

Poster Session, Guillaume Wunsch

## **An analysis of the most recent national workshops on Italian Population Studies according to a network perspective**

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### **Background and purpose of the research**

Recently, many studies have analysed research collaboration patterns, because collaboration and interdisciplinarity are considered to be a key element in the advancement of knowledge and in the productivity of research. Nevertheless in contemporary demographic studies on the evolution of this discipline substantial attention has been paid to the themes, methods and theories used in scientific products. There is clearly a lack of reflection on the choice of scientific relationships set up to produce scientific papers in the demographic field.

The aim of the research is to make an empirical analysis of the scientific relationships we have observed among authors of the papers presented in Italian demographic meetings.

### **Data and Methods**

Every two years a national workshop on population studies is organized in Italy by the Demography Section of the Italian Statistical Society.. Using the abstract collection of the last four meetings (1999, 2001, 2003 and 2005) we have built a rich data-set merging information on the single scientific work and on the authors. This dataset has been analysed from a social network perspective.

### **Main results**

In this paper, the properties of the demographers' network are evaluated, with the aim of identifying factors which may influence collaborative relations among the participants. The network density is often low and there are many subgraphs visualizing small groups of research teams. The centrality degree is also very low, because no author is in a leading position. An important issue is shown by the presence of collaboration among authors belonging to different scientific institutions.

### **Conclusions**

These are the first results of study on the structural properties of the scientific network population in Italy. The main evidence drawn from this analysis, following a network approach on Italian

demographers' co-authored data collected in 1999-2005 and aimed at identifying factors influencing collaboration patterns, indicates that "closeness", defined in a wide sense and not only as geographical proximity, plays a major role in determining scientific relationships.