

Report on Participation in 2018 Taiwan Field Research Trip

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The field research trip to Taiwan has provided me with the opportunity to visit universities, companies, as well as institution and associations. After this trip, I am more motivated to conduct my research about regional inequality issues and the difference in the motivations of local and central government.

First of all, when we visited the agricultural neighborhood in Sanzhi, I learned a lot about the history of this area. Mr. Lin, a local farmer, emphasized the difficulties to fight against the local government, while we saw many kinds of rewards from the central government. According to him, the central government has been encouraging such sustainable agricultural projects, but the local government was in the favor of big companies, which had helped the economy boom. This kind of conflict in policy can be the result of the political system in Taiwan. However, even though the political system in Mainland China is supposed to keep the central and local government on the same page, such conflict still happens, and will affect the region in many aspects, like we saw in Sanzhi. Thus I felt when I conduct my future research I should investigate deeper into this issue in the context of Mainland China.

Secondly, we had a lecture regarding the global competitiveness of industry in Taiwan, followed by a visit to Lite-on group. Mainland China and Taiwan have been working closely in many industries. By looking into the current situation in Taiwan, we could see the influence that the policy change in Mainland China has exerted on the Taiwanese economy. Vice versa, the Chinese economy could also be shaken by such changes, especially for the provinces that rely on FDI and international trade. Even though my research is currently focused on institutional quality, in the near future, I also have to provide a clear image of the key factors fostering economic growth in China as a country, as well as different regions. And I believe policies made by regional government deserve more attention.

Thirdly, I really appreciate that we have spent one day learning about international relations. Taiwan is very special to us students from Mainland China because of historical reasons. Before arriving at Taiwan, we were divided into study groups in order to prepare background information of each topic that we are going to learn about when in Taiwan. And I was lucky to be in the group of international relations and trade. Our group prepared the material for Cross-strait relations, Taiwan-Japan relations, Taiwan-ASEAN relations as well as trade partners of Taiwan. The lecture we had in NCCU, which was about U.S., Taiwan and Mainland China, was not only comprehensive but also included very recent issues regarding this relationship. It was not until this lecture that I realized how rapidly things have changed between these three countries. This lecture, along with the session we had at the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association, has made me rethink the cross-strait relationship and its future possibilities. This one-day experience has given us a better understanding about the political situation of Taiwan. When we were in Taiwan, we witnessed the election for mayors. This was an eye-opening experience, especially when we connect what we learnt on the first day with what we saw in the following days.

What's more, the workshop we had with NCCU and NTU students has inspired me to keep improving my current

research proposal. As a first-year doctoral student, my research is still at a very early stage, so being able to present my research proposal and discuss it with more people meant a lot to me. The audience responded to the key issues that I am tackling, and gave very constructive comments. Also, the presentation by some of the Taiwanese students used micro-level data and econometric methods, which was something that I want to include in my research. I really appreciate the opportunity to learn from their research experience.

Last but not least, this trip connects us with other people. On one hand, during the lecture at NCCU as well as the workshop at NTU, we were offered the chance to meet and talk with the local students. Especially during the dinner after the workshop, we had the time to continue the unfinished discussion from the workshop, and we were able to share our opinions in a relaxed atmosphere. On the other hand, this trip allowed students in our program to get to know each other better. By working as a group to represent Kyoto University, we gradually developed team cohesiveness. In the end, I am proud of being part of this program, and I want to concentrate on my research proposal and continue attending such workshops in order to improve my research.