**Using Labour Force Surveys for Comparative Research in Demography: Looking Forward to the IPUMS LFS Project**

**Friday 22nd November 2019**

**Salle Sauvy, INED, Paris**

**Pôle Perspectives Internationales workshop**

**Organisation: Milan Bouchet-Valat & Lidia Panico (Ined)**

For many years, Eurostat has provided harmonized Labour Force Surveys (LFS) data for many European countries. This data constitutes a rich source for cross-national comparative analysis, providing a larger array of variables than censuses, on a quarterly basis for large samples of individuals within households. These advantages have recently prompted the IPUMS international project to start working on the harmonization and dissemination of Labour Force Surveys microdata for Europe and beyond. After a presentation of this ongoing project, three scientific presentations will illustrate the uses of this data for social sciences, including long-term unemployment, women’s employment and union formation, and the educational gradient of motherhood.

**Program**

**8:45 Welcome café**

**9:00 Session 1**

Albert Esteve & Mariona Lozano (Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, Barcelona) – “The Harmonization of International Labor Force Survey Microdata: IPUMS Meets the Challenge”

Mariona Lozano (Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, Barcelona) – “Boom, Bust, and Goodbye: The Length of Long-Term Unemployment Before and After the Great Recession and its Implications for an Aging Europe”

**10:15 Pause**

**10:45 Session 2**

André Grow (Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research) – “The Changing Importance of Women’s Labor Market Position for Union Formation: Evidence from European Cohorts Born Between 1940 and 1980”

Caroline Berghammer (University of Vienna & Austrian Academy of Sciences) – “Change in the Educational Gradient of Single Mothers Since the 1970s in European Countries: A Family Life Course Approach”

**12:15 Close**

**Abstracts**

**The Harmonization of International Labor Force Survey Microdata: IPUMS Meets the Challenge**

**Albert Esteve1 & Mariona Lozano1**

1 Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, Barcelona

Increased availability of international microdata has resulted in an emergence of cross-national studies based on comparable and harmonized data. The IPUMS international project has contributed to such expansion by collecting, harmonizing and disseminating over one billion person records in 443 samples of census and survey microdata from 98 countries, spanning from the 1960s to the present. As the harmonization of the census database is reaching its limits and more and more countries are abandoning the idea of traditional censuses, IPUMS is turning their efforts to Labor Force Surveys, which are widely available across countries. In this presentation, I present the IPUMS strategy to collect, harmonize and disseminate European Labor Force Survey microdata. One of the first results in this direction has been the June 2019 release of Italian and Spanish Labor Force Survey microdata by IPUMS.

**Boom, Bust, and Goodbye: The Length of Long-Term Unemployment Before and After the Great Recession and its Implications for an Aging Europe**

**Mariona Lozano**1 (with Elisenda Renteria1)

1Centre d’Estudis Demogràfics, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Aging societies mean shrinking workforces, and hence most governments plan to extend working lives and pass legislation to promote activity among older workers. Nonetheless, after the Great Recession, the increase in long-term unemployment is challenging these objectives. In this paper, we examine the length of long-term unemployment across age groups and countries during the last 17 years in the EU-28, and analyze differences between the economic boom cycle (2000-2007), economic bust (2008-2013) and initial recovery (2013-2017). We use the EU-LFS and mortality data from HMD to estimate years in long-term unemployment, and decompose changes into effects of mortality and employment behavior.

Our results show a strong polarization between Southern Europe and the rest of the continent. In Southern countries, men and women were expected to live up to 5 years looking for a job between the ages of 15 and 49, and only small signs of recovery were recorded after the economic bust. Figures were smaller for older workers, but changes in labor market participation explained the loss of working years as they opted for exiting the labor market. Decomposition analyses showed that inactivity explained the reduction in years being unemployed, and no years of employment were gained after the crisis for the long-term unemployed. The improvement in mortality only partially contributes to explain changes in working time, and the main effects are attributable to changes in economic cycles.

**The Changing Importance of Women’s Labor Market Position for Union Formation: Evidence from European Cohorts Born Between 1940 and 1980**

**André Grow**1 (with Jan Van Bavel2)

1 Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research

2 University of Leuven

Women’s economic role in society has changed dramatically over the last decades. Starting around the 1960s, women’s participation in the labor force increased and they increasingly entered previously male dominated occupations. Valerie Oppenheimer theorized that changes in women’s economic role are likely to affect the foundations of family formation. She predicted that with the convergence between men’s and women’s women economic roles, uncertainty in women’s labor market position would become an increasingly important impediment to marriage for them.

In this paper, we test Oppenheimer’s prediction with data from the European Labour Force Survey in 31 countries, for cohorts born between 1940–1980. We focus on individuals’ unemployment risk as an indicator of the uncertainty that surrounds their position on the labor market. In line with Oppenheimer’s hypothesis, our results suggest that over successive cohorts, higher levels of unemployment risk are increasingly negatively related to the likelihood that women are married.

**Change in the Educational Gradient of Single Mothers Since the 1970s in European Countries: A Family Life Course Approach**

**Caroline Berghammer**1 (with Anna Matysiak2, Torkild Lyngstad3 & Francesca Rinesi4)

1Department of Sociology, University of Vienna; Vienna Institute of Demography, Austrian Academy of Sciences

2University of Warsaw

3University of Oslo

4Italian National Institute of Statistics

Previous research demonstrated that the prevalence of single motherhood is highest among low educated mothers, both in the US and Europe. We contribute to this knowledge by examining long-term trends in the educational gradient in single motherhood and studying how the effect of education changes over the family life course. We include eight European countries (Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom). The analysis is based on censuses and labour force surveys from the 1970s to around 2015.

Our results show that the education gap in single motherhood generally turned from positive to negative (except for the UK and Norway where it was already negative in the 1970s), but that its strength differs (still) considerably between countries. The education gap is by far widest among mothers with young children (0 to 4 years; partly 5 to 9 years) and it has increased most strongly in Ireland, the UK and Poland.

For many years, Eurostat has provided harmonized Labour Force Surveys (LFS) data for many European countries. This data constitutes a rich source for cross-national comparative analysis, providing a larger array of variables than censuses, on a quarterly basis for large samples of individuals within households. These advantages have recently prompted the IPUMS international project to start working on the harmonization and dissemination of Labour Force Surveys microdata for Europe and beyond. After a presentation of this ongoing project, three scientific presentations will illustrate the uses of this data for social sciences, including long-term unemployment, women’s employment and union formation, and the educational gradient of motherhood.