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## Ethnography and Observation

What is it like to do fieldwork? In this paper, Susan Murray teases out the moral, ethical and political decisions that take place in the field.

*Qualitative Research*, 3 (3): 377–95 (2003):  
<http://qrj.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/3/3/377>

A Spy, a Shill, a Go-Between or a Sociologist: Unveiling the ‘Observer’ in Participant Observer  
Susan B. Murray, San Jose State University

Aksel Tjora’s paper discusses different ‘modes’ of interpretation which shape how students take fieldnotes.

*Qualitative Research*, 6 (4): 429–51 (2006):  
<http://qrj.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/6/4/429>

Writing small discoveries: an exploration of fresh observers’ observations  
Aksel H. Tjora, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

### EXERCISE

Choose any convenient setting and attempt an observational study. Experiment with at least two different methods of keeping fieldnotes. Now read through your notes and consider which format is likely to be most productive to address your research problem and to provide you with reliable data.

In this paper, Raymond Gold shows how ethnographic work can be scientifically credible.

*Qualitative Inquiry*, 3 (4): 388–402 (1997):

<http://qix.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/3/4/388>

The Ethnographic Method in Sociology

Raymond L. Gold, University of Montana

http:

**LINK**

[www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm](http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm)

(Use the search facility with the words ‘ethnography’ and ‘participant observation’.)

This paper shows the importance of using our eyes in ethnographic research in order to recognise the role of space and place.

*Qualitative Research*, 8 (5): 616–34 (2008):

<http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/8/5/616>

Observing places: using space and material culture in qualitative research

Paddy O’Toole and Prisca Were, Flinders University, Australia

In this article, pitched at an introductory level, Jan Savage discusses the value of ethnographic work in the context of the debate about evidence-based health care.

*Journal of Research in Nursing*, 11 (5): 383–93 (2006):

<http://jrn.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/11/5/383>

Ethnographic evidence: The value of applied ethnography in healthcare

Jan Savage, EGA/UCL Institute for Women’s Health, London

In this article, Allan Hegelund reviews the categories of ‘objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’. He shows how theoretical models can shape what these terms mean in ethnographic research.

*Qualitative Health Research*, 15 (5): 647–68 (2005):

<http://qhr.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/15/5/647>

Objectivity and Subjectivity in the Ethnographic Method

Allan Hegelund, Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Frederiksberg, Denmark


 http:
**LINK**

For information about software that you can use in qualitative research, go to:

NVIVO [www.qsrinternational.com](http://www.qsrinternational.com)

MAXqda [www.maxqda.com](http://www.maxqda.com)

ATLAS.ti [www.atlasti.com](http://www.atlasti.com)

This paper tells you about latest advances in online virtual ethnography.

*Sociology*, 43 (4): 685–98 (2009):

<http://soc.sagepub.com/content/43/4/685>

New Avenues for Sociological Inquiry: Evolving Forms of Ethnographic Practice

Laura Robinson, Santa Clara University, and Jeremy Schulz, University of California, Berkeley

**YOUTUBE****What is ethnography? by Penny Harvey**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTyBowGKb0Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTyBowGKb0Q) (truncated 15 minutes)

Full version:

[www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/methods/ethnography/index.shtml](http://www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/methods/ethnography/index.shtml) (43 minutes)

An anthropologist discusses the place of ethnography within her discipline: its history, its theoretical assumptions and its problems.

**What is ethnomethodology? by Wes Sharrock**

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jrONEDuaS4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jrONEDuaS4) (truncated 15 minutes)

Full version:

[www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/methods/ethnomethodology/index.shtml](http://www.methods.manchester.ac.uk/methods/ethnomethodology/index.shtml) (47 minutes)

A philosophical and historical treatment of ethnomethodology, covering the work of Garfinkel and Sacks, and moving on to conversation analysis.