



May 25, 2017

Announcement of SSMART 2017 Projects

The Berkeley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS) is pleased to announce this year's two awarded projects for the Social Science Meta-Analysis and Research Transparency (SSMART) grant program. Through this competitive research program, BITSS aims to improve the quality of research in economics, political science, psychology, and related disciplines by focusing on research transparency and reproducibility issues.

This third round, supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation¹, focuses on projects led by or partnered with researchers from the Global South. BITSS received 11 proposals in response to the [Request for Proposals](#), requesting more than \$280,000 in funding. The SSMART review committee included experts in political science, demography, and psychology.²

The reviewed projects fell within three categories outlined in the RFP: (1) developing innovative methods to improve the transparency and credibility of research findings; (2) producing new findings through meta-analysis; and (3) studies of researcher norms and strategies to promote the practice of open science. The two selected projects fell within categories (1) and (2).

Synopses of the awards are below. Research projects will be completed by May 2018 and progress can be tracked on the Open Science Framework (OSF).

BITSS is an initiative of the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA), headquartered at University of California, Berkeley. For more information, visit <http://bitss.org>.

¹ Funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation aims to catalyze research in this area led by or partnered with researchers in the Global South.

² The review committee included Kevin Esterling (Professor and Associate Dean of the Graduate Division of Political Science, University of California, Riverside), Michèle Nuijten (PhD Candidate and Lecturer, University of Amsterdam), and Zacharie Tsala Dimbuene (Assistant Professor, University of Kinshasa). Each reviewer scored 7 eligible proposals, reviewed the projects recommended for award, and confirmed the two projects for award.

Category 2: Producing new findings through meta-analysis

Research Transparency in Brazilian Political and Social Science: A First Look

Researchers: Scott Desposato, (UC San Diego), George Avelino (Fundação Getúlio Vargas, São Paulo)

Open Science Framework Page: <https://osf.io/6n9fe/>

Abstract: We propose to conduct the first meta-analysis and reproducibility analysis of political science in Brazil. Funds will be used for graduate student support and other expenses to collect data and assess reproducibility of all articles published in the last five years in the three leading Brazilian political science and general social science journals, the *Brazilian Political Science Review*, the *Revista de Ciência Política* and *Dados*. A meta-analysis will test the relationship between type and field of study and reproducibility, and results will be presented to the annual meeting of the Brazilian national association of political scientists, the Associação Brasileira de Ciência Política (ABCP).

Category 3: Studies of researcher norms and strategies to promote open science

Pre-Analysis Plans: A Stocktaking

Researchers: Daniel N. Posner, George Ofosu (UCLA)

Open Science Framework Page: <https://osf.io/xrtqm/>

Abstract: The evidence-based community (including BITSS) has held up preregistration as a solution to the problem of research credibility, but—ironically—without any evidence that preregistration works. The goal of our proposed research is to provide an evidentiary base for assessing whether PAPs—as they are currently used—are effective in achieving their stated objectives of preventing “fishing,” reducing scope for the post-hoc adjustment of research hypotheses, and solving the “file drawer problem.” We aim to do this by analyzing a random sample of 300 studies that have been pre-registered on the AEA and EGAP registration platforms, evenly distributed across studies that are still in progress, completed and resulting in a publicly available paper, and completed but (as far as we can determine) not resulting in a publicly available paper. Given the significant costs of researcher time and energy in preparing PAPs, and the implications that adhering to them may have on opportunities for breakthroughs that come from unexpected, surprise results^{3, 4}, it is critical to take stock of whether PAPs are working.

³ Laitin, David. 2013. “Fisheries Management.” *Political Analysis* 21(1): 42-47.

⁴ Olken, Benjamin A. 2015. “Promises and Perils of Pre-Analysis Plans.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 29(3): 61-80.