



The EAST-WEST CENTER Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

EAST-WEST POPULATION INSTITUTE

February 5, 1973

ATOLL POPULATIONS PROJECT - Circular #12

Dear Friends:

Enclosed are the notes on Population Definitions which you were promised in the last mailing. This supercedes the previous handout (at the conference) on this topic, which may be safely discarded.

Enclosed also an update to the bibliography circulated last summer. If you know of any other articles or books dealing either with method or with results that are as valuable as those listed and more-or-less equally valuable to all of us, then please let me know.

If any of you discover errors or inconsistencies in the model tables distributed in the last mailing, please let me know. Also, if you feel that a table could be more instructively arranged than it has been, or that more tables (or columns) are required--then please let me know as soon as possible, so that the suggestion can be passed on to the others.

Similarly, if you find the checklist of chapter topics defective, please advise. Also the scope of the volume--as reflected in the list of chapters...

Finally, I enclose a list of corrections and additions to the model tables, occasioned by the further work on population definition. Please modify your tables accordingly.

Sincerely,

Vern

Vern Carroll

P.S. I hope everyone is getting an adequate supply of comments on his (or her) work. I myself have received four excellent sets of comments. Interestingly, they are from the four most "junior" members of our group (of ethnographers). These are also the folks whose first drafts were closest to being acceptable as final drafts. Do you suppose there is a relationship between writing good papers on a topic and (carefully) reading (and commenting upon) other papers on the same topic? Maybe us "oldsters" ought to read more!

VC:lkt
Enclosures



The EAST-WEST CENTER Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

EAST-WEST POPULATION INSTITUTE

ATOLL POPULATIONS PROJECT -- Circular #13

6 February 1973

Dear Friends:

Things get started faster than they get finished.

Enclosed also two new goodies:

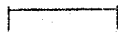
(1) A set of conventions established by me and the ASAO Cartography Editor for features ordinarily plotted on village maps. In preparing a draft map you should xerox your basic map, then white out all irrelevant detail on the xerox copy, and rerox. If your map uses others symbols, you may do one of two things: white out old symbols with correction tape and (neatly hand letter a new one; or (if your symbols are differentiated to the same degree as these) you may provide a conversion key thus:

now on map



etc.

rewrite as



Do not underdifferentiate: e.g., it is useless to map "structures" (regardless of function or occupancy).

(2) Griff Feeny has produced an admirably succinct discussion of the logic behind a "Lexis Diagram." I enclose a copy for your bedtime reading.

Best wishes for an early masterpiece,

Vern Carroll

Defining Populations

The notion of 'a population' may be considered from two points of view: formally, or ethnographically. Formally, a population is a certain kind of construct: a "set" to be precise. Regarded over time, it is a set whose membership changes. This approach to population definition (which Feeney began with at the conference) slights one major problem: how the members of a population are assigned to it (by the data-collector) in the first place. The formal demographer is ordinarily reduced to working with the data that are available, and it is the demographer's task to make the best of this situation. The ethnographer, however, collects his own data; therefore he is faced with the problem of how to conceptualize the population he is studying, and how to decide which particular people should be included, and which particular people should be excluded.

From an ethnographic point of view 'a population' is the name for a naturally-occurring collection of individuals in a specifiable place (or places) at a specifiable time (or times). In this book we are interested in certain naturally-occurring populations, each of which is discrete and subject to the ordinary population processes of birth, death, and migration.

There are four approaches to the definition of actual populations: the "de facto approach"; the "ethnic approach"; the "jural approach"; and the approach from the standpoint of a "reproducing population". Each of these approaches (to be defined more carefully after an introductory discussion of the issues) yields a different sort of population. If one were to take the entire population of the planet, then all four approaches would define the same population. Even for a segment of the world's population as

small as the population of a large nation, there are insignificant divergences (percentage-wise) between the populations defined in these four different ways. But at the scale of community-size populations the different approaches may lead to populations of vastly different composition: Not all of those who happen to be present on an atoll at a particular time (the de facto population) have land rights there (i.e., belong to the jural population); not all of those with land rights are necessarily present; the ethnic population is not necessarily the jural one; and the population involved in the reproduction of the next generation (comprised as it often is of many 'aliens') may be something different from all of the foregoing.

Thus it becomes important to the anthropologist to decide how his data on persons will be categorized, for he will eventually want to refer to tables (also of his own devising, normally) in which his population data is presented, and it is important for everyone to be clear about what the table is a tabulation of. The importance of clarity in population definition is really three-fold: In the first place, there is the usual scientific goal of absolute clarity. By this criterion a tabulation should be "reproduceable." That is, another fieldworker, given only the procedural information in the published report should be able to conduct his own fieldwork, and arrive at the same tabulation. There is a second reason for clarity: the comparison of time-stratified data is only possible if the data pertain to "the same population" (a notion which is discussed further on page 6). If it can be said fairly that the data pertain to "different populations" (because the population definitions have shifted over time) then any changes in time (including zero changes) cannot easily be sorted into those changes attributable to changes in the population, and changes

attributable merely to shifts in population-definition. Finally, clarity is essential if one hopes to make cross-cultural comparisons between different populations. In fact, at this juncture we need more than just clarity: we need standardized population definitions.

The simplest standardized population definition is that of the "de facto population." It comprises all of those (live) individuals who are within a particular, well-defined, area of enumeration at any (specified) moment in time. If the area of enumeration is defined clearly, and if it can be assumed that the enumeration was exhaustive (of those present) and accurate (with respect to the data collected), then the tabulations concerning a de facto population (resulting, of course, from a "de facto census") are unambiguous.

This is the most common sort of census; it is also the one most liable to be found in historical documents, and in the results of national censuses. Besides their availability and practicality, there is an additional interest for the anthropologist in de facto population figures: they reflect a continuing association between people, and the area in which they live (including the resources included in that area). From another point of view, a series of de facto censuses record the demographic changes in a localized community.

The major defect of a de facto census is that it may count people who are only present temporarily; conversely it may omit people who are temporarily away. As long as these two groups are very small (percentage-wise), or are of like composition (in age and sex, as well as total number) then no great distortion has been introduced. But if, for example, a census were conducted when a large number of aliens had been invited to a feast, then the results of the census might be skewed, (in comparison with

the composition of the ordinarily resident population). The conventional solution to this problem is to organize the census so that the only individuals assigned to an area of enumeration are those who are "usually resident" there. Temporary visitors are excluded; those away from home temporarily are included. This kind of census is called a "de jure" census (and defines a de jure population).*

The distinction between "usually resident" and "visiting temporarily" seems to be reasonably unambiguous in the European cultures which use this distinction in their censuses, but these categories do not correspond with anything in the languages and cultures considered in this volume. Since the distinction is ethnographically unreal, it cannot be (anthropologically) useful. Presumably this is why very few anthropologists have ever used the notion of 'de jure population.' Since census decisions about who is or is not "usually resident" are made on the basis of respondent's answers to the census enumerator's questions, and since no meaningful question incorporating this notion can be phrased, it follows that no fixed meaning can be attached to the results of de jure censuses. The fact that certain government censuses (notably those for TTPI) purport to provide de jure population data should not be allowed to obscure the fact that there is no way of getting such information. In other words the published results of de jure censuses in the Pacific are quite useless.

Much more real, from an ethnographic point of view, is the notion of who does or does not 'belong' to a certain population. On Nukuoro, one is

* This problem is one which is far more likely to be troublesome to the census-taker who does not know whether an area of enumeration is temporarily enlarged or depleted. The anthropologist living in a village is normally aware of this sort of thing, and times his census accordingly.

either a 'native of Nukuoro' (tangada de henua, literally 'a person of the land'), 'an alien from another island' (tangada mai moni, literally, 'a person [who has come] from a canoe,' or 'a European' (tangada abasasa). While the last category tends to remain undifferentiated, the 'aliens from other islands' are classified according to their place of origin. E.g., one is a Kapingamarangi person, a Ngatik person, a Ponape person, etc. It is easy enough to inquire about ethnicity: goe se dangada hee? (literally, 'you are a person from where?') is the phrase you would use. The only possible difficulty in interpreting the responses to this question is that such a question may imply that the answer is not obvious. Therefore, if a person has mixed parentage (as many do) the answer may be interpretable as "the ethnic identity I would opt for if my Nukuoro identity were cast into doubt." This can be corrected for by asking respondents what most of their neighbors think with regard to their ethnic identity.

An ethnic population can include dead people as well as living, allowing for the inclusion of much population data obtained from genealogical inquiry. An ethnic population also includes all members of the ethnic group (e.g., all 'Nukuoro') regardless of location.* This is especially useful in the following way:

In the absence of any migration (i.e., movement in or out of the population, including by adoption), two de facto censuses of the same area would clearly pertain to "the same population." Indeed the very same individuals would constitute the two populations, except as new members

*There is an unfortunate tendency (on the part of the uninformed) to use the term "de jure population" for the "ethnic population," or for those who seem to "belong" to the ethnic group represented by the community one is studying. Such idiosyncratic uses of a standard technical term are doubly regretted because of the confusion they breed.