Transparency in Qualitative Research

Maureen Haaker
UK Data Service

24 January 2020
Managing and Sharing Research Data for Transparency and FAIRness
Many thanks to Louise Corti, who shared many of her slides from the panel on transparency at RMF 2018. Slides with Corti (2018) have been reproduced with permission.
Today’s debate

• In quantitative methods, reproducibility is held as the gold standard for demonstrating research integrity

• Threats to scientific integrity, such as fabrication of data and results have led to some journals now requiring data, syntax and prior registration of hypotheses to be made available as part of the peer-review

• The ‘reproducibility’ of qualitative research has been questioned but has been protected from the recent transparency agenda. But for how long?

• What if journals begin to mandate the sharing of data and analysis for qualitative research?

Corti (2018)
International transparency agenda

- Increasing drive for openness and sharing – value and transparency
- Funders, professional societies and journals driving open research mandates
- Universities UK: *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*
- Data sharing: *RCUK Common Principles on Data Policy*
- UK Parliamentary Science and Technology Committee Inquiry on *Research Integrity* - so-called 'crisis in reproducibility' of research
Crisis? What crisis?

- The **Reinhart and Rogoff controversy**
  - Paper: “Growth in the time of debt”
  - George Osborne in 2010: “The latest research suggests that once debt reaches more than about 90% of GDP the risks of a large negative impact on long term growth become highly significant. If off-balance sheet liabilities such as public sector pensions are included we are already well beyond that.”
  - Thomas Herndon, postgrad student at Uni of Massachusetts

- **Reproducibility project: Psychology**
  - 250 scientists from around the world attempted to reproduce findings from a sample of Psychology papers published in 2008.
  - 61 did not replicate, with 15 being “not at all similar”; 39 replicated, with 4 being “virtually identical”
But, a slight terminology crisis

Open research
Open science
Open access
Open data

Open Research ≠ Open Data

Corti (2018)
Providing research context – through data?

- **Research Data Policy** in place in UK since 1995
  - People share what they feel they ‘can’ share
  - Hard to see exactly what data were created, what methods were used and what fieldwork represented the research
- Evidence base: 1000 qualitative data collections shared
- Practical guidance and protocols on sharing datasets and methods
- Lots to learn from historians on methods for assessing provenance of a data collection

Adapted from Corti (2018)
# Qualitative research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data transparency</th>
<th>Production transparency</th>
<th>Analytic transparency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing full access to data itself</td>
<td>Explain how data were collected:</td>
<td>Information about data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide (partial) • Interview transcripts • Field notes • Videos…</td>
<td>• Interviewee selection • Participants • Documents…</td>
<td>Describe which evidence supports which claims Discursive footnotes / supplement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data sharing benefits

• Fundamental in **collaborative and multi-stakeholder projects**
• Extend voices of participants
• Make best use of hard-to-obtain data, e.g. elites, socially excluded, over-researched
• Not burden over-researched, vulnerable groups
• Provide greater ‘research transparency’

***In each, ethical duties to participants, peers and public may be present.***

Corti (2018)
Process transparency

- Documentation of method
  - Described method in articles, often highly sanitized; unlikely to be fully transparent
- Raw and derived data in qualitative research
  - What counts as data?
  - What is ‘replication data’ – a ‘subset’ of whole data?
  - Ethical issues
- Need a better link between a published paper and underlying data sources and the methods narrative

Corti (2018)
Analytic transparency

• Linking a claim to data
• A problem for qualitative research – not simple running code
• Annotation for Transparency Initiative (ATI)
  ‘facilitates transparency in qualitative research by allowing scholars to ‘annotate’ specific passages in an article. Annotations amplify the text and include a link to one or more data sources underlying a claim; data sources are housed in a repository

• But, a slippery slope?…

Corti (2018)
Providing pathways to show process

- We can define recommendations by the scale of ‘immersion’
- Trajectories for defining and supporting process transparency
- Practical guidance based on real case studies of particular research approaches that highlight best practice and showcase good archived datasets

- UKDS Guide coming very soon!

- Aim: to encourage ‘trust’ in qualitative methods and show How To
## Supporting transparency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Layers of transparency/integrity</th>
<th>Key ways to support transparency/integrity</th>
<th>Enhanced ways to support transparency/integrity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>Allowing appropriate access to data via archive</td>
<td>Publishing a data paper*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Creating a data list in some form**</td>
<td>ReadMe document is helpful to get an overview of more complex material deposited (e.g. Big Society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including metadata on transcripts</td>
<td>Consistent presentation, offering some background information and key to transcript symbols, for example (Managing Suffering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consistent and coherent anonymisation</td>
<td>Best practice is to use pseudonyms or generalised terms for place names, roles etc,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Including field-notes where appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Including documentation such as grant information/final reports – do not rely on website links as these are often broken</td>
<td>Correspondence (e.g. Big Society correspondence with UKDA about why interview transcripts were not deposited), notes from meetings with gatekeepers, reports from collaborators in research (e.g., Conservation, Markets and Justice – report from UEA and InsightShare)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documenting the consent process – both for participation and for data sharing – ensuring</td>
<td>Ethical approval documentation – from RECs and other correspondence (e.g.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Depositing data

- Unravelling the Mediterranean migration crisis: The MEDMIG project journey
  https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=852674
Depositing partial data and data summaries

- Pioneers of Social Research, 1996-2018
  [https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=6226](https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=6226)

Professor George Brown interview summary.

Born 15 November 1930, off Portobello Road, London. Twin, weighed under 3 lbs, not expected to survive. Two-room flat, shared toilet, water on the landing.

Father a lens maker, orphaned at 13/14, then apprenticed. Finished as a foreman, ill-educated, upright, skilled worker. Nervous, had a perforated ulcer. Father had seven siblings.

Mother had been a waitress. They met early and stayed together all their lives. Good marriage. Her sister, aunt Rose, came to help when the twins were born. Jaundice.

Due to work pressure in the war, father had episode of nervous vomiting. Highly strung, pleasant, nice man. Not particularly close to parents. Mother highly anxious about them.

At two, moved to terrace house in Kensal Green, a step up, but only had half the house: kitchen, scullery, front room, one bedroom, yard. Not allowed into the street until was 5.

Rememberes father as somewhat distant and away at work, mother as nervous and protective rather than warm. Not close to parents: maybe they were too close themselves. Not easy to talk to.

No books in the house. No preparation for 11+, just told to bring a pencil and ruler. Surprise when the teacher told him he was going to grammar school - only boy from the area to do so. Had to walk to Kilburn and would hide his cap on the way. Difference from parents resulted. Parents did pay the small grammar school fee, and made clear that it was a sacrifice - and that he had to leave at 16, in order to contribute to the family income.

Mother would nag a lot, although George well behaved. She was oldest of seven siblings. Had difficult problem with her father, ex-

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UK Data Service
Documenting your study

- Anti-Politics: Characterising and Accounting for Political Disaffection, 2011-2012
  (https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=7855&type=Data%20catalogue)

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<td>Get in touch</td>
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### DOCUMENTATION

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APPENDIX B
THE SAMPLE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 1963 - 7 P.M.

DEANSGATE UNIVERSITY

A comfortable common room. Low tables with plates of sandwiches on them and cups of coffee. A microphone looking like a miniature radio transmitter sits in one of them. Nine people in unobtrusive low chairs, arranged in an oval shape, sit round the tables. Six are visitors. Three men and three women - people who have responded to the appeal in the Sunday Times to take part in the study. Two are research assistants - a man working on the study with a and a woman, who is a graduate research student in the department conducting her own research on a completely different project. She has come to take charge of the recording and will later transcribe it. The ninth person is me.

I welcome everyone, thank them for their time and reassure them no-one should feel under any compulsion to speak nor to say such things that at the end of the evening they leave feeling ashamed and wishing they had not come. I tell them I hope they will enjoy the discussion. I spend several minutes on this introduction, waiting to sense that everyone is comfortable and understands the research purposes of the meeting by talking about the way they have been approached - via a news article, by talking about the problems or samples selected in this way. One person takes up this point and asks whether I will not have too many people from similar economic backgrounds. I reply that I am not particularly concerned about the lack of a representative sample of the general population because the kinds of statements I wish to make do not require such a sample.

"It depends what kind of statement you wish to make at the end of the day whether you need a representative sample of the population. I am not trying to draw any conclusions from my work about incidence or prevalence. I will not be saying 'In Britain today 60% of the population committed adultery' or 'Of men in Britain today, half will have committed adultery by the time they have been married ten years'. For that kind of statement, a representative

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=4858&type=Data%20catal ogue
More on sampling...

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=4858&type=Data%20catalogue
The critical question to be asked about any sample is not whether they do or do not represent the general population from which they are drawn, but whether the characteristics on which they vary matter, given the focus and purposes of the study...

Furthermore, if it is intended that general statements about the incidence and prevalence of “adultery in Britain today” are to be made, then a sample would need to be drawn which represented the distribution of people “in Britain today”. However, when a study is being undertaken in a new area, when it refers to an illicit behaviour which is surrounded by much secrecy, when it is intended not to make such grad statements but rather to look in depth and in detail at adultery, then this sample has certain advantages...

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=4858&type=Data%20catalogue
Affluent Worker: Interviewer comments

- 19 -

Interviewer notes.

Heavy public school type - wears sporty flat cap. Seemed to find it all rather amusing but quite interesting. Earlier, while I was interviewing someone else, I heard him in the school office telephoning a girl to say that he would be back late because I was taking too long; he unlithy spoke French at first: "C'est Colin... " eh. At the end as I put my scarf on he commented - quite correctly! - that we way in which I tied it had class implications.

Very assurance, loved to talk & very anxious to please, to come up to my rather mysterious expectations, whatever they might be. However I don't think this influenced the substantial content of his answers.

Small, cozy semi-detached house, with shabby furniture - piles of books & music, obviously keen that he is very active in hobbies & music, languages etc.

Wife had noticeably less posh accent than respondent. Suggested that tennis & ballroom dancing were necessary social requirements.

Strong views on understandability, even unnaturalness of sexual interest in teeneger. Thought boys should regard girls as just healthy tomboys like themselves!

Notable emphasis on traditional aristocratic, gentlemanly rather than bourgeoise values - "loyalty, service to the community" eh. "Decent" a key word.

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=6512&type=Data%20catalogue
Marsden’s reflection on “felt poverty”

8 ‘Felt’ poverty

I’m not sure whether we need a separate section on how mothers feel poverty. Perhaps the feeling may best come through indirectly, and all this section will be subsumed in the others. I notice that I’ve already begun to use bits of material in the section on expenditure. My reason for including this title in the section headings is that we can describe objective conditions of life and quantities of this and that, but how do the mothers feel about it? Do they actually feel themselves to be worse off?

It seems obvious, but it’s worth saying, that nobody felt the scales were adequate. On the other hand, most of them wouldn’t say how much they needed, and the reason for this reluctance appeared twofold. They were already self-conscious about receiving ‘charity’, though the feeling wore off after a time, and also the long time of pinching and scraping had become a habit of mind. They just couldn’t think about wants and needs, they daren’t let their appetites be titillated by thoughts of more money and nice food and possessions. As one said, when going shopping her constant thoughts were ‘can I do without this, can I do without that’. People were sensitive about poverty in different degrees which was quite unrelated to their needs. Mrs Dufay was one of the

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=5072&type=Data%20catalogue
5 October 2014

The main focus of this day was the development of the storyboard, which was an arduous process. The group initially decided to focus on water and developed a storyboard over a period of approximately 2.5 hours. Upon its completion, the group was visibly distressed by the fact that they had not included trees – we suggested that to try and cover more in the allotted time would be difficult. Noticeably the three women in the group that had been largely silent throughout the development of the water storyboard, stated that had they had known they had limited time, they would’ve chosen to focus on the trees (forest). We told them they could certainly develop a new storyboard or try to incorporate their concerns in the present storyboard. After about 30 minutes into the development of a new tree-focused storyboard, the group gave up and decided to continue with the creation of their first, water-focused storyboard. [My impression is that this was a decision primarily driven by fatigue].

6 October 2014

A smaller group of us (4 participants) drove out to film the impact of the cattle and flooding (~ 5 km from the main village); this is also where the Sukuma are. On the way back I asked a young Sukuma girl if she had been born in the village. She replied that she had in fact been born in Morogoro. In asking further I learned that a few years ago the TZ government relocated a large number of Sukuma from Morogoro due to conflicts between their cattle and farmers. Apparently Undu and Kilwa regions were designated for the re-homing of the Sukuma, but no infrastructure (e.g. water) was put in place, so naturally the Sukuma began to move elsewhere. At this time, village leaders in these regions were told [not sure by whom – perhaps the District?] that if the Sukuma came and asked for land, the village should not refuse them. The Ruhatwe participatory video group claims that although Rukole offered them land, Ruhatwe never agree [as a village] to do so.

I also asked how/why the history of the Sukuma, having been removed from their home, gave them any pause – whether they [Ruhatwe] felt any sympathy for them. The PV folks responded that being removed from your home is ‘serious’ and that they do in fact feel for them because of this. BUT, when the Sukuma came to Ruhatwe they moved to an area where there were already people living (from Ruhatwe) and ‘disturbed their way of life.’ So the way they see it is, although they feel for them, they also feel for their people and that this is an injustice. [I think this may be a potential recognition issue for us to explore].

Apparently the Sukuma began to come to Ruhatwe in 2012 [according to the PV group].

Responses of community members who attended rush screening

Prepared by Peter Paul (MCDI)

1. During the meeting with expert from the district (in this scene) people should not have interrupted each other, they should have given each other sometime to talk rather than interrupting.

Field notes

There are a lot of processes that the average villager needs to go through in order to simply build a building materials/ Need to pay a lot of money/ It didn’t used to be like that/ When asked when this change began, the participant stated that it was when Kikwete (current TZ president) took power. This is the CUF political party representative – whilst I do not doubt that there are some real hassles in ‘simply cutting building poles’, I wonder if it really has any connection to Kikwete’s inauguration, 2002-2005.

Fire which is lit by people to clear land for agriculture gets out of control and burns the forest causing some of the trees to die.

Problem animals that live in the forest (ig baboon, vervet monkey, lion, elephant) and eat crops. Apparently two people were killed in Ruhatwe in 2014 by elephants.

Legal but unsustainable harvesting of timber leading to the loss of forest and severe soil erosion.

The elder interjects at this point and claims that this area in unlike other areas in Kilwa in that it is highly fertile. He states that you can cut a tree and in 5 years it will have regenerated. Whilst this is clearly an exaggeration, part of the village lands appear to be highly fertile (floodplain) where they grow rice during the rainy season when the lands become inundated with water. At present they are hard, cracked clay soils (see image below).
Creative documentation

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=852476&type=Data%20catalogue
Living Multicultural: blog

Organising our analysis

We completed the first year of Living Multiculture on 1 July, meaning we’re halfway through our project – but all the way through the first phase of our fieldwork. We completed the last of our focus groups last week, and we’re now immersed in the masses of data we’ve collected in the form of individual and group interview transcripts and detailed field notes. Time to get to grips with the data analysis!

The team spent some time thinking carefully about how we are going to manage all of this data using NVivo qualitative data analysis software (with the expert help of Mark Carrigan). Preparing a code book has really helped us to organise our thinking about the questions we are asking of the data and the emerging themes we are already thinking about. The next stage of work will be about meticulously going through our data and organisng it into broad themes, while keeping detailed notes about more nuanced themes and ideas that we notice while doing so. Doing this kind of interpretive work as a large team needs clarity and organisation, which we’re trying to build in from the start.

We already have some ideas about themes that are emerging from our early analysis, and these are informing how we are beginning to organise the data. We’re organising our thoughts conceptually (e.g. around ‘conviviality’, ‘environment and the non-human’), practically (around ‘methods and methodology’ and ‘policy’), and thematically (around ‘place and belonging’, ‘feelings’). We’ll gather the data that relates to each of these ‘codes’ and more, recognising that they will be cross-cutting and that by organising the data we will develop new ideas about what it is telling us.

We’ll be sharing these ideas and emerging findings in more detail at our interim findings seminar on 27 September at the OU Camden Centre – please let us know if you’d like to attend. This builds on the conference papers we presented at the Association of American Geographers Annual Conference in Los Angeles in April and will incorporate work from some of the new conference papers we are writing – Katy

From the blog

Living Multiculture project - Winter Blog 2014/15

It has often felt like a winter of argument, contestation and crisis around migration and multicultural.

Read more

Autumn Update 2014

Rather unbelievably we are in the final weeks of Living multicultural being a ‘live project’.

Read more

Spring updates

A quick update on the various activities on the Living Multiculture project: we are deep in the data ‘cleaning’ and coding process still.

https://beta.ukdataservice.ac.uk/datacatalogue/studies/study?id=851852&type=Data%20catalogue
New possibilities with changing technology

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<th>Hierarchical Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nodes\Attitude</td>
<td>A person's general feeling of favorableness or unfavorableness. Synonym: affect (Ajzen and Fishbein) Evaluation of people, objects, and ideas (Aronson). A set of beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodes\Attitude\Mixed</td>
<td>A person's statement that they are indecisive as to whether their attitude is positive or negative. If a person states two different views, such as that they are positive about one aspect and negative about another, this is not mixed, but rather multiple, feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodes\Attitude\Negative</td>
<td>A negative opinion or a disagreement where an opinion is not shared with someone or with a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>specifying positive opinion or agreement with other stakeholders or with an idea. A shared opinion</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Nodes\Community\Community change</td>
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The next step: linking to persistent data

- QualiBank: persistent citation of sources. this extract (LINK: https://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/QualiBank/Document/?cid=q-1dba72b1-d148-40e7)
The Qualitative Election Study of Britain: Qualitative Research Using Focus Groups

Abstract

Qualitative Election Study of Britain was a qualitative investigation into people’s political attitudes before and after their vote choice for the 2010 general election. We provide a close examination of the leaders evaluation component of this much larger study to present our recommendations for good research design. By “research design”, we refer to the entire research process: from development of the research question through to reporting the results of the data analysis. Using the leaders’ evaluation component of the Qualitative Election Study of Britain as the research question, we explain and clarify the various aspects of a research design and provide examples of good research practice.
Reviewing a qualitative dataset

1. Generic project-level checks:
   - project-level metadata and consent forms are checked for legal and ethical information specified by the depositor that influences data sharing and reuse (e.g. anonymisation carried out; consent in place for data sharing; consent for disclosing participant names, ...)
   - for qualitative data (interviews, images, video) consent agreements should not preclude data sharing
   - copyright status and permissions are checked, e.g. for research where third party data have been used
   - for data collections resulting from a RCUK-funded project, that a link to the project record on the Gateway to Research is included in ‘Related resources’

2. Generic file-level checks:
   - each file opens without problems
   - file formats of data files and documentation files conform to the UK Data Archive’s recommended file formats: http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/manage-data/format/recommended-formats.aspx
   - file properties of data files contain no names of people or other disclosive information (typically the case where interviewee name has been used as file name before anonymisation)
   - access and licence have been selected in accordance with any confidentiality concerns (e.g. safeguarded data, permission access data) and documentation files are open access

http://reshare.ukdataservice.ac.uk/reshare-review-procedures/
The Research Data Journal is a digital-only open access journal, which documents deposited data sets through the publication of data papers.

Data papers are scholarly publications of medium length containing a non-technical description of a data set and putting the data in a research context. Each paper gets a persistent identifier providing publication credits to the author.

The journal concentrates on the social sciences and the humanities, covering history, archaeology, language and literature in particular. The publication languages are English and Dutch.

**Featured in volume 1:1 (2016)**

- **O. Gelderblom**: Merchants from the Southern Netherlands and the rise of the Amsterdam staplemarket (1578-1830)
- **E. Jorink (dep.)**: Correspondence of Swammerdam (1664-1879)
- **E.J. de Jager**: Reis van de Razzia: een oral history project over de moeris van Batavia
Advocacy and training

• Encourage disciplines to take note of existing good guidance on data sharing

• Guidance to include **DOING process transparency**

• Incorporate best practice in post-graduate courses

• Introduce at undergraduate level – transparency and cheating
Transparency for students

Thinking Ahead: developing good practice in data management with students

Maureen Haaker and Dr. Scott Summers of the UK Data Service reflect on their recent workshop given to second year undergraduate students at the University of Essex on research transparency and data management.

The UK Data Service’s history of advocacy and training in data management and sharing

Since the early 2000s the UK Data Archive has led the way in supporting and training researchers in the social sciences on how to create high quality data for sharing.

http://blog.ukdataservice.ac.uk/thinking-ahead-data-management/
Key issues and critiques

• How can we respond positively to transparency calls?
• What is the evidence and where should it sit?
• What are some of the issues and challenges with providing analytic transparency?
• How do publishing outlets – journals and data archives work together to solve this?
• What advocacy and training do we need and when should it start?
Questions

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