

The Mass-Observation Project

Autumn 2004 Directive

Part 1: Being part of research

Have you ever carried out research?

Please describe any studies on people that you have carried out in your employment or voluntarily for an organisation - or as part of your own interests.

The kinds of things you might include

- Doing research at school/college/university for projects where you had to investigate an issue
- Community projects eg oral history, local history, gathering local opinions on an issue where you had to interview people
- Being employed to interview people as part of an opinion poll or market research
- Family history or personal investigations
- Government or official research eg for the Census
- Academic research/medical research/anything else you can think of

Please include dates and details of the projects including what you felt about it and what happened to the results. Are you someone who enjoys this sort of activity? Did you feel the research was valuable? If so, why?

Have you taken part in research?

Most of us have been stopped in the street by someone with a clip board saying "Excuse me could you spare a few minutes?" Can you recall this happening to you? How have you responded?

Does it make a difference how you are invited to take part in a study (eg in the street, door-to-door callers, surveys at your work place, diaries to be kept of your activities, questionnaires through the post, unsolicited phone calls, questions via email)

Have you ever volunteered to be a "guinea pig" in medical research? Please describe.

Have you been involved in the outcome of research projects? For example, when people are interviewed for an oral history project, they are usually given the interview transcript to read and correct. Has this ever happened to you?

Please describe the different experiences you have had in as much detail as you can, and give your feelings about them.

Do you feel that social research is important? Please comment.

As usual, please start both parts of your reply on a new sheet of paper with your M-O number, (NOT name), sex, age, marital status, town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember not to identify yourself or other people inadvertently within your reply.

Being put into categories

There are two further sorts of information which are often requested in surveys: *your ethnic group* and *your social class*.

Ethnic group: Have you been asked to supply this information in surveys or ethnic monitoring for jobs? How do you respond? What do YOU think the categories should be called and where would you place yourself and why?

Social class: How do you think this should be worked out? Income? Life style? Education? Family background? Where you live? Have a think and let us know, and say where you'd place yourself and why.

How important to you are these two categories and do you think that the information helps in understanding social inequalities?

Usually the mini-biography which we ask you to send in with each directive reply provides basic biographical information about you for research - your year of birth, the town, city or village where you live, your sex and a brief indication of your occupation or former occupation. Sometimes it includes marital status or family circumstances. How would you feel if we also asked you for information about your ethnic group and social class as part of the M-O Project?

Being private

Is there any kind of information you would prefer to keep private? Eg income, sexual preference, political views, religious beliefs and affiliations.

Reflections on Mass-Observation

Does this feel like taking part in social research? Please explain.

When you write replies to the directives do you consciously think about the people who read what you write and use it in their research?

Have you ever wanted to know more about the people who use your replies in their research?

Part 2: Your Most Recent Dream

Please write down the last dream you remember having, whether it was last night, last week, last month, or whenever. (NB start a new sheet with your mini-biog)

Please describe the dream exactly and as fully as you can. Your report should contain, whenever possible, a description of the setting of the dream, whether it was familiar to you or not; a description of the people, their sex, age, and relationship to you (no real names please); and a description of any animals that appeared in the dream. If possible, describe your feelings during the dream and whether it was pleasant or unpleasant. Be sure to tell us exactly what happened during the dream to you and other characters.

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