



Human Resources and
Social Development Canada

Ressources humaines et
Développement social Canada

Akademi for Migrationstudier i Danmark
Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark



Researching “hard to reach” groups

Gary Raw

Director, Research and Statistics
IND

Workshop for the 11th International Metropolis Workshop, Lisbon, October 2006

Workshop organisers

- **Gary Raw**

Research and Statistics, Immigration and Nationality Directorate, Home Office, UK

Government and private sector research, application of research for policy and practice

- **Trine Lund Thomsen**

Academy for Migration Studies in Denmark

Institute for History, International and Social Studies, Aalborg University, Denmark

Researcher, irregular migration and migration management

- **Bayla Kolk**

Assistant Deputy Minister, Housing and Homelessness Branch, Canada

Linkage of policy, research and implementation

Workshop aim

- To develop guidance on conducting research involving “hard to reach” groups, through a participative facilitated workshop.

Workshop plan

- **This introduction** [no “presenters”]
- **Who are you?** [please complete the questionnaire so that the workshop organisers know what perspectives (researchers, researched, contact makers and research sponsors/users) are represented by the discussion]
- **Facilitated discussion** of four aspects of research with hard to reach groups [all those attending are invited to contribute their views, evidence and experience in a structured discussion]
- **Conclusions** [what are the key points]
- **Follow-up** [should our work continue beyond this workshop or beyond the conference?]

Starting point

- Good policy development depends on obtaining evidence that is both reliable and seen to be reliable.
- In the field of migration and communities, obtaining this evidence often depends on engaging with groups that are described as “hard to reach”, for example because they are motivated to remain hidden (or hidden from authority), there are safety/security risks, or there is no reliable sampling frame or route to contact.
- Such groups include, for example, the victims and perpetrators of immigration crime, those of uncertain status in their host country and even refugees whose status has been assured.
- Working with these groups involves special problems with obtaining reliable, unbiased findings and avoiding risks to participants.

Four questions

1. **Which groups are hard to reach and why?**
2. **What are the key criteria for guidelines** (e.g. excellent research design, protection of participants, avoiding offence)?
3. **What are the key elements that need guidance** (e.g. sampling, making contact, providing data, obtaining data, personal safety, data security, participant retention)?
4. **What are the most important guidelines** for researchers, target group members, those who make contacts and research sponsors/users?

Which groups are hard to reach and why?

- Which groups should we be thinking about in this discussion?
- What are the reasons they are hard to reach?
- Which reasons apply to which groups (matrix to be completed)?

Which groups are hard to reach and why?

- **Which groups should we be thinking about in this discussion (i.e. in the Metropolis framework)?**
 - Asylum seekers
 - Refugees
 - Illegal immigrants/irregular migrants
 - Illegal/irregular workers
 - Employers or illegals
 - Homeless people
 - People traffickers
 - People smugglers

Which groups are hard to reach and why?

- **What are the reasons they are hard to reach?**
 - Motivated to remain hidden (or hidden from authority)
 - Fear of the authorities (prison, fines, removal)
 - Don't know "the system"
 - Fear of reprisals (e.g. family, employer, community)
 - Bad memories
 - Sensitive data
 - There are safety/security risks
 - Being hidden by others
 - No reliable sampling frame
 - No route to contact

Which groups are hard to reach and why?

- Which reasons apply to which groups?

What are the key criteria for guidelines?

- Excellent research design
 - What does “excellent” mean?
- Excellent research execution
 - What does “excellent” mean?
- Protection of researchers, participants and any other parties affected by the research
 - What does “protection” mean?
 - Who are the “other parties”?
- Avoiding offence
 - To and from whom?
 - At all costs?
- Any others?

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Being clear about the research question
- Sampling
- Making contact
- Providing data
- Obtaining data
- Personal safety
- Data security
- Participant retention
- Any others (or subdivisions of these)?

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Being clear about the research question
 - What are you trying to discover?
 - What will the findings be used for?
 - Does everyone understand the limitations?

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Sampling
 - Who is the specific group(s)?
 - Theoretical population (ethnic group, generation, gender etc.)
 - Practical/accessible population
 - Qualitative vs quantitative methods (or mixed)
 - What are the best method to answer the research question(s), given the limitations?
 - Having a sampling base
 - Sample definition

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Making contact
 - Access vs response
 - How to access the sampled persons?
 - Sources of contact information
 - Direct access
 - Use of gatekeepers
 - No contact needed

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Providing or obtaining data
 - Issues to consider
 - legal
 - ethical
 - practical
 - “audience”

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Personal safety
 - Safety risk management for all involved
 - Unintended consequences of contact or data exchange
 - Hazard identification, probability, severity, risk monitoring, mitigation, fall-back

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Data security
 - Accessibility
 - Confidentiality
 - Physical/electronic measures
 - Anonymity
 - Person level vs group level

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Participant retention
 - Maintaining contact and motivation
 - Additional information
 - Longitudinal research

What are the key elements that need guidance?

- Any others (or subdivisions of these)?

What are the most important guidelines?

What is most important to say to:

- researchers
- target group members
- those who make contacts
- research sponsors/users
- any other groups?

For further contact

Dr Gary Raw

Director, Research and Statistics
Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon
CR9 3RR
UK

Telephone: +44 20 8760 8358

Fax: +44 20 8760 8400

E-mail: gary.raw@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk