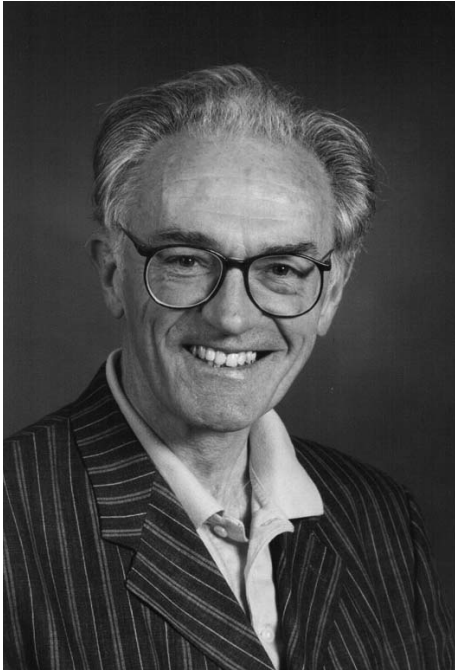


## Peter Townsend (1928-2009)



ESDS is saddened to learn of the recent death of Peter Townsend.

Peter Townsend's career was defined by contributions to the development of sociology as an academic discipline and active commitment to tackling inequality. These strands entwined in a unique manner and both aspects of Peter Townsend's work are represented via the collections of ESDS Qualidata.

As an activist, he founded the Disability Alliance and participated in establishing the Child Poverty Action Group. ESDS Qualidata holds papers from Townsend's involvement with both organisations - *Papers of the Disability Alliance, 1973-1998* and *Papers of the Child Poverty Action Group, 1965-1998* - providing insight into establishing and running organisations, developing policy positions and courses of political activism. As a sociologist, Townsend passed through the Institute of Community Studies before becoming founding Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Essex. He is especially

remembered for the creation of, and research on, four classic studies.

The first of these studies, *The Family Life of Old People, 1865-1955*, drew on the same Bethnal Green society as Young and Willmott's *Family and Kinship in East London: Bethnal Green Survey, 1954-1955; Subjects*, to illustrate the role of kinship networks and extended family in maintaining community.

In the late 1950s, Townsend conducted a study of social change around the Katherine Buildings in Stepney. Established as a working-class tenement, the buildings provided an early case study of poverty thanks to Beatrice Webb, Octavia Hill and Ella Pyecroft detailing patterns of employment and kinship. Townsend took their original notes to interview a cross-section of the then tenants, some of whom were descendants of the original inhabitants to produce *Katharine Buildings, 1885-1962*, a study of social change over 70 years.

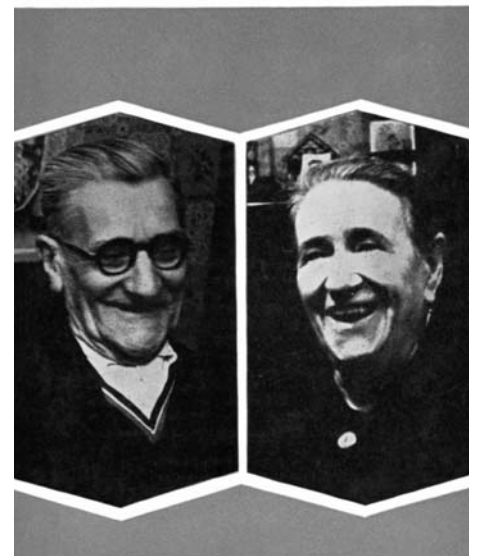
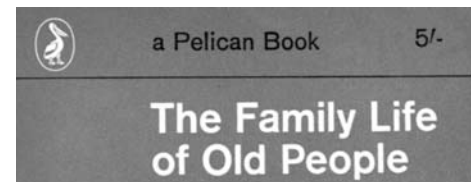
By the late 1960s Townsend's work had moved from qualitative to large-scale survey data. This culminated in the immense *Poverty in the United Kingdom: a Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living, 1967-1969*. In a nationwide survey of some 6,000 individuals, Townsend introduced the concept of relative deprivation to expand the poverty debate beyond income into a denial of social and environmental resources.

Townsend's collections continue to attract interest. *The Last Refuge, 1958-1959*, the fourth of Townsend's classic studies, looked at elderly life, focusing on institutional care through interviewing staff, residents, and documenting conditions in institutions and homes for the aged. In 2005 Julia Johnson and Sheena Rolph took Townsend's data as an inspiration and source for updating the documenting and analysis of contemporary provisions of residential care in their study *'The Last Refuge' Revisited*.

Peter Townsend was without doubt a pioneer. It is therefore apt that his work and the in-depth autobiographical interview with him launches ESDS Qualidata's pioneers web site. Pioneers of Qualitative Research introduces, and will over time provide access to, a series of interviews conducted by the oral historian Paul Thompson with over twenty pioneering social researchers. These interviews and the other sections of the web site provide insight into the lives, intellectual development, major influences and research projects of a set of key social researchers from the 1960s to the 1980s.

An early supporter of ESDS Qualidata, Peter Townsend was invaluable in establishing a qualitative data archive. It is another contribution, among so many, that makes his loss such a sad event.

[www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/pioneers/townsend/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/pioneers/townsend/) ■



## Protection of ESDS resources

ESDS resources are now protected by a single user authentication process called Federated Access Management (shibboleth), which requires users to have a username and password provided by an institution which is a member of the UK Access Management Federation (UK federation). In most cases this will be a UK academic institution and the user will authenticate with their institutional login credentials.

Using these credentials allows the ESDS to gather two attributes from the institution which confirm the user's identity and status with that institution. The level of access to resources is controlled in this way.

This streamlining of the ESDS authentication process has a number of implications for users. Those previously accessing resources by any other authentication method, such as Athens, may find access unavailable or changed.

However, as many UK academic organisations will be continuing to use Athens as their agent for access via the UK federation, such cases will be rare. If a user cannot use credentials issued by their own institution, the UK Data Archive can provide assistance. The UK Data Archive is a member of the UK federation and is able to provide usernames and passwords which can be used to register for and access the majority of ESDS data resources.

Users who have previously registered with an Athens account, but have switched to Federated Access - through their own institution or the UK Data Archive - should be able to match their new credentials with their existing record by providing some key personal information on first accessing ESDS with their new credentials.

Application form: [www.data-archive.ac.uk/aandp/access/online\\_form.aspx](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/aandp/access/online_form.aspx) ●

## Release of UN Comtrade database

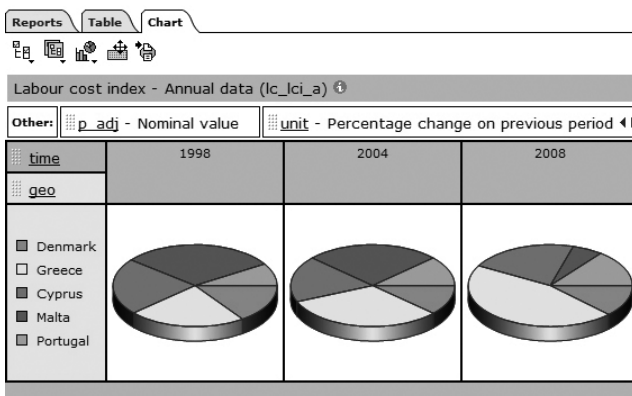
ESDS International released access to the United Nations' Commodity Trade Statistics Database (UN Comtrade) in September 2009. This extensive database contains over 1.1 billion items of information and is considered to be the most comprehensive trade database available. It contains time series data from over 140 reporter countries, with series starting from 1962.

Topics covered by this vast commodities database include food and live animals, beverages and tobacco, crude materials, mineral fuels, chemicals, animal and vegetable oils, machinery and transport equipment. All commodity values in the database are converted from national currency into US dollars.

Unlike the other macro datasets in the ESDS International portfolio, access to Comtrade is via the UN's own interface rather than Beyond 20/20. The UN interface provides several different methods for querying data, including the Express Selection feature which contains a wide range of options and is easy to use. ESDS International provides software, user guides and support for UN Comtrade.

[www.esds.ac.uk/international/support/user\\_guides/un/uncomtrade.asp](http://www.esds.ac.uk/international/support/user_guides/un/uncomtrade.asp) ●

## Upgrade to Beyond 20/20 software for international macrodata



The macro datasets provided by ESDS International are delivered using Beyond 20/20 software. To coincide with the new academic year, this software is being upgraded from version 7.3 to version 8.0 to include a more user-friendly interface and some useful new features.

The new version is icon based rather than using an actions menu. The icons allow users to access all the same features as the actions menu, in addition to some new ones. There are separate 'Table' and 'Chart' tabs to enable users to switch easily

between viewing the data in tabular or chart form and on each tab the icons allow you to select further options for saving, formatting or printing data. Users can also now move from one dataset to another using the 'Direct links to macro data' drop down box without needing to leave the Beyond 20/20 interface.

Another useful new feature of the software is the profiling function. Profiles allow search criteria to be saved for later use when returning to the database. Selections are saved in the dimensions individually and refer to the particular database they are saved within. For example, several countries could be saved or a range of years as a profile. The next time logging in to that database, select the profile icon, choose the profile previously saved and data matching that criteria will be displayed.

The additional features in the new version of Beyond 20/20 will enable users to access the data required more quickly and easily. ●



Photo by: Magalie L'Abbé, Creative Commons, Flickr

# Crime theme for ESDS



In 2008, ESDS launched its new thematic pages, enabling researchers and scholars to quickly find what data-related resources are on offer at ESDS on a particular topic or theme. Last year we launched the theme of health and health behaviour, which received some excellent feedback, particularly from new users who found the vast range of materials available on the ESDS web site to be somewhat daunting.

This year we are launching the second theme: crime and social control. Crime encompasses a wide range of issues that lie within the remit of several academic disciplines, including sociology, psychology, law and economics. As a theme, crime may cover various topics, ranging from contemporary concerns over youth gangs and anti-social behaviour, through 'white collar' and corporate crime - including crimes against the environment - to serious violence. Crime-related data held by ESDS include not only national crime surveys (which themselves cover diverse issues such as identity theft and alcohol-related disorder in the night-time economy), but also

illegal drug use, workers in the criminal justice system, football hooliganism, and community policing in Africa.

ESDS thematic crime pages contain case studies, pointers to key data sources, ready-made searches demonstrating how to find crime-related data, and web-based videos to showcase ESDS's online data exploration tools. The ESDS resources section contains overview and work-through guides and presentations. The presentations are from

workshops organised by ESDS where expert speakers talk about data they have created or re-use of data.

The web-based videos (using the software Demobuilder) demonstrate how researchers can find data and access both survey and qualitative data, conduct simple online tabulations and graphs using ESDS's suite of online data exploration tools.

[www.esds.ac.uk/themes/crime](http://www.esds.ac.uk/themes/crime)



## Television news cultures before and after the Iraq War

One of the defining political episodes of this decade is sure to be the Iraq War. A new study released by ESDS Qualidata explores the changing relationships between government and the public through the media before and after the conflict.

*Shifting Securities: Television News Cultures Before and After the Iraq War, 2003-2005*, deposited by Marie Gillespie of the Open University, seeks to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of an increasingly mediated democracy, specifically, examining how changing practices of news production in an increasingly competitive transnational news environment affect the quality of political journalism and judgements about the legitimacy, credibility, ethics and salience of 'security' policy.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted in 175 interviews and focus

groups with news audiences and citizens living in socially and culturally diverse milieus across the British Isles and New York, USA, to assess shifting senses of social and national security in relation to specific events, such as the London bombings of 7 July 2005. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were also undertaken with news makers and producers, government, military and security policymakers, and security experts, who were interviewed about the mediation of those events, addressing issues raised in the audience research.

[www.esds.ac.uk/findingdata/sndescription.asp?sn=6126](http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingdata/sndescription.asp?sn=6126)

# Analysing complex surveys

In July, ESDS Government held an introductory workshop on analysing complex sample design in ESDS Government supported datasets.

Standard statistical software typically treats data as simple random samples. A large proportion of Government surveys however employ complex sample design features such as stratification and clustering. Rather than treating such data as simple random samples, techniques or approaches to analysis are required that take into account design features. Ignoring clustering in a survey, for example, might lead to an underestimation of standard errors or confidence intervals, potentially leading to incorrect inferences regarding the statistical significance of findings.

An introductory guide will be released providing an overview of the complex design features of ESDS Government supported datasets. Grounding is also given in elementary concepts in complex sample design and the analysis of survey data using Stata, drawing practical examples from the Health Survey for England.

One issue highlighted in the guide is that important variables such as primary sampling unit (PSU) are rarely included in data deposits. Where such variables provide information on geography, there are perceived disclosure risks associated with adding finer grain geography to datasets. Data depositors will take these disclosure risks into account when deciding what variables to include or exclude. However, some ESDS Government supported datasets, such as the Health Survey for England and British Social Attitudes Survey, include anonymised versions of PSU variables that do not provide any extra direct information on geography.

In recent years, the capability of software such as Stata and SPSS to handle complex sample design has grown considerably. In tandem, data users are more knowledgeable about analytical issues surrounding such design, and request complex sample design information to be included in datasets.

[www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/past.shtml#csd](http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/past.shtml#csd) ●



## ESDS under review

The ESDS will have reached the halfway point of its current five year ESRC/JISC award by March 2010, and is therefore due for a mid-term review (MTR) to assess its effectiveness and to inform decisions about its longer term future. At the time of going to press the precise timetable for the review had still to be finalised, although the proposed date of submission of the main

report to the review panel is 31 March 2010. As part of the process it is critically important that users' views on the service, current and future, are noted and addressed; thus all users are invited to send comments and suggestions to ESDS. The panel's final report will be considered by the Research Resources Board of the ESRC in October 2010. Kevin Schürer, Director of ESDS, says that the MTR "is an important opportunity for ESDS to take stock and plan for the future of data provision ahead". ●

## Forthcoming events

- 1 October 2009:** Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE): one-day introductory workshop, City University, London
- 6 October 2009:** Survive or Prosper? A Workshop on Directing Research Centres, The British Academy, London
- 6 October 2009:** Introduction to government survey data: focus on crime, University of Lancaster
- 8-14 October 2009:** 5-day intensive training in Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM), Narrative Interview and Interpretation, Muswell Hill, London
- 12-13 October 2009:** 7th ESSTrain - Socio-Demographic Background Variables for Cross-National Comparative Survey Research in Europe, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 13 October 2009:** Introductory workshop to MCS3, Institute of Education, London
- 3 November 2009:** Data management for ESRC Research Centres and Programmes, Centre Point, London
- 11-13 November 2009:** NCRM Autumn School: Hybrid and Cross-over Methods in Social Research, Southampton
- 18 November 2009:** ESDS Government Research Conference: Crime, Safety and Community, British Academy, London
- 30 November 2009:** ESDS International Annual Conference, Institute of Materials, London
- 2 December 2009:** Managing and sharing research data: focus on consent, confidentiality and disclosure, London
- 2-4 December 2009:** 5th International Digital Curation Conference: Moving to Multi-Scale Science: Managing Complexity and Diversity, Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London
- 15 December 2009:** Labour Force Survey user meeting, Royal Statistical Society, London
- 20 January 2010:** Timescapes Conference: the Craft of Qualitative Longitudinal Research, Cardiff School of Social Sciences, Glamorgan Building
- 11-17 March 2010:** 5-day intensive training in Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM), Narrative Interview and Interpretation, Muswell Hill, London
- 12-20 March 2010:** ESRC Festival of Social Science 2010, various venues ●

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