



Using oral history methods

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Oral history methods, used increasingly across a range of disciplines are concerned with memory, meaning and subjectivity.

They work from the premise that memory can provide valuable insights into how social structures, processes and relations are lived and interpreted, acknowledging relationships between past and present.

Oral history's capacity to engage with minoritised groups and individuals on their own terms values testimony which challenges dominant historical accounts. The approach has generated investigations focusing on migrants, gender inequalities, childhoods, sexualities, the emotions, race and ethnicity and aspects of community life, nationally and internationally¹.

The interview is at the heart of oral history research with its invitation to reflect on aspects of past experience. As with other types of qualitative research, it is an inter-subjective event, a dialogue where someone makes sense of experience, creating a coherent sense of self over time. Memory is thus seen as an active process of producing meanings and identities, shaped by language, subjectivity, the interview relationship and the present².

Whilst a debate has emerged among oral historians as to whether memory should be regarded as individual or collective, Anna Green³ argues the significance of contexts and discourses, valuing individual remembering and the capacity of individuals to critically assess and contest dominant accounts.

Oral history methods may be used as part of different research designs. We have used oral history in survey⁴ and case study⁵ approaches to research. The survey approach generates a large number of interviews, covering a wide range of topics enabling comparison and generalisation¹. The case study approach examines a small number of interviews in depth in order to develop concepts and theory⁵.

The oral history interview may take different forms. Commonly oral historians distinguish between thematic or subject focused interviews⁶ and the whole life or chronological approach. Perks and

Thomson see the latter as 'the most effective way of contextualising specific experiences'⁷. In seeking to elicit a 'whole life story', interviewers often start by asking about the narrator's place of birth and earliest memories and working forward in time through major life phases (like childhood, education, work, marriage and parenthood, retirement and so on)¹. It is argued that this 'chronological' approach, following the course of events through a 'typical' life cycle, is more natural and therefore less intrusive. People know how this format works and expect it, and, consequently, are less directed by the interviewer and more empowered in the interview.

However, a strictly chronological approach tends to assume that life cycle and stages are universal, and does not properly acknowledge the impact on these of history, politics and culture, for example, upheaval and displacement⁸. The use of specific life stages may thus be normative and normalising, generating summary, superficial and stereotypical information, and conventional justifications.

The free-flowing interview, with or without chronology, using questions permitting reflection, narration and emotional expression has typically proved most suited to an oral history approach, particularly when an interviewer is well-prepared and sensitive to difference.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Using oral history methods
- 2 Walking and talking: Mobile methods for understanding families' everyday environments in India and the UK
- 3 What can qualitative researchers and teachers learn from quantitative researchers and teachers (and vice versa)?
- 4 The varying relationship between economic growth and national debt
- 5 Who are the under-pensioned and what should policymakers know?
- 6 Methods at the boundaries of the arts and humanities, and social sciences
- 7 Bringing together researchers to discuss research methods
- 8 Videos from the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival

Walking and talking: Mobile methods for understanding families' everyday environments in India and the UK

Catherine Walker, Janet Boddy and Ann Phoenix, NOVELLA node, Institute of Education, University of London

Everyday life has long been an object of social theorising and research. However, it is difficult to theorise the everyday without fixing it as invariant or overinflating it. Methods for researching the complexity of the mundane are, therefore, crucial, particularly since the everyday is not transparently open to scrutiny. Research thus needs to find ways to make the everyday visible and to analyse it.

The NOVELLA (Narratives of Varied Everyday Lives and Linked Approaches) node of NCRM conducts research into a variety of everyday family lives. One NOVELLA project, Family Lives and the Environment uses a multi-method approach to investigate the ways in which families negotiate their family lives in relation to their environments.

The research has been conducted in rural and urban settings across Southern England and Andhra Pradesh, South India, and is a collaboration between NOVELLA researchers at the Institute of Education and University of Sussex, and researchers on the University of Oxford Young Lives (an international longitudinal study of childhood poverty) and Sri Padmavathi Mahila Viswavidyalayam University in India. Catherine Walker, doctoral researcher at NOVELLA, focuses on children's everyday environmental experiences, understandings and practices in India and England, by collecting new data on families with a 12-year old child (the index child) and conducting secondary analysis of Young Lives data.

A challenge in researching the everyday and habitual is that many things people do regularly are taken for granted, given little thought and not readily remembered. One way in which the Family Lives and the Environment project makes mundane engagements with the environment explicit is through a 'mobile' interview with the index child and main caregiver, and sometimes other family members. This consists of a guided walk or drive around familiar places in the immediate vicinity of the family home, planned with the help of a map constructed collectively by the family during a previous research visit.

This method enables researchers to experience mundane, taken for granted ways in which participants navigate and negotiate place, as illustrated in the following two case examples.

Embodied meanings

The mobile interview with twelve year old 'Gomathi' and her mother 'Sujatha' took place in a bustling urban district in India, starting with a walk along a busy main road. Catherine's fieldnote recorded:

Through the walk as Sujatha repeatedly pointed out aspects of going out which are potentially dangerous for Gomathi – crossing the road was a particular hazard. [...] As we walked along the road, I could fully sympathise with this I was finding it difficult myself to cross the road, and to dodge the traffic, unstable or dirty areas of road [...]

Practical challenges were also evident in some UK interviews, as illustrated by Catherine's fieldnote of the mobile interview with eleven year old 'Callum' and his family:

I explained that it would be good to stick together as much as possible. As soon as we set out I realised the impracticality of this guidance as we were walking down a narrow pavement between a thorny hedge and a grass bank going up to the main road. [...] Janet and I picked up on what it would be like to walk down the road – the lack of lighting and the noise from the cars and family members added to this – Callum said that he had "like, six thorns" in his shoes from walking down the road to get to the school bus.

In such circumstances, the 'talk' on the 'walk' is inevitably constrained. However, the method generates embodied understandings of the meanings of places for family members that would not be available to researchers through talk alone. Equally, walking and talking helps participants to reflect upon the significance of the places that make up their environments. It is perhaps not surprising that talk of how places are changing, often due to processes outside participants' control, tended to generate such reflections.

For example, in an interview immediately following the walk, Callum brought up changes to what children his age can do on the land around his home, reflecting that "...because of everybody closing their land off due to robberies and the roads getting faster and faster, due to better and better cars, kids can't go out and about as much."

This was a topic that he returned to throughout the research activities, also relating this to the growing influence of technology on children's time use and activities. However, the mobile interview vividly indicated that these issues are embodied and served to focus Callum's narratives and those of his mother on the meanings their family environments held for them.

Occasionally the 'walking interview' took place in a car, either because that better captured the family's everyday practices, or because heat or darkness prohibited a walk. When sampling within specific geographical areas, walking interviews with different families sometimes literally crossed the same ground, but highlighted the different significance that space and place can have.

The urban 'walk and talk' interviews often took place in noisy street environments. This frequently made it challenging to transcribe the audio recordings. However, the noisy recordings are highly evocative and open up families' everyday environments, practices and narratives to research understandings in ways that would be difficult to access otherwise.

For further information about NOVELLA, please see <http://www.novella.ac.uk/>

What can qualitative researchers and teachers learn from quantitative researchers and teachers (and vice versa)?

Martyn Chamberlain, Loughborough University

The International Benchmarking Review of Sociology¹ highlighted how in terms of both content (i.e. what is taught) and delivery (i.e. how it is taught) the provision of quantitative method teaching in UK universities lags behind that provided in Australia, Canada, the United States, as well as many European countries such as the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Spain. It concluded that this state of affairs had a negative effect on the quality of the quantitative skill-set possessed by the typical UK social science graduate and that ‘business end-users bemoan the lack of quantitative longitudinal data researchers’¹.

Against this background, key professional associations and funding bodies within the social sciences, such as the British Academy and the ESRC, are seeking to develop undergraduate students’ quantitative statistical skills². Indeed, the Nuffield Foundation, in partnership with the ESRC and HEFCE, has recently invested just less than twenty million pounds establishing fifteen centres of excellence nationwide under the banner of what is referred to as the Q-Step programme³.

Q-Step is a far-reaching capacity building move to promote undergraduate curricula reform and pedagogic innovation to help produce more numerate social science graduates. However, I am wary of any agenda which seeks to embed the development of quantitative skills within an employability agenda. Rather, my interest in this shift towards enhancing the profile and role of quantitative methods in social science curricula lies in the fact that I have long advocated the need to engage students with core substantive topics and theoretical debates using both numeric and narrative forms of information and data. This is a position I have certainly strongly advocated in my respective research method and theory textbooks^{4,5}. Indeed, like many colleagues I am sure, in both my academic writing and teaching I always start with the evidence for and against an idea, a policy, an opinion, a conclusion, regardless of if this evidence is numeric or narrative in form.

I think this dual emphasis on both words and numbers is an essential starting point if we are as educators and practitioners are to pursue the goal of developing graduates who aren’t just employable, but who also possess the transferable analytical and critical thinking skills necessary to be the informed politically-engaged citizens that today’s advanced democratic society’s so desperately need. As a medical sociologist and criminologist, I firmly believe my students must be capable of analysing using both words and numbers pertinent issues within the realms of both crime and justice and health and social policy. That is if they are to be able as informed citizens to hold fully to account society’s socio-economic, cultural, professional and political elites.

I know the Q-Step programme is not viewed with enthusiasm by everyone. I have found the feelings of many of my colleagues range from disinterest and disengagement to disdain and outright ideological rejection. I am not surprised by this. Indeed, it is not unknown for sociology and criminology students to begin an introductory research methods course, for example, on the receiving end of an anti-positivist diatribe devaluing the importance of quantitative methods in the social sciences, in preference for more qualitative approaches⁶.

Yet I think it is important to not get bogged down in debates about the value of qualitative over quantitative approaches (or vice versa). Or for that matter what their respective profile in already overcrowded undergraduate curricula should be. Rather, I think the Q-Step programme is important precisely because it serves to remind us all - be we qualitative- or quantitative- focused researchers - of a key lesson we can learn from each other. Namely, that if we are to promote our students’ critical thinking and lifelong learning skills, rather than just their future employability, then we need to work closely together to embed a culture of narrative and numeric evidence-based inquiry and substantive and theoretical debate across the curriculum, not solely within research methods modules.

Certainly my own research has shown that pedagogic innovation in how we deliver qualitative and quantitative teaching is not in itself enough to engage and develop students’ research and critical thinking skills⁷. As a result, I for one welcome the opportunities for broader-based collaboration and curriculum innovation, the Q-Step programme brings with it.

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The varying relationship between economic growth and national debt

Andrew Bell, Centre for Multilevel Modelling, University of Bristol

In 2010, Carmen Reinhart and Kenneth Rogoff (henceforth, RR) produced a paper outlining the links between countries' growth rates and their national debt levels¹. The paper claimed to show evidence that, when debt levels grew to greater than 90% of GDP, growth disappeared or even went negative. Unsurprisingly, this had a significant impact on policy makers, particularly those looking to justify austerity measures to bring levels of debt down.

However, four years later, the paper made the headlines again. The paper, it turns out, was littered with questionable methodological decisions and errors, including an excel spreadsheet error that excluded a number of countries from the analysis². When these were corrected, the apparent 'cliff' at 90% of GDP disappeared; however, there remained a steady relationship between growth and debt, with lower growth being associated with higher levels of debt.

Two questions remain from both RR's original paper, and Herndon et al's reanalysis. First, these analyses consider the average debt-growth relationship, but don't consider how this relationship may differ between countries.

Even among developed countries, there is significant variation in the political institutions and economic situations, which could affect how a potential effect of debt on growth might play out. If there were substantial variation in the growth-debt relationship between countries, then the relevance / meaningfulness of an average effect (or 'stylised fact') could be questionable.

Second, there remains doubt as to whether there is really a causal effect of debt on growth, on the basis of a bivariate relationship. It seems likely that low growth rates would cause governments to increase spending thus increasing debt; as such it could be that this could drive the apparent growth-debt relationship, rather than any negative effects of high debt rates. Further, this directionality could also vary across countries, with an effect of growth on debt on one country, and an effect of debt on growth in another.

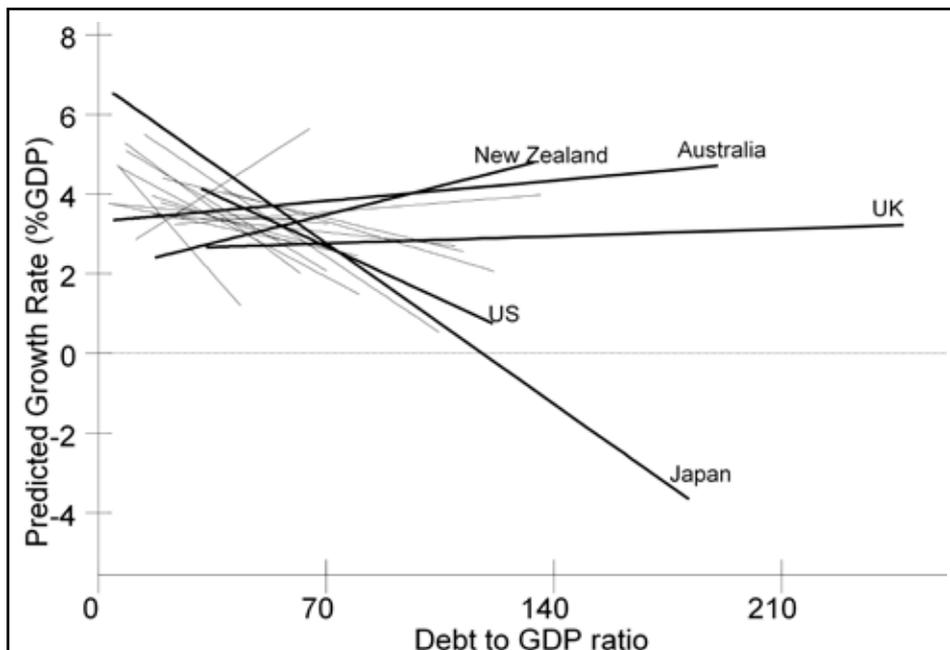
It is these two questions that we (myself, Ron Johnston and Kelvyn Jones) were looking to answer in reanalysing RR's data, and multilevel models were the obvious tool for the purpose, given their capacity to consider variation between areas such as countries as well as simple average effects³. First, we used a random slopes multilevel model to assess how the relationship between growth and debt varies between countries.

Second, we created a multilevel version of a distributed lag model⁴, to assess the directionality of this relationship, again varying across countries. More details of these models, and our findings can be found in the paper⁵.

The results that we found were messy – certainly there was no evidence of the strong negative association found by RR. The results can be seen in the figure – some countries display a relationship akin to that found by RR, but just as common seem to be trends in the opposite direction. Other countries show no evidence of a trend at all, including in the UK where RR's work has been used to justify austerity politics. Crucially, the average relationship is no longer visible, either visually or statistically. Perhaps equally importantly, though, the multilevel distributed lag model shows a relatively consistent direction of causality in the opposite direction to that implied by RR's interpretation of their results: low growth leads to higher national debt, rather than vice-versa.

There are clear implications of this, for those considering economic austerity policies, but more widely for those using methods to illustrate relationships, and policy makers using such apparent relationships to make policy decisions. Whilst average relationships provide neat, stylised conclusions, they can also obscure important complexities. The world is a messy place, and using statistical methods that ignore that messiness can lead to bad policy decisions being made.

Graph: The relationship between growth and debt for the countries in the sample; some key countries are highlighted



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Who are the under-pensioned and what should policymakers know?

Athina Vlachantoni, Jane Falkingham, Maria Evandrou and Frank Feng, University of Southampton

Individuals from particular minority ethnic groups in the UK, such as those from a Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, are among those considered to be 'under-pensioned', that is they are less likely to have adequate pension protection in later life.

This new research project, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, aims to understand the differences between and within ethnic groups in terms of occupational pension membership, as this type of pension protection is particularly important in the British context.

This is an important policy challenge for at least three reasons:

1. pension protection is part of a cumulative disadvantage faced by certain ethnic groups including health status and financial wellbeing
2. the UK is becoming more ethnically diverse
3. the minority ethnic population is ageing alongside the White British population and therefore pension protection will become an increasingly pressing policy concern

Policy reforms in the area of occupational pensions are well underway in the UK, with the employees of larger companies becoming automatically enrolled in occupational pension schemes, followed by medium and smaller companies by 2018.

Although such reforms can make a significant difference in the number of employees covered by occupational pensions, it remains to be seen whether the employment patterns of men and women from particular minority ethnic groups will continue to pose a concern in terms of their adequate pension protection.

Longitudinal data

The project uses data on working-age individuals from the UK's largest longitudinal survey Understanding Society, which also includes sample boosts for five prominent minority ethnic groups: African, Black, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian.



In addition, the dataset allows researchers to distinguish individuals from Polish descent in the population, in order to compare and contrast 'traditional' and 'new' groups of migrants to the UK.

The research found that coming from a minority ethnic group compared to the White British majority can adversely affect one's chances of being in paid work in the first place; their chances of being an employee (as opposed to self-employed), and working for an employer who offers a pension scheme.

These results confirmed existing evidence which tells us that the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups, and especially women within these groups, are the least likely to fare well across these three dimensions.

The only minority group more likely than the White British to be in paid work was the Polish group, reflecting the largely economic nature of migration among Poles settling in the UK.

The research found that although Poles are most likely to be in paid work, nevertheless they are still less likely to work as employees or for an employer who offers a pension scheme. Such complex employment patterns translate into pension insecurity during working age, which can contribute to income insecurity in later life.

However, once an individual works for an employer who offers a pension scheme, their ethnicity does not appear to have an effect on their chances of being a member of that scheme.

The findings of the research have important implications for the design of policy aimed at improving pension protection for minority ethnic groups. Firstly, they confirm important differentials between the White British majority and the minority ethnic population in terms of employment patterns and pension protection, as well as between different ethnic groups. Secondly, our research suggests that participation in the labour market and better occupational pension protection for a diverse workforce are as important, or even more important, for such groups than access to an employer's pension scheme.

This article was originally published on 8 July in Society Central blog <http://societycentral.ac.uk/>. Dr Athina Vlachantoni from the Centre for Research on Ageing and the ESRC Centre for Population Change, University of Southampton, presented this research at the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival.

Methods at the boundaries of the arts and humanities, and social sciences

Jen Tarr, London School of Economics and Political Science

What makes a social science? Is it the methods we use, or the way we use them? To what extent can we adopt or adapt methods from arts based disciplines, and why might we want to? What are the challenges in doing that?

Arts based social research aims to do several things: broaden the kinds of questions we can ask as social scientists and the kinds of knowledge we can have about the world; acknowledge that not all expression is verbal or text-based; and take up recent challenges in qualitative research around performative social science or 'live methods'¹ in thinking about how methods produce particular kinds of findings. Methods from the arts are sometimes referred to as 'creative methods', but this is a misnomer if it implies that only these methods require creativity. Creative research develops across many methodological paradigms, both qualitative and quantitative.

The Communicating Chronic Pain² and MIDAS³ (Methodological Innovation in Digital Arts and Social Sciences) projects are funded under NCRM call for Methodological Innovations Projects⁴ addressing methods at the boundaries of the arts and humanities and social sciences. Communicating Chronic Pain has explored and evaluated a variety of arts based methods including expressions on social media and drawing and sculpting, digital photography, music and sound,

and physical theatre through workshops with patients, clinicians and carers as a way of expressing the highly subjective experience of living with chronic pain. MIDAS explores six ethnographic case studies in the arts and social sciences, looking at methodological connections and synergies between different sites and how they engage research differently.

Some of the existing work on arts-based methods^{5,6} tends to assume the inherent value of bringing the arts into social research without fully interrogating the tensions that emerge from combining different disciplinary traditions together. Methods from the arts enable us to ask different kinds of questions, but when we work across disciplines we need to avoid simply working to the lowest common denominator if we want to say anything useful.

Researchers working at the boundaries of the arts and humanities and social sciences have encountered issues that highlight disciplinary conventions. Firstly, to what extent do arts-based methods require the researcher to become a participant? Is the researcher positioned differently than in other forms of qualitative research? Many researchers, including myself, have encountered points in the research process where we have been forced to take a more hands-on, participatory approach than we might otherwise have done. Disciplinary expectations in the arts may mean that these forms of involvement are more often normalised.

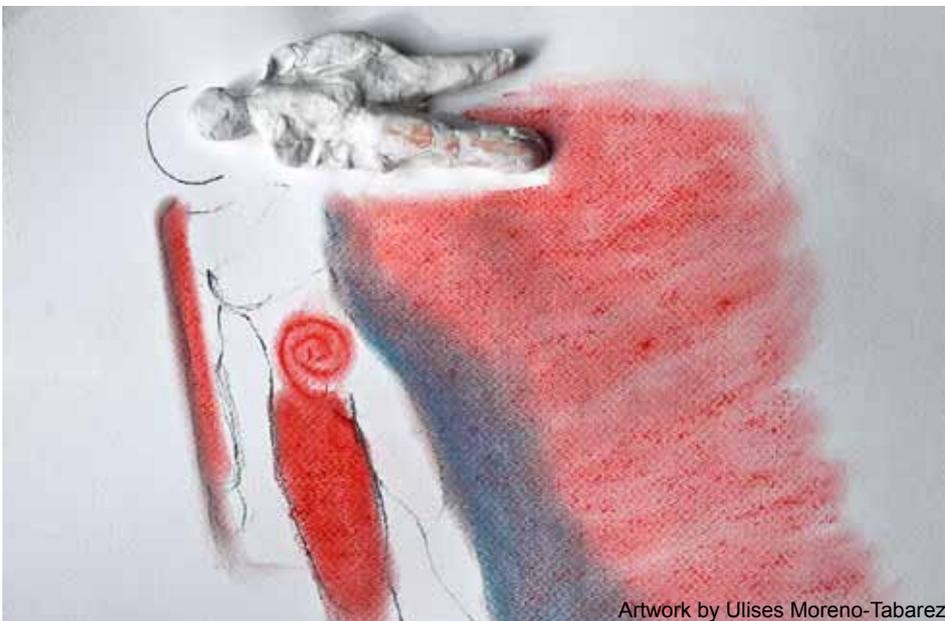
Secondly, how did the digital impact upon, or drive the development of the research process? Digital methods make new forms of expression possible: while traditional forms of qualitative research tend to work on text through interview transcripts, fieldnotes and other written documents, new technologies are making images, sound and video far more accessible, potentially further blurring the boundaries between the arts and social sciences. One thing social science can learn from the arts is how to better account for site specificity: how does the site or context (conference presentation, journal article, lecture PowerPoint) affect what we produce?

Finally, where are the boundaries between arts and social science? How far can we go, in blurring those boundaries? Is it possible to accept certain kinds of art as social science, or are we merely building dialogue between disparate disciplinary traditions? Will arts outputs always be secondary to a peer reviewed journal article, or is there a place for art as primary outcome in social research? What criteria would we use to judge it? For now, such outputs are likely to remain separate to the journal articles and other formal outputs we produce.

Carey Jewitt, Nina Wakeford, Elena Gonzalez-Polledo and Jen Tarr explored some of the key issues they face in their research, at the 'Methods at the Boundaries' session at the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival.

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Artwork by Ulises Moreno-Tabarez

Bringing together researchers to discuss research methods

Rosalind Edwards, NCRM, University of Southampton

In July over 700 researchers met to explore and discuss research methods, at the 6th Research Methods Festival at St. Catherine's College, Oxford. The Festival is held biennially and is organized by the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) on behalf of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). This year's Festival marked the 10 year anniversary of the NCRM.

The Festival is unique in its organization, contributions and atmosphere. It highlights the value of methods-related resources and research in the UK, and meets the methodological and networking needs and interests of UK and international social science researchers. Leading practitioners of social research methods in their field are approached to convene sessions on a range of topics and cutting-edge developments drawing on ESRC investments and other distinguished research projects and organisations. This year's Festival was informed by the ESRC's focus on interdisciplinary and international research, including guest sessions from the Swiss and the Finnish methods festivals. Particular methodological themes included: cross-national methods and international knowledge exchange; secondary data analysis initiatives; methodological innovations; social media and creative methods; and careers and skills development.

The vibrant Festival programme offered over 50 sessions with 200 presentations, stretching across methodological boundaries. Professor Gary King (Harvard University) got the Festival off to a buzzing start with the NCRM annual lecture sponsored by the International Journal of Social Research on social media analysis. High profile keynote talks by Professor Sharlene Hesse-Biber (Boston College) on mixed methods and Professor Douglas Harper (Duquesne University) on visual methods were also received enthusiastically by participants. The Festival showcased the groundbreaking work of NCRM Nodes: MODE on multimodal methodologies, PATHWAYS on methods for mediating social and biological factors, TALISMAN on geospatial data analysis and simulation methods, LEMMA 3 on analysis of longitudinal data, NOVELLA on narrative analysis methods; and PEPA on programme evaluation.



Photo: Professor Gary King (Harvard) gave the NCRM Annual Lecture on 'Reverse engineering Chinese censorship'. The talk was filmed and is available at the NCRM website.

The Festival also featured a varied social programme to stimulate the methodological imagination including a lecture by the sociologist and broadcaster Laurie Taylor, and an installation of interactive digital technologies including a simulation of pigeon-flight over London.

The Festival spread of topics engaged participants across the social science disciplines: sociology, education, health, social statistics, economics and psychology to name but a few. They reached over sector boundaries, with a third of participants from outside Higher Education: further education, national and local government, and market and independent social research organizations. And they addressed researchers at all stages of their careers: a quarter of those attending were full time students.

Media communication was another exciting feature of the Festival. The keynote lectures were live-streamed for the first time, while the RMF smartphone application enabled participants to negotiate their way around the Festival programme and location, and collated the Festival related #RMF14 tweets. There was also media interest in several of the Festival presentations. For example, the Guardian featured an article 'Can a parent get over the death of a child?' based on Dr Denise Turner's research on researching emotionally sensitive and challenging topics.

Dr Almudena Sevilla's research on parental time investments since the 80s achieved coverage in the Observer, Daily Mail and the Economist, and Times Higher Education covered Dr Andrew Hudson-Smith's Festival presentation about the potential of crowdsourcing for funding research and data mining.

Most of the presentation slides, filmed talks and the popular 'What is ...?' audio presentations from the Festival are available on the NCRM website.

The 7th ESRC Research Methods Festival will take place in July 2016.

To view the filmed talks and 'What is?' audio presentations from the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival please go to <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/TandE/video/RMF2014/>

To view the presentation slides please see the session details in <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/RMF2014/prog.php>

Videos from the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival

The filmed presentations and 'What is?' audio slideshow presentations from the 6th ESRC Research Methods Festival are now available:

- Challenges of coverage, Sampling and participation in mixed mode surveys, by Peter Lynn
- Democratisation in theory and (one example of) practice, by Jaimie Ellis and Graham Crow
- Visual Methods: Sociology and Beyond, by Douglas Harper
- Engagement, co-production and exchange, Creating Vignettes of Early Onset Dementia, by Nicholas Jenkins
- Engagement, co-production and exchange: working with community groups and genealogists, by Tanja Bueltmann
- Reverse engineering Chinese censorship, by Gary King
- Geographically combining small area environmental and longitudinal data, by Benedict Wheeler
- Giving voice to people with disabilities in research, by Ed Hall
- Knowledge mobilisation strategies and techniques, by Angie Hart and Emily Gagnon
- Lessons for social research from participatory decision making, by Graham Smith
- Linking historical administrative data, by Chris Dibben
- Methods for dealing with linkage error, by Harvey Goldstein
- Methods for testing trends in mental health - is it really possible to compare like-with-like, by Stephan Collishaw
- Sample size determination for thematic analysis and related qualitative methodologies: a quantitative model, by Andy Fugard
- Scaffolding to using quantitative data in sociology and politics classroom: building bridges, by Wendy Olsen
- The 'thing-ness' problem of mixed methods research, by Sharlene Hesse-Biber
- The democratisation of evaluation, by David Gough
- The impossibility of separating age, period and cohort effects, by Andrew Bell
- The questionnaire design pitfalls of multiple modes, by Pamela Campanelli
- Understanding the causes of measurement differences by mode, by Gerry Nicolaas
- Using linked data, by Melanie Wright
- What data are available? Spotlight on data for linkage in the four UK countries, by Peter Smith
- What's in a letter? What qual might learn from quant, and vice versa, by John MacInnes
- What is small area estimation? by Dimitris Ballas
- What are Fixed Effects? by Mirko Draca
- What is problem-centred interviewing? by Herwig Reiter
- What is qualitative interviewing? by Janet Holland
- What is rhythm analysis? by Dawn Lyon

To view the filmed presentations and audio slideshows, please go to <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/TandE/video/RMF2014/>

ABOUT NCRM

The ESRC National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) is a network of research groups, each conducting research and training in an area of social science research methods. NCRM is coordinated by the Hub at the University of Southampton.

NCRM brings together researchers from across the UK with a wide range of research methods expertise, at the frontiers of developments in research methodology.

NCRM disseminates innovations and developments in research methods through training courses and events and through other direct engagement with researchers, but also by cooperating with other organisations and initiatives with an interest in social science research methods.

NCRM was established in 2004 as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) strategy to improve the standards of research methods across the UK social science community. NCRM acts as a strategic focal point for developments in research, training and capacity building related to research methods, both at the national level and cutting across social science disciplines.

For more information about the NCRM and its activities please see our website <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk>

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