

## **From Indianapolis to the World: Fertility Surveys in the Twentieth Century**

Emily Merchant, University of Michigan

Throughout the twentieth century, demographers sought to understand how people make decisions about family size, in particular why they might limit their families and what methods they might use to do so. Scholars have pointed out that demography is both a social science and a policy science, and that the emphasis has shifted back and forth between science and policy over the history of the discipline (Hodgson 1983; Ittmann 2003; Demeny 1988; Szreter 1993). Fertility surveys are a major point of intersection between science and policy, as they aim to understand the current state of affairs in order to change it. Between the two world wars, demographers began designing studies intended to elicit information about fertility and contraceptive practice, first of white couples in Indianapolis and, within twenty years, of couples in developing countries. This paper traces the history of four fertility surveys, two in the U.S. – the Indianapolis Study of Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility of the 1940s and the Growth of American Families (GAF) study of the 1950s – and two international – the Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) of Contraception studies of the 1960s and the World Fertility Survey (WFS) of the 1970s. It analyzes those surveys within the multiple and overlapping contexts of the history of demography, the history of survey research, the American eugenics movement, the global population crisis, and the twentieth-century geopolitics of decolonization, Cold War, and international development.

Demography and public opinion research were born alongside one another, with the Office of Population Research and the Office of Public Opinion Research established in Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs in 1936 and 1940 respectively. Over the course of the twentieth century demographers increasingly supplemented their use of census and vital registration data with survey data, which allowed them access not only to information about what people did but to information about why people did what they did and what they thought about what they did. As scholars of science and technology studies have pointed out, surveys also influenced how people thought and what they did. International fertility surveys educate both field staff and respondents about various contraceptive options and how they work (Riedmann 1993), and are a vehicle for both disseminating and measuring developmental idealism, a concept developed by Thornton (2005) to signify belief in (and the goodness of) the reciprocal production of modern societies and modern families. The paper proposed here uses fertility survey as a lens through which to explore the history of demography and the place of demography in the history of the social sciences and the global history of the twentieth century.

Although the four surveys addressed in this paper all elicited information about fertility and family planning, they appeared at different moments in the history of demography and the history of the world, and each addressed a unique concern. The Indianapolis study, officially titled "Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility," sought to explain the most pressing population problems of the interwar period, fertility decline and socioeconomic and educational differentials in U.S. fertility (Whelpton and Kiser 1946-1958). Sponsored by the Milbank Memorial Fund and the Carnegie Corporation, it was carried out by demographers with strong ties to the American Eugenics Society, and aimed to find the social and psychological correlates of fertility so as to reverse the prevailing differential and thereby produce a eugenic distribution of family size.

The GAF study began in 1955 and was repeated in 1960, when the pressing demographic concerns were to explain the postwar baby boom, identify changing norms about family size, and assess the prevalence of contraceptive use in the United States (Whelpton and Freedman 1956; Freedman, Whelpton, and Campbell 1958; Whelpton, Campbell, and Patterson 1966). It continues now under NIH funding as the National Survey of Family Growth. The KAP studies were the international counterpart of the GAF, though “KAP” refers to a type of survey rather than a specific and coordinated survey program. Indeed, GAF is often discussed as a KAP survey (Mauldin 1965; Berelson 1966). By 1970, about 150 KAP studies had been carried out in various parts of the world (Gille 1987). GAF and many of the KAP surveys were funded by the Population Council, and shared an effort to quantify the rate of unwanted childbearing and thereby measure the level of unmet need for family planning services. Known internationally as the “KAP-gap,” the identification of this unmet need provided intellectual and moral justification for the entry of the Population Council into overseas family planning work in the mid-1960s.

In contrast to the KAP surveys, the World Fertility Survey was a coordinated program that aimed to produce internationally-comparable results. Funded mainly by USAID and the U.N. Fund for Population Activities, and using instruments designed by the IUSSP, it was coordinated by the International Statistical Institute in London. The study began in 1974, as a centerpiece of the U.N.’s World Population Year, and was intended to serve as the factual basis for national population policies and for a world population policy that never materialized. Continuity of personnel and intellectual program can be traced from Indianapolis through GAF and KAP to WFS. Pascal Whelpton, co-director of the Indianapolis Study, was also a co-director of GAF, along with Ronald Freedman, who directed KAP studies in Taiwan. The WFS explicitly aimed to assess differential fertility and was modeled on the GAF (Gille 1987), and Norman Ryder was an important presence in both programs.

The proposed paper will locate these surveys in the broader history of public opinion research, examining the Indianapolis Study alongside Robert and Helen Lynd’s Middletown survey, and exploring how Alfred Kinsey’s surveys of sexual experience may have helped pave the way for the GAF by widening the boundaries around what kinds of intimate questions could legitimately be asked. The paper will examine the challenges of cross-national survey research inherent in the KAP and WFS and discuss the ways in which doubts about the validity of the KAP-gap raised questions for the field of survey methodology as a whole (Choldin, Kahn, and Ara 1967; Hauser 1967; Westoff 1988). It will analyze available data from these surveys to produce an international comparison of attitudes toward fertility and contraception at mid-century and will draw on the documentation for all four surveys to discuss how changes in the questions and the way they were asked reflected changing understandings of and concerns about fertility, and changing approaches to survey research. This paper will also rely on the published findings of the various surveys and materials from the archives of key individuals and institutions in the history of demography and fertility surveys, including Frederick Osborn, Bernard Berelson, the Milbank Memorial Fund, the Population Council, and the United Nations.

The various demographic concerns addressed by the four surveys lead a path not only through the history of twentieth century demography but also through the history of twentieth century biogeopolitics, a concept developed here as the international extension of Foucault’s of biopolitics, or governance through the management of population. They lead from a domestic focus and anxiety about

intranational socioeconomic fertility differentials between the wars to a global focus and anxiety about international racial fertility differentials in the postwar period. They lead from an interwar world organized around European and American overseas empires to three postwar worlds, the first two locked into competition for influence over the rapidly-expanding third. The paper proposed here will analyze those surveys and their uses not only to document the role played by population and its management in the global history of the twentieth century, but also to explore the way demography, through fertility surveys, informed and legitimized that management and thereby contributed to the shaping of population and history.

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility</b>	<b>Growth of American Families</b>	<b>Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice of Contraception</b>	<b>World Fertility Survey</b>
<b>Time Period</b>	1941	1955-1960	1960-1980	1974-1984
<b>Funder</b>	Milbank Memorial Fund, Carnegie Corporation	Population Council	Population Council	USAID, U.N. Fund for Population Activities
<b>Geography</b>	Indianapolis	United States	Select sites throughout the world	42 developing countries and 20 developed countries
<b>Concern</b>	Fertility decline, socioeconomic differentials in family size	Explaining the baby boom, predicting future fertility, assessing contraceptive prevalence	Identifying demand for family planning programs in developing countries	Assessing global fertility trends, informing national and global population policy
<b>Archives</b>	Milbank Memorial Fund, Frederick Osborn Papers	Population Council	Population Council, Bernard Berelson Papers	United Nations

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