

Call for Papers for the Session

Process Generated Data

at the Seventh International Conference on Social Science Methodology
organised by ISA RC 33 (Research Committee on Logic and Methodology)
September 1st – 5th, 2008, Naples

Process-generated data have several advantages in comparison to data “classically” used in social research, i. e. surveys, interviews and observation: Process-generated data are non-reactive. They can be used, if other means of data collection are not applicable, for example, if infrastructure for large-scale surveys does not exist (which is the case in many countries of transition), if response-rates in surveys are expected to be low, if researchers might not get access to interview partners or if the social phenomenon of interest is not observable (e.g. when analysing past events or hidden populations). At the same time, discussion on how to methodologically handle these process-generated data has been long neglected.

The session aims at comparing a wide range of process-generated data and discussing how they can be used for social research. Examples for standardised data are customer data bases, web logs, administrative forms and GIS data. Examples for less structured data are documents, novels, diaries, letters, websites, paintings, films, photos, maps, mechanical drawings, construction plans, landscapes, buildings, monuments and objects.

Papers should discuss a specific type of process-generated data, addressing the following questions:

- What are the specific characteristics of this data type? How does this effects data analysis and interpretation?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of this data type? How does this data type differ from other forms of process-generated data, and how does it differ from surveys, interviews and observation?
- For which kind of theoretical and thematical research question are these data suitable?
- Where and how can these data be sampled and collected? Are these data limited to a specific geographical area and historical period? Are data of the same data type collected in different periods or geographical areas comparable?
- How valid are results drawn from these data?

Papers debating general methodological questions in handling a specific data type and papers discussing specific methodological problems in a specific research project are both equally welcome. In order to gain a common ground of discussion, authors should also state their disciplinary and theoretical background and – in case of presenting a thematic case study – shortly present the thematic background of the study.

Selected Papers from this session will be published in a special issue of the journal HSR (Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung).

Submission

Please email an extended abstract (1-2 pages) to the session organizer:

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Deadlines:

Submission of extended abstracts (1-2 pages)	January 31 st , 2008
Notification of authors	February 15 th , 2008
Submission of Full Paper for HSR	September 30 th , 2008

Further Information

On the Conference:	http://www.rc332008.unina.it/
On RC 33:	http://www.isa-sociology.org/rc33.htm
On ISA:	http://www.isa-sociology.org/