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Reflexion

The anthropological demography of Europe

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Abstract

This paper introduces a collection of related research studies on the anthropological demography of Europe. Anthropological demography is a specialty within demography that uses anthropological theory and methods to provide a better understanding of demographic phenomena in current and past populations. Its genesis and ongoing growth lies at the intersection of demography and socio-cultural anthropology and with their efforts to understand population processes: mainly fertility, migration, and mortality. Both disciplines share a common research subject, namely human populations, and they focus on mutually complementary aspects. The authors of this paper focus on the differences between the disciplines of anthropology and demography, the emergence of anthropological demography and its theoretical, methodological, and empirical aspects. In addition, they critically summarize the contributions that were presented in the first workshop of the Working Group on Anthropological Demography of Europe of the European Association for Population Studies, held in Rostock in Fall 2005 and reflect on how these papers add to the further development of anthropological demography in Europe, i.e. elaborating the epistemology of anthropological demography; applying additional theoretical perspectives to better understand demographic behaviour in Europe ; illustrating the way in which culture plays a role in case studies on European demographic behaviour; and emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to data collection and the added value of triangulating quantitative and qualitative analyses.

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1. Introduction: the intersection of demography and anthropology

Anthropological demography lies at the intersection of demography and socio-cultural anthropology, with their efforts to understand population processes: mainly fertility, migration, and mortality. Both disciplines share one research subject, namely human populations, though they focus on complementary aspects. Demography is mainly concerned with the dynamic forces defining population size and structure and their variation across time and space, whereas socio-cultural anthropology focuses on the social organization shaping people's production and reproduction. Given these different focuses, the methodological approaches are different: demography has a strong inclination towards quantification, statistical modeling, and hypothesis testing; anthropology is highly qualitative, based on case studies, and inductive. Anthropological demography uses anthropological theory and methods to investigate demographic phenomena. The main theoretical concepts in anthropological demography are culture, gender, institutions, and political economy; its empirical research approach includes a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies applied to case studies. Ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation are often central to this approach, as is interpretative reading of primary data and historical material.

The approach of anthropological demography is increasingly represented in population studies. However, its development faces major challenges due to the different epistemological and methodological traditions of its two 'constituent' disciplines. Demography is oriented to the quantification of population processes, while socio-cultural anthropology is oriented to the qualitative specification of the behavioral and institutional mechanisms defining such processes. The consequence is that demographers are often puzzled by aspects of socio-anthropological work such as the secondary role assigned to theory testing, its critical approach to universal analytical categories including the concepts of age, time, marriage, illness, and empirical focus on case studies not based on population representative samples. In turn, anthropologists tend to be skeptical about demographers' emphasis on statistical representativeness and on the comparable nature of data collected through standardized surveys; they claim that in demographers' work often little attention is paid to the validity of the data, of the analytical models, and of their interpretation. Despite the challenges, scholars in both disciplines have occasionally come together, working in multidisciplinary research teams, and created complex research designs to build on mutual strengths and reduce disciplinary limitations, thus launching the field of anthropological demography.

Anthropological demography has emerged recently and gradually, and its definition as a specialty within demography is still evolving. The history of demography and anthropology provides a few examples of scholars turning to the neighboring discipline, but the birth of anthropological demography really occurred

within the last two decades of the twentieth century (see later). To date however, the original insights into the study of demographic behavior that anthropological demographers have provided have either addressed historical populations (Viazzo and Lynch 2002, Netting 1980, Kertzer 1984, Röling 1987; Kerklaan 1988; Shorter 1991; Sigle et al. 2000) or they have focused on non-western regions with few exceptions; for these exceptions, see for instance the research by Townsend (2002) in the US and Brettell (2003) in Portugal. The Working Group on the Anthropological Demography of Europe in the European Association for Population Studies, active since 2005, aims to produce comparable theoretical and methodological collaboration in the European context and this special collection is one step in this direction (see section 6).

We start this paper by briefly delineating the history of the growing interest in socio-cultural anthropology within the discipline of demography, i.e. the emergence of anthropological demography. We subsequently focus on its major contributions: the inclusion of anthropological theory and methods to demographic research. We conclude with some reflection on the possible future direction of the sub-discipline and the contribution of the papers, included in this special collection, to this further development.

Any text of this kind is inevitably the result of choices about where to set the borders of anthropological demography and ensuring that the reader is aware of these choices. First, the following discussion of anthropology refers solely to socio-cultural anthropology (the terms are used interchangeably)[3]. Second, this discussion emphasizes the contributions of anthropological demography to the field of demography; no attempt is made to elaborate on its contribution to (socio-cultural) anthropology.

2. Demography approaches Anthropology

Kertzer and Fricke (1997, p. 1) characterize the relationship between anthropology and demography as "long, tortured, often ambivalent, and sometimes passionate" and recognize that anthropological demography is mainly the result of the opening of the demographic community to anthropological insights into population processes. On the contrary, in their view, the majority of anthropologists hesitate about learning and using demographic techniques. At the beginning of the twentieth century the situation was

[3] There is another area of overlap between demography and anthropology, namely the large field of evolutionary anthropology, archeology, and paleodemography. These branches of anthropology characteristically use demographic methods to understand the bio-demographic structure of past or contemporary populations, such as hunters and gatherers or isolated populations. Despite partial overlaps with anthropological demography, the theoretical concepts of reference of anthropology are different: evolution, adaptation, kinship, and the relation between population and resources.

quite different: anthropology, particularly what became known as 'social anthropology' in the United Kingdom, made great use of population data; kinship studies became the privileged perspective to understand the social organization of production and reproduction of human populations. Extensive fieldwork was accompanied by census taking in the local population to understand family processes such as household structure, marriage, divorce, and childbearing (see the classics; Radcliff-Brown 1964, Firth 1963[1936], Fortes 1943). A quite different approach was taken by anthropology in the United States, where 'cultural' anthropologists emphasized the cultural and ritual manifestations of populations rather than their social organization. Cultural anthropology remained immune to demography for many years, with the exception of research in cultural ecology and cultural materialism, which focused on population issues and paid attention to the balance between population and resources (Harris and Ross 1987).

Demography made the first steps towards anthropology in the early 1950s, when a few anthropologists were invited to join the Committee on Population Problems in Non-industrial Societies of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population. The need was seen to address the influence that local forms of social organization and culture had on population dynamics, which became increasingly evident in the 1960s and 1970s. There were two major and very diverse demographic projects in this period. One was the ambitious data collection program of the World Fertility Survey, aimed at producing comparable population estimates for countries with incomplete data and which highlighted the necessity of contextual information for valid data collection and interpretation. The second was the Princeton European Fertility Project, with the ambition to test and confirm the demographic transition theory by documenting the empirically changing patterns of marital fertility, infant mortality, urbanization, industrialization, and literacy in historical European populations. This concluded that cultural factors were important in determining the onset and the rhythm of the transition.

The experience of both projects highlighted the methodological and theoretical boundaries within which demography had been contained until then. The large representative sample surveys of the World Fertility Survey were employed as an alternative to registers and censuses in most African and Asian countries, in which the coverage and accuracy of these more traditional sources for population estimates were questionable. The Caldwells, Australian demographers, were the first in their field to lament the limitations in the use and interpretation of such data, echoing to a great extent a common criticism of quantitative data collection in empirical social science. The criticism is that such data only reflects what is included in the questions, and social reality is distorted if the questions are formulated by a researcher not involved in collecting the data or exposed to the social reality producing the data. The concern for

standardized information across social and cultural settings can, on the one hand, justify the inflexibility of questionnaire protocols and closed format questions. On the other hand, however, it seriously compromises the validity of responses. The Caldwells were involved in West African village studies in the late 1970s. This experience and their reading of the anthropological literature about that area led them to abandon what has been regarded as an 'armchair approach' to demographic analysis (a substantial disengagement of the analyst from the field) and to launch what Caldwell, Hill and Hull (1988) defined as *micro approaches to demographic research* or an anthropological approach to demography.

The main aspects of micro-level demography were: importing some features of anthropological fieldwork into demography to attain intensive and continuous contact with the population studied; employing a range of flexible research methods; and directly involving researchers in all stages of the research, where possible in a multidisciplinary team. Additionally, echoing parallel calls for small-scale studies in demography (Leibenstein 1981), Caldwell's approach implied using village studies to gather contextual information and to understand the complexity of the social realities in which demographic behavior is embedded. He felt that only with such information could one interpret the association between variables. Similarly, the researcher being in the field and collaborating daily with anthropologists within a common project would allow a better evaluation of data validity, because of the use of unprompted information on local meanings, motivation for actions, and sensitive topics.

In the following years other demographers employed micro-demographic approaches (Lesthaeghe 1980; Massey 1987), partially inspired by the body of pioneering research generated by Caldwell and his numerous colleagues during those years. An *ad hoc* IUSSP committee on anthropological demography gave further visibility to this approach and contributed to a widening debate on anthropological demography and its foundation.

The main reason for accompanying survey research with fieldwork was to add an explorative open component to data collection to ensure valid data and their correct interpretation. In this sense, mainstream demography perceived the contribution of anthropology to demography as a methodological one: the main interest remained explaining quantitative change in population dynamics and not the application of anthropological theory to population dynamics, an emphasis which has subsequently been criticized by anthropologists engaged in population studies (Fricke 1997).

The other source of renewed interest in anthropology among demographers came at nearly the same time from the Princeton European Fertility Project and its effort to empirically prove the transition theory with European historical data. According to the project, the transition theory was at best an inaccurate depiction of the historical process of demographic change and an incomplete account of the determinants of demographic

change. Their idea was that cultural setting influenced fertility decline, which was independent of socio-economic factors, and they felt that a transition theory that incorporated culture and ideational change was needed (Knodel and van de Walle 1979; Cleland and Wilson 1987; Watkins 1986). However, culture could be measured only through indicators such as religion and language, while their concept of culture was not elaborated further.

With a renewed interest in culture as one of the most influential contextual dimensions reflected by demographic behavior, demography started from the 1990s to welcome anthropology as a social science discipline from which it could also borrow societal concepts and theories and not only methodology. However, this could not occur in a completely straightforward way. Major challenges were represented by: (a) the operationalization of the concepts of culture, gender and institutions; (b) the consistency of interpretations of empirical data collected by intensive fieldwork, and estimates produced by large representative sample datasets; and (c) the combination of the holistic approach involved in case study analysis and analyses based on statistical relationships among variables. In the next section we approach the theoretical challenges related to the major concepts of reference, while the section following that is devoted to methodological challenges.

3. Theoretical focus of anthropological demography

Within the existing theoretical contributions of anthropological demography one can distinguish those focusing on culture, on political economy, on gender, and institutional demography.

Culture

The role of culture in the analysis of demographic processes is at the center of demographers' renewed interest in anthropological theory. Culturally sound explanations of demographic behavior seemed essential to illuminate the otherwise inexplicable variation in demographic behavior. However, the issue of defining culture and how culture should be taken into account in empirical research are questions that still have no unanimous definitive answers. This debate has been raging for a long time in anthropology and definitions range from a more materialist "learnt repertory of thoughts and actions exhibited by members of social groups" (Harris 1979:47), to the more interpretative "historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols" (Geertz 1966:3). In a seminal paper, Hammel describes how the concept of culture in

anthropology has been used alternatively as "an identifier of social groups, a body of autonomous traditions, a set of coherently patterned behaviors, a determiner of human action, an artistic expression of human experience, and a set of symbols negotiated between social actors" (Hammel 1990, p. 457).

Inspired by Clifford Geertz's (2000 [1973]) distinction between models *of* reality and models *for* reality, and addressing the related dialectic between structure and action, Hammel proposes a parallel distinction: "culture *for* the people" versus "culture *by* the people." In the former sense, culture determines people's actions by providing them with blueprints of how things ought to be conducted. Individuals learn the norms of their social environment and internalize them and conform, actively comply, or rebel against them after they have taken into account the opportunity costs of their conduct. This "culture for the people" is useful in justifying the inclusion of cultural dimensions into behavioral models providing an explanation as to why people in the same cultural context act the way they do. However, this vision of culture is criticized by mainstream anthropology since it treats individuals as "cultural dopes", underestimates the role of individual agency, and does little to explain cultural change. A "culture by the people" represents the way social actors perceive the world and attribute significance and symbolic meaning to social behavior. In this sense culture represents the possible paths, while the path taken is by individual choice. In this definition of culture, individual agency and practices are central. Cultural symbols can be transformed and interpreted by individuals for their own purposes in specific circumstances. Since this process of transformation and interpretation takes place in social interaction, in conversation, and in practices, individual agency appears to be "socially distributed" (Carter 1998:p. 262) and in the form of "flows of conducts or activities-in-setting". This vision of culture as an "evaluative cloud of commentary" (Hammel 1990, p. 467) is consistent with individual subjective attributes like values or attitudes on specific behavior being ambiguous and even contradictory within a specific cultural context.

According to Fricke: "Culturally sensitive population studies require an assumption that people engage their world in terms of highly various and local systems of meaning, and a willingness to explore existing sources with an eye to relating those meanings to demographic outcomes" (Fricke 1997, p. 186). Anthropological demographers aim to incorporate culture in demographic studies in three ways:

First, they try to make sure that standard demographic variables such as education or age at marriage are informed by the cultural meaning that these variables assume in the specific context. For example Johnson-Hanks (2006) finds that education is related to higher age at first birth among Beti women in Cameroon, mainly because formal schooling is closely connected with a higher motivation to have a good reputation and behave according to a local concept of respectability. Schooling is a socialization factor reinforcing the characteristics of honorable conduct through specific practices, one

being self-domination. This explains why education is also consistent with the widespread use of natural non-western contraception in this context.

Second, anthropological demographers are attentive to the symbolic systems of reference in the population they study and thus open to the necessity to modify standard variables or introduce new contextual variables into behavioral models. The fieldwork by Susan Short's team in China indicated a much more refined and valid definition of the characteristics of women's employment than the classic division into waged and unwaged. It was only by accounting for the different intensities and compatibilities with childrearing in specific non-wage activities that the relation between working time and childrearing time could be appreciated in full (Short et al. 2002). Similarly, in research aiming at counting the homeless people in Paris, the explorative fieldwork phase takes into account the multiple definitions of 'home' held by the informants to ensure collection of valid data (Marpsat 1999).

Third, anthropological demographers interpret the complexity of individual motivations that are beyond local patterns of behavior. An example of such complexity was found by Bledsoe and colleagues in rural Gambia. They showed that the use of western contraception there is consistent with Gambian women's interest and motivation in bearing as many children as possible, and thus does not directly serve any goals of limiting fertility. The social organization of this community makes having adult children the most important source of wealth and social respect for women. The local idea of reproductive biology identifies childbearing life as "body resource expenditure" (Bledsoe 2002) and reproductive capacity is thought to diminish not with age but with the stress suffered by a woman's body. One of the most stressful events is considered to be experiencing a mishap (miscarriage, still birth or the early death of the infant). A woman in this society considers resting between pregnancies as the most effective way of restoring her reproductive capacity (her own "body resources"). This combination of a local social organization, and a concept of fertility that depends on physical stress rather than on ageing, leads a Gambian woman whose pregnancy ended in a mishap to use western contraception to maximize the survival chances of her next child. In this last example anthropological demography refutes the concept of culture and social organization as separately affecting demographic outcomes.

Political economy

Similarly to social history, anthropological demography pays much attention to the intersection of global and local forces and in its resulting agency–structure dynamic. This focus is best represented in the political economy approach to demographic processes, analyzing the impact of economic forces in the cultural and political context

and not in opposition to it (Schneider and Schneider 1984; Greenhalgh 1995; Kertzer 1995).

A good example of such an approach is a study of differential timing of fertility decline by occupational category in Casalecchio di Reno, Italy (Kertzer and Hogan 1989). People's behavior at the local level seems clearly influenced by a set of factors, such as the introduction of compulsory school attendance, the promulgation of child labor laws, and the type of class-specific living arrangements which affected the economic value of children to parents differently for sharecroppers compared to all other social classes. Similarly, the reconstruction of fertility decline in Sicily by Schneider and Schneider (1984) is a role model study of political economy applied to fertility. They employ oral memories and archival data to define the forces behind the fertility transition; using historical data on vital events they also test how the fertility transition was experienced by various social groups. In the words of the Schneiders:

"A political economy approach is above all concerned with the power differences that have emerged, and will continue to emerge, in the course of history: differences of age and gender within families and kin units; between the official institutions and their clients, customers or followers; between classes or ethnic groups; and across these lines as a result of interactions. And it is oriented towards embedding any kind of change, population change included, in history as distinct from evolution" (Schneider and Schneider 1996, p. 8).

Gender and institutions

After 'culture', 'gender' is the analytical category whose use by demographers has been most widely criticized in anthropology; it is also a prime theoretical challenge in anthropological demography. The view in anthropological demography of the relationship between gender and demographic behavior has been compellingly summarized by Greenhalgh (1995). In her words, the way demographers account for gender in reproductive processes is at best "suggesting the emergence of a demography of women" that considers a narrow range of women's characteristics as demographically important and ignores the rethinking of analytical categories related to gender achieved in anthropology, sociology, and social history.

In comparison, the conceptual redefinition of gender as a social institution means recognizing it as a structuring principle of social life and power distribution. As such it affects reproduction and other life domains, and entails the study of both men and women and the consideration of both the socio-economic and the ideological dimensions of gender. Anthropological studies of socio-economic inequalities have shown that the growing equality between men and women in this domain does not

necessarily correspond to a growing empowerment of women. Gender appears to be a multidimensional concept whose change is not necessarily unidirectional.

Considering gender as a macro variable (i.e. a societal structuring principle) makes anthropological demography very close to the institutional demography clearly formulated by McNicoll (1980). Institutional demography stresses the importance of local institutions in explaining demographic behavior. One way to do that is to look at formal and informal social institutions as a framework for individual decision-making at a given time. Thus, institutions are the background context for demographic behavior. For instance, returning to gender and fertility, an institutional approach would be to examine the way gender concepts structure the relationships between men and women in the market, legal arena, and privacy of the family. McDonald (2000), a demographer, uses this approach, tests it on a macro level, and concludes that in contexts where gender equality is guaranteed in the public but not the private sphere, fertility is likely to be lower than in contexts where gender relations are consistently equal or unequal. A second way to consider institutions is a transactional approach to institutional change and to look at how local institutions as an environment change due to historical patterns or changes at a higher institutional level (national or global). Because of its focus on case studies and their historical development, institutional demography is one of the more solid bridges between demography and anthropology, particularly the area of anthropology with a political economy approach.

As Greenhalgh (1995) puts it, these are complementary ways to look at the same issue and the difference between them is their points of departure. Institutional demographers would start from individual decision-making and go up to define local context and how this is modified by global forces. "A political economy demographer is more likely to work from the top down beginning with an understanding of the historically developed global forces – the world market, the international state system, and so on – that shape local demographic regimes, next identifying the ways in which these impinge on regional, national, and local environments, and finally tracing their effects on individual fertility behavior" (Greenhalgh 1995, p. 87). In other words, while institutional demographers insert institutions as the context that defines opportunity structures for decision-makers who have their own values and goals, political economy anthropology sees them as a context that defines values and goals through the definition of power and moral structures.

4. Methodological focus of anthropological demography

Empirical research in anthropological demography is generally qualitative and quantitative; the use of these two methodological approaches is achieved either by

running parallel and distinct studies or by merging qualitative and quantitative components of the study in a coherent and complex research design.

A minimalist approach to anthropological demography is to employ anthropological methods to produce better data and to use them to better model the forces shaping population dynamics. In a multidisciplinary fashion, anthropological methods are 'only' asked to improve the validity of measurements and the interpretation of results by providing local context and clarifying the local ideational and cultural dimensions (meanings and values). The open approach of these methodologies is, for instance, a good way to explore the different definitions of apparently similar terms and get around one of the biggest problems encountered in cross-cultural comparison. For instance, apparently straightforward terms indicating such concepts as kin relationships, living arrangements, union status, or migration may have very different behavioral consequences because they have very different meanings. However, the very nature of anthropological fieldwork, where the researcher is engaged with the empirical context under examination and can directly observe people's behavior, makes it a very powerful methodological strategy for critical reading of reported behavior and to spot potential systematic biases which undermine data quality. An example of the advantages of direct observation is provided by Bledsoe's study of intra-household fostering strategies in Sierra Leone (Bledsoe 1990). The author is able to show the way in which intra-generational obligations among kin are not rigidly regulated and univocal, but rather spread across a network of ties that is in constant flux. Parents cannot automatically assume future support from biological children, as it must be negotiated.

Anthropological demographers place particular emphasis on fieldwork methods that represent the basis of ethnography; however, when researchers aim for historical depth, fieldwork must be complemented by the use of archives, registers, and other documentation, such as that provided by oral history. This latter approach in anthropological demography translates into careful interpretation of historical statistical data; it parallels the work of social history, and complements work in historical demography (Kertzer 1986; Hammel 1972). In order to achieve the necessary contextual depth and sound qualitative investigation anthropological demographers opt for case studies and small populations. The non-representative nature of relatively small samples based on case studies still generates skepticism about the reliability and usefulness of their results when generalized to the whole population and is being critically discussed within demography. Nonetheless, frequently such discussions simply shoot at the wrong target, since they fail to acknowledge that the aim and the unique contribution of case studies is less about providing a quantification of the phenomenon under study than clarifying the mechanisms generating it and their complex interconnections.

Within anthropology there is dissatisfaction towards this minimalist approach, in which anthropological wisdom is perceived to service statistical demography. Some have refused the simplistic identification of anthropology with qualitative methods and argued for a strong methodological position, which has been labeled "critically interpretative demography" or "demography without numbers" (Scheper-Hughes 1997, p. 203). Anthropologists holding these views argue for the deconstruction of objective analytical demographic categories and methods in favor of the understanding of local social practices. One illustration of such approach is Scheper-Hughes's (1992) own research on infant mortality in a *favela* of a middle-sized town in Brazil. Starting with a standard examination of the death registration of children under five, the author found that one third of such children were missing from the official records and the existing death records were usually uninformative on the cause of death. Rather than merely noting the biases that poor data recording implied for correct estimates of infant mortality, she engaged in participant observation and open interviewing. Once more intensive fieldwork of this case study showed that women (and other adults) provide maternal care to their newborns only very gradually, in the belief that some children were not meant to survive and were destined to become "angels" shortly after birth. Given the high infant mortality in the area, this practice can be interpreted as protecting mothers from an early attachment to a child when the probability of losing it is high. The qualitative reading of missing data as one of the main source of information combined with the ethnographies of maternal practices resulted in the local understanding of the causes for the high infant mortality. Such "praxis-oriented, critically applied, politically engaged anthropology" (Scheper-Hughes 1997, p. 219) who is supposed to witness and explain the social nature of population processes hidden to official data, needs to be reconciled with demography's orientation to cross-cultural comparison, generalizations, and theory testing.

The majority of research practices finds its place between the two extreme versions of anthropological demography, the minimalist and the critical ones. In both cases the combination of methodologies is not straightforward. The difficulties arising from combining qualitative and quantitative methods lead to the question as to whether it is preferable to work in multidisciplinary teams of fully trained demographers and anthropologists, or alternatively to invest in interdisciplinary training programs to form fully rounded anthropological demographers. The first option offers the comparative advantage of specialization but risks creating barriers of communication between researchers. The second option, while remedying this latter problem by exposure to both disciplines in the students' formative years, may underestimate the amount of investment needed to form a good demographer and a good anthropologist.

5. Towards a 'Pukka' anthropological demography of Europe

Recently, researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Napolitano and Jones (2006), discussed interdisciplinary research in social/cultural anthropology and public health. The authors critically describe what is seen as the contribution of 'pukka[4]' anthropologists, i.e. real anthropologists, to the field of public health. Conducting a literature review and a qualitative study on views of public health professionals and anthropologists working in public health, they conclude that: "One enduring obstacle to the acceptance of anthropological evidence in public health was the perception among quantitative researchers that anthropological studies were soft (Foster 1987), whimsical (Hubert 1990), and unscientific, lacking rigour, reproducibility and generalisability (Mays & Pope 1995)" (all cited by Napolitano and Jones 2006, p.1265). The respondents in the study by Napolitano and Jones (2006) identified the following characteristics of 'pukka' anthropological research: the application of anthropological theories and methods of long term ethnographic research and participant observation, and a reluctance to use short term focused methods and rapid procedures. These conclusions can easily be transferred to experiences in anthropological demography.

While reviewing the literature on anthropological demography, it appears evident that most anthropological demographic research has been conducted in developing countries by researchers from western societies. Within European demography, with the exception of historical demography, anthropology plays a minor role. Why is there a lack of anthropological demographic research in Europe? Are European demographers working on European demographic issues less interested in the context of demographic behavior? Or, does the availability of a mass of detailed register and survey data reduce the need for case studies and for an ethnographic analysis of the local context of culture, gender, and institutions in one industrialized societies?.

The present special issue tries to fill this gap in the anthropological demography field. The nine papers were originally presented during the first workshop of the Working Group on Anthropological Demography of the European Association for Population Studies, held in Rostock in Fall 2005. The workshop, which was attended by demographers and anthropologists, focused on the development of anthropological demography in Europe by focusing on the available theoretical frameworks, empirical case studies investigating European populations, the specific methodological issues raised by conducting anthropological demography research in a European context, , and the lessons that can be learnt by selected case studies in developing countries.

[4] 'Pukka' (= pakka, a concept used in India) meaning 'real'; a 'pakka' anthropologist thus means a 'real' anthropologist (Napolitano and Jones, 2006, p. 1264).

The paper by Ernestina Coast, Katherine Hampshire and Sara Randall (2007) (Demographic Research, 16, pp. 493-518), entitled *Disciplining anthropological demography* elaborates on the epistemological development of anthropological demography, as touched upon in Section 1 and 2 of this paper, focusing on the possible advantages of inter-disciplinarity of anthropology and demography. The authors focus on barriers to interdisciplinary research, issues such as differences in: academic cultures; ideas about the positionality of the researcher; positivism versus interpretative approach; methods applied and levels of analysis; knowledge produced; ways of presenting data (numbers, figures versus text, quotations, case studies). The paper also elaborates on issues such as difficulties of interdisciplinary articles being accepted and published when they do not seem to fit the journals of either discipline; and the traditional focus of anthropological demography on 'the other', i.e. the 'exotic' rather than the own society. In summarizing and describing methodological differences between the two disciplines and lessons learned, the paper is a 'must' for anyone interested in conducting anthropological demographic research.

The authors emphasize the strong theoretical underpinning of anthropology but do not further deliberate on these anthropological theories. This is more than compensated for by the paper by Patrick Heady (2007a) entitled *Fertility as a process of social exchange*, in which he applies the – in anthropology – classical theory of social exchange (Mauss 1990 [1924]; Levi-Strauss 1969 [1949]; cited by Heady 2007a) in trying to understand and explain fertility decline in the Italian Alps from the 1950s onwards. In this, the author adds a theoretical perspective to anthropological demography, complementing the existing ones on culture, political economy, gender and institutions (see Section 3). The paper is a good example of how anthropological theories can contribute to demography, and one could indeed classify the paper as being written by a 'pukka' anthropologist. It interprets demographic data on marriage and fertility through and with anthropological theories, is based on long term ethnographic research rather than short term rapid appraisals, including living with the population, participant observations, chats and interviews. The author sketches new insights, i.e. new possible explanations for fertility decline in Europe, in discussing changes in social exchange (between families, between villages) regarding marriage and fertility. Although the empirical evidence is not always convincing, the author succeeds in making the reader think (and think again), and re-think theoretical frameworks such as the reversed flow-of-wealth theory by Caldwell (1981) and the Second Demographic Transition (SDT; Lesthaeghe and Surkyn 1988; Van de Kaa 1994; all cited by Heady 2007). Heady classifies the SDT as a theory that finds the explanation for fertility decline in an individualistic approach, a focus on increase of self-actualization, while he himself looks broader at cultural and social explanations of fertility decline. The paper thus clearly illustrates the *context* of demographic issues in Europe.

The paper evokes a strong wish for more case studies that apply and reflect on the theory of social exchange on fertility decline and marriage processes. One might think of more historical demographic case studies in Europe, but also of studies on present non-western societies experiencing fertility decline. For examples, in southern India – where fertility decline is fast – one can still observe the importance of the exchange of brides between villages and families, and the custom at time of marriage that brides have to promise 'to give back' one of their future daughters to their natal families, i.e. a future maternal uncle–niece marriage. However, there is obviously more scope for the social exchange theory, it can offer much to the study of migration (see e.g. the paper by Fleischer, below) and health and mortality. Having read Heady's paper, it is hard to push the theory of social exchange out of one's mind, as it provides such an interesting framework to look at demographic reality.

In general, regarding theory, the dialogue between anthropology and demography could be extended even more to some branches which remain at the margin of population studies. One example is cognitive anthropology (D'Andrade 1992), providing a systematic study of the way people construct cultural schema on gender roles, parenthood, care, illnesses, identity, and consequently motivate their demographic behavior. The political economy approach has not yet completed the renewal of institutional demography. In the latter, contextual level explanations are still dominated by a rigid concept of institutions that limits institutional demography to an account of the effects of specific institutional configurations on individual behavior. What is needed is the incorporation of the interaction between individual agency and institutions and how cultural, economic, and political institutions are historically intertwined. An interesting possibility is provided by the new institutional economists (Denzau and North 1994; North 1994) who link motivation of behavior to a shared belief system (shared mental models) determining the choices that people make. They define behavior as, "a consequence of learning through time – not just the span of an individual's life or a generation of a society – but the learning embodied in individuals, groups and societies that is cumulative through time and passed intergenerationally by the culture of a society" (North 1994, p. 360).

The paper by Jennifer Johnson Hanks (2007), entitled *What kind of theory for anthropological demography?* (Demographic Research, 16, pp. 1–26) is a challenging paper. The author aims to define a new own theory for anthropological demography (additional to the existing ones described in Section 3 which are mostly borrowed from other disciplines) taking a further step in trying to bridge the gap between demography with its focus on population size and structure and anthropology with its focus on the social organization shaping people's production and reproduction. The author indicates that theoretically, demography has been consuming theories rather than creating them, borrowing them from other scientific disciplines. As an alternative, the author proposes

a new theory in which, to quote the author: "… (demographic) rates should be seen as the product of the distribution of conjunctures (that is, specific, local contexts of action) and the culturally-configured processes of construal, through which actors make sense of, and engage with, those conjunctures" (Johnson Hanks 2006, p. 11). The proposed theory of demographic conjunctures is based on theories of practice of Bourdieu (1984, 1998), Sewell (1992, 2005) and others (de Certeau 1984; Giddens 1979, 1984; Sahlins 1985); and classical demography of vital events, in which birth and death rates are the products of life circumstances, rather than the traits of individuals (for example, Halbwachs 1960; Leridon 1977; Ryder 1978; Halbwachs and Sauvy 2005) (all cited by Johnson-Hanks 2006, p. 14), and starts with the premise that " demographic events are the products of social action, which occurs through the interplay of social structure and contingency" (p. 12). The theory of demographic conjunctures "focuses on social structure and its instantiation in specific interactive contexts" (p. 14). It is quite interesting that the author feels that – while defining a theory of anthropological demography – she needs to go through the quantitative micro-sociology and social demography (as it is defined in the USA, including micro-data in national representative surveys). The paper is not easy, and definitely needs a lot of through-thinking.

The paper is a reflection on the discipline of demography, i.e. can be seen as anthropology *of* demography rather than anthropology *in* demography (see the distinction between anthropology *of* medicine and *in* medicine). Such a reflection on one's own discipline rarely happens in demography, or – perhaps better – we as demographers are not good at it. Possible remarks from a 'pukka' demographer on the paper would be "how to measure this all?" and "where are the data?".

In a short reflection entitled *What can anthropological methods contribute to demography - and how*? (Demographic Research, 16, pp. 555-558), Heady (2007b) reflects that anthropological methods consist of more than only in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, i.e. is more than the 'reductionist' approach of anthropology that one can also observe within demography. In general, anthropologists use a range of qualitative methods, but most importantly conduct ethnographies: the researcher lives with the people concerned, participates in their daily activities, and thus tries to understand, or rather *Verstehen* (Weber 1968, cited by De Bruijn 1999) the insider's point of view (the *emic* view, Pike 1967, cited by Harris 1975).

The paper by Clementine Rossier (2007), entitled *Attitudes towards abortion and contraception in rural and urban Burkina Faso* (Demographic Research, 17, pp. 23–58) provides an insight into the meaning of abortions and sexuality as shared and constructed by people in Burkina Faso. These demographic events thus are informed by the cultural meaning in this specific context. The author emphasizes the importance of context specificity of surveys. Abortion and sexuality behavior are contextualized,

based on an elaborate review of existing ethnographic literature (a data source not often exploited within demography), fieldwork, and participant observation. The qualitative research results are integrated into a quantitative survey. Quantitative attitudinal scales are constructed, by phrasing questions in a locally relevant way and by defining answering categories as indicated by respondents in the qualitative research, thus contextualizing the survey. The paper is an example of combining qualitative and quantitative research. There are many more ways in which anthropological demographers can contribute to combining and triangulating qualitative and quantitative research methods and data.

The paper by Katherina Georgiadis (2007) entitled *Anthropological demography in Europe: methodological lessons from a comparative ethnographic study in Athens and London* (Demographic Research, 17, pp. 1-22) deals with methodological issues faced in anthropological demographic fieldwork on fertility and motherhood in Europe (Greece and the UK). The paper deals with 'anthropology at home' and the positionality of the researcher. Being of Greek origin and living in the UK, the author reflects on her position and identity as researcher within societies to which she herself belongs, in different ways. Methodological issues also dealt with are handling language problems, conducting fieldwork in an urban setting, and the possibilities of comparative qualitative research. A critical reflection on methodological issues like this seems to be typical for the discipline of anthropology.

The author describes individual choices and aspirations of women living in Greece and the UK, and the meaning given to motherhood and womanhood. The first concepts are individualistic concepts; less attention is given to the (shared) context in which these women live. Is demographic behavior in Europe indeed more individualistic and is context indeed not (more) important? Or does the focus on the individual indicate more about our own (culturally determined) frameworks and ideologies in demographic research? Or is it simply not so 'easy' to identify the (cultural) context in one's own society? It is time that anthropological demographic researchers from non-western societies conduct research in western societies and provide their observations about 'us' and our (cultural) context.

The last three papers deal with case studies on anthropological demography in Europe. Caroline Bledsoe, Rene Houle and Papa Sow (2007) focus in their paper entitled *High fertility Gambians in low fertility Spain: The dynamics of child accumulation across transnational space* (Demographic Research, 16, pp. 375–412) on the apparent high fertility of Gambian women in Spain. The authors, reflecting on why fertility among these migrants is high, refer to linkages with their home country, the circulation of women (older women being replaced by younger women in their reproductive ages), and above all the role of Spanish and European policies. In combining ethnography and demography, they study demographic behavior of a group

of African migrants in Europe, describing the contexts of behavior, as it exists in Africa and Europe.

Annette Fleischer (2007) in her paper entitled *Family, obligations, and migration: The role of kinship in Cameroon* (Demographic Research, 16, pp. 413–440) focuses on the motivations of Cameroonian migrants to Germany. The paper highlights the duties and responsibilities of everyone involved, and the migrant in particular; the key characteristics of persons 'selected' as being possible 'good' migrants; the pathways followed and survival strategies; the importance of the institutions of family and kinship, and the role of family obligations and responsibilities. The paper describes systems of exchange, which brings to mind the theory of social exchange in the paper by Heady (2007a). The paper is an example of how demographic behavior in Europe is embedded in the social and cultural context of the society of origin, in this case Cameroon. It regards migration behavior to Europe as especially contextualized for the African context, but less for the European context into which the migrants move and live. In that way, this paper and the former one, reflect the 'traditional' anthropological demographic focus on 'the other' and the 'exotic', here a group within Europe. The case studies included provide a nice 'smell' of issues involved in African–European migration.

Finally, Monica Mynarska and Laura Bernardi (2007) study cohabitation and marriage behavior in Poland, among Polish women, in their paper entitled *Meanings and attitudes attached to cohabitation in Poland: Qualitative analyses of the slow diffusion of cohabitation among the young generation* (Demographic Research, 16, pp. 519–554). The authors combine several social psychological theories such as the diffusion theory (Rogers 1995 cited by Mynarska and Bernardi 2007) and value expectancy theories (Ajzen and Fishbein 1977; Ajzen and Fishbein 1988; cited by Mynarska and Bernardi 2007). In presenting the results, the authors describe many attitudes and meanings attached to cohabitation and relationships, within the changing political and economic transformation in Poland, and refer to the role of religion and social context. In this, the authors incorporate dimensions of culture to the complexity of individual motivations that are beyond local patterns of behavior. However, these cultural/religious meanings, reported in the results, are not reflected upon with a theoretical framework, which would have increased the contribution to the anthropological demography of Europe even more. An anthropological theory that would fit is the cognitive anthropology of D'Andrade (1984, 1992, 1995), who tries to integrate social psychology and cultural anthropology and link cultural meaning systems to the motivation of behavior through cultural schemas which work at the individual level but are largely shared by people.

The authors, like many other authors of papers in this special collection, elaborately describe the data collection methods, the selection of respondents, and the

analysis method of grounded theory. Thus, methodological issues are well accounted for, a legacy of demography with its strong focus on accountability for methods.

The paper shows where anthropological demography in Europe can add more, where it already plays a role in the areas of migration and historical demography. The demographic consequences of the culture of reproduction, union, ageing, and health of these populations for example are virtually unexplored by anthropological demographers. However, it is easy to envisage the interest of using anthropological demography approaches to investigate the symbolic values and the gender implications of new reproductive technologies or to define a political economy of ageing.

Summarizing the different papers, we can conclude that the identity of a 'pukka' anthropological demography has several faces. It includes the application of anthropological theories to understand and interpret demographic behavior and processes in fertility, migration, health and mortality, and nuptiality. Anthropological demography puts a strong focus on theories of culture and cultural meaning given to demographic events and uses them to guide data collection. The present papers on anthropological demography in Europe add the perspective of the social exchange theory, applied to understand the demographic behavior of marriage and fertility (Heady). Also, a further step is taken in trying to bridge, theoretically, the gap between demography with its focus on population size and structure and anthropology with its focus on the social organization shaping people's production and reproduction (Johnson-Hanks). The research practice of anthropological demography consists of the application of a range of qualitative methods, most importantly long term ethnography, participant observation, and narrative interviews; i.e. not a reductionist approach to the application of qualitative methods. The present papers illustrate the application of this mix of qualitative methods (e.g. Heady; Georgiadis) in the European context. Likewise, anthropological demography contributes by constant attention to how quantitative and qualitative research can be combined and triangulated (e.g. Rossier) and with critical reflection on positionality of the researcher and the researched (Coast, Hampshire and Randall; Georgiadis). Consequently, even when using survey or administrative data, anthropological demography pays attention to the contextualization of quantitative analyses (e.g. Fleischer; Bledsoe, Houle and Sow; Mynarska and Bernardi). Finally, the identity of the sub-discipline is in its understanding, or rather *Verstehen*, of demographic behavior in the social and cultural context in which people live. Thus, in applying anthropological demographic research in Europe, demographic events are contextualized. Demographic behavior thus can be better understood in the European context in which it takes place. According to Kertzer, "much anthropological work on such topics as fertility and migration takes place without reference to the demographic literature" (Kertzer 2006, p. 543). Yet, we are more optimistic in this respect: the very recent opening up of anthropology to more advanced demographic techniques such as

event history analyses and to comparative work promises to make the collaboration in multidisciplinary teams smoother and the development of anthropological demography faster than it has been so far. Anthropological demography is gaining ground as a specialty within anthropology as well as within demography. The contributions of this special collection mark an important chapter of the interdisciplinary dialogue. The demographic community has not unanimously accepted it within its boundaries, given the identification of the core of demography with its formal methods of analyses. However, if demography is thought of as the science that analyzes causes and consequences of population processes and changes, as "comprehensive demography" (Bozon 2006), then anthropological demography will continue to provide unique insights into the role of culture and the complexity of global and local institutional forces within such processes.

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