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Du genre et de l'Afrique. Hommage à Thérèse Locoh

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This book, consisting of a collection of articles focused on two major themes, *Gender* and *Africa*, is a tribute to Thérèse Locoh, the brilliant Africanist demographer who first introduced and developed the topic of gender issues at the French National Institute of Demography, INED.

This work interlaces all of the aspects of population studies: fertility and family, health and mortality, and internal and international migration. The various authors approach the subject through the lens of the analysis of social phenomena, and in particular the analysis of the social construction of gender with regard to its implications and consequences on the African continent. However, the content goes beyond these concepts to include discussions of population modeling, since the understanding of gender relations cannot be achieved without the creation of appropriate methods of measurement and analysis.

Starting with the very first page, the reader finds himself on a journey that runs through the individual's life cycle, pausing at eight demographic stage markers. The first pause is birth, a prelude to childhood, youth and transition to adulthood.

The book opens with a reflection on the gender conditioning at an individual's birth as recounted in the article by France Meslé, Jacques Vallin and Irina Badurashvili, who describe the growth of the sex ratios at birth in many Caucasian countries in the 1990's. Several other elements of social construction are also discussed in this first part. Marie-France Valetas and Arnaud Bringé study Algerian and Spanish immigrant populations in France, shedding light on how choosing an infant's name appears to be less and less dependent on the child's sex.

Carole Brugeilles and Sylvie Cromer guide the reader through a quantitative study that highlights how patterns of thought in terms of gender can be influenced by the approach of teaching in the school, even when the subjects taught are apparently neutral in terms of gender, as in the case of mathematics. Utilizing survey data, Céline Vandermeersch investigates the explanations offered for the Senegalese practice of child-rearing outside the family, the so-called *confiage*. Through different and complementary approaches, Valérie Golaz, and Claudine Sauvain-Dugerdil and Gilbert Ritschard address the long and difficult stage of transition to adulthood, depicting a landscape that is ever-diversifying and evolving.

This first section of the book does not lack in interesting elements regarding methods of study. Magali Barbieri offers a rigorous analysis of information collected on infant mortality in Togo through the Demographic and Health

Surveys (DHS). The omissions, the rounding of ages and systematic shift of dates of birth create bias regarding the extent of infant mortality. Despite this, the DHS is considered a valuable source of data providing a wealth of information about health behaviors and characteristics of populations in less developed countries.

The second stage presented in the book is that of sexuality, marriage and the birth of children. Sexuality is first addressed by a discussion on female genital mutilation in Africa and its consequences on a woman's well-being and process of self-fulfillment. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch portray the African reality as diverse and complex from this point of view, while Armelle Andro and Marie Lesclingand highlight the social consequences resulting from the importation of this phenomenon (via migration) in France.

However, the ideas proposed by the authors extend beyond the African continent. Catherine Rollet takes the reader to France in the second half of the twentieth century, through the experience of a female doctor, Germain Montreuil-Straus, who dedicated herself to the providing sex education to young women during the interwar years. In a completely different context, Michel Bozon transports the reader to the provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan, at the border with Burma and Tibet, to explore the construction of gender relations in a society without marriage: that of the Na in China. In that society, marriage does not exist, just as terms such as husband and father do not exist. It is a society in which the woman is given a great deal of sexual freedom, but gender asymmetries do not seem to be missing.

After sexuality, marriage is analysed in depth, as a central element in the relationship between the individual, family and society. This is highlighted by Zahia Ouadah Bedidi's discussion of the profound transformations that have occurred over the past thirty years in Algerian society, identifying the main determinants and social implications. Evina Akam addresses fertility from the perspective of evolution induced by the rapid reduction of gender inequalities in education. Again, regarding this topic, examples may be taken from a variety of different realities. In this work the reality of Latin America is addressed in an article by Maria Eugenia Cosio-Zavala, exploring the relationship between the recent rapid decline in fertility and the evolution of gender systems in Mexico.

The third part of the work is dedicated to the family. In this context, residential characteristics and family construction are linked to the dynamics of marriage and fertility addressed in the preceding chapters. Through various quantitative approaches, traditional and modern issues related to gender are presented. In this section, Marc Pilon and Kokou Vignikin investigate the social and family consequences of rural-urban migration; Véronique Hertrich analyzes the role of segmentation and emigration as a means to limit family size in populations that begin the demographic transition, while Myriam Mouvagha-Sow utilizes the case of Gabon to present one of the most dramatic asymmetries in gender relations, that of domestic violence.

An interesting emerging gender issue - step parents in France - is addressed by Laurent Toulemon. The rise of marital breakdowns and the formation of new households where one or other of the spouses is already a parent seems to result in permanent and quite exclusive maternity, but less durable paternity. The father seems to be more fragile after separation, but more often enriched by the care of step-children. An innovative analysis is also offered by Sara Brachet regarding the division of labor in the care of children in the Swedish context. Here the gender inequalities paradoxically seem to be supported by regulatory mechanisms which are sometimes only egalitarian in theory.

Themes of gender in economic activity and employment intersect in the fourth part of this work. Here the relationship between autonomy and economic status of women in urban areas of Dakar and Lomé are addressed, from different points of view, by Agnès Adjamagbo and Philippe Antoine and by Donatien Beguy. This section also offers a theoretical discussion, as Souad Triki retraces the scientific path of the integration of gender analysis and economic thought, starting from the original model of family economics developed by Gary Becker.

The journey continues in the fifth section, discussing migration, which typically takes place during adulthood. This section presents migration in its many forms: internal or international, for work or marriage, tourism or study, seasonal or continuous, regular or irregular, addressing the phenomenon through varied and complementary approaches. In particular, several authors seek to deepen the readers understanding of immigration in France and Quebec: Jean-Baptiste Douma focuses on the feminization of the foreign population in France, highlighting the main determinants and implications. Stéphanie Condon guides the reader through the history of the female migration from Antilles during the 60's. She reveals a complexity of choices and paths encountered along the life cycle of an individual, until the transition to retirement, which does not necessarily entail the return to the country of origin. Mumpasi B. Lututala, offers reflections on the difficult path of migration of many Congolese women in Paris : in this case the information is captured from a small essentially qualitative survey, conducted in the French capital. Victor Piché and Jean Renaud offer the lecture insight into the process of economic integration experienced by the immigrant population in Montreal.

Returning to Africa, Amoakon Anoh, N'Guessan Koffi and Glébelho Lazare Sika emphasize the unique role played by immigration in a section of the Ivory Coast in West Africa, calling attention to the process of integration for foreigners in the national community, and the Ivorian government's lack of an explicit policy that regulates this process.

The theme of migration in Africa is discussed from another point of view by Valérie Delaunay and Catherine Enel, with reference to the living conditions of young seasonal migrants in Dakar. This study offers several important mes-

sages and lessons, especially regarding the evolution of social behavior and marriage, as well as contraception and reproductive health.

The sixth part of the work is devoted to the health transition and mortality. These phenomena span the life cycle, but during the health transition, they become increasingly a prerogative of older adults and elderly. Thus, Rosa Gómez-Redondo traces the rapid, even if delayed, health transition in Spain, highlighting its characteristics and trends in terms of gender differences.

Nonetheless the context of Africa is distinguished by levels of mortality that remain high at all ages, although lower than in the past. The explanatory factors, diverse and complex, again are analyzed in terms of gender disparities. Thus, Dominique Waltisperger examines gender differences in mortality in Antananarivo, focusing on the period of the crisis years of 1984-1988. Myriam Khlát and Agnès Guillaume emphasize the importance of definitional issues in addressing interventions in maternal mortality. Whereas initially maternal mortality was considered strictly from a medical perspective, more recently it has acquired a sociological dimension. Increasingly, family and social policies are being crafted to address this early form of mortality.

Several authors dwell on the effects of AIDS, both from a demographic and social point of view. Jacques du Guerny discusses the difficulties with which the issue of "women and AIDS" has found its way into the complex system of the United Nations. N'Guessan Koffi, G. Lazare Sika and Gnamessan Ali-Kouadio study the social behavior change among young people faced with the difficult access to care in Côte d'Ivoire, while Annabel Desgrées du Loû deals with the evolution of the married couples' behaviors induced by the disease spread.

This chapter wouldn't be complete without the attention to the political aspects of women's health. Odile Frank turns a critical eye on the Cairo Conference, which places women at the center of international concerns in development, but at the same time reduces the health of women to their reproductive health alone, missing the underlying social and economic problems. Afterwards, the author suggests the broad outlines of a comprehensive approach to women's health, with an overall view of social and economic causes of female morbidity and mortality.

As highlighted by Jacques Vallin in the introduction to the book, understanding the demographic behavior in the light of gender issues requires not only attention to ever newer research problems, but also the development of appropriate measurement and analysis tools. The seventh part of the work includes three contributions along these lines. It includes examples of specific research problems: the regional variability of the sex ratio among centenarians observed in Italy, the relationship between migration and marriage in Senegal, and the housing situation in Mali. The three studies develop interesting methods. The first developed by Graziella Caselli, Jean-Marie Robine and Domenica Rasulo, proposes a longitudinal analysis, based on wide-ranging statistical data

available in Italy since 1870. In the second case, Catherine Enel and Gilles Pison document an original method of investigating union formation by women staying in a village and those of her sisters who emigrated to the city. In the third case Richard Marcoux focuses on advantages of the integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The book concludes with a look at the scientific walk of Thérèse Locoh, proposed by Michèle Ferrand and Maryse Jaspard, and by Christine Tichit, Tania Vichnevskaja and Yara Makdessi. The work is enriched by an interview to T.L. realised by Annie Labourie Racapé and Monique Meron published in the French review *Travail, genre et société*, but especially by two personal touches of Mohammed Mazouz and François Heran, which constitute an element of specificity of the book.

Starting from this last part of the work, together with the enlightened introduction of Jacques Vallin and the postscript of Dennis Cordell, the reader could get the overall meaning of the work.

The strength of this book lies in having touched all demographic aspects around the theme of gender and Africa, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches and allowing room for innovative methods of analysis. All contributions are conducted under scientific rigour and are topically linked. A permeating policy-oriented purpose makes the work appealing for a wide audience; not only demographers, sociologists, epidemiologists, anthropologists or historians, but also political scientists and policy makers.

Despite the variety and complexity of the chapters, the result is comprehensive and consistent. The reading is enjoyable and expertly introduced by Jacques Vallin, who pulled the thread through this pleasant journey.

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