The May 2010 enumeration of the population of Indonesia produced a 'fast count' of over 237 million, which was later largely confirmed in the release of the final figures in February 2011. The subsequent debates in the national press focused on the issue of whether this number represented the resumption of a 'population explosion' since the 2000-2010 intercensal rate of growth of 1.49 percent was higher than the figure for 1990-2000. In addition attempts to place the new number in context focussed on official population projections that had only anticipated a population of 235 million, thus reinforcing the notion that population numbers were somehow 'out of control'. At base the debate pitted the desires of policymakers against the conclusions of academic analysis. This problem is likely to be repeated as attempts are made to produce estimates of fertility, education and maternal and infant mortality. This seminar describes an attempt to strengthen academic contributions to the analysis of national census data.

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