

Where Do People Live?

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Abstract: Population counts for small areas, as in a census, are directly affected by the rules that determine where each person is to be counted. Clear rules are needed for groups such as migratory workers, persons whose work requires long absences from the family home, homeless persons, military personnel, persons maintaining two or more homes, persons in hospitals, correctional, or other

institutions, crews of sea-going vessels, and others. The rules may have a bearing on family and household statistics and statistics on socio-economic status as well as on counts of numbers of people.

Key words: Census; residence; migratory workers; de facto; de jure counts; homeless persons.

1. Introduction

An important and unique feature of a census of population is that it provides data for small areas. To supply these data, the areas must be meaningful in terms of conditions within the country. For instance, the population of a small area must be sufficiently large to assure that publication of data does not result in an inadvertent disclosure of data for any individual person or household.

Data are usually made available for a country's primary subdivisions, such as states, provinces, and prefectures, and the secondary subdivisions, such as counties or communes. Data normally become available for incorporated municipalities and other legally recognized areas. In addition, research or planning activities may necessitate the use of areas defined by natural, functional, or economic considerations. Such special purpose areas may or may not be consistent with the system of political boundaries which prevail within a country.

For governmental and other purposes, the territory may be further subdivided by variations in density of settlement, major source of livelihood, size of agglomeration, etc. Classifications like, for example urban-rural, metropolitan areas, and open country, do not depend on geographic contiguity, but may be based on separate tracts of area that meet designated criteria.

Population data for specific areas is important to various users. The powers and duties of individual municipalities are often established by their population counts. The allocation of seats in legislative bodies may depend on the distribution of the population. The responsibilities of local governmental units are often linked to the size of the population. For example, the allocation of public funds among governmental units may depend on the size of the population. Scholars and other researchers use census results for very small areas, in order to combine them into unconventional aggregates. Commuting areas, drainage districts, marketing areas, postal delivery areas, school districts, health service areas, TV or other service areas are examples of unconventional categories for which data may need to be

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assembled. Regardless of who assembles the tabulations for special purpose areas, the census office or the user, the starting point is likely to be the same, namely the tabulations for very small areas, that are in turn part of the tabulation program for the census.

2. Who Is to Be Counted?

Early in the census planning one must reach a decision on who is to be counted in the national totals. The recommendations of the United Nations draw attention to groups of people who may or may not be properly considered as members of the total population. Practices have varied with regard to members of the military forces. Some census reports omit any reference to the nation's armed forces. Should military personnel stationed in other countries be counted as part of the population of their own country or should they be counted as part of the population of the country they are stationed in? Similar questions apply to members of the diplomatic corps. Should they be counted as part of the population of the area they are residing in or as part of the population of the home country? Should a distinction be made between members of the diplomatic corps who live in embassies or other quarters for diplomatic personnel and other members of the diplomatic corps who live in other quarters, counting the latter as residents of the area where they actually live?

Seasonal workers who cross national boundaries can be considered members of the population in their country of origin, or in the country they are working in. Although guest workers have become a major part of the population of some countries, they still may exert a significant influence in their countries of origin. Decisions need to be made regarding the inclusion or exclusion of merchant seamen and fishermen who may be at sea for extended periods. The large num-

ber of refugees in some countries also poses questions regarding the proper treatment in the census. Where nomads move freely across national boundaries, special procedures may be needed to ensure proper enumeration.

3. Where Are People to Be Counted?

Having determined who is to be included in the national totals, it becomes necessary to decide which area they should be allocated to. It is a common practice to characterize a census as *de jure* or *de facto*. A *de jure* census defines a person's residence as the place he or she is most closely bound to by law or custom. This is established by asking for each individual's "usual" residence. A *de facto* census allocates each individual to the area he or she is found in at the time of the census. Each procedure has advantages and drawbacks. These procedures may be regarded as "ideal." In actual practice, most censuses combine the two procedures at least to some extent.

If a country's armed forces are to be included in the national totals, should they be included in the population of the places where they are stationed? Or should an effort be made to allocate each member to the place the individual would regard as "home"? Career military personnel may be treated differently from those members of armed forces who will be returning to civilian life after completing a term of military service. A combination of two approaches is illustrated by the procedure used in the 1970 Census of the United States. Members of the U.S. Armed Forces who were stationed overseas were included in the national grand total. They were also included in the special computations that were used to determine the number of Representatives each state is entitled to. Those members of the armed forces were excluded from other tabulations.

To conduct a census, one must assume that each person can be identified uniquely with a

specified residence. Modern transportation, communication, and the increasing division of labor have facilitated the loosening of ties to a specific residence. Particular attention is needed when a person's place of employment is sufficiently distant from the family residence, from the family residence that the person needs separate living arrangements and visits to the family occur only at weekends or less frequently.

A common approach in censuses is to ask the individual to report his or her place of usual residence. It is easier to define one's usual residence in terms of what it is not than to state precisely what it is. It is not necessarily the place where one owns property, pays taxes, or is allowed to vote. It is not necessarily the place where one was reared, or has one's family roots. A person is to be counted at his/her usual residence even though he/she may be temporarily absent. If the country maintains a population register, the place where the individual is required to be registered would normally be considered the usual residence, if the register is up to date. Children and persons who do not have a usual residence elsewhere are enumerated along with the head of the household.

To avoid double counting, provision must be made for a person who may have more than one place that can appropriately be considered his/her usual residence. A person who owns or leases two or more homes for regular use by his or her family will need to select one of the homes as the usual residence.

Persons who virtually have no usual residence are not to be omitted from the census. The best procedure is to count them at the place the census enumerator finds them.

Migratory workers in agriculture, forestry, recreation, construction, or other economic activities are examples of those who may not have any usual residence and may appropriately be counted where they are found. On

the other hand, one could try to allocate migratory workers to their off-season residences. There are other persons in a modern society who have no home or usual residence. Allocation of such persons to the place where they are found by the census enumerator may be the only effective way of including them in the census, even if the *de jure* approach is favored. For people who live in the street or sleep in nighttime shelters provided for the homeless there may be no alternative to allocating them to the small area where they are found by the census enumerator. The agency conducting a census must be prepared to deal with gypsies and other groups and persons who virtually have no usual residence.

Persons in the custody of the police and those in prison require special attention. An effective procedure may be different treatment for short term and longer term inmates, allocating short term prisoners to their usual residence, if there is one, but counting inmates who are serving long terms at the place where they are actually staying. Persons living in nursing homes, hospitals devoted to the care of long term patients, homes for the handicapped, or similar institutions may appropriately be counted where they are found by the census enumerators. People who are in a hospital for a short stay may be counted as residents of the area that they regard their usual residence.

Since college and university students comprise a significant part of the population, special procedures may be required to ensure that students are properly enumerated. From the view of household economics, it might be argued that the great majority of students are dependent on their parents for all or part of their maintenance, and should thus be counted as residing with their parents. However, only a small proportion of these students return to the parental home after completing their studies and it may be more appropriate to enumerate them at the places (student

housing, etc.) where they live while attending college or university. The situation may be different for students living in elementary or secondary school facilities. One possibility is to enumerate these students as residents in the parental home, even though they spend most of the year at school.

Rising affluence in some parts of the world has led to an increase in the proportion of people who have more than one home. Frequently the homes are located in different climatic zones, and these people move seasonally to escape temperature extremes. Such people may find it difficult to designate one of these places as their usual residence. The residence occupied at the time the census is taken can be considered the usual residence. The local officials in both places may have a vested interest in having the census count reflect the peak seasonal numbers. As the number of pensioners in the population increases, there is an increase in the numbers of persons and households who change their residence seasonally.

Consideration needs to be given to residents of houseboats, mobile homes, and other forms of nonconventional housing. Insofar as these physical units remain in one place or regularly return to the same place, there may be little problem in determining the usual residence.

Fishermen and crew members of sea going commercial vessels call for special treatment to determine whether or not they are to be considered as members of their households on shore. Determining which area the crews of naval vessels should be enumerated in can be controversial unless adequate preparation is made. Should such crew members be added to the population of the home port, or to that port where the vessel is docked on census day, or be treated as a separate entity which is not part of any city or county on shore? If crew members maintain households on shore

near the home port, should they be counted as members of their on shore households?

For the 1990 round of censuses, the question of counting persons absent because of space travel may not be sufficiently great to warrant any concern about the appropriate place at which they are to be included in the census.

A de facto enumeration avoids many of the problems listed above. However, it has problems of its own, including the distortion of family and household statistics by treating the person who may be the principal source of financial support as a unit separate from the family.

The needs of the government and other users of census data will determine which approach is used in the census. It is likely that in the future, census administrators will decide on a modified approach that deals with special situations in a manner designed to meet the needs. Another approach would be to ask the respondents if there is another place where they might have been enumerated. Knowing what place might have been reported as the usual residence helps avoid duplicate counting, and also helps prepare special tabulations that further our understanding of various groups and areas.

The exclusion or inclusion of certain groups in the census directly affects the national totals, especially when enumerating major tourist or visitor centers. Have we given enough attention to establishing the appropriate procedures to exclude foreign visitors who are at the place only temporarily? And what has been done to exclude foreign students from the count for an area that has a significant number of foreign students?

Neither a de facto nor a de jure census will supply a daytime or a nighttime population count. Where such counts are needed, special procedures need to be developed. Whether to use these other procedures in connection

with the conduct of the census will have to depend on local considerations.

4. Some Side Effects

The discussion up to this point has been concerned primarily with the effect of treatment of certain exceptional groups on the total count of the population of small areas. There are, however, some side effects that deserve consideration. A rigid application of a de facto approach would exaggerate the number of very small households by placing family members who are not together on census day in separate households. This has a direct effect on the number of households, on the analysis of characteristics of households, and on evaluating trends. It also affects the analysis of household income, poverty statistics, and any study of the socio-economic status of the population. Analyses of the economic structure may also be affected, as would be studies of the urban-rural structure.

There are, as usual, costs associated with each of the methods of conducting a census.

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