RESEARCH NOTE

SIXTEEN YEARS OF JAPA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN POPULATION ASSOCIATION

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This paper presents results of a content analysis of all articles published in the Journal of the Australian Population Association during its sixteen-year history, 1984–99. The findings show that geographic focus, principal subject area and analytical procedure did not change significantly over the period. About three-quarters of articles focused exclusively on Australia and the most common subject areas were fertility and migration. Most articles had one author but this declined over time. Females constituted only one-fifth of sole and first authors and one-quarter of all authors; these proportions decreased in recent periods. About two-fifths of first and all authors were affiliated with the Australian National University. The findings are compared with those of a similar analysis of Demography.

The Journal of the Australian Population Association (JAPA) was the first demographic journal to be published in Australia. Founded by the Australian Population Association in 1984, JAPA was the official journal of the Association until 1999 after which it was superseded by the Journal of Population Research. Throughout its period of publication, JAPA remained the foremost Australian scholarly journal devoted to population-related issues and was prominent among such journals in the Asia-Pacific region.

Research published in a prominent journal both reflects developments in the field of inquiry it represents and helps shape those developments (Zuckermann and Merton 1971; Keyfitz 1993). With three-quarters of articles focused solely on Australia, JAPA clearly reflects the development of demographic research on Australia during 1984–99, yet does not reflect accurately the scope of demographic research undertaken in Australia during those years. Important demographic research on Africa, and South and Southeast Asia undertaken by Australian and Australian-based demographers (notably at the Australian National University) is barely mentioned in the journal, nor are the advances pioneered by Australian demographers in theory and in the use of qualitative techniques (Caldwell 1994).

The ways in which a journal helps shape developments in a discipline can take

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several forms. Among them is canvassing for articles by editors and the selection and refereeing process after submission. As Keyfitz (1993) notes, editors of demographic journals do canvass, and there is competition among population journals for good articles. Selection of the best articles for publication obviously allows for greater influence when acceptance rates are low than when they are high. While it is not possible to measure the extent to which a journal shapes disciplinary development, the influence of *JAPA* on Australian demography has probably been quite high. This has been through the canvassing of articles rather than through the selection process. Certainly articles were canvassed in the early years and review articles, which were introduced in 1995, were also canvassed. The high acceptance rate after submission limited the extent to which Australian demography has been shaped by the selection process.

The *Journal* had four editors. The Foundation Editor was Lado Ruzicka who edited Volumes 1 to 2, Gigi Santow edited Volumes 3 to 9, Don Rowland edited Volumes 10 to 14 and Heather Booth edited Volumes 15 to 16. All four editors were affiliated with the Australian National University. In the sixteen-year history of the *Journal*, a total of 148 articles in 31 issues were published. This paper presents results of a content analysis of all 148 articles and compares these with a similar analysis of the official journal of the Population Association of America, *Demography*.

**Methodology**

In order to ensure a degree of standardization and comparability with other content analyses of demographic journals, an initial literature search was conducted. Only two previous analyses were found: one of the *Bibliographie internationale de la démographie historique* (International Bibliography of Historical Demography), published in the *Annales de démographie historique* and covering the years 1979–84 (Perrenoud 1986), and the other of *Demography* covering the years 1964–92 (Teachman et al. 1993). The variables and classifications used in the present analysis were developed in order to facilitate comparison with the more relevant of these, namely the content analysis of *Demography*.

The variables by which articles were classified include: year of publication, volume and issue number, number of authors, sex of each author by rank, affiliation of each author by rank, whether the paper focused on developed or developing countries, geographic focus, for Australia-focused articles whether focused on the Aboriginal population, subject area, analytical procedure, whether primary data were analysed and if so whether quantitative or qualitative, whether secondary data were analysed and if so whether quantitative or qualitative, and for quantitative primary (or if no primary, then secondary) data analysis, source of data (i.e. census, survey, etc.) and type of data (i.e. cross-sectional, longitudinal).

Rank of author was taken to be the order of appearance on the article. For authors affiliated with the Australian National University (ANU), affiliation was divided into two categories: those based in groups with demography as the central discipline

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