



ENACTING METHODS: THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF DATA

4 December 2012, 11:00 – 16:00

The Open University, Milton Keynes, Christodoulou Meeting Room 15

This forum (co-developed and hosted by the Enactments programme and Families, Relationships, Communities programme) provides a valuable practical opportunity to critically reflect on the social and political life of method and the future potential of research data. The choice of methods when developing research is rarely a neutral activity. Researchers often have a strong prior commitment to certain methods making method perhaps less about representation and more about performance. Could methods be said to enact? The possibility that methods are capable of taking on a life of their own is further compounded by the increasing awareness that projects become archived as “data” which may well be re-purposed by new researchers, with new questions in years to come.

All Welcome.

RSVP: If you would like to attend please e-mail: socsci-ccig-events@open.ac.uk.
Directions & Map: <http://www3.open.ac.uk/contact/locations.aspx>

Programme:

11.00-11.15 CCIG Director's update (Jef Huysmans, Open University)

11.15 -11.30 Welcome to the Forum (Jacqui Gabb and Kesi Mahendran, Open University)

11.30 – 13.00 **The practicalities, potentialities and pitfalls of using archive data** (Libby Bishop, Archivist, Economic and Social Data Service – ESDS). Discussant: Peter Redman (Open University)

What can archives offer to researchers? Why should we use them? What theoretical, ethical, and practical challenges does secondary analysis present? Libby will address these questions and many more. Peter will lead our discussions, drawing on his experience of researching sex using the Mass Observation archive, Little Kinsey study. Using key questions of interest to CCIG members, Libby will then talk us through the ESDS archive. Questions will address: 'how does the archive understand method?' What resources exist in the archive to study 'what is sex?' and 'how borders become enacted?'

13.00 – 13.30 **Data Economies and Ecologies** (Evelyn Ruppert, co-convener, Open University - CRESC)

Evelyn will draw from her work on SLoM and 'live' archives of 'big data' to discuss the epistemological and ontological issues raised when data travels and is re-purposed, deployed, re-framed and re-mobilised by different methods and researchers.

13.30 – 14.15 Lunch

14.15 - 14.45 **The Political Life of Methods**

These two openings will set up and stimulate ideas for the round table.

Critical Methods in International Relations: the politics of techniques, devices and acts (Claudia Aradau, King's College, London & Jef Huysmans, Open University)

Methods have increasingly been placed at the heart of theoretical and empirical research in IR and social sciences more generally. This opening explores the role of methods in International Relations and argues that methods can be part of a critical project if reconceptualised away from techniques of organising empirical material and research design. It proposes a two-pronged reconceptualisation of critical methods as devices which enact worlds and acts which disrupt particular worlds. Developing this conceptualisation allows us to move away from the dominance of scientificity (and its weaker versions of systematicity and rigour) to understand methods as less pure, less formal, messier and more experimental, carrying substantive political visions.

Introducing Militant Enquiry (Martina Tazzioli Goldsmiths – University of London)

This opening will introduce militant enquiry as means to search for the productions of new forms of subjectivity as the outcome of migrants' practices of resistance that continually disrupt the governmental regime. It will draw from my current project which concerns a critical analysis from a Foucaultian perspective of the European governmentality of people mobility and, in particular, of migrations.

14.45 – 16.00 **Round table: New considerations for research inquiry**

Forum participants are invited to discuss some of the new considerations that have developed as a result of the day's discussion.