DISCUSSION

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In his paper, Dr. Shryock has presented the historical pattern of definitions of residence as they have evolved in the decennial censuses, he has then discussed some alternative definitions, set down criteria for rules used in applying official definitions, and finally has commented on major problem cases experienced by the Census Bureau in applying current definitions.

At the start, two general comments are in order. First, the paper demonstrates both the strong feeling of continuity and comparability and also the nature of changes which have developed from using the same basic definition through eighteen decennial censuses. Second, any discussion of the use of a de facto definition would amount to an academic exercise, since there exists no basis for expecting a change insofar as the official definition is concerned. This does not preclude the possibility of its use as an auxiliary definition.

Our major interest then may be directed toward the problem of considering the present definition. Dr. Shryock has said that "there is a more widespread demand for a closer approximation to a count of the de jure population, or for defining "usual residence" with a connotation of greater permanence." I would raise the question as to whether the latter is possible when a population is becoming increasingly mobile.

The problem cases which have been discussed are perhaps relatively new only in the sense that they have now grown large and troublesome enough to raise questions as to the adequacy of census practices of classification. Military population is a case in point, for in California the military personnel stationed in the State numbered less than 50,000 in 1940, were more than 170,000 in 1950 and may be expected to exceed 300,000 in the 1960 Census count. Similarly, persons with more than one residence, in the categories mentioned by Shryock, have probably increased markedly in the past two decades.

Looking ahead, these problem cases may be expected to become larger and still more troublesome in the future. Our role in world affairs, for example, should lead to increasing numbers of Americans abroad, both in civilian and military capacities. Dr. Shryock's comment on the number of technical assistants and consultants abroad points up a relatively new area which challenges our population recording system. In quite a different field, the increasing number of house trailers is an indication of existing or potential mobility in sizeable segments of our population, at least in states which offer retired persons an opportunity to follow the weather, or call for large numbers of construction workers who follow the jobs.

We might ask: are these and other problem groups large enough to have an unfavorable effect on the quality of census data? We don't really know, because at present we have no measures of their aggregate size.

We assume that we can safely say that most United States residents on April 1, 1960 had a single, clearly recognized place of residence and were enumerated at that place. To determine how many posed complex problems of classification and definition by the enumerators would carry us into that area of which Shryock says: "the tabulation of other population statistics on a different basis is probably a luxury that we cannot afford and hardly require."

I would like to suggest, nevertheless, that consideration be given to an approach that may prove useful both in assessing the data we now receive and also in indicating the degree of mobility of the population. It involves additional coverage and also additional tabulation, hence it poses financial and other problems. Nevertheless, it may have some utility.

First, we need a measure of the effect of international movement. We now have monthly estimates of the United States military personnel abroad and, as Shryock has pointed out, the 1950 Census included military personnel and some civilian categories overseas. But civilian coverage was and is incomplete and it appears that a considerable undercount may occur. Granting the many uses to which census data are put, it would appear that those persons temporarily abroad with usual residence in the United States should be allocated to places of residence for the original purpose of legislative apportionment. Those Americans overseas for extended stays, whose residence may be defined as abroad by the Census Bureau, should be reflected in the national total if not in a residence allocation within the national boundaries.

Similarly, we need more precise measures of those persons temporarily in the United States whose usual residence is abroad. In California we know that there are many Mexican farm laborers in labor camps within the State whose usual residence is in Mexico. Large metropolitan centers inevitably have many visitors to our shores who are counted where found since they have no residence within the United States.

A combination of these data, dealing with Americans abroad either on short-term or long-term stays and with persons temporarily in this country but with usual residence abroad, would help in defining the extent of movement across our national boundaries.

Second, how many people reported in the Census are counted where found because they have no usual place of residence?

Third, how many persons were transients on Census day: not enumerated at their place of usual residence?

I am suggesting here for exploratory purposes a tabulation that would show for an area on the enumeration date:

1. The number of residents present at their

place of residence and enumerated at that place.

2. Residents absent, i.e., temporarily elsewhere in the United States or abroad.

3. Military personnel present. (The problem of assigning military personnel to place of pre-service residence is not considered in this particular analysis).

4. "Migrants"--persons present but with no usual place of residence.

5. "Transients"--persons present with a usual place of residence elsewhere.

In addition there is needed a tabulation of all Americans residing abroad, military and civilian.

Further refinements may be called for, especially in terms of populations residing in group quarters. But this approach would be a start toward analyzing problem cases and at the same time would provide a better perspective both of mobility patterns, and perhaps of the evolving meaning of the term "residence".

As Dr. Shryock has mentioned, one criterion for definition is whether it produces useful statistics. Every producer or supplier of population statistics knows the variety of needs at least insofar as they are defined by the requests received. We feel that as yet we have not been able to answer adequately a request for California population estimates "by sex, male, female, etc."

Many requests involve legitimate needs and pose questions as to alternative definitions. The "daytime" population was pointed out as one such, and others may be noted. In many states there are problems related to "peak" populations in beach and mountain recreational areas. Similarly, seasonal agricultural activities lead to considerable variations in population numbers.

But, while means are needed to obtain these types of data, no one of them offers a basis for improving on "usual place of residence" as the basic definition in the decennial census. Most of them imply a measure of change over time, usually of cyclical nature, rather than fitting the concept of the census as a cross-sectional measure.

The task ahead is to continue to function within the established framework, devoting particular attention to the questions and problems which we can see--and most of them appear related to our increasing mobility. They foreshadow further difficulties in improving upon and clarifying the definition of "usual place of residence".