Common Qualifier Paper Problems

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Overclaiming

"I prove democracy is not real" \rightsquigarrow

"I provide evidence consist with failure of representation"

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- ➤ Overclaiming

 "I prove democracy is not real"
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- Underclaiming: under-contextualizing, conceptually
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- ► Book-reporting Literature review ~>
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- Organization "(Why is this here?)" "(How related to prior?)"

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 - ▶ Uncertainty, inference
- Insufficient detail about the case, data, methods, etc. History of India, Assume we know India

Ignoring counterarguments, alternative explanations "I've shown you evidence consistent with my theory X" ⋄ "I've shown you evidence consistent with my theory X, but also inconsistent with Y and Z." Have *something* to say; demonstrate that you've thought about the problem.

► Failing to recognize design's weaknesses

"Because coefficient is positive, X causes Y"
design that enables answering Q you propose

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 "Because coefficient is positive, X causes Y"
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- ► Failing to recognize data's limits

 Cool data that can't answer question
 →

 Data + Method that address exactly what you propose

- ► Failing to recognize design's weaknesses

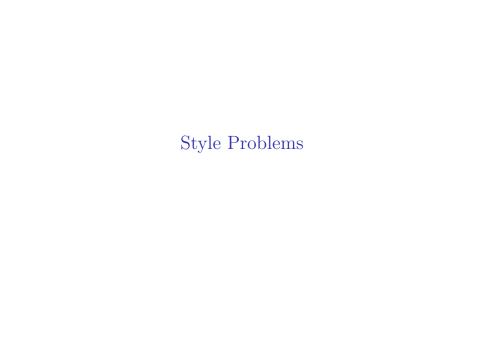
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 Data + Method that address exactly what you propose
- ► Accepting unacceptable limits

 "X is too hard", "Y not computationally feasible for me",

 "Z takes hours", "To know W, must visit archive"
 Get as close to the bleeding edge as you can.



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 Holding out until page 4 \rightarrow Reader always knows result
- Using the passive voice

 "an analysis was conducted" → "we analyze"

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- ► Referring to the person rather than paper "He argues" \rightsquigarrow "Barker (2002) argues"



There's a lot of good advice about writing academic papers. Heed it.

▶ A template for writing a paper:

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 - Compiled PDF: http://tinyurl.com/3sk8djrv

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 - ▶ Quarto file: http://tinyurl.com/yeysumx4

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- Some advice: https://www.ryantmoore.org/papers.html
- These notes: https://github.com/ryantmoore/discussions/blob/main/994-2025-03-07 qualifier probs.pdf

There are many potential pitfalls \dots



There are many potential pitfalls ...



but you will write a great paper!

References I

Barker, David. 2002. Rushed to Judgment: Talk Radio, Persuasion, and American Political Behavior. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.