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Sensitizing concepts in studies of homelessness and disability

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As valuable as they might be, observational data are not just informational but can inspire (re)conceptualization and a view to empirical complexity. Following a discussion of 'sensitizing concepts', this chapter discusses how observations conducted in ethnographic fieldwork on disability and homelessness contributed to developing ideas that further sensitized our understanding of field material. In illustration, the chapter draws on two studies: my research team's recent fieldwork on agency and authority in the circumstance of homelessness, and on my work on 'othering' as a process of marginalization in research on disability.

While it might seem contradictory, in the first case, sensitive observational work in video-recorded placement meetings led to an understanding of how homeless clients were perceived, unexpectedly, by service providers as *both* helpless individuals *and* active agents with authority. This spurred the team to be sensitive to the power held by the clients, not just to their helplessness in the circumstances (Mik-Meyer and Haugaard, 2020; Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019). In the second case, after visiting two research sites where employees with cerebral palsy worked, I discovered that the physical disability of the employees had profound effects on their relationships with their able-bodied colleagues. This discovery led me to investigate the research on othering conducted within gender studies as well as within the research field of disability. My analysis showed that able-bodied colleagues and managers wanted to avoid othering and marginalizing their co-workers with disabilities but nevertheless ended up contributing to exactly that othering and marginalization (Mik-Meyer, 2015a, 2016a, 2016b). Taken together, the studies illustrate an orientation towards empirical complexity otherwise undiscovered in observational studies bereft of analytic understanding.

From sensitizing concepts to empirical complexity

Herbert Blumer's (1954) classic work on sensitizing concepts, 'What is wrong with social theory?', early on emphasizes how analytical ideas and a related (re)conceptualization can spring from ethnographic data. Blumer distinguishes two phases when doing ethnographic work. In the first phase, the ethnographer explores practice and writes detailed descriptions, and in the second phase the ethnographer uses his or her field observations to conduct the analytical work, or 'understanding', as it might be described. According to Blumer, social theory is too separated from the empirical world, as the concepts of social theory are not based in the researcher's field observations. Put another way, field observations that are simply informational but not attuned to understanding hardly provide the kind of insight that ethnography can offer.

Blumer distinguishes between concepts viewed as definitive, that is, as concepts that refer 'precisely to what is common to a class of objects, by the aid of a clear definition in terms of attributes or fixed bench marks', and sensitizing concepts, which, according to him, are concepts that guide the researcher's work and 'suggest directions along which to look' (Blumer, 1954, p 7). This means that social theory concepts are not to be considered as fixated with just one meaning. For instance, the concept of othering suggested—to me as a researcher visiting Danish workplaces—a direction in which to look. So, othering is not a concept with just one meaning and a clear definition, as what it means to be 'othered' comprises different processes in different research fields and at different locations. In the field of disability, othering is closely linked to discourses of tolerance, equality and sameness (Mik-Meyer, 2017), whereas in the field of homelessness, othering is part of a discourse of agency and authority (Mik-Meyer and Haugaard, 2020; Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019). However, processes of othering encompass similarities across very different research fields as well.

According to Blumer and other interactionists such as Erving Goffman, the concepts of social theory must be sensitive not only to changes in theoretical understanding but also to a changing social world. This means that researchers, in their development and discussion of social theory concepts, have to include both theoretical and empirical discoveries. Otherwise, the social theory concepts risks 'feed[ing] on itself', as Blumer (1954, p 3) puts it. In such unfortunate cases, concepts from social theory are used to interpret the empirical world instead of investigating how the concepts actually fit the empirical world and how the empirical world ought to lead to theoretical changes.

Another shortcoming of social theory (in the 1950s), according to Blumer, was that concepts in then-current social theory did not provide adequate guidelines for how to conduct research inquiry, making it difficult for social scientists to test their theories. In his view, the lack of a careful empirical grounding for theoretical concepts meant that they were vague (for instance, concepts such as 'social class', 'social institutions' and 'cultural norms')—and this was the 'basic deficiency in social theory' (Blumer, 1954, p 5). Finally, Blumer (1954) pointed to the problem that social scientists rarely use the empirical facts provided by research. When concepts are vague, researchers do not know which questions to ask and what to examine, and this means that they are encouraged to stay in their own (theoretical) world. This led Blumer to suggest that social theory should develop what he referred to as sensitizing concepts, that is, concepts that give the social scientist 'a general sense of reference and guidance in approaching concrete empirical instances, [and] suggest directions along which to look' (Blumer, 1954, p 7), as seemingly contradictory as they might seem to be at first sight.

However, investigating and developing sensitizing concepts does not mean that they cannot be tested, improved or refined. Nevertheless, testing, improving and refining are more difficult with sensitizing concepts than with definitive concepts, because sensitizing concepts do not have a fixed meaning. For instance, the meaning of the concepts of othering and authority changes according to the research field investigated and its practitioners, which is why a refinement of the concepts should include empirical data. Social theory is about improving the perception of concepts such as othering and authority through the direct study of the social, empirical world, emphasizing its distinctive form. These basic ideas of Blumer's have inspired much ethnographic and observational research, including the studies discussed.

Analytical ethnography

More recent commentary along these lines shows how useful it is to base the development of concepts on complex ethnographic data, not least because 'inconsistencies [are] a central property of social life' (Deener, 2017, p 374). According to Andrew Deener, with more nuanced conceptual lenses, inconsistencies and ambiguities of social life can be shown to be the norm rather than disturbing factors the researcher should avoid or explain away (Deener, 2017, p 374). Observational data, in particular ideas of ethnographic complexity,

give the researcher knowledge of the ambiguities of a field, as this 'softer' methodology enables the inclusion of all sorts of data in the research (Deener, 2017, p 360). The ethnographer's combining their role as an outsider to the field with their ethnographic authority, that is, their being able to combine insider knowledge from the field with outsider theory based on the researcher's academic training, is one way to develop a sensitizing approach to the field. Gary Alan Fine and Tim Hallet (2014) posit that the ethnographer, as an outsider, can see the processes that are taken for granted by the insider, and can use this outsider position to facilitate a development and fine-tuning of concepts from social theory based on his or her observational data. In line with Blumer's thoughts, the ethnographer brings a specific type of conceptualization of the field forward, which is different from the knowledge of the studied participants.

What this suggests is an 'analytical ethnography' (Lofland, 1995; Snow et al, 2003), wherein the researcher, through fieldwork, develops 'mini-concepts', extends the meaning of pre-existing theories or concepts to other fields and modifies pre-existing theories (Snow et al, 2003, pp 186–191). The point is to develop, extend and modify concepts through the lens of complexity, such as when Philip Strong (1979, 1988) refined Erving Goffman's theory of ceremony by studying a 'bunch of encounters' in the new setting of paediatric consultations in the United States and Scotland (Hillyard, 2010, p 425). By focusing on roles within the 'consultation etiquette' of the medical encounter, Strong found two 'equally central dimensions to the ceremonial order: The "technical competences of server and client" and "their moral character"' (Strong, 1988, p 240 cited in Hillyard, 2010, p 430). This strengthened focus on all of the participants morality meant that Goffman's theory was further developed to include an emphasis of 'etiquettes' rather than 'etiquette' (singular): Goffman's ideal model of ritual orders—the server-client relationship—was present in the consultations, but this ritual order was not the only one (Hillyard, 2010, pp 430–1).

As the key to developing, refining and modifying concepts is to immerse oneself in the field, quite a number of scholars have examined the importance of the relationship between the ethnographer and the participants in the field. For instance, Kathleen Blee (2019) shows how her work with concepts was shaped by her relationship to the people she studied; in one case, she studied white supremacists, and in another, she studied grassroots activists. The field relationship with the white supremacists was characterized by an 'expectation of mutual deceit', while the field relationship with the grassroots activists was

characterized by honesty and a 'shared sense of politics' (Blee, 2019, p 743). By examining her vastly different field notes from the two studies, she found that 'field relationships shape theorizing by affecting not only what researchers can access but what they notice or find puzzling and what they regard as significant in a research setting' (Blee, 2019, p 754). Her field relationships pulled her in different theoretical directions even though she started out with a similar research question in each case about how the members' opinions become aligned with the ideologies of their groups. In the white supremacists study, she focused on how members adopted the group's ideas, but did not engage with the content of these ideas, whereas, in the grassroots activists study, she examined the content of their beliefs, but did not investigate how their perceptions had been developed in the group.

Similarly, Jadwiga Leigh (2019) retheorizes the concept of 'affective practice' by drawing on insights from ethnographic work on agency and conflicts stemming from a child protection service. Affect theory was first introduced by Baruch Spinoza, who distinguished between emotion and affect. Affect was seen as 'produced by the body, or the mind, when an interaction occurred with another body or mind' (Leigh, 2019, p 214). However, Leigh draws on and further develops Margaret Wetherell's (2012) concept of affective practice, and shows that although conflicts mainly unfold in the encounter between a social worker and a manager, everyone in the workplace ends up being engaged in affective and emotional work. In this case, ethnographic observation led to a nuanced adjustment of the perception of the social theory concept of affect.

Empirical complexity

Investigating social theory concepts in practice emphasizes the importance of scholars thinking about what Goffman might call methodological 'impression management'. This refers to the way they, as ethnographers, affect the research participants and hence the results of their research. Here, complexity is introduced in the empirical reflexivities of research relations in the field. The point is that research participants often have different understandings of what goes on in the field than the researcher. The goal of including observational data in a research project is hence to include otherwise hidden perceptions and patterns of understanding in order to gain a better perception of the studied participants' 'landscape of meaning' (Decoteau, 2017, p 72). Other researchers use 'shadowing' (Czarniawska, 2007) to gain a more 'holistic representation' of what goes on in the field (Gilliat–Ray, 2011,

p 480). The point is that immersing themselves in the field affects the researchers' findings, just like various other methodological approaches inform the theoretical and conceptual work in different ways (Järvinen and Mik-Meyer, 2020).

A word of caution. The emphasis on empirical complexity does not mean, as is sometimes alleged/claimed, that the researcher is not well versed in theories pertinent to the studied phenomenon, which is a rather myopic critique of researchers conducting ethnography-based research (for instance, Huber, 1973). According to Huber, researchers should 'spell out in advance and in detail what is expected and why it is expected' (Huber, 1973, p 282) and use concepts and explicated assumptions to inform their observations. In a similar vein, Loïc Wacquant (2002) formulates a critique of an inductive approach to observation studies in a provocative review of Mitchell Duneier's *Sidewalk* (1999), Elijah Anderson's *Code of the Street* (1999) and Katherine Newman's *No Shame in My Game* (1999). According to Wacquant (2002), Duneier (1999) gets too close to the data without holding it against theory, whereas Anderson (1999) is too far away from his data and forces it into a theoretical framework, while Newman (1999) pushes theory aside, even though the data challenge it. Wacquant argues that doing ethnography without theory is impossible, and that ethnographers need to acknowledge this, using theory in every decision and step of the study and being transparent about it. His critique has led to counterarguments (for instance, Wilson and Chadda, 2009) in which Wacquant's top-down approach is criticized (see also Anderson, 2002; Duneier, 2002). However, without taking sides in this debate, what stands out is the need for researchers to be what might be called 'analytically reflexive' about the role of theory and concepts in working with observational data.

Empirical complexity in two observational studies

In my research, I combine observation data, interviews and documents. The reason for combining different kinds of data is not steered by an ambition to get closer to a 'real world' out there (Silverman, 2013; Mik-Meyer, 2020a). My reason for combining different methodologies is to qualify a sensitizing approach to my field of research as suggested by Blumer. By using observational data, I am able to get an insider's perspective on topics of importance seen from the research participants' points of view. Topics that may otherwise have fallen outside my research design and interest only because I would not have known that they existed. When researching the negotiations of marginalized

identities in workplaces and in shelters, my on-site observations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019) or video-recordings of real-life encounters are optimal data (Heath et al, 2010) as they allow me to access the researched participants' perspectives on the social world that they are part of. In my case, I often supplement these observations with policy documents such as legislation and organizational scoring schemas guiding professional work, as this kind of data also gives me an insider perspective on the perceptions and joint understandings in the field that (often) guide the actions of the participants studied (Mik-Meyer, 2018, 2020). Open-ended interviews are obviously a third kind of data that will provide information on the thoughts of the participants. For instance, when examining the policy documents related to the fields of homelessness and disability, I quickly discovered the many dilemmas and ambiguities defining these two areas, which directed my attention to the patterns related to conflicts and disagreements between clients and staff. In many cases, the conflicts and disagreements reflected key structural dilemmas of housing (the scarcity of available apartments), economy (debt, for example) related to being homeless or disabled. For instance, staff would not explicitly state the letter of the law or the rules and procedures of staying at a shelter in their actual video-recorded encounters, but reading policy documents and interviewing staff revealed that such issues often affected these encounters. Therefore, knowledge gained from interviews and from reading policy documents added valuable insights when analysing what went on in the workplaces where employees with disabilities worked or in the video-recorded placement meetings at homeless shelters.

Homelessness, agency and authority

Our recent study of homelessness is based on 23 video-recorded placement meetings in three Danish shelters. Research emphasizes and problematizes the ambivalence of being homeless in a society that stresses that all citizens, including homeless individuals, should be active, responsible and in charge of their own life (Parsell, 2011; Parsell and Parsell, 2012; Farrugia and Gerrard, 2016; Parsell and Clarke, 2019). However, most studies do not provide *concrete* examples of how the ambivalence of being homeless—that is, the way in which homeless people are perceived as being in a challenging position and simultaneously perceived as people with resources—is negotiated in everyday organizational life. One of the major strengths of an ethnographic approach to recording real-life interactions in shelters is the possibility of providing analysis of what actually goes on in these

placement meetings, that is, of explaining how the ambivalence of an identity of strength and weakness is negotiated during—in this case—placement meetings. Like any observational data, recordings can shed light on why participants often end up actively reproducing the practices from which they explicitly distance themselves (in, for instance, interview situations). In my research on homelessness, a key finding was that these encounters—most likely unintendedly—ended up reinforcing passivity in clients despite an effort of social workers to achieve exactly the opposite, namely, to help the homeless individuals become responsible for their lives, as they would stress in the follow-up interviews (Mik-Meyer, 2020b).

My recording of these real-life events resulted in my discovering new aspects of what it meant for homeless individuals to be 'active' and 'responsible' for their lives, showcasing the complexity of the rubric of 'homelessness'. One surprising aspect was, for instance, the unexpected effects of gender norms on these encounters, which was visible after reviewing the 23 real-life encounters several times. One of my publications uncovered how stereotypical gender norms of women affected staff's expectations of the way the homeless men should act and perceive their own situation (Mik-Meyer, 2020b). In placement meetings, service providers evaluated the ability of male clients originating from the Greater Middle East to cook, clean and do stereotypically feminine work in the home. The service providers' idea was that they had to learn these duties while living at the shelters if they were to succeed in living on their own after their stay at the shelter. This focus on stereotypically feminine household work in placement meetings was not a result of a preconceived idea of stereotypical gender norms being key in placement meetings. However, the recorded meetings displayed 'gendered stories' of housewives and cleaning ladies, which explicated the norms by which the staff evaluated the actions of the homeless men; whether these men's actions reflected a prototype of a well-functioning and responsible person or not. With this in mind when examining the video recordings for what was said verbally as well as what was bodily expressed (for instance, through stiffening, leaning forward, looking down, displaying an arrogant gaze and so forth), I was able to analyse the way the stereotypically gendered perspectives affected the staff's encounter with homeless men with ethnic backgrounds other than Danish at the placement meetings. This type of observational data provided a rich source of how organizational members mutually negotiated gendered expectations and the effects of this gendered negotiation (Mik-Meyer, 2020b).

The video recordings also displayed the relevance of investigating the negotiation of the key social theory concepts of agency and authority, as much of the participants' orientations toward each other had to do with negotiating agency and authority (Mik-Meyer and Haugaard, 2020; Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019). The placement meetings opened with pleasantries, that is, with friendly comments that at first would suggest equal power among the participants as well as display the policy-relevant goal of placing the client at the centre (so-called client centredness) (Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019). However, the structural constraint of an action plan, quickly introduced by the staff member structuring the conversation and topics of relevance, made it clear that the staff had a particular authoritative position. The staff represented the organization and its perceptions of what to consider as clients' 'troubles' or 'problems' (Gubrium and Järvinen, 2014), whereas the clients were positioned as the receivers of the organizational work defined by the action plan. The action plan was an 'obligatory passage point' (Clegg, 1989, p 205) that framed all the meetings and the (somewhat joint) perceptions of what would constitute a 'social problem' of the homeless. In other words, the action plan was concurrently a tool of agency and of power, as it provided both parties with expectations relative to the meeting and thus provided the base for negotiating agency and power. Both parties knew that the pleasantries and friendly comments that suggested equality existed vis-à-vis an organizational reality defining relevant social problems and—consequently—relevant actions to take in order to solve the problems.

One key contribution to and refinement of the social theory concept of authority was to exemplify how this concept is indeed a nuanced and negotiated phenomenon without a fixed meaning. We theorized authority as a right to speak, to be heard and taken seriously within a specific framework. The authority of service providers in shelters and municipalities was dependent on the organizational framework (the action plan and so forth), and they had—unsurprisingly—the authority to speak upon organizationally relevant issues. However, to jump to the conclusion that this meant that the homeless individuals did not display authority in the meetings would be wrong. The homeless individuals were expected to take on authority as citizens who knew what they wanted and who should correspondingly work strategically to achieve this goal. However, the homeless individuals were also expected to behave in the role of the (passive) client, which meant that they were expected to constantly juggle a double and mutually inconsistent pair of roles when trying to be heard and taken seriously.

Therefore, we concluded that the performance of authority was carried out on a scale. At one end, the service providers performed organizational authority, and at the other end the homeless individuals performed authority as, respectively, citizens (with resources) and clients (without resources). Although the two available positions for the clients were very different, respectively accentuating strengths and weakness, both positions could hypothetically (and did in real life) give them the right to speak and be taken seriously (Mik-Meyer and Haugaard, 2020; Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019). When the homeless persons were taken seriously and were heard by the staff, they displayed a practical knowledge of their situation. However, when the service providers rejected the homeless persons' perceptions of their situation, then it was typically because the staff perceived these perceptions as organizationally irrelevant. When different perceptions of what constituted a social problem were competing, the organizational authority of the staff would typically win. However, we also found that staff were reluctant to take the authority and define the solutions to clients' problems. Both parties deployed different resources which they perceived as meaningful to the contexts in which they interacted. Therefore, the authority of clients was measured up against how they succeeded in making their actions relevant to a number of organizational discourses. Authority was, in this study, a scalar phenomenon and not a command–obedience relationship (Weber, 1978, p 58) wherein social actors either had the authority to command or did not. In our work, authority was usually less than full command. Rather it had to do with the right to speak and be taken seriously.

In a co-authored article with David Silverman (Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019) on the negotiation of agency, we found an overall ambivalent discourse of client centredness ('My view matters') in the video-recorded placement meetings that comprised three positions that the homeless could adopt. They could adopt the position of someone in need and worthy of help ('I have had a troubled life, but am moral'), of a responsible person ('I take control of my life') and of a troubled and passive client ('I am dependent on the staff's decision'). This analysis, based on observational data, led us to suggest that the emphasized policy goal of client centredness had to be investigated in practice in order to understand what was meant by this goal. Taking centre stage as a client or being put at the centre of the work can be played out by actors in many different ways, which is why a normative model of client centredness must be treated as a research topic rather than as a concept with a fixed meaning that politicians can act on (Mik-Meyer and Silverman, 2019, p 18). When interactions did not deliver agency to any of the participants, this had consequences for

everyone. Clients' failure of agency was usually related to practical matters, whereas service-providers' failure of agency was visible when they could not deliver in relation to the organizational action plan. As both parties' agency depended on the other party's actions, they turned to collaboration rather than conflict when in a tight spot. In this project, collaboration meant to work towards a shared perception of the clients' troubles—and hence a shared perception of what action to take to help solve the client's troubles (Mik-Meyer and Haugaard, 2020).

In conclusion, the video recordings were an especially good data-acquisition tool for me to use to get insights into topics of relevance for the research participants and to get real-life, detailed knowledge about joint expectations—knowledge that would have been difficult if not downright impossible to get through the methodology of interviewing or studying policy documents.

Processes of othering

My second example of how the complexities of observational data contribute to the development of more nuanced analytical thinking in a research project stems from an investigation of how colleagues and managers perceived their colleagues with visible disabilities. This study's data acquisition began with some weeks of field observations in two workplaces where employees with visible disabilities worked. In both workplaces, I immediately discovered a kind of childish interaction, that is, cases where colleagues and managers spoke to their colleagues with a disability as if they were children or people who needed extra attention and special care. Able-bodied colleagues and managers would greet their colleague with a disability with expressions such as "There comes the vacation child" and so forth. My observations furthermore included a (too) frequent use of their first names in conversations (Mik-Meyer, 2015). I soon discovered that the 'institutional identity' (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000; Gubrium and Holstein, 2001) available to these employees with disabilities was that of a child or a person in need of special care. When conducting interviews, talk about care was also predominant—even though the interview guide did not include questions on this topic (Mik-Meyer, 2016a). Additionally, observations included a stereotypically feminized approach to the employees with disabilities—who were predominantly male. Able-bodied staff members approached this group of employees as fragile, weak and in need of caregiving. In interviews with the employees with disabilities, they reflected on this caring approach—also without being asked questions on this particular matter.

All in all, it was clear that employees with disabilities were perceived as quite different than the able-bodied staff at the workplaces. In the interviews with able-bodied staff members, stories popped up regularly of other people who were considered different, but whose difference from the norm had no connection to physical impairments. Able-bodied staff members talked about homosexuals, persons with another skin or hair colour, individuals who wore strange clothes, had a different ethnic background than Danish, who were drunks, transvestites, old, pregnant, in grief and so on (Mik–Meyer, 2016b). The commonality of these stories was exclusively these people's 'different' appearances, which spurred my interest in why most able-bodied interviewees chose to talk about *other* different people when being asked questions about their colleague with a disability. I systematically searched for these stories in my interviews and examined why and how they popped up in the interviews. They were typically the result of spontaneous, slip-of-the-mind kind of answers to questions about what they first thought when they met their new colleague with a disability (see Mik–Meyer, 2016b for a complete analysis).

These findings indicated that the processes of othering of employees in Danish workplaces included a different kind of marginalization than what is typically found in disability research. Collectively, my project showed that discrimination practices could take a different form than what research in the field of disability typically focuses on, namely, lower wages, poor career opportunities, bullying and ill-treatment and so on. My study found that to discriminate against ones colleague could include more subtle practices, which the social theory's sensitizing concept of othering stimulates an investigation of. Othering of employees with disabilities was an everyday practice that could not be changed or controlled by, for instance, focusing predominantly on economic matters, policy reports or changing the formal culture at the work place (Mik–Meyer, 2016a). To discriminate against or 'other' your colleague with a disability was related to a dominant discourse of ableism, which automatically made employees with visible disabilities different. Processes of othering were also related to dominant discourses of tolerance and inclusiveness, which automatically made it wrong to talk about difference. The result was a subtle process of othering in which co-workers tried to refrain from explicitly talking about the difference of their colleagues with disabilities even though ableism at their workplace made this group of employees stand out. However, this subtle process of othering was surely not a process that able-bodied staff members appreciated or wanted to be part of. As such, the findings support one of the key qualities of observational data, namely, that

observations on site can help explain why research participants may end up reproducing practices that in interviews they explicitly distance themselves from.

Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been on the way observational data can help tease out key empirical complexities, here within two different research fields. In both instances, sensitizing concepts from social theory along with observational data helped shed light on topics in social theory centred on questions of gender norms, agency, authority and othering. Blumer's (1954) point that researchers should approach concepts of social theory as having fluid meaning allows for empirical data to affect and develop concepts of social theory that are otherwise too general and weakly empirically grounded. Observational data are in this respect ideal for discovering new aspects of the social world that no other methodology can provide access to.

As grounded in the flux of reality as they are, observational data should of necessity be brought on board as part of the goal to investigate the way that formal social policy—for instance, the policy of client centredness—plays out in real life situations. Basing research on observational data allows for discussions of different topics than the ones that a formal social policy approach would suggest. For instance, wage gaps or the career trajectories of employees with disabilities rather than the everyday process of othering (which might be experienced as being equally as problematic as receiving lower wages than your colleagues). Immersing themselves in the field, the researcher will be confronted with different and timely aspects of the social world that other, less nuance-centred methodologies cannot capture. In that sense, observational data are key if the goal is to expand one's knowledge of particular research fields, as well as if one wants to help fine-tune and give credence to empirically complex social theory.

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