Preparing for field research includes conducting a literature review, contacting informants and using information provided by them cautiously, and making informal and formal contacts.

Various **roles of the observer** are possible -- varies by degree of participation and observation

- **complete participant** -- observe, but not identify; ethical issue of deception
- **participant-as-observer** -- participate fully, identify as observer
- **observer as participant** -- identify as observer, partial participation
- **complete observer** -- strictly observe

It is important to attend to the researcher’s relationship to the participants.

The **etic perspective** emphasizes the important of being able to ask questions of a culture that would not occur to the members themselves

The **emic perspective** refers to trying to adopt the beliefs, attitudes, and worldview shared by the culture being studied to gain a full understanding

Qualitative interviews can be undertaken in various ways

- informal conversational interviews
- interview guide (or schedule) approach
- standardized open-ended interviews

Life history (oral history interviews), feminist methods (usually focused on research that improves the lives of women), and focus groups, and focus groups (sometimes called group interviews) are three additional qualitative methods.

Recording observations raises a number of issues

- how much can you trust your memory? (usually not very much or very long)
- how can notes be taken in stages? (first sketchy, then more complete)
- how much should you record?