

SIDeS Triennial Conference

“Demography and environment in historical perspective”

7-9 November 2024, Bari (Italy).

The Italian Society of Historical Demography dedicates its triennial conference to the relationship between population and environment. Environmental influences on population growth and decline are numerous, and the proposed sessions are a clear testimony to this. Continuing a tradition of established studies – dating back to the April 1987 conference dedicated to Population, Society, and Environment – and prompted by new and ongoing issues, we invite the scientific community to participate in our event hosted by the University of Bari from November 7th to 9th, 2024.

The conference will be structured into eight sessions outlined below, from which interested participants are free to choose. Contributions in the form of extended abstracts should be sent no later than June 15th, 2024, to the session organizers, with a copy to the SIDeS secretary, Gabriele Ruiu, at gruiu@uniss.it. Specifically, the abstract should ideally be structured with an introduction, data and methods, expected results, and should not exceed 5000 characters (including spaces). Multiple sessions can be indicated, but with a preference order.

The outcome of the submission will be communicated by mid-July 2024.

In the case of acceptance, the participation fee is as follows:

- For SIDeS Members: €115 if paid by 09/30/2024, or €215 if paid after that date.
- For Non-Members: €160 if paid by 09/30/2024, or €260 if paid after that date.

Population and environmental resources in the pre-industrial age

The panel aims to discuss the evolution of the relationship between demography and availability of environmental resources, focusing on the mutual influence between anthropic and natural factors in determine different contexts. Contributions may concern any Italian areas of any size and cover a more or less long period of the pre-industrial era (in its broadest sense, from prehistory to the modern age). The panel wants to promote a multidisciplinary dialogue, including different primary sources (written, archaeological, osteological, archaeobotanical, biomolecular, genetic and so on) and perspectives, useful to study the different socio-ecological contexts.

Session Organizers:

Irene Barbiera - Università degli Studi di Padova (irene.barbiera@unipd.it), Matteo Di Tullio - Università degli Studi di Pavia (matteo.ditullio@unipv.it), Claudio Lorenzini - Università degli Studi di Torino (cla.lorenzini@gmail.com)

Rural depopulation and urban depopulation in the contemporary age

The session aims at comparing studies on depopulation in very different contexts, from inland areas to the mountains, up to historical centers and deindustrialized areas, in the contemporary age. The purpose is to identify similarities and differences between the factors that determine the exodus or decline of the population and its consequences on the local economy and society. The role of economic activities (agriculture, industry, tourism and services) and their transformation is particularly relevant in explaining both depopulation and its cessation or reversal, but cultural factors and demographic mechanisms offer further essential elements for an explanation of the phenomenon. Contributions may cover specific cases or comparisons on a wider scale, both in the long and short term.

Session Organizer:

Giovanni Favero - Università Ca' Foscari Venezia (gfavero@unive.it)

Geographic variations in fertility and nuptiality patterns in the modern and contemporary era

Researchers and scholars are invited to contribute works on territorial variability in fertility and marriage rates, exploring possible correlations with environmental factors. Proposals may concern both the contemporary and modern era, aiming to deepen the understanding of how geographical context can influence these crucial aspects of society. Contributions using both individual and aggregate data are welcome. Papers addressing both Italian and non-Italian communities will be accepted. Preference will be given to papers proposing a quantitative approach to analysis. For example (but not exclusively), papers could examine differences in fertility/marriage behaviors between mountainous and plain regions, territorial disparities in the seasonality of labor activities and births/marriages, homogamy and heterogamy in urban/rural contexts, changes or continuities in fertility/marriage behaviors among migrants/settlers compared to their area of origin.

Session Organizer:

Gabriele Ruiu - Università degli Studi di Sassari (gruiu@uniss.it)

Environment and mobility in modern and contemporary Italy

The session aims to investigate the existing relationship between crises, territorial transformations, and migration movements. Research in environmental history, which intersects with social and natural sciences, is on the rise. These aspects are not alien to the tradition of historical demography. Even recently ("Popolazione e Storia," no. 1 and 2, 2023), the relationship between migration and resources has been re-examined, with particular attention paid to "highlands." In addition to the analysis of endemic and often long-term mobility, the session welcomes contributions that investigate phenomena of temporary, seasonal, or "permanent" mobility, including circulation and commuting patterns. Consider emergencies, disasters, catastrophes, or environmental crises (floods, earthquakes, eruptions, pollution, etc.), as well as large-scale human interventions (land reclamation, deforestation, new city construction, etc.). Of particular interest will be observing the interplay between different mobilities, such as the conversion of temporary migrations into permanent settlements, and the management of spaces along migratory arcs and potential returns.

Session Organizers:

Cristina Munno - Università di Bologna (cristina.munno@unibo.it), Francesco Scalone –
Università di Bologna (francesco.scalone@unibo.it)

Epidemics and the environment in the twentieth centuries

The panel aims to explore the connection between population, epidemics and environment in light of the territorial, social, spatial and geographical variables that characterized the major pandemics of the XX century, first of all Spanish flu. Paper proposals may address topics and issues concerning single case studies or carry out a comparative analysis, in a synchronic or diachronic way.

Session Organizer:

Roberto Cea - Università degli studi di Firenze (robertocea81@gmail.com)

Diseases in urban and rural contexts between the seventeenth century and the late nineteenth century

The aim of this panel is to explore the diseases that affected the population of the Italian Peninsula in a historical perspective (from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century). The environmental interpretive pathway invites researchers and scholars to focus on the urban and rural dimensions of diseases in their different characterization, spread and incidence (endemic, epidemic, etc.), through case studies and/or comparative approaches between town and country. Looking at urban contexts, a key to interpretation could be offered by the mass of data available in the archives of the welfare, correctional and care institutions for which cities were the designated sites (hospitals, foundling hospitals, conservatories, orphanages, asylums, almshouses, prisons, etc.).

Session Organizer:

Angela Carbone – Università degli Studi di Bari Aldo Moro (angela.carbone@uniba.it)

Health inequalities in the past: social and environmental determinants

The session aims to investigate the complex issue of health inequalities among populations from a historical perspective. The reasons behind health inequalities are multifaceted and involve a wide range of factors that generate mechanisms responsible for the relationship between health on one hand, and the social position of individuals and the context in which they live on the other. Contributions aimed at understanding the correlation between health and social determinants (socio-economic conditions such as income, occupation, education) are welcome. The session also aims to stimulate reflection on the link between health and environmental variables related to place of birth/residence, such as geographical characteristics (altitude, presence of sanitary facilities), economic factors (presence of industrial districts, economic development), and socio-cultural aspects (urbanization, rurality) that can also explain heterogeneity in the geographical distribution of health. We are seeking contributions that use a variety of indicators to measure the health status of historical populations, including anthropometric information (height, weight, and chest circumference), as well as reasons for exemption from military service (pathologies identified during medical examination) to highlight changes over time (persistence or disappearance of specific pathologies) and in different geographical contexts.

Session Organizer:

Donatella Lanari - Università degli Studi di Perugia (donatella.lanari@unipg.it)

Climate, weather, demography

In the present, climate change is linked, at least in part, to population growth. But climate change itself has important demographic consequences. The objective of the session is to discuss the relationships between climate, meteorology and population in the past. Proposals that investigate the long term and explore the ways in which climate change may have affected population and demographic behavior are welcome. Moreover, we solicit contributions that relate birth, nuptiality and mortality to meteorological variables such as temperature and rainfall, but also with extreme events, such as heat waves. Contributions relating to all historical periods and any geographical area will be taken into consideration.

Session Organizers:

Alessio Fornasin - Università degli Studi di Udine (fornasin@uniud.it), Matteo Manfredini - Università degli Studi di Parma (matteo.manfredini@unipr.it)