

Editorial – Special Issue on Total Survey Error (TSE)

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In the past two decades, the focus in survey methodology and statistics has shifted from studying one source of error (e.g., nonresponse) to studying two or more sources of error simultaneously (e.g., nonresponse and coverage error, nonresponse and measurement error). The Total Survey Error (TSE) framework delineates and describes all the ways in which error can arise in survey data: in design, collection, processing, and analysis. Paul Biemer initiated the international total survey error workshop (ITSEW), and since then workshops have taken place annually in varying locations around the world. Information on these past workshops can be obtained at <http://www.niss.org/search/node/itsew>. Presentations and papers from these workshops have been very influential, and as a result the TSE framework has had a growing impact on survey research (e.g., [Biemer 2010](#)).

In 2010, a special issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly* devoted to TSE contained a contribution by Bob Groves and Lars Lyberg titled “Total Survey Error: Past, Present and Future.” This article provided a historical overview of survey errors. New technologies have stimulated changes in data collection, and new statistical and modeling tools have changed our analysis procedures. Reacting to these changes, Paul Biemer again took the initiative and in 2013 gathered a small group of experts to organize the first international conference on TSE. The TSE15 conference “Improving Data Quality in the ERA of Big Data” took place in Baltimore, MD USA in September 2015. An edited volume of invited papers from the conference has just been published in the Wiley series in survey methodology ([Biemer et al. 2017](#)).

The TSE15 conference also involved 129 contributed presentations. The articles published in this Special Issue are based on those talks; presenters were invited to develop full research articles and submit them to the Journal of Official Statistics.

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References

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