Qualitative Transparency Deliberations

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Inequalities in Depositing Data files

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Inequalities in Depositing Data files

Posted: **Sat Sep 03, 2016 10:30 pm**
by **ekarakoc**
Not all scholars may have similar experiences in depositing/archiving their data files to a particular website (e.g. journal's or other places). For a journal or pedagogical reasons, have you ever post your data sources/field notes? Do you think that there are inequalities in achieving those goals for scholars with quantitative or qualitative training?

Re: Inequalities in Depositing Data files

Posted: **Tue Jan 10, 2017 10:37 am**
by **egeozen**
I posted the data we coded for our publication with my co-authors on my personal web page. However, it has its own difficulties and challenges. I couldn't do the same thing for another publication due to the high size of the data files. So, it can be challenging to upload the data file especially the data are original.

Whether there are inequalities in terms of quantitative and qualitative methods, I believe that this question needs to be answered by a scholar whose training is on qualitative research. But still, I can make some assumptions about possible inequalities.

First of all, the content and format of data are by its nature different from each other in quantitative and qualitative methods. While for quantitative scholars it is most of the time an excel, STATA, SAS, or SPSS document, it is much more tricky for qualitative scholars. We are talking about pages long field notes, interviews, thoughts, even sometimes participatory observation. On the other hand, it is almost given that the whole data collection and management process needs to be transparent and publicized. So, it is very difficult both for the researcher and also the reader to follow the data sharing process for qualitative methods.

Second, the data posting process is also tricky because researchers, in both training, would not like to publicize their data until they use the data for their own research and publish everything they would like to publish. And in this criteria I don't see any inequality between two data collection methods. It doesn't mean, though, that these concerns cause dilemmas in terms of scientific process. Again, right after the publication of a research, the scientific community has the right to ask researchers to make their data accessible.

Third, and as a last point, I see an analogy between today's academia and capitalist system, which is basically an economy running on production and consumption patterns. In scientific process we have the same processes, in which data collection and production process is very very costly in both methods, and there is the asymmetry between the production and consumption preferences. And I believe that this is the point where those inequalities become crystal clear. For example in public opinion research, it is very costly to generate new and original data while at the same time the expiration date on the same data is extremely short since public opinion changes very fast and therefore it is very difficult to grasp it. Most of the time best we can do as researchers is to take a snapshot, a very expensive snapshot.

I did not even mention anything about the publication process, but none of these points I made could and should be thought independently from the publication process. Well, maybe that is a matter of another post...

Re: Inequalities in Depositing Data files

Posted: **Thu Jan 19, 2017 1:24 pm**
by **Guest**
From my limited experiences I can easily say that there is high variation across journals in terms of their requirement for easy access to data. While some journals required me to send the data before publication, some others only recommended me to make it accessible without further checking if I really did or not.

I always posted the replication files online in my webpage, and clearly indicated in the publications that the replication materials can be accessed through my personal webpage as well as journal's data depository, if available. However, I have received many emails from other scholars asking me about the replication materials. It seems that high variation across journals and disciplines indeed does not help researchers be certain where to look in a publication or journal's website to see the location for replication files. I believe in the necessity of a common stance by all the journals to embrace a similar practice such as clearly indicating where to find the replication materials in the very first page or the last page of the publication.

Moreover, I realized that some journals only ask you to make your data accessible until the print version of the publication appears. I think there is no need to wait for print version to be available, the authors must make their data available when online version of the data appear in the journal's website, as well. After all, many scholars are merely reading the online versions and do not wait for another 1-2 years to cite the paper.

Lastly, I also realized that some versions of data files make this issue even more complicated. For example, some versions of STATA data files cannot be opened by other versions. Having this in mind, it is important to focus on making data files easily accessible, not only accessible in some formats.

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