



WORKING PAPER FOR ARNHEM CONFERENCE

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The social status (roleplay)

The aim of the task:

Help the participants to understand that the social status is not an abstract concept, but part of our daily experience and behavior, and our behavior is based on cultural patterns.

The number of participants: 5-18

Time: 30-90 minutes

Tools:

- pieces of paper with instructions, symbolic tools for the simulation such as clothes, mobiles etc. (not necessary)
- videocamera and videoplayer, if we analyze the simulated scenes watching (replay) them together

Process:

1. Volunteer pairs or groups to play the following situation (roleplays):

- **A policeman** and **a woman** who hasn't respected the red light.
- **A university professor** and **a university student** who ask for a dead-line change of his or her degree thesis
- **A waiter or waitress** in a small, but cosy restaurant and **elderly guest** who would like to eat only a little soup.
- **A waiter or waitress**, who order a lunch with appetizer, dessert, fine wine and cognac.
- **A HR manager** and **a romani woman applying for a job** in the manager's office.
- **A swarthy boy** standing in a shop with a piece of chocolate in his hands and **a shop assistant**
- **A client** and **a busy lawyer** or **a surgeon** fixing a meeting personally.
- **A school headmaster** and **a parent** talking about the problems of their child's class with a teacher.

2. It is recommended to play all the situations. Leave some minutes for preparation, and then 3-4 minutes for each situation to play. Ask the participants if they need some help, some tools etc. The trainer may arrange the room before the situations representing the cultural milieu of the encounter.

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3. After the roleplay situations talk about what has happened, and analyze the behavioral patterns and changes.

- What did you feel in the situation (role)?
- Have you ever had a similar experience? To what extent was it similar to this situation? What were the differences?
- How did the cultural background and patterns influence the people in the situation?
- What is the importance of some external patterns such as clothes, mobiles, rites: introduction, the position (placement) of the persons?
- What kind of specific communication style or technic was used by the participants?

- How did they use the available time?
 - What kind of stereotypes can we discover?
4. If we have enough time we may change the roles (between the playint participants) or add other ones to the situations.
 5. A possible variant of the task: during the play change suddenly the roles, and the participants have to finish the situation in this way. It is more difficult and it depends on the group whether it works or not.