(Labov 1984), but this is not always practical. (We include a short checklist of factors to consider when undertaking sociolinguistic recordings as Appendix 1 in § 5.7.)

Another thing to remember is that groups have their own dynamics. Some people in groups are more quiet and some people are more loquacious. So recording in a small group doesn't guarantee that you will get good quality data from a lot more people. Labov et al. (1968) found that some people who were very quiet in group recordings talked freely in individual interviews. And the quiet people may not always be the group outsiders:

> In our South Harlem studies, the most extreme example was Jesse H., who never spoke a word in two group sessions. Yet Jesse was well known to be a person of consequence, who others turned to for advice, and in individual interviews he talked freely and at great length. (Labov 1984: 49).

People often come and go in the less structured context of group or walkabout recordings, and while it may be possible to find out some basic demographic information about participants (e.g. age, gender, social class, occupation, and education), other aspects of their social identities may be impossible to retrieve. These may include speakers' attitudes towards economic and social mobility (cf. Hazen 2002; Meyerhoff and Walker 2007), the communities of practice that individuals participate in regularly (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 1992; Bucholtz 1999; Meyerhoff 2001; Mendoza-Denton 2008), and many other identities particular to those speakers. Equally, some researchers may want specific data about the nature of the interactions recorded, such as who was sitting where, how participants made eye-contact, and what clothing they were wearing. Some of this data can be provided by video recording, but video is not always feasible or desirable (e.g. in Iran, videoing family conversations may be problematic because women often don't wear head scarves at home but they are expected to wear them in the presence of non-intimates, who might view the video).

Outside the lab it is hard to better the classic anthropological method of taking notes based on what you have personally seen and experienced in the field, typically known as participant observation. The photographs in Fig. 5.1 show the complex positioning and movement of speakers in the university common room where Adachi (2011) undertook some of her fieldwork. This placement and positioning needs to be noted independently if the sociolinguistic fieldwork is not based on video data.

5.5.2 Ethics and the question of surreptitious recording

We have discussed in some detail ways of dealing with the compromises that the observer's paradox forces us into. Readers might ask: why not hide the recording device and simply not tell people that we are
p. 142 recording them? Wouldn't this ↳

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capture the most naturalistic and spontaneous data? The answer to this is quite simple: it is completely unethical to record people's conversations and interactions without their informed consent. It is a tremendous breach of personal trust and professional standards (see also Rice, Chapter 18 below).