Population Structure

Population statistics started very early in the Nordic countries in general and in Denmark as well. Already in the eighteenth century censuses and vital statistics were organized and published, mostly taken from the parish registers. Thus, population censuses were conducted on 15 August 1769, 1 July 1787, 1 February 1801, 18 February 1834, and 1 February of the following years: 1840, 1845, 1850, 1855, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1890, 1901, 1911, and 1921. The censuses of 1930 and 1940 were conducted on 5 November.

Population numbers by sex are therefore available since the eighteenth century. Population figures by age and marital status were also combined rather early, but the first combination of population by age, sex, and marital status was made in 1855. The following censuses all published this combination.

A historical introduction concerning population development in the first half of the eighteenth century is found in Statistisk Bureau (1871), and a history of the population censuses from 1769–1890 may be found in Statistisk Bureau (1894: I–XL).

Because the territory of Denmark in the nineteenth century was composed of very different parts (Iceland, Faeroe Islands, Greenland, Schleswig, and Holstein) the government had to produce statistics for all these different territories. For reasons of comparison the data for Denmark proper (without the Faeroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland, but with Schleswig and Holstein) have been used, although the numbers for Greenland and the Faeroe Islands in particular are very small. Iceland has been left out because it was given its own chapter in this book. Schleswig and Holstein are included for the period they belonged to Denmark.

Vital Statistics

In Denmark as in all Nordic countries the record of vital events was introduced very early, for the most part already in the eighteenth century. For the country, annual time series of the main demographic characteristics of births, deaths, and marriages are documented since 1801 (cf. Statens Statistiske Bureau, 1905). More detailed information became available at later times. Births by legitimacy status have been published since 1867, infant mortality since 1860, and divorces since 1896.

Households and Families

Data on households (husstande) have been gathered at least since 1840. But until the census of 1940 no extensive and detailed household statistics were developed in Denmark. Until 1860 only the number of households was published. In 1870 and 1880 the number of households and the persons outside the family were published. In 1890, 1901, and 1991 the number of households, household members, and institutional households plus members was published. In 1921 only the number of households was given. In 1930 and 1940 the number of households, household members, and institutional households plus members was published as from 1890–1911.

The only effort to present more details on private households was the disaggregation of private households by size, introduced in 1890 and repeated in 1901, 1911, 1930, and 1940. Other information such as the composition of households, the profession of household head, or household types was not given.

Comparisons of 1855 household data with those of 1845 were made in Statistisk Bureau (1857). A comparison of the number of households and of mean household size for 1860 and 1870 with regional disaggregation is found in Statistisk Bureau (1871), which also gives some information on servants. The number of households from 1880 back to 1840 (1880, 1870, 1860, 1840) with calculation of mean household size and regional disaggregation is given in Statistisk Bureau (1883: LXVII–LXXI). Statistisk Bureau (1894: CXXXVff.) publishes mean household size for 1840, 1860, 1880, and 1890.

The definition of a household (familie, husstand) since 1890 distinguished between family and institutional households. Earlier censuses only published one household figure which also included institutional households. Family statistics as statistics on the fertility of married women were not introduced in the time period under consideration.

Remarks (also see introductory Table 6.1)

No peculiarities.