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Comment

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From this side of the Atlantic, the amount of attention devoted to the adjustment of the U.S. census can sometimes seem bewildering. Censuses are conducted for many purposes and raise many methodological problems. For perhaps most purposes, the effects of coverage errors in the census

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seem likely to be minor compared, for example, to the effects of nonresponse in most sample surveys. Nevertheless, there are important uses of census data in Great Britain, as in the United States, where coverage errors do matter, most notably in the preparation of local area population estimates, which are widely used by central government for the allocation of resources. Furthermore, the adjustment issue has particular significance for the 1991 censuses of England and Wales and of Scotland since, unlike in 1981 and before, the estimates of the national under-