

Timescapes: Living a Qualitative Longitudinal Study

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Abstract: This article introduces and describes *Timescapes: Changing Relationships and Identities Through the Lifecourse*, the first, indeed the only piece of research in the UK designed and funded (by the Economic and Social Research Council) specifically as a large-scale qualitative longitudinal study. The history of the development of the study places it in a specific context of debates about archiving, secondary analysis and re-use of qualitative data, and the study makes a contribution in all of these areas. As research and archiving practice it presents a model of an approach to large scale qualitative longitudinal research. The study consists of nine projects taking place in five UK universities, with seven empirical projects covering the life course, all integrated at a number of levels to produce the whole study. The broad aim is to investigate the changing nature of relationships and identities over the life course. Qualitative longitudinal research is distinguished by the deliberate way in which *temporality* is designed into the research process making *change and continuity* over time a central focus of analytic attention and a conceptual driver. In our case it is also built into the title. A timescape is a temporal vista that brings into focus a micro-temporal view of the world, and can in this way, as in our case, give insight into the dynamic unfolding of real lives. Temporality, its different meanings, and the way different temporalities intersect and play out, is a key part of our investigation. We are critically and particularly interested in three broad timescapes: biographical, generational and historical. The article discusses the conceptual basis of the research, substantive and empirical issues, and the contribution to qualitative longitudinal methodology, as well as the living archive that we are developing to house our data.

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to introduce the *Timescapes* study, describe its provenance and emergence, what the study is doing and tentatively look into its future. Put simply, *Timescapes: Changing Relationships and Identities Through the Lifecourse* is a qualitative longitudinal study starting in February 2007, and comprised of a set of nine projects, seven of them empirical, taking place in five universities around the UK. For members of the research consortium involved "living a qualitative longitudinal study" can be very close to our experience. It tends to fill the horizon. It is large, over the first three years 30 researchers and a small support staff have worked in *Timescapes*, and our participants, 400 direct, 1,000 taking linked lives touched in the research process into account, are scattered throughout the UK. The size is partly the point of *Timescapes*, almost an experiment to see if you can scale up qualitative, and particularly qualitative longitudinal research. [1]

We do not eschew quantitative research, indeed we actively seek relationships with large scale quantitative longitudinal studies in the UK, for example USoc, *Understanding Society*, a new and enormous household panel study. We are also taking a lead in trying to shift or erode the qualitative/quantitative divide (ELLIOTT, HOLLAND & THOMSON, 2008). But our study is qualitatively driven, and the researchers employ multiple qualitative methods in pursuit of their particular substantive concerns. It is the first, indeed the only piece of research in the UK designed and funded specifically as a large-scale qualitative longitudinal study. [2]

2. Why the Study?

In 2004 there seemed to be a growing interest in qualitative research methods in the social sciences, and amongst policy makers, who could see perhaps that a quantitative approach has many advantages, but cannot access the fluid and often highly situation-specific experiences, understandings and perceptions that mediate how people deal with and respond to social change (CORTI & THOMPSON, 2004; HEATON, 2004, 2008). With their characteristic sensitivity to context, qualitative studies are also able to combine an analysis of both micro- and macro-social processes and focus on the role of agency. In this context the UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) decided to undertake a feasibility study of the possibility of undertaking a *large scale* qualitative longitudinal study as part of its ongoing commitment to supporting UK longitudinal resources. The Council is already heavily invested in *quantitative longitudinal* (QL) studies, which are much admired and valued both in the UK and more widely for the long term data they produce on populations and trends, and their contribution to the development and implementation of policy. ESRC was/is also committed to investing in and scaling up from qualitative resources in general and making better use of secondary analysis of archived data (MASON, 2002; CORTI, WITZEL & BISHOP, 2005). Researchers undertaking the feasibility study reviewed the literature and canvassed the field to uncover what qualitative longitudinal research was out there and what those who were doing it thought

about scaling up to a large scale project. A large amount of information and massive enthusiasm for the idea was generated (HOLLAND, THOMSON & HENDERSON, 2006). [3]

In thinking large scale about QL research, we wanted to retain the flexibility of qualitative research, enabling theoretical and methodological innovation to flourish, whilst providing a degree of coordination in order to develop common elements relating to methods of record keeping and archiving. This coordination would facilitate all those elements that this new large study needed to incorporate and demonstrate: data-sharing, secondary analysis, comparability and scaling up. We decided on a coordinated network, a collaboration between a number of research teams working on related /integrated topics, with built in scaling up methodology and procedures. The main advantages of this model are that it allows for integration and flexibility, preserving the characteristics of qualitative research that depend on small teams and academic networks with specific substantive interests. We thought that a coordinated network could also provide greater scientific input (from a whole team of scientists from different social science disciplines for example), and so lead to a faster development of the whole system. This model is clearly more complicated than a single project or research programme. The *Timescapes* Study is the realization of the model, a co-ordinated network generated by a consortium of researchers from five UK universities who are committed to collaborative work, data sharing, scaling up and archiving their data for re-use, by the *Timescapes* team in the first instance, but once archived by many users for many purposes. [4]

3. What Is the Study?

With the overall plan of a series of qualitative longitudinal projects which would cover the life course and be concerned with relationships and identity, would be located in different disciplinary traditions, be run by top notch researchers, Bren NEALE, our current director, recruited the consortium. The coordinated network was created, the study was developed and designed. And, with great good fortune, funded for five years. [5]

3.1 The team

In thinking about what holds the collaboration together, apart from the fact that some of the key players always work collaboratively, a core set of elements came to mind. They define and express what we understand qualitative longitudinal research to be, our investment in that methodology and its value for advancing social science, our ethical research practice, and our commitment to and hope for the future of such research:

1. Time in all its complex meanings and effects;
2. the skills and commitment of the *Timescapes* team members;
3. the commitment to advance qualitative longitudinal methodology from our varied disciplinary perspectives and substantive concerns;

4. the projects that we have developed with which to generate valuable qualitative longitudinal data and theoretical insights on identities and relationships through the life course in biographical, generational and historical context;
5. our commitment to sharing that data, demonstrating that you can collaboratively build a large scale qualitative longitudinal study that is more than the sum of its parts; and
6. that the study can, via a dedicated archive, provide useful and relevant data for further integrative and comparative analyses by ourselves and others, to advance knowledge and theory and to guide policy and action. [6]

That is what we stand for and what holds us together, even if we stumble at times and are pushed in different directions by our funders and events, and sometimes fall from our high ideals. [7]

3.2 Conceptual and methodological approach

One major overall objective in the study, as the title suggests, is to examine the dynamics of personal, intimate and family relationships, the identities that flow from these relationships and how they are worked out across the life course and within different generations. Qualitative longitudinal research is distinguished by the deliberate way in which *temporality* is designed into the research process making *change and continuity* over time a central focus of analytic attention and a conceptual driver. In our case it is built into the title. A timescape is a vista that brings into focus a particular temporal view of the world. Temporality, its different meanings, and the way different temporalities intersect and play out, is at the heart of our investigation, and conceptually, the study seeks to understand the significance of time in people's lives, understood here as a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon. [8]

We are critically and particularly interested in three broad timescapes and their intersection: biographical, generational and historical. *Biographical* time relates to the individual life, here we are concerned with agency, causality and consequences. *Generational* time refers to the relationships between generations, both through time but also travelling simultaneously through the same segment of historical and social time. Generational categories are fluid as people cross generational boundaries, move between different contexts, or as key stages of life expand or contract. And in some instances generations are very compacted, very close together in time, a parent and their own child might be having a child at roughly the same time, grandparents might parent their children's children. Here we are concerned with the dynamics of inter-generational relationships and identities, and the shifting structures of family and kinship (EMMEL & HUGHES, 2010). [9]

Historical time refers to how individuals locate themselves in relation to different external events, and wider social and structural conditions, both local and global. Here for example we examine the policy contexts that shape individual lives and

through which people work out their relationships and identities. An example of this can be given from the *Inventing Adulthoods* Study. We have been following young people through their transitions to adulthood since 1996 (HENDERSON , HOLLAND, McGRELLIS, SHARPE & THOMSON, 2007). Part of the sample is located in Northern Ireland, so their individual transitions and identity construction took place in a context of the Troubles, paramilitary cease fires and their failures, the highs and lows of the peace process and devolved government, economic boom, and we returned to talk to those young people in a recession. Some dramatic historical, political and social shifts and changes have taken place in the period, and we can see in individual trajectories how these have affected individual lives (McGRELLIS, 2010). In the current recession those projects still in the field have asked their participants about its effects on their lives and relationships. Others reviewed their data for effects of past recessions. Members of the team have written a series of articles about their findings (EDWARDS & IRWIN, 2010) and the title of one by Nick EMMEL and Kahryn HUGHES (2010) about people living on the disadvantaged estate they are studying is quite revealing: " 'Recession, it's all the same to us son': The Longitudinal Experience (1999-2010) of Deprivation." [10]

So, with our three timescapes "[t]his means that the study seeks to understand micro processes of social change in their biographical, familial and historical contexts" (ADAM, 2008, p.7). [11]

The *conceptual questions* focusing on these notions of time that all of the *Timescapes* team are concerned to pursue are:

- What is the salience of time in people's daily lives?
- How are different timescapes (biographical, generational, historical) experienced; how do these timescapes intersect as lives unfold?
- What key events or "critical moments" (biographical, intergenerational and historical) are significant for people and what impact do they have on life decisions and chances?
- How do people understand the causal links between their earlier and later selves, and their changing circumstances and experiences?
- How might people from different generations and different backgrounds offer diverse perspectives? [12]

Methodologically we are trying to advance the practice of QL research, and to develop an ethical approach to that research; these are ongoing activities across the team and throughout the study. A major contribution to methodological development is our unique archive, which makes our data available for use by the whole team and by other secondary analysts, and will become an important contribution to the resource infrastructure in the UK. [13]

Our methodological cross team research questions are pitched at a general level and are:

- What are the key ethical requirements for a large-scale qualitative longitudinal study?
- What are the possibilities and challenges for data sharing and archiving in a major qualitative longitudinal study?
- How can mixing qualitative and quantitative methods contribute to the development of qualitative longitudinal research, and enhance its role in longitudinal social science?
- What are the issues for scaling up qualitative and qualitative longitudinal research? [14]

3.3 The projects

The seven empirical projects in the study cover the life course, from toddler to the oldest generation, several of them being cross-generational, altogether studying in depth and over time over 400 participants from families and other groups. The toddlers have actually been born in the course of a project on first motherhood, and are now participants (THOMSON, 2011; THOMSON, HADFIELD, KEHILY & SHARPE, 2011/in press). Across the study our samples reflect key social identifiers, gender, class, race and ethnicity, and locality; and varied identities, life experiences and available resources—that is emotional, cultural and material resources. The projects are located in diverse geographical and cultural settings throughout England, Wales and Scotland as indicated in Table 1.

Project Location	Substantive Theme	Sample
1. UK wide	Siblings and friends	Children in middle childhood
2. Yorkshire	Teenage relationships	Teenage birth cohort
3. UK wide	Motherhood	Cross generational, includes grandmothers
4. Wales, Norwich	Masculinities and risk	Fathers
5. S.E Scotland	Work/life balance	Cross generational, parent/young child
6. Northern inner city	Grandparenthood and social exclusion	"Young" grandparents and significant other
7. UK wide	Older relationships and commemorative events	Older people and significant other

Table 1: Geographical distribution and samples [15]

We cover a complementary range of topics, relational and generational: siblings and friendships, young people growing to adulthood, parent-child relationships,

partnering, motherhood, fatherhood, and grandparenthood, work life balance, intergenerational care/support/well being—and the identities that flow from these life situations and commitments.. These are the projects, teams and universities.

Project	Research Team	University
1. Siblings and Friends: The Changing Nature of Children's Lateral Relationships	Rosalind Edwards, Susie Weller	London South Bank University
2. Young Lives and Times: The Crafting of Young People's Relationships	Teenage Relationships	University of Leeds
3. The Dynamics of Motherhood: An Intergenerational Project	Rachel Thomson, Mary Kehily, Lucy Hadfield, Sue Sharpe	The Open University
4. Masculinities, Identities and Risk: Long Term Transitions in the Lives of Men and Fathers	Karen Henwood, Mark Finn/Fiona Shirani,	University of Cardiff
5. Work & Family Lives: The Changing Experiences of "Young" Families	Kathryn Backett-Milburn, Alice MacLean, Sarah Cunningham-Burley, Lynn Jamieson, Jeni Harden, Sarah Morton	University of Edinburgh
6. Intergenerational Exchange: Grandparents, Social Exclusion and Health	Kahryn Hughes, Nick Emmel, Lou Hemmerman,	University of Leeds
7. The Oldest Generation: Marking Time, Relationships and Identities in Old Age	Joanna Bornat, Bill Bytheway	The Open University
8. Making the Long View: Sharing the Inventing Adulthood project	Sheila Henderson, Janet Holland, Sheena McGrellis, Sue Sharpe and Rachel Thomson	London South Bank University
9. Changing Social Landscapes and Timescapes: Meshing Levels of Analysis	Sarah Irwin and Mandy Winterton	University of Leeds

Table 2: Projects in the Timescapes study [16]

All of the projects pursue our major objective and theme: the dynamics of personal, intimate and family relationships, the identities that flow from these

relationships and how they are worked out across the life course and within different generations. These processes are happening against a backdrop of widespread and significant changes in family and domestic life and intimacy. But these changes are also accompanied by the continuing importance to people of relationships of intimacy, love and care. We know relatively little about the micro processes through which these changes, continuities and transformations are occurring, and our study is filling some of these gaps in empirical, theoretical, policy related and methodological knowledge. [17]

All projects also share the conceptual and methodological concerns that are the backbone of the Study, employing and elaborating the different timescapes, biographical, generational and historical, linking biography and history, although they may work within different disciplinary approaches. This is a clear advantage for the *Timescapes* team, opening us all up to different perspectives, and giving us many opportunities for viewing our data, and our research practice, through different lenses. The different approaches and perspectives, combining for particular shared purposes, common or shared questions, shared data, and cross project/team analyses, add richness to our interpretations. [18]

All of the empirical projects use prospective qualitative longitudinal designs, tracking individuals through time to capture transitions, changes and continuities as lives unfold, in some cases over quite long periods. And of course we all use qualitative longitudinal methods, from our particular perspectives, and again a wide variety of different and often innovatory techniques are used across the projects. [19]

An example here is the *Dynamics of Modern Motherhood (DoMM)* project, which has adopted ethnographic/observational methods that enable the team to capture the presence and agency of infants, this is where our babies and toddlers came into the frame. The "day in a life" data where the researcher shares a day with mother and child, includes detailed fieldnotes and visual data that enrich analysis and provide a new perspective on the unfolding family dynamic. In a recent paper the team presented their findings about how toddlers exercise control and agency in the context of food and eating. This project is intergenerational, since grandmothers too are included, being interviewed several times (THOMSON et al., 2011/in press). While DoMM incorporates the youngest generation into their research, at the other end of the life course *The Oldest Generation* project TOG has been exploring the theme of risk in the lives of the oldest participants in the study. Here they use interviews with the older person and a significant other, and diaries kept about the old person's activities by a recorder, often that same other family member. They have identified a range of strategies that people use to manage the increasingly heightened risks associated with loss of independence and impending death—for example types of resistance (BYTHEWAY & BORNAT, 2011/in press; BORNAT & BYTHEWAY, 2010). Two of the participants of this project, all of whom are over 75 years old, have died in the course of the last year. We have also lost several young people in different projects through accident and illness. So our sample declines or grows through fundamental life events, birth and death. [20]

We have increased the longitudinal reach of many of these projects by building on existing data sets where projects have taken as their basis an earlier study that the researchers have undertaken. This heritage data draws existing resources into the overall study and the archive. An example here is the *Siblings and Friends* project at London South Bank University, which draws its current sample of 10-16 year olds from two earlier sibling studies and a study of school transitions undertaken between 2002-2006 (EDWARDS, 2007, 2009; WELLER, 2007a, 2007b; WELLER & BRUEGEL, 2009). And Project 4 *Masculinities, Identities and Risk* in Cardiff revisits an earlier sample studying the transition to father and adds a new current sample (FINN & HENWOOD, 2009). [21]

As well as the empirical projects covering the life course, two further projects are engaged in work that integrates the projects as a whole and are of particular importance to our objective of archiving our data so that we can share it amongst ourselves, and can make it available to others for secondary analysis and re-use. So we have an archiving team developing the archive, and a project which is archiving the data from the Inventing Adulthoods study (HENDERSON, 2007). This is a qualitative longitudinal investigation of youth values and transitions to adulthood, now of more than 11 years standing, which provides a model and experience of archiving qualitative longitudinal data that feeds into and contributes to *Timescapes'* archiving activities. The Inventing Adulthood [website](#) is a mine of information about the study and the process of archiving, with 20 brief case studies of participants in the study, a contribution to archiving and qualitative longitudinal resources in the UK. [22]

The secondary analysis project runs across all the projects. Three elements are involved: an integrative analysis of data and findings relating to subjectivities, contexts and life course transitions; a secondary analysis of cross cutting *Timescapes* themes which are addressed in each of the empirical projects, and making strategic links to large scale quantitative longitudinal studies—NCDS National Child development Study, USoc Understanding Society (IRWIN, 2008; WINTERTON & IRWIN, 2010). [23]

3.4 Shared approach

We all work within an ethical research framework, which we are developing and refining as we go, led by cross project Team members (HENWOOD, 2008). The considerable ethical issues raised in the pursuit of qualitative research are exacerbated in the case of qualitative longitudinal research, when the researcher(s) return over time to the participants. We had a major residential meeting and conference in January 2010 where we pulled together much of this material. We plan to produce guidelines on the ethics of qualitative longitudinal research (HENWOOD & BISHOP, 2011/forthcoming). All of the projects and the *Timescapes* team are fully committed to sharing, re-using and scaling up the data generated by the study, and to making that data widely available through our dedicated archive. Various combinations of projects share data and analyses, the *Fatherhood*, and *Motherhood*, and *Oldest Generation* projects, the two grand

parenting projects. In this we are making a considerable and unique contribution to current work in these areas in the social sciences. [24]

As well as increasing the longitudinal reach of our study, we are increasing the depth, by drawing in graduate students, to be generators, users and re-users of the *Timescapes* data; and by our system of affiliated qualitative longitudinal projects. Levels of data access and use depend on the negotiated extent of the affiliation, but can include drawing on the *Timescapes* data for secondary analysis and re-use, relating it to their own project data, depositing data in the archive, and access to *Timescapes* data for collaborative analysis, interpretation, writing and dissemination. This is ongoing with a number of projects already working with us and more in the pipeline. *Timescapes* is a living creature, growing, developing and changing as we progress through time, and spreading tentacles out into affiliated international projects and networks. [25]

In addition to shared conceptual and methodological research questions, there are also substantive research questions that all projects are concerned to pursue in addition to those relating to their own project. These are:

- How do people experience and craft their personal relationships and identities over time and at different points in the life course?
- How do individuals from different backgrounds and generations balance "living for the self" with "living for others" and what are the implications for interpersonal trust, belonging and commitment?
- How do people understand and inhabit a particular generation and relate to older and younger generations? How does this change as generational cohorts age?
- What impact do demographic changes have on the way relationships and identities are "worked out" over time? [26]

We, and hopefully the ESRC, see ourselves as part of a long term overall longitudinal strategy in the UK. And we are working on contributing a more holistic understanding of life course processes and transitions in order to inform policy developments. As we become more established we can examine the effects of particular policies on these processes. One of the points made in the original feasibility study was that

"In some instances, the ultimate value of a QL study may take years to accrue, for example in the tracing of historical trends over time, and of the effectiveness of policy assumptions that go beyond particular administrations ... In the longer term it may be possible to grasp a tangible sense of social change, intergenerational dynamics and the making of history" (HOLLAND et al., 2006, p 28). [27]

In addition to this overall intention for our data and analyses with respect to policy, individual projects bring with them policy-making and practitioner users and involvement in their substantive areas, for example the National Children's

Bureau, The Grandparents Association, the Scottish Government has close links with the research group in Edinburgh. [28]

The overall policy related research questions we are working with are:

- How are intergenerational dependencies and responsibilities worked out over time?
- How do diverse social policies intersect in the lives of individuals and families?
- What is the dynamic interplay between formal and informal care and support?
- What are the implications for the long term resourcing of families and the well being of individuals? [29]

All of the projects are concerned with the same set of *Timescapes* conceptual, methodological, substantive and policy questions, although able to interpret and pursue them in the light of their own circumstances and approach. We also collected base data on our samples comparable to other *quantitative* longitudinal studies, so that we can make comparisons with those studies e.g. NCDS and Understanding Society. And we have a series of common questions that we each ask in our own ways for further within *Timescapes* analyses.

- What have been the most important events/turning points in your life?
- What would you say have been the most important events or changes in the world in your lifetime? Have these events affected you personally?
- What would you say are the main benefits or challenges of being aged x? Do you feel you belong to a particular generation? What makes your generation different from other generations?
- How do you imagine your life in five years time? Is there anything you'd like to change in the future? Or anything you'd like the government to change for you? [30]

Each project also has their own conceptual, methodological, substantive, and policy questions and issues that they wish to pursue, or that emerge in the course of the research as important. [31]

4. The Archive

The team is committed to making their data available for secondary analysis and re-use, and the *Timescapes* archive is a significant part of our activities and our output. We have been working closely with [ESDS Qualidata](#), the UK qualitative data archive and UK Data Archive of which it is part, on this. We have the good fortune to share a person with them, Libby BISHOP who is our Senior Research Archivist for part of her time. What we wanted of our archive was not just the long term preservation, management of and access to data provided by ESDS Qualidata, which assumes that data are no longer in active use (are "fixed") prior to deposit. We wanted to be able to deposit and access the data as an ongoing

activity. This is a function that institutional repositories are more equipped to meet whilst research teams are still active, so in consultation with a wide range of relevant players, that was the direction we decided to go for the living archive that we needed whilst undertaking the research, with ESDS Qualidata for the long term preservation, management of and access to data at the end so to speak. [32]

The *Timescapes* archive team have developed this multi-media archive (visual, audio, text), and a range of custom built templates that conform to national standards for the projects to use in preparing their data for archiving. Basically we provide a model, techniques and templates for archiving qualitative longitudinal data, and these will be disseminated to other qualitative longitudinal projects, including those affiliated to *Timescapes* itself. We will be disseminating all of this work in the rest of the time that we are funded (currently up to February 2012), and training researchers in use of the archive. There are several levels of access to different types of data in the archive, from open access, through password and agreement protected (for anonymized data) to embargoed for a set period of time (for example for unanonymized digital recordings). A key objective of this work has been to create a well designed search and retrieval system and a schema for metadata with standards that conform to national requirements. We launched the archive in October 2009, and data from the projects are put into the archive as they become ready. We are envisaging a leap forward in the analysis of qualitative longitudinal data, synchronic and diachronic, in this instance across and through time, and across and through projects, with the arrival of this archive (BISHOP, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). [33]

5. How is *Timescapes* Different?

Since the model for large-scale longitudinal studies in the UK, and possibly everywhere else, is quantitative studies I want to draw attention to four major differences between quantitative longitudinal and qualitative longitudinal research. These are modes of data generation, type of data generated, methods of analysis, and broadly, the conceptualization of the subject. (Briefly for quantitative study a static, unitary subject with a stable identity; for qualitative a more post-modern understanding of the narrated and constructed self.) These lead to a major overall difference between *Timescapes* as a large scale qualitative longitudinal study, and large scale quantitative longitudinal studies, where the research process is broken down and data generation and analysis are separated, and the individual's understanding of social experience excluded. Every bit of the research process is taking place within the [Timescapes study](#), making it a very different beast. This process includes theoretical and methodological development, sample design, data generation in which the context and reflexivity of the researcher is an important, probably crucial, dimension, data analysis much of it complex and innovative, archiving, secondary analysis and data re-use, training people to use a unique archive, dissemination of all our works to the waiting world through presentations and written publications of all types aimed at wide audiences, in which its importance for theory, method, practice and policy are drawn out. Whilst we of course take archiving, sharing and re-use of data for granted, we are forging a path in this

respect, particularly in the scale on which we are working. In the UK there has been a debate about whether or not secondary analysis, re-use of qualitative data can be undertaken at all, with many lively and stimulating contributions (MASON, 2007). These have ranged from those who think it is epistemologically unsound and so impossible, to those who see merely surmountable practical problems to be involved. Naimh MOORE (2007) has suggested that criticisms of secondary analysis that emphasize the importance of the context of the original research and reflexivity of the original researchers, are ironically underestimating the temporality of context and the reflexive production of data. They overlook the contemporary context, and the reflexive research process of the re-user of data. The challenge here rests on the importance of understanding *all* temporal processes at play in the act of revisiting data. There are some wonderful examples in the literature of people returning to data generated earlier, by others and particularly by themselves, demonstrating and elaborating this temporal interplay (FIELDING & FIELDING, 2000; SAVAGE, 2005a, 2005b; SILVA, 2007; ANDREWS, 2010). [34]

Although I have been using the term secondary analysis in this article, and I imagine you have understood what I meant, it is really a shorthand term with which myself and colleagues tend to disagree. As qualitative longitudinal researchers, it is difficult to maintain the distinction between primary and secondary analysis. In fact these distinctions even tend to break down rather quickly when qualitative researchers work as part of a team. Is the primary analyst the fieldworker, who was "there" with firsthand experience of the data generation, or others in the team? Or all of them? These complexities are compounded further in the context of QL research in a team, and even more so in scaled up QL research. The precise relationship between primary analysis (of one's own data, or someone else's) and secondary analysis (of someone else's data, or your own) is blurred in this context. Revisiting one's own data is intrinsic to the task of qualitative longitudinal research, as layers of cross sectional and case history analyses are built up and interwoven over time to create complex, multi-dimensional analyses—a "secondary" process yet conducted by the originating researcher(s). In this process analysis is both temporal and always provisional as HENDERSON, HOLLAND and THOMSON (2006, p.1) point out in talking about the *Inventing Adulthoods* study.

"our research spans a decade and we still maintain both contact with participants and a consistent core research team. As such, we have been continuously revisiting and recontextualising our participants, our data, ourselves, our theoretical and methodological approaches and substantive interests over a number of years as a matter of course.

The 'cultural habitus' of both researcher and researched shifts at each stage of data generation and analysis and this produces an exponential reflexivity on the part of both—a reflexivity that recognizes change and avoids fixing *any* actors and aspects of the research process in the past." [35]

Currently we are revisiting some of the young participants in Northern Ireland in *Inventing Adulthoods*. Sheena, the original interviewer, has re-interviewed some of them for the seventh time, and together the team is working on developing longitudinal case analysis and producing case histories. So we all work on a couple of cases that we did not interview, drawing on all the data available from all our methods used with each person, their individual archive. We can draw on case profiles which were produced and added to by the original interviewer at the time of the interviews, a quite different process. Sheena comments:

"The data from which these narrative documents are produced dates back at least 10 years. In that sense they are historical documents. The voices are however alive, and each new interview brings the previous one to life in a powerful and illuminating way. Having recently completed another 'round' of interviews with young people from the NI site, after a five year gap or more, the potency of previous interviews become all the more intoxicating" (McGRELLIS, 2010, p.5). [36]

6. Where Are We Now?

We have been funded from 2007 to 2012, and have been developing and performing all the activities that I have described in parallel since the beginning. A number of our projects have completed their fieldwork, and prepared their data for the archive. The process of analysis and writing has been continuous throughout this period (see <http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk> for publications/presentations). Some projects have come to the end of funding, and others continue to 2012. The next period will be one of consolidation of the work and building use of the archive through training and capacity building. We will continue to analyze our data and disseminate our findings. We will also be seeking further funding to continue all aspects of our work, hoping to preserve the collaborative mode in which we have come thus far. [37]

Qualitative longitudinal research in general and *Timescapes* in particular, is in the business of breaking down the distinctions between primary and secondary analysis, and celebrating the sharing and re-use of data, and getting the message out to a broad audience. We are not just doing this for the intellectual thrill, or the contribution it makes to social science, but for the really useful knowledge that qualitative longitudinal research can produce. This can cover all aspects of social life and be of immense and productive use for those who are formulating policies that have such enormous effects on the everyday lives of people in biographical, generational, and historical time. [38]

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