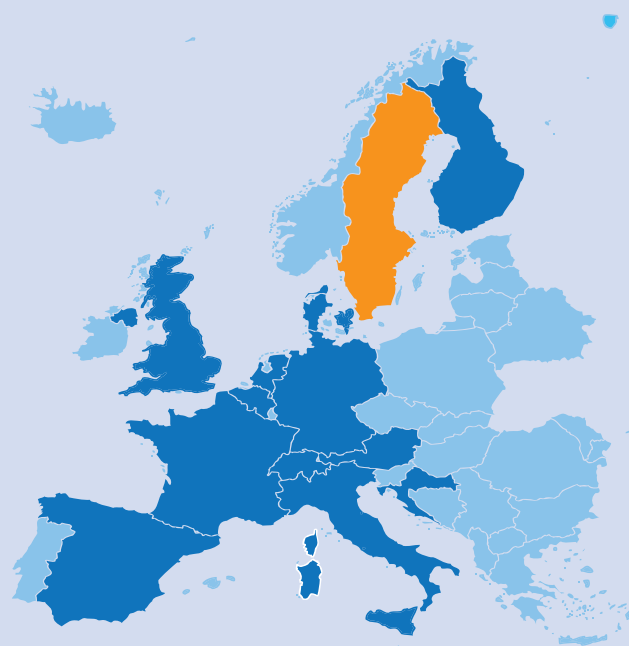


SWEDEN

- Sweden has a long tradition of population statistics. The data infrastructure is quite unique.
- Demographic change is a prominent policy issue. The Swedish government funds large-scale research projects and foresight activities in various related areas.
- Swedish data sources most relevant for the JPI “More years, better lives” comprise around 40 datasets.



1. Demographic context

The population of Sweden reached 9.5 million by the end of 2012, and is anticipated to pass the 10-million threshold around 2017. The fertility rate currently stands at 1.9 children per woman. In 2011, life expectancy stood at 83 years for females and at nearly 80 years for males. By 2060, it is projected to increase to about 89 years for females and 87 years for males. The most common causes of death among elderly people are cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Both in- and out-migration significantly influence Swedish demography. The number of foreign-born citizens has been on the rise and exceeds the level of emigration. In recent years, net migration has been the largest factor contributing to population growth. As in other European countries, the Swedish population is ageing. Today, 1.6 million people (18% of the Swedish population) are 65 years or older. By 2060, their number is projected to reach 2.7 million (25%).

It is Swedish policy to encourage elderly with care needs to continue living in their own homes and making use of ambulatory care services. In 2012, about 162,300 people of 65+ years (9% of this population age group) lived in ordinary housing and received home care. Among the 80+ population, the corresponding figure was 23%. The number of those unable to manage their daily activities

of living independently and living in old age or care homes was 87,600 among the 65+ population (5%).

Employment rates at advanced working age are fairly high among both Swedish males and females. In 2012, it ranged at 75% among males and 74% among females of 55 to 64 years. Among those aged 65 to 74 years, 18% of males and 11% of females were still working. In 2010, the average labour market exit age in Sweden was 63 years. Individuals may already retire from 61 years onwards and will then receive a guaranteed pension starting at age 65 years. While the formal retirement age is 65 years, it is possible to work beyond this age if there is a mutual agreement of the employer and the employee.

2. Demographic change and policy concerns

These demographic changes will have significant social and economic repercussions for Sweden, and will influence taxpayers' willingness to contribute to growing needs in the ageing care sector, including for improved communication, transport, and social services. The challenge of increasing productivity is being addressed in a number of ways. First, there is a permanent and growing demand for more efficient production systems and the development of value chains in both the public and the private sectors. Second, it is essential to mobilise the

Swedish workforce and to increase the number of hours or years worked. Third, the government has started a policy debate on the options for working longer and for promoting job retention up to the year of formal retirement.

The Swedish pension system is currently being reviewed and debated by policymakers. In March 2011, the government appointed a commission called the “Retirement Age Inquiry” to analyse the pension-related age limits and to investigate any possible obstacles to an extension of working life.

The initiative’s interim report showed that working conditions needed to be better accommodate older workers’ needs, rules of the national public pension and occupational pensions systems needed to be revised to facilitate longer working lives. Government agencies, employers and the social partners need to change their attitudes towards employing older workers.

3. Data sources

General issues

Through its system of personal identification numbers and registers that cover the entire population, Sweden has unique opportunities to study policy-relevant and multidisciplinary issues related to social conditions, housing and health, for example. An information and advisory function should be established at the Swedish Research Council to facilitate register-based research. At the same time, the information contained in registers must be handled in such a way as to protect the privacy of the individual.

Infrastructure and the institutional pattern of Swedish databases

Statistics Sweden (SCB) is the national administrative agency with the main task of supplying customers with statistics for decision-making, debate and research (www.scb.se/eng). Population and welfare is one of its four priority fields. Datasets relevant for social research have been made available for Swedish researchers through the Mona or Micro data online access, a system that provides microdata at Statistics Sweden.

The Swedish Research Council (www.vr.se) has a sub-council for research infrastructure activities. One of its purposes is to produce a long-range strategic plan for how Swedish researchers within academia, the public sector and industry can gain access to the highest quality research infrastructure in Sweden and in oth-

er countries. This plan is presented in the Swedish Research Council’s Guide to Infrastructures. Furthermore, the Swedish Research Council has, in collaboration with The Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (www.forte.se) and the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, initiated an inquiry to determine which of the existing survey databases and longitudinal studies have the greatest value for Swedish research, and whether there are options for increasing coordination and improving quality.

The Swedish National Data Service (<http://snd.gu.se/en>) is a service organisation for Swedish research in the humanities, social sciences and medicine. It helps Swedish and international researchers to gain access to existing data within and outside of Sweden. Other important actors in the realm of Swedish statistics include universities and research institutes responsible establishing new or connecting existing datasets, the Swedish Initiative for Research on Microdata in the Social and Medical Sciences (<http://simsam.nu/>), the Swedish Data Inspection Board protecting individual’s privacy in the information society (<http://www.datainspektionen.se>), the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (<http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistics>), and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (<http://english.skl.se/>).

The strengths of the Swedish statistics system and its international capacity

The main strengths of the current system in Sweden are the long tradition of population statistics and the large number of registers, which cover both the total population and selected fields. The broad provision of databases, registers and ongoing longitudinal studies also raises the need for coordination and overview. The infrastructure for empirical studies on demography, living conditions, health, work, education, social security and cultural and political activities in Sweden has developed significantly over the last decade.

There are, however, various challenges as to the increase in options for using registers and databases and applying them to various policy contexts. There are also ethical and legal constraints to be addressed. Furthermore, there are technical and formal restrictions on the use of data, though these problems that have been partly resolved by the microdata online access system (Mona). With regard to comparative work with foreign scholars, the picture is not so positive. The opportunities to disclose microdata over the Internet to other countries are limited.

Health and Performance

The annual national public health report has a strong focus on health inequalities, living conditions and social gradients. It is based on different datasets, including the education register, Statistics Sweden, as well as the patient register and death register. The dataset SWEOLD covers health, mobility, ADL, housing and living conditions in a broader context. Four datasets (Betula, H70, H85 and 95+) have a special focus on cognitive ageing, mental capacity, memory and Alzheimer and dementia. Some birth cohorts and age cohorts have been studied in terms of their life-course development and their health and social conditions, with gender issues taken into account (COSM, Monica Study, SMC, Uppsala Birth Cohort and PPSW). The well-known Swedish Twin Registry has a number of sub-registries. Of special interest is SATSA (Swedish Adaption/Twin Study), which looks at twins growing up under different social conditions. Lastly, there is a rapid development of the Swedish Quality Registries in health research. There are 73 such registries currently being certified.

Social systems and welfare

Administrative datasets from the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare (i.e. a register for the care of the elderly and functionally impaired), the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (i.e. the Swedish Social Insurance Registry), and the Swedish Pensions Agency and Statistics Sweden (called “Household economy”) provide a good overview of living conditions and social protection. The longitudinal Swedish Living Level Study or Panel Survey of Ageing and the Elderly have an extended sample of people over age 55. The main focus of the Swedish National Study of Ageing and Care (SNAC) lies in the care and social protection of the elderly. There are also numerous datasets about attitudes towards the welfare state and personal preferences regarding care, including the Swedish Welfare State Survey, the European Social Survey and International Social Survey Program.

Work and productivity

The main sources on the issues of work and productivity are the Labour Force Survey, the Longitudinal Individual Data Base (LINDA), the Longitudinal Integration Database for Health, Insurance and Labour Market (LISA), and the Work Environment Survey; all of which are administered by Statistics Sweden. Together they cover employment rates, working activities, income, socio-economic conditions, work environment, the quality of work for employed people, as well as variations with regard to age, gender, ethnic background and functional impairment.

The Swedish Longitudinal Occupational Survey of Health (SLOSH) provides data on broad issues of labour market

participation, working life, social environment, personal agency and health.

Education and learning

The Swedish register of education, UREG, is based on the register of the entire population, RTB, and describes a person’s highest level of education, years of participation in education, gender, age, city or municipality of residence and place and country of birth. Of interest is the register on the educational attainment of the population. Education after age 50 is rarely covered. Adult education and lifelong learning are mainly described through participation rates for various forms of adult education, such as on-the-job training, study circles, adult education centres or formal adult education. Three longitudinal and research-based datasets can be used for studying education and learning in a lifelong perspective: “Evaluation through follow-up” (ETF), the Malmö study, and the “Individual Development and Adaptation” (IDA). All of these datasets have been designed to follow education-to-work transitions and can also be used for adult or lifelong learning, and informal learning.

Housing, urban development and mobility

Administrative datasets coordinated by Statistics Sweden allow analysing basic living conditions. These include HEK, which covers the household economy, and HUT, which covers household costs. Special registries of care for the elderly and people with disabilities are monitored by the Swedish National Boards for Health and Welfare. The Swedish Panel Study of Living Conditions of the Oldest Old (SWEOLD) includes data on individual mobility, as well as adaptation to daily life.

Public attitudes towards old age

There is an increasing interest in age discrimination and attitudes towards ageing. However, available data and research in this area are limited. Attitudes towards ageing and older citizens have also been surveyed in the Eurobarometer. In general, Swedes are in favour of a longer working life, but there are major differences with regard to education level and type of profession; e.g. there is a significant difference between white-collar and blue-collar workers.

Social, civic and cultural engagement

Political participation and media interests are covered by three datasets monitored at the University of Göteborg: the Swedish Election Study dating back to 1956; the Media Barometer, as well as the SOM Institute Cumulative dataset covering opinions and social background. For these issues of equal interest may be the EU-SILC and the Swedish Level of Living Survey (LNU). In addition, the Swedish Agency for Cultural Policy Analysis is responsi-

ble for four statistical areas in the official statistics in the cultural field: museums, adult education associations, cultural environment preservation and society expenditure on culture.

Uses of technology

The Media Barometer covers questions on how the respondents deal with technological progress. Statistics Sweden also launched two datasets on the use of computers and the internet in 2012: “Swedes on the internet” and “Use of computers and the internet”. Both of these datasets can be used to investigate the use of information and communication technology by older people, also differentiating by age, education and ethnicity. The report “Empathy and high tech” from the LEV project and published by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs provides information shows how that new technologies will change health and elderly care in the future.

Wellbeing

The major dataset on wellbeing is the National Public Health Survey (see above) covering individuals aged 16-84 years that are included in the Statistics Sweden population register.

Intergenerational relationships

The Swedish Multi-Generation Register at Statistics Sweden is comprised of individuals born in 1932 or later, and who have been registered in Sweden from 1961 onwards. It also covers individuals, who have been adopted or have a foreign background. The Linnaeus database and Scanian Economic Demography Database also identify intergenerational networks, family formation and work from a historical perspective. Lastly, Sweden participates in the international GGS (Generations and Gender Survey), which focuses on family structures and intergenerational networks.

4. The data and the policy agenda: gaps and challenges

The Swedish data sources most relevant for the JPI “More years, better lives” comprise around 40 datasets. Statistics Sweden has the broadest supply of data, including population registers for the entire population, as well as surveys on living conditions (EU-SILC) and the household economy, activity registers for the entire population on issues like education, the labour market, occupations and targeted surveys as to the labour force and the work environment.

The majority of reviewed datasets in Sweden focus on the issue of health and performance. Many of these studies are cohort studies, and some are birth cohort studies. There is also some research on centenarians. Major issues addressed include cognitive capacity, memory ability and Alzheimer or dementia. Work and productivity are covered by both research-connected datasets and Statistics Sweden, and information on retirement age, disabilities and social insurance or pensions are accessible for research.

Datasets on education and training are largely focused on youth education, but there are relevant longitudinal databases. Still, lifelong learning has not been well covered in existing datasets, even though information on participation rates in different forms of adult education is available.

Housing, urban development, and mobility was difficult to detect in one single dataset, but appear as important dimensions or variables in many datasets. Specific datasets on attitudes towards age, ageing and the new demography could not be identified, but there are a few studies investigating attitude changes over time or employers’ attitudes towards older workers. Meanwhile, attitudes towards the welfare state and general welfare policies, social services and living conditions are featured prominently in Swedish research and datasets.

This policy brief summarises the major data sources for the ten policy fields identified by the working group of the Data Mapping Project of the Joint Programming Initiative “More Years, Better Lives”. An extended version of the original text and more information on the described sources are available at <http://www.jpi-dataproject.eu/>.

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Author: Prof. Kenneth Abrahamsson, Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare (FORTE), Stockholm, Sweden

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