

## Editorial

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*Statistical Journal of the IAOS*

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This is my first issue as Editor-in-Chief. For the last three years, Dr. Fritz Scheuren has put his mark on this journal in ways that cannot be replicated. I am grateful to him for showing by example what hard work and dedication can accomplish. Fortunately, he has promised to stay active on our editorial team. He will be helping us by identifying manuscripts that promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics.

In March, I had an opportunity to present the transitional plan for the change in editorship to the IAOS Executive Committee at their meeting at the UN in New York. I was able to report that it will be business as usual. Our editorial assistant, Greta Cherry is staying on the team. With Greta's help, manuscripts move smoothly through the system. At IOS Press, our technical editor, Kim Willems and our newsletter editor, Saskia van Winjgaarden will also continue to work with us.

I am pleased that Dr. Katherine Condon has agreed to take on the responsibility of interviewing current and former presidents of the IAOS, distinguished official statisticians and colleagues from all corners of the world and to bring conversations on topics of special interest. Dr. Nancy Torrieri, who is new to our team, has agreed to help her. I appreciate very much that we will be able to carry on what has now become a regular feature for our Journal. The interviews and conversations are not edited. The views and opinions expressed in these interviews are those of the interviewees. They do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of the Journal.

The behind-the-scenes volunteer effort that goes into building a journal is immense. In addition to organizing the peer reviews, the special editors and the emphasis editors put in many hours to ensure that the manuscripts are relevant and interesting to both users and producers of official statistics and represent the

best scientific methods and practices in the field. There would be no journal without volunteers willing to share their expertise and time and give back to their profession as editors and reviewers.

The June issue starts with a telephone interview with Stephen Penneck in his home outside London. He is a Past-President of the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS), a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) and a Chartered Statistician, and an elected member of the ISI. He retired in 2012 as Director General at the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS), but is still very active in professional statistical organizations. He is a Vice President of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and Chair of the ISI's Advisory Board on Ethics. He serves on the RSS Executive Committee and Council. He is also a member of the International Advisory Committee for the Statistics Centre of Abu Dhabi.

The modernization of the statistical systems at ONS is one of the subjects touched upon in the interview. Mr. Penneck is hopeful that ONS will succeed in implementing his vision for a new statistical architecture for the statistical systems.

We talked about leadership skills and what it takes to be a leader. It is clear from the conversation that Stephen Penneck has strong leadership skills. He knows how to build team work and he understands how to find and build on personal strengths. He has a strong commitment to public service and to our profession. In the interview, we find out that his commitment to family life is equally strong. We also learn that in his retirement, he is active in politics serving as a local authority councillor. He concluded the interview by stating that official statisticians all over the world have a lot in common, not only professionally, but also in their private lives. "We want to make an impact, no matter what we work on, no matter in what country we work. That is what drives us."

On occasion, we publish a conversation on a topic of interest to our readership. In the June issue, we bring a conversation with Peter Agre, an American physician and a molecular biologist. Rather than promoting statistical methods, he promotes science worldwide.

Dr. Agre's work focuses on malaria. In fact, his life goal is to eradicate malaria. He has held many important positions and have received many honors and awards in recognition of his work, including the Nobel Prize in Chemistry. He also has membership in the National Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society. He is in contact with many colleagues across the world. Those who have met and worked with him recognize him for his humanitarian efforts and for his humility.

When we began our conversation, I wanted to know how one leads such a successful career and life. I also wanted his perspective on the role of statistics in his work. However, we ended up talking mostly about how professionals work together as an international community, how we can collaborate rather than compete with each other and how we can teach young professionals to take a global perspective. I hope you will find this conversation as enlightening as I did.

The interview and the conversation piece are followed by a special section on the 2020 Decennial Census in the United States, hence the theme of the June issue: The US 2020 Census: A New Design for the 21st Century. I am very pleased that the Census Bureau made this special section possible. A special thank you to Lisa Frid for working with us.

The section starts with an excellent overview of the plans for the 2020 Census. The paper is written by Lisa Blumberman, Associate Director for Decennial Census Programs, Deidre Bishop, Chief of the Decennial Census Management Division and James Dinwiddie who is a Special Assistant for Decennial Census Programs.

The U.S. Census Bureau is researching and testing new methods to reduce the cost of the 2020 Census. Reaching non-respondents is costly. The plans for contacting non-responding households are discussed in the ensuing papers by Census Bureau staff: "Adaptive Design Research for the 2020 Census" by Konicki and Adams; "An Approach for Using Administrative Records to Reduce Contact in the 2020 Decennial Census" by Darcy Steeg Morris, Andrew Keller and Brian Clark and "Imputation Research for the 2020 Census" by Andrew Keller.

Each paper deals with an important aspect of the non-response operation: (1) determining the number

of contact attempts that should be made to non-responding units using adaptive approaches that maintain the quality of the data; (2) using administrative record information from government and other sources instead of field visits and (3) examining the ramifications of imputation strategies for missing data.

Through the manuscripts we publish, the Journal hopes to promote the advancement of official statistics. The next papers in the June issue show how we are reaching users and producers of official statistics in all parts of world sharing knowledge and best practices. The Heine and Oltmann manuscript, "Towards a Political Economy of Statistics," contributes to the discussion in many countries on the future of production of official statistics. They believe statistical operationalization to be a central challenge for data production in the field of economic and social activities. Ramachandran contributes with a Malaysian experience in "Official Statistical Leadership at the Crossroad Again." The paper highlights a number of areas that the author feels need to be considered by national statistical agencies in order to stay relevant and safeguard the statistical quality and integrity of official statistics. "The Maori Statistics Framework" paper by Coutts, Morris, and Jones looks at general resources for those working in the area of statistics for and about an indigenous population, in this case New Zealand's indigenous population.

The remaining papers address specific data issues. De Waal addresses the issue of consistency when using a mix of administrative data sets and surveys. The paper "Obtaining Numerically Consistent Population Estimates" presents general approaches for solving this problem based on weighting, imputation and macro-integration. He discusses the advantages and drawbacks of each approach. In their paper "Collecting and Managing Data in Statistical Relational Data Bases," Hudec and Prazenka recognize that not all data are 'crisp' and precise. Their paper presents ways to manage the fuzziness in data. Jesilevski's paper is also concerned with data quality. The paper "Iterative method for Reducing the Impact of Outlying Data Points Ensuring Data Quality" looks at ways to determine and treat outliers.

Finally, the March 2016 issue included Synthetic Data as a special topic (see the overview paper by Vilhuber, Abowd and Reiter entitled "Synthetic Establishment Microdata Around the World," in Volume 32, Number 1). In this issue, Dr. Drechsler from Germany and Dr. Raab from Scotland provide very thoughtful comments on these papers. I am looking forward to

continue the discussion of data confidentiality and the many other important issues for official statistics in future issues of the Journal.

Kirsten West  
Editor-in-Chief  
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