

major research instrument. Making an introspective record of fieldwork enables a person to take into account personal biases and feelings, to understand their influences on the research.

Analysis and Interpretation

The fourth type of fieldnotes provides a link between the ethnographic record and the final written ethnography. Here is the place to record generalizations, analyses of cultural meanings, interpretations, and insights into the culture studied. Most of the tasks in the remaining steps involve detailed analysis of your fieldnotes and can be recorded in this category of fieldnotes.

Analysis and interpretation notes often represent a kind of brainstorming. Ideas may come from past readings, from some particular theoretical perspective, from some comment made by an informant, from talking about your project with a friend. It is important to think of this section in your fieldwork notebook as a place to "think on paper" about the culture under consideration.

Tasks

- 3.1 Set up a fieldwork notebook or file with sections for**
- condensed accounts.
 - expanded accounts.
 - a journal.
 - analysis and interpretation.
- 3.2 Conduct a period of participant observation and record your experience.**
- 3.3 Select one paragraph of expanded fieldnotes and, using more concrete language, try to expand it into several paragraphs.**

Step Four

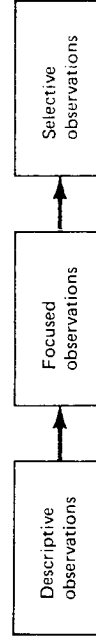
MAKING DESCRIPTIVE OBSERVATIONS

OBJECTIVES

- To learn to make descriptive observations.
- To identify the different kinds of descriptive observations.
- To conduct a period of participant observation for the purpose of making descriptive observations.

By now you have conducted at least one session of fieldwork and made some observations. Every day you spend in the field from now on will involve making more observations. At first, many ethnographers feel overwhelmed with all the things to be observed and recorded. In particular, you may be wondering, "Am I observing the things that I should be, the things that are important?" Each ethnographer must discover the answer to that question and the answer will change during the course of fieldwork. The most useful thing at this point is to gain a better understanding of observation itself and the various types to use. In this step we shall examine the first and most important type, *descriptive observation*.

You will make descriptive observations whenever you look at a social situation and try to record as much as possible. It means approaching the activity in process without any *particular* question in mind, but only the *general* question, "What is going on here?" In Chapter Three of Part One, I identified the three major types of observation and discussed their sequence in fieldwork. As we focus on descriptive observation in this chapter, keep in mind that you will learn the other types in this progression:



Underlying each of these forms of observation is a mode of inquiry based on asking questions.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY UNIT

The basic unit of all ethnographic inquiry is the *question-observation*. Neither exists in isolation from the other. We examined this proposition at some length in our earlier discussion of the ethnographic research cycle. Now, as you are in the field making observations, you need to keep in mind that each thing you see and record is influenced by the

questions you have in mind. You will gain skill in observing as you gain skill in asking the right questions.

Let's consider an actual fieldwork case. Several years ago I was assigned to a grand jury and decided to use the opportunity to conduct ethnographic fieldwork. I worked unobtrusively, participating as a member of the grand jury, making notes during meetings when possible, and recording my observations in more developed form after a day-long session. Here are some of my fieldnotes made during the first meeting.

I parked near the county courthouse and walked the short distance to the new building. Streams of people flowed into the lobby and scrambled into the waiting doors of elevators. "Going up sir?" a young man called to me from one of the eight elevators. I nodded, stepped in, and waited until he stopped at the eighth floor where I knew the Marshall County Criminal Court was located.

I followed the hallway until I saw a sign over two large doors: CRIMINAL COURT. I decided to go in even though there was still five minutes before the appointed hour of 9:00 A.M. I pushed open one of the swinging doors and found myself in a large courtroom.

There were rows of spectator benches, all made of heavy dark wood, oak or walnut, to match the paneled walls. The rows of benches went for more than twenty-five feet until they met a railing that seemed to neatly mark off a large area for "official business." I went in, sat down in the last row of spectators' benches, and looked around at the few other people seated at various places in the courtroom. The high ceiling and heavy dark wood made me feel as if I were in a sacred, almost religious place. Two people sitting in front of me were talking in hushed tones and I could not hear what they said. As newcomers came in, they would stop, look around, and then move very slowly to find a place to sit. At the right of the area behind the railing were twelve high-back leather chairs behind another railing. A large oak table with massive chairs all faced toward a high lectern which I took to be the judge's bench. All this area was empty. I waited.

A few minutes after nine a man walked in with a brisk manner. He looked at the people scattered around the large courtroom, all of us in the spectators' area, and said, "Hello. I assume you are all here for the prospective grand jury. Judge Fred Adams is going to be on the bench and it would be better if you all sat in the jury box." Slowly people got up and I joined them as we moved together toward the front. How easy for some unknown man to give orders and we all obey. I took a seat in the front row and soon all twelve chairs were filled; several people sat in the first row of the spectators' area; three men sat in chairs inside the area of "official business." I wondered if this was where we would meet for the next few months or what we would be called upon to do. I spoke to no one, although I could hear some comments being made quietly. I took out a tablet and began making fieldnotes. I wondered if the people around me thought I was writing a letter or what. I was conscious of standing out in my casual clothes and beard. All the others were dressed neatly; the men in suits and ties, some in sportcoats. Many dark business suits. They all looked professional. The women were well dressed in suits, dresses, high heels, make-up. All looked older than myself. It was as if they had all dressed for some formal occasion. I felt a little out of place, but decided that didn't matter.

The man who had called us to the jury box began calling out names. "Mrs. Mary Wendt." "Here." "How about Joseph Walters?" "Here." "I wrote down as many names as I could, but they came so fast I missed some. "James P. Spradley?" he called out, clearly mispronouncing it. "Is that right?" he asked as I said, "Here." I nodded, trying not to call attention to the fact of my presence. He continued through the list, and as a few more people drifted in he read off their names also. Several people did not answer. No one seemed concerned or at least no one volunteered information about the missing persons.

I began to overhear people behind me talking. "It's fun to get into something new," a lady's voice said. "Yes, I like to have new experiences." came another voice. "Mine was in the mail when I returned from vacation." I think she was referring to the letter saying we had been selected for the grand jury. "I can't sleep in. I have insomnia. I couldn't get to sleep before two A.M. and I woke up at six so I only got four hours of sleep."

I wasn't sure what we were waiting for, but probably the judge. "I took two Gelusil this morning," came the voice of a different woman, obviously nervous. A man down the row rustled a newspaper he was reading. "I didn't know how many criminal courts there were but I figured the elevator operator would know where I was supposed to come." This was the first woman's voice. I glanced around. She was wearing a red dress. "I don't even know how many they send these things to." "It's twenty-three I think," came the voice of a man who had been listening to their conversation. "And they hope to get sixteen." There was an obvious air of expectation. I felt it. We had been chosen—and we didn't know how, or at least I didn't and some of the others didn't. But to be one of the select persons in this group with an interesting task; not knowing how long we would meet or what we would do—at the moment all seemed rather exciting.

The man who was reading our names was joined by a sheriff's officer in full uniform, gun mounted on his left hip. He walked across the courtroom and stood near a door near the high judge's bench. The man and the police officer kept looking at each other, one glanced at his watch, there was an air of expectancy in the jury box also. You could feel something important was about to happen, but I'm not sure how we knew.

"Will everyone rise!" The officer shouted his command at the exact instant that the door opened. "The court of Fred Adams, honorable judge of Marshall County, is now in session." [That is an approximation since I couldn't write while standing and I couldn't remember exactly what he said.] I stood at attention and felt my heart beating faster than usual. A tall, gray-headed man in full black robe walked slowly in, turned toward the bench, and went up and sat down. Everyone was completely attentive. The moment had arrived.

"You may sit down," he said, after sitting down himself and arranging his robe. "I want to give you some general instructions. I'm going to appoint one of your number as foreman. Mr. Stone, will you serve as foreman?" He spoke with authority, not asking a question, but giving an order. "Yes, your honor." Mr. Stone spoke quickly and quietly.

This rather lengthy record actually covers less than fifteen minutes of observation. It is entirely descriptive and one can quite easily see the *implied questions* I had in mind.

1. What did I do on the first day of the grand jury?
2. What is the courtroom like?
3. How did other prospective jurors, the judge, and other officials act on the first day?
4. What did people say?

These are all examples of *descriptive questions* that lead to *descriptive observations*. Obviously, I did not record other information that could have been observed that day, such as the color of each juror's shoes, the color of each man's tie, or the spacing distances among prospective jurors when they first took seats in the criminal courtroom. Such specific questions might emerge later as important. At this stage of any investigation, general descriptions were the first priority.

When ethnographers work with informants, they can ask descriptive questions to elicit the informant's observations of social situations. For example, if I wanted to compare the grand jury I participated on with others, I could locate informants and begin by asking these same questions: "What did you do on the first day of the grand jury?" and so on. In a sense, when you make descriptive observations, you participate in a social situation, then *treat yourself as an informant*. (See Spradley 1979 for a discussion of interviewing informants.)

Descriptive observations, in response to descriptive questions, will include a considerable amount of information about the ethnographer. First, it includes the ethnographer's actions. I described where I went, what I did, where I sat, how I overheard things, and who I saw. Description of any kind is always from some point of view. It originates in the sensory organs of some specific individual. Later I might want to make general statements about that first day on the grand jury, but for the present it is important to include my actions. Second, descriptions include the ethnographer's thoughts and feelings. As an individual I have access to my feelings and my thoughts. I can say, "I wondered if this is where we would meet . . ." and "I felt a little out of place . . ."

Although there are an endless number of descriptive questions one can ask, it is helpful to classify them into types that give rise to specific types of descriptive observations.

KINDS OF DESCRIPTIVE OBSERVATIONS

A descriptive question-observation can occur even when the ethnographer has very little knowledge of a social situation. Indeed, they are designed to guide you in research when you are most ignorant of the culture under consideration. Almost all such observations can be reduced to two major types: grand tour observations and mini-tour observations.

Grand Tour Observations

The concept of "grand tour" comes from the common experience of having someone show us around their house, place of business, or school. Friends come for dinner, and as they stand in the entrance to my home they say, "My, what a nice place you have." "Would you like to see the rest of the house?" I ask politely. "Sure, that would be great." And as we begin the route from one room to another, I comment, "Okay, I'll give you a grand tour." What follows is an identification of the *major features* of my home. I'll point out that the kitchen has been remodeled; I will identify the laundry room and the study. However, I will not discuss the cost of remodeling the kitchen or go into detail about all the activities that go on in the laundry room or study.

Later, on that first day the grand jury began its work, we moved to what was called "the grand jury room." "Can you describe the grand jury room?" This question led to a grand tour description which included the features someone would encounter if they entered the room, walked around in the room, and investigated the objects in the room.

We can expand the idea of a grand tour to include almost every aspect of events in addition to spatial location. Let's take the largest sequence of events in the grand jury. "Can you describe the major things that take place when you are on a grand jury, from the first moment you learn about it until it is all over?" The following entry offers an abbreviated response to this question and will give you a grand tour of these events over time.

Serving on the grand jury begins when you receive a letter that informs you that you have been selected and must appear on a certain date. This is followed by a period of waiting, and for most jurors wondering what will be entailed. Some make phone calls to the Marshall County Courthouse to find out more information or to try and be excused from duty.

The next major event takes place when the prospective jurors appear in a courtroom and receive instructions about the legal duties of a grand jury. The judge read this to us from the statute book and then we were sworn in. We had to take an oath that we would perform our duty and abide by the laws.

This was followed on the same day by the first meeting in the grand jury room. At this meeting the Marshall County prosecuting attorney explained what the group was supposed to do, how he would bring cases, and maybe some witnesses, and then we had to vote as to whether there was enough evidence to have a regular case. We heard a couple of cases that first day. Actually, the day was broken up into hearing cases presented, discussing the cases, taking coffee breaks, taking a lunch break, then hearing more cases, and finally leaving.

After monthly meetings for three months, another event took place when we went out to investigate the jails. The grand jury has the authority to see if the jails are being run according to the law and that no prisoners' rights are being violated. We divided up into smaller groups and visited the jails. Then there was the last meeting, and some weeks later each juror received a check for gasoline and salary of six dollars per day.

Like all grand tour observations, this one provides only the most general features of these events. It gives an overview of what occurred.

In an earlier step we identified three major features of all social situations: *place*, *actor*, and *activities*, each of which provides a possible grand tour description. For example, in the grand jury setting I tried to describe the various actors involved. Among these were the *judge*, *county attorney*, *assistant county attorney*, *bailiff*, *witnesses*, *defendants*, *jurors*, and on one occasion an *interpreter*. There were numerous witnesses and jurors, thus offering room for a grand tour description of all the different types within each of these categories.

In addition to these three features of social situations, we can now identify six more that will help you in formulating initial grand tour questions and making the observations. This will give a total of nine major dimensions of every social situation.

1. *Space*: the physical place or places
2. *Actor*: the people involved
3. *Activity*: a set of related acts people do
4. *Object*: the physical things that are present
5. *Act*: single actions that people do
6. *Event*: a set of related activities that people carry out
7. *Time*: the sequencing that takes place over time
8. *Goal*: the things people are trying to accomplish
9. *Feeling*: the emotions felt and expressed

In a most general sense, these dimensions can serve as guides for the participant observer. Consider the dimension of time, for example. I have already sketched in an overview of the sequence of events from the perspective of a grand juror. In addition, each meeting lasted most of a single day and the events were scheduled over time in a particular way. Every social situation includes this temporal dimension and by focusing on this dimension, new observations emerge. In the grand jury, cases heard at the beginning of the day frequently moved slower than cases heard toward the end of the day. This difference in *tempo* could be described not only for cases but for other activities as well.

After making numerous notes on the meetings and the specifics of cases, I realized that the dimension of *feeling* had been largely ignored. The question, "What are all the different feelings people have during grand jury meetings?" could lead to new and important grand tour observations. "What are all the goals people seem to be trying to achieve?" was equally revealing when one considered all the different people who participated in the grand jury process. These nine dimensions are not equally important for every social situation, but they do provide the beginning ethnographer with an excellent guide for making grand tour observations.

Mini-tour Observations

Almost all participant observation begins with grand tour observations. The descriptions entered in your fieldnotes offer almost unlimited opportunities for investigating smaller aspects of experience. Because grand tour observations lead to such rich descriptions of a social situation, the ethnographer must guard against the feeling, "I've described everything in this social situation." Every grand tour observation is like a large room with numerous doors into smaller rooms, each door to be opened by a mini-tour question-observation.

The form taken by mini-tour questions is identical to the questions that lead to grand tour observations except that mini-tour questions deal with a much smaller unit of experience. In asking yourself either type of question, you will always begin with phrases like the following:

1. What are all the . . . (places, acts, events, feelings, and the like)
2. Can you describe in detail the . . . (objects, times, goals, and the like)
3. Can you tell me about all the . . . (people, activities, and the like)

The second part of each question that leads to a mini-tour observation draws on specific information already discovered. Let's go back to the grand jury and see how to make mini-tour observations.

Earlier in this chapter I presented a grand tour of the major events that occurred over time on the grand jury, from the first moment a juror received notification until the last contact with the Marshall County Court. Here are some questions that guided me in making mini-tour observations:

1. Can you describe the period of waiting for the first meeting of the grand jury, what goes through your mind, what people do, and how they feel?
2. Can you describe in detail the first time the prospective jurors met in the criminal courtroom and received instructions from the judge?
3. Can you tell me all about a single case from the moment it is introduced by the prosecuting attorney until it is completely over?
4. What goes on during the coffee break? What are all the things people do in the order they do them?
5. Can you tell me in detail what happens during the time before the grand jury meetings begin, from the moment the first person arrives until the last one comes in and the meeting begins?

Here is the beginning of a lengthy fieldnote entry in response to the mini-tour question about a single case.

There was an air of anticipation, a few minutes during which the members of the grand jury sat in silence and the prosecuting attorney searched through his files. Then

he said, "I've got two cases to present this morning. I'll have to rush. We have ten witnesses." He spoke fast and conveyed a strong impression that we would have to move quickly throughout the morning.

"This is a case of felonious theft by retention. It means retaining property of at least \$2500, retail market value on the date of the offense. Here is a summary of the case. One day in July a van was broken into and a revolver was stolen. Then later there was another robbery of stereo equipment from a stereo store. The police, making an investigation of a house, recovered the revolver, three Pioneer receivers, one Teac tape deck, two JBL speakers. There were three people in the house at the time, and the police found the prints of one of them on some of the stereo equipment."

The prosecuting attorney spoke rapidly, and when he came to this point he looked up at a clerical assistant and motioned to him. He got up and left the grand jury room. I looked at the people on the grand jury and they were now whispering to each other, all looked very interested.

"We now have our first witness," the prosecuting attorney said as the clerk returned with a middle-aged man dressed in a blue business suit. The clerk pointed to a chair, the man sat down, the clerk asked him to raise his hand and proceeded to administer an oath: "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?" "I do."

"What is your name?" the prosecuting attorney asked. "Bob Johnson." "Would you spell your name and give your address?" "B-O-B J-O-H-N-S-O-N, 42 East Alder, Center City."

"On July 14 did you report a theft?"

"Yes, a .38 Colt was stolen from my van. I had purchased it in February of 1972, paid \$118 for it. At the time I worked for the Center City Police Department and I have a permit to carry the revolver."

"As of July 10, do you have any opinion about the retail value of the .38 Colt?"

"Yes. About \$140 because it had gone up about \$20 more than the purchase price." The prosecuting attorney turned abruptly to the grand jury and asked: "Any questions?" He paused for a total of three seconds, turned to the witness, and said, "Okay" and the clerk quickly ushered him out of the grand jury room.

You can see from this partial example how mini-tour observations lead to an enormous number of detailed descriptions. Your goal in making this kind of observation is to take what sometimes appears as a trivial event, such as a coffee break, and record it in concrete detail.

DESCRIPTIVE QUESTION MATRIX

The number of questions you can formulate to lead you to grand tour and mini-tour observations is almost limitless. By selecting each of the nine dimensions of social situations in turn, you can describe most features of any social situation. As you consider these dimensions such as space, actors, feelings, and goals, you will discover that your questions tend to lead you to the way these dimensions are *interrelated*. For example, you might begin

with a grand tour question like, "What are the major *events* in this social situation?" Then you might ask, "Who are all the *actors* in this social situation?" Then it would be possible to ask several mini-tour questions that *relate* these two dimensions such as:

1. Which actors participate in which events?
2. In what ways do events change relationships among actors?

As a guide to asking grand tour and mini-tour questions I have found it useful to prepare a matrix with each of the nine dimensions listed along both axes of the matrix. With such a matrix you can formulate descriptive questions for all the relationships possible among the nine dimensions of social situations. I have prepared a sample matrix which includes nine grand tour questions in the set of diagonal boxes and a great many mini-tour questions in all the other boxes of the matrix. The exact form of these questions will change from one social situation to another, but they can be used as a guide for checking your own thoroughness. It should be kept in mind that each social situation is different; each will emphasize some dimensions more than others. For example, in studying the grand jury I had very few *objects* to describe. Much of my time was spent observing one particular kind of *activity*: speaking. In another fieldwork project in a factory that produced equipment for tanneries, much of the description involved *objects*. This descriptive question matrix is offered as a guide to making descriptive observations. Each person who uses it will have to adapt it to the social situation under investigation. You will find yourself asking more questions from one part of the matrix than from others. However, by checking against this type of matrix you can avoid the problem of overlooking important ethnographic data.

In this step we have discussed the first type of observation made by ethnographers doing fieldwork. Although you will move to other types in the future, you will continue to make descriptive observations during part of every fieldwork period.

In commencing fieldwork the ethnographer is like a map-maker who sets foot on an uncharted island. Because the terrain is *unknown*, the map-maker cannot set out to locate deposits of iron ore, lakes, volcanoes, and landslides caused by earthquakes. At the start of the investigation one does not even know if these physical features exist. Instead of beginning with preconceived ideas about what to find, the map-maker sets out to describe what can be observed. Whatever the individual encounters goes into the record book. Certainly this kind of investigator will overlook some important features of the landscape, but later, after a preliminary survey map has been drawn, it will be possible to come back to the island to discover and include more details. In much the same way, the ethnographer begins with descriptive observations stimulated by grand tour questions. At almost the same time, with

Descriptive Question Matrix

| | | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|---|
| SPACE | Can you describe in detail all the <i>places</i> ? | OBJECT What are all the ways space is organized by objects? | ACT What are all the ways space is organized by acts? | ACTIVITY What are all the ways space is organized by activities? |
| OBJECT | Where are objects located? | Can you describe in detail all the <i>objects</i> ? | What are all the ways objects are used in acts? | What are all the ways objects are used in activities? |
| ACT | Where do acts occur? | How do acts incorporate the use of objects? | Can you describe in detail all the <i>acts</i> ? | How are acts a part of activities? |
| ACTIVITY | What are all the places activities occur? | What are all the ways activities incorporate objects? | What are all the ways activities incorporate acts? | Can you describe in detail all the <i>activities</i> ? |
| EVENT | What are all the places events occur? | What are all the ways events incorporate objects? | What are all the ways events incorporate acts? | What are all the ways events incorporate activities? |
| TIME | Where do time periods occur? | What are all the ways time affects objects? | How do acts fall into time periods? | How do activities fall into time periods? |
| ACTOR | Where do actors place themselves? | What are all the ways actors use objects? | What are all the ways actors use acts? | How are actors involved in activities? |
| GOAL | Where are goals sought and achieved? | What are all the ways goals involve use of objects? | What are all the ways goals involve acts? | What activities are goal seeking or linked to goals? |
| FEELING | Where do the various feeling states occur? | What feelings lead to the use of what objects? | What are all the ways feelings affect acts? | What are all the ways feelings affect activities? |

| | | | | | |
|-------|--|--|---|--|--|
| EVENT | What are all the ways space is organized by events? | TIME What spatial changes occur over time? | ACTOR What are all the ways space is used by actors? | GOAL What are all the ways space is related to goals? | FEELING What places are associated with feelings? |
| | What are all the ways that objects are used in events? | How are objects used at different times? | What are all the ways objects are used by actors? | How are objects used in seeking goals? | What are all the ways objects evoke feelings? |
| | How are acts a part of events? | How do acts vary over time? | What are the ways acts are performed by actors? | What are all the ways acts are related to goals? | What are all the ways acts are linked to feelings? |
| | What are all the ways activities are part of events? | How do activities vary at different times? | What are all the ways activities involve actors? | What are all the ways activities involve goals? | How do activities involve feelings? |
| | Can you describe in detail all the events? | How do events occur over time? Is there any sequencing? | How do events involve the various actors? | How are events related to goals? | How do events involve feelings? |
| | How do events fall into time periods? | Can you describe in detail all the <i>time periods</i> ? | When are all the times actors are "on stage"? | How are goals related to time periods? | When are feelings evoked? |
| | How are actors involved in events? | How do actors change over time or at different times? | Can you describe in detail all the actors? | Which actors are linked to which goals? | What are the feelings experienced by actors? |
| | What are all the ways events are linked to goals? | Which goals are scheduled for which times? | How do the various goals affect the various actors? | Can you describe in detail all the goals? | What are all the ways goals evoke feelings? |
| | What are all the ways feelings affect events? | How are feelings related to various time periods? | What are all the ways feelings involve actors? | What are the ways feelings influence goals? | Can you describe in detail all the <i>feelings</i> ? |

mini-tour questions in mind, the ethnographer will observe and record the details of social life. As time goes on, each ethnographer will come back to events and activities observed earlier and try to describe them in more detail.

Once a map-maker or geographer has an initial description of an uncharted island, he or she might want to begin looking for specific relationships between land features. It might be possible to formulate some hypotheses to be tested by later observations. But before this can occur, the geographer will have to sit down with the maps and analyze them in great detail. In similar fashion, before you can go on to making focused and selected observations, you will need to analyze the data you have collected from making descriptive observations. In the next two steps we will examine ways you can analyze the data you have collected.

Tasks

- 4.1 Write out a series of questions that will lead to both grand tour observations and mini-tour observations. Review earlier fieldnotes to do so.
- 4.2 With these questions in mind, conduct a period of participant observation in which you make both grand tour observations and mini-tour observations.
- 4.3 Write up an expanded account of these descriptive observations.

Step Five

MAKING A DOMAIN ANALYSIS

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the nature of ethnographic analysis.
2. To understand the nature of cultural domains.
3. To identify the steps in making a domain analysis.
4. To carry out a systematic domain analysis on all fieldnote descriptions collected to date.

By now you have collected and recorded many pages of descriptive observations in your fieldnotes. With grand tour and mini-tour questions in mind you could probably go on making more observations for many weeks. In fact, it would be possible to make *only* descriptive observations, describing in more and more detail the social situation you have selected. Some beginning ethnographers who work without guidance continue to collect descriptive observations until they decide it is time to write up their ethnographic report. Although many good ethnographies have been done this way, it is both time consuming and ineffective. In order to discover the cultural patterns of any social situation, you must undertake an intensive analysis of your data *before* proceeding further. You will recall our earlier discussion of the ethnographic research cycle which went from asking questions to collecting data to making an ethnographic record to *analyzing ethnographic data*. Only when you have completed the cycle will you be ready to return to the first step of asking more questions and then collecting more data. In this step we will examine the nature of ethnographic analysis and discuss in detail the first type: domain analysis.

ETHNOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole. Analysis is a search for *patterns*. In the social situation you are studying you have observed behavior and artifacts. As you have recorded what people do and say, you have been able to make inferences about what they know. But, in order to move on and describe the *cultural* behavior, the *cultural* artifacts, and the *cultural* knowledge, you must discover the patterns that exist in your data. In a general sense, all your ethnographic analysis will involve searching through your fieldnotes to discover cultural patterns.