



TEMPORAL ETHICS AND THE RE- USE OF QUALITATIVE DATA

Dr Anna Tarrant and Dr Kahryn Hughes

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atarrant@lincoln.ac.uk k.a.hughes@leeds.ac.uk

This session

- We consider the value and implications of a temporal ethical sensibility towards qualitative data, its generation, re-use and preservation
- Situate our observations in context of increased infrastructures for preserving and re-using qualitative data
- Consider what is special about qualitative data
- A bit about us and the Timescapes Archive
- Attend to *proactive* and *reactive* ethical research strategies
- Advocate a shift in position from data *ownership* to data *stewardship*
- Forward an agenda for data justice

A bit about us



Associate Professor in Sociology/
UKRI Future Leaders Fellow

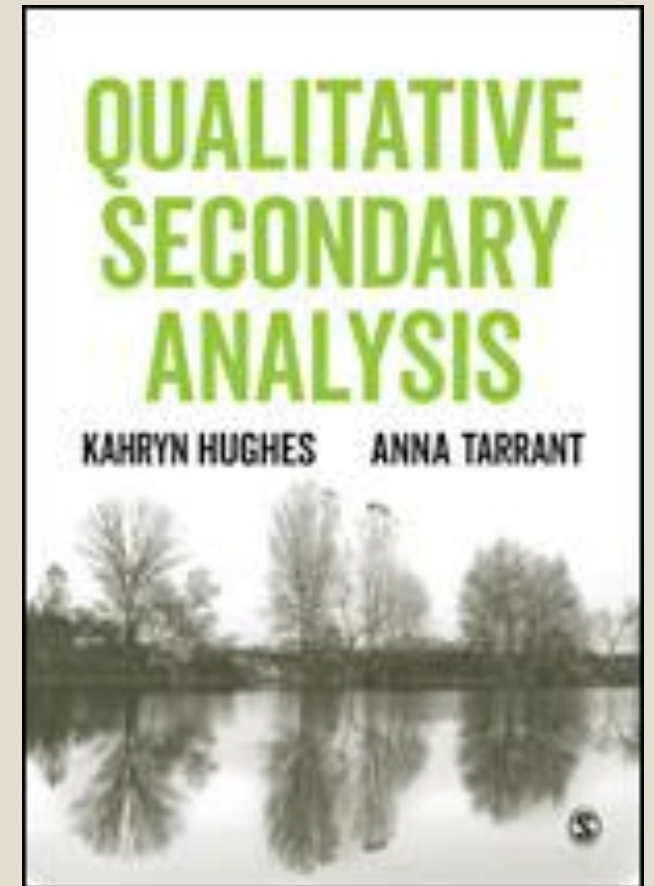
University of Lincoln

Experts in qualitative research methods and field leaders in Qualitative
Secondary Analysis



Associate Professor in Sociology/
Director of the Timescapes Archive

University of Leeds



The rise of qualitative data archives

- The re-use of qualitative data has been fuelled over the past two decades by a number of changes:
 - The **growth in data infrastructures (UK and internationally)**:
 - e.g., UK Data Service (UKDS); The Mass Observation Archive; the Northern Ireland Qualitative Archive; the Timescapes Archive
 - **New methods** – e.g., Timescapes, Sarah Irwin; Libby Bishop, Bren Neale; Big Qual (Ros Edwards, and colleagues); QSA (Kahryn Hughes and Anna Tarrant)
 - **European Funding Councils**: reusing valuable resources that were expensive to produce
 - **'Knowing capitalism'** (Mike Savage and Roger Burrows, 2007; 2009; 2014)
 - **Neoliberalism**: (Ros Edwards and Janet Holland), new scientific methods

What is special about qualitative data?

Qualitative data are special because of their qualities

- They're expensive, difficult and time consuming to generate,
- They're creative and can be text based and visual,
- They're often small scale in terms of sample size,
- They're often deeply personal for both the participant and the researcher

What do we mean by qualitative data?

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RO: Yeah.

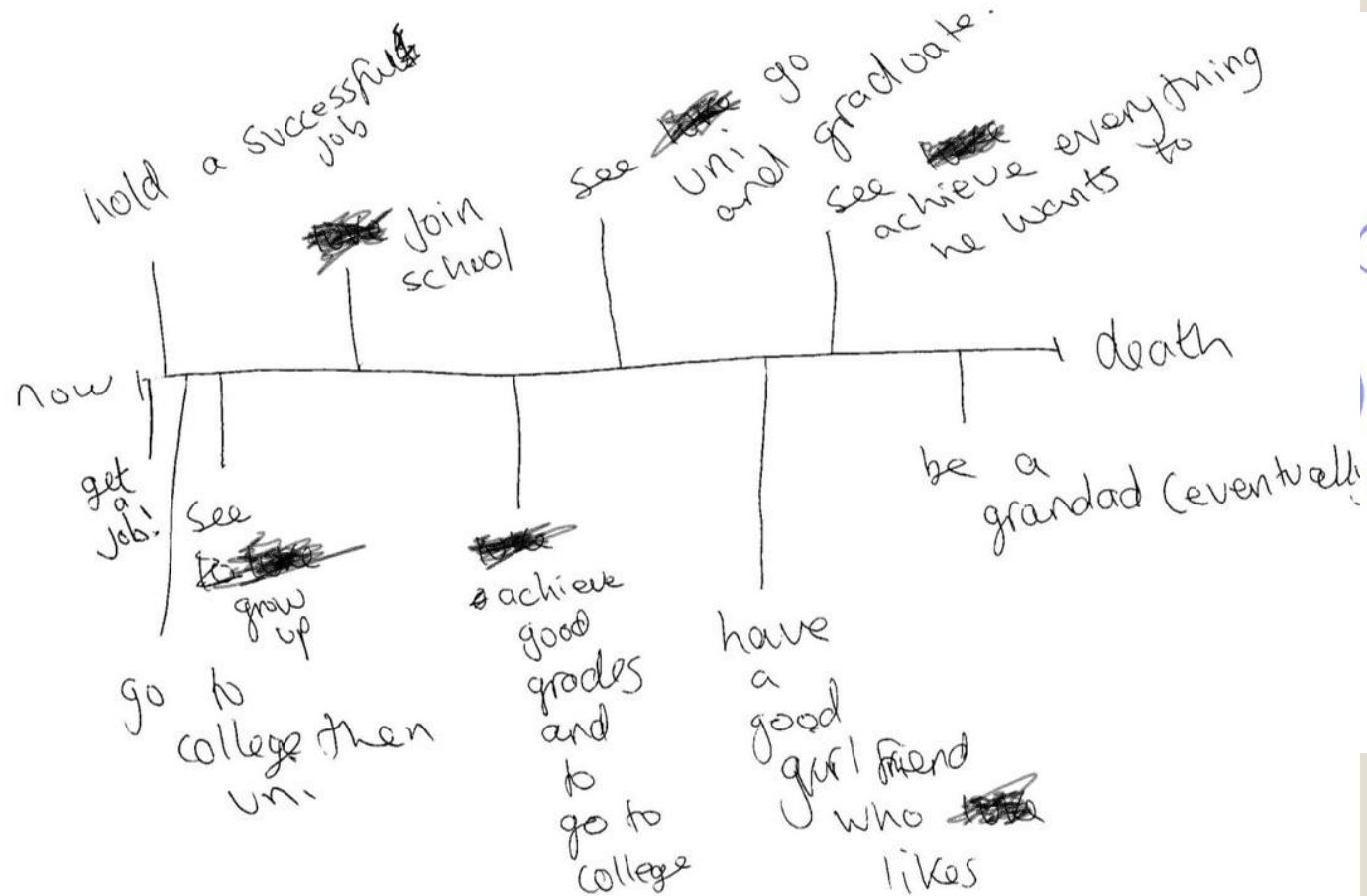
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RO: Only on bu

SW: So how ma

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(when
younger)

Additional ethics for qualitative data re-use

- **Consent:** how can it be informed if you don't know the uses to which it's being used?
- **Anonymisation:** how can you anonymise data and still keep its meaning?
- **Confidentiality:** how can data be kept confidential when the intention is to reuse it?
- **Representation:** how can you represent people you haven't met?



About the Archive

The Timescapes Archive is a specialist resource of Qualitative Longitudinal (QL) Research data

MORE >



ABOUT

USING THE ARCHIVE

DEPOSITING YOUR DATA

Welcome to the Timescapes Qualitative Longitudinal Data Archive

This is the first port of call for researchers who would like to learn more about the Archive and its holdings.

The Timescapes Archive

- Regulate who deposits data, who uses the data
- Legally binding contracts of reuse
- *Bona fide* researchers only and control what and when they access data:
 - Use time-embargo
 - access controls to different 'layers' of data – from open access to completely restricted;
 - Special permissions
- These together mean that data users are very visible, both to the archive to the data generators

Data protectionism beyond legislation

Data protectionism characterises the context of qualitative data re-use in the field

- Historical ethical concerns such as those noted: data privacy, linkage, confidentiality and anonymity,
- Additionally:
 - Fears people will be mis-represented,
 - Fears data will be exploited for unethical purposes,
 - Fear that researchers will be made vulnerable in some way or another because the personal bits of their data won't be treated sensitively enough
 - Fear that other researchers may publish from data before the data originators
- Informed by our work with the Timescapes Archive, we take a more critical stance on a data protectionist position

A temporal ethical sensibility: building 'time' into data reuse

- What can we achieve if we foreground a temporal ethical sensibility, rather than a risk ethics?
- What do we achieve if we move away from a focus on data generators and actually think about the lifetimes of data?

Proactive and reactive ethics

- We move beyond the question of the 'special character' of data
- As in primary fieldwork our ethics on the reuse of data needs to be *proactive* and *reactive*
- Reactive ethics also part of longer term processes and relationships
- Qualitative archives:
 - Archiving qual data allows the same approach throughout data lifetimes
 - Constantly innovating in the ethics of archiving through ethical cases
 - Taking a temporal approach allows us to change in ways which suit new circumstances

Example of proactive ethics

- With qualitative data, there are shifts towards ensuring participants are able to give enduring consents to the archiving of data generated with them,
- In the Following Young Fathers Further study we developed archiving information and consent forms
- Here we suggest shared copyright of all data with participants (see also Neale, forthcoming; Haaker, personal communication)
- All personal details are also stored but in the 'dark archive', until the death of the participant

Following Young Fathers Further (or FYFF for short) is a four-year research study based at the University of Lincoln. It is funded by the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship scheme. We would like to learn more about the lives of young fathers and how we might better support young men in their parenting journeys. To do this, we are gathering information via interviews and other activities through the course of the study.

FYFF

Archiving Information Sheet

1. Archiving

We would like to store all the interviews and information we generate with you in an archive. This is the space where your data will 'live'. It means that other people will be able to look at them in future and will help them to understand what young fatherhood is like today.

2. What is an archive?

An archive is a bit like a library where the books are all digital only. We would like to store your interviews in an archive based at the University of Leeds, called the Timescapes Archive. It will hold copies of all of the information from you and others who take part in the research. This includes recordings (like sound files) as well as written versions of interviews (usually called transcripts).

Everything will be stored in a digital form in the archive, not just as paper in a building.

The archive allows people like researchers and historians to look at the material that we have gathered in our research project now and into the future.

Because we are learning so much and hearing so many interesting things we want to store the interviews and study information to give other researchers a chance to look at them too.

3. Protecting your identity

The archive that your interviews are being stored in will have restricted access. Your interviews and personal data will not be available to just anyone. We will make sure that the people who look at your material promise to do so in a responsible manner and protect your identity.

We will make sure that any details that could identify you or anyone you talk about in the interviews will be changed before the material goes in the archive.

Your personal details, such as address, telephone number and email, will be stored in the archive with extra protections. They will not be made available to anyone during your lifetime. If you want us to take them out of the archive you can do so at any time by contacting the research team or the Timescapes Archive Director.

Contact details for the Archive Director are on the Archive website and are listed below.

4. Agreement to archive


To make sure that you agree that we can archive any data we produce with you, we would like you to sign a consent form. The FYFF team will also sign the form, and give you a copy to keep.

The agreement covers ALL interviews and activities that we do with you as part of the FYFF project.


The form also asks you to agree to share 'copyright', or ownership, of the interviews with our research team.

We ask for shared copyright with you because this means that both you and the FYFF team have control over the data. You can still make use of, or withdraw, any data produced should you wish to. However, shared copyright means that the FYFF team can continue to use your data for research purposes.


Because we take our responsibilities very seriously and do not wish your right to privacy to be affected by helping us with our research, we will make sure that nobody else can look at your interview material unless they have our approval and tell us why they want to see it.



UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN



UK Research and Innovation



timescapes
An ESRC Qualitative Longitudinal Study

Director of FYFF:
Dr Anna Tarrant atarrant@lincoln.ac.uk

Timescapes Archive:
<https://timescapes-archive.leeds.ac.uk/>

Timescapes Director:
Dr Kahryn Hughes k.a.hughes@leeds.ac.uk

From data ownership to stewardship

- **Data stewards model** (Bishop and Neale, 2012) a way forward as part of this ethical sensibility
- This moves us away from focusing on researchers as data 'owners'
- **Data Stewards** include all those people looking after the data at different points, but they're not all doing the same thing all the time with those data.
- *So we can also think about* **data stakeholders** - people with different interests in data (curators, re-users, generators, a combination or all of these), at different points in the lifetimes of those data

Data rights to data justice?

- We conclude that you cannot take a solely protectionist stance towards qualitative data, but this is not an 'either/or' question
- It is not always possible to be proactive with ethics – what does this mean for data?
- Data rights (as proactive ethics)
- Data justice (as more reactive) – we make decisions as they emerge
- Still attend to key ethical priorities to contextualise the data for re-users, and prohibit unethical reuse
- The legacy and stewardship models allow for 'data sustainability', ensuring the preservation of data and participation by people who are too often marginalised and absent from the socio-historical record (e.g. unlikely to be part of large-scale panel surveys)

Our questions to you

- Our expertise is predominantly focused on qualitative research data, its preservation and ethics.
- We are keen to understand the broader applicability of what we are doing and constructing arguments for

What perspectives
are you
approaching
questions of data
integrity from?

Which of our ideas
have you found
interesting and
why?

Further reading

- Bishop, L. (2009) 'Ethical sharing and reuse of qualitative data', *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 44(3): 255–72.
- Dencik, L., Jansen, F. and Metcalfe, P. (2018) A Conceptual Framework for Approaching Social Justice in an Age of Datafication, Working Paper, DATAJUSTICE Project. Available at: <https://datajusticeproject.net/2018/08/30/a-conceptual-framework-for-approaching-social-justice-in-an-age-of-datafication/> (accessed 23 May 2019).
- Grinyer, A. (2009) 'The ethics of the secondary analysis and further use of qualitative data', *Social Research Update*, 56. Available at: <http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU56.pdf> (accessed 23 May 2019).
- Neale B. and Bishop, L. (2012) 'The Timescapes Archive: A stakeholder approach to archiving qualitative longitudinal data', *Qualitative Research*, 12: 53–65.
- Neale, B. (forthcoming) *Qualitative Longitudinal Research*, Sage: London.
- Tarrant, A. and Hughes, K. (2020) Developing a temporal ethical sensibility for sharing research data: a case for data re-use and qualitative secondary analysis, <https://www.dcc.ac.uk/blog/developing-temporal-ethical-sensibility-preserving-and-curating-research-data>