

Abstract for EPC 2014
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Register-based household statistics

Background

Sweden's last traditional population and housing census was conducted in the early 1990s. The survey was widely questioned in the country and was costly and time consuming for both data providers and Statistics Sweden. Afterwards, the decision was made that traditional population and housing censuses would not be carried out. It was also agreed that work would begin to enable a population and housing census based totally on registers.

In addition to data on individuals, the results of the population and housing censuses included data on the number of households in the country and their composition. Sweden has lacked total statistics on households for more than 20 years. Data on households are an important basis for planning at both regional and national levels and are in demand by local authorities and researchers.

A population and housing census totally based on registers

As an EU member state, Sweden has an obligation to conduct a population and housing census for 2011 and this would be completely based on register data for the first time. A totally register-based census requires relatively large preparatory work to be implemented.

A prerequisite of a register-based census is the existence of a complete register of the population (the registered population), and this already existed in Sweden. The register contains detailed information on each individual, but does not provide information about how a person lives or if they live together with other people.

It was necessary to link the population to their residence and to any other persons residing in the same dwelling. This could already be done for people living in one-to-two dwelling houses, but not for people living in apartment buildings. The solution was to create a register of all dwellings in the country (dwelling register) that included homes in one-to-two dwelling houses and apartment buildings. Then the population register was supplemented with data on the dwelling number for those people living in apartment buildings.

The creation of a register of dwellings and the supplementing of the population register meant that all persons in the country had a unique identity for their residence. All persons living in the same dwelling have the same unique identity. The connection between persons and dwellings enables one to see if a person is living alone or together with others, and thus the number of households can be generated as well as their composition. The population register, the dwelling register and the link between them are the bases of a register-based census.

Annual household statistics

The work of implementing a register-based census did not represent a one-time event, since the registers and the connection between them are continuously updated. This means that data on, for example, households in Sweden can be regularly produced.

In December 2013 the first annual register-based, total statistics on households will be published in Sweden. The reference date will be 31 December 2012, i.e. one year after the reference time of Sweden's census. The statistics will then be published annually, and they will likely develop over time.

The first published tables will include information about the variables:

- Type of household
- Household status
- Size of household

The variable Type of household is divided into:

- Persons living alone or lone parents
- Persons living together as married, registered partners or in a consensual union, with or without children
- Other households, with or without children

The variable Household status is divided into:

- Living alone
- Partner in a married couple, registered partnership or in a consensual union
- Lone parent
- Child
- Not living alone, but in a household

The published tables will refer to national and regional levels.

Advantages of a register-based model

There are many advantages of building a register-based model, a few of which are noted below.

- Continuous
- Reduced burden on respondents
- Data at a detailed regional level
- Census statistics
- Enables sampling of households
- Inexpensive

Results

No results are presented here as publication has not occurred yet; but the results will of course be included in a report for a possible contribution at the 2014 European Population Conference.

The most interesting aspect of register-based, total household statistics is perhaps not the results, but what is needed to enable the results, i.e. the approach involved and the model's advantages. The report describes the work involved for a census totally based on registers and how this work has made possible an annual register-based, total set of household statistics in Sweden.