Replication Paper Tips

Gov 2001

General Suggestions

- You should start thinking now about which article you want to replicate. And dont forget that you will need to find one or two co-authors.

- Read Gary's Publication, Publication article. Then read it again when you start work on your paper.

- Choose an article that is important in your field and that has already attracted attention from other scholars.

- A good way to get a sense of the influence an article has had is by looking at its citations. Google Scholar is great for this.

- Read through previous papers that your author(s) has written, especially if they are on the same topic. If the paper you are replicating is the last in a series, the procedures used may be more fully documented in one of the earlier ones, even if that paper is not explicitly mentioned in the text.

- Read all footnotes, notes under the tables and figures, and appendices.

Getting Data

- Check the author(s) website(s). You may get lucky and find the data (and/or code) that you need already posted. Also check the homepage of the journal and see if there is any discussion of a replication policy or if they post any of the data. (For example, the American Economics Review often makes available the data for its articles.)

- Check public data archives. The IQSS Dataverse (http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/) and the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu) are good places to start.

- If you can't find the data in a publicly available source, then contact the author. *Be courteous and professional.* Try to consolidate your questions into as few emails as possible. Authors should be contacted only when you are unable to proceed without their help.

Getting the Data into R

- The foreign() library in R is designed to facilitate loading data from other formats, particularly SPSS and STATA. Check the read.spss() and read.dta() help files for details.

- A program called DBMS/Copy, which is available on the lab machines in CGIS, can be used to transfer files between formats. Stat/Transfer is another such program that is also available on at least some lab machines.

Sample Replications

In the last years, the American Political Science Review published two replication articles, both of which are worth reading as examples.

- Jana von Stein. 2005. Do Treaties Constrain or Screen? Selection Bias and Treaty Compliance. American Political Science Review 99 (4): 611622.

- Kusoke Imai. 2005. Do Get-Out-the-Vote Calls Reduce Turnout? The Importance of Statistical Methods for Field Experiments. American Political Science Review 99 (2): 283300.

For getting a good idea of some of the pitfalls of replication, also read the response by Gerber and Green to Imais replication of their original article. Definitely read this article before making your replication public.

- Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green. 2005. Correction to Gerber and Green (2000), Replication of Disputed Findings, and Reply to Imai (2005). American Political Science Review 99 (2): 301313.