

# ANNOTATIONS

## MENTAL HEALTH IN MODERN SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

**W**ORLD WAR II has brought forth an awareness of the high incidence of mental and emotional disorders that exist in the United States. More than 680,000 men were discharged from our armed forces because of psychiatric illness or inability to adapt to military life. It may be expected that the total number of World War II veterans who will suffer from some kind of psychiatric illness will probably increase in the next twenty-five to thirty years. Thus, to the sizable civilian group who exhibit latent or overt symptoms of dysfunction, we must now add the hundreds of thousands of people for whom war was a traumatic and completely disorganizing experience.

**MENTAL HEALTH IN MODERN SOCIETY** attempts to show how the information and skills acquired in treating and preventing mental disorders in the armed forces may now be applied to the enormous problem of building sound mental health in our society. If this problem is to be met successfully, not only psychiatry but many other professional groups will have to rise to the occasion. All the knowledge and resources of the fields of sociology, anthropology, education, social work, medicine, and various community agencies will have to be pooled if prevention and treatment of mental ill health is to become a reality.

The authors clearly bring out the fact that powerful factors operate against mental health in our society as it is now constituted. In the military mode of life and especially after the return of the veteran to the civilian setting, the family, job, and the community configuration proved to be forces of great im-

<sup>1</sup> Rennie, Thomas A. C. and Woodward, Luther E.: **MENTAL HEALTH IN MODERN SOCIETY**. The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1948, 424 pp.

port, directly affecting personal adjustment. Therefore, we shall have to learn how to remove or alleviate stresses found in the environment, as well as how to take positive measures to strengthen the inner resources of individuals.

Since mental ill health is, to a large degree, socially conditioned, to foster mental well-being, it will be necessary to give attention to groups as well as individuals. There are many faulty attitudes in our present-day society with regard to mental illness. Shame, ridicule, and stigma are still attached to mental disorder, and there is a tendency to hold the disordered person as being solely responsible for the illness. If any positive goals of mental hygiene are to be realized, a vigorous program of public education is clearly indicated.

Many lines of activity will be needed to deal adequately with these mental health problems. Immediate needs are for research, more facilities for treatment of the mentally ill, and the training of greatly increased numbers of psychiatrists, psychiatric social workers, psychiatric nurses, clinical psychologists, and occupational and recreational therapists.

These are some of the issues brought up in *MENTAL HEALTH IN MODERN SOCIETY*. Individual case histories, with a personality picture and details of the subsequent treatment given, are also presented. In their zeal, the authors have covered a vast area including some very well-founded suggestions. Here and there it would have been wise to add a sprinkle of salt. Many details could have been left out without detracting in any way from the main content of the book.

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### STUDIES IN POPULATION<sup>1</sup>

FOR the first time in its eighteen years of existence, the Population Association of America has published the proceedings of an annual meeting. The present volume, covering the 1949 meetings in Princeton, New Jersey, is a neatly prepared one of

<sup>1</sup> Mair, George (Editor): *STUDIES IN POPULATION*. Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America at Princeton, New Jersey, May, 1949. Princeton University Press, 1949, 170 pp. \$2.50.

some 170 pages containing 24 papers arranged in five sections as follows:

- I. Application of Demographic Data to Current Problems (5 papers).
- II. Tools for Demographic Research (5 papers).
- III. Resources for the World's People (4 papers).
- IV. Value System and Human Fertility (4 papers).
- V. Future Courses of Research in Fertility (6 papers).

The editor labels the volume as an experiment. It was motivated by the desire to preserve "much material potentially useful to demographers and workers in associated fields," which with no provision for publication of proceedings might never be put into print. This aspiration was amply fulfilled with this publication. Constructive ideas and new demographic approaches, which frequently are expressed during the meetings of the Population Association of America, are certainly badly needed by the demographers all over the world.

The major emphasis of this meeting was on the discussion of human fertility and its associated factors. This seems appropriate, for fertility is generally regarded as the most important element in the contemporary population crisis. The other two elements, mortality and migration, are believed to be more easily controlled with present scientific knowledge and social mechanisms than fertility, which is more rigidly linked with religious beliefs and traditional habits.

The paper by the Reverend William J. Gibbons, S.J. (*The Catholic Value System in Relation to Human Fertility*) provides a good illustration of the religious factor in maintaining high levels of fertility. It affords an account of the position of the Catholic Church on specific forms of family limitation.

The influence of customs and traditions in maintaining high fertility was treated by Irene Taeuber (*The Reproductive Mores of the Asian Peasant*) and Josiah Russell (*Demographic Values in the Middle Ages*). Lack of statistical data and similar demographic reactions put in a parallel line both the contemporary Asian peasant and medieval European populations. High fertility and high mortality keep the balance of births

over deaths on a precarious level, as fertility cannot always adequately meet the excessive mortality. An estimated gross reproduction rate of over 4.0 among the Asian peasants is reduced by the intense mortality to a little over the replacement level (net reproduction rate of 1.2 to 1.6). However, one can find significant evidence that present mortality is declining. Will fertility follow soon? Mrs. Taeuber has no doubt that it will. The pressure of modernization is a stimulus too powerful to be resisted by any religious belief or traditional mores.

A good illustration of this was offered by Clarence Senior (*An Approach to Research in Overcoming Cultural Barriers to Family Limitation*) by referring to the spread of postpartum sterilization in Puerto Rico.

Dr. Howard C. Taylor, Jr. (*Physiological Factors and Their Control*) summarized the physiological aspect of conception. Ovulation, which occurs around the 14th day of the menstrual cycle, is accompanied by a slight but detectable rise of body temperature. The average life of both sperm and ovum does not exceed a period of two to four days. This leads to the inference that conception is scarcely possible before the 8th or after the 20th day of a 28-day menstrual cycle. On the other hand, a natural control of abundant fertility is constantly going on as at least one-tenth and perhaps one-fifth of all pregnancies terminate in spontaneous abortion. Until recently it was believed that this wastage was due to congenital defects in the primitive cells of the ovary or testis. More recent research has revived the theory that abortion frequently arises from unfavorable uterine environment.

In the discussion of the future course of research, studies of the type made in Indianapolis<sup>2</sup> were praised. According to Ira Reid (*Needed Research on Fertility of Negroes*) it may be necessary to expand such studies in order to include different racial communities defined on the basis of some social criteria. Wilson H. Grabill (*The Future Course of Research in Fertility*)

<sup>2</sup> See Whelpton, P. K. and Kiser, Clyde V.: Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility. IV. Developing the Schedules and Choosing the Type of Couples and the Area to be Studied. *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*, October, 1945, xxiii, No. 4, pp. 386-409.

suggested more use of distributional analysis to supplement rate analysis in studies of fertility. The trend towards two children as the modal size of family for women of completed fertility is a significant fact. It suggests that there is a limiting value in the decline of the birth rate and also that a virtual end to the spread of the small family system may be expected within a few decades.

Progress in understanding the social aspects of human fertility is mainly dependent on special studies, Ronald Freedman (*Some Aspects of Research in Differential Fertility*). The small family deviant in the socio-economic group of high fertility and *vice versa* will indicate the attitudes and characteristics required for a reduction of fertility. A secular detachment from traditional values is needed in order to achieve a rational planning of family size. Finally, Dr. Moya Woodside (*The Psychiatric Approach to Research Interviewing*) called for more psychological training of the interviewer in order better to trace demographic trends and to secure a better understanding of attitudes relating to family size.

Mr. T. J. Woolfer (*Recent Proposals for Modifying the Net Reproduction Rate*) and Mr. John Hajnal discussed the *pros* and *cons* of the new indices of reproduction. The conventional net reproduction rate cannot well represent the future, while the generation rate cannot adequately measure the flow of present fertility. A whole series of such rates may be designed, taking account of age-sex differentials in nuptiality and mortality or being adjusted for duration of marriage, children ever born or birth order, etc. Each such rate answers a particular need. No single rate can suit all purposes. The conventional reproduction rate, however, probably gives an answer to the question most frequently asked.

Mr. Seymour L. Wolfbein (*The Length of Working Life*) gave a summary of his work on a table of working life in which the population surviving at age 14 and later years is treated in accordance with rates of accessions to and separation (on account of death or retirement) from the labor force. Finally, the average number of remaining years of work is compared with the expectation of life at different ages, thus giving the average

number of years of retirement, which, as Mr. A. J. Jaffe pointed out, may prove to be a highly valuable social and cultural index.

Mr. Paul H. Jacobson presented an analysis of marital dissolution in the United States, pointing out that while dissolutions caused by death of either spouse have declined from 30 per 1,000 couples in 1890 to less than 20 at present, those caused by divorce are on the upward trend with marked acceleration during recent years, influencing mostly the recently married couples.

Dr. Christopher Tietze reported on a series of 363 illegal abortions induced by physicians; his report apparently is unique in American medical literature.

Mr. Ross A. Eckler gave some interesting points on the development of the current population survey of the Bureau of the Census, which is a continuous miniature census covering some 25,000 households every month. Mr. Calvin F. Schmid explained the system of census divisions as established in the State of Washington.

Three interesting papers were read at the dinner session by J. D. Black (*Population and Scarce Food Resources*); R. Bradford (*Soil Resources and the World's Potential Food Supply*); and G. R. Clapp (*Management of Resources in the Tennessee Valley*). A fourth paper by W. S. Thompson (*Some Reflections on World Population and Food Supply During the Next Few Decades*) was added in the proceedings. These papers afford various views on the highly controversial problem of resources for the world's people.

Finally, the reviewer can hardly resist expressing a sincere hope that the publishing of proceedings of the annual meetings of the Population Association of America will be continued. It would seem to be especially desirable until the time comes when a periodical similar to the English *Population Studies* and the French *Population* will fill the present gap in American demographic literature.

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