

Good Practice for Field Trips and Data Collection

Fieldwork: the power of context and ethics

Data collection is a crucial part of research, leading to plausible answers to research questions. For such a purpose, field trips are made in accordance with planned target locations. To form a clearer picture of what the site and type of data are like before a research study actually starts, preliminary field work is usually necessary. Looking back on those field trips made over the last year, there are many points to ponder. The 2012 class of the Social Sciences Department, International Program, made a few trips to visit a number of places with the purpose of acquainting ourselves with how data should be collected during our field work which would occur in the not too distant future. Before such trips, we might have a vague idea of what the actual site would be like or what type of data we should find useful for our research. Surprisingly, after those trips during which we had gained many kinds of experience, it eventually came to our knowledge that what we had learned in class and what we saw in actuality were something that really needed 'negotiating.' As for methodology, it came up almost automatically to us on site as to how data should be collected. Linkages to theories learned in class worked their way out effectively in relation to what appeared in sight. In brief, those field trips exposed us to the context under which social facts were perceived by us as to how they were constructed. That is to say, fieldwork assists us in the conceptualization process by exposing us to the power of context during data collection, without which analysis of research questions could hardly be realized.

In addition, data collection has to be done in a very ethical fashion. Ethics is a great matter of concern here. Our study subjects, participants, etc. are to be treated strictly with honor and respect. The data collected are to be processed in a professional way as required by our institution. Our research studies would never reflect good practice without such an important consideration.

In conclusion, field work needs incorporation of many dimensions. Success in research has to be aimed with proper consideration of ethical aspects. That is to say, a good research study has to be accomplished with academic effort and due ethical consideration.

Experience from field trip

The experience from field trip of Ph.D. program international science is marvelous, useful and practical. As we know study society is not only abstract like thinking or theory, but having experience in social reality and movement important too. The trip going to Chiangrai and Chiangmai province in which I joined last year, in July and August 2012, made me understand more about local community. Of course social reality and interaction will concrete your idea and becoming capital, e.g. social capital, academic capital in practice which you never find in library and university. That is to say study social science is not an armchair philosopher, seeing reality can help you think about what is the research question practically.

During the trip we have some activities especially discussion after travelling each day in the evening, this activity practice us how to explain society by using concept and to share our idea each other sharper. It is very important for you to know how to practice like this and you really need it when you write down your thesis to explain the society you have studied.

In addition, not only the field trip will shape me in academic way but interacting with the people in their society and culture has shape me being more human. That is I feel like my body, mind and feeling have connected to it and influence to converse my identity, it is shaping me. I can see the difference in myself before and after the trip. The trip makes my academic life lively.

So...how can you imagine if you study social science but never go to any place to see the reality? This is the important process which every academic institution must have to open the student mind and experience, no matter how often there are in a semester, but at least once in it. I appreciate for this activity which the program prepare for us and really hope that we will be supported each semester.