



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS**

Akoka – Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria

**2020 ANNUAL LECTURE AND CONFERENCE
Call for papers**

The Department of Sociology, University of Lagos invites researchers, government officials, officials of non-governmental organizations, students and all those interested in the improvement of society and the human condition through research to participate in its 2020 Annual Lecture and Conference scheduled to take place between June 17 and June 18, 2020 at the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

Theme and sub-themes

The conference theme is ‘Nigeria’s data challenge’. The conference aims at facilitating scholarly exchange among researchers and government/non-governmental officials interested in addressing Nigeria’s data challenge. It is common knowledge that governments at all levels, researchers/research institutions, non-governmental organizations as well as businesses need reliable data about size, demographic composition and population growth patterns for proper planning, designing studies/interventions or market projections. Sourcing data through vital registration, censuses, surveys and population registers in Nigeria is fraught with many problems, unfortunately. This is partly due to structural and political challenges faced by the government ministries, departments and agencies saddled with the responsibility. The result may be dearth of reliable information to work with. Where data are available, there may also exist the challenge of turning them into useable solutions to identified problems, sometimes because of restricted access to the data.

We note also that Nigeria’s last census was conducted in 2006, about 14 years ago. Projections based on the results of the exercise long after the conventional 10 year intercensal period may be misleading in many contexts considering the undocumented changes in the demographics of the population over this period. Sometimes, people turn to national surveys for their data needs. National surveys in Nigeria however also come with several challenges, one being that they are designed with census figures as the sampling frame and basis for taking key methodological decisions. The coverage of vital registration is also not universal due to the nation’s vast land area, many hard-to-reach communities with limited government presence and a number of entrenched socio-cultural hindrances. Recently, collecting data in Nigeria may have been further complicated by the

state of insecurity especially in parts of the North-east where terrorism has affected daily activities negatively and led to the displacement of several communities in the last decade. Attacks by armed terrorist groups in the North-central region and more recently, abductions for ransom in the South-west, armed banditry and illegal mining in Zamfara and militancy in the Niger-delta region have also contributed to the current state of insecurity, making data collection difficult or impossible in some parts of the country.

Attempts by the National Identity Management Commission to develop and manage a national database with information on all adult citizens of the federation may also have ethical challenges, which may include privacy issues and the agency's capacity for protecting citizens from misuse of the data. A similar effort in Lagos state faced a major legal setback. While the Independent National Electoral Commission keeps a register of voters, the reliability of information collected is questionable as politicians are constantly motivated to manipulate the data in several ways to suit their interests. In addition to the influence of politics on availability of reliable data, the cost of collecting and managing data and the various local and global economic interests may also be a challenge particularly when we consider the difficulty associated with attracting funds for research in a country where budgetary allocations for education at all levels hover around 6% and only a small allocation gets committed to data collection and management. Sometimes, data collection activities are funded by local and international organizations, but this has implications for what is prioritized and data governance.

For its sensitivity, recent census tools in Nigeria have excluded religion in spite of concerns about the associated loss this implies. Yet religious beliefs, affiliations and interests may contribute to Nigeria's data challenge even when there is no question on religious affiliation. For instance, certain religious teachings may make de-facto enumeration impossible because some categories of people cannot be physically accessed by some enumerators. One may then ask: In what specific ways does religion shape the collection and management of data in Nigeria? On the other hand, across the world, users of the internet are generating data which may be scientifically mined to answer a number of questions about the population. Yet, internet penetration especially in Nigeria's rural areas where about half of the people live, limits the applicability of big data in the country. Generally, where data are available, whether researchers and policy makers are sufficiently equipped to manage them and transform them to answers to policy questions is another challenge. By implication, there may exist a gap between data and policy/programmes. It is important to note also, that attempts by people in government to encourage local and foreign investment in the economy is challenged partly by the apparent lack of reliable data and the difficulty in obtaining reliable data for designing and implementing market surveys and

getting reliable information for demand and availability analysis, market entry strategy, customer identification and business restructuring and revival. Consequently, for new and old businesses, creating a framework for a successful business in Nigeria may be challenged by the country's bigger data challenge.

With this picture of Nigeria's data challenge in mind, we invite interested persons to submit abstracts and extended abstracts on any of the following sub-themes:

1. Nigeria's census challenge
2. Issues in national surveys in Nigeria
3. Vital registration in Nigeria: Challenges and prospects
4. Ethical issues in Population register management in Nigeria
5. Data management and health policies and programmes in Nigeria
6. Political issues and data management in Nigeria
7. Cultural issues in the collection and management of data in Nigeria
8. The political economy of data management and research funding in Nigeria
9. Religion and the data challenge in Nigeria
10. New technologies/ICT and Big data: challenges, prospects and opportunities for data collection in Nigeria
11. Building capacity for data management and bridging the Data-policy gap in Nigeria.
12. Insecurity and data collection in Nigeria
13. The data challenge and doing business in Nigeria
14. Exclusion of the often-neglected sub-populations – women, elderly, special populations

Submission guidelines

Only submissions in English will be accepted.

Abstracts should not exceed 250 words while extended abstract should be between 1000 and 2500 words.

Only Word documents (.doc or .docx) should be submitted.

Submissions should be made by mail to: unilagsociology@gmail.com; gamaike@unilag.edu.ng; mkunnuji@unilag.edu.ng

Important dates:

February 10, 2020: Short abstract submission opening

May 1, 2020: Deadline for submission of short abstracts

March 1, 2020: Full paper or extended abstract submission opening

May 31, 2020: Deadline for full paper or extended abstract submission

June 6, 2020: Notification of acceptance of abstract

June 17, 2020: Deadline for registration