



IUSSP Seminar on Looking Backward, Looking Forward: African Demography in Historical Perspective

Ol Pajeta, Kenya, 30 November - 2 December 2021

Seminar report

The IUSSP Scientific Panel on Historical Demography together with The British Institute in Eastern Africa (BIEA) and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine organized a seminar on African demography in historical perspective in Ol Pajeta, Kenya from 30 November to 2 December 2021. The seminar was sponsored by the IUSSP, the Wellcome Trust, the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation, and the Galton Institute. Sarah Walters and the BIEA were the local organizers.

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.

The seminar brought together 26 participants from Kenya, Uganda, Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Zambia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. 21 participants were present in Kenya and 5 participated virtually. 21 papers were presented dealing with different contexts in both time and space, as well as different aspects of demography and population history. Presentations showcased the growing availability of historical demographic micro-data through new digitisation projects, including the use of both parish registers and hospital records for historical demography. The variety, quality and accessibility of such micro-data was discussed, including the relative advantages of various denominational records, e.g. Anglican records for occupational data (Meier zu Selhausen & Weisdorf), Catholic and Lutheran records for 'family cards', which enhance family reconstitution (Walters, Doyle, Pöhlmann & Rafferty; Thibon). Participants assessed the completeness and quality of these records and described work to improve demographic reconstruction through linking and comparing with historic hospital records (Doyle) and HDSS data (Walters, Doyle, Pöhlmann & Rafferty). Consideration was also given to historical legacies of missionary influence for healthcare (Baumert; Bolt and Cilliers) and current sexual health and HIV trends (Chiseni), using historic annual reports and contemporary DHS data.

The use of other data sources included census and Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) data, oral histories, qualitative archival research and official reports, genealogical data and health and demographic surveillance site (HDSS) data. Innovative methods were introduced to maximise the exploitation of DHS, census and HDSS data to study long-term trends in fertility and marriage, such as the use of an extended Own-Child Method to impute full birth histories and reconstruct fertility from census data back to the late-1940s in Kenya (Timaues), and the use of sequence and cluster analysis to consider compositional change in reproductive regimes using HDSS data in Senegal during the 1940s-70s (Bras, Remund, & Delaunay). The importance of revisiting pre-transitional fertility rather than taking the 1970s as a baseline for the study of trends was stressed. Cilliers & Mariotti presented the application of Cure models to study the South African settler fertility transition using genealogical data. Other studies considered long-term change in adolescent fertility (Garbett & Perelli-Harris) and the contribution of marriage and union formation to fertility change using DHS data (Grant and Kohler). Golaz considered the reporting and recording of marriage over time in DHSs from Uganda and Kenya, and Thibon focused on changes to demographic regimes in Burundi and Rwanda during 1980-1993, assessing narratives about mounting population pressure at that time. Marco-Gracia & Fourie exploited the full series of South African censuses from 1911-2011 to re-examine the unusual pattern of high female to male child (<5 years) sex ratios over time in the region. Bolt and Cilliers revisited colonial official statistics, presenting an exciting new dataset based on the digitisation of health data from Blue Books and Annual Medical Reports from African countries under British rule, which they are using to consider trends in health provision and funding over time, linked to demographic outcomes.

Several of the papers focussed on Kenya, considering regional fertility change over the past 70 years and identifying the need to consider local as well as national influences of colonialism and Christianity on demographic regimes (Timaues, Ojakaa, Gitu). Ojakaa called for more local studies based on microdata from parish registers and health facilities, especially to understand trends in Central Kenya through the 1950s-70s—a suggestion met by Doyle's description of microdata in that region. Thomas described the 'layering' of debates about reproduction, focussing on abortion, and showing the interactions between international, national, and individual concerns in policy and outcomes in Kenya.

Amone's paper focussed on the demographic impacts of the slave trade in northern Uganda, showing the relevance of past patterns of slave raiding for ongoing settlement practices in the region. In a dedicated session on migration, participants described how patterns of movement have arisen, shifted, and changed from the mid-eighteenth century through to the present. Manning discussed how rates of outmigration were higher in the context of the slave trade than they are today, even if absolute numbers of migrants are today far higher. De Haas and Frankema show how the global "age of mass migration" (1850-1940) was characterised by the rising importance of intracontinental migration within Africa, and the contraction of intercontinental trends. Menashe-Oren and Bocquier show how differences in natural increase between rural and urban areas explain observed trends in urbanisation during 1985-2015 far more than in-migration to urban areas.

On the final day of the meeting, we held a discussion session to reflect on how lessons from the past can and should inform current and future knowledge about population change in Africa. We also held a workshop session to discuss possibilities for future collaborations, key research themes and prospects for further expansion of data and methods in African demographic history. We recognised a lack of research on mortality in our seminar and a concentration of

work on East, Southern and Anglophone Africa. We discussed potential for summer schools, future research workshops, joint publications, and the further development of the African Population History Network (APHiN) to support work in this field.

The seminar was organized under difficult circumstances, first scheduled in March 2020, but postponed due to Covid-19. Also, the final seminar was affected by various Covid-restrictions, such as mandatory mask wearing and daily testing. Despite these constraints, it was fantastic to connect with colleagues in-person, and the virtual presence of those who were unable to join us in Kenya was a great addition to the seminar.

Sincere thanks to our funders (IUSSP; Wellcome Trust; the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius Foundation, and the Galton Institute); as well as to Paul Monet (IUSSP), Frida Nkirete, Loyce Anyango, Charles Mwaniki, Teresia Ngandi (BIEA), Frankie Liew and Christina Breach (LSHTM), the IUSSP Panel on Historical Demography (Martin Dribe, Lund University; Lisa Dillon, Université de Montréal; Hao Dong, Peking University; J. David Hacker, University of Minnesota; Lionel Kesztenbaum, Institut National d'Études Démographiques; Ana Scott, Universidade Estadual de Campinas; Sarah Walters (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine), and to Stephen Wandera (Makerere University) and George Alter (University of Michigan) for all their support with administration, planning, and advice on organisation.

International Seminar
Looking backward, looking forward:
African demography in historical perspective

Ol Pajeta, Kenya, 30 November - 2 December, 2021

Organised by
The IUSSP Scientific Panel on Historical Demography
&
The British Institute in Eastern Africa

*With support from the IUSSP, the Wellcome Trust, the Jan Wallander and Tom Hedelius
Foundation, and the Galton Institute*

Tuesday, 30 November

9:30-10:30 Welcome and introductions

10:30-10:45 Tea/coffee

Session 1 10:45-12:30 Fertility and reproduction (Chair: Jutta Bolt)

Ann Garbett and Brienna Perelli-Harris: The untold story of 50 years of adolescent fertility in West Africa: A cohort perspective on the quantum, timing, and spacing of adolescent childbearing

Jeanne Cilliers and Martine Mariotti: Stop! Go! What can we learn about family planning from birth timing in settler South Africa, 1800-1910?

Hilde Bras, Adrien Remund, Valérie Delaunay: Trajectories of childbearing in a sub-Saharan African setting: Beyond spacing, stopping, and postponing?

12:30-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:15 Marriages, unions, and fertility (Chair: Ian Timaeus)

Monica J. Grant and Hans-Peter Kohler: Marriage change and fertility decline in sub-Saharan Africa, 1992-2018

Valérie Golaz: Quantitative perspectives on couples and marriage in Kenya and Uganda

Christian Thibon: Fertility trends and changing marriage patterns, before the decade of crisis, 1980-1993 in Burundi and Rwanda

15:15-15:30 Tea/coffee

15:30-17:15: Migration (Chair: David Ojaka)

Michiel de Haas and Ewout Frankema: Shifting patterns of African migration, 1800-present

Ashira Menashe-Oren and Philippe Bocquier: The roles of internal migration and natural growth in the urban transition in sub-Saharan Africa, 1975-2015

*Patrick Manning: Counting and categorizing African migrants 1980 – 2020: Global, continental and national perspectives

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Wednesday, 1 December

9:30-11:15: **Fertility and reproduction in Kenya (Chair: Monica Grant)**

*Lynn Thomas: A layered history of Kenya's 2010 abortion debate

David Ojaka: Trends and patterns in Kenya's fertility transition at sub-national levels: 1956-2014

Ian Timaeus: Fertility and family building in Kenya, 1947-2007: Estimates from imputed full birth histories based on census data

11:15-11:30 Tea/coffee

11:30-13:15 **Microdata from parish registers (Chair: Kennedy Gitu)**

*Felix Meier zu Selhausen: Colonial influences, labour market outcomes, and gender inequality: evidence from christian converts in urban British Africa

*Shane Doyle: Family reconstitution: linking hospital and parish records in Africa

Sarah Walters, Shane Doyle, Johannes Pöhlmann, Sarah Rafferty: Parish register microdata in Africa: three experiments in comparing and combining sources

13:15-14:15 Lunch

14:15-16:00: **Population health and healthcare (Chair: Michiel de Haas)**

Jutta Bolt and Jeanne Cilliers: The expansion of colonial healthcare in twentieth century British Africa.

Nicolai Baumert: Health care under different colonial regimes: The historical roots of health care in colonial Cameroon, 1900 – 1960

Michael Chanda Chiseni: The sins of the Church: The long-term impacts of Christian missionary praxis on HIV and sexual behavior in Zambia

Thursday, 2 December

09:30-11:15 **Population growth and sex ratios (Chair: Sarah Rafferty)**

Charles Amone: The nineteenth century slave trade and demographic changes in northern Uganda

Kennedy Gitu: From near demographic collapse to a 'bounce back': population growth, mobility and settlement in Samburu

Fran Marco Gracia and Johan Fourie: Missing boys: explaining South Africa's unbalanced sex ratio, 1894-2011

11:15-11:30 Tea/coffee

11:30-13:00 Roundtable and open discussion: where are we now? (Chair: Martin Dribe & Hilde Bras) Discussants: Kennedy Gitu, Valérie Golaz, Sarah Walters, Charles Amone, Caroline Bledsoe (virtual) Themes arising from the conference: where are we now? (40 min roundtable, 50 min open discussion)

13:00-14:00 Lunch

14:00-16:30 Where next? (with tea/coffee) (Chair: Sarah Walters)

Data: potential sources and technical needs 40 min (20 min breakout, 20 min together)

Research Themes 40 min (20 min breakout, 20 min together)

Funding opportunities, potential collaborations 40 min (20 min breakout, 20 min together)

Final wrap up and publication plans (30 minutes)

*Video presentation and virtual discussion

Participant list

Dr Charles Amone, Kyambogo University

Loice Anyango, British Institute in Eastern Africa

Nicolai Baumert, Lund University

Prof. Caroline Bledsoe, Northwestern University

Prof. Jutta Bolt, University of Groningen

Prof. Hilde Bras, University of Groningen

Michael Chanda Chiseni, Lund University

Dr Jeanne Cilliers, Lund University

Prof. Shane Doyle, Leeds University

Prof. Martin Dribe, Lund University

Dr Ann Garbett, Southampton University

Dr Kennedy Gitu, Kenyatta University

Prof. Valérie Golaz, Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques (INED)

Prof. Martin Gorsky, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Dr Fran Marco-Gracia, Universidad de Zaragoza

Dr Monica Grant, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dr Michiel de Haas, Wageningen University

Prof. Patrick Manning, University of Pittsburgh

Dr Felix Meier zu Selhausen, Wageningen University

Dr Ashira Menashe-Oren, Université Catholique de Louvain

Dr David Ojaka, Brim Research Ltd.

Sarah Rafferty, University of Cambridge

Dr Christian Thibon, Université de Pau

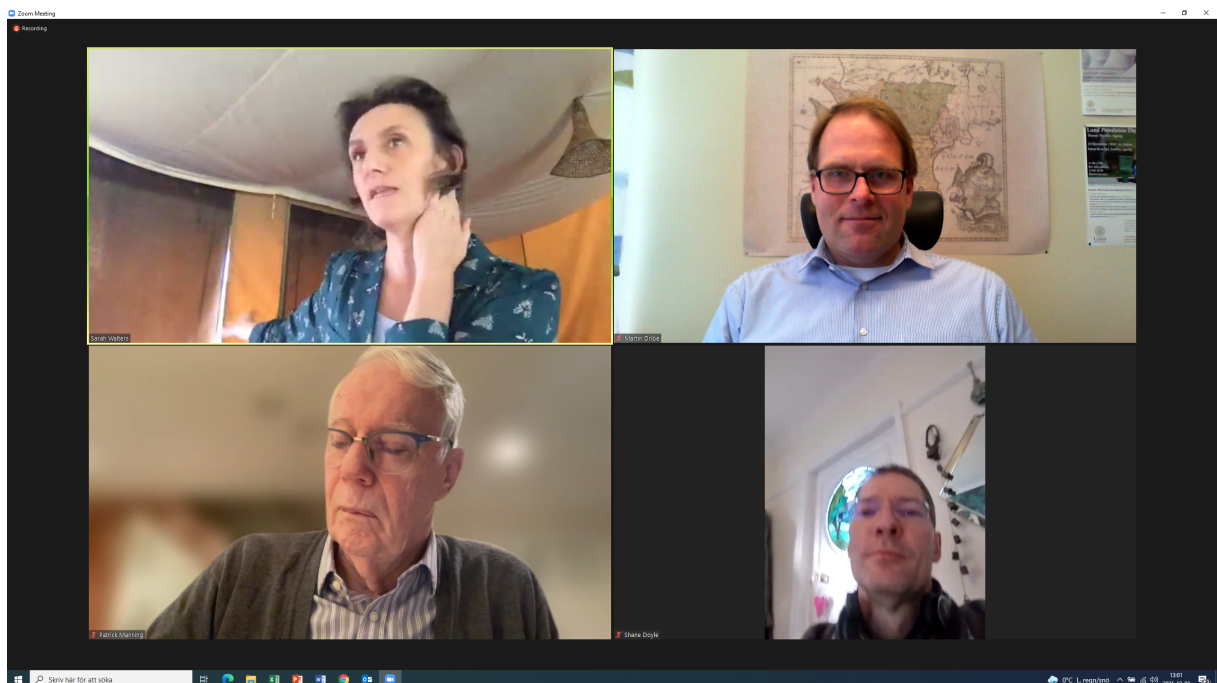
Prof. Lynn Thomas, University of Washington

Prof. Ian Timaeus, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Dr Sarah Walters, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine



The seminar participants at the Sweetwaters camp, Ol Pajeta, Kenya.



Some of the virtual participants

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The conference venue at the Sweetwater camp.



Prof. Lynn Thomas (University of Washington) gives a virtual presentation about the history of Kenya's abortion debates



Participants at the seminar

Photos by Sarah Rafferty, Ian Timaeus, Jutta Bolt