EXERCISE CONTEXT FOR QUALITATIVE DATA

1. Read one (or both) interview extracts.

2. Identify one or two analytical points of interest, or research questions that this data might address - based on this short extract.

3. Consider your points or questions and think about what kinds of contextual information would help you.

4. Now read the contextual information provided for the extract(s) you reviewed. How does the information provided fit (or not) with what you thought would be useful?

5. Reflect now on the beginning of this exercise. Were you able - even without context - to come up with some kind of issue or question from the data?

6. Do you think there might be occasions when working with 'just the data' could be beneficial?

EXAMPLES OF LEVELS OF CONTEXT
UK Data Archive: www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/document/study-level

Timescapes:
www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/assets/files/secondary_analysis/secondary_analysis_desirable_documentation.pdf
MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS - INTERVIEW EXTRACT

G19: An’ a bottle o’ Dettol wis aye... an’ TCP.. that wis her. She niver gaed to the doctor. She wis a walkin’ doctor. She didnae need a doctor...

we wis never nae weel. Ken. We hidnae much clathes, it wis a gym costume an’ a white blouse an’ that woman brushed it doon every night wi’ Dettol an’ water... it wis brushed, this wis to keep the germs aff ye. It must have worked, cos we wis niver nae weel, but we wis brought up on, fit, soup, tatties... butter, eggs... fit else? Veggies. A real... a substantial meal. I mean, we niver got steak an’ things like that... I mean there wis meatless days, some days you couldnae get meat. I believe we wis healthier than what my kids were. They got a’ this... a’ the goodness has gone oot o’ the grub, I think.

LP: Uh-huh... you think that food’s got quite a lot to do with it [staying healthy]?

G19: Well, my bringin’ up made us healthier than the brinin’ up I’ve gien them... comin’... wi’ the things we ate. Wi’ the things that we was forced to eat or do withoot. But nowadays... baked rice... now, you got baked rice. It wis made wi’ eggs an’ there wis currants in it, an’ this wis a luxury, mind?

Husb: Nowadays, they’d sooner buy a tin.

G19: Nowadays they get a tin an’ there’s nae eggs in it an’ the goodness is oot o’ it. Like... have you ever had frozen stuff an’ you’ve cooked it an’ you feel as though it didnae taste right... after ha’in a fresh bit o’ steak an’ onion. Ken fit I mean? The juice... there’s nae the juice in it. Well, that’s whit we find wi’ the things nowadays an’ a, the richt good is out o’ them... the body-buildin’ material... afore you eat it.

I mean, tinned soup, I would niver hae it in the hoose unless it wis maybe Karen [daughter] comin’ in an’ I wis gaun away in a hurry an’ gettin’ a tin o’ soup... I wouldnae gie it to him [husband]... we were nae brought up like that, we wis brought up to get a’ thing oot o’ the groun’ and intae a pot... My father grew a’ thing. As I say we niver had the money that they’ve nowadays. My mother could have niver bought four tins, five tins of soup to pit in a pot. It would have cost her very little to put on a pot o’ soup an’ gettin’ the full body o’ that pot o’ soup, ken?

Makin’ toast at the fire wis a great thing... you niver tasted toast at the fire that you will in a grill, it’s nae the same taste. An’ baked tatties in a fire. Used to sit aoun’ an’ bake tatties, or bake chestnuts... it wis somethin’... we wis happy sittin’ singin’... even when the kids were little we used to say “Come on, kids, come on an’ we’ll hae a little concert”. We used to dress them up an’ they used to sing an’ dance. It wis great, ken... nowadays they’d think we was feein’! And now, you see; when they’re up we could sit an’ speak about this an’ laugh aboot it... what we used to dee, an’ this an’ that, an’ dress them up an’ mak’ them sing an’... Isabel wis that fat, but she wis goin’ to be a ballet dancer an’ she wis gaun aboot Like an elephant! Ken. We all laugh aboot this nowadays. They were happy, days.

Kids are nae happy nowadays. They’re gettin’ too much. They’re never deprived of onythin’, they get it eventually. Even wi’ the school... they’re nae feart at their teachers the wey we were. The wey they were, we used to come hame... “I got the strap” an’ then get a punch up for gettin’ the strap. Karen comes hame an’ says to me “I got the strap today”. I says “Oh well, ging back an’ get another een”... she thinks I should ging up an’ say to the teacher “Dinna strap my daughter”. Ken fit I mean? It’s a difference... they’re defiant wi’ the strap they were feart at the strap. They come hame an’ tell us they got the strap... we wanted to know what for... an’ then we got a punch up for... gettin’ it.

CITATION OF DATA
The aim of Blaxter and Patterson’s (1982) research was to study inter-generational transmission of deprivation using a sample of women in 58 three-generation families and was part of a larger ESRC programme on Transmitted Deprivation. Sampling was purposive: families that remained working class across two generations, grandmother-daughter co-location in a Scottish city, and continuing contact. The study addressed diverse factors, exploring whether health and social histories, attitudes, and health behaviours would affect the health experiences of the children and were possibly transmitted across generations. Nutrition was one of several topics addressed; others were orientations toward medicine, antenatal care, preventive behaviour, use of lay remedies, etc. The study used several types of data: information from longitudinal visits with the mothers, health visitor reports, etc. Other data, including the material archived at ESDS Qualidata, are semi-structured interviews that focused on attitudes and perceptions. The original study was intended to inform social policy.

A year after publishing their book, Blaxter and Patterson re-analysed their data to study the historical and moral significance of food. They reported on what constituted ‘good food’: specific foods were less important than a ‘proper’ meal, as contrasted with processed foods, or ‘snackery’. They also used their rich intergenerational data to compare the different attitudes and behaviours between grandmothers and their daughters.

Interviews were done by two educated, white women. Patterson did the majority of the grandmother interviews. She was from the same area where the families lived. Blaxter praised her ability to gain rapport with the respondents. The study was presented to respondents as being about child-rearing and child-rearing beliefs and practices across generations. There had been regular visits to the families by either Blaxter or Patterson; mothers were interviewed at the end of the six-month study.

Biographical information and interviewer notes for the interview with Grandmother 19.

Date of interview: 1978; age of G19: 43.

[Text has been edited slightly to remove identifiers.]

Upstairs flat in drab block of 4. Untidy. Back garden overgrown grass. A daughter with baby living with parents. Doesn’t appear to be married. Another daughter who is pregnant was also present. Not sure whether she is living there also. A teen aged daughter also lives at home. The two daughters present looked gaunt and ill. Son-in-law came in later and left granddaughter - seemed to be about 4 or 5. G19 seemed quite forthcoming despite the presence of all these people. But when I was leaving she showed me to the door and confided that she and [someone of her daughter’s generation] were very different: “Although she’s a nice person, she was brought up on the good things of life. She likes to get out and enjoy herself, while I only thought of my family.”

REFERENCES


CITATION OF DATA