

This book is an important contribution to the public debate that the United States needs to have in relation to the institutionalized inequities that surround having children. Folbre gives a good deal of attention to inequalities among children in the United States and how institutional arrangements contribute to them. These arguments are very well made but, at times, I felt some disjunction between the arguments as they relate to all children and those that relate to differences among children.

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**HELGE BRUNBORG, EWA TABEAU, AND HENRIK URDAL (EDS.)**

*The Demography of Armed Conflict*

Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2006. ix + 395 p. \$79.95.

Can rapid population growth help cause civil violence, such as insurgency or revolution? How does war affect the population structure of societies? Is the science of demography a useful forensic tool in determining mortality arising from war crimes?

This edited volume addresses such questions. It brings together fifteen papers on various aspects of the relationship between demography and violent conflict. Most were originally presented at a seminar held in Oslo in 2003 and then published in 2005 in the *Journal of Peace Research* and the *European Journal of Population*. The papers, each making up a chapter in the book, address both directions of the bivariate causal relationship between demography and conflict: how changes in demographic factors might cause conflict and how conflict might cause changes in demographic factors. A number of chapters closely examine specific cases, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Mozambique, Uganda, and Rwanda.

Although the book promises much, it lacks a binding conceptual framework; it covers some relatively marginal topics in depth, while barely addressing others; its chapters vary markedly in quality and do not effectively relate to one another; and, while some chapters are fascinating and important, others are either too narrow in focus, irrelevant to the book's topic, or simply muddled. Sadly, the result is far less than the sum of its parts.

Much of the book focuses on the demographic consequences of violent conflict. Three chapters deal with macroscopic considerations: the relationship between new weapon technologies, battle deaths, and the cost of warfare; the importance of making a temporal distinction between the immediate and the lingering effects of mass

violence on adult mortality; and the generally declining trend in the global total of battle deaths since World War II.

Three other chapters deal with the problem of counting the victims of violent conflict for the purpose of war-crimes prosecution. Two of these discuss the conflict in the former republic of Yugoslavia: one estimates the deaths in the massacre in Srebrenica (at least 7,475) and the other the total deaths in Bosnia and Herzegovina (102,622, including 55,261 civilians). Partly because of this focus on a common case, these three chapters form the most coherent part of the book.

A smaller part of the book deals with potential demographic causes of conflict, and this part is by far the least substantial. One chapter analyzes the relationship between economic inequality and major civil violence, including ethnic war, revolution, and genocide. Although perhaps interesting in itself, this contribution bears little relation to the topic of the book, except under the most expansive definition of "demography." Two other chapters make the case that demographic pressures can significantly contribute to conflict. One, a study of demography, migration, and conflict on Pacific islands, suggests that when emigration is not an option for island populations, competition for employment among youth heightens communal tensions and civil unrest. Another argues that territorial loss and refugee influxes raise the likelihood that a society will experience genocide, because these phenomena induce fierce socioeconomic competition among groups. This latter chapter, although included in the weakest portion of the volume, is among the most intriguing and informative.

A fourth chapter in this section is far more skeptical about the conflict-inducing potential of demographic pressure. Henrik Urdal of the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo uses a cross-national statistical analysis to argue against the hypothesis that population pressure and resulting environmental degradation (depleted soils, deforestation, and the like) can cause civil conflict. But Urdal's analysis does little more than reproduce the long-standing and well-known finding that the simple bivariate correlation between population pressure and violence is weak. It does not investigate the more complex multivariate and interactive hypotheses put forward by several researchers (including the author of this review) that include population pressure in a constellation of factors that can raise the probability of civil violence.

The editors of the volume acknowledge that the book's examination of the demographic causes of conflict is relatively weak. "We would have liked to include more articles [about] demographic causes but the study of this is still in its infancy." Here the editors are decidedly wrong: the study of this subject is not remotely in its infancy. Over the last several decades, scholars have produced a large body of important and fruitful research on how population stress can cause violence, including the Lateral Pressure theory of Nazli Choucri and Robert North in the 1970s, the deeply insightful work of Jack Goldstone in the 1980s and 1990s on the demographic precursors of revolution, a detailed statistical analysis by Population Action International in 2003 that reaches a conclusion diametrically opposite to that of Urdal, and Colin Kahl's 2006 book on how demographic and environmental stresses have been key drivers behind violence in the Philippines and Kenya. It is hard to believe that the editors are not familiar with this work. Assuming they are, it is inexcusable to suggest that it has not substantially furthered our understanding of the relationship between population pressure and violence.

Although some of this book's individual chapters are valuable, the reader should not expect a thoroughgoing treatment of the complex relationship between demography and violence.

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## SHORT REVIEWS

*by John Bongaarts, Susan Greenhalgh, Geoffrey McNicoll*

**ISABELLE ATTANÉ AND CHRISTOPHE Z. GUILMOTO (EDS.)**

*Watering the Neighbour's Garden: The Growing Demographic Female Deficit in Asia*

Paris: Committee for International Cooperation in National Research in Demography, 2007. xii + 425 p. Download at «[http://www.ciced.org/Eng/Publications/pdf/Book\\_singapore.pdf](http://www.ciced.org/Eng/Publications/pdf/Book_singapore.pdf)».

Despite the existence of data demonstrating growing sex-based imbalances across a wide swath of Asia, especially in India and China, there has been little systematic study, even less rigorous comparison, and virtually no serious theory-building on this subject. By presenting new work on Asian societies from the Caucasus to East Asia, this important interdisciplinary volume maps out this critical terrain and lays the groundwork for the more energetic development of this field of research and action. Aably edited by Attané, research fellow at the French National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED, Paris) and Guilmoto, senior fellow at the French Research Institute for Development (IRD, Paris) and executive director of the Center