

Vicky Hosegood comments on paper:

Data on intergenerational relationships and support: The Mekong Integrated Population-Registration Areas of Cambodia (MIPRAoC)

Patrick Heuveline

We were pleased to receive this paper from Patrick Heuveline discussing data that could be used to study intergenerational relationships and support collected in the 2012 Orphan Rider Survey which was conducted in a sub-sample of households registered as part of the demographic surveillance conducted by the Mekong Integrated Population-Registration Areas of Cambodia (MIPRAoC) project.

This paper complements that by Makandwe Nyirenda and colleagues in the same strand. Both papers describe different approaches to collecting data about a defined sub-group identified in an enumerated population that is being followed prospectively. Furthermore, the demographic surveillance design used in the MIPRAoC project differs from the Africa Centre demographic surveillance system (ACDIS) described by Nyirenda et al. and the Agincourt DSS described in the paper by Sangeetha Madhavan et al. in their strand 1 paper.

In my comments I have highlighted comparative points that I found interesting when considering these papers together, in addition to asking some clarifying questions about Patrick's paper.

DSS-related comments

I am very interesting in the advantages and limitations of a 'light' DSS in comparison with the more intensive approaches that I am most familiar with e.g. the Africa Centre DSS and the Matlab DSS.

Do you consider that the reason this DSS is 'light' solely because of the frequency of routine data collection visits? The basic data collected would be the basis of all surveillance systems (e.g. birth, death and migration registration, and for women aged 15 to 49, pregnancy and marital status updates).

Could you tell us a bit more about the background for choosing the particular 'light' design of the MIPRAoC surveillance system. Was this 'light' design the first choice for the implementation team or were other designs considered but not adopted for any particular reason? In the Africa Centre DSS, the decision to have multiple routine rounds per year was a response to the very high levels of child and adult migration (both internal and external). In the paper, you note that *'Extensive, labor-related migration to the capital city is not rare, and in fact, most of the country's rural areas experience substantial outmigration'* Has residential mobility presented a challenge in enumeration (leading to double-counting of people or households, or failing to

observe, being able to collect reliable data about demographic events occurring to people or households), and in contacting people or households selected for sub-sample surveys such as the Orphan Rider survey? Or have you found clever ways to ensure robust enumeration during your long inter-visit period? It would be very helpful to hear about your experiences of balancing the frequency of visits against the consequences for data quality and fieldwork operations.

Does the MIPRAoC project meet the description of a demographic surveillance system as considered by the INDEPTH Network?

While I appreciate that the two age pyramids on p5 represent different populations and are a few years apart, is there a suggestion that fertility rates are unstable in the DSS or is the undercut in the 5-9 year olds in the DSS pyramid an artefact of changes in the surveillance study area or method used to identify births?

You note that the DSS can be used to identify whether an individual moves or is joined by others following the death of a spouse. Could an analyst detect whether the individual has moved alone or whether a whole household has moved i.e. distinguishing the case of a widow and her children who move to another place as a household from a case where a widow and her children move away but to join other households?

Orphan-rider survey-related questions

The survey conducted in 2012 was designed to compare the wellbeing of adults who lost a parent during childhood and of those who did not, with a sample size of close to 2,000 for each group.

The definition of orphanhood used in the project was ‘...individuals under the age of 65 at the time of the survey, having lost either biological parent before the median age at marriage in Cambodia—23 years for females or 25 years for males.’

In this study setting, is misclassification of non-biological ‘social’ parents (step-, formal and informal foster/adoptive parents) as biological living parents (‘adoption effect’) a challenge in data collection? Also, did the case of respondents not knowing the survival status of one or both parents occur often? And how did you handle such cases when assigning individuals to orphan or non-orphan status?

It was interesting to read that you operationalize the concept of ‘social’ parent in the study. This is something that we are exploring for a round next year in the Africa Centre DSS. Does this concept have a direct equivalent in languages used in

the study area or is this a concept that the fieldworker needs to elaborate during the interview?

It is interesting to see the specific questions used in the second module. Thank you for including them in your paper. In many of the questions, the reference is to 'relatives' and covers both the respondents own relatives and those of her husband. In the study communities, was this a compromise to avoid having a excessively repetitive questionnaire or is there very little anticipated effects on the outcomes of interest if the transfers and relationships are between the respondents own relatives or from his or her in-laws. This would suggest that marriage in some way ensures equality for the couple in terms of receiving and providing care to each of set of relatives. In other settings, one would anticipate a more complex pattern in the obligations and expectations that each partner may have with respect to their own and their partners' relatives.

I have several more comments and questions but will stop here for now. Thank you for presenting a very interesting paper.