

LSHTM
Festival

*“Guerra de cifras” and
cifras de guerra:*
Essays on data quality and conflict
mortality in Latin America

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- Composed of multiple studies spanning conflicts in Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico and topics such as homicide, disappearance, and bereavement
- Unifying threads
 - Focusing on population characterization
 - Examining data quality in conflict settings
 - Engaging with the types of quantities measured and monitored in conflict settings
- Varied data sources...
- ...and varied computing environments

Need to develop practices prioritizing openness that are context-agnostic and can be applied across all projects

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and **to share in scientific advancement and its benefits**

*Article 27.1
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*

Open Practice #1: Principled data processing

- From colleagues at the Human Rights Data Analysis Group and modified for academic workflows through work with the Mortality and Inequalities Research Group at LSHTM
- Core principles:
 - Transparency
 - Auditability
 - Replicability
 - Scalability
- Implemented from the beginning of every project
- How?
 - Task-based structure – one script, one task
 - Makefiles/meta-files – ensure that code is run in the intended order
 - Prioritizing open-source software tools
 - Version control (even when working “alone”!)

Open Practice #2: Openness in peer review

- Peer-review is an important, albeit imperfect, aspect of academic publishing
- It can be difficult for reviewers to determine how authors have implemented their analyses
 - Especially true for areas where there are the most researcher degrees of freedom (e.g., data preparation)
- Sharing code *at the review stage* can alleviate these challenges...
 - ...but code needs to be shared in a way that does not violate anonymization policies
- One solution: anonymous read-only repositories linked in the submitted manuscript
 - For reviewers: clarifies how analyses were carried out
 - For authors: accountability mechanism for code clarity and quality (i.e., no fixing the code “later”)

Open Practice #3: Openness after publication

- After publication, open principles ensure that others can benefit from our scientific work (UDHR Art. 27.1)
- Share code in public repositories and with open licenses
 - Replication
 - Extension
 - Teaching examples
- Publishing data *when possible*, balancing openness with privacy and confidentiality concerns that come with human rights work
 - When publishing data is not possible, I consider whether there are other sharable outputs
- Prioritize publishing in open-access journals when possible and self-archiving
 - Helps ensure that people who want to read my work can access it

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Thank you!

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