



Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung
Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

MARTIN-LUTHER-UNIVERSITÄT
HALLE-WITTENBERG



Anthropology, Demography, and History

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Over the past two decades anthropological demography has emerged both as a specialty within anthropology and as a recognised part of demography. Special doctoral programmes sprang up in the United States, a regular committee of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population was devoted to the field, and meetings of the Population Association of America began to feature sessions focusing on anthropological work. Yet obstacles remained. Anthropologists working in demography often found themselves caught between a strong anti-positivist sentiment among many anthropologists and demographers suspicious of ethnographic research as a methodology and uncomfortable at the relentless deconstruction of analytical categories that characterises anthropology.

Social anthropology's intersections with demography are many, although often anthropologists working on issues of demographic interest are unaware of the connections. This presentation examines some of these connections, and in doing so pays particular attention to the relations of anthropology to history, and the relevance of demography to this anthropology/history nexus. In conclusion, as an example of the richness and importance of anthropological demography, the example of the use of identity categories in demographic research is briefly considered.

David Kertzer is professor of social science, anthropology and Italian studies. His book *The Pope and Mussolini* received the 2015 Pulitzer prize for biography or autobiography.

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