



# timescapes

An ESRC Qualitative Longitudinal Study

Changing Relationships and Identities  
through the Life course

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Study Overview.

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## Timescapes: An Overview

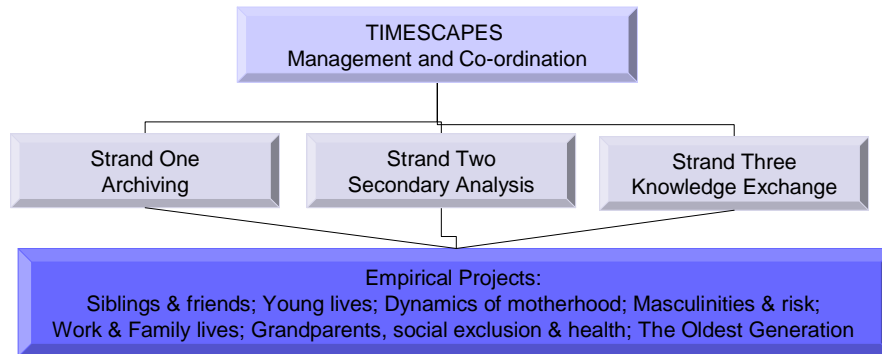


**Timescapes** is a five year study designed to shed light on the dynamics of personal relationships over the life course, and the identities that flow from those relationships. Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and carried out by a consortium of researchers from five universities, the study will use and develop qualitative longitudinal methods of enquiry. Working from a range of disciplines (Sociology, Psychology, Social Policy, Health Studies, Gerontology, Oral History, Cultural Studies) Timescapes will provide new insights into the processes by which relationships and identities are forged, sustained, discarded or re-worked over time. The research will focus on relationships with significant others - parents, siblings, wider family, children, partners, friends and lovers. These are fundamentally important domains of life, being implicated in the way individuals define themselves and impacting on their life chances and well being. The data generated will be of relevance for social policy, shedding light on the dynamics of well being and social care and the long term resourcing of families.

Conceptually, the study will seek to understand the significance of time in people's lives. Time is understood here not in simple linear terms as something that links the past with the future, but as a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon. We will be focusing on three Timescapes in the study. *Biographical time* is seen as an individual life that flows through the life span from birth to death. *Generational time* links people in particular emotional and practical ways with their own generation and those of their parents and children over the course of their lives, reflecting the shifting structures of family and kinship. Finally, *historical time* concerns the way people locate themselves in different epochs and in relation to external events, circumstances and environments, including shifting policy landscapes. A key aim of the study is to produce new theoretical understandings of the micro-processes of social change and the complex linking of history and biography in individual lives.



## The Timescapes Programme



Seven QL empirical projects have been devised that track individuals or inter-generational groups over time. Collectively the projects span the life course, documenting the personal lives and relationships of children and young people (projects 1, 2), adults in midlife (projects 3, 4, 5) and those in later life (projects 6, 7). The projects are located in diverse geographical and cultural settings in England, Wales and Scotland. The study will illuminate fundamentally important life experiences such as growing up, forming relationships, bearing and rearing children, living in families and growing old, drawing on the perspectives of those involved.

The projects will feed into three central strands of work. In strand one (Archiving), the data will be drawn together to create a rich working archive on the dynamics of personal lives and relationships in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our focus here will be on developing robust methods for the organization and display of QL data for re-use. Strand 2 (Secondary Analysis) will foster and showcase the re-use of the data set within and beyond the academic community, using strategies such as mobile workshops, affiliated projects, studentships and a secondary analysis project. In Strand 3 (Knowledge Exchange/Transfer) we will organise a range of communication activities, including workshops and conferences, interactive website, methodological round tables and a series of publications.



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## The Timescapes study: Key Concepts and Policy dimensions

**Timescapes** is a large scale, five year study designed to shed light on the dynamics of personal relationships over the life course, and the identities that flow from those relationships. The research will focus on relationships with significant others - parents, siblings, wider family, children, partners, friends and lovers. These are fundamentally important domains of life, being implicated in the way individuals define themselves and impacting on their life chances and well being. The study will use the lens of three timescapes – biographical, generational and historical time – to interrogate these processes, and will seek to develop fresh insights into the multiplicities of time in lived experience. The study will use and develop qualitative longitudinal (QL) methods that allow for finely grained understandings of temporal processes in people’s lives.

The study has both theoretical and practical relevance. Firstly it will yield valuable data on the dynamics of personal lives and relationships that will fill gaps in our substantive and theoretical knowledge and be of relevance for social policy. Secondly, the study will establish a specialist archive of data for sharing and re-use within and beyond the academic community. The archive will represent a rich and detailed historical resource on the dynamic nature of human sociability and belonging at the turn of the millennium, illuminating basic and important human experiences that are common to all.

### *Temporality: Theory and Method*

The importance of the temporal dimension of social experience has long been recognized in social scientific research. With the recognition of rapid social change in contemporary times, the need to build a dynamic or *processual* approach (Harris 1987) into social enquiry has intensified; only by looking *across* and *through* time can we begin to grasp the nature of social change and discern the intricate connections between the personal and social, agency and structure, and the micro and macro dimensions of experience (Neale 2004). Placing time at the forefront of our thinking has a transformative effect. As Adam (1990: 8) shows, time cannot simply be ‘added on’ to our existing theories of social science, for it requires us to rethink, ‘not just the nature of social time, but the very nature of the social’.





Qualitative Longitudinal (QL) research can be defined simply as qualitative enquiry that is conducted through (or in relation to) time. In QL research, time is the medium through which data is collected and/or explored and is a key driver of analysis and explanation (Saldana 2003:7-8). Indeed, time itself becomes data, opening up a range of conceptual and methodological challenges and opportunities (Saldana 2003: 7-8). Bringing qualitative and longitudinal modes of enquiry together offers a distinctive way of knowing and understanding the social world.

Qualitative enquiry generates ‘rich’ data – detailed, situated, contextualized data, that can answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions and discern human agency – the capacity to act, to interact, to make choices and influence the course of personal lives. In this mode of enquiry, data collection and analysis are integrated and creatively re-worked to derive meanings from context (Holstein and Gubrium 2004). Such research has significant explanatory power because it captures something of the textures of real lives.

The explanatory power of qualitative enquiry is further enhanced when combined with the strengths of the longitudinal tradition: cumulative data gathered strategically and serendipitously, that accrues value incrementally by bringing social change into focus, and revealing micro processes and answering questions that were not initially conceived of (Ruspini 1999; Thomson, Plumridge and Holland 2003; Neale and Flowerdew 2003; Laub and Sampson 2003; Holland, Thomson and Henderson 2004). By combining ‘time’ and ‘texture’ QL research can capture ‘change in the making’ (C. Wright Mills), discerning how life changes and continuities are created, lived and experienced (Neale and Flowerdew 2003; Neale 2004). In particular, it can shed light on the intricacies of causality, understanding not only that particular individuals or groups might move from A to B but how and why these journeys are undertaken and what significance they hold for those involved. It therefore offers the unique potential to explore the dynamic intersection of agency and structure in processes of social change.

As in all longitudinal research, the value of a data set, particularly its historical value, accrues over time and isn’t necessarily evident at the outset. In a sense, QL research requires something of a leap of faith. Prospective Longitudinal researchers do not know what they



will find out because they are researching the intersection of the present and past with the future. But experience shows that they will uncover valuable insights that could not be discovered in any other way.

### *Relationships, Identities & Life Course*

The Timescapes study will explore the temporal complexities of a fundamentally important, embodied life experience: the passage through the life course and the personal relationships and identities that are forged, sustained, discarded, reworked or otherwise bound up with this process. These are important themes for investigation in their own right (Giele and Elder 1998; Holstein and Gubrium 2000a/b, Hockey and James 2003, Gillies, Holland and McCarthy 2003; Stewart and Vaitilingam 2004) but this study will be unique in bringing these topics together for sustained and extensive investigation in ‘real’ time, as lives unfold. Our main focus will be on relationships with significant others: parents, siblings, family, children, partners, friends and lovers, for these basic human ties are profoundly implicated in the shaping of individual lives.

Recent research in this field has revealed that relationships, identities and life course trajectories are marked by diversity and fluidity. It is acknowledged, for example, that the trajectory of a life is not a fixed cycle, with normatively defined stages, but can be conceptualized in terms of the more fluid and individualized notions of ‘turning points’ or ‘defining moments’. The life course is not ‘a progress through a predetermined structure but the negotiation of a passage through an unpredictably changing environment’ (Harris 1987: 27-8). Similarly our intimate and familial ties are not rigidly prescribed but increasingly understood as fluid and negotiated webs of relationships and practices, that transcend the centrality of ‘the’ family (seen as an a-historical and essentialist institution), or the conjugal bond and which may or may not be organised around co-residence, heterosexuality, conventional divisions of labour, or ethnocentric notions of family structures. In line with these changing patterns, relations across the generations are also shifting, for example, in practices of care and support between elderly parents and their adult children, shaped by evolving patterns of employment, increased health and longevity, and the demographics of ageing and fertility. Added to these complexities are ethnic, religious, cultural, class and



regional differences across the ethnographic landscapes of the UK that are currently under researched (Appadurai 1991).

The study as a whole will speak to different forms of diversity, reflecting key markers of social identity and differentiation. Identity and its workings is a fundamental concern of social enquiry. 'Who we are' has individual dimensions but is essentially relational, emerging out of our differences from and similarities to others. It is best understood not as a fixed state but as a process, as 'being' and 'becoming'; as Jenkins reminds us, one's repertoires of identities is never a final or settled matter (Jenkins 2004: 5-6). Reynolds (2004), for example, has detailed how young Black people's sense of ethnic identity is fluid, according to the context in which they find themselves, and is influenced by a range of geo-political and social factors, not least family and social networks in Britain and overseas. 'Who we are' is a 'rag bag', an implicit web of identifiers (age, gender, class, ethnicity, language, cultural and geographical heritage and so on) that reflects our increasingly heterogeneous society. 'Who we are' or 'who we are becoming' is also linked fundamentally to what we do and who we relate to. Moreover, these complex identifiers emerge and are constituted not in isolation but in relation to each other.

The focus of this study will be on the identities that flow from age and generational categories (for example, being young or old) and from key relationships (for example, being a brother, daughter, partner or parent). Setting these in a wider context, Timescapes will explore how these age and relational identities intersect with other key social identifiers noted above. Crucially in the study, we will work with holistic notions of these markers, exploring how they are subjectively defined and interlinked in the construction and reconstruction of the self.

Timescapes focuses on the micro-processes by which continuities and changes in personal lives are occurring, how they are worked out over time and across the generations and what subjective meanings they hold for the individuals concerned. This is where our understanding and knowledge of personal lives is lacking. We know that there are important changes in patterns of intimacy and family life and in demographic patterns of ageing, generational dependency and child bearing. The diversity and fluidity of relational practices



and identities is now well documented, although how new these diverse patterns actually are, and the extent to which they represent continuities with past patterns of behaviour continues to be debated (McRae 1999). Mapping these changing patterns of personal and domestic life remains an important and challenging task for demography. At the same time, there are also important continuities. Relationships of intimacy, love and care remain significant for people and are giving rise to new forms of commitment and values. These changes, continuities and transformations have implications for the way people live their personal lives and they also have a profound impact on individual aspirations, life chances and well being. Yet currently we know relatively little about the micro processes through which these transformations in personal life are occurring. In particular we have a limited understanding of individual agency and hence of causality in the processes of growing up, growing old and the formation, dissolution and sustaining of relationships. These broad issues around transformations in personal lives give rise to a number of substantive research questions that will collectively drive the Timescapes projects:

- How do people experience and work out their personal relationships and identities over time and at different points in the life course? What is the link between ‘who you relate to’ (or should relate to) and ‘who you are’?
- How and with what rationale do individuals balance ‘living for the self’ with ‘living for others’ (Beck and Beck- Gernsheim 2001) and what are the implications for interpersonal trust, belonging and commitment?
- How does such balancing vary among individuals from different ‘walks of life’ or different generations, and at different critical moments (both personal and historical)?
- How do people understand and inhabit a particular generation and relate to older and younger generations? How does this change as generational cohorts gradually age?
- What impact do demographic changes have on the way relationships and identities are ‘worked out’ over time? (e.g. extended dependency of young people, later child bearing and increased longevity).

### *Timescapes*

The key conceptual tool for investigating the substantive themes of the study is that of ‘*timescapes*’ (Adam 1998). A ‘scape’ is a vista that brings a feature of the world into clear view, and may do so in kaleidoscopic ways, depending on the position and disposition of the observer. Central to the concept is a recognition that time is not linear but multidimensional,



that it is woven through a multiplicity of contexts that need to be recognized and understood in relation to each other. The three timescapes that will frame this enquiry are those of *biographical*, *generational* and *historical* time (Hareven 2000; Bengston *et al.* 2002). In developing these Timescapes we have drawn on the insights of C. Wright Mills, who said that we can't hope to understand society unless we explore how biography and history are interwoven in real lives.

*Biographical time* is conceived as an individual life that flows '*horizontally*' through the life span, from birth to death, shaped by and interacting with a multitude of personal, relational and historical events and circumstances. *Generational time* offers a different perspective on the life course, placing individuals in a '*vertically*' conceived generational convoy, simultaneously relating to and identifying with the generation 'above' (parents, grandparents and their contemporaries) and/or those 'below' (children, grandchildren and their contemporaries). Age and, more broadly, generation are key markers for defining, identifying and distinguishing people, yet generational categories are fluid and shifting as people cross generational boundaries, move between contexts or as key stages of the life course expand or contract. It is the dynamics of these intergenerational relationships and identities that constitutes generational time.

Crucial to this study is the linking of biographical and generational time to *historical time* - how individuals locate themselves in different epochs and in relation to different external events, circumstances and environments, both locally and globally. Historical time will be tracked across external events and structural conditions, and will take in wider social changes, shifting socio-economic and public policy norms and expectations, and technological advances as these play across the lives of our participants, producing and intersecting with critical moments in their own pathways. In particular we will take into account the policy landscapes within which people work out their relationships and identities. By linking biographical time with generational and historical time we aim to shed light on the dynamic interface between individual agency, the shifting structures of family and kinship, and the wider technological and social policy structures of society.



How time links to place, the shaping of relationships and identities in geographically and culturally diverse communities, will also form part of our enquiry (Adam 1998; Hareven 2000; Appadurai 1991). Other Timescapes also have salience for this study, e.g. *cyclical time*: the seasons of the year, anniversaries and so on, through which people link historical and biographical time and mark significant social ties. Finally the study will examine *structural time*, the timetables, rhythms and elasticity of time, as both resource and constraint, in contemporary society (Morgan 1996).

Time, in this study, is more than the medium used for interrogating substantive themes; temporality itself, and its place in people's lives forms a core part of our enquiry. Despite the growing interest in the social study of time, empirically grounded research that is sensitive to the multiplicities of time in lived experience is currently small scale, scattered, underdeveloped and diluted in its impact. In this context, creating multidimensional explanations for wider processes of social change, that will enable an alignment of grand theorizing with empirical realities, is a challenge (Chamberlayne *et al* 2000). Grand narratives of social change explain contemporary transformations in parenting, partnering, intimacy and family life in terms of individualization, detraditionalisation, globalization, democratization, and risk (Giddens 1992; Beck 1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 2002; Bauman 2003). These processes are presumed to lead to the atomization of relationships, a paring down to 'pure' relationships of intimacy or the parent-child bond, or, more negatively, and driven by rational economic thinking, the commodification of relations of love and care, the dismantling of togetherness, and widespread instabilities in family life. Currently, however, these theories are to varying degrees dislocated from the dynamics of real lives, particularly from empirically driven research that maps changes as they occur (Neale and Smart 1997, 2003; Jamieson 1998, Smart and Neale 1999; Lewis 2001; Neale 2002; Edwards and Duncan 2003, Williams 2004). By exploring how time is implicated in social practice and experience, the study will seek to capture the immediacy and complexity of 'change in the making' and enable more finely grained, empirically informed understandings of the changing nature of personal lives (Mills 1959).

The temporal focus of this study has given rise to a number of cross cutting research questions that will be explored across our empirical projects:



- What is the salience of time in people's daily lives?
- How are different Timescapes (biographical, generational, historical) understood by individuals and groups and how do they intersect as lives unfold?
- What key events or 'critical moments' (biographical, intergenerational and historical) are significant for people, and what meaning and impact do they have on the course of a life or linked lives?
- How might people in very different life course and historical positions offer diverse perspectives?



### *Policy Relevance*

An important aim of this research is to engage users in the research process, and increase the utility of the study by supporting the development of policies that are sensitive to life course and relationship dynamics. QL research has a particular contribution to make in increasing our understanding of *how* and *why* our social and material worlds come to be shaped in particular ways, how things might change or be sustained, and what those processes mean for those involved. For example, policy makers and practitioners addressing pressing social issues may seek to understand not simply ‘what works’ but ‘what matters’ to people and ‘how things work out’ for them, including the long term effects of social policy interventions that seek to sustain and bolster family resources or encourage change. People leading everyday lives, including research participants themselves, require insight into the shaping of social life and of their own dynamic role in this process. Additionally research-active social scientists working outside academia (for example government departments and NGOs that fund and commission research) have methodological as well as substantive needs. Spencer and colleagues (2003) have pointed to the need for such agencies to creatively extend the range of qualitative methods that are currently in use (rather than continuing to rely on the standard interview); QL research has obvious potential here.

The Timescapes study will yield data of relevance to social policy, particularly in the areas of health and social care, the dynamics of well being, social support for generational groups (children, adolescents, parents, older people), and the long term resourcing of families. Overall we aim to contribute a more holistic understanding of life course processes and transitions to inform selected areas of policy. The following policy related questions will be explored across our empirical projects:

- How are intergenerational dependencies and responsibilities worked out over time?
- How do fluid patterns of intimacy and family life influence the long term resourcing of families and the wellbeing of individuals? (in both material and emotional terms)
- What is the dynamic interplay between formal and informal care and support over the life course?





- How do particular policy developments relate to individual biographical change?  
How do diverse social policies intersect in the lives of individuals and families through time, and what is their long term impact?

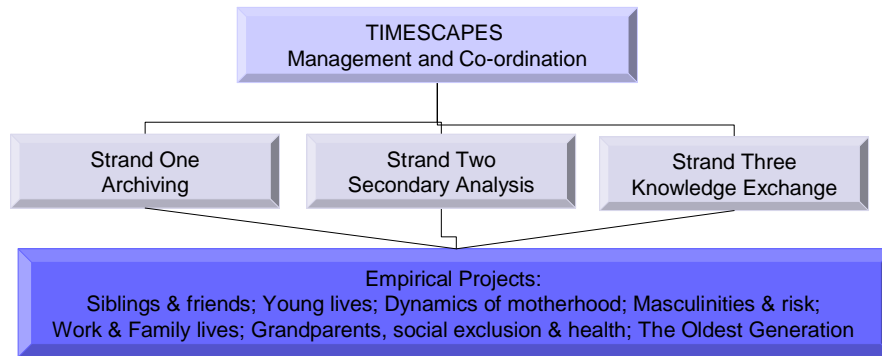
With regard to the last questions, we plan in each of the empirical projects to track selected individuals through a complex and shifting policy landscape, gathering longitudinal case data that will illuminate the complex relationship between process and outcome for specific policy interventions in people's lives. For example, project 6 will explore how policies for neighbourhood regeneration, social exclusion and community health care impact on the sustaining of relationships with a deprived community. Strategies for engaging users in the Timescapes research are set out below (Strand 3).



## 2. The Timescapes Study: Design and Organisation

The study is organized into a series of strands and projects that run concurrently over a five year period (see annex 1 for time chart for the overall study):

# The Timescapes Programme





## The Empirical Projects: introduction

The Timescapes study is built upon seven empirical projects that collectively span the life course, focusing on the experiences of younger life (projects one and two), mid life (projects three to five), and older life (projects six and seven). Over half the projects (projects 3, 5, 6, and 7) are based on a cross generational design. In this way, the Timescapes study will illuminate fundamentally important and dynamic human experiences such as growing up, crafting relationships, bearing and rearing children, living in families, becoming old and passing on, from the perspectives of those involved (Hareven 2000).

As well as addressing the broad substantive, temporal and policy related questions outlined above, each project will explore their own substantive themes:

|  |
|--|
| Project 1<br><b>Siblings and Friends: The changing nature of children’s lateral relationships</b>                  |
| Project 2<br><b>Young Lives and Times: the crafting of young people’s relationships</b>                            |
| Project 3<br><b>The Dynamics of Motherhood: an Intergenerational Project</b>                                       |
| Project 4<br><b>Masculinities, Identities and Risk:<br/>Stories of Transition in the lives of men and fathers.</b> |
| Project 5<br><b>Work and Family Lives: The Changing Experiences of ‘Young’ Families</b>                            |
| Project 6<br><b>Intergenerational Exchange: Grandparents, social exclusion and health</b>                          |
| Project 7<br><b>The Oldest Generation: Events, Relationships and Identities in later life.</b>                     |

The projects will track individuals and family groups over time to document changes and continuities in their relationships and identities and explore how these varied relationships are ‘worked out’ in different socio-economic, historical and cultural settings and contexts



across the UK. The aim is to include up to 400 individuals and family groups in the overall sample, and to sample boost at the outset to mitigate possible attrition rates. The samples will be drawn from all ‘walks of life’ and reflect varied identities, life experiences and access to resources, with gender, class, ethnicity and locality providing the core sampling criteria. We will collect cultural, historical and locality materials as important meta data to contextualize the research. This will facilitate the development of a spatial as well as temporal dimension to the study and the linking of time and place as integral features of data collection and analysis.



| <b>Substantive and Methodological themes across the Empirical Projects</b>  |   |   |                             |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Project Location</b>   | <b>Substantive Theme</b>                        | <b>Sample</b>                               | <b>Methodological Theme</b> |
| 1.<br>UK wide   | Siblings and friends                            | Children in<br>Middle childhood             | 1 2<br>3 6                  |
| 2.<br>Yorkshire   | Teenage Relationships                           | Teenage<br>Birth Cohort                     | 3<br>7                      |
| 3.<br>UK wide   | Motherhood                                      | Cross Generational<br>Incl. Grandmothers    | 3<br>6                      |
| 4. Wales<br>Norwich   | Masculinities and risk                          | Fathers                                     | 2 4<br>5                    |
| 5. S.E<br>Scotland  | Work/life balance                               | Cross generational<br>Parent/young child    | 2<br>5                      |
| 6.northern<br>inner city  | Grandparenthood and<br>Social exclusion         | 'Young' grandparents +<br>significant other | 3 4<br>5                    |
| 7.<br>UK wide   | Older relationships and<br>Commemorative events | Older people +<br>Significant other         | 4                           |
| <b>Methodological Themes</b><br>1=sample maintenance; 2=design/data collection 3=ethics;<br>4=secondary analysis; 5=user engagement; 6=researcher reflexivity;<br>7=mixed longitudinal methods (qualitative/quantitative) |   |   |                             |

The projects are designed around successive waves of interviews (biographical, life-history, in-depth). Some (e.g. project 1) work horizontally to explore a broad range of experiences through time; others (e.g. projects 2, 3 and 7) work vertically, intensively interrogating a topic with a smaller number of cases and complementing the waves of interviews with continuous data collection through an array of ethnographic methods (e.g. participant observation, day in the life tracking, internet communication, written accounts and so on). Units of analysis range from the individual, through to more complex 'linked lives' (family, sibling, household or inter-generational groups). We will employ a 'funnel approach' to data generation, enabling a broad and eclectic gathering of initial data, including historical accounts, followed



by more focused enquiries over time as particular themes emerge. This is important in prospective QL designs where it is not possible to know at the outset what data may be significant.

The projects are at different stages of development, from pre-existing studies (1 and 4) through to recently funded (2 and 3) and newly proposed projects (5, 6, 7). In this way, the Timescapes study allows for scaling up and extending existing research; data from the pre-existing studies will form an integral part of the archive, thereby extending the longitudinal reach of the overall study (see annex 2 for historical timeline covered by the projects). Also, the knowledge and expertise gained in the established projects will feed into the development of the new, purpose designed projects. The projects will be activated at different points in the five year study, depending on their stage of development and existing levels of funding. In each case they embody a longitudinal design, with the potential for long term follow up (see annex 3 for further details of the temporal research design). The projects will use a core QL analytical strategy: combining cross sectional (synchronic) and case history (diachronic) data analysis as an incremental and iterative process (Thomson and Holland 2003, Neale and Flowerdew 2004b).

The empirical projects will generate a detailed and extensive resource on personal lives and relationships in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Combining data from a rich array of contexts (socio-economic, geographical, domestic, and generational) allows for a finely grained understanding of the substantive themes and a more holistic understanding of the tenor of life under late modernity. The resulting dataset will be historically significant in the scale and diversity of material on the shaping and reshaping of personal lives, gathered contemporaneously at the turn of the millennium.



## Timescapes Empirical Projects: Descriptions and Resources

### Project 1

#### Siblings and Friends:

#### The changing nature of children's lateral relationships.

The aim of this project is to document and track the meanings, experiences and flows of prescribed (sibling) and chosen (friendship) relationships for children and young people, and how these relate to their sense of self as their individual and family biographies unfold. Studies of these lateral relationships are underdeveloped in childhood and family research. Little work follows children and young people over time to map their views and experiences of everyday changes in their sibling relationships and friendships. Sibling bonds are said to provide a sense of constancy for children in an uncertain world where parents may be less available physically (e.g. through paid employment), or psychically (e.g. emotional fulfilment). Such arguments, at a pragmatic level, leave aside the fact that children may have social ties to half and step sisters and brothers both within and outside their household that provide larger sibling groups, and can also form close friendships.

The project will follow up samples of children from two previous studies, which were conducted in tandem and used similar interview tools (Edwards et al. 2005a, 2005b, 2006). The first is a nationally distributed sample of 58 children aged between 7 and 13, living in a variety of family circumstances, and from a range of ethnic and class backgrounds, who were interviewed about their sibling relationships (full, half and step) and friendships between winter 2002 and summer 2003. The second is a sample of 44 children and young people aged between 5 and 21, evenly split between White and Asian, and from a variety of family and class circumstances, who were interviewed between summer 2003 and spring 2004. Those who were aged between 5 and 13 at the time of the original interview (around two-thirds of the combined sample) will be followed up, in order to track them from middle childhood into their teenage years. We would employ some sample boosting if attrition was particularly evident among the minority ethnic children.

#### Indicative Research Questions

- What are the dynamics of children and young people's ontological connection to/separation from siblings and friends, and what do these relationships mean for age related, gender and other status hierarchies and boundaries?
- How are these prescribed and chosen relationships balanced over time and accommodated with a sense of a separate self for children and young people from different social groups?
- What particular ethical considerations arise in the design and conduct of QL research with children and young people living in different circumstances? What are the specific issues surrounding sample maintenance, informed consent, appropriate methods of data collection and researcher involvement over time?

#### Project details

**Discipline:** Sociology/Social Policy



**Project Span:** Feb 2007-Jan 2011

**Design:** Prospective QL (waves 2 and 3),

**Builds on:** Sibling social capital practices (Families & Social Capital ESRC Research Group, 2002-6); Sibling relationships in middle childhood (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2002-4) (Wave 1)

**Sample:** 60 young people aged 10-16 at wave 2, including minimum of 20 sibling groups. Range of class and ethnic backgrounds, balance between boys and girls.

**Sites:** Metropolitan, urban and rural across Britain.

**Methods:** In depth interviews at 2 yearly intervals, using a flexible range of activities, including maps, flow charts and vignettes.

**Dataset:** 60 longitudinal case histories, comprising 120 accounts across waves 2-3, plus 60 accounts from wave 1 (n=180 accounts in all). Cultural commentaries (on games, music, etc.).

**Secondary Analysis:** Linking with 'young lives' data in projects 2, 5 and strand 1, and with sibling and friendship data throughout the projects.

## Project 2

### Young Lives and Times:

#### The crafting of young people's relationships

This recently established study follows a birth cohort of young people to chart the dynamics of their intimate, social and familial relationships. It explores how young people practice and 'work out' this nexus of relationships over time, through cumulative experiences and 'turning points' in their biographies and through changing sources of morality as they construct their identities.

Currently we lack detailed knowledge of the nature of young people's friendships and romantic or sexual relationships, particularly of the processes through which these are forged, sustained, lost or discarded through their teenage years (Thomson 2000; Sharpe and Thomson 2005). It is often presumed that these processes are bound up with young people's family cultures, in particular, the extent to which they are embedded in their families and the nature of their intergenerational relationships with their parents and other kin. Indeed there is evidence to suggest that the ability of young people to form stable adult relationships and take on the commitments and responsibilities of family life and citizenship is causally linked to their earlier family experiences (Iacovou 2004), although longitudinal data that are contextually sensitive enough to shed light on these processes are currently limited (Neale and Flowerdew 2003; 2007).

The project will explore 'what matters' to a new cohort of young people, brought up in a climate in which patterns of parenthood, partnering, care, intimacy and family life are widely understood to be diverse, fluid, and open to negotiation (Brannen 1999; Brannen and Nilsen 2002). The project will extend our knowledge of young people's values, aspirations and experiences of friendship, love, sex, cohabitation, marriage and parenthood, and how their relational identities and values are shaped through and, in turn, shape their practices over time. We will be tracking the young people through key transition points in their lives, for





example, as they enter intimate relationships, leave compulsory schooling and reach the age of majority. We intend to recruit a sample of teenage parents through Sure Start with the aim of discerning how their different needs – for education, housing, childcare, benefits, and so on are met over time, to what extent they are supported by family and/or the state and the long term effectiveness of the support they receive. With similar aims in mind, we will also seek to track a sample of NEETS (young people not in education, employment or training) recruited via the local connexions service. We envisage that the data generated from these case studies will be of value to Sure Start and Connexions in evaluating the long term effectiveness of their policies. Overall, we aim to understand the prescribed and individualized aspects of young people’s developing biographies at a period of intense change in their lives.

### Indicative Research Questions

- How do young people define, experience, balance and move between their family, friendship and courtship (intimate) relationships over time?
- What are the changing values and sources of morality that young people draw upon in practicing and developing these differently constituted relationships and what does this mean for their evolving identities?
- What are the best means of addressing issues of confidentiality, anonymity, informed consent and intrusion in a prospective QL study which uses multi media methods to collect sensitive data? What are the best means of drawing on complementary quantitative longitudinal data to enrich a qualitatively led project?

### Project Details

**Discipline:** Sociology/Social Policy

**Project Span:** October 2008 –June 2011

**Design:** Prospective QL, age cohort (waves 3 and 4, 2009-10 aged 16-18).

**Builds On:** *Changing Lives: The Dynamics of Young People’s Relationships*, designed to track young people over a decade from age 13 to 23, ESRC fellowship/’Real Life Methods’ node of the National Centre for Research Methods (Oct 2005-Sept 2008) (Waves 1 and 2, 2006-8, aged 13-15).

**Sample:** Birth cohort of 30–40 young men and women from mixed socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds; followed from age 13 (wave one) to age 18 (wave 4).

**Sites:** Five contrasting socio-economic communities in a Northern metropolitan City

**Methods:** Repeat In-depth interviews (18 month intervals) complemented by continuous data collection: ‘Walking alongside’ young people using a range of ethnographic methods (participant observation, interactive website, written and visual mapping techniques) to create a cultural inventory of young lives.

**Dataset:** 30-40 longitudinal case histories comprising 60-80 accounts from waves one/two, and a further 60-80 accounts from waves three/four (N=120 -160 accounts); focus group and local baseline survey data from wave one.

**Secondary Analysis:** linking with ‘young lives’ data in projects 3, 4 and strand 1, and courtship/partnership data across the projects; links to DfES quantitative longitudinal study of Young People (tracking young people from age 14 over a decade, n=20,000).



## Project 3

### The Dynamics of Motherhood: an intergenerational project

Intergenerational studies have pointed to the way in which the arrival of a new generation can be the catalyst of rapid change for families, in terms of contact, social mobility and a reconfiguration of identities and power (for example (Park and Roberts 2002, Brannen et al (2004), Bjerrum Nielsen and Rudberg 1994, 2000). Longitudinal studies draw attention to the iterative, recursive and 'textured' way in which such shifts are negotiated (McLeod 2003, Thomson et al. 2003, Neale and Flowerdew 2003). In this process identities and resources do not simply 'shift' but rather we find that there are ongoing 'conversations' often over three generations, through which identities, investments and dependencies are constructed and revised (Thomson 2004a).

The Momm study explores the different ways in which women make sense of the meaning of first time motherhood, both in relation to popular constructions of the 'good mother' and in relation to private and more public intergenerational narratives. 12 intergenerational case studies are being constructed, drawing on two waves of interviews (during pregnancy and one year after the birth) with first time mothers, and, where possible, interviews with their mothers, grandmothers and a nominated 'significant other' (e.g. partner, father, sibling or friend). The mothers' identity work is being traced over the first year of parenthood, exploring tensions between ideals and practices.

As part of the *Timescapes* study we propose to *extend* and *deepen* the project over a further two years period, drawing on 6 of the case studies for detailed investigation over the four years since the study began. This will enable us to more fully explore the ways in which mothers, and the families they are part of, negotiate the arrival of a new generation. The project will combine a longitudinal and intergenerational design in order to explore the complex array of temporal registers that characterise family life at a time of acceleration and social change (Morgan 2005).

#### Indicative Research Questions

- How are interpersonal and family relationships constituted and played out over time in the context of the arrival of a new generation?
- What are the dynamic processes of identity formation for mothers in this context and how is this linked to the interplay between 'grandmother', 'mother', 'daughter' and 'child' over time?
- How do hindsight, foresight and insight (Thomson and Holland 2003) interact in the research process and in what ways does researcher subjectivity become a central source of data and knowledge (Lucey et al 2003)?

#### Project Details

**Discipline:** Sociology/Cultural Studies

**Project span:** Jan 2008-December 2009

**Design:** Prospective QL (waves 3 & 4),

**Builds on:** The Making of Modern Motherhood: memories, representations and practices (the MOMM project). ESRC (ref: 148-25-0057) Identities and Social Action programme (Jan 2005-Dec 2007) (Waves 1 and 2).



**Sample:** 6 intergenerational case histories from divergent class and ethnic groups; repeat interviews with mothers, grandmothers and significant others

**Sites:** Metropolitan, urban and rural across UK

**Methods:** Repeat in-depth interviews with mothers, grandmothers and significant others at yearly intervals; participant observation of special events and routine family practices; ‘day in a life’ shadowing; memory books (Thomson and Holland 2005); visual data.

**Dataset:** 12 intergenerational case histories, comprising accounts from mothers, grandmothers and significant others in each group (48 accounts from waves 1 and 2; 24 accounts from waves 3 and 4, n= 72 accounts).

**Secondary Analysis:** linking with parent data (projects 4, 5) and motherhood and intergenerational data across the projects.

## Project 4

### Masculinities, Identities and Risk:

#### Stories of transition in the lives of men and fathers

This project will draw on and extend an ESRC funded project exploring the ways in which men narrate, and account for, their experiences of becoming a father for the first time, and any transformations it brings to their relationships and lives. Based on three waves of interviews (conducted before and after the birth), the project has generated a carefully crafted, qualitative longitudinal data set focused intensively around some critical turning points in men’s life histories (pregnancy, birth, changes to daily routines) and how they interpret or make meaning of a significant biographical change. Use of diverse cultural representations of men and fathers as prompts within the interviews provides a valuable historical contextualization of the biographical data.

Findings from the project have shed light on how men fashion, negotiate and rework their identities as men and as fathers in the light of changing cultural constructions of masculinity and fatherhood, and how dynamic, embodied gender relations work through into both women’s and men’s adult lives (Henwood and Procter, 2003; see also McQueen and Henwood, 2002; Henwood, Gill and Mclean, 2002; Gill, Henwood and Mclean, 2000). In analytical terms, and as part of a wider programme of social psychological studies of men’s sense making and identities-in-the-making, they highlight the diverse ways in which men position themselves “psycho-discursively” in their private and public relationships, and within the changing time and place coordinates of their lives (see e.g. Edley and Wetherell, 1999; Frosh, 1995; Frosh, Phoenix and Pateman, 2002; Wetherell and Edley, 1999; Willott and Griffin, 1999). The overarching goal of these ongoing studies is to build on the (as yet embryonic) understanding we have of the ruptures and uncertainties in people’s relationships and lives flowing from the dynamics of socio-cultural change. Studies in the family policy arena suggest that investigating how people view the risks and opportunities they have lived through, and see on the horizon for themselves and others who share their life projects, are essential to understanding the impact of socio-cultural destabilization on the choices and decisions people make in their lives (Lewis, 2005).

The proposal is to conduct a substantively and methodologically innovative meta- and re-analysis of waves 1-3 of the men’s transition to fatherhood data. This will enable a more



finely grained understanding of temporalities in the experiences of fathers over a time of intensive change in their lives. The empirical re-study will provide a unique opportunity for a long term follow up of the sample, whose lives may have changed significantly since they were last interviewed nearly a decade ago, and for comparative investigations into two geographically, socially and culturally diverse cohorts of first time fathers. The project will be geared towards extending ('scaling-up') the reach, relevance and impact of studies of men's sense-making and life transition within a range of academic/educational, policy and practice arenas, such as psycho-social, gender and Life course studies; parenting education; gender, welfare and citizenship; counseling and mental health.

## Indicative Research Questions

- How do men interpret the changes in their relationships and identities as they enter parenthood, and how do they understand and negotiate masculinities, fatherhood and risk across biographical time?
- How effective is the strategy of using cultural images to historically contextualize biographical data?
- What is the utility of a research design combining intensive and extensive tracking of individuals across different stages of life?
- How can a virtual network of academic users be used to develop data analysis, interpret stakeholder involvement, and establish the reach, relevance and impact of findings?

## Project Details

**Discipline:** Social Psychology

**Project Span:** Feb 2007- July 2010

**Design:** Prospective QL (waves 1-3); follow up (wave 4), combines intensive and extensive tracking of individual over different phases of the Life course

**Builds on:** ESRC Masculinities, Identities and the Transition to Fatherhood (December 1999-February 2001: waves 1-3). The project will be affiliated to the Cardiff 'QUALITT' node of the National Centre for Research Methods, which is designed to increase the innovation, integration and impact of qualitative social science

**Sample:** 30 fathers (waves 1-3) – varied employment, income & age; sample boosting at wave four to maintain existing variation and extend it to cultural heritage (English and Welsh) and non-normative family structures (non-resident fathers)

**Sites:** Waves 1-3 (Norwich and Norfolk); extension in wave 4 to Cardiff and South Wales (rural and urban, varied localities, two contrasting regions of the UK)

**Methods:** Meta-analysis of existing longitudinal data (waves 1-3 repeat life-history interviews); re-interviewing after a gap of 7-8 years (wave 4, 2009); comparative analysis with new cohort of first time fathers; interviewee appraisals of visual images/cultural representations of men and fathers; supplementary focus groups

**Dataset:** 45 sets of 3-4 interview transcripts, each of 1-2 hours duration; 15 full case histories (interviewed at waves 1-4); 30 wave 1-3 data sets (15xNorfolk) and 15 new cases (South Wales); 6 focus groups (across 2 main geographical sites & time points - 2001 & 2009); 250 audio-tape hours

**Secondary Analysis:** Linking with projects 3 and 5 on parenting and adulthood, and with data on masculinities, fatherhood and risk across the projects; active engagement with the wider research community using the project bulletin board on the study website.



## Project 5

### Work and Family Lives: The changing experiences of 'young' families

This project aims to explore how families reconcile work and family life over time, drawing on the changing experiences and perceptions of a stratified sample of families with primary school age children. Policies at national, UK and European level emphasise the need to support all working families and to address the needs of children (Millar 2000; Wasoff and Dey 2000). However, researchers are increasingly illuminating the challenges, contradictions and inconsistencies facing working parents trying to achieve a work-life balance (Duncan and Edwards 1998, Backett-Milburn *et al* 2001, Mauthner *et al* 2001). These are especially acute for low income families who may also experience considerable movement in and out of low paid employment (and therefore poverty) (Kodz *et al* 2002, Kemp *et al* 2004). There has been a lack of research that explores the process of negotiation between parents and children in addressing issues raised by working parenthood, how such issues impact on everyday family practices, and how these may change over time in response to changes in work and family circumstances, including those in the lives of children. Greater understanding is also needed of how work/family issues are being constructed and 'worked out' by parents and their children living under very different socio-economic and labour market conditions.

We will address these themes through a longitudinal project, focusing centrally on a core sample of 16 low income families who are either with or without work at the inception of the research. We will compare their experiences with a sample of 4 affluent families who conform to the model of the male breadwinner/female homemaker 'traditional' family, which, it has been argued, tacitly underpins much of the UK tax and welfare system. We will examine parents' and children's accounts of their families' everyday lives, teasing out the ways in which children describe their own lives and concerns within the time/space/financial structures of their parent(s)'s working or non-working lives.

### Indicative Research Questions

- How do young children and parents understand, negotiate and reconcile the timetables and rhythms of their working and home lives and what does this mean for their relationships and identities over time?
- How are these changing experiences mediated by families living under different socio-economic circumstances and structural constraints?
- What is the utility of QL research for understanding the dynamics of work/family balance and for developing policies that are sensitive to processes of change, particularly in low income families?

### Project Details

**Discipline:** Sociology/Social Policy

**Project span:** Feb 2007- Jan 2010

**Design:** Prospective QL (waves 1 - 3).

**Builds on:** Gender-related family-work balance in Scottish Companies (European Social Fund 2003-2006); Caring and Providing (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1998-2000); The



socio-economic and cultural contexts of children's lifestyles and the everyday production of health variations (ESRC Health Variations Programme, 1999- 2001).

**Sample:** 20 families with primary school-aged children: 8 low income families with parents in employment (including 2 lone parent families), 8 low income families with neither parent in employment (including 2 lone parent families), 4 affluent 'traditional' families (father in employment, mother as homemaker). Child interviewees will include equal numbers of boys and girls.

**Sites:** Urban, South East Scotland

**Methods:** Repeat individual interviews with parents and 1 primary school age child in each family (waves 1 and 3), focus group interviews with family members (wave 2).

**Data Set:** The total number of individual interviews with parents and children in each wave will be 56 (n = 112 accounts); plus 20 focus groups.

**Secondary Analysis:** linking with young lives data (projects 1 and 2), parenthood data (projects 3 and 4), and work/life balance data across the projects.

## Project 6

### Intergenerational Exchange:

#### Grandparents, social exclusion and health

The Social Exclusion Unit observes that social exclusion is frequently perpetuated across generations (SEU, 2004). We have made similar observations in our methodological research to access socially excluded groups. Furthermore, we have identified that within these groups, generations are closely layered, as many first time mothers are in their mid to late teens (ESRC RMP H333250001) and mothers and daughters may be having children simultaneously. Our knowledge and understanding of intergenerational exchanges and how these impact on the nature of health and wellbeing (Drew and Silverstein 2004) and health seeking behaviour (DoH 1999, Berkman 2000) in this context is limited. In particular we need research on the dynamics of such exchanges and how they link to the ageing process for those in mid to later life.

Using access methods identified in on-going research (Emmel *et al.* forthcoming) life history cases will be developed through repeat interviews with purposefully sampled participants, capturing mid- (35+) to older life (50+) grandparents and their biological or 'chosen' children and grandchildren (Bornat *et al* 1999; Clark and Roberts 2003). The project will thereby generate retrospectives of the participants' life course, while tracking ongoing changes over 'real' time. Interviews will explore how life events link to people's experiences of social inclusion/exclusion and their connection or otherwise to their locality (Phillipson *et al* 1999); changing perceptions and behaviours around health and well being, and their layered identities and relational practices as children, parents and grandparents. Divergence between mid-life and older-life grandparents' forms of intergenerational exchange around health, in the context of the local neighbourhood and perceptions of spaces and places considered healthy and unhealthy, will be investigated.

Our sample will build on existing networks generated in on-going and completed research (ESRC RMP H333250001; Emmel and Malby, 2000). The research site is ethnically homogeneous, a low-income estate in a city in the north of England, built as a slum-



clearance site in the 1930s. However, in our research we have identified perceptions of difference—the places people live, those who have married and moved to the estate, those who are ‘locals’ and ‘not locals’. These perceptions of relationships and identity will be investigated with reference to our core research questions. In addition we will interrogate observable gender differences; for example, we observe high levels of male morbidity and premature mortality and the frequent absence of men from the home. Our longitudinal design will enable us to shed light on the dynamics of these processes.

The research will make contributions in three methodological areas. First, we will contribute to debates around life-history methods in qualitative longitudinal research, critically engaging with the transformation of retrospective life histories into prospective case histories, gathered in ‘real’ time. We will draw on analytical strategies developed in the RMP project to reflect on the methods used, their appropriateness and lessons learnt for the social science community.

Second, we will consider the transferability of the data, in particular, interrogating what ‘packages’ of contextual data — demographic, economic, geographical, health information — should accompany primary data when it is deposited in qualitative archives, to make it amenable to secondary analysis.

Third, building on the substantive research and the lessons learnt about the transferability of data and, subsequently, analysis, we will contribute to ongoing policy debates and initiatives addressing social exclusion, teenage pregnancy, and inequalities in health. We will liaise closely with strategic and operational policy makers at local (PCT, local authority), regional (strategic health authorities), and central (Department of Health, Social Exclusion Unit) through existing networks. Our method includes evaluation of the appropriateness of these interventions and interactions to policy making processes.

### Indicative Research Questions

- How do grandparents living in a socially excluded locality, understand and mobilize intergenerational relationships over time, and what impact do these processes have on their identities, in particular on the sustainability of their health and well being?
- What are the dynamics of grandparents’ experiences of social inclusion or exclusion and the nature of their ties to their localities and how does this relate to their unfolding biographies?
- What meta data needs to be collected and collated in order to contextualize project level data for secondary analysis and what ethical issues need to be taken into account in determining the nature and extent of meta data? What are the best strategies for ensuring the credible and ethical transfer of these data to inform policy making processes addressing social exclusion and inequalities in health?

### Project Details

**Discipline:** Health Research and Policy

**Project span:** Feb 2007 – Jan 2010

**Design:** Prospective/Retrospective QL (waves 2-5).



**Builds on:** Emmel ND, Hughes KA & Greenhalgh J, Developing Methodological Strategies to Recruit and Research Socially excluded groups, ESRC RMP [H333250001] (Nov 2002-Oct. 2005) (wave 1)

**Sample:** Family groups including Mid-life (35+) and Older-life (50+) grandparents defined as socially excluded at wave one, and their children and grandchildren. Local policy planners.

**Site:** Estate in northern English city

**Methods:** Life history interviews/narratives with family members, and focus group discussions with policy planners.

**Dataset:** 8 longitudinal case histories for grandparents (interviewed at 6 monthly intervals over 2 years, n=32 accounts); life history narratives from 2 members from 4 families respectively (n=8 accounts). Focus group discussions (1-2) with local policy planners.

**Secondary Analysis:** linking to projects 3 and 7 on older lives, and data on grandparenthood, intergenerational relationships and social exclusion across the projects.

## Project 7:

### The Oldest Generation:

#### Events, relationships and identities in later life.

This project is concerned with life processes for the oldest generation and, in particular, how continuities and changes in inter-generational relationships and identities are marked and commemorated. How older people interact with family, friends and others is changing in the UK as a result of demographic and labour market trends. These include the growing complexity and fluidity of family and kin ties, increased geographical mobility, changing patterns of labour market participation by women, and the increased longevity and periods of dependence of the oldest generation. Under these circumstances, traditional perceptions of inter-generational relations, rights and responsibilities are being re-negotiated; friends, neighbours or professional domestic or home care workers are just as likely as family members to provide support for the oldest generation and the intrinsic nature of these intergenerational ties and patterns of support is therefore shifting and subject to new practices and forms of expression.

We will explore the dynamic nature of older people's relationships and identities in the context of these changing structures of intergenerational support. A particular focus of this research will be the marking of relationships and identities among the oldest generation through key events (e.g. birthdays and Christmas) and life transitions (births, 'marriages' and deaths). Our previous and on-going research (Bornat *et al.* 2000, Dimmock, Bornat *et al.* 2002; Bytheway 2005a, 2005b) has revealed the significance of such events for marking the passage of biographical and generational time and reflecting continuities and changes in familial and non familial relationships. Life transitions (e.g. the arrival of a grandchild, the marriage or divorce of an adult child, or the death of a spouse) may also precipitate changes in the composition or routines of households that may have particular impacts on the oldest generation.

A purposive sample of 12 families will be recruited through the UK-wide Open University network and followed over an 18 month period. We will recruit one member of the oldest





generation and one person to act as ‘reporter’ on the family with whom we will be in regular contact. The reporter will keep a diary, take photographs at key family events and provide data on the generational structure of the family, the ages of the oldest members, patterns of contact and living arrangements across the generations, and basic information regarding gender, ethnicity, household tenure and composition, class and geographical location. Repeat life history interviews with the older person will enable us to collect retrospective as well as prospective data. The first interview will focus on the family's history and heritage; retrospective accounts of key life events; descriptions of events that have occurred over the course of the previous 12 months; and current patterns of family and non-family contact between households. The second interview will update the first with accounts of events and changes that have occurred during the intervening 18 months. If, for any reason, the second interview is not possible, attempts will be made to interview another member of the oldest generation in the reporter’s family.

Our aim is to explore how families manage and account for time and change in the context of age and ageing. Our data will derive from life history interviews, diary entries and photographs. We will also undertake secondary analysis of four other datasets in the consortium, searching for references to relevant family events. The serendipitous source and nature of the information gathered in this project may, through both symbolic as well as literal references, indicate not only how, but why certain family relationships are sustained or change and with what possible outcomes (in terms of patterns of care and support) for the oldest generation.

## Indicative Research Questions:

- How are the living arrangements, household practices, needs and resources of the oldest generation affected by (and how do they affect) their intergenerational relationships and identities and what is the dynamic nature of these processes?
- How do families maintain contact within and between the different generations, and how significant are annual routines of family celebration and commemoration, and events associated with key life transitions (births, marriages, deaths)?
- What is the value of linking data from a range of differently derived time- based projects and datasets (Mass Observation, Timescapes) in addressing these themes?

## Project Details

**Discipline:** Oral History/Gerontology

**Project Span:** Feb 2007 – Sept 2009

**Design:** Prospective/Retrospective QL (waves 1-2),

**Builds on:** Mass-Observation Archive data, in particular, The Social and Personal Significance of Birthdays in Adult Life (RES-000-22-0566, Jan 2004 - April 2005)

**Sample:** 12 diverse families recruited through the UK-wide Open University network, including 12 people from the oldest generation (aged 75+) plus a significant other.

**Sites:** varied (geographical, socio-economic) across the UK.

**Methods:** Life history interviews (waves 1 - 2) at 18 month intervals, with oldest family member; diary keeping, photographs and regular contact with nominated significant other throughout the study period

**Dataset:** 12 longitudinal case histories, comprising accounts from older people



(12 accounts at each wave, n=24 accounts); and written, diary and visual records from 12 significant others.

**Secondary Analysis:** CAQDA searches for data on inter-generational relations in later life (projects 3 and 6) and key commemorative and life events across the projects; further analysis of data from the Mass-Observation Archive.



## The Central Programme

The data collected in the seven empirical projects will be analysed and findings reported on by the individual teams, but will also feed into the central programme of work for the overall study. This has three strands: Archiving, Secondary Analysis and Knowledge Exchange/Transfer, details of which are set out below.

### Strand 1: Archiving

**Co-ordinators: Sheila Henderson and Bren Neale.**

**Consultants: Amanda Coffey (QUALITI) , Louise Corti and Libby Bishop (ESDS Qualidata); Dr. Rob Perks (British Library Sound Archive)**

A key objective of this ESRC initiative is methodological in nature: to establish a working archive of data derived from the empirical projects as a valuable resource for sharing within the social scientific community and for future historical use. The first step in this process, and the focus of Strand 1, is to address the practical, ethical, legal and epistemological tasks of archiving, representing and contextualising the Timescapes dataset (Mauthner, Parry and Milburn 1998; Boddy 2004; Parry and Mauthner 2004, Holland, Thomson and Henderson 2004; Bishop 2005). These are undoubted challenges: ethical considerations of participant anonymity, confidentiality, consent, intrusion and research influence are accentuated where qualitative research is conducted over time, and the way they are addressed raises epistemological questions about the status and quality of data that has been skewed and/or modified. It is increasingly accepted that qualitative data cannot be treated on the same basis as quantitative data for the purposes of archiving and secondary analysis; flexible, localized and responsive strategies are needed that reflect the context specific nature of the data and take account of the 'live' interface (especially salient over time) between researchers and research participants.

Working within these broad parameters we will establish a specialist working archive of Timescapes data at the University of Leeds, housed in the FLaG (Families, Life course and Generations) Research Centre and with close links to the consortium projects. The archive will be established as a specialist satellite of The UK Data Archive (Qualidata) and developed



in collaboration with Qualidata and three of the ESRC funded QUADs teams. The decentralized, thematic nature of this resource offers a different way of encouraging and facilitating secondary use – through collaborative links with the original researchers and the participants themselves. It also allows for substantive research and technical skills to be combined in the development, showcasing and management of data sharing and re-use (Boddy 2004). Archiving for secondary use will not therefore be a technical or administrative task ‘tacked on’ to the end of the projects but will be integral to the research process and outputs.

A data co-ordinator will oversee this continuous and creative process, working closely with the project teams and in collaboration with The UK Data Archive (Qualidata) throughout the five year period to create a robust and well integrated resource. In line with ethical, methodological and epistemological requirements core data will be selectively deposited and different levels of access will be built in for different categories of users (Holland *et al* 2004).

The materials for archiving will include:

- Selected and edited multi media raw data files (e.g audio, visual, electronic and written materials and digital transcripts), produced in consultation with the research participants
- Baseline analytical files, both cross sectional and longitudinal, including case history profiles and broad thematic coding
- Meta-data (fieldwork/research materials, historical/cultural/locality source materials) to fully contextualize the research
- digitized transcripts from pre-existing waves of data collection (enabling the resource to be built up from the first year of the study)
- Working/conference/briefing/media papers and publications from the study

This will create an extensive resource for data pooling within the consortium and for a range of secondary uses (Corti and Thompson 2004). The data set will be partially digitized to allow online access via user friendly web based software. To facilitate this process, new audio and visual data will be digitized at the point of collection using state of the art recording technology. Data from the projects will be recorded, transcribed, anonymised where appropriate, catalogued and formatted in comparable fashion, and integrated within the archive in ways that allow for ease of use and longevity. Ensuring that the data is of high quality, both in terms of intellectual content and technical capture, integration and display



will be a priority for the archive. Our skilled researchers will be trained in the use of new digital recording techniques and we will work to high standards of data harmonization, precision and clarity of record keeping, drawing on industry standards for this work in collaboration with ESDS Qualidata.

**Establishing the Archive for re-use.** The network will use a coordinated, but flexible system of data entry, organisation, and integration, based on principles of best practice for producing large data sets (Mandemakers and Dillon, 2004). We will establish a common scaffolding that will enable data to be accessed through a variety of routes: for example, by project, by case within project, by meta data, locality or historical moment, by gender, ethnic or age/generational categories, and by cross cutting descriptive themes and topics. The thematic organization (Richie and Lewis, 2003) will develop flexibly, but is likely to include *identity/relationship* (e.g. fatherhood, siblinghood); *temporal life experiences* (e.g. chronologies of events, life transitions, turning points); *domains of change* (e.g. family, health, education) and the *resourcing of families* (e.g. negotiation of formal/informal care and support, and opportunities and constraints).

We will be exploring different techniques to integrate and interrogate data from across the projects (Hodkinson *et al.* 2005). The data scaffolding will be supported by a navigational device allowing easy and rapid access to the data.

Tapping the potential offered by computer software, we will adopt CAQDAS technology as the analytical platform for organising our core data, and will choose a package that offers cutting edge tools and resources for managing and organising large scale, multimedia datasets (Lee and Fielding, 2004).

The basis for depositing the Timescapes dataset with ESDS Qualidata will also be integral to this strand. The data co-ordinator will work to national standards, allowing for a seamless transfer of data and records to the archive and eventually on to ESDS Qualidata. The dataset will be promoted, maintained and updated over time, with facilities for publicity, training, online guides, and user support.



We will maintain a broad and flexible approach to these tasks, drawing directly on the expertise of ESDS Qualidata (Corti) and the ESRC demonstrator scheme for qualitative archiving and data sharing, including Coffey's project on archiving multi-media qualitative data sets. We will also draw on wider cutting edge expertise, for example, the NCeSS Digital Record node that is developing digital software for integrating and accessing qualitative data sources in varied formats. Specifically, we will learn from Henderson *et al's* demonstrator scheme project, *Negotiating the Long View*, which will be extended under the Timescapes study. (see below).

### **Strand One Project:**

#### **Making the Long View: Sharing the Inventing Adulthoods project**

We have produced a unique and extensive QL data set based on longitudinal research conducted over 9 years on the lives of young people in five localities in the UK (an inner city area, a disadvantaged housing estate, an isolated rural area in England, an affluent commuter belt suburb, and contrasting communities in a Northern Irish city). The first project involved over 2000 young people in a range of methods including questionnaires (1800), focus groups (62) interviews (58), and research assignments (272). The other two projects have followed 115 young people drawn from this sample (fluctuating with each of five interview rounds and dropping to 70 at the fourth and fifth). Individual interviews were the key research method, but focus groups, memory books, lifelines and questionnaires were also employed. Aged between 11-19 in 1996, at the outset of the research, the young people are now aged 20-28.

Although the focus for investigation has shifted from values, to adulthood, to social capital across the three component studies, a consistent concern has been to investigate: agency and the 'reflexive project of self' (Giddens 1991); values and the construction of adult identity; how the social and material environment in which young people grow up acts to shape the values and identities that they adopt; and the impact of globalisation on the individual. Working with the complexity of the young people's accounts, we have focused on the dynamic interplay between the individual, the resources available to them and the structuring effects of time, locality, class and gender.

We are currently funded on an 18 month ESRC project (until August 2006) to explore the best means of archiving and sharing QL data. Drawing on 10 cases from the Inventing Adulthoods project we will explore creative ways of overcoming ethical and practical problems relating to representing, contextualizing and providing access to this dataset and attempt to establish a group of secondary users. Within Strand 1 of the Timescapes study we propose to maximize the value of the Inventing Adulthoods data set by archiving up to a further 40 cases; extending our group of academic and non-academic users; developing our longitudinal case history methodology (10 cases fully written up); and, crucially for this participative process and possible future data collection, maintaining contact with the



sample. We also aim to contribute this growing expertise and point our group of secondary users to the consortium as a whole.

### Indicative Research Questions

- What strategies are best adopted in the process of establishing an ethically sound, contextualized and accessible archived resource and encouraging academic and non-academic use and re-use of this resource?
- What methods of in-depth case analysis are most effective in the context of QL studies involving 5-6 interview waves?
- What are the best means of maintaining links with a longstanding longitudinal sample to maximize the potential for further waves of data collection?

### Strand One Archiving Project Details

**Discipline:** Sociology/Cultural Studies

**Project span:** October 2006- Sept 2010

**Design:** Consolidation of participatory research archiving and data sharing from nine year prospective QL project (waves 1 to 6); and of longitudinal case history analysis methodology

**Builds on:** Three ESRC empirical projects (Youth Values, Inventing adulthoods and Youth Transitions: waves 1 to 5) and ESRC demonstrator scheme for Qualitative data sharing and research archiving (Negotiating the Long View).

**Methods:** Higher level longitudinal case analysis; sample maintenance; establishing a working dataset for secondary analysis, based on consultation and networking with project participants and established and potential secondary users.

### Strand 2: Secondary Analysis

**Co-ordinators:** Joanna Bornat and Sarah Irwin, with Amanda Coffey.

Building on and closely linked to the work of Strand 1, Strand 2 will develop, facilitate and showcase secondary analysis of data from the Timescapes archive. In order to ensure that the dataset does not atrophy but remains a vibrant, growing and useable resource, we aim to advance methods for analysis, data sharing and re-use, and establish a community of users, as well as develop new theoretical and substantive insights arising from the synthesis of the Timescapes data. Secondary Analysis is central to the work of the consortium, being a core part of the remit of each project and an area ripe for development in qualitative work (Corti *et al* 2005; Bornat 2005). Web based archives have been described as ‘repositories of meanings’, lending themselves ideally to processes of analytical immersion in the data through browsing and serendipity (Bradley 1999, Featherstone 2000). The linked collection and assembly of qualitative longitudinal data in the Timescapes archive will enable both joint and individual interpretations of the data to emerge. The past, for example, recalled through memory and recorded through the synchronous accounting of events, can be identified and



constructed from varied perspectives as well as different points in time. The potential for creative interpretation through the sharing of theories and the juxtaposing of perspectives is therefore immense (Bornat 2005b).

One of the distinctive characteristics of qualitative research is the interweaving of data collection and analysis by the same individual or within research teams. In this context, the precise relationship between primary analysis (of one's own data), meta-analysis (re-visiting one's own data perhaps with a different theoretical, substantive or temporal focus (Neale and Flowerdew 2004b)) and secondary analysis (of someone else's data) is a complex matter, with implications for team working (Holland *et al.* 2004). The distinction between these analytical strategies becomes blurred in a longitudinal design, where revisiting one's own data is intrinsic to the task; in this case, layers of cross sectional (synchronic) and case history (diachronic) analyses are built up and interwoven over time to create complex, multi-dimensional analyses, although precise mechanisms for this vary and are not well documented. These complexities are further compounded in the context of a scaled up QL study, involving high volumes of data, large teams of researchers and variable levels of meta data through which to build contextual insights.

Our community of users for this resource is likely to include those interested in the substantive and theoretical themes of the data set, its policy and practice dimensions, and those engaged in both qualitative and longitudinal research. It is important to see Timescapes not as an isolated, stand alone study, but as an integral part of the longitudinal strategy for the UK, complementing the kind of valuable data that is being collected through large scale cohort and panel studies, such as the BHPS, the Avon Study, ELSA and the DfES Longitudinal study of young people in England and Wales. We will seek to establish links with such data sets and, as mixed methods are developing, will encourage quantitative researchers to become an integral part of our community of users. In order to take forward these ideas we are currently exploring ways of linking productively with the new UK Household Longitudinal Study, which is due to be phased in to replace the BHPS from Spring 2007.



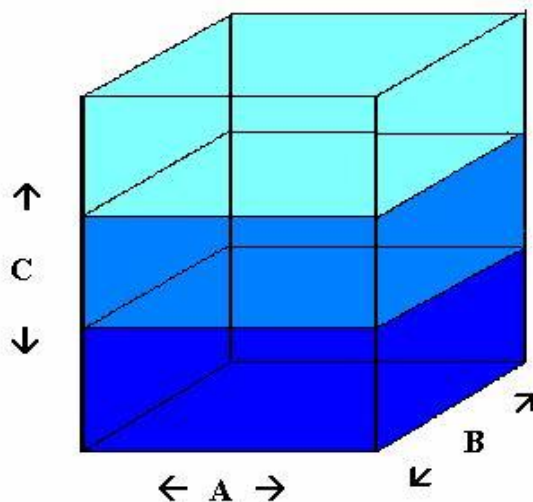


### Analysis: An overview

In each of the three core areas of our work (establishing the archive for re-use, advancing QL methods, including methods of temporal analyses, and producing original findings) we will develop and refine our methods for handling, organising, analyzing and interpreting data sources. We have described our strategy for establishing the archive above (strand 1). Below we set out our initial strategy for advancing QL methods and producing findings.

**Advancing QL methods, including temporal analyses.** QL analysis requires both synchronic analysis (cross sectional thematic analysis, repeated after each wave of data collection) and diachronic analyses (longitudinal case histories, linking earlier and later waves of data from the same individuals or groups). Analyzing change through time requires a balanced articulation of these two modes of analysis through a third dimension: a cross cutting, multi-dimensional matrix that combines the two (Saldana, 2003). This involves linking cross sectional and longitudinal data together making strategic comparisons between case histories across the sample and linking these to particular themes in the data resource.

Although both qualitative and quantitative longitudinal traditions have realized such analyses, this remains a challenge to both execute and describe. Our starting point is to visualize the multi-dimensional matrix as a cube (see also Verhave and van Hoorn 1984). This is not rigid or bounded, but expands cross sectionally with additional cases/projects, and through time as new temporal data is added for individual case





The cube provides the scaffolding for scaling up QL data analysis, guiding and distinguishing analytic levels and the temporal stages of analysis and theory building. The project data makes up the body of the cube. Cross sectional analyses run along the horizontal front axes (dimension A), moving back and forth to compare cases at particular points in time, while temporal analyses run along the horizontal side axes (dimension B), running backwards and forwards through time to understand continuities, changes and shifting interpretations of events and experiences. Researchers work in both dimensions simultaneously, expanding the analysis as synchronic and diachronic materials are added and linked together. We will maintain an open and flexible approach to the scaffold, prioritizing its navigational and structuring functions and allowing for a range of interpretive strategies and techniques to be utilized and developed across the consortium teams and among secondary users.

**Producing original findings.** The multidisciplinary composition of the consortium is a key asset for the production of original findings, providing a range of theoretical perspectives and intellectual traditions for framing and interrogating research questions (e.g. Giddens 1991, Andrews *et. al.*, 2000; Willott and Griffin, 1999; Bertaux and Thompson 1993, Wetherell, *et al.*, 2001). The programme will encourage innovative strategies for synthesising accounts and explanations across the projects. In this way it will counter the tendency towards fragmentation and hyperspecialisation in contemporary qualitative data analysis (Atkinson and Delamont, 2005). Returning to the notion of the cube, new analyses and insights can be built through the vertical scaffolding (dimension C). Building on the foundation of the CAQDAS navigation system for *organising and indexing* ‘raw’ case data, primary or secondary analysts will draw out relevant subsets of data with which to develop *descriptive analyses* (e.g. chronologies, case profiles, or cross case themes). At the next level, *interpretive analyses* are constructed, answering specific questions posed by analysts working in their own disciplinary and methodological traditions. At the top of the cube, these analyses are related to wider bodies of evidence from different disciplines to produce generalisations and broad findings that can then be linked across projects. As well as working horizontally through the cube, both synchronically and diachronically, analysts work iteratively up and down the scaffolding, re-visiting and re-contextualising data in order to refine emerging insights.



## Retrospective and Real life events in Interviewees' narratives

Across the projects, interview data will be generated as descriptive narratives of real life events and experiences. Different disciplinary approaches lead to different ways of understanding, interpreting and analyzing these narratives (see Mason, 2002, on developing literal, interpretative and reflexive data readings). In QL interviews life events and experiences are narrated retrospectively (looking back at the distant past or events since the last interview); in the present (current circumstances); and prospectively (what is expected to happen in the future). The ongoing generation of data through time is likely to yield differing, possibly richer accounts covering the same events, as individuals 'overwrite' their biographies. Approaches that focus on cross-sectional dimensions of QL analyses usefully distinguish between temporal reporting (what is reported as having happened), temporal re-interpreting (when the past is seen differently) and temporal discrepancies (when discordant data emerges across time). Researcher subjectivity (that researchers speak from different perspectives and cannot read change literally but also reinterpret over time) is also highly salient (Lewis, 2005). Case study analysis, in contrast, produces individual case histories by structuring a story through biographical time and domains. Cases are compared by examining biographical narratives, together with the narrative devices used (Thomson, 2005). The most important question here may not be the accuracy of descriptions of the past. Instead, reflexive versions of self offered at different points in time can be compared to explore how past events are reworked to resource current needs and future ambitions, part of a project of the self and, possibly, the reshaping of identity. An urgent task for the Timescapes programme will be to find ways to accommodate such differences, and in so doing further stimulate the development of QL methods for investigating the dynamics of change. It is anticipated that the overall study will make an important contribution to theoretical debates concerning memory, the role of the present in constructing the past, and the role of the past in determining the present and imagining the future (Connerton 1989, Misztal 2003).



In developing a strategy for data sharing and secondary use we envisage the following five dimensions:

➤ *Cross Team Secondary Analysis:*

All of the project teams will be doing some secondary analysis work, linking their data with other data in the archive. We envisage an incremental scaling up of analysis and interpretation through the formation of small cross project teams that will pool selected data to answer specific questions. Secondary analysis plans are built into the descriptions of each project (see above); here we give some examples of how the teams will work with the integrated resources to analyse and produce findings from across the data set, thereby knitting the study together.

- Each of the seven projects will take a different theme for detailed analysis working across the generations and across the life course: siblings and friendship, courtship and partnering, motherhood and femininity, fatherhood and masculinity, parent-child relationships and work-life balance, grandparenthood, intergenerational relationships in later life, and key commemorative and life events. For example, Project one, on siblings and friendship in middle childhood, will analyse data on these topics from across the archive, creating insights into the nature and salience of siblinghood and friendship across the generations and in mid and older life. Project four, on fatherhood and masculinity in the lives of mid-life fathers will analyse data on father-child relationships for older fathers with grown up children, young people's relationships with their fathers, and on values surrounding fatherhood across the integrated sample. Project 5, on parent-child relationships and work life balance, will interrogate this theme across the life span, for example examining data from older retired people who may be 'resource poor' in financial terms, but 'resource rich' in terms of time.
- We envisage that each team will produce a paper out of this secondary analysis and these will be drawn together for a research monograph on the dynamics of relationships across the life course.

➤ *Secondary Analysis studentships:*

The aim here is to build capacity in the skills of QL secondary analysis. We have secured a secondary analysis studentship through funding from the University of Leeds. The student will work across the archived data. Consortium members from other universities will seek similar funding within their own institutions. Details of the funded and proposed studentships are given in annex 4.



➤ *Affiliated membership of the consortium/Associate projects:*

This will enable re-use of the data set in a way that encourages collaborative and ethical links between original stakeholders (consortium members and their research participants) and new users. Affiliated members may include academic researchers, government researchers on placement with the consortium and members of the demonstrator project user group. Associate projects, both national and international, will be able to pool data, so ensuring that the data set will not atrophy but expand and grow in creative ways, offering potential for generating new research questions. ‘Timescapes’ is already acting as a magnet for such research investments; a Nuffield Foundation funded project based at the University of Leeds and exploring disability across the life course (Shah and Priestley) will be affiliated to the Timescapes study from the outset. The data from the project will make a valuable addition to the archive, significantly boosting our sample of disabled participants and adding fresh insights of relevance to policy, as well as providing fertile ground for secondary analysis. Two affiliated proposals from colleagues at the Universities of London and Oslo are currently awaiting funding decisions.

➤ *Secondary Analysis Workshops:*

Delivered at strategic sites and to targeted potential users (e.g. BSA Family Studies Group) across the UK, these mobile workshops will introduce the Timescapes data set, illuminate the nature of the data through hands on demonstrations, show the potential for secondary analysis, using the strand two project as an exemplar, and give practical advice for how to access and exploit the data set. We envisage developing these workshops in the latter phases of the study.

➤ *A Secondary Analysis project:*

This will draw on the cross cutting themes built into the empirical projects to produce a synthesis of key temporal data and findings and linking these to macro level data (see details below).



## Strand Two project

### Changing Social Landscapes and Timescapes: Meshing levels of analysis

Most of the projects take as their focus particular moments within the Life course. These ‘slices of life’ provide excellent lenses on key questions about social structural continuities and changes. A core theme of the secondary analysis project will be to address substantive and conceptual questions around social change, and provide insights into the reshaping of social life in the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It will be positioned to shed further light on diversity and change in social relations and subjectivities, and develop new kinds of insight.

Recent arguments of a growing significance to people of choice and decision making, and increased perceptions of risk, have been influential but also challenged by many for failing to adequately take account of the proximate contexts, constraints and social relations in which people are embedded. In fact, we are short of frameworks for conceptualising the changing landscapes, and timescapes, of choice and constraint. For example, opportunities for young adults have been reconfigured and the contexts in which certain courses of action are ‘chosen’ have altered, as work opportunities for young school leavers have significantly diminished. Gendered options around work and care in the family building period have altered and link to historically changing expectations and aspirations: in particular work is a more routine and ‘normal’ part of the experience of mothers of young children. Increased health and longevity, and changing demographics (of ageing, and of fertility) are part of shifts in generational relations, and in cross generational connections and commitments.

Sociological theory has weaknesses when it comes to analysing these kinds of developments with reference to both micro and macro aspects of change, and to the meshing of these ‘layers’ of the social world. A parallel, and linked difficulty, lies in conceptualising contexts, yet a more adequate analysis of context carries significant potential for better understanding the articulation of micro level experience and the macro level of society wide developments.

As part of their remit the projects will be gathering a wealth of information about micro level social experience at the level of individuals, and building pictures of context through exploring family and intimate relationships, friendships, localities and patterns of interaction



and subjective experiences over biographical time. It will provide a rich resource for exploring the articulation of subjectivities and contexts, and will strengthen analytic links between continuity and change at the level of individual lives and the macro level of social change.

The project will entail three areas of work. The first will be an integrative analysis of data and findings drawn from across different projects relating to subjectivities, contexts and Life course transitions. The second will be a secondary analysis of the cross cutting Timescapes themes, which will be addressed in each of the empirical projects (see p.9 above for indicative research questions). The third will be a macro level quantitative data analysis, through strategic use of a range of data sets. The purpose here is not solely one of accessing macro ‘context’, but of joined-up conceptual and analytic development, exploring macro and micro level evidence to provide different lenses on key social processes.

## Indicative research questions

### *Integrative analysis*

- What are the core commonalities and differences in the ways people negotiate and experience transitions and turning points over the life course?
- How do transitions and (planned and unplanned) ruptures in ‘normal experience’ impact upon social relationships and subjectivities? How does this vary over the life course?
- How do people’s subjectivities and outlooks relate to the networks and contexts in which they are embedded? How do proximate social relations change over biographical time, and how is this experienced and managed?

### *Macro level Quantitative Data Analysis*

- How do changing practices and perceptions relating to ‘work life balance’, and expectations surrounding the paid work of mothers, help to inform analysis of aggregate trends in gendered employment participation?
- How do aggregate level changes in care and employment patterns among mothers of young children link to shifts in ideas of ‘the best thing to do’?

## Project Details

**Discipline:** Sociology

**Project Span:** October 2009 – September 2011

**Design:** Secondary analysis of QL data, including micro and macro data; conceptual development.

**Dataset and Methods:** Timescapes dataset: Integrative analysis of key findings, secondary analysis of key themes across the empirical projects; analysis and integration of micro



(Timescapes) and macro data (e.g. BHPS/UKHLS, British Social Attitudes, DfES Longitudinal Study of Young People in England, ONS demographic data)

**Builds on:** Timescapes conceptual themes and empirical evidence; Changing Lives ('Real Lives' node of the NCRM); collaborative links with DfES and BHPS/UKHLS; ESRC Research Group for the study of Care, Values and the Future of Welfare (CAVA): synthesis of findings and development of new conceptual insights from the separate but linked empirical projects (Irwin 2004).

### Strand 3: Knowledge Exchange/Transfer

Co-ordinator: Professor Janet Holland

A core aim of this study is to develop and disseminate theoretical, methodological, substantive and policy related findings from the Timescapes research. In order to meet these objectives, Strand 3 will create the necessary infrastructure for communication and knowledge exchange/transfer within and beyond the consortium. By bringing together the expertise of consortium members, we will provide a cutting edge learning environment for advancing substantive and methodological knowledge. Additionally, we will develop long term plans for the Timescapes study and archive (e.g. cross cultural and historical comparative work, the further development of online resources and the development of collaborative links with international researchers/data sets). Details of Strand 3 activities are given below.

#### Strand 3 Activities

- Timescapes website: links to project web pages and bulletin boards; strand three activities, working papers, links to international networks, JISC List (developed initially under Neale's fellowship); links to the online archive.
- Residential meetings: Five meetings over the course of the five year study, each lasting 1.5 days and rotated around the projects.
- In-house conferences: Two one-day conferences: methodological in year 4, policy related in year 5 (in collaboration with National Family and Parenting Institute).
- External conference & seminar presentations (substantive, methodological and policy related; local, national and international)
- Publications (see below)
- A national advisory Board, including government policy makers, social theorists, social policy, life course and generations researchers, QL and qualitative methodologists, archiving and data sharing experts, and media representatives. The board will operate through meetings scheduled to coincide with our residential meetings and conferences. International board members will contribute primarily





- through virtual means of communication (see annex 5 for provisional list of board members).
- Project advisory groups, to include those who implement policy at local level.
  - Associate projects, including international affiliations offering scope for collaboration and comparative work (these are described under Strand two).

The rolling programme of residential meetings, complete with open workshops and seminars, will provide the infrastructure for the integrative work of the consortium, bringing together our project and strand teams, management group, advisory board, and wider networks of researchers and practice audiences. Strand 3 activities will enable the team to advance theoretical and substantive understandings of the Timescapes themes, both within and beyond the consortium. The Timescapes study will be linked to a range of Research Centres and funded Initiatives that explore related themes, e.g., the BSA Family Studies group; The Families and Social Capital Group at London South Bank (Edwards and Holland); the Social Identities Programme (Thomson and Kehily); The SCARR network (Henwood); The Centre for Ageing and Biography (OU Bornat and Bytheway); the Centre for Families and Relationships Research (Edinburgh, Backett Milburn, Jamieson and Cunningham Burley); and the FLaG (Families, Life course and Generations) Research Centre (Leeds, Neale, Irwin, Hughes, Emmel). Additionally members of the consortium will build on their collaborative links with international colleagues working in related fields, for example, through the ESA and ISA.

Three activities, leading to specific outputs, have been singled out below for focused attention. These are QL Methods and Ethics, User Engagement and Publishing.

## QL Methods and Ethics

### **Co-ordinator: Karen Henwood**

We aim to advance skills and knowledge in the practice and utility of QL research, including the scaling up of such research for secondary use. To this end we have built a range of methodological and ethical questions into the Timescapes projects. These cover considerations such as informed consent; non intrusive modes of ‘walking alongside’ participants and the alteration of participant and researcher perceptions over time; the relative merits of intensive and extensive tracking of individuals; sample maintenance; issues



of data ownership and sharing in a context where data never becomes dated and never loses its provisional status; and, of key importance, the challenges of reconciling the need for participant anonymity and confidentiality with the requirements of developing a major longitudinal dataset for re-use.

We will also be exploring complex strategies for the primary and secondary analysis of QL data, including meta data requirements; the use of virtual networks of researchers; the balance between longitudinal analysis of case study and cross sectional data; analysis across different QL data sets; and linking QL with macro longitudinal data (see empirical projects and Strand 1 and 2 projects for further details).

Each project will document and reflect on the methods used and bring these reflections together for discussion and dissemination in strand three. We will be organizing methods and ethics round tables as part of our regular residential meetings, which will inform our own work and our methodological outputs. As an intrinsic part of this work we will be exploring quality issues in QL research, focusing on process (a crucial consideration in long term research) as well as outcomes, and on ways to conceptualise quality that will be meaningful to QL practitioners (Spencer *et al.* 2003). We will reflect on appropriate standards for quality and credibility (Seale *et al.* 2004) and work to meet these as part of our developing practice (Seale 1999; Seale *et al.* 2004).

## **Ethics**

In QL research ethical considerations are woven into each stage of the research process, from initial design, through to the wider dissemination of the findings. This means using clear and open methods of communication about the research (e.g. leaflets) so enabling respondents to make informed choices about participating; using discreet methods of recruitment; dealing responsibly with gatekeepers; using non-intrusive, interactive and participatory modes of data collection, maintaining confidentiality and scrupulously anonymising data sets. An ethical approach to the dissemination phase is also required to ensure that findings are not used in ways that sensationalize or otherwise distort them. Strategies for dealing with the media and for the involvement of participants in wider dissemination activities are also needed. Participants often regard themselves as potential



users and beneficiaries of the qualitative research in which they are involved, necessitating careful consideration of ways to disseminate findings directly to them (newsletters, briefings, dedicated publications and so on). Ethical considerations also arise within research teams (for example, in terms of staff support and safety, and ownership of data and findings) and in relation to professional users of research (for example, to ensure that their involvement is a mutually supportive and beneficial process rather than an exploitative one). Ethical practices in the research process cannot always be determined a priori for they are context specific and therefore require a sensitive appraisal of local circumstances and sensibilities.

Particular ethical considerations arise in the following contexts:

- Conducting research within families or small groups where the individuals concerned know each other and where different perceptions across the group may form a core component of analysis and explanation.
- Working with dependent groups (e.g. children) in ways that respect their agency while acknowledging their status as dependents who may need protection from harm
- Developing protocols for working with different constituencies of research users who may have different and conflicting agendas.

Given the nature of this initiative, we will be addressing the particular ethical issues that arise in relation to QL Research as an intrinsic part of our work. We will draw on specific ethical guidelines where these exist (eg in the context of young people, Alderson and Morrow 2004 and local frameworks eg the City of York Council of Schools ethical policy for photographing children). Our work will comply with the BSA ethical code of conduct, and the new ESRC Research Ethics Framework.

We will be addressing the following core methodological and ethical questions across the study:

- What are the practical and ethical requirements for conducting a large-scale qualitative longitudinal study?
- What are the possibilities and challenges for data sharing and archiving in a major QL study?
- How can mixing qualitative and quantitative methods contribute to the development of QL research and enhance its role in longitudinal social sciences?
- What are the possibilities and challenges of scaling up qualitative and QL research?

The Timescapes study has productive links with the Research Methods Programme (Emmel and Hughes) and the Demonstrator Scheme for Qualitative Data Sharing and Archiving



(Henderson and Coffey, also Corti). Four consortium members are in leadership or management roles in the two qualitative nodes of the National Centre for Research Methods (Coffey, Irwin, Neale, Emmel), under which Neale is currently advancing QL methods studies. In particular Timescapes provides a bridge between the two NCRM nodes, drawing on their respective interests and expertise to advance QL research in ways that will be mutually beneficial. We envisage, for example, that our methodology conference would be organized as a joint venture between the Timescapes study and the NCRM, and will seek to draw on the NCRM training and capacity building programme to further develop a skills base in QL research (e.g. a one day QL training workshop, organized by Neale with contributions from Timescapes colleagues and funded by the NCRM, is scheduled to take place at London South Bank University in March 2007).

## User Engagement

### **Co-ordinators: Kathryn Backett Milburn and Nick Emmel**

As indicated above (introduction) the Timescapes study will act as a focal point for all with an interest in research on families and relationships across the life course - researchers, policy-makers and practitioners in a range of fields - making QL research more accessible for them. Our case studies will show how individuals navigate a complex policy landscape at different junctures and turning points in their lives. The longitudinal nature of the enquiry will yield new insights into the long-term needs of family members and how different policies intersect over time to impact on individual well-being. Such knowledge will help in assessing the long-term efficacy of welfare provision. It will sharpen awareness of the importance of biographical and cross-generational events and micro-processes within families, essential if such policies are to have long-term benefits.

It is important to recognize that research users are not a homogeneous group but cover a range of constituencies across government, the voluntary sector, the business sector, the media and the general population. The interaction between qualitative research and real life issues and concerns is distinctive in that findings may gradually filter through to the real world through a variety of channels and with differential effects. The impact of such research therefore may not be immediately apparent; It may have a subtle or pervasive



influence on changing attitudes and perceptions over time, working through ‘incremental nudges rather than immediate translation’ (Spencer *et al.* 2003: 81). This is likely to be all the more the case in QL research, where findings may be unanticipated and emerge over time.

Producing findings of relevance to policy and practice requires an effective strategy of user engagement throughout the research process. To this end, we have built in dedicated resources for this activity (Kathryn Backett-Milburn and Nick Emmel, each giving 5% of their time over the life time of the study; supported by Professor Fiona Williams as policy advisor to the study). The aim is to identify multi-faceted methods of engaging with research users (Walter, Nutley and Davies, 2003) as a central part of strand 3, as well as at project level. We will engage in dialogue with policy-makers and practitioners from the outset, ensuring that policy issues and concerns feed into and guide the developing research, and creating channels of communication for the dissemination of findings and insights, both substantive and methodological, as they emerge. These strategies are summarized below:

- National Advisory board to include members from key policy areas and the media (see annex 5).
- Project level advisory groups to include a range of local and national users. Development of policy partnerships to sharpen policy/practice implications of the research e.g. ChildLine, London Play, Parentline Plus, Worcester Mental Health Partnership NHS trust (project 1); DfES, National Youth Agency, Young Voice, Barnardos, Connexions service and a young people's advisory panel (project 2); The Maternity Alliance, Sure start and the National Childbirth Trust (project 3); Fathers Direct and the Equal Opportunities commission (project 4); Social Exclusion Unit and local health and social care planners (project 6); and Help the Aged and Dept of Health (project 7). Project level dissemination strategies, including media strategy, will be integrated with the overall communication strategy.
- Strand 3 User engagement activities, to include seminars/workshops that bring together policy-makers, practitioners and research participants; an international policy conference in collaboration with the National Family and Parenting Institute; and publications/ presentations tailored to different constituencies of users (e.g. policy briefing papers to be disseminated to research users at local, regional, and national levels; publications in professional journals, and presentations at practitioner events).

In undertaking this work we will reflect on wider debates about the nature of research evidence and the status of QL research in a culture of evidence based policy. Whatever part of the user constituency they are drawn from, users require research messages that conform



to quality standards, i.e. that are based on robust methods of enquiry, that can be distilled from complex findings, that address pertinent questions, that are presented in clear and precise formats and that can be fed into new ways of thinking and acting. Historically, clarity and precision are thought to reside in ‘numbers’ rather than ‘narratives’ particularly life narratives, although this perception is beginning to change. We will aim to create a more widespread understanding among research users of the utility of QL enquiry and its potential as a mode of social enquiry and explanation.



## Publications

### **Co-ordinator: Professor Rosalind Edwards**

We will develop a publications strategy for the consortium, built around the following principles:

- there are a range of users from academic, statutory, voluntary and business sectors, and media, interested in both the methodological and substantive outputs from the ‘Timescapes’ programme, and that different means of dissemination through publication are appropriate for reaching particular audiences;
- the audience for publications is variously local, national and international;
- sustained engagement is necessary with the variety of users in order to develop publication modes that are of most use to them, and that target particular audiences; and
- the importance of added value from joint publications across project teams within the ‘Timescapes’ consortium, in addition to publications arising from individual components of the consortium.

Means of dissemination through publication and target audiences include:

- working papers – targeting all sectors;
- summaries and bulletins – targeting statutory, voluntary and business sectors and media;
- extended articles in peer refereed journals – targeting academics nationally and internationally;
- short articles in policy and practice focused outlets – targeting statutory and voluntary sectors; and
- book publication and edited collections (as part of a possible book series with one publisher) – targeting primarily academics but also of interest to other users (e.g. a Handbook of QL research to include international contributions).

## **Timescapes Management and Co-ordination**

The Timescapes Study will be managed by a Management Group, comprising the grant holders of the Study: the Director (Bren Neale), Co-director (Janet Holland) and Project Directors/Strand Co-ordinators: Kathryn Backett-Milburn, Joanna Bornat, Rosalind Edwards, Nick Emmel, Sheila Henderson, Karen Henwood, Kahryn Hughes, Sarah Irwin and Rachel Thomson. The Timescapes Archive Manager (Libby Bishop), and Administrator (Linda Fox), have been co-opted on to the Management Group. If members of the management group are unable to attend a meeting, they may send a representative from their project team in their stead.



## Remit

The Management Group will undertake the detailed planning, monitoring and strategic development of elements of the Timescapes study, as set out in the study blueprint. These will include financial management, the effective management of risk, the development of key milestones, performance and quality assurance indicators, and key outputs, including the Timescapes archive. An important dimension of quality assurance lies in the overall reach and impact of a research study: the extent to which it is theoretically engaged and imaginative, empirically grounded and policy relevant. The team will be responsible for ensuring that, in terms of both process and outcome, the research is of high quality: appropriately designed, rigorously and ethically conducted, credible in its claims, valuable in its outputs and contributing to knowledge (Spencer *et al.* 2003). The group will also consider and, where appropriate, approve proposed changes to the study.

## Key Tasks and lead members:

1. To develop and agree key milestones, performance indicators and quality assurance indicators for the Study, and to ensure, through these means, that the Study is appropriately designed, rigorously and ethically conducted, credible in its claims, and valuable in its outputs; to oversee reporting arrangements to ESRC, and develop long term strategies for the continuation of the study.

- *Bren Neale and Janet Holland* (study director and co-director)

2. To oversee the development of the Timescapes Archive, including strategies for the integration, management and pooling of data across the Study, and of data from earlier funded projects that Timescapes builds on.

- *Sheila Henderson and Bren Neale* (Strand 1 co-ordinators).
- *Libby Bishop* (Timescapes archive manager)

3. To devise strategies for Secondary Use of the Timescapes dataset, including analytical strategies for the Timescapes data, and across micro and macro longitudinal data sets; levels of access for secondary users; and building a community of users through promotion, training and support activities. The group will make decisions with regard to the involvement of users and other third party organizations in the study, including affiliated projects, and the conditions which may be imposed on such third parties.

- *Joanna Bornat and Sarah Irwin* (Strand 2 co-ordinators)
- *Libby Bishop* (Timescapes Archive Manager)

4. To identify and meet the methodological and ethical requirements of the Timescapes study, including the challenges of reconciling the need for participant anonymity and confidentiality, with the requirements of developing a major qualitative longitudinal dataset for re-use.

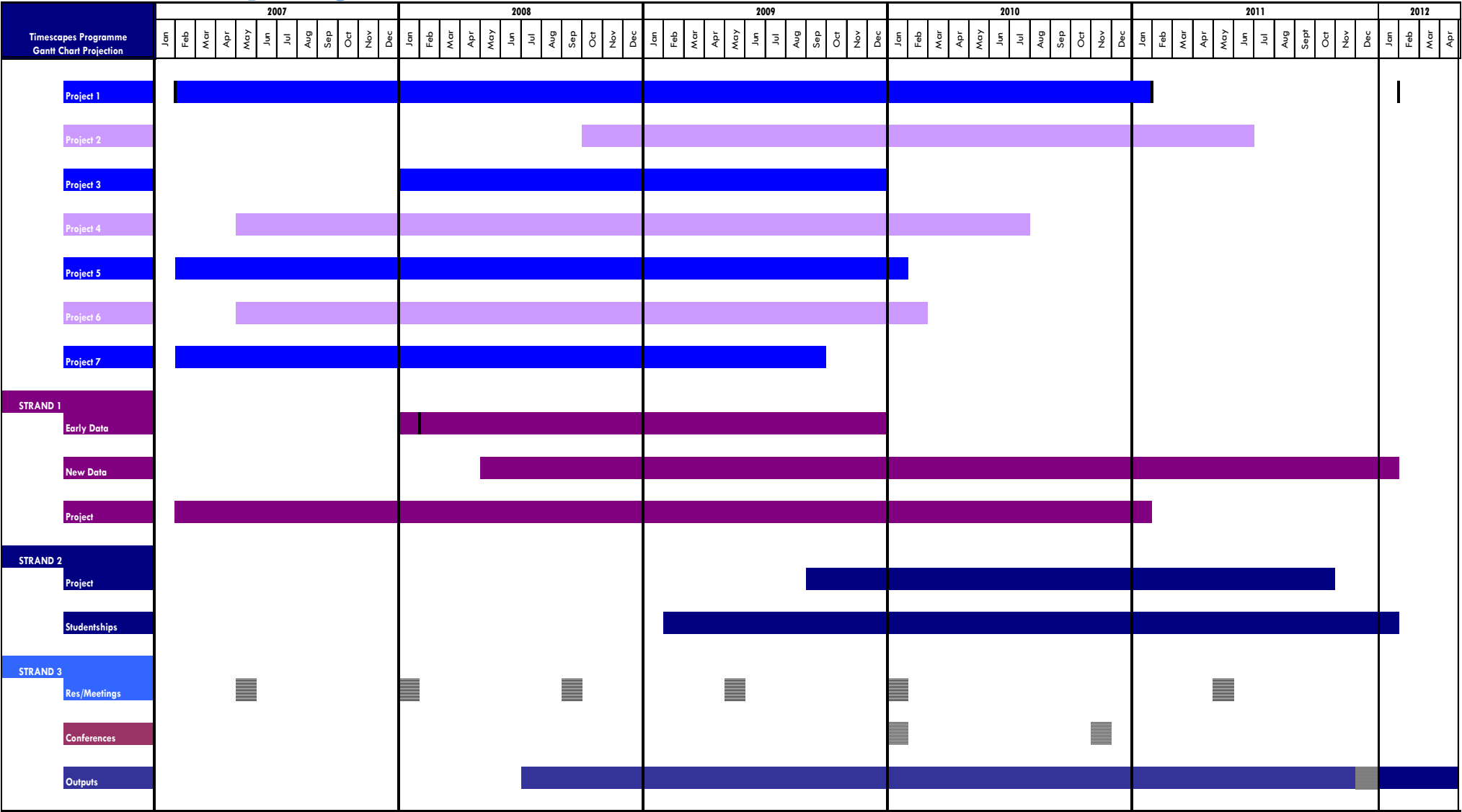




- *Karen Henwood* (Methods and Ethics Co-ordinator)
  - *Kabryn Hughes* (Liaison, University of Leeds Ethics Committee)
5. To develop strategies for the continuous and multi-faceted engagement of research users, including policy makers and practitioners, in the Timescapes study, and for the production of policy relevant outputs
- *Kathryn Milburn, Nick Emmel* (User Engagement Co-ordinators)
  - *Fiona Williams* (Policy Advisor)
6. To determine and administer the policy to be followed with regard to any communication and dissemination activities relating to the Study, including the management of intellectual property rights.
- *Janet Holland* (Strand 3 Co-ordinator)
  - *Ros Edwards* (publications Co-ordinator)
  - *Linda Fox* (Timescapes Administrator)
7. To advise on the financial management of the Timescapes study and agree financial record keeping and reporting arrangements, as required by ESRC
- *Janet Holland* (Co-Director)
  - *Helen May* (University of Leeds Faculty Research Manager)
  - *Linda Fox* (Timescapes Administrator)

Meetings of the Management Group shall be structured around regular residential meetings, supplemented through virtual meetings (access grid and teleconferences) and email discussion. The Timescapes Director shall chair meetings of the Management Group and shall give at least ten (10) working days prior notice of such meetings. In the absence of the Timescapes Director, the Timescapes Co-Director will assume this responsibility. The Timescapes Administrator shall facilitate and document the work of the group. Members of the Group shall reach agreement by consensus, or, as a last resort, by majority vote, except for those decisions specified in Clauses 5.2, 6.1, 8.2(d), 8.2(e) and 16.3 of the Partner Agreement document, which shall require a unanimous vote. Voting rights will be held by the grant-holders and will not extend to co-opted members.

## Annex 1 The Timescapes Programme





**Annex 2**  
**Historical Span of DATA from Timescapes Projects**

| Projects                       | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Siblings and Friends        |      |      |      |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |
| 2. Young Lives and Times       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    |
| 3. Motherhood                  |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |      |
| 4. Fatherhood                  |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    |      |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |
| 5. Work and Family Lives       |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |      |
| 6. Grandparents and exclusion  |      |      |      |      | x    |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |      |      |
| 7. Oldest Generation           |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |      |
| Strand 1. Making The Long View | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    | x    |      |      |      |      |      |      |



### Annex 3: Building temporality into Research Design

Qualitative longitudinal research can be defined simply as qualitative enquiry that is conducted through time. The aim is to understand and delineate processes and micro-processes of change and continuity in the construction of the social over time. Generation of data at one point in time is a perfectly legitimate research activity, and is the basis of most qualitative and quantitative research. This approach *can* be used to produce longitudinal data by calling upon participants to give current, retrospective and/or projective accounts of their experiences, covering the past, present and/or future. Life history approaches for example can ask participants to recreate an account of their life retrospectively. However, our concern is to generate *prospective* rather than retrospective data, to document processes and the causes and consequences of social changes or continuities *in real time*, as they occur. At a minimum this requires at least two waves of data generation within a project, to compare conditions and circumstances across time intervals and chart the pathways, turning points and transformations that shape and reshape people's lives.

Although most of the projects in the Timescapes study employ interviews as the basic method, several of them are multi-method, for example, using ethnographic or visually based techniques to obtain finely grained and nuanced detail on personal lives and relationships. These methods add depth to the data generated by providing detail of the context surrounding the main waves of data.

The Timescapes study is structured initially around a five-year timeframe, within which projects run for different lengths of time, ranging from 2 to 4 years. This variation depends on their individual research questions, and on whether they are designed to build on waves of data from earlier projects, or are newly established projects. Four of the empirical projects (along with the archiving project in Strand one), build on earlier work, thereby extending the longitudinal reach of the study and adding value to earlier ESRC investments. Taking these pre-existing waves of data into account, the overall length of the empirical projects varies from three and eight years.

This means that the numbers of waves of data varies between projects. The time between the waves also varies (between 6 months to 2 years within the Timescapes time frame,



between 6 months and 5 years overall). This variation depends on the nature of the particular projects, their pragmatic, methodological and theoretical requirements, and, crucially, the specifics of the phenomena under study. The interval have been carefully chosen to meet these requirements. For example, P3 The Dynamics of Motherhood is built on a study initially concerned with the identity work of first time mothers, who were interviewed during pregnancy and one year after the birth of their first child. Associated interviews with their mothers, grandmothers and a significant other explored intergenerational negotiation of new patterns of dependency and support. In the Timescapes programme these intergenerational groups will continue to be interviewed at yearly intervals, providing continuity with the previous waves of data and ensuring regular tracking at a time when young children are highly dependent on adult support. In a further example, P2 Young Lives and Times provides waves 3 and 4 of a prospective longitudinal study following a birth cohort of 30-40 young men and women from ages 13 to 23. They will be interviewed at ages 16 and 18 during Timescapes, at crucial times of change as they leave compulsory education and attain the age of majority. This project employs repeat in-depth interviews (at approximately 18 month intervals) complemented by continuous data collection: ‘Walking alongside’ young people using a range of ethnographic methods (participant observation, interactive website, written and visual mapping techniques) to create a cultural inventory of young lives.

A key aim of this study is to advance qualitative longitudinal methodology. To this end, we will be documenting and reflecting on the varied methods employed, including the flexible strategies and time intervals through which we will engage with the study participants. An important aspect of the Timescapes programme is the full use of the flexibility of both qualitative and longitudinal approaches. To deal with the variability of the data so produced we will use and showcase state of the art methods for handling, organising, analyzing and interpreting data sources. This will involve a coordinated, but flexible system of data entry, organisation, and integration, based on principles of best practice for producing large data sets. A common scaffolding that will enable data to be accessed through a variety of routes will be established. It will be possible to access data by project, by case within project, by meta data, locality or historical moment, by gender, ethnic or age/generational categories, or by cross cutting descriptive themes and topics.



The overall theoretical framework of the study involves linking biographical and historical time, for each of which an analysis through time is a prerequisite. We will be tracking the biographical trajectories of individuals in the richly defined relational context that each of the projects in the study provides, enhanced by the flexibility of the multi-method approaches employed. Here we will be able to see the dynamics of agency, the intricacies of causality and consequences of change. Historical time will be tracked across external events and structural conditions, and will take in wider social changes, shifting socio-economic and public policy norms and expectations, and technological advances as these play across the lives of our participants, producing and intersecting with critical moments in their own pathways.



## Annex 4: Secondary Analysis Studentships

We propose to establish up to four studentships as part of our Strand 2 work, the primary focus of which will be the secondary analysis of data from the Timescapes study. The broad aim of the studentships is to develop a skills base among the next generation of researchers and build up a community of users for the Timescapes dataset. Currently we have secured funding for one secondary analysis studentship through the University of Leeds. Other teams in the consortium will seek similar funding from their institutions. The main objectives are to advance and showcase methods of secondary analysis, and the scaling up of QL research by drawing on and integrating data from across the Timescapes study. The studentships may also include a small element of new data collection to answer specific questions or follow up and extend specific case studies with Timescapes participants. The studentships will commence in October 2008, attached to the individual teams but working across projects, creatively linking data and contextual higher level analysis and interpretation. The topics have been designed to complement the work of the empirical projects and explore new dimensions of the Timescapes themes. Indicative lines of enquiry are set out below, although the students will develop their own research questions and, in keeping with the Timescapes enterprise, will have ample opportunity to creatively explore their topics, following new leads and developing new insights that emerge through the integration of the Timescapes data. Details of the funded and proposed studentships are set out below.

### **Care, Values and Support:**

#### **Change and Continuity in Personal Lives and Social Policy** Supervisors:

Professor Fiona Williams/Dr. Bren Neale (University of Leeds)

Funded by the University of Leeds.

Start date: October 2008; completion: September 2011

This studentship explores continuities and changes in values and in social support for those with caring commitments, drawing on the experiences and reflections of individuals of different generations and in different life circumstances. Examples would be caring for young children or older relatives, the care of an older spouse/partner, or the care provided by children and young people for their family and friends. It will explore how commitments and values unfold over time, as well as the difference that formal support, provided through



social policies and provisions, might make to these. Whilst much has been written on the changing nature of family lives and personal relationship and on the values associated with care (Williams, 2004), there have been fewer attempts to assess the unfolding of these over time. The study will explore the rich variety of ways in which care and support are constituted and practiced among the Timescapes respondents, gleaning insights on personal agency, material and emotional forms of care, the significance of familial, friendship and social networks, and professional, employment/school based and voluntary support. Further sources of empirical data for secondary analysis will be the CAVA dataset on Care, Values and the Future of Welfare (Williams).

The Timescapes dataset enables a biographical approach to these themes, drawing out accounts which include people's present and past experiences of care commitments and the support they receive, and, for older respondents, their perspectives of their own parents' lives and how these compare with their own. The biographical data from the data set will be mapped against historical changes in forms of social and legal policy affecting support for practices and commitments of care. It will provide opportunities to illuminate how values of care have changed over time in relation to the evolving landscape of care practices and social policies.

### **Proposed Studentships:**

#### **The Construction of Complex Identities of Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality through Historical, Biographical and Social Time**

Supervisors: Professor Janet Holland and Dr. Tracy Reynolds (LSBU).

As the title suggests, the focus of this studentship is the construction of core complex, embodied identities of ethnicity, gender and sexuality through time. Identities are fluid, relational, historically located, and potentially contradictory. They reveal the interactional and contextual features of social relationships. Drawing on the broad literature on the concept of intersectionality, the study will examine how individuals are multiply constituted by ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age and other identities. The structural, social and subjective contexts of the processes will be elucidated.





The dynamics of identities is a core theme running through the Timescapes study, yielding rich sources of data from ethnically and culturally diverse samples of individuals located across the UK. Data from the Inventing Adulthood project, an existing large longitudinal dataset (consolidated in the Strand 1 Archiving project), will be a key source of data for the studentship. Further sources of data for secondary analysis will be earlier studies undertaken by the supervisors, Holland and Reynolds, including the Women Risk and Aids project data on young people's sexuality from 1989-92. The study will provide an opportunity to explore how different identities intersect; whether and how this might change over the individual's life course, or with historical and social/ political/ policy changes over time; and the subjective experience of multiply constituted identities.

### **Family Time: Generation and Regeneration**

Supervisors: Professors Joanna Bornat & Rachel Thomson (Open University)

Families can be understood within continuous flows of time, in which understandings of past, present and future are in constant negotiation. Short term planning and domestic routines form the everyday technologies through which family histories and life courses are forged. The combination of longitudinal and intergenerational designs goes some way to capturing this dynamics process. The arrival of a new generation or the departure of the oldest generation within a family has a profound influence on roles, relationships and resources as generations are repositioned. Previous research has tended to focus on how family resources are passed from older to younger generations. This studentship will explore these transitions, giving special attention to the impact that a new generation has within families and following this through time.

The study will harvest accounts from different generations across the Timescapes dataset, for example, drawing out accounts from children about the arrival of siblings, and the significance of grandchildren for older generations. It will be linked in particular to the two Open University projects, 'The Dynamics of Motherhood' (Thomson and Kehily) and 'The oldest generation: events, relationships and identities in later life' (Bornat and Bytheway). Key to the investigation will be how identities, experiences and choices are affected by such intergenerational adjustments. Broad areas for exploration include the power dynamics and



operations consequent on generational shifts within a family, the impact on the identities, experiences and choices of family members, including the oldest generation, and the past repertoires and accounts that people call on from individual and family experiences to explain and accommodate these changes to a family's structure.

### **Masculine life trajectories, father figures and the negotiation of identity dilemmas in personal lives: A methodological studentship**

Supervisors: Dr Karen Henwood and Dr Amanda Coffey (Cardiff University)

This studentship will advance methods for scaling up QL research through data pooling and secondary analysis, developing dynamic understandings of masculinity and fatherhood as the substantive focus of this work. Methodological advancement is one of the key contributions that the Cardiff team will make to the collective work of the Consortium, and it will provide ample opportunity for the studentship to develop fresh lines of enquiry linking theory, substance and method in QL research.

The study will look across time and space to develop new understandings of masculine life trajectories and how these relate to fatherhood, family life and the provision of welfare. It will harvest the Timescapes dataset for accounts relating to life trajectories and key times of transition for boys and men across the lifecourse. Viewing these themes in different timescapes and landscapes will create a rich tapestry of reported experiences and researcher interpretations. It will open up to examination contrasting identity and relational dilemmas and ways of tracing them through biographical, family and generational time. A key source of data for the study will be the Cardiff project on Masculinities, Identities and Risk (Henwood, Coffey *et al.*), which is concentrated around a single moment of adult transition – the entry to fatherhood and its aftermath. The studentship will draw out data from the dataset on father figures, perceived as sources of authority, discipline, prohibition and control; and on the intergenerational transmission of masculine strengths and vulnerabilities and ways of responding to life's challenges (independence, autonomy, rationality, activity, assertiveness, risk-taking etc). These are key arenas of the work that families do, but are often not brought centre stage in research featuring identity dilemmas over male provider and carer roles.



The studentship will contribute to the advancement of knowledge on secondary analysis and the integration and scaling up of QL data. The Timescapes consortium will provide the field setting for this work, representing a rich source of meta data for reflecting on the methodological opportunities and challenges that this work entails. The ways in which the Consortium responds and works out these challenges, will create a dynamic, advanced research and learning environment.



## Annex 5: Advisory Board Members

The following individuals will be invited to join the Timescapes advisory board.

### Methodological/Substantive

Professor Julia Brannen (London IOE, RRB)  
Professor Nick Buck (Essex, ULSC, ESDS, NLSC, UKHLS)  
Professor Graham Crow (Southampton, NCRM hub)  
Professor Angela Dale (Manchester, RMP, NLSC)  
Dr. Jane Elliot (London IOE, CLS, NLSC)  
Professor Jenny Hockey (Sheffield)  
Dr. Natasha Mauthner (Aberdeen)  
Professor Jennifer Mason (Manchester, NCRM node)  
Professor Jane Millar (Bath)  
Professor Chris Phillipson (Keele)  
Professor Jacqueline Scott (Cambridge, NLSC)

### Theoretical (Time, Space, History)

Professor Barbara Adam (Cardiff)  
Professor Mary Chamberlain (Oxford Brookes)  
Professor Simon Duncan (Bradford)  
Professor Gill Valentine (Leeds)

### Policy and Knowledge Transfer

Sue Duncan (London, Cabinet Office)  
Anne Harrop (York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation)  
Mary Macleod (London, National Family and Parenting Institute)  
Jeremy Mortimer (BBC, Eyewitness project director)  
Diana Wilkinson (Edinburgh, Scottish Exec)  
Professor Fiona Williams (Leeds, Policy Advisor)

### Technical/Admin:

Naomi Beaumont (ESRC NLSC, RRB)  
Louise Corti (Essex, Qualidata);  
Rob Perks (London, National Sound Archive)  
Dorothy Sheridan (Sussex, Mass Observation Archive)  
David Zeitlin (Kent, ESRC RRB)



### Virtual Board members:

The following colleagues will be invited to form a virtual (email) advisory board. We will fund Profs Gordon and Heinz to attend selected meetings.

Professor Daniel Bertaux (CNRS Paris, France)  
Professor Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen (Oslo, Norway)  
Professor Tuula Gordon (Helsinki, Finland)  
Professor Walter Heinz (Life Course Centre, Bremen, Germany)  
Professor James Holstein (Marquette, US)  
Professor Eva Jeppsson-Grasman (Linköping, Sweden)  
Dr. Julie McLeod (Deakin, Australia)  
Professor Anya Peterson Royce (Indiana, US)  
Professor Johnny Saldana (Arizona, US)  
Professor Johanna Wynn (Melbourne, Australia)  
The Director, Harvard US, Murray Centre Archive

### Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board

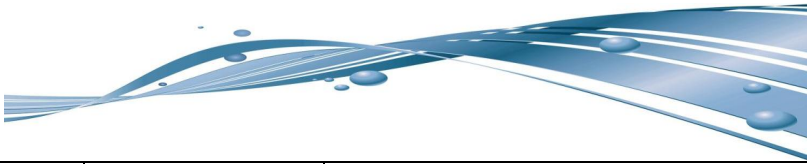
1. To advise on general strategy for the Study to achieve its scientific objectives.
2. To advise on action to be taken on specific aspects of Timescapes, to include:
  - (i) communication plans, especially engagement with and dissemination to potential users of the research;
  - (ii) areas where the teams identify a lack of appropriate progress or anticipate future difficulties in the achievement of the Study objectives.
3. To advise on other aspects as referred by the project teams to the Board. These may include:
  - (i) proposed modifications to the Timescapes budget (the budget holder is an ESRC official who will provide necessary documents);
  - (ii) specific communication and dissemination activities.
4. To comment on the draft Annual Report before submission to the Research Resources Board. The Director is accountable to the Research Resources Board, which acts on behalf of the ESRC in the monitoring of the activities of the Timescapes Study.
5. In exceptional circumstances, to communicate directly with the Research Resources Board on any matter arising from the other terms of reference or related issues raised by an ESRC official.
6. There will normally be two meetings of the Board each year, with the nominated liaison member(s) of the Research Resources Board invited to attend and provided with papers in advance.



## Annex 6: Risk Assessment for the Timescapes Study

### Risk Assessment for overall programme of research

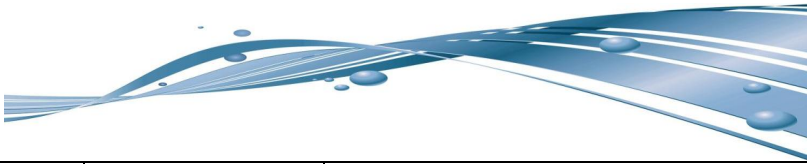
| Risk   | Probability of occurrence | Likely impact   | Action to (a) reduce risk and (b) manage risk if it occurs   |
|--|---------------------------|---|--|
| Collaborations/ relationships between teams, projects institutions, disciplines poor or fragmented                       | Moderate                  | Impede smooth working of consortium   | (a) input from director(s) and management team to foster relationships, smooth the pathways; (b) set up processes to deal with difficulties as they arise (Ongoing process of developing and maintaining relationships and interactions.)  |
| Individual professional priorities work against effective collaboration. Individuals in teams move on to further careers | Moderate-high             | Disrupt work of the consortium  | A general problem in longitudinal, indeed much research work. (a) ensure professional development of researchers, including PIs; (b) renegotiate and rework institutional arrangements with new institutions if PIs move on  |
| Mismatch of project development and development of central Timescapes programme  | very low                  | Lack of congruence between projects/ data in terms of cross-cutting themes and concerns                         | Participation in ongoing discussion and collaboration across projects through all stages of the programme  |
| Learning from S1 archiving project not transferable to Timescapes archive  | Low-moderate              | Impede development of Archive   | (a) Develop realistic/feasible archiving strategy (b) support from elsewhere (e.g. other QUADS projects); Other members of project team input. Review parameters of archiving strategy   |
| Ethical constraints on access to other data sets; projects resist archiving  | Low to moderate           | Inability to interrogate core questions across study; failure to have provided useful archive of secondary data | Ensure ongoing study-wide interrogation of ethics of archiving data for secondary analysis, ensure ethically informed practices of data collection and dealing with sensitive data.<br>Ensure commitment to archiving is instilled across projects from outset and foster flexible supportive communication/working relationships between data co-ordinator and projects |
| Core questions do not translate to other data sets   | Low                       | Meaningful comparison across the study cannot be made; 'scaling up' of  | Early planning discussions have accounted for this, and project protocols are being devised in ways that meet secondary data analysis needs identified by applicants across the study.   |



|  |     |   |   |
|--|-----|---|---|
|  |     | projects into broader study only partially achieved   | Development of broad analytical frameworks to be used and critically interrogated across study, thus beginning process of managing overall data set as part of ongoing theorisation of a) potential for secondary analysis of qualitative data, b) answering substantive thematic questions core to study, c) interrogating broader meta data needs for facilitating secondary analysis |
| Management of study overall is ineffectual or poorly led | Low | Overall study cannot be delivered; waste of public money; failure to produce archive of qualitative data; individual projects compromised | Ensure regular communication across study in form of planning, monitoring, revision and dissemination meetings. Building on existing highest calibre academics' experience, managing and retaining good collegiate working relations across the study to ensure commitment to shared timetables of goals and milestones.  |
| Running out of money before study is completed           | Low | Inability to complete study.  | Ongoing financial management of study centralised and adequate budgeting at planning stage identified and agreed. Expert peer review of financial commitments ongoing at planning stage; regular communication across study to ensure ongoing monitoring of financial spending in individual projects.  |
| Running out of time before study is completed            | Low | Work is rushed, of poor quality and findings not fully drawn out or disseminated  | Develop detailed and realistic work programmes and milestones for each project/strand as part of initial planning process. Ensure realistic time is built in for dissemination activities<br>Substantial ongoing management and review of work plans at all stages of the study will ensure delivery on time.   |

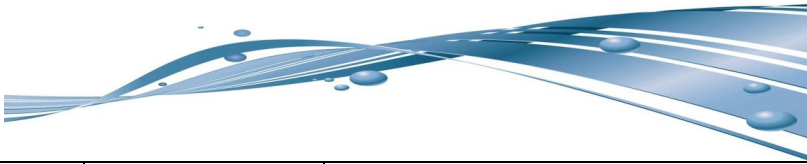
### Risk Assessment for projects

| <b>Risk</b>  | <b>Probability of occurrence</b> | <b>Likely impact</b>  | <b>Action to (a) reduce risk and (b) manage risk if it occurs</b>   |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Ethical approval:<br>(i) approval from own uni withheld<br>(ii) Own uni procedures do not meet ESRC requirements | (i) very low<br><br>(ii) low     | Delay in starting project until issues presenting barriers resolved | (i) Prior discussion of project with ethics college<br>(ii) Prior discussion with Ethics Committee, make sure they are aware of new ESRC ethical procedures |
| Failure to recruit   | Low                              | Delay in starting   | Advertise posts well in advance. Ensure   |



|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| skilled staff required   |   | project and/or less skilled researcher working on project   | posts are advertised widely and in appropriate outlets. If less skilled researchers have to be appointed, ensure they receive necessary training   |
| Key informants (gatekeepers, participants) refuse to engage with research team   | Moderate to high  | Size of sample will be reduced  | Ensure that adequate time, energy and resources are put into maintaining and establishing good relationships with gatekeepers and with participants. Provide contact numbers to facilitate participant-to-researcher communication. Highest priority is on building trusting relations with participants and gatekeepers. Share advice and support across the team. e.g. Hughes and Emmel have considerable experience in researching sensitive topics and sensitive populations.  |
| Sample attrition from earlier study<br>(i) e.g. family has moved from previous address<br>(ii) participants contacted but refuse to participate<br>(iii) loss of or skewing of particular samples.e.g. minority ethnic sample due to (i) or (ii) | (i) moderate<br><br>(ii) low<br><br>(iii) low to moderate | Sample is smaller than expected and less broad in social and geographical coverage                                      | Not experienced as a major problem in QL studies, where participants usually have strong commitments to the research.<br><br>Good research relationships already established with participants from earlier study. Where there is lack of continuity of researchers, ask original interviewers to 'sponsor' renewed contact with participants<br><br>(i) follow up contact by mobile and land phone after recontacting letter<br>(ii) and (iii) accept decision and recruit replacements with similar characteristics (inc. snowballing from similar participants in sample) |
| Attrition between waves of data collection in the study.   | Low   | Sample smaller than expected affecting social and geographical coverage and threatening longitudinal nature of data set | (1)Ensuring good research relationships with sample is a high priority, ongoing contact between waves needed. Less experienced consortium members to take advice from more experienced colleagues and from advisory groups to develop strategies to retain ongoing contact, e.g. through web and mail shots.<br><br>(2) Sample boosting where sample does fall.  |
| Project is ineffectually led and/or poorly managed   | Low   | Quality of project would suffer.  | Projects build out of existing research with clear trajectory of enquiry and we have retained highly experienced leaders of projects to ensure high standards. Projects to be tailored to substantial existing understanding of sensitivities in   |





|  |              |  |  |
|--|--------------|--|--|
|  |              |  | participant population. Regular participation in study-wide management groups will ensure ongoing external monitoring of progress of project.  |
| Timetable slippage through unforeseen events or poor management of workload                        | Moderate     | Delays in progress of project  | Ensure timetable and management of workload is clear and projected, and can accommodate unforeseen events. Provide training in workload management if necessary. Advice and support from other consortium members and project advisory group   |
| Project is overambitious and unachievable in time frame  | Low          | Unless objectives are revised, project will be seen to have “failed”   | Projects have been carefully and realistically designed by experienced empirical researchers. Develop clear project work plans and goals/ milestones at initial planning stage. Use iterative research strategy to enable ongoing monitoring of stage of project, working to identified goals and milestones. Ensure that there is a systematic process for prioritising objectives if one or more has to be dropped, e.g., reduction in size of sample. |
| Strand 1 project does not overcome barriers to collaborative archiving with research participants. | Low-moderate | Impede development of project outcomes   | (a) extra effort to contact, engage participants. Contacts, research relationships and sample maintenance in fact good (mitigates)   |
| Failure to consult all relevant user groups or meet expectations of users                          | Low          | Project will fail to ‘make a difference’ to users; there may be residual resentment or disappointment from particular interest groups. | Build in clear, transparent information about project for users and what their expectations might realistically be. Ensure enough time is built into project plan to engage with users, including in any dissemination events. Produce outputs tailored for users.   |



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