



Centre for Peace Studies

Developing a project proposal
SVF 3023 – Specialisation with Methodology

Your project proposal is the foundation of your theoretical propositions, data collection and/or fieldwork and ultimately your thesis. Detailed planning at the outset is essential. It is important to be practical when developing your project proposal and not be too ambitious. Timescales, finances, university regulations and safety issues all have an influence upon the nature, scope and size of your research project. It is essential to be realistic about what you can achieve.

Your project proposal should be a maximum of 10 pages.

Your project proposal must address the following issues:

1. Background to your proposed research.

Describe the nature of the topic you want to research. Explain your interest in the topic and what the existing literature, if any, states about this topic.

2. Aims and objectives of the proposed research

Explain what you want to explore during your proposed research and why.

3. Significance of the research and its relationship to peace studies.

Explain why the topic is important and how it is connected to peace studies.

4. Research Questions

What are your research questions? (For example, consider, why, what, when, how etc). These questions are the broad questions your thesis will address and relate to the broad themes you want to identify during your research. These should NOT be confused with survey or interview questions for your respondents. You should choose only 2 or 3 research questions. For practical purposes and to ensure you complete your research in good time, these questions should be narrow and answerable from the methods and data collection techniques you use. If your research questions are too big this will cause problems later.

5. Research methods and data sources

What sort of research methods will you use to answer your research questions? For example, semi-structured interviews, survey research, documentary analysis, a mixture of methods? Where will you get your data from? For example, who will you interview, observe, survey and why? How will you gain access to respondents? How will you choose your sample? How many respondents will you interview, survey, observe? Will these chosen methods allow you to access data that will answer your research questions? (NB. Do not be too ambitious about the amount of data you collect. Collecting too much data will lead to problems later).

6. Safety issues

Describe and explain the threats to personal safety you may encounter in the country/countries in which you are carrying out your research and the steps you will take to minimise these risks. If there are any known and obvious risks to personal safety then research should NOT be carried out in those areas. A number of countries are volatile and are highly changeable politically. It is each student's responsibility to plan ahead and research safety aspects in relation to the country/countries where research will be done as well as ongoing monitoring of the situation prior to departure and during the fieldwork process.

As part of the contract for supervision each student is required to evidence the steps they have taken to find out about the risks they are likely to face as a researcher in the country/countries and the particular regions they will visit.

7. Challenges you may encounter during the research process and how you will solve them

Whether your thesis is based solely on theoretical work or on empirical data collection it is important to plan your research and anticipate, if possible, any difficulties you may encounter. You need to indicate that you have thought through the likely challenges and identified how you will overcome them. Some of the difficulties you encounter may include, for example, limited availability of data, ethical issues, difficult to access respondents, time constraints, sensitive topic.

7. Bibliography

List the literature sources you have referred to.

8. Timetable

Show how long each stage of the above will take and how you will achieve what you aim to do to finish in time. How long will it take you to analyse your data and when will you do this? How long will it take to complete your reading and to write your theoretical and methods chapters of your thesis? A realistic and well-planned timetable will help to keep your supervision and workload spread evenly throughout the time you have and aid in monitoring your progress.