

History of ANU Demography

Professor Peter McDonald

This is a revised version of the talk given by Professor McDonald at the launch of the School of Demography on Wednesday 18 November 2015.

Demography commenced at ANU when the founders of the university determined that demography was one of four disciplines that the university should have. This was in the era of 'populate or perish' soon after the Second World War. Mick Borrie was appointed as a demographer, the first academic appointment to the Research School of Social Sciences. In 1947, he produced a population projection that showed that Australia's population, 8 million in 1947, would be 8 million in the year 2000. This was unacceptable to the post-war reconstructionists at the time and so the Australian migration program was created and has continued to this day. Borrie was always close to Australia's migration planners and the association between ANU Demography and migration policy has remained strong through time as described in the inaugural annual address on immigration and citizenship given by former ANU Vice Chancellor, Ian Chubb, in 2010.

Borrie worked with government departments, with other disciplines in the ANU, with other universities, and on a global scale. Australian population policy was a major concern of the then Department of Demography. Borrie was Vice President of IUSSP, President of the United Nations Population Commission and Head of the National Population Inquiry that reported in 1975. He was a genitor of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the discipline of sociology in Australia.

Borrie took ANU Demography in two other important directions in the 1950s. First, he appointed Charles Price to lead research on migrant settlement in Australia. Over the years, Price assembled a team around him including Frank Jones, Reg Appleyard, Jerzy Zubrzycki, Frank Kunz and Ian Burnley who were world leaders in the sociology of migration working through the concepts of assimilation, integration and ultimately defining multiculturalism that continues today as the rationale of Australia's migration programme.

Second, Borrie appointed Norma McArthur to work on the demography of the Pacific Islands, the forerunner of ANU Demography's important work on the demography of developing countries that was to be greatly expanded under Borrie's successor, Jack Caldwell. Borrie took students from India, Pakistan, South Korea, Ghana and Hong Kong and employed the later famous Indonesian demographer, Masri Singarimbun. He also recruited the equally later famous Dirk van de Kaa working on a PhD on the demography of West Irian. Under Borrie's supervision, both Jack Caldwell and Gavin Jones did PhDs on Malaysia. Borrie also had the wisdom to recruit the great Lado Ruzicka, a refugee at the time which

greatly enhanced ANU Demography's technical capacity and its research on mortality. Lado introduced me as a young student to the wonders of tempo effects in demography.

Jack Caldwell is the doyen of demography – ranked one in the world among the demographers of all time by his peers in a survey conducted in 2009. Demographic issues in developing countries, with an emphasis on theory, were his main interests. His many publications are among the most highly cited in the field. With Pat Caldwell, he pioneered anthropological demography particularly through his work in Africa and India. He established ANU Demography as a home of demographic theory. Jack fostered these interests in the Department of Demography with PhD students coming from developing countries all over the world and through the creation of the Masters of Arts in Demography, which, in various forms has continued until today and has trained around 500 people mainly from developing countries. This training has had an enormous impact on world demography.

Jack also took the lead in a highly innovative program that saw a succession of new graduates of ANU Demography sent to universities in Indonesia to work as 'interns'. As the first of these interns, I can say that this had an enormous impact on my career. Others to participate later became household names in the field: Terry Hull, Valerie Hull, Graeme Hugo, Alan Lopez, Gigi Santow, Michael Bracher, Kim Streatfield, Paul Meyer, Ross Steele and Carole Hettler. Later, in the 1980s, Jack oversaw the creation of the International Population Dynamics Program which, under Terry Hull's leadership, saw the appointment of many highly skilled demographers working on and in developing countries especially in Asia.

At the beginning of his appointment, Caldwell also led the 1971 Melbourne Fertility Survey with Christabel Young and Helen Ware. This survey was a landmark in Australian social survey research and captured social change in Australia at a vital time – as second wave feminism took hold and women gained greater control over their own fertility.

Gavin Jones returned to the ANU Department of Demography in 1975 and remained at ANU for the next 30 years. Gavin is the doyen of Southeast Asian demography. He is the most cited scholar on the demography of Southeast Asia and in the 1980s ran the ASEAN Population Program which fostered comparative demographic research across the countries of Southeast Asia. He established demography as a crucial component of economic development and urban planning in Southeast Asia, and in other parts of the world. He had an enormous impact on the development of Indonesian demography including the careers of both Indonesians and Australians working on Indonesian population issues, especially me. From the late 1960s until today, the demography of Indonesia has remained a highly important area of research for ANU Demography. Witness the \$3.2 million in research grants with which Iwu Utomo has been associated in the past 10 years.

Gavin headed ANU Demography from 1988 to 1996. I have been using the term, ANU Demography, because it was in Gavin's period as head that the era of name changes and

restructures descended upon demography at ANU. The Department of Demography successively became the Demography Program, a part of the Division of Demography and Sociology, the Demography and Sociology Program, the Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute (ADSRI) and now the School of Demography – six names in 25 years. I worked under all of these names except the one being launched today. The term, ANU Demography is also necessary because, for a long period of time, another flank of ANU Demography with David Lucas, Heather Booth, Alan Gray, Christine McMurray, Lorraine Corner, Chris Wilson, Habte Tesfagiorgiss, Paul Meyer, Marian May and others operated in the National Centre for Development Studies and this is where the training of Masters students took place along with the training of many PhD students. In 1988, Jack Caldwell moved to the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH) and a third largeish group of demographers operated there. A fourth group (involving the research of Len Smith, Alan Gray and John Taylor) worked on indigenous demography in CAEPR while Don Rowland taught undergraduate demography with great distinction in the Department of Sociology.

I became head of the Demography Program, as it was then known, in 1996. In my period as head, in relation to demography, the focus was

- upon the demography of Australia especially international migration and its economic and social effects. The contributions of Siew-Ean Khoo, Rebecca Kippen and Jeromey Temple need to be mentioned in this regard,
- upon the demography of China led by one of the world's great scholars of Chinese demography, Zhao Zhongwei, and the demography of Indonesia as already mentioned,
- the demography of Iran with Jalal Abbasi and Meimanat Hosseini and with a prize winning book as a product,
- social demography and the family in Australia with the successful field survey, *Negotiating the Lifecourse*, which in many ways was a prototype for the HILDA survey. Here the names of Edith Gray, Ann Evans, Deborah Mitchell and Janeen Baxter are important,
- Australian mortality led by Heather Booth,
- reproductive health issues and maternal mortality with Terry Hull and Iwu Utomo,
- population ageing through the ARC Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research, and
- the issue of low fertility and its consequences.

ADSRI was created in 2007 as a result of a review of the Research School of Social Sciences in 2005 and this took ANU Demography into a multi-disciplinary mode with Bryan Rodgers and Bruce Smyth as social psychologists focussing mainly on family issues, Robert Ackland on on-line social networks and Deborah Mitchell on social welfare policy. The

multidisciplinary nature of ADSRI enabled the creation of the Master of Social Research degree which has proven to be a great success. Well, that's all history now.

Over the years, ANU demographers have been the President of the United Nations Population Commission, two Presidents of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population and three Vice Presidents (unmatched by any university in the world), two winners of the UN Population Award (totally unmatched by any other university), two winners of the Irene B. Taeuber Award being two of only four non-Americans to have won this award, two of the three Presidents to date of the Asian Population Association, President of CICRED (the international association of population associations), several Presidents of the Australian Population Association and many Australian national honours – OBEs and Orders of Australia.

In 2009, five ANU demographers who were all together at ANU in the early 1970s, were ranked by their peers in the top 40 demographers of all time for the quality of their work. Note the list of 40 included such people as Thomas Malthus and Karl Marx – but Jack was ranked ahead of them!

In sum, throughout its proud history, ANU Demography has always had its finger on the pulse of the important policy issues of the day both in Australia and in other countries but, in so doing, gained a reputation for its preeminent work on theory. Long may it continue.