

14. Using Administrative Data for the population count in the Italian Permanent Population Census

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Since 2018 the Italian Population and Housing Census has become a Permanent Census, based on the combined use of register and survey data. In this census design, census-type data, including the usually-resident population count by municipality, are released every year. Due to the pandemic, the 2020 surveys had to be cancelled. Nevertheless, according to the Permanent Census design, the 2020 population data will have to be released by the end of 2021. To this end, Istat is currently conducting a feasibility study in order to try and estimate the population count by sex, age and citizenship solely through the use of administrative sources.

More precisely, thematic registers (i.e. the Labour and Education registers) and administrative sources (such as the Tax Returns, Earnings, and Pensions administrative registers) could help detecting over- and undercoverage errors of the Population Register (i.e. the backbone of the Population Census). This study is also conducted with a view to a more intensive use of administrative sources for the post-2021 census, also driven by the need to further reduce costs and to minimize households' response burden.

The tentative administrative estimate of the usually-resident population count will be based on the use of 'signs of life' (such as being a worker or a dependent family member, having a yearly rent contract, receiving a retirement pension or any unemployment benefit, etc.) to be found in AIDA (*Archivio Integrato Dati Amministrativi* i.e. the Integrated Administrative Data Base), created in 2015. According to this approach, administrative sources are explored in order to find relevant patterns for specific subpopulations. The signs of life coming from administrative data are evaluated and selected according to the type and reliability of the source, to geographical and duration patterns, and to possible associations with other individual characteristics (household relations), with the aim of defining the place of usual residence of each individual.