Demography

From a politicians point of view

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Secretary General, Geoforum Danmark
Former member of the city council – Hillerød Municipality
I would like you to know:
- Why demography is a valuable tool for politicians
- The most important demography issues currently for Europe
- That political means to impact the demography are scale dependent
Birth rate in Europe

• Please, talk to the person next to you about:
  – How is birth rate development in your country?
Birth rate decline in Denmark

Der fødes færre og færre born i Danmark. Tendensen gælder i hele Danmark og i alle kommuner, uanset om det er i byer eller landområder. Bare i de sidste seks år er faldet af antallet nyfødte pr. 1.000 indbyggere i nogle kommuner mellem 30 og 40 procent. Seks af landets 98 kommuner viser dog en svag stigning i 2012 i forhold til 2006, mens de resterende 92 kommuner viser et fald i antallet af fødsler.

Klik på regionerne og videre på de forskellige kommuner og se detaljere utvikling.
Birth rate decline in Denmark
Development of school domain

Development in number of 6-16 years old

– Hillerød Municipality

Historik

2013 prognose

2012 prognose
Consequences – municipal scale

• Less children for the schools means we have to:
  – Dismiss teachers
  – Merge schools to larger units
  – Eventually close down schools

• This might have an effect on the local society:
  – Drainage of local society if e.g. the village school closes down – people will move away from the village
  – Self-reinforcing mechanism: no families would like to move to or live in a neighborhood with no schools

• So far in Hillerød Municipality we have:
  – Merged almost all schools to larger units
  – A school closing in a village is probably coming up soon
A demographic analysis is necessary to estimate what the future will bring

Analysis based on population data

Every year a re run of the analysis is done to:

- strengthen the knowledge of the future
- draw political consequences from it
Consequences – national scale

- At national scale:
  - 333 schools closed down (22%)
  - Over a 5 years period of time
  - On average >3 schools per municipality

- Explanation here:
  - To save money
  - To strengthen education level

- Fact though:
  - Declining number of children
Development of elderly people

Relative index development of 65+ years

- Hillerød Municipality

65+ årige

65-80 årige

81 +

years old

Indeks 2013 = 100

Aldring sætter Europa på kraftig skrump

Af Jens Thomsen
Mandag den 13. december 2010, 00:00

Befolkningstallet vil falde dramatisk i Europa i de kommende 20-30 år, mens gennemsnitsalderen ryger i vejret. Den økonomiske velfærd er på spil, hvis europæerne ikke sætter ind over for samfundets aldring nu, advarer eksperten.

GAMMELBY Mick Jagger, Paul McCartney og Bruce Springsteen rocker ufortrødent videre, selv om de for

“Combinationen of more elderly people and few newborn cause a serious issue for economists and politicians”

At European scale:
- Population number will decrease dramatically
- Time scale: 20-30 years
- Economic welfare at risk
Mitigation – European and national scale

- Ageing is inevitable
- What to do is to adjust our politics.
- And we need to adopt a new way of thinking

- Dealing with this demographic challenge:
  - Raise the age of retirement – seen in context of expected life duration
  - It has to become possible and attractive to stay employed for elderly people
  - Make up with stereotypes about older employees
Dealing with the demographic issue of fertility. High birth rates in a modern society can be obtained in various ways:

- Through incentives for couples to have more children
- Through support to families with kids
- Through an extensive social system
- Through a flexible labour market
Mitigation – municipal scale

- One thing is the solution at large scale
- Please notice that at the municipal scale all municipalities are competitors to the attractive citizens:
  - Like to have good tax payers
  - Like to have more families to preserve schools and kindergartens
  - Like to have less care demanding 81+ citizens to avoid building new nursing homes

- But there should be room for all of us...
Mitigation – municipal scale

• Various strategies could be suggested for prevention:
  – Inaction
  – Close a lot of schools
  – Plan for a change of future demography
Mitigation – municipal scale

- A plan for a change of future demography
  - Offset in the estimates of the demographic development
  - Spatial analysis of areas to suffer more than others
  - Aligned with the plan for development of residential areas – “the housing prognosis”
  - Aim at no institutions or schools to become affected in the long run

- If this plan is frequently revised it can avoid issues like one we had some years ago in Hillerød Municipality:
  - A 15 years old school became needless and had to close down – no more children to attend to it
  - Schools and institutions represent an investment to care for
## Mitigation – municipal scale

### De nye borgere

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Civilstand</th>
<th>Index</th>
<th>ÅrNy</th>
<th>ÅrKo</th>
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<td>Enlige / singler</td>
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<td>57,0 %</td>
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<td>Par</td>
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<td>Et barn</td>
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<td>15,1 %</td>
<td>11,1 %</td>
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<td>22,9 %</td>
<td>10,8 %</td>
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<td>Tre eller flere børn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 11 år</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 65 år</td>
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<td>6,6 %</td>
<td>12,0 %</td>
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Side aspects of political decisions

Other reasons why to avoid changes in demography:

- Every time a political decision on changing the demography is done, it will have some side aspects appearing. Experience from the “Learning at all cadastra” principle is:
  - Very high degree of citizen involvement needed
  - Are the school roads ready for the larger school districts?
  - Merging 2 or 3 schools is also merging 2 or 3 different cultures
  - Parental protests might occur
  - Private schools may be preferred
  - Management – how to?
25 minutes from now...

Did you get to know:
- Why demography is a valuable tool for politicians?
- The most important demography issues currently for Europe?
- That political means to impact the demography are scale dependent?
Thank you very much for your attention

Questions?

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Alternative strategy for mitigation of the demographic challenge 😊