

Qualitative & Multi-Method Research

Newsletter of the
American Political Science Association
Organized Section for Qualitative and
Multi-Method Research

Contents

<i>Letter from the Section President</i>	
Peter A. Hall	1
<i>Letter from the Editors</i>	
Alan M. Jacobs and Tim Büthe	2
Symposium: Linking Interpretation and Causal Inference	
Guest Editor, Edward Schatz	
<i>Introduction</i>	
Edward Schatz	3
<i>Interpretive Process Tracing and Causal Explanations</i>	
Ludvig Norman	4
<i>Structure, Meaning, and Network Causality</i>	
Steven Samford	9
<i>The Case for Comparative Ethnography</i>	
Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith	13
<i>Making Identity Count: Sequencing Methods in the Study of National Identity</i>	
Bentley B. Allan and Ted Hopf	18
<i>Interpretation, Causality, and Family Resemblances</i>	
Edward Schatz	24
2015 Section Awards Citations	28
QMMR Book Scan, 2014–15	31

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Letter from the Section President

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As the incoming President of the QMMR section, I want to begin by thanking Lisa Wedeen for her service in this role over the past two years and Colin Elman, the indefatigable Secretary-Treasurer of this section for all the work he has done over many years to keep it running and robust, as well as the editors of this publication and the members of the section's Executive Committee for the time they devote to the profession. Since its founding in 2003, this section has become one of the largest and most vibrant in the APSA, reflecting an efflorescence of new work and debate about qualitative and multi-methods in political research.

This year, one of the most prominent of those debates is about how to ensure the integrity of research in political science and the role of transparency in that process. In the first instance, this debate has been inspired by the work of an ad hoc committee created in 2010, on the initiative of Arthur Lupia, Colin Elman and several other political scientists, to propose new ways of advancing Data Access & Research Transparency (DA-RT). The DA-RT group has sponsored a number of APSA panels and workshops to discuss such proposals, but many political scientists are only now becoming aware of this initiative and its implications.

Some of those implications are upon us, as the editors of 27 leading journals in political science have signed a joint statement agreeing to implement by January 2016 a series of principles that include to "require authors to ensure that cited data are available at the time of publication through a trusted digital repository" and to "require authors to delineate clearly the analytic procedures upon which their published claims rely, and where possible to provide access to all relevant analytic materials." Many editors are currently considering how to implement these steps.

Animated by concern about what these measures might require in particular of scholars doing qualitative research and research with human subjects, more than a thousand political scientists signed a petition last November asking journal editors to delay implementing these DA-RT principles until there can be more deliberation in the discipline about their implications for scholars doing different kinds of research.

I can report that the QMMR section is currently sponsor-

ing a systematic process of deliberation about the issues involved in securing transparency in qualitative research. This follows up a motion passed unanimously at our 2015 business meeting that called for such a process and tasked the editors of this publication, Tim Büthe and Alan Jacobs, with drawing up plans for one, building on the excellent symposium they edited on this topic in the spring 2015 issue of *QMMR*. Tim and Alan have done a remarkable job of designing a process that will allow for wide consultation about these issues and culminate next fall in a series of reports about the value, costs, risks and practicalities of research openness for specific types of qualitative scholarship in political science. Their plan has now been approved overwhelmingly by the executive committee of the section and by 98 percent of participating section members in a poll that attracted the highest turnout we have ever had.

These Qualitative Transparency Deliberations will be led by a steering committee of about nine scholars, who will consult the broad community of qualitative researchers, bilaterally and through an online platform, with a view to identifying the major issues that efforts to secure research transparency raise for scholars doing multiple kinds of qualitative research. The steering committee will then recruit about a dozen working groups of three scholars, each of which will consult widely and consider the issues associated with research transparency that arise within a specific type of qualitative research or bear on a specific dimension of various kinds of research.

We hope to be able to sponsor a meeting of these working groups in June and again just prior to the start of the 2016 APSA Annual Meeting with a view to putting online in the early fall the statements prepared by each of these groups. These statements may suggest specific standards or guidelines to be applied to a particular type of research or discuss the general issues associated with ensuring the integrity of research there. Our expectation is that each will seek to articulate the (possibly multiple) understandings of research transparency current among scholars undertaking specific types of qualitative research.

Once we have the relevant online platforms up and running, we will be alerting all members of the section to them via APSANet. I urge you to participate in these deliberations. The objective is to ensure that all relevant views are heard and that these issues are discussed more widely in the profession. Our hope is that this process will clarify the issues associated with research transparency in qualitative research and inform any actions that journal editors or APSA might take on such matters. These are important issues deserving of your attention.

An outline of the planned Qualitative Transparency Deliberations can be downloaded from www.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/moynihan/cqrm/QualitativeTransparencyDeliberationsProposal.pdf.

Anyone seeking more basic information about the initiatives that have inspired this deliberative process can consult this website for an account of the DA-RT initiative (<http://www.dartstatement.org/>); this website for recent debates about it (<http://dialogueondart.org/>); and this website for the Sym-

posium on these issues in the last issue of this publication (www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/cqrm/QualitativeMethodsNewsletters/QualitativeMethodsNewsletters/). I hope you will share the deep gratitude we all owe to Tim Büthe and Alan Jacobs for all the work they have done to encourage informed discussion of these issues and that you will participate as this deliberative process moves forward.

Letter from the Editors

In this issue, we are delighted to present a symposium, inspired by a panel at the 2015 APSA Annual Meeting, that explores a range of innovative linkages between the ventures of interpretation and causal inference. In remarkably diverse ways, the essays in this collection propose approaches to empirical research that combine tools and logics of causal inferences with techniques and understandings typically associated with interpretive inquiry. Our contributors make the case, respectively, for joining cross-case comparison to ethnography, interpretation to process tracing, ethnographic fieldwork to social network analysis, and interpretive discourse analysis to the quantitative measurement of identity. As Guest Editor of the symposium, Edward Schatz both introduces the pieces and offers a concluding synthesis that unpacks a set of conceptual ambiguities and tensions with which positivist-interpretivist bridge-building efforts must grapple.

Readers can also find in this issue the details and citations for all section awards presented at the 2015 business meeting. And we present here the first installment of our new Book Scan, based on a systematic search of a wide range of publisher lists for recent releases that seek to develop or teach approaches to qualitative or multi-method research. We look forward to seeing the Book Scan, together with the Journal Scan introduced in the last issue, become regular features of *QMMR*.

Finally, we would like to offer thanks to several people: to Edward Schatz for his outstanding editorial contributions to the symposium; to Allison Forbes for careful copy-editing of the symposium; and to Alex Hemingway for his invaluable assistance with compiling the Book Scan.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on this issue of *QMMR*, and invite section members to send us proposals for future *QMMR* symposia.

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