**FIELD RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

Your group is to select a topic of field research. This could be a bar, coffee shop, diner, 16th street Mall, Bus, Market Street Station, or somewhere you can observe, watch people interact, etc. You have only 1.5 hours so think fast!

You will be approaching this activity using “descriptive observation.” That is, you will observe anything and everything, assuming you know nothing. Clearly this can lead to the collection of minutiae, so be reasonable in this approach.

**Proposed Steps/Tips:**

* Decide on a site
  + Ideal setting:
  + Directly related to the researcher’s interests
  + Easily accessible
  + Allows for immediate rapport with informants (if you will be engaging them)
* Gain entre (describe how you did this in your report back)
  + Ensure your safety. Don’t get arrested!
* Identify your general research question (likely a description)
* Observe, listen and ask questions if appropriate
* Take field notes

**Thoughts to possibly guide you:**

* Look at the interactions occurring in the setting, including who talks to whom, whose opinions are respected, how decisions are made. Also observe where participants stand or sit. You may want to focus on this comparing those with power versus those with less power, men versus women, young vs old, majority v minority, etc.
* Counting persons or incidents of observed activity is useful in helping one recollect the situation, especially when viewing complex events or events in which there are many participants.
* Listen carefully to conversations, trying to remember as many verbatim conversations, nonverbal expressions, and gestures as possible.
* How are things at your location organized and prioritized? How do people interrelate? What are any cultural parameters?
* Description of what the cultural members deem to be important in manners, leadership, politics, social interaction, and taboos;
* What is happening and why?
* Draw a map
* Sort out the regular from the irregular activities
* Look for variation to view the event in its entirety from a variety of viewpoints.

**Presentation of your findings from your field notes.**

Chapter 10 on Field Research should guide your report back. Some things to consider:

* What was your guiding goal (research question)?
* Where did you go?
* Entrée issues?
* Are there any themes that emerged?
* Testable hypotheses?
* Draw map on the board of your location – any important aspects?
* What were the advantages, disadvantages of your methodology
* What would you do differently next time?
* Address ethics, validity, reliability and generalizability