

Transition to a register-based census: the case of the Netherlands

Eric Schulte Nordholt
(e.schultenordholt@cbs.nl)

© CBS



Statistics
Netherlands

Outline

- Data collection
- Data sources
- Characteristics of the Dutch census
- Conditions facilitating use of administrative sources
- Discussion

Data collection

- Centralised in one data collection division (registers and surveys)
- Efficiency and professionalism
- Using the same infrastructure for social and economic statistics as much as possible
- Collection strategy (preferred order):
 - register data
 - sample surveys
- Only existing sources are being used for the Census 2021
- No Census 2021 questionnaires!

Data sources

For the Census 2021:

- Registers
 - Population Register (automated population registration system)
 - Jobs file (all employees)
 - Self-employed file (all self-employed)
 - Educational Attainment File
 - Fiscal administration
 - Social security administration
 - Pensions and life insurance benefits
 - Housing Register
- Survey
 - Labour Force Survey

Characteristics of the Dutch census

- Relatively cheap
- Short production time
- More socially acceptable than the Census 1971
- All tables are numerically consistent
- Some missing information in the survey tables
- Dependent on registers (availability, timeliness)
- Comparisons over time possible
- International comparisons possible
- Census data continuously available

Conditions facilitating use of administrative sources

- Legal base (Statistics Act)
- Public approval ('Big Brother is watching you')
- Cooperation among authorities (mainly government organisations)
- Comprehensive and reliable register system (administrative versus statistical registers)
- Unified identification system (preferably unique ID-numbers)

Discussion

Are there questions or remarks?

