

DOING RESEARCH, BEING ENGAGED: METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND ETHICAL REFLECTIONS

URD

PhD in Urban and Regional Development

IN VARIETATE CONCORDIA

29/11/2023
Castello
del Valentino,
DIST

Roundtable 1

Sala Astengo
10,00 – 12,30

Roundtable 2

Sala Vigliano
14,00 – 16,00

PhD program in Urban and Regional Development

Two roundtables to discuss together some of the methodological challenges and ethical reflections around doing research. Both roundtables aim at fostering the discussion about these topics through sharing experiences, lessons learned and doubts.

The roundtables are primarily directed to PhD students, but everybody is welcome. Scholars have been invited to start and join the discussion, but, after their inputs, the floor will be opened to all participants.

Janet Cherry, visiting professor at DIST and engaged scholar at the Department of Development Studies, Nelson Mandela University, in Gqeberha, South Africa, will share this journey with us.

Roundtable 1

Attempt, persist, renounce, take care.
Sharing challenges, experiences and
practices on accessing and being in the field

Introduction and chair: Magda Bolzoni (DIST).

Inputs from: Janet Cherry (DDS, NMU), Lucilla Barchetta (DFBC, UniVe), Elisa Bignante (DCPS, UniTo), Maddalena Gretel Cammelli (DCPS, UniTo), Luigi Gariglio (DCPS, UniTo), Giovanni Semi (DIST), Antonio Vesco (DSPS, UniCt).

Roundtable 2

Engaged scholarship everyday? Sharing
doubts, practices and ethical quagmires

Introduction and chair: Marta Montanini (DIST).

Inputs from: Janet Cherry (DDS, NMU), Silvia Aru (DIST), Irene Bono (DCPS, UniTo), Francesco Chiodelli (DIST), Mara Ferreri (DIST), Michele Lancione (DIST), Loris Servillo (DIST).



Politecnico
di Torino



UNIVERSITÀ
DI TORINO



Interuniversity Department of Regional and Urban Studies and Planning

Roundtable 1: Attempt, persist, renounce, take care. Sharing challenges, experiences and practices on accessing and being in the field

The literature on fieldwork research methods extensively covers the ways in which access to the field could be gained and maintained. It looks as if it is mainly a matter of choosing the right ways and the right words, at the right time. However, while defining our field and carrying out our research, we are often confronted with challenges, limits and limitations. Some of them arise from who we are and how we are perceived in the setting we would like to inquire, and are related to our positionality, our body, phenotype, class, gender, safety or comfort. Others emerge from the socio-spatial context we would like to research or are imposed by university regulations. In some cases, we may end up considering a topic or a field inaccessible to us. We rarely speak about it, somehow perceiving the struggles we encounter as individual ones that we should solve by ourselves, or as individual shortcomings rather than common challenges and issues worth of academic discussion. Could these aspects become part of the analysis and of the academic reflection? Drawing from the experiences of the participants, in this panel we share and discuss challenges and practices of how we negotiate accessing and being in the field, between desires, possibilities and constraints.

Roundtable 2: Engaged scholarship everyday? Sharing doubts, practices and ethical quagmires

Who doesn't want to be an engaged scholar? Building collaborations, co-constructing knowledge, co-design projects and, by doing so, paving the way for change, betterment, justice? However, the way we understand “engaged scholarship” and its repertoire of practices and techniques, but also the value system and worldviews we associate with it, differ from researcher to researcher, and sometimes clashes with the institutions we are affiliated to or we collaborate with and even with the people we want to be allies of. Being an engaged scholar everyday is a tough job, in terms of establishing relations, maintaining credibility and trust, bearing responsibilities, trying to reconcile the (often too short) time of the research projects with the long-term aspirations of the people we want to collaborate with. With the help of researchers that conjugate engagement in different ways, we share the joys and sorrows of trying to do research in the ‘right way’.

For more info: magda.bolzoni@polito.it, marta.montanini@polito.it