
Laidlaw Reflective Report

Research Period

Educational for Sustainable Development: Scoping
Animal Welfare Legislation and Policy Across the Gulf

Harry Roberts-Percy

Supervised by: Prof David Lewis & Dr Israa Al-Banaa



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



Introduction

Throughout this research period, I conducted a scoping literature review evaluating the current existence of legislative and policy frameworks regulating the use of animals in scientific research in the Gulf states. This work has proven to be a challenging, though rewarding, period, giving me first-hand experience in academic collaborative research. I continue to be incredibly grateful to both my supervisors and the Laidlaw Foundation for the support, resources, and expertise throughout this time.

Research

The role of animals in research is undoubtedly crucial in the development of scientific progress and innovation amongst numerous sectors. However, it is the ethical regulatory frameworks across both institutional and legislative spheres that require further scrutiny. The Gulf states in particular have made progress in investing into their scientific infrastructure and research output, giving further cause to assess this previously unknown aspect. By systematically reviewing research papers in these countries, we have been able to detail the current ethical and legal requirements, whilst also being able to identify areas for improvement across multiple research areas. This research looks to inform further opportunities to reform and promote knowledge-sharing in these regions in the care and welfare of research animals.

I started my project by learning how to use the search engines on PubMed and Scopus; two free archives of scientific literature that would help form the basis of my research. As a law student, it was daunting familiarising myself with resources from a different discipline. Whilst I treasured this cross-disciplinary nature of my project, I also recognised it as what would become the most significant challenge I faced. Using Kenya as a previously research base, I was able to conduct a ‘mock trial’ of the methodology I had established with my supervisors, knowing that I would be able to test the efficacy of the process based on pre-established knowledge base. For the purposes of the trial, I imported the gathered information into an Excel spreadsheet in the same format as I would go on to do in the remainder of the project.

Upon the development of these initial skills, I moved onto the bulk of the project: completing the research with the Gulf states, before then expanding into other countries in the region. I had a renewed confidence and motivation in the project as it became a more formative reality, especially after the trial with Kenya. The project took a lot of self-discipline and that was the main obstacle and development I took from it all. I knew that the amount of output would depend on how productive I was. In total, I managed to complete nine countries in full depth: Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran. With the confidence and efficiency that I developed throughout the project, I would be able to continue this work in the future and expand it throughout the region further, mirroring the same methodology that I developed in collaboration with both my supervisors.

I concluded my project by spending time to collect both my thoughts and investigations into one uniform table to clearly compile and show the outcomes of the research. All the researched countries had significantly varying levels of provisions, both on legal and institutional levels, and so I felt that it was incredibly important for me to take time to standardise the research by making sure I had examined in the same depth across all countries, and then consequently being able to present it in a clear form (a final table). This final table will then form the primary component in continuing this research into other countries, as well as the informing the growing educative provisions on the topic in the countries that I completed myself.

Country	Research Details				Legislation							Ethics		
	Years Scoped	No. Papers	PubMED	Scopus	Asst. Criteria	Drug Discovery	Veterinary Medicine	Conservation Biology	Wildlife Biology	Marine Biology	Invertebrates	Licensing Only	National	Institutional
Saudi Arabia	2024-2025	28	✓	✓	✓	Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures after Cabinet Resolution No. 321 dated 9/13/1432; Implementation Regulations of the Law of Ethics of Research on	Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures after Cabinet Resolution No. 321 dated 9/13/1432; Implementation Regulations of the Law of Ethics of Research on	Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures after Cabinet Resolution No. 321 dated 9/13/1432; Implementation Regulations of the Law of Ethics of Research on	Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures after Cabinet Resolution No. 321 dated 9/13/1432; Implementation Regulations of the Law of Ethics of Research on	Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures after Cabinet Resolution No. 321 dated 9/13/1432; Implementation Regulations of the Law of Ethics of Research on	Law of Ethics of Research on Living Creatures after Cabinet Resolution No. 321 dated 9/13/1432; Implementation Regulations of the Law of Ethics of Research on	X	X	✓
Qatar	2024-2025	5	✓	✓	✓	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not regulated	X	X	✓
Bahrain	2018-2025	1	✓	✓	X	Law (System) of Animal Welfare for the States of Cooperation Council, Law No. 52 of 2014	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available	✓	X	✓
Kuwait	2024-2025	5	✓	✓	✓	Law No. 112 of 2015 approving the Animal Welfare Act for the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf	Not available	Not available	Not available	Law No. 112 of 2015 approving the Animal Welfare Act for the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf	Not available	✓	X	✓
Oman	2020-2025	3	✓	✓	X	Sultani Decree No. 21 of 2017 raising the Animal Welfare Law	Sultani Decree No. 21 of 2017 raising the Animal Welfare Law	Not available	Sultani Decree No. 21 of 2017 raising the Animal Welfare Law	Not available	Not available	✓	X	✓
United Arab Emirates	2024-2025	7	✓	✓	✓	Federal Law No (18) of 2017 Concerning the Protection of Animals	Federal Law No (18) of 2017 Concerning the Protection of Animals	Not available	Federal Law No (18) of 2017 Concerning the Protection of Animals	Not available	Not available	✓	X	✓
Yemen	2022-2025	2	✓	✓	✓	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	n/a	✓	✓
Iraq	2024-2025, 2019-2025	62	✓	✓	✓	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	Not regulated	n/a	✓	✓
Iran	2024-2025	121	✓	✓	✓	Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Iran, 2020	Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Iran, 2020	Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Iran, 2020	Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Iran, 2020	Guidelines for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals in Iran, 2020	Not available	X	✓	✓

Figure 1: Completed final table of research outputs

An additional component I particularly struggled with at the end of my research project was the output of a poster. I have never claimed graphic design as a particular passion or skill of mine, nor am I about to after the initial iterations of the posters I created. The most difficult part was understanding the balance between written content and information and the visuals of the poster. After speaking with my supervisors, I decided to focus on showing the research outcomes in different, more visually-appropriate ways, rather than the full table shown in Figure 1. The use of the bar chart (Figure 2) instead of the table has helped make a clearer, direct comparison between the countries showing the number of papers with both law and ethical provisions in place, ones with only one or the other, and those that lack both. Furthermore, I linked the conclusions I made with a geographical representation of the research (Figure 3), with the colours helping demonstrate the comparative links that can be made between the countries in a different form. It also helps show how and where the methodology can be expanded to in the region. The use of these different illustrations has helped me with my poster and shown me the importance of understanding the different ways in which research can be presented between different audiences.

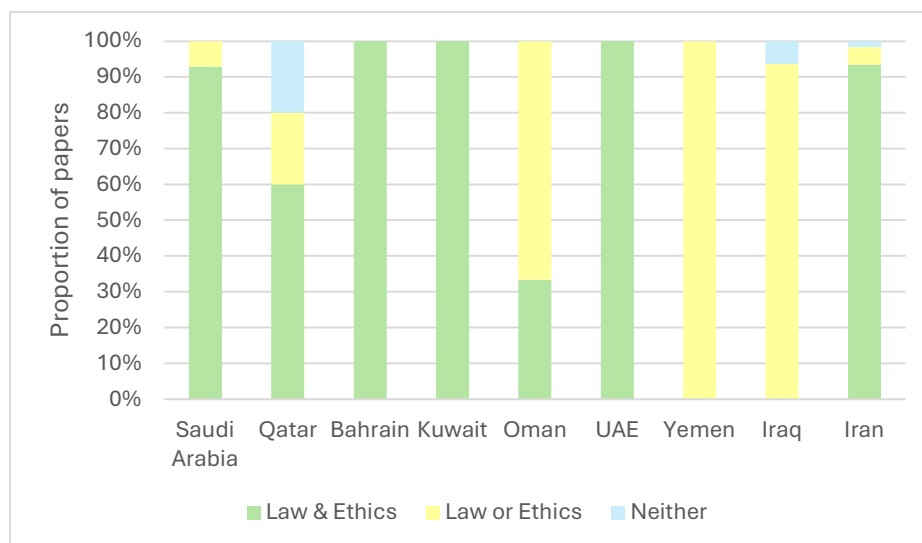


Figure 2: Bar chart with the percentage of papers per country found to have both law and ethical provisions, only one, or neither



Figure 3: Geographical representation of the research outputs and area covered

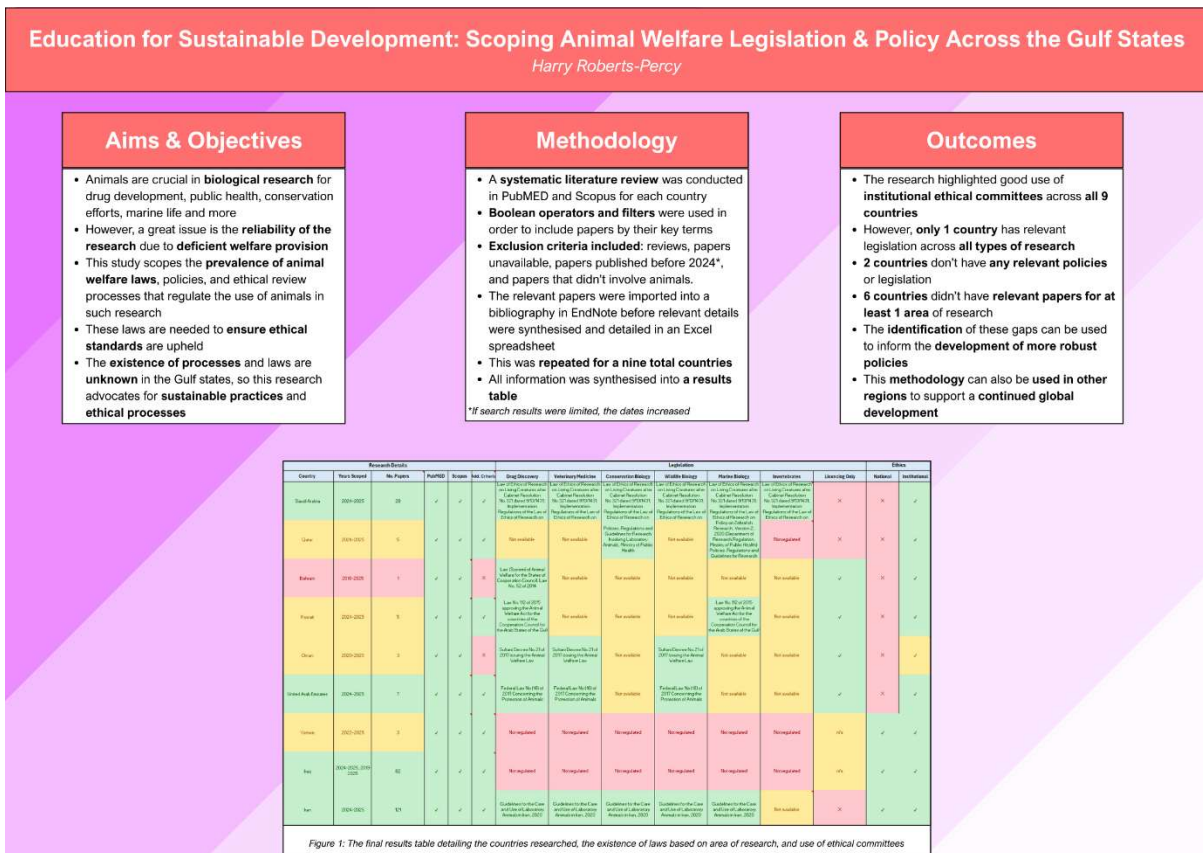


Figure 4: The first iteration of the poster, with the whole table on it

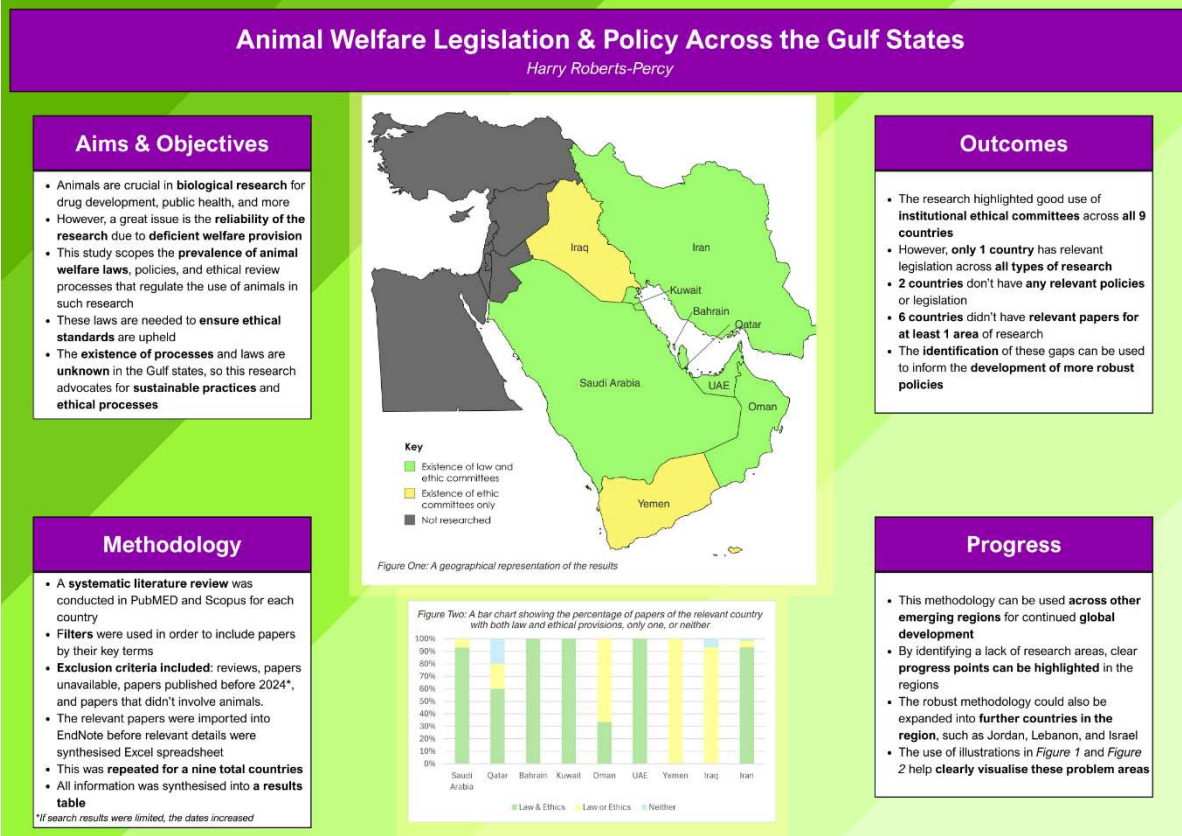


Figure 5: The second iteration of the poster, with different illustrations

ANIMAL WELFARE LEGISLATION & POLICY IN THE GULF STATES

Harry Roberts-Percy

Supervised by Dr David Lewis & Dr Israa Al-Banaa

INTRODUCTION

- Animals are crucial in biological research for many sectors
- However, a great challenge is ensuring consistent ethical standards and reliability
- Current guidelines and regulations are not well-documented in the Gulf states
- This study assesses animal welfare laws, policies, and ethical processes that regulate animal use in research

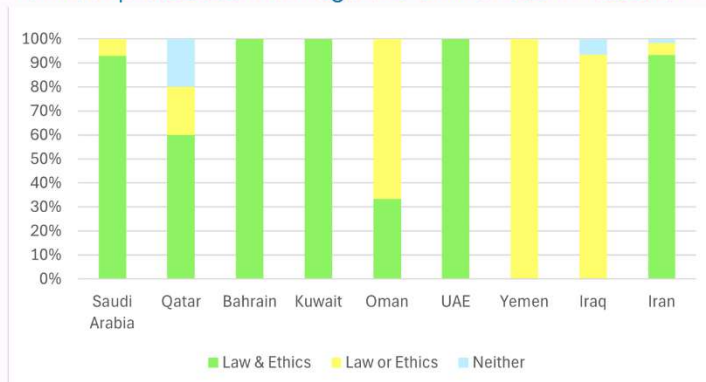


Figure 1: A bar chart showing the percentage of papers of the relevant country with both law and ethical provisions, only one, or neither

OUTCOMES

- The research highlighted a good use of institutional ethical committees in all 9 countries
- Only 1 country has appropriate legislation for all types of research
- 2 countries don't have any appropriate policies
- 6 countries didn't have relevant papers for at least 1 area of research
- The identification of these gaps can be used to inform the development of more robust policies

METHODOLOGY

- A systematic review was conducted in PubMed and Scopus for each country
- Operators and search terms were used to exclude papers by key terms and features
- Relevant papers were imported into EndNote with details synthesised into an Excel spreadsheet
- This was repeated for a nine total countries
- All the researched information was finalised into a results table



Figure 2: A geographical representation of the results

Figure 6: The final version of the poster

Personal development

This research period has been impactful on me in several ways. First and foremost, I have been incredibly grateful to both the Foundation and my supervisors for the opportunity to conduct such important research, whilst having the opportunity to learn and develop new skills and grow individually. It has taught me a lot about my personal, professional, and academic qualities.

The project came from the Faculty of Biological Sciences at the University and so was already a leap away from the pond that I was used to swimming in - the School of Law. Having not read a scientific or mathematical word for around three years, I already knew that that sudden transition would be the hardest challenge I faced during the research period. The task of skimming hundreds of scientific research reports with such technical language was very daunting, although it helped me understand the challenges that came with such a cross disciplinary project. Relying on the expertise of both my supervisors, I was able to understand the best way to go through the papers, such as the different functions of EndNote and where to find specific information in these papers.

Additionally, the main point of development for me personally was how I adapted my skills from my degree in Law with Hispanic Law into the project. I am used to skimming large pieces of legislation and finding the key pieces of information that I need in them. These skills in synthesising information helped here, not only when reading the pieces of primary legislation and policy but also focusing on different key parts of the papers themselves. This was reflected in how my efficiency and speed built throughout the countries, right from the mock trial with Kenya through to the final country I completed, Iran. This has given me renewed confidence in my ability to relate different skills and applying them in my approaches across disciplines.

The research project was harder as it was completely different to the work I was used to doing. There wasn't a big exam to aim for, incredibly strict deadlines, or people doing the exact same project as I was doing at the same time to talk and relate to. This did, however, meant I valued being able to work completely independently, growing qualities of discipline and self-reflection in my work. This aligned with how I was already very solution-oriented as a person; I often look to find answers and solve problems myself before relying on advice and help from other people.

Despite that progress, I never felt I was in pure isolation during the research project. I really enjoyed staying in contact with other Scholars at Leeds from my 2025 cohort and understanding the different challenges and prospects they were facing in their research. It helped me look at different perspectives and ways of going about my research, and how I could perhaps change and improve my own ways of doing things.

All this development are key factors to why I applied for the programme; I was eager to not just only expand on my academic and professional qualities but to also really challenge myself as a person. I, unfortunately, missed out on the leadership development residential in June, but the research project has really put the key ideas into motion for me, on how to develop from hereon in. It continues to be a great piece of motivation and interest for me in the programme as I move forward towards the Leadership and Development Day in September, and the annual conference in Durham in October of this year.

Further opportunities

I continue to be eager in continuing and disseminating the research to larger audiences. I am intending on writing and submitting an abstract to apply to present my research at the 2025 Annual Laidlaw Conference in Durham soon, in a hope to achieve my aims of expanding on both the research and also my own developmental gains that I have mentioned.

Another element of this will be writing the full methodology, results, and discussion into an extensive research report for submission to either the *Laboratory Animals* or *Animals* journals. This will further help disseminate the research into a wider academic sphere, helping inform the educative process to develop the Gulf states and research countries in accordance with the results already investigated. This could also provide the opportunity to expand on the already established methodology, by applying it to more and more countries in the Middle East and surrounding region, potentially including Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Türkiye. This would not only create more helpful resources and research outcomes on the topic, but also further developing my research skills and personal developmental growth. These has been key skills and elements that I have looked to develop throughout my time as a Laidlaw Scholar, and I continue to be committed in doing so.

I am, as of now, yet to consider my career prospects in any extensive form. I have always pictured that I would be in some sort of law firm given the degree route I chose to go down, however this research has proven to me how applicable the skills I have learned in my degree are to other areas. The cross-disciplinary nature of the research has taught me so much about applying myself to alternative academic areas, and now I see no reason why that wouldn't be a possibility for a professional career as well. The confidence and skills I have learnt and developed will be undoubtedly influential in whatever I end up pursuing. Whilst I continue to be unsure about the exact form, the nature of the programme and this project in particular has given me the skills, confidence, and experience in considering different careers and opportunities available to me.

Conclusion

This research period has done nothing but develop my qualities both academically, professionally, and personally. The variation of work has taught me a lot about my approaches to my educational work and to working with my supervisors. The importance of independence and investing trust in myself in the research that I have conducted has been the main take away from it all, helping me be more assured in my own abilities. I intend to further disseminate and expand on the project to a wider audience and will now be more confident and active in looking and applying for these opportunities.

I continue to thank both my supervisors for their unwavering support and expertise, and the Foundation for the opportunities it has gifted me. I look forward to the next stages of the Scholarship and my development.