# Into the archive: A realist perspective of the archive as a site for research

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*This thesis is dedicated to the long line of strong and intelligent women that I come from.*

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# Abstract

The evolution of social enquiry is a product of constant negotiation between theory and context. Whilst changes in theoretical thought are well-documented in literature, it is the archive that guards changes in practice. The archive is used as a site for research in wide ranging disciplines. What is kept, what is discarded and what is publicised, along with changes to the content of these categories over time, are clues to how the archive has been constructed. This thesis uses a realist perspective to explore the processes involved in the creation of an archive collection, and in the use of archive material for social research. It draws on socio-political milestones, as well as shifts in underpinning ontology, to argue that archive collections are a result of underlying mechanisms influencing archival processes and shaping the archive's offering. Using research into unpaid care within the Carers UK archive collection, the content of the archive itself is used to explore these mechanisms. Understanding the mechanisms that underpin the archive, and using this to inform research and research methodology, means that both the potential and limitations of the archive as a site for research will be better understood and thus better utilised in the field of social enquiry.

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# Chapter 1 : Introduction

## 1.1  Introduction

The initial chapter of this thesis provides overviews of key aspects from the research. The research is justified through an explanation of the development of the research, and through situating the research in relation to current academic debate. Areas in which this research has potential for impact are also identified. This is followed by the research questions, which have guided the design and direction of this research. A brief overview of the methods used explains what principles have been used to conduct the research and justifies decisions made about the methods. A similar overview of the theoretical framework underpinning this research situates this thesis within realist debate and explains the epistemological and ontological position of the researcher going into this project. The chapter summaries of section 1.6 provide a brief summary of the highlights of each chapter. Through visiting the key points and key findings from each, it is clear how these chapters work together to tell a single narrative. The final section of this chapter is a brief summary of the overall findings.

## 1.2  Justification

This research makes important contributions to two broad fields; realist research and research methods. By expanding the reach of this research beyond the relatively small field of archive research, the potential for impact is increased. This is furthered by extending the current academic debate beyond the theoretical to the practical to make actionable suggestions for changes to practice within sociological research using archives.

Taking the principles of realist evaluation into the archive to evaluate both archive practice and theory from a researcher's standpoint is uncharted waters. In doing so this thesis broadens the reach of realism by extending a realist epistemology into the study of archival research. Realist thinking towards archive theory is a relatively new phenomena, leaving much to be explored. Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain* (2009) uses a realist approach to evaluate the inherent

bias of archives within the remit of critical race studies and whilst Davidson et al. (2019) provide a realist model for data analysis that can be applied to archive research this is not its intended application.

As Dalkin et al. (2015) explain, a traditional relationship between theory and practice is iterative, where 'structures shape actions, which shape structure, which shape actions, and so on'. As this thesis demonstrates, this is not the case in archives. Theory is perceived as a hobby of the academic, whilst practice is borne out of a survivalist model necessitated by budget cuts and thinning resources. Academic evaluation of practice has been limited to the discipline of Library and Information Studies, whilst theoretical development has been disjointed across a wide range of disciplines, but without the benefit of being truly inter- or multi-disciplinary. This research pulls together these separate fields of enquiry to evaluate how the archive has been positioned by academic research and what this means for researchers using the archive today. Taking the same approach to archive practice, international, national, and local policies have been evaluated to establish the theoretical positioning of archive policy and the relationship between academic theory and archive practice. The nature of the archive is changing and so too is the nature of research using archived material.

Davidson et al. make the case that the current climate of 'ever-reducing resources' (Davidson et al., 2019: 365) for academic research is already shifting towards the reuse of data over primary research. This is due to the time and cost effectiveness of secondary analysis over original research. If this is the case then research using archived material is likely to become more prevalent within the next generation of social researchers which will, in turn, draw attention to how archives are used for research. This thesis takes a step in this direction by evaluating the autonomy of the researcher when conducting research within an archive. As is demonstrated, it is not just the creators and donors of archived content that leave a 'watermark' on a collection (Stoler, 2009), but so too do the archivist, the process of archiving, and the institution within which the collection is housed. This thesis draws attention to the underlying mechanisms that influence our research and subsequently demonstrates that negligence of the influence of the archive process on research is to compromise its integrity. Aside from addressing a gap in the literature, this project draws attention to the way that

researchers engage with archives and raises questions about the authenticity of this relationship.

What researchers are presented with when entering the archive is not a set of facts, and researchers are not impartial judges. This thesis raises awareness of how researchers engage with the archive and draws attention to the value of a reflexive approach in which the researcher questions both the material and themselves throughout their engagement with the material. As this research breaches several new areas in its realist approach to a comprehensive account of archives as research sites, it has been necessarily constrained by time and resource limitations. However, whilst it is acknowledged that there are several areas within this thesis that are worthy of further investigation, it is hoped that by highlighting key mechanisms across the process of archiving it will inspire more research into both archive theory and practice about the realities of the use of archives for research, as opposed to what the archive is, or what it should be, conceptually.

## 1.3  Research Questions

1. How is an archive collection developed?
    a. What decisions are made?
    b. What regulations and practices influence these decisions?
    c. What socio-economic factors are evident in an archive collection?
2. What underlying processes influence researchers' use of the archive?
3. What does this say about the archive as a site for research going forward?

## 1.4  Methods overview

To answer the research questions, different forms of data were needed. First, a literature review was done using keyword searches to compile a detailed history of the Carers' Movement. This was followed up by a review of large-scale research into unpaid carers from the start of the Carers' Movement in 1965 to 2015. As this review was inclusive of the design, methods, content, output, and

reception of such research, the questionnaires themselves and government reports were used alongside the academic literature.

Academic literature was once again reviewed using keyword searches to build a history of archive theory, and to identify the key academic debates around archive theory. Through the realist process of 'zig-zagging' between theory testing and refinement during fieldwork, sampling was identified as a key area of interest for this thesis. Thus, keyword searches were used to identify international, national, and local archive policies on sampling in the archive, which were then used to build a picture of how archival sampling works in policy and how it is regulated.

The data collection aspect of this project took place at Manchester Archive, using the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection. Initially designed as a research project to evaluate the representation of unpaid carers, this thesis evolved during the preliminary data collection period when several questions were raised about the collection's formation and construction. It was felt that justice could not be done to the original idea without first answering these questions. At the upgrade stage of this thesis, it was realised that answering these questions would constitute a thesis in itself, and the decision was made to follow through with a theoretical enquiry of the archive. Since it was the researcher's work in Manchester Archive and with the RCA collection that raised the questions about the theoretical construction of the archive, and the researcher already had sufficient background knowledge of the material, it was decided to stick with this location and collection.

This research required that the RCA collection was examined for more than just its content but also for its positioning within the wider concept of the archive. To achieve this, a two-pronged approach to data analysis was used. To analyse the contents of the RCA collection Davidson et al.'s Breadth and Depth model for 'big qual' analysis fit best (Davidson et al., 2019). Developed as a model for the analysis of archived data through the merging of qualitative datasets, Davidson et al.'s model was judged to have a wider application to the broader concept of archive research as the RCA collection is positioned as a set of qualitative data from different sources. The RCA collection catalogue was used to execute Recursive Surface Thematic Mapping, in which suitable sources are selected

using a purposeful sampling method, extracts examined, and the selection of sources revised accordingly. This was followed by 'deep excavation' with in-depth interpretive analysis of the selected cases, in this case, the selected documents. As it was not designed specifically for the analysis of archive collections, Davidson et al.'s model was not appropriate for examining the external factors of the RCA collection, and a separate method was needed.

To analyse the RCA collection's structure, organisation, and order Prior's approach to document analysis was used. This approach was chosen because it encompasses the context in which documents are created, as well as their consumption, use, and function (Prior, 2003). However, Prior's is an 'inside-out' approach, looking at how documents can function differently in different environments. This research expanded Prior's approach to an 'outside-in' model, evaluating the impact of various social phenomena on the documents as part of the wider collection.

Findings from the literature reviews, policy reviews, and data collection were then looked at in the context of one another to evaluate the archive as a site for social research. Fieldnotes were used both to provide examples of the findings from this research 'in action' and as a form of qualitative data in their own right. Thus, fully exploring and satisfying all of the research questions.

## 1.5  Theoretical framework overview

The entirety of this research is both a product of, and guided by, a realist framework. This is demonstrated in the way that the gap into which this research fits was discovered through the 'zig-zagging' between theory refinement and testing that is characteristic of realist thinking (Emmel et al., 2018).

The underpinning philosophy of this research is that there is an underlying stratified reality. Researchers cannot access this reality through empirical research, however, this reality can be glimpsed through effects on social phenomena. Because of the partial nature of a researcher's access, any claims made about the nature of reality are fallible. It is these effects that are visible through empirical enquiry. Applied to this thesis, the effects of the archiving

process are visible in archive collections, and analysis of the RCA collection can provide explanations of theories of the middle range, 'close enough to observed data to be incorporated in propositions that permit empirical testing' (Merton 1968 in Emmel, 2013). By applying this framework, archives are positioned not as a starting point but as a point of transition for research done using archived material.

Intrinsic to the realist methodology is acknowledgement and incorporation of the parameters of the research set by overseeing institutions in the research design. Consequentially, restrictions on time and resources as set by the ESRC and the University of Leeds have been in-built into the design of this research. For this research to be a truly realist piece it is not enough to just incorporate a realist approach into the design. The researcher themselves must subscribe to a realist way of thinking. This involves being aware of their own theoretical sensitivities and practising reflexivity through an iterative process of reflection and revision as described in Bhaskar's Critical Realism (Gorski, 2013).

## 1.6 Chapter summaries

**Chapter 2:** The Methods chapter of this thesis explains how this research has been done and the principles guiding its design and execution.

This thesis is a product of the natural 'zig-zagging' process characteristic of a Realist approach. Intended as a review of how unpaid care is represented in archives, through a combination of preliminary reading and personal circumstances, the focus of this thesis changed to be a realist perspective on the archive as a site for sociological research. The principles of realist enquiry are integrated into the research through its design, incorporating a practice of 'strong reflexivity', inspired by that used in autoethnographic research, where the research design is influenced by the researcher's reflexive practice in an iterative relationship.

As an ESRC funded PhD project, the scope of the research is necessarily limited to the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection held by Manchester Archive. Data from within the RCA collection were analysed by

applying the principles of Davidson et al.'s 'breadth and depth' model of secondary data analysis for large qualitative datasets. The structure of The RCA collection and its wider situation in Manchester Archive were analysed using Prior's approach to document analysis, chosen for its recognition of both the individual and collective context of a series of documents. All research done for the purpose of this thesis is in line with University of Leeds ethical guidance and has been approved by the University of Leeds ethical committee.

**Chapter 3:** Chapter 3 details the history of the Carers' Movement in the UK, from the social context prefacing the formation of the National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependants (NCSWD) in 1965 to the protection of Carer's allowance in 2015. Key milestones of the Movement are examined and placed into relation with Carers UK and its predecessors.

The key finding from this chapter is that Carers UK has evolved from its beginnings as the NCSWD. The relationship between the Carers' Movement and Carers UK was, and is, iterative. This is demonstrated by the legislative change initiated by the NCSWD and the several iterations of the carer's organisation in response to changing attitudes towards unpaid carers and the care they provide. The NCSWD, the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants (NCCED), the Association of Carers (AoC), Carers National Association (CNA), and Carers UK were separate organisations with separate focuses, despite the core goal of the advancement of rights for, and recognition of, unpaid carers. The stamp of each individual organisation, and variations between, are identified here and revisited in Chapter 8 to show how these variations are evident in the RCA collection.

**Chapter 4:** Advancing on from the history of the Carers' Movement, Chapter 4 takes a closer look at the history of how unpaid carers have been measured. Looking at the design, content, and method of large scale surveys, this chapter details the evolution of the measuring of unpaid care both in context with, and as separate to, the Carers' Movement.

Just as Carers UK had an iterative relationship with the Carers' Movement, so too did the measurement of unpaid carers. Questions about unpaid care were numerous between 1990 and 2000, however with the cessation of the General Household Survey (GHS) 'Carers' trailer module, and no plans to re-run the Carers in Households survey, unpaid carers are now predominantly measured by Carers UK, as opposed to the government. The focus of government research into unpaid carers shifted from questions about living arrangements and dependants in 1990 to questions about time and employment in 2011, demonstrating that socio-political shifts are visible in the design and methods used to measure unpaid carers.

**Chapter 5:** Chapter 5 begins with an examination of what archives are; how they are purposed and who they are for. This is followed by an overview of the history of the academic study of the archive, taking a detailed look at key works from Derrida, Stoler, and others. Key debates in the modern academic study of archives are identified and dissected. There are two key points to take from this chapter.

The first important point to note is that archives are not just storehouses. Archives have a long history as elitist institutions that preserve the stories of the powerful and exclude alternative narratives. Although this is now more widely recognised, criticism of the inherent bias of the process of archiving has been met by strong opposition both internally and externally.

The second point is that academic research into archiving has been divided. Research into policy and practice has largely been the work of Library and Information Studies, whilst theoretical research has traditionally been predominant within the discipline of History. Since Derrida's *Archive Fever* drew attention to archives as knowledge producers in their own right, the study of archives has been adopted by a far-reaching range of academic disciplines, each with their own take on what an archive is and what an archive does. The work of Stoler has heavily influenced the research for this thesis. Stoler's realist account of the archive is what has been taken forward to the findings of this research.

**Chapter 6:** Chapter 6 is an examination of what sampling means within archives, how it is done, and how it is regulated. Key policies are identified and reviewed for their use in theory and in practice. The archive catalogue, which is both a result of sampling and the tool researchers sample from, is critically examined. This chapter serves a dual purpose by unpicking the policy context in which archives are created and highlighting methodological challenges faced in the process of this research specifically, with the wider application to social research using archives more generally.

The significant finding from this chapter is the divide between archive theory from the previous chapter and the empirical standpoint of sampling policies and practice within archives. Sampling is positioned as a destructive last resort that does not reconcile with an archivist's preservation role, and to be used only to reduce the number of records within an archived collection. Although sampling is recognised as skilled work, and the input of donors is recommended, there are no fixed rules on how collections should be sampled. In practice, this task falls to archivists who are conflictingly supposed to both think like the original creator of the materials and be unbiased and impartial in their decision making.

**Chapter 7:** The first findings chapter, Chapter 7 presents findings from Manchester Archive but stops short of the RCA collection. Drawing on theory and practice from chapters 5 and 6, key findings from the literature are tested in practice to give a real-life account of a working archive from a researcher's perspective.

The interesting finding to take away from this chapter is that, in practice, the sampling and organising of archive collections are driven by necessity. Limitations on staff, money, and other resources have left a significant amount of material unorganised. This has implications for access as, despite efforts to widen participation, a significant amount of material has access restrictions and/or is uncatalogued, and online information about collections is patchy at best. Archives are shifting towards a customer-focused model and, with cuts to resources ever increasing, incorporation of theory into practice does not look likely going forwards.

**Chapter 8:** Following on from findings from within the archive, Chapter 8 delves into the RCA collection. The RCA collection is unpacked to look at how it has been put together and what is represented within it. This is taken further with the discussion of challenges that are presented to the researcher through the use of the RCA collection.

This chapter demonstrates that there is evidence of the shaping of the narrative of the RCA collection embedded within the collection itself. The RCA collection is a product of decision-making necessitated through the archiving process and thus, all aspects of the collection from its name, to its structure, and contents have been actively chosen. As the researcher does not have information on how these decisions have been made, assumptions are made from glimpses of this process in the empirical evidence.

**Chapter 9:** The Discussion chapter of this thesis brings the findings from all the previous chapters together to discuss the bigger picture. Using a realist framework, the literature, findings from practice, and findings from the collection, conclusions are drawn about the nature of archives and the influence of archiving practice on social research. The divide between theory and practice is explained using Pawson's Context, Mechanism, Output model for realist evaluation.

The key findings from this chapter are, firstly, that there is a divide between archive theory and practice. Theories about how the archive is constructed and used have not been translated into practice. This is due in part to funding and resource cuts necessitating in a shift towards a customer and target-focus for archives nation-wide. Smaller facilities, such as Manchester Archive, seem to have been particularly affected, with widening participation initiatives taking priority over the basics such as cataloguing.

Archives have been recognised as knowledge creators in their own right since the latter half of the 20th Century, but the potential for impact on research done within the archive has not been sufficiently investigated. Using the principles of realist evaluation, the archive has been repositioned as a programme able to affect and alter research outputs from archived material. Sampling is a key mechanism that influences what a researcher uses in the

archive. Currently, archival sampling is positioned as separate activities done by the donor, archivist and researcher with no information sharing between these stages. A new model of archival sampling where detailed records are kept and shared as factions of a single process would be dually purposed to provide additional context to the collection and reduce the number of assumptions the researcher has to make about this process.

Looking at the RCA collection, there is evidence of the sociological changes that took place throughout the collection's creation. This is visible through changes in the methods used in the research done by the organisation, and in changes in language and style both across the collection e.g. between newsletters and meeting minutes and with chronological progression. Comparing the findings from the RCA collection with sociological research from the same era, it is clear that the epistemology governing the research has endured the archiving process, despite being conceptually located within the empirical epistemology of archiving practice.

**Chapter 10**

The final chapter concludes on the thesis overall. The research questions are revisited and answered individually to clearly demonstrate how the findings from this research come together to answer the research questions. The research is located between the academic fields of archive theory and archive practice, working to bridge the gap identified in the Archive Theory chapter of this thesis. As well as making a key contribution to these specific academic areas, the contribution to the broader academic fields of realist research and research methods more generally is explained. A final summary concludes on this project, finishing with the author's perspective on how social researchers should approach archives going forward.

## 1.7  Overall findings

Using a combination of literature reviews, policy reviews, archive data, and field notes, this research has compiled evidence that has been used to answer the

research questions. The key findings in relation to each research question are detailed here.

The National Archives' policy frames the creation of an archive collection as a self-contained, linear process. In doing so, the creation of an archive collection is positioned as beginning at the donation of the materials, and ending when the collection is made available to the public. Documents are positioned as fixed and neutral within this process. However, academic theory demonstrates that the creation of an archive collection is far more conceptual than just the arrangement of paper documents. Prior to donation the creators and donor of the documents purposefully select which documents fit a narrative they want to publicise. This is repeated by archivists at appraisal when judgement is used to weed out documents that do not fit the criteria of 'future-worthy'. Deeper than the influence of the people involved in archiving is the institutional influence of the archive facility itself. Archives have a history as elitist, biased, and exclusionary institutions and, whilst this is recognised and challenged, theorists such as Stoler (2009) and Daston (2017) have demonstrated that the exclusion of certain narratives and favouring of others persist. Separate to the findings from theory and practice literature, this research revealed that there is a disconnect between archive theory and practice, as the process of creating an archive collection is presented by archives as a linear administration exercise, without incorporation of the findings of archive theory research.

Throughout this research, haphazardness has been a recurring theme. This demi-regularity (Fletcher, 2017) is prevalent in the execution of archive policies and in the management and handling of archive collections. This haphazardness impacts the researcher, and thus their research, through overuse and unregulated use of archivists' judgement in sampling a collection and making collections accessible. Lack of resources due to a nation-wide target-focused initiative is identified as an underlying mechanism for this haphazardness.

In addition to contributing to archive research, this research is able to make suggestions about the advancement of research methods within the archive. Subscribing to the claim by Davidson et al. (2019), archive research is a highly useful source of qualitative data. Building on Davidson et al.'s 'breadth and

depth' framework (2018), it is proposed that the same approach is taken to archive collections as is taken to archived secondary data.

## 1.8  Conclusion

As this thesis progresses, the methods used are justified by outputs of usable and useful information towards answering the research questions. This also strengthens the justification for the research as a whole, as the interesting findings serve to bridge a gap in the literature. Following on from the overview provided, Chapter 2 is a detailed account of the methods used for this research and justification for their selection.

# Chapter 2 : Methods

## 2.1 Introduction

Firstly it is important that I address my choice to use the first person when discussing methods. The use of the first person can be uncomfortable for sociologists, as eloquently expressed in Quinlan's poem 'Writing the First Person Singular', featured in *Qualitative Enquiry* (2013). However, my realist theoretical framework and advocating of strong reflexivity would not be compatible with the use of the third person. The "crisis of representation" between the objective and the subjective (Zhou and Hall, 2016) and the efforts to balance these two historically juxtaposed terms in qualitative research will be discussed in this chapter.

Before justifying my methodological decisions, the context behind these decisions is made clear. The organic development of this research was fostered through a process of revision and reflection, culminating in the research questions. The methods used to answer these questions are examined following a detailed look at the realist theoretical position that underpins this research and what that has meant for the research design. My decision to practice strong reflexivity is detailed and justified through a look at uses of reflexivity in social enquiry. Strong reflexivity is then demonstrated through a critical look at my fieldwork through the application of Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman's framework examining researchers' perceived and performed credibility and approachability during fieldwork (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017). Moving from methodology to method, I explain the use of document analysis within the archive and how a realist strategy informed sampling decisions during each stage of data collection. Finally, I highlight some of the ethical considerations of this project and how they were handled.

## 2.2 Origin and evolution

This thesis is the result of a process of evolution and the direction of the research changed at two key points during the fieldwork. To justify my decisions I will draw

on Bischoping's reflexive strategies for a good story: 'coherence', 'reportability' and 'liveability' (Bischoping, 2018, Bischoping and Gazso, 2015).

The original plan for this thesis was to investigate how an unpaid carer's identity as a carer is shaped and changed by the process of research into unpaid care. During the early stages of this thesis, I developed a strong interest in the way research into unpaid care was constructed. It became apparent that the process of research, intended as context, raised enough questions to be a thesis in its own right: How is large-scale research designed? What decisions were made in the design of research into unpaid care? Who made these decisions? What are these decisions based on? The story I was trying to tell was not *coherent* (Bischoping and Gazso, 2015) without these answers. Given the time and space limitations of this research, continuing as planned would have resulted in a confusing 'coherence-threatening truth' (Bischoping and Gazso, 2015).

The second turning point came during my time at the Manchester Archive. During my fieldwork several 'why' questions emerged, punctuating my preliminary findings:

- Why is this collection here?
- Why is it organised like it is?
- Why are some documents missing?

Probing into each question increased the scope of my research from the process behind research into unpaid care to the process behind the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA)[1] collection and the archive itself. Answering these *why* questions gave a descriptive and empirical account of the processes of the Archive. However, as a realist researcher, this empirical account felt superficial and didn't sufficiently satisfy my questions:

> 'Dynamic and complex social reality is characterised by the interdependencies of agency and structure. Agency can be seen and recorded from empirical and actual events and experiences. There are, however, real generative mechanisms that govern, mediate, and facilitate these events and experiences' (Emmel, 2013: 73).

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[1] The title of the collection is exactly that which appears in the collection catalogue provided to me by the Greater Manchester County Record office. The title as it appears in the publically available Greater Manchester Lives Archive Catalogue is 'Records of the Carer&rsquo;s Association'. It is obvious why this title has not been used.

A realist approach was used to take this further and uncover the 'richer and deeper' (Williams, 2013 in Emmel, 2013: 5) social phenomena driving these processes and the actors involved, raising the more interesting questions (and the focus of this thesis): *How* did this collection get here? What are the implications of this process on research using this collection? The way this research developed followed Emmel's proposition for scientific realism, starting with fragile ideas evolved through zigzagging between ideas and evidence (Emmel, 2013: 6). This unintentional track affirmed my realist qualitative methodology.

## 2.3 Theoretical framework

Jennifer Mason proposed that the ontology and epistemology of a piece of research may not be clear to the researcher at the beginning of the project (Mason 2002 in Emmel, 2013). This was true of this research. However, in this case, it was not a matter of weighing up the options and choosing a side but of introspection. Less of a methodological decision and more of a philosophical acceptance. The philosophical reflection that continued throughout this research was, in itself, an indication of underlying realist beliefs, however, I had not felt the need to 'nail my colours to the mast' prior to this thesis. The following will explain how my beliefs align with realist theory and how this permeates through each aspect of the research, both inherently and decisively.

By unpacking the social processes and phenomena driving the functioning of archives as institutions, I am moving beyond the observable and the empirical to acknowledge the *underlying reality* (Emmel, 2013: 72) that is the cornerstone of a realist approach. Unlike reductionism and constructivism which have a conventional distinction between micro and macro, realism focuses on the ontological distinctions between the strata in social phenomena (Gorski, 2013). As such, Realism is much more 'internally consistent and philosophically developed' than the positivism that preceded it (Gorski, 2013: 659). Since Bhaskar's development of Realism in the 1970's theorists such as Maxwell, Pawson, Sayer and Emmel have developed the concept of realist enquiry (Mason, 2002, Pawson, 2002b, Pawson et al., 1997, Emmel et al., 2018). What sets

Realism apart from previous theories is the acknowledgement of a stratified reality (Dalkin et al., 2015), where the real exists independent of our knowing it (Emmel et al., 2018). The social world is 'emergent, transitive and only ever relatively enduring' (Emmel et al., 2018: 4), meaning that realist research moves 'beyond describing what can be measured in the social world to explain the deeper causal powers that shape that which can be observed' (Emmel et al., 2018: 5). Rather than reducing behaviours into measurable variables, realist research looks for evidence to refine theory and thus, the theory is 'challenged and enhanced' through the development of models to explain empirical findings (Emmel et al., 2018: 5). Through the application of a realist framework this research positions the archive not as a starting point but as a transition point for research and an organisation that is, in line with a realist ontology, 'acting on structures that existed before [it] and in which [it] played no part in shaping, but which [it is]… trying to change or keep the same' (Emmel et al., 2018: 4). This thesis uses this realist framework to identify the 'valid yet provisional' causal mechanisms as explanations of social processes known as 'theories of the middle range' (Boudon 1991 in Emmel, 2013: 87). The world consists of open systems in which prediction is not possible (Fletcher, 2017). Therefore realist research looks for tendencies, as opposed to laws, in empirical data. These tendencies, known as 'demi-regularities' appear as 'rough trends and broken patterns' in empirical data (Fletcher, 2017: 185). As well as theoretical considerations, the limitations of the research were incorporated into the research design.

As a result of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)-funded PhD at the University of Leeds, this thesis has been necessarily constrained by the limitations of the ESRC Studentship. A realist methodology acknowledges that 'theory cannot be divorced from the institutions within which we do research and for whom we do research' (Emmel, 2013: 71), and thus, the length of time allocated to complete the research, the funding for resources and the ultimate length of the final report were predetermined by the ESRC and the University of Leeds. These set parameters were not necessarily limitations, but nevertheless removed a level of autonomy from the researcher. This influences the claims made by this research which are 'controlled by the many decisions the

researchers make, or have forced upon them by the conditions in which they are doing the research' (Emmel, 2013: 46) and supports Maxwell's claim that knowledge derived from qualitative research is 'partial, incomplete and fallible' (Maxwell, 2012: 12). The purpose of this enquiry was to go beyond the observable and the empirical to reveal the underlying reality (Emmel, 2013) of the archive process, aligning with a realist approach (Emmel, 2013). The iterative process of reflection and revision that fostered the evolution of this piece of research conforms to realist practice (Dalkin et al., 2015), and goes hand in hand with a strong reflexive approach. Gorski notes that Realism can be used as a common sense alternative to the shortcomings of positivism and empiricism (Gorski, 2013: 659). This interpretation misses the mark by not acknowledging the continual reflection and revision prevalent in Bhaskar's Critical Realism (Gorski, 2013: 659). The iterative process of reflection and revision throughout this research ensures its labelling as realist is more than superficial.

## 2.4  Reflexivity

Maxwell claimed that there is no objective or certain knowledge of the world and that research is anchored by the researcher's perspective and experiences (2012). The objective blank slate researcher championed by early grounded theorists (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is now accepted to be unrealistic and unattainable. As Zhou and Hall explain:

> 'Even when the goal is objectivity and generalizability, one cannot escape from the personal dimensions of his or her thoughts, thoughts birthed from the brows of the countless before it, swayed by the incessant pull of new, personal, individualized experiences' (Zhou and Hall, 2016: 344).

Researchers must now be accountable for their own positioning and the influence of this on the research in a process known as 'Reflexivity', described by Davies:

> 'Reflexivity, broadly defined, means a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the way in which the products of research are affected by the personnel and process of doing research' (Davies, 1999: 4).

Researchers are not just cognitive but emotional and physical beings (Barbalet, 1998). As the sole researcher throughout the project, reflexivity has meant an acknowledgement of the 'process of ongoing critical self-reflection with the goal of enhancing self-awareness' (Kondrat, 1999). Hertz links reflexivity to a researcher's ontology and epistemology with reflexivity being a continual reflection on "what I know" and "how I know it" (Hertz, 1997 in Pillow, 2003: 178). This is aligned with my realist framework. To understand why the application of reflexivity in this research, the use of reflexivity in social research will be examined, followed by an examination of Mao et al.'s model of reflexivity, and a framework developed by Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman.

Since the Post-structuralists' reflexive turn in the social sciences there has been a change from positivist, early Grounded Theory's objective, blank slate researcher to the acknowledgement of a reflexive 'open theoretically sensitive researcher' (Emmel, 2013: 31). In social enquiry 'researchers are encouraged to acknowledge their own presence and characterize their role in the formation of knowledge, and to self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and experiences on their research' (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017: 2). These characteristics include gender, race, affiliation, age, sexual orientation, immigration status, personal experiences, linguistic tradition, beliefs, biases, preferences, theoretical, political and ideological stances, and emotional responses to the participant (Berger, 2015: 220). Traditionally, reflexivity has been used to bolster ethical practices by preventing harm (Bischoping and Gazso, 2015, Kumsa et al., 2015) and to ensure rigour (Berger, 2015). Realist research takes reflexivity beyond this belt and braces approach to quality assurance and implements reflexivity as an integral part of the research process (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016). Furthermore, reflexivity is regarded as a legitimate source of knowledge (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016). This approach to reflexivity is something that is more often demonstrated in primary qualitative research than archive research, however, as a realist, I believe that a reflexive approach is necessary and beneficial in all variations of social enquiry. The principles of reflexivity used in autoethnography, necessitating an introspective researcher, have influenced my approach.

Autoethnography is praised for its 'epistemologically strong reflexivity' and its principles of 'reflecting on the positionality, perspectivity, and subjectivity of the researcher' (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016: 753). I believe these principles can and should be applied to all qualitative research, with the researcher working *with* and *through* their story, accounting for physical experience, mental state, anxieties, excitement and self-questioning (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016: 754). Kacen and Chaitin explain:

> 'the worldview and background of the researcher affects the way in which he or she constructs the world, uses language, poses questions, and chooses the lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and making meaning of it, and thus may shape the findings and conclusions of the study' (Kacen and Chaitin, 2006 in Berger, 2015: 220)

However, reflexivity has been criticised for the 'continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of researcher's positionality' (Bradbury-Jones, 2007 and Guillemin and Gillam, 2004 in Berger, 2015: 220), with Patai going as far as to say that 'we do not escape from the consequences of our positions by talking about them endlessly' (Patai, 1994 in Pillow, 2003: 177). Thus, today's qualitative researcher needs to find a balance between reflexivity and 'narcissism' (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016: 756).

To put reflexivity into practice there needs to be self-awareness, acceptance and acknowledgement of not only how the researcher's positioning affects the research but how the research affects the researcher (Bischoping, 2018). Interactions in the field make the researcher feel certain things individual to them. Discussing how the researcher negotiated these sometimes difficult feelings should be an important part of any research (Berger, 2015). Mao et al. offer a spiral model (Figure 2.1) to demonstrate the incorporation of the self in critically reflexive research (2016). Mao et al.'s model demonstrates that the self is central to the research by all aspects of the research revolving around the researcher. This one-directional approach neglects the inextricable connection between a researcher and their research. Mao et al.'s model displays the self and the research as separate entities and is thus not compatible with my realist framework in which the researcher is inextricable from the research process.

**Figure 2.1 Spiral model of Mao et al.'s critical reflexive approach**
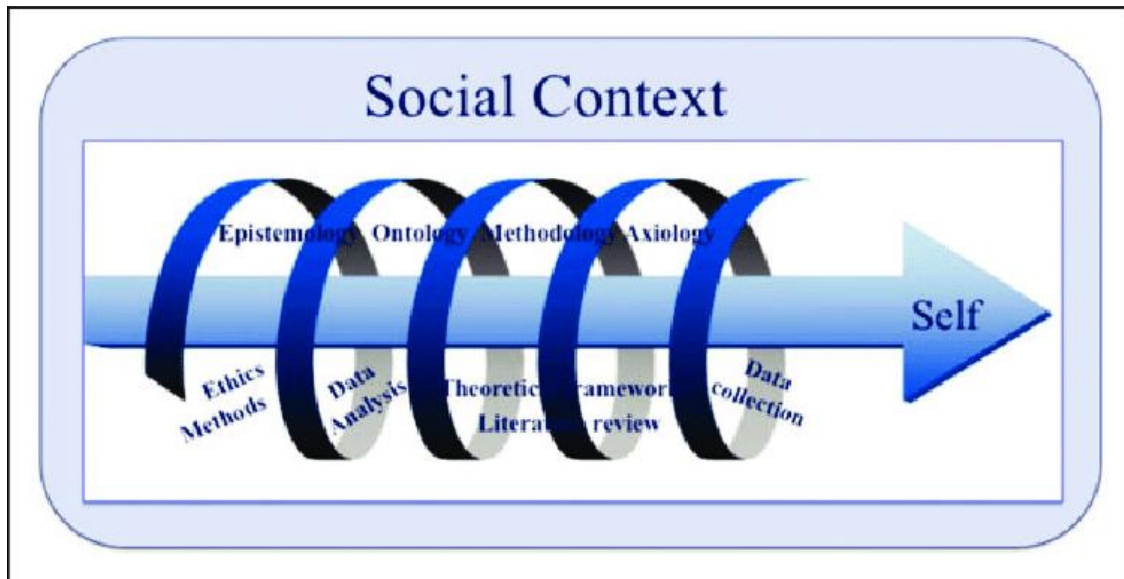


(Mao et al., 2016: 4)

The iterative process of reflexivity in realist research causes a change in perspective with an effect that permeates beyond the researcher's academic work to their everyday life. 'No matter what we study, we always have a relationship with the phenomenon and we look at it from a very specific perspective' (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016: 755). Mao et al.'s model acknowledges that the researcher and research have some degree of interplay but does not go far enough in intertwining the two. The realist approach used in this research positions the self and the research as inextricably linked (Emmel, 2013), with a free-flowing and iterative dynamic between the two. Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman suggest a 'strong reflexive' approach in their framework for understanding the impact of people's perceptions of the researcher.

Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman (2017) propose that credibility and approachability are placed on the bodies of researchers' by participants and, influenced by race, gender and privilege, this impacts whether the researcher is located as an insider or outsider in their research. This status is flexible and subject to reflection and revision by both the researcher and the participant. Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman use the example of Mayorga-Gallo, a 'light-skinned Latina' being read as white and thus positioned as an outsider during research with black, Latino/a and white participants (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-

Freeman, 2017: 379). This framework can be applied to the gatekeepers in my research.

As standalone reflections, these field notes come dangerously close to Ploder and Stadlbauer's reflexivity as narcissism (Ploder and Stadlbauer, 2016: 754), but their documentation of impact on the research is notable. My perceived approachability and perceived credibility directly influenced my performed approachability and performed credibility (Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017). There were noticeable differences in the way I was treated by different members of archive staff during my fieldwork based on my perceived credibility and approachability. Some of these interactions had no bearing on the research (e.g. a male staff member perceiving me to be in need of help carrying a box, therefore I asked for help with additional boxes that I otherwise would have helped myself to) but some were more notable. During my visits to the archive, I was often the only female visitor and I was often the youngest. I felt the label 'student' weighing heavily when in contact with an older, male archivist in particular. This perceived credibility (or lack thereof) caused my performed credibility to match it. Interactions between myself and archive staff notably changed during the visits in summer of 2016 when I was pregnant. Female staff members (all older) were warmer and more helpful because of my perceived approachability. Pregnancy also influenced the evolution of this research, drawing once again on Bischoping's reflexive strategy 'liveability' to demonstrate.

Reflexivity is often talked about in terms of the insider and outsider (Berger, 2015, Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017, Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman, 2017). Reflecting on my research into unpaid carers, I began the research as an insider because of family experience of unpaid carers. This status shifted in 2016 when I was pregnant and following bereavement, causing a change in positioning and subsequent re-evaluation of the research (Berger, 2015). My personal circumstances made me less resilient to the stories I was reading in the RCA collection. As Sinding and Aronson found in their research into unpaid carers (2003 in Bischoping and Gazso, 2015), I was at risk of facing a truth that would not be 'liveable' (Bischoping, 2018). Bischoping's strategy of 'liveability' acknowledges that a story should not only be liveable for the reader but be liveable for the researcher in order to meet the ethical requirement to do no harm

(Bischoping, 2018). My decision to focus on the process behind the collection helped to mitigate against this and in so doing I identified a gap that this research has gone on to address.

It would not have been possible to do a piece of realist research without an element of reflexivity (Emmel, 2013). Unlike Mao et al.'s model for reflexivity, Mayorga-Gallo and Hordge-Freeman's 'strong reflexive' framework was compatible with my reflexive approach, allowing room for the acknowledgement (and validation) of individual feelings in the shaping of this project. This framework was used to reflect upon my own experience of perceived and performed credibility and approachability, leading to revelations about the forming of this research project in keeping with the revision and reflection of a realist epistemology.

## 2.5  Method

The leading methodological decision in this research was how to frame the records in the RCA collection in terms of the type of data. I needed a method that incorporated both the internal and external context of the documents. A two-pronged approach of secondary data analysis and document analysis was selected based on the compatibility of these methods with my realist framework. In-keeping with the strong reflexive approach to reflexivity throughout this research, I also used fieldnotes, in the form of a field diary, communication with archive staff and users, marginalia, and paradata, as a form of data. This section will discuss how the decision was made to use these methods and my approach to each.

### 2.5.1  Secondary Data Analysis

Although it was not collated for research purposes, an archive collection is nevertheless a collection of data (Sherif, 2018). The fact that it is a collection of data from separate sources (NCSWD, NCCED etc) makes it a suitable candidate for secondary data analysis (Davidson et al., 2019). Since the 1960's when Glaser suggested secondary data analysis move beyond its quantitative roots

(Sherif, 2018: 2), the idea of answering new questions with old data has become 'a respected, common, and cost-effective approach to maximising the usefulness of the collected data' (Hinds et al., 1997: 408). Glaser and Strauss noted that documents should be akin to 'the anthropologist's informant or a sociologist's interviewee' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 163) and, when done well, secondary analysis is a useful tool for the qualitative researcher (Heaton, 2008). To articulate my position on archived material as secondary data, without compromising on the need for context that is embedded in a realist framework, I needed an approach that envisioned archive data in qualitative research as akin to the principles of Big Data in quantitative research.

Big Data refers to the mass of data collected by cheap sources such as social media and web traffic, as well as computer-automated analysis of speeches, news articles and blog posts (Lohr, 2012). This data is then used by businesses, governments, law enforcement agencies and health services, among others, to show and predict trends (Lohr, 2012). I believe big data correlates with archived material because data is collected and stored without a singular research purpose. Much like the algorithm that searches for keywords in social network comments, the archivist is collecting and presenting data without specification of its purpose or multiple purposes.

Archive collections can be very large datasets, as demonstrated in Kitchin's book 'The Data Revolution' (2014):

> 'In 2013 the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the US was storing some 4.5 million cubic feet of physical documents from US executive branch agencies, courts, Congress and presidents (just 5 per cent of the federal government's records) to which it adds 30,000 linear feet of new records annually (Ellis 2013), as well as holding more than 500 terabytes of digital data' (Kitchin, 2014: 67).

Methods for secondary data analysis did not encapsulate the sheer quantity of qualitative data a researcher is faced with in the archive. Data that has not been accumulated for a central research purpose. Whilst trying to articulate my approach to the analysis of archived material, Davidson et al. published their paper *Big data, qualitative style* (Davidson et al., 2019), which resonated with both my realist theoretical framework and the approach I had taken to the material within the archive.

Davidson et al. claim that in a climate of budgetary restraint where costs and resources for research are increasingly limited, the future of qualitative research lies in combining small-scale qualitative data sets into larger-scale data sets for re-use, termed 'big qual' (Davidson et al., 2019). Advancing Mason's 'scaling up' proposition for the secondary analysis of qualitative data (Mason 2002 in Davidson et al., 2019), Davidson et al. suggest a 'Breadth and Depth' model in which the researcher works *across* the data before digging into it (Davidson et al., 2019). Using 'hybrid iterations of text mining and qualitative techniques' (Davidson et al., 2019: 366) to create usable datasets that haven't been just put together but that can be assembled in new ways for new research questions 'the gains from pooling data from multiple studies sharing the same broad topic' (Davidson et al., 2019: 367). By doing so researchers are able to ask questions that could not be answered by individual projects alone (Davidson et al., 2019: 367 ). This model is eloquently explained through the metaphor of archaeology. In the first stage of the model potential data sources are reviewed for inclusion, based on criteria set by the researcher. Following the selection of suitable sources, extracts of data are examined for keywords or themes, which are then sampled for further investigation, labelled Recursive Surface Thematic Mapping (Davidson et al., 2019: 370). 'In archaeological metaphor terms this is akin to digging shallow test pits, where the digging is only deep enough to show whether anything of interest is present in the data extract being examined' (Davidson et al., 2019: 371). This then moves on to 'deep excavation', with 'in-depth' interpretive analysis of the selected cases as wholes (Davidson et al., 2019: 372). Davidson et al. relate this theory to the use of archived secondary data, however, I believe it has applications beyond archived data to the archives more generally.

The metaphor of archaeology has long been used to describe archive research. Derrida used it to 'let the stones talk' as a testament to Freud, known for his love of archaeological digs (Derrida 1996, in Freshwater, 2003). Davidson et al.'s use of this metaphor broadens the parameters of what the archive has to offer the researcher. It symbolises a new wave of archive research, where the archive is not just a site for knowledge production but for theory testing and revision. Through Davidson et al.'s Breadth and Depth model 'analysis is

achieved by iteratively combining recursive surface thematic mapping and in-depth interpretive work' (Davidson et al., 2019: 364). Taking the iterative property of theory testing and refinement from realist evaluation, Davidson et al.'s model aligns with both my realist approach to this research as a whole and my specific approach to the RCA collection, allowing for the achievement of both ontological depth and epistemological narrative necessitated by a realist methodology (Bhaskar 2008 in Emmel et al., 2018). However, for Davidson et al.'s model to be applicable the RCA collection needs to be justified as 'big qual' data.

The RCA collection meets the criteria for 'big qual' data because it exceeds the reading capacity of the research team (Davidson et al., 2019). I used the RCA collection catalogue to survey the available data, using my research questions as criteria, looking for keywords relating to research[2]. I then read each of the selected documents to assess their relevance, including both 'the more and the less promising' documents (Davidson et al., 2019: 371). By using the recursive surface thematic mapping of Davidson et al.'s Breadth and Depth approach (Davidson et al., 2019), I was able to purposefully sample the already narrowed RCA collection, resulting in the final selection of the categories of 'Meeting Minutes' and 'Newsletters', along with various research reports done by the NCSWD. NCCED and CNA. These documents were then subject to in-depth analysis, as described in stage five of the Breadth and Depth model:

> 'An immersion in data at a scale that qualitative researchers feel uses the strengths of qualitative analysis; that is, in being sensitive to changing context, multi-layered complexity and rich detail to represent intricate social realities and produce nuanced social explanations' (Davidson et al., 2019: 372)

As Glass warns, there is a temptation to use qualitative secondary analysis for 'pedestrian reviewing', prioritising ease over appropriateness (1976). By using Davidson et al.'s model I was able to take a large qualitative dataset (the RCA collection) and, through purposeful sampling (Emmel, 2013), reduce it to a manageable amount of data without compromising on the 'distinctive order of knowledge about social processes that is the hallmark of rigorous qualitative

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[2] Although this keyword search was initially carried out at file-level within the RCA collection, when it came to viewing the documents it was limited to series-level because individual files are only available to view as part of their series.

research, with its integrity of attention to nuanced context and detail' (Davidson et al., 2019: 365).

Although Davidson et al.'s Breadth and Depth model of secondary data analysis was a fitting method for answering questions about the content of the RCA collection, it did not allow for an examination of the external context of the documents. This research called for consideration of the potential of documents as tools that '*do* things as well as contain things' (Prior, 2008: 822). To evaluate the Archive itself I needed to directly challenge the notion that the records within the archive collection are merely receptacles of content 'screened, counted, and coded for appropriate evidence in support or refutation of relevant hypotheses' (Krippendorf, 2004 and Weber, 1990 in Prior, 2008: 822). Prior's proposition that 'the ways in which such material is actually called upon, manipulated, and functions cannot be determined by an analysis of content' (Prior, 2008: 824) was used to complement the internal focus of Davidson et al.'s model with an external examination of the collection. Thus, Prior's approach to document analysis was used to complement the secondary data analysis.

### 2.5.2  Document Analysis

Along with the likes of Glaser and Heaton, Yanow agrees that documents are a versatile source that can be used as part of research to provide background information or corroborate or refute primary data (2007). However, Yanow takes this a step further and suggests that the analysis of the documents themselves can be used as the central data in a research project (Yanow, 2007). This approach moves beyond content analysis to 'the selective device through which the facts were churned; what facts were selected to be written down and which were rejected' (Caulley, 1983: 24). Prior's extensive writing on methods of document analysis and its use in qualitative research have influenced its use in this research.

In the book *Using Documents in Social Research* (2003), Prior provided five key points regarding organisational document analysis:

- Documents need to be considered as situated products, rather than as fixed and stable things in the world

- Documents are produced in social settings and are always to be regarded as collective (social) products
- Determining how documents are consumed and used in organized settings, that is, how they function, should form an important part of any social scientific research project
- In approaching documents as a field for research we should forever keep in mind the dynamic involved in the relationships between production, consumption, and content
- Documents form a field for research in their own right, and should not be considered as mere props for action.
(Prior, 2003: 26).

These points convey documents as nuanced in their creation, collection, retention, and observation, accepting multi-layered influence in an echo of the social strata of critical realism. This is reiterated by Carr, who stated that 'the facts of history and evaluation never come to us 'pure', since they do not and cannot exist in a pure form; they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder' (Carr, 1961 in Caulley, 1983: 24). Documents are *active agents* in episodes of interaction and schemes of social organization (Prior, 2008: 824) with potential far beyond that of a receptacle. Prior's document analysis places the manipulation of the document in the social context as the priority (Prior, 2008: 825), and is thus aligned with realist epistemology and ontology underpinning this research. Before moving on to discuss the research itself it is important to acknowledge where Prior's influence stops.

Following on from Prior's 2003 work, Prior developed a typology 'of the ways in which documents have come to be, and can be considered in social research' (Prior, 2008: 825), presented in the 2008 paper *Repositioning Documents in Social Research* (see Figure 2.2). Prior clearly demonstrates the relevance of these approaches to the field of Health Science and broader document analysis (Prior, 2008: 825), but the particular use of document analysis in this thesis does not fit comfortably into the model. Prior's approaches focus on the intrinsic properties of the document and thus have a limited application to this research which uses Davidson et al.'s approach to content analysis. This limitation is exhibited in Prior's use of archaeology as a metaphor for document analysis, again covered more applicably by Davidson et al. (Davidson et al., 2019). I have

taken an alternative, extrinsic approach to document analysis, focusing on not 'how documents function in, and impact on, schemes of social interaction and social organization' (Figure 2.2), but how social interaction and organisation has impacted on the documents and their function. This approach is more akin to an architect evaluating the existing construction as opposed to an archaeologist evaluating the remnants of what once was. Prior's approaches are based on examples of active documents in the medical field (e.g. x-ray) as 'actors' in their own right (Prior, 2008: 828). These are very different from documents in the archive, retired from active duty. Thus my use of document analysis is envisioned as an extension of Prior's typology, expanding on rather than replacing the existing table (Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2 Approaches to the study of documents**

Table I   Approaches to the study of documents

| Focus of research approach | Document as resource | Document as topic |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Content | (1) Approaches that focus almost entirely on what is 'in' the document. | (2) 'Archaeological' approaches that focus on how document content comes into being. |
| Use and function | (3) Approaches that focus on how documents are used as a resource by human actors for purposeful ends. | (4) Approaches that focus on how documents function in, and impact on, schemes of social interaction and social organization. |

(Prior, 2008: 825)

### 2.5.3  Fieldnotes

The use of fieldnotes as data is a principle that originated from ethnographic anthropology in the early 1900's (Emerson et al., 2011), and has since been developed within the field of ethnographic research (Atkinson et al., 2001; Emerson et al., 2011). The 'mundane and unromantic' practice of writing fieldnotes entails the observer transforming 'portions of [their] lived experience into written fieldnotes' (Atkinson et al., 2001: 352). Since the turn of the 21st century fieldnotes have become cemented into qualitative enquiry as a valued

and valid source of data (Emerson et al., 2011), however there is a lot of debate about how fieldnotes should be written, how they should be presented and even what constitutes fieldnotes (Sanjek, 1990, Atkinson et al., 2001, Emerson et al., 2011, Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018).

Researchers' fieldnotes have traditionally been used as an analysis aid as opposed to being treated as data in their own right (Ottenberg 1990 in Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018). This has led, where fieldnotes are used as data, to guides on ethnographic analysis presupposing the existence of detailed meticulously-collected fieldnotes (Strauss and Corbin 1990, Richardson 1990, Wolcott 1990 in Emerson et al., 2011). However, the reality is that 'raw' fieldnotes are 'written (for the most part) more or less contemporaneously with the events depicted' (Atkinson et al., 2001: 353). Fieldnotes, as observations and reflections from 'the field', are selective (Atkinson et al., 2001). They are often limited to moments that provoke strong or noticeable feelings in the researcher (Trigger et al. 2012 in Fujii, 2015). Moreover, they are accumulated over the course of fieldwork into a 'corpus', often with little or no coherence or consistency (Atkinson et al., 2001). Thus fieldnotes cannot be considered a complete record of events (Atkinson 1992 in Atkinson et al., 2001). Despite this messiness, fieldnotes are arguably 'original texts' (Mulkay 1985 in Atkinson et al., 2001). Life is not as polished as the accounts of ethnography found in publications (Emerson et al., 2011), and fieldnotes offer a representation of the realities of the lived experience of a researcher's fieldwork.

There is a traditional assumption, prevalent in ethnographic research, that revelations from fieldnotes can only be achieved by, and should be attributed to, 'the researcher's long-term immersion in the field' (Schatz 2009 in Fujii, 2015). However, this level of 'deep immersion' is not necessary for a revelation and nor it is exclusive to ethnographers (Fujii, 2015). Fieldnotes as data offer an understanding of the process of how the researcher turns a lived experience into a written, publishable text (Emerson et al., 2011). This data 'extend[s] the field of research methodology by examining not only the by-products of data collection but also the interpretation and analysis of data' (Edwards et al., 2017: 14), extending its reach beyond ethnography and beyond deeply immersive studies. It is because of this intimate nature of fieldnotes that researchers have been

hesitant to acknowledge their use of fieldnotes as data. Fieldnotes are intimate, private documents (Atkinson et al., 2001, Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018) and cultural norms dictate that asking someone to reveal their fieldnotes signifies rudeness and distrust (Sanjek, 1990), and provokes embarrassment (Emerson et al., 2011). Analysis of fieldnotes can also be labour intensive, with poor quality analysis coming across as 'anecdotal, unreflective, [and] descriptive' (Pope et al., 2000).

Finding revelation in the mundane (Fujii, 2015) and developing theory from fieldnote data is not easy or straightforward (Emerson et al., 2011). The use of fieldnotes:

> 'takes us closer to the research experience and illustrates how researchers can draw upon a variety of materials that have the potential to deliver an increased understanding of the research process as well as the substantive field of investigation' (Edwards et al., 2017: 15).

As this research explored the research process itself, the use of fieldnotes as data was more straightforward than if the subject of investigation had been extraneous to the research. As suggested by Phillippi and Lauderdale, 'a well-framed approach to field note collection is ideally created prior to study start, then revised purposefully based on findings to incorporate new components while retaining continuity of key items throughout data collection' (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018: 383). This is reflected in my use of fieldnotes, and how their use evolved from initially purposed as a record of my data collection within the archive to a reporting of my experience researching within the archive. This process is similar to Fujii's 'accidental ethnography' (2015), described as 'paying systematic attention to the unplanned moments that take place outside an interview, survey, or other structured methods' (Fujii, 2015: 525). By paying attention to these moments the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the research context. For the purpose of this research 'fieldnotes' includes marginalia and paradata are defined as 'the by-products of research activity' (Edwards et al., 2017), including my field diary, and rough notes I made about findings whilst in the archive. Communications with the archivist and other archive users are also used as data, as Goodwin and Hughes (2011) note, personal correspondence is

useful data and communications provide evidence of shifting and changing human interdependencies.

As fieldnote data was one of the types of data used for this research, and not the only type of data, my fieldnotes were used during the preliminary stages of data analysis to reinforce my findings. Like any other data the researcher has to make sense of fieldnotes by sifting through them and interpreting them (Pope et al., 2000). Revisiting my fieldnotes confirmed the questions I was having about the composition of archive collections by highlighting where my expectations as an archive user had been barricaded. In the final stages of analysis, my fieldnotes were used to provide demonstrable examples of the phenomena I had theorised based on the document analysis and secondary data analysis 'in action'. Utilising fieldnotes in this way qualifies that 'the importance of these observations lies not in what they tell us about the particular, but rather what they suggest about the larger political and social world in which they are embedded' (Fujii, 2015: 525). Fieldnotes can also reveal a lot about the larger political and social world of the researcher through critical reflection. Critical reflection entails 'a deeper level of reflection whereby researchers examine the assumptions (i.e. beliefs, values, ideas) that guide their actions' (Fook and Gardner, 2007, Brookfield, 2017) to uncover assumptions implicit in our work (Maharaj, 2016: 115), linking back to the strong reflexive approach used in this research (see section 2.4).

## 2.6  Sampling

The way sampling is done in the archive, both intentionally and unintentionally is something that is looked at extensively in Chapter 5. However, before progressing to any findings it is important to understand how sampling was used in the fieldwork for this research; what sampling decisions were made and how those decisions were informed. As explained in the Method section of this chapter (2.5), sampling decisions were made in regards to the RCA collection.

Emmel's scientific realist approach to sampling in qualitative research (Emmel, 2013) has influenced the sampling strategies used in this research. It has already been established that I brought a realist, reflexive approach to my

research. This includes fieldwork. I actively shaped the research and made ongoing decisions about sampling throughout, whilst recognising my theoretical sensitivity and presence in what was being investigated (Emmel, 2013: 46). Each sampling decision was made, not guided. Each decision was also rooted in the context of this research as a PhD. Resource and, in particular, time constraints were at the forefront of all sampling decisions. This is especially evident in the sampling choices made regarding the RCA collection.

The decision to use the RCA collection was straightforward but nevertheless a considered and informed sampling choice[3]. Carers UK is the UK's only national membership charity for carers (Carers UK, 2014d) and its evolution from the National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents (NCSWD) played a leading role in the Carers' Movement of the early 1960s. The RCA collection is the only archive collection containing records from a Carer organisation during the Carers' Movement (The National Archives, 2018a), making it the primary source of research into unpaid carers during this period. Thus, the RCA collection was the obvious choice for this research. As this collection is housed by the Greater Manchester County Record Office (GMCRO) the decision on location was predetermined. Sampling within the collection was a more involved process.

The RCA collection is initially split into two parts; documents included in the catalogue and documents not included in the catalogue (GMCRO, no date). Documents included in the catalogue are divided across 23 boxes (Archivist, 2015) which do not perfectly correspond with the categories and sub-categories within the catalogue (GMCRO, no date). Documents not included in the catalogue are held in 26 additional boxes held off-site (Archivist, 2016). The decision was made to only include the 23 boxes that have been catalogued[4]. The 26 additional boxes were excluded from the research for several reasons; their existence was only made known during the final stages of data collection (author's field notes), the content was unknown (Archivist, 2016), and only a

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[3] As previously noted, this research evolved within the archive, so the initial decision to use the RCA collection was premised on the focus of this research being on research into unpaid care.

[4] Numbers true as of 2018

handful of boxes could be physically brought to Manchester Archive per fortnight. After scanning the content of three of these boxes (the content of which was miscellaneous and not relevant to this research), it was clear that a thorough examination of all boxes would not be possible given the time limit on the research. This purposeful sampling strategy follows Patton's guidance to select information-rich cases whilst acknowledging resource limitations (Patton, 2015). If the concepts that have emerged from this research are taken further in future projects it could be useful to revisit the archive and examine the contents of the additional boxes, however, the usefulness of this exercise cannot be known until the boxes have been catalogued.

The records themselves were selected using a purposeful sampling strategy, described by Mason as:

> 'selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research question, your theoretical position, your analytic practice, and most importantly the argument or explanation that you are developing' (Mason, 2002: 124).

Mason's description acknowledges the researcher as reflexive (Emmel, 2013: 50) but is limited by its failure to acknowledge influences external to the research. To go beyond the empirical layer of the observable and reach the underlying reality the sampling strategy 'must explain the causal powers, liabilities, and dispositions inherent in a complex, open and stratified social, natural, and physical system' (Emmel, 2013: 65). This was achieved through the reflexive approach taken throughout this research, demonstrated in the criteria for document selection.

The RCA collection contains a wide variety of document types including newsletters, meeting minutes, research reports, leaflets and books (GMCRO, no date). This research was concerned only with research into unpaid carers, thus a purposeful sampling strategy needed to be in place to identify the information-rich cases (Patton, 2015). In this instance 'information rich' meant those that mentioned research. Cases that contained any information about primary research were actively chosen during the 'surveying of archived data' phase of Davidson et al.'s Breadth and Depth model (Davidson et al., 2019). *Primary research* was defined as any instance of using participants, identified by using keywords/phrases such as; research, question, questionnaire, help, answer. Following the realist strategy of revision and testing, these keywords were

revisited and revised as fieldwork progressed to account for dated language and unusual recruitment strategies.

An easier and more time-efficient method would have been to include only records labelled as 'research' by the archive in the RCA collection catalogue. This was not a viable option for three reasons. Firstly the titles and descriptions of records within the RCA collection catalogue are inconsistent (GMCRO, no date). Some report titles are styled: 'Report: title', some are styled: 'Report: research on…', some are styled: 'Title, research into…' or 'Title, report on…', and some have a short description of the content of the report under the title (GMCRO, no date), making it difficult to establish which are research reports or contain reference to research. Secondly, newsletters and meeting minutes by Carers UK and its predecessors include several sub-headings which are not included in the catalogue (GMCRO, no date). Research mentioned in newsletters and meeting minutes is evidence of not only what aspects of research are important but of which aspects of research were reported to which audiences[5]. The final reason for not utilising the Archive's categorisation of documents is because the parameters used to catalogue the items are unknown. This means that the catalogue itself is unreliable and its categories cannot be replicated. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 Findings from Practice and Chapter 8 Findings from the collection.

To summarise, sampling in this research was necessarily constrained by the limits of PhD research, however, a realist sampling strategy allowed for incorporation of these time and resource limitations without constraining the sample. The collection, boxes within it, and subsequent records were purposefully selected for their information-rich cases (Emmel, 2013, Patton, 2015). Records relating to research were manually chosen using a visual keyword search as opposed to using items labelled as 'research' in the catalogue. Purposefully selecting cases in this way followed Davidson et al.'s model for secondary analysis of archived qualitative data (Davidson et al., 2019) and aligned with the realist framework underpinning this research.

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[5] This is discussed in detail in Chapter 8

## 2.7 Ethics

As a funded studentship under the ESRC and the University of Leeds this project is bound by the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (ESRC, 2018) and the University of Leeds Research Ethics Policy (University of Leeds, 2015). A high ethical standard ensures 'the maximum benefit of the research whilst minimising the risk of actual or potential harm' (ESRC, 2018). This piece of research was 'low risk' because the methods did not include accessing or talking to participants (University of Leeds, 2015). However, there were still some relevant ethical principles to address. The following section will detail how this research has been designed in accordance with the relevant ethical principles which subsequently led to approval from the University of Leeds Ethics Committee.

### Research Design

I can confirm that this research does 'not duplicate work that has already been undertaken' and 'that it will address the question which has been posed' (University of Leeds, 2015: 7).

### Conduct

This research has been conducted with integrity. The principles of honesty and openness have and will be observed in both the conduct of the research and the publication of the results. I had completed relevant methods training before starting any fieldwork and fieldwork did not start until I had received ethical approval from my institution.

### Data Protection

The storage and use of data comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 (2018) and the University's Code of Practice on Data Protection (University of Leeds, 2018), and will continue to do so (including new GDPR regulations).

**Monitoring of Research**

This research has been conducted under the guidance of the University of Leeds and the ESRC. Review processes have been completed in accordance with the terms of the ESRC Studentship and the University of Leeds PhD place.

**Access**

The RCA collection is owned by the GMCRO and housed at Manchester Central Library (Manchester City Council, 2018b). Collections owned by the GMCRO are available to the public but some access restrictions are in place for certain collections (Manchester City Council, 2018b). The RCA collection is available to view on request in the Search Room of the Manchester Central Library (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). There were no ethical concerns in gaining access to the RCA collection.

**Anonymity**

Neither the ESRC nor the University of Leeds necessitates anonymity in the use of archived documents. The National Archives confirmed that anonymity was not necessary for any names in documents available to the public unless specified by the donor organisation (The National Archives, 2019). No such specification applies to the RCA collection.

**Conclusion**

Although this research only required a 'light touch' ethics review, all ethical considerations have been taken seriously and met to the highest standard. This project received full ethical approval and consequently, there are no ethical concerns associated with this piece of research.

## 2.8  Summary and Conclusion

This research has gone through a process of evolution. Originally intent on investigating how an unpaid carer's identity as a carer is shaped and changed by the process of research into unpaid care, the questions that arose from preliminary reading were too interesting to ignore. A gap in research was identified between archive theory and policy and archives' use as a site for research. Using a realist theoretical framework this thesis is positioned within that gap.

The exploration behind the empirically observable to the social phenomena influencing archive processes was driven by a realist framework. As such, this research aimed to use empirical enquiry to get to the 'underlying reality' and find indications of the effects of causal mechanisms influencing researchers' decision-making in archives. Inspired by Emmel's *Sampling and Choosing Cases in Qualitative Research* (2013), the limitations of the research as a PhD were acknowledged and incorporated into the research design. A strong reflexive approach ensured that the limitations of the researcher were also acknowledged throughout. This research called for an approach to analysis that accounted for both the internal and external qualities of archived documents. Two separate approaches were chosen to achieve this.

Davidson et al.'s Breadth and Depth model was chosen for its novel approach to large-scale qualitative data and its alignment with a realist framework. This model was used to make manageable the vast amount of qualitative information within the RCA collection, and to purposefully sample a workable amount of data. Following the model, an in-depth analysis of selected cases was done. As Davidson et al.'s model was not designed explicitly for archive collections, document analysis was used to analyse the RCA collection over and above its contents. Document analysis was chosen because of its flexibility and alignment with my realist theoretical positioning. Prior's influence on the use of document analysis in this research is evident, however, this research takes document analysis a step further, expanding on Prior's typology of document analysis in social research. Prior's writings align with my theoretical understanding of document analysis and my use of the method has been inspired by Prior's work. However, Prior's more recent typographical model to encapsulate

the use of document analysis in social research falls short of what I was trying to achieve. I suggest an expansion to this model to include external as well as internal influences on documents. All data collection and analysis conforms to a high ethical standard.

As an ESRC-funded PhD project at the University of Leeds, this research was required to adhere to the ESRC and University of Leeds' codes of ethical conduct. This research complies with all aspects of both, without exception.

# Chapter 3 : History of the Carers' Movement

## 3.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 detailed the methods used for this research, along with their justification. Moving on, this chapter is the first of three dedicated to literature. Providing a detailed history of the Carers' Movement, with a focus on research within it, this chapter is the background to Carers UK. Carers UK is the charity responsible for the archive collection used in this research: the Records of the Carers Association (RCA) collection. It has already been established in the Methods chapter of this thesis (Chapter 2) that a realist framework has been used throughout. As this research aims to uncover the 'theories of the middle range' (Boudon 1991 in Emmel, 2013: 87) that work behind the scenes of the archive to shape the RCA collection, it is important to first understand the social context in which the RCA collection was created. The social context behind the creation of the documents within the RCA collection provides an understanding of the public story of Carers UK which, in turn, will allow for comparison with the narrative of the archive and theories on what has and has not been archived. Coming from Carers UK, and a product of the Carers' Movement, the Records are intertwined with legislative changes and political movements that need to be understood before any suggestion can be made about the mechanisms behind the construction of the RCA collection.

The RCA collection covers a period of time from just before the formation of the first unpaid carers' charity in 1965 to the final donation to the RCA collection in 2008. Although this period covers a large portion of the Carers' Movement, the Carers' Movement continues today. It is the 'driving force to make carers' lives better' (Carers UK, 2014b). The push for more and better support for unpaid carers is a continuing movement in the face of an ageing population, and pressure on health and social care budgets (Carers UK, 2014b). Taking these factors into consideration, this chapter details key milestones of the Carers' Movement, from the events that necessitated it's beginning to the most recent Care Act (Carers UK, 2014a).

The most recent donation to the RCA collection was in 2008, however, the timeline for this chapter continues past that point. This decision is grounded by Stoler's claim that an archived collection is rooted in the context of its host institution (Stoler, 2009: 25). By looking at developments in legislation and research into unpaid care up to 2015, we can place the RCA collection into the context in which it is housed, reviewed and researched today.

Finally, a note on the order of this chapter. Since this chapter provides the context for the RCA collection, a collection ordered chronologically, it makes logical sense to use the same format to allow for easier understanding of how the two align. In the same vein, the changes in the name of the organisation have been signposted in this chapter, as the RCA collection is partly separated by organisation name (GMCRO, no date). The chronological order of this chapter is best visualised in a timeline.

## 3.2  Timeline

The Carers' Movement has spanned over four decades, with many milestones important in the shaping of the Carers' Movement and Carers UK. Figure 3.1 shows these milestones chronologically from the start of the Carers' Movement in 1963 to the most recent piece of carers' legislation in 2014. Starting with the initiation of the Carers' Movement, these milestones will be used to build an overview of the evolution of research into unpaid carers.

The 52 years spanned by this chapter have seen a range of changes that have influenced the Carers' Movement. Time and space constraints mean this chapter has been limited to milestones that are relevant to the RCA collection and the analysis of the RCA collection. As such, milestones have been given space according to their relevance. For example, the examination of government surveys into unpaid care has been explored in greater detail than, for example, financial support for carers. Although included in the above timeline, the measurement of carers' by government surveys will be discussed in the next chapter, as this is better examined by type of survey than chronologically.

**Figure 3.1 Timeline of Carers' Movement milestones 1963-2015**

| Left milestone | Year | Year | Right milestone |
|---|---|---|---|
| Carers Movement Started | 1963 | 1990 | NHS Community Care Act<br>GHS trailer module again |
| First Survey of Unpaid Carers | 1964 | 1991 | |
| NCSWD Founded | 1965 | 1992 | Speak Up Speak Out: research amongst members of Carers National Association. |
| | 1966 | 1993 | |
| Introduction of Dependant Relative Tax Allowance | 1967 | 1994 | |
| | 1968 | 1995 | GHS trailer module again<br>The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act |
| | 1969 | 1996 | |
| | 1970 | 1997 | First National Helpline for Carers |
| Introduction of Attendance Allowance | 1971 | 1998 | First International Conference on Family Caregiving |
| | 1972 | 1999 | Carers Strategy |
| | 1973 | 2000 | |
| | 1974 | 2001 | CNA renamed Carers UK<br>Carer section added to Census<br>CARMEN Network founded |
| Introduction of Mobility Allowance | 1975 | 2002 | |
| Introduction of Invalid Carers Allowance | 1976 | 2003 | |
| | 1977 | 2004 | Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 |
| | 1978 | 2005 | |
| | 1979 | 2006 | Work and Families Act Eurocarers formed |
| | 1980 | 2007 | |
| Association of Carers formed | 1981 | 2008 | Pension Rights<br>Carers win protection against discrimination and harassment at work |
| NCSWD rebranded as NCCED | 1982 | 2009 | Carers Strategy Carers in Households Survey |
| | 1983 | 2010 | Equality Act |
| Carers in Transition: a Relief and Respite role for the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependents published | 1984 | 2011 | Carers in Census for England and Wales again |
| GHS Trailer module titled 'Carers' – first government recording of Carers | 1985 | 2012 | The International Alliance of Carer Organisations created<br>New rights announced to come into force in 2015 |
| Invalid Carer Allowance extended to married women | 1986 | 2013 | |
| | 1987 | 2014 | Care Act |
| NCCED and Association of Carers merged to form Carers National Association | 1988 | 2015 | Carers Allowance protected |
| | 1989 | | |

## 3.3  Right place, right time

The success of the Carers' Movement in the early years was pivotal to its continuing momentum and endurance (Cook, 2009). This success has been attributed to continual outstanding leadership and a narrow focus with 'realistic, desirable and achievable' goals (Cook, 2009). However, there is also arguably an element of 'right place right time'. Progress by the Carers' Movement goes hand in hand with progress made by feminist movements. An exploration of how rights and recognition for carers and caring activities were developed through the Carers' Movement is contextualised through an understanding of the developments of feminism for carers and women more generally. The Carers' Movement is intertwined with the feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s because 'caring often entails and perpetuates the oppression of women' (Fisher and Tronto, 1990: 37). Understanding the theoretical underpinnings of the feminist movement is to understand the positioning from which the Carers' Movement developed.

The Carers' Movement saw success on a much larger scale than could have been predicted for a charitable organisation in the 1960s (Cook, 2009). The notion of the 19th Century 'dutiful daughter', required and expected to give up their own aspirations to care for a sick or elderly parent (Cook, 2009) was at odds with the principles of the Women's Liberation Movement of 1960's Britain (The British Library, no date), providing a catalyst for the Carers' Movement and the progression of carers' rights. Since the 1970s there has been a steady increase in works that 'offer a critical, feminist engagement with political theory' (Molyneaux, 1998: 219) and unpaid care is an example of this. However, this has not been straightforward, as Gordon et al. (1996) note:

> 'Since the inception of the feminist movement, feminists have rebelled against domestic sequestration. In fighting for liberation, however, they have been divided about how to achieve equality and how that struggle should affect women's traditional caregiving roles' (Gordon et al., 1996: 258)

Feminist literature of the 1970 and 1980s described three distinct types of carer; the selfish carer, the androgynous carer, and the visible carer (Fisher and Tronto, 1990). The idea of the 'selfish carer' came from the position that care is a burden on women (Molyneaux et al, 2011) and women need to consciously prioritise their own needs to overcome this (Fisher and Tronto, 1990). However,

this theory neglects the fact that life in and of itself is a constant negotiation of caring relationships (Nakano Glen, 2000). The 'androgynous carer' contextualises care by recognising that 'caring acquires its meaning in social contexts, such as the household, the marketplace, or bureaucracy' (Fisher and Tronto, 1990: 56). This categorisation positions care as undervalued work, viewed by society as 'women's work', and suggests that a more male-inclusive stereotype would increase the value and visibility of this work. The 'androgynous carer' is short sighted in that it does not account for the fact that the division of labour by gender is not limited to caring but this dynamic is a product of a patriarchal society (Fisher and Tronto, 1990). Similarly, Hughes et al. (2005) argue that, regardless of gender, carers are viewed as 'inferior and defective men' (Hughes et al., 2005: 266). The 'visible carer' takes the alternative view that women as the main source of caring will not (and should not) change, but the place of carers in society and the value society places on caregiving should be more valued (Gilligan, 1993), as 'patriarchal societies have not truly valued caregiving, but have instead sentimentalized and romanticized what they insist are women's "superior moral virtues" and "natural" inclination to care for the dependent' (Gordon et al., 1996: 257). By increasing the visibility of care work feminists aimed to 'expand women's professional horizons while simultaneously seeking greater respect and financial rewards for women's traditional activities in the home and helping professions' (Gordon et al., 1996: 263). However, recognition does not improve the situation and can in fact reinforce the status quo of caring. Historically, the male breadwinner role enabled and envisioned women's caring role within the home for children, the aged and the disabled (Leitner, 2003). As care work is most commonly done by women, by supporting the family in its caring function the caring role of women is strengthened and the gender division of family care is reproduced (Leitner, 2003: 366).

The commonality between these theories is that they are 'person-centric', focusing on the person doing the care rather than the care itself. This dichotomy between 'the rational, autonomous man' and 'the dependent, caring woman' (Fisher and Tronto, 1990: 36) meant that challenges to the concept of caring were too concerned with motivation rooted in the enduring assumptions of caring (Mayerhoff, 1971, Noddings, 1984). This 'see-saw quality' of the women's

movement, with one side aiming to eliminate gender limitations and the other wanting recognition for activities designated as 'female', prevalent in the feminist movements of the late 1800s, still persists today (Cott, 1987 in Gordon et al, 1996) and is visible within the Carers' Movement. The Women's Liberation Movement gained momentum and publicity in the UK with the introduction of the contraceptive pill in 1961, followed by revision of the Married Women's Property Act in 1964 (The British Library, no date). It was during this time that Mary Webster, a Reverend forced to retire at age 31 to look after her elderly parents, found herself without any further caring responsibilities and began to seek out validation for her own experience of caring (Cook, 2009).

Carers UK dates the start of the Carers' Movement back to 1963, when the founder, Reverend Mary Webster, wrote a letter to a national newspaper to raise awareness of the issues faced by single women with caring responsibilities (Carers UK, 2014b). This letter, in which Webster famously described the plight of these women as akin to being 'under house arrest', inspired an article in The Guardian (Henwood, 2015) which, coupled with a meeting at the House of Commons, aroused an overwhelming amount of interest and support (Henwood, 2015). The Carers' Movement had begun in earnest. The first piece of research into unpaid carers swiftly followed (NCSWD, 1964, Cook, 2009). This was a small-scale survey in the Woolwich area, recording the prevalence of single women with a parental dependant (NCSWD, 1964). A year later, in 1965, Webster founded the first charity for carers in England: The National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependants (Carers UK, 2014b).

## 3.4  The National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependants

The National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependants (NCSWD) aimed to raise awareness of, and support for, single women caring for an elderly family member (Carers UK, 2014c). Two years after its formation in 1965, the NCSWD cemented its place in history by initiating legislative change (Carers UK, 2014b). Dependent Relative Tax Allowance was introduced in 1967 as the first recognition of unpaid caring responsibilities (outside of parental responsibilities)

in English legislature (Henwood, 2015). The Carers' Movement would come to be prominent for its legislative success after a refocusing of the NCSWD following the death of founder Mary Webster in 1969. Webster was succeeded by the NCSWD's first paid director, Roxanne Arnold, a barrister central to the subsequent legislative successes of the Carers' Movement (Carers UK, 2014c). Central to Arnold's new NCSWD was the idea that campaigning efforts should be evidence-based.

In 1968 a pioneering survey by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) identified 3 million disabled adults living in private households (Harris 1971 in Burchardt, 1999: 6). The OPCS survey provided evidence of widespread poverty and additional expenditure incurred as a result of disability (Burchardt, 1999). This fuelled a case for legalised rights and provisions for adults with disabilities. Subsequently, 1970 saw the introduction of the Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act (Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act 1970). This legislation was the first to recognise and solidify rights for adults with disabilities including education and support at home, access to public buildings, and representation on public bodies (BBC, 2010). This legislation laid the foundations for financial support for people with disabilities which would subsequently pave the way for financial support for carers.

The survey done by the OPCS enumerated the number of adults living with disabilities and consequently drew attention to the financial implications of disability (Burchardt, 1999). As a direct result, Attendance Allowance was introduced in 1971 (Burchardt, 1999: 6). This financial benefit for those who 'required significant amounts of personal assistance' (Burchardt, 1999: 6) was extended with the introduction of Mobility Allowance in 1975, for those who needed 'help getting about' (Harris 1971 in Burchardt, 1999: 6). The introduction of Attendance Allowance based on the OPCS survey opened the door for a similar benefit for carers, with the evidence-based approach to legislative change at the heart of the NCSWD's campaign.

With financial benefits now in place for adults with disabilities, the NCSWD formed the first campaign for financial support for carers (Carers UK, 2014c). The 1974 White Paper *Social Security Provision for Chronically Sick and Disabled People*, which introduced Mobility Allowance (BBC, 2010), stated within it that

'there was "a strong case for the provision of a noncontributory (sic) benefit of right" to be payable to carers of sick and disabled people' (Gov.UK, 2015). The 1976 NCSWD report *The Cost of Caring* provided the evidence for a campaign for financial support for carers similar to that of Mobility Allowance for people with disabilities (Carers UK, 2014c). Invalid Care Allowance (ICA) was introduced in 1976 (Legislation.gov.uk, 1976), shortly after the publication of *The Cost of Caring* report. The introduction of ICA was a success for the NCSWD as, for the first time in history, financial support was available to people with caring responsibilities.

Although regarded as a success for unpaid carers (Carers UK, 2014b), ICA came with strict parameters, stipulating that the person with a disability be related to the carer in one of the following ways:

'a) lineal descendant, or an ascendant in a straight line

b) husband, wife, step-father, step-mother, step-son, step-daughter, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother, step-sister, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece; or

c) father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law' (Legislation.gov.uk, 1976: 4)

Providing care for someone outside of these relationships did not qualify one as an informal carer and similarly, married women were not eligible (Berthoud, 2010: 2). Although restrictive by today's standards, these criteria were reflective of the time. The NCSWD, the leading charity for informal carers (Carers UK, 2014b), was limited to single women with caring responsibilities for parents only (Carers UK, 2014c). ICA also stipulated that only full-time carers were eligible for the award, with the carer being 'regularly and substantially engaged in caring' and caring activities needing to be provided for a minimum of 35 hours per week and 'on every day in a week' to qualify (Legislation.gov.uk, 1976). The introduction of ICA was an important milestone for the Carers' Movement. The financial implications and sacrifices that could accompany informal care had been recognised, an achievement which some members saw as a completion of the NCSWD mission (Carers UK, 2014b). The introduction of ICA was a turning point for the NCSWD. Although the word 'carers' wouldn't appear in UK legislation until 1976 (Clements et al., 2009), the introduction of ICA was recognition that caregiving could cause financial hardship. Several members saw this as

completion of their objectives and an end to an 'era of hard campaigning' (Cook, 2007b: 46).

The NCSWD needed a new focus if it was to retain its status. Following the introduction of ICA and the successful campaigning of the NCSWD, an increasing number of married women, widows and divorcees were seeking help from the NCSWD (Lloyd, 2004). The NCSWD campaign had brought together people otherwise isolated from each other and had united them with a sense of identity and purpose (Cook, 2009). 'By questioning the assumption that women care "naturally" and should care rather than undertake paid employment, the campaign had the important effect of politicising the issue of care' (Bytheway and Johnson, 1990). As a consequence, in 1979 it was suggested the NCSWD should broaden its objectives (Lloyd, 2004). The exclusion of married women had become outdated (Carers UK, 2014b) and, with the introduction of ICA, some believed the disadvantages faced by carers in the past were no longer prevalent, and that the original objectives of the NCSWD had been met (Cook, 2007a: 34). If the NCSWD was to stay current it needed to expand. This was exacerbated by the formation of the Association of Carers, meaning that by the end of 1981 the NCSWD faced competition as the leading charity for those providing unpaid care.

## 3.5  The Association of Carers

The Association of Carers (AoC) was formed in 1981, following the call for a more inclusive definition of unpaid carer after the introduction of ICA (Lloyd, 2004). Founder Judith Oliver was a carer for her disabled husband whilst also raising a young family (Cook, 2007a). After interviewing carers around the country with a grant from the King's Fund, it became apparent that an organisation to support carers in the community was needed (Cook, 2007a). Along with co-founder Sandra Leventon and others, the AoC was formed (Carers UK, 2014c). Thus, the AoC focussed on developing support for carers in the community, not just those with elderly dependants (Carers UK, 2014c). This was completely separate to the political, legal and financial objectives of the NCSWD, with the AoC directed towards developing and extending services (Cook, 2007b). The AoC had a much broader definition of "carer": 'anyone who is leading a

restricted life because of the necessity to care for a person who is mentally or physically handicapped or ill or impaired by infirmity' (Cook, 2007a: 36). Placing carers' central to determining what help they need was a pioneering strategy by the AoC, and remains part of the Carers UK ethos today (Carers UK, 2014c).

Both the NCSWD and the AoC emphasised the value of research and a strong evidence base for campaigning (Cook, 2007b). In 1983 the AoC carried out a number of door-to-door surveys in different areas of England with two main aims; to enumerate carers and to describe their experiences (Cook, 2007: 40). With the AoC's more inclusive definition, different types of carers were discovered, the most notable of which was young carers, gaining attention in their own right (Cook, 2007b). As part of the identification and promotion of different types of carer, the AoC played a large role in the campaign for married women to be recognised as carers (Lloyd, 2004). This was achieved in 1986 when the British government announced ICA would be extended to married women following a European Court ruling (Carers UK, 2014b). This ruling extended ICA to others beyond just single women, a change pre-empted by the NCSWD by a name change four years' previous.

## 3.6  The National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants

As a reaction to the change in the profile of informal carers emergent after the introduction of ICA and a reaction to the AoC's more inclusive definition, in 1982 the NCSWD officially rebranded as the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants (NCCED) (Carers UK, 2014b). However, shortly after the extension of ICA to married women, talks began of a merger between the NCCED and the AoC. By the late 1980s there was considerable overlap between the NCCED and the AoC: their aims were similar, constituencies overlapped and they were competing for funding from the same sources (Cook, 2007a: 45). In 1988 the two organisations merged (Carers UK, 2014b).

## 3.7  Carers National Association

The merger between the NCCED and the AoC was an effort to reduce confusion for the public and carers, to reduce duplication and wasted effort, and to build on successful local-level cooperation (Cook, 2007a: 45). The core values of the NCCED and the AoC were amalgamated to produce new objectives that combined the political strengths of the NCCED and the broader, community awareness of the AoC (Cook, 2007a). The resulting organisation was named the Carers National Association (CNA) (Carers UK, 2014b). Following the merger, the CNA became a more modern charity and 'many local branches focused their efforts on setting up scores of local carers' centres' (Carers UK, 2014c). With the creation of the CNA came a new, broader, definition of carer: 'people looking after a relative or friend at home' (Carers National Association, 1992: preface).

A 1986 review of Community Care policy highlighted a failure to give the proper support to informal carers and a need for more flexible support, the resulting response was The NHS Community Care Act 1990 (Cook, 2007a: 51). The Fifth Report of the Social Services Committee (1990) echoed the findings from the 1986 review, which assisted the NHS and Community Care Act in going through Parliament (Cook, 2007a). The fiscal arguments in favour of support for informal carers were emphasised again in the Social Security Advisory Committee report of 1992 (Cook, 2007a: 51). During this period the CNA conducted the largest survey of carers to date.

In 1992 the CNA conducted a survey titled Speak Up Speak Out: research amongst members of the Carers National Association (Carers UK, 2014c). A survey of the members of the CNA, it was designed to 'collate their views and experiences as carers, and of the services they receive' (Carers National Association, 1992). At the time, this was the largest non-government survey dedicated to carers with 3000 responses (Carers National Association, 1992: 1), but represented just 0.05% of the 6 million carers the CNA claimed were in Britain at the time (Carers National Association, 1992: 1). Analysis of the survey highlighted the negative health and financial repercussions for carers, respondents' lack of awareness of their carer status and a desire for more recognition from family and friends, wider society and policymakers (Carers National Association, 1992).

The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act was introduced in 1995 following on from the surge in research from the CNA's *Speak Up Speak Out* report (Carers UK, 2014c). Unlike previous legislation that had cemented financial support for carers, this new legislation was 'an act to provide for the assessment of the ability of carers to provide care' (Carers (Recognition and Services) Act, 1995: 1) and contained the first mention of carers being able to 'ask for an assessment of their own needs when the person they are caring for is having an assessment'. This process was branded Carers Assessment (Carers Trust, 2012).

Introduced in 1995, the Carers Assessment was positioned by the NHS as a step towards gaining ICA, with promotional material advertising that support from local councils could include 'being offered money to pay for things that make caring easier' (NHS, 2015). The information is aimed directly at the carer, with the care recipient external to the situation. The Carers Assessment is explicitly to assess the needs of the carer with the assumption the care recipient will not be affected. The benefits extend beyond the financial and can 'extend beyond a person's caring role to improve their access to educational, employment and leisure opportunities' (Corden and Hirst, 2011: 218). Thus, suggesting that the quality of life of the carer could be improved by accepting a caring identity. The introduction of The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act (1995) was a precursor to a national strategy for carers.

*Caring about carers: a national strategy for carers* was the Government's Carers Strategy document published by the Department of Health (DoH) on the 1st January 1999 (DoH, 1999). This document uses data from the 1995 General Household Survey (GHS) carers trailer module to profile carers including age, location, the number of hours spent caring, and economic status (DoH, 1999). The aim of the Carers trailer module in the GHS and the use of data in the 1999 Carers Strategy were aligned: 'to know about the extent and nature of informal care so that they can plan service to help those providing the care' (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, 1985: 33). The strategy attempted to address the gap between policy and carers' experiences (Banks, 2004). The document contained three strands; information, support, and care (DoH, 1999). For the first time, the government made a commitment to what could be expected for long-

term care services and committed to providing information about the services and support available. It also pledged to place carers at the centre of the planning process and to recognise that carers have their own needs which should be met with specific services and support (DoH, 1999).

## 3.8  Carers UK

In 2001 the CNA was renamed Carers UK 'to recognise devolution and the contribution of Carers Scotland, Carers Wales, and Carers Northern Ireland' (Carers UK, 2014c). With the name change came new objectives. The charity was once again focussed on research and policy work with the aim of legislative change (Carers UK, 2014c), similar to the aims of the NCCED prior to the merger. One of the successes of this new focus was the introduction of Carer's Allowance.

Carer's Allowance is a government-run scheme introduced in 2003 to replace the pre-existing Invalid Care Allowance (Work and Pensions Committee, 2008). This was a financial benefit 'to help you look after someone with substantial caring needs' (Gov.UK, 2015). There were no restrictions on the relationship between the carer and care recipient, however, as with its predecessor ICA, Carer's Allowance stipulated that the carer must be 16 or over and spend at least 35 hours a week caring (Gov.UK, 2015). This was the first update since the introduction of ICA in 1976. Eligibility criteria were strict as demonstrated in Figure 3.2. People providing care for fewer than 35 hours per week were not eligible. However, they could still be subject to financial loss due to caregiving responsibilities. In 2011 64% of all unpaid carers provided fewer than 20 hours of care a week (ONS, 2016). Unlike Carer's Assessment, only the financial impact of the caring on the carer was accounted for. The care recipient needed to be in receipt of one of the benefits stated, however all except Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance were means tested (Gov.UK, 2015). If the care recipient did not need personal care, and thus was ineligible for Attendance Allowance, they may not qualify for any of the specified benefits. This implies that the financial situation of the care recipient is directly linked to that of the caregiver. The care recipient must also acknowledge their need for care, however, there is a disincentive for them to do so. If a caregiver receives Carer's

Allowance the recipient is no longer entitled to receive the severe disability premium (Gov.UK, 2015). This further links the finances of the carer and caregiver. It also assumes the disability of the care receiver is less severe if the caregiver is in receipt of Carer's allowance.

**Figure 3.2 Eligibility criteria for Invalid Care Allowance**

**You**

You might be able to get Carer's Allowance if all of the following apply:

- you're 16 or over
- you spend at least 35 hours a week caring for someone
- have been in England, Scotland or Wales for at least 2 of the last 3 years
- you normally live in England, Scotland or Wales, or you live abroad as a member of the armed forces
- you're not in full time education or studying for 21 hours a week or more
- you earn no more than £102 a week (after taxes, care costs while you're at work and 50% of what you pay into your pension)

You might not get Carer's Allowance if you already get one of these benefits:

- State Pension
- Bereavement Allowance
- contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
- contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Industrial Death Benefit
- Maternity Allowance
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- training allowance
- Unemployability Supplement – paid with Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit or War Pension
- War Widow's or Widower's Pension
- Widowed Mother's Allowance
- Widowed Parent's Allowance

**The person you care for**

The person you care for must already get one of these benefits:

- Personal Independence Payment (PIP) daily living component
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) - the middle or highest care rate
- Attendance Allowance
- Constant Attendance Allowance at or above the normal maximum rate with an Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, or basic (full day) rate with a War Disablement Pension
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

(Gov.UK, 2015)

If the caregiving is sudden-onset, it is likely that income for the carer would cease relatively soon after the onset of the caregiving. The caregiver would then

have to wait for the care receiver to have one of the named benefits assessed and approved before the caregiver could begin the application process for Carer's Allowance. Financial hardship is likely which can increase the pressure and negative effects of caregiving. On average 7% of people providing unpaid care reported themselves to be in bad or very bad health, compared to 5% of those who do not provide unpaid care (ONS, 2013). This figure rises to 13% for those providing 50 hours of unpaid care or more (ONS, 2013). Caregiving has been proven to cause and worsen emotional, psychological and physical stress (Carers UK, 2014d). Older carers providing 50+ hours of care are the most likely to be suffering ill health (Carers UK, 2014d). Certain groups can be disadvantaged when it comes to Carer's Assessments and Carer's Allowance. Caregiver's who are not proficient in the English language, both written and spoken, are at risk of not understanding or not adequately completing the necessary forms. In 2011 7.7% of respondents to the England and Wales Census reported English was not their main language. A further 1.3% reported they could not speak English well and 0.3% reported they could not speak English at all (ONS, 2013). The cap on weekly income also means that caregivers earning over this will be excluded, however, it is interesting to note that the Carer's Allowance claim form only accounts for the income of the caregiver, not the caregiver's household (Gov.UK, 2015). This means Carer's Allowance could be available to Person A and not Person B, despite Person A having a much greater household income. The introduction of Carer's allowance was the start of a wave of legislative success for Carers UK.

Carers UK was achieving the legislative change it had been striving for with three new laws passed over five years. The Carers and Equal Opportunities Act 2004 provided the right for a carer to have an assessment of their needs 'enshrining in law the principle that carers should have a life of their own' (Carers UK, 2014c). 2006 brought another milestone with The Work and Families Act, giving employed carers the right to request flexible working (Work and Families Act, 2006). The Department of Health's 2006 White Paper had promised a 'new deal for carers' (The National Archives, 2009a). A revision of the 1999 Carers Strategy was published in 2008 'setting up a help/advice line, provision of cover in emergencies and an expert carers program' (The National Archives, 2009a).

Also in 2008 the European Court of Justice ruled that: 'the UK's disability discrimination law provides protection on the grounds of someone's association (including caring responsibilities) with a disabled person' (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2015), thus extending victims under disability discrimination laws from just people with disabilities to people with disabilities and their carers.

In 2014 a new piece of legislation updated the Carers and Equal Opportunities Act (2004) and 'strengthened the rights and recognition of carers in the social work system' (Carers UK, 2014c). The Care Act 2014 detailed local authorities' duties in relation to assessing carers needs and eligibility for services and support (Carers UK, 2014a). In a revolutionary change, anyone appearing to require care and support was entitled to an assessment of need (Carers UK, 2014a). The person-centred approach advocated for by Carers UK was finally enshrined in law, with the Care Act (2014) specifying that the person, their wellbeing and their desired goals should be the focus of assessments of need. There was also an emphasis on helping people to connect with local support services, whilst standardising eligibility for services across the country (Fernandez et al., 2015). This new piece of legislation was criticised for the pressure it put on local service provision, with local councils undertaking between 440,000 and 530,000 extra assessments as well as implementing services and provision to comply with new rights for carers (Fernandez et al., 2015).

Some caregivers may accept the role of carer but resist the label if they see it as a 'bureaucratisation' of their personal relationships, imposing on them an unwanted identity (Foster, 2005 in Hughes et al., 2013). A change in the disability benefit scheme led some carers to feel they had been categorised within 'the generalised group that joe public refers to as benefit scroungers' (Carers Trust, 2011), undermining their identity within the caring relationship by bureaucratic labelling. Moore and Gillespie noted a similar fear of 'benefit stigma', noting that, in instances where the care-receiver's disability was not always visible, some caregivers were concerned about the stigma from some people believing the care-receiver was claiming benefits unlawfully (Moore and Gillespie, 2014: 107).

## 3.9 Summary and Conclusion

The 52 years covered in this chapter have seen changes to the discourse on unpaid carers. These social and political changes have been predominantly motivated by the efforts of Carers UK and its predecessors.

Formed as the first charity for unpaid carers in 1965, the NCSWD saw quick success with the legal recognition of unpaid caring responsibilities in Dependant Relative Tax Allowance. This was followed by the introduction of ICA in 1976, a milestone that was regarded by many as the completion of the NCSWD's objectives. Following competition from the AoC, and the subsequent recognition of a wider variety in the demographic of unpaid carers, the NCSWD rebranded as the NCCED in 1982. This rebranding brought the alignment of the NCCED and AoC closer together and over the next few years, the two charities spent time and resources competing for limited funding and publicity. In 1988 the two organisations merged to form one organisation with an evidence-based approach to campaigning for legislative change to benefit the support of unpaid carers: the CNA. The CNA was hugely successful, achieving legislative change in the form of The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act and heavily influencing the government's national carer's strategy (1999). In 2001, the CNA absorbed Carers Scotland, Carers Wales, and Carers Northern Ireland to form the charity now known as Carers UK. The introduction of Carer's allowance and Carers Assessment, along with the development of The Carers and Equal Opportunities Act (2004), The Work and Families Act (2006), and the Care Act (2014) are among the greatest achievements of Carers UK to date. However, even if society devoted more funding and resources to caring 'this increase would not automatically resolve the dilemmas and conflicts involved in the caring process' (Gibbs, 2014: 56). As the Carers' Movement is inextricably linked with feminism and feminist movements, Gibbs states that 'to build a feminist future we need to stretch our imaginations so that we can discover new visions of society in which caring is a central value and institutions truly facilitate caring' (Gibbs, 2014: 56). Therefore, to truly understand the impact of the Carers' Movement, research should use a feminist methodology to understand care and carers, however the following Chapter will demonstrate that historically this has not been the case with large-scale government research into unpaid carers.

Archived collections are products of 'social and political institutions' (Stoler, 2009) and the RCA collection is no exception. The social and political milestones of the Carers' Movement, covered in this chapter, are the social and political contexts in which the records that make up the RCA collection were produced. This context will be used in later chapters to demonstrate how an understanding of the context of an archive collection can be instrumental in its interpretation, and how the social and political climate in which documents and collections are created permeate through in present day. As this thesis is focused on the portrayal of research within the RCA collection, the next chapter will take a closer look at how research into unpaid care has been designed and implemented by the British government, and how this has changed over the course of the Carers' Movement.

# Chapter 4 : History of the measurement of unpaid carers

## 4.1 Introduction

As the Carers' Movement progressed, so did a need to gather information about the unpaid carer population. Beginning in 1985, the Government has done a number of pieces of research targeting unpaid carers. Through the course of this Chapter, this research will be examined in detail including design, content, and method. Although intertwined with the milestones of the Carers' Movement in the previous chapter, government research has been discussed separately as it has predominantly taken the form of large-scale surveys, some of which have run numerous times and are thus better discussed in terms of survey type than chronology. In addition to looking at content and design, the detailed analysis of government research into unpaid care shines a light on the types of decisions that go into developing research and what is regarded as 'of value' which in turn has an effect on what is retained for archiving (Bastian and Alexander, 2009). Like the events of the Carers' Movement from the previous chapter, this information is the social and political context in which the documents within the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection were created. This will be used to inform analysis of how the RCA collection has been formed.

## 4.2 General Household Survey

From the start of the Carers' Movement in 1963 to today the language used in the discourse of unpaid care has evolved. As the Carers' Movement progressed and carers and caring activities became more visible, unpaid care was defined by the ring-fencing of legislative eligibility criteria for ICA. This, in turn, was replaced by the AoC's more inclusive definition. A turning point came in 1985 when the GHS defined unpaid carers in the first government attempt to measure unpaid care (UK Data Service, 1985). Amid the surge in competitive campaigning by both the Association of Carers (AoC) and the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants (NCCED), the first government survey of informal carers was

launched in 1985 (UK Data Service, 1985). An additional section of questions, known as the carers trailer module, was included in the 1985 General Household Survey (GHS) (rebranded as the General Lifestyle Survey in 2005) (UK Data Service, 1985).

The GHS ran from 1971 to 2012 (UK Data Service, 2018b). Information was collected on both private households and individuals within private households in Great Britain (UK Data Service, 2018b). Unpaid care first featured in the 1985 survey in a trailer module titled *Carers* (UK Data Service, 1985). The GHS collected data via door-to-door interviews (UK Data Service, 1985), making it the first Government survey to engage with carers face-to-face. The following method was used to identify carers:

> 'All adults were asked whether they cared for someone who was sick, elderly or disabled. Respondents who said 'yes' were then asked about the nature of the care they provided. Certain types of caring were excluded for analysis of the data: those caring for someone in their capacity as a volunteer for a charity or other organisation; those caring for someone receiving care in an institution; those providing financial support only; and those caring for someone with a temporary illness or disability (as defined by the respondent)' (UK Data Service, 2015a).

The *Carers* module comprised 32 questions, some of which were in several parts (UK Data Service, 1985). The topics covered included; the relationship between the carer and dependant, the dependant's disability and how it affected them, whether the dependant lived or did not live with the carer, and the activities undertaken as part of the caregiving (UK Data Service, 1985). Although the title of the trailer module was *Carers*, the words "care" or "carer" did not appear in the parameters for inclusion. This is reflective of the language of the time, as the word 'carer' did not appear in any legal dictionary until 1988 (Cook, 2009) following the significant publicity for carers driven by the Carers' Movement. The following question was used to define and filter unpaid carers:

> 'Is there anyone living with you who is sick, handicapped or elderly whom you look after or give special help to (for example, a sick or handicapped (or elderly) relative/husband/wife/child/friend, etc)?' (UK Data Service, 1990)

The key components of the question; the activities involved and the reason for the caregiving are open to interpretation[6]. This suggests discrepancies and inconsistencies in the way these questions could have been interpreted by both the interviewer and respondent, resulting in discrepancies and inconsistencies within the resulting data.

The wording, language, and definitions used in large-scale surveys such as the GHS are used by participants to identify whether they fit into a certain category. If there is ambiguity in the definitions used then there is a risk that people who fit the category might rule themselves out through misinterpretation of the wording. The wording of a survey question is pivotal as it defines what the researcher is asking about and thus what is found out. This interpretation needs to be consistent from the researcher to the participant to the analyst in order to produce reliable, robust data.

Within the 1985 GHS caregiving activities are defined as 'looking after' or giving 'special help' (UK Data Service, 1985). The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'look after' as 'to take care of or be responsible for' (OED, 2015) and thus includes all relationships where there is an element of dependence. This dependence can be real or perceived e.g. an older sibling may not be directly responsible for the actions of a younger sibling but may perceive this to be within their responsibility. 'Help' broadens the parameters to include relationships where the activity will 'make it easier or possible for (someone) to do something by offering them one's services or resources' (OED, 2015). This could include activities as varied as babysitting grandchildren, cooking for a friend once a week, paying for a child's friend to accompany them on an activity or cutting a neighbours' grass. These actions are not dependent on the type or existence of the relationship between the parties involved. The concept of help is taken further with the adjective 'special'. The word 'special' is defined as 'different from usual' (OED, 2015). Whilst this is appropriate as it acknowledges that the interpretation of an activity as caregiving is contingent on the pre-existing relationship, it calls into question the 'norms' of a relationship. Identity Discrepancy occurs when family caregivers feel that the duties/tasks they are performing are not

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[6] The Oxford English Dictionary definition has been used to represent respondents' interpretation of words as this is 'widely regarded as the accepted authority on the English language' (OED, 2013).

appropriate, or against the norm, for their pre-existing relationship with the care recipient (Melton, 2012), also known as Caregiver Identity Theory (Montgomery and Kosloski, 2009). For example, physical care may require the caregiver to see the care receiver naked, something which is expected within a husband and wife relationship, but not that of daughter and father. Thus using the word 'special' accepts that caregiving can be experienced in different ways based on the pre-existing activities. Alternatively, 'special' as 'different from usual' could also cause long-term carers to be excluded as caregiving is subsumed into their 'usual'. The ambiguity is furthered with the use of time as a suitable measurement for informal care.

The 1985 GHS included the following question:

'About how long do you spend, on average each week looking after or helping [Dependant]? – that is doing the things you've mentioned and including time when you need just to be there (apart from when you are asleep and including time travelling to and from his/her home)' (UK Data Service, 1985).

As with the definition of informal care activities, the wording is open to interpretation. The word 'need' is a source of confusion. 'Need' could refer to the basic needs of the care recipient i.e. without the caregiver's presence the care recipient's life would be at risk, or it could extend as broad as the care recipient's quality of life, spirits or mood being improved by the presence of the caregiver. The distinction between when the caregiver needs to be there, as opposed to when the care recipient needs the caregiver to be there is vital. There may be instances when a caregiver feels they need to be there for their own peace of mind, yet the care recipient may not need the caregiver there. There is also no distinction between caring for someone because their life depends on it or to increase their quality of life. Different carers will have a different impact on the care recipient and two different people doing the same activity could have a different impact. This can also be outside the control of the caregiver if taken from the care recipient's perspective e.g. preferred sex/age for the care receiver, or if the carer is a relative or not. Beyond the wording, the concept of time as a measurement of caregiving is problematic.

Asking respondents to pinpoint how much time they spend caring is unrealistic. 'Time is unreal', perceived in relation to other events as 'before' or

'after', not directly (McTaggart, 1908: 458). When more than one activity is happening, attention resources are split between the activities, less information is encoded and the time period is perceived as shorter. Alternatively when more attention is paid to an activity more information is encoded and the time period is perceived as longer (Brooks, 2012). When a person is asked to recall an event if there are several similar events available for recall the time period is perceived as longer (Brooks, 2012). If carers are dividing their time between caregiving and non-caregiving activities, or performing the same activities regularly, it is highly likely the duration of the events will be recalled incorrectly. Similarly, 'duration is related to an awareness of the amount of change in or between events' (MacDonald, 2014: 3). A carer might not have a clear change between caregiving and non-caregiving events. These events may run simultaneously e.g. a parent washing up while their disabled child plays is still caring for the child. Along with the duration of time, events themselves are not linear (Adam, 2013). 'Past and future can only be lived, experienced, related to, interpreted, sought out, captured, recaptured, or preserved in the present' (Adam, 2013: 142), meaning the past is always reconstituted through the present. 'Each moment is recreated, reselected, and re-interpreted, preserved and evoked afresh in the light of new knowledge' (Mead, 1959 in Adam, 2013: 143). When the past is as hypothetical as the future (Mead, 1959 in Adam, 2013: 143), an accurate reporting of the amount of time spent caring each week is futile. There might not be an 'average' week for a carer e.g. a grandparent might look after a disabled grandchild whenever called upon and not to a fixed schedule. Similarly, a parent of a disabled adult might see themselves as a full-time carer, despite working 35 hours a week. Thus, there is scope for inaccuracy. There is also confusion over what to include when calculating 'time spent'.

The GHS defines 'time spent' as including travel time but not time asleep on overnight visits. Carers Trust identifies three broad categories of activities: Practical household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing up, ironing, paying bills and financial management. Personal care such as bathing, dressing, lifting, administering medication and collecting prescriptions, and emotional support such as listening, offering advice and friendship (Carers Trust, 2012). Therefore talking over a coffee could be categorised as 'friendship' and 'listening', both

caregiving activities defined by Carers Trust, however, this could equally be a commonplace activity between two friends. Also, if an elderly parent is neither ill nor disabled but their quality of life is greatly increased by having their child as a driver one day a week, is this any less of a caring role? This suggests that the impact of an activity can influence whether it is labelled as caregiving, once again drawing attention to the existing relationship between caregiver and care recipient. The difficulty is establishing boundaries. It is proposed that the impact of the caregiving should negate a negative impact caused by the disability, however, disabilities can have varying effects based on their nature and onset and then again based on the care recipient themselves and their lifestyle. Activities that continue throughout a period of disability could change caregiving status over time as a person adapts to their new boundaries and as support networks are put in place. Despite this question having a large scope for interpretation and the problematic use of time to quantify caregiving, variations of this question have been used in all government surveys of unpaid carers, including the most recent population census in 2011. Despite the introduction of unpaid care and carers into a large scale government survey being a landmark achievement for the Carers' Movement, it is not recognised as such by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The inclusion of the carers trailer module is omitted from the GHS survey timeline in favour of the removal of the question on refrigerator ownership in the same year (ONS, 2013), thus demonstrating that measuring and monitoring the carer population was not a priority for the Government at this time. This was reflected five years later in a reduction in the number of questions asked about unpaid care and carers.

In 1990, five years after the debut of the carers trailer module, the GHS ran another trailer module targeting unpaid carers (UK Data Service, 1990). This module, also titled *Carers,* comprised just 12 questions[7] (UK Data Service, 1990). The initial question to identify unpaid carers was that used in the 1985 GHS (UK Data Service, 1985). All 12 questions had previously appeared in the GHS *Carers* trailer module (UK Data Service, 1990). Questions omitted included questions about previous dependants, breaks, and the amount of time the

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[7] Questions are numbered up to 14, however questions 5 and 13 are notes for the interviewer pertaining to previous questions.

dependant was at home (UK Data Service, 1990). The CNA's answer to this reduction in the amount of data collected on unpaid carers was to conduct their own large-scale survey, *Speak Up Speak Out* (Carers UK, 2014b).

Data from the 1990 GHS, coupled with research done by the CNA, contributed to the implementation of The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act (1995) (Carers UK, 2014b). The carer trailer module of the GHS ran for the third time in 1995 (UK Data Service, 1995). Contrary to the 1990 module, which was a scaled-down version of the 1985 module, the 1995 GHS section on unpaid care was reactive to the Carers' Movement in that it was considerably larger (UK Data Service, 1995). Consisting of 67 questions (seven of which were interviewer notes), the 1995 GHS included all questions from the 1990 GHS and more (UK Data Service, 1995). Additional topics included; specificities about the dependant's living arrangements, whether only financial help was provided, professional visitors to the dependant (or reasons for lack thereof) and arrangements for breaks from caregiving (UK Data Service, 1995).

The Government's Carers Strategy document (1999) acknowledged the limitations of the GHS trailer module (DoH 1999). It was claimed that the GHS module 'cover[ed] only a small proportion of carers in Great Britain and the figures given can only be approximate' (DoH 1999: 21). The report also highlighted gaps in the data; black and ethnic minorities, young carers and distribution by Local Authority (DoH 1999: 21). The Government's answer to this was a new Census question 'to tackle incomplete information about carers' (DoH 1999):

> 'To improve the information we hold, the Government intends to trial a new question for use in the 2001 Census. We intend to target the question on provision of personal care, and to enquire about the number of hours per week for which care is provided' (DoH, 1999: 21).

The Carers' Movement had infiltrated the largest source of population data within the UK. The 2001 Census for England and Wales would include a question formulated to be comparable with the 'time' question in the GHS (DoH 1999). However, the GHS carer trailer module would run again in 2000, one year before the next Census.

In 2000, the carers trailer module was included in the GHS for the final time (UK Data Service, 2000). Now titled 'Informal Carers', the trailer module had received an upgrade from its predecessors. The introductory question replaced the word 'handicapped' with 'disabled' (UK Data Service, 2000) and the following preface was included:

> 'Some people have extra responsibilities because they look after someone who has long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age' (UK Data Service, 2000)

This new need for the care recipient's illness or disability to be long-term raised similar criticisms about ambiguity and interpretation as previous questions. The wording is complex and subjective as 'long-term' is not defined. This wording also set the precedent that caregiving should not be recognised until the caregiving is long-term, as well as the condition requiring the care.

The GHS does not set any parameters on the length of time a person has been a caregiver. It is possible a person caring full-time for a recipient with an illness of unknown length may not categorise themselves as a carer, whilst a person who takes a neighbour shopping once a month would. Policy relating to carers is not likely to apply to those caregiving in the short term so it is reasonable that short-term carers are excluded considering one of the primary uses of the GHS is for policy development (UK Data Service, 2015a). However, as a count of the number of people caregiving in England at any one time, the exclusion of short-term carers could be detrimental to policy development. Their change in circumstances, even temporarily, could affect the economy if this is a large population. It is reasonable to assume that a proportion of short-term carers also progress to be long-term carers. Information on this population would be informative as it would allow for judgement of the significance of the short-term carer population in relation to policy, and would also aid in predicting the size and demographics of the long-term carer population going forward.

The Guidelines for using the 2000 GHS data provide insight into the rigorous exclusion criteria used by interviewers to identify carers (UK Data Service, 2000). These include; excluding volunteers, those caring for someone in an institution, and those providing financial support only (UK Data Service, 2000). The example given for financial support is as follows:

'A fictitious respondent Fred replied that he cared for his sick wife and his elderly mother. He cared for his wife by helping her with washing and dressing and cared for his mother by paying her utility bills. In this case, only the information collected about Fred's wife was used in the creation of derived variables for analysis of the data' (UK Data Service, 2015a).

It is proposed that the exchange of responsibility is the variable for determining care in this example. This is something which is not covered by the GHS (UK Data Service, 2015a). Fred might not be only providing financial support in the example provided. If Fred is giving his mother the money for the utility bills and has no further influence then this is a pertinent example. However, if Fred pays the bills directly he is taking on a responsibility to alleviate that of his mother. Fred might also be responsible for managing the utility supplier, another responsibility. Thus, it becomes clear that caring responsibilities are not as clear-cut as the GHS describes. This is again demonstrated in the exclusion of those who care for someone within an institution.

Financial support is not the only type of support excluded. Those caring for someone in an institution are excluded from the definition of carer but were recorded under the question: 'May I check, does (NAME OF PERSON CARED FOR) usually live in a hospital, residential or nursing home?' (UK Data Service, 2015a). This accepts that some people perceive themselves as caregivers despite the care recipient being in an institution, although the GHS does not accept these people within the definition of carer (UK Data Service, 2015a).

Ex-carers or continuing carers e.g. those for whom the care recipient has died or is in full-time residential or nursing care (Carers Support, No date, McLaughlin and Ritchie, 2007), are largely un-catered for in terms of support. The first national helpline for carers was launched in 1997 (Carers UK, 2014c) and projects were created to help carers back into work and help former carers cope with bereavement (Cook, 2007a: 46). In 1983 60% of NCCED members were former carers (Cook, 2007a: 46). Despite claiming to provide services and support for former carers, there are no more recent numbers from the CNA on the proportion of former carers after the merger. There are several local government support groups across England, however, these lack a central focus, each with separate aims and mentioning 'support' without further elaboration on what 'support' includes (Peterborough Telegraph, 2011, Salford CVS, 2015,

Carers Strategy Group, 2012). Most continuing carers will continue to be responsible for the quality of life of the care receiver. They are expected to be contactable, available and to provide items by the care receiver's residence institution (Milne and Larkin, 2015). This group are more likely to identify as carers as the caregiving identity is not limited to within the household or to the caregiver being the sole provider of care. The caregiving activities of this group go largely unrecognised. If a relationship is dominated with caregiving activities it becomes difficult to reverse this once the care receiver is in residential care. It is normal for a husband to spend time with his wife and normal for a wife to buy shirts for her husband, however, if an institution presides over these seemingly normal activities they arguably become caregiving. Aspects of the private relationship becoming public property move the role of the caregiver out of the 'norm' for their relationship with the care recipient. Under these circumstances, the carer identity is more readily accepted (Melton, 2012).

The GHS collected information on informal care in 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000 but has not included the informal care module since. The GHS suffers in asking respondents to recall events and time durations. Similarly, terms like 'need' and 'temporary' are vague, as are 'long-term' and 'support'. Continuing carers are excluded in the GHS definition of carer, however continuing carers are more likely to have accepted a carer identity than some carers. The public regulation of traditionally private activities reinforces the change from the pre-existing relationship to one of caregiver and recipient.

The final GHS, completed in 2011, refers to caregiving just once, asking:

'Was the main reason you/he/she could not start work because...
- You were caring for children below school age..................................1
- You were caring for other children....................................................2
- You were caring for a dependent adult relative...............................3
- Some other reason........................................................................4'

(UK Data Service, 2015a)

The GHS only uses the term 'carer' to describe paid day-care workers, however 'caring' is referred to in several places (UK Data Service, 2015a). 'Caring' is only recorded as the primary factor influencing employment and is not an aspect of

respondents' lifestyles the GHS explores individually (UK Data Service, 2015a). Caring for a dependent is an option as a reason for changing employer or employment contract, working fewer than 30 hours a week and not starting work (UK Data Service, 2015a). There is no definition of 'caring' leaving the term open to interpretation. Restricting the parameters to dependent adult relatives suggests that caregiving for an adult outside of the family makes you less of a carer than those caring for adult relatives. 'Children below school age' is a subjective term requiring clearly defined parameters. This could be interpreted as below primary school or secondary school age. Also, if nursery or pre-school can be interpreted as a form of school, some infants may be included in this group whilst others of the same age may be excluded. This is directly related to the 'other children' referred to in the following option. This is presumed to mean all other children not included in the first category i.e. children not below school age but once again this is open to interpretation. The category of 'child' is a social construct. Different human types e.g. old man or young girl, are defined by a general 'diffuse pattern of behaviour that is proper at a given life stage' (Eisenstadt, 1956: 22). The concept of a child changes from society to society and incites cultural variations in its meaning and thus in responses.

The use of the word 'caring' to describe both caring for children and caregiving for a dependent likens these two activities which, in practice, can be experienced very differently. Nakano Glen suggests two categories of 'care' amongst humans, proposing that 'caring for' and 'caring about' have separate definitions: 'caring about' engages both thought and feeling, including awareness and attentiveness, concern about, and feelings of responsibility for meeting another's needs. 'Caring for' refers to the varied activities of providing for the needs or well-being of another person' (Nakano Glenn, 2000: 86). It is accepted that these two categories are not mutually exclusive. Coming back to the 'caring for other children' option, this could refer to looking after able children or caregiving for a disabled child.

The 2001 Census would be the first Census for England and Wales to include a question on unpaid care. This question would be reconfigured in 1999 to be compatible with the GHS question on time spent caring (DoH, 1999).

## 4.3  The Census

Following the first census in 1801, A census has been taken in England every 10 years, with the exception of 1941 due to World War II (Savage and Burrows, 2009: 762). There are only four questions guaranteed to be included in the Census, known as core questions (ONS, 1997: 3). These are:

- the count of the number of households
- the counts of the number of people
- date of birth
- sex
  (ONS, 1997: 3)

These core questions underpin the other questions and are 'so fundamental that a census could not be taken without asking them' (ONS, 1997: 3). All other topics are open for review, including the questions themselves and response categories (ONS, 1997: 3).

The review process starts six years before the Census is carried out (ONS, 2017). In the review of each census topic, it is the responsibility of the Census Offices to detail how each piece of information will be used, what alternative sources of information census users could access and any risks associated with exclusion from the census (ONS, 1997: 3). Interdependencies between questions and an assessment of the possible uses of Census information, together with the benefit deriving from each use are also taken into account (ONS, 1997: 4). This was the case with the provision of care question for the 2001 Census.

The 2001 Census was the first to include a question on unpaid carers (ONS 2001). User consultation identified sufficient need for a Provision of Care question. Following this, 10 cognitive interviews were done on the subject of relationship, limiting long-term illness, provision of care and receipt of care in July 1995 (Moss, 1999: 97) to 'explore, understand and explain the ways in which respondents answer questions, to ascertain whether or not a question is acceptable and works as intended' (ONS, 2009b: 6). Prior to 2001, those providing unpaid care were not counted by the Census (UK Data Service, 2018a). Furthermore, those providing unpaid care were not *accounted for* in the Census. When asked about employment activities those providing full-time unpaid care

had the choice of the 'looking after home or family' category or 'other' and anyone providing unpaid care alongside paid employment would have their employment alone recorded (UK Data Service, 2018a). The 2001 Census introduced the 'provision of unpaid care' marker (UK Data Service, 2018a), recognising unpaid care alongside employment activity for the first time in a Census for England and Wales. The definition of 'unpaid care' appeared as follows:

> 'A person is a provider of unpaid care if they look after or give help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age. This does not include any activities as part of paid employment' (ONS, 2014).

Respondents had to recognise the components of the definition and identify as meeting it by answering the question. The question was developed through testing within the 1997 and 1998 Census Tests before being revised following the 1999 Census Rehearsal (ONS, 1999: 32) to reflect the Government's Harmonisation Strategy (see section 4.4) (ONS, 2005b: 11), meaning that all government surveys would ask the same set of questions on unpaid care going forward. The question used in the 2001 Census appeared as in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 2001 Census question**



(UK Data Service, 2014)

The Provision of Care question was tested with '15 cognitive interviews with adults looking after someone in the household, 3 interviews with people with

a long-term illness or health problem' in June 1996 (Moss, 1999: 97) and 'cognitive interviews' asking about provision of care as part of the 1997 Census Test follow-up survey (Moss, 1999: 97). There were no more topic-specific tests done for the Provision of Care question after this (Moss, 1999), as the introduction of the Provision of Care question was overshadowed by the introduction of a question on income and an expansion of the Ethnicity question in tests for the 2001 Census (ONS, 1996). In comparison, the Ethnicity question underwent nine focus groups, 14 cognitive interviews, the second round of 27 cognitive interviews, 60 qualitative interviews and a further 15 cognitive interviews (Moss, 1999: 97). However the original Provision of Care question had been asked in the 1995 GHS (albeit in two parts) so had already been tested on a large scale (UK Data Service, 1995). With this in mind, the Provision of Care question was given more testing than the General Health question which was similarly new to the census and similarly recycled from other surveys (Moss, 1999: 97).

The Whitepaper for the 2001 Census states of the General Health question:

> 'the Government proposes to include a general health question which will ask the respondents to assess their own health over the preceding 12 months as either 'Good', 'Fairly good', or 'Not good'. This information has been demonstrated in surveys to have a good predictive power for health policy and the provision of services, particularly for the elderly. Its inclusion in the Census in 2001 for the first time will enable such information to be applied at the local area level' (Economic Secretary to the Treasury et al., 1999: 19).

This suggests the inclusion of this question in the Census was purely to increase the scale of the outputs and that the question itself was not a point of contention. This line of thinking could also have been applied to the Provision of Care question based on its use in the GHS, given that the decision to use a question based on the amount of time spent caring was made after the final preparations for the Census Rehearsal in 1999, and questions are not tested after this period (Moss, 1999: 30). This is contradicted by the fact that for the 2011 Census the Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion (EILR) classifications were consulted on and revised between the 2009 Census Rehearsal and the 2011 Census (ONS, 2009a: 1). The Provision of Care question was omitted completely from testing for the 2011 Census and appeared without a change in the final form

(UK Data Service, 2014), demonstrating that harmonisation of survey questions was regarded as a priority over reviewing the content in light of sociological developments such as those made by the Carers' Movement.

The ONS received over 100 responses in support of retaining the carer topic for the 2011 Census (ONS, 2006b: 11). The most commonly stated reasons for users needing the information were service provision, resource allocation, and policy development/monitoring (ONS, 2006b: 11). The carer topic was moved from category 2: 'Those topics where further work will be undertaken before a decision is made whether to include them in the 2011 UK Census' (ONS, 2005c: 8), to category 1: 'Those topics to be included in the 2011 UK Census' (ONS, 2005c: 8). Despite this, the ONS considered dropping the carer topic for the 2011 Census as a space-saving measure (ONS, 2006a: 3).

The funding bid for the 2011 Census allowed for three pages of individual questions, however question development and testing based on user requirement had resulted in six pages of questions (ONS, 2006a: 1), necessitating a reduction in size. With compromises on question size and layout reducing this to four pages, there was a resulting debate in 2006 as to whether the Census questionnaire should be over three pages or four, with the carer and industry topics excluded from the three-page designs as these were weaker topics in terms of user requirement (ONS, 2006a: 3). This is despite the *carer* topic having a stronger expressed user need than Welsh Language Proficiency or Religion. Religion was always going to be retained due to its value in monitoring equality objectives, however Welsh Language Proficiency was retained on the basis that 'there is a long-standing commitment to include a Welsh language proficiency question within the Census (asked since 1891)' (ONS, 2006a: 3), suggesting the ONS valued tradition over user need, however there were legal implications tied to the retention of the Welsh Language question (ONS, 2007: 1).

The process of choosing Census questions is not as simple as gaging user demand. Layout plays an important part with a greater number of pages negatively affecting response rates (ONS, 2006a: 3). Research had shown that a four-page survey reduced response rates and would cost an additional £20 million (ONS, 2006a: 1). Censuses the world over receive criticisms around four key topics; cost; concerns about privacy and confidentiality; declining response

rates; and the need for more timely and frequent data (Kukutai et al., 2015: 6). As cost is the foremost of these criticisms it is no surprise that it was of foremost concern to the England and Wales 2011 Census Team. Despite the threat to its inclusion, the 2011 Census for England and Wales saw the inclusion of the carer question again, unchanged from the 2001 Census (UK Data Service, 2018a).

As an evolution of the GHS question, the Census question suffers from the same problems of quantifying 'time spent' and terminology. However, it also has additional problems with interpretation. Actions that constitute caregiving in the Census question are defined as 'looking after' or giving 'help' or 'support' (UK Data Service, 2018a). This adds the remit of 'support' to the definition in the GHS. 'Support', defined as giving 'assistance', 'approval, comfort or encouragement' (OED, 2015) broadens the parameters to include financial assistance and emotional support.

The condition that the recipients are 'family members, friends, neighbours, or others' (ONS, 2014) is open to interpretation. 'Family members' is a vague term that can be interpreted as household, blood relation, marital relation, sharing a surname or, in the case of unmarried step-families, a bond akin to these relationships (Havas, 2007). The shift from the nuclear family system and the increased value placed on independence has complicated defining a 'family' (Gillies, 2003). 'The family' is not the static middle-class ideal it was once portrayed as (Finch, 1994) and rising rates of divorce, cohabitation, and birth outside of marriage have blurred the parameters of who and what is 'family' (Gillies, 2003).  This can have very different implications for the relationship between two people. This suggests that two respondents to the 2011 Census could have different interpretations of the word 'family', compromising the reliability of the data. The inclusion of 'others' counteracts this by including any other people, from strangers and acquaintances to immediate family. Whilst this avoids any problems caused by the interpretation of 'family', it increases the scope to include anyone and everyone, positioning 'family members, friends and neighbours' as examples rather than limitations. The Census definition only refers to plural care receivers; family members, friends, neighbours or others (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Taken literally, respondents who provide care for just one person do not meet the Census definition of carer. Finally, the Census gives

four reasons for the provision of care: long-term physical ill health, long-term mental ill health, disability, or problems related to old age (UK Data Service, 2014). Grouping these categories into one avoids confusion caused by the overlap between categories and care recipients falling into more than one category. This may increase the accuracy of the data, however, the reasons for caregiving cannot be separated. Carers of people with physical disabilities cannot be compared against carers of people with a long term mental illness. These socially constructed 'dependency' groups (Thomas, 1993: 652) are limiting.

The 1997 Census Test trialled a question relating to receipt of care, linking it to the questions on illness and disability and provision of care, however, this was unsuccessful for several reasons:

> 'Comparison of responses to the 1997 Census Test and the follow-up Census Test Evaluation Survey revealed a high level of discrepancies for this question (33.6 per cent). In addition, a routing instruction linking the questions on receipt of care and limiting long-term illness did not work. Subsequent cognitive testing indicated that respondents and their carers sometimes had different views on whether care was being provided, leading to inconsistent responses to the questions on receipt and provision of care within the household' (ONS, 2005a: 32).

The 'caregiving bind' arises when 'caregivers try to protect the care-receiver's identity by concealing the extent of informal care provision' (Moore and Gillespie, 2014: 102). This can have a negative impact on the prospects of the caregiver receiving positive social recognition for the caregiving role (Moore and Gillespie, 2014: 107) as 'people who are cared for would sooner deny the existence of their carer than accept [a] presumption of dependency' (Molyneaux et al., 2011: 423),

The respondent is the 'householder' defined as 'the person who lives, or is present, at this address who: owns/rents (or jointly owns/rents) the accommodation; and/or is responsible (or jointly responsible) for paying the household bills and expense' (UK Data Service, 2014). Thus, the Census assumes that all respondents are aware of the health of the care recipient. The person completing the Census form will not necessarily be the carer and might not be aware of or willing to admit to the care. The Census is clear that:

> 'No distinction is made about whether any care that a person provides is within their own household or outside of the household, so no explicit link can be made about whether the

care provided is for a person within the household who has poor general health or a long-term health problem or disability' (UK Data Service, 2014).

This is due in part to the aforementioned problems with linking questions on illness and disability to the receipt of care. However, this is also a result of the changes to the Census question made between the 1999 Test and 2001 Census. The location of the dependant was dropped in favour of the amount of time spent caregiving (Moss, 1999). Consequently, those who care for people in an institution cannot be separated from those providing care to someone within the household because the location of care is not recorded.

To conclude, a lot of the terms used in the Census are open to interpretation e.g. 'family', 'look after' and 'long term'. This means different respondents could have different understandings of these terms. The response is dependent on who the respondent is. If the dependant is the householder they might not be aware of the extent of the caregiving, particularly if their independence has been protected by the respondent. There is also no way to know about the type of caregiving since efforts to link care and illness have failed. To limit future failures in linking data from government surveys, the Government Statistical Society introduced a Harmonisation Strategy.

## 4.4  Harmonisation

The mid to late nineties saw a push for harmonisation in Government Surveys (GSS, 1996, GSS, 1998). This was achieved by reusing a 1995 GHS question in the 2001 Census (ONS, 2001). The 2001 Census Whitepaper, published in March 1999, states the aim of the Provision of Care question was 'to record whether or not the person provides unpaid personal help for a friend or relative with a long-term illness, health problem or disability, and the time spent each week in providing such care' (Economic Secretary to the Treasury et al., 1999: 19). However, the 1999 Census Rehearsal, conducted in April 1999, included a different question (ONS, 1999). This new question was developed through testing within the 1997 and 1998 Census Tests, appearing in its original form in the 1997 Census test questionnaire as shown in Figure 4.2.

Following efforts to harmonise questions across government surveys (ONS, 2015: 7) the decision was made to reuse the GHS question to allow comparisons to be made between the two sets of data (Walker et al., 2001: 2). This achieved the Carers Strategy aim of longitudinal data on the provision of care that could be broken down by age, ethnicity and local authority, amongst other variables (DoH, 1999). The rush to align the question with new policy meant that the question was not subject to the same rigorous testing and review as the original 1997 Census Test question (Moss, 1999). However, the change from 'substantial unpaid personal help' to 'look after, or give any help or support to' was defended by the ONS in 2005, stating that 'respondents were unsure as to what was defined as care when assessing the number of hours they provided' which led to an underestimation of the number of hours carers provided (ONS, 2005a: 69). As discussed in relation to the GHS, the terms used in the final version of the Census question are similarly unclear.

**Figure 4.2 1997 Census Test Question**



(ONS, 1997a, ONS, 1998)

The Provision of Care question, as it appeared in the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, is the same question that appears in the *2015 Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources* document version 3.3  (ONS, 2015: 7). Version 1 of this document (2004) replaced the *Harmonised Concepts and*

*Questions* (1995) document (ONS, 2015: 2) which was the first effort to harmonise common topics in major government surveys (Moss, 1999: 29). The reason behind the harmonisation effort was to improve the comparability of social statistics through common classifications, definitions and standards (ONS, 2008: 5), and to recognise that 'these surveys were designed at different times, to meet different needs, and were commissioned by a range of departments' (ONS, 2008: 5), which had, in part, caused the lack of cohesion described in this Chapter.

**Figure 4.3 Part 1 of the harmonised 'Basic Carers Question'**



IF AGE >= 16
BASIC CARERS QUESTION
– Do you do any of the things listed on this card for family members, friends, neighbours or others because they have long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or problems relating to old age? Please do not count anything you do as part of your paid employment.

1. Yes
2. No
SHOWCARD

1. Keeping an eye out, 'being there':
   Being available if needed
   Making your whereabouts known so you can be contacted if needed

2. Social support and assistance:
   Sitting with
   Chatting with/listening to/reading to
   Making/receiving telephone calls to talk to them
   Encouraging them to do things for themselves

3. Accompanying on trips out to go:
   Shopping
   To hospital/GP/optician/dentist/chiropodist
   To the park/church/restaurant

4. Home and garden:
   Making meals
   Going shopping for someone
   Washing/ironing/changing sheets
   Cleaning/housework
   Gardening
   Odd jobs/maintenance
   Lifting/carrying heavy objects

5. Paperwork/official/financial:
   Helping with paperwork
   Dealing with 'officials' (including by phone)
   Paying bills/rents/rates
   Collecting pension/benefits

6. Medical:
   Collecting prescriptions
   Giving medication
   Changing dressings

7. Moving about the home: giving help with
   Getting up and down stairs
   Moving from room to room
   Getting in and out of bed

8. Personal care: help with
   Getting dressed
   Feeding
   Washing/bathing/using the toilet

(ONS, 2004)

**Figure 4.4 Part 2 of the harmonised 'Basic Carers Question'**

```
IF YES TO BASIC QUESTION
LENGTH OF TIME SPENT CARING
  –   Thinking about all the things you do for anyone else, about how many hours a week do you spend
      looking after or helping them? Please include any time you spend travelling so that you can do these
      activities.

  1.   0-4 hours a week
  2.   5-9 hours a week
  3.   10-19 hours a week
  4.   20-34 hours a week
  5.   35-49 hours a week
  6.   50-99 hours a week
  7.   100 or more hours a week
  8.   varies – under 20 hours a week
  9.   varies – 20 or more hours a week
```

(ONS, 2004)

Despite the Government harmonising the Census question with the GHS question in 1999, the topic of Care was not officially under the General Statistics Service Harmonisation scheme until 2004 when the GSS *Harmonised Concepts and Questions* (1995) document was replaced with several documents separated by topic (Harmonisation Team, 2017), including the *General Health and Carers* report (ONS, 2004). The Carer question appears in two parts as shown in Figures 4.3 and 4.4. The second part of this question is the same as appears in the 1990 and 1995 GHS without the 'other' category (UK Data Service, 1990, UK Data Service, 1995). The 2001 Census asks this question with a smaller number of answer categories (ONS, 2001), possibly as part of space-saving efforts. The first question is an updated version of the first question asked of carers in the 1990 and 1995 GHS trailer modules (UK Data Service, 1990: 38, UK Data Service, 1995: 43) . The language has been updated, replacing 'sick, handicapped or elderly' (UK Data Service, 1995: 43) with 'long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability, or problems relating to old age' (ONS, 2004: 8). It was not until 2011 that the General Health and Carers standard was upgraded from a secondary to primary principle (GSS, 2011: 1) that is, from 'Concepts and questions which apply only for a selected group of surveys' (GSS, 1996: 11) to topics and questions which extend 'to all or nearly all major Government household surveys' (GSS, 1996: 11). It would be 10 years after the 1999 Carers' Strategy before a large-scale Government Survey was dedicated to unpaid carers (UK Data Service, 2010).

## 4.5 Other Government Surveys

### 4.5.1 Carers in Households

In 2010 the Department of Health and the Department of Work and Pensions commissioned the NHS Information Centre for health and social care (NHS IC) to undertake a survey of Carers in Households as part of the 2009 Carers Strategy (NHS Digital, 2010). The Carers in Households Survey was carried out just once in 2009/10 (Data UK, 2011). It is arguably the most comprehensive survey of informal carers to date and was the first and only government survey dedicated to unpaid carers. Carers, identified through a short screening questionnaire, were defined as:

> 'those people who identified themselves as having extra responsibilities of looking after someone who has a long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age' (Data UK, 2011).

People providing care in a professional capacity were excluded.

> 'The main questionnaire then identified carers who also fitted the General Household Survey (GHS) definition of 'Carers', which excludes those caring as volunteers for a charity or organisation, those caring for someone in an institution, those providing financial support only and those caring for someone with a temporary illness or disability, and asked a further range of questions' (Data UK, 2011).

As with the Census and the GHS, the terms 'long-term', 'support', and 'temporary' are open to interpretation. The topics included were: household information, whether respondent met the GHS definition of 'carer', support given to main person(s) cared for, support for carers, access to specific services for carers, impact of care-giving on carer, impact of care-giving on employment prospects and demographic details (Data UK, 2011).

The *Selection of topics and questions for the 2001 Census* report (Moss, 1999) details an effort to 'harmonise' common topics in major government surveys from 2001 onwards 'with the primary objective of producing comparable outputs' (Moss, 1999: 29). Therefore it is assumed the wording of 'long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems relating to old age' (Data UK, 2011), which mirrors the wording of the Census (ONS, 2001), was deliberately taken from the Census question to aid comparison between the two data sets.

This is then negated by the GHS definition of carer as opposed to that of the Census. The choice to use this definition is presumed to be another effort to harmonise questions on the same topic in different surveys. However, by taking parts from the Census and the GHS, the Carers in Households Survey is not comparable with either. Along with the definition of carer, the Carers in Households survey also uses the questions from the 2000 GHS informal carers trailer module (UK Data Service, 2000).

To summarise, despite efforts to harmonise questions in government surveys, the GHS (2000) and Carers in Households survey (2009/10) are not directly comparable because of their different samples. It is suggested that trends within the two separate data sets could be compared to inform further analysis, although it is stressed that the time gap between the two would need to be accounted for. The Carers in Households data (2009/10) was the last dedicated survey of unpaid carers, meaning there has not been a government-run survey dedicated to unpaid carers in almost a decade.

### 4.5.2  Life Opportunities Survey

The Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) was 'a large scale longitudinal survey of disability in Great Britain' and 'compares the experiences of disabled people with those of nondisabled people' (UK Data Service, 2015c). The LOS started in 2009 and has had two 'waves' to date, each spanning two years, the first running from June 2009 to March 2011 and the second from June 2010 to March 2012 (UK Data Service, 2015c). Unlike the Census and GHS, the LOS recorded unpaid care from the care recipient's perspective, asking:

'Do any of the following help you with the activities we have been discussing?

(1) Family member or relative

(2) Friend or Neighbour

(3) NHS nurse/medical carer

(4) Social Worker

(5) Paid help inside the home

(6) Paid help outside the home

(7) Unpaid carer (volunteer)

(8) Other person (please specify)

(9) No-one'

(UK Data Service, 2015c).


As with the GHS and Census, the language used leaves room for interpretation and thus variation. The separation of the terms 'unpaid carer', 'family member or relative' and 'friend or neighbour', echoes the historic view that care from family and friends is somehow different from 'unpaid care'. Boundaries between caring (but not caregiving) relationships such as parent and child, husband and wife, sibling and sibling, and caregiving relationships are blurred. Montgomery and Kosloski argue that 'the caregiving role should not be seen as a new role but, rather, as the transformation of an existing role relationship' (Montgomery and Kosloski, 2009: 47). However, Hughes et al. acknowledge that, in spousal relationships, the caregiver role is more likely to be absorbed (Hughes et al., 2013: 83). The negotiated relationship that existed prior to the caregiving impacts whether a person sees themselves as 'looking after', 'helping' or 'supporting' a person, meaning these roles are not as clearly defined as the LOS question suggests.

The negotiation of new roles hinges on the dynamic within the relationship between caregiver and care receiver, and expectations of 'normal' roles within this relationship. The notion of 'virtual reciprocity' or 'hypothetical exchange' can create the perception that caregiving activities are normal parts of a relationship. The caregiver believes that if the situation were reversed the care receiver would provide the same level of care for them without question (Hughes et al., 2013). Hughes et al. noted that caregivers acknowledged their caregiving activities but 'preferred to see themselves in a relationship-based role' (Hughes et al., 2013: 83). The perception that identifying as a carer can actively end the existing relationship can lead to caregivers rejecting this identity out of 'resistance to the loss of a part of their relationship with the other person' (Molyneaux et al., 2011: 430).

Following the harmonisation of questions on unpaid care in government surveys, The LOS has a section dedicated to provision of unpaid care copied directly from the 2000 GHS. This section states that: 'some people have extra

responsibilities because they look after someone who has long-term physical or mental ill health or disability, or problems related to old age' (UK Data Service, 2015b) before asking:

> 'May I check, is there anyone living with you whom you look after or give special help to, other than in a professional capacity? For example, a sick, disabled or elderly relative?' followed by 'Is there anyone not living with you whom you look after or give special help to, other than in a professional capacity? For example a sick, disabled or elderly relative?' (UK Data Service, 2015b).

The definition of disability has been taken from the 2011 Census, however, it is used as a precursor to the broader question from the 2000/01 GHS. There is room for discrepancy as some respondents may answer the question directly, however, others may take guidance from the preface. As the question is taken directly from the issues with discrepancy in the wording persist.

The LOS is the most recent data set with information on co-mutual caregiving, asking respondents both if they receive and give care (UK Data Service, 2015b). As this is also a longitudinal study, it would be interesting to note if those both receiving and providing care reported a change in their general health at odds with those either receiving or providing care. However, the problems the 1997 Census Test encountered matching care provider and recipient data must not be overlooked. The LOS recorded continuing carers by recording whether the caregiver and care recipient live together (UK Data Service, 2015b). However, for the caregivers who did not live with the care recipient, it did not categorise whether the care recipient lived alone, with other people or in residential care (UK Data Service, 2015b).

Like the Carers in Households Survey, the LOS used aspects from the Census and the GHS, meaning it is subject to the same criticisms but the resulting data cannot be compared with either. The LOS uses outdated terminology by classing unpaid carer and care from family and friends separately. It captures the prevalence of care from the care recipient as well as from the carer meaning the two could be compared, however this would be susceptible to the same problems encountered by the Census in doing so. Understanding Society provides a longitudinal approach but with a limited number of questions.

### 4.5.3  Understanding Society

The most recent data file for Understanding Society holds records from 2009-2013 (Understanding Society, No date). It is a longitudinal study which 'captures important information about people's social and economic circumstances, attitudes, behaviours and health' (Understanding Society, No date). Like the LOS it is run in waves, with the first random sample of nearly 40,000 households starting in 2009 and interviewed annually (Understanding Society, No date). The Understanding Society questionnaire asks two questions relating to caregiving:

> 'Is there anyone living with you who is sick, disabled or elderly whom you look after or give special help to?
>
> YES
>
> NO
>
> Do you provide some regular service or help for any sick, disabled or elderly person not living with you?'
>
> > YES
> >
> > NO

(Understanding Society, No date)

This question satisfies the need for harmonisation amongst government surveys - in this instance the 2000 GHS, the 2009/10 Carers in Households survey and Understanding Society. Once again the vague terms 'look after' and 'special' are used. Rather than asking participants to report the amount of time they spend caring per week, Understanding Society asks if the carer lives with the dependant in the same manner as the original 1997, 1998 and 1999 Census Test question (Understanding Society, No date). This avoids the problematic recall, however, it means continuing carers cannot be separated from other carers who do not live with a dependant.


## 4.6  Research Methods

Following examination of the research that has been done into unpaid carers and unpaid care, this section provides a brief overview of the methods used for research in this field more widely. This research focusses on large scale research

done by the Government as it is the main source of data that is used to affect change through policy. This type of research predominantly uses a quantitative survey methodology as it is the most time and cost efficient method for research of this scale, however this is not the only method that has been used for research into unpaid care.

Caring itself is a qualitative attribute. In the 12th Century Lombard's Sentences raised the question of understanding differences and changes in qualitative attributes through attempts to measure theological virtues (Crombie, 1994). At the time most scholars were of the Aristotelian position that 'quantity and quality are distinct categories' and that 'there could be no addition or subtraction of degrees of intensity of a quality as there could be of length or a number' (Crombie, 1994: 414). It was Duns Scotus who 'proposed the radical thesis that change in degree of a qualitative attribute be understood as quantitative change' (Michell, 2003: 520), suggesting that qualitative attributes be measured quantitatively. In the early 1600's Galileo Galilei increased the scope of measurement with his famous quote 'measure what is measureable and make measureable what is not so' (Galileo pre-1610 in Klein, 2012: 509). However, it was not until the 18th Century when human behaviour became the subject of scientific study by Aguste Comte and the development of the discipline of Sociology (Calhoun et al, 2007). Early sociological enquiry attempted to mirror the methods championed by the natural sciences (Jahoda, 2015). Statistician Quetelet was the first to try to quantify human qualitative attributes, reclassifying them from philosophical discussion to statistically measureable variables in attempts to measure the moral and intellectual qualities of man (Jahoda, 2015). There is debate over when qualitative methods began to be used in earnest. Despite recognition that ethnographic methods were used in 17th Century Anthropology, qualitative research did not become widely recognised within sociology until the 20th Century (Given, 2008).

The 1950's brought an increased profile for Sociology in Britain with the launch of The British Journal of Sociology (Jstor, 2016). Prior to the 1950's sociology in Britain was intertwined with the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) (Halsey, 2004: 1). This was no different after the Second World War, with LSE training first-generation professional sociologists in the

aftermath of the war (Halsey, 2004: 70). 'Sociology was becoming recognised and established in Britain' but remained heavily focused on the statistical empiricism of the London Statistical Society (Halsey, 2004: 71). The 1950's was a phase of infatuation with qualitative techniques (Calhoun, 1987: 618) which accelerated into the 1960's. Until this point, 'qualitative (or 'in-depth') interview methods were mainly regarded as being appropriate only to psychotherapists and related disciplines' (Savage and Burrows, 2008: 305). The perceived superiority of academic social science over market research led the two to develop detached from each other (Savage and Burrows, 2008). This golden age of qualitative research was characterised by a need to give a voice to those whose voices had previously been silenced and ignored through a growing distrust of authority and authoritarian control (Given, 2008). These circumstances were the foundations for the Carers' Movement and research into unpaid carers and unpaid care.

As of 2019, the most commonly cited data about unpaid carers remains quantitative, coming from Carers UK. This is in the form of large-scale data about the demographics of the carer population from the 2011 Census. Although almost a decade old, Carers UK justifies the continuing use of UK Census figures 'as they are the biggest dataset concerning carers in the UK' (Carers Uk, 2019). The most recent policy briefing from Carers UK, titled *Facts about caring* (2019), is a compilation of 'facts' in the form of numbers. This report includes reference to qualitative data, citing factors 'carers are most likely to talk about', however it is heavily reliant on the qualitative attribute of caring as measured through qualitative variables such as hours spent caring or take up of support. This demonstrates that although qualitative research has been done by Carers UK and its predecessors (see Chapter 8), when it comes to influencing policy it is numbers that are the most influential medium.

Qualitative research focusing on unpaid carers has primarily come from academia. Since the start of the millennium there has been a focus on the carer identity and the health/psychological effects of unpaid caring (Miller et el, 2008, Montgomery and Kosloski, 2009, Corden and Hirst, 2011, Hughes et al., 2013) and the dynamics and dimensions of the caring relationship (Nakano Glenn, 2000, Al-Janabi et al., 2008) in qualitative research about unpaid carers. More recently, the research done by the Centre for International Research on Care, Labour and

Equalities (CIRCLE) has championed qualitative research methods in unpaid carer research as it allows carers to speak for themselves and in their own language (CIRCLE, 2019).

By acknowledging that the methods used for large scale Government research into unpaid carers are not completely representative of the broader field of unpaid carer research the wider socio-political context in which this research has been conducted is brought to light. Thus, this Chapter should not be read in isolation and is intrinsically linked to the Carers' Movement (Chapter 3) and to further research done by Carers UK and its predecessors (Chapters 8 and 9).

## 4.7  Summary and Conclusion

Since the NCSWD was founded in 1965, research into unpaid care has undergone change. Many of these changes are a direct result of preceding research. For example, research in the mid to late 1960s brought the issue of identity to the forefront of research. To research carers as a sub-population, there needs to be an accessible, known population. Efforts to identify carers have involved self-identification, interviewer/researcher discretion, nomination by a professional e.g. through NHS services, and identification through an indirect question as seen in the Census. Although several different types of carer are classified and quantified, locating and identifying unpaid carers remains one of the key challenges for researchers in this field. This has been compounded by inconsistency in the definition of the word carer and what constitutes caregiving.

Initially restricted to the single woman and her dependant, the definition of carer has expanded to include men, widows and divorcees caring for an elderly dependent, married women, and finally anyone giving special help to a loved one. The transition between definitions and the misalignment between organisational and legislative parameters led to confusion as some people and circumstances were recognised in certain circles and not in others. This confusion is replicated in the changes to wording in government surveys.

Between 1985 and 2000 the GHS ran the carer trailer module on a five yearly basis. Between 1985 and 1995 the definition of unpaid care did not change. However, the number of questions asked about unpaid care and the focus of

these questions varied, with the 1990 GHS carer trailer module asking fewer. This shows a shift in the focus of research into unpaid care. Following suit from government surveys dedicated to unpaid care, and the development of the census question, the module that ran in 2000 was shorter, with a focus on time spent caregiving and the activities involved. The module had been renamed *Informal Carers* with an updated, stricter definition. As the CNA had fought to broaden the definition of unpaid carer, the Office for National Statistics was restricting it. The inconsistent and vague wording of survey questions has left scope for discrepancies in the unpaid carers counted in each survey.

Linking back to the feminist influence on the Carers' Movement from Chapter 3, this influence is far less visible in government research into unpaid care. Smith characterises feminist research by a research method which, 'at the outset of inquiry, creates the space for an absent subject, and an absent experience, that is to be filled with the presence and spoken experience of actual women speaking of and in the actualities of their everyday worlds' (Smith, 1987: 107). Thus, arguably, caregiving cannot be fully understood without examining women's experiences as intersectional with feminism and disability studies (Smith, 1987). However government research into unpaid carers does not follow this intersectional approach as, arguably, a choice of predetermined answers stifles the voice of women by reducing their experience to a simple 'check box'. Similarly, efforts to look at the relationship between unpaid care and illness and/or disability revealed these variables to be incompatible (ONS, 2005a). Incompatibility between disability and unpaid care is not limited to the linkage of variables within surveys and extends to the theoretical positioning of these disciplines more broadly. Hughes et al. (2005) argue that the framing of (and connotations of the term) "care" within disability studies cannot be reconciled with the feminist positioning of care characteristic of the Carers' Movement. A feminist framework prioritises the giver whilst disability studies prioritising the receiver, without recognition of interdependence and mutual need (Hughes et al., 2005). This is a consequence of the methods used in this type of research.

Government research into unpaid care and carers has predominantly been conducted using a large-scale survey method. This is a time and cost effective method of gathering a large number of responses, thus it is the obvious

methodological choice for this type of research. The structured nature of the survey questions and answers has also allowed for questions about unpaid carers to be harmonised from just before the start of the 21st Century to present day, with the intent that data from these questions be comparable across surveys. In reality however, differing populations, samples, and guidance notes has meant that data from the same questions across different surveys are not directly comparable. There has also been no effort to rectify the difficulty in comparing disability and unpaid care within government research. The harmonisation strategy has also effectively frozen questions on unpaid care from the early millennium, meaning that the questions asked continue to reflect the socio-political context of that time, focusing on the amount of time spent caring, despite academic research highlighting this as a problematic metric. This suggests that assumptions can be made about the context in which a survey was created by examining the details within the survey itself including language and method.

The Carers in Households survey data from 2009/10 is the most recent large-scale data set dedicated to unpaid carers and, according to Carers UK (2019) remains one of the most reliable data sets due to its large numbers, along with the 2011 Census data. The RCA collection is not just a product of the context surrounding its creation but of the institution in which it is held. Now that the social and political background of the RCA collection has been explored, the discussion moves on to the social and political context of archives.

# Chapter 5 : Archive Theory

## 5.1  Introduction

Chapters 3 and 4 established the social and political context surrounding the creation of the records within the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection. Chapter 5 steps away from the RCA collection itself, to look at the social and political history of the institution in which it is held. How archives are understood by the people using archived material contributes to the interpretation and thus the value of the collections they hold. After documents have been created, the decision to archive and the interpretation of what is archived by archive users renders the content of the collection as changeable.

Examining the concept of archives from an academic perspective serves a dual purpose. Firstly, the different approaches to what archives are and what they contain have shaped the archives that we have today. An examination of the development of archive theory through academia will be used to inform the findings from the original research in this thesis, and to place those localised findings into the broader social phenomenon of archive institutions. Secondly, it takes the concept of a realist approach, outlined in the Methods chapter of this thesis, into the archive to build on current academic debate. Beginning with a brief history of what MacLeod (2004) terms 'archiving behaviour', the focus then turns to the development of academic theory of archives and archiving. Through a discussion of how archive theory has developed in the last 40 years, the multidisciplinary and multi-faceted field of archive theory is unpicked. Discussion of the key debates in academic theory of archives demonstrates that archive theory remains contested today. The final section of this chapter explores the way in which theory forces researchers to be introspective about their own approach to the archive, with examples of how this has been negotiated in real-world research.

## 5.2  What are archives?

Before discussing key debates in archive theory about what archives *are*, it is first important to understand what archives *do*. This initial section will provide a brief description of the purposes at the core of archiving in the UK, based on information from The National Archives, the leading and largest archive in the UK (The National Archives, 2016b). This description will be developed as this chapter progresses to demonstrate how archiving in the UK has changed over time with different theoretical bases.

UK archives 'provide first-hand information or evidence relating to historical events or figures' (The National Archives, 2017d), as opposed to libraries which store secondary sources of information (The National Archives, 2017d). Documents within an archive, known as 'records' (Postal Heritage, 2013), come in many forms, including: 'letters, reports, minutes, registers, maps, photographs and films, digital files, sound recording' (The National Archives, 2017d). They are the 'written record of another time' (Freshwater, 2003: 733). Archive collections are 'documents or material of any kind that have accumulated as part of the normal activity of an organisation, business or individual being kept as a unit in an archival repository' (The National Archives, 2017b). These collections have been created by official bodies, businesses, professional organisations, or are private collections (The National Archives, 2017d). They are a compilation of items and records that have been deemed important enough to save or to have a long-term value (Bastian and Alexander, 2009: x). The oldest record of archiving behaviour dates back to the 2nd millennium BC (MacLeod, 2004: 23).

The oldest written documents anywhere in the world were found in the ancient city of Urku in Southern Iraq (MacLeod, 2004). although it is impossible to accurately date these documents, they are estimated to have been created c.3400-3000 BC (MacLeod, 2004: 20). Findings have shown that these texts were repurposed as building materials more than a century after their creation (MacLeod, 2004), meaning that texts were kept (archived) for a period of time after becoming outdated or replaced. Thus, the invention of writing is synonymous with the development of "archival behaviour", and a 'curatorial attitude towards written texts' (MacLeod, 2004: 21). By the middle of the 3rd

millennium BC, texts had become integrated into society and so too had the archiving of these texts. There is evidence that texts were systematically stored in 'tablet houses' (MacLeod, 2004: 21), considered as the first example of archives. Fast-forward to today and there are numerous types of archives both worldwide and within the UK (The National Archives, 2016b).

**Figure 5.1 Types of archives in the UK**

| | |
|---|---|
| National | 122 |
| Local | 654 |
| University | 328 |
| Special | 1,224 |
| Business | 61 |
| **Total** | **2,389** |

(ARCHON 2009 in LISU 2009)

According to the most recent information on the number and type of archives in the UK, in 2009 there were just under 2,400 archives in the UK (ARCHON 2009 in LISU 2009). Figure 5.1 shows the split by type of archive. The statistical series collecting data on the types of archives in the UK was discontinued in 2010 (LISU, 2009) so there is not any more recent data on the number of each type of archive. However, The National Archives 'Find an archive' function lists 2,271 archives across England alone in 2018 (The National Archives, 2018c). Archives across the UK contain a varying number of collections and records, the largest being The National Archives (The National Archives, 2018b).

The National Archives is 'the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales' (The National Archives, 2016b). It is advertised as an 'expert in information and records management', and as holding a leadership role for the archive sector (The National Archives, 2016b). As the largest archive in the UK, The National Archives has 185km of shelving housing millions of records (The National Archives, 2017e), and over 32 million of these

records are catalogued[8] (The National Archives, 2018b). In 2016 the most popular reason for visiting archives was for family history research (44%), followed by local history research (30%) (Archives and Records Association, 2017), showing that the largest proportion of people are not using the archive for an academic purpose. Despite this, the nature of archives and the epistemology underpinning them has been a point of contention across disciplines in academia (Moore et al. 2016).

## 5.3 Academic fascination

Archived material has been used for social research since the 1830s and the time of the 'father of sociology' Aguste Comte (Freshwater, 2003: 733). Following the 17th Century Enlightenment and French Revolution, Comte combined elements of the disciplines of history, philosophy and economics to bring order and progress to a post-revolution society with a new epistemological framework in a discipline he termed *Sociology* (Calhoun et al, 2007). Comte's Sociology was a search for invariant laws governing the social and natural worlds (Calhoun et al, 2007). The methodology used by Comte was inspired by the natural sciences (Calhoun et al, 2007). Slow and rigorous, it centred on the collection and examination of large quantities of documentary evidence (Calhoun et al, 2007, Raftery, 2001). Through this practice, the knowledge of scientific truths about the past echoed in historical research in the social sciences (Freshwater, 2003).

Following 19th Century historian von Ranke's three principles of historical investigation; objectivity, close analysis, and truth, the archive was established as a site of 'truth, plausibility, and authenticity' (Iggers and Powell 1990).

> 'The development of the discipline of history through figures such as Ranke in Germany and Michelet in France helped to generate the sense that it was possible to 'tell history as it was' through careful scrutiny of the treasure-house of material from the past, accumulated in the archive awaiting the historian's gaze to bring it to life (Ernst, 1999). The archives along with museums, libraries, public monuments and memorials became instruments for the forging of the nation into the people' (Featherstone, 2006: 592)

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[8] Cataloguing is the process of making a searchable list of records within an archived collection (The National Archives, no date)

As the notion of the archive institution changed, it became subject to what Freshwater terms 'academic fascination' (Freshwater, 2003: 729). As a static and literal entity archives create the illusion that the past is similarly tangible and as such that there is a level of knowledge about the past that researchers cannot have about the present or future (Moore et al. 2016). The archive had traditionally been the domain of the Historian (Daston, 2012, Freshwater, 2003, Starza-Smith, 2009, Stoler, 2009, Burton, 2005, Moore et al. 2016), but since the mid-1980s 'historians have challenged the position of the archive as the unquestioned source of knowledge and truth about the past' (Geiger et al. 2010: 5). As theories of 'historical contextualisation' were developed in the forms of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism, the archive gained 'a new allure' and, with it, the attention of social theorists (Freshwater, 2003: 729). Despite the long history of social research using archived material, the study of the archive itself only gained momentum within the discipline in the late 20th Century (Freshwater, 2003). Philosopher Derrida (1996) challenged the upheld symbolic status of the archive in the beginning of a 'theoretical offensive' that would bring empiricist approaches to archive investigation into question (Freshwater, 2003: 734).

Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1995) was a turning point for the discipline as it raised the issue of state power and authority in the archive. Derrida built on Foucault's work in *Archaeology of Knowledge* on the construction and realisation of the state in the archive (Freshwater, 2003: 736). 'Foucault's primary concern [was] to trace out the discursive rules that govern the different epistemes of Renaissance, classical, and modern knowledge' (Mambrol, 2018) and as such, Foucault theorised the archive as a functional concept. The archive was positioned as 'the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events' (Foucault, 1972: 129). In doing so Foucault regarded the archive as an effect of sovereignty, 'the sovereignty of the human sciences, of the institutions of justice, of the police, of medicine or psychiatry' (Osborne, 1999: 62), and that which 'differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration' (Foucault, 1972: 129). However, Foucault's theoretical archive has since been criticised for its abstract placement of the 'ideality' of the archive. 'The archive, he emphasizes, is 'the general system of the formation and transformation of statements' (Foucault, 1972: 130). In other words it has a

completely virtual existence (Osborne, 1999: 53). Derrida repositioned the academic debate around archives and, for the first time, the focus was on what was not in the archive through state-mandated exclusion (Derrida, 1996).

Derrida argued that the institutionalisation of archiving behaviour had instilled exclusion through selection processes in what Derrida termed 'archival violence' (Derrida 1996 in De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 7). The archive was no longer a 'neutral, benign and static' institution (Bastian and Alexander, 2009: 257) but actualisation of the law (Moore et al. 2016). However, Derrida's account of the archive is criticised for its heavy reliance on psychologist Freud, specifically Freud's principles of psychoanalysis, to reveal exploitation through the concept of language (Andrade, 2016). As a key figure in the development of Deconstruction theory, Derrida's approach positioned language as a stand-alone communication without influence or impact on or from the broader concept of archives as institutions (Derrida, 1996). Furthermore, Derrida's positioning of the archive was starkly literal, claiming that 'the archive is first a literal place; a domicile, an address, a residence (Derrida, 1996: 1–2). Thus, solidifying the archive as an event in political and physical space (Mambrol, 2018). Derrida argued that 'an archive took place (as an event) because it could be kept in place, both physically and politically' (Mambrol, 2018). However, Derrida's theories often referred to the notion of public records archives in a provate and privileged space, neglecting to account for increasingly public archives in public spaces 'open to individual construction, maintenance, and control' (Mambrol, 2018). Similarly, 'both Derrida and Foucault share a very restricted view of what archives are, the data they store, and the technologies through which they operate' (Mambrol, 2018). Derrida makes claims about the use of technology in archives (that archive technologies determine what can/cannot be archived) but has no understanding of what technologies are used in archives or what their effects (intended or otherwise) are (Mambrol, 2018).

Derrida's insight into the elaboration of the institution of the archive, through recognising that the structure of archives determines what can be archived (Mambrol, 2018), advanced archive theory (Stoler, 2009). However, by isolating the content of archives, Derrida assumed a tangible and knowable reality. Conflictingly, Derrida's observations are just one layer of the stratified

reality acknowledged by the realist theoretical framework underpinning this research. Derrida's depiction of a solid and measurable archive is simplistic. By recognising that the content of an archive collection is just one of several structures designed through the process of archiving, this thesis acknowledges a messier, changeable, and fluid process of archiving. Despite criticisms of Derrida's *Archive Fever*, it remains a key milestone in the 'archival turn' from 'archive-as-source to archive-as-subject' (Stoler, 2009: 54).

*Archive Fever* gave theoretical stature to the archival turn (Stoler, 2009: 54) and exposed 'the myth of the fixed historical record' (Freshwater, 2003: 737). Derrida claimed that research done within the archives is dealing with the dead (Derrida, 1996: 84). This analogy is carried forward by Freshwater in the acknowledgement that any reading of archive contents is a necessary reinterpretation of the material (Freshwater, 2003: 738), highlighting the importance of reflexivity when engaging with archive material as 'responsibility to the dead requires a recognition that the reanimation of ghostly traces—in the process of writing the history of the dead—is a potentially violent act' (Freshwater, 2003: 738). Archives are not just about the past but are read and interpreted in the present (Moore et al. 2016). The researcher's interpretation is a 'recontextualization [sic]' rather than a reconstruction (Freshwater, 2003: 738). Thus, the original documents are not stable across space or time (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 4) as archives provide a connection between the living and the dead through giving a voice to the past (Moore et al. 2016). Sociologists Harvey-Brown and Davis-Brown (1998) expanded on Derrida's concept of State Power within the archive by examining the role of the archive in the formation of a national self-consciousness, regulated by archive practice, to produce spaces of 'secular national memory' (Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998: 18). These spaces 'preserve a collective national memory thence to constitute a collective national identity, thereby contributing to… the collective sense of moral solidarity' believed necessary for a 'smooth functioning society' (Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998: 20). Steedman (2002) argues that the space to manipulate narratives within the archive comes from their 'nothingness'. Stories from the archives are told in the context of a pre-textual 'History'. What historians claim from the archives did not happen in a literal sense and did not happen in the way that these stories come

to be represented. Thus, narratives within the archive are made from the remaking of several separate stories by an external body (Steedman, 2002). Derrida also paved the way for the expansion of the study of the archive outside of the discipline of History.

Library and Information Scholars Radford and Radford (2005) expanded on Derrida's composition of an archive by applying Foucault's Post-Structuralist 'discursive formation' to the library shelf. This is done through the argument that the nature of library classification systems create real discursive formations that can be 'seen, touched and experienced' and have material effects (Radford and Radford, 2005: 70). These principles are transferrable from the library to the archive, as archives use similar classification systems (The National Archives, no date-b). This is particularly applicable to Manchester Archive, used for this research, which is housed within the Manchester Central Library and is governed by several pieces of policy which span the two organisations (Manchester City Council, 2012). Accounts of the archive, such as those by Harvey Brown and Davis-Brown (1998) and Radford and Radford (2005), move beyond Derrida's assessment of language to look at the collection (Brown, 2013) or the composition (Radford and Radford, 2005) of the archive, but are limited by their single point of focus and, like their predecessor Derrida, reliance on empirical affirmation.

Following the 'archival turn' from 'archive-as-source to archive-as-subject' (Stoler, 2009: 54) the platform for debate over the positioning and identity of archives opened up. Moving beyond the traditional discipline of critical history, a wide range of disciplines and sub-disciplines engaged with archive research (Stoler, 2009: 54), including literature (Starza-Smith, 2009), anthropology (Stoler, 2009), Science (Daston, 2012, Daston, 2017) and even Performance (Freshwater, 2003). In 2012 this progressed beyond the humanities with *The Sciences of the Archive* (2012), by Science Historian Daston.

In *The Sciences of the Archive* Daston examines the archive's place in science research, holding the 'sciences of the archive' accountable, and questioning the compatibility of the natural sciences' 'collective empiricism' (Daston, 2012: 158) and the 'princess-and-the-pea sensibility' of the historian's archive (Daston, 2012: 158). Daston's paper critiqued the archive as a site for

natural sciences research and broadened the discourse around what the archive *is* and who it is for beyond the humanities (Daston, 2012). However, as Daston's paper challenged the disciplinary norms of archive users, it divided these disciplines within the archive itself, by positioning science research in direct opposition to that of the Humanities (Daston, 2012: 156). This polarisation reinforces archaic rhetoric about solid boundaries between disciplines and undermines and undervalues interdisciplinary research, which the archive has the potential to foster (Manoff, 2004). This limits what should have been a forward-thinking paper.

Despite criticisms, Daston (2012), like Radford and Radford (2005), and Derrida (1996), positions the archive as a site of preservation for the future. The National Archives champions preservation as the primary aim of archiving (The National Archives, 2016b). However, for this to be so, it relies on what Daston terms 'collective empiricism' (Daston, 2012: 187). A 'conception of a community that of necessity transcend[s] space and time' (Daston, 2012: 187), and assumes that future communities will view and use the collection in the same way as the creator. Despite making this observation, and acknowledging it as flawed, Daston's work does not expand on the implications of this thinking for the archive or the researcher in the archive. Daston followed the 2012 paper with *Science in the Archives: Pasts, Presents, Futures* (2017). This book follows on from the 2012 paper, taking a closer look at 'how scientists choose to remember the past' (Daston, 2017: vii). Rooted in the history of practices, this work is a testament to what Daston claims is the endurance of scientific practice over theory through representation in the archive (Bycroft, 2017). However, like the 2012 paper, it acknowledges theory but does not engage with it, positioning archived documents as contained as opposed to constructed by the archive. Starza-Smith takes an alternative approach by examining archived documents from the outside in, focusing on the preparation of the documents for archiving.

Early Modern English Literature scholar Starza-Smith uses principles from new historicism and cultural materialism to 'reappraise the ontological status' of 'what the archive *is*' through the examination of the social conditions that created it (Starza-Smith, 2009: 1). Whilst Starza-Smith engages in the discussion of archive methodology, the focus is on the transformation of documents in

preparation for archiving. The language used by Starza-Smith in this paper emanates a romanticism that feels out of place in the discussion of archive practice and is somewhat depictive of the ideological as opposed to the reality it is describing. This romanticism of the archive is described by Moore et al. (2016) as a 'romance of communing with the dead' or by Steedman (2002) as 'making the dead walk'. Starza-Smith's paper suffers from the same limitations as Daston's, recognising that the archive is 'both too messy and not messy enough' (Starza-Smith, 2009: 1), without suggestion of any theoretical basis for this. However, the acknowledgement of inconsistencies within the narrative of the archive frames a gap in academic work indicative of archive theory at the start of the 21st Century. This gap is addressed by the work of Stoler (2009).

Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain* (2009) is a major works in challenging empirical notions of *what the archive is.* Like Derrida, Stoler observes what is not written, but takes this concept beyond structuralism to acknowledge the archive as a site of 'epistemological and political anxiety' (Stoler, 2009: 36) as opposed to bias (Derrida, 1996). Stoler brings a realist approach to debates about the archive, acknowledging that the archive creates history through the power to reshape and govern how people feel about historical events. Through this approach, the 'social epistemologies that guided perception and practice' are identified (Princeton University Press, 2010) and reinforced by the recognition that 'the real' is not simply lodged between the lines (Stoler, 2009). Stoler's findings conform to the theory of a stratified reality on which principles of a broader realist epistemology are built (Emmel et al., 2018), with claims about the real that are fallible, testable and changeable (Emmel, 2013). A stratified reality cannot be known in its entirety (Dalkin et al., 2015), meaning theories within this reality are subject to revision and actively changed (Stoler, 2009: 24). Thus, through the lens of a realist epistemology, archives are re-envisioned:

> 'not as repositories of state power but as unquiet movements in a field of force, as restless realignments and readjustments of people and the beliefs to which they were tethered, as spaces in which the senses and the affective course through the seeming abstractions of political rationalities' (Stoler, 2009: 46).

Through this perception, the material in the archive is the product of a lengthy decision-making process cementing its roots in the social and political context not

only of the institution itself but of the institutions that it served (Stoler, 2009: 25). Stoler's framing of the archive, echoes the position of this thesis with claims made about a partial reality. The key debates in archive theory have been approached from this realist stance.


## 5.4  Inclusion criteria

Although archive theory has been extensively written on since Derrida's Archive Fever, it remains a contested field. The archive is not a 'neutral zone' (Gerson, 2001 in Smith and Stead, 2013: 4) with a prescription formula for inclusion. The value of an archive collection is said to lie in its 'contributions to academic, social, economic and personal development' (De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 4), however determination of contribution is a process of negotiation 'governed by institutional policy as well as the demands of individual authors, living and dead, and the trustees of their estates' (Smith and Stead, 2013: 4). The National Archives' Records Collection Policy details criteria for selecting records for archiving (The National Archives, 2012b). However, these criteria centre on the use and origin of the document as opposed to its composition and content.

The National Archives' selection policy includes broad terms such as 'contribute substantially to public knowledge' and 'of significant contemporary interest or controversy' (The National Archives, 2012b: 6), which leave room for interpretation in the appraisal of records. Community archives add to this complexity by 'frequently maintaining a strong sense of independence and autonomy in their decision-making and governance' (Bastian and Alexander, 2009: 6). For example, Manchester City Council will consider donations that are of particular local interest (Manchester City Council, 2012), or deemed to be 'historically significant' (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016: 6). Similarly, 'many social justice organisations and social movements have chosen to operate outside of this framework by preserving the records of their own activities' (Moore and Pell, 2010: 255). Couple this with a strive for local pride (Bastian and Alexander, 2009: 32) and the archive, once positioned as a logical and processual storehouse, evolves into what De Jong and Koevoets term *Chaosmos*; 'puzzling and impenetrable' (De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 5). This echoes

Starza-Smith's observation that the archive is both 'too messy and not messy enough' (Starza-Smith, 2009: 1). Thus, as the archive is 'constituted by political, social and cultural knowledge regimes' (De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 3) it becomes a knowledge producer in its own right. The following section will review the underlying mechanisms that underpin this process including elitism, control and how researchers engage with archives.

## 5.5  Elitism and exclusion

The archived documents that a researcher accesses have been filtered through the original donor, policies of archives and of the individual archive, and the archivist before the user enters the frame. Derrida terms this 'complex and elusive processes of exclusion masked as selection' arc*hival violence* (Derrida 1996 in De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 7), claiming that each collection excludes as much as it reveals (De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 4). These decisions influence the construction of a collection which then has implications for its interpretation. Record keeping is a political act (Findlay, 2013). As such, archives have been designed to achieve 'control, order and regulation' for social phenomenon' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 14). Through processes of preservation and exclusion (Booth, 2006: 100) archives become sites of political power and control (Booth, 2006). The resulting meta-narrative of 'national context' (Davidson et al., 2019) means that official documentation can be structured towards a particular constructed 'truth' (Burns, 2010). Mbembe describes how archives foster control of power:

> 'not all documents are destined to be archives. In any given cultural system, only some documents fulfil the criteria of 'archivability' [sic]. Once they are received, they have to be coded and classified. They are then distributed according to chronological, thematic or geographical criteria. Archives are the product of a process which converts a certain number of documents into items judged to be worthy of preserving and keeping in a public place, where they can be consulted according to well-established procedures and regulations. The archive ...is fundamentally a matter of discrimination and selection, which, in the end, results in the granting of a privileged status to certain written documents, and the refusal of that same status to others' (Mbembe, 2012: 19).

As an institution designed for the privileged, where the very nature of the institution dictates that some can afford to create and maintain their stories and others cannot (Schwartz and Cook, 2002), archives are protectors of the position of the powerful in society.

Through archiving, the elite are able to enhance their position and thus the past is controlled through the privileging of some stories and the marginalisation of others (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 1). Brown and Davis-Brown claim there is a 'symbolic and material border' dividing the 'orthodox representatives of knowledge and memory from the non-orthodox and unauthorized speakers (Paraphrased from Brunner et al, 1999 in Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998: 21). The use of archives for the abuse of power, as places 'where states, corporations and organizations produce knowledge for their own interests' (Booth, 2006: 100), is well documented in the 'meticulous recordkeeping practices' of repressive regimes such as the Stasi in East Germany and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge (Findlay, 2013: 8). The construction of an archive, and of the collections within, is 'an active act of production' that prepares the content for 'historical intelligibility' (Booth, 2006: 91). Through the manipulation of archived content, power is negotiated, contested and confirmed (Schwartz and Cook, 2002) in conscious and subconscious efforts to regulate the past. In doing so the archive 'set[s] up both the substantive and formal elements of the narrative' (Booth, 2006: 91) for control of the future. Thus, 'what is in the archive is a function of the power relations in past and present societies' (Berkhofer, 1997: 222). Archives are 'not just a bearer of historical content, but also a reflection of the needs and desires of its creator' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 3). They are 'institutionalized sites of mediation between the sociohistorical process and the narrative about that process' (Trouillot, 1995: 52) with 'the power of the present to control what is, and will be, known about the past' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 3).

## 5.6  Controlling the narrative

Archives can emphasise 'the interdependence between the intangible, the oppression of 'outsider' groups, and the materiality of formalised means of valorising some forms of heritage and memory rather than others' (Moore et al.

2016). Archives are 'the loci of power of the present to control what the future will know of the past' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 11) and as such form the intersection of past, present and future (Moore et al. 2016). Archives contain original documentation detailing the histories of people, places and events that have moulded the world we live in (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016), however it is well documented that the process of archiving, and thus archives, can exclude the voices of certain groups (Booth, 2006, Stoler, 2009, Featherstone, 2006, Derrida, 1996), or contain these voices 'framed and fragmented through the commentary… of authorities who silenced them' (Freshwater, 2003: 731). The politics of the archive extend to 'manipulating, concealing, hiding and destroying information' (Booth, 2006: 97) in order to regulate the narrative of the archive and its content. Choices over what to preserve are made within 'socially constructed' and 'naturalised' frameworks that ultimately determine the value of stories for preservation through the archiving of certain documents (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 3). Central to the state's exercising of control through archiving in the latter half of the 20th Century was the notion of a singular, shared history (Moore and Pell, 2010).

Within the archive, there is a dominant history of the 'imagined community' which 'obscur[es] the particularity and plurality of localised memories and more marginalised identities' (Glassberg, 1996). The idea of a singular public and thus a singular, shared history has been central to controlling stories through the archive (Moore and Pell, 2010: 256). Through this narrative, archive collections held power over the shape and direction of 'collective memory and national identity' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 2). As Steedman (2002) claims, history has shaped memory. The archive 'was the building that acted as the sanctum, the place in which the sacred texts and objects were stored that were used to generate collective identity and social solidarity' (Featherstone, 2006: 592). However, as the amount of social data increased in the latter half of the 20th Century (Raftery, 2001), data took new forms, including texts, narratives and social media data, and data sets combining multiple types of data such as 'satellite images, ethnographic accounts and quantitative measurements' (Raftery, 2001: 4). Data represented events and phenomena as easily consumable information, data and knowledge (Inda 2006 in Sokhi-Bulley, 2011: 141). The

idea of a singular public was refuted in favour of a model of society comprised of multiple, competing and unequal publics (Fraser, 1990). As the amount of publically available information increased (Raftery, 2001), and people were more easily able to gather their own information and evidence (Findlay, 2013), the attitude of society towards information shifted, and 'the complete trust and reliance on large information gatekeepers, like governments and big media players, morphed into recognition that these are simply some of many voices and not necessarily the authoritative ones' (Findlay, 2013: 10). Evidence of this power manipulation through the controlling of stories can be found in archives across the globe 'if one is willing to look' (Stoler, 2009).

Accessing suppressed stories through archived material that has been actively constructed to suppress them is a delicate process. Indicators of stories of alternative groups are found in documents where officials have been 'improperly schooled on what not to see or say', either in the heat of the moment or without proper regulation (Stoler, 2009: 39). Stoler demonstrates this in findings from the Dutch colonial archives (Stoler, 2009). Stoler argues that the Dutch colonial state's use of 'paternalistic metaphor and familial analogy' were not in fact metaphors but 'dense transfer points of power used to inform every aspect of racial policy, political calibrations, and the tone and tenor of the archives produced about them' (Stoler, 2009: 75). An example of power and control exerted through archiving is demonstrated in the archives of Cape Town, where the Eurocentric canon of 'whiteness' and 'westernisation' over 'blackness' and 'Africanization (sic)' is easily observable (Mbembe, 2015). Evidence of this power manipulation has been highlighted in UK archiving as recently as 2017. The Guardian newspaper reported that many government documents due for release to The National Archives in 2017 had been withheld or lost and 'Whitehall departments [did] not have to explain why they [had] been retained, or where they are' (Norton-Taylor, 2017). However, bias in archives is increasingly recognised.

There are movements targeted at increasing recognition of bias in archives and at increasing the inclusion and public awareness of alternative stories. This is demonstrated by the *Rhodes Must Fall* movement at the University of Cape Town, targeted at the decolonisation of archives in South

Africa as part of a wider movement for the demythologising of history (Mbembe, 2015). However, these movements are met with criticism and push-back from the dominant voices and cultures within the archive. For example, the *Rhodes Must Fall movement* (Mbembe, 2015) received criticism from media accusing those involved of 'fighting over the past because of [an] inability to build a future' (Mbembe, 2015: 4). Although this demonstrates that a focus on the past can be easily positioned as counter-productive to future-building, it is the means to control the way the past is represented through the documents and archives which determines groups' abilities to participate in, and influence, the future (Moore and Pell, 2010: 255). Narratives within the archive are remade from other people's stories by a researcher of a different time (Steedman, 2002). It is claimed that it is easier to ignore the theory that the archive is under the influence of regulatory powers and that the stories are orchestrated through archive process than to believe empiricist notions of impartial, evidential facts in the archive and 'the fixed historical record' (Freshwater, 2003: 734). This is especially true with unique collections, where it is difficult to accept the loss of the original narrative through archiving (Freshwater, 2003).

Like critical race studies, critical feminism has been a pioneering field for 'uncovering hidden voices' in archives. 'Women began to understand how the loss of knowledge of earlier women's struggles and demands is a major way of securing the social and personal subordination of women' (Hamner, 2014 in Withens, 2016: 850),  with feminist historians such as Rowbotham, Tilly, and Hufton working to recover a `hidden history' of female activism (Molyneaux, 1998: 220). The aim of this movement was to ensure different voices are, and continue to be, represented and disseminated over and above evidence gathering in what Withers terms *feminist cultural heritage* rather than traditional history preservation (Withers, 2016). This movement went hand in hand with the political activism of the feminist movement of the 1970's (see Chapter 3), as there began a 'reinvigorated and international feminist movement, in tracing the history of feminism and the work of feminist groups' (Molyneaux, 1998: 220). 'Acts of cultural recovery' were a key part of the Women's Liberation Movement in the UK (Withers, 2016: 849). Both within the UK and internationally, this movement examined the social and historical factors that conditioned the emergence of

female activism and thus theorised gendered forms of collective identity (Molyneaux, 1998). An example of this is the Mass-Observation Archive at the university of Sussex which 'holds material not only *about* women but also *by* women about their lives' (Sheridan, 1994: 103).

This continues today with Tamboukou's work on documents of women trade unionists in the garment industry in the first half of the twentieth century (Tamboukou, 2016), and a 'recent interest in documenting and re-evaluating the histories of the UK Women's Liberation Movement' (Withers, 2016: 847). Mosmann's research detailing the relationship between feminist objects and feminist scholarship within archives and positions 'contact with the activist feminist "archive" as a way to reposition and redeploy late twentieth century feminisms' (Mosmann, 2016: 172). Initiatives such as *Sisterhood & After*, launched at the British Library in 2013, *Sistershow Revisited: feminism in Bristol,1973–1975* (2010), and *Music & Liberation* (2012) have contributed to 'an abundance of diverse memory resources' dedicated to interpreting the stories of feminist activism and the Women's Liberation Movement (Withers, 2016), recognising that 'even gaps and silences about women can be significant in the interpretation of documents' (Sheridan, 1994: 101). Similarly, women's history was brought into popular culture with the recent history of the suffrage movement (Withens, 2016). As Tamboukou describes:

> '[Feminist archives] have re-enacted marginalised voices and subjugated knowledges from the archives of the memory of work: they have textualised the conditions of women workers' lives and have mapped material and discursive entanglements between workspaces and personal spaces. In so doing they have foregrounded the intimate, intense and often invisible ways through which women workers lived their workspaces, populated them with ideas, beliefs and everyday practices, and also imagined them differently' (Tamboukou 2016)

This is further demonstrated by the Feminist Theory Archive, which documents the work of influential feminist theorists and scholars in a feminist archive devoted to feminist research (Pembroke Centre, 2019).

As well as external parties fighting for change within the archive, there are internal pushes for change as well. A 2010 initiative encourages public archives to re-read records 'against the grain' (Moore and Pell, 2010: 257) to draw out the stories of marginalised groups, including women and ethnic minorities, along with

revising acquisition policies to make them more inclusive of underrepresented groups (Carter, 2006). Whilst this shows a step change in the culture of the archive itself, and commits the archive to an epistemological stance beyond empiricism, the archive remains bound to its government funders. Thus the level of change achieved can only ever be a compromise.

## 5.7  Engaging with archives

As theory changes so does the way we approach research in the archive. As well as the theories of the archive, differences in the way research is done in the archive influence findings from archive research and the interpretation of what constitutes knowledge within and from archives:

> 'the particular approach and methods used in doing archival research need to differ according to the constitution, organisation and purpose of an archive or collection and the data or contents in question, as well as because of the researcher's stance and preferred research strategies' (Moore et al. 2016)

The historical archive varies from the sociological archive, which varies from the archive as theorised from different disciplines. 'Absences, exclusions, ethics, practices, methods, research strategies, access, disciplinary status, truth claims, facts, generalisability, validity, all manifest differently – or sometimes not at all – across the disciplines' (Geiger et al. 2010: 6). There are divisions in the way researchers from different disciplines account for 'spatio-temporal rhythms' and how researchers 'orient [themselves] within the archive, how [they] follow specific storylines, narrative personae and analytical insights, and how [they] write about them' (Tamboukou, 2016: 71). In particular, human documents and narratives such as those within the RCA Collection can be interpreted and analysed in a number of different ways (Gibbs, 2014).

Whilst archives have traditionally been the domain of the Historian (Moore et al. 2016), and thus archive methodology has traditionally been situated within the discipline of History, social researchers take a different theoretical and methodological approach based on an epistemology and ontology different from that within the field of History. Geiger et al. (2010) notes that Historians have been concerned with the content of archives and the role of archival content in

shaping history and memory. 'History, as a modern concern, is an enterprise devoted to classifying, fixing, stabilizing, and authorizing memories (Robertson, 2004: 460). Sociologists have framed their concerns around archive material as qualitative data and thus archive research as the re-use of qualitative data. This is demonstrated in research by Davidson et al. (2019), Geiger et al. (2010), and Gibbs (2014).

Osborne (1999) provided a key intervention for the role of sociology in the archive, however it is limited to the role of historians and archivists and sociological history in the archive rather than the discipline of sociology. In particular Osborne neglects to account for producers of archived material (Geiger et al., 2010). Rather than engaging with the historian's archive, sociologists have diverged to create a separate experience and interaction within the archive:

> 'the language of 'the archive' is not one that many sociologists have taken up, or have much recourse to, even as they discuss issues about the storage of and access to 'data'. Rather the debate to date has tended to reiterate common sociological framings of qualitative research, in which primacy is assumed to attach to the fieldwork encounter' (Geiger et al. 2010: 7)

The place and parameters of fieldwork in archive research have been of particular contention in recent methodological research. As Moore et al. (2016) states, the archive to the researcher is a 'literal and material place' of labour processes. Traditionally fieldwork comprises the time the researcher is 'in the field' (in the archive in this case). However, Tamboukou (2016) makes a compelling case for fieldwork within the archive as starting before the researcher enters the archive, during the planning and preparation for fieldwork, as research questions shape the preparation for fieldwork and thus guide the preparation. That being said:

> 'new beginnings emerge, around people, documents and sources that had not been thought about when designing the research… no matter how well we have prepared, once we find ourselves in an archive, we have to adapt to new conditions and contexts, synchronise ourselves with its space/time rhythms, and in this way become organically entangled in it' (Tamboukou, 2016: 77).

Conversely, an idea from the field of Anthropology is that of "fieldwork after fieldwork", where researchers reflect on their own fieldwork and ethnography, similar to that of a sociologists reflexivity but with an emphasis on reflecting on

the researcher's changing understanding of the fieldwork over time (Geiger et al., 2010). Analysis and writing up of research data from the archive take place in a separate 'temporal moment' from the fieldwork, changing understandings of fieldwork over time. This resonates with the change in the researcher's positioning in relation to caring responsibilities which in turn changed the direction of this research (see Chapter 2).

The Methods chapter of this thesis noted interactions with archivists as pivotal to shaping this research, and the findings chapters revisit these interactions with a critical lens to demonstrate that interactions between the archivist and researcher constitute both cause and effect of the institutional processes within an archive. Interactions for this research were difficult for the researcher to negotiate (see Chapter 2), however this is not a unique experience for the sociologist in the archive. Tamboukou (2016) argues that difficult interaction with archivists should be expected when researching within archives and that it is within the interest of the researcher and their research to navigate these waters carefully, as the archivist and interactions between the archivist and researcher are part and parcel of fieldwork in archives: 'we should not separate the physical, social and intellectual dimensions of the archival research we carry out' (Tamboukou, 2016: 78). This has been particularly applicable to this research as, as a sociologist within the archive, this research goes beyond the boundaries of the archive and encompasses the interlinking material and intellectual processes involved in archive research.

This research comes from the position that archived material must be understood in the context of its conditions of production and reading, supported by Hodder (1994). This research also voices concerns about the limitations of using data without a complete understanding of its creation. These concerns are typified within sociological archive research, forming 'part of the resistance to the creation of a sociological archive, that it can never be complete, that it will always be a site of loss and failure' (Geiger et al. 2010: 8). The issue of 'incompleteness' within the archive has more recently become of interest and concern to historians, having previously disregarded contextual information, so highly commended by social researchers, in favour of a wider picture in which 'events and developments at family, community, local, national and international level' are

considered of greater value (Geiger et al., 2010). Historians generally require a lot of sources from the same era, however, as demonstrated by Steedman's book, *Master and Servant: Love and labour in the English industrial age* (2007), sociologists can gain plentiful information from a single source.

Despite these differing approaches to context and what constitutes valuable evidence, Historians and Sociologists agree 'that even incomplete documentation will provide an invaluable source for future researchers in ways we cannot predict or anticipate' (Geiger et al. 2010: 10). It is not possible to know what will be of interest to researchers of the future. As this research is positioned within sociology, this thesis focusses on engagement with the archive from within the field of social research.

Power is negotiated, contested and confirmed and 'when power is denied, overlooked, or unchallenged, it is misleading at best and dangerous at worst' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 2). By acknowledging that archived documents change over time (Stoler, 2009), and that the archive is vulnerable to instability through movement of documents within the archive institution itself (Geiger et al., 2010: 26), trust in, and reliability of, the documents has political connotations (Hamilton et al., 2012, Stoler, 2009). As Derrida (1996) claimed that the archive is a political institution (Booth, 2006: 103), there is a question over how this is handled by researchers in archives and what part researchers play in the construction of knowledge in and from archives. Schwartz and Cook suggest researchers should not only recognise the power at play in archives but that they should actively challenge it (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). The work done by Mbembe in the Rhodes Must Fall movement takes a direct approach to this by publically shaming the archives themselves and holding the regulators of the archives accountable for the bias and elitism found in the archives of South Africa (Mbembe, 2015). However, this is an extreme example. For the researcher using the archive as a data collection site, for relatively uncontroversial research, Booth describes an 'epistemological divide' (2006) in the way the archive is approached:

> 'In general, those who understand archives as apolitical institutions tend to display inordinate confidence in the ability of historians to recover and reconstruct the past. By contrast, those who conceptualize archives as political institutions tend to refer to history as fiction rather than an act of discovering the past' (Booth, 2006: 103).

However, Stoler's (2009) epistemological positioning of archives gives researchers the option to tread the area between Booth's dichotomy. Through acknowledging archived material as somewhere between fiction and truth social researchers can preserve the value of archived material as a window to the past, whilst maintaining an open eye and ear to the process that the material has gone through. This is developed and a case is built for this process to be considered as data, both in its own right and as a co-producer of the final product of the archived material the researcher handles.

## 5.8  Summary and Conclusion

There are over 2,200 archives in the UK of varying size (The National Archives, 2018c). The largest of which is The National Archives, providing leadership and advice to archives across the country. The use of archives for academic research developed within the discipline of History as a method of connecting past and present, however as the subject of Sociology developed, reliance on evidence-based decision making meant that archive research soon became integrated into social enquiry. Despite this, social theory of the archive was not developed until the late 1900s, when philosopher Derrida challenged the upheld symbolic status of the archive, drawing attention to the stories that were not in the archive, and how power and policy upheld an institution of exclusion. Derrida's work formed the basis of archive theory in other disciplines such as science, performance, and literature, as it challenged Foucault's idealistic notion of the archive by drawing attention to what was not in archives. However, like Foucault, Derrida's view of archives was restricted. It was not until Stoler's realist approach in A*long the Archival Grain* that archive theory would move beyond a framework reliant on empirical evidence.

Today's academic discussion of archive theory is contested over concepts of inclusion, value and neutrality. Although The National Archives sets out criteria for the inclusion of documents in archives, these criteria are vague and the policy is based on recommendations and guidelines as opposed to hard and fast rules. As such, the archive continues to be a site for the controlling of history through the exclusion of stories of marginalised groups. Scholars such as Steedman,

Stoler, and Moore et al. have progressed this field with debates over the construction of narratives within archives and the forging (or perception) of links between the past, present, and future through these narratives. As the amount and type of publically available data have soared, there has been recognition of a power imbalance. Efforts to challenge this have been met with resistance, despite the acknowledgement that power over the archives is power of what is known of the past and thus creates the foundations for the future.

As this chapter has demonstrated, archive theory and academic literature are predominantly concerned with the retrieval of marginalised stories and are most commonly located within the fields of critical race studies and critical feminism. Research combining archive practice with collection content is lacking and, similarly, literature about the role of the researcher in the archive is undeveloped. The findings from this literature review will be used in conjunction with findings from the original research in this thesis to construct a new model of the archive. In doing so a case is made for both practice and content to be accounted for in social research done using archives.

Moving inward from the social phenomena underpinning the regulation of archive content, the inclusion of documents in the archive is also affected by a process of decision-making that takes place before documents are finalised as an archive collection. The next chapter will explain each level of this process in terms of various forms of sampling, before moving on to demonstrate this in practice with original findings.

# Chapter 6 : Sampling

## 6.1 Introduction

Archival sampling involves choosing which records to keep akin to choosing cases in qualitative research for which the verb 'sampling' (in its traditional sense as outlined by statisticians Bowley and Gorard) does not do justice (Emmel, 2013: 1). Couple this with 'imprecise use of terminology and a corresponding misuse of technique' (Kepley, 1984: 238) and it is understandable that the place of sampling in archives has been questioned (Hull et al., 1981).

Sampling is used to create a subset of a population, the number and make-up of which is decided through a process of negotiation between the researcher, their chosen sampling method, and the scope (and limitations) of the research. Archival sampling feels like somewhat of a juxtaposition. To plan to discard items from archives, the very institutions of preservation (The National Archives, 2017a), contradicts their purpose and questions the heritage protected within their walls. However, it is the limited capacity of these walls that causes a need for sampling. Archives hold collections of information in many forms including letters, reports, maps and photographs (The National Archives, 2017a). Such a vast array of documents come with a massive physical presence. The National Archives, the largest archive in the UK, holds millions of records taking 185km of shelving to store (The National Archives, 2017b). The fact is archives do not have unlimited space, forcing the need to sample (Hull et al., 1981).

As explained in the Methods chapter of this thesis, the documents in archives are qualitative data and thus a population for research. An opportunity to discard some of this population through sampling is an opportunity to control that population and, in the case of the archive, to control history itself. Using evidence from policy, and the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection, it will be argued that archival sampling is not just the administration process to maintain and order a collection advertised by The National Archives (The National Archives, no date), but a construct that actively shapes it.

## 6.2 The purpose of sampling in archives

Sampling in archives became unavoidable in the aftermath of World War II. During wartime, massive amounts of documents from wartime organisations were accrued, which then had to be archived following the end of the War (Kepley, 1984: 238).

> 'States not only sought the greater mobilization of populations but also sought through surveillance and monitoring to amass archives and databases which could provide the information that would allegedly protect it against its enemies and subversive influences' (Featherstone, 2006: 592)

Archives were inundated with materials and the destruction of 'marginally useful' documents became essential 'if archivists were to cope with and make usable to scholars, the immense collections of the twentieth century' (Boles, 1981: 125). Recognition of the need for a more long-term approach to sampling in archives came in the 1980s when, as Sly observed, growing collections and shrinking resources increased the need for sampling in archives (Sly, 1987: 71). This period of change was marked by the introduction and implementation of an internationally recognised guide to sampling in archives.

The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report: *The use of Sampling Techniques in the Retention of Records: A RAMP study with guidelines*, introduced 'essential principles' for the application of sampling methods to archived material (Hull et al., 1981). The introduction of these guidelines aimed to tackle 'one of the most important and sensitive problems of archival science' (Hull et al., 1981: 1) by reducing the amount of records being held. UNESCO also recognised that the popular belief amongst archivists and historians was that archivists should not play a role in the shaping of records and that they should be positioned only as gatekeepers (Hull et al., 1981). Thus, UNESCO took the stance that sampling should be a last resort:

> 'sampling is a technique which, in whatever form, is subject to some criticism and uncertainty by custodian and searcher alike and that the archivist will be well advised to adopt sampling methods as infrequently as possible' (Hull et al., 1981: 47)

The UNESCO report claimed that sampling should only be used in archives 'when some further reduction in bulk is deemed necessary over and above that first decision [of appraising the collection for archiving]' (Hull et al., 1981). This

positioning of sampling as only useful for space-saving was further perpetuated by the referral to sampling as 'systematic retirement' (Hull et al., 1981). The focus of the UNESCO report was on what should be removed from the archives through sampling, as opposed to what should be retained. This meant that archivists were encouraged to judge the *worthlessness* of records instead of their worth. Sampling in this way is akin to purposeful sampling except instead of choosing information-rich cases for the purpose of research (Emmel, 2013) archivists choose information poor cases for the purpose of being discarded. Purposeful sampling is one of several sampling methods used in archives.

## 6.3  Types of Sampling

Historically, documents were selected for archiving based on their 'impact on precedent or media attention' (Kepley, 1984: 239). However, the focus of social research using archived material shifted in the latter part of the 20th Century. Research turned away from the study of elites to the reconstruction of the everyday experiences of ordinary individuals (Kepley, 1984: 239). As a result, large quantities of paper records covering these everyday experiences became of interest, causing archives to introduce sampling techniques in the 1970s and 1980s as 'a way to capture all of the major characteristics of the series while reducing its bulk' (Kepley, 1984: 239). However, the introduction of sampling strategies was not without resistance.

The dominant criticism of archival sampling was that, by removing some documents, the quality of the overall collection would be compromised (Boles, 1981). UNESCO refuted this by claiming that as the complete population is unknown, any sample cannot be representative (Hull et al., 1981). The donor's decision to donate material for archiving is a process of selection in itself. The donor has purposefully selected those particular documents for archiving. There is evidence of this in the highly publicised case of the diary of Queen Victoria. After the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 all 141 volumes of her diary, comprising over 43,000 pages, were edited by her daughter Beatrice to destroy anything that cast the Queen in a poor light (Dennison, 2014). This demonstrates that, as claimed by UNESCO, what the archive receives has already been purposefully

sampled to portray only what the donor wants to be seen (Hull et al., 1981). Therefore, what an archive receives is not a complete and whole population and thus representation of the whole is an impossible achievement (Hull et al., 1981). The narrative of an archive collection as received by the archivist is not authentic but structured and created by the donor of the material. Sampling cannot detract from the integrity of a collection as the original collection was a sample itself, thus archivists should 'be able to sample without undue anguish about the integrity of the records' (Hull et al., 1981: 48). This all-or-nothing approach to the completeness of a collection serves to allay fears that valuable material is being discarded through sampling (Sly, 1987: 55). Whilst examination of the UNESCO guidelines suggest a purposeful sampling method was recommended, in actuality the UNESCO report declared that archival sampling should be 'truly random' and should apply a statistically sound method of selection with no element of bias' (Hull et al., 1981).

Simple random sampling was the mathematical sampling technique favoured by archives as the resulting truly random sample was seen as the gold standard (Kepley, 1984). A simple random sample is a sample of a population in which every case has the same probability of being selected for the sample (Bryman, 2016). Whilst a simple random sampling method is robust and removes human error/bias from the equation, in practice it requires the collection to go through detailed preparation prior to sampling. Simple random sampling needs each case to have a unique identification number (Bryman, 2016). Translated to archiving this means that each document needs to have been assigned a unique number, however this research demonstrates that this is not common practice in archives (Tullock and Cave, 2004, author's field notes). Not all archived documents are itemised, thus not all archived documents are numbered. Similarly, where collections have been numbered, there is no requirement for unique identifiers as standard, so some numbers are duplicated (Boles, 1981), meaning a statistical random sample is not possible without additional work to organise and label a collection. Systematic sampling has been documented as an alternative sampling method in archives (Boles, 1981). Unlike simple random sampling, systematic sampling selects elements for their location within the total population e.g. every 10th document (Bryman, 2016). It is simpler, quicker, and

easier than simple random sampling, and does not require unique identifiers (Boles, 1981). However, 'it is never possible to be absolutely certain that a particular group of records is free from hidden regularities' (Boles, 1981: 127), thus introducing an element of human selection.

The advantage of mathematical sampling is that 'it gives subsequent users of the sample a clearer idea of what they are using, and how much faith to put in it' (Boles, 1981: 126). From the perspective of a social researcher using the archive, it means that the process of sampling is robust, however the content of the documents that have been discarded is unknown to both the researcher and archivist. Whilst the removal of documents is systematic, the removal of content is random. The use of systematic sampling in archives came under criticism for comprising 'a very wide spectrum of techniques', meaning that a truly random output was not guaranteed (Hull et al., 1981). This issue was exacerbated when systematic sampling techniques were applied to archive collections without a systematic order to their content. Statistical sampling techniques have been developed for use on a list of variables with the same properties (list of participants, contact numbers etc.). However, this is not the case with documents within an archive collection, where the content of each individual case can vary from one to the next. Thus there is no guarantee that what has been removed is of the same content as what has been kept. Therefore, despite UNESCO's recommendation that archival sampling be 'truly random' (Hull et al., 1981), it was argued that sampling of archive documents should be subjective to avoid 'spectacular cases' being culled (Kepley, 1984: 239). This meant that the first sampling decision had to be whether the ordinary or the extraordinary is required in the archival sample (Hull et al., 1981). Thus, in sampling, assumptions were made about the kinds of documents archive users (including researchers) would be interested in. In an attempt to incorporate an element of human selection into the mathematical techniques championed by UNESCO, stratified sampling was tested. However, stratified sampling, a form of statistical sampling in which 'certain parts of the universe to be sampled are weighted differently than others' (Kepley, 1984: 241), proved too complicated and involved computational techniques beyond the remit of archivists (Kepley, 1984). Thus, purposeful sampling is used in modern-day archival sampling.

Purposeful sampling 'ha[s] a logic and power quite different from that of probability sampling' (Emmel, 2013: 36). Defined as making judgements 'about who or what to sample with reference to the purpose of the study, its context, and the specific audience for the research' (Emmel, 2013: 34), purposeful sampling differs from statistical sampling in that it aims to 'illustrate some aspect' of the collection rather than to represent it (Lewinson, 1957: 292). Unlike mathematical sampling, purposeful samples are made up of cases 'worthy of in-depth study because they provide detailed insight' (Emmel, 2013: 36). Applied to archives, purposeful sampling is used by applying 'subjective knowledge of the records and their possible use to weed or otherwise reduce the size of groups of records' (Sly, 1987: 57). The sampling is 'tailored to meet a situation in which a series is judged to have some research value but only certain files… are judged worthy of retention' (Kepley, 1984: 238). This is demonstrated in the recommended strategy for sampling by The National Archives.

The National Archives offers a modern-day, UK specific, equivalent of the UNESCO guidelines of 1981 in the various guidelines associated with the *Selecting Your Records* series (The National Archives, 2013b). Archival sampling is referred to as 'selection' (The National Archives, no date-d). The National Archives uses purposeful sampling in appraisal and selection of documents, as documents are purposefully chosen for their value, whether it is sentimental or historical (The National Archives, no date). This aligns with the principle of selecting 'information rich cases' in purposeful sampling (Emmel, 2013). This is further demonstrated in the *Record Selection Policy* of The National Archives, which claims that internal administration papers, routine case files and temporary papers do not have the necessary 'enduring historical value' to be archived (The National Archives, 2012b: 9). For purposeful sampling to be reliable the criteria for selection must be very specific or comprehensive with a clear description of the criteria (Hull et al., 1981). The difficulty lies in compiling a list of criteria that will both capture the cases of interest and be easy to administer within archives. This process is similar to developing criteria by which records series' themselves are judged for their historical value (Kepley, 1984: 238).

Purposeful sampling has been criticised because the resulting sample does not reflect the whole group of records and therefore is open to interpretation.

There is a danger that this can deteriorate into the simple taking of examples or a decision to keep some items over others, rather than a true attempt to reduce the size of the records (Hull et al., 1981). This *Haphazard* or *Accidental* sampling is defined as 'selections consisting of what remains, is available, or is accidentally discovered' (Affholter, 1985 in Sly, 1987: 56). However, this criticism is based on the outdated principle that the application of sampling should be solely purposed to reduce the size of a collection. In reality, purposeful sampling reduces the size of a collection whilst protecting the integrity of the collection within the sample. For purposeful sampling to be actionable in archives the person or persons making the decisions must have a knowledge of the materials and of sampling.

Purposeful sampling avoids the criticism of statistical sampling that sampling archive collections can lose items of special significance. However, this is ultimately the responsibility of the archivist. Recommendations by UNESCO (Hull et al., 1981) and The National Archives (The National Archives, 2012b) suggest a collaborative approach to sampling between the archivist and the donor of the material, however purposeful sampling in practice uses personal judgement. The role of purposeful sampling in shaping an archive collection before it reaches the archivist is an important recognition in understanding how an archive collection is shaped.

## 6.4  The process of sampling in archives

UNESCO advises that the concept of information poorness is not defined by the archivist alone. The UNESCO guidelines recommend that sampling should be used 'only after the most careful consideration of the methodology to be used and with the advice of an expert in the field of study involved, and, or, in statistical method' (Hull et al., 1981: 47). This recommendation recognises that sampling is specialist work and that expertise on both the part of the material to be sampled and the sampling method are needed. However, the credibility of this claim is damaged with the caveat that 'it has not proved wholly possible to state categorically what should or should not be done' (Hull et al., 1981: ii).

Despite their reluctance 'all archivists, unwittingly or otherwise, participate in some form of sampling' (Affholter 1985 in Sly, 1987: 6). Lewinson predated the

UNESCO report by asserting that archival records are only suitable for sampling if 'their total volume is very large compared with the importance of their content and the degree of research interest in their subject matter' or simply, 'if it is inconceivable that all could be kept but undesirable that none should be' (Lewinson, 1957: 300). This prioritising of space in archival sampling has been echoed by Cook (1977), UNESCO (Hull et al., 1981) and, more recently, The National Archives (2013b). Archive regulators actively choose not to sample because archivists have no insight or input into the types of research that archived material will be used for. As the previous chapter demonstrated, this is a diverse field. The primary goal of archivists is the preservation of records (The National Archives, 2017d), which does not reconcile with the discarding of records through sampling. This is an issue that particularly affects smaller archives with less storage space, with Manchester Central Library recently accused of 'throwing away' records because of a lack of storage space (Wainwright, 2012). Whilst the general nature of this claim is denied by Manchester City Council, the Council does admit that some outdated or duplicated items and those that are not cost-effective to repair have been discarded as part of a 'much-needed housekeeping exercise' necessitated through a history of libraries 'amassing material almost indiscriminately' (Wainwright, 2012).

When a donor donates a group of material (referred to here as the collection) for archiving the collection is first appraised to determine if it meets the criteria for their chosen archive (The National Archives, 2017c). If deemed a good fit for the archive, the collection then goes through a process of negotiation between the archive and donor to establish which records will form the collection (The National Archives, 2017c). For The National Archives, this involves the donor completing an appraisal report which is then reviewed by a Records Decision Panel (The National Archives, 2012b). This is followed by a file appraisal, carried out by an archivist in one of four methods, as demonstrated in Figure 6.1. Examples of the criteria for exclusion include 'information of short-term value' and 'where the content doesn't add substantially to what is already known' (The National Archives, 2013b: 14). These criteria are open to interpretation and demonstrate the need for the inclusion and involvement of a

specialist both in sampling methods and the subject matter as recommended in the UNESCO report (Hull et al., 1981). The National Archives' guidelines do not make any such recommendation. The person or people reviewing each collection will be of different personal and professional backgrounds and could, therefore, interpret the parameters of the criteria differently. Archival policies are inherently subjective and archival records are 'refracted through processes of valuation and interpretation' (Brown 1998, Cook and Schwartz 2002, Schwartz and Cook 2002 in Moore and Pell, 2010: 257). By integrating the perspective of the donor, The National Archives acknowledges the place of background knowledge in archival sampling. This echoes Cicourel's claim in relation to archived documents:

> 'The researcher cannot appraise the conditions that led to the production of the document without some theory which accounts for the common-sense meanings used by the actor and by the social structure within which the material was produced' (Cicourel, 1964: 154).

The National Archives' acknowledgement of the potential expertise of the donor serves to add specialist care to the sampling of a collection, assisting in the display of 'not only what the document's words formally mean but also what [their] witness *intended to say*' (Kluckhohn and Gottschalk, 1945: 32). However, it must be recognised that the donor is unlikely to be the creator of the documents, given that archives hold predominantly historical records. With this in mind, the donor is likely to understand and interpret the material in terms of their own generational experience (Kluckhohn and Gottschalk, 1945: 9). In doing so, the donor's interpretation is likely to 'mirror dominant cultural understandings' (Brown 1998, Cook and Schwartz 2002, Schwartz and Cook 2002 in Moore and Pell, 2010: 257) as opposed to the objective stance recommended by UNESCO and The National Archives (Hull et al., 1981, The National Archives, no date). Kluckhohn and Gottschalk argue that further to an understanding of the subject matter, an understanding of the zeitgeist is needed to understand archived documents (Kluckhohn and Gottschalk, 1945). As these documents are reread in different contexts they are given new meanings 'often contradictory and always socially embedded' and thus there is no "original" or "true" meaning of a text outside specific historical contexts' (Hodder, 1994: 172). This is described as an iterative relationship in which the documents of a period, interpreted with an appropriate understanding of the socio-cultural time of creation 'will enable the historian

better to appreciate its cultural atmosphere' (Kluckhohn and Gottschalk, 1945). By this school of thought, the archivist with experience in interpreting historical documents is better placed to evaluate documents than the donor. This justifies The National Archives' guideline for communication and negotiation between the donor and archivist in selecting which records to archive (The National Archives, no date). Once records have been selected for archiving it is then the job of the archivist to catalogue the collection.

**Figure 6.1 Methods of Appraisal**

**1. Mixed series**
A series that contains a mixture of policy and case files. Case files should be separated out and reviewed in line with **Operational Selection Policy 48** . Policy files should be appraised as a whole using the series-level approach above (for example, if they cover the development of primary legislation a decision could be made to select them all) or using one of the appraisal methods below.

**2. Selection criteria and file title**
An appraisal of the files takes place using selection criteria (records collection policy, generic selection criteria, operational selection policies, departmental selection criteria) and comparing them against the file titles in order to select files for preservation. This method is much less effective when file titling is poor or where the content of files does not match the file title.

**3. Sift and file review**
An appraisal takes place initially on file title, sifting out any files that are obviously worthy of selection (for example, records of a key committee or management board) or should not be selected (for example, a publication). The remaining files are then subjected to file by file review. Again this method is only really effective where file titling is accurate.

**4. File by file review**
Each individual file is appraised on its content using relevant selection criteria (records collection policy, generic selection criteria, operational selection policies, departmental selection criteria).

(The National Archives, 2013b: 10)

An archive collection's catalogue is often the first insight a user has into the contents of a collection. The National Archives advises that 'for archives to be used, and useful, they must be discoverable to those who want to use them' (Barts Archives, 2017). This is achieved through the cataloguing of archival records (Barts Archives, 2017). The methodological ideal is that the items go through as few changes as possible, and are passed through as few hands as

possible. In the archive, this would look like the donated material being preserved *as is* and the researcher having direct access to the complete collection. However, this theory does not translate well to practice, thus archive collections have catalogues.

## 6.5  Sampling in archives for research

Cataloguing is the process of writing titles and descriptions for the records (The National Archives, no date-b). Archive users then use these descriptions and titles to select which records they want to view. Cataloguing is described by The National Archives:

> '[cataloguing can] give you greater intellectual control over collections, creating accurate descriptions, enable identification of preservation/conservation needs, widen access to descriptions and the collections themselves, and enable you to contribute data to archive networks' (The National Archives, no date-b).

Although the National Archives provides a framework for cataloguing collections, individual archives have the autonomy to govern their own approaches and guidelines (The National Archives, no date-b). The fact that archive cataloguing is not standardised leaves scope for interpretation of what a catalogue should be and how it should be constructed. This has a direct impact on the research done using archive collections as it is the catalogue that is used by the researcher to purposefully sample the records for their research. There is no standard format to a collection's catalogue, however, traditionally the primary aim of a catalogue has been signposting and assisting in the retrieval of information (Wheatley, 1879 in Mays, 2014: 20). A more contemporary perspective is argued by Mays, who instead claims that the catalogue is just one level of indices for a collection and that researchers make pivotal judgements based on what is or is not in a collection's catalogue (Mays, 2014: 20). By understanding how the catalogue is developed we can better evaluate the catalogue's design and function as a tool for the researcher. As the focus of this thesis is how archives actively play a part in the shaping of research done using archived material, and the catalogue is the link between the construction of a collection through archive processes and the

use of a collection by a researcher, the role of a collection's catalogue in sampling using archived material is explored.

A researcher's time in the archive is governed by resource limitations attached to the research project. As such, it is not practical for a researcher to approach a collection in its entirety. Whilst this method might be advantageous to the researcher looking to connect a broad research area with the collection (Barts Archives, 2017), in reality, a researcher approaches the archive with background knowledge of their research area of interest, and of the collection itself (The National Archives, 2018d). Thus, the catalogue is a valuable resource in expediting the matching of the researcher's more detailed questions with the collection. Not cataloguing a collection works in theory for certain types of collections. A collection of items such as diary entries created by one person and in a clear, intentional order would stand to gain from not being catalogued. Conversely, the RCA collection used in this thesis is a compilation of items from different organisations. Thus, the collection was already artificial at the point of donation (Hull et al., 1981). The focus is now turned to the centrality of the researcher within the cataloguing process.

The process of cataloguing is described by The Society of Archivists as:

'The process of providing access to materials by creating formal descriptions to represent the materials and then organizing those descriptions through headings that will connect user queries with relevant materials' (Barts Archives, 2017).

The researcher is a key aspect of this process. The work of the archivist in cataloguing is intended to get the researcher from A to B. The word 'connect' suggests a level of *fit* between researchers' queries and archive materials. This *fit* is determined by both the archivist and the researcher in a process of negotiation, as outlined by The National Archives' *Records Collection Policy* (2012b). The National Archives also describes cataloguing as 'describing the material to an appropriate level of detail, in order to best inform researchers what the items are before they are fished out of storage for them to see' (Cahill, 2016a), and as enabling researchers to 'zoom in on the parts of the archive they're interested in' (Postal Heritage, 2013). Researchers use the catalogue to 'help determine whether a certain collection of archival materials contains documents, photographs, etc. that they might need to consult for their research project'

(Libraries and Archives Canada, 2012). Thus, the catalogue is, in the first instance, used to connect the researcher's questions with the collection (Barts Archives, 2017). Ontologically this makes the catalogue itself more than just a finding aid. Unlike a library catalogue, an archive catalogue is not simply a register or database of items (The National Archives, no date-b). By giving the catalogue credence as an active component in the researcher's decision-making process, the status of the catalogue is elevated. However, this is regulated by the positioning of the catalogue in archive policy.

The cataloguing process within the archive is output-focused and gives no weight to the importance of the process itself or the influence on the collection and the researcher. This surface-deep positioning of the catalogue points to an empirical ontology subscribing to Wheatley's idea of a catalogue as functional signposting for the retrieval of information (Wheatley, 1879 in Mays, 2014: 20). The language used by The National Archives and its recommended sources further support this, describing an archive catalogue as providing access to materials (Barts Archives, 2017), a 'finding aid' (Libraries and Archives Canada, 2012) and for 'identification' (The National Archives, no date-b). This places the researcher as external to the catalogue and the researcher's work as independent from it. The position of the archivist in cataloguing archive collections is equally contested.

## 6.6  The archivist's role

Things worthy of archiving have traditionally been 'surrounded by concepts of truth, authority, order, evidence, and value' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 11). The National Archives confirms that part of the value of a collection is in 'what we know about how and why they were originally created' (Janes, 2014). As such the archivist is said to use 'heavy doses of informed judgement, a fine balance of analysis and synthesis, a good depth of general knowledge, and honed research skills' in the process of cataloguing (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, 2016). The model archivist is said to 'think like [the creator]' (Cahill, 2016b). This idea will be addressed in two phases; firstly, can an archivist think like a creator? Secondly, should they?

The National Archives' positioning of the cataloguing archivist is similar to that of the qualitative data analyst, showcasing stories whilst preserving connections amongst the dataset or series (Patton, 2015). 'Whether conscious of it or not, archivists are major players in the business of identity politics' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 16). Standpoint epistemology claims that 'from each positioning the world is seen differently' (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 94), and recognises that knowledge based on just one positioning is 'unfinished' (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 95). This resonates with The National Archives preservation of order in collections but is at odds with the cataloguing archivist. The 'one positioning' is interpreted as not a single person but a single contextual positioning. The archivist, located in the space and time of the collection, as opposed to the space and time of the creation of the original documents, cannot profess to think like a creator. As Stoler recognises, the cataloguing process can cause items to be 'dislodged from their contexts, flung into the orbit of a political world that is often not their own' (Stoler, 2009: 26).

The notion of 'a creator' of an archive catalogue is problematic in itself. Taking the RCA collection as an example, it is made up of hundreds of documents with tens of creators. The collection was compiled by one person and thus the creators of the documents did not have a hand in the creation of the collection. This disconnect between the creators of items and the donor is not unusual in collections pertaining to large organisations, especially ones that have been through as many organisational changes as Carers UK. As it would be impossible to think like the many creators it is possible that the archivist is trying to emulate the donor instead. However this, too, is problematic as it is not known how much involvement the donor had in the creation of the items and, in the case of the RCA collection, the donor is known to have been involved in only one of the several incarnations of Carers UK. With the unknowns surrounding the people involved in the collection before it reaches the archive, the archivist cannot profess to think like any of these people. This raises the question: should the archivist be trying to think like the creator?

Transversal politics advocates for notions of social, economic and political difference to be respected (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 95). Applying the principals of transversal politics to the cataloguing of an archive collection, the archivist is not

the 'authentic voice' (Yuval-Davis, 1999: 95) of the collection. They are not representative of the creator and should not assume this role. That is not to say that the archivist is not well placed to catalogue a collection. The principle underlying the archivist trying to replicate the thought process of the creator is more applicable to collections which have no order on donation. In order for collections to be accessible they need to be catalogued (The National Archives, no date-b). In the case of the RCA and other collections, it is not possible to consult the donor or creator of the materials. Asking questions such as: what does this material record? Why was this item created? What aspects of the organisation does this relate to? When was this created? Does it relate to the items before and after it? Do these items belong together, according to the original order, or were they intended to be separate? is the recommended method (Cahill, 2016b, The National Archives, no date-b). In this instance, the archivist shouldn't think like a creator but should endeavour to showcase the collection and its items, whether or not the order makes sense. Thus preserving the interdependencies within the original order system as opposed to artificially constructing stories through recordkeeping (Findlay, 2013: 13). The National Archives is contradictory in respect to the archivist's mindset when cataloguing a collection and separately suggests that impartiality should be the primary trait (The National Archives, no date-b), following Schwartz and Cook's observation that within the profession archivists perceive themselves as 'neutral, objective, impartial' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 2).

The National Archives argues that archivists should be 'as unbiased as possible when arranging and describing records' and that 'organising records to reflect their origin and how the original creator kept them is the best way to allow them to speak for themselves' (Janes, 2014). However, the idea of an unbiased archivist is idealistic. The epistemological objectivity promised by this approach to a donated collection is simply not achievable. The principles of reflexivity discussed in the Methods chapter of this thesis are relevant here. The National Archives guidance acknowledges that the archivist can impact the catalogue (Postal Heritage, 2013) but is limited to their professional ability. Whilst cataloguing is hailed as skilled work requiring expert knowledge of both the collection and the archive (Hull et al., 1981), the individual's influence is

neglected. Like researchers, archivists are not just cognitive but emotional and physical beings (Barbalet, 1998). As opposed to claiming impartiality, archivists should take a reflexive approach to the construction of a collection. As Finefter-Rosenbluh advises of social scientists, archivists should be 'encouraged to acknowledge their own presence and characterize their role in the formation of knowledge' (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017: 2) which will allow them to 'self-monitor the impact of their biases, beliefs, and experiences on their research' (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017: 2). This feeds into the issue of the influence of the archivist on the catalogue.

## 6.7  Influence through selection

The cataloguing archivist is advised to engage with the material within the collection before beginning the cataloguing process (Cahill, 2016a). By recording the information the archivist is then able to make decisions about the order of the files and collection (Cahill, 2016b). The National Archives claims that the archivist is 'as unbiased as possible' (Janes, 2014) during this process. The cataloguing process as described by The National Archives and its recommended resources has a grounded theory ontology, positioning the archivist as a 'blank slate', able to approach the collection intellectually and ideologically free. Although still used regularly in the field of Health Sciences (Memon et al., 2018, Kongnetiman, 2018, Kondratjuk, 2018, Kivunja, 2018), Grounded Theory in social enquiry is 'old news' (Gorski, 2013: 659) and a more reflexive approach to both the research and researcher is often favoured (Emmel, 2013). Zhou and Hall provide the simplest explanation of this approach:

> 'Even when the goal is objectivity and generalizability, one cannot escape from the personal dimensions of his or her thoughts, thoughts birthed from the brows of the countless before it, swayed by the incessant pull of new, personal, individualized experiences' (Zhou and Hall, 2016).

Applying this to the cataloguing process, the archivist works with and through their own experiences and cannot be emancipated from them. The RCA collection is a good example for demonstrating this.

The RCA collection is the archive for the organisation Carers UK. Given that there are 6.5 million people providing unpaid care in the UK (Carers UK, 2014d), one in eight people in the UK are providing some form of unpaid care (Carers UK, 2014d), and Carers UK has a strong media presence, it is fair to assume that the archivist will have heard of Carers UK. The archivist likely knows or has come into contact with someone providing unpaid care. At present The National Archives' standpoint is that that archivist can compartmentalise their experience with unpaid carers and view the collection impartially (The National Archives, no date). A reflexive approach to cataloguing would acknowledge that the archivist draws on their own experiences when making decisions in the cataloguing process. The key problem is that saying the archivist is impartial does not make it true. As Finefter-Rosenbluh (2017) affirm, decision making is guided by people's biases, beliefs and experiences, and this is no different for the archivist. The archivist does draw on their experiences and is an active participant in the decision-making process and thus the creation of a collection. The archive catalogue is more than just signposting or 'pointer out of the position of required information' (Wheatley, 1879 in Mays, 2014: 20). It leads the researcher and thus has influence. There is a link between decisions made by the archivist and researcher that can be traced through a collection's catalogue.

A collection's catalogue is both a product of sampling by the archivist and used by researchers to sample items within a collection. Thus it is pivotal to discussions of archive sampling. However, as with broader issues of archiving, there is a gap between policy and theory about how cataloguing is done and how the catalogue itself is used.

## 6.8  Summary and Conclusion

Sampling in archives has been taking place since the start of archiving behaviour. It became more prevalent in the aftermath of WWII, and it is only relatively recently that it has become officially recognised by organisations that regulate, and advise on, the process of archiving (The National Archives, no date, ICA, 2000, Hull et al., 1981). The National Archives and UNESCO now recognise that sampling is a necessary part of archiving practice, however, attempts to regulate

sampling have been met with criticism. Sampling is positioned as a destructive act to be used as a last resort when the number of records in a collection needs to be reduced. This positioning is perceived as incompatible with an archivist's role to preserve material.

The type of sampling done by archivists is purposeful sampling, however, it is not recognised as such and archive policy continues to strive for the methodical regularity of mathematical sampling methods. There is also confusion over how much involvement an archivist should have in sampling an archive collection. Once the material has been accepted by an archive it becomes the responsibility of the archivist (The National Archives, no date). Whilst it is true that the modern-day librarian is less of a fact provider and more of a guide (De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 22), they have the autonomy to put their stamp on a collection as 'decisions on what to preserve and what to collect' can be made by the archivist and their staff (De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 13). The archivist's role in 'sustaining a community, whether digitally or physically, depends not only on a practical and theoretical understanding of its records but also on the knowledge and ability to preserve and value them' (Bastian and Alexander, 2009: xxi). However, as with the initial selection process, archivists' cataloguing practices are not neutral. 'Theories, models and descriptions, applied in [archivists'] role as intermediaries between people and information, are as presumptuous and controlling as scientists' construction and containment of nature' (Ohlson, 2002 in De Jong and Koevoets, 2013: 24). These practices should not be neutral and require a knowledge of the interconnecting themes across and between documents within a collection. As Stoler explains: 'an interest in European paupers or abandoned mixed blood children gets you nowhere, unless you know how they mattered to whom, when and why they did so' (Stoler, 2009: 9). When the researcher comes to sample a collection it is the catalogue that they use.

The cataloguing archivist is tasked with 'creating order out of chaos' (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, 2016). Through creating the catalogue the archivist structures the researcher's first interaction with an archive collection. The catalogue is a product of sampling in that the archivist purposefully selects which aspects of the collection to showcase through presenting them as themes within the collection. Issues are rendered important by where they appear, how

they are cross-referenced, where they are catalogued and thus how they are framed (Stoler, 2009: 50). Through archivists' construction of a catalogue, the researcher is guided to what the archivist believes is important, as opposed to having the autonomy to choose this for themselves.

There is no requirement for sampling processes to be documented or for any information on sampling to be disclosed to archive users along with the collection. The National Archives provides guidelines for sampling, however, these are just guidelines and not rules, thus individual archives are able to create and regulate their own sampling activities. Through lack of a transparent sampling process, archives are not acknowledging that the process of sampling in itself can alter the narrative of an archive collection. The empirical framework of sampling policy and the impartial positioning of both the archivist and the information within a collection do not match with archive theory. This will be explored in more detail as the next chapter moves into the archive to look at how archiving policy holds up in a real-world environment.

# Chapter 7 : Findings from practice

## 7.1  Introduction

This thesis has covered the context in which the documents within the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection were created, the development of archive theory, and the various processes of sampling practised within archives. This chapter looks at how archive policies work in an archive environment, using Manchester Archive to demonstrate.

The archive is an institution of decision making, which can have limitations and implications for the way in which archival research is conducted and the interpretation of the contents therein. By acknowledging the archive as an institution of knowledge production and discussing the elements and decisions that precede a researcher's access, any findings from the Records of the Carers' Association (RCA) collection can be located within the context of the meta-concept of 'archives', Manchester Archive, and the specific collection in which the material is held. Examining Manchester Archive's access policy and wider access strategies will provide a theoretical account of how access to collections held at Manchester Archive is regulated. The author's experience is used in conjunction with policy, to demonstrate the realities of access from a researcher's perspective. In doing so gaps are identified where judgement is used and where policy and practice do not align.

Beginning with the sampling policies from the previous chapter, processes of sampling at Manchester Archive are compared against international, national, and local sampling policies. This is followed by a detailed examination of access policies and regulations, and the challenges that these present to researchers using archives. Archive users are profiled, and national and local initiatives are investigated for potential consequences affecting archive culture and researcher's access to archive material. The profile of academic researchers as archive users is discussed in relation to access and services, followed by an examination of 'the academic researcher' as profiled by The National Archives.

## 7.2  Sampling at Manchester Archive

Manchester Archive, also known as the Greater Manchester County Record Office (GMCRO), is physically located within Manchester Central Library (Manchester City Council, 2018b). Manchester Archive's mission statement is 'to store historical records relating to the Greater Manchester area and to make them available for members of the public for research' (GMCRO, 2018). To establish how Manchester Archive achieves this, and how it is regulated, this mission statement needs to be unpacked.

The first aspect of Manchester Archive's purpose is 'to store historical records' (GMCRO, 2018), which it achieves through holding archive collections, however the previous chapter demonstrated that this is not a straightforward process. At present, Manchester Archive holds four miles' worth of shelved records (GMCRO, 2018). There is also an off-site storage facility holding records moved there for the Central Library renovation in 2012 (Archivist, 2016). Collections are stored in boxes, with most across several boxes (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). It is not known how many collections or records are held by Manchester Archive or if this has changed over time (GMCRO, 2018). The strict criteria for inclusion into Manchester Archive are both part of the mission statement and widely publicised (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a, GMCRO, 2018, Greater Manchester Lives, 2016, Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015).

As explained in the Chapter 6, the National Archives is in a leadership role for the archives sector (The National Archives, 2016b), but the guidelines it promotes are recommendations, not rules. Thus, individual archives have the autonomy to govern their own sampling practices. This is true of Manchester Archive, which claims to only hold records and collections 'relating to the Greater Manchester area' (GMCRO, 2018). The Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership, a collaboration between Manchester Archive and the nine other local authority archives and study services in Greater Manchester, takes this relationship further by stating that records need to be 'historically and locally significant' (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016: 10).

Current collections held by Manchester Archive include *Congresses of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance* (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a), *The Shareholders' Records of The Manchester Ship Canal Company*, and the records of the *Royal Manchester and Royal Lancashire Volunteers 1778-1794* (GMCRO, 2018). The Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership specifies that the relationship between the collection and Manchester is at record (item) level (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016), as opposed to the broader collection, file or series level (The National Archives, 2016a), meaning that each individual document must display a significant link to the Manchester area. As a much smaller facility than The National Archives, Manchester Archive does not have a formalised internal structure for selection on par with the Records Decision Panel of The National Archives (The National Archives, 2012b). Manchester Archive has no specific policy on sampling, other than that the archivist should not restrict access or exclude material (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries, 2012: 3). There are several reasons not to use sampling techniques in an archive, including: 'lack of time, money, or staff, uncertainty as to what future generations of researchers will want, fear of discarding valuable material, and worry that statistics is a discipline best left to specialists' (Sly, 1987: 55). However, sampling is covered under Manchester Archive's own *Stock Management Policy* (2012).

Manchester Archives' *Stock Management Policy* (2012) covers 23 libraries and archives in Manchester (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries, 2012). Within the *Stock Management Policy*, under the heading *Censorship* it states that material should be classed as of 'legitimate interest' unless it has 'incurred penalties under the law' and that 'those who provide library services should not restrict this access', and material 'should not be excluded … on any moral, political, religious or racist ground alone to satisfy any sectional interest' (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries, 2012: 3). This is supported under the heading *Stock Selection* with a statement confirming that 'Manchester's selection policy aims to ensure comprehensive subject coverage' (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries, 2012: 3). The RCA collection is used to demonstrate sampling policy in practice at Manchester Archive.

There are areas in which Manchester Archives' RCA collection does not meet the standard suggested by The National Archives guidelines (The National

Archives, no date-d). The National Archives recommends that 'all records which are open to inspection by the public should be clearly described, in publically available finding aids' (The National Archives, 2004: 10). This was reiterated in the 2013 *Best practice guide to appraising and selecting records*, stating that once a collection has been approved for inclusion it should be appraised by the department, then at series-level to describe each series and records within, then individual files should be catalogued (The National Archives, 2013b: 6). However, a large proportion of the RCA collection had not been looked at since its last donation in 2008 (author's field notes). At the time, Manchester Archive was nearing a period of refurbishment (2010-2014) and the RCA collection material was moved off-site where it remained until it was requested for this research in July 2016 (author's field notes). There is no index or catalogue for the materials donated in 2008, and no information on the content of the 26 boxes held off-site (author's field notes). Uncatalogued material is not a problem localised to Manchester Archive.

In 2002, the North West Regional Archive Council (NWRAC) launched project Logjam which aimed to 'identify, quantify and prioritise uncatalogued archival collections in the North West' (Tullock and Cave, 2004: 3). This showed that in Greater Manchester 30% of archived material was uncatalogued in 2002 (Tullock and Cave, 2004: 11). The report acknowledged that an increase in opening hours without a concomitant increase in staff was partially responsible for the backlog (Tullock and Cave, 2004: 24). There were also additional barriers including lack of space to sort and catalogue collections and a deficiency in the ability to purchase cataloguing software (Tullock and Cave, 2004: 25). To combat this, the NWRAC recommended additional cataloguing and paraprofessional staff along with a dedicated cataloguing space (Tullock and Cave, 2004: 25). Despite these efforts, Manchester Archive still has a large amount of uncatalogued material (author's field notes).

The final aspect of Manchester Archive's mission statement is that records are 'made available' (GMCRO, 2018). Manchester Archive achieves this on paper by allowing public access to the collections (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a). However, access is regulated by the County Archive Research Network,

part of the GMCRO (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a). Furthermore, access restrictions are not limited to policy.

## 7.3  Access

Archives need policies to balance public access and the risk of unauthorised access (The National Archives, 2016a), whilst also recognising the need to restrict or withhold access to some items from the public (ICA, 2014). Based on international standards and best practice, the International Council on Archives (ICA) provides guidelines for access policy in its *Principles of Access to Archives* report (2014). The ICA describes the purpose of archive access policy:

> 'Archives are preserved for use by present and future generations. An access service links archives to the public; it provides information for users about the institution and its holdings; it influences whether the public will trust the custodians of the archives and the service they provide' (ICA, 2014: 2).

The ICA states that 'both public and private entities should open their archives to the greatest extent possible' (ICA, 2014: 4), meaning that archives' access policies should be as inclusive as possible. Archive access policies should also 'promote the widest possible use of archives, consistent with the framework of laws, regulations, and agreements within which archival institutions work' (ICA, 2014: 2) and that archivists should 'be proactive' in informing the public of the availability of materials in their role as gatekeeper (ICA, 2014). However, as with policy relating to sampling, individual archives have the autonomy to create and regulate their own access policies, thus access to archived material varies from one institution to another (Janes, 2012).

Access to the records held by Manchester Archive is multifaceted. The Central Library building, where Manchester Archive is situated, is located within Central Manchester and is easily accessed by public or private transport (Manchester City Council, 2018c). However, the physicality of Manchester Archive is just one aspect of access. Archives regulate who can look at each collection with processes and restrictions on who can use the space itself further regulating access.

To access records held within Manchester Archive the researcher must first request to view a collection through the Greater Manchester Lives website (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a). Viewing is at the discretion of the archivist and permission must be granted in advance. Basic information such as how many boxes of records are in each collection and the time needed to retrieve the records from storage are available on the website, along with a very brief description of the collection (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013b). Following the booking for the RCA collection, the author was then provided with the RCA collection catalogue via email and asked to make a more specific selection of the records within the collection (Archivist, 2015). The selection was then returned to the archivist and the selected records should be available on the date of the visit. Once at the central library, a 'reader's ticket' is needed to access the archive. This is a barrier to access.

A reader's ticket is an identity card 'accepted and required as a means of identification' within the County Archive Research network (Greater Manchester County Record Office, 2018). Registering for a reader's ticket involves leaving personal details with the archive and showing ID (author's field notes). This follows the ICA requirement that 'all users of the archives must show some form of identification and provide information such as name, address and contact details' (ICA, 2014: 10). This in itself regulates who is able to access the Archive. Users need to have a permanent address and some form of photographic identification, meaning that those in temporary accommodation and those without a driving license or passport are unable to use the Archive. Users also need to schedule a visit in advance, meaning they need to be able to schedule a visit and keep a scheduled visit. This potentially excludes people with unpredictable health problems and people with disabilities that affect the ability to pre-plan activities. The necessity to pre-plan a visit works against Manchester Archive's aim of attracting tourists (The National Archives, 2012a), as collections cannot be viewed by footfall. Access to a collection is also regulated by policy, but is regulated at the discretion of archivists:

> 'Archivists determine appropriate access by considering professional ethics, equity and fairness, and legal requirements. Archivists ensure that restrictions are fairly and reasonably applied, prevent unauthorized access to properly restricted archives, and provide the widest possible use of archives' (ICA, 2014: 2).

Looking specifically at researchers in the archive, the materials that are available to view should be those requested in advance by the researcher (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a). However, in reality, the items available to view are those which have been brought out of storage to the viewing room by the archivist for the research (author's field notes). As the material had been brought onto the premises from off-site and then moved into the archive viewing room by overnight staff (author's field notes), the material made available by the archivist on any given day was final. Access to other records, including those on the property but not in the viewing room, required at least 24 hours' notice for retrieval (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a, author's field notes). Similarly, items could only be viewed on a box-by-box basis (author's field notes) in line with ICA guidance to 'prevent unauthorised access' (ICA, 2014: 7). The archivist presents the researcher with the boxes containing their selected items and it is the responsibility of the researcher to locate the item (author's field notes). Because there is no list of contents with each box, the researcher is exposed to items they did not choose to view.

There are clearly storage issues at Manchester Archive, with several boxes of the RCA collection held offsite in a storage facility. Affholter implies that 'in the face of storage constraints or other problems, haphazard selection such as choosing "the nearest box" occurs' (Sly, 1987: 57). This has been the case at Manchester Archive where, on several occasions, this research has been impeded by the wrong material being brought for viewing, or only a small proportion being brought for viewing. This process leaves room for the archivist to have discretion over the selection of the researcher.

The use of archivists' discretion was demonstrated in practice during the fieldwork for this research (author's field notes). On several occasions, only a small portion of the requested material had been made available for viewing, on the belief that the available material was enough for the researcher to work with for one day (author's field notes). In making this decision the archivist made assumptions about the researcher beyond just their rate of work. The archivist exercised their authority over the researcher. By giving the researcher the amount of material the archivist believed the researcher should get through in a day, the archivist demonstrated the belief that the archivist knew more about

working with archive collections than the researcher. This implies that the decision on material made by the researcher is flawed. This links to the broader concept of what *should* be of interest to a researcher in an archive.

Although from registering to use the archive, the archivist knew that the material was being used for academic research, the archivist did not know any details about the research the collection was being used for. By regulating the amount of material the researcher could look at, the archivist was assuming that what they had provided was of interest to the researcher in its entirety. There was no scope for the researcher to sample from the available material and thus get through it quicker. Moreover, the assumption was made that the researcher would want to look at the material in the order in which it is catalogued. Although the researcher can request, for example, to look at box five directly after box two, if only boxes one to six are available for viewing on a certain day, the researcher is unable to look at, for example, box 15 after box two (author's field notes). Through regulating access to the collection the archivist directly regulated the data collection process of the researcher. This is one example of archive practice impacting research done using archived material as the researcher was only able to look at what the archivist believed the researcher should be looking at, in a time frame believed to be reasonable by the archivist. As Smith and Stead state: 'archivists are just not qualified to make the difficult judgements called for in deciding when and what to restrict' (Smith and Stead, 2013: 161). This is further demonstrated through evidence of human error.

Whilst institutional processes and documentation attempt to define the limits of archive materials, the human element and its accompanying influence cannot be ignored. The human element of the archive is synonymous with human error. Things can be lost, accidentally destroyed or rendered unusable or simply miscataloged (Stoler, 2009) as a consequence. From the donor to the user, several actors place their interpretation onto a collection, some of which are unintentional or unnoticed and some of which cast a permanent shadow across the material.

## 7.4  Emotions

As explained in the Methods chapter of this thesis, a reflexive approach has been taken throughout this research. During data collection, this entailed a process of critical self-reflection and heightened self-awareness (Kondrat, 1999), achieved by including personal feelings and emotions in detailed field notes throughout the data collection process. This led to the recognition of emotional barriers to access.

An unforeseen impact of the research during this project was the emotional impact. The RCA collection contains many first-hand accounts of unpaid carers and details their struggles, their loneliness, and their accounts of asking for help (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Whilst some of these accounts were part of research into unpaid care and thus included within the remit of the fieldwork, most were happened upon by the researcher by a need to filter through the RCA collection at box-level as opposed to individual file-level (author's field notes).

The RCA collection contains emotionally sensitive information, however, there is no content warning on any of the RCA collection labelling or in the RCA collection catalogue (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Lack of a trigger warning for such material runs the risk of causing harm to archive users who may be adversely affected by the content of the material. Although the researcher for this research was aware of the potential for such content, it nevertheless influenced the direction of this research. Unprepared for the particularly emotive material, the researcher chose to focus some time on the structure of the RCA collection itself and its place within the archive. This, in turn, led to several 'but why?' questions that did not fit with the original plan for this research. After taking time to consider the options, the researcher decided to pursue a more theoretical piece incorporating the collection as part of the wider archival institution. Through this reflexive practice, the lack of recognition of the emotional impact of archive use on the part of the archive is demonstrated to have directly influenced this research. Davidson et al. (2019) claim that the accessibility of archived data is contingent on 'the skills and energies' of the researcher as well as the institution holding the data. This is transferable to wider archive culture, in that the accessibility of any archived material is only accessible as far as is allowed by Bischoping's concept of 'liveability', the researcher's capacity to emotionally

handle the material (Bischoping, 2018). This is something that needs to be addressed if archives are to widen their audience.

## 7.5  Widening Participation

In 2012, the National Archives and the Local Government Association stated that archives 'should be for everyone across all communities to discover and use' (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015). This statement accepts a shortfall in archive access by recognising that the archive is not currently 'for everyone across all communities'. This is complicated by evidence that the audience for archives is changing (Tullo, 2014). The age profile of archive users was older in 2016 than in 2014, with a 5% increase in the 45-64 age bracket and a 4% drop in 17-24-year-olds (Archives and Records Association, 2017). Just 13% were aged 25-44 in 2016 (Archives and Records Association, 2017). This could be due, in part, to the greater online presence of archives in general and digital/digitised collections (The National Archives, 2014). The Archives and Records Association reported in 2012 that '71% of those surveyed used archive websites compared with 59% in 2007' (Archives and Records Association, 2012). The gender split of archive users was roughly even, and 97% of archive users were white (Archives and Records Association, 2017). There have been both local and national initiatives aimed at widening the audience of archives. Looking specifically at Manchester Archive, there are a number of initiatives that include widening participation.

The Local Government Association and The National Archives collaborative report on the transformation of local archives (2015) positions widening participation initiatives as supporting local communities to develop an understanding of the past and present, stressing the importance of the archive keeping pace with digital opportunities. This is echoed by Manchester Archive which received a £1.55 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2012 for the Archives+ digital showcase for archives (Archives+, 2013). Archives+ is intended to 'raise awareness of and provide easy access to

Manchester's histories for the broadest possible audiences - both existing and new' through 'exciting' and 'interpretive' exhibitions (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015). Both the Local Government Association and The National Archives publicise and showcase particular collections in an effort to 'engage residents' and 'attract visitors' (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015: 3). Most recently this has been focussed on commemorating the First World War (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015, Greater Manchester Lives, 2016). By interpreting the collections for these 'stories' (Archives+, 2013) the archive is not just publicising the data within the collections but is providing the public with the Archive's analysis and results from it. For example, the Radical Manchester exhibit on display through Archives+ 'brings together different political stories from the archive' (Archives+, 2013). These stories 'tell the history of Manchester' through a digitised and animated archive experience (Archives+, 2013).

Manchester Archive is bound by the terms of the Heritage Lottery Fund grant that funded Archives+, which stipulated a development of the archive audience by attracting 'heritage tourists, young people, teachers, families, place-based neighbourhoods and black and ethnic minority communities' (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015: 13), with Manchester Archive prioritising the support of regional tourism (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016: 24). To attract these specific groups Manchester Archive publicises specific collections, most recently these have included healthcare research and how 'archives make a positive contribution to people's health and wellbeing' (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016: 16) as well as collections relating to the First World War in line with the national initiative to commemorate its anniversary (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016: 20). This customer-focussed initiative is concurrent with a national shift towards a more target-focused model of archives. This is elaborated on in the Discussion chapter of this thesis. Beyond policy, the very act of archiving makes assumptions about who will be able to access the collection as the archive itself is designed for a certain audience.

## 7.6 Academic Researchers

Assumptions cannot be made about the ways in which the archive impacts the researcher and research done within it without first establishing who *the researcher* is to the archive. As established in Section 5.7, academic researchers are not a single, homogenous group. Looking at the profile of archive users will establish where academic researchers fit into the wider audience of the archive. In doing so the importance of academic researchers, and thus academic research, to archives will be determined. Each researcher using the archived records will have their own aims and questions guiding their research. However, resource constraints mean that it is not feasible for archives to cater to individual needs (The National Archives, 2012a), thus compromises have to be made.

The National Archive User Survey divides the purpose for archive visits into 12 sub-groups:

- Family history research
- Local history research
- Academic research
- Architectural/building/site research
- To gather information for a talk/publication/presentation
- To find information relating to my work
- To find information for the organisation I volunteer at
- Military research
- General browsing
- Accompanying a friend/family member
- Am in the area/here on holiday/have time
- Other
  (Archives and Records Association, 2017)

This thesis focuses on the 'Academic Research' sub-group, which comprised 21% of all respondents to the archive users survey in 2016 (Archives and Records Association, 2017), up from 12% in 2012 (Archives and Records Association, 2012).

As the third biggest user sub-group (after family history, 44%, and local history, 30%), academic researchers made up just over one fifth of all archive users in 2016 (Archives and Records Association, 2017). As such, archives have

dedicated resources to help researchers use the archive (The National Archives, 2018d, The National Archives, no date-d). For this to be possible the archive has made assumptions about who *the researcher* is and what they are looking for. The national survey of archive users (most recently done in 2016) groups both students and researchers within the Academic Researcher sub-group (Archives and Records Association, 2017), meaning that A-level students, PhD students and academics within all disciplines are aggregated. A separate survey by online directory Archives Hub found that 45% of archive users were in the subject area History compared to less than 5% in Psychology and Sociology combined, and 20% in Library and Archive Studies (Archives Hub, 2015). Thus, although academic researchers are a moderately sized user group, sociological researchers are in fact a very small subset of that group. The National Archives makes recommendations about the traits of a researcher using archives. These include that researchers; be aware of the limitations of archives, are able to work without the aid of an archivist, are patient, and bring tenacity (The National Archives, 2018d).

Despite the archivist's heavy involvement in the researcher's selection, the researcher is expected to be able to view the collection without assistance from the archivist (The National Archives, 2018d). Archivists are not specialists in all collections and researchers are expected to be realistic about the limits of an archivists knowledge (Castagnetti, 2018) and their availability to assist with queries. As a result of financial hardship (The National Archives, 2012a) the role of the archivist has changed and become more complex, shifting from 'information signpost' to 'providing a wide spread of support to visitors' (CIPFA, 2018). This shift has meant that archivists, traditionally viewed as 'those who received records from their creators and passed them on to researchers' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 2), are now more involved in the researcher's archive experience. Thus meaning it is important to recognise their limitations, despite archivists 'extolling their own professional myth of impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 1).

Researchers are expected to 'bring plenty of patience and tenacity' and be able to identify relevant items without assistance (The National Archives, no date-c). This is demonstrated at Manchester Archive as researchers are expected to

have the time to sift through the material at box-level. The RCA collection does not have a record list by box and items within boxes do not necessarily correlate with the order of items in the catalogue (author's field notes). Therefore the researcher is expected to have the time to locate the items they want to view. Researchers are also expected to be prepared to work with pen and paper only (author's field notes) but be computer literate enough to locate and view digitised records where necessary (The National Archives, no date-c). Researchers are also expected to work at a certain pace. As previously mentioned, the researcher was told on more than one occasion that they would not get through the amount of material they had requested (author's field notes). This is despite the archivist not being familiar with the researcher's reason for visiting.

The access policy at Manchester Archive dictates that viewings must be booked in advance (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a), thus the researcher is expected to look at only the materials requested and to have a good idea of what those materials are, having selected them in advance. This is at odds with The National Archives advice which recommends that researchers are aware of the limitations of archived material and keep an open mind as they might not find what they are looking for but 'could find new sources [they] didn't know existed' (The National Archives, no date-c). However, as demonstrated by the RCA collection, the contents of a collection are not always clear from the catalogues and the contents of the boxes do not always match up with the collection catalogue (author's field notes). This means that the researcher must actively view more items than planned in order to locate the items they intend to view.

There are assumptions that can be made about archive users based on user data. 82% of archive users had visited an archive before, of which 83% had visited the same archive before (Archives and Records Association, 2017). Therefore it is reasonable for the archive to assume that the researcher is familiar with using an archive. Just 44% had done online research before visiting the archive and just 33% had done background reading (Archives and Records Association, 2017). As such, an archivist should not assume that a researcher has done background reading prior to their visit. Moreover, on booking to visit the archive the researcher does not have to provide a reason for their visit (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). This means that the archivist is not aware of the

archive users reason for visiting on arrival. There is also very little information about archive researchers in archive user surveys.

The National Survey of Archive Users is more focused on how users engage with the archive (how they travelled there, which services they used, if staff were helpful etc.) than profiling the users themselves (Archives and Records Association, 2017). Results are not disaggregated by sub-group, meaning there is very little information available about the profile of academic researchers in the archive (Archives and Records Association, 2017). Thus it is not clear if the researcher as constructed by the archive is based on averages from user evidence or if it is an iterative conditioning tool, aimed at modifying users to fit the archive. The archive designs resources around a constructed researcher which in turn makes the archive more favourable for those who conform to this construct, which reinforces the design of *the researcher* in archive policy and practice.

## 7.7 Summary and Conclusion

Manchester Archive does not follow the detailed sampling guidelines set out by The National Archives (The National Archives, no date), and instead restricts its intake to documents that are relevant to the Greater Manchester area (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012). However, the RCA collection is evidence that this policy is not strictly followed, as it bears relevance through its donor but not at document level. As a result of storage issues a lot of Manchester Archive's material is held off-site and has not been catalogued. However, this is not a localised issue and is indicative of a nation-wide backlog of archived material that is either inaccessible or has not been through a process of selection and cataloguing (Tullock and Cave, 2004, International Council on Archives, 2014) affecting overall access to archive collections nationwide.

Access policies within archives are necessary to prevent unauthorised access. It is internationally recognised that archives should be as inclusive as possible, however, Manchester Archive seems particularly restrictive due to an incomplete booking system, the need to book in advance, and the need to

register with the Archive. This further perpetuates archivists' autonomy in selecting what the researcher sees, as it is at the discretion of the archivist that the researcher receives the material they asked for. This was demonstrated several times throughout this research. Access restrictions are a consequence of budget cuts (The National Archives, 2012a) which have necessitated a change in the culture of archive institutions from content-oriented to customer-oriented. A need for income has forced targets and widening participation initiatives (The National Archives, 2012a). As a mid-sized group of archive users, academic researchers do not fare well out of these initiatives, being neither large enough to influence change or small enough to warrant additional attention and resources.

Taking these findings together it becomes clear that budget cuts and limitations on resources are influencing the experience of the academic researcher through causing an element of haphazardness to intersperse across a range of archiving activities. Before this is expanded on, Chapter 8 considers findings from within the RCA collection itself.

# Chapter 8 : Findings from the collection

## 8.1  Introduction

Following on from the discussion of theoretical and political issues within the archive in Chapter 7, this chapter takes a detailed look at the challenges of using an archived collection for research. Continuing to look at decision-making processes in the archive, the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection is used to demonstrate how these manifest and how decisions made throughout the life of an archive collection can impact research using it. Before compiling the findings from this research, the nature of the archive itself must be discussed, going beyond 'what you found' to 'how you found it' (Kaplan, 1990 in Smith and Stead, 2013: 1).

Whilst there is a presentation of empirical data it must be stressed that these are not concluding remarks and should not be relied upon singularly. The Discussion chapter (Chapter 10) builds on findings from this chapter to demonstrate that the evidence presented is an indication of underlying processes within and surrounding the institution of the archive.

The first section of this chapter examines the RCA as a complete collection. The origins of the collection and its position within Manchester Archive are detailed. This is followed by a deeper look at the content of the RCA collection, as evidence of decision-making in the archive (building on concepts from Chapter 7 *Findings from Practice*) is presented to demonstrate how archive processes have shaped the RCA collection. The following section uses the findings to demonstrate how the decision making process of the archive both locally and nationally, internally and externally, influence the researcher in the archive and thus research using the archive. The final section of this chapter revisits the history of the Carers' Movement (Chapters 3 and 4) to show how this narrative has firstly been shaped by the donor and archivist, and secondly has endured intervention through archive practice.

## 8.2 Creation of the Records of the Carer's Association collection

As demonstrated in Chapters 5 and 7, the narrative of a collection is structured through the regulation of its contents, and an archive collection is constructed through a chain of decisions that begin at the creation of each document. Understanding how the RCA collection was formed will illuminate the links between the history of the Carers' Movement, archive practice, and the collection itself. In doing so the RCA collection is located in both the context in which it was created, the context in which it is regulated, and the narrative of the collection as a whole.

The RCA collection was first donated to Manchester Archive by Sandra Leventon (Holzhausen, 2016), co-founder of the Association of Carers (AoC) (CYWU, 2008). The AoC became the Carers National Association (CNA) when it merged with the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants (NCCED) in 1988 (Cook, 2007b: 45). Following Leventon's death in 2001 (CYWU, 2008), Carers UK continued to contribute to the collection 'on an ad-hoc basis' (Holzhausen, 2016). The amount and availability of information about the donation of the RCA collection meets The National Archives' recommended standard of 'essential information' described in Chapter 6 (The National Archives, 2004: 8). However, more information about the circumstances around the donation would give the researcher insight into the decision-making process behind the creation of the RCA collection. Knowing what the original donation looked like, and how it was structured, along with the negotiations between the donor and the archivist at appraisal (The National Archives, no date), is understanding how the material has been sampled which, in turn, reveals information about the context of the material and the creation of the collection. By giving the researcher insight into what has been discarded from the RCA collection (if anything), the researcher is better able to understand the narrative that the donor has constructed. According to the Manchester Archive catalogue, there have been three separate donations of materials; NCCED records in 1999, AoC records in 2007, and CNA records in 2008 (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). The decision to donate the material is, in itself, evidence that the donor had an agenda towards the narrative.

The decision to donate material to an archive is based on the belief that items are future-worthy (Daston, 2012). Information on why the donor decided to archive items, and why they chose that time to do so, would give the researcher more information about the context in which a collection was created. Thinking specifically about a researcher using the RCA collection, this information would provide practical guidance on how to navigate the collection by revealing what was important to the donor and how the donor intended the structure of the collection. It would also give a clear indication of where the intervention from the archivist begins.

The RCA collection catalogue indicates that a list of the material was provided on donation (GMCRO, no date), however, the existence of such a list has not been confirmed. Such a list would be invaluable to the researcher in establishing the level of intervention by the archivist in the organisation of the RCA collection. This would provide evidence as to how much of the structure of the collection, and thus the narrative, was formed through the archiving process (i.e. the regulation of documents and archivist intervention) and how much is authentic to the donor. One decision that is known to have been made by the donor was the decision to house the RCA collection within Manchester Archive.

The decision on where to house a collection is made firstly by the donor and secondly by the archive (The National Archives, no date). In the case of the RCA collection the donor, Sandra Leventon, chose to house the RCA collection within Manchester Archive. For ten years, Sandra Leventon ran the Greater Manchester Office of the CNA Journal in a voluntary capacity (CYWU, 2008). Leventon subsequently helped to set up a Carers' Project at Manchester Jewish Social Services (CYWU, 2008). Given her history, it is logical that Leventon, working independently (Holzhausen, 2016), chose Manchester in which to establish the RCA collection. Leventon's links to the Manchester area qualify the RCA collection for Manchester Archive under Manchester Archive's policy of taking records 'relating to the Greater Manchester area' (GMCRO, 2018), however this does not meet the narrower criteria set by The Greater Manchester Archives and Local Studies Partnership which specifies that the relationship between the collection and Manchester be at item level (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016). By making the decision to house the RCA collection in Manchester

the donor made decisions about who the RCA collection was for, and thus about who is more easily able to access it. As Manchester Archive is a much smaller archive than The National Archives, the RCA collection has a smaller audience than if it were held by The National Archives. However, as The National Archives oversees UK archives, someone searching for the word 'carers' within The National Archives' online search facility would be directed to the RCA collection at Manchester Archive (The National Archives, 2018a). Thus, the reach of the RCA collection has been expanded with the development of digital search facilities. Nevertheless, locating the RCA collection at Manchester Archive raises assumptions about its relevance both locally and nationally.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Manchester Archive prides itself on its inclusion of records that are of significant relevance to the Greater Manchester area (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016). However, a large proportion of the records within the RCA collection do not meet these criteria. It is only the link between Leventon and the Greater Manchester area that provides the necessary relationship for the RCA collection's inclusion in Manchester Archive. For example, Minute Book 4 within the RCA collection contains minutes and papers from the Leeds branch of the National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents (NCSWD)/National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependents (NCCED) (GMCRO, no date: 6), The Association of Carers (AoC) series contains a job description for a London Regional Development Officer and a report about unpaid carers in Southwark (GMCRO, no date: 16). Moreover, whilst the organisations had branches in Manchester, none of the organisations within the RCA collection were based in Manchester (Carers UK, 2014c). Leventon's work in Manchester was deemed to satisfied Manchester Archive's necessity for the RCA collection to have a significant link to the Greater Manchester area (Archivist, 2016). However, this link is not made obvious in the collection catalogue or in Manchester Archive's description of the collection (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c, GMCRO, no date).

The donor's decision on where to spatially locate the collection has connotations for the collection itself and thus any research using it. Housing the RCA collection in a local archive as opposed to The National Archives situates the collection, and thus the history of Carers UK, in Manchester's local history. As

the specification is for collections to be relevant to the Manchester Area at record level (GMCRO, 2018), the inclusion of the RCA collection in Manchester Archive suggests that the collection *is* relevant to the Manchester area at record level, which is inaccurate. The RCA collection is linked to Manchester through the ethos of Manchester Archive, which has implications for the identity of the RCA collection.

The ethos of Manchester Archive and the values of the Greater Manchester County Record Office (GMCRO) leaves what Stoler terms a 'watermark' on the RCA collection (Stoler, 2009). This watermark is a subtle stamp of influence, contextualising the RCA collection within Manchester's history. This context is not descriptive but analytical (Boudon, 2014). Applying Pawson's Context + Mechanism = Output formula for realist evaluation (Pawson, 2002b), the archive institution is the Context in which Mechanisms, in the form of practices, are initiated, thus influencing an Output in the form of the publically available archive collection. Pawson's model demonstrates the link between the Manchester Archive (the Context) and the RCA collection (the Output), thus validating Stoler's watermark theory.

## 8.3  Structure

The structure of an archived collection is the direct result of selection and cataloguing by the donor and archivist (see Chapter 7). Understanding what this structure looks like for the RCA collection and how it fits with national guidelines prefaces an in-depth exploration of evidence of decision making at each level of the RCA collection.

The RCA collection includes records for the five separate organisations of the Carers' Movement; the National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents (NCSWD), the National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependents (NCCED), the Association of Carers (AoC), Carers National Association (CNA) and Carers UK. However, the catalogue for the RCA collection only lists three of these organisations: NCCED, AoC and 'National Carers Association' (assumed to be an error and to mean CNA) (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). There are no criteria for items included in the RCA collection, other

than that they have been donated by Leventon and Carers UK (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Some of the items included, particularly in the *Miscellaneous reports etc* folder, do not appear to be connected in any way to the organisations within the collection e.g. young carers research and research to evaluate the dissemination of information to informal carers and Research from the University of Quebec (1986) (GMCRO, no date) and the undated report (based on research in 1996) Working and Caring for Older People in Europe (1996) (GMCRO, no date). The structure of a collection is accessed through its index.

When a user approaches an archive collection, the index is the first port of call. Often, a user has to negotiate the index of a collection before they set foot into the archive. This is a pivotal point for any archive collection as people make a 'preliminary –and often final – judgement' based on what is or is not in its index (Mays, 2014: 20). As with library classification systems, indices can vary from collection to collection and there is a discrepancy over what an index should achieve. Wheatley's 1879 definition is simple: 'an index is an indicator or pointer out of the position of required information, such as the finger-post on a high road, or the index finger of the human hand' (Wheatley, 1879 in Mays, 2014: 20), however Mays argues that 'the road is already an index' and that 'the road sign is an index to that index' (Mays, 2014: 21). Through the indexing process items can become 'dislodged from their contexts, flung into the orbit of a political world that is often not their own' (Stoler, 2009: 26). Nevertheless, the index is supposed to point the user at the information they wish to find. Indices are often compiled by archivists giving them a position of relative exteriority to the information contained in a collection (Mays, 2014: 21), linking back to whether intricate knowledge of the content is necessary to classify it. This type of classification system is not necessarily negative. Whilst the value of contextual knowledge of a collection has been discussed in terms of its creation, it would be presumptuous for a collection to be indexed entirely in terms of its origins. Users, particularly researchers, explore archive collections in terms of their own research and their own experiences. Having a straight forward filing system gives the user the creative freedom to arrange the records in an order they see fit. Systems used to catalogue archive collections have been developed for disciplinary classifications,

in a model built for ease and speed (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017, The National Archives, 2017a), that favours 'binary divisions and branching tree structures' (Featherstone, 2006: 593). However, just as 'inter- and trans-disciplinarity and new subject areas do not fare well in such systems', neither do the large variations in archived material (Cubitt, 1998 in Featherstone, 2006: 593).

A multi-level list format as developed by the General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)) is used by archives worldwide (Postal Heritage, 2013) and recommended by The National Archives (The National Archives, no date -b). ISAD(G) guidelines were formulated in 1994 by the International Council on Archives (ICA, 2000) to promote consistent and appropriate descriptions of archived material and to aid 'the retrieval and exchange of information' (Archives Hub, no date). This format structures a collection (also known as fonds) by series, file and item (Postal Heritage, 2013). The RCA collection is divided into eight series' (Fig 8.1), each identifiable by a unique code (GMCRO, no date). This coding is similar to the Dewey Decimal system used in the main section of the Greater Manchester Library where the archive is housed (author's field notes).

The RCA collection follows the 'principle of provenance', which advises items are grouped by where they came from, then in groups that reflect 'administrative structure' or 'functions of the organisation' (Janes, 2014). Items are coded first by organisation chronologically: NCSWD followed by AoC and CNA (NCCED and Carers UK are not named in the series') (GMCRO, no date). Secondly, items are ordered by theme e.g. newsletters, reports, finance records etc., and thirdly items are ordered chronologically (GMCRO, no date). The RCA collection catalogue does not have an individual author, only the GMCRO (GMCRO, no date), and there is no information about the cataloguing process for the RCA collection (author's field notes). While the ISAD(G) recommends a strategy for ordering and cataloguing items in a collection, there is no recommendation for the recording of this process other than the finished catalogue (ICA, 2000). The RCA collection catalogue does not include information on who catalogued the RCA collection, the original order of the collection, or what decisions were made by the archivist during the cataloguing process. The way collections are catalogued by archivists is a practice brought

over to archiving from libraries (Featherstone, 2006). It affects the usefulness of the collection to archive users in general and researchers in particular.

'The capacity for the archives to yield up significant material to the researcher depends upon the modes of classification adopted by the archivists' (Featherstone, 2006: 593). The National Archives recommends that this structure is 'meaningful' in order to 'enable records to be readily found and understood and [to] help effective management of sensitive information in compliance with legislation such as the Data Protection Act 1998' (The National Archives, 2017a). Documents within the RCA collection have been manually allocated to a series. This is evident from the series' not being mutually exclusive, thus the categories themselves do not provide a pro-forma for allocation (as with chronological categories for example). It is not known whether the categories were created by the donor of the materials or the archive, however, ISAD(G) guidance is to preserve the existing arrangement of records within a collection (Postal Heritage, 2013). If the categories are those created by the donor that could provide an explanation as to why the categories do not follow the standard ISAD(G) format from the general to the specific: fonds (collection), series, file, item (Postal Heritage, 2013). However, it is recognised that one size does not fit all. 'Many decades of collective experience has taught archivists that sorting everything into, say, date order for the sake of it isn't a good idea' (Janes, 2014). This is particularly true of collections used for academic research, in which theme may be more appropriate than date order. Borko and Bernier claim that an indexing system should be 'for organising the contents of records of knowledge for the purposes of retrieval and dissemination', regardless of style (Borko and Bernier, 1978 in Mays, 2014: 21). A predetermined path through the collection presents it in terms of varying significance placed on records by somebody else (author, donor, or archivist). For example, records in chronological order place time as the most important aspect of a collection – as is often the case with historical records. However, document type or the quality of the document may be of more importance to other users.

Archive practice, both nationally and within the Manchester Libraries Information and Archives group, suggests that the items within the RCA collection were categorised by Leventon prior to donation in 1999 and subsequently categorised

(or approved) by the archive (The National Archives, no date-b, Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012). Items that were part of the 2007 and 2008 donations remain ordered by Carers UK and have not been catalogued by Manchester Archive (Archivist, 2016). However, it is possible that the original order of this material has not been preserved. As this material is available for public access but does not have a catalogue, and users are able to view items at box-level, there is no reference guide for consultation when users return items to the boxes. This process could contribute to inconsistencies in archive catalogues, which are used by researchers to identify and sample items for inclusion in research.

**Figure 8.1 Series' of the Records of the Carer's Association collection**

| G/CHA/1 | THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SINGLE WOMAN AND HER DEPENDENTS |
| --- | --- |
| G/CHA/2 | ASSOCIATION OF CARERS |
| G/CHA/3 | CARERS' NATIONAL ASSOCIATION |
| G/CA/4 | CARERS AND FINANCE |
| G/CHA/5 | CARING AND WORK |
| G/CHA/6 | YOUNG CARERS |
| G/CHA/5* | LOCAL CARERS' PROJECTS IDENTIFIED |
| G/CA/9* | to 1969 |

*Inconsistencies in numbering are as presented in the catalogue (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c).

## 8.4  The Catalogue

Chapter 6 established that the archivist's decisions can impact a collection's catalogue, and thus the shaping and positioning of the collection itself. It has also been established that the researcher's decisions on what to look at in an archive collection are influenced by the catalogue. The catalogue is positioned by the

archive as an object independent from its creators. By unpacking the process[9] behind the catalogue this neutrality will be called into question and the catalogue will be repositioned as bearing the mark of its makers. Using the RCA collection, it will be demonstrated how decisions made by the archivist at cataloguing can direct the work of the researcher in identifying which items are relevant to their research.

A recommended source from The National Archives compares cataloguing a collection to a jigsaw: 'it's like putting together a puzzle where the picture that emerges is part of someone else's life' (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, 2016). A collection is made up of pieces of something that have been reconfigured to make a picture. The two-dimensional nature of a jigsaw fits with the representation of a catalogue as an empirical, flat account, without depth, and independent of the people involved. However, this is not the theory evoked through the 'how to' resources from The National Archives, which advocate for the preservation of context within a collection (The National Archives, no date-b). Whilst depictions of the catalogue itself are of a finding aid, the process of creating the catalogue suggests much deeper connections between the items with a collection. This is first evident in the 'principle of original order', which recommends items within a collection remain in the order in which they were donated in an attempt to 'preserve the context of the records' (Janes, 2014). The suggestion that the order of the records can change the knowledge within a collection as a whole and the individual items within is suggestive of a reality beyond the visible that can be manipulated by the order of a collection. This in itself refutes an empirical ontology.

By mitigating for effects beyond the tangible The National Archives takes an alternative approach to the creation of a catalogue. This is furthered by the adoption of the multi-level list system by The National Archives, which is structured to preserve 'evidential and informational relationships to the whole' (Postal Heritage, 2013) to recognise that 'an awareness of the fact that records come in series is absolutely essential' (Janes, 2014). Although it is standard

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[9] For the purpose of this section the process will be labelled 'cataloguing' and includes actions taken by the archive between the initial receipt of a collection and the final version of a catalogue for that collection. The collection is not necessarily available to the public at this stage.

practice for the archivist to order a collection (The National Archives, no date-b), doing so means that order 'is imposed, rather than allowing for several orders or even disorders to flourish among records' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 18). This emphasis on the invisible connections between items again suggests that a collection's value is more than its face value. This links back to the archive as an institution for empirical research.

Each part of the archive process; donation, cataloguing and researching, is connected to the catalogue. By keeping these processes as separate and only presenting the objects (catalogue and collection), the archive as an institution is denying the connections between the processes, established in Chapter 7, and thus devaluing the impact that travels between these processes. The acknowledgement that the archivist uses judgement in their decision making is an acknowledgement of the archivist drawing on experience to inform their decisions. The National Archives advises that the archivist uses judgement in decision making when compiling a catalogue (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, 2015). By the archivist using their beliefs, biases and experiences in the decision-making process of creating the catalogue they are influencing its direction. Since the catalogue is a representation of a collection (Barts Archives, 2017) the archivist is shaping the collection. The researcher is unlikely to see a collection in its entirety, and thus the collection is to the researcher what is presented in the catalogue.

When a researcher uses the archive for fieldwork they will have questions that need matching with items in a collection through the catalogue (The National Archives, no date-b). Because the catalogue has been shaped by the archivist, the catalogue is, in part, a reflection of the ontological position of the archivist and the archive as an institution. This positioning then guides the researcher in a certain ontological way (see Chapter 5). The argument here is not that the individual archivist is represented in the catalogue and thus the collection but that the catalogue is laden with a certain way of thinking. It is difficult for the researcher to escape that way of thinking because it has not been documented. For example, in qualitative research, the researcher has the chance to reflect on their decisions and is encouraged through reflexive practice to be mindful of their own positioning in relation to the data (Davies, 1999). This is then absorbed into

the research and becomes an active part of the research process. There is no such process in archive cataloguing. Instead, the process is described by The National Archives as detailed and skilled work requiring judgement, knowledge and skill (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, 2015), but it is not presented as such to the researcher. As a result, research done in the archive is positioned by the archive as empirical, placing research value only on the items directly as opposed to their place as part of a whole and the construction of that whole. A clear and traceable record of decisions made by the archivist or, at the very least, acknowledgement of the importance and influence of the cataloguing process would greatly increase the robustness of research done using archive material. Taking the RCA collection as an example, if there was a clear explanation for the allocation of items to files in the form of a paragraph under the file headings in the catalogue, which explains the criteria for the inclusion of items in that particular file, the researcher would be better educated to take their decisions forward when deciding what to include in their research. However, it is not as simple as a clear allocation. Archivists use judgement in their decision-making.

The RCA catalogue has not been created by an impartial and unbiased archivist. This is evident in inconsistencies in the amount and type of information available for each item. Item descriptions in the catalogue should 'provide descriptions which can highlight and draw out potential research use of the records' (Barts Archives, 2017). These descriptions should contain the necessary information to allow different people, researching the collection for different reasons, to 'discover' the collection (Barts Archives, 2017). These descriptions are written by an archivist and therefore contain information that the archivist perceives as of importance to researchers. For example, some of the meeting minutes within the Minute Books have more detail in the catalogue than others (GMCRO, no date). All descriptions include the meeting minutes, however, some have additional information e.g. 'includes outline for regional development' (GMCRO, no date: 5) and 'discussion of changing terms of charity' (GMCRO, no date: 6). This is a result of the archivist using their judgement to determine what is important to the researcher.

Variations in the catalogue show a priority for certain items over others and thus reveal the archivist's mark on the catalogue. This is translated to the

collection through the researcher's use of the catalogue. For example, the item labelled 'June 1974 The Wages of Caring' (GMCRO, no date: 11) could be a research report, however since the archivist has not specified that it is or is not, the researcher would be equally justified in including or excluding this item from their enquiry. Another example of the archivist's influence on the collection is in the Miscellaneous Papers file. The first item in this file is listed as 'Papers connected with founding of organisation (not listed separately)' (GMCRO, no date: 12), and similarly the last item in the same file is listed as 'Miscellaneous papers sent by Isle of Wight Branch - not listed' (GMCRO, no date: 13). There is no information on the decision to not list these papers separately. The archivist has made the judgement that these papers are separate to the others listed in the file and that they have no individual value in the collection. Despite the value of these items being represented as less than others, these items do still have value as they are included in the catalogue. The archivist has the power to remove/exclude or destroy items during the cataloguing process (The National Archives, 2009b) and the fact that these items remain as part of the collection is a statement on their worth. This a reflection of a policy governing 23 archives and libraries across Manchester, stating that material that has not incurred penalties under the law should not have restricted access, and that material 'should not be excluded … on any moral, political, religious or racist ground alone to satisfy any sectional interest' (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries, 2012: 3). Most items with the RCA collection catalogue are listed by date first, with the exception of undated items (which are grouped together) (GMCRO, no date). This places an emphasis on chronological order over content.

The use of time to order items is deemed to provide 'the greatest meaning and value to the records' (Bailey, 2013). However, whilst chronology is putting items back into the original order of creation, it risks 'destroying the contextual information accrued by collections that have passed through multiple states of custodianship prior to their acceptance into the archive' (Bailey, 2013). The archivist cataloguing the RCA collection has balanced this risk well by using chronological order as the third layer of filtration, preserving what is believed to be the original order in the first two (GMCRO, no date). Stoler argues that it is 'dates that matter' (Stoler, 2009: 9) and that items need to be placed in a context

that is their own (Stoler, 2009: 26). This could not be done without the inclusion of time in the item description. This is particularly the case for the RCA collection, which contains items created by organisations that went through several incarnations and turning points. The key issues from this section are now taken forward and discussed in detail alongside evidence from the RCA collection.

## 8.5  Evidence of Decision Making

National and local policy necessitates that decisions must be made about the contents, and disclosure of contents, of an archive collection (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012, The National Archives, no date-b). However, as local policy is vague and caters more for the library portion of the Manchester Libraries Information and Archives group (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012), and national policy offers only guidelines (The National Archives, no date-b), Manchester Archive has a reasonable amount of autonomy when selecting and cataloguing a collection. Internal policy and The National Archives' guidelines lay out a decision-making process for archivists, however, there is not a clear specification of the skills needed for the archivist to make these decisions, the scope or parameters of these decision. Thus, there is space for misinterpretation and inconsistency. Without a detailed record of the decisions made, the researcher does not have the parameters around which a collection was created. This is the equivalent of the researcher having responses to an interview without the questions. However, evidence of this decision-making process is engrained into a collection itself as described in Stoler's watermarking theory (Stoler, 2009). Issues are rendered important by where they appear, how they are cross-referenced, where they are catalogued and thus how they are framed (Stoler, 2009: 50). To demonstrate that archive collections 'hold records of the evidence and deliberations informing decisions' (James in Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015: 2), this section uses the RCA collection to highlight evidence of decision making.

## 8.5.1 Donor's influence

The existence of the RCA collection is, in itself, evidence of decision making. Donor Leventon made the decision that the materials should not only be preserved but should be made publically available (Holzhausen, 2016), in line with ICA guidelines that archives should be opened to the greatest extent possible (ICA, 2014). As confirmed by the Director of Policy and Public Affairs for Carers UK, establishing the archive was a task initiated and undertaken by Leventon alone, with the support of Carers UK (Holzhausen, 2016). Unlike The National Archives' guidelines suggest (The National Archives, no date), the shaping of the collection began before the items were donated. As recognised by UNESCO, the archivist can only filter and organise the materials that have been donated, which are a subset of an unknown complete record (Hull et al., 1981). By reason of its existence it is known that the RCA collection was reviewed by Manchester Archive, as Leventon's chosen archive facility, where it was deemed to meet The National Archives' criteria of being 'of value as evidence or as a source for historical or other research' (The National Archives, 2016a), and the criteria of historical significance necessary for inclusion in Manchester Archive (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016, Archivist, 2016). There is no information in the RCA collection about the decisions made by the donor, author, or organisation in selecting which items were 'future-worthy' (Daston, 2012). However, assumptions can be made from the nature of the documents themselves.

Taking Smith and Stead's recommendation to look more fundamentally at the issues of temporality and finality (Smith and Stead, 2013: 23), the nature of the documents within the RCA collection (meeting minutes, newsletters, reports etc) suggests that they were drafted and redrafted prior to the final version that appears in the archive. The archivist, researcher, and donor only had access to a finalised version of each document. This version of the document is the one that the creator deemed fit for purpose, and that the donor and archivist approved for public viewing. Thus, the documents within the RCA collection had been purposefully sampled prior to donation, meaning that Manchester Archive only received items that Leventon, the author, and the original organisation deemed worthy of keeping (Hull et al., 1981). This supports the RCA collection as a deliberately constructed representation of Carers UK and its predecessors, with a

purposefully crafted narrative through the inclusion of some documents and exclusion of others. There is no information about the criteria for Leventon's selection, however, through the application of realist principles, conclusions can be drawn about Leventon's theoretical positioning when selecting which items to archive.

As explained in the Methods chapter, this research follows the realist principle that the real is not knowable in its entirety (Emmel et al., 2018). The real is not accessible, however, it can be glimpsed through evidence of effects observed through empirical investigation (Emmel, 2013). The same can be said for the decision-making process of the donor of the RCA collection. From what is known about Leventon, conclusions can be made about how Leventon wanted to frame unpaid caring and, more specifically, Carers UK and its predecessors. As Leventon was the co-founder of the AoC (CYWU, 2008), it is assumed that she held the same principles championed by the AoC. It is assumed that Leventon held a strong belief that the definition of the word 'carer' should be inclusive, as this was the driving factor behind the formation of the AoC (Lloyd, 2004). Similarly, it is assumed that Leventon believed support for unpaid carers should be person-centred. This is based on the AoC focussing efforts on increasing community support for unpaid carers over legal and financial recognition (Carers UK, 2014c), and the AoC's pioneering and enduring initiative that approaches to unpaid carer support should be carer-led (Carers UK, 2014c). Through Stoler's watermarking theory (Stoler, 2009) evidence of Leventon's decision-making and its grounding in these principles are visible in the RCA collection.

### 8.5.2  Intended Audience

The entirety of the RCA collection is publically accessible, however, some of the documents within it were not created for public viewing. There is evidence of this in the type of documents within the collection. Some items, such as the research reports and press releases, were created for the public eye, others were intended for viewing by members of the organisation e.g. the newsletters, yet others were intended to be viewed internally e.g. meeting minutes and letters. There is also evidence of intent for separate audiences in the way information about the same

research project is shared differently across different documents. For example, information about a research project in the newsletters is much more vague, using layman and non-specialist language, than in the meeting minutes (GMCRO, no date). Just as the records were not created with the intention of them being publically available, they were not intended to be viewed alongside each other.

The RCA collection is the archive of Carers UK and as such contains documents from its predecessors; the NCSWD, NCCED, AoC and CNA (GMCRO, no date). Prior to the merger between the AoC and the NCCED in 1988, these organisations were completely separate, overlapping in subject matter alone (Carers UK, 2014b). As separate organisations, documents from each were not intended to be positioned (and viewed) as parts of a singular whole. By grouping documents from these separate organisations, as has been done in the RCA collection, context between documents is artificially created by viewing documents from alternative organisations alongside. Similarly, as previously mentioned, items within the same organisation were intended to be viewed by separate audiences. For example, a summary of research findings in a newsletter was not intended to be viewed alongside meeting minutes from the project's conception. This is evidence that the RCA collection is a construction separate to an authentic and direct illustration of the organisations it represents. In this regard, the researcher is presented with more of the socio-political context than the original recipients, which means the documents are understood and interpreted differently by the researcher than the original intended recipients. Manchester Archive also has influence over the audience of the RCA collection.

The RCA collection is not actively advertised by Manchester Archive, The National Archives or Carers UK. Greater Manchester Lives, which oversees the archives and local history libraries within Greater Manchester (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a), promotes local interest collections such as the history of local schools and neighbourhoods, and the history of the First World War from archives within the Greater Manchester Lives group (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016). By not advertising the RCA collection Manchester Archive is not raising awareness of the existence of it which is suggestive that it is not likely to attract local interest. It also suggests that Manchester Archive is not using the RCA collection for its own research purposes. Although not confirmed, as a large

proportion of the RCA collection has remained uncatalogued in off-site storage for a decade (Archivist, 2016) this indicates that the RCA collection is not one of Manchester Archive's most popular. However, a lack of active engagement from the archive can also be positive for the researcher. By not publicising the RCA collection Manchester Archive is not making any public statement about what the RCA collection is/is not and what it can/cannot provide. Thus Manchester Archive is not making any judgements or assumptions about the RCA collection's range or limitations. Publicity about collections comes loaded with archivist's assumptions about what people want to know. This is demonstrated in Manchester Archive's current exhibition on the 'Worker's Co-operative Movement' which 'showcases' selected stories from the collection (Archives+, 2018).

### 8.5.3 Branding

The name of the RCA collection is, in itself, an indicator of decision-making. Just as catalogues act as a reference point for the contents of a collection, so too does the name of the collection. Lewinson distinguishes 'records' from 'archives' by the process of selection, defining records as 'the total documentation of an organisation's operations' (Lewinson, 1957: 291). Therefore, by reason of its name, the RCA collection at Manchester Archive is a complete record. However, the RCA collection has been sampled by the donor prior to being donated to the archive and has been through a process of appraisal and selection at Manchester Archive, regardless of whether any material was removed or not. Thus, the RCA collection is not a complete collection of records as the name indicates. Similarly, the title is not representative of the organisations included within the collection.

The collection is titled *Records of the Carers Association*, however, none of the organisations included in the RCA collection were called the *Carers Association* (GMCRO, no date, Carers UK, 2014c). It is not clear why the RCA collection was named as it is, or who was involved in this decision. In 1999 when the first material was donated to the RCA collection the organisation now known as Carers UK was called the Carers National Association (Carers UK, 2014b), therefore it is possible that the name of the RCA collection is simply an administrative error or abbreviation. This name is unlikely to have come from the

donor as the donor had specialist knowledge of the organisations within the collection (CYWU, 2008), and thus is unlikely to have named the RCA collection in this confusing way. It is more likely that the RCA collection was named by someone without specialist knowledge of the organisations or who was not familiar with the contents of the collection. This is again demonstrated by the RCA collection title in the exclusion of the majority of organisations represented within it.

The title *Records of the Carer's Association* does not indicate an affiliation with the organisations represented within it. The NCSWD, NCCED, AoC, CNA and Carers UK are all included in the RCA collection but this is not indicated in its title (GMCRO, no date). This is confusing for archive users as the title is not indicative of its contents. Thus, a researcher looking for archived documents from the AoC would not necessarily be directed to the RCA collection. The amalgamation of these organisations from 1988 onwards does not justify the amalgamation of the distinct histories of these separate organisations. The inclusion of items from several separate unpaid carers' organisations in one collection is more suggestive of an archive for the Carers' Movement as opposed to a business archive for Carers UK. The items are not limited to the paper history of Carers UK but are more evocative of social and political changes in attitude towards unpaid carers. This is indicated by the inclusion of newspaper articles, about unpaid carers, not directly linked to any of the organisations (GMCRO, no date). However, a more inclusive title proves a difficult task.

As the RCA collection spans the five organisations of the Carers' Movement and therefore it is difficult to find an inclusive title. Also, as the RCA collection houses variations in quantity and type of items for each organisation they are not equally represented (GMCRO, no date). The RCA collection is advertised by The National Archives as being the archive of Carers UK (The National Archives, no date-a), thus labelling the RCA collection *Records of Carers UK* would perhaps be a better representation. Alternatively, the RCA collection contains a lot of items that are representative of the Carers' Movement as a social and political phenomenon, so labelling it *Records of the Carers' Movement* would perhaps be a better fit. This would make the contents of the RCA collection clearer to archive users, however, the RCA collection then loses

its affiliation with Carers UK, which is an important link as Carers UK remains responsible for the upkeep of the RCA collection and is, on paper, actively involved in updating it (Holzhausen, 2016). The name of the RCA collection does not inspire confidence in the labelling and cataloguing of the contents within it. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the title is indicative of errors throughout the cataloguing of the RCA collection.

### 8.5.4  Organisation

In accordance with Manchester Archive's policy, the items that are in the RCA collection catalogue have been organised (or had their organisation approved) by an archivist (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012). It was confirmed that the items kept off-site since before the 2010 renovations (Archivist, 2016, Wainwright, 2012) have not been through a selection process at Manchester Archive, and are therefore in the same order as when donated (Archivist, 2016). Due to time and resource limitations, this research has focused only on the catalogued portion of the RCA collection. The way items have been organised within the RCA collection influences the information that is made available to the researcher and the order in which the researcher can access items. The organisation of the collection is also evidence of underlying processes that dictate the process through which the RCA collection is organised.

Within the RCA collection, the series' and files are not mutually exclusive. Items could fit into several series', meaning that all items relating to a certain organisation, theme, or year are not located in one place. By mixing the priority factor of the files, the series' are confusing and do not provide the clear categorisation recommended by The National Archives (The National Archives, no date-b) or ISAD(G) guidelines (ICA, 2000). This also suggests that, as series' 1-3 are labelled by organisation, items outside of series 1-3 have no affiliation to any organisation. This is further evidence that the categorisation and labelling of the RCA collection have not been done with specialist knowledge of the history of the organisations within the collection, and in some cases without the due care recommended by The National Archives (The National Archives, no date-b). For

example, series 9 appears to be comprised entirely of newspaper articles, however, the series title 'to 1969' does not indicate this. This has a direct impact on researcher's work as research may be limited to certain files or series', whereas some items from other files could be relevant to the research but are missed because of the decision making of the archivist. For example, Item 1 in series 5 is a report by the NCSWD so could equally be placed within file 7 of series 1 (GMCRO, no date). Similarly, series 5 contains articles written by Jill Pikeathley (item 31) and Sandra Leventon (item 26) which could equally be housed within series 1 and series 2 respectively (GMCRO, no date). There are also some items relating to young carers in series 9 which could equally be housed in series 6 (GMCRO, no date). The Miscellaneous Reports file is in the NCSWD series but some of the items are reports done by the AoC, despite the AoC having its own folder (GMCRO, no date). This suggests that the reports were not separated out when they were donated and this has not been updated since.

The RCA collection series' are nominal categories and therefore do not have a natural order. The order that the series' appear in has been deliberately chosen (or approved) by the cataloguing archivist (The National Archives, no date-d). The first three series' are chronologically ordered by the founding of each organisation. This default to chronological order is observed by Stoler as a systemic trait of archives, which conserve the notion that the date is the factor that matters within an archived item (Stoler, 2009: 9), further perpetuated by the labelling of series 9. By placing the organisations as the first three series' this places more importance on the organisation than the subject theme in the latter series', as seen in order bias in surveys (Krosnick, 1999). This is evidence of the archive making decisions on behalf of the archive user by assuming that archive users will want to know the organisation of an item over the subject matter. The clear structuring of the RCA collection in series 1 compared to the unclear structure and labelling in the rest of the series' suggests that series 1 may have been structured to file-level prior to donation by the donor, however, this cannot be verified (author's field notes). There is also evidence of decision-making by the archivist in the unclear structure of the RCA collection. Errors in numbering show a lack of specialist knowledge of selection/cataloguing or a lack of special

care taken in carrying out these practices. For example, none of the files within series' 2, 3, 6, and 9 are labelled (GMCRO, no date), supporting the theory that series 1 was catalogued/selected by someone different to the rest of the collection. The organisation of the RCA collection also has implications for access to it.

The organisation of an archive collection regulates access as much as it assists in it. Access is controlled through the classification of items to certain sections. For example, someone looking at the young carers section would miss the young carers report in the miscellaneous reports section of the RCA collection (GMCRO, no date). Also, the classifications only go so far e.g. the newsletters are listed by date but not content, so the decision has been made that content is of less importance to archive users than chronology.

There are also inconsistencies in how the files are organised, at odds with the guidelines described in Chapter 7. For example, letters, news articles and reports are together in file G/CHA/4 but are disaggregated in file G/CHA/1 (GMCRO, no date). In series 4 the files are organised by theme, however, in series 1, the files are organised by type of document. This means that items of the same type or content are not easily identifiable by the researcher and that the researcher is exposed to more material (as the material is provided at series level) than they intended. Similarly, the lack of numbering at file-level means that it is difficult for the researcher to locate and identify files of interest. Even when identified the researcher will not receive the items at file-level as they are not numbered and therefore not easily locatable by the archivist. Instead, the researcher will receive the file to the nearest series and have to locate the file (author's field notes).

As a file is not a physically separated entity there is no distinction between files within the physical series. Also, some of the file titles are ambiguous meaning it is not clear what is included in each, e.g. *Folder 3*, *Folder 4*, and *Costs of Caring* (GMCRO, no date). Similarly, the *Other Benefits and Financial Help* file is mainly newspaper articles but the file label does not indicate this GMCRO, no date). The *Miscellaneous Reports etc* folder contains news items, leaflets, books and articles as well as research reports and loose questionnaires (GMCRO, no date). It is not clear why these have not been separated. It could be that, in line

with national difficulties, the archive did not have enough time or resources to dedicate to separating this file into several files (The National Archives, 2012a). Manchester Archive is known to have used volunteers to catalogue material due to a backlog (Govier, 2016). This could provide the conditions in which the archivist carrying out the cataloguing of the RCA collection did not have the specialist knowledge to categorise the items within this file. This again means the researcher will see more items than they intended to as they will have to physically work through the series to locate items within the file. This is further evidence of the archive constructing and construing the context of the RCA collection.

At item level, a decision has been made to group some items. For example, within file 7 of series 1, concurrent newsletters have been grouped and listed as one item (GMCRO, no date). The newsletters are organised chronologically by newsletter number, however, there are several gaps in the collection e.g. of newsletters 1-50 the archive holds 18 of these (GMCRO, no date). Where consecutively numbered newsletters are held by the archive these have been catalogued as one set e.g. newsletters 25, 29, and 34 are listed separately before 'No 37 (December 1970) to No 40 (June 1971)' (GMCRO, no date). There is no obvious reason for these to be grouped and, as previously explained, they were not intended to be looked at as grouped items. This later changes with newsletters 129, 130, 131 amongst items listed individually (GMCRO, no date). Similarly, within file 9 of series 1, the first item (not numbered) is listed as 'papers connected with founding of organisation' (GMCRO, no date).

Grouping items forces the researcher to treat the newsletters as one as opposed to individual items. There is no suggestion that the newsletters should be grouped in national or local guidelines (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012, The National Archives, no date-b). However, national and local guidelines advise that duplicates are removed (The National Archives, no date, Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012). Despite these guidelines, there are several copies of each newsletter held in the archive GMCRO, no date). The number of copies of each newsletter held is documented in the catalogue (GMCRO, no date). This goes against Manchester Archive's policy of not keeping duplicates or

of only keeping what is necessary to save space (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012, The National Archives, no date-b). The decision to keep duplicates does not make sense in the current climate of trying to space-save. It is assumed that duplicates are a result and also a product of this as it is suspected they have not been discarded as either the archive did not have the time or resources to properly discard them, or the cataloguing was done by staff (or volunteers) without the authority to discard items. This makes the researcher's task more time and resource intensive as they have to filter through several copies of the same item.

### 8.5.5  Incomplete information

There are several inconsistencies in the information within the RCA collection, each of which contributes to a barrier to access for users of the collection. Inconsistencies begin with the information about the donation of the RCA collection. The Manchester Archive catalogue of all collections states that the 'National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependents and Association of Carers: Minutes, accounts, newsletters, reports, miscellaneous papers, 1965-1988' was donated in 1999, whereas the 'Association of Carers: Minutes, accounts, annual reports, newsletters, branch material, 1981-1988' was donated in 2007 and the 'National Carers Association: Newsletters, annual reports, financial statements, publications, miscellaneous papers etc., 1988-1990s' were donated in 2008. There is no mention of the material for the NCSWD (GMCRO, no date). This is assumed to have been donated in 1999, as the Archive catalogue lists NCCED material as donated in 1999 (and the NCSWD was its predecessor), whereas the RCA collection catalogue lists a series for the NCSWD but not the NCCED. It is not clear whether the material donated from 2007 and 2008 was used to create new series' or if the items were integrated into an existing structure. As there is not a clear definition between donation periods in the RCA collection or its catalogue (GMCRO, no date, Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a), it is assumed that donations made after the first were at least partially integrated into an existing structure.

Arguably the most problematic for the researcher is the inconsistencies in the numbering of items within files. There are over 3000 items in the collection, 550 of which do not have item numbers (GMCRO, no date). This makes it difficult for the researcher to identify items in the RCA collection and makes the task of locating items more labour intensive. There are also a lot of items of the same number within sub-folders. For example, Item 1 within G/CHA/2 could refer to 'Minutes of 1st Annual General Meeting -Westminster Hospital 30/10/82' or 'Minutes and papers of meeting 18th February 1983' or 'Letter to Judith Oliver…20th February 1981' (GMCRO, no date). All the above appear under separate headings that are not numbered. This is a consistent problem throughout the collection.

The numbering of items within the RCA collection is also not reliable. There is an error in the organisation with *The Loving Trap* report catalogued as item 18 and the *Dynamics of Informal Caring* survey report, which *The Loving Trap* report is based on, as Item 19 (GMCRO, no date), meaning the chronology of items is not consistently followed. Similarly, the number of replies to the initial questionnaire has been rounded up from 699 to 700 in the catalogue. This might be a minor alteration but it is an indicator of deliberate changes made in the selection process. There is another similar error where the 'March 1984 Carers in Transition' survey item is described as 'a relief and respite role for the NCSWD', despite the NCSWD being rebranded as the NCCED two year's previous (Carers UK, 2014b). As well as inconsistent and unreliable numbering, descriptions of items also vary within the RCA collection.

There is no pattern to how items are described in the catalogue. Each item is described through a combination of name, year, date, type of document, and a one or two line description of the content. On occasion extra information is included, such as the number of replies to a questionnaire or the number of copies of a document held in the archive (GMCRO, no date). As the description of an item in the collection catalogue is used by the researcher to purposefully sample the collection at item, file, or series level, sampling decisions cannot be made in confidence if the amount of information about each item varies. The fact that the archivist has not provided detailed descriptions for each of the items can be both advantageous and detrimental the researcher's work. As demonstrated,

the lack of description can cause items to be wrongly excluded from a piece of research. Alternatively, forcing the researcher to engage with materials and make their own judgement on whether an item should be included or excluded takes the power away from the archivist to the researcher. Rather than this decision-making process being part of the cataloguing process and hidden and unrecorded, the researcher then has greater control over the items that are included in the research and has the power to be reflexive about this process. This makes the same decision-making process more rigorous as it can be built into the research if the researcher has made the decisions as opposed to being an unknown variable. This is demonstrated in the ad-hoc use of the term 'research' in the catalogue (GMCRO, no date).

The term 'research' is used to label items the archivist has identified as primary research. Secondary research and articles about research done by the organisation are not labelled as research in the RCA collection catalogue (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Qualitative and quantitative research proposals, results and reports of varying scales and methods are all classified under the umbrella term 'research'. If a researcher was only interested in quantitative surveys, they would have to manually filter through the items labelled 'research'. This is an example of the catalogue leading the researcher to the collection but not in the direct way that a library index does. This makes the catalogue so much more than just a finding aid. It is not just about signposting but about leading. Unlike the library where people know exactly what they want, the archive catalogue is designed to aid in finding materials to answer questions, rather than to find specific items. This raises the question of balance between the catalogue and researcher when matching the researcher's queries with the collection. A discussion about incomplete information is not complete without mentioning missing data.

Missing data is largely regarded as a problem by archivists and archive users, as demonstrated in the resistance to, and criticism of, introducing sampling techniques into archiving practice (Hull et al., 1981). However it has been put forward by Derrida (1996) and, more recently, Stoler (2009) that missing data is, in itself, insightful. Awareness of archival sampling and in particular the sampling done by the donor is an openness to indications of an intended narrative which in

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turn is indicative of the excluded narrative (Daston, 2017, Stoler, 2009). Without acknowledgement of missing data 'imagination slips easily into the gaps' (Jones, 2007: 177). Consequentially missing data becomes problematic when it is ignored and a collection is misinterpreted as a complete, unbiased and factual record. Missing items also provide evidence of excluded information, however, it is not known why the information has been excluded. Within the RCA collection, some items are listed but recorded as 'not in folder' or 'not in archive' (GMCRO, no date). This suggests there was an original list from the donor that does not match up with the items in the collection. There are also instances where it is noted that items are 'noted from lists' or 'fuller information not included' (GMCRO, no date). This supports the additional list theory but there is no information about the exact meaning of these lines. If there was an original list from the donor (and there are several instances of these lines throughout the collection to suggest there might have been), it is another example of the archivist having the power to rewrite the narrative constructed by the donor. Missing attachments to newsletters (NCSWD, 1978a) indicate that at some stage in the life cycle of the newsletter the attachment was not deemed 'worthy of preserving' (Mbembe, 2012: 19). As the preservation of newsletters and their attachments became more consistent in later years (GMCRO, no date), one reason for the exclusion of attachments in earlier years could be that it is a reflection of attitudes towards social research, and perceptions of the importance of recording processes. Consistencies in later years would then be due to changes in these attitudes.

## 8.6  Implications for research

The researcher in the archive faces a number of practical barriers to using an archive collection, over and above the physical access restrictions. In the current climate of cuts to academic research, the extra time and resources necessary to overcome these practical barriers can have a marked impact on a social research project.

Time is the primary factor. If a researcher has to spend time looking at the material at series level as opposed to item level that is time added to the research. Similarly, if the archivist misinterprets the researcher's choice of

materials or items have been incorrectly boxed this costs time. If items are not in the right place or labels are not mutually exclusive the researcher needs to spend more time looking through a collection to find items.

The structure of the RCA collection dictates that the researcher will see more than just the items they have selected from the catalogue. Time must be dedicated to filtering through the RCA collection at series and box level to first match up the RCA collection with the catalogue and then identify the relevant items. As the researcher sees more items than intended, they are exposed to more information about the organisation which can influence the direction of the research. Although this has a negative impact on the time needed for fieldwork in the archive, it means that the researcher is forced to engage with more of the RCA collection than just the items they selected. This increases the researcher's knowledge of the RCA collection as a whole which is positive for the research. Conversely the added time it takes to identify the relevant items could lead to a decision to further focus the research topic and to a smaller area of focus within the RCA collection.

## 8.7  Visible influence of the Carers' Movement

If, as Stoler claims, an archive collection is both a product of archiving practice and 'the institutions that it served' (Stoler, 2009), then the RCA collection is intertwined with the history of the organisations it represents; the NCSWD, the NCCED, the AoC, CNA and Carers UK. The RCA collection is not only shaped by the archiving process but it is shaped by the context in which it was created. As Chapter 3 of this thesis demonstrated, unpaid carers' place in society, and society's attitude towards unpaid care has changed markedly since the start of the Carers' Movement in 1963. There is evidence of this in changes in the language and style of items in the RCA collection with chronological progression. That these changes are visible, over and above the evolution of the definition of 'carer' by the organisation, despite interference from the donor, archivist and researchers is evidence of the endurance of social context within archived documents.

Gottschalk writes that present generations can only understand past generations in terms of their own experience (Gottschalk, 1945: 9). If this is the case and processes and interpretations 'mirror dominant cultural understandings' (Brown and Davis-Brown 1998, Cook and Schwartz 2002, Schwartz and Cook 2002 in Moore and Pell, 2010: 257), the donor has as much potential to misinterpret the material as an archivist. 'The Zeitgeist must therefore be studied in order to understand any personal document and yet it is also true that the documents of a period will enable the historian better to appreciate its cultural atmosphere' (Gottschalk, 1945: 27). Policy changes changed the nature of the organisation and this is evident in the RCA collection. The most noticeable change is in the change of name of the organisation from the NCSWD to the NCCED to include married women (Carers UK, 2014c). In the first half of the 1970s, campaigning by the NCSWD started to see real change with the introduction of Attendance Allowance and Invalid Care Allowance, which led to the NCSWD becoming more focused on legislative change (Carers UK, 2014c). This is evident in the RCA collection through the changing attitudes towards research and its members.

One of the most compelling pieces of evidence is the change in tone seen in the newsletters and the meeting minutes between 1963 and 1988. Chapter 3 detailed the evolution of the NCSWD from its origins in 1963 to its change of focus and rebranding to the NCCED in 1982, and its merger with the AoC to become the CNA in 1988. As the organisation changed with society, so too did the content of the newsletters and meeting minutes. At the beginning of the Carers' Movement, the most important aspect of a piece of research was the person doing the research[10]. There is often one person referred to by name at the start of details of any project e.g. 'approach to MH re: research...' (NCSWD, 1966-1972: Minutes Dec 66), 'MK to investigate…' (NCSWD, 1966-1972: Minutes May 67), 'MWH suggested… for research' (NCSWD, 1966-1972: Minutes July 67), 'MS reported…' (NCSWD, 1966-1972: Minutes September 68). This changed from focusing on the individual to a focus on the organisation doing the research e.g. 'several women's organisations' (NCSWD, 1974), 'The National Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations has requested…' (NCSWD,

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[10] Names have been redacted

1977), 'Thameside Council project' (NCCED, 1987b). The NCCED continue to refer to in-house research projects by the internal person involved: 'MS's questionnaire' (NCCED, 1985b), 'replies will be analysed by MIA' (NCCED, 1984b).

The overall tone of the newsletters also shifted over this period. The earlier newsletters talk about participants of research done by the NCSWD as though they are part of the organisation and takes a casual approach to discussing research:

> 'Many of our readers have already applied on behalf of their dependants for the Attendance allowance, or intend to do so... In each of the cases of refusal reported to us, the single woman concerned gave up her job some time ago because her dependant could no longer be left alone during the day and the refusal of the application for the attendance allowance has caused concern and disappointment.' (NCSWD, 1971)

This becomes more formalised in later newsletters:

> 'The National Joint Committee of Working Women's Organisations has requested that we participate in researching data on the general topic "Health Care for Women", with particular emphasis in the mental health area. At the moment we are not proposing to circulate a questionnaire. For the time being we have decided to ask you to co-operate by indicating whether or not the caring process affected your health adversely' (NCSWD, 1977).

Talk about research becomes more external as the NCCED supports research from other organisations:

> 'Thameside Council is carrying out a major survey into caring in the community to find out how many people in the borough currently look after dependant relatives and friends. More than 17 000 households are to be asked to take part in the survey which has been promoted by concern about the hidden number of carers in the community. The council will use the results of the postal survey to review its policies and services.' (National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents (NCSWD), 1977)

And internal research requests are brief:

> 'Would you please cooperate in answering the following questions and return the form to NCCED AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE' (NCSWD, 1985a)

These changes are reflective of a shift in attitude towards social research more broadly.

The RCA collection follows the path of the publicised Carers UK history (Carers UK, 2014b). There is little documentation of failure and where this is documented it is passed over without detail e.g. 'application turned down' (NCSWD, 1966-1972). It is not known whether this exclusion was a deliberate decision by the donor or if the original documents for failed grant applications/research proposals were not kept. The focus on success within the RCA collection follows the narrative that Carers UK and the donor have created. The RCA collection tells the story that the donor and Carers UK want to be told and read and preserved. There is no indication of this for the researcher.

Looking at the RCA collection as a researcher there is no preface about the limitations of using archived material or the politics involved. The RCA collection, in particular, has no additional information about the Carers' Movement. This lack of awareness of (or disregard for) the foundations of the RCA collection suggests that the archive positions itself more as a storehouse with a purpose of presenting items as opposed to a knowledge creator charged with educating users.

This can also be linked to the problems with recall discussed in Chapter 4. This is likely to have affected the donor and archivist when selecting from the RCA collection as documents from the past viewed in light of the changes in the Carers' Movement may have been discarded if they did not fit with the current ethos of Carers UK. This could be an explanation for some of the items missing in the RCA collection. For example, in the May 1968 meeting minutes in Minute Book 1 there is reference to a meeting in March 1968 but there are no minutes for a March 1968 meeting in the RCA collection (NCSWD, 1966-1972), there are also reports mentioned in the minutes that are not in the collection (GMCRO, no date).

## 8.8  Summary and Conclusion

The RCA collection, although officially the archive of Carers UK, was largely the labour of just one donor, Sandra Leventon (Holzhausen, 2016). There is no information on how much of the RCA collection structure has been kept from the original structure on donation, or how much has been determined by archivists,

meaning researchers using this collection have no contextual information about its creation. What is known is that the structure has been approved by archivists at Manchester Archive, indicating a level of selection and choice about its composition. There are pieces of evidence within the RCA collection, from its name to missing items, indicating the decision-making process that has gone into the RCA collection, from the decision to keep each document by its creator to the cataloguing of part of the collection by Manchester Archive.

The classification of items within the RCA collection series' creates a divide between the groups of documents. This divide can be natural, for example in the separation of documents from the NCSWD and the AoC, or it can be forced, for example in the separation of research reports from the meeting minutes detailing their inception. Through this process, the transitions between organisations are exposed. Changes in the use of language and in the expansion and restriction of the remit of the term 'carer', reveal the social and political context of the Carers' Movement, the socio-political context through which these documents were created. These indicators of changes in social phenomenon have endured an archiving process affected by *haphazardness* (see section 9.10 for more detail), permeating the wider archive institution. The Discussion chapter compiles these findings to draw conclusions about what they mean for archives and what the consequences are for social research using archives going forward.

# Chapter 9 : Discussion

## 9.1  Introduction

Throughout this thesis, the nature of the archive has been contested. As a site for various different types of research, such as family history, academic, and local (Archives and Records Association, 2017), UK archives nationally (as represented by The National Archives) are tasked with meeting the needs of these different groups (The National Archives, 2012a, Manchester City Council, 2012). Through the prioritisation of certain groups over others and universally imposed resource frugality (The National Archives, 2012a), the identity of the archive has gone through a period of change. Academic research into archive theory has shown, over the last decade, that the archive is not of a fixed identity but malleable and subject to influence. This is something that has been hinted at in archive practice research but not unpicked. In a time of substantial financial difficulty, the institutions that govern the practice of archiving have been forced into a target-driven and consumer-led ethos, meaning that the findings from archive theory research have been neglected in practice. Using the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection as an example, this research has used a realist approach to reposition the archive as a social process. This is used to demonstrate firstly that practices within the archive are not, and cannot be, singular and objective and secondly that this is neglected in the reality of archive practice. Building from Davidson et al.'s (2019) 'Breadth and Depth' approach to archived material, this research concludes with suggestions for how social researchers can manage the influence of the archive process in their research.

## 9.2  A gap in research

> 'While some writers have begun exploring aspects of "the archive" in a metaphorical or philosophical sense, this is almost always done without even a rudimentary understanding of archives as real institutions, as a real profession (the second oldest!), and as a real discipline with its own set of theories, methodologies, and practices' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 2).

As explored in Chapter 4, there has been a divide within the archive between archive practice and archive theory (Daston, 2017). By looking at the iterative relationship between theory and practice, this research bridges the two areas where, as Dalkin et al. (2015) demonstrate 'structures shape actions, which shape structure, which shape actions, and so on'. By addressing this link from a methodological perspective and examining the consequences of both theory and practice for the researcher, current debates in archive theory are applied to the practicalities of the archive as a site for research. In doing so a gap is addressed between research into theory and practice within the archive, and current debates are extended beyond theory to methodological practice.

Archive practices, (as discussed in Chapters 4 and 7) like other social programmes, are 'dynamic, multiple, conflicted and contested' (Greenhalgh and Emmel, 2018: 270). A realist approach looks at the theories of the middle range in the underlying theories behind the process and the generative mechanisms behind the ontology (Pawson, 2002b: 342). Unlike the empiricist epistemology of the Library and Information Studies (LIS) discipline, which claims to 'solve definite, practical problems and deal with specific, concrete phenomena' (Floridi 2002 in Radford and Radford, 2005: 75), a realist epistemology challenges the notion that phenomena are concrete and that theory is linear and predictable (Greenhalgh and Emmel, 2018: 270). Thus, we cannot establish cause through observational evidence alone (Dalkin et al., 2015: 11). The real is not something that can be seen or touched and therefore claims made about it are fallible, testable, and changeable. The real is stratified (Dalkin et al., 2015) and can be glimpsed through the effects of mechanisms on behaviour (Pawson, 2002b). By using this approach this research fits into a gap in both the literature on archive practice and realist research of the archive.

By taking the conclusive ideas about archive practice as bias forward as fragile indicators of underlying social processes, the empiricist debates of the late 20th and early 21st Century (Derrida, 1996, Daston, 2012, Starza-Smith, 2009) have been addressed. The work of Stoler has also been expanded by taking theories about the underlying generative mechanisms at play in the archive and applying these to the archive process. By focusing on research this work is separated from Stoler's on colonialism and race which focuses on the archive as

for 'historians, literary critics and anthropologists' (Stoler, 2009: 54). Daston's work focused on how research practice in the natural sciences is represented in the archive. This research looks at how research practice in the social sciences is represented in the archive (and how this representation changes) and thus has taken it further either side, looking at the impact on the RCA collection and beyond the archive to researchers' decision-making processes.

Social research within the archive has potential to be interdisciplinary (Manoff, 2004). This research also serves to bridge the rift between disciplines that Daston positioned as opposed, with social research falling somewhere between the 'bookish humanities and the hands-on sciences' (Daston, 2012: 156). This research doesn't serve to divide disciplines but examines the archive as a site for research regardless of discipline. Although there is a focus on social research, all researchers within the archive are bound by archive process. Therefore it is hoped that the assumptions drawn from this research can be extrapolated to archive researchers across disciplines going forward.


## 9.3  Epistemological change

The demonstrable change in epistemology in the RCA is evident in the way that research is presented and discussed throughout the collection and, most notably, in the change in attitude towards how research is conducted (see Chapter 8). Initially snowball sampling was used through local churches and GP's (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c), once the National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependents (NCSWD) gained momentum, members were used as the sample for research (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). This changed again as qualitative methods became more popular in social science research and qualitative 'case histories' were used (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c), and again as organisations outside of the then Carers National Association (CNA) were used for recruitment.

There is also a marked change in the way methods are documented in the archive. As the archive is a site for the preservation of documents for the future (Daston, 2012, The National Archives, 2016b), and one of the criteria for a document to be archived at Manchester Archive is that it is of value (Manchester

City Council, 2012), the items within the RCA collection are deemed to hold some historical significance suggesting that at the time of selection (by the organisation, donor and archive) each individual item in the RCA collection was deemed to be of use to future users of the RCA collection. From this, it is inferred that the presence or absence of research material is a testament to its perceived importance. Prior to the outsourcing of research to MAS, there is little detailed information about the methods used by the organisation. Information about questionnaires includes response rates and recommendations but there are no specific research aims or information on the target population (NCSWD, 1966-1972). This is perpetuated in the meeting minutes which do not detail any discussion of, or justification for, the research methods used (NCSWD, 1966-1972, NCSWD, 1967-1974). This changed as research was outsourced to MAS, leading to a consistent report format with the clear provision of information such as sample size, target population and methods (NCSWD, 1978b).

What is consistently noticeable is a reliance on empiricism throughout research documents in the RCA collection. There is little to no reference to literature and reports end with recommendations based on findings alone. There is no theoretical base for their conclusions. This empirical approach echoes the epistemology of social research more widely between the start of the Carers' Movement in 1965 and the development and implementation of a more theoretical approach in the late 1990s to present. However, the most important and noticeable change in the research in the RCA collection is a change in direction following changes to the very fabric of the organisation.

The original unpaid carers charity, the NCSWD, was a publicity campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the single woman with unpaid caring responsibilities, and solidified its place in history by achieving legislative change in the form of financial support for unpaid carers (Carers UK, 2014c). However, the research in this initial period was ad-hoc, and although the minute books show efforts to increase the research outputs from the NCSWD, these efforts were more often than not unsuccessful (NCSWD, 1966-1972). Research that was done was small-scale, limited to within the organisation and focused on respite and targeting loneliness (NCSWD, 1966-1972). The NCSWD consciously changed their campaigning efforts to be more evidence-based in the 1970s

(Carers UK, 2014c) and the focus of research shifted to financial needs and support (NCSWD, 1966-1972, NCSWD, 1967-1974). After the implementation of Invalid Care Allowance in 1976 (Legislation.gov.uk, 1976), research done by the NCSWD changed in focus again to what would become its predominant focus from 1978-present; evaluation research.

Over the next 15 years, the NCSWD (and subsequently the NCCED and CNA) would have a dual approach to research of unpaid carers. The primary research focus was on evaluating policy (NCSWD, 1978c, NCSWD, 1986a, NCSWD, 1986b, NCSWD, 1986c, NCSWD, 1990). Evaluative research at this time was premised on what Campbell describes as the 'experimenting society' (Campbell 1969 in Pawson et al., 2005: 3), where organisations such as charities like the NCSWD had developed a mistrust of professional views of government-developed programmes and relied instead upon supporting evidence (Solesbury 2001 in Pawson et al., 2005: 3). However, this was also before the time- and cost-driven turn away from primary research to systematic review in policy evaluation during the 1990s (Pawson, 2002a). This evaluative focus continues today with Carer's UK reporting on unpaid carer's take up and use of Care Quality Commission resources in 2018 (Carers UK, 2014d).

The second approach to research by the NCSWD and its successors was a more investigative one. The organisation remained committed to knowledge production, with large-scale projects such as The Dynamics of Informal Caring (1979), Survey among Working Women with Dependants (1976), Home Help Survey (1978b), Carers in Transition (1984a) and several less-formal enquiries within the organisation such as Residential Care Research (NCSWD, 1980-1985), Can a Carer Say No? (1987a) and Housing needs of the Single Woman with Dependants (NCSWD, Undated). As discussed in Chapter 5, to determine how this research compares to academic social research at the time it is best compared with Townsend's *Poverty in the UK* study (Townsend, 1979), which used similar methods to those used by the NCSWD and also targeted vulnerable populations. By comparing the two it places the research done by the NCSWD in the methodological context of its conception as opposed to its place within the more recently constructed RCA collection.

*Poverty in the UK* (Townsend, 1979) was an examination of relative deprivation covering various measures of living standards (PSE, 2016). It is regarded as a pioneering piece in the development of research of vulnerable populations (PSE, 2016). Townsend's study predates projects like The Dynamics of Informal Caring (NCSWD, 1979) and is thus one example of the methods used by the NCSWD being used in academic research at the time. Both used a questionnaire method, however, Townsend created a team of interviewers specifically for the study (Townsend, 1979), whereas the NCSWD distributed its questionnaire by post with a newsletter (NCSWD, 1979). Interestingly, Townsend does not question or provide justification for the choice to do face-to-face interviews over postal questionnaires, despite the lengthy discussion of methods that prefaces the study (Townsend, 1979). The research done by the NCSWD follows a similar suit to Townsend in that there is no justification for the methods used, no discussion of ethics and the questionnaire length is far longer than would be acceptable today (Townsend, 1979, NCSWD, 1979). However, Townsend's study feels somehow richer. There is a lot more 'paradata' (context and perceptions from in the field) (PSE, 2016) from using interviewers rather than postal questionnaires, and it is in these between-the-lines comments that more advanced methodological concepts are addressed. For example, the ethics of participant consent and understanding are questioned by one of Townsend's interviewers in an annotation of the questionnaire form (PSE, 2016). There is a qualitative element in Townsend's thorough understanding of the target population that is missing from the research done by the NCSWD. This is due in part to the NCSWD outsourcing research reports to a third party (NCSWD, 1974-1979) so that thorough understanding of the material is not engrained into the report as it is with Townsend's study. The key point here is that the NCSWD did not draw a distinction between research done for evaluative purposes and research done for investigative purposes. By using a one-size-fits-all approach to research methodology the NCSWD did not utilise their arguably unmatched access to a rich source of information about unpaid carers.

By examining changes in research done by the NCSWD, and placing those changes in context with social research at the time, this research has established that the epistemological positioning of social research has endured

the archive process. However, the way in which the collection is structured is reflective of an empirical epistemology within the archive. By examining the context behind the mechanisms at play in the structure of an archive collection researchers will be better able to understand and unpick the layers visible through an archive collection.

When looking at research within the archive there are three distinct layers of epistemology; the original positioning of the research, the positioning of the archive, and the positioning of the researcher. As the RCA collection demonstrates, the epistemological positioning of the original research is preserved within the items and is highlighted through comparison with similar research from the same time period. The positioning of the archive is more complicated. Although this research has shown that archive practices work together to influence researchers' decision-making, the practices and policies regulating them are individually structured. Knowing this, the consequences for research within the archive and beyond can be discussed.

## 9.4  Reconciling theory and practice

By using a realist approach this research has combined the two distinct fields of archive practice and archive theory. Archive practice has traditionally featured in the empirical discipline of Library and Information Studies (LIS) (Floridi 2002 in Radford and Radford, 2005: 75). Unlike research into the archive within these disciplines, this research comes from the position that the relationships between practice and theory cannot be unpicked through empirical research alone (Archer 1998 in Greenhalgh and Emmel, 2018: 271). Like Stoler, this thesis used a realist approach to link practice to theory and show that archive practices are not solid. Like the content of the archive itself, they are constantly interpreted and enacted (Stoler, 2009). Using a realist evaluation framework this thesis identifies the mechanisms that are the 'cogs and wheels' of the causal processes that bring about the outcome that is being explained (Hedström and Ylikoski, 2010). In doing so, assumptions can be made about theories that explain the specific set of phenomena that can be seen in the archive. This section will draw on the key findings from this research to make a case for the archive to be viewed and

treated as a social programme akin to an intervention in a realist evaluation, connecting the researcher with archived items. To preface a discussion about the archive as a programme rather than an institution the principles of a realist evaluation must be explained.

Realist evaluation is theory-driven evaluation based on the principle of not just 'what works?' but 'what works, for whom and in what circumstances' (Pawson, 2002b: 2). Developed by Pawson and Tilley in their book *Realistic Evaluation* (1997), it is the idea that it is not programmes that work but a transferable theory identified through a Context + Mechanism = Outcome configuration (Dalkin et al., 2015: 2). As Pawson explains:

> 'The causal power of an initiative lies in its underlying mechanism (M), namely its basic theory about how programme resources will influence the subject's actions. Whether this mechanism is actually triggered depends on context (C), the characteristics of both the subjects and the programme locality. Programmes, especially over the course of a number of trials, will therefore have diverse impacts over a range of effects, a feature known as the outcome pattern (O)' (Pawson, 2002b: 342).

This CMO configuration was initially developed by Pawson and Tilley (1997), but has been discussed, reviewed and altered by realist researchers in the two decades since its inception (Dalkin et al., 2015, Emmel et al., 2018, Emmel, 2013, Greenhalgh and Emmel, 2018, de Souza, 2013). For this research, Dalkin et al.'s (2015) adaptation of the traditional model is the best fit. Reconceptualising Pawson and Tilley's model, Dalkin et al. disaggregate the concept of 'the mechanism' into resources and reasoning to aid the identification of factors that affect an outcome contextually or mechanistically (Dalkin et al., 2015). The result is a configuration that reads:

$$M(Resource) + C \rightarrow M(Reasoning) = O$$ (Dalkin et al., 2015)

To understand how the archive fits this concept, each component will be explained individually.

If the archive is to be positioned as a programme, the aim of the programme needs to be established: *What should the archive achieve?* This is not straight forward. As this research has demonstrated, The National Archives has the primary aim of preservation (The National Archives, 2016b), Manchester Archive has the goal of allowing discovery of archived materials (Greater

Manchester County Record Office, 2018), and the archive for a social researcher is a site to find evidence to answer research questions (The National Archives, 2018d). These separate faces of the archive focus on separate time periods. The National Archives promotes preservation for the future, Manchester Archive is concerned with linking present enquiries with available materials, and the researcher is looking for evidence from the past to answer research questions.

As demonstrated in the findings section of this thesis (Chapters 7 and 8), although designed to accommodate and facilitate academic research, academic researchers are not the key demographic of the archive. Academic Researchers accounted for 21% of UK archive visitors in 2016 (Archives and Records Association, 2017: 7). Furthermore, a survey of users of Archives Hub (an online service linking 330 archive institutions across the UK) found that 45% of respondents in 2015 classified themselves as within the subject area History, with less than 5% of respondents classifying themselves within Psychology and Sociology[11] (Archives Hub, 2015: 5). From this data, it can be inferred that the needs of the social researcher are not a primary concern for archives when compared to family history researchers (44% of visitors) or local history researchers (30% of visitors) (Archives and Records Association, 2017: 7). This is confirmed in a joint report by the Local Government Association and The National Archives (2015) which stated that the priority for Manchester Archive following funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund was to target the following audiences: 'heritage tourists, young people, teachers, families, place-based neighbourhoods and black and ethnic minority communities' (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015: 13). An analysis of the identity of archives to the separate user groups was beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, since a researcher's use of the archive has been demonstrated to be a joint venture between the

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[11] Psychology and Sociology is a subject category as defined in the 2015 Archives Hub User Survey (2015) and cannot be disaggregated. There is no explanation for the combination or information on the split between Psychology and Sociology within the group.

Researcher and the archivist[12], this thesis focused on the purpose of the archive for the archivist and for the social researcher.

Taking the archivist's perception of archives as sites of preservation for future archive users, and the archive as a source of evidence for the researcher, the purpose of the archive must be somewhere in the middle ground. After assessing both perspectives it was concluded that the purpose of the archive as a programme for social research goes beyond providing access to archived materials. For the archive as a programme to 'work', the archive should aid the researcher in connecting their research questions with archived material. This fits with both the National Archives purpose of 'providing evidence' and allowing a researcher to 'uncover history' (The National Archives, 2017d), and Manchester Archive's notion of providing ways for people to 'discover' the archive (Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015: 13). The archive works through various policies and practices designed to connect the researcher with material evidence to answer their research questions (Barts Archives, 2017). This is the desired 'Outcome' in Pawson's CMO configuration, making the policies and practices the 'Mechanisms'. These mechanisms can be divided into 'resources' and 'reasoning' as described by Dalkin et al. (2015).

Generative mechanisms as defined by Pawson (2002b) hold the causal power of initiatives, predominantly 'its basic theory about how programme resources will influence the subject's actions' (Pawson, 2002b: 342). Dalkin et al. (2015) suggest two categories for these mechanisms in realist evaluation: resources and reasoning. Explained by Dalkin et al.:

> 'Resources and reasoning are mutually constitutive of a mechanism, but explicitly disaggregating them can help operationalise the difference between a mechanism and a context' (Dalkin et al., 2015: 4)

Mechanisms are vital to a programme's ontology and determine whether there are changes in behaviour (Pawson, 2002b: 342). Dalkin et al. expand on this in the new model by clarifying that 'resources are introduced into a context in a way

[12] The term 'archivist' refers to anyone involved in archiving activity within the archive. The archivist could be a head archivist or a volunteer, a single person or a team. Where necessary specifics are given throughout.

that enhances a change in reasoning' (Dalkin et al., 2015: 4). Applying this to the archive, the resource is archive practice e.g. selection, sampling, cataloguing, and the reasoning is the archivist's interpretation and judgement on what should be seen. Labelling the archivist's interpretation and judgement as a mechanism was a point of contention during this analysis. It did not fit with Pawson and Tilley's initial description of the properties of a mechanism in that there was no black or white initiation point – this mechanism did not 'fire' in line with Pawson and Tilley's gunpowder analogy (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Dalkin et al. suggest that this is the case when, as with the archive, 'human volition is entwined' (Dalkin et al., 2015: 5). Dalkin et al. propose an alternative 'dimmer switch' analogy, where 'intensity varies in line with an ever-evolving context' (Dalkin et al., 2015: 5). This variation in intensity fits with the variation in the level of intervention from the archivist and thus justifies the aforementioned elements as 'mechanisms' in the context of an archive collection. Before providing some key examples to demonstrate how this theory works in action within archive research, the 'context' element of the CMO configuration needs to be identified.

The 'context' within realist evaluation is the characteristic on which the activation of the mechanism depends (Pawson, 2002b: 342) and subsequently the degree of activation (Dalkin et al., 2015). It is the 'spatial and institutional' location of social situations (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). In the case of the archive, this is the collection itself on reception by the archive. As Pawson and Tilley state, 'policies are constitutive of the norms, values and interrelationships' found in the context (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). In a realist methodology, context is not treated differently to policy. It is accepted as 'part of the very social fabric of policy' (Greenhalgh and Emmel, 2018: 271). As such policies and practices governing the archive are accountable. The National Archives guidelines recommend different levels of input from the archivist based on the condition of donated materials (The National Archives, no date -d) and as such the archivist has different levels of freedom of judgement in each case. Variations include whether the collection is from an organisation or individual, the age of the items, whether the items are organised, how the items are organised etc. (Barts Archives, 2017). Thus the collection itself is the 'context' that activates the archivist's judgement and interpretation.

## 9.5 Examples

As demonstrated in Chapter 5, Daston (2012), Starza-Smith (2009) and Freshwater (2003) make observations about how the archive is internally structured but fall short of providing a theoretical explanation for their observations. Starza-Smith acknowledges that policy and practice within the archive can have implications for the researchers, noting that a researcher in the archive has to 'accept the archive's inherent messiness, to negotiate with a false tidiness imposed by the original archivists, and to discern an acceptable category of mess' (Starza-Smith, 2009: 1). The following three examples will show that this research made similar observations to Starza-Smith but has taken these observations beyond the empirical. Through the application of a realist evaluation method, the mechanisms that activate a change in the researcher's behaviour have been pinpointed. This not only serves to advance the work of Historians such as Starza-Smith (2009), Daston (2012) and Freshwater (2003), but links their observations of archive practice to Stoler's archive theory by reinforcing Stoler's suggestion that the archive directs and limits the researcher's thinking (Stoler, 2009: 48). This will be demonstrated by drawing on three of Pawson's four 'I's'; Individuals, Interrelationships, Institution and Infrastructure, the first of which has already been discussed in relation to the archivist.

### 9.5.1 Cataloguing

The first example is that of cataloguing in the archive. The collection catalogue is the resource that researchers use to connect their enquiries to the available materials (Barts Archives, 2017). Using Manchester Archive and the RCA collection to demonstrate, this example will show how the process of cataloguing within the archive fits the realist evaluation configuration. In this instance, the 'context' (Pawson, 2002b) is the RCA collection. The 'resource' (Dalkin et al., 2015) is the guideline policy of both Manchester Archive and of its overseer, The National Archives. The National Archives recommends that a collection is catalogued (The National Archives, 2009b), however, the *Manchester Archives Stock Management Policy* does not explicitly mention a process for cataloguing (Manchester City Council, 2012). The archivist has used their judgement, the

'resource' (Dalkin et al., 2015) to catalogue the RCA collection in line with The National Archives recommendations (The National Archives, no date-b). This is seen in the preservation of the divide between items pertaining to the various organisations that preceded Carer's UK, and in the multi-level list approach to the catalogue (Postal Heritage, 2013).

The archivist has also used judgement when creating the titles and descriptions within the catalogue. The National Archives guidance states that descriptions should be representative of the materials and should be 'clearly described' (The National Archives, 2004: 10) but does not give guidance on length (Barts Archives, 2017). The archivist's judgement in this is particularly evident in the 'Newsletters' and 'Minute Books' (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c) folders within the RCA collection, which are both described by their chronology with no reference to content (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). A more obvious example of this is the decision not to catalogue the additional material held off-site. There are also instances where the box labelling does not match up with the catalogue (G/CA/3), meaning that the catalogue misrepresents the material and thus misleads the researcher. This is further evident in the Miscellaneous Reports section where a research report (item 18) is placed before the survey it is based on (item 19) (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c), thus disrupting the chronology of the RCA collection and misrepresenting the items within it. The subsequent 'Outcome' (Pawson, 2002b) is the change in the behaviour of the researcher based on the catalogue. As the researcher uses the catalogue to purposefully sample (Emmel, 2013), it is not unreasonable to assume that a different catalogue, perhaps detailing the content of the newsletters, would yield a different sample for the researcher.

## 9.5.2 Selection

Selection within the archive is also a generative mechanism for social research within the archive. Selection is a decision-making process including the appraisal of records and the use of judgement to determine which records are suitable for archiving (The National Archives, no date-d). As with cataloguing, the 'context' (Pawson, 2002b) is the RCA collection. The 'resource' (Dalkin et al., 2015) is the

policy governing the selection process. For Manchester Archive this is detailed in the *Libraries, Information and Archives Stock Management Policy* (Manchester City Council, 2012). According to The National Archives, the process of Selection starts with a negotiation between the archivist and the Donor and is regularly revisited when a collection is archived (The National Archives, no date-d). The 'reasoning' (Dalkin et al., 2015) is the archivist's judgement in selecting which records to archive. An example of this in the RCA collection is the large number of duplicates in the 'Newsletters' section of the RCA collection. Policy dictates that duplicates should be flagged for withdrawal from a collection (Manchester City Council, 2012), so their appearance is evidence of a choice by the archivist. The 'outcome' (Pawson, 2002b) is again the change in behaviour from the researcher based on the preceding Selection process. Censorship policy advises that access to archived material should not be restricted 'on any moral, political, religious or racist ground' (Manchester City Council, 2012), and yet through Selection the researcher only has access to material the archivist allows them to see. This is further perpetuated through the way in which the Archive stores its materials.

### 9.5.3  Storage

The way that materials are stored in an archive is a slightly different example to the two previous in that there are more contextual factors contributing to the continuum of the activation of the reasoning mechanism (Dalkin et al., 2015). The 'context' (Pawson, 2002b) in this example is the RCA collection. The 'resource' (Dalkin et al., 2015) is Manchester Archive's policy that items must be requested in advance (GMCRO, 2018) and that access should not be restricted (Manchester City Council, 2012: 3). The desired 'outcome' (Pawson, 2002b) is that the researcher sees the specific items that they have requested. The archivist uses judgement (Dalkin et al.'s 'reasoning') in delivering items to the researcher. The archivist has judgement over whether the researcher sees individual items, boxes of items or a selection.

As some of the RCA collection boxes are stored off-site, it is the responsibility of the archivist to organise the logistics of retrieving the boxes for

the researcher's visit. As was observed during research for this thesis, the retrieval of boxes and the accuracy of that retrieval was dependent on the archivist. In most instances, the researcher was given the items selected at folder level. Within each folder there was no guide to the items, meaning that identifying the specific items of interest was time-consuming. As items within the folders were not labelled (as in the catalogue), this process also resulted in the researcher viewing many more items than originally intended. As such the archivist was involved in the researcher's sampling process.

The archivist was also responsible for the number and order of boxes the researcher viewed on any given visit. As the researcher had requested to view a large number of items (when taken at box-level) the archivist often provided a selection of boxes believed to be of most interest or relevance to the researcher. This was despite the researcher not disclosing details of the research at any point during visits to the archive. Therefore it is suggested that if the RCA collection had been in a different state of organisation, or organised differently, it would have resulted in the researcher having a different sample of material.

### 9.5.4   Concluding thoughts

The three examples above demonstrate how the archive fits Dalkin et al.'s reconfiguration of Pawson's CMO formula. The archive is not a steadfast institution but a malleable process with direct influence over the research that is done within it. However, as previous research into archive practice demonstrates (Floridi 2002 in Radford and Radford, 2005, Starza-Smith, 2009), the policies and practices of the archive were not created, and nor are they implemented, with recognition of this influence. This is on par with observations of methodology in health services research which implements 'techniques, strategies or instruments mechanically with little if any concern for the epistemological justification for their use' (Greenhalgh and Emmel, 2018: 270). Having made observations about the construction of the archive and suggested its repositioning from institution to process, this research has gone as far as the likes of Floridi and Starza-Smith in researching archive practice. This research now moves below the surface to

discuss the theory behind the CMO configuration (Pawson, 2002b) evident in the archive.

## 9.6  The 'Institutional arrangement'

Returning to Dalkin et al.'s formula for evaluation research (see section 9.4), the archivist's judgement when implementing archive practices has been demonstrated as a generative mechanism that impacts the researcher's decision-making in the archive. It has also been demonstrated that the context is the composition of a collection itself which, together with archive policy (the resource), activates the mechanism. However, it is not accurate to claim that the archivist is autonomous in their influence over a collection. Pawson (Pawson, 2002b) suggested that context should also be considered a product of social situations. Most applicable to the archive is 'the institutional arrangement into which the programme is embedded' (Pawson, 2018 in Emmel et al., 2018).

Looking specifically at Manchester Archive, there are several pressure points identified during this research that could be influencing an archivist's judgement when engaging in archive practices. The overarching factor is a lack of funding. Despite a £50 million refurbishment of the Central Library building (including restoration of the archive reading room) completed in 2014 (Pidd, 2014) and Manchester Archives+ receiving over £1.5 million from the Heritage Lottery fund in 2011 (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2018), Manchester Archive remains behind on cataloguing and selection, as shown by part of the RCA collection remaining uncatalogued. This is not a recent problem. Tullock and Cave's (2004) *Logjam* report identified that 30% of archive material within Greater Manchester was uncatalogued, citing a lack of staff, space and resources as the main barriers. Although Manchester Archive has supplemented its cataloguing staff with volunteers (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016), this leaves a skills shortage. Whilst cataloguing is recognised as skilled work (Postal Heritage, 2013) requiring a high level of research and description (Explore York Archives, 2012), volunteers that catalogue material are not required to have any qualifications or experience working with archive collections, and yet are asked to 'tell stories about our

archive' (Govier, 2016). This reinforces the division between archive practices and contributes to the level of judgement an archivist uses (or is able to use).

The backlog of uncatalogued material at Manchester Archive is not wholly a result of the refurbishment but a reflection of a nation-wide problem (Tullock and Cave, 2004). As Brown and Davis-Brown describe, at this point archives have a decision to make:

> 'Is it more appropriate to acquire as many materials as possible but be unable to describe, preserve and present them adequately, or is it preferable to describe, preserve and make fully available a more limited range of records and documents' (Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998: 18)

York Archive implemented a 'More Product Less Process' (MLMP) policy in 2012 (Explore York Archives, 2012), which prioritises 'making the maximum number of records available in the minimum amount of time' by providing a higher level of description but at file level as opposed to item level (Explore York Archives, 2012). For the researcher, this is a better solution than the use of volunteers. The skill-level is maintained and the researcher has more information available to them. However, with more description, there is more opportunity for the archivist to interpret the files rather than describe them, as is a risk with cataloguing in detail (Barbalet, 1998). This reinforces the need for reflective practice to be built into archive practice at each stage (Finefter-Rosenbluh, 2017).

The original donor of the material is also responsible for limitations faced by the archivist as the 'interrelationships' between stakeholders need to be taken into context (Pawson, 2018 in Emmel et al., 2018). Within the 21st Century, scholars such as Booth (2006) and Stoler (2009) have built on the work of Derrida (1996) and established the archive as a site of power. Archiving is now recognised as 'an act of production that prepares fact for historical intelligibility' and controls the narrative (Booth, 2006: 91).

Stoler describes the archive as a site of 'the expectant and conjured' able to train and 'selectively cast' attentions (Stoler, 2009: 16). This is easily demonstrated in the RCA collection which almost perfectly follows the triumphs of the organisation as listed by Carers UK (Carers UK, 2014b), but does not contain

any documents from the failed funding bids from the late 60's (NCSWD 1966-1972), and lists several (assumed failed) research proposals with no follow up (NCSWD, 1966-1972, NCSWD, 1974-1979). Decisions about which documents to archive are not just the responsibility of the archivist but also that of the organisation from which the records came and the donor (The National Archives, no date-d). This includes which parts of the organisation's history, information and actions should be protected (University of Glasgow, no date). Similarly, the decision to archive items is not only based on what is deemed future-worthy (Daston, 2012) but also on the story and narrative the donor wants to be preserved (Booth, 2006). This has been extensively researched within the field of critical race studies (Stoler, 2009, Verbuyst, 2013, Burton, 2005) but is also applicable to the representation of Carers UK within the RCA collection. A culture change in the positioning of the archive towards a target-focused model is also a contributing factor to how archivists position collections in what Pawson terms Infrastructure: 'the wider societal, economic and cultural setting' (Pawson, 2018 in Emmel et al., 2018).

## 9.7  Infrastructure

Just as the archive shifted from knowledge store to knowledge producer towards the end of the 20th Century, it now shifts into the realm of business. Manchester Archive has a wide range of business archives (Manchester City Council, 2018a) which are increasingly viewed by businesses as assets and investments for the future (University of Glasgow, no date). Whilst Business archives are preserved and accessed in the same way as other archives, the fact that the organisations that they represent remain active means the representation of the business within the archive can have repercussions. This is true of the RCA collection, although Carers UK have not donated to the RCA collection since 2008 (Holzhausen, 2016).

Manchester Archive's Heritage Lottery grant came with the stipulation that Manchester Archive do more for heritage tourists, black and ethnic minority communities and valued regular users (The National Archives, 2013a). As such Manchester Archive is not actively prioritising academic researchers or the sub-

group of sociological researchers that make up a small percentage of the academic researcher group (Archives Hub, 2015). Similarly, the Archives+ 'centre of excellence' (Archives+, 2013) installed in Manchester Central Library brings 'easy history' to 'new audiences' (Archives+, 2013) with exhibitions focusing on popular topics within Manchester Archive such as local history and family history (Archives+, 2013), adding another level of intervention from the archivist where stories can be, and are designed to be, selectively chosen. In 2012 The National Archives proposed introducing accreditation for archiving standards with the aim of 'embedding a culture of sector-led continuous improvement' with a focus on 'best value for money' (The National Archives, 2012a: 4). This demonstrates the forced evolution of the archive, necessitated by wider financial pressures, into a target- and customer-focused model, further demonstrated by the active call for archive users to be involved in describing individual archived documents (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a).

The impact of this shift is visible in the RCA collection. As already discussed, there are a number of items missing from the RCA collection, identified through mention of these items in documents within the collection. Policies and practices responsible for the deliberate exclusion and discarding of documents from the RCA collection were discussed, however, these decisions were not necessarily political or deliberate. Missing items could also be the result of 'problems associated with limited space and the perfectly understandable attitudes of mainly volunteer officials whose priority is day-to-day survival [and/or] not preserving the past' (Booth, 2006: 95). Thus, demonstrating how socio-political influences on the broader concept of the archive institution infiltrate a collection.

To summarise, as Pawson recognised, the realist evaluation CMO configuration is not as straight forward as 'what works' (Pawson, 2002b). Context is a product of social situations (Pawson, 2002b) which then intersect with policy. In Manchester Archive this is demonstrated by limitations on resources and a skills shortage in those performing archiving activities. There are also decision-making processes that cannot be accounted for, such as those by the creator of the materials and the donor. With an increase in business archiving, Manchester Archive has also adopted a more customer-focused attitude to induction and

retention. It is target-focused with a need to appease groups of a certain demographic. Academic researchers have consistently been a middle group for the archive, not large enough to demand voices are heard but not small enough to require special attention. As a result, academic researchers and their needs fall under the radar.

## 9.8  The Identity of archives

Through the separation of archive activities and lack of clear policy, Manchester Archive reinforces the idea that each stage of archiving a collection is stand-alone and is objectively executed. However, the reality is that a collection is refracted through a different perspective at each stage. This process aligns with Stoler's perception of destabilized contexts and blurred lines of events that call common-sense assumptions into question (Stoler, 2009: 198).

Collections are imprinted by the archivist and are subsequently embossed by 'watermarking', with the archivist's touch visible in certain lights and from certain angles (Stoler, 2009: 22). This is evident in the RCA collection as there is an emphasis on chronology over theme (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). As has been established, the amount of time a researcher has for archive fieldwork is limited by the time and resources available within the project which would make it difficult for the researcher to rearrange the materials. In the case of the RCA collection this would not be possible as the collection can only be viewed one box at a time so the researcher is bound by the archivist's parameters of how the collection should be viewed, reiterating that 'people feel obliged to think about the collection in certain ways or have difficulty thinking in certain ways' (Stoler, 2009: 48). The influence of the archivist is not easily identified in a publically available collection. Thus it is difficult for the researcher to account for the influence of this process. Ideally, the archive should be more transparent with its processes and should document the decision-making process of the archivist at each stage. However, given the resource limitations faced by Manchester Archive, and that The National Archives promotes York's More Product Less Process policy, there is unlikely to be any changes made in this direction. Instead, the researcher needs to take responsibility for their own understanding of the archive

process and build this into their research methods. The way a collection has been constructed is part of the knowledge of the collection. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, this means taking Stoler's (2009) theories about the negotiated content of archives and applying them to the archive itself. As observed by Dalkin et al, 'peoples' choices are conditioned by pre-existing social structures and organisations' (Dalkin et al., 2015: 2). Therefore by applying Pawson's CMO configuration (Pawson, 2002b) to the archiving process, the real is visible through its effects on the researcher's decision-making process following the exercising of judgement by the archivist.

Although there are indications in The National Archives' resources for researchers that the archive is trying to metamorphose beyond its self-imposed identity as a storehouse (see Chapter 4), resource limitations such as those indicated in the *Logjam* report (Tullock and Cave, 2004), and the 'exceptional financial constraint' faced by UK archives (The National Archives, 2012a) suggest this is not a priority. With resources treading water over a backlog of uncatalogued materials, the archive appears fixed in place for the time being. However, there are indications from within Manchester Archive that the archive is entering a period of change.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has been responsible for not only the massive refurbishment of the Manchester Central Library (including archive) but has made donations to small and large projects within archives nationwide (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2018). Similarly Manchester's Archives+ 'centre of excellence' is one of several digital archive displays across the country (Archives+, 2013). UK archives are focused on widening participation and access because of an increased need for archives to demonstrate their value (The National Archives, 2012a). This necessitates a change in which archives become more like businesses, target-driven, value-focused and selectively showcasing products to entice the greatest footfall. This shift is demonstrated in Manchester Archive's decision not to prioritise cataloguing the uncatalogued portion of the RCA collection in the 10 years since its donation. Another example of efforts to attract more archive users is in the installation of Archives+.

In an increasingly digital age, digitised archive collections are becoming more common (The National Archives, 2012a). Despite this being specialist work

(The National Archives, no date-b) and requiring a large amount of time and resources, it is a way to widen participation and access (The National Archives, 2012a). In 2016, 46% of archive visitors were aged over 65 (Archives and Records Association, 2017). As internet usage within the over 65 age group has markedly increased since 2012 (ONS, 2018), the digitisation of archive records poses less of a risk of alienating the largest user group now than in 2012. There is a clear priority, both nationwide and within Manchester Archive, to widen participation and access (Archives+, 2013, The National Archives, 2012a, Local Government Association and The National Archives, 2015) which has come at the expense of a reconfiguration of the archive in line with archive theory. This is demonstrated in Manchester Archive's policy which has not been updated since 2012 (Manchester City Council, 2012), and The National Archives' policy which has not been updated since 2013 (The National Archives, 2013b). Both the archive nationally (represented by The National Archives) and Manchester Archive appear to be either content with, or negligent of, the division between practices reinforced through separate policy (Manchester City Council, 2012, The National Archives, 2013b). This perpetuates the ideology of the archive as a storehouse which serves to sustain an empirical ontology. Thus there is a mismatch between how the archive identifies itself and what actually happens within the archive.

The identity of the archive to the archivist is first and foremost a product of how the archive identifies itself. The archivist has been institutionalised through training that revolves around the target-driven principles of the archive and time and resource saving (The National Archives, 2012a). Thus the principles of the archive are evident in the archivist's work. As Stoler notes 'the principles and practices of governance are lodged in particular archival forms' (Stoler, 2009: 35). This is seen in the lack of cataloguing of the RCA collection (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c) and in the efforts of the Archives+ centre (Archives+, 2013). In line with the empiricist positioning of the archive, archivists have positioned themselves as neutral, objective and impartial (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 2). The National Archives acknowledges that the archivist can have influence over a collection but limits the remit of this to professional ability (Postal Heritage, 2013) and emphasises the importance of the unbiased archivist (Janes, 2014).

Academic research acknowledges archivists to be emotional and physical beings with the same influence of judgement over a collection as the social researcher has over their data (Barbalet, 1998). However, the archivist is constrained by the same issues that are directing a change in the archive. The National Archives itself advertises the archivist's role as 'helping to change the way people think' (The National Archives, 2016b). Following policy means that the archivist is directed to treat each stage of archiving separately (The National Archives, 2009b). At Manchester Archive this has been compounded by an increased workload for fewer staff (Tullock and Cave, 2004), meaning the archivist does not have the time or resources to reflect on archive practice in the way that researchers reflexively review their fieldwork. There is a changing climate within the archive and increased demands on the archivist (The National Archives, 2012a). The evidence suggests that archivists are treading water (Tullock and Cave, 2004) and not in a position to challenge the identity of the archive which, if challenged by a recognition of the interplay between policy and theory in the construction of a collection, would almost certainly amount to more mental and physical labour for the archivist.

Looking at the realist sociological researcher specifically, this research has shown that the archive does not just harbour knowledge but actively shapes it. This makes the researcher's perception of the archive markedly different to that of the archive itself or the archivist. As this thesis has demonstrated, the archive is not the objective storehouse that policy was built around and nor does policy dictating objective and separate practices make it so. On beginning archive fieldwork, The National Archives recommends that the researcher be knowledgeable about their subject area (The National Archives, 2018d), however, there is no indication that the researcher should be aware of the background of the collection they intend to look at. With the work of Stoler (2009), Starza-Smith (2009), Freshwater (2003), Burton (2005) and even Derrida's now outdated *Archive Fever* (1996), it is irrefutably accepted that the archive has an influence over what the researcher sees, whether that be at initial selection or in response to requests from the researcher. However, this seems to be a secret kept from the archive itself. There is no evidence of attempted integration of archive theory into policy within The National Archives or in-house at Manchester Archives.

Whilst the evidence points to this being a consequence of limited resources as opposed to the intentional digging in of heels, this nevertheless misdirects the researcher. To the researcher, archive material, like the stories within it, are fluid and changeable depending on what the archive user wants (and chooses) to know (Stoler, 2009). To the researcher the archive is a site where knowledge is negotiated, shaped and created (Starza-Smith, 2009), however it is also a site of deception. The archive openly professes to be unbiased and the collections to be the work of objective archivists (Janes, 2014). There is a wealth of literature disputing the notion of an objective observer within social research (Emmel, 2013, Dalkin et al., 2015). This debate is transferable to the archivist, compared to a researcher by The National Archives (The National Archives, 2016b), who uses emotion and experience to inform their interpretation of policy and practice (Barbalet, 1998). By ignoring this evidence the onus is on the researcher to disentangle and make sense of the processes a collection has gone through.

## 9.9  Multi-level sampling

Through examining how sampling is supposed to be used in archives along with how sampling is used in actuality (see Chapter 6), it has been demonstrated that sampling takes place at three key stages in the life of a collection; in preparation for donation, at selection, and when used for research. These sampling processes have been demonstrated to occur independent of one another both physically and in policy. However, there is a strong case for these processes to be repositioned as separate levels within the single process of archiving.

The three key points at which an archive collection is sampled are linked to three key actors in the archiving process; the donor, the archivist, and the researcher. As previously demonstrated, firstly the donor purposefully samples a collection prior to donation, secondly, the archivist purposefully samples when selecting which items to archive, in reducing the size of a collection, and grouping items for cataloguing, and finally the researcher purposefully samples a collection in choosing which items to include in their research. These three milestones are labelled as separate activities; donation, selection/appraisal, and use (The National Archives, 2012b, The National Archives, 2009b, The National Archives,

2018d). Currently, there are separate recommendations for each, with no overlapping policy (The National Archives, 2012b, The National Archives, 2009b, The National Archives, 2018d). However, each act of sampling is geared toward the same goal.

The UNESCO report of 1981 rejected criticism that sampling records would compromise the integrity of a collection on the grounds that a collection in the hands of an archive is never complete and thus, without the whole, the integrity had already been compromised (Hull et al., 1981). By recognising a model in which all forms of sampling of a collection are linked, the archived collection is recognised as a collection in its own right, separate from the unknown whole defined by UNESCO. The value of this approach is demonstrated by the work of Derrida (1996), Daston (2017), and Stoler (2009) among others, who have drawn data from the collection itself and validated the value of an archived collection as beyond that of its content. Such a model also serves to address the original criticism by bolstering the integrity of the sample through thorough documentation of the sampling methods and the criteria used for sampling.

The main problem with sampling in archives is that the process of sampling is perceived as negative (Hull et al., 1981). Sampling in archives has been portrayed as an act of destruction. It is positioned in policy as a last resort, to be used only when a reduction in the size of the collection is necessary (Hull et al., 1981, Kepley, 1984), and to be conducted by an archivist selecting what should be removed from a collection. However, sampling is also done to construct or protect a narrative by the donor, or to create a more specific subset of the collection. Sampling, as a process to deliberately create a sub-set different from the whole, is a process not covered by The National Archives' guidelines (The National Archives, no date-d). Thinking about sampling as a positive process, that purposefully creates a more refined sub-population, addresses some of the stigmas around sampling in archives, and validates sampling as a useful tool for creation as opposed to destruction. This feeds into the realist positioning of the archive as a producer of knowledge in its own right (Stoler, 2009). Through recognition and acceptance of the sampling process through documentation, the collection is consequently accepted as a product of the

process of archiving. Taking forward the notion that sampling in archives is a process of creation, the three points at which a collection is sampled have commonalities that further demonstrate their suitability to be linked as one process. Sampling prior to donation, sampling as selection, and sampling for research are all geared towards the same common end: the portrayal of the collection.

As demonstrated in the case of Queen Victoria's diary (Dennison, 2014), and reiterated by the UNESCO report *The use of Sampling Techniques in the Retention of Records* (Hull et al., 1981), the material donated to an archive is not a comprehensive collection as a result of sampling by the donor. The narrative has been actively structured by the donor to portray their own interests. With Queen Victoria's diary, this was to portray the Queen in a more favourable light, by removing scandalous details, such as the Queen's relationships with her servants (Dennison, 2014). Similar assumptions can be made about the RCA collection. Donor Leventon had been an activist for the Association of Carers (one of the previous organisations of Carers UK) (CYWU, 2008). Couple this with the fact that Leventon single-handedly archived the RCA collection (Holzhausen, 2016) and we can conclude that Leventon wanted to continue and protect the legacy she had built. Missing editions of newsletters and minute meetings are easy to identify as they are numbered. There are also proposals and research funding applications missing, identified because they are mentioned in other documents. It is not possible to know exactly what is missing from a collection, but what is knowable is that each of the missing documents was judged, at some point in time, not to be 'future-worthy' (Daston, 2017). Whether this was by the creator, the organisation, the donor, or the archive, discarded documents were weighed against unknown criteria and it was decided that either the document would not be of use to interested parties in the future or, that the document did not fit with the desired narrative for the collection. In this respect, archived material follows the principles of a stratified reality, characterised through a realist epistemology. The complete whole is not, and cannot be, known. However, assumptions can be made about the whole from empirical evidence, through which the real is glimpsed (Emmel et al., 2018). An example of this in practice is in Stoler's assumptions about the decision-making process of policies based on

'against the grain' interpretation of Dutch colonial archive documents (Stoler, 2009). Through omission of documents, a narrative is constructed. It is this narrative, running through an archive collection that constitutes the 'new data' formed through the process of archiving, and that is a direct result of sampling.

Sampling by an archivist in the form of selection or appraisal is similarly purposed at preserving the collection. As detailed in the UNESCO report, archivist's were reluctant to integrate sampling into archiving practice as it was viewed as incompatible with an archivist's role as a preserver of historical documents (The National Archives, 2017c). The International Council on Archives (ICA) advises that archivists' ensure that access to archives is as unrestricted as possible (ICA, 2014). This is supported by The National Archives (The National Archives, 2012a) and Manchester Archive (Community and Cultural Services: Libraries Information and Archives, 2012). The purpose of retaining as much material as possible stems from the duty to preserve material which, in turn, comes from the universal principle of archives that material should be preserved for use by future generations (Derrida, 1996, The National Archives, 2016b). However, as the amount of material held by archives increases, usefulness is not on par with complete retention.

Whilst there is no question that sampling a collection loses some of the context, retaining the entirety of a collection can compromise the accessibility of a collection. This is demonstrated first-hand by the RCA collection. The uncatalogued material is preserved in the original order from the donor, however, a large amount of material, coupled with time and resource constraints, have resulted in the items remaining uncatalogued and off-site for more than a decade. Thus, these documents do not meet ICA or The National Archives' recommendations for accessibility (The National Archives, no date-d, International Council on Archives, 2014), despite allegedly preserving the integrity of the collection through retention in its entirety (Hull et al., 1981). Thus qualifying Brown and Davis-Brown's question with the answer that, from the archive user's perspective, it is 'preferable to describe, preserve and make fully available a more limited range of records' (Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998: 18). This supports the idea that the aim of the sampling archivist is to preserve the collection for use by future generations, as was the intent of the donor.

Finally, a researcher sampling from an archive collection is also concerned with the portrayal of the collection. Academic researchers, from all disciplines, are bound by ethics to responsibly and accurately use the data they collect (University of Leeds, 2015). This is also the case when sampling. As sampling is done using criteria individual to each research project, it is possible to select data that fits a preconceived notion of findings. However, a need to abide by ethical codes of conduct, and the necessity for ethical approval, means that this type of bad practice design is unlikely to come to fruition in an academic research project. Thus, academic researchers using archived data are bound to an accurate portrayal of the collection.

Each actor has their own agenda in sampling the collection. Despite these agendas, each level of sampling has the same purpose of preserving the collection for future generations of archive users (Booth, 2006). Therefore, they should work together to achieve this goal. The three acts of sampling should be linked first and foremost because they are each carried out on the same collection. By separating the activities in policy the collection they pertain to is effectively a separate, new collection at the start of each point.

By positioning sampling activities as separate processes, any and all change a collection has gone through prior to that particular activity is disregarded. In doing so, the collection in its previous form is lost. For example, at the point at which the RCA collection was sampled by the researcher for this research, there was no available information on the original composition of the collection on donation, or the collection prior to cataloguing (author's field notes). Similarly, donors are not involved in the cataloguing process (The National Archives, no date-b). Each activity is physically and theoretically separate from those before and after. However, as Stoler claims, an archive collection is rooted in 'the social and political context not only of the institution itself but of the institutions that it served' (Stoler, 2009: 25). By separating the actions of archiving The National Archives and therefore archives across the UK, turn a blind eye to the recognised importance of cross-referencing and context in interpreting archived documents (Stoler, 2009).

In an ideal scenario, the donor would have a detailed record of everything that has ever been a part of a collection. This would be handed over to the

archivist and kept with the collection. However, this negates the donors intent and ability to structure the narrative. A right that is ethically protected. The donor does not need to disclose any tampering with the collection prior to archiving. Ethically this is akin to the interview participant only disclosing information they want to be known. There is an element of interviewer bias in this process in that the donor only presents information they want to be known by users of the collection. However, as current guidelines recommend that archivists sample only to reduce the number of records in a collection, the archivist should keep a detailed record of what has been removed from the collection. This should be made available to users of the collection to inform conclusions on what has and has not been removed/selected by the donor and archivist.

Considering sampling in the archives to be one process, *archival sampling*, with separate levels, acknowledges the processes that a collection goes through and through this recognition comes validation. The current system is disjointed, meaning that the archivist samples without knowledge of the donors intent, and the researcher samples without knowledge of the intent of the archivist or donor. In doing so, these processes are positioned as sampling from a separate collection which is not the case. Consequences of this are that the original narrative, and intended narratives, can get lost. However, the current system is not purely a reflection of an empirical epistemology but a consequence of the turn to a more customer-focused model in archiving policy and practice. The time taken to liaise with the other parties and to create the recommended paper trail is less time and cost-effective than for archives to treat their own activities as separate from those of the donor and archive users. Thus, the status quo is unlikely to change given the current climate of archiving practice (The National Archives, 2012a).

## 9.10 Haphazardness

To fully explore the concept of haphazardness, findings will be used to provide evidence of haphazardness as a demi-regularity within archive behaviour. Beginning within the RCA collection there is evidence of haphazardness in the overlap between categories of documents and in the retention of duplicated items

(Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Within the RCA collection catalogue haphazardness is evident in the numerous items that have not been numbered, in errors and inconsistencies in the titles of series' and file's, and in the differences in content in the description of items (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Looking at the collection as a whole, only some of the collection has been catalogued, and there is no information about the material that has not been catalogued. Moving on to processes within Manchester Archive, a lot of material is held off-site and is not accessible to the public without request. Haphazardness persists when accessing a specific collection. The website through which users should make bookings is partially populated and difficult to use, there is scope for misinterpretation and misunderstanding between the user and archivist in what is requested, what is available, and what is made available. Finally, looking at archive policy recommendations from The National Archives (The National Archives, no date), there is a clear mismatch between empirically-grounded policy that positions both collection and archivist as unbiased and neutral (Schwartz and Cook, 2002), and research into archive theory, proving the institution to have an in-built history of bias and elitism (Stoler, 2009, Mbembe, 2012). Taking these findings together, haphazardness is a demi-regularity within the archive.

As explained in the methods chapter of this thesis (Chapter 2), 'demi-regularities' are broken patterns observable in empirical data (Fletcher, 2017). The underlying reality is stratified and cannot be accessed in its entirety. Therefore, it is not possible to make concrete claims about causation, however, assumptions can be made about the underlying reality through the appearance of demi-regularities in empirical findings (Fletcher, 2017). Through the emergence of haphazardness as a key theme enduring across all findings of this research, the concept of haphazardness qualifies as a demi-regularity. Moving forward, the next task is to establish the social situations that could play a part in the prevalence of haphazardness.

From the literature review, policy review, and fieldwork it has been demonstrated that a reduction in resources is responsible at least in part. The term 'resources' here refers to staff and time. The National Archives' own policy admits that there has been a reduction in the number of archiving staff nationally

(The National Archives, 2012a). This is corroborated by Manchester Archive staff who revealed that tasks were not completed because there was not always a person available to do the task. This leads on to the issue of skillsets. A lack of staff does not necessarily translate to a lack of bodies. Archiving is hailed as skilled work (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives, 2015), and yet unskilled volunteers are being recruited to perform this work without pay (Govier, 2016). A reduction in staff goes hand in hand with the issue of time.

The average opening hours of archives across the UK has increased, however, staff have not been increased in proportion, meaning that archivists now face longer working hours (The National Archives, 2012a). Despite the additional hours, archivists are being instructed to meet targets for increasing access, and to keep up to date with new initiatives and new technologies, such as Archives +, and thus have less time to spend on traditional archivist roles such as selecting and cataloguing records. Couple this with a lack of trained staff and the result is inevitably unfinished projects and inconsistency. Manchester Archive's online catalogue is an example of this. Although it admits to being a 'work in progress' (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a), there is no guide on how to use the catalogue and the Archives Catalogue only has collection-level information for the RCA collection, no information on the series' and files within (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013c). Although the online catalogue says that more information will be added 'over the next few years' it is dated as last updated in 2013 (Greater Manchester Lives, 2013a), a demonstrable example of the 'exceptional financial constraint' faced by UK archives (The National Archives, 2012a).

The causal mechanism behind these social phenomena is the customer-focused attitude adopted by The National Archives that is filtering through to archive facilities nationwide through a national initiative. Archives are going through a period of rapid change. A customer-focused model is being implemented because of budget cuts, however, this is not the only major challenge to the culture of the archive. There is a national push to increase access to archive collections by digitising records and making them publically available online (The National Archives, 2012a). Within Manchester Archive information about collections is available online via the online catalogue, but the

vast majority of collections are not digitised. The exception being the showcased collections in Archives+ (Archives+, 2013), specifically digitised to increase access to 'locally significant moments for current and future generations' (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016: 10). Although digitising records is the currently favoured method of widening access to archives (Greater Manchester Lives, 2016, The National Archives, 2012a) this modifies and expands the role of the archivist. Archivists must actively intervene in the creation of records, thus eroding the belief that the archivist is a passive receiver of materials (Schwartz and Cook, 2002). Constructive adaptation of the archivist's identity is 'the only hope that today's history will be able to be written tomorrow' (Schwartz and Cook, 2002: 18). Thus, the digitisation of archives is both a cause and result of the customer-focused shift in the culture of archives.

The nature of a realist ontology is that the relationship between the causal mechanism and outcome cannot be proven as definite, however, the existence of the demi-regularity of haphazardness suggests that it is a partial reality.


## 9.11 Summary and Conclusion

The researcher visits the archive at the beginning of their archive research, however, the archive is not a starting point, it is a negotiated mid-point. The realist researcher understands that data is not autonomous of its origins (Davidson et al., 2019: 367) and this is no different for the items within the archive. The RCA collection is 'watermarked' by the decision-making processes of the donor and archivist (Stoler, 2009). Evidence of this is visible in the structure and content of the RCA collection. Similarly, changes in the epistemology of research into unpaid carers are evident in the RCA collection. The sampling process, grouping and dividing documents for the catalogue, exposes the transitions of the Carers' Movement in methods and language used by the various iterations of Carers UK. Through comparison with Townsend's *Poverty in the UK* study (Townsend, 1979) it is clear that the epistemology surrounding the creation of a document is able to endure the process of archiving.

Addressing a gap in the literature, this research used a realist approach to demonstrate the links between archive theory and practice. Using Dalkin et al.'s

(2015) adaptation of Pawson's CMO configuration (Pawson, 2002b) it was demonstrated that archiving practice can be treated as a programme, with the policy as the resource, and the RCA collection as the context. Archivists' judgement is the generative mechanism that works to initiate certain outcomes in certain circumstances. In positioning the archive in this way the relationship between archive practice and research using archived material is exposed. In-keeping with Pawson's more recent works, this research takes into account the personal and institutional factors affecting a programme (Pawson, 2002b).

The role of the archivist is overlooked within archive practice and policy to the detriment of the validity of the collection. It has been demonstrated that the archivist is key in constructing an archive collection (and thus the narrative within it) and that the decision-making process directly impacts the decision-making of the researcher. This is most evident in the sampling of archive materials. In policy, archive sampling is positioned as three separate activities; pre-donation by the donor, selection by the archivist, and sampling by the researcher, however, archive policy only addresses sampling done by the archivist. The case was made that, as all sampling activities contribute towards a representation of a single collection, all sampling activities should be considered parts of the single act of archival sampling.

The political climate of the archive means archivists are facing greater workloads with reduced budget and resources (The National Archives, 2012a), resulting in new policies such as MPLP (Explore York Archives, 2012) and widening participation initiatives (The National Archives, 2012a) rather than the revision of outdated policy in the wake of new academic literature. Budget cuts, staff reductions, and backlogs are nation-wide issues facing archives. Manchester Archive is no exception. A large amount of material remains uncatalogued and inaccessible following storage issues that began in 2010. To combat the financial pressures of the modern archive, the culture of archiving has shifted from content-focused to customer- and target-focused.

This model is proposed as a cause of the demi-regularity haphazardness. Evident throughout the archive from policy to within the RCA collection, haphazardness is a result of resource limitations consequential of a change in the culture of the archive. A move away from the traditional paper archive to digital

archives is both a cause and result of the shift to a target-focused model in archive institutions.

# Chapter 10 : Conclusion

## 10.1 Introduction

In the Discussion chapter, the key findings from previous chapters were brought together and examined in detail. This chapter brings the research full circle to address the research questions set out at the beginning of this thesis. Taking each question in turn, the research questions are answered with summaries of the key findings from the research. The final section of this revisits the justification for this research, to establish that it makes a contribution to academic literature, and to situate the thesis within the fields in which the author believes impact can be achieved.

## 10.2 Research Questions revisited

The aim of this research has been to answer the research questions set out at the beginning of this thesis. Whilst the previous chapters have included all the information needed to answer the questions, this final recap gives a brief overview of how the research has answered each question, and the outcome for each.

1. **How is an archive collection created?**
    a. **What decisions are made?**
    b. **What regulations and practices influence these decisions?**
    c. **What socio-economic factors are evident in an archive collection?**

From the policy review in Chapter 6, the practice of creating an archive collection appears straight forward. If following the recommendations of The National Archives, a person or organisation with a collection to donate chooses an archive facility in which they would like their documents preserved (The National Archives, 2013b). Providing the documents meet the criteria for inclusion in that specific archive, the donor then proposes which parts of the collection should be archived and this decision is reviewed by a panel of archivists (The National Archives, 2013b). Once donated the collection is subject to appraisal by an archivist in

which records are purposefully sampled at series level (or file level if series level is not appropriate) to select files 'worthy of selection' (The National Archives, 2013b: 10). Once appraised the collection is then made available to the public in as accessible a way as possible (ICA, 2014: 4). Although positioned as a relatively simple, linear process, assumptions can be made about the underlying framing of archives.

The National Archives' process for the creation of an archive collection is a self-contained process. The creation of an archive collection is contained entirely within the remit of this process. There is no incorporation of events before or after this process, and the steps that a collection follows are one-directional. From this, it is evident that the collection is a neutral set of documents. The archivist does not need to have special knowledge of the subject matter and does not need to see each individual document, to be able to assess 'worth' and filter the collection accordingly. There is no requirement for this process to be documented, or for any documentation from the donor or archivist to be presented with the collection to archive users. Chapter 8 used the Records of the Carers' Association collection within Manchester Archive as evidence of these processes in action and the consequences to a collection and its narrative, placing a spotlight on inconsistencies and gaps in the collection and its composition, directing assumptions about the decision-making process behind it. These findings suggest that straightforward step-by-step policies within the archive are just one element regulating archive content. Developments within archive theory over the past 20 years' support these findings.

Chapter 5 reviewed academic literature about archive theory to present an account of how archives are positioned and how that positioning has changed. Broadening from the discipline of History to Sociology (amongst others), the notion of archives as neutral storehouses was challenged towards the end of the 20th Century as theoretical works by Foucault, Derrida, Steedman, and Stoler addressed gaps in the narratives within the archive and challenged the exclusion of certain peoples and stories as well as the framing and interpretation of those included. This theoretical approach to archives has been advanced within critical race studies and critical feminist studies, as 'archaeological' work has been done to uncover and reposition hidden narratives within archives. However, despite

progress being made within archive theory and exclusion being acknowledged as inherent in the narrative of archive collections (Stoler, 2009) as well as through deliberate exclusion (Derrida, 1996), academic findings continue to support the theory that archives produce knowledge and regulate histories of past peoples for future consumption. Thus demonstrating that the creation of an archive collection is more than the sum of its parts and that policy is not the sole regulator of archive and collection content. As explained by Stoler (2009), an archive collection is created through both the context of its archive and the context in which it was created.

Looking first at the context in which a collection is created, the Records of the Carer's Association (RCA) collection contains evidence of this, visible through certain 'lights and angles' in a process described by Stoler as 'watermarking' (Stoler, 2009). As identified in Chapter 3, the composition of research documents themselves, including original questionnaires and summary reports and the language used within each, provide evidence from which assumptions can be drawn about the context in which the research was done and the theoretical framework underpinning the research. Transitions between organisations are visible in the changes of definitions of the term 'carer', and in changes in themes of research from small-scale localised projects about the types of personal support unpaid carers want, to large-scale national projects about the take-up of various types of financial support (GMCRO, no date). Methods transition away from lengthy quantitative surveys of members to mixed-method research of purposefully sampled groups of unpaid carers (GMCRO, no date). This matches up with developments of Carers UK and the Carers' Movement more widely as described in Chapter 3, and the increasing influence of feminism within research into unpaid care as depicted in Chapter 4. This is evidence that the social and political context in which research is done endures the archiving process. Taking research reports as examples, it is not possible to evaluate what is missing based on today's standards of research. However, comparison with Townsend's *Poverty in the UK* study (Townsend, 1979) found that research done around the same time by the NCSWD followed a similar approach to aspects of the research and thus demonstrated that the theoretical framework used by the unpaid carers organisation was reflective of that of the time. This demonstrates that an archive

collection is created in part through the context in which its content was created. However, Stoler also claimed that the context of the institution in which a collection is housed contributes to the creation of a collection (Stoler, 2009).

It has already been established that the process of creating an archive collection goes beyond merely gathering documents, and it has been demonstrated in this thesis that institutional factors play a role. Chapter 7 detailed the challenges faced by researchers in accessing and using archived material for research. These challenges include barriers to access, lack of sufficient information about content including a lack of content warnings, and archives actively giving precedence to collections selected to attract the attention of groups targeted by widening participation initiatives (Archives+, 2013, The National Archives, 2012a). As demonstrated through the fieldwork for this research, these challenges can have a direct impact on archive collections. A lack of clarity in policy coupled with the autonomy of archives to regulate their own practices has meant that a large proportion of the burden of responsibility for decision-making for a collection falls to the judgement of the archivist. As a consequence archivists are directly involved in the creation of collections through regulating content using judgement without guidance or documentation.

Circling back to the research question, an archive collection is created not only by the collation of a group of documents but by deliberate decisions on the part of archivists and the donor in selecting what is and is not included. In doing so the narrative of an archive collection is sculpted and the collection becomes the preservation of that narrative over and above the preservation of the individual documents. As demonstrated by this thesis, a collection is also influenced by the context in which it was created and the institutional context in which it is kept. However, the process of creating an archive collection is presented by archives as a linear administration exercise, without incorporation of the findings of archive theory research or of the realities of actuating archive practice.

## 2. What underlying processes influence researchers' use of the archive?

Researchers' use of archives is regulated by the discipline from which they are approaching the material (see Chapter 5), creating separate experiences and interactions within the archive. The historical archive varies from the sociological archive, which varies from the archive as theorised from different disciplines. These differences extend to all aspects of archive research from methods and practices to claims of truth and validity. There is even contention over the point at which archive research begins, whether on entry to the archive or in the preliminary research in preparation for this fieldwork. This thesis has focused on the experience of the archive from the position of social research within sociology. Chapter 9 identified the underlying processes that influence researchers' use of the archive through an exploration of the key findings from all aspects of this research and a detailed discussion of the broader theoretical implications of these findings. Key influences on a researcher's use of the archive are the same as those contributing to the creation of an archive collection and include overuse and unregulated use of archivists' judgement, a lack of comprehensive information about a collection, and barriers to access. However, there is more to it than these empirical findings.

Looking at the findings, there is a theme of haphazardness, identified as a demi-regularity. Looking at this in context with all findings, from policy and literature reviews to the data from within Manchester Archive and the RCA collection, haphazardness is a consequence of a national reduction in resources for archives. Fewer overall staff, a greater proportion of unskilled or less-skilled staff, and budget cuts have seen tasks left unfinished and resources clustered towards priority initiatives, such as digitising archives (Archives+, 2013). A cause of the lack of resources is a shift towards a target-focused model of archiving nation-wide.

## 3. What does this say about the archive as a site for research going forward?

Davidson et al. claim that the nature of academic research is changing and that researchers are increasingly being encouraged to use the more cost- and

resource-effective secondary data over primary data (Davidson et al., 2019). If this is the case then research done using archived material is likely to increase. This is made even more probable with the increasing amount of business archives held in archive facilities nation-wide (University of Glasgow, no date), meaning archives now hold data relating to the recent past as well as traditionally historic materials. As archives become increasingly digitised the availability of archived material will increase. However, it has been demonstrated in this thesis that increased availability of material does not equate to increased accessibility or usability. In a climate where budgets are unlikely to recover, the archive is heading towards increased backlogs and a culture of 'acquiring as many materials as possible but unable to describe, preserve[,] and present them adequately' (Brown and Davis-Brown, 1998: 18). This unfavourable prediction should not be confused with a recommendation that researchers forfeit use of the archive.

As explained in Chapter 7, the position of academic researchers, as a group of archive users, increased between 2012 and 2016 (Archives and Records Association, 2017). This group is unlikely to increase enough to hold the same influence as the family researcher group, nor is it likely to decrease to warrant special mention within widening access policies. However, the position of the academic researcher is arguably advantageous. As such a multi-disciplinary group it is impossible to increase the favourability of the entire academic community of archive users and, arguably, efforts to do so would be to the detriment of a proportion of this group. Whilst the climate of the archive is unquestionably in a period of change, the position of the academic researcher as a user remains unchanged. However, a change in archiving culture necessitates a change in the culture of archive research methodology.

Acknowledging that documentation processes within the archive are outside the control of the researcher, it is not realistic to expect archivists to harmonise their sampling strategies, or to formalise their sampling strategies for that matter. The 'wish list' of documents, from the list of every document the donor possessed, to a complete and comprehensive catalogue, is just not feasible. However, this research has shown that there are relatively simple ways of getting more of the contextual background information about a collection than

is initially supplied to the researcher. As archive theory and the principles of document analysis used in this thesis show, there is value to the context within and between items in a collection. Taking principles of the Breadth and Depth model for secondary data analysis used in this research, learning as much as is possible about the context of a collection before 'digging deep' into it (Davidson et al., 2019) should be in-built into the research design of any project using archives. Resource and access limitations will dictate how far this extends for each individual project, however simply asking archivists what they know about the history of a collection is a basic starting point. In this research alone information about the donor, decisions about the order of a collection, and the true content of a collection were revealed through general enquiries with archivists.

## 10.3  Contributions to knowledge

One of the requirements of this PhD is that it contributes to knowledge. Three key areas have been identified to which this research has contributed, and in which this research is likely to have an impact: filling a gap in the literature between archive theory and practice, extending realist theory into archive research, and developing a research methodology for research done within archives.

At the beginning of this thesis, a gap in literature was identified between archive theory and practice. The research done for this project has worked to address this gap by contextualising archive practice with academic archive theory. Specifically, this research expands on research into archive practice by demonstrating that self-contained practices are negligent of, as opposed to immune to, the influences described in theory. This research has also contributed to research into archive theory by bringing the debate into the archive itself. Whereas Stoler (2009) looked at the larger theoretical framework of archiving, this research has turned that focus inward to look at influences made *through* the archive as opposed to made *by* the archive.

As already established the archive is a site of research for several different disciplines, most notably History followed by Psychology and Sociology (Archives Hub, 2015). An advantage of the realist methodology of this piece is that the

'mechanistic approach' (Hedström and Ylikoski, 2010) in its purely empirical form is familiar across the applied sciences and humanities. This should make the transition from empirical to realist philosophy more translatable to archive researchers in different disciplines. In doing so this research bridges the gap between debates on archive policy and practice through the realist approach.

This research also contributes to the field of realist theory more generally. Stoler (Stoler, 2009) brought a realist approach to archive theory, but archive practice primarily remains within the predominantly empirical discipline of Library and Information Studies. By considering archive theory alongside archive practice this research has expanded the remit of a realist approach into new areas of social research.

This research is believed to have the widest reach and impact within the broader area of research methodology. It has been demonstrated throughout this thesis that value of an archive collection both historically and to research is embedded in its internal and external contexts and through an interplay between the documents within the collection. By positioning archive collections as large qualitative data sets, as opposed to documents, it is proposed that researchers using archives re-evaluate the way that research is designed and conducted within them.

## 10.4 Final comments

The Discussion and Conclusion chapters of this thesis have covered the key findings from both data collection and from the research as a whole. This final section brings the thesis to a conclusion with a final takeaway message from the author about social researchers' awareness in and of archives.

As researcher's, we are bound by a certain code of conduct. Be it by our institutions, funders, or regulatory boards, there are standards of diligence that we abide by when conducting research. What this research has shown is that these standards are not high enough concerning research in and using archives. Archive facilities are under enormous financial pressure, manifesting as increased opening hours and paradoxical staff shortages, along with a reduction

in skilled staff and a shift from archive users to target groups. As a result, archives are not providing researchers with the background information that archive theory, supported by this research, demonstrates as necessary to interpret, understand, and use an archive collection.

It is without a doubt that archives are in a period of change. Initiatives to digitise archives, aimed at increasing access, are clashing with already thin resources, leaving vast amounts of material inaccessible to the public, either directly or through unfeasible access limitations. It is because of this that researchers' need to take the initiative and take ownership of the potential and limitations of archives for research. As demonstrated in this research, archivists are struggling to effectively action practices bore out of policies that position archive collections as no more than documents, and archivists as administrators. These outdated policies make it all too easy for researchers to follow suit and treat archived collections as two dimensional papers. However, archive collections are stories. Using principles from secondary data analysis methodologies, this research has argued that archive collections are qualitative data, both inherently and in their content. Thus, the final message of this thesis is that if we, as researchers, are to do justice to the stories within archives, we must resist the urge to be shepherded through by empirically-based policies and overworked archivists, and remain mindful and reflexive of the human element within ourselves and our data.

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# Chapter 12 : List of Abbreviations

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| AoC | Association of Carers |
| CNA | Carers National Association |
| DoH | Department of Health |
| GDPR | General Data Protection Regulations |
| GMCRO | Greater Manchester County Record Office |
| LIS | Library and Information Studies |
| NCCED | National Council for Carers and their Elderly Dependants |
| NCSWD | National Council for the Single Woman and her Dependants |
| ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| OPCS | Office of Population Censuses and Surveys |
| RCA collection | Records of the Carer's Association |