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# Fieldwork in Hazardous Areas

Disaster Studies  
Wageningen University, 2005

Illustrations: Mark de Koning  
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# 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Wageningen Disaster Studies (WDS) has three inter-connected fields of research and education: natural hazards, violent conflict and humanitarian aid. WDS addresses the three fields with a focus on the diversity of actors that shape emergencies and relief interventions. Local people (victims and profiteers, citizens and combatants), national governments, United Nations peace keeping forces, and international humanitarian agencies, all have their own interests and level of responsibility. By taking this complex field as subject of research, Disaster Studies realises it is also part of this field of actors. Researchers too have their interests, and they often become part of the scene. This places responsibilities on researchers with regard to the quality of their research and the ethical choices they make. And it makes security of the researcher and the people s/he works with a major concern.

Studying disasters requires field research, and this is often in unstable, politically sensitive or violent locations. WDS does not allow students or staff to do research in areas with open violent conflict. But we do allow research in conflict areas where violent outbreaks are rare and scattered, and in post-conflict areas where violence lingers. Students need to be prepared that open violence may erupt in these areas. Violence is unpredictable and security levels can become unacceptable during fieldwork. Leaving the field for security reasons is one of the most difficult decisions a researcher can be confronted with.

This manual presents the principles of Disaster Studies in a Code of Conduct, outlines conditions and requirements posed on students of disasters and provides students with practical advice on doing research in disaster areas. The manual is not meant to replace disciplinary Codes of Conduct, course requirements on research methodology, the major/minor contracts of Wageningen University, or the normal conditions regarding health and insurance for students going to do fieldwork abroad. It is a manual that specifically prepares students for working in hazardous environments.

The manual outlines Wageningen Disaster Studies policies. We have expatriate students as well as students doing research in their own country. Some specific guidelines do not apply to the latter. It has to be remembered that the dividing line between disaster areas and normality is very thin and sometimes absent. Many of the areas where disaster studies works are not as dangerous as people tend to expect. On the other hand, so-called stable areas may in fact be very violent and instability can occur in a period of months. The manual can therefore contain useful advice too for other students going to areas that are not considered particularly hazardous.

## **Research, ethics and security**

The Code of Conduct and fieldmanual emphasize the interconnectedness of social scientific research, ethics, security and the wellbeing of the researcher and his/ her informants. Social science depends for its data on organizations and people. They are the people suffering from the disasters we study, and operating in the delicate and often volatile political environments where we do our research. This puts, in our view, a special responsibility on researchers to treat people with respect and refrain from endangering their security. This is not just an ethical issue. Treating people with care and respect helps to build the trustful relationship that is needed to obtain reliable information and entice people to tell their stories. Fostering respectful relations with host organizations and people in the field has a direct bearing on the researcher's security as well. It enhances access to security information and brings about that people are more likely to help you out in case of danger. There is also a mutual relation between wellbeing, ethical research and security. Feeling secure and establishing good relations enhances the wellbeing of the researcher. The other way around, when wellbeing is affected by too much stress, this may put relations under pressure and cloud judgement of

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security situations. Behaving ethically, maintaining scientific standard, acting security sensitive and safeguarding your wellbeing thus go hand in hand and have to be balanced in fieldwork in hazardous areas.

The Code of Conduct of Disaster Studies draws on existing Codes while incorporating our research focus and special considerations of doing research in hazardous environments. Working in volatile areas puts high demands on the flexibility and creativity of researchers. The application of the principles laid down in the Code partly depends on the research situation and question. Deviating from the standards is often necessary. The standards are, however, more than a guideline. Students are expected to follow them as much as possible and deviations must be co-ordinated with the supervisor of Disaster Studies or the host organization and accounted for in the methodology section of research reports or theses.

The code of conduct and field manual are open for discussion and comments in order to improve their practical value for students preparing and conducting research in hazardous areas. To engage in this discussion or for comments: [Disaster.Studies@wur.nl](mailto:Disaster.Studies@wur.nl).



## **2. Code of Conduct**

### **1. Respect the dignity of research subjects.**

Respect for the dignity of people must be the guiding principle in considerations of methodology, security and ethics. Research subjects are people with their own values and understandings of their actions and the world around them. Researchers should do everything –as far as the research allows- to respect this and engage in dialogue on the aim of the research, the collection and analysis of findings and the use of research results. Research subjects that severely breach the values of researchers, for example war criminals or gross violators of human rights, nonetheless deserve to be treated with the same respect in acknowledging their points of views in research. Researchers are required to oblige the principles of informed consent and openness of research. There are exceptions when conditions, research questions or respondents demand covert research techniques. This can only be considered after careful deliberation, and must be accounted for in the results. Students are not allowed to operate under the guise of another identity than being a student researcher.

### **2. Safety first for researchers, research assistants and informants.**

Safety of researchers, assistants and informants is the first concern. Research should not be done in areas of open violent conflict. In any situation, 'rules of engagement' have to be discussed and roles and responsibilities must be clear between host organization, Wageningen Disaster Studies and researchers. This is especially important in cases of emergencies, such as evacuation, hospitalization or repatriation. The presence of the researcher in the field can have repercussions for the security of people. Researchers have to be aware of this and act in accordance, by not endangering assistants, informants and people from the wider community.

### **3. Respect and avoid doing harm to the position and reputation of host organizations.**

Most research is accommodated or assigned by a host organization. Considering that the host organization operates in the same sensitive, hazardous or violent environment where the research takes place, researchers should endeavour to avoid damage to the host organization, abide by the host organization policies regarding ethics and practice, and respect established work relations including with local authorities. It has to be recognized that hospitality and assistance are not indefinite, and that researchers should be modest in consuming time and energy from their hosts.

### **4. Respect the principles of social science.**

Scientific research is bound by rules. Researchers are responsible for not violating the standards of their discipline. They must consider the complications of data gathering in conflict situations and take utmost care in generating reliable data. They must be aware of the social implications of their research and endeavour to make their research socially relevant. Whereas researchers should take interests and insights of contract parties, hosts and respondents into account, research must remain independent and the intellectual ownership rests with the researcher. This must be clarified at the start of the research, and in case of contract parties laid down in written and mutually agreed *terms of reference* (ToR). Researchers are responsible for not harming the field and relations with host organizations for future research.

### **5. Act responsibly in the dissemination of research results.**

Returning results to the community under study is imperative and can take different forms. By the dissemination and sharing of research results the researcher gives her/ his results to a larger social community. This has to be done in scientific and socially responsive ways. It must be recognized that by sharing data, risks can develop for informants, assistants and the

larger community. Avoiding harm overrules the norm of transparency of (raw) data as researchers are in the first place bound to protect the security of their respondents. Ensure that representation of the research displays respect of the people and cultures studied.

**6. Recognize the dynamics of being part of the research situation.**

Research is a two-way process, and researchers gain different roles in the research environment. People endeavour to have their vision represented, try to bend the research into desired directions and enrol researchers to act on their behalf as broker to the outside world. Researchers must be prepared that people develop their own notions about their presence, which may lead to distrust or to false expectations. Research must be independent. Value-based conclusions and advocacy work can be part of the social responsibility of the researchers, but must not interfere with the quality of data-gathering and analysis.



" IT'S PART OF OUR NEW SELECTION PROCESS "



## 3. Field manual

### A. Becoming a student of Disaster Studies

Becoming a student of Disaster Studies starts with the motivation to do research in (post) disaster areas. Our students often find their motivation in the idea of doing highly interesting work in a field where practical solutions to problems are direly needed. But students also have to ask themselves if they are prepared to take the downsides. “Research in disaster affected areas is no fun. If you want fun, go someplace else”, said a former student of WDS working in post-conflict Burundi. She found it highly unpleasant to be locked up behind the walls of a house, always depend on drivers from the host organisation, to be bugged down by bureaucratic procedures for every step taken, to be restricted in movement while living in a beautiful country she would love to explore and abiding by curfews seriously limiting her social life. Disaster-affected areas are often very expensive to live and student budgets do not stretch far in these situations. Meeting with suffering people and living among those who barely manage to survive can give profound stress. A student wishing to go to a hazardous environment should seriously consider what motivates her/him to do so.

Disaster Studies offers undergraduate minor and master courses and possibilities for graduate PhD and post-Doc research. Conditions and preparations for fieldwork are generally the same as for students going to developing countries. However, considering the complicated nature of doing research in (post) disaster areas, Disaster Studies has some additional conditions.

In many areas, Disaster Studies only accepts students for fieldwork who have prior experience in living or travelling in areas outside of Europe. This special condition is motivated by different considerations:

- First encounters with cultures and conditions outside of Europe often have a big and unpredictable impact. Going to a (post-) disaster area will complicate this further, where these encounters may create uncertainties and anxieties that enhance security problems.
- Host organizations in (post-) disaster areas often work in stressful conditions and may not have the time nor the patience to coach a student’s first steps into unknown territories and help them cope with being away from home for a long period of time.

In addition, Disaster Studies obliges students to have a working knowledge of the lingua franca in the proposed area of research. Learning local vernaculars is often impossible, but students must have a fluency in the lingua franca, which is often the former colonial language in an area.

### B. Preparing Fieldwork

#### 1. Security

Risk assessment(s) must be made for all research in (post-) disaster areas. As a rule, Disaster Studies will not allow students to work in areas where active violent conflict takes place. An important criterion is the travel advice of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, assessing the level of risk involved is complicated. Violent outburst may be rare, sporadic and localized in areas classified as being in conflict. WDS may consider these safe enough for students despite a negative travel advice. This depends on information obtained from other sources, including locally present aid agencies. Media coverage of disasters and violent conflict alone is not trustworthy to assess a security situation. The decision to travel to these places stays the responsibility of the student/ researcher.

In recent years, partly as a result of anti-terrorist policies, people in certain areas have developed a hostile attitude to Westerners associated with aid agencies. Western students of

Disaster Studies should avoid travelling to such areas where they and their travel companions can be exposed to violence.

Apart from personal security, an important aspect in deciding to do fieldwork is the feasibility of the research. Security considerations may inhibit the research of certain topics, or disallow certain methodologies, including participant observation or participatory data gathering. Security may also inhibit the logistical organisation needed for research. When there is no transport or transport is severely restricted by the frequency of roadblocks, research may not be possible. Research should also not jeopardize the security of informants, research assistants or host organizations.

- Discuss security considerations with the host organization.
- Find information from different sources about the security situation in the area (see also appendix A).
- Discuss security with people who have recent experience in the research area.
- Prepare a security assessment and preparedness plan as part of your research proposal.
- Prepare alternative options in case your fieldwork can not push through due to security considerations.
- Anticipate on how to stall and safeguard your data (notebooks, floppy disks, cd-roms, documents, tapes) to prevent possible misuse of sensitive information by third parties. Send backups home, mail them to a separate e-mail account, or create web space, to prevent loss.



“ READ CLOSE : The AREA IS NOT  
IN ACTIVE VIOLENT CONFLICT ”

## **2. Host organizations as facilitators of research**

Disaster Studies requires that students are hosted by an organization in the country of research. This can be a local or international organization of a university, government, UN body or NGO. Working through a host organization has advantages and disadvantages. Among the disadvantages are that local people may identify the student with the host and that the relation with the host may become strained when students develop a critical attitude towards their work. However, these risks do not outweigh the advantages in relation to security, quality and relevance of research that host organizations offer. Besides, working with a host adds to the learning experience of students preparing for a career in (post) disaster areas.

The selection of the host-organization is often mediated by the supervisor of Disaster Studies, but can be arranged directly by the student as well. The place and role of the organization in the local context and in relation to political tension must be taken into account in choosing what kind of organization to work with.

Considering that students undertake research primarily for learning purposes, Disaster Studies does endorse that students take on salaried assignments with host organizations. Financial contributions of the host to research costs is acceptable and often necessary. This must be arranged in advance. Ideally, students' research can provide relevant data and insights for the host. However, considering that staff of the host organization is usually far more experienced and knowledgeable than students, they should be modest in claiming potential contributions (or improvements) to the hosts' projects or area of work.

Students also should be modest in claiming attention *from* the host organizations, unless otherwise agreed upon, because host organizations have serious work to do and will have limited time to guide students. Remember that arrangements made with head offices may count little or not at all with sub-offices in the field. Likewise, directors make promises that their staff may not like to deliver and have many creative ways of circumventing. Base your expectations as much as possible on arrangements made directly with the people you will actually work with.

The network of Disaster Studies is a major asset. Students working with a host organization should bear in mind that they represent us. When the relation with the host organization is ruined, the possibility for research for future students become more limited.

Disaster Studies encourages students to co-ordinate with the host organization to establish relevant research questions. However, as stated in the code of conduct, research should be an independent endeavour, and the intellectual ownership of the project remains with the student. Host organizations have a stake in the research and naturally want to steer its outcomes. To maintain a critical distance it is important to find a field supervisor from outside the host organization, preferably attached to an academic organization.

- Given the importance of the relation with the host organization, students are advised to consult their supervisor in Disaster Studies before communicating with prospective hosts during the preparation (let us read drafts of your initial e-mails, until the relation is well established).
- Roles, expectations and logistic arrangements with the host should be clear before departure and must be approved by the supervisor.
- Try hard to maintain a good relationship with the host organization. In case of disputes the supervisor should be informed and possibly involved before they escalate.

## **3. Research proposal**

Proposals have to conform to the normal standards of research proposals. They need to be approved before students can leave for the field. There are some special considerations regarding proposals for research in hazardous areas:

- The proposal must have sections about preparedness for ethical issues and risks that can be anticipated in the research area

- The proposal should contain some safety precautions and alternative plans in case security situations become more restrictive.
- Research in hazardous areas is often costly: public transport may not be working effectively, house rent shoots up in areas with a high presence of aid organisations and peace keepers, and food items may be very costly. Research proposals need to contain a realistic budget. Start budgeting, applying for finances and saving money well in advance of departure.

#### **4. Health**

The health preparations for the usual Disaster Studies destinations are not much different from preparing for developing countries in general. The University Students Doctor or the GG&GD can advise you on specific vaccinations required for countries and regions. Ensure to start this preparation on time (6 weeks before departure). Vaccinations and prophylaxis can be quite expensive, especially when going on fieldwork for a long period –some health insurance companies cover these expenditures (see appendix A).

Travelling to (post) emergency areas may require special preparation. In refugee situations health services may be higher than in surrounding areas due to emergency aid interventions, but you may also encounter situations where medical services have been absent and erstwhile-eradicated diseases have recurred.

Although in most places sufficient quantities of food are available for those who can afford it, fresh vegetables and fruits may not be readily available in your area of research. Likewise, where you have to rely on motorized transport, you are bound to miss your usual exercise. Remember that a good condition is vital in your capacity to cope with stress and health threats in the field. Balanced food and regular exercise are important success factors of your fieldwork!

HIV/AIDS prevalence is often high in (post-) militarized areas. HIV/AIDS is a taboo in many places, and people may be unaware of carrying the disease. Be aware of other sources of infection besides sexual transmission, including blood transfusions or manicures. It is wise to bring a set of syringes to the field, as part of your medical kit.

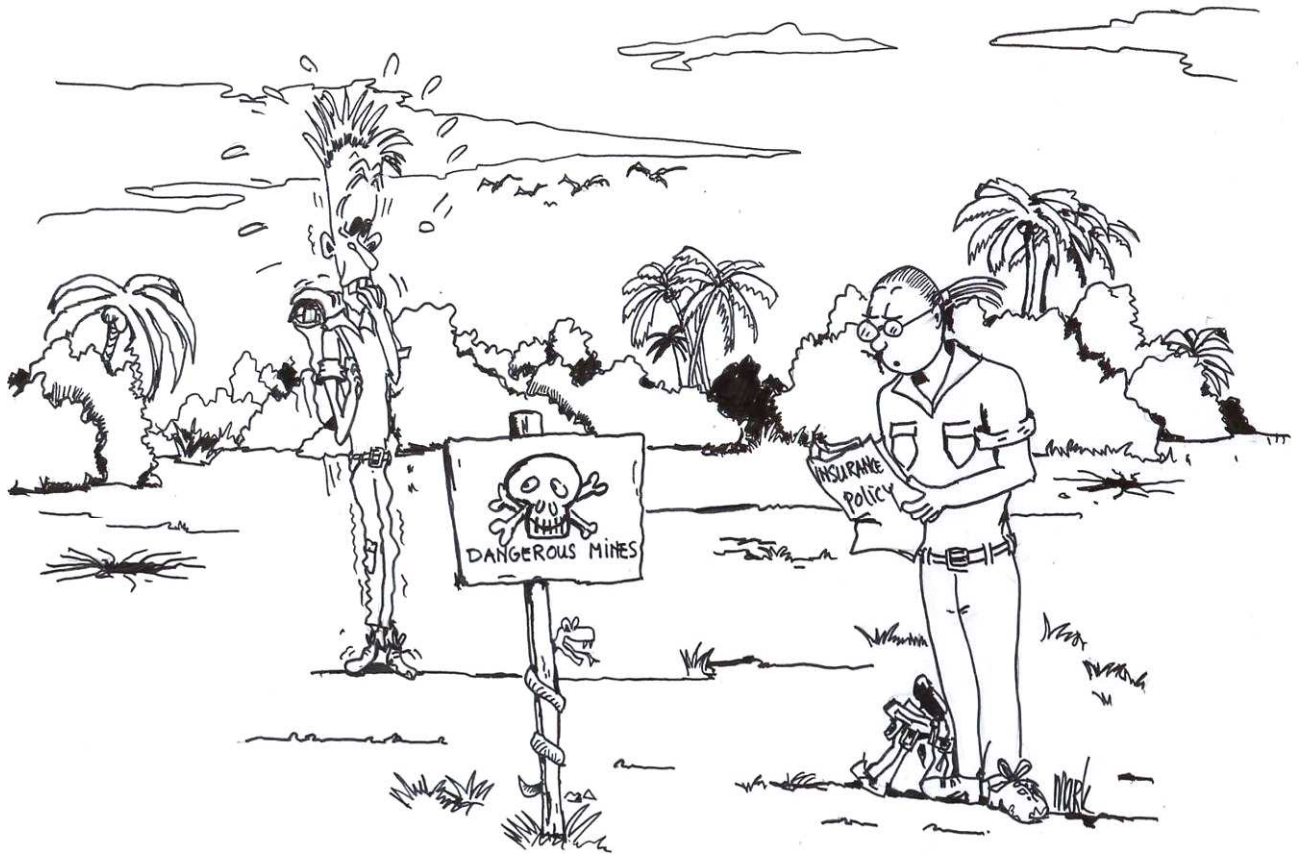
Some general points to think of before leaving for the field.

- Condoms, tampons and other relevant items may not be available in every place or even country, let alone disaster sites. The same applies for sunscreen. Beware that tropical sun is very strong and can cause serious problems.
- Have a dental check-up before you leave.
- When you expect to go to areas with limited food availability, bring supplies of supplemental vitamins.
- Bring a generous medical kit, since you will be bound to give away some items, but beware never to give away your basic supplies.
- Try to prepare and anticipate on social, emotional and psychological reactions you might experience (for more: see appendix B)

#### **5. Insurance**

Students and staff of Disaster Studies are required to have appropriate insurance. This is normally arranged through the university except for areas where molest insurance is needed. This is a special insurance covering risks associated with dangerous. Molest insurance is usually only offered in a package with other insurances. This may imply that you need to suspend your regular insurance.

- Check the conditions and coverage of your insurance in cases of molest, repatriation and family visits when hospitalized.
- Check the amounts compensated in case of invalidity or mortality and take a more expensive package if deemed too low.
- Some companies cover vaccinations and malaria prophylaxis, which may save you a lot of money.



"WAIT LET ME SEE WHAT IS COVERED IN THIS POLICY"

## 6. Authorities / Documents

Where visas are applicable, these should be arranged in advance. Many countries require in addition a research permit. As a rule, Disaster Studies expects students and staff to abide by these requirements. You can lose a lot of time with bureaucratic problems if the paperwork is not in order and the rule of suspicion that often supersedes the rule of law in (former) war zones, can easily get you arrested. In exceptional cases, however, it is advisable to have a tourist visa (sometimes to be renewed after expiration) instead of an official research permit. Such decision must be well-informed, well-argued and co-ordinated with the supervisor.

- Inquire on time about visa and other bureaucratic requirements. Obtaining off-needed letters of invitation from your host-organization takes time.
- Try to anticipate the bureaucracy in a country, for instance by consulting the local Dutch embassy.
- Make photocopies of valuable documents such as passport, ticket and driving license. Leave one set of copies behind in the Netherlands.

- When you intend to drive, ensure to have an international driver's license (to be obtained through the ANWB).
- Inquire about the possibilities of cash dispensers in your country of research, as well as coverage of credit cards. In case there is none, inquire in time about the best way of bringing money.
- Disaster Studies will provide you with an introduction letter to enhance access.

### **7. Home front and communication**

Going to an environment that is considered dangerous creates worries and insecurity for people at home. It is crucial to discuss this and let people know what you are about to do and how you will stay in touch.

Before departure, it is necessary to appoint a contact person in the Netherlands who takes care of your financial and administrative affairs and who will be your representative in case of emergency. The contact details of this person should be known to your supervisor in Disaster Studies, and s/he should likewise have supervisor's details.

Your supervisor is the contact person in Disaster Studies in case of emergency. When the supervisor is absent for holidays or fieldtrips, s/he will inform the student about who takes over this role during her/his absence.

- Provide your contact person and supervisor in Disaster Studies with the necessary contact details and information about your trip before you leave.
- Inquire in advance about availability of Internet and telephone in your area of research in order to keep expectations realistic about the possibilities of communicating home.
- Bring your mobile phone to the field. In many places a local prepaid mobile number can be obtained.
- Using internet providers for telephone communication can reduce the communication costs substantially. Inquire and inform your home front about these possibilities.

### **8. Conditions for approval and responsibilities of Disaster Studies**

To summarize the conditions that must be met by students of Disaster Studies before departure:

- The area of research is not in open violent conflict.
- An approved research proposal that contains a section about preparedness for ethical issues and risks that can be anticipated in the research area
- Agreement with a host organization
- Proper insurance, including molest if necessary
- Visa and research permits (or an alternative agreement approved by the supervisor)
- Communication details of the student, host organization and contact persons.

The supervisor of Disaster Studies:

- Provides contact details for student and contact person.
- Provides a letter of introduction.



“NO THANKS, I HAVE MY  
FIELD MANUAL”

### C On arrival

On arrival in the country where the research is taking place, it is important to introduce yourself to the various institutions and actors involved. This gives you the opportunity to update the security situation and make relevant contacts. Making courtesy calls with other organisations and authorities can be regarded as polite and create contacts which might prove useful later on. Be aware that contacts with the host organization and other actors are your main asset for a successful research and for your security.

- *Take time to get to know your host organization*  
Take time to get to know the host and to co-ordinate about the research you are going to do. It is usually well appreciated when you bring a present for the person who has made arrangements for you. Many organizations in (post-) disaster areas have a security

protocol and/ or a Code of Conduct that you must take into account. Make clear (preferably written) agreements in the first week about roles and responsibilities in case of emergency. Your evacuation and shelter is part of the responsibility of the host organisation (for instance access to a UN plane). Also, use your time to discuss with your host and other informants about possible sensitive issues and tricky actors you may have to deal with. Your host will be able to assist and give advice for many basic security issues in relation to housing, transportation, carrying money, and data-storage.

- *Introduce yourself to your national embassy or representation*  
You must inform your Embassy or representation about your presence in the country. They can instruct you about safety protocols and include you in the list of people to be warned or evacuated in case of emergency. The Embassy may ask you for an itinerary when you go to risky areas.
- *Introduce yourself to the local authorities*  
As a rule, it is important to introduce yourself and your project to local authorities. Co-ordinate with your host organization about whom to approach and what to say and not to say.
- *Abide by the law*  
Find out about local law and abide by it! The use of (soft) drugs is usually illegal and traffic rules vary from country to country. When you get into problems with the law, your National Embassy has only limited room to help you out. They can advise and assist in case of extreme events as arrests, detainment and abduction, but Embassies don't have real power to intervene (for more detailed information see to the website of the ministry of foreign affairs).
- *Health and acclimatisation*  
Common sense is the most practical advice regarding health. Take the time to adjust to a different time-zone, climate, and eating or living habits. It is normal to experience minor inconveniences, including stomach and sleeping problems, in the first weeks of fieldwork.



"YES MOM, I WILL BRUSH MY TEETH  
AT LEAST FOUR TIMES PER DAY"

- *Research assistant*  
Research assistants are often recruited in the actual field area. In case you have an assistant travelling with you to the field, endeavour to ensure that s/he is included in security and insurance arrangements. It has happened that expatriates are being evacuated and have to leave their assistant behind! Who employs the assistant: you or your host organization? Make that clear and find out what this implies for your



responsibility. Consider the health risks of your assistant and provide, if necessary, prophylaxes.

## **D Doing fieldwork**

### **1. Personal safety**

Personal safety is most important, and students should always avoid unnecessary risks. In case of doubt: play it safe! Host organisations can advise and inform you on where to go for information, safe hours of the day, safe areas to go unaccompanied, and safe means of transport. In hostile environments, situations can change very quickly. Although these changes are largely unpredictable, preparedness for sudden events is possible and important.

#### *Criminality*

Conflict situations are often high on criminal activity, inflicted by parties in the conflict and people profiting from the chaos (Van Brabant 2000). In post-conflict situations criminal activity often even rises. When military presence recedes, weaponry remains available and former fighters return home without employment.

A few points to consider:

- Respect local advice on no-go areas, hours and types of transport to avoid and other measures to reduce risk of getting victimized by criminal behaviour.
- Never resist violent robbery, and be aware that robbers often use violence because *they* are nervous. Try to co-operate without showing fear or anger.
- No material goods, even when unavailable in the research location, are worth being molested for.
- Keep updating your assessment of the security situation.

#### *Travel and traffic*

In most (post-) disaster areas, traffic accidents are a bigger risk than violence! The local situation is best assessed by asking your host and other local informants. When the situation is very fluid, inquire about the roads at taxi stands or bus stations where people arrive from the area you want to visit.

- When you travel to the field, leave an itinerary with your host organisation or another trusted organisation/ person.
- Inform your people at home where you are going and how long you anticipate being out of email- or telephone contact.
- Inform yourself about the risks of public transport. In some areas it is not advisable to take taxis for risk of being robbed or violated by the driver.
- When driving your own car, take time to anticipate on the journey you are about to undertake and to prepare possible necessities (including ample drinking water). Which locations are you driving through, what risks may you encounter?
- In case armed escorts or travel by military convoy is necessary to reach a destination, students should not travel their own car, but get a reliable ride.
- Do not drive at night time, and ensure it is safe to take night rides in public transport.
- Try to anticipate the quality of the transport and the driver, and in case you feel unsafe consider leaving and waiting for another ride.

#### *Landmines*

In former war zones, landmines are an issue of concern. The host organisation and local informants can advise you where to go and where not. Otherwise check the *landmine monitor report* (see appendix A).

A few rules that apply are:

- Avoid driving your own car in mine-infested areas.
- Where there is one mine, there are more. Never act impulsively.
- In the case of a mine accident in front of you, be careful of getting out of the car to assist, as anti-vehicle mines are often combined with anti-personnel mines. Only set foot on the traces of the cars ahead of you.
- Do not go where locals don't go. On the other hand, do not always go where locals go who may have to take risks to ensure their livelihood that you can avoid. Be cautious wandering off main roads and paths.

### *Violence*

Students of Disaster Studies are not allowed to work in areas where extreme events of violence are likely to occur. In the event of a serious outbreak of violence, they should leave the area. Since such situations can erupt very fast, it may nonetheless be useful to consult guides concerning violence, kidnapping, and bombing that are listed in appendix B.

- In case of erupting violence, follow your host's advice. Stubbornness, toughness or carelessness about risks jeopardizes your and other people's safety.
- Beware of the frog-in-the-water syndrome, both with you and with your (local) companions. This refers to the phenomenon that frogs that are being thrown into hot water immediately jump out, whereas frogs being put into water that is gradually heated stay until the boiling point. In other words: beware of getting adjusted to risk levels that are unacceptable. Ask yourself regularly if you would advise a fellow student to come and visit you. If the answer is: "No, that would be too dangerous", reconsider your decision to stay on.
- It is important to take regular breaks when you work in violent-prone or tense areas. Leave the area at least every 6 weeks for a few days of rest and reflection.



### *Sexual violence*

Disaster Studies students, especially women, should inform themselves about risks of sexual violence. Make a list of places and hours to avoid, and inquire whether you can travel alone. You must also find out what behaviour and clothing considered normal in your own society, is perceived as un-socialized or indecent in the area of research. As a guest in the country, adjusting yourself to local mores is an ethical must and enhances your security. When you discuss these risks, take into account that violence can be targeted. Certain categories of women are more vulnerable to sexual violence, for political reasons or for being considered as loose or available moral “others”. This can be the case for Westerners, but also city folks or women from other ethnic groups.

Points to take into account:

- Make a plan to minimize exposure to sexual violence risks and act accordingly.
- Reflect on and learn from mild everyday harassment and minor events and ask feedback from colleagues and friends about behavioural precautions you take or not take.
- Consider in advance a plan of action in case you are submitted to violence. Sexual violence can bring about tremendous physical and mental suffering, aggravated by (misplaced) feelings of guilt and shame. Having considered beforehand who to talk to may help you to find a course of action.

## **2. Stress management and wellbeing**

The personal experience of living under difficult circumstances or in a stressful environment should not be underestimated. Doing research in or after a disaster situation means a confrontation with human suffering, loss of life and general dismay. The impact of this can be very intense, and is added on to the ‘normal’ culture shock experienced in a different environment. For many people, encountering the consequences of conflict, suffering and death may lead to forms of ‘secondary trauma’, and what Robben and Nordstrom call an existential shock. “It is the paradoxical awareness that human lives can be constituted as much around their destruction as around their reconstruction and that violence becomes a practice of negating the reason of existence of others and accentuating the survival of oneself” (Robben and Nordstrom 1995: 13). Culture shock often focuses on friction in the research environment, for instance when confronted with evidence that people continue politicking and quarrelling in the midst of disaster.

Stress can both result in over-identification (“Am I the only one who cares?”) and over-distantiation (“These people owe their suffering to themselves”) and may lead to biased observations and/ or unacceptable behaviour. Precautions against stress are thus both for your own sake and for the sake of the research and research environment.

### Box 1: stress

- Pay attention to your body. Is it giving you warning signs? Rapid heartbeat, stomach pains, tightness in the chest, trembling, feeling tired all the time, headaches and other aches may be signs of stress.
- Pay attention to you mind. Is it giving you warning signs? Difficulty concentrating, difficulty remembering, finding that you are more ‘disorganized’ than usual, feeling overwhelmed or fearful may be signs of stress.
- Pay attention to your personal life and your emotions. Are they giving you warning signs? Are you arguing more with friends or co-workers of family members? Constantly feeling angry or sad or fearful or hopeless may be a sign of stress.

Source: Ehrenreich 2002

- Low moods are a normal part of fieldwork, but be aware of acute stress symptoms
- Share anxieties or stress with others
- Reflect about your own behaviour and ask feedback from colleagues and friends about possible signs of stress
- Maintain a good balance between identification and distantiation (see below)
- Take a break from the field every now and then, (known in expat jargon as a Rest and Recovery break, or R&R), to think things over and reflect upon events.
- Maintain a good condition: keep eating, drinking, sleeping, and exercising.
- Hold on to a daily routine, do not neglect chores like laundry.
- Remember that your supervisor and field supervisor are experienced with fieldwork stress. Do not hesitate to consult them, or at least inform them on any personal considerations before these become problematic.

### **3. Dealing with dire poverty**

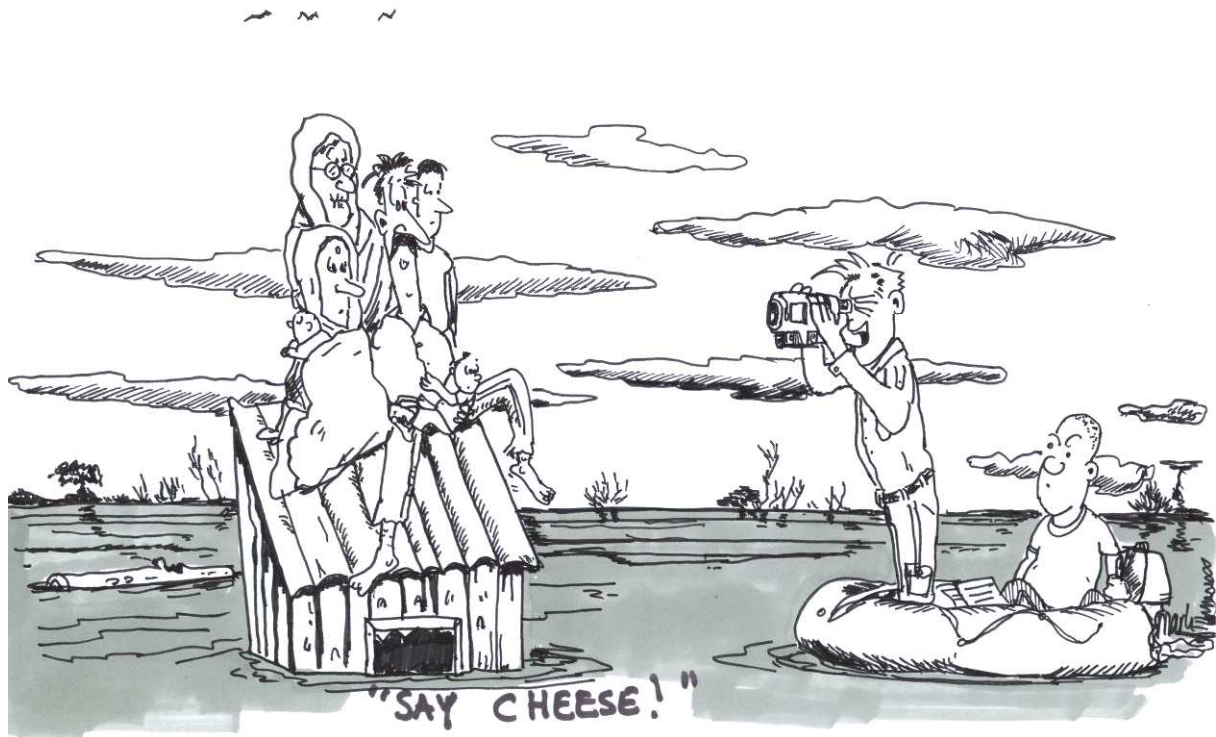
The encounter with dire poverty can result in social or moral dilemmas that can cumulate into stress. The socio-economic difference between the researcher and the researched can be huge in many developing countries, let alone disaster sites. There may be a threshold that you do not want to trespass, for instance working in a situation of extreme food shortage or famine.

Finding a good way to go about questions of what attitude to take and how to deal with people addressing you for help is not easy and is never completely resolved. How to handle requests for assistance (scholarships, sponsorships) or plain begging? How do you handle requests for medical items from your medical kit? It will probably keep you deliberating throughout the entire period of fieldwork. Often, students get irritated when requests are being made. Try to remember that people's suffering is usually real and that they have few chances to meet possible benefactors.

Be aware that charity and assistance towards destitute people can create expectations for the future (if you stay in the field for a long period of time) and can even disturb ongoing aid-projects. Find out about the local cultural appropriateness of charity if you want to make a contribution. Try not to get overwhelmed with feelings of guilt for not directly contributing to relieve people's misery. People often like to have researchers around who have much more time and interest to listen to their stories than overloaded aid workers normally have.

Some tips:

- Find a balance in your lifestyle. Do not adjust to local standards to the extent that you jeopardize your health and wellbeing. Be careful on the other hand to display your wealth and live 'grand' in the midst of poverty.
- People often try you out, until given a clear no which they accept and does not need to jeopardize the relation
- Consider how much money you can/ want to give away, as part of your budget considerations.
- Larger contributions (for instance for health costs of someone whose situation particularly touched you) may be better channelled through the host organization than dealt with directly.
- Some students have worked out plans with the host organization for more structural forms of support after they go home, for instance by mobilizing funds for projects.



#### 4. Data gathering and relations in the field

By making people subjects of research, researchers create representations of people. These representations of people, cultures, villages, and organizations can have a profound impact on these people. As stated in the Code of Conduct above, it is the responsibility of the researcher to make sure that informants get an appropriate introduction on the aims and dissemination of the research, in a way that they are able to give their approval for their co-operation.

However, it must be recognised that complete openness about research is often not possible. Firstly, explaining everything to everybody is arduous and interferes too much with interviewing. Secondly, ethnographic research is usually open-ended and the researcher does not know what the final lines of analysis will refer to, and, finally, not all research environments or research questions are suitable to complete openness. There are no unequivocal solutions to ethical choices and it is important to co-ordinate them with the supervisor and to motivate them in your research strategies and reporting.

Interviewing is about probing: pursuing lines of questioning, and asking things in different direct and indirect ways. However, in post-conflict and hazardous areas, research subjects have often suffered loss and harm and may be traumatized by past events. Students should realize that questioning people about these events can have profound adverse impact on them. This means you have to be even more careful and modest in interviewing in these situations. Be aware of signals that people do not want to talk about certain things and respect these.

Confidential and secret information should be treated with great respect. It should be left out or carefully concealed in written reports. But what about secrets that detail of criminal or dangerous facts? Should these not be reported to authorities? The codes of conduct of social and medical workers may be helpful in these cases. They stipulate that confidentiality should not be breached unless immediate life-threatening situations occur. This means, for example, that when someone confesses to a murder in the past, the information should be respected as secret, whereas intervention is required when someone confesses to planning

a killing for the next day. Extreme caution should be maintained in these cases. Do not act on your own without consulting an experienced, trusted person.

Qualitative, and especially ethnographic research is not about finding truth, but about producing empirically informed plausible accounts. This is generally the case. There are two points of attention that are especially poignant though in situations of (post-) disaster or conflict. Firstly, in these situations 'truth' is often subjected to politics to a great extent. In a politicized environment research becomes part of political struggle. "Research and politics are both about representation and lines of analysis are bound to find their way into political arenas as statements of controversy, challenge or support" (Hilhorst 2003, pp. 227). Research thus risks to be used as a political tool by representatives of warring or opposing parties. As Wilson (1992) notes, researchers are often offered broker positions. This means that they can become part of strife over loyalty between different people or groups of people. How do you view your role, and more importantly, how do people view you and perceive your intentions and possible contributions to their cause. Consult methodology books on what researchers can do to minimize risks of becoming negatively engrossed in politics.<sup>i</sup>

Secondly, reliable data gathering may be more complicated than in situations of normality. (Post) disaster situations are characterized by the high prevalence of confusion and rumour. This can lead to bizarre data. Besides, there can be a high level of propaganda: deliberately planted information that finds its way into and reinforces all kinds of rumours. Propaganda networks may be very effective, so stories appear so often that they gain reliability. This is the case with primary data as well as secondary data. Especially the use of Internet sources may present problems. While accounts and articles in newspapers, magazines, and especially scientific literature are traceable to authors and publishers, Internet sources are often not. Internet sources should thus be checked very carefully with regard to their sources.

#### *Identification or distantiation?*

Much has been written about the question if and to what extent researchers should identify or distantiate themselves from the people they study, with the concepts of *cultural relativity* and *ethnocentrism* marking both ends of the spectrum of moral realities. Classical examples of research taking 'going native' (too) far are the researcher who joins a warring party in a tribal feud in the Amazon forest (Napoleon Chagnon<sup>ii</sup>) and the researcher who joins a cannibal food feast in Peru (Tobias Schneebaum<sup>iii</sup>).

It is necessary to maintain a balance between identification and distantiation. This has different elements: it requires a balance between plunging into the field and taking breaks, as well as a balance between having empathy for people one works with and maintaining analytic distance. Finding this balance is difficult, and being made more difficult because people usually try to persuade or seduce researchers to identify with them.

The tension between identification and distantiation has implications for your relations and wellbeing in the field. Research is a lonely endeavour and many good friendships have evolved during fieldwork. On the other hand, students may be very disappointed to find that they were befriended for no other reason for people to bring their situation under attention of the outer world. Researchers are often enrolled to add their weight to partisan legitimation politics. Of course friendship is always a delicate mixture between instrumental and personal attachment, after all researchers also have a definite interest in befriending their subjects. This should not scare researchers off from developing friendship or relations of trust with people they research. However, when engaged in naively, one can be confronted with relations that are out of balance or where interests are kept hidden and breach of trust and disappointment is inevitable.

A certain identification with the people researched is necessary to create the ambiance of trust in which people are prepared to talk to you and to respectfully grasp people's points of view. However, too much identification can lead you to become biased and uncritically adopt people's views. Disaster Studies does not expect students to be objective or neutral. Political engagement, speaking out against injustice or on behalf of marginalized people can be responsible and praiseworthy. However, we do expect students to be

independent and display openness in their research to the different realities on the ground. A-priori judgments and biased data are not part of the professional standards of social scientific research.

- Try to triangulate the data collection, especially when emotional accounts are involved. Triangulation means that you collect data from different perspectives and informants and through different methodologies.
- Try and maintain contacts with people that are not only or directly linked to the research.

#### *Responsibilities towards research informants and assistants*

Safety for respondents & research assistants as well as their reputation can be enhanced by methods of data storage. In hostile, or otherwise sensitive environments, respondents who play a key role in your data collection by providing sensitive information, should be protected. Notebooks and computers can be stolen or confiscated. Researchers can guard the anonymity of research informants in notation, quotation and notes, by refraining from mentioning names, addresses and phone numbers on tapes, floppy disks, notebooks and phones, and a secure place to store this material.

#### *Representation*

Everywhere in the world, people get an idea about a visitor based upon appearance. Being a researcher means that you are depending on that appearance for the access to information. There is no single way of dressing or behaving for a researcher. Visiting authorities may require dressing neatly, but visiting a village chief dressed the same way can create mistrust. A few points to consider regarding appearance and representation:

- *Alcohol* can undermine your position, as it can be connected to morality and religion. Needless to say it can also lower your ability to assess situations.
- *Cigarettes* can have the same effect as the above but can also be nice to share or give away.
- *Clothing*. People can be offended by the way you dress. Find out the local opinions on proper dressing, and bring clothes that allow you to iterate between local (informal and hot) conditions and (formal and air-conditioned) offices. Be aware that whereas military items of clothing are normal in Europe, they are not and sometimes even forbidden in other parts of the world. Wearing heavy hiking shoes can have the same effect.
- *Religion* is very important in many countries. Respect religious sensitivities and consider how to represent yourself. In some places, there is no concept for people without religion, which may be very alienating and can be associated with questions of good and bad.
- Note that mores about smoking, drinking, clothing and religion are often gendered! What is acceptable for men may not be for women.



Researchers are often confused for representatives of donors, which can be a nuisance that affects the information people give you. They will, for instance, underplay their coping capacities to enrol you in assisting them. Being overdressed can add to the impression that you are an official. As Barakat and Ellis (1996) write about doing research in refugee or IDP-camps, casual dress was more accepted, and more practical because they didn't look like donors. But going to the UNHCR headquarters in a t-shirt and shorts, as was practical in the camp, was not a good idea. However, dress alone will not make the difference. Expect to be treated as a rich person, as you probably are to local standards.

#### *Suspicion*

Researchers, having no clear business in the area and asking questions, often meet with suspicion. In politicized environments, this can lead to suspicions of being politically motivated or working as a spy. Such suspicions are not just figments of imagination: international intelligence networks operate and have been intensified since 9-11, sometimes acting under the pretence of being aid workers or researchers, so that people have a ground to mistrust foreigners.

Apart from gaining trust by being open about your motivations and work, your host organization can broker trust on your behalf. However, a controversial position of the host organisation may make you controversial as a consequence. When you perceive that your host is a liability in this respect, you should contact your supervisor and may have to look for alternative channels for doing your research.

Suspicion can also follow from the political meaning attached to your research. As was elaborated above, research often becomes part of politics. This can have repercussions for security. Van Brabant notes that "it is important to ask how your presence, your programming and your positioning, as revealed through formal and informal statements, affect the (perceived) interests of other actors and what that means for your security" (2000: 40).

When you have not been raised in a militarized environment, getting used to being suspicious yourself may require a big effort. Beware that local and international intelligence often operate in (post) disaster situations. Stay alert in what you tell people you meet and who are interested in your work. Be careful not to share sensitive information that may jeopardize yourself, your assistant or research informants, not even to people who act as friends and share personal information as well.



- Be sensitive with photography. In highly politicised environment it might be unwise to be seen *mapping* the environment using photographic or film material, let alone photographing or filming military and military equipment.
- Be sensitive with the information you gather. Do not touch on sensitive topics that fall outside your research interest, even though you may be tempted out of general interest to discuss them with people you meet.

#### **4. Disaster Studies supervision during fieldwork**

During fieldwork contact with Disaster Studies supervisor remains important. With regard to the academic work, you should discuss major changes in your work with your supervisor to give her/ him an opportunity to get updates on your progress and changes in the research. From a security point of view, important changes in for instance research location should be discussed.

- Keep your supervisor informed on the security situation, especially when changes occur.
- Write monthly updates of the progress of the research to your supervisor
- Be clear about questions you want supervisors to respond to. Not every mail will be elaborately responded to if the supervisor sees no reason to intervene or advice.
- Don't wait too long to contact the supervisor when disputes arise between you and the host organization.
- Good students ask for supervision when they get stuck in their work. It is good to be independent, but asking for help when needed is the smart and responsible thing to do.

### **E. After Fieldwork**

#### **1. Post-fieldwork stress and reversed culture shock**

Coming back home you will find yourself changed and affected by your overseas experiences. The term 'reversed culture shock' is sometimes used to address the process of re-adaptation. Especially when returning from disaster areas or post-conflict environments, this reversed culture shock may be accompanied with the memories and experiences of extreme events and psychological consequences of experiencing hazards and disasters, even if it is only in the narratives of people/respondents. Supervisors and students both have a responsibility to address these issues carefully.

Many people experience a form of stress when returning home. This post/fieldwork stress is very normal but can grow problematic when neglected. Symptoms of post-fieldwork stress are:

- Prolonged fatigue;
- Concentration problems
- Lacking motivation to get to work;
- Vague physical complaints;
- Excessive use of alcohol, tobacco or other stimulants;

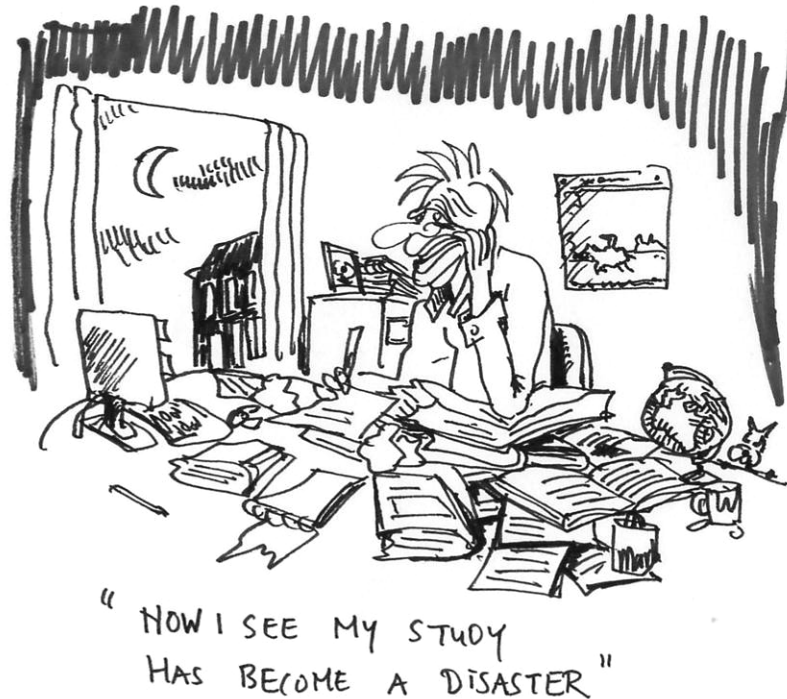
Added to this, returning home with a head full of impressive memories and experiences may result in a feeling of disappointment in friends, relatives and others. Things you have experienced will probably be very different from the life world of your friends and family. This disappointment may result in a tendency to withdraw from social occasions. That is a sign of stress.

Then, what to do:

- Plan a period of relaxation when returning from the field;
- Schedule a work plan for writing the thesis;
- Take the above symptoms of post-fieldwork stress seriously and act when they become problematic. They are *not* unusual, do not feel ashamed in any way, also

because a long period in a different situation - in anthropology the 'liminal phase' of the *rite de passage*- unleashes unforeseen emotions and behaviour; that is a normal human reaction;

- Psycho-social advice or assistance can be organised through medical and psychological personnel of the university (see appendix A).
- Go to the doctor for a medical check up after months in the field; for the Wageningen university doctors this is a standard procedure.
- Consider continuing writing a diary to help you digest the experiences in the field and upon return.



## 2. Reporting

The report of the undertaken research must of course be committed to the principles of science. This means proper and validated use of data, accountability for the methods of data gathering, and sharing and verifying the results with the host organization. If possible, reporting to other people involved in the research can be done at the end of the fieldwork (for instance through a seminar) and by submitting copies of the thesis.

Consulting the host organization or research respondents on the results is fairly common, but the question is what to do when disagreement arises between the researcher and the respondents<sup>2</sup>? Ideally, the roles and responsibilities of the student are laid down in a memorandum with the host organization leaving the intellectual ownership of the research with the student. This means, that the student should try her/ his utmost best to accommodate critique, but without jeopardizing the independent analysis. Using diplomatic language can avoid many disputes. In case the student and host organization can not overcome their differences, the supervisor will mediate. If that is not effective, the student and supervisor will together decide how to proceed after careful deliberation. In case such conflicts arise, one of the issues to take into account is the implications for future researchers and the well-being of the researched community? On the other hand, research is also about bringing out 'truths that people do not want to hear'. The supervisor has the final say in such decisions.

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<sup>2</sup> See for illustration of the above presented dilemma the *epilogue* of Hilhorst 2003

### *Dissemination of research results*

(Social) science is an enterprise whereby researchers build upon each others work, therefore proper and responsible dissemination is not only important for the host organization and the communities or people involved, but also to other scientists. However, the impact of dissemination has to be carefully assessed before endangering people or ruining the reputation of the host organization. Anonymity of informants and assistants and respecting confidentiality are oft-used and acceptable measures.

Writing the report in an accessible language and providing copies of the work is a mere act of decency towards people who have contributed to the research.

### **3. Supervision after fieldwork**

The frequency of supervision after fieldwork partly depends on how students progress, and is laid down in the supervision contract between Disaster Studies and the students. Some special considerations are:

- Inform your supervisor in case of excessive post-fieldwork stress. In case of prolonged difficulty to get to work, consider reporting you are ill to avoid that study time elapses.
- Disaster Studies encourages students to disseminate their work to people concerned. We have limited funds available for reproducing a maximum of 10 copies of your report and sending it to interested stakeholders.

## 4. References

- Barakat, Sultan & Sue Ellis (1996) 'Researching Under Fire: Issues for Consideration When Collecting Data and Information in War Circumstances, with Specific Reference to Relief and Reconstruction Projects. *Disasters* 20 (2): 149-156
- Black, Richard (2003) 'Ethical Codes in Humanitarian Emergencies: From Practice to Research? *Disasters* 27 (2): 95-108.
- Brabant, Van, Koenraad (2000) *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments*. Good Practice Review 8, London: ODI.
- Ehrenreich, John H. (2002) *A Guide for Humanitarian, Health Care and Human Rights Workers. Caring for Others, Caring for Yourself*. Center of Psychology and Society. Online available: <http://www.mhwwb.org/disasters.htm>
- Hilhorst, Dorothea (2003) *The Real World of NGOs. Discourses, Diversity and Development. (Epilogue: the politics of research)*. London: Zedbooks
- Meyers, Barton (1991) 'Disaster Study of War', *Disasters* 15(4): 318-330
- Pelton, Robert Young (2003) *The Worlds Most Dangerous Places*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Robben, A. C. G. M. and C. Nordstrom (1995) 'The Anthropology of and Ethnography of Violence and Sociopolitical Conflict', In Nordstrom, C and Robben, A. C. G. M., *Fieldwork Under Fire, contemporary studies of violence and survival*. London: University of Berkeley Press.

## Appendix A: Useful addresses

*Wageningen University and Research center (WUR):*

[www.wur.nl](http://www.wur.nl)

See [www.disasterstudies.nl](http://www.disasterstudies.nl) under the *links* button for a selection of relevant websites on humanitarian aid, conflict, natural hazards, international news agencies and more.

*Medical Department / students doctor WUR:*

Duivendaal 4, 6701 AR Wageningen. 0317-484022

*Hospitals with tropical disease departments:*

Academisch Medisch Centrum (AMC),

Keurings en vaccinatie bureau voor de tropen.

Meibergdreef 9, Amsterdam, 020-5663900

Havenziekenhuis Travel Clinic

Haringvliet 2, Rotterdam, 010-4123888

Academisch Ziekenhuis Leiden (AZL),

Poli Infectieziekten Tropische geneeskunde en Vaccinaties

Albinusdreef 2, Leiden, 071-5263636

Academisch Ziekenhuis Nijmegen St. Radboud

Afdeling Tropische geneeskunde

Geert Groteplein zuid 8, Nijmegen, 024-5141415

*Vaccinations and other medical advice*

GG&GD, general information for tropical diseases and vaccination: 0900-9584

(with departments in every provincial residence in the Netherlands).

- Stichting bestrijding Sexueel overdraagbare ziekten: 030-2343700
- Aids-infolijn: 0800-0222220

*General information about travelling and the tropics*

- The London School of Tropical Medicine has a useful web-site on travel health (<http://www.masta.org>).
- Royal Institute for the Tropics (KIT)

*Travel advice*

- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.minbuza.nl>
- US State Department: <http://travel.state.gov>
- UK Foreign Office: <http://www.fco.gov.uk>
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/>
- Worldworx: <http://www.worldworx.tv/safety/>

*Landmines Monitor Report*

<http://www.icbl.org/lm/2002/report.html>

*International Drivers license:*

<http://www.anwb.nl>

## Appendix B: Readings on specific safety issues

### *Fieldwork in hazardous / (post-)violent environments:*

Note: Many dissertations, monographs and other research reports have a methodological section where the condition in which fieldwork was executed is elaborated on practically and methodologically. You can learn a lot from these.

- Barakat, Sultan & Sue Ellis (1996) 'Researching Under Fire: Issues for Consideration When Collecting Data and Information in War Circumstances, with Specific Reference to Relief and Reconstruction Projects' *Disasters* 20 (2): 149-156.
- Brabant, Van, Koenraad (2000) 'Operational Security Management in Violent Environments' *Good Practice Review* 8, London: ODI.
- Meyers, Barton (1991) 'Disaster Study of War', *Disasters* 15(4): 318-330.
- OCHA (1999) OCHA Orientation Handbook on Complex Emergencies ([http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/ocha\\_\\_orientation\\_\\_handbook\\_on\\_\\_.htm](http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/ocha__orientation__handbook_on__.htm)).
- Pelton, Robert Young (2003) *The Worlds Most Dangerous Places*, New York: Harper Collins Publishers. (Online abstracts: <http://www.comebackalive.com/df/index.htm> ).
- Nordstrom, C and Robben, A. C. G. M. (1995) *Fieldwork Under Fire, contemporary studies of violence and survival*. London: University of Berkeley Press.
- \*Roberts, David Lloyd (1999) *Staying Alive. Safety and security guidelines for humanitarian volunteers in conflict areas*. Geneva: ICRC.
- Different handouts and code of conducts of Humanitarian agencies are obtainable from Disaster Studies: MSH, Pax Christi, Cordaid, ICRC and UN.

### **Ethics in fieldwork:**

- AAA (1998) *Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association*. Online available @: <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>
- ASA (...) *American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics*. Online available @ <http://www.asanet.org/members/ecoderev.html>
- Black, Richard (2003) 'Ethical Codes in Humanitarian Emergencies: From Practice to Research?' *Disasters* 27 (2): 95-108.
- Mentzel, Maarten (1993) 'Beroepsethos bij onderzoek. Via beroepscode omgaan met dilemma's', *Facta* 1 (6) :14-20

### **(Mental) Health:**

\* Hoe blijf ik gezond in de tropen, Amsterdam: KIT  
(You'll receive a copy when visiting the Students Medical Advisor)

## Appendix C: Students checklist:

- 1) Did you provide DS / supervisor with:
  - A research proposal
  - Itinerary of travels
  - Communication plan
  - Contact details of homefront (family)
- 2) Did you receive from DS / supervisor:
  - Letter of introduction
  - Contact details of supervisor for my homefront
- 3) Did you arrange with host organisation:
  - Letter of introduction
  - Safety agreements
  - Agreement on the research topic, are they informed well
  - Housing and facilities
- 4) General preparations:
  - Medical advice, vaccinations, prophylaxis and medical kit.
  - Data storage (also specific software)

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<sup>i</sup> Two useful publications who go into these issues are *Fieldwork Under Fire, contemporary studies of violence and survival* by Nordstrom and Robben (1995) and *Operation Security Management in Violent Environments* of the above mentioned Koenraad Van Brabant (2000).

<sup>ii</sup> In 2000 a discussion about ethics in fieldwork challenged the behaviour of Chagnon regarding the treatment of Yanomamo. An interesting article on this discussion on (anthropological) fieldwork: *The Yanomami and the Ethics of Anthropological Practice*, by Terence Turner.

<sup>iii</sup> A beautiful documentary film was made about Schneebaum who at the age of 78 returns to Peru and New Guinea and confronts himself with the moral dilemma's of going native. *Keep the river on your right: a modern cannibal tale* (2000) by D. Shapiro.