Research Proposal (Working Draft)

Motivation / Research Question

The research received from the Open Government Partnership’s (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 proposed research 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 same causal relationship at many different levels. The mode proposed is:

In this model, is a vector of trust/validity values, is a matrix of commonly used control variables (i.e. GDP per capita, Education Level, Mortality Rate, Geni-coefficient), is a vector of trust/validity post OGPs initial startup year (2011), and is a binary variable, for the treatment group, that equals “1” for each year that observed country participated in OGP, and “0” for each year it did not. The sign and magnitude of is the marginal effect of interest because it will tell how significant positive, or negative, the effect of participating in OGP has on the trust/validity variable.

The greatest challenges 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. In this paper, the research will approach this challenge in a two-step methodology. First, the model will be tested using a “placebo” effect where a fake treatment group will created to test if the treatment is getting picked up before the OGP was introduced. Second, this paper will apply the synthetic control method 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” side, it helps remove the endogeneity problem trough tested and rigorous bootstrap randomization, and it helps the disaggregation effect (Abadie, Diamond, & Hainmueller, 2015). Once the synthetic controls are created and tested, another difference-in-difference analysis will be applied and tested using the same aforementioned “placebo” effect. Additionally, the results from the original difference-in-difference analysis will be compared to the synthetic control diff-in-diff analysis as a robustness check. 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*

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 researchers to dive into country level analyses, using the same method, and conduct more rigorous and statistically significant analysis with disaggregated data (i.e.: RCT in a specific areas that investigate which control variables facilitate transparency variables that effect public trust.).

*Country or Regional Selection*

The aforementioned methodology will be employed at 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. In the initial worldwide analysis, the 77 countries participating in OGP will be the treatment group, and the 160+ countries that received a value based on public trust and government legitimacy will be the control group. Each trust/legitimacy dependent variable will be investigated separately in order to determine the effect of participating in OPG has on each of the independently derived dependent variables. The dependent variables will be classified as direct indicators of trust and legitimacy, and indicators representing variables for trust and legitimacy.

*Anticipated Data Sources*

The determinants of public trust and government legitimacy are not well understood. Understanding 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 from Transparency International, the Gallup Poll, World Bank, Freedom House, the World Values Survey and the Open Government Partnership. The data and their time lines are listed below in terms of usability in this papers diff-in-diff model. 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 |
| Freedom House |  |  |  |  |
| World Values Survey |  |  |  |  |

More specifically, data from TI’s Corruption Perception Index (CPI), confidence variables from Gallup’s World Poll, will be considered the primary variables for government legitimacy and public trust respectively, and these dependent variables will be used in separate difference-in-difference analyses. This data is appealing because there is adequate time before and after OPG’s introduction, in order to minimize other exogenous variables, and both surveys specifically ask questions in regards to public trust and government legitimacy.

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

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.

OPG Research Agenda 2017 - 18. (2017).

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