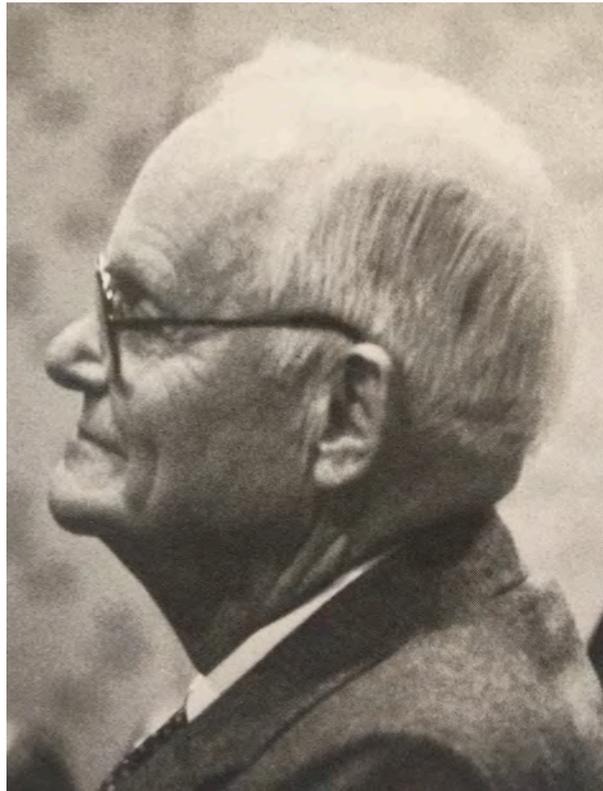


DEMOGRAPHIC DESTINIES

Interviews with Presidents of the Population Association of America

Interview with Dudley Kirk PAA President in 1959-60



This series of interviews with Past PAA Presidents was initiated by Anders Lunde
(PAA Historian, 1973 to 1982)

And continued by Jean van der Tak (PAA Historian, 1982 to 1994)

And then by John R. Weeks (PAA Historian, 1994 to present)

With the collaboration of the following members of the PAA History Committee:
David Heer (2004 to 2007), Paul Demeny (2004 to 2012), Dennis Hodgson (2004 to
present), Deborah McFarlane (2004 to 2018), Karen Hardee (2010 to present), Emily
Merchant (2016 to present), and Win Brown (2018 to present)

DUDLEY KIRK

PAA President in 1959-60 (No. 23). Interview with Jean van der Tak at Dr. Kirk's home, Stanford, California, 1989.

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: Dudley Kirk was born in 1913 in Rochester, New York, but moved as a small child to California and grew up there. He received a B.A. in political science from Pomona College in 1934 and an M.A. in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy of Tufts University in 1935. From Harvard he received an M.A. in sociology in 1938 and Ph.D. in sociology in 1946. He was with Princeton's Office of Population Research from 1939 to 1947, where he was author of the influential monograph, Europe's Population in the Interwar Years (1946), and coauthor of The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union (1944). He was also Assistant Professor of Sociology at Princeton in 1945-47. From 1947 to 1954, he was a demographer in the Office of Intelligence Research of the U.S. State Department. He was Director of the Demographic Division of the Population Council from 1954 to 1967. He returned to California in 1967, where he has been at Stanford as Professor of Population Studies with the Food Research Institute and also with the Department of Sociology, of which he was Chairman in 1975-76. He has published widely on such issues as population trends in Europe and Latin America, migration, the demographic transition, and population growth and economic development. He has served on the U.S. Committee on Health and Vital Statistics and as a consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Ford Foundation, among other groups. [He died in San Jose, California, in 2000. At the time of his death, he was Morrison Professor Emeritus of Population Studies in the Food Research Institute and Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology at Stanford University.]

VDT: Dr. Kirk did a first interview for the PAA oral history project with Anders Lunde at the PAA meeting in Philadelphia in 1979 [April 26, 1979]. However, the tape of that interview is flawed and also he has now added ten more years to his distinguished career. So, I thank you, Dudley, for agreeing to this second interview.

How did you become interested in demography? You mentioned in your 1979 interview that your demographic interest grew out of your interest in geography.

KIRK: Yes. In high school and even before, I was intrigued with numbers, had fantasies about numbers--population growth of cities and of nations, of tribes, people and so on. But that interest wasn't crystallized because in my high school, of course, there was nothing on population and no such course at Pomona College.

In college, however, I wrote a long paper, which took quite a little research, on the future of Los Angeles County. The county supervisors at that time had a big study of the future of Los Angeles County. This was fascinating, because it assumed a good deal of population growth but nothing like what has happened. There were 2 million at the time I wrote that paper in 1933 and 9 million now. The forecast was that the population growth would be accompanied by a growth in the network of public transportation, particularly what we called the "big red cars" of the Pacific Electric; people commuted from our town, about 35 miles away, into Los Angeles on these big red electric trains. They had no idea at all--nor did anybody at that time, really--that the growth of Los Angeles would be a matter of freeways and automobile transportation. There was no forecast of the freeway mentality and culture.

So, I was interested in population and population problems. Then I went to the Fletcher School [of Law and Diplomacy]. At Pomona, I had been in political science and I was interested particularly in international relations. I was at Fletcher a year.

Then my father called my brother and me in and said, "I'm going to give each of you \$2,000"--

which was a lot of money at that time--"and you can do anything you want with it. You can start a candy store or continue with graduate work or take a trip or whatever." At age 21, you can imagine what I chose, and what my brother chose. We went around the world, spent a year.

We started off on a Japanese freighter across the Pacific. Spent a month in Japan and six weeks in China. Then to Malaysia on a Norwegian freighter; the captain just couldn't wait to get to Singapore, because he loved to play golf. We went to India, spent quite a little time in India, and then to London, where we spent the spring term [of 1936] at the London School of Economics. Then came back to the U.S. and I went to Harvard as a graduate student; my brother went to the University of California.

At Harvard I was a major in sociology. I took Ed Hutchinson's course in population, enjoyed it tremendously, and went on and wrote a dissertation under Hutchinson on the Nazi population policy. My conclusions were that the success of the policy in raising the birth rate--which they did, very substantially--was as much as or more the result of re-employment as of population policies. About one third of the labor force in Germany was unemployed in 1933. With rearmament, there was a tremendous revival in employment and people had children.

VDT: You got your Ph.D. in 1946 from Harvard, where you'd gotten an M.A. in 1938. Meanwhile, you'd gone to the Office of Population Research at Princeton in 1939. When was this dissertation written?

KIRK: I wrote it at Princeton, really, but through those years, I was mainly engaged in the work of the Office of Population Research.

VDT: In your 1979 interview, you said you were really hired by Irene Taeuber for the Office of Population Research, who interviewed you sitting on a loveseat in the Hay Adams Hotel in Washington when you were there attending your first PAA meeting [May 12-13, 1939].

KIRK: Yes, she was delegated to interview me. You remember Irene, how very intense she was. You could say that she hired me as much as anyone did. Of course, Frank Notestein was the director.

VDT: You said that the job paid \$2,500 a year, on which you were very comfortable.

KIRK: Yes, it really was a good salary.

VDT: At the Office of Population Research, they were doing the four books commissioned by the League of Nations. You were a coauthor on the Notestein book, The Future Population of Europe and the Soviet Union, the first one to come out [1944], the one in which Ansley Coale did the projections. What part did you do in that book?

KIRK: I wrote a couple of chapters. We were all involved; this was a team effort.

VDT: Then there was your own important book, Europe's Population in the Interwar Years [1946]. In that book, you used the expression "demographic transition." You also called it the "vital revolution." Who was the first to use the actual expression, "demographic transition"?

KIRK: I think it was probably Frank Notestein, though I'm not sure. We demographers were a very small, compact group; we had a lot of interchange with each other. So it's really quite hard to pin down something like that--who was actually the first to use the expression.

VDT: Of course, the concept was being developed just at that time. In your book, you stressed the importance of modernization--the threshold of development that would tip off fertility decline. You wrote a lot about the modernization threshold later.

KIRK: Later I did, yes.

VDT: Do you still believe that modernization is necessary first--that there can be no fertility decline engineered by direct family planning programs without waiting for associated socioeconomic development?

KIRK: No, I don't believe that. Modernization is certainly important, but a country like Indonesia, which has an effective population policy, has reduced the birth rate substantially. And, of course, the outstanding example is China.

But I did write a couple of articles on modernization and fertility decline in Latin America, where in those days there was no antinatalist policy. I was enamored then of the threshold hypothesis; wanted to test it out. And it worked well in Latin America, that is, it predicted when the birth rate was going to go down, by the degree of modernization. There were certain critical points and when a country got beyond that point, the birth rate began to go down. Frank Oechsli of the University of California and I developed an index of modernization that included education, health--ten items, a whole series of socioeconomic variables--and it worked very well in Latin America. But, I have to admit the threshold hypothesis doesn't work elsewhere. And I don't believe it works in Latin America now, because the whole culture is now attuned to birth control, the idea of reducing the birth rate--not only the government, but the people. So, the birth rates are going down quite fast in most of Latin America now.

The threshold hypothesis was intriguing because with it you could, hopefully, predict how fertility was going to go. But I don't think it's worth much now.

VDT: Well, the rapid fertility decline has also slowed down in some countries. Back to your book, Europe's Population in the Interwar Years. It was very influential and has been much praised. You pointed out to Andy Lunde in the 1979 interview that at OPR you were creating a small library of books on population, which were rare in those days, with the four League of Nations volumes and Irene Taeuber's book on The Population of Japan [1958] and Kingsley Davis's book The Population of India and Pakistan [1951]. You were prescient in your book. You foresaw that there would be no permanent increase in Western European fertility after World War II, which was true--there was a bump of a baby boom to about 1964 and since then fertility has been very low. You said that was due to growing "individualism." I was struck by that because that's the term now used to describe the motivation for Europe's low fertility. Dirk van de Kaa used it in his Population Reference Bureau Population Bulletin, "Europe's Second Demographic Transition" [March 1987], that I edited, and he built on the work of Ron Lesthaeghe, who also used that term, which you had already used, back in the 1940s. Also, you found pockets of high fertility--the Netherlands then, Central Russia, and Albania. You wrote more later on Albania.

KIRK: Yes, Albania is the last underdeveloped country in Europe. Unfortunately, they haven't taken a census in a long time and the vital statistics aren't very reliable. Fertility has now gone down, but how much, nobody knows.

VDT: How did you get your data for that book? You had a tremendous array of data. You had an appendix table with even the gross reproduction rates for 600 areas.

KIRK: Europe historically, for a long time, has had much better vital statistics than we had in this country. They are quite reliable and you could compute reproduction rates. The total fertility rate hadn't been developed as a measure. We computed reproduction rates just for fun.

VDT: You described that in the 1979 interview, all of you sitting around doing net and gross reproduction rates, inspired by Lotka. It was a tremendous collection of data in that book.

KIRK: And I think I mentioned to Andy in 1979 that when I go to Europe now, I love to look at the minor civil areas--the departements of France, counties of England--and think about how they were 40 years ago and what it is now. Of course, fertility has now gone down.

VDT: Yes. But fertility has gone up again slightly in Sweden and such countries--up to 1.9 total fertility rate in Sweden in the 1989 PRB World Population Data Sheet [and 2.0 in the 1990 Data Sheet]. Fertility is now lowest in Italy [1.3].

KIRK: Italy is curious. I think people still have an image of Italy with a lot of bambinos. It's just amazing--the lowest in Europe!

VDT: Frank Notestein, of course, was a dominant character at the Office of Population Research and you say he remained a friend of yours all his life.

KIRK: I had two major mentors in my demographic career and the first was Frank. I also had a tremendous respect for the other, Frederick Osborn. He was a very tall man, a very remarkable man--a true American aristocrat in the best sense, that is, in the sense of having responsibility to go along with prestige. He felt that he had a responsibility to go out there and help the country. And he did. And while he was never a technical demographer as such, he was in a sense our statesman. He got funds for us and you know that he essentially started the Office of Population Research at Princeton; he got support for it. He was a Princeton alumnus, of course.

VDT: I understand he first approached Harvard and they turned him down.

KIRK: That's true. He was glad, of course, to have it at Princeton. Then later when he had helped to found the Population Council, I worked for him there. Fred Osborn was a very dear, close friend.

In demography per se, the founder of the field in this country, in a way, was Frank Notestein. Yes, he and I were close for over 40 years, from 1939 till his death in 1983. Frank was director of the Office of Population Office from its beginning. When I got there in 1939, he had a tiny office. There was Frank, me, a secretary named Martina Evans, and Ansley Coale, then a graduate student. That was OPR. Henry Shryock and John Durand had been there earlier. We were in three rooms on the second floor of a building on Nassau Street and exactly opposite my office was that of a podiatrist.

I remember a colleague in the economics department saying, "How can you find enough in the field of population to spend your time on?" That was sort of the attitude. Population was something aside, just a figure that you put in but you didn't do anything with it.

So that was the start, and, of course, it grew. Irene Taeuber worked at the Library of Congress in Washington and she sent up the abstracts for the Population Index. She would do the bibliography and she wrote most of the "country items" too.

VDT: She was writing those lead articles on the population of different countries anonymously, didn't get a credit line on them.

KIRK: Well, she did a tremendous amount anonymously and a tremendous amount over her name too. She'd come to Princeton to consult. Irene was always a bit eccentric in her manner of things. If you said something, she'd say "No, and . . ." but then she'd agree with you. If it began with no, it would end up with yes. Of course, she was a remarkable woman.

Also, Frank Lorimer stood out. He was another person I always admired very much. He was in Washington at the American University but he came up to Princeton to consult on his book on the Soviet Union [The Population of the Soviet Union, 1946], because it was published by OPR.

VDT: I want to talk about him later, because in your 1979 interview you cited him as one of the broad-gauged people working in population in the early days. Why did you leave the OPR to go to the State Department?

KIRK: It was an opportunity, really, to advance demography. I was the first person in the federal government to have the title "demographer." Later on, the Census Bureau had demographers. I was in the Office of Intelligence Research, which was the successor of OSS [Office of Strategic Service]. I was responsible for population research in the State Department, later joined by Earl Huyck and Chris Tietze. There was something called National Intelligence Surveys, which were conducted for most every country in the world. We were responsible for the opening demographic section on countries X, Y and Z. We spent a lot of our time on that.

I became head of a division of research dealing with South Asia and Africa, huge territory! When India was partitioned, I had responsibility for drawing up what would be the fairest line between India and Pakistan, that is, in terms of the population of Muslims and Hindus. This was so the U.S. would have a view. Of course, the specific geographic delineation was done by the British, and they did a pretty good job.

VDT: As far as your figures were concerned, it was about the best place the line could have been?

KIRK: About the best they could have done. It was very hard, because there were minorities on both sides.

Of course, there were other things. I was involved in political aspects too. I had a background in political science and international relations. Every day, we had a review of intelligence that was coming in and I was there supposedly as an expert on the Near East and South Asia and Africa.

When they were going to construct the Aswan dam in Egypt, the United States opposed it. Dulles was Secretary of State and he didn't think it was a good idea. We sent up a statement on how we thought it was a good idea, the dam should be built, with U.S. assistance. But Dulles's secretary, who was in charge of looking into it, said he wouldn't dream of presenting our statement to Dulles. This illustrates our frustrations when Dulles replaced Acheson as Secretary of State.

VDT: You told Andy Lunde about the rather unsophisticated methods you used to make population projections, because, well, there were no computers then.

KIRK: There were no computers. We did a lot, but they were short-range projections; not really anything fancy.

VDT: Then you went to the Population Council, which had been established in 1953, was it?

KIRK: It was contractually established in 1952, but established an office in 1953. I came in 1954. There were Frederick Osborn, Margaret Cramer, who was the accountant, Catherine Glazer, who was the secretary, and myself, and that was it.

VDT: Again, you came in right on the ground floor. Frederick Osborn was the first director?

KIRK: That's right. Frank Notestein had proposed me to Fred, but it was Fred who persuaded me to join the Population Council. It was a very pleasant experience working with him. And with Frank too, as I have said. [Frank Notestein left OPR in 1959 to succeed Frederick Osborn as second director of the Population Council.]

VDT: In your interview ten years ago, you said you were there through the "real excitement period" of the Population Council, when it . . .

KIRK: Was just starting up.

VDT: It was also the time of orthodoxy. The latest Population and Development Review has a lead article by Dennis Hodgson on "Orthodoxy and Revisionism in American Demography" [PDR, December 1988]. By orthodoxy, he means the idea that rapid population growth was impeding development in less developed countries and could be brought down by direct intervention, family planning programs, without waiting for socioeconomic development. Of course, the Population Council was one of the leaders in that policy; that's what he implies. Do you agree with that? Of course, John D. Rockefeller set up the Council because he felt something had to be done and the Rockefeller Foundation was drifting away from interest in population. In the 1950s the Population Council mostly concentrated on research and you were head of the division for demographic research.

KIRK: Yes, but we expanded a great deal. We didn't really feel any great conflict between the idea that modernization promotes reduction of the birth rate or that family planning does. From the first, we were promoting the family planning idea. And almost from the first, we had a scientist at the Rockefeller Institute doing research on contraceptives, though this was modest at first.

I think my own greatest contribution to the Council was the selection and nurturing of Council Fellows.

VDT: You chose the Population Council Fellows?

KIRK: Yes, at first; later on, we had a committee, but I had a lot of say in choosing them. I administered the program, which began in the mid-1950s.

VDT: These were young people brought in from less developed countries to study at American Universities and the idea was to build up demographic expertise in their countries--that they would go back to their countries?

KIRK: And to get a viable national group, large enough to grow by themselves. A few years ago, I looked at who were the leading demographers in less developed countries and over a third of them had been Population Council Fellows. Isn't that something!

VDT: Who were some of them with whom you had a hand? What about those who went to the University of Chicago: Visid Prachuabmoh from Thailand and Mercedes Concepcion from the Philippines and Haryono Suyono from Indonesia? Were they your Population Council Fellows?

KIRK: Yes.

VDT: And Iskander from Indonesia?

KIRK: Yes. He changed his name because of prejudice against Chinese names in Indonesia. He went to Princeton.

VDT: Can you think of some others like that?

KIRK: Yes, indeed. There was Mohamed El Badry (from Egypt), Alvaro Lopez (Colombia), Gustavo Cabrera (Mexico), Carmen Miro, S.N. Agarawala, P.M. Visaria, Lee-Jay Cho, Saw Swee Hock, Etienne van de Walle, Thomas Frejka, and many others. Perhaps more familiar are the Americans who were Population Council Fellows, such as Judith Blake, Paul Demeny [originally from Hungary], Reynolds Farley, Robert Potter, Harriet Presser, and Joe Stycos.

VDT: Did you go out to the countries to meet them; you traveled a lot?

KIRK: I did indeed, to find suitable recruits. And we had groups sent out for more general surveys.

VDT: Yes, you and Phil Hauser and Bud Harkavy went in late 1962 on a trip to Southeast Asia.

KIRK: Yes, I still have the notes we wrote. Then, of course, demography was pretty primitive in most of these LDC countries.

VDT: I would think so. How did you go about finding people who were even interested in coming to study in the U.S.?

KIRK: Once we had one person in the country who'd been here, then they would find others suitable to come, to build up a nucleus of demographers in the major countries.

VDT: The trip you made with Bud Harkavy and Phil Hauser, that was the beginning of the connections with the Philippines and Indonesia and Thailand, those three countries in particular. Did you know they gave a dinner for Bud Harkavy at this last PAA meeting [in Baltimore], that you missed?

KIRK: Yes, I was sorry to miss that.

VDT: He looks just the same as he always has, very youthful. Those must have been exciting years in the Population Council. You felt anything was possible. The idea was to build up expertise for demographic research in these countries?

KIRK: That's right--a "critical mass." We thought it was smart to start with research and with research, as Bernard Berelson used to say, "invented here." They'd listen much more to an expert from their own country--not think of it as something that was . . .

VDT: Thrust on them by the U.S.

KIRK: Yes. We were too cautious really. We didn't realize how much latent possibility there was. We were very cautious about urging countries to have family planning programs and all that sort of thing. The culture in a lot of these countries was not so unfavorable to the idea of family planning as it was in Western culture. We were sort of reading from Western culture all the opposition--the Catholic

opposition, the whole elaborate machinery of government as opposed to family planning.

VDT: In the United States, yes.

KIRK: In Europe also. We were sort of projecting from that, and we were wrong.

VDT: Except for the Philippines, which has a strong Catholic church, but that's the American influence in a sense.

KIRK: But we could have pushed faster.

VDT: You mean in Thailand, Korea, Singapore--they were all just waiting?

KIRK: Yes. Not only the governments but also the people were beginning to be concerned about population growth.

VDT: Did you have anything to do with the KAP studies, which of course were showing [a demand for contraception]?

KIRK: Oh yes, the Population Council really started that. We financed quite a number of those. Of course, later on they spread with AID and different sources of funding.

VDT: And the KAP studies led to the World Fertility Survey. You talked about getting Thais to speak to the Thais and so on. I'm always interested in Studies in Family Planning, the string of authors on each article and there'll be three or four Thais and one American, sometimes the senior author, sometimes the junior author at the end, or sometimes in the middle.

KIRK: Yes, we were very careful on that. It was hard for them at first, because they were new to demographic research. But I think the program is very successful. We always had a difficult time persuading--by that time, the Ford Foundation, or even the Rockefeller Foundation--to give a large amount of money for Fellows.

VDT: Most of the money came from Ford, through the Population Council?

KIRK: Yes. Ford and Rockefeller always referred to us as the retailers; they were the wholesalers. We had a hard time explaining to them the importance of fellowships. From their point of view, fellowships were not a good investment, because they don't show early return. The foundation likes to see an early return. And in this case, it may be five or ten years before anything shows. They were generous, of course, but they kept wanting us to justify it every year.

VDT: You brought students over for one-year, two-year courses, or . . . ?

KIRK: Some of them would get a master's degree and go back, but our objective was to have them go for the Ph.D. and really get fully trained.

VDT: So they could go back and set up a department or center for demographic research?

KIRK: Yes.

VDT: Did the Population Council try to follow them up?

KIRK: Yes, we supported them when they went back. We gave them financial assistance for projects, or on occasion, we'd finance a position for a Population Council Fellow in the government or a university.

Then we were very interested in the regional centers, as the one in Santiago, Chile, for Latin America, CELADE, which Carmen Miro led so effectively, and the one in Chembur, near Bombay, which was later taken over by the Indian government.

VDT: When you say the Population Council was interested, does that mean some financial support came from the Population Council?

KIRK: Oh yes. We largely established them, in terms of money. Well, CELADE, of course, was under the Economic Commission for Latin America, ECLA.

I remember one horrible experience I had there; I went down quite often. There was a meeting of an advisory committee for CELADE, presided over by the head of ECLA. We met about 10 o'clock and they elected officers and I was elected vice-chair. I assumed this was sort of honorary, because the Population Council had given the money. But at 11 o'clock, the ECLA man announced that he had to catch a plane for Mexico and he left and who was put in the chair?

VDT: There you were in the chair, one hour after it began!

KIRK: Yes, and I was the only non-Spanish-speaking person there, except for Nathan Keyfitz, who had extremely heavily accented Spanish, but he could get along. There was a man from the statistical side who sat beside me, a Castillian Spaniard, spoke beautiful Spanish, and I could understand every word he said. He spoke excellent English too. The rest was all the way down to Caribbean Spanish, which has no s's, and Chilean Spanish, which is pretty bad.

At first they gave me a nice girl to translate for me. I was hearing it in Spanish in one ear and then the English in the other ear half a sentence later. I was driven up the wall, and went to Spanish alone. It was a three-day conference, and I just struggled through it, with the help of the Spaniard, the statistician. I got so I could understand what they were talking about. But I didn't know whether they were for it or against it. The Spanish was more formal than it is now and they'd say, "As my distinguished colleague has said so beautifully, in such perfect language" and so on and so on.

What I got to listen for was the little word "pero"--"on the other hand." That was followed by the real substance of what they had to say. I learned more Spanish in those three days than in all the time before, or since.

VDT: CELADE was already taking on students at that time, in the 1950s. quite early?

KIRK: Yes, it was about 1955. Now it's independent and, as I said, the Indians have taken over the Bombay center.

VDT: Did you ever go out to teach in any of these places?

KIRK: No, we got good people to go. Dorothy Thomas was one; she went to Bombay. I remember she had a pet mongoose, because there was brush around the center and snakes. Mongooses eat snakes, so she had this pet mongoose to protect her.

VDT: Don Bogue was out there early on.

KIRK: That's right. The Chembur center turned out some very good people, and still does.

VDT: The Population Council was very important at that time.

KIRK: The accomplishments we were making were rewarding, I thought. And, of course, the Council was growing.

VDT: You were head of the demographic division; Sheldon Segal was head of the biomedical division . . .

KIRK: He became head; he wasn't the first one. The third was the international division. The demographic division became the Center for Policy Planning.

VDT: Frank Notestein was head of the Population Council from 1959 to 1969, then Bernard Berelson, then George Zeidenstein came in the early 1970s. Did you have anything to do with the Parker Mauldin-Berelson research that began to look at the relative contributions of socioeconomic development and family planning, when they had to prove that family planning had a net impact on fertility decline?

KIRK: No, I'd left the Council by then. I left in 1967.

VDT: Why did you leave and go to Stanford?

KIRK: I was attracted to Stanford and I felt that the Council was getting to be too much of a family planning rather than a research organization. And that followed on more and more. Zeidenstein pushed aside Paul Demeny, who was head of the Center for Policy Planning. He displeased Zeidenstein, because he wasn't policy-oriented enough.

VDT: That just happened last year or so, but it had been coming to a head for a long time. I interviewed Paul last June in New York, just after that decision had been made. However, he has plenty to do. But you yourself felt in the 1960s that the Population Council was becoming too program-oriented, too family-planning oriented; you were more interested in research?

KIRK: Yes.

VDT: And that entered into your decision to come to Stanford?

KIRK: Also my family. We spent a year here at Stanford at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences, a think tank, in 1964-65. I took a year's sabbatical from the Council. And my wife and children had liked it so much, they urged me very much to go when I was offered the opportunity. So we came back. I joined the Food Research Institute and the Department of Sociology. Later I had a joint appointment.

VDT: Tell me something about your work at Stanford.

KIRK: I got very interested in Mexico and Latin America. We did this threshold hypothesis idea. I was very much interested in the acceleration of fertility decline.

VDT: Which you felt was happening?

KIRK: It was happening. As you pointed out, in some countries it has slowed down. But in those days--and I think I was one of the first to point that out--if you projected these things ahead, it appeared that fertility was likely to go down faster in the less developed countries than it did in Europe. And it did.

VDT: Indeed, in such countries as Costa Rica and Mexico.

KIRK: I think more particularly in Asia.

VDT: In your 1979 interview you said that the ten countries where fertility decline had been fastest had all been islands or--there was another word you used; I think you meant peninsulas.

KIRK: Islands and peninsulas, yes: Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South Korea, which might as well have been an island, in view of its political separation from North Korea and the Asian mainland. The demographic transition proceeded faster than in mainland countries; they're more exposed to cultural influence from outside. Japan, of course, is an outstanding example.

VDT: Right. Its crude birth rate dropped from 34 to 17 in one decade--due in part to abortion, which wasn't so much used in other places. Ten years ago you were also working on migration in Mexico.

KIRK: Within Mexico and Mexico to this country. But I got quite interested in the food problem in Mexico and went to conferences on that issue in Mexico. They had the feeling their food was being taken from them, with vegetables grown in Baja California and Sonora and cattle from other areas being exported to the U.S. And they were interested in alternative supplies. One of the most interesting dinners I've ever had in my life was at a conference, given in the botanical garden of the University of Mexico. We had a dinner of possible foods--snakes, insects, mollusks, exotic seafoods, wild vegetables.

VDT: You ate these things because that might be all there was left to eat?

KIRK: Well, the Mexican sponsors of this conference were exposing us to other possible things to eat, perhaps for public relations. We were on TV. They focused in on me, perhaps to see if a gringo could eat all the "delicacies."

VDT: The idea was the Mexicans felt they could not feed their growing population because their land was being exploited for food grown for the U.S.?

KIRK: Yes, whereas in fact, you go barely outside of Mexico City and you see very primitive, rainfed, agriculture. Corn and beans are the main stuff. In the north, northwest in particular, the area that sends vegetables to us, it's a highly developed agriculture, entirely irrigated. The people of European background had developed entrepreneurially; things moved ahead. But the Indian population follows the old ways; it's hard to change. I got interested in that.

VDT: At that time did you bring in the population angle?

KIRK: Oh yes.

VDT: If Mexico continued to reduce its fertility, it would have fewer people to feed?

KIRK: I wrote some articles on the future population of Mexico, predicting a rapid decline in fertility. But even so, there's a tremendous cohort of young people.

VDT: You also have worked quite a bit on migration within Mexico and to the U.S.

KIRK: Yes. Curiously enough, the Mexican border states didn't grow as much from net migration as one might expect, because a lot of migrants that went to border towns went on across to the U.S. It was sort of a staging ground for migrants from northern and central Mexico.

It's not commonly recognized in this country that these areas are selective of more European types. The more southerly areas are more Indian. At the National Museum in Mexico City, the handsome girl guides, mixed Indian and European, will tell you about the culture that has amalgamated. But you go to Oaxaco and that's primarily Indian. We went to a wedding there, which was held in what had been a convent, and from the balcony we looked over the crowd--I suppose there were 200 people there--and I saw only one person with an Indian face. The upper class minority is definitely European in appearance. I'm citing this to show that prejudice really exists. But I've wandered a bit from demography.

VDT: No, that's migration, that we're talking about. In your PAA presidential address of 1960, which we'll get to later, you wanted demographers to look more at migration. I think they are doing so now.

KIRK: Yes, I spoke of migration as the "stepchild of demography."

VDT: You mentioned some leading influences on your career--Fred Osborn, Frank Notestein . . .

KIRK: And Frank Lorimer.

VDT: Tell me about Frank Lorimer. I've heard what a wonderful character he was; how he married again, that New Zealand nurse he met in Africa. They went to live on a commune in New England, had a child when he was 79, and went out to New Zealand.

KIRK: They adopted another daughter, Petra's illegitimate niece. He also had adopted children by Faith, his first wife. Frank Lorimer illustrated what I see as a great difference from those presently in demography. He had very broad interests, a broad background; he'd been a minister. At that first meeting of PAA I attended in 1939, 50 years ago, there were 17 participants, who gave papers, wrote joint papers, discussed papers and so on. Only 17, and 14 of them were then in Who's Who or a subsequent edition. And I doubt very much whether the 529 participants that I counted in the 1988 meeting program--think of it, 529 as opposed to 17!--I doubt very much whether they're going to have as high a proportion in Who's Who.

VDT: What do you think accounts for that, that population then drew such eminent people?

KIRK: That was before it was very firmly located in sociology. Several disciplines would be represented in these meetings, broad-scale people. Frank Lorimer, besides the ministry, studied anthropology. He and Fred Osborn wrote this book at the Museum of Natural History in New York, Dynamics of Population [1934].

VDT: Who else was outstanding at PAA meetings?

KIRK: Phil Hauser. As you know, he had a large influence at the Census Bureau. He was at all these PAA meetings. And there was Henry Shryock, John Durand, and Lowell Reed, for whom I had a great deal of respect. Lowell Reed was a biostatistician and a very level-headed person. He was very good at chairing meetings, because he'd get to the heart of the discussion, keep it focused. He was at Johns Hopkins.

VDT: You mentioned him in your 1979 interview. You felt he was a real inspiration in demographic methodology.

KIRK: Yes. Well, as a biostatistician, he came at the field from a different point of view. And I remember we had John D. Black of Harvard, an agricultural economist, so our meetings drew from different disciplines. Of course, demographers come from different fields today, but we're more specialized now.

VDT: It's become a field in its own right and perhaps within that field . . .

KIRK: That's right, specialized. As you point out, I'm in migration. But, of course, there's a whole range of specialties dealing with population.

VDT: And in your time, you felt that you would like to steer clear of too much emphasis on numbers rather than their meaning. You said you came from the pre-computer age; you had your students do your computer programming for you when it was necessary.

KIRK: Well, after I came here to Stanford. When I came in 1967, the computer age was just beginning.

VDT: You mentioned to me at a PAA meeting not too long ago that you felt more should be said about Warren Thompson. You noticed that he hadn't even been mentioned in the International Encyclopedia of Population [1982].

KIRK: And Whelpton, of course. The two of them were at the Scripps Foundation and they were always participants in the early meetings. Warren Thompson's book [Population Problems] was the textbook in the field for years, generations. It had five or six editions. I had a lot of respect for him. And I liked Pat Whelpton very much. Pat originally was sort of in Thompson's shadow.

VDT: What about Kingsley Davis? I'm going to interview him two days from now. Is he among your leading influences?

KIRK: I wouldn't quite place him in that category; he isn't much older than I am. I first knew him when I was at Harvard as a graduate student. He was teaching at Smith and came over and talked. Then we were at Princeton together.

VDT: Did you perhaps have differences of opinions?

KIRK: Yes, we did, sometimes.

VDT: Norman Ryder in his interview with me last year said he had been asked at the New Orleans PAA meeting just before that, who really came up first with the term "demographic transition." He felt that Kingsley Davis had used it in the volume of the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science on "World Population in Transition" that he edited in 1945, but that he'd borrowed that from you. You had published an article, using that expression, in 1944, the year before.

KIRK: Well, I had, but I never thought of that. I never put those things together.

VDT: As you said earlier, you were all working on it together.

KIRK: But--I suppose I shouldn't say this--but Kingsley has been a prickly character.

VDT: That is exactly the expression that Norman Ryder used!

KIRK: Well, I hesitate to put it on the record. But he's an extremely able person. Of course, he was chair of sociology at Berkeley for some years.

VDT: And you were at Stanford. Well, I guess you've both now mellowed. (Laughter)

KIRK: He was offered a job at Stanford, too, at the time he left Columbia, but Berkeley offered him \$2,500 more, so he went to Berkeley. Our local demographic history might have been quite different, if he'd come to Stanford.

VDT: What about your students while you were here at Stanford?

KIRK: I had a real difficulty because there was no demographic setup and I was in the Food Research Institute. I had difficulty in getting students who were interested in demography on fellowships. All the graduate students now come on fellowships and the departments distribute the fellowships and I didn't get a lot of those. So, I didn't get the cream of the crop.

VDT: Those interested in demography would not necessarily come to Stanford?

KIRK: That's right, and I wouldn't blame them. My students were largely converts from other fields. Some of them have stayed in demography and some have gone into other fields.

VDT: Will that change now? I understand there's a new demography center with Fred Pinkham as assistant director, who came from the Population Crisis Committee.

KIRK: It's a center for population and resources; it's not a department. Brian Arthur really started it. He was quite good at getting money and they got money to support this center and hire some people. But then he got tired of it and dropped it and it went over to an Australian who is interested in population biology. So, we have a group that meets from time to time, but we don't have really a core group of demographers.

VDT: Perhaps that center will entice more potential demographers to Stanford, although there's the competition from Berkeley nearby.

KIRK: That's true. In any event, I never really developed a demography department or a demographic center of any consequence. I did have other demographers here and we did joint

research. I had big classes and graduate students, although the majority did not go into demography. Of course, population was a big thing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. And Paul Ehrlich is here. He was more of a thunderer than I was.

VDT: And still is. I heard him recently; he's still harping on the same theme.

KIRK: He outshone me. So, I couldn't say that I've been altogether happy here professionally. My family has been happy and that was important to me.

VDT: California, a special life, and Stanford is a special atmosphere.

KIRK: Yes.

VDT: You mention Paul Ehrlich, who is still preaching the urgency of reducing rapid population growth in developing countries, and perhaps he's right. Meanwhile, there's the new revisionist approach to the problem--what do you think of that?--the idea that population growth is only one factor in economic development and, of course, at the 1984 Mexico City population conference, the Americans said it was a neutral factor. The National Academy of Sciences report in 1986 [Population Growth and Economic Development: Policy Questions] came out with the idea that population growth, while still important, was not the overriding important thing in development.

KIRK: That was discussed at the PAA meeting in San Francisco [April 3-5, 1986]. Nathan Keyfitz was a visiting professor here then and he was very much upset by it and wrote impassioned letters and articles.

VDT: He felt it was downplaying rapid population growth? And what do you think of it?

KIRK: I thought it a good report. As you say, there has been a lot of revisionism. I guess I could be put in the category of revisionists. The issue is whether or not you can have economic development, at least rapid economic development, in a rapidly growing population, and there's actually no empirical basis for saying you can't. You have lots of countries with rapidly growing populations who've had economic development too.

VDT: Brazil--and also Mexico, at certain times, not always.

KIRK: Right.

VDT: There's a funny expression used about you in that Dennis Hodgson article that looks at the shift from orthodoxy to revisionism. He says that in the 1970s, you, Kingsley Davis, Clyde Kiser and Frank Lorimer were labeled "eugenist demographers" by the feminists, because they felt you were supporting family planning programs to bring down the birth rate at whatever cost in developing countries and they felt that perhaps had eugenist, racist overtones.

KIRK: I've been called that because of long association with Frederick Osborn, and I was president of ...

VDT: The Eugenics Society?

KIRK: Yes, though the name was changed to the American Society for the Study of Social Biology. I

was president of that for three years [1969-72]. And I've always felt there really is a eugenic aspect of this. In a way I hate to go on record for saying this, but I think there's a real problem in the Western civilization in that we are approaching a stationary population and the rest of the world, the less developed world, is rapidly becoming an increasing proportion of the total population. Since I have a background in political science, I see that as a power problem too. Because as these countries get developed, and particularly as China gets developed, their large populations are going to be a tremendous asset. That's a debatable question, of course, but I think so. I think that sheer size is going to have a very great effect on our position. In the past, Western civilization was a rapidly expanding civilization in numbers, in population, as well as in technology. I see us having to face a major readjustment in which power is going to go to other countries. And maybe we'd be better off if we had more people. I've spoken about this.

Yesterday, we went out to a restaurant and there was an Irish woman and she had six children, a beautiful family, and I told her I admired her family. Because--this is a difficult thing to express really--numbers are really going to count. In Western Europe they're beginning to be concerned about low fertility and I predict that we are going to be concerned about it. Maybe not in five or ten years, but by the year 2000, something like that.

VDT: You also said in your 1979 interview that you had been watching the growth of the Hispanic population in this country, which will become an increasing proportion of our population.

KIRK: Yes. California already has a majority of minorities in the schools; the non-Hispanic whites are a minority in the schools. Those children are the population of the future.

VDT: And that's something we should think about?

KIRK: We should think about it. I waver. Sometimes I think we ought to admit Hispanics, we shouldn't be as selfish as we are about our standard of living and our possessions and so on. I waver between that view and that we ought to keep them out. I guess I lean more toward letting in a moderate amount. But we'll have to have immigration if we're going to keep up the total population.

VDT: Keep up our population growth or . . . ?

KIRK: Population growth and ultimately our population size--unless we have some rise in fertility. As you point out, in Sweden and some countries the birth rate has gone up.

VDT: Slightly. In the U.S. too. In the latest Population Reference Bureau Data Sheet [1989], the U.S. TFR rounds up to 1.9; it had been rounding up to 1.8.

KIRK: The increasing minority population in the U.S. is a problem, I think, but I don't think it's an irresolvable problem.

VDT: What do you see as leading issues in demography over the years you have been involved? We have covered rapid population growth in less developed countries. In your 1960 PAA presidential address, which you had first titled "Population Shibboleths of 1960," then when it was published in Population Index it had gotten a very sober title ["Some Reflections on American Demography in the Nineteen-Sixties," Population Index, October 1960], you decried the lack of attention to migration, which you saw as an important variable at the local level, in particular, in population change. Don't you feel there's now more attention to migration in the field of demography?

KIRK: I think there is more attention, but it hasn't really grabbed a large proportion of demographers, and for a very simple reason: mathematical demography is in the ascendance. Births and deaths are such nice variables--they're unique, they happen only once, at least as far as we know--and births and deaths are variables that you can use mathematically very easily. Migration is entirely different, because you can migrate more than once, you can migrate in a thousand different directions, you can migrate for different times and periods. It's a very messy variable. And demographers have shied away from it--mathematical demographers entirely. Meredith John, who is here at Stanford, she teaches a course on demography and there is only one hour devoted to migration, because she's a mathematical demographer.

You've heard me say before that if you go below the national level in this country, the most important demographic variable is migration. If you talk about local areas, you have to be concerned primarily with migration, because birth and death rates aren't that much different. Migration is the important variable, and it's neglected because it's difficult to deal with in a mathematical framework. In that 1960 address, I referred to migration as a "stepchild of demography," which I think is the case even today. As you say, there's a lot of attention to it within demography, but it's within the context of a tremendously expanded attention to population study as a whole. It's still not a leading interest in demography.

VDT: And you feel it should be?

KIRK: I feel it should be because, you know, the true test of science is prediction and if you're going to predict population change below the national level, and sometimes at the national level, you have to make some prediction about migration. Now, the Census Bureau really dodges that issue by just assuming some arbitrary constant amount of migration.

VDT: Indeed, 600,000 net migration.

KIRK: Right, and it isn't based on anything except taking a number.

VDT: Well, it's based on legal migration and a bit thrown in there for illegal migration.

KIRK: Yes, but it's based essentially on what's happened in the past. I understand why that should be. But I do think it needs more attention and what brings about migration, in a sociological context and economic context.

VDT: Sociological and economic causes of migration?

KIRK: And consequences too. I have this feeling about the whole field of population that we don't really deal enough with the consequences of population change. We talk about economic consequences in a broad sort of way, but the revisionists have looked at this more closely and they say the effects of population growth are different from what has been conventional wisdom among demographers.

VDT: In your 1960 presidential speech, you did say that you felt there should be more emphasis on consequences. You felt that demographers got hung up on causes because they were so stunned by their projections of the 1930s that turned out so wrong because they didn't foresee the baby boom or rapid population growth in developing countries, so they shifted back and instead of saying what was going to happen to population, it was safer just to describe trends and deal with causes, possible causes.

KIRK: That's right. Migration is not an easy field to study. As I say, I spent considerable time studying it as it happened in Mexico. The data are primitive because in the census, you only have state of birth and then their present state. So, it's hard to get a current basis of migration in Mexico.

VDT: They don't have anything like the U.S. Current Population Survey with "Where did you live five years ago, or last year"?

KIRK: They're beginning to, but they haven't done it systematically to cover the whole country.

VDT: They're having a survey of that type?

KIRK: Well, they've had fertility surveys but they don't have a national population survey.

VDT: Which of your publications are your favorites, or those you feel were most important? Of course, your book, Europe's Population in the Interwar Years.

KIRK: At the time, I thought the articles I wrote on the accelerating decline of fertility in less developed areas were important. There were several articles that referred to this. Perhaps the best was "A New Demographic Transition?" in the National Academy of Sciences, Rapid Population Growth [1971].

VDT: You had a fine article in Population and Development Review in 1979 ["World Population and Birth Rates: Agreements and Disagreements"]. Was that one?

KIRK: No, that was about errors in population estimates. Another article that I particularly liked was on "Factors Affecting Moslem Natality" in Bernard Berelson [et al, eds.], Family Planning and Population Programs [1965].

VDT: What accomplishments in your career have given you the most satisfaction?

KIRK: I suppose that the greatest satisfaction I've had is what has happened to the Population Council Fellows and what I had to do with it. I had to recruit funds to run the fellowship program. We used to meet the Fellows when they arrived by air. We paid a lot more attention to them then than later.

VDT: I forgot to bring up a very important occasion--Paul Demeny and his thrill at how you picked him out, in Geneva, when you heard from Frank Lorimer in 1957 that here was this Hungarian who had gotten out of Hungary after the Communist takeover--officially, because he was at official meetings in Geneva and he decided not to go back to Hungary. His professor in Hungary got in touch with Frank Lorimer who got in touch with you and within a month there you were in Geneva, interviewing him at the Beau Rivage, a hotel that still exists [albeit in Lausanne, not Geneva, per se]. You had lunch there and within a month or so, here he was, a Population Council Fellow, arriving in the United States to go to Princeton and you had him met at the airport in New York.

KIRK: I did a detective job to find him. He had a sort of mail drop with a professor at the university. I went to the apartment where this man lived and the concierge didn't know anything about Paul Demeny and I didn't know the professor's name, so he said, "Well, go around and try each apartment." I knocked on each door and several of these nice Genevois invited me in to have coffee! They hadn't heard of Paul Demeny either; I was just a strange American who had knocked on their door. I finally

did find the door of the professor but there was no one there. So I went down to the police station. You know, everybody has to register in Geneva.

VDT: If you come to be a resident in the city, right. I know, because we lived some years in Geneva. Two of my children were born there and I even went to the Institut des Hautes Etudes Internationales, where Paul was briefly.

KIRK: And the gendarme said he was going to the university but he didn't have his address. I went to see Gunnar Myrdal [then director of the Economic Commission for Europe], just before he went with his wife Alva to India where she was Swedish ambassador, and his English secretary called the university for me--my French being very bad--and found out where he lived and I sent him one of those telegrams and that's how I got in touch with him.

VDT: He didn't tell me that complicated story but he talks about the impressive lunch that you had at the Beau Rivage and how you snapped him up so quickly and made certain he got to the U.S. and to Princeton. Do you have any other dramatic stories like that about choosing Population Council Fellows?

KIRK: No, I can't think of any quite so dramatic.

VDT: Now let's turn to your reminiscences of PAA. We don't have to dwell on that too long because you wrote such a fine vignette on "PAA Meetings Over the Years" for PAA Affairs in the Spring 1983 issue. I love that one. In the book in which I'll put together excerpts from these interviews, I'll also include the "vignettes of PAA history" and that's an important one.

Your first meeting was in Washington in 1939; it was at the Hay-Adams Hotel. Irene Taeuber interviewed you for the job at OPR. Lotka was president then and gave a dramatic talk. I believe it was Kingsley Davis's first meeting too and he was so impressed with Lotka that he applied for a Social Science Research Council fellowship to go study demography, this wonderful field. [Actually, Davis had already received this fellowship--see his interview.] You wrote of the early meetings, often at Princeton, and there was such a difference from later on, because there were single sessions to which you all went, it was a small group, and so on.

KIRK: They were a small group. There were 17 participants in the 1939 program. And now there are--I counted 529 in the 1988 program.

VDT: We've talked about several of the notables in the early years. What about Horace Hamilton, who was president the year after you?

KIRK: He was at North Carolina State University, did quite a little work in population, but I didn't know him too well.

VDT: Could you tell me about Kurt Mayer, who was secretary-treasurer [1959-62] during your time? He moved back to Switzerland.

KIRK: He invited me to go to Brown once to be a professor there, but I turned him down.

VDT: In 1960 when you were president, you switched the days of the meeting from Saturday and Sunday to Friday and Saturday. [The meeting was in Washington, D.C.]

KIRK: I think this is an important change that has occurred. Our meetings had been Saturday and Sunday and we were not subsidized, we paid our own way, and we didn't take time off from work. We came on our own funds and used up our weekends for this. I changed it to Friday and Saturday because I thought people were entitled to have a little weekend left, and the Association was agreeable to that.

VDT: Also in your year, you had a double session on the Saturday afternoon. That was one of the early years of double sessions. Anne Lee says they started at the 1957 meeting in Philadelphia. People then had to make a choice. Up to that time everyone had always attended all the sessions. [The first double session occurred the year before, 1956, on the morning of the first day of the meeting at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. At the 1957 meeting at the University of Pennsylvania, there were double sessions in four time slots.]

KIRK: That's right. It was a family affair; we all got together.

VDT: You felt that was true even at your meeting in 1960? Unfortunately, there's no record of how many attended that 25th annual meeting. Andy Lunde prepared a list of all the meetings and he had numbers at the early meetings [through 1935] but for many years no record was kept of how many actually registered. You might have had, say, a couple of hundred or so? Seven years later in Cincinnati in 1967, there were 452.

VDT: It was growing very fast.

VDT: In 1960 there were only about 500 members altogether; the half or less than that would have attended the meeting.

KIRK: I have my old programs going way back, but we've moved; they're somewhere in boxes in the garage.

VDT: But the programs don't tell you how many attended; those who paid the registration fee. I presume you had a registration fee?

KIRK: Probably a dollar. Do they have the attendance at the 1939 meeting?

VDT: No. There were 38 at the first "organizational" meeting in May 1931 and then for some reason there's some record up through 1935 [200 at the fourth annual meeting on May 3, 1935, in Washington, D.C.], and then not until 1967, 32 years later, did they again have some record of the numbers who were there. The latest meeting [Baltimore 1989] has the record so far, nearly 1,200 [1,193, later surpassed by the 1991 meeting in Washington: 1,399].

KIRK: 500 participants.

VDT: Five hundred plus, it must have been, on the program this year in Baltimore, the meeting you missed--which would have been your 47th or 48th meeting?

KIRK: I've missed four meetings.

VDT: Only four meetings in all those years since 1939!

KIRK: So somewhere I have all the programs, going way back.

VDT: In your vignette, you said you felt that the meetings had lost something by growing so.

KIRK: I think it was inevitable. But--I have a biased point of view, I guess--but I think the meetings were more pleasurable then. We knew all the people; we were all at the same sessions; we talked about the same things. It was a family affair, as I say, and we all were interested in each other's personal affairs. But, of course, this isn't the way a science grows; we had to have this expansion and specialization. But the specialization has brought some narrowing of interests. As I mentioned, there were people of broader interests in the early days; the papers tended to be broader.

VDT: Yes, it's becoming more and more specialized, even at the meetings. This year, for instance, they had specialized workshops on Wednesday afternoon and evening; they'd never had them on Wednesday evening before--before the beer party! As well as Thursday evening, which began a few years ago. There were a lot of workshops this year on China, an increasing specialty. But you still find the meetings pleasurable?

KIRK: Oh, of course.

VDT: You started the dinner meetings of the oldtimers, those over 70 who have been members at least 35 years. That continued this year; I'm sure they missed you. That's very special. Do you think that PAA has a network of camaraderie that is perhaps missing in other professional organizations?

KIRK: Yes, more so than, say, the American Sociological Association or the American Economic Association, which are tremendous, gigantic things. But there's such a difference. Our programs in those days were two or three pages. Now they're a hundred pages [127 pages in 1989]. We'd have four or five sessions then and now there are 84. There were 84 in New Orleans [1988].

VDT: There were 84 this year, eight overlapping at a time.

KIRK: Eight overlapping! Well, the audience is not as attentive. There isn't the same level of discussion, not as it used to be, usually just a few random questions. The meetings were more significant in a sense. There weren't people moving in and out all the time, that sort of thing; there was more attention paid to it.

VDT: But you still go.

KIRK: Oh yes. I'll be there at Toronto [1990].

VDT: My hometown. My first meeting was the last meeting in Toronto, in 1972. At that time I was embarrassed that PAA was meeting in that hotel, the King Edward Hotel, which was shabby when I was growing up and it was shabby then. That was the hotel that turned the women away in the bar and the Women's Caucus rose up in wrath and said, "We will never again allow PAA to meet at any hotel that has any discrimination against women." Well, women could go in, but to a ladies bar, where you had to have a male escort; that was an old Toronto custom.

KIRK: I remember even in New York, at lunchtime, there'd be two or three floors of restaurants, and they always had one that was for women only, accompanied by men.

VDT: I guess Toronto was carrying on that custom. Next year the meeting is in the Royal York Hotel, which when I was growing up was the largest in the British Empire. It's still an old dowager of a hotel but it's been refurbished, so I hope it's a better place.

After all its growth, PAA is still rather small; it's fluctuated at about 2,600 members since the mid-1970s [2,679 at the end of 1989; 2,752, end 1990]. That's far smaller than other professional organizations, like ASA and the American Economic Association. So, it's still rather elitist, don't you think, by the standards of other professional organizations?

KIRK: It depends on what you mean by that word. If you mean in terms of specialization, it is, I think, though the huge organizations have tremendous numbers of programs on all different subjects. I don't think I'd use the word elitist. I think we felt a bit elitist in the early days, but now it's such a huge organization, that it's not so elite.

VDT: What do you see as the outlook for world population growth? Are you depressed by the fact that world population growth seems to be stuck, the rate hasn't gone down?

KIRK: Yes, I am depressed about it. I am depressed that Western civilization countries face the prospect of losing population. I think it's not healthy for a country to lose population, because then it becomes aged, lacks youth. It isn't the fact that there are fewer people so much as the effect in terms of age distribution. A gerontocracy isn't a healthy kind of society.

VDT: The other side of the coin of the rapid population growth in developing countries?

KIRK: That's right. Even the Japanese are now getting concerned about an aging population. This will be a problem. But most of the world is a long way from that. China maybe . . .

VDT: They are beginning to be a bit concerned about how distorted their age structure will be by their one-child-per-couple policy, though they're easing up on that.

KIRK: Yes, they are. And the one-child-per-family idea was never quite as effective as people like Ravenholt thought. I see imbalance. The developed countries, if anything, need a higher fertility rate and the less developed countries, if anything, need a lower fertility rate. You know, when they talk about the consequences of population change, it's forgotten that in 1939, the concern was a declining population in the U.S., in developed countries--Enid Charles's book, The Twilight of Parenthood, and so on. Somebody said to me a long time ago, "You're in a good field, because demography and the population problems of the world are going to be around a very long time. It's a good field to be in." And I still think that's true.

VDT: You must have enjoyed your career and felt it was important.

KIRK: Yes, that's right. I did.

VDT: May I ask you about your current interests? You and your wife are working with the California State Mental Health Association, is it?

KIRK: We have a son who is in the Napa State Hospital, in the wine country. Ruth is president of the Napa State Hospital Alliance for the Mentally Ill. There is a California Alliance for the Mentally Ill and there was a meeting of that, which I went to, that conflicted with the Baltimore PAA meeting. We think that we're making a real difference. I'm sure Ruth is making a difference. The other day we were

in Sacramento talking with the state senators and the head of the Ways and Means Committee of the Assembly about budget and research problems. We spend a great deal of time on this, she particularly. Napa is about an hour and a half away from here and she goes up two or three times a week. She works tremendously hard at it, and very successfully. She gave a wonderful speech night before last for the volunteers--250 volunteers--who work at the hospital. And she does a wonderful job.

VDT: And important in this Administration--"kinder, gentler"--more voluntarism in this current era.

KIRK: "A thousand points of light."

VDT: Indeed; you're adding several. One last question. Cary Davis of the Population Reference Bureau said he once discussed beekeeping with you. Did you ever do that?

KIRK: Yes, I used to keep bees, in high school and college. Here, I had an observation hive in the bedroom. The bees were behind plexiglass and there was a little plastic tube through a hole in the wall with a little landing place outside and I could watch them inside the hive, in the bedroom!

VDT: Like in a nature center. They didn't fly around in your bedroom?

KIRK: Occasionally they did and Ruth was very disturbed about it. I once had a party for sociology and they came and looked at the bees. You know, I'd forgotten about this. This is one of the main reasons why I got into demography; I was interested in bees and social insects. I kept ants. I'd dig up an anthill, capture the queen, these big red desert ants, and they would pick up larvae and I'd put them in a Mason jar and they'd dig down. Then I'd put a wooden collar around the top of that, put the whole thing in a field box buried in the ground, with sawdust around the jar. So when I wanted to look at them, I could push the sawdust aside and see their underground tunnels. I was very much interested in social insects. My first ambition in life was to be an apiarist, a beekeeper. They paid \$3,000 a year for apiarists then.

(1913-2000)

Dudley Kirk, Morrison Professor Emeritus of Population Studies in the Food Research Institute and Professor Emeritus in Department of Sociology at Stanford died on March 14, 2000. He was a major figure in the scholarly analysis of the demographic transformations that have shaped societal change in the industrialized societies and the less developed countries of the world. He did not limit his interest to any specific sector of the world's population, for he sought to understand the basic principles that explained changes in mortality and fertility at every socioeconomic level.

Dudley's work at the Office of Population Research at Princeton, at the Rockefeller-funded Population Council, and at Stanford, affected public action on population problems in three ways. First, his predictions of the coming population explosion after World War II influenced generations of political actors. He was among the first to stretch analyses of the etiology of the demographic transition to include socioeconomic development. The increase in incomes that was driven by the industrial revolution had triggered an early decline in mortality rates, followed by a decline in birth rates. But Dudley argued that, for areas like Latin America, Africa and Asia, modernization was the determining variable that brought about declines in mortality, and especially declines in fertility. He defined modernization as a holistic process involving an interrelated set of social and economic changes, including education, urbanization, literacy, health facilities, communication media, plus increases in per capita income.

Second, as one of the most influential demographers in the world, he helped to determine the disbursement of funds, both for scholarship and for the implementation of inter-national policies to reduce poverty and population growth. He discussed the population explosion wisely, with genial equanimity and unflappable reassurance. He noted that growth rates, compounded, would often lead to inappropriate judgments about the probable duration of explosive rates of population growth. He stressed that only by examining the evidence in specific situations we could arrive at informed judgments.

Third, as a teacher, he influenced a generation of future researchers and consumers of information about demographic change in the world. His courses had different titles, like "Population Problems," "Demography of

Developing Countries," "Population Perspectives in the Third World," and "Population in the American Economy and Society," but they all stressed the importance of socioeconomic development. The influence of his teaching was extended by his writing. He was one of the first to conclude that the decline in fertility rates among contemporary developing countries would be more rapid than indicated by earlier experience. The decline in death rates could be followed by a similarly rapid reduction in fertility rates if a country could reach "a certain threshold of socioeconomic development." His empirical research and that of other demographers confirmed that important conclusion.

Over the years, Dudley made enormous contributions to numerous aspects of the research and teaching programs of the Food Research Institute. In the Department of Sociology, his level-headed and thoughtful approach was important in the selection of faculty and reform of the curriculum, culminating in his service as Chair in 1975-1977.

Dudley's last research project, a joint effort with Bernard Pillet, makes it clear that when a late- developing country fails to reach a certain threshold of socioeconomic change, the rapid-growth phase of the demographic transition is almost certain to be of long duration. Sadly, their analysis of 21 African countries found that even the beginning of a decline in birth rates was evident in only 5 countries, and, even in those countries, the average woman would give birth to 5.1 children during her child-bearing years.

It was not in Dudley's nature to become a crusader or a pamphleteer, flailing at windmills. He was, instead, the scholar and teacher who analyzed each problem carefully, determined how much of it was in our world to handle, and what part was in our stars to accept. He was an insightful and reassuring prophet of the population explosion and its outcomes.

Dudley Kirk was born on October 6, 1913 in Rochester, New York. He passed away after a short illness on March 14, 2000 in San Jose, California. He was a graduate of Pomona College and held advanced degrees from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Harvard University, where he also obtained his Ph.D. in Sociology (1946). After serving briefly at the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, Dudley Kirk was appointed Chief of the Planning Staff for the Office of Intelligence Research of the State Department in Washington, D.C. (1947-1954). In 1954 he was appointed Director of Demographic Research of the Population Council in New York where he served continuously (except for a sabbatical year at the Center for Advanced

Study in the Behavioral Sciences) until 1957. Then he joined the Food Research Institute, initially as Professor and subsequently as holder of the Dean and Virginia Morrison Chair of Population Studies. He served concurrently as Professor in the Department of Sociology until his retirement in 1979.

Dudley Kirk is survived by his wife Ruth Louise of San Jose; his children, Margaret L. Kirk of Fresno, California, John D. Kirk of Angwin, California, and Deborah K. Rihn of Spokane, Washington; son-in-law Bernard A. Rihn; and grandchildren, Annie S. Rihn, Bernard K. Rihn and Alexander K. Rihn.

The Committee:

Pan A. Yotopoulos, Professor, Food Research Institute

Bruce F. Johnston, Professor Emeritus, Food Research Institute

Sanford M. Dornbusch, Professor Emeritus, Department of Sociology





Some Reflections on American Demography in the Nineteen Sixties

Author(s): Dudley Kirk

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C U R R E N T I T E M S

SOME REFLECTIONS
ON
AMERICAN DEMOGRAPHY
IN THE
NINETEEN SIXTIES

Like so many speakers, I find myself the prisoner of a printed title set before my speech was completely written.^{/1} I was tempted on this occasion to discourse on the more obvious popular images of world population problems dramatized by the zealous in such terms as "the population explosion" or the "population bomb." To my mind, few things are less explosive than large populations. In what other field would a world growth of 1.6 per cent per year be regarded as "explosive"? But it is the imagery, and not the basic concern, with which I disagree.

We professionals, of course, also have our slogans and shibboleths. It had been my original intention to call attention to some of these. For example, I had in mind poking some friendly fun at the fertility cult of our profession — at those of us who feel that the real core of demography is the measurement and interpretation of reproductive change. The very word "fertility" is a password or shibboleth of the demographic profession, and its use is a mark of the professional cognoscenti. Actually it is a word taken by us out of its biological context and assigned a meaning contrary to that of medical practice, and indeed of the Latin languages from which the word was originally borrowed.^{/2} It is a tribute to our doggedness that our usage has come to prevail in the English language. It has become a necessary word in our scientific universe of discourse. At the risk of sounding eccentric, I would hope that we would seek alternatives. A possibility is the word "natality," a more dignified choice, less ambiguous, and a more appropriate companion for the word "mortality." It also has the advantage of being directly translatable into other languages.^{/3} I note the use of "natality" by the National Office of Vital Statistics and hope this may achieve wider currency as a word describing birth performance.

But instead of dwelling further on our foibles, I would like in the next few minutes to direct your attention to our future and to our opportunities as American demographers in the 1960's.

Our Association had its origin in the 1930's in concern about declining and differential natality. The first decade was the most creative and confident of our professional history. Later both our theory and our projective models led us astray. Demographers, of all people, were among the last to recognize that the postwar resurgence of natality was more than a temporary baby boom.

Even in the 1950's we were consistently bearish in a bull market for population, and, like other counselors, we lost some clients in

Editor's Note. — This is the text of the address delivered by Dudley Kirk, President of the Population Association, at the banquet on the evening of May 6, 1960, at the Hotel Twenty Four Hundred, Washington, D. C., as part of the annual meeting of the Association. It is hoped that in future we may each year publish the Presidential Address in the October issue of Population Index.

maintaining this position. The achievements of the profession have been more in documenting change than in forecasting it.

But my purpose is not to recapitulate the errors of the past, but rather to urge us to try to think more imaginatively about the future. Let us look for the hints of what may be ahead, now perhaps a cloud no larger than a man's hand. Certainly in the 30's there were hints of the coming changes in natality. This was clearly suggested by the check, and indeed reversal, of the long-time downward trends in the midst of a severe economic depression. But we lacked the vision to see it.⁴

If we could see through the eyes of the little people from Mars, who keep us under surveillance from time to time from their flying saucers, I wonder what demographic developments in this country would seem most significant. I suspect we would be most impressed by the enormous population redistribution occurring in the United States. Our Martian friends were probably never taken in by the "center of population" concept, which pictures the center as drifting westward through the cornstalks of Indiana and Illinois. They would recognize that this did not represent a continuation of the westward movement in the historical sense, but a reflection of the special attractions of California and neighboring states. If present trends continue, California will replace New York as the leading state of the Union in the next few years. But from this high overview, our space visitor would have no doubt that the meaningful center of population is, and will continue to remain, in the Northeast and especially New York, as it has since the year 1800. Incidentally, it was an astronomer, J. Q. Stewart, who first brought this to our attention in quantitative terms.

Everywhere we see the growing place of the metropolis and suburbia in our national life. Perhaps the single most significant demographic series in the whole armamentarium of American population statistics is represented by the following: two generations ago, in 1900, the median American lived in the countryside; by 1930 he lived in a small town of 5,000-10,000 population. Today he lives in a metropolitan area, increasingly in the suburbs, and the country-dweller today is as much in touch with world events and cultural innovation as the city-dweller of yesterday. It is difficult to overstate the revolution this has meant in the average American's way of life. The nation may well turn to demographers for clues as to what the future holds in this regard.

It may be that the 1960's will see the transition from metropolis to regional megalopolis, as now frequently discussed and as predicted by Oswald Spengler forty years ago. Conversely, the depopulation of the countryside is exceeding even the tempo forecast by Spengler. The 1960 census will show that much of the physical area of the United States is losing population, in some cases at truly shocking rates, paralleling and extending the experience in 1940-1950. I have in mind, for example, the decline in the rural farm population of Oklahoma. Over half of this population deserted their farms in the single decade 1940-1950. The next decade may well prove the hypothesis that the American family farmer is a vanishing American, and that the type of rural life he represents, often described as the backbone of Jeffersonian democracy, has become only a matter of history.

In this situation, it behooves demographers to give very careful thought to what concepts should appropriately replace the historical

distinctions between urban and rural and between farm and nonfarm. The depopulation of the countryside is now being partly met by a great invasion from the cities for summer and part-time residence. There is an obliteration of traditional rural-urban differences. In fact, is it possible that within the foreseeable future the very concept of unilocal residence may have to be re-examined? Multiple and seasonal residence, while not now statistically of great importance, is a rapidly growing pattern. An offsetting feature to frequent changes of residence, whether determined by season, by occupation, or by family life-cycle, is the growing possibility of changing occupation without change of residence, through new patterns of long-range commuting. We are only beginning to measure, much less evaluate, the significance of these changes.

The study of internal migration is the stepchild of demography. Too little attention has been given by the leadership of our profession to the theory and measurement of migration, despite its role as the chief determinant of differences in population change and structure among local populations, and indeed now for many states. In the words of one leading authority in this field, the majority of recent migration studies are "planlessly empirical and trivial in content." This is a harsh judgment. The study of migration presents peculiar problems in terms of definition and complexity, but I feel confident that the application of the technical virtuosity so evident in the field of natality could yield great progress. It is our responsibility as demographers not to ignore the crucial problems because the data do not lend themselves readily to pat generalizations or to neat mathematical models. It is in this area of migration, with its complex variables of origin, destination, distance, and time, that the new computers may make the greatest contribution to demographic analysis.

It is my impression that the study of migration differentials has made very little progress in the past thirty years, despite the fact that this, much more than any other demographic variable, is changing the distribution and characteristics of local population. To take a single example, what have been the effects on the State of Arkansas of the fact that close to half the people born in that State have left her boundaries? Who left or stayed? Is it possible to judge what some of the social implications are?

This leads me to reflect briefly on what is sometimes called the homogenization of the American population, which is occurring as the result of migration on the one hand, and of mass media on the other. Will the 1960's see continuing convergence of regional, class, perhaps even of racial, differences in population characteristics? To what extent are there counterforces, such as the increasing school segregation by religion? Many observers see a trend toward greater mobility in our population, particularly insofar as its leadership is concerned. Fewer and fewer remain in their community of birth. The ties of family and local community grow weaker. Are we becoming a single national community, in which regional and class differences and loyalties are being progressively dissolved? Our profession is in a key position to provide some of the answers.

Or let us turn to the "heartland" of demography — the field of reproduction. I predict that the 1960's will see a growing disenchantment with intensive studies of individual attitudes in relation to family size.⁵

I suspect that greater emphasis in the future will be placed on studies of what people do rather than on what they say they think. For better or worse, much of what we want to know about the motivations and behavior affecting natality is possible only in studies that may violate some of the more conservative proprieties. More than in the past, our information may come from projects involving action research. Before the end of the decade demographers will certainly have the opportunity to evaluate the effects of more efficient methods of family limitation, probably of several new types.

If the present levels of birth rates by age are maintained, we can expect a rise in the general birth rate in the 1960's. It is in this decade that the larger baby crop of the 1940's will come into the most marriageable and reproductive ages. I would hope that in the '60's there will not only be a continuing attention to the factors that may influence the validity of this projection, but even more to what this new wave of children may mean to this country. There are effects on schools. But I have in mind more broadly ranging problems, for example, the micro-demography of the family unit and the family life-cycle. Earlier marriage, earlier childbirth, and larger family size affect far more than national population growth and the vague relationships between people and resources. These are changes that directly affect the size, composition, and functions of the most important unit of our social structure.

Or again, like Joseph Spengler, I am greatly concerned about what he calls the esthetic effects of the coming increase in numbers. In this country it is not primarily an economic problem, but a problem of the quality of life. As a Californian in origin, I have perhaps seen the effects of rapid population growth that closer range than people from some other areas of the country. We have had an average growth rate of 3.7 per cent per year sustained with few interruptions for over a century. Population growth has not meant a deterioration of material living standards. They are among the highest in the world. But what happens to the quality of life when the mass-produced suburb engulfs the land and the asphalt tentacles of the freeways reach out and destroy the natural beauty of the countryside? The fresh air of California is poisoned not by the belching smokestacks of factory and forge, but by the fumes of private automobiles, themselves the distinctive hallmark of material opulence in the Western world. California was a pleasanter place with a smaller but less opulent population.

I have not mentioned the field of mortality. This branch of our profession suffers from the very excellence of its performance. It has not been the squeaky wheel and therefore has not always had the attention and praise its performance merits. It too has its challenging problems, on which I would like to expound were time available.

Nor have I spoken of the study of population quality. Hopefully, in the coming decade we will overcome some of our prejudices against the study of the implications of differential natality among different segments of our population. The prejudices spring from the resistance to racist and other unscientific conclusions advanced by biased observers a generation ago. We have overcompensated, and it is time to take a new look. The quality of our population is certainly as important and legitimate an area of inquiry as its quantity.

I come to a summing up. I've tried to suggest a few areas in which demographers may make important contributions in identifying and predicting social trends that may affect, or even threaten, our national well-being. There are few quick or easy answers. But society has a right to expect us to produce at least some of the answers.

The study of population is at once a body of data, a methodology, and a bundle of generalizations concerning the causes and consequences of demographic phenomena. Members of our profession have been entrusted with obtaining the inventory and maintaining the books of the national population accounts. Those responsible for the gathering of census data and of other population data are active members of this Association. They are in a sense our hosts at this meeting. Too often their work goes unappreciated by other social scientists, whose needs they have tried so hard to serve — often in the face of administrative pressure and public censure. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to their work.

In methodology we have made brilliant contributions in evaluating and analyzing data. Also, of course, demographers are incorrigible model builders, and were so long before this became the rage in other social sciences. The new generation of demographers, with their better grounding in mathematics and statistics, should certainly outdo their professional antecedents in this regard.

But I hope that, more than in the recent past, we shall not only measure, but study the significance of, demographic changes in American life. This is the tradition in which the Association was founded and which contributed so much to public thinking in the 1930's. Later, and quite naturally in view of our earlier mistakes, the focus of professional effort changed to the causes and away from the consequences of demographic changes. I hope that in the 1960's the pendulum will swing back. I hope that we will again assume the responsibility for interpreting the larger implications of population changes, to our scientific colleagues, to the public, and to those responsible for national policy.

FOOTNOTES

1. The announced title was "Population Shibboleths of 1960."
2. In French, for example, the word fertilité refers to the capacity to conceive, fécondité to birth performance. In English demographic usage the meanings of the words have been arbitrarily reversed.
3. e.g. French, natalité; Spanish, natalidad; Italian, natalità.
4. There is a common assumption that natality was low in the 1930's because of the depression. The causal connection has not been adequately demonstrated. Actually after 1934 natality was continuously higher than would have been expected with a projection of trends during the prosperous 1920's. It is true that there is a close correlation between business conditions and the relatively minor year-to-year fluctuations in natality. But there is no convincing evidence that basic trends in natality and size of family are a function of business

cycles. Indeed the popular idea (among demographers as well as others) that a depression would inevitably be followed by a comparable drop in natality should not be accepted unquestioningly. There is some evidence to the contrary. (cf. Dudley Kirk and Dorothy L. Nortman. *Business and babies: the influence of business cycles on birth rates*. Proceedings of the Social Statistics Section, American Statistical Association, 1958, pp. 151-160.)

5. I do not mean that this important middle term will be ignored, but rather that more attention will be given to general cultural norms on the one hand and to actual behavior on the other.

METROPOLITAN GROWTH The following advance data, received in a communication from the U. S. Bureau of the Census, September 27, 1960, are the basis of the cover chart.

Population of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas by Size: 1960 and 1950 (Based on preliminary field count)

Size and component parts of SMSA	1960	1950	Increase Number	1950-1960 Percent
3,000,000 or more				
Central cities	17,626,869	17,655,217	-28,348	-0.2
Outside central cities	13,860,735	8,133,750	5,726,985	70.4
1,000,000 to 3,000,000				
Central cities	12,530,408	12,037,125	493,283	4.1
Outside central cities	17,001,666	11,820,988	5,180,678	43.8
500,000 to 1,000,000				
Central cities	9,699,611	8,092,551	1,607,060	19.9
Outside central cities	8,827,626	5,680,057	3,147,569	55.4
100,000 to 500,000				
Central cities	16,019,213	13,448,800	2,570,413	19.1
Outside central cities	14,318,095	10,834,663	3,483,432	32.2
Under 100,000				
Central cities	1,289,824	1,010,208	279,616	27.7
Outside central cities	408,515	370,630	37,885	10.2

ERRATUM In the April 1960 issue of *Population Index* the last two lines on p. 187 in the table, Reproduction rates and intrinsic vital rates, are in error. The correct figures are given below.

Country	Date of Fertility Rates	Date of Life Table	Reproduction Rate		Intrinsic Rate (per 1,000 females)
			Gross	Net	Natural Increase
France	1956	1956	1.30	1.25	7.9
	1957	1957	1.32	1.26	0.8
	1958	1958	1.31	1.26	0.8

Source: Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques. *Etudes Statistiques: Supplément Trimestriel du Bulletin Mensuel de Statistique*, No. 4., Oct.-Dec. 1959. P. 318.