

Data Access and Research Transparency in Political Science Journals

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- Background

- Growing realization that some scientific research was based on falsified data and analysis
- In genetics, in autism research, in other fields as well
- Great pressure to publish to advance academic careers.

- Most recently case of Diederik Stapel, Dutch Social Psychologist (2011)
- Published a widely publicized study in *Science* about an experiment done at a train station showing that a trash-filled environment tended to bring out racist tendencies in individuals.
- Had also published a widely cited study that had correlated eating meat with selfish behavior
- Turned out that all of the data had been falsified.

- Scandal has had an explosive impact on the social sciences
- Association for Psychological Science, which had no protocols for providing data for transparency and replication, quickly adopted them in 2012.
- Quickly followed by efforts in Economics, Sociology,
- But the greatest efforts have been made in political science

- There have been efforts before to provide data for replication purposes before publication
 - ISQ and other ISA journals since 2001
 - AJPS (since 2013)
 - But focus has been on replication, not research transparency

- Now focus is on *research transparency* for both quantitative and qualitative data
 - Data access
 - Production transparency
 - Analytical transparency

- *Data access*: Researchers making evidence-based knowledge claims should reference the data that support those claims (see below for more specific guidance on references). Further, they should provide access to any data they themselves generated or collected. Where data are under ethical or legal constraint (for instance, due to human subjects or copyright imperatives) authors should clearly explain why they cannot be shared or must be embargoed for a period beyond publication.

- *Production transparency*: Researchers providing access to data they themselves generated or collected should offer a full account of the context in which the data were collected or generated and the procedures used to collect or generate them.

- *Analytic Transparency*: Researchers making evidence-based knowledge claims should clearly map the path from the data to the claims. In addition to information provided in the article's main text and footnotes, this path should be mapped in ways which correspond with the methodology employed. For example, researchers may document the path by providing their computer programs and scripts, or activate the article's footnotes and provide a Transparency Appendix (see below). Researchers should make available materials sufficient to allow others to fully understand and, where relevant, reproduce their results.

Efforts made by APSA

- Since 2011, the American Political Science Association (APSA) has been engaged in a multi-layered dialogue on data access and research transparency (DA-RT).
- As part of this conversation, APSA Council approved in 2010 the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Data Access and Research Transparency to discuss openness in the discipline.

- These conversations produced substantial revisions to APSA's *Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science* and updated the discipline's general expectations for openness.
- Since then, the DA-RT committee has been working with various groups to develop practices that can improve transparency while being sensitive to the needs of diverse research traditions.
- One recent product of these efforts is the January 2014 symposium on DA-RT in [*PS: Political Science & Politics*](#), which includes essays from journal editors and archivists.
- The introduction to that symposium includes separate draft guidelines for attaining transparency in qualitative and quantitative research traditions.

Transparency (DA-RT): A Joint Statement by Political Science Journal Editors

- Ann Arbor meeting September 2014
- Statement issued October 2014.

A Commitment to Data Access and Research Transparency

- Transparency requires making visible both the empirical foundation and the logic of inquiry of research. We agree that by January 15, 2016 we will:
- Require authors to ensure that cited data are available at the time of publication through a trusted digital repository. Journals may specify which trusted digital repository shall be used (for example if they have their own dataverse).
 - If cited data are restricted (e.g., classified, require confidentiality protections, were obtained under a non-disclosure agreement, or have inherent logistical constraints), authors must notify the editor at the time of submission. The editor shall have full discretion to follow their journal's policy on restricted data, including declining to review the manuscript or granting an exemption with or without conditions. The editor shall inform the author of that decision prior to review.
- Require authors to delineate clearly the analytic procedures upon which their published claims rely, and where possible to provide access to all relevant analytic materials. If such materials are not published with the article, they must be shared to the greatest extent possible through a trusted digital repository.
- Maintain a consistent data citation policy to increase the credit that data creators and suppliers receive for their work. These policies include using data citation practices that identify a dataset's author(s), title, date, version, and a persistent identifier. In sum, we will require authors who base their claims on data created by others to reference and cite those data as an intellectual product of value.
- Ensure that journal style guides, codes of ethics, publication manuals, and other forms of guidance are updated and expanded to include improved data access and research transparency requirements.

Journals that have signed

- Twenty political science journals have signed on to the statement
- The first to sign on to the statement was the *American Political Science Review*
- The 20 journals have committed to implement this by January 2016.
- And that is where we are now