IAOS Special Meeting

“NSOs Professional Independence: Threats and Responses”

Tuesday 18 September 2018

Discussion: The Role of the International Statistical Community.

Moderator: Hermann Habermann
Rapporteur: Hallgrímur Snorrason
• If an office is part of the government, then, in what sense can it be independent?

• To what extent can the formulation of the budget of the office, the content of surveys, and say professional decisions on the use of adaptive survey design be independent?

• Are there parallels and contrasts between the operations of Central Banks?

• What are reasonable remedies for attacks on independence? Are they likely to be successful?

• How important are laws to protect and strengthen national statistical offices?
The role of international agencies and NGO’s in protecting independence.

- What is the effect of the Fundamental Principles on independence?
- Does there need to be a more active presence of international agencies in reviewing the independence of national statistical offices?
- Independence, e.g. more frequent reviews of national statistical offices with respect to their independence?
- Should there be reviews of the offices adherence to fundamental principles?
- Given that country adherence to international standards and norms are generally voluntary (with the possible exception of the IMF and Eurostat) what are the limits of international reviews?
- Are there conflicts with national sovereignty? What have we learned about the effectiveness of international agency participation in recent cases?
- Can non-governmental organizations such as the ISI, IAOS, ASA, and the Royal Society have a greater impact? How can this be accomplished?
Issues on social media can become viral in a matter of hours and have significant impact on the policies of governments.

Is social media a beneficial tool for the defense of a statistical office, is it a threat or both?

Are there ways to maximize the benefits and minimize the threats?

How does one deal with false statements that can become viral almost immediately?

How can social media galvanize support for both official statistics and those who have undertaken to lead those agencies?

Are there lessons that can be learned from Argentina and Greece with respect to the impact of social media?