



Chapter 4: Appendix B

Worksheet With Assignment for Observation

The purpose of this assignment is to get more practice in making observations and taking notes in a setting with relatively easy access but which is complex enough to have different things going on at the same time.

You will begin to learn

- to analyze the raw material you have collected in terms of culture and social organization.
- to collect and use adequate evidence for the inferences, hunches, and assertions you make from your observations.

Location

You should go to a place where you can observe unobtrusively and where you will not feel odd or awkward. It can be a park, shop, restaurant, coffee shop, supermarket, etc.

Procedure

1. Go to your chosen location. Spend about half an hour to an hour there, depending on how much is happening. You could stop when nothing new appears to be going on.
2. See what you can see, hear and learn by just hanging around. Do not formally interview anyone. In your notes, however, try to indicate questions that occur to you that you feel cannot be answered without interviewing people. What limitations did this cause?
3. If you can take notes unobtrusively while you are there, fine. If you think it is too difficult to do so, write down everything you can remember as soon as possible. This means within a couple of hours: If you leave it much later, or even until the next day, you will inevitably find that you have forgotten large chunks. It is essential that you note the time, date, etc. of your visit.
4. Look through your notes a few times. Make a note of any further thoughts you may have on your material.
5. Draw a quick map of your chosen location, clearly labeling the major objects and areas of activity.

Other Things to Think About

- Identifying typical routines of activity.
- Anything that strikes you as unusual: How do you make sense of it?
- Do you see any inappropriate/unacceptable behavior? How do other participants deal with it?

(Adapted from Roberts et al., 2001, p. 124)