

PREFACE: SPECIAL ISSUE ON SURVEY RESEARCH ON ASIA, AFRICA, LATIN AMERICA, THE CARIBBEAN, AND OCEANIA

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We introduce the *Special Issues on Survey Research on Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania*, which will comprise two “free to read” volumes: one in 2025 and another in 2026. The articles in this first volume showcase applications from Israel, Brazil, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, and Australia. Topics include empirical likelihood approaches for inference under nonignorable sampling and nonresponse; quarterly poverty estimation using survey and administrative data; small area estimation of child trafficking prevalence; parameters for estimating sample sizes in vaccination coverage cluster surveys (VCSs); and evaluation of bias in nonprobability panels for social research. Together, these contributions illustrate the breadth of survey methodology’s impact, and we hope these issues will serve as a catalyst for future research, knowledge sharing, and international collaboration.

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Statement of Significance

These special issues showcase survey research focused on Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania. Together, these regions account for approximately 85 percent of the world's population and encompass extraordinary linguistic and sociocultural diversity. This diversity generates unique methodological challenges, stimulates innovative scientific contributions, and offers impactful applications across a wide range of domains. Survey research—and, by extension, the field of statistics—stands to benefit from greater engagement with the ideas and practices developed in these contexts.

The 2025 and 2026 special issues of JSSAM celebrate the importance of international contributions to scientific inquiry—specifically, to survey research—by focusing on regions that have historically received less attention in leading statistical journals: Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania. Together, these regions account for approximately 85 percent of the world's population and encompass extraordinary linguistic and sociocultural diversity. This diversity generates unique methodological challenges, stimulates innovative scientific contributions, and offers impactful applications across a wide range of domains. Survey research—and by extension the field of statistics—stands to benefit from greater engagement with the ideas and practices developed in these contexts.

Innovation, knowledge exchange, and capacity building in survey research in these regions are more vital than ever. The demand for accurate, timely, and detailed survey data is growing rapidly, even as many countries face challenges, such as declining response rates and reductions in funding for large-scale survey programs. This includes the recent defunding of the Demographic and Health Surveys, which have long provided critical health data for developing countries. At the same time, emerging data sources such as satellite imagery and nonprobability samples offer potential avenues to help address these challenges, but they also raise new statistical and methodological questions. The growing international emphasis on modeling techniques, as illustrated by the United Nations' recent efforts to strengthen capacity in small area estimation (SAE) in various countries, underscores the need for continued methodological innovation. Notably, many of the papers submitted to this special issue focused on SAE and other modeling approaches—a reflection of the strong global interest in these topics, even if this set of papers is, of course, not a probability sample.

The creation of these special issues was itself a testament to the value of international collaboration and outreach. The Guest Editors represented diverse regions—including Latin America, Africa, and Asia—and the call for papers was disseminated widely, generating remarkable enthusiasm. Key international organizations helped circulate the announcement, including the American Statistical Association's (ASA's) Committee on International Relations in Statistics, multiple groups within the United Nations, and the International Association of Survey Statisticians, among others. The announcement also was sent to ASA's Survey Research Methods Section and American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) networks and was shared extensively through the Guest Editors' own international connections. This broad dissemination yielded 42 submissions from across the globe. To ensure timely and high-quality reviews, the editorial team expanded from five to six Guest Editors, and the special issue was divided into two volumes—one appearing as 2025 Issue 5 and the second as 2026 Issue 1.

These issues highlight the vital role of journals in fostering scientific exchange across borders. Authors benefited from constructive feedback and guidance from international experts, including in specialized topics where local expertise may be limited. This exchange not only strengthened the individual papers but also contributed to the broader goal of building global capacity in survey methodology.

The articles in this first volume showcase diverse applications from Israel, Brazil, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, and Australia. Topics include empirical likelihood approaches for inference under nonignorable sampling and nonresponse; quarterly poverty estimation using survey and administrative data; small area estimation of child trafficking prevalence; parameters for estimating sample sizes in vaccination coverage cluster surveys (VCSs); and evaluation of bias in nonprobability panels for social research. Together, these contributions illustrate the breadth of survey methodology's impact, from informing public health policy to advancing human rights, poverty measurement, and robust statistical practice.

The second volume will broaden the scope further, featuring work from additional countries and addressing a wide range of survey and methodological challenges. While this first volume is more heavily focused on survey statistics research, the second volume will have a larger variety of papers on methods. Despite the progress documented in these two volumes, many important topics remain to be studied, including further work on data integration and the use of emerging data sources, sampling for hard-to-reach populations, challenges from data linkages, and expanding methodologies and assessments for the use of non-probability samples.

Interdisciplinary and intercultural collaborations are essential in today's interconnected world, as are clear communication and transparency in research. It was important to the Guest Editors that these special issues be "free to read," ensuring access for a global audience. We hope these issues not only provide visibility to important applications and innovations from Asia,

Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania but also serve as a catalyst for future research, knowledge sharing, and international collaboration in survey statistics and methodology.

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