Practising ethics: guides for built environment research

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Abstract

Practising Ethics Guides are part of an open-access educational tool for emerging and established built environment practitioners to teach themselves and others how to identify ethical dilemmas that may arise in research and practice, negotiate their ethical responsibilities, and rehearse strategies to navigate unpredictable ethical issues with care and creativity. The guides are the result of an interdisciplinary collaboration between two long-term projects that explore ethical protocols for built environment practitioners and strengthen pathways to urban equality, paying particular attention to the western-centric bias of ethical values which privilege the individual over the communal or collective. Together, this research explores the relationship between universals and specifics through a framework that encourages a situated mode of ethical practice, which situates the relation between universal principles and particular processes in specific contexts. The guides help navigate this relationship by using generative questions as prompts for practitioners to reflect on potential ethical considerations and by setting out guidelines that contextualise concerns and suggest potential actions. *Practising Ethics Guides* are designed as an accessible point of reference at all stages of a project — from planning research and conducting activities in the field, to producing and communicating outputs. Rather than a regulatory hurdle, they consider ethics as an opportunity to enrich architectural practice through reflexive curiosity and critical investigation.

Practising Ethics is an open-access educational tool developed through a collaboration between the Bartlett Ethics Commission 2015–2022 (a Bartlett Faculty-funded project exploring ethical issues facing built environment researchers and professional practitioners);[1] and 'The Ethics of Research Practice', part of Knowledge in Action for Urban Equality or KNOW 2017–2022 (an ESRC-funded research project working to strengthen pathways to urban equality in thirteen cities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia).[2]

The Bartlett Ethics Commission's work involved a critical review of ethical codes and resources of sixty-six built environment professional bodies, identifying a lack of guidance to facilitate the reflective process that occurs in the act of creating architecture, flagging a particular need for specific case studies to illuminate how universal codes work in action, and emphasising how to make judgements in specific situations. Work within the KNOW program included conducting a literature review to examine critically and culturally the ethics of co-producing knowledge. The literature revealed how research ethics is culturally located, exemplified by Boaventura de Sousa Santos' argument that, to allow for mutual intelligibility across intercultural translation, the hegemonic relation between different experiences must be recognised.[3] The fieldwork explored a range of participatory and visual methodologies — from collaborative historical mapping and transect walks, to photo diaries and participatory drawings — exposing ethical issues including conflicts of interests, power relations, and emotional impact. Common to both projects has been an investigation of how the relation between the universal principles and the particular processes is situated in the specific contexts, and we propose that it is by developing a practice of ethics that one starts to navigate the relation between the two. Each part of the Practising Ethics toolkit generates skills to support the building of a more ethical form of practice. It includes a lexicon of core principles, a set of case studies where researchers share their own stories of ethical experiences in the field, a suite of guides focusing on specific methods, as well as commentaries on existing protocols and suggested readings.

Two questions sit at the heart of our project: 'What is an ethical practice of built environment research?' and 'How do we foster the conditions for emerging and established practitioners to develop this?' By defining ethics as a situated but also a relational practice, it is possible to see that developing an ethical research practice involves responsibility, reflection, and recognition. But how to help researchers develop ethical attitudes and aptitudes that cultivate acts of responsibility, reflection, and recognition? A desire to achieve a balance between the reflective and the active has been a fundamental aim of our approach, and for this reason our guides focus on the use of questioning to generate reflection and on the act of guiding itself to encourage the taking of responsibility and recognition of the other.

Addressing the lives and stories of Others, D. Soyini Madison reminds us, is always 'a complicated and contentious undertaking'.[4] To illustrate what is at stake, she invites researchers committed to addressing processes of unfairness and injustice to consider five central questions:

i.   How do we reflect upon and evaluate our own purpose, intentions, and frames of analysis

as researchers?

ii. How do we predict consequences or evaluate our own potential to do harm?

iii. How do we create and maintain a dialogue of collaboration in our research projects between ourselves and Others?

iv. How is the specificity of the local story relevant to the broader meanings and operations of the human condition?

v. How — in what location or through what intervention — will our work make the greatest contribution to equity, freedom, and justice?[5]

These self-reflexive questions form the backbone of Madison's ground-breaking text *Critical Ethnography* (2005) and inspired the generative questions that open each of our *Practising Ethics Guides* tailored to the methods employed by built environment researchers, including: 'Why have I chosen to work internationally?'; 'Will I cause harm?'; 'Am I making anyone feel uncomfortable?'; 'Is it unethical to remain silent?'; 'Am I alert to the history and power of this medium?'; 'Are there barriers to access?'; and 'Will I need a support system?'[6]

From these opening questions, because our aim has been to help readers practice their research ethically, David Roberts devised the format and structure of the guidelines to follow the path of ethical issues as they might arise during the development of a research process — from planning and conducting research, to communicating and producing outcomes. Each guide opens with a series of guiding questions, acting as prompts to reflect on the potential ethical considerations which emerge throughout a project, before, during, and after research has been conducted. The guidelines proceed to expand on the dilemmas and possible courses of action suggested by reflecting on the questions, illuminating the different ethical concerns they raise, and recommending actions.

Practising Ethics Guides were written by experienced researchers who guide their readers through the processes of negotiating the ethical dilemmas that can arise during a research project. For this reason, they focus on the different kinds of ethical issues practitioners might encounter as a result of using specific research methods and pay attention to the particular contexts and ways in which these methods are practiced. When practicing research, methods and context inform one another; we consequently consider this series of guides as embedded in a mode of applied ethics that is both situated and relational, bringing together forms of knowing with ways of doing.

Pia Ednie-Brown introduces Francisco Varela's notion of 'ethical know-how' as a framework for considering how best to equip creative practitioners for the ethical dilemmas they will face,[7] which recognises the situated nature of ethics in practice, 'in harmony with the texture of the situation at hand, not in accordance with a set of rules or procedures'.[8] Varela's notion of 'ethical know-how' is a conceptual touchstone for iDARE,[9] a project we have been in dialogue with since 2015.[10] Drawing from Mencius, Varela proposes that rules and procedures 'will always remain external to the agent,

for they will always differ at least in some ways from the agent's internal inclination'.[11] Ethical know-how, by contrast, involves spontaneous, compassionate moral action sensitive to the particularities and immediacies of lived situations. To develop this disposition where immediacy precedes deliberation requires expertise gathered through a sustained journey of experience and learning:

> And because truly ethical behavior takes the middle way between spontaneity and rational calculation, the truly ethical person can, like any other kind of expert, after acting spontaneously, reconstruct the intelligent awareness that justifies the action.[12]

Taking inspiration from existing research ethics resources, such as Susan Cox and others' *Guidelines for Ethical Visual Research Methods* (2014) and IDEO's *The Little Book of Design Research Ethics*, each guide sets out core ethical principles and includes a selection of further resources, along with questions and guidelines.[13] The decision to include core principles — such as consent, confidentiality, and benefit not harm — was fundamental to our intention of developing and refining an approach sensitive to the institutional and conceptual, as well as the cultural, physical, and emotional challenges that can arise in the research process. Most of the guides refer to the three key ethical principles set out by University College London, as this is the context in which our own research took place, but throughout the guides we have also highlighted in bold other words, which refer back to a broader set of ethical principles found in philosophy that we discovered through our research; we have also referred to principles that were identified by our research participants in their lived ethical experiences, which have been included as part of the Practising Ethics project in the form of a lexicon.[14]

To develop our guides and clarify what might comprise the most helpful framework for reflection and action, we studied a range of other models for ethical decision-making, including those generated by The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University,[15] the *Framework for Making Ethical Decisions* (2013) produced by Brown University,[16] and the guidance of The Oral History Society.[17] These hold in common a focus on the chronological sequencing of ethical research processes, but at times do not fully recognise the differences that particular research methods pose for practicing ethics. In order to better navigate this relation between the universal and the particular or specific, we devised a template for writing a guide that included sections common to all guides, and other sections which differed depending on the method and context being addressed.[18]

Since built environment research is as much about people as it is about places, in these guides people, both researched and researching subjects, are the focus of ethical practice. This includes the people who use and inhabit the places being researched, the people engaging with those places emotionally or spiritually even if they are not physically present, the people who design and those that build them, and the people who own or manage them. In addition, the guides consider the researcher as necessarily a key person or actor who devises the research approach, becomes a

participant in the place where they gather data, and determines how to interpret that data and what to do with it.

The guides put into practice the definition set out by Susan Banks and others that ethics is about the kind of lives people may lead, considering what actions may be right or wrong, and which qualities of character we might develop, but most importantly, the responsibilities we have for each other and our ecosystem.[19] They foreground process over outcome; because both people and research can be unpredictable, researchers need to be prepared to navigate unexpected situations and high expectations with limited time. Noting how even the best-laid plans often go awry when they come into contact with reality and real people, the guides emphasise the importance for researchers to put systems in place to support them throughout their process, minimising harm to those they are researching and participating with, as well as themselves.

It is important to note that the guides are not exhaustive and are not intended to address all the possible situations to be faced, particularly for research on sensitive topics or in places experiencing violence or instability. But we argue that learning from the experiences of others can help gain the ability to reflect on what is encountered, and to make informed decisions about the best way to practice research ethically. Insightful and imaginative research encompasses a range of sites, cultural contexts, and people, and there will always be a need for flexibility and care.

Making Images Guide

A picture is said to be worth a thousand words because of its ability to hold as much meaning in one frame as can only otherwise be expressed in that many words. However, the 'thousand words' do not always remain the same for a single image. Depending on the audience and the context in which the image is being viewed, the interpretations can be different. Further, through a matrix of editing, captioning, and juxtaposing, the image can be made to 'mean' a thousand different words for particular audiences. Central to the ethics of representation, then, is the understanding that all photos and films are *made* not 'taken,' and their meanings are temporally and culturally contingent constructions.[20]

In built environment research and practice we use still and moving images to communicate our perspectives and ideas in many different ways (Fig. 1). We draw plans, sections and axonometric cut-aways to explain aspects of a building, take photos on field trips, make infrared images to measure building performance, map patterns of spatial configuration, film users at site visits, and design new structures entirely, all to better conceive, understand, analyse, and transform our built environment.

Visual research methods are a highly effective and engaging means to explore and portray aspects of the built environment, opening up new ways of seeing, sharing lived experiences, and galvanising social action on pressing issues. This power of still and moving images brings with it an array of ethical considerations. In your fieldwork, it is important to consider how you depict inhabitants or users on site as it may not be appropriate or possible to take images without individuals' awareness, to film in a seemingly public space, or even invite participants to take images which document their own relationship with the built environment. In your design, as Iain Borden explains, the socio-spatial-temporal condition of the built environment as something we inhabit and make our own, presents problems and opportunities in terms of how to represent these multidimensional experiences. In your analysis, you may have to negotiate the problematic history of some forms of representation, such as the colonial uses of mapping in subjugating, enclosing, and excluding. In your dissemination, you may crop, edit, caption, and photoshop images to highlight certain ideas and perspectives which will have an impact on how audiences interpret and understand the built environment.

Guideline 1: when planning research — *act honestly and openly*

Making images of the built environment presents a unique means to discover, design, and display aspects of space and society. Whether you choose to take photos, make films, produce maps or renders of sites and situations, Susan Cox and others question how graphic representations of any kind can produce detailed and intimate portraits of individuals, but which can be shared instantaneously and globally beyond your control. This engages with a number of interrelated ethical principles raising knotty issues.

In terms of confidentiality, it may be impossible to guarantee anonymity to those who may feature in your images. In terms of benefit not harm, it is important to carefully consider whether anyone could be identified from your images and may feel exposed or vulnerable to criticism when these are shared with audiences. In both instances, it is vital to consider how you accommodate informed consent and enable individuals to make decisions about their involvement in your research.

As Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban explains, the 'spirit' of informed consent encourages research based on 'openness and disclosure' whereby the researcher discusses the goals, processes, possible outcomes, and harms and benefits.[21] This is particularly important with visual methods as it is possible for researchers to hide from public view when photographing or filming. Such covert or clandestine approaches are considered to be unethical and intellectually limiting, preventing the opportunity to share views and experiences. Open and collaborative relationships instead can allow for the building of mutual trust with participants and for images to be jointly owned as you collectively agree on how best to take images.[22]

The participants of your research will be the active or passive subjects of your images. They may create the photographs you use, participate in your filmed interview, or simply be in a site you are observing. The most obvious time to ask for consent is before you take an image, but it may also be suitable to do so at key junctures throughout your research. When taking images of identifiable individuals or of people in private spaces, Rose Wiles and others advise that it is good ethical practice to seek consent through a verbal request before recording and, ideally, by signing a consent form afterwards.[23] In public spaces or at public events, it may not be practical for you to obtain consent. But you can be prepared with an information sheet and consent forms if someone does approach you to inform them about the research, the nature of their participation, and possible risks and benefits, and to enable them to give their informed consent. In other situations, for example, when working closely with a community, it is best practice to get written, filmed, or audio-recorded consent to take images. However, the process of seeking informed consent is by no means simple, complicated by questions of language, literacy, or cultural factors, such as a wariness of legal procedures. A public health project in rural Nepal by Abriti Aryal and others used pictorial consent in the form of explanatory diagrams which illustrate the nature of the research, time commitments, and dissemination.[24]

Your research may take you to an array of different spaces, from city streets to office foyers, and from online forums to participants' homes. It is important to consider whether you have a right to

make images in this site as ethical considerations can overlap with legal issues. Even though UK law permits taking photos and film of people and places in a public place, Rose Wiles and others warn 'photographing someone in a place where they have a reasonable expectation of privacy might be considered to be an invasion of privacy'.[25] This is particularly the case when there are unclear definitions or public space or blurred boundaries in semi-private and pseudo-public spaces, for example, in shopping malls or newly developed parks and squares that operate under private security guards. It may, however, be particularly important for you to examine and be exposed to such contentious spaces and issues. As such, it is worth careful research and planning into the situation in advance, to bring along an information sheet and present ID cards to reassure any officials or users as to the value of your research and ethical rigour of your approach, and to stop if asked or if you are concerned that you may be making others feel uncomfortable.

Visual methods provide a wonderful opportunity to work with others on the conception, production, and dissemination of images. As Susan Cox and others celebrate, still and moving images 'can enable participants to begin to articulate what otherwise may have been unsayable […] presenting new possibilities for reflecting, describing, and sharing their experiences'.[26] Researchers have increasingly invited participants to take images or record films of their lives and communities to shape their own representation, allowing access to spaces that may otherwise remain unseen.

Guideline 2: while conducting research — engage responsively and reflexively

In her long-term research on the spatial practices of mixed-use markets run by immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers in Cape Town, Huda Tayob demonstrates responsive and reflexive ethical built environment research.[27] Tayob initially intended to document the markets using photography, but interviewees were uncomfortable because of cultural sensitivities and a fear of being documented. Rather than abandon the research, Tayob adapted her approach by turning to the work of postcolonial and subaltern theorists who point to the importance of recognising the unequal power relations between the researcher and researched. Gayatri Spivak argues that the subaltern cannot speak, but proposes researchers should learn to 'speak to', as opposed to 'speak for', the subaltern, in an active gesture that involves building a relationship between the speaker and the listener.[28] Tayob instead began to sketch and annotate plans and sections of market stalls on site as a mode to engage in conversations about her research with inhabitants, a method to record contingent everyday architectures in ways that protect the privacy of interviewees and a mechanism to position herself in the research through drawings that are representative of the particular relationship between the researcher and the researched.[29] Tayob's work exemplifies the need for built environment researchers and practitioners to make images in a way that is responsive to situation and reflexive in approach and forms of representation.

When making images, it is important to critically appraise the sites and situations in which you are working, and the effects these images may have. A site is never neutral ground; there are always

other claims on the space, its ownership, function, and symbolism. As such, whether intentional or not, your work will have an impact: ignoring, celebrating, or criticising architecture, ecologies, and histories.[30] In this contested space, a site analysis will allow you to understand the impact your work may have. This might concern a site's colonial history and indigenous peoples' land-rights, or a situation such as an urban regeneration scheme. In any case, it is important to be mindful of local tensions and cultural sensitivities, and to think carefully whether images made could unintentionally reinforce negative stereotypes or expose confidential and personal material.

As well as the situation, it is vital to consider the form of representation you choose and its history and power in built environment practice. Ahmed Ansari and others of the group Decolonizing Design expose how Anglocentric and Eurocentric design technologies, techniques, and ways of seeing and acting in the world can flatten and eradicate ontological and epistemological difference, and produce and exert colonial power.[31] Decolonizing Design asserts the importance in finding new hybrid, derivative, and syncretic practices and discourses: 'We should aim to have many diverse forms of design practice in the world — each specific to its region and its biosphere, each rooted in the cosmologies and mythos of its culture, each concerned with defining its own aims and identifying and addressing its own problems and opportunities.'[32]

One of the most common methods in built environment research and practice is photography. For Susan Sontag, 'to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed', whereby the camera controls subject and viewing to limit audience interpretation as well as perpetuate distance and power imbalances.[33] Such criticisms remind us how our images are made, not taken, and of our responsibility to redress this in our approach.

Sonya de Laat advocates methods such as collaboration, multivocality, and reflexivity, encouraging researchers to get to know those you seek to represent by speaking with communities and fostering relationships, adding new dimensions to your research.[34] Multivocality is a term in documentary filmmaking, which seeks to include as many voices and perspectives of participants as possible alongside that of the maker in order to reduce hierarchies and make explicit constructed and negotiated elements.[35] In still images, this multivocality can be sought in the process of writing image captions by including the voices of those who have appeared or are part of the community or research.[36] Reflexivity involves dispelling the myth of reality by demonstrating to the viewer how the production is a cultural construct and including authoritative voices of those being represented.[37] In architectural photography, Borden explores strategies of dialectical imagery and temporality, using the capacity of captions to 'question and to supplement, reinforce and destabilise the visual image', and to show buildings in use, with people in them, to demonstrate how the built environment is not static and isolated, but 'relational entities, encountered in differing sequences, glances and memories'.[38]

One of the most contested forms of representation used in built environment research and practice is mapping. Mishuana Goeman, Tonawanda Band of Seneca, reminds us how 'maps, in their most traditional sense as a representation of authority, have incredible power and have been essential to colonial and imperial projects'.[39] As a tool to survey lands and render spaces as a plan,

every aspect of a map carries great bias and import: its orientation and projection, languages used, and political borders drawn.

There are a number of initiatives that expose these issues and seek to embody alternative power relations: 'The Decolonial Atlas' is a growing collection of maps which challenge our relationships with the land, people, and state;[40] 'Queering the Map' is a community-generated mapping project that geo-locates queer moments, memories and histories in relation to physical space;[41] *On Circulations And The African Imagination Of A Borderless World* (2018) by pan-African publisher and broadcaster Chimurenga, seeks to map and pay tribute to works that articulate histories of circulation from an African perspective;[42] Aissata Balde's maps of migrant journeys challenge notions of state, boundary, and space by exploring the fluid notions of territory, charting displacement, limbo, and escape, and blurring techniques of hand and machine to embody her own position;[43] And Dallas Hunt and Shaun A. Stevenson draw our attention to how Indigenous peoples have historically and contemporaneously created alternative representational strategies in Turtle Island, repurposing technology to represent their own experiences of land and territory.[44]

Drawing is another key medium in the research and production of the built environment. This usually takes the form of plans, sections, and axonometric cut-aways to explain aspects of an existing or newly designed building. Further to Tayob's work questioning whether orthographic drawings can tell a different story of marginal and subaltern populations, Dan Innes' project *Disobedient Drawing* critiques 'the sanitized and impersonal aspect of contemporary architectural drawings, which often forget the people who inhabit them'.[45] Innes' work removes monochrome linework and foregrounds more diverse human experiences within the design process, allowing for difference, subjectivity, and ambiguity.[46]

Sayan Skandarajah summarises, 'contemporary technology has familiarized us with the possibility of representation techniques that show us everything as a "whole". Three-dimensional scanning, drone photography, and virtual reality, with their supposed connotations of precision, completeness, and objectivity, have become part of everyday practice within visual documentation'.[47] Skandarajah's drawings challenge the nature of these urban representations in capturing 'the whole' by employing non-perspective East Asian axonometric spatial representations to incorporate temporality, movement, and a continually shifting viewpoint, 'which allows the viewer to be an enhanced and engaged participator in the city, rather than a passive spectator'.[48]

A final form of representation to consider concerns the digital models that illustrate structures, buildings, and spaces. These visualisations or renders are powerful tools of communication, presenting visions as if they were already real. 'As the images become more realistic', Graham McKay warns, 'their content becomes more fictional'.[49] Mark Minkjan agrees, describing how 'the social implications, political dynamics and internal problems of architecture and spatial production are conveniently left out of the picture'.[50] As built environment researchers and practitioners, you have a responsibility in how to use such powerful forms of representation and how to complicate or subvert these curated, edited, and sanitised images disseminated widely online.

Guideline 3: before producing and communicating research* — *share carefully and generously

Displaying your images marks a joyful and important moment when you open up your research to others. This may come at an end of year show or public exhibition, conference presentations, publications, or it may come at an earlier stage in your project to engage with audiences. The urge to make your work public may be driven by a moral argument to share resources with communities and organisations, or to add your voice to struggles for equality and justice, fostering public interest and galvanising social action.[51]

'The creation of images', Cox and others explain, 'has the potential to tap into powerful emotions, memories, or beliefs that may result in discomfort or potential emotional harm for participants.'[52] Images that enter and remain in the public domain may be easily copied and reproduced globally online in new contexts. This carries with it an important set of responsibilities as these images may have unexpected negative or harmful consequences, ranging from anxiety or embarrassment to considerable political, economic, and physical harms, depending on the situations and circumstances in which they exist.[53]

Sarah Pink advises researchers to think carefully about which forms of dissemination are the most appropriate, to seek to understand the political, social, and cultural contexts in which images will be viewed and interpreted, and where possible, to allow participants to comment on images at pre-identified points prior to display.[54] In such instances it is important that you explain the possible implications of making these images public to participants and, when it might prove difficult to fully appreciate contexts, to take initiative and responsibility yourself. [55] It is important to consider whether it is right to share your images in all contexts or whether they should be apportioned or adapted for different audiences.[56]

To anonymise individuals, some researchers blur, block out, or pixilate distinguishing facial features, but these risk altering the nature of the images and dehumanising participants by objectifying them and disregarding their right to make an informed choice about revealing their identity.[57] To preserve anonymity in her research exploring the extractive agendas driving the urban development of Lusaka, Thandi Loewenson fictionalised names and omitted sites as required to maintain the confidentiality agreements which were a condition of collecting these observations.[58]

Finally, it is important to think carefully about how you are storing and with whom you are sharing your images. There is detailed data protection advice available on the most secure forms of managing and storing data advising the anonymisation, encryption, and deletion of images at different research stages.[59] If you choose to share you work online, you may decide to issue a copyright notice, a form of legal protection that provides information about uses that are acceptable and includes details about contacting the copyright owners for consent to use.[60] Or you may collectively decide on a creative commons license that enables the free distribution of your work, to give others the right to share and build upon your work.

Co-producing Knowledge Guide

> Research in itself is a powerful intervention, even if carried out at a distance, which has traditionally benefitted the researcher, and the knowledge base of the dominant group in society.[61]

Various definitions for knowledge co-production exist in the literature, and some of them can be found in the list of resources at the end of the guide (Fig. 2). Most definitions view knowledge co-production as a method of collaborating with partners to jointly define research questions and generate new knowledge, projects, or products. The process of collaborating with different stakeholders yields knowledge that is grounded in a relevant social, cultural, and political context. Co-production attempts to combine and include various ways that different stakeholders use in order to approach, understand, and deal with the research questions. Therefore, interactions and communication between partners co-producing knowledge stand at the core of this method. The relational aspects of co-production are crucial for allowing the emergence of a specific kind of knowledge that is not only integrated but can also be transformational, acting as a powerful agent of change and affecting different stakeholders.[62] In this way, knowledge co-production enables social learning that can challenge existing assumptions, which prevent transformative change.[63] The societal effects of knowledge co-production therefore include not only gaining new knowledge but also other possible impacts such as encouraging network building, increasing public involvement, developing a wider understanding of different perspectives, and enhancing decision-making capacities.[64]

Co-produced research can range from a small-scale local collaboration to an international cross-cultural, multi-sited project involving multiple partners across disciplines. You may intend your research to be co-produced with research participants, colleague academic partners, practitioners, decision-makers, and/or other stakeholders. Your co-produced research may take place in your own geographic, socio-cultural, and political settings, or in a different context — in a geographical area you are unfamiliar with. Choosing your partners and research locations means recognising different learning styles, different ways of interaction with the social and physical environment, and different entry points for influencing change.[65] These issues have important ethical implications that will affect your research; they are crucial for its success, and the ways in which you might measure success.

Knowledge co-production is closely related to, and often forms part of, other collaborative approaches that emphasise participation. Participatory action research (PAR) is one example. This process is driven by participants, which are involved in devising all stages of the research, to collectively deliver action, change, or transformation regarding issues that are jointly selected to be researched. [66] Other participatory approaches include co-design and co-creation, which focus on developing research programmes, projects, and products collaboratively.[67] Co-designing in creative disciplines can employ 'caring design' by combining innovation and problem solving through participatory processes that are relational and responsive.[68] Many of these approaches include practice-led research, a type of research found in disciplines and professions such as art, design, and architecture, where the research is located in the creative process itself. Yet, while some kinds of

practice-led, based, or related research involve collaborative and/or participatory elements, others focus on sole-authorship.[69] Projects that aim to produce beneficial outcomes, while sharing power and resources, may require sharing ethical principles and practices to guide collective action. [70]

Because different partners collaborate to co-produce knowledge, paying special attention to interpersonal interactions is an important part of the process. This type of collaboration is based on recognition and respect for the knowledge and value systems of the various stakeholders.[71] Differences can lead to tensions, for example, around issues of power relations between partners, balancing different expectations and interests, allocation of time and resources, and ways of working through disagreements, misunderstandings, or conflicts. While institutional ethics principles and procedures are important for thinking about research ethics, they offer no tools for recognising or dealing with such issues. This guide encourages you and your partners to reflect about your relational responsibilities, and apply an ethics of care in order to open up possibilities for positive interaction and transformation, at the personal and the institutional levels.

Guideline 1: when planning research — *building relationships and planning for the unexpected*

The questions in this section build on those listed above, and go into more details in order to prompt you to consider the impact of practical decisions that are taken in early stages of planning the research. Some of them overlap, and most should be considered simultaneously rather than read as a linear process. They are designed to encourage thinking collectively, in advance, about possible ethical issues and points of contention, and deciding with your partners how they might be addressed.

Thinking through these questions is useful in identifying, minimising or avoiding problems that are often inadvertently built into the design of co-produced research projects. Estelle Barrett's concept of 'pre-ethics' is very helpful in setting out this process. She proposes 'pre-ethics' as a discussion between researchers and research participants to define and agree upon the ethics of the planned research. In this process, institutional consent forms are also negotiated prior to the research.[72] In addition to generating relevant key ethics principles at this early stage in the project, it is also very useful to get training in the facilitation of meetings, and to come up with ground rules about conducting them — regarding language, the organisation of residents' assemblies, etc.[73]

It is important to take time together with all partners when designing the research in order to: understand each other's ways of working; define common goals and purposes; recognise the knowledge and value systems of each partner; and agree about the details of working together.[74] It is also helpful to collectively decide in advance about ways to deal with and solve unanticipated ethics issues and problems as they come up, and to include this in the research plan. Decisions will of course vary depending on the scope and characteristics of the research, and you may not find all the questions in this section relevant, but some of them may be useful in thinking how to incorporate

ethical considerations into the joint planning of your research.

i. Identifying research partners and building relationships between them:

Who are the stakeholders involved in our research?

Who are our co-producing partners?

What titles will the different partners have? What different roles will they play, and what activities will they carry out?

Are all co-producers fully aware of their roles, and their relations to each other and the activities they are being asked to perform at the start of the project?

Will co-producers decide these aspects of the project for themselves? In relation to one-another? Or if not, who will make these decisions and how will they be communicated to the research group?

ii. Designing the research questions:

Why are we co-producing knowledge? What are our shared goals?

What kind of knowledge will be produced? How can we ensure that the respective knowledges of all partners will be recognised and valued?

Who will benefit from our research?

How do we address the different motivations for co-production, so that all partners can benefit from this research?

What kind of impacts do we want to achieve?

iii. Choosing methodologies:

Which research methods will be used?

Who will carry them out, e.g. to conduct the fieldwork, interviews, focus group facilitation, take photographs, make films, produce installations, stage exhibitions, or draft policy? For interviews or focus groups, how will the questions be co-designed and framed?

Who will analyse and interpret the data or findings? Who will make creative, conceptual, practical, and technical decisions regarding the design of the installations or exhibitions, and who will make decisions regarding this division of labour?

iv. Co-producing knowledge:

How will we work together, divide the types of work, and share the workload?

How, and how often, do we intend to communicate?

How will we comment and feedback on each other's work?

How do we intend to identify and address potential misinterpretations that may arise from difference in culture, language etc.?

v. Disseminating knowledge:

What types of outputs will benefit various stakeholders?

How will we produce our outputs?

Who will our work be shared with?

Have we considered authorship protocols, how they vary across discipline, and ensured that all those who have been involved get credited in the most appropriate and fair way?

Who will present our work?

vi. Addressing problems: Research ethics

In addition to completing institutional ethics requirements, are we going to design our own ethics protocol or guidance for our research?

How will we ensure that everyone's voice will be heard?

How will we address issues such as ethical dilemmas, interpersonal difficulties, and complaints that may come up during the research?

Guideline 2: while conducting research — reflecting on the 'how' of working together

Even projects that are well designed in advance may run into difficulties as the work is carried out. In such cases, it is important to take time to consider with the partners what went wrong, why, and what can be done to redress this. Even if the project seems to be running smoothly, there may be some unvoiced complaints or hard feelings. Regular monitoring of the research should therefore consider the presence of restrictive hierarchies or power disparities within the team that may prevent the voicing of problems or critique. Further, specific feedback meetings might be required in order to examine relational aspects and team dynamics and find out whether team members think there are problematic attitudes at work, such as competition, ethnocentrism, or paternalism.[75]

It is also important to regularly observe whether all partners feel that their learning styles, values, and modes of interaction with the social and physical environment are being recognised and respected, and inquire whether all partners feel that they are gaining something out of working together.[76] In addition, as the research unfolds, it is vital to take time to regularly discuss and critically consider the implications of the research methods, and the ways in which they inform the construction and representation of meaning.[77] Disagreements and concerns often arise in co-production work, and addressing them may require flexibility to make changes and adjustments to the initial research plan. Finally, even dealing with ethics issues could be prone to re-embedding colonial ideas about

relationship, respect, and responsibility.[78] The following questions do not repeat but expand on those listed above, to prompt more detailed thinking about issues that are likely to come up during the research.

      i.   Are we following our agreed modes of collaborating?

      ii.   Are we making sure that all partners feel valued and respected?

      iii.   How are we addressing emerging concerns or problems? Can we make necessary adjustments and decisions together, in an open and transparent way?

      iv.   Do all partners have opportunities to express any discontents or complaints as they come up? Are they being listened to? What is being done about these discontents?

      v.   Are we evaluating the effectiveness of our research methods, and examining whether they are helpful in the process of our collective meaning-making?

      vi.   Are we facing any difficulties, problems or disagreements caused by working distantly or in dispersed locations?

      vii.   Are we paying attention to problems that may be caused by differences in language and culture?

Guideline 3: Before producing and communicating research outputs — emphasising 'with' rather than 'about'

As discussed above, co-produced research differs from research that is conducted individually, in that the process of collecting data, analysing it, and disseminating it is performed by multiple stakeholders. Towards the end of the research, as attention shifts towards the production of outputs, it is important to consider issues such as how to ensure that you are writing 'with' rather than 'about' your research partners, and that you are reporting back to research participants and taking care to do this in culturally appropriate ways and in the relevant language. [79] It is also vital that you make sure the outcomes will be beneficial to different types of stakeholders; and that publication and dissemination of the data does not introduce any risks to the research participants. Although reflections in this part of the guide concern the final stages of your project, the prompts in this section are written in the present tense, meaning that, rather than looking back, they are designed to encourage the resolution of issues relating to the process of co-producing outputs, their presentation and dissemination, while there is still time to take action upon them.

As noted, co-produced research places an emphasis on collaboration and relationship-building between different partners and stakeholders. These relationships will not necessarily terminate as the research timeframe is over. Therefore, before the research ends, you will need to collectively consider whether and how to continue the relationships between stakeholders, and how to benefit from relationships of trust built over time for future collaborations and co-production. In

addition, you may find that drawing conclusions and sharing learning about the co-production process itself could inform other research projects and future co-produced research.[80]

     i.   Are we producing outputs which are relevant to all stakeholders? Do the various stakeholders feel that they have benefitted from the research?

    ii.   Are we taking necessary precautions, if required, to protect our research participants when we publish certain data?

    iii.   Are we documenting and sharing project learning?

    iv.   Are we going to continue the relationships between stakeholders? Will the relationships cultivated develop into a longer commitment? Can we continue to build a knowledge-sharing process?

    v.   What have we learnt about the process of knowledge co-production itself?

Researching, Risk and Wellbeing Guide

> But the process of undertaking this type of research was more than I bargained for. My experiences ranged from daunting and overwhelming to funny and gratifying. Collectively, they revealed my own vulnerabilities and resilience.[81]

Negotiating risk and managing wellbeing whilst practicing research present particular kinds of ethical challenges (Fig. 3). Amongst them are working with gatekeepers to gain access to your research site or sites, adapting to uncertainty and recognising your limits, and navigating and communicating the emotions that practicing research can provoke. Discovering your limits and being present with, and for, the people who contribute to your research are part of a more sustainable, just, and transformative practice, but they require personal awareness and a robust, multi-tiered system of support. Both of these are vital elements of a research ethics of care.

Guideline 1: when planning research — balancing access and risk

Conducting research that matters is invigorating, but it can also be stressful and, at times, overwhelming. As the researcher, it is essential to begin balancing access and risk as soon as you start to negotiate ways to enter your chosen data collection site or sites and find out whether and how particular people are involved. This process continues, and may intensify, as you go deeper into your site and obtain more information.

Ethics committees normally require researchers to seek permission from relevant authorities, known as gatekeepers, before entering a space to collect data. In many situations, identifying the authorities — building management or owners, municipal officials, institutional administrators, and others — is straightforward. In some cases, being granted access may be equally straightforward and require only a formal letter asking permission, perhaps accompanied by a second formal letter from your institution attesting to the work that you are doing. Some gatekeepers may be responsive and enthusiastic, whereas others may be indifferent, possibly even hostile, or simply unable to prioritise your request for assistance, obliging you to wait to begin your work or seek help from someone else.

Regardless of whether assistance is delayed or forthcoming, any help you receive may come with strings attached: expectations that you will portray your gatekeeper and/or their work in a positive or uncritical way, facilitate connections to publicity or sources of funding, provide free advice or privileged information, or any number of other small or large benefits. Female researchers in particular may contend with unwelcome sexual advances. Navigating these expectations could put you or your research participants at risk; disappointing a gatekeeper could limit your access to critical people, places, or data, and getting too close to a gatekeeper could compromise the integrity of your work. Finding a balance between risk and access may be particularly sensitive if your gatekeepers are themselves in vulnerable or compromised circumstances, or present a conflict of interest, due to,

for example, their involvement in crime, corruption, or scandal, or if they are running for election.

In all cases, balancing access and risk creates uncertainty and anxiety, especially if you are working on a tight schedule. You may need to have uncomfortable conversations to clarify expectations, shift your research approach, change your study site, or even take measures to protect yourself or your participants. These measures will vary depending on positionality, depending on you and your participants' gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, race, religion, age, migration status, nationality, personal history, and more, as well as where you are undertaking research. Sometimes, the adjustments you make may not fall into 'best' or 'standard' practices in research, and you may be asked to defend or explain your decisions. This can seem daunting when you made those decisions based on incomplete information or personal factors that you would prefer not to share. It is worth reminding yourself — and others — that methodology is never fixed or rigid but rather malleable, contingent, and integrative.

How can you find support?

Counterbalancing competing pressures requires the development of overlapping support structures. Each person's support will take different forms, depending on who they are, their life circumstances, their personal and academic relationships, and the content of their research, but some key components could include your academic supervisor, personal tutor, and program director; colleagues, mentors, and friends doing similar research; partners, families, and friends; and involvement in activities or organisations that enable you to decompress. What you need may evolve over the course of your research.

In addition, students may likely have access to their university's usually free Psychological and Counselling Services. Securing an initial appointment, especially around exam times, can take time, but your supervisor or programme director may be able to advocate on your behalf if your need is urgent or if you are on a tight schedule. There is no shame in asking for support, clinical or otherwise. To the contrary, it shows a considered assessment of the 'occupational hazards' of research and a willingness to engage with your limits as a person, as well as a scholar.

Finally, having a network of contacts on the ground, in the place or places where you will conduct research, is essential and should be part of what informs your site selection. These people can suggest alternative points of entry if necessary, vouch for you and your work, and provide insight into existing practices for gaining access, managing risks, and coping with stress, as well as interpreting cultural norms. It is important to recognise the expertise that 'local fixers' bring to bear on your research and, equally, to be conscious of the sacrifices they make and the risks they take to assist you. At the same time, you may be unable or unwilling to integrate their guidance if it is grounded in systems of beliefs that you do not share, requires financial resources that you do not have, or would steer your research in a different direction, to give a few examples.

Guideline 2: while conducting research — ***developing informed empathy and reflexive openness***

There is a common view inside and outside of academia that the value of academic research stems from its commitment to objectivity, achieved through maintaining sufficient professional distance and avoiding bias. You can see this in the neutral, measured prose in which most academic work is written.

However, you the researcher are the person making decisions about the research design, execution, and dissemination, and not simply an instrument that carries out research. In the course of a project, you may feel doubt, surprise, confusion, shock, and wonder — all these emotions and more! You may feel like you have everything under control only to watch it all unravel. Sometimes you may feel equipped to handle difficulties and at other times you may feel out of your depth. Design thinking, commonly used at The Bartlett, involves prototyping, or repeatedly creating, experimenting with, and, if necessary, discarding bare-bones models, and only carrying to the next stage the things that matter. Like design, research is also an iterative process. All research has fits and starts as the researcher tries out different approaches to see which one or ones will work. Even if these mistakes, failures, delays, and uncertainties do not feature in the final product, they are an important part of the research process.

Collecting data can provoke a range of responses depending on the content of the research and the context in which it is unfolding. Among these responses may be distressing thoughts about your life experience, the privilege from which you have benefited, or hopelessness about the conditions around you. You may also struggle to build or maintain a productive rapport with your research participants, particularly if you know or unexpectedly discover problematic information about them — for example, that they hold beliefs that you find abhorrent, they are involved in illegal or unethical activities, or they treat you aggressively or inappropriately whilst you are engaging with them.

How can you manage your emotions as you collect data?

Cultivating 'informed empathy' and compassion are indispensable in research, which can be protective factors as you work to safeguard your wellbeing and that of your research participants.[82] Informed empathy can help you to identify with your participants regardless of their life circumstances, activities, or behaviours, thus fostering a relationship of trust and mutual respect, but without breaching your boundaries. Compassion allows you to acknowledge your limits without passing judgment on what they are.

One limit many researchers encounter is that of physical exhaustion. The American Psychological Association recommends keeping some energy in reserve to avoid the 'fatigue point', the place at which intended performance continues to rise whilst actual performance plunges. Building your energy reserve may mean you choose to take breaks, create some distance between you and

your research, and spend time doing other activities or being with family and friends.

Taking time away from your work can feel self-indulgent, especially if you are working against a deadline or under pressure from funders, teammates, or supervisors, and you may feel that you are failing to take advantage of the opportunities you have to gather more and better data. But care work is also work and the 'reflexive openness' that it requires — the willingness to seek support and feedback as you think critically about your research whilst navigating the context in which you are working and balancing life's other challenges and responsibilities — is an essential component of research design and implementation.[83]

For some people, care work may include elements of 'wellness' or 'self-care', such as diet changes or practicing mindfulness, but it is important to remember that care work has individual, communal, and institutional dimensions. Your university, your supervisor and programme director, and you, the researcher, all have a duty of care to everyone involved in the research.

Guideline 3: before producing and communicating research outputs — refining an ethics of care

After you finish collecting data and move towards analysing it and disseminating it, your relationship with that data and with your experience will evolve. In the immediate aftermath, following the adrenaline of being in the field, especially if it was a sprint until the end, you may feel let down. Data collection can be a formative experience and integrating back into your normal day-to-day life may require an adjustment. Some people may withdraw during this adjustment period, whereas others may be especially outgoing; some people may become emotionally volatile, whereas others may feel drained and flat. It is possible to experience all of these impulses at different times with different people.

Once you begin analysing your data, you may find that the information you collected does not show what you expected it to show or that you are still missing pieces that you need to construct your argument. If you have flexibility in your work plan or if your study site or sites are nearby, you may be able to return to verify your findings or collect additional data. If one or both of these is not the case, however, you may have to make do with what you have. Having to rethink your work, especially at what feels like a late stage of the project or if you blame yourself for the difficulties you are having, can produce anxiety. Some people respond to this anxiety with avoidance, which can compound existing time pressure.

As you reflect on your experience, you may doubt some of the decisions you made in terms of their ethical value. Perhaps questions you asked brought challenging truths to light or made things that are usually hidden visible to those you worked with, and maybe to yourself too. Particularly if you worked with people who are vulnerable and excluded, you may wonder how they are doing or worry

whether your project exacerbated their difficult circumstances. Organizing and analysing your data, as well as writing up, require you to revisit and think deeply about these decisions, difficulties, and concerns, which can be emotionally draining. In addition, finding the words and images to explain and defend your research, including capturing the voices and experiences of other people, may feel like a profound responsibility.

How can you continue to care for yourself and your participants?

Building in some extra time at this stage of the research process creates space to reflect and absorb the experience of collecting information. You may find that you need to make changes to the support system you have developed, but it can be useful to check in with your main ports of call including your supervisor and perhaps your programme director, as well as any close mentors or confidants. These people may be able to assist you in identifying and naming challenges you are encountering, validating your experiences, and devising plans to address issues if necessary.

When you enter a space to collect data, you become part of that space and you have a responsibility to take ownership for the impact that your presence had. In some cases, you may want to check in with your research participants later to see if there are ways you can support them personally or through connecting them with other people or resources. Depending on the methodology you are using, you may continue to solicit your participants' involvement in the research. Regardless, it is good practice to be sure that your participants understand how they contributed to the final product and that you share research outputs with them in the format that they find most useful.

Developing and refining an ethics of care for research on the built environment requires continuously practicing reflexive openness. In this way, you contribute to normalising the expectation of support, improving access to that support, and allowing you and other researchers the flexibility to take researchers' needs better into account, including when these needs are unanticipated.

Researching Internationally Guide

> Field trips, which are increasingly prevalent in built environment education, offer [an] opportunity for learning to take place. They can provide a powerful learning moment for [researchers], enabling the critical and active application of theory and knowledge acquired in the classroom to real-life environments and processes. But they can also take on an unpalatable and extractive dimension. And when the trips involve the crossing of global north and global south, the risk of development tourism becomes particularly acute.[84]

For the purpose of this guide, working internationally refers to conducting research or research activities in a location other than where you are normally based, professionally affiliated, or funded (Fig. 4). In this regard, even when a non-British UCL researcher is conducting research in their country of origin, or any other context that is familiar or linked to their ancestry, this would still be regarded as working internationally, as it is 'international' in terms of their place of employment.[85] The term is used in the broad-sense and somewhat confusingly alongside the term 'abroad' which specifically refers to a researcher working somewhere other than a place where they were born or raised. In this guide, the phrase 'researching internationally' is used rather than working abroad, and aims to raise critical reflections on ethical issues that arise in the process of producing terminology of this kind.

Researching internationally presents peculiar kinds of ethical issues and concerns that range from the risks of conducting field work in what can be an unfamiliar terrain to the need for a nuanced understanding of the culture, politics, and relationships encountered in the chosen site of research.[86] Although these guidelines present you with a simplified and somewhat linear approach to working internationally across three distinct moments of research, it is in practice a very fluid and iterative experience. Depending on the nature, scale, and length of your research, the collaborations and international work will demand multiple field trips and engagements. In that regard, your work will be punctuated by several opportunities, moments, and iterations of preparation, execution, and documentation of findings. It will be good practice to consider this guide and its specific guidelines afresh each time.

Guideline 1: when planning research — *harnessing the value of researching internationally*

Researching internationally offers a valuable opportunity to deepen your knowledge and understanding of ideas, concepts, and events as they are applicable in other parts of the world. Working this way is increasingly viewed as an opportunity to gain in-depth experience and skills, and allows you to appreciate and integrate academic knowledge in a very practical manner. Doing research internationally is also important in the development and circulation of ideas and innovative approaches that are relevant for shared 'global' challenges. In many respects, working internationally also plays a vital role in career development, raising the profile, relevance, and impact of research.

Despite the value of working internationally, it is essential to reflect and consider why you have chosen to work internationally in the first place. Taking time to reflect on this is highly important in order to avoid the potential risks of inadvertently reproducing colonial, raced, or gendered power relations in your international work. This is a subtle but important activity to consider how researching internationally, regardless of the subject discipline, is actually more than just 'fieldwork' or even a 'research activity'. And definitely much more than a response to a funding call. It is an engagement with people's culture, politics, livelihoods, diverse challenges, and varied lived experiences. By thinking this way, a sense of humility is evoked at the opportunity to work internationally. To research internationally or abroad, in a place that is not familiar to you, is a privilege that should be valued, respected, and not taken for granted irrespective of (and sometimes because of) previous experiences.

Think clearly about where you have chosen to work and why this particular country and locality are fit for your research. Doing some background reading and study often comes with the different stages of preparation, but especially at the outset. This exercise, if done systematically, is particularly useful for confronting any biases, assumptions, stereotypes, and expectations that have fed into the research design (both purposively and unconsciously). Again, as a reflexive exercise, it exposes the gaps and limits of your knowledge, and pushes the boundaries of the sources of preparatory material that can be consulted (ranging from published academic literature to blogs, project websites, and social media pages of relevant research organisations). On a practical note, it is helpful to map recent research activities or projects that have been conducted in your chosen site, which in turn can be useful for identifying potential partners and collaborators, and also for taking into account the likelihood of increasing research burden or fatigue in areas that have already received a lot of research activity. This has become a growing concern in many locations in low and middle-income countries (LMICs).

International collaborations are seen to be fundamental to the success of researching internationally. How to select partners, and determining when the collaboration will actually begin, are very important steps to consider.[87] Where possible, the involvement of partners in the preparatory phases of the work can yield rich insights, especially during proposal writing if applicable. However, the nature and demands on time need to be tactfully considered and streamlined, as many potential partners in LMICs, for instance, have limited staffing and resources. Also in the case of funded projects, a careful scrutiny of the limitations of the use of funds is a vital consideration, as this helps you to ascertain and clarify important needs of partners or field activities that cannot be covered by the funder, and in that respect, gives you an opportunity to explore supplementary or 'top up' funds (if possible) that will allow for an overall successful research engagement. Although it is important to be strategic with time and resources when establishing partnerships, be careful not to reinforce or introduce hierarchies in any negotiation or to coerce or push partners to make unfair compromises in order to take up the opportunity to work together.

Both an extensive background study of your selected field and the early engagement of

partners (if possible) during your preparation are instructive for generating information that helps you to properly complete any procedural ethical requirements (including risk assessments) of your institution. In some instances, partner organisations may have their own ethical processes that may have a bearing on your collection, processing, and use of data, and will feed into writing your own institution's ethics application. This allows a comparison of ethical concerns to be mapped, and a development of an understanding of ethics not just as a set of universals, but universals that are culturally specific and situated in particular locations, something that is often overlooked but should be considered in the interest of best ethical practice.

Guideline 2: while conducting research — maintaining partnerships and navigating fieldwork

The value of working internationally with partners is best seen as a product of relationship-building. Irrespective of the total length of engagement, partners can do more than 'gatekeeping' and playing facilitation functions as you conduct the research[88]. Harnessing this value requires an intentional building of 'partnerships with equivalence', which implies a recognition of the diverse skills, knowledges, and values that partners have and can directly contribute to the research. It also means that such relationships with partners are formed through accountability, mutual respect, transparency, trust, and a commitment to learn together and co-produce knowledge[89]. Conceiving partnership as a relationship of this kind breaks down the limitations of the transactional nature of interactions that can exist between researchers and international partners. This recognises how their utility and roles may not be confined to only specific components, periods, or research activities that you could prescribe in the research design (notably data collection). Instead, partnerships with equivalence mean that the roles and responsibilities that underpin the research are collectively negotiated and agreed. Although this may lead to some degree of specialisation of tasks, the specialisation should not lead to isolation or the subordination of tasks. For instance, while partners may end up doing the bulk of field data collection, you can use the negotiations on roles and responsibilities to explore what inputs and support you could provide, possibly through certain forms of remote working. Similarly, by inviting input from partners, they can in turn shape the roles and activities that you will lead.

It is important to be willing to seek and take on board the priorities and concerns of partners by revisiting the assumptions and expectations that were built into the planning stages of the research. For instance, for externally funded research, the short turnaround time of submissions, which is commonplace, may mean that a much more meaningful, open, and honest conversation with partners about the budgets, key concepts, research limitations, and other concerns is required when the research finally commences.

Also, it is important to bear in mind the power imbalances that may inadvertently have been created or re-enforced through your international work with partners.[90] For instance, coming from an institution in the Global North as a fund holder and an established or well-published academic of a particular gender or race with qualifications in higher education can provoke scenarios of privilege that

may introduce a sense of superiority in some contexts. Although you may not be able to predict all the possible scenarios, re-emphasising and working towards equivalence, equal importance, and recognition of the contribution of all partners from the start of the relationship is a useful practice. One should pay attention to and welcome the contribution of early career partners and consider dropping the operational or everyday use of titles, e.g. 'principal' investigator or project 'lead', to flatten the curve of hierarchies in team working.

Working internationally with partners in the manner described above allows you to deepen your knowledge of the field and bridge your knowledge gaps. During moments of collective field work, you should take care when mediating the cultural and political nuances of navigation in the field or direct engagements with communities. It is good to rely on the wisdom and experience of your partners in situations that could raise ethical concerns, even if you have previous working experience in a similar context, country, or region. The local knowledge of partners is invaluable in this regard. For instance, giving out personal details, tips or cash, or cracking insensitive jokes (remember that sarcasm is not universal) could raise undue or unfair expectations for research participants. In many LMIC contexts, action research involving international researchers may be easily conflated by community residents as international NGO activity. Furthermore, it is important to draw on the knowledge of local partners in the planning and selection of activities aimed at capacity-building or sharing. It is common to invite known 'experts' in this endeavour, but bear in mind that 'expertise' is contextual, and partners can help navigate who can be useful for the stated objectives of capacity-building. One needs to be willing to consult or invite local or in-country experts to counter or balance the dominance of foreign-based experts in capacity-building spaces.

If you are working in a setting that requires the use of a foreign language, do plan ample time for the translation of material, and where possible involve your partners in this exercise instead of outsourcing it through a contracted service. The translation exercise that preserves the contextually relevant meanings of the key concepts and 'ethos' of the research takes more than a linguistic endeavour and can be a very rewarding collective exercise with partners and participants where possible. It is a vital moment of knowledge co-production.

The mediation of partners is also valuable in assessing and mitigating risk when conducting the research. The risks you may have outlined on paper may manifest very differently from what you anticipate or are used to. For instance, ascertaining the concept of the acceptable standards of safety and wellbeing, or how and where to get support in the unfortunate episodes of health and safety threats or crises, should be discussed with partners and periodically reviewed. Similarly, your effective compliance with other aspects of institutional and procedural ethics during the course of your research is hinged on the sustained relationship with partners.

Guideline 3: before producing and communicating research outputs — reflecting the field

Discussing the range and types of research outputs that will be developed from the research is a very important exercise to do with partners right from the beginning. Beyond the usual academic publications, it is good to also consider other kinds of outputs that are useful for partners (especially partners from non-academic organisations) and think about who is the intended audience of every planned output.

It is important to actively involve your partners in defining and interpreting findings from the research, irrespective of the methods of data collection employed. One should bear in mind that, although the production of outputs may be deferred to latter parts of the research, they may be the result of a series of findings that could emerge right from the beginning; therefore, identifying and correctly interpreting them should ideally be a part of the negotiated relationship with the partners. The risk of not being intentional about this may result in you assuming the sole role of writing up findings, or in some cases the partners deferring it to you, especially when time pressure and other constraints of travel or budgets in later stages could make the research partnership more remote.

The nuances of political and cultural appropriateness encountered in fieldwork are equally relevant when producing and communicating research outputs, to ensure that the work does not cause harm and will be beneficial. It is important to collectively work through the language that is used to frame findings in a manner that is not derogatory, and does not discriminate, exaggerate, or introduces bias. This is a very important consideration that you can reflect upon with the partners and any other stakeholders directly engaged in the research, inviting feedback where possible.[91] It is important to confirm consent to cite and use references to stakeholders that are identifiable from your outputs, and check that confidentiality is maintained for respondents and data sources that should not be identified. It also means that, in some instances, anonymisation as a good practice may not be enough, and will require findings to be presented in forms that mitigate against risks of harm. For instance, a survey and mapping of land tenure statuses of informal settlements as part of a large urban study will yield rich insights; however, detailed visualisations of findings could put particular households at risk of eviction, despite the anonymisation of respondents. Such data could be presented at the settlement level with broad descriptive statistics instead of the disaggregated visualisation in public outputs.

In the specific case of producing publications, you should discuss a plan of authorship with partners as early as possible. Although there are no fixed conventions governing this, the idea is to be fair in according formal credit and recognition of research efforts in each output, bearing in mind how important academic authorship is for career progression. In the publication plan, also consider giving lead roles to partners and early career partners where there is the opportunity to do so. It is also very useful to explicitly acknowledge non-authors and stakeholders who have participated in certain substantive aspects of the research project. Be open and transparent with partners about any outputs that you intend to do alone in addition to the team outputs that have been agreed, as well as any plans to re-use the data in the future.

In a very broad sense, also think about other benefits of the collaboration and spaces where capacities could be shared and built into the process of conducting the research and generating outputs. These could include sharing reading lists, difficult to access literature, conference calls, and funded training events.

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Universals and specifics

In response to the questions that guided our work — 'What is an ethical practice of built environment research?; and 'How do we foster the conditions for emerging and established practitioners to develop this?' — we have proposed the core principles of responsibility, reflection, and recognition. The guides aim to apply these principles in difficult 'ethical moments', yet they acknowledge that general guidelines on how to negotiate ethical issues in practice may not be attuned to the specificities of concrete situations nor address inherent conditions of inequality and power relations.

> [The] universal will always default to a set of powerful categories and experiences, and then everything else will be studied from the outside. So I think it's important to let go of that category, not because we don't share questions. […] It's because I don't think that we are able to ask them in a way that will not reproduce the geographies of authoritative knowledge.[92]

Overall, our research has aimed to foster a practice of ethics that allows relations between universals and specifics to emerge in three ways. First, by focusing on the particular ethical issues engendered by specific methods, we hope to encourage reflection on how universal principles are embedded in specific situations and contexts. Second, by generating a methodology of guiding that prioritises activities of self-questioning and reflection, an ongoing process is set up in which the abstract ethical principles and generic ethical protocols, through which one measures oneself in relation to what happens 'in the field', are mediated through the figure of the guide as one who shows the way by prompting and supporting these activities. And third, by providing a textual template for the guides that allows for different types of voice — both a voice that is shared across all guides and a voice that is specific to each guide — it is possible to create a 'commonality' that works across and is shared by the individual guides, rather than a more abstract universal.

It is important to conclude by emphasising how we have attempted to navigate the difficulties of relating universals and specificities in the practice of ethics by embedding the guides within a wider set of tools that highlight the recognition of differences and their potential to create moments of intersubjectivity which foster the development and practice of responsibility, reflection, and recognition.[93] The lexicon of principles, the case studies, and the selected protocols and readings provide a context for our guides and highlight the care and creativity in building a more ethical form of practice.

Funding

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