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Narrative analysis of paradata from the Poverty in the UK survey: a worked example

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1. Introduction

This paper describes how a narrative analysis of survey paradata from Peter Townsend's groundbreaking *Poverty in the UK: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living 1967-69* (PinUK) enabled us to address the following issues:

- How the story of one household emerges from paradata in the PinUK survey.
- How the story of the research relationship emerges through paradata.
- How paradata reveal research practices.

The analysis presented here is of micro paradata in the main, comprising the observations and notes and calculations and drawings which fieldworkers made on the margins of survey booklets. Our emphasis is different from survey methodologists, who have also become increasingly interested in paradata and how they might help them understand survey practices, particularly how technologies work in the field, how to improve data quality and response rates. In a recent review of the area Nicolaas (2011) defined paradata as '*All data about the process of collecting survey data: such as interviewer call records, length of interview, key stroke data, interviewer characteristics: demographic characteristics...* Although interviewer observations and information from interviewer questionnaires do not describe processes, this kind of information is also often referred to as paradata.' (Nicolaas, 2011:3) Indeed, a distinction employed frequently in the literature is between 'macro' paradata which comprises by-products of sample selection and survey administration (e.g., item and unit nonresponse rates, response variances, sampling and coverage errors) and micro paradata which includes process details known on each case (such as how many attempts it took to get an interview, the language the interview was conducted in) (Scheuren, 2000). Nicolaas, however, points to the important role which interviewers' interaction with interviewees have in securing interviews. '*A crucial step in gaining co-operation from sample members is the interaction between the interviewer and the contacted sample member*' (Nicolaas, 2011:9).

2. The possibilities for a narrative analysis of paradata project

The paper is based on a small, pilot research project aimed to provide new insights into the methodological utility of analysing paradata (Edwards et al, 2012). It was a collaboration between the central Hub of the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM), concerned with the strategic development and co-ordination of the NCRM, and one of its nodes:

NOVELLA (Narratives of Everyday Lives and Linked Approaches), a programme of narrative research.

Our objectives were as follows.

- To explore the possibilities of narrative analysis for micro level marginalia from a sub-set of the archived PinUK survey material.
- To extend understanding of secondary narrative analysis with data not collected for this purpose.
- To place the historically situated narrative analysis in the context of analysis of macro level data of the archived material.
- To explore ethical tensions for survey interviewers and the implications for contemporary survey fieldwork.
- To pursue the potential of this project for informing a framework for the collection and understanding of contemporary paradata, with an informed 'Community of Interest'.

The project team decided to explore these issues by working with the *Poverty in the UK: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living 1967-68* for several reasons. It provided us with the potential to cross the contemporary boundary in survey research between paradata and data (between research process and substantive outcome) – a line that is far less clear in contemporary qualitative research, and indeed was not always the case for survey research in the past where, prior to codification of survey research, interviewers were encouraged to write marginalia. We took advantage of these qualitative and historical blurred boundary situations to bring narrative analysis of archived classic survey marginalia to bear on the issue of the potential of contemporary paradata. Historically situated archived paradata also had the potential to be informative in relation to ethical issues, and in particular the tensions for survey interviewers in ensuring 'good' data while respecting participants and their rights. Such tensions still exist but may be less easily ascertained in current datasets not only because of use of electronic data collection, but also because of contemporary codification of socially acceptable ethical practices.

The original PinUK survey questionnaires are held at the UK Data Service at University of Essex. In the course of this small project, we digitised 69 booklets to work with. Project team members (Edwards and Phoenix) were also successful in securing funding for a larger project '*Poverty in the UK: Advancing paradata analysis and open access*' with Professor Dave Gordon at the University of Bristol (Edwards et al, 2014). This project aimed to provide open access to digitised data from the PinUK survey and to develop the capacity to use them through innovative analysis of micro paradata and comparative analysis of macro paradata. This work has involved tracing and video interviewing some of the original PinUK field interviewers and researchers working on the project, which has provided unique insights into the process of the survey. The video interviews, as well as all the digitised PinUK materials and illustrative paradata analysis will be posted on the www.poverty.ac.uk for open access.

The analysis reported here is based on the *Possibilities for a Narrative Analysis of Paradata* project only.

3. Paradata in the PinUK survey

The PinUK survey questionnaire booklets were large and contained plentiful space to write marginalia. They included a final question addressed to the field interviewers: *Please write in any additional notes*, which encouraged reflective accounts. Further, field interviewers were allowed considerable discretion on how to find out some information, particularly around issues deemed to be 'sensitive' at the time (such as ethnicity) where it was assumed that direct questioning was likely to cause offence.

'We are seeking to distinguish between coloured and non-coloured immigrants..... You should base your codes on observation together with inferences from what you are told in the interviews... if there is reasonable cause for asking if they are coloured (because reference has been made about an external country of birth or you are working in an immigrant area, you may ask 'is she/ he coloured? If this question is tactless, do not ask it.' (Townsend, 1979: 1096)

The methodology of the PinUK survey required skilful and exacting fieldwork. Interviews could last three hours or longer and paradata often provided crucial information about the basis for the field interviewers' decisions about codes and impressions of the household. The ethos of the survey encouraged field interviewers to give some answers based on observations and this process generated marginalia.

'We have tried to allow therefore in the design of the questionnaire for diverse circumstances and we have adopted a form of layout which records answers which apply to each individual living in the household as well as to the household as a whole. But the interviewer should use discretion in making notes to elucidate certain answers and also to collect any information not covered by the questionnaire which seems to be important in arriving at a reliable picture of the individual's or household's resources' (Townsend, 1979: 1078)

Further documentation and interviews with original fieldworkers suggest that efforts were made to communicate to field interviewers the aims and scope of the survey and why it was particularly important to collect extremely detailed data on income from populations who were hard to reach. Thus a '*Commentary on the Survey and the questionnaire*' prepared as a '*guide to interviewers and others*' included contextual information about poverty research in the UK, how poverty was conceptualised and measured in the survey and the aims of each section of the questionnaire. Interviewers were instructed '*to do all that is humanly possible to record vital information about the composition of the household, housing amenities, and other matters.*' (Townsend, 1979: 1076)

We shall now move on to discuss the background and methodology of the PinUK survey.

4. The PinUK survey

By the middle of the last century there was widespread belief that poverty was in decline in the UK. These beliefs were underpinned by full employment policies, rises in real wages and the expansion of social welfare programmes as well as evidence from Rowntree's and Laver's poverty study in York which showed that, in 1950, only 1.5% of the survey population lived in poverty, compared with 18% in 1936 when a previous study had been

conducted in that town (1951). In these surveys, understandings of poverty were based on a measure of the minimum income needed to meet absolutely basic needs to ensure 'physical efficiency', although as Platt (2014) points out, Rowntree himself had previously outlined the limitations of such 'absolute' measures.

'A family living upon the scale allowed for in this estimate must never spend a penny on railway fare or omnibus. They must never go into the country unless they walk. They must never purchase a halfpenny newspaper or spend a penny to buy a ticket for a popular concert. They must write no letters to absent children, for they cannot afford to pay the postage. They must never contribute anything to their church or chapel, or give any help to a neighbour which costs them money. They cannot save, nor can they join sick club or Trade Union, because they cannot pay the necessary subscriptions. The children must have no pocket money for dolls, marbles, or sweets. The father must smoke no tobacco, and must drink no beer. The mother must never buy any pretty clothes for herself or for her children, the character of the family wardrobe as for the family diet being governed by the regulation, "Nothing must be bought but that which is absolutely necessary for the maintenance of physical health, and what is bought must be of the plainest and most economical description." Should a child fall ill, it must be attended by the parish doctor; should it die, it must be buried by the parish. Finally, the wage-earner must never be absent from his work for a single day.' (Rowntree, 1902, cited in Platt, 2014: 11).

However, Rowntree's and Laver's findings were disputed (Platt, 2014) and the mid-1950s saw a 're-discovery' of poverty and also shifts in how poverty was conceptualised and measured. The PinUK survey played a pivotal role in redefining poverty because Townsend conceptualised poverty in relative rather than absolute terms and because of the thoroughness with which he designed the survey to operationalise the principle of relative poverty. This emphasis is clear from the very opening sentences in Townsend's book based on the survey.

'Poverty can be defined objectively and applied consistently only in terms of the concept of relative deprivation.... Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary or are, at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities (Townsend, 1979:31).

Although Platt (2014) argues that the extent to which Townsend's work represents a complete departure from the earlier studies based on absolute measures of poverty can be exaggerated, she points to how his work was innovative in establishing the idea that (in)ability to participate as a citizen should be key to the way poverty was conceived and measured.

The requirement for wide-ranging and detailed data on all aspects of living conditions meant that the survey was extremely exacting. The questionnaire was lengthy and detailed, comprising sections on *Housing and Living Facilities; Employment, Occupational Facilities*

and Fringe Benefits; Current Monetary Income, Assets and Savings, Health and Disability; Social Services; Private Income in Kind and Style of Living.

In particular forensic detail was required about incomes and assets which were framed as the centrepiece of the questionnaire (Townsend, 1979:1080).

5. The possibilities for a narrative analysis of paradata project : Method Mapping Data and Thematic Analysis

When we first encountered the PinUK survey booklets at the UK Data Service¹, they were tied in bundles. The PinUK survey was based on a representative sample drawn from 630 parliamentary constituencies and the bundles were ordered by the code numbers for the geographical regions in which these constituencies were situated (see Figure 1). This meant that our entry-point into the data was through place, rather than, for example, household type or interviewer or date when the interviews were conducted. In this way, our initial familiarisation and sampling processes were to a certain extent dictated by the materiality of the data (Moor and Uprichard, 2014). That is, how the paper bundles of data had been organised and documented by another research team, several decades previously and the access arrangements we negotiated to work with them. This led us to develop of different working practices than those we used to work with digitised data, for example, or data which could be easily copied and shared.

Figure 1: Bundle of surveys for area 6/35A



An initial task of the *Possibilities of Paradata* study was to map the paradata in the booklets. We undertook a preliminary analysis of the available macro paradata associated with each of the selected survey documents: e.g. number of calls, length of interview, gender of interviewer, household structure, as contextual information for the narrative and thematic analysis. From this familiarisation process, we devised a typology for the paradata and undertook a thematic analysis of 69 booklets, selected to reflect a range of household types,

¹ We are grateful to Libby Bishop and her team at the UK Data Service for their support for our work.

interviewers and geographical areas and because they had extensive marginalia (most booklets had minimal paradata or none at all). The geographical areas we decided to focus on were associated with high levels of immigration (including minority ethnic groups was a core principle of the PinUK study); seaside areas; areas we expected to be affluent and areas designated as 'special areas' in the PinUK survey where there were high levels of unemployment and early school leaving. The categories comprised: justification; explanation; evaluation; de-briefing (of self and of team); standpoint (political; personal) (for a fuller explication of the categories, please see Appendix 1). From the 69 booklets, six were then theoretically sampled for narrative analysis (by area, interviewer and type of household). Two of these were collaboratively analysed as a whole group and the other four were analysed by pairs of the research team before being discussed by the whole team. This paper presents a worked example of our narrative analysis.

6. Narrative analysis method

Our narrative analysis was based on close readings of the paradata and involved paying careful attention not only to the content of the data, but also form, tone and structure and importantly contexts: 'the worlds that surround texts, elicit them and are reflected and transformed by them' (Charon, quoted in Riessman, 2008:11) We also considered how particular impressions and effects were communicated, looking at assumptions, inconsistencies and non-sequiturs in the texts, to alert us to taken for granted in the paradata and what was noteworthy. Alongside close analysis of shorter fragments of data, we analysed how narratives built across documents as a whole.

Our reading was intertextual. Thus we considered how paradata referred to legislation of the period and social concerns, and as discussed above, how they related to the survey questions and the documentation. Importantly, our analysis was informed by engagement with the questionnaire and instructions as well as other fieldwork documents, the published book (Townsend, 1979) and material from the archives of Peter Townsend and Brian Abel-Smith as well as interviews with fieldworkers and other members of the original research team undertaken as part of the Advancing paradata project (Edwards et al, 2014), which provided invaluable contextual material. In some cases, where field interviewers had been involved in fieldwork for a sustained period of time, we were able to identify how their marginalia developed across several of the interviews they undertook.

We took into account the material and graphic nature of the data: that is how writing appeared on the page, drawings, initials and use of different coloured inks and the impression that handwriting made on us. In their reflections on working in the Mass Observation Archive, Moor and Uprichard (2014) note how evocative handwriting can be, being both personal and historically and culturally situated (reflecting, for example, gender and education). Further, our work with both archived paper booklets and digitised documents enabled us to consider how the materiality of our data shaped the ways we approached research tasks. For example, writing which was indecipherable on the page became a little clearer when we were able to zoom in on it on screen and demographic information was recorded on flaps which folded into the main booklet and were fragile and needed to be handled with particular care.

example, were at times indicative of what struck fieldworkers as remarkable or could be used to cast doubt on data.

We also considered what paradata revealed about how the field interviewer positioned themselves in relation to the rest of the research team and the research task (Phoenix, 2013). For example, whether there was evidence of field interviewers justifying decisions to others further up a research hierarchy or whether they appeared to be on an equal footing or senior to coders; whether the field interviewers knew others in the administrative or analytic teams, whether they were tentative or confident that their paradata would be taken into account.

We also read the paradata for evidence of how field interviewers were positioned in relation to the research informant. We noted, for example, examples of where the marginal notes indicated that there was suspicion on either side, that confidences were shared as well as moments of bafflement, sadness or amusement. Given the exacting nature of the survey, we were alert to indications of tensions which arose between the need to get detailed data and to the need to maintain courteous and workable fieldwork relationships. We also considered how researchers interpreted the research task, for example, whether they considered themselves to be advocates for informants living in poverty, bringing their living conditions to wider audiences and on occasions intervening on behalf of people in need (Edwards and Elliott, 2013) or whether they saw themselves as investigators tasked with uncovering truth about income and living conditions, who needed to weigh up the veracity of informant's accounts. In some ways these positions resonate with Jossellson's distinction between hermeneutics of faith and suspicion,

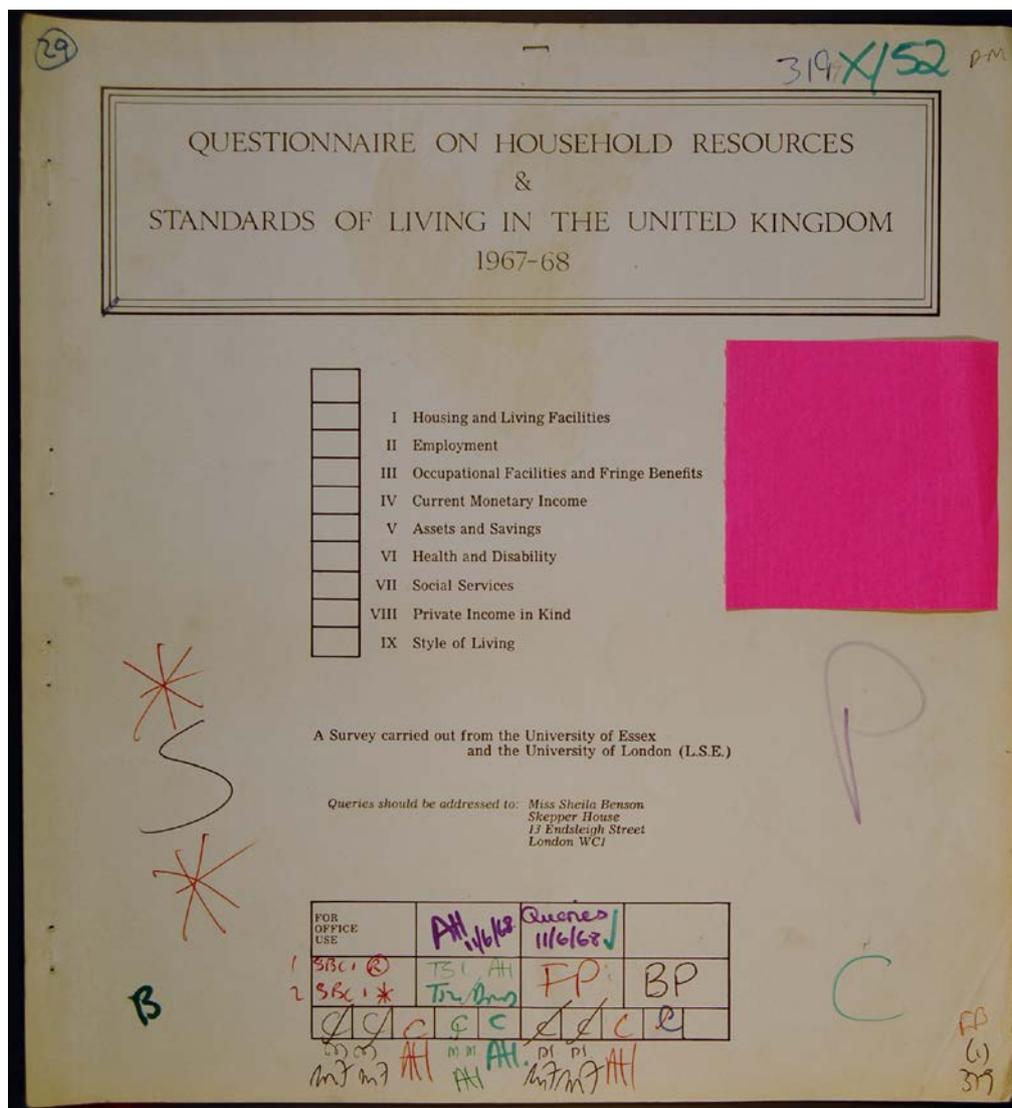
"The former positioning aims at the restoration of a meaning addressed to the interpreter in the form of a message. It is characterized by a willingness to listen, to absorb as much as possible the message in its given form...This type of hermeneutics is animated by faith. By contrast, hermeneutics may be approached as the demystification of meaning presented to the interpreter in the form of a disguise. This type of hermeneutics is animated by suspicion, by a skepticism towards the given." (Jossellson, 2005:3)

Working reflexively was important in avoiding over-reading minimal texts and remaining aware of the implications of reading these historical texts through a contemporary lens. A helpful strategy which emerged from our analyses was to pay particular attention to the genre the paradata suggested to us. Tuning into the cultural resonances we detected in individual narratives enabled us to make more explicit how we perceived the field interviewer to be orientating themselves to the interviewee and to his or her audience. We do not claim that field interviewers necessarily wrote marginalia with any particular genre in mind: this would be hard to justify given that the paradata are fragmented and written forty-five years prior to our analyses. Rather we found that awareness of genre helped clarify the frames we were using to understand the texts and the writers and importantly, as we shall see in our worked example, how these changed and developed. Thus working in groups was also valuable for raising our awareness of the situatedness of our interpretations (Elliott et al, 2013).

We shall now proceed by describing how we undertook a narrative analysis of one case in the PinUK dataset.

7. Analysis of case 68

Figure 4: Front cover of PinUK booklet cover for case 68



Our research team worked through the digitised booklet on screen together, reading each item of paradata aloud, in short chunks, before reading any subsequent material. Slowing down the reading of the text, both by reading it aloud and analysing only small sections at a time, gave us time to consider our own affective and imaginative responses (Elliott et al, 2013).

Our analysis started by examining the front page of the survey booklet and the data about the date and duration of the interview and the interviewer (see Figure 4).

The front cover is busy and rather untidy. It is marked with different coloured inks and initials on the front cover and is clearly a working document, shared across several users. This is in contrast to contemporary survey technologies, where some tasks are computerised, rendering some of the labour we can see on these texts invisible. From consulting the survey documentation and from our close examination of booklets during our familiarisation phase, we were able to establish from the different colours of ink used which research roles the writers of paradata occupied and to trace how long they were involved in the project.

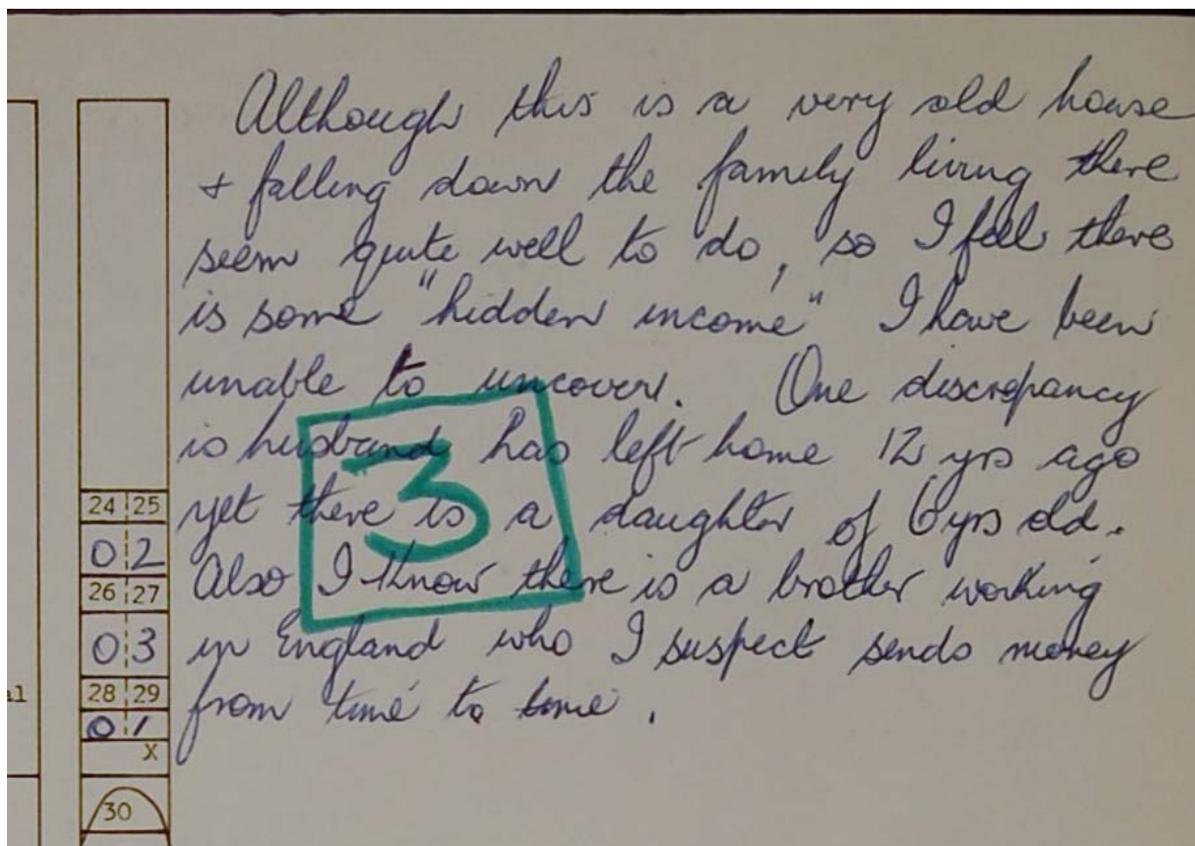
“We are checking and editing in green and purple pens: may we ask interviewers to continue to use the more prosaic colours of black, blue and red” (Interviewer training materials; Townsend, 1967-69)

Thus the front cover indicates the intended audience for the paradata field interviewers wrote inside the questionnaire and we have a sense of the interviewers as being part of, and accountable to, research teams as well as ‘in the field’. It is also clear that their work was carefully scrutinised.

This interview took place in one of the four ‘special areas’ in the survey. From our familiarisation with the materials, we worked out that the interviewer was a market researcher, who had been employed to supplement the research team. The interviewer was therefore unlikely to have had the same training as the core team of field interviewers (although, as our own interviews with field interviewers for our subsequent paradata project indicated, access to and content of training was variable) and the approach to the fieldwork may have been different from the field researchers who were trained and recruited directly by Townsend and his university-based team. However, the ethos of precision around income data and household information is embedded in the questionnaire used, regardless of whether or not this was reinforced in training.

The total interview time in this case was 2 ¼ hours, over two sessions, both on the same date. The household interviewed comprised three generations of women: grandmother, mother and two daughters, aged 17 and 6. The interviewer’s initial and surname only is noted on the booklet, so it is not clear from the document whether the field interviewer was male or female, although our reading of the data corpus indicated that female interviewers were much more likely to use the titles Mrs or Miss than men were to use Mr. In our group analysis we formed the impression that the interviewer was a man, although we had no conclusive evidence for this. We have therefore used the pronoun ‘he’ to refer to the researcher throughout this paper and have been mindful in our analysis of how our impressions of the researcher, including about gender, might have shaped our reading of the data.

Figure 5: Paradata item 1



Although this is a very old house and falling down, the family living there seem quite well to do, so I feel there is some "hidden income" I have been unable to uncover. One discrepancy is that the husband has left home 12 yrs ago yet there is a daughter of 6 yrs old. Also I know there is a brother working in England who I suspect sends money from time to time.

From the start of the interview, the field interviewer sets up a puzzle around hidden income and discrepancies between the 'well to do family' in their 'old and falling down' surroundings, and between the absence from the household for twelve years of the husband and the presence of a child, who is six (Figure 5). The tone of this item of paradata reminded us of a detective story: we had the impression of the field interviewer as a private investigator, questioning the family. We considered how the language of the paradata conveyed this impression, highlighting the use of words such as 'hidden' and 'suspect'. Overall, the sum of the writing is suggestive of duplicity, but the interviewer is precise about each statement's relationship to fact: I know there is a brother, I feel there is some hidden income, I suspect he sends money. We noted a similar pattern in the structure of the sentence about the brother and the sentence about the house, namely that it starts with a

fact, then moves to suspicion: there is a house, I feel there is hidden income; there is a brother, I suspect he sends money. Thus speculation about what can't be known is shored up by what can be directly observed. The repeated 'I' and the strong verbs underline warrant for these impressions, establishing the field interviewer as someone whose observations count and potentially underlining his credibility with the rest of the research team.

We used the genre the paradata suggested to us to think about the orientation of the field interviewer towards the family. The interviewer was positioning himself as an investigator, who needs to get the truth from the interviewees, who are not revealing everything. The phrase *'I suspect sends money from time to time'* turns a rather ordinary, or indeed generous, family transaction into something rather dubious. There was an impression of distrust and moral judgement around the concealment and possibly around the uncertainty about the parentage of the informant's 6 year old daughter.

There is information in the paradata which could only have been ascertained later in the interview, suggesting that these opening comments were written after the interview was completed rather than during the interview. As we noted earlier, there is space at the end of the questionnaire where interviewers are invited to *'please write in any additional notes'*; however, it seems the interviewer wanted to alert the rest of the research team to the insufficiencies of the coding frame from the start and to indicate that they should not take the data at face value. It is, however, important to remember that the interviewer's approach is consistent with the research task: that is, to arrive at detailed and accurate assessment of income. Further, as we have noted above, the study's methodology put emphasis on the value of the fieldwork team's impressions.

Figure 6: Paradata item 2

Husband is "Dope-Addict" so housewife tells everyone she is a widow & children believe their father is dead. Wife took her husband to court for maintenance but judge said it would be useless to give a Court Order as money would never be paid so he made a ruling that husband should pay 1/s a week just to keep it legal. This shilling has never been paid.

QUESTION 10(f) — Court order
A maintenance order secured through the courts. If no action has been taken to confirm the separation then code 1; in this situation at least the spouse in the household accepts that man and wife are not living together and there is no immediate prospect of them so doing.

QUESTION 11
If answer yes, complete other parts of question and amend Q. 10 if someone included in answers to that question who proves in fact to be a temporary visitor or guest (i.e. who has stayed less than 4 weeks and not expected to stay for total period longer than 4 weeks).

QUESTION 11(a)
If there is more than one visitor enter information for all in box or on this left hand page.

QUESTION 11(f) Code as follows:

Relative staying without payment	1
Friend staying without payment	2
Relative staying with payment	3
Friend staying with payment	4
Other person staying with payment	5
Other (e.g. nurse/student—specify	6

QUESTION 12
If any person is felt to belong to the household and is expected to return to it after a total absence of less than thirteen weeks (e.g. at University, in hospital, at work, staying with relatives), then the interviewer should include such a person in the replies to Q. 10. But the information should also be recorded here in Q.12.

QUESTION 12(h) Prompt and code as follows:

Hospital/nursing/convalescent/residential Home	1
Staying with relative or friend	2
Otherwise away on holiday	3
In armed services/merchant navy	4
At boarding school, college or university	5
Otherwise working away from home	6
Approved school/Borstal/detention centre, etc.	7
Children's Home/foster home	8
Prison	9
Other (specify)	x

3a

P3a qu 10 Husband is 'Dope-Addict', so housewife tells everyone she is a widow and children believe their father is dead. Wife took her husband to court for maintenance but judge said that it would be useless to give a Court Order as money would never be paid so he made a ruling that husband should pay 1/s a week just to keep it legal. This shilling has never been paid.

As we piece together information about the case from the paradata, in conjunction with the demographic data about the family, we find a complicated story leaving much inconcludable. There is the implication that the husband is the father of the child, yet the puzzle that the children think that their father is dead (see Figure 6). The capital letters and quotation marks around 'Dope Addict' give the impression of a non-respectable family, in keeping with the first item of paradata (Figure 5). As contemporary readers, we were struck by the morality underpinning the paradata. The interviewer does not comment on the housewife lying to her children about their father being dead, but does comment on small amounts of money being hidden (see Figure 5). The conjunction 'so' linking the clauses that the interviewee's husband is a 'Dope Addict' and the informant tells everyone she is a widow implies that she is justified in doing so or that it is unremarkable that she does. We relate this to the positioning of the child in that period. It was acceptable not to tell children about their parentage (for example about being adopted) but is much less so in contemporary times. However, the paradata are also written in a way which is directly relevant to the research task: household composition and income are important to comment on, what the children know about their father is not.

Reading this item of paradata leads us to consider who is in the room at the time of the interview. If the children think that their father is dead, then they cannot be present for the interview. We cannot know when the information would have been revealed and who would have been present. It is possible (but inconcludable) that the interviewer got two sets of facts (from the two separate interviews) and he's trying to knit them together into a story which allows him to emerge as a competent interviewer and makes sense for coding.

This structure of the sentence '*This shilling has never been paid*' is emphatic and dramatic. It has echoes of court-room rhetoric and conveys injustice. Yet, again, the detail about the shilling is in keeping with the project requirements for clarity about income. This income is notional but not available in practice: it is the opposite of the 'hidden income' implied in first item of paradata (Figure 5).

We discussed the paradata in relation to the question this refers to: Qu 10f '*Are you married or unmarried?*' The response categories for this question are:

- Married
- Married present last night
- Married away last night
- Married, separated – no court order
- Married, separated – court order
- Divorced
- Widowed

The notes to question 10f clarify that a court order is a '*maintenance order secured through the courts*' (Townsend, 1979:1092). Checking between the data and the paradata, we conclude that the interviewer is explaining why there is no court order, which coders might expect to have resulted in an increase in income and also clarifies whether the interviewee's husband is alive or dead. It would have been accurate just to code 'no court order', but this interviewer chooses to give a fuller explanation. This is an unusual and rather salacious story, which a field interviewer may like to relate. However, again, it can also be seen as part of the task – telling a story which might add texture to the report of the interview in the PinUK survey book, which field interviewers were encouraged to do, and also, an example of thoroughness.

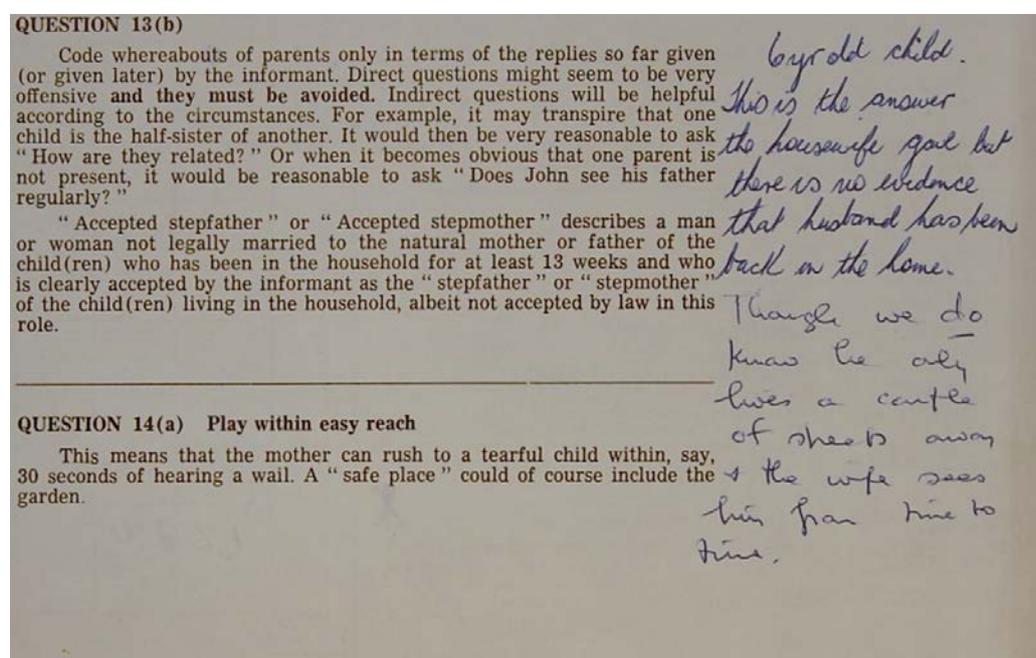
When we reflect on the 'genre' of this item, we decide that it is not in keeping with the detective frame which suggested itself in the first item: we are not dealing with what is 'hidden' and there is a shift in the tone and structure of the writing. The interviewer does not doubt the interviewee's word that the shilling has not been paid. She therefore seems to be placed in a more morally acceptable position than in the previous item of paradata.

The interviewer notes that the interviewee has confided in him, although she usually '*tells everyone*' a lie. This positions him as being an effective field interviewer, who is sufficiently trusted by the interviewee to find out information which others might miss.

At this point in our analysis, we still found the family structure confusing and review what we know of the family so far from our reading of the paradata and the coded survey question answers. We thought the reference to children implied that both girls were the

offspring of the husband and wife, although it is possible that the brother in England mentioned in the first item of paradata (Figure 5) is one of the interviewee's children. We decided against this interpretation because as the interviewee, the girls' mother, is the pivotal figure in the first item of paradata and everyone is figured in relation to her, the brother is likely to be her brother rather than the brother of the children. There is an implied, but unconfirmed, story about the husband having left home twelve years ago, likely to have been in and out of their lives enough to have fathered another child and to have a court order taken against him to being, while being sufficiently absent to be passed off as dead. However, we don't know the sequence of events because the paradata does not flesh out the story but only the sections which are relevant for the codes.

Figure 7: Paradata item 3: two different handwritings



P 4a; qu 13 6 yr old child. This is the answer housewife gave but there is no evidence that husband has been back in the house [handwriting style 1]

Though we do know he only live a couple of streets away and the wife sees him from time to time. [handwriting style 2]

The opening note (not a full sentence) of the third item of paradata is bald: '6 year child' (see Figure 7). The tone suggests the field interviewer is presenting evidence again, in keeping with our detective story. The formulation 'this is the answer the housewife gave' distances the interviewer from this datum, casting doubt upon it. There is a strong sense that the interviewer does not believe the answer and that this has left him with a dilemma: he cannot comprehend how this child can exist and the interviewee's account be true.

When we find out that the father lives 'only a few streets away' from the family, we are surprised and wonder that the children have not met their father and that it has been possible to conceal him from the 17 year old daughter in particular. The paradata which

reveal this information are in different handwriting, belonging to a checker we presume. We undertake our own ‘detective work’ to work out who has written them from the looking at the front cover and the coding, but we are unable to solve this puzzle. Later in the survey booklet, we note that someone other than the interviewer had completed the informant’s father’s occupation (in green ink). This led us to wonder how the checker knew this extra information – we speculate that someone must have gone back and checked the data. We look back to the start of the interview to try to confirm this but cannot.

The paradata in Figure 7 refer to question 13b in the original survey, which relates to the parentage of children in the household (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Questions relating to Figure 7

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
13. ASK ALL WITH CHILDREN OR WITH CHILDREN LIVING TEMPORARILY AWAY (IF NONE SKIP TO Q.17) We have to check on adopted children or step-children. Have you or your husband/wife been married before?				
X yes, married twice or more	X	X	X	X
Y no, married once	Y	Y	Y	Y
0 never married or too young	0	0	0	0
1 married DK times	1	1	1	1
2 does not apply	2	2	2	2
(a) Is the child (are any of the children) in the household from a previous marriage? CODE EACH CHILD	3	3	3	3
4 no	4	4	4	4
5 DK	5	5	5	5
(b) Is the child (are any of the children) an adopted or foster child? CODE EACH CHILD	6	6	6	6
7 yes, adopted	7	7	7	7
8 no	8	8	8	8
9 DK	9	9	9	9
	20	20	20	20

QUESTION 13(b)

Code whereabouts of parents only in terms of the replies so far give (or given later) by the informant. Direct questions might seem to be very offensive and they must be avoided. Indirect questions will be helpful according to the circumstances. For example, it may transpire that one child is the half-sister of another. It would then be very reasonable to ask “How are they related?” Or when it becomes obvious that one parent is not present, it would be reasonable to ask “Does John see his father regularly?”

After consulting the data from question 13 (Figure 8), we work out that the coder is reinstating the original ‘answer the housewife’ gave: that the child is from her current marriage - which the field interviewer had coded differently from her answer, as being the child of a previous marriage. The coder provides rationale for why it is likely to be correct in his or her own paradata: namely that that the husband lives nearby.

From our own efforts, we note that there is a lot of conflicting information which we are unable to make sense of and must remain inconcludable. However, the task of the original research team is to draw conclusions and to code. This is particularly difficult because, as the guidance notes for question 13b (see Figure 8) indicate : “Direct questions might seem to be very offensive and they must be avoided”. Unlike contemporary surveys, where there is an emphasis on asking the same question consistently across interview, here interviewers are encouraged to get information through indirect questioning, with the result that we do not know what questions this interviewer felt able to ask.

The intervention of the coder highlights the role of the members of the research team who are usually 'off-stage' during fieldwork. The two items of paradata here are a sequence rather than a dialogue between coder and field interviewer. The coder responds to the interviewer's paradata, but the interviewer will not see the coder's comment. The coder's intervention indicates that the interviewers are accountable for their work and that their work is checked very thoroughly.

Using the frame of the 'detective' genre, we refine our understanding of the field interviewer's role again. He brings to mind a diligent police constable, one of a hierarchically structured team, trying to fit material into a restrictive format to present to his superior, rather than the independent private investigator we imagined at the start of the analysis.

Our impressions are fragmentary, though, because the paradata were written when they were relevant to the research task, not to elucidate the informant's life story.

8. Conclusions

In this paper we have considered how paradata from a single case in the PinUK study offered insights into historically situated research relationships and research practices, including our own.

We undertook analysis of both paper questionnaires and digitised data. Working between the two media, we became aware of our own methods for handling and processing data, which informed our thinking about the 'backstage' working practices of the PinUK team. Thus our work with the paper booklets was facilitated by the hospitality of the archivists who made space for us in their offices and the work had to be paced to fit in with train times and the Archive's closing times (Moor and Uprichard, 2014). In contrast, our digital dataset was portable: we were able to consult it when and where we wanted to and as such it is not as closely associated for us with any particular place or working practices, as the original dataset was. When working with the original data, we became engaged in the process of taking care of the questionnaires, putting them in order and stacking them carefully on the shelves. We developed colour coded, paper systems for categorising the booklets, as well as a sense of what it was like for a team to work with one single copy of a questionnaire, rather than easily duplicated material. Cultivating these new / old ways of working, we came to see ourselves as part of a chain of researchers who had worked on these booklets and became curious about our predecessors, the processes they had developed for handling and analysing the data, the distances they had to cover to undertake interviews and how they fitted together as a team. This fuelled our interest in what paradata might tell us about research practices (as well as insights into informants' lives), reminding us to pay attention to the initials and the doodles on the front covers, for example, as well as text written inside the margins. We noticed how the medium shaped the way we worked with the data. For example, we could not easily flick backwards and forwards through the digitised booklet images, as we had with the paper booklets. This slowed down the process of cross-checking but reinforced the discipline of allowing the analysis to unfold line by line and page by page.

Some of the paradata in the PinUK booklets convey a vivid impression of the informants (Edwards and Elliott, 2013; Edwards et al, 2014), though in the case discussed above no clear sense of the informants as individuals emerges. However, a focus on the field interviewer's struggle to make sense of the family, on where he feels the need to explain and what he passes over without remark, conveys what it might be like to be an all female household, headed by a single mother without any male support in the 1960s, particularly in the deeply religious area in which this survey interview was conducted. From the story the informant 'tells everyone' about her absent husband, there is a sense of some stigma surrounding her situation and of being held to account.

Working with the frame of the detective genre, enabled us to track how we moved from an initial interpretation of the field interviewer as outsider with strong identity claims of his own ('I suspect', 'I know') to thinking of him as someone embedded within a strongly hierarchical team and accountable for his work.

We have found that paradata are also a valuable way of gaining and insight into the experiences of field interviewers at that time. There is now a burgeoning literature on reflexive practice but this is a relatively recent phenomenon, confined to qualitative rather than quantitative research. Indeed reflecting on his ethnography, *Street Corner Society*, undertaken in the 1940s, William Foote Whyte noted '*It seems as if the academic world had imposed a conspiracy of silence regarding the personal experiences of fieldworkers ... it was impossible to find realistic accounts that revealed the errors and confusions and the personal involvements that a fieldworker must experience*' (Whyte, 1993:358, cited in Riessman, forthcoming). Paradata can offer rare insights into 'confusions and personal involvements' of research practices from this period.

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Appendix 1: Typology of Paradata Forms

AMPLIFICATION - figures and computation

- background clarification

- direct quotes

JUSTIFICATION - of coding decision of lack of coding

EXPLANATION - relates to substantive focus and coding

EVALUATION

Character- individual or household personality/emotions

- material/resource circumstances

Claims - veracity of interviewee information

- what may have happened/will happen

DEBRIEFING

Self - offload/explain to self

Core team- discuss/explain interview process

- comment on research focus or questions

- exchanges between interviewer and core team

STANDPOINT

Political - wider political context

Social - wider general or local social situation

Personal - active/voice beyond fieldworker role