the Survey Statistician

The Newsletter of the International Association of Survey Statisticians

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In This Issue

Dear Colleagues,

This letter should be my last contribution to TSS in my role as President of the IASS. It has been an 'interesting' two years since the 2011 Dublin WSC, and by the time that you see this, it will be almost time for the 2013 Hong Kong WSC. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

As you will no doubt be aware, we will in fact have two General Assemblies in Hong Kong. The first, on Wednesday August 28, will be the 'usual' GA for the current version of IASS, in its guise as a French registered association. Its objective will be to set in train the process of winding down this version. The second, on Friday August 30, will be to vote on the proposed statutes for the new Dutch version of IASS, as an association of the ISI. Further details are in the report of our Scientific Secretary, Ineke Stoop, in this edition of TSS. I strongly urge all of you who will be at the WSC and in HK on either or both of these days to attend these GAs. The more people who attend, the stronger will be the mandate of the incoming Executive and Council of the 'new' IASS to chart its course over the next few years.

Details of the new Executive and incoming Council members are set out elsewhere in this issue of TSS. For my part, I would like to thank Ada van Krimpen of the ISI and Gerrit J. Stemerdink, an independent ISI member, who analysed the returned ballots and reported the election outcome. The Chair of the IASS Nominations Committee, Keith Rust, did a great job coordinating the nominations process, with the result that we now have a very strong group of people who will form the incoming Executive and Council in Hong Kong. I congratulate them all. Furthermore, I would like to extend these congratulations to all who volunteered to put themselves forward for election in 2013. Without their agreement to serve as IASS office-bearers, IASS would not be able to function in a way that reflects the aims and needs of its members.

One of the highlights of the WSC is the opportunity to listen to the presentation by the Cochran-Hansen Prize winner. This year the winner is Emilio Lopez Escobar of ITAM in Mexico. His award is based on his PhD research at the University of Southampton, and I can personally vouch for its outstanding quality - Emilio visited me here in Wollongong early last year, and it was really good to talk to him about his ideas. However, Yves Tille, who ably chaired the jury for award of the C-H Prize, also points out that the jury was very impressed by the number (18) and quality of the nominations that it received, making their final decision a close one. This is great news for the future of the C-H Prize.

More immediately, many of you will be aware that the IASS in the past has had a 'tradition' of sponsoring young survey statisticians from developing countries to attend the IASS short course program at the WSC (and consequently the WSC itself). The funding for this activity has in recent years been via a block allocation from World Bank funding to the ISI. This year, things have been slightly different. To start, there is no separate IASS short course program prior to the WSC in Hong Kong. Instead, IASS-organised short courses are being run as part of an overall ISI short course program (with IASS Vice-President, and Incoming President Elect, Steve Heeringa guiding things). This removes IASS capacity to allow free entry to these courses. Secondly, details of ISI

funding for these IASS awards came through relatively late, meaning that there has been little time to canvass applications. As a consequence the IASS Executive Committee has authorised the granting of three awards, each of US$2,500, to support attendance at the WSC and associated satellite meetings. We are currently trying to ensure that availability of these awards is as widely circulated as possible, and have our fingers crossed that we are able to reach the young people who will make best use of them!

Other news on the survey sampling front over the last six months has been rather more sobering. Many of you will know that financial restrictions at Statistics Canada meant that Survey Methodology, one of the most important scientific publications related to survey sampling, stopped its print version at the end of 2012, with the last familiar brown and tan English (Survey Methodology) / French (Techniques d'enquête) print version being the December 2012 (Volume 38, number 2) issue. From June 2013 SM will only be published electronically. On the positive side, it is intended that this electronic version will now be freely available to all from the SM website. Unfortunately, it remains unclear exactly how this will operate, with no clear indication on the SC website of how complete issues of SM can be downloaded.

Similarly, cost pressures at Statistics Sweden meant that another iconic sampling publication, the Journal of Official Statistics, has had to withdraw the discount on its print version that in the past it was able to offer, via ISI and IASS, to subscribers from developing countries. With effect from 2013, all print subscribers will have to pay the full subscription rate, irrespective of where they are from, or their ISI/IASS membership status. Again, on the positive side, JOS has for some years now made itself freely available electronically, using its very well designed web portal (http://www.jos.nu/) and JOS is confident that this will provide an adequate substitute.

And now, as they say, for the good news. The American Statistical Association and the American Association for Public Opinion Research have just launched a new journal aimed squarely at survey samplers. Issue 1 of the Journal of Survey Statistic and Methodology was published in May 2013. In publishing this new journal, ASA and AAPOR recognise that survey samplers represent a large group of statistical scientists with significant impact in huge areas of science, industry and society, but with limited opportunities to disseminate their research in standard statistical outputs. See http://jssam.oxfordjournals.org/content/1/1/1.full for a statement from the editors that directly addresses this issue and explains how JSSAM will help. In the interests of full disclosure, I note that I am on the initial Editorial Panel of JSSAM, but this does not hold me back from wishing (wearing my IASS Presidential headgear) this new journal every success.

A letter from a President (and especially a last letter) should have a forward looking aspect to it. So where is survey sampling, both as a profession and as a science, heading? Having just returned from the 2013 Graybill Conference on Modern Survey Statistics at Colorado State University, it seems clear that there are plenty of new and exciting developments that are pushing the science forward. However, the view from the a practitioner's desk is rather more nuanced. To a large extent, this was eloquently captured by the presentation "Advances in Sample Data Augmentation" of Frauke Kreuter of JPSM at this conference. In the abstract for her talk, Frauke notes that "in recent years large survey organizations have made considerable efforts to enhance information on all sample cases with paradata, data from commercial vendors, and through linkage to administrative data to allow for improved field operations or non-response adjustments." This move away from the traditional concept of a sample survey as a free-standing information collection and analysis entity has been gathering pace over the last ten years, and I think is now well entrenched. Its implications are clear.

Target populations are more dynamic, much less clearly defined (think networks) and much harder to measure. Furthermore, resources that can be targeted at a particular sample unit are much smaller. As a consequence, sampling design is moving away from its traditional emphasis on how selection is implemented to how samples from quite different sources, and of quite varying provenance, can be quickly integrated. Sampling inference will have to adapt to this new data collection paradigm, with the importance of sampling error much diminished, and a real need to come to grips with how basic ideas like uncertainty should be characterised in the resulting confusing mix of non-response errors, linking errors, measurement errors and model specification errors. We are currently being reminded at every turn that Big Data is the wave of the future. Survey statisticians are already caught up in this wave, and must learn, sometimes very quickly, about how to efficiently surf it. The alternative, speaking from painful personal experience and in common with anyone who has waded unprepared into the ocean when the waves are rolling in, is to be 'dumped' and left gasping on the sand.

I personally do not believe there is any value anymore in solving the neatly defined survey sampling problems of the last century. And I have always struggled to find a justification for asymptotic (as opposed to approximate) arguments in situations where effective sample sizes are becoming smaller and measurement errors are becoming bigger. But this does not mean that statisticians, and sampling statisticians in particular, cannot continue to make substantial contributions to how data are collected, analysed and interpreted in order to maximise the payoff from their information content. The theory for this is being developed. Many of the presentations at the 2013 Graybill Conference focused on emerging inferential needs, as will many of the presentations at the WSC in August. There is a new young cohort of survey samplers who will benefit from these ideas because they will be free (and encouraged) to use them. That is true paradigm shift.

Ray Chambers,
President, IASS

Letter from the Editors

The July 2013 issue of the IASS newsletter *The Survey Statistician* contains articles of interest and important information regarding upcoming conferences, journal contents, updates from the IASS Executive and more.

In the New and Emerging Methods Section (edited by Ineke Stoop), Michèle Ernst Stähli from the Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences and Dominique Joye from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland have contributed an article on 'Non-respondent Surveys: Pertinence and Feasibility'. In the article, they address the problem of unit non-response and discuss the opportunities offered by short follow-ups for non-respondents which can be used for weighting procedures to minimize non-response bias. In the Ask the Experts Section (edited by Robert Clark), Noel Cressie from the University of Wollongong and University of Missouri and Scott Holan and Christopher Wikle from the University of Missouri answer the question of 'How can survey estimates of small areas be improved by leveraging social-media data?'. For the Book and Software Review Section, Greg Griffiths from the Australian Bureau of Statistics has contributed a review of the Springer 2013 book on 'Practical tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples' by Richard Valliant, Jill Dever and Frauke Kreuter. This book is a result of many years of collaboration and expertise arising from the Joint Program in Survey Methodology based at the University of Michigan and the University of Maryland.

On behalf of the IASS membership, we wish to thank the authors and editors of these sections for their important contributions to *The Survey Statistician*. In particular, we want to thank the outgoing Scientific Secretary, Ineke Stoop, for her contributions to the New and Emerging Methods Section and the timely Scientific Secretary reports during her term in office. The new editor for these sections will be the incoming Scientific Secretary, Mick Couper, and we wish to welcome him to the Editorial Board.

Please let Mick Couper (mcouper@umich.edu) know if you would like to contribute to the New and Emerging Methods Section in the future. If you have any questions which you would like to be answered by an expert, please send them to Robert Clark (rclark@uow.edu.au). If you are interested in writing a book or software review, please get in touch with Natalie Shlomo (natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk).

The Country Report Section has always been a central feature of *The Survey Statistician* and we thank the editor of the section, Pierre Lavallée (pierre.lavallee@statcan.gc.ca) for his continuing effort to obtain timely reports from the different countries. We ask all country representatives to please submit articles and share information on your country's current activities, applications, research and developments in survey methods. Please contact Denise Silva (denisebritz@gmail.com) if there are any changes or updates to the list of country representatives as published in the last issue of *The Survey Statistician (*No. 67).

As in the past, this issue of *The Survey Statistician* includes a letter from Ray Chambers, the President of IASS. This is Ray's final letter as President since the incoming President, Danny Pfeffermann, will be taking up his official duties from the WSC Conference in Hong Kong. The IASS community extends its gratitude to Ray for his hard work and dedication these past years and in particular for ensuring the smooth

transition of the IASS from the French to Dutch territories. We also congratulate the new President-Elect Steve Heeringa, as well as all other elected IASS council members, and wish them a productive term in office.

We thank Marcel Vieira for putting together the list of conferences for inclusion in the newsletter. Please send to Marcel (marcel.veira@ice.ufjf.br) any conference announcements that you would like advertised in the next *Survey Statistician* to be issued in January 2014. We also thank Henry Chiem and Yovina Joymungul Poorun for collating the advertisements of upcoming conferences and for preparing the Tables of Contents section. Please note the inclusion of the table of contents for the first issue of the new Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology, sponsored by AAPOR and the American Statistical Association.

In the News and Announcement Section, we congratulate Danny Pfeffermann on his prestigious appointment as Government Statistician and Director of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. We also congratulate Emilio Lopez Escobar on winning the Cochran-Hansen prize and look forward to hearing his paper at the WSC Conference. Also, Christine Bycroft sends out an announcement requesting IPS topics for the next WSC Conference in Rio de Janeiro, August 2015.

As always, we have many thanks for everyone working hard to put *The Survey Statistician* together, and in particular Henry Chiem and Yovina Joymungul Poorun of the Australian Bureau of Statistics for their invaluable assistance.

Please take an active role in supporting the IASS newsletter by volunteering to contribute articles, book/software reviews and country reports. We also ask IASS members to send in notifications about conferences and other important news items about their organisations or individual members.

We hope you enjoy the July 2013 issue of *The Survey Statistician* and are happy to receive your feedback and comments on how we can make improvements.

The Survey Statistician is also available for downloading from the IASS website at http://isi.cbs.nl/iass/allUK.htm.

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Report from the Scientific Secretary

Results of the 2013 IASS Election

<u>For President-Elect:</u>
Steven G. Heeringa, USA

<u>For Vice President</u> (2 positions):
Jairo O. Arrow, South Africa
Geoffrey F. Lee, Australia

<u>For Scientific Secretary</u>:
Mick P. Couper, USA

<u>For Council Member</u> (six positions):
J. Michael Brick, USA
Daniela Cocchi, Italy
Jack Gambino, Canada
Risto Lehtonen, Finland
Ralf Münnich, Germany
Jean Opsomer, USA

Preparation WSC 2013

- The IASS will of course be present at the WSC 2013 in Hong Kong. Activities in the last months have been focused on preparations for this important event.
- 4 top-ranked IASS course proposals on survey design, sampling, editing and imputation and analysis have been selected by the ISI Short Course Committee, Hong Kong (SCC-HK) (see http://www.isi2013.hk/en/short.php);
- IASS officials have reviewed a large number of submissions for the Cochran-Hansen prize. This time both the quantity and the quality of the submissions were very high. The Cochran-Hansen prize Award Ceremony will be held on August 29;
- The IASS has also applied for Word Bank funding to allow young statisticians from developing countries to attend the WSC and its associated short courses. The Executive Committee of the ISI have approved an amount of US$7,000 to support participants for the workshops in Hong Kong. This will mean that the IASS will be able to support 3 young statisticians.
- Since WSC 2011 IASS has moved from an association subject to French law to an association that is part of the ISI and therefore subject to Dutch law. That means that new statutes have been drafted (see below) and two General Assemblies will be organized.

New statutes

In 2013 the move of the IASS from being an association incorporated under French law to one incorporated under Dutch law will have to be finalized.

There will be two General Assemblies during the WSC in Hong Kong this coming August:

- on August 28, will be the last GA for the current French version of the IASS,
- on August 30, will be the first GA for the new Dutch version of the Association.

The new Dutch version of the IASS can only come into existence following a vote of the ISI General Assembly on August 29.

The main objective of the first GA will be the presentation of the usual reports (including financial reports) and a discussion of the proposed steps for the dissolution of the French version of the IASS.

The main objective of the second GA will be a discussion of the statutes proposed for this new version of the IASS. This is necessary because the statutes of the current (French) version of the IASS are specific to French law and cannot be used under Dutch law.

The primary driving force for this change was the decision by INSEE that it could no longer afford to support the administration of the IASS from its offices at Cefil in Libourne, France. One consequence was the decision, taken at the General Assembly of the IASS at the 2011 World Statistics Congress in Dublin, that it become an Association of the ISI, and therefore subject to the statutes of the ISI. A necessary consequence of this is that the IASS moves from an association subject to French law to an association that is part of the ISI and therefore subject to Dutch law.

To make the transfer possible two General Assemblies will be organized during the WSC in Hong Kong this coming August: the first one, on August 28, will be the last GA for the current French version of the IASS, and the second one, on August 30, will be the first GA for the new Dutch version of the Association. This gap is necessary because this new Dutch version of the IASS can only come into existence following a vote of the ISI General Assembly on August 29. The main objective of the first GA will be the presentation of the usual reports and a discussion of the proposed steps for the dissolution of the French version of the IASS. The main objective of the second GA will be a discussion of the statutes proposed for this new version of the IASS. This is necessary because the statutes of the current (French) version of the IASS are specific to French law and cannot be used under Dutch law. A summary of comments received during electronic consultations will be presented at this second GA.

Draft statutes for the Dutch version of the IASS have also been prepared and can be found here: http://isi.cbs.nl/iass/NewIASS-StatutesUnderDutchLaw.pdf. These reflect the change of status of the Association. For comparison, the statutes of the current French version of the IASS are available in the IASS part of the ISI Website: (http://isi.cbs.nl/iass/StatutesEnglishIASS.doc).
In drafting these new statutes, we have taken the opportunity to modernize and simplify them. The governance of the Association will now be similar to those of the other ISI Associations. We believe that IASS membership will benefit from the administrative experience of the ISI Permanent Office as well as the experience of ISI permanent staff in management of the membership database, follow up and reporting of financial issues and capacity to adapt to innovations in communications.

Preparation WSC 2015
Christine Bycroft from Stats New Zealand is chair of the IASS Program Committee for the 2015 WSC in Rio. The first preparations for this Conference have already been started.

Membership advantages
Over the past period the council has been discussing ways of making (institutional) membership more attractive. The draft statutes spell out the following initiatives and activities:

2.2. In order to realize its objectives the Association may:
  a) Organize meetings, seminars, conferences, research and training programs and theoretical or practical investigations independently or in collaboration with other organizations included Associations of the ISI;
  b) Collaborate with international, national, regional and other organizations and institutions having objectives similar to those of the Association;
  c) Publish periodicals, pamphlets, books, information circulars, etc., independently or in cooperation with other organizations;
  d) Make business transactions, undertake or participate in cooperated activities and take all necessary action for the promotion and advancement of the objectives of the Association.

6.18. The Executive Committee shall have power:
  a) To appoint committees, sub-committees, working groups, etc., for assigned tasks, and to delegate its powers to such committees and sub-committees or to one or more officers for assigned purpose;
  b) To extend the term of the Officers for a period not exceeding eight months pending a meeting of the General Assembly;
  c) To conduct its own business at meetings or by post or electronically as and when necessary.

Publications
  • The Survey Statistician is the bi-annual journal of the IASS. It is freely available online as a PDF: http://isi.cbs.nl/iass/survstatUK.htm
  • Survey Methodology is published by Statistics Canada in both an English http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/12-001-x/12-001-x2012001-eng.htm and a French version http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olc-cel?catno=12-001-x&lang=fra and is freely available online.
  • The Journal of Official Statistics www.jos.nu is published by Statistics Sweden. It is freely available online and also available for €70 per annum for print versions.

Initiatives elsewhere
The American Association of Public Opinion Research has published reports on Online Panels and Non-Probability Sampling that are of great value to the survey research world. These reports are available here:
  http://www.aapor.org/AAPOR_Releases_Report_on_Online_Survey_Panels1.htm
  http://www.aapor.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Reports1&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=5963

News and Announcements

Professor Danny Pfeffermann Appointed Government Statistician of Israel

The IASS community would like to congratulate Danny Pfeffermann on his prestigious appointment as Government Statistician and Director of the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) from April 2013. Danny is Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor of Statistics at the Southampton Statistical Sciences Research Institute, University of Southampton. He also regularly consults for the US Bureau of Labour Statistics. Danny has devoted his career to the advancement of survey methodology with over 60 academic publications and is co-editor of the 2-volume Handbook in Statistics: 'Sample Surveys' published by North Holland in 2009. Danny was the 2011 recipient of the Waksberg Award and published his 'Waksberg award' paper 'Modelling of Complex Survey Data: Why Model? Why is it a Problem? How can we Approach it?' in *Survey Methodology*, Vol. 37 (2). Danny was President of the Israel Statistical Association from 2005 – 2007 and is President-Elect of the IASS where he will take up his official duties at the ISI World Statistics Conference in Hong Kong in August 2013.
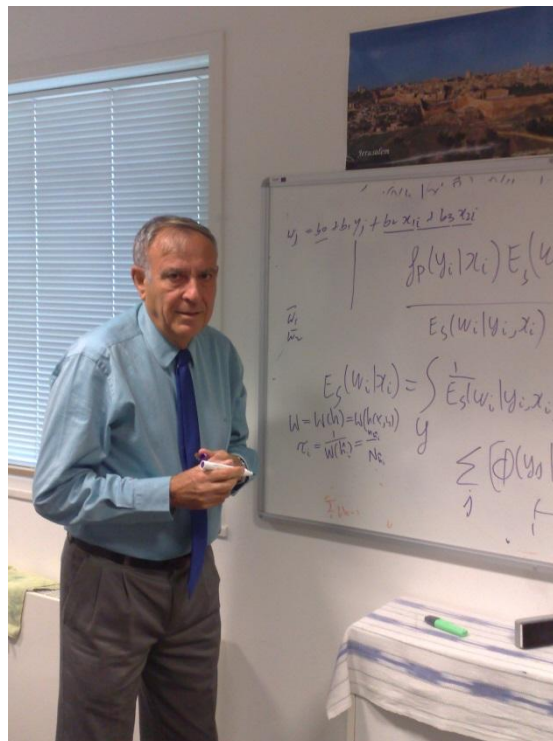
IASS Invited Paper Session topic proposals: WSC Rio de Janeiro 2015

The 60th World Statistics Congress of the ISI is to be held from 27th – 31st July 2015 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. This might seem like a long way off, but it is now time to ask for topics and organisers for the IASS Invited Paper Sessions in Rio. Your help is needed. If you have ideas for topics to be considered, or if you are interested in organizing an Invited Paper Session, please contact the Chair of the IASS Rio Programme Committee, Christine Bycroft christine.bycroft@stats.govt.nz.

Each topic proposal should include a title, a brief description and justification for your proposed session, and an organiser if possible.

Proposals submitted to IASS will initially be reviewed by the IASS Council. Topics selected by the IASS will then be submitted to the full Rio Scientific Programme Committee and a final selection made.

The selection criteria will take into account diversity, scientific quality and impacts.
Priorities will be given to ensure that the programme:
- Has a balance of organisers from around the world
- Has a good representation of organisers and/or speakers who are early career statisticians
- Has a good representation of both male and female organisers and/or speakers
- Is attractive to the diverse membership of the ISI and its Associations.

More information can be found:

http://www.isi-web.org/images/root/2015-WSC-Brazil.pdf

Cochran-Hansen Prize

In celebration of its 25th anniversary, the International Association of Survey Statisticians established the Cochran-Hansen Prize to be awarded every two years to the best paper on survey research methods submitted by a young statistician from a developing country. Participation in the competition for the Prize is open to nationals of developing countries who are living in such countries and who were born in 1971 or later. In 2013, the Cochran-Hansen Prize committee has been chaired by Prof. Yves Tillé from the University of Neuchatel. The committee received 18 applications from 15 different countries : Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic , Chad , Chile, Egypt, India, Jordan, Mauritius, Mexico, Palestine , Philippines, Ukraine, South Africa. Seven papers were submitted by women. The committee received 3 papers in French and 15 in English. The committee was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the papers. After deliberation, the prize has been given in 2013 to Emilio López Escobar from Mexico for his paper « An unequal-probability replication variance estimator for large-entropy sampling designs».

Courses in Applied Social Surveys (CASS) at the University of Southampton, United Kingdom

Using Paradata to Enhance Survey Design and Analysis
Presenters: Prof Frauke Kreuter and Dr Gabriele Durrant
(with contributions from Dr Mario Callegaro, Dr Olga Maslovskaya and Prof Peter W. Smith)

22 - 23 October 2013, University of Southampton

Information at : http://www.s3ri.soton.ac.uk/cass/showcourse.php?id=12102070

In recent years the use of paradata ('field process data') has received increasing attention in survey research. Typical examples of paradata are key-stroke files, which capture navigation through the questionnaire, and time stamps, which provide information such as date and time of each call attempt or the length of a question-answer sequence. Other examples are interviewer observations about a sampled household or neighbourhood, recordings of vocal properties of the interviewer and respondent, and information about interviewer calls and interviewing strategies. It is hoped to use paradata for the improvement of survey designs, survey quality and analysis. It also offers opportunities for efficiency gains and cost savings in surveys.

This course introduces participants to the practices and cutting-edge research in the up-and-coming field of paradata. It is aimed at both producers and users of paradata, both at junior and senior levels.

This course is part of a 3.5 year ESRC research project conducted by 4 of the presenters (grant number: RES-062-23-2997). The event is organised jointly with the Social Statistics Section of the Royal Statistical Society.

Ask the Experts

How can survey estimates of small areas be improved by leveraging social-media data?

Noel Cressie, Scott H. Holan, and Christopher K. Wikle

Noel Cressie is Distinguished Professor at the National Institute for Applied Statistics Research Australia, University of Wollongong. Cressie, Scott H. Holan, and Christopher K. Wikle are, respectively, Adjunct Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor in the Department of Statistics, University of Missouri.

At first glance, social-media data look like the antithesis of survey data - never to be used in the same sentence! By social-media data, we mean the sort of information one gets from Google, Facebook, Twitter, and so forth, about what "the crowd" is talking about or looking for. Exactly which crowd we are referring to is an important part of the science of crowd-sourcing.

The US Census Bureau is mandated by Congress to provide forms in a particular language if the level of that language being spoken in a given area is high. The law (in Section 203 of a larger bill) is not specific about how this will be done except to say that the Director of the Census Bureau will do it. One approach will be to rely on the American Community Survey (ACS).

The ACS was designed to replace the decennial census long-form, to deliver timely estimates in the US of many variables at one-, three-, and five-year intervals. Areas smaller than states are needed to meet Section 203's need, yet the ACS does not have the sample size in small areas that could provide accurate information on say, percent of Spanish-speaking households. Can small area estimation methodology be used to assist the Director to make informed Section-203 decisions?

Traditional small area estimation looks for covariates that are highly correlated with the variable of interest (here percent of Spanish-speaking households). The Fay-Herriot model is a popular way to incorporate survey-sampling errors with linear-model-based, independent errors. More recently, the assumption of independence in the errors has been extended to account for spatially dependent errors. The spatial dependence arises naturally in small area estimation of contiguous regions, where nearby regions tend to behave more alike than those far apart. This has sometimes been called "the first law of geography," and it often occurs because the linear model is missing some covariates that themselves have spatial variability. This "borrowing of strength" means that survey data and covariates from counties that are nearby a given county, along with the covariate for that county, can be used to estimate the variable of interest, even when the county has not been surveyed. The result is an estimate of the percent of Spanish-speaking households for the county in question and the mean squared prediction error

associated with it. The "spatial" part of Fay-Herriot modeling can net higher precisions and hence better decisions based on more certainty. But we can do more.

In an age where one has available a wide variety of non-standard auxiliary information such as social-media (e.g., Google Trends, Twitter) search loads or satellite observations of various land-surface characteristics, it may prove worthwhile to include such "big data" covariates in small area estimation. Clearly, such information comes spatially (and temporally) referenced, and they can be quite voluminous. Thus, it would be useful to extend the type of covariate information used in the Fay-Herriot model to include such "functional" covariates. The inclusion of these functional covariates may be facilitated through dimension-reduction methods that include stochastic search variable selection. An article by Porter et al. (2103) has done just this, where the variable of interest is the percent Spanish-speaking households, and the covariates are time series from Google Trends of search loads containing three common Spanish words. The research resulted from comments made in 2012 by then Census Bureau Director Bob Groves, who knew that funding was going to limit the precision of the Bureau's surveys, and he was looking for modern-media data sources to help. There is an added wrinkle in that socio-economic-demographic data may come aggregated at various levels of spatial support (e.g., census tracts; Public Use Microdata Areas or PUMAs; counties). It is often advantageous to consider a common level of support for the associated "true" process in order to facilitate inference. The Fay-Herriot model can be adapted to accommodate such change-of-support, allowing for efficient borrowing of strength. (It should be noted that although we use the terminology, "process," in this context, we also include as part of the process other "true" latent quantities of interest such as the super-population mean.)

The results of Porter et al. (2013) are based on a fully Bayesian analysis, with certain features of the Google Trends time series selected as part of the methodology. Interestingly, the higher-frequency terms from the time series tended to be selected over the lower-frequency terms, a result that would have been missed if one had used the first few temporal EOFs (empirical orthogonal functions; i.e., functional principal components) of the time series as covariates.

It is clear that spatial small area estimation with functional covariates could also be used in agricultural surveys, where the functional covariates are remote-sensing scenes of land-use/land-cover. There is also a spatio-temporal version of the approach discussed above, based on dynamical spatio-temporal models and spatio-temporal change-of-support. This may be useful for modelling flows, such as might arise when studying immigration patterns over small areas.

Reference:

Porter, A.T., Holan, S.H., Wikle, C.K., and Cressie, N. (2013). Spatial Fay-Herriot models for small area estimation with functional covariates. Downloadable from arxiv at http://arxiv.org/abs/1303.6668

The paper is also available as Working Paper 08-13, National Institute for Applied Statistics Research Australia (NIASRA), University of Wollongong.

Ask the Experts - Call for Questions

If you'd like to ask the experts a question, please contact Robert Clark at rclark@uow.edu.au.

New and Emerging Methods

Non-respondent surveys: pertinence and feasibility

Dr. Michèle Ernst Stähli, *Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences: FORS*
Prof. Dominique Joye, *University of Lausanne, Switzerland*

Abstract

Among the techniques to address the problem of unit-nonresponse in surveys, short follow-up surveys for nonrespondents have not (yet) been a strong tradition. They are however promising ways to document and possibly correct for non-response bias, so that it should be of interest to put aside a small part of the overall budget to implement them.

This contribution relates to a longer series of experiences from non-respondent surveys as follow-ups of long face-to-face general social surveys in Switzerland. It shows the great opportunities offered, but also the challenges that have to be faced when opting for this approach.

Introduction

All surveys are facing at least four sources of error: sampling, coverage, measurement, and non-response errors (Dillman, 2000). The latter deals with the fact that not all sampled people finally participate in the survey, raising the question of representativity of the collected data.

Non-response error has always been a major concern, which has been mainly addressed by trying to get high response rates. This concern is getting even more relevant when response rates are low or dropping, as it is currently observed in several countries. However, response rates alone are not sufficient to inform about possible non-response biases, since it has been shown that non-response biases are not always directly related to the extent of non-response (Peytcheva and Groves, 2008). In order to ensure data quality, it is therefore central to have at least some information about the non-respondents.

We first briefly present the different approaches used to get information about non-respondents and their application to elucidate the specific advantages of non-respondent surveys. We then present this approach in general and specifically as used in the last several years in Switzerland in the fieldwork setting of international surveys. We finally summarize the opportunities and challenges raised by this approach.

What can be done about unit non-response?

1. A very widely used technique, especially in marketing and opinion surveys but not only, is to compare the respondents to the population, using for example census data as a reference. This leads to the so called post-stratification weighting. The advantage is that these population data are easily accessible and quite reliable in most countries. The serious drawback is that population data

don't inform directly about non-respondents and such weighting gives the illusion of representativeness, but in many cases does not correct for relevant non-response biases (for the case of foreigners, see for example Lipps et al, 2013).

2. In some cases, respondents can be compared to non-respondents on the basis of sample frame data. The clear advantage is that each information contained in the frame is available for every sample unit, respondents and non-respondents altogether, allowing for precise determination of non-response bias. The problem is that informative sample frames are only available in few countries, and if so, mostly contain only very basic socio-demographic information. Finally, there is a similar limitation as for the previous technique: biases on relevant survey outcomes cannot always be detected and corrected using the frame information. In other words, such a correction will function only if there is a clear relation between the variables available in the frame and the variables of interest in the survey.

3. Another widely used technique is to compare early to late respondents, using for example days to respond as a regression variable, or the level of effort (Biemer et al. 2013). Advantage: contact paradata can be produced by every survey as a collateral product with minimal effort, and mostly are recorded anyway for fieldwork monitoring purposes. Problem: This approach assumes that there is some linear function of response propensities linking cooperative respondents to non-respondents, and that late respondents, and respondents needing higher levels of efforts to be reached and motivated to participate,are situated in between. However, as there are different types of non-respondents (Brennan and Hoek, 1992), this is not necessarily the case.

4. Respondents can also be compared to non-respondents on the basis of information collected at every sample unit's address, such as geographical or GIS-related data, and observational data (Smith 2011). These data however don't always relate to the non-respondents but mainly their environment and imply that a common dimension, such as lifestyle, links the choice of a residential environment and the propensity to participate to a survey. Moreover, the particular case of observational data implies a clear protocol in order to be coded reliably.

5. Information about non-respondents can also be collected at the doorstep. Doorstep questionnaires have shown to be effective in some cases (e.g. Lynn, 2003), even if based on the judgement of the interviewer (for example by evaluating the current sexual activity in the NSFG, see West, 2011). The problem is that they can be collected only for refusals, not for non-contacts, and only in face-to-face surveys.

6. Finally, it is possible to invite all non-respondents to answer a very short questionnaire, repeating some central survey questions, suspected to be particularly sensitive to non-response bias. The advantage of this technique is to deliver not only socio-demographic information about non-respondents, but also attitudinal ones, and to be feasible for all kind of surveys at reasonable costs. The drawback is of course that not all the survey non-respondents will answer such a follow-up.

The idea to follow up non-respondents with a specific survey is not completely new. Non-respondents were specially targeted already by Hansen and Hurwitz (1946), who proposed to subsample the nonrespondents. But they assumed that there was a fundamental difference between the very easy respondents and the others since they defined the non-respondents as all those who did not answer at the first attempt. The idea of reapproaching nonrespondents by another protocol in order to reach different profiles has also emerged (e.g. Hochstim and Athanasopoulos, 1970). However, there is not a vast literature about short surveys focusing on all non-respondents of a longer survey.

Method
The non-respondent surveys presented in this paper were all conducted for international general social surveys based on random samples and realized face-to-face interviews following the same strict fieldwork protocols, ensuring the international comparability. They were also carried out by the same survey organization. The surveys differed mainly in timing (season of start and length of fieldwork) and central topic. Long face-to-face interviews (of about 1 hour) don't achieve high response rates in Switzerland (around 50%). This inevitably raises the concern about non-response bias. The comparisons with population data did not bring to light significant differences between respondents and non-respondents, except for nationality, non-nationals being underrepresented as in most surveys (Laganà et al, 2013). The authors were convinced, supported by literature (Stoop et al. 2010), that these comparisons do not detect most of the survey relevant differences between respondents and non-respondents. Such differences were supposed to lie more on the attitudinal level than on socio-demographics. This is why, since 2006, the non-respondents of 6 long CAPI surveys[1] (several rounds of the European Social Surveys, European Values Study, MOSAiCH conveying the ISSP) have been followed up by a short paper questionnaire, including socio-demographic, behavioural and attitudinal questions.

These non-respondent surveys (NRS) were all conducted after completion of the main survey, by addressing a single page two sided paper questionnaire with about 15 questions to all non-respondents (except the hard refusals, having contacted us directly and asked not to be bothered anymore). Refusals and non-contacts were addressed by specific letters, taking into account their status, and they were all given an unconditional incentive (from a pen to 10 CHF cash (around 10 USD), depending on the incentive given at the main survey). The contact procedure included at least one reminder (by mail or telephone, depending on the survey). In parallel, 20% of the respondents to the main survey received the same questionnaire, in order to check for stability of the answers over time and mode.

The Response Rates
The response rates to the NRS we experienced in Switzerland are very encouraging: through this technique we can collect information concerning about half of all non-respondents, achieving an overall response rate of about 70-75%.

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[1] The most recent NRS survey follows the ESS 2012 and is still in field, results are not yet available.

Figure 1. Response rates to the main surveys, non-respondent surveys and cumulated
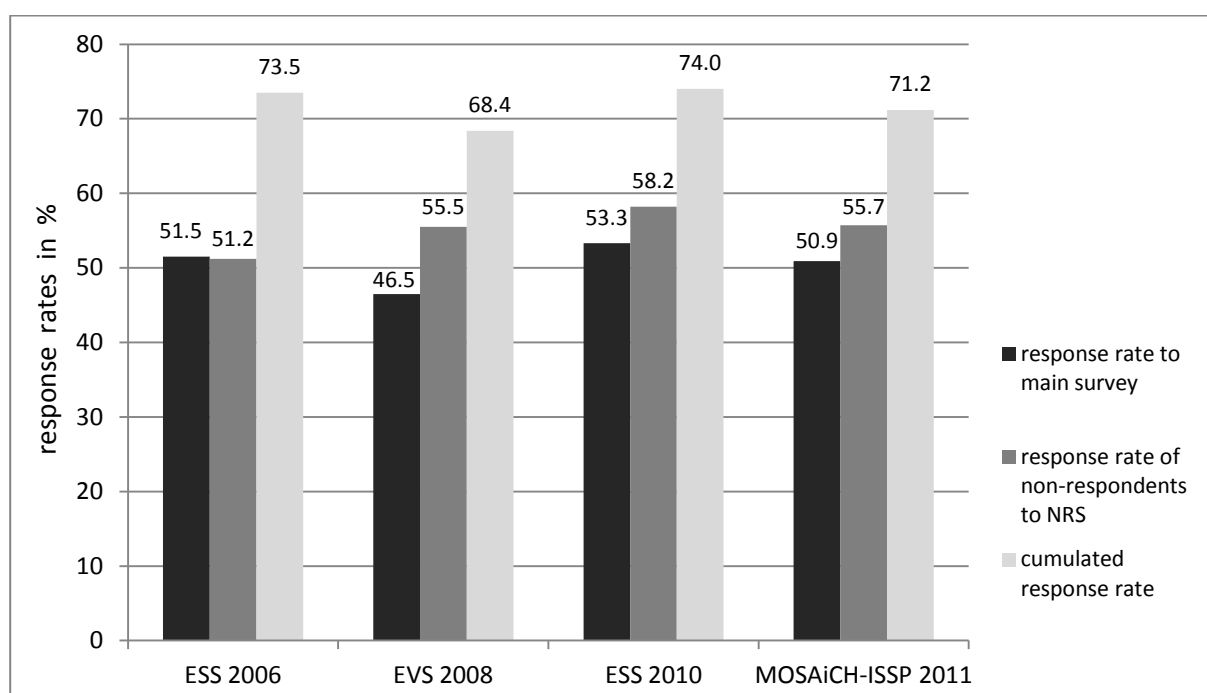

Figure 1 shows that the NRS can significantly improve the information about the sample. But there seems to be an upper limit.[2]

There clearly is a significant minority (around a fifth) of the population who can be designated as hard-core non-participants because they can neither be reached nor persuaded to participate. In our case the share of non-contacts and the share of refusals are approximately of the same size. And a small part of the population does not participate for non-systematic reasons, even if followed up.

The response rate for the control group (people having participated to the main survey) varies between 80% and 90%. The response rate for the subgroup of refusals and non-contacts varies roughly between 40% and 60%, depending on the survey and subgroup. There is no clear pattern, sometimes refusals responding better, sometimes the inverse. The reason for these irregular differences lies in the specific contact and conversion efforts of each main survey and the procedure applied to the NRS.

Choosing the right questions
The first NRS was developed for the European Social Survey Round 3, together with the ESS core scientific team. It has been carried out in 4 countries (Switzerland, Belgium, Norway and Poland, see Stoop et al, 2010). Questions that were expected to be sensitive to non-response bias were selected from the main survey. Previous analyses on NR-bias, based on comparisons between cooperative and reluctant respondents and variance inflation induced by post-stratification, guided the choice of the questions. In this first version of our NRS, the following questions have been retained: gender, birth year, household size, education, work status, hours watching TV,

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[2] Even in a very recent mixed-mode experiment, where we could achieve high response rates with a shorter questionnaire and several sequential mixed mode designs (up to 70%), the overall response rate including a NRS did not significantly go beyond what we could achieve in the longer face-to-face surveys (max. 76%). Similar figures were achieved by other countries participating in the ESS-R3 NRS (Stoop et al., 2010, pp.252-278). In fact, when response rates to the main survey are higher, the response rate to the NRS is lower.

participation in social activities, involvement in charity organizations, interpersonal trust, trust in politicians, political interest, perception of neighborhood security, satisfaction with democracy in country, attitudes towards immigrants and attitudes towards surveys. Compared to the respondents, the non-respondents (answering the NRS) were more likely to live alone, to disagree that surveys have a value for society, to be less interested in politics, to participate less in social activities, to be less employed and to feel safe rather than very safe in their neighborhood after dark. Through propensity scores weighting, theses biases could be reduced (Matsuo et al. 2009).

The content of the NRS questionnaires for the following surveys was quite similar, with a mix of demographic variables and opinions known to be linked to non-response: social isolation and participation and attitude to foreigners notably. However they have been adapted each time in response to the results of the previous NRS and to the actual main survey concerning the interest in the central topic as well as the final choice, the wording and the format of the questions. The subsequent NRS included alternately also questions about centrality of different life domains, membership of associations, propensity to vote, perceived people's fairness, trust in justice, trust in science, happiness, life satisfaction, health, depression, work-life balance, social support and locus of control. Some other characteristics, potentially linked to the possibility to contact the respondents, such as having a fixed telephone line and the telephone number listed in the directory, were included as well as the household composition.

Comparative analyses of the first three NRS showed that the following variables are quite stable predictors of survey participation and should therefore be included in each NRS: interest in politics, attitude towards immigrants and attitude towards surveys. Registration in telephone directories is also a powerful predictor, however partly linked to the survey process itself. Even if telephone contacts are not used, this predictor remains significant: if registration of one's phone number is a voluntary act, it is a good proxy of openness to the public sphere. These results strengthen the idea that participation is mainly related to life styles and relation to the society.

The Challenges
There are however some serious challenges to face. The questions in the main and the non-response survey have to be as comparable as possible, even if NRSs are rarely carried out in the same mode as the main survey. When designing the NRS, careful attention has to be paid to the 'mode translation'. In our case, when we check the distribution differences and the correlation between the answers to the main survey and the NRS in the control group, we have found some significant shifts in the response patterns, meaning that the comparability of the main and NRS surveys can suffer from time/context or mode effects. In a few cases, we can correct for them, in particular if we have a measurement model. In order to improve the stability of the information, in the last NRS still in field, we introduced 3-item-batteries per concept whenever possible in order to construct latent variables. Further research is also needed to assess which differences are mode related, and could therefore be corrected by redesigning the questions also in the main survey, or by developing a specific battery of questions to be used for the NRS and introduced in the main survey. This last option would also allow for not having to repeat a NRS for every survey, if the set of questions proves to be stable predictors of participation over time and over the surveys.[3]

As mentioned earlier, the NRS can not only be used in order to identify possible biases but also for correcting biases through a weighting procedure. More research is needed to investigate the most appropriate way of performing the propensity score weighting (Matsuo et al, 2010; Alanya and Wolf, 2012) in particular taking into account that not all

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3 To disentangle mode from time effect, an idea could be to have an additional control group of respondents answering the NRS shortly after the main survey.

the non-respondents have given information. Inflation in the variance term is also a worry to consider when using such weighting schemes. More generally, we still don't know how the last part of the non-respondents differs and we have no information how far, or on which values, they are different from respondents.

Cost should not be the main concern, as such non-respondent surveys represent a small share of the overall budget, compared to their potential contribution to the overall quality of the survey. In Switzerland, an NRS as described above, addressed to all possible non-respondents and including a significant unconditional incentive, represents about 5-7% of the whole field budget. If the non-respondent sample is very large, a random subsample of non-respondents can be drawn.

Conclusion
Non-respondent surveys are a powerful tool to asses and to correct for non-response bias, as they can inform about a high proportion of all types of non-respondents on participation and survey relevant dimensions. The central challenges lie in the choice of the questions and their design. What we currently suggest is to include questions measuring social integration and participation, or, more generally the relation of a respondent to the others in the society. This could include dimensions about lifestyles but also opinion about, for example, immigrants or attitude towards surveys. Whenever possible, we have to use short batteries and include – if not available through the sample frame – age, sex and household composition. Particular attention has to be paid to avoid at least mode effects when designing the questions. Geographical information, such as urbanization and residential environment or even data linked to the address, should also be considered, for instance through the paradata or metadata, sample frame or any other source that can be legally used. And the integration of information coming from non-respondent surveys and other data about non-respondents should be further investigated.

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New and Emerging Methods – Call for Volunteers

If you're interested in contributing an article to the "New and Emerging Methods" section of a future edition of *The Survey Statistician*, please contact Mick Couper at mcouper@isr.umich.edu.
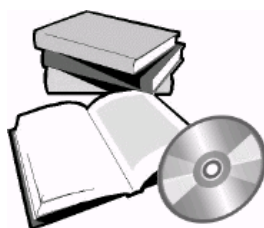
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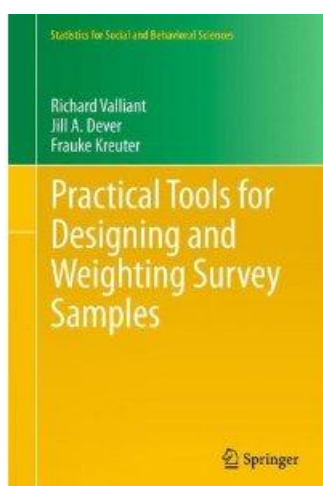
Practical Tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples
By Richard Valliant, Jill A. Dever, Frauke Kreuter

Book Review by Greg Griffiths

As the authors declare at the opening of the first chapter, this is a practical book. It is a book in which three experienced practitioners lay out the art and science of sample design. Their intent is to display and discuss an array of approaches and tools long used by practicing survey statisticians, illustrating how existing software can be used to solve survey problems and providing software when needed. A principal goal of the book is to give students (and practitioners) a taste of what is involved in the design of real world single-stage and multi-stage samples.

The intended audience is threefold:

- Students seeking exposure to applied sampling either through a second semester-long course or by way of supplementary reference,
- Survey statisticians searching for practical guidance; and
- Social scientists and other practitioners desiring insight into statistical thinking and steps taken to design, select and weight probability based surveys.

The book content is organised into four parts, the first three being accompanied by an outline of a project in which the techniques to be discussed will prove useful, discussion of relevant techniques and a description of one solution to the project issues. The four parts are:

1) Designing Single-Stage Surveys: encompassing sample size determination for a single stage design, power calculation, relevant mathematical programming techniques and tools for multi-objective optimisation, the impact of outcome rates on effective sample size;

2) Designing Multi-stage Surveys: encompassing the design of multi-stage samples, area sampling (including the use of composite size measures);

3) Survey Weights and Analysis: encompassing the calculation of base weights, adjustments for unknown eligibility and non-response, calibration and other uses of auxiliary data and variance estimation;

4) Other topics – encompassing discussion of Multi-phase designs as well as Process Control and Quality Measures.

Most chapters are accompanied by several exercises, so as to allow the reader to put the ideas presented and the tools provided into practice.

The Back matter of the book contains a notation glossary, a description of the datasets used for the projects and many of the examples throughout the book and which accompany the companion R package PracTools, a discussion of the R functions used in the book and answers to selected exercises, as well as a reference list and index.

The authors have taken pains throughout to ensure that the discussion is accompanied by useful examples and exercises at the end of most chapters (selected answers supplied) as well projects which supply both an introduction to the issues to be discussed an example of how the various techniques discussed might be applied. Examples are provided using and discussing application of a choice of R, SAS, Microsoft Excel with its Solver add-on, Stata and SUDAAN code, with the code used being downloadable from the books web site.

In the reviewers opinion the author's achieve their stated aim well. It is a pleasure to be guided by their expert hands. The issues addressed are well laid out, the discussions pertinent and informative and the code provided instructive and useful.

Throughout enough of the theory underlying the approaches is exposed so that the reader can apply the techniques discussed appropriately with awareness of the underlying assumptions. It is not however the purpose of the book to provide the detailed theoretical underpinnings and the book therefore provides a suitable accompaniment to more theoretically oriented volumes. Nor is the book purely a cook book of processes to be applied. The issue at hand and the underlying rational and assumptions of each procedure are explained and illustrated throughout.

Is the book suitable for each of the target audiences? An emphatic 'Yes!'. The discussion, projects and examples are all aimed at adding a layer of practical know-how to the reader's previous experience of sample design issues. The book may profitably be read from cover to cover, dipped into for guidance or use made of the exercises and accompanying background to practice application.

What does this book bring to the sample survey literature? The focus on the practical issues confronted in sample design is very welcome, as are the tools for addressing those issues that the books supplies. The book is seeded with good practical advice, including advice on estimating population parameters, the idiosyncrasies of particular software packages and documenting the sample design process. The prominence given to chapter on power calculations in sample size determination, the chapter on designing to achieve multiple objectives and the final chapter on process control and quality measures is particularly nice to see.

Is there anything missing? The focus of the book is on the sample design and weighting process, so there is naturally little if anything on tasks that a survey methodologist might be involved with either before or after - for example: deciding to run a sample instead of using other data sources, testing alternative collection strategies, analysing sample data and integrating results with other material, confidentialising tables or microdata. The authors acknowledge that they have decided not to cover other aspects a practitioner

may be called on to know – dealing with missing data (although the general issue of non-response weighting adjustment is covered well) and multiple frame sampling. Other omissions are selecting several samples (possibly over time) in a coordinated fashion (sample rotation and overlap control) and small domain estimation. A book can only be so long. Finally one slightly surprising omission is the treatment of anomalies (outliers) in estimation – cases where the data is correct but use of an existing weight may cause problems.

Compared to the usefulness of the material covered, these gaps are relatively minor and even before any potential "Advanced Practical tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples" from the same authors appears to accompany it, this volume is well worth adding to your bookshelf if you have the funds, or the bookshelf of your institutions library if you do not but your institution does.

We encourage reviews of books and software in the area of survey methods. This could include authors to submit reviews of individual books or software packages, broader reviews of groups of text and monographs in specific areas, or a selection of software with similar functions. If you are able to write a review for this section, please contact Natalie Shlomo (natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk).

AUSTRALIA

Paul Sutcliffe

Australian Bureau of Statistics offers facility for in depth analysis of the Australian labour market

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) released a new data source available to undertake in depth analysis the Australian labour market. The Longitudinal Labour Force Survey (LLFS) file provides details on the labour market participation and the transitions into and out of employment of Australians over a three year period, providing insights into how the labour market has changed over time.

This is the first time the ABS has released a data source that combines the results of 56 separate household surveys, arranged into a structure that allows for labour related data on people, families and households to be analysed over multiple time points. Over the 3 year period, information has been collected from over 150,000 households, resulting in over 1.8 million records.

The LLFS complements the large range of ABS labour, social and macro-economic outputs, and can be used to increase understanding of:
- the activities or factors that are relevant to labour market participation and transitions; and
- the socio-economic, demographic or household/family characteristics that are associated with these activities or factors.

This data source is useful for governments, researchers and analysts interesting in understanding the labour market over multiple time points.

The LLFS is made available as a Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) accessed through a unique virtual environment, the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL). Further information about the CURF and purchasing a licence to access the CURF can be found at the CURF Microdata Entry Page on the ABS website.

More details are in the publication Microdata: Longitudinal Labour Force, Australia, 2008-10 (cat. no. 6602.0) which is available from the ABS website - www.abs.gov.au.

BELGIUM

Luc Lebrun

An initiative on Quality Indicators by the Belgian Statistical Office

The quality of a statistic is an important concern. Formulating the key characteristics of quality is quite easy: relevant, exact, timely, clear, coherent, etc. Quantifying those quality dimensions is less easy.

Therefore, the Belgian Statistical Office has conceived a project on Quality Indicators for its products that has now largely been transposed into an operational instrument.

The principle is simple: give a quantitative appreciation on each dimension of the quality. The Code of Practices of the European Statistical System identifies the quality dimensions and describes quality indicators, without however providing an implementation procedure.

The realization was less simple. Indeed,
- on the one hand, the quality dimensions are not comparable (how to compare a bias with a lack of readability?) , and thus a relevant global indicator is all but obvious;
- on the other hand, quantifying something requires measurable information, and the possibilities are not identical in each domain.

The challenge was to build a SMART (specific, measurable, affordable or acceptable, realistic, time bounded) tool. Besides, the guidelines to build the tool were:
- an information, if possible relying on multiple criteria, on each dimension;
- an information able to guide decisions: action on the steps of the process used to produce a statistic;
- an objective information, not (or as little as possible) biased by the personal opinion of the producer; on the contrary the appreciation of the client is desirable;
- a "normalized" information, to avoid an implicit weighing.

The tool is at a first stage a set of about 20 indicators covering (almost) all quality dimensions, each producing a score between 0 – the worst possible situation – and 100 – the best one. As an example, on timeliness: a statistic made available immediately at the end of the reference period gets 100, a statistic never produced has 0 score.

The use of several indicators for each dimension contributes to the robustness of the system.

In the choice of the indicators, special attention is paid to statistics based on surveys, because of several accuracy related specific indicators, such as bias and variance.

Beyond the basic scores, the tool produces some level of aggregate scores, producing synthetic indicators, that provide information on the total quality of a statistic, on processes common to several statistics (such as data collection, dissemination policy, …), and finally on our statistical system as a whole.

In a first attempt, the exercise has focused on the quality indicators which are intrinsic to the data collection and statistics production method and which are stable. An extension to more volatile, statistical production process related quality indicators is being implemented.

Further information can be obtained from Luc Lebrun, Quality Manager, Belgian Statistical Office, luc.lebrun@economie.fgov.be.

CANADA

Pierre Lavallée

The Survey of Financial Security

The Survey of Financial Security (SFS) was conducted in 2012 to collect data on the assets, debts, and net worth of Canadians. This was the third occurrence of this survey since 1999. The sample size was increased from 9,000 dwellings in 2005 to 20,000 dwellings in 2012, which will allow for the production of provincial and national level estimates.

Similar to the first two occurrences, the 2012 SFS employed a dual frame sample design. An area sample ensuring complete coverage of the target population was supplemented with a list sample selected to improve the efficiency of the sample by increasing the number of high net worth households in the overall sample. One major improvement to the design resides in the change of methodology for the creation of the list frame. This leads to more efficient stratification and sample allocation. The 2012 SFS list frame is a subset of standardized residential addresses obtained from the 2009 personal income tax file. These addresses are optimally stratified based on the predicted net worth of their corresponding families and the sample is allocated between strata in order to optimize the design. As a result, 42% of the sample was allocated to the list frame in 2012 as compared to 9% in 1999 and 17% in 2005. Moreover, approximately 45% of the list frame sample was allocated to households in the highest quartile of predicted net worth.

Another major change is the move from pencil and paper interviewing to computer assisted personal interviewing for the 2012 survey. Data collection was completed at the end of 2012 with an approximate response rate of 68 percent. Data are currently being processed and results will be released in early 2014.

For more information, please contact Christian Nadeau (christian.nadeau@statcan.gc.ca).

Survey Methodology

December 2012 marked an important date for *Survey Methodology*, a journal published by Statistics Canada. The Volume 38 Number 2 issue was the last one released in printed form. Starting in 2013, Survey Methodology will be published in a free electronic-only version (PDF). A fully accessible HTML version of the journal will also be available. The papers will be encoded using MathML (Mathematical Markup Language), the industry standard adopted by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) as the approved way of expressing math on the web.

For more information, please contact Mike Hidiroglou (mike.hidiroglou@statcan.gc.ca) or Susie Fortier (susie.fortier@statcan.gc.ca).

COLOMBIA

Leonardo Trujillo

Statistical Quality Assurance Project – DANE, 2013.

The National Administrative Department of Statistics, commonly referred to as DANE (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, in Spanish) is the Colombian institute responsible for the planning, implementation, analysis and diffusion of the official statistics in Colombia. DANE is also in charge of carrying out the National census every five years. Since 2010, as one of its main new initiatives, a project for the evaluation and certification of all the governmental statistical operations has started according to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the United Nations in order to meet the needs of all sort of users by ensuring and promoting the credibility, reliability and transparency in the production of statistical information. The evaluation process is led by a Committee of Independent Experts (CIE) composed of academics, international experts and technical peers from different statistical institutes around the world considered as top and with a long trajectory on the issue of the statistical operations being evaluated. Since its inception, sixty six (66) statistical operations have been evaluated (10 in 2010; 20 in 2011 and 36 in 2012) and for 2013, it is expected to evaluate seventy (70) operations. The project aims to provide an evaluation mechanism that let to highlight aspects to improve, promote the application of good statistical practices and legitimizes the reported data and the transparency between users and the public. Some operations to be evaluated this year ranges from economic surveys, business censuses and administrative data. If you want to get more information about this project or you consider yourself as good candidate to be part of the CIE, you can contact Ana Zoraida Quintero (azquinterog@dane.gov.co), Hernando Trilleros (hatrillerosn@dane.gov.co) or Leonardo Trujillo (ltrujilloo@unal.edu.co).

XXIII International Symposium in Statistics, Bogota, Colombia, July 25th-27th, 2013

The Department of Statistics at the National University of Colombia is organizing the International Symposium in Statistics since 1990. Through the years, this event has allowed the bonding of the statistical community in different regions of Colombia and has counted with the cooperation of other universities. Sometimes the Symposium has focused on a single topic of interest, such as regression analysis, time series, sampling, design of experiments, multivariate analysis, Bayesian analysis, nonparametric statistics, Statistical Quality Control and Industrial Statistics. For the most recent events, the Symposium have spanned in more than one subject. In the 2013 version, the event is going to be held at the AR Hotel in the capital city of Bogota and some invited speakers include Agustin Maravall (Bank of Spain), Heleno Bolfarine (University of Sao Paulo), Jeff Wu (Georgia Tech), Jon Rao (Carleton University), Luigi Spezia (Biomathematics and Statistics Scotland) and Peter Green (University of Bristol). You can find more information about this event at http://www.simposioestadistica.unal.edu.co/ or with Luz Mery Gonzalez at lgonzalezg@unal.edu.co.

MAURITIUS

Mamode Hossen Gendoo

Census 2011 – Use of Scanning and Recognition Technology

Statistics Mauritius conducted the 18th census of the Republic of Mauritius in 2011 and opted for the first time to make use of scanning and recognition technology for data capture. The processing of the census questionnaires in this manner proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the census for which speed, accuracy, and security are paramount. The firm Urgence Informatique Europe (UIE) was hired for the data capture after an extensive evaluation that included rigorous trials on the pilot census questionnaires to test the scanner's accuracy, performance, security, data integrity, and reliability and integration capabilities. Both Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) and Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) were used. Where a simple answer is required, such as 'yes/no', OMR was used. More complex responses such as names and addresses were captured using ICR response areas. This mix of OMR and ICR technologies necessitated the use of questionnaires of specific quality in terms of paper and colour specifications as well as design. Also, the questionnaires had to be kept in good condition for optimal scanning and recognition. Specially designed carton boxes akin to pizza boxes were used to protect them from being wrinkled. Another important issue related to ensuring good handwriting and proper ways of filling in the questionnaires. For this reason, the census questionnaires were, unlike previous censuses, filled in by census enumerators who were given extensive training thereon.

After being completed on field, the questionnaires were returned to the office in the 'pizza boxes' and remained in the boxes as they were moved around the scanning area to ensure tracking. All the questionnaires were then guillotined to create stacks of loose-leaf pages which were scanned. Each Census questionnaire bore a unique barcode. The software reads data from the barcode and the image, performs verification checks, and submits any errors for manual review and correction by the operators using the Key from Image (KFI) technique. Data capture of the Population Census started in August 2011 and ended in November 2011, that is, a period of 4 months instead of 11 months for the previous census carried out in 2000. Data validation and coding were completed by February 2012 and the first results were released in June 2012, 6 months earlier than the 2000 census. Six tabulation census reports were then disseminated in October 2012. The experience of using Scanning and Recognition technology has been challenging for both the office and field operations but all the efforts put in paid off.

Source: Statistics Mauritius, Newsletter, Issue 14 – December 2011
Website: http://statsmauritius.gov.mu
Contact Persons:

Ms N. Gujadhur (Statistician – Census Unit)
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MYANMAR

2013 Myanmar Population and Housing Pilot Census

The last population census in Myanmar was conducted in 1983 which is now about 30 years old. Since then, the country has relied on data from administrative records, household base surveys and projections. It created a lot of debates on the current population estimates among statistics users and development partners especially during the last 10 years. Therefore, the country has envisioned 2014 Population and Housing Census (PHC) since early 2011 with the support of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Department of Population (DOP), the Ministry of Immigration and Population (MOIP), the focal department undertaking population and housing censuses in the past, has initiated the planning for a PHC to be conducted in April 2014.

The PHC will be done on "de facto" basis. The questionnaire was developed and discussed with data users (Government), donors, and civil society organizations and approved by the Census Commission. It will collect data on place of residence and dwelling structure together with access to various housing facility and ownership of durable goods, demographic characteristics, migration, education, labor force and employment, fertility and mortality (including MMR) and some information related to household members in abroad.

In order to test procedures and understanding of the various stake holders including the respondents, 2013 Myanmar Population and Housing Pilot Census was conducted with residents in some villages of selected 20 townships across the country representing a cross-section of Myanmar's diverse geographic and ethnic mix from 30 March to 10 April.

Further information about the PHC is available at the UNFPA Myanmar website http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/myanmar/2013/01/30/6184/housing_census_in_myanmar/ with respective contacts details.

SPAIN

Miguel Angel Martínez Vidal

A population census based on registers and a "10% survey" - methodological challenges and conclusions

In December 2012 was released the first results of the population and housing census in Spain. Data were collected between november 2011 and march 2012. These data were about population in different geographical areas and its basic characteristics: sex, age and country of birth and citizenship. In April 2013 new data has been disseminated regarding dwellings. It is expected that the dissemination of census results wiil be completed in the last quarter of 2013.

The population and housing census 2011 in Spain has followed a new approach. Instead of an exhaustive door-to-door enumeration of the population, it has been conceived as a combination of two elements: registers and survey. The overall cost of the census, 85 million euros, is 20% the one of a classical census. We can benefit from the existence of a Population Register of high quality in Spain. Taking this register as its

backbone, a *census file* was created using all the available administrative registers (tax collection agency, social security, vital statistics…). These registers were used to provide, for every person, a measure of *proof of residence.* But some 2.2% of the population remained as being of *doubtful residence* in the registers, because that there was no sufficient evidence in registers to count them. These people were grouped into homogeneous clusters (region, sex, age, citizenship…) and were counted in the census using weights (called *count factors*) obtained from the survey. This survey was actually the second element of the census. It consisted on a fieldwork operation including a classical building census, that enabled geo-referencing every building, and a sampling survey addressed to 10% of the population, in order not only to get those weights but also, and mainly, to provide characteristics of persons and dwellings. This "10% survey" was collected using a sequential multichannel method, thus promoting the Internet as first option (39% of questionnaires were collected through this channel). Eventually, the census, as a product, is the mixture of two components: a *weighted census file* containing around 47 million registers but only with a few variables for every person (those contained in the population register) and a file containing many variables, the ones collected in the questionnaires, but only for 4.2 million people. This system has similarities with censuses based in long and short forms. But providing consistency between detailed data coming from the survey and the main figures coming from the weighted census file has also proved to be a challenge. Some inconsistencies show up and consequently, more than ever, the dissemination and explanation to users becomes crucial.

For more information :

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UNITED KINGDOM

Peter Lynn

First results from the 2011 Population Census were released in July 2012 for England, Wales and Northern Ireland and in December 2012 for Scotland. A number of further releases on different topics have taken place throughout 2013. A popular innovation has been the publication of online interactive charts and maps: http://bit.ly/XN8fjK.

The ESRC National Centre for Research Methods commissioned a network to explore the issues associated with web survey methods for probability-based surveys of the general population. The network focused on three broad themes:
1. coverage and sampling,
2. participation and engagement,
3. measurement challenges.

The objective was to establish the range of possible ways in which web surveys could be used, what is known about the properties of these methods, and what further research is needed in order to inform decisions about how and when to use these methods in the UK. Two conferences were held, in February and June 2013, the papers from which are available online (http://www.natcen.ac.uk/genpopweb).

"Life Study" is the name of the latest British birth cohort study, which will collect data on more than 100,000 children (http://www.lifestudy.ac.uk). The sample will have two linked parts. In a small number of study areas, women will be sampled during pregnancy and invited to attend a centre where a range of tests, assessments and interviews will take place. Additionally, in-home interviews will be carried out with a nationally representative population sample of new mothers. Both parts of the sample will then be followed up regularly. Field work is scheduled to start during 2014. The study is coordinated by the University College London Institute of Child Health.

Understanding Society: the UK Household Panel Study runs an annual competition, open to all researchers, to propose experimental studies that can be mounted on its Innovation Panel (http://tinyurl.com/innpan-comp). Studies carried to date have addressed a wide range of topics including the measurement of satisfaction, consumption, identity and fertility intentions, as well as respondent incentives, dependent interviewing, data collection modes, and techniques for reducing item nonresponse. Most recently, first findings on the effects of introducing web interviewing in a sequential mixed-mode design have been published (http://tinyurl.com/goingonline).

USA

Howard Hogan

Launching Adaptive Design at the U.S. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census Bureau, in collaboration with our survey sponsors, is building and testing adaptive design capabilities for its surveys and censuses. Adaptive design is a strategy for proactively managing data collection in order to attack rising costs and falling response rates. Ongoing work at the Bureau includes constructing data resources that support the adaptive design strategy and testing "business rules" that use this information to dynamically manage cases during data collection.

The data resources under construction and evaluation include auxiliary frame information that permits tailoring contact attempts (e.g. alternative contact modes), interviewer observations of household characteristics related to response propensity and survey outcomes, measures of contact attempt outcomes, measures of effort and costs and estimates of key survey variables. Key indicators from these data are being developed for "dashboard" displays that survey managers can consult on a daily basis during data collection.

We are also examining, in simulation and field test, how the key indicators can be used to manage fieldwork efficiently. For example, collaborating with researchers at the National Center for Health Statistics, we are simulating different "business rules" – involving measures of field effort and survey estimate quality – for stopping data collection. In the National Survey of College Graduates, the Bureau and the National Science Foundation are collaborating on a mode switching experiment. This study involves using daily measures of response propensity and survey estimates to make decisions on the data collection mode (Web, CATI) for contacting open cases.

The capacities we are building and the research on their use will inform adaptive design efforts throughout the Bureau.

To learn more contact Peter Miller (peter.miller@census.gov).

Website on the future of survey research

The Institute for Research in the Social Sciences (IRiSS) at Stanford University is pleased to announce the launching of a website documenting two recent conferences on the future of survey research.

The conferences were organized by IRiSS at the request of the Advisory Committee of the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate of NSF (http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/advmembers.jsp), with the guidance of Directorate head Myron Gutmann.

The conferences were coordinated by Stanford PhD Candidate David Vannette and were designed by a subcommittee of the Advisory Committee, including Stanley Presser (University of Maryland), Kaye Husbands Fealing (University of Minnesota), Steven Ruggles (University of Minnesota, Janet Harkness (formerly of the University of Nebraska, Lincoln), and Jon Krosnick (chair, Stanford University).

The conferences are dedicated to the memory of Professor Harkness, who lost a long battle with cancer during the course of the committee's planning efforts.

The conferences had two purposes: (1) to summarize best practices in contemporary survey data collection and data analysis, and (2) to identify directions for future research to explore ways to improve survey methods.

The conference programs, biographies of the speakers, slides, and transcripts of the presentations re available at this website:
https://iriss.stanford.edu/content/future-survey-research-nsf

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

2013 Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM)

Date: 3 – 8 August 2013
Venue: Palais des congrès de Montréal, Montréal, QC, Canada
Homepage: http://amstat.org/meetings/jsm/2013/index.cfm

JSM (the Joint Statistical Meetings) is the largest gathering of statisticians held in North America. It is held jointly with these societies:

- American Statistical Association*
- Institute of Mathematical Statistics*
- International Biometric Society (ENAR and WNAR)*
- International Chinese Statistical Association
- International Indian Statistical Association
- International Society for Bayesian Analysis
- Korean International Statistical Society
- Statistical Society of Canada*

 (*indicates the founding societies of JSM)

Attended by more than 6,000 people, meeting activities include oral presentations, panel sessions, poster presentations, continuing education courses, an exhibit hall (with state-of-the-art statistical products and opportunities), career placement services, society and section business meetings, committee meetings, social activities and networking opportunities.

Comments and suggestions are welcome at meetings@amstat.org.

35th Annual Conference of the International Association for Time Use Research (IATUR)

Date: August 7 – 9, 2013
Venue: Centro Empresarial FIRJAN, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Homepage: http://eventos.ibge.gov.br/en/iatur2013

The International Association for Time Use Research (IATUR) and the Technical Committee for the Study of Gender and Time Use of the Brazilian federal government invite researchers, policymakers and all people with an interest in human daily activities and use of time to paticipate in the 35th Annual Conference of the Association, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, from August 7 to 9, 2013. The 35th Conference is a joint promotion of Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), Secretariat of Policies for Women - Presidency the Republic of Brazil (SPM), Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), and the Organization of United Nations Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and International Labour Organization (ILO).

Key Dates:

January 2 to April 1, 2013	Submission of abstracts
April 8, 2013	Deadline of notification of abstract acceptance
April 26, 2013	Deadline to apply for financial assistance
May 17 to August 1st, 2013	Registration period

For any inquiries about the IATUR 2013 Conference, please contact us at
iatur2013@spmulheres.gov.br.

The 59th World Statistics Congress

Date: 25 – 30 August, 2013
Venue: The Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), Hong Kong
Homepage: http://www.isi2013.hk/en/index.php

The 59th World Statistics Congress (WSC) will be held in Hong Kong during 25-30 August 2013. The meeting venue will be the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), which is a magnificent, multi-purpose venue located right in the heart of Hong Kong on the Victoria Harbour.

The 59th WSC provides a platform for the international statistical community to share and present the latest knowledge and innovation in statistics. The scientific programme encompasses a wide range of topics facilitating professional exchanges and sharing amongst experts and practitioners in various statistical spheres. Featuring the unique theme "Youth", a series of sessions will be organised on the "Theme Day" of the 59th WSC to address, from various statistical perspectives, topics surrounding the "Youth". Delegates are welcome to plan tailor-made events from a wide spectrum of activities including scientific programme, social programme, satellite meetings and short courses. Short courses will be run during 22 – 25 August and include the following:

- Analysis of Complex Sample Survey Data
- ISI Declaration of Professional Ethics – What does it Mean in Practice?
- Editing and Imputation of Survey Data
- Practical Tools for Designing and Weighting Survey Samples
- Business Survey Methods
- Actuarial and Statistical Aspects of Reinsurance
- Statistical Methods of Meta-Analysis
- esign of Experiments with Applications in Marketing and Service Operations
- Wavelet Methods for Environmental Time Series
- Heavy Tail Phenomena

For more information, please visit the homepage or contact wsc2013-enquiry@censtatd.gov.hk.

SAE 2013 – The First Asian ISI Satellite Meeting on Small Area Estimation (SAE)

Date: 1 – 4 September, 2013
Venue: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Barcelona, Spain
Homepage: http://eventia.upf.edu/sesm/ficha.en.html

Small Area official statistics are routinely used for a variety of purposes, including assessing economic well-being of a nation, making public policies, and allocating funds in various government programs. With the rapid development of survey methodology, different governmental agencies are now exploring ways of combining national survey data with administrative and census records to produce reliable small area statistics. The field of small area estimation research is quickly expanding to meet this demand, and is constantly tackling practical problems that are theoretically challenging.

The main purpose of the proposed meeting will be to assess the current state of development and usage of small area methodology. We hope that this meeting will serve as a bridge between mathematical statisticians and practitioners working on small area estimation in academia, private and government agencies. Although there have been a number of conferences on small area estimation in the recent past, they have been in Europe and North America, and have had a focus on practitioners in the developed world. This meeting in Bangkok will give researchers in developing south Asian countries an opportunity to learn about state-of-the-art small area estimation techniques from the experts in the field.

We plan to have nine invited plenary sessions. In addition, we will have one parallel special topics session to accommodate people who might be interested in presenting their work, but cannot be included in an invited session due to time limitations. We also plan to have a half-day training session on SAE immediately before the start of the meeting on September 1, 2013.

We look forward to seeing you in Bangkok!

Raymond Chambers, University of Wollongong, Australia (ray@uow.edu.au)

Partha Lahiri, University of Maryland, College Park, USA (plahiri@survey.umd.edu)
Co-chairs, Scientific Committee

Songkiat Sumetkijakan, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
Chair, Local Organizing Committee

RSS Annual Conference

Date: September 2 – 5, 2013
Venue: University of Northumbria, Newcastle, England
Homepage: http://www.rssconference.org.uk/

The 2013 Conference of the Royal Statistical Society will take place from 2-5 September at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle in North East England.

As usual the first day (Monday 2 September) will see a number of short courses and workshops take place with the welcome reception for the main conference scheduled for the evening.

The main conference programme will take place over three days starting on the morning of Tuesday 3 September and concluding in the late afternoon of Thursday 5 September.

The main conference will be preceded by a number of short courses and workshops on Monday 2 September with a welcome reception taking place in the evening at the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art

The conference programme will include 4 plenary sessions with speakers including Doug Altman, Sheila Bird and Sir Mark Walport, as well as more than 30 invited sessions featuring an international line-up of speakers and covering a broad range of topics.

Topic streams will include statistical methods & theory, environment & ecology, public sector & policy, and industry & commerce.

There will also be a stream of professional development workshops running through the conference including sessions on presenting skills, peer review and building an R package.

The conference will also include the Society's Annual Awards Ceremony at which the RSS medals and the awards for Statistical Excellence will be presented. The ceremony will take place on the early evening of Tuesday 3 September.

The conference dinner will take place at the Great North Museum on the evening of Wednesday 4 September.

For further information please contact Paul Gentry (p.gentry@rss.org.uk) at the RSS.

2013 International Conference on Survey Research Methodology

Date: September 4 – 6, 2013
Venue: Academia Sinica, Taipei, Taiwan
Homepage: http://survey.sinica.edu.tw/2013/html/index.php

The 2013 International Conference on Survey Research Methodology (ICSM) will be held on September 4-6 in Taipei, Taiwan. This conference is hosted by the Center for Survey Research (CSR), Research Center for Humanities and Social Sciences, Academia Sinica, which has provided the major domestic and international forum for current and fundamental issues in survey methodology since 1993.

The purpose of this conference is to bring together researchers from various fields to share knowledge and experience, as well as to stimulate new ideas for future research and development.

IARIW-IBGE Special Conference on "Income, Wealth and Well-being in Latin America", Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Date: September 11 – 14, 2013
Venue: Center for Information Documentation and Dissemination, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Homepage: http://eventos.ibge.gov.br/en/iariw

The International Conference "Income, Wealth and Wellbeing in Latin America" will be organized by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in collaboration with the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth (IARIW). The event will be held from September 11th to 14th, 2013, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The conference will convene scholars and researchers from private and public institutions, who may contribute with original works to the discussion of inequality (including inequality of education and opportunities), poverty, socioeconomic mobility, the "new" middle class and well-being in Latin America. The conference will also feature sessions about income redistribution, taxes and transfers and national income measurement.

For enquiries about the scientific programme:
info@iariw.org

For enquiries about the organization of the conference:
internacional@ibge.gov.br

3rd International Conference of the Priority Programme on Survey Methodology 'Survey Methods in Future Research'

Date: September 12 – 13, 2013
Venue: BITZ – Bremer Technologie- und Gründerzentren, Bremen, Germany
Homepage: http://www.survey-methodology.de/en/termine_en.html

How will survey research looks like in the future? Is the current state of the art of survey methodology and statistics already well prepared to cope with the demands of future survey research? What research questions should be addressed now to cope with expected future demands? The 3rd International Conference of the German Priority Programme on Survey Methodology (PPSM) conference calls for papers that shed light on these questions in perspective by discussing recent attempts at handling one or other of research questions currently involved in that broader frame of reference.

Invited presentations:

Jelke Bethlehem, Statistics Netherlands (NL)
Web panels for official statistics

Annelies Blom, Univerity of Mannheim (DE)
Recruiting a probability-based online panel: Lesson from the German Internet Panel

Lars Lyberg, Stockholm University (SE)
The total survey error perspective in multi-national and multi-cultural surveys

Willem Saris and **Melanie Revilla**, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona (ESP)
Estimating the quality of survey questions and its application on surveys using new data collection techniques

Ineke Stoop, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP (NL)
Representing the population: Do our response efforts help and what can we do?

Annette Jackle, **Peter Lynn**, **Jon Burton** and **Noah Uhrig**, University of Essex (GB)
Lessons from mixed-modes design experiments on the Understanding Society Innovation Panel

Registration:

Registration is possible between May 2nd and August 12th. The conference fee is 60 euros, including two coffee breaks, one lunch break with sandwiches and soups as well as fruits and drinks per day. In addition we offer you a special cultural program in the city of Bremen. Furthermore, a joint dinner on the first conference day in the city of Bremen can be booked by you. For 35 euros you will get a rich three-course menu with a variety of dishes.

IAOS Conference Da Nang, Vietnam

Date: October 8 – 10, 2014
Venue: Da Nang, Vietnam
Homepage: http://iaos2014.gso.gov.vn/

The conference will focus on how official statistics need to constantly adapt to meet the needs of a changing world.

Themes for the conference include:

- Keeping up with changing needs of users for easily accessible, relevant, reliable information
- Exploiting new technology, especially use of the Internet for data collection and dissemination
- Coping with shrinking budgets
- Dealing with changing expectations on access to detailed data while protecting respondents' confidentiality
- Collaborating with other sectors, including education, to improve communication with users
- Developing new sources of information, such as administrative records, for producing official statistics

The conference will be hosted by the General Statistics Office, Vietnam. For more information, please email iaos2014@gso.gov.vn.

Producing reliable estimates from imperfect frames

Call for Contributed Papers

Statistics Canada's 2013 International Methodology Symposium will take place at the Ottawa Convention Centre, located in the heart of downtown Ottawa, from **October 15th to 18th, 2013.**

The Symposium will be titled "**Producing reliable estimates from imperfect frames**". Members of the statistical community, such as those from private organizations, governments, or universities, are invited to attend, particularly if they have a special interest in methodological issues resulting from the use of imperfect frames.

The first day will consist of workshops, while the following days will consist of both plenary and parallel sessions covering a variety of topics. Additional research and results may be presented via poster sessions.

We are soliciting contributed papers examining **methodological issues resulting from the use of imperfect frames.** Topics may include:

- Frame Developments
- Multiple Frames
- Two-phase Designs
- Adaptive Designs
- Alternative Designs
- Indirect Sampling
- Telephone Surveys
- Web Surveys
- Hard to Reach Population Surveys

- Tracing Methods
- Use of Administrative Data
- Combined Data Sets
- Big Data
- Calibration and Related Estimation Methods
- Adjustments for Coverage Errors
- Adjustments for Classification Errors
- Small Domain Estimation

Your proposal must be submitted by e-mail to symposium2013@statcan.gc.ca by **March 20th, 2013.** It should include a 250-word abstract (in French or English) giving the content of the presentation, as well as its title and your full contact information.

We will contact you by **May 10th, 2013** to inform you whether or not your proposed communication has been accepted. In the case where it has been accepted, the final slides of your presentation will have to be submitted (in English or French) by **August 26th, 2013.** Proceedings from the conference will be published and disseminated to participants. Your final paper will need to be sent by **December 20th, 2013.**

Statistics Canada   Statistique Canada

Canada

Date: October 23 – 25, 2013
Venue: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Homepage: http://eventos.ibge.gov.br/en/icas2013.

VI International Conference on Agriculture Statistics (ICAS-VI)

The International Conference on Agricultural Statistics (ICAS) is organized every three years, starting from 1998, under the auspices of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) Committee on Agricultural Statistics. ICAS-VI will be hosted by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 23-25 October 2013, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conference theme will be Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development. Linking statistics with decision making, focusing on issues raised by the implementation of the Global Strategy.

The VI International Conference on Agriculture Statistics (ICAS-VI) will be at the service of these initiatives. It will be hosted by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 23-25 October 2013, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The conference theme will be Improving Statistics for Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture, and Rural Development. Linking statistics with decision making, focusing on issues raised by the implementation of the Global Strategy.

Before the Conference, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) will organize and conduct two-day training sessions for young statisticians from developing countries, and FAO will organize two parallel events: International Greenhouse Gas Data Workshop (for invited people only) and Deriving Food Security Indicators from Household Surveys using the ADePT Food Security Module. Country experiences (open to the public).

The Organizing Committee of ICAS-VI will be chaired by the IBGE, while the Scientific Program Committee will be co-chaired by the IBGE and the USDA.

Work session on statistical data confidentiality

Date: October 28 – 30, 2013
Venue: Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Canada
Homepage: http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2013.10.confidentiality.html

Information Notice No. 1
The meeting will be held at the Simon Goldberg Conference Centre in the R.H. Coats Building of Statistics Canada from 28 to 30 October 2013, starting at 9.30 a.m.

Purpose of the meeting
1. The main objectives of the meeting are to facilitate the exchange of experience and identify the best practices in dealing with technical issues related to statistical data confidentiality in national statistical offices. The meeting is primarily intended for experts from national and international statistical offices as well as invited academics dealing with statistical disclosure limitation. At the kind invitation of Statistics Canada, the meeting will be held from 28 to 30 October 2013 in Ottawa, Canada.

2. Statistical disclosure limitation is an important issue influencing public perception of official statistics. Statistical confidentiality and protection of respondents' privacy is included in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe adopted at its 1992 annual session.

Date: November 5 – 8, 2013

Venue: Universidade de Brasília, Brasília, Brazil

Homepage: http://www.esamp.unb.br/

A IV ESAMP, a ser realizada no período compreendido entre 05 a 08 de novembro de 2013, na Universidade de Brasília - Campus Darcy Ribeiro, DF, tem como principal objetivo oferecer uma oportunidade para congregar estatísticos, pesquisadores e profissionais de pesquisa social das universidades e de diversos órgãos produtores de informação visando discutir suas experiências à luz dos mais recentes desenvolvimentos metodológicos em planejamento amostral e análise de dados de levantamentos amostrais.

O evento também representa uma oportunidade única para os órgãos produtores de informações, quer na área governamental quer nas representações institucionais sediadas em Brasília. É uma oportunidade importante também para que os estudantes de graduação e pós-graduação em Estatística e áreas afins, que tenham especial interesse pelos métodos estatísticos para produção de pesquisas, possam compartilhar suas experiências e ter contato com os problemas enfrentados na prática pelos órgãos que realizam pesquisas e as suas possíveis soluções.

Como parte da IV ESAMP, será também realizado o 3o. Workshop Internacional sobre Pesquisas para Avaliação de Políticas Públicas, evento satélite da 4ª Escola de Amostragem e Metodologia de Pesquisa, que conta com o apoio do IASS - International Association of Survey Statisticians

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In its 4th edition, the Brazilian School on Sampling and Survey Methodology will happen at the Universidade de Brasília, from 5 to 8 of November, 2013, along with the third International Workshop on Surveys for Policy Evaluation. Both events bring together survey statisticians, researchers from both official statistics offices and universities, and students, with the aim of discussing the most recent methodological developments on survey sampling design and the analysis of complex survey data. More information can be found at www.esamp.unb.br.

Cristiano Ferraz

1st Southern European Conference on Survey Methodology (SESM) and VI Congreso de Metodología de Encuestas

1st Southern European Conference on Survey Methodology (SESM) and VI Congreso de Metodología de Encuestas

Date: December 12 – 14, 2013
Venue: Universitat Pompeu Fabra (UPF), Barcelona, Spain
Homepage: http://eventia.upf.edu/sesm/ficha.en.html

From December, 12 to December 14, 2013 the 1st SESM Conference and the VI Congreso de Metodología de Encuestas will be held in Barcelona (Spain). On this occasion, we invite you to submit proposals for panels on topics related to survey methodology and its applications.

The conference aims at bringing together national and foreign researchers and companies interested in sharing knowledge on up-to-date best practices in survey methodology and new scientific results, form bridges between the academic world and companies using and doing surveys, strengthen international cooperation and expertise transfers.

Given the international nature of the conference, sessions can be organized either in Spanish or in English.

Panel proposals are invited in any area of survey methodology, or in substantive applications of survey research. Topics of the conference include but are not restricted to:

- Measurement error
- Web surveys
- Collecting data trough social networks
- Mixed mode of data collection
- Sampling and sample design
- Sampling elusive populations
- Question testing and piloting
- Interviewer effects
- Questionnaire design
- Multilevel models
- Construction and evaluation of composite scores

- Election polling and public opinion surveys
- Small area estimation
- Causal inference
- Methods to analyse and prevent missing data
- Fieldwork
- Confidentiality and data access
- Social desirability bias
- Innovative ways of presenting results of statistical analyses
- Experimental and quasi experimental survey designs

Submissions should be sent via the conference website (http://eventia.upf.edu/congresos/ficha.en.html?cc=123&). Deadline for proposals submission is March 15, 2013. Notification will be given by April 5

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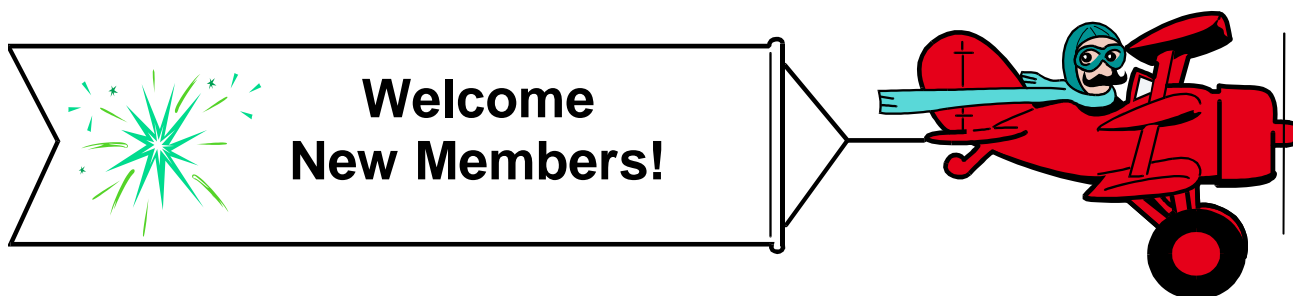T. Yan, J. Xu

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J. R. Schott

Welcome New Members!

We are very pleased to welcome the following new members and institutional members!

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Nigeria	Omotola	Dawodu
United States	Jill	Dever
Botswana	Vijai K.	Dwivedi
India	Showkat	Maqbool
France	Elisabeth	Morand
Nigeria	Olorunsola Emmanuel	Olowofeso
United States	Bhojnarine	Rambharat
Indonesia	Agnes Tuti	Rumiati
Nigeria	Aliyu	Usman
United Kingdom	Steve	Wisher
Canada	Wesley	Yung

Country	Department	Organisation
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	Mick P. Couper (USA)	mcouper@isr.umich.edu
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	Natalie Shlomo (UK)	natalie.shlomo@manchester.ac.uk
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2 International Organisations

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EUROSTAT

16 Bureaus of Statistics

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GERMANY –STATISTICHE BUNDESAMT
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KOREA, REPUBLIC OF – STATISTICS KOREA
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SWEDEN – STATISTISKA CENTRALBYRÅN

5 Universities, Research Centers, Private Statistics Firms

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USA – RESEARCH TRIANGLE INSTITUTE
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