Observation and Analysis

EDTC 809 Assessment and Evaluation

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Fall 2017

**Introduction**

The research was done through an observation at Martin Luther King Federal Court House Newark, NJ on September 26th for the court trial of a New Jersey Senator. This trial was open to the public and had started a few weeks ago. The observations were done by watching the attendees and jury’s behavior during the trial and taking notes while it was occuring. The question that evolved was what happens at the trial of a man of great power while he on trial in a State he represents?

**Process**

Part 1- I took the notes on a small white pad. When I arrived I didn’t know what to expect but after I got in and was at the trial I began to realize that there was a lot going on simultaneously with major groups and subgroups that could have observed and different settings that set the stage for my observations among which:

* Setting: the court plaza
* Setting: the first floor security desk
* Setting: the elevator
* Setting :the fourth floor outside the court room entering
* Setting: the court room where the trial is conducted
* Setting: the fourth floor outside the trial leaving

**Part 2: Full field observation notes**

The observation takes place at the Federal Court House in Newark NJ on Monday September 25, 2017. The researcher arrives at parking lot behind building at 8:30 am. He sees a few men and woman going in back door of building. Figure out it is an employee entrance. He walks to gate house at western end of parking lot and ask attendant where main entrance is? He points north so the researcher walks around to the front. Basically empty except a few cameras in opposite corner (south west of plaza) he proceeds to the entrance and goes thru security. He has to take off his shoes and empty his pockets, Show ID to security guard and sign into building. Once inside they show me seating area to put my shoes back on. My phone goes off. The person he was supposed to meet is out on the plaza so he turns around and proceeds out. In the few seconds since the first security check the plaza now has activity he sees at least three reporters have joined the camera crews and reporters are taking people to different parts of the plaza to do their interviews. The researcher get called over to do his with first a woman and then a second one a YouTube segment with a representative of the Senators office. They ask why he is there. How long has known the Senator? The sun is glaring though its early morning. He sits on a concrete bench and notice how big the stone monument is in the middle of the plaza it is stamped with the scales of justice.

* 4 TV stations w reporters interviewing people asking why they are there?
* 2 women sit on concrete benches, sunny and glare.
* Older Hispanic man with accent has PR flag in lapel man asks if he has family there he relays his sister lost everything. Big sculpture in courtyard doors. He speaks to researcher and gives him card. The researcher sees men in suits pushing and dragging suitcases of lawyer’s notes as they enter the building. The reporters shift to a gang plank made up of steel guides the Senator has arrived with a young woman who the researcher recognize as a TV reporter herself but also the defendants’ daughter. The Councilman shuffles the researcher over to the “receiving line “and he and the researcher great the Senator. After the senator goes in we follow into the building and go again thru security. The older man is recognized as councilman but he is sent out because he doesn’t have an id he says he left it in car. Line moves quickly everyone goes up in elevator to 4th floor. People probably reporters or law school students sitting on floor waiting to go in. The researcher is turned away from going in as the officer says mumbles something about who can go in. The door opens slightly and the researcher sees about 10 people inside. The researcher waits a while and then calls the senators aide to ask if he can go in or what the procedure is for getting in. He comes out nods to the officer the researcher is on the guest list so he is admitted inside. The space is much smaller than other courtrooms he’s been in probably only 5 rows of seats on each side. The researcher sees the Senator and his legal team from the back. The front row behind him has his daughter and an older woman probably a family member. The researcher goes in the next row to the inside corner directly cattycorner to the jury box. He sees three people straight ahead of him standing/ mulling around big computer screens in front and near the jury box. All talk in muffled tones, everyone seems to have dark suits. The defendant looks tired. The City councilman from downstairs enters more questions about relief efforts in Puerto Rico. Someone comments reporter should be covering Puerto Rico not the trial. After 40 minutes two women file in and sit next to the researcher they were the ladies on the concrete bench downstairs on the plaza. The woman sitting next to the researcher startles the researcher by fixing his collar. She says she had 7 brothers and smiles at him. Inside the court room the reporters, the defendant and the legal team, the court staff, the judge ,the jury, the guests the researcher recognize only one lawyer who gave a talk at Seton Hall while I was in college. The researcher focuses on the emblem over the Judges chair US District court. The researcher overhear someone say that a juror was late that’s why the delay. Front box now has the press secretary. The jury box is still empty. A court warden in white shirt and badge calls out “turn off phones and All Rise. Judge enters and judge says to send jury in. Jury comes in and all are seated. Judge is an elderly black man –robust and no nonsense. The researcher continued to take notes of his observation of jury members of which he notes there are more than 12. Maybe alternates?

As the jury is seated the researcher has an opportunity to observe them. He wonders what they will do.

* 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 back row
* 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 front row
* Two TV screen at east and west side of jury box
* White man Juror four is playing with his beard
* Black woman Juror 9 is playing with her nails
* Black male Juror 10 scratching eye
* Number 4 front row turns toward the judge and seems attentive
* Nine men and nine woman
* Judge starts and the TV screens come on a chart is flashed on the screen
* Judge calls on lawyer defendants lawyer Mr. L to start eh cross examination of the witness, an FBI accountant
* Questions go back and forth and lawyers object to certain questions
* jury sent out judge hears him
* Judge says “What is good for the goose not necessarily good for the gander”
* Judge smirks laughs
* Tags on each jurors shirt
* Slow moving Row 1 number 8 rocking back and forth
* Mr. L continues flashes chart on screen depicting trips taken to Dominican Republic probably thirty of them discuss trips costs how many people on flights
* Goes to how many Senator paid for
* Flashes pictures of senator his family members on screen with family member of person who is accused of bribing the senator
* Judge is impatient
* Judge sends jurors out
* Prosecution a female lawyer late 30’s object over and over to line of questioning’
* Judge concurs makes defendants attorney move on
* Questions on ethic forms are brought up Some of the charges revolve around not reporting things on ethics form
* Defense attorney grills FBI agent on who is covered by the form
* FBI agent replies when pushed that person whose trip is not on form is not covered by ethics form and didn’t need to be on form so charge seems groundless
* At 11:30 the judge frustrated with conversation calls a break for lunch
* Empty out into the hall walk down in back of Senator to use bathroom he is with his aide the researcher speaks for a few moments and then leaves having told the Senator he has a lunch meeting with Dr Creswell presenting
* I took the notes on a small white pad. My primary thought was there was a lot going on that I could focus on a lot as is this was a play there were simultaneously scenes I could have observed fuller
* I was discrete taking my notes I sat on a bench in the courtyard wrote my interaction at the security and elevator and hallway as soon as I entered the court room while in the court room I made the observations and wrote them down No one seemed to notice my jottings as they were distracted as I was by the noisy typing of the reporters on their lap tops in the row behind me
* The observation took place Martin Luther King Federal Court House in Newark, NJ on September 26 from 8:30AM-10:30AM.
* The purpose of the study is to observe what it is like to be at a trial of a US Senator in a Federal Court House.
* The question being looked at is how does a man of great power go on trial in a State he represents?

Part 3: I Coding Data: Priori Codes

Coding during a first cycle can be a single word to full sentence. The second coding captures the primary content and essence. Patterns are also coded as Process codes (Saldana 2013,p.118-22). Social organization coding is applied below. In the first instance coding captured what was happening and observed. In the second coding a more in depth review of what is happening; Social interactions among all parties, and the decorum of a trial, the framework to interact within that is not normal to every day interaction but is a system (the trial system) onto itself. From entry into the building, interaction with guards, security. Entrance to the court room , behavior of the judge and the court attendants, the process of the legal trial the defendant and the prosecutors, the questioning of witnesses and interaction non verbal with the jurors are all part of the PLAY that is unfolding in front of us and themes emerge among a backdrop that within those themes in the court and judge system of justice holds the fate of the Senator sitting in the defendants box before them

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| Observation | Themes |

The researcher was discrete taking his notes. First he sat on a bench in the courtyard wrote his interaction at the security and elevator and hallway as soon as he entered the court room. While in the court room he made observations and wrote them down. No one seemed to notice his jottings as they were distracted as the researcher were by the noisy typing of the reporters on their lap tops in the row behind them

Part 4: Analysis

The researcher in this observation was an observer and a participant. Invited to attend he gave interviews, intermingled with the asttendees as a guest of the defendant snd spoke tot eh defendant at times during the observaqtional period. The question that was asked and answered was what was it like to attend a trial of a US Senator in the state he represents.

After reviewing my obdservations and coding the observations Ithe researcher found themes . One was the social interaction between the reacher and the other grouos in attendance and the obsdervation of groups that there was no interaction with: the jury, the legal teams the Judge int eh case. Coding was useful (Saldana) to summarize and capute meanings

Trials as social sytems onto themselves they hace a structure and pariticpants na d rules of decorum that must be followed. In each trial there is a defendant, a legal team, the court officers, the jury ndf the attendees . Brought into a court room there are physical space designs , court room seats, the huryt box, the defendant and procutors tablers anf th er Judges and witness boxes. By observing an coding different elements that happen simultaneously research can observe and understand bett ewrhtr ejudicial system. Understanding of a trial of a US Senatror can benefit society by understanding better a role of a pulblci official the day to day decisiosn that are made by them, the processes that they must adhewre to, and an examination of what can occur if the government decideds to bring a case against such a person.

Conclusion

**Appendix 1: Jottings Magro Oct 2017**

Arrive at parking lot behind building at 8:30 am,

A few men and woman going in back door of building. Figure out it is an employee entrance.

Walk to parking lot attendant where main entrance is?

Plaza empty except a few cameras in opposite corner (south west of plaza)

Go to entrance and go thru security.

Take shoes off and empty my pockets

Show ID to security guard

Phone goes off.

Person I am meeting is out on the plaza

Plaza now has activity.

Three reporters and camera crews doing interviews.

I do mine

Sun is glaring

Sit on a concrete bench

Big stone monument is in middle of plaza w/the scales of justice.

4 TV stations w reporters interviewing people asking why they are there?

2 women sit on concrete benches, sunny and glare.

Older Hispanic man with accent PR flag in lapel man

Asks if he has family in PR

Sister who lost everything

Gives me his card.

Men in suits dragging document notes enter building.

Reporters shift to gang plank made up of steel guides

The Senator w a young woman TV reporter, his daughter.

Councilman shuffles me to the “receiving line “

We great the Senator.

Go again thru security

The older man a Councilman sent out get his ID in car. Line moves quickly

Everyone goes 4th floor.

People sitting on floor

I am turned away

Officer says mumbles something about who can go in.

Door opens slightly see 10 people inside.

Call the senators aide can I go in or

Comes out nods to the officer I go inside.

Small space 5 rows of seats on each side.

Senator and his legal team in front of seats.

His daughter and an older woman probably in front row.

I next row across from the jury box.

Three people straight ahead mulling @ big computer screens

Muffled tones, dark suits.

The defendant looks tired. Gray.

City councilman enters questions about relief efforts in Puerto Rico.

Comments reporter should be covering Puerto Rico.

Two woman file in sit next to me

Woman startles me by fixing my collar

Says she had 7 brothers smiles at me

The reporters, the defendant and the legal team, the court staff, the judge the jury, the guests I recognize only one lawyer

Spoke at Seton Hall

Focus on the emblem over the Judges chair US District court.

Juror was late - delay.

Front box - press secretary.

Jury box empty.

A court warden in white shirt “turn off phones and All Rise.

Judge enters jury come in all are seated.

Judge is an elderly black man –robust and no nonsense.

Jury members more than 12.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 back row

1, 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 front row

Two TV screen one each end of jury box

White man Juror four is playing with his beard

Black woman Juror 9 is playing with her nails

Black male Juror 10 scratching eye

Nine men and nine woman Judge Starts and the TV screens come

Chart is flashed on the screen

Judge calls on lawyer Mr. Lowell

Witness goes into witness box

FBI accountant lawyers object jury sent out judge hears him

“What is god for the goose not necessarily good for the gander?”

Judge smirks laughs

Tags on each jurors shirt

Slow moving Row 1 number 8 rocking back and forth

Mr. Lowell continues flashes chart on screen trips to Dominican Republic probably thirty of them discuss trips costs how many people on flights

Goes to how many Senator paid for

flashes pictures of senator his family members on screen

Questioning goes on for 30 minutes

Interruptions, yelling, questioning of judge

Jury sent out twice

Judge is impatient

Judge sends jurors out

Prosecution a female lawyer late 30’s object over and over to line of questioning’ Judge concurs makes defendants attorney move on

At 11:30 judge call break

Empty out into the hall

Walk down in back of Senator

With aide we speak for a few moments

I leave.