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Trust, but Verify: The Transparency Revolution and Qualitative International Relations

ANDREW MORAVCSIK

"Доверяй, но проверяй" ("Trust, but verify.")
–Old Russian proverb, often used by President Ronald Reagan

Qualitative analysis is the most important empirical method in the field of international relations (IR). More than 70 percent of all IR scholars conduct primarily qualitative research (including narrative case studies, traditional history, small-n comparison, counterfactual analysis, process-tracing, analytic narrative, ethnography and thick description, discourse analysis), compared to only 20 percent whose work is primarily quantitative. Total use is even more pervasive, with more than 85 percent of IR scholars conducting some qualitative analysis.[1] Qualitative analysis is also unmatched in its flexibility and applicability: a textual record exists for almost every major international event in modern world history. Qualitative research also delivers impressive explanatory insight, rigor, and reliability. Of the twenty scholars judged by their colleagues to have "produced the best work in the field of IR in the past 20 years," seventeen conduct almost exclusively qualitative research.[2] Moreover, controlled studies reveal that experts on world affairs whose analyses are informed by more eclectic theory and the myriad "situational facts of each historical episode" (a mode in which qualitative analysis excels)

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[1] Daniel Maliniak, Susan Peterson, and Daniel J. Tierney, *TRIP around the World: Teaching, Research and Policy Views of International Relations Faculty in 20 Countries* (Williamsburg, Virginia: Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, College of William and Mary, 2012), Charts 28–30, available at http://www.wm.edu/offices/itpir/_documents/trip/trip_around_the_world_2011.pdf. See Active Citation 1 in online supplemental material. Instructions for accessing this material can be found at the end of this article.

[2] Maliniak et al., Chart 42. These seventeen scholars are Michael Barnett, Barry Buzan, Martha Finnemore, Samuel Huntington, John Ikenberry, Robert Jervis, Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane, Stephen Krasner, David Lake, John Mearsheimer, Joseph Nye, John Ruggie, Jack Snyder, Stephen Walt, Kenneth Waltz, and Alexander Wendt.

tend to predict future events significantly better than those who seek to predict future events using average tendencies and abstract theory (hallmarks of formal and quantitative analysis). To borrow Tolstoy's famous metaphor, "foxes" consistently outperform "hedgehogs."[3] No wonder scholars hold a widespread conviction that qualitative analysis is more policy relevant than any other type of IR scholarship.[4]

Yet IR researchers, like all political scientists, face a shifting environment. Across the social sciences a transparency revolution is underway. Concern about the inability to replicate results or locate data in natural, medical, and social sciences; clear evidence that scientific studies generate a suspicious number of confirming results; questions about whether scholarly citations are accurate or informed; and resulting questions about the legitimacy and credibility of all types of academic scholarship, have led journals, professional associations, foundations, governments, colleagues, journalists, and the public to press researchers to open their data, analysis, and methods to greater scrutiny.[5] Such demands for transparency cross disciplinary and methodological barriers. Statisticians are being asked to publicize datasets, robustness checks, and the procedures by which data are selected and manipulated. Experimentalists increasingly preregister experimental questions and protocols and track subsequent protocol revisions in the course of conducting experiments. Formal analysts post appendices with extensive derivations. Qualitative political scientists have also been at the forefront of the transparency revolution, often working closely with their quantitative, experimental, and normative colleagues through the American Political Science Association (APSA), National Science Foundation (NSF), Social Science Research Council (SSRC), various interdisciplinary research communities, qualitative training institutes, university departments, and major journals. All this is part of a general trend in IR over the past two decades, led by top research scholars in the subdiscipline, toward paying more explicit attention to qualitative methods.[6]

[3] Philip Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment: How Good is It? How Can We Know?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005) Chapter 3.

[4] Maliniak et al., Chart 57. See Active Citation 2 in online supplemental material.

[5] Jon Wiener, *Historians in Trouble: Plagiarism, Fraud and Politics in the Ivory Tower* (New York: New Press, 2005); Malcolm Wright and J. Scott Armstrong, "The Ombudsman: Verification of Citations: Fawlty Towers of Knowledge?" *Interfaces* 38, no. 2 (March–April 2008): 125–32; David Goodstein, *On Fact and Fraud: Cautionary Tales from the Front Lines of Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Ole Bjørn Rekdal, "Academic Citation Practice: A Sinking Sheep?" *Libraries and the Academy* 14, no. 4 (2014): 567–85.

[6] For example, Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Steven Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997); Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001); Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, eds., *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Henry Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010).

This article explores what the transparency revolution may mean for qualitative political scientists, particularly those in IR. The central argument is that, although openness does pose some challenges of adaptation, it provides important positive opportunities. The major challenge is to assure that research transparency is implemented in a way appropriate to qualitative research. The first section of this article defines three types of research transparency—data, analytic, and production transparency—and explains how each is best understood in the qualitative IR tradition. It then evaluates the practical tools currently available to enhance each. An emerging consensus among scholars, journals, associations, and funders in political science views "active citation" as the most generally applicable and logistically manageable standard of qualitative research transparency for general use. It melds traditional citation, web technology, and new thinking on qualitative methods to permit scholars to hyperlink citations directly to annotated sources in an appendix. The goal is to place a researcher's qualitative data, interpretive data analysis, and methodological choices just one click away from readers. Active citation can be supplemented by other transparency tools, including traditional citations, data archiving, hyperlinks, and databases—each of which is essential for particular purposes.

The second section of this article weighs the costs and benefits of enhancing qualitative transparency with active citation and other means. The basic message is that greater transparency offers large potential opportunities and benefits without imposing an undue logistical burden. Research transparency promises to enhance the richness, rigor, and policy relevance of qualitative IR. This is likely not just to improve the quality of IR scholarship and attract more researchers to it, but will encourage all political scientists to invest in language skills, area expertise, policy and functional expertise, historical knowledge, interviewing and archival techniques, innovative methods of qualitative inference, and other such skills. All this could help revitalize qualitative IR research, as well as increase the recognition (both inside and outside academia) accorded those who conduct it.

WHAT IS RESEARCH TRANSPARENCY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Defining Research Transparency

Research transparency mandates that "researchers have an ethical obligation to facilitate the evaluation of their evidence-based knowledge claims." This obligation can usefully be divided into three dimensions.[7] The first, data transparency, rests on the premise that social scientists should publicize the

[7] This tripartite distinction revises that found in American Political Science Association (APSA), *A Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: APSA, 2012), 9–10, also available at Arthur Lupia and Colin Elman, "Openness in Political Science: Data Access and Research Transparency," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47, no. 1 (January 2014): 19–42, appendices A and B.

data and evidence on which their research rests. This helps readers apprehend the richness and diversity of the real-world political activity scholars study and to assess for themselves to what extent (and how reliably) that activity confirms particular descriptive, interpretive, or causal interpretations and theories linked to it.

The second dimension, analytic transparency, rests on the premise that social scientists should publicize how they measure, interpret, and analyze data. Social scientific evidence does not speak for itself but is used to infer unobservable characteristics like identity, preferences, power, beliefs, strategic intent, and causality. For readers to understand and engage in scholarship, they must be able to assess what the data measure, how descriptive and causal inferences are drawn from them, and how precise and unbiased they are.

The third dimension, production transparency, rests on the premise that social scientists should publicize the broader set of research design choices they make, which gave rise to the particular combination of data, theories, and methods they use for empirical analysis. Decisions on how to select data, measure variables, test propositions, and weight overall findings—before, during, and after data analysis—are often decisive in driving research results. Any such choices inevitably exclude other possible data, measurements, theories, specifications, tests, and summaries. These design decisions can induce significant methodological biases invisible to most readers by excluding consideration of "hidden" options. When scholars run many tests in different configurations, random chance dictates that some are likely to generate positive results. In qualitative political science, specific concerns include oversampling of confirming evidence ("cherry-picking"), unfair framing of alternative theories ("straw-manning"), conducting idiosyncratic and nonrobust tests, and aggregating findings unfairly. For research to be production transparent, authors must explain the processes and decisions through which they made these choices.

Research Transparency as a Fundamental Norm of Social Science

Transparency is a foundational principle of scientific scholarship embraced by scholars across the full range of epistemological commitments, theoretical views, and substantive interests. The celebrated physicist Richard Feynman locates the essence of scientific investigation in an "integrity . . . that corresponds to a kind of utter honesty," which he defines in terms of transparency: "The idea is to try to give all of the information to help others to judge the value of your contribution; not just the information that leads to judgment in one particular direction or another."[8] Yet transparency is central not only to

[8] Richard P. Feynman, "Cargo Cult Science: Caltech 1974 Commencement Address," *Engineering and Science* 37, no. 7 (June 1974): 10–13.

natural scientists and unambiguously positivist modes of inquiry; it is just as essential, perhaps even more so, to the human and social scientists and more interpretivist modes of inquiry. Philosopher of history R. J. Collingwood, who famously maintains that historical analysis involved carefully describing, contextually interpreting, and "reenacting" past subjective experiences, argues: "History has this in common with every other science: that the historian is not allowed to claim any single piece of knowledge, except where he can justify his claim by exhibiting . . . to anyone else who is both able and willing to follow his demonstration, the grounds upon which it is based [and] what the evidence at his disposal proves about certain events."[9]

Transparency enjoys this unique status as a fundamental principle across academia because nearly all scholars view scholarship as a collective enterprise—a conversation among scholars, sometimes extending to those outside academia as well. This conversation cannot take place, and thus social science as we know it can have little intersubjective meaning, without openness and honesty among scholars about data, theory, and methods. Research transparency fuels collective social science in two ways, which are summarized in the Russian proverb that President Reagan made famous: "Trust, but Verify."[10]

Transparency invites scholars to verify what their colleagues have written, thereby fueling an essential collective conversation. In its ideal form, sound and relevant scholarship describes a cycle. When new work appears, other scholars in the same research community are inspired to debate it and to conduct new research that challenges, extends, or borrows from it to move in innovative directions, renewing the flow of research. Citizens, practitioners, and political leaders may apply elements of it, feeding back their experiences in the form of new data and questions for researchers to analyze. Scholars are trained to contribute to the advancement of this collective enterprise and are recognized and rewarded for doing so. The smooth functioning of this cycle is what gives social science its credibility and legitimacy, both inside and outside academia, and what ultimately justifies society's investment in it.

Transparency makes these things possible. It does not achieve them directly but rather empowers scholars to achieve them collectively. In the case of any given piece of scholarship, each reader is better able to assess the richness and rigor of it; to appreciate, replicate, criticize, and debate it; to improve or extend it; and even to borrow from it in order to produce work in unrelated directions. Transparency is also a precondition for scholars to demonstrate excellence publicly, as well as for their research communities to recognize and reward their contributions fairly. It encourages researchers

[9] R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 252.

[10] James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan: A History of the End of the Cold War* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 65, 100, 267, 273.

to direct their training and skills in ways that are productive empirically. Transparency permits citizens, private organizations, sponsoring bodies, and public decision makers to evaluate and apply the results with confidence and precision. In the end, all this not only closes the cycle of research but displays it publicly, thereby enhancing the credibility and legitimacy of research.

A research community in which scholars accept research because of the prominence of the author or the abstract sophistication of the methods is questionable. A community in which scholars can read and understand one another's work and verify and debate it when they choose, fosters legitimate confidence. Massive datasets, copious citations, clever arguments, or sophisticated methods should not inspire trust without transparency. Why, for example, should a reader be convinced by a "structured, focused comparison" of foreign policy decision-making cases unless he or she can peruse the evidence, track why the evidence supports one theory rather than another, and understand why particular data and theories were selected?[11] This is not to say, of course, that all social science is exact and replicable in the strict sense of interpreting any given body of evidence in only one way. It is to say that, whatever their epistemology, scholars owe their readers openness about data, theory, and methods, even when (indeed, especially when) they are making close calls about complex interpretive issues, because this is what constitutes scholarly debate and community.

For these reasons, transparency, in contrast to almost all other methodological ideals in social science, tends to unify rather than divide scholars. Though specific research communities in political science are often separated, sometimes irremediably, by diverse methodological, theoretical, substantive, and normative commitments, most scholars accept that transparency is necessary for the members of each group to converse with one another, for each group to engage in productive disagreement with others, and for outsiders to view the overall enterprise as credible and legitimate. Evidence of the consensual tendency comes from the recent establishment of APSA's Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT) initiative, the incorporation of new norms of research transparency into the APSA Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science, the positive consideration of new transparency standards by the *American Political Science Review*, the launching of a new interdisciplinary SSRC social scientific transparency project, and many other recent transparency initiatives in political science.[12] All of these efforts were led by qualitative and quantitative scholars working together and secured the approval not just of mainstream empirical researchers but

[11] Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*; David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 823–30; Peter A. Hall, "Systematic Process Analysis: When and How to Use It," *European Management Review* 3 (2006): 24–31.

[12] APSA, *A Guide to Professional Ethics*.

also interpretivists, post-modernists, ethnographers, political theorists, formal analysts, and others.

Research Transparency in the Qualitative Tradition

Although the research transparency is a general ideal, its proper application varies greatly across specific research communities. Qualitative analysis as practiced in contemporary IR differs in relevant ways from other research methods. These differences stem from three characteristics: such research tends to examine few cases intensively, to employ diverse forms of textual and factual evidence, and to be structured around temporal or causal narratives backed by "causal process" observations.

These characteristics have implications for transparency. The first implies that transparency standards must be consistent with intensive case study analysis. The second implies they must be designed to handle a broad range of textual (and, sometimes, non-textual) sources. The implications of the third characteristic—the use of narrative backed by process observations—requires more elaboration. Qualitative analysis generally conceives data as a set of heterogeneous "causal process observations" within a case rather than as homogeneous "dataset observations" across cases, as is common in statistical work. A causal-process observation "is an insight or piece of data that provides information about context or mechanism and contributes a different kind of leverage in causal inference. It does not necessarily do so as part of a larger, systematized array of observations. . . . A causal-process observation may be like a 'smoking gun.' It gives insight into causal mechanisms, insight that is essential to causal assessment and is an indispensable alternative and/or supplement to correlation-based causal inference."[13] Often a single case can generate dozens or hundreds of theoretically relevant causal process observations. This has important implications for what data, analytic, and production transparency means and how it is presented.

Qualitative work normally appears in narrative form, with myriad intervening observations. In a formal sense, the analyst enjoys considerable flexibility in the role, weight, and meaning assigned to each piece of evidence, depending not just on its position in the underlying temporal narrative or causal model, as well as its intrinsic contextual reliability. This type of nuanced but rigorous and informed contextual interpretation of each source, highly prized in fields such as history and law, is more appropriate to qualitative case study analysis than imposing on this process any set of simple rules, such as weighting all data equally or randomly, or simply placing all data

[13] Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 252–53. See also James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 230–31; Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*.

in a general database, as is appropriate to statistical work. In order for such an analysis to be transparent, readers should be able to move efficiently, in real time, from a point in the main narrative directly to the source and the scholarly interpretation that explains its significance, and back again.

In recent years, political scientists have moved to establish norms of transparency appropriate to the specific research community of qualitative political scientists. Building on the APSA/DA-RT initiative described above, a team of scholars has developed specific applied transparency guidelines for qualitative research.[14] The NSF is funding a Qualitative Data Repository (QDR) based at Syracuse University as well as various projects demonstrating new transparency standards and instruments that use new software and Internet technologies.[15] A series of conferences, workshops, journal articles, and foundation projects are further elaborating how best to implement qualitative transparency in practice.[16]

A Core Instrument of Qualitative Transparency: Active Citation

What practical tools are best able to enhance transparency in qualitative political science, given the specific characteristics outlined above? Several instruments are available, including traditional citation, active citation, external hyperlinks, data archives, and qualitative databases. Although perfect research transparency is an attractive ideal, an appropriate and workable standard of transparency for empirical researchers must take account of five types of real-world constraints: logistics, intellectual property law, confidentiality of data and other human subject constraints, existing publication practices, and the right of scholars to exploit new data. Scholars are converging to the view that, in light of all these practical considerations, the most promising and widely applicable basic standard for enhancing qualitative transparency is *active citation*. Other instruments and standards can also be useful under narrower circumstances and are often best used in combination with active citation.

Active Citation (AC) is a digitally-enhanced mode of citing empirical material. In actively cited research, any empirical citation to a contestable empirical claim is hyperlinked to an annotated excerpt from the original source, which appears in an appendix attached to the scholarly work. The main text and citations of a scholarly article, book, or chapter remain just as they are traditionally, no matter their format; the difference lies entirely in the new "Transparency Appendix" (TRAX) appended to the work, which contains an entry for each source cited in support of a contestable claim (see

[14] APSA, *Guidelines for Qualitative Transparency* (2013), see Footnote 7.

[15] Qualitative Data Repository (QDR), Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry, Syracuse University, http://www.qdr.org.

[16] For guidance on qualitative methods, see ibid.

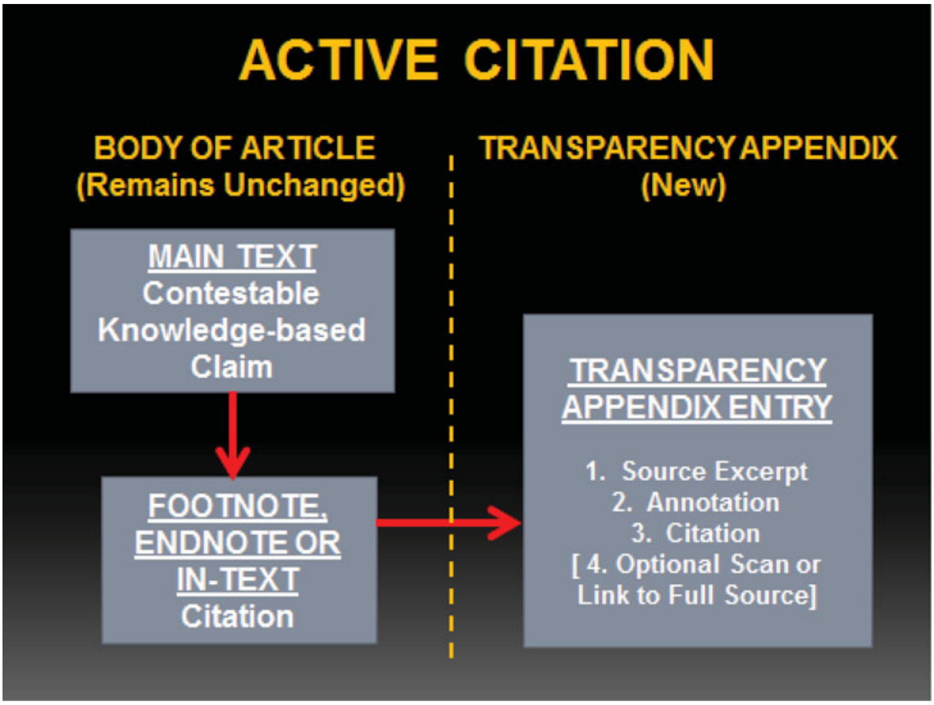

FIGURE 1 Active citation with transparency appendix.

Figure 1). Each TRAX entry contains four elements: (1) an excerpt from the source, presumptively fifty to one hundred words long; (2) an annotation, of a length at the author's discretion, explaining how the source supports the underlying claim in the main text; (3) a copy of the full-source citation from the footnote, and, optionally; (4) a link to or scan of the full source. The TRAX also reserves an exceptional first entry to address general issues of production transparency. The excerpt and link/scan can easily be adapted to presenting sources in visual, audio, cinematic, graphic, and other media.[17] Active citations can be employed in almost any form of scholar work: directly attached to unpublished papers, manuscripts submitted for publication, online journal articles, and e-books, or as separate online appendices to printed journals and books. Like all appendices, the TRAX would lie outside word limits. For budgetary reasons, most journals would probably not include them in printed versions.

Each element of AC promotes transparency in a distinct way. The source excerpt offers basic data transparency. Its relatively short length provides interpretive context while avoiding most logistical, legal, confidentiality, and

[17] This is increasingly commonplace outside of academia. For a creative use of multi-media active footnotes in a museum website, see Metropolitan Museum of Art, www.metmuseum.org.

data-ownership constraints. The optional scan or link offers the possibility of referencing a complete source, when it is feasible and informative. The annotation delivers basic analytic transparency by offering an opportunity for researchers to explain how the source supports the main text. The full citation assures that each TRAX entry is entirely self-contained for convenient downloading into word-processing, bibliographical, or database software. The exceptional first entry (as well as any specific methodological citations) enhances production transparency by addressing research design, selection bias, and other general methodological concerns that remain insufficiently explained in the main text, footnotes, or empirical entries. As it focuses on methodology, the current article contains relatively few contestable empirical claims that properly illustrate AC: still, for examples, readers may examine notes 2, 4, 19, and 37, for which active footnotes have been provided.[18] In addition, the pilot-data collections currently in development at QDR (described in more detail in the next paragraph) include active-citation compilations with their accompanying TRAXs.[19]

AC is rapidly taking root. Published articles, presentations at disciplinary and interdisciplinary conferences, and modules at training institutes and graduate seminars have elaborated AC in detail.[20] The new norms and standards that APSA promulgated for qualitative transparency were developed with prototypes of AC in full view and hence are compatible with this approach to transparency.[21] With National Science Foundation funding, the QDR has hosted various activities to refine the guidelines for AC with input from methodologists and field researchers who employ archives, interviews, ethnographic observation, secondary sources, and other materials. The repository has also commissioned ten "active citation compilations" as pilot projects, with several by leading scholars of international relations and comparative politics—including Jack Snyder, Elizabeth Saunders and myself from this symposium—to retrofit classic articles and chapters to the active citation format.[22] Under the same grant, developers have been creating tools to assist in preparing TRAXs, in particular via software add-ons to automate the formatting of transparency appendices and individual entries in popular word processing programs. In September 2013, the editorial board of the *American Political Science Review* received a presentation on the new

[18] Andrew Moravcsik, "Example of an Active Citation about Steven Spielberg's 'Lincoln,"' Methodological Memo, Princeton University, 2014, http://www.princeton.edu/~amoravcs/library/ (see Stevens-ExampleActiveCitation.pdf).

[19] QDR, http://www.qdr.org.

[20] Andrew Moravcsik, "Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43, no. 1 (January 2010): 29–35; Moravcsik, "Active Citation and Qualitative Political Science," *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 10, no.1 (Spring 2012); Moravcsik, "Transparency: The Revolution in Qualitative Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47, no. 1 (January 2014): 48–53.

[21] APSA, *Guidelines for Qualitative Transparency*.

[22] Moravcsik, "Active Citation"; Moravcsik, "Active Citation and Qualitative Political Science"; Moravcsik, "Transparency."

DA-RT principles and their instantiation in quantitative and qualitative research, including active citation. The board voted unanimously to further investigate bringing the journal in line with the new principles. A workshop co-hosted by APSA in September 2014 assembled thirteen editors of top political science journals and resulted in a joint statement and common adoption date for a package of quantitative and qualitative research transparency standards, including AC.[23] In addition, scholars representing the move toward qualitative transparency are participating in multi-method and interdisciplinary initiatives by major foundations in this area, including the SSRC. There is good reason to expect that in coming years active citation will become the norm for qualitative papers, articles, and books.

Combining Active Citation with Other Transparency Instruments

AC appears to be the most efficient and effective general standard currently available to enhance qualitative transparency in political science, yet other instruments remain useful, even essential, for more specific purposes. These include traditional citation, hyperlinks to webpages, data archiving, and databases. None match AC's overall combination of broad applicability, low demands of time and logistical effort, consistency with the distinctive epistemology of qualitative analysis, and ability to deliver all three types of research transparency. Yet each has specific advantages and can be particularly useful when employed in tandem with AC, which is designed to facilitate such mixed-method qualitative transparency strategies.

Traditional Citation

Legal academia and history rank highly among the disciplines in data and analytic transparency. This is achieved through ubiquitous discursive footnotes containing long, annotated quotations. In many ways, such traditional footnotes remain the most efficient transparency instrument. Readers can scan the main argument, citation, source, and interpretation at a glance. Yet recent trends in formatting publications—the move to endnotes, ever tighter word limits, and so-called scientific citations—have all but banished discursive footnotes from political science.[24] These trends are not methodologically neutral: they privilege quantitative research that employs external datasets

[23] In addition to APSA serving a lead host, the workshop is co-sponsored by Syracuse University's Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry and University of Michigan's Center for Political Studies and the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

[24] *International Security* provides admirably detailed traditional footnotes, though it does not consistently provide either annotations or extended quotations. For similar book citations, see Thomas J. Christensen, *Worse Than a Monolith: Alliance Politics and Problems of Coercive Diplomacy in Asia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Jack L. Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

and cites secondary journals rather than data, while blocking qualitative research from achieving data and analytic transparency. Given the economics of social science journals, this trend is unlikely to reverse. Fortunately, however, AC can match the epistemic advantages of traditional citation—of which it is essentially a technologically enabled extension—while leaving the existing (pre-appendix) format of articles and footnotes (and therefore their hard copy format also) essentially unchanged.

Hyperlinking Websites

Scholarly journals and papers that cite secondary research, as well as journalistic articles, policy papers, social media, and government documents, regularly employ characteristic bright blue hyperlinks to external web pages. In the modern world, such links are often useful, which is why AC makes explicit a provision for them as an optional supplement. Yet three barriers preclude hyperlinks alone from serving as the primary transparency instrument.[25] First, most citations in political science—including many primary documents, informal printed material, interview transcripts, ethnographic field materials, and books published in the past half century— remain unavailable online (or hidden behind paywalls), in foreign languages, or within long documents. Human subject and intellectual property constraints limit the scholar's ability to save materials on the web. Second, web links are unstable, changing surprisingly often when periodicals and book series switch owners, formats, or archiving systems or when government agencies, private firms, or civil society groups reorganize.[26] One example must suffice: in 2009 the US State Department unexpectedly altered the web address of the canonical series of public documents on US foreign policy, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (*FRUS*).[27] Who knows what new formats and changes the future will bring? Third, even when efficient and stable web links are available, they offer at best only data transparency, while doing little to enhance analytic or production transparency. At most we learn what a scholar cited but not why.

Data Archiving

Quantitative social scientists promote data transparency primarily by archiving datasets in repositories. By analogy, political scientists have created data repositories for textual material, notably the Qualitative Data Repository for political science materials recently established with NSF funding at Syracuse University.[28] Repositories are essential instruments, especially for the purpose

[25] Linked documentation is the principle underlying the software Zotero, supported by the Mellon and Sloan Foundations, https://www.zotero.org/blog/building-a-sustainable-zotero-project/.

[26] For an adventurous example, see the *Yale Law Journal Online*, http://www.yalelawjournal.org/.

[27] US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 2009.

[28] QDR, http://www.qdr.org; Henry Murray Data Archive at Harvard University, http://www.murray.harvard.edu/.

of preserving complete collections of new and unique field data, such as interviews, ethnographic notes, primary document collections, field research material, and web-searches.[29] Archiving full datasets also builds stronger procedural bulwarks against selection bias (cherry-picking) of specific quotations and documents out of a larger body of material.

For these reasons, AC is designed to be entirely compatible with data archiving in that TRAX permits optional links to material in archives. Yet practical considerations preclude using data archives as the primary instrument to achieve research transparency. First, most qualitative scholars sift through many times (even orders of magnitude) more source material, most of it uninteresting, than they peruse intensively or cite, and the logistical burden of depositing all such material is prohibitive. Second, intellectual property law imposes narrow de jure and de facto limits on copying textual sources, including most secondary material published in the past half century, a surprising amount of archival material, some web material, much commercial material, and almost all artistic product. Third, protection of human subjects creates an additional administrative barrier enforced by university Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) that would require materials to be sanitized or placed under tight control before being released. Fourth, if scholars want to exploit new data further, then the publication of complete datasets may have to be delayed, as sometimes occurs with quantitative data. Fifth, archiving at best enhances data and perhaps production transparency, but it does little to improve analytic transparency. Links from article to archives are often cumbersome, fail to designate particular passages, or do not explain why a passage is important.

Databases

Scholars increasingly employ databases such as Atlas, Access, Filemaker, and Endnote to array and manipulate textual data. This approach is extremely promising, even indispensable, in encouraging scholars to analyze texts with critical theoretical issues firmly in mind, thereby enhancing data, analytic, and production transparency.[30] It is particularly useful in research designs that emphasize macro-comparative inquiry, systematic coding, content analysis, mixed-method analysis, or weighing of a large number of sources to estimate relatively few, carefully predefined variables.[31] AC aims to be fully

[29] Colin Elman, Diana Kapiszewski, and Lorena Vinuela, "Qualitative Data Archiving: Rewards and Challenges," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43, no. 1 (January 2010): 23–27; QDR, "A Guide to Sharing Qualitative Data," Qualitative Data Repository Project, funded by the National Science Foundation, December 2012.

[30] Evan S. Lieberman, "Bridging the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide: Best Practices in the Development of Historically Oriented Replication Databases," *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 37–59.

[31] For a fine example, see the work of the Research Network on Gender Politics and the State, http://libarts.wsu.edu/pppa/rngs/.

compatible with this trend, which is why TRAX entries are formatted (and software designed) so they can be downloaded. Yet there is little reason to believe that databases will either become ubiquitous or displace the traditional narrative structure (on which AC builds) as the primary mode of qualitative presentation. First, the narrative structure is well suited to the epistemology of case study analysis because it easily permits the analyst to present (and readers to follow) a multistage causal process backed by a flexible and nuanced contextual analysis of individual steps in the sequence, each of which is linked to one or more documented and annotated process observations. Second, compared to databasing, narrative analysis is less costly and more flexible: analysts need not commit early to particular variables, divide sources into small snippets, code each one separately, enter everything formally, or structure the study accordingly. Because change is low cost, narrative encourages open-ended, exploratory analysis aimed at theory generation, a comparative advantage of qualitative work. Third, as long as other disciplines, such as law and history, retain narrative structure, maintaining a similar format in political science promotes interdisciplinary compatibility and interaction.

For all these reasons, the emerging trend in political science appears to be to employ AC as the general transparency standard for evidence presented in a narrative form, backed by traditional citations, hyperlinks, data archiving, and databases in appropriate circumstances.

ENHANCING QUALITATIVE TRANSPARENCY IN IR: A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Using AC to enhance qualitative transparency comports with scholarly ideals. It is now enshrined as a formal APSA guideline. Technologies and standards exist to achieve it. Yet qualitative IR scholars will naturally wonder about its practical costs and benefits. This section argues that research transparency offers unprecedented opportunities to improve the richness, rigor, and relevance of IR research and to bolster the reputation of qualitative scholars—and it does so at surprisingly low cost.

The Benefits of Qualitative Research Transparency

Enhanced qualitative transparency offers at least five major benefits.

More Qualitative Data

Greater data transparency promises to make available more abundant, high-quality, and accurate textual evidence, thereby helping to improve the quality of current scholarship and to reduce the cost of future research.

Anyone who seeks to examine the evidence underlying contemporary qualitative IR scholarship is likely to be frustrated. Genuine source material lies beyond the reach of nearly all readers. Articles rarely quote sources verbatim, and even when they do, almost never at sufficient length for a reader to assess the evidence in context. Incomplete or vague citations (without page numbers, for example) are common. Often references invoke generic material, such as chapters of secondary sources, leaving the exact evidentiary basis of the claim obscure. Even when sources are precisely cited, in a world of burgeoning research publication, they are often too costly to replicate.[32] Relatively few are available online. Under the best circumstances, finding such sources requires days in a university library, usually with the help of an interlibrary loan. Specialized and informal publications, foreign materials, government documents, interviews, or ethnographic observation notes are often available only from authors, and it is not uncommon for authors to be unable or unwilling to provide them—particularly years later. Language and legibility barriers can be prohibitive. In two recent graduate seminars, my students found that even in highly praised IR research, a substantial portion of cited materials (generally around 20 percent) cannot be identified or located at all, even by an entire class that is working together with the help of authors. The result: generally few, if any, IR political scientists have any inkling what cited sources actually say.

This lack of transparency is itself worrisome, as it leaves us with no precise way to assess the accuracy of evidence in contemporary political science, thus violating a foundational practice of social science. IR scholars almost never challenge the quality or reliability of one another's textual evidence, even though qualitative scholarship in IR is supported by a thinner and more derivative level of textual evidence than in law, history, policy analysis, or a subdiscipline such as comparative politics. Some make a virtue of this, based on the questionable belief that political scientists should abjure primary evidence and stick only to secondary sources.[33] This is problematic, however, since it would mean that qualitative researchers must renounce archival and field research and can never revise the received empirical wisdom of other disciplines.

Even more troubling are recent examples suggesting that the primary and secondary sources cited in qualitative political science contain significant inaccuracies. Students in my graduate seminar on qualitative methods have used AC in recent years to replicate a number of highly praised works source-by-source. Consistently around 10 percent (beyond the 20

[32] Mark Bauderlein, "We Must Stop the Avalanche of Low-Quality Research," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (13 June 2010).

[33] Ian S. Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 3 (September 1996): 605–18.

percent that could not be located) do not support underlying claims.[34] The discrepancy, moreover, tends to increase as the sources become more central to core causal arguments, which suggests the evidence is not just sloppy but biased. One example must suffice:[35] a recent major press book, backed by articles in *International Security* and policy recommendations in *Foreign Policy*, selectively edits quotations from numerous primary and secondary sources so they state the opposite of their unambiguous meaning in context—consistently in ways favoring the author's thesis.[36] Several disciplinary referee processes failed to catch these errors.

Of course pockets of scholarship employing exceptionally rich, nuanced, well-documented work exist, in which scholars do engage in knowledgeable debate. Yet these are exceptions that prove the rule, in the sense that they tend to cluster where scholars can recapitulate sources (as well as arguments and methods) from other disciplines (e.g., the causes of World War I, international law), rich area studies literatures (e.g., Chinese foreign policy, Vietnam War, end of the Cold War), or extensive policy analysis tradition (e.g., European integration, nuclear policy, and other military strategy issues).[37] Such work is therefore not as common as it should be. Moreover, because in the eyes of most scholars, richly sourced work is indistinguishable from work with thinly or incorrectly sourced work, these scholars do not always receive the recognition they deserve as methodological models.

AC, backed by other tools, addresses this issue by enhancing data transparency. This in turn encourages scholars to attend to the quality, accuracy,

[34] For examples from natural science, see K. S. Larsson, "The Dissemination of False Data through Inadequate Citation," *Journal of Internal Medicine* 238 (1995): 445–50; James K. Wetterer, "Quotation Error, Citation Copying, and Ant Extinctions in Madeira," *Scientometrics* 6, no. 7(2006): 351–72; Wright and Armstrong, "The Ombudsman," 125–32.

[35] It would be unprofessional on my part to criticize specific works without extensive documentation and an opportunity for rebuttal by the author, both of which go beyond the scope and space limits of this article. However, one recent work, Sebastian Rosato's book, *Europe United: Power Politics and the Making of the European Community* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), does make claims that more than one scholar has charged—and in some cases Rosato has admitted—are based on erroneous data, data analysis, and biased methodology. See Andrew Moravcsik, "Did Power Politics Cause European Integration? Realist Theory Meets Qualitative Methods," *Security Studies* 22, no. 4 (December 2013): 773–90; Robert H. Lieshout, "Review of *Europe United*," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 234–37; Sebastian Rosato, "Theory and Evidence in Europe United: A Response to My Critics," *Security Studies* 22, no. 4 (December 2013): 802–20. Accordingly, I have cited it as an example.

[36] For an example of a debate over whether verbatim quotations were edited so as to change their meaning radically, which in two cases the author concedes, see Moravcsik "Did Power Politics Cause European Integration?" 786–88. For Rosato's admissions, see Rosato, "Theory and Evidence in Europe United," 808n13, 807n12, 808n15, respectively.

[37] Jack Levy, Thomas J. Christensen, and Marc Trachtenberg, "Correspondence: Mobilization and Inadvertence in the July Crisis," *International Security* 16, no. 1 (Summer 1991): 189–204; Christensen, *Worse Than a Monolith*; Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive*; Elizabeth Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); Keir A. Lieber, "The New History of World War I and What It Means for International Relations Theory," *International Security* 32, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 155–91; Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing Thy Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence, and Assessments of the Adversary's Intentions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014).

and originality of evidence. The need to present an explicit and annotated quotation in context is likely to make researchers more aware of what they cite; at a minimum, outright misquotations of the type mentioned above would become nearly impossible, unless the author committed outright fraud. Referees, critics, and readers would recognize superior evidence more quickly, shifting disciplinary norms and incentives to favor it. The reputation of journals would increasingly come to rest not just on enforcing transparency, but on presenting rich and accurate textual evidence while avoiding embarrassing errors and omissions. This in turn requires that referees and critics be knowledgeable qualitative researchers able to recognize the difference. In training and advising graduate students, hiring and promotion of scholars, research funding, and professional recognition, greater value would be placed on increasingly rare skills and expertise required to collect and manipulate high-quality textual evidence: foreign language ability, area knowledge, historical expertise, policy experience, ethnographic observation, archival inquiry, interviewing design, and other field research skills. This is an opportune moment, given innovative new methodological work in some of these areas.[38]

Transparent evidence does not only help encourage greater accuracy. It also helps scholars convey a deeper, more vivid and nuanced image of politics. Through AC, political actors—politicians, social organizers, interest group leaders, contemporary observers, technical specialists, and common citizens—can address readers directly, expressing their perceptions, beliefs, interests, cultural frames, deliberative processes, and strategic choices in their own words. Scholars of all epistemic persuasions should welcome this. Traditional historians, interpretive analysts, and cultural theorists should applaud the implication that to grasp politics fully, one must comprehend the subjective meanings and beliefs, cultural frames, and discourses through which social actors interpret and communicate their situations. More positivistic, rationalist, or materialist scholars should welcome the opportunity to assemble more observable implications concerning the motivations, strategies, knowledge, and beliefs of actors in order to test conjectures about their behavior.

A data-rich environment does not simply enrich current scholarship. It encourages future research by allowing scholars to reuse published evidence at low cost. Today this dynamic rarely works well. One study concludes, "Most data generated by American qualitative and multi-method social science are used only once."[39] This is understandable, since the evidence itself is not truly visible. AC radically reduces the cost of viewing, and therefore

[38] Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009); Layna Mosley, ed., *Interview Research in Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); Lisa Wedeen, "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010): 255–72; Diana Kapiszewski et al., *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[39] Elman, Kapiszewski, and Vinuela, "Qualitative Data Archiving," 23.

reusing, data. An afternoon with a dozen articles can yield hundreds of precisely cited, copiously quoted, carefully annotated sources—something that today can take weeks or months to assemble. Scholars can collect, evaluate, download and reanalyze them or, more likely, use them as a springboard to deeper research. This particularly benefits younger scholars catching up to the research frontier. This virtuous circle of data creation also helps facilitate comparative analysis in which similar situations are examined in various settings (e.g., countries, issues, time periods) using evidence from different sources; meta-analysis, in which the empirical results and content of different studies is assessed; and secondary use of data, commonplace in quantitative tradition, in which evidence collected in one context is employed for new and entirely unrelated purposes. All this promises to expand research opportunities for individual qualitative scholars, to render qualitative analysis more prestigious, and to improve research across the sub-discipline.

More Rigorous Analysis

Greater analytic transparency encourages more nuance and rigor in drawing causal theoretical inferences from individual sources.

Qualitative analysis is based in part on contextual analysis of individual pieces of evidence. To this end, scholars invoke textual exegesis; secondary history; the relationship among various pieces of data; and area, linguistic, and policy expertise. Yet readers often find it difficult to replicate precisely how scholars draw descriptive and causal inferences. Accordingly, even when data is available, such inferences are rarely debated in IR. This is troubling, not simply because we do not know how reliable qualitative data analysis is in IR as a whole, but because specific cases clearly exist in which IR scholars lack the contextual knowledge to draw valid causal or descriptive inferences.[40] As with data, exceptions prove the rule: rare pockets of exceptionally high-quality analysis exist, but they tend to cluster where scholars can draw on prior work in area studies, policy analysis, history, or law; and they are underappreciated. [41]

AC, backed by other transparency tools, enhances analytic transparency by permitting scholars to add annotations explaining how they interpret specific qualitative evidence. Now is an opportune moment to encourage greater care in drawing causal inferences from qualitative data and to facilitate greater recognition for superior interpretive skills. In recent years, IR

[40] For an example of how a major theoretical point can turn on contextual interpretation of a document, see Moravcsik, "Transparency," 782; Rosato, "Theory and Evidence in Europe United," 815–16; *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, no. 297, tome 1, 1955. I have activated the final citation to the original source, and my annotation addresses the debate. See Active Citation 3 in online supplemental material.

[41] Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); examples in note 38.

scholars, qualitative methodologists, and scholars in other disciplines have refined techniques of qualitative data analysis, and these innovations are now taught to graduate students. These include improved counterfactual analysis, coding schemes, process-tracing, various schemes of necessary and/or sufficient conditions, discourse analysis, and content analysis.[42] AC would encourage such techniques to be employed in an explicit or sophisticated manner, rarely the case today, and more robust debate and replication of such analyses—as explained in greater detail in the next section. All this promises to enhance the analytical rigor of qualitative analysis and thus bolster the academic respect and recognition such analysis receives.

Improved Research Design

Greater production transparency encourages improvements in methodological rigor and general research design, particularly regarding issues of selection bias.

Qualitative IR scholars are not immune from bias in the selection of data, theories, and methods. They often enjoy almost unchecked discretion to choose among thousands of primary and secondary sources, numerous cases and observations, myriad formulations of IR theories, and many standards of theory testing. With the exception of theoretical literature reviews and the issue of case selection, scholars almost never acknowledge (let alone make transparent) procedural elements of qualitative research design. Few IR works employ explicit strategies to select reliable and high-quality data, to sample that data in an unbiased fashion, to test theories with an equal ex ante probability of (dis)confirmation, to aggregate results systematically, or to defend the appropriateness of particular qualitative testing procedures—let alone to triangulate or conduct robustness checks.

The current lack of transparency makes it impossible to know precisely how common cherry-picking and similar biases are in qualitative political science, yet they are probably widespread. One reason is that prevailing methodological standards do not even pretend to be unbiased. Often scholars present dozens of pages of qualitative evidence confirming a favored theory, followed by a few pages of evidence disconfirming alternative theories, regardless of the state of the historical or primary literature being sampled.[43] Summaries of findings are presented almost without constraint; even

[42] See Derek Beach and R. B. Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013); James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 169–95; Levy et al., "Correspondence"; Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*; Mahoney and Goertz, *A Tale of Two Cultures*; James Mahoney and Rachel Sweet Vanderpoell, "Set Diagrams and Qualitative Research," *Comparative Political Studies* (forthcoming).

[43] For a critique, see Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science." Some scholars maintain that sampling is unnecessary. Challenged on the lack of an explicit strategy and potential biases in

in the natural sciences, evidence shows considerable error.[44] Thesis committees, journal referees, conference commentators, or job committees almost never challenge or discount such results. Examples exist of IR scholars publishing cherry-picked evidence for a favored theory against straw-manned alternatives and framing the results favorably.[45]

The exceptional first TRAX entry, especially dedicated to this purpose, provides space in AC (outside the word limit) to elaborate selection bias, research design, robustness checks, and to describe how the research was conducted. This can be supplemented by actively cited individual references to methodological points in the main text. This encourages scholars to reduce these biases—or at least to make readers aware of them—and empowers readers to assess the reliability of research for themselves, to be more cautious in accepting results, to challenge publicly the methods, or to conduct methodologically improved research. All this parallels the common practice in quantitative and experimental political science of submitting articles for publication with long appendices justifying the choice of data, coding scheme, choice of variables, statistical approach, and experimental protocol, backed by robustness checks.

It is an opportune moment for such reforms, because scholars can exploit a large overhang of recent innovations in qualitative methods. Aside from the work on field research and data analysis noted above, important work has appeared on process tracing; structured, focused comparison; case selection; formal analytic narrative; QCA and fuzzy set analysis; medium-n comparative case-study design; interview design; and databases.[46] Detailed methodological analyses now exist on issues such as dealing with extreme cases, how to take account of randomness and historical contingency in small-n designs, coping with multiple necessary conditions, and so on. Although today one rarely sees today such cutting-edge methods actually applied in empirical research, because there is no way to make either the methodological approach or the empirical payoff transparent. Active citation would fundamentally alter this dynamic.

sampling secondary and primary material, one scholar has argued, "Rather than relying on some kind of sample, my claims rest on an informed reading of the secondary literature." Yet the same scholar also concludes, "The existing historiography leans toward my view." Rosato, "Theory and Evidence in Europe United," 811. This begs the basic methodological issue: How can we know what direction the historical literature leans unless we have sampled it fairly?

[44] Robert Siebers, "Data Inconsistencies in Abstracts of Articles in Clinical Chemistry," *Clinical Chemistry* 47, no.1 (January 2001):149.

[45] For a debate over cherry-picking and evidence on both sides, see Moravcsik, "Transparency," 779–80; Rosato, "Theory and Evidence in Europe United," 812n31.

[46] See notes 6, 13, 42; Robert H. Bates et al., *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

More Robust Debate, Publication, and Theoretical Development

Greater transparency introduces more vigorous replication and criticism of research findings, higher quality academic debate, more publication opportunities, and new theoretical insights into world politics.

Today, scholarly debate in qualitative IR over data, analytic, and procedural issues remains rare. More common are abstract debates over contending grand theoretical or conceptual positions that—due to the lack of transparent data, analysis and procedure—are often difficult to adjudicate empirically. Whereas in the quantitative tradition, it is now commonplace in early graduate statistics training to replicate and extend recently published quantitative scholarship using easily available datasets, often with an eye to publication, such replication remains rare in the qualitative tradition even though myriad opportunities exist. To be sure, islands of high-quality qualitative empirical debate exist. They are, however, instructive exceptions because they arise in areas where political scientists can draw on disciplines or specific area and policy studies communities more committed to data, analytic, and production transparency. Discussions in H-DIPLO, which bring together historians and political scientists, or in international law, which link political scientists with legal academics, are exemplary.[47] AC and other instruments of research transparency promise to help focus attention on such intense, high-quality empirical debates as methodological models and to multiply them across IR.

The ultimate payoff for this effort is not better footnotes, active or otherwise. It lies in the main text of articles: we care about transparency because it permits us to make new arguments about politics and better reassess the relative real-world importance of old ones. As transparency encourages scholars to replicate, critique, and debate published work more intensively, this is more likely to occur. Now is an optimal moment to encourage such empirical debates. As we have seen above, new innovations in qualitative methodology are at hand. Moreover, opportunities to publish replications—a career opportunity qualitative scholars, particularly younger ones, do not want to miss— are increasing rapidly.[48] Most of all, it is an optimal moment because qualitative replication and critique are proving to be devastatingly effective in advancing our theoretical knowledge of world politics. Qualitative replications and extensions have recently called into question widely accepted theories of audience costs

[47] H-DIPLO: H-Net Network on Diplomatic History and International Affairs, https://networks.h-net.org/h-diplo (accessed 1 July 2014).

[48] APSA and various publishers are considering proposals for replication journals or sections of journals on replication. Qualitative replication is increasingly taught at the graduate level. Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing."

by James Fearon, nuclear crisis diplomacy by Matthew Kroenig and Todd Sechser, and credible commitment by Robert North and Barry Weingast.[49]

In a parallel manner, transparency may also enhance the theoretical diversity and substantive scope of IR. Critical here is not simply that qualitative replication offers a new empirical tool. Relative to statistical or experimental analysis, qualitative data and analysis are also extremely flexible and relatively inexpensive. Textual information is readily available on almost every aspect of world politics in recorded history. Qualitative work also plays a unique role in generating new causal conjectures and theories and uncovering precise causal mechanisms. Moreover, it may also be particularly well suited to cope with rare, complex and contingent events.[50] Methodologist Gary King argues that the limitations imposed by causal endogeneity, social complexity, and extreme cases inherently relegate issues such as the impact on international conflict and cooperation of democracy, ethnic diversity, interdependence, international institutions, and nuclear weapons to the category of "big social science problems we can't answer" using statistical, experimental, and formal deductive theories.[51] If political science is to remain diverse—and, in particular, is to avoid increasingly looking under statistical and experimental lampposts—yet at the same time reliable, rigorous and respected throughout the social sciences, high standards of qualitative transparency are imperative. Given how little has been done, rigorous qualitative replication has the potential to be one of the largest growth areas and revolutionary forces in political science, and in IR specifically, over the coming decade. The result will likely be to invigorate the field theoretically and strengthen the role of qualitative scholars within it.

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[49] Marc Trachtenberg, "Audience Costs in 1954," 2014, http://www.h-net.org/~diplo/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Forum-1.pdf; Jack Snyder and Erica D. Borghard, "The Cost of Empty Threats: A Penny, Not a Pound," *American Political Science Review* 105, no. 3 (August 2011): 437–56; Francis Gavin et al. "Forum on 'What We Talk About When We Talk About Nuclear Weapons'," *H-Diplo/ISSF Forum* (15 June 2014), available at http://issforum.org/ISSF/PDF/ISSF-Forum-2.pdf; Tommaso Pavone, "Constitutional Constraints, Organizational Preferences, and Qualitative Methods: A Replication and Reassessment of North and Weingast" (unpublished manuscript, Department of Politics, Princeton University, May 2014).

[50] Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in *Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), 79–117; Jon Elster, "A Plea for Mechanisms" in *Social Mechanisms*, ed. P. Hedström and R. Swedborg (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1–31.

[51] Gary King, "A Hard Unsolved Problem? Post-Treatment Bias in Big Social Science Questions," presentation at Hard Problems in Social Science Symposium, Institute for Quantitative Social Science, Harvard University, 10 April 2010), http://GKing.Harvard.edu; Bent Flyvbjerg, "Case Study," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th ed., ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Los Angeles: Sage, 2011), 301–16; Peter J. Katzenstein and Rudra Sil, "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions," *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 2 (2010): 411–31.

More Interdisciplinary Interaction and Policy Relevance

Broader effects of greater research transparency include more intense interdisciplinary interaction and greater policy relevance.

Greater research transparency encourages greater cooperation with neighboring disciplines, particularly those that employ best practices in qualitative methodology, such as history, legal academia, education, and sociology. Law reviews, for example, normally require that an author provide extensive quotations from cited sources and an annotation interpreting it; when citing jurisprudence, they must even cite all relevant cases for and against any interpretation. Archival historians are traditionally responsible not simply for quoting specific documents accurately, but also for reporting a balanced sample of relevant contextual material in the broader document, box, archive, or other location from which it came. Scholars in other fields often hold political science research in low regard, because it fails to meet these professional standards of transparency. AC and other instruments would permit political scientists to cooperate across disciplines on an equal basis.[52]

Transparency would also encourage more policy-relevant IR research. Scholars should be encouraged to speak to public affairs, and we have seen that qualitative work in IR tends to be considered more policy relevant than quantitative work. Yet two barriers stand in the way: much qualitative empirical work attains a level of regional or functional expertise required to be credible in the policy world, and transparency and replicability of policy and journalistic work are now often out ahead of political science. Readers would be surprised to encounter electronic journalism or reports from a government, international organization, NGO or think-tank without hyperlinks to underlying data, sources, and analysis. US government intelligence officials and decision makers, burned several times in recent years with vague or manipulated evidence, increasingly structure even confidential assessments with footnotes that drill down to (properly sanitized) primary sources. It is impractical—even unprincipled—for scholars to seek to influence public policy debates with scholarly conclusions that are empirically less transparent and methodologically less reliable than what policymakers and journalists already produce. If qualitative political scientists wish to retain their respect, they must follow suit. At the same time, public authorities and research funders are seeking guidance on how to generate richer and more rigorous qualitative results. There are real opportunities for collaboration between scholars and public affairs practitioners, not just on substantive research but on qualitative methodology, but a precondition is enhanced research transparency.

[52] Francis Gavin, "Panel Comments" (54th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, CA, 5 April 2013).

Are the Costs of Transparency Too High?

Despite these advantages, some may worry that AC (or any other transparency instrument) consumes more time, energy, and resources than it is worth. At first glance, this fear seems plausible. Yet the experiences of other research communities and disciplines, and of those (including myself and others in this symposium) who have begun employing AC in their research, suggest that the fear is exaggerated. At least six considerations suggest that the costs are lower than skeptics fear.

First, transparency publicizes what many qualitative scholars already do. Many scholars already conduct careful field research, assemble archival documents in multiple languages, master voluminous historical literatures, reconstruct complex decisions, and, increasingly, have been trained in qualitative causal analysis. AC simply provides a formal structure in which such scholars can demonstrate—and others can properly recognize—prevailing high standards.

Second, only contestable empirical claims and, exceptionally, issues of production transparency need to be actively cited. Contestable empirical claims, as defined by the author, are often a small subset of the total. No obligation exists to actively cite introductory and background material, literature reviews, conventional methodological issues, extensions, or, importantly, uncontroversial empirical claims.

Third, the length of quotations and annotations is flexible and discretionary. AC obliges scholars to provide a modest quotation and some annotation clarifying analytical ambiguity. Yet implementation remains largely at the authors' discretion: the suggested length of sources at fifty to one hundred words is only a guideline. If the evidentiary context is clear, the author may simply enter a single line. Similarly, if the link between to the underlying claim is obvious or trivial, a one-sentence annotation may suffice. Moreover, all requirements defer to intellectual property, human subject, and logistical constraints. An article based on confidential or non-transcribed interviews (e.g., with contemporary Chinese military officers) probably cannot be as openly sourced as one based on public documents (e.g., about nineteenth-century British imperialism); if necessary, verbatim text may be omitted or replaced by a summary. Diverse research communities will surely evolve varied expectations about reasonable and feasible transparency appropriate to specific research conditions.

Fourth, advance preparation and modern technology lighten the load. Jack Snyder, Elizabeth Saunders, and I recently contributed pilot projects for the QDR by retrofitting previous book chapters and articles. The burden was misleadingly heavy because we retrofitted research conducted years (even decades) ago with obsolete technology. Most scholars today work (or should work) far more efficiently, researching from beginning to end in digital media, employing readable e-copies of secondary sources like journals and books, online or scanned copies of primary sources; managing information with programs such as Endnote and Scrivener; photographing archival documents with small digital cameras; taping interviews; taking and scanning notes electronically; and managing sources using spreadsheet and database programs. Such data can be searched, accessed, edited, and inserted within seconds. Even the financial cost is modest, but a silver lining is that qualitative scholars can now apply for outside funding to defray the research costs of achieving transparency, just as their quantitative and experimental colleagues do.

Fifth, AC imposes little format change on writers, editors, reviewers, and publishers. AC leaves scholarly formats of main text and citations essentially unchanged. Only the appendix is new, and it lies outside word limits. Dedicated software is available. Since actively cited articles would appear in electronically published versions, increases in publication costs would be marginal.

Sixth, AC imposes a lighter logistical burden than that borne by past political scientists, contemporary scholars in other academic disciplines, and natural scientists. AC is not a radical and untested scheme. Rather, it closely resembles the system of discursive footnotes common a generation ago across the social sciences and humanities, including political science—albeit in a technologically turbo-charged form. It is a less demanding version of current and long-established practices in legal academia, history, and other neighboring fields. It is a functional parallel to the derivations, data, and robustness checks formal and quantitative political scientists must submit to journals as appendices and to mandatory materials that customarily appear with articles in natural science. Is there some reason why political scientists cannot meet the same challenge?

CONCLUSION

Research transparency is a basic social scientific principle, shared by research communities of all types. It is a precondition for rich and rigorous qualitative scholarship, a spur to productive debate and extension of existing research, an instrument to promote theoretical diversity, a way to encourage policy relevance, an instrument to forge interdisciplinary links, a source of new publication outlets and less expensive research opportunities for qualitative scholars, and a means to enhance the credibility and legitimacy of qualitative research and those who conduct it, both inside and outside academia. Other disciplines have long since taken the lead in assuring data, analytic, and production transparency for qualitative research. Given the benefits, the costs are remarkably low.

Transparency is, however, more than an academic ideal. It is a straightforward adaptation to modern life. Today transparency envelops us. Not just academics and scientists, but journalists, government officials, civil society groups, corporations, and individual citizens are embracing technologies much like active citation. Whether we peruse the morning paper online, assess our legal rights, book airplane seats, visit a museum, read a government intelligence briefing, or chat with friends, we would be shocked to find ourselves without the blue links to vital underlying information and analysis. Political science has fallen behind the curve, but it is responding. The question is no longer whether qualitative political scientists will move in the same direction, but when and how. With active citation and other instruments at hand, transparency is now just one click away.

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SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIAL

An appendix containing the Active Citations mentioned in this article can be accessed at http://dx/doi.org/10.1080/09636412.2014.970846.