

# *Demographic Cooperation in Scandinavia*

## Possibilities of Demographic Cooperation on the Scandinavian Level

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### *1. The situation in Sweden*

The scientific council linked to the Central Statistical Office of Sweden decided in October 1967 that a special projection-group would be appointed for demography. The group consists of professors Gösta Carlsson, Hannes Hyrenius, Torsten Hägerstrand, Carl-Eric Quensel, along with Lars Widén, chief of department and the author of this report, who acts as chairman. The group has been given the task of formulating proposals for measures which will promote research in the field of demography. When the group was appointed, one of the points raised by the scientific council was that an investigation should be made into the possibility of forming a Nordic demographic institute. It might be that the basic population of each separate Scandinavian country is too small for the establishment of an institute of good quality.

In May 1968, the projection group mentioned submitted its first report, which was discussed at a meeting of the scientific council on June 4, 1968. The discussion held on that occasion has brought the matter into a situation which is to some extent new, and consequently no motivation exists to reproduce the group's report in its entirety at the moment. However, relevant parts of this report, which is written with Sweden as a starting-point, are utilised below.

### *2. Reasons for measures*

The projection group has indicated a series of circumstances which motivate increased attention being paid to demography.

a) Earlier, the subject of demography, both in regard to research and to teaching, has been represented at the Swedish universities, within the subject »statistics». During recent decades, however, the development of the subject »statistics» has led to demography being pushed to one side. The fact that demography has by this means, without any virtual, deliberate statement being made to this effect, been accorded such an obscure position is extremely unsatisfactory in regard to the great need of training and research in this field (see below).

b) If demography is understood in its widest sense, a great deal of research in this sphere is already being effected. One can point to many contributions from related university subjects, such as economics, sociology, ethno-geography, and further from the research engaged in by separate state, communal and private organisations. As a consequence of »demography» not being established as an independent subject, and as a consequence of training being so badly provided for, these contributions are split up, and do not assume the character and the effectiveness which they should acquire if the subject had a more secure position.

In particular, it is noted that the research in the central demographic problems is insignificant. The number of works published by researchers concentrating on Swedish demography, and concerned with the subjects of mortality, fertility, reproduction, changes of marital status and migration, has been insignificant.

c) There exists a clear need of people with demographic training. In this respect, a distinction should be drawn between three levels, viz. 1) some fundamental training in the subject, which should be given to all persons with training in the social sciences, and for preference also to some other categories, 2) an appreciably more profound training to persons who in their work will be directly engaged in demographic problems (this applies to staff in several offices of SCB (Central Statistical Office of Sweden) offices, to a number of other state organisations, to communal and private research institutes, and not least to the staffs of university institutes, primarily in the sociological subjects), and 3) a specialist training for persons who devote themselves entirely to teaching and research in the field of demography. Currently, these needs are not satisfied in an adequate manner.

Of course, it is difficult to fix the size of the demand for those falling in categories 2) and 3). In regard to category 2), however, it could well be stated that today a very large number of sociologists are engaged in research work for which some, not too insignificant training in demography would be of essential importance. In regard to category 3), it can be said that solely the demand in SCB, and the need of persons who can devote themselves to teaching in demography, corresponds to a rather large number of persons.

d) Today, some teaching is given in demography, but the contributions made are not coordinated. When the teaching given nowadays is provided by people competent only in a limited sense, there is partly a risk of the same instruction being given twice, and partly a risk that the demographic problems of method and analysis are neglected.

e) With a view to the markedly increased interest in development countries, at least as far as Sweden is concerned, and in their problems, it is important that the questions connected with the population structure and the circumstances of increase in population in these countries should be taken into account in both teaching and research. Everybody speaks of »the population explosion», but hardly anybody is interested in problems relating to measurement in these countries, which normally have a very deficient statistical foundation, of the fertility and population increase in the past and today, and also to estimate future development.

f) At the international level, there is a large demand, at the moment unsatisfied, for persons prepared to make contributions concerned with the production and analysis of population-statistical data in developing countries. To date, Sweden has been able to contribute very little to meeting this need.

g) Currently, SCB produces population statistics, in many respects extended, and has through the introduction of computers and other aids, including the personal number important for purposes of identification, acquired essentially expanded opportunities of producing statistical data, for example by the combination of different forms of material (»the archive-statistical system»). Even if the supply of statistical data should not in itself decide the direction taken by research, it can nevertheless be stated that it appears to be wasteful if these data are not exploited to a greater extent than is the case now. It can be assumed that the statistical production indicated, along with the analysis connected with it, will prove to be of significance from a practical viewpoint, for instance in planning.

h) During recent years, in a number of developed countries, demography has assumed a strengthened position. This applies to the international organisations, which have to an increasing extent begun to evince interest in questions coming within this category. This could soon lead to direct demands being imposed upon Sweden in regard to keeping up with this development.

The fact that during the last few years demography has obtained such markedly increased interest is primarily bound up with the increased realisation that population development has great importance in the economic and cultural development of a country. As a consequence, it can be said that we have entered upon a period characterised by an inherent dynamic as regards the development of the subject demography.

In the author's opinion, the motives indicated above univocally point to the present clear necessity that something should be done with a view to strengthening the position of demography in this country.

### 3. *The position of demography in other countries*

In conjunction with the Second World Population Conference arranged by UN in Belgrade in the autumn of 1965, a great deal was illustrated by means of an inquiry consisting of material compiled for elucidation of the development in respect of research and teaching in the field of demography, and particularly as regards what had happened after the first conference, held in Rome in 1954. The account which follows below is largely based upon this report from the Belgrade meeting, although to some extent it has been possible to supplement it with more recent information. In the Belgrade report, especial attention was directed towards development in the under-developed parts of the world. In 1954, in these countries there was very insignificant activity in the demographic field; the position is now completely changed. The contributions made by the UN have been of particularly great importance in this respect. UN has arranged a number of conferences and seminars in different parts of the world, and has established three regional centres for research and teaching in demography. The first of these centres has functioned in Chembur, near Bombay, India. Alongside a comprehensive research programme, until 1965 a one-year course of training had been given to 130 people from 17 countries. Another centre for demography (CELADE) has been functioning since 1958 in Santiago di Chile. Until 1965, 90 persons from 18 countries had been given a one-year course at CELADE. The third centre, located in Cairo, did not start functioning until the end of 1963, and had not, as a consequence, been able to accomplish very much at the time the inquiry material for UN was compiled. Moreover, it is intended that at least one more UN centre, in West Africa, will be established.

Not in the least in connexion with the development which has occurred in the UN centres, in many individual under-developed countries units have been organised for research and teaching in demography. The rapid nature of the development in the sphere of demography in the under-developed parts of the world is of great interest to our country. Nevertheless, a matter of even greater interest for us, perhaps, is the study of what has happened in the countries of the world which have undergone greater development in the economic and industrial fields. Here also, rapid development has taken place, if not everywhere. A rather clear distinction can be drawn between two groups of countries, viz. on the one hand those countries in which demography, in particular as regards

research and teaching, is regarded as an independent, special subject, and in which development occurs for preference within the framework of this subject, and on the other those countries in which development in the field of demography occurs within the compass of other subjects of study, such as statistics, sociology, economic history, economics, geography, genetics, and so on.

It can very well be considered that an example of a country which falls within the first group is *France*. As early as in 1945, there was organised in Paris the state Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques (INED), which during the succeeding twenty years was able to grow into a very large institution (nowadays more than 100 staff). This institute primarily devotes itself to research, but also engages in a certain amount of teaching activity. Long-term training in demography, furthermore, is provided at a number of universities in France, and there are several professors in the subject. Demography is regarded as an independent subject.

In the *United States*, development in the field of demography has principally been effected through the sociological faculties of the universities. A number of well-known professors in sociology are completely oriented towards demography. In some instances, demography is regarded as an independent subject. Thus, at two universities opportunities are given for doctorates in demography. The vigorous development which has occurred in Washington, DC, at the Bureau of the Census, and the National Centre for Health Statistics, should be mentioned. These two federal institutions, now very large, do not engage solely in the production of data, but also in analytical activity in the field of demography. A report to HEW (The Department of Health, Education and Welfare) reproduced in *Population Index*, July-September 1967, completes the picture of the situation in the USA. It appears from this report that the annual number of dissertations for doctorates specialising in demography has amounted to some 20—25 during the sixties. If the need of qualified demographers is studied, the conclusion arrived at is that the need exists for the production of three times as many doctoral dissertations a year. Here, stress is laid not in the least upon the requirements of qualified demographers by the international organisations.

Another example of a country in which great interest has been attached to demographic research is offered by the *Netherlands*. Since the beginning of the 1960's there have been two professors in demography (in Tilburg and Amsterdam): however, for preference development has occurred through other subjects.

In the *Soviet Union*, there has been a demographic research institute since February 1965 — the Laboratory for problems connected with population movements — attached to the University in Moscow. The leadership of this institute has been entrusted to highly qualified scientists with

varying special interests. One country which should be mentioned in *Hungary*. There, a research institute attached to the central statistical office engages in a great deal of activity.

As is known, not very much has so far happened in the *Scandinavian countries*. In this connexion to give a detailed account of the situation within each of the Scandinavian countries should not be necessary.

One characteristic of the development in many countries appears to be the establishment of research institutes devoted to demographic research. The UN inquiry showed that since 1954 such institutes have been established in 13 countries, *viz.* Belgium (2 institutes), Canada, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Hungary, Italy (2), Israel, Norway, Poland, Romania (2), Sweden, USA (14), Yugoslavia (2). In the USA, all the 14 new institutes have been established at the universities, but in respect of the other 16 institutes, eight have been organised separately from the universities.

Those who replied to the UN inquiry were also given the opportunity of expressing their opinions of the factors which could explain the increased interest in demography. In this connexion, particular mention was made of the great interest evinced in the circumstances relating to the pronounced increase in population in the under-developed countries, of the significance of demographic knowledge in conjunction with social and economic planning work, of the great deal of data arising from the censuses which are nowadays arranged in increasing parts of the world, of the fact that otherwise there exists an increasing abundance of data concerned with population statistics, of an augmented consciousness of different kinds of social problems such as unemployment, urban crowding, the shortage of manpower. Finally, it was also pointed out that the First World Population Conference stimulated increased contributions in the field of demography. Viewed generally, it may be possible to state that the increased interest in demographic research depends upon an enhanced insight that demographic changes constitute one of the most important factors for explanation and appraisal of the social and economic changes in society. It follows from this that a study of the demographic factors is necessary in connexion with all kinds of forecasting and planning work.

#### 4. *Possible actions in Sweden*

During the course of the last few years, a number of measures have been adopted in Sweden with a view to strengthening the position of demography there. Special mention is due of a conference arranged by the chancellor of the State Universities in the autumn of 1962, together with several presentations in the university estimates and in SCB's estimates. Those taking part in the population conference of the Council of Europe in the autumn of 1966 also gave a written communication to the Minister of

Education after the meeting. To a great extent, these presentations have not had any result. Reference can also be made to Hannes Hyrenius' DN article in 1960: Demography — the science which lost its way (reproduced in *Befolkningsstudier*, Gothenburg, 1962).

Various alternative solutions have been discussed:

a) The establishment of special institutes for demography at all, or at least some of the Swedish universities. These institutes would engage in both research and teaching of the subject.

b) The concentration of efforts in *one* university.

c) The establishment of a research institute independent of the universities.

Among the possibilities discussed has been that of transforming SCB's office for population statistics into a unit to some extent independent of SCB.

A Swedish demographic institute should devote itself to research under private management, along with qualified training. Nothing need prevent such an institute passing on individual research projects to other institutions, and accordingly in regard to such projects functioning almost as an organisation for granting appropriations.

At the meeting with the SCB scientific council in June 1968, it was decided that until further notice an eye would be kept on the course of events on the level of the Nordic Council, before any initiative was taken for the organisation of a Swedish institute. Furthermore, it was decided to commission the group to give consideration to the starting of some large-scale project in the field of demography. It would be better to start a large-scale and meaningful, concrete project than at this stage to devote energies to the question of organisation.

##### 5. A Nordic Demographic Institute

Both the scientific council of SCB and the special project group for demography have spoken in favour of a Scandinavian institute. Prototypes of such an institute are to be found in several neighbouring fields, such as the Nordic school of public health in Gothenburg, and the Nordic institute for community planning, which according to current proposals will be established in Stockholm in 1968. First and foremost, what speaks most in favour of perhaps the best solution of demographic problems to be found on the Scandinavian level is that the individual countries appear to be rather small for each to maintain a research institute of high quality. If efforts are combined, it will become easier to bring about a demographic institute or really high class. A series of questions arises now. How large should the institute be? What work

should be entrusted to it? In which place should it be located? How will it be financed? When can it start operations? How will the staff be recruited? and so on. At the present stage, it appears that the question of the tasks set is the most important, and consequently the other questions are ignored here.

The starting point seems to be that the institute should devote itself partly to research, and partly to specialised teaching at a high level. Alongside such specialised teaching, one might consider courses of more summary character, especially as long as the universities have not realised that it is necessary to devote greater attention to demographic problems in connexion with the regular training of sociologists and others.

In regard to research, two features appear to dominate, namely on the one hand research which is of significance to community planning, and on the other research which has to do with the problems of under-developed countries.

Particular emphasis should be laid upon the importance of research of the latter type. This can be done in a number of ways. In part, one can engage in research and teaching which takes into consideration the problems now encountered in respect of the production and analysis of population-statistical data from under-developed countries, and in part one can subject to analysis the old historical material from the Scandinavian countries, with a view to utilising this material for conclusions on the under-developed countries in their current situation. The parallels between the situation in Scandinavia in the 1700's and the present situation in the under-developed countries is obvious.

#### 6. *Other possibilities of cooperation on the Scandinavian level*

Some further possibilities of cooperation on the Scandinavian level are listed below:

1. Regular symposia of the same type as those now current.
2. The issue of a journal or series of publications. In such a case, this could suitably be in the English language.
- c) The publication of a bibliography of all that is published in this field in Scandinavia. Could possibly be combined with b).
- d) The formation of an association open to all, which could in a wide sense be concerned with demography in Scandinavia. This is closely linked with point a).
- e) The formulation of a common terminology, etc.
- f) One or more major co-Nordic projects. By way of example, mention can be made of the intra-Nordic population migrations. Such a project could be made topical, even if no Nordic institute comes into existence for some time to come.