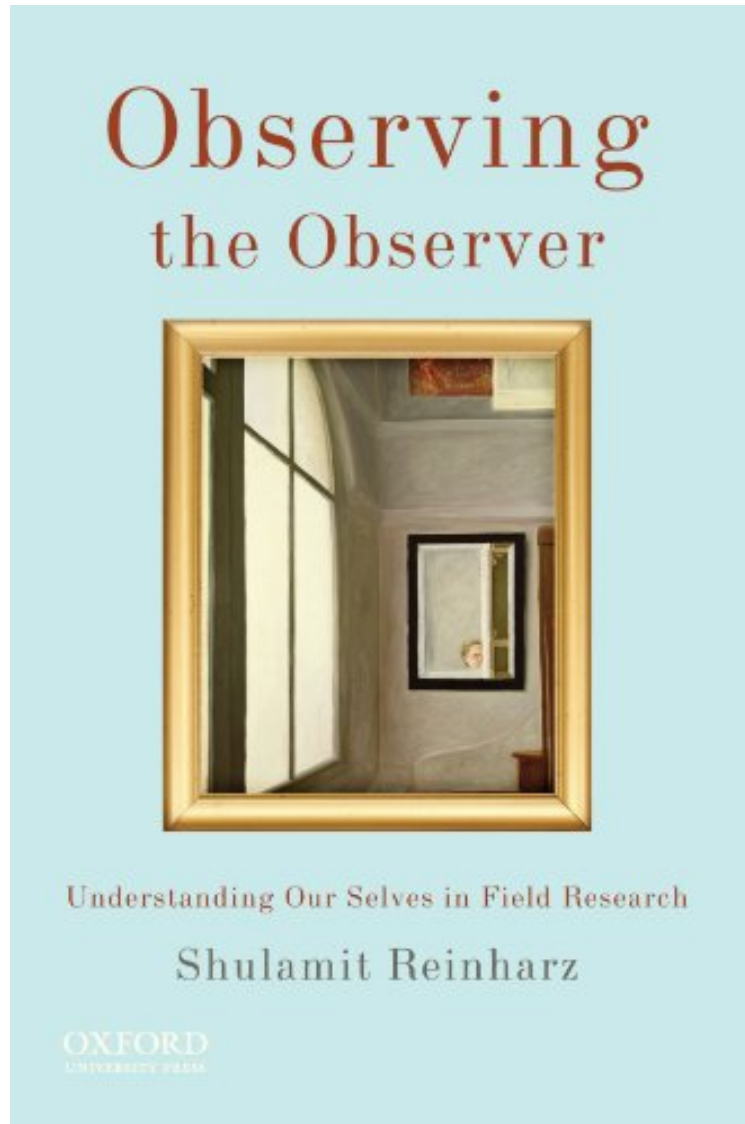


(Free) Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research

# Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research

*Shulamit Reinharz*

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**Shulamit Reinharz : Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research By Louise Social researchers who do fieldwork, students who aspire to do fieldwork, and anyone interested in

ethnography are very fortunate to now have available Shulamit Reinharz's *Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research*. Based on her year-long participant-observation research on aging in a kibbutz in Israel, what most sets this book apart from other fieldwork literature is Reinharz's persuasive evidence that the "deep immersion in another social world compels the researcher to reexamine himself/herself and perhaps to change." Her unique attention to reflexivity in this context provides a framework for understanding the researcher in the fieldwork setting that builds on the notions of change and emergence. Woven throughout the book in ways that draw the reader into the research process, this attention is one among many treasures to be gleaned from the significant and welcome contributions *Observing the Observer* makes to the "field" and to feminist qualitative methodology. Louise Lopman, Ph.D.

Ethnography or participant observation research has been performed since the early nineteenth century and is now one of the most common ways for field researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of social life. In *Observing the Observer: Understanding Our Selves in Field Research*--the only book that covers the issue of "reflexivity" in field research--author Shulamit Reinharz provides a captivating analysis of her yearlong stay in Israel, where she engaged in a study of aging on a kibbutz. Exploring the issue of "reflexivity," this unique volume focuses on the key tool in fieldwork--the self. It discusses how the many facets of the self (or "selves") of a researcher--research selves, personal selves, and situational selves--can affect how research is enacted and reported on. The book addresses many of the current debates on fieldwork, especially those that have arisen in the feminist literature. Ideal for graduate courses in qualitative research methods, ethnographic methods, or ethnography, *Observing the Observer* can also be used in upper-level undergraduate courses on qualitative methods.

"*Observing the Observer* makes an important contribution to the literature on social science methodology by focusing on the process of conducting field research and how this process shapes our findings (and ourselves). The book fills an important gap in this literature by not only highlighting various nuts-and-bolts aspects of carrying out field research but also by bringing in a personal perspective on the process."--Melanie Cammett, Harvard University "Several sections are quite unique to the literature on qualitative research (i.e., the sections on motherhood and fieldwork and on absent selves) and will make a significant and very useful contribution. The book raises issues that are not addressed in any other methodological text I have seen. I think it would create rich discussion and ultimately be helpful for doctoral students preparing to embark upon ethnographic projects."--Cynthia Miller-Idriss, New York University "Observing the Observer is the best discussion of the self in fieldwork that I have read, without a doubt."--Linda Grant, University of Georgia About the Author Shula Reinharz is Jacob Potofsky Professor of Sociology at Brandeis. She is also Founding Director of the Women's Studies Research Center and Founding Director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute. Dr. Reinharz is the author or coauthor of several books, including *Feminist Methods in Social Research* (OUP, 1992).