

User Research Fellowship |  
Shivani Gupta | 2022



**WHERE DO I EVEN START?**

# What we'll cover

**1. Problem Identification & Framing:** How to Breakdown Problems, Rationale, Discovery Methods & Guiding Principles

*exercise for problem mapping*

**2. Sourcing Inputs & Context Definition:** Building Meaningful Redundancy into your Research Practice, Stakeholder Identification

*exercise for rapid generation*

**3. Hypothesis Building & Sacrificial Concepts:**

Defining approach

*exercise for rapid generation*

**4. Research Methods Overview:** What to hold sacred, how to adapt to your Research Objectives

**5. Table-stakes:** Estimating Effort, Logistics, Planning, Contingencies

**6. Cultural Contexts, Bias Management & Preparation:**

Focus on India (breakdown of context types)

*context mapping, empathy building prompts & exercises*

**7. Sampling:** Building a Representative (& Realistic) Sample

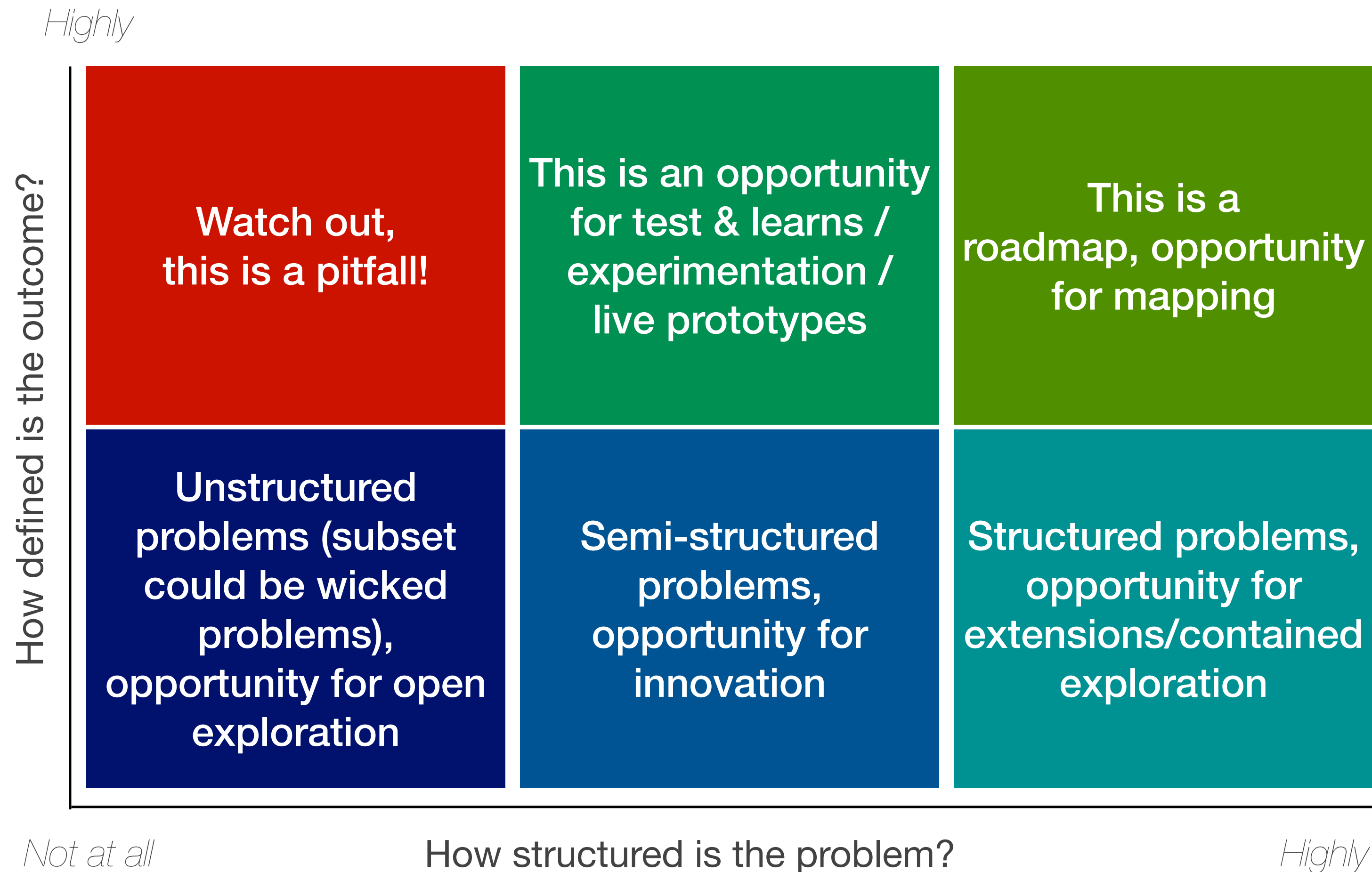
**8. Developing Research & Documentation Tools**

**9. Research Tips, Traps & Watch-outs**

**10. Table-stakes:** Research Roles, Analysis & Synthesis Planning

# I. Problem Identification, Discovery & Framing

# Problem Classification Framework



# Problem Framing: Guiding Principles



Business ->  
Human ->  
Behavioral/Emotion



Solution ->  
Problem



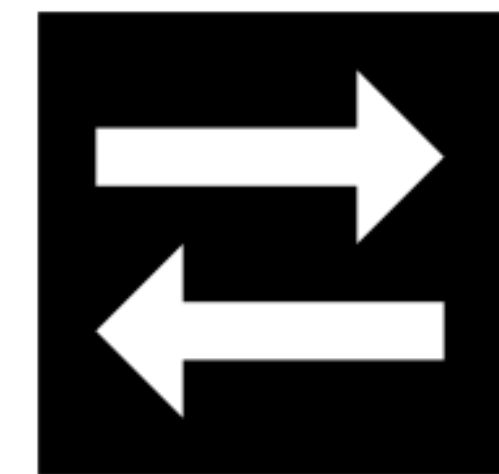
Generic, Broad ->  
Nuanced, Contextual,  
Specific



Surface level, Superficial ->  
Underlying, Lasting,  
Fundamental



Negative ->  
Positive (if possible)



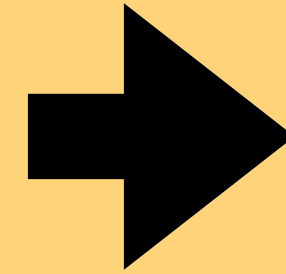
Open ended ->  
Directional

# Problem Inventory: Leveling your problem

- Socio-Cultural
- Ecosystem
- Systemic
- Stakeholder-focused
- Moment-focused

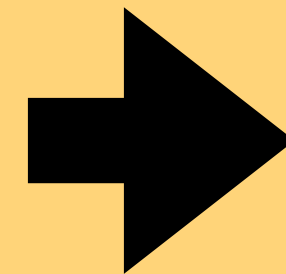
*Dimensions to be aware of vs to work with vs to solve*

How might we reduce subscriber churning from our streaming service?



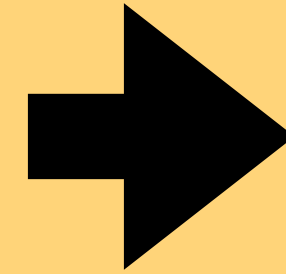
Tech & Media, UK

How might help women who have experienced sexual violence cope?



Developmental Sector, Rural India

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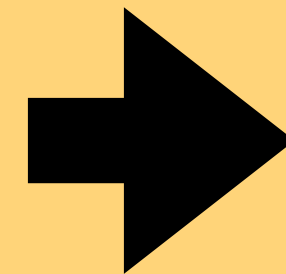
Tech & Media, UK

How might we **transition transactional consumers** to being more **engaged** with the platform?

How might we **engineer moments of surprise & discovery** on the platform?

How might we put viewers in **experiential mindsets**, and reduce moments of evaluation?

How might help women who have experienced sexual violence cope?



Developmental Sector, Rural India

How might we **drive lasting coping** in women who have experienced sexual violence?

How might we include **families** in the **journey of coping**?

How might we **externalize blame and reinforce it** across stakeholders and interactions in the legal journey?

# II.

# Sourcing Inputs & Context Definition



# Sourcing Inputs\*

- Past Research
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Client/industry context: Annual letters, public releases
- Reports (Ex. Trend Reports)
- Analogous Inspiration (Cross geography, segment, industry)
- Experience Audits (Social media, website, branded content)
- Data Sources (Quantitative): Client + Syndicated + Open Source
- Primary Research
- Frameworks from credible sources

*\*To what end? Define your objective before you go hunting!*

# III. Hypothesis Building & Sacrificial Concepts

# Hypothesis Set

- Descriptive Hypothesis: Explain behavior  
(Problem focused)
- Prescriptive Hypothesis: Influence behavior  
(Solution focused)

# Sacrificial Concepts

- Sketchy
- Each one should be unique
- Meant to be discarded
- Meant to prompt conversation, provoke ideas from participants
- Used to capture initial hypothesis from stakeholders/team

# IV.

# Research Methods

## *Overview*

# OVERVIEW

## CATEGORISATION OF TOOLS



**CARD SORT**

- IDENTITY MAPPING*
- IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TOOL*
- FEATURE PRIORITIZATION*



**SCENARIOS**

- SCENARIO TESTING*
- PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES*



**STORY CREATION**

- BODY SCAN TOOL*
- STORY PROMPTS*
- STORY BOARDING*



**EXPERIENCE MAPPING**

- AUDITS*
- DAY IN THE LIFE*
- STAKEHOLDER/ECOSYSTEM MAP*
- TRUST MAP*
- CROSS REFERENCE MAP*



**HUMAN PROTOTYPING**

- EMPATHY WORKSHOPS*
- EXPERIMENTS*
- LIVE WEB CAMPAIGNS*

# V.

# Table-stakes

*Part I*

**Questions? Thoughts? Contractions?**

Hit me up on [LinkedIn!](#)

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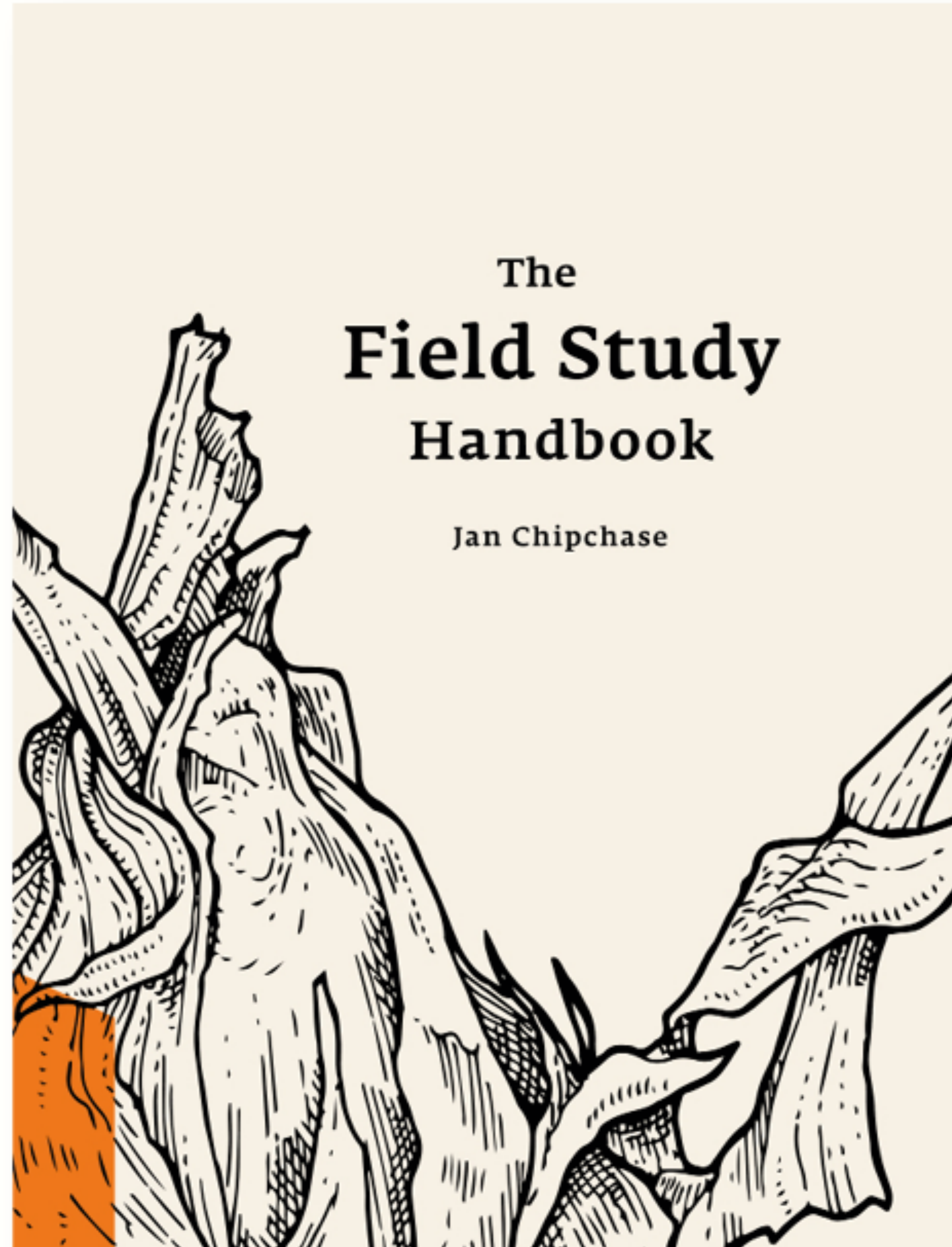
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# VI. Cultural Contexts, Bias Management & Preparation

Resource



*Why do we call  
research “going  
into the field?”*

# Immersion / Breaking Down Cultural Context

- Social norms (*ex. saving for the next generation, personal space*)
- Individual norms (*ex. meat-eaters vs vegetarians*)
- Belief systems (*ex. lower cost = bad quality*)
- Hacks, Heuristics
- Collective memory (*ex. trauma, places, dates, people of meaning*)
- Status/Power Dynamic (*ex. caste, localities*)
- Cultural History (*ex. economic policies, known for*)
- Current Arts, Media, Popular Culture (*ex. idols, aspirations, news*)
- Rituals, Sensitivities (*ex. food, pronouns, religion*)
- Language, Communication Style, Gestures (*ex. physical contact*)
- Empathy Games (*ex. bound fingers*)



# VII.

# Sampling

# Sampling - Overlooked & Underrated

- Avoid Self selection bias
- Avoid Purely demographic-based segments
- Define Representative samples, think behavioral segments
- Find Positive Deviances, Extreme users
- Rule of thumb for qual: 5-7 per type / till saturation; quant (50+)
- Plan for back-ups (must have, nice to have)
- Screen participants (Surrogate checks for desired criteria)
- Capture basic identifier details for synthesis



*The two men were born in the same year, 1948, are wealthy, self-employed, and spend a lot of time in the same location, London. They both like international travel, dogs, sports cars, fine wines, have children and have married and re-married.*

Resource

**VIII.**

# **Developing Research & Documentation Tools**

# Developing & Adapting Tools/Frameworks

## Research Tools



CARD SORT



SCENARIOS



STORY CREATION

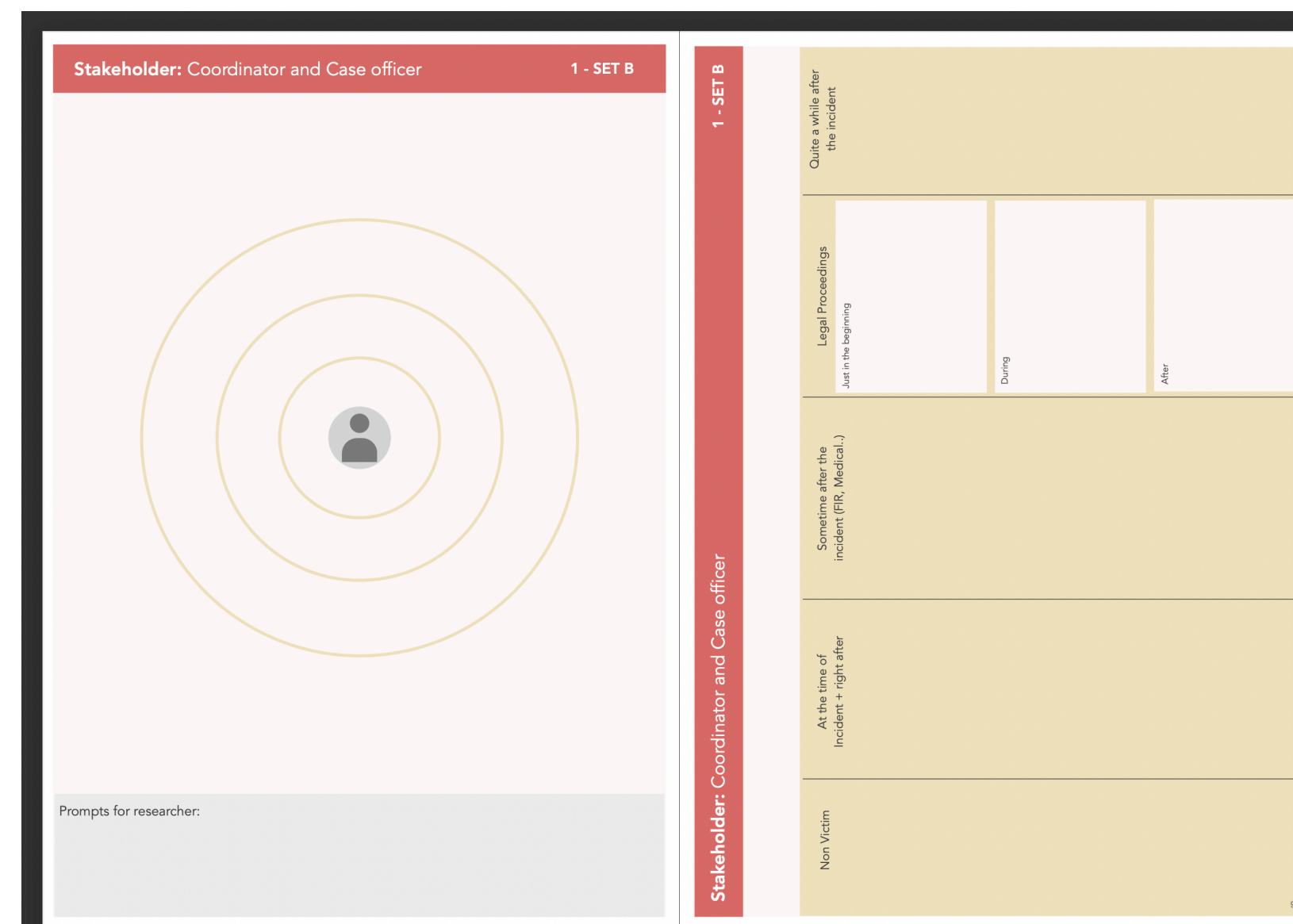


EXPERIENCE MAPPING



HUMAN PROTOTYPING

## Documentation Tools



## Synthesis Tools



**IX.**

# **Research Tips, Traps & Watch-outs**

# Best Practices / Watch-out

- Participant types to prepare for:  
Pleasing, Antagonizing, Slow to Warm up, Tangential
- Assumptions, Checks & Balances
- Different problems, same tool
- Language barriers/Cultural Gap
- Tone, Body Language
- Fatigue, counter-biasing
- Scheduling
- Daily Debriefs
- Mock Interviews
- Recognize complexity of sample
- Explaining tools + desired interaction
- Collection without filtering
- Research Approach & Plan:  
With Objectives + Methods + Hypothesis & Assumptions + Dependencies + Schedule

# X.

# Table-stakes

*Part II*

**Thank you for listening.**  
**To stay in touch, find me in the world.**