

Editorial

The theme of this issue is the count of young children. In the United States, birth registration is considered 100 percent complete. The death registration system generally receives equally high marks. Similarly, there is evidence that immigration and emigration of young children are captured in administrative records. Thus, thanks to the method of Demographic Analysis (DA), we know how many children of various ages should be counted in the US decennial census of the population.

Coverage evaluations based on DA and dual system estimation tell us that the decennial census does a good job of counting the overall population, yet when it comes to young children, there are issues. The census falls short. In fact, every US census since 1940 has fallen short. In the manuscript by William O'Hare, we learn by how much. We also learn that in the U.S., there is a differential undercount with the rate varying by race and ethnicity. Since many policy decisions and transfers of federal funds to programs aimed to help children are tied to the census count it is important to get it right.

Commentaries on the O'Hare manuscript were solicited from official statisticians who have spent many hours thinking about the reasons why it is so difficult to count children (Griffin and Robinson). We also invited input from statisticians in Canada (Dolson) and France (Toulemon) and learn that the patterns observed in the U.S. are present in other countries.

One of the UN 2015 global development goals is to 'leave no one behind'. In order to achieve that goal we must know how to count children in all parts of the world. The difficulties encountered in the enumeration process in developed countries may have lessons for counting children everywhere and in all types of family structures.

The main aim of the Journal is to support the IAOS mission by publishing articles to promote the understanding and advancement of official statistics and to foster the development of effective and efficient official statistical services on a global basis. The Table of Contents is rich with examples of such efforts. I will highlight just a selection of them here.

It has been almost 100 years since the American Statistical Association published "The History of Statistics. Their Development and Progress in Many Countries" compiled and edited by John Koren. In "Celebrating the Establishment, Development and Evolution of Statistical Offices Worldwide" Catherine Michalopoulou and Angelos Mimis pay tribute to John Koren and his work.

This manuscript is followed by "The Concept and Commodity of Official Statistics" written by Rolland. Rolland puts forth the idea that official statistics are commodities. He is of the opinion that the foundation of official statistics needs rethinking and he provides some interesting arguments about the threats and opportunities for statistical agencies today.

In "Towards a Global System of Monitoring the Implementation of UN Fundamental Principles in National Official Statistics" Andreas Georgiou aims to advance the discussion of the need for an international-global system of review and assessment of how the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (UNFP) are being implemented. He introduces an analytical argument why official statistics and their quality are a "global public good." He states that as such it needs to be managed appropriately at the global level so as to achieve a socially optimal outcome from the point of view of the world community. The paper proposes and discusses various aspects of setting up an international institution and a global system for monitoring the implementation of the UNFP.

Official statistics come from many different sources. Data collection through census taking is the topic of the manuscript by Juran and Pistiner ("The 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses 2005–2014"). They identify the main characteristics of censuses under the 2010 World Program of Population and Housing Censuses of the UN.

Schnorr-Baecker presents an overview of emerging requirements for statistical indicators, as well as applications and publications on new data sources (often referred to as Big Data) that are relevant to official statistics in her paper, "Statistical Monitoring Systems to Inform Policy Decision-Making, and New Data Sources."

No matter the source of official statistics, they must meet certain statistical standards. Several manuscripts illustrate this point as they address issues surrounding quality assurance, non-response, fabrication and confidentiality.

Quality assurance ensures the user that official statistics on people, businesses and governments are not only produced with a high degree of care and in accordance with best practices, but also that sound practices are followed and quality audits take place when disseminating and presenting the statistics (Levy and Scott; Nguyen and Hogue). Administrative data are not exempt from quality assurance standards. The UK Statistics Authority has three levels of quality assurance for administrative data: basic, enhanced and comprehensive (Babb). A fourth paper, "Framework for Process Quality in National Statistical Institutes" by Brancato, Barbalace, Signore and Simeoni rounds out the topic of quality assurance.

All surveys are affected in varying degrees by *non-response and item non-response*. Approaches for dealing with both are discussed in the manuscript "Targeted Letters: Effects on Sample Composition and Item Non-Response" by Bianchi and Biffignandi.

Data fabrication or falsification was a special topic in Volume 32, No 3. In this issue, Landrock examines differences between real survey data and data falsified by interviewers in multivariate outcomes associated with determinants of political participation.

Finally, *confidentiality and approaches for protecting data confidentiality* are always of high priority. Krenzke, Li and McKenna write about this in "Producing Multiple Tables for Small Areas With Confidentiality Protection."

Other topics are covered. The paper pertaining to the 2010 Brazilian Population Census focuses on research conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) to identify indigenous populations. It is by de Oliveira Martins Pereira and it is entitled "Innovations on Measuring the Indigenous Population in the 2010 Brazilian Population Census."

In this issue, you will also find a manuscript by Dr. Joan Turek who retired earlier this year after more than 46 years of service to the US federal government. She worked for the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). Much of her research has focused on income measurement and the implication for official indicators such as poverty.

In the manuscript published here, you will see an example of her research and her contribution to our profession. Dr Turek shares her findings from an analysis of imputation for missing income data in the Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS ASEC). The data cover the period 1977 to 2007. The manuscript illustrates Dr. Turek's commitment to understanding the link between the collected data and the final measurement outcome.

Many other manuscripts are available for your perusal, but I will not single them out here. Instead, I will mention that Katherine Condon has been hard at work to produce a special interview for this issue. She features a conversation with editor-in-chief emeritus, Dr. Fritz Scheuren. His many and unique contributions to official statistics and to this Journal are well captured. As always, the views and opinions expressed in the interviews and conversations published in SJIAOS are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of the Journal, the IAOS nor IOS Press.

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