CHAPTER 4

Demography of Gender

Nancy E. Riley

Over the last two decades, there has been a major shift in the way demographers think about issues of gender. In published accounts, the field has gone from a seeming lack of awareness that many demographic events are closely connected to gender to a nearly required nod to the relevance of gender. So have we broken through the barrier that has kept gender out of demography for so long? This chapter will argue that we have not completely removed the barriers to demographic work on gender but that headway is being made. This is a case of the half-empty and half-full glass. Depending on the angle from which we approach the issue, we can argue that things have changed radically in demography and that our knowledge of gender's role in demographic events has grown quickly and broadly over the last couple decades. Or we can point to the continuing weaknesses in the area of gender and demography.

This chapter will attempt to demonstrate that both perspectives have merit. It will draw on work from mainstream demography to demonstrate the progress that the field has made, both in understanding the importance of gender and in developing empirical support for the role of gender in demographic processes. The chapter will also discuss work from outside mainstream demography in order to suggest the paths and kinds of thinking that have yet to influence the field and which, if borrowed, might enrich demography's understanding of gender. The aim of this chapter is not to cover all the work on gender in demography but rather to illustrate and discuss how gender is studied and understood by demographers. To that end, it will illustrate arguments with relevant research and cover the types of work currently taking place. This chapter will focus on the issues of fertility and mortality; gender is equally important in migration, but space limitations and the different issues involved in that area of work necessitate separating these processes.

INTRODUCTION

Interest in gender has grown for a number of reasons. In some ways, interest has arisen in demography as it has in other disciplines and reflects a recognition of the importance of gender as an organizing principle of society. Thus to study nearly any social behavior requires some attention to gender. But attention to gender has also emerged for its potential ability to rescue the theory of demographic transition theory, which has been criticized and critiqued for its weaknesses in understanding and explaining cross-cultural demographic change (Greenhalgh 1996; Hirschman 1994; Szreter 1993). Increasingly, demographers argue that "women's position," or something like it, is a contributing factor in demographic change. Several scholars (Caldwell 1982; Cleland and Wilson 1987) connect women's position to demographic transition, either in the past or future. Although the empirical evidence has been insufficient to allow specific connections between fertility decline and women's position, there is nevertheless a continued belief that, if properly measured, understanding gender might contribute to demographers' understanding of the pattern of demographic transition.

Defining Gender

Gender can be defined as a pervasive system of patterned inequality. Gender operates on several levels across any society and plays a role in all aspects of social life, particularly because gender is an organizing principle in all societies. While most social scientists emphasize the social constructedness of gender, biology also plays a role (Udry 1994). Particularly important are reproduction and the differing roles that reproductive processes have played in women's and men's lives. The terms *sex*, denoting biological, and *gender*, denoting social, are often used to emphasize the different influences on gender, but most social scientists understand that such a seemingly simple dichotomy is more complicated than can be captured by such terminology. Even our definitions and understandings of sex and biology are socially constructed and, on the other side, the biological differences between women and men have been important to the ways that the social world is organized (see Riley 2003; Tuana 1983; Birke and Vines 1987). In addition, it is often difficult to separate biological and social aspects of human behavior, or to point to distinct biological and social influences on the differences between women and men. Real and perceived physical differences between women and men are often part of the meaning and organization of gender.[1]

While differences between individuals are important, as Chapter 1, "Age and Sex," illustrates, social scientists increasingly emphasize a broader definition of gender, which focuses on the ways societies are organized rather than on the attributes of individuals (Ferree, Lorber, and Hess 1999). From this perspective, the differences between women and men are of less central concern than the role that gender plays as a social institution. Like any other social institution such as social class, family, or economy, gender is a set of social and cultural practices that influences the lives of all women and men in the way that

[1] In his Presidential Address to the Population Association of America, Richard Udry (Udry 1994) emphasized and attempted to trace the biological origins of some gender differences. This chapter will focus on gender as a social construction, even while recognizing the obvious biological influences on human behavior.

it organizes society and interacts with other social institutions. Thus, gender helps to define and shape other social institutions but is also, in turn, defined and shaped by them. From this perspective, gender refers not just to differences between women and men but to the multiple levels at which gender operates, the ways those differences create and are created by societal and cultural norms, expectations, patterns of behavior and ideology, and the inequalities that result (Scott 1986). Gender operates in all spheres of society, from the economy, to education, to art and law (Marshall 2000). Family and marriage practices are also central pieces of the gender system that relate to demographic events, of course. In social systems where women marry early, where marriage is patrilocal, and where lineage is traced through the patriline, women seem to fare less well than in other social systems. As discussed later, in these kinds of systems, women may have a smaller voice in decisions that relate to illness, death, birth, or contraception.

There are no universal rules or patterns that allow us to know what kinds of societies or communities are likely to have more or less equitable gender systems (Yanagisako and Collier 1987). Women seem to fare better in communities where their traditional spheres of work are valued, even if those differ from men's. But it is also true that women's access to and control over those resources of the society considered most valuable—such things as land, money, steady work, political power, or time—influence their status and gender equality. Thus, while it is certainly important whether or not women have choices in their own lives, gender's more pervasive influence is probably not at this individual level but through its influences on the social, economic, and political contexts in which individuals live, make decisions, have children, and die.

Gender in Demography: Increasing Attention

How do we measure the amount and extent of scholarship on gender in demography? There are a number of signposts, and most suggest that work on gender has increased significantly over the last 15 years or so. Perhaps the best illustration of the recency of demography's attention to gender is the direct involvement of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP) in issues of gender (see Federici, Mason, and Sogner 1993). Early discussions in IUSSP led to a 1988 conference on "Women's Position and Demographic Change" and the establishment of a Gender Committee in 1990. Through a series of conferences on various topics related to gender, with many of the conference papers later published in volumes (Federici, Mason, and Sogner 1993; Mason and Jensen 1995; Presser and Sen 2000), IUSSP has provided a space for study and discussion of ways that gender is involved in demographic processes. This is not to say there had been no work on gender in demography before 1988, but it was at this time that more systematic and collaborative work began on this issue.

Whereas 20 years ago sessions directly related to gender were nearly absent from the Population Association of America's (PAA) annual meetings, now there are several sessions directly focused on gender at any annual PAA, dealing with a number of gender issues: from measurement of gender equality to gender influence on some demographic outcome to larger issues that certainly come from interests in gender, such as issues of domestic violence. In addition, questions related to or informed by gender research are integrated in additional PAA sessions, from those about teenage fertility in the United States to sessions on the impact of AIDS in Africa.

Another indicator of the attention to gender is the new interest in documenting the role of men in demographic outcomes, particularly in fertility outcomes. Men's roles in reproduction have long been ignored in most demographic projects. Even now, "most family demographic research on men has concentrated on the absence more than the presence of men in families" (Bianchi 1998: 133). In their examination of men's roles in fertility in western societies, Goldscheider and Kaufman (1996: 88) find that "the level of commitment between men and women is the key variable missing in the current study of fertility." Greene and Biddlecom (2000) suggest more serious and extensive oversights, however, when they argue that demographic models and assumptions do not permit the easy inclusion of men in our understanding of fertility outcomes. This is due in part to the fact, as Poston and Chang (2003) have observed, that fertility rates calculated for females need not be, and seldom are, the same as fertility rates calculated for males. Even as men continue to be missing from most demographic analyses, there is larger agreement on the importance of including men in the assessment of demographic change and an increasing amount of research is being undertaken in this area (see also Bawah et al. 1999).

Attention to gender has also come from reproductive rights activists. Although such perspectives have been present for some time (Freedman and Isaacs 1993; Cook 1993; Dixon-Mueller 1993; Kabeer 1994), their voices were especially heard during and after the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo. This conference, and the discussions surrounding it, put scholars and activists interested in gender, especially those from the Third World, onto the radar screen of demographers. Even in the disagreement of some mainstream demographers and in their concern of what was removed from the population agenda to make room for issues of women and gender (McIntosh and Finkle 1995), we see a new way of dealing with the issues surrounding gender. One of the most important contributions of the reproductive health activists has been the attention given to feminist projects. Feminist research is necessarily political, and the activist work relating to the Cairo conference made clear the connections among research, policy, and women's lives and encouraged those interested in gender to consider these connections (Petchesky 1997, 2000; El Dawla 2000; Desai 2000). While much of this work came from outside mainstream academic demography, it nevertheless has had an impact on the field. It has been influential in linking researchers and family planning practitioners, and has brought to demographers' attention feedback from actual users of contraceptives and family planning programs. Coming perhaps most forcefully from Third World feminists and practioners in health programs, these discussions have often been controversial, with parties from many sectors deeply engaged in the issues. These have not been merely ideological debates (see Presser 1997). Rather, while such discussions do continue, many have tried to incorporate the thinking and findings from the discussions into both research and health delivery programs. Thus, many of the recent changes in many family planning programs, from the dismantling of family planning targets in India to the role of the state in China, invoke, if they did not arise out of, discussions about reproductive rights.

Just how pervasive attention to gender has become is also seen in the way that issues of gender have become part of data collection projects. For example, the largest data collection project in demography, the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS), seeks to collect information on gender in a variety of ways. In addition to several questions on the standard DHS questionnaire, there are now separate modules on

women's status, on domestic violence, and modules for male respondents. While such modules are used only in selected countries, their development and use in such a large-scale survey endeavor are indicative of the understanding of the ways that gender is central in demographic change. In addition to the inclusion of these questions and modules, the researchers at DHS and its affiliates have focused on gender in their analyses and reports. For example, researchers at DHS (Blanc et al. 1996) reported on an experimental survey designed to measure the strategies and negotiations that women in Uganda use to achieve their reproductive goals. Using data from a DHS module on women's status in Egypt, Kishor (1994) reported on both the strengths and weaknesses of the survey measures and the survey's findings.

Also promising for the future of demographic work on gender is the number of new and younger scholars who have been working in this area to develop new techniques and theories to address old and new questions. At any large professional meeting of demographers, there are reports from new scholars who are working through some of these difficult questions. All indications, therefore, suggest that work on gender continues to draw significant interest and attention from demographers.

SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS

The most important and extensive contribution of recent work on gender is the way that gender issues have been regularly brought in to demographic inquiry; gender is now something that most demographers consider as they think about demographic behavior (see also Bachrach 2001). The significance of this cannot be overstated. As already noted, this attention and recognition may be traced through a variety of means, especially the way that gender appears in so many pieces of demographic research, is the subject of many panels at demography conferences, and is the theme of some smaller conferences. But in addition to putting gender on the map in demographic research, this new research has also raised a number of related substantive concerns. They will now be briefly mentioned, and then in later sections of the chapter further elaborated.

One area that has received sustained attention is measurement. Once we recognize that gender is a significant factor in social and demographic processes, its measurement becomes paramount. Measurement of gender has been difficult and not always successful. But the problems with measurement connect to issues of epistemology (what counts as knowledge or evidence and how we use that knowledge) and methodology (theory about how we acquire that knowledge). Thus, some researchers are wrestling with how to expand the models we use to measure demographic processes so they may better evaluate gender's role; others talk about abandoning those models and developing new ones. If we continue with old models, what aspects of gender do we want to measure and why? Are there better models to be found to examine gender and its role in demographic processes? These questions are at the core of much of the gender research currently underway in demography. Most demographers recognize that there are gaps in our knowledge in this area but differ in their suggestions and plans to fill those gaps. In addition, while most recognize the role of gender as both an independent and dependent variable, work has been much more focused on the former than the latter. All of these issues and questions underscore the complexities, difficulties, and importance of continuing work on gender in demography.

METHODS AND MEASURES

As in early work in other social science fields, the earliest demographic work on gender—which is still ongoing—documents differences between women and men. Differences in mortality and morbidity rates, educational attainment, or labor force participation have all been measured and documented. These data have contributed to our understanding of the different lives of women and men across the world, as many of the chapters in the *Handbook* demonstrate. While these findings are important, of course, they often do not go beyond the mapping of sex differences and do not capture the full impact of gender.

In recent years, demographers have been eager to find more comprehensive measures of gender. While women's labor force participation and education have regularly been used as "proxies" for gender, many demographers understand that these measures do not, in fact, represent the depth or scope of gender inequality in any society, and some have attempted to develop new measures. Balk (1994), for example, examined four different aspects of women's position in two villages in Bangladesh; she distinguished among mobility (how freely women move about in public), leniency (a woman's perception about what her family permits her to do), authority (women's participation in household decisions), and attitudes (a woman's opinions about women's rights in Bangladesh). She found that where women's autonomy is high, women's mobility and their household authority go far in explaining variance in total number of children ever born. "Thus," she concludes, "models of fertility that rely solely on proxy measures of women's status [such as education] will be underspecified" (Balk 1994: 1). Balk's research speaks to the complexity and necessity of understanding and measuring gender in new ways, well beyond the use of education and work. However, as will be clear in the next sections on empirical findings, it is easier to collect and explain measures of women's work or education than it is to work with other measures, ones that might give us a deeper understanding of how gender operates. For this reason and others, these measures constitute a large proportion of work which purports to understand the role of gender in demographic change.

One of the difficulties in measuring gender is trying to measure gender's effect at multiple levels (Smith 1989). Early on, Mason (1993: 24) identified the heart of the problem, and demographers have yet to solve this difficulty (see also Cain 1993). Mason argues that in societies which are relatively culturally homogeneous:

> an individual-level analysis cannot reveal anything about the impact on demographic change of women's position *as it is determined by the social institutions of gender*, unless the analysis covers a period during which these institutions have changed significantly. Cross-national or cross-cultural analyses conducted wholly at the aggregate level (for example, those in which countries are used as the units of analysis) avoid this problem, but often suffer from other shortcomings, for example, the problem of making inferences about individual behavior from correlations computed at the aggregate level (emphasis in original).

The availability of appropriate data is key, as Dixon-Mueller and Germain make clear. They have written that:

> National-level surveys such as the DHS, as valuable as they are for many purposes, tell us little about the social context of sexual and reproductive decision-making or women's empowerment. One needs more than statistical correlations to understand contexts. One needs to understand where the individual fits in larger configurations of individuals, couples, households, kin and peer groups, and communities—and in social structures marked by hierarchies of prestige, power, and wealth (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 2000: 72).

The above are examples of the kind of work that is more likely to address more central (and thornier) issues of gender. Further difficulties of capturing the central issues of gender are reflected in the debates and struggles in the demographic community over definitions and uses of concepts such as autonomy, empowerment, or women's status. Scholars are asking if gender is about power and inequality, how may power be measured? Autonomy, empowerment, or women's status each measures some aspect of power but is also problematic in some way. The discussions over the terms may be as valuable as the actual results and further underscore the very difficult task of trying to measure gender. While it is impossible to discuss all the measures that have been tested or used to measure gender, a sampling of some of the research and discussion shows the range, depth, and disagreements among these efforts (see also Kishor 1994; Balk 1994, 1997; Malhotra, Vanneman, and Kishor 1995; Kabeer 1999). As Mason (1993) argues, one of the major problems in the empirical literature on "women's position" is the varying terms and meanings of those terms to describe women's position and the ways that some authors do not make clear their definition or methods of measurement of this concept. Mason notes that two of the most important aspects of women's position are "women's control over resources compared to that of men [and] the degree of their autonomy from men's control" (Mason 1993: 19).

Nawar, Lloyd, and Ibrahim (1995) used data from two surveys from Egypt to flesh out measures of autonomy. They sought to measure how and to what extent women were able to make independent decisions regarding social activities, participation in the public sphere, and health-seeking behavior. While some characteristics such as urban residence, high levels of education, and some aspects of socioeconomic status are positively correlated with autonomy, the authors found that women from across social and economic categories were both restricted in their independence in decision making and at the same time had some control over those areas of their lives deemed most relevant to women, particularly in family planning and child rearing.

While these findings are interesting, particularly salient for this review are the ways the authors discuss the complexities of defining and measuring autonomy. The authors remind us that human behavior is not only influenced at the individual level, but is "embedded in economic and institutional systems, social norms and influence, and personal interconnection" (Nawar, Lloyd, and Ibrahim 1995: 152). They also point out that autonomy is influenced by the way that "the very definitions of appropriate gender behavior proscribe or encourage autonomy . . . [and how] women are socialized to express lower levels of autonomy than men, even when their actual behavior suggests otherwise" (Nawar, Lloyd, and Ibrahim 1995: 52). One of the most important points they make is how "cultures differ in the extent to which autonomy is valued and sought as a social 'good.' Contemporary Western societies may equate autonomy with power, independence, and privacy, all of which are highly valued. Non-Western societies often place higher value on social interdependence and the support and status achieved from belonging to a group" (Nawar, Lloyd, and Ibrahim 1995: 152–153).

Writing from the perspective of Southeast Asia, Errington (1990) makes a similar argument when she describes economic control as a manifestation of power in western societies but not a key aspect of power in many Southeast Asian societies; in such situations, she (Errington 1990: 7) argues, women's "economic 'power,' may be the opposite of the kind of 'power' or spiritual potency that brings the greatest prestige" (see also Riley 1997a, 1999). The ramifications of these societal differences for the study

of gender are enormous and are often overlooked in much demographic literature on gender. Even Nawar and her coauthors focus on absolute autonomy, not women's autonomy relative to that of men; without a larger sense of the overall gender system in Egypt, their measures are not able to capture some of the key issues of gender, which, as discussed above, relate to power and inequality between and among women and men.

In other work, scholars have attempted the further elaboration of women's autonomy. A very interesting analysis by Ghuman, Lee, and Smith (2001), for example, used results from a study conducted in five Asian countries. They examined the validity and reliability of measures of women's autonomy through an investigation of the sometimes contradictory responses of wives and husbands on questions related to women's independence and autonomy. They attempted to understand the relationships among the different responses but for the most part were not able to do so. They came to the conclusion that we cannot be confident that measures—including women's power to make economic decisions, their freedom of movement, their control over household resources, and attitudes about gender equality—capture gender and gender equality. They were struck by the instability of the measures, between wives and husbands, within the communities, and across different societies. Their research underscores a dilemma for those working on issues of gender in demography; while we may find associations between some of the measures and demographic outcomes, we must still be concerned with the validity of the measures as representative of gender. Thus we remain in the early stages of truly assessing gender's role in demographic outcomes.

Given the difficulties of capturing gender and its role in demographic outcomes using conventional demographic methodologies, qualitative approaches might provide useful alternative or complementary information. But there has been little discussion of the different value of qualitative and quantitative methods for assessing gender's effects in demography compared to that in neighboring fields, particularly women's studies (see Lather 1991; Jayaratne and Stewart 1991; Barrett and Phillips 1992; Fonow and Cook 1991; Maynard and Purvis 1994; Reinharz 1992; Riley 1999). It may be the predominance of quantitative work and the general preference for quantitative methods in demography (see Riley and McCarthy, 2003) that have resulted in relatively little attention to discussions of methodological strengths and weaknesses.

Nevertheless, as some have argued (Greenhalgh 1990; Scheper-Hughes 1997), qualitative methods might deepen our understandings of gender and other complex social processes; they are more likely to capture the messiness of social life than are the more parsimonious quantitative models. Qualitative methodologies, with their interpretive frameworks and underlying arguments against universalizing, may also be more likely to capture the shifting and varying notions of gender across national and cultural borders and ethnic and age groups. Related to these issues, qualitative approaches tend to be more constructionist than positivist (Warren 2002), thus following an epistemology that matches much theorizing on gender (Keller 1989). But these issues of epistemology and methodology are more complex than implied by a simple focus on the qualitative/quantitative divide, as we will discuss later in this chapter (see also Maynard 1994).

The importance of these discussions and issues becomes clearer when we examine the empirical evidence on gender and demographic change, and observe the successes, as well as the presence and extent of continuing gaps, in our understanding.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The volume of empirical findings about the role of gender in demographic processes has increased noticeably in recent years. Since 1993, when Watkins summarized the extent of our knowledge about gender as "a great deal about a limited range of women's activities and characteristics" (Watkins 1993: 553), progress has been made. Some of these findings are better characterized as sex differences (which Poston discusses in Chapter 1): women and men have different demographic outcomes, as do boys and girls. But here is where the distinction between gender and sex becomes important, and where the central issues of gender are key: the role of power, the socially constructed nature of gender, and the way that gender is a force at more than the individual level. While demographers are examining gender's effects in many areas of demography, we are probably more confident in our understanding of the role of gender in mortality than in our understanding of its role in fertility.

Morbidity and Mortality

As chapter 10, "Adult Mortality," makes clear, there is wide agreement that gender affects morbidity and mortality. As will become evident below, however, some of this agreement may be premature, as scholars are beginning to unravel some of the apparent connections between gender and mortality outcomes; while there may be clear and strong statistical associations between certain aspects of women's lives, it is not as clear how well these proxies accurately represent gender inequality or even women's empowerment—or what the pathways of influence are. The two areas that have received the most attention are maternal health and infant and child health. Maternal health has obvious connections to women's position in society. We know that women and men have different mortality and morbidity rates (see Chapter 10); we are now trying to understand the causes of those differentials and the role that gender inequalities play. It is also probable that gender affects child and infant health outcomes. Presumably, mothers will have a greater impact on their children's health and survival than will other family members, and mothers' position in the society may influence that impact.

MATERNAL HEALTH. Much of the research on women's health concerns maternal health—the health of women before, during, and after pregnancy. Maternal mortality is a very serious issue in some societies, where rates can be as much as 100 times the rates in industrialized countries with the lowest maternal mortality rates (McCarthy and Maine 1992). To some extent, maternal mortality is another aspect of sex-differentiated mortality outcomes: women are exposed to the risks of pregnancy, and men are not. But differences in women's and men's health are not only about exposure to risk; gender is also involved in the kinds of access women have to health services and in the ways that health care is structured and supported in any society or community.

Several studies (Santow 1995; Obermeyer 1993; Dixon-Mueller and Germain 2000; Sen and Batliwala 2000) have found that the more independence women have, especially the more freedom they have to move about the community, the more likely it is they will seek health care for themselves. The pathways of influence seem clear in most instances: when women have access to and the skills to understand health provision, they are more

likely to use it and use it effectively. In her study of Morocco and Tunisia, for example, Obermeyer (1993) found that in both countries, women who have higher education and are from a higher socioeconomic class are more likely to have received maternal care. As discussed below, Obermeyer argues that while these findings represent an argument for the positive influence of education on women's use of health care, education does not simply translate into better maternal care. The surrounding society and norms, particularly gender norms, also play a role.

An analysis undertaken in North India deepens our understanding of how women's roles and positions can influence their health. Consistent with the findings of other researchers, Bloom and colleagues (2001) found that women's autonomy (particularly their freedom of movement) is an important factor in health care utilization among poor and middle income women and that this impact is independent of other social and demographic factors such as education or number of children. The authors highlight the role of family structures and practices in these processes. They argue that in North India, "because women's lives are rooted in the domestic sphere, family and kinship are the key factors defining the parameters of their autonomy" (Bloom, Wypij, and Das Gupta 2001: 68). Women with closer natal ties are more likely to have greater freedom of movement, which in turn translates into greater use of prenatal care; the importance of this relationship is further underscored in the way that it explains the differences found between Hindus and Muslims. The authors argue that in this area of India, the key issue is not whether women can move about alone, but whether they can move about when and where they wish; contact with natal kin allows women to move about in the company of others, and it is this contact which seems to be an important part of health care utilization.

While maternal mortality is as obviously influenced by gender inequality as is overall maternal health, in many ways maternal mortality involves different pathways of influence. In some respects, we can see the handling of maternal mortality and morbidity risk as reflecting the seriousness that the health network of any society places on women's health and lives. Most pregnancy-related deaths cannot be reduced by some of the other interventions often promoted to improve the lives of people, especially women and children, in poorer countries. While access to better nutrition, prenatal and postnatal care, and primary health services have many benefits for women (and others), they are not the surest routes to lower maternal mortality rates. Such medical crises require more sophisticated and on-the-spot services such as surgical intervention, blood transfusions, and well-trained health personnel. Thus, to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, health facilities must be established to deal with the needs of pregnant women (Maine and Rosenfield 1999; McCarthy and Maine 1992; Ward and Maine 1994). Communities and health systems thus need to make special and directed efforts toward reducing maternal mortality in order to produce effective results.

Of course, maternal mortality is also, at least indirectly, related to the overall role of women through other pathways. If women are restricted in the roles they play in society, they may be more likely to have a higher number of pregnancies, putting them at increased risk for pregnancy complications. Thus maternal mortality is the immediate outcome of a lack of attention at the time of a pregnancy crisis, an outcome that many argue is preventable if health and government officials understand and take the issue seriously (Yamin and Maine 1999). But a further influence relates to the overall roles and options of women and the pressure they face to fill particular maternal roles.

INFANT AND CHILD MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY. We know that along with its effect on women, gender also shapes the processes surrounding the morbidity and mortality of the children women care for. Work in this area of demography has been long-standing, and while some early findings have been revised or even challenged, many early findings have held up to later scrutiny. Mosley and Chen's (1984) model depicting the pathways of influence on infant and child mortality points to several places where gender, and women's position in particular, play potentially key roles. Mothers are usually the family members most involved with children and their health concerns and so their position in the family, the community, and the society at large often acts as a mediating influence on children.

Other research has corroborated the influence of women's position on child health. For example, in an article published as early as 1986, Caldwell argued that women's status is a major factor in the reduction of infant and child mortality in many societies. He compared countries' economic status with the level of infant mortality and found that women's status helped to explain those places where the direction of the relationship was unexpected (that is, higher mortality in wealthier countries or lower mortality in poorer countries). In places such as Sri Lanka or Kerala, the lower-than-expected infant mortality rates can be explained by norms which allow girls to go to and stay in school and allow women access to the public sphere without sanction. In societies such as Oman or Morocco, the higher-than-expected rates could be attributed to limitations on women's movement and schooling imposed at the societal level.

But as others have pointed out, this connection between gender and mortality might be better characterized as one between mother's education and mortality outcomes (Mason 1995; Desai and Alva 1998). Research has consistently shown a strong link between mother's education and child health outcomes and has specified the possible pathways at both the individual and societal or community levels (Cleland and van Ginneken 1988; Kaufmann and Cleland 1994; Mosley and Chen 1984). Most have argued that because mothers are more likely to be closely involved in child care than are other family members, it is their behavior that will influence child health outcomes. Women who have freedom of movement, who have had schooling that allows them to read, who are confident in their ability to work with and through the health system, and who are self-assertive will be more likely to translate these characteristics into improved health of their children (Mosley and Chen 1984; Caldwell 1979; Caldwell 1986).

In spite of these apparent and quite reasonable-sounding connections, however, recent research has questioned the strength and pervasiveness of the relationship. Desai and Alva (1998), for example, analyzed DHS results for 22 countries and found that while a mother's education is significantly correlated with child immunization, even controlling only for household socioeconomic status and community of residence[2] reduces the connection between infant mortality and mother's education and is significant only in a few countries. Their work suggests that the role of maternal education in infant health is not as clear, consistent, or as strong as once believed (Caldwell 1994; Mason 1995), nor is it easily separated from other measures of socioeconomic status.

[2] The authors argued that had they been able to control other key variables such as race/ethnicity and income, the relationship would have been further weakened.

Other research has tried to move beyond using the proxies of education (or work) to understand how women's position is related to infant and child health. Two pieces of research illustrate this line of inquiry (see also Desai and Jain 1994; Kishor 1993). Using DHS data from Egypt, including a specific module on women's status, Kishor (2000) examined influences on infant health and survival. She identified 32 indicators of women's "empowerment" and divided these into three groups: indicators of *evidence* of, *sources* of, and *setting* for women's empowerment, each of which can play a part in gender's role in child outcomes. Her analysis led her to conclude that certain family structures that give women decision-making control have the largest effect on infant health and survival. But perhaps her major contribution was her evidence demonstrating the many facets of women's position that can influence child outcomes and the contradictory effects of those facets. Her work underscores the difficulty of capturing gender's effects and the dangers of trying to do so in models which work best with a limited number of variables.

Durrant and Sathar (2000) conducted an investigation to identify the aspects of women's status that are most likely to influence investment in children, particularly those related to infant survival and children's schooling. They explored and elaborated on the conflicting findings from other studies (e.g., Kishor and Parasuraman 1998; Basu and Basu 1991) that suggested that women's work outside the home affects child and infant survival. They argued that these studies support an understanding of women's status as "elusive, multidimensional, and hard to measure" (Durrant and Sathar 2000: 10). They then broke down the concept *women's status* into independent- and community-level components (including such variables as women's ability to move about outside the house, women's fear of their husbands, decision making regarding children's lives, and access to resources). They sought to determine which of them influence child health and schooling outcomes.

They found that higher female status at the individual level, as measured by less physical abuse by husbands, greater access to financial resources in the household, and fewer restrictions regarding purdah, was negatively associated with infant mortality. But children's schooling, particularly that of girls, was less subject to women's status at the individual level. In this case, mothers' individual situations have less of an effect than do community-level measures of women's status, most notably higher mean levels of women's mobility and a lower percentage of women in the community who fear to disagree with their husbands. Durrant and Sathar's findings are important not only because of the obvious policy implications but also because they underscore the ways that women's status is multidimensional and the ways these different measures (at both individual and community levels) differently affect various demographic outcomes. Community-level aspects of gender interact with—attenuating or enhancing—individual aspects of gender. Further, these influences and interactions are likely to vary by context.

From some provocative and important research (Jejeebhoy 1998; Rao and Bloch 1993), there is increasing evidence that violence against women is not only widespread in some societies and obviously connected to women's physical survival and well-being but also has significant ramifications for infant and fetal health and death. Jejeebhoy's (1998) analysis connects women's higher rates of infant and fetal mortality with wife beating. She argues that there are two reasons for the connection: a pregnant woman who is beaten is more likely to experience a miscarriage and those who are beaten are less likely to have the kind of power that they might use to further their own or their infants' health and well-being. "As a consequence, their health-care seeking and nutri-

tion are compromised, and they are more likely than other women to experience fetal mortality, to deliver babies of low birth weight whose survival is generally uncertain, and to have less decision-making authority or confidence in caring for their infants'' (Jejeebhoy 1998: 305).

An interesting finding in this study is that the relationship between women's experience of being beaten and fetal and infant loss remains statistically significant and strong even after introducing controls for age, education, economic status, and indices of a woman's autonomy. While this relationship holds in both the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and the southern state of Tamil Nadu, it is stronger in the north, where women have less power than do those in the south. This research is strong evidence of the way that gender—here evidenced in physical threats to women's lives and health—has long-term and far-reaching consequences, for women themselves as well as their children.[3]

From these and other studies on gender and mortality, it has become evident that gender's role in mortality and morbidity outcomes is not as clear-cut as once thought. Gender plays a role in child health even before birth in the ways that pregnant women are treated and have access to health care. As we have seen here and in other chapters in this *Handbook*, girls and boys often have different health and survival outcomes, and many of them are socially induced. Maternal health and mortality are also outcomes of gender's influence, again at different points in women's lives. But as complex as are the relationships between gender and mortality and morbidity, these relationships are nevertheless better understood than is gender's role in fertility (Mason 1993; Durrant and Sathar 2000).

Gender and Fertility

The connections between gender and fertility at the community/societal level are clearly strong but complicated. Mason (1993: 30ff) has hypothesized seven major links between women's position and fertility. These include the ways that women's economic and social independence might delay age at marriage and how women's access to knowledge and technology can influence women's ''innovative behavior,'' including fertility regulation. A series of potential links revolves around the way that women's position in society can influence motivations to limit fertility within marriage. Women will be less interested in limiting the number of children when their roles, status, and respect derive particularly from their position as mothers and when they are dependent on males (husbands and sons).

Several scholars (Bloom, Wypij, and Das Gupta 2001) have suggested that family structure—whether it is patriarchal, patrilocal, and/or patrilineal—and the kind of contact women have with their natal family will also affect fertility. In families organized around and traced through men, the material rewards of childbearing accrue to men more than to women, while women bear the physical burdens. In such situations, where women do not often have as much voice in childbearing decisions, family patriarchs do not support fertility limitation (Caldwell 1982; Folbre 1994). But evidence also shows that women, too, have reason for wanting children in such family structures. Evidence from

[3] Violence against women has drawn increasing attention from demographers, as a recent Population Reports testifies (Heise, Ellsberg, and Gottemoeller 1999).

China (Wolf 1972) and India (Cain 1991; Cain, Khanam, and Nahar 1979) indicates that women's vulnerable position in these families and households makes them highly dependent on males. Creating a "uterine family" (Wolf 1972) consisting of daughters and, especially, sons, will give them love and support that help to counteract their disadvantaged position, especially if they become widowed (Cain 1991).

Related to these issues is another: what women do when they have a voice in fertility outcomes. While some presume that women want fewer children than do their husbands, the evidence for this is not consistent across social settings. Mason and Taj (1987), for example, reviewed studies conducted in many social settings and found that there was no strong or consistent evidence for women preferring fewer children than men. This finding is consistent with that of other studies. In their study of Nepal, Morgan and Niraula (1995) found that women do not want more children than men, and in a study of five Asian countries, Mason and Smith (2000: 308) found "no evidence that gender stratification influences spouses' agreement about whether to stop having children."

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION. As in the area of mortality, we are more certain about the links between certain variables, such as women's education or women's labor force participation, and fertility outcomes. And although these variables do not cover or even represent the full range of gender influences, the connections are important to our understanding of fertility, fertility differentials, and fertility change.

In a review of recent findings, Castro Martin (1995) used DHS data for 26 countries to demonstrate both the connections between women's education and fertility and the complexities and variability in this relationship. Her findings are consistent with previous studies (Cochrane 1979, 1983; Cleland and Rodriguez 1988) that found that while education had a generally negative relationship with fertility, the magnitude and direction of the effect of education also differed depending on the economic development of the country. Castro Martin found that in virtually all societies, women with the most formal education have the lowest levels of fertility.

However, the magnitude of difference between those with the least and most education varied widely across societies. The largest differences were found in Latin America. She related this gap to "a highly polarized social structure, in which the living standards of the upper social strata contrast sharply with those of the lower strata" (Castro Martin 1995: 190). In sub-Saharan Africa, in contrast, education has a weaker effect on fertility; in some countries in the region, fertility is actually higher among women with some schooling than among those with no schooling, although Jejeebhoy (1995) has observed that in most places, this pattern does not hold true for more highly educated women. Researchers have pointed to the ways that education might affect fertility: delayed marriage, changed fertility preferences, and increasing contraceptive (particularly modern) use all are potential results of women's education (Castro Martin 1995; Jejeebhoy 1995; Weinberger, Lloyd, and Blane 1989; Cleland and Rodriguez 1988; Sathar, et al. 1988).

THE ROLE OF WORK. The connections between women's work and fertility outcomes are even more complex and difficult to disentangle than those related to education; while giving us important information about fertility, they are not necessarily fully informative about the role of gender in fertility outcomes. For some years, drawing

from the experience of western societies, demographers believed that fertility had a linear and negative relationship to women's work. Indeed, that relationship was consistent across many industrialized societies (Singh and Casterline 1985) and, partly based on that information, the same relationship was assumed to hold in other places. In fact, in less industrialized societies this relationship is sometimes evident. Results from DHS surveys, for example, show that across many societies, women who work for cash have lower fertility rates than those who do not work for cash. This relationship is evident in places as diverse as Botswana, Bolivia, and Kenya (Muhuri, Blanc, and Rutstein 1994: 10). But the connections between fertility and women's work are complex. Even in industrialized countries, scholars point out, ideological change seems to have as large a role as work in changing fertility levels (Chafetz 1995; Mason and Jensen 1995).

Widely used cross-national surveys such as the WFS and DHS have not always been useful for untangling the complex relationships. In her assessment of World Fertility Survey results and their strengths and weaknesses in helping us understand the fertility/work connection, Lloyd (1991) argues that while these surveys offer important descriptive evidence of differing relationships between fertility and women's work, "these cross-sectional fertility and family planning surveys have taught us very little about the causal mechanisms underlying work-fertility relationships. The challenges and frustrations of working with these data have sharpened our understanding of the strengths and limitations of large-scale cross-national surveys" (Lloyd 1991: 157).

One of the major difficulties in understanding the relationship between work and fertility is connected to the problems of measurement of women's work (Dixon 1982; Oppong 1994; Anker 1994). When women work full-time throughout the year, information on their participation in the paid labor force is relatively easy to gather. However, throughout the world, women—more often than men—work part-time, part of the year, and in the informal sectors of the economy. Unpaid work also influences demographic outcomes (Desai and Jain 1994). These aspects of women's work undoubtedly influence all aspects of women's lives in some ways, including childbirth, but are difficult to measure accurately. And even if we have accurate measures of work, we know that the reasons that women work differ from setting to setting, and from woman to woman, and these differences underscore the different meanings of work. Thus, although whether women work (for wages or not) is an important piece of information, for the purposes of understanding its use in measuring gender, it is necessary to know a great deal more about that work, including its meaning to a woman, her family, and her community (for a fuller discussion of these issues, see Riley 1998).

What do these findings about the connections between education and work on the one hand and mortality and fertility on the other suggest about gender? Because of their relative ease of collection, education and work have been widely used as proxies for gender, empowerment, and women's status in demographic research. That use has strengths and weaknesses. In the details of the pathways of influence of education or work on fertility and mortality, we can see possible linkages. For example, paralleling Caldwell's arguments about infant mortality (noted earlier), Castro Martin (1995) has argued that the overall level of education in a community may have a larger effect on fertility levels than does average length of schooling among individuals who have attended school. While community educational resources are related to overall community resources, we can expect gender to play a role in the differential access of

women and men which results in different levels of school attendance and graduation rates. Jejeebhoy (1995) has further argued that in highly gender-stratified communities, women's education does not necessarily translate into social or economic self-reliance, even though it may have an influence on fertility outcomes.

Similarly, women's access to work is not universally interpretable as representing increased status or power. While in some cases, women's access to labor force participation may increase their independence from family resources, it is also true that labor force participation and education, no matter how strongly linked to fertility or mortality outcomes, do not in themselves capture the role of gender. Folbre (2001), for example, discusses how gender ideologies and inequalities are part of social and legal institutions in industrialized societies and remain potent influences in the organization of family and work life. She argues that this influence has contributed to the low fertility trends seen across the western world. How these differences might or might not be related to gender or differential power is a separate question. In different contexts, education and work have different meanings and different uses. As will be detailed below, it is the meaning of the behavior, meaning that arises from the social, economic, and cultural context, that is likely to give us clues to gender's influence (for empirical work on this issue, see Kishor 1993).

Increasingly, demographers are moving to other means to try to understand the role of gender in demographic outcomes. Many have attempted to understand gender as a complex issue and have tried to capture its influence through various methodologies. Some research has focused on power and empowerment as key ways to understand gender; others have looked at resistance to policies and norms to understand gender's role. Several scholars have examined the way that gender's role in institutions such as the economy or state has been linked to demographic outcomes. I will examine some of the strands of this work here and discuss it and other perspectives on gender in the next section.

RESEARCH FINDINGS: NEW ISSUES AND METHODOLOGIES

Power and Empowerment

Recently, demographers interested in understanding gender's role in fertility and mortality have focused on the issues of power and empowerment. While not all agree that this is the best way to understand gender's role in demographic behavior, this work has nevertheless produced insights into these issues, as suggested above in our discussions of Balk (1994) and Durrant and Sathar (2000). Discussion of a few pieces of research cannot do justice to all that is being done but will give the flavor and general direction of the field. In research on the determinants of contraceptive behavior in Ethiopia, Hogan, Berhanu, and Hailemariam (1999) relied heavily on conventional measures of women's position, including literacy, women's work, and age differences between spouses. They found that literacy, in particular, influences women's knowledge of and use of contraception. Those measures, as we have seen, are not particularly useful proxies of women's position, even though they help to explain contraceptive behavior. But these researchers have also included a measure that more directly gauges women's position: their involvement in household decisions. They found that rural women who are highly involved in household decisions are 36% more likely to use a contraceptive than are those who are

less involved. While the mechanisms of this relationship are not fully spelled out, this research and others like it suggest that women's contraceptive and fertility behavior is linked to their role in their households.

Other researchers have delved further into the issue of women's power, either at the community or the household level, to examine the relationship between power and demographic outcomes. Unequal structures of power are present at many, and often several, layers of society, as these examples indicate. Browner's (1986) work on an indigenous community in Mexico has demonstrated how women's inability to resist community expectations of fertility can result in their having more children than they prefer. While the Mexican government pressured women to limit their births, many in their own community believed that high fertility would help to stave off ethnic elimination. In this situation, women were caught between two conflicting pressures. Even those who wanted to limit their fertility were unable to realize their desires. Not only did they have to negotiate these competing pressures, but their unequal access to decision-making power relative to village men also played a role. In this village, then, women's difficulty in navigating both the larger political tensions and structures and the household dynamics meant that fertility remained high despite government efforts and women's desires.

Kerala, India, has often been used as an example of a place where women's status has had a strong negative correlation with fertility. Many have argued that women's high levels of education are influential in Kerala's low fertility rates. Using Kerala Fertility Survey data from three Kerala districts, Rajan, Ramanathan, and Mishra (1996) found that the pathways of influence are more complicated than this simple correlation might indicate. They argue that the increase in female literacy and the rise in women's age at marriage were actually the outcome of other processes. With increases in male schooling came an increased demand for brides with higher levels of schooling. Parents were thus compelled to educate their daughters to make them more eligible marriage partners. Women's increased levels of schooling, in turn, meant later age at marriage.

Their results suggest that gender's role is best understood by examining not only women's behavior and characteristics but men's as well. They found, for example, that although higher education is associated with greater autonomy for women (defined through a series of measures related to sources of income, buying power, and independence in seeking health services for their children), Keralan women, in general, do not have a high level of autonomy. Most women do not retain control of their income or property, and most women have to seek their husband's permission when they want to make purchases. Thus, while the relationship between women's education and fertility remains robust, Rajan and colleagues concluded that, given the pathway of influence, it is better characterized as the effect of the wife's *and* husband's education on fertility outcome.

Marriage timing is also a key issue in recent fertility in Japan: delayed marriage age has substantially influenced falling fertility rates in that country. Here again, changes in women's position have been central to these demographic changes. Tsuya (2000) has examined marriage behavior of young Japanese women and has argued that women view marriage more negatively than do men, and unmarried women residing with their parents are particularly likely to see the negative consequences (both psychological and material) of marriage. The subordination of and constraints placed on women within marriage makes these issues particularly salient. As Tsuya has phrased it, "the institution of marriage is not serving the needs and desires of adult Japanese, especially

Japanese women, well'' (Tsuya 2000: 343). She argued that marriage delay thus can be seen as evidence of young Japanese women's empowerment; they use their education, jobs, and living situations (often with their parents) to postpone marriage and remain independent as long as possible.

A study done in Nigeria takes a different perspective on how gender might influence demographic outcomes—in this case fertility. Renne (1993) has asked, Why do beliefs about women and men and their place in society affect decisions about reproduction? She found that men continue to dominate in most areas of this Yoruba village; men are the property owners, families are patrilineal, and ''the husband is the head of the wife,'' (Renne 1993: 346) as one respondent stated. But even within this male-dominated setting, women (and men) find strategies to obtain their reproductive goals. Renne argued that now that women are receiving more education, there has been an ideational shift in that women feel an enhanced self-worth that allows them to argue that they should take part in reproductive decisions. They are more likely to discuss contraceptive use and reproductive goals with their husbands and to assert their own ideas and goals in this area of family life. Here, then, women's increased power has not resulted in changes in overall male dominance but has given women new strategies to achieve their own goals in this one important area of their lives.

Thus, in these studies we can see how gender influences demographic outcomes through women's use of power in smaller or larger areas of their lives. While researchers are still endeavoring to measure women's power and status in ways that truly capture what is happening in their lives, this research has underscored the importance of power in understanding gender's role.

Identifying Resistance

Research that has sought out and analyzed incidents of resistance has also contributed to the understanding of gender's role in demographic change. Resistance, of course, comes in many shapes and has any number of directions or targets. Women or men might resist their proscribed roles as wives, husbands, fathers, or mothers; they can resist those who keep them from their own goals; they might resist policies (pronatalist or antinatalist policies, for example); or they could resist something even less tangible, such as new changes that influence their lives. Resistance may be overt and direct, like the collective protests over abortion and abortion rights in the United States (Ginsburg 1989; Luker 1985) or it may consist of small, hidden acts that may be difficult to identify as resistance (Scott 1990; see Kligman 1998 on Romania's population policies and resistance to them).

We have already seen evidence of resistance in some of the literature discussed above. For example, young women in Japan are resisting by postponing marriage. In that case, they are resisting the expected roles of adult women. While the motivation of such resistance may be individual (women are not taking to the streets as a group to protest marriage), the outcome may have effects well beyond the individual level. As Tsuya argues, the resistance exhibited by young women suggests that in order to stop or reverse the fertility decline and other societal changes caused at least partly by this marriage delay, large societal changes might be necessary. In particular, she argues that ''we need to make the gender system more equitable by bringing about changes in different spheres of the society . . . home, market, and government'' (Tsuya 2000: 344).

In this case, then, we have an example of how gender relations in the society affect demographic changes which may in turn affect gender relations.

A similar case of individual resistance culminating in changes in gender relations at the societal level can be seen in China, although in a significantly different way. As Greenhalgh (1994), White (2000), and others have reported, women in rural China often resist the birth planning policy that limits their fertility, but that resistance is often hidden from others. Thus, some women who are pregnant with an "out-of-quota" (thus illegal) child hide from authorities (and others) until the birth; other women quietly remove IUDs that have been inserted during official birth control campaigns; still others resort to the abortion of female fetuses or the abandonment of girl infants. These resistances suggest a way that women assert their own goals and mechanisms to achieve a more desirable family size or structure. These actions testify to both women's disagreement with the policy and the "influence of traditional patriarchal culture . . . which . . . places family loyalty and filial obligation, not socialist ethics, at the center of the childbearing calculus" (White 2000: 111).

Although women's actions in these situations are not the kind commonly referred to when we talk about "empowerment," they are nevertheless acts of assertion of power. As Scott (1990) has reminded us, we have to look for these kinds of "hidden transcripts" of resistance in the actions of those outside the realm of formal power, in this case village women who are subject to official birth planning policy. The irony is that as women in China resist the birth planning policy, they are also accommodating to societal and family norms that value males over females (White 2000). Thus, sex-selective abortions and the abandonment or outright killing of girl babies has resulted in an alarming number of "missing girls," a very unbalanced sex ratio at birth, with other serious consequences for the future, including the numbers of men who will not be able to find women to marry. As Greenhalgh has argued, when the state accommodated peasants' desire for sons by allowing those with only a daughter to try to have a boy, it was evidence of the state's public recognition of "the unequal value of daughters and sons . . . Thus . . . son preference . . . [was] incorporated into the formal population policy of the province" (Greenhalgh and Li 1995: 625, 627).

We see another kind of resistance in Kenya. There, among the Luo, women's use of contraceptives may be undermining men's control over their families. In that setting, men's dominance has rested on their ability to control important material and symbolic wealth and the connections those various components of wealth and prestige could bring: "Cattle were used primarily as bridewealth, which legitimated control over the women who would produce the children that would perpetuate the husband's lineage" (Watkins, Rutenberg, and Wilkinson 1997: 216). While men continue their economic control and domination today, they have not been able to control women's reproduction in the same way. Watkins and her colleagues attribute this change to the new family planning programs, introduced by outsiders to the culture, which have made contraception easy to obtain. Consequently, Luo women have been able to make decisions about contraception and reproduction that their husbands may disagree with. While most women do not use birth control secretly, the fact that some do, or that it is clearly a possibility, has undermined a vital aspect of men's dominance in the family and society. This contraception availability is "a . . . fundamental challenge to the fulfilment of what men traditionally considered to be one of the major elements, if not *the* major element, of the good life: children that will in turn produce cattle that can be exchanged for wives who will bear more children" (Watkins, Rutenberg, and Wilkinson 1997: 239). In this

setting, women's position in the society, particularly vis-à-vis their husbands, has been influenced by the introduction and spread of fertility control measures.

Gender Change Out of Demographic Change

In all of these cases of resistance, we can see another way of viewing the relationship between gender and demographic behavior: the way that the direction of influence can vary. In Kenya, increased access to contraceptives has given women new space to negotiate their relationships to men. In Japan, lower fertility and delayed marriage may lead to changes in women's and men's lives that will result in increased opportunities for women outside the home and/or more shared responsibility by men for home and child care tasks. In China, lower fertility has come with high sex ratios at birth and new dangers to girls and women living under two competing pressures from the state and the family. While there are many ways that demographic change could influence gender relations and hierarchies in a society, this is not an area that has received a lot of attention. The work above speaks to the importance of this aspect of demographic change. Perhaps the bulk of research in this area has been done in industrialized settings. There, where fertility has dropped to low levels, there is considerable evidence that this change has contributed to changes in women's position in the society. For example, Rindfuss and Brewster (1996) found strong evidence for the way that fertility desires and outcomes in industrialized countries are influenced by the organization of work and the availability of child care. The diversity in fertility rates across industrialized countries can be partly explained by the ease or difficulty women face in trying to combine work and family roles (see also Chesnais 1996; Pinnelli 1995; Folbre 1994). This work and the research reported above in Japan, China, and Kenya speak to other ways that demographic change can influence women's position in society and the kinds of research focuses that are possible in this area.

Toward Broader Thinking about Gender

Most recently, we have witnessed the beginning of even broader thinking about gender and its role in demographic change. As illustrations of the contributions that such work can make, two pieces of such work, both on the issue of Islam and women, will be mentioned. They underscore the difficulty of doing this kind of work in demography and lead to a discussion of the theoretical issues in the study of gender in demography, the focus of the following next section. Obermeyer (1992) and Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) have tackled the relationships among gender, Islam, and demographic processes. Obermeyer (1992: 34) examined "the 'fateful triangle' model that sees a pernicious association between Islam, women, and demographic outcomes." She argued for disentangling these elements of social behavior and for a recognition of the wide variation with Arab countries on each of them. Women's status, however measured, varies enormously from one culture to another, as do fertility and mortality rates. Obermeyer makes a strong argument for the importance of understanding the cultural and social underpinnings of those differences and of the ways that Islam both shapes and is interpreted in different cultural and economic settings. Thus, we cannot assume a simple causal relationship between Islam and women's status or demographic outcomes;

rather, research "must include in-depth investigations of the context in which decisions about fertility and health are made" (Obermeyer 1992: 50).

Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001) were also concerned with the ways that Islam is assumed to affect women's status and fertility. Using data collected in South Asia, they were able to look at regional and religious influence across several settings. Their data include information from both Muslim and Hindus in three different regions: Punjab Province, Pakistan; Uttar Pradesh in North India; and Tamil Nadu in South India. By comparing the many permutations of religion, region, and economic setting, they were able to demonstrate that many of the assumptions about Islam and women's position are not supportable with these kinds of data. By many measures, women in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh—both Hindu and Muslim—are more constrained and have less access to resources than do women—again both Hindu and Muslim—in Tamil Nadu. Thus, they argue, their "findings clearly suggest that differences between Indian and Pakistani women can be attributed neither to nationality nor to religion. Rather, after controlling for the effect of a host of sociocultural factors, every indicator of autonomy remained strongly conditioned by region within the subcontinent, with Tamilian women (representing women from the south) experiencing significantly greater autonomy than women from either Uttar Pradesh or Punjab (jointly representing women from the north)" (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001: 706).

Further, they found that the levels and determinants of women's autonomy vary widely among the settings. Whereas in the south, education enhances women's position, higher autonomy for women in the north seems to come from "traditional factors conferring authority on women—age, marital duration, number of surviving sons, nuclear family residence and dowry" (Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001: 704). These projects and others underscore the importance of context in understanding even those seemingly common elements of different societies and the dangers of assuming or attempting to measure what appear to be universal characteristics across settings, such as religion or women's status. In this research, both Islam and women's status vary and interact differently, depending on context, reminding us of how complex gender can be.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

While demography has begun to wrestle with the larger meanings of gender and its broader relationships with demographic behavior, it is particularly from the perspective of theory that we can best see the gaps in our knowledge on these issues and some of the reasons why these gaps remain. The best way to recognize potential contributions to understanding gender's role in demographic change is to step back from demography, look at what is happening and is being discussed about gender in other social sciences, and then see how those insights and perspectives might be used in demography.[4] Theory holds a very important place in gender studies. Theory has been central to the growth and depth of gender studies over the last couple decades. Work has focused both on critiquing and " 'destabil[izing]' the founding assumptions of modern theory" (Barrett and Phillips 1992:1) and creating new theory that speaks to the role of women, men,

[4] For more discussion on this issue, see Riley and McCarthy, 2003; Riley 1997b; Riley 1998; Greenhalgh and Li 1995.

and gender in the social world (see Evans 1997; Barrett and Phillips 1992; Scott 1988a, 1988b; Hirsh and Keller 1990). Among the areas potentially relevant for demographic inquiry have been theoretical developments concerning the role of the state (Brown 1995; Foucault 1980); the connections between the "private" and the "public" (Ginsberg 1989; Rich 1979, 1980; Tilly and Scott 1987; Kelly 1986); work on the body (Martin 1989; Rothman 2000; Gordon 1977); the place and understanding of difference (Mohanty 1991; Moore 1994; Spelman 1988; Higginbotham 1992); the role of gender in relations among nations (McClintock 1995); and the gendered nature of knowledge production (Keller 1985, 1992; Harding 1986, 1991) One of the important pieces missing from demographic work on gender is a strong and consistent link to the key work of scholars of gender outside the field of demography (Bachrach 2001).

While this is not the place to discuss the wide-ranging work outside demography, it is useful to consider a few of the areas of work that might be particularly useful to demographers. As discussed above, an especially important understanding among feminist scholars is the way that gender operates on many levels in any society. To capture its effects, then, we have to recognize that "the gender perspective simultaneously emphasizes the symbolic and the structural, the ideological and the material, the interactional and the institutional levels of analysis" (Ferree 1990: 868). As we have seen, many demographers working on issues of gender have argued that proxies for gender inequality—education and work in particular—are inadequate for capturing gender's influence. But one of the major differences between work on gender inside and outside demography is that demographers usually approach the issue of gender in an attempt to explain some specific demographic outcome.

Research in this area rarely begins with a broad question about how best to understand gender; such a perspective would better allow us to consider—and then revise, pursue, or abandon—potential paths of inquiry. Because demographic research on gender often begins with an attempt to understand which aspect of women's lives influences demographic change, it is thus handicapped from the onset. When we start from that focus, we are easily neglectful of—and usually never even consider—other important aspects of gender, even within the specific area of work and women's position (Riley 1998).

Scott's plea for the need for the development of new theory speaks strongly to this issue. She argues that we need theory that can analyze the workings of patriarchy in all its manifestations—ideological, institutional, organizational, subjective—accounting not only for continuities but also for change over time. We need theory that will let us think in terms of pluralities and diversities rather than of unities and universals. We need theory that will break the conceptual hold, at least of those long traditions of (Western) philosophy that have systematically and repeatedly construed the world hierarchically in terms of masculine universals and feminine specificities. We need theory that will enable us to articulate alternative ways of thinking about (and thus acting upon) gender without simply reversing the old hierarchies or confirming them. And we need theory that will be useful and relevant for political practice (Scott 1988a: 33).

A second key area of work in feminist studies is epistemology. Scholars are examining what counts as knowledge and how we know what we know and the ways that gender has influenced our epistemological approaches. Discussions on these issues are ongoing and influential in many disciplines (Alcoff and Potter 1993; Harding 1991). Scholars have asked whether we can expand and deepen our understanding of gender using traditional epistemologies or whether these must be abandoned in order to do

justice to these issues. In what ways might newer epistemological and methodological perspectives help to improve our understanding? In nearly all research on gender within demography, the answer to these questions seems to be that demography's long-standing epistemological and methodological frameworks are adequate, even if they need to be updated. Mason (1995: 4) has argued for retaining the "the dominant scientific standard in demography, which is quantitative and positivistic, and which therefore requires statistical or experimental proof of causality." She has thus suggested "leav[ing] intact much of scientists' and philosophers' conventional understanding of the principles of adequate scientific research" (Harding 1991: 113). Harding has pointed out that such an approach is appealing because "it conserves, preserves, and saves understandings of scientific inquiry that have been intellectually and politically powerful. It enables the results of feminist research to enter conventional bodies of knowledge and to encounter less resistance in doing so than if less conventional epistemologies were used to justify them" (Harding 1991: 113).

Thus, most of the work on gender reported on in this chapter works to bring gender into demography's existing models and assumptions, adding variables to demographic models that might allow us to better examine the role of women and gender and their effects on demographic behavior. Certainly, as is evidenced by the strides that demography has made in recognizing and understanding gender's role, this is a strong argument (see also Maynard 1994). By working from within the existing models, we expand their use and, when appropriate, make changes to the models and even methodologies to promote further understanding. Many demographers, for example, have called for combining quantitative and qualitative methods as a way of getting information on different elements of any demographic process.

As useful as this approach has been, Harding and others (Haraway 1988 and some within demography: see Greenhalgh 1994, 1995; Riley and McCarthy 2003) have argued that demographic understanding of both gender and other issues would be enhanced through an examination and expansion of methodologies and epistemologies. Greenhalgh (2001), for example, has argued for more attention to discourse among demographers. Discourse is "not a language or a text but a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories and beliefs" (Scott 1988b: 256–257). Discourse analysis focuses attention on the creation of categories such as *gender* but also on categories that are central to demographic work, such as "too high fertility," "overpopulation," and others (see Furedi 1997). The importance of discourse, and thus its analysis, is its connection to outcomes. "Once institutionalized, the discourses become attached to specific disciplinary practices, and techniques and tactics of control. Through institutionalization, gendered discourses on population produce material effects—including demographic effects" (Greenhalgh 2001:2).[5]

Thus, some interested in the role of gender in demographic change want better demography, but through retaining demography's methodologies and epistemologies. Others believe that new methodologies and epistemologies are necessary for understanding gender. Perhaps there is some middle ground here for pursuing an understanding of gender's role in demographic processes. Some demographers may continue to look for new directions outside of demography (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 2000; Riley and McCarthy 2003). If other demographers feel they need to retain their

[5] For examples of work on demographic events using discourse analysis, see Chatterjee and Riley 2001; Greene 1999; Greenhalgh 2001.

own methodologies and epistemologies, they can also borrow from the insights and work done in other fields, even if they do not choose to use those methodologies in their own work. Although there are many areas of work that could be mentioned, three will be discussed here: context, power, and the meaning of motherhood. In each, there has been significant work in other social science fields and each has important potential contributions to demographers' understanding of gender. These discussions will be necessarily brief but may indicate the kinds of connections between demography and other fields that could be made or strengthened.

Context

Perhaps the most central issue, both to the study of gender generally, and to what might be most useful to a field like demography with its focus on cross-setting comparisons, is the notion of gender as a social and cultural construction. This notion strongly argues that understanding any social behavior requires understanding the context in which it arises. Many demographers already know this, of course. In the literature on gender in demography, many have either warned about this aspect of gender or concluded that context is central to gender's effects. Obermeyer (1993: 361), for example, in her study of maternal care in Tunisia and Morocco, argues that we need to take seriously the importance of examining closely how "cultural norms relating to women are translated into reproductive outcomes." After looking at north-south comparisons of women's status and religion in South Asia, Jejeebhoy and Sathar (2001: 708) conclude that what is needed is "context-specific measures of women's autonomy."

But a deep understanding of cultural context requires commitments of time, language study, and cultural immersion that are not viewed as important by many quantitative demographers. Such training is, however, at the core of training in other disciplines, particularly anthropology. It is not surprising, then, that particularly from anthropologists we have access to studies of gender and other social institutions that provide depth and breadth and across-society perspectives that could give context to any focused study of demographic behavior. While we certainly should not abandon large quantitative surveys, the gaps in our knowledge of gender (and of many other aspects of social life) give weight to the arguments regarding the importance of combined methodological studies (see especially Kertzer and Fricke 1997 but also Greenhalgh 1997; Scheper-Hughes 1997). In her study of infant and child mortality in Northeast Brazil, Scheper-Hughes's (1992) rich descriptions of life in the poor shanty town provide the context that makes clear just how complex are the reasons that so many children die at young ages. While a quantitative survey might have assessed the extent of the poverty and mortality, and in-depth or focus-group interviews might have fleshed out some of the issues covered in the survey, these methods would not provide the depth that Scheper-Hughes does. Her study chronicles the reasons for the undercount of child deaths, the ways that gender construction plays a significant role in the kind of mothering that takes place in this shanty-town area, the connection between people who live in poverty and those who live much higher up on the socioeconomic index, both in Brazil and beyond, and the ways that researchers are involved in how information is collected and disseminated.

Again, while most demographers may not do this kind of ethnographic work, they can use the studies and perspectives that others outside the field have developed and

read that work against what is being done within demography itself. Some have argued (Greenhalgh 1995; Kertzer and Fricke 1997) that the ethnographic and anthropological insights most easily adopted by demographers are depth and richness of context but that it is also possible to incorporate these insights into demographic research, thus creating new epistemological pathways for demography.

Power is at the heart of gender construction and inequality, reflecting the ways that gender is a hierarchical social division which awards more privileges and resources to men than to women. From this perspective, what is most important in gender is not the differences we find between women and men, but the meaning of those differences and the ways they reflect differences in power. Here again, demographers working on gender know the importance of power, as is clearly apparent in the way many researchers have been involved in discussions of empowerment: what it is, how to measure it, and how to decide about its importance. And demographers by no means have ignored the importance of women's power (or empowerment) in general, that is, its importance outside of any demographic change (for example, among many others, see Mason 1995: 22; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001: 709; Riley 1997a).

However, the conceptualization of power has been the subject of interesting and useful work well outside demography, and some of that is particularly useful for the study of gender's role in demographic processes (Foucault 1980; Gramsci 1971; Scott 1985, 1990). Gramsci, for example, has elaborated on hegemonic dominance, found and asserted particularly in social institutions, such as the economy or family. To identify this kind of power, we must look carefully at the social landscape. Scott has argued that one way to understand the extent of such power and the resistance to it (Foucault 1980) is to look for the "hidden transcripts" of the subordinate groups (Scott 1990; see also Scott 1985). Scott's work is useful for thinking about the different ways that subordinates work against and within hegemonic structures and the unusual and often hidden assertions of power. This perspective draws attention to sites of resistance and action outside the dominant discourse (see also de Certeau 1984).

In a situation where the dominant and subordinate are intimately connected, as are men and women, these hidden transcripts may be particularly difficult to untangle. Scott (1990: 136) has written that "most of political life of subordinate groups is to be found neither in overt collective defiance of powerholders nor in complete hegemonic compliance, but in the vast territory between these two polar opposites." To find the dissension or the resistance, then, we have to look in public transcripts too, but much of it will likely be very subtle, showing up as silence, as euphemisms, or grumbling. This research speaks to the enormous complexity of power and resistance and the ways that it is found in a myriad of sites and forms. Identifying and measuring this power, then, requires multiple methods and perspectives. As demographers go about trying to map power, resistance, empowerment, and other versions of these processes, they would do well to learn from those who are working to understand power at its many social, cultural, and political levels.

The Meaning of Motherhood

A very obvious area of research that would help inform demographers in their work on gender, particularly as it relates to fertility, is research on the meaning of motherhood. While demographers have already done research on the "value of children," there is an

extensive and growing literature on what motherhood means, how it is shaped by the culture and by gendered social, political, and economic institutions, and how individuals interact with those meanings in their own lives. This literature spans many disciplines, from economics (Folbre 2001), to sociology (Hays 1996), to anthropology (Lewin 1994). These and other works (Jetter, Orleck, and Taylor 1997; O'Barr, Pope, and Wyer 1990; Glenn, Chang, and Forcey 1994) often fill out the ways that women and men negotiate through the tensions and expectations about children and parenting and the ways that daily lives reveal these tensions and expectations. Particularly interesting is recent work on childlessness and the new reproductive technologies. Both areas reveal the ways that reproduction is at the center of a society's values.

Inhorn's insights (1994, 1996) about childless women in urban Egypt is an example of research that is not part of mainstream demography but can inform demographic research. In this society, particularly among poor migrants who have moved from rural to urban centers, women's status and power are so powerfully tied to the bearing and raising of children that to be childless is a disaster. When these women moved to the city, they lost other sources of power, income, and even identity, and those losses made children even more important. Inhorn lived and talked with women who were searching for cures to their infertility and came to understand the cultural necessity of bearing children for women in this part of the world. She notes that "indeed, it is from the study of infertility that issues of pronatalism, or child desire, are perhaps best understood. Namely, those who are missing children and who therefore have had much cause to reflect on their object of desire are often in the best position to articulate why children are so very important on a number of levels, ranging from the personal to the political" (Inhorn 1996: 234).

She connects the attitudes of infertile women with the (often negative) responses to the government's family planning program, arguing that "such programs as state-sponsored population control in Egypt, which 'target' women, have literally operated in the dark with regard to the real knowledge, attitudes and practices of their female constituencies. Given this inattention to women's lives and desires (let alone the almost complete neglect of men in population discourse), it should come as no surprise that Egypt's population control efforts have been judged to be weak and ineffective" (Inhorn 1996: 236–237). Here, then, we have clues about the underlying reasons that women want children and how those reasons, and the social context generally, might derail or slow down the government's family planning efforts.

Another angle on the meaning of motherhood and the ways that it is written into policies, practices, and technologies comes from research on the new reproductive technologies. This research (Rapp 1990,1998; Hartouni 1997; Franklin 1995) suggests how "new technologies fall onto older cultural terrains, where women interpret their options in light of prior and contradictory meanings of pregnancy and childbearing" (Rapp 1990: 41). Hartouni (1997) argued that these technologies—with their different roles for biological mother, gestational mother, and social mother, for example—challenge definitions once thought stable. Called into question by this "radical transformation of reproductive practices and processes" (Hartouni 1997: 83) are "the social relations and practices that constitute what are called mother, father, and family" (Hartouni 1997: 83). This work on motherhood, pregnancy, childlessness, and families suggests ways of approaching questions of motherhood, fertility, and pregnancy from new angles in order to illuminate the ways that fertility and reproduction are negotiated and mediated by individuals, families, communities, and states.

All of these areas, and many more that have not been mentioned, suggest the possible contributions from this rich literature. Much of this research takes a step back from the usual goals of demography—of finding the way a particular behavior or status influences a particular demographic outcome. The focus, then, is often not on demographic processes but rather encompasses work that lies outside of demography's traditional scope. In that richness and scope—with its strong connections to demographic processes—lie its strong potential for enriching and enlarging our understandings of gender and demographic processes.

CONCLUSIONS

Examining the research on gender in demography makes clear that we work in a much more hopeful environment than existed just 10 years ago. We have accumulated a rich store of information on gender's connection to processes surrounding fertility and mortality. Perhaps the most positive sign is the sheer volume of work dealing with gender, and the ways that most demographers recognize gender's importance in all social processes. Gaps do remain in our understanding of gender and demographic behavior. It may be that the tools of demography are not geared to understanding the complexities of gender; more data may not necessarily give us more answers. But these gaps, then, are linked to the theoretical and methodological weaknesses in the field generally and the ways that much of the work on gender continues to follow the field instead of "imagining" something different (Dixon-Mueller and Germain 2000; see also Kertzer and Fricke 1997 and McNicoll 1992 on some of demography's other weaknesses).

That issue speaks to the ways that demography might expand its tools and outlook generally—by developing new epistemologies and methodologies or at least by borrowing the findings and insights of others who approach these topics from different perspectives. Our knowledge gaps, then, are not about the problem we used to have, when gender was barely recognized as important. It is clear we will continue to move forward in our understanding of gender; if we connect to work beyond demography, we will make even more progress in understanding the powerful role of gender in demographic change.

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