DA-RT: Aspirations and Anxieties

by Colin Elman
Syracuse University
and Arthur Lupia
University of Michigan

We are very grateful to the editors of the Comparative Politics Newsletter for arranging a well-balanced forum on the topic of transparency and openness, and for including scholars holding very different perspectives.

Several important issues arise when individuals or organizations consider how to instantiate transparency and openness principles in the form of concrete proposals. For example, what levels of evidence or explanation provide more benefits than costs to a knowledge community (Hall, 2016)? There are questions about the protection of human subjects. There are questions of ownership of data and ideas. While conversations about these and cognate topics have been occurring for many years and in many places, it is terrific to see the Comparative Politics Newsletter further extending these dialogues. In their best moments, these types of conversations can help diverse communities of scholars understand and appreciate the different ways of knowing that make social inquiry so effective. We are glad to have the opportunity to make a contribution to this latest iteration.

I. The Case for Openness

Social inquiry involves gathering and using information derived through engagement with the social world. Different research traditions use different kinds of evidence, analysis, and interpretation to create, exchange, and accumulate intersubjective knowledge claims. Notwithstanding this diversity, every scholarly community holds that knowledge-generation is process-dependent.

Research communities develop rules or norms about what constitutes knowledge in their particular tradition. In a given community, the rules or norms offer guidance on what can be gained from scholarship, and on what needs to be done to make assertions that the community sees as legitimate. These rules and norms also allow a community to comprehend and evaluate a particular piece of research. They provide foundations for answering questions such as 'Is the set of research tasks itemized by the scholar capable of producing the answers she is seeking?' and 'Was the research described in the design conducted appropriately?' These rules and norms empower conversations about whether this is work of a particular kind, and if so whether it was done well from the community's perspective.

The process-dependence of knowledge generation has a transparency corollary: if there are stable practices for properly conducting investigation and analysis, and if the legitimacy of a knowledge claim depends on those practices being followed, then the less you can see of the process, the less access you have to the context from which the knowledge claim has been derived. This corollary determines the nature of openness. Visibility and access are tied to the epistemic levers that produce the claim.[1] This type of frankness, then, can be sharply distinguished from simply dropping the name of a technique or source as the legitimating basis for intersubjective knowledge.

Of course, scholarship involves much more than just the epistemologies that underpin the claim to 'know' something. Research communities also have technological and sociological dimensions. Computers, for example, empower intensive algorithmic analysis. Archives allow for artifacts to be accessible to research communities. Field research is governed by ethical constraints and is also shaped by the institutional forms of IRBs. Nevertheless, the epistemic commitments reflected in a research community's rules and norms are at the center of the knowledge bases that they seek to build.

II. No 'One-Size- Fits-All'

Different types of scholarship are motivated and shaped by diverse theories of knowledge. Our communities observe different things. We think about what we observe in different ways. We draw different kinds of conclusions from our investigations.

It follows then that DA-RT expects that different research communities will achieve openness in diverse ways. How DA-RT principles are instantiated in particular research practices and journal policies will be informed by the interests and concerns of local research communities. DA-RT is intended to enable scholars to demonstrate the qualities of their work in ways that are suitable to research of the type they conduct, and to em-

[1] We explore the themes discussed in this section in Lupia and Elman (2014) and Elman and Kapiszewski (2014).

power research communities to celebrate work that is done well.

Accordingly, we can say unequivocally that anyone attempting to attach a procrustean, one-size-fits-all view of transparency to DA-RT either isn't paying attention to what we have been doing or is purposefully misrepresenting the project.

One of the most inspiring aspects of the first five years of DA-RT was the genuine willingness to listen and learn exhibited by participants representing a wide range of perspectives and epistemologies. Across many research traditions, there is a consensus that increased intersubjectivity, understandability, and evaluability are virtues that can be enhanced by openness. This consensus underpinned a truly joyful multi-year conversation among people who held very different views about what constitutes scholarship.

Perhaps the most distressing aspect of the last nine months has been how quickly some members of our discipline have managed to take what was a broadly inclusive and constructive conversation about how to better evaluate diverse kinds of work, and turn it into a filibustering rerun of some very old and tired methodological battles. Of course, disagreement is expected. Our discipline is fragmented, and some of the cleavages are irreducible and fractious. Moreover, some of these conflicts attach to the *raison d'être* for different traditions, conversations about how to evaluate what 'we' and 'others' claim to know. Nevertheless, we cannot stress the following point too strongly: most of these epistemic divisions are almost entirely irrelevant to DA-RT.

DA-RT acknowledges (and is entirely comfortable with) the existence of cleavages in our discipline by allowing openness to be shaped by research communities. It does so without favoring any particular side. In contrast to one popular but deeply misguided claim, DA-RT is neither a brief for quantitative and experimental approaches, nor a critique of qualitative and interpretive work. Beyond its commitment to the potential virtues of greater openness about processes and contexts that produce knowledge claims, DA-RT has no stake in any specific set of rules or what type of claims they produce. For this reason, we encourage people to focus on how to empower scholars to offer greater context about their work and, by so doing, give others greater access to its meaning. In this sense, we agree with Htun's (2016) suggestions about constructive next steps that scholars can take to produce work that is of great value to others.

III. A Few Words About The Actual Content of DA-RT Policies

We have been dismayed by the strawman characterizations of DA-RT as imposing a categorical openness requirement that outranks all other concerns. These portrayals directly contradict the utterly unambiguous plain text reading of the source documents that DA-RT has produced. To be sure, DA-RT is based on the broad and epistemically neutral consensus that the content of empirical social inquiry depends on the processes that produce it. Offering others access to these processes makes conclusions of social inquiry more understandable, more evaluable, and more usable.

Accordingly, we can say unequivocally that anyone attempting to attach a procrustean, one-size-fits-all view of transparency to DA-RT either isn't paying attention to what we have been doing or is purposefully misrepresenting the project.

Notwithstanding this broad principle, DA-RT explicitly envisions mechanisms for seeking balance between competing and irreducible considerations. While increasing openness may enhance understandability and evaluability, there may be ethical, legal, and logistical reasons to limit what is shared. Accordingly, some of the universal claims made by DA-RT skeptics are very puzzling. Take, for example, the idea that scholars undertaking field research will always have to share their field notes. That idea didn't come from us. In fact, the importance of human subjects concerns has been baked into DA-RT since its origin in 2010. Our conception of DA-RT realizes that the type and context of research will affect communities' choices about how openness is achieved and about how much openness is optimal. This point is not negotiable.

That said, it is worth considering why so much misinformation about DA-RT has been circulating. A number of commentators on DA-RT have responded and contributed to hearsay, rumor, and gossip, rather than to what the documents actually say. For this reason, we

were especially pleased that the newsletter editors decided to include several source documents in this forum for readers to consider.

There are only two formal policies stemming from DA-RT activities. The first policy is a revision to *APSA's Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science*, the responsibility for which rests with APSA's standing Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights, and Freedoms. The revisions, which apply to APSA generally, were the product of an extended and broad consultation with a variety of APSA members. The APSA Council approved these changes by acclamation. The changes to the *Ethics Guide* were followed up by APSA-commissioned discussion documents whose purpose was to clarify different kinds of guidelines that might be considered by different research communities.

The second policy was in part catalyzed by the changes to the *APSA Ethics Guide* and the subsequent discussion documents, but is otherwise wholly separate. The Journal Editors Transparency Statement (JETS) arose after a lengthy conversation amongst the first group of signing journal editors. JETS applies only to participating journals, most of which are not APSA publications.

IV. Engagement and Inclusion

To claims by some critics that these policies were sprung on them without notice or an invitation to participate, we say the following: one can't be an APSA member since 2010 and claim that APSA did not try to make them aware of DA-RT activities or invite them to relevant events. Most DA-RT activities were organized at the request of, or in coordination with, APSA leadership and staff. As a result, information about these efforts has been freely available for years and has frequently been brought to the discipline's attention. This publicity goes back to the drafting of the changes to the *Ethics Guide*, an endeavor that took place over several years, and involved several APSA committees, including most notably multiple interactions with the APSA Council. The entire APSA membership was invited to comment on the drafting of the *Ethics Guide* changes.

In addition, over the years there have been many public events focused on DA-RT activities. APSA, in particular, made considerable effort to publicize most of these events before, during, and after they occurred. The January 2014 issue of *PS: Political Science and Politics*, which included several DA-RT articles, was developed in response to requests about implications of the *Ethics Guide* changes. Pretty much every mode of communication short of carrier pigeons available to APSA (e.g. journal publication, email, website) have been used to draw attention to DA-RT and then the JETS.

It is also worth noting that some outreach focused explicitly on qualitative and interpretive groups. For example, a double-header roundtable series at APSA 2013 was the subject of a single-topic email sent to approximately 850 members of the QMMR section (including, incidentally, many of the 'delay DA-RT' petition signatories). The text of the email included the sentence "it is important for qualitative researchers to participate in the dialogue, so that it includes our interests and concerns."

We now know that despite these efforts many people were not paying attention to the discipline's DA-RT activities. A related example might place this aspect of DA-RT's history into clearer perspective. As Lynch (2016) notes, "intense public and private discussions about DA-RT …consumed the September 2015 annual conference of the APSA." A main theme at many of these meetings centered on concerns about whether increased transparency could endanger human subjects in vulnerable situations. Many people made heartfelt appeals on this point.[2]

At the same conference, there was an all member meeting on "Revising Ethics Guidelines for Human Subjects Research." APSA heavily publicized the meeting in the conference programs. It posted signs throughout the conference venue. The all-member meeting was scheduled in the early afternoon on Saturday, when most people were still at the conference site. Many of the documents emphasized this "APSA MEMBER DISCUSSION." This event was one of only a few of the events at the conference with such a designation. Given the many claims made about human subjects protection in the many private and public discussions about DA-RT to which Lynch refers, APSA reserved a room for

[2] All of the editors with whom we have ever spoken are sensitive to this matter. In fact, as we note below, attending to this concern has been baked into DA-RT from the outset, and the JETS editors and editorial boards have been working to find a balance between transparency and ethics that fit the values of the research communities that they serve.

the gathering — a room that could seat about 40 people with space for others to stand if necessary. One of us attended the entire meeting, wanting to learn more about the discipline's interest in making real and concrete progress on human subjects concerns — including the concerns voiced repeatedly by DA-RT critics. In this large room, for the duration of the time reserved for the all member meeting, there were never more than eight people in attendance. Six people stayed for the entire meeting, one or two more wandered in and out.

Our belief, and this is all that it is, is that many members believe that human subjects protection, like transparency, is an important principle. Yet, until and unless there is a concrete proposal on the table, neither is a topic to which most people choose to devote their attention. Our experience before and after the JETS certainly bears this out.

So, we do not blame anyone for not being involved in earlier DA-RT activities. We understand that the professional incentives for attending to such matters are low for many people. At the same time, there is a very big difference between not being invited to participate in a conversation and choosing not to participate in a conversation to which one has been repeatedly invited.

Going forward, now that more people are paying attention to DA-RT, we hope that everyone can agree that it will make for a more productive conversation if we all engage with what the project has actually produced, and not a comic book version of it. We readily acknowledge that DA-RT is an ongoing process that will benefit greatly from the broader engagement of the larger group of scholars who now appear to be paying attention. But we hope that people will be as attentive to evidence and argument as they would want members of their own research communities to be when working on substantive problems and puzzles.

V. Journal Editors and their Constituents

Many of the interlocutors in DA-RT discussions have been academics for decades. They have interacted with journals and journal editors more times than we have had hot dinners. Indeed, several of them have been journal editors and/or editorial board members. We are, therefore, truly puzzled at some of the characterizations of how DA-RT led to the JETS, and how the JETS affects relationships between editors and authors.

The JETS *does not usurp* editorial powers. It does not force editors to do anything. The JETS is a coordination mechanism, where journal editors express a common resolve to address transparency issues. On this point, it is important to note that editors signed onto the JETS because they wanted to. They joined JETS because doing so helped them achieve an aspiration for their journal.

Moreover, to sign on to the JETS, many of the editors sought and received the assent of their editorial boards. As a result, the claim that only 27 scholars signed the statement is misleading. With the exception of a few journals where the editor acts as a serial autocrat, the JETS was endorsed by editorial boards and not just by editors.[3]

> One of the oddest features of recent contributions by several DA-RT skeptics …is a steadfast belief that the most reliable guide for how best to conduct and represent research in the future is how it was done in the past.

Similarly, the JETS *does not augment* editorial powers. As before, journal editors decide what combinations of premises, evidence, methods, conclusions, and interpretations they will accept. This contrasts with the claim by a number of DA-RT skeptics that the JETS gives editors new authority.

The most prominent version of this misunderstanding is manifest in the way that some skeptics have reacted to the first JETS bullet point, part of which is quoted here: "If cited data are restricted (e.g., classified, require confidentiality protections, were obtained under a non-disclosure agreement, or have inherent logistical constraints), authors must notify the editor at

[3] Still, some may want more information on how journals came to sign onto the JETS. Here it is. In a twelve day period in October 2014, we sent a single inquiry to the listed editors of about 40 journals. (We learned that many journals' websites were out of date on this matter.) Any follow-up conversation was initiated by the editors. One journal, *Perspectives on Politics*, said "no" right away. Many others said "yes" after consulting with their editorial boards. Others never responded. After that, several other journals reached out to us and asked to sign. We accepted all of these inquiries. In sum, editors signed the JETS because it helped them to clarify their practices and achieve their existing aspirations.

the time of submission. *The editor shall have full discretion to follow their journal's policy on restricted data, including declining to review the manuscript or granting an exemption with or without conditions.* The editor shall inform the author of that decision prior to review." Some scholars who conduct ethnographic research on vulnerable populations have read this section, and especially the italicized sentence, as giving editors a new power to insist that authors ignore their ethical and legal obligations to human subjects. Their view is that authors, and not the editors, should be able to determine when and with whom the evidence for their claim is shared.

It is surely worth noting that the discretion to follow their journal's own policy *is the same freedom the editors have always had*. The reason why the sentence allows for different responses depending on the journal's policy is that research traditions use different kinds of data for different kinds of analysis. For some approaches, data can be rendered more shareable using de-identification, masking, or similar strategies. For editors who commonly receive manuscripts of that type, they want to retain the authority to investigate whether a (albeit diminished) view of the data can be provided. In other research traditions, different strategies are available. This acknowledgement of diversity is consistent with DA-RT's long-standing commitment to allow different research traditions to follow their own rules and norms.

The practical upshot of this diversity is that for scholars engaging with vulnerable populations very little is likely to change. Most journals fit within one or a few fairly well-defined research traditions, and hence publish for particular audiences. Authors, editors, and audiences in that community understand the well-known and widely shared norms on what is acceptable practice. It follows that problems are only likely to arise where there is a mismatch of expectations between author and editor — a mismatch that DA-RT does not create. We can imagine three scenarios where such a mismatch might arise, and hence where, for example, an ethnographer might come under inappropriate pressure to disclose.

1. An author could send their manuscript to an out-of-brackets journal, i.e. a journal that does not typically speak to their audience, and hence is ignorant of the relevant norms. This could, for example, be the case when a hard-core political methodology journal is on the brink of publishing an ethnography, but intimates it may not do so because of concerns about data access. We do not think this is a counterfactual that arises very often, however, not least because the mismatch in this out-of-brackets scenario runs much deeper than differences of opinion about openness.

2. Perhaps a little more realistically, the author could send their manuscript to a pluralist journal that services a very diffuse set of traditions. We would hope that the editorial team for such a journal would include people with the requisite diversity of background and skills, and hence a familiarity with the relevant research community's rules and norms. Indeed, in this context, bringing matters of openness out into the open, as the JETS does, provides another lever for pluralists to insist that editors of discipline-wide journals be attentive to all of its audiences.

3. Most realistically, a particular research community may not have a well-articulated sense of what is and is not appropriate. To be sure, there may be research communities that need to be more upfront about why they know what they claim to know and what evidence would be needed to persuade desired end-users of the same result. But for research communities that find themselves in this position, the issues pertaining to publishing a certain type of work run much deeper than transparency.

Our skepticism about the likelihood of mismatched expectations is borne out by the paucity of evidence that any unreasonable demands have been made. We have been having this conversation for more than five years. In all of that time we have never been presented with evidence of an identifiable case of a journal editor making an inappropriate request for data, let alone refusing to review or publish a manuscript on the basis that the author refused to provide this information. We know that hearsay on this topic circulates widely, but we have never seen a shred of evidence from an actual case.

To this end, it would be helpful for scholars who feel as if they are being asked to cross an ethical line to share with others the exact requests that are being made of them. To see what we are suggesting, in 2005, James Fowler, then an assistant professor, posted to a political

science discussion group a quote from a rejection letter he had received (see here). The letter said that the journal was no longer accepting formal theory papers without empirical work. The editor furthermore attributed the policy change to the EITM program. Fowler's post reached EITM's leadership. EITM's leadership was able to clarify that the journal's policy did not reflect their teachings or position. This clarification helped the journal's research community to voice its objections to the policy. As a result of this process, the policy change was quickly abandoned.[4]

If scholars — especially junior scholars — share their tangible experiences now, senior scholars can be a resource in consulting with journal editors where appropriate about the unintended consequences of the request, they can clarify to the scholar why they have misinterpreted the request, or they can do both. Having never seen one of these requests, we offer no judgment about whether and how many there have been. We have no factual basis for saying whether any such instances involve ethical overreach or an author's misinterpretation of an editor's request. To this end, we think that it is important for research communities not to reify stories of mismatched expectations until we know more about their actual content.

> DA-RT's goals are only viable if they result from each research community having an open conversation about their respective standards. Transparency can only be sustainable within a research community if it has honest discussions about the kinds of explanations that it is willing to accept.

As a historical note, we will also add that some scholars have sought to tie these stories about inappropriate requests to the JETS. The problem with these stories is that *they began to circulate well before most JETS journals announced or implemented new policies*. That said, if we focus on documented instances of the problem, the discipline will benefit from addressing it directly.

In sum, prior to DA-RT and the JETS, journal editors had the power to determine the types of manuscripts that they would accept and reject, as well as the type of documentation that they would require for published knowledge claims. Some editors are given power similar to serial autocrats over such matters, others make such decisions in consultation with editorial boards. In the same way that Oz never did give nothing to the Tin Man that he didn't already have[5], the JETS gives no new powers to editors. Instead, it represents their joint commitment to clarify decisions that they are making and want to make.

Going forward, DA-RT and the JETS will be carried out in ways that are consistent with the expectations of the research communities that the different journals serve. Any rules that an editor or editorial board adopts will in part be guided by what it typically publishes. To be sure, journals that publish multiple types of research must be sensitive to a broader range of concerns. Indeed, as we can now see, different JETS participants have made different choices about what to require, with the differences informed by the research communities they traditionally service.

In that spirit, we recognize that both the changes to the APSA's *Ethics Guide* and the JETS are focal moments in our discipline's conversation about how we know what we know. They are the result of years of consultation at dozens of public fora in which hundreds of scholars from different research traditions participated. And until last summer, the DA-RT project largely avoided the type of animus that characterized a number of other activities in the discipline.

The JETS changed the stakes. To the editors, the JETS is a concrete proposal written as a means of clarifying decisions that they were already empowered to make. The JETS provided editors with an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from one another's experiences. The JETS represents a set of principles on which they could agree.

To others, the JETS represented other things. We have seen, and learned a great deal from, reasonable commentary about topics not covered in the JETS or about possible negative consequences of interpreting the JETS in particular ways. We have also seen multiple

[4] A similar effort was recently sparked by a rejection letter from the BMJ (see here).

[5] This language borrows from America. 1974. 'Tin Man.' Holiday. Warner Brothers Records, Inc.

conspiracy theories, enemy narratives, and speculation about others' motives –– endeavors that seldom elevate scholarly debate and do not, in this case, merit a response. The debate about DA-RT and the JETS has brought out both high and low forms of discourse.

There is no doubt that by committing their journals to openness, the editors who signed the JETS have made the transparency conversation more immediate and more consequential for the discipline. Partly as a result of this, many more people are now engaging in the discussion, and bringing their expertise and experience to the table. This is a very welcome development, and one that is entirely consistent with the DA-RT project's long-standing commitment to outreach and engagement.

We hope that the increase in attention to openness, and especially the recent interest of more qualitative and interpretive scholars, will enhance and sustain the ongoing substantive dialogue about transparency. We invite those who are more skeptical of DA-RT and of journals' adoption of transparency requirements to learn about the history and content of the DA-RT project by reviewing the text and materials on the DA-RT web site. And we urge them to generate and join in conversations about how to address the challenging aspects of making social science research more transparent.

VI. Change is Not a Threat

The notion that scholarship is, at its core, epistemically-motivated compliance with community understandings is not new. Nor is the claim that process-dependent knowledge is only fully intersubjective to the extent that the guidelines the scholar used are public, and that she includes information about whether and how they were followed. Representations of social inquiry have always included markers to this effect. To be sure, different research traditions offer different types of signposts, but they invariably articulate the reason for the research project and an account of its conduct. DA-RT is suggesting that there are unrealized opportunities to achieve those goals more effectively, and in ways that would have hitherto been impossible or uneconomic.

One of the oddest features of recent contributions by several DA-RT skeptics, by contrast, is a steadfast belief that the most reliable guide for how best to conduct and represent research in the future is how it was done in the past. At base, this unqualified faith in tradition is a claim that transparency has always been as good as it needs to be, and that that there has been nothing in recent societal or technological changes, or in the development of scholarly infrastructure and related practices, that would empower improvements in openness.

To be sure, we are both old enough to appreciate curmudgeonly reflections of the kind shared by Monty Python's Four Yorkshiremen, and the days when there "were a hundred and sixty of us living in a small shoebox in the middle of the road."[6] But this indulgence comes with a substantial cost. It means eschewing any potential gains from the now near-ubiquitous modern technology that provides an unparalleled ability to both generate and share information. Research data, documentation, and publications can now be stored, indexed, searched, and downloaded with an ease and immediacy that would have been previously inconceivable.

One example of better technology empowering enhanced openness is the promise of improved citation practices. Modern scholarly knowledge claims are now most often conveyed between researchers in digital formats (even the masters for almost all newly produced paper texts exist in digital form). The days when the primary way to locate an article was in a volume that was chronologically arranged on a library shelf are mostly over. One of the most significant building blocks in new capabilities in information management has been the development of permanent identifiers, notably Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs), which provide stable, persistent, and resolvable references.[7] Publishers commonly assign DOIs to articles, and downloads from journal websites are typically accompanied by an instruction to use them when citing. Most political science journals with a qualitative lean, however, use traditional citation practices that were designed when knowledge claims were printed on bound paper. Indeed, the advice given by some traditionalists on how to improve citation practices is made in just those terms, for example suggesting that accuracy consists of providing page numbers. This is of course partially true but, in the context of what is currently possible, imperfectly reflects the kind of

[6] The sketch was popularized by Monty Python, but actually originated on the "At Last the 1948 Show," a 1967 television program on the BBC.

[7] http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2015/04/23/digital-object-identifiers-stability-for-citations/

precision now available (and of considerable potential benefit) to many authors.

The final point to mention about change is that, in the long run, social scientists are unlikely to have the option of remaining 'analog players in a digital world.' Evolving communication and other technologies, as well as more general societal trends, mean that many research processes and publications are going to be more accessible. Accordingly, for most scholarly communities a more productive strategy would be to grasp the opportunity to shape the forms that transparency will take so that they match their community's epistemic needs.

VII. Conclusion

We conclude by expressing our heartfelt admiration for the individual scholars, journal editors, and institutions who have contributed to the lively and promising conversations in political science about sharing data and pursuing research transparency. The conversation of course is oriented around an important milestone: the editors of 27 journals committed to clarifying their publication's expectations about data access and research transparency (DA-RT). The editors deserve the discipline's thanks and respect for willingly promoting, and graciously accepting the burden of instantiating, openness.

The journal editors' commitment is a milestone; however, it is not the end of the journey. As the discipline's journals and research communities gain more experience with openness, further clarifications and improvements are sure to follow. This growth is all the more likely now that transparency has sparked the interest of scholars across the discipline. This broad engagement has always been a necessary condition for DA-RT to achieve its original vision.

We strongly believe that political science's epistemic pluralism and variety of methodological approaches should be celebrated as a source of strength. Similarly, from the outset, we have argued that there must and will be multiple ways to pursue and achieve transparency. Hence, DA-RT's goals are only viable if they result from each research community having an open conversation about their respective standards. Transparency can only be sustainable within a research community if it has honest discussions about the kinds of explanations that it is willing to accept.

Indeed, each research community in our discipline that promulgates empirical-based knowledge claims regularly articulates rationales for others to view their claims as credible and legitimate. Because of the different audiences that political scientists seek to reach and the different ways in which communities produce knowledge, these rationales and the way they are communicated will vary widely. This diversity makes it all the more important that we be clear about our standards and that we seek to communicate them to others as clearly as we can. Not doing so limits the extent to which we can truly understand and access the meaning of one another's claims. This limitation in turn compromises our ability to learn important lessons from our discipline's variety of epistemologies and methods. Being compromised in this way reduces our ability to inform our discipline's actual and potential constituents, and our ability to provide them with insights that they can use to improve the quality of life.

Our capacity to be of service to others is why it is critical for our discipline, and different research communities within it, to discuss issues of transparency in many different venues. The emergence of a concrete proposal (JETS) brought new attention and energy to these discussions. The JETS and the events that it catalyzed are now a focal element of conversations about how the discipline can better serve its various constituencies in the coming years. The topic is also drawing a lot of attention from outside the discipline. While many disciplines are having discussions about transparency, few are having it in domains that have our brand of epistemic and methodological diversity. In many respects, our discipline is seen as a leader in how we are managing this issue.

Hence, January 15, 2016, the date featured in the JETS, is an important date: it led people to focus on the topic of transparency and on attempting to develop and clarify policies for making decisions that journal editors were already being forced to make. Yet, this date neither begins nor ends a conversation. All journal editors to whom we have spoken understand that there is still much to learn about how best to balance the costs and benefits of data sharing and research transparency for our discipline's vibrant and diverse collection of research communities. Like many people who have taken different positions on particular elements of ongoing

transparency discussions, we believe that these conversations can help the discipline as a whole have a greater social impact than it does today. These are difficult issues that require the ideas and focus of many minds to address. For that reason, we are grateful to everyone who is participating in these conversations. Our discipline has important differences that, if effectively capitalized on, make us stronger: we are much better together than we are apart. Thank you for your consideration and thank you for the contributions that you make to teaching, research, and public service.

References

Elman, Colin and Diana Kapiszewski. 2014. "Data access and research transparency in the qualitative tradition." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(1):43–47.

Hall, Peter A. 2016. "Transparency, research integrity, and multiple methods." *CP: Newsletter of the Comparative Politics Organized Section of the American Political Science Association* 26(1).

Htun, Mala. 2016. "DA-RT and the social conditions of knowledge production in Political Science." *CP: Newsletter of the Comparative Politics Organized Section of the American Political Science Association* 26(1).

Lupia, Arthur and Colin Elman. 2014. "Openness in political science: Data access and research transparency." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(1):19–42.

Lynch, Marc. 2016. "Area studies and the cost of premature implentation of DA-RT." *CP: Newsletter of the Comparative Politics Organized Section of the American Political Science Association* 26(1).

CPS Editors' Response to DA-RT Symposium

by Ben Ansell
Oxford University
and David Samuels
University of Minnesota

The DA-RT initiative was well-intentioned, but we found its implementation to be a challenge. After signing the Joint Editorial Transparency Statement (JETS), we consulted with our editorial board, seeking suggestions for best practices for qualitative research. The responses raised several issues we had not considered. Our experience trying to develop rules, guidelines, and procedures for authors to follow — particularly for authors of work with qualitative empirics — has revealed that moving from principles to practice will be much more difficult than we believe the originators of DA-RT and the signatories of the JETS had envisaged.

In response to the issues our board members raised, we decided to delay implementing any requirements for scholars of qualitative work until clearer 'best practices' have been developed, disseminated, and received with some consensus in the field. Many editors who signed the JETS edit journals that receive few qualitative submissions. These editors can largely continue doing what they have already been doing for several years: require authors of quantitative research to deposit replication files. Since *CPS* (rightly) has the reputation of being a mostly-quantitative journal, and since on taking over the journal in September 2013 we also began requiring receipt of (quantitative) replication materials before beginning the publication process, one might have imagined we would have had a similarly smooth experience implementing the DA-RT initiative.

However, *CPS* does in fact receive and publish many qualitative articles — and we would like to receive more — and it quickly became apparent to us that no simple analog existed that might 'replicate' the experience of quantitative data transparency for qualitative submissions. In particular, we found that no clear set of 'best practices' existed to which we might point qualitative scholars. We did seek to draw upon the published suggestions for data access and research transparency that many qualitative scholars have made, but it became clear to us that for some methods, few suggestions for concrete practices had been made — and that in any case, nothing close to consensus about best practices