

MY410

Fundamentals of Research Design for International Development

Dissertation Proposal

Tips & Suggestions

November 2019

1. Introduction

- This document presents a few suggestions for your proposal.
- The aim of this document is to help you start writing.
- Avoid readinging this as a template that you have to replicate/adapt.
 - We don't want you to produce proposals (and dissertations) that look all the same.

Research Question

- Look out and be conscious of your choice of words.
 - interrogating words, e.g., how, why, does ($x \rightarrow y$), is (x associated with y), when, what, etc.;
 - relational words, e.g., interacts, affects, leads, conditions, uses, influences, transforms, etc.
- Think of different potential answers to your question.
 - If they sound awkward to you and or not aligned with what you had in mind, adjust the question accordingly.

Background Literature

- See if the CARS approach can help you: Create A Research Space.
- We know many things about [your topic]. But...:
 - Evidence is not conclusive on...
 - This proposition has not been tested here [time and/or space]
 - New/different data is now available.
 - Another variable could be missing.
 - Etc.

Research Design

- Make sure you motivate your choices, see the following examples (some might apply to you, but perhaps not all):
 - Case selection and/or sampling strategy
 - Data sources/collection: interviews, existing datasets (e.g., World Bank, V-Dem, etc.), secondary sources (datasets used in published research), archives, etc.
 - Data analysis (e.g., regression, comparative analysis, process-tracing, content analysis), etc.
 - Measures/operationalization
 - Etc.

Internal Consistency (Question & Design)

- Take a look at the following examples of questions and designs.
- Notice the highlighted words and the arrows.
 - Some words in the questions and designs are highlighted with different colors.
 - The arrows connect them to show some of the links between question and design.
- In your proposal, try to make those connections (you might not use arrows, but you can think of other ways).

Question & Design Consistency

Research Question	Research Design
Are political factors associated with the location of investment projects?	<p>RD1.</p> <p>Share of votes of ruling party (national and subnational) at voting district level. Source: electoral authority</p> <p>Government expenditures on infrastructure at the district level. Source: national and subnational published budgets.</p> <p>Regression analysis</p> <p>Case selection. Ideal case would be where national and subnational governments have legal prerogatives to invest at the local level.</p>

Research Question	Research Design
Are political factors associated with the location of investment projects?	<p>RD2.</p> <p>Motivations for investment decisions. Sources: interviews to office holders and bureaucrats at subnational governments, users and potential users (of alternative projects), contractors.</p> <p>Decision-making process. Sources: statutes, minutes, and interviews (see above).</p> <p>Process tracing</p> <p>Case selection. A subnational government that had to choose an investment project from a number of different options (e.g., public transportation).</p>

Question & Design Consistency

Research Question	Research Design
How is the international securitisation agenda affecting the performance of local NGOs?	<p>RD1.</p> <p>Experiences of NGO practitioners working within or/and around international security agenda Source: interviews with NGO practioners and participant observation</p> <p>Case study analysis</p> <p>Case of local NGOs with interviews as data source</p>

Research Question	Research Design
How is the international securitisation agenda affecting the performance of local NGOs?	<p>RD2.</p> <p>Working/aid conditions and experiences of NGO practitioners Sources: NGO reports, policies, legislations and acts, academic literature</p> <p>Critical review of secondary literature</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Critical review of literature+ key informant interviews</p>