

Developments of Population Statistics in Eastern Asia

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This paper compares historical developments of statistical institutions and improvements in population statistics in Taiwan, Korea, and China in the 20th century. In Taiwan, under the Japanese rule (1895-1945), population censuses and vital statistics were impressively accurate owing to a combination of the traditional *paojia* system and the modern police system. However, Japanese colonial rule in Korea (1910-1945) was less successful than it was in Taiwan. Birth and death registrations improved but slowly, and were not complete until the end of WWII. As a result, population estimates for the colonial period are controversial and there remains a wide range of population sizes and vital rates estimated by Korean demographers. The vital statistics in the Republic of Korea collapsed during the Korean War (1950-1953) and the registration rate remained extremely low until the 1970s. The improvement of population registration system in the 1980s occurred under the growing interest in regionally balanced developments. Population censuses in mainland China were less accurate than those in the Empire of Japan until the end of WWII. Although population registration system quickly organized in the People's Republic of China under the strict rule of the Communist Party, false reports from local governments continued even after the economic reform in the late 1970s. China was extremely slow in transiting to a pro-natal policy due to irrational decisions of Communist Party.

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