QUALITATIVE LONGITUDINAL METHODS: Research into Practice

A Research Methods Training Day
organised by the School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds in affiliation with Timescapes

17th October 2011
QUALITATIVE LONGITUDINAL METHODS: 
*Research into Practice*

**Workshop Aims**
The methods training day in Qualitative Longitudinal (QL) Methods aims to provide a unique opportunity to experience the highest quality training in Qualitative Longitudinal Methods and Secondary Analysis. A distinctive aspect of this workshop is that it brings together people from academic environments, and people working in research-active organisations.

We will offer presentations exploring the value of bringing a temporal dimension to our understanding of social processes and the relationship between human agency and wider social structures. The training day will also explore the usefulness of working across data sets, and exploring questions of sampling in depth. Practical issues of generating and managing data using Qualitative Longitudinal Methods will be examined, and examples given of the rich variety of ways in which time can be embedded in social enquiry and how it can be utilised as both a conceptual category and methodological strategy. The training day draws on the work of the ESRC Timescapes Qualitative Longitudinal Initiative: ‘Changing lives and times: relationships and identities through the life course’. We will also discuss strategies for undertaking Secondary Analysis of qualitative data.

Through a choice of linked practical sessions participants can engage in depth with practical aspects of research, including a bespoke IT workshop using the Timescapes Data Archive. There will also be a Masterclass for those already working with QL methods and seeking training in highly specific and sophisticated aspects in their use. In addition practical workshops linked with the presentations, on Sampling and Secondary Analysis, are also available.

**About the Workshop**
The day will consist of a number of presentations and participants will attend two different practical sessions which they will choose in advance. The workshop is suitable for academic and non-academic researchers, and policy makers seeking to learn more about QL methods and data re-use. Participants will be expected to have a grounding in qualitative research methodologies.

The training day will be drawing on existing online resources at University of Leeds, including the Timescapes Archive, and Timescapes Resource Centre, showcasing cutting-edge methods, data resources and software developed in Leeds. These bespoke peripatetic resources will be made available prior to, and after, the training day. In this way, we aim to extend both the reach of researchers into the field of QL methods, and this training period beyond that of face to face contact.
QL methods are used across the public sector, and in a range of academic and organisational disciplines. The core strength and purpose of Qualitative Longitudinal (QL) methods is to capture the lived experience of social change, for example, of individuals or organisations undergoing particular transitions or social processes and responding or adapting to changing environments. This is a powerful methodological approach for revealing how change is created, lived and experienced, particularly in policy and organisational contexts where individuals are required to change their behaviour or where change processes in policy or practice environments need to be evaluated and better understood.

A key part of the workshop, and central to the use of QL methods is how we might understand and develop research using secondary analysis. The value of secondary analysis of qualitative data is increasingly recognised in (and beyond) the UK research community. Qualitative data re-use provides a unique opportunity to study the raw materials of the recent or more distant past to gain insights for methodological, substantive and theoretical purposes. Timescapes comprises a range of activities including seven substantive research projects which focus on identities and social relationships across the life course, and are developing strategies for exploring and analysing temporality. The separate, but linked, projects are all an integral part of the Timescapes Archive of longitudinal qualitative data. This offers a rich resource for researchers and policy makers. The Timescapes Archive and the Secondary Analysis project have been developing strategies for the effective re-use of QL data. This training day will build on the insights gained, and provide delegates with an in-depth and critical understanding of the method of secondary analysis more generally.

Who is the course for?
The workshop is suitable for academic and non-academic researchers who are contemplating, or already using, secondary analysis within their research. The workshop also caters for those from different disciplines. The level is intermediate, that is we expect a grounding in, and familiarity with, qualitative research methods.

How to apply?
Places are limited because of the hands-on nature of the workshops, and we therefore recommend early registration. To apply for a place, fill in an application form and return it to us via post or email. Electronic copies of the form can be downloaded from www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk.

The workshop fee is £100. Payment can be made in either cash or cheque and is non-refundable for non-attendance. The fee for self-funding post-graduate students is £30.

Participants must meet their own travel and subsistence costs.

Venue and Date
17th October 2011, University House, University of Leeds, Leeds, LS2 9JT

Contact Details
The workshop is organised through the School of Sociology and Social Policy, in affiliation with Timescapes, an ESRC funded qualitative longitudinal study. For further details on the workshops please contact:
Marie Johnson
Research Support Officer,
Email: m.b.johnson@leeds.ac.uk
Web: www.sociology.leeds.ac.uk
PRESENTATIONS

Working Through Time

Bren Neale

This session will provide an introduction to Qualitative Longitudinal Research and explore the value of bringing a temporal dimension to our understanding of social processes and the relationship between human agency and wider social structures. Examples will be given of the rich variety of ways in which time can be embedded in social enquiry and how it can be utilised as both a conceptual category and methodological strategy.

From sampling and choosing cases to analysis in qualitative research

Dr Nick Emmel

This session is based on small group exercises. It will enable delegates to explore the process of ‘capturing’ time in qualitative interview situations and to brainstorm ideas for research designs that place time at the forefront of social enquiry. Strategies for managing and analysing data generated through the use of QL methods will also be covered.

Secondary Analysis and working across data sets

Dr Sarah Irwin

Secondary analysis of qualitative data is an under-developed sociological practice. The presentation considers how we construct social explanation from qualitative data, and how working across multiple projects magnifies the complexities of the task. The presentation offers a secondary analyst’s critical reflections on working across qualitative data sets with reference to issues of sampling, understanding context, analytic strategies, and social explanation.

The Ethics of QL research: a special case?

Dr Kahryn Hughes

This presentation will consider how particular ethical questions are raised through the use of QL methods, including the implications for participants in research which requires repeated visits. Whilst all qualitative research requires researchers to form relationships of trust with participants, this session will explore the particular ethical considerations raised by research engagement which might be sustained over years. Additionally, the session will explore how the question of informed consent is problematic for data which is intended for reuse over long periods of time.

PROGRAMME

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:15 am</td>
<td>Registration, coffee and introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Working through time</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:45 am</td>
<td>From sampling and choosing cases to analysis in qualitative research</td>
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<td>11:00 am</td>
<td>Break for Tea and Coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:15 am</td>
<td>Secondary Analysis and working across data sets</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45 am</td>
<td>The Ethics of QL research: a special case?</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm</td>
<td>Individual Workshops: A &amp; B</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 pm</td>
<td>Break for Tea and Coffee</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:15 pm</td>
<td>Individual Workshops: C &amp; D</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15 pm</td>
<td>Plenary: review and discussion of the day</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 pm</td>
<td>Tea and close</td>
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Participants will choose two of the four available workshops when they register. For further details on the workshop summaries and abstracts, please see below.
Libby Bishop
Libby Bishop works part-time in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds as Senior Research Archivist where she is responsible for developing a new archive of qualitative longitudinal data. The archive has been created as part of the Timescapes Qualitative Longitudinal study which involves the collection and analysis of data on the dynamics of family life and personal relationships across the life course. She promotes the archive as a resource for reuse, including the provision of training and support for new users. Libby also works part-time as Researcher Liaison at ESDS Qualidata, a service of the UK Data Archive, University of Essex, where she supports data depositors in areas of data sharing and management as well as ethical use of data. She also assists the research community by developing teaching resources, promoting thematic collections and conducting workshops on secondary analysis. Key activities include advising on informed consent for archiving and consulting with large ESRC programmes and centres.

Nick Emmel
Nick Emmel is writing a book about sampling and choosing cases in qualitative research for Sage at the moment. His research interests include investigations of poverty, social exclusion, and inequalities in low-income communities.

Esmee Hanna
Esmee is a research fellow for the Young lives and times Project within Timescapes, currently researching the life experiences and issues of widening participation with a sample of young black men. She also teaches Social sciences within the Open University and has taught for a number of years within the School of Sociology.

Kahryn Hughes
Dr Kahryn Hughes is the Director of Intergenerational Exchange: grandparenting and poverty, as part of Timescapes. She has been involved in developing methods for researching individuals and groups traditionally considered hard-to-reach for the last ten years. She is particularly interested in the use of QL methods in understanding intergenerational poverty within families and across localities. and Social Policy here at Leeds.

Sarah Irwin
Sarah Irwin is a Reader in Sociology. She directs the Secondary Analysis Project of ESRC Timescapes. She is also Director of The Centre for Research on Families, Life Course and Generations at the University of Leeds. She has long standing interests in the areas of family, education, gender, the life course and research methods, and has published extensively in these areas.

Bren Neale
Bren Neale is Professor of Life Course and Family Research in the School of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Leeds. She specialises in policy related research on the dynamics of family life and childhood. These have included studies of the transition to marriage, family and professional care of terminally ill people, and the changing lives of parents and children following divorce. As Director of the ESRC Timescapes Initiative, Bren has been researching new conceptual and methodological understandings of time. She has contributed to advances in Qualitative Longitudinal (QL) research methods and supported the development of projects across academia, government and the voluntary sector. As part of her work in establishing the new Timescapes Archive, she has advanced a ‘stakeholder’ model for the archiving and re-use of complex longitudinal data.

Ben Ryan
Dr Ryan started his career working for a specialist typesetting and printing company dedicated to the production of high quality scientific and medical journals both in print and online and led a team of developers to fully automate the full lifecycle production process from origination to delivery including developing aggregation, citation and abstract services. He then moved into working in the educational sector on the development of tools, technologies and standards to support the use of digital learning resources underpinned by repository based services for their delivery. Since 2008 he worked within the Timescapes project to develop the present archive and support the process of research data acquisition from the Timescapes projects for use within the archive. He is currently developing the first version of a new archive specifically developed to support the needs of qualitative reasearch.
Workshop A: A Masterclass in Qualitative Longitudinal Methods

Professor Bren Neale and Esmee Hanna
This session is based on small group exercises. It will enable delegates to explore the process of ‘capturing’ time in qualitative interview situations and to brainstorm ideas for research designs that place time at the forefront of social enquiry. Strategies for managing and analysing data generated through the use of QL methods will also be covered.

Workshop B: Developing casing methods: working within and across cases in QL research

Dr Nick Emmel
Participants will be asked to reflect on a piece of qualitative research they have undertaken or are undertaking. Working in groups and together you will be asked to consider the following:

- The sampling strategy you considered in your research,
- The justifications for this sampling strategy when discussing methods in the research,
- The methodological strategies used for analysis,
- The relationships between sampling and analysis of the research,
- And finally, reflection on the ways in which links can be drawn between sampling decisions, methodologies for analysis, and claims made from the research.
Workshop C: Demonstration of Timescapes Archive

*Dr Libby Bishop and Dr Ben Ryan*

This workshop will offer a practical hands-on session in which participants will gain insights into the nature and scope of the Archive, and learn how to access and explore different kinds of data held within it. Users will work alone or in pairs on their own workstations. There will be a set of exercises covering all basic functions of the archive: browsing, simple and advanced searching, and downloading data. In addition, special features of the archive will be demonstrated, such as the handling of multi-media files and the use of contextual, descriptive documentation that is available for some of the Timescapes data. To facilitate this workshop, users will be asked to register in advance to have optimal access to the available data.

Workshop D: Doing secondary analysis: the example of Timescapes data on life course, social relationships and temporality

*Dr Sarah Irwin and Dr Kahryn Hughes*

Participants will engage with qualitative data drawn from the Timescapes projects and will address a series of questions relating to research methodology, and the doing of secondary analysis with qualitative, and qualitative longitudinal, data. As temporary secondary analysts they will discuss their own interpretations and analytic reflections and the groups will then explore a series of methodological issues arising from these exchanges.