

analyze the problem, but it may be suggested that lack of funds is not the principal obstacle to medical evaluation of the effectiveness of various contraceptive techniques. There is urgent need for investigation of how medical statistics can be improved both within the traditional structure of medical practice, and by exploiting fully the advantages for research of the new institutional forms emerging from the expansion of prepaid medical care plans and public health programs.

The section of this book devoted to the assessment of the moral and social implications of simple contraceptives seemed to this reviewer at first reading to be superficial and platitudinous. Later, closer reading revealed that on the contrary every page contained several interesting and worthwhile observations or raised provocative questions. However, there are few data here, almost no mention of research completed or in progress, and none explicitly proposed as necessary or desirable. There are ideas, but none is developed. The material is so condensed that its chief usefulness is likely to be as a source of suggestions for discussion and expression of opinion among other groups. The doctor as such is likely to find it irrelevant. There was no challenge to the statement in the symposium that the responsibility for proper use of contraceptives is individual and personal, and therefore moral; that it is not the job of the medical profession to develop moral restraints and controls among patients, but the job of church and family.

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THE FERTILITY OF AMERICAN WOMEN¹

WHILE the United States has lagged behind other countries in developing a nationwide and well-functioning system of birth registration, information on children ever born and on children under five years of age living with their mothers was obtained and published in considerable detail as early as the census of 1910, followed by the censuses of 1940 and 1950.

¹ Grabill, Wilson H.; Kiser, Clyde V.; and Whelpton, Pascal K.: *THE FERTILITY OF AMERICAN WOMEN*. New York, John Wiley & Sons; London, Chapman & Hall, 1958, 448 pp., \$9.50.

The monograph under review rests mainly on this body of census data, supplemented by related material from the Current Population Survey (CPS) and other sources.

The volume is organized into 11 chapters, including a brief introduction and a recapitulatory summary. Two chapters, furnishing a "long view" from the colonial period to the mid-1950's, are followed by a thorough discussion of trends and differentials in fertility in the 20th century comprising four chapters and more than half of the total number of pages. The emphasis is on residence (urban-rural), color, education, and occupation of husband. Other variables are considered to the extent that information is available. A short chapter focusses on marriage and patterns of family building which have been discussed in more detail in another census monograph: *AMERICAN FAMILIES*, by Paul C. Glick.

The ninth chapter, dealing with the fertility of cohorts of native white women, draws heavily on Professor Whelpton's earlier studies. It culminates in an analysis of the increase in the number of births during the period 1945-1954 as compared with 1930-1939. Of the total increment, 24 per cent is ascribed to the larger number of women, 30 per cent to higher cumulative marriage rates, 34 per cent to higher rates of first births per 1,000 ever-married women, and only 12 per cent to increase in family size per 1,000 mothers. The discussion of the outlook for births (Chapter 10) is brief and avoids a critical confrontation of the cohort approach with the traditional method used by the Bureau of the Census.

American demographers are indebted to the authors for having packaged into a manageable volume a vast body of data and for having provided authentic and authoritative interpretation. The monograph will long remain a benchmark for future studies. It will also serve to reveal shortcomings in our official statistics on the subject of human fertility. In the reviewer's opinion, the principal defects are: relative lack of attention to duration of marriage in the analysis of fertility and absolute lack of any analysis by religion. The former stems, at least in part, from our failure to establish a nationwide system of marriage registration and from our reluctance to include in the standard certificate of birth a question on duration of mar-

riage. However, information not available from current statistics, can be—and in fact has been—obtained, to some extent, from census data.

No remedy has been found, on the other hand, for the lack of official statistics that would permit analysis of fertility by religion. In the United States, a major political taboo has prohibited up to now the collection of census statistics on religion other than those obtained through the periodic Census of Religious Bodies which cannot be used for the study of fertility. To fill this gap, the Bureau of the Census included a question on religious preference in the CPS of March 1957. The information was obtained without difficulty, with less than one per cent of the respondents failing to report. Since the survey of March 1957 also covered educational attainment, husband's occupation, and income, the stage was set for a comprehensive analysis of social and cultural factors affecting fertility. It is the reviewer's understanding that the requisite tabulations were indeed made, but that the data on religion were omitted from publication owing to pressures from unidentified persons or groups outside the Bureau. At about the same time, plans for including a question on religion in the 1960 census were abandoned.

It is the reviewer's belief that society has the right and the duty to inform itself on all important aspects of its own existence and that where the task exceeds the capabilities of individual scholars and private organizations, the information should be obtained through government. Available studies, based on samples limited as to size or geographic coverage, have made it clear that religious affiliation is an important factor in reproductive behavior. More detailed information on this subject is urgently needed. This information was obtained in 1957 from the relatively large CPS sample but, except for a brief table in *Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1958*, has not been published. It seems appropriate, therefore, to conclude a review of *THE FERTILITY OF AMERICAN WOMEN* with a plea to the new Secretary of Commerce to reverse the decision of his predecessor and to release the data on religion and fertility.

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