

# METHODS | NORTH WEST

**Manchester Methods Exchanges Conference** is a student-led event which provides postgraduate researchers with the invaluable opportunity to present their research method ideas and experiences to a supportive and interdisciplinary audience. The conference brings together researchers from universities across the North West, which provides attendees with a fantastic opportunity to meet and gain advice from fellow academics from varied institutions and disciplines.

**Kanaris Theatre, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL**

**10th May 2017, 10:00am – 5:00pm**

Book via [Eventbrite](#)

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

MethodsNW are looking for PGR students at Lancaster, Manchester, Liverpool and Keele universities to take part in the conference-launch event of the new student-led Methods Exchanges programme in Manchester on May 10th 2017.

There are FOUR conference themes that have separate call for papers and specific contacts to send your abstracts. Please read the descriptions carefully and apply to the specified email listed in the call.

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### THEME ONE: Archives and Collections

This strand focuses on the practical challenges facing students when using archives and collections, but will also reflect on some theoretical aspects. Themes to expand upon include (but are not limited to):

- Personal experiences of working with archives/collections, for “good” or “bad”.
- How best to prepare ahead of engaging with archives/collections – the things to know.
- Do you have a collection to bring along and discuss? – How did you/others use it, etc.
- Having to create your own archive/collection in the course of your studies – pros/cons.
- Can the provenance of archives/collections shape the way we use them? Should it?
- Does digitisation affect engagement? How will digital information shape future sources?

Proposals for papers exploring these themes (or others) are welcome from any disciplinary perspective, in relation to any academic experience. **Abstracts of no more than 250 words must be sent by 5pm on 10th April, 2017 to Dalinder Sall (dalinder.sall@manchester.ac.uk).**

This is an ideal opportunity for doctoral students to present on their research methods and/or personal experience, to an interdisciplinary audience of PGRs and invited academic staff, in an informal, workshop-style environment. Presentations will be ten minutes long, and will be followed by questions and discussion.

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## THEME TWO: Fieldwork

We invite papers from postgraduate researchers who are planning to, or have experience with, conducting fieldwork. As a central component of ethnographic study, fieldwork approaches involve the researcher immersing themselves in a variety of settings, and collecting data about a social group of interest using a range of techniques including, but not limited to, participant observation, interviews, photography, videography, and netnography. We invite papers which relate to, but are not limited to, the following key topics:

- Managing the 'messiness' of fieldwork
- The interpretive gap between researcher and researched
- Researcher positionality and related ethical concerns
- Experiences of researcher vulnerability when conducting fieldwork
- Managing and maintaining field relations (during and after leaving the field)
- Recording, analysing, and disseminating nuanced and complex fieldnotes.

In addition to the presentations, attendees can expect to listen to a key speaker who will provide insights into the challenges they have personally faced with conducting field research. Furthermore, there will be the opportunity to engage with a panel of researchers who will be providing first-hand insights into their fieldwork experiences.

**Please submit an abstract of no more than 250 words to [fieldworktheme@gmail.com](mailto:fieldworktheme@gmail.com).** Presenters should expect to present a 15-minute paper which addresses one or more of the fieldwork-related topics outlined above. Please state which topic(s) your paper addresses and your academic discipline at the top of your abstract.

### Important dates:

- The deadline for abstract submissions is the **7th April 2017**.
- The decision of the outcome will be emailed to applicants by the **14th April 2017**.

If you have any queries, please get in contact via: [fieldworktheme@gmail.com](mailto:fieldworktheme@gmail.com)

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## THEME THREE: Quantitative Methodologies

This theme represent a powerful method in Social Science that can contribute to both generalised theory testing and to exploratory analysis. However, they can also be highly technical and jargon heavy and can appear intimidating, impenetrable and insular to those who lack familiarity or experience in data analysis. This theme draws together doctoral students and researchers from across many disciplines who are using quantitative methodologies. It addresses the benefits and limitations of these methods, and provides a support network for those grappling with quantitative research methods to discuss common challenges and issues.

Themes to expand upon include (but are not limited to):

- Operationalising concepts in a quantitative analysis.

- Ensuring that research projects rooted in quantitative methodologies remain theory and topic driven.
- How to choose between competing analytical techniques and determine the most appropriate approach for your study.
- Balancing theoretical and pragmatic decisions in your research design.
- Dealing with imperfect data and the compromises this may entail to the overall research design.
- Techniques for dealing with missing data.

Proposals for papers exploring these themes (or other quantitative themes) are welcome from any disciplinary perspective, in relation to any academic experience. **Abstracts of no more than 250 words must be sent by 5pm on 12th April, 2017 to Dalinder Sall (dalinder.sall@manchester.ac.uk).**

This is an ideal opportunity for doctoral students to present on their research methods and/or personal experience, to an interdisciplinary audience of PGRs and invited academic staff, in an informal, workshop-style environment. Presentations will be ten minutes long, and will be followed by questions and discussion.

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#### **THEME FOUR: New Forms of Data**

This theme focuses on the opportunities opened up by the new forms of data that have become available as a result of technological, computational and social changes in the last decade. As the ESRC (2016) notes, social science researchers across multiple fields are increasingly working with forms of data “created by new technologies, connections and processes” and that these new forms “are rapidly emerging as important to supplement, enhance and in some cases replace datasets collected by traditional means”.

Postgraduate researchers across multiple fields engaging with the ‘digital’ broadly conceived are encouraged to submit proposals for papers describing the current progress of their research, with an emphasis on how it leverages new forms of data. Topics of interest to expand upon include (but are in no way limited to) the following topics of interest:

- Internet data: derived from social media and other online interactions (including data gathered by connected people and technologies, e.g. mobile devices, wearables, the Internet of Things)
- Tracking data: monitoring the movement of people and objects (including GPS/geolocation data, traffic and other transport sensor data, CCTV images, etc.)
- Satellite and aerial data: e.g. Google Earth, landsat, infrared, radar mapping, etc.
- ‘Big’ archival data: massive repositories of texts, audio, visual and video materials that require machine-assisted navigation and analysis
- Visualising data: new approaches to aesthetics and analytics of data visualisation (including 3D modelling and printing, virtual reality, geospatial displays).

Presentations will be ten minutes long, and will be followed by questions and discussion. **Abstracts of no more than 250 words may be submitted as a Word document no later than 5:00pm on 14th April, 2017 to Loretta Anthony-Okeke (loretta.okeke@manchester.ac.uk).**