EDITOR'S PREFACE

This volume is the first report of the Pacific Atoll Populations project, sponsored during 1972 and 1973 by the East-West Population Institute. The project was designed to encourage fieldworkers to present their population data in a form suitable for comparative studies and to interpret these data in the context of nondemographic variables. The diffusion of demographic concepts and techniques was an inevitable preliminary to the final presentation of data, as was the modification of ordinary demographic practice to accord with ethnographic realities.

The project was suggested by Robert Harrison—then research associate at the East-West Population Institute. A proposal written jointly by us suggesting a conference to bring together fieldworkers and population specialists was submitted in April 1971 to the East-West Population Institute. In September 1971, the Institute accepted the proposal. Invitations to the conference were extended in July 1972, and preliminary versions of the ethnographic papers were circulated for comments in October and November 1972.

The conference took place from 27 December to 30 December 1972 at the East-West Center, Honolulu. Chairmen of the sessions were Griffith Feeney, Ko Groenewegen, Robert Harrison, Alan Howard, Newton Morton, Peter Pirie, Aram Yengoyan, and myself. The ethnographers attending—in addition to those who have contributed to this volume—were William H. Alkire, Ivan A. Brady, Sachiko Hatanaka,

Antony Hooper, Judith Huntsman, Paul Ottino, Nancy J. Pollock, and Michael A. Rynkiewicz.

At this conference, the issues were clarified and goals were agreed upon. Those who were able revised their contributions for inclusion in this volume; the others will publish elsewhere.

The present work begins with an effort to clarify what is meant by an *atoll population* and how one can begin to organize one's thinking about atoll population data. The next chapter discusses the techniques for examining some of the more interesting of the interrelationships between different sorts of demographic data. The ensuing seven chapters provide case studies of typical atoll populations. The studies illustrate how demographic data from particular societies can be organized and point to some of the conclusions that can be drawn from such data. In lieu of summary and synthesis—which would be premature in the absence of more data—we have addressed the concluding chapter to future fieldworkers.

Our efforts in this volume have been directed toward breaking new ground and establishing a research tradition. If the book serves adequately as an introduction to the demographic study of small-island populations in Oceania and as a primer on method, then its main purposes have been achieved. The aim of the series in which this volume appears is to provide a framework for the systematic comparison of Oceanic societies and cultures. Our focus here is on the demographic basis for such comparisons. We hope that our efforts will succeed in encouraging the collection and presentation of comparable data so that wider comparisons will become possible. We also hope that students of population theory and policy will find here some challenges to the conventional wisdom.

VERN CARROLL

East-West Population Institute
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