

# The Case History

Making the most of QL data

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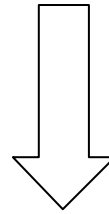
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	Case 1: Sherleen	Case 2: Stan	Case 3: Devon	Case 4: Karin
Interview 1	May 1998		January 1999	May 1998
Interview 2	July 1999	June 1999	March 2000	August 1999
Interview 3	April 2000	April 2000	November 2001	March 2000
Interview 4	March 2002	February 2001	February 2003	May 2001
Interview 5	December 2002			March 2003

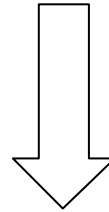
**THE ARCHIVE**

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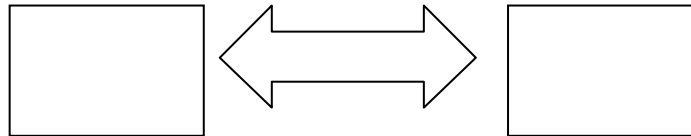


**THE 'LENS'**  
BIOGRAPHICAL DOMAINS

EDUCATION    PLAY    FAMILY LIFE



**THE CASE HISTORY/IES**



# From archive to history

- Condensation of data
- Structured analysis
- Articulation of narrative and cross sectional dimension of the case
- Using a conceptual ‘lens’
- Biographical domains and ‘through lines’

# From case history to conversation

- Contrast as a key analytic strategy
- Privileging the temporal/ narrative/ longitudinal (methods)
- Privileging the spatial, social, cross sectional (mediums)

	Karin	Sherleen
<b>Biographical method</b>	Incursion/transgression Burning bridges	Deferred gratification Shifting allegiance Family project
<b>Biographical motifs</b>	Escape Rebellion	Loyalty Determination Mirroring
<b>Biographical impasse solution</b>	Social isolation reworking relationship with the local	Mother's depression reworking 'home'

	Fields of existence	Technologies of the self	Investments/ identifications	Spatial horizons	Social horizons
<b>Karin</b>	City centre School Home Work	Art	Child Sexual Rebel Cosmopolitan	Exile University Rejection of the local	Upward social and geographica l mobility
<b>Sherleen</b>	School Home Martial arts	Pedagogy	Student Black woman Daughter	Migration Home/ family Keeping local	Upward social mobility as a family project over generations

# Towards a four dimensional analysis

- QL data overwhelms 2 dimensional strategies of data analysis
- ‘through lines’ (Saldana), ‘looking both ways’ (Thomson and Holland), ‘recursivity’ (Lewis).
- Longitudinal and cross sectional as 2 aspects that always seek expression

The case history approach has much strength. Most significantly it enables a focus on the processual – on ‘how’ something happens over time. It is not simply a documentary method as it involves a massive condensation of primary data. The analyst must actively create a history from the archive. The temporal character of the data set means that specificity, concrete events, juxtapositions and coincidences, lie at the heart of the analytic story that is forged. So the case history is simultaneously abstracted from the mass of detail that constitutes the archive, and concretely tied to the particularities of the case. It is not possible to generalise interpretations from the case history, yet depth can also provide a foundation for insight. Although a case history is constructed to demonstrate ‘how’ a process takes place over time, the culmination of this project is also the starting point for understanding ‘why’ questions. By placing case histories into conversation with each other it may also be possible to identify patterns and to engage in theoretical development. (Thomson forthcoming 2007)

# Ethical and practical challenges

- Accumulation of extraordinary perspective
- The whole as more than the sum of the parts
- Sharing the perspective: returning tapes, negotiating accounts
- Privacy: the problem with working with single cases
- Secondary analysis and the limits of anonymity.
- Balancing the desire to realise potential with the well-being of research subjects.

Karin: It was kind of cringe-worthy reading it. But at the same time I know everything I told you, you are just kind of passing it back now. You didn't just pick thing out of nowhere, so nothing shocked me.

Int: Do you feel that it is an accurate feedback?

Karin: Yeah. There were some things 'Ah, I knew that already' and then there were other things 'Oh really? I'll have to think about that'. But yeah.

Int: So what kinds of things surprised you?

Karin: I was surprised by the whole, ahm [laughs] that I should 'try and transgress conventional modes of femininity'. I didn't know I did that! But then, when I think about it, aye, I did. But I wouldn't have noticed that myself. [...] You didn't come up with anything shocking. I told you something, you thought about it and then told it back to me in your ways.

Int: Its quite an unusual thing, for anybody involved in research to actually receive that back again.

Karin: Yeah. I think that it would have been much easier for me not to have got this. See if you are ever doing this again, don't bother. I don't think that anybody needs to [laughs].

Int: You think it would have been better not to have it?

Karin: I might be more wary about talking to you. Cos I never know what you're going to think about me now.

# The Archive

[Www.lsbu.ac.uk/inventingadulthoods](http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/inventingadulthoods)