A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. The top-left corner is a horizontal bar extending to the right, and the bottom-right corner is a vertical bar extending upwards. The rest of the frame is implied by the corners.

UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES IN RESEARCH

CHAPTER 8
Lune & Berg

SWBAT:

Students Will Be Able To

Define unobtrusive measure in research.

List examples of unobtrusive strategies.

Apply unobtrusive measure in research in the future.

What is an UNobtrusive measure?

- Data collection independent of the processes that produced it.
- Social artifacts, traces, or other materials or events that were first created for some other reason prior to our examining the data.
- Using investigative tactics to collect data.

“People Watching”

<https://youtu.be/i7UoLk-Vy4>

The Science of Garbology

RATHJE, 1973

- In 1973, a study developed by anthropologists at the University of Arizona examined trash and the way it reflects upon the lifestyles of a group of people.
- The results act as a kind of mirror on the society it investigates.
- What people leave in the garbage as traces of themselves may speak more eloquently and truthfully about their lives than the account they may offer themselves.
- What some may see as garbage and debris, garbologists see a representation of pieces of historical artifacts with cultural meanings and important social content.

"Bearing Witness to History"

AN EXAMPLE OF USING GARBEOLOGY AS A MEANS OF UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES IN RESEARCH.



A sampling of the artifacts found in the "Bearing Witness to History" exhibit which was inspired by the Shanks, Platt, & Rathje study.

Debris found in and around ground zero & the Pentagon after 9/11 was used in a study by Shanks, Platt, and Rathje in 2004 to explore the cultural experience of 9/11, and how it impacted American Society.

THIS IS A PERFECT EXAMPLE OF USING UNOBTRUSIVE MEASURES IN RESEARCH.

Unobtrusive Strategies

ARCHIVAL STRATEGIES

Public Archives:

- Commercial Media Accounts
- Actuarial Records
- Official Documentary Records

Private Archives:

- Solicited & Unsolicited Documents
- Comprehensive Autobiography
- Topical Autobiography
- Edited Autobiography

PHYSICAL EROSION & ACCRETION

- Physical Evidence
- Physical Traces left behind by human activity.
- The deposit of almost any object or material by humans can be accretion.



PUBLIC ARCHIVES

Webb & his colleagues (1981, 2000) suggest that virtually any running record provides a type of archive.

Some examples of running record archives:

Researchers find archival data attractive because locating this information is much easier.

- ✓ LIBRARIES
- ✓ TOMBSTONES
- ✓ HOSPITAL Admittance records
- ✓ POLICE Incident reports
- ✓ COMPUTER ACCESSED BULLETIN BOARDS (Pinterest)
- ✓ MOTOR VEHICLE registries
- ✓ NEWSPAPER MORGUES
- ✓ MOVIE rental stores
- ✓ CREDIT COMPANY BILLING records

PUBLIC ARCHIVES

Commercial Media Accounts

- Any written, drawn, or recorded (video -OR- audio) materials produce for general or mass consumption.

Examples:

Newspapers, Books, Magazines, TV Program Transcripts, DVDs, Comics, Maps, Blogs, IG, etc.

BRAINSTORM:

HOW WOULD AN ETHNOGRAPHER USE COMMERCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS TO COLLECT UNOBTRUSIVE DATA?

Actuarial Records

- Tend to be produced for special or limited audiences but are typically available to the public under certain circumstances.

Examples:

Birth/Death Records, Marriage/Divorce Records, Insurance & Credit Card Application Info, Residential Records, etc.

BRAINSTORM:

CREATE A RESEARCH QUESTION INVOLVING ACTUARIAL RECORDS.

Official Documentary Records

- Schools, social agencies, hospitals, retail stores, etc have written records/files that can eventually become public.

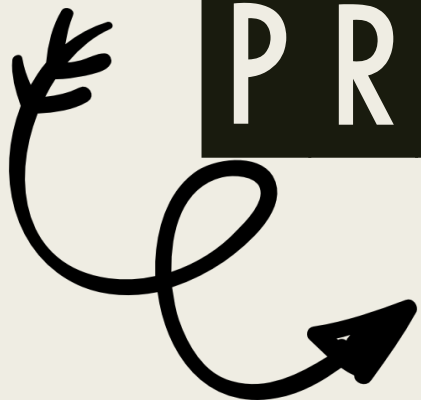
Examples:

Official Court Transcripts, Police Reports, Census Info, School Records, Sales Records, etc.

BRAINSTORM:

WHAT PARTICULAR AGENCIES WOULD USE THIS FORM OF DATA COLLECTION?

PRIVATE ARCHIVES



Private records are created for smaller, more specific audiences than the public in general.

USEFUL
ESPECIALLY
WHEN CREATING
CASE STUDIES.

❖ *Unsolicited Private Archives* would be those that are found naturally by the investigator.

E.G.- HOUSE LOG OF A DELINQUENCY GROUP HOME → USED TO INVESTIGATE STAFF AND CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS IN ORDER TO DETERMINE MISBEHAVIOR PATTERNS.



❖ *Solicited Private Records* would be those items that are requested by the researcher.

E.G.- DAILY WORK JOURNAL OF ICU NURSES → USED TO INVESTIGATE ASSESSING STAFF AND TASK EFFECTIVENESS.

Examples of Private Archives

- ✓ Autobiographies (Memoirs)
- ✓ Diaries
- ✓ Letters
- ✓ Home Movies
- ✓ Drawings/Sketches
- ✓ Videos

PRIVATE ARCHIVES

Comprehensive Autobiography	Topical Autobiography	Edited Autobiography
<p>➤ Spans the life of the individual from his/her earliest memory to the time of the writing.</p> <p><u>Comprehensive Autobiography Includes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Descriptions of Life Experiences• Personal Insights• Anecdotal Reminiscences	<p>➤ Offers a fragmented picture of life.</p> <p>➤ Interesting more due to the nature of the topic rather than the identity of the author.</p> <p><u>Topical Autobiography Provides:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity to the research subjects, rather than the understandings of the researcher.	<p>➤ Researchers serve as editors & commentators, and should only edit for the sake of clarity.</p> <p><u>Edited Autobiography Includes:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diaries written by the research subject, which is then used by the researcher to create the edited autobiography.

Physical Erosion & Accretion

■ Erosion- wear/tear

- Erosion measures are used with other techniques in order to corroborate one another.

■ Accretion- accumulation/buildup

- Accretion measures represent deposits of almost any object or material over time—even garbage! (Rathje, 1979)

PROS: INCONSPICUOUS & UNAFFECTED BY RESEARCHERS WHO LOCATE AND OBSERVE THEM.

CONS: INTERPRETING AND AFFIXING MEANING TO THE PHYSICAL TRACES MAY BE PROBLEMATIC & MAY EVEN BIAS THE RESULTS.

<http://PSC.dss.ucdavis.edu/sommerb/sommerdemo/traces/intro.htm>