for "a demography without numbers." Castigating those anthropologists who would work as "handmaidens" to statistical demographic science, she argues that "the piling up of quantitative data that relies on biomedical and Western categories will not generate fresh insights" (1997: 219).[3]

Yet on closer inspection one finds that even the most arch antipositivists in anthropology cannot escape from an interest in such standardized and quantifiable data as those documenting the spread of AIDS or rates of infant mortality. Just as anthropologists would argue that demographers must submit their categories of analysis to a deconstruction that is sensitive to local cultural understandings and social practices, so too demographers can point to important realms of human experience that require the use of cross-culturally applicable categories of analysis. Those anthropologists who have over the past two decades been working self-consciously at the intersection with demography remain committed both to the need for fundamental rethinking of demographic categories and methods and to the search for methods that will allow cross-cultural analysis, generalization, and theory.

RESEARCH EXEMPLARS

The range of recent work in anthropological demography can be illustrated by the example of three anthropologists who have been working in close contact with the larger demographic research community. These studies show some of the contributions that anthropology can make and, especially, the role of anthropological theory in demographic research.

Monica Das Gupta, working in a British social anthropological tradition, focuses on the relationship linking kinship and inheritance systems, gender ideology, and demographic outcomes. While her work concentrates primarily on northern India, she is interested in much larger comparative issues as well. In a series of publications (Das Gupta 1987, 1995, 1997), she has explored links between kinship systems and demographic regimes, with a special focus on mortality. Demographers have paid considerable attention in recent years to the link between women's status and fertility. What Das Gupta does is to put the question of women's status in the larger context of kinship systems and to relate these not only to fertility behavior, but also to a range of other demographic variables. Employing a broader anthropological perspective and adopting a life course view, she also demonstrates the importance of not viewing women's status as a simple variable with a single value characterizing a particular society. Rather, depending on the kinship system and the coresidential arrangements that are linked to it, women may have greater or lesser autonomy and influence at different stages of their lives. Hence, in northern India, while young married women have very low status and

[3] Expressions of doubt regarding the ability of anthropologists working on demographic questions and more traditional demographers to combine their forces in a single interdisciplinary field of demography are also raised by Hill (1997) and Greenhalgh (1997).

little autonomy, once women become mothers-in-law themselves, they typically gain considerable domestic power. These patterns in turn are shown to have demographic consequences; young mothers are unable to get the resources they need to nurture their newborns (especially daughters) and hence face high likelihood of infant mortality. In addition, in their young adult years women face higher death rates than men of the same age. Yet, later in their lives, as their power increases, women are able to marshal greater resources and in fact show greater survivorship rates than men.

Susan Greenhalgh's (1995a) attempts to develop a political economy of fertility that incorporates both feminist and cultural perspectives has been noted earlier. In her own work examining the nature and effects of China's one-child policy, she further develops these theoretical ideas while placing demographic behavior in China in a perspective different from that commonly found in the demographic literature. The fact that the state plays a major role in shaping fertility behavior is certainly no surprise in the Chinese context. What Greenhalgh sheds light on, though, through her anthropological approach, is how state-level policy comes to be contested at the local level and how contestation by peasant women and men affects local-level implementation of the state policy. She refers to her approach as "negotiational," focusing on three aspects of "reproductive micropolitics." These include "resistance to the birth control program; negotiation over family size and contraceptive practice; and the consequences, both beneficial and deleterious, for women, their bodies, and reproductive outcomes" (1994: 6). She does not romanticize women's resistance. Quite the contrary, she points out its paradoxical effect, which enables women to raise more sons than daughters. She also recognizes that peasant culture is itself changing as a result of its exposure to the state's antinatalist campaign.

Partially influenced by feminist theory, anthropologists have in recent years paid increasing attention to the body, to the ways in which it is conceptualized and its metaphoric use in symbolizing the social world. Caroline Bledsoe (2002), drawing on this tradition and linking it to the demographic study of fertility, aging, and mortality, calls for a new way of thinking about demographic issues. Rooted in a collaborative study with demographers and assorted other scientists in The Gambia (Bledsoe, Banja, and Hill 1998), Bledsoe's work was influenced by her surprising finding that contraceptive methods were often used in this West African society to increase rather than to limit the number of births. She shows the importance of gaining an understanding of how local people themselves conceptualize reproduction and relate it to understandings of body, health, and social support. Here Bledsoe stresses the fact that western notions of linear time do not capture how the women under study think of their bodies and their reproductive lives. Understanding their reproductive behavior entails an understanding of Gambian ideas relating to the wearing out of the body occasioned by reproductive episodes. These include not only childbirth but also miscarriage and other events as well.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

Had it not been for a strong feeling within mainstream demography that anthropological methods and theory could help enrich the field, it is possible that anthropologists investigating demographic topics would have continued working in almost total independence of demographers studying the same topics. It is still the case today that much

of the anthropological work on such topics as fertility and migration takes place without reference to the demographic literature (and, one could add, vice versa). There are various reasons for this, including a certain degree of disciplinary insularity among anthropologists, as well as a strong antipositivist and antistatistical bias among many (but far from all) sociocultural anthropologists.

What has been so exciting about recent developments in anthropological demography, however, is that they have not simply come from the more behaviorist, or postivist, wing of anthropology, which is linked to studies of social organization. Rather, this new work has been enriched by anthropological theory on culture and the role of symbolism. The three research exemplars mentioned above all illustrate this in various ways, as political economic, social organizational, feminist, and symbolic theoretical strands from within anthropology are all brought into play.

Those demographers who, in calling for anthropological involvement in their field, simply sought advisors who would help them do better what they were already doing (e.g., in designing survey questions) may be either pleasantly or unpleasantly surprised that what they are getting is something quite different. Anthropological demography, as it is now developing, is poised to enrich demography as an interdisciplinary field by forcing it to confront some very basic epistemological and ontological questions. While this may produce some discomfort, the potential payoffs for both demography and anthropology are great.

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