

Aspects of the Population Questions in Finnish Social Development Policy

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The population policy of independent Finland is generally believed to have begun during the mid-1930's, when it was observed that the growth in population was slowing down, and it was feared that this would lead to economic difficulties. The measures that were demanded to prevent this slowing down in population growth received substance with time as support forms for the economic position of families with children. These forms were then further broadened and developed. The principle task of population policy became the equalization of the expenses caused by children, i.e. family expenses.

During the broad social policy development that has taken place during the past decades population policy aspects have been presented in only a limited extent. Measures for the support of families have been based almost solely on social and humane grounds. The purpose of measures equalizing family expenses has principally been to increase the standard of living of children and their guardians. Thus, family policy has more and more clearly become a part of social policy.

Often population policy and family policy are regarded as one and the same, due to the fact that family policy measures are based on population policy aspects. As almost all social policy measures directly or indirectly affect the development of society, it would be preferable to speak of population policy measures when we are trying for population policy goals regardless of which sector of social policy the measure is seen to belong to. After all, one often tries, consciously or unconsciously, to reach many goals. At times it happens that measures that are clearly intended to be used for e.g. economic or social policy goals have noticeable population policy effects. As a typical example one could mention labor policy measures. In practice, the effect of social policy measures is noticeable only when they are in effect at the same time and in the same direction.

In the following, we shall principally describe the setting of population policy goals in Finland, and the special aspects of the development of the supply of measures during the past few decades, in other words since the second world war. In this sense, population policy includes social policy measures that can be seen to more or less directly affect the development and condition of the population. The emphasis of this paper will be on events during

the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's, even though the development of population policy thought during its first few years will also be described briefly. General attitudes and attitudes towards population questions as well as the stand of the press on population policy will be described as they are reflected in editorials in daily newspapers, on the basis of newspaper clippings¹ from 1940 to 1973. Also those few committee reports that have taken a stand on population questions will be examined. The most important measures affecting the population structure, distribution and development and which are taken from the different social policy sectors will be taken into account regardless of whether they have been explicitly used to reach population policy goals. The paper will hopefully inspire and give directions for possible future broader and more scientific research.

Towards an industrialized society²

Already around 1910 the birth rate in our country had begun to decrease rapidly. Already before the first world war statisticians had directed attention towards this developmental trend. During the 1920's the decreasing birth rate was regarded as an alarming phenomenon, the reasons for which and consequences of which were debated both among medical researchers and economists. At this time, attention was also given to the prerequisites for practical population policy, and the measures it calls for. In this respect special mention should be made of Professor Ylppö's broad program intended to further child-care. Since, according to him, one could not increase the birth rate, all attention should be focused on decreasing the death rate, especially the child mortality rate. This program, which was to be realized during the following decades, was in a way the origin of mother and child-care in Finland.

During the 1920's attention was directed in many prestigious journals to the changes that a lowering of the age structure and a decrease in the birth rate cause. The reasons for the decrease in the birth rate were debated in newspapers. The principle factor was regarded to be women who no longer wanted to fulfill the highest calling of women, to rear and care for future generations. Mention was also made of the low yield of agriculture. Reference was also made to the fact that it was generally difficult for families with children to find housing, and an abundance of children was regarded as shameful in our country. Men were criticized for not demanding enough of women when, for example, they married a woman who could not look after the household and children.

¹ The source used was the clippings files of the Väestöliitto, the Finnish Population and Family Welfare Federation.

² This review is based principally on Reino Lento's paper, »Väestöpoliittisen ajatustavan synty ja tähänastinen kehitys Suomessa». Yearbook of the Population Research Institute I, 1946, p. 41—85

Despite some disintegrative features, the debate in the press during the late 1920's had a clarifying effect on opinions, and it was a critical factor in focusing interest on population questions. It was also instrumental in having attention focused on matters making it more difficult for families with children to get by; matters that became so harmful that they demanded attention.

The actual population policy awakening took place in 1934 when the chief actuary of the Central Statistical Office of Finland, Gunnar Modeen, gave a speech which aroused a great deal of attention, on the future population development of Finland and the economic consequences. This speech, which was based on a population prognosis covering the entire country, revealed that our population would lessen in the near future and it would never reach the 4 million mark. Modeen emphasized in his speech that an increase in population strongly affects economic progress. If our growth in population slows down, this would have a harmful effect on the economic development of our country. Many researchers and representatives of public life hurried to give their opinions on this matter. The newspapers believed that the matter deserved attention in their leading editorials. Lento (1946, p. 70) believes that especially the fact that our population would never reach the 4 million mark was the most important reason for the speech arousing much attention among the public. The general public had, of course, heard talk of a decrease in the birth rate, but the matter had not been presented in such an alarming light before.

This interest was fostered by corresponding development in our neighbor to the west, Sweden. There, the decrease in the birth rate had been very rapid: in 1933 and 1934, the birth rate in Sweden was the lowest in Europe. Only a month after Modeen's speech Alva and Gunnar Myrdal's book, »Kris i befolkningsfrågan» (Crisis in the Population Question) appeared in Sweden. The lively debate in the press that this caused, the numerous bills in Parliament and the resultant measures no doubt affected the formation of opinion also in Finland.

In Finland, the importance of the population question and the necessity of population policy measures were generally recognized in the debate in the newspapers in 1934—1935. Modeen's speech is generally held, with reason, to be the signal for the beginning of family policy in Finland (see e.g. Kuusi 1964, p. 176).

One did not need to wait long for practical measures caused by the awakening of population policy. In 1935, the Parliament requested that the Government give attention to population questions and study how common families with many children are among the lower income groups in Finland, what kind of circumstances they lived in, and what measures should be undertaken for their support. In 1935 and during the following years many population policy bills were presented to Parliament. From the point of view of those with children, the most important changes were the raising of tax rebates for children in income tax, and a decree stating that the wife's income was to be taxed sep-

arately from the husband's income. Possibly the most important reform from the standpoint of population policy was, however, the levying of an additional tax on those who did not have a family or a responsibility for looking after close relatives. In 1937 a law was passed on maternal support, according to which this support could be given to every mother in poor circumstances. In 1937 the law on communal midwives was also reformed. Possibly the most important of the reforms that came about was that mothers with little or no means were guaranteed a cost-free childbirth.

In line with the example given by Sweden in 1935, the Government established in November of 1937 a special committee to study population questions. However, the war interrupted the work of this committee, and by this time the work had not led to any significant results.

The war and the reconstruction

The war which began in the fall of 1939 signified a hard blow to our nation, and the debate on population questions caught fire anew in the pages of newspapers and magazines as well as over the radio and in private circles. As the proposal of the committee on population still had not come out, the idea was presented in many sectors that something must be done through organization on the grassroots to set things going. In February of 1941 several civic organizations established »Väestöliitto» — the »Population and Family Welfare Federation» and this organization has since then played a significant role in the development of Finnish family and population policy. According to the rules of the Federation, its task is to »spread information on the significance of the size and quality of the population for the existence of the nation as well as for its material and spiritual development; with this in mind to follow the development of the population of Finland; and, through educational work and if necessary by presenting social reforms, to affect the betterment of the growth of the population and its circumstances.»

Among the first tasks of the Federation was to deal with the problem of the equalization of family expenses. Society first had to be made to recognize and accept in principle the idea of equalization of family expenses. Immediately after it was founded, the Federation began to disseminate systematic propaganda in favor of the equalization of family expenses. The first results were reached already after a couple of years, in 1943 when the law on family subsidies was passed. The purpose of the family subsidy system was to help large families with little means and those families whose income had suffered due to the principle provider having died or become incapacitated. At first, family subsidies were paid when the family's fifth child was born, but later on, it was paid also for the fourth child. Thus, Finland was the first Scandinavian country to adopt an actual process of equalizing family expenses. It may be

mentioned that the law specifically stated that the family subsidy was not to be regarded as social assistance.

During the war, the term »population policy» appeared more often in the pages of newspapers than before. The beliefs and opinions that were presented in these papers were in a sense a continuation of the thought presented during the 1930's. It is understandable that after the winter war in 1940 was lost, reference was often made to the words used by then Foreign Minister Väinö Tanner in his communiqué on the acceptance of the terms of peace: »It remains our fault that as a nation we were too small...» Especially in 1941, when the birth rate figures for the previous year were published, much attention was fastened on the lowering of the birth rate. Many articles in the press exhorted the citizens to ensure a satisfactory growth in population. The debate on practical population policy measures also stabilized noticeably. The newspaper editorials often brought up the question of reforming the tax system and of different forms of economic support. Above all, however, attention is drawn to the fact that many editorials analyzed the reasons for the decreasing birth rate on a much more factual basis than during the 1930's. The belief that the decrease in the birth rate was due to a change in the structure of society, to a shift from an agrarian society to an urbanized one appeared in more and more editorials. From the standpoint of the development of population internal migration from the countryside to population centers, »escape from the country», as it was disparagingly called, was regarded unfavorably, as it »signified a shift in strength to the powers that lessen the population of our country» (Helsingin Sanomat, Nov. 8, 1941).

Many newspapers emphasized the significance of large families. According to one paper, a satisfactory rate of growth can be reached only if our nation sets as its goal an increase in the birth rate to what it was at the turn of the century. Each family should then have an average of seven children (Valkeakosken ja Sääksmäen Sanomat, January 28, 1941). According to the right-wing newspaper Uusi Suomi, a Finnish family should even have at the least five to six children (February 19, 1942). According to the director of the Population and Family Welfare Federation, Heikki von Hertzen, a normal family should be regarded as one with 4 children (Ilkka, March 21, 1942).

While the right-wing press often emphasized that the decrease in the birth rate was principally due to spiritual reasons, and that therefore solely economic measures would not increase the birth rate, those on the left often emphasized the significance of economic measures in improving the situation.

If can be said that the leftist opinions were brought forth in a speech given in February, 1942, by the then Minister of Social Affairs K. A. Fagerholm, in which he said that the birth rate would hardly increase even if a broad propaganda campaign were initiated, and that it was much too optimistic to believe that the problem could be solved merely by carrying out a number of social reforms. A change in the mode of thought was necessary, as was clear recognition of the fact that the population question actually affects all of us.

Under the circumstances prevailing at that time he did not believe that too vigorous a campaign for a higher birth rate would be acceptable, as more progress must be made in the direction of social reforms before one could turn to the poorer social strata to speak of an increase in the birth rate.

Generally speaking, both the press on the right and on the left were agreed, however, that the birth-rate could be increased through measures of social support.

There actually were many plans presented during the beginning of the 1940's to raise the birth rate. The Government prepared a proposal on the child support system, and the Committee on Population Policy planned a proposal to organize home establishment loans. This latter proposal led to legislation in 1944. The Ministry of Food initiated a bill on distributing foodstuffs to large families at a reduced cost, something which had been carried out in a very large scale for a long time. Plans were also be drawn up to build housing for large families. As, however, these measures demanded large sums of money, it was proposed that these funds should be acquired by taxing those without children. The public was not yet quite ready for such a measure, however.

For many people, the importance of population policy for the development of our country remained completely unclear. Constant education work was needed, as was a large propaganda campaign. After the war, attention was paid especially to family policy, which in Finland — at least previously — had generally been identified with population policy.

A general system of children's allowances came into force in Finland in 1948. The children's allowances reform, which as late as the 1960's (Kuusi, 1964, 6 and 177) was regarded as the broadest and most radical reform in Finnish social policy, was not based on family policy nor even on social policy grounds. The nature of the reform was almost solely connected with wage and economic policy. However, the intensive education work carried out by the Population and Family Welfare Federation had prepared the way for the establishment of the children's allowance system. The employers attempted to ward off general wage increases and the resultant inflationary spiral by the use of children's allowances to the employees. However, the family wage system, in which only those workers in the employ of another could take part, changed the next year to a general system of children's allowances benefiting all children. At the beginning of the 1950's, the size of the children's allowances were raised at a quicker pace than the general price level, but later on during the decade, social policy concentrated more on improving the situation of the elderly and those out of work.

The 1944 law on communal maternity and child clinics decreed that these were mandatory in every commune. The parallel training of public health nurses ensured the staff needed by maternal and child care. The maternity subsidy, which has been given to every new mother since 1949, has been very important from a national health standpoint. Its monetary value has been small (comparable to 2—3 days' wages for industrial workers according to

recent prices), but its condition, a check-up in the maternity clinics, has had an important effect on the fact that the infant mortality rate in Finland is one of the lowest in the world. Before the war, those who died within a year of birth formed 70 per thousand of those surviving birth, while the corresponding situation in 1974 was 10.2 per thousand.

The time of social structure change

After the war, the population policy debate became desultory. Also, relatively few articles appeared in the newspapers on questions connected with the development of population and related occurrences. The birth rate increased noticeably, and the population replacement did not cause anxiety.

During the 1950's the debate on population occurrences in the pages of the press was concentrated principally on the problems that the large age groups, born during the late 1940's, were expected to cause.

However, in the 1960's, the population questions began to accumulate. Social development had, since the 1950's, been characterized by a noticeable change in structure. The determining feature was a decrease in the population in sparsely-populated areas, and a growth in population centers of different sizes. The relative portion of agriculture diminished rapidly, while the portion of industry and the service trades increased. During the mid-1960's, even the state undertook measures to get the amount of agriculture production to correspond with domestic consumption. This included, among others, different measures to decrease the size of cultivated areas. While in 1950 46 % of the economically active population was working in the agricultural sector, the corresponding figure in 1970 was only 18 %. On the other hand, the demand for the goods produced by urban trades increased faster than their supply.

This rapid structural change was regarded as a problem. It had an essential effect on agriculture. Giving up agriculture usually entails in our sparsely settled country a change in residence. As a result of the structural change, internal migration became more and more lively. Those in the sparsely settled east and north of Finland moved to the already noticeably urbanized and industrialized south of Finland. The drawbacks of migration were especially evident in the areas of departure. Because of this, more and more attention was focused on the development of regional policy.

Industrialization and the change in the structure of society demanded that the population be re-settled. A consequence was, among others, a housing shortage. Despite the fact that for two decades much housing has been built — after all, during the 1960's, 8.2 houses were built every year for every 1 000 inhabitants, more than any other country in Europe — there has been a housing shortage in Finland constantly since the end of the war. The insufficiency of housing in southern Finland has principally been due to urbanization and a concentrating of production activities and the population in one area, and in

eastern and northern Finland, it has been due a great deal to a low income level.

For the moment there is no data on to what degree the housing shortage has affected the development of population and the establishment of families. The housing shortage in the cities and towns has, however, clearly presented difficulties to those moving, and it has made the establishment of families more difficult and it has hindered the acquirement of a labor force especially in southern Finland.

The 1960's also became a period of emigration for Finland. Emigration increased constantly up to 1965. This was directed above all to Sweden. Net emigration reached a total of 68 000 people, half of which moved during 1964 and 1965. After this time a few years of decreasing emigration followed, due to the unfavorable market conditions prevailing in Sweden. But at the end of the 1960's, emigration increased again and reached previously unseen heights. In 1969 and 1970 the number of those emigrating formed almost one percent of the entire population. From 1961 to 1970 a total of 177 000 people moved to Sweden, while the number of those moving to other countries remained rather low, only about 10 000. During the 1960's, the total emigration was around one half of the natural increase in population, which reached 351 600. The net population loss was especially large in northern Finland. For example in 1969 and 1970, 10 % of the population of the two northernmost administrative districts moved to Sweden (Korpelainen, 1973, p. 76). During the past few years, however, the rate of emigration has been rather low. During the 1970's, return migration in certain years has been even larger than emigration. Even though one has not wanted or attempted to hinder emigration, its drawbacks have become apparent to more and more people. Emigration has become a central regional policy question.

At the same time as the weight of internal migration was increasing in southern Finland's population centers and emigration reached alarming proportions, the birth rate continued to decrease.

For this reason it is clear that population development questions appeared often in the press during the 1960's.

The papers continuously gave close attention to the development of the growth of population and any changes in this, and they often took definite stands on these questions in their lead editorials. This was the case especially during the late 1960's and the early 1970's, when as a result of the decreasing birth rate and the emigration it was feared, and then actually confirmed that the population was decreasing. Much alarm was evidenced in the editorials due to this situation, and this alarm was increased by statistical prognoses. On the basis of the decreasing birth rate these prognoses showed that the population of Finland would not increase but on the contrary it would actually decrease. The situation was the same as at the end of the 1930's. Such headlines as »The Finns are disappearing» and »Never 5 million» were often seen in newspapers at this time.

It was feared that the change in the population structure would result in a smaller and smaller part of the population becoming responsible for the economic development of the country, the lengthening education of the youth, and the care of the elderly. It was also feared that the domestic labor force would not be sufficient in the future; instead, one would have to import labor from overpopulated countries that represented so different a culture and level of civilization that this could cause large difficulties in adapting. It was even believed that in a country like Finland an absolute decrease in population was a national disaster.

Emigration was regarded in a disfavorable light: due to emigration, Finland lost those in the best age groups, a labor force that often had received expensive professional training. This development was branded »unfortunate» or »unfavorable» and so on.

However, the press very rarely presented concrete grounds for why such a development should be regarded as disfavorable. Only later, during the 1970's, when more exact data on the emigrants was available, it became apparent that the free mobility of labor in Scandinavia, in force since 1954, had drawbacks attached, from which especially Finland suffered. For example the peak years of emigration from Finland were during the years when there was a favorable market in Sweden and, correspondingly, return migration to Finland occurred when unemployment prevailed in Sweden. Thus, emigration is not an escape valve that would give economic policy more leeway, and would equalize shifts in the market during times of good employment as had been thought. It was also noted that only a small part of the migrants were unemployed immediately before they moved. The long-term unemployed and those experiencing difficulties in finding employment generally did not move elsewhere (Korpelainen 1973, p. 76).

The press also gave a great deal of attention to the reasons for emigration. It was noted that emigration was a sign that the trades did not develop rapidly enough to enable the labor force that had been freed during the structural changes to find work in domestic markets. Our foolish economic policy, our housing policy, our family policy and standard of living competition, a change in attitudes, the employment of mothers, small housing and so on were all blamed for our diminishing birth rate.

As a consequence of the extensive emigration a State Emigration Commission was established in 1970. The aim of the commission was to treat emigration problems and to present proposals to authorities. Later, in 1973, also a research institute for migration was founded.

Even so, since the beginning of the 1960's, social policy developed and spread rapidly. While in 1961 slightly over 12 % of the net national product was used for social redistribution of income, the corresponding portion in 1972 was a little under 20 %. Social income redistribution was now directed especially to benefit the elderly, the work-disabled, the ill and the families of widows.

During the past decades, health care has been one of the most rapidly broadening parts of our national economy. The portion of medical expenses covered by society has rapidly increased in Finland. In 1964 the general law on health insurance came into force. In 1972 a new national health law (66/1972) came into force. The goal of this latter law is to transfer the emphasis of health policy, heretofore too much on hospital activity, to health care and out-patient care. According to the national health law, the commune must take care of the health care education, the contraceptive clinics, the medical care of the inhabitants, transportation of the ill, school health care and dental hygiene work and care in its area. However, the health centers will not operate at their full capacity until the next decade.

In the field of policy affecting retired people, the benefits granted by national retirement pensions have increased from year to year. In 1960 a general employment pension came into force, and in time this was enlarged to include more and more sectors of society.

Employment and labor policy has been very intensively developed during the past years. One has attempted to increase the regional and vocational mobility in order to ease structural unemployment, something which appears in connection with the changes in the vocational structure especially in the predominately agriculture and forestry-oriented areas in eastern and northern Finland.

On the other hand, in the field of family policy proper there have been but minor reforms during the 1960's. In 1961 a special children's allowance law came into force, the purpose of which was to give support in connection with the raising and care of a child by those in difficult straits. At the beginning of 1962 a law on housing subsidy to families with children came into force, according to which housing subsidy could be given to those living in rented housing and who have at least two children — since 1975 even one child and families living in their own house and young couples without children — as long as the annual income of the family did not exceed a certain limit.

In the committee reports that appeared during the 1960's and which dealt with the population question, the development and future of society was examined principally from the economic point of view. Labor force questions were debated, as were the sufficiency of the labor force supply and the related factors, such as the effect of emigration on economic growth. This can be observed in e.g. the 1964 and the 1969 reports of the Secretary of Economic Council (Komiteamietintö 1964 B 93 and Talousneuvoston sihteeristö 1969) which dealt with the growth policy in the near future, and in the report of the developing areas board that debated the growth center policy of Finland (Komiteamietintö 1969 B 46).

The only report during the 1960's that examined more closely the population policy questions of Finland was the report of the Committee on Family Expense Equalization (Komiteamietintö 1966 A: 7). The task of the Committee was to examine and unify legislation on children's allowances, and the Com-

mittee emphasized the significance both of the qualitative characteristics of the population and the size of the population on the social, economic and cultural development of society. Special emphasis was given to the significance of the development of population from the point of view of economic growth. In dealing with the basic grounds for family policy, the Committee observed that one must use both economic and social policy measures, such as family policy income redistribution, to ensure a sufficient growth in the population of Finland. As it was expected that the increase in our population and labor force would slow down in the near future, Finland must establish her labor supply even in the future on the basis of self-sufficiency, and care must be taken that the annual population increase in our country corresponds with the need of the required economic growth. It was supposed that the best way to ensure an even growth in the labor force and in consumption was to keep the annual population increase stable at around one percent. According to the report, one must go on to practice long-range and deliberate population economy, in other words put special attention to ensuring the constant growth of the labor force.

Despite the continuously decreasing birth rate, population questions were given cursory treatment in the committee reports at the beginning of the 1970's, and usually only its effects were noted, even though one could have expected that it would have been dealt with more thoroughly, and proposals or recommendations would have been made to improve the situation. For example, the Economic Planning Center noted in its report on the development possibilities of the national economy up to 1980 (Taloudellinen suunnittelukeskus 1972), that from the point of view of the development of society, emigration was harmful; a curtailing of the size of the young age groups signified a notable loss; and furthermore, if the active population sector that emigrated could be offered work in domestic markets, the social problems would be less alarming than what they appear to be as emigration continues. However, it is supposed that the reasons for this are primarily economic, and that they should be removed primarily by economic policy means.

From among the committee reports that appeared during the 1970's, mention should be made of one, the report of the Committee on Child Day-Care, in which population aspects are explicitly recognized. The Committee notes that a well-attended family policy effects the structure of the population and the labor force, ensuring an even population development and possibilities of carrying out an even-handed and predictable labor policy, which in turn has a positive effect on culture and economic life phenomena (Komiteanmietintö 1970 A 20).

With the continued decrease in the birth rate, a re-arrangement of family expense equalization became the subject of discussion more and more often. It was debated in committee reports but also by private individuals, organizations and research institutes. The more evident results of this was the day-care law (36/1973) which came into force in 1973, the purpose of which was to

make day-care activity a general social service system. Taking into consideration, however, the possibility of acquiring trained personnel, it has been calculated that the need for day-care for children cannot be completely satisfied until the 1980's. In 1973, the Parliament accepted a proposal of the Government according to which an increased children's allowance would be paid for children under three years. The equalization of family expenses has been further extended under the present law.

During the 1970's even political parties have taken a stand on population questions. At the moment, however, only two parties have published a population policy program proper. According to the program of the Central Party (Keskustapuolueen väestöpoliittinen ohjelma, 1973), there is no reason to set higher goals for population growth; one should be satisfied with zero growth. On the other hand, the party believes it to be important that a goal be the establishment of a population development that is in harmony both regionally and in its age structure. Thus, population goals for the different sectors of the nation should be drawn up. The goal should be to keep the size of the population at the present levels in all the administrative districts. According to the population policy program of the Liberal Party (Liberaalinen kansanpuolueen väestöpoliittinen ohjelma, 1973), the population of our country should not decrease. In solving the population problem, the program continues, labor policy, housing policy and health policy have a central significance. In the opinion of the party, this can be reached by a more efficient family policy and by developing a social policy that is more favorable to children. The other parties bypass the question principally by presenting a family policy and regional policy program without, however, taking a definite stand on population development.

The increasing interest in demography and population questions at the end of the 1960's also became apparent in the form of different seminars and symposiums. Thus, the first Nordic demographical symposium was arranged outside of Helsinki in 1967, but here, however, there was little discussion on population policy matters. The Population and Family Welfare Federation, in turn, arranged a symposium in 1970, in which different questions connected with optimum population size were dealt with, and a seminar in 1972, where the future population policy of Finland was debated. Since the end of the 1960's, it has continuously been proposed that demography be taught in the universities. In 1974, a new professor's chair of sociology, specializing in demography, was established in the University of Helsinki. Also in other universities during the past years short courses in demography have been held. In 1974, the Finnish Demographic Society was established.

Up to now, there has been no official stand on the development of the population in Finland, nor has a population policy program been drawn up. In official publications, committee reports and documents very little attention has been paid to social problems from a demographical or a population policy aspect. This is probably due to the fact that in Finland social problems are

primarily seen to be economic problems. It has been difficult to see the connection between demographic factors and the well-being of an individual or the entire nation. This belief has been furthered by the fact that up to the last few years, a noticeable problem in Finland has been unemployment, which, it is true, has more and more been structural unemployment. Also emigration, even though it possibly has not involved at all specifically the unemployed, has assisted in bringing about the belief that in Finland at least there is not a shortage of labor. Furthermore, already during the early 1960's, it had been predicted that in the near future the demand for labor would exceed the supply, but this situation has been noticeably reached only during the very last few years, and only in the highly industrialized southern part of the country, principally affecting skilled workers. It is also obvious that it is not attractive and politically appropriate to begin to solve problems that won't bear fruit until the next generation. After all, there is an abundance of current questions, the solving of which would bring satisfaction and honor on a shorter time-scale.

For the time being, population policy points of view have not been taken into consideration, at least not explicitly, when planning social policy measures. The Finnish Committee on World Population Year has proposed establishment of a Population Commission of Finland. The aim of the Commission should be to prepare population policy measures for long run population programs and to be a coordinating organ for population questions (Komiteanmietintö 1975, 11). It is also to be expected that in the future one will base social policy measures more and more on population policy points of view. Our possible population policy program may begin from the idea that the population must constantly increase at least to some extent. It is also probable that more attention shall be directed to what measures should be undertaken in the different sectors of social policy so that a more regionally balanced population development could be achieved.

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