



The role of general census of population and housing in achieving comprehensive development in Algeria

Mayouf Rachida¹, Setti M'hammed¹

¹Laboratory of Cities, Regions and Territorial Governance, FST-GAT-USTHB, Algiers, Algeria

To cite this article: Rachida, M., M'hammed, S. (2016) The role of general census of population and housing in achieving comprehensive development in Algeria. *Lucrările Seminarului Geografic Dimitrie Cantemir*, Vol. 42, pp. 181-188. DOI: 10.15551/lsgdc.v42i0.16

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15551/lsgdc.v42i0.16>





THE ROLE OF GENERAL CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING IN ACHIEVING COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ALGERIA

Mayouf Rachida¹, Setti M'hammed¹

Abstract: Censuses play an important role in processing development issues through its significant role in highlighting the statistical data for various demographic characteristics, social and economic of society, and so by doing a general census operation of population and habitation, which is one of the largest statistical operations, carried out by the states, and the most important and therefore reliable in the formulation of development programs and fill their needs in the field of population policy and habitation. Algeria is among the oldest Arab and African countries that organised a census of population and habitation system and with the advent of the French colonization of Algeria and it occupied in 1830. It knew 21 censuses during the colonial period and five censuses after independence from 1962 to the current day. These censuses differed among themselves in terms of accuracy, Totalitarianism and its goal in achieving comprehensive development in Algeria.

In this context, we will try through this research paper, to highlight the role of the general of population and housing in achieving comprehensive development in Algeria, and its importance in providing data and information for making a strategy program of development.

Keywords: General Census, Population and housing-comprehensive development, Algeria

Introduction

General Census of population and Housing is considered to be one of the biggest statistical operations conducted by the countries of the world and the most important of all it gives information that allows them to pinpoint the population's economic, social and demographic statue. Moreover, it helps the assessment of the different changes that occurred for population in time and we mainly relied on it for planning and programming the economic policies and future development strategies. Census of population has a distinctive feature of being a main source for information needed for demographic, economic and social researches. The information provided by the Census is used in a wide range for development planning and the assessment of its programs, as well as, in the field of analytic studies of all the social phenomena. The information about housing and its link to the population has a great importance when preparing residential projects and assessing them, moreover it used to evaluate the conditions of the dwellings how to improve it.

For making reliable strategies and control results for Census, Algeria, one of the many countries that rely on statistics for the development of many key sectors organizes a General¹Census of population and Housing each ten years that rely on for economic sectors.

¹ *Laboratory of Cities, Regions and Territorial Governance, FST-GAT-USTHB, Algiers, Algeria*

The population growth that Algeria has witnessed is remarkable, since the population has tripled (from 12 million from independence day 1962 to 34.4 million according to the last Census of Population and Housing in 2008). In addition, giving importance to Census operation cannot be separated from development projects under the title no development without statistics which confirms its value in statistical mechanisms for developmental operations and the importance of supporting and enforcing the statistical abilities and finding advanced statistical systems that meets the needs of the person in charge .

1. General Census of Population and housing and its procedure

Census of population and housing is considered one of the most important elements of the official statistical system of every country; it occupies significant range in developing and developed countries. It provides vital statistical information about different demographical, social and economic features of the society. According to United Nations which reported in one of its publication “there is a strong bond between population and accommodation censuses, that the two censuses can form one statistical operation, or might form two independent activities , but between them there is such great coordination that they shouldn’t be independent from each other completely, because they have basic shared element” [11].

General Census is prepared by the government, which is considered as survey in order to gather information about the society it governs, it allows to estimate the population and Housing and determine its characteristics , where it gives accurate and detailed data about the form and division of the population’s structure and the nature of its accommodations, these latter draws a clear picture while limited by time, that gets assembled by direct survey of people for no more than 15 days.

Approximately 90% of the countries of the world do the population and housing census, where statistical administration helps confirm to the government that the census benefits the community, where the overwhelming majority of the population knows that the country has the right to do censuses, which drives them into cooperation with the scanning process.

1.1. The classical census method

A general census is programmed almost every five or ten years, during this census all the information and data needed about population and accommodations is put in a form that is filled by the statistician after interrogating the citizens or it is sent by mail to the citizens to fill it themselves. Algeria is one of the countries that rely on the classical way of census.

1.2. Census that rely on administrative records

The information about the public is collected solely from administrative records (housing records, building records and accommodation units, civil statues record, etc.).

Sometimes the data collected from administrative records can be completed by data gathered in research that relies on a certain slice of society or by doing a partial census of the community; this method requires the existence of full administrative records that get updated regularly.

1.3. Census that relies on examination techniques.

Considering the problems of the method mentioned above, like the huge cost, the important resources that should be filled in such a short time, and the fast obsolescence of data for the classical census and the need to have full administrative records. A lot of countries have changed the way they do census, relying on examination techniques by doing partial

public censuses on really close time periods. These methods allow the countries to have renewable and updated data and with a lower cost than the classical census method and in addition the design of these examinations is different from one country to another and is specified by the properties of these countries. And right now UN is trying to always unite and enhance and expand the methods and performance and precision required to conduct censuses.

2. The relation between Population and Housing Census and comprehensive development

Comprehensive development means the rise of the society entirely in all its urban and rural developmental fields and levels and for all the categories in society. It means besides dealing with poverty, but providing job opportunities and eliminating illiteracy, and achieving justice in distributing national wealth, and guarantying the freedom of speech and the participation of the public in decision making. However, it is a collective conscious process and it is directed towards finding structural shifts that seeks through it to achieve goals and results in different aspects of political, social and economic aspect of life that is shown in Figure 1.

Statistical information and data in general is considered to be the main element in developmental planning, without it the countries' efforts for development can't be realized on the actual grounds. From here, we say that the information the general population and accommodation census provides, contributes in a big way in the process of developmental planning , and the most important aspects of this contribution is shown in :

-Relying mainly on the data and information gathered in affecting the citizen and the fields that witness shortage in development, and that includes using it in the process of putting the plans , programs and policies of development.

-The statistical data and information provides the necessary means to observe and evaluate the progress and success of the developmental projects and plans while evaluating impacts caused by these projects and plans.

Goals of Comprehensive Census		
Economical Goals	Social Goals	Political Goals
Increasing the productivity of work.	Caring for the working class	-producing and applying policies that can face foreign and domestic forces in all fields. -The existence of an active country on the side of the national community
Developing the local ability and nationalizing it	Increasing the existence of experts and scientists in the	
Relying on local product as a resource for investment	Improving the levels of education and health and luxury in general for all citizens	
Fighting poverty by reducing the gap of income and wealth distribution in the community	Increasing the participation of women in the economic activity and life fields in general	
Ending unemployment	Developing general knowledge	

Figure 1. Goals of Comprehensive Census (Source: the autors)

3. The evolution of censuses operation in Algeria

Algeria is considered one of the countries that had accommodation and population census brought into by the French colonization and occupation forces in 1880, and while in different times and conditions u can study the evolution of the census process in two different periods, the colonial period from 1830 to 1962 and the after independence period from 1966 to 2008.

3.1. Colonial period 1830 - 1962

When Algeria was conquered by the French colonizer in 1830, the population was not known, but meanwhile historians estimated approximately 3 million inhabitants [9]. France brought the census into Algeria to serve its benefits in the first place, where the first attempt to do a population census was in 1843 but it failed, then there was an another attempt in 1845 but it also failed for many reasons and the most important are :

- The modernity of the census process and the lack of awareness amongst citizens and their fear from the enquiring process.

- The lack of qualified statisticians that can survey the census.

- Incomplete census due to the fact that France hasn't took over Algeria entirely.

From the France attempts for trying to do a population census, sources varied reported that the first successful census of Algeria was conducted in 1836 [7], other resources reported that it was in 1886 [9], but most researches and sources that are interested in demographic studies see that the first census that was actually conducted in Algeria was in 1856, the second was in 1861 and the third in 1866. However the French administration kept conducting this census once every five years regularly, except the census of 1916 and the one of 1942 because of the first and Second World War and the census of 1945 is considered to be the last census of the colonial period, and by that Algeria has known 21 censuses in the time of the French colonial era.

These censuses were distinguished by being inaccurate and incomplete to include all of the population compared to the countries that censuses appeared in after, like the two developed countries, Iraq and Egypt , and that is the cause of the complete secrecy France has imposed on Algerians on one hand and its interest in the geographical distribution of the population rather than the properties and structure of the population on the other, and it appears during the stage of collecting and indexing the information that the censuses before 1936 were not published except for the total number of the population. But detailed censuses started getting published by 1936, where it published the typical, age and economical structure of the population, but this census has a lot of mistakes in it which shows it was in the stage of experiment.

Death censuses in the colonial period was more concerned in the factors of population reduction rather than the causes of prosperity (Birth), and we point out to the most important censuses of the colonial period are the censuses of 1948 and 1954 so we see that it's hard to rely on the data published before 1948 and dealing with it should be with extreme care, however it can't be neglected or undermined, but it's just less accurate and comprehensive than the ones that took place after 1936, because of the unawareness of the population on one hand and the rejection of the patriotic citizens to cooperate with the French administration, and boycotting it by giving false numbers in fear of taxes, and compulsory recruitment in the French army on the other .

3.2. The period after the independence 1966 – 2008

After the independence the Algerian government thought of organizing and conducting general censuses of population and housing, under legislation number 91.64 dated in March 4 1964 [12], the national conservative for population and housing census was established (C.N.R.P) in January 01 -1964.

Under regulation number 120.64 dated in April 14- 1964 [12] a national committee was formed of ministers and representatives, which helped greatly in studying, organizing and launching the first census Algeria has known after the independence.

Under regulation number 297.65 dated December 2- 1965 [12] which stated the date and period of the census, starting from that regulation Algeria has known five censuses in the period that came after the independence, which are:

- First Census: 1966
- Second Census : 1977
- Third Census: 1987
- Fourth Census: 1998
- Fifth Census: 2008

3.2.1 First census 1966

The 1966 census is considered the first General Population and Housing census after the independence. Therefore, Algeria, which came out of the war for independence that continued for seven years and a colonization that lasted for 132 years, needed to know its human ability after what was left of the war, like destruction and mass murder of the population and burning of the houses and farms and forests. The purpose was that it can plan for its future in the light of its human and financial abilities on the way to progress and to get away from the circle of retardation, poverty, ignorance and deprivation.

And the process of organizing for the census took almost two years which were spent in dividing the country administratively, numbering the buildings, putting the questions and the required information getting the statisticians and experts to supervise the census process, but in return the CNRP faced many problems which are :

- The expansion of the countries surfaces and the inability to contact and reach remote areas.
- The unawareness of the population and their fear of the statisticians and their illiteracy.
- The unavailability of statisticians and experts.
- The budget for the census wasn't enough.

These problems forced the C.N.R.P to do the census on two stages:

First stage: and it was devoted to counting the people of the desert and that was in the beginning of January 1966, as it lasted for fifteen days (two weeks). And “The births and deaths of the period between the first and second stages were erased because of the different time periods the census of the south (the desert) and the people of the north” [9].

The 1966 census is considered to be the first one that the Algerian citizens has done, and is considered to be more accurate and comprehensive than the censuses of the colonial era, that it included all the inhabitants present and absent, citizen and foreign equally, without distinguishing or discrimination as it was in the days of the French colony. It included most of the data needed by researchers, scholars and planners. The most important aspect that distinguished the 1966 census compared to the colonial era censuses was the fact that it was prepared and planned in advance, in contrast with the censuses done in the colonial period, while recording the lack of registration of the new born babies, but in a less percentage than

the previous censuses and it was comprehensive of the whole population and detailed, unlike the previous censuses.

3.2.2. Second census 1977

It was realised for the changes that occurred on the social and economic features of declining of living condition and national economy, being necessary in order to get statistical data of economical nature. Following regulation number 15.75 dated February 27 1975 [12], it was a general census of Population and Housing 1977, where a national committee was formed to do the task, where it established the definition and foot path for this census and its importance was shown as:

- It helped in putting the developmental plans and special programs and the developmental plans for the municipality.
- It was interested in demographic, economic and social data.
- It was considered a tool that serves politics and that was by decisions the government takes.
- It relied on demographic projection that allowed the establishment of realistic policies built on the demographic ability to provide a qualified working force.
- It allowed the putting of the first specific ten-year budget for it, which allowed the processing of the deep changes inside the social and economic infrastructure of Algeria.
- The demographic data like age, sex, age range, migration movement contributed in assembling demographic plans.

General census of population and housing 1977 resembled a vital stepping stone that was used to perform investigations and studies on the demographic, economic, social and cultural statues that it became a valuable source in demographic studies.

2.2.3 Third census 1987

For modern data and statistics, and to continue organizing the nation there was a need for a third census. And the national bureau of statistics in 1982 under regulation number 311.85 dated December 17 1985 the edited and finalized one of regulation number 489.82 dated December 18 -1982 [12] was assigned the mission of providing statistical data that include all aspects of economic and social life of the country, where the legal basis was remodelled under legislation number 09.86 dated July 29 [12] which insisted on putting a general organizational structure for census and that by establishing a national committee which was formed under regulation number 240.86 dated September 16 1986 [12].

The general Census of Population and Housing helped to reorganize the country, by the new administrative division that Algeria known in 1984, which divided Algeria into 48 states and 1545 communes and also allowed to provide important socio-economic information to draft a new development strategy through the data related to the geographical distribution of the population, individual demographic properties, the size and structure of the working force, the size and structure of the educational and vocational class and the illiteracy levels, and it touched on data about the residential section.

2.2.4. Fourth Census 1998

Following the changes that hit the different political, social and economic sectors of Algeria, especially with the crumbling situation as a result of the security statues that Algeria has witnessed for ten years on one hand, and it joining the global market on the other, It was a must to find solutions for these situations, and so there was a fourth census of population and housing in 1998, as it was assigned to a national committee under regulation number 248.96

dated July 16 1996, that was edited and finalized by regulation number 169.98 dated 20May 1998 [12] .

And this census allowed us to know all the social situations of the population, where it helped the statistical data system, by evaluating and going after social and economic goals underlined in the millennium treaty goals for global development which Algeria has committed itself to achieving which allowed Algeria to set a program to support the economy in the period of (2005 - 2009) and the most important results of what it achieved were:

- The reduction of poverty from 14% on 2000 to 6% on 2006.
- The reduction of unemployment from 30% on 2000 to 15.3% on 2005.
- Controlling the inflation from 30% in 1995 to 1% in 2005.

2.2.5 Fifth census 2008

The fifth census was considered a “very important and sensitive procedure” [12] as it gone through an atmosphere of ease and stability, unlike the 1998 census where fear and panic made it a hard task in some of the troubled areas. It helped in developing accurate statistical data that corresponds to the social and economic transformations and the needs of the applicants and users of the census. And that Algeria can achieve its goals of comprehensive development with the extra program to support the economy.

Closure

On the light of what it has been discussed in this paper of the importance of Population and Housing Census its role in achieving comprehensive development in Algeria which allows it to get very important data with its use of the international conducts and concepts, Successful planning for the developmental process relies mainly on the quality and reliability of the statistical data used in that process, however most of the censuses done in Algeria were classical census, and it's a method that suffers a lot of problems , most important of which are:

- The huge cost of financial and human resources used for the census.
- It lasted for a long period of time (10 years).
- The long time it takes for the information to get published considering the fast obsolescence of data, so Algeria is looking into organizing a continuous census of population every five years instead of ten years as it is now, while including a data base in the path of seeking national goals of development and clarifying that the 2018 census will be the last of its kind since the independence, and by that replacing the classical census with the new method of census which relies on examination techniques, which will make the best solution for the problems the government faces with the big cost and the fast obsolescence of data.

And as a result of what we mentioned before we conclude our research with a number of recommendations:

Concentrating on raising the accuracy and reliability of the statistical data that is considered as the main foundation in comprehensive development in many ways most important of which it is applying the internationally recommended curriculums, standards and systems.

- Taking advantage of the big progress in information technology and computers and different statistical programs.
- The importance of orienting qualified people in statistical systems by providing international and local comprehensive statistical training programs while focusing on choosing and employing statistical competence with the right majors and expertise.

- Making a dynamic associative (geographical/statistical) data base that can be updated with statistical data and distribute it geographically.
- Focusing on gathering statistical data in the geographical information system to form a data base for public benefit.

References

1. Ageron, R. C., 1968. *History of contemporary Algeria 1830-1966*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris.
2. Bouisri, A., Pradel de Lamaze, F., 1971. *The population of Algeria after the 1966 census*, pp. 25-46.
3. Economic and Social Council, 2008. *Human Development Report - Algeria in the category of middle-income countries through the Development Indicators*
4. Elhakim, A., S., 2007. *The role of statistics in the development process of activating*, The Arab Congress on statistical I. Amman, Jordan .
5. *General Report and methodologically Census of Population 1966*, 1980, Commissioner of National Population Census (C.N.R.P) A.vol 4 series.
6. Guend, A., 1982. *The population of Algeria*, UPO, Algeria.
7. Jawida, A., 2007. *The phases of demographic transformation in Algeria and its controlling factors*, Researcher magazine, Superior school for teachers of literature and human sciences, Bouzareah.
8. Mazhoud, E., 2009. *Geography of population*, University of Mantouri- Constantine.
9. Mrebi, E., 1984. *Demographic changes in Algeria, 1936 -1966*, National Book Foundation Algeria.
10. *N.O.S: National Office of Statistics, statistics collections No° 104/2002*, (Series C: Regional Statistics and Cartography), 2002, Centers evolution 1987/1998.
11. *Population and Housing census principles and recommendations*, 1999, First revision, Social and Economic issues administration, Statistics branch, New York, page 9
12. Swabir, H., 2007. *Methodology report for the fourth general census of population and housing 1998*, National Statistical Bureau, Page 5.
13. *UN: 1998, General principles for national programs of population projections as an adjunct in the planning Development*, Translation Demographic Centre, Lebanon, Beirut.
14. The Ministry of Health and Population, 1998. *National report on population and development in Algeria*, Algeria.