

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Project title: The contentious politics of the census in consociational democracies

University of Birmingham Ethics Committee reference: ERN_16-0840

I would like to invite you to participate in this research project. You should only participate if you want to; choosing not to take part will not disadvantage you in any way. Before you decide whether you want to take part, it is important for you to understand why the project is being undertaken and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

The project examines the relationship between the design of political institutions and the politics of the census in societies that are divided along national, ethnic, religious or linguistic lines – and in particular, states with power-sharing arrangements in place (also known as consociational democracies). The research has two main objectives, which are to generate a body of scholarship on the relationship between the design of political institutions and the politics of the census in divided societies, and to work with policy-makers and practitioners to generate knowledge on ways to mitigate the possibility of contentious debates about the census, and conflict that stems from those debates, in those societies.

As part of this research, I am conducting interviews with policy-makers, practitioners and experts in international and regional organisations, donor agencies, and in four case-study countries, which are Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kenya, Lebanon and Northern Ireland. This is why you have been approached to participate in the project.

When and where will the interview take place?

The interview will take place at a mutually convenient time and at a mutually agreed location. The interview will only be recorded subject to your permission, and I am still interested in hearing your opinions if you choose not to be recorded. Hand-written notes may also be taken during the interview, and recorded interviews will be transcribed at a later date. You will have the choice whether comments made during the interview are confidential, or can be attributed to you in published materials.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked a number of questions relating to the politics of the census in the country where you are based, or which you work on. Questions will vary depending on your particular professional role, but are likely to include those relating to issues such as:

- How decisions about which questions and tick-box answers to include on the census form are made
- Whether there is campaigning by organisations to include or exclude certain topics from the census, and what forms this campaigning takes
- How the results of the census and their implications for the political representation of national, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups are interpreted

Discussion of further issues you may deem relevant is welcome. Should you feel uncomfortable with any of the issues mentioned above or with any of the questions asked, you do not have to discuss them.

How long will the interview last?

I anticipate that the interview will last up to one hour.

Are there any risks involved in participating?

There are no anticipated risks involved in participating in this research project. Unless you give express permission for your views and opinions to be attributed to you, your participation in the research and the answers that you give will be kept confidential.

Who is organising the project?

Dr Laurence Cooley, a research fellow in the International Development Department at the University of Birmingham, is organising and conducting the research. Professor Stefan Wolff of the University of Birmingham and Dr Ian Shuttleworth of Queen's University Belfast are acting as mentors for the duration of the project but will not be involved in conducting the research themselves.

What will happen with the findings of the project?

I anticipate that the research will result in a number of formal outputs, such as articles in scholarly journals. These will be made available on an open-access basis, so that they can be read by anyone with internet access. I also plan to write a number of more accessible summaries of the research and its policy relevance for a less specialised audience. You will not be mentioned by name in any of the project outputs unless you waive your right to confidentiality. Copies of the project outputs will be sent to all participants.

What if I have questions about the project?

If you have questions about the project, in the first instance you can contact me by e-mail at l.p.cooley@bham.ac.uk.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part or not. If you do decide to take part, you are free to withdraw from participation, without giving a reason, up until the time that the research findings are finalised, which will be 31 January 2019. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form.

Should you have any concerns about the project that you do not want to discuss with me, you can contact Dr Adam Quinn, the Director of Research in the School of Government and Society at the University of Birmingham, at a.j.quinn@bham.ac.uk.