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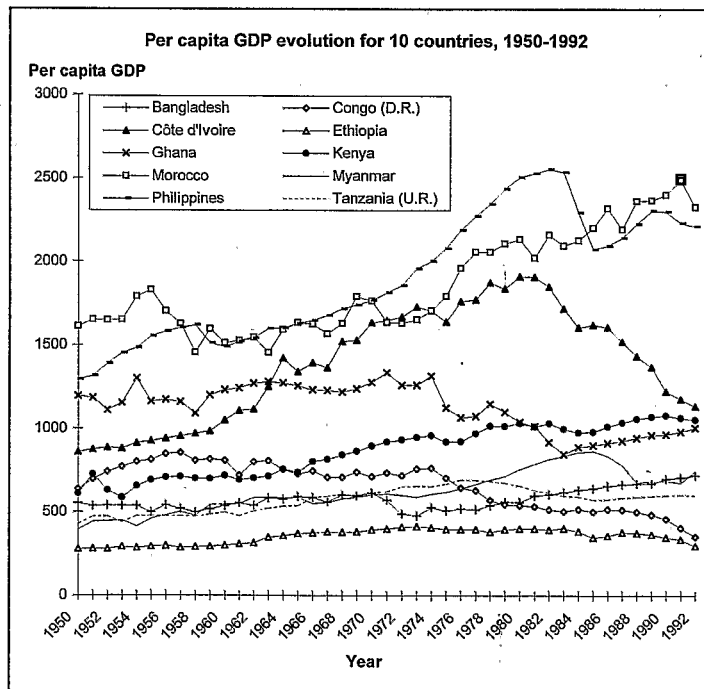
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Crisis with a range of causes and consequences (economic, social and cultural) are currently affecting many countries. Poverty, meanwhile, persists when it is not actually spreading. The relations between crisis, poverty and demographic changes are receiving attention from a growing number of researchers. This was the theme of a book published by the CEPED in 1996.¹ The two articles in this issue of *The Ceped News* deal respectively with the links between poverty and fertility and between crisis and mortality. The first article is by F. Gendreau and is based on the conclusions of the research conference organized at the end of 1996 by the UREF Demography Network at Ouagadougou.² The second article is by M. Garenne and explores the impact of political crises on childhood mortality using examples drawn from five countries: Uganda, Ghana, Rwanda, Madagascar and Mozambique.

POVERTY AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

For several decades the term poverty was little used, but since the beginning of the 1980s, with the onset of economic crisis and the solutions proposed by the international institutions, it has been in widespread use. The question at issue is important, since the analysis of poverty given by these institutions and foreign investors determines the form of their action. Experience has shown that their analysis is based on the liberal ideology and that the remedies they advocate involve an



increased role for market forces (price deregulation, removal of trade barriers, a reduced role for the State, etc.). Several aspects of this liberal approach, however, actually help to create or exacerbate poverty (global economic integration, primary commodity price fixing, international division of labour, etc.).

Many countries are facing serious situations whose causes and forms are multiple, bringing a stagnation or deterioration in living conditions for all or part

¹ Coussy (J), Vallin (J), eds., 1996, *Crise et population en Afrique. Crises économiques, politiques d'ajustement et dynamiques démographiques*, CEPED, Paris.

² Gendreau (F), Lucas (E), eds., 1998, *Crises, pauvreté et changements démographiques dans les pays du Sud*, ESTEM and UREF, Paris. This conference was organized jointly with the UERD (Unité d'Enseignement et de Recherche en Démographie) of the University of Ouagadougou. Unless specified, most of the quotations in this article are taken from this book. This article was published in French in the « Chronique du CEPED », n.29.

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of their population. The scale of the problem is clear from macro-economic data. The twenty-six countries studied by the OECD in the period 1950-92 which had a per capita GNP of less than \$2000 in 1950 (in 1990 dollar values) included Japan, Greece and Turkey, Bulgaria, Rumania and Yugoslavia and Brazil, as well as ten countries of Asia and nine of Africa. In addition to the 'Japanese Miracle' and the 'Asian Tigers' (South Korea and Taiwan), several countries have achieved very acceptable levels of growth in their per capita GNP, including the two southern European countries, the two « baby Tigers » (Indonesia and Thailand), and China and Egypt. In all these countries per capita GNP rose threefold during the period in question. By contrast, ten countries have experienced much lower rates of growth, with less than a doubling of per capita GNP. In decreasing order of growth, these are: Myanmar, Kenya, Philippines, Morocco, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, Bangladesh; for Ethiopia, the growth is actually close to zero; and in two countries, Ghana and DR of Congo (former Zaire), there has been a contraction³.

Closer examination reveals divergences in this broad outline, however. From figure 1 it can be seen that for nine of these ten countries the curve of per capita GNP reached its maximum during this period, while in four of them (Ethiopia, DR of Congo, Ivory Coast and Ghana), per capita GNP in 1982 was less than 80% of this maximum. The shape of the curves varies greatly depending on the country. Growth in Morocco was slow but steady throughout this period. The Philippines and Ivory Coast experienced a phase of high growth up to the start of the 1980s but then entered a phase of contraction which by 1992 had taken their per capita GNP down to the levels of 1976 and 1962, respectively. The seven other countries are all located in the lower half of the diagram, with growth levels that are very low, almost non-existent (Bangladesh, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania) or even negative (Ghana and DR of Congo). There is clearly a wide variation in the situations and economic dynamics at work, related to the diversity of political contexts, development strategies, regional environments, etc. It is for this reason that Jean-Marc Ela has argued for using 'the entire range of restructuring processes at work between the State, the economy and society' as the framework for analysis.

Conceptual and methodological framework

The relationship between poverty and demography has often been the subject of hasty interpretations. In the Programme of Action adopted at the Cairo Conference in 1994, for example, it is stated that: « The

elimination of poverty will help to halt population growth and accelerate its stabilisation ». This implies that poverty is actually responsible for high population growth, a view which is known to require extensive qualification. Population growth was for long regarded as a major and direct cause of under-development, crises and poverty. Nowadays, however, the opposite causality is also being considered, and the concepts of crisis and poverty have in turn appeared as factors in demographic explanation. The fundamental question at issue here concerns the nature of interrelations between the present crisis, poverty and demographic change in the Third World countries, at the level of society and within families, and more generally the implications of the crisis and worsening poverty for the demographic transition. Providing answers to these questions raises many methodological problems: these include data availability (the limited comparability of demographic and economic data); imbrication of phenomena (for example, dissociating the effects of the economic crisis from the economic policies intended as remedies); the non-linear and even reversible character of the changes; the qualifications to be made in the analysis (does a particular phenomenon have an influence? Is it a « trigger » or an « accelerator »?).

Situations of poverty and crisis require an examination of the various demographic, economic and social mechanisms whereby societies reproduce themselves. The reactions to these conditions from populations, families and individuals are multiple and present in all three of these areas of social reproduction. Examples include: the transformations in relations of gender and generation, changes in the systems of production and exchange, and modifications in labour market conditions. These reactions occur in different time-scales, so that as well as immediate effects there are also longer-term effects linked to the behavioural changes produced in response to the new circumstances. It is important that analysis distinguish between structural and contextual phenomena, given that adaptations may be simple temporary reactions or lasting shifts in response to situations which become structural. As regards demographic or socio-demographic aspects, the reactions may take the form of changes in phenomena such as mobility and nuptiality behaviours. We can illustrate this by focusing on changes in fertility.

Poverty and fertility

The original paradigm of the fertility transition, namely « modernisation » in the sense of a context of economic progress, has been gradually enriched, if not actually challenged, by the inclusion of the broader aspects of societal transformation: social, cultural, religious, political and institutional, etc. This multidimensional approach was necessary given that the fertility

³ Maddison (A), 1995, *L'économie mondiale 1820-1992. Analyses et statistiques*, OECD, Paris, 274pp.

transition has sometimes occurred historically in very unfavourable economic contexts, including in countries experiencing crisis or impoverishment. No mechanical link exists between modernisation and fertility reduction: specific conditions are responsible for particular situations which cannot be extrapolated in time or place.⁴

Another point to be noted is that a fertility decline can occur among poor populations. This has been shown for Latin America by Maria Cosio-Zavala, who distinguishes between « transitions of modernization » and « transitions of poverty ». Her analysis shows that while the fall in fertility is larger and faster in the wealthier countries and in the most affluent sections of the population, a fall is also observed in the poorest countries and in the poorest sections of the population: these are survival strategies reflecting the increasing difficulties that parents have to bring up, educate and care for their children, strategies which can be implemented thanks to the availability of contraceptive information and material.⁵ Without this the fertility transition either does not occur or is much slower. Three types of country and groups of population can thus be identified: those experiencing the classic transition that is part of modernisation, a transition associated with poverty, and no transition.

The consideration of different time scales is of fundamental importance here, as Patrice Vimard has pointed out: « If the fertility transition begins or speeds up in periods of difficulty, this is because earlier developments in the fields of education, health and social relations have made possible the change. The role of the crisis is simply to trigger or accelerate a change in mentalities whose bases have distant origins. » It can be seen that taking into consideration the contexts and different scales of study reveals the complexity and diversity of situations.

⁴ In this context, mention may be made of the international seminar in Mexico (2-4 June 1998) organized by the CICRED on the theme of *Poverty, fertility and family planning*.

⁵ Cosio-Zavala (M), 1992, *Transitions démographiques et développement social dans les pays en développement*, Meeting of the Group of Experts on population growth and the evolution of demographic structures, 21pp.

Overall approach

The wide variation in conditions is clear from Table 1. No correlation can be discerned between the levels for either the first or second periods. Bangladesh, Morocco and Tanzania have experienced fairly similar increases in per capita GNP, but while fertility fell by approximately 50 % in the first two, it fell by only 20 % in the third. Although Ivory Coast and Ghana started and ended this period with the same fertility levels, per capita GNP had risen by 32 % in the former but fallen by 16 % in the latter. Ghana thus appears to be a country which has become poorer yet where fertility has nonetheless been reduced.

The question can also be explored in a single-country context. In Vietnam, for example, fertility is highest (4.9 children per woman) in the poorest 20 % of the population, and falls steadily before reaching 1.8

children for the wealthiest 20 %. Dang Thu and co-authors remain cautious, however, because « no simple generalisation can be made about the relationship between poverty and fertility », and interpreting this result would require an in-depth analysis including other variables, such as type of habitat (urban or rural), educational level, the extent and success of family planning programmes.

Table 1 : Changes in per capita GNP and fertility

Country	per capita GNP (\$)		Summary fertility index	
	1950	1992	1950-55	1990-95
Bangladesh	551	720	6.66	3.40
DR of Congo	636	353	6.00	6.70
Côte d'Ivoire	859	1134	6.90	5.70
Ethiopia	277	300	7.15	7.00
Ghana	1193	1007	6.90	5.70
Kenya	609	1055	7.51	5.40
Morocco	1611	2327	7.17	3.75
Myannar	393	748	6.00	3.60
Philippines	1293	2213	7.29	4.00
Tanzania	427	601	6.74	5.90

Sources : Maddison, 1995, and United Nations estimates

A case study in a rural milieu

Poverty and economic hardship are experienced at the level of individuals and households, and it is at these levels that decisions are taken about adaptations and behaviour changes in the demographic and economic spheres. This approach can be illustrated with the comparative study conducted by Agnès Adjamagbo and Valérie Delaunay on two zones of West Africa: Niakhar, in Senegal's groundnut basin, and Sassandra, in the south-west of Ivory Coast. For these authors, « the analysis of the relations between economic factors and fertility involves complex processes about which it is hard to make general conclusions » given that « conflicting logics are at work ».

The crisis which has affected these two zones is not of the same nature although there are elements common to both, notably falling primary commodity prices (groundnuts in the former, coffee and cocoa in the