Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: PhD research including fieldwork in the Levant

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Template: DCC Template

Project abstract:

In this research I pose the following question:*how does the social process of policy learning proceed in authoritarian regimes?* Research in the role of learning in policy making has focused on democratic contexts. The literature on authoritarian regime learning is focused specifically on regime survival strategies. This study will substantially expand this focus by examining non-survival-based policy learning primarily in Jordan which is classed as an autocracy (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2020). My study will do this by examining the Kingdom's creative response to the pressures of its Syrian refugee crisis. This response combines development opportunities for young nationals and refugees with empowerment and resilience building, alongside the traditional approach of providing humanitarian assistance.

 The Jordan Compact (2016) ushered in this significant shift in policy, offering a "different kind of vision" (Betts and Collier, 2017). The agreement has been widely praised as offering something substantively new, but we do not yet know much about the policy development process. The Compact's resulting biennial Jordan Response Plans have involved international and domestic non state actors, particularly new and established International Non-Government Organisations, who are positioned at the meso-level of policy making. My research asks the additional question: *what is the relationship between the learning by these actors and incremental policy change?* In answering these questions, I will seek to uncover the nature of policy learning, the conditions and contexts which limit or enable it, and how this leads to policy development both at ground and national level.

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PhD research including fieldwork in the Levant

Data Collection

What data will you collect or create?

I will be collecting data that shows how refugee policy gets made, primarily in Jordan, but also in other countries in the Levant. In particular, I will be looking at how policy actors learn and how this in turn shapes policy during a period of incremental change. I will be collecting primary data at policy meetings and capturing reflections of elite and other personnel from key policy actors. I will also collect evidence of outcomes that link directly to the learning uncovered. The locations for this data collection will be in a variety of refugee communities across the country. I will analyse documents from policy actors for evidence of policy learning processes. This will include meeting minutes, national and regional policy documents and web reviews of policy actor websites. I will also use survey data from the Arab Barometer to judge satisfaction levels in refugee policy in Jordan. I will also use data from Relief Web to compare this with findings from Lebanon and Iraq.

The primary data will be in the form of digital photographs (JPEG), audio recordings (interchange file format) and textual data (MS Word). NVivo may be used although a decision has not been taken on this until training is complete after a training course at the end of March, 2022. I will store my data in my laptop in accordance with UK Data Protection Policy (2018) and this will be backed up by Birkbeck One Drive. Tabular data will be stored in Excel which is widely used. I will store my data in my laptop in accordance with UK Data Protection Policy (2018) and this will be backed up by Birkbeck One Drive.

I do not consider the data volume at this stage to be large enough to incur additional costs. However, I am alert to this and have set aside a contingency budget of up to £200 for this purpose.

How will the data be collected or created?

I will be reusing data that I collected during my master's dissertation. This includes Zoom interview recordings and transcripts with International Non Government Organisations, an International Organisation and the Chairman of the Jordan INGO Forum, as well as arrays recorded on Excel spreadsheets of document analysis and web reviews which I will update periodically. I will collect new interview data, recording the in person interviews on a recommended Olympus recorder. I will transfer the recordings to my laptop and create transcripts in Word documents. My chosen formats and software allow the long term sharing and access to the data. My primary data collection files will be named in accordance with the nature of the data collection activity. For example, I will name a file Interviews. Additionally, I will create arrays in Excel to organise the collected data before analysis. One of these files will be called Mapping Macro and Meso Level Change in Jordan's Refugee Policy Response (a separate file will be created for shadow cases) which maps policy changes within the policy cycle against learning activities and time. Another of these files will be a Taxonomy which maps variations between policy actors and learning. I will create a flow chart to plan and record versioning and will consult Data One on data quality.

Documentation and Metadata

What documentation and metadata will accompany the data?

I will create a guide in accordance with Metadata standards to accompany the data. At present I intend to follow the standards outlined in the [Data Documentation Initiative](#) (DDI) as this is recommended for research in social science . This will include for example, an account of the new theory of organic learners and their characteristics and how to identify these in the data. I will include a thorough methodological explanation. This will include how the process tracing steps have been synthesised with Yin's case study protocols so that others can understand the value of combining this approach. This will also include an explanation of process tracing tests and how they have been applied.

Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will you manage any ethical issues?

As this research involves working with human participants, ethical concerns are of primary concern. I will continually reflect on ethical issues.

At the outset, I gained ethical approval for the semi-structured interviews which I began conducting as part of my MRes dissertation and is the foundation for this inquiry. I have submitted an extended application for ethical approval, which includes considerations of new field based research, to Birkbeck. I have also competed a Declaration of Ethics Statement for the CBRL which includes a reflection on their principles for ethics.

As part of this process I have also completed a risk assessment for the CBRL and will be completing a risk assessment for Birkbeck.

I consider ethical issues are a matter to continually learn about and reflect on. I will attend training sessions and Birkbeck based discussions on ethical matters to develop my thinking. As I encounter new possibilities in the field, I will always consider the ethics of the situation before a take a decision to act.

Update with guidance from the right.

How will you manage copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues?

Once I have agreement for its sharing I will own the copyright and IPR of data.

I may choose to use photographs from websites of the actors who are my participants. I will seek their permission to use these photographs and quoting them as the source in line with copyright laws. When the data is available for sharing I will consult the DCC guide on how to licence research data.

Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up during the research?

The data will be stored on a laptop dedicated to this purpose alone and behind a password in accordance with UK Data Protection Policy 2018. It will be backed up on Birkbeck's One Drive which is managed by Birkbeck's IT team. I will be responsible for the laptop. In the event of an incident the data can be recovered from the One Drive. Some of the data may be politically sensitive in that it may reveal strategies for developing practice for example between INGO competitors.

How will you manage access and security?

Unless anonymity is requested by the participants the data is not confidential. However, the data will be stored behind a password which only I and my collaborators will know. I will transfer recordings of meetings and interviews directly to the laptop on the same day of completion of the event. There will be a time delay of no more than a few hours, but being aware of the risk extra care will be taken to protect the recorder keeping it on my person in a locked bag. This may be not be a significant issue if participants agree to be named which I think is likely. The data is immediately backed up on the Birkbeck One Drive and will comply with formal security standards such as ISO 27001.

Selection and Preservation

Which data are of long-term value and should be retained, shared, and/or preserved?

I think the transcripts and photographs will be of long term value. These may be accessed by other policy theorists who may wish to apply existing or new theories to them. A selection of photographs of the policy process meetings and outcomes will provide an historic record of this vital policy making process. I will also use the data to prepare reports and articles in the years following completion. I will consult the DCC guide on how to select data for curation during the post fieldwork period in 2022-23.

What is the long-term preservation plan for the dataset?

I will take responsibility for the long term preservation of the dataset. I will need access to a repository. I will consult Data One Best practices for selecting data for long term curation. I will consult the DCC guide on how to select and appraise data for creation. I hope to attend a training course on long term preservation, curation and preparing archives during 2022-23. I have set aside a personal budget of up to £300 for this purpose.

Data Sharing

How will you share the data?

I will share the data with participants initially. For example, I will send copies of the relevant transcripts, via secure email to participants, one the transcript has been made. I will share photographs in the same way. Once agreed, I will share transcript data via a repository. This will be updated with new data in the same way, as the project proceeds. I have considered getting a

persistent identifier but do not believe that the data collected will large enough in volume to require this.

Are any restrictions on data sharing required?

Based on my preliminary experiences in collecting the data I am not anticipating any significant difficulties in sharing the data. However, will share the data collected with the participants, and show them how it is being used in the study. From this I will seek a data sharing agreement. I need exclusive use of the data for up to two years after the completion of the thesis for the purpose of presenting the reports on findings.

Responsibilities and Resources

Who will be responsible for data management?

I will be responsible for implementing the data management plan DMP. I will treat this as a working document and regard this version as the first step. I will review and revise it regularly. I will be responsible for each data management activity and will regard these activities under the headings of data capture, metadata production, data quality, storage and backup, data archiving & data sharing.

What resources will you require to deliver your plan?

I require a laptop with Microsoft Office, with backup, which I already have and an online repository.