



Conducting Field Research in Contexts of Violent Conflict

An Annotated Bibliography

Nathalie Gasser

NCCR North–South Dialogue, no. 16

2007

dialogue



The present study was carried out at the following partner institution of the NCCR North-South:

swisspeace
Sonnenbergstrasse 17, P.O. Box, CH-3000 Bern 7,
Switzerland



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

The NCCR North-South (Research Partnerships for Mitigating Syndromes of Global Change) is one of twenty National Centres of Competence in Research established by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). It is implemented by the SNSF and co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the participating institutions in Switzerland. The NCCR North-South carries out disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research on issues relating to sustainable development in developing and transition countries as well as in Switzerland.

<http://www.north-south.unibe.ch>

Conducting Field Research in Contexts of Violent Conflict

An Annotated Bibliography

Natalie Gasser

NCCR North–South Dialogue, no. 16

2007 [2006¹]

Citation

Gasser N. 2007. *Conducting Field Research in Contexts of Violent Conflict. An Annotated Bibliography*. 2nd edition [2006¹]. NCCR North–South Dialogue, 16. Bern, Switzerland: NCCR North–South.

Note on earlier version

The first edition of this publication was entitled *Conducting Field Research in Contexts of Violent Conflict* (NCCR North–South Dialogue. Bern: NCCR North-South).

Editing

Theodore Wachs, NCCR North–South

Cover photo

South Wello, Ethiopia, Eva Ludi (2004)

Distribution

The PDF version of this paper can be downloaded from:
<http://www.north-south.unibe.ch> under “Publications”

© NCCR North–South

Contents

1	Preface	7
2	Annotated Bibliography	9
3	Thematic Index of Authors	31
	About the Author	34

1 Preface

This annotated bibliography focuses on literature concerned with strategies for conducting field research in social contexts characterised by highly polarized conflicts. This is a topic largely neglected by the literature on qualitative field research. The bibliography consists of literature that is mainly, but not exclusively, concerned with field research in violently divided societies. Reflections on the subject are shaped by two main disciplinary approaches: (1) social anthropological research, and (2) “applied” development-oriented research. From a historical perspective, social anthropology is the discipline from which the practice of systematic field research emerged, mainly through the method of participatory observation. It is therefore not surprising that most of the literature dealing with the subject of field research in violence-prone areas stems from this discipline.

Despite an ever-increasing body of literature concerning new anthropological theories and perspectives on violence on the one hand, and general methodological issues on the other hand, little has been published on the practical implications and methodological challenges that confront a social anthropologist conducting field research in a conflict setting. Sensitive methodological issues tend to be discussed in personal conversations between researchers rather than documented for a wider public. There are still few written reflections on the subject, and the existing ones are extremely heterogeneous thematically, revealing individualised and often improvised field research strategies. As the consequence of a particularistic approach, social anthropologists working in conflict settings tend to focus exclusively on one party to the conflict.

Such studies are generally characterised by a purely disciplinary outlook and deal with a wide range of methodological issues. Although research topics and approaches vary greatly, ethical issues related to field research in violently divided societies are discussed by Bourgois (1990), Gill (2001), Lee (1990), Mitchell (1993), Olujic (1995), Pieke (1995), Scheper-Hughes (1995), Sluka (1995), and Zulaika (1995). No systematic and all-encompassing review of the methodological and ethical problems of conducting research in violent contexts exists, although Avruch (2001) and Kovats-Bernhard (2002) touch on these issues.

Another body of literature is concerned with field research strategies in violence-prone areas by practitioners working for non-governmental, governmental and intergovernmental organisations. This body of development-oriented literature offers ideas, methods and techniques for dealing with conflicts. A heterogeneous set of interdisciplinary and action-oriented methods and guidelines can be found under a wide range of labels such as aid and development, human rights, community relations, peace and justice, emergency relief, conflict resolution and prevention. Compared with social anthropological texts, most of the literature in the field of development research is clearly action-oriented and not based on a particular theory. Instead of a theoretical foundation, this body of literature – as represented by Anderson (1999), Fisher (2000), Huntington (2005), Reber (2005) and Stiefel (1998) – provides a set of practical tools for

those working in ‘dangerous fields.’ As development research takes a holistic approach, it aims primarily to take into account several of the conflicting parties (or ‘stakeholders’).

This annotated bibliography provides an overview of the existing literature in both fields described above. A thematic index of authors can be found at the end of the bibliography.¹

Please note: With the exception of some abstracts written by the author, most abstracts are excerpts from the original documents and are liable to the respective author’s copyright.

¹ I would like to thank Tobias Hagmann for his suggestions and comments.

2 Annotated Bibliography

A

AAA, American Anthropological Association (1998). *Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (AAA)*. Internet Publication.

This is a statement of principles released by the American Association of Anthropology (AAA) to assist anthropologists in dealing with ethical issues.

Anderson, Mary B. (1999). *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace or War*. Boulder, Rienner.

The book's primary goal is to challenge aid agency staff members to take responsibility for the way their assistance affects conflicts. The "do no harm" approach should help aid agency staff to step back and look more closely at the conflict situation they are operating in and seek lessons from past actions by other aid agencies to try and decrease the negative impact of aid and ensure that aid is provided in a conflict-sensitive way. The book's target audience includes aid agency staff and the wider international development community, and is not geared to a heavily academic audience.

Avruch, Kevin (2001). "Notes toward Ethnographies of Conflict and Violence." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol.30, No.5, pp.637–648.

This article examines the characteristics of recent ethnographies of "conflict zones," especially those that seek to depict violence based on experience. These works are contrasted with older ethnographic treatments of violence. A number of critiques of these works are considered. The article concludes with a discussion of the several roles (methodological, conceptual, and moral) that the human rights movement has played in helping to formulate the agenda for the new ethnographies of violence and conflict.

B

Bourgeois, Philippe (1990). "Confronting Anthropological Ethics. Ethnographic Lessons from Central America." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.27, No.1, pp.43–54.

The concern with ethics in North American cultural anthropology discourages political and economic research on unequal power relations and other 'dangerous' subjects. US anthropologists define ethics in narrow, largely methodological terms – informed consent, respect for traditional institutions, responsibility to future researchers, legal approval by host nations, and so on. The responsibility of the researcher to uphold 'human rights' or to document political repression and suffering is not merely dismissed by mainstream anthropology as a partisan

issue outside of the realm of scholarship, but is actually condemned as ethically problematic. The growing postmodernist deconstructivist approach within US anthropology allows ethnographers to obey their discipline's narrow ethical dictates through reflexive investigation of the hermeneutics of signs and symbols devoid of the political and economic social context. Drawing on his fieldwork experiences in Central America, the author argues that anthropologists have a historical responsibility to address larger moral issues because their discipline's traditional re-search subjects – exotic others in remote Third World settings – are being violently incorporated into the world economy in a traumatic manner that often includes starvation, political repression, or even genocide. Meanwhile, in the name of ethics, North American anthropologists continue to ignore or avoid the human tragedies engulfing their 'research subjects'.

C

Chatzifotiou, Sevaste (2000). "Conducting Qualitative Research on Wife Abuse: Dealing with the Issue of Anxiety." *Sociological Research Online*, Vol.5, No.2.

Abused women are a very sensitive group with whom to conduct research. Researchers need to be aware of this inherent sensitivity and design their research accordingly. The ethics of social research, the implications of conducting research on sensitive topics, and the possible exposure of the participants to stressful moments for the sake of the interview are important issues to be given serious consideration by the researcher prior to undertaking fieldwork. However, during fieldwork the researcher may face issues to which she had paid less attention while designing the inquiry, namely issues related to dealing with the anxiety to which she would be exposed during the interviews. It is well recognised in the literature that the rights and safety of the participants must be of paramount importance to researchers in every research project. Still, the researcher's 'safety' should not be underestimated or given too little attention. This paper, based on the experience of conducting research with abused women, documents the issue of the researcher's anxiety, which was a salient issue throughout the study. Documenting the research process, from the design of the research to issues which arose after the fieldwork, the paper draws attention to the issue of anxiety experienced by the researcher in various stages of the research, prior to, during, and after leaving the field, and provides ways that these were dealt with.

D

Daniel, E. Valentine (1996). *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropology of Violence*. Princeton, etc., Princeton University Press.

How does an ethnographer write about violence? How can he make sense of violent acts, for himself and for his readers, without compromising their sheer excess and their meaning-defying core? How can he remain a scholarly observer

when the country of his birth is engulfed by terror? These are some of the questions that engage Valentine Daniel in this exploration of life and death in contemporary Sri Lanka. In 1983 Daniel “walked into the ashes and mortal residue” of the violence that had occurred in his homeland. His planned project – the study of women’s folk songs as ethnohistory – was immediately displaced by the responsibility that he felt had been given to him, by surviving family members and friends of victims, to recount beyond Sri Lanka what he had seen and heard there. What does an anthropologist trained to do fieldwork in one place and educated to look for coherence and meaning in human behaviour do when he is forced by circumstances to keep moving, searching for reasons he never finds? How does he write an ethnography (or an anthropography, to use the author’s term) without transforming it into a pornography of violence? While trying to avoid expanding the anthropography into prurience, how does he avoid flattening it with theory? The ways in which Daniel grapples with these questions, and their answers, give this groundbreaking book a rare sense of passion, purpose, and intellect.

Daniel, E. Valentine (1997). “Mood, Moment and Mind.” In: Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele and Pamela Reynolds. *Violence and Subjectivity*. Berkeley, University of California Press. pp.333–363.

Daniel describes an event witnessed by one of his informants in the context of fieldwork in Sri Lanka: A daughter witnessed her father’s murdered body being dragged away, tied to an army jeep, in the midst of the applause and cheering of soldiers. In one instance she asks the author to write about the way her father came to his brutal death and another she asks him never to write about her father at all, because the way he was killed was a direct negation of all he had lived by. Daniel reflects on how writing can be commensurate with this kind of divided responsibility. He suggests a theory of representation and a mode of writing.

Das, Veena (1990). “Introduction: Communities, Riots, Survivors: The South Asian Experience.” In: Veena Das. *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia*. Delhi, Oxford University Press. pp.1–36.

This article contains a short paragraph about “Writing and Violence” (pp. 31-33) dealing with the following: What is the form IN which violence may be written about when the foundation is that it exceeds limits? Does it tear the facts of violence out of context? Does the author have the status of a voyeur in relation to narratives of suffering? While there cannot be a single answer to the nature of this responsibility, Das argues that authors cannot simply hide behind the axiological neutrality of Max Weber but should take responsibility.

Davison, Judy (2004). “Dilemmas in Research: Issues of Vulnerability and Disempowerment for the Social Worker/Researcher.” *Journal of Social Work Practice*, Vol.18, No.3, pp.379–393.

Ethics discussions in qualitative research have established a sound base of knowledge and practice that offers advice on the protection and rights of research informants. This paper, although it supports the primacy of informant safety, highlights less visible research debates. The potential for vulnerability and harm of the social work researcher are explored. The value of achieving heightened empathy and emotional resonance with research participants is considered a process that the author suggests is likely to increase the richness of research data, but may also accentuate the researcher's vulnerability or distress. The author's experience in personal re-search with vulnerable informants and as a research supervisor in social work is used to reflect on processes and practices, which she claims may make social work researchers particularly vulnerable to conflict and distress. Data from her recent research, which explores the experiences of social work researchers, are used to illustrate these issues.

Dentan, Robert, K. (1995). "Bad Day at Bukit Pekan." *American Anthropologist*, Vol.97, No.2, pp.225–250.

The Senoi Semai of Malaysia have acquired a reputation for being one of the most non-violent peoples known to anthropology. This essay explores the question of Semai violence through interviews with men who have committed homicide while in a state of possession, and an interview with a participant in a 1949 massacre of Chinese villagers that was carried out in retaliation for a raid on a Semai village by Chinese Communist insurgents. In Semai storytelling, violence is recounted with relish, while first-person accounts of violent acts are descriptively revealing but emotionally neutral. This essay attempts to represent a Semai narrative and put it into several of its many contexts, including the author's fieldwork.

De Soto, Hermine G. and Nora Dudwick, Eds. (2000). *Fieldwork Dilemmas: Anthropologists in Postsocialist States*. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press.

In *Fieldwork Dilemmas* ten anthropologists disclose the political and physical dangers inherent in field research. Focusing on former socialist states, they vividly depict the upheavals of everyday life in eastern Europe, revealing how their informants and the communities in which they live endure political and economic dislocation, plummeting living standards, emerging gender inequalities, and ethnic and nationalist violence.

E

El-Bushra, Judy and Ibrahim M.G. Sahl (2005). *Cycles of Violence. Gender Relations and Armed Conflict*. Nairobi, ACORD.

This book describes ACORD's (international African-based NGO) research 'Gender-sensitive Design and Planning in Conflict-Affected Situations', carried out during 2000 and 2001 in five communities living in the shadow of violent conflict in Juba (Sudan), Gulu (Uganda), Luanda (Angola), Timbukta (Mali) and

the Lower Shabelle region (Somalia). It also includes analysis of data collected earlier in Eritrea and Rwanda. Two main questions are examined in this book: what is the impact of war on gender relations? And can gender relations contribute to conflict? The analysis in this book explores the term 'gender relations' and divides it into: gender 'roles', 'identities', 'ideologies', and 'institutions/power structures,' examining how each of these changes are a result of war. It finds that, while gender is a factor in perpetuating violence, it is also a factor in rebuilding social relations and peace. This book also addresses the challenges in methodologies and tools for research in turbulent conditions. The aim is to develop flexible and sensitive research methods that go beyond information collection to engaging in joint reflection with communities about issues confronting them. Agencies should no longer continue to work only 'in' conflict rendering practical services, but also 'on' conflict, with communities, to analyze and address the factors that perpetuate it.

F

Feldman, Allen (1995). "Ethnographic States of Emergency." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.224–252.

"The most intellectually high-powered essay (...), who sees all efforts by theorists to posit "closure" as an act of totalizing violence which contributes to the objectification of victims. Rather the task of the fieldworker is to be a witness-emissary, to tell the story of those destroyed, and ultimately to become physically transformed by the experience, offering a redemptive vision into the inchoate. This is a striking vision, one which gives the ethnographer great moral responsibility. Yet Feldman tends also to romanticize violence as the source of the desired protean anti-totalizing impulse." (Excerpt of Review: Lindholm, Charles (1999). *CSSH*, Vol. 41, No. 3, pp. 601-602).

Fisher, Simon (2000). *Working with Conflict: Skills and Strategies for Action*. London, Zed Books.

This source book is for people working in areas affected by conflict and violence. Easy to use, well laid out and including helpful visual materials, it provides a range of practical tools, processes, ideas and techniques for tackling conflict. These tools have been developed over a number of years by the organisation "Responding to Conflict (RTC)" in collaboration with practitioners from around the world. Part I is a guide to understanding conflict, including down-to-earth techniques for conflict analysis and the critical issues that must be taken into account - power, culture, identity, gender and rights. Part II explains how to build effective strategies to address conflict, including how to influence policy within organisations. Part III focuses on action: intervening directly in situations of acute conflict, addressing the consequences, and working on the social fabric which conditions the emergence of conflict. Part IV introduces the skills involved in the necessary processes of evaluation and learning in order to improve

future interventions. The book embodies and reflects the rich diversity of over 300 practitioners from some 70 countries who, in RTC “Working with Conflict” courses, have pooled their variegated experience and adapted these methods to suit a wide range of situations. Examples and cases in the book are drawn from around the world - including Cambodia, Afghanistan, South Africa, Kenya, Northern Ireland and Colombia.

G

Gaigals, Cynthia and Manuela Leonhardt (2001). *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development*. International Alert, Saferworld and IDRC. Internet Publication.

This report aims to provide a critical overview of the approaches to development being defined by donors, academic institutions, and NGOs and agencies charged with the delivery of effective aid and development programmes in conflict-prone and conflict-affected areas. Seeking to highlight the range of different approaches and to identify their strengths and limitations, the report concludes by identifying some of the important policy issues to be addressed if conflict-sensitive development approaches are to have broader relevance and impact. It draws on the findings of Saferworld’s and International Alert’s research, policy dialogue and field work on approaches to peace and conflict-sensitive development, and on a consultative meeting held in Ottawa in November 2000 attended by government, academic and civil society experts from around the world.

Gill, Hannah E. (2004). “Finding a Middle Ground between Extremes: Notes on Researching Transnational Crime and Violence.” *Anthropology Matters*, Vol.6, No.2.

Women anthropologists working in areas of conflict and risk must address specific practical and philosophical concerns, including ethical issues involving the exposure of patterns of crime and violence in a community, limitation of movement and constant surveillance, and mistrust relating to the anthropologist’s background. These issues are addressed in the context of the author’s field research with a transnational migrant community in the Dominican Republic.

Green, Linda (1995). “Living in a State of Fear.” In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.105–127.

Linda Green analyzes “fear” in a personal and political context. The culture of fear that has reigned in Guatemala since the 1960s has unravelled the social fabric by infusing distrust into friendships and family ties. Fear has entered social memory and social practices. Silence and secrecy are the concomitants ethnographers face when they want to carry out fieldwork in a country that is still under authoritarian control, where counterinsurgency units have a free hand and death squads intimidate and assassinate citizens and foreigners alike. Green sketches

the eerie calm yet visceral disquiet of everyday life under repression. The culture of subterranean terror in the town of Chicaj fuses with the routines of fieldwork as Green herself is summoned to the military commander who controls the area. (...). Sharing her experience with the widows of Guatemala, she learns of the importance of silence as a strategy of survival as well as an instrument of repression. Coming to grips with fear does not mean succumbing to the state of normalcy and routinization on which it thrives but enduring its ambiguity in memory and defiance.

H

Hays–Mitchell, Maureen (2001). “Danger, Fulfillment and Responsibility in a Violence–plagued Society.” *Geographical Review* (1–4), Vol.91, No.1–2, pp.311–321.

This is a critical self-reflective article about the author’s field research in the central Andean Highlands of Peru. While not intending to conduct field research in a society at war, once in the field the author is caught up in the violence of an emerging conflict. Violence, death, distrust and fear were commonplace. She was forced to alter fieldwork goals and methods. The author reflects, very personally, on making and accepting mistakes and about taking responsibility in the field. She suggests how fieldwork informs important phenomena in ways otherwise impossible to see and survey.

Henry, Frances (1966). “The Role of the Fieldworker in an Explosive Political Situation.” *Current Anthropology*, Vol.7, No.4, pp.552–559.

Henry discusses research in a situation of conflict between the government and trade unions in Trinidad. She was able to establish a rapport with both sides, and discusses how she got around attempts to get her to abandon her neutrality. The article offers a set of strategies when dealing with specific fieldwork-related situations and problems.

Herbert, Steve (2001). “From Spy to Okay Guy: Trust and Validity in Fieldwork with the Police.” *Geographical Review* (1–4), Vol.91, No.1–2, pp.304–310.

The author conducted field research in the Los Angeles Police Department. Whereas most officers initially were wary and sceptical of his presence, most of them grew friendly and helpful with time. Herbert analyses his relations with informants and how he was fictionally transformed from “spy” to “okay guy”. He further discusses the validity of data in the context of his fieldwork experience.

Howell, Nancy (1990). *Surviving Fieldwork: A Report of the Advisory Panel on Health and Safety in Fieldwork, American Anthropological Association*. Washington, American Anthropological Association. Advisory Panel on Health and Safety in Fieldwork.

This report addresses the issue of special risks to anthropologists during fieldwork and how to identify the variety and relative severity of risks that confront

anthropologists in the field. It identifies three significant categories of frequent and serious risks to anthropologists: malaria, hepatitis and accidents with vehicles. Other useful inclusions in the book are suggestions on various emergency communication devices, an annotated bibliography of the most useful health and safety guides, and an interesting discussion on the spatial issue of dispensing health care in the field.

Huntington, Dan (2005). *Guidebook to Safe and Effective Development in Conflict (SEDC)*. City, Risk Management Office (RMO) of DFID and GTZ, Nepal.

DFID (Department of International Development) and GTZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit) established a joint Risk Management Office (RMO) in 2002 to enable DFID and GTZ programmes to work safely and effectively without exacerbating the conflict. Since then, it has become increasingly clear that good development practice has a crucial role to play in helping staff to stay safe and work effectively. The RMO has developed the SEDC approach by merging good development practice, Risk Management, and Do No Harm. It is the first time that these concepts have been merged. RMO has adapted the concepts of Risk Management and Do No Harm., which are usually associated with humanitarian work, to the development context. It has taken the RMO a year to design and test the SEDC analysis.

K

Kleinman, Sherryl (1991). "Field-Workers' Feelings. What We Feel, Who We Are, How We Analyze." In: William B. Shaffir and Robert A. Stebbins. *Experiencing Fieldwork. An Inside View of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, London, New Delhi, Sage Publications.

The author discusses the issue of dealing with emotions during field research. He concludes that dealing with emotions during field research and talking to others (participants and other researchers) does not have anything to do with professional weakness. On the contrary, it allows us to gain deeper knowledge about ourselves and others.

Kovats-Bernat, Christopher J. (2002). "Negotiating Dangerous Fields. Pragmatic Strategies for Fieldwork amid Violence and Terror." *American Anthropologist*, Vol.104, No.1, pp.208-222.

As anthropology turns toward the cultural issues of the 21st century, more and more ethnographic fieldwork is and will continue to be conducted in regions fraught with conflict, instability, and terror. Despite a growing literature that seeks to develop new theories and perspectives for the study of violence, little mention is made of the practical matters of survival in perilous field sites and how the anthropologist's experience of violence in the field should be considered. What is needed is a pragmatic strategy for dealing with threats to the safety, security, and well-being of anthropologists and informants who work amid the

menace of violence. Drawing on my own fieldwork in Haiti, I suggest the adoption of new tactics for ethnographic research and survival in dangerous fields—strategies that challenge the conventional ethics of the discipline, reconfigure the relationship between anthropologist and informant, and compel innovation in negotiating the exchange of data under hazardous circumstances.

Krohn–Hansen, Christian (1997). “The Anthropology and Ethnography of Political Violence.” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol.34, No.2, pp.233–240.

Two recent books have shown the fruitfulness of approaching analysis of political violence and terror based on a set of general anthropological ideas about meaning formation, cosmology, and ritual. One of these works in particular reveals links between what may be described as the cultural construction of political violence in modern industrialized contexts and the shaping of particular spatial and bodily symbolism among social actors. The other book has contributed to the field of cross-cultural studies of political violence by examining connections between the making of particular concepts of the past – or history – among groups of actors, and the suffering and perpetration of political violence. This study sheds general light on the relationship between collective memory of violence and spirals of ethnic violence. This review essay also briefly assesses a third book, i.e. a collection of essays which discuss different aspects of what it means in theoretical, methodological, and ethical terms to carry out research based on fieldwork when political violence in the field is, or has until recently been, commonplace. Together the three volumes can be said to reveal central features of recent trends among anthropologists who investigate political violence. (Review essay of Feldman (1991), Maliki (1995) and Carolyn Nordstrom/Antonijs C. G. M. Robben (1995)).

Kunnath, George J. (2004). “Under the Shadow of Guns. Negotiating the Flaming Fields of Caste/Class War in Bihar, India.” *Anthropology Matters*, Vol.6, No.2.

This paper emerged from the author’s fieldwork among the Dalits in Jehanabad district of Bihar, India, where caste and class violence has claimed hundreds of lives since the 1970s. Marxist rebels, the private armies of the upper-caste landlords, and the police have turned this region into what is known as the ‘killing fields of Bihar’. Conducting fieldwork in a context of ongoing caste and class war has raised a number of questions that challenge the conventional fieldwork practices in anthropology and open new avenues for exploration. This paper, after laying out the context of the research, examines and discusses the issues of the researcher’s identity, anthropological objectivity, ethics, fieldwork methods and personal commitment in the ‘fields under fire’.

L

Lee, Raymond M. (1995a). *Doing Research on Sensitive Topics*. London, Sage Publications.

Lee introduces researchers to the subject of sensitive research and addresses the question of what makes research contentious. He considers the relationship between research and issues of social or political power, the capacity of research to encroach on people's lives, and the potential implications researching sensitive topics may have for the researcher. Covering both quantitative and qualitative methods, Lee offers advice on such key questions as the choice of methodologies for sensitive research and the problems of estimating the size of hidden populations. He also examines the political and ethical problems inherent in the relations between the researcher and the objects of research, and in the disclosure, dissemination, and publication of research.

Lee, Raymond M. (1995b). *Dangerous Fieldwork*. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

How can researchers gain access but mediate personal safety in the midst of violent social conflict? Under what conditions does danger occur and what can a researcher do to evade it or manage it? In *Dangerous Fieldwork* Lee examines the kinds of danger faced by researchers and provides strategies for reducing risk in perilous situations. He presents the experiences of researchers who have worked among various groups such as outlaw bikers, youth gangs and those infected with HIV. He also discusses the hazards of working with informants in inherently dangerous occupations. The under-documented but increasingly important subject of sexual harassment and assault is addressed as well. In this volume the author avoids adopting an alarmist stance toward potentially dangerous fieldwork. Instead he emphasizes the importance of carefully appraising research settings for possible danger. *Dangerous Fieldwork* is invaluable reading for all researchers, especially those interested in qualitative methods in the fields of anthropology, sociology, criminology, nursing and health care, drugs and alcohol and law.

M

Manz, Beatriz (1995). "Reflections on an 'Anthropología Comprometida': Conversations with Richard Falla." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.261–274.

In an interview conducted by Beatriz Manz, the anthropologist and priest Ricardo Falla, who has dedicated his life to assisting and chronicling the lives of Mayas living under political duress in Guatemala, gives an account of his long-term fieldwork. According to Falla, field-workers are witnesses, but they need a coherent theoretical approach to understand what has been witnessed. With a sense

of moral grounding, Falla insists that fieldworkers must be able to make judgments and choose sides.

Mason, Simon A. (2003). *Conflict-Sensitive Interviewing: Explorative Expert-interviews as a Conflict-Sensitive Research Method, Lessons from the Project "Environment and Cooperation in the Nile Basin" (ECONILE)*. European Peace Science Conference, June 1 to 3, Amsterdam.

This paper describes and evaluates "Explorative Expert Interviews" as a conflict-sensitive research method. Conflict-sensitive research methods seek to 1) minimize bias through a dual approach (two researchers, one on each side of the conflict), 2) increase trust through accountability and transparency, 3) guarantee the safety of the researchers and researched through confidentiality, and 4) enhance applicability and acceptability of conflict management options through participatory conflict analysis. The method of explorative expert interviews presented in this paper is based on qualitative interview literature, mediation and conflict transformation approaches, and experiences from the "Environment and Cooperation in the Nile Basin" (ECONILE) project. The method can be used to gather different conflict perceptions, develop hypotheses, trace causal mechanisms, and brainstorm management options. It is suitable for building a network of experts for follow-up conflict management projects. The method is not useful for testing generalized hypotheses or finding "hard" causal effects.

Migdal, Joel S. (1980). "Field Research in an Occupied Territory." In: Joel S. Migdal. *Palestinian Society and Politics*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. pp.88-96.

The author discusses the issue of "interviews in a hostile environment" exemplified by a case study among Palestinians.

Mitchell, Richard (1991). "Secrecy and Disclosure in Fieldwork." In: William B. Schaffir and Robert A. Stebbins. *Experiencing Fieldwork. An Inside View of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, London, New Delhi, Sage Publications. pp.207-222.

Drawing on his fieldwork experience among mountain climbers and survivalists, the author defines the forms of secrecy experienced in fieldwork and contrasts the appropriateness of secrecy and disclosure in research from positivist and symbolic interactionist perspectives. From the positivist point of view, secrecy is an anathema, but interpretative sociologists recognize that secrecy is present in all social actions yet perfected in none of them.

Mitchell, Richard (1993). *Secrecy and Fieldwork: Revelation and Concealment in Post-Modern Ethnography*. Beverly Hills, Sage Publications.

Richard Mitchell explores the ethical and practical quagmire of revelation and concealment in the field and attempts to arrive at a more useful set of norms for

fieldworker behaviour than the bureaucratic solutions in existence. What should the researcher tell, and not tell, informants? Is fieldwork inherently an activity requiring covert behaviour by the researcher and subject alike? Are honesty and openness at odds with effectiveness in the field? Drawing from his own work with mountaineers and survivalists, as well as examples from the successful and unsuccessful fieldwork of others, the author examines these questions and concludes that secrecy is “risky” but necessary business.

Moussaoui, Abderrahmane (2001). “Du danger et du terrain en Algérie/Danger and fieldwork in Algeria.” *Ethnologie française* (1-3), Vol.31, No.1, pp.51-59.

In connection with fieldwork in Algeria, a country that has been experiencing murderous violence for nearly a decade, the author undertakes to show how an anthropologist can attempt to uncover logic in the surrounding chaos. In a conflict where a statement constitutes a fundamental risk and personal opinion is a heresy threatened by death, the work of the researcher, though difficult, is not impossible. The article tries to depict the motivations, the stakes, and anxieties and the risks such work entails.

N

Nash, June (1976). “Ethnology in a Revolutionary Setting.” In: M. Rynkiewicz and J. Spradley. *Ethics and Anthropology. Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. New York, Wiley. pp.148-166.

Drawing on her fieldwork in Bolivia, the author argues that anthropologists can no longer retreat into the deceptive pose of neutrality. Anthropologists are now, as Nash points out, at the crossroads in defining a participation-observer perspective more adequate to the load that revolutionary stress is putting on their role in the field. Science advances only by honest declaration of the convictions that influence data gathering and analysis.

Nordstrom, Carolyn (1995). “Creativity and Chaos: War on the Frontlines.” In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.129-153.

Carolyn Nordstrom describes how she has struggled and continues to struggle with the senselessness of the violence inflicted on the population of Mozambique by Renamo’s war. Anthropologists themselves, like those among whom they work, cannot be removed from the impact of witnessing tragedy but must struggle with the implications of working in a context where violence throws into dramatic relief core questions about human nature and culture. Nordstrom rejects apologetic rationalizations of warfare in a radical move by striking out Reason as it applies to war. Instead of reasoning away her bewilderment or surrendering to the in-avoidable distortions and constrictors of reasonable narration, she

focuses on the poetics of the cultural discourse of the victims of war who create their worlds anew from the shards of their broken homes and lives.

Nordstrom, Carolyn (2004). *Shadows of War. Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press.

In this provocative and compelling examination of the deep politics of war, Carolyn Nordstrom takes us from the immediacy of war-zone survival through the offices of power brokers to vast extra-legal networks that fuel war and international profiteering. She captures the human face of the front lines, revealing both the visible and the hidden realities of war in the twenty-first century. *Shadows of War* is grounded in ethnographic research carried out at the epicentres of political violence on several continents. Its pages are populated not only with the perpetrators and victims of war but also with the scoundrels, silent heroes, and average families who live their lives in the midst of explosive violence. Nordstrom demonstrates that war recon-figures our most basic notions of humanity. This book, of crucial importance at the present moment, shows that war is enmeshed in struggles over the very foundations of the sovereign state, the crafting of economic empires both legal and illegal, and innovative searches for peace.

Nordstrom, Carolyn and Antonius C. G. M. Robben, Eds. (1995). *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press.

This book consists of a collection of essays written by anthropologists who have experienced the unpredictability and trauma of political violence firsthand. The book uses theoretical, ethnographic and methodological points of view to illuminate the processes and solutions characterizing life in dangerous places. The essays describe the first, often harrowing experience of violence, the personal and professional problems that arise as troubles escalate, and the often surprisingly creative strategies used by people to survive. The articles are written under the influence of the “interpretive turn” in social anthropology and represent challenges to scientific concepts of objectivity.

O

Oglesby, Elisabeth (1995). “Myrna Mack.” In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.254–259.

This article consists of the letters of the anthropologist Myrna Mack, who died in 1990 at the hands of Guatemalan soldiers in downtown Guatemala City as she left her office to go home. The letters are prefaced by Elisabeth Oglesby, who worked with Mack for five years in Guatemala before her murder.

Olujic, Maria B. (1995). "Coming Home. The Croatian War Experience." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.186–204.

Olujic writes about her perturbed departure from California to the war-torn republic of Croatia. She describes a departure for the field that is at the same time a coming home. She returns after an absence of two decades to a motherland that no longer corresponds to her childhood memories. She emphasises the ethical dilemmas of the ethnography of violence and socio-political conflict by reminding us of its dire consequences. Researchers should be careful, Olujic stresses, about asking victims of violence to tell their stories when we are unable to relieve the reliving of their traumas. It is possible to give a voice to the victims of violence, but it is impossible to restore their lives.

P

Pieke, Frank N. (1995). "Accidental Anthropology. Witnessing the 1989 Chinese People's Movement." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.62–79.

Pieke reflects on responsibility and personal safety in his description of unexpected ethical dilemmas when he engaged in the protests in Tian'anmen Square in Beijing in May 1989. The protests kept him from executing his initial research plan. After having decided to switch attention to the protests, he was likely to put his hosts — his colleagues at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences — in a vulnerable situation. When he finally felt free to do research among the rallying students, he was asked to become a human shield. Pieke shows that the exercise of discussing and conveying the haphazard conditions under which fieldwork in locations under siege is conducted is intriguing. However, his account fails to consider the practical issues that emerge from doing fieldwork under fire and that challenge the conventional ethics of field-work under fire.

R

Reber, Philipp (2005). *More Safety and Security for Missions Abroad. Guidelines of Caritas Switzerland*. Lucerne, Caritas Publications.

Today aid workers are increasingly exposed to risks when working abroad. In order to improve the safety and security of its staff, the executive board of Caritas Switzerland has approved the present binding guidelines More Safety and Security Abroad. The guidelines provide practitioners with a series of recommended measures for improving safety and security in the field and when travelling abroad.

Reychler, Luc and Thania Pfaffenholz (2001). *Peace-building: A Field Guide*. Boulder, Rienner.

This book draws on the lessons of a decade of peacemaking and conflict management in some of the most troubled regions of the world. Its purpose is to provide current and prospective aid workers with practical guidelines. It addresses the problems that fieldworkers are confronted with on a daily basis, such as managing stress, security issues, and ethical issues, but also working procedures such as how to design mediation processes and monitoring. It is divided into four parts: (1) Preparing for the Field, (2) Working in the field, (3) Surviving in the field.

Robben, Antonius C. G. M. (1995). "Seduction and Persuasion. The Politics of Truth and Emotion among Victims and Perpetrators of Violence." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.81-103.

Both victims and perpetrators of violence have a personal and political stake in making the ethnographer adopt their interpretations of the cause and dynamics of the violence. Antonius Robben encountered these problems in his research into the contested historical reconstruction of Argentina's "dirty war" as told by its chief protagonists and survivors. Because of the high political and emotional stakes of this violent conflict, he was exposed to strategies of persuasion and concealment used by generals, bishops, politicians, former guerrilla commanders, and human rights leaders. Robben uses the term "ethnographic seduction" to describe these strategies. He turns a frank and probing eye on the question of how the sophisticated rhetoric of Argentine military officers affected his critical sensibility and how the anguished testimonies of their victims enwrapped him in silence and sorrow. Ethnographic seduction disabled his ethnographic gaze as his interlocutors tried to entice him away from a deeper understanding of the troubled 1970s to a surface of reason and emotion. Tossed between compassion for the victims and a sincere attempt to understand their victimizers, Robben slowly begins to apprehend the analogies between the seduction techniques used on him by the architects of repression and the dirty war practices of disappearance, deception and terror perpetrated against the Argentine people. This awareness allows him to expose the transparency of dictatorial power, recognize the perfidiousness of its domination, and empathize more deeply with the victims of repression.

Robben, Antonius C. G. M. and Carolyn Nordstrom (1995). "The Anthropology and Ethnography of Violence and Sociopolitical Conflict." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.1-23.

Robben and Nordstrom argue that violence is a dimension of life and confirm what is stated by others: violence is a cultural phenomenon. Little can be said

about violence outside the constraints of society and culture. In the introduction, Robben and Nordstrom focus on the three principal concerns of the book: 1) “the everyday experiences of people who are the victims and perpetrators of violence”; 2) “the relationship between field-workers and the people studied, including the distinct research problems and experiences of ethnographers who study situations of violence”; and 3) “the theoretical issues that emerge from studying topics that involve personal danger”. According to them, doing “fieldwork under fire” involves “a number of responsibilities above and beyond those associated with more traditional ethnography: responsibilities to the field-worker’s safety, to the safety of his or her informants and to the theories that help to forge attitudes toward the reality of violence, both expressed and experienced.” Little research has been done so far on this subject. The authors aim to help “ethnographers of violence and socio-political conflict” to recognize and solve problems occurring during their field-work, and to take away some of the anxieties of doing fieldwork in violent contexts and encourage further research on this topic. The editors organized the sequence of chapters to “follow the trajectory of the actual field encounter, starting with the researcher’s initial confrontation with violent events, moving through the complexities of actual field-work and ending with his or her return from the field with finished notes in hand, or return to the field for second insights”.

Rodgers, Dennis (2001). *Making Danger a Calling: Anthropology, Violence and the Dilemmas of Participant Observation*. London, Development Research Centre, LSE.

Rodgers discusses the practical implications of doing participant observation in violence-prone areas exemplified during his research in Nicaragua for a PhD dissertation. The basic question he considers is whether it is legitimate or even necessary for anthropologists to engage in violence, and with the violent, in the context of researching a phenomenon, or to what extent anthropologists should in Nietzsche’s words “make danger a calling”.

Ross, Howard (2002). *Conflict-Sensitive Journalism. A Handbook*. City, IMPACS International Media Support.

This publication seeks to contribute to the theoretical refinement and practical realisation of conflict-conscious journalism as a tool for use by media practitioners in conflict-affected areas. With this goal in mind, the handbook is designed to be both a practical everyday guide for those already familiar with the subject, as well as an introduction for those unfamiliar with such practices. A conflict-sensitive journalist applies conflict analysis and searches for new voices and new ideas concerning the conflict. He or she reports on who is trying to resolve the conflict, looks closely at all sides, and reports on how other conflicts were resolved. A conflict-sensitive journalist takes no sides, but is engaged in the search for solutions. Conflict-sensitive journalists choose their words carefully.

S

Sangarasivam, Yamuna (2001). "Researcher, Informant, 'Assasin', Me." *Geographical review* (1-4), Vol.91, No.1-2, pp.95-104.

Sangarasivam presents a self-reflective analysis of her "fieldwork under fire" in Sri Lanka. Sangarasivam, herself an expatriate Tamil, investigates the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam). The author briefly discusses her struggle with her multiple identities and argues for methodologies that recognize the researcher as an informant himself. She further discusses interactions between political engagement and research.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1995). "The Primacy of the Ethical. Propositions for a Militant Anthropology." *Current Anthropology*, Vol.36, No.3, pp.409-440.

In this article, Scheper-Hughes calls for a 'militant anthropology': "The new cadre of 'barefoot anthropologists' that I envision must become alarmists and shock troopers – the producers of politically complicated and morally demanding texts and images capable of sinking through the layers of acceptance, complicity and bad faith that allow the suffering and death to continue without even [a] pained cry of recognition". According to Scheper-Hughes political activism has to be an integral part of anthropology amidst horror.

Shaffir, William B. and Robert A. Stebbins (1991). *Experiencing Fieldwork. An Inside View of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, London, New Delhi, Sage Publications.

Reports about field research usually describe the methods and techniques of the research. Less often do they tell of the researchers' social and emotional experiences: anxiety and frustration, as well as exhilaration and pride in achievement. In this book field researchers discuss their personal experiences and, less prominently, the methodological decisions and choices behind their studies of society.

Silkin, Trish and Barbara Hendrie (1997). "Research in the War Zones of Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia." *Disasters*, Vol.21, No.2, pp.166-176.

This paper engages in the discussion of conducting research in war zones, initiated in *Disasters* by Barakat and Ellis. It looks specifically at possibilities for research in the war zones of Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia during the 1980s, and notes the ways in which this context differs from the wars in former Yugoslavia, to which Barakat and Ellis mainly refer. The authors suggest that the unique context of every internal war and the institutional actors that converge around this context, create both the potential and the demand for particular kinds of information, especially when humanitarian programmes involving international donors are under way. De-contextualising research in war zones fronts the specific context in which it occurs, to derive general guidelines can thus be problematic.

Simons, Anna (1995). "Rumor. The Beginning of the End." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.42–60.

Simons describes the outburst of street violence in Mogadishu on July 14, 1989. She carefully explores conflicting rumours that buzzed around the capital. Rumours are often the only source available for ethnographic information in violent situations, instead of well-informed informants, who have been the core of ethnographic research. Simons shows that rumours provided people in Somalia with a perspective in an unstable situation. Rumours are important for the coherent historical narrative constructed in hindsight and therefore deserve as much ethnographic attention as the events that remain present in the collective memory.

Sluka, Jeffrey A. (1990). "Participant Observation in Violent Social Contexts." *Human Organisation*, Vol.49, No.2, pp.114–126.

The paper addresses an area largely neglected in the literature on research methods and the experience of fieldwork in anthropology – namely the methodological and subjective issue of the dangers anthropologists face while in the field. It begins with a brief review of the literature on methods with reference to this issue, and a discussion of some factors that have contributed to the fact that certain problems of physical safety for fieldworkers have become more prominent today than ever before in the past. The second part of the paper illustrates some of these problems by presenting the example of fieldwork/research in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The author begins with the experiences of other researchers in Belfast, and then discusses his own experience, focussing on dangerous aspects and how these were managed through a conscious effort at impression management. The third part of the paper returns to a more theoretical or abstract level, presenting recommendations for managing some of the dangers inherent in conducting fieldwork in violent or dangerous social contexts. This is followed by a brief conclusion, presenting some overview observations on this issue.

Sluka, Jeffrey A. (1995). "Reflections on Managing Danger in Fieldwork: Dangerous Anthropology in Belfast." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.276–292.

The author reflects upon the management of danger by drawing on his experiences in the Catholic ghettos of Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1981-2 and 1991. He discusses some of the practical methodological sensitivities of doing fieldwork among members of a liberation organisation that has many enemies and is under threat from the security forces. Sluka reminds us of ethical matters concerning 'bargaining' with participants in a conflict over the expected results of the research. He points out that neutrality may be impossible in highly charged conflicts. In this respect, he also comments on the risks of becoming partisan in a conflict area. However, his main advice to anthropologists doing fieldwork in hazardous conditions is confined to such issues as mediating threats through

foresight, planning, and skilful manoeuvre. Sluka does not push this point further by asking whether mediating danger and negotiating the safety of anthropologists and informants who work in distressing battlefields warrants critical reflection on the conventional ethics of the discipline.

Smyth, Marie and Gillian Robinson, Eds. (2001). *Researching Violently Divided Societies: Ethical and Methodological Issues*. Tokyo, London, etc., United Nations University Press/Pluto Press.

This book, produced as a result of an international collaboration between researchers in Eastern Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Northern Ireland and elsewhere, aims to: (1) Provide a guide to the issues faced by researchers working in violently divided contexts, (2) document the insights and practical wisdom of researchers operating in such contexts, (3) afford access to the living experience of those researchers and the ethical and methodological challenges which face them, (5) present accounts and analyses that illustrate a wide range of diverse experiences and perspectives on the practice of researching in violently divided societies, (6) explore the involvement of the researchers with the research material and the impact of doing the research on them. The authors cover a range of ethical and methodological concerns. The specific demands of conducting research in war-torn and divided societies have stimulated the contributors to analyse and critique issues of concern to all researchers, such as the contribution of research to society, the benefit of research to respondents, and issues of objectivity. In the often stark circumstances in which the contributors work, these themes take on an urgency and clarity that can potentially illuminate research practise in general.

Starn, Orin (1991). "Missing the Revolution: Anthropologists and the War in Peru." *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol.6, No.1, pp.63–91.

On 17 May 1980, Shining Path guerrillas burned ballot boxes in the Andean village of Chuschi and proclaimed their intention to overthrow the Peruvian state. For hundreds of anthropologists in the thriving regional subspecialty of Andean studies, the rise of the Shining Path came as a complete surprise. Starn analyzes why anthropologists missed the gathering storm and what this says about the ethnographic understandings and representations of the highlands.

Stiefel, Matthias (1998). *Rebuilding after War: A Summary Report of the War-torn Societies Project*. Geneva, WSP/UNRISD.

This paper offers a summary report of the war-torn societies project (WSP), a four-year participatory action-research project, supported by 28 agencies and institutions. WSP undertook to initiate participatory action-research (PAR) projects, in four selected war-torn societies (Eritrea, Mozambique, Guatemala, Somalia). The PAR-method was developed in the late 1960s and was applied in slightly modified fashion by WSP. Research and policy action is seen as potentially interrelated in several ways. In the research process it was expected that there would be value in promoting and facilitating dialogue about research priorities and findings, and about the policy agendas of the different participants.

Swedenburg, Ted (1995). "Prisoners of Love. With Genet in the Palestinian Field." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.25–40.

In a distinctive self-reflective way, Swedenburg discusses his field research in the Palestinian West Bank in 1992, shortly after the first Intifada. Swedenburg has a strong autobiographical involvement with the people he researched. His special relation with the Palestinians leads him to a self-reflective exegesis, captured well in the double entendre of "prisoners of love" – Jean Genet's musings on his years with the Palestinians in the early 1970s. With Genet he shares the experience of exhilaration "to be among, not with" as well as an 'unacademic feeling' of being "enamoured of the Palestinian revolution". In comparing his sympathy for the Palestinian cause with Genet's literary writings, he offers a formula for balancing his affinity with criteria of scholar objectivity. Swedenburg stresses the ambiguity of conducting participant observation in highly violent contexts.

T

Taylor, Christopher Charles (1999). *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994*. Oxford, Berg.

The book starts with a personal account of the author's engagement with Rwanda and his bewildering experience of violence and massacre unleashed in Kigali. The sudden contraction of the world and the rescue of expatriates convey a sense of the radical rupturing of knowledge and meaning. The immediate interest of this book on the Rwandan genocide (1994) is the fact that Taylor, who had already established himself as an ethnographer of Rwanda, was coincidentally present during the period leading up to and the first few days of the massacres. This makes it a very personal and searching analysis, since the worlds and beliefs of victims and perpetrators were those of friends and acquaintances.

Timmer, Jaap (2002). "Conflict and Anthropology. Some Notes on Doing Consultancy Work in Malukan Battlegrounds (Eastern Indonesia)." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 3(2) 2002: 65–88. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Fifth European Society for Oceanists Conference in Vienna, 4–6 July 2002.

In this article, the author reflects on methodological considerations while conducting field research in violence-prone areas by drawing on his experiences as a consultant for international and local non-governmental organisations that were providing emergency aid to the victims of the Malukan conflicts and attempting to provide service in the field of peace-building and conflict transformation. In regions where security and trust allowed refugees to return, he also worked on so-called reconstruction and rehabilitation programs. Drawing on his education as a social anthropologist, the author processed anthropological knowledge to make sense of what was going on in order to find solutions to distressing situa-

tions and to think through approaches that would foster a better future for the Maluku. He also reflects on the limited control over reliable information and the extent to which 'truths' have to be continuously assessed. He critically assesses anthropological fieldwork methods for consultancy work and argues for a methodological discussion. The author argues that anthropologists can play a distinctive role by bringing accounts to the reader which are not over-sensational, and deconstructing the myth about those who engage in acts of political violence.

V

Van Brabant, Koenraad (2000). *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments*. Good Practice Review 8. London, Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

This paper offers a systematic step-by-step approach to security management, from con-text analysis, threat and risk assessment to security strategy choice and security planning. It reviews major types of threats (battlefield survival, vehicle safety, site security, sexual assault, abduction and kidnapping etc), preventative measures, and guidelines for survival and incident management. The importance of incident analysis and better exchange of security information between agencies is also explored. Finally, a number of cross-cutting themes are explored which are relevant to risk control, such as personal and team competency, clarity towards national staff, good communications, briefing and training, etc. The annexes provide additional information, for example, on legal protection of aid workers, private security companies, the UN security management system, insurance cover, etc. The arguments in the GPR are illustrated with case material drawn from all over the world.

W

Wallach, Bret (2001). "A Window on the West Bank." *Geographical Review*, Vol.91, No.1-2, pp.26-33.

This is a descriptive article on social reality in the West Bank in the early 1990s. At the end, the author reflects briefly on the implications of doing fieldwork among both parties to the conflict.

West, Harry G. (2003). "Voices Twice Silenced: Betrayal and Mourning at Colonialism's End in Mozambique." *Anthropological Theory*, Vol.3, pp.343-365.

In the course of gathering life histories in northern Mozambique, the author encountered men who had been the victims of torture at the hands of the Portuguese during the Mozambican war for independence. The author gives an account of his conversations with these men, reflecting upon the urgency with which they told him their stories decades after their experience of violence. Where Portuguese attempts to 'rehabilitate' political prisoners and to use them as counterinsurgency

operatives rendered all torture victims suspect in the eyes of the post-independence state, and where the atmosphere of political suspicion was exacerbated by civil war, these men were frustrated in their attempts to find a public discursive space in which to make sense of what had happened to them. They consequently spoke of their experiences as if mourning their own deaths, the author argues, while demanding as recently departed ancestors that they not be forgotten.

Winkler, Cathy and Penelope J. Hanke (1995). "Rape Attack. Ethnography of the Ethnographer." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp.154–184.

Anthropologists are not immune from violence. Cathy Winkler is an ethnographer who had to pick up the shattered pieces of her own life after a rape attack. Winkler describes how she was abused repeatedly by a rapist and then became the victim, survivor, witness, plaintiff, investigator and researcher of her own assault. Ethnographer and ethnography collapsed into one whole, in which objectivity and subjectivity were jumbled in ambiguity. The research object became the subject, and the subject survived by behaving as an object. Winkler's contribution excels in conveying the confusion, irrationality, and bewilderment of the rape attack in particular, and of violent conflict as well as research on violence in general.

Wolf, Daniel R. (1991). "High-Risk Methodology. Reflections on Leaving an Outlaw Society." In: William B. Shaffir and Robert A. Stebbins. *Experiencing Fieldwork. An Inside View of Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, London, New Delhi, Sage Publications.

This article is based on the author's field research on an outlaw motorcycle club in the USA, a deviant group that is also frequently involved in violence and engages in illegal and organized criminal activity. Wolf chose an unconventional methodology, and a very risky entry strategy: He approached the group as a biker with the intention of first earning trust before approaching them as an anthropologist. As a consequence, he faced a professional ethical problem in conducting clandestine research.

Z

Zulaika, Joseba (1995). "Face: The Anthropologist as a Terrorist." In: Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press. pp. 206–222.

Zulaika conducted fieldwork in his own natal Basque village. He examines his conflicting roles as an outside observer, educated in the United States, and on the other hand, as a friend and neighbour to the combatants on both sides of the conflict. He rejects dichotomous assumptions that impose ethical judgments on subject matter in such a way as to preclude understanding.

3 Thematic Index of Authors

Approaches (theoretical, conceptual and methodological)

Author	Content	Country
Anderson (1999)	do no harm approach	
Avruch (2001)	overall review of concepts & approaches	
Daniel (1996)	"writing violence"	Sri Lanka
Daniel (1997)	reflexivity, "writing violence", representation	Sri Lanka
Das (1990)	"writing violence", responsibility, reflexivity, representation	South Asia
Dentan (1995)	interviews, representation, "writing violence"	Malaysia
El-Bushra/Sahl (2005)		Sudan, Uganda, Angola, Mali, Somalia, Rwanda
Feldmann (1995)		Dominican Republic
Gill (2004)		
Hagmann/ Mason (2004)	literature review	
Hays-Mitchell (2001)	reflexivity, responsibility	Peru
Henry (1966)	partiality/impartiality, Field work in two conflict parties	Trinidad
Kovats-Bernat (2002)	review of concepts and approaches, new strategies	Haiti
Krohn-Hansen (1997)	review of three approaches	
Kunnath (2004)		Bihar, India
Herbert, Steve (2001)	validity of data	Los Angeles, USA
Lee (1995a)	research on sensitive topics	
Lee (1995b)	dangerous fieldwork general	
Manz, Beatriz (1995)		Guatemala
Mason (2003)	interviews	Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia
Migdal (1980)	interviews	Palestine
Mitchell (1993)	secrecy	
Moussaoui (2001)		Algeria
Nash (1976)	partiality/impartiality, neutrality	Bolivia
Nordstrom (1995)		Mozambique
Nordstrom(2004)	creativity	
Nordstrom/Robben (1995)		
Rodgers (2001)	participant observation	Nicaragua
Ross (2002)	conflict sensitive journalism	
Sangarasivam (2001)	self-informant, political engagement	Sri Lanka
Scheper-Hughes (1995)	militant anthropology	
Trish/Hendrie (1997)		Ethiopia
Timmer (2002)		Indonesia
Sluka (1990)		Belfast, Ireland
Smyth/Robinson (2001)		

Stiefel (1998)	PAR-method	Eritrea, Mozambique, Guatemala, Somalia
Starn (1991), Swdenburg (1995) De Soto/Dudwick (2000) West (2003) Winkler/Hanke (1995) Wolf (1991), Zulaika (1995)	ethnographic understanding, representation, orientalism reflexivity, new approach interviews self-informant closed society, high risk methodology self-informant	Peru Palestine Postsocialist States Mozambique USA Basque, Spain

Ethics

AAA (1998) Bourgois (1990) Davison (2004) Gill (2004) Henry (1966)		Central-America Dominican Republic
Kovats-Bernat (2002) Kunnath (2004) Lee (1995a) Lee (1995b) Manz, Beatriz (1995) Mitchell (1993) Nash (1976) Olujic (1995) Pieke (1995) Rodgers (2001) Smyth/Robinson (2001) Reychler/Pfaffenholz (2001) Wolf (1991), Zulaika (1995)	partiality/impartiality, Field work in two conflict parties double identity Bihar, India partiality/impartiality, neutrality self-informant Croatia clandestine research self-informant	Trinidad Haiti Guatemala secrecy Bolivia China Nicaragua USA Basque, Spain

Dealing with perceptions/emotions

Chatzifotiou (2000) Gill (2004) Green (1995) Kleinmann (1991) Herbert (2001) Mitchell (1991) Mitchell (1993) Robben (1995) Shaffir/Stebbins (1991) Simons (1995) Sluka (1990), Taylor (1999) Timmer (2002) Starn (1991), Reychler/Pfaffenholz (2001) Wallach (2001)	anxiety trust fear feelings general informant's perception of researcher secrecy secrecy seduction rumours impression management truth ethnographic understanding, representation, orientalism rumours field research in two conflict parties	Dominican Republic Guatemala Los Angeles Argentina Belfast, Ireland Rwanda Indonesia Peru Palestine
--	--	---

Development-oriented approaches:

Anderson (1999) do-no-harm approach
 Huntington (2005) merging good development practice,
 Risk Management and Do No Harm

El-Bushra/Sahl (2005)

Fisher (2000)

Gaigals/Leonhardt (2001)

Reber (2005)

Stiefel (1998) PAR-method

Timmer (2002)

Reychler/Pfaffenholz (2001)

Nepal
 Sudan, Uganda,
 Angola, Mali, Somalia,
 Rwanda

Cambodia,
 Afghanistan,
 South Africa, Kenya,
 Northern Ireland,
 Colombia

Eritrea, Mozambique,
 Guatemala, Somalia
 Indonesia

Research design:

Chatzifotiou (2000)

Gill (2004)

Dominican Republic

Safety/security, protection strategies:

Chatzifotiou (2000)

Gill (2004)

Howell (1990)

Kovats-Bernat (2002)

Lee (1995b)

Pieke (1995)

Reber (2005)

Sluka (1990)

Sluka (1995)

Reychler/Pfaffenholz (2001)

Van Brabant (2000)

Dominican Republic

Haiti

China

Belfast, Ireland

Belfast, Ireland

Gender:

Chatzifotiou (2000)

Davison (2004)

El-Bushra/Sahl (2005)

Gill (2004)

Reber NGO (2005)

Reychler/Pfaffenholz (2001)

Sudan, Uganda,
 Angola, Mali,
 Somalia, Rwanda
 Dominican Republic

Other:

Oglesby (1995)

Ross (2002)

letters of the anthropologist Myrna Mack

conflict sensitive journalism

Guatemala

About the Author

Nathalie Gasser is a scientific collaborator at swisspeace; she has been involved in different NCCR North-South projects, in particular in the Horn of Africa, and has focused on themes such as social and economic change in Bedouin societies and theories of cultural representation. She gained field experience in Egypt and Madagascar.

Nathalie Gasser
NCCR North-South
Sonnenbergstrasse 17
P.O. Box, CH - 3000 Bern 7
Phone +41 31 330 12 12
Fax +41 31 330 12 13
nathaliegasser@yahoo.com

NCCR North–South Dialogue Series

- 1 *Human and Animal Health in Nomadic Pastoralist Communities of Chad: Zoonoses, Morbidity and Health Services.* Esther Schelling. 2002¹, rev. 2007²
- 2 *Understanding Institutions and Their Links to Resource Management from a New Institutionalism Perspective.* Tobias Haller. 2002¹, rev. 2007²
- 3 *Dialogue Workshop Methodology: Adapting the Interactive Problem–Solving Method to an Environmental Conflict.* Simon A. Mason. 2003¹, rev. 2007²
- 4 *The Globalisation Discourse.* Norman Backhaus. 2003¹, rev. 2007²
- 5 *Reforming Agriculture in a Globalising World – The Road Ahead for Kerala.* K.N. Nair, Vineetha Menon. 2004¹, rev. 2007²
- 6 *Simen Mountains Study 2004.* Eva Ludi. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 7 *“Should I Buy a Cow or a TV?” Reflections on the Conceptual Framework of the NCCR North–South.* Christine Bichsel, Silvia Hostettler, Balz Strasser. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 8 *An Overview of Different Vulnerability Approaches and Definitions.* Martin Cassel–Gintz. 2006¹, rev. 2007²
- 9 *Forestry in the Princely State of Swat and Kalam (North–West Pakistan).* Sultan–i–Rome. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 10 *Livelihood Strategies in North–West Pakistan.* Bernd Steimann. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 11 *The Critical Issue of Land Ownership: Violent Conflict, Somali Region of Ethiopia.* Ayele Gebre–Mariam. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 12 *Marginality: Concepts and Their Limitations.* Ghana S. Gurung, Michael Kollmair. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 13 *Political Ecology in Development Research.* Jon Schubert. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 14 *Ethiopia and the Nile: The Dilemma of National and Regional Hydro–politics.* Yacob Arsano. 2005¹, rev. 2007²
- 15 *Social Networks and Migration: Far West Nepalese Labour Migrants in Delhi.* Susan Thieme. 2006¹, rev. 2007²
- 16 *Conducting Field Research in Contexts of Violent Conflict.* Nathalie Gasser. 2006¹, rev. 2007²
- 17 *Bridging Research and Development: Capitalisation on Experience with Partnership Actions for Mitigating Syndromes.* Peter Messerli, Annika Salmi, Karl Herweg, Franziska Pfister, Thomas Breu. 2007

This annotated bibliography focuses on literature concerned with strategies for conducting field research in social contexts characterised by highly polarized conflicts. This is a topic largely neglected by the literature on qualitative field research. The bibliography consists of literature that is mainly, but not exclusively, concerned with field research in violently divided societies. Reflections on the subject are shaped by two main disciplinary approaches: (1) *social anthropological research*, and (2) *“applied” development-oriented research*. From a historical perspective, social anthropology is the discipline from which the practice of systematic field research emerged, mainly through the method of participatory observation. It is therefore not surprising that most of the literature dealing with the subject of field research in violence-prone areas stems from this discipline.

However, despite an ever-increasing body of literature concerning new anthropological theories and perspectives on violence on the one hand, and general methodological issues on the other hand, little has been published on the practical implications and methodological challenges that confront a social anthropologist conducting field research in a conflict setting. Sensitive methodological issues tend to be discussed in personal conversations between researchers rather than documented for a wider public. This annotated bibliography provides an overview of the existing literature in both fields described above. A thematic index of authors can be found at the end of the bibliography

The NCCR North-South Dialogue Series presents reflections on research topics of concern to programme members throughout the world.

dialogue

NCCR
north
south
47nos