



Crime in Latin America (CRIMLA): The role of family, employment, culture and the state

Instruction, advice and information to interviewers in CRIMLA

Instructions

- The interview guide is extensive. We hope to get information on all the different sub-sections of questions, but it is not a problem if something is missing or if there are large sections added. These interviews are flexible, so follow your “ethnographic feel” for what is interesting and appropriate in each interview.
- The order questions is asked is not important – so if, in the course of the conversation, it feels natural to raise them in a different order, do that.
- You are doing three interviews. So you can spread the questions a little out in terms of time. Take some in each interview. Take decisions about the order of questions, which ones to put in each interview etc. based on the dynamic of the interview.
- These are life-history interviews. That means that they are extensive and should last for at least 1,5 hours x 3 (longer is good too) unless there are particular reasons for them to be shorter (e.g. the interviewee is uncomfortable or have other obligations). That means that they will have to be conversations that participants are engaged in, more than quick questions and answers.
- For some key events (turning points in life, major incidents that happened etc.) you should ask about it in several interviews/return to it (people often tell about their lives in different ways at different times, so it is good to get some of this diversity). For other, less central topics, it can be enough to discuss it once.
- Let there be at least a week between each interview so that the interviewee get some time to reflect upon it (and forget a little bit about it) until the next interview. Try to do all three interviews within a 2-3 month time span.
- Try to get participants to talk as much as possible, following a “natural” pattern of conversation. Allow them to raise their own issues and form the interviews in their own way.
- We are particularly interested in crime. So whenever they start to talk about this (all forms of crime) ask as many follow-up questions as you can. Also when they talk about what leads them into, as well as what make them desist crime.
- Listen to what they want to tell and ask follow-up questions for the issues they raise.
- Use phrases such as “yes”, “interesting” etc. and body language (like nodding) to acknowledge and confirm that the stories they tell are interesting. If there are stories you do not approve of try to be neutral or ask follow-up questions that shows that even though you do not “agree” what they are saying is interesting for the research.
- Use pauses to try to facilitate answers (do not jump to the next questions if there is a moment of silence). Let participants spend some time on thinking about it, or have them try to fill the empty space of conversation that a pause provides.



- Write a small “ethnographic intro” to the transcription (10-20 sentences) of the interview that says something about the setting of the interview, the participant and the atmosphere. Do not worry about language, content or anything here. This is just for the rest of the research team to get “a feel” for the context when they read the interview later.
- If participants are uncomfortable about a topic do not push them (e.g. if they have been sexually abused as children, or they have committed crimes that they do not want to talk about). You can very carefully return to this in later interview, but never in a way that makes it uncomfortable for them or you.
- Tell participants not to tell you names or other details that can be of interest for law enforcement. Their own names can also be left out.
- Tell participants not to tell you about plans for criminal activity in the future.
- At the beginning of the interview make it clear that participants understand the interview they are participating in and what it will be used for (try to get consent on tape, since we do not have papers they should sign).
- Let participants know that they can withdraw from the interview whenever they want, also afterwards (meaning that we will delete it).

Advice

- Listen to your own “inner voice” regarding what can of questions can be asked participants, in what way they should be phrased, and when to follow up and ask more and when to stop. Do not make yourself or the participants uncomfortable.
- Do not do an interview if you are unsure or feel unsafe about anything regarding the interview-setting, the participant or something else.
- If you feel really uncomfortable or unsafe in an interview, try to find a natural way to end it. In these cases we will not use the interview and try to find another participant instead.
- Be prepared and set off enough time for each interview. Be careful with scheduling more than one interview per day as these can be tiring and demands a particular presence. In particular situations that demands it, more than one interview can be scheduled for one day.
- Remember that we want follow-up interviews with all participants, so create an atmosphere in the interview that invited this. Also, note down in the days after the first interview what you could/should or wished you had asked more about in the first one so that you remember this for the follow-up interview.

Information

- If you, or participants, during the course of the research require a talk with a psychologist or some other professional the CRIMLA-project will facilitate this.
- The researchers in the project also have extensive experience with interviewing vulnerable groups – so please reach out if there are particular ethical, methodological or personal questions you want to discuss.
- You can at any time resign from this job, for personal or other reasons.
- Data is the property of the University of Oslo and UNAM. If you are interested in writing something from this project (academic or otherwise) we encourage and can assist in that (as co-authors or otherwise, providing feedback). We hope that those involved in the project will



use the opportunity that this data set offers. Publications from the project will have to be approved by project leader, since they “represent” the project and not only the individual researchers involved. If you want to use data or have questions about this, please contact Sveinung Sandberg or Gustavo Fondevila.

- You can at any time reach out to anyone of the members of the core research team if you have any kind of questions.

CRIMLA core research team for data collection

Sveinung Sandberg, Gustavo Fondevila, David Rodríguez Goyes and Martín Di Marco