

Call

Academy of Sociology Replication Award 2025

1. Why a replication award?

Credible science depends on replications that test the robustness and generalizability of research findings and thus also contribute to theory development. This requires transparent and well-documented research, with open access to data and analysis files, as well as researchers conducting replications. Replications are becoming increasingly important. This is reflected, among other things, in the fact that institutions such as the German Research Foundation (DFG) explicitly regard replications as part of good scientific practice. Nevertheless, they have so far received comparatively little recognition in research practice (in the form of publications and citations).

The AS Replication Award gives greater recognition to replications. Every two years, one or two studies that make a special contribution to the scrutiny of research findings by replicating key elements of another study will be awarded. Such a replication award is currently (2024) an innovation in sociology.

2. What counts as a ‘replication’?

Reproductions include all works that conform to one of the following approaches:

- (1) Thoughtful **Reproduction**: An existing paper is examined by repeating the data processing and analyses and examining them for possible errors.¹ In addition, the robustness of the results is examined with respect to purely methodological aspects, such as different forms of data processing, weighting, imputation or operationalization of variables (e.g., using linear versus categorical metrics).
- (2) **Reanalysis**: This proceeds as in (1), but extends the analyses by making modified and well-founded changes to the model used to identify causal effects, e.g. by adding further control variables, removing colliders, or overcoming a possible ‘overcontrol bias.’
- (3) **Replication with new data**: Here, the analyses are repeated with new data. This can be particularly useful for experiments with small sample sizes to test the robustness of their results.
- (4) **Adversarial Collaboration**: This corresponds to one of the approaches (1) to (3), with the special feature that original authors and replicators work together. In the case of well-documented studies with well-prepared analysis files, the role of the original authors may essentially be limited to commenting on the results of the replication team in the joint publication: For example, are possible modifications of the analyses considered reasonable, and if yes/no, why? What can be agreed in terms of modified analyses or data processing, and what cannot? Original authors can proactively seek a second team that wants to replicate their work.²

¹ Eligible reproductions include ‘push-button’ reproductions, which use the analysis files (e.g., Stata code) from the original article, and ‘recreation’ reproductions, which work without the original authors’ analysis files.

² However, simply sharing replication materials without using them for replications is not worthy of the award. Since we want to reward constructive collaboration, we assume that no third parties are involved. However, if additional ‘moderators’ or ‘referees’ are involved, the award will be split appropriately between the winners.

Eligible replications **must be published** at the time of submission: in a journal, in a dissertation or habilitation, or as a preprint in a recognized repository (such as SocArXiv, SSOAR, RePEc). In addition, they must address a topic or methodology of sociological relevance. In addition to studies in sociological journals, articles in multidisciplinary journals (e.g. PNAS, PLOS ONE) are also eligible, provided that they deal with sociologically relevant topics. The replication does not have to be carried out by an AS member, but an AS member must nominate the replication (see point 4).

3. Evaluation criteria: What qualifies as an outstanding replication study?

- **Rigor of the methodological and theoretical reasoning:** The replication study convincingly explains why the modifications or robustness tests applied are methodologically and/or theoretically appropriate.
- **Importance of the replication for the advancement of sociological knowledge and/or for the impact of sociology on evidence-based policy and the public:** Replication studies are particularly relevant if they examine research findings with high scientific impact (measured by citations, but also by media attention, input for evidence-based policy, or textbooks), make corrections in heavily researched areas, and/or make a general methodological contribution to what should be tested or modified and how (e.g., by suggesting innovative visualizations or novel robustness tests).
- **Transparency** of the methodology, code, and documentation of the replication. In the case of adversarial collaborations, this means that also the transparency and well-documented materials of the original authors can be honored.
- **Pre-registration** of the replication, **where appropriate.**³
- Adherence to **research ethics**, e.g. with regard to constructive, respectful treatment of the original authors and their data and other materials.

4. Eligibility to nominate: Who can nominate and how?

All members of the AS are eligible to nominate; self-nominations are also welcome. An informal e-mail with the nominated work attached is sufficient. All works that meet the above-mentioned replication approaches and criteria and have been **published since January 1, 2020**, can be submitted **until April 30, 2025**. Please send an **e-mail** to replication@akademie-soziologie.de.

5. Prize money and award ceremony

The prize money is 1,500 Euro. The prize will be awarded at the AS Conference from October 8–10 2025 in Mainz, Germany. The winners will have the opportunity to briefly present their work at this event. They will be informed of the award at least two months before the Conference.

6. The Jury

The selection committee will consist of a team of three people, at least two of whom will be AS members.

³ This step is particularly useful if the pre-registration has taken place before the replicators have had access to the data.