

Qualitative longitudinal analysis: biography and social class

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Qualitative longitudinal data analysis: a workshop for social
scientists
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Objectives

- Introduction to Timescapes project data set
 - Young Lives and Times (YLT)
- Experience of undertaking QSA on longitudinal YLT data
 - HE trajectories and social class
- Insight from longitudinal analysis
 - substantive and methodological

Myself and Dr. Sarah Irwin



Young Lives & Times

Mixed methods, including:

- Questionnaire

- Timelines

- Relational maps

- Self-portraits

- Essays: 'when I'm 25': link to NCDS

- Photographs

- Interviews

Interviews; 3 waves of interviews 13/14, 15/16, 17/18 yrs, (2007; 2008; 2010)

W₁: 29 participants, W₃ 21

Prospective and retrospective

Prof. Bren Neale & Dr Carmen Lau, University of Leeds, UK

Young Lives & Times: research questions

- How do young people construct their personal relationships and identities over time?
- How do young people define, experience, balance and move between their family, friendship, intimate and community relationships over time?
- What are the changing values and sources of morality that young people draw upon in constructing their relationships and identities?
- How do young people make sense of their past, present and future? How do they refine their ideas at different turning points in their lives as they 'overwrite' their biographies?
- What opportunities and constraints exist in young people's lives and how far is the notion of 'life planning' applicable to them?
- How do diverse aspirations and subjective experiences relate to standard dimensions of social difference and inequality?

Re-using longitudinal data: insight into HE trajectories

- Young Lives and Times (YLT)
 - data on parental occupation and education
 - Educational aspirations over time,
 - Familial, peer and school relationships
- QSA issues:
 - Sampling, context of primary data
 - Deductive and inductive strategies
 - Project sample: 'middle class/HE educated'
 - Our sample: seek class complexity

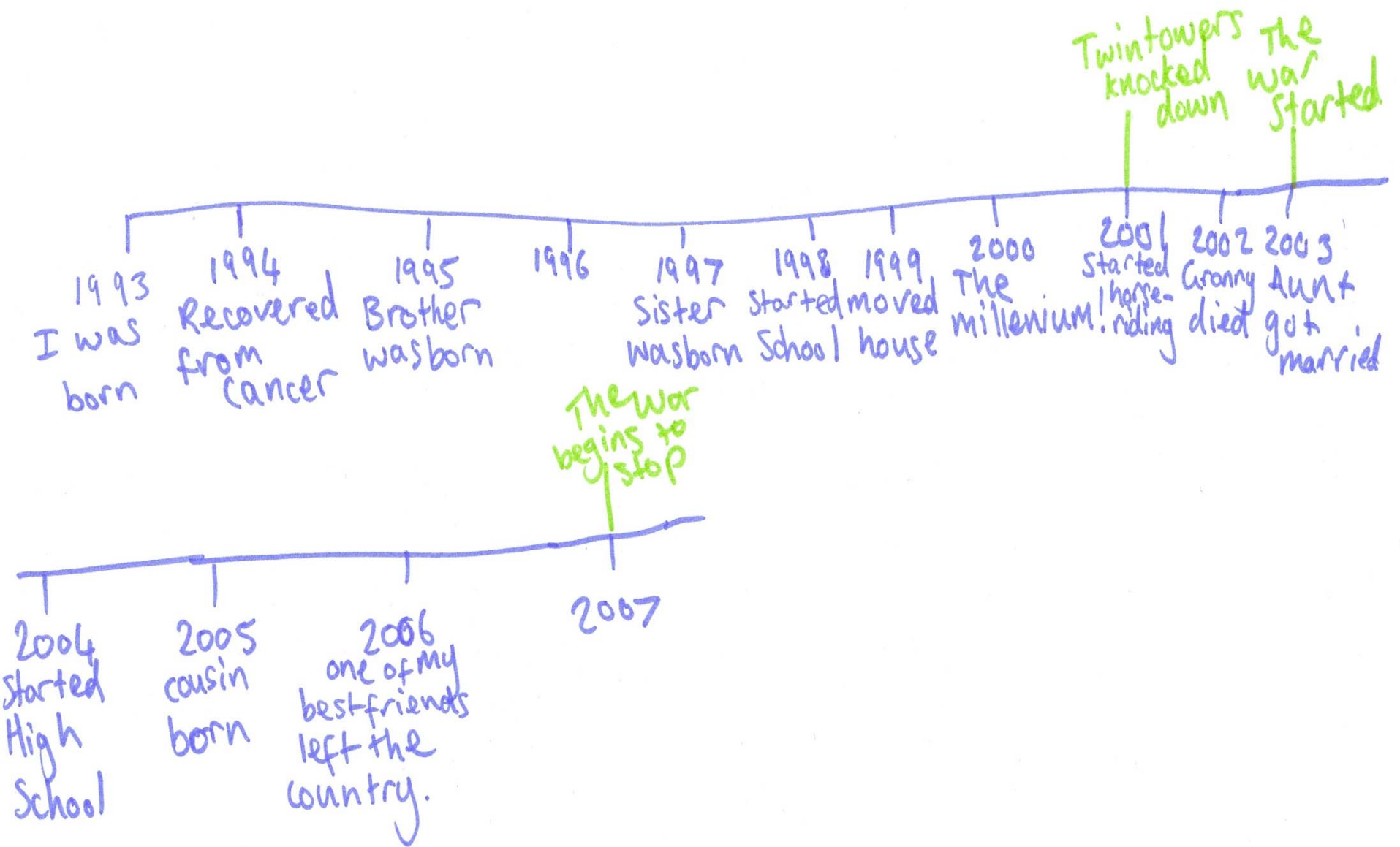


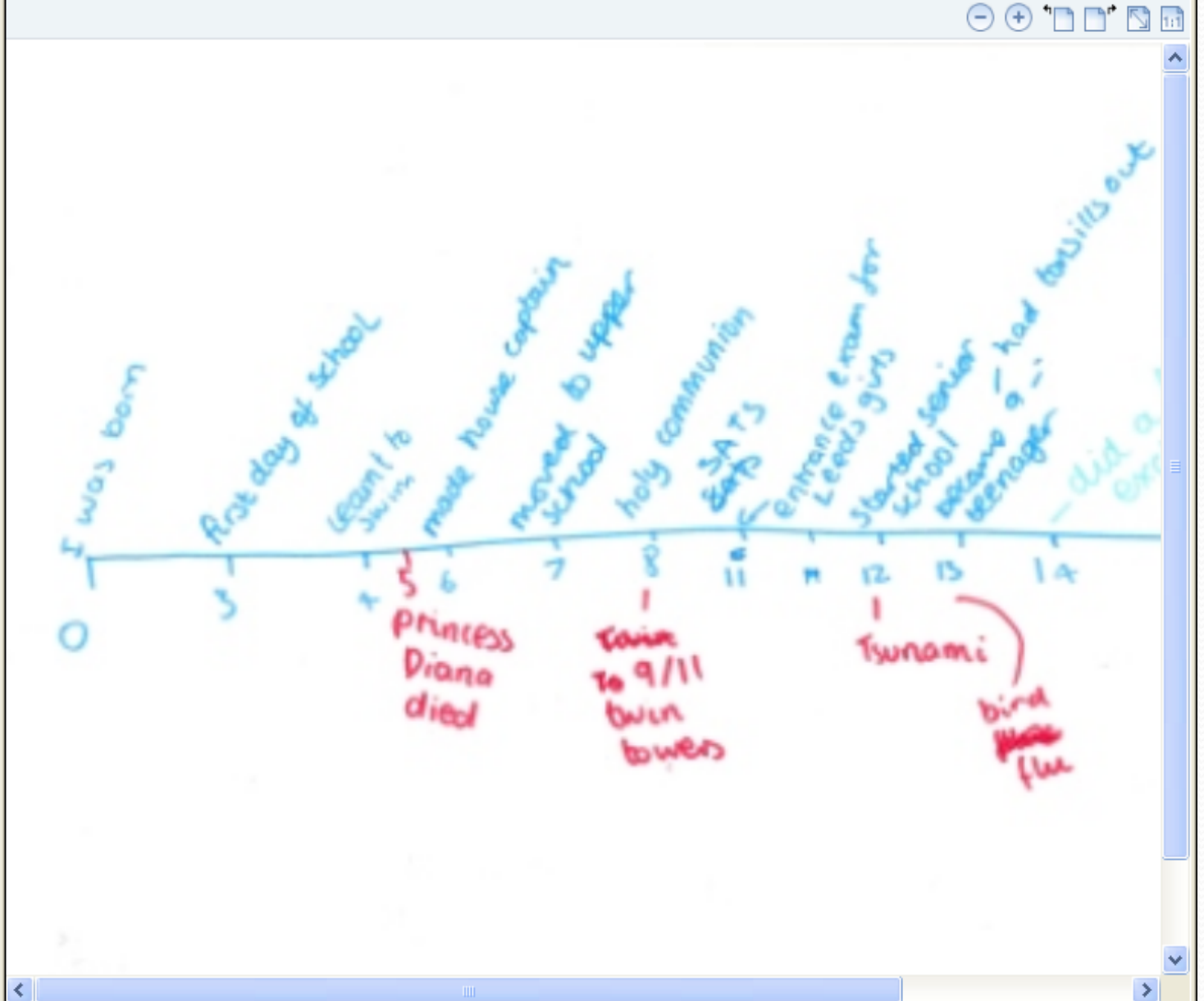
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YOUNG LIVES 1 of 1

- Young Lives and Times Chelsea
 - Wave Two 1st Interview 2008
 - Relational Map
 - Self Portrait
 - Timeline**
 - Faces
 - Future Timeline
 - Past Year Timeline
 - Family
 - When I'm 25

No metadata

View Options Timeline



Imagine you are now 25 years old. Write about the life you are leading, your interests, your home life and your work at the age of 25.

You have up to 30 minutes to do this.

I have finished my medicine course at Edinburgh University, and am now training to be a forensic pathologist. I have a little green car, which I use to get around. I live in a small flat with a good friend. In the evenings, I read, do work related to my training, and take Catalan classes. Occasionally, when my friend is out, I play my clarinet. Eventually, I will finish my course and move to Barcelona. I email old school friends every now and then, and they update me with their lives. I am still writing stories, in spiral bound notebooks, which litter the floor and the desk. The flat is quite clean, as we keep it in good condition. I take the train down to Leeds during the holidays, and visit my family.

Imagine you are now 25 years old. Write about the life you are leading, your interests, your home life and your work at the age of 25.

You have up to 30 minutes to do this.

I would like to have a good social life, have good friends that will always be there for me.

Have a boyfriend, maybe married but not sure.

I would like to have a good and a well paid job, that I enjoy, maybe something to do with dance, sport or maybe ~~me~~ something to do with media.

~~I may~~ I would like to be living with my friends maybe in a flat, have a car.

Still get on with ~~all~~ all my family, still close to Lauren.

Education in YLT

- W1/questionnaire
 - 10 schools, northern city, n = 489
 - qualitative study, n = 29
- How likely is it that you will go to HE?
 - v likely, likely, not v likely, not sure
- Followed up in interviews (continuity/context)
- Appeared 'organically' elsewhere
- See framing of these expectations
 - vague notion to assumed rite of passage
- QLL: see change over time; the ebbs & flows



Influences on HE expectations

- Socio-economic status
- Parental education
- Parental expectations
- Parental knowledge of HE
- Academic identity*
- Social and institutional processes
- Peers & friends*
- Importance of the significant minority/class complexities*
- Change over time*

Sampling strategies & context

Context of the YLT sample

- Visual (not transcript) data
 - Sweep, depth not breadth
 - Essays very useful
- Mapping of participants:
 - parental occupations,
 - parental education
 - school type attended,
 - HE expectations at 13/14 (questionnaire response*)
 - family income
- Representative sample of uni educated/professional households/HE aspirational
- Review of 'outliers'
- Full review of all data from all other HE aspirational* participants
- Eventual case study analysis

Likelihood of uni (W1)

V Likely..... Likely.....not v likely.....not sure....



HE expectations: the ebb and flow of influences

HE aspirational [W_1], differently resourced contexts, change over time:

- i. **Millie & Catherine:** graduate parents, continuity, HE assumed
- ii. **Jen & Jodie:** intermediate contexts; private schools, increasing academic identities over time.
- iii. **Maddie & Natalie:** parents as onlookers, contested academic identities

QLL: mapping continuity

Millie & Catherine: 14/15 , university assumed, peers, schools, family all align, throughout

Catherine, w2, 15yrs: I wouldn't want to do it at Leeds University I'd want to move away from... I think it was, I think university is kind of more the experience of like living on your own as well.

Millie: w3, 17yrs, Oxford bound:

Int: Have you always thought you were going to go to University then or?

Millie: Yeah it was always just a given to be honest.

Int: Right. Why was that then?

Millie: Both my parents went to University. Most people at school's, not everyone, but most people's at school's parents went to University. Teachers all went to University. It's just, it's a middle class thing, you are surrounded by all these people that have gone.

QLL: mapping change

Jen & Jodie: QLL we see a process of acquiring a natural attitude to HE attendance

Jen: w1, little interest in HE future, (model? *)

- w2, *"I'm not very, like, academic, like I'm not very good at working and stuff so I don't know"*
- W3: *you can stay on at like college or school to do your A-levels, you might as well like wait another three years and do more education*
- *& the... fees, like it's not too good, but cause like my parents will pay them because they paid for my school fees for like ages, so they won't mind paying them.*

Jodie: w1: teachers misunderstand her needs

- W2: *..my mum talks to me about like if I want to go to university and stuff like that. Erm, and, but I don't really think about it that much really*
- W3: *... the school I went to ... was a good school, it was always kind of been not pushed onto us, but you know that's the main aim at the end of school really. Not all the girls I went to school with have done that, some have got jobs and stuff, but for me that's just what I want to do, go to Uni.*

QLL: mapping change/conflict

Maddie & Natalie: parents as onlookers, contested academic identities

Maddie: w₁; just do my best, that's all mum wants

- W₂, realises the importance of grades, example of her brother:
 - *My brother ... were the first one to go to university, it's easier when you're the first one in the family to go. ... he's really brainy and he found it hard to get in and he were the first one so I don't know how I'm going to get there. But I really, I hope I do but I don't know how I'll do it, but I might have to go to a, a lower university than that and one that doesn't expect as highly from you*
- W₃: Influence of peers in her changed HE aspirations:
 - *...like my friends were saying to me 'oh why are you going to college to do a childcare course when you are really smart and you can get your A-levels and you can...', you know, they were basically saying, you know, you can do a lot better than that, you know, you can decide later.*



Natalie; poorer circumstances than most, clear academic abilities

- W₁: clearly going to university
- W₃; clearly conflicted. Work experience, disaffected teacher, boyfriend:
- *Rickie said to me someone at his work, they've got a, a biochemistry degree... And that's the kind of thing I want to do. And they've got the exact same job as Rickie. And Rickie hasn't got a degree. So I don't know. What's, what would be the point coming out with forty grand's worth of debt and just getting a job that I could have got anyway? And I'd be missing out on four years experience as well. Cause a lot of jobs now they are just going for experience rather than degrees.*

Conclusion

- YLT: manifest micro level influences on social inequalities in education
 - Winterton, M. and Irwin, S. (2012) 'Teenage Expectations of Going to University: The Ebb and Flow of Influences from 14 to 18' *Journal of Youth Studies* 15 [7]: 858-74
- QLL enabled case based analysis
- QSA: challenging, requires fine tuned methodological skills, more than able to produce new insight

Reading longitudinally

- The Ikea principle: some assembly is required
 - Other flavours of flat pack furniture retailers are available
- Context: continuity and change
- QLL: beneficial for developing sense of participant
- Temporal dimensions of social processes
- Changing meanings: HE, intimate relationships
- Changing understandings : futures, pasts, presents

Resources and publications

- Irwin, S. and Winterton, M. (2012) 'Qualitative Secondary Analysis and Social Explanation', *Sociological Research Online* 17 [2] <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/2/4.html>
- Irwin, S., Bornat, J. and Winterton, M. (2012) 'Timescapes Secondary Analysis: Comparison, Context and Working Across Data Sets', *Qualitative Research*, 12 (1): 66–80
- Winterton, M. and Irwin, S. (2012) 'Teenage Expectations of Going to University: The Ebb and Flow of Influences from 14 to 18' *Journal of Youth Studies* 15 [7]: 858-74
- Winterton, M, Crowe, G., and Morgan-Brett, B (eds) (2011) *Young people's imagined futures: insights into non-standard biographies*, Timescapes seminar series, Working Paper 6, available at:
http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/secondary_analysis/working%20papers/WP6_final10Oct.pdf
- Winterton, M and Irwin, S. (2011) Youngsters' expectations and context: secondary analysis and the interpretation of imagined futures, in Timescapes seminar series, Working Paper 6, available at:
http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/secondary_analysis/working%20papers/WP6_final10Oct.pdf
- Irwin, S. and Winterton, M (2011) *Timescapes data and secondary analyses; working across the projects*, Timescapes seminar series, Working Paper 5, available at:
<http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/events-dissemination/publications.php>
- Irwin, S. and Winterton, M (2011) *Debates in qualitative secondary analysis: Critical reflections*, Timescapes seminar series, Working Paper 4, available at:
<http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/events-dissemination/publications.php>
- Irwin, S. and Winterton, M (2011) *Qualitative Secondary Analysis in Practice: An extended guide*, Timescapes seminar series, Working Paper 7, available at:
http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/secondary_analysis/working%20papers/WP7-Nov-2011.pdf
- For a range of other Timescapes resources:
<http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/secondary-analysis/timescapes-secondary-analysis-project>