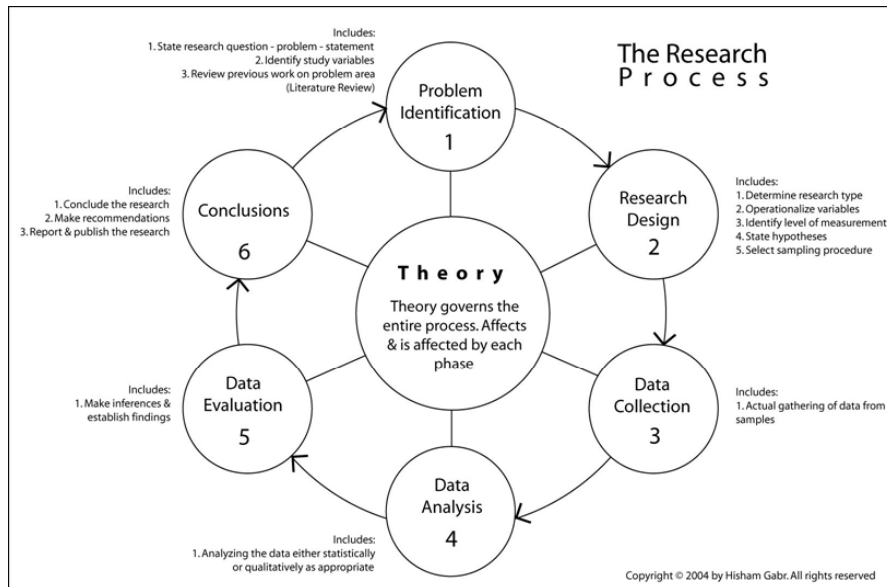
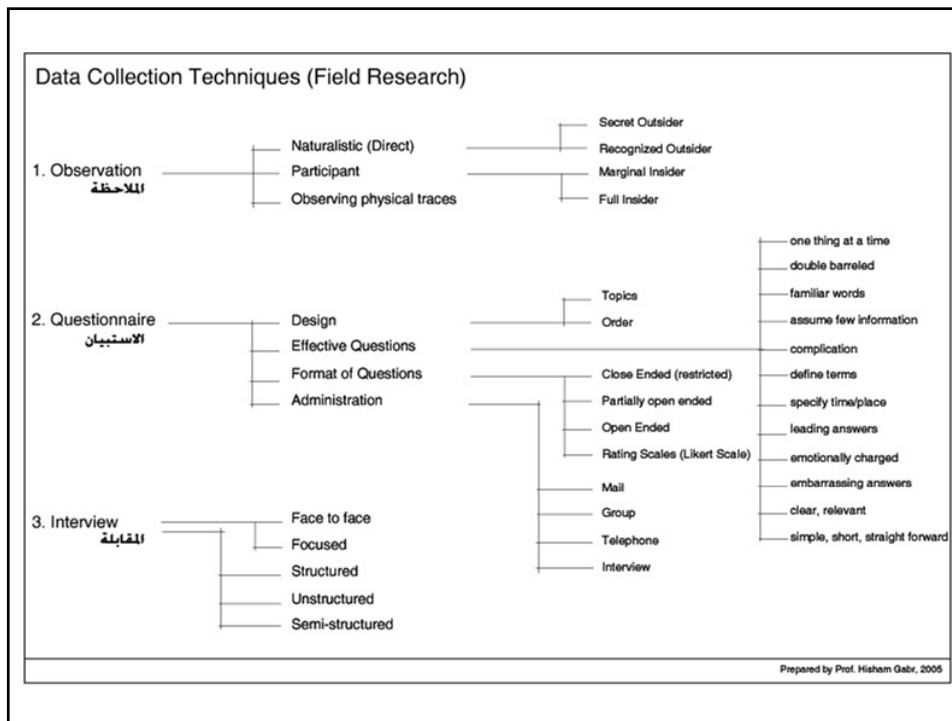


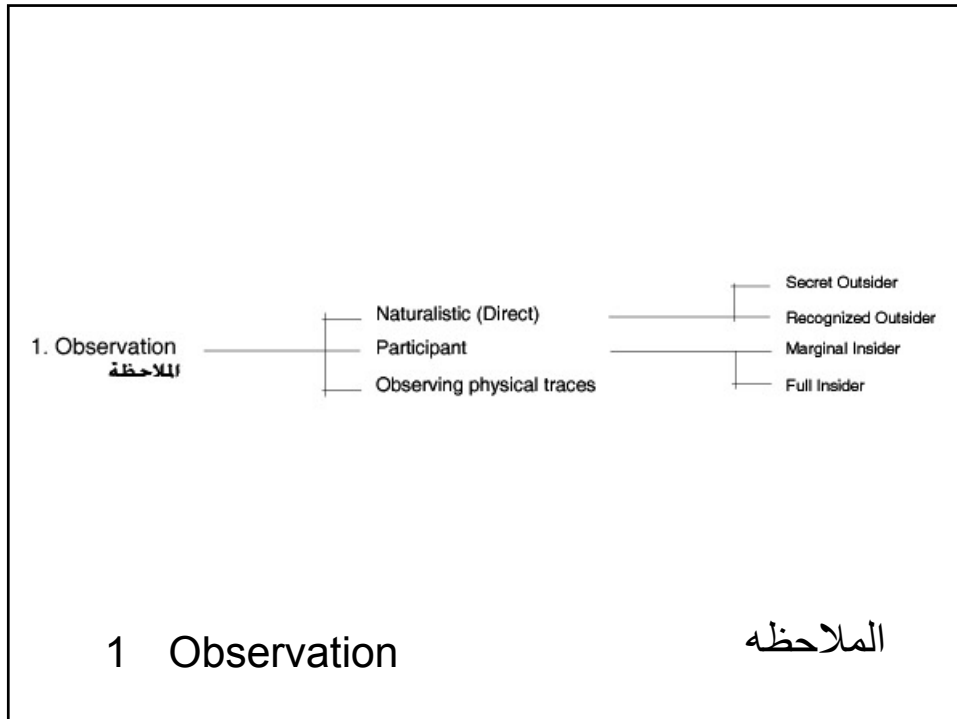
Observations

The Research Process خطوات البحث العلمي



- Introduction & Types of Observations
- Naturalistic Observations
- Participant Observations
- Observation of Physical Traces
- Comparison of Observation Types





Observations

- Observation involves the systematic and careful observation of subjects, objects, or phenomena in their natural setting.
- The technique is particularly useful in the field of architecture and urban design although it is extensively used in social and ethnographic research.

A. Naturalistic Observation

- Sometimes called direct or non participant observation. The observer in this type is considered an OUTSIDER. One can differentiate two types of naturalistic observation:
- the secret outsider
- the recognized outsider

What to Look For ?

Zeisel (1984) summarizes the important items to look for during the observation of environmental behavior. They are:

1. Who is: actor
2. Doing what: act
3. With whom: significant others
4. In what relationship: describes the relationship between the actor and the others such as aural, visual, tactile, olfactory, or symbolic type relationship
5. In what context: describes the sociocultural context including the situation and culture
6. Where (Setting): describes the physical setting

Recording Devices

Observations can be recorded using photographs, pre-coded checklists, maps, notations, or videotapes and movies (Zeisel, 1984).

Mapping observed behavior is a well known technique called behavioral mapping, which is an annotated diagram or map of observed behavior.

Recording Devices

Notations are basically written description of the observed behavior. The notation could be in the form of one sentence to which the researcher can add comments later. Pre-coded checklists are ready-made charts that include expected types of observations and a designed coding system to be used on the field

B. Participant Observation

- Participant observation is when the observer is an INSIDER. One can differentiate two types of participant observation:
- the marginal participant
- the full participant

Concern with Participant Observation

A serious ethical concern arises when dealing with participant observation.

Would the participant observer be considered cheating on the community that he became involved with?

C. Observation of Physical Traces

Observation of physical traces is a particularly useful techniques in architecture and urban design.

The simplicity and unobtrusiveness of the techniques makes it one of the easiest data gathering to conduct.

It could be used to gather data in early stages of the research such as for exploration or it can be used in detailed and information extensive data gathering.

What to Look For ?

Zeisel (1984) summarizes the important items to look for during the observation of physical traces. They are:

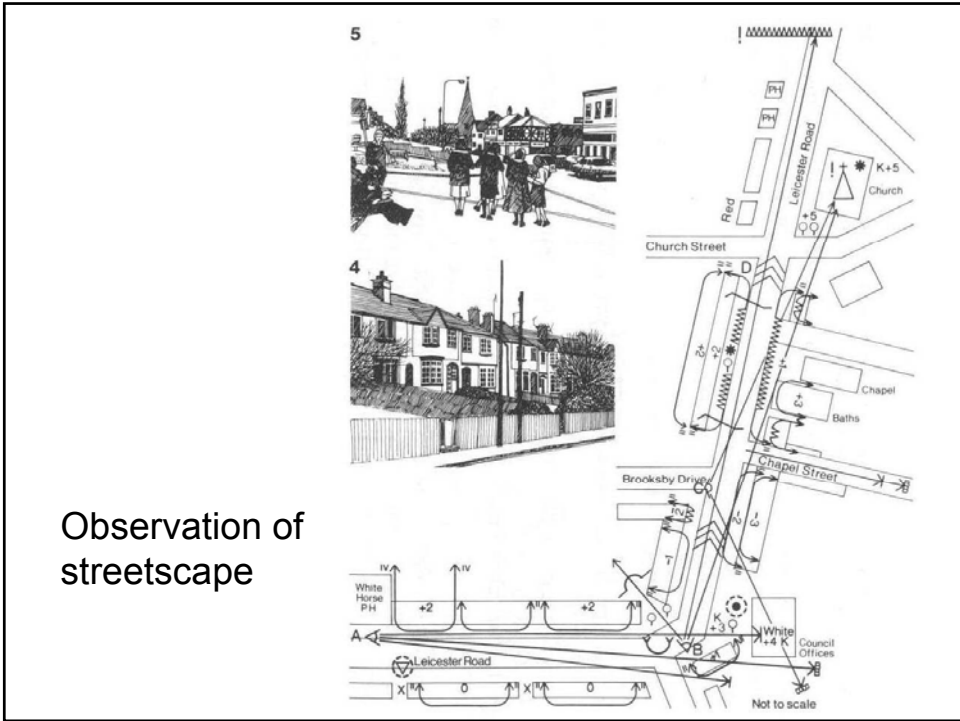
1. By-products of use: including signs of erosions, leftovers, and missing traces
2. Adaptations for use: including props, separations, and connections
3. Displays of self: including personalization, identification, and group membership
4. Public messages: including official, unofficial, and illegitimate signs
5. Context: understand how traces clarify the context and how the context clarifies the traces.

Recording Devices

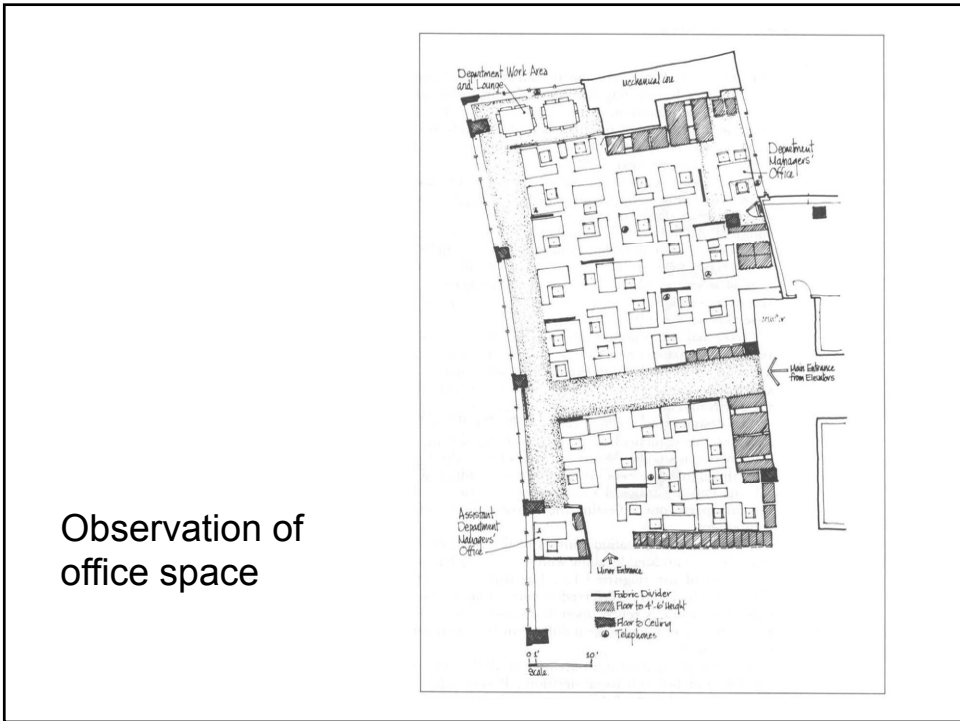
Observations can be recorded using photographs, drawings, annotated diagrams, or counting (Zeisel, 1984).

Comparison

Naturalistic	Participant	Trace
emphatic (feel for the character)	emphatic (feel for the character)	imageable (suggests ideas)
direct	direct	easy
variably intrusive	unobtrusive (no influence on behavior)	unobtrusive (no influence on behavior)
dynamic	dynamic	durable (do not quickly disappear)

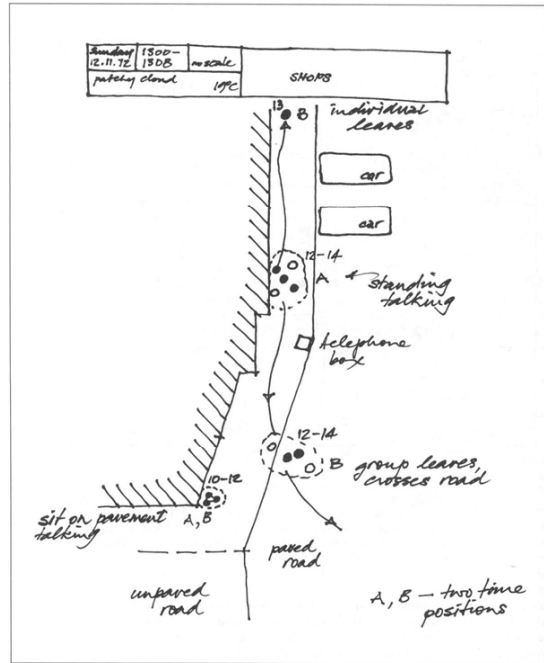


Observation of streetscape



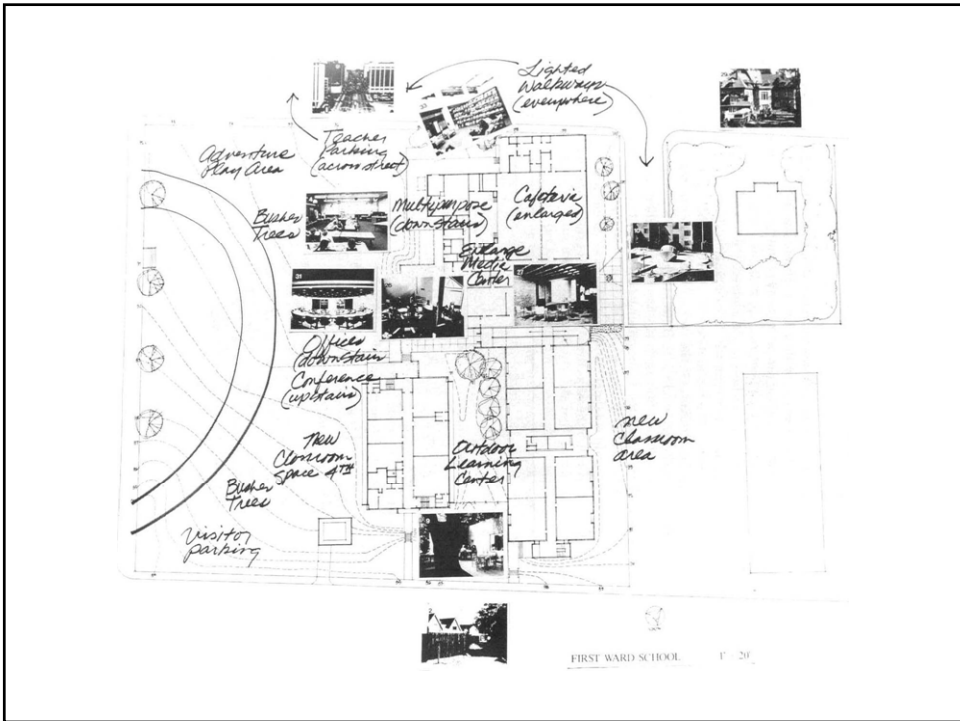
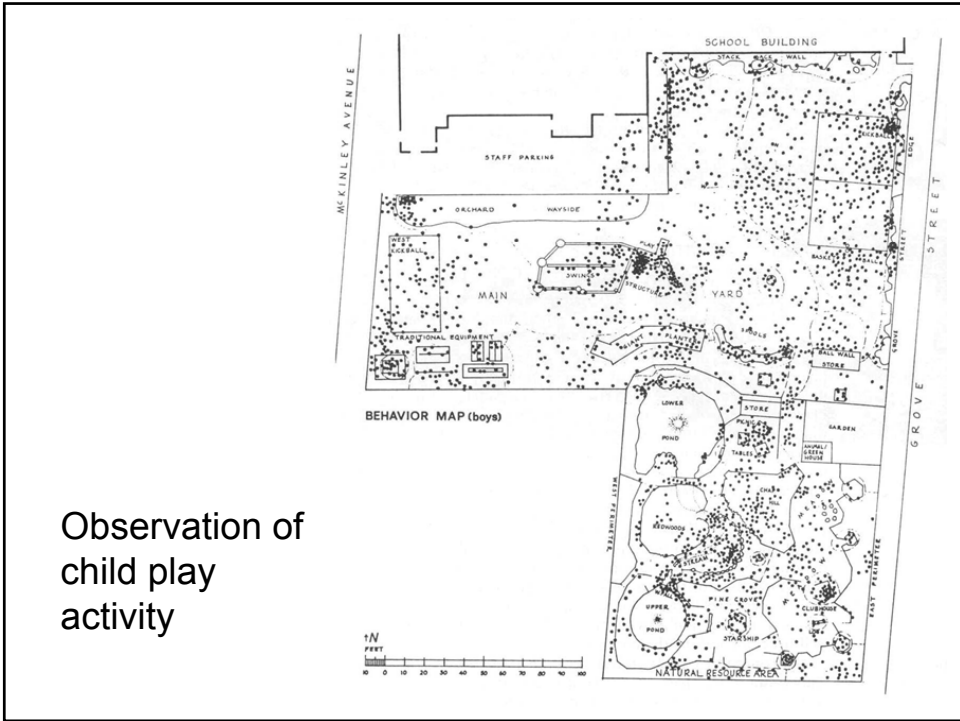
Observation of office space

Observation of street activity



Observation of where kids play







Observation of child play activity