

Field Work Report

Anisa Santoso

My PhD research focuses on the foreign social policy making in the regional institution of ASEAN, particularly on the subject of migrant workers protection and on the case of Indonesia and the Philippines. From the choice of case it was obvious from the beginning of my research that no matter how I will tackle the theoretical bases of my thesis, the empirical part of this will need a field work to complement my argument. I had hoped that going into the field work will help me dig out some sort of synthesis from the reality I see on the field that will shed new light to my analysis and ultimately my argument. As an addition, it is also an important way to discover more data and test out my primary hypotheses.

As it is evidently not cheap to travel to these two countries from the UK and stay for a period of few months I applied for the School funding and was awarded a generous amount of travel funding by the school and IAPS. This funding enabled me to spend a favourable amount of time away on my field work.

The field work itself was divided to two parts; Indonesia and the Philippines. I began by visiting Indonesia from December 2010 until February 2011. During this time I managed to utilise previous contacts I made through prior experiences in the country to broaden and deepen the scope of resources for my research. In addition to interviews with relevant government officials and NGOs, I had the chance to observe processes within the workers recruitment and education as well as dig into other dimensions of the issue, such as welfare funds politics and the Indonesian political culture itself.

I conducted the Philippines part of the fieldwork from the period of March 2011 to late April 2011. Similar to the Indonesian part of my fieldwork, my visit to the Philippines had been focused on influential subjects to the issue of migrant workers. From my interviews with government officials, various NGOs and other societal groups a similar pattern of influence with the case of Indonesia surfaced. Although both cases have different characteristics, through my work in the Philippines I was able to draw a line of inference for my analysis which will add into ultimately, my argument.

This experience has provided me a more detailed framework with which to look at the object of my research. It has definitely given me a more solid comprehension of the problem and an in-depth insight into how the actors involved view and act on the issue. The field research as a whole was a great experience for me in many ways. Academically I did attain valuable data and resources, but I also managed to capture the sentiment of the people working and touched by the issue, which helped me a great deal in defining my inference. A lot of the people I had been in contact with were surprisingly very resourceful and helpful for my research and although some had reacted to me with the

doubt of what the academia could possibly do to bring a better life for Asia's migrant workers; it reminds me even more of why I do my research.



