

Objectivity and Research Ethics in Participant Observation

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KEYWORDS Covert. Objectivity/Subjectivity. Participant Observation. Qualitative Research. Research Ethics

ABSTRACT Objectivity of the field research has been one of the most debated issues of qualitative research. Two important aspects of fieldwork-subjectivity and research ethics are discussed in this paper through the context of participant observation. Main argument of this paper is that objectivity is not a necessity when attempting to understand dynamics of societies and individuals, because the nature of humanity is based on social constructions, and subjective perspectives can only be bettered to an extent through adapting critical realism while in the field. Furthermore, it is argued that when the researcher has nativity to the group they are observing, this is not necessarily a disadvantage and this subjectivity can even contribute to the research. These arguments are enriched through various examples including examples from William Foot Whyte's Street Corner Society.