Qualitative Transparency Deliberations

hosted by the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University on behalf of the APSA Section for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research
https://www.qualtd.net/

Just back from fieldwork

https://www.qualtd.net/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=90

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Just back from fieldwork

Posted: **Wed May 04, 2016 10:56 am**
by **Guest**
My research involves highly sensitive topics in the eastern D.R. Congo. I just got back from a round of fieldwork and was struck by how grateful my subjects were for the human subjects protections my IRB imposes. Saying something like, "I'm not allowed to tell anyone I talked to you" or "I can't even write down your name in my interview notes" put my subjects' minds at ease and made them more comfortable sharing information about the topic at hand, one which is very sensitive and could endanger those subjects if it were known they had talked to me.

We have human subjects protections for very good reasons, and they must be paramount in any discussion of transparency standards. The idea that I might not be able to publish the very interesting and policy-relevant findings from this research if I don't hand over a list of interviewee names or identifying details to a journal editor, reviewer, or public website isn't just personally frightening, it's contrary to our purpose and practice as a discipline. I cannot and will not compromise my subjects' safety. As junior faculty, I need to publish these findings in a highly-ranked journal. JETS puts me in a very frustrating situation.

Re: Just back from fieldwork

Posted: **Wed May 04, 2016 9:19 pm**
by **Guest**
In response to...

"The idea that I might not be able to publish the very interesting and policy-relevant findings from this research if I don't hand over a list of interviewee names or identifying details to a journal editor, reviewer, or public website isn't just personally frightening, it's contrary to our purpose and practice as a discipline."

Can you show me where in JETS this requirement is stated? In my reading, it's not there. These kinds of ghost stories are unhelpful.

Re: Just back from fieldwork

Posted: **Fri May 06, 2016 5:40 pm**
by **TimButhe**
Thank you, Guest #1 (May 4 post at 10:56am) for providing concrete, specific illustrations of why and how the ability to safeguard the anonymity of interview subjects and other interlocutors is important in some contexts--even when it might not be required by the researcher's IRB, i.e. the human subjects protection rules/protocol for the research. For this, the post was very informative and much appreciated.

I read the response to the original post's 2nd paragraph by Guest #2 (May 4 post at 9:19pm) as a reminder that it is quite unclear what exactly DART or JETS requires of the many elements of political science research that are "qualitative" (in the broad sense of every part of our research that does not consist of estimation of statistical relationships or the implementation of a well-designed experimental protocol). More importantly, it is far from clear what kinds of transparency or "explicitness" (https://www.qualtd.net/viewtopic.php?f=10&t=83) practices would be helpful for various specific kinds of qualitative work--and what the tradeoffs are. That issue is much bigger than DART or JETS. And that's why these deliberations are so important. Thank you all for contributing to them.

Re: Just back from fieldwork

Posted: **Sat May 07, 2016 4:28 am**
by **paolospada**
I think it would be very interesting to invite some of those journal editors that have subscribed JETS to explain us how they are applying it in a way that is more concrete than the statements they have posted.

I think QTD is extremely important and should not be limited nor framed by JETS, as Tim explains, but at the same time I think JETS/DA-RT was the starting point of the debate that promoted this conversation thus getting a clear understanding of what JETS really means in practice would be helpful for all.

After that we can move on to better things. It might be that JETS has zero impact and thus we can all relax and have a nice expansive conversation about transparency and replication in qualitative and mixed method research that leads to a set of nice principles and guidelines that do not need to be necessarily operational, it might also be that JETS might have in some circumstances problematic effects and then this conversation should be framed to create 3 products: 1) an explanation of such problems, 2) an alternative operational proposal that solves them (an amendment to JETS), 3) a larger set of principles that is not necessarily operational.

I do not know if the first or second author in this conversation are correct simply because reading the interpretation of JETS that various journals are publishing it is unclear what will be required.

Prof. Lupia in his editorial [http://charlescrabtree.com/files/newsletter_spring2016.pdf] seems to describe a very flexible approach that does not appear to change anything if the editor does not want to change anything, but at the same time opens also the door for significant changes that go in the direction of what guest 1 is afraid off. There is that little sentence in JETS ("The editor shall have full discretion") that is one of the key element of this debate as many others have pointed out, see for example the answer to the critique that John Patty of the blog Math of Politics has made to the reasons behind the e-petition to delay JETS.
[critique by John Patty http://www.mathofpolitics.com/2015/11/0 ... everybody/]
[answer https://dialogueondartdotorg.files.word ... -nov-9.pdf].
And that is just one of the examples, at the following site you can find a lot more info on the debate that generated the space for QTD: https://dialogueondart.org/perspectives-on-da-rt/

Until it is more clear what is going to happen the so called "ghost stories" are as plausible to me as the

"nothing will change" stories. And there is a value in mapping all the potential consequences of a new policy, even those that might have a low probability according to some.

And here are the JETS requirements (link: http://www.dartstatement.org/#!blank/c22sl):

1) Require authors to ensure that cited data are available at the time of publication through a trusted digital repository. Journals may specify which trusted digital repository shall be used (for example if they have their own dataverse). 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 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.

2) 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. If such materials are not published with the article, they must be shared to the greatest extent possible through institutions with demonstrated capacity to provide long-term access.

3) Maintain a consistent data citation policy to increase the credit that data creators and suppliers receive for their work. These policies include using data citation practices that identify a dataset's author(s), title, date, version, and a persistent identifier. In sum, we will require authors who base their claims on data created by others to reference and cite those data as an intellectual product of value.

4) Ensure that journal style guides, codes of ethics, publication manuals, and other forms of guidance are updated and expanded to include improved data access and research transparency requirements.

Re: Just back from fieldwork

Posted: **Sun May 22, 2016 10:44 pm**
by **TimButhe**
Allow me to temporarily re-direct the discussion on this widely read thread a bit to solicit input from scholars experienced in (or aspiring to undertake) fieldwork concerning the **key issues with which the steering committee will need to grapple in the next few days** when we try to decide how to define and delineate the 12-15 working groups that are supposed to be the core of stage 2 of the Qualitative Transparency Deliberations. PLEASE generously share your thoughts about the following two questions:

Should "fieldwork" be the focus for a separate working group during stage 2, or do the transparency issues in fieldwork vary too much by research context (e.g., violent settings vs. non-democratic regimes vs. advanced industrialized democracies) **that fieldwork should in fact be differentially discussed in a several separate, differently defined working groups?**

What are the 2-3 aspects of research transparency for which you would most want to see an opportunity for differentiated deliberations during stage 2 of the QTD?

Thanks!

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