

# Non-Participant Observation

**Introduction:** Non-participant observation is a research technique whereby the researcher watches the subjects of his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under scrutiny. ([www.encyclopedia.com](http://www.encyclopedia.com), 2017)

Did you know?

This approach is sometimes criticized on the grounds that the very fact of their being observed may lead people to behave differently.

In this type of research, the participant observes and does not take part in what is going on. The aim is for the researcher abstains his/herself from the social settings

## Participant versus Non-participant

- **Participant observation:** the researcher/observer joins a group and observes their activities, while at the same time taking care to observe what is going on
- **Non-participant observation:** the researcher/observer simply observes the activities, but doesn't take part in them

The diagram above provides a comparison between participant and non-participant observation

The video below describes the types of observation and the advantages and disadvantages of observation which can be applied to non-participant observation.

<https://www.slideshare.net/yohanyanieaxel/observation-in-research?ref=https://notesmaster.com/en/group/caribbean/1556-cape-covid19-support/25341-methods-of-enquiry-non-participant-observation>