

SRA Monthly Bulletin:  
January 2011



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Happy New Year! Although we're all hoping for a good year ahead of us I'm sure the usual speed bumps will arise as always.

Thank you as always for your support, which is greatly appreciated and I look forward to seeing you all soon at some point.

If you have any items for possible inclusion regarding News and Publications should be sent to [Dorothy.williams@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:Dorothy.williams@the-sra.org.uk) and anything relating to Research Funding/ Training + Events to [MakiD@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:MakiD@the-sra.org.uk).

Please see the SRA website at [www.the-sra.org.uk](http://www.the-sra.org.uk) for more regarding what we have lined up ahead.

Best wishes from SRA London

## **SRA News items**

**January 2011**

### **44 Per Cent Cut in Research Councils**

Research Councils UK are preparing for a 44 per cent cut in capital spending following a decision to spread the pain across Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Science minister David Willetts told the House of Commons science and technology select committee in November that the BIS's portfolios will take pro-rata hits as the department attempts to cut the 44 per cent from its capital budget. Willetts admitted that this represents a 'significant' cut but said that some projects will still receive backing. However, some major science projects will be cut during the spending review period, and some that are already underway, such as the Isis synchrotron may also be cut.

### **Government Lowers its Aim on Higher Education Participation**

The Aim Higher programme for widening the participation in higher education among the underrepresented groups will not be funded after next July. This was revealed by David Willetts as well back in November and will mean that the scheme which received £250 million between 2008 and 2011. Research by the Higher Education Funding Council for England has shown that over the past five years disadvantaged young people have become 30 per cent more likely to enter higher education. The post – 1992 universities lobby group Million+ mentioned their disappointment with the decision.

### **Women Sidelined in Online Science**

Research from Goldsmiths College and the University of Bedfordshire has found that women are poorly represented in online science, engineering and technology articles. The work funded by the government advisory group on the underrepresentation of women in science and technology - the UK Resource Centre – showed men dominated content on mainstream and specialist websites. Women most often appeared in anonymous pictures as science journalists rather than scientists, in dedicated female publications, or in stereotypical activities.

### **Minister Offers Assurance over Defra Science Guide**

The abolition of quangos funded by the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs does not threaten the provision of sound policy advice, environment minister Caroline Spelman told the House of Commons environment, food and rural affairs committee. Spelman told MPs that the department's chief scientific adviser, Bob Watson, had stressed that any reductions must make sure the evidence base remained robust and that cuts were distributed according to the evidence-based priorities: 'We were careful to protect the evidence budget to make sure that we do have that resilience,' he said.

### **Willis Fills AMRC Chair**

Liberal Democrat peer Phil Willis took over as Chairman of the Association of Medical research Charities back in November. Willis is now a member of the Lords science and technology select committee. As an MP he was Lib Dem education spokesman and chaired the House of Commons select committee on science and technology.

## Publications

We would be very grateful if SRA members who were interested could write a book review of one of the following titles:

[Qualitative Research, Sheila Keegan](#)

[Social Research Methodology, Roger Gomm](#)

[Researching with Children and Young People, Tidall, Davis and Gallagher](#)

If any of SRA members are interested in writing a review of any of the titles mentioned above please contact Dorothy Williams at [Dorothy.williams@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:Dorothy.williams@the-sra.org.uk) to receive a copy of the book and speak to Carolyn Roberts at: [carolyn.roberts@samh.org.uk](mailto:carolyn.roberts@samh.org.uk) to inform her that they wish to review and submit their entries to her.

## Titles of Interest

### **Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology**

**Carla Willig, City University London**

This text offers a clear introduction to the topic by taking six different approaches to qualitative methods and explaining when each one should be used, the procedures and techniques involved, and any limitations associated with such research.

- Reflexivity and ethics
- The benefits of different approaches and the comparisons
- Appropriate ways of writing up research

### **Research Methods and Data Analysis for Psychology**

**Stuart Wilson and Rory MacLean, Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh Napier University**

This student-friendly and accessible text offers a broad introduction to research methods, data analysis and SPSS for psychology. Bringing these three elements together the text provides students with a full introduction in a single title. With coverage of qualitative research methods and data analysis, as well as the traditional quantitative elements, this text offers a balanced approach. Further support for students and lecturers can be found on the accompanying website, including a guide to SPSS. Written with student engagement in mind, the text offers Stop and Think boxes, In the Know boxes, Test Yourself sections and Activities and Questions.

### **The Stata Survival Manual**

**David Pevalin and Karen Robson**

**University of Essex**

If you are new to using Stata software and concerned about applying it to a project you may find this book useful. The authors offer you a step by step introduction to the basics of the software, before gently helping you develop a more sophisticated understanding of Stata and its capabilities. The book will guide you through the research process offering further reading where more complex decisions are needed and give 'real world' examples from a wide range of disciplines and anecdotes that clarify the issues for readers.

**Qualitative Research Design for Software users****Silvana di Georgio and Judith Davidson,**

This book is an essential guide for anyone using qualitative data analysis software (QDAS), particularly useful for those that want to go beyond a basic introduction to discover how to get the most out of software and how to identify the methodological issues they need to consider. The book is organized in the three parts – the first addresses the methodological issues that need to be addressed when designing qualitative research using QDAS; the second uses case studies to demonstrate the issues and the design framework that was introduced in the first part. The last section contains practical appendices to help readers apply the framework introduced to their own research.

**Essentials of Social Research****Linda Kalof, Amy Dan and Thomas Dietz****Michigan State University**

This is an introductory text designed to provide straight forward, clear answers to the key questions students have about research methods. Written for those with no prior background in social research methodology.

**Social Research 3/e: Issues, Methods and Process****Tim May,**

This book bridges the gap between theory and methods in social research, clearly illuminating these essential components for understanding the dynamics of social relations.

**Research Methods in Health 3/e****Ann Bowling,****University College London**

This best selling book provides an accessible introduction to the theoretical concepts and descriptive and analytic research methods used in research on health and medical services. The third edition has been thoroughly revised throughout to include updated references and boxed examples, with additional information on key methodological developments.

**Interpreting Statistical Findings: A Guide for Health professional and Students****Jan Walker and Palo Almond****University of Southampton**

Perfect for students undertaking a critical review of quantitative research papers and will also help health professional to understand and interpret statistical results with health-related research papers. The book requires little knowledge about statistics, includes worked examples and is broken into the following sections:

- A worked example of a published RCT and a health survey
- Explanations of basic statistical concepts
- Explanations of common statistics test
- A quick guide to statistical terms and concepts

## **Policy Press**

New publications this month

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20% discount available on all titles at <http://www.policypress.co.uk>

### **Asylum, Migration and Community**

**Maggie O'Neill**

Rooted in more than two decades of scholarship, this book uses critical social theory and participatory, biographical and arts-based methods with asylum seekers, refugees and emerging communities to explore the dynamics of the asylum-migration-community nexus.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861347224&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=1&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861347224&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=1&dc=14)

### **Systematic Action Research**

**Danny Burns**

This book shows how systemic action research can be integrated, in any context, to the process of social and organisational development and change. Filled with illustrative stories and pictures, it brings the concepts to life enabling the reader to develop a clear picture of how to put it into practice.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861347374&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=3&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861347374&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=3&dc=14)

### **The Handbook of Inequality and Socioeconomic Position**

**Mary Shaw, Bruna Galobardes, Professor Debbie A. Lawlor, John Lynch, Ben Wheeler, George Davey Smith**

This handbook is the definitive resource for anyone wishing to quickly look up and understand key concepts and measurements relating to socioeconomic position and inequalities.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861347671&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=6&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861347671&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=6&dc=14)

### **Doing Research with Refugees: Issues and Guidelines**

**Bogusia Temple, Rhetta Moran**

Designed specifically to explore methodological issues relating to the involvement of refugees in both service evaluation and development and research more generally. It builds on a two-year seminar series funded by the ESRC and attended by members of a range of statutory and voluntary organisations, as well as academics and refugees themselves. The participants jointly drew up a set of good practice guidelines that are re-produced in the book for the first time.

Special price for Voluntary Sector £30.00 (UK only).

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861345981&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=7&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861345981&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=7&dc=14)

### **The Ethics of Survivor Research: Guidelines for the ethical conduct of research carried out by mental health service users and survivors**

**Alison Faulkner**

This guide is an accessible manual on ethical practice for research from the perspective of mental health service users and survivors. The guidelines are not intended as rules, but as helpful guidance on some of the difficult and important issues to be considered prior to a

research project or research training programme. There are helpful hints and suggestions, as well as quotations and ideas reflecting the experience of people who were consulted for the development of the guidelines. FREE pdf version available online at [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)  
[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861346414&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=8&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861346414&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=8&dc=14)

### **Researchers and their Subjects: Ethics, Power, Knowledge and Consent**

**Marie Smith, Catherine Bond**

This book examines the role of participants in research and how research ethics can be put into practice. Health, social, and journalistic research are currently subject to very different forms of regulation and codes of practice. By including the experiences of researchers and their subjects in all of these contexts, the book explores the disciplinary divides.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861345141&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=9&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861345141&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=9&dc=14)

### **Understanding Research for Social Policy and Practice: Theme, Methods and Approaches**

**Saul Becker, Alan Bryman**

Comprehensive in scope, and written by experts in a thoroughly accessible and engaging style, the book combines theoretical and applied discussions to provide the essential one-stop guide to research for social policy and practice.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861344045&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=11&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861344045&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=11&dc=14)

### **Biographical Methods and Professional Practice: An International Perspective**

**Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat, Ursula Apatzsch**

The turn to biographical methods in social science is yielding a rich harvest of research outcomes and invigorating the relationship between policy and practice. This book uses a range of interpretive approaches to reveal the dynamics of service users' and professionals' individual experiences and life-worlds. It shows how biographical methods can improve theoretical understanding of professional practice, as well as enrich the learning and development of professionals, and promote more meaningful and creative practitioner-service user relationships.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861344939&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=13&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861344939&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=13&dc=14)

### **Biography and Social Exclusion in Europe: Experiences and Life Journeys**

**Prue Chamberlayne, Michael Rustin, Tom Wengraf**

Throughout Europe, standardised approaches to social policy and practice are being radically questioned and modified. Beginning from the narrative detail of individual lives, this book re-thinks welfare predicaments, emphasising gender, generation, ethnic and class implications of economic and social deregulation.

[http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861343093&sf1=eh\\_subject\\_code&st1=L100&sort=sort\\_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=14&dc=14](http://www.policypress.co.uk/display.asp?K=9781861343093&sf1=eh_subject_code&st1=L100&sort=sort_date/d&ds=Social%20Research%20Methods&m=14&dc=14)

**Other titles include:**

**Ground Rules for Social Research 2/e: Guidelines for Good practice**

**Martyn Denscombe**

De Monfort University

**The Good Research Guide 4/e: For Small Scale Social Research**

**Martyn Denscombe**

De Monfort University

**Doing Your Research Project 5/e**

Judith Bell

**How to Research 4/e**

Loraine Baxter, Cristina Hughes, Malcolm Tight

University of Warwick and Lancaster University

**A Gentle Guide to Research Methods**

Gordon Rugg, Marian Petre

Keele University, Open University

**Dealing with Statistics: What You Need to Know**

Reva Berman Brown, Mark Saunders

**Using Statistics: A Gentle Introduction**

Gordon Rugg

Keele University

**The Student's Guide to Research Ethics 2/e**

Paul Oliver

University of Huddersfield

**Gaining Funding for Research: A Guide for Academics and Institutions**

Diane Berry

University of Reading

## SRA Training Courses and Events:

For more information please visit: <http://www.the-sra.org.uk/training.htm>

All 1-day courses are £250 for non members and £175 for members; 2-day courses are £450 for non members and 350 for members.

SRA training days over the next few months:

Course: [Writing Effective Research Reports](#)

Level: Introductory

Length: 1 Day

Location: London

Date: 26th Jan 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 23rd December 2010**

Course: [Cognitive Interviewing](#)

Level: Advanced

Length: 1 day

Location: London

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

Course: [Essentials of Survey Research Design](#)

Level: Introductory

Length: 1 Day

Location: Manchester

Date: 2nd Mar 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 28th January 2011**

Course: [Introduction to Survey Sampling](#)

Level: Introductory

Length: 1 Day

Location: Manchester

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> Mar 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 28th January 2011**

Course: [In Depth Interviewing](#)

Level: Introductory

Length: 1 Day

Location: London

Date: 24<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 24th February 2011**

Course: [Research into Policy and Practice](#)

Level: Advanced

Length: 1 Day

Location: London

Date: 21st Jun 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 20th May 2011**

Course: [Grounded Theory and Research Method](#)

Level: Advanced

Length: 1 Day

Location: London

Date: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 5<sup>th</sup> March**

Course: [Survey Research and Data Privacy](#)

Level: Advanced

Length: ½ day

Location: London

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 21st April 2011**

Course: [Survey Research and Data Privacy](#)

Level: Advanced

Length: ½ day

Location: London

Date: 2nd Mar 2011

**Deadline for Bookings and Confirmation: 21st April 2011**

## **Forthcoming SRA Events**

### **Call for papers**

The Social Research Association is staging the UK's inaugural conference in **Using Social Media in Social Research on 23 February 2011 in London.**

The SRA invites the submission of papers which help illuminate the application of social media in social research. The past few years has seen the rapid growth of social media in communication within communities and interaction between people. This conference aims to explore the role of social media (current and potential) in a research and insight generation capacity. Papers can cover the areas of policy or practice.

### **Conference format**

This one-day conference will include a combination of presentations and workshop discussions. Accepted papers will each have an oral presentation as well as a poster in a lunchtime poster session. There will be an award for the best paper of the conference and papers will be published electronically by the SRA in the Proceedings of the Conference.

### **Important dates**

Outline paper submissions due            December 21<sup>st</sup> 2010  
Author response notification January    8<sup>th</sup> 2011  
Conference                                    February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011

### **Submissions**

The submission of papers and the management of the paper reviewing process will be electronic. Papers are to be submitted electronically to Nigel Goldie, CEO, SRA ([nigel.goldie@the-sra.org.uk](mailto:nigel.goldie@the-sra.org.uk)) and the email clearly identified as 'Social Media in Social Research – conference paper'. Papers are likely to be 7,000 words or less in length. SRA will not accept any paper that is substantially similar to another paper that is currently under review or has already been accepted for publication in a journal or another conference.

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## **Other organizations' courses and events coming up**

### **ARMA Training Events:**

#### **Fundamentals of Research Administration, February 16th, Aston Conference Centre Birmingham**

This intensive one-day course is aimed at Research Administrators who will probably have a maximum of one year's experience in university research centres/institutes or central offices, or in the NHS, or in the offices of sponsors of research.

Research Contracts, 18th March, Newcastle University

This course is targeted at staff in research support roles (whether in departments, faculties or central research offices) who come across research contracts in their day-to-day work and support the contract process but who are not necessarily contracts specialists.

Make your booking online: <https://www.arma.ac.uk/list-events.xhtml>

### **BHPS Introductory Training Courses 2011**

**5-6 May 2011**

#### **Introduction to BHPS using Stata**

This course is aimed at new users of the BHPS or those who have so far made use only of simpler aspects of the data. The underlying structure of the BHPS is complex, with various different data about individuals and the households in which they live across time. The BHPS team has tried to make this structure as transparent as possible through the way data is organised. However, even the number of different data sets can appear daunting. This course aims to guide the user through these apparent complexities, and ensure that they can effectively make use of as much of the data as they require for their own research projects.

For more info please see: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/survey/bhps/courses/stata-intro>

### **ESRC RDI Workshops: International Social Research Training**

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2011, 2- 5 pm (provisional programme)

CAQDAS

'Methodological and technical innovations in CAWDAS: integrating data and analyses' (NCRM QUIC node)

### **British Sociological Association's 2011 Annual Conference**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2011 – London School of Economics

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## NCVO

NCVO Research supports voluntary and community organizations by developing a strong evidence base on voluntary sector issues.

Find out about the key areas we work in as well as details of all our publications, events and our membership scheme for organizations within civil society at <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/research/>

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**The CASS Short Course Programme** for the academic year 2010 can be found at the following website [www.s3ri.soton.ac.uk/cass](http://www.s3ri.soton.ac.uk/cass). All course content and registration forms for the courses that CASS offers this academic year can also be downloaded from this site.

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### **Managing and sharing social science research data: legal and ethical issues**

April Friday 8<sup>th</sup> 10.00 – 2.30 British Library, London.

As part of its current Researcher Development Initiative (RDI) grant, the UK Data Archive will host a workshop on managing and sharing research data for quantitative **Data Management Support Services. University of Essex** and qualitative social science research. The workshop is aimed at social researchers at all stages of their career – from new to experienced – and will cover key legal and ethical issues surrounding the managing and sharing of data in research with people (surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations and ethnography). The workshop will provide guidance and practical exercises and discussions focusing on:

- ethical and legal issues in data sharing and re-use
- handling and sharing confidential information and personal data
- informed consent and data sharing
- anonymising data

Content is based on advice and guidance provided by the UK Data Archive to researchers and aims to help researchers plan data management strategies for projects and consider data sharing and archiving as part of ethical review procedures.

**Organisers: UK Data Archive Essex University**

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### **Fitting Statistical Models to Complex Survey Data workshop**

The workshop is designed to foster interaction between practitioners and statistical experts in the analysis of complex survey data, by which participants can get advice on

the suitability of different approaches for their intended analysis, and the statistical experts can get feedback on what is the 'current practice' regarding the analysis of complex survey data within the UK quantitative social science community, including information on issues and barriers for successful analysis of such data. **Please note that the workshop is free of charge and is limited to 40 places on a first come first served basis. Please complete the attached forms and send to the course administrator at [webcontact-s3ri@lists.soton.ac.uk](mailto:webcontact-s3ri@lists.soton.ac.uk)**

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## **Royal Statistical Society Official Statistics Section Meeting**

### **"The Retail Prices Index and the Consumer Price Index"**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 5pm

The Retail Prices Index is the traditional measure of retail price inflation, and has been widely used for a range of purposes. Recently the Government has been giving more prominence to an alternative measure, the Consumer Price Index. This meeting will discuss whether the CPI is a better inflation measure than the RPI for all or some purposes. The ONS is considering how to improve the CPI and in particular how to include housing costs, which are currently excluded.

Attendance is free and open to all, but pre-registration is recommended. You can register by email: [meetings@rss.org.uk](mailto:meetings@rss.org.uk) or by phone (020) 7638 8998. For further information contact Michael Baxter ([michael a baxter@hotmail.com](mailto:michael_a_baxter@hotmail.com)).

**The Royal Statistical Society's next Ordinary Discussion Meeting** will take place on January 26<sup>th</sup> 2011 at 4pm on 'Resource allocation models'.

Two papers will be presented:

**"The abuse of regression in the National Health Service allocation formulae: response to the Department of Health's 2007 'Resource allocation research' paper"** by J. Galbraith and M. Stone and

**"Resource allocation for English local government: a critique of the four-block model"** by A. Gibson and S. Asthana.

You can find information about Ordinary Meetings or download the PDF file directly from our website [www.rss.org.uk/preprints](http://www.rss.org.uk/preprints). If you would prefer a copy or a PDF file sent directly to you please contact [journal@rss.org.uk](mailto:journal@rss.org.uk).

We welcome contributions to the discussion following the presentation of the papers. If you would like to contribute, you would be limited to five minutes' speaking time at the meeting. It would be helpful if you could let us know in advance so that your name can be called. Again please e-mail [journal@rss.org.uk](mailto:journal@rss.org.uk).

If you cannot attend the meeting we would be happy to receive a written contribution. The written version of such contributions is **strictly** 400 words in length (not including any tables or reference details and figures). Please provide the following information at the beginning of your contribution:

\* the author(s) and title of the paper under discussion.

\* your name (including your title) and your affiliation, as you would wish it to appear on your printed contribution, e.g. Dr X, University of Y, City Z.

\* either a full postal address or an e-mail address where you wish to receive the proofs of your contribution for checking (proofs will be sent out approximately three months after the meeting).

You are not obliged to submit your written contribution before the meeting but if you do it may be read out for discussion during the meeting if there is time.

After the meeting, contributions may be submitted for publication by sending a paper copy or pdf file direct to the Society's address before Wednesday February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011. This deadline is important (i) to help the authors of the paper, who will consider all the contributions and compose a reply, in limited time and (ii) for the production of the journal.

### **Social Network Analysis: State of the art and new developments**

Tuesday 15/3/11, 2-6.30pm at the Royal Statistical Society, 12 Errol Street, London, EC1Y 8LX.

Social network analysis has grown from being a small niche curiosity to a well respected methodology in a relatively short time. This half-day meeting provides an overview of the field and its applications, and a discussion of recent developments. Topics covered include ideas, concepts and the history of the network perspective; multilevel models to analyse network and group dependencies, for example in educational data; models for dynamics in longitudinally observed networks and their use to study peer influence; using Exponential Random Graph models to explore network structures; and specialist software available for analysing network data.

#### **Martin G. Everett (University of Manchester)**

*Social Network Analysis: History and Overview*

- Ideas, concepts and history of the network perspective.
- Techniques for visualization and descriptive measures.
- Specialist software available for analyzing network data.

#### **Mark Tranmer (University of Manchester)**

*Random effects models for social network and group dependencies*

- The "network effects model" and the "network disturbances model".
- Multilevel random effects models for modeling model group dependencies.

- Assessing variation in educational outcomes between pupils and schools, taking into account friendship networks of the pupils in the school.

**Tom A.B. Snijders (Nuffield College, University of Oxford)**

*Modelling dynamics of social networks*

- Stochastic actor-oriented models: a class of continuous-time Markov chain models for representing network dynamics.
- Models of network dynamics for studying peer influence.
- How individual behaviours (adolescent smoking and collaboration between firms) are influenced by their network partners (“peers”).

**Johan Koskinen (University of Manchester)**

*Recent advances in Exponential Random Graph Modelling (ERGM) and inference*

- Using ERGM to explore network structures
- Estimating network size and handling heterogeneity in ERGM
- Different approaches to Bayesian estimation for ERGM

Registration with payment is required. Booking forms can be downloaded from [www.rss.org.uk/events](http://www.rss.org.uk/events) or requested by email from [conference@rss.org.uk](mailto:conference@rss.org.uk)

Meeting contacts: Tarani Chandola ([tarani.chandola@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:tarani.chandola@manchester.ac.uk)) and Jouni Kuha ([j.kuha@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.kuha@lse.ac.uk))

Registration charges: RSS Student/Retired Fellows - £20; CStats/GradStats - £22; RSS Fellows - £25; RSS members - £30; none of the above - £35

Please alert colleagues or others you feel may be interested in attending or contributing.

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**BIVAR New Seminar Series: Thursday 20 January, London**

**Nick Ockenden: Volunteering: myths and challenges in a big society**

Numerous organisations suggest that their involvement of volunteers has never been higher or more central to their work. Research indicates, however, that rates of volunteering have been static for the past decade and have recently started to decline. Much evidence also suggests that volunteers are being sidelined from positions of influence. At a time of heightened interest in volunteering, Nick will draw on research by IVR and other organisations to start to distinguish myth from reality, and discuss some of the major challenges facing the movement.

**Colin Rochester: Volunteering at the grassroots: activities and issues in a new policy environment**

There is growing interest in individual and collective acts of volunteering at grassroots level but what do we know about these activities? Colin will highlight some of the key

issues for community-based voluntary action in the light of a challenging policy environment.

For more information on topics please contact Diana Wray at IVAR  
[diana@ivar.org.uk](mailto:diana@ivar.org.uk)