

Expanded Fieldnotes Assignment: Identity and Reflexivity

Plan to visit your site, yes again, for extended observations, at least an hour or two – or more. Take jottings and notes about all things as usual, but as you take notes and as you expand them, add a focus on identity and reflexivity. Again I suggest that as you write your expanded fieldnotes, or after you write them, you use the coding system presented for expanded fieldnotes with description in plain text, *thoughts and feelings in italics*, and **analysis in bold**.

Jottings and Fieldnotes

As you enter your site and write about it using an identity and reflexivity lens, keep the following list of questions in mind:

Identity

- What are some of the markers of identity here (i.e. symbols, clothes, body language, verbal language)? In other words, how do people here create or display identity?
- How do you know that these things mean “identity?” Is the meaning something you deduced, or something you were told?
- How relevant or important is identity in this setting?
- Are there political or power implications for identity at your site? Are there active stereotypes about or within the community?
- Is a group identity used to create borders between insiders and outsiders here? How that is shared identity marked? What is the purpose?

Reflexive You (*a shift to thinking about your own identity*)

- How do you think you’re perceived in this site? Is it different from how you want to be perceived? What do you do to create that perception?
- What sorts of comments or actions from the informants suggest the ways in which they have chosen to “see” you and grant you an identity?
- What processes have you had to go through (internal and external) to be a researcher or participant at the site?
- Are you an insider, outsider, or both? Explore this as fully as you can and talk about how it feels to be an observer at the site, a participant at the site, or both.
- Are there social or political implications for you as a researcher at this site?
- What are perceptions of you and your research by the community you’re working with? How do you feel about that?

I know that it may be very difficult for you to work through all of these questions, but these are the kinds of questions you need to begin to ask yourself in order to work with the larger ideas of identity and reflexivity.

Expanded Fieldnotes

1. Explore any difference that you perceive in what you think/believe about the people at your site and what you think they think/believe about themselves. What is the cause of the difference in perception? Is it the result of the researcher/informant difference, or it because of a different element of identity? If you don't even have a guess at the source of difference of understanding, try your best to explain why it is you cannot know the real reason for the differences.
2. Given that you may have chosen some site or group with which you are familiar, begin with an exploration of the ways in which you are an insider. Why do you consider yourself to be a part of this culture? To what degree do you consider this connection to be a part of your identity? If you are not yet a part of this culture, discuss what connection you do have. For example, revisit your initial attraction to this place as a research site and what drew you to it. Have those ideas changed or developed? How and why?
3. Explore the idea of being either an insider or outsider (or both) at your site and what this brings to your research and what it means for you.
4. Include any detail or information from people at the site about identity and the role it plays in your community.