

## INTRODUCTION

This manual is concerned with the methods of projecting households and families and the application of these methods to the actual situation in selected countries. It is particularly designed to aid demographic statisticians in developing countries who want to project numbers of households and families as an integral part of the economic and social planning in their countries.

The need for reasonable projections of the future number and composition of households and families has been growing since the end of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> A quick survey of the literature indicates that in many countries, particularly in the developed ones, the demand for projections of the number and structure of households and families has been made by several government departments and several sections of private industry.

Traditionally, the biggest users of household and family projections have been the government agencies concerned with the planning of housing and building. Next are the government agencies and private industries planning the development of public utilities, and for the production and distribution of consumer durables such as electrical appliances and automobiles, for which the consumers are households rather than individuals.<sup>2</sup> For example, agencies concerned with housing problems continually need information on the formation and growth of households and families and on their demographic composition. It is partly an observation that in most of the world the rate of growth of households and families has been more rapid than that of population in recent years and, therefore, their future trends will be different from those of the total population.

The Population Commission has continually stressed the urgency and importance of producing household and family projections,<sup>3</sup> and accordingly the present manual has been prepared in response to the recommendations of

the Commission. It is hoped that it will provide methodological tools and models that will be particularly useful for the developing countries.

More precisely, the manual undertakes to summarize and digest each of the methods of projecting households and families available so far and to provide practical examples to illustrate concrete steps of making projections. However, since there have been no previous United Nations manuals on methods of evaluating and analysing the census data on households and families,<sup>4</sup> some preliminary work has been done to provide an inventory of the demographic data on households and families and to analyse patterns and trends of the sex-age specific headship rate, which are basic to modern methods of household and family projections. Part one deals with problems of ascertainment and evaluation of basic data on households and families and part two presents summaries of various methods used in the past by countries and institutions.

The manual regards the headship rate method as the standard approach usable for both developed and developing countries if there are data available for heads of households classified by sex and age. Because of its importance, a more detailed treatment is made of this method in the latter half of part two and in part three. Part three is in fact devoted to applications of the headship rate method to various situations of data availability with illustrative examples.

The countries which have made tabulations of heads of households and families by sex and age are rather limited in number, totalling only about 35, and they are mostly confined to Western European, Northern American and Latin American countries. The under-representation of Asian and African countries is obvious. For countries without relevant data, direct application of the headship rate method is not possible. Some efforts have therefore been made in the latter part of part three to describe the possibility of using regional model headship rates, or rates available from other countries in the region that have similar economic and cultural backgrounds.

It should be explained at this point why the title of this manual is *Methods of Projecting Households and Families*,

---

<sup>1</sup> Household and family projections have been prepared for 23 countries by Governments, institutions or research workers. In all, 42 sets of country projections have so far been located by the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup> See also *General Principles for National Programmes of Population Projections as Aids to Development Planning* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 65.XIII.2), pp. 27-28.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 3* (E/3207/Rev.1, E/CN.9/156/Rev.1), p. 12; *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 3* (E/3451, E/CN.9/165), p. 8; *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 9* (E/4019, E/CN.9/202), pp. 46-47.

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the labour force, for example, there are two manuals which supplement each other. One is *Methods of Analysing Census Data on Economic Activities of the Population* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.69.XIII.2) and the other is *Manual V: Methods of Projecting the Economically Active Population* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.70.XIII.2).

instead of simply *Methods of Projecting Households*. As already indicated, the main interest of the manual lies in the "household" as the demographic and economic unit of housing, consumption, welfare and the like, rather than in the "family" as the socio-biological unit of the community. It does not, therefore, aim to make projections of both households and families at the same time, but rather to make only those of households, where the statistics for both characteristics are available. It does, however, treat "family" where there are no relevant household data, except as family data available in the censuses, as in the

cases of some Eastern European countries and Portugal.<sup>5</sup> This is why both the term "households" and the term "families" are used in this manual, on the understanding that projections of families are prepared only when the necessary household data are not available.

---

<sup>5</sup> In these countries a "family" actually means a "family household" and a person living singly in a separate housing unit is regarded as a separate family. As will be pointed out, the "family" in the sense prevalent in Western Europe and Northern American censuses refers mainly to the nuclear family-oriented concept and therefore excludes the one-person family.