

# What is Ethnography?

- Defined as:
  - a method of observing human interactions in social settings and activities (Burke & Kirk, 2001)
  - as the observation of people in their 'cultural context'
  - the study and systematic recording of human cultures; *also* : a descriptive work produced from such research (Merriam-Webster Online)
- Rather than *studying* people from the outside, you *learn from* people from the inside

# Ethnographic Research



- Ethno -- folk; graphy -- description;
- Ethnography – partial or full description of a group
- Researcher becomes part of the group he/she studies
- Derived from the field of Anthropology-study of man kind
- No preset limitation of what will be observed
- No end point as it is a continuous process



# What is ethnography?

Ethnography....

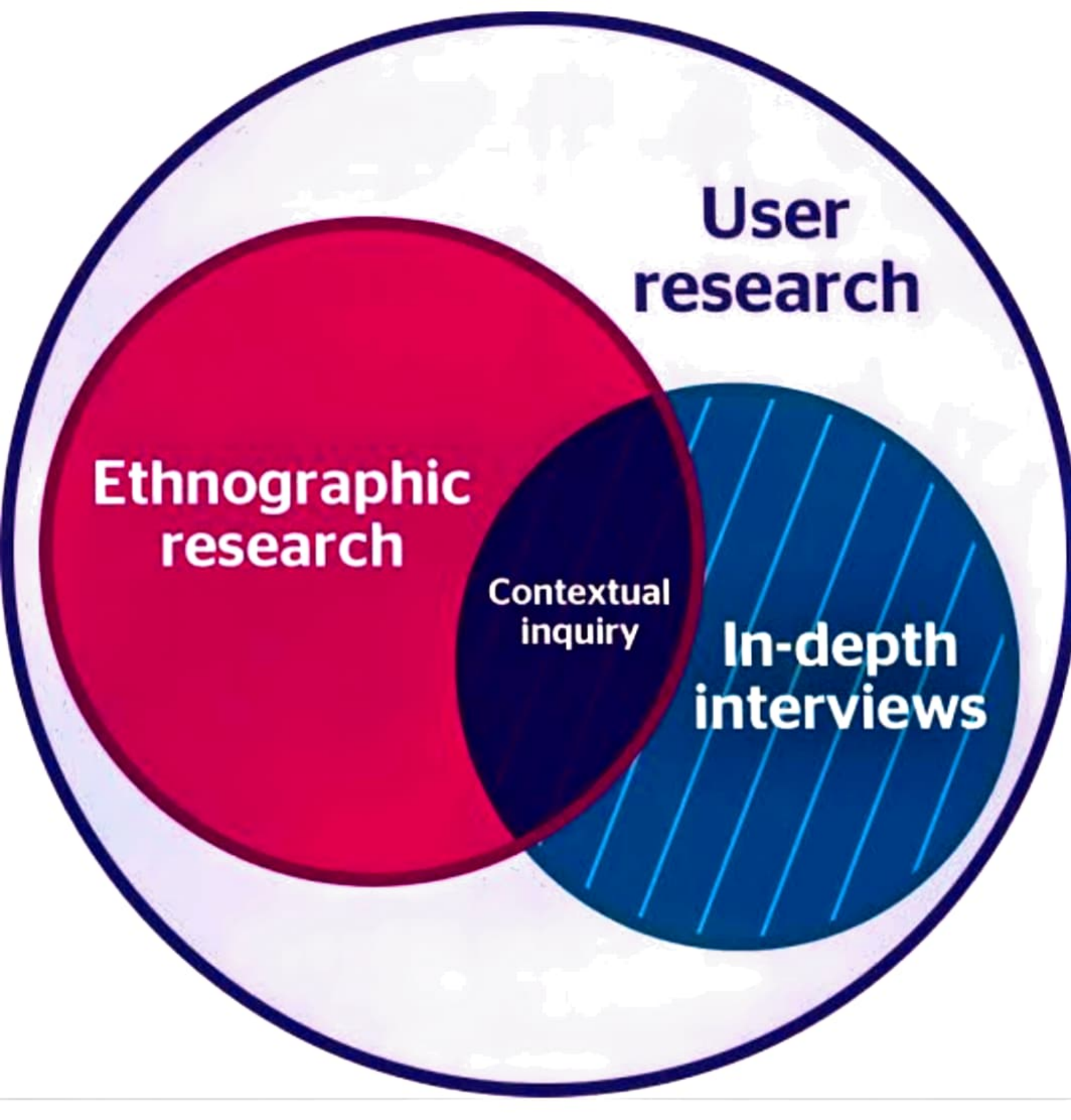
Qualitative research design

Studies the culture (values, beliefs, behaviors, language) of a distinct group within society

The distinct group of people have usually been together over an extended period of time, having similar beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, language

Ethnographic research originates from anthropology/  
sociology

4:27



**User  
research**

**Ethnographic  
research**

**Contextual  
inquiry**

**In-depth  
interviews**

# Ethnographic Research

- Ethnographic fieldwork was developed originally by anthropologists to study a society, culture or group in depth.
- The approach depended heavily on observation and in some cases integration into the society.
- Participant observation enables researchers to share the experience of their subjects.





# Research Methodology

- There are many facets to researching a new culture or cultural practice that the ethnography will use:
  - Acceptance
  - Participant Observant
  - Key Consultants
  - Quantitative & Qualitative Data
  - Interviewing
  - Mapping
  - Photography & Filming



# Participant Observation

- o The most significant aspect of ethnographic research is **participant observation**. A research method in which one learns about a group's beliefs and behaviors through social participation and personal observation within the community, as well as interviews and discussion with individual members of the group over an extended stay in the community.



# Challenges of Ethnography

- Social & political challenges typically include but are not limited too:
  - The need to gain acceptance within the community.
  - Issues involving the researchers age, skin color, ethnicity, religion, or gender.
  - Being the center of rivaling groups while trying to maintain a neutral position.



# Ethnography

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graph TD; PO[Participant Observation] --> FN[FIELD NOTES]; II[Informal Interviews] --> FN; FI[Formal Interviews] --> T[TRANSCRIPTS]; CT[Collecting Texts] --> DA[DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS]; CI[Collecting Images] --> DA;
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**Participant  
Observation**

**Informal  
Interviews**

**Collecting  
Texts**

**Formal  
Interviews**

**Collecting  
Images**

**FIELD  
NOTES**

**TRANSCRIPTS**

**DOCUMENTARY  
ANALYSIS**



# Components of Cultural Anthropology

There are two main components in Cultural Anthropology

1. **Ethnography** -A detailed description of a particular culture primarily based on fieldwork.
2. **Ethnology** -The study and analysis of different cultures from a comparative point of view.

Each taking place in various areas throughout the world from postindustrial societies to small communities.