

## **Call for contributions**

### **Dossier : "Anthropology, social sciences and digital fieldwork"**

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In the past few decades, academics have developed a growing interest in digital technology as an object of study as well as a methodological tool. Scholars in anthropology and sociology have been looking into online fieldwork, and questioning the way they retrieve, identify, classify, analyze and visualize data. By hybridizing data collection methods and conducting multi-sited fieldwork (online and offline), academia is gradually making way for an array of new practices that some describe as “patchwork ethnography” (Watanabe, Varma, and Günel 2020). The surge in new concepts and terms testifies to the importance of this phenomenon: one can practice “digital ethnography”, “net-ethnography” or “netnography”, conduct participant observation in “codistance” or interviews in “differed presence” (Bourrier and Kimber 2022), explore digital archives and so on.

During the recent pandemic, researchers were confined at home and borders closed for several months or years, a situation that led many of them to resort to hybridized methods of data collection. Although research activities have gradually been starting up again, there is still a need for a reflexive approach to multi-sited fieldwork. Indeed, not all fieldwork are easily accessible, or are accessible in a similar way. Incidentally, the ideal of a universal and open Internet space is challenged by censorship in authoritarian regimes such as China, North Korea or Iran. Moreover, conducting multi-sited research raises methodological, epistemological and heuristic issues that have little been addressed by scholars, especially in French speaking academia. This special issue seeks to fill this gap, an approach that we feel is

all the more justified by the fact that access to fieldwork is still compromised by many recent geopolitical and health crises.

With this special issue, we wish to participate in building a methodological framework for doing empirical research from afar. We will pay close attention to how each fieldwork's specificities can influence our way of conducting research, especially in the context of area studies that are based on sensitive fieldwork and controlled online spaces.

How can we adapt our "classic" or "traditional" methods of data collection, rooted in long-term immersion and direct observation, when they no longer agree with our practices? If the very notion of "fieldwork" needs to be reconsidered, what other concepts specific to the fields of anthropology and sociology are challenged by the fact that researchers increasingly turn to the digital world? Do we need to redefine our disciplinary fields to include the practice of online ethnography, or think of it as a new discipline? How does working from afar force us to change the way we practice research, and how do these changes redefine area studies? What meaning can this new methodological approach give to our individual experiences? Rather than studying the impact of the Internet on society, or what happens in virtual spaces, we want to address the more prosaic issue of how scholars can access, observe, and report on this online presence. In this way, we hope to contribute to the development of a reflexive and critical approach of online research tools and methods, by adopting online ethnography as a new research paradigm.

In this special issue, we would like to include articles that critically address access issues, research practices (fieldwork, observation, interviews, cooperation with on-site researchers), and ethical concerns, in the context of research conducted partially or entirely from afar; articles that offer innovative solutions to the methodological issues raised by our use of the Internet, especially if restricted in any way; articles that aim at redefining anthropological and sociological concepts in the digital age. Contributions must be based on original research.

The title, abstract (10 to 15 lines), and keywords of the article must be submitted in French or English to the coordinators of the special issue ([nolwenn.salmon@univ-lyon3.fr](mailto:nolwenn.salmon@univ-lyon3.fr) ; [manonlaurent3@gmail.com](mailto:manonlaurent3@gmail.com) ; [peronnet.amandine@gmail.com](mailto:peronnet.amandine@gmail.com) ) and to the editors of the journal ([cargo.canthel@gmail.com](mailto:cargo.canthel@gmail.com) ) **before Friday, April 14, 2023**. The contributors will be notified **before May 5, 2023**. Articles, in French or in English, should be between 30,000 and 50,000 characters including the bibliography, and may include copyright-free illustrations. The first draft of the article should be submitted to the coordinators and editors by **July 28, 2023**. The second draft, revised according to the team's suggestions, should be submitted for double-blind peer review by **October 27, 2023**.

## **Bibliography**

Bourrier, Mathilde et Kimber, Leah (eds.). 2022. "Enquêter à distance : nouvel eldorado ?". *Socio-anthropologie* (45).

Watanabe, Chika, Varma, Saiba and Günel, Gökçe. 2020. "A Manifesto for Patchwork Ethnography". Society for Cultural Ethnography: Member Voices. Consulté le 28 novembre 2022. <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/a-manifesto-for-patchwork-ethnography>