

The Timescapes Initiative

- Timescapes was the first large scale qualitative longitudinal study to be funded in the UK by the Economic and Social Research Council (2007-2012). It was an initiative that comprised three elements:
 1. Empirical qualitative longitudinal data generation and analysis.
 2. The creation of an archive housing a range of qualitative longitudinal data sets.
 3. The development/promotion of approaches to re-using archived qualitative (longitudinal) data.
- Seven core empirical projects, conducted across five UK Universities, documented change and continuity in key relationships and identities over time, capturing different aspects of the life-course including:
 - Children's sibling relationships and friendships.
 - Youth trajectories.
 - Dynamics of motherhood.
 - Men as fathers.
 - Work and family life.
 - Intergenerational exchanges.
 - The oldest generation.
- Repeat interviewing and a variety of tools such as diary completion, photography, network mapping and other visual and observational techniques were used across the studies, with data collected over a period of 2 to 10 years.
- With participant's consent anonymised data from each of the projects was deposited in the Timescapes Archive (<http://timescapes-archive.leeds.ac.uk>) for re-use by social researchers.

The Timescapes Archive

- The archive is part of the institutional repository at the University of Leeds and is a satellite of the UK Data Archive (UKDA).
- There are over 3000 files housed in the archive including text, visual and audio material.
- Timescapes sought to develop good practice in data sharing between researchers, and to forge close working relationships between researchers and archivists, adopting a 'stakeholder approach'. This focused on procedural matters, ensuring they were sensitive to, and appropriate for, complex qualitative longitudinal data.
- It is a novel initiative in that time and resources were invested in:
 - The specialist curation of qualitative longitudinal data sets.
 - Shaping procedures sensitive to qualitative work.
 - Documenting the process and practicalities of preparing qualitative data for deposit.
- There are four levels of access to the data:
 - Public - exemplars of anonymised data.
 - Registered users - anonymised data.
 - Approved users - sensitive/restricted data.
 - Embargoed material.
- In addition, a range of qualitative longitudinal studies affiliated to Timescapes are housed in the archive.

Activity: Browsing the Timescapes Archive

Use the search function to identify data of interest to you, and save your searches.

- How easy is it to find material of interest to you?
- What is your experience of searching by: (i) project and by (ii) case?

SOME USEFUL RESOURCES:

- Hadfield, L. (2010). 'Balancing on the edge of the archive: the researcher's role in collecting and preparing data for deposit' In: Shirani, F and Weller, S. (eds). *Conducting Qualitative Longitudinal Research: Fieldwork Experiences*. Timescapes Working Papers Series 2, 60–73.
<http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/WP2-final-Jan-2010.pdf>
- Neale, B. (2013) The Timescapes Archive Report
<http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/archive/The-Timescapes-Archive-Report.pdf>
- Neale, B. and Bishop, L. (2012). 'The Timescapes Archive: a stakeholder approach to archiving qualitative longitudinal data', *Qualitative Research*. 12(1): 53-65.