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**The design and content of the 'Social participation' study:
A qualitative sub-study conducted as part of the
age 50 (2008) sweep of the National Child Development Study**

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Abstract

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Introduction

This working paper provides an overview of the design of a qualitative sub-study of 170 members of the 1958 British Birth Cohort Study, known as the National Child Development Study (NCDS) carried out in 2008-9. The aim is to provide a resource for other researchers wishing to use this data set and to reflect on the methodological advantages and disadvantages posed by conducting qualitative biographical interviews with a sub-sample of members of an existing longitudinal quantitative study. We therefore focus on the development of the topic guide, our sampling strategy, and on the characteristics of the sample that was achieved. Transcribed interviews from this project have been archived at the UK Data Archive, University of Essex so that they are available for analysis by other researchers.

Although there is currently much interest in the methodological issues in linking quantitative and qualitative data (see Elliott 2005; Bryman 2006a b & c), there is little suitable data which might permit effective linkage. Methodologically, this project represents the first attempt to interview members of a national, longitudinal cohort study in depth, with the possibility of linking such biographical narratives to structured survey data collected throughout the life course. As will be discussed in more detail below, the interviews gave individuals a chance to provide their own account of their 'life story' and to reflect on different aspects of their identity. We decided to focus substantively on respondents' accounts of social participation, an area of great topical interest, but where research is currently focused around cross-sectional surveys. The new data we collected therefore allows for exploration of the dynamic, life course forces which facilitate or restrict various kinds of participation.

Issues of quality in qualitative and mixed methods research - methodological considerations

There are three major methodological advantages of designing a mixed methods project in which members of an existing longitudinal study, that collects mainly standardised or 'quantitative' data in a systematic way, are recruited for qualitative, in-depth biographical interviews.

First the quantitative data from the longitudinal study makes it possible to identify specific groups of respondents that are of substantive interest to interview in more depth. For example, groups that are a small minority in the population as a whole (e.g. in the context of the current project, those who are downwardly mobile) can be identified and specifically targeted for interview. In addition, the longitudinal nature of the quantitative data makes it possible to identify a group based on a specific life-time trajectory rather than on current characteristics measured at a single time point.

Second the process of inviting individuals for qualitative interview from a much larger sample with known characteristics makes it possible to say something about those potential respondents who were either unavailable for interview, or who explicitly declined to be interviewed. We will therefore also make an explicit comparison between those who agreed to the qualitative interview and those who declined in order to understand more about the nature of our sample. As Noy (2008) has argued, sampling is often overlooked in the context of qualitative research as being perhaps the 'least sexy' aspect of the qualitative research process. Indeed many approaches to sampling adopted by qualitative researchers (e.g. snowball sampling, theoretical sampling, quota sampling, convenience sampling and the use of case

studies) make it very difficult, if not impossible, to say anything about the achieved sample in comparison with the 'target sample' of potential interviewees[i]. Furthermore, there is evidence that many social researchers believe that 'generalisability' is not relevant in relation to assessing the quality of qualitative research (Bryman et al 2008, find only 30.7% of researchers stating that generalisability is relevant in qualitative research). However, it is important for qualitative researchers to consider how their models or findings might be different if those who refused to participate had talked to them (Groger et al, 1999). As Groger et al argue: 'Because as qualitative researchers we focus on meaning, we tend to be satisfied with the meaningful utterances of our informants. Although we agree that generalizability should not be a major concern in qualitative research, we do believe that the idea of tapping the full range of variation of a given phenomenon implies some desire for generalizability. (p 834 Groger et al 1999). In the context of the current research project, there is a great deal of detailed longitudinal information about all the potential respondents and this makes it possible not only to look at how characteristics such as gender and social class may be associated with individuals' preparedness to take part in the study, but also to examine whether measures of well-being and personality type appear to have an impact.

Thirdly, qualitative interviews allow us to explore much more satisfactorily the extent to which respondent's own stories and accounts – as elicited through semi-structured means - are effectively captured by the structured survey questions which they have responded to previously. Researchers are thus able to assess possible biases and limitations of survey questions and can develop strategies to improve questionnaire design.

This working paper starts with a brief summary of the background to the NCDS before discussing in more detail the substantive and methodological aspects of the qualitative sub-study carried out in 2008-9. The second section of the paper therefore describes in detail the development of the topic guide, and the third section focuses on the sampling procedures used and the factors associated with whether cohort members agreed to participate in the study.

Background: NCDS

The 1958 British birth cohort study, known as the National Child Development Study (NCDS), started out as a single wave Perinatal Mortality Survey. There were over 17,000 children in this birth cohort in Great Britain, all of whom were eligible for comprehensive follow-up. This occurred as funding permitted, at ages 7, 11, 16, 23, 33, 42 and 46 years. In addition at age 42/43 a biomedical survey of cohort members was carried out by specially-trained research nurses. In childhood, information came from interviews with parents and teachers, from medical examinations on the whole cohort, while the children themselves underwent educational tests. From age 16, the cohort members themselves were interviewed, and their examination results, and other qualifications over the years, were added to the record. Adult sweeps have collected data in domains including physical and mental health, demographic circumstances, employment, housing, attitudes, and social participation. There has inevitably been some attrition due to lost contact; refusals; emigration and death, but response rates remain high. The adult surveys each include information on approximately 11,000 individuals who are still participating in the survey (Plewis *et al.* 2004).

Background to the qualitative sub-study study

As highlighted above, the qualitative sub-study of NCDS cohort members at age 50 focussed primarily on the substantive area of social participation. Questions about whether, and why, social participation is declining in Britain have become central to debates on inequality in recent years, inspired by public and academic concerns about falling levels of social capital in

modern Britain (see Halpern 2005). Most British research argues against the view associated with Robert Putnam that there has been a major decline of social capital similar to that reported for the United States (Putnam 2000). Although some voluntary associations (notably trade unions and working men's clubs) have declined in membership, others such as environmental associations and sports and leisure clubs have increased. Informal networks remain relatively strong, and although electoral turnout has fallen and formal political participation declined, Pattie et al (2004) conclude that there have actually been increases in informal action, for instance boycotting certain kinds of consumer goods, signing petitions, etc. Halpern's (2005: 212, 216) careful review of much of the evidence argues that there is evidence of 'decline, albeit a decline that has been uneven across the social classes', where we should place 'the UK's middle classes in a category of gently rising social capital and the manual classes in a category of falling sharply'.

In these debates about the possible decline of social capital, cohort studies have been used to compare trends between generations, but have been little used to study change through the lifecourse. Thus Ferri, Bynner and Wadsworth (2003) present data from the 1946, 1958 and 1970 British Birth Cohort Studies showing considerable decline in participation in membership of a selection of voluntary associations between cohorts at equivalent ages. The British Household Panel Study (BHPS) has been used to examine individuals' changing associational membership year by year (Warde et al 2003), but is limited by its relatively short time span, and by the relatively small sample sizes for individuals in specific age groups. We therefore know very little from survey evidence about the individual level factors which affect people's involvement over time: why do some people remain consistently involved? Why do some people stop being involved? Why do some people start being involved?

The structured survey data collected as part of the age 50 sweep of the National Child Development Study (NCDS) together with information from biographical interviews with a sub-sample of the cohort, provides an opportunity to conduct a thorough exploration of the individual dynamics of those active and inactive, and those who *become* active and inactive.

Qualitative data, especially that collected as part of social movement research has been demonstrated to provide valuable insights in previous research. The American sociologist Doug McAdam points to the role of key formative experiences in generating 'activist identities'(McAdam 2000). People may either be encouraged to be active, or alternatively dissuaded from activism, by specific engaging or harrowing, possibly 'one-off' experiences. More generally, people's involvement is closely tied to their own sense of identity, their perception of their social role, and what kinds of participation flow from this (Preston, 2004). The qualitative interviews therefore focus substantively on individual identity and give cohort members a chance to provide their own narratives on engagement, linking these to broader accounts of their social ties and relationships, as well as the circumstances of their life histories.

These in-depth interviews therefore allow us to examine whether people can identify key experiences that have impacted on their level of social participation. We are able to link people's accounts with data collected in previous waves and assess whether there appear to be certain forms of 'patterning' which link the accounts collected qualitatively with variables collected in earlier waves. In particular, use of the life history data from NCDS - including work histories, relationship histories and fertility histories - enable us to take a life course perspective on social participation and to investigate how changes in different life domains may impact on an individual's participation in social activities such as membership of voluntary groups etc. 170 interviews are sufficient to define certain 'types' of narrative so that the extent to which these overlap with variables can be empirically assessed.

In recent years, there has been much discussion of the bias of survey sources to measuring more formal kinds of engagement, and the possibility that this neglects less organised kinds of participation (see Bennett et al 2009). We are able to use qualitative interviews to gain a fuller understanding of how different individuals conceptualise social participation, and the kinds of activities which are meaningful to them, and hence to uncover forms of social participation that are not routinely measured in survey research. Our information can then be used to inform the design of quantitative studies focusing on this topic in the future and possibly correct biases in current research on social capital.

In order to collect qualitative information on social participation, social integration and identity from a sub-sample of cohort members a topic guide was developed with six main parts:

1) Neighbourhood and belonging

2) Leisure activities and social participation

3) personal communities

4) life history

5) identity

6) Reflections on being part of the NCDS

While these sections of the guide deal with ostensibly separate themes, in practice we found a degree of overlap and cross-referencing during interviews between the discussions of neighbourhood, friendship and life trajectories in particular. The full Topic Guide is provided as Appendix 3 of this working paper. The following section of the paper provides a more detailed description of how the topic guide for the qualitative interviews was developed and piloted. We then go on to discuss the sampling strategy adopted.

Developing and piloting the topic guide

The interviews were conducted on the basis of a semi-structured topic guide, which in its final configuration contained a total of 31 questions. The design of the topic guide was influenced by several considerations. Intellectually, our prime concern was to elicit responses that would illuminate the core issues and debates around participation and identity outlined above, articulated particularly through the lenses of life-course and intergenerational mobility. However, we also wanted the interviews to be useful to investigators working across a broader range of sociologically relevant themes and subject areas. Given that our interview sample was drawn from the NCDS, it was important that we not only thought in terms of filling gaps in our understanding of participation stemming from the limited coverage of this particular issue in the quantitative waves of the Study but that we tried to establish multiple links with the main study data. Also that we use the opportunity to explore and obtain feedback on the very particular form of participation that is implied by long-term membership of a cohort study like the NDCS. In terms of our approach, as well as collecting information on practices, attitudes and the details of personal life histories, we also wanted to examine how participation and identity were discursively constructed by Cohort Members. This required a careful wording of questions and timing of prompts in order to allow space for and encourage unstructured responses. Lastly, we needed to work within our own parameters of time and resource, which meant balancing out the desired coverage of subject areas with a time limit of approximately 90 minutes per interview.

The topic guide was built up over several months through an iterative process of development and review. This began with a research team review and discussion of the key literatures in research on participation and identity, such as those informing the debates on social and cultural capital. In order to be able to link our study with previous work, we decided to root our guide in the question frame established by Savage and his colleagues for their study of *Globalisation and Belonging* (2005) and the development of this frame by Miles in his qualitative study of the users and non users of cultural institutions in Manchester (Miles and Sullivan 2010). This was then augmented through the incorporation and adaptation of lines of questioning from other qualitative studies, such as Spencer and Pahl's work on friendship (2006) and the ESRC Timescapes project (http://www.timescapes.leeds.ac.uk/).

The initial 'pilot' topic guide was developed between January and May 2008. This was tested in the field in a series of seven pilot interviews with Cohort Members across the three sampling regions in June 2008. Each member of the research team was involved in this process, carrying out their own interviews and reading critically those conducted by others. This resulted in a thorough account of how well different parts of the draft guide had worked and where revision might be needed. The pilot interviews resulted in a number of changes to the draft guide. As well as the addition, dropping, replacement and splitting of particular questions this included the specification of mandatory prompts, words and phrases and the inclusion of detailed instructions to interviewers about how to use the guide. A central aim of the research was to collect reasonably consistent data across the 170 interviews so that information obtained can be analyzed in conjunction with quantitative longitudinal data from NCDS. It was therefore important that all questions in the topic guide were covered consistently. 'Must-use' words or compulsory phrases were highlighted in **'bold'** in the topic guide. Other questions could be paraphrased or reworded to help build rapport and make the interview as natural and conversational as possible. This new draft was then circulated to our Advisory Group and amongst our team of assistant interviewers for comments and suggestions. It was also presented for public discussion at the 2008 ESRC Methods Festivals and at several other meetings and seminars. Lastly, on completion of the first phase of the main study, amounting to 30 completed interviews, the resulting 'final' version of the topic guide was subjected to one further operational review, during which a small number of mostly minor amendments were made. We now discuss the questions in more detail.

The first section of the topic guide, on **<u>neighbourhood and belonging</u>**, is designed to tap participation and involvement in neighbourhood activities and establish their significance. It is placed first to help put interviewees at their ease, as the questions are not threatening and usually evoke reflective responses, and to literally 'locate' the Cohort member in terms of their housing and migration histories. Its questions probe the shaping and substance of trust through neighbouring, which is a core concern of the social capital literature. This has been shown to have different effects to more familiar measures of participation, such as voluntary association membership, in that it can be in more deprived but more supportive neighbourhoods where these effects are more apparent (Li et al 2005). The questions are also designed to explore the balance between pragmatic and symbolic investment in place and as such to test out the wider application of Savage et al's (2005) critique of the globalisation thesis at the centre of which is their concept of 'elective belonging' (in which individuals care passionately about where they live for symbolic reasons, but do not necessarily engage extensively with neighbours or join local associations).

This first section underwent some small modifications as a result of the piloting of the topic guide. The main change concerned the dropping of a question about what respondents liked or disliked about living in the area because this was coming up under earlier questions and the addition of another about what their 'ideal' house would be like and where it would be located (drawn in part from its effective use in the *Cultural Capital and Social Exclusion* study on which Savage had been involved).

In Section 2 on **Leisure Activities and Social Participation** , our aim was to encourage Cohort Members to define and describe participation in their own terms, rather than by any established criteria or predetermined definition of what social and cultural participation might comprise. This relates to our interest in the nature and significance of everyday or mundane engagements and associations, which are often excluded from view in 'official' accounts of civic and cultural participation (Bennett et al 2009). We did this by asking them in the first instance to recall and explain what spare time activities they had engaged in over the past week and weekend and how typical that pattern was. If not mentioned, we then went on to ask about more formal, organised types of participation, of the kinds regularly asked about in the NCDS survey, so allowing for cross-referencing with the quantitative life history record, which we also furnished by asking respondents how their interests had changed over time. Finally, in order to be able to address arguments about the rise of 'the leisure society' and the privatisation of leisure we asked questions about overlap between leisure time, family life and work.

This section worked relatively well, such that few post-pilot revisions were required. We refined the questions about overlap and compartmentalisation to make them clearer and put more emphasis on probing for notions of work/life balance here. We also added a prompt about subscriptions to causes under the question about involvement in voluntary work.

The section on '**Friendships**' was included to ensure we have full data on informal social ties and networks to set alongside more formal involvements. It was adapted from Spencer and Pahl (2006), who were interested in developing understanding of personal communities as sites for the production and articulation of social capital. It begins with respondents being asked to map their friendships on a ring diagram, placing in relation to the centre of the diagram according to their importance. This exercise was partly introduced at this point to help break up the interview and the experience of the pilots confirmed its usefulness in this way as well as for the information it provided. Cohort Members were encouraged to discuss the process as they went about filling in the diagram and were then asked a series of questions about their relationship to the people they had included and its significance.

Although this section worked relatively well in piloting, it was decided to convert a number of the direct follow up questions into prompts because they tended to be covered by respondents during the completion of the diagram. It also became clear that the process of visually representing relationships by means of a diagram does not always translate so well into a recording, so instructions to interviewers for annotating the diagram were added to the guide. Finally, we decided to develop this section a little further by adding two specific 'locating' questions about personal relationships, one about how and with whom time was spent at Christmas-time, the other asking which member of the respondent's personal community was relied on most for emotional support.

In Section 4, Cohort Members are given up to half an hour to recount their '**life story'** as they see it. This is set up in the form of an open and unformatted invitation as we are interested as much in how people construct an account of their life course as the specific detail, with each providing points of reference and comparison with the respondents' mobility profile and their life trajectories as represented in the main waves of the panel survey. Here then the idea is to distil and locate, socially and culturally, the types of story being told: active or passive accounts, survival or achievement narratives, and so on. Only if, after ten minutes or so, respondents really struggle to give any kind of account, do we revert to a series of questions – converted into prompts after the pilots – which ask about specific periods of the Cohort Member's life. Having completed their accounts, respondents are asked to identify the key influences and turning points in their life. The section then ends with a second practical exercise, in which they are asked to choose which from a series of 'life diagrams' (taken from Ville and Guérin-Pace 2005) best represents their own trajectory, or if none are applicable, to draw one of their own. Apart from a series of instructions and prompts to make the aims and

desired approach of this section clear to interviewers, the only post-pilot changes to this section concerned minor amendments to the wording of questions. This section worked particularly well, and provided some very rich accounts of cohort members lives and experiences that will be of major value for future researchers and offers a very rich set of accounts of how a large sample of 50 year olds view their lives retrospectively.

Section 5, on **Identities**, was the least developed at the pilot stage, partly because of the complex, inchoate and contested notion of 'identity' itself and partly because of the lack of pre-existing models for this subject in qualitative interviewing on which to build. It was therefore the section that subsequently underwent the most revision and elaboration. Although there were fears about straying into the territory of psychology, it was felt important to begin this section without imposing any categories of identification, so in the first place respondents were asked how they defined and described themselves and how they thought others saw them. They were then asked whether they felt they belonged to a social class and whether they felt any sense of national identity.

Our experience of the pilot interviews led us to cut the self-definition questions down to just one and to expand the list of sociological categories for identity that we employed. In order to reflect the fact that this group had recently reached the age of 50 and had all lived through a distinctive, and in some ways remarkable, period in British history, we therefore added a question about sense of generational identity. In a further reference to the age these people had reached, and wishing to provide a link to the original health-related concerns of the NCDS, we also asked about the benefits and drawbacks of being 50 years old. One of the most notable features of the pilots was the strong profile of work and work-related concerns emanating from Cohort Members' narratives. We therefore followed the question about class belonging with one about the shaping of identity by occupation or working life. We also decided to include gender, the one remaining core sociological category for identity that was missing, and, as we found, one of the most difficult to construct identity questions around. We resolved this by asking respondents how important being a woman/man was to their sense of self and then, using a third, 'Gender and Identity', diagram, by asking them to place themselves on a line representing a spectrum between the two poles of 'Male' and 'Female'.

The final section of the topic guide asks about **membership of the NCDS**. In many ways this was the least problematic of the sections to design because one of its main aims was simply survey evaluation and development: to understand Cohort Members' experience of being in the study and to provide an opportunity for feedback on how this might be improved in the future. The more critical component of this section concerned the development of questions around the 'Hawthorne Effect' (Landsberger 1958), in other words trying to distil how far membership of the Study itself might have affected Cohort Members' sense of self-identity and whether this might in turn be impacting on the way they behave and respond as participants. This section changed little as a result of piloting and mainly in the form of prompts being turned into direct questions.

As an additional five interviewers were recruited for the main fieldwork, the project team also developed interviewer protocols and guidelines for dealing with disclosures or other potentially uncomfortable or difficult situations within an interview. We reflected extensively on how much to identify or share with a participant, in particular how this may shape the remaining interview in terms of value to the data archive and issues of confidentiality[ii].

As mentioned above, the final version of the topic guide was subjected to one more review during the study proper when the five assistant interviewers had completed their first five interviews and the research team had read the transcriptions of these interviews. At this point, with practice, all interviewers felt that the guide was working well. The main areas of difficulty for them concerned respondents covering ground on the subject of one section in another, which sometimes caused problems with continuity and repetition, the asking of

mandatory questions on formal associational activities, when these might already have been mentioned in respondents' accounts of their leisure activities over the past week, the question on self-identification at the top of Section 4, which some respondents struggled with and became self-conscious about, and the terse responses of some male respondents to the questions on gender identity.

Only very minor changes to the guide itself were made at this point, for example, adding prompts to give respondents reference points, as in Section 2, Question 10 about the development of their interests over time, and to make sure influential people as well events were talked about in the question about turning points in the 'Life Stories and Trajectories' section. The poles of 'Gender and Identity' diagram were also changed from 'Male' and 'Female' to 'M' and 'F', this because the relevant question here asks about masculinity and femininity and it was felt that such a re-labelling, being less directive, would give interviewees more scope to respond.

Instead, more emphasis was placed on the way the guide was being used and the need to ensure consistency of coverage across all questions and mandatory prompts. The importance of allowing Cohort Members enough space to set their own agenda and talk about the events and experiences that they raised as particularly significant was stressed. Here interviewers were asked, in particular, to encourage respondents to elaborate about the impact of any dramatic, life changing or sensitive issues that were raised, such as moments of personal and family crisis. In a similar vein, interviewers were asked draw respondents out more on the meanings and interpretation behind very brief and more categorical responses.

Interviewer characteristics

The interviews were carried out by a team of seven interviewers, two of whom (Andrew Miles and Sam Parsons) were part of the core team and the other five were experienced qualitative interviewers recruited specifically to conduct the qualitative interviews. Each interviewer conducted between 19 and 34 interviews. A very brief summary of the characteristics of the interviewers is provided in Appendix 1. There is already a considerable literature on the impact of interviewer characteristics on research interviews and it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this in detail. However, our aim was to recruit interviewers who were close to cohort members in age as a strategy for helping to build rapport.

Sample Design

The use of an existing large scale longitudinal study as the basis for a qualitative study of a subsample of participants provides the potential for sophisticated stratified or theoretical sampling based upon known characteristics of the target sample. However, there is a tension between constructing a very specific sample that will be of particular interest for the study of a narrowly specified substantive topic, and the need to produce data from a, broadly representative, range of respondents that can then form a resource for subsequent analysis by future researchers. To best meet the central aims of the project, the sample was stratified on two main criteria; geographic location and social mobility. In addition, an attempt was made to take account of the 'Mosaic' profile characteristics of where cohort members lived, and to ensure that the Mosaic profile of the sample of interviews broadly matched the Mosaic profile of the total sample of cohort members living in each region. The aim was to interview 180 cohort members, living in selected locations, within three geographic regions across Great Britain: the North West and South East of England and also within Scotland[iii]. The target sample of Cohort members was selected to reflect the Mosaic profile of cohort members living within the three geographic regions, with 60 interviews planned for each region. We also aimed to achieve a balance between men and women. The sample was stratified by social mobility with the aim of conducting sufficient interviews with upwardly mobile, downwardly

mobile, stable 'service class' and stable non-service class individuals to make some qualitative comparisons. Further information about this is provided below, with full details of the derivation of the social mobility variables provided in Appendix 2. In addition we describe below how the sample can be weighted to counteract the impact of stratifying the sample by social mobility rather than taking a random sample from the cohort.

Social Mobility

Social mobility is a sociological concept that encapsulates the degree to which an individual's, or family's, social status changes throughout the course of their life as they navigate a social hierarchy. Following the influential 'class structural' perspective (e.g. Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992), we operationalise this as the degree to which an individual moves up and down the social class system, based on their occupational class at the key points of measurement. For example, an individual's own occupation at a point in time and their parent's occupation at an earlier time in their childhood. We also adopted Goldthorpe's influential analysis of the class structure, which distinguishes a professional-managerial 'service class' from an intermediate and working class.

For the current project, the social mobility of each cohort member was captured by their father's occupation when they were 16 (in 1974) and their own occupation at age 46 (2004), the latest information available when the interviews were being planned. To minimise data loss, if a cohort member had not participated, or had not provided occupation information at age 46, information was taken from the age 42 survey. Likewise, if there was no information recorded about their father's occupation when the cohort member was 16, we used information from when they were age 11.[iv] A detailed account of the derivation of the social mobility variable is provided as Appendix 2. The focus on father's occupation when the cohort member was aged 16, in 1974, as the best proxy for social class of origin, is to ensure that fathers were likely to have reached the peak of their occupational careers. Analysis showed that the average age of cohort members' fathers when cohort members were 16 was 46.6 years (with a standard deviation of 6.5 years).This also neatly matches with the age and employment trajectory of cohort members when we look at their own occupation in the last survey at age 46. Although we are sympathetic to approaches which recognise the paid employment of mothers is also significant to a household's class position, we were confident that in 1974 this would not have had a major influence on many cohort members.

A simple two-class occupation classification, based on Socio Economic Group, was used to profile the social mobility of NCDS cohort members between age 16 and age 46. This resulted in four categories: a) the stable service class, (b) upwardly mobile into the service class, c) downwardly mobile from the service class, and d) the stable other (working class). Figure 1 shows the social mobility profile of the NCDS cohort members who participated at age 16 (or 11) and age 46 (or 42). The longitudinal sample size was 9,328. Given this distribution, a random sample of 180 cohort members would be expected to yield just 14 cohort members in the downwardly mobile group and 19 cohort members in the Stable Service Class. A stratified sample was therefore taken with 30 in each of these two groups and 60 in each of the larger groups of upwardly-mobile cohort members and cohort members in the 'Stable other' category. This ensures sufficient cases in each category for comparative analysis.

Figure 1: Social Mobility Profile of NCDS cohort members (age 16 to age 46)
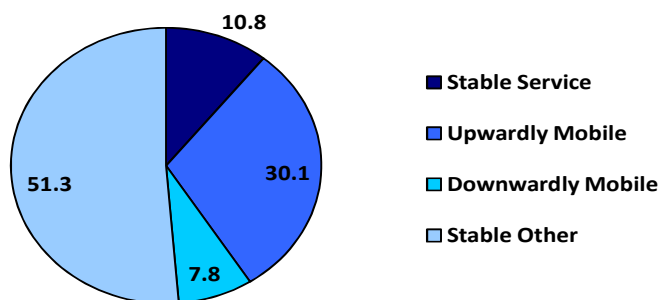
Mosaic Classification

The Mosaic classification[v] paints a rich picture of UK households (consumers) in terms of their socio-demographic profile, lifestyles, culture and behaviour. In total, information held in 400 variables from a variety of data sources has been used to build Mosaic. The information covered includes

- Demographics (i.e. household demographics, population movement, health, background and beliefs)

- Socio-economics and consumption (i.e. occupation, industry, employment status, qualifications, socio-economic status, cars and transport, product and media)

- Financial Measures (i.e. directorships, shareholdings, bad debt, credit behaviour)

- Property Characteristics (i.e. housing age, second residencies, amenities, tenure, building)

- Property Value (i.e. council tax band, property value, property sales)

- Location (i.e. accessibility, rurality, urbanisation, islands)

With this classification, each household within the UK is defined as one of 61 types within 11 groups. The 11 main Mosaic groups are Symbols of success, Happy Families, Suburban Comfort, Ties of Community, Urban Intelligence, Welfare Borderline, Municipal Dependency, Blue Collar Enterprise, Twilight Subsistence, Grey Perspectives and Rural Isolation. This information is available to match onto address information in other data sources. We therefore used postcodes to attach the Mosaic classification to the addresses of NCDS cohort members who participated in the 2004 survey. Table 1 gives the distribution of cohort members by their Mosaic classification in each of the three selected regions. It can be seen that, in each region, cohort members tend to be concentrated in five or six main groups, but that there are some clear differences in the Mosaic profile by region. For example, in the North West, 83.4% of the cohort members are concentrated in the following five groups: Suburban Comfort; Ties of community; Happy families; Symbols of success and Blue collar enterprise. In the South East the cohort members are slightly less concentrated, with 85.6% of the cohort in *six* separate groups: Symbols of success; Suburban comfort; Happy families;

Ties of community; Urban intelligence and Blue Collar enterprise. Scotland is even more heterogeneous, with 77.9% of cohort members in six groups: Happy Families; Blue collar enterprise; Symbols of success; Suburban Comfort; Rural isolation; and Ties of Community. This means that the North West Region is more characterised by 'Ties of Community' than the other two regions (although Suburban Comfort is still the modal category), the South East is characterised by high numbers living in areas characterised as 'Symbols of Success' and 'Urban intelligence' and Scotland is characterised by high proportions in the groups 'Blue Collar Enterprise' and 'Rural Isolation'.

Table 1: Mosaic group for NCDS cohort members in three regions in Great Britain based on address at age 46 (2004)

	North West %	South East %	Scotland %	% of UK households in each group from Experian
Symbols of success	**15.0**	**22.9**	**13.4**	9.62
Happy Families	**15.3**	**16.0**	**19.2**	10.77
Suburban Comfort	**23.4**	**22.0**	**11.9**	15.10
Ties of Community	**22.3**	**9.3**	**7.7**	16.04
Urban Intelligence	1.8	**7.7**	2.6	7.19
Welfare Borderline	1.5	2.0	4.8	6.43
Municipal Dependency	5.6	0.7	4.9	6.71
Blue Collar Enterprise	**7.4**	**7.7**	**16.7**	11.01
Twilight Subsistence	1.1	1.1	4.1	3.88
Grey Perspectives	4.0	6.1	5.5	7.88
Rural Isolation	2.5	4.3	**9.0**	5.39
Not coded[1]	0.1	0.3	0.3	
N(100%)	*799*	*2330*	*689*	

[1]*Full postcode was not provided.*

Timing of interviews

The latest round of data collection for members of the 1958 National Child Development Study (NCDS) was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) between 11th August 2008 and 18th May 2009, when the majority of cohort members were age 50. [vi] A total of 9790 cohort members were interviewed, with 890 living in the selected locations within the three geographic areas. The aim was to ensure that all cohort members selected into the qualitative 'Social Participation' study had already taken part in the main quantitative study. In addition the plan was for the qualitative interviews to take place within six months of an individual's main quantitative interview. To this end, the sample was drawn on four separate occasions: September 2008, December 2008, March 2009 and June 2009 and the qualitative interviews were carried out between November 2008 and August 2009.

Achieved sample

In order to address the questions raised in the introduction, about the quality and generalisability of qualitative research, the next section of the paper focuses first on the key predictors of response to the qualitative sub-study. We then go on to assess the representativeness of the achieved sample, and in particular to evaluate the impact of the stratified nature of the sample.

In summary, the response rate to the qualitative sub-study was 71% - 238 cohort members were contacted and 170 interviews were completed. A total of 40 cohort members (17%) refused (including some who initially agreed but then cancelled or were not in at time of interview) and 28 (12%) were not contactable – either they had very recently moved, the phone numbers were not valid, or the interviewer only left messages and never actually spoke to the cohort member.

Reasons for refusal

As has been highlighted above it is unusual in qualitative studies to focus on 'response rates' or refusal rates. However given the unique methodological approach taken in this study of conducting biographical qualitative interviews with individuals who are part of an on-going longitudinal quantitative study, we are able to document the reasons given for not taking part. In summary, 17 of the 40 (42.5%) cohort members who refused an interview stated they were too busy (this included cancelled interviews which when re-contacted said were too busy); 13 of the 40 (32.5%) just straightforwardly refused or cited other reasons (family illness; mother ill); 6 (15%) said they felt it was 'too soon' after the previous interview or cited 'survey overload'; and 4 (10%) cancelled interviews and the interviewer was unable to make further contact.

A good gender balance was achieved in the final qualitative sample, with 86 men and 84 women interviewed. However, against expectation (Shepherd, 1993; Elliott and Shepherd, 2006), table 2a shows that response rates were somewhat higher for men than women: 78.2% men compared to 65.6% women and this was largely due to a higher refusal rate among women. Also against expectation, table 2b shows that the Downwardly Mobile group were the most likely to agree to be interviewed (81.8%) - the least likely were the 'Stable Other' group (67.9%) i.e. those whose fathers were not in the service class when they were aged 16 and where the cohort member was also not in the service class at age 46.

Table 2a: interview outcomes by gender

	Men	*Women*	*All*
Interviewed	78.2%	65.6%	71.4%
Refused	10.0%	22.7%	16.8%
Non Contact	11.8%	11.7%	11.8%
N(100%)	*110*	*128*	*238*

Table 2b: interview outcomes by social mobility profile

	Stable Service	*Upwardly Mobile*	*Downwardly Mobile*	*Stable Other*	*All*
Interviewed	71.8%	70.7%	81.8%	67.9%	71.4%
Refused	15.4%	17.1%	6.1%	21.4%	16.8%
Non Contact	12.8%	12.2%	12.1%	10.7%	11.8%
N(100%)	*39*	*82*	*33*	*84*	*238*

To investigate whether gender or social mobility was more likely to lead to participation in the study, and whether the observed differences reported above are statistically significant, a simple logistic regression was carried out using participation in the qualitative study as a dichotomous dependent variable. This showed that men were significantly more likely to participate than women (odds ratio 1.85, p= .041) but that there was no significant difference by social mobility profile. The final sample by gender and social mobility is given in table 3, and this also provides an overview of the mosaic profile of the geographical areas where respondents lived. Focusing first on gender and social mobility, it can be seen that there is a good balance of men and women in the two larger groups of upwardly mobile and stable working-class cohort members. However, men are somewhat over-represented in the Stable service class, and women are somewhat over represented in the downwardly mobile group.

Table 3: Total number of interviews by Mobility and Mosaic profile

	Stable Service	Upwardly Mobile	Downwardly Mobile	Stable Other	ALL
1. Symbols of success	12 (8-3)	14 (10-4)	4 (2-3)	7 (3-4)	37 (23-14)
2. Happy Families	2 (1-1)	12 (4-7)	8 (2-5)	6 (2-6)	28 (9-19)
3. Suburban Comfort	6 (5-0)	11 (7-4)	2 (1-1)	12 (6-5)	31 (19-10)
4. Ties of Community	3 (1-4)	8 (2-5)	3 (0-3)	9 (6-3)	23 (9-15)
5. Urban Intelligence	1 (1-0)	3 (2-0)	3 (1-2)	2 (2-0)	9 (6-2)
6. Welfare Borderline	0	0	2 (2-0)	3 (0-3)	5 (2-3)
7. Municipal Dependency	0	1 (0-1)	1 (0-0)	3 (3-0)	5 (3-1)
8. Blue Collar Enterprise	0	6 (1-3)	4 (1-3)	6 (3-3)	16 (5-9)
9. Twilight Subsistence	0	1 (0-1)	1 (1-0)	1 (0-1)	3 (1-2)
10. Grey Perspectives	3 (0-2)	3 (3-1)	0	6 (4-2)	12 (7-5)
11. Rural Isolation	1 (0-1)	2 (2-1)	0	6 (0-1)	9 (2-3)
Total number interviewed *Male v Female*	*28* *(16-12)*	*58* *(31-27)*	*27* *(10-17)*	*57* *(29-28)*	*170* *(86-84)*

Are there other differences between participators and non-participators in the qualitative study?

Further analyses were carried out to find out if there were systematic differences between those who agreed to the qualitative interview and those who did not. For all of these analyses, data from the main age 50 interview was used. These results should be interpreted with caution given the relatively small numbers in the sample. First, it can be seen in Table 4 that regardless of employment status men were slightly more likely than women to agree to be interviewed and that within the group of women those who were working part-time were most likely to agree to an interview.

***Table 4: percentage of cohort members interviewed,
refused or non-contact by gender and employment status***

	Men				*Women*			
	Interviewed	**Refused**	**Non-contact**	**N**	**Interviewed**	**Refused**	**Non-contact**	**N**
Working FT	78.0	10.0	12.0	100	60.6	23.9	15.5	71
Working PT	83.3	16.7	0	6	73.9	17.4	8.7	46
Not Working	75.0	0	25.0	4	63.6	36.4	0	11

Table 5 provides a summary of response rates for a number of different groups within the cohort. Once again, given the relatively small sample size, these figures should be interpreted with caution. However, there is an indication that those who are cohabiting are less likely to agree to be interviewed than other groups, and that those who did not vote in the last election are less likely to be interviewed than those who reported that they did vote.

Table 5: Percentage of cohort members interviewed, refused or non-contact by characteristics at age 50

	Interviewed	*Not interviewed*	*Refused*	*Non-Contact*	*N*
Living alone	69.8	30.2	16.2	14.0	43
Married	75.4	24.6	16.4	8.2	171
Cohabiting	45.8	54.2	20.8	33.4	24
No children	70.5	29.5	9.1	20.4	44
1+ children	71.6	28.4	18.6	9.8	194
Degree+ qual[vii]	76.3	23.7	12.3	11.4	114
Other/no quals	66.9	33.1	21.0	12.1	124
Did not Vote	58.7	41.3	30.4	10.9	46
Voted	75.5	24.5	12.8	11.7	188
NCDS: complete participation	75.0	25.0	16.4	8.6	152
Missed 1 survey	72.6	27.4	14.5	12.9	62
Missed 2+ surveys	45.8	54.2	25.0	29.2	24
Current Participation	74.5	25.5	13.7	11.8	161
No current participation	64.9	35.1	23.4	11.7	77
Ever Participation	72.5	27.5	15.2	12.3	211
Never participated	63.0	37.0	29.6	7.4	27
Poor/Fair General Health	73.3	26.7	10.0	16.7	30
Good General Health	71.2	28.8	17.8	11.0	208
High (4+) Malaise score	80.0	20.0	13.3	6.7	30
Low (0-3) Malaise Score	71.1	28.9	16.6	12.3	204
Total N	**170**	**68**	**40**	**28**	**238**

As part of the Age 50 quantitative survey, cohort members were asked to complete a fifty item personality inventory (the IPIP) for the first time. Analysis of this data (see Table 6) suggests that those who agreed to a qualitative interview had somewhat higher extraversion, conscientiousness and intellect scores than 'refusers'. Perhaps surprisingly they had significantly lower agreeableness scores than non-contacts. Between non-contacts and refusers, non-contacts had significantly higher extraversion and emotional stability scores than refusers. Small numbers did not permit separate analyses by men and women.

Table 6: mean scores across five aspects of IPIP Personality Inventory

	extraversion	*agreeableness*	*conscientiousness*	*Emotional Stability*	*Intellect*
Interviewed	30.6[2] (sd 7.1, n=158)	37.3[2] (sd 4.7, n=160)	34.3[2] (sd 5.1, n=158)	28.8 (sd 7.1, n=157)	33.6[2] (sd 5.4, n=158)
Refused	28.4[1] (sd 6.7, n=35)	37.7 (sd 4.9, n=34)	32.5 (sd 4.8, n=33)	26.9[1] (sd 6.4, n=36)	31.7 (sd 5.7, n=35)
Non Contact	32.4 (sd 6.0, n=26)	38.9 (sd 4.3, n=27)	34.0 (sd 6.6, n=27)	30.9 (sd 7.8, n=27)	33.4 (sd 4.9, n=28)
Overall mean	*30.5* (sd 6.9, n=219)	*37.5* (sd 4.7, n=221)	*34.0* (sd 5.3, n=218)	*28.7* (sd 7.2, n=220)	*33.3* (sd 5.4, n=221)

[1] significant different p<.05 between refusers and non-contacts

[2] significant different p<.1 between interviewed and refusers; [2] significant different p<.1 between interviewed and non-contacts

All of the results reported above are based on bivariate analyses which focus on the differences between those who were successfully interviewed for the qualitative study and those who were not. In order to assess whether the observed differences are statistically significant, and also to determine which variables have the strongest association with response to the qualitative study (once other factors are controlled), a logistic regression was carried out that incorporated all of the variables outlined above. Given the small sample size, the logistic regression was carried out on the total sample of 238 cohort members (i.e. models were not estimated separately for men and women). In addition, in the first analysis, the dichotomous dependent variable was simply whether the cohort member had participated in the sub-study or not (total n=238) rather than trying to distinguish between cases where there was no-contact and those who refused. These results can then be interpreted as identifying which factors predict participation in the qualitative sub-study. A second model was then estimated on the sample of cohort members who were successfully contacted (total n=210) with a dichotomous dependent variable indicating whether the cohort member was interviewed or refused to be interviewed. This model gives insights into the factors most strongly associated with refusal to participate.

Logistic Regression models

A forward selection (Likelihood Ratio) stepwise method was adopted for both models reported[viii]. With this approach the variable with the smallest significance level for the score statistic is entered into the model at the first step. The remaining variables are then re-examined and the variable with the next smallest significance level for the score statistic is entered into the model at the next (second) step. This process is repeated until no more variables are eligible for inclusion in the model based on the chosen cut-off point (0.05).

Table 7 displays a full set of statistics from the analyses, with the results discussed below in terms of the 'odds ratio' (OR) or the relative odds of a particular characteristic, i.e. being unemployed, being associated with participation in comparison with a 'reference category', i.e. being employed, once other measures in the model have been controlled for. The (OR) for the reference category is set as 1, thus an OR greater than one indicates a characteristic has a positive association with participation and an OR less than one indicates the characteristic has a negative association with participation.

Table 7 Logistic regression analyses: predicting participation in qualitative interview

	Model 1: non-participation v participation				Model 2: refusal v participation			
	β (log-odds)	SE	Sig	OR (95% CI)	β (log odds)	SE	Sig	OR (95% CI)
Gender (ref cat: male)	-0.87	0.33	0.008	0.42 *(0.22-0.80)*	-1.08	0.41	0.009	0.34 *(0.15-0.76)*
Social class (ref cat: stable other)								
Stable service								
Upwardly mobile								
Downwardly mobile								
Participation in NCDS (ref cat: Complete participation)								
Missed 1 interview	0.22	0.38	0.566	1.25 *(0.59-2.63)*				
Missed 2+ interviews	-1.30	0.48	0.007	0.27 *(0.11-0.70)*				
Employment status (ref cat: Full-time work)								
Part-time work								
Not working								
Partnership status (ref cat: married)								
Cohabiting	-1.34	0.47	0.005	0.26 *(0.10-0.66)*				
Alone	-.017	0.41	0.689	0.85 *(0.38-1.90)*				
Highest qualification (ref cat: below degree)								
Voting (ref cat: voting)					-1.21	0.41	0.003	0.30 *(0.13-0.66)*
Malaise – symptoms of depression (ref cat: low score)								
Parent (ref cat: has 1+ children)								
Current participation (ref cat: participating)								
Health status (ref cat: good/excellent)								
df	*5*				*2*			
N(100%)=	*233*				206			

Model 1: predicting participation v non-participation in the qualitative sub-study.

Results suggest that women, cohabiting cohort members and those who have missed two or more previous sweeps of the study are each significantly less likely to have taken part in the sub-study. After accounting for all other measures included in the model, the odds of participation among women are less than half that of men (0.42, p.008) and the odds of participation among cohabiters are almost a quarter that of married cohort members (0.26, p.005). Similarly, the odds of participation among cohort members who have missed two or more previous NCDS interviews is also around a quarter the level of those who have taken part in all previous main NCDS surveys (0.27, p.007).

Model 2: predicting participation v refusal to participate in the qualitative sub-study.

In this model, the cohort members that interviewers were unable to contact have been excluded from the analyses. The results suggest that women and those who did not vote in the 2001 General Election have significantly higher refusal rates. After taking all other measures included in the analyses into account, the odds of participation among women is now approximately a third that of men (OR 0.34, p.009) and the odds of participation among non-voters in 2001 is less than a third that of those who report that they voted in the last general election (OR 0.30, p.003).

Interpreting odds ratios

For those who are not familiar with the interpretation of logistic regression models, it is important to clarify the meaning of the odds ratios reported above. Using the simple example of the relative chances of men and women taking part in the qualitative study, and using an approximation of the figures reported above in Table 2a, we can see that approximately 80% of men agreed to participate compared with approximately 65% of women. Expressing this in terms of odds rather than probabilities or percentages we obtain odds of 80: 20 or 4: 1 that men will participate and 65: 35 or 1.86: 1 that women will participate. The odds of women participating are therefore slightly less than half that of men however this does not mean that women are half as likely to participate as men.

The quality of the sub-sample of biographical interviews - how far does it represent the cohort as a whole?

Whereas in the previous section the focus was on predictors of response to the qualitative study, here we turn to a consideration of the characteristics of the qualitative subsample of 170 interviews. The important questions here are a) how closely the sub-sample resembles the cohort as a whole? and b) to what extent the decision to over sample those in the stable service class and those who are downwardly mobile may have had an impact on the demographic profile of the qualitative sample? This leads to a practical discussion of the use of simple weighting to make the sample more representative of the main cohort.

Gender and Employment

Table 8 provides a profile of the sample broken down by gender and a simple categorisation of employment status. It is clear that the sample over-represents women in part-time work and under represents both men and women who are not working. To some extent this is counter-intuitive as one might expect that those who are in work have less time to devote to research interviews. However a possible interpretation is that those who are working feel more 'successful' and are therefore more willing to spend time talking about their lives.

Table 8: Profile of the sample by gender and employment compared with those who were not interviewed and those in the main cohort.

	Men			*Women*		
	Interviewed	**Not interviewed**	**All in age 50 survey**	**Interviewed**	**Not interviewed**	**All in age 50 survey**
Working FT	90.7	91.7	84.9	51.2	63.6	49.8
Working PT	5.8	4.2	3.5	40.5	27.3	31.1
Not Working	3.5	4.1	11.6	8.3	9.1	19.1
N(100%)	*86*	*24*	*4805*	*84*	*44*	*4957*

A more detailed profile of the sample who took part in the qualitative study in comparison with the cohort as a whole is provided in Table 9. This makes it clear that while the sample contains individuals from all of the key groups within the cohort there are three groups who are somewhat under-represented in the sample. These are i) cohort members who are cohabiting ii) cohort members who report that they did not vote in the last general election and iii) cohort members with only poor or fair self-reported health. The next section examines whether it is the deliberate over- sampling of the stable service class and those who are downwardly mobile which may have had an impact.

Table 9: Profile of the sample in comparison with the main cohort focusing on key characteristics at age 50

	Interviewed *%*	*(N)*	*Not interviewed*	*Refused*	*Non-Contact*	*All at age 50*
Living alone	17.6	*(30)*	19.1	17.5	21.4	20.4
Married	75.9	*(129)*	61.8	70.0	50.0	68.5
Cohabiting	6.5	*(11)*	19.1	12.5	28.6	10.4
No children	18.2	*(31)*	19.1	10.0	32.1	16.4
Degree+ qual	51.1	*(87)*	39.7	35.0	46.5	34.9
Did not Vote	16.0	*(27)*	29.2	36.8	18.5	26.9
Current Participation	70.6	*(120)*	60.3	55.0	67.9	61.9
Ever Participation	90.0	*(153)*	85.3	80.0	92.9	83.5
Poor/Fair General Health	12.9	*(22)*	11.8	7.5	17.9	18.2
High (4+) Malaise score	14.2	*(24)*	9.2	10.5	7.4	14.3
N(100%)	*170*		*68*	*40*	*28*	*9632-9783*

Over-sampling and Weighting

Sample weighting is a procedure that is routinely used in quantitative survey research (Holt and Smith 1979). In particular it can be useful when a stratified sample is taken and some groups are deliberately over-sampled to ensure large enough numbers for comparative purposes. Weighting the stratified sample then helps to ensure that any descriptive statistics, calculated for the sample as a whole, provide unbiased estimates of the same parameters in the underlying population. Weighting is rarely used in qualitative research because, as discussed above, the focus of qualitative research is on meaning making within interviews, rather than on being able to generalise from the sample to a larger population. However, in the current study, the sample of 170 qualitative interviews is reasonably substantial and it is of interest to make at least some tentative inferences from the sample to the broader cohort. As has been described above, the sample was deliberately stratified by social mobility trajectory in order to provide sufficient numbers in each of four mobility groups to make comparisons. Table 10 below provides a summary of the per cent in each social mobility group in the cohort as a whole and the per cent in the achieved sample of 170 interviews. It can be seen that those in the stable service class and those in the downward mobility group were deliberately over-sampled in the qualitative study. The figures in Table 9 can be used to calculate weights for the individuals within the qualitative sub-sample so that the sub-sample can be weighted prior to any descriptive statistics being calculated. This is also of use when evaluating how representative the sample is of the broader cohort on a number of basic characteristics such as employment status, marital status etc. To the extent that these characteristics are associated with social mobility the un-weighted achieved sample is likely to appear biased on these dimensions. This will be discussed further below.

Table 10: Weights for the sample

	Cohort % (N)	*Sample % (N)*	*Weight*
Stable service	10.8	16.5% (28)	0.65
Upwardly mobile	30.1	34.1% (58)	0.88
Downwardly mobile	7.8	15.9% (27)	0.49
Stable non-service	51.3	33.5% (57)	1.53

Table 11 and table 12 below reproduce the main elements of tables 8 and 9 above, but with the data weighted to readjust the proportions of cohort members in each of the social mobility groups. It can be seen that weighting the data makes only a very small difference to the percentages of men and women in different employment statuses in the sample, but does bring them slightly closer to the percentages in the sample as a whole. The sample does however still clearly under represent women who are not working. In table 12 it can be seen that weighting the data makes no more than a one percentage point difference in the distribution of most characteristics. However it does reduce the proportion with a degree or higher qualification from 51.1 per cent to 42.2 percent which is considerably closer to the cohort average of 34.9 per cent, but still suggests that the sample contains too high a proportion of the well-qualified.

Table 11: Profile of the sample by gender and employment compared with those who were not interviewed and those in the main cohort. (weighted)

	Men		Women	
	Interviewed	All in age 50 survey	Interviewed	All in age 50 survey
Working FT	89.7	84.9	48.2	49.8
Working PT	5.7	3.5	43.4	31.1
Not Working	4.6	11.6	8.4	19.1
N(100%)	*87*	*4805*	*83*	*4957*

Table 12: Profile of the sample in comparison with the main cohort, focusing on key characteristics at age 50 (weighted)

|	Interviewed		All at age 50
	%	*(N)*	
Living alone	18.3	*(31)*	20.4
Married	74.6	*(126)*	68.5
Cohabiting	7.1	*(12)*	10.4
No children	16.5	*(28)*	16.4
Degree+ qual	42.2	*(71)*	34.9
Did not Vote	16.7	*(28)*	26.9
Current Participation	68.6	*(116)*	61.9
Ever Participation	89.3	*(151)*	83.5
Poor/Fair General Health	10.7	*(18)*	18.2
High (4+) Malaise score	14.2	*(24)*	14.3
N(100%)	*169*		*9632-9783*

Record of participation in each of the main sweeps of the cohort study

To complete the descriptive profile of the sub-sample of those interviewed qualitatively at age 50 it is instructive to examine their record of participation over the years in the main cohort study and to compare this with those who did not agree to take part. Of the 170 interviewed, two-thirds (67.1%) had been interviewed in every round of NCDS data collection from birth to age 50. 26.5% had missed one interview, 4.7% two and 1.8% three interviews. There were no differences between men and women. For the vast majority of these cohort members the reason for previous non-participation was not refusal, but non-contact at the time of

interview[ix]. Among cohort members not interviewed in the qualitative study (either refused or non-contact), fewer (55.9%) had participated in all previous interviews: 25% had missed one interview, 10.3% two, 4.4% three and 4.4% four interviews. Previous non-participation was slightly higher among the men than women who had not been interviewed. Figure 2 breaks the non-interviewed group down further into those who refused or were non-contacts. Although a small group (n=28), it is the non-contacts who were the least likely to have a full participation history.

Figure 2: Previous participation in 9 main sweeps of NCDS data collection by participation in the Social Participation study
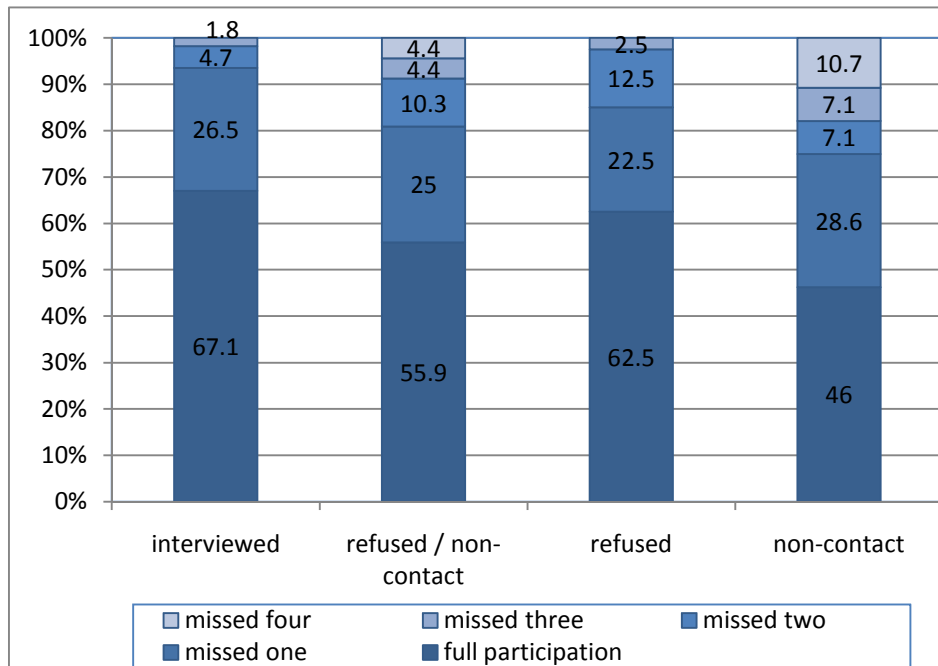
Discussion and Conclusions

This paper has provided a descriptive overview of the design of a qualitative sub-study of the 1958 British Birth Cohort Study, which involved 170 in depth biographical interviews. The response rate of 71 per cent suggests that using a longitudinal quantitative study as the basis for a qualitative study is practical and effective. One important further consideration is whether participation in this sub-study might have an impact on cohort members' preparedness to participate in further sweeps of the main study. There was no evidence from the interviews themselves that this might be the case however, clearly this can only be tested at the next sweep planned for 2013 when cohort members will be 55.

The analysis presented in this paper suggests that the achieved qualitative sample is broadly representative of the cohort as a whole with all major groups represented. The main groups who are somewhat under-represented are women who are not in the labour market; cohort members who are cohabiting; cohort members who report that they did not vote in the last general election; cohort members with only poor or fair self-reported health and cohort members with qualifications below degree level. Weighting the sample to take account of the deliberate over sampling of those in the stable service class and the downwardly mobile groups brings the educational profile of the sample closer to that of the cohort as a whole but those without degree level qualifications are still somewhat underrepresented. Simple weights

have been provided so that those using the data can apply weights to adjust figures so that they are more representative of the cohort as a whole.

As discussed in the introduction, the representativeness of a qualitative study is not usually seen as a key dimension on which it should be evaluated. Qualitative researchers are typically more interested in the perceptions of respondents and the meanings they attach to events and experiences than in generalising findings to a wider population. However, as described above, one aim of this project has been to provide a resource for mixed methods research i.e. for the qualitative interviews to be used in tandem with the longitudinal quantitative data from the cohort study. In this context it is arguably more important that the interviews collected are broadly representative of the cohort as a whole, and also important to understand whichspecific groups are under or over-represented. In the context of the substantive focus on social participation, for example, the fact that the sample of qualitative interviews is somewhat biased towards those who report voting in the last general election those who are better educated and those with better self-reported health suggests that social participation levels among those interviewed are likely to be somewhat higher than among the cohort as a whole.

One further methodological advantage of conducting a qualitative sub-study as part of a major quantitative longitudinal study is that information is available on the individuals who *declined* to participate. This can potentially provide information on what characteristics may make individuals more or less likely to agree to take part in a qualitative study. It is also worth noting here that the letter sent to cohort studies when they were invited to take part explicitly stated that the interview would 'be more of a conversation rather than a list of questions on a computer', to make it clear that the style of interview would be very different from the structured interviews cohort members have become used to. The only factors that appeared to have a significant impact on respondents' willingness to be interviewed were gender, marital status and voting behaviour. While it might be expected that factors such as personality and 'Malaise' or wellbeing would be strongly associated with whether an individual agreed to be interviewed this was not found to be the case. There was a tendency for those who refused to be interviewed to have lower extraversion scores, lower conscientiousness scores and lower intellect scores than those who agreed to be interviewed, but these differences only reached the 10% level of significance in bi-variate analyses

Appendix 1

Seven interviewers, five women and two men, conducted the 170 interviews. Two interviewers worked exclusively in one of the three geographic regions. One worked in both the North West and Scotland. Interviewers were selected to be 'in and around' the age of cohort members. The age of interviewers ranged from 42 to 58 years. Some interviewers had a birthday during the fieldwork period. More specifically

South East:

JS Female 44-5, SP Female 42-3

North West:

CS Female 47, KP Female 57-58

Scotland:

FR Female 52*, RK Male 38-39

North West and Scotland

AM Male 47-48

The number of interviews, refusals and non-contact for each interviewer on the project is detailed in the table below

interviewer * outcome2 outcome of contact Crosstabulation

			outcome2 outcome of contact			
			1.00 interviewed	2.00 refusal	3.00 non contact	Total
interviewer	am	Count	19	8	4	31
		% within interviewer	61.3%	25.8%	12.9%	100.0%
	cs	Count	19	7	4	30
		% within interviewer	63.3%	23.3%	13.3%	100.0%
	fr	Count	32	10	0	42
		% within interviewer	76.2%	23.8%	.0%	100.0%
	js	Count	34	5	9	48
		% within interviewer	70.8%	10.4%	18.8%	100.0%
	kp	Count	21	4	2	27
		% within interviewer	77.8%	14.8%	7.4%	100.0%
	rk	Count	23	1	2	26
		% within interviewer	88.5%	3.8%	7.7%	100.0%
	sp	Count	22	5	7	34
		% within interviewer	64.7%	14.7%	20.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	170	40	28	238
		% within interviewer	71.4%	16.8%	11.8%	100.0%

The interview was aimed to be 90 minutes in length. The average length of an interview was in fact 84.75 minutes (sd 25.31). The mode was 84 minutes. The shortest interview took just 25 minutes, the longest 156 minutes.

Appendix 2: Social Mobility in NCDS

Father's SEG when cohort member age 16 (or age 11 if no information at age 16)

7-Class SEG	%	N	*3-Class SEG*	%	N	*2-Class SEG*	%	N
Large Business	5.2	764	Service Class	16.9	2,511	Service Class	16.9	2,511
Professional	5.5	822						
Lower Service	6.2	925						
Small Business	17.3	2,559	Intermediate Class	24.7	3,654	Others	83.1	12,308
Intermediate Non-manual	7.4	1,095						
Skilled Manual	38.2	5,660	Working Class	58.4	8,654			
Semi / Unskilled	20.2	2,994						
N(100%)		*14,819*			*14,819*			*14,819*

Cohort Member's SEG at age 46 (or age 42 if no information at age 46)

7-Class SEG	%	N	*3-Class SEG*	%	N	*2-Class SEG*	%	N
Large Business	10.8	1,138	Service Class	40.8	4,276	Service Class	40.8	4,276
Professional	5.5	573						
Lower Service	24.5	2,565						
Small Business	16.9	1,776	Intermediate Class	30.7	3,217	Others	59.2	6,203
Intermediate Non-manual	13.8	1,441						
Skilled Manual	13.5	1,413	Working Class	28.5	2,986			
Semi / Unskilled	15.0	1,573						
N(100%)		*10,479*			*10,479*			*10,479*

Longitudinal SEG information to construct Social Mobility variable: 2-class SEG

2-Class SEG Social Mobility				
Social Mobility Group	Father's SEG	CM own SEG	%	N
Stable Service	Service Class	Service Class	10.8	1,029
Upwardly Mobile	Other	Service Class	30.1	2,872
Downwardly Mobile	Service Class	Other	7.8	740
Stable Other	Other	Other	51.3	4,888
N(100%)				*9,529*

Weighted and Unweighted distribution of Social Participation sample:
2-class Social Mobility

Social Mobility Group	**Unweighted %**	**N**	**Weighted %**	**N**
Stable Service	16.5	28	10.8	18
Upwardly Mobile	34.1	58	30.1	51
Downwardly Mobile	15.9	27	7.8	13
Stable Other	33.5	57	51.3	87
N(100%)		*170*		*170*

Inclusion and exclusion in social mobility variables

Social mobility was constructed from occupation-based socio-economic group (SEG) information collected during cohort members' (CM) childhood and when they were in their forties. Specifically, the SEG information collected from cohort members' fathers (including father figures) in 1974 when cohort members were age 16 and from cohort members themselves in 2004, when age 46. To maximise numbers, if information was missing in 1974 (age 16), information collected in 1969 (age 11) was used. Likewise, if information was missing in 2004 (age 46), information collected in 2000 (age 42) was used.

Socio-Economic Group (SEG) Information from CMs' Father (figure) 1974: Age 16

SEG information from father's occupation was available for **10,499** of the 14,654 (CMs) who had taken some part in the age 16 survey. The 4,155 CMs with no SEG information was largely due to non-participation in the parental interview (where the SEG information was recorded), but for a significant minority who did take part in the parental interview there was no, or inadequate, father's occupation information recorded. The specific details are given below.

Number of cohort members	Number missing	Variable
14, 654: CMs who had taken some part in the age 16 survey		Resps3
11,691: CMs with information in 'parental interview'	2,963	N2358
10,710: CMs with information on father's occupation	981	N2385
10,499: CMs with valid father occupation information	211	

Who are missing?

1,192 CMs took some part in the age 16 survey but information about father's occupation was not provided. This was broken down to 981 where no father occupation was recorded and 211 where some occupation information was recorded but could not be used. For this 211, the information recorded in father's occupation was inadequate (n=122) or the father was in the armed forces and no clarifying information was recorded (n=89).

Interviewer instructions for occupation information (n2385) were as follows. 'If father not working, write 'not working' below and fill in details of last occupation. If no male head write 'none' and proceed to next question.' There were no other interviewer instructions re: which male head of household was applicable or not. As such, if there was a male head of household, occupation information should have been recorded.

Information on the CMs father figure (n2375) was used to explain why 981 did not provide father occupation information. For 866 (88%), there was no male head of household so no information could be recorded. For the remaining 12%, a father (inc. adopted/step/foster) (89, 9%) was present or the CM lived with another male family member (inc. other situation) (26, 3%).

1969: Age 11

SEG information from father's occupation was available for **13,304** of the 15,336 cohort members (CMs) who had taken some part in the age 11 survey. As found at age 16, the 1,466 cohort members with no SEG information was largely due to non-participation in the parental interview (where the SEG information was recorded), but for a significant minority who did take part in the parental interview there was no, or inadequate, father's occupation information recorded. The specific details are given below.

Number of cohort members	Number missing	Variable
15,336: CMs who had taken some part in the age 11 survey		Resps2
13,876: CMs with information in 'parental interview'	1,460	N1111
13,484: CMs with information on father's occupation	392	N1175
13,304: CMs with valid father occupation information	180	

Who are missing?

572 CMs took some part in the age 11 survey but did not provide occupation information. This was broken down to 392 where no father occupation was recorded and 180 where the father was in the armed forces and no clarifying information was recorded.

Interviewer instructions for occupation information (n1175) were as follows. 'Record occupation for present male head of household. If not working, record details of last occupation. If no male head, fill in details when a male head was last living in household'.

For example, no male head was recorded for 678 cohort members, but usable occupation information was recorded for 421 (62%) of these cohort members.

Information on the CMs father figure (n1127) was used to explain why 392 did not provide father occupation information. For 237 (60%), there was no male head of household so no information could be recorded. For the remaining 40%, a father (inc. adopted/step/foster) (111, 28%) was present of the CM lived with another male family member (inc. other situation) (44, 11%).

Supplementing age 16 SEG information with age 11 SEG information

An additional 4,318 CMs were included by supplementing the 10,499 with occupation information at age 16 with occupation information at age 11. The final sample was **14,817.**

Who were the additional cohort members included?

82% of the additional cases had either not participated in the age 16 survey (2099, 49%) or had not participated in the parental interview at age 16 (1440, 33%). The remaining 18% were made up of cohort members with no father or 'male head of household' at age 16 (598, 14%), those with inadequate father occupational information at age 16 (97, 2%), or where no occupation information recorded for father or other male head figure at age 16 (84, 2%).

Who remained excluded?

Of all 18,558 members of NCDS, 3,539 were excluded from the derived measure of childhood SEG from father occupation at age 16 or age 11. The overwhelming reason for this was non-participation. 60% (2,133) had not participated in either the age 16 or age 11 surveys and 30% (1,059) had not participated at age 16 **or** 11 and had not participated in the parental interview at age 16 or 11. Of the remaining 10%, 3% (103) had no father (father figure) at age 16 or age 11. The remaining 7% were made up of some combination of partial participation, poor occupation information, or no father (figure) in age 16 and / or age 11 surveys.

Socio-Economic Group (SEG) Information from Cohort Members

Occupation information for CMs was based on current occupation. CMs not in full-time or part-time employment at time of interview were not included.

2004: Age 46

SEG information from CMs own occupation was available for **8,264** of the 9,534 who had taken some part in the age 46 survey. 1,270 cohort members had no SEG information, simply because they were not employed when interviewed. The specific details are given below.

Number of cohort members	Number missing	Variable
9,534: CMs who had taken some part in the age 46 survey		Resps7
8,313: CMs with occupation information	1,221	N7seg
8,264: CMs with valid occupation information	49	

Who are missing?

Of the 1,270 with no SEG information, 1,221 (96%) were CMs not in full-time or part-time employment at time of interview, of which 843 (69%) were women. The remaining 49 (4%) gave poor occupation information (n=36) or were in the armed forces with no clarifying information recorded (n=13). 18 (37%) were women.

2004: Age 42

SEG information from CMs own occupation was available for **9,592** of the 11,419 who had taken some part in the age 42 survey. 1,827 cohort members had no SEG information, fundamentally because they were not employed when interviewed. The specific details are given below.

Number of cohort members	Number missing	Variable
11,419: CMs who had taken some part in the age 42 survey		Resps6
9,613: CMs with occupation information	1,806	Seg
9,592: CMs with valid occupation information	21	

Who are missing?

Of the 1,827 with no SEG information, 1,241 (68%) were women. 1,759 (96%) were CMs not in full-time or part-time employment at time of interview. 6 (0.3%) CMs who did not know or did not give their employment status (econact) and 14 (0.8%) were in full-time or part-time employment at time of interview but no occupation information was recorded. A further 27 (1%) CMs had an imputed employment status 'employed' recorded (empstat) but no employment status information in 'econact'. The 21 (1%) were in the armed forces with no clarifying information. No-one was recorded with providing inadequate information. All CMs in the armed forces were male.

Supplementing age 46 SEG information with age 42 SEG information

An additional 2,215 CMs were included by supplementing the 8,264 with occupation information at age 46 with occupation information at age 42. The final sample was **10,479.**

Who were included?

81% of the additional cases had not participated in the age 46 survey (1,785). The remaining 19% were made up of cohort members with no occupation information (395, 18%) or inadequate occupational information or in armed forces at age 46 (35, 1%).

Who remained excluded?

Of all 18,558 members of NCDS, 8,079 were excluded from the derived measure of SEG from CMs own occupation at age 46 or age 42. The overwhelming reason for this was non-participation. 83% (6,677) had not participated in either the age 46 or age 42 surveys. 9% (752) were not employed at age 46 and age 42, 8% (632) had not participated at age 46 and were not working at age 42 (or vice versa), and the remaining <1% (18) had some combination of non-participation and poor occupation information. 73% of those excluded as they were not working at age 46 and age 42 were women.

Longitudinal social mobility: CMs with occupation information at 46 *or* 42 <u>and</u> 16 *or* 11

The final sample size is **9,527**. Although 10,476 CMs had occupation information at 46 or 42, 952 were excluded as they did not have information on father's information at age 16 or 11.

Who were excluded?

Of the 952, 194 (20%) had not participated in the age 16 *and* 11 surveys. A further 348 (37%) had not participated in the age 16 survey and participated but not provided any occupation information in the age 11 survey, or vice versa. 286 (30%) had participated but had no occupation information recorded in both age 16 and age 11 surveys. The remaining 124 (13%) had poor occupation information recorded in both age 16 and 11 surveys.

Appendix 3: Topic guide NCDS: SOCIAL PARTICPATION & IDENTITY PROJECT

PILOT INTERVIEWS TOPIC GUIDE

Notes to Interviewers concerning the use of this guide:

- All questions must be asked.

- In the interests of building rapport and encouraging conversation, it is not necessary to read out each question *verbatim*. While it should be, or should become, possible to memorise shorter questions, longer questions can be re-phrased or adapted slightly as long as the substantive content is covered. However, if a word or phrase within a question or statement has been emboldened it *must* be used exactly as it appears.

- Probes under questions largely represent *possible* lines of development/areas to request expansion on depending on the interviewee's response to the preceding question. However, if a probe has been placed in italics, the supplementary question or subject area it refers to *must* be covered.

- Further guidance and conventions relating to specific questions and subject areas are provided in separate notes under the various section headings.

SECTION 1: NEIGHBOURHOOD AND BELONGING (10-15 minutes)

Q1. We know a bit about your housing history from your survey responses but we would like to know a little bit more about your **involvement in your current neighbourhood**. Can I begin by asking you **how long you have lived here and about how you came to live here**?

Probe for:

Whether choice of residential location contingent on particular life events (job/career, marriage, kids etc)

Where they lived before.

How often they've moved.

Q2. Do you feel you belong here?

Probe for:

What are the neighbours like?

Do you feel part of a community?

Do you feel this is the right place for you?

Q3. When people ask where you are from, what do you say?

Q4. Do you think you will continue living here in the future? Under what circumstances might you move and where to?

Probe for:

Possible reasons for staying or going - job movements, children/family reasons, local amenities, housing career etc

Q5. What would your **ideal house** be like, and where would it be located?

SECTION 2: PARTICIPATION (15-20 minutes)

The survey included questions about your spare time interests and activities but we are not sure that these questions gave you enough scope to describe and explain what you do. We therefore want to ask some additional questions.

Q6. First, could you talk me through your last week and then last weekend in terms of how you **spent your spare time**?

Probe for:

Outside the home -

How often do went out, *what they did*, where they went, how long they spent, who they did it with/met

Motivation – *why/how did they become interested*, what do they get out of it, how long have they been doing it, *how involved are they*

Inside the home -

What they did when they stayed in, how long do they spent doing it, did they do with anybody

Why/how did they become interested, how long have they been doing it

Q7. Is this a **typical pattern?**

Probe for:

How, when, and *why it might vary*

Q8. Do you belong to any **organised clubs** or have any **formal associations** - for example do you attend a **church** or **evening classes**, or are you a member of a **political party**, **sports club** or **musical group**?

Probe for:

Length, extent of, reasons for involvement

The local significance such organisations/activities, types of people involved

Subscriptions to organisations/causes

Q9. (*If not raised above*) Do you do any **voluntary or charitable work**?

Probe for:

What this involves – function, time

Reasons for getting involved or for not getting involved

Q10. How have your interests and involvements **changed or developed over time**?

Probe for:

Comparison with parents' interests and interests growing up

Timing, reasons and influences for any change

Q11. To what extent does your **leisure time** and **social life** overlap with **family life**?

Probe for:

Do you find you spend most of your leisure time with family, or do you spend most of your time with friends? How does what you do with your partner/family differ from what you do with friends?

Q12. Does your job or work situation affect your leisure activities in either a positive or negative way?

Probe for:

Demands of work, e.g. irregular hours, overtime, working away, holiday entitlement

Workplace social events

Sense of work/life balance, priorities

(If has one) impact of partner's job on leisure time/opportunities

SECTION 3: FRIENDSHIPS (15-20 minutes)

(*Give separate sheet with ring diagram entitled 'Personal Community Map' to interviewee*)

Q13. Looking at this page with the five concentric rings marked on, can you please think of **those people who are important to you**, and write their names in, with those who are **most important closest to the centre** (*allow five minutes for interviewee to complete this*)

Note: where the respondent offers comments about how difficult or easy this is, encourage comments and reflections (in order to encourage discussion about the criteria being evoked).

Q14. Thank you. For each person you've listed could you say:

- Why has that person been placed there (in a specific location within the 5 circles)? **In what way are they important to you**?

- How would you describe your relationship to that person (e.g. mainly 'fun/sociable' or confiding?)

  Probe for:

  How often do you keep in touch?

  What do you talk about?

  How has your relationship with this person changed in importance or intensity?

Note: Do not probe specifically for the terms used to describe the relationship (best friend, colleague, family, etc) since we want to know the lay terms used by respondents.

Ensure that when the respondent points to an individual the name of that person and their position within the ring structure is also clearly mentioned for the tape transcription.

When this exercise has been completed, please indicate the relationship of each person to the cohort member by annotating the diagram (e.g. Mum; Bro; Aunt; Cous; Fr=friend; Wk for work colleague, etc) in a different colour ink to one used by the interviewee.

Q15. And thinking specifically about **the Christmas holiday period**, who do you generally spend time with? How much does it vary year by year?

Q16. Thinking about the people you have included here as being most important to you, who would you say you rely on for most of your emotional support?

SECTION 4: LIFE STORIES & TRAJECTORIES (up to 30 minutes)

The NCDS has collected a lot of information about your life over the years. But we'd now like to give you more of a chance to say what has been important in your life from your own perspective.

Q17. So could you talk me through your **life story** as you see it?

Note: Reassure the interviewee that they can take as much time as they wish or need.

It is particularly important not to prompt or to offer any structure at this point but to let people construct their own response and to give them some time to work out how they want to do it. If they ask for clarification, indicate that there is no 'right' way to do this and encourage them to start where or with what they want to.

Only if, after 10 minutes or so, people are really struggling to give a response, or if their response is very short and they have actually finished their account after a few minutes, should they be given some assistance/asked to expand using the following prompt structure:

- **Starting with your childhood could you say a bit about**

  - **what kind of child you were**

  - **how you got on at school**

  - **who had the most influence on your life**

- **Thinking about when you left school and decided what to do next …**

- **Going back to your early years of work and your twenties…**

- **Focusing on your thirties…**

- **Finally thinking back over the past five or ten years…**

Q18. Have you covered all of the major points you want to cover? What would you say have been the **key influences and turning points?**

Probe for:

Why were they important - *how and why they changed the course of a life or lives*?

Influential people as well as events/situations

Q19. If you had to depict your life up to now by means of a diagram, which of these diagrams would you choose (*show separate 'Life Trajectories' sheet to interviewee and ask them to mark which one with a tick*), or if none of these apply, can you draw a more representative pattern in the blank box?

Note: where the respondent offers comments about how difficult or easy this is, encourage comments and reflections (in order to encourage discussion about the criteria being evoked).

SECTION 5: IDENTITIES (15-20 minutes)

We are interested in **how you see yourself as a person**, and whether and in what ways this might have shifted or changed over the course of you life.

Q20. Generally speaking, could you tell me **how you define yourself?**

Note: do not offer possible characteristics. It is important to get the lay categories which are meaningful to respondents.

Q21. Do you think of yourself as **belonging to a social class**?

Probe for:

If so, which one, and why? If not, why not?

Have you always felt this way? *Did you feel you belonged to a particular social class when you were growing up*?

Have particular experiences ever made you more or less aware of yourself as belonging to a class?

Note: if respondents refer to themselves as 'ordinary', they should be asked to expand on what they mean by this.

Q22. How much do you think your **occupation or working life** has shaped your sense of who you are?

Probe for:

Would you say you've had a career?

Q23. As you probably know, the NCDS was chosen as a representative sample of British people born in 1958. **What does 'British' mean to you**?

Probe for:

Alternative, preferred, labels - English/Scottish/Welsh/Irish/Black British etc – and their meaning

How patriotic do you feel?

Q24. Do you think of yourself as **belonging to a particular generation?**

Q25. What are the main advantages and disadvantages of being the age you are?

Probe for:

Health and physical factors

Q26. How important is being a woman/man to your sense of who you are?

Probe for:

Has this changed over time?

Q27. Can I ask you to look at this diagram (*show separate 'Gender and Identity' diagram with male-female spectrum line on it to the interviewee*)? Some people think that there is a continuum between masculinity and femininity. If you agree, where would you place yourself on this line? (*Once this has been done*) Would you always have positioned yourself there or might you have chosen a different place on the line in a different period of you life?

SECTION 6: MEMBERSHIP OF THE NCDS (10 minutes)

Finally, we'd like to find out more about what it has been like for you to be a member of the NCDS - whether it's been a good and interesting experience, how it might have been improved, whether we've been asking the right types of questions, and so on.

Q28. Do you have any memories of being in the study as a child?

Probe for:

What? Whether unsettling or enjoyable, etc

Q29. As an adult there has been the opportunity to be interviewed 6 times between age 23 and 50. Can you recall any occasions on which you didn't take part and what the reasons for this were?

Note: if the response to this question doesn't match the interviewee's actual participation record or if they have missed an interview but can't recall, remind them and prompt again for reasons for not taking part.

Q30. Have you ever thought of dropping out?

Probe for:

Why/ Why not? When?

What have been the most frustrating aspects of being a panel member?

What would improve the experience of being a panel member?

Q31. Has being part of the NCDS had any impact on your life?

Probe for:

Whether it makes them feel somehow different from other people

Do you ever talk about being a panel member with anyone? Who? In what context?

Does the experience of being a panel member ever encourage you to reflect on your own life and experiences?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH! That's the last question in this interview but before we finish are you happy that we've covered everything you wanted to say? Is there anything else you would like to raise or mention?

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[i] While it is acknowledged that the concept of a target sample is rarely used in the context of qualitative research it is a useful term to suggest all those who might have been part of the response group

[ii] Jennifer Mason Qualitative Researching; Melanie Mauthner, Maxine Birch, Julie Jessop, and Tina Miller 'Ethics in Qualitative Research'; Steinar Kvale 'InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing'; Herbert J. Rubin 'Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data'

[iii] Additional funding from the Welsh Assembly Government means that 60 interviews will be carried out in selected areas of Wales during the last quarter of 2009 and the first half of 2010.

[iv] If there was no father present and no father figure at either age 16 or age 11 then the cohort member will not have been included in the qualitative substudy. There were only 103 cohort members recorded as having no father figure at both age 11 and age 16 (see Appendix 2 for further details)

[v] Mosaic United Kingdom: The Consumer Classification for the UK. (2006) Experian Ltd

[vi] 364 (4%) were interviewed after their 51st birthday.

[vii] This refers to all those with qualifications at NVQ level 4 and above so that it includes cohort members with vocational qualifications as well as those with academic qualifications

[viii] Additional models including the five aspects of the IPIP Personality Inventory were also estimated but these did not yield any significant results.

[ix] Reason noted on response data file was 'no data but contact later on'

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