FIELDWORK

Observing the Uses of Public Space

Choose a space that offers some possibility for the kind of observation, description, and analysis that you have been reading about throughout this chapter. To some extent, all of the writers focus on the use of public space and what certain spaces are designed for. John Fiske, for example, suggests that even though a mall might be designed to bring more people to stores to buy more goods, people go to malls for different reasons. Some are not at all interested in buying, but they are interested in the space. Mike Davis and Murphy Davis each suggest that urban planning (the design of public space) can reflect the extent to which race, class, and income level inform public policy decisions about urban space. Jane Jacobs uses her observations of sidewalk culture to discover that when city planners try to "clear out" a public space, they also change the way people use that space, often making it more dangerous or less friendly.

To find out more about how a space is used, spend time watching to see who goes there and what they do once they are there. Make several visits to the same place and get as much information as possible.

Mapping the Space

When you begin your observation, sketch a map of the space. Note the layout of the place. Where do groups of people gather? Do different groups (teens, senior citizens, serious shoppers, etc.) tend to congregate in certain places? Make a note of that on your map.

Taking Notes

As you begin this project, you probably will not have a clear focus for your notes. Look back at the notebook entry you wrote as a starting point for your observations; however, your questions and concerns will likely change as you watch. Your notes may seem random at first. It takes practice to get used to noting the kinds of things that happen daily that you don't notice or take for granted, so make several visits. Comparing your notes with others will help you to get distance on what you are recording. However, even at the beginning, you can focus on simple things: What does the space look like? Who uses it? What are they doing there?

Watching People

Record who comes to the space. Note age, gender, ethnicity, appearance, and whether they are alone or with others.

Note how people seem to be using this space. In a mall, for example, are teens actually the "tricksters" who know the rules only to invert or mock them, as Fiske claims? How else might their activity be described? Fast food restaurants are designed so that people get their food and, presumably, eat it quickly and get out. Is that how everyone uses this kind of space? How else might these spaces function for people in ways other than those for which they are designed by developers?

Asking Questions

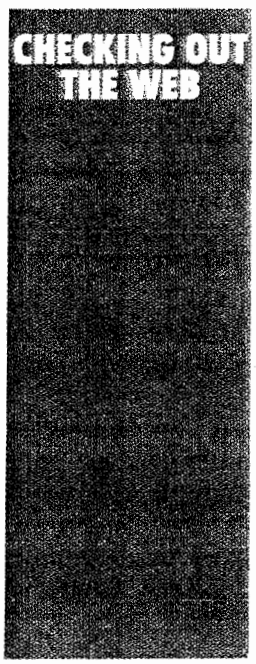
Although your primary job will be to watch and to take notes, you will find out even more if you ask questions. Ask people how often they come to the space, when, and why. Ask owners, business people, or caretakers what they think the space is meant for and how many of them actually use it for that purpose.

Writing Up Your Findings

When you have completed your observations, you will discover that what you write will depend on what you would like to emphasize from your findings. Your paper might look more like an interpretation of space and the way it is used (in the way Fiske or Davis or Jacobs write), or it might look more like a report on what you have found.

If you write your findings as an interpretive essay, review several of the essays in this chapter. Each gives both a strong sense of place and a reflection on what the place means to the people who live there or use it. Many include first-person impressions or feelings but ground those impressions in information about the way the place is used, developed, or designed. It is easy, in this type of essay, to forget about the observation notes that you have taken and to fall back on your own impressions. However, your impressions will be more convincing when they are tied to the fieldwork that you have done for this project.

If you are writing a report, review instructions on writing a report in the fieldwork assignment in Chapter 3, Schooling. A report should fall into the typical report pattern: Introduction, Methods, Observations.



1. When most people think about shopping malls, they naturally think of the kind of place John Fiske writes about—an enclosed space containing department stores and several smaller stores where they go to shop or hang out or to get out of the weather. However, with increased use of Internet technology, virtual malls are now being created. Explore the Web for one of those virtual malls and consider how the entire concept of "mall" changes when the space it occupies is electronic. Use a search engine such as Yahoo or Lycos—entering the words "virtual + mall" yielded 538 sites, proving that there are many sites that consider themselves virtual malls. What would you say constitutes a "mall" space, virtual or not?

2. Since the publication of the two articles in the Perspectives section, discussion has continued about what to do with the space left behind by the World Trade Center attack. Using a search engine in one of the major newspapers or magazines such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Nation*, or *Time Magazine*, for example, search for stories on the Ground Zero memorial. Write

FIELDWORK

Classroom Observation

Most students know that being successful in school means understanding what teachers value and what they expect from students. This is sometimes called "psyching out" a teacher, and students learn to be good at it. They do this by evaluating the formal requirements of the course (e.g., reading assignments, labs, homework, tests, papers), by observing what takes place in the classroom (e.g., lectures, discussion, films, group work), and by learning the teacher's personality and eccentricities.

The purpose of this project is to investigate what it takes to be successful in a course in which you are enrolled and to draw some conclusions about the nature of teaching and learning. The method used is participant/observation. You are asked, in effect, to observe yourself, your teacher, and other students and to take detailed notes on what you do in and out of class.

Several weeks will be needed for this project so that you can accumulate a sufficient amount of entries in your field log to make your observations reliable and conclusions possible.

Field Log

As a participant–observer, you need to keep a field log on the classes; reading assignments; papers; exams; sections or labs, if pertinent; study groups; and informal conversations outside of class.

Background

When you start this project, write a statement that summarizes what you know about the course at this time. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. *Why are you taking the class?* To fulfill a requirement, for personal interest, for some other motivation?
2. *Read the syllabus:* How does it describe the content of the course and what you will learn? What are the assignments? How will the course grade be determined?
3. *Describe the format of the class:* What size is the class? In what kind of room does it meet? Does it look like it will be mostly lecture, discussion, a combination of the two, something else? Keep track of attendance patterns. Note where students sit to see if patterns develop.
4. *From what you can tell so far, what will you need to do to get the grade you want?*

Field Notes

Field notes consist of the observations you record during and outside of class. Use these questions:

1. *Where do you sit in class?* Why?
2. *How do you actually spend your time in class?* Taking notes, doodling, engaging in class discussion, looking around, writing notes to other students, day-

dreaming, talking to other students, working on something for another class, reading a newspaper or magazine?

3. *What does the teacher do in class?* Is it the same thing every day or does it change? How does the teacher run the class? Do individual class meetings have a routine format? Is there a set schedule (e.g., lecture Monday, discussion Wednesday, film Friday)? Who talks?
4. *What do other students do?*
5. *What do you do outside of class?* Keep track of the time devoted to various activities: reading assignments, reviewing or rewriting notes, studying for tests (alone or with others), attending lab sessions or section meetings, doing research, writing papers, meeting with the teacher or assistant, talking informally with other students about the class, and so on.

Analysis

Review your notes and look for patterns and key points. Here are some questions to consider:

1. *Compare what you know now about the course with what you wrote earlier on in your field log:* Have your responses changed? Does the course syllabus give an accurate forecast of what to expect, or have you become aware in other ways of the "real" requirements of the class? Have you changed your mind about the grade you think you might get?
2. *What kinds of patterns emerge from notes on what you do in class?* Do you do the same thing in every class, or does your activity vary? Have you changed what you do in class consciously? If so, why?
3. *Has the work returned to you so far (homework, tests, quizzes, papers, etc.) confirmed or revised what you thought it would take to do well in the course?* What have you learned about the teacher's expectations and preferences?
4. *How does the work you do outside of class figure in?* Could you skip class and still do well? Do you do all the work or only certain assignments? Do you have a system for deciding what to do and not do? If so, how did you develop it? Do you meet with or talk to the teacher, the teaching assistant, or other students about the class?
5. *What patterns emerge from your observations of other students?*
6. *What are the main differences and similarities in the courses you have observed?* What is their significance?

Writing the Report

For this project, use a version of the standard format for reports.

Introduction

Explain what you are investigating and the purpose of your research. Identify the class you observed, its enrollment, usual attendance, course requirements, and any other pertinent information. It can help readers to summarize this information in a diagram that accompanies your Introduction. (See Table 3.1.)

TABLE 3.1

DESCRIPTIONS OF COURSES OBSERVED

STUDENT	COURSE TITLE	ENROLLMENT AND % USUAL ATTENDANCE	COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THEM (MC = MULTIPLE CHOICE)
Worth	Anthropology	90 (60%)	Pass 2 MC midterms = take notes, attend, study notes; 1-pg. extra credit paper.
	Common Medicines	150 (90%)	2 MC tests: drug names, uses = memorize, memorize; good notes are critical; final cramming will not do here.
	International Studies: Africa	55 (90%)	4 short ans. tests; 6-pg. paper. Study ugly stuff like population distribution.
	Art History	100 (95%)	Midterm and Final, both essay. Memorize names and dates; concepts not a problem.
Cynthia	Anthropology	76 (60%)	Read for weekly quizzes, watch films, pass MC midterm and final. 1-pg. book review for extra credit.
	Intellectual Trad. of the West (Medieval)	25 (90%)	Write 4 papers, essay midterm and final. Read, attend.
	Sociology	400 (50%)	3 MC tests. Read, take notes, watch films.
Alycia	Intellectual Trad. of the West (Medieval)	25 (80%)	1 paper; midterm, final with take-home essay. 150–200 pp./wk. reading.
	Critical Literature	22 (60–75%)	3 papers; response ¶s. 15–60 min. reading/night to practice analyzing.
	Law	20 (95%)	10 1-page papers; research on topic about church and state.
John	Astronomy	105 (60%)	MC tests. Attend, read text, extra credit for 1000-word report.
	Psychology	155 (70–75%)	MC tests. Attend, read text, extra credit for being a subject in dept. experiments.
	Basic Acting II	9 (100%)	Perform 2 scenes, one monologue; attend 3 plays, review 2 of them.
Brandt	Calculus	35 (80%)	Problem sets. Take notes; geometrically interpret concepts; review and keep up.
	Chemistry	450 (70%)	Problems sets and MC test; read to get high grades on tests.
	History of Science	20 (97%)	Essay midterm and final; paper. Take notes & refer to them when reading; research final paper (use Wr. 210 skills); do well on final by catching up.

Method

Explain how you gathered data.

Observations

Summarize key points from your field log to establish patterns and to characterize your participation in the course. (See the sample Observations.)

Conclusions

Derive inferences and generalizations from your observations. (See sample Conclusions.)

OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS FROM "CROSS-CURRICULAR UNDERLIFE: A COLLABORATIVE REPORT ON WAYS WITH ACADEMIC WORDS"

Worth Anderson, Cynthia Best, Alycia Black, John Hurst, Brandt Miller, and Susan Miller

The following Observations and Conclusions come from a longer article written by a group of undergraduates at the University of Utah in an independent study course under the direction of Susan Miller, a faculty member in English and a prominent writing theorist. Following an introductory section, the article consists of observations and conclusions written by the various members of the research group.

SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS

Art History

1 On the first day of class, the professor urged us all to drop, said she was willing to dispense drop cards to everyone, launched into a lecture that filled the time, handed out a syllabus, and reminded us that it was not too late to drop. I promptly named her "Madame Battleaxe."

It got worse. She was the embodiment of objectivist theories: "There are these facts. They constitute Truth. I will speak. You will listen. You will emerge with Truth." She spoke quickly, had some funky uses for the word "sensuous." I take notes very poorly, so I just sat and listened. A friend who sat beside me and played stenographer was frustrated by this, but for me I did better by just listening.

I realized that I was having trouble memorizing dates on pictures, so I went to see her. We got to talking about Charles V, and amazingly, I liked her. She reassured me about the test, and explained how highly she valued coherent writing, composed with an eye to history. I decided that she considered herself a historian, so her audience values would be in that community.

After our meeting, I was far more tolerant of her in class. On the midterm and final I wrote much more than anyone else, and emerged both times with the top grade. Serving up what she wanted worked.

Sociology

5 The teacher basically taught lecture one day—film one day—lecture one day ...I believe that it's good to develop a routine, but not a rut! At first people groaned when they found out we were going to be watching another film. Once the students realized how the class would be taught, they began walking out during the films and lectures. One day I counted twenty-two people who walked out during a film. Later, the students developed a different routine. They would come to class and stay only if there was a film (so they could answer the test questions). But they would leave if the teacher was lecturing because they felt they could get more from reading the book.

The teacher lectured from an outline of key words on the overhead projector. Several people commented that his lectures were hard to follow, but I thought they weren't too difficult because he followed the book. In fact, at times he read straight from it! The professor had the habit of leaning on the lectern while he lectured and placing his hand on his chin. (It almost covered his mouth!) One day I observed, "Five people walked out of the lecture early. I assume from the time that had elapsed that it was after they'd copied the outline. I noticed people who simply copied the outline of key words and then just sat there in a kind of stupor."

In such a large class I noticed diverse student behaviors. One day during the film, as I counted the twelve people who left early, the girl to my left did homework for another class, the guy in front of me ate yogurt, and the guy to my right organized his Franklin Day Planner. I rarely took notes on the films because they were irrelevant, but some people took notes anyway. One girl's notes consisted of "Boring ≫ ≫ ≫ Big Time!"

Calculus

I would go early to hear students discuss assignments and compare solutions to take-home quizzes, but this seemed almost a formality rather than a concern over concepts. When the professor began to work rapidly on the board, the lead flew across my notebook. She may not be exceptionally exciting, but unless you pay attention, you get lost fast. There was only moderate interaction between students and instructor by way of questions. Amazingly few questions are raised about such complex material.

There were several overlapping communities of student interaction in this class. Although it was a small class, there were many students whose names I didn't know, and could barely recognize by sight. I think this was because math is an independent discipline. You only need to interact with a few students to find the right answer. I took notes the whole time. After class, I would talk to students who could explain concepts like double integration a little better than what I had understood.

10 Math is a very sequential subject. When I had had trouble understanding the last assignment, I knew it would only compound with a new one. Today's concepts would be based on what we learned yesterday, which was based on the day before. Students had a tough time when they hadn't been here. Dr. A. covers the new material by relating it to yesterday's material, which makes it easier. Dr. A. becomes a narrator

for the strange mathematical figures that appear on the board.

When Dr. A. explained what kind of questions there would be on tests, she sometimes let us use a "cheat sheet," so we knew it would be hard. I would meet with other students to study.

SAMPLE CONCLUSIONS

A.

In ITW, I learned both on my own and in class. I learned as I read the assignments alone, and then my knowledge was expanded when the professor expounded on the material. Sections of this course are taught by teachers from different disciplines, so students who take more than one part of the sequence learn about ideas and about professors' specific fields. This section was actually "taught." The history professor who taught it connected ideas to historical background. But in Sociology, I learned the most from the text. The instructor's lectures were helpful, but I gained very little from the films. Ironically though, I preferred the films to the lectures. As I wrote one day, "I enjoyed the film simply because I didn't have to listen to another lecture." Anthropology was not "taught." The professor simply spouted facts each day. In considering where the learning occurred here, I've decided I learned most from the text. The films were informative and very helpful, but they were never shown at the right times. I really struggled with the professor's lectures, yet I learned from my notes because that's the only place that certain material was given.

School is a contract between a student and a teacher. Each must share a mutual respect for the other for learning to occur. In my liberal education courses, the teachers were not as concerned about the classes as they should have been. I got the impression that these teachers were being punished. They were bored because the material was so fundamental to their disciplines. But to the students, the material is new. If the professor shows excitement and projects a positive attitude, students will tend to be more interested in learning. Large classes require more effort from both students and teachers.

B.

Generally, the crucial part of learning in any classroom is digging up what the professor expects. I find that all classes require exceptional note-taking and analytical reading. Not all classes "require" attendance; in some I learn more from reading than from going to class. Poorly attended classes are those where the professor reads the text and gives no additional information. Well attended classes are taught by professors who enjoy the subject and make the students feel comfortable with it.

15 Although most of the students' learning must be done outside of class, an attitude toward learning is developed in the classroom. The professor's role is crucial because the students will be as active as the teacher is. Many of my peers say that the average student counts on having at least one "blow-off" class. If a teacher is strict, the students will make greater efforts and follow the teacher's guidelines. If a teacher is dull and doesn't include fun tidbits or allow us to express varying views, the students will find the material dull and difficult to study. But if the professor is excited, encourages us to voice different opinions, and interacts with us, the students will be excited about the subject and have an easier time.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The first image in this grouping depicts a man telling a woman worker, "We never figured you could do a man-size job." What does that statement and the comment that runs at the bottom of the poster—"America's women have met the test!"—suggest about attitudes toward women in the workforce before and after the war? Does the statement suggest gender equality? If so, why might some men think that women should have stepped aside and quit their jobs after the war?
2. Rosie the Riveter became a familiar and well-liked image of the American woman worker in World War II and has since become an icon for women's movements through the twentieth century.

   Consider three versions of the icon:

   - A "Rosie" in a post–World War II poster.
   - A U.S. stamp printed in the year 2000 to commemorate the decade of the 1940s and issued with a series of stamps commemorating each decade of the twentieth century.
   - A 2002 clothing catalogue cover illustration that reproduces Norman Rockwell's original Rosie the Riveter.

   How does the meaning of that image change depending on where, when, and for what purpose it is reproduced?
3. Look at and think about the final two images in this series. What are Gordon Parks and the editors of *Nervy Girl Magazine* saying about "women's work"? Are the two similar? How does Parks's comment seem to differ from *Nervy Girl*'s?

SUGGESTED ASSIGNMENT

Make your own visual—a poster, an illustration, a brochure, a photograph—illustrating the meaning of "women's work" today. As an introduction to or a reflection on your visual, write a commentary explaining what you tried to illustrate and what, in working conditions for women today or in the political or economic climate, made your choices possible or difficult.

FIELDWORK

Reconstructing the Network of a Workplace

In any job you hold, negotiating the workplace involves more than performing the work you were hired to do. You need to understand your coworkers and how they do their jobs, how they relate to each other and to you, how they have established unspoken rules for daily routines and interactions, and where you fit into all of that. As the narrator in Sandra Cisneros's story "The First Job" discovered, the people who have worked at a place for some time seem to know almost automatically how to act, when to speak, when to sit, and when to make sure they are working diligently.

This is what's known as the "social network" established in any job that involves more than two people. Most of these unspoken rules are unique to each work place and are unknown to those on the outside. If, for example, you entered an office, stood in front of what you thought was the receptionist's desk, and felt frustrated

or confused when the person behind the desk pointedly ignored you until you discovered that the receptionist was at the next desk, you probably stumbled onto one of the unspoken rules that has evolved from the social network in that office. Customers often are confused by such networks and, for example, might call the waitress assigned to another area to their table in a restaurant or ask the stocker rather than a sales clerk at a discount store to help them purchase an item. New workers must learn to negotiate these social networks quickly or they are likely to make mistakes in front of the supervisor that veterans in that workplace would never make.

One way that anthropologists have studied the culture of the workplace is to try to understand the social networks established on the job. To do so, they have relied on interviews and on participant-observation studies, such as the one described in the next selection by James Spradley and Brenda Mann.

THE COCKTAIL WAITRESS

James P. Spradley and Brenda J. Mann

James Spradley, a professor of anthropology at MacAlaster College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and Brenda Mann, who has worked as a senior product analyst at Dialog Information Services, spent a year studying the culture of the workplace from the point of view of "cocktail waitresses," as waitresses in bars were still called in 1975 when this study was completed. The selection reprinted below is from *The Cocktail Waitress* and illustrates how workers daily and almost automatically interpret their own workplace so they know who to go to for information, whom to avoid, or what tasks will hang them up.

SUGGESTION FOR READING Spradley and Mann make a clear distinction between the "social structure" that has been established in Brady's bar and the "social network." Underline and annotate those places in the selection where Spradley and Mann provide examples or explanations for each. After you complete your reading, review your annotations and use them to write a short explanation of the difference between the two.

1 Denise moves efficiently through her section, stopping at a few of her tables. "Another round here?" she asks at the first table. They nod their assent and she moves on. "Would you like to order now?" "Two more of the usual here?" She takes orders from four of the tables and heads back to the bar to give them to the bartender. The work is not difficult for her now, but when she first started at Brady's, every night on the job was confusing, frustrating, embarrassing, and exhausting. Now it is just exhausting.

Her first night was chaos. When introduced to the bartender, Mark Brady, he responded with: "Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" Flustered, she shook her head. "He's not going to be one of those kind, is he?" she thought. Then later, following previous instruction, she asked two obviously underaged girls for identification, which they didn't have. As she was asking them to leave Mark called Denise over and told her not to card those two particular girls. Embarrassed, Denise returned to their table, explained they could stay, and took their order. A customer at the bar kept grabbing her every time she came to her station, and tried to engage her in conversation. Not knowing what to do, she just smiled and tried to look busy. She asked one customer what he wanted to drink and he said, "the usual" and she had to ask him what that was. An older man seated at the bar smiled and said, "Hello, Denise," as he put a dollar bill on her tray. Again, she didn't know what to say or do so she just smiled and

walked away, wondering what she had done or was supposed to do to make her worth the dollar. Another customer at a table grabbed her by the waist each time she walked past his table and persistently questioned her: "Are you new here?" "What nights do you work?" "What are you doing after work?" And so went the rest of the evening. It wasn't until several nights later and following similar encounters that she began to sort out and make sense of all this. She began to learn who these people were, what special identities they had in the bar culture, and where each one was located in the social structure of Brady's Bar.

The bartender's initial question, albeit a rather standard come-on, had been a sincere and friendly inquiry. The two girls she carded were *friends of the Brady family* and often drank there despite their young age. The grabby and talkative customer at the bar was Jerry, a *regular customer* and harmless drinker. The dollar tip came from *Mr. Brady,* the patriarch of the business. The man with the hands and persistent questions was a *regular* from the University who had a reputation with the other waitresses as a *hustler* to be avoided. These people were more than just customers, as Denise had initially categorized them. Nor could she personalize them and treat each one as a unique individual. They were different *kinds* of people who came into Brady's, and all required different kinds of services and responses from her.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Social structure is a universal feature of culture. It consists of an organized set of social identities and the expected behavior associated with them. Given the infinite possibilities for organizing people, anthropologists have found it crucial to discover the particular social structure in each society they study. It is often necessary to begin by asking informants for the social identity of specific individuals. "He is a *big man.*" "That's my *mother.*" "She is my *co-wife.*" "He is my *uncle.*" "She is my *sister.*" Then one can go on to examine these categories being used to classify people. A fundamental feature of every social structure is a set of such categories, usually named, for dividing up the social world. In the area of kinship, for example, some societies utilize nearly 100 categories, organizing them in systematic ways for social interaction.

5 When we began our research at Brady's Bar, the various categories of the social structure were not easy to discern. Of course the different activities of waitresses, bartenders, and customers suggested these three groupings, but finer distinctions were often impossible to make without the assistance of informants. At first we thought it would be possible to arrange all the terms for different kinds of people into a single folk taxonomy, much like an anthropologist might do for a set of kinship terms. With this in mind, we began listening, for example, to the way informants talked about customers and asked them specifically, "What are all the different kinds of customers?" This procedure led to a long list of terms, including the following:

girl	regular	cougar
jock	real regular	sweetie
animal	person off street	waitress
bartender	policeman	loner
greaser	party	female
businessman	zoo	drunk
redneck	bore	Johnny
bitch	pig	hands
creep	slob	couple
bastard	hustler	king and
obnoxo	Annie	his court

This list was even more confusing as we checked out the various terms. For example, we asked, "Would a waitress say that a bartender is a kind of customer?" Much to our surprise, the answer was affirmative. Then we discovered that a *regular* could be an *obnoxo* or a *bore,* a *party* could be a *zoo,* a *cougar* was always a *jock,* but a *jock* could also be a *regular* or *person off the street.* Even though it seemed confusing, we knew it was important to the waitresses to make such fine distinctions among types of customers and that they organized all these categories in some way. As our research progressed it became

clear that waitresses operated with several different sets of categories. One appeared to be the basis for the formal social structure of the bar, the others could only be understood in terms of the specific social networks of the waitresses. Let us examine each briefly.

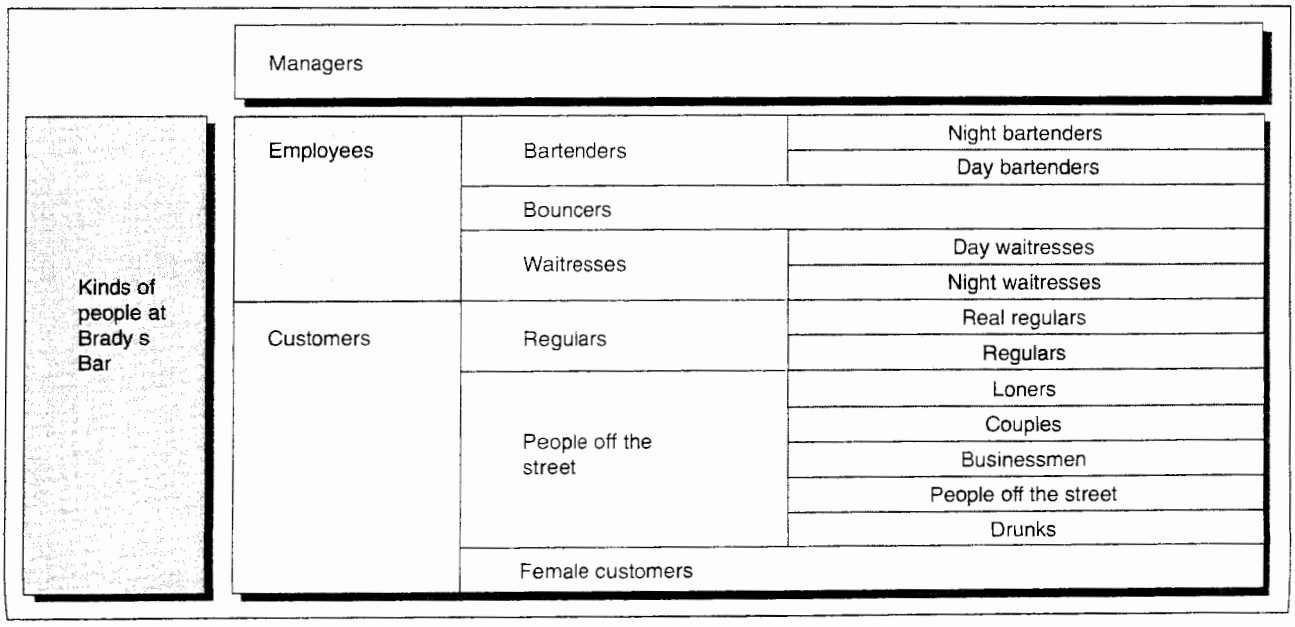
The formal social structure included three major categories of people *customers, employees,* and *managers*. When someone first enters the bar and the waitresses look to see who it is, they quickly identify an individual in terms of one or another category in this formal social structure. The terms used form a folk taxonomy shown in Figure 8.1. Waitresses use these categories to identify who people are, anticipate their behavior, and plan strategies for performing their role.

Although waitresses often learn names and individual identities, it is not necessary. What every girl must know is the category to which people belong. It is essential, for example, to distinguish between a real regular and a person off the street. Both are customers, but both do not receive identical service from her. For example, a waitress should not have to ask a real regular what he's drinking, she should expect some friendly bantering as she waits on him, and she won't be offended if he puts his arm around her waist. A person off the street, however, receives only minimal attention from the waitress. Denise will have to inquire what he or she wants to drink, she won't be interested in spending her time talking with him, and she will be offended if he makes physical advances. It is important that Denise recognize these differences and not confuse the two kinds of customers. Being a good waitress means she can make such important distinctions. Although a knowledge of this formal social structure is essential to waitresses, it is not sufficient for the complexities of social interaction in Brady's Bar. In order to understand the other categories for identifying people and also to see how waitresses use the social structure, we need to examine the nature of *social networks*.

SOCIAL NETWORK

Social network analysis shifts our attention from the social structure as a formal system to the way it is seen through the eyes of individual members, in this case, the cocktail waitresses. Each waitress is at the center of several social networks.

FIGURE 8.1

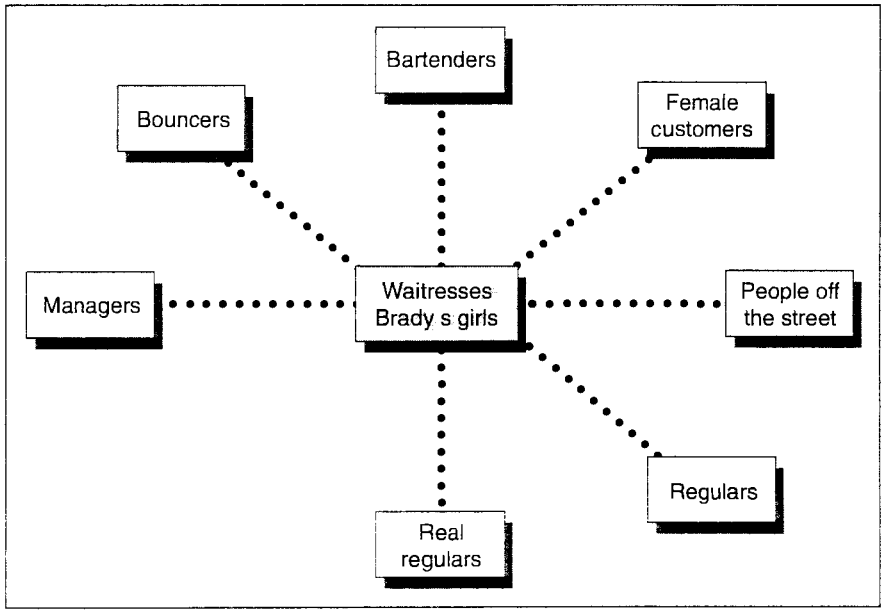


[See Figure 8.2] Some link her to specific individuals in the bar; other networks have strands that run outside the bar to college professors, roommates, friends, and parents. In addition to the formal social structure, we discovered at least three different sets of identities that make up distinct social networks. Only through an awareness of these networks is it possible to understand the way waitresses view their social world.

10 The first is a social network determined by the behavioral attributes of people. As the girls make their way between the bar and tables each night, identities such as *customer, waitress,* and *bartender* become less significant than ones like *bitch* and *obnoxo* based on specific actions of individuals. Sue returns to a table of four men as she balances a tray of drinks. No sooner has she started placing them on the table than she feels a hand on her leg. In the semidarkness no one knows of this encounter but the customer and the waitress. Should she ignore it or call attention to this violation of her personal space? She quietly steps back and the hand disappears, yet every time she serves the table this regular makes a similar advance. By the middle of the evening Sue is saying repeatedly, "Watch the hands." When Sandy takes over for her break, Sue will point out *hands,* a man who has taken on a special social identity in the waitresses' network. The real regular, businessman, loner, person off the street, or almost any kind of male customer can fall into the same network category if his behavior warrants it. A customer who peels paper off the beer bottles and spills wax from the candle becomes a *pig.* The person who slows down the waitress by always engaging her in conversation, perhaps insisting that she sit at his table and talk, becomes a *bore.* As drinking continues during an evening, the behavior of some individuals moves so far outside the bounds of propriety that they become *obnoxos. Hustlers* gain their reputation by seeking to engage the waitress in some after-work rendezvous. The bartender who is impatient or rude becomes someone for the waitress to avoid, a real *bastard.* Even another waitress can be a *bitch* by her lack of consideration for the other girls. When a new waitress begins work, she doesn't know what kind of actions to expect nor how to evaluate them. Part of her socialization involves learning the categories and rules for operating within this network.

A second social network is based on social identities from outside the bar itself. Holly's roommate from college often visits the bar and

FIGURE 8.2



one or another waitress serves her. Although she is a *customer*, they treat her as one of the other girl's *roommates* who has a special place in this social network. Each waitress will reciprocate when the close friends of other waitresses come to the bar, offering special attention to these customers. The colleges attended by customers and employees provide another basis for identifying people. "That's a table of Annie's," Joyce will say about the girls from St. Anne's College. *Cougars* are customers who also play on the university football team. Even *bartenders* and *waitresses* can be terms for kinds of customers when they have these identities from other bars where they work.

Finally, there is a special network of insiders that crosscuts the formal social structure. This is *the Brady family*, made up of managers, employees, and customers—especially real regulars. The new waitress does not know about this select group of people when she first starts work. Sooner or later she will end up hanging around after work to have a drink on the house and talk. In this inner circle she will no longer think of the others as waitresses, bartenders, or customers, but now they are part of the Brady family. This network overarches all the specific categories of people in a dualistic kind of organization, a system not uncommon in non-Western societies. For example, a Nuer tribesman in Africa organizes people primarily on the basis of kinship. He has dozens of kinship terms to sort people into various identities and to anticipate their behavior. But every fellow tribesman, in a general sense, is either *both* or *mar*, distinctions that are important for social interaction. For the waitress, everyone in the bar is either in the Brady family or outside of it.

The social life of Brady's Bar derives its substance and form from the formal social structure as well as the various networks that waitresses and others activate for special purposes. Each waitress finds herself linked in some way to others in the bar with varying degrees of involvement.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Although this selection opens with a scene of a particular waitress working Brady's Bar, Spradley and Mann are not writing a story of the bar or a description of the shift of one waitress. Why provide this opening scene? How does it help readers to understand the information and analysis provided in the rest of the selection?
2. Recall a place where you have worked or think about the place where you currently work. What are some of the types of people who make up that workplace? Make a "single folk taxonomy" list the way Spradley and Mann do for Brady's Bar. In what way might your list be divided into a more formal social structure as the researchers divided their list of types at Brady's?
3. From what you have read here, explain how the social network at Brady's functions to help waitresses do their job and, at the same time, creates what Spradley and Mann call the "social life" of the bar.

Fieldwork Project

For this assignment, reconstruct the social network in a workplace, much like Spradley and Mann did. Do this assignment whether or not you are currently holding a job. If you currently hold a job (even if it is volunteer work, campus work, or work for an organization that is paid or unpaid), spend some time taking field notes (see Participant Observation Fieldwork in Chapter 3, Schooling) and keep the questions below in mind. If you currently do not hold a job, write about one you have done before and use the questions below to help you recall details of that workplace. Divide your report into three sections: Background, Analysis, and Conclusion.

Background

Begin your report by giving your audience a general background summary of the workplace. The questions below can help you to prepare that summary:

1. What is the nature of this business or organization?
2. When did you begin working there? What was/is your job? What difficulties did you encounter during the initial stages of the job?
3. Who are the people in this workplace, and how many employees typically are on the job at one time?
4. Who supervises the workplace? Is that person always present or only occasionally present?
5. What is the pay, if it is a paying position; if it is not, how many volunteer hours are expected of those who work there?
6. What do people expect from employees in this workplace? (For example, do customers expect to be waited on or are they left to themselves to browse?)
7. What is the work space like? Describe it. How large is it? Is there enough room here for workers to do a job comfortably? Is there anything in particular that is important to mention about the space? (For example, is it exceptionally dark or open or crowded?)

Analysis: Reconstructing the Social Network of the Workplace

Your aim in this central section of your report is to reconstruct the social network of the workplace. Spradley and Mann use both visual diagrams and descriptive analysis to explain how workers and customers interact in the bar to form the social network at Brady's. You can do the same. Begin by visually mapping out relationships and follow that diagram with a description of the social network you have reconstructed. The following questions can help you with your analysis:

1. Who is in charge (either by actually having a position above others or by virtue of less formal or unstated determinations)? Is the boss or supervisor always in control, or do subordinates have their own ways of doing what they want?
2. How do workers spend their time while on the job?
3. How do workers know what to do and when to do it?
4. What kinds of things happen that help or impede the work done in this place? Are there certain people you would identify as interfering with work and others you would say facilitate the work being done?
5. What seems to be the attitude of those working as they are doing their job?
6. How do workers interact with each other? Do they interact with customers or outside people coming into the work space? For example, what are the typical informal as well as formal interactions among employees, employees and customers, staff and supervisors, and so on?
7. Is there a person (supervisor or not) who must be pleased or not crossed? How do workers know that?
8. What are some things that go on in the job that you only learned on your own after working there for a time?
9. What are the unspoken rules of this workplace, and how does the social network that has evolved here seem to convey and sustain those rules?

Conclusion

The concluding paragraph of the Spradley and Mann selection offers a quick summary of their descriptive analysis:

> The social life of Brady's Bar derives its form from the formal social structure as well as the various networks that waitresses and others activate for special purposes. Each waitress finds herself linked in some way to others in the bar with varying degrees of involvement.

Your conclusion ought to do the same. Summarize your analysis quickly in this concluding portion of the report.

1. Besides the e-mail address, included in most of the Dilbert strips, Scott Adams with United Feature Syndicate, Inc., maintains an official Web site called "The Dilbert Zone." Locate the Web site and look for unofficial sites to see what difference it makes when fans represent or use this cartoon character and the situational humor of Dilbert. You will also find other sites on "job humor" on the Internet. How does the humor in these compare with Dilbert?

2. As you can see from the Perspectives discussion of sweatshops today, concern over sweatshop economy has returned to the news as a serious social matter. Much of the discussion has to do with working conditions outside the United States, but little attention has been given to sweatshops that investigators continue to find in this country.

   Some of the most interesting and innovative reporting and activism connected with this issue is available through Internet sources. By far the most thorough and interactive site for sweatshop history is the Smithsonian Institution's site devoted to its exhibit *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A History of American Sweatshops 1820–Present* (http://americanhistory.si.edu/sweatshops/). Begin your work by visiting this site and following the many links that trace sweatshop history from the early part of the nineteenth century to the El Monte, California, sweatshop raid on August 2, 1995. After you have visited this site, extend your searches to sites such as the Cornell WorkNet page.

   Use the information you find in your research to create a public service announcement (video, audio, or print) to make consumers aware of this issue.

3. Visit the site http://www.hardhattedwomen.org, where the organization Hard Hatted Women has set up on-line support for women seeking jobs traditionally designated as jobs for men. The site was begun in 1979 when three women—a steelworker, a truck driver, and a telephone repair technician—decided to make resources available to women looking for jobs in nontraditional professions. Using that site and its related links to such sites as the Women's Labor Bureau as the basis for research on issues relevant to women's labor, what would you say are the primary issues for women in today's workforce? How are they different from men's labor issues?