

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY APPLIED TO TEACHING IN THE SPANISH GUARDIA CIVIL



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Abstract

The main objective of this document is to explain what the Spanish Guardia Civil is doing in the field of research within an educational context. At present the Spanish Guardia Civil is developing research programs through the SPANISH NATIONAL SECURITY RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE (IUI SI). In this paper, the scientific approach to research in the academic context is outlined. An analysis of the thematic areas studied and archived since 1982 is explained and the areas of interest to the Guardia Civil for future research are indicated. The reader will learn the phases necessary for framing a research project within the Guardia Civil's lines of investigation and for successfully completing and submitting a 'Directed Academic Paper'.

Key Words: Guardia Civil, IUI SI-Spanish National Security Research and Investigation University Institute, Research Methodology.

The aim of this document is to present in an international context the research activities that the Guardia Civil is developing in the educational realm.

In the current academic programme for higher level students in the Guardia Civil (Orden Ministerial Decree dated 15 February 1996), a student must obtain 10 credits (100 academic hours) for their research project, during the fourth and fifth year enabling them to pass the five year curriculum. The research project, also known as the Academic Directed Paper ('Trabajo Académico Dirigido' or 'TAD', in Spanish) follows a scientific methodology that has been modified over the years in order to conform to the current requirements of any and all Spanish universities at which this kind of investigation is performed.

The Officers Academy of the Guardia Civil (AOGC for its abbreviation in Spanish), where the upper level studies take place, has historically wanted its students to accomplish an investigative paper of this type before they left the Academy with the rank of lieutenant in the Guardia Civil. Since 1982 all such final projects have been archived and are now available through a database.

The Guardia Civil² has demonstrated that it has a special interest in promoting 'programmes of investigation' within teaching and research centres. In order to develop these investigation programmes, the Spanish Ministry of the Interior has sought to form partnerships and alliances amongst different educational and research institutions, both civil and military, within Spain and abroad. As a result of these efforts, an agreement was signed on October 17, 2002, between the Ministry of the Interior (in the area of the Guardia Civil) and the National University of Distance Education (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia-

UNED) in order to create the IUII ('Instituto Universitario de Investigación sobre Seguridad Interior' or University Research Institute for Internal Security).³

In 2008 the IUII published a book entitled 'Research Methodology Applied to Teaching and Decision-Making in the Guardia Civil'.⁴ One part of the book is dedicated to analyzing the bases of investigation in an Internal Security context; and the other part serves as a step by step guide to conducting the research projects in accordance with all the teaching regulations in the Guardia Civil, which include the criteria established in the European Space of Superior Education and the Bologna accords.



Proposed below are some of the driving notions in education research generally, presented here as examples and as philosophic principles. Those will illustrate the manner in which to conduct research in the educational field of the Guardia Civil:



- From an empirical and analytic approach or perspective - Establishing cause and effect relationships with the objective of explaining, predicting, and managing the phenomena that occur as part of the formative curriculum in the Guardia Civil, bearing in mind the lines of investigation proposed by the AOGC.
- From an interpretative and systemic approach or perspective -Comprehending meanings, specifically of the phenomena that take place in the intervention between educational and operative contexts, with the objective being to discover how it is that people perceive, process, attribute, interact, and modify the proceedings in which they are involved.
- From an investigation-action approach or perspective - Evaluating the implementation of best practices and searching for solutions, with the goal of resolving problems while avoiding overgeneralization, and improving the implementation in every context and situation.

Investigation in the field of internal security is multi-methodological in its approach. Studies of this type are necessarily complex because of their multi-discipline nature; they are particularly so in this field due to the peculiar relationship between the researcher and the objects or procedures under investigation.

We arrive at the analysis of complex processes when we consider the concept of public safety in both internal and external contexts. There is citizen safety to consider, to be sure. However, the personnel element itself moves to the forefront as the Guardia Civil becomes a fundamental protagonist in the construction of its own security.

This concept of internal security entails a profound transformation of the Guardia Civil by the corps of police responsible for the change. The transformation is reflected in their objectives, structures, ways of intervention, professional credentials of their personnel and, specifically, in the management of the service organizations, in terms of quality and efficiency.

With any of the three approaches, information-gathering is vital. Consulting sources is basic and non-negotiable in starting any type of investigation.

The consultation and review of previous papers in general and the use of previous works and studies is vital to focus the problem the student is going to study. In order to begin and delimitate our work, and to prevent the dissemination of previously acquired knowledge, a consultation of previous bibliographies is recommended. Our goal is to establish synergies and, above all, to present new ideas at the end of the work.

Towards this goal, it should be known that from 1982 to 2009 there have been 1258 finished investigation works in the AOGC. These works have been grouped and classified into 28 different subject areas to make them most accessible from the database of the CEPOL 'e-library' (the former eDoc in CEPOL). From a simple analysis we can observe the following information:

¹ Guardia Civil collaborator in the fields of research and investigation. Spanish National Security Research and Investigation University Institute (IUII). This educational branch belongs to the national distance learning university of Spain (UNED).

² www.guardiacivil.org.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

As we can observe, in the time period between 1982 and 2009 the most studied area was 'Terrorism and Subversion', whereas the least treated area was 'Recruitment'. Thirty-eight percent of the research projects presented were in the top three areas of 'Terrorism and Subversion', 'Management/ Organisation', and 'Investigation Methods', whereas the categories of 'Corruption', 'Victimisation' and 'Recruitment' combined represent only 0.64 % of the total.

It is of interest to remark that, for example, the area concerning 'Illegal Immigration and Border Control' has only evoked an interest of 2.2 % in the researches, notwithstanding the fact that this topic has acquired significant interest in recent years. Similar discrepancies between current interest and the level of actual research being conducted is seen as well with the areas of 'Community Policing', 'Forensics/Evidence', 'Organized Crime' and 'Juvenile Crime'.

At the time of this writing the investigation team is studying the relationships that exist between the increasing interest of certain thematic areas with the events occurring in real life—internally or externally—at the Guardia Civil. The studies that are being developed within the context of CEPOL in the field of methodology and teaching will no doubt soon be reflected in the research activity at the AOGC as well.

Hereafter we present the phases of the elaboration of the investigational works and the 'lines of investigation' established by the Direction of the AOGC and the IUISI.

Phases of the elaboration of the investigative work

The student must pass through certain 'phases' in the elaboration of the research project, also known at the formative level as the Academic Directed Work ('Trabajo Académico Dirigido' or 'TAD', in Spanish). These phases should be understood in detail, as a time sequence is implied and concrete tasks must be executed. During the two last years of the training the following phases are realized:

CEPOL thematic area	Number of Investigative Works at the AOGC	%
Terrorism, Subversion	194	15.42%
Management / Organization	147	11.69%
Investigation Methods / Actuation	142	11.29%
Research	106	8.43%
Judicial / Penal Matters	105	8.35%
Police Cooperation	82	6.52%
Strategies of Policing	53	4.21%
Police Ethics, Rights and Duties	47	3.74%
Crime Prevention	46	3.66%
Drug Issues, Smuggling	45	3.58%
Forensics / Evidence	45	3.58%
Education / Training	35	2.78%
Organized Crime	34	2.70%
Police Science	30	2.38%
Illegal Immigration, Border Control	28	2.23%
Community Policing	23	1.83%
Abuse of Children and Women	18	1.43%
Public Order	18	1.43%
Juvenile Crime	12	0.95%
Police Leadership	11	0.87%
Criminal Justice Cooperation	9	0.72%
Police-Public relations	7	0.56%
Human Trafficking	5	0.40%
Police Corruption	4	0.32%
Police-Minorities Relations	4	0.32%
Corruption	3	0.24%
Victimisation	3	0.24%
Recruitment	2	0.16%
Total	1258	100.00 %

PHASE 1: Knowledge is gained in: (1) research methodology; (2) oral expression techniques; and (3) the preparation, realization and delivery of the research project.

PHASE 2: Proposal for research project (TAD) is presented; partial grade for the course.

PHASE 3: Revisions to the proposal are made and authorization for the project is obtained; selection of a Director for the TAD.

PHASE 4: Elaboration of the TAD (the research and writing thereof); follow-up with the Director; control, orientation and evaluation.

PHASE 5: Submission of: (1) the TAD, (2) index cards, (3) authorization and (4) list of proposed experts for the committee.

PHASE 6: Multimedia presentation; evaluation of the TAD and of the course.

AREAS OF INVESTIGATION FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECTS

The proposals of the TADs (projects of investigation) should be of interest to the Guardia Civil, and they should fit within one of the following areas as proposed by the AOGC:

- 'Society, the Guardia Civil, the Police Corps in the present day': analysis of the social phenomena in which the Guardia Civil has been affected; public image of the police corps, communication, etc.
- 'Organization of the Guardia Civil': internal problems; deployment; personnel; disciplinary regulation; training, etc.
- 'Missions of the Guardia Civil': assessment of citizen security; application of new technologies; current problems; the future; judicial police; financial issues; borders, etc.

Additionally, the IUSI, following the suggestions of the General Direction of the Guardia Civil, proposes some more lines of investigation at a more general level:

- 'Application of innovative technologies in the different fields of the community policing'.
- 'Quality management in the Guardia Civil'.
- 'Prevention of labour risks'.
- 'The phenomenon of immigration in Spain'.
- 'Other fields/areas in public security'.

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³ www.iusi.es.

⁴ García Palomero, I., y Moure Colón, F., (2008): Metodología de la investigación aplicada a la enseñanza y la toma de decisiones en la Guardia Civil, las Fuerzas Armadas y otras Fuerzas de Seguridad del Estado. Madrid: IUSI.

