**Call for Abstracts**

**Fourth ISA Forum of Sociology, July 14-18, 2020, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Varieties of Population Indicators: Their Construction and Use in Politics**

The relevance of population indicators for democratic politics has been widely acknowledged in the still young field of Quantification Studies. A basic assumption in this line of reasoning is that there is an inherently political dimension to what seems to be methodological or technocratic issues in the construction and use of numbers in politics. The planned session picks up this argument by focusing on specific aspects of how population indicators are constructed and used in politics.

Population indicators often operate largely hidden from public scrutiny, while indeed defining the population(s) to be considered in public policy, the size of electoral districts, the nature of intergovernmental fiscal relations etc. However, the processes by which population indicators are constructed and institutionalized as key elements of public policy are still poorly understood. Why do some societies rely on censuses and others on registers to know their populations? How contentious are institutionalization processes?

Expectations about the future are often narrated by using demographic projections. On the one hand demographic projections belong to the most reliable type of projections that we know and are hence crucial for policy formulation. On the other hand, migration movements introduce a notoriously hard to predict element in demographic projections. Critics have argued that demographic projections are politically exploited for sparking fears of ethno-racial conflicts or suggesting overwhelming factual constraints. How do population indicators operate as instruments of political imagination and why are they chosen over other possibilities?

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