



Papeles de Población

ISSN: 1405-7425

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Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México
México

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Presentación

Papeles de Población, vol. 12, núm. 50, octubre-diciembre, 2006, pp. 9-12

Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México

Toluca, México

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Presentation

The second half of the 20th century was a period of extraordinary demographic changes. In the first place, Latin America went through an intense cycle of demographic growth and later, got into a stage of systematic deceleration. From a certain point of view, taking into account the low mortality rates, the steep decrease in the fecundity rate and the rise in life expectancy, demographic tendencies are socially favorable. Population's growth has ceased to represent the main preoccupation of the demographical studies. However, changes in structures by age have determined new demands on the population's side and have imposed research new challenges, as well as to the conception and application of population policies. To the latter are added the effects of the dominating economic model, particularly in reference to the deterioration of the population's life condition and the lack of ideal social policies to face such situations. The development of the 21st century demography will be thus marked by multiple problems derived from the conjunction among such demographic tendencies, economic transformations and the ongoing social and political processes. Demographic research will be more often more interdisciplinary. The multiplicity of subjects will define more open directions as for methodological approaches and analytic perspectives. In this framework, population policies will surely have to be based upon wider criteria, closely linked to the rest of social policies.

Demographic changes, particularly the steep drop of fecundity rates started in the middle of the 1970's, determined innovative scenarios in different forms. In a certain way, it could be said and proven that population policies turned out to be successful, but only partially. Paradoxically, during the same period when the population's growth decreased substantially, the population segment deprived from basic resources to ensure a dignifying existence increased. Neither the population policies nor the economical growth were sufficient to contain the tendencies of social inequality and poverty. The paradoxes of the to the deterioration of the population's life condition in stable circumstances lead to rethinking the demographic issue linked to the economic development. In particular, changes in population's structures by ages have diverse economic

and social consequences. The demographic aging can be seen as a process expressed in two levels: among the individuals and in the demographic collective. The individual grows old as passes by the different stages of the cycle of life; population's aging implies the displacement of the age-groups and the relative raise of the older subgroups inside the demographic structure. Demographic aging represents an achievement, a human conquest, it is not a problem in itself, but it imposes and modifies the character of social demands, among them are: employment, health, and social security, spheres where the responsible institutions are not able to face emergent situations, to mention some.

Changes operate at all levels. Fecundity decrease's impact on the family size has collateral and additional consequences, especially in relation to the solidarity and support networks generated in home environments. In the same sense, the circumstances which give birth to the called «demographic bonus», propose an almost lost opportunity. The recent evolution of the regional economies has shown a severe weakness in the generation of employment determined by the new formulas of work organization and the adoption of technologies that limit the generation of labor positions and promote the deterioration of the precarious occupations among the less qualified workers. In the current economic circumstances this social debt is almost irresolvable, due to the increment of the population in active ages and the intrinsic limitations of the economical model as for employment creation and the demands of educated workforce. The social policies' main task is to productively integrate the active population, before adult population grows in an accelerated way. But the challenge is double: it implies to absorb accumulated delays and to incorporate the new working population. The challenges, besides, do not only correspond to the demanded employment's quantity but also to their quality. In this respect it is worthy emphasizing the success possibilities of the social policies do not only depend upon the demographic environments, but also upon the interrelation with the other economic, social and politic instances which can favor or limit the reaches of those policies.

In this issue, Papeles de POBLACIÓN includes a set of works, most of them the result of empirical, innovative and thought-provoking researches regarding the

subjects dealt, and besides they are opportune to define social policies. The works are grouped in four thematic sections.

The first section integrates two articles, the first by Carmen A. Miró, a Latin American notable demographer, researcher from the Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos «Justo Arosemena», where she performs an incisive analysis of the demographic research evolution and the challenges it faces in Latin America, in relation to topics, research lines and analytical approaches. The second work, by Manuel Ordorica Mellado, researcher-professor from the Centro de Estudios Demográficos, Urbanos y Ambientales de El Colegio de México, currently nominated for the General Secretary position of that institution. The article analyzes the effects of the dynamics of the demographic components on the structure by age and distinguishes the aging phenomenon in Mexico as one of the most relevant problems of this century. Both articles shape a thematic unit of what could be thought of as the lineament of the «Future's Demography», at the extent of what they define fundamental aspects of the demographic research's agenda in Latin America and Mexico.

The second section is formed by an ample number of works on demographic aging, the trends and their consequences upon the structures of demands and social services. The first one is the article by Juan Chackiel, researcher linked to the Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía, the article analyses the scenes of the aging problematic from the transition stages by which the countries of the region undergo and emphasizes on the characteristics that such phenomenon will adopt. The following article is by Isalia Nava Bolaños, subscribed to the doctorate program in Population Studies from the Colegio de México, and Roberto Ham Chande, researcher from the Colegio de la Frontera Norte. The article analyzes the demographic transition scheme of social security and savings and expenditures in such systems, in order to elucidate the possibilities of making effective the demographic dividends in Mexico. The following article, by Verónica Montes de Oca, researcher from the Social Researches Institute from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and Mirna Hebrero, researcher from the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social, it is on the aging effects in Mexican homes. The study analyzes the experiences of homes with an advanced life-cycle in widowhood, retirement, chronic-degenerative

diseases and the processes of attention. Finally, the article by Jaciel Montoya Arce and Hugo Montes de Oca, both of them are researchers from the Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados de la Población; the article is referred to the tendencies and challenges of the aging process in the State of Mexico.

The third section contains four articles on monetary remittances from the Mexican migrants residing in the United States. The first work is written by Rodolfo Tuirán Gutiérrez, researcher-professor from the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México, Jorge Santibañez and Rodolfo Corona, researchers from the Colegio de la Frontera Norte. The article shows that the official figures in respect to family remittances' amount generated by the Bank of Mexico are overstated, that not all of the registered resources by such institution correspond to remittances. The second article by Alejandro I. Canales, researcher-professor from the University Center of Social, Economic and Administrative Sciences from the University of Guadalajara, refers to the impact of the remittances on economical development in Mexico. This work shows that remittances constitute a familiar transfer fund which has scarce or null impact on the dynamics and economical development. The third article, by Jorge Eduardo Mendoza and Cuauhtémoc Calderón, researcher-professors from the Economical Studies Department from the Colegio de la Frontera Norte, analyzes the importance of the external flows derived from the economical aperture and of the regional intensity of the remittances in regional growing in Mexico. Finally, an article by Juan Gabino Becerril, researcher-professor from the Population's Research and Advanced Studies Center, from the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico, the article presents estimations for the international migration from the State of Mexico and the destination of the received remittances in the Tejupilco and Almoloya de Alquisiras Municipalities, in the State of Mexico.

The last section deals with fecundity studies and adolescent sexual life and the fertility problematic among Mexican women. It is formed by the articles by Carlos Welti Chanes, researcher from the Social Researches Institute from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and Alfonso González Cervera, researcher from the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Xochimilco, Metropolitan Autonomous University, Xochimilco. The first reviews some of

the relevant stages in the fecundity research in Mexico, it analyzes the use of fecundity surveys and emphasizes on the appearance of the adolescent fecundity as research subject. The second, based on the National Survey on Reproductive Health, analyzes the sub-fecundity frequency in Mexican women.

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