

Inference from Non Probability Samples

Call for Presentations
Conference of SRM, ESRA and ELIPSS

Paris Institute of Political Studies (Science PO)
March 16/17 2017

“Survey Research Methods” (SRM), the “European Survey Research Association” (ESRA) and the “Étude Longitudinal par Internet Pour les Sciences Sociales” (ELIPSS) seeks presentations for a conference on “Inference from Non-Probability Samples” in Paris, March 16/17 2017.

Keynote speeches will be held by Prof. Andrew Gelman, Columbia University, New York, U.S.A. and Prof. Jelke Bethlehem, Institute of Political Sciences, Leiden University, The Netherlands.

Submission and presentation guidelines

- Please read the section “Inspiration” below for a description of the kinds of contributions we are seeking.
- Email your proposal to the scientific organizers (inps@uni-potsdam.de).
- Submissions should include the name and affiliation of the author, a title, and an informative abstract (200 words).
- The presentations should take no longer than 30 minutes, with 10 minutes on top of this for discussion.
- Submission deadline is December 31th 2016. The final program will be circulated in January 2016.

Inspiration

In survey research, the data collected with a survey are the facts we know, from which we want to infer certain characteristics of a defined population (descriptive inference) or about a parameter of a more general data generating process (causal inference). In probability samples, the process that creates the observed data from the population is well known, making descriptive inferential statements from the observed data to the population relatively unproblematic. While causal statements require further assumptions, probability samples ease

the inference from respondents to (classes of) human beings in general subject to assumptions being met. Probability samples have thus always been an important criterion for the quality of empirical research with surveys.

However, the role of probability samples for survey research have come under pressure from various directions. Unit nonresponse places a question mark on the assumption that a probability sample by design remains to be a probability sample in practice. In recent years, economics witnessed an *experimental revolution* that brought an increased use of experimental designs with highly selective research units away from the field and into computer labs, and this experimental revolution has also reached other disciplines of the social sciences. The technical innovation of web surveys has made the design of survey experiments very easy in practice although the classic distinction between *internal* and *external* validity is still a factor in judging the worth of such experiments for robust causal inference. While the response rates in classic survey modes diminish, self-selected samples of respondents are increasingly available via social networking and specialized internet platforms.

The purpose of the conference is to discuss the possibilities of drawing inferences from social science data without the use of probability samples, or from probability samples with low rates of response. What kind of research questions can be answered using self-selected samples, and what measures can be taken to combat selection bias? We seek presentations that criticize the use of non-probability samples and small-scale experiments, as well as presentations that advocate their use. Best practice examples are welcome, as well as methodological discussions.

Policies

- Submissions will be selected by examining all of the information in the abstract.
- Following the conference, it is planned to publish a special issue of SRM on “inference from non-probability samples”. Presenters will be invited to submit their papers to SRM for that purpose, but there will also be an open call for papers for the special issue. Thus it cannot be guaranteed that the conference papers will be published in SRM.
- The conference is open to all but the number of delegates will be limited. ESRA members will take precedence in case of shortage of space. More details will follow when the programme is announced

Fees

Participants are asked to travel with their own funding. There will be a small conference fee to cover coffee and refreshments. There will be also a conference dinner at additional costs.

Scientific Organizers

- Nick Allum (ESRA Board)
- Ulrich Kohler (Editor of Survey Research Methods)
- Laurent Lesnard (ELIPSS)

About

- Survey Research Methods is Survey Research Methods is the official peer reviewed journal of the European Survey Research Association. The journal publishes articles in English which discuss methodological issues related to survey research.
- European Survey Research Association provide coordination in the field of survey research in Europe and to foster and enhance links between European survey researchers and their colleagues in other parts of the world.
- Étude Longitudinal par Internet Pour les Sciences Sociales is an online panel that is representative of the population living in metropolitan France.