



Traditional censuses: challenge and opportunity

Mariet Tetty Nuryetty
mariet@bps.go.id

Session 2a
Population and Housing Censuses; Registers of Population, Dwelling, and Buildings
Brunei, 22-24 August 2017





Outline

1. Definition

2. Necessary
conditions

3. Advantages and
disadvantages

4. Some
considerations
for census taking
and content



1. Definition


Traditional approach comprises a **complex operation** of actively collecting information from individuals and households on a range of topics at **a specified time**, accompanied by the compilation, evaluation, analysis and dissemination of demographic, economic and social data pertaining to a country or a well-delimited part of the country.



1. Definition (2)

Various methods of collecting data: a mailed or dropped-off questionnaire, the telephone, the Internet, personal visit follow-up, or a combination.

The traditional census has merit in providing **a snapshot of the entire** population **at a specified period** and data for **small geographic** domains.



2. Necessary Conditions

It is essential to have **national legislation** for conducting the population and housing census to **ensure confidentiality** and **completeness of coverage**.

A permanent central census organization, that may or may not be part of statistical office, needs to exist in country. This can be expanded during the time of census.


Traditional census requires substantial resources, **sufficient funding** for a field operation covering the entire country, and data processing.

The other conditions are **the support and general acceptance by the public** to participate in the enumeration, and trust towards the statistical office or census agency.



3. Advantages and disadvantages

Advantages of a traditional census

- **comprehensiveness** of coverage and simultaneity.
 - the **flexibility** in deciding topics and design questionnaire.
 - **lesser** need for **complex** data adjustment since processing of raw data provides all inputs.
 - The census frame becomes the **base** for all sampling frames.
 - data collection is finished in a **short period**
- 

3. Advantages and disadvantages (2)

Disadvantages of a traditional census

- Cost and administrative complexity.
- Very long processing time.
- Outdated since it is conducted after 5- or 10-year intervals.
- Respondent burden, especially in countries where participation in the enumeration is declining.
- Difficulties in enumerating specific population groups, such as persons with high mobility or with multiple residences, or persons difficult to reach for other reasons.

4. Some considerations for census taking and content

Very precise planning is required for every stage of census because of the sheer volume of work and overlapping time frames.

The recruitment and training of a large number of census takers adds to cost and complexity.

Possible error in canvassing the questions and in the quality of response. But can be minimized by proper questionnaire design, effective training, and wide publicity.

Data can be presented for every administrative level but subject to privacy and confidentiality considerations.

Essential features of a population and housing census are fully satisfied with the traditional census method.



References

Adopted from:

1. Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3. United Nations, 2015.
- 



Thank you

