

CHAPTER 6

Conducting a Literature Review

So far we have discussed the initial stages of any a typical research project: hypothesis formation, conceptualization, measurement, and the development of a suitable research design. At some point early in the process it is important to spend time reading others' reports of similar research. We refer to this enterprise as conducting background research or a literature review.

You should undertake a literature review near the outset of a research effort, if only to make sure that your research does not duplicate someone else's. More important, a literature review can help you narrow your topic and suggest ways to investigate it. In this chapter we will discuss reasons for background research and explain how to conduct it.

For many students simply finding a research topic can be a time-consuming and frustrating experience. So while this chapter focuses on what to do once you have identified a research topic (if only in a general sense), we also will make some suggestions to help you become more familiar with political issues, debates, sources, and events and identify potential research topics of interest to you. We also demonstrate techniques for searching for information on the Internet.

Selecting A Research Topic

Potential research topics about politics come from many sources: your own life experiences and political activities and those of your family and friends; class readings, lectures, and discussions; and newspapers, television, and magazines, to name a few. Becoming aware of current or recent issues in public affairs will help you develop interesting research topics. You can start by reading a daily newspaper or issues of popular magazines that deal with government policies and politics. We have listed a few below.

Journals and Magazines with a Government and Policy Focus

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report. 1945-. A weekly report of hot topics in Congress. The information is later compiled into annual volumes called the CQ Almanac.

Environment. 1958-. Geared for professionals and academics who wish to keep up with environmental policy matters. Global in coverage, but emphasis is on the United States. Ten issues per year.

Environmental Reporter. 1970-. The Current Developments section is a weekly review of pollution control and related environmental management problems.

Governing: the states and localities. 1987-. Contains articles addressing current policy issues confronting states and localities and what they are doing about them.

Intergovernmental Perspectives. 1975-. Published quarterly by the U.S. Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. Articles cover major intergovernmental topics and are well-documented with data. Stopped publication in mid 1990s.

National Journal: the weekly on politics and government. 1969-. Similar to the

Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, except the focus tends to be on the executive branch rather than Congress. Article topics can include regulatory agencies, lobbyists, foreign trade, and so forth.

State Government News. 1958-. Covers all branches of state government. Aimed at state government practitioners.

* Public Perspective. Contains articles and data about public opinion toward political issues and policies.

Popular Journals and Magazines

The Atlantic. 1857-. Essays on American and/or world events.

The Economist. 1843-. Weekly news magazine with worldwide coverage of news related to economics. International perspective aimed at the layperson. Contains charts of economic and financial indicators.

National Review: a journal of fact and opinion. 1955-. Bi-weekly news magazine with articles on current issues from a conservative perspective.

The New Republic. 1914-. Weekly coverage of issues facing the United States, traditionally from a liberal perspective.

*American Prospect

* American Spectator

* Policy Review

* The Progressive

Reasons for a Literature Review

Good research involves reviewing what has been written about a topic. Among the reasons for such a review are (0) to see what has and has not been investigated; (1) to develop general explanations for observed variations in a behavior or phenomenon; (2) to identify potential relationships between concepts and to identify researchable hypotheses; (3) to learn how others have defined and measured key concepts; (4) to identify data sources that other researchers have used; (5) to develop alternative research designs; and (6) to discover how a research project is related to the work of others. Let us examine some of these reasons more closely.

Often a beginner will start out by expressing only a general interest in a topic, such as childhood socialization or the siting of hazardous waste facilities. At this stage the person will not have formulated a specific research question (for example, "How soon in childhood does socialization begin?" or "Do negative televised campaign advertisements sway voters?"). A review of the previous research will help sharpen a topic by identifying major research questions that have been asked by others. Note also that as explained below having a precise topic in mind greatly facilitates Internet searches.

After reading the published work in an area, a researcher may decide that previous work has not answered a question satisfactorily. Thus a research project may be designed to answer an "old" question in a new way. Published reports are often sources of important questions and untested hypotheses that need to be researched. Thus an investigation may follow up on one of

these ideas.

At other times, researchers may begin a research project with a hypothesis or with a desire to explain a relationship that has already been observed. Here a literature review may reveal reports of similar observations made by others and may also help a researcher develop general explanations for the relationship by identifying theories that explain the phenomenon of interest. The value of one's research will be greater if a general explanation of the observed or hypothesized relationship can be provided rather than simply a report of the empirical verification of a relationship.

In addition to seeking theories that support the plausibility and increase the significance of a hypothesis, a researcher should be alert for competing or alternative hypotheses. A researcher may start out with a hypothesis specifying a simple relationship between two variables. Since it is uncommon for one political phenomenon to be related to or caused by just one other factor or variable, it is important to look for other possible causes or correlates of the dependent variable. Data collection should include measurement of these other relevant variables so that in subsequent data analysis the researcher may rule out competing explanations or at least indicate more clearly the nature of the relationship between the variables in the original hypothesis.

For example, suppose someone has hypothesized that people become active in politics because they have some serious dissatisfaction with government policy. A review of the literature on political participation would show that participation is related to years of formal education, attitudes toward citizen duty, and beliefs about one's own ability to affect political affairs. Thus it would be wise to include measures of all these variables in the research design so that the policy dissatisfaction explanation may be compared with the other explanations for political participation. In fact, without conducting a literature review the investigator might not be aware of the potential importance of these other variables.

A researcher also may compare his or her concept definitions with those of other researchers. Using the same definitions of a concept as other researchers will lead to greater comparability of research findings on the same topic. Furthermore, the validity of a researcher's measures may be improved if the literature reveals that other researchers' definitions of a concept are ambiguous or combine two or more concepts that need to be treated separately. For example, in his study of political participation of French peasants, Sidney Tarrow found that it was important to separate the concept "support for political parties" from the concept "interest in politics."¹ The concept "interest in politics" was interpreted by French peasants to include the idea of approval of existing parties. Because French peasants did not approve of the parties, they denied that they were interested in politics despite their high levels of voter turnout. Hence, in this case it was advisable to measure political interest and party support separately.

A researcher may also discover the opposite problem: he or she may be using overly narrow definitions that fail to capture important dimensions of a concept. For example, if you were conducting a survey to measure support for democratic values, you would be missing numerous definitions of this concept if you simply defined it as a belief in regular elections. A review of other studies on democratic values would alert you to other definitions such as support

for political rights.

Research reports provide us with valuable information about viable research designs, measurement strategies, and data collection methods. A note of caution is necessary, however. Dead ends and "bonehead" mistakes are rarely reported. Published research reports may lead us to believe that the research process proceeds in an orderly, nonproblematical, textbook fashion. Thus, some of the more obvious alternatives in research design, measurement, and data collection may have been tried by other researchers and rejected for good reasons. Sometimes, however, an author will discuss possible improvements and explain why they were not incorporated into his or her own research. Although reading previous research will not necessarily tell you everything other researchers have tried and rejected, it may suggest to you ways of improving your research design and measurements and help you turn your study into a more interesting and successful research project.

As an example of the benefits of a literature review, let us look at a review conducted by one of us, Richard Joslyn, who was interested in the impact of television news on the political opinions and behavior of the American public. In particular, he wondered whether watching the news affected people's beliefs about the utility of political participation.

A review of the literature on political participation revealed four main considerations. First, it was discovered that previous investigators had developed a concept that was relevant to the hypothesis. It was called *political efficacy* or *sense of civic competence*. This concept had been defined in a number of similar ways:

the feeling that political and social change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change;²

the timeless theme of democratic theory that members of a democratic regime ought to regard those who occupy positions of political authority as responsive agents and that the members themselves ought to be disposed to participate in the honors and offices of the system;³

an individual's belief in the value of political action and the probability of success in this action;⁴

belief in the efficacy of one's own political action, consisting of (1) a belief that public officials can be and are influenced by ordinary citizens; (2) some knowledge about how to proceed in making this influence felt; and (3) sufficient self-confidence to try to put this knowledge to work at appropriate times and places.⁵

This looked to the author like a concept that might be influenced by watching television news shows.

Second, the author discovered that political efficacy had recently been divided into two

different types of belief: internal political efficacy, or "the level of perceived personal power in the political system"⁶ and external political efficacy, or "the feeling that an individual and the public can have an impact on the political process because government institutions will respond to their needs."⁷ This division meant that a researcher might want to specify which aspect of political efficacy was involved in any given hypothesis.

Third, the literature review revealed ways in which both internal and external political efficacy had been measured by other researchers. A set of six to eight questions on public opinion surveys had originally been used to measure efficacy in general; later a smaller set of questions was found to measure internal and external political efficacy separately.

Fourth, the literature review turned up numerous studies that had tested different explanations for variations in people's political efficacy (see Table 6-0.) These explanations focused on individuals' personality, social status, social cohesion, and political experiences, and consequently they represented rival hypotheses for efficacy that did not depend upon television news viewing. Joslyn was able to include some of these alternative explanations in his research design so that the television news hypothesis could be evaluated more completely.

At the conclusion of this literature review, then, the researcher had become familiar with the conceptualization and measurement of a phenomenon relevant to his original hypothesis, had discovered sources of data that included at least some of the measures of interest, and had been alerted to competing hypotheses that would have to be taken into consideration in testing the link between political efficacy and television news exposure. One can readily see that literature reviews further the conceptual, empirical, and theoretical aims of most research projects.

Conducting a Literature Review

How you conduct a literature review depends on the main purpose of the review, the stage of development of the research topic, and available resources. If you are starting with only a general interest in a subject and not a specific hypothesis, then it might be a good idea to locate a textbook covering the subject, read the appropriate sections, and then check out the sources cited in the notes. From there you can begin to develop and refine a more specific research question. Another approach to get you started would be to skim the contents of a few professional journals likely to have articles in your area of interest. Any of these approaches can be done with standard library materials but, as we'll see, using electronic sources such as the Internet and electronic databases often facilitates the task.

Ms Carter: Janet asked if this paragraph should be "boxed," as in a pedagogical device?

Here's a tip many students find useful: each time you find what appears to be a useful source look at its list of notes and references. One article, for example, may cite two more potentially useful sources. Each of these in turn may point to two or more additional ones and so on. It is easy to see that by starting with a small list you can quickly assemble a huge bibliography. Moreover, you increase your chances of covering all the relevant literature.

A thorough literature search includes anything published on your topic in professional journals, magazines, books, newspapers, government publications and documents, and conference proceedings. To guide you in this endeavor, we have listed in the remainder of this chapter a number of professional journals in political science, with comments on their content. Also listed are indexes and bibliographies that will help you locate materials related to your topic.⁸ Several of these indexes are available as compact disc databases. Your library's reference librarian will undoubtedly be able to provide you with additional information and guidance on the particular library sources available.

USING THE INTERNET TO CONDUCT A LITERATURE REVIEW

The Internet provides a relatively new tool for conducting literature reviews. The Internet can be thought of as an enormous collection of files or documents that are stored on computers throughout the world and that can be searched for information of all kinds including text, quantitative data, graphic images, and video and audio files. Since all of the **sites** or places where this material is stored are electronically linked, they can be accessed from a personal computer or terminal connected to a network. It is then possible to “download” or retrieve selected information. The World Wide Web (WWW)—a networked information system—makes finding and retrieving this information especially easy.¹

A person uses a commercial browser such as Netscape or Internet Explorer or one provided by an Internet Provider like America Online to visit Internet locations, look for documents or data of interest, and retrieve them. Most readers of this book have probably been doing surfing the web since high school, if not before.

One of the benefits of this revolution in global communications is that it places an almost limitless supply of information literally at one's fingertips. Scouring the Internet also allows one to find many kinds of documents and data that a traditional library search will not turn up or are not available on many campuses. The drawback, if there is one, is that without careful planning and thought one can drown in a sea of citations and references. It is thus important to plan ahead. An Internet literature review involves a series of steps.

1. Create a list of **search terms**.
2. Access the Net with a **browser**
3. Use **search engines** and **electronic data bases** to find information and documents.
4. If necessary, modify the list of terms and repeat steps 2 and 3.

The search begins with a list of “**search terms**” or keywords. The purpose is to find documents and information that contain these terms. If you were writing about television and

¹The Internet and World Wide Web are really separate entities but for simplicity we use the terms interchangeably.

politics, for instance, keywords for your search might include among many others “television,” “mass media,” “elections,” and “public opinion..” When entered into an appropriate computer program the Internet is browsed for documents that contain these words and phrases. The trick is to find as many relevant documents as possible while excluding those that contain irrelevant information. (Programmers sometimes refer to getting the right “hits.”)

Do not even sit in front of a computer or terminal until you have tentative search strategy in mind. At the outset think carefully about the things you that you are looking for. Do you want to find articles or books about the topic? What time period are you interested in? If you want articles, do you want them to come from scholarly sources like academic journals or from newspapers and magazines? If the latter, are you looking for general circulation publications such as *Time* and *Newsweek* or do you want to read articles from the “opinion presses” like *The Progressive*, *American Spectator*, and *The New Republic*? Do you need political speeches and essays? Will you be analyzing “raw” data such a public opinion polls or government statistics? Answering questions like these will speed the search process.

After you clarify these matters you can then develop a list of search terms. Presumably your research involves a few tentative hypotheses. Ask what specific words, concepts, phrases, and ideas those propositions contain. If, for example, you want to write a paper on the importance of television in presidential elections, which at first might seem like a specific topic, it is still necessary to think clearly about what information will answer the questions posed in the research design. Searching for broad terms such as “elections,” “television,” or “presidency” will lead you to so much information that you probably waste time trying to sort out the useful from the irrelevant. If you looked for items containing “presidential elections,” you could find dozens and dozens of articles on the history of campaigns, foreign elections, electoral laws, candidate biographies, and political consultants to name just a few. None of these might be relevant to your needs. Indeed with such broad searches you may not even find what you’re looking for. Hence, whenever possible use your hypotheses to help define search terms.

It sometimes makes sense to make a second list containing terms that should be specifically excluded from the search. If the project involves the study of televised political advertisements, for instance, you would want to eliminate documents and articles that pertained to speeches, debates, and press conferences, all of which might show up in a general search for “television and elections.”

After deriving a list of words and phrases from the hypotheses, you might then develop a list of **synonyms** for them. Once again, the clearer and narrow a topic the easier it is to come with synonyms. As an example, instead of a huge topic such as “the effects of television on presidential elections,” a person might limit the scope of the study to a specific question: “Has negative campaign advertising increased in the past 30 years?” It should now be relatively easy to list the main concepts and some synonyms for use in an Internet search. The list might include

Term
advertisement
negative

Synonym/cognates
commercial (s), ad(s), spot(s)
attack, hostile, dirty

television

mass media, media

Using the guidelines presented below one can search for various combinations of these words and phrases as in, for instance, “negative advertizing” or “attack ads” or “political spot advertisements.”

Surfing the Net.

Use your browser like Netscape or Internet explorer to find electronic data bases or search engine. A database is a collection of documents assembled by a company or organization. It usually contains specific types of information such as lists of journal articles, government documents, research reports, numerical data, or newspaper and magazine files. Although many are private and cannot be visited by the general public, there are now so many that it is usually easy to find more than enough. Table 6.1 lists some of networked or electronic databases and indexes that are especially useful for the social sciences. These are becoming so widespread and popular that they have begun to replace the paper indexes listed below. The information in these compilations can be searched for documents containing keywords. To visit these places enter the Internet address or “uniform resource locator” (URL) name in your browser’s “go to” box.

Table 6.1 Library Sites and Networked Databases ¹	
Database and Internet address (URL)	Comment
Jstor http://www.jstor.org	Perhaps the best tool for conducting literature reviews since it provides access to full articles, not just tables of contents or abstracts.
OCLC Reference Service http://firstsearch.oclc.org/	Tables of contents of nearly 12,500 journals in all subject areas.
Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe	Full-text information from newspapers, the legal literature, and other sources on a variety of topics.
CARL UnCover "A Current Awareness and Document Delivery Service" http://uncweb.carl.org/	Current article information from more than 17,000 multi-disciplinary journals.
PCI Periodicals Contents Index http://pci.chadwyck.com/	Citations to articles in journals and magazines in the humanities and social sciences.
Indiana University Bloomington Libraries Political Science Research Guide http://www.indiana.edu/~libpoli/RR/ps_res.html	Large collection of pointers to political science materials
Political Science: A Net Station (Walter C. Koener Library, University of British Columbia) http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/	Links to political science sites
Documents in the News Current Events Research (University of Michigan) http://www.lib.umich.edu/libhome/Documents_center/docnews.html	Large collection of documents related to current events
Historical Newspapers Online http://historynews.chadwyck.com/	Indexes to the New York Times and the London Times
Project Muse http://muse.jhu.edu/muse.html	Online journals. May require a subscription.
¹ You may have to use some or all of these databases at your library or at least be connected to the Internet from a campus location. The reference library staff should be able to help you.	

In addition these places, many research institutes and other organizations maintain Internet web sites that are open to the public and have searchable files that can be retrieved. A section later in the chapter contains an extensive list of some of the most helpful ones.

If a specialized database is not helpful one can turn to a general search engine. Broadly speaking a search engine is computer program that searches for and catalogs information stored

on the computers throughout the world. (Experienced web users often refer to them by various other names such as robots, spiders, worms, or harvesters.) They periodically visit web sites throughout the world and obtain summary information from them that is then compiled into directories which you in turn can search. They usually provide a directory or listing of subjects and a search facility that allows you to specify exactly what information you are looking for.

Although there innumerable search engines, each with its strengths and weaknesses and peculiarities, they can be used more or less the same way by entering search terms and imposing search conditions. Table 6.2 lists some of the more popular. If you start your browser and enter the address or “uniform resource locator” (URL), you will go to a search engine. These program provides a place to type in keywords and other search options.

TABLE 6.2	
Search engine	Internet Address (URL)
Google	http://www.google.com/
AltaVista	http://altavista.digital.com/
Excite	http://www.excite.com
Metacrawler	http://www.metacrawler.com
Hotbot	http://www.hotbot.com
Infoseek	http://guide.infoseek.com
Lycos	http://www.lycos.com
Open Text Index	http://www.opentext.com/omw/f-omw.html
Search	http://www.search.com
Webcrawler	http://webcrawler.com
Yahoo	http://www.yahoo.com
Open Directory Project	http://www.dmoz.org/

Practical Guidelines.

Here are some trick that help us efficiently scour the net for information.

- When first visiting a site, particularly one that has a search feature look for and click “help” buttons. The help page will usually provide specific instructions for searching that site.

- ▶ Many sites, particularly those listed in Table 6.1 above, contain links to still other web pages. It is possible then to pyramid a search by going first to political science page and then looking for even more specific places.
- ▶ If you have a clear topic in mind, it is usually preferable to start with a specific Internet site such as those sponsored by research organizations or universities. We list quite a few below such as “Political Resources on the Net” (<http://www.agora.stm.it/politic>). Doing so will reduce the number of false hits. Whichever source is picked, however, familiarity with a few tips will speed the process.
- ▶ If you are working at a personal computer, it is helpful to open a simple word processing program such as Notepad or WordPad or even a full blown word processor at the same time as you are surfing the Net. By using the cursor to highlight and copy selected text from a web page to the word processor you can facilitate collecting information. This technique is especially helpful for copying complicated and long Internet addresses (URLs).
- ▶ Many of the places you visit will have “advanced” search options. You can, for example, frequently limit your search to specified time periods (the years between 1990 and 1999, say), to certain types of articles (book reviews or editorials, for instance), to particular authors or subjects, and to data formats. Take advantages of these features because it is maddening to wade through a long list of possible sources only to discover that most are not the type of reports you need or are in a form that you cannot access.
- ▶ When the program returns a list of items carefully examine the header or top of the search page. It will usually summarize your search request. You may think you were searching for “elections” when in fact you accidentally type “electrons.”

Connectors and Modifiers Usually a person wants only documents containing all of a list of words or even a specific phrase such as *negative campaign ads*. Advanced search features allow you to specify exactly what words or phrases should be **included** in the document and which should be **excluded**. If you simply enter the words without modifiers the program will in all likelihood look for pages that contain any of the listed words but not necessarily all of them or a complete phrase. So you need to force the engine to look for all of the words or the phrase, if that is what is wanted.

Different programs have different ways of accomplishing this task (hence the need to consult the help features), but often one of a couple of conventions will work. To make the program list only documents with all of the words in the list connect them with the boolean operator AND. Other programs require a plus sign (+) between words. Suppose, for instance, that we wanted to conduct research on turnout in recent elections. If we typed

voting participation elections

the retrieved documents could contain voting **or** participation **or** elections.

Since any

document with the word “election” could appear, we would have to wade through many more than are relevant to the topic. But by typing

voting AND turnout AND presidential²

the selected documents must contain all the words voting **and** turnout **and** presidential.

If you want a specific phrase or term try enclosing it between quotation marks. Example: the phrase “political terrorism” will search for the exact phrase. (Proper Names such as Bill Clinton do normally do not have to be included in quotes.)

If a search engine allows an “AND,” it will also permit the use of “OR” to search for lists of terms. Example: if we enter

turnout OR participation

the program will search for documents having **either** turnout **or** participation.

Moreover, one can often force the program to skip documents having certain words by using **NOT** or the minus sign (-) as in

elections NOT American

which gives documents containing elections **but not if** American is included.

Finally, one can frequently use parentheses to combine connectors as in

(voting OR turnout OR participation) AND election

RESOURCES AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET

We have list below a number of web sites arranged by subject matter that contain documents, data, and other kinds of information relevant to political science and related disciplines.

Ms Carter/Janet: How should these be “formatted?”

GENERAL SOURCES FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE (Start with these.)

Political Resources on the Net <http://www.agora.stm.it/politic> (Page of links sorted by country. Good place for political parties and organizations, governments, and mass media from all around the world.

The Ultimate Political Science Links Page.)

²Instead of AND some search engines use the plus (+) sign as in “voting + turnout+ presidential.”

<http://ednet.rvc.cc.il.us/~PeterR/PSLinks.htm> (Maintained by P. S. Ruckman, Jr. Rock Valley College, Rockford Illinois.)

Political Resources on the Net.

http://www.lsu.edu/guests/poli/public_html/polpart.html (Very useful general site.)

Social Sciences Virtual Library <http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/socsci/Poly-Cy: Internet Resources for Political Science>

<http://www.polsci.wvu.edu/policy/>
American Government and Politics

http://www.lsu.edu/guests/poli/public_html/ampols.html (Sponsored by the Department of Political Science, Louisiana State University.)

Political Science Resources <http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/> (Maintained by Richard Kimble, University of Keele.)

Avalon Project at the Yale Law School.

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm> (Documents pertaining to law, history, economics, politics, and government.)

National Political Index <http://www.politicalindex.com/> (Connections to more than 3,500 political Web sites including current political news sources, federal elected officials, tracking congressional legislation.)

GovSpot <http://www.govspot.com/> (This commercial but free site simplifies the search for government sites and documents, facts, news, and other information.)

Electronic Policy Network <http://epn.org/> (Links to many articles and data pertaining to public policy. One of the better sites.)

SITES DEVOTED TO SPECIFIC TOPICS

Ms Carter/Janet: these are examples. How detailed do you want this list to be?

American government

General:

Institute for Better Education Through Resource Technology <http://ibert.org/>
(The purpose of the site is to “provide training and tools for understanding and embracing the responsibilities of citizenship in 21st century America.”)

The President and White House

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

The Briefing Room <http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/html/briefroom.html>

White House Offices: http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/html/EOP_org.html

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/>

Council of Economic Advisors (CEA)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/CEA/html/index.html>

National Security Council (NSC)

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/NSC/html/nschome.html>

Office of National Drug Control Policy <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/>

Office of Science and Technology Policy

http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OSTP/html/OSTP_Home.html

Important Cabinet Departments

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) <http://www.os.dhhs.gov>

Department of Transportation <http://www.dot.gov/>

Department of Justice <http://www.usdoj.gov/>

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) <http://www.fbi.gov/>

Department of Labor <http://www.dol.gov/>

Department of Defense <http://www.defenselink.mil>

Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov>

Department of Energy <http://www.doe.gov>

Department of Commerce <http://www.doc.gov>

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) <http://www.hud.gov>

Legislative branch

Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>

House: <http://www.house.gov/>

Thomas: Legislative Information on the Internet <http://thomas.loc.gov/> (Search for the text of bills and committee hearings.)

Congressional Budget Office: <http://www.cbo.gov/> (An extremely important agency, this office studies fiscal impact of legislative and budget proposals.)

Agencies and Bureaus

Federal Election Commission (FEC) <http://www.fec.gov>

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) <http://www.cia.gov/>

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <http://www.epa.gov/>

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) <http://www.fcc.gov/>

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) <http://www.fda.gov>

Judicial Branch and Law and Courts**State and Local Government****American politics**

Elections

Parties and Interest Groups

Comparative Government and Politics**International Relations****Social and Economic Data****Political Theory**

Major Journals in Related Disciplines

PRINTED RESEARCH RESOURCES

Professional Journals in Political Science and Related Fields

Any good literature review will include research reports published in professional political science journals. It is a sign of the information explosion and of academic pressures to publish that there are now an increasing number of journals with political science-related articles. The following list is not complete, but it includes the major journals of general political

science, a representative selection of journals that specialize in some aspect of political science, multidisciplinary journals, and some major journals in related disciplines.

Journals of National and Regional Political Science Associations

Note that more and more journals and professional associations have their own Internet sites, although very few provide direct access to the full text of articles. They do, however, provide tables of contents and abstracts. Keep in mind that the addresses listed below may not be accurate since some journals tend to move from one publisher to another.

American Journal of Political Science. (<http://PSWEB.SBS.OHIO-STATE.EDU/ajps/>) 1957-. Primarily American government and politics articles.

American Political Science Review. (<http://www.ssc.msu.edu/~apsr/>) 1906-. The official journal of the American Political Science Association.

Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue Canadien de Science Politique. (<http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwpress/jrls/cjps/cjps.html>) 1968-. Focus on Canadian political matters, some articles on international affairs and political theory. Bilingual.

Journal of Politics. (<http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/journals/jjop.html>) 1939-. Primarily American government and politics articles.

Polity. 1968-. Articles on American politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political philosophy.

Social Science Quarterly. (<http://www.utexas.edu/utpress/journals/jssq.html>) 1920. Articles on a wide range of topics in the social sciences.

Western Political Quarterly. (Political Research Quarterly (<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~prq/>)) 1948. Broad coverage of political science and public administration.

Specialized or Multidisciplinary Journals

Academy of Political Science Proceedings. 1910-. Each issue is devoted to a single theme. Presents divergent views on topics. Articles tend to be expository, rather than analytical or empirical.

American Politics Quarterly. (<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http%3A//www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/j0091.html>) 1973-. Articles on American political behavior.

Annals (American Academy of Political and Social Sciences). 1899-. Each issue focuses on a single topic.

The Brookings Review. 1982-. Articles on public affairs research by scholars associated with the Brookings Institution.

Campaigns and Elections: The Journal of Political Action. 1980-. Articles by academics and practitioners on the contemporary American political scene.

Comparative Political Studies. (<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http%3A//www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/usdetails/j0193.h>)

- tml) 1969-. Interdisciplinary articles on cross-national comparative studies.
- Comparative Politics. 1968-. Broad coverage of comparative politics topics.
 - Comparative Strategy: An International Journal. 1970-. Focus on international politics and strategic problems.
 - Congress and the Presidency. 1972-. Formerly Congressional Studies; Capitol Studies. Focus on research on the presidency and Congress.
 - Electoral Studies. (<http://www.psci.unt.edu/es/>) 1982-. International, interdisciplinary journal focusing on voting and elections.
 - European Journal of Political Science. 1973-. Research on European political matters.
 - Foreign Affairs. (<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/>) 1922-. Focus on current issues in American foreign policy, usually with policy recommendations. Articles by scholars, government officials, or journalists.
 - Foreign Policy. (<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/>) 1970-. Wide-ranging coverage of foreign affairs. Articles debate current American foreign policy decisions.
 - Government and Opposition: A Quarterly Journal of Comparative Politics. 1965-. Comparative studies of political development.
 - International Affairs. 1922-. Emphasis on political and social aspects of international affairs.
 - International Organization. (<http://mitpress.mit.edu/journal-home.tcl?issn=00208183>) 1947-. Focus on practical and theoretical problems of international organizations.
 - International Political Science Review. 1980-. Official publication of the International Political Science Association. Each issue focuses on a theme.
 - International Studies Quarterly. (<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~isq/>) 1957-. Multidisciplinary articles related to transnational phenomena.
 - Journal of Communist Studies. 1985-. Articles examine historical and current situations throughout the world involving communism.
 - Journal of Conflict Resolution. (<http://www.library.yale.edu/un/un2f1a1.htm>) 1957-. Articles on international and intranational conflicts.
 - Journal of Development Studies. 1964-. Interdisciplinary journal with articles on economic and social development of Third World countries.
 - Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. 1981-. Journal of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.
 - Legislative Studies Quarterly. (<http://www.uiowa.edu/~lsq/>) 1976-. International journal concentrating on comparative legislative and cross-national studies.
 - Policy Studies Journal. 1972-. Theoretical and practical articles addressing important public policy problems.
 - Policy Studies Review. 1981-. Articles related to current public policy issues.
 - Political Behavior. 1979-. Interdisciplinary journal with articles on political behavior and decision making.
 - Political Science Quarterly. (<http://www.psqonline.org/>) 1886-. Articles on American politics, comparative politics, and international relations.
 - Political Theory. 1973-.
- (<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http%3A//www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/j0026.html>) International journal of political philosophy, published quarterly.
- Presidential Studies Quarterly. (<http://www.cs presidency.org/presquar.htm>) 1972-.

Focus on the American presidency.

Public Administration Review. (<http://www.niu.edu/ext/par/>) 1940-. Focus on municipal, state, and federal management issues.

Public Opinion Quarterly. (<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/POQ/home.html>) 1937-. All aspects of public opinion and polling.

Public Policy. 1953-. Articles on public policy formulation.

Publius: The Journal of Federalism. (<http://www.lafayette.edu/publius/>) 1971-.

Intergovernmental relations in federal systems; multidisciplinary articles.

Science and Society. 1936-. Journal of Marxist thought and analysis.

State and Local Government Review. 1968-. Articles focus on applied public policies and government management.

Terrorism: An International Journal. 1977-. Devoted to the study of terrorism.

Urban Affairs Quarterly. 1965-. Interdisciplinary articles on urban affairs.

Women & Politics. (<http://www.westga.edu/~wandp/w+p.html>) 1980-. Describes, predicts, and assesses the impact of politics on women and of women on politics.

World Politics. (http://www.wws.princeton.edu:80/world_politics/) 1948-. Articles contain in-depth historical or political analysis, rather than commentary or debate, of current international affairs.

*American Historical Review

* British Journal of Political Science (<http://www.cup.org/>)

*) Ethics (<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/Ethics/>)

* Journal of American History

* Journal of Theoretical Politics

(<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http%3A//www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/j0175.html>)

* International Political Science Review

International Security (<http://mitpress.mit.edu/journal-home.tcl?issn=01622889>)

(<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/frame.html?http%3A//www.sagepub.co.uk/journals/details/j0034.html>) * Millennium (<http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/intrel/millenn/>)

* Philosophy and Public Policy

* Political Studies

* Public Choice

(<http://kapis.www.wkap.nl/kapis/CGI-BIN/WORLD/journalhome.htm?0048-5829>)

* Political Psychology (<http://www.polisci.umn.edu/polipsyc/journal.htm>)

* Review of International Studies

(<http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk/scripts/webjrn1.asp?mnemonic=ris>)

* Review of Politics (<http://www.nd.edu/~rop/>)

* Studies in American Political Development

American Economic Review. 1911-. Major economics journal.

American Journal of Sociology. (<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/AJS/home.html>) 1895-. Wide-ranging coverage of topics in sociology and related fields.

American Psychologist. 1946-. Official journal of the American Psychological

Association; current issues in psychology.

American Sociological Review. (<http://www.pop.psu.edu/ASR/asr.htm>) 1936-. Official journal of the American Sociological Association; general articles in the field of sociology.

JAPA: Journal of the American Planning Association. 1925-. Major sources of scholarship on matters relating to planning, land use and public policy.

Resources for Feminist Research. 1971-. International journal with research articles and substantive bibliographic information.

Indexes, Bibliographies, and Abstracts

A literature search will also use the information contained in indexes, bibliographies, and collections of abstracts. There are numerous indexes to periodical literature, books, and government publications. Some are quite comprehensive, others are more selective. It is a good idea to check the description of a particular index--usually contained in the front of the index--before using it.

Unfortunately, there is a time lag between publication of a periodical or book and its entry in an index. However, you may discover that articles of interest are concentrated among a few journals. To identify articles related to your topic that have not yet been indexed, skim the table of contents of the latest issues of these journals.

The first time you conduct a comprehensive literature search, you may be overwhelmed by the number of citations you discover. Managing them systematically may present a major problem. It may help to put each relevant citation on a separate 3 X 5 index card. If the citation proves to be useful, then complete bibliographic information can be entered later on the card in the form you will be using for your bibliography. These cards can be sorted according to various needs. This method preserves the fruits of a literature search in a form that will be useful to you, and it saves the step of writing the citation information onto a list and then transferring it to a card.

Instead of using 3 X 5 cards or notebook paper to record citation you might consider using a simple database program such as "Ibidem," an electronic bibliography program from Nota Bene or Filemaker Pro, a full-scale database system.

After you have located a number of sources pertinent to your research project, you will want to become familiar with this literature in the most efficient way possible. Each researcher develops a strategy best suited to the situation at hand, but we offer here three suggestions. First, locate the most important and relevant research reports immediately and concentrate on them rather than trying to read all of the numerous research reports you have discovered, some of which are of only peripheral concern. Abstracts are helpful here. Abstracts are short summaries of the contents of books and articles. These will aid in identifying those sources most relevant to your topic and improve the efficiency of your literature review. Collections of abstracts are included in our list of indexes and bibliographies.

Second, start with the most recent publications. They will contain references to past literature. Even when the content of past work is not discussed, repeated reference to a work will indicate that it is considered by many to be important. Thus you should probably review the work early on in your review.

A final strategy is to take a number of works that you know are directly related to your topic. Using the citation index of the Social Sciences Citation Index, locate the author and work. Below this entry will be a list of all subsequent publications that have referenced the work. These publications are likely to be closely related to your topic as well. The number of times a work is cited by others is a rough indication of its significance (or controversiality). This may guide your decisions about which works to read first.

The following is a list of indexes, bibliographies, and collections of abstracts and other sources of use to political science researchers conducting a literature search. Although each source is briefly described, you will ultimately be the judge of whether the work is a useful source for your own literature review.

ABC Pol Sci: A Bibliography of Contents. 1969-. Timely index with tables of contents of about 300 international journals in their original language in the fields of political science, sociology, economics, policy studies, and law. Author, title, and subject indexes. Updated quarterly.

Alternative Press Index. 1969-. Index of left-of-center publications generally not indexed elsewhere. Issued quarterly.

America: History and Life. 1964-. Abstracts and citations of articles on U.S. and Canadian history from prehistory to present. Volume 0 includes abstracts from Historical Abstracts, 1954-65. Updated quarterly.

Combined Retrospective Index to Scholarly Journals in Political Science. 1886-1974. An index of articles from 531 journals in history, political science, and sociology. Arranged by subject. Also includes author index.

Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Science. 1974-. Weekly index with tables of contents of journals arranged by broad discipline headings. Good for searching for recent articles. Includes author and title word index.

Current Law Index. 1980-. Monthly index of some 700 periodicals.

Dissertation Abstracts International: Humanities and Social Sciences. 1938-. Monthly compilation of abstracts of doctoral dissertations from cooperating U.S., Canadian, and European institutions. Formerly called Dissertation Abstracts and Microfilm Abstracts. Change in title reflects increased coverage.

Energy Abstracts for Policy Analysis. 1975-. Abstracts all types of publications on nontechnical aspects of energy. Annual index. Also available online.

Environment Abstracts Annual. 1970-. Annual cumulation of Environment Abstracts. Covers publications including journals, proceedings, newsletters, and reports on a broad range of environmental topics. Includes a section called "Year in Review" that has a calendar of the year's key environmental events, directory of agencies and conservation organizations, list of conferences, and a legislative summary. Online version is called Enviroline.

Feminist Periodicals. Reproduces tables of contents of current issues of over 100 major

feminist journals.

Index to Current Urban Documents. 1972-. Quarterly index to local government documents of the 272 largest American cities, their counties and regions. Annual cumulation.

Index to Legal Periodicals. 1908-. Monthly index with annual cumulation.

Index to Periodical Articles Related to Law. 1958-. Quarterly index of journals not covered by Current Law Index or Index to Legal Periodicals. Therefore does not cover law journals or directly law-related publications.

Index to U.S. Government Periodicals. 1970-1987. Quarterly index of approximately 200 out of more than 2,000 government periodicals.

International Bibliography of the Social Sciences-Political Science. 1953-. Covers international journals in political science; updated yearly.

International Political Science Abstracts. 1951-. Comprehensive source for abstracts for all subject areas of political science. Detailed subject and author indexes. Published bi-monthly with cumulative annual index.

Legal Resources Index. 1980-. Includes indexing for legal periodicals, legal newspapers, and law-related articles from business and general interest periodicals. Available in microfilm and online. Online version is updated daily, microfilm version monthly.

Magazine Index. January 1970-. Microfilm index, updated monthly, of approximately 400 magazine titles.

Monthly Catalog of United States Government Publications. 1895-. Most complete index to U.S. government publications.

Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin. 1915-. Biweekly index of policy-oriented literature. Includes periodicals, books, and government documents.

Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin: Foreign Language Index. 1972-. Foreign language counterpart of PAIS Bulletin, updated quarterly.

Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature. 1900-. Semimonthly index of approximately 200 popular newsstand periodicals.

Sage Public Administration Abstracts. 1974-. Quarterly index of articles, books, government publications, pamphlets, and so on. International in scope.

Sage Urban Studies Abstracts. 1973-. Quarterly collection of articles international in scope. No cumulative indexes.

Social Sciences Citation Index. 1973-. An index, updated three times a year, of 2,000 journals. Subject, source, and citation indexes.

Social Sciences Index. 1974-. Quarterly index of approximately 300 frequently used journals in the social sciences.

Sociological Abstracts. 1953-. Extensive coverage of publications in and related to sociology. Supplements include papers presented at sociological meetings, updated five times a year.

Women Studies Abstracts. 1972-. Updated quarterly.

Women's Studies Index. 1989-. Annual index. Provides the most comprehensive coverage of women's studies periodicals.

Universal Reference System: Political Science Series. 1969-. Annual supplements commence in 1969. A ten-volume set arranged by broad topic headings indexes material prior to 1969. Includes abstracts.

Urban Affairs Abstracts. 1971-. Updated weekly with semiannual and annual

cumulations.

USPD, United States Political Science Documents. 1975-. Indexes and abstracts from political science journals; updated yearly.

Compact Disc Databases

Quite a few of the indexes and abstracts described above are available in compact disc form. Here we draw your attention to some of the most commonly available ones.

ABC Pol Sci. 1984-. Compact disc version of index described above.

Auto-Graphics Government Documents Catalog System. 1976-. An index to all government documents catalogued by the Government Printing Office since June 1976. Compact disc equivalent to Monthly Catalog.

PAIS. 1972-. Compact disc incorporates the Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin and the PAIS Foreign Language Index.

Sociofile. 1974-. Compact disc equivalent to Sociological Abstracts.

Ms Carter/Janet: cut this section? Most news papers have online indexes. In addition, their contents can be accessed through Lexis-Nexis. By the time the book is published the Internet and electronic databases will have superceded much of this material.

Newspaper Indexes

Newspaper articles may be a source of background information as well as of explanations and hypotheses about politics. These major newspapers have indexes:

Christian Science Monitor
New York Times
Times (London)
Wall Street Journal
Washington Post

The National Newspaper Index comes in microfilm and compact disc versions. The microfilm version indexes since January 1979 the Christian Science Monitor, the New York Times, and the Wall Street Journal. The Washington Post was added in September 1982 and the Los Angeles Times in October 1982. The compact disc version indexes the same newspapers from 1988 on.

Book Reviews

You may find it helpful to know how others have evaluated key books related to your research topic. Reviewers often critique the books, compare them with other works in the field, and offer interpretations and explanations that differ from those of the author.

Book Review Digest. 1905-.
Book Review Index. 1965-.
Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Scholarly Journals. 1886-1974.
Current Book Review Citations. 1976-. Monthly index to book reviews published in more than 1,200 periodicals.
Perspective. 1972-. Monthly review of new books.
Political Science Reviewer. 1971-.

Conference Proceedings

Frequently research is presented at professional conferences before it is published in a professional journal. Thus if you want to be informed up to the minute or if a research topic is quite new, it may be worthwhile to investigate papers given at professional conferences.

The Index to Social Sciences & Humanities Proceedings (1979) indexes published proceedings. However, the proceedings of the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association (APSA) and regional political science associations have not been published. Summer issues of the APSA's PS contain the preliminary program for the forthcoming annual meeting. The program lists authors and paper titles. The International Studies Newsletter publishes preliminary programs for International Studies Association meetings. Copies of programs for other political science and related conferences (frequently announced in PS) may be obtained from the sponsoring organization. Abstracts for some fields, for example Sociological Abstracts, include papers presented at conferences. Once promising papers presented at professional conferences have been located, copies of the papers may usually be obtained by writing to the authors directly.

Many draft manuscripts and conference papers are now on line from sites maintained by professional organizations.

Conclusion

No matter what the original purpose of your literature search, it should be thorough. In your research report you should discuss those sources that provide explanations for the phenomena you are studying and that support the plausibility of your hypotheses. You should also discuss how your research relates to other research and use the existing literature to document the significance of your research. An example of a literature review is contained in the research report in Chapter 14.

Exercises

Ms Carter/Janet: Do you want new and/or Internet assignment(s) added?

1. Using the citation index of the 1992 Social Sciences Citation Index, determine the number of times Richard Fenno's book, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*, published in 1978, has been cited. (An explanation of how to use the citation index appears on the front overleaf of

the volume.) Using the citation index of the 1992 Social Sciences Citation Index, determine the number of times Richard Fenno's book, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*, published in 1978, has been cited. (An explanation of how to use the citation index appears on the front overleaf of the volume.) If your library has the CD-ROM version of the SSCI then you need to be aware that the only citations that will appear on the screen are ones you ask for very specifically, with the exact initials, dates, titles, etc. Since citations have a way of being written in different formats, a way to view as many as possible is to browse the data base. The way to browse the CD-ROM listing is to (1) load the program for SSCI; (2) open up the 1992 data base; (3) at "Basic Index" prompt hit ALT and F together to change fields; (4) cursor down to "Citation" and hit return; (5) at prompt type "FENNO"; and (6) press ALT and D together. Using the cursor at this point will allow you to browse the listing and catch all the different "FENNO" citations. Use the source index to obtain complete information on the second source that cites Fenno's book. How many references were listed in the bibliography of the source? (Note: you will find Fenno in this list.)

2. Using ABC Pol Sci, Volume 24, No. 5, 1992, give the year, volume, and issue number for the following periodicals: African Studies Review, American Politics Quarterly, Policy Studies Review, World Development. Give the name and author of the last article in each periodical.

3. Using Volume 19 of the Social Sciences Index, determine the number of sources listed for the following topics: Environmental Policy-United States; Iran-contra affair; Nationalism-Eastern Europe; Political Science-Political Science as a Profession; State Legislatures. Give the titles of the sources listed under state legislatures.

END NOTES

1. Sidney Tarrow, "The Urban-Rural Cleavage in Political Involvement: The Case of France," *American Political Science Review* 65 (June 1971): 341-357.

2. Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren E. Miller, *The Voter Decides* (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, 1959), 187.

3. David Easton and Jack Dennis, "The Child's Acquisition of Regime Norms: Political Efficacy," *American Political Science Review* 61 (March 1967): 26.

4. Robert Weissberg, *Political Learning, Political Choice and Democratic Citizenship* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 470.

5. Donald R. Matthews and James W. Prothro, *Negroes and the New Southern Politics* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 276.

6. Jerome D. Becker and Ivan L. Preston, "Media Usage and Political Activity," *Journalism Quarterly* 46 (Spring 1969): 130.

7. Arthur H. Miller, Edie N. Goldenberg, and Lutz Erbring, "Type-Set Politics: Impacts of Newspapers on Public Confidence," *American Political Science Review* 73 (March 1979): 67.

8. A source of much of the commentary in this chapter on journals, indexes, bibliographies, and abstracts is Bill Katz and Linda Sternberg Katz, *Magazines for Libraries*, 6th ed. (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1989).