Research Proposal (Working Draft)

Motivation / Research Question

The research received from the Open Government Partnership (OPG) Strategic Refresh in 2016 showed stakeholders three things. It showed the level and type of compliance and commitment OGP participants had, it showed what varying factors drive the development and completion of a National Action Plan (NAP), and the potential long term impact OGP reform can have on participating countries (“OPG Research Agenda 2017 - 18,” 2017). OPG has compiled a wealth of publications, in terms of what effects OPG has on transparency promotion, and is now calling for research that address how these effects in transparency influence different behaviors and economic factors of its participants. OGP is has proposed four specific research topics, and the research collected from these topics will be used to promote the positive effects of having an open and transparent government.

One of the research questions focuses on the effects an open and transparent government has on the trust and legitimacy between the state and its citizens. More specifically, OGP has proposed the research question as:

*Does involving citizens in policymaking and service delivery lead to improved trust and legitimacy between the state and society? How? Which OGP or non-OGP countries and subnational governments have demonstrated these outcomes?*

Answering this question is important because many researchers perceive that improved trust and legitimacy between the state and society has a positive effect on civil society’s willingness to engage in the political process and reformations (cite). >>EXPAND<<

Targeted Audience

There are three different groups of individuals this research will target. The first group is made up of the Open Government Reformers (i.e. mid-level government officials / civil society actors) are already committed to improving the trust and legitimacy between each other, the state and civil society. The second group is the OGP Support Unit and Independent Reporting Mechanism, and they will use the results from this research to constrict an OPG platform that facilitates legitimacy and trust between state and civil society. Most importantly, the third group consists of the already engaged and committed political leaders and the skeptical political leaders that need empirical evidence a more open and transparent government positively effects the legitimacy and level of trust between state and civil society.

Methodology

*Analytical framework; why it is particularly suited to doing a synthesis study*

>>>> Talk about the previous conclusions from research, and elaborate on how important context and capturing a causal relationship is. (Agrawal et al., 2014)(Francoli, Ostling, & Steibel, 2015)(Idrc, 2015)<<<<

This paper is going to apply a difference-in-difference method, using time-series country level data from multiple accredited data sources, in order to quantify the effect a more open and transparent government has on the trust and legitimacy between that country’s state and civil society. The difference-in-difference analytical framework is preferred because it will definitively answer the question by theoretically isolating and empirically quantifying the causal effect between the independent and dependent variables. Additionally, the difference-in-difference framework allows the research and model to be scalable in terms of investigating the causal relationship at many different levels.

The greatest challenge to inference rests in the choice of the control groups that will constitute as a valid counterfactual to the countries that participate in the Open Government Partnership. To combat this challenge our study will employ difference-in-difference analyses from the global and continental perspectives, using data collected from more than 160 of the world’s 195 countries, as a control group. From the global perspective, all countries not participating in OGP will be used as a base control group, and from a continental perspective, all countries within each continent will be used as the control group to for the treatment group within that continent. As valid control group data sources surface, the scalability and applicability of the difference-in-difference approach will be considered (i.e.: Can the model’s statistical integrity be supported with assumptions made at the country level?). Additionally, a comparative analysis of countries with similar statistical characteristics (i.e.: GDP, population density, income per capita, and other theoretical variables that drive public trust) will be done in order to build a representative control group.

As these different control groups are investigated, a synthetic control method will be applied in order to find the best combination of comparison units that represent the case of interest. Although this method is not always in theory economically ideal, this method does drastically improve this paper’s ability to investigate the causal relationship from a more “contextual” ideal (Abadie, Diamond, & Hainmueller, 2015). Identifying these contexts allows researchers to further investigate the specific characteristics within the compared groups that allow for statistically significant casual results.

Knowing these specific characteristics will motivate more rigorous and statistically significant future research (i.e.: RCT in a specific areas that investigate which control variables facilitate transparency variables that effect public trust.).

Additionally, the synthetic controls analysis will be used to test the robustness to the difference-in-difference estimates. If the results from different-in-difference test are significant, then the synthetic controls analysis will yield similar weighted averages for that control group comparison.

*Extent of generalizability*

*Country or Regional Selection*

In the initial worldwide analysis, the 77 countries participating in OGP will be the treatment group, and the 160+ countries that receive a value from Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and participate in Gallup’s World Poll will be the control group. Both of these relationships will be investigated separately in order to determine the effect of participating in OPG has on each of the dependent variables.

After a complete overview difference-in-difference approach is applied to all countries using aggregate data, 5 to 10 countries will be chosen for a deeper, more inductive analysis, to investigate the causality of open government on that countries public trust. Each country will have its own set of economic assumptions applied and each difference-in-difference model will be critiqued independently.

*Anticipated Data Sources*

The determinants of public trust and government legitimacy are not well understood. Due to this, this paper will use statistically significant corruption and “confidence in government” estimates developed from organizations at the forefront of transparency promotional industry. The data sources will be Transparency International, the Gallup Poll, and the Open Government Partnership. Both TI’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and variables from Gallup’s World Poll will be considered proxies for “public trust” in different ways. These proxies will be used in separate difference-in-difference analyses. Using this data is appealing because there is adequate time before and after OPG’s introduction. The annual time series data is as follows:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Data Source Overview** | | | | |
| Data Source | Start Year | Most Recent Updated Year | Unit | Can it be converted easily? |
| Transparency International | 1995 | 2015 | Scale (10 pt. and 100 pt.) | Yes |
| Gallup | 2006 | 2015 | Percentage | Yes |
| OGP | 2010 | 2015 | Binary | Yes |
| World Bank | 1995 | 2015 | Varies (Basic Controls) | Yes |

Additionally, a rigorous literature and data base review will be conducted in tandem with the OGP’s Review Committee.

Project Plan

* July 17 – July 31, 2017: Literary review, clean data, and fine tune research
* Aug 1, 2017: Successful applicants notified
* Aug 2-16, 2017: Work with review committee to fine tune the research approach and project plan, identify and plan outreach to relevant stakeholders
* Aug 17 - Sep 29, 2017: Research
* Oct 2, 2017: Submit first draft of paper
* Oct 16, 2017: Receive feedback on provided paper
* Nov 9, 2017: Submit final draft
* Nov 20-23, 2017: OGP Regional Meeting in Argentina and possible launch of papers

Research team profile, including qualifications, track record and organizational capacities

Dr. Tauhid Rahman

Joe Navelski

Intern?

Bibliography

Abadie, A., Diamond, A., & Hainmueller, J. (2015). Comparative Politics and the Synthetic Control Method. *Source: American Journal of Political Science*, *59*(2), 495–510. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/24363579

Agrawal, A., Gibson, C. C., Brosius, J. P., Tsing, A. L., Zerner, C., D’Cruz, C., … Whitby, P. (2014). Summary for Policymakers. *Climate Change 2013 - The Physical Science Basis*, *1*(3), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004

Francoli, M., Ostling, A., & Steibel, F. (2015). *From Informing to Empowering: Best Practices and Recommendations for Improving Government Civil Society Interactions within OGP*. Retrieved from http://www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/FromInformingToEmpowering\_FullReport.pdf

Idrc, O. G. P. (2015). Advancing Open Government and Evaluating it’s Impact: Research Papers by the Winners of the OGP IDRC Research Grant, 2–3.

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Please submit your proposals to [munyema.hasan@opengovpartnership.org](mailto:munyema.hasan@opengovpartnership.org) by 12 midnight EST by July 14, 2017.

Task List

Research question

* Transition from question to audience better

Audience

- Clean up section / make it flow

Refine Methodology

* Run Diff-in-diff globally
* Run synthetic control method globally
* Run Diff-in-diff globally on synthetic control (weighted averages)
* Run Diff-in-diff continentally
* Run synthetic control method continentally
* Run Diff-in-diff continentally on synthetic control (weighted averages)
* Write equations – solid left hand side
* Be clear about research and defining a left hand public trust and legitimacy
  + Can we create this with a data set? OGP was invited, how many participants came

*Anticipated Data Set*

* Research needs to be conducted thoroughly about the literary surrounding public trust and legitimacy
* Can we create this variable?
* Rank them in the proposal

Research Team Profile

* Dr. Rahman – qualifications, track record, and organizational capacities
* Joseph Navelski – Independent Research, Peace Corps, Previous Grants/Proposals, Govt. Experience, Future Plans with Education and OGP