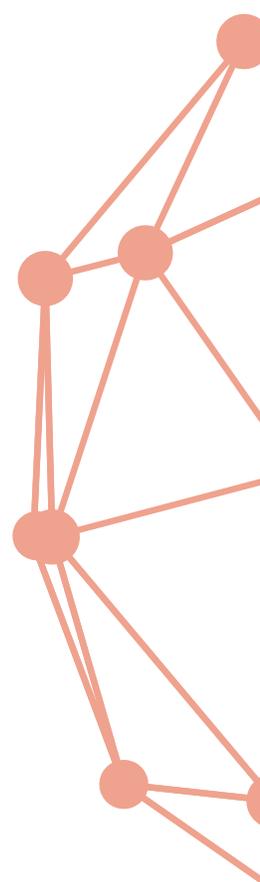


TECHNICAL PROTOCOL

**FOR FIELD RESEARCH IN
VIOLENT CONTEXTS**



con**se**

RED DE CONOCIMIENTO SOBRE **SEGURIDAD CIUDADANA**

www.conose.org / info@conose.org



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Red de Conocimiento sobre Seguridad Ciudadana
(Knowledge Network on Citizen Security, CONOSE)
San Salvador, El Salvador, 2018

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PROJECT: ETHICAL, METHODOLOGICAL AND PERSONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH IN A VIOLENT ENVIRONMENT

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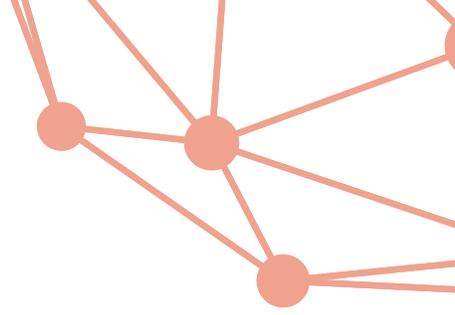


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ABBREVIATIONS

ASJ	Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa (Association for a More Just Society)
CONOSE	Red de Conocimiento sobre Seguridad Ciudadana (Knowledge Network on Citizen Security)
EROS	Earth Resources Observation and Science
FLACSO	Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences)
FRVC	Field Research in Violent Contexts
FUNDAUNGO	Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo Foundation)
IUDOP	Instituto Universitario de Opinión Pública (University Institute of Public Opinion)
LAV	Laboratorio de Análisis de la Violencia (Violence Analysis Lab)
NGO	Non-governmental organizations
UNDP	Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo (United Nations Development Program)
UNDP-RBLAC	Buró Regional para América Latina y el Caribe del PNUD (UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean)
UCA	Universidad Centroamericana “José Simeón Cañas” (“José Simeón Cañas” Central American University)
UERJ	Universidad Estatal de Río de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro State University)
UNAH	Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras (National Autonomous University of Honduras)
UNODC	Oficina de las Naciones Unidas contra las Drogas y el Delito (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime)
URL	Universidad Rafael Landívar (Rafael Landívar University)
USAID	Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo (United States Agency for International Development)

FOREWORD

Field research presents several challenges concerning both, methodology design and ethics, which are heightened when studying highly insecure and violent contexts. This reality constitutes an important obstacle for working in the field to produce primary data. Some territories can be inaccessible to researchers, people might be afraid to talk or to provide information, and the research team might be threatened. This document aims to provide guidance to generate valid and scientifically sound results while conducting research on highly violent environments.

Both, the people's safety and the methodological and ethical consistency of the research project are at stake in insecure contexts. However, despite violence distorts the bases of social interaction and everyday living (cohesion mechanisms, the difference between public and private spaces, among others), there is no consensus among social scientists about the impact of such contexts on research. On the other hand, it is also worth mentioning that working in those environments might, in fact, make them more violent by putting at risk its inhabitants or the research subjects.

Therefore, there is urgent need to explore and bring consensus to this topic within Latin America, the most violent region in the World. To date, most specialized literature about violence prevention refers to work done in the United States of America and the European Union. This societies currently experience low levels of violence and socially different conditions relative to Latin America. It is urgent, then, to adapt the international experience to our context, which also needs to evaluate the region as a whole and produce high-quality data and research.

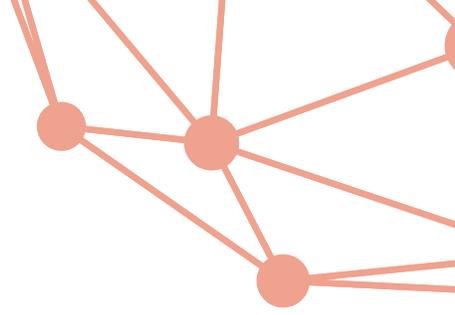
Against this backdrop, the present document responds to the desire to contribute to the knowledge-building in the Central American region, with respect to these concerns shared by the members of the Citizen Security Knowledge Network (CONOSE), since it was formed. This network is comprised of academic and civil society institutions from the Central American region and the Dominican Republic that conduct research and provide training on citizen safety and have the financial support of the InfoSegura Project (USAID-UNDP).

The network's interest in generating insights for the region, showing the challenges of conducting fieldwork in violent contexts, led to the organization of the Second Regional CONOSE Forum by network member institutions, particularly colleagues from the State University of Rio de Janeiro Laboratory of Violence Analysis (LAV-UERJ) and the Centroamericana Jose Simeon Cañas University (UCA) through its University Institute for Public Opinion Research (IUDOP Spanish acronym).¹

The LAV-UERJ and IUDOP-UCA team prepared and presented the initiative of leading a knowledge-building process to the CONOSE Steering Committee. Once approved, it led to the origin of the project titled: Ethical, Methodological and Security Challenges for Research in Violent Contexts.

The information gathered in this document is the result of CONOSE's process of query and discussion, led by a team including Ignacio Cano and Emiliano Rojido of LAV-UERJ, and Jeannette Aguilar of IUDOP-UCA. This was part of a broader work agenda that focuses on the development and implementation of a training program in the region.

¹ This took place in the city of San Salvador, El Salvador in April 2017



The general objective of this discussion process was the improvement of the safety, and of the ethical and methodological consistency of social research in violent contexts. It was specifically intended to bring together social researchers in the Central American region with experience working in violent contexts, provide a space for exchange and reflection, leading to the preparation of an analytical paper summarizing the ethical, methodological and practical challenges of doing research in these contexts.

The focal activity in this process was holding the workshop with leadership by LAV-UERJ and IUDOP-UCA, accompanied by the Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo Foundation (Fundaungo) and FLACSO Program in El Salvador, as local network partners. Workshop participants included professionals with a background in social research in violent contexts from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Costa Rica. The event took place at the UCA facility in the city of San Salvador, from November 13 to 15, 2017.

The colleagues from LAV-UERJ and UCA oversaw organizing the activities, facilitating the sessions and the documentation during and after the event in coordination with the CONOSE steering committee. The work carried out during the different sessions led to the creation of a workshop report that served as the basis for a document reflecting the richness of the exchanges between the participants

Because of these discussions and the agreements reached, the leading team took care of preparing both documents. The first consists of a Technical Protocol for Field Research in Violent Contexts, and the second is a Field Research Toolkit for working Violent Contexts.

Both documents were validated by workshop participants through an exchange process on the CONOSE website² and the final versions are presented herein.

The documents do not lay down exclusive strategies for field work in violent contexts, rather the aim is to lay a foundation for further academic discussion. CONOSE acknowledges the time and effort of the academics responsible for preparing the documents, and the others who participated in the process of collective construction, and special gratitude for sharing knowledge and approaches that have made this output possible.

San Salvador, May 2018

INTRODUCTION

Collecting social data in territories with high rates of violence is a formidable ethical and methodological challenge that is commonplace in Latin American countries where homicide rates are some of the highest worldwide. Whether violence itself is the focus of analysis, or whether it is a question of studying other social dimensions in violent contexts, social researchers rely on the methodology manuals and ethical norms when they are up against unforeseen situations that hinder access to the populations under investigation, limit methodological options, challenge the ethical principles used, compromise the validity of the results, and submit participants, researchers and those studied, to risks that need to be minimized.

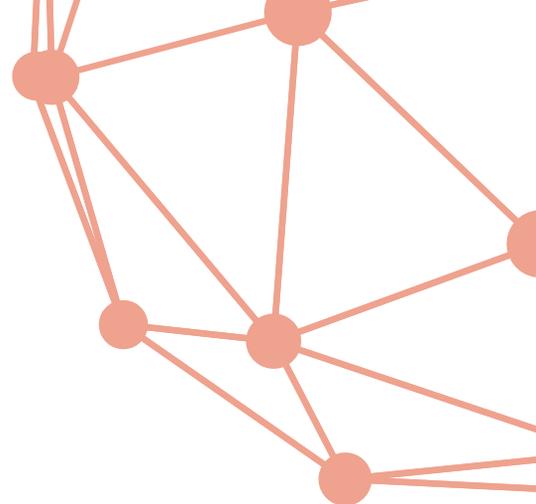
Given their uniqueness, these circumstances have not been addressed very extensively in the specialized literature and the experiences of researchers working in these conditions are often left undocumented and not disseminated.

To help fill this gap and contribute to reflections by individuals and institutions venturing into this difficult area, the Citizen Security Knowledge Network (CONOSE) proposes this Technical Protocol for Field Research in Violent Contexts, with recommendations to respond to ethical

and methodological issues that may turn up while conducting research under these circumstances. This protocol is the result of exchanges between researchers with experience in the matter in Latin America, particularly in Central America, and also includes contributions from the scarce existing academic literature.

Despite the risks involved, it must not be forgotten that at times society needs the results of field research in violent contexts. Designing public policies for violence prevention, for instance, requires precise knowledge of the situation.

In this area, there are no recipes or prescriptions that can be adopted equally across the board. However, it is possible and necessary to list issues that call for reflection, preferably before starting research, in order to attempt to keep an ethical pattern while conducting research, and to minimize methodological issues imposed by violence, while protecting the physical and moral integrity of all those involved in the process. This is what the protocol is intended to do. As such, its purpose is to guide each research group in reflection, in order to make the best decisions for their specific context. Additionally, this document can motivate social research institutions to prepare their own institutional protocols, so they are more specific and



tailored to local circumstances.

Conversely, the intent is not that the document be carved in stone to be applied in a rigid and immovable way over time, but rather to encourage that the text be enriched in the future with new additions. Therefore, this instrument is more of a starting point than a destination.

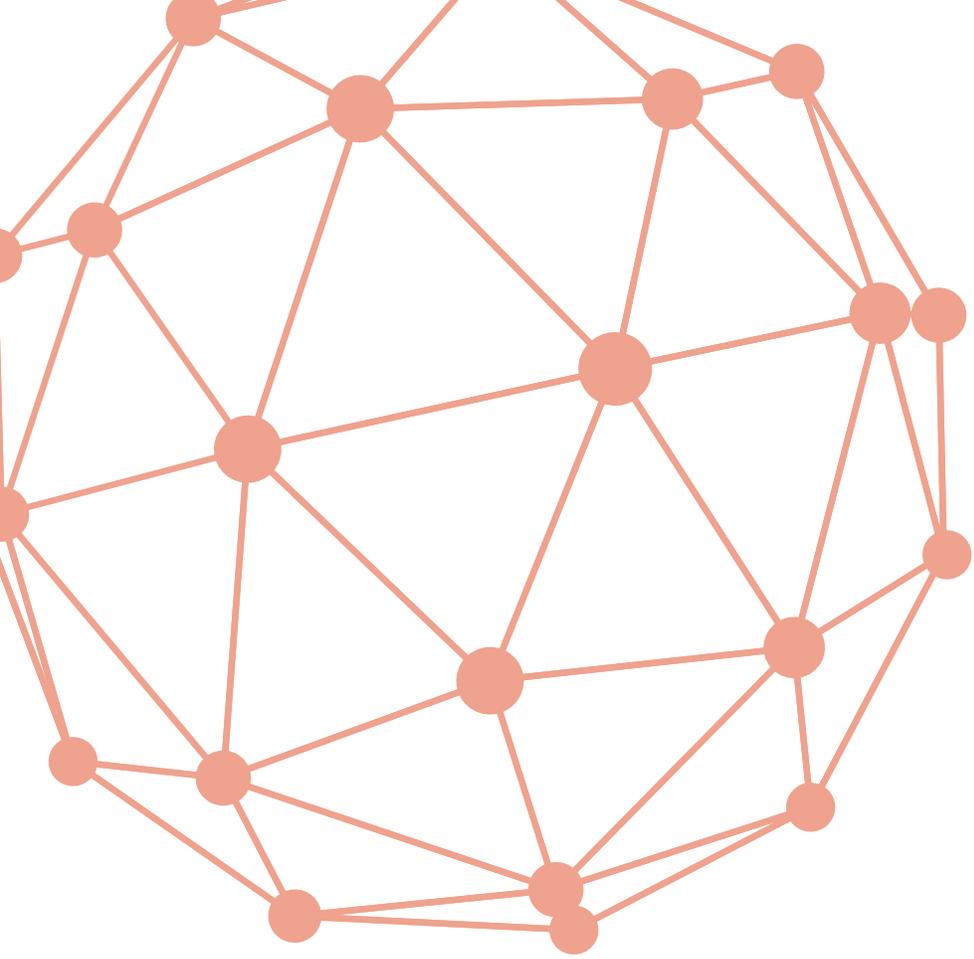
In brief, this proposal was drafted with three basic objectives: (a) improve the reliability and validity of data and results, which are threatened by violence; (b) maintain an ethical pattern of investigative behavior, even in extreme circumstances; and (c) protect the safety of all stakeholders involved in research.

Given their non-prescriptive nature, several alternatives or examples of how problems were addressed in certain contexts will often be offered. The intent is to provide each institution with elements for reflection. The only unshakable conviction is that the problems that violence creates for social research cannot simply be ignored.

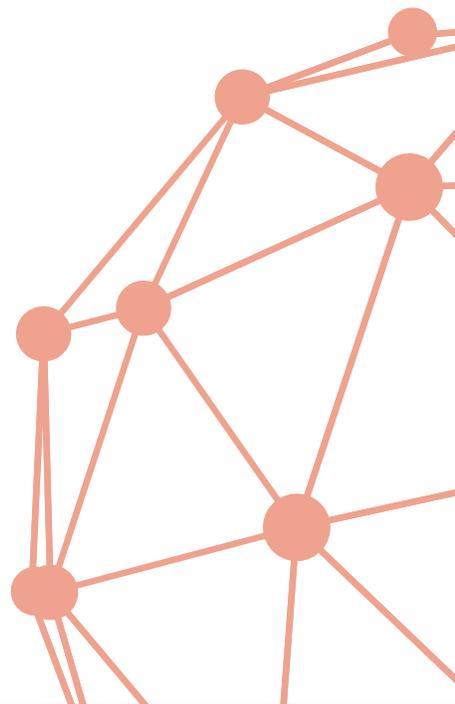
Recommendations are distributed in three moments: (a) research design, (b) preparation and collection of data in the field, and (c) results analysis and publication. In any case, some elements are common to several

phases and there is no fixed separation between them.

The protocol is intended for both quantitative and qualitative methodologies required when researchers enter areas where acts of violence are committed. Off-site methods (telephone surveys, etc.) or those based on secondary data are not included here. Moreover, this exercise was intended for contexts with a high rate of criminal or political violence, but not for domestic violence, because the way in which the latter affects research is very different from the former two.



RESEARCH DESIGN



1.

UNDERTAKE A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE ADVISABILITY OF CONDUCTING THE RESEARCH.

Consideration of the cost-benefit implications should determine whether it is really worthwhile to embark on research, given the risks involved and the intended outcome. Implicit in this notion is the idea that in some instances conducting research may not offset the effort because outputs do not justify costs and risks.

A number of costs should be considered:

- a. Putting the researchers and subjects at risk, for instance, of potential retaliation by armed parties who oppose the study, or the results of the research.
- b. Putting at risk the image of the individuals or groups who are subjects of research, as they can be stigmatized.
- c. Re-victimizing people who have been victims of violence, and may relive traumas while responding to the enumerator's questions.

Furthermore, the expected benefits should go beyond making an innovative contribution to existing academic knowledge on the matter, and include advantages for the benefit of the populations that are subjects of research, which is fundamentally the social function of research. The benefits may be economic, but also social or political, for instance, public policy made for these communities.

2.

REFLECTING ON THE FEASIBILITY OF CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN A VIOLENT CONTEXT, ON THE SUBJECT-MATTER TO BE STUDIED BASED ON THE PLANNED METHODOLOGY, ON INDIVIDUALS' WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE VALID RESPONSES AND ON THE RISKS INVOLVED.

The starting point for this reflection is the analysis of the risks to which researchers and subjects of research are exposed. The former may be at risk as a result of their presence in violent settings, whereas the latter can be threatened or targeted for agreeing to provide data for research if their identity is revealed or disclosed.

The risks are twofold:

- a. Those that result from inquiring about certain sensitive matters.
- b. Those that are simply the result of the researchers' presence in the field.

This risk assessment needs to include several components, including:

- a. Desk review of existing research on the same or similar topics in equal or similar communities.
- b. Preliminary field visits to the study's target sites to explore the terrain.
- c. Reflection on the profiles of respondents who are at particularly high risk in each context.

Not every methodological option is valid in every circumstance. Thus, where individuals feel intimidated by violent actors, using focus groups or techniques

3.

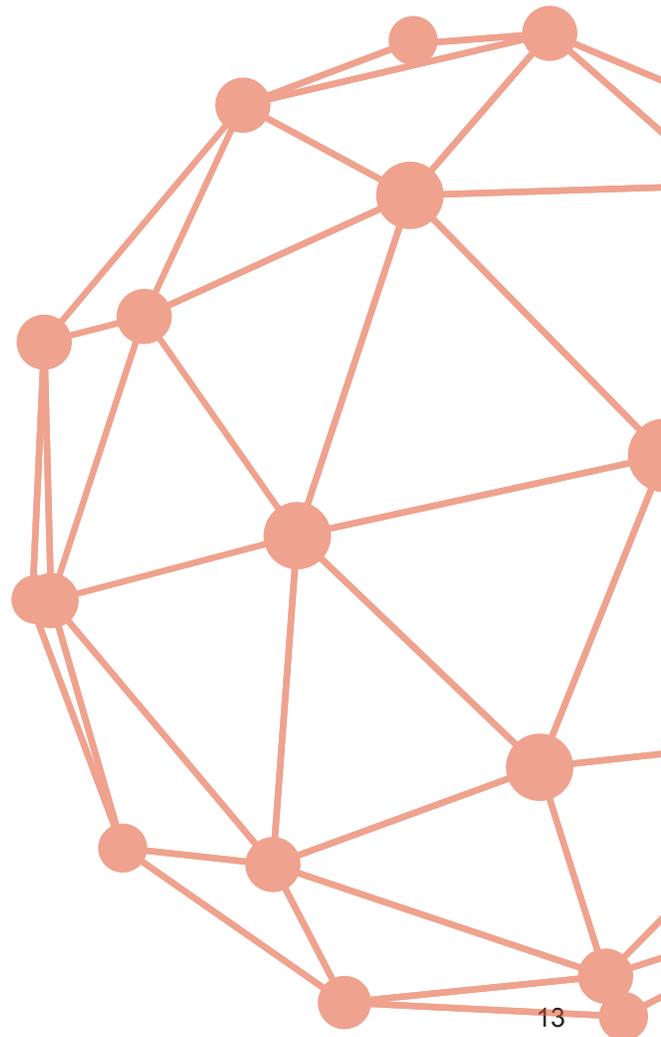
that require expressing opinions in presence of others is discouraged.

In other cases, methodologies need to be tailored. One example is the possibility of proposing a confidentiality clause among focus group participants in cases where sensitive matters are addressed. However, concealed observation, which is riddled with ethical issues, may be the only option in contexts where the behaviors are of interest, and the researchers and the study itself are at risk if revealed.

However, if a cost-benefit assessment determines that the research is worthwhile, it is essential to explain the risks and make them known to both researchers and research subjects, who must agree with the process.

REVIEW THE PROJECT'S LEGAL IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE COUNTRY'S LEGISLATION.

It is extremely important to ascertain the effect of national law, for instance, on secrecy, or confidentiality of information, or the lawfulness of meeting with criminal groups. In certain cases, the “anti-terrorist law” prevents interviewing members of criminal groups to take place in group-settings.



4.

ONCE THE RESEARCH PROJECT HAS BEEN PREPARED, VALIDATE IT WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE EXTERNAL TO THE GROUP.

In some professional communities, projects need to go before an ethics committee to be validated, in order to ensure researchers' behavior is ethical. In other cases, there are no committees, or the applied criteria are outside the matter at hand (generally criteria from biomedical disciplines), or they run the risk of excessively bureaucratizing the process.

In the absence of official oversight, or when inappropriate, such as ethics committees, seeking input from peers is recommended; they can review the project and provide an informed opinion regarding compliance with ethical and methodological parameters

5.

THE DESIGN AND BUDGET FOR THE STUDY NEED TO INCLUDE COSTS FOR PROTECTION, AND BE FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD.

Some security measures, such as a means of transportation or advance visits, entail a higher cost that must be budgeted. Moreover, it is common for the fieldwork to be interrupted in times of explosive violence, or for high-risk sectors to be replaced by others with lower levels of risk. All of this uncertainty raises costs and extends execution time, and the project needs flexibility to provide for this; this is something donors need to be fully informed beforehand.

6.

STUDYING METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO REDUCE RISK.

The following possibilities are suggested:

- a. All the instruments to be used in the study (questionnaires, interview scripts, etc.) should all be pre-tested specifically designed to detect safety problems associated with these instruments. A simple measure is to share these instruments with local leaders, or people familiar with the local context, so that they can alert you if any of the questions or issues may raise tensions or risks if, for example, they are intercepted by an armed stakeholder. The pretest can also present several possible drafts of the same item, in order to identify the least troublesome version.
- b. Reduce the size of the survey to minimize time spent in the field, leaving all the most sensitive matters for the end.
- c. Apply the most sensitive questions using cards or tablets, in order for the respondent to choose an option, without having to speak about it out loud. This way, if armed stakeholders were in earshot of the interview, they would not actually know the answer that was given. This option has the drawback of not being valid for the non-literate, or those with reading difficulties.
- d. Using hypothetical questions (what would happen if...?), instead of direct questions about the respondent's behavior, to prevent them from confessing illegal or at-risk behavior.

7.

ADOPTING MEASURES TO PROTECT THE RESEARCH TEAM.

The following are some examples of what is possible:

- a. Taking out insurance for researchers, covering life, accident and theft.
- b. Purchasing burner cell phones specifically for field work, so enumerators do not take their own, thus reducing the risk of theft or revealing their identity or place of residence. If these phones have GPS to keep track of their location, this constitutes an added layer of safety.
- c. In case the territories (neighborhoods, communities, etc.) are divided according to domination by certain rival armed groups, it is imperative for enumerators to leave behind their own IDs before going into the field, in order to avoid revealing where they are from.

¹ Another strategy for tackling this problem is to use experimental techniques involving two forms of the same questionnaire, one of which contains the sensitive item (e.g. "Are you paying extortion?") along with many other trivial questions (e.g. "Have you left the municipality in the last month?"). The other version of the questionnaire omits the sensitive point. If the respondent answers the question: "How many of these questions do you answer positively?", a comparison of the average number of positive responses between the two versions would allow the proportion of people subjected to extortion to be estimated without knowing which people gave this answer

8.

ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH VIOLENCE CAN AFFECT THE SAMPLING OR CENSUS FRAMEWORKS THAT SUPPORT THE RESEARCH.

A number of studies in areas of high violence detected significant forced displacements of populations expelled by violence, rendering the population census void in a short period of time. In such cases, the research group itself must rebuild the sample frame locally before sampling begins.

Similarly, it is recommended that the study areas be oversampled to ensure that some of them can be replaced in the event that violent incidents take place immediately prior to the fieldwork.

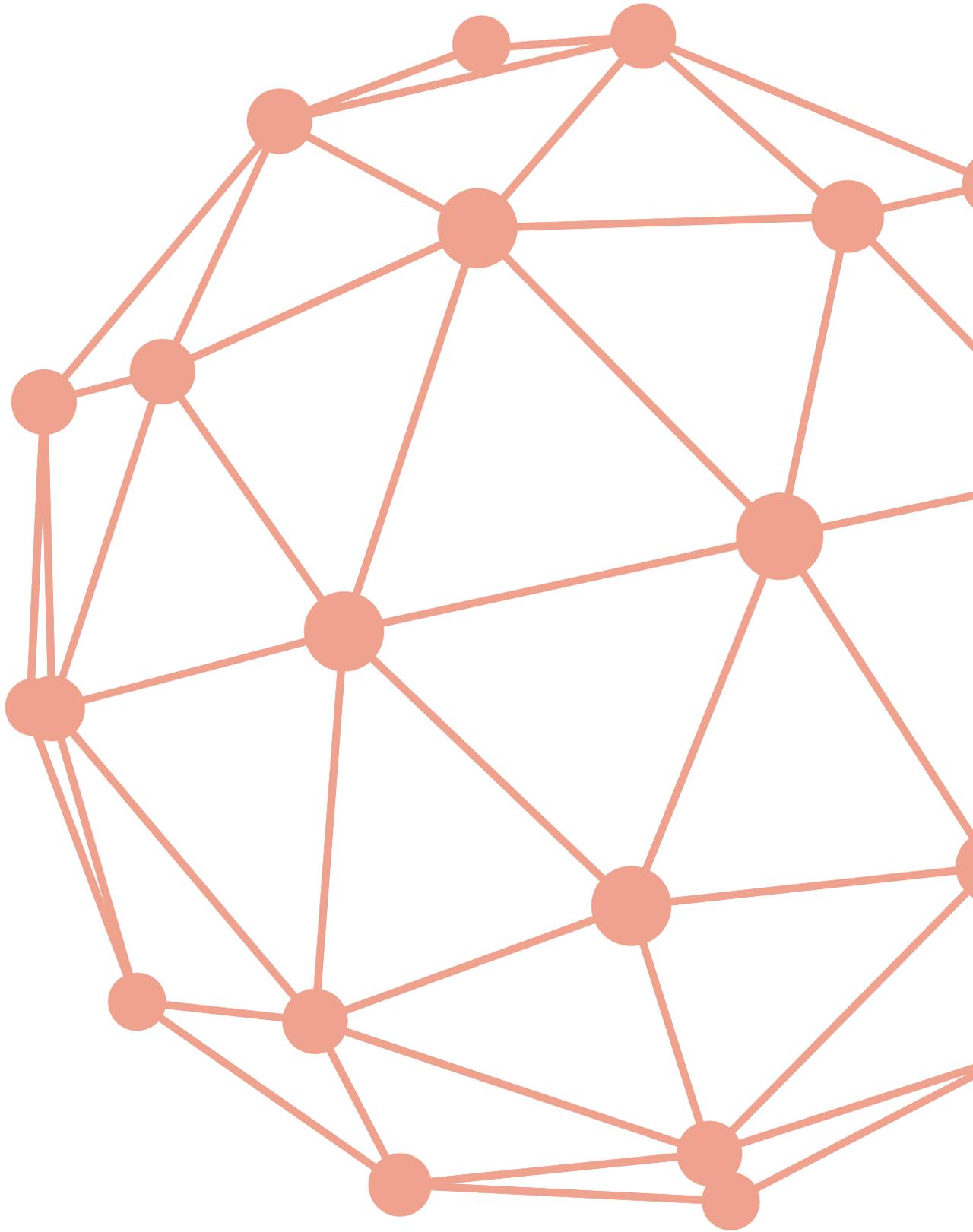
9.

STUDYING THE MECHANISM OF ACCESS TO THE STUDY TARGET AREAS.

The first issue to be ascertained is whether permission from certain parties is required to enter these areas, either from the communities themselves (as is the case in some indigenous areas in Guatemala) or from armed actors who control the territory.

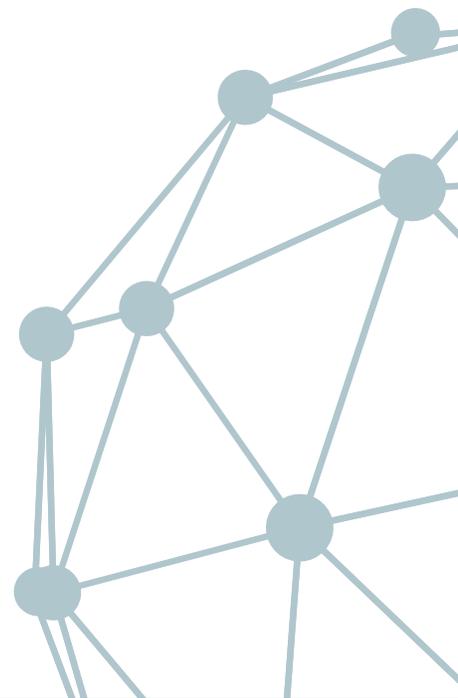
In the latter case, the conditions or requirements for access need to be ascertained, both overall, and on a day to day basis. Generally, it is preferable not to pay for access, or for conducting the research, but this principle is not always that easy to hold up, and on occasion, it is not unusual to have to provide some sort of contribution, for instance hiring local staff appointed by the armed groups, or providing some non-monetary benefit to the community (medical care, food, condoms, etc.).

Under these circumstances, it is preferable not to tie the remuneration or benefit to a particular type of information, only for access; otherwise, this could become an incentive for fabricating the information associated with the exchange.





PREPARING AND CONDUCTING FIELDWORK



1.

DEVELOP A SAFETY PROTOCOL THAT IS SPECIFIC TO FIELD WORK PERFORMED FOR THAT STUDY.

This safety protocol should include, among other things, the following:

- a. Information about how to introduce the institution responsible for the study to the respondents, as well as the study's purpose. Although the respondent has the right to know the purpose of the study, and, above all the potential consequences, on occasion providing too much detail about the study can increase the level of risk.
- b. Safest locations and times to conduct interviews or making contact with subjects of the study. For instance, in certain countries, it is considered safer for enumerators to remain outside the respondent's home, and conduct interviews at the door. By contrast, in others indoors is considered more private and safer against armed stakeholders who control the territory; therefore, there is greater freedom in providing answers. There are also situations where it is recommended that people be interviewed in institutions or neutral settings, far removed from their places of residence, for increased safety.
- c. A daily procedure to confirm whether it is safe to enter the field on that day, for instance, through local contacts, and reading the news to ascertain there have been no serious acts of violence the previous day.
- d. Exit routes, meeting places and local contacts in case of emergency.
- e. Strategies to enter the field, usually in small groups or with a supervisor.
- f. Mechanisms for the field team and the central team to be in touch during the fieldwork.
- g. External means of identification for researchers (T-shirts, badges, cover letters, stickers on vehicles) to differentiate them from other groups, particularly groups at risk of violence.
- h. Ensure that, even in the absence of a formal consent form (which is often inappropriate in contexts where there are armed stakeholders present), respondents are aware of the consequences and risks involved in participation in the study.
- i. Defining the materials that can enter the field, and which need to remain in the office, as well as the codes to be used to mask the identity of the persons interviewed.
- j. Input on the enumerator's physical appearance, what to do and what to avoid, in order to forestall suspicion (e.g., avoiding colored clothing or markings that may be associated with violent groups).
- k. Signs that can help recognize whether the respondent is under the effect of fear or threat, in order to cut the interview short.
- l. Procedures to follow in the case

2.

of an emergency or a threatening situation (for instance, when questioned by a member of a criminal group, being forced to pay for being in the territory, or being forced to withdraw immediately, etc.).

m. Prohibition of recording images (photographs, videos) in sensitive areas.

n. Enumerators should avoid providing their personal identification information, or speaking about their personal lives while in the at-risk territories.

o. Be mindful of “invisible borders” between armed groups and the rules of conduct applied in each territory.

p. Voice modulation when dealing with sensitive issues in places where armed actors might be able to overhear the conversation.

q. Procedures and times when the field logbook will be filled out, especially in relation to sensitive issues, in which case it is preferable not to record information until you leave the hazardous region.

The contents of this protocol need to be the subject of training for all members of the research team.

ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH IT IS SAFE TO RECORD THE INTERVIEWS.

A recorded interview provides a wealth of material for analysis, but in certain contexts and regarding certain topics, should the recording fall in the wrong hands, it can compromise the safety of the respondent. Under such circumstances, note-taking is the preferred option; in this case, working in pairs is recommended, so that one enumerator is in charge of the conversation and the other takes down the responses.

3.

STUDY THE ENUMERATOR PROFILE THAT IS MOST SUITED TO THE TYPE OF RESEARCH AND THE LOCATION.

Age, gender, origin, physical appearance and other socio-demographic elements need to be considered when choosing the most favorable enumerator profile, in order to reduce risks and have the greatest probability of obtaining valid responses. In certain cases, residents in the community are hired to interview and accompany the enumerators in order to reduce risks. In other cases, it is safer to avoid having people work in the places they reside. The presence of individuals whose appearance or origin is different may be ill-advised in certain contexts, because this draws the attention of the armed stakeholders.

4.

DRAFT THE “TERMS OF RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT”.

Every member of the research team must sign the terms of responsibility and commitment. These terms spell out the obligation to preserve the privacy of people’s identities and of the contents of the research. In addition, it needs to be signed by the individuals responsible for transcribing recorded interviews or other similar materials. In this regard, it is important for these people to be cautious with the information they share on social media.

5.

EXPLORE WAYS TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, AND THE RESEARCHERS THEMSELVES, AS WELL AS POSSIBLE REFERRALS TO HEALTH CARE OR SOCIAL SERVICES.

In view of the fact that interviews are not a form of therapy, despite their potential cathartic value, it is important to reflect on the potential mechanisms for emotional and psychological support that may be offered to victims of violence that may be identified in the course of the study, as well as referrals to social and health services they might benefit from. In fact, that may be a core compensation for study participants.

For their part, researchers may also suffer vicarious victimization from frequent contact with victims recounting their traumas, and it is important that they receive support to deal with this.

6.

LOCAL CONTACTS TO FACILITATE ENTRY INTO THE FIELD.

Local contacts may be local leaders or public officials with strong local presence. They can help in several ways:

- a. Help to establish safe locations and schedules.
- b. Contact at the start of the day to know if it is safe to enter the field that day or not.
- c. Intermediary to obtain permission from armed stakeholders to enter the field, if necessary.

In certain cases, local residents can be hired to accompany enumerators, offering information and protection. It is also possible to engage local people to conduct interviews, but this requires a training process, and according to the subject matter and context, it is not always possible to find candidates locally who fit the required profile. If feasible, this is certainly a possible compensation for community members.

7.

DETERMINE IN ADVANCE WHICH INFORMATION ON CRIMINAL CONDUCT MAY BE REPORTED.

On occasion, there are limits to the commitment to confidentiality with respondents, such as information regarding serious life-threatening crimes that may be committed in the future or in cases of sexual abuse of children. Before the study starts, it is necessary to find out what exactly are the limits of confidentiality of information, and to be clear with the respondents about these limits, as long as this does not put the research team at risk. Often, it is recommended that there be an explanation of the type of information that one does not want to find out (for instance, offenses committed, or planned), precisely to avoid issues of confidentiality.

8.

KEEPING A LOGBOOK.

All incidents during fieldwork, particularly those involving safety and ethical considerations, should be recorded in this log. If the notebook contains sensitive information, it should be kept at the main office and filled out daily *after* leaving the field. For their part, researchers or supervisors may also keep their own *field diary* to record daily incidents, but not the most sensitive ones that could compromise people's safety. The latter are to be recorded directly in the *central logbook*.

9.

PREPARE A MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

Respondent's identity, for instance, should be managed with codes, so that the identity does not appear in the same document that reflects their answers. This sensitive information should not go to the field or, if necessary, should go separately and for the shortest possible time.

The files with the answers can also be encrypted and/or sent to the cloud electronically, so that they are not lost in the event that the electronic device where they are registered is mislaid or stolen.

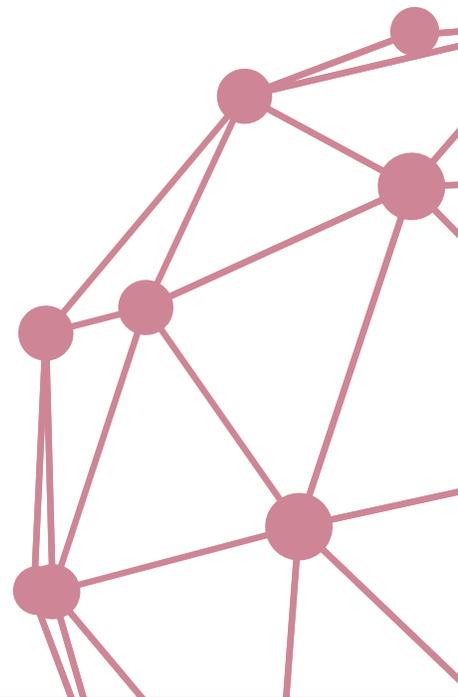
Even if the information is stored digitally on the cloud or at institution headquarters, it should also be subjected to computer security measures to prevent leakage or appropriation by third parties.

After the project is completed, this information may be destroyed to ensure that it does not fall into the hands of third parties. The destruction process needs to be cleared with donors to avoid future problems with accountability or audits.





RESULTS ANALYSIS AND PUBLICATION



1.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH DONE UNDER VIOLENT CONDITIONS AND THE POSSIBLE BIASES THAT THIS MAY INTRODUCE INTO THE RESULTS.

In this sense, epistemological humility regarding results and interpretations is recommended, above all. When violence is not the subject of study, it is important to reflect on the possible methodological impact that it can have on the responses to the issues of concern.

One example is the replacement of high-risk sectors or areas with equivalent ones, which may introduce biases to the extent that new areas may differ from those originally planned. When violence itself is the subject of study and the most violent areas are excluded, the problem becomes more evident.

Additionally, the problems encountered during research as a result of violence should be described openly in reports and publications.

2.

AVOID IDENTIFYING INTERVIEWEES AND, AT TIMES, COMMUNITIES IN THE REPORTS, THROUGH THE USE OF CODES AND THE SELECTION OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED.

Identifying individuals or groups can compromise their safety or lead to stigmatization. The information provided on individual respondents' profiles (sex, profession, etc.) next to the quote from their statements may help the reader to contextualize the statement, but care should be taken that this information does not make it possible to identify the person. Overall, giving unnecessary details should be avoided.

On occasion, it may be necessary to use different codes for the same respondent, as an additional way to prevent identification. In this case, the reader needs to be informed. When it is not possible to record interviews, and quotes are dependent on enumerator notes, and are therefore not necessarily literal, or when certain words in a quote are altered to avoid participants from being identified, the reader should also be advised.

In addition, care should be taken to guard against the use of stigmatizing language to avoid labels that reinforce prejudices about the social groups being studied.

On the other hand, it is not enough to eliminate names or replace them with codes, often information about premises, professions, etc. can be what identifies people or communities. That is why the review needs to be done several times and also by local residents who are more sensitive to these possibilities for identification

3.

COMPLYING WITH THE COMMITMENT TO BRIEF AUTHORITIES AND COMMUNITIES REGARDING THE RESULTS, IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CASE.

Some of the measures to be taken in these contexts are as follows:

- a. In violent areas, briefing communities on the results may be inadvisable, or may even put individuals at greater risk. Therefore, the method for briefing should be thought out ahead of time, and done in agreement with local contacts.
- b. The provision of information to donors may be limited or interrupted when this information is likely to be used to the detriment of individuals. For example, there have been occasions when the people who requested the study did not review the information on the identity and address of persons wanted by the law, so as not to affect them.

4.

CHOOSING THE TIMING OF PUBLICATION OR DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS TO MINIMIZE THE POTENTIAL NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITIES UNDER INVESTIGATION.

It is important to analyze the political and social context where the results of the research are going to be disseminated, in order to anticipate and minimize any adverse effects on the population that participated in the study and to avoid, as far as possible, its being used to justify public policies that violate the rights of the population.



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