Study Abroad Journal / Report

*Journal report of observations, assumptions, analysis & research related to observations.*

Topic Focus:

Trip Preparation Research (demographics, readings):

Date: Location:
Observation: (health, culture, societal, religious – based on windshield survey)

Assumptions:

Analysis for in-depth study:

Research findings (include citation):

Application:
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Windshield Survey Components and Descriptions

Housing: What is the age of the houses, architecture? Of what materials are they constructed? Are all neighborhood houses similar in age, architecture? How would you characterize their differences? Are they detached or connected? Do they have space in front or behind? What is their general condition? Are there signs of disrepair—broken doors, windows, locks missing? Is there central heating, modern plumbing, air conditioning?

Open space: How much open space is there? What is the quality of the space—green parks or rubble-filled lots? What is the lot size of the houses? Lawns? Flower boxes? Do you see trees on the pavements, a green island in the center of the streets? Is the open space public or private? Used by whom?

Boundaries: What signs are there of where this neighborhood begins and ends? Are the boundaries natural—a river, a different terrain; physical—a highway, railroad; economic—difference in real estate or industrial or commercial units along with residential? Does the neighborhood have a displayed identity, a name? Are there unofficial names?

“Commons:” What are the neighborhood hangouts? For what groups, at what hours (e.g., schoolyard, candy store, bar, restaurant, park, 24-hour drugstore)? Does the “commons” area have a sense of “territoriality,” or is it open to the stranger?

Transportation: How do people get in and out of the neighborhood—car, bus, bike, walk, etc.? Are the streets and roads conducive to good transportation and also to community life? Is there a major highway near the neighborhood? Whom does it serve? How frequently is public transportation available?

Service centers: Do you see social agencies, clients, recreation centers, signs of activity at the schools? Are there offices of doctors, dentists; palmists, spiritualists, etc.? Are there parks? Are they in use?

Stores: Where do residents shop—shopping centers, neighborhood stores? How do they travel to shop?

Street people: Who do you see—housewife, mother with a baby? Do you see anyone you would not expect—teenagers, unemployed males? Can you spot a welfare worker, door-to-door salesman? Is the dress of those you see representative or unexpected? What animals do you see—stray cats, pedigree pets, “watchdogs”?

Signs of decay: Is this neighborhood on the way up or down? Is it “alive”? How do you decide? Trash, abandoned cars, political posters, neighborhood-meeting posters, real estate signs, abandoned houses, mixed zoning usage?

Race / Ethnicity: Are the residents Caucasian, African-American, or of another minority, or is the area integrated? Are there indices of ethnicity—food stores, churches, private schools, information in a language other than English?

Religion: Of what religion are the residents? Do you see evidence of heterogeneity or homogeneity? What denominations are the churches? Do you see evidence of their use other than on Sunday mornings?

Health / Morbidity: Do you see evidence of acute or chronic diseases or conditions? Of accidents, communicable diseases, alcoholism, drug addiction, mental illness, etc.? How far it is to the nearest hospital? Clinic?

Politics / Media: Do you see any political campaign posters? Is there a headquarters present? Do you see an evidence of a predominant party affiliation? Do you see outdoor television antennas? What magazines, newspapers do residents read? What media seem most important to the residents—radio, television, print?