Call for papers

International conference

Demographic Challenges in Africa:
The Contributions of Census and Civil Registration Data

Paris-Aubervilliers, Campus Condorcet, 16-18 October 2019

Organized by DEMOSTAF
in partnership with INED, AFD, IUSSP, UNFPA, CRVS and MEAE

Description

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in 2015 for the year 2030 present a significant challenge to the African continent, home to many of the world's least developed countries. With the world's fastest population growth, Africa is in the midst of unprecedented transitions, but country-by-country situations diverge markedly. For instance, for many of the region's countries, child mortality has dropped quite rapidly, while in others, it stands at world-leading levels. Similarly, populations – particularly urban populations – in several countries appear to be tracking a steady decline in fertility, whereas this decline has levelled off through slowdowns and stalls in others.

An additional challenge is that demographic figures and trends in Africa are not known precisely. Data production, consistency, and reliability vary widely from one country to the next. Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) are not easily exploitable in most countries. While national statistics offices conduct routine censuses and surveys used to inform planning in parts of Africa, offices in other countries struggle to generate accurate data. Existing statistical sources are underused and insufficiently analysed because of data quality issues as well as a lack of time and resources.

The special emphasis placed in the SDGs on inequality and ensuring inclusive developmental progress calls for the production of indicators at the most narrowly defined geographical and socio-economic level. This need demands stronger interaction between government statisticians and researchers. For example, census data, although spaced out over time, provide demographic and socio-economic information at the individual and household levels across a country's entire population. Census data enable the production of indicators at highly disaggregated levels, as well as mapping, environmental, and multilevel analyses. Meanwhile, the systematic recording of vital events in civil registration systems is still rare on the continent. However, longstanding and efficient systems are in place at the local level. Efforts are also being made to improve record-keeping by introducing collection systems and methods more relevant in their contexts (mobile phone usage, determination of probable causes of death through family surveys, etc.).

This conference aims to shed light on current research into sociodemographic dynamics in Africa by drawing on public statistics data, in particular censuses and CRVS. This involves examining populations' characteristics and the ways in which they are evolving in terms of fertility and reproductive health, family and marriage, migration, education, health and mortality in various countries throughout the African continent by reframing them in their environmental (urbanisation, population density), social (gender and intergenerational relations) and economic (resources, development level) contexts.

The conference is also an opportunity to brainstorm ways of conducting collaborative research that involve official statistics providers in the analysis and exploitation of results.

Submissions

Papers and presentations may focus on populations studied at the local, national, or international level. They can compare, combine, or crosscheck different data sources; those using census and vital registration data are particularly encouraged. Proposals should be **submitted via email to contact_demostaf@listes.ined.fr by May 1st in the form of a short abstract and a long abstract (or manuscript) in French or English.** Authors will be informed of selection procedure results in May. Short (250 words maximum) and long (2-4 pages) abstracts should be presented as follows: Background/Objective/Data and Methods/Results (provisory)/ Conclusion or contribution (provisory)

Organization

This two-and-a-half-day event will consist of traditional sessions, flash sessions featuring short presentations, poster sessions, and round tables. The conference will be held in French and English, with simultaneous interpretation provided. Insofar as the available budget permits, financial assistance is provided for speakers not benefiting from funding.

Organizing committee: Géraldine Duthé (INED, France), Valérie Golaz (INED, France), Jean-Alain Goudiaby (Université de Ziguinchor), Gilles Pison (INED/Muséum national d'histoire naturelle, France), Thomas Wiest (INED, France)

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Partners

The conference is organized as part of the *Demography Statistics for Africa* project (European Union's H2020 programme grant no. 690984 which brings together 18 institutions: https://demostaf.site.ined.fr/en/), in partnership with the French Institute for Demographic Studies (INED), the French Agency for Development (AFD), the CRVS panel of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Centre of Excellence for CRVS (CRVS) housed at Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC) and the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE).