

POPULATION AND TERRITORY. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PRODUCTION IN SPAIN (1990-2005)

Josefina Domínguez Mujica

PoblEs/En Red¹

Departamento de Geografía. Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

INTRODUCTION

The Thematic Network for the study of Geography and Population in Spain, a project financed by the Ministry of Education and Science within the framework of the National 2004-2007 Plan for Scientific Research, Development and Technological Innovation focused its work on the new demographic dynamics, their territorial impact and their implications, both in the fields of scientific work and training and in their application. The Network was led by Dr. Vicente Rodríguez Rodríguez and it was made up of ten Geography teachers from nine Spanish universities.

One of the Network's objectives was the gathering and systematization of the available information on Spanish bibliography on population and territory between 1990 and 2005, both in terms of publication and period of study. During that period of time much has been written on demographic issues, coinciding with the consolidation of population studies in Spanish universities. That is why a critical review of this bibliography -scientific journal articles, book chapters, congress minutes, books, reports and theses- had become a necessary task for the Thematic Network. This paper reports on the results of this work.

1 PoblEs/En Red is the acronym for Red Temática para los estudios de Geografía y Población en España (Thematic Network of Geography and Population Studies in Spain), a project financed by the Ministry of Education and Science within the framework of the National 2004-2007 Plan for Scientific Research, Development and Technological Innovation. The Network was made up of the following members: Calvo Miranda, J., Delgado Urrecho, J., Domínguez Mujica, J. Feria Toribio, J., Ferrás Sexto, C., García Coll, A., González Pérez, J.M., Gurría Gascón, J. Reques Velasco, P. y Sánchez Aguilera, D. under the direction of Rodríguez Rodríguez, V. Dr. Domínguez Mujica was responsible for the writing of this paper.

I. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGIES

The Network's researchers made use of both the most advanced computer-based and more traditional data gathering techniques to ensure the inclusion of the largest number of recorded items. The search criteria were centred on key-words, both generic and specific, related to geodemographically related phenomena and processes.

Among the sources consulted we made use of the automated ISBN and REBIUN (University Libraries Network) catalogues, the CSIC (ISOC, CIRBICL, CIRBICR)² documentary collections, the Social Sciences Citation Index, the DIALNET and other university libraries' databases, as well as the TESEO doctoral theses database. We have also utilized some printed catalogues with information on certain monographs, and publications released by several banking companies and by different regional public bodies and institutions.

Once the references had been gathered, they were entered into a database. The management software used was Access, with a custom field implementation to link different fields and facilitate searches.

Finally, the greatest difficulty we faced was the management of the complete database, eliminating double entries, renaming some references, modifying the ascription of some of the works according to thematic classification and so on.

The resulting number of bibliographical records was considerable, although from a geographical point of view the figures varied widely. There are some regions, such as Extremadura, Asturias or Castilla-La Mancha, for which there are very few works recorded, whereas for others like Catalonia, Comunidad Valenciana, Región de Murcia and Andalusia there is a large body of work published.

II. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PRODUCTION

Among the works recorded, in very few cases do «population and territory» crop up as key words. They are rarely the main focus of the debate, for scientific production on population is often the work of specialists who lie outside the field of Geography and, consequently, there is little attention paid to spatial relations. The bibliography on population, from a specific geographical perspective, is thus limited to the geodemographic works undertaken in university Geography departments and research centres.

Regarding the format of the publications recorded, there are two main channels of dissemination: articles in scientific journals, of which we recorded about 700, and submissions to congresses as well as book chapters, that we have assimilated to the category of minutes (about 450). The number of books, on the other hand, is lower, about 300. Thus, the dissemination of a good part of the research recorded has been rather limited, largely confined to congress minutes or articles in journals, and consulted mostly by specialists.

2 CSIC (Spanish National Research Council); ISOC (Social and Human Sciences Bibliographical Database of Spanish publications); CIRBICL (Catalogue of the collections found in the CSIC's network of libraries); CIRBICR (Catalogue of the collection of periodical publications found in the CSIC's network of libraries).

III. SCALES OF ANALYSIS AND CHRONOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

The majority of the research work recorded has a regional focus -the result of the fact that data generated by public administration bodies tend to be regionally-based and of the specialization of the research groups at work in the different universities. The number of works that deal with population dynamics at a national level is much smaller, and comparative studies are even fewer.

Urban environments come third, in quantitative terms, as the object of attention of the geodemographic studies recorded. Sometimes they examine demographic processes in urban municipalities of some importance, or alternatively in metropolitan or suburban areas; there are also analyses of the relation between urban growth and tourist development.

As regards both archipelagos, a considerable number of works deal with them as a territorial unit, whereas certain non-administrative regions -mostly in rural areas- are dealt with to a much lesser extent. Finally, provinces, municipalities and microscale analyses follow in decreasing order of interest.

Regarding the chronological evolution of bibliographical production, the largest number of records belong to the years 2001, 2002 y 2003. At the beginning of the 1990s the number of publications was very limited, but over the following decade it increased -somewhat irregularly. The fact that in 2004 and 2005 there is a smaller number of bibliographical references might be due to delays in their publication and to the fact that when this project was undertaken (2006) many of them had not yet appeared in the information catalogues.

IV. THEMATIC CONTENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND POPULATION STUDIES

The subject matter covered by the bibliography recorded is, in order of decreasing importance, the following: 1. International migration and foreign population. 2. Demographic dynamics from a territorial perspective (rural areas, urban environments, tourist spaces, and so on). 3. Biodemographic structures and coexistence patterns, heading under which we have included the analyses of aging processes, gender, household, family studies and so on. 4. Interior migrations and geographical mobility. 5. Training, activity, occupation and unemployment, in other words, educational structure and labour market. 6. Natural population movement, under which we have included state of health and sanitary factors related issues. And 7. Other subjects.

The most frequent subject matter among all the bibliography gathered is the issue of international migrations and foreign population. It is the main focus of interest in the areas that have received an earlier or larger influx of immigrants, although in the last few years it has drawn the attention of specialists everywhere. There are more studies on stock population than on migration flows, and the studies on immigration tend to focus on specific geographical areas.

In terms of demographic dynamics associated to urban environments, most studies deal with processes of growth and their causes (suburbanisation, decline of central urban areas, processes of gentrification and metropolisation...) Complementarily, when dealing with the evolution of population in rural areas, the focus is both on the demographic lethargy of a large number of rural municipalities and on the processes of demographic recovery from the perspective of local development.

Interest in biodemographic structures is much higher in those areas affected by demographic stagnation and by aging processes. There are also some studies concerning gender, household and coexistence patterns, which seem to become more frequent from the mid-90s onwards.

We have found two different kinds of studies on mobility: on the one hand, interior emigration and rural exodus, that continue to draw the attention of specialists in the areas affected by these processes, and, on the other hand, residential mobility caused by modifications in developed urban systems.

Populations' educational and productive structures are rarely the subject of the geodemographic bibliography recorded, a deficit compensated by studies undertaken by some economic specialists.

We have recorded few monographs or articles on natural population dynamics and related factors (fertility, natality, mortality...). Additionally, this subject matter is generally examined within more wide-ranging works that tend to relate vegetative growth with other demographic processes. Mortality, often examined from a sanitary perspective, and fertility are the main areas of focus of the bibliography on natural population movements that we have seen.

Of much lesser quantitative importance are the studies on human groups whose cohesion derives from ethnic, language or cultural factors, studies on population settlements and those evaluating demographic policies.

V. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF GEODEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS IN SPAIN

The work surveyed is limited in scope; there is very little on human mobility beyond an analysis of foreign immigration (emigration, return immigration, residential mobility...); little attention has been paid to households, coexistence patterns and life cycles, or to the population's productive structure; to demographic policies or to demographic studies from the angle of Social Geography, and, above all, what seems to be missing is a wider and more in-depth look at natural population movements.

It would also be advisable for research work to adopt micro- and macro-scale perspectives, and for the work produced to be divulged beyond university circuits and academic environments. Prospective studies should also be undertaken in order to consolidate the practical application of Geodemography.

Another weakness we have detected in current scientific production in Spain are the wide-ranging differences in terms of geodemographic research tradition among Spanish universities. In some of them the said scientific production reaches high levels of specialization, with important thematic innovations and methodological developments, whereas in other cases there is a notable deficit in this respect. Consequently, knowledge of demographic reality is quite complete in some cases and clearly insufficient in others and, in turn, this circumstance hinders effective systematization and comparative analysis.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The imbalance described above as regards the different subject matter studied, as well as the different geographical areas dealt with, lead us to think that it would be recommendable for researchers to adopt new thematic and territorial perspectives in the work to be done in the near future.

It is necessary for specialists from different universities and different professional backgrounds to cooperate, and both more systematization and prospective studies are needed for a more successful development of geodemographic analysis in Spain.

