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General Details

Introduction

A Census of Population was taken on the night of Sunday, 21 April 1991, in accordance with the Statistics (Census of Population) Order 1991 (S.I. No. 62 of 1991)¹. A copy of the census questionnaire including the explanatory notes which accompanied it is reproduced in Appendix 1, Volume 1 of the detailed census report.

This third volume of the detailed report is in four parts. In the first three parts household composition is analysed in the context of (a) all private households, (b) private households in permanent housing units, and (c) private households in temporary housing units. The final part relates to family units and family cycle. Some basic classifications for these variables have been previously published in the series of Summary Population Reports. The territorial divisions of the country distinguished in this report are defined in Appendices 3–8 of Volume 1.

Subsequent census volumes will analyse the population by such characteristics as occupation, industry, education, etc.

Coverage

The census figures relate to the *de facto* population, i.e. the population recorded for each area represents the total of all persons present within its boundaries on the night of Sunday, 21 April 1991, together with all persons who arrived in that area on the morning of Monday, 22 April 1991, not having been enumerated elsewhere. Persons on board ships in port are included with the population of adjacent areas. The figures, therefore, include visitors present on census night as well as those in residence, while usual residents temporarily absent from the area are excluded.

The date of the census was chosen to coincide with a period when passenger movements were at a minimum and consequently, the figures closely approximate to those for the normally resident population. Members of the Defence Forces who on census night were serving abroad with the United Nations were excluded from the enumeration.

Conduct of the Census

The census enumeration was carried out by a specially recruited temporary field force consisting of 334 full-time supervisors and some 3,200 part-time enumerators. The census questionnaires were distributed during the three weeks immediately preceding the census night and the collection of the completed questionnaires commenced the following day. The enumerators examined the questionnaires at the time of collection to ensure that they were correctly completed, and, where necessary, they assisted householders in their completion.

Production of Results

Each enumerator first prepared and returned to the Central Statistics Office a summary of the population in his/her enumeration area. These summaries formed the basis for the preliminary 1991 population results issued in three census publications within months of the census date². The completed questionnaires for the individual households were subsequently transmitted to the Central Statistics Office for processing.

The population summaries, dwelling listings and enumeration maps for individual enumeration areas were checked for consistency in county order and used to determine the boundaries of census towns and suburbs/environs of towns with legal boundaries. The first stage clerical scrutiny and computer processing of the entries for date of birth, marital status and relationship to head of household (questions 1–6) on the census questionnaire proceeded concurrently in the same county order. These two operations combined allowed the publication of the first set of final census results in a series of Local Population Reports which were issued on a county-by-county basis immediately results became available (see Appendix). A summary report for the State was issued in April 1993.

The derived first phase computer file forms the basis for three volumes of the detailed census report covering Areas, Ages and Marital Status, and Household Composition and Family Units. The computer processing of the remaining information on the census questionnaires enabled the publication of a second series of Local Population Reports covering place of birth, religion, Irish language, usual residence, car usage and household characteristics. Of the remaining volumes of the detailed census report, priority will be given to publishing those relating to Occupation, Industry and Education.

A complete list of the reports on the 1991 Census published to date is given in the Appendix.

¹ Made by the Taoiseach in pursuance of powers conferred on him by sections 11 and 16 of the Statistics Act 1926 and the Statistics Acts 1926 and 1946 (Transfer of Ministerial Functions) Order 1949 (S.I. No. 142 of 1949).

² Census of Population of Ireland 1991
Preliminary Population Figures (PI 8176) June 1991
Preliminary Report – Areas (PI 8248) July 1991
Preliminary Report – Age Groups (PI 8447) November 1991

Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS)

Small area population statistics for Urban Districts, Rural Districts, Towns, District Electoral Divisions, etc from the 1991 Census are being made available on a commercial basis in two phases. The first phase information is already available containing detailed classifications of the population by age, sex and marital status and of households by size and by age, sex and marital status of the head of the household. Details of family units classified by size, age of youngest child, etc are also provided. The second phase information will become available shortly.

Definitions

Private and Non-Private Households

A *Private Household* is defined as a group of persons living together (usually but not necessarily related), jointly occupying the whole or part of a private dwelling house, flat or temporary dwelling and sharing a common budget. A person who lives alone or a person who occupies only part of the living accommodation but does not normally share a common budget with the other occupants is regarded as constituting a separate private household.

The details in Part 1 relate to all private households while the information in Part 2 refers to *private households in permanent housing units* and excludes households occupying caravans or other temporary dwellings (covered separately in Part 3).

A *Non-Private Household* is a boarding house, hotel, guest house, barrack, hospital, nursing home, boarding school, religious institution, welfare institution, prison or ship, etc. However, proprietors and managers of hotels, principals of boarding schools, persons in charge of various other types of institutions and members of staff who, with their families, occupy flats on the premises are classified as private households.

Head of Household

This is the person in respect of whom information is entered on the first line of the census questionnaire. Private households were free to choose any adult member present on census night as the *head of household*.

Household Size

The number of persons in a household consists of the total number of persons present there on the night of Sunday, 21 April 1991, together with all persons who arrived in the household on the morning of Monday, 22 April 1991, not having been enumerated elsewhere.

The size and composition of a household, therefore, include visitors present in the household on census night and exclude any usual residents of the household who were temporarily absent.

Family Units

A family unit or *nucleus* is defined as

- (1) a husband and wife, or
- (2) a husband and wife together with one or more usually resident single children (of any age), or
- (3) one parent together with one or more usually resident single children (of any age)

The identification of family units is based on the information returned on the census questionnaire particularly the details provided on the relationship to head of household. While in general the information is sufficient to enable family units to be properly classified, there are two particular circumstances in which it is not adequate.

Firstly, there are problems in identifying unmarried parents with children as separate family units. This happens particularly where one unmarried parent with one or more children lives with his/her parents and the information given on the relationship to head of household does not clearly identify the parent/child relationships. In such cases, the unmarried parent and children are subsumed in another family unit. As a result of this the number of family units identified as consisting of unmarried parents with children is probably understated to some degree.

Secondly, there is the position of couples who, although not married, cohabit (i.e. live together as husband and wife). Where it is clear from the census form that this relationship exists, a couple together with their children, if any, are classed as a family unit. Otherwise, they are classed as other persons who may or may not be attached to another identifiable family unit.

Because the census figures relate to the *de facto* population, the composition, size and type of family units are affected by temporary absences from or visitors to households on census night. In particular, the temporary absence of one parent from a household on census night (e.g. in hospital, absent on business or holiday, etc.) reduces a two-parent unit to a one-parent unit. To the extent that this has occurred, the number of one-parent family units is overstated at the expense of two-parent units. The presence of visitors, including family members who usually live elsewhere, in households on census night may also have the effect of creating a second family unit in what is normally a one-family household or of attaching other persons to the usually resident family unit.

Family Cycle

Family Units are classified into thirty three family cycle stages allowing the summarisation of family cycles on the basis of youngest or oldest child (see Tables 33 and 34) This classification was introduced in the 1981 Census of Population and has been used in the Labour Force Surveys conducted since 1981 and in the Household Budget Survey

Type of Private Household

The classification of private household by type is the same as that used for the 1986 Census of Population The family unit forms the basis of the classification Households containing family units are further classified into those with and those without other persons Households containing more than one family unit are also distinguished separately as are one-person households

Thirteen types of private households are distinguished, namely those consisting of

- | | | | |
|----|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | One person only | | |
| 2 | Husband and wife (or couple) | } | with no other persons |
| 3 | Husband, wife (or couple) with single children
(of any age) | | |
| 4 | Lone father with single children
(of any age) | | |
| 5 | Lone mother with single children
(of any age) | | |
| 6 | Husband and wife (or couple) | } | with other persons |
| 7 | Husband, wife (or couple) with single children
(of any age) | | |
| 8 | Lone father with single children
(of any age) | | |
| 9 | Lone mother with single children
(of any age) | | |
| 10 | Two family units with or without other persons | | |
| 11 | Three or more family units with or without other persons | | |
| 12 | Non-family households containing related persons | | |
| 13 | Two or more persons not containing a family unit
nor related persons | | |

The age of children is not relevant in defining the household type For example, a household comprising a husband and wife and their child aged 10 years is assigned to Household Type 3 as is a household comprising a husband and wife and their unmarried son aged 30

Marital Status

The 1986 Census was the first in which information on the marital status of ever-married persons was collected on the basis of the *de facto* rather than the legal status. The formulation of the question used in 1991, which was identical to that contained in the 1986 Census, was as follows

MARITAL STATUS – for persons born on or before 21 April 1976			
Was the person ever married? Please ✓ the appropriate box	What is the marital status of persons who were ever married ("Yes" at Q 5)? Indicate the present actual marital status irrespective of the legal status Please ✓ the appropriate box		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 No <input type="checkbox"/> 2	Widowed Remarried following Widowhood Dissolution of previous marriage (annulment or divorce) Married	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4	Married but Separated Deserted Marriage Annulled Legally Separated Other Separated Divorced in another country
			<input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7 <input type="checkbox"/> 8 <input type="checkbox"/> 9

In the Tables the category *married* includes *remarried*, while *separated* includes persons recorded as *deserted*, *marriage annulled*, *legally separated*, *other separated* and *divorced in another country*

Commentary

Private Households

The population enumerated at the 1991 Census was 3,525,719 persons of whom 3,433,048 were in private households and 92,671 were in non-private households. Of those in private households 3,408,651 were in permanent housing units while 24,397 were in temporary housing units.

There were 1,029,084 private households in total, of which 1,019,723 were in permanent housing units and 9,361 were in temporary units. The average size of private households was 3.34 persons compared with 3.53 in 1986 and 3.66 in 1981.

Table A provides a breakdown of private households by composition in 1986 and 1991.

Table A Private households classified by composition in 1986 and 1991, showing the percentage change in each category

Composition of household	Number of households		Change 1986 – 1991	
	1986	1991	Actual	Per cent
One person	180,793	207,564	26,771	14.8
Husband and wife (or couple)	109,590	125,450	15,860	14.5
Husband and wife (or couple) with children (of any age)	429,187	431,693	2,506	0.6
One parent with children (of any age)	81,087	90,906	9,819	12.1
Husband and wife (or couple) with other persons	14,184	15,131	947	6.7
Husband and wife (or couple) with children (of any age) and other persons	62,830	61,730	-1,100	-1.8
One parent with children (of any age) and other persons	16,902	18,656	1,754	10.4
Two family units with or without other persons	12,604	7,076	-5,528	-43.9
Three or more family units with or without other persons	164	69	-95	-57.9
Two or more persons but not including a family unit	68,963	70,809	1,846	2.7
Total	976,304	1,029,084	52,780	5.4

Between 1986 and 1991 the number of private households increased by 52,780 or 5.4 per cent. The number of one-person households increased by 26,771 or 14.8 per cent. Households consisting of a husband and wife without children increased by 14.5 per cent while those consisting of a husband and wife with children only increased marginally. There were also appreciable increases in the number of households comprising a lone parent with children (+12.1 per cent) and those comprising a lone parent with children and other persons (+10.4 per cent). The number of multi-family households declined substantially between 1986 and 1991 continuing a long-term trend.

One-Person Households

In Table B one-person households are classified by age and sex of the household member for 1986 and 1991. The percentage changes from 1986 to 1991 are also shown.

Table B One-person households classified by age and sex of household member, 1986 and 1991

Age group	Males			Females		
	1986	1991	Change 1986-1991	1986	1991	Change 1986 - 1991
			%			%
Under 25 years	4,844	4,928	1.7	4,484	4,499	0.3
25-29 "	6,089	6,393	5.0	3,849	4,109	6.8
30-34 "	5,845	6,740	15.3	3,597	4,132	14.9
35-39 "	5,652	6,542	15.7	3,196	4,208	31.7
40-44 "	5,196	7,104	36.7	2,808	3,900	38.9
45-49 "	6,254	7,094	13.4	2,957	4,050	37.0
50-54 "	7,386	8,005	8.4	3,946	4,476	13.4
55-59 "	8,578	8,883	3.6	6,241	6,370	2.1
60-64 "	9,092	9,677	6.4	9,623	9,962	3.5
65-69 "	9,418	10,596	12.5	14,388	15,590	8.4
70-74 "	8,608	9,414	9.4	16,172	17,806	10.1
75 years and over	9,938	12,888	29.7	22,632	30,198	33.4
Total	86,900	98,264	13.1	93,893	109,300	16.4

The number of males living alone increased by 11,364 and females by 15,407 between 1986 and 1991. There were particularly large percentage increases for males in the 40-44 age group and females in the 35-49 age group. Over one third of male one-person households in 1991 consisted of persons aged 65 years of age and over. The corresponding percentage for females was 58.2 per cent.

Some 18.9 per cent of males and 27.7 per cent of females over 65 years of age were living alone. Both the higher female life expectancy and the tendency generally for females to marry older males are contributory factors to this sex difference. For example, of the 98,264 males living alone 14,569 (14.8 per cent) are widowed, while of the 109,300 females 54,676 (50 per cent) are widowed. Some 20.3 per cent of males and 30.4 per cent of females over 75 years of age were living alone.

Size of Household

As can be seen from Table C the continuing trend towards smaller household size persisted in the 1986–1991 period

Table C Private households classified by household size, 1986 and 1991

Number of persons in household	Number of households		Change 1986 – 1991	
	1986	1991	Actual	Per cent
1	180,793	207,564	26,771	14.8
2	198,048	218,524	20,476	10.3
3	144,835	157,840	13,005	9.0
4	156,675	170,896	14,221	9.1
5	127,844	130,886	3,042	2.4
6	83,941	77,188	-6,753	-8.0
7	44,322	36,763	-7,559	-17.1
8	23,219	18,423	-4,796	-20.7
9	8,517	5,765	-2,752	-32.3
10	4,167	2,766	-1,401	-33.6
11	2,048	1,256	-792	-38.7
12 or more	1,895	1,213	-682	-36.0
Total	976,304	1,029,084	52,780	5.4

Between 1986 and 1991 households of all sizes up to 5 persons showed increases, while all sizes from 6 persons upwards showed declines. The largest increases, both in actual and percentage terms, were for one-person and two-person households. The number of households with 6 persons or more declined from 168,109 (17.2 per cent of the total) in 1986 to 143,374 (13.9 per cent of the total) in 1991.

Headship Rates

The "headship rates" (i.e. the percentage of males and females in various age or marital status groups who are heads of households) are sometimes used in conjunction with population projections to estimate future housing demand.

Table D shows the percentage of males and females in certain broad age groups who were heads of households in 1986 and 1991 – both for all types of households and also excluding one-person households.

Table D Percentage of males and females in certain broad age groups who were heads of households, 1986 and 1991

Sex and age group	All types of households		Excluding one-person households	
	1986	1991	1986	1991
Males				
15-24 years	7.9	6.2	6.4	4.6
25-44 "	71.1	68.5	69.6	66.6
45-64 "	86.2	86.8	84.6	85.2
65 years and over	79.8	81.8	75.8	77.5
Females				
15-24 years	5.3	6.2	3.9	4.7
25-44 "	12.5	16.3	9.8	13.4
45-64 "	22.0	22.4	15.5	15.6
65 years and over	43.1	45.5	24.4	24.6

For all household types combined the headship rates for males aged 15-24 and 25-44 declined slightly between 1986 and 1991, while there were increases for the other age/sex groupings. If persons living alone are excluded the same patterns are evident.

Table E gives similar headship rate data for certain marital status categories.

Table E Percentage of single, ever-married and widowed males and females who were heads of households, 1986 and 1991

Sex and marital status	All types of households		Excluding one-person households	
	1986	1991	1986	1991
Males				
Single	20.0	20.6	9.0	8.9
Ever-married (excl. widowed)	91.5	90.1	91.4	89.9
Widowed	74.5	77.1	62.1	62.8
Females				
Single	16.5	18.2	7.8	9.2
Ever-married (excl. widowed)	7.5	10.6	6.8	9.5
Widowed	71.8	74.5	59.0	59.8

The headship rates for males are higher than for females in all marital status categories, but particularly so for married persons. The exclusion of one-person households significantly affects the rates for single and widowed males and females.

Family Units

In the earlier part of the commentary private households were analysed by type defined on the basis of the presence or absence on census night of an identifiable family unit. This section contains a further analysis of the family units themselves and their composition.

Table F Number of households, number of family units and number of persons classified by composition of household, 1991

Composition of household	Number of households	Number of identified family units	Total number of persons in the household
Single family unit	743,566	743,566	3,003,398
Two family units	7,076	14,152	43,555
Three or more family units	69	207	647
Total with a family unit	750,711	757,925	3,047,600
One-person households	207,564	—	207,564
Two or more persons but no family unit	70,809	—	177,884
Total in private households	1,029,084	757,925	3,433,048

The total number of family units was 757,925 an increase of 18,445 since 1986. Households containing family units accounted for 3,047,600 persons, a further 385,448 persons were in private households not containing an identifiable family unit and the remainder of the population (92,671 persons) were in non-private households.

A detailed classification of the population by five year age group, marital status and whether a member of a family unit or otherwise is given in Table 32. As mentioned previously there are important qualifications arising from the census procedures and definitions which must be borne in mind when interpreting the figures — in particular the impact of temporary absences from the usual residence on census night and the fact that an unmarried child of any age can be classified as a "child" in a family unit. Table G following summarises the composition of family households using broad age groupings.

Table G Population in family households distinguishing males and females classified by position in family unit and by broad age group, 1991

Position in family unit and broad age group		Persons	Males	Females
Husbands and wives (or couples)	Total	1,289,034	644,517	644,517
Under 55 years	— with children	820,835	394,199	426,636
	— no children	127,552	60,693	66,859
Aged 55 years and over	— with children	177,395	104,916	72,479
	— no children	163,252	84,709	78,543
Lone parent	Total	113,408	19,167	94,241
Under 55 years		57,013	7,753	49,260
55 years and over		56,395	11,414	44,981
Children (single of any age) with both parents	Total	1,305,978	689,757	616,221
Under 15 years of age		826,456	424,202	402,254
15 and under 25		396,423	213,209	183,214
25 years and over		83,099	52,346	30,753
Children (single of any age) with one parent	Total	217,887	122,870	95,017
Under 15 years of age		83,177	42,434	40,743
15 and under 25		68,028	36,976	31,052
25 years and over		66,682	43,460	23,222
Other persons in family households	Total	121,293	52,145	69,148
Under 15 years of age		20,292	10,286	10,006
15 and under 25		30,260	13,398	16,862
25 and under 55		28,658	15,291	13,367
55 years and over		42,083	13,170	28,913
Population in family households		3,047,600	1,528,456	1,519,144

Of the 644,517 family units with both husband and wife (or couple) present, 499,115 or over 77 per cent had children. Over 82 per cent of the parents involved (79 per cent of males and 85 per cent of females) were under 55 years of age. For couples with no children present on census night about 56 per cent were over 55 years of age.

There were 113,408 family units with just one parent present on census night. In over 83 per cent of these the lone parent was a female. Widowhood was the predominant marital status among lone parents.

There were 1,305,978 children in family units with both parents present, over 63 per cent of these children were under 15 years of age with a further 30 per cent aged 15–24 years. There were 217,887 children in family units with only one parent present with 38 per cent being under 15 years of age and a further 31 per cent aged 15–24 years.

In addition to parents and children there were a further 121,293 persons in family households of whom over a third were 55 years of age and over. The total included 5,666 widowed males and 22,106 widowed females.

Table H provides an analysis of family units consisting of husbands and wives (or couples) and their children by age of wife and age of youngest child.

Table H Family units comprising husbands and wives (or couples) classified by age of wife and age of youngest child in family unit, 1991

Age of youngest child	Age of wife					Total
	Under 25 years	25–34 years	35–44 years	45–64 years	65 years and over	
With no children	7,634	31,993	10,771	49,942	45,062	145,402
With children						
where youngest child						
aged 0–4 years	11,242	102,109	59,191	3,480	–	176,022
" 5–14 "	288	25,694	102,837	62,959	13	191,791
" 15 years and over	3	126	11,350	101,283	18,540	131,302
Total with children	11,533	127,929	173,378	167,722	18,553	499,115
Total	19,167	159,922	184,149	217,664	63,615	644,517

About 22.6 per cent of the family units with both members of the couple present, had no children as against 21 per cent in 1986. Some 20 per cent of wives aged 25–34 had no children in 1991 compared with 16 per cent in 1986.

There were 176,022 units where the youngest child was under 5 years of age and in 58 per cent of them the wife was aged 25–34 years. In a further 191,791 units the youngest child was aged 5–14 years and 53.6 per cent of the wives were aged 35–44 years. There were 131,302 units where the youngest child was over 15 years of age and in 91.3 per cent of these the wife was aged 45 years and over.