# MNW Methods Labs: A New Strand of Activity

# Methods Labs: An Overview

Complementing its Online Methods Seminar Series, from 2022-23 MNW is organising and running a new Methods Labs strand. Methods Labs offer opportunities for postgraduate and academic researchers to come together to work intensively for a concentrated period of time around particular methods or methodologies. Normally running for half or full days, the Methods Labs format is dynamic and flexible, and MNW will support those delivering the Labs to ensure they are configured effectively as well as providing funding.

MNW will be working closely with the NWSSDTP on the Methods Labs, with particular Methods Labs organised by, for instance, thematic priority area leads annually. However, the Methods Labs also reflect MNW’s core priorities in supporting PGR access to the state-of-the-art in existing methods and methodologies as well as creating spaces where it is possible for PGRs to explore, collaborate around and thus help contribute to exciting new methodological developments in, across and beyond the social sciences.

Rather than take a prescriptive approach, MNW invites proposals for Methods Labs in any and all areas. These may be closer to more traditional seminars, workshops or master classes but could also take the form of hackathons, data fests, datathons and involve exhibits, models or even performances or live curated displays with new technologies. Whatever form they take, however, the emphasis will be on involving those in attendance in direct and engaging ways.

# Organisation: How the Methods Labs Will Work in Practice

The Methods Labs programme will be populated annually through three main routes.

First, NWSSDTP thematic priority leads will be responsible for proposing and delivering Methods Labs related to their area.

Second, the Institutional Leads will work with those who have delivered and attended the most popular Methods Seminars to develop Methods Labs where there is more space to develop ideas, discussion and collaboration.

Third, the Institutional Leads will themselves propose and work collaboratively to develop Methods Labs in specific areas. Decolonising methods has already emerged as an early theme and there will be discussions around, e.g., methodological approaches to the study of violence, doing impactful data science and approaches to analysis in interview research.

MNW’s Director will have overall responsibility for the programme but with the Institutional Leads playing a major role in developing the annual programme. **Institutional leads** include:

**Keele University**: Anita Hayes, links@keele.ac.uk

**University of Lancaster**: Gary Potter Methods@Lancaster G.potter2@lancaster.ac.uk

**University of Liverpool**: Michael Mair engage@liverpool.ac.uk / Michael.Mair@liverpool.ac.uk

**University of Manchester**: Emma Banister, methods@manchester.ac.uk

Collaboration between institutions on the Methods Labs is the preference but individual institutions can also take the lead on individual labs without having to secure academic involvement from other institutions. I.e., individual institutions can take Methods Labs forward on behalf of MNW.