

Scotland's Census Conference

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Censuses : A Great History

- 4000 BC China; 2000 BC Egypt
- 7th Century 'Dal Riata' 'Tradition of the Men of Alba'
- 1086 Domesday Book
- 17th and 18th Centuries : Quebec, Scandinavia, USA

Censuses: A Great History

- 'Modern' censuses since 1801
- Increasing trajectory in quality and, importantly, variety of use since then
- 2011 the best ever!!

Initial Motivation

- Rickman (1798) 12 reasons
 - 'the intimate knowledge of any country must form the rational basis of legislation and diplomacy'
 - 'an industrious population is the basic power and resource of any nation, and therefore its size needs to be known'
 - 'the number of men who were required for conscription to the militia in different areas should reflect the area's population'
 - 'there were defence reasons for wanting to know the number of seamen'
 - 'the need to plan the production of corn and thus to know the number of people who had to be fed'
 - 'a census would indicate the Government's intention to promote the public good' and
 - 'the life insurance industry would be stimulated by the results.'

Subsequent Motivations

- Public Health (eg Farr)
- Social Class (eg Stevenson)
- ONS 2010
 - Targeting investment where it is most needed
 - Planning for provision of services to match local need
 - Policy making and monitoring
 - Academic and Market Research
- Health; housing; employment; transport; ethnic groups; etc etc

Fundamental Aim

Count the population

BUT

When, where, how?

Census Accuracy

Nineteenth Century Population of England and Wales

1841	15,914,148	
1851	17,927,609	r=0.013
1861	20,066,224	r=0.012
1871	22,712,266	r=0.011
1881	25,968,286	r=0.012

These and later censuses accepted without much debate

Census Accuracy

- 1991: Deterministic Adjustment (based on age specific sex ratios)
- 2001: Integrated Census and Coverage Survey Adjustment and Imputation (One Number Census)
- 2011: Improved 2001
- Note: A brilliant adjustment method cannot rescue a poor collection

Towards the Future

Administrative Records Base

- 'data could be gathered from records held by the Post Office, local government and credit checking agencies' Source: [www.bbc.co.uk \(10/7/10\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk/1/0/7/10)
- 'This would give more accurate, much more timely data in real time, There is loads of data out there in loads of different places' Source: Francis Maude (D. Telegraph, 7/10)
- BUT (for another purpose)
- 'Most QA datasets proposed by ONS fall into the category of QA for explanation' Source: Plewis et al (2011)

2013 Consultation

- The world moves on



- Technology, Open Data, Demand present opportunities

BUT

- In a climate of fiscal austerity

So why local level data? I. Ethnicity

- Ethnicity needs a high degree of granularity
- Both definition and spatial variability
- Eg a) Newly accession countries; b) chain migration

II Health variability is local and cause differential

Fieldside



Torry



16

