

*Teaching and Research
and the Need for Demographers*

The Teaching in Demography and the Need For Demographers in Denmark

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Since the publication of the survey »The University Teaching of Social Sciences (Demography)» by Unesco in 1957 there has been a still increasing interest in demography in Denmark which has influenced on the extent of teaching and research in this discipline.

The increasing interest can be referred to various reasons, but the following reasons are supposed to be essential.

The fast growth of population in the developing countries and the economic and social problems created hereby.

Furthermore, the comprehensive change in the economic and social structure in Denmark since the Second World War should be mentioned (such as the considerable decline in the agricultural population, depopulation and considerable changes in the age-structure in many areas, much urbanisation etc.). These elements have created new and difficult problems for the planning departments where the problems of the population are in focus.

Finally, it should be mentioned that when the sociological study at the Faculty of Law and Economics at the University of Copenhagen was created in 1958, demography was introduced as an independent discipline. Since 1965 the discipline has been compulsory.

Having explained the present teaching situation in Denmark I would like to make a few remarks about the need for demographers and the requirements for the teaching system which arise.

I. The Present Teaching Situation

1. *The Teaching in Demography at the Faculty of Law and Economics at the University of Copenhagen*

The compulsory course in demography for students of sociology comprises of 4 lectures per week during four months with exercises (2 hours per week) added. Then laboratory exercises (2 hours per week) are made during the following four months. The aim of the course is to give a general introduction to demography with special emphasis on the methods.

This course deals with the following subjects:

1. The nature and sources of demography.
2. Mortality, fertility, migration, marriages, and divorces (measurement, historical development viewed in connection with changes in social and economic factors, actual patterns).
3. The relation between the demographic components and the growth and structure of population illustrated by means of the stationary and the stable population.
4. The historical development of the growth and structure of population.
5. Population projections.
6. The global population development and theories of population.
7. Social and economic consequences of population development with special emphasis on the developing countries.

During the lectures great importance is attached to the division between the industrial and the developing countries so that the global aspects of demography are clearly emphasised.

The following books are used:

- a) P. C. Matthiessen: *Teoretisk Demografi, (Demographic Methods)*, Copenhagen 1967.
- b) P. C. Matthiessen: *Befolkningens Vækst, Årsager og Konsekvenser, (Growth of Population, Causes and Consequences)*, Copenhagen 1965.
- c) Det Statistiske Departement: *Spædbørnsdødeligheden i Danmark 1931—60, (Infant Mortality in Denmark 1931—60)*, Copenhagen 1964.
- d) Det Statistiske Department: *Nyere Tendenser i Dødeligheden, (Mortality Trends)*, Copenhagen 1965.
- e) Det statistiske Departement: *Fertilitetsforskelle i Danmark, (Differential Fertility in Denmark)*, Copenhagen 1965.
- f) Det Statistiske Departement: *Ægteskaber, fødte og døde 1941—55, (Marriages, Births and Deaths 1941—55)*, Copenhagen 1962.
- g) *Population Studies No. 17, United Nations: The Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends*, New York 1953.
- h) *Population Studies No. 26, United Nations: The Aging of Population and Its Economic and Social Implications*, New York 1966.

- i) P. H. Hauser (ed.): *The Population Dilemma*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 1963.

The course is terminated by a written and an oral examination. The course is held every year and about 75 students of sociology attend it.

After the termination of this course the students of sociology have the possibility of choosing special subjects of demography as a subsidiary subject. In the spring 1967 a seminar was made on the subject: »Fertility, Family Planning and Population Programmes». About 20 students attended this seminar. Up till now 6 students have been examined in demography as the subsidiary subject (oral examination). The examination requirements comprised the following books:

- a) Bernard Beralson and others (ed.): *Family Planning and Population Programs*. The University of Chicago Press. 1966.
- b) Whelpton, Campell and Patterson: *Fertility and Family Planning in The United States*. New Jersey. 1966.
- c) G. Ohlin: *Population Control and Economic Development*. O. E. C. D. Paris 1967.

In 1970 a course is planned concerning the use of population models when estimating the demographic variables in countries with incomplete demographic statistics.

Students of economics are taught only little about demographic methods in their compulsory course of statistics. But they have the possibility of selecting — as a special discipline — demography. Until now only few students of economics have used this opportunity.

So far, the teaching in demography has been carried out by teachers in statistics, but this year an assistant lecturer has been appointed and next year a lecturership in demography will be created.

2. Teaching in Demography in Other Places

Elements of demography (demographic methods and population descriptions) are included in courses — especially statistics — in various faculties at the Universities and at the institutes of higher education, but the content and the size are determined by the students' sphere of interest. This applies e.g. to the students of economics at the University of Aarhus, students at the Schools of Business Administration, students of political science, students of geography, actuarial students as well as students of engineering.

Finally, it should be mentioned that in the discipline geography at the schools there exists a possibility of teaching the pupils demography based on special school-books on this subject.

B. The Need for Demographers

The need for demographers or persons with a good knowledge of demography is in evidence within governmental and municipal departments for the production of statistics¹ as well as within regional planning institutes.

As far as the first group of departments is concerned, almost all the academic personnel are recruited among economists from the university who through their study are taught some demography even though the compulsory syllabus for students of economics at the University of Copenhagen is very limited and comprises only the formal methods of demography.

Here an extension could be considered.

As far as the planning organisations are concerned the situation is even worse. Most of the positions are held by architects and engineers who receive no or only a few lessons in demography during their studies. To this may be added that these persons often meet problems which are very difficult (regional population projections and investment planning) and which are even treated subordinate within demography. I think that in these studies there is a great demand for much profound teaching in demography.

A certain knowledge of demography for persons engaged in business can be very useful (population projections and estimates of the demand of commodities in the future). This points to a need of some teaching in demography at the schools of business administration.

Further to these examples for the need of demography, there is an obvious demand for more extensive education in demography for geographers, historians, doctors, sociologists, economists etc. who wish to study the demographic aspects of their discipline. In such cases the curricula should be so flexible that these students can take courses at an institute where demography is studied as an independent discipline.

¹ Other departments of the central administration should be mentioned, such as The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour.