Fieldwork in Middle East Political Science: Misalignments in Training and Practice

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ABSTRACT The discipline of political science lacks a systematic understanding of how scholars studying Middle East politics prepare for and navigate in-country research, even as fieldwork plays a vital role in contemporary scholarship about the region. Drawing on evidence from an original survey of scholars studying the Middle East and North Africa, we identify a training–practice misalignment wherein 38% of respondents reported having received no formal training before entering the field despite almost all respondents claiming to have conducted fieldwork. Qualitative evidence from open-ended responses reveals the frustration that many scholars experience due to their lack of formal training and subsequent dependence on informal networks and knowledge. Conflict, authoritarianism, state surveillance, and repression in public space—characteristics that increasingly are prevalent in many parts of the world—have long shaped the practice of fieldwork in the Middle East, rendering our findings significant beyond this region alone. The article discusses implications of this misalignment for this subfield and the discipline more broadly, as well as potential pathways forward.

Fieldwork is a central part of political science research on contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA) despite myriad challenges posed by conflict, instability, and authoritarian rule.[1] Many scholars in the subfield agree that in-depth fieldwork is important because it allows scholars to escape existing and potentially problematic theoretical frameworks; facilitates original data collection; foregrounds the voices of those most proximate to political events; and deepens researchers' understandings of the region in ways that enhance analysis (Lustick 2020; Tessler 2019). Yet, despite broad consensus around the importance of fieldwork and the expectation of field experience in candidates for MENA faculty positions, we lack a systematic overview of current fieldwork-related training and research practices among MENA political scientists. In the absence of such an audit, scholars have only anecdotal or personal insights into the proportion of MENA scholars who do fieldwork, the fieldwork-specific methods training that scholars receive prior to embarking, and the ways they conduct their research once at their field site.

This article introduces data from an original survey of MENA scholars ranging from doctoral students to senior professors and discusses a core empirical observation. We found that although the majority of surveyed MENA scholars engage in field-based research, many (38%) did not receive any formal training prior to entering the field. Indeed, our study identifies a systematic misalignment between methods that are commonly taught and the field practices most heavily relied on by MENA scholars.

Understanding fieldwork practices is important beyond simply providing a more nuanced characterization of MENA politics as

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an academic field. Understanding shortcomings in fieldwork training and on-the-ground practices also is a prerequisite for solidarity with academics in the region and for prevention of extractive research practices. For decades, scholars have raised important critiques regarding fieldwork and research in the MENA. One strand of this discussion centers on the ethics of inequality and colonial legacies. Wedeen (2016) and Anderson, El-Mahdi, and Shami (2025a, 2025b), among others, highlighted how knowledge production that severs values and ethical interpretation from ostensibly value-free "facts" has served—intentionally or not—as an integral part of Western imperialism in the MENA region. Gaining insight into fieldwork training, wherein understandings of data collection are embedded in global political and educational infrastructures, is an essential step in addressing these concerns.

Ethical considerations surrounding the decolonization of knowledge production are exacerbated further in the MENA by the existence of active conflicts, repressive authoritarian regimes, foreign military intervention, and surveillance systems, as well as a wide attendant range of positionality concerns. These considerations highlight logistical (as well as ethical) hurdles as a second strand of concern for scholars working in the region. Although such challenges are not specific to MENA alone, they nonetheless define contemporary research in the region. In the past two decades, at least two political science PhD candidates have lost their lives doing fieldwork in the region: Nicole Suveges from Johns Hopkins University was working in Iraq and was killed in an explosion in 2008; and Giulio Regeni from Cambridge University was working in Egypt and was killed in 2016. MENA scholars of the past 25 years have experienced high barriers to entry into the field due to protracted conflicts in Syria, Yemen, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine, Libya, and Iraq and authoritarian or quasi-authoritarian regimes in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Iran, Algeria, the Gulf states, and Jordan (Clark and Cavatorta 2018). Thus, knowledge production and fieldwork in the MENA is particularly fraught, risking the perpetuation of unequal frames and structures as well as the full range of applied and logistical challenges that are familiar to field researchers worldwide.

Finally, mapping MENA fieldwork training is important beyond decolonizing knowledge production and facilitating safe and ethical research. Data-collection practices affect the quality of academic findings (Bell-Martin and Marston 2021) and what we can know about politics in the region. Common MENA fieldwork practices such as the use of translators and local research assistants, the reliance on shared networks of interlocutors, the "outsourcing of fieldwork" (Schwedler and Chomiak 2024), and the channeling of research topics into those select areas that are feasible in authoritarian and physically risky settings all impact the nature of research that is produced. Gaining insight into how these collective practices shape regional knowledge production can reveal communities or topics that are being missed or omitted.

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EXPERT SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Understanding current fieldwork and training practices is an essential step in addressing the ethical, practical, and knowledge-production challenges identified in this study. This article draws on an original expert survey of MENA political scientists administered from October 2024 to January 2025.[2] The survey was designed to provide a snapshot overview of current practices and was centered primarily on two themes. First, we asked how MENA scholars were trained in preparation for fieldwork. Second, we investigated how they conducted themselves in the field, with a particular focus on how they worked with local interlocutors and assistants (e.g., translators, fixers, and survey enumerators) to navigate complex contexts. The survey was open to MENA political scientists worldwide, from PhD candidates to senior faculty members, including scholars who were working in think tanks and other nonacademic positions. The survey garnered 244 responses, of which 146 were sufficiently complete to include in our analysis.

We did not impose a prefabricated definition of fieldwork in our survey; that is, respondents were allowed to self-determine whether their research practice qualified as "fieldwork." We considered this term sufficiently widespread to allow for a shared understanding, and the range of methods encompassed in the concept are so diverse as to be disadvantageous to list. We strategically left the term undefined so that we might capture and analyze the breadth of practices that respondents classified as fieldwork in their open-ended responses. Of course, this choice meant that what might be considered fieldwork for some scholars would not qualify as such for others (e.g., archival research and oversight of a lab-in-the-field experiment). In line with our interest in theorizing fieldwork practices, we explicitly left open the possibility that research assistants and translators, for example, may have played a key role in the research, adhering to a more open conception of fieldwork.

The survey was administered online in English through Qualtrics and required between 15 and 20 minutes to complete. The survey link was disseminated via professional networks, including the Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) listserv and the American Political Science Association (APSA)–MENA section message board. We also recruited participants through contacts at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), Palestinian American Research Center, Council of American Overseas Research Centers, WomenAlsoKnowStuff, and direct email invitations to faculty members and graduate students at institutions in the Canada, Europe, the Middle East, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We also encouraged colleagues to forward the survey to relevant political scientists in their networks. We incentivized the survey by giving participants the option to make a small donation to the Global Academy Emergency Fund.[3] We opted to not disseminate the survey on social media sites to mitigate the likelihood of bot or otherwise inappropriate responses.

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We cannot precisely estimate the response rate because the platforms through which we disseminated the survey have overlapping memberships. The largest organizational network through which we publicized the survey, POMEPS, emailed an invitation to 2,051 respondents, with a response rate of 23% (463 people). If we assume that all respondents accessed the survey via POMEPS, the completed response rate would be 32%; if we assume that only half of all responses stemmed from POMEPS, the POMEPS-specific response rate would be 16%. From all of the 2,051 emails, the response rate was 7%, which is slightly higher than other reported social scientist surveys (Pruschak and Hopp 2022).

With this response rate, our sample likely was not wholly representative of MENA political science as a subdiscipline, but we posit that any strictly fixed vision of this subdiscipline is itself a chimera. For this study, we specifically prioritized regional and professional diversity over a narrow bounding of the field of experts to incorporate demographics that are not commonly captured in North American imaginaries of MENA political science. To wit, 44% of our respondents came from outside of North America and 19% were researchers with jobs currently outside of the academy. Although these variables call into question the uniformity of the group under consideration, they do not undercut the coherence of the community or of our findings as a whole. We note, however, that our survey participants were more likely to be interested in and/or have personal experience with fieldwork due to the nature and introductory framing of the survey. Because of this bias and the lack of a reliable sampling frame for this population, we therefore make cautious claims about the generalizability of our descriptive findings.

Survey responses were anonymized to create conditions in which respondents felt free to respond honestly without concern of being identified. Demographic questions were minimal to ensure that responses could not be linked to particular individuals. These choices had consequences regarding questions about actual practices in the field. Opting for anonymity meant that we lost granularity regarding factors that may have added valuable insight. For example, we did not ask respondents for their institutional affiliation and instead collected only broad geographic data. Although it would have been interesting to understand variation across institutional types to address questions of inequality or difference within academia, we prioritized privacy over transparency.

MENA SCHOLAR SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the respondents who completed the survey, 23% were doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, 21% were assistant professors, 37% were associate or full professors, and 19% were employed in nonacademic positions (table 1). Sixty percent of respondents earned their PhD between 2010 and 2024; 15% were currently working toward the degree. More than 50% of the participants were from institutions in North America, 13% were from the MENA region, and 23% were from Europe. Sixty-four percent of the participants identified as comparativists, 27% worked in international relations, and 5% were in political theory. Slightly more than 50% reported working in a positivist paradigm, with 47% describing their work as interpretivist or critical. Respondents identified a range of methodological proclivities: 52% working qualitatively, 42% working with mixed methods, and only 5% working exclusively with quantitative methods.

Table 1

Demographics of MENA Scholar Survey Respondents (N=146)

Current Professional Position		
Doctoral Student	21	14%
Postdoctoral Researcher	13	9%
Assistant Professor	30	21%
Associate Professor	28	19%
Full Professor	26	18%
Other	28	19%
Received Doctoral Degree		
Before 1970	1	1%
1970–1989	7	5%
1990–2009	29	20%
2010–2024	87	60%
Not Yet Received	22	15%
Current Professional Location		
North America	82	56%
MENA Region	19	13%
Europe	33	23%
Other	12	8%
Gender		
Male	69	47%
Female	63	43%
Non-Binary/Third Gender	1	1%
Prefer Not to Say	12	8%
Political Science Subfield		
Comparative Politics	93	64%
International Relations	39	27%
Political Theory	6	4%
Other	8	5%
Methodological Approach		
Qualitative	76	52%
Quantitative	8	5%
Mixed Methods	61	42%
Other	1	1%
Epistemological Approach		
Positivist	74	51%
Interpretivist/Critical	68	47%
Other	4	3%

FINDINGS

Of the surveyed MENA political scientists, 95% reported having conducted fieldwork at some point in their career, and a large majority (86%) reported having conducted fieldwork in the past five years. These percentages varied minimally by cohort, with 90% of those who earned their PhD between 2020 and 2024 having conducted fieldwork compared to 93% of those who earned their PhD between 2010 and 2019. This underscores the centrality of fieldwork in MENA research despite the COVID-19 pandemic and regional upheaval since the 2011 uprisings. The decision to enter the field also was not impacted by methodological factors: respondents in the sample who identified as using only quantitative

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methods all conducted fieldwork; conversely, the few who reported never having conducted fieldwork used both qualitative and mixed-methods approaches.

The typical length of a fieldwork trip for MENA political scientists was between two and six months. Outliers on this question included respondents who reported fieldwork trips that lasted less than one month or more than two years. Here again, these patterns varied little by cohort. The modal MENA location where people reported conducting fieldwork (given the option of reporting multiple sites) was the Levant/Eastern Mediterranean (87 respondents), North Africa (75), Turkey (34), and the Gulf States (32). It is interesting that 54 respondents (i.e., more than a third of the sample) also reported conducting fieldwork in non-MENA contexts.

These data underscore the significance of fieldwork in political science knowledge production in the MENA, which makes questions of adequate preparation and training even more important. Of the 138 respondents who reported having conducted fieldwork, 38% claimed to have never received fieldwork training in any capacity, and more than half reported never having taken a formal doctoral course that covered fieldwork topics. The methodological and demographic characteristics of the respondents largely mirror the broader respondent pool, leaving unresolved the reasons for this mismatch between what MENA scholars need and what is structurally available to them. With some variation, for example, these results hold for fieldwork-conducting respondents trained in North America (44% received no formal training), Europe (29%), and the MENA region (25%).[4] They also hold for current doctoral students (45%), assistant professors (31%), and tenured professors (40%), keeping in mind that some in the former category may take formal coursework before graduating. If we assume that our survey sample is biased in favor of scholars with a fieldwork-centric research focus, these findings are even more surprising because we would assume such scholars to be *more* likely to have received training in the topic. Regardless of the underlying reasons, among which we do not have sufficient data to arbitrate, the outcome is that more than a third of the MENA researchers we surveyed entered their fieldwork site without any structural training.

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It is not surprising that this reality was reflected in the open-ended responses that survey takers were invited to record regarding their doctoral training. Many attested to their lack of training or support, stating: "I received zero training, and my advisor was not helpful" and "I self-taught; I read methods sections of books and discussed with colleagues." One respondent pointed out the paradox of MENA politics norms for fieldwork research without attendant instruction, stating that "We had no formal training, but we were given grants to go to the field early on in graduate school!" Others experienced a lack of attention to fieldwork in their department: "Fieldwork research methods were barely considered as a sub part of qualitative methods training. Doctoral students were poorly prepared for any type of fieldwork experience, even less so in politically unstable and unsafe environments. The predominance of quantitative research methods in the department…resulted in the marginalization and depreciation of fieldwork research. I did not obtain any tailored training nor funding to fulfill my fieldwork research." Many other similar comments displayed both disappointment and frustration at what was deemed inadequate instruction and support as well as a desire for formal training.

Although the absence of formal fieldwork instruction for almost 40% of MENA political science researchers is surprising, coursework within a department is not the only source of training, and the data do not necessarily mean that scholars enter the field unprepared. Most respondents reported being proactive about acquiring skills and information they needed for their work. Ten percent (who we include as having received training in our analysis) reported seeking out supplementary instruction, to include summer methods "camps" such as at the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research (IQMR), which offers courses in ethnography and other approaches to fieldwork methods. The perceived efficacy of supplementary training options, however, was uneven. One respondent stated: "I had to be very proactive about seeking out advice from my advisor and other researchers. I was only able to do this because of my preexisting (pre-PhD) work experience and network. Otherwise, we did not get any training about fieldwork. My department explicitly told me that they use IQMR to fill in gaps for methods training, but I wasn't supported to attend it until after I had already completed much of my fieldwork and defended my prospectus."

Many respondents instead highlighted the critical role of informal training obtained from supervisors, colleagues in the field, and peers both at home and in the region, stating that they relied heavily on advice from graduate students and advisors who had conducted fieldwork. Another respondent wrote: "I had advisors who spent time personally telling me about their fieldwork advice outside of class and preparing me logistically" and that "much of my field training was informal, from my advisor, from mentors in fellowship programs, and in 'the field' itself. I would say that I had a lot of field methods training, but very little of it was in a classroom." Another survey respondent commented: "I learned far more about the logistics of field work—for instance, how to arrange and conduct interviews—through conversations with my PhD advisor and older graduate students rather than through any coursework, including at IQMR."

Overall, the responses revealed a patently ad hoc and uneven training terrain regarding fieldwork and one that likely exacerbates inequalities within and across academic institutions.[5] Students working with advisors who have conducted fieldwork may be advantaged, but the level of supervisory engagement and the value of that engagement varied qualitatively. Respondents who proactively sought guidance from their personal networks received training based on the strength of those networks, with the attendant inequalities that such a system implies for the community as a whole. Formal courses offered by departments, as well as methods training in supplementary programs, were

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cited frequently as insufficient for preparing students for field-based research in the MENA. Considering structural shortcomings, survey respondents sought individualized solutions, leaving them split over whether they felt prepared for fieldwork when they set out; 68% reported that they "agreed/strongly agreed" that they were prepared.

The positive perception of preparedness may reflect the specific methods that respondents used in the field relative to the topics commonly taught in qualitative methods courses. For example, 93 of the respondents reported receiving training in interviewing, which also was the most common mode of fieldwork research ultimately used in the sample.[6] Survey research, ethnography, fieldwork ethics, and philosophy of science all received similarly high representation in methods courses, with between 70 and 72 of the survey respondents claiming that they received training in these areas. By contrast, topics including safety and risk assessment and navigating authoritarian and conflict contexts were taught significantly less: between only 31 and 36 of respondents reported having received training.

These numbers decreased even further as topics became more centered on logistical concerns, including those which scholars ultimately had to contend with when they entered the field. Only 18 respondents reported having received training on working across languages or with a translator/interpreter; nevertheless, 58 (42%) of respondents who conducted fieldwork had worked with a translator/interpreter. Only 14 received training related to working with a research assistant or fixer; nevertheless, 88 (65%) of respondents who conducted fieldwork worked with them. These "nuts-and-bolts" topics demand site- and time-specific pedagogical content that is difficult to maintain, yet they represent challenges that many MENA researchers must navigate, rendering them severely undertaught areas of instruction. The survey revealed a further incongruity in the opposite direction—namely, that experimental methods are commonly taught: 52 of 146 field-based or lab-in-the-field, or 36% of the total sample, claimed to have received training, but only 9% of MENA researchers reported using fieldwork or lab-in-the-field experimental methods.[7] Thus, whereas some core fieldwork practices are well represented in methods courses, the data also reveal a degree of mismatch between what MENA scholars need and what is structurally available.

DISCUSSION

Fieldwork is central in MENA research despite a range of challenges. Certain fieldwork skills (e.g., interviewing) appear well represented in general qualitative methods coursework. However, respondents pointed to a lack of formalized training and mentorship, particularly as they pertain to on-the-ground practicalities of working in translation, hiring assistants, and handling security and logistics. Respondents also reported feeling unprepared to navigate the empirical realities of conflict settings and authoritarian contexts. In the absence of standardized norms, researchers must figure out what works, practically and ethically, on their own or with their specific network of peers and mentors. Fieldwork training and actual fieldwork practices rarely are discussed transparently in formal contexts, resulting in the development of what Parkinson (2025) characterized as fieldworker "archetypes" who behave according to a range of pressures and norms. Fieldwork training for MENA scholars is largely an ad hoc affair, mimicking patterns that reflect the conduct of fieldwork in comparative politics and international relations as a whole (Schwartz and Cronin-Furman 2023).[8]

Given that approximately 60% of our survey respondents received some training that was applicable to fieldwork—notably on interviewing, participant observation, survey research, and ethics—another question arises as to whether "fieldwork" is taught productively beyond this baseline and what it should entail. A critic might respond that "fieldwork training" of the type being called for by survey respondents is, by necessity, so site-specific as to be impossible to formalize effectively—even within a single region. Logistical imperatives and security risks are extremely changeable and context dependent, just as legacies of inequality are uneven across communities and actors. Advice about how to navigate research in Damascus today, for instance, would be radically different from advice on Damascus one, five, or 10 years ago. It would be an impossible undertaking for faculty members in teaching positions to stay current on all areas at all times. Given this impossibility, a critic might claim that qualitative methods courses offering basic training represent the best option for the greatest number.

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Keeping the goals of decolonizing field research, facilitating practical engagement in logistically complex settings, and attending to the fidelity of empirical data in fieldwork collection in mind, we suggest two pathways for improving fieldwork training for MENA scholars. The first pathway could benefit scholars at all levels and requires thinking outside of the box of departmental offerings. The second pathway targets graduate students still engaged in coursework and could be applied beyond the MENA region.[9] It requires unboxing the category of "ethnography and/or participant observation" and nudging ethnography's core tenets into more mainstream political science practice.

Region-specific professional associations including the APSA-MENA section, POMEPS, Arab Political Science Network, MESA, and the American Institute of Maghrib Studies, among others, are well positioned to institutionalize regular in-person and/or virtual workshops with scholars currently engaged in fieldwork as well as those working full time in the region. These groups already provide this type of programming to some degree; formalizing this content around fieldwork-training needs would create a reliable platform for scholars to access current insights and emerging best practices for ethical and effective conduct in specific sites. Situated outside of a single department and with the

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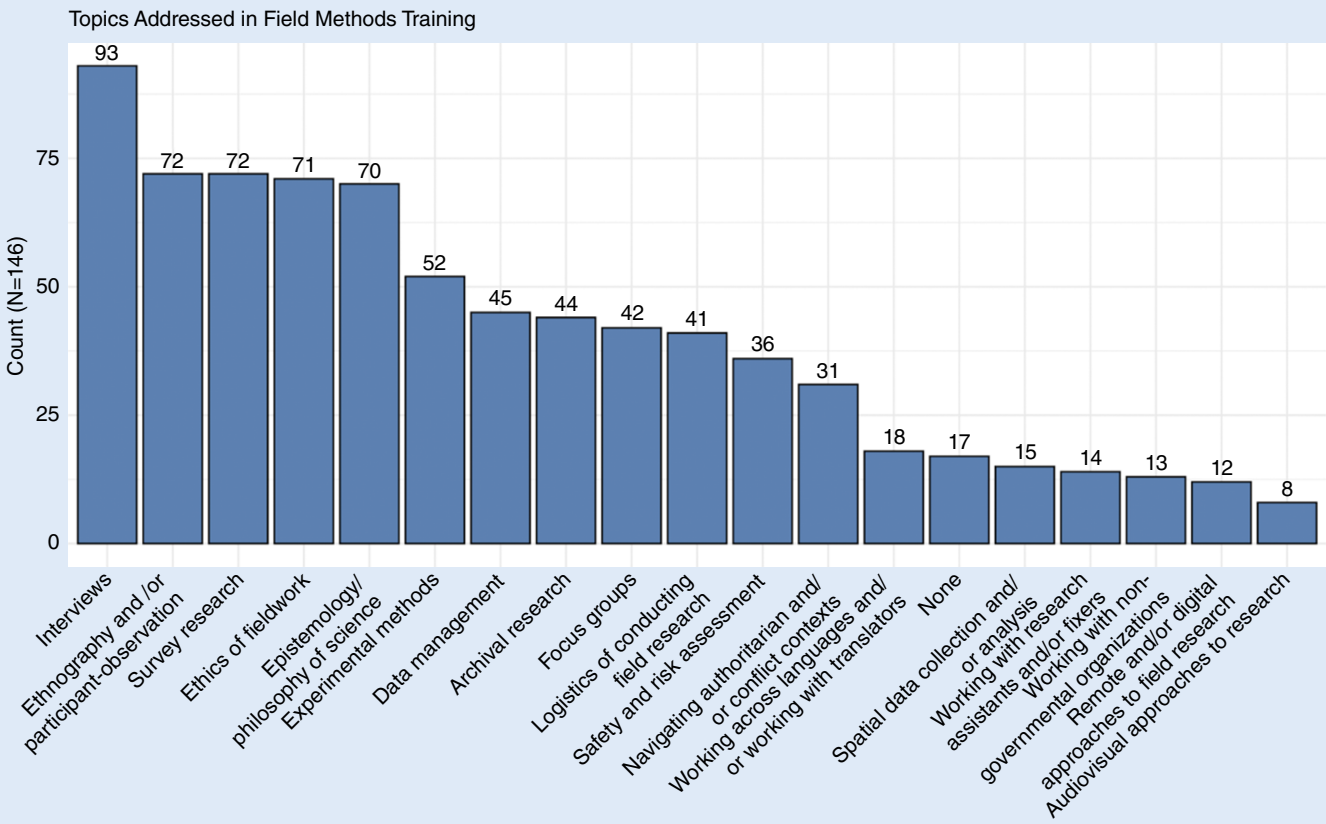
Figure 1

Topics Addressed in Field Methods Training (N=146)



MENA region as their core interest, these organizations are situated structurally to act as platforms that can offer this type of training content, if staffing constraints allow. As a virtual format that could be made available to many scholars, this also has the potential to even out inequalities within academia that privilege those scholars with existing networks and easier access to mentoring resources.

These workshops, which could focus on relevant methodological themes (e.g., working in translation), specific topics (e.g., fieldwork during protest movements), or specific countries (e.g., fieldwork in Egypt or in urban-authoritarian contexts), could be geared toward researchers planning fieldwork trips in the coming year. Scholars across career levels engaged in on-site fieldwork could host sessions dedicated to providing up-to-date and country-specific touchpoints for incoming researchers, sharing their experiences and creating space for much-needed conversations on practicalities and logistics. The platform also could strive to redress global political economies of research that privilege North American and European scholars by actively showcasing the work of peers and colleagues based in the region and by promoting a deeper engagement with regional scholarship. MENA-based colleagues have long borne the burden of helping to situate newly arrived fieldworkers, sharing their deep knowledge of living and working in the region. Enfolding them in this project in ways that recognize their manifold scholarly contributions, alongside their service to the community, will be critical.

As these workshops become institutionalized and formalized, MENA scholars could depend on them as a reliable source of fieldwork training and information. Over time, these workshops could generate region-specific recommendations that systematically address challenges such as conducting research in authoritarian contexts and navigating security. The extensive bibliography compiled by the Advancing Research on Conflict summer program offers an example of the richness of scholarship that a concerted consideration of fieldwork practice may generate.[10]

A second pathway—which may seem more straightforward because many scholars think about what small adjustments are feasible within their own department—centers on the basic premise that students need to be trained for fieldwork, particularly if the students intend to work with subalterns, in conflict areas, across languages, and/or in variable security conditions. The generic quantitative and qualitative methods courses common to many departments provide insufficient training and preparation, as revealed in this study. This premise also holds for students and scholars who work with their field site from afar—for example, those who hire a field assistant to conduct interviews or an enumeration team to conduct surveys while they themselves remain based at their university. Such outsourcing of field research is increasingly common and demands the same degree of knowledge about field-based methods, ethics, and logistics.

Offering a standalone, formal fieldwork course would free up one or more substantive weeks in the qualitative methods course

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while at the same time providing a course offering that gives full attention to the myriad complicated topics that researchers are likely to encounter in the field. Caging these diverse topics in one week of readings under the umbrella category of "ethnography" or "participant observation" is a disservice to the complexity of fieldwork issues for which researchers must prepare. Approximately 50% of our respondents reported having received training in participant observation; nevertheless, most of them claimed that they needed to supplement their training via informal channels to feel prepared. Some of the topics included in political science fieldwork training also might be covered in other disciplines, with the implication that some students would be well served by exploring interdisciplinary training channels. However, the systematic outsourcing of fieldwork methods training to other disciplines risks undermining vital connections between method and substantive research questions and thematic interests that are distinctive to political science. Therefore, there remains a need for formal training specifically tailored to the substance and logistics of political science as a discipline.

Doubtless other pathways exist. The field of MENA political science does not lack resources to address best practices in and ethical challenges surrounding fieldwork—availability of scholarship is not the impediment to more rigorous training.[11] Furthermore, fieldwork-based research, of course, is not specific to the MENA, and the shortcomings identified in this study may apply equally to other regional subfields. Whereas MENA countries have long been considered distinctive because of their authoritarian regime types, postcolonial legacies, and prolonged conflicts, these supposedly unique attributes are increasingly prevalent or relevant across the globe, rendering the discussion about a need for dedicated fieldwork courses urgent for the discipline as a whole. We propose these dedicated fieldwork research courses and smaller context-specific workshops as ways to systematically improve training for those scholars who are seeking to enter the field. While we are careful to note that there is no one-size-fits-all "fix" for the ethical and logistical quandaries highlighted here, our survey findings demonstrate a gap between training and practice that demands much further inquiry and innovation, here and elsewhere.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

NOTES

1. We adhere to the broad definition of fieldwork used by Wood (2009), who described fieldwork as "research based on personal interaction with research subjects in their own setting."
2. The boundaries of the discipline of political science vary across regions, with many universities in the Middle East and Europe subsuming the study of politics under different nomenclature. Respondents self-identified as political scientists, and we targeted subjects via platforms that cater to them. The diversity of "political science identities," however, makes it difficult to determine with certitude the total population of the community.
3. After completion of the survey, we donated 965 Swiss Francs to the Global Academy Emergency Fund, which helps displaced scholars in war-affected contexts, particularly Gaza and Sudan.
4. Some of these subgroup findings should be interpreted cautiously due to the small sample sizes after respondents are categorized by region. For example, only eight respondents were from the MENA region: only four reported using field methods and one received no formal methods training.
5. Schwartz and Cronin-Furman (2023), for example, highlighted the gendered aspects of unequal advising in their survey of international fieldwork methods. They found that the responsibility of informal advising of students who lack formal fieldwork training falls disproportionately on female faculty members.
6. Survey responses to the topics addressed in field methods training were non-exclusive; most respondents reported receiving training in more than one topic.
7. We are not suggesting based on these data that experimental methods are "over-taught," and we acknowledge that students may be using experimental methods embedded in surveys and other modes of non-field-based research.
8. We note that our data allowed us to characterize but not isolate the causes of this gap between training and experience or to arbitrate between different explanations. Supply-side factors, such as availability and willingness of scholars to teach fieldwork-related courses for doctoral students, could play a role as well as demand-side factors—namely, doctoral students' enthusiasm for enrolling in such formal coursework relative to other courses within a limited pre-fieldwork timeframe.
9. Although we assert the importance of understanding scholarly practice in the MENA specifically, our findings should not be construed as reifying MENA exceptionalism. In fact, the global backsliding of democracy suggests that MENA researchers' fieldwork practices may provide essential lessons for colleagues who are studying in the United States and elsewhere.
10. See The ARC Bibliography at https://advancingconflictresearch.com/new-page-1.
11. Although MENA scholarship has produced its own corpus of texts on this topic, the recent emergence of edited volumes underscores the call to consider fieldwork across the discipline more broadly. Three examples of these works are Krause and Szekely (2020); Kapiszewski, MacLean, and Read (2015); and Sriram et al. (2009).

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