

Ethics and Safety in Fieldwork

Third-term Workshop, Academic Year 2021- 2022

Dates: 4-5-6-7-8 April 2022 (10:00 - 12:00) – Badia (*room tbc*)

Instructor: Luigi Achilli, Part-Time Professor, Migration Policy Centre (RSC)

Contact: Claudia.Fanti@eui.eu

Workshop worth: 10 credits

Register [online](#)

Course Description:

This workshop is about how issues of ethics and safety play out during fieldwork, both for the researcher and the people they work with. Questions of ethics and safety are not limited only to those who work so-called 'difficult' or 'extreme' settings. On the contrary, one can face as many challenges interviewing bureaucrats in Brussels as interview Salafists in Tunisia. This workshop takes an intersectional approach to discussions of both ethics and safety, placing the positionality of the researcher at the centre of these challenges. The strains of fieldwork ethics and safety, that can have consequences on mental health and wellbeing, are also discussed throughout this workshop.

This workshop follows the pattern of fieldwork, addressing issues ethics and safety in three distinct phases: before, during and after fieldwork. By the end of the workshop, researchers will have developed their own ethics approval and risk assessment protocols for their own doctoral research projects. These protocols will account for issues of ethics and safety in the planning, conduct and write up of their research projects. The workshop will use a number of interactive tools to draw out these challenges, and help students to think deeply and reflexively about the kinds of challenges they may face. Part of each session will involve working in smaller groups, discussing and responding to particular hypothetical fieldwork situations; as well as practicing facilitating group discussions and conducting interviews on sensitive subjects.

The workshops is primarily designed for students who are pre-fieldwork, or in the early stages of their fieldwork. However, students who have already completed their field research are most welcome to join, and treat the workshop as more of a reflective exercise.

Course Preparation

In the required reading list below, you will find a combination of articles, chapters and shorter blog pieces. Some of the session require a heavier reading load than others. You are strongly recommended to complete all reading ahead of the course. At the very least, you should come to each session having read all set pieces for that session, and be prepared to engage in an active discussion.

All students should think through and be prepared to speak briefly to the following questions during the workshop:

for students who are pre-fieldwork

- What are the ethical questions that might emerge during your fieldwork?
- What are the risks you might face during your fieldwork? What risks does your fieldwork pose to your research participants?
- How will your gender, ethnicity and other subjective identities impact your fieldwork?
- How might your health and mental health be impacted by doing fieldwork?

for students who are currently doing fieldwork, or are post-fieldwork

- What were the ethical challenges that you faced during your fieldwork?
- What were risk you faced during your fieldwork that you had not prepared for? What risks did your fieldwork pose to your research participants?
- How did your gender, ethnicity and other subjective identities impact your fieldwork?
- What did you do to take care of your health and mental health during fieldwork?

Readings

Session 1

Before Fieldwork (1): Planning fieldwork that is safe and ethical

Callaway, E. 2017. "South Africa's San People Issue Ethics Code to Scientists." *Nature News* 543(7646): 475.

Sluka's "Too dangerous for fieldwork? The challenge of institutional risk-management in primary research on conflict, violence and 'terrorism'"

Sukarieh, M. and Tannock, Stuart 2013. On the Problem of Over-researched Communities: The Case of the Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp in Lebanon. *Sociology* 47 (3) , pp. 494-508

Session 2

Before Fieldwork (2): The impact of race, gender and subjective identities on gaining access

Henderson, Frances B. 2009. "'We Thought You Would Be White': Race and Gender in Fieldwork." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (2): 291–4.

Yacob-Haliso, O. 2018. 'Intersectionalities and Access in Fieldwork in Postconflict Liberia: Motherland, Motherhood, and Minefields.' *African Affairs*, 118(470): 168–181.

Chaet, J. 2020. 'Waiting for something to happen: encountering gendered temporality in anthropological fieldwork'. The New Ethnographer [https://www.thenewethnographer.org/the-new-ethnographer/waiting-for-something-to-happen-encountering-gendered-temporality-in-anthropological-fieldwork].

Session 3

During Fieldwork (2): Navigating risks and making decisions ethically

Cronin-Furman, K., & Lake, M. 2018. "Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 51(3), 607-614.

Khan, H. 2020. 'Friendships built on (dis)trust: navigating fragility during fieldwork'. The New Ethnographer. [https://www.thenewethnographer.org/the-new-ethnographer/2019/08/01/friendships-built-on-distrust-navigating-fragility-during-fieldwork].

Bryman A, Bell E (2011) Business Research Methods. (3rd edition). Ch. 5: Ethics in Business Research. Oxford University Press.

Session 4

After fieldwork (1): Mental health, vicarious trauma and well being

Moran, R. and Asquith, N. 2020. 'Understanding the vicarious trauma and emotional labour of criminological research'. *Methodological Innovations* 1:11.

Pollard, A. 2009. 'Field of screams: difficulty and ethnographic fieldwork'. *Anthropology Matters* 11(2): 1-24.

Session 5

After Fieldwork (2): Data analysis and writing up

Said, Edward W. 1989. 'Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors'. *Critical Inquiry* 15(2), 202-225.

Spivak, Gayatri. 1988. 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' In, Nelson, Cary and Lawrence Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana : University of Illinois Press

Assignment

Submit your ethics and risk assessments with mitigation plans as developed during the workshop.

Additional Resources

The New Ethnographer: www.thenewethnographer.org

The Fieldwork Initiative: <http://fieldworkinitiative.org>

Advancing Research on Conflict: www.advancingresearchonconflict.com

Further reading

- Abidin, C. & de Seta, G. (eds.) (2020) Special issue: Doing Digital Ethnography: Messages from the Field. *Journal of Digital Social Research*, 2(1).
- Baele, S. J. et al. (2018). "The Ethics of Security Research: An Ethics Framework for Contemporary Security Studies." *International Studies Perspectives*, 19(2), 105–127.
- Baird, A. (2018). 'Dancing with danger: ethnographic safety, male bravado and gang research in Colombia.' *Qualitative Research* 18(3): 342-360.
- Basini, H. (2016). "Doing No Harm": Methodological and Ethical Challenges of Working with Women Associated with Fighting Forces/Ex-combatants in Liberia.' In A. Wibben (Ed.), *Researching War: Feminist Methods, ethics and politics* (pp.163-184). Oxon & New York: Routledge.
- Berry, MJ, Chávez Argüelles, C, Cordis, S, Ihmoud, S & Velásquez Estrada, E 2017, '[Towards a fugitive anthropology: Gender, race, and violence in the field](#)', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 537-565.
- Caliandro, A. (2018) Digital methods for ethnography: Analytical concepts for ethnographers exploring social media environments *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* Vol. 47, Issue 5 , pp. 551-578.
- Calvey, D. (2018). 'The Everyday World of Bouncers: A Rehabilitated Role for Covert Ethnography.' *Qualitative Research* 19(3): 247-262.
- Calvey, D. (2017). *Covert Research: The Art, Politics and Ethics of Undercover Fieldwork*. London: Sage.
- Cancian, M. F., & Fabbe, K. E. (2019). "Informal Institutions and Survey Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 52(3), 485–489.
- Chamboredon Héléne, Pavis Fabienne, Surdez Muriel, Willemez Laurent. S'imposer aux imposants. A propos de quelques obstacles rencontrés par des sociologues débutants dans la pratique et l'usage de l'entretien. In: Genèses, 16, 1994. Territoires urbains contestés. pp. 114-132.
- Clark, I & Grant, A 2015, '[Sexuality and danger in the field: Starting an uncomfortable conversation](#)', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 1-14.
- Clancy, Kathryn B. H., Robin G. Nelson, Julienne N. Rutherford, and Katie Hinde. (2014) "Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault." *PLoS ONE* 9, no. 7.
- Cook KS, Yamagishi, T (2008). A Defense of Deception on Scientific Grounds. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 71: 215-221.
- Curtis, D. A. (2019). "What Is Our Research For? Responsibility, Humility and the Production of Knowledge about Burundi." *Africa Spectrum*, 54(1), 4-21.
- Desposato, S. (Ed.). (2016). *Ethics and Experiments: Problems and Solutions for Social Scientists and Policy Professionals*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Desposato, S. 2014a. "Ethical Challenges and Some Solutions for Field Experiments." San Diego: University of California.
- Driscoll, J., & Schuster, C. (2018). 'Spies Like Us.' *Ethnography* 19(3): 411-430.
- Enria, L. 2018. 'Elective affinities: fragility and injustice in the field'. The New Ethnographer [https://www.thenewethnographer.org/the-new-ethnographer/2018/04/25/elective-affinities-fragility-and-injustice-in-the-field].
- Eriksson Baaz, M., & Utas, M. (2019). Exploring the Backstage: Methodological and Ethical Issues Surrounding the Role of Research Brokers in Insecure Zones. *Civil Wars*, 21(2), 157–178.
- Evans, A.. (2017). Tinder as a methodological tool. *Allegra Laboratory*. Retrieved from: <http://allegralaboratory.net/tinder-as-a-methodological-tool/>.
- Franzke, Aline shakti, Bechmann, Anja, Zimmer, Michael, Ess, Charles and the Association of Internet Researchers (2020). *Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0*. Available at: <https://aoir.org/reports/ethics3.pdf>

- Fujii, L.A. (2018). *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Fujii, L.A. (2015). "Five Stories of Accidental Ethnography: Turning Unplanned Moments in the Field into Data." *Qualitative Research* 15 (4): 525–39.
- Giglietto, Fabio, Luca Rossi & Davide Bennato (2012) The open laboratory. Limits and possibilities of using Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube as a research data resource. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 30: 3-4, 145-159
- Grimm, J. J., Koehler, K., Lust, E. M., Saliba, I., & Schierenbeck, I. (2020). *Safer Field Research in the Social Sciences: A Guide to Human and Digital Security in Hostile Environments*. SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Habib, R. R. (2019). "Ethical, methodological, and contextual challenges in research in conflict settings: The case of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon." *Conflict and Health*, 13(1), 29.
- Henrion, E., and Thorley, L.. (2019). "Ethical Standards Rapid Literature Review: Final Report." Research Communications and Uptake. London: Department for International Development.
- Hertwig R, Ortmann A (2001). Experimental Practices in Economics: A Methodological Challenge for Psychologists? *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 24: 383-451.
- Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual ethnography*. London, UK: Sage.
- _____(ed.) (2005). *Virtual methods: issues in social research on the Internet*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- _____(2015). *Ethnography for the Internet: embedded, embodied and everyday*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
- _____(2017). 'Ethnography and the Internet: Taking Account of Emerging Technological Landscapes'. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. 10,3, pp. 315-329.
- Humphreys, M. (2014). "How to make field experiments more ethical." *Washington Post*. November 2, 2014.
- Kloß, ST 2017, 'Sexual(ized) harassment and ethnographic fieldwork: A silenced aspect of social research', *Ethnography*, vol. 18, no. 3, p. 396-414.
- Krishnan, S 2015, '[Dispatches from a 'rogue' ethnographer: exploring homophobia and queer visibility](#)', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford: Special issue on Sexual Harassment in the Field*, vol. 7, no. 1, p. 64-79.
- Kozinets, R. (2019). *Netnography: The essential guide to social media research*. London: Sage publications.
- Laurens, S. « "Pourquoi" et "comment" poser les questions qui fâchent ? ». Réflexions sur les dilemmes récurrents que posent les entretiens avec des « imposants », *Genèses* 2007/4 (n° 69), p. 112-127.
- Markham, A. N.; Tiidenberg, K., & Herman, A. (2018). "Ethics as Methods: Doing Ethics in the Era of Big Data Research—Introduction." *Social Media + Society* 4(3): 1-9.
- Markham, A. N. (2012). Fabrication as ethical practice: Qualitative inquiry in ambiguous internet contexts. *Information, Communication and Society*.
- Middleton, T. and Cons, J. 2014. 'Coming to terms: reinserting research assistants in ethnography's past and present'. *Ethnography* 15(3): 279-290.
- Navarro, Tami, Bianca Williams, and Attiya Ahmad. 2013. "Sitting at the Kitchen Table: Fieldnotes from Women of Color in Anthropology." *Cultural Anthropology* 28, no. 3: 443–63.
- Nelson, RG, Rutherford, N, Hinde, K & Clancy, KBH 2017, 'Signalling safety: Characterizing fieldwork experiences and their implications for career trajectories', *American Anthropologist*, vol. 119, no. 4, pp. 710-722.
- Osorio, J. (2014). "Numbers Under Fire: The Challenges of Gathering Quantitative Data in Highly Violent Settings." *Drugs, Security, and Democracy Program. DSD Working Papers on Research Security No. 6*. New York: Social Science Research Council.
- Pachirat. T. "Working Undercover in a Slaughterhouse: An Interview with Timothy Pachirat" *Medium*.
- Pandey, A 2009, 'Unwelcome and unwelcoming encounters' in P Ghassem-Fachandi (ed.) *Violence: Ethnographic encounters*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 135-144.

- Pinçon Michel, Pinçon-Charlot Monique. Pratiques d'enquête dans l'aristocratie et la grande bourgeoisie : distance sociale et conditions spécifiques de l'entretien semi-directif. In: *Genèses*, 3, 1991. La construction du syndicalisme. pp. 120-133;
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- Thaler, K. (2019). "Reflexivity and Temporality in Researching Violent Settings: Problems with the Replicability and Transparency Regime." *Geopolitics* 0(0): 1–27.
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