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on Population and Housing Censuses ¹
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Study topic 3

2001 ITALIAN POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS: THE PRELIMINARY PHASE

Supporting paper submitted by the National Statistical Institute
(ISTAT), Italy ²

I. The preliminary phase

1. The collection of 2001 Italian Census data will be based on the traditional compilation of questionnaires by respondents, even though in combination with the use of Population Registers. Anyway, the direct enumeration will be enriched and partially innovated as for contents, techniques and execution processes.

2. The following steps have been planned to test the innovations and the modifications:

- **Pre-test (April 1998):** organization of data collection, questionnaires and other forms;
- **First Pilot Survey (October 1998):** organization of data collection, usage of population registers, units of enumerations (population living in private household, building, housing units), questionnaires (Household form, Building form) and other forms, usage of new data capture techniques;
- **Second Pilot Survey (October 1999):** organization of data collection, units of enumerations (population living in private household, population living

1 The papers which are prepared for this work session will be treated in the same manner, as papers that are prepared for seminars.

2 Prepared by Angela Ferruzza, Roberta Vivio and Donatella Zindato, (Istat - Population and Housing Census and Territory Statistics Department)

in institutional household, building, housing units), questionnaires and forms.

3. The design, implementation and experimentation of the data management informative system proceed in parallel with the homologous phases of pre-test and Pilot surveys. The system prototype is going to be tested during the First Pilot Survey.

II. Pre-test

4. The Pre-test, conducted within Istat during April 1998, has been used to test:

- the phase of first contact by enumerators (using information on the households taken from the Population Register and cartography provided by Istat) and the use of some auxiliary forms;
- two different versions of the questionnaire with alternative formulations of some questions.

5. During this step, enumerators have been chosen among members of the Census Department while colleagues of the same Service and some foreign citizens have been chosen as respondents.

6. On the basis of the analysis of the results, questionnaires to be tested within the First Pilot Survey have been partially redesigned.

III. The First Pilot Survey

III.1 The organization of the pilot survey

III.1.1 When, Where and How Many

7. The date of the First Pilot Survey is the 25th of October 1998.

8. Analysis of syntetical indicators and multidimensional analysis applications have been performed to single out Communes "at risk of low quality data" while a particular attention has been devoted to biggest cities. On this basis, a list of six municipalities (among which three big cities - Milan, Florence and Palermo - and three small Communes - Castello Lavazzo, Camigliano e Calvello) with demographic and organizational characteristics suitable for this kind of survey has been defined.

9. In the big Communes the survey will be conducted only on a sample of enumeration areas (but the enumeration will be complete within each area) for a total of 1,500 enumeration units for each Commune, while in the small ones the survey will concern the whole communal surface. The overall number of enumerations units concerned by the survey is of about 9,000.

III.1.2 How

10. For the survey will be used:

- Two versions of the enumeration questionnaire for the households: these versions differ one from the other because they contain a different definition of *temporarily resident persons* and different formulations of some questions;
- A detailed respondents guide completely innovated as for contents and editing;
- A questionnaire for the enumerators, in order to evaluate the effectiveness and the quality of the enumeration questionnaire, the directions for the peripheral bodies and the contact with the respondents;
- A questionnaire for the respondents, in order to evaluate any difficulty related to the comprehension of the household form.

11. Moreover, a report on the experience of the first pilot survey will be asked to the Communal Bureau of the Census and also to the Istat Regional Departments.

III.2 The innovations and the modifications in the first pilot survey

III.2.1 Organization of data collection

12. The organization of the Italian Census of Population and Housing relies on several peripheral bodies, who take part in the enumeration in different ways.

13. Fundamental for the success of the Census is the **Communal Bureau of Census**, which is established at each Commune for the time of the enumeration and is charged with operative duties. Within the First Pilot Survey the Communal Bureau of Census, with the supervision of the Census Department and the collaboration of **Istat Regional Departments**, are responsible for the choice of the enumeration areas (in Milan, Florence and Palermo), for the selection of the enumerators and for the data collection step.

14. A new **First Contact Step** and the use of some new auxiliary forms is planned to improve the collection of data.

15. Enumerators are supplied by Istat with detailed maps containing the itinerary they have to follow within the area that has been assigned to them. Information taken from the Population Register on the number of usually resident persons that is registered for each housing unit is used to guide them. During this step the building form has to be compiled by the enumerator.

16. Information taken from population register will be used also by the **Communal Bureau of Census** to check the collection of the data and in some situations to suggest to the enumerators to go back finding people.

III.2.2. Units of enumerations

17. For the 1991 Italian Census, the units of enumeration of the Population Census were the usually resident persons and the present on the census day persons living in private and institutional households. Conventional dwellings and non-conventional dwellings if occupied by resident persons were the units of enumeration of the Housing Census. As attributes of the dwellings were considered also some characteristics of the building, but the building itself was not an enumeration unit.

III.2.2.1 Population Census

18. The First Pilot survey concerns, for what regards population, only people living in private households: thus, people living in institutional households are not surveyed.

19. For The First Pilot survey has been put forward the hypothesis to enumerate, for what regards **population**:

- the usually resident persons (which is used for determining the *legally resident population*),
- the present on the census day persons (already counted in 1991),
- the temporarily resident persons.

20. Italian law defines the "usually resident persons", but not the "temporarily resident persons"; at the moment we have formalized two definitions, that are going to be tested:

(a) "temporarily resident persons" are those who live in two (or more) places, that is those who spend all or the most of the week in a housing-unit different from the one of residence periodically coming back to the last;

(b) "temporarily resident persons" are those who live in two (or more) places that is those who, referring to the last 12 months, spent more of 6 months (even if without continuity) in a housing-unit different from the one of residence, and at the moment keep on using it as temporary residence.

21. This content innovation requires that some people will have to fill in two forms, one in the "usual residence" and one in the "temporary residence".

22. On the other side it will be possible to obtain, besides the traditionally compiled figure for the *usually resident population*, also a figure for the *present on the territory population*. The *present on the territory population consists in: resident population not temporarily residing out of the municipality plus non-resident population temporarily residing in the municipality*

23. During this First Pilot Survey special measures for the enumeration of foreign citizens are not foreseen. Nevertheless foreign citizens and stateless persons are enumerated as usually resident persons, temporarily

resident persons or present on the survey day persons, in the same way of Italian citizens.

III.2.2.2 Housing Census

24. For what regards **Housing**, has been put forward the hypothesis to enumerate :

- Conventional dwellings (housing units already counted in 1991),
- Non conventional dwellings (other living quarters not completely counted in 1991),
- Building (not counted in 1991).

25. In the past census, non-conventional dwellings (cellar, attic, warehouse) were counted only if occupied by resident persons. During this first survey, non-conventional dwellings will be enumerated also if they are occupied by temporarily resident persons or occasionally present persons.

26. Furthermore, it has been proposed to introduce a new unit of enumeration: the building.

27. Until 1991 some characteristics of the building were collected as attributes of the dwellings, but the building itself was not considered as enumeration unit. This requires, obviously, the adoption of a "building form".

28. It has not been easy to choose a building definition clearly understandable by the enumerators because of the different kinds of building. The definition that has been chosen for the first pilot survey is based on the criterion of the "staircase" together with the one of the "civic number". An alternative definition, that for the moment won't be used, could consider if the building is completely separated or not.

III.2.3 Household form, Building form

29. The architecture of the form, identified by a progressive code, is composed by:

- three lists (A List for the resident persons, B List for the temporarily resident persons, C List for the present on the census day persons)
- Section I for the information on the housing-unit
- Section II for the information on the resident persons
- Section III for the information on the temporarily resident persons

30. The editing of the form has been prepared using the technical standard necessary to test new data capture techniques (ICR, OCR, KFI ...) and to test Automatic Data Coding.

31. As far as the contents is concerned the followings are the innovated (I) or modified (M) items if compared with 1991 census forms.

Information on the housing unit :

- Renovation work (I)
- Rooms (M)
- Drinking water (M)
- Sanitary facilities (M)
- Heating (M)
- Car park (I)

Information on the persons:

- Relationship to reference person (M)
- Number of marriage (I)
- Citizenship (precoded)(M)
- Year of entrance in Italy (M)
- Education (two version) (M)
- Attendance of course (M)
- State of occupation (M)
- Number of hours worked in the preceding week (two version) (M)
- State type of job and of main activities (precoded, two version) (M)
- Fiscal code of the enterprise (for the dependent employee)
- Place of residence (M)
- Place of presence at the census date (M)
- Place where you live (two version)(I)
- Daily mobility (two version)(M)
- Reason for temporarily residence (I)
- Knowledge of the language (foreigners only) (M)
- Reason for presence (foreigners only) (M)

Information on building :

- Number of floors (M)
- Number of stairs (M)
- Period of construction (M)
- Number of dwellings (M)
- Central Heating (I)
- Drinking water (I)

III.2.4 Usage of new data capture techniques

32. As far as data capturing is concerned the adoption of innovative technologies for data capturing and automatic coding has to be tested. The traditional form registration and the optical scanning of forms will be therefore tested. Experimentation is planned on the use of optical scanners, optical mark and optical character recognition procedure and automatic and assisted coding procedure.

4.The Second Pilot Survey

33. Information coming from the experience of the First Pilot Survey is fundamental to:

- analyse the validity of hypothesis considered;
- continue the experimentation with the Second Pilot Survey foreseen for October 1999;
- continue the process which will end with the final formulation of the products and procedures to be used for 2001 Census.

34. The Second Pilot Survey will test:

- organization of data collection
- special organizational frame for foreign citizenships
- special organizational frame for the biggest communes
- data capturing system and automatic coding
- units of enumerations (population living in private household, population living in institutional household, building, housing units, other living quarters)
- questionnaires and forms
- data management informative system.