

INTRODUCTION

PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL DEMOGRAPHY: PAST AND PROSPECTS

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This issue illustrates demography's potential contribution to historical understanding, and simultaneously suggests the importance of an historical, long-term view of contemporary demography. Historical demography has had this kind of role in other regions of the world, notably Northwest Europe and East Asia, and we can hope that the sorts of studies included in this issue of *Philippine Population Review* will be appreciated and stimulate much more historical demographic research on the Philippines.

A *précis* history of the field may help to put this issue into an appropriate context (I include here a few citations as an aide to the interested reader). Historical demography – the demographic study of past times – has been with us for a long time, but the field had a resurgence all across Europe starting in the 1950s, initiated by the path breaking work in parish demography by Louis Henry (Fleury & Henry, 1956) on France and then E. A. Wrigley and his Cambridge Group for the Study of Population and Social Structure (Wrigley, 1966) on England. Then followed several decades of exciting research on European demographic systems long-term. The resulting body of scholarship transformed our understanding of European societies during the industrial revolution and even well before. Livi-Bacci (1999) and Lee (1977) provide overviews. There may be a particular interest in the historical demography of Spain (Reher, 1990) since this is based on records very similar to those available for the Philippines.

The focus of historical demographic research gradually turned toward other regions where a combination of colonial and indigenous records

provides the required information. Useful sources on this include Borah (1970) and Newson (1995) on Latin America, Mahadi, Inikori, Cordell, & Gregory (1987) on Africa, and Erder (1975) on the Middle East. In Asia the most systematic work has been carried out on Japan and China. Prominent for Japan is the work of Hayami (1979, 2001). Lee and Feng (2001) review and synthesize the evidence for China. South Asia and colonial Malaya have seen some good use of the very rich British colonial archives – Dodge (1980) and Dyson (1989) are a good introduction to this literature — and some of the best work across the remainder of Southeast Asia has come from the colonial records for the Dutch East Indies – Indonesia (see, for example: Boomgaard (1989) and Gooszens (1999)), and thematic histories of Southeast Asia have given the region's demography a prominent place (Reid, 1987, 1988, 2001; Owen, 2002). But on the work of empirical reconstruction of the facts, Southeast Asia has generally lagged behind.

What of historical demographic research on the Philippines? It must be said first that nowhere in Southeast Asia is there a greater gap between the possibilities and the products. This is not at all a criticism of the work that has been completed, but rather, a testament to the extraordinary body of primary records that is available and not yet exploited, much of it suitable for analysis using the methods of technical demography.

Focusing on work in which the demography is central and some demographic treatment of the data is provided, and, accepting the risk of an unfortunate omission, a few important contributions can be indicated. There have been studies of individual parishes: Tigaon, Camarines Sur (Owen, 1987a, 1987b); Nagcarlan, Laguna (Ng, 1979; Smith & Ng, 1982); San Jose, Batangas (Gealogo, 1995, 1996), and a series of demographic studies of Manila (Doeppers (1972, 1984, 1986, 1998a 1998b 1998c). There have been a few important explorations of the archival record at regional scale: for example, for Leyte (Cruikshank, 1978), the Bicol Peninsula (Owen, 1984), the Central Plain of Luzon (Doeppers, 1968; McLennan 1980), Batangas (May, 1987) and Cebu (Cullinane & Xenos, 1998). A few studies are important for tracing a national picture for a particular time period based on comprehensive examination of large volumes of records. Both Corpuz (1989) and Newson (1998, 2006, 2009) concern themselves with the decades immediately after the Spanish arrival, and several studies (e.g.: Anderson, 2006; De Bevoise, 1995; May, 1987) have looked at the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and expounded

broader theoretical arguments concerning connections between demographic systems, political systems and regime change.

The six papers included in this issue are a welcome addition to this literature. What many of these papers address is a shortage, with certain important exceptions, of demographic analysis that draws on the country's rich historical record of the core demographic processes – birth, death, marriage and migration. Several of the papers in this issue draw on parish records, or on aggregate population data based ultimately on the parish records. Others address important population diversities arising from historical migrations into the Philippines. This set of papers is welcome in another way too. Readers will have noticed that the very short survey above mentions only two Filipino authors working on the core demographic processes. But in an historiographical essay on Philippine historical demography, Gealogo (1998) highlights a number of significant studies by Filipinos who are working in important areas of social history – work which in my view is just at the boundary with demography.

How can Philippine historical demography progress over the next decade and beyond? The main point, already made but very much worth repeating, is that among the countries of Southeast Asia the parish archives of the Philippines are the most comprehensive of any set of resources available for a national demographic history. They even rival in some ways the local parish records that have been the foundation for European historical demography—particularly in England, France and Spain as cited earlier. Moreover, these records are more accessible and usable now than they have ever been. When I first began exploring the parish records in the 1970s it was necessary to go from parish to parish — as we did up and down the Ilocos Coast, Laguna, Batangas and Cebu – and the work was as much killing *anay* as reading documents. Today much of the local parish record has been indexed, filmed and made available to researchers (see the Genealogical Society of the Mormon Church, including its Family Research Centers in the Philippines).

Much of historical demography is inherently local, both methodologically and substantively, so a comprehensive picture will emerge only when we have many dozens of local studies of the kind reported here, complemented by many more studies of population diversities in the form of demographies of both immigrant and indigenous language and cultural groups. With its characteristic attention to geographic and social diversities, a thriving historical

demography could complement History, Anthropology and Ethnohistory, as well as provide an important temporal perspective on modern population change. The papers in this issue illustrate the possibilities.

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