

8 INVESTIGATE TOOLS

[FROM 'HOW TO STUDY PUBLIC LIFE' by Jan Gehl & Birgitte Svarre]



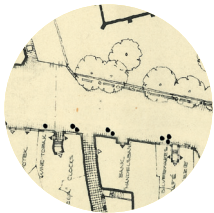
Counting

Counting is a widely used tool in public life studies. In principle, everything can be counted, which provides numbers for making before-and-after comparisons, between different geographic areas over time.



Looking for traces

Human activity often leaves traces, which can give the observer information about city life. Traces can be counted, photographed or drawn on a map.



Plotting

Activities, people, places for staying and much more can be plotted in, i.e. drawn as symbols on a plan of an area being studied to mark the number and type of activities and where they take place. This is also called behavioral mapping.



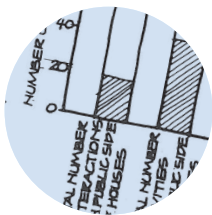
Photographing

Photographing is an essential part of public life studies as it helps to document situations where urban life and form either interact or don't after changes have been made.



Tracing

People's movements inside or crossing limited spaces can be drawn as lines of movement on the plan of the study area.



Keeping a diary

Keeping a diary can register details and nuances about the interaction between public life and space. Noting observations can later be categorized and/or quantified.



Tracking

In order to observe people's movements over a large area or for a longer time, observers can discreetly follow people without their knowing it or follow someone who knows and agrees to be followed and observed. This is also called shadowing.



Test walks

Taking a walk while observing is underway can be made more or less systematic, so that the observer sees problems and potentials for himself on any given route.