



Frames and Populations in a Register-based National Statistical System

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Countries that not yet have started to use administrative registers for statistical purposes perform censuses by sending out interviewers to knock at all doors in the country. Sample surveys in these countries are performed by sending out interviewers to knock at an area sample of doors.

When the national statistical institute starts to use administrative registers, the survey methods will change: the new registers will be used for both censuses and sample surveys as sampling frames and as sources for statistical variables. Gradually, the statistical system is becoming more and more register-based. The countries in North Europe have made this transition from a traditional area frame based statistical system into a completely register-based system.

In such a system, all *sample surveys* are based on frames that have been created by statistical registers. Also, for a *census* as the Farm Census, The Farm Register is used as frame and questionnaires are sent to all holdings to get additional information that is not already in the register. A third kind of survey is based entirely on microdata in the system of statistical registers. The traditional Population and Housing Census has been replaced by a number of such *register surveys* that are based on statistical registers created with the system of statistical registers that has been developed by the national statistical institute. Instead of frames (that will be used for data collection) the register surveys are based on register populations created in a different way than frame populations. In a register-based statistical system there are new ways of improving consistency and coherence. Coverage errors can be analysed and reduced by combining microdata from different sources.

However, in many countries the coverage of the administrative systems is not perfect. In developing countries there can exist informal sectors especially in rural regions where persons and holdings are not included in administrative registers. It will then be necessary to combine register-based surveys with area based sampling. Also, some administrative systems are not updated regularly. As a result, important variables in the registers, as e.g. residential address, can be wrong. The magnitude of such errors can be measured with area based sample surveys.

Key words: Administrative registers, register system, coverage errors, dual frames.