

Instituto Nacional de Estadística, España

**Submission to the United Nations Statistics Division Website on
2010 World Population and Housing Censuses**

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Outline of the census type planned for 2011 in Spain

Important preliminary note: *The census type has not been wholly decided at this time. Therefore, the following description refers to the census type thought most likely based on the information available in October 2005, i.e., prior to the release of international recommendations on the next census round.*

The type of census thought most suitable for 2011 is an improved version of the model used in 2001: **a combination of a classical census** (in the sense of involving a specific and exhaustive collection of census information) **and a census based on administrative registers**. Although it contains elements of the three census types most frequently cited in the bibliography (*classical, exclusively register-based, and a combination of registers and sampling statistical operations*), it is not substantially the same as any of them, so it would be best classified in a new census category which could be termed **combination of registers and exhaustive statistical operation**.

The essence of this census type is to make use of the administrative registers relevant to a census (to reduce costs and to lessen the burden to citizens), **but complemented with an exhaustive statistical operation**, with a twofold aim: to improve the accuracy of population counts, on one hand, and to obtain the census variables not available from the combination of registers, on the other hand.

There are two major differences from the most similar census type (combination of administrative registers with sampling operations):

- Variables not available from administrative registers are not obtained by sampling surveys but through an exhaustive field operation, as in a classical census.
- The population count based on the population register is not immediately accepted as the best possible, but is checked and corrected against reality through the exhaustive operation. The census is thus an exhaustive evaluation of the coverage of the population register, and enables us accurately to adjust population counts and reduce the main sources of under- and over-coverage that are so characteristic of classical censuses.

This census type obviously meets the four essential requirements: universality, simultaneity, individual enumeration and defined periodicity. In particular, the principle of universality is met for **all** census variables, not just for population counts or a subset of *basic* variables.

The administrative registers used in the 2001 census were: **the Population Register** (from now on referred to as “the PR”), **the Cadastre** and **the Identity Cards Database** issued by the Ministry of the Interior. For 2011, we shall try to add further records, such as affiliates to Social Security (to obtain the census variables on employed persons). We also plan to keep the 2001 census information linked at the individual level, using the PR as the linchpin, to give the census data an analytically rich longitudinal perspective.

In general, the trend in Spanish censuses is an **increasing, and increasingly effective, use of administrative registers**. But by 2011 we shall not be in a position to compile a census based solely on registers.

The main technical and legal conditions for this census type to be suitable are:

1. **Availability of a Population Register.** The Register need not be completely reliable for demographic purposes, but it must be reliable enough as an **initial** solution for how many people, whom and where will be counted in census figures.
2. **It is also advisable to have another administrative record usable for census purposes.** Examples: Cadastre, tax files, social security registrations, public registers of unemployed, educational qualification records, and so on.
3. If the two preceding conditions are met, it would be inefficient not to use that system of registers for the census. A further condition for this census type to be regarded, in certain circumstances, as the most suitable is that a census based exclusively on administrative registers is unfeasible for at least one of the following reasons:
 - a. The PR requires regular and exhaustive checks against reality (at least once every ten years) for its figures to be used accurately for statistical and demographic purposes.
 - b. The combination of administrative registers fails to cover the essential needs of census information, and the missing variables are too significant in terms of quantity and/or quality for them to be covered adequately by sampling operations.
4. This type of census, as regards its relationship with the PR, has two variants, depending on whether it is simply the case that the census is supported by the RP, or whether the benefits are mutual, such that the RP uses the census operation to update and improve its information. For the 2001 census in Spain, we used the second variant, which also requires the following:
 - a. The specific legislation governing the PR must expressly provide such use of the census operation to update the PR – while preserving the statistical confidentiality in the strictly census-related information.
 - b. Technical measures must be applied to ensure that the PR information to be checked, which will be used for both purposes (administrative and statistical), is properly separate from the rest of census information, which may only be used for statistical purposes. In the 2001 census, this separation was achieved by splitting the questionnaires for each information type across different sheets.

More methodological details are available at <http://www.ine.es/censo2001/index.html>. For the time being, the information refers to the 2001 census only, but the type of census is similar. The results section gives access to a free online dissemination system, structured in the form of a **data warehouse, which has already answered over a million queries in its first year and a half of operation.** This high demand for census information, which often requires very fine geographical and/or conceptual detail, is one of the main reasons why we prefer to supplement administrative registers with an exhaustive operation rather than with sampling operations.