

FOREWORD

At the present time the Milbank Memorial Fund is becoming increasingly concerned with the urgent need for more and better communication, exchange of ideas, and mutual understanding between the various and diverse disciplines whose work affects the public health. During its long history of concern with the contribution of the science of demography, the Fund has always seen the principal application of demographic research to be towards improvement in public health, and its activities in population have usually been considered a part of its work in public health. It was against such a background that the topic of "Demography and Public Health in Latin America" was selected for the Fund's 40th Annual Conference, held in New York City, at the Beekman Tower Hotel, September 17-18, 1963.

At the time the Conference was being planned the Board of Directors of the Milbank Memorial Fund was reviewing the activities of the Fund. It was thought that a conference on this subject would be very helpful in considering the possibility of future programs in support of demography, public health, and education for the health professions in Latin America. Furthermore, that region of the world remains, despite recent considerable improvement, something of a frontier area so far as demography is concerned. It was believed that the bringing together in one place of a sizeable number of demographers side by side with a group of leading public health people, might result in an effective assessment of the current status of demography in Latin America and at the same time provide an opportunity to review the interrelation-

ships between demography, health, and welfare in the area.

Of some 60 participants in the Conference, about one third were from Latin America. The countries represented either as birthplaces or places of residence included Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, and Continental United States.

The program consisted of four half-day sessions, corresponding to the four sections of this volume. The first three were concerned, respectively, with appraisal of official demographic data, research, and teaching and training in demography. The final session was devoted to the interrelationships between demography, health, and welfare.

Most of the papers were reproduced and sent to all participants in advance. Thereby it was possible to dispense with the actual reading of any manuscript at the Conference and to maximize the time available for informal discussion.

The present volume brings together the formal papers and much of the ensuing discussion. For the first time the Conference Proceedings appear as a supplement to the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. Also for the first time a Spanish as well as an English version of the Proceedings is being published.¹

In a background paper on the place of Latin America in world demographic history, Dr. Kingsley Davis points out that the region as a whole has the demographic characteristics of underdeveloped countries generally. However, its death rate has declined faster than that of Asia or Africa in recent years and its rate of population growth is now conspicuously high.

The first section is devoted to an evaluation of the census data and vital statistics for Latin America. Professor Giorgio Mortara, a native of Italy who has spent many years in Brazil as professor, as head of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, and as chief stimulus of census activity, prepared the paper on appraisal of census data for Latin America. According to him, no country in Latin America has a long series of regular censuses. Several attempted occasional censuses but these were generally of poor quality. However, under the impetus of FAO which attempted to encourage world-wide census enumeration during the early 1950's and under the impetus of the Inter American Statistical Institute in both the 50's and 60's, the number of Latin American countries taking a census increased from eight during the 1925-1934 decade to 18 during 1945-1954. Sixteen

republics took a census during 1955-1963. Although the censuses are generally of poor accuracy, those since 1950 have attained sufficient uniformity to allow ample international comparisons and analyses.

In his appraisal of vital statistics, Professor Gaete-Darbó points out that this is a field of growing importance because of the increasing emphasis on planning. The deficiencies are in the collection rather than in the processing of the data. In the Latin American countries there generally is a clear-cut division between the collection and the processing of vital statistics. The registration of births, deaths, and other vital events is done by the so-called "civil registrars." The records are transmitted to the statistical offices which carry out the analyses and publication of the data. Neither branch knows much about the work of the other. The Pan American Health Organization has deliberately avoided efforts to change this basic system, but it has done a great deal to improve the quality of vital statistics through working with both the registrars and the statisticians and through development of departments of vital statistics in the schools of public health and departments of preventive medicine.

The second section of the volume, devoted to demographic research, begins with a report by Mr. Jorge Somoza in which he describes the research within two agencies in Santiago affiliated with the United Nations. One of these is ECLA (Economic Commission for Latin America) with which Mr. Somoza is affiliated. The other is CELADE (Centro Latinoamericano de Demografía) with which he was previously affiliated full time and now part time. The demographic work at ECLA is mainly that of securing the basic information needed for the work of that agency in economic and social fields, supplying population estimates and projections to the United Nations, advising groups on economic planning, and advising the governments in the region on demographic matters. As for CELADE, research is an integral part of its work since its chief aim is that of training demographers in the Latin American region. This also holds for the demographic training centers in India and Egypt and the prospective branch of CELADE in Costa Rica. Since the host countries help to support the demographic centers, they may call upon the centers for assistance in such things as population estimates. Both faculty and students engage in research in the centers. The research projects undertaken by students are designed mainly to give training in research, and relatively few of the results of those student projects are published.

Mr. Somoza lists in his paper some 241 past research projects carried out by students and faculty members at CELADE.

In the next paper Professor Rodolfo Stavenhagen describes demographic research in the universities of Latin America. He is with the Latin American Center for Research in the Social Sciences, a UNESCO agency located in Brazil. Since CELADE is an integral part of the University of Chile, this University does far more research in demography than any other in Latin America. Purely demographic research in other universities is very recent and is represented in only a few institutions. However, quite a few engage in social research with some contact with demographic subjects, such as studies of Indian populations, immigration and assimilation, race relations, urbanization, and industrialization. Professor Stavenhagen lists 26 social science research centers in Latin American universities. Seventeen of these are found in Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Venezuela.

Professor George W. Roberts of the University of the West Indies, who has been closely identified with census activity in the former British West Indies for the past decade, gives a report on the "Census Research Program for the West Indies." He is in charge of the preparation of a series of monographs relating to the 1960 Census for the West Indies, a project supported in large part by the Population Council. He describes some of the practical difficulties in taking the last census and in carrying out the tabulations. There is the physical difficulty of census taking in some 10 former British colonies and jurisdictions collectively including only 3 million people but about 100 inhabited islands scattered over some 2,000 miles of ocean and mainland. Added to this were the political changes during the census period.

An innovation of the 1960 Census in the West Indies was the effort to record marital status, including the different types of consensual unions. Fairly regular censuses for this region go back to 1841. Hence there is the possibility of rather good studies of trends.

Dr. J. Mayone Stycos reports on the new international population program at Cornell University. He has done considerable work in Jamaica as well as in Puerto Rico, Peru, and other Latin American areas. The Cornell International Population Program is a research and training program in social demography. Training emphasizes not only traditional demographic skills, but entails area studies and acquaintance with the methods and theories of other social sciences. Research is currently concentrated geographically on Latin America, substantively on

fertility and migration and methodologically on ecological and sample survey investigations.

The third section of the Proceedings is devoted to teaching and training in demography in Latin America. This appropriately begins with a paper by Professor Carmen Miró about the work of CELADE, of which she is Director. The center is sponsored jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Chile, with much financial support from the Population Council. The basic course is one of formal demography and methodology. It is concerned with population composition, distribution, mortality, fertility, internal migration, evaluation of demographic data, and population projections. The advanced course (second-year) is designed to give the student a broad understanding of the problem of population growth in relation to economic and social conditions, greater competence in handling quantitative data, and ability to carry on independent research.

Dr. Nathan Keyfitz, who has spent a great deal of time in underdeveloped areas, first in Indonesia and next at CELADE, undertakes the assessment of teaching and training in demography in the universities of Latin America. He points out that in only three or four universities of Latin America does the teaching of demography go back a generation or more. The teaching of demography in this area is usually attached to economics and in some of the older courses it has a strong affinity with actuarial science. Dr. Keyfitz pays high tribute to CELADE and to Dr. Miró. He states that thus far the Center has had about 75 fellows distributed among 18 of the 20 Latin American republics and many of its graduates are now giving courses within their own countries.

In the next paper, Dr. Mario Romero G., Director of the Institute of Statistics, University of Costa Rica, presents a report on the teaching of statistics and demography in Central America. He describes the special needs for demographic training in Central America. According to Dr. John Durand of the United Nations, in 1963 the Population Commission proposed the establishment of a Central American branch of CELADE in San José, Costa Rica. Under the proposal, the branch would be lodged within the Institute of Statistics of which Dr. Romero is Director.

Dr. Benedict J. Duffy and Dr. Hugo Behm present companion papers on the teaching of demography in schools of public health. Dr. Duffy deals with some of the general interrelationships between demography

and public health, and he emphasizes that the two fields have much to give each other, especially in the approach to problems of underdeveloped areas. Dr. Behm writes about the type of demographic training needed in schools of public health with special reference to his own school in Santiago de Chile.

There are three possible levels of demographic training within schools of public health. These are vital statistics, formal demography, and family planning. Practically all schools of public health offer some training in vital statistics. Firstly, vital statistics is a means of bookkeeping on levels and trends of health, and changes in the importance of different types of illness and causes of death. Secondly, people going into public health or any type of administrative medicine probably should have at least some acquaintance with broad population problems and the possibilities and limitations of census data. They should know something about the common techniques for measuring distribution, composition, and characteristics of the population by such things as age, sex, marital and socio-economic status, and the various indices of population growth. Thirdly, some schools of public health are already recognizing the importance of teaching about family planning and about the relationship of family planning to health. They realize that in the underdeveloped countries problems of population control lie at the core of the problems of health. In fact, population planning or family planning provides a means of progress in health and a means to facilitate economic development. For instance, one of the acute population problems of Latin America is that of the high incidence of induced abortion, a problem with which the School of Public Health at the University of Chile has been much concerned.

The fourth and final section is on demography, health, and welfare. In the first paper, Mr. John W. Morse is concerned with demography, "feedback," and decision-making in programs for economic and social development. He emphasizes the integration of the various social and biological sciences in approaches to the economic development of areas such as Latin America. He believes that demography has an important role to play in that the feedback of demographic data could guide the formulation of policy. He recommends periodic surveys to learn attitudes of people on specific matters and to ascertain from the people themselves the most profitable avenues of approach to problems of health, education, and welfare.

The final paper is by Mr. José L. Janer and Dr. Guillermo Arbona

of Puerto Rico. They state that demography constitutes nowadays one of the most useful tools in planning for health and welfare. Its role in planning is especially important in underdeveloped countries. Hence it is virtually imperative to include demography in any curriculum intended to train individuals for work related to the advancement of the well-being of human populations.

In an informal summary of the significance of the Conference, Dr. Leona Baumgartner emphasizes the need for more co-operation, tolerance, and understanding between the demographers and the public health workers. There is need for "a bit more humility" within both groups in their approaches to problems of underdeveloped areas.

The Milbank Memorial Fund is indebted to the authors for preparing the papers and for sending them in time to be reproduced and distributed in advance of the Conference. It wishes to thank all participants for their part in the informal discussions. That we decided to publish much of the discussion indicates the value which we place upon it.

As has been the case almost every year for the past 20 years the Fund is again indebted to Lowell J. Reed for his Chairmanship of the sessions. It is hoped that both the English and Spanish versions of the Proceedings will be useful to demographers and persons of related interests in all parts of the world and especially in Latin America. If they contribute to the improvement of basic data, if they are useful to students and teachers, and if they aid in the joint development of demography and public health in Latin America, their aims will be amply served.

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REFERENCE

¹ The Spanish version appears under the title, "Demografía y Salud Pública en Latin América," Part 2 of the April 1964 issue of the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly*. The Proceedings of the previously mentioned Round Table Conference on Medical Education in Latin America were published in the January 1964 issue (Vol. XLII, No. 1, pp. 11-66) of the *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* in English. Versions in Spanish, Portuguese, and French are also available.