**Monograph:**

# Timescapes Data and Secondary Analysis: Working across the Projects

## A Timescapes Working Paper

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# Timescapes Data and Secondary Analysis: working across the projects[i]

**The paper describes some of our work to date and makes a request to Timescapes project teams for some input, as helpful to the secondary analysis project and as a focus for our planned project visits. It was circulated to Timescapes colleagues in October 2010.**

## SUMMARY

The Timescapes Secondary Analysis Project comprises a range of activities including work bridging Timescapes data and external data sets (undertaken primarily through the YLT project), and work across the Timescapes projects. This second task has entailed a consideration of cross-project data on the 'common questions' and analysis of data on themes held in common across all, or sub-sets of, the Timescapes projects. This working paper takes the latter concern with common themes as a focus. It comprises:

1. **Introduction**

2. **A description of our developing strategies for undertaking secondary analysis of data across the Timescapes data sets**
   We identify some methodological domains in need of critical reflection, to enable us to work effectively across Timescapes data sets (or bring them into conversation with other data sets).

   In a companion working paper we have undertaken a review of literature on secondary analysis and engage with a variety of issues relating to data re-use in general. The current focus is Timescapes specific and we deal here with some challenges of working across Timescapes data sets, and develop critical reflections on how we build substantive insights. We consider these domains:

   - Building understanding of project data samples and content
   - Developing analytic strategies
   - Developing meaningful bases for comparison

   The purpose here is partly to share our developing ideas about the conduct of our Timescapes secondary analysis, and to start developing a resource we hope will be useful to the process of secondary analysis generally. Additionally, at points we reflect on materials which might usefully be archived in conjunction with project data. We invite comments on these ideas, and welcome suggestions on what teams themselves think would be usefully deposited now and in future by the current teams and current and future affiliates. As part of a collaborative undertaking we very much welcome primary research project teams input on these issues. Through building a picture of our approach, we hope to show something of the thinking and reading of data which has shaped a series of research questions we believe could be productively addressed across various sets of Timescapes projects. These will form a substantive focus for our developing secondary analysis and methodological reflections.

### 3. An elaboration of our research questions

We have designed a series of research questions based on our understanding of the projects and reading of some sample transcripts. We will discuss how we arrived at the research questions, which are on continuities and changes in gendered identities, roles and relationships. The questions are designed to exemplify and explore some themes held in common across data sets. They relate to gender, identities, roles and values in the contexts of important life course and social structural changes. We believe the questions hold important potential to exemplify the scope for working with, and across Timescapes in researching life course processes and social change.

### 4. A request for all projects to nominate one, or two, participants based on some of our questions, and to provide us with some brief notes as to why these one or two participants have been identified, and the themes they are seen to exemplify. We

anticipate that this will provide a helpful focus for face to face meetings with project teams in November/December 2010. This will also help us develop our ongoing work under 3, above.

The originally circulated document also included appendices of secondary analysis presentations we had done to date along with those anticipated for 2011, with a view to being transparent as to our uses of data.

# 1. Introduction

One key part of the Timescapes secondary analysis (SA) project is working with data across the Timescapes projects.[ii] We have embarked on analysis of themes held in common across (subsets of) projects. In developing this work we address a twofold aim: the secondary analysis project is a vehicle for developing substantive insights as well as for documenting and reflecting analytically on methodological 'lessons'. Through this work we aim to develop guidance which will be helpful to other secondary analysts of Timescapes data. In a companion working paper we review various issues and arguments relating to the successful undertaking of SA. Many of the debates there are concerned with issues of reflexivity, context and the relationship between primary and secondary analysis. The focus of this working paper is Timescapes-specific and takes a more central interest in the challenges of working across Timescapes data sets, and develops critical reflections on the grounds on which we may build substantive, as well as methodological, insights. We also seek to contribute to broader debates in secondary analysis.

Key secondary analysis issues we explore relate to familiarising ourselves with the data sets, sampling, context, developing analytic strategies for working within, and across, data sets, and establishing meaningful bases for comparison. We are centrally interested in extending understanding and explanation but we see relevant issues as embedded within these domains. We explore them in turn. There are other issues we will be concerned with to do with the practice of secondary analysis and working with colleagues on Timescapes in our capacity as 'internal secondary analysts'. This working paper maps some of our research interests and concerns, offering some critical reflections on secondary analysis and a description of our research strategy and questions. It also provides a platform for facilitating engagement with the primary research teams.

At points we reflect on materials that could be usefully available to re-users of Archived data, and invite views on these ideas, and on whether there is other documentation that (current and/or future) data depositors could be archiving to facilitate productive data re-use.

# 2. A description of our developing strategies for undertaking secondary analysis of data across the Timescapes data sets

## 2.1. Introduction: Working across Timescapes data sets

### 2.1.1. A common cause?
The Timescapes empirical projects are all distinct undertakings, having differing disciplinary contexts, holding their own logic, running with their own distinct research designs and questions, and own varied strategies for sampling, their own time frames (at level of the projects and at level of data collection intervals, and at level of focus) their own interview schedules and varied (mixes of) methods used. The common connections reside in their qualitative longitudinal design and their interest in and focus on aspects of time, generation, the life course and life course transitions, and identities and relationships across diverse life course stages. Various 'extrinsic' features are held in common by virtue of their collective – for example, ethics and archiving protocols.

Within Timescapes there has been in use a terminology of scaling up which seeks to highlight the potential benefits of having multiple but linked qualitative studies. A terminology of

'scaling up' was seen as a hostage to fortune since it readily implied a numerical logic. In part following discussions at the May 2009 Residential we prefer the terminology of extending understanding and explanation of social processes. Here we offer a few comments on the issue of enhancing explanation as a potential outcome of working across projects. The issues run through all our concerns below in one way or another.

If we are to develop strategies for working across data sets we eschew any simple additive or cumulative approach. We need to engage, rather, with strategies for moving between data sets. A metaphor of translation may be appropriate here or, better, a framework in which we can make comparative sense of evidence from different projects. How do we do this? If we compare directly across projects we are not likely to be comparing like with like. How then can we make satisfactory links across types of evidence? Necessarily these will not be 'flat' links in which we 'map' data from one project onto another, but they must be links whose sufficiency will be conceptual. Therefore we need to pay special attention to what we are taking data/evidence to stand for, and how we take it to relate to the general processes under examination. This is perhaps the central challenge for the SA project, and it arises in any work looking across diversely conceived data sets: how do we ensure that the different data sets can 'talk' to each other in meaningful ways?  A counter to this (made at a recent conference) is, roughly rendered, 'just get on with it'. We hope do both: show a critical approach to issues arising but do so in practice, and develop methodological as well as substantive insights in the process.

Whilst we have internal access to Timescapes projects, and an ability to liaise with primary analysts, we are also positioned quite similarly to new external secondary analysts.  Like us they may work across TS projects' data; or they may want to look at individual project data only, or they may want to relate to their own empirical data evidence from one or more Timescapes projects. The approach we take is one of looking across the Timescapes data sets – in this respect our work is different to quite a lot of work on re-use which has tended to focus on re-use of particular single studies.

### 2.1.2. On context
We do not dwell on issues of context here. It is the subject of extensive discussion within literature on secondary analysis, and we engage with these arguments in our companion working paper. There are important issues relating to protocols for supplying evidence on contexts of primary data production. The Archive team is facilitating discussion and guidance about contextual information which may helpfully be archived. We are liaising with them and feeding into this process.

### 2.2. On developing our understanding of the data sets

### 2.2.1 Introduction
How do we build up our understanding of what is held in the data sets? Whilst we can gain a general feel from our knowledge of the project research designs and an understanding of the methods, interview schedules and so on, we only begin to know the data, and build our understanding of the scope of the projects by reading it. Given the extent of available data for each project an interesting question arises of how we go about picking out individuals or cases whose material we explore, at least as a way into the data sets in their entirety. Ideally we will read and get to know the available data across all the cases available to us and build knowledge of this material. This 'ground up' strategy will help gain detailed understanding of the projects, but in practical terms there are constraints on how effectively we can read in-

depth across all cases, across projects and make analytic sense of them (considering, for example, data for all waves of interviews for two participants can easily fill a box file).

For secondary analysts there will be time and capacity constraints on how well they come to know data across multiple, longitudinal, data sets. However, the alternative of taking subsamples or exemplar cases might entail partiality, decontextualisation or a misconstrual of meanings. We do not have a clear cut best strategy here. Below we document what we see as some key issues and discuss how we are building our understanding of Timescapes data sets. An understanding of the project samples, and their characteristics, is a helpful starting point, and an important component of the context in which secondary analysts will read and use the data.

### 2.2.2. Understanding the nature of project samples

It is important for secondary analysts to have an understanding of how project data samples relate to the issues under examination within the primary research project, both in terms of theoretical interests and in terms of population heterogeneity. For example, how are samples deemed to offer a slice through relevant diversity in the population? How are they situated with respect to such diversity? (for example, Young Lives and Times contains a diverse sample, but it is composed of different but internally quite homogenous subgroups in respect of class). Developing an understanding of the sample structure then is an important starting point for data re-users (such an understanding may evolve of course. In the above example, as analysis progresses, class maybe superseded by some other salient dimension and the understanding of sample structure will change). A minimal knowledge of how the sample is structured in respect of the original project aims, however, is a useful starting point. Secondary analysts will be seeking to understand the nature of individual projects' samples e.g. through building a knowledge of project aims, the target population, the recruitment process, and evidence on self selection.[iii]

Secondary analysts working with a series of specific samples confront a difficulty multiplied. They need to relate the specific to the general across diverse project aims, contexts and sampling strategies. This could be entailed in, for example, working across Timescapes projects, or in working across their own and other project data. It will be important for secondary analysts to build an understanding of the specificity of the project samples, and the implications of this specificity for working across differently conceived data sets. Secondary users have available to them project base data, that is broad socio-demographic data recorded for all project participants. However, this is a simple picture. We need to ask: Do we have an adequate understanding of how the project samples relate to the theoretical concerns being addressed by the projects? Do we have a handle on relevant population heterogeneity and how each project sample is situated with respect to such (project relevant) heterogeneity? What conceptual work do we need to do in bringing together data from the different projects in ways in which comparison is meaningful? Importantly, and running through the questions above, is this: as secondary analysts we need to grasp the implications of sample structures and characteristics for asking new questions which fall out with the original project aims.

### 2.2.3. Understanding participant data

How should secondary analysts work with project data? Do we sample within projects, and if so, how? Each project is generating a very significant amount of data. Transcribed interview data over successive waves for two participants can fill a box file. Additionally the data has not been pre-coded. Analytically the absence of pre-coded data and impossibility of a linked thematic analysis is not too troubling since reading cases 'as cases' offer much greater

insight. Arguably this is a sounder basis for cross-case comparison anyway. Confronted by such a vast amount of data how are secondary analysts to grasp it? Are there strategies for drawing from the data sets in ways which will be analytically productive? There is a tension here which we have not yet resolved and which we will reflect on as we develop our own analyses. The tension arises due to the time necessary to build a good working knowledge of individual project data sets, and to then work across diverse data sets, in a very tightly constrained timeframe. The latter crystallises a more general difficulty for secondary analysis of large qualitative data sets. The alternative scenario would be to sample strategically within projects, and then work across projects on this partial basis. Various risks accompany such a strategy. One is that secondary analysts will not necessarily have available to them a nuanced understanding (or indeed any real understanding) of the bases on which they might sample strategically. Developing in-depth readings of data for some key participants may be very valuable, but only if we know exactly how they are situated with respect to the project data as a whole. In so far as this is a conceptual or theoretical call, then we cannot pre-judge it in the absence of a conceptual or theoretical knowledge of the data set as a whole.[iv]

There are other potential difficulties arising from sampling within the Archive (or sampling from project data sets made available to us). There is a risk this further decontextualises data, and neglects the extent to which the archive itself (or pattern of what is deposited there and why) is a process. Data is embedded in this context (for example, of decisions about what can be meaningfully deposited in the Archive or made available to secondary analysts, for example), and if we sample selectively we do so at risk of riding roughshod over these contextual dynamics.[v] In the absence of having a well grounded knowledge of the data sets as a whole, analysts would need to make judgements about how particular cases or participants are situated in respect of certain processes, and then (in light of having a good 'map' of the available data) do particular, in-depth case study readings. If such an approach is plausible as a strategy it would still be contingent on having a good knowledge of all participant data across salient dimensions of interest. Additionally, such an approach would need to be project based, and then build comparisons as a subsequent phase of analysis. That is, bringing into conversation data from different project data sets would require establishing an understanding of diversity within projects (on the projects' own terms), and then working with subsamples from across projects.

For us to have a starting point into exploring project data, we have made a practically based decision to gain an overview of sample characteristics from evidence available to us, primarily the standard socio-demographic base data, and to then identify participants who appear typical (according to this data), within the terms of the project. For example, if projects have a dominant patterning in respect of particular characteristics we identify someone who looks typical rather than atypical. We have followed this strategy of sampling 'typical' participants in our early analysis of data on which we report later. Ideally of course we would identify typicality and atypicality in conceptually interesting ways but this will have to be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the data and based on a grounded knowledge of which criteria are interesting. We might be interested in typicality and atypicality with reference to specific social processes. For example, Shirani (no date/WP) explores the experiences of men who are 'off-time' in key life course transitions. Or, in light of our own questions, we might want to look at gendered identities in contexts of 'typical' and 'atypical' divisions of labour in the home. In practical terms it is hard to know how, in practice, one could do this in other than a ground up way (i.e. building knowledge of all data). If we are interested in particular social processes we need a grasp of how these are accessible through the available data. We then need to judge how individual participant data

relates to these questions, what might be productive comparisons and so on. There are significant time and capacity constraints for secondary analysts in seeking to work in this way.

A profile of project samples could be very useful for secondary analysts. For example, teams might identify what they see as key dimensions of diversity across their projects, and how they see their samples as relating to the key theoretical issues they are addressing. Whilst secondary analysts may have very different aims and purposes, this could nevertheless help provide a useful orientation to the available data.

A project guide to data sets which offers an orientation for re-users would be very helpful for secondary analysts. Such a project guide would not be a short cut for secondary analysts but could be a useful orientation which facilitates entry into the available data.

## 2.3. Developing analytic strategies

### 2.3.1 Introduction
What kinds of analytic strategies should we follow to draw from the data effectively? Do differing strategies suit differing purposes, and objectives? The project teams will themselves have insights about more, and less, productive strategies when it comes to exploring their own data. In addition some of them are working with a variety of mixed methods data and will have made use of differing strategies in working across these kinds of data. For our current purposes we have reflected on the pros and cons of doing thematic, and case study analysis across the data sets. Typically we would expect to undertake either thematic, broadly cross sectional analyses or longitudinal, case based analyses (which could then be built upon to explore the patterning which is often an object of analysis within thematic analysis).

### 2.3.2 Thematic analysis
We undertook this kind of analysis in a preliminary exploration of the common questions data (Bornat, Irwin and Winterton, under review). There we read across data sets, undertaking such readings with, and without, a full reading of study participants' data. This was undertaken as a preliminary exploration and was not intended as a full analysis. We believe that such thematic analysis could be misleading in the absence of an understanding of how 'common questions' were used, and fitted into different project interviews very differently. (This material is discussed in our Euroqual presentation and our Qualitative Researcher article).

Thematic analysis is typically the route taken for exploring thematic patterning within data. For our purposes there are clearly several disadvantages to such a strategy:

- such readings risk superficiality given the absence of detailed context; and given the risks of too readily assuming comparability across projects;
- it is not clear how such a reading could effectively capture the longitudinal dimensions of the Timescapes data;
- data has not yet been coded. If data is pre-coded it may risk an even more decontextualised reading by secondary analysts.

### 2.3.3   Case study analysis

Case study analysis entails detailed readings of each case (participant typically, although it could be some other e.g. family 'unit'). This is straightforwardly done 'in longitude', as we read data through successive waves (We are aware colleagues have complicated this 'linear' reading, where successive data waves may encourage a re-reading and even re-analysis of earlier data). Case study analysis is an obvious strategy for QL research, allowing us to seek a holistic reading, and is especially important in contexts where meanings and evidence is emergent and complex.

Advantages:
- It encapsulates continuities and changes in individual lives
- It enables detailed comparison between strategically chosen cases – within projects and, potentially, across projects

Challenges:
- The depth of case study research pulls against breadth. Case study examples may be strategically chosen to manifest breadth, e.g. to reveal aspects of heterogeneity within a broader sample or because they have some key conceptual purpose. We need be clear what we are taking cases to 'stand for', for example to reveal heterogeneity? To stand for a particular set of circumstances or experiences? As a test case which supports or challenges theory?

Should coded data be deposited in the Archive, it may be valuable for researchers to identify if there are specific research questions or domains where they believe thematic analysis could be beneficial, and to delineate possible difficulties. Indeed it may be that a project 'guide' to the individual data sets which illuminates these sorts of issues – for example the logic and wisdom of undertaking different analytic strategies -  would be very helpful in orienting secondary analysts to the data set.

More generally, primary researchers might want to list analytic areas they think might be potentially fruitful or interesting for re-users to explore (this might even open up interesting scope for future collaborative work). In time it may be that the Archive could enable communities of users around substantive and / or methodological issues.

There could be interesting opportunities to enhance use of Archives as a teaching resource. For example, it might be interesting to consider the pros and cons of lodging one or more examples of an analytic case study within the Archive, alongside project data. This could be done in different ways and with different aims. It might be designed to offer insights into how researchers move between the micro level evidence and general understandings of social processes. We may explore the value of doing this as part of the Secondary Analysis project (in conjunction with projects, if desired).

## 2.4   Meaningful bases for comparison

### 2.4.1 Introduction

How do we establish meaningful bases for comparison across Timescapes projects? In part this relates to how we conceptualise the specificity of samples. However, there are also important threats to meaningful comparisons relating to how data is collected across projects. The issue is about whether we are comparing like with like because we know that different study contexts and different ways of generating data, may themselves access different

dimensions of people's experiences (e.g. Mason 2002). As always however, we are involved in a conceptual rather than a descriptive undertaking. The issue is not just one for our SA work on Timescapes and is relevant to any qualitative analysis. The problem may be heightened in cross-project comparative analysis, as we have multiple differences with which to contend.

We cannot isolate data (nor 'evidence') from the ways in which it is created within each study. We are left with the question of how, in comparative strategies, we can know what we are comparing (is it substantively different, an aspect of social life generally, or are differences created artificially by virtue of the divergent design of studies through which they arise?). In practice, can we arrive at judgements about whether differences are meaningful in ways which relate to the substantive rather than the methodological? More positively perhaps, it may be that such differences themselves help throw into sharper relief the multi-faceted dimensions of experience under examination.

### 2.4.2   Challenges of comparative analysis across data sets

Data is embedded within the specific project designs and aims, so we are not straight forwardly comparing like with like. Let us take two brief examples. 'Men as Fathers' and 'Work and Family Lives' both carry extensive data on identities and orientations to parenting, the former looks at fathers' experiences, the latter at children's as well as fathers' and mothers' experiences. This is a difference of sampling. However, as always the project aims shape data generated, so that (at least potentially, and on the basis of the few cases we have examined to date) fathers in the two projects provide different kinds of accounts of identity and fathering. A second example comes from people's reflections on belonging (or not) to a generation. A preliminary analysis suggested that some members of The Oldest Generation sample identified as members of a wartime generation, and referenced the war as a point of commonality. This reference to a common experience could be seen as some support for a notion that generation is a meaningful concept for the oldest Timescapes participants, unlike others for whom it typically appeared more nebulous. However, the Oldest Generation study was centred on life history interviews where discussions about a life lived through the 20th century, in its historical context, might itself be more likely to render a particular (affirmative) response to a question on generational membership than a similar question asked in the context of a study focusing on current experiences. It could be more an artefact of the interview context than a real indicator of 'generational' difference. We need make decisions, then, about how we bring data into meaningful conversation.

### 2.4.3   Developing strategies for meaningful comparison

In analysis across data sets we have to translate relevancies so data sets can 'talk to each other'. We will be doing this regardless so it is important that comparison is conceptually grounded. Quite how we do this is contingent on the particular questions at hand.

Identifying strategies for theory building and testing will be difficult given the gap between the data sets available to us and what would be required by such a strategy. However, meaningful comparison is in part about developing scope and strategies for conceptual development. For example, we may arrive at a concept of how relevant processes are operating in various contexts (say, the passage of time tends to reinforce conventional gender roles and undermine egalitarian roles) for a set of reasons we can conceptualise, and link to other available evidence. We might then generate hypotheses about how diverse contexts shape different outcomes, and test this out against available data. Meaningful comparison

then here would be about conceptual development and a resource towards theoretical development.

Longitudinal evidence potentially offers an important lens on relevant processes, and another dimension on which to build comparisons across data sets. It opens up a series of questions which could not be asked in cross –sectional research, and by comprising another dimension it enhances scope for meaningful comparison. For example: how are experiences reinforced, or altered, through time? Working through the issues we have described so far we have moved towards developing a series of research questions, with a view to building methodological as well as substantive insights.

## 3. An elaboration of our research questions

### 3.1. Introduction
We have designed a series of research questions based on our understanding of the projects and our readings of some sample transcripts. We will discuss how we arrived at the research questions. They are designed to exemplify and explore some themes held in common across data sets. They relate to gender, identities, roles, relationships and values in the contexts of important life course and social structural changes. We believe the questions hold important potential to exemplify the scope for working with, and across, TS in researching life course processes and social change. The questions are based on our understanding of the data sets, and a (so far limited) number of cases we have studied in depth. We will be building up this work. We hope also to build on insights from the project teams.

The focus on gender relates to some key issues in contemporary life course and social structural change. As secondary analysts we need design research questions which can 'work' across different project data sets – either across Timescapes or (more realistically) across subsets of projects. Obviously this is a somewhat 'backwards' way to go about normal research, with data availability driving the research questions. We envisage that many secondary analysts will come to the Timescapes data set with questions already in mind, perhaps linked directly to primary data sets held by analysts. Others may come with a specific question, others with a more exploratory approach. For our own purposes we needed to devise questions we could sensibly ask across (subsets of) data sets. We cannot just research what we want but need to ensure there is an adequate and suitable comparative evidence base. How did we arrive at the questions? We did not identify the questions straight away. We started our consideration of possible questions by identifying a set of transcripts to examine. These were chosen on the basis of criteria of participants' typicality, in broadly socio-demographic terms (and adjudged in the context of each projects sample and making use of base data and other descriptive material). We then read the transcripts using a loose set of questions as a guide and focus for analytic reflection. This allowed us to start building an understanding of the project data (reading 'cases' through successive waves). It was also intended to aid us in developing preliminary analytic ideas.

An early, subsequently set aside, formulation for the early reading of transcripts was:
*How important are relationships, interdependencies and networks of support in people's* experiences of transition or of particular life course stages? How do these (relationships, interdependencies and networks) work across different contexts and over time? Reading the transcripts we identified that we did not quickly gain confidence that we could adequately address this question (and a series of linked questions not listed here). The question (and its sub questions) could be worth further exploration, since it may be a fruitful area to research.

However, we did not follow this avenue. Another briefly explored avenue was a question relating to issues of grandparenting as a potential route into embracing all projects, since they all have some lens on grandparenting albeit from very diverse positions. Taking grandparenting as a focus might allow different family-generational lenses on aspects of grandparenting and exchanges of care and support across generations. However, from our reading of transcripts, our understanding of the Timescapes data generally and our interests in a range of areas relating to gender, we have devised a series of questions in this area. The questions relate to issues of gender, identity, roles, relationships, commitments and values in longitudinal contexts.

### 3.2. Research questions – a general formulation

- How does Timescapes evidence offer insights into continuities and changes in gendered identities and behaviours at the turn of the 21$^{st}$ century?

- Does such evidence give insights into changing structures in which women and men relate to work, family life and children, and to one another?

- How does TS evidence on women's and men's identities provide a lens on contemporary gender dynamics?

- How does new prospective longitudinal evidence shed light on gendered identities, and women's and men's social positioning and commitments, in evolving contexts?

Below we identify sub-questions and adapt them to sets of projects. These are followed by a series of questions directed to you, the project teams.

### A) Research sub-questions we think can be addressed through data in WFL; MaF and Momm/DoM.

a) How do women and men describe their role and identities as parents?

b) How do they manage the linked care and commitments which follow having dependent children? How 'symmetrical' or 'asymmetrical' are these commitments? (asymmetry may well be interpreted in terms of 'equal but different', rather than unequal, and give insights into norms and perceived (un)fairness in divisions of labour)

c) Do practical arrangements remain stable or change over time?

d) Do women's and men's perspectives on arrangements, roles and identities remain stable or change over time? Do motivations alter over time, and how they relate to evolving contexts and perceived constraints and opportunities?

These questions focus us on a key life course point where tensions arise from the late twentieth century and current reconfiguring of work and care commitments. There are also important policy implications relating to work life balance; gender equalities etc.

## B) For TOG and IE: We think that the same questions would be interesting but asked in respect not of parenting, but of grandparenting

a) How do women, and men, describe their role and identities as grandparents?

b) How do they manage the linked care and commitments which follow having dependent, or partly dependent, grandchildren? How 'symmetrical' or 'asymmetrical' are these commitments? (these may well be interpreted in terms of 'equal but different', rather than unequal, and give insights into norms and perceived (un)fairness in divisions of labour)

c) Do practical arrangements remain stable or change over time?

d) Do women's and men's perspectives on arrangements, roles and identities remain stable or change over time? Do motivations alter over time, and how they relate to evolving contexts and perceived constraints and opportunities?

## C) Research sub-questions we think could be addressed through data in YLT / SIBS, and potentially children in WFL

We recognise gender is an important dimension of the SIBS project in particular. To narrow things down and identify common ground with YLT (and WFL potentially) we propose taking as a focus gender and young people's thinking about the future:

a) How do girls and boys perceive the future? In their hopes, fears and expectations: is there evidence of gendered difference? How is this manifest; how does it relate to age? And do perceptions and expectations change over time (and in ways that are gendered?)

b) Do expectations about education, work, occupation, and anticipated family life reveal similarities or differences for girls and boys? Do these ideas change over time? How do they relate to age and to changing experience and contexts?

### A note on why we think these questions would be productive:

### In respect of A) and B):

We can make use of the longitudinal evidence and address generally interesting questions in new ways. We can make good use of evidence in identities, which is at the heart of the TS projects. The evidence could give interesting insights into if and how practical arrangements, and gendered roles, sense of self, values and motivations evolve over this life course 'squeeze'. Further, identities/sense of self may be more 'on show' in contexts where people are having to make adjustments etc. This longitudinal dimension can potentially bring something new and useful to theorising gendered relations to work and family. It links to policy issues (and links also to questions about support; resources in care etc) and to work life balance debates, as well as tapping into important sociological questions about gender. Additionally it links to issues tracked in large data sets; and of significant interest to quantitative longitudinal research (e.g. employment trajectories; work and care decisions in family building period etc).

**In respect of C):**

There is much to be gained through longitudinal evidence on young people's expectations for the future, and understanding if and how such expectations are gendered, and if and how this changes through time. In addressing such questions we again tap into a life course period which provides an interesting avenue into social structural changes. For example, broader evidence shows young women to be increasingly ambitious for their future education and employment. How does this evolve through time over different contexts? How do macro level changes relate to individual level perceptions, choices, and decisions? The issues here offer a useful complement to the focus above, and potentially inform some interesting questions about young people's expectations in a context of important changes in educational and employment opportunities.

## 3.3. Some questions to the Timescapes project teams

a)  Do you think that the questions, as we have posed and organised them in section 3.2, can be meaningfully addressed through your own project data? Are there related questions we might also be usefully exploring?

b)  In respect of the questions we have posed, can you nominate one or two participants whose data would be relevant? Who? Why is their data relevant (e.g. does it help address one or more of the questions above? Does it allow a different angle on the issues we are raising above, if you believe this could be productive)?

c)  On what bases have you made the decision about which participant(s) to nominate?

d)  Can you supply notes about the 'case', and the evidence therein, providing analytic reflections to give us insight into both the participant(s)' data, and your own thinking about its relevance? Can you indicate if you think the case typical or atypical of broader themes in your data set.

Your responses will enhance our understanding of the individual project data and your perspectives will enrich our developing understanding of the data. We also hope to gain insights into the scope of different sampling strategies; and to bring into conversation our own secondary researcher analytic reflections and those of the primary analysts.

## 3.4. Analytic notes on some Timecapes participants, relating to our research questions

In developing our own early analytic reflections on common domains across the TS data sets we commenced by identifying participants we deemed 'typical' of projects, on the basis of socio-demographic type criteria. This may not lead to typicality in other respects; but we needed a route into the data based on extrinsic (and readily accessible) evidence. This was accessed through base data and/or descriptions of participants supplied on the transcribed data files. We read the transcripts separately and compared our ideas on the key themes emerging. Issues of gender, parenting and identity loomed large and we have tried to find questions which will help reveal salient themes in, and beyond, the interviews we have so far read. To date we have read all transcribed data from some participants across all projects. For each project however reading two or three interviews with 2 or 3 participants clearly provides us with at best an indicative view of the data held. The material below then is indicative if some of the themes arising, here from interviews with 'new' parents, which are relevant to our questions above. We offer some of our analytic notes relating to our readings of

transcripts from a participant in Work and Family Lives and a participant in Men as Fathers. We do so to offer a flavour of our interests and to show how we see the project empirical data may allow us to address questions listed above (in 3.2 part A, a - d).

Rather than write up a case study we draw out what we see as some interesting analytic issues arising from our readings, here with reference to gender, identities and work and care commitments. The idea here is to make more concrete some of the issues we have in mind. Social scientific literature documents the repositioning of women in respect of paid work and care. Increasingly women, as mothers of young children, are in paid work and contributing to family economic resourcing throughout family building. Arguably this is part of an economic and cultural transformation in the positioning of women relative to men although inequalities remain a central feature of such transformation. A care deficit has arisen, and women remain most centrally responsible for meeting this: not just a private solution to a public problem, but one that is still profoundly gendered. There is much literature in this area, and it is one we will address. We think that a longitudinal dimension offers scope for exploring the issues in new and interesting ways, raising various questions which could shed light on practices, values, and evolving roles.

## Example of participant from Work and Family Lives

Jan Ritchie was interviewed as part of the WFL project. She is an information officer in a government department, and has managerial responsibilities. She has degree. She is on maternity leave at the time of the W1 interview, with a baby, and will return to working 19 hours a week (p5). She also does an additional part time (web design) job from home (at W1, not W3). She is married to Archie, an accountant, and has 3 children. She plays an important role in financing the family. This may be related, conceptually, to contemporary increases in the way women work as an economic 'necessity' yet this is cultural, and entails what is wanted for the children and family lifestyle, and for herself. Work is central to Jan's sense of herself and she relates it to her own educational and previous work achievements.

Jan appears to be a perfect case study of the struggles of maintaining family life in the context of her working. Her husband works, but appears very much as a background figure (and is often more or less absent) in her account of how she manages family life, especially the coordination and arrangements around care, school, clubs and her work commitments. She is on maternity leave. She nevertheless finds aspects of managing 'time squeezes' quite hard work (and talks about life before maternity leave). Through the interview an overarching theme almost (more than a recurring motif) is time pressure. Almost everything centres around how she has to manage family life and the principal issue here is managing time; and coordinating times. Also, she feels she has a limited support network because she does not have family in the area, and perceives this exacerbates issues in managing childcare contingencies. A significant degree of contingency is ever-present. She holds back holiday days in case of child illness (p12); talks extensively about difficulties of managing if a child is ill – school always seems to call the mother; and she says she 'live in dread of one of them going down with something' (p11). She tends to be more flexible than her husband so she is the one who does the care around child illness. This exemplifies how closely managed regimes can be quickly unstuck. It also appears to evidence how she interprets her particular division of labour as an outcome of proximate circumstances (she is more flexible).

Interestingly, managing is not just managing time. It is about managing (and/or being concerned about) the relationships which go with this. Additionally this potentially offers

insights into the gendering of care – mothers of young children who are working may have work as a central part of their identities now, but are still positioned in such a way to carry the practicalities and emotional burdens of managing and coordinating care. This holds in respect of, for example:

Children:"…as I said  my daughter especially doesn't like me working. ….she can't understand why I can't be there (to pick her up) every day. And so what I'm trying to do is make it the best for everybody but ultimately nobody is particularly happy… and yes, I think that's the difficult thing. Its knowing that the kids would probably rather me being at home, but then also knowing that I have to work" (p4-5)

Work colleagues p.3 – e.g. time off for ill children; and she talks of concerns that 'colleagues are almost carrying you'

People she involves in sharing care of children – for example, she appears anxious about reciprocity when she is calling on people who are not that close to her:  (p22: "It always seems to be just sort of us that are having to ask for help and I don't like doing it. I know they don't mind, but I don't like doing it").

Husband – e.g. she talks about negotiating emergencies with him, and her 'losing'; or how he is in a different time frame to her etc)

We are not aware that this aspect of managing relationships as part of managing time and care, is much discussed in the literature. It is potentially an interesting dimension, particularly of gendered commitments and the maintaining and mobilising of relationships. This is all relevant to (A) (a)and ( b) above.

Work is clearly an important part of Jan's identity. She says she works for the money, to pay mortgage and bills; and 'necessities – they are not 'materialistic' but clearly she sees her income as important to affording things they want for children (clubs etc). She also describes her education and having worked hard at work – as being a waste if she did not continue with working. Although (p14) she 'could weep at thought of going back (to work)' we get the impression work is important to her identity (affirmed in W3 interview)

Wave 2 interviews were family interviews and W3 one to one interviews. Jan was interviewed again in July 2009 in W3. Now it is the summer holidays; Jan is back at work doing 19 hours per week. Her life sounds much calmer although we do not really know why (summer holidays; fact that eldest is expected to be more independent as he is about to start secondary school and get himself home etc; baby/toddler is at nursery…). Have the parents settled into a routine now the baby is older, and things thereby feel less stressful? Jan certainly sounds more at ease with the routine they have in place. Overall the routines seem fairly similar (p5); less stressed; (p5); and Jan (p7) seems more at ease with work life balance issues. The youngest child has settled well at nursery. The issue of how things continue or change through time is an interesting area to explore, raising as it does questions about how people may alter their ideas, motivations around care and work commitments; hours, divisions of responsibility etc. We are therefore interested in if and how roles remain stable or change; if plans come to fruition or not; if mothers and fathers reflect on things differently as time moves on. That is parts **A: (c) and (d)** above.

Whilst not having an immediate tie-in to issues discussed in W1, we seem to observe a continuation in the way Jan is positioned in a such a way that work and home life are still in tension with one another. Here it is evidenced in expediting her work commitments, and elsewhere she indicates unease with her standing amongst colleagues who do not have children. This tension also manifests in emotions about how well she is doing both as an employee, and as a mother (echoed in case of Emma who we also looked at in WFL).

This appears to be in contrast with men we looked at in WFL and in MaF. It suggests another general theme/line of enquiry to follow up: that women experience tensions between family and work commitments, and carry burdens of not completing either to best of their ability; whilst men do not experience/perceive such tensions or shortcomings in the same way (e.g. cf. Crompton). Whilst this is not a new insight, nevertheless, it may be richly evidenced in TS, and another interesting line of enquiry which we could productively ask across the relevant data sets. Additionally it is an avenue of enquiry we can usefully look at in longitude (e.g. it appears Jan reveals a very different positioning in this respect than does her husband across the different circumstances of their successive interviews). Re **A (d)** above: the evidence suggests it is worth further exploring continuities in a gendered differential in women's and men's experience of burden in carrying both employment and care commitments (this could link to e.g. occupational position, and to who carries the ultimate responsibility for childcare and its coordination).

### Example participant from Men as Fathers

We turn now to an interviewee from Men as Fathers. At W1 interview (2000) Bruce is a school teacher and Head of a school language department. His partner runs her own company, and has an income twice his own. He is 29, and has a Masters degree. Whilst we identified Bruce as 'typical' of the MaF interviewees (in the Norfolk sample) in some respects he appears somewhat unusual in his extremely close and committed emotional involvement with his prospective (and then actual) fatherhood. Throughout he appears to have a very close role in his baby's upbringing.

In W1 interview he talks about his scope for changing his role at work; his partner earns a good deal so he has scope to be flexible; and he feels overburdened with administrative duties as head of a school department and is contemplating returning to a teacher only role. He is very home centred, focused on his partner's pregnancy and wants to be closer emotionally to the child than his father was with him. In interview W2 the baby is 14 weeks old, and Bruce is very heavily involved in care of his child, and does night feeds. They have a nanny. He says he has altered his work practices, ensures he leaves on time, and is less a perfectionist, so he has altered his priorities in this respect. (Note that this is something over which he appears to exert control, unlike Jan above). In the way he talks he sounds almost the primary carer, and his partner is a shadowy figure, and he talks about his parenting, rarely about their parenting (if he talks about her, it is typically about her work hours and income). He is a doting father and is very centred on details of the child. Various things are in place to support him including flexibility at work, friends and family nearby, affording a nanny.

By interview 4, in 2008, he has 3 children aged 8, 6 and 3. He is still a doting father and very child focused and centred although less exhaustively so within this account. He did move out of the HoD role to take on a teacher only role as he was keen to move away from the headaches of administration. His identity as a father appears to have evolved from a close

hands-on nurturing role (which he agrees is 'motherly') to one which he sees as more masculine possibly, e.g. as a mentor:

Int: "you used to word explicitly, the hobby horse; you being the mother, fully involved and being prepared to do all things, very much a notion of kind of a shared parent, in fact you talked about the female mother role

Bruce: Oh yeah we used to laugh about that

………………………………..

Int: So I'm wondering whether now that the kids are a little bit older, although William's still only quite young, has that kind of shifted for you, does that identification still apply or is there another way that you would identify as a father?

Bruce: Oh well it would still apply to an extent but I think perhaps it's changing because of their different needs. Like I say I mean I would say – there he is – that Jeremy, he's very bright in lots of ways, one of the things he finds difficult is physical things, he's not the most co-ordinated and he sometimes feels a bit, you know coming last in the egg and spoon race type thing (laughs) that sort of thing. Which is one reason why I always think it's quite a good idea for him to just have a go at things but also kind of develop a sense of having a go. And I guess that's something which is a bit, perhaps that's a bit more of a sort of like a kind of a dad thing perhaps, I don't know, rather than a nurturing mum thing, maybe that makes some sense.

There are interesting questions about men's identity as fathers and if and how these evolve through time (we are aware this is a central theme for the MaF team). A theme which we will seek to develop in greater depth relates to the gendering of relations to work and family care commitments, and this allows a much clearer cut dimension of comparison, potentially, with other data sets. For example, the evidence here may echo some of the issues discussed earlier, relating to the articulation of parental care and paid work and how this is perceived and managed by women and by men, and if/how it relates to diverse circumstances. For Bruce the two appear to sit comfortably alongside one another. In part this may be because of resources. Whilst his wife has extensive work commitments it appears she has scaled these back; they still have a nanny; we see throughout how he appears very much in control of his commitment at work. Also he 'brought his first baby to work', not literally but displaying his new fathering role, involving pupils and staff and manifesting pride in his committed father role. His identity may be unusual. Interestingly though we nevertheless seem to witness continuity, rather than tension, between work and fathering. This is also evidenced elsewhere when he describes how new sensitivities make him a better teacher and communicator. Where there is evidence of any tension between home and work for him it is one that he appears to manage on his own terms.

Again we have not found it entirely straight forward to draw longitudinal insights into our questions. In people's moves through different circumstances we potentially see how gendered roles and responsibilities play out through time. Through diverse sets of 'particular' circumstances, various themes and ideas emerge which we can build and explore as we extend our readings across project data sets. An example of a question to ask here would be about gender and levels of control and autonomy in managing work and care commitments (since Jan and Bruce seem to be opposites in many respects). However, an early question mark over any straightforward reading of gender is this: Jan's husband Archie appears to experience a good deal of guilt and anxiety about managing both paid work and care effectively.

We have not chosen participants to illustrate general themes. Rather we have started with particular participants across different projects in seeking to generate research questions which may be meaningfully asked across project data sets. We have presented some interesting issues which arose from our readings of some of the data. The themes we have identified here may be a small subset of relevant themes which arise even when the focus is on gender, identity, work and care amongst new parents (and no doubt also only a subset of possible relevant themes even when the focus is only on Jan and Bruce!). These help illustrate our thinking and we hope will serve as a prompt to encourage TS teams to share analytic reflections on their data relating to the research questions we have posed.

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[i] We are grateful to Bren Neale, Joanna Bornat and Nick Emmel for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

[ii] The Secondary Analysis project includes working across qualitative and quantitative data sets; mostly undertaken through Irwin's analyses of Young Lives and Times data and other data sets; and also in collaborations with the UKHLS team. In respect of internal Timescapes work, the SA project has included work on data arising from the common questions asked across projects, as well as the work on which we report in Winterton and Irwin 2011 (Working Paper 4), and the work on SA and common themes we have embarked on, as reported here.

[iii] Do self selection issues impact: who chooses to participate in the study, and why, and are there the implications for analysis?

[iv] Potentially a way of addressing this is to liaise with primary researchers; although in a context of asking new questions of the data, quite who is picked, and why, is itself an interesting question.

[v] We are grateful to Nick Emmel for sharing with us some of his reflections on sampling and, specifically, sampling in Archives