

The History of Demography at Berkeley

Demography as a topic of intellectual interest focusing on populations and population processes has a long history at Berkeley. It has late 19th and early 20th century roots going back to the salvage ethnography of Alfred Kroeber, Edward Gifford, and others in Anthropology, and in later investigation of the impact of European colonization on many Native American populations by Sherburne Cook (Physiology), Woodrow Borah (History), Robert Heizer (Anthropology) and John Rowe (Anthropology). Perhaps its earliest manifestation as a technical discipline came with the arrival of Jacob Yerushalmy in 1947, who with Jerzy Neyman organized the program in Biostatistics (in the School of Public Health). Less technical aspects of demography were also taught in the Department of Sociology by William Petersen and Kingsley Davis. Other aspects of demography were taught in Economics, principally by Carlo Cipolla and Albert Fishlow. For some years formal analytical work on demographic topics was located principally in Public Health. Chin Long Chiang taught biostatistical techniques; Donald Minkler and others organized a program in Maternal and Child Health. In 1964 Judith Blake and Chin Long Chiang in the School of Public Health and Kingsley Davis in Sociology organized a Graduate Group in Demography, offering a PhD and MA in the subject. (A Graduate Group at Berkeley is a consortium of faculty from different departments, offering a graduate degree program, but using resources based in their home departments.) In 1967 that Group was made a Department in the College of Letters and Science, and by 1970 the faculty consisted of Judith Blake, Sam Preston, Nathan Keyfitz, Etienne Van de Walle, Robin Fox, Eduardo Arriaga, and others, either in faculty or visitor status. (Kingsley Davis remained in Sociology.)

At about that time, the campus was deeply divided over political issues that had emerged during the Free Speech Movement (1964) and that were later exacerbated by other domestic political issues and U.S. involvement in overseas military endeavors. The Department of Demography was especially deeply split, and all of the faculty except Judith Blake left Berkeley. At that point (1972) the campus administration decided not to replace the faculty but to leave the Department without resources. Judith Blake was accepted in the School of Public Policy; otherwise the Demography Department was vacated. Gene Hammel, then an Associate Dean of the Graduate Division, was charged with shepherding the remaining doctoral students toward their degrees. The markedly irregular dissolution of a departmental program without review by the Academic Senate led to strong protests from faculty and key committees of the Senate, such as the Graduate Council and the Committee on Educational Policy. Vice Chancellor Christensen appointed an administrative committee of faculty to explore revival of the old Graduate Group, but all the appointees declined to serve unless appointed by the Senate. The Committee on Committees of the Senate then appointed an ad hoc Senate committee chaired by Prof. Starker Leopold (Zoology) in 1972. Other members were Profs. David Brillinger (Statistics), Gene Hammel (Anthropology), Bent Hansen (Economics), Lucy Sells (student member, Sociology), Melvin Webber (City and Regional Planning), and Harold Wilensky (Sociology). The report of the Leopold Committee in 1973 recommended re-institution of a Graduate Group in Demography, but one with its own budget and resources, and with the eventual goal of re-establishment of

the Department of Demography. Hammel was charged with carrying out these goals and entered into negotiations with the Administration. The Graduate Group in Demography reported to the Dean of the Graduate Division rather than to the Dean of Letters and Science, an unusual administrative connection but one concordant with its mission in managing two graduate degree programs but none for an undergraduate degree.

These efforts were strongly supported by the Dean of the Graduate Division, Sanford S. Elberg, and by the then Vice-Chancellor and later Chancellor, Ira M. Heyman, in their own negotiations with cognizant committees of the Senate. In 1977 Hammel was asked to chair the new Graduate Group and succeeded in recruiting Prof. Ronald Lee from the University of Michigan and Prof. Kenneth Wachter from Harvard. Lee had been an MA student in the earlier Department at Berkeley, Wachter had been a Miller Fellow at Berkeley while these reorganizations were going on, and Lee, Wachter, and Hammel had had strong connections with and through the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. All three shared a strong interest in historical demography and the analysis of longitudinal data. In some sense, Peter Laslett (one of the founders of the Cambridge Group) is the godfather of the present program in Demography. It was he, for example, who introduced Wachter and Hammel when both were at Cambridge in 1970. It was Lee's work on time series analysis, leading eventually to Ch. 9 in the Wrigley-Schofield *Population History of England*, that brought all three to a conference on behavioral models in historical demography at Philadelphia in 1974, organized by Lee, where their common interests became clear.

Lee and Wachter began teaching at Berkeley in 1979. The Graduate Group was housed in the brown-shingled building at 2234 Piedmont, formerly the home of a physician, that had been on the present site of International House but was moved across the street. The space was allocated by the generosity of the Institute of International Studies, which became a strong supporter of the Demography program. The building had been the locus of Kingsley Davis' International Program in Urban Research (part of I.I.S.) and was fire-bombed by protesters against his conservative political views in the early '70s. When Demography moved in in 1978 parts of the building were still charred, and the bitter smell of burnt wood was still perceptible. The analogy of Demography rising like a phoenix from the ashes of its predecessor is thus not far off the mark. Other members invited to join the Graduate Group in those early years were Judith Blake (Public Policy), David Brillinger (Statistics), Chin Long Chiang (Public Health), Elizabeth Colson (Anthropology), Kingsley Davis (Sociology), Jan DeVries (History), Albert Fishlow (Economics), Donald Foley (City and Regional Planning), Barbara Heyns (Sociology), Daniel McFadden (Economics), Donald Minkler (Public Health), Elizabeth Scott (Statistics), Alan Sharlin (Sociology), Thomas Smith (History), Richard Sutch (History and Economics). These faculty participated in different degree and were a resource for students, especially Chiang, DeVries, Fishlow, Minkler, Sharlin, and Sutch.

The Group thus had two faculty positions, with Hammel additionally on loan from Anthropology. Part of the resources allocated to the Group was a block of funds for a visitor. Hammel, Lee, and Wachter could not cover the entire curriculum for the degree, and the Group did not have enough resources to hire others to do so in a regular way.

Instead, it recruited visitors seriatim to teach the missing courses that could often be taught in alternate years without disrupting the curriculum. Thus Ansley Coale, Griffith Feeney, Sheila Johanssen, Massimo Livi-Bacci, Jacob Siegel, and most notably Georges Tapinos taught particular courses from time to time. That flexible resource has since disappeared. The loss is unfortunate, because a permanent visitor position is an inexpensive mechanism for staffing a diverse curriculum.

From the beginning, the philosophical focus of the Group was on technical demography as a tool in the investigation of population phenomena, but firmly grounded in social and economic theory. It did not pursue demography for its own sake but demanded relevance to the social sciences that surround it. That philosophy continues to rule.

The Group was an intellectual and pedagogical success. Its reputation for innovative theory and methodology grew. Although it did not, and still does not, focus on many of the standard workhorses of census analysis or fertility surveys, it frequently makes use of those same datasets. Its doctoral recipients have found employment in prestigious locations with universities, governments and consulting firms internationally. It attracted abundant support for research and student fellowships and has the highest per capita levels of such support in the social sciences at Berkeley. Of its current 5 faculty, including one emeritus, 3 are members of the National Academy of Sciences, a higher ratio than in any other department at Berkeley, two are members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and one a corresponding member of the British Academy.

In 1987 the then Dean of the Graduate Division, William Shack, transferred administrative responsibility for Demography to the College of Letters and Science. In 1990, at the urging of the Dean of Social Sciences, Gerald Mendelsohn, the Group was reclassified by Vice Chancellor Heilbron as a Department in the College of Letters and Science, thus accomplishing the process laid out by the Leopold Committee. While it is still quite small, it has enlarged. John Wilmoth joined the Department in 1989 and strengthened its offerings both in social demography and in mortality analysis. Jennifer Johnson-Hanks joined it in 2000 and has expanded its offerings in anthropological demography and general social theory. Michael Hout is formally a member both of the Demography and Sociology Departments. Hammel retired in 1993 but has continued to teach occasionally. Other faculty who have been associated with the Department are Jan DeVries (History), Will Dow (Public Health), Paul Gertler (Public Health, Business Administration), Jon Gjerde (History), Leo Goodman (Sociology and Statistics), Jane Mauldon (Public Policy), Daniel McFadden (Economics), and Michael Tarter (Public Health).

The Department is the organizational core for the Center for the Demography and Economics of Aging (CEDA), funded by the National Institute of Aging, and chaired by Ronald Lee.

The Department also took the lead in establishing another Graduate Group, which administers a joint doctoral program in Sociology and Demography. The core faculty of

that Group include Irene Bloemraad (Sociology), Michael Hout (Sociology), Gene Hammel (Demography), Jennifer Johnson-Hanks (Demography), Ronald Lee (Demography), Sam Lucas (Sociology), Kristin Luker (Sociology), Jane Mauldon (Goldman School of Public Policy), Kenneth Wachter (Demography), and John Wilmoth (Demography). Other faculty associated with this joint program are Claude Fischer (Sociology), Leo Goodman (Sociology and Statistics), Trond Petersen (Sociology) and Steve Raphael (Public Policy).

The Department now moves onward into its future. It has a good age structure and anticipates a careful replacement of its senior members, so as to maintain that structure. The campus itself now reflects growing appreciation of demographic approaches, and the number of faculty with such interests is now much larger than it was two or three decades ago. The Department appreciates their interest and works hard to maintain those links across the administrative fiefdoms that are departments at Berkeley. Crucial to these efforts are the weekly Brown Bag seminars and the monthly meetings of the Bay Area Colloquium in Population. As a note of historical interest, the latter was first established as a joint graduate seminar in anthropological demography in 1972, by G. W. Skinner (then at Stanford, now at UC Davis) and Gene Hammel, just as the old Department of Demography was about to go on the rocks (unbeknownst to them). We can still remember teaching it with the whiff of tear gas in the air at Berkeley. That seminar, which later became the Stanford-Berkeley Colloquium in Demography (STANBERK) and then the Bay Area Colloquium in Demography (BACPOP), was the egg in the nest of the phoenix.