



**International Union for the
Scientific Study of Population
Union internationale pour l'étude
scientifique de la population**

A short presentation of IUSSP activities

France Meslé

IUSSP Secretary General

IUSSP what is it ?

- The largest international professional association for individuals interested in population studies
- Over 2000 members from 136 countries
- A multilingual association
- A strong network between population scientists

Main activities

- The International Population Conference
- Scientific Committees
- Training activities
- A website, and Twitter, and Facebook
- Very soon, N-IUSSP a new magazine on line
- Recently involved in the Data Revolution process

What is the Data Revolution ?

Many thanks to Tom Moultrie, IUSSP Council member, for sharing some of his slides !

Seeds of the 'Data Revolution'

- Phrase coined in the process of setting the framework for the post-2015 Development Agenda, intended to replace the MDGs that expire in 2015
- First widely-publicised use of the term in March 2013, by the *High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, reporting to the Secretary-General of the UN

Seeds of the ‘Data Revolution’

“We also call for a data revolution for sustainable development, with a new international initiative to improve the quality of statistics and information available to citizens. We should actively take advantage of new technology, crowd sourcing, and improved connectivity to empower people with information on the progress towards the targets ...

“Too often, development efforts have been hampered by a lack of the most basic data about the social and economic circumstances in which people live... Stronger monitoring and evaluation at all levels, and in all processes of development (from planning to implementation) will help guide decision making, update priorities and ensure accountability ...

A true data revolution would draw on existing and new sources of data to fully integrate statistics into decision making, promote open access to, and use of, data and ensure increased support for statistical systems.”

What does this mean?

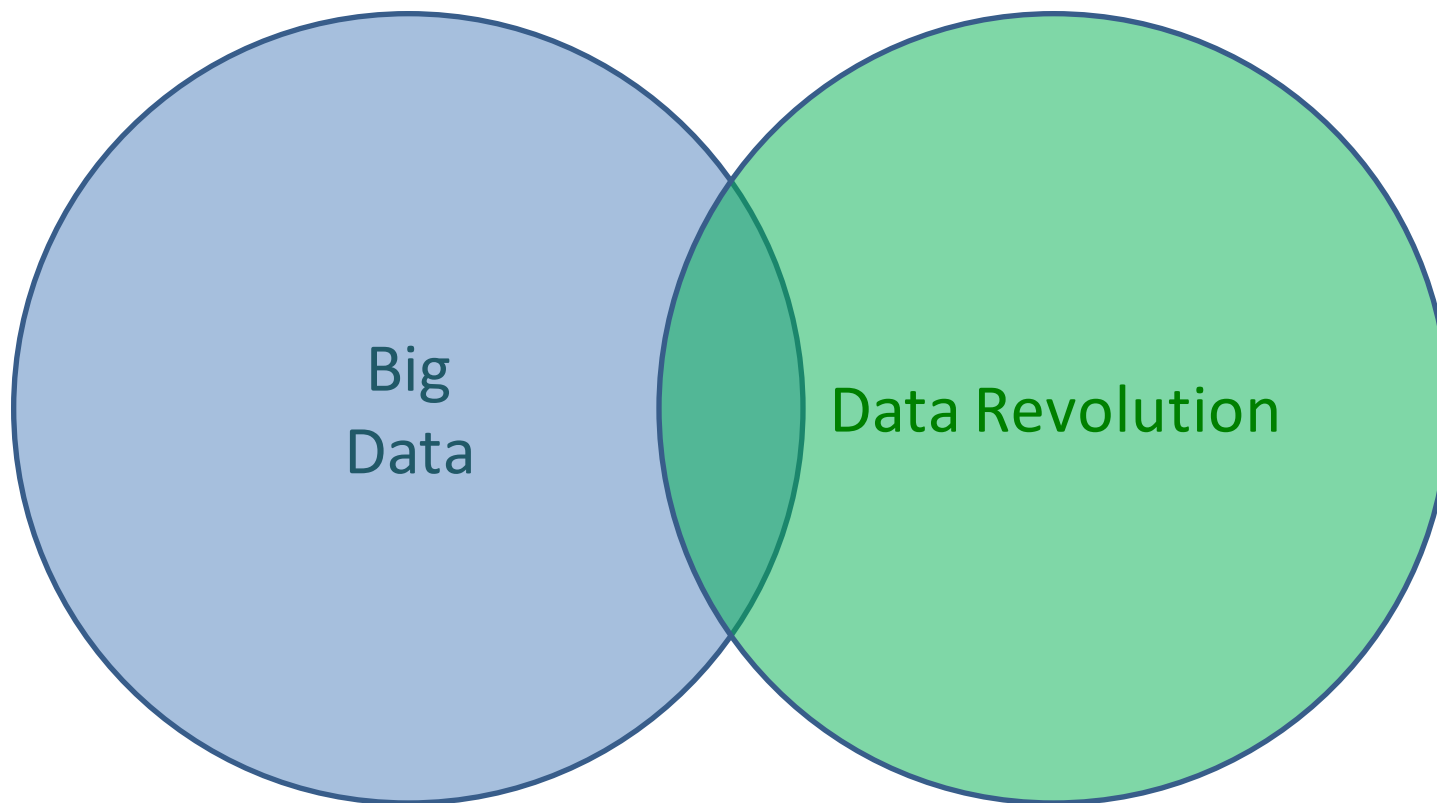
- The idea further amplified in *A World That Counts* produced by the same body in November 2014
- The data revolution is:
 - ✓ An explosion in the volume of data, the speed with which data are produced, the number of producers of data, the dissemination of data, and the range of things on which there is data, coming from new technologies ... and from other sources, such as qualitative data...
 - ✓ A growing demand for data from all parts of society.
- And, in the context of sustainable development...

What does this mean?

- “The data revolution for sustainable development is:
 - ✓ The integration of these new data with traditional data to produce high-quality information that is more detailed, timely and relevant for many purposes and users, especially to foster and monitor sustainable development;
 - ✓ The increase in the usefulness of data through a much greater degree of openness and transparency, avoiding invasion of privacy and abuse of human rights from misuse of data on individuals and groups, and minimising inequality in production, access to and use of data;
 - ✓ Ultimately, more empowered people, better policies, better decisions and greater participation and accountability, leading to better outcomes for people and the planet.”

Big data ≠ The Data Revolution

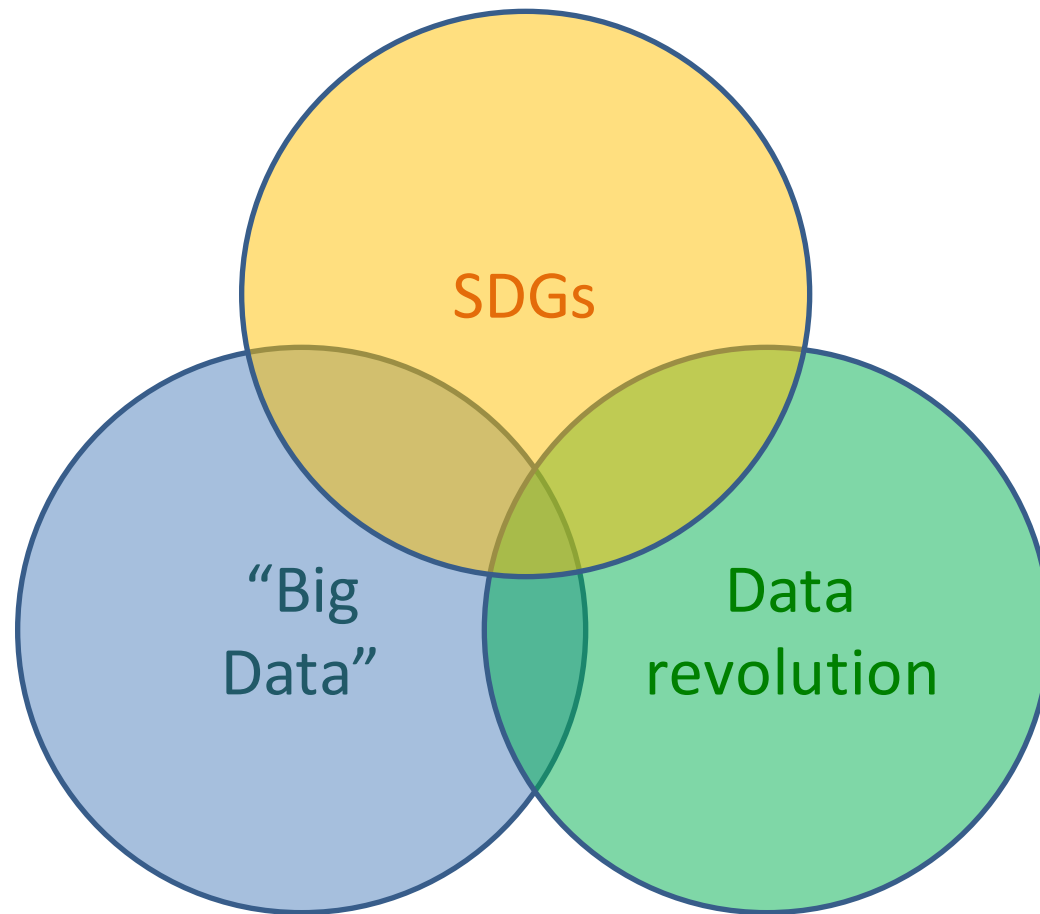
- Only some (albeit important) overlap



An important distinction

- While the genesis of the Data Revolution is intimately bound up with the post-2015 development agenda, and hence the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are to replace the MDGs, there is a lot more to the Data Revolution than the SDGs

The Data Revolution ≠ SDGs



So where do demographers fit in?

- The Data Revolution envisages an explosion of data, about people, collected by people, for the benefit of people
 - ✓ These data will be used, in part, to track a large number of population-related indicators, based on 17 SDGs and 169 associated targets
- Demographers are in a strong position to evaluate what is feasible and possible with data collected on human populations, to understand the limitations of those data, and to assess the validity of the results derived from them

Demographers and the SDGs

- Can help in ensuring that the SDGs are measurable, valid, and useful
 - ✓ Enhancing understanding of the limitations of point estimates and the implications of uncertainty
 - Especially with highly disaggregated indicators
 - ✓ Distinguishing between goals and the underlying causal mechanisms associated with those goals
 - E.g. Is the intention to simply track levels of maternal mortality, or to understand causal mechanisms that explain differentials
 - ✓ Distinguishing between empirical and model-based estimates
 - ... and emphasising the limitations of each
 - ✓ Building and developing capacity in NSOs
 - Improving quality and reliability of census data

Demographers in the Data Revolution

- The SDG process is largely driven by political considerations
 - ✓ Scope for substantive intervention is distinctly limited
 - ✓ Most of the work in refining indicators driven at a country level
- Within the broader arc of the Data Revolution, however, there is scope for significant contributions from demographers
 - ✓ Three central issues related to the population sciences

1. Data quality

- Determining the scientific basis of data quality
 - ✓ Methodological basis for integrating 'new' forms of data with 'conventional' data
 - Questions of sample selectivity and uncertainty
 - Techniques and processes for the validation of 'new' data, both internally and externally
- Validation of estimates from multiple sources
- Determination of suitable denominators for many indicators
 - ✓ Again, the need to enhance the quality of census data

2. Data access and availability

- Data, with appropriate metadata, needs to be made available at levels of granularity appropriate to the indicators required
 - ✓ Requires open, and tiered, access to data
- Methods for indicator estimation at fine levels of granularity need to be developed, based on the integration of 'new' and 'old' data forms
 - ✓ Geospatial coding; 'big' data
 - ✓ Requires creativity, and cross-disciplinary collaboration

3. Developing and enhancing institutional capacity

- Discussions on the Data Revolution afford primacy to National Statistical Systems, and the particular role of National Statistical Offices
 - ✓ Requires that these institutions are strengthened and capacitated to play the required part
- Many of the SDG indicators, and much of the Data Revolution agenda would benefit from the input and involvement of demographers
 - ✓ Not least the enhancement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems