

IN THIS ISSUE

IN the article, "Fertility and Research in Fertility in Japan," Irene B. Taeuber provides an interesting account of the phenomenal decline in fertility in Japan. On the basis of her own research and the growing number of studies by Japanese students of demography and public health, she discusses the trends in abortion, sterilization, infanticide and contraception and the bearing of these trends on declining fertility. The author states that the decline in fertility in Japan since 1947 "has been so rapid and so persistent that it has forced new estimates of the probable future population and new definitions of the population problem."

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It is perhaps commonly believed that the Catholic religion constitutes one of the cultural barriers to the reduction of birth rates in Puerto Rico. A paper on this subject, "Contraception and Catholicism in Puerto Rico" was contributed by J. Mayone Stycos, Kurt Back, and Reuben Hill. The paper "attempts to show at what extent religion affects beliefs and behavior with respect to fertility and birth control in Puerto Rico." The analysis is based on three different sample surveys. "A sample of 1,000 households, representative of the total households in Puerto Rico . . . is used in dealing with questions of incidence of birth control use."

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The thirty-first of a series of reports on the Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility is contributed by Erwin

S. Solomon, Jeanne E. Clare, and Charles F. Westoff. This report analyzes the significance of the fear of possible childlessness and the desire to avoid an only child as motivations affecting the conception of a second child and the desires of children for siblings as a variable influencing completed fertility. In the analysis of all three hypotheses, the sample was confined to couples who had planned the last child. The first two hypotheses were further restricted to couples (239) who had one child living at the conception of the last child. The third hypothesis relates to factors encouraging couples to have their last child and was restricted to couples (300) who had one or more children living at the conception of the last child.

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Recently several demographers have provided evidence that past declines in mortality in Western countries have contributed little or nothing to the increases in the relative number of the aged. Finding that these studies have been made "always in connection with specific numerical illustrations or with special population models," George J. Stolnitz has undertaken a more general approach in an article "Mortality Declines and Age Distribution" which is presented in this issue. The author attempts to analyze "the underlying structure of the probable relations between mortality movements and age in any population."