



ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH METHODS FOR REFUGEE STUDIES

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WHAT IS ANTHROPOLOGY?

- ✖ Social science
- ✖ Culture
- ✖ Ethnography
- ✖ Participant Observation



ETHNOGRAPHY: WHAT IS IT?

- ✗ “*Ethno*” = folk + “*graph*” = writing
- ✗ A research method consisting of **long-term field work**, including **participant observation**, interviews and other qualitative methods.
- ✗ **Goals**
 - + Depth - **holism**
 - + **Natural** settings
 - + Actor’s point of view - **collaboration**
 - + **What people actually do** as well as what they say they do
 - ✗ Beyond “deference effect” and “social desirability” effect

ETHNOGRAPHY: LIVING WITH AND OBSERVING



Can happen
anywhere!



ETHNOGRAPHY'S KEY METHOD: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

- ✗ The researcher **observes and participates** in an every-day social setting.
 - + **Complex knowledge** – A broad spectrum of Information
 - + **Immersion -> INSIDER/OUTSIDER Experience**
 - ✗ *Explicit Awareness*
 - ✗ Introspection
 - ✗ Record Keeping



PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: WHAT DO YOU REALLY DO?

- ✖ Attend events - seasonal ceremonies, marriages, funerals, holidays, political and community meetings, educational seminars, etc.
- ✖ Work - make crafts, gather wood, prepare food, clean, care for children
- ✖ Go with people to markets, stores, restaurants, clubs, mosques, visit people, watch TV
- ✖ Be around whenever talking, joking, fighting, crying, disciplining of children, greeting and more happens....



CHALLENGES OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

1. Community **acceptance and trust** must be obtained.
 - + Skilled researcher necessary.
2. **Time consuming**
3. Becoming too close – **risk objectivity**
4. May be **difficult to generalize** - small size

ETHNOGRAPHY FOR REFUGEE STUDIES – WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

✗ Local level

- + Integration best practices -> dialogue on local levels
- + Social interactions
- + Avoiding methodological nationalism

✗ Law and policy in practice - surprises

✗ Gender / vulnerable groups

ETHNOGRAPHY FOR REFUGEE STUDIES – WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

- ✗ Show refugees as more than statistics or passive victims - show instead their “resourcefulness, motivation and commitment” (Kaya 2016: 6)
- ✗ Adding complexity to media representations



- ✕ **Ethnographic research** in Turkey, U.K., Germany
- ✕ **Photovoice**
 - + Turkey, Iraq, Greece, Germany and Sweden
- ✕ **Documentary film**
 - + Visual representation + analysis
 - + Real stories
 - + Dissemination