

## Reusing Qualitative Data Webinar

Thank you very much Vanessa. I'm Maureen Haaker, and I'll be talking about very similar things as Vanessa, but for qualitative data. First I'm going to go through a couple different types of qualitative data reuse projects, then I'll walk you through a case study of one of those types of reuse, then do a quick overview on how to get started reusing data, including addressing a couple of key issues that arise when trying to reuse data, and finally I'll show you some ways of how to find qualitative data. Quali data reuse is not particularly common, but certainly becoming more common, and the UK Data Service is certainly offering more qualitative datasets in a more accessible way than it has been able to before.

**SLIDE** There are many ways you can re-use qualitative data. You can, quite simply – give a description or understanding of a particular social and historical point in time. Why this is useful is because you can see more of the data than what publications reveal. You may not be able to see all the data – depending on what is available in the archive – but you can certainly see more data than what was originally published. And this is useful because you won't be limited to what researchers thought was salient for their research questions and topics, you can explore it further and see what would be of interest to answer your questions.

Another way to re-use data is to consider analysing the methods used, and look lessons that might be gleaned about the most effective ways of sampling, data collection methods, or developing topic guides. One thing that is especially valuable is to look at how an interview was laid out before the interview was conducted, that is, what questions interviewers thought they were going to ask, and then look at what was actually talked about in the interviews. There can be many reasons why certain questions are or are not asked in interviews. Some interview schedules are designed to be more flexible, or sometimes tangents come up and you want to interrogate that further. In any case, it's an important researcher skill to have that intuition to know what to do and you really can't see that unless you start comparing the interview schedules with the actual interview transcripts.

Another re-use is called reanalysis, which looks at the wide range of approaches you can take in the analysis of a dataset. It usually means asking some kind of different research question from what the original researchers were trying to do. For example Clive Seale and Charteris-Black did a study using comparative keyword analysis of illness narratives. The original illness narratives had been looked at exclusively for health research. When Seale and Charteris-Black came along to do the comparative keyword analysis, they were much more interested in an analysis of the discussions rather than the actual health issues that came up in the interviews. So the question can be very different in that way. Or sometimes, the question can be a similar topic to the original research, but have a slightly different focus. For example, Joanna Bornat looked at gerontology as a topic, and found two different datasets looking specifically at this topic. However, Bornat's research question was on racism, which wasn't the focus of the original work, but the dataset was rich enough to allow her to explore this theme within the existing data.

Finally, data is also re-used for teaching and learning. Jo Haynes is one person who does quite a bit of that. It gives students the opportunity to work with real data and also gives them some hands-on experience working through analysis of data and the issues that arose from methodological choices. There are a number of teaching datasets available through our websites, as well as other teaching

resources which use archived data to walk students through various methodological and thematic issues.

**SLIDE** There is a fifth type of reuse, which is exemplified by the case study I'll go through with you. And this case is a restudy, which is where you replicate the methods of a study for purposes of comparison. You may be looking at a historical comparison, which could help you demonstrate how society has changed over time, or it could be a geographical, class or comparison with any other variable to show differences between subgroups. This example of this kind of reuse project is from the project "School Leavers Study". The original study was conducted by Ray Pahl in the late 70s as part of much wider community study on the Isle of Sheppey. The UK Data Service holds a number of collections related to this community study, but the School Leavers study specifically looked at student aspirations. Pahl asked teachers to set a particular essay, just before students were due to leave school, prompting them to imagine they were reaching the end of their life, and something made them think back to the time they left school. They were then assigned to write a short essay of what happened in their life over the next 30/40 years.

**SLIDE** In 2009, Graham Crow and Dawn Lyon (and that's Graham Crow with Ray Pahl) decided to re-analyse this dataset and focus solely on student aspirations. Using very the same methodology, they conducted a re-study on School Leavers for students on the Isle of Sheppey in 2009.

**SLIDE** The prompt supplied to students in 2010 during data collection was nearly the same: imagine you are at the end of your life and reflect back on what you've done since leaving school. They then transcribed the essays and compared the themes from this set of essays to the set of essays collected by Ray Pahl. You can see the wording of the prompt and a small snippet of one essay here. There was a challenge to doing a re-study of this specific study: when Ray Pahl collected the data initially, he sort of stumbled into finding teachers had assigned this essay. They were able to share the essays with him, but he didn't have absolutely control over how the essay was presented and collected to students. The originals also show the markup from teachers, as these were graded. When Graham Crow did the re-study, these were not marked, and the research team had more control over the essay prompt. Crow goes into some detail about this, and devised this prompt based on conversations with Ray Pahl about his original study. Nevertheless, this is a point crow addresses in his publications, and comes to the conclusion that the overall picture painted by essays as a collective still offers a valuable comparison. The findings showed a shift in aspirations, as you might imagine.

**SLIDE** And here is a few more details on what they received back – slightly different gender divide, but similar amount of data received. Both datasets covered the same general themes of health, education, career and family and leisure, although in very different ways.

**SLIDE** But how, exactly, were they different? In 1978, students expected much more grounded (and arguably mundane) sort of jobs. Career progression was gradual and followed on from hard work, and sometimes there talk of periods of unemployment, or even death. You can see a few examples in the left column of some of quotations from those essays, such as the one on the bottom: "I longed for something exciting and challenging. But yet again I had to settle for second best. I began working in a large clothes factory."

2010, however, showed students imagining well-paid and instantaneous jobs, filled with choice, but also with some uncertainty. Crow and his research team also noted a clear influence of celebrity culture in those essays. For example, you have the quote on the bottom of a girl who writes “In my future, I want to become either: a dance teacher, hairdresser or a Professional Show Jumper/horse rider. If I do become a dancer my dream would be to dance for Beyonce or someone really famous.”

**SLIDE** The impact of this study, however, spans beyond the interesting changes they’ve noted in young people’s aspirations – their study was part of a much bigger community project on the past, present and future of the Isle of Sheppey. The goal was to engage the community alongside this research, and find innovative ways of including the participants in the research outputs. As part of this initiative, they published the Living and Work on Sheppey website, which has videos and artwork produced by residents of the Isle of Sheppey, as well as ways for those who participated in the research to stay in touch with each other and read about the history of their community. They helped to create a shared history and memory of what Living on the Isle of Sheppey means among this community.

**SLIDE** There’s a number of publications out where you can read a bit more about their project and the results of their study. And, as I’ve said, this case study demonstrated just one way of re-using qualitative data – which is a complete re-study and comparison between the two datasets. If you’d like to have a closer look at any of those slides, we will post them through our Events page on the UK Data Service website.

**SLIDE** Ok, so we’ve covered the different types of reuse projects you can do, but what about actually doing secondary analysis. As with quantitative data, the first thing you will need to do is to orient yourself to the original research project. I think the main point to make here, which is very much the same as reusing quantitative research, is to not underestimate the amount of time it will take to get acquainted with the dataset. There may be multiple levels of context to get through in order to really understand the data. And what I mean by that is you have more than just the data that is collected at the time of the interview or data collection, but may also need to consider the metadata of the participant, or the historical time period in which the data was collected or where the data was collected. So really, the idea is that you really need to understand the dataset as whole in order to really get to the root of what the data can convey. The documentation provided with the dataset will be really useful starting point for this. It often contains more information about the methodology, such as the interview schedule or call for participants, or sometimes it includes segments from publications arising out of the original study or funding applications. I’ve also seen some studies which have sections written up by the principal investigator about particular features of the dataset, such as the sample. For example, Annette Lawson conducted a study in the 1980s on Adultery, and, given the sensitivity of the topic, the sampling became a primary focus for her. She ended up writing a 56-page document just on her sample. In my time working with the qualitative datasets at the UK Data Service I’ve also seen background, contextual material taken from the area of research, such as meeting minutes, government pamphlets, letters from participants... all of this helps to paint that picture of what was going on around the study and would be included in the documentation.

You may also need to consider the sample. For example, if the dataset is too large, you may need to take a subsample. This may not be as much of an issue with qualitative research, since they are

usually smaller studies anyway, but there are some collections which got a large amount of funding and you'll need to carefully consider what is feasible. For example, the Edwardians collection, put together by Paul Thompson and widely considered the first "oral history of Britain", contains 453 80+ page interviews. This would take a considerable amount of time to read and re-read, so you may need to take a sample of this. Conversely you might find the interviews from different datasets complement each other and would make a new, larger dataset that is useful to you if combined.

Finally, you'll need to think through how you will approach the data. You might use an inductive strategy, where you start with the data and see what comes from that, or a deductive strategy, where you have a firmer idea of what you are looking for within the data. Both are equally valid, but you will need to consider your approach as you get started.

This was a very brief overview of a couple of key issues when getting started with qualitative data re-use. If you are looking for more guidance or discussion on these issues, then there are 2 sources I highly recommend. First and foremost is a chapter out of Silverman's most recent edition of Qualitative Research. Libby Bishop wrote this chapter specifically on reusing qualitative data, and it's filled with further examples of reuse and addresses these key issues in more depth. If you have access to this book through your library, I'd definitely recommend starting with this chapter. There is also a Timescapes methods guides series, which is available online. It's short – just a few pages, from Sarah Irwin and Mandy Winterton, but it's another great guide to help you get started.

**SLIDE** There are other resources available through our website. If you explore the Use Data tab, which is at the top of page, then select "secondary analysis" using the left-hand menu, you can find tips for reusing both quantitative and qualitative research. Here you can see there is a short guide, as well as a bibliography of sources that can help get you started.

**SLIDE** Finally, I want to go through a couple of ways to look for qualitative data. **CLICK** We have the two ways you may have seen before: first by going to Key Data, and there is a qualitative/mixed methods tab, and the other **CLICK** is by going to our catalogue, which works like Google – you simply search using a keyword (as is done here with food). Then you can filter down to the type of data you'd like to see using the facets on the left-hand side of the page.

**SLIDE** However we also have a relatively new tool which is specific to qualitative data, and that is Qualibank. Like the Data Catalogue, you simply type in a keyword but instead of searching through the abstracts and catalogue pages, like the Data Catalogue does, Qualibank actually searches through the data itself.

**SLIDE** This means you may be able to identify relevant interviews that may be spread across different collections, or find a collection where you didn't think this theme might come up. In this example, I've typed in typhoid, and you can see that it's searched through and highlighted in the data itself where it is mentioned. The first couple of hits were from Morale and Home Intelligence Reports collection, but further down there were also examples from our Edwardians interviews.

**SLIDE** When you click on one of the search results in Qualibank, so clicked on one of the interviews that came up, it brings you straight to the interview to the spot in the data where your keyword is mentioned. If you scroll to the top of this page, you can also see there are links to external resources and collection documentation. And, if I click on that, it would bring me to the bottom of the page...

**SLIDE** ...which include things like audio extracts of the transcripts, images related to that interview, or sometimes even web resources. Finally, one last feature of QualiBank: if you wanted to cite directly from an interview transcript, you can simply click the create citation button, which you can see in the left-hand menu, then highlight the portion you are interested in,

**SLIDE** that create citation button will then turn into a “retrieve citation” button, which you can click and you’ll see this pop-up. You can copy-paste this citation into your document, and it has a persistent identifier, which is the URL you see at the end of this citation, which brings your readers directly to the exact paragraph you’ve highlighted within QualiBank. This introduces a new layer of transparency to your work and also helps you to accurately cite the data you are re-using.

**SLIDE** So that’s it for qualitative data, but before you go I wanted to highlight a couple of upcoming dates. We’ve got a number of other webinars coming up, all of which take place from 3-4pm. Next week is one on Data management, but for those interested in qualitative data we’ve got introductions to our Census data and UK and cross-national surveys. There’s also a number of conferences coming up, again largely for those using some of the survey data like Understanding Society and the Labour Force and Annual Population surveys. Do keep an eye on our News and events pages – this is where we post information on future webinars, conferences, as well as fellowship and grant opportunities.

**SLIDE** Questions?