

Editorial

Handover of the editor-in-chief role

During the ISI World Statistics Conference in Kuala Lumpur from 18–23 August, Kirsten West as the outgoing editor-in-chief of the SJAOS, formally handed over this role to me. I would like to thank Kirsten for the great work done for the journal and also for all the efforts of introducing me as the incoming editor-in-chief into the SJAOS community. It is great that Kirsten agreed to be continuing as general editor for the journal. I am very much looking forward to working together with the team of general and emphasis editors and the enthusiastic group of reviewers.

Strategy for the journal 2019–2021

As main strategic orientations for the journal, I would like to keep the strong points of the last couple of years and at the same time work on expanding the audience, contributions and the exposure of the journal.

Such strong points that I want to maintain are for example the approach for soliciting manuscripts on a broad set of current and innovative issues in official statistics and being at the forefront of discussing important developments. The aim is to further establish a more close relationship with the National Statistical Systems by incorporating more active representatives of this audience in discussions and manuscripts. I would like to gradually expand the number and origin of contributors from the currently non-core regions (non-English speaking and developing countries). I hope to make the journal a ‘must’ for a new group of readers by promoting the active use (via some key articles, or specials) as training and reference material for those working or wishing to work in a specialization of official statistics.

Beyond the content of the journal improvements are foreseen for the submission system and review procedures. A better coverage by the emphasis editors of the domains in official statistics has already been implemented. The new list of general and emphasis ed-

itors is visible on the cover of this journal. I thank the emphasis editors that for a variety of reasons had to step down, for all their efforts and energy organizing reviews and finalizing manuscripts, and give a very warm welcome to the new emphasis editors Dario Buono, Aref N. Dajani, Jean-Michel Durr, Jaume Garcia Villar, Aurel Schubert, James Whitworth and Linda Young.

A new website and a discussion platform and twitter account

On the 22th of August 2019, the journal launched the new on-line platform for discussion on topics of significant relevance for Official Statistics (www.officialstatistics.com) as part of the new SJAOS website. This discussion platform of the SJAOS will be an opportunity for anyone working or interested in official statistics, to contribute to topical discussions, at your own convenience. With each issue of the journal, a new discussion topic will be launched via a leading article. Finally, a twitter account, will complement this by stepping into more modern, faster and agile communication tools. You will find more details about the new website and discussion platform at the end of this editorial.

“Official statistics using ‘un-official’ data, a threat or a challenge”?

The increased use of statistics for evidence based decision making and beyond this, demands for example, for reliable indicators of progress in achieving the targets for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s), require more and better statistics in a wide variety of societal domains. Due to the digital revolution, new technologies, new types of data and datasets and new forms of cooperation between the public sector and private partners, the world of producing and disseminating official statistics is rapidly changing. Official statistics need to deliver the statistics and indicators re-

quired, and to achieve this, they are challenged to adjust to the new circumstances. Though, the capacity to collect data and develop technical knowledge, scientific standards and methodology, continues to be at the core of official statistics, these activities are no longer exclusively done by designated official statistics organizations. Other producers are increasingly involved in producing official information. Data infrastructures are more and more based on a variety of sources of data, ranging from the traditional surveys, registers and administrative sources and big data, owned and kept by multiple actors who belong to various types of organizations (Business, NGO's, etc). Beyond data sets also procedures (methodologies, standards) are used that are not by definition part of the procedures of official statistics and the quality and ethical standards followed can be different from what is common in official statistics.

Inspired by these developments and challenges the theme of this issue and the first theme for the discussion platform "Official Statistics using 'un-official' data, a threat or a challenge" is kicked off by the opening article from Steve MacFeeley and Bojan Nastav with as title "You Say You Want A (Data) Revolution: A proposal to use unofficial statistics for the SDG Global Indicator Framework".

You are invited to participate on the discussion.

The main statement to react on is '*Official Statistics should consider switching from a purely production or manufacturing based model to a mixed business model: one combining the manufacture of official statistics with the franchising of production under license.*'

What else to find in this issue

After the opening article, there are three very informative documents. First, a conversation with Oliver Fischer about the International Programs at the US Census Bureau, informing about its variety in international capacity development support. In the series of featured interviews with IAOS, for the September issue, Sibylle von Oppeln-Bronikowski speaks about her entrance and experiences in the world of official statistics. Next is a report of the panel discussion about past, present and future roles for the UNSC. The panel with as title "Servicing the Statistical Commission, past, present and future – side event at the 50th Statistical Commission" consisted of five very prominent official statisticians, Katherine Wallman, William Seltzer, Her-

mann Habermann, Paul Cheung and Stefan Schweinfest.

The issue contains further 12 articles covering a mixture of themes, varying from the ethical challenges that big data and data linking present for official statistics in an article by Steve Penneck; "Confidentiality in an era of big data: an official statistics perspective". Abbas, Rasul and Ahmad inform about "Unreported data sources in public sector organizations" and De Broe and others give general guidelines for the process to embed experimental statistic in the official statistical process based on the use of new data sources for statistics on solar energy in their article "From experimental to official statistics: The Case of Solar Energy". Also the article by Van Kints Webster, and de Haan, "Utilizing big data and multilateral index methods to produce the Australian CPI: Theory, implementation and empirical results", discusses the opportunities and challenges from big data when utilizing scanner data to compile the CPI, with a focus on implementation guidance to national statistical offices.

Consumer prices are also dealt with by Hanif and Shah in their contribution about "Tradable and non-tradable inflation in consumer prices in Pakistan". They conclude that the inflation rate in tradable goods' prices is volatile and lacks persistence whereas services items price changes are found relatively stable and highly persistent in Pakistan.

Rondinella and Porciani share with us in their article "Teaching official statistics in universities. Recommendations from a direct experience", a series of reflections deriving from teaching official statistics. The experiences highlighted the lack of official statistics themes within the standard study plans and the scarce awareness of students about the official statistics and allowed the identification of the essential topics to be addressed. D'Orazio approaches the issue of Statistical Learning in his article "Statistical Learning in Official Statistics: the Case of Statistical Matching". Showing how popular statistical learning techniques can be beneficial for matching purposes. Rammon, He and Parker, in their article "Multiple imputation to account for linkage ineligibility in the NHANES-CMS Medicaid linked data: General use versus subject specific imputation methods" present an application of multiple imputation (MI) for handling missing Medicaid/CHIP status due to linkage refusals in linked NHANES-Medicaid data using the linked 1999–2004 NHANES data. Habaasa in "Measuring SDG economic indicators in Uganda: Exploration of data deficiencies" argues that a lot of data from administrative data can be

used to feed into the Ugandan page on the economic indicators of the SDGs given that censuses and surveys are not regularly updated. Perrenoud and others present in the article “Towards a cross-national comparison of quality of employment”, an international comparison of quality of employment indicators from the perspective of the employed person. The article shows the main results for the indicators chosen and the limits of the international comparability, mainly related to different institutional and labour market contexts, and to the heterogeneity of data sources.

Smith and others in “The framework for estimating coverage in the 2011 Census of England and Wales: combining dual-system estimation with ratio estimation” describe how they combine two sources and ratio estimation to produce a set of population estimates. Finally in the article “Review on Financial Bubbles” by Harsha and Ismail, they debate on whether or not financial bubbles can persist in modern asset markets. They use 6 groups of econometric tests to detect these bubbles and describe the important developments in the area of detection and analysis of financial bubbles.

I wish you pleasant readings of these interesting articles.

Some words about the next issues (Volume 35, Issue 4 and Volume 36, Issues 1, 2 and 3)

The next issues of the journal are already in preparation or planned. The December issue will have two special sections, one on the role of Data for Policy (D4P) and Policy for Data and one on trusted smart statistics. Data for Policy will be the theme for the second discussion on the discussion platform. March 2020 (Volume 36, Issue 1, March 2020) will be a special with circa 20 manuscripts, about the preparations for the Population and Housing Census round 2021. This will also be the third theme launched for the discussion platform. The June 2020 issue (Volume 36, Issue 2) will be the main issue for publishing the manuscripts submitted from the authors of papers from the 2019 ISI WSC and finally the September 2020 issue (Volume 36, Issue 3) is expected to be a special about the Future of Economic statistics. Interested authors for that theme are kindly invited to contact me at pevssjiaos@gmail.com. The following other topics are provisionally identified as topics for a full special: Training in official statistics, Statistical literacy (1e, 2021), Agricultural statistics, SDG’s methodology and results, Sustainable Development. Beyond this, issues can contain special sections dedicated to a specific topic.

The new discussion platform and website (www.officialstatistics.com)

On the 22th of August 2019 the Statistical Journal of the International Association for Official Statistics (SJIAOS) will launch the new on-line platform for discussion on topics of significant relevance for official statistics (www.officialstatistics.com) as part of the new SJIAOS website. The discussion platform will invite you to contribute to important discussions at a time of your own choosing. There are more details about the new website and discussion platform at the end of this editorial.

The ISI World Statistics Conference, the IAOS conference and Journals like the *Statistical Journal of the IAOS*, are the traditional platforms where views on new developments and important issues in Official Statistics are exchanged. However, conferences occur only a few times per year, journal issues are released maybe four times per year and typically only reach specific interest groups. This new on-line discussion platform of the SJIAOS will be an opportunity for anyone working or interested in official statistics, to contribute to topical discussions, at your own convenience.

Every three months there will be a new discussion item. With each issue of the SJIAOS, a new discussion topic will be launched via a leading article. Statements from this article will then invite you to post your opinion and arguments. Each discussion will run for a year and be closed with a concluding commentary by the article author(s). When fully up and running (after four journal issues), there will be four different discussion topics open for your contribution at any one time.

The discussion platform can be found on a prominent place on the new SJIAOS website (www.officialstatistics.com). Contributions have to be in English, have to be clear and concise, specifically addressing one of the statements and should not exceed 25 lines. When considered useful, references to a longer text (article, paper) can be added as an attachment. Contributors are required to register on the discussion platform. Anonymous contributions will not be accepted.

The SJIAOS discussion platform editor (James Whitworth) will moderate the discussions and the quality of the contributions (but of course not on the positions taken), can take decisions on the integrity of the arguments and is available for support when needed.

The first discussion has been kicked off. You are invited to contribute on: www.officialstatistics.com

The first discussion: ‘*Can un-official statistics help*

to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Global Indicator Framework and how can Official Statistics play a role in this process?’ centers around statements taken from an article by MacFeeley and Nastav ‘You say you want a (data) revolution’ ‘A proposal to use unofficial statistics for the SDG Global Indicator Framework’, published in this issue (Vol 35, number 3). You are invited to discuss the main or detailed statement(s).

The main statement for discussion is:

‘Official Statistics should consider switching from a purely production or manufacturing based model to a mixed business model: one combining the manufacture of official statistics with the franchising of production under license.’

Other subsidiary statements to be discussed are:

On the role of National Statistical Organisations (NSO’s) and International Statistical Organizations (IO’s)

‘In this post-truth era, NSOs and IOs should assert their mandate and legitimate role as custodians of knowledge and protectors of deliberative public spaces. The statistics community is underestimating the changes underway in the world of data and statistics. The various networks and philanthropic partnerships established to strengthen data ecosystems and promote collaboration in recent years may be counter-productive, inadvertently undermining the UN. Therefore, Official Statistics must adapt in a way that allows it to take some control (or at least exert more influ-

ence) over a rapidly disintegrating information landscape. NSO’s and IO’s must act now to ensure the integrity of Official Statistics in a rapidly disintegrating information landscape.’

On the control and ownership of statistical information

‘There will be ideological resistance in some countries to governments collecting more data – the fear of a Big Brother state. The neo-liberal agenda aims to minimize the role of the public sector – even in the data sphere. There will be resistance to expanded government oversight and accreditation. NSO’s and IO’s must act now to ensure this resistance does not erode the right to live in an informed society.’

On the SDG Global Indicator Framework

‘It is highly improbable that based on current ‘Official Statistics’ by 2030 the SDG Global Indicator Framework will be fully, or even close to fully, populated. Currently less than half of the framework is populated. However, the UNSC could change into the body with the authority and competence to certify statistics as ‘fit for purpose’ – to review unofficial statistics and assess whether they can be certified as ‘Official’ for the purposes of populating the SDG Global Indicator Framework. It would be what the Académie des Sciences or the Royal Society was to the Victorian era, in terms of homologation.’

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