

Anthropological research: the structure of inquiry

Pertti J, Peltto, author

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Abstrak

This text is a comprehensive introduction to research methods in social and cultural anthropology. The Peltos focus their discussion on the essential elements of preparing and analyzing the supporting evidence from which generalizations about human nature are derived. The specific elements of anthropological research - such as interviewing informants, observing ceremonial behaviour, and designing surveys - are all covered, but the primary aim is to show how basic observations can be systematically translated into socio-cultural generalizations. The authors place strong emphasis not only on quantification and statistics, but also on the more qualitative aspects of anthropological working styles that are essential to effective research. The two main themes of the book can be stated as follows: (1) anthropological generalizations and more complex theoretical structures can be built up only through careful implementation of basic concepts, the building blocks of all theory, and (2) successful description and hypothesis testing depend on the judicious mixing of quantitative and qualitative research materials. The second edition, in which Professor Gretel Peltto has collaborated with her husband, expands the discussion of tools of research and offers a more comprehensive analysis of current ideas concerning the 'theory-building' process. An entirely new chapter has been added on the research methods and relevance of applied anthropology. Throughout the text, many new and updated examples are cited to illustrate statistical and methodological approaches to anthropological research.