

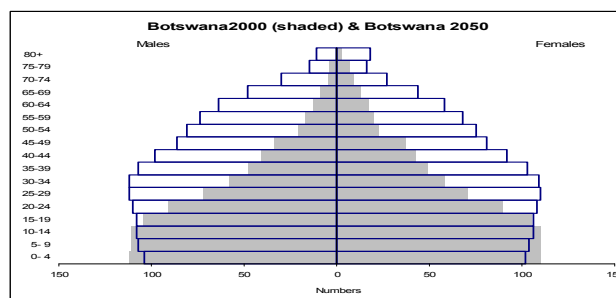
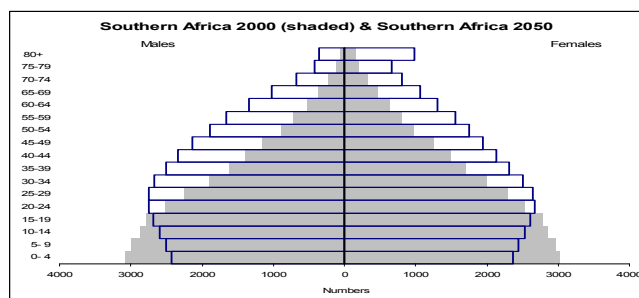
Thinking on Age Structural Transition in Southern Africa: A Short and Long Term Consequences

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Abstract

It is well known that twentieth century witnessed remarkable demographic transformations. Since mid-1980s, most developing countries have shown promising signs of fertility decline and the potential consequences of the changes in age structure have received growing recognition by demographers, economists and policy makers. This has led to the emergence of new concepts like age-structural transition, demographic bonus, and the demographic window of opportunity. It has become clear that following fertility decline a period of demographic change will be ushered in during which the number and relative size of the young, working age population will surpass that of children (ages 0-14) and the elderly (ages 65+). This period will present developing countries and Africa continent as well with a unique opportunity to invest in human capital formation, improve the quality of their labour force and stimulate economic growth. The aim of this paper is to review the unfolding picture of age-structural transition in Southern Africa in during 2000-2050 and to explore its policy implications. Data used in this analysis is mostly taken from the United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospects (UN, 2008 Revised).

As a result of age-structural transition in southern Africa, the ratio of children of total population of southern Africa has dropped slowly while that of the elderly (Population aged 60 and over) is growing systematically and will rise from just 6.0% at the threshold of the 21st to above 13.0% in 2050. It will show commensurate changes in dependency ratios, it means a decline in child dependency ratio along with a gradual rise in elderly dependency ratio. The period between 2020-2035, this figure will be accompanied by a widening of the demographic window of opportunity. If these opportunities wouldn't be met, southern Africa may be faced to serious problems of ageing especially health care, social security and retirement systems in the early of 2040s.



Key Words: Demographic Transition, Age-Structure, and Southern Africa

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