

Book Review - Projects in Ethnographic Research (Michael V Angrosino)

Projects in Ethnographic Research by Michael V Angrosino is a brief and practical guide to ethnographic studies. Professor Angrosino begins by defining his subject, ethnography, which includes the Greek words *ethnos* (people) and *graphos* (to draw), forming a picture or description of the people. He also makes the point that unlike in other fields, ethnographers are participants as well as observers in their study, themselves forming the primary instrument of research. Ethnographic research occurs in the field rather than in a clinic or laboratory, requires personal contact between researchers and the study community, seeks the perspectives of those in that community, generates data to build theories, and seeks to understand the context as well as the content of behavior. Selecting a site is an important practical consideration, based on what is practical to answer the research question that the investigator is trying to answer. Ethnographers must learn to observe, rather than ignore, and make useful notes on what they see. The ethnographic interview is an indispensable tool to gain information, and includes exploratory interviews (life history and open questions of key informants) as well as semi-structured interviews (surveys from a representative sample). Records and other archived materials allow the researcher to fill in gaps in stories and understand the context of people's answers. Finally, ethnographers must summarize their findings, answering the initial research question that they asked, and craft their report to meet the needs of their stakeholders, whether academia or the general public.

From a missions perspective, *Projects in Ethnographic Research* is the kind of book that you put into your backpack to remind yourself of the key points that you need to know as you encounter a new culture. It is small, light, and a quick read. While not comprehensive enough

to teach ethnography by itself, Angrosino's text is a good companion for those who know the basics but need to be reminded from time to time. It is also just the ticket for a missionary field researcher who needs a broad overview of a culture and needs the results fast.