

Coding System and Work Sheet

The reduction of non-numerical data to numerical form is mandatory in the machine handling of data. Thus, the selection of the IBM punched-card system for analysis of data dictated the adoption of a master coding plan. Since it was impracticable to transfer detailed data of an exact nature from the questionnaire to the IBM card, an intermediate transfer form, coordinated with the master code, was necessary.

The master coding plan was evolved during the early stages of the preliminary analysis of data, and was reviewed by the panel of consultants before use. It was recognized that this system of coding would be the heart of the analysis, that is, the completeness of the facility for translation of data could make or break the study. Accordingly, major considerations that might influence the identification of unidentified aerial objects were included, together with a wide range of variations within each factor. The frequent CODING system (with minor corrections) was used throughout the translation of the original data with marked success. A copy of this system, called CODES, is enclosed as Exhibit B4, Appendix D.

To facilitate the preparation of the punched-card abstract, an intermediate form called the WORK SHEET (later, the CARD DISK) was developed. Referenced to both the data form the questionnaire and the system of repeat identification, the WORK SHEET permitted an efficient transcription of data simultaneously by several people. In conjunction with the CODES, the WORK SHEET was used during the reduction of the original data to code form necessary for transfer to punched cards. A sample is included as Exhibit B5, Appendix E.

After the analysis was under way, it became apparent that the utilization of machine processing could be improved by incorporating in the IBM card system group classifications of certain factors requiring more than one column for discrete expression. In addition, the inclusion of certain data relating to the evaluation and bearing of the sun with respect to the observer was considered necessary. Finally, a critical examination of certain segments of the data indicated the need for the addition of a new factor relating to the discoveries of the object or objects sighted. Prior to the start of the analytical study, it had been assumed that a classification of stated factors would, by inference, define the maneuver pattern.

All these additions have been incorporated in a revised set of CODES and CARD DISK that are illustrated in Exhibits D6 and D7, Appendix E. However, at the time that the maneuver factor was determined to be critical, it was physically impracticable to make the required definitions and re-evaluate the original data. Therefore, no code for maneuverability has been included in the CODES, CARD DISK, or IBM cards.

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