

International Seminar on

Looking backward, looking forward: African demography in historical perspective

Nairobi, Kenya 2-3 April 2020

Seminar organized by the [IUSSP Scientific Panel on Historical Demography](#)
and held at the [British Institute in Eastern Africa](#).

Organizing Committee: Sarah Walters (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), Martin Dribe (Lund University), Shane Doyle (University of Leeds), Stephen O. Wandera (Makerere University), Jeanne Cilliers (Lund University).

CALL FOR PAPERS

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 30 September 2019

We invite submissions on historical or long-term, interdisciplinary, perspectives on demographic change in Africa. The aims of the seminar are to review the state of the field of African population history, to consider the role of the past for understanding the present, and to facilitate partnerships and future comparative work on African historical demography.

There is a resurgence of interest in Africa's demographic pasts. Evidence on past population trends is essential to respond to core questions in African history, such as the human cost of the slave trade; the impacts of colonialism on health, wellbeing and the family; the effects of post-colonial policies on households and livelihoods; long-term trends in mortality and migration; and the influence of religion, education and employment on intergenerational relations and the social organisation of reproduction. Improving the evidence on Africa's past populations will illuminate how people have managed their resilience and reproduction over time, in the face of environmental, epidemiological, political and economic change.

Understanding the historical origins of African demographic regimes may also help to influence current and future population trends. This is important given Africa is projected to account for more than half of all global population growth by 2050, with implications for both demographic dividend and migration. In particular, contemporary demographers have called for interdisciplinary and historical approaches to improve understanding of the contexts of fertility transition in the region, including its stalls, reversals and exceptional age- and parity-specific dynamics, as well as the historical context of the AIDS pandemic. Papers which seek to situate current population trends in historical perspective are encouraged.

The seminar will showcase the growing availability of historical demographic micro-data through new digitisation projects. Alongside the substantive research papers, the seminar will include a data workshop in which scholars who have collected new datasets will have the opportunity to present their databases and to consider scope for future comparative work and collaborations. We will review the potential of new digital methods for widening historical micro-data collection in Africa and seek the experience of previous comparative demographic projects in achieving data harmonisation.

Online Submissions:

The IUSSP Panel on Historical Demography invites researchers to **submit online, by 30 September 2019**, a short 200-word research abstract **AND** upload an extended abstract (2 to 4 pages, including tables) or a full paper. To submit an abstract please fill out the online submission form on the IUSSP website: <http://iussp.org/en/iussp-seminar-submissions>.

If you would also like to contribute to the data workshop, please also send an email to sarah.walters@lshtm.ac.uk with a 200-word description of your dataset at the same time as your main submission.

The working language of the seminar is English: abstracts and final papers should be submitted and presented in English. If the paper is co-authored, please indicate the names of co-authors. Submission should be made by the author who will attend the seminar. We aim to publish suitable papers in a journal special issue or an edited volume.

Applicants will be notified whether their paper has been accepted by **15 October 2019**. Authors of accepted papers must upload the full paper on the IUSSP website by **28 February 2020**.

Funding is available to cover the cost of the seminar venue, airport transfers, accommodation and meals for speakers for two days. We are seeking further financial support for travel, but the outcome is uncertain, and participants should seek their own funding for flights, additional accommodation and other expenses. Priority will be given to African scholars, early career researchers and those from developing countries in awarding travel support.

For further information:

Please contact Seminar Organizer Sarah Walters (sarah.walters@lshtm.ac.uk).

IUSSP Scientific Panel on Historical Demography:

Chair: Martin Dribe (Lund University, Sweden)

Members: Lisa Dillon (Université de Montréal, Canada), Hao Dong (Peking University, China), J. David Hacker (University of Minnesota, USA), Lionel Kesztenbaum (Institut national d'études démographiques, INED, France), Ana Silvia Volpi Scott (Universidade Estadual de Campinas, UNICAMP, Brazil) and Sarah Walters (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK)