



WORKSHOP

THE MIDDLE EAST DIRECTIONS PROGRAMME

FIELDWORK RESEARCH CHALLENGED: CONSTRAINTS, NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Scientific Organisers:

Virginie Collombier | European University Institute (EUI)

Francesco Strazzari | Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

Lorenzo Bosi | Scuola Normale Superiore

Sala Europa

Villa Schifanoia, Via Boccaccio 121 - Florence

7 MAY 2019

■ INTRODUCTION

Scholars are increasingly aware that fieldwork research in conflict-prone, politically unstable or authoritarian areas can pose specific risks and challenges, and that new regulations and restrictions have emerged to respond to higher risks. As a result, research agendas in the social sciences are increasingly framed by security concerns.

These constraints reduce the scope for research agendas and may affect precisely where ethnographic approaches are likely to be most useful and needed: in explaining changes in times and spaces of uncertainty. At the same time, technological developments, which lower communication and team coordination costs, disclose new opportunities for digital ethnography, data analysis and storage. They also expose new forms of control and surveillance, thereby raising questions about the ethical and professional implications of relying on open source data-mining. The conditions for producing and reproducing knowledge are being exposed to unprecedented stressors, challenges and opportunities, and it is important to better understand this shift in the way we gain and maintain access to the field.

Discussions on these issues are needed among researchers in order to raise awareness and to contribute to establishing measures that are appropriate for their work. In preparation for the EISA Pan-European Conference that will be held in Sofia in September, scholars at the Robert Schuman Centre of the EUI (MEDirections Programme), the Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna and the Scuola Normale Superiore, will gather to kick start a discussion on these themes, which cut across the sociology, the epistemology and the methodology of social sciences. The workshop aims to identify needs, set expectations and build a collaborative platform.

■ PROGRAMME

7 MAY

09.30 - 10.00

Welcome introduction

Brigid Laffan | Director, Robert Schuman Centre (RSCAS), EUI

Luigi Narbone | Director, Middle East Directions Programme (MEDirections), RSCAS, EUI

10.00 - 12.30

Fieldwork under restrictions: trends and implications for knowledge production

Panel Chair: **Luigi Narbone** | MEDirections, RSCAS, EUI

Speakers:

Luigi Achilli | RSCAS, EUI

Alessandra Russo | Sciences-Po Bordeaux, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

Alice Mattoni | Università di Bologna, Scuola Normale Superiore

Ester Sigillò | RSCAS, EUI

Roger MacGinty | University of Durham (via skype)

12.30 - 13.30

Speakers' lunch

Sala Bandiere

13.30 - 16.00

Redefining the field? New avenues and skills

Panel Chair: **Francesco Strazzari** | Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

Speakers:

Edward Stoddard | Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, University of Portsmouth

Benoit Challand | Scuola Normale Superiore (via skype)

Virginie Collombier | MEDirections, RSCAS, EUI

Alessandro Tinti | Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

16.00 - 16.30

Conclusions and a way forward

■ **SPEAKERS**

Luigi Achilli

RSCAS, EUI

Benoit Challand

Scuola Normale Superiore

Virginie Collombier

MEDirections, RSCAS, EUI

Roger MacGinty

University of Durham

Alice Mattoni

Università di Bologna, Scuola Normale Superiore

Luigi Narbone

MEDirections, RSCAS, EUI

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Sciences-Po Bordeaux, Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna

Ester Sigillò

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Edward Stoddard

Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, University of Portsmouth

Alessandro Tinti

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