



University of Chicago – Peking University Summer Institute on
International Relations Theory and Methods
(Beijing, August 2015)

“Trust, but Verify”: What the Digital and Transparency Revolutions in Social Science Mean for You

Andrew Moravcsik
Princeton University

Qualitative Transparency: A Social Science Revolution

1. Transparency is a basic norm of social science.
2. For qualitative researchers, it has a specific meaning.
3. Digitally enabled citation (“active citation” or AC) is emerging as the “default” publication standard.
4. AC has large benefits and low costs (individual and collective).
5. AC will happen very soon: January 2016!

This will have a large impact!

- Well over 50% of IR scholars (US and world) do mostly qualitative research.
- 92% of IR scholars do some qualitative research.

What is Research Transparency?

Definition: A disciplinary norm whereby empirical researchers publicize how and why they reach conclusions.

Plain English: Scholars “show their work.”

Note: Related to, but not identical to replicability.

What is Research Transparency in Political Science?

For evidence-based knowledge claims, researchers should strive for research transparency. It has three dimensions:

- *Data Transparency*: Access to data.
- *Analytic Transparency*: Explication of the link from data to descriptive/causal conclusions.
- *Process Transparency*: Revelation of procedures used to collect, generate or choose data, theory, and methods.

What does research transparency mean for qualitative research?

Research traditions/communities define transparency differently.

Appropriate standards of any research community must be tailored to distinctive:

1. Epistemological structure
2. Practical “real-world” constraints

Transparency and the epistemology of qualitative research

- MOST qualitative political science is “classic” case study analysis with:
 - Relatively few “case studies”
 - Textual evidence (not statistics)
 - Process observations and analysis linked to steps in narrative (not dataset observations)

So need to create transparency instruments consistent with discursive footnotes.

Transparency and practical “real world” constraints on researchers

Five “real world” constraints matter:

- Intellectual Property Rights
- Ethics (Confidentiality/Human Subject Protection)
- Logistical Burden
- First-Use Rights
- Publishing Format

Conventional Citation Does Not Assure Transparency

- Word limits
 - “Scientific” citations are designed for a world where articles cite articles.
 - Lack of *de facto* access to data sources via citations
 - Sloppy citation (e.g. 20% wrong, no pages, etc.)
 - Non-availability of evidence (about 15%)
 - Even “available” evidence is costly to find
 - No requirement or room for analytic or process transparency.
- CONCLUSION: Any enhancement must be digital...

4 Potential Formats to Promote Qualitative Transparency

- CONVENTIONAL CITATION
- HYPERLINKS TO ON-LINE SOURCES
- QUALITATIVE DATA ARCHIVING (AND SOFTWARE DATABASES)
- ACTIVE CITATION (AC): “Digitally enabled citations” linked to annotated source excerpts in an appendix.

WHAT IS AN ACTIVE CITATION?

**BODY OF ARTICLE
(Remains Unchanged)**

MAIN TEXT
Contestable
Knowledge-based
Claim



CITATION
Footnote,
Endnote or
In-Text



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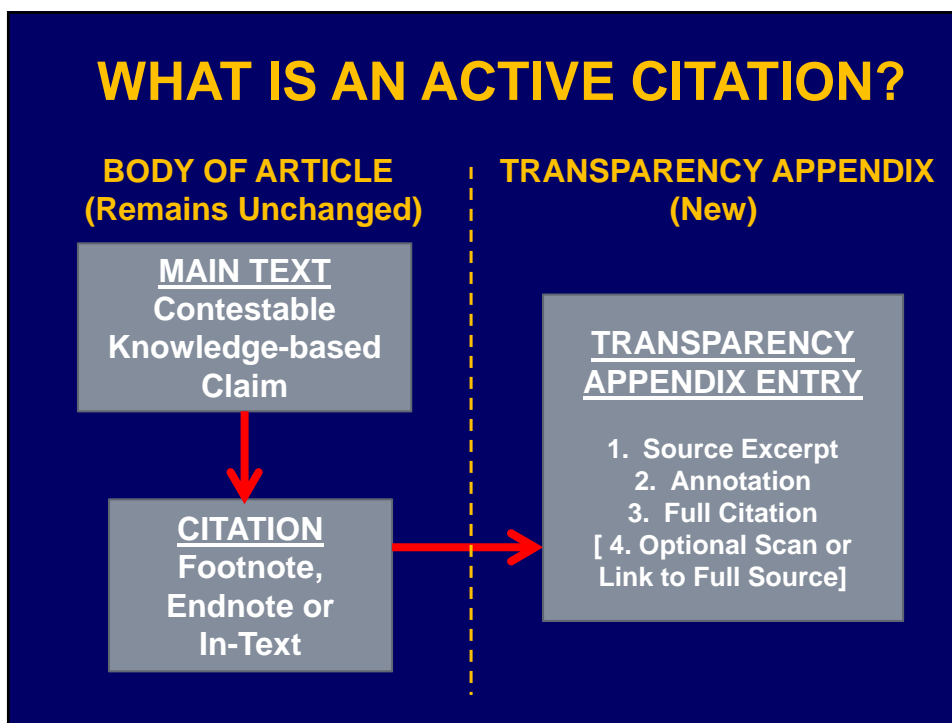


CITATION
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**TRANSPARENCY APPENDIX
(New)**

WHAT IS AN ACTIVE CITATION?



AC and Process Transparency

Issues: Choices and robustness with regard to data selection (“cherry picking”), theory choice and specification, analytical methods, weigh conflicting evidence, etc.

- No way ever to achieve an ideal or perfect process transparency, but...
- AC provides a special first “methodological” entry in the TRAX. Length is at the author’s discretion.

Resembles Best Practices: Legal Academia (Yale On-Line Law Review)

be going through at the present moment.

For reasons that I will explain in this Essay, I believe that we may be undergoing a transformation that is every bit as fundamental as those that we once went through when first transitioning from hunter-gatherer forms of life (which did not yet have legal systems or engage a distinctive sense of legal obligation²) to more sedentary forms of agricultural living with larger population densities, incipient domestic legal institutions, and—ultimately—an emergent distinction between morality and law.³ We are so used to where we are today, however, that we sometimes forget what it took to get us here, and it can be especially difficult to see what is happening when we are right in the midst of such a process. I have nevertheless made some recent efforts to reconstruct that earlier process, and my examinations suggest that the transformation was not likely based in reasoning alone, but rather emerged as part of a larger set of sociocultural and linguistic developments among a small handful of cultural traditions at first. These developments began the transition in the ancient world and then caused it to spread thereafter to many other regions.⁴ The relevant processes appear to have involved the slow coevolution of a specific and reciprocally reinforcing set of institutions and practical attitudes within these pioneering cultural traditions, which were sufficient to maintain distinctively new legal orders—along with a distinctive and emergent sense of domestic legal obligation to animate them—in equilibrium.⁵

Over the last several centuries, an analogous transformation has—in my view—been taking place with respect to the emergence of international law. More specifically, I believe that the phenomena that Hathaway and Shapiro have recently called “outcasting” have been coevolving with, and helping to produce the emergence and stability of, a distinctive set of practical attitudes in us. These practical attitudes have, in turn, begun to infuse us with a special sense of international legal obligation, which is capable of animating both those same outcasting practices and an emergent international legal order.

Although this process is not yet complete, it would appear to be picking up steam, and—given its importance to our contemporary world—we need to understand this transformation as the focus of current international legal scholarship in several of our

In Part I, I will employ contemporary devices in metaethics⁶ to ask whether international law is law. Although some people take the question to be a simple one, I believe that the question could have been asked of domestic law when domestic legal systems were first emerging, and that the question would have undoubtedly seemed (and probably also seems) to be a difficult one in many regions of the world, the domestic version of the question now,⁸ and I therefore want to get a better sense of what might be at stake in this question. Examinations of this kind can help clarify the nature of the question, not only in the case of domestic law but also in the case of international law.

The metaethical discussions in Part I will isolate one distinctive dimension of the question: the emergence of international law as a distinctive dimension of the question, along with the specific type of

Ian Shapiro
Thursday, 21 February 2013
**Equality's Frontiers:
How Congress's Section
5 Power Can Secure
Transformative Equality
(as Justice Ginsburg
Illustrates in Coleman)**
Rava B. Siegel
Thursday, 21 February 2013
**Sex Equality's Inner
Frontier: The Case of
Same-Sex Marriage**
Kenji Yoshino
Thursday, 21 February 2013

YALE LAW JOURNAL ONLINE ARCHIVE

Volume 122

Footnote 6

Metaethics is the attempt to understand the metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and psychological presuppositions and commitments of moral thought, talk, and practice.” Geoff Sayre-McCord, *Metaethics*, STANFORD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PHILOSOPHY (Aug. 29, 2008), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/metaethics/>; see also Stephen Darwall, Allan Gibbard & Peter Railton, *Toward Fin de siècle Ethics: Some Trends*, in MORAL DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE: SOME PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACHES 3, 7 (1997), available at <http://philosophyfaculty.ucsd.edu/faculty/dbrink/courses/other%20pdf%20articles/DarwallGibbardRailton.pdf> (“We use this term broadly, not assuming that one can avoid normative commitments in doing metaethics and not restricting metaethics to the analysis of moral language; we include under ‘metaethics’ studies of the justification and justifiability of ethical claims as well as their meaning, and also the metaphysics and epistemology of morals, and like matters.”).

An Example: Jack Snyder



<https://qdr.syr.edu/discover/projectcontentsnyder>

Five Benefits of Qualitative Transparency

1. **Fulfills our ethical responsibility as social scientists**

Five Benefits of Qualitative Transparency

2. **Better communicates richness and rigor**

- **More space** (e.g. word limits and interpretive footnotes)
- **One-click” access to:**
 1. Data in which political actors speak in their own voices
 2. Scholarly analysis and interpretation
 3. Methodological (process) information
- **Self-awareness and collegial debate incentivize more attention to richness//rigor**

(e.g. the “multi-method thesis”)

[**NB: Interpretivists should *really* like this!]**

Five Benefits of Qualitative Transparency

3. Qualitative scholars can more easily debate, extend, reuse, improve and transcend existing research.

- Data, analysis and methods become public goods, fostering discussion and extension (critics need only provide marginal data)
- Incentivizes innovation and investment in qualitative methods and skills (e.g. inductive methods, area studies, functional knowledge, policy expertise, historical knowledge, interpretive skill, digital ability)

Five Benefits of Qualitative Transparency

4. Qualitative scholars can demonstrate and validate excellence and expertise, enhancing legitimacy inside the discipline.

- Documents (or quotes) trump conjectures
- Disciplinary acknowledgement of merit
- Greater demand for expert gatekeepers (e.g. publishing, evaluating)
- Methodological skills of interpretation, language, etc.

NB: 90%+ of political scientists use qualitative analysis

5 Benefits of Qualitative Transparency

5. Qualitative social science will gain more credibility and legitimacy outside academia

- Interdisciplinary research (e.g. Law, History, Public Policy, Sociology)
- Policy Analysis
- Funders and the Public

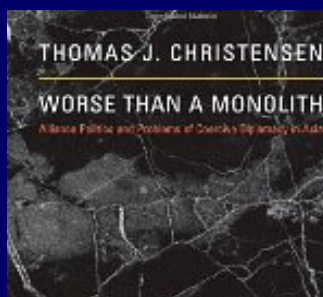
The benefits are large, but what about the costs?

Not as large as most people imagine.

Costs are Low

1) Some political scientists already do it

Best Practices: Political Science



ALLIANCES AND WAR ESCALATION, 1950–51

79

ments reveals that the Soviets apparently believed that Zhou's complaint about Pyongyang's intentional exclusion of Beijing from the decision process was quite justified. In an initial draft of a September 20 telegram to China on the subject, Gromyko criticized as "entirely mistaken" the North Korean leadership's reluctance to "conscientiously inform the Chinese Comrades of the military situation and all the decisions the Korean commanders and political leadership made regarding issues arising in the course of military operations." In this initial draft Gromyko wrote that he believed that Kim Il-sung himself "must correct this point." Gromyko did not, however, transmit this draft to Beijing. The telegram that was actually sent was quite different and was almost certainly geared toward manipulation of the alliance to minimize China's anger at Pyongyang and to maximize the chance that Beijing would still come to its defense if and when needed. In the revised telegram the situation is described more neutrally as "not right" (or "abnormal") but then is quickly explained away by reference to the "weak links" that the central command in North Korea has with its front lines. Gromyko says this situation arose because of technical difficulties not because the "Korean Comrades are unwilling" to share information with the Chinese.³⁸

³⁸ "Geweimike Guanyu Dui Zhou Enlai de Dafu Zhi Weishen Dian" [Gromyko's Telegram to Roschin Regarding a Reply to Zhou Enlai], Sept. 20, 1950, in Shen, ed. *Chaoxian Zhanzheng*, 2:542–44. Shen offers full texts of both the telegram as sent and the original draft. Mansourov, "Stalin, Mao, Kim," 7, discusses only the final draft and describes it as a telegram from Stalin, rather than Gromyko. Moreover he seems to take at face value the explanations of the "abnormal" conditions in which Kim Il-sung is unable to inform his Chinese comrades of his activities. In the Chinese version of the original draft, the situation is described as something Kim Il-sung can fix and as *wanquan cuowu de* (totally mistaken), as opposed to the final version's *bu zhengque de* (not right), translated as "abnormal" by Mansourov.

The Costs of Transparency are Modest

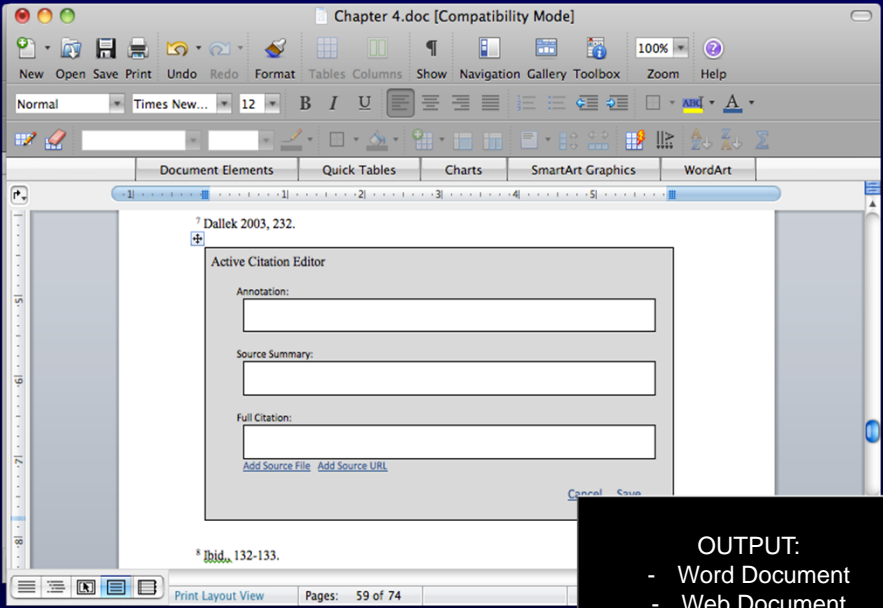
- 1) Some political scientists already do it
- 2) Only “contestable empirical claims” need AC
- 3) Authors choose length of quotations and annotations
- 4) Modern technology + advance planning lighten the load
- 5) Writers, editors and publishers keep existing formats
- 6) Standard practice in other disciplines (law, history, classics), political science (once upon a time), as well as journalism, policy and the web.

From these perspectives, AC is a very modest proposal!

Qualitative Transparency: It is happening...

- Sponsored Articles/Workshops/Special Issues on Conceptual and Practical Issues (Funding from IQMR, NSF, APSA, ISPR)
- Developed Active Citation (AC)
- Established a Qualitative Data Repository (QDR)
- Created NSF/QDR On-line Demonstration Portal: 20+ scholars retrofitting “classic” and forthcoming research to AC (e.g. Snyder, Saunders, Boix, me)
- Developed Training Materials and Sessions at summer institutes and universities
- Revised APSA and QDR Guidelines (Quant and Qual)
- Designed New Software

ACE Word Add-in



OUTPUT:

- Word Document
- Web Document
- Database (Access, Atlas...)

Qualitative Transparency: It is happening NOW!

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- Designed New Software
- **25 journals (and increasing steadily) have signed on to a qual/quant transparency package that mentions AC, to be implemented in January 2016**

25 Journals have adopted (Oct 2014 – Feb 2015)

- American Political Science Review
- American Journal of Political Science
- Journal of Conflict Resolution
- Comparative Political Studies
- International Security
- Political Analysis
- Research and Politics
- State Politics and Policy Quarterly
- Political Science Research and Methods
- Journal of Theoretical Politics
- Quarterly Journal of Political Science
- Political Behavior
- The Political Methodologist
- Italian Political Science Review /
Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica
- Journal of Peace Research
- European Union Politics
- International Interactions
- British Journal of Political Science
- Security Studies
- The Journal of Politics
- European Political Science
- Party Politics
- Cooperation and Conflict
- Conflict Management and Peace
Science
- European Journal of Political
Research
- Journal of European Public Policy

Bottom Line:
You snooze, you lose!

Materials available at the **QDR**: <https://qdr.syr.edu/>

and the **APSA DA-RT**: <http://www.dartstatement.org/>

Materials from this lecture available at:

www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs
under “DATA AND METHODS”

- **SLIDES FOR THIS LECTURE**
- **RECENT ARTICLES**
 - *The Political Methodologist* (2015)
 - *Security Studies* (2014)
 - *PS* (2010, 2014)
 - *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* (2012)
- **Links to APSA DOCUMENTS**



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