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Fertility Levels and Differentials in Informal Settlements in South Africa: Evidence from the 2001 South African Population Census.

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2006-11-13T13:28:09Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/1651

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Statement of the problem.

Fertility transition has being experienced in South Africa (SA) for almost four decades (Moultrie and Dorrington, 2004). Studies examining fertility levels, and trends in SA situated the onset of this country's fertility transition in the 1960s. UN's (1995) study on fertility in South Africa indicated a decline from an estimated average of 7 to 6 children per woman between 1950 and 1970. The pace of decline accelerated in the early 1980s. South Africa's fertility dropped to an average of 5 to 4 children per woman in the period between 1980 and 1995. The overall level of fertility in the country in 2001 is estimated to be 2.87 children per woman (Moultrie & Dorrington, 2004). The fertility transition may be partially explained by the South Africa's demographic regimes that are typical of both developed and developing world (DSD, 2000).In fact, fertility transition in South Africa has followed the pattern similar to that observed in some African countries, with women in all age groups having fewer children (Moultrie,2002) . On the other hand, fertility transition in this country is also similar to that of European countries with the doubling time between births.

Fertility level is however different within different geographic and socio-economic groups. For example, fertility differential by place of residence was observed in 1998 Demographic and Health Survey, with TFR for non-urban women estimated at 3.92 against 2.25 for urban women (DHS, 1998). Among provinces, Limpopo had the highest level of fertility of 4.01 children per woman, while the Western Cape had the lowest fertility level of 2.35 children per woman (Stats SA, 1996). With respect to population or racial group, the whites have experienced a long and sustained fertility decline from the end of the 19th century until attaining below-replacement fertility by 1989, with a of TFR 1.9. Asian fertility also declined remarkably from 6.5 in the late 1960s to about 3 by the late 1980s. African fertility is estimated to have decreased from a high of

6.8 to a low of about 3.9 between the mid-1950s and the early 1990s. (DSD, 2000:42-43). While fertility information has been provided at the national level, not enough has been done at the sub national levels. It is not clear if the national picture is common among all sub-national sections. Informal settlements in South Africa, with a total number of 3,560,383 people or 7.94 % of the total population (Statsa, 2004), represent an important proportion which can affect fertility pattern of the country. In order to fill this gap, this study analyzes fertility in South Africa informal settlements.

1.2 Research Questions

- Does fertility level in South Africa informal settlements affect the national pattern?
- Are there differences in fertility among women of childbearing age in informal settlements?
- What factors could account for fertility level in South African informal settlements?

1.3 Objectives of the study.

The broad objective of this study is to examine fertility dynamics in South African informal settlements, using South Africa 2001 census data. The specific objectives are:

- To estimate fertility levels in informal settlements;
- To examine fertility patterns and differentials in informal settlements;
- To identify critical factors affecting fertility level in these informal settlements.

1.4 Significance/Justification of the study.

Most of the existing studies done in SA provide fertility levels, trends, patterns and differentials at the national level. Not much study has been done in the sub-national levels. Informal Settlements in South Africa is one of these sub-national areas which have a long history of neglect and poverty.

The poor socio-economic conditions in which household live has been pointed as likely to affect fertility in developing countries. The National Research Council findings in 1993 revealed that economic reversals in Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) as depicted by poor economic conditions have strong impact on fertility behaviour. Poor economic conditions are found to influence child mortality negatively and the possibility of first marriage and timing of first birth positively. (NRC, 1993). Salaff (1985) observed that couples tend to reduce their family size because of economic pressures. Analysing fertility in South Africa during the 1990s, Schoumaker (1999) discovered an inverse-j relationship between economic status and fertility. The finding of Mencarini and Dovandri (2002) using data from surveys on a few villages in 1990s also indicates a negative relationship between economic status and parity in rural Botswana and in rural South Africa. Hung (2002) is of the opinion that improvement of socio-economic conditions of people strongly affects family structure, life style and reproductive behaviour.

Based on current information, it is not clear whether the reported fertility transition in South Africa applies to these informal settlements. Indeed, informal settlements are settlements created through a process of self-help. They are principally characterized by poverty, unemployment and little or no access to basic services (UNCSD, 2004). In fact, in most of South Africa informal settlements, people are not able to pay for services such as housing delivery, electricity and transport because of poverty, and government subsidy does not cover the cost for these services. Furthermore, in most of South Africa informal settlements, all of the basic needs sectors are informal and profit margins are low. In addition, a livelihood is seldom a formal job, but rather a delicate navigation of niches on the economic fringe. Meanwhile, these vulnerable livelihoods have to be often adjusted in the face of factors such as competition, or government intervention in the form of regulation. Besides, in South Africa informal settlements, in most cases, residential densities do not allow for cars penetration and residents are accustomed to walk from street to their houses. (UNCSD, 2004:15).

Because of the socio-economic characteristics of South Africa informal settlements outlined above, it is assumed that fertility may portray a different picture comparatively to the national figure. Therefore, this study intends to examine fertility level and differentials and identify socio-economic factors affecting fertility in South African informal settlements. Looking at fertility in a local level context is likely to provide useful insights into population dynamics necessary for policy and programme intervention to address location-specific population problems.

1.5 Hypotheses

- H_a : Fertility in informal settlements is higher than the national level ;
- $H_{a:}$ Fertility is different within socioeconomic background;
- $H_{a:}$ Socioeconomic background affect fertility in South African informal settlements.

1.6 Definition of terms

The following concepts are defined thus:

1. Fertility refers to the number of live children, if any; a woman has ever given birth to. It is expressed in terms of Children ever born or in terms of conventional rate as total fertility rate (TFR).
2. Children ever born (CEB) refers to all children born to a woman, whether in or out of marriage, whether born in a present or a previous marriage or union, and whether living or dead at the time of the census. Stillbirths are not included.
3. Total fertility rate (TFR) is interpreted as the number of births that a woman would have if she survived all her reproductive years and experienced the age specific fertility rate prevailing in a given period.
4. Informal settlements or squatter camps occur on land which has not been surveyed or proclaimed as residential, and the structures are usually informal. They are usually found on the outskirts of towns or in pockets of ‘infill’ inside towns, or along railways and roads.

5. Education refers to the highest grade completed at school or the highest post-school qualification obtained.
6. Marital status refers to the personal status of each individual in relation to the marriage law or customs of the country. In South Africa for example, customs unions are recognized as a legal marital status and has been taken into account in the SA 2001 Census.
7. Income related to all money received from salary, wage or own business, plus money benefits from employer, such as contributions to medical aid and pension funds, plus all money from others sources, such as additional work activity, remittances from family members living elsewhere, state pension or grant, other pensions or grants, income from investments etc. The Census question asks for the total before tax.
8. Wealth can be interpreted as money and property. It is the abundance of object of value and also the state of having cumulated these objects. In the SA 2001 Census, wealth has been expressed by having TV or Radio.

1.7 Study Limitations.

This study is a secondary data analysis. One of the problems in using secondary data is that relevant data are rarely available. Information on contraceptive use for example and that of health facilities are not available in census. The 2001 census data however offers a good opportunity for exploring the association between fertility and key socioeconomic variables. For this reason, the study is a cross sectional analysis of the socio-economic factors of differentials in fertility in the South African Informal Settlements. The study is limited to only 10 % sample of the SA 2001 census.