

## Review:

**Liz Przybylski. 2020. *Hybrid Ethnography: Online, Offline, and In Between*. SAGE Publications, Inc.**

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### *Abstract*

As social media proliferates globally, affecting over half the world's population, ethnographic research must adapt to evolving modes of communication and representation. Liz Przybylski's book *Hybrid Ethnography: Online, Offline, and In Between* offers an accessible, practical guide to hybrid ethnography spanning both digital and physical spaces. Covering project formulation, research ethics, site selection, data collection, analysis, and writing, the book draws on the author's experience studying hip-hop culture across the United States and Canada. Key strengths highlighted include the continuous focus on ethical considerations and the book's utility for researchers at all stages. The modular chapter design also allows for targeted consultation by researchers. Overall, this timely volume serves as an essential, durable guide for ethnographers navigating an increasingly digitized social landscape where subjects have greater control over self-representation. It receives an enthusiastic recommendation for students and scholars alike.

### *Keywords*

*Methods, Hybrid Fieldwork, Hybrid Ethnography, Online, Offline*

As of the beginning of 2023, the global social media usage rate stood at almost sixty percent. It is fair to say that social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok affect most of us in some way. For researchers, it might increase accessibility to interlocuters, but it also creates a shift in the control of the descriptions. The “subjects” are no longer passive entities. They have the means and power to present their own stories and perspectives faster and quicker than ever. This development also challenges the researchers’ traditional authority over representation. As the social media age redefines how stories are shared, made, and perceived it becomes crucial for researchers to navigate this new socially connected era. In this ever-hanging landscape, *Hybrid Ethnography: Online, Offline, and In Between* emerges as a welcomed guide.

Written by Liz Przybylski an interdisciplinary scholar engaged in, among other things, popular music studies focused mainly on hip-hop culture in United States and Canada. When working on her dissertation project she realized she had few sources at hand to guide her work. This prompted her to write this well-timed methods book that stands firm on her experiences, focusing on issues that arise in present-day online and offline research. The book has been written accessibly for researchers. Penned in a straightforward and sharp language across ten snappy chapters, Przybylski gives the reader a hands-on guide to the practicalities of theory-based hybrid research methodology, as well as the tricks of the trade of a seasoned hybrid ethnographer. Each chapter includes brief summaries and up-to-date reading recommendations which adds to the accessibility of the book.

*Chapter 1* deals with the basics, presenting hybrid fieldwork and how to formulate research questions. It addresses practical and theoretical aspects and offers strategies for developing projects that incorporate both digital and physical ethnography. In *Chapter 2* the author dives into research ethics, providing essential project design guidance, especially for institutional review board applications. Przybylski also discusses professional standards beyond formal regulations and highlights responsible research conduct. *Chapter 3* deals with research site selection and preparation, recommending researchers to engage in reflexive practices by considering “Where are you?” and “Who are you?” The chapter also includes nifty exercises focusing on specific research

projects. With the table set by the first three chapters, laying out the essential utensils of ethics and preparation, the remaining chapters serve up the main course and deal with the practical ins and outs of conducting fieldwork.

*Chapter 4* offers strategies for data collection across online and face-to-face environments and *Chapter 5* suggests methods for interpreting initial experiences and refining research questions. *Chapter 6* focuses on documenting expressive culture, detailing techniques for photo, audio, and video recording, both created by the research and participant-generated. *Chapter 7* shifts focus to the art of conducting interviews and online surveys, whereas *Chapter 8* lays out the analytical process, enriched with insights from Przybylski own field research between the United States and Canada. *Chapter 9* covers the writing process, from analysis to presenting findings. It offers valuable advice on academic publishing and public dissemination. Lastly, *Chapter 10* contains the conclusion. It serves as both a reflection and a guide for staying dexterous as the terrain of fieldwork continually shifts. The design of the book, where each chapter stands as independent units, acknowledges that research is often a non-linear process. It allows readers to jump between chapters, enabling targeted consultation. I have found the exercises sprinkled throughout the book to be especially beneficial for structuring my thoughts regarding the subject matter of each chapter.

One of the book's greatest strengths, which resonates with my own experience when doing hybrid research, is its continuous focus on research ethics from the early chapters and onwards. This underscores the importance of ethical considerations in all stages of the research process, which is particularly relevant in the complex settings of hybrid ethnography.

In conclusion, the book is an essential and practical guide to the rapidly evolving topography of ethnographic research. From my first encounter with this book, it has become my staple recommendation to students at all stages of their academic adventures as well as to my fellow colleagues. It should come as no surprise that I find *Hybrid Ethnography: Online, Offline, and In Between* to be an invaluable research companion, not least because, as Liz Przybylski writes in the conclusion of the book, "the hybrid field is not going away."