

Comparing Chinese and Korean panel data from historical population registers

James Z. Lee, *Hong Kong University of Science and Technology*

Cameron D. Campbell, *University of California, Los Angeles*

Hao Dong, *Hong Kong University of Science and Technology*

Comparison requires comparability. As similar data and methods enabled the development of historical demography and historical sociology within Europe and among specific Eurasia communities, so it is hoped similar data and similar methods allow the development of comparative historical demography and sociology within East Asia. This ambition motivates this paper which compares three of newly available historical panel datasets transcribed from household registers in East Asia. Specifically, they are China Multi-Generational Panel Dataset – Liaoning (CMGPD-LN) 1749-1909, China Multi-Generational Panel Dataset – Shuangcheng (CMGPD-SC) 1866-1912 and Korean Tansung Household Registers (THR) 1678-1888. We first introduce similarities and differences among the three datasets, including institutional settings, temporal and spatial characteristics, formats of source registers, etc. Secondly, we compare the capacity of individual and inter-personal linking. As original household registers were cross-sectional and were compiled annually or triennially, transferring to panel data requires linking individual observations across registers. Further, using these panel data to calculate a number of standard demographic measures and to analyze the roles of kin-networks and broader social context requires linking individuals to their spouses, children, parents and other relatives. Thirdly, we discuss the feasibility of these datasets on several basic topics, based on tests of left-hand and right-hand censoring problems. Fourthly, we specifically illustrate characteristics of data referring to several standard demographic issues, such as age, sex and social composition, fertility, mortality, marriage and migration. With EAP members' help, we hope to enrich this paper by involving other comparable historical datasets from Taiwan, Japan and Korea into our comparison in the short future.

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