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Social simulation and policy making

Christopher Watts, SIMIAN node, University of Surrey

Computer simulations of human behaviour can provide insights into the mechanisms by which social phenomena are generated. As such, social simulation should be added to existing quantitative and qualitative methods as a third source of guidance for policy makers. The SIMIAN project has worked to promote this.

Computer simulations related to social systems have been used since the 1960s. System dynamics models use differential equations and causal-loop diagrams to represent stocks and flows. Discrete-event simulations represent processes subject to some random variability, typically queues. Since the 1990s another type of simulation has emerged, which explicitly represents interactions between multiple individuals, such as human agents, and specialises in explaining group-, network- or society-level phenomena that emerge from these interactions. Interest in this *agent-based modelling* has now grown beyond academic social science.

Although human behaviour can be highly varied and unpredictable, much of the time we follow conventions and are constrained to relatively few possible actions. An early success was models of road traffic, where efficient and safe travel is made possible by the extent to which human drivers follow the same signals, traffic lanes and rules of behaviour. In applications where the behaviour of human agents is less constrained and conventional, however, simulation models are taking longer to reach a stage where they can influence policy. Applications associated with recent work in SIMIAN include the emergence of social norms and criminality, the generation and diffusion of innovation, economic migration, labour and wage inflation, counter-terrorism, and tactics for tracing contacts of tuberculosis patients for screening purposes.

Traditional simulation projects conducted within Operational Research usually begin with the collection of quantitative data relevant to the system of interest. The model is then used to generate quantitative forecasts, and recommendations are based on these for some practical decision. The social simulation community, by contrast, often begins its work with some theory. This includes social theory about some macro-level phenomena which they will try to explain, and micro-level theory about human interactions from the behavioural sciences, which they represent in computer code. Quantitative data about the real-world social systems being studied may be too difficult to collect or of limited use for generalisation. Instead of forecasts, social simulation project outcomes include testing the coherence and exploring the implications of the theories used to construct the models, often through the generation of qualitative output, such as visual patterns. In place of estimates of how *probable* an outcome from a system is, social simulation often indicates only what is, or is not, *plausible*.

Policy makers still like to ask for a single number, or a small set of options or action points, but experience of social simulation projects encourages one to be more subtle than that. It takes time to build understanding of a social system, including recognising the interconnection between its components, the variability in behaviour and the scope for unintended consequences. However, by representing people and their environment explicitly, often in visual form, agent-based simulation models can be easier to interpret, discuss, critique and contribute to than the products of certain other social science techniques, especially for non-technically trained stakeholders. As more people become aware of social simulation as a research method, its acceptability is likely to increase.

Presentations on this theme from a recent Operational Research Society Simulation Special Interest Group meeting are available online http://bit.ly/o3whuN

Crowdsourcing opening up new opportunities

Andy Hudson-Smith, Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis, University College London

Crowdsourcing[1] is the term used for methods of data creation, where large groups of users who are not organised centrally generate content that is shared. From direct public involvement via citizen science initiatives, such as the well-documented Galaxy Zoo, through to simply tapping into online data feeds, we are arguably in a new era of volunteered information and knowledge creation.

The notion that there might be value in harvesting the knowledge of individuals is based on the observation that, although large number of individual estimates may be incorrect, their average can be a match for expert judgment. Judiciously handled, randomly sampling the opinions or calculations of a large number of users might lead to data and information that are surprisingly accurate and that, in some cases, cannot be recorded in any other way[2].

Volunteered Information

The ability to ask the general public their opinion on issues is of course not new, but it is the sheer wealth of data and new research methods to gather, tap into and mine online repositories that is the game changer. The potential of crowdsourcing methods applies across the sciences but it has had specific impact in geography through Volunteered Geographic Information (VGI)[3].

OpenStreetMap (OSM) is perhaps the best known VGI output, started in UCL in 2004. OSM has over 400,000 volunteers contributing to create a free editable vector map of the world[4]. While many early volunteers were highly technically literate, they were not necessarily experts in geographical collection[5]. Yet, through crowd based quality control and refined workflows, aimed at members beyond the traditional community, they have become the map of choice for many users.

Large Scale Surveys

We have been working with our colleagues from the School of Geography, University of Leeds, to build a series of toolkits and workflows to enable social scientists to collect and analyse data from the crowd as a means to include mass human input within urban modelling scenarios[6]. One such tool we have developed is a public facing website SurveyMapper.com, which allows anyone to ask the crowd anything and returns a live map of results on a number of geospatial levels from global to street level.

SurveyMapper has been used by the BBC (Radio 4, Look East, BBC North and BBC South) and the Greater London Authority as well as the wider academic community to carry out rapid data collection. Tens of thousands of inputs can be collected quickly, providing a near real time view of research questions.

Data can be exported later for more rigorous analysis or integration with existing datasets. The combination of rapid survey set up, mass data collection and the addition of a geographic element to the meta data presents an intriguing development for the social sciences.

Tweets

Sites such as SurveyMapper.com are aimed at targeted data collection, yet, via social networks such as Twitter, there is a wealth of information ready to be collected and 'mined'. Using various application programming interfaces (API's) it is possible to actively gather vast amounts of data for both content and locational analysis. At the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis we are working on 'Big Data Toolkits' to produce workflows for researchers to easily integrate social networks for data without the need to program. One early tool is the 'Tweet-o-Meter' detailing real-time counts of tweets in 16 global cities with the ability to store the data for analysis. This enables data, in excess of millions of messages, to be collected quickly. We are working with colleagues at the University of Manchester on ways to analyse it to predict financial, political and social trends.

Andy Hudson-Smith works at the new TALISMAN Phase 3 node of NCRM.

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6 This work has been funded by the JISC National e-Infrastructure for Social Simulation (NeISS) project.

Picture: BBC Radio 4 used SurveyMapper.com in 2008 to map what single factor affected their audiences most about the credit crunch.

Multimodality and communication

Carey Jewitt and Jeff Bezemer, London Knowledge Lab, Institute of Education

Multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach that understands communication and representation to be more than about language. It has been developed over the past decade to systematically address much-debated questions about changes in society, for instance in relation to new media and technologies.

Multimodal approaches have provided concepts, methods and a framework for the collection and analysis of visual, aural, embodied, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments, and the relationships between these[1,2].

What theoretical assumptions inform a multimodal approach?

Three interconnected theoretical assumptions underpin multimodality.

First, multimodality assumes that representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which contribute to meaning. It focuses on analyzing and describing the full repertoire of meaning-making resources that people use (visual, spoken, gestural, written, three-dimensional, and others, depending on the domain of representation) in different contexts, and on developing means that show how these are organized to make meaning.

Second, multimodality assumes that resources are socially shaped over time to become meaning making resources that articulate the (social, individual/affective) meanings demanded by the requirements of different communities. These organized sets of semiotic resources for making meaning are referred to as modes which realize communicative work in distinct ways - making the choice of mode a central aspect of interaction and meaning. The more a set of resources has been used in the social life of a particular community, the more fully and finely articulated it will have become. In order for something to 'be a mode' there needs to be a shared cultural sense within a community of a set of resources and how these can be organized to realize meaning.

Third, people orchestrate meaning through their selection and configuration of modes, foregrounding the significance of the interaction between modes.

Thus all communicational acts are shaped by the norms and rules operating at the moment of sign making, and influenced by the motivations and interests of people in a specific social context.

Core concepts for multimodal analysis

Four core concepts are common across multimodal research: mode, semiotic resource, modal affordance and inter-semiotic relations. Within social semiotics, a mode is understood as an outcome of the cultural shaping of a material through its use in the daily social interaction of people. The semiotic resources of a mode come to display regularities through the ways in which people use them and can be thought of as the connection between representational resources and what people do with them. The term modal affordance refers to the material and the cultural aspects of modes: what it is possible to express and represent easily with a mode. It is a concept connected to both the material as well as the cultural and social historical use of a mode. Modal affordance raises the question of what a mode is 'best' for what. This raises the concept of inter-semiotic relationships, and how modes are configured in particular contexts. These four concepts provide the starting point for multimodal analysis.

What is the focus and scope of Multimodal research?

Multimodality can be used to build inventories of the semiotic resources, organizing principles, and cultural references that modes make available to people in particular places and times: the actions, materials and artifacts people communicate with. This has included contributions to mapping the semiotic resources of visual communication and colour, gesture and movement, gaze, voice and music, to name a few[1].

Multimodal studies have also been conducted that set out to understand how semiotic resources are used to articulate discourses across a variety of contexts and media for instance school, workplaces, online environments, textbooks and advertisements. The relationships across and between modes in multimodal texts and interaction are a central area of multimodal research.

Multimodal research makes a significant contribution to research methods for the collection and analysis of digital data and environments within social research. It provides novel methods for the collection and analysis of types of visual data, video data and innovative methods of multimodal transcription and digital data management[3].

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Ethnic dealignment? Improving estimates of the change in ethnic voting between the 2001 and 2005 British General Elections

Nicky Best and Jane Holmes, BIAS node, Imperial College London, and Stephen D. Fisher, University of Oxford

Research suggests that ethnic minorities in Britain vote overwhelmingly for Labour. This used to be at a consistent rate. But following the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001 and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, there are some opinion poll data that suggest Britain's non-white ethnic minorities, and especially Muslim population, disproportionately turned against the Labour government by the time of the 2005 election.

The British Election Studies (BES) are post-election cross-sectional surveys carried out after each General Election, and these data suggest a narrowing of the gap in Labour voting (among all electors, voting or not) between non-whites and whites from 20 percentage points in 2001 to 11 points in 2005. If real, this decline would provide evidence that Britain's ethnic minorities, for the first time, brought their electoral behaviour much more into line with that of the white population. However, this estimate of the change is not statistically significant, due to the very small number of ethnic-minority respondents in the BES surveys and so no firm conclusions can be drawn.

Nevertheless, aggregate data such as these have typically not been used to estimate differences between ethnic groups in electoral behaviour because of the ecological fallacy problem.

To overcome some of these issues, researchers at the BIAS node of the NCRM have used a novel statistical approach to combine the individual-level BES survey data with the aggregate census data and constituency election results in a joint analysis. Here we explain how this approach can help to improve estimates of the change in the strength of association between ethnicity and vote choice between the 2001 and 2005 General Elections.

A method for combining inferences from individual and aggregate data

The method – called Hierarchical Related Regression (HRR) – was originally developed by BIAS researchers for estimating the relationship between adverse health outcomes and the socio-economic characteristics of individuals and their neighbourhoods, using a combination of individual-level survey data and small-area census and disease register data.

Table. Estimated gap between percentage of non-whites and whites voting Labour at each election. Figures in brackets indicated 95% confidence intervals.

	Gap in Labour Voting (non-whites - whites)		Change in Gap (2005-2001)
	2001	**2005**	
Combined data (HRR model)	17% (13%, 21%)	11% (8%, 15%)	-6% (-11%, 0%)
BES data only	20% (9%, 31%)	11% (2%, 20%)	-9% (-23%, 5%)

Lack of high quality survey data on ethnic minorities has been a persistent problem for research in this area and so there is substantial uncertainty surrounding estimates of the share of the vote for the non-white population as a result of sampling error.

An alternative is to use the election results themselves, together with Census data on the ethnic composition of each parliamentary constituency. These data avoid problems of sampling error and small sample sizes because they represent the entire electorate.

A key feature of the HRR model is that precision is increased by jointly modeling both individual and population aggregate outcomes, in terms of the same predictors. In the voting application, this involves fitting two linked regression models, one modeling the probability that an individual in the BES survey voted Labour as a function of their ethnicity (white or non-white) and one modeling the proportion of the electorate in each constituency that voted Labour as a function of the proportion of the constituency population that are non-white.

About the ecological fallacy

The ecological fallacy is a logical fallacy that can occur when people look at the averages of data collected from groups of individuals, and then assume that these same averages can be applied to each individual within the group. The term 'ecological fallacy' was introduced in a paper in 1950 by William Robinson. For each state in the US, he computed the literacy rate and the proportion of the population born outside the US. He showed that these two figures were positively correlated – in other words, the greater the proportion of immigrants in a state, the higher its average literacy. However, when individuals are considered, the correlation was negative – immigrants were on average less literate than native citizens. Robinson showed that the positive correlation at the level of state populations was because immigrants tended to settle in states where the native population was more literate. He cautioned against deducing conclusions about individuals on the basis of population-level, or 'ecological' data.

The fundamental problem of trying to infer individual-level associations from group level data is that we don't observe the cross-classification of which individuals in the group exhibit which characteristics. In our voting example, the constituency level data only tell us that y% of the population in that constituency voted Labour and x% are of non-white ethnicity. We don't know which of the y% that voted Labour are white or non-white. However, in constituencies in which virtually everyone is white (i.e. x% is close to 0%), we know that most of the y% in that constituency that voted Labour must be white (and vice versa for constituencies with a high proportion of non-whites). Thus the aggregate data can provide some information about individual-level behaviour, which can be combined with the individual-level information from the BES surveys using the HRR models in order to estimate the individual-level associations of interest.

Part of the novelty of HRR models lies in the formulation of the model for the aggregate data. This is obtained by averaging the individual-level regression relationship over the population in each constituency rather than specifying the relationship directly at the aggregate level. This means that the regression model for the individual-level survey data and the model for the aggregate-level constituency data both depend on the same set of regression coefficients, which can be interpreted as the individual-level probabilities of a white or non-white person voting Labour. Thus HRR models allow us to effectively use information from constituency-level data to improve the estimate of the association between ethnicity and the vote from the relatively limited individual-level survey data without falling foul of the ecological inference fallacy.

Application to the 2001 and 2005 election data

The table shows the estimated gap in Labour voting between non-whites and whites in both the 2001 and 2005 General Elections, together with the estimated change in this gap. Whilst no firm conclusions can be drawn from the BES estimates due to the wide confidence intervals, the improved precision of the combined estimate from the HRR model provides more convincing evidence that the gap did narrow by around 6 percentage points.

We are currently extending this work to focus specifically on Muslim voters, and to also include data from the 2010 General Election.

BIAS is part of the National Centre for Research Methods. Further information, including training materials from a recent workshop on HRR methods, can be found on the BIAS website
http://www.bias-project.org.uk/

Methodological challenges in researching ethnicity

Angela Dale, James Nazroo, Lucinda Platt and Sarah Salway

This article is based on the four events from the NCRM funded Networks for Methodological Innovation project 'Promoting methodological innovation and capacity building in research on ethnicity'.

Using categories to record ethnicity

Ethnicity is a complex multi-faceted concept. Ethnic group categories attempt to measure this complex reality by dividing people into restricted, exclusive groups that are specific to social, historical and political context. These categories are often challenged by researchers and respondents alike. To some extent these difficulties can be addressed in surveys by providing a broad-ranging set of questions that allow different definitions of ethnicity to be used in response to the theoretical requirement of the research question. Such questions can cover identities, family origins, practices, networks and values. This approach has been implemented in Understanding Society, the UK Household Longitudinal Study, but it is not available in most social surveys. Although standardised categories have utility in assessing inequalities and how these have changed over time, as in the census, these widely used categories (labels) influence responses by research participants and also influence self-perception. It is important that ethnic categories are not seen as explanatory, but, rather, as tools.

Using latent class models

Ethnicity may be seen as a latent construct measured by a range of different indicators. Latent classes can identify the most salient indicators for different groups, thus being informative about processes, for example, how groups define themselves - both their shared perceptions and idiosyncratic perceptions. However, the choice of measures will depend on the notion of ethnic affiliation or ethnic group that the indicators are intended to capture. It is important not to conflate salience of ethnic identity with dimensions of ethnicity. We need to think about what component of ethnicity is most relevant in any given situation.

Respondent driven sampling (RDS)

It is notoriously hard to find a sampling frame for minority ethnic populations and the costs of doing a population sift are usually prohibitive. One response to this problem is provided by respondent-driven sampling. This method has been widely used in HIV-related research in the USA.

RDS uses non-probability methods to recruit sample members by a kind of snowballing, but in a way that attempts to minimise the biases usually associated with snowball sampling. The success of RDS depends crucially on the groups sampled being networked and on clearly specified eligibility criteria for network membership. It also requires each initial sample member to have a sufficiently large network and to be willing to recruit peers into the network. One drawback of the method is that, because of the dependence on recruiting through networks, it is mainly applicable to small geographical areas. Also, as with any non-randomised sampling method, it is not possible to calculate a response rate.

Arts-based methods

Traditional interview methods are not good at reaching people with little English, or those who lack the confidence to respond to interviews. Arts-based methods can provide a way to engage these individuals and create space for them to contribute their perspectives and experiences. In one example, a Gantt chart was used to map life-events against demands on time, thus showing some of the complexity of the lives of the research participants. Other methods were based on craft workshops, making collages or puppets. Whilst these methods can work well in engaging participants who would otherwise be unlikely to respond, analysis and interpretation of the results are not at all straightforward and standard criteria for quality are hard to apply.

Mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches

Working with standard ethnic categories recorded in national quantitative datasets allows stark inequalities on key outcomes such as health, employment and income to be highlighted; and the same data can also be used to explore the extent of heterogeneity within these crude groupings. Qualitative research may also begin by using these same ethnic labels, but can explore their meanings for the lives of respondents and provide an understanding their genesis and reproduction. Mixed methods are likely to be most effective when there is a common theoretical framework for how ethnicity is understood, and the limits of the data and the methods are recognised and respected.

Further information: http://bit.ly/oOFhoC

runmlwin: New software to run MLwiN from within Stata

George Leckie and Chris Charlton, LEMMA2 node, Centre for Multilevel Modelling (CMM)

George Leckie and Chris Charlton at the Centre for Multilevel Modelling (CMM) have developed and released a new Stata command called runmlwin which allows Stata users to run the powerful MLwiN multilevel modelling software developed by CMM from within Stata.

The runmlwin command allows Stata users to easily access the following MLwiN modelling features:

• Estimation of multilevel models for continuous, binary, count, ordered categorical and unordered categorical data;
• Fast estimation via classical and Bayesian methods;
• Estimation of multilevel models for cross-classified and multiple membership non-hierarchical data structures;
• Estimation of multilevel multivariate response models, multilevel spatial models, multilevel measurement error models and multilevel multiple imputation models.

Example: Growth curve modelling

Suppose we want to study the relationship between child weight, age and gender for the first three years of life. To do this, we shall fit a growth curve model to the repeated measures of child weight. The data are multilevel: the repeated measurements are nested within children. We specify a quadratic relationship between child weight and age. We include a random-intercept to allow children to vary in terms of their initial weights and a random-coefficient on age to allow children to also differ in terms of their growth rates.

A girl dummy variable and a cross-level interaction between girl and age are included to allow boys and girls to have different mean growth curves. Boys and girls are also allowed to have different residuals variances as boys are thought to gain weight less smoothly than girls. We fit our model in MLwiN by typing the following runmlwin command in Stata:

```
. runmlwin weight cons age age2
girl girlXage, level2(child:
cons age, residuals(u))
level1(occasion: girl boy,
diagonal) nopause
```

The runmlwin command automatically retrieves not only the parameters estimates and standard errors from MLwiN, but also the predicted values for the child specific intercepts and slopes. This makes it easy for users to graph the predicted growth curves for boys and girls using standard graphics commands in Stata (see figure).

The results show that boys are initially heavier than girls but that this gender gap narrows, albeit not significantly, with age. The graph shows a fanning out of the growth curves and that relatively few of the curves cross over one another. This suggests that some children are consistently heavier than others and that initial weight differences tend to widen with age. Finally, the larger boy residual variance suggests that boys' weight gain is harder to predict than girls' weight gain.

Support and documentation

Stata users can download the runmlwin command from the runmlwin website. The runmlwin website also provides comprehensive documentation, worked examples and an active discussion forum.
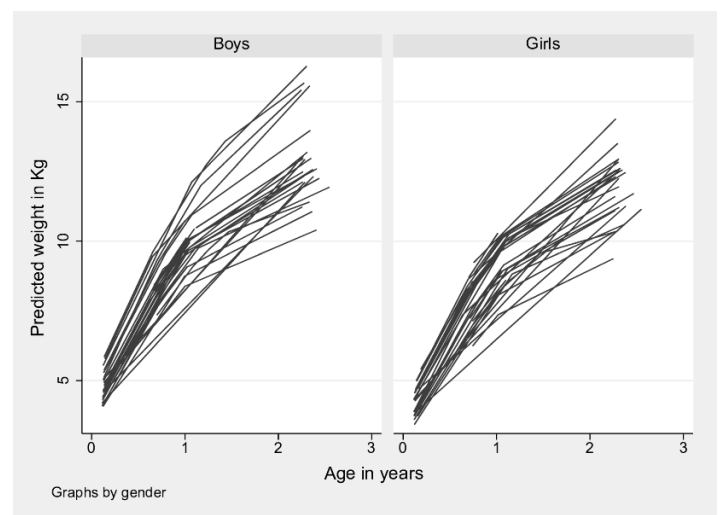
Further information

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/cmm/software/runmlwin/

Figure. Stata model output for the growth curve model fitted using the runmlwin command (left). Predicted growth curves for boys and girls (right).

Assessing UK academics' research methods training needs

Rose Wiles, NCRM Hub, University of Southampton

In broad terms, researchers identify a need in training in qualitative skills at the beginning of their career but an increasing need for training in quantitative methods as their career progresses.

This was found in the recent assessment of research methods training needs of academic social scientists in the UK carried out by the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM). However, the study also found that researchers, and those who supervise and lead research, recognise the importance of gaining skills across a range of methods as well as more general research and transferable skills.

The assessment of training needs was conducted by Dr Sean Moley and Dr Rose Wiles from the NCRM Hub, University of Southampton, as a follow-up to the similar assessment in 2005.

The assessment comprised an online survey of 2,352 ESRC funded researchers and a content analysis of academic job specifications in the social sciences over a four week period.

Training needs dependent on seniority and role

Looking at specific methodological issues, handling non-response, structural equation modelling and panel data analysis were the three most sought after quantitative topics.

Narrative inquiry, action research and ethnographic fieldwork were the most sought after qualitative topics. Analysis of these data across career level indicated that doctoral students frequently reported a demand for training in 'mathematics for statistics' while 'visual, creative and sensory methods' came near the top of the list for research fellows and senior research fellows.

'Log-linear modelling of tables', and 'instrumental variables methods' were often chosen by lecturers and senior lecturers, along with 'secondary analysis of qualitative data', which was the top choice for readers and professors.

In contrast to NCRM's 2005 assessment, training in mixed methods emerged as a training need but our data showed no consensus on what 'mixed methods' comprises.

Training in quantitative methods still a pressing need

The need for training in quantitative methods is viewed as the most pressing training need by those involved with the supervision or training of social scientists; this mirrors the findings of the 2005 assessment. However, some respondents noted that a focus on quantitative training should not be at the expense of qualitative training.

The content analysis of research posts provides some support for the need for researchers to have skills across a range of methods as well as specific skills in qualitative methods. The most common reason given for undertaking research methods training was to meet the needs arising from a current or planned research project.

Further information

The full report is available online in
http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/1788/

Methods at Plymouth University

The Centre for Methodological Innovations (CMI) at Plymouth University is a multi-disciplinary research group drawing together staff with expertise in methodological innovation, methods and techniques. The CMI is formally launched in September 2011 alongside the Institute of Health and Community and two other associated research centres.

The CMI brings together in a more formal structure academic staff from across the social sciences, health, education and other subject disciplines including arts, business and science within the university. Staff interests span qualitative and quantitative approaches and issues of method, methodology and epistemology and include social network analysis, feminist approaches, auto/ biography, narrative, participatory research, objectivity and subjectivity and risk adjustment models.

CMI members teach on the MSc programmes of Social Research, Social and Market Research, Social Research and Evaluation, and Social and Education Research. CMI members have longstanding research interests relating to pedagogical aspects of teaching research methods. The 2011/12 academic year sees the launch of a new intensive delivery of the MSc in Social Research.

The CMI staff organised the sixth annual Methods@Plymouth conference 'Methods and Methodology: Innovations, influence, impact and ethics' on the 19 and 20 May 2011. Reflecting the multi-disciplinary nature papers varied from 'advanced quantitative methods' through to 'ethical decision making by researcher practitioners'. Key note speakers were Dr Gill Clarke, formerly of the University of Southampton, and Professor Edwin van Teijlingen, University of Bournemouth.

Members of the CMI established the Methodological Innovations Online journal in 2006. The journal is an international peer reviewed social research journal. The June 2011 edition is a special edition with an editorial by Professor John Scott (Plymouth), on the 'Impact of Research on Policy' and draws contributions from leading academics and policy makers. Previous special topics included 'Survey methods for hard to reach populations' and 'Making qualitative data more re-usable'.

Further information

Methodologival Innovations Online
http://www.pbs.plym.ac.uk/mi/

Email csutton@plymouth.ac.uk to be added to the Methodological Innovation Online new issues alert distribution list.

ESRC Chief Executive Paul Boyle: We should make better use of administrative data in research

From left to right: Professor Judith Petts (Dean of the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, University of Southampton), Professor David Martin (NCRM Co-director, Director of the ESRC Census Programme), Professor Paul Boyle (ESRC Chief Executive), Professor Patrick Sturgis (NCRM Director), Professor Jane Falkingham (Director of the ESRC Centre for Population Change).

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is committed to making better use of administrative and transactional data in research, acording to the ESRC Chief Executive, Professor Paul Boyle. ESRC has reserved approximately 12% of its budget for data preservation and access, longitudinal studies and research methods.

Professor Boyle made these comments at the National Centre for Research Methods Annual Lecture on 4 May 2011 at the University of Southampton.

To view the filmed lecture and photos, please see http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/TandE/other/Paul_Boyle/

5th ESRC Research Methods Festival, 2-5 July 2012 at St Catherine's College Oxford

The dates for the next ESRC Research Methods Festival have now been confirmed. The festival will take place on 2-5 July 2012, once again at St Catherine's College in Oxford. The National Centre for Research Methods Hub at the University of Southampton is already working on the festival programme and making sure the festival will be as enjoyable and informative as in previous years.

This biennial event attracted over 800 participants in 2010 and we expect to attract at least the same number in 2012.

The festival programme will be published on the NCRM website before the registrations open in early 2012. We will publicise the programme and registrations through NCRM website http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/ and Twitter @NCRMUK

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