



Introduction

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In 1993 *Demography* published an issue that took account of the state of the field of demography, 30 years since the journal began as the field's flagship journal. In that issue, Susan Watkins's chapter, "If all we knew about women was what we read in *Demography*, what would we know?" sketched how authors wrote about women (and men) over the past 30 years. She found a number of things that—surprisingly and disappointingly—remain true today, now some 25 years later. Women were nearly always the target or subjects of research on fertility ("thick on the ground," as she put it (Watkins 551)) but most research used a narrow set of variables and concepts to capture the lives of women. Related to the lack of variables, "a rather meager range of women's activities is thought to be relevant for their behavior" (559). Part of that, she argued, is that available data do not permit much more (561). What measures are missing? She pointed to the importance of context and differences between one community or society and another in how gender is constructed, and how that context often is missing in demographic research. While power is central to most feminist research-

ers' understanding of gender (565), Watkins found that "issues of power are ignored almost completely" (561) in demographic work.

In addition, Watkins pointed out that "echoes of what Geertz terms 'fierce and multisided debates' are muted in our journal" (565). She wondered if "perhaps on the whole, the *Demography* community found the feminist critiques of research topics 'too political' for a scientific discipline, and viewed qualitative methods as inappropriate or problematic" (565).

Now, some 25 years later, where is demography on gender? Certainly, most demographers would quickly agree that gender is an important piece of any demographic analysis. The existence of this very volume—part of the *International Handbooks of Population* series—supports that widely held view. But we also might be surprised—and disappointed—that while the field has made some changes and moved the needle on understanding the role of gender in demographic outcomes, the needle has not moved very far, especially when we compare demographic work with work on gender in neighboring fields.

This volume addresses some of the missing pieces on gender in demography and brings together new work on the role of gender in demographic change. We present exemplars of research that explore how gender influences demographic processes of fertility, mortality, and migration; chapters that survey specific topics related to gender; and chapters that examine more

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theoretical and methodological aspects of gender research. In this introduction, we outline the context for the articles in this volume.¹

1.1 Efforts to Make Gender Part of Demographic Analyses

Watkins' article in 1993 came during a heyday of efforts to bring gender into the field of demography. This work took many forms and directions. Behind much of it were scholars' efforts to define and conceptualize gender (see Riley and DeGraff, this volume). Karen Mason's groundbreaking 1984 publication, *The Status of Women: A Review of its Relationships to Fertility and Mortality*, widely distributed through the Rockefeller Foundation, argued for recognizing that gender operated especially strongly at the societal level; other scholars (Riley 2003) pointed to gender as an organizing principle in all societies, thus deeply entwined with other social institutions such as the economy, the state, education or the labor force. Key to defining gender was power (Greenhalgh 1995; Greenhalgh and Li 1995; Riley 1997). Scholars also worked to find ways to measure it (Mason 1984; Mason and Smith 2001; Ghuman et al. 2006; Jejeeboy 1995) and many sought to bring theoretical insights, often derived from outside the field, into demography (Greenhalgh 1996; Handwerker 1990; Kertzner and Fricke 1997). These struggles were public—in journals and other publications, at conferences, and even in more practical, applied ways, such as in the U.S. Census (Presser 1998; Presser and Sen 2000; Federici et al. 1993).

There was also resistance in the field during this time; in submissions to population journals, some authors were discouraged from using the term “feminist” and even, for a while, “gender.” But perhaps because there was a critical mass of scholars working at these endeavors, or because there came a wider acceptance of a need for more attention to gender in demography, or for some

other reason, scholars did find some success in organizing conference panels and in publications. Interest in gender scholarship was particularly evident at population conferences held by two major organizers in the field, the Population Association of America (PAA) and the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP). Throughout the 1980s and through the 1990s, these organizations sponsored panels where scholars working on or interested in the intersection of gender and demography came together to discuss their progress and challenges. Several of the IUSSP conferences resulted in collected volumes exploring some of this work. Different volumes addressed different aspects of the relevant issues, from questions of measurement (Federici et al. 1993) to education (Jejeeboy 1995) to questions about power (Presser and Sen 2000). Population journals also published articles that addressed questions of gender, power, and population changes (e.g. Balk 1994, 1997; Caldwell 1986; Desai and Jain 1994; Dyson and Moore 1983; England et al. 1996; Greene and Biddlecom 2000; Morgan and Niraula 1995; Presser 1997; Riley 1997, 1998, Sathar et al. 1988).

But, significantly, in ways that continue to haunt the field, many of the most influential articles and monographs that dealt with the complexities and especially the theoretical issues around gender and population outcomes were published not in population journals but in journals in neighboring fields (Bier 2010; Budig and England 2001; Desai 2000; Greenhalgh and Li 1995; Krause 2001; Mason 1986, 1987; Riley 1999). Importantly, scholars working in neighboring fields—some of whom had a foot in demography and some who did not—were publishing groundbreaking research on these issues, often in publications in which theory plays an important role (Bledsoe 2002; Bledsoe et al. 2000; Brettell 2002; Christopher et al. 2002; Folbre 1983, 1986; Ginsburg and Rapp 1991; Greenhalgh 1995, 1996; Inhorn 1995; Jolly and Ram 2001; Roberts 1998; Sargent 1989; Scheper-Hughes 1993; Solinger 2001).

During this same time period, the UN conferences in Cairo in 1994 (International Conference

¹We note that in this introduction, much of our focus is American demographic work, and we are nearly exclusively addressing English-language research.

on Population and Development) and in Beijing in 1995 (UN Fourth World Conference on Women) were in many ways watershed moments. At these conferences, gender was front and center, and, influenced by the conferences, programs sought to address gender, gender inequities, and women's lives in new ways. In these settings, researchers and practitioners came together to develop strategies that focused on gender equity and expanding the choices women had in their reproductive lives. These were big steps for population programs and for demography as well. But many of the goals set at that time have not been met, and some (Murphy 2017) argue that the population agenda continued to follow a pathway that emphasized individual efforts ("empowerment") and not structural change; thus, here again and still, gender was dealt with at the individual level more than at the levels of society or globally (Cornwall et al. 2008; Wilson 2008; Dodgson 2000; Everett and Charlton 2013).

After these heyday years, attention to gender changed and even declined in the field of demography, at least in the organized and visible sense that was present in previous years. For example, there were fewer panels on gender at PAA in subsequent years.² In the IUSSP, where most work is done through Scientific Panels, there was a Panel on gender from 1996 to 1999 and then from 2006 to 2009, but there has not been one since.³

The falloff of attention to gender can be read both positively and negatively. Demographers now generally agree that gender is important to any analysis of demographic change, and most analyses include some measure of gender. There

is now a biennial award in PAA, the Harriet Presser award, given to honor a scholar for contributions to the study of gender and demography. But the lack of explicit attention to the thorny issues of gender within demographic change suggests that some may think we have finished with this issue, that we have figured it out. We suggest that is far from true. As the chapters in this volume point out, gender's relationship to demographic dynamics remains not only significant but incompletely understood. When we look at the articles published in demography journals that address gender, most of them still use relatively narrowly defined variables to attempt to capture gender—educational attainment, or labor force status. Gender is thus used not as a lens but as an accepted variable. While some go further, and bring in more nuanced variables (Short and McNeil 2017), we often find the same lacunae that Susan Watkins saw 25 years ago: a meager selection of variables, and often a lack of recognition about the broad areas of social life that are intertwined in demographic outcomes.

It is not obvious why there seems to be less interest in gender, or, more accurately, in exploring the complexities of gender, among demographers than there was 20 years ago. It may be that at a certain moment, there was a critical mass of scholars whose research and interests focused on these processes. It may be that funding opportunities have shifted.⁴ Key to our own puzzlement over these changes is that the subjects of gender and reproduction or gender and health continue to be at the cutting edge of work in neighboring fields (Bridges 2011; Briggs 2017; Browner and Sargent 2011; Brunson 2016; Ginsberg and Rapp 1995; Inhorn 2015; Kanaaneh 2002; Murphy 2012, 2017; Rapp 2001; Ross and Solinger 2017). What appears to be true now was hinted at in the past: much of the work in these areas is published outside of journals or places specifically focused on demography. That demography has not drawn regularly from neighboring fields on these or other issues (Fricke 1997; Furedi

²While there have been sessions that are meant to explicitly address gender, after 2003, gender as a topic was subsumed under a new heading: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender (and sometimes, interestingly, Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Religion (2008)).

³These panels are established by the IUSSP council, often after being proposed by members. They organize programs and work in the subject area of the panel. They are meant "to address an emerging or critical population issue or to develop and improve training and research in the population field. They consist of a small international group of high level experts" (IUSSP).

⁴We note that other lenses and perspectives are also less present among demographers, most notably anthropological perspectives.

1997; Greenhalgh 1996; Riley and McCarthy 2003) suggests that demography is missing out on being part of conversations that are not only cutting edge but also address topics central to the study of population. Demography's reluctance to bring in theory or politics (in its pretense of being apolitical and its attempts to be above the fray) gets in the way of potential interactions and scholarly exchanges, which are often theoretical and which recognize the politics involved in processes of gender.⁵

Across many social science disciplines, there has been a lot of work on gender and its connection to demographic issues, and in this volume, we have tapped that work. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the above, while many of the authors here are demographers, many would not consider themselves first as demographers but rather only secondarily so, and some, perhaps, not even that. But each of the chapters brings an important perspective on gender and demography, a perspective that contributes to these important topics.

1.2 Introduction of chapters

The first section of the volume, *Methodology and Measurement*, directly addresses some of the issues that Watkins raised in 1993 and have also been the subject of many conference panels and articles. The chapters by both Riley and DeGraff (Chap. 2) and Chatterjee and Riley (Chap. 3) examine the conundrums of those methodologies—predominantly surveys—most commonly used in demography and those used by others who are studying demographic outcomes using other methodologies. Riley and DeGraff provide an overview of efforts to capture gender in its complexities and discuss some of the reasons for the continuing challenges to do so. Working through exemplars, they discuss the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative survey data in under-

standing gendered demographic processes, made especially clear through a comparison with qualitative research data. Chatterjee and Riley focus on the India Demographic and Health Survey to illustrate how in their focus on collecting individual level data, such surveys often miss the broader contexts of individual measures, decisions, and actions, and in the process, render those broader issues invisible in demographic work. Leslie King's chapter (Chap. 4) focuses on societies with "too-low" fertility and discusses how demographers engage with issues of these societies. While some assess whether state policies to raise fertility rates are effective, a smaller number push further to examine the discourses behind and surrounding how low fertility is seen as undesirable and the ways that it is often linked to ideas about the composition of the nation and to exclusionary policies. By pointing out how those discourses are inherently gendered, as "women tend to be constructed as the mothers of the national family, whose primary task is reproducing the nation" (p. 26), King reminds us of the ways that gender's effects lie well beyond individual behavior, choices, and actions.

The second section focuses on fertility and infertility. The section begins with Elizabeth Krause's reflections on doing work on fertility in Italy over the last several decades; in ways that are similar to and different from King, in the first section, she interrogates the politics of "too-low" fertility in the context of Italy's history of population control. Three of the chapters in this section—those by Soraya Tremayne (Chap. 6), Kristin Wilson (Chap. 7) and Holly Donahue Singh (Chap. 8)—use the lens of infertility to effectively challenge some of demography's usual ways in its handling of fertility. They trace the ways reproduction shapes and is shaped by forces at all levels of society, from the individual through to questions about national identity and the role of reproduction in creating and maintaining a nation. Singh places current surrogacy practices in India within the history of that country's long involvement with fertility programs, including controversial programs that use sterilization as central to controlling fertility, and argues that a reproductive lens—in her chapter (Chap. 8) it is

⁵We refer less to government politics here, although those may come into play as well, and more of a focus on the unequal distribution of power within and between populations, and the ways those power differentials influence all aspects of social and economic life.

the processes of gestational surrogacy in India—allows us to see how a variety of forces influence fertility management. In her examination of infertility in the US, Wilson is explicit that seeing infertility, fertility, voluntary and involuntary childlessness from the perspective of women themselves offers a new and more grounded view of these concepts and the meaning of them to the individuals involved. In her examination of Iranians' use and interpretation of ARTs, Tremayne also focuses on local meanings of reproduction and infertility. She investigates how Iranians deal with apparent contradictions in their attempts to “preserv[e]...the strict cultural and religious principles of procreation, and, at the same time, break...the very rules which uphold them, have affected family, lineage, and kinship in Iran” (p. 2). Looking at infertility, surrogacy, and ARTs in these three very different settings—Iran, the United States, and India—underscores the impossibility of developing universal measures of gender or much else; the definition of infertility is “necessarily imperfect” as Wilson argues. Fertility and infertility are also enmeshed in community-anchored social issues, including gender, family, kinship, and motherhood; “cultural responses to ARTs are as varied as the cultures themselves” (Tremayne).

Singh argues that surrogacy and other such reproductive practices pose challenges to demography, suggesting a need to rethink a variety of issues, from assessing what kinds of reproductive services are needed where and by whom, to how ideologies about infertility, motherhood, and kinship shape and are shaped by national agendas. The first four chapters in this section provide some of the background for Riley's chapter (Chap. 9) on stratified reproduction, a term that describes the ways that social and even biological reproduction—processes that include conception, pregnancy and birth but also the raising of children—is unevenly distributed across populations. In the way that reproduction follows lines of social inequality, it is inherently political. These chapters on fertility and infertility underscore how new lenses, often developed outside the field of demography, allow insight into some core concepts in demography, including the value of chil-

dren, the role of the state in demographic change, and even how we count births and fertility.

The three chapters in the next section, *Health, Morbidity, and Mortality*, address the topics of maternal health, HIV, and infant mortality in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Brunson (Chap. 10) identifies some of the challenges in achieving further declines in maternal mortality in low-income countries, particularly Nepal. She concludes by arguing that as demography's hyperfocus on fertility rates declines in conjunction with declining population growth rates around the globe, demographers are ideally positioned to contribute more significantly to studies of women beyond the topic of how many offspring they produce—a more holistic consideration of women's experiences of reproduction (or lack thereof) and their relation to demographic characteristics. Brunson invites demography to widen the scope of demographic inquiry in this way.

Both Smith and Johnson-Hanks point to gendered sexual norms as important social structures tied to population dynamics. Johnson-Hanks (Chap. 11) unpacks how “women's conformity to gendered norms concerning premarital sex affects the survival of their children in sub-Saharan Africa.” Her research demonstrates a complicated relationship between stigma and infant survival: she demonstrates that the “mortality disadvantage suffered by illegitimate children is shared by children born after bridal pregnancy in societies that are less tolerant of non-marital sex” and discusses what social arrangements might lead to such a result. Smith (Chap. 12) argues that the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa “has heightened the stakes of normative gendered practice and sexual intimacy.” Using ethnographic and survey research in Nigeria, Smith examines how unmarried women and married men navigate the increased social scrutiny of sexual behavior “through moral lenses shaped by the epidemic.” Smith's chapter is exemplary in its tacking back and forth between the lived experience of unwed women and married men, avoiding the common pitfall of equating “gender” with “women.” He asserts, “A thorough understanding of the dynamics of gender and HIV requires attention to men and masculinity as much as to women and femi-

ninity.” Methodologically these two chapters are exemplars of the kind of innovative mixed-method research we call for in this Introduction that incorporates statistical and qualitative analysis.

In the fourth section, *Migration and Displacement*, all three chapters deal with international migration—two through marriage, and one through refugee resettlement. The first two chapters examine gendered inequities that drive marriage migration, and the third investigates the gendered effects of forced migration on refugee married couples. Bélanger and Flynn (Chap. 13) introduce the topic of marriage migration, pointing out that the phenomenon is hardly new; throughout many societies, patrilocal marriage practices dictate that brides migrate to both a new family and a new location at the time of marriage. They outline the ways in which a gendered approach had been incorporated into migration studies since the 1990s, unpacking a multitude of nuances to the overly broad term “marriage migration.” The authors conclude, “Gender is an inextricable and constitutive feature of marriage migration, and requires evaluation at the levels of individual women and men’s experiences, policies and practices in sending and receiving societies, and global and transnational pressures and institutions.”

Qureshi and Rogaly also address marriage migration in their chapter (Chap. 14) on Punjabi marriage in Britain, aptly titled, “Womanhood Implies Travel.” They tackle the assumptions in the literature on migration, which often discount key forms of women’s mobility because the distance of women’s migration is sometimes shorter than men’s. By focusing on how women—particularly in societies with patrilocal, exogamous marriage systems—are more migratory than men due to their leaving their natal homes at the time of marriage, they argue against such gendered assumptions about the scales of mobility that matter.

Esara Carroll (Chap. 15) focuses not on marriage migration, but rather on the effects of refugee resettlement on the gendered relations of language acquisition, education, and employment for married couples of Burma origin residing in New York. She argues that analyses of US

refugee integration and discussions of how to measure outcomes often minimize the effects of gender and its correlate, carework. Such studies “treat gender as a self-explanatory demographic trait, with effects which do not need to be contextualized,” and their assumed naturalness thereby remains unquestioned. Her ethnographic chapter portrays the salient contextual factors that may contribute to variation in experiences of refugee integration. These three chapters undoubtedly demonstrate that migration is a process inherently structured by gender relations.

The chapters in the next section focus on families and marriage; all five chapters address the changes in these institutions in different contemporary societies. Taken together, they argue that how we define families—who is included and who is not—has a great impact on what we conclude about families, but also about gender, and the social world in general. Three of the chapters focus on marriage and partnerships: Whitehouse examines the change in polygyny in West Africa, Dales looks at marriage in Japan, and Compton and Baumle focus on same sex partnerships in the United States. In each case, the circumstances around these marriages and partnerships have shifted in key ways that affect both how individuals enter and leave them but also how they are seen by others. From all these chapters on families, we also see how internal family dynamics, whether that is women’s happiness in China (Zumbyte et al., Chap. 16) or elderly support in Indonesia (Schröder-Butterfill et al., Chap. 17), are difficult to measure and often subject to assumptions that prove inaccurate depending on the methodological approach used.

Writing on gay and lesbian partnerships and families in the United States, Compton and Baumle’s chapter (Chap. 18) brings into demography a neglected area of research in demography (but see Baumle 2013): not only work on families formed around such partnerships but the larger issues of sexuality. They challenge demographers to move away from assumptions of heteronormativity. Dales’ chapter (Chap. 19) on marriage in Japan addresses the concerns over the non-marriage of some in a country where marriage and family structure much of social life and

where “too-low” fertility has become a concern. As Compton and Baumle argue about the United States, Dales focuses on the politics of recognizing different (sometimes newer) kinds of families. She argues, “it is imperative to address the diversity of the unmarried demographic. In light of a growing percentage of individuals who do not marry, the implications of other relationships become salient, for individuals and for the state... [and] draws attention to the ways in which the assumption of a universal life course centered on marriage produces (and reproduces) political inequalities that privilege particular versions of gender and sexuality” (p. 13).

Writing about elderly care in Indonesia, Schroder-Butterfill et al. (Chap. 17) also question how family and family networks are defined. Along the lines of the chapters in the first section of the volume, they also explicitly address how methodological approach influences substantive conclusions, arguing that “conventional statistical units, because they neglect gendered constraints, give a very partial account of age structural impacts.” They point out how a more locally based methodology is more effective and representative of what is actually happening on the ground and can better allow for local versions of key networks of support: “local surveys prepared and analyzed on the basis of ethnography open up an alternative approach in which the importance of gender roles and preferences can be placed in the context of evolving network and other sub-population relationships. More particularly, on this basis we can then explore whether older people’s gendered preferences for care are (or are not) realized, and how and why these outcomes occur”. Zumbyte et al.’s chapter (Chap. 16) on women’s housework in China presents an additional argument about how difficult it is to devise universal measures to understand issues of gender, even within one country. Women’s happiness, they find, seems to have a relationship to how much housework they do. But the relationship between these two—happiness and amount of housework—differs substantially between rural and urban areas. From these five chapters that focus on families, we can see that the relationship between gender, and even a

social institution (family) often recognized as closely tied to issues of gender, is difficult to summarize in any parsimonious way. Rather, like gender, the social construction of families makes it imperative that careful work be done in any society, with attention to local meanings and to the effects of methodology and theory, to allow us any degree of understanding about these complex issues.

The final section of the volume allows us a glimpse of the policy implications of attention to gender in demography and how we might apply research findings to ongoing events and issues. Charbit’s chapter (Chap. 21) makes clear how gender has an effect on our understanding of the environment and climate change in several ways. First, because of their position in the community and in the family, women have a different relationship to climate change and have to deal with it differently than do men. In addition, and relatedly, when women are part of the administration of programs, the programs are more likely to address the realities of women’s lives. Wies and Haldane (Chap. 22) expand the boundaries of demography in another way, arguing that gender-based violence is structurally supported; reducing such violence requires attending to the structures surrounding such violence. And finally, focusing on humanitarian crises and the experiences of women, Palmquist and Gribble (Chap. 23) make an argument for how women’s reproductive roles—here, pregnancy, birth and breast-feeding—and a lack of attention to these roles during crises make women particularly vulnerable to violence. In these three chapters, the authors are not only taking demographic issues out of the academy and examining what happens on the ground, but even the topics they focus on are relatively new or rare in demography, and thus expand demographic work on gender in important ways.

1.3 Looking Ahead

The course of soliciting chapters for this volume reflects what we believe are characteristics of the field. Readers will notice the absence of work on

men (but see Smith, Chap. 12 this volume), a topic about which we were unable to obtain chapters although we did solicit several. The heavy contribution from anthropologists and chapters that rely on qualitative data is also an obvious feature of this volume. We have fewer chapters that use quantitative data either primarily or even heavily. That imbalance—surprising in a volume in demography—to some extent reflects the editors' own perspectives: Brunson is an anthropologist, and Riley has done ethnographic and qualitative work. But it also mirrors the state of the field of demography, where we see gender as still missing the attention it deserves and being tended to mostly at the peripheries of the field, or in the interdisciplinary interstices.

However, by no means is gender a topic completely missing in demography. There are many demographers who do continue to work at the challenges of incorporating gender—in all of its complexities and connections—into demographic analyses. As we discussed above, those efforts began as early feminist scholars sought ways to conceptualize and measure gender and to model its effects. And they continue today even as the shape and place of such work and conversations may have shifted (e.g. Desai and Temsah 2014; Desai and Andrist 2010; Goldscheider et al. 2015; Brinton and Lee 2016; Johnson-Hanks 2006; Kishor 2014; Nobles and Mckelvey 2015). And we laud that work, those who continue to attempt to bring gender—as a theoretical, complex topic—into demographic analysis.

But at the same time, we note that in general, gender comes into demography more often in some ways and not others. It is now regularly included as a variable; most analyses include some measure that distinguishes between the experiences and lives of women and men. It also comes in in more complex ways, as part of analyses that are focused primarily on other institutions or events, such as research focused on marriage, families, mortality, or migration, for example. But what is still largely missing in demography is research that explicitly engages with and contributes to larger theoretical perspectives on discussions and understandings of gender, especially when we compare such work

in demography with that taking place in neighboring fields. There is now less explicit attention to the broader issues of gender and population outcomes within demography than outside the field, particularly in neighboring fields.

Here again, we are not completely sure about the reason for this difference in focus between demographers and scholars who are primarily rooted in other fields. Bridging disciplines is difficult for many areas of scholarship. But there are particular elements about the study of gender that make it hard for demography to engage fully with it. Here we note three: methodological and epistemological differences; the importance of theory to much gender scholarship; and the way that most gender scholars recognize and accept the political nature of their work.

Demographers and other social scientists often have very different epistemological and methodological orientations. “At the center of data collection for [demography] is the social and demographic survey, aimed at reducing social life and demographic behavior to a series of discrete, measurable variables whose relationships can be modeled mathematically” (Kertzer and Fricke 1997: 2). John Caldwell argued that demographers “believe in numbers in an almost mystic way” (Caldwell 1998: 158). On the other side are those social scientists whose epistemological and methodological orientations “could be taken for a study in contrasts” and who maintain “political as well as epistemological objections [to] treat[ing] people being studied as objects whose behavior is rendered into the western observer’s already existing categories” (Kertzer and Fricke 1997: 3). That raises the role of theory in gender scholarship. Because of a belief that gender is socially constructed, most gender scholars recognize that the meaning of any behavior, whether that is labor force participation, responsibility for housework, or who controls money in a family, will have a different meaning depending on the society or community in which it takes place. Thus, universal measures of gender are not something that scholars seek out or accept. It is at the level of theory that scholars connect the

findings from different settings or across different disciplines; thus, gender scholarship often has an important theoretical component to it, something that is not present in much demographic work on gender. Another continuing tension is about the political nature of gender. Most feminist researchers acknowledge the political nature of gender and study of gender, and demography's aversion to recognizing the political nature of its work (Greenhalgh 1996; Demeny 1988; Riley and McCarthy 2003) also makes it more difficult to bridge the divide. Significantly, the conversations around gender that take place outside of the field of demography often have strong theoretical and political components.

Demography has much to add to our understanding of gender. We believe that both quantitative and qualitative methodologies provide important insights; each methodology has challenges, weaknesses, and strengths, making (another) argument for the usefulness of combining multiple methodologies. In that process, demographers have much to contribute in terms of the best use of quantitative data to capture patterns and trends in social processes, information about causal relationships, and long experience in understanding the strengths and pitfalls of different statistical modeling techniques. Equally important, demography itself would be well served by attending to these differences in how gender is handled outside and within the field. We hope the chapters in this volume encourage scholars to read and work across disciplinary boundaries. Such cross-cutting work encourages new pathways and insights. Finally, demographers might heed the arguments of scholars from feminist/gender studies who have long argued that gender is inherently and necessarily political. By recognizing and embracing that notion, we believe demographic work will be both stronger and also able to make an even greater contribution to understanding the power of gender in societies, and to effect social change. When we compare demography to neighboring social science fields, we can see how the field of demography would benefit from more, wider and deeper critical perspectives, not only around the issue of

gender, but in other areas as well.⁶ In other social science fields, such critical perspectives are productive in a variety of ways, from examining methodological and epistemological perspectives used by scholars, to the political implications of research findings or even research itself, to arguments about needed new directions.

These chapters make clear that there is exciting and useful work underway on how gender is involved in demographic processes. There is much more to be done, of course. But demography is well-positioned to make important contributions to the theoretical debates about gender that are occurring in and across many disciplinary fields. These chapters go far in that process.

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⁶In addition to research on gender, work in neighboring fields has such critical perspective in relative abundance; critical perspectives have examined such key issues as the historical roots of the field, including colonial and post-colonial influences; considered how more participatory research might benefit communities; traced the role of race and ethnicity in both social processes and in the way research gets done and noticed; examined pathways and influences of research funding; and looked at how research gets entangled with larger political and economic forces. All of these topics, and many others, would provide demography with useful new perspectives of and understandings of the field and the implications of the work it does.

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