

Age-Sex Structure for Selected African countries in the early 2000s

Abstract

This paper uses data from the recent United Nations population projections to examine the changing age-sex structure in selected African countries and links these to changes in social and economic development. African countries are at different stages of the demographic transition and have differing age-sex structure. Available statistics indicate that Africa is slowly becoming an aging society. The growth of the elderly population presents many problems for the African society. In traditional African societies, the care for elders has been the responsibility of younger family members. This paper focuses on how social change and the rapid growth rate of the aging population have influenced African's family care-giving traditions, and how changes of the family structure and social values affect the needs of institutionalized care systems. In addition, the paper looks at how countries respond to the new realities through appropriate policies and programmes to meet the needs of all age groups.

Introduction

Since Second World War African countries experienced a downward trend in mortality. This trend has been reversed with the advent of HIV/AIDS pandemic.

In the last fifteen years or so, fertility has been observed to be declining in most African countries. In fact all countries that have participated in the DHS have shown some decline in fertility.

Recently there has been an increase in both internal and international migration patterns. More and more young people are leaving rural localities for urban areas and skilled professionals are leaving the continent for better employment opportunities overseas.

The above-described demographic changes have had an impact on the growth and structure of African population. Most African countries are now experiencing increases in the elderly population.

Objective

The main objective of the study is to examine the changing age-sex structure in selected African countries and link these to changes in some aspects of social and economic development.

Data and Methods

The data for this study was obtained from the most recent projections and estimates as prepared by the United Nations Population Division. Medium variant was used. In addition, wherever possible, supplementary data was obtained from existing population censuses and demographic surveys.

Using the above-described data we calculated various social and economic indicators (percentage of the population above 65 years and over, dependency ratio, Percentage of women in the labor force,

Population pyramid were also constructed for selected years between 1950 and 2030.

In order to have a representative sample of the African population, we selected at least one country from each region (North, West, East, Central and Southern Africa).

Results

Preliminary analyses indicate an increase in the population aged 65 years and over.

Countries that have witnessed fertility decline (Botswana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana and South Africa) indicate a decline in the population aged 0-4 years.

There have also been changes in the socio-economic conditions that have contributed to demographic changes. For example school enrolments, especially for females, have climbed in recent years. Illiteracy was higher among women than men in all the selected countries 1990 (see Table --). Girls are still much less likely to be enrolled in school than boys in many sub-Saharan African countries, which suggests that the gender gap in education will be repeated in the next generation. Girls' representation decreases as they move up the education ladder, and drops precipitously at the university level

Illiteracy and School Enrollment by Sex, Selected Countries, 1990

Country	Percent illiterate				School enrolment (females per 100 males)	
	Ages 15-24		Ages 25+		Secondary level	Tertiary level
	Women	Men	Women	Men		
Cameroon	29	15	68	43	68	-
Egypt	46	29	78	50	79	59
Ethiopia	69	51	89	74	76	22
Kenya	14	8	54	26	69	45
Sudan	61	41	88	63	77	67
Uganda	37	23	67	37	53	38

Source: UN, The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics (1995) table 7.

Figure x Population Pyramid for Algeria, 2003

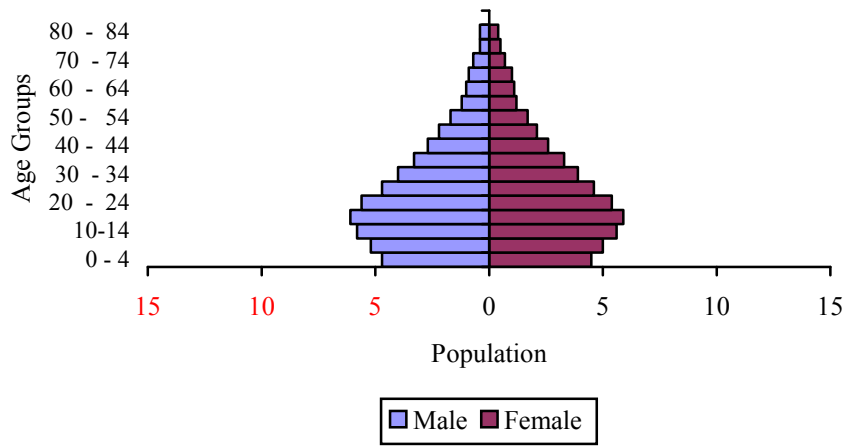


Figure x Population Pyramid for Benin, 2002

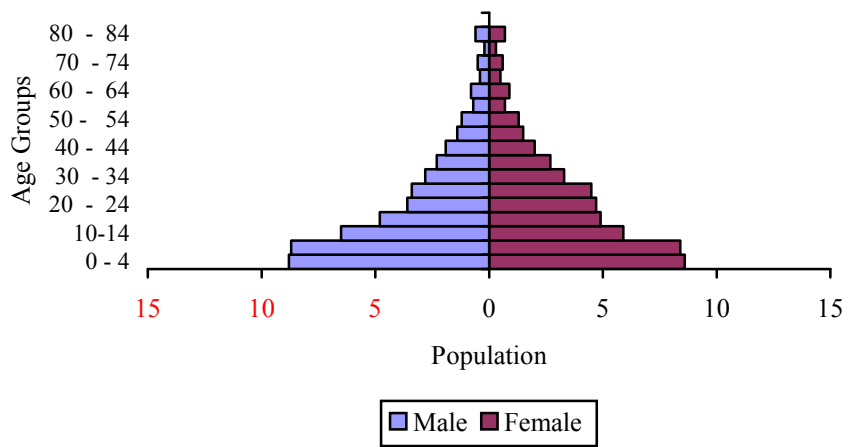


Figure x Population Pyramid for Botswana, 2001

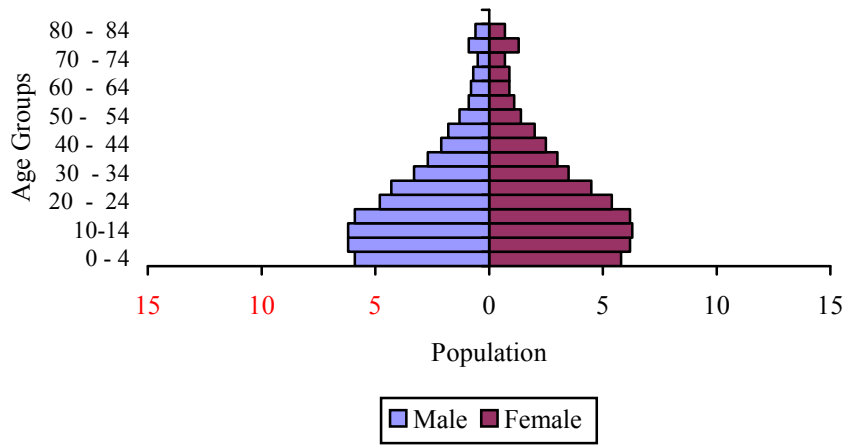


Figure x Population Pyramid for Burkina Faso, 1996

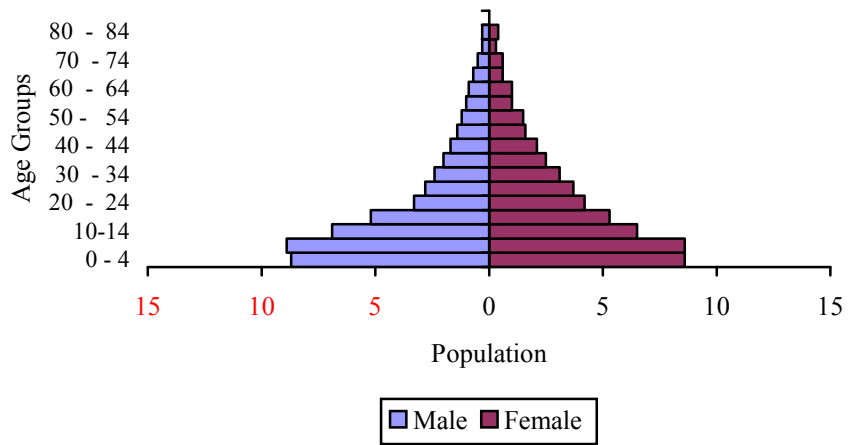


Figure x Population Pyramid for Cape Verde, 2003

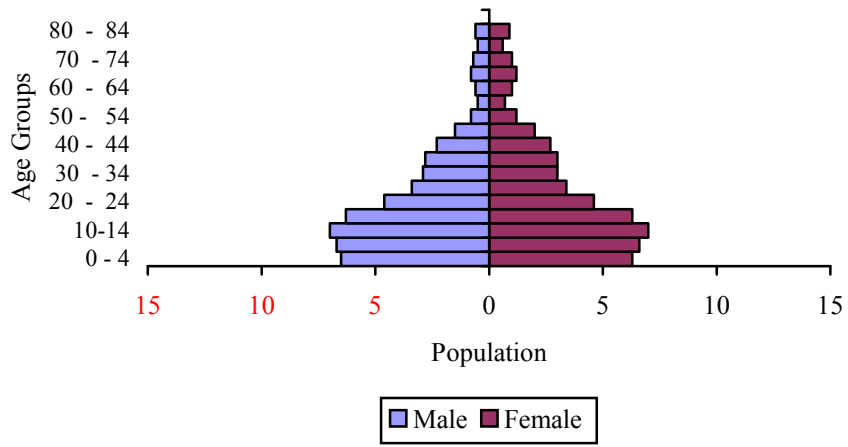


Figure x Population Pyramid for Ethiopia, 2002

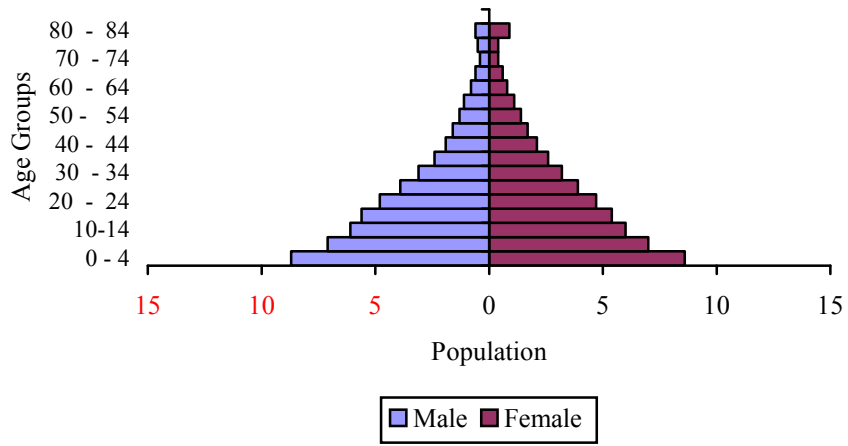


Figure x Population Pyramid for Ghana, 2000

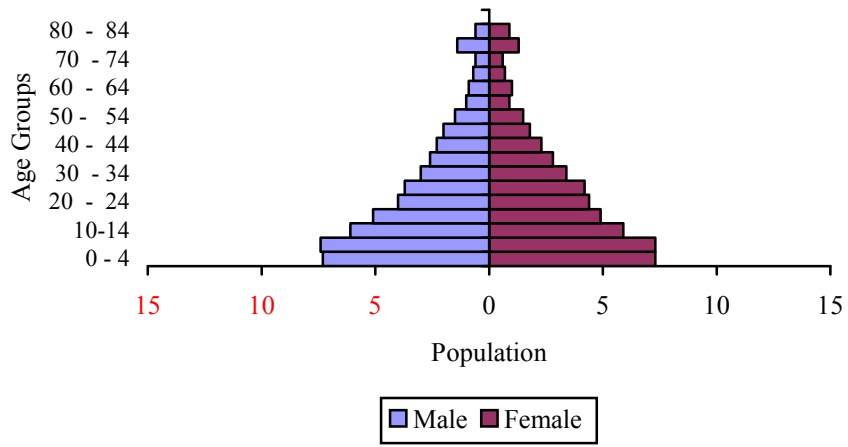


Figure x Population Pyramid for Guinea, 1996

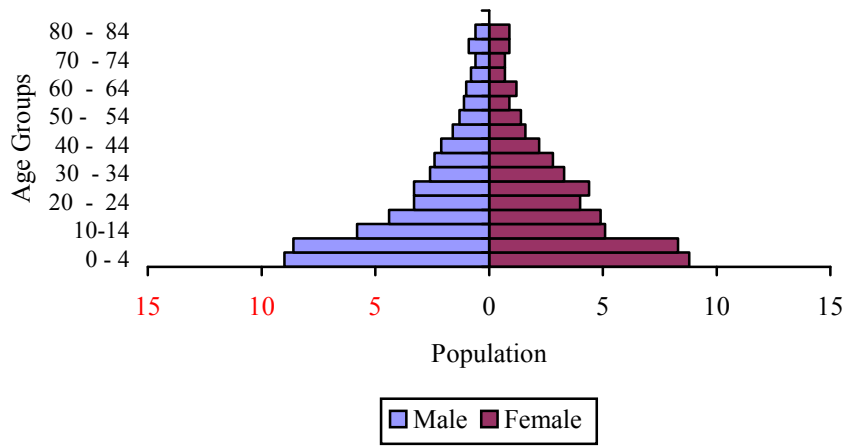


Figure x Population Pyramid for Lesotho, 2001

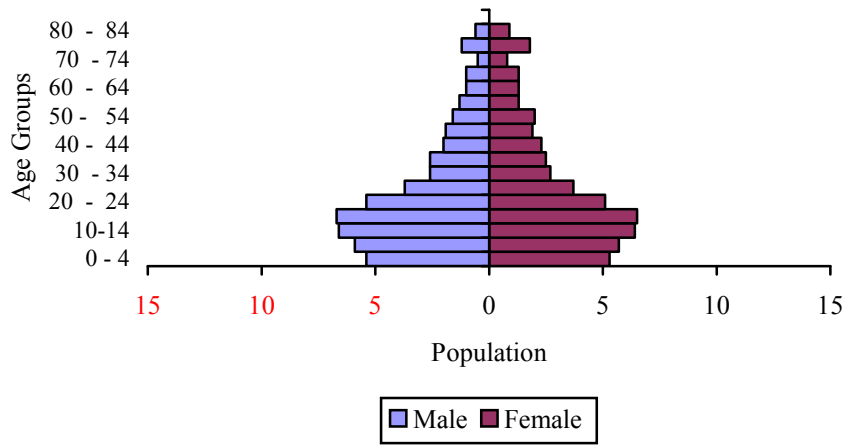


Figure x Population Pyramid for Malawi, 1966

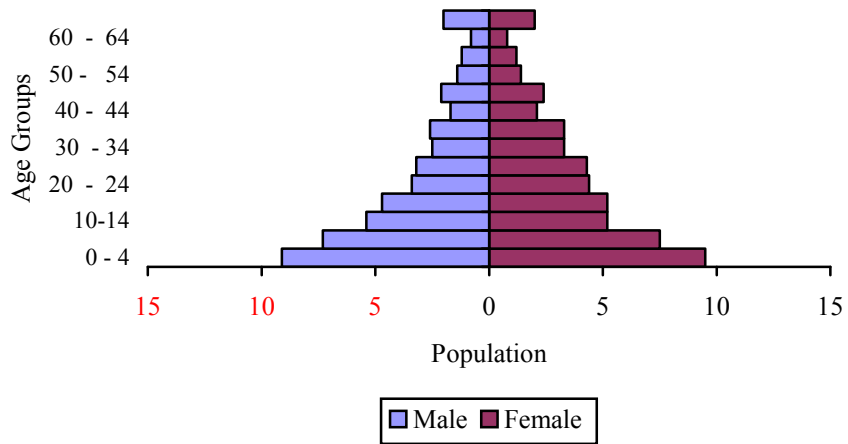


Figure x Population Pyramid for Malawi, 1977

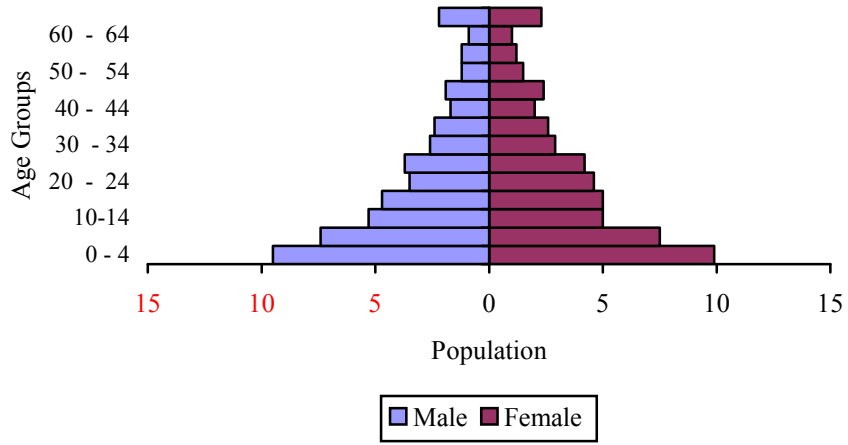


Figure x Population Pyramid for Malawi, 1998

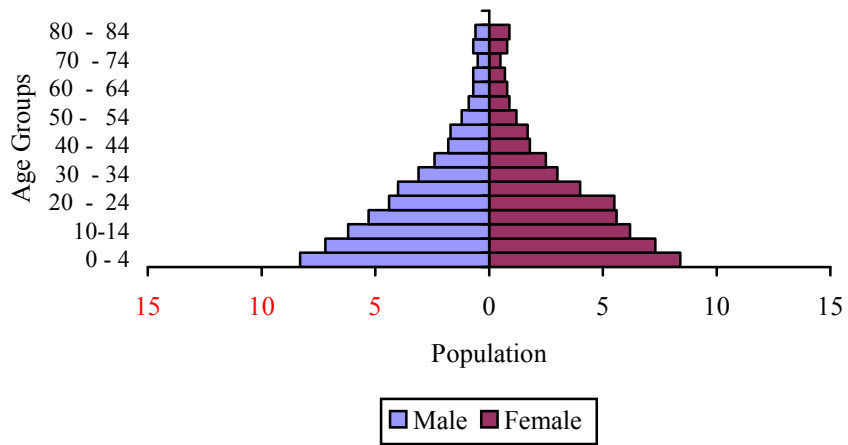


Figure x Population Pyramid for Mauritius, 2002

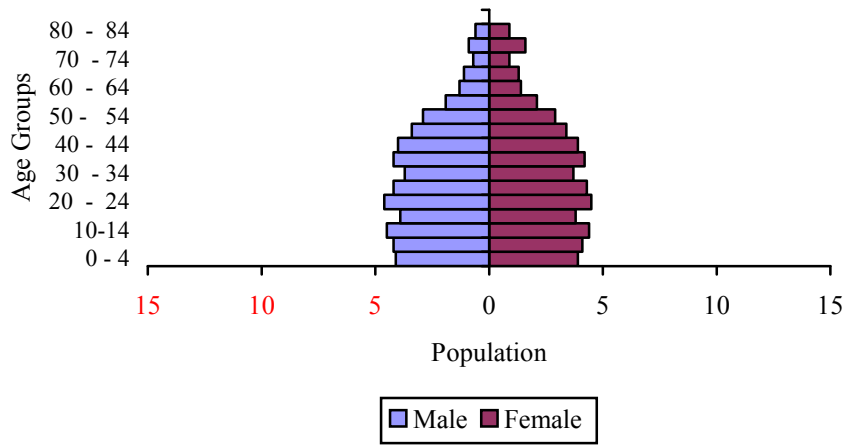


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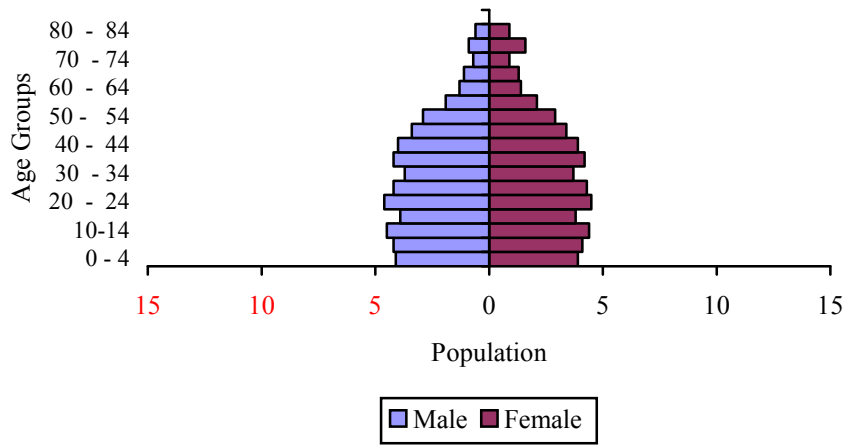


Figure x Population Pyramid for Morroco, 2003

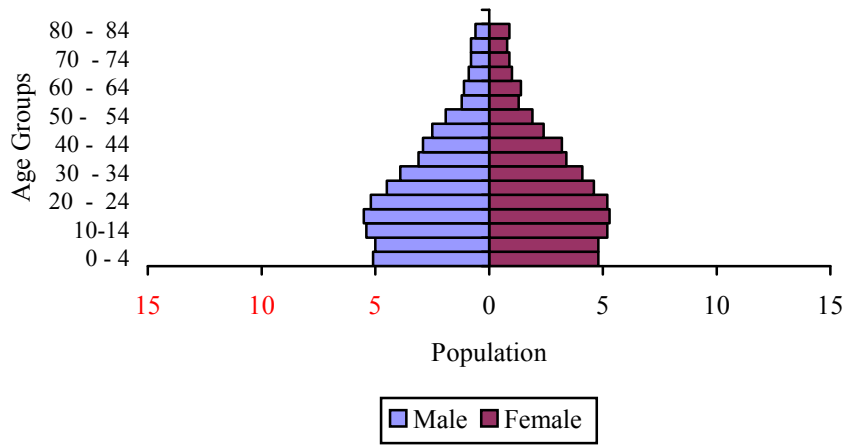


Figure x Population Pyramid for Mozambique, 1997

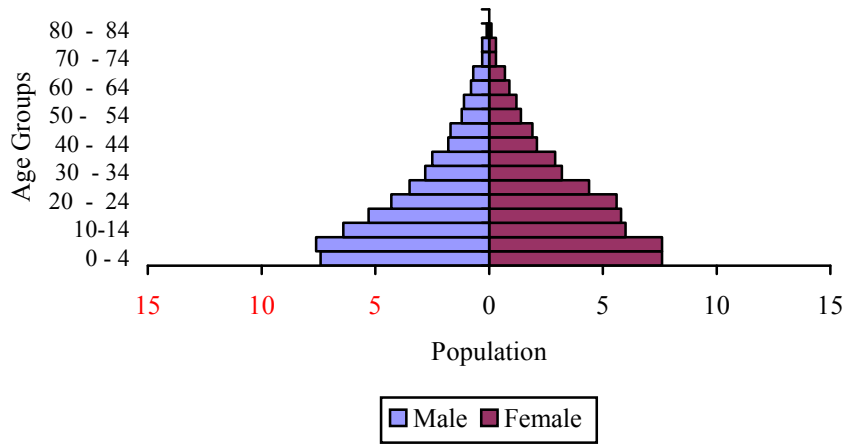


Figure x Population Pyramid for Namibia, 2001

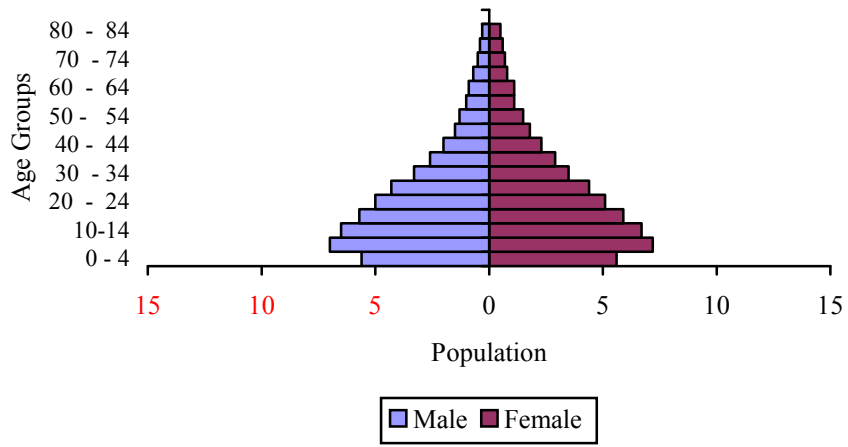


Figure x Population Pyramid for Nigeria, 2000

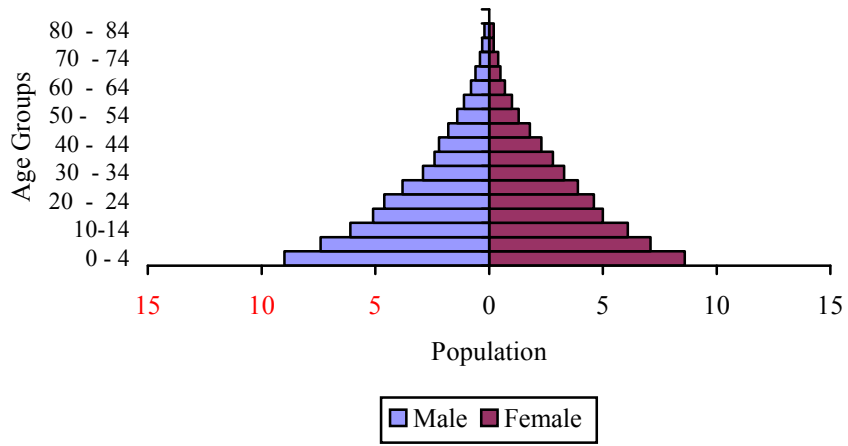


Figure x Population Pyramid for Reunion, 1999

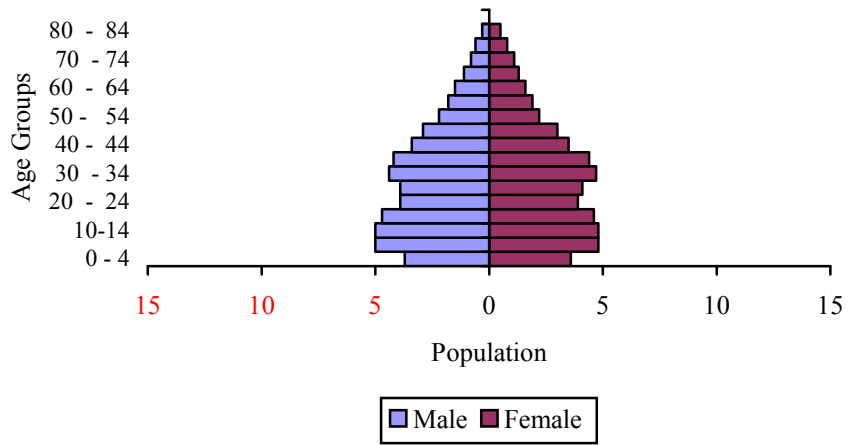


Figure x Population Pyramid for Rwanda, 2002

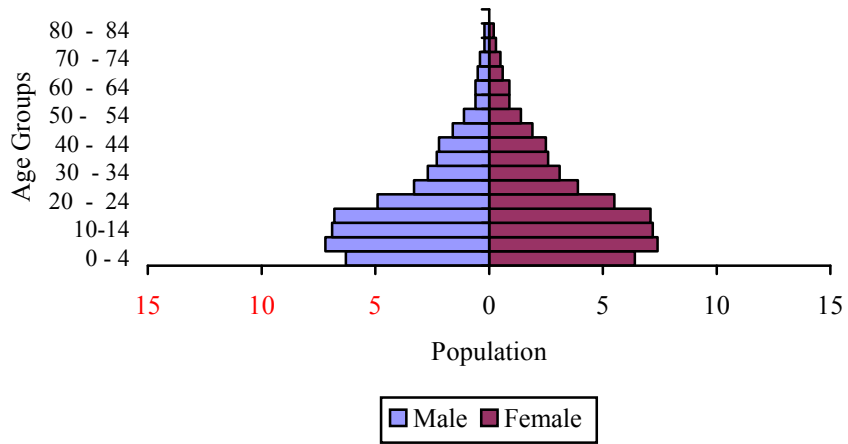


Figure x Population Pyramid for St Helena, 1998

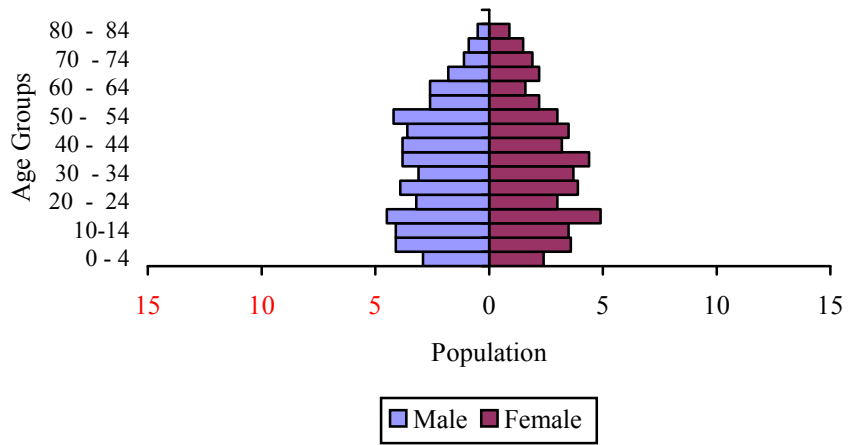


Figure x Population Pyramid for Seychelles, 1998

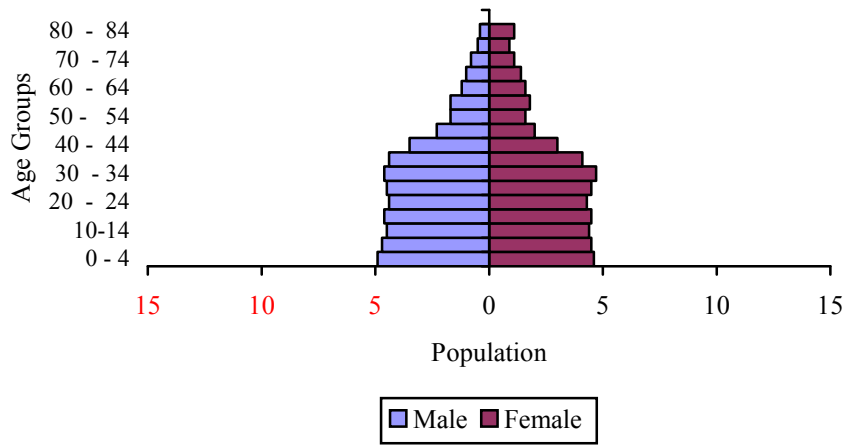


Figure x Population Pyramid for Sierra Leone, 2003

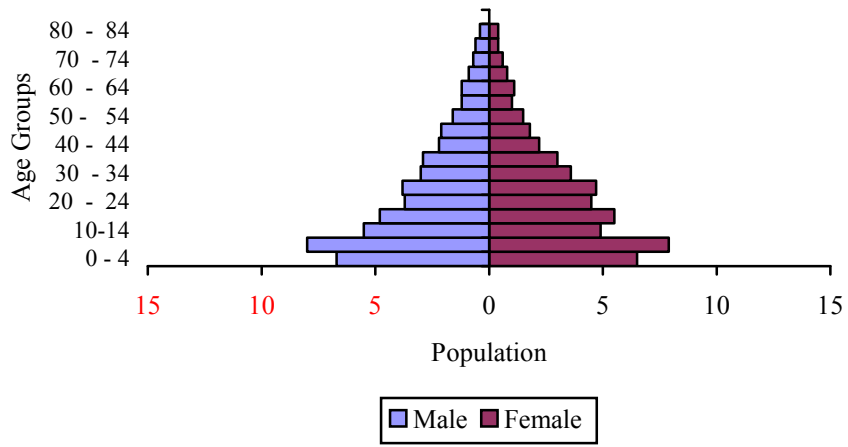


Figure x Population Pyramid for Somalia, 2002

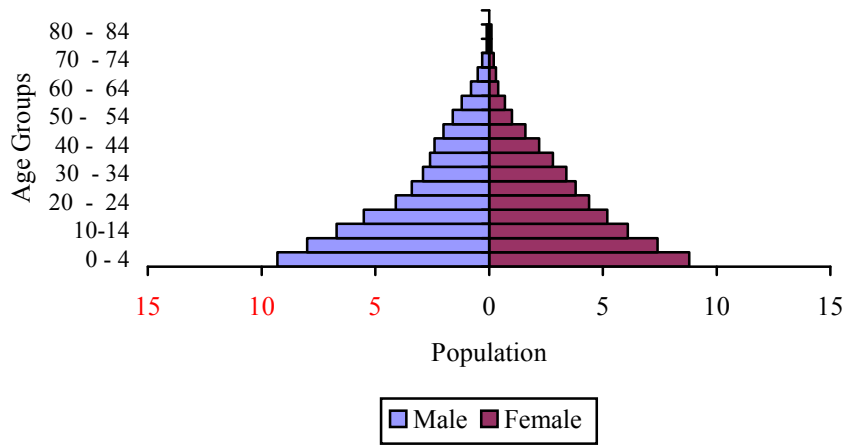
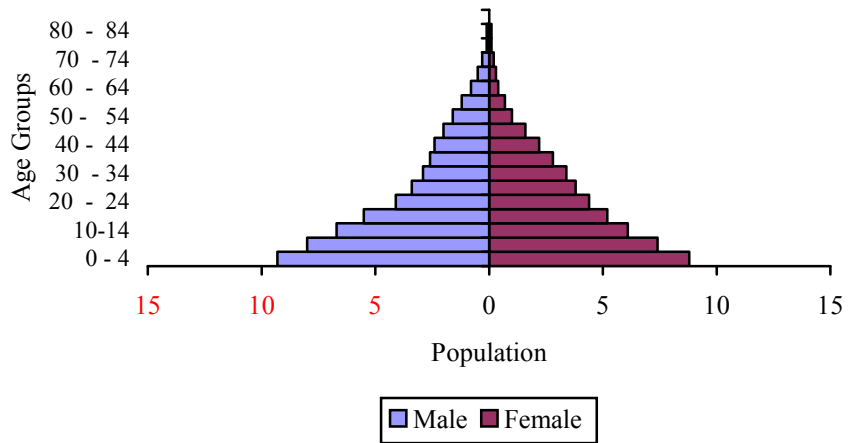


Figure x Population Pyramid for Somalia, 2002



Conclusion

The changing age-sex structure of the population is having tremendous impact on not only demographic variables but also family and gender relations. All these aspects need to be investigated.

References

Population Reference Bureau (2007) 2007 World Population Data Sheet, Washington.

United Nations (2006) *World Population Projections and Prospects*, New York.

