

The Center of Research and Advanced Studies on the Population, 15 years of life

Fifteen years ago I had the chance to see the Center of Research and Advanced Studies (*Centro de Investigación y Estudios Avanzados de la Población, CIEAP*) on the Population be born in the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. Many an enterprise and institution are born, yet numerous are those which do not reach one year of age, not to mention five years; we demographers would say that mortality in the first five years of age is high. Nonetheless as it occurs in demography, once the first years pass it is very likely that they live for long time, since they have lived through a difficult stage of life; the same has occurred to this center, already passed a difficult stage of life, so it is very probable that it has a long life expectancy.

It has grown strong; it started with a reduced number of researchers and nowadays it is still healthily small. The center has preserved a great stability, which is the result of a wise and enthusiastic direction and the fact that the university rectors have known how to strengthen it. As in the studies of population, the researchers of the center migrated from a household to a post in a university and currently they have their own premises in the same university.

In our country, fifteen years of age represent a very important moment in the life of people, especially women. It is when they are introduced to society, which means they are able to become married and have started their fertile life; this is the reason a party with escorts is thrown. We might also say it is the arrival of youth; that is why the calculation of fertility rates starts at 15 years of age, it is the moment the reproduction cycle begins. We may say that it is the period where the independence of young ladies from the parents begins and they take up greater responsibilities before society.

In these fifteen years, the Center of Research and Advanced Studies on the Population has performed numberless activities and programs; it has raised awareness on the topic of population through the diplomas it offers. Demographic

topics of national and State level relevance have been discussed, such as aging, accelerated growth of populations, their distributions in the territory, ethnical demography and international migration, among others. We find two key topics in the XXI century among the projects of the center: international migration and the socio-demography of advanced ages.

The work of the center is linked to those who support population policies, this is to say, both the National Council of Population and the State Council of Population of the State of Mexico. Likewise, it is related to lawmakers; several encounters have been organized in the Lower Chamber of the State of Mexico in order to discuss the demographic topic and its relations with development, and its effect on the welfare of population; what is more, its researchers actively take part in the Mexican Society of Demography.

Papeles de POBLACIÓN is part of the listing of excellence journals of the National Council of Science and Technology; not many are the journals in this situation. The journal has become a sphere of analysis and critical discussion of the community of specialists in the field of socio-demography. Inside it, population policies, topics of national importance, demographic figures, sectorial programs, et cetera have been discussed, that is why the journal has become the analytical conscience of demographers; the diversity of ideas and opinions has been propitiated and respected. This journal reaches forty-two countries in the world where demographic research is carried out.

The researchers from CIEAP are youths who have accomplished their postgraduate studies in the best institutions of higher education in the country: Colegio de México, Colegio de la Frontera Norte, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México, among others. From the point of view of research, it has build networks with diverse institutions, which has made knowledge on the field of population richer. It is important to distinguish the fact that the students of diverse majors link their research works with those of the researcher-professors; the latter have a close relation with undergraduate students of the very university.

The center premises are top level; they are located in a prestigious university: the Autonomous University of the State of Mexico. It is widely recognized by the national and international demographic community; it has a modern infrastructure. To sum up, it has the right conditions to carry out excellence research.

Where does it have to head to?

In the future it will have to direct its actions so that in a short term the researchers who have not accomplished a doctorate do it, so as to have a steady and consolidated panel of researchers.

It will have to strengthen mobility, not only national but international. Perhaps in some years the researchers in the center will be able to begin postgraduate courses on population, in an attempt to fill the voids that nowadays exist in the country in this respect. Likewise, the center should continue with its important support to public functionaries and academicians through its courses.

Even if it is true that by means of the journal the diffusion of its activities has been increased, I would find it important to have a radio program and the possibility to insert articles in the newspapers. It is especially important to sensitize politicians and the general population on the demographic topic. Due to the fact that the politicians of the mid XX century were not aware of the relevance of the demographic topic, we were delayed, more than a decade, in establishing a policy of population oriented to regulate demographic growth.

Currently, the center has a panel of young researchers, but in some years it will be necessary to renew it. That is why I propose to develop a retirement plan in order for them to complement their incomes in the future.

In two years the Mexican Independence Bicentennial and Mexican Revolution Centennial will be celebrated; I consider it would be very important to have a meeting on any or some of the topics of national or international relevance in the field of Demography, in view of having publishable articles; this would be the contribution of the center to these celebrations. It would be really useful for the State to publish a book on its demographic dynamics and its perspectives, taking into account the most recent data; special numbers can be issued on new topics such as demography of enterprises, electoral demography and ethnical demography, among other. It would be very enriching to publish articles by professors and students altogether so as to foster interest in research; the experience of the researcher and the freshness of the student's ideas would be joined. This is a virtuous binomial.

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It seems as though that it is time we carried an electronic survey and ask the readers what new topics might be included to improve our journal. It is also utterly important to take the journal as a basic bibliography in undergraduate courses in the university; something interesting is to know what the demographers do and which methodological tools they lack. I think a seminar may be carried out to try to answer these questions.

An edifying activity is the possible evaluation of the center and the journal by specialists from institutions external to university, and even to the country. This might enrich their labor. It is important to invite prestigious demographers so as to speak on the future topics, likewise, also invite international functionaries to comment on the priority topics in the world's demographic agenda.

We hope to be in a similar event to this one when the center is 20, once it has reached legal age. I want to congratulate to Jaciel Montoya on the work developed in the direction of this center of excellence and, of course, to José Martínez Vilchis, rector of this university, who has strengthened CIEAP and maintains it at a high level.

Manuel Ordorica