Special Paper: Research Methods in Middle Eastern Studies

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Aims of the Paper

This special paper for the MPhil/MSt in Modern Middle Eastern Studies aims to provide students with 1) a basic knowledge of social sciences and 2) a broadly-based training in research methodologies which enables them to understand the principles of research design and be able to use a range of research instruments and analyse data. In particular, the paper will focus on developing students' ability to:

- understand the philosophical and epistemological issues underpinning the major research paradigms and their applications in any research study.
- define and formulate research problems and questions and decide on the most appropriate research methods.
- examine and critique a range of research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, and observation.
- analyse various qualitative data including interviews and documents.
- address ethical issues and codes of ethics in social research.

Week 1

Epistemological foundations of social sciences: The session will explore epistemological and ontological issues in the philosophy of social science and the philosophical underpinning of the major research theories and paradigms of social sciences. The session will also introduce students to the main philosophical debates and critiques of the major research theories.

Essay Questions
- Do we need research paradigms when conducting research?
- What are the main criticisms and shortfalls of social sciences?

Reading list:

Alan Bryman, Social Science Research Methods, Oxford University Press (3rd edition, 2008, especially pp 159-60, 391-5)

Bryman, A, (2001) Social Research Methods. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Crotty, M. (1998) Foundations of Social Research. London: Sage.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (2003) Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry (2nd edition), London: Sage.

DeVaus, D (2001) Research Design in Social Research. London: Sage.

Flyvbjerg, Bent (2001) Making social science matter: why social inquiry fails and how

it can succeed again. Cambridge University Press.

Geddes, B. (2003) Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press

May, T. (2001) Social Research. Issues, methods and process. 3rd edition Buckingham: Open University Press.

Punch, K. (2005), Introduction to Social Research. Quantitative and qualitative approaches. London: Sage.

Robson, C. (2002), Real World Research. Oxford: Blackwell.

Social Science and the Middle East Context

Tessler, M.A., Nachtwey, J. And Banda, A, (1999) Area studies and social science: strategies for understanding Middle East. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Zartman, I. William. (1976) "Political Science." In The Study of the Middle East: Research and Scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences, ed. Leonard Binder. New York: Wiley.

Gabriel. B. D. (1977). "Political Culture Approach to Middle East Politics." International Journal of Middle East Studies 8 January: 43–63.

Tawfic, F. (1983). Political Behavior in the Arab States. Boulder: Westview Press.

Week 2: Research design: formulating research questions and design and critiquing research papers.

The session will examine a range of research questions and explore various issues related to research design. Students will explore ways of planning research, including purpose, conceptual framework, research questions, methods and questions of validity.

Essay Questions:
- How can research paradigms shape and influence the research design?
- Students will be given a research paper and will be asked to write an essay critiquing the research paper.
- Students will be asked to develop a research proposal, state the main research question, describe the research design and the rationale underpinning their choice of instruments and explore the main limitations.

Reading list:

Andrews, R (2003) Research Questions, London: Continuum.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (1995) Designing Qualitative Research. Second editions. London: Sage. Chapter 2. ME. Sharp, Inc.

Pushkala Prasad (2005) Crafting Qualitative Research: Working in the Postpositivist Traditions.

Geddes, B. (2003) Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press

De Vaus, D.A (2001) Research Design in Social Research. London: Sage

Punch, K. (2005), Introduction to Social Research. Quantitative and qualitative approaches. London: Sage. Chapter 3

Hakim, C. (1987) Research Design: Strategies and Choices in the Design of Social Research. London: Allen & Unwin

Mason, J. (2002) 'Finding a Focus and Knowing Where You Stand', Chapter 1 in, Qualitative Researching. London: Sage p.13-23

May, T. (2001) Social Research: Issues, Methods & Process, Buckingham: Open University Press

Research Design and the Middle East Context

The National Human Development Report 2008-2009: Toward a Citizen's State, English Report: http://www.nhdrlebanon.org/pdf/NHDR_Full_Report_En.pdf

Stenhouse, L. (1981) What counts as research? British Journal of Educational Studies, volume 29 issue 2.

Week 3
Non-empirical research approaches: Historical research.
This session will discuss different approaches to the use of archival documents and texts for historical research. We will address changing perspectives on the relation between historians and written sources, particularly the question of objectivity and the status of truth/fact. The aim will be to bring out the relevance of historical methods of interpreting texts to research in development studies.

Essay questions:
Can we generate theories on the basis of documentary sources?
Assess the merits and demerits of historical analysis.
Historical analysis can never be objective. Discuss.

Reading list:
Appleby, A., Hunt, L., and Jacob, M. (1994) Telling the Truth about History. New York; London: Norton. Chapter 7

Evans, R.J. (1997), In Defence of History. London: Granta Chapters 3 and 4. [For shorter versions of the above Appleby et al and Evans, see John Tosh (ed) (2000), Historians on History Harlow: Pearson Education: Chapters 37 and 38

Green, A. & Troup, K. (1999), The Houses of History: A critical reader in twentieth-century history and theory. Manchester: Manchester University Press Chapters 11 and 12

Marwick, A. (2001) The New Nature of History: Knowledge, evidence, language Basingstoke: Palgrave Chapter 5

Plummer K. (2001) <u>Documents of life 2: an invitation to a critical humanism</u>. London: Sage.

Scott J. (1990) <u>A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research</u>. Cambridge: Polity.

Tosh, J. (1991), <u>The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods and New Directions in the Study of Modern History</u> (2nd edition) London: Longman. Chapters 2 and 3

<u>Historical Research and the Middle East Context</u>

Edward Said (1979), <u>Orientalism</u> wVintage Books: New York.

Gavin D. Brockett (2009), "Provincial Newspapers as a Historical Source: Buyuk Cihad and the great struggle for the Muslim Turkish Nation (1951–53)." <u>International Journal of Middle East Studies</u> <u>Volume 41</u>, <u>Issue 03</u>, pp 455b-455b

Kopf, D. (1980) Hermeneutics versus History Author(s): Reviewed work(s): Orientalism by Edward W. Said Source: <u>The Journal of Asian Studies</u>, Vol. 39, No. 3, pp. 495-506.

Tamari, S. and Zureik, E. (2001), <u>Reinterpreting the Historical Record: The Uses of Palestinian Refugee Archives for Social Science Research and Policy Analysis</u>., Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies.

Week 4

Empirical Research: **Ethnography and participant observation**
Session aims: to provide an introduction to ethnographic approaches, using a discussion of a number of different ethnographies. Discussion will include conducting ethnographical studies, methods of recording, the role of participant researcher ways of interpreting qualitative data through ethnography and ethical issues.

Essay
Discuss the value and limitations of ethnographic research.
How can researchers address the main ethical concerns of ethnographic research?

Readings:
Agar, M. (1996) <u>The Professional Stranger: An Informal Introduction to Ethnography</u>. San Diego, Calif. ; London: Academic Press.

Atkinson, P. Coffey, A. Delamont, S., Lofkand, J. And Lofland, L. (2001) (eds.) <u>Handbook of Ethnography</u>. London: Sage.

Bradburd, D. (1998) <u>Being there. The Necessity of Fieldwork</u>. Washington ; London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Brockington, D. and S. Sullivan (2003). "Qualitative Research." In <u>Development Fieldwork. A Practical Guide</u>. (eds) Scheyvens, R. and D. Storey. p. 57-76.

Emerson, R. Fret, R. I. And Shaw, L (1995) <u>Writing Ethnographic Field Notes</u>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fetterman, D. (1998) <u>Ethnography. Step by Step</u>, 2nd edition, London: Sage.

Fife, W. (2005) <u>Doing Fieldwork. Ethnographic Methods for Research in Developing Countries and Beyond</u>. London: Sage.

Hammersley, M. (1992) <u>What's Wrong with Ethnography?</u> London: Routledge. Part I

Lofland, J., L. Anderson, D. Snow, L.H. Lofland (2005) <u>Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis</u>, 4th Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth

Monaghan, J. and Just, P. (2000) <u>A Very Short Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology</u>. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<u>Ethnographic and Participatory research and the Middle East Context</u>

McGee, Alyson (2008). <u>Critical Reflections of Action Research Used for Professional Development in a Middle Eastern Gulf State</u>. Educational Action Research, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 235-250,

Suad, J. (1977) "Zaynab: An Urban Working Class Lebanese Woman." In <u>Middle Eastern Muslim Women Speak</u>. Elizabeth W. Fernea & Basima Q. Bezirgan (eds.) Pp. 359-371. Austin: U. of Texas Press.

Suad, J. (1997) "Shopkeepers and Feminists: The Reproduction of Political Process Among Women Activists in Lebanon." In <u>Women in Groups in the Middle East</u>. Dawn Chatty and Annika Rabo (eds.) Berg Press. Pp. 57-80.

Zaalouk, M. (2004) <u>The Pedagogy of Empowerment: Community Schools as a Social Movement in Egypt</u>. American University In Cairo Press.

Week 5

Interviewing. This session will discuss interviews as a source of data in qualitative research. It will go over the rationale for choosing the interview method, the different kinds of interview structures, questions of reflexivity, power and researcher identity, and potential pitfalls in interviewing in developing country contexts. The session will also explore how to analyse interviews.

Essay

Assess the merits and demerits of different kinds of interview structures.

Assess the merits and demerits of adopting mixed methods and sources of data in a research project.

Reading list

Brannen, J. (1988) 'Research note: the study of sensitive subjects, notes on interviewing', <u>Sociological Review</u>, Vol. 36, No. 3. Pgs. 552-563

Briggs, C. (1986) <u>Learning How to Ask</u>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Denzin, N. K. (1988) 'The Sociological Interview', in <u>The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods</u>. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall

DeVault, M. (1990) "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis." <u>Social Problems</u>, Vol. 37, No. 1. p. 96-116

Edwards, R. (1998) "A Critical Examination of the Use of Interpreters in the Qualitative Research Process." <u>Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies</u>, Vol. 24, No. 1. p. 197-208

Finch, J. (1984) "'Its Great to Have Someone to Talk to'. Ethics and Politics of Interviewing Women." In C. Bell and J. Roberts (Eds.) <u>Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice</u>. London: Routledge

Fontana, A. and J.H. Frey (2000) "The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text." In N.H. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.) <u>The Handbook of Qualitative Research</u>. p. 645-672. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Hammersley, M. and P. Atkinson (1995) "Insider Accounts: Listening and Asking Questions. In <u>Ethnography: Principles in Practice</u>, 2nd Edition. London: Routledge. p. 124-156

Morgan D.L. and M.T. Spanish (1984) "Focus Groups: A New Tool for Qualitative Research." <u>Qualitative Sociology</u>, Vol. 7, No. 3. p. 253-270

Rubin, H., and I. Rubin (2004) <u>Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data</u>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Silverman, D. (2001) <u>Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction</u>, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter. 4

Thorne, B. (1980) "'You Still Takin' Notes?' Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent." <u>Social Problems</u>, Vol. 27, No. 3. p. 284-297

<u>Interviews and the Middle East Context</u>

Clark, Janine A. (2006) "Field Research Methods in the Middle East." <u>Political Science and Politics</u> 39 (3): 417-424.

Hanna Herzog (2005) "On Home Turf: Interview Location and Its Social Meaning." <u>Qualitative Sociology</u> 25-47 Volume 28, Number 1

<u>Iraqi Population Survey in Lebanon A Report Danish Refugee Council</u>, Beirut, November 2007 http://www.english.drc.dk/fileadmin/uploads/pdf/English_site/Lebanon/Iraqi_Population_Survey_-_English.pdf

Salah Alzaroo and Gillian Lewando Hunt (2003) <u>Education in the Context of Conflict and Instability: The Palestinian Case, Social Policy & Administration</u>, Volume 37 Issue 2,Pages165-180

Week 6

Analysing qualitative data. The session will explore how to analyse qualitative data such as interviews and documents and how to generate theories from the data. It will also discuss the ethical considerations and issues of validity when analysing qualitative data.

Essay

How can researchers improve the validity of their qualitative data analysis?
Asses the merits and demerits of applying the grounded theory in analysing qualitative data.

Reading list:

Geddes, B. (2003) Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press

Glaser, B. G. (1978). Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory. Mill Valley, Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. G. (1992). Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence vs Forcing. Mill Valley, Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Chicago, Aldine.

Locke, L.F. Silverman, S. And Spirduso, W.W. (1998) Reading and Understanding Research. London: Sage

Marshall, C. and G. Rossman (1999) Designing Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage

Maxwell, J. (1996) Qualitative Research Design, Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage

Richards, L. (2005) Handling Qualitative Data. A Practical Guide. London: Sage.

Savolainen, J. (1994). "The Rationality of Drawing Big Conclusions Based on Small Samples: In Defense of Mill's Methods." Social Forces 72:1217-1223.

Silverman, D. (2005) Doing Qualitative Research, London: Sage

Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1994). "Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview." Handbook of qualitative research. N. K. D. Y. S. L. (Eds.). Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Strauss, A., and J. Corbin (1990). Basics of Qualitative Research. Newbury Park, Sage.

Strauss, A., Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques. Newbury Park, Sage.

Week 7

Quantitative instruments: Questionnaires. The session will explore the advantages and disadvantages of surveys and how to design a good questionnaire and select the research sample.

Essay

What are the main limitations of quantitative research?
How can researchers improve the validity and reliability of questionnaires?

Reading list

Bryman, A, (2008). <u>Social Research Methods</u>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2: Research Designs and Chapter 6: The Nature of Quantitative Research.

Cresswell, J. (2003) <u>Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches</u>. London: Sage

Punch, K.F. (2005). <u>Introduction to Social Research, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches</u> (2nd edition) London: Sage. Chapter 5: quantitative research design, Chapter 6: Collecting quantitative data.

Robson, C. (2002). <u>Real World Research</u> (2nd edition). Oxford: Blackwell. Chapter 5:Fixed Design.

<u>Quantitative Analysis and the Middle East Context</u>

Fischer, R.; Harb, C.; Al-Sarraf, S.; Nashabe, O.; (2008) "Support for Resistance Among Iraqi Students: An Exploratory Study." <u>Basic and Applied Social Psychology</u> vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 167-175.

Harik, Iliya (1987) "Some Political and Cultural Considerations Bearing on Survey Research in the Arab World." In <u>The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World</u>, eds. Mark Tessler, et al. Boulder: Westview Press.

Moaddel, Mansoor (2007), <u>Values and Perceptions of the Islamic and Middle Eastern Publics</u>. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Palmer, Monte. (1982) <u>Survey Research in the Arab World: An Analytical Index</u>. London: Menas Press Ltd.

Shahe S. Kazarian (2005) "Family Functioning, Cultural Orientation, and Psychological Well-Being Among University Students in Lebanon." <u>The Journal of Social Psychology</u> . Volume 145, Number 2

Tessler, M. (1987) <u>The Evaluation and Application of Survey Research in the Arab World</u>. Boulder: Westview Press.

Tessler, M. (2003) "Arab and Muslim Political Attitudes: Stereotypes and Evidence from Survey Research." <u>International Studies Perspectives</u> 4: 175-180.

Week 8

Research ethics: the session will introduce students to the main codes of research ethics and discuss some the issues involved in carrying out ethically responsible research in the social sciences. The session will include an introduction to the ethical review/approval procedures of the University.

Essay

What are the ethical issues that can encounter the researchers when conducting any type of research? And how can researchers address these issues?

Readings:

Bryman A. (2001) <u>Social research methods</u>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 24.

Gomm R. (2004) Social research methodology. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan. Chapter 13

Jacobsen, K. and Landau, L.B. (2003) The dual imperative in refugee research: some methodological and ethical considerations in social science research on forced migration. Rosemarie Rogers working paper series, Inter-University Committee on International Migration.

Goodhand, J.(2000) 'Research in Conflict Zones: Ethics and Accountability', Forced Migration Review 8.

Jarvie, I. C. (1969) "The Problem of Ethical Integrity in Participant Observation." Current Anthropology 10:505-508