
LETTER TO THE EDITORS

The Qualitative Data Repository's Annotation for Transparent Inquiry (ATI) Initiative

Colin Elman, *Syracuse University*

Diana Kapiszewski, *Georgetown University*

We write with news of an initiative that the Qualitative Data Repository (QDR, www.qdr.org) is undertaking in partnership with Cambridge University Press (www.cambridge.org) and the technology firm Hypothes.is (<https://hypothes.is/>), with the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (www.rwjf.org) and the National Science Foundation. The Annotation for Transparent Inquiry (ATI) project seeks to enhance the transparency of qualitative and multi-method research in the health and social sciences. In this short letter we offer some background on the initiative, and let *PS* readers know about an associated working group.

PS readers are likely to be familiar with supplemental materials—study datasets, relevant information about their creation, and the code used for analysis—being provided to enhance the transparency of quantitative and computational social science. These materials are shared in ways that are consonant with the numeric nature of the data and their analysis as an aggregate body of information. That analysis is typically summarized in tabular form in the text or appendix of published work (see figure 1).

In qualitative research, by contrast, data—text, audio, video, and images—are used and represented somewhat differently. Rather than being analyzed holistically, the data are analyzed individually or in small groups, and serve as distinct inputs to an analysis, supporting discrete inferences and interpretations in the relevant publication. Moreover, the data and their analysis are interwoven through the text of a publication (see figure 2).

Making qualitative research more transparent and accessible—and therefore more easily disseminated and more quickly incorporated into academic and public dialogue—thus presents a variety of substantive, technical, and ethical challenges. Addressing those challenges requires coordinated engagement by publishers, annotation platforms, and digital repositories.

QDR, Cambridge University Press, and Hypothes.is, with the generous support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, have partnered to develop a solution: ATI. QDR is a domain repository dedicated to curating, preserving and publishing the data

underlying qualitative and multi-method research in the health and social sciences. Its operations are supported by the National Science Foundation (Award Nos. 1424191 and 1628636). Cambridge University Press is a leading publisher of social science scholarship. Hypothes.is is a non-profit technology firm that develops open source software enabling the creation, storage, and sharing of web-standard annotations. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the largest philanthropy focused exclusively on health in the United States, and supports research related to improving population health, well-being, and equity. ATI is a new approach to achieving transparency in qualitative research in the health and social sciences.

ATI draws on Andrew Moravcsik's (2010; 2014a; 2014b) pioneering work on active citation. ATI is based on the concept of “open annotation,” which allows for the generation, sharing, and discovery of digital annotations across the web. Digital annotations to published scholarship based on qualitative data include analytic notes (that discuss the generation and analysis of the data and how they support textual claims/conclusions), excerpts from data sources (and translations as needed), and potentially the sources themselves (i.e., the work's evidentiary base, when these can be shared ethically and legally). Annotations can be mapped across the span of a book or article—linked to discrete passages in the text where data sources are deployed. The annotations serve as a digital overlay that can be displayed in tandem with any manuscript on any webpage, appearing right next to annotated text. In addition, the annotations and sources are compiled into a “data supplement” that is viewable in a repository and assigned a persistent identifier (e.g., a Digital Object Identifier [DOI]).

ATI thus augments the main text and footnotes of a research publication, allowing authors to include more substantive content in the text by reducing the need for block quotations or discursive footnotes. By accelerating access to research-enhancing information and easing readability, ATI dramatically strengthens and amplifies the impact of qualitative research. The “ATI at a Glance” page on the QDR website offers more information, including links to a few early prototypes (<https://qdr.syr.edu/guidance/ati-at-a-glance>), and another page offers some basic instructions for using ATI (<https://qdr.syr.edu/deposit/ati-instructions>).

QDR and its partners are currently working to assemble a group of approximately 35 outstanding scholars from various health and social science disciplines who will serve as pioneers for this new approach to transparency. Members of this “ATI Pilot Working

Colin Elman is the director of the Qualitative Data Repository in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He may be reached at celman@syr.edu.
Diana Kapiszewski is the deputy director of the Qualitative Data Repository. She may be reached at dk784@georgetown.edu.

Figure 1
Quantitative Research – Matrix Data

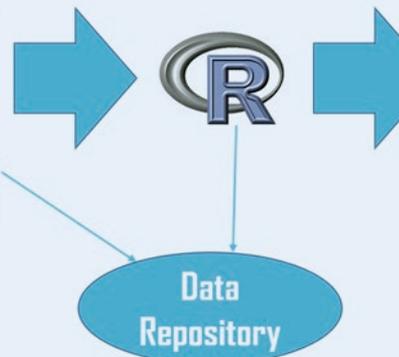
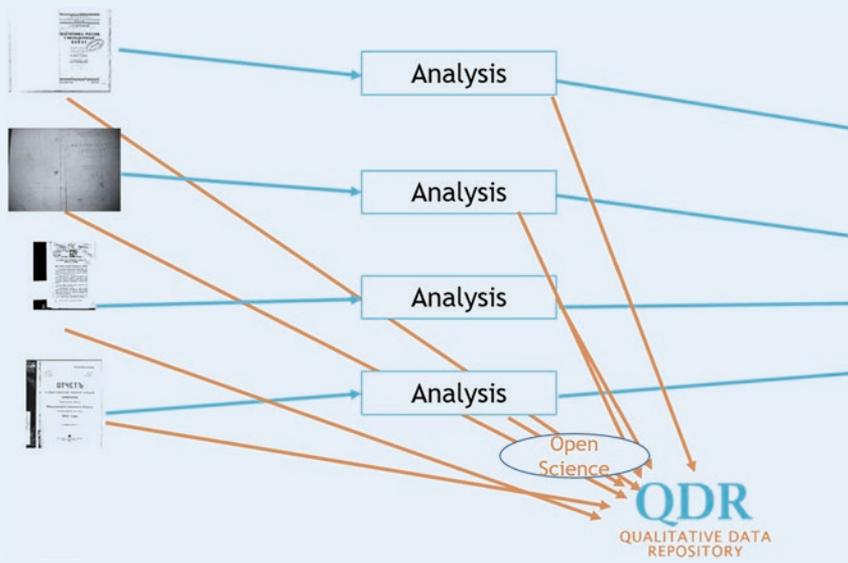


Table 2. Treatment Effects (Experiment 1)

	Perceive Personal Influence	Support Cap on Carbon Emissions	Believe Global Warming is Real	Believe Global Warming is Harmful	Support Cap on Carbon Emissions	Willingness to Take Personal Action
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Intercept	0.38***	0.23***	0.37***	0.23***	0.29***	0.29***
Per Descriptive (D)	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.02
Per Descriptive (I)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Impactive (D-I)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cue ID	-0.12**	-0.06	-0.06	-0.05	-0.14**	-0.17**
Cue D-I	-0.10	0.11*	0.03	-0.06	-0.01	-0.06
PartyID	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PartyID * Per D	0.21**	0.23**	0.28**	0.21**	0.13*	0.13*
PartyID * Per D-I	-0.10	-0.12	-0.06	-0.12	-0.14	0.04
PartyID * Cue D	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.12	0.13	0.13
PartyID * Cue D-I	-0.11	-0.11	-0.13	-0.13	-0.13	-0.13
SE	.08	.07	.07	.07	.07	.07

Toby Bolsen, Thomas J. Leeper, and Matthew Shapiro. 2014. "Doing What Others Do: Norms, Science, and Collective Action on Global Warming." *American Politics Research* 42(1): 65–89.

Figure 2
Qualitative Research – Individual Pieces of Data



DANILOV'S DEFENSIVE PLAN OF 1910

The Russian war plan of 1910 was more defensive and more oriented toward Germany than any other Russian plan made between 1890 and 1914. General Danilov, the principal draftsman of the plan, allocated 53 divisions to the German front and 19 to the Austrian front. His deployments abandoned the forward fortresses, the Narva River barrier, and indeed most of Poland. Forces deployed against Germany and ~~to advance~~ to advance after completing their concentration, if circumstances permitted. Rail and road improvements were ~~planned~~ planned with strictly defensive operations in mind. The abandoned forward zones were to be stripped of all supplies.³

Danilov gave two reasons for concentrating forces far from the frontier and primarily against Germany: One was Russian military weakness after the Russo-Japanese War, including the continuing lag in the speed of Russian deployments, and the other, the possibility of a large-scale German attack against Russia and the uncertainty of adequate French support.

The Russo-Japanese War and its attendant political and economic difficulties had a ruinous effect on the ~~Russian~~ Russian. Military stocks were drawn down and not replaced because of Russia's financial crisis, which lasted almost until 1910. Official targets for the stockpiling of equipment and supplies would not even be approached until 1913 or 1914.⁴ Between 1906 and 1908 as many as one-third of Russia's soldiers were used for internal security duties, which sapped morale and interfered with training.⁵ Moreover, Russia's defeats in Manchuria had called into question the fitness of existing military doctrines, organizational forms, and commanders. The first five years after the war were spent debating the doctrinal and institutional implications of the defeat. Significant reforms and reorganization were delayed until 1908 and 1910, when funding was increased and policymaking powers were concentrated in the hands of the war minister.⁶

Russian military ~~equipment~~ equipment at several times during this period that the army's devastated condition made the use of force dangerous [not of 186] against even Turkey, not to mention Austria or Germany.⁷ Such was the state of disorganization even as late as 1909 and 1910 that it would have been "utterly impossible to make war," according to General A. Brusilov, who commanded the Russian Eighth Army. In Brusilov's high-priority corps in the Warsaw military district, supplies were barely sufficient even for peacetime requirements, and the transport service was in chaos.⁸

Group" will produce and evaluate a diverse set of pilot projects that will illustrate the power and promise of open annotation and demonstrate the utility of ATI. Our goal is to include scholars who employ different analytic approaches and diverse types of qualitative data, and study different geographical regions and time periods. This diversity will allow us to identify different ways in which annotation contributes to academic research and publishing. Each working group member will be paired with a graduate student interested in the relevant research topic who will review their pilot project using a pre-determined set of criteria. Each author and graduate student will receive a modest honorarium.

Half of the working group members will "retroactively" annotate an article based on qualitative evidence that they recently published,

or have forthcoming, in an academic journal. The other half will employ ATI as they write a piece that they will later submit to an academic journal for review. Once working group members submit their annotation projects to QDR, the repository will curate them and use Hypothes.is technology to generate open annotations. Graduate students will then evaluate the use of ATI. Ultimately, the annotations will be linked to the digital version of the article published on the journal web site. (The ATI Data Supplement will also be published on the QDR site.)

We will invite ATI Pilot Working Group members and graduate student assessors to attend two workshops funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, in February and September of 2018. In those workshops, we will discuss the experience of,

challenges presented by, and promise of using ATI to enhance the openness of qualitative scholarship, and consider ways in which the approach can be further developed.

Please get in touch with Colin Elman (celman@syr.edu) or Diana Kapiszewski (dk784@georgetown.edu) if you have questions or are interested in joining QDR, Cambridge University Press, and Hypothesis in this initiative. ■

REFERENCES

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