

Anthropology • Research Methods

"Participant observation lies at the heart of the ethnographic approach to qualitative research. The essence of participant observation is immersion in the settings, cultural practices, and daily activities of people who are the focus of study. Through participant observation, researchers form relationships with people who teach them to see the world through their eyes. The translation of everyday experience and knowledge acquisition in the field into the rigorous conduct of participation is rare in the world of qualitative inquiry. In this valuable and easy to understand book, Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt, two widely recognized and internationally known ethnographers, pool their knowledge to offer a comprehensive and structured approach to participant observation that is a must read for initiates and experienced researchers alike."

—**Jean J. Schensul**, Institute for Community Research, Hartford, Connecticut

Participant observation is the foundation of ethnographic research design and supports and complements other types of qualitative and quantitative data collection. Qualitative research in such diverse areas as anthropology, sociology, education, and medicine draws on the insights gained through the use of participant observation. The authors have written a guide to the systematic collection of data in naturalistic settings—communities in many different cultures—to achieve an understanding of the most fundamental processes and patterns of social life. This book serves as a basic primer for the beginning researcher and as a useful reference and guide for experienced researchers in many fields who wish to reexamine their own skills and abilities in light of best practices of participant observation.

This new edition includes discussions of participant observation in nontypical settings, such as the Internet, participant observation in applied research, and ethics of participant observation. It also explores in greater depth the use of computer-assisted analysis of textual data, issues of sampling, and linking method with theory.

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