

RECENT INTERNATIONAL CENSUS DEVELOPMENTS  
AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE 2031 UK CENSUS  
(if there is one!)

## Overview

- Conference of European Statisticians' Census Recommendations
- Shifts in data collection methodology
- Changes to topic content
- Emergency preparedness and contingency planning
- Discussion



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***Somerset House on the Strand at the time of the 1841 Census***

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***Meeting of the Census Expert Group, Geneva, October 2024***



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**Conference of European Statisticians' Recommendations**

- **Planning and conducting the Census**

- Legal basis

- Census design and enumeration methods

- Field operation activities

- Technology

- Communications and outreach programmes

- Dissemination and related issues

- Geospatial information and small area statistics

- Quality management

- Costs and benefits

- Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

- **Census Topics**



## RECENT INTERNATIONAL CENSUS DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE 2031 UK CENSUS

### Shifts in data collection methodology

The three basic methods of data collection are:

- ***The traditional census***, typically exemplified by the collection of data directly from respondents in the field by enumerators and/or through electronic/online media
- ***The register-based census***, in which all information is collected from several independent administrative registers and then linked to create a single statistical database
- ***The combined approach***, in which elements of both the traditional and register-based approaches are combined to suit national circumstances

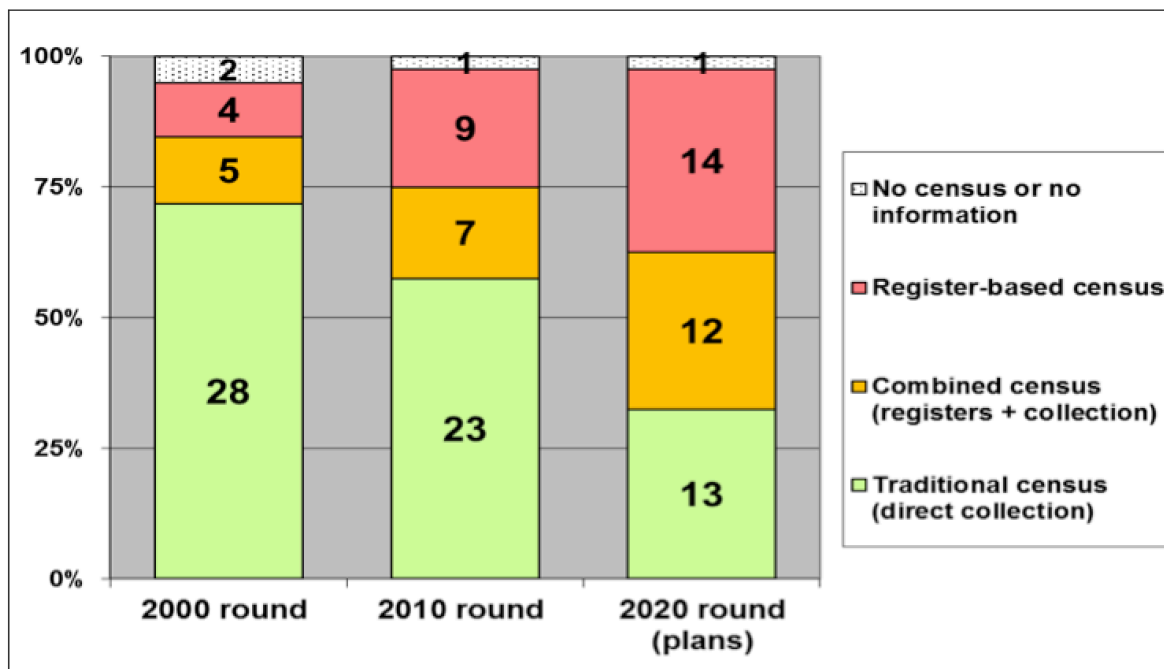


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Since the 2000 round of international censuses, the methodology for collecting census data has changed dramatically in many countries in the UNECE region.

**Figure 2:** Number of European countries by census method adopted – 2000, 2010, and 2020 rounds



Source: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



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### **The basic methods - the traditional census**

The traditional (of full field enumeration) approach comprises a complex operation of actively collecting information from individuals and households on a range of topics, throughout the whole or specified part, of the country, at a specified time.

There are two major methods of enumeration:

- where the information is recorded directly by an enumerator during a doorstep interview with the respondent; or
- where the household members complete the questionnaire on their own and return it either to the enumerator, or via a postal service, or online.

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### **The basic methods - the traditional census**

#### *Necessary conditions*

- Good address list
- High level of literacy for self-completion

#### *Advantages*

- Comprehensive coverage (universality)
- All the data are collected at the same time (simultaneity)
- Short enumeration period
- A good understanding of the methodology
- Greater flexibility in deciding the topics to be covered
- Provides a base for subsequent sampling frames.

#### *Disadvantages*

- Administrative complexity
- High costs
- Declining responses
- Long periodicity
- Quickly out of date
- Hard to count some groups

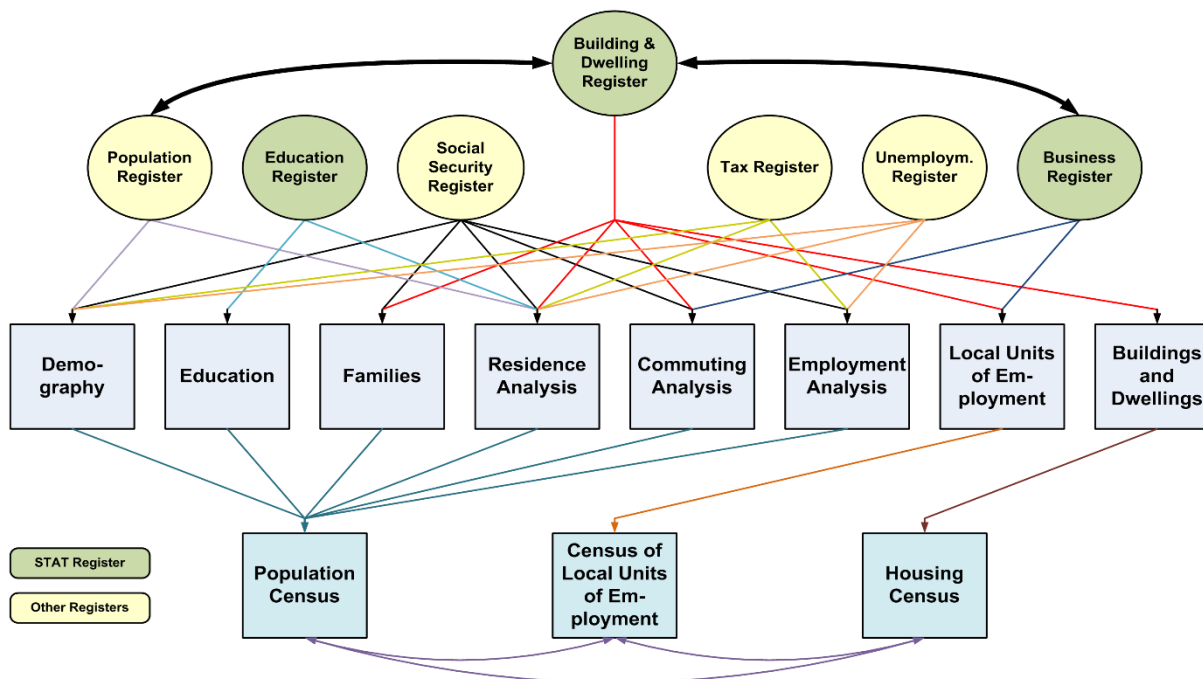


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### The basic methods - **the register-based census**

In this basic approach there is no field enumeration element at all, and the data is taken by the statistical office solely from information held on administrative registers, usually under the control of other government departments or agencies.



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### **The basic methods - the register-based census**

#### *Necessary conditions*

- Legal authority in place
- Unique identification
- Population register
- Common definitions and concepts
- Public acceptance
- Good dialogue between NSI and data holders

#### *Advantages*

- Reduced costs
- Greater frequency of data
- No public burden

#### *Disadvantages*

- Data collected for non-statistical purposes
- Updating may not be regular
- Reduced flexibility



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### The basic methods - the combined approach

The combined methodology makes use of registers relevant to a census, complemented by surveys and/or a complete enumeration. The use of survey/enumeration data is intended to:

- Improve the accuracy of the population counts;
- Provide information for census variables that cannot be reliably based on administrative data;
- Check, update and improve the quality of census data derived from administrative sources;
- Add additional variables to the census as and when demanded; and
- Provide a linking frame in order to bring together different sources.

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### **The basic methods - the combined approach**

#### *Necessary conditions*

- All necessary census information is available from one or other of the sources
- Ability to link the information from the different sources at the record level.
- Ability to link between persons and their dwellings

#### *Advantages*

- Population counts in this approach may be more accurate
- Maximum geographical and statistical detail
- Less costly
- Reduces respondent burden
- Less risk of non-response

#### *Disadvantages*

- More costly than register-based census
- Public awareness may be reduced
- More data processing required
- Poor coherence between the different data sources



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**Conference of European Statisticians' Recommendations**

- **Census Topics**

Criteria for inclusion in the Census

Population bases

Geographic-related topics

Migration and temporary mobility

Demographic topics

Households and families

Housing

Education

Economic activity

Agriculture

Ethno-cultural characteristics

Disability



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**Topics: Criteria for inclusion in the Census**

- Must meet a significant and clearly demonstrated user need
  - Information is required for small geographic areas and/or small population sub-groups
  - Practicable questions can be devised
  - Requirement to undertake multivariate analysis
  - No adverse effect on public response
  - Do not require lengthy explanation or instruction
  - Statistical requirement only
  - Acceptable burden on the public
- 
- Core topics
  - Non-core topics
  - Derived topics
  - Other topics

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## Topics: Population bases

### Recommended base

- Usually resident population, defined as:  
*“Those persons who have lived at their place of usual residence for a continuous period of at least 12 months”.*

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Topic	Core	Non-core	Derived
Location of usual residence	✓		
Urban or rural areas	✓		✓
Degree of urbanisation		✓	✓
Grid squares		✓	✓
Location of place of work (or education)		✓	
Mode of transport to work (or place of education)		✓	
Distance travelled to work (or place of education) and time taken		✓	





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**Topics: Migration and Temporary Mobility**

Topic	Core	Non-core	Derived
• Country/place of birth	✓		
• Country of birth of parents		✓	
• Country of citizenship	✓		
• Citizenship acquisition		✓	
• Ever-resided abroad and year of arrival	✓		
• Country/place of previous usual residence		✓	
• Duration of residence in country		✓	
• <b>Temporary mobility</b>		✓	
• Reason for migration or temporary mobility		✓	
• Refugee status		✓	✓
• Place of usual residence one/five years before census		✓	

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Topic	Core	Non-core
Sex	✓	
Gender		✓
Age	✓	
Legal marital status	✓	
De facto marital status	✓	
Total number (and sex) of children born alive		✓
Date of marriage of ever-married women		✓
Date of start of consensual union of women having ever been in a consensual union		✓

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<b>Topic</b>	<b>Core</b>	<b>Non-core</b>	<b>Derived</b>
Relationship between household members	✓		
Household status	✓		✓
Type of household	✓		✓
Size of household	✓		✓
Single or shared occupancy		✓	
Tenure status	✓		
Income		✓	
Rent and other housing costs		✓	

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## Topics: Families

Topic	Core	Non-core	Derived
Family status	✓		✓
Type of family nucleus	✓		✓
Size of family nucleus	✓		✓

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Topic	Core	Non-core	Derived
Type of dwelling	✓		
Housing arrangements		✓	✓
Occupancy status	✓		
Shared occupancy		✓	✓
Vacant dwellings		✓	
Number of occupants	✓		✓
Type of ownership	✓		
Useful floor space/ number of rooms	✓		
Type of rooms			✓
Density standard	✓		✓

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## Topics: Housing

### *Amenities*

Topic	Core	Non-core
Water supply	✓	
Toilet facilities	✓	
Bathing facilities	✓	
Type of sewage disposal system		✓
Availability of:		
- Kitchen		✓
- Hot water		✓
- Electricity		✓
- Piped gas		✓
- Air conditioning		✓
Type of heating		✓
Type of energy used for heating		✓
Access to dwelling		✓

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Topic	Core	Non-core
Type of building	✓	
Floor level of dwelling within building		✓
Number of floors of building in which dwelling is located		✓
Availability of lift		✓
Period of construction		✓
Construction materials		✓
State of repair		✓

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## Topics: Education

Topic	Core	Non-core
Level of educational attainment	✓	
Educational qualifications		✓
Field of education and training		✓
School attendance		✓
Literacy		✓





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## Topics: Economic Activity

### Topic

### Core Non-core

Labour force status



#### *Previous classification*

##### In labour force

- Employed persons
- Unemployed persons

##### Not in labour force

- Attending an educational institution
- Pension or capital income recipients
- Performers of unpaid household services
- Others

#### *New classification*

##### In labour force

- Employed persons
- Unemployed persons

##### Not in labour force

- Unavailable job-seekers
- Available potential job-seekers
- Willing non-job-seekers
- Others

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## RECENT INTERNATIONAL CENSUS DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE 2031 UK CENSUS

### Topics: Economic Activity

#### Topic

#### Core Non-core

#### Employment status



#### *Previous classification*

Employees

Self-employed

- Employers
- Own-account workers and members of producers' cooperatives
- Contributing family workers

Persons not otherwise classified

#### *New classification*

Employers

- In corporations
  - In household market enterprises
- Independent workers without employees
- Owner-operators of corporations
  - Own-account workers in household and market enterprises

Dependent contractors

Employees

- Permanent
- Fixed-term
- Short-term/casual
- Paid apprentices, trainees and interns

Contributing family workers

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## Topics: Economic Activity

Topic	Core	Non-core
Occupation	✓	
Industry	✓	
Type of workplace		✓
Institutional sector of workplace		✓
Type of place of work		✓
Working time		✓
Income		✓
Participation in own-use production of goods	✓	
Informal employment		✓



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## Topics: Agriculture

### Topic

### Core Non-core

Own-account agricultural production

✓

Agricultural activities during the previous 12 months

✓

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**Topics: Ethno-cultural characteristics**

Topic	Core	Non-core
Ethnicity		✓
Religion		✓
Language		✓

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## Topics: Disability

Topic	Core	Non-core
Disability status (function and degree)		✓
encompassing		
- Walking		
- Seeing		
- Hearing		
- Cognition		
- Self-care		
- Communication		

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**Topics no longer being recommended:**

*Economic activity topics*

- Size of workforce at place of work
- Duration of job search
- Socio-economic group

*Household topics*

- Durable household goods
- Number of cars
- Availability of car parking
- Access to the internet
- Computer literacy



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## Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

- Risk Register
- Emergency management plan
- Team conditioning
- Ensuring fast workflow
- Contingency in the event of a main plan failure





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**Questions and discussion**