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Letter from the President:

It is my pleasure as incoming President of the Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research section to thank our sections' members for the excellent, cutting-edge, and intellectually engaged research and other scholarly activities that have established our community as home to many foundational contributors to political science and the social sciences more generally. In recent years, our section has had the opportunity to support the development and publication of important new work that is purely methodological, as well as exceptional applications of qualitative and multi-method research techniques to key substantive areas. We have recognized such work through our section awards, workshoped work in progress through sponsored APSA sessions, and published select contributions through the section's excellent journal.

We find ourselves in a broader political moment when efforts at exclusion based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, and sexuality have gathered strength in many parts of the world. Members of our section have long offered scholarly analysis of these efforts and of the movements that arise in opposition to them. In this historical moment of increased opposition to efforts at reversing long-standing patterns of exclusion, it is imperative that we redouble not only our scholarly efforts to understand, document, and analyze these phenomena, but also our practical work to ensure that our scholarly community represents the kind of inclusion that we want to achieve in the broader world.

As one concrete step in this direction, I ask each member of the organized section to make a concerted effort to use our section awards nomination process to amplify the excellent work on and using qualitative methods by scholars who are women, people of color, working at institutions in the developing world, and/or in other traditionally marginalized categories. Each year, such scholars produce an enormous array of interesting and innovative books, articles, and conference papers developing and/or using qualitative methods. Yet our section's awards committees can only consider the pieces that receive a nomination.

By making a special effort to read, recognize, and nominate great work by scholars from historically marginalized communities and identity categories, we can help the QMMR section live up to its potential as an exemplar of social as well as intellectual and methodological diversity. This effort can have broader effects, as well. Section awards can draw attention to job applications, strengthen tenure files, and help build a case for promotion. Hence, the efforts we make to highlight the contributions of diverse scholars within the qualitative and multi-methods community can help increase the pluralism of academia more generally.

Furthermore, the effort involved in nominating deserving work is minimal. For the Alexander L. George Article Award, articles or chapters in edited volumes can be nominated simply by emailing a PDF of the work to celman@syr.edu by the end of January 2020. No elaborate nominating message is needed, and the effort to include authors from diverse backgrounds who may not think to nominate themselves will surely strengthen the section. This call for nominations of scholars with diverse backgrounds and identities is also highly relevant to the David Collier Mid-Career Achievement Award, recognizing scholars who have made significant contributions to qualitative and multi-method research and who are still in the 15-year period after the receipt of their Ph.D. Here, a bit more work is needed. A nomination requires a cover letter making a specific case for the achievements of the candidate and also an up-to-date curriculum vitae. These materials can be sent to j-seawright@northwestern.edu by the end of January 2020.

On a different note, I wish to thank Melani Cammett for her excellent leadership of the section over the last two years, and also Henry Hale for his service as vice president. Jennifer Larson has organized an excellent set of panels as the 2019 division chair, and she deserves thanks and recognition for these efforts. Colin Elman has continued his decades-long indefatigable service to the section and the broader cause of qualitative and multi-method research as secretary-treasurer of the section and also as the leader of the Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research. It is hard to overstate his contributions this and every year. Jennifer Cyr remains an innovative and creative editor of the section publication, but I wish to especially recognize the contributions of her co-editor, Kendra Koivu. Kendra put an enormous amount of work into the newsletter, intellectual and otherwise, in the face of immense challenges during the last years of her life. The section has benefitted greatly from her efforts. I think her work on the newsletter and more broadly will be fittingly commemorated by the section paper award, which has been renamed in her honor. Finally, I appreciate the intellectual vitality that makes this section such a stimulating, ever-changing space. My thanks to each of you for your ongoing contributions!

Jason Seawright
j-seawright@northwestern.edu

*“Estamos vivos porque estamos en movimiento...
...si quieres que algo se muera, déjalo quieto”*
- Jorge Drexler, Uruguayan singer, *Movimiento*

Letter from the Editor:

This issue is filled with questions—questions directed toward how we think about our research and what (or whether) guidelines should be in place regarding how we present it.

The issue’s principle symposium takes a critical point of view on the latter debate. Specifically, it questions the continued advocacy of Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT) in political science. While the value of DA-RT has been debated in the past, here, the authors push the discussion forward in multiple ways. For example, they re-define those parts of the research process to which we, as a scholarly community, should have “access.” They question the feasibility of (full) transparency and the ethics of replication when data collection is based on relationships of trust, exchange, and with marginalized populations. They also tackle the problem of DA-RT from the, perhaps, less obvious perspective of political theory.

To accompany the symposium, we invited a set of scholars to engage in a bit of back-and-forth regarding the theoretical and normative importance of DA-RT for the knowledge-building enterprise. The resulting debate is animated and informative. Indeed, I find these kinds of exchanges particularly fruitful and illuminating. By carving out specific and often competing opinions on a particular issue, they help us (the readers) better define where we stand.

This issue also includes a stand-alone article that provides a provocative re-exploration of how we distinguish qualitative from quantitative work. Among other things, it suggests that the growing popularity of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), especially at institutes that typically focus on *quantitative* methods, blurs the supposed lines that distinguish qualitative from quantitative methods.

In all, these works invite us to question, critically, the exercise, use, and application of qualitative and mixed methods. This is a necessary task, I think. Our pursuit of good, methodologically sound research requires that we continue to examine those methods, as often as we can and from as many different perspectives as possible. Only in this way—by constantly pushing our methodological endeavors forward—will we ensure the vitality of what we do.

Following the words of Jorge Drexler, cited above, “We’re alive because we are in movement... If you want something to die, keep it still.”

Of course, this task—understanding and innovating in the practice of qualitative and mixed methods—is one for which QMMR is particular well suited. It is my goal, as editor of this publication, to push for innovative articles from a variety of viewpoints and voices. I do this in the name of the methods that this publication seeks to promote and understand.

I also do this in the name of my former co-editor and dear friend, Kendra Koivu, who recently passed away after valiantly fighting cancer for years. Her departure is an immense loss for those of us who knew and loved her. It will also reverberate in our study of methods. Kendra was tireless as a scholar and an editor. She was fantastically smart. Her insights on methods—among other things—were brilliant.

Kendra worked almost to the end on QMMR. Editing this publication was, I think, a real labor of love for her. Frankly, I cannot promise to produce this publication at the level that Kendra and I could have done as a team. Her brilliance, as I suggested above, is in many ways unmatched. I will, however, work my hardest to ensure that QMMR stays on the cutting edge of methodological debates. It’s the best way to ensure that the study of qualitative and mixed methods forges ahead—stays in ‘movement,’ if you will—and remains vital to the social sciences. It’s also what Kendra would have wanted.

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jmcyr@email.arizona.edu

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