

entrepreneurial strategies, etc. Meetings like the ESBRI workshop in Tällberg offer a different perspective and foster open discussion. And this is no small matter.

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Theory and Practice in the Analysis of Longitudinal Data

(QMSS Workshop/Seminar)

University of Southampton,
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From August 19–27, 2004, the University of Southampton in the United Kingdom became the venue for a workshop on Theory and Practice in the Analysis of Longitudinal Data. The workshop was organised by the European Science Foundation as part of the programme Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences. Applications to participate in the QMSS workshop/seminar were invited from highly qualified junior scholars, who either research quantitative methods as such or use them in their social-science research and need to broaden their skills. Only applicants from the nineteen European countries with organisations supporting the QMSS programme were considered for participation. For further information about the QMSS programme, see the European Science Foundation website (<http://www.esf.org/qmss>).

The course was one in a series of twelve planned workshops intended to enhance the knowledge of junior researchers with regard to the latest developments in quantitative methods. The focus of this course was 'event history analysis'. It was split into two modules: a one-week series of lectures providing a strong theoretical background on this subject, followed by a two-day, hands-on seminar devoted to the analysis of real-life data. The workshop was led by two senior researchers of international acclaim in this field: Hans-Peter Blossfeld (Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg) and Goetz Roehwer (Ruhr-Universität Bochum). The afternoon practical sessions

were led by Karen Kurtz (Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg).

Hans-Peter Blossfeld is a professor of sociology and the editor of the *European Sociological Review*, and he has published numerous books and articles on quantitative social research methods and statistical methods for longitudinal data analysis, and many other topics. Goetz Roehwer is a professor of social research methods and statistics and is co-author of the Transition Data Analysis program (TDA), which was used in the course. The QMSS course drew heavily on the book by H.-P. Blossfeld and G. Roehwer, *Techniques of Event History Modeling. New Approaches to Causal Analysis* (LEA 2002).

The course started with an introduction to types of longitudinal data and methods of longitudinal data analysis. Event history analysis allows researchers to analyse longitudinal data in cases where it is expected that previous experience could influence subsequent outcomes. It is designed to consider multiple risks which can be inter-related. A somewhat similar technique, path analysis, is suitable for continuous dependent variables only, which is why this approach has been heaped with criticism in recent years. The seminars were practical computer-based sessions using a single data set. At the end of the workshop the participants took part in a two-day seminar on the topic addressed in the workshop. The speakers included leading international researchers in the field (e.g. John McDonald, Chris Skinner, Fiona Steele, Alessandro Rosina).

Located in the heart of Hampshire, on the southern coast of England, the University of Southampton proved to be a very pleasant and inspiring venue. It is also home to the Statistical Sciences Research Institute (known as S³RI), which supports the activities of researchers in the field of statistics and demography, and focuses primarily on statistical research. It has one of the largest groups of statisticians at any British university (see <http://www.s3ri.soton.ac.uk>). The knowledge acquired in the training pro-

gramme is particularly relevant and highly applicable to the analysis of data from longitudinal surveys. It further enhances the development of sociological research, especial-

ly as the use of more advanced quantitative methods has lately become a standard for quality research in the social sciences.

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