

Consuming research!

The ESDS Government Annual Conference, held in November 2007 at the British Academy London, focused on the topic of consumption.

The one-day conference demonstrated the importance of consumption from a policy perspective by showcasing recent research using ESDS Government datasets.

Speakers from a range of organisations explored issues around food, the environment, the lifecourse and cultural consumption. Nicola Shelton and Moushumi Chaudhury addressed inequalities in unhealthy eating in Scotland, finding that those who are younger, in manual jobs or in deprived areas have worse diets than others, while education is associated with better diet. Alan Warde drew on time use data to explore eating as a practice.

In the environment session, Joyce Dargay explored the way in which land use impacts on car ownership and use. David Fell reported on work undertaken for Defra which looked at the future for waste under

different lifestyle scenarios – the research suggested that a bottom-up approach to waste management was most likely to result in sustainability.

Two papers, drawing on the Family Expenditure Survey, looked at consumption at opposite ends of the lifecycle. Lisa Farrell showed that children's expenditure was non-trivial and related to that of their parents, while Paul Higgs demonstrated that households headed by a retired person have increased consumption of household goods, but was dependent upon cohort and income.

David Wright completed the day by discussing a new dataset on cultural capital which allows analysts to cluster tastes by preferences – demonstrating that although tastes have patterns they are not readily simplified to high or low taste.

Slides from the research conference and summaries of the papers are available online. A guide to using ESDS Government data for analysing consumption is in production at the time of writing.

www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/past.shtml ■



Season's Greetings

ESDS has had a productive year with staff busy working on acquiring data and supporting users as well as backroom development in preservation and data delivery systems.

In the year August 2006 – July 2007, ESDS:

- acquired 392 new datasets and 93 new editions increasing the number of datasets in the Data Catalogue to over 5700
- registered 22,485 new users making a total of 47,635 registered users

- and trained over 300 people at 24 workshops

ESDS thanks you for your support in 2007 and will continue to be proactive in its outreach mission and responsive to requests for joint working and partnerships across all services and skills in the coming year.

ESDS would be pleased to hear from anyone wishing to collaborate with workshops, training or teaching materials. ■

New thematic web pages for ESDS

ESDS has been busy planning thematic pages for the ESDS web site. ESDS is currently broken down into a number of data-related services – government, longitudinal, qualitative and international, but this is not always an obvious starting point for a researcher. Many researchers typically position themselves within a substantive theme: 'I am a Health researcher' or 'I work on the environment' and so on. The aim of the new entry points is therefore for a user coming to ESDS to say 'show me everything you have on health' and will enable a broader approach to be taken to finding data and data resources.

The themes selected have taken into account existing themes used by the ESRC, Question Bank, social science departments and UKDA subject categories. Crime and social order; work and labour market; health

and lifestyle; demography and migration; environment and energy; and education and training are just some of the themes under review.

The topic-specific pages will provide an overview and key entry points to large and complex resources including:

- datasets – both held at ESDS and elsewhere
- enhanced data and researcher-oriented products
- user guides on datasets, methods, and software
- external resources – centres of expertise
- events – workshop and seminar presentations
- publications – depositor and user, user profiles and case studies



- learning and teaching datasets and materials

The aim is for a selection of the themes to go live by March 2008. Updating the content of themes can be an arduous task, but the plan is to review them on a six-monthly basis. ●

International news

World Economic Outlook data released

ESDS International is pleased to announce the release of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook database for students, researchers and staff at UK higher and further education institutions.

The database contains selected macroeconomic data series from the statistical appendix of the World Economic Outlook report, which presents the IMF staff's analysis and projections of economic developments at the global level, in major country groups and in many individual countries. It can be used to find data on national accounts, inflation, unemployment rates, balance of payments, fiscal indicators, trade for countries and country groups (aggregates), and commodity prices whose data are reported by the IMF.

The IMF WEO data can be accessed via the data delivery software Beyond 20/20 WDS and associated support materials are available online.

esds.mcc.ac.uk/wds_weo/
www.esds.ac.uk/international/support/user_guides/imf/ ●



Latinobarómetro now available

The Latinobarómetro surveys can now be accessed free of charge by ESDS-registered users working or studying in the UK higher and further education sector.

The Latinobarómetro is an annual public opinion survey, conducted in 18 countries in Latin America, representing more than 400 million people. The annual survey involves around 19,000 interviews with the same survey instrument employed in all countries, allowing methodological and cross-national comparisons to be made across a wide range of economic and social issues.

ESDS has acquired additional ESRC funding for a three-year licence, running until September 2010, to provide access to this resource. ●

Mothers Alone added to ESDS Qualidata Online

Mothers Alone: Poverty and the Fatherless Family, 1955-1966 (SN 5072), is a study based on 116 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with respondents from Essex and West Yorkshire.

The study explores the lives and experiences of mothers living alone by putting forward two central questions: what is poverty and who are the fatherless? The study asked about housing conditions, homelessness, diet and nutrition as well as about detailed indicators of poverty and the subjective, felt experience of poverty. The collected data originate from a pilot study carried out for a larger project, Poverty in the UK, by Peter Townsend.

Following extensive enhancement of all paper-based interview transcripts, first by scanning and applying Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and then by adding eXtensible Markup Language (XML), this collection is now fully browsable and searchable through ESDS Qualidata Online. The published transcripts can be searched by either keyword or using demographic

details, such as respondent's gender, year of birth, geographical location or occupational class. Furthermore, any search can include other collections also published on ESDS Qualidata Online. Currently these are: Family Life and Work Experience Before 1918, 1870-1973 (SN 2000); Families, Social Mobility and Ageing, an Intergenerational Approach, 1900-1988 (SN 4938); and Mothers and Daughters: Accounts of Health in the Grandmother Generation, 1945-1978 (SN 4943). ■



Usage of ESDS Longitudinal data

ESDS Longitudinal has added a new resource to its web pages. For each of the seven main UK longitudinal studies – the 1970 Birth Cohort Study, the British Household Panel Survey, the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, the Families and Children Study, the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, the Millennium Cohort Study and the National Child Development Study – the project titles and abstracts of those users who have access to the data, and who have agreed to share this information with others, may now be viewed.

This data usage information can be accessed via the 'Usage' link provided for each of the core longitudinal studies; for example, current and past projects using British Household Panel Survey data can be found at the URL given below. The provision of information on projects using a particular study is designed to complement the information on publications arising from studies which is

already made available via study catalogue records.

This development follows the success of ESDS Government in making project information for each of its core studies available via its web pages and it is envisaged that this resource will be extended to other ESDS component services over the coming months.

www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/bhps/usage.asp ■

The screenshot shows the ESDS Longitudinal website interface. At the top, there are navigation links: Home, About, Usage, Support, News, Events, and Help. The main heading is 'ESDS Longitudinal'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Usage of the BHPS datasets'. The text on the page states: 'The content on this page is generated by users. Therefore the users acknowledge that those of the user are not included by those of the ESDS.' It also includes a disclaimer: 'This page contains information from users who have downloaded the ESDS data and who have agreed to have their project information shared. Users can opt to be included or to amend the details held for them by changing their account preferences details.' There are two bullet points: 'Health and economic performance' dated October 2007, and 'Household used for more information' dated 1st September 2007. At the bottom, there is a note: 'The Center for Health and Research at Brunel College is undertaking a project which involves using data on household which the research is related to. The data in the British Household Panel Survey would be a valuable resource to gather information on these issues in future. Other services would also be used.'

ESDS workshop for NHS librarians

On 18 October ESDS held a workshop for National Health Service (NHS) librarians from the south eastern region.

The librarians were given an opportunity to explore how archived data sources in the health domain can be used in research, learning and teaching. Many of the participants are highly familiar with bibliographic and research information that utilise Athens authentication, but while they had heard of ESDS, none had yet dipped their toes in the water.

The need to find out more about social science data is becoming evident as more and more staff employed by the NHS undertake research. Many student nurses use the NHS library help desks requesting national statistical information on health. The librarians provide the front line to these queries and were very impressed to hear about the wide range of data available in the ESDS portfolio for health-related research. They also said they would make use of the teaching and support materials produced by ESDS. With their input, a new brochure on resources for nursing research will be created.

The course helped to enhance the librarians' professional qualifications for the Knowledge and Skills Framework, covering key dimensions including: information collection and analysis; knowledge and information resources; and biomedical investigation and intervention.

www.esds.ac.uk/news/eventdetail.asp?id=1829 ■



UKDA to lead major new European project



Starting in January 2008, the UKDA will co-ordinate a new two-year project funded by the European Commission under the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) programme.

This major new award totalling 2.7 million euros is aimed at developing the Council of European Social Science Data Archives (CESSDA) research infrastructure (RI), and is a direct result of the CESSDA RI being identified by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Roadmap exercise as a research network of excellence. The CESSDA network has existed for over 30 years, and now extends to 21 countries across Europe. Through its data exchange agreements CESSDA provides access gateways to important social science data materials and EU investments such as the European Social Survey, the Eurobarometers, the International Social Survey Programme and the European Values Surveys across

Europe. In recent years CESSDA has developed a number of resource discovery and data management and access tools, such as Nesstar and the multilingual CESSDA data portal as a result of EC-funding

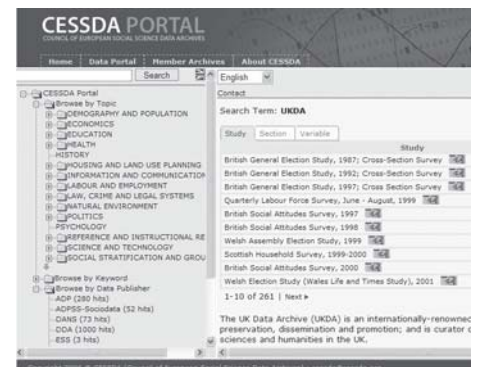
The aim of the new project will be to plan the future development of the CESSDA RI and will focus on tackling and resolving a number of strategic, financial and legal issues in order to ensure that European social science and humanities researchers have access to, and gain support for, the data resources they require to conduct research of the highest quality, irrespective of the location of either researcher or data within the European Research Area.

The project will consist of several interlinked yet individually focused work packages, including work on: developing and extending the data portal to provide a fully-integrated data infrastructure that will allow seamless access to as many data holdings across Europe as possible; developing common authentication and access middleware tools; developing metadata standards such as the Data Documentation Initiative (DDI); creating thesauri management tools; extending the coverage

of the CESSDA RI to include countries from eastern Europe; strengthening the CESSDA RI through the development of professional training for data archivists and the certification of data archiving organisations; providing secure data facilities for the dissemination of data which pose statistical disclosure risks; investigating the potential of grid technologies for data dissemination and analysis; improving data harmonisations tools and the development of a European question bank of survey responses.

The research will be led by Professor Schürer, Director of the UKDA, who will act as Principal Investigator for the project.

www.cessda.org ●



Forthcoming Events

16 January 2008: Geography and migration workshop, Cardiff

17 January 2008: ESDS Government meeting on changes in access to the government surveys and Labour Force Survey/Annual Population Survey user meeting, London

29 January 2008: Growing Up in Scotland seminars: an introduction to using GUS data, Aberdeen

7-16 March 2008: ESRC Festival of Science 2008, Various venues

14 March 2008: Combining macro and micro data from the census, University of Manchester

10 April 2008: Survey Measurement: Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Contemporary Questionnaire Items, London

15 April 2008: JISC Conference 2008, Birmingham

16 April 2008: Longitudinal studies using the census, Edinburgh

14 May 2008: Longitudinal studies using the census, Belfast

18-20 June 2008: Fourth International Conference on e-Social Science, University of Manchester

30 June 2008 - 3 July 2008: Research Methods Festival 2008, St Catherine's College, Oxford ●



Season's Greetings

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