

# Editorial

## *History in Statistics and Society*

Laura Cházaro<sup>1</sup>

This issue presents six articles, a historical document and a book review. On this occasion, the articles examine statistics and probability in historical perspective, but using an approach that has multiple dimensions, for each essay explores an epoch, a century, or a specific moment in the history of statistics. Of course, history does not begin and end with chronology, as these contributions clearly demonstrate, since they propose distinct historiographical strategies and commitments in their efforts to contextualize and give meaning to practices, institutions or individuals linked to the field of statistics. Moreover, the experiences and events analysed herein are examined from a global perspective. Though bounded by the national borders of Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, the authors never lose sight of the fact that the local presupposes a global world.

The issue opens with two articles that focus on the emergence of the field of probability, but using quite distinct methods and examples. The first, by Marcia Longen Zindel and entitled “Tomada De Decisão E Risco: A Contribuição Dos Matemáticos E Estatísticos” (“Risk and Decision-making: The Contribution of Mathematics and Statistics”), inquires into the genesis of calculations of risk while elucidating the ideas of probabilists, most of them European. Leticia Mayer Celis’ article, “Nuevas propuestas sobre el origen de las ideas de probabilidad y el probabilismo” (“New Proposals on the Origin of the Ideas of Probability and Probabilism”) also refers to the origins of the notions of probabilism and risk, but in her argument these concepts are based on, or emerge from, the dilemma of otherness, experience derived from her travels and encounters with other cultures. The global dimension is, for Mayer, a historiographic tool with which one can reveal the complexity of the concept of probability once it is placed in historical perspective.

The next two contributions discuss statistics as a tool or instrument of bureaucracies and the State. In “Da DGE até hoje, com o IBGE, uma sucessão em linha reta” (“From the DGE to Today’s IBGE: a Straight-line Succession”) and “Post Scriptum a La fábrica de las cifras oficiales del Estado argentino (1869-1947)” (“Postscript to *The Factory of Official Figures*

<sup>1</sup> Departamento de Investigaciones Educativas, CINVESTAV-IPN.

of the Argentine State”), Nelson de Castro Senra and Hernán González Bollo, respectively, present two visions of the same history: the emergence of bureaus and bureaucracies. Both authors illustrate the richness of this topic, extending their explorations published in previous issues of *Statistics and Society*.

The section *Biographical Profiles* publishes “El inicio de una tradición estadística: José Martínez Lejarza (1785-1824), en la configuración del México independiente” (“The Beginning of a Statistical Tradition: José Martínez Lejarza (1785-1824) in the Configuration of Independent Mexico,”) by Ana María Medeles Hernández, which is complemented by the *Historical Documents* section that presents an extract from the book *Análisis estadístico de la Provincia de Michoacán en 1822* (*Statistical Analysis of the Province of Michoacán in 1822*), written by Martínez Lejarza himself. This biography and its accompanying document clarify certain characteristics of the population statistics generated towards the end of the colonial regime.

The *Book Review* section closes this issue with Cecilia T. Lanata Briones’ commentary on the aforementioned book by González Bollo, *La fábrica de las cifras oficiales del Estado argentino (1869-1947)* (*The Factory of Official Figures of the Argentine State*), which includes a *Postscript* by the author.

Finally, we wish to inform readers that this issue brings to an end the period of Ana Medeles and I as editors of *Statistics and Society*. *It was an experience that gave us a grand opportunity filled with learning experiences and, at times, difficulties and challenges. Though the Asociación de las Américas en la historia de las estadísticas y cálculo de probabilidades does not belong to the formal structure of any university or research centre. The five issues published (the last two under our auspices) were made possible by the technological resources offered by the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, thanks to the generous support of Natalia de Lacerda Gil. This Asociación, like similar initiatives, leads a fragile life, but we have succeeded in sustaining it more-or-less consistently through conviction and a commitment to carry forward its achievements. We live in a world governed increasingly by institutions that evaluate provable products, one ruled by bureaucratic and administrative logics. But we persevere and now pass the baton to colleagues who, like ourselves, are committed to advancing the study of statistics in the confluence of history, sociology, cartography and demography. As the articles published to date in Statistics and Society demonstrate, statistical knowledge and practice have marked our past, but they will also define the future of the political, social and economic life of contemporary societies.*

**Journal Statistics and Society/ Estadística y Sociedad/Estadística e Sociedade/  
Statistique et Société**

No. 5, November 2018.

Editor

**Laura Cházaro** Cinvestav-IPN.

Co-editor

**Ana Medeles**, UdeG, México.

Associate editors

**Leticia Mayer Celis**, IIMAS, UNAM, México

**Claudia Daniel**, UBA-IDES-CONICET, Argentina

**Natália de Lacerda Gil**, UFRGS, Brasil

Editorial board

**Herberth Santos**, Assembléia Legislativa do Estado de Goiás, Brasil

**Jean-Guy Prévost**, UQAM, Canadá

**Fernanda Olmos**, UNLU/UNTREF, Argentina

**Jean-Pierre Beaud**, UQAM, Canadá

**Hernán González Bollo**, IEHS-IGEHCS-UNICEN/CONICET, Tandil, Argentina.

**Hernán Otero**, IEHS, UNICEN, Argentina

**Flavio Coelho Edler**, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz, Brasil

**Renato Sérgio de Lima**, Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, Brasil

**Maria Angélica Pedra Minhoto**, Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brasil

**Tarcísio Rodrigues Botelho**, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brasil

**Alexandre de Paiva Rio Camargo**, Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Políticos (Iesp)/ Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (Uerj), Brasil

Graphic design and layout

**Octavio Gómez Hernández**

**Imagen de portada:** "Censadores domiciliarios tomando nota" (Negativo de película de nitrato: 12.7cm x 17.8cm) México, D.F. ca. 1930, Fototeca Nacional (SINAFO) Secretaria de Cultura, INAH, México, Fondo Archivo Casasola, número de inventario 160118. Reproducción autorizada por el Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

**Journal of Statistics and Society/ Estadística y Sociedad/Estatística e Sociedade/  
Statistique et Société**

**Revista de la Asociación de las Américas para una Historia Estadística del cálculo y las  
probabilidades**

Departamento de Investigaciones Educativas, Centro de Investigación y de Estudios  
Avanzados del Instituto Politécnico Nacional / Calzada de los Tenorios 235, Granjas Coapa,  
C.P. 14330. Ciudad de México.

Contato: [chazaro@cinvestav.mx](mailto:chazaro@cinvestav.mx) | Site: <http://seer.ufrgs.br/estatisticaesociedade>