Reviewer’s report

Title: Understanding the supports needed for policy implementation: a comparative analysis of the placement of intermediaries across three mental health systems

Version: 0 Date: 30 May 2019

Reviewer: Carmen Huckel Schneider

Reviewer's report:

I agree with the authors that the emergence, establishment and sustainable operations of intermediary organisations would be best explained by taking a whole of system view, informed through institutional theory. However, the paper: 1) requires a better description of the puzzle requiring explanation; 2) needs a better description of the methodological approach and epistemological placement of the study; and 3) needs to refine concepts for clarity.

The puzzle

The authors should include a better description of the intermediaries that were of interest in the three countries chosen and describe their placement within that system. This is the phenomenon that the authors want to understand. We learnt little about the intermediaries in the paper, and have no process tracing of when, how or why they emerged. As such, the puzzle is still unclear.

Methodological approach

It is not clear whether the authors are taking a reductionist approach - although parts of the paper suggest this. It is also valid to approach this research topic with a constructivist methodology - which for this study could be translated as a comparative case study approach - whereby institutionalist theories could be used to guide thinking. The author should make the approach clear and revise the paper accordingly.

Conceptual Clarity

The definition on an intermediary needs to be tightened - specifically what is NOT included as an intermediary within the scope of this study. Other terms need to be defined more tightly (especially if an reductionist approach is taken and the variables need to be defined).
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