

**Participation, Involvement, and Application in the Field of Ethnological Research, Museums, and Cultural Heritage**  
**Tytti Lehtovaara**

Hanneleena Hieta, Karri Kiiskinen, Maija Mäki, Päivi Roivainen, and Ann-Helen Sund (eds.) 2019. *Liikettä rajapinnoilla. Keskusteluja etnologian osallistavuudesta. Rörelser och gränssytor – Etnologiska diskussioner om samverkan*. [Movement in the interfaces. Discussions on participatory nature in ethnology]. Helsinki: Association of Finnish Ethnologists Ethnos. Ethnos publication 21. Turku: University of Turku. Scripta Aboensia 6. 398 pp. ISBN 978-952-68509-4-8 ISSN 0357-511X.

The book *Liikettä rajapinnoilla* is based on the IX Ethnology Days, which focused on cultural understanding and dialogue. The topics of the conference focused on how to create dialogue and how to participate in social debates. These questions are also discussed in the book through the themes of participation, involvement, and application in research and museum work, as well as that of sharing research knowledge. Indeed, these themes have been discussed in the fields of research, museums, and cultural heritage for some time.

The book presents the themes of participation, involvement, and application in the field of ethnological research, museums, and cultural heritage extensively, diversely, and with practical examples. It also demonstrates various opportunities and challenges that arise in the processes of knowledge production. The editors of this collection of articles recommend the book to researchers and students in the field of ethnology, museum professionals, and those interested in applying science. *Liikettä rajapinnoilla* is divided into two sections and both sections have their own introductory chapter, and the book includes altogether 10 articles. The article collection is bilingual: the majority of the texts are in Finnish and one in Swedish. The collection contains practical examples, and the articles include photographs and tables illustrating relevant facts and results.

The first section is titled “Research: participation, involvement, and application” (Tutkimus: osallistuminen, osallistavuus ja soveltavuus). Karri Kiiskinen and Hanneleena Hieta lead the reader to the first part by introducing the meanings of participation, involvement, and application in this context. These three topics are the main concepts of this book and the contents and examples of the articles in the book open them up more for the reader. In this book review, I will highlight different examples of each theme. For example, how local people have been involved in data collection, how the researcher has

involved his or her own body in the research, or how data collection, analyzing, or research material have been applied.

The following article (Steel & Koskinen-Koivisto) focuses on the relevance and usefulness of participatory research. The authors introduce the topic through their own research, in which the relationship between the participants and researchers could even be described as a partnership. In their article, they also emphasize the involvement of the participants in all phases of the research. After this, Karri Kiiskinen studies the relationship between the body and environment in his article. Moreover, he examines how technology can help data collection and show patterns and rhythms in research material. He also considers how an experience and understanding of space is formed. In his article, he explains how he has involved himself as a researcher and how he cycled in a couple of different places in Europe and collected material at the same time. One of the articles (Lehtonen) in the first section focuses on the daily life of dogs. Lehtonen examines what one should pay attention to when studying dogs or animals. He also observes the relationships between humans and dogs. At the end of the article, Lehtonen considers how this knowledge could be used in the future when working with guide dogs. In his article, Lehtonen also discusses how to apply cultural and future research together.

The second part, titled “Sharing: silos of information and routes of reciprocity” (Jakaminen: tiedon siilot ja vastavuoroisuuden väylät), starts with an introduction into what is meant by authority, effectiveness, and interaction in the field of museums and cultural heritage (Mäki & Roivainen). The authors also highlight the power of relationships, which are also part of the cultural heritage process. The following article (Ahmas) deals with collective knowledge production and open and closed expertise in museums. The museum project examined in the article involved local people, who shared memories and experiences of their home area. Ahmas also looks at the prerequisites, challenges, and changes that her research brought to the museum professionals. One of the articles (Mäki & Schwartz) presents a new way of doing genealogy. In this article, the authors approach genealogy with ethnographic methods; for example, they did interviews and collected drawings and maps. They were interested in collecting participant stories and experiences from their own family. In her article, Anna-Mari Immonen writes about a museum object, a knitted sweater known as *Ruhnust*. Immonen is interested in what kinds of encounters the sweater has experienced in its lifetime. According to Immonen, the sweater has met professionals from both fields, i.e. researchers and artisans.

The scope of the book is comprehensive because it deals with three different fields: research, museums, and cultural heritage. When I started to read the book, I was somewhat confused and did not immediately understand what

the focus of the articles was. From the reader's perspective, it was challenging to address the diversity and magnitude of the book's topics. The titles of the book, the two sections, and the articles also appeared slightly mysterious. When I continued reading the book, the article titles and the main idea began to come clearer. Because I got more explanations of what is meant by the name of the book *Movement in the interfaces, Discussions on participatory nature in ethnology*. I also began to realize that there are many different interfaces to navigate and I realized that there are many conversations as well as ways to participate. However, the articles are well written, and the content is topical. It was also interesting to read professional descriptions of practical examples.

I was more familiar with the themes of the first part of the book, because I work in the research field. The articles in the first part made me think that many ethnological studies are participatory, involving, or/and applied, which the authors of the book state as well. "Applied" is also an interesting term, because ethnological researchers do not usually repeat the research done by previous researchers. Each researcher and research group selects methods that help to answer their particular research question. This raises the question of what the authors mean by "applied" in the context of this book. One example of it is researchers collecting data in unusual ways; for example, the study by Mäki and Schwartz in which they collected family stories as genealogical material. I felt that I learnt more and new information from the second part of this book. It was interesting to learn how they work on, produce, and publish collected material in the practical field of museums and heritage.

This book showed how we have an enormous and unique level of professionalism, knowledge, and understanding in field of ethnological research, museums, and cultural heritage. This knowledge concerns, for example, the relationship between humans and the environment, animals, genealogies, or matter. I think that we should share this unique knowledge even more outside our field. In this book, Kristina Ahmas's article "When the ivory tower crumbles, an information community emerges" (Tietoyhteisö rakentuu, kun norsunluutorni murenee) addresses this theme very well. A good example of this is the point I wrote earlier in Ahma's article, where she discussed open and closed expertise and how it can be utilized and shared, for example, in a museum context.

One of themes in this book is also how we share research results and knowledge. I would like to hear more about this subject. I think that we ethnologists, anthropologists, and museum and cultural heritage professionals should think more about how we could be even more involved in academic and non-academic communities. In addition, we should consider how we could involve them in developing the publication and dissemination of research knowledge.

In the future, I would like to see more research on the academic community itself: for example, on how we work and what we think about how we share research knowledge. When we reflect on our own actions and working habits and obtain new research data on that, we can begin to develop even more open and inclusive knowledge and explore new pathways and places to share this unique cultural knowledge that we have.

**AUTHOR**

Tytti Lehtovaara, MA, PhD Student of Ethnology and Anthropology, University of Jyväskylä. Currently she studies women's cultural dress and consumption choices.