

Conducting Field Research in the Global South – Practical Advice

A 1-Day Seminar for GIGA Doctoral Students

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Overview:

This seminar aims to provide doctoral students with theoretical understanding, ethical reflection and practical advice on planning and conducting field research. After a brief introduction to theoretical approaches to field research, we will discuss safety and ethical issues that arise when conducting field research in foreign countries. In the afternoon, we will focus on practical aspects of planning, i.e. arranging contacts, gaining access, and building up trust and reputation. The last session will focus on gathering information in the field and manoeuvring the obstacles and challenges that arise from research stays in difficult environments.

Participants are expected to read a good amount of literature in preparation for the seminar to familiarize themselves with issues that the seminar cannot cover in depth. The seminar will not discuss research techniques in detail, i.e. there are no sessions on participant observation, interviewing or survey research methods.

Schedule:

10-11h: Lecture: Field Research – Objectives, Approaches, Debates
11-12h: Seminar Discussion (based on literature): Field Research & Ethics
12-13h: Lunch Break
13-15h: Planning Field Research: Contacts, Access, Safety
15-15.30h Coffee Break
15.30-17h Lecture & Discussion: In the Field - Gathering and Triangulating Information

Literature

Symposium: Field Research: How Rich? How Thick? How Participatory? *Newsletter of the APSA Section on Qualitative Methods*, Spring 2003.

<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/cqrm/Newsletters/>

Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2008. Field Research. *The Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Charles Boix and Susan Stokes. Oxford.

Elisabeth Jean Wood 2006: The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones, *Qualitative Sociology* 29: 3, pp. 373-386.

Jillian Schwedler 2006: The Third Gender: Western Female Researchers in the Middle East. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39: 3, pp 425-428

David Collier, "Data, Field Work, and Extracting New Ideas at Close Range," *APSA-CP Newsletter*, Winter 1999: 1-6.

Elwert, Georg 2003. Feldforschung. Orientierungswissen und kreuzperspektivische Analyse. Sozialanthropologisches Arbeitspaper, Heft 96. Institut für Ethnologie. Freie Universität Berlin. www.latautonomy.org/DE_FeldforschungNEU.PDF

APPLICATION:

- ❖ Elisabeth J. Wood 2003: *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Chapter 2: Ethnographic Research in the Shadow of Civil War. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 31-50.
- ❖ Lee Ann Fujii 2009: Conducting Field Work in the Aftermath of War and Genocide. In: Fujii: *Killing Neighbours. Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. Cornell University. Pages 23-44.

Ethnography and Political Science

Lisa Weeden 2010: Ethnographic Work in Political Science. *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, pp.255-272.

Kathleen M. Dewalt and Billie R. Dewalt 2002: *Participant Observation. A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Alta Mira. Chapters 1-3.

Samer Shehata 2006: Ethnography, Identity and the Production of Knowledge. In: Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds): *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research*

Howard Becker 1958: Problems of Inference and Proof in Participant Observation. *American Sociological Review* 23:6, pp. 652-660.

H. Russel Bernard 2006: Participant Observation. In: *Research Methods in Anthropology. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Oxford: AltaMira Press. Pages 342-386.

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel M. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw 1995: *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.