

REMINISCENCES

The Role of Foundations, the Population Association of America, Princeton University and the United Nations in Fostering American Interest in Population Problems

FRANK W. NOTESTEIN

Up to the mid-1920s no great interest had developed in population problems. A few people were producing information in health departments, the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of the Census. Scattered academics in Biology, Sociology and Economics were producing solid work. But the impact was minimal. A few reformers were gathered around Margaret Sanger whom many people admired, wished well and did not take quite seriously; and whom more of the religious establishment harrassed, jailed and damned. In general, the turning points of interest in the field had come from major events: The Black Death; the mounting welfare crisis in England's late seventeenth century; the reform of the late nineteenth century; the triumphs of public health; the flood of immigration to the United States; and a little later the unemployment of the Great Depression. From these came a series of sweeping and generally erroneous doctrines from Malthus to Marx, the optimum enthusiasts, the Eugenists, the "innate superiority" advocates of one ilk or another. I fear one must say, in general, progress has come because drastic events have brought sweeping doctrines that were generally wrong but stimulated answers, thereby advancing knowledge. This is a bit too simple, but not far from the mark.

In any case, we had arrived at the mid-1920s with rather low levels of interest in population on the part of the public, business, academics and government, but with a scattering of interested people drawn from a wide range of fields producing solid work. Moreover, the nonsense,

to the extent that it existed, was not very important because no one paid much attention to that either.

Beginning in the 1920's the institutional development of our field was largely initiated by interested and influential private citizens. The first major move in this direction came from Mr. Edward Scripps of the newspaper chain. Being concerned about the population of the Far East, he searched the library at Columbia University for relevant material, and there he found a doctoral thesis by Warren S. Thompson dealing with the Malthusian theory. He invited Thompson to accompany him on his yacht for a trip to the Far East and the South Sea Islands, and in 1922 set up the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems. The original plan called for two scholars who would rotate between home and a year's residence abroad so that in the course of some decades, between them they would have a considerable first-hand knowledge of the world's major regions. Thompson got P. K. Whelpton, a young agricultural economist, to join him, thereby beginning an extremely fruitful professional collaboration that lasted until Thompson's retirement followed shortly by Whelpton's death in 1964.

The original plan could not be carried out in its entirety because two deaths in quick succession so depleted the Scripps estate that the intended endowment was never built up. The Foundation had an income from endowment of only something like \$15,000 a year. However, by the time the value of the dollar had depreciated heavily, Thompson and Whelpton were able to gain other financial support, notably from the Rockefeller Foundation.

Thompson is a sociologist with a flair for statistics. His textbook on population is sound and for many years was the only one in the United States.¹ He wrote many books, but those dealing with international population problems received the most attention throughout the world. Thompson's respect for facts simply presented and his wide range of information did much to stimulate interest in the population field.

P. K. Whelpton was the statistician of the two. He was concerned with the work-a-day development of demography. After writing with Thompson, a study of population trends in the United States² which was issued in 1933 by the President's (Hoover's) Research Committee on Social Trends, he continued the work, initiated in that volume, on forecasting population by the component method. This work was reproduced for the United States National Resources Committee for use in its *Problems of a Changing Population*³ published in 1938. Later

the Bureau of the Census, with Whelpton's advisory help, took over the activity. As the difficulties of projecting the future course of fertility became evident, he became interested in studying the fertility of the several cohorts. This led him quickly to detailed sampling surveys of reproduction and contraceptive behavior in cooperation with other groups that are discussed by Dr. Kiser. Later, as the second director of the Population Division of the United Nations, he did much to arouse interest around the world in the careful study of population. In short, mainly through the technical work of two men, the initiating interest of Mr. Scripps did much to gain attention for and give scientific respectability to the study of population. Working carefully in fields thought to be sensitive, they proved them so little sensitive that these fields are now cultivated by the United States government and by international agencies.

Meanwhile at the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, Louis I. Dublin, as head of the company's statistical office, had been making the idea familiar around the world that public health is a good investment. Working with him was Alfred J. Lotka who did more than any other man to lay the foundations for the mathematics of formal demography upon which the most recent developments in demographic analysis depend.⁴

The next major institutional activity stimulated by influential private individuals was that of the Milbank Memorial Fund. Dr. Kiser is relating that part of the story, but it is perhaps appropriate for me to note that the Fund's interest also resulted initially from the pressure of a single Trustee, Thomas Cochran of the Morgan Bank. I doubt that there is a written record, and I am relying on what John Kingsbury, the Secretary of the Fund and Edgar Sydenstricker, then the Fund's Director of Research, told me more than 40 years ago. They reported that Mr. Cochran said he was unwilling to continue voting for grants in the field of public health unless the Fund was willing to start work in the field of population and birth control. As a retired foundation executive, I can assure you that one of life's happy times is when an influential Trustee insists that you enter a controversial field that you have been wanting to develop. I have no doubt that Sydenstricker very much welcomed Cochran's initiative. It is also interesting to note that although the Fund approached the field of population in a somewhat gingerly fashion because of its presumed sensitivity, the Fund's work in that field brought no adverse response whatever. It was its work in the field of medical care that brought the major upheaval.

As early as 1927 Margaret Sanger had demonstrated the breadth of her interest by organizing the First International Conference on Population held in Geneva. Out of that meeting came an effort spearheaded by Pearl and Gini to set up an international scientific society. Dr. Lorimer is discussing the work of that organization so that I need only point out that the Union was in theory a union of national societies, and since there was no population association, an American National Committee, with Dublin as Chairman, was formed as a substitute. I have no complete list of the early membership but it included at least: Black, Chaddock, Dublin, Fairchild, Glover, Hankins, Kosmak, Lotka, Notestein, Pearl, Reed, Thompson and Whelpton.

In 1931 Mrs. Sanger also stimulated Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild to call an organizing meeting from which the Population Association of America emerged. Mrs. Sanger obtained the funds from the Milbank Memorial Fund to defray the expense of the meeting. It was expected that she would be elected First Vice President. Largely because of Frederick Osborn's influence, her name was withdrawn. Osborn, a great admirer of Mrs. Sanger, persuaded the meeting, and I think Mrs. Sanger, that the fortunes of the field would be advanced if the new Association were to guard its scientific nature and keep free from attachment to the birth control movement. In any case, the Population Association was launched in 1931 with something like 30 or 35 members, of whom at least five survive.

When I get impatient with elements of today's demographic establishment for their efforts to restrict the political power within the Association to the company of professionally professional demographers, I have to admit that they are neither more arrogant nor lacking in a sense of humor than we were in our time. We went to organizational lengths beyond all lengths to keep out all but the purest of the academically pure. I still remember when about a dozen of us would meet in Dublin's office at the Metropolitan as the members of the American National Committee of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population Problems and draw up a memorandum to the new Population Association of America. We would then adjourn our meeting and quickly travel to the Town Hall Club, where the same group would assemble as the College of Fellows of the new Population Association of America of which we were the *crème de la crème*. As such we received the memorandum from the American National Committee, pondered its merit, and passed on the results of our superior wisdom together with notice of the action taken to the body of the Association.

The College then hastily adjourned to reconstitute itself as the Association and receive with gratitude the result of the College's mature wisdom. It really took us an incredible time to realize that the birth controllers and other action groups were probably less eager to capture the academics than the academics were to avoid capture.

With a grant from the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Population Association employed Dr. Frank Lorimer as Secretary. Another gift from a private individual enabled the Association to employ Dr. Irene B. Taeuber who, with Lorimer, issued for the Association an experimental bibliography called *Population Literature* during 1935 and 1936. It took up where the defunct *Social Science Abstracts* left off. In 1937 Lorimer moved to the National Resources Committee, and Dr. Taeuber transferred to Princeton University's newly formed Office of Population Research to begin editing the new *Population Index*, which continues systematic bibliographic coverage of the field to the present time. Thanks, therefore, to a private donor, the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Population Association, Princeton University and, most recently, grants from the United States Government, the demographic field has had unrivaled bibliographic coverage from 1935 to the present time under the professional guidance of Dr. Irene B. Taeuber and Dr. Louise K. Kiser, later succeeded by Dr. Dorothy Good.

The Population Association, under Lorimer's guidance also had something to do with the fact that the United States National Resources Committee, under the Chairmanship of Harold Ickes, set up a Committee on Population Problems. Probably the depression, with its unemployment was even more influential. The Committee had Professor E. B. Wilson of Harvard as Chairman; and Professor William F. Ogburn of the University of Chicago and Dr. Warren S. Thompson of the Scripps Foundation among its members. Lorimer left the Population Association for the larger responsibilities of directing the Technical Staff. The result was a very important book entitled, *THE PROBLEMS OF A CHANGING POPULATION*,³ which was published by the Government Printing Office in 1938. It was, of course, heavily oriented to the prospects for slowing population growth, and perhaps ultimate decline, that dominated the evidence and the thinking of the depression decade.

Apart from its professional merits, two matters make the Resource Committee's work of interest for this account. The first is the fact that a governmental activity was launched and aided by the Population Association of America, the Scripps Foundation for Research in Population Problems and the Milbank Memorial Fund. Both Thompson and

Whelpton of the Scripps Foundation were deeply involved in forecasting the future population, and Dr. Kiser of the Milbank Memorial Fund contributed a chapter on "Social Conditions Affecting Birth Rates." Thus often the private foundations have assisted governmental innovation. The second item of interest is the fact that there was a scandalous deletion from Kiser's text made without his knowledge or permission. In a signed comment in *Population Index* for July, 1938 (p. 136), I wrote as follows:

The undersigned editor deeply regrets to have to report that Chapter V, "Social conditions affecting birth rates," which appears under the signature of Dr. Clyde V. Kiser, has been so cut as to change its scope and distort the original presentation. The change was made without the knowledge of the author, whose article was contributed at the request of the Committee and without salary. Dr. Kiser is informed by the Technical Director of the study that the change was made without his knowledge and without consulting the full membership of the Committee on Population Problems.

As published, Section 5 of this chapter, "Factors underlying group differences in fertility," devotes two paragraphs to the influence of biological factors and then stops abruptly. The original manuscript went on to summarize the evidence showing that biological factors are relatively unimportant and that group differences in fertility arise largely through differences in the acceptance and practice of contraception. There was nothing in it to indicate whether the author approved or disapproved of the situation he was describing.

The chapter in its published form puts its author unwittingly in the position of having written an article on "factors underlying group differences in fertility" that neglects the scientific evidence regarding factors known to be of primary importance.

When their attention was called to the matter, the Advisory Committee expressed to Dr. Kiser their deep regret for the oversight through which he was not consulted regarding the deletion and indicated that in the event of a further printing an attempt would be made to introduce a summary of recent discussions indicating the minor influence of biological factors on group differences in fertility.

In the second printing, Kiser was given an opportunity to alter the text. This is the only case of explicit censorship of which I am aware in our field. The interesting thing about it is that, so far as I know, there was no political pressure. The Chairman of the Committee, a highly respected and responsible professor of statistics, made the cut on his own to avoid expected trouble and did not tell either the author or his colleagues about his ruthless bit of censorship. I think more of the constraints on freedom of research or expression that I have observed have come, not from the people endeavoring to make

trouble, but from those seeking to avoid expected trouble. In this sense, I suppose we should remember with—was it Mark Twain?—that most of our troubles never happen. In any case, the constraint here was neither Catholic nor Congressional—just the timidity of a secular-minded academic.

It is impossible to go on with the story without going back a moment to discuss Frederick Osborn.²³ Having retired from business before he was forty years old, Osborn went to Clark Wissler at the Museum of Natural History and asked him to lay out a two-year course of study. That completed, he secured the help of Dr. Frank Lorimer, a refugee from the clergy to John Dewey's philosophy, whom we've just seen at the Population Association and the National Resources Committee. They collaborated on *DYNAMICS OF POPULATION*⁵ which was published in 1934 and was clearly one of the most important demographic works of our generation.

In the early 1930s Osborn told me, with his typical diplomacy, that he doubted that, without the usual graduate training, he could become a competent professional in our field. He thought, however, that he had acquired a sufficient knowledge to give him reasonably good judgment. Moreover, he said that in business he had been successful as a promoter. He felt that the study of man desperately needed a promoter, and to this end he intended to devote the remainder of his life. As it turned out, Osborn was called on for many other assignments, but no discussion of the development of the population field or of the role of foundations in it, is complete without considering his activity. He was a trustee of the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Carnegie Corporation, the Social Science Research Council, Princeton University and the Population Council as well as the first executive officer of the last. Moreover, he used all of these posts in his promotional activity.

Before Osborn joined the Board of the Milbank Memorial Fund, but after they had finished *DYNAMICS OF POPULATION*, he went to see Mr. Milbank who, with Osborn's father, was a trustee of Princeton University and had known Osborn as a young businessman on Wall Street. Soon they were both agreeing that it was unfortunate that Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs had no one working on the world's population problems.

Meanwhile, Sydenstricker was somewhat vicariously, I think, hoping to see me settled at a university. The upshot of Sydenstricker's, Milbank's and Osborn's interest and promotional work at Princeton was that in 1936 the Fund made a five-year grant to the University that

established the Office of Population Research as part of the Woodrow Wilson School. I was put in charge as a Lecturer with a research assistant, a secretarial-statistical clerk and an annual postgraduate fellowship. The first two research assistants were Dr. Henry Shryock and Professor Dudley Kirk, and the first three fellows were Professor John Durand, Professor Ansley J. Coale and Professor George Stolnitz. As we have already seen, the Fund also shortly made a grant to Princeton to produce *Population Index* for the Association and Dr. Irene Taeuber joined the professional staff, with somewhat later, Dr. Louise K. Kiser as her colleague. The University furnished the office space, and the Milbank Fund the rest of the funds for five years. After five years the University took over the salary of the director, and sometime after I left, the cost of the library. Otherwise, the costs of the Office of Population Research have been met by continuing grants from the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the United States Government, with special grants from the Carnegie Corporation and the Population Council.

In addition to publishing *Population Index* and completing work on the studies of fertility started at the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Office began some of the preparatory work for the Indianapolis Study, which is being discussed by Dr. Kiser. By the opening of the war, it became evident that we were at the end of an epoch in Europe. Mainly on Dr. Kirk's initiative we began laying out a plan to study its population, and had scarcely presented the plan to the University, when a request for such work came from the League of Nation's economic group that had moved from Geneva to Princeton. The League group, under Loveday, wanted a series of studies as background for the discussions of postwar planning. With Osborn's help, a very substantial grant for this work was obtained from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The result was four books, published by the League of Nations: **THE FUTURE POPULATION OF EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION**,⁶ by Notestein, Taeuber, Kirk, Coale and Louise Kiser; **ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHY OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE**,⁷ by Moore; **EUROPE'S POPULATION IN THE INTERWAR YEARS**,⁸ by Kirk; and **THE POPULATION OF THE SOVIET UNION: HISTORY AND PROSPECTS**,⁹ by Lorimer. Meanwhile, the Department of State asked us to extend our studies to Asia. This work resulted in two books: **THE POPULATION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN**,¹⁰ by Kingsley Davis; and **THE POPULATION OF JAPAN**,¹¹ by Irene Taeuber. This series of books earned the worldwide recognition

of the Princeton Office and did much, I think, to arouse interest in a Population Division for the United Nations.

Under its arrangement with the Department of State, the Office also prepared a series of papers on demographic matters for the Secretary's Committee that was engaged in studying problems of the forthcoming peace, and a study of Palestine¹² which was later presented to the Anglo-American Commission on the Future of Palestine. Although, at the time the study was not well received by either the Arabs or the Zionists, many years later I was informed by Mr. Horowitz, who had served the Commission as Attorney for the Zionists, that our study had first shocked the Zionists, and then convinced them that there could not be a Jewish majority in Palestine. This, he said, led them to opt for partition.

After the war, with the financial support of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Coale and Hoover produced their ground-breaking study: *POPULATION GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LOW INCOME COUNTRIES*¹³ published by Princeton University Press in 1958. Meanwhile, Westoff, Potter, Mishler, Sagi and Bumpass were conducting one of the successors to the Indianapolis Study.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

This is not the place for a complete story of the Office of Population Research, which I left in 1959, but which has carried on in ever more effective fashion under the direction of Ansley J. Coale, our second Milbank Memorial Fund Fellow. With another Fellow, Melvin Zelnik, he reconstructed a series of annual birth rates for the United States from the middle of the nineteenth century,¹⁷ with Demeny (another Fellow) produced *REGIONAL MODEL LIFE TABLES AND STABLE POPULATIONS*,¹⁸ and *METHODS OF ESTIMATING BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURES FROM INCOMPLETE DATA*.¹⁹ With many colleagues, including: Brass, Demeny, Heisel, Lorimer, Romaniuk and van de Walle, he conducted an impressive study of *THE DEMOGRAPHY OF TROPICAL AFRICA*²⁰ issued by Princeton Press in 1968. With many colleagues from other countries, the Office is now conducting a major study of European fertility trends in the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, Irene Taeuber, with her husband Conrad, continues to turn out books about the population of the United States,²¹ and Irene to tease truth from the hopelessly intricate web of fact and fiction about the Chinese population.

These are only the highlights of a continuing flow of solid demographic research not rivaled, I think, for quality elsewhere in the world,

which is accompanied, moreover, by an impressive flow of graduate students who are enriching our field. Meanwhile, Westoff, as staff director for the Commission on Population Growth and The American Future, Irene Taeuber, as demographic organizer for the Pacific Science Conferences, Ansley Coale, as the American representative for several years on the Population Commission of the United Nations, and all of them as consultants for most of the interested foundations have done much to foster the study of population on a worldwide scale.

Other important currents of development have origins outside the Milbank Memorial Fund and the Scripps Foundation. Justice cannot be done to them in this paper. Another focus of demographic infection was provided by William F. Ogburn, Louis Wirth and E. W. Burgess at the University of Chicago. One of their distinguished students, Philip Hauser, did much to strengthen the intellectual tone of the Census in the 1940s, and went on to build a distinguished center for population studies at the University of Chicago. From this center one of Amos Hawley's students at the University of Michigan, Bogue, developed a strong new center mainly concerned with training for technical assistance in Family Planning. The Center at the University of Michigan also is led by Ogburn's students, Professor Freedman and the Duncans (Beverly and Dudley), who have built one of the world's leading centers for both training and research. (Is the fact that our small field boasts at least four distinguished husband and wife teams significant? They are: the Kisers, the Taeubers in two generations and the Duncans.) Still another of Ogburn's students, Stouffer, began the work at the University of Wisconsin, which has another flourishing center. The foundations supported these groups, but their origins were quite strictly academic in the first instance. Similarly solid work developed, at various times, at Brown, California (Berkeley), Duke, The Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Pennsylvania, Washington and North Carolina, first with Odum and Vance. The later manifestations in the Center for Population Studies came from a much newer stream of abundant financing and is staffed by recognized biologists, economists, physicians and sociologists.

Through the years the Population Association has flourished. Having started in 1931 with fewer than forty members, it has completed its 1971 annual meeting in Washington with more than 800 registrants and a membership of about 2,000. The meetings are much more imposing professionally than they used to be when the Association was small enough to meet year after year as guests of Princeton University.

Perhaps it is less generally friendly than when Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt invited us to the White House for tea, and brought her knitting to listen to the sessions on differential fertility. It has constantly fostered scholarship and public responsibility by its bibliography and, in recent years, its journal *Demography*, its advisory committees working on and evaluating the work of the census, and its annual professional meetings. I doubt that there are many professions in which the personal friendships have been more rewarding than those of our rapidly developing society, which was effectively launched by a few individuals with the help of the Milbank Memorial Fund.

In 1946 the United Nations established a Population Division of the Secretariat to serve the Population Commission of the Economic and Social Council. I accepted the role of Consultant-Director for a period of two years with the stipulation that I could continue my teaching at Princeton University. In view of this part-time arrangement I was permitted to nominate an American deputy and took Dr. John Durand from the Bureau of the Census. He had been our first Milbank Fellow at Princeton and, following Whelpton, served as Director of the Division for many years before leaving recently to become a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

The United Nations was fortunate in the membership of the Commission. Professor Hauser, the eminent demographer from the University of Chicago, who had been Acting Director of the Bureau of the Census, represented the United States, to be followed with the change of administrations by Professor Kingsley Davis, Professor Ansley J. Coale and now, with a shift away from technical personnel, by General William Draper. Professor David Glass, England's most eminent demographer, represented the United Kingdom, and France's dean of demography, Alfred Sauvy, represented that country. Perhaps because in the United Nations at that time nothing much could be done about population except study it, the Commission escaped many of the political tensions that accompanied other issues—at least in their most virulent form. The general result was that with a minimum of friction a maximum of groundwork was laid for fruitful studies and excellent publications. For the first time, governments, planning boards and universities in the underdeveloped countries began to have access to the world's literature on population presented in factual and noncombative form. Staff turn-around meant that gradually there became scattered throughout the world, a group of professionals familiar with other countries and with the modern methods and literature.

The United Nations developed regional centers for demographic training and research in Bombay, India; Santiago, Chile; San Jose, Costa Rica; and Cairo, Egypt, initially with financial help from the Population Council, later from the Ford Foundation and more recently from US/AID. These centers have done much to train the professional personnel of their regions, and particularly in Latin America, to shift discussions of population from the realm of philosophic speculation to that of empirical studies.

In this field I think the United Nations story is the importance of the unimportant. In the long run its quiet laying of the foundations for international information has meant more for social action than many of the ideologic battles waged while the world watched with bated breath. By expanding gradually, and hewing carefully to a scientific line, the United Nations has done much to prepare the ground for major assistance in the field of population policy and programs. Of recent years, under the imaginative leadership of Milos Macura and the newly developing Population Trust Fund, it has begun to move ahead in the field of practical work.

Thus far this account has concerned itself with the work of two foundations, Scripps and Milbank, and with some of their direct and indirect offshoots. I have noted that the work of each was initially stimulated by the interest of a single individual, and that later interest by a number of foundations came primarily through the work of Frederick Osborn. Now another key individual must enter the story, Mr. John D. Rockefeller III. His interest came most sharply to my attention when the President of Princeton called to say that Mr. Rockefeller had come back from the Far East much worried about population and the fact that there seemed little coordination between the medical and the social science groups concerned with the Far East in the Rockefeller Foundation, which he served as a Trustee. He had decided he would personally like to send a demographer and a public health man together on a three-month trip through the Far East to think about the interrelations of their fields. Would I be the demographer? I said yes, and the Rockefeller Foundation nominated Dr. Marshall Balfour who was in charge of the Foundation's activities in the Far East. Then it was decided that the Rockefeller Foundation, not Mr. Rockefeller, would send us. The new theory was that the mission would have no specific obligations except to observe and advise the Foundation as to the interrelation of its policies in the medical, social science and demographic fields. Dr. Irene Taeuber was added to the party as our Prince-

ton expert on the Far East; and Roger Evans was added from the Social Science Division of the Foundation.

We were to take three months traveling through Japan, China, Indonesia and the Philippines and then write our report. We were told later that shortly after we started our travels the President of the Foundation, Chester Barnard, invited Cardinal Spellman to visit the Foundation, and that the Cardinal indicated that he could not approve of an organization with interest in birth control.

Our mission proceeded with fascinating interest for its members who had a chance to see Mainland China just before the curtain went down. In general, the demographers returned greatly impressed with the importance of public health work in the modernizing process, but the physician returned so excited about birth control that he virtually lost interest in malaria control. We published our report²² and the people at the Foundation were polite about it. A mild staff proposal for a project on Demography and Human Ecology in Ceylon was turned down by the Board on, I am told, the opposition of John Foster Dulles, and that was that for a good many years as far as family planning was concerned.

It is also clear that there was a good deal of staff opposition to family planning projects. The public health program was the star of the Foundation's crown, and it operated in many strongly Catholic countries. Some members of the medical group were unwilling to get into the field of birth control because of the enemies it would make with Catholic governments. Others were so deeply committed to saving life, and thereby speeding population growth, that they were constantly trying to convince themselves that there was no danger in growth. Some of the men wanted the foundation's resources to be used in the development of agriculture and science because they saw in that work quicker and more effective means for coping with the problem. Still others thought that birth control would do no good. A few, including Balfour and doubtless Alan Gregg, were bitterly disappointed. But the upshot was that for many years the Foundation sublimated its interests in birth control by supporting demographic studies at universities. Our Office of Population Research at Princeton was a grateful beneficiary of this interest.

John Rockefeller, as I have had occasion to learn through several years of work with him on matters relating to population, is an insightful, modest, gentle and very persistent man. Undoubtedly his interest in population had some influence on the Foundation's work,

influence somewhat like that of water dripping on stone. It exerted constant basic pressure that was rather easily deflected by the bureaucracy into safe channels for a considerable time. But the interest persisted and he finally gave it meaning by creating the Population Council in 1952, the same year in which he became Chairman of the Board of the Rockefeller Foundation.

This is not the place to evaluate the work of the Population Council. It should be noted, however, that Frederick Osborn became the first executive officer, setting in closest collaboration with his Demographic Director, Dudley Kirk, the tone and pattern of its work. The tone was clearly that with which they have always been associated, which emphasized training, research and technical evaluation rather than the polemic aspects of the population field. It is interesting to note, moreover, that, although the Council was financed exclusively at first by Mr. Rockefeller's personal gifts, shortly it began to draw support from other members of the family, from the Rockefeller Brothers' Fund and then from the Foundation. The Foundation's help came first in the field of fellowships, but by the early 1960s the Rockefeller Foundation was the major source of support of the Council's Technical Assistance Division, which was working mainly in the field of family planning. At present the Foundation supports nearly all aspects of the Council's work.

It is my belief that Mr. Rockefeller would never have launched the Population Council if he had been successful in persuading the Foundation to take leadership in the varied aspects of the field, but he has never said anything of the sort to me. Although I regretted the Foundation's timidity at the time, I am not at all sure now that the decision was unfortunate for the field. It is my perhaps prejudiced belief that under Mr. Rockefeller's more untrammelled leadership a new, small and more flexible organization has been able to move more effectively than the Foundation could have in this delicate area.

Much the same course of events occurred in the Ford Foundation. It is newer and its support of this field comes later. But the Ford Foundation's initial grant to the Population Council was limited to the demographic field. Shortly Ford funds could also be used to support biomedical research, but not birth control. Finally there were no restrictions, except those designed to avoid duplication of effort by the Council of the Ford Foundation's own family planning efforts in the field. At the present time the Ford Foundation's expenditures are much the largest of any foundation, and until recently they exceeded those

of all governmental and nongovernmental organizations put together.

The gifts of the Scaife Family stand in sharpest contrast with those of Ford and Rockefeller. Their work is less deeply institutionalized and reflects much more clearly the interest of the donors, which from the first specified an unambiguous interest in fostering the spread of family planning, and within the framework of that interest gave maximum freedom to the professional judgments of the recipients. At the present time the Scaife Family's contributions to the field appear to be of the same general order as those of the Rockefeller Foundation.

By now, of course, the situation is completely changed. The government, which for years did good demographic work at the Bureau of the Census and the Department of Agriculture, and avoided family planning as a pestilence under presidential edict, now is the largest contributor of funds to the family planning field both here and abroad. Moreover, other governments are heavily involved, and the United Nations is preparing to move massively into the field. Yesterday's taboo has become today's fad with results for human comfort that are much more than we had feared and much less than we had hoped. The answers are not clear, but in this field at least one can say there is reason for hope.

I have gone far beyond my initial assignment of discussing the work of the Population Association and a few other Milbank-connected matters in our field so that I could raise a general question and give my tentative reactions. In the development of this field, which required changes in deeply laid values, what have been the major factors that brought it from very small professional beginnings to a massive international movement in some forty years? It seems to me that at least the following points should be made:

1. Since the 1920's, as in earlier times, the major determinant of change in public opinion and public policy toward population has been the course of great events; the Great Depression, World War II, and the unprecedented postwar growth particularly in the less developed world.

2. In general, the leadership of the academic community has not been remarkable. Whether in the social, biologic or medical sciences the proprieties of the professions have been quite as important obstacles to action as have the proprieties of either the public or the Establishment. There has been very little censorship or explicit restraint. Most of the checks have come from feared rather than actual opposition. The

community of scholars generated a number of erroneous doctrines, often with ideologic overtones, which have then been put to rest by solid scholarship. Much of the progress has come from academic counterpunching. It is true that a small number of scholars drawn from a rather large number of fields did furnish the basis for solid development of the field when new resources became available.

3. With the exception of Chicago, universities draw low marks for innovative support. Mostly they had to be pushed or bribed before there was a trend to the bandwagon. Deeply institutionalized departments with only gradually rising budgets protected their vested interests by avoiding innovation about as vigorously as other property owners do. Universities become innovative when they see new funds in support of changes that also promise collateral support for established activities. In other situations the slaughter of the innocents can be heavy.

4. Large, and deeply institutionalized, foundations with established programs have the same problems as the university in achieving flexibility. The vested interests are deep, and the political ramifications of sensitive innovations on established activity may be drastic. Innovation of the sensitive sort will seldom come from the staff unless it is forced from above, and that in turn, if the organization is powerful, may impair the sensitive work.

5. The foundations that are controlled largely by the interests of the donor, as opposed to those that are deeply institutionalized, have been much the most flexible and innovative and in general the most efficient. If the reason for public support in the form of tax exemption is to get diversified decision making and flexible experimentation, it is the personally led, or at least the tightly led, institution that gets the highest marks. It is to be noted that such institutions can, and probably many of them do, pursue unfortunate as well as desirable goals with efficiency. But thus matters are put to the test of experience.

6. The situation is almost like the links of a food chain. The personally led special-purpose foundations experiment for and nourish the larger and more deeply institutionalized foundations and universities. These, in turn, experiment for and nourish the governments, which now show signs of experimenting for and nourishing the international organizations. The same activity that is viewed as improper, if not downright wicked, at the beginning of the chain is transformed by the end into an essential constituent of virtue if not a basic human right. Alas, because of the widened field of interest we also move from focused

and efficient into massive and cumbersome. With all its faults, I cannot think of a system more likely to speed the essential processes of social change than this diverse set of organizational arrangements.

7. Now that efforts to slow population growth are accepted by the establishment, it is probable that the new in-group will try to brush off other applicants crying for attention such as: internal migration, centralization and dispersion, and income, educational and ethnic distributions.

8. Whatever the institutional setting, in sensitive areas we cannot overvalue the worth of objective studies that widen professional and public understanding. The growth of knowledge has fostered change more efficiently than public debate. Debates are not won, they are made obsolete.

9. Finally, none of the processes would have worked nearly as well without the imaginative, inciteful and determined leadership of a few influentials among whom I would include notably: Mr. Scripps, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Albert Milbank, Mr. Sydenstricker, (in a different and even larger sense) Mrs. Sanger, Mr. Osborn and Mr. Rockefeller—all of whom in their time have provided the critical leadership.

REFERENCES

¹ Thompson, W. S. and Lewis, D. T., *POPULATION PROBLEMS*, Fifth Edition, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.

² Thompson, W. S. and Whelpton, P. K., *POPULATION TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1933.

³ Committee on Population Problems, *THE PROBLEMS OF A CHANGING POPULATION*, Report to the National Resources Committee, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1938.

⁴ Lotka, A. J., *THEORIE ANALYTIQUE DES ASSOCIATIONS BIOLOGIQUES*, Paris, Hermann et Cie, 1934.

⁵ Lorimer, F. and Osborn, F., *DYNAMICS OF POPULATION: SOCIAL AND BIOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHANGING BIRTH RATES IN THE UNITED STATES*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1934.

⁶ Notestein, F. W., Taeuber, I. B., Kirk, D., Coale, A. J. and Kiser, L. K., *THE FUTURE POPULATION OF EUROPE AND THE SOVIET UNION: POPULATION PROJECTIONS 1940-1970*, Geneva, League of Nations, 1944.

⁷ Moore, W. E., *ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHY OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN EUROPE*, Geneva, League of Nations, 1945.

⁸ Kirk, D., *EUROPE'S POPULATION IN THE INTERWAR YEARS*, Geneva, League of Nations, 1946.

⁹ Lorimer, F., THE POPULATION OF THE SOVIET UNION: HISTORY AND PROSPECTS, Geneva, League of Nations, 1946.

¹⁰ Davis, K., THE POPULATION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1951.

¹¹ Taeuber, I. B., THE POPULATION OF JAPAN, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958.

¹² Notestein, F. W. and Jurkat, E., Population Problems of Palestine, *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, 23, 307-352, October, 1945.

¹³ Coale, A. J. and Hoover, E. M., POPULATION GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN LOW-INCOME COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF INDIA'S PROSPECTS, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958.

¹⁴ Westoff, C. F., Potter, R. G., Jr., Sagi, P. C. and Mishler, E. G., FAMILY GROWTH IN METROPOLITAN AMERICA, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1961.

¹⁵ Westoff, C. F., Potter, R. G., Jr. and Sagi, P. C., THE THIRD CHILD: A STUDY IN THE PREDICTION OF FERTILITY, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963.

¹⁶ Bumpass, L. L. and Westoff, C. F., THE LATER YEARS OF CHILDBEARING, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970.

¹⁷ Coale, A. J. and Zelnik, M., NEW ESTIMATES OF FERTILITY AND POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES: A STUDY OF ANNUAL WHITE BIRTHS FROM 1855 TO 1960 AND OF COMPLETENESS OF ENUMERATION IN THE CENSUSES FROM 1880 TO 1960, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963.

¹⁸ Coale, A. J. and Demeny, P., REGIONAL MODEL LIFE AND STABLE POPULATIONS, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1966.

¹⁹ ———, METHODS OF ESTIMATING BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURES FROM INCOMPLETE DATA, New York, United Nations, 1967.

²⁰ Brass, W., Coale, A. J., Demeny, P., Heisel, D. F., Lorimer, F., Romaniuk, A. and van de Walle, E., THE DEMOGRAPHY OF TROPICAL AFRICA, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968.

²¹ Taeuber, C. and Taeuber, I. B., THE CHANGING POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, New York, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1958. (They have a new census monograph now in press.)

²² Balfour, M. C., Evans, R. F., Notestein, F. W. and Taeuber, I. B., PUBLIC HEALTH AND DEMOGRAPHY IN THE FAR EAST, New York, The Rockefeller Foundation, 1950.

²³ A somewhat fuller account may be found in Notestein, F. W., Frederick Osborn: Demography's Statesman on his Eightieth Spring, *Population Index*, 35, 367-371, 1969.

DISCUSSION

Frederick Osborn: Notestein pointed out in the latter part of his statement that the major determinant of attitudes toward population has been the course of great events, including population growth. I believe he has failed to define an emerging and basic determinant of the importance of population studies.

I think he implied and might have added a third cause of change in public attitudes—the sudden realization that the very survival of man is threatened by the destructiveness of our technologic society and its weapons, a development closely linked in the public mind with the growth of population.

Fear that man may not survive strikes at the deepest chords in man's being. Nothing could change public opinion and public policy toward population as much as the fear of nonsurvival with which it appears linked. Inevitably demography becomes more important as (to paraphrase Corning and others*) society, national and global, is recognized as a collective goal-directed survival enterprise, within which the demographic discipline constitutes one of the functional divisions of labor.

Such a society is in the making. In it, problems of reproduction and child rearing, of the distribution of births and of maintaining both genetic and social diversity become among the most important elements of social life.

The course of world events will force demography to widen its horizons in interdependency with all the disciplines involved in the study of man and his survival.

* Corning, Peter, *The Biological Bases of Behavior and Some Implications for Political Science*, *World Politics*, 23, 321–370. Steiner, George, Books, *The New Yorker*, March 6, 1971, pp. 98–116.