



Scientific Session: Our Next World – Rethinking Demography

30 October 2017, 13:30 – 15:15

Scientific Session at the 27th IUSSP International Conference, Cape Town, South Africa

This session will share knowledge and insights into what the future will bring in terms of demographic trends while also crucially asking what we can do about it. Demography and ageing will map the future of our lives, of the societies we live in, and of the way in which our societies – from Asia to America, from Africa to Europe – live with each other. The session's title looks simple but the reality behind it is complex and challenging: what can be known and what is unknown about what is "next"? And what will define our "world", with all its growing inter-dependencies and its risks, surrounding our lengthening and changing lives?

Introductions

Demography in the 21st Century: Dynamics by Continent

Hans Groth, President of the World Demographic & Ageing Forum, St. Gallen, Switzerland

John F. May, PhD Georgetown University, Washington, DC, USA

- *One can speculate how demography will affect the importance, the influence, and the power of nation states.*
- *No other force is likely to shape the future of business, societies and their governance as the irreversible forces of demographic ageing. Globally, the number of persons aged 60+ is expected to more than double by 2050 and more than triple by 2100, increasing from 901 million in 2015 to 2.1 billion in 2050 and 3.2 billion in 2100.*
- *Total population growth in the 21st century will be concentrated to Africa due to ongoing high fertility while inequality and unrest might drive migration within and out of the continent.*
- *Overall, international migration and refugees globally will increase and thus become another shaping force. Africa will most likely add to the migration trends but will not drive them entirely.*

Geopolitical Issues Arising from Demography

Nicholas Eberstadt, Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, USA

Though political alliances, domestic configurations, borders, and other arrangements cannot be foretold over the coming generations, three big prospective demographic changes bearing on geopolitics may be noted here:

- *The continuing relative – and possibly absolute – decline in population for "EU-world", Russia, and Japan: prefiguring a continuing decline, all other things being equal, in relative economic influence and military potential.*
- *The race between the two demographic giants – China and India – for international influence: both beset by separate human resource constraints that could limit their "rise".*
- *The global implications of sub-Saharan Africa's coming demographic boom: danger or opportunity? Everything depends on governance, and "unlocking the wealth in human beings".*

Panel Discussion

Continuous changes and unprecedented innovations will significantly impact societies, economies and governance all over the globe. Therefore, demographic shifts will fundamentally impact our living standards and potential to prosper. The ongoing population dynamics will open up new areas of change. To meet these challenges, globally coordinated measures and actions will need to be initiated. During this session, leading experts from across the globe will be discuss what the pressing topics are for the future competitiveness of nations in the context of these demographic shifts. The areas of focus will be: work life, financial markets, retirement systems, health and ageing, and digital revolution.

- What are the points of agreement and certainty?
- What could potentially surprise us?
- What can and must be done?

Moderator

Thomas B. Cueni, Director General, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA), Geneva, Switzerland

Panellists

Ewa Björling, Minister of Trade of Sweden (2007-2014), Stockholm, Sweden

- *Digitalisation versus automatization – future career/job opportunities for young people.*
- *Changes in our retirement systems – longer life expectancy means longer work life, not longer retirement.*
- *How to motivate people, sticks or carrots?*
- *Can life be wealthy and successful all over the globe or is it going to be a change from a wealthy Europe to a more developed China and India? Can 1 + 1 be 3 instead of 2?*

Nicholas Eberstadt, Henry Wendt Chair in Political Economy, American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, USA

- *Let's talk about "NAFTA-land": the USA, Canada and Mexico taken as a single population. What is the demographic outlook for this agglomeration, assuming that the NAFTA treaty is not undone? How does the demographic outlook for NAFTA-land compare with that of, say, the rest of the OECD countries?*
- *Immigration is politically contentious in many affluent societies nowadays. How do prospects for immigration bear on NAFTA-land's population outlook?*
- *The USA is on track to see continuing growth of working age groups and to age rather less than many other developed societies--but it has also witnessed some growing difficulties in "unlocking the value" of these seeming advantages, especially with its "men without work" problem. Can you talk a little about this paradox?*

Wang Feng, Professor of Sociology, Fudan University, Shanghai, China

China along with a number of East Asian economies are seen as successful examples of benefiting from the demographic dividend, will Africa be the next?"

- *Asia's diversifying demographic profile but overall trends toward longevity and low fertility.*
- *The linkages between the changes in Asia (especially East Asia and especially China) and Africa, with a focus on understanding the notion of the demographic dividend properly (it does not happen automatically but requires institutional conditions).*
- *China as an example to explain this: a healthy and educated population, a political and economic system/reforms that allowed individual initiatives and employment, and a state-led development strategy that was export-oriented to begin with).*

Eliya Msiyaphazi Zulu, PhD Executive Director , African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP), Kenya

- *What are the major changes that the African population is expected to experience in the next few decades? What are the key drivers of these changes and implications for the sustainable development goals agenda?*
- *In the past few years, there has been considerable reference to the demographic dividend agenda across Africa, with the African Union declaring “harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth” as the theme for 2017. What is driving the prioritization of population change as a key development issue in Africa? Is this a signal of real change in the commitment of African leaders and other development actors to address this issue or its mere rhetoric? Is the demographic dividend a relevant concept for looking at development in Africa?*
- *What are the most critical investments that African countries should embark on to maximize their chances of harnessing the demographic dividend? How much should these priorities across the continent – is it a matter of one jacket fits all?*
- *What are the biggest threats and consequences of failure to harness the dividend for Africa and the world at large?*

Thomas Zeltner, Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, Berne, Switzerland

The world of the 21st century is confronted with a double burden of diseases. New and newly emerging infectious diseases will continue to cause global health crises and have the potential of destroying any potential demographic dividend in a region or globally, while chronic diseases put the health care systems, but also families and societies under enormous pressure. Three burning questions need to be addressed in this context:

- *The unrestricted access to timely and appropriate vaccines and medications will be key. But how can the interests of governments and risk-taking pharmaceutical companies be aligned?*
- *The need for informal care for chronically ill family and community members will grow exponentially. Will women be the losers of this race?*
- *Will health become a major driver in demography by initiating new migration patterns and new global security debates?*
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Summary & Conclusion – Assembling the Jigsaw

Wolfgang Lutz, Founding Director, Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital (IIASA, VID/ÖAW, WU), Vienna, Austria

- *This summary will try to draw the big picture of a world faced simultaneously by rapid population growth and ageing as well as rapid technological change and globalisation. It will highlight possible implications for labor markets, international migration pressure and geopolitical changes. In this context, what are the policy priorities to assure sustainable human wellbeing?*