FROM INTERVIEW TO ANALYSIS: CODING ORAL HISTORY TESTIMONY AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTATION FOR ANALYSIS USING QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS SOFTWARE

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ABSTRACT

This is a working paper that will draw on the combined experiences of the research team working on the project 'The School, Work, and School to Work Transition Experiences of adolescents in NSW 1930-1954'. The intention of the paper is to render visible the research process involved in a large scale interviewing project at a critical stage in preparation for analysis. Much has been written on sound research interviewing technique but there has been less emphasis on the transformation and translation of the data. The oral history interviewing approaches of the team will be discussed, and examples of style of interview and nature of testimony will be provided in order to illuminate the difficulties and issues involved in breaking down the very complex and multi-layered nature of the data into coding categories for analysis using NU*DIST software. The procedures that were used to code the information are explained and the implications for the interpretation of the data are discussed. The project began in 1993 and expected completion date is the end of 1996.

This paper emerges out of a large scale oral history project, 'The School, Work, and School to Work Transition Experiences of Adolescents in NSW 1930-54'. Several papers have been produced which explore the background to the project, but this paper concentrates on the issues that are of concern to the research team at the current stage in the project which involves the development of a second phase of 'indexing' transcripts. The first phase, which will be outlined later, involved a form of fine-grained content analysis based on the analysis of pilot study interview transcripts plus the first one hundred interview transcripts collected for the project. The second phase is concerned with creating an indexing system that embraces those aspects of the interview best covered by the umbrella term 'speech event', i.e., the questioning strategies used, the interactive aspects of the interview and the manner of 'the telling'. In the course of detailing the derivation of the indexing categories, this paper renders visible the nature of some of the decisions being made with respect to such a project, and in particular the decisions connected to the use of NU*DIST software.

Background
This particular oral history project is methodologically unusual in several respects. It draws on a broad cross-section of school and work experience in New South Wales, Australia, and incorporates three geographical case studies; it explores, in extended semi-structured interview format, much of the context of each informant's life experience, for example, family circumstances and relationships, in order to better understand their school and work experiences; the sources of evidence include the
researchers' field
journals; and the computer analysis (still rare in non quantitative
historical work) is multi-
phase and multi-level. Historians rarely provide glimpses into how
they evaluate text and
determine what constitutes 'evidence'. However, oral historians,
because they work with

material that is constructed between two parties at some time after the
events took place,
tend to be more openly reflective about their research 'design'. As
will be shown, the use
of qualitative software allows for a more thorough and detailed
analysis. The potential of
the computer as a tool for oral history analysis is essentially
unexplored in the literature
of history, biography and oral history, but is increasingly evident in
other areas of the
'individual account' genre such as life history.

When the proposal for the project was initially submitted the
first author and chief
investigator had intended to use a traditional spreadsheet plus copy,
cut and file approach
having never used qualitative software before. Thus the research
questions and design
were already in place. The discovery of NU*DIST provided the
opportunity to fine-tune
the design, and to take a more inventive approach to the analysis than
initially conceived.
It has forced the team to be very conscious of each step in the
procedure, and this degree
of precision has heightened rather than dampened the investigators'
intuitive powers with
respect to following and identifying 'leads'. Indeed, the puzzles and
gaps in the evidence
that so typically challenge the historian are more likely to be
genuinely intriguing when
such software is employed, than to be the legacy of sloppy practice!

The interview: 'event' and process
For purposes of analysis in the youth transition project the oral
history interview is
conceptualised in the following Figure which attempts to illustrate the
interview as an
event with its own temporality, undertaken within a cultural milieu and
consisting of
interdependent elements, the boundaries of which are more integrated
than defined.
As can be seen the figure has a 'butterfly' configuration. Two
isosceles triangles (one labelled interviewee, the other interviewer) are joined tip to tip with that point of connection representing the 'interview event'. Each triangle is divided from that point into three more triangles each representing input into the interview event ('background', 'performance', 'content'). Outside the diagram, one each side, pointing to the base of the triangle, are two arrows representing 'culture', plus one arrow pointing directly at the point of connection representing 'time'.

Figure

Culture: Both interviewer and interviewee may share specific cultural attributes, but on the other hand they may bring different sub-cultural perspectives to the interview. No matter how well briefed an oral history interviewer may be the informant will be bringing more to the interview than first hand knowledge of some prior period or event. Meaningful interpretation of the interview data will depend on the degree of shared meaning, which in turn requires that the interviewer seek clarification and elaboration during the interview and validation of interpretation of the transcribed text afterward. Moreover both informant and interviewer bring the sum of their subjective 'lived' experience to the interview event. In this project particular note was taken of Briggs's point that even when one appears to share the culture of the informant, the extent of the
shared experience may be illusory. It is important to try and remain 'open', cultivating a naivete in order to render what seems obvious, alien and surprising. We all draw on myth, and researchers bring a layer of formal theoretical knowledge that can have its own mythic dimensions. Some of that myth and knowledge is 'visible' and easily recognised or challenged, other aspects are more deeply hidden. Take for example a team discussion that preceded this paper. We were discussing the fact that when we asked the sixty to eighty-year-old informants about being treated as adult or feeling grown up, the most common response was a puzzled look, and then the typical half-seriously delivered remark, 'I do not think I have ever grown up'. We knew we had to try to make sense of this and that there was something amiss. It occurred to us, a different generation, that the question made sense to us because of our experiences, but that during the 1930s and 1940s young people had a lot of different sort of freedoms and responsibilities of a type we had never experienced and which the interviews were picking up. This project is entering completely new territory, and what we brought to the interview was a different cultural perspective, much like missionaries entering a native village. As academics and educators we are knowledgeable about current issues with respect to youth. The literature on youth today abounds with references to sexual and other freedoms, and addresses questions of rites of passage and rituals associated with treatment of adulthood. The literature of the past, particularly associated with the psychology of adolescence also points to rituals and the 'passage' to adulthood. Our expectations, loaded as they were with this abundance of professional 'knowledge' generated by several generations of historians and social scientists, found expression in lines of questioning about feeling grown up, only to be confronted by mystifying forms of response. It proved an important lesson.

Time: An interview is in itself an 'event' and takes a certain
amount of time.
The time of day, time restrictions and even the need to replace the
tape after a certain
time all have some impact on that event. There are also temporal
aspects relating to the
nature of memory and the construction of a story. The informant may be
creative with
time. The literature indicates that the informant, given minimal
direction, will use a
flexible non-linear time framework whereas the historian, typically,
will be concerned to
establish the chronology of events and may then request that the
informant move
backward and forward through the recalled sequence. The very subject of
this study,
'transition', suggests a linear sequence, although it is possible that
the experiences
assumed to be connected with, and possibly defining, transition may
not parallel the
linearity of growing older in years, or moving from one grade to the
next.
Performance: The one to one interview is a process as well as an
event consisting
of a combination of elements common to both interviewer and informant.
For example,
both 'perform'. They have different motivations and expectations
resulting in different
roles and delivery. For example an informant may wish to 'instruct'
the researcher,
and/or 'help' them, and/or entertain them, and/or want to be remembered
by an as yet
unknown audience. The researcher wants information, and/or to reassure
the informant,
and/or to celebrate their life. The researcher will also be attempting
to maintain balance,
perhaps professional 'distance' or objectivity, and will not want to
judge, but to be
receptive and act accordingly. The possibilities are many. Both also
have social roles to
perform, adhering to conventions of various types from conventions with
respect to
conversation to those connected with their 'status', sex, religion and
the like.
Performance can also be embedded in delivery, such as the 'acting out'
of a story.
Background: There is an identifiable element to the interview
that can be called
'background'. Background is somewhat different to culture, content and
performance,
because it draws on preparation and utilisation of materials or a
mind-set specifically
marshalled or constructed for the interview. The oral historian brings
their specialised
knowledge of interviewing, the requirements of the project, the
'history' of the period
under study and some knowledge of the informant. The informant brings
memories
recalled in response to the questions they expect to be asked, some
knowledge of the
purpose of the study, of the nature of an interview and some knowledge
of the researcher
as established by phone, letter or other means. The informant may
'rehearse' answers.
Very often they will say they have given thought to the questions and
surprised
themselves in what they had remembered. They may study their
memorabilia and in this
project are asked to answer some questions on a survey. They may have
to strain to
remember dates and end up calculating them on the basis of events such
as the date of the
birth of a child or the date on an otherwise unrelated document. They
may ring up friend
to 'refresh' their memory or seek out a school or local history
pertinent to their own
experience of childhood. This category more than any other highlights
that the interview
is an event, unique in its construction, and in its place in the lives
of both parties. It
becomes a part of their subjective lived experience.

Content: Interviews are content-laden, there is verbal and non
verbal content -
words, gestures and facial expressions, plus silences and gaps.
Content is that element
that can be decontextualised for purposes of indexing and the
identification of themes,
but in order to fully 'understand' a segment, that segment needs to be
recontextualised
again, drawing in the whys, hows and ways of the telling.

The content is the bricks, the performance the mortar, and the
background the
scaffolding for the interview event. The aspects of time and culture
together represent
dimension, situatedness and connection with the world. All of the
above must provide the
basis for the interpretation and evaluation of oral testimony.

A great many texts provide guidance as to how to conduct an
interview and then
to do what is essentially a content analysis and evaluation based on what is usually a very 'document oriented' approach to the source. Quite a deal of attention is given to what behaviours and speech patterns to suspect. For example a person whose story is full of contradictions is seen as an unreliable informant. Ironically human lives are also full of contradictions. It may be quite possible to regard a teacher as a good teacher even if you feared them. The respondent who changes their mind or seems to want to please the researcher is seen as providing untrustworthy testimony, also the one who has a well rehearsed and polished story and will not then provide elaboration! It is only recently that a group of oral historians (mostly based in England and Europe) have reassessed the value of such testimony.

Thus the interview has the potential to provide many layers of information. The challenge for the historian is to utilise them to provide the most accurate and trustworthy reconstruction of the past in order to then facilitate interpretation and explanation.

The layer that is the easiest to start with is content in the form of text. Gaps and gestures can be signified with appropriate words and embedded where pertinent in the transcribed text. Software such as NU*DIST assists in the process by allowing searches for word strings and patterns of text. Another layer concentrates on the interactive and unique aspects of the 'event' - performance and background. The third explores the text for cultural constructs, which may well be evident in the manner of 'the telling', threads and patterns that will allow the historian to refine the first two levels of analysis or which stand alone as theoretical constructs to be tested. It is early days in the 'Youth in Transition Project' but some of the second and third layer patterns that the team are detecting and discussing during de-briefing sessions are outlined below.

Indexing the content
Included in a detailed appendix to this paper are the many indexes
(codes) developed for the content (first layer of) analysis. They were derived from the reading, and re-reading of more than one hundred transcripts and team discussion and it is expected that refinement will continue although not to any great degree. A 'node' (indexing category) called miscellaneous is the repository for any item of content not covered elsewhere. These lines or parts of lines will be re-coded toward the end of the content coding exercise. Previously the researcher utilised a spreadsheet format for coding oral history transcripts and tended to code in much larger units of text because of physical limitations - the human brain can only do so much. However, the software allows for a more fine-grained analysis as every line of text can be, and is, treated as a text unit for coding. Using such software encourages greater 'precision' in coding and also simplifies and improves coder comparison. It had always been the intention to devise as detailed a coding framework and then to code each complete transcript thereafter. NU*DIST can be as easily employed using that approach as the alternative, ie, partial coding while searching the text for 'themes'. Nonetheless, the latter would not be easy with hundreds of transcripts to code as with only a few. The second phase in the analysis of content will be to work toward more aggregated and abstract indexing units utilising a range of search commands, the most useful of appears to be the 'matrix' command. For example, one node FAMILY (see appendix) is represented by '3' and has nine siblings, eg NUMBER OF CHILDREN (3 1), TYPE (3 3), to name but two of them. These sibling nodes in turn have their own 'children' creating a tree-like hierarchical structure. Another node is WORK/EXPERIENCE RELATIONS (6 1 5) and contains two siblings. Combining these two nodes will produce a nine by two matrix and the software will indicate how many 'finds' occur in each cell and indicate the text units associated with those 'finds'. This allows the researcher to determine patterns in the content that can
then be explored further.

Revisiting the interview
In some methodological texts an attempt is made, particularly when referring to the importance of validity, to equate the qualitative researcher's competency as observer and interviewer with the robustness of the 'instruments' used by quantitative researchers. It is a poor analogy and dangerously misleading in its simplicity. An interviewer is a complex social being, bringing sets of skills, knowledge, and naturally their own personal mannerisms and cultural baggage to the interview. Their behaviour during the interview, indeed the way they respond to the informant and their own stories must be considered in the analysis because they provide another source of information. This particular project has sought to lay bare the interviewer's role in the interview event.

The interviewers in the project have a particular role to play, and goals to achieve but have no set 'script' during the interview. One reason for this is the need to concentrate on what is said and how it is said because memory and the willingness to remember are both unpredictable. The researcher has to be aware of the informant's body language (and their own for that matter) and they need to maintain eye contact where appropriate, neither of which is possible if using or taking notes.

It was evident from the some one hundred pilot interviews that for many people childhood is essentially a dim memory with some flashes of detail and emotion. These memories have very likely been maintained because of their significance to the child, and later to the adult. It was also realised that memories of schooling and early work experience were subsumed in the larger span of childhood memories and hence the interviewers should attempt to unlock that whole area in at least so far as it provided the context for the school and work experience. Thus the researchers would need to encourage reflections and memories of childhood and family life
generally to try and gain some glimpses into how children and adolescents experienced the events and feelings of their youth within the institutional frameworks of family, school and workplace.

The lack of notes and a script also bear on the interviewers' training and the philosophy of the project. With respect to the latter it is deemed important that the informant should feel at ease and enjoy the interview event. The tape recorders that are used are small and unremarkable in appearance, and the microphone leads have sufficient length to allow ease of movement and comfortable proxemics. The machines do not require power sockets, allowing further freedom and the interviewer's formal taped introduction to the interview is completed before the interview to allow an easy flow straight into the recording once the decision has been made to start.

As each informant had volunteered for the interview and had received a package of information about the process and had been contacted by phone, the researcher arrives in the expectation that the informant will have a fairly clear idea of what to expect. Pictures are also sent so that the face of the interviewer will be familiar to the informant. The interviewer arrives smartly rather than casually dressed at the informant's home, is courteous in what might be termed an 'old fashioned way', waiting to be invited in, to sit down, exchanging pleasantries and the like. The researcher then generally expresses interest in elements of the informant's history already known to them, or in 'safe' topics such as the informant's garden, memorabilia, the traffic, the proximity of the local shopping centre, the streetscape or the like, in the recognition that this early phase is a 'summing up' phase for both parties. The researchers take their lead from the informant as to the degree of familiarity acceptable, using surnames until requested to use the informant's first name. If the informant seems anxious to get started then the researcher will oblige, but nine times out of ten the informant will offer refreshments in a deliberate rather than off-the-cuff way and so this 'tea ceremony' assists in the gradual development
of rapport. The importance of the refreshments in establishing trust and in evening out the balance of power is frequently highlighted by the change in the atmosphere when the tape recorder is produced and the informant is taken from a familiar to an unfamiliar conversational situation. Other activities for the initial phase of the interview might be examining photos and memorabilia.

The researcher is playing a triple role throughout the proceedings. The first is the conventional role of guest and conversationalist, the second is that of the concerned professional researcher, alert for signs of distress or puzzlement about the project, aware of aspects of the interaction that may have significance for the analysis of the text at a later time. The third is that of historian, mentally noting points of the conversation that might have significance for the reconstruction of the past, mind working on many levels with respect to what one already knows about the period, taking note of what one might explore, determining the best strategies for eliciting information.

From the researcher's point of view the first formal step in the process of the actual interview is that associated with the examination of the brief survey form completed by the informant. The material gathered from that form is essentially nominal data: informant's name, relevant dates, names of schools attended and places of work prior to age 21. The pilot study had indicated that eliciting 'dates' caused the most disruption to the flow of an interview. However, if the material from the survey is read directly on to the tape it serves several purposes, first it solves the problem of establishing chronology on the tape (which is archived) allowing the researcher to concentrate on other information, second it allows the researcher to establish that the tape is working properly by providing an obvious break in proceedings to check. Thirdly it helps the informant to deal with 'nerves' by having a set script, and acts to jog their memory as they re-establish a focus on their past.

After the abovementioned procedure, the researcher has a brief
conversation with the informant about where they might 'start' the interview. Previous experience had shown that expecting the informant to start with their experiences at primary school and then move on in chronological sequence could cause problems, including feelings of inadequacy in both parties if there was very little to be remembered/elicited about such early days. Very often a good point of departure would have been suggested in the conversation phase preceding the interview. Thus a very typical approach is to allow the informant to start their story from the point they chose, sometimes after a brief session of contemplating alternatives offered by the researcher if the former experienced a mental block. From that time on the researcher has to keep track of the twists and turns of the interview to ensure that all pertinent ground can be covered, and that no opportunities for exploring the unexpected be lost.

The researchers are well versed in Australian education history for the period, however the main source of period knowledge guiding their interviewing comes from other transcripts (the aforementioned pilot study). However, none of the researchers 'wear' this knowledge obviously and for most of the interview adopt a naive approach in their response to what the informant says, ie, as if they have not heard the type of information before. In some cases however, the researcher judges it is necessary to display some knowledge to encourage further elaboration, or to seek a reaction. At times the informant may feel that the researcher would not understand what it was like 'back then' and thus may misinterpret what they say, or on the other hand they may simply take the position that everyone does know what they are talking about and so do not see it is necessary to elaborate. Both types of thinking are particularly evident in the area of school discipline and one indication is they provide a bare minimum. Common monosyllabic comments on teachers is that they were 'tough', 'nice', 'good or 'hard'. 
To probe further the interviewer might say: 'From what I've heard, discipline was very different then and the cane was frequently used. You said your teachers were tough, do you mean they caned?

Unless the informant is reluctant, very nervous, or their memory is very vague the first segment of the interview is typically free of much in the way of direct questions by the interviewer. However the interviewer senses when the free recall is flagging and then provides direction, picking up themes already touched on and exploring new ones. The aim is to allow the informants to tell as much of their story in their own way, even if this means that the informant draws on current experience to 'make sense' of their past experience. The researchers do not interrupt unless the informant has moved into a topic well outside that of the scope and chronological framework of the project or unless clarification is required immediately. Here the researcher's judgement is required. If a person switches to talking about their children's experience of school that topic may well be worth 'riding out' as it may help the researchers to make sense of the informant's own recollections of their schooling. Indeed questions that prompt comparison are standard repertoire for oral historians and are made use of in this project toward the end of each interview. However, if the informant moves into an area that after some time would not seem able to throw light on their past or at least the manner of their recollection the researcher interrupts and redirects at an opportune moment.

The informants are not the only ones who will consciously 'edit' during the process of the interview, the researchers have their sensitivities too and none of them want to cause distress, or jeopardise the whole interview for a few minutes of personal revelation. They are not trained therapists, and they do not wish cause harm. When one informant revealed she was raped as a young woman the chief investigator was so concerned about the anguish this might produce she gratefully engineered a change in
direction at the first opportunity after assessing whether or not it would be best to stop the interview. Another team member was also very concerned when one informant provided details of a teacher abusing the boys in his class. Interestingly both researchers decided at the time that to stop the tape would be inappropriate as the way in which the informants were telling the story showed that they had come to terms with the events of their past. Nonetheless, both researchers discussed the revelations with the informants after the taping, taking the role of editor, providing the opportunity during (as well as after) the interview event to eliminate the material from the tapes.

Will such revelatory and sensitive material be used in the analysis? The answer is yes, as it seen by the informant to be an important part of their story, however such content would not be highlighted or connected to an individual in the writing-up stage. The researchers would note the incident, even if erased from the tape, in their field notes, so it would still constitute data, albeit of a general rather than specific type, to assist in the overall interpretation.

The researchers write field notes to supplement the interview, citing their feelings about the event, and trying to capture any information that was not captured on tape but offered after, for example a typical example is where one informant merely noted she remembered a teacher on tape and then when seeing the researcher to the door described the same teacher vividly as a 'most attractive lady, tall and manly, who was a hard taskmaster and a good teacher'. The researchers are resigned to the fact they can only do their best to deal with the vagaries of memory in the interview by working hard to seek elaboration in the interview and to provide cues to assist memory, and also by collecting field notes, seeking corroboration, and comparing independent accounts of similar phenomena.

The all female research team has certain rules and conventions to follow as set by the chief investigator including manner of dress, punctuality, ethics.
requirements and
general approach to the interview, but for this paper they wrote notes
about what they
actually did or would not do. There was a high degree of
correspondence between the
points as noted in discussion afterward, and the sets of interviewer
rules turned out to be
far more complex than those initially set. They are:

a) Be professional and prepared for all contingencies, from equipment
failure to an instant
readiness to leave if the informant has a change of heart.
b) Be receptive and supportive and 'human'. It needs to be noted here
that all of the
team have the ability to relate warmly to others, and to emanate calm,
and that they also
regard these qualities as essential, and evident, no matter what.
c) Display one's genuine interest in the project and in meeting people.
d) Be prepared to talk about oneself but try and do that after the
interview.
e) Let the informants tell their own story as much as possible.
f) Try to avoid 'going "empathetic" native', ie, becoming so familiar
with the type of
information given that one falls into a pure conversational mode that
has all the hallmarks
of having lived in that era, or having experienced what the informant
is 'feeling' oneself.
The result is that interviewers might hold back a reply, but not all
the time as some
involvement is required for 'b'.
g) Try and ask the questions in a conversational way utilising as much
as possible the
protocols of conversation including turn taking, and responsive rather
than directive
questioning. This is described among group members as approximating
'having a chat'
mode.
h) Not pressing obviously sensitive areas.
i) Not supporting overtly negative statements about the self although
refraining from overt
commend during the interview
j) Not being judgemental about what one is hearing (so long as there is
no conflict with
items h and i).
k) Awareness of one's posture and one's facial expressions and verbal
and non verbal
responses. Trying to provide natural input, for example smiling or
laughing where the
informant does if it seems 'right', similarly being sombre or serious
as seems to be
l) Turn off, or wipe the tape immediately upon request.
m) Being an interviewer involves a degree of role-play but only as far as it is comfortable and appropriate. None of the team feels however, that the role they take is unethical, unpleasant or obtrusive, but that it approximates 'normality' in what is not a normal situation. Normality in this case approximates the conventions generally accepted, in our society, of friends or acquaintances sharing stories and engaging in conversation.

o) Seeking a 'balance' of power.
p) 'All care', 'all responsibility'.

Given that the interviewers have such a complex set of rules that govern relationships with their informants it is obvious that somehow this input has to be described and coded where possible so that the reader is able to judge the findings arrived at in the light of that information.

Re-thinking the analysis of oral testimony
Generally speaking, when an historian examines a document he or she will employ a set of well worn and well known questions that systematically assist in the evaluation of the trustworthiness of the source. Satisfied about its credibility they engage in an analysis of its content and identify those text sections they see as most relevant or useful in assisting them to describe and interpret the past. Much of the debate over interpretation rests on the reasons for that choice. Most academics engaged in oral history start from the premise that the bulk of the information they gather during an interview is 'suspect' in that it is filtered, fragmented and decayed and that corroboration of some kind is crucial. They are focussed on method and their set of questions about the data is more complex, than those they might use in document analysis, because they have to deal with the interview event. For a great many years the approach was to combine traditional document analysis method with awareness of interview technique and how the method of
the interview might impact on the credibility of the testimony. The perceived 'weakness' of oral data, plus a grab-bag methodology, shaped the treatment of the interview as an historical 'source' - it was seen as a form of 'corrupted' document. Moreover the transcribed testimony was often analysed more rigorously as a document than it was as an interview.

Lately the debate in oral history has moved from an emphasis on what can be safely corroborated, to what can one safely leave out of the interpretation given that the story is constructed between the historian and the informant. For example, consider a case where many informants recall the actions of a particularly strict teacher. On the one hand the 'weight' of evidence would suggest that the teacher did act in that certain way, but on the other an analysis of the way in which the information was related to the interviewer might provide reason for pause. For instance the story might be told by many people in a very similar way, even to the use of the same words.

This might suggest that the experience was not personal but collective in some way, possibly suggesting collaboration in construction or unconscious adoption and integration of a common story at the time of the event or much later. Furthermore an examination of the way in which similar content was related may show that all of those people were displaying a similar pattern of recall and that this may be related to a type of comment by the interviewer or some other feature of the event. Thus content analysis must be cross checked against other layers of analysis of information pertaining to the interview as an event - it is multi-level.

If there is a mass of interview data the content analysis in itself will have several phases, hence an earlier comment that interview analysis can be multi-level and multi-phase. For example, the appended content analysis is an early stage for all its apparent completeness. Some of the categories will be combined into new nodes as the data is
searched for patterns. Decisions thus have to be made about when to combine the different levels of data. In the authors' view, given the large numbers of interviews involved in the transition project, it is only when findings of apparent significance are detected in the content analysis that the other layers of material in the interview should be brought to bear in the interpretation and evaluation of those findings. For example, the detection of 'collective remembering' can provide a more complete understanding of the period or group under study and help avoid misinterpreting testimony, as is discussed in recent paper by the first author on the myths associated with teacher training.

To date the transcripts have not been searched intensively for speech event characteristics, but post interview debriefings, plus the literature on conversation and semantic analysis, memory theory, life history and oral history research and research interviewing practice have provided some ideas to work from. A rough outline of the working categorisations is provided in the following section of the paper, at this point they pick up on key facets of the interview event, namely temporality, interaction and storytelling.

Analysing the interview as an 'event' - Temporality
Temporality forms one possible category. The transcripts can be coded for 'temporal shift'. The shift may be introduced by the informant or the interviewer. For example the interviewer, probing for further information may want the informant to move back from current events to events that occurred in primary school some fifty years ago. The informant may be talking about a current experience and something they say will jog their memory and send them backward or forward. In addition to the 'temporal shift' there is the 'interruption'. An interruption stops the 'flow' of the interview. The interruption may be 'external', ie the telephone or the arrival of a visitor, or 'internal', ie, typically the informant gestures or asks the interviewer to stop the tape so that
they can leave the room for some physical purpose or to say something 'off the record' in confidence. A change of tape or problems with the recorder constitute a 'mechanical' interruption. There are variants of time use that are creative, ie, utilising concurrent time frames and condensation or compression of time, even venturing into mythic time. For now, this use of time will be referred to as 'creative'. Thus the categories suggested are:

TEMPORALITY
a) temporal shift (informant/researcher)
b) interruption (internal - purposive or confidential /external/mechanical)
c) creative

2. Interactive aspects
If the interview is seen as a speech event, and the philosophy of the project is to direct at times but also to collaborate conversationally with the informant, then these different modes have to be tagged in the analysis. Broadly speaking the shifts in approach can be termed 'interviewer directive and collaborative modes'.

Interviewers can initiate a completely new line of inquiry, resume an earlier line of inquiry or go with the flow and probe the topic of the minute. They also contrive to elicit a certain approach by asking questions that challenge the informant in some way, for example to be reflective about a certain issue, such as, 'how would you compare growing up in the thirties with growing up in the nineties'? When 'collaborating' the interviewer, can be 'encouraging' with such stock phrases as: 'Yes I'm very interested', 'Please go on', 'Really?'; or empathetic-supportive: 'That must have been awful!', 'How wonderful!'. Very often the responses are not words but such signifiers as laughter, shaking of the head and the like. Also as mentioned above the interviewer can 'edit', for example, to avoid getting into areas that they determine are too sensitive. Another aspect that might be regarded as editing is in the framing of questions, rephrasing, elaborating, re-defining.
INTERVIEWER MODE
a) directive (change direction/resumption/probing/contriving)

b) collaborative (encouraging/empathetic-supportive)
c) editorial (restraint/re-cast)

Just as the interviewer has a role to play and uses the responses of the informant to elaborate on that role, so the informant does the same. For example the informant seeks licence to take a certain approach in their story telling, typically asking: 'Can I tell you a story?', or guidance: 'Will it be alright to say this on tape?'. There is also an apologetic side to being an informant, concern that they haven't remembered enough and the need to be reassured that they are fulfilling their obligations. Another form of what might be termed a seeking mode is that of casting around for ideas or inspiration. Informants can also take a directive role, over-riding the researcher, ignoring questions or directions from that quarter and pressing ahead relentlessly. They may decide to change the topic entirely. Another form of directive interviewee behaviour, and such behaviours indicate power relations, is that of assessing the researcher's skills and expertise: 'Don't you know that? You're the historian!'. They too can edit the information, qualifying what they have said, correcting detail, censoring: 'I shouldn't have said that, I'm sure she was a lovely person'. Finally, the informant often acts-out a remembered event embedding dialogue or using mimicry, changing their tone of voice, posturing and the like.

INFORMANT MODE
a) directive (topic switch/over-riding/questioning)
b) seeking (licence/guidance/affirmation/inspiration)
c) editorial (qualifying/correcting/censoring)
d) acting-out (dialogue/mimicry)

Another category might be labelled 'TONE'. The interview is a very dynamic event, with many shades or tones of interaction. The 'tone' can depend on the frequency of verbal interaction, ie, can vary from the orchestrated monologue to a conversational mode, and also exhibits interpersonal dynamics. Sections of the
interview for example may represent contest, other sections, withdrawal, and yet others an easy openness. There is also another dimension, that of CHARACTER. When one person talks to another the interchange takes on a certain character, eg, humour. A person may remember everything in the past as wonderful and fulfilling - their story has a 'rosy glow'. Some informants want to reveal the past, even shock the interviewer or at least set the record straight, that is they have an agenda of some sort, even if it is just to have a good time with their visitor. Tone and character may change throughout the interview.

Some of the listed traits are evident in most interviews, although the list is by no means complete:

**TONE & CHARACTER:**

**examples of tone:**
easy
nervous
friendly
aggressive

**-----------------------------**

**examples of character:**
moralising
humorous
emotion laden
teaching/instructing
revelatory
confessing
telling both sides of the story
reflecting
setting the record straight
listing/naming
shocking
telling it like it was
rosy glow
romantic
warning/prognosticating

3. Examining themes in the storyline
One of the most interesting aspects of the interview is the construction of the story. Here is where you will find fantasy, myth, and ritual. The great majority of informants
'encapsulate' the past by simplifying the complexity of their experiences. The following is a list of phrases that signify such encapsulation:

'things were like that then'
'making do'
'times were tough'
'we didn't question then'
'it was simpler then'
'it was safe then'
'bad old days'
'good old days'
'innocent days'
'we knew our place'
'you knew where you stood'

In addition there are forms of typing and self-grouping for example:

'self reliant battlers'
'privileged'
'different'
'ordinary'
'happy'
'unhappy'
'carefree'
'fearful'

Their stories also encapsulate a sense of differential forces shaping one's life or destiny and providing momentum. These provide individuals with powerful explanations for their actions and their fate, sometimes the person notes these forces in their own words, at other times it can be inferred by the listener, for example:

FORCE, DESTINY & MOMENTUM issues of:
taking control, being controlled, freedom from control
internal direction, external direction, aimlessness - 'drifting'
luck - being a winner, being a loser
belonging, not belonging
going from:'bad to worse','good to bad','bad to good','good and getting better'
being 'stable and secure','unstable', 'unsettled, or 'on an even keel'

Such examples are prototype coding categories that as yet have to be refined and tested in the same way as the content categories in the appendix.
Is all of this still history?
This paper represents the team's first foray into the analysis and coding of those aspects of the interview that contribute to an understanding of the content, ie, they are an important element in the recontextualisation of the coded content. How can such a multi-layered analysis contribute to historical understanding? By illuminating the processes involved in interpretation and admitting new forms of evidence. An illustration is probably the best guide. After an analysis of the content the researcher may have framed some interesting hypotheses about physical punishment and transition on the basis of the 'weight' of the evidence (content of the interviews). Using NU*DIST to further explore the text sections that constitute the relevant evidence may show that all such findings emerged from interviews, or interview segments, that were moralising in 'character' and 'contestational' in tone. On the one hand, after another look at the transcripts, this may mean the line of enquiry should not be pursued because the data may actually be untrustworthy. Conversely such information about the 'manner of the telling' may elaborate on the connections discovered because it provides greater insight into the way informants made, and make, sense of what happened to them.

The combination of computer software and incorporating 'interviewer talk' in the analysis of evidence has the effect of alienating some historians, however, historians will have to come to grips with oral evidence as a key source. They will have to pay more explicit attention to the analysis of text as traditional forms of documentation are superseded by new forms. Moreover, it is inevitable that new tools and sources will bring about some change in the nature of historiography. Even now historical narratives are subject to critical interpretation from many quarters, for example to ascertain the existence of metanarratives. Historians are being challenged to examine their own interpretative frameworks and be more visible in their method.
Something will have to change in the discipline if history is to maintain its status in the academy, its relevance and also its appeal.

Among historians there is also something akin to fear in the use of oral sources because they pose so many problems for verification. Thus they are very often not seen as 'serious' sources. However, if the problem sections of the interview, ie, the interactional elements and 'story-telling' elements are treated as a useful aspect of the testimony rather than ones to be excluded, the findings could well be richer, more human, more 'in touch' with the world. Nonetheless, one final point needs to be stressed. While there is the potential for historians to become much more creative and encompass new forms of data such as myth and the human psyche, the historian's strength must continue to rest with their ability to place events in context, hence new conceptualisations and new tools should be directed to that end and must ultimately be assessed on the basis of what they can add to historical interpretation.

REFERENCES

APPENDIX HOLB94.235 AARE 1994

YOUTH AT SCHOOL AND AT WORK 1930s-50s INDEXING:

(NB: Constructed for use with NU*DIST Software)

SUMMARY OF NODES
1 DATA
1 1 site
1 2 type
   1 interview
   2 private papers
   3 official archive
   4 secondary source
   5 academic

2 DEMOGRAPHICS
2 1 gender
2 2 age
   1 1901-10
   2 1911-20
   3 1921-30
4 1931-40
5 1941-50
2 3 location
2 4 school
 1 dates
 2 type
2 5 further education
2 6 work

3 FAMILY
3 1 number of children
3 2 informants position

3 3 type
3 4 religion
3 5 parents education
3 6 parents occupation
 1 during child’s schooling
 2 outside child’s school years
3 7 siblings
 1 education
 2 occupation
3 8 family relationships
3 9 family life
 1 economic
 2 responsibilities
 3 scenes
 4 health
 5 history

4 SCHOOL
4 1 infants
 1 experiences
 2 attitudes & feelings
 3 behaviour
 4 achievement
 5 other
4 2 primary
 1 experiences
 2 attitudes & feelings
 3 behaviour
 4 achievement
 5 other
4 3 secondary
 1 experiences
 2 attitudes & feelings
 3 behaviour
 4 achievement
 5 other
4 4 to and from
4 5 family direct involvement

5 FURTHER EDUCATION
5 1 experience
5 2 attitudes and feelings
5 3 behaviour
5 4 other
5 5 achievement

6 WORK
6 1 experience
   1 job location
   2 training
   3 tasks
   4 environment
   5 relations
   6 travel
   7 wages
6 2 attitudes and feelings
6 3 behaviour
6 4 other
6 5 achievement

7 LIFE OUTSIDE FAMILY & SCHOOL
7 1 friends
7 2 money
7 3 board
7 4 events
7 5 pursuits

7 6 community scenes

8 GREAT DEPRESSION
8 1 experiences
8 2 attitudes and feelings

9 WAR
9 1 experiences
9 2 attitudes and feelings

10 RELIGION
10 1 family
10 2 scenes
10 3 school
10 4 work
10 5 own philosophy
10 6 type
11 LIFE COURSE
11 1 change
   1 school related
   2 school to work
   3 work related
   4 maturation
      1 sexuality
      2 age perception
   5 relationship related
   6 religion related
11 2 other

12 ANTICIPATION
12 1 goals
   1 development
      1 stage
      2 source
   2 other
12 2 opportunities perceived
12 3 dreams

13 PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY
13 1 thoughts on self
13 2 world view

14 ARTICULATION OF ROLES
14 1 gender
14 2 student
14 3 work
14 4 citizen
14 5 group
   1 age
   2 national
   3 religious
14 6 other

15 MISC & UNCLASSIFIED

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COMPLETE LIST OF NODES
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number of children
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informants position
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<td>Nuclear Step Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Middle / Older Sisters</td>
<td>Single Parent Father</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle / Older Both</td>
<td>Other Guardian Sibling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle / Younger Brothers</td>
<td>Other Guardian Grandparents</td>
</tr>
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<td>Middle / Younger Sisters</td>
<td>Other Guardian Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle / Younger Both</td>
<td>Extended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youngest / Older Brothers</td>
<td>None-Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youngest / Older Sisters</td>
<td>Loss Parent or Guardian Death</td>
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<td>Youngest / Older Both</td>
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<td>Youngest / Other</td>
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<td>Religious Type</td>
<td>Loss Sibling Other</td>
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religion aspects

parents or guardians education

parents or guardians occupation

parents or guardians occupation during informants schooling
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parent or guardians occupation outside of informants schooling - male
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parents or guardians occupation outside of informants schooling - female
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(3 9 3 3) /family/life/scenes/pets
family history
(3 9 4) /family/life/family history
(3 9 4 1) /family/life/family history/immediate
(3 9 4 2) /family/life/family history/distant
health
(3 9 5) /family/life/health
(3 9 5 1) /family/life/health/informants
(3 9 5 2) /family/life/health/immediate family

SCHOOL
(4) /school
infants
(4 1) /school/infants
infants experiences
(4 1 1) /school/infants/experiences
(4 1 1 1) /school/infants/experiences/subjects
(4 1 1 2) /school/infants/experiences/teaching
(4 1 1 2 1) /school/infants/experiences/teaching/discipline
(4 1 1 2 2) /school/infants/experiences/teaching/personalities
(4 1 1 2 3) /school/infants/experiences/teaching/methods
(4 1 1 3) /school/infants/experiences/environment
(4 1 1 3 1) /school/infants/experiences/environment/internal
(4 1 1 3 2) /school/infants/experiences/environment/external
(4 1 1 4) /school/infants/experiences/other
infants attitudes and feelings
(4 1 2) /school/infants/attitudes&feelings
(4 1 2 1) /school/infants/attitudes&feelings/own
(4 1 2 2) /school/infants/attitudes&feelings/others
(4 1 2 2 1) /school/infants/attitudes&feelings/others/teachers
(4 1 2 2 2) /school/infants/attitudes&feelings/others/students
(4 1 2 2 3) /school/infants/attitudes&feelings/others/family
infants behaviour
(4 1 3) /school/infants/behaviour
(4 1 3 1) /school/infants/behaviour/own
(4 1 3 2) /school/infants/behaviour/teachers
(4 1 3 2 1) /school/infants/behaviour/teachers/students
infants achievement
(4 1 4) /school/infants/achievement
(4 1 4 1) /school/infants/achievement/academic
(4 1 4 2) /school/infants/achievement/non-academic
infants other
(4 1 5) /school/infants/other

primary
(4 2) /school/primary
primary experiences
(4 2 1) /school/primary/experiences
(4 2 1 1) /school/primary/experiences/subjects
(4 2 1 2) /school/primary/experiences/teaching
(4 2 1 2 1) /school/primary/experiences/teaching/discipline
(4 2 1 2 2) /school/primary/experiences/teaching/personalities
(4 2 1 2 3) /school/primary/experiences/teaching/methods
(4 2 1 3) /school/primary/experiences/environment
(4 2 1 3 1) /school/primary/experiences/environment/internal
(4 2 1 3 2) /school/primary/experiences/environment/external
(4 2 1 4) /school/primary/experiences/other
primary attitudes and feelings
(4 2 2) /school/primary/attitudes and feelings
(4 2 2 1) /school/primary/attitudes and feelings/own
(4 3 3 2) /school/secondary/behaviour/teachers
(4 3 3 3) /school/secondary/behaviour/students

secondary achievement
(4 3 4) /school/secondary/achievement
(4 3 4 1) /school/secondary/achievement/academic
(4 3 4 1 1) /school/secondary/achievement/academic/credentials
(4 3 4 1 2) /school/secondary/achievement/academic/other
(4 3 4 2) /school/secondary/achievement/non-academic

secondary other
(4 3 5) /school/secondary/other

FURTHER EDUCATION

(5) /further education

experience
(5 1) /further education/experience
(5 1 1) /further education/experience/subjects
(5 1 2) /further education/experience/teaching
(5 1 2 1) /further education/experience/teaching/discipline
(5 1 2 2) /further education/experience/teaching/personalities
(5 1 3) /further education/experience/teaching/methods
(5 1 4) /further education/experience/environment

attitudes & feelings
(5 2) /further education/attitudes&feelings
(5 2 1) /further education/attitudes&feelings/own
(5 2 2) /further education/attitudes&feelings/others
(5 2 2 1) /further education/attitudes&feelings/others/teachers
(5 2 2 2) /further education/attitudes&feelings/others/students

behaviour
(5 3) /further education/behaviour
(5 3 1) /further education/behaviour/own
(5 3 2) /further education/behaviour/teachers
(5 3 3) /further education/behaviour/students

other
(5 4) /further education/other

achievement
(5 5) /further education/achievement
(5 5 1) /further education/achievement/academic
(5 5 1 1) /further education/achievement/academic/credentials
(5 5 1 2) /further education/achievement/academic/other
(5 5 2) /further education/achievement/non-academic

WORK
(6) /work

experience
(6 1) /work/experience

experience job location
(6 1 1) /work/experience/job location
(6 1 1 1) /work/experience/job location/self
(6 1 1 2) /work/experience/job location/parents
(6 1 1 3) /work/experience/job location/relations
(6 1 1 4) /work/experience/job location/family friend
(6 1 1 5) /work/experience/job location/school
(6 1 1 6) /work/experience/job location/counsellor or exchange

experience training
(6 1 2) /work/experience/training
(6 1 2 1) /work/experience/training/informal
(6 1 2 2) /work/experience/training/formal
(6 1 2 2 1) /work/experience/training/formal/on job
(6 1 2 2 2) /work/experience/training/formal/off job

experience tasks
(6 1 3) /work/experience/tasks

experience environment
(6 1 4) /work/experience/environment

experience relations
(6 1 5) /work/experience/relations
(6 1 5 1) /work/experience/relations/with employer
(6 1 5 2) /work/experience/relations/with other employees

experience travel
(6 1 6) /work/experience/travel

experience wages
(6 1 7) /work/experience/wages

attitudes and feelings
(6 2) /work/attitudes&feelings
(6 2 1) /work/attitudes&feelings/own
behaviour
(6 3) /work/behaviour
(6 3 1) /work/behaviour/own
(6 3 2) /work/behaviour/others

other
(6 4) /work/other

achievement
(6 5) /work/achievement
(6 5 1) /work/achievement/promotion
(6 5 2) /work/achievement/other

LIFE OUTSIDE FAMILY AND SCHOOL

(7) /life outside family & schl

(7 1) /life outside family & schl/friends
(7 2) /life outside family & schl/money
(7 3) /life outside family & schl/board
(7 4) /life outside family & schl/events

(7 5) /life outside family & schl/pursuits
(7 5 1) /life outside family & schl/pursuits/play
(7 5 2) /life outside family & schl/pursuits/sports
(7 5 3) /life outside family & schl/pursuits/entertainment
(7 5 4) /life outside family & schl/pursuits/clubs
(7 5 5) /life outside family & schl/pursuits/hobbies
(7 5 6) /life outside family & schl/pursuits/other

life outside fam and school community scenes
(7 6) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life
(7 6 1) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life/characters
(7 6 2) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life/occupations
(7 6 3) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life/social activity
(7 6 4) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life/sites
(7 6 5) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life/other
(7 6 6) /life outside family & schl/scenes of community life/politics

GREAT DEPRESSION
(8) /great depression

(8 1) /great depression/experiences
(8 1 1) /great depression/experiences/impact on school
(8 1 2) /great depression/experiences/impact on own work
(8 1 3) /great depression/experiences/impact on family
(8 1 4) /great depression/experiences/other

(8 2) /great depression/attitudes&feelings

WAR
(9) /war

(9 1) /war/experiences
(9 1 1) /war/experiences/impact on school
(9 1 2) /war/experiences/impact on own work
(9 1 3) /war/experiences/impact on family
(9 1 4) /war/experiences/other

(9 2) /war/attitudes&feelings

RELIGION
(10) /religion

religion family
(10 1) /religion/family

religion scenes
(10 2) /religion/scenes
(10 2 1) /religion/scenes/social
(10 2 1 1) /religion/scenes/social/functions
(10 2 1 2) /religion/scenes/social/organisations
(10 2 1 3) /religion/scenes/social/personalities

religion school experience
(10 3) /religion/school
(10 3 1) /religion/school/sunday
(10 3 2) /religion/school/regular school
(10 4) /religion/work
(10 5) /religion/own philosophy

religion type of experience
(10 6) /religion/type
(10 6 1) /religion/type/services attended
(10 6 2) /religion/type/references to other
LIFE COURSE

(11) /life course

change
(11 1) /life course/change

change school related
(11 1 1) /life course/change/school related
(11 1 1 1) /life course/change/school related/between classes
(11 1 1 2) /life course/change/school related/between schools
(11 1 1 2 1) /life course/change/school related/between schools/relocation
(11 1 1 2 2) /life course/change/school related/between schools/promotion

change school to work
(11 1 2) /life course/change/school to work
(11 1 3) /life course/change/work related
(11 1 3 1) /life course/change/work related/change jobs
(11 1 3 2) /life course/change/work related/change task
(11 1 3 3) /life course/change/work related/change responsibilities

change maturation
(11 1 4) /life course/change/maturation

change maturation sexuality
(11 1 4 1) /life course/change/maturation/sexuality
(11 1 4 1 1) /life course/change/maturation/sexuality/sex ed
(11 1 4 1 2) /life course/change/maturation/sexuality/self
(11 1 4 1 3) /life course/change/maturation/sexuality/others

change maturation age perception
(11 1 4 2) /life course/change/maturation/age perception
(11 1 4 2 1) /life course/change/maturation/age perception/physical
(11 1 4 2 2) /life course/change/maturation/age perception/conceptual
(11 1 4 2 3) /life course/change/maturation/age perception/behaviour
(11 1 4 2 4) /life course/change/maturation/age perception/expectations

change relationship related
(11 1 5) /life course/change/relationship related
(11 1 5 1) /life course/change/relationship related/family
(11 1 5 2) /life course/change/relationship related/marriage
(11 1 5 3) /life course/change/relationship related/other

change religion related
(11 1 6) /life course/change/religion related

decisions
(11 2) /life course/decisions
ANTICIPATION

goals

goals development

goals development stage

goals development source

goals other

opportunities perceived

dreams

PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY

thoughts on self

world view

ARTICULATION OF ROLES
gender
(14 1)  /articulation of 'roles'/gender
(14 1 1) /articulation of 'roles'/gender/self
(14 1 2) /articulation of 'roles'/gender/others

student
(14 2)  /articulation of 'roles'/student
(14 2 1) /articulation of 'roles'/student/self
(14 2 2) /articulation of 'roles'/student/others

work
(14 3)  /articulation of 'roles'/work
(14 3 1) /articulation of 'roles'/work/self
(14 3 2) /articulation of 'roles'/work/others

citizen
(14 4)  /articulation of 'roles'/citizen
(14 4 1) /articulation of 'roles'/citizen/self
(14 4 2) /articulation of 'roles'/citizen/others

group
(14 5)  /articulation of 'roles'/group

group age
(14 5 1) /articulation of 'roles'/group/age
(14 5 1 1) /articulation of 'roles'/group/age/self
(14 5 1 2) /articulation of 'roles'/group/age/others

group national
(14 5 2) /articulation of 'roles'/group/national
(14 5 2 1) /articulation of 'roles'/group/national/self
(14 5 2 2) /articulation of 'roles'/group/national/others

group religious
(14 5 3) /articulation of 'roles'/group/religious
(14 5 3 1) /articulation of 'roles'/group/religious/self
(14 5 3 2) /articulation of 'roles'/group/religious/others

other
(14 6)  /articulation of 'roles'/other

MISCELLANEOUS & UNCLASSIFIED
(15 )  /misc and unclass