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Anticipating and Managing Danger in Oral Historical Fieldwork, Part I: Reflections on the Role of the Interviewer(s)

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Abstract: This article offers an overview of the literature on anticipating and managing danger in qualitative fieldwork as it pertains to the practice of oral history in different settings. It offers an alternative perspective to the widespread assumption that oral history is an inherently positive endeavour that results in good relationships and outcomes. As someone who has frequently worked in conflict and post-conflict settings, and among *génocidaires*, war criminals and others whom anthropologists and sociologists have termed “unloved groups”, I have frequently had to consider the potential for danger throughout my research, from applying for ethics approval, to negotiating everyday encounters in the field, to disseminating outcomes. Yet the potential for harm still exists when working closely with seemingly benevolent participants, such as family, friends, colleagues, and community leaders, for example. As such, this article explores some of the circumstances through which danger can emerge in the course of oral historical fieldwork, whether in relatively benign or overtly dangerous settings. It also offers preliminary recommendations for anticipating and managing these forms of harm. Its timeliness lies in recent debates regarding whether oral historical research, particularly in the United States, should be subject to institutional review or whether current discipline-specific “best practices” are sufficient for ensuring minimal harm.

Keywords: ethics, danger, physical harm, psychological harm, reputational harm, social harm, economic harm, political violence

Introduction

On 8 September 2015, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) proposed that “oral history, journalism, biography, and historical scholarship activities that focus directly on the specific individuals about whom the information is collected” should be excluded from human subject regulation.¹ This recommendation was based on the recognition that oral history, as an established discipline, has developed its own ethics standards, central to which is the highly regarded practice of establishing informed consent with research participants. For many oral historians, the HSS’s proposed revision was unexpected “good news” in an otherwise seemingly stagnant debate between oral historians and federal policymakers that dated back to the early 1990s.² At the heart of the debate lay a fundamental difference of opinion regarding the potential for oral historical research to inflict harm upon the people and communities its practitioners studied. Whereas the U.S. government interpreted any human subject research to be a potential source of harm following a series of “glaring medical abuses” that occurred surrounding World War II, oral historians argued that “efforts to force oral history and historical inquiry into a regulatory framework designed for scientific research caused harm, confusion, and undue burden.”³

Subsequent comments by oral historians on the HHS recommendations have, nearly unanimously, reinforced this latter position.⁴ Indeed, for most oral historians, their research is a predominantly positive endeavour, and one that involves minimal harm for all involved. Oral historians are conscientious about maintaining reputable, discipline-

specific ethics codes and best practices. In the U.S., the Oral History Association's "Principles and Best Practices" were adopted in 1989, and revised in 2000 and 2009 in accordance with advances in the field.⁵ In the U.K., the Oral History Society published a similar set of legal and ethical guidelines to guide practitioners in their research design and everyday practice in 2003, which were subsequently revised in 2012.⁶ Beyond these discipline-specific ethics standards, oral historians commonly pride themselves on their ability to build intimate and trusting relationships with the people and communities with whom they work. The literature abounds with accounts of the close, personal relationships that practitioners have established with research participants that in turn allow them to listen deeply to and document previously unstudied narratives with an eye toward democratizing history—the underlying essential “social purpose” of bringing previously silenced voices into conversation with elite or official histories, celebrated in oral history's formative years by Paul Thompson.⁷

Only in rare instances have oral historians engaged critically with the negative impacts that these intimate relationships can have for our research and ourselves.⁸ Even more rare are accounts in which our best efforts to establish trust and build effective relationships fail completely or are undesirable in the first place, resulting in distance, insecurity, hostility, and various forms of harm to the interviewer, research assistants, and/or research participants. Nonetheless, many of us—particularly the steadily growing cohort of oral historians engaged in the study of political violence in its various manifestations—find ourselves working with research participants whom constitute “unloved groups” and who can pose a threat to researchers.⁹ Even more troubling, some oral historians have initiated projects anticipated as minimal risk, only to find themselves

unwittingly caught up in interpersonal conflict, political upheaval, or mass violence, for example. The fact remains that as part of the practice of oral history, we are frequently inserting ourselves into the intimate, everyday lives of people whom we do not always know well in advance, and whose mental and physical health, deeply held beliefs, and motives surrounding the interview are not always immediately clear to us. Similarly, we may find ourselves working in unfamiliar contexts in which there are no overt signs of instability or conflict, only to find the situation far more complicated on the ground. Under the circumstances, as oral history potentially moves away from institutional review, it seems timely to initiate a conversation on the full range of potential harms and worst-case scenarios that oral historians should be prepared to negotiate, regardless of the location of their research or subject of interest.

With this in mind, there exists substantial body of interdisciplinary academic literature on conducting research in dangerous settings that promotes ethical and safe research design in different contexts. This literature encourages researchers to conduct risk assessments relevant to different phases of their research, from the initial research design, to conducting fieldwork, to disseminating research outcomes. But much of this literature understandably privileges the potential harm that we could be doing to participants as members of “vulnerable populations,” with only passing consideration of the potential harm to which we could be exposing ourselves. Indeed, in conversations I have had with colleagues across the social sciences, including in the context of institutional ethics review, there is a pervasive tendency for researchers to be quite dismissive of the dangers to which they are exposed in the course of undertaking

fieldwork in dangerous settings, often on the grounds that it wrongly detracts attention away from our far more vulnerable research participants.

However, this position does researchers a grave injustice: we owe it ourselves, our loved ones, and our students and colleagues to engage with the various harms to which we are exposed surrounding our research and to approach this research with an informed understanding of the potential impact it can have on us and on our personal and professional relationships. Likewise, we need to continue to assess and adapt our “best practices” in so far as we are able to mitigate these harms, if for no other reason than to allow us to be able to engage with this difficult subject matter long-term, we hope with greater benefit to the peoples and communities with whom we work.

To this end, this article—the first in a two-part series on managing danger in oral historical research¹⁰—will provide an overview of the literature on managing danger in fieldwork, particularly as it relates to the well-established and carefully considered “ethnography of political violence” sub-field of anthropology, as well as political science literature on fieldwork in difficult settings.¹¹ Occasionally throughout this overview, I will reflect on my oral historical fieldwork in various settings to explore the closely related concepts of physical, psychological, reputational, social, and economic harm that can be experienced by the interviewer at different stages in the research project. The resulting article is intended to provide oral historians with a firm understanding of current “best practices” for anticipating and managing danger in fieldwork, and to help them make sense of these experiences in the hopefully unlikely event that one or more of these forms of harm become a reality in their research.

Managing Danger in Fieldwork: An Overview of Existing Literature

The literature on managing danger in fieldwork largely emerges from the realization that political violence in its various manifestations is occurring with increasing regularity throughout the world.¹² Jeffrey Sluka—a political anthropologist with extensive experience conducting research amid state terrorism and insurgencies in Northern Ireland—recently summarized the challenges this presents as follows:

[t]oday, political violence—particularly in the forms of state terrorism and armed conflict—has grown to epidemic proportions and become globally endemic. There are approximately 25 ‘major’ wars and 80 to 100 lesser armed conflicts, and if we include other forms of political violence such as riots, civil disorder, coups, terrorism, and particularly state terrorism such as political intimidation, murder, torture, and rape, then it involves most countries of the world, and the number of people directly affected runs into the hundreds of millions if not billions. As a result, more researchers are studying violence, and more who are not studying violence per se are finding themselves working in violent contexts typically involving state terror.¹³

This observation regarding the growing prevalence of political violence is often paired with the realization that to stand out on today’s competitive job market, many students and early career professionals feel it necessary to engage in high stakes research and related activities that can, over time, seriously compromise their physical and mental well-being.

Anticipating Danger—Risk Protocols and Research Design

With this in mind, many experts on managing danger in fieldwork begin with the recommendation that researchers, prior to engaging in fieldwork—whether at home or abroad—conduct a thorough review of any relevant academic publications, human rights reports, media articles, and related materials that can facilitate an informed and up-to-date understanding of the potential for danger, its likely sources, and strategies that can be adopted to minimize risk. Likewise, networking with other academics and practitioners

who have conducted extensive fieldwork in the researcher's proposed setting is highly recommended as part of the preliminary research design. Community contacts who are "in the know" can also be essential in this regard, though the effectiveness of this kind of networking is, in my experience, highly dependent on the extent to which foreign and local experts feel free to discuss the challenges they face.

In post-genocide Rwanda, for example, one of the effects of the dictatorial regime of President Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) is the tendency for most foreign and local experts to maintain silence regarding the government surveillance and interference they encountered, lest failing to do so might prompt the introduction of further bureaucratic obstacles to their fieldwork or persecution of the people with whom they work. Similarly concerning for many researchers is the possibility that other academics might perceive their acknowledgements of government surveillance and interference as somehow indicative of their lack of skill. As such, it may not always be possible to rely upon networking to gain a solid understanding of potential risks in fieldwork in a given setting. In such instances, analyzing human rights reports or reading for critical silences in official documents and local media coverage can be essential. Likewise, a pre-visit to the community the researcher intends to study can be valuable for sensitizing them to any potential harms they may encounter.

In addition, several resources offer risk assessment protocols that researchers are encouraged to complete as part of their research design. One of the most recent—a working paper by political scientist Angélica Durán-Martínez that draws upon her experiences in Latin America—includes appendices that walk researchers through key questions of relevance to their personal safety, as well as that of research assistants and

participants, as it relates to the location where they are proposing to conduct fieldwork, key elements of the researcher's identity (both real and perceived), the methods being used, the networks required to ensure feasibility, and so on.¹⁴ Sociologist Jennifer Rogers-Brown—an expert on gender, technology and resistance to agricultural technologies in the U.S. and Mexico—further prompts researchers to further consider what she terms the “axes of gendered risk mediation,” including the impact of social location, impression management, and ethical dilemmas on the physical safety, emotional well-being, and professional or reputational integrity of researchers and participants, among other potential risks.¹⁵

Similarly, conversations with the researchers' ethics committee or institutional review board—in instances where members have relevant experiences—can help the researcher anticipate some of the potential pitfalls of their proposed research program. For example, Susan Thomson—a political scientist who studies power relations surrounding post-genocide reconciliation in Rwanda—found that while her experience with institutional review at her university in Canada did not explicitly prepare her to handle such factors as government interference, the pre-fieldwork preparations and conversations demanded by the institutional review process rendered her more capable of dealing with such interference. She recalled:

[w]orking with REB representatives helped me think through the on-the-ground implications of my research in ways that I would not have done otherwise. Indeed, the additional responsibilities of demonstrating to my REB that I had built in appropriate and sufficient safeguards to protect the peasant Rwandans that I would work with eventually helped me navigate the fraught process of having my field research permit revoked by the office of the Minister of Local Government.¹⁶

However, not all researchers have positive encounters with their institutional review boards. To this end, Thomson—whose own review process took fourteen months

due to committee members' misplaced concerns about the extent to which she, "a mere doctoral candidate," could be trusted to conduct ethical fieldwork among vulnerable communities, as well as their lack of knowledge about the site she intended to study—recognizes that her relatively positive perceptions of institutional review are rare.¹⁷ As mentioned above, many oral historians have valid misgivings about the relevance of institutional review for their research, a position shared by many social scientists.¹⁸

In my encounters with institutional review boards in Canada and the United Kingdom, I have had to address misperceptions of Rwanda and other post-conflict communities in which I work as active war zones, as well as misperceptions of the *génocidaires*, ex-combatants and war criminals whom I sought to interview as monsters who would attempt to do me harm. In one instance, the review committee recommended I conduct my proposed fieldwork among diasporic Rwandans living in "developed nations." Their reasoning was diasporic Rwandans would have access to counselling and other forms of psychological support. However, this position failed to take into consideration the added distress that can come from being displaced from one's ancestral lands, and relied upon the assumption that counselling would be perceived by participants as a culturally appropriate or financially realistic means of resolving any distress they may be experiencing, among other potential pitfalls. Indeed, in my experience many diasporic Rwandans, having been cut off from family and community support networks in the process of escaping political violence throughout Rwanda's past—networks which cannot be easily replaced by psychotherapy or counselling—face significant complications in managing their mental health. As a result, the review committee's recommendations, while well-intentioned, could have inadvertently introduced a new

range of ethical problems to my fieldwork, in addition to failing to protect participants' mental health.

Of similar concern is the tendency for researchers who are members of minority communities or in other ways find central facets of their identity poorly represented in academic settings to be faced with ethics committees, institutions, and literature that offer little consideration of the unique risks and challenges they may face in their fieldwork. Yolande Bouka—a policy analyst affiliated with the Nairobi-based Institute for Security Studies—recently commented that as a “black woman of Togolese origin, raised in Quebec and living and studying in the United States,” she found it difficult to find representations of herself in the literature on preparing for fieldwork in dangerous settings.¹⁹ The literature available through her American university was largely dominated by “white or western experiences,” resulting in “the near-absence of non-white/non-western voices.”²⁰ As a result, she struggled to anticipate the potential for danger in her fieldwork.²¹ This finding is troubling given how central anticipating how different facets of a researcher's identity and the ways they may interact with research assistants' and participants' subjectivity are for most risk assessments, as well as within oral historical research more generally.²²

Meanwhile, concerns persist that institutional review can actually imbue researchers with a false sense of security. Some researchers may equate approval with the misperception that they have developed a research design that will successfully ensure minimal harm for all those involved in the research, when in actual fact, further areas of danger persist, particularly in instances where committee members lack relevant disciplinary, thematic, or regional expertise. As a result, most experts recognize that the

process of anticipating and managing danger in fieldwork must be ongoing, even after the fieldwork is completed. As argued by international development expert Amiera Sawas,

the reality is that risk is a multi-faceted, constant and changing issue facing the researched, institutions, researchers, careers and academic inquiry itself. Risks operate on multiple levels, ranging from the physical, emotional, and reputational and are present before, during and after the research is conducted.²³

Managing Danger During Fieldwork

To this end, as fieldwork begins to take shape most experts advocate transparency in dealings with gatekeepers, in-country partners, and research participants.²⁴ This includes obtaining necessary permissions from gatekeepers, and minimizing deception—wherever doing so would not endanger participants—regarding the fieldwork’s focus, methodology, and ethical obligations. Such transparency can in some instances result in obstacles being introduced to prevent research, as I discovered in my research into Rwandan civilians’ perspectives of their nation’s state-funded memorials commemorating the 1994 genocide.²⁵

Following a presentation I gave on some of the controversies that surrounded these sites, a Rwandan government official in attendance warned me against returning to the country on the grounds that I would no longer be welcome. I was nonetheless allowed to re-enter Rwanda two weeks later to conduct a small scoping project, the results of which were subsequently published online with the knowledge and agreement of in-country partners. The government officials and community groups with whom I met seemed eager to have a foreign researcher study community perspectives on the memorials. However, upon returning some months later to present a formal proposal to the Rwandan National Ethics Committee (RNEC) to launch a country-wide version of the project, I was stopped at passport control and told that my visa—acquired with full transparency

regarding the purpose of my trip—was invalid. I was given three weeks to negotiate ethics approval, and was warned against having any contact with the civilian population. Several extra-procedural bureaucratic obstacles were then introduced, making it impossible to acquire the necessary permits. I ultimately left Rwanda with a much deeper understanding of the political climate surrounding the state-funded genocide memorials, and the recognition that this topic was regarded by government officials as far too politically sensitive for me to ensure minimal harm for everyone involved. In the aftermath of this admittedly frustrating and anxiety-inducing experience, I found myself grateful to the RNEC committee for preventing research into a topic that had become increasingly politically fraught in the months between my visits to Rwanda, without whose intervention I could have inadvertently placed myself and the Rwandans with whom I had intended to work in harm's way.²⁶

In instances where research is permitted, special effort should be made to ensure the maintenance of good working relationships with gatekeepers and other relevant parties. For example, agreed upon meetings should be kept as a gesture of good will and to demonstrate trustworthiness, if nothing else. In addition, where it will not introduce potential harm to participants, changes during fieldwork to the researcher's methodology should be addressed with gatekeepers and research participants, as with institutional review boards. Political scientist N. Patrick Peritore argues that such efforts to ensure transparency are essential for establishing a “functional security and support network,” one that in particular challenges western researchers' “implicit assumptions regarding their legal and civil rights and personal untouchability.”²⁷

The fact remains that foreign researchers who have the privilege of holding internationally respected passports or related credentials are often protected from serious harm, making them far less vulnerable than local researchers, research assistants and participants. However, this heightened protection cannot always be assumed. To cite but two recent examples, in 2014 Alexander Sodiqov, a Tajik graduate student at University of Toronto, was arrested and accused of espionage and treason by Tajik secret police as a result of his efforts to interview Tajik civil society leaders. His advisor, political scientist Edward Schatz, ultimately led a successful online campaign to shame the Tajik government into releasing Sodiqov and permitting him to return to Canada, but not before Sodiqov's arrest and imprisonment prompted Schatz's realization that "we're in a new period, and it's not just in authoritarian contexts... There are new threats to the academy. Knowledge [is seen] as a dangerous thing."²⁸

In another deeply troubling example, the body of Giulio Regeni, an Italian-born graduate student at Cambridge, was found along an Egyptian highway in early February 2016. His body bore evidence of torture prior to being killed, suggesting his murder was the result of his research surrounding Egyptian labour unions, alleged connections to Italian intelligence, and/or his anonymous work for the communist newspaper, *Il Manifesto*, which was critical of the Egyptian government.²⁹ Scholars and human rights activists studying human rights in Egypt claim that Regeni's murder "bears the hallmarks of the security services," and are invoking their own recent experiences of official harassment, including arrests, detentions, physical violence, and deportations, in calling for an independent probe into his disappearance and murder.³⁰

Such fieldwork-related dangers are far from a recent phenomenon. In 2008, the celebrated American anthropologist Cynthia Mahmood published an account of a brutal assault and rape she endured in 1992, which she believes was intended to discourage her from studying a contemporary Sikh uprising in northwestern Punjab or otherwise engaging with scholars who were critical of Hindu majoritarian nationalism.³¹ Her colleagues at the time ultimately proved unsympathetic, discouraging her from reporting the attack to the police lest it jeopardize the research project on which they were collaborating, and even blaming her for the assault on the grounds that they had warned her against meeting with “dubious individuals.”³² Similarly distressing is her admission that “[n]ot too many people know about ‘what happened to me.’ After all, I don’t want to be viewed as a victim, as some sort of permanent cripple.” In addition to highlighting the potential dangers researchers need to consider in tackling fieldwork in dangerous settings or politically sensitive subject matter, her account offers a powerful indictment of academic attitudes toward researchers who endure physical and psychological violence related to their research.

The fact that assaults, illegal detentions, and even assassinations can happen in the context of fieldwork on politically sensitive subject matter will not shock most researchers. Yet even when working in benign settings or on uncontroversial subject matter, researchers may find themselves vulnerable to physical or mental harm. Take, for example, an incident described in Barbara Paterson, David Gregory, and Sally Thorne’s 1999 “protocol for research safety,” in which a female researcher entered a participant’s home to interview him about living with a chronic illness:

When the researcher entered his apartment, he locked the door behind her. The prospective participant then announced that he had no intention of being

interviewed. He had volunteered for the research project because he “wanted a woman.” The researcher spend the next hour listening and talking calmly to him as she inched her way to the door. She left the apartment untouched but shaken.³³

The authors note that in discussing this incident informally with colleagues, it became clear that many researchers were having similar dangerous and distressing encounters in their fieldwork—a phenomenon that, in my experience, also exists in “corridor talks” among oral historians.³⁴ Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki recently commented that the oral history interview is akin to a blind date.³⁵ While they employed this comparison somewhat playfully in reference to the awkwardness and uncertainty that can surround initial meetings with research participants, there is a darker side to it as well. Many oral historians can recount stories of unwanted sexual advances, including inappropriate touching and comments, physical assaults of both sexual and non-sexual natures, and other dangerous scenarios that occur in the context of entering the homes, places of business, and communities of research participants who otherwise appear perfectly harmless.

For example, throughout my fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina, I was frequently subjected to inappropriate sexual comments—often made in the presence of research assistants—that, when I voiced my disapproval, were dismissed as an unavoidable part of Bosnian masculinity and culture. In one incident, an otherwise kindly and professional senior colleague lured me into a back room where he worked on the premise of lending me some books, only to corner me and become agitated when I refused his advances. Another male colleague intervened after hearing raised voices, but the experience nonetheless prompted me to cut off contact with the institution. I learned some months later that this particular colleague was a well-known predator, but due to the culture of

silence around his transgressions, women newcomers to the institution often learned the hard way to avoid him. In another incident during a preliminary meeting with a convicted war criminal I was hoping to interview, I noticed the research assistant with whom I was working was visibly angry and struggling to control his emotions. Upon asking him what was wrong, he responded that the man we were hoping to interview was trying to convince him to leave the room so he could rape me—to show me what life was really like for women during the Bosnian War. I was suddenly keenly aware of just how vulnerable I was as a woman working with convicted war criminals in the prisons, and how little I could control how these men saw me. Yet somehow, this incident proved less distressing to me than the aforementioned attack from my colleague, perhaps because I had been forced during the REB process and throughout my fieldwork to assess the potential for harm associated with my work among perpetrators and ex-combatants, and was therefore capable of greater resilience where my “unloved participants” were concerned.

Often, these dangerous or distressing encounters are brought about, not by some inherent fault on the part of the researcher or some grand criminal purpose on the part of research participants, but rather as a result of the difficult to predict and often unconscious processes of transference and counter-transference. Psychoanalysts Ralph Greenson and Milton Wexler define transference as

the experiencing of impulses, feelings, fantasies, attitudes, and defenses with respect to a person in the present which do not appropriately fit that person but are a repetition of responses originating in regard to significant persons of early childhood, unconsciously displaced on to persons in the present. The two outstanding characteristics of transference phenomena are (1) it is an indiscriminate, non-selective repetition of the past, and (2) it ignores or distorts reality.³⁶

Conversely, the term counter-transference encapsulates the feelings and associations that the analyst or researcher experiences toward the patient or research participant, which should be acknowledged and analyzed to ensure deeper insight into the people and narratives with whom they are working.³⁷ In the context of oral historians' efforts to build good relationships and engaging in deep listening with research participants, transference and counter-transference are very real concerns—capable of evoking strong feelings of friendship, romantic love, and sexual desire, just as much as anger, resentment, or fear, for example. Yet these phenomena are rarely addressed in the literature. In the few instances where oral historians have engaged with these concepts, oral historians focus on the ways that an awareness of transference and counter-transference, much like subjectivity and intersubjectivity, can positively influence our analysis.³⁸ Entirely missing from their analysis are suggestions for mitigating the potential harms to oral historians and interviewees that can emerge as a result of these powerful emotional phenomena, even in otherwise benign settings.

For these reasons, in teaching an introductory project-based class on “Oral History Theory and Practice,” I encourage my students to work collaboratively. This does not mean that students necessarily conduct interviews in pairs—though they have the option of doing so—but rather that they have opportunities throughout the class to discuss their research interests, intended interviewee, interview guide, and other relevant factors in a supportive environment. In approaching the interview, preparation includes the usual tasks recommended by oral historians like Valerie Yow, such as identifying a research question and composing an interview guide.³⁹ However, I also encourage students to prioritize their security alongside that of the interviewee in determining a mutually

comfortable and secure environment in which to conduct the interview, and to not be afraid of bringing an interview to an immediate end if they feel threatened. We discuss at length students legal and ethical responsibilities, and how these might play out in different interview-related scenarios. I also encourage students to inform at least one other person of their intended interview schedule, and provide them with their preferred emergency contacts in the unlikely event that they should fail to check in after the interview. Finally, I encourage students to find one or more students in the class with whom they can debrief after the interview to discuss any perceived successes or failures, and help make sense of any difficulties that may have emerged in the course of the interview. Should serious problems arise, students can contact me for support and likewise have access to various free physical and mental health services on campus, among other support networks and self-care options. These additional measures are intended to mitigating harm for my students, as much as it is in my power to do so.

To return to the literature on managing danger more broadly, Peritore actively encourages researchers working to “assume the worst case scenario” regarding security—to assume that their activities are being monitored and that the potential for harm is high—and constantly revisit whether the knowledge being gained from their fieldwork outweighs the potential risks, both for themselves and the people with whom they are working.⁴⁰ Such measures are likely unnecessary in the average oral history project, where the anticipated risks might be minimal. However, related to this worst case scenario and something which oral historians should take very seriously, experts on managing danger note that researchers should make data security a priority at all times—a challenging task given the exceptional efforts that governments and other interested

parties often go to in obscuring the technologies they use to keep track of suspicious activities and communications.

To this end, political scientist Enrique Arias—whose expertise centres on drug trafficking networks and policing in Latin America—argues that special efforts should be made to conduct an honest threat assessment and put in place any necessary data security protocols prior to the start of fieldwork.⁴¹ Arias emphasizes that:

Scholars should keep in mind that establishing absolute data security is impossible. This was the case forty years ago, when security agents could break into the home of a researcher to steal paper files, and it is certainly the case today. A flash drive containing thousands of pages of information can be quietly carried away without the researcher's [sic] becoming immediately aware of the loss. External hackers can gain access to a computer to upload large portions of a researcher's hard drive without the researcher's ever becoming aware that the files have been taken or that the computer has been accessed. Governments with sophisticated information technology systems can comprehensively monitor significant portions of national electronic communications, using programs to sift through data for potential threats. State agents can also target individuals' data through targeted data monitoring or physical seizure of their electronic devices.⁴²

To protect against these invasions, Arias suggests taking the time to identify individuals or institutions that might seek to breach researchers' data and the technologies that might be used, and encourages extreme caution when using public WiFi services, smart phones, or peripheral devices, such as printers and scanners that have their own memory and storage capacity. He likewise encourages researchers to encrypt their hardware, maintain adequate antivirus and malware software on their computers, use robust passwords that are changed frequently—at least once every ninety days—and otherwise take steps to ensure their data security protocol remains up-to-date, even after their research is concluded, by regularly consulting with data security experts.⁴³

To this, I would add that researchers working in dangerous circumstances should take steps to anonymize their data upfront as much as is possible, using codes in

reference to participants in emails, text messages, fieldnotes, recordings, and all other relevant materials, whether written or typed, and refrain from taking photographs or otherwise recording personally identifying information pertaining to participants, research assistants, and research sites. In most of my fieldwork in settings where government surveillance is a possibility, this has meant pursuing verbal consent rather than a signed consent form, and turning on the recorder after the interviewee has finished discussing elements of their background that could make them identifiable. Researchers may also want to consider resisting current trends that favour making raw data, in addition to research outcomes, available via open-access repositories established through their institutions.

Finally, in instances where the potential risks outweigh the value of the knowledge being gained, several experts advocate having an exit strategy in place that includes both enabling physical distance from participants and the research site and/or professional distance from the subject that has led to unwanted harassment or physical violence. Sluka recommends having a credit card with sufficient funds available at all times to allow researchers to purchase last-minute transportation away from their field site, though he acknowledges that this does not always eliminate risk, particularly for researchers working in their native communities or for researchers whose work raises controversies that transgress borders.⁴⁴ In addition, Durán-Martínez recommends designating a point person with whom researchers check in with on a regular basis. Some researchers email, call, or text message their point person when they arrive home each day, while others may choose to check in after specific meetings around which risk is heightened, for example. The point person should have a basic but accurate knowledge of the

researcher's activities and whereabouts, and the capacity to raise the alarm or implement measures to get the researcher out of a dangerous situation should the need arise.⁴⁵ In the event that the point person is not located in the same country or is completely removed from the people and places being studied, Durán-Martínez recommends having a local network of "second-phase contacts" who can implement the researcher's escape plan, including securing any relevant raw data.

Managing Danger After Fieldwork

While the immediate physical danger posed by conducting research in a high risk context or on controversial subject matter can be drastically reduced by cutting off contact with a threatening research participant or leaving the field site, some forms of harm can persist—particularly reputational, economic, and psychological harm. In terms of reputational and economic harm, some researchers struggle with self-censorship related to their desire to avoid perpetuating conflict or upsetting gatekeepers, collaborators, and research participants. This is a significant problem for researchers working on politically sensitive subjects in post-genocide Rwanda, for example, where the Rwandan government can exert significant influence over researchers and research participants who are critical of the regime. As someone who regularly writes expert country conditions reports on behalf of Rwandan asylum seekers, I see legally rigorous evidence of state persecution of perceived political dissidents and enemies of the state on a regular basis. Knowledge of the dire consequences that criticism of the government can have for Rwandans has in several instances led me to withhold narratives of individuals whose confidentiality I cannot guarantee, fearing refusals of research permits, or worse

yet, approval followed by government surveillance that subjects the Rwandans with whom I work to heightened danger.⁴⁶

For example, following my recent difficulties in securing a research permit in Rwanda and the broader official dissatisfaction resulting from my research, I have delayed publications to allow any official memory of my fieldwork to fade, in the hopes of better protecting the research assistants and participants with whom I worked. In the few publications I have published to date, I have likewise refrained from including the rich life histories I documented due to concerns that they might make the interviewees easy for government officials and other interested parties to identify, placing them at risk of persecution. Further complicating the situation, many researchers of Rwanda have themselves become polarized. At one extreme, there is a cohort of researchers who are dismissive of the Rwandan government's negative human rights record and muzzling of researchers on the grounds that the recent genocide and the exceptional progress it has made in promoting development and national reconciliation make the nation a "model for Africa."⁴⁷ At the other extreme exists a vocal cohort of researchers and human rights watchdogs who condemn the Rwandan government for its negative human rights record and categorize the current regime of President Paul Kagame as a dictatorship.⁴⁸ This polarization can interfere with scholars' efforts to present and publish their work—non-critical studies risk being dismissed as pro-government propaganda, while critical studies are often accused of "genocide ideology."⁴⁹ The resulting academic polarization can have serious implications for today's job market, particularly for early career researchers, introducing heightened challenges to already competitive processes of peer-review, promotion, and so on.

In terms of lingering psychological harm, several experts suggest that scholars, by virtue of their tendency to repress potentially painful feelings in order to maintain their professionalism, struggles to negotiate a manageable work-life balance, common social isolation, and additional life stressors, are particularly vulnerable to psychological harm. For this reason, experts on managing danger in fieldwork are increasingly calling for researchers to pay greater attention what is termed “vicarious traumatization”—roughly explained as a transformation in researchers’ or professionals’ inner experience resulting from “empathetic engagement with trauma survivors and their trauma materials, combined with a responsibility or commitment to help.”⁵⁰ For example, following a few months of working closely with adult survivors of childhood abuse and neglect, clinical psychologist Laurie Anne Pearlman recalled “I began to note that my emotions were muted, my connections with friends beyond our institute were less satisfying, and my usual ebullience was dimmer.”⁵¹ She linked these observations to vicarious traumatization, which she notes encapsulates

such trauma symptoms as avoidance, intrusive imagery or thoughts (including nightmares), and physiological hyperarousal—all symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder—as well as complex trauma symptoms such as dissociation, affect dysregulation, and somatization.⁵²

Corridor talks among colleagues revealed similar sentiments among several members of staff, prompting her organization to introduce a “feelings time” component to their weekly meetings as a means of addressing the vicarious traumatization being experienced by its staff. To this end, oral historians who find themselves struggling similarly with vicarious traumatization and other negative physical or psychological effects related to their research may find it similarly helpful to set aside time on a regular basis to engage in counselling or debrief with others who work on similar subject matter.

The key here is finding people who are capable of taking on the weight of our stories and emotions without subjecting them to undue emotional duress—a task that can be easier said than done.

In recognition of the threat posed by dangerous fieldwork extending beyond the perhaps limited framework afforded by the concept of trauma, similar calls to prioritize self-care among researchers who work and write on violence have emerged from a number of disciplines in recent years. Medical anthropologist Kimberly Theidon, an expert on transitional justice and reconciliation in Latin America, recently commented on the necessity of “being on guard”—an “important coping strategy that allows researchers to compartmentalize experiences and partition self-as-researcher from self-as-vulnerable-human-being,” in part to protect loved ones and colleagues from the lingering effects of our research.⁵³ However, she likewise stresses the importance of including a self-care component in our research designs—one that applies to each stage of our research and that includes an awareness of how burnout typically manifests in the body, along with personally appropriate options for addressing these symptoms and mitigating the underlying stressors. She identifies burnout as manifested through the following symptoms when persisting over long periods of time:

- Extreme fatigue, which may be (perversely) accompanied by insomnia
- Anxiety, hypervigilance, and irritability
- Depression, which may appear as lethargy
- Lack of appetite or overeating
- Nightmares, or intrusive thoughts while awake
- Headaches, skin rashes, gastrointestinal problems
- Anger, overreacting to minor upsets
- Forgetfulness or “absentmindedness”
- Difficulty concentrating
- Numbness⁵⁴

To resolve burnout, Theidon considers several options, including learning to recognize and respond appropriately to personal boundaries and limits, finding a “safe space” during fieldwork and research removed from the community in which the researcher works, accepting powerlessness in instances where the researcher is unable to resolve injustices and abuses of power, and—taking a page from “expert survivors”—allowing oneself to experience laughter and joy even in the midst of conflict and despair.⁵⁵ She also recommends keeping a diary as a therapeutic exercise that helps researchers manage difficult fieldwork situations, and centring oneself—creating a ritual that clearly separates one’s work space from other aspects of their everyday life—before engaging in any research-related writing. She concludes with a few tips for self-care that she has found helpful for resilience-planning in advance of fieldwork drawn from the work of self-care specialist, Beth Hudnall Stamm:

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.
3. Vary the work you do.
4. Get some light exercise.
5. Do something pleasurable.
6. Focus on what you did well.
7. Learn from your mistakes.
8. Share a private joke.
9. Meditate, relax, or pray.
10. Support a colleague.⁵⁶

Conclusion

With oral historical research potentially moving away from institutional review—at least in the United States—it seems timely to re-evaluate and expand current discussions about the discipline’s ethical framework to consider more thoroughly the potential dangers and worst case scenarios facing practitioners. While much oral historical research can be deemed minimal risk, potential conflicts leading to physical, psychological,

reputational and economic harm can arise unexpectedly, particularly in instances where oral historians find themselves establishing intimate relationships with gatekeepers, research assistants and participants or probing—whether intentionally or inadvertently—sensitive subject matter. As such, oral historians should nonetheless be encouraged, in the absence of institutional review, to engage with pre-fieldwork risk assessment protocols, whether independently or in conversation with experts on the researcher’s regional or thematic interests, with the goal of promoting adaptability and resilience in the face of danger. This is not to say that engaging in risk assessment will in all circumstances protect researchers from harm. As noted by Sluka, “the emergent quality of danger means that we cannot always foresee all the risks or how risky a situation may become.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, some risks emerge simply as a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time—a case of bad luck or unfortunate timing—rather than any failure on the part of the researcher. However, current wisdom maintains that engaging in risk assessment prior to conducting fieldwork, and then revisiting and revising the resulting protocol as necessary during and after fieldwork to address new concerns that may arise provides researchers with the best changes of navigating dangerous situations with minimal harm.

Notes

¹ United States of Health and Human Services, “Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects,” 8 September 2015, accessed 5 January 2016, <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/09/08/2015-21756/federal-policy-for-the-protection-of-human-subjects>.

² See for example, Don Ritchie, “Good news for scholars doing oral history! The federal government is preparing to grant them a right to excluded from IRBs,” History News Network, 13 October 2015, accessed 5 January 2016, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/160885>. For more information on the ongoing debate regarding oral history and institutional review in the U.S., see Clifford Kuhn, “Background on the current HHS Recommendations,” accessed 5 January 2016, <http://www.oralhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Background-on-the-Current->

HHS-REcommendations-Concerning-IRBs.pdf; and Zachary Schrag, *Ethical Imperialism: Institutional review boards and the social sciences, 1965–2009* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2010), 143-160.

³ Clifford Kuhn, “Background on the Current HHS Regulations,” 2015, accessed 6 January 2016, <http://www.oralhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Background-on-the-Current-HHS-REcommendations-Concerning-IRBs.pdf>.

⁴ Entering “oral history” as search term in the “Comments” section on the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects reveals 51 comments, most of which are in favour of the proposed revisions. One comment is a letter from the Oral History Association that endorses the proposed changes, noting that “[t]he OHA's strong ethical codes already guide research in the field and will continue to do so effectively if the proposed rule is adopted.” Oral History Association, “Comment on FR Doc #2015-21756,” 5 January 2016, accessed 6 January 2016, <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=HHS-OPHS-2015-0008-1020>.

⁵ Oral History Association, “Principles and Best Practices,” 2009, accessed 6 January 2016, <http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>.

⁶ Robert Perks and Joanna Bornat, “Is your oral history legal and ethical?” Oral History Society, 2012, accessed 6 January 2016, <http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/>.

⁷ Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸ See, for example, Katherine Borland, “‘That’s not what I said’: Interpretive conflict in oral narrative research,” in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds.) *Women’s Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 63-76; and Valerie Yow, “‘Do I like them too much?’: Effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa.” *Oral History Review* 24(1) (1997), 55-79. In addition, Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki’s edited volume *Oral History Off the Record* contains several examples of the struggles, failures, and negative outcomes inherent in oral historical practice in different settings. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki (eds.), *Oral History Off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

⁹ This term was coined by Nigel Fielding in reference to those individuals who are immersed in events or subject matter marked by conflict or controversy, and from whom others often actively seek to distance themselves—in his case, the police. Nigel Fielding, “Mediating the Message: Affinity and Hostility in Research on Sensitive Topics,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 33(5) (1990), 608. In more recent years, the particular challenges of working with “unloved groups” has been addressed by a wide range of scholars in different settings, most notably Kathleen Blee in her work among white supremacist activists in the U.S. See for example, Kathleen Blee, “White Knuckle Research: Emotional Dynamics in Fieldwork with Racist Activists,” *Qualitative Sociology* 21(4) (1998), 387-388.

¹⁰ The second part will evaluate best practices surrounding anticipating and managing danger for research assistants and participants as it applies to oral history.

¹¹ Regarding this overview, I am grateful to the recent work of Jeffrey Sluka and other participants who contributed to a workshop I organized in 2014 at the Liu Institute for Global Issues at the University of British Columbia on “Approaching Perpetrators:

Ethnographic Insights on Ethics, Methods, and Theory.” Sluka’s presentation on “Managing danger in fieldwork with perpetrators of political violence and state terror” first prompted me to consider how the insights and best practices used by practitioners affiliated with the ethnography of political violence sub-field might be adapted to better prepare oral historians to negotiate danger in their fieldwork. His subsequent article in *Conflict and Society*, and his previous publications on the subject, are excellent starting points for comprehending the literature on managing danger surrounding fieldwork. Jeffrey Sluka, “Managing Danger in Fieldwork with Perpetrators of Political Violence and State Terror,” *Conflict and Society* 1 (2015), 109-124. See also his previous publications on related topics: Jeffrey Sluka, “Participant observation in violent social contexts,” *Human Organization* 49(2) (1990), 114-126; Jeffrey Sluka, “The anthropology of conflict,” in *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror* eds. Carolyn Nordstrom and JoAnn Martin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 18-36; and Jeffrey Sluka, “Reflections on managing danger in fieldwork: Dangerous anthropology in Belfast,” in *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival* eds. Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C.G.M. Robben (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 276-294.

¹² The term “political violence” is broad ranging, encapsulating subtle forms of everyday violence, such as small-scale acts of racism and domestic violence, to overt large scale episodes of physical violence, such as war and genocide. For more information, see Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, “Introduction,” in *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 1-32.

¹³ Sluka, “Reflections on managing danger in fieldwork,” 110.

¹⁴ Angélica Durán-Martínez, “Building an Effective Research Safety Protocol and Emergency Exit Strategies,” *Drugs, Security and Democracy Program Working Papers on Research Security* 4 (2014), http://webarchive.ssrc.org/working-papers/DSD_ResearchSecurity_04_Duran-Martinez.pdf (accessed 22 February 2016).

¹⁵ Jennifer Rogers-Brown, “More than a war story: A Feminist Analysis of Doing Dangerous Fieldwork,” *Advances in Gender Research* 20 (2015), 111-131.

¹⁶ In Canada, institutional review boards (IRBs) are referred to as Research Ethics Boards (REBs). Susan Thomson, “Academic Integrity and Ethical Responsibilities in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Working with Research Ethics Boards to Prepare for Fieldwork with ‘Human Subjects,’” in S. Thomson, A. Ansoms, and J. Murison (eds.) *Emotional and Ethical Challenges for Field Research in Africa: The Story Behind the Findings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 141-142.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁸ See for example, Charles Bosk and Raymond De Vries, “Bureaucracies of mass deception: Institutional review boards and the ethics of ethnographic research.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595(1) (2004): 249-263; Elisa Gordon, “Trials and tribulations of navigating IRBs: Anthropological and biomedical perspectives of ‘risk’ in conducting human subjects research,” *Anthropological Quarterly* 76(2) (2003): 299-320; Judy Hemming, “Exceeding scholarly responsibility: IRBs and political constraints,” in C. Sriram, J. King, J. Mertus, O. Martin-Ortega, and J. Hermann (eds.) *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violence and Difficult Situations* (London: Routledge, 2009), 21-37; and

Nandini Sundar, "Missing the ethical woods for the bureaucratic trees," *American Ethnologist* 33(4) (2006), 535-537. Among the most vocal is historian Zachary Schrag, whose book *Ethical Imperialism: Institutional Review Boards and the Social Sciences, 1965-2009* concludes that "IRB review of the social sciences and the humanities was founded on ignorance, haste and disrespect." Schrag, *Ethical Imperialism*, 192.

¹⁹ Yolande Bouka, "Researching Violence in Africa as a Black Women: Notes from Rwanda," *Research in Difficult Settings Working Paper Series*, May 2015, http://conflictfieldresearch.colgate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Bouka_WorkingPaper-May2015.pdf (accessed 20 February 2016), 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

²¹ That said, while she calls upon non-white/non-western scholars and practitioners to write more about their experiences investigating political violence, in her working paper, Bouka references several sources on positionality that can serve as a good starting point. Most notably, see Grave Akello, "The importance of autobiographic self during research among wartime children in Northern Uganda," *Medische Antopologie* 24(2) (2012), 289-300; Audrey Kobayashi, "Coloring the Field: Gender, 'Race,' and the Politics of Fieldwork," *Professional Geographer* 46(1) (1994), 73-80; Dorinne Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990); Alister Munthali, "Doing fieldwork at home: Some personal experiences among the Tumbuka of Northern Malawi," *The African Anthropologist* 8(2) (2001), 114-136; and Brackette Williams, "Skinfolk, not kinfolk: Comparative reflections on the identity of participant-observation in two field situations," in D. Wolf (ed.) *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 72-95.

²² Among oral historians, subjectivity is defined as "the constituents of an individual's sense of self, his or her identity informed and shaped by experience, perception, language, and culture—in other words an individual's emotional baggage." Conversely intersubjectivity references "the interaction—the collision, if you will—between the two subjectivities of interviewer and interviewee. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 54, 58.

²³ Amiera Sawas, "The risks—both serious and subtle—of fieldwork," *Social Science Space*, 27 August 2014, <http://www.socialsciencespace.com/2014/08/the-risks-both-serious-and-subtle-of-fieldwork/> (accessed 20 February 2016).

²⁴ Indeed, sociologist Raymond Lee actively counsels researchers against engaging in covert research on the grounds that "covert researchers are vulnerable to mistakes and misunderstandings about who they are and what they are doing. Because some clandestine organizations combine an endemic concern about concealed identities with the use of violence as a routine protective device, misattributions can have deadly consequences." Raymond Lee, *Dangerous Fieldwork* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), 75.

²⁵ Between 6 April and 18 July 1994, extremist political elites affiliated with Rwanda's Hutu majority implemented a genocide that targeted the nation's Tutsi minority population and their perceived supporters, resulting in an estimated 400,000 to 800,000 civilian deaths, among other forms of violence. Since the genocide, the victorious Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF)—a political party dominated by Tutsi refugees who grew

up in exile as a result of previous periods of ethnic and political violence—has invested in a controversial official history that casts the genocide as the “1994 genocide of the Tutsi.” While official histories are not unusual throughout Rwanda’s past, the RPF official history formally recognizes only Tutsi victims of the genocide, while casting the Hutu majority in the roles of perpetrators and bystanders. This politicization of the genocide—particularly visible at the nation’s various state-funded genocide memorials—overwhelms many Rwandans’ lived experiences of the conflict, sowing widespread civilian dissatisfaction and facilitating the maintenance of powerful reservoirs of ethnic and political tension. For more information, see ____

²⁶ For further information on the subtle forms of intimidation that researchers of Rwanda and other highly politicized settings must negotiate, see ____.

²⁷ Patrick Peritore, “Reflections on dangerous fieldwork,” *American Sociologist* 21(4) (1990), 359.

²⁸ Edward Schatz, cited in Jennifer Clibbon, “How Alexander Sodiqov was freed following espionage charges,” *CBC News*, 23 September 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/how-alexander-sodiqov-was-freed-following-espionage-charges-1.2772191> (accessed 28 February 2016).

²⁹ Stephanie Kirchgaessner, “Why was he killed? Brutal death of Italian student in Egypt confounds experts,” *The Guardian*, 24 February 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/24/why-was-he-killed-brutal-death-of-italian-student-in-egypt-confounds-experts> (accessed 28 February 2016).

³⁰ Lin Noueihed, “Italian killing highlights assault on academic freedom in Egypt,” *Reuters*, 25 February 2016, <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-egypt-academics-idUKKCN0VY2H3> (accessed 28 February 2016).

³¹ Cynthia Mahmood, “Anthropology from the bones: A memoir of fieldwork, survival, and commitment,” *Anthropology and Humanism* 33(1-2) (2008), 1-11.

³² *Ibid.*, 6.

³³ Barbara Paterson, David Gregory, and Sally Thorne, “A Protocol for Researcher Safety,” *Qualitative Health Research* 9(2) (1999), 260.

³⁴ Social scientists, beginning with the anthropologist Paul Rabinow, often cite “corridor talks” as an essential means of informally exchanging fieldwork experiences—discussions that Rabinow argued should become discourse in order to promote more formal knowledge exchange. Paul Rabinow, “Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology,” in James Clifford and George Marcus (eds.) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 253. Valerie Yow applied this concept explicitly to oral history practice, defining them as “the remarks you made about your reactions to your research while you were standing with a colleague in the corridor. You were about to go into the room where you would discuss the really important research matters.” Yow, ““Do I like them too much?”” 55.

³⁵ Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, “Only Human: A Reflection on the Ethical and Methodological Challenges of Working with ‘Difficult’ Stories,” *Oral History Review* 37(2) (2010), 191.

³⁶ Ralph Greenson and Milton Wexler, “The Non-Transference Relationship in the Psychoanalytic Situation,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 50 (1969), 28.

³⁷ Paula Heimann, “On counter-transference,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 31 (1950), 81.

³⁸ Two notable exceptions to this statement include Karl Figlio, “Oral History and the Unconscious,” *History Workshop Journal* 26(1) (1988), 120-132; and Michael Roper, “Analysing the analysed: Transference and counter-transference in the oral history encounter,” *Oral History* 31(2) (2003), 20-32.

³⁹ Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2nd edition (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005), 68-91.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 362-363.

⁴¹ Arias includes a handy “threat assessment matrix” on page 9 of his article. Enrique Desmond Arias, “Data security in highly violent settings,” *Drugs, Security and Democracy Program Working Papers on Research Security* 7 (2014), http://webarchive.ssrc.org/working-papers/DSD_ResearchSecurity_07_Arias.pdf, accessed 22 February 2016).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴³ To ensure that researchers’ data security protocols are adequate and remain up-to-date, Arias recommends as a starting point that researchers read Reporters Without Borders “Safety Guide for Journalists,” and consider undertaking training courses that offer basic information about data security. Reporters Without Borders, “Safety Guide for Journalists: A Handbook for Reporters in High-Risk Environments,” 14 December 2015, <http://en.rsf.org/rsf-publishes-new-version-of-its-14-12-2015,48626.html> (accessed 22 February 2016).

⁴⁴ Sluka, “Managing Danger in Fieldwork with Perpetrators of Political Violence and State Terror,” 112.

⁴⁵ Durán-Martínez, “Building an Effective Research Safety Protocol and Emergency Exit Strategies,” 15-21.

⁴⁶ For more on the particular ethical and methodological challenges I have encountered in conducting oral historical fieldwork in post-genocide Rwanda and Bosnia, see _____. For more on maintaining ethical standards around publication, see Chandra Sriram, “Maintenance of standards of protection during writeup and publication,” in Chandra Lekha Sriram, John C. King, Julie A. Mertus, Olga Martin-Ortega, and Johanna Herman (eds.) *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 56-68.

⁴⁷ See for example, Kurt Davis, “Paul Kagame and Rwanda: An Economic Model for Africa,” *Ventures*, 15 June 2014, <http://venturesafrica.com/paul-kagame-and-rwanda-an-economic-model-for-africa/> (accessed 1 March 2016). See also the defences of Rwanda and President Paul Kagame offered by former heads of state Tony Blair and Bill Clinton: Tony Blair and Howard Buffet, “Stand with Rwanda: Now is no time to cut aid to Kigali,” *Foreign Policy*, 21 February 2013, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/02/21/stand-with-rwanda/> (accessed 1 March 2016); and Komla Dumor, “20 minutes with Bill Clinton—Up against ‘Big Poppa,’” *BBC News*, 12 August 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23632845> (accessed 1 March 2016). Among academics, Phil Clark published in 2013 a piece in *Times Higher Education* that accused experts on Rwanda of exaggerating their experiences of government interference to add cachet to their work and protect their turf against younger researchers. Phil Clark, “Must

academics researching authoritarian regimes self-censor?" *Times Higher Education*, 28 November 2013, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/must-academics-researching-authoritarian-regimes-self-censor/2009275.article> (accessed 1 March 2016). In response, a cohort of long-term experts on Rwanda published a letter implying that Clark's position could be attributed to his tendency to "hobnob with government elites," making him incapable of seeing "the many dark sides of the supposed Rwandan success story." Danielle de Lame, Howard French, Villia Jefremovas, René Lemarchand, Timothy Longman, Jens Meierhenrich, Catharine Newbury, David Newbury, Gérard Prunier, Filip Reyntjens, and Susan Thomson, "Truly hostile environment," *Times Higher Education*, 19 December 2013, <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/comment/letters/truly-hostile-environment/2009939.article> (accessed 1 March 2016).

⁴⁸ See for example, Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011); Susan Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power: Everyday Resistance to Reconciliation in Postgenocide Rwanda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013). In the aftermath of publication, both books were condemned by Rwandan government officials and bloggers.

⁴⁹ Law No 18/2008 defines genocide ideology as "an aggregate of thoughts characterized by conduct, speeches, documents and other acts aiming at exterminating or inciting others to exterminate people basing (sic) on ethnic group, origin, nationality, region, color, physical appearance, sex, language, religion or political opinion, committed in normal periods or during war." The law is controversial among human rights experts due to the vague definition of the term and its widespread application to individuals who discuss the RPF's various human rights abuses and limited democratic reforms, among other politically sensitive subject matter. Amnesty International, *Rwanda: Safer to Stay Silent: The Chilling Effect of Rwanda's Laws on 'Genocide Ideology' and 'Sectarianism'*, 31 August 2010, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR47/005/2010/en> (accessed 8 February 2016).

⁵⁰ Laurie Anne Pearlman, "Vicarious traumatization in mass violence researchers: Origins and antidotes," in Ivana Maček (ed.) *Engaging Violence: Trauma, Memory, and Representation* (London: Routledge, 2014), 171. See also, Katherine Bischooping, "Timor mortis conturbat me: Genocide pedagogy and vicarious trauma," *Journal of Genocide Research* 6(4) (2004), 545-566.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., 174.

⁵³ Kimberly Theidon, "'How was your trip?' Self-care for researchers working and writing on violence," *Drugs, Security and Democracy Program Working Papers on Research Security* 2 (2014), http://webarchive.ssrc.org/working-papers/DSD_ResearchSecurity_02_Theidon.pdf (accessed 29 February 2016).

⁵⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁵⁶ Beth Hudnall Stamm, cited in Theidon, "'How was your trip?'" 13.

⁵⁷ Sluka, "Managing Danger in Fieldwork with Perpetrators of Political Violence and State Terror," 121.