

# Who Publishes in Comparative Politics? Studying the World from the United States

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Who publishes in the discipline's leading journals is a matter of intrinsic interest to political scientists. Indeed, any discipline is first and foremost about the people who practice it. A focus on who publishes also raises important questions concerning the relationship between the characteristics of authors, such as their gender, seniority, institutional affiliation, and nationality, and the knowledge they produce. Is who publishes associated with what is published? Moreover, publications in leading journals are an important marker of professional status and a key conduit for the diffusion of ideas. This points to a further question: Do the top journals differ in terms of the authors and research they publish?

To address these issues, we analyze the three leading U.S. journals dedicated fully or largely to comparative politics—*Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, and *World Politics*—over the 1989–2004 period.<sup>1</sup> We focus on six

characteristics of the authors who publish in these journals: disciplinary affiliation, gender, engagement in collaborative research, professional rank, the type of institution with which they are affiliated, and the country where they work. We then study the relationship between these author characteristics, on one hand, and the subject matters, objectives, and methods of research, on the other. Finally, we compare the three journals, considering who publishes in them and whether the articles they publish differ in terms of subject matters, objectives, and methods.<sup>2</sup>

The results of the analysis show that publications in the leading comparative politics journals are mostly single-authored and written by male political scientists based in U.S. universities. Surprisingly, we find that most characteristics of authors are not strongly associated with the diverse range of research questions, objectives, and methods found in the literature. Who publishes thus does not appear to have a strong relationship with what is published in comparative politics. The comparison of the three journals underscores the pluralism of the field. Though there are some significant differences across the three journals, all publish various types of authors and research. Although the field of comparative politics is thus characterized by considerable pluralism and openness, a rarely noted feature, the dearth of articles by foreign-based scholars, leads us to qualify this positive assessment. For a field that aspires to study the world, this U.S.-centric perspective stands as an important limitation.

## Who Publishes?

The authors of comparative articles are overwhelmingly male political scientists (see Table 1). Although the proportion of political scientists has remained remarkably stable over the years,<sup>3</sup> we note a statistically significant increase in

the number of female authors over the 1989–2004 period.<sup>4</sup> With regard to professional rank, the proportion of articles published by graduate students and untenured faculty is quite high, especially given the standard length of the career of a tenured faculty member. Altogether, 40.4% of authors work at top-30 U.S. research universities, putting the majority at other types of institutions. Two other findings reported in Table 1 deserve further comment: most comparative articles are single-authored and the vast majority of authors are based in the U.S.

## "Under One Skull": The Dominance of Non-Collaborative Research in Comparative Politics<sup>5</sup>

Roughly a quarter (25.7%) of articles published in comparative politics have two or more authors. Moreover, when comparativists do collaborate, they mainly work in pairs. Very few articles have three authors, and none has more than three. There is scarce evidence that this is changing; indeed, the proportion of collaborative articles in the leading journals has been quite stable over the past 35 years.<sup>6</sup>

To set these numbers in context, more than 70% of the published papers in the physical sciences are coauthored, whereas in the humanities the proportion of coauthored articles is not more than 5% (Baum et al. 1976, 899–900).<sup>7</sup> And nearly half of all articles in the three leading "general" political science journals (i.e., *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, and *Journal of Politics*) are authored by two or more scholars.<sup>8</sup> Thus, comparative politics occupies an intermediate location between the physical sciences and the humanities; and within political science it probably stands between the fields of American politics, which sets the norm for the field due to

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**Table 1**  
**Author Characteristics**

	(% Articles)		(% Articles)
Discipline		Gender	
Political Science	91.2	Male	74.3
Sociology	4.7	Female	18.5
Economics	4.1	Male & female team	7.2
History	0.3		
Other	7.2		
Team Research		Professional Rank	
One author	74.3	Full professor	26.0
Two authors	22.9	Associate professor	23.5
Three authors	2.8	Assistant professor	46.4
		Graduate student	11.0
		Other	14.4
Type of Institution		Location	
US universities-ranked 1–15	25.7	USA	89.2
US universities-ranked 16–30	14.7	Western Europe	8.5
US universities-ranked below 30	42.9	Canada	6.0
US teaching colleges	5.3	Asia	2.5
US non-university/college	0.6	Israel	1.9
Foreign-based	21.6	Oceania	1.6
		Latin America & Caribbean	1.3
		Middle Eastern Countries (excluding Israel)	0.3
		Eastern Europe & Post-Soviet Countries	0.0
		Africa	0.0

*Note:* The data are drawn from the variables “Discipline,” “Gender,” “N\_Authors,” “Rank,” “Affiliation\_Type” and “Foreign\_Location” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. N = 319. Institutional rankings are based on the relative rankings for research-doctorate programs in political science as reported in National Research Council (1995: 602–05).

The total percentage for the columns on “Discipline,” “Professional Rank” and “Type of Institution” exceeds 100% because some articles have multiple authors. The percentage for foreign based authors under the columns “Type of Institution” and “Location” differs because some articles are authored by multiple authors, who live in more than one foreign country.

its size, and political theory, the quintessential habitat of solitary thinkers in the discipline.

Reflecting on trends in the social sciences more than four decades ago, C. Wright Mills (1959) issued a manifesto for rugged individualism in scholarship. He stated, “Let every man be his own methodologist; let every man be his own theorist. . . . Stand for the primacy of the individual scholar; stand opposed to the ascendancy of research teams of technicians. Be one mind that is on its own confronting the problems of man and society” (224). Since then, some notable efforts have been made in comparative politics to emulate the “hard” science model of team research.<sup>9</sup> It has even been claimed that, for political science as a whole, “the traditional picture of the scholar laboring independently on his or her research no longer seems valid” (Fisher et al. 1998, 854). Yet, for better or worse, the “ascendancy of research teams” in the social sciences that Mills feared, and that some assert is today a reality, has simply not happened in comparative politics. Comparative research is still done mostly “under one skull.”

### *“A Little Knowledge is a Dangerous Thing”: Studying the World from the United States*

A final aspect of the authors who publish in the leading journals of comparative politics—the fact that the vast majority (89.2%) are based in the U.S.—deserves special commentary. In some respects, this is unremarkable. After all, the journals under consideration are English-language journals published in the U.S. and run by editors affiliated with U.S. universities.<sup>10</sup> Still, the scarcity of work by foreign-based contributors in these journals points to deeper issues regarding our knowledge about world politics that should be a matter for genuine concern.

The story of the field of comparative politics is one of great progress. As Robert Dahl notes, reflecting on his days as a graduate student in the 1930s, “Overall, the field [of comparative politics] was very Eurocentric. . . . Very few people had mastered the languages, even Russian, that were required to understand non-European countries. Even Latin America—a rich treasure house of expe-

rience nearby—was not within our ambit. I don’t think we studied Canada. It was all very parochial” (Munck and Snyder Forthcoming, 116). However, a whole generation of U.S. comparativists set out to overcome this parochialism in the 1950s and 1960s.

Expanding the empirical scope of comparative politics was a central goal of the behavioral revolution in comparative politics and, in particular, of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) Committee on Comparative Politics chaired by Gabriel Almond from 1954 to 1963 and then by Lucian Pye from 1963 to 1979. The launching of *Comparative Political Studies* and *Comparative Politics* in 1968 was part of this effort to broaden the scope of the field.<sup>11</sup> And the success of this drive is indisputable. Indeed, our analysis shows that although the study of Western Europe still dominates, the field has expanded its regional scope beyond Europe and does a good job providing broad coverage of the world’s regions (Munck and Snyder 2007, 10).<sup>12</sup>

Yet this success has a paradoxical side: inasmuch as U.S. academics, in

their quest to cover the globe, have ventured further and further from familiar North American and European cultures, their knowledge has arguably become more superficial. Most U.S. comparativists do field work for their dissertation over a span of one to one-and-a-half years, and, as their careers progress, the norm is to return to the field for only short trips. As Adam Przeworski puts it, these comparativists thus play a “parachuting game” (Munck and Snyder Forthcoming, 502). The increasing availability via the Internet of data sets of

global scope, used time and again, even after their last substantial insight has been extracted, further increases the risk of producing formalistic, even trivial, knowledge about world politics.

One potential solution to this problem is to draw on research by citizens of foreign countries, for, as Przeworski argues, “US-trained foreigners are much better at studying their countries than Americans will ever be” (Munck and Snyder Forthcoming, 502). Yet there is little evidence that much knowledge produced by foreign researchers is disseminated by the

leading comparative politics journals. As shown, only slightly more than 10% of the authors of articles in the leading U.S. comparative politics journals are foreign-based. Moreover, U.S.-based and foreign researchers rarely collaborate: when U.S.-based authors engage in collaborative research, they do so with other U.S.-based authors 96% of the time and with foreign-based authors only 4% of the time.<sup>13</sup>

It is important not to take this argument about the parochialism of research in comparative politics too far. Detachment and distance may provide analytic

**Table 2**  
**Authors and Research Subject Matters**

	Subject Matter (% Articles relative to all articles by type of author)				
	Political Order	Political Regimes	Social Actors	Democratic & State Institutions	Economic & Extra-national Processes
<b>Discipline</b>					
Political Science	8.3	17.1	21.2	29.5	23.9
Other disciplines	14.3	11.4	20.0	28.6	25.7
Political Science and other disciplines team	17.1	8.6	22.9	20.0	31.4
<b>Gender</b>					
Male	9.0	15.7	23.0	26.7	25.6
Female	10.1	18.0	15.7	34.8	21.3
Male & female team	11.8	14.7	17.6	32.4	23.5
<b>Team Research</b>					
Single author	8.6	16.3	23.4*	27.4	24.3
Multiple authors	12.0	15.4	14.5*	32.5	25.6
<b>Professional Rank</b>					
Associate professor & above	11.0	14.2	20.5	30.6	23.7
Assistant professor & graduate student	7.4	16.7	22.1	27.9	26.0
<b>Type of Institution</b>					
US top 30 universities	8.8	16.6	17.7	30.4	26.5
Other US universities & colleges	10.1	16.9	23.7	27.5	21.7
Foreign-based	9.1	11.7	23.4	28.6	27.3
<b>Location</b>					
US-based	9.6	17.5	19.7	28.8	24.4
Foreign-based	9.1	11.7	23.4	28.6	27.3
US- and foreign-based	8.0	8.0	36.0	28.0	20.0

*Note:* The subject matter “political order” includes questions related to state formation and state collapse, war, revolutions, nationalism, civil wars and violence, and ethnicity and ethnic conflict. “Political regimes” includes research on varieties of political regimes, and democratization and democratic breakdowns. “Social actors” spans questions about social movements and civil society (including social capital, strikes and protests), interest groups (including business and labor studies), citizen attitudes and political culture, religion, and clientelism. “Democratic and state institutions” refers to research on elections, voting and electoral rules; political parties; democratic institutions (executive and legislative branches of government); federalism and decentralization; the judiciary; the bureaucracy; the military and police, and policy making in general. “Economic and extra-national processes” covers economic policy and reform (including the welfare state, the developmental state, neoliberalism and varieties of capitalism), economic development, globalization, and supranational integration and processes.

The data are drawn from the variables “Question,” “Discipline,” “Gender,” “N\_Authors,” “Rank,” “Affiliation\_Type” and “Foreign\_Location” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. N = 319 for all variables except professional rank (N = 289) and type of institution (N = 318). For the data on professional rank and type of institution, jointly authored articles were assigned the rank of the highest ranked author or institution; when co-authors were based in the US and abroad, coding relied on the affiliation of the US-based author. Chi-square tests were performed comparing one subject matter at a time against the rest. \* = significant at 5% level, \*\* = significant at 1% level.

advantages, which could be called a “Tocquevillian edge,” because they can make it easier to see patterns that are difficult for those immersed in the context to discern.<sup>14</sup> Also, although we were unable to determine how many of the U.S.-based scholars in our sample were born abroad,<sup>15</sup> it is well known that many U.S. universities are tremendously cosmopolitan. Still, it is prudent to recognize the limitations inherent in thinking about the world from the vantage point of the U.S.

and to remember that, as the saying goes, “a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.”

### Comparing the Authors

The research published in leading comparative politics journals is quite diverse. Research questions range over many topics. Some articles put greater emphasis on theory generation, whereas others highlight empirical analysis. Likewise, distinct methodological options, such as deductive

vs. inductive and quantitative vs. qualitative, are pursued in different publications (Munck and Snyder 2007, 12–13). This diversity raises the question: Are the characteristics of authors associated with choices about research questions, objectives, and methods? That is: Is *who* publishes associated with *what* is published?

The answer is largely “no.” Concerning the subject matter of research, the only statistically significant difference is between single-authored articles and

**Table 3**  
**Authors and Research Objectives**

	Theory & Empirics (% Articles relative to all articles by each type of author)			Description & Causation (% Articles relative to all articles by each type of author)			
	Theory Generation	Theory Generation & Empirical Analysis		Descriptive	Descriptive & Causal, but Primarily Descriptive	Descriptive & Causal, but Primarily Causal	Causal
		Empirical Analysis	Empirical Analysis				
<b>Discipline</b>							
Political Science	4.1	44.8	51.1	14.1	36.7	36.3	13.0
Other disciplines	4.0	56.0	40.0	32.0	40.0	28.0	0.0
Political Science and other disciplines team	8.3	45.8	45.8	25.0	20.8	33.3	20.8
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	4.2	46.0	49.8	16.5	37.1	35.9	10.5
Female	1.7	42.4	55.9	13.6	30.5	33.9	22.0
Male & female team	13.0	52.2	34.8	21.7	34.8	34.8	8.7
<b>Team Research</b>							
Single author	3.0**	41.8**	55.3**	15.6	35.0	35.4	13.9
Multiple authors	8.5**	57.3**	34.1**	18.3	37.8	35.4	8.5
<b>Professional Rank</b>							
Associate professor & above	6.4	47.1	46.4	15.7	37.9	34.3	12.1
Assistant professor & graduate student	3.4	44.3	52.3	15.4	33.6	36.2	14.8
<b>Type of Institution</b>							
US top 30 universities	4.8	53.6	41.6	11.2	32.8	42.4	13.6
Other US universities & colleges	4.3	40.7	55.0	22.1	34.3	30.0	13.6
Foreign-based	3.8	41.5	54.7	13.2	45.3	34.0	7.5
<b>Location</b>							
US-based	4.8	45.6	49.6	17.6	33.2	35.2	14.0
Foreign-based	3.8	41.5	54.7	13.2	45.3	34.0	7.5
US- and foreign-based	0.0	62.5	37.5	6.3	43.8	43.8	6.3

*Note:* A theory is understood to consist of a proposition or set of propositions about how or why the world is as it is. An empirical analysis is understood to consist of an inquiry based on observable manifestations of a concept or concepts. Thus, empirical analysis is not restricted to causal hypothesis testing. In turn, the term “descriptive” is not used, as is common, in a critical fashion, as when a work is characterized as being “merely descriptive.” Here the term is used in a positive manner, as referring to accounts about what the state of the world is, that are differentiated from causal accounts that seek to explain why the state of the world is as it is.

The data are drawn from the variables “Theory\_Empirical,” “Descriptive\_Causal,” “Discipline,” “Gender,” “N\_Authors,” “Rank,” “Affiliation\_Type” and “Foreign\_Location” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. N = 319 for all variables except professional rank (N = 289) and type of institution (N = 318). For the data on professional rank and type of institution, jointly authored articles were assigned the rank of the highest ranked author or institution; when co-authors were based in the US and abroad, coding relied on the affiliation of the US-based author. Kruskal Wallis tests were performed. \* = significant at 5% level, \*\* = significant at 1% level.

**Table 4**  
**Authors and Research Methods**

	Methods of Theorizing (% Articles relative to all articles by each type of author)				Methods of Empirical Analysis (% Articles relative to all articles by each type of author)			
	Inductive, Qualitative	Inductive, Quantitative	Deductive, Semiformal or Informal	Deductive, Formal	Qualitative	Mixed Method, Dominantly Qualitative	Mixed Method, Dominantly Quantitative	Quantitative
<b>Discipline</b>								
Political Science	55.7	17.3	23.8	3.2	44.4	20.1	13.5	22.0
Other disciplines	71.4	9.5	19.0	0.0	62.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Political Science and other disciplines team	58.8	11.8	23.5	5.9	22.7	13.6	9.1	54.5
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	58.4	16.8	21.7	3.1	44.5	19.4	12.8	23.3
Female	53.8	15.4	25.6	5.1	41.4	17.2	15.5	25.9
Male & female team	56.5	13.0	30.4	0.0	50.0	20.0	10.0	20.0
<b>Team Research</b>								
Single author	55.8	18.4	21.8	4.1	41.3	20.0	13.5	25.2
Multiple authors	60.5	11.8	26.3	1.3	53.3	16.0	12.0	18.7
<b>Professional Rank</b>								
Associate professor & above	60.2	15.5	21.4	2.9	56.5**	16.8**	9.2**	17.6**
Assistant professor & graduate student	53.5	18.2	25.3	3.0	30.6**	21.5**	16.7**	31.3**
<b>Type of Institution</b>								
US top 30 universities	55.2	16.2	25.7	2.9	39.5	21.0	16.8	22.7
Other US universities & colleges	59.5	20.2	17.9	2.4	44.0	20.1	11.9	23.9
Foreign-based	58.8	5.9	29.4	5.9	54.9	11.8	7.8	25.5
<b>Location</b>								
US-based	58.3	18.3	21.1	2.3	43.7	20.6	13.4	22.3
Foreign-based	58.8	5.9	29.4	5.9	54.9	11.8	7.8	25.5
US- and foreign-based	42.9	14.3	35.7	7.1	18.8	18.8	25.0	37.5

*Note:* The data are drawn from the variables “Method\_Theory,” “Method\_Analysis,” “Discipline,” “Gender,” “N\_Authors,” “Rank,” “Affiliation\_Type” and “Foreign\_Location” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. The N for methods of theorizing is 160 for all variables except professional rank (N = 146). The N for methods of empirical analysis is 305 for all variables except professional rank (N = 275) and type of institution (N = 304). For the data on professional rank and type of institution, jointly authored articles were assigned the rank of the highest ranked author or institution; when co-authors were based in the US and abroad, coding relied on the affiliation of the US-based author. Chi-square tests were performed on the data on methods of theorizing, comparing one method of theorizing at a time against the rest. Kruskal Wallis tests were performed on the data on methods of empirical analysis. \* = significant at 5% level, \*\* = significant at 1% level.

collaborative work, with the former focusing more often on social actors (see Table 2). Working alone or collaboratively also makes a difference in terms of a key research objective: single-authored articles are more likely than collaborative articles to focus solely on empirical analysis instead of on theory generation or on theory generation combined with empirical analysis (see Table 3). Finally, professors at the associate level and above are less likely than untenured faculty to use quantitative methods of empirical analysis (see Table 4).

Still, the data suggest that most differences in research are not associated with distinct author characteristics and that disciplinary background, gender, and where a researcher works—the institution with which he or she is affiliated, and the country where he or she is based—make no statistically significant difference for the kind of work that is done. Overall, the link between *who* publishes and *what* is published appears tenuous.<sup>16</sup>

## Comparing the Journals

The diversity of research in comparative politics raises the question of whether the leading journals differ in terms of their openness to distinct types of authors and research. Given their role in influencing professional success and the diffusion of ideas, it is legitimate to ask: Do the top comparative politics journals have distinctive profiles?

A comparison of the three leading journals reveals several statistically significant differences among the authors who publish in them (see Table 5). *Comparative Politics* publishes more articles by women, especially single-authored pieces. *Comparative Politics* also publishes far more articles by assistant professors than do the other journals. *World Politics* lies at the opposite end of the spectrum with regard to the gender and rank of its contributors, and it publishes more articles by authors based in Asia. In turn, *Comparative Political Studies* has intermediate scores on all the variables for which statistically significant differences can be detected. Still, the overarching similarities among the three journals are strong: all are open to publishing research from various types of authors.

With regard to the types of research published by these journals, the similarities are again quite striking (see Table 6). There are no statistically significant differences regarding subject matters, the balance between descriptive and causal analysis, and the use of inductive and deductive methods of theorizing. Still, the journals do differ in terms of the balance between theory and empirics, with

**Table 5**  
**Journals and Authors**

	(% Articles, relative to all articles in each journal)		
	Comparative Politics	Comparative Political Studies	World Politics
Discipline			
Political Science	88.2	86.3	76.1
Sociology	4.2	4.4	4.5
Economics	2.5	3.1	7.5
History	0.0	0.6	0.0
Other	5.0	5.6	11.9
Gender			
Male	70.5*	75.3*	78.9*
Female	26.8*	14.7*	12.3*
Male & female team	2.7*	10.0*	8.8*
Team Research			
One author	83.0	69.3	70.2
Two authors	16.1	27.3	24.6
Three authors	0.9	3.3	5.3
Professional Rank			
Full professor	17.1	21.7	26.3
Associate professor	14.0	22.8	21.1
Assistant professor	48.1*	36.1*	27.6*
Graduate student	6.2	11.1	9.2
Other	14.7	8.3	15.8
Type of Institution			
US universities-ranked 1–15	23.1	25.4	17.6
US universities-ranked 16–30	12.0	14.8	11.8
US universities-ranked below 30	42.7	35.5	39.7
US teaching colleges	5.1	4.1	5.9
US non-university/college	0.0	0.6	1.5
Foreign-based	17.1	19.5	23.5
Location			
USA	81.9	78.8	75.0
Western Europe	8.6	6.4	10.9
Canada	3.4	7.7	4.7
Asia	0.0*	2.6*	6.3*
Israel	3.4	0.6	1.6
Oceania	1.7	1.9	0.0
Latin America & Caribbean	0.0	1.9	1.6
Middle Eastern Countries (excluding Israel)	0.9	0.0	0.0
Eastern Europe & Post-Soviet Countries	0.0	0.0	0.0
Africa	0.0	0.0	0.0

*Note:* The data are drawn from the variables “Discipline,” “Gender,” “N\_Authors,” “Rank,” “Affiliation\_Type” and “Foreign\_Location” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. N = 319. Chi-square tests were performed on the data, comparing one value (e.g., political science) at a time against the rest for the variables discipline, professional rank, type of institution, and location. \* = significant at 5% level, \*\* = significant at 1% level.

*World Politics* lacking articles that engage only in theory generation and also having a greater proportion of articles that offer purely empirical analyses. Moreover, the three journals differ in terms of methods of empirical analysis, with *Comparative Politics* placing

greater emphasis on qualitative empirical analysis. Again, *Comparative Political Studies* has intermediate scores on the statistically significant variables. Yet these differences should not be exaggerated: the three journals are indistinguishable across many dimensions of research,

**Table 6**  
**Journals and Research Dimensions**

		(% Articles relative to all articles in each journal)		
Research Dimensions	Options	Comparative Politics	Comparative Political Studies	World Politics
<b>Subject Matters</b>	Political order	8.6	9.7	10.1
	Political regimes	16.0	16.7	14.6
	Social actors	21.6	19.0	25.8
	Democratic & state institutions	29.6	28.7	27.0
	Economic & extra-national processes	24.1	25.9	22.5
<b>Objectives</b> <i>Theory &amp; Empirics</i>	Theory generation	5.4*	5.3*	0.0*
	Theory generation & empirical analysis	50.9*	46.0*	35.1*
	Empirical analysis	43.8*	48.7*	64.9*
<i>Description &amp; Causation</i>	Descriptive	21.4	13.3	14.0
	Descriptive & causal, but primarily descriptive	31.3	35.3	45.6
	Descriptive & causal, but primarily causal	35.7	36.0	33.3
	Causal	11.6	15.3	7.0
<b>Methods</b> <i>Methods of Theorizing</i>	Inductive, qualitative	55.1	62.4	50.0
	Inductive, quantitative	16.9	14.9	15.6
	Deductive, semiformal or informal	24.7	19.8	31.3
	Deductive, formal	3.4	3.0	3.1
<i>Methods of Empirical Analysis</i>	Qualitative	53.8**	41.5**	33.3**
	Mixed method, dominantly qualitative	17.9**	24.6**	7.0**
	Mixed method, dominantly quantitative	11.3**	10.6**	22.8**
	Quantitative	17.0**	23.2**	36.8**

*Note:* The data are drawn from the variables “Journal,” “Question,” “Theory\_Empirical,” “Descriptive\_Causal,” “Method\_Theory” and “Method\_Analysis” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. The N for the data on subject matters, theory and empirics, and description and causation, is 319; the N for the data on methods of theorizing is 160; and the N for methods of empirical analysis is 305. Chi-square tests were performed on the data on subject matters, comparing one subject matter at a time against the rest. Kruskal Wallis tests were performed on the data on theory and empirics, description and causation, methods of theorizing (in a value by value fashion for the 4 values), and methods of empirical analysis. \* = significant at 5% level, \*\* = significant at 1% level.

and even where differences do exist, they are not overwhelming. Indeed, each of the three journals publishes all of the main types of comparative research.

### **Conclusion: Optimism with a Caveat**

Publications in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, and *World Politics* are mostly single-authored articles by male political scientists based at U.S. universities. Yet most characteristics of authors—especially disciplinary background, gender, and where a researcher works—are not associated with distinct research questions, objectives, and methods. Who publishes thus does not appear strongly linked to what is published. Our comparison of the three leading journals does reveal some significant differences. Still, the journals converge in their shared openness to publishing a diverse array of authors and types of research.

This pluralism and openness bodes well for the future of comparative politics. It suggests that the field’s top journals reflect the views of a range of intellectual communities and operate according to the principle that there are multiple paths toward excellence in comparative research. Moreover, as we show elsewhere (Munck and Snyder 2007, 12–17), the intellectual agenda of modern comparative politics is not defined by a stark juxtaposition between an old area studies approach and a new economics-inspired one. Instead, the field is far more complex and rich, defying simplistic characterizations cast in terms of by now quite predictable and stale debates. In sum, most of our evidence underscores the vitality of comparative politics in the U.S.

Yet this optimistic assessment requires an important caveat: our data show that the articles published in the leading comparative politics journals are authored overwhelmingly by scholars based in the

U.S. This fact has implications for the knowledge about world politics generated by these publications. A scholar of the U.S. Congress would surely have doubts about research on Congress by a Chinese academic who spoke poor English, had rarely been to Washington, D.C., and had not talked to many or any Members of Congress. Likewise, we are dubious that an American-based scholar with rusty Chinese, a narrow network of Chinese contacts, and limited time to spend in the field will deliver any deep insights about Chinese politics, even if he or she is a master of the most sophisticated methodological techniques available. There is no substitute for close, regular contact with the subject of research. Thus, finding better ways to engage researchers abroad and incorporate their knowledge into a collective, worldwide enterprise of comparative politics remains an important challenge facing comparativists in the U.S.

## Notes

\* We are grateful to Angela Hawken for her advice on the construction of the data set, to Matthew Lieber for his assistance with data collection, and to PS's two anonymous referees for their comments and suggestions.

1. The data set codes 319 articles from three journals—*Comparative Political Studies* (150 articles), *Comparative Politics* (112 articles), and *World Politics* (57 articles)—on 29 variables (a description of the variables can be accessed at [www-rcf.usc.edu/~munck/](http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~munck/) or [www.brown.edu/polisci/people/snyder/](http://www.brown.edu/polisci/people/snyder/)). The articles were drawn from issues published in 1989, 1992, 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2004 (except for the last issue of *World Politics*, which was not in print when the data set was constructed). In the case of *World Politics*, a journal that includes articles on international relations, the coders determined which articles belonged to the field of comparative politics. Book reviews, research notes, introductions to special issues, and articles on methodology were not included. The coding was carried out by the two authors of this article. For most variables, each author was responsible for three non-consecutive years of each journal, but Snyder coded all articles on the five variables related to the attributes of authors and the variable *Foreign\_Language*. The analysis was done using Stata 9.1.

2. This study complements our assessment, on the basis of the data set we analyze here, of ongoing debates about the direction of comparative politics (Munck and Snyder 2007). It also fills a gap in previous studies that analyze the contents of the leading comparative politics journals, yet devote little attention to the characteristics of the authors of the articles (Sigelman and Gadbois 1983; Hull 1999).

3. The percentage of authors in our study who are political scientists (91.2%) is nearly identical to the 92% reported by Sigelman and Gadbois (1983, fn. 2) in their analysis of articles published in *Comparative Politics* and *Comparative Political Studies* between 1968 and 1981. Although this is a low level of authorship by non-political scientists, it is higher than the corresponding figure for other journals in the discipline. Only 2.8% of articles published in the five “general” journals in political science—

*American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and *Polity*—during the 1994–1998 period had authors with departmental affiliations not in political science. See McCormick and Rice (2001, 676).

4. The number of single-authored articles by women was 15% in 1989, 10% in 1992, 23% in 1995, 12% in 1998, 18% in 2001, and 29% in 2004. The number of co-authored articles that include a female author was 2% in 1989, 6% in 1992, 8% in 1995, 10% in 1998, 7% in 2001, and 9% in 2004. Kruskal Wallis test, significant at 5% level. The data are drawn from the variables “Gender” and “Year” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. N=319.

5. The phrase “under one skull” is Albert Hirschman’s, as quoted in Stepan (2001, 1).

6. In their analysis of articles published in *Comparative Political Studies* and *Comparative Politics* between 1968 and 1981, Sigelman and Gadbois (1983, 279) found that 21.2% had two or more authors. Hull’s (1999, 118) study of articles published in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, and *World Politics* between 1982 and 1996 found that 23.3% had two or more authors. Thus, only a marginal increase in the amount of team research can be detected over the last 35 years.

7. Unfortunately, these figures are quite dated, (i.e., for the 1950s and 1960s). See also De Maio and Kushner (1981).

8. On average, 49.2% of articles published between 1990–1996 in the *APSR*, *AJPS*, and *JoP* had multiple authorship (Fisher et al. 1998, 851).

9. See, for example, David Laitin’s discussion of the Laboratory in Comparative Ethnic Processes (LiCEP) in Munck and Snyder (Forthcoming, 639–40).

10. However, Norris (1997, 29) found that the proportion of foreign contributors to two leading “general” European political science journals (i.e., *European Journal of Political Research* [EJPR] and *Political Studies*) was far higher: 24% of the contributors to *EJPR* in the 1990s were not from Western Europe, and 41% of the contributors to *Political Studies* were not from Western Europe. Most of these foreign con-

tributors were U.S.-based (20% for *EJPR*, 26% for *Political Studies*). In terms of their pools of contributors, these two general European political science journals are thus far more internationalized than their three comparative U.S.-based counterparts.

11. *World Politics* was founded in 1948.

12. Western Europe is studied in 41.0% of articles, Latin America in 27.2%, East Asia in 20.3%, North America (Canada and U.S.) in 17.0%, sub-Saharan Africa in 12.4%, the USSR or post-Soviet Republics in 11.8%, the Middle East and North Africa in 11.5%, Eastern Europe in 10.8%, Oceania in 8.2%, South East Asia in 6.9%, South Asia in 5.9%, and the Caribbean in 5.5%. The total percentage exceeds 100% because individual articles frequently cover multiple regions. The data are drawn from the variable “Region” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. N=305.

13. However, there is evidence that research produced by foreign-based scholars is read by U.S.-based academics. For example, 71% of the articles by U.S.-based authors cite non-English language sources. The data are drawn from the variables “N\_Authors,” “Foreign\_Language,” and “Affiliation\_Type” of the Munck-Snyder Comparative Politics Articles Data Set. The N for the data on collaboration is 319; the N for the data on foreign language sources is 305.

14. The reference to the French social theorist Alexis de Tocqueville alludes to the fact that although he was a foreigner and visited the United States for a relatively brief period, he was an especially keen observer of patterns in American political and civic life. Still, many of Tocqueville’s observations about the United States were factually incorrect (Wills 2004).

15. Likewise, we do not know what percentage of the foreign-based scholars in our data set are natives of the countries in which they work, or what percentage of American-based scholars are foreign-trained.

16. This statement concerns strictly the authors who published in these three journals. It does not take into account the prior matters of who submits manuscripts and which manuscripts get accepted.

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