

## comparative politics in central and eastern europe: mapping publications over the past 20 years

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### Abstract

This article offers a new empirical perspective on the state of Comparative Politics (CP) in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). We present findings on the authors, methods, and epistemology of CP publications in the most relevant journals from eleven countries in the region. The major finding is that CP is rather marginal in CEE Political Science. Furthermore, CP articles predominantly focus on the authors' country of origin, use off-the-shelf data, apply mostly qualitative data analysis techniques, and rarely take a historical perspective.

**Keywords** Comparative Politics; Central and Eastern Europe; academic journals

**I**n the early 1990s, the discipline of Political Science departed from rather different starting points in the various countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (see, e.g., Eisfeld and Pal, 2010a). For instance, Hungarian social sciences had already opened to Western influences in the late 1970s (Szabó, 2002), which

fostered extensive data collection exercises,<sup>1</sup> and thus created opportunities for broad cross-national comparisons. Similarly, Slovenian scholars benefited from the early establishment of Political Science departments in the 1960s and a very low ideological control, compared with other countries in the region (Klingemann,

2002; Fink-Hafner, 2002). In sharp contrast, Romanian Political Science never gained autonomy from the Communist Party's official dogma, not even in the short liberalisation period of the mid-sixties (Barbu, 2002). The general assessment – especially when compared to the West – seems to be that Political Science in CEE, while improving, faces considerable challenges in terms of institutional legacies, funding, coordination, and in several countries, an increasingly difficult political setting in the form of 'regime hybridization' (Eisfeld and Pal, 2010a).

This article focuses on Comparative Politics (CP) as one important sub-discipline of Political Science and here, in particular, on CP publications in major journals from eleven countries in the region. We do so based on a new data set on CP publications in CEE, which we introduce in Section 1. In Section 2, we analyse various dimensions along which CP publications can vary, both within countries over time and across countries. First, we compare the share of CP articles in major Political Science journals. Second, we analyse the topics addressed in CP studies. Third, we differentiate CP articles in terms of their data and methods used. Fourth, and related, we investigate the temporal scope, wondering how much of history is taken into account in CP publications in CEE. Fifth, we analyse the geographical scope of CP articles. Finally, we aim at unravelling who the authors of CP articles are.

Several trends characterise CP publications from all countries under study. First, only a small fraction of published Political Science articles in CEE can be classified as CP. Second, CP articles are dominated by a neo-institutionalist perspective, the most studied topics being political parties, elections, voting, and electoral rules, followed by citizens' attitudes and political culture. Third, CP articles are predominantly performed on off-the-shelf data, which tends to be analysed in a

*'We are not alone in considering publications as being among the most important aspects of a discipline's standing'.*

methodologically loose manner. Fourth, CP articles rarely exhibit a historical dimension, with most of them focusing on momentous events or short periods of time. Fifth, despite the fact that most countries in CEE are small and arguably heavily interdependent, the geographic scope of CP publications is rather narrow and only very few regional comparative studies are performed. Sixth, CP publications in national journals are dominated by native authors, with very little regional or international co-authorship.

Needless to say, a comprehensive assessment of the state of CP in CEE would need to go beyond an analysis of publications and include aspects, such as the size and quality of departments, the content of curricula, funding opportunities and so on (see, for instance, the volumes by Klingemann *et al*, 2002; Eisfeld and Pal, 2010a; Holzer, 2011). Yet, a focus on publications is both justified and informative. We are not alone in considering publications as being among the most important aspects of a discipline's standing. Similar analyses have already been performed for the US (Munck and Snyder, 2007a, b) and comparatively for Germany, Great Britain, and the US (Dethloff *et al*, 2007).<sup>2</sup> Just like any of these studies, our approach is also subject to limitations. We only capture parts of the CP publications, as in each country there is more than one outlet for CP and as scholars from CEE publish their (better) work in journals outside the region. Despite these limitations, which need to be kept in mind, we believe that our comparative analysis of CP publications in major national journals is one informative

piece of evidence of the state of the national CP communities.

## THE CP PUBLICATIONS IN CEE DATA SET

At the core of our article is the 'Comparative Politics Publications in Central and Eastern Europe' data set (henceforth 'CPPCEE 2011').<sup>3</sup> It was compiled in two waves, between the end of June 2010 and mid January 2011. All eleven coders are students of Political Science (M.A. or Ph.D. level at CEU) or teaching it, and are native speakers of the journals' main language. The data set consists of eleven post-communist democracies in CEE (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, and Slovenia).<sup>4</sup>

Coders were asked to list all relevant Political Science journals in their country and to rate their importance so as to identify the main journal, which should have published a minimum of twenty issues, preferably covering the entire 1990–2009 period. In several countries,<sup>5</sup> this selection was cross-checked by consulting further country experts. The journals used for coding are: *Sociologicheski Problemi* (Социологически проблеми) (Bulgaria), *Politička Misao* (Croatia), *Politologický časopis* (Czech Republic), *Politikatudományi Szemle* (Hungary), *Godishnik* (Macedonia), *Moldoscopie. Probleme de Analiză Politică* (Moldova), *Studia Polityczne* (Poland), *Romanian Journal of Political Science (RJPS)/Revista Română de Stiință Politică* (Romania), *Politické vedy* (Slovakia), *Teorija in praksa* (Slovenia), and *Srpska Politička Misao* and *Nova Srpska Politička Misao* (Serbia).<sup>6</sup>

Coders then identified all CP articles in the respective journal, starting from 1990 until 2010, and coded each of them in every second year based on a set of some 2 dozen items (see Appendix A). *An article counts as CP, if the author(s)*

*'... CP only plays a marginal role in major Political Science journals in the region'.*

*attempts at answering a question by using empirical evidence from at least two different cases. In most instances cases are countries but we also considered as comparative those studies that investigate sub-national units (e.g., regions).*

## THE MARGINALITY OF CP IN CEE

One of the most important findings of our study is that CP only plays a marginal role in major Political Science journals in the region. In two countries in which we analysed inter-disciplinary journals (Bulgaria and Slovenia), and in Moldova and Slovakia, the percentage of CP articles was smaller than 10 per cent. The proportion was slightly higher in five other countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Serbia) where approximately one in five articles could be considered comparative. The exception to this rule is represented by the case of Macedonia. One tentative explanation could be the higher level of specialisation of political science publications in this country<sup>7</sup> (Table 1).

This rather dismal picture of CP in the region needs to be somewhat put in perspective. First, some CP scholars from CEE might publish neither in their home country journals nor in that of neighbouring CEE countries, but rather prefer to aim at higher-ranked international outlets that are listed in the Social Science Citation Index, ISI Thompson. Only one of the journals in our sample – *RJPS* in Romania – has been recently indexed by the ISI. Second, more CP publications might exist in other national journals that

are not captured by our data. This might depress the number of CP articles reported by us in those countries in which the journal is an interdisciplinary one (e.g., Bulgarian and Slovenia). Yet, we think that neither of these issues presents a final blow to the validity of our claim that the sheer number of CP publications is rather low.<sup>8</sup>

The quantity of publications is one issue. Another is the impact of these publications. Arguably, a few publications with a high impact factor would paint a more positive picture of CP in CEE than many articles that are not read and referenced by others. One way of (imperfectly)<sup>9</sup> assessing the impact of CP publications consists in looking at

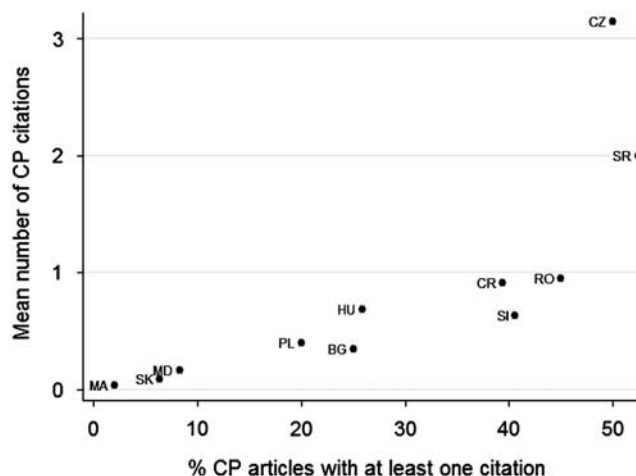
their citation indices according to Google Scholar (Figure 1).

Looking at the impact does not improve the assessment of CP publications in CEE. More than three quarters (75.5 per cent) of the articles in our sample are never cited. The overall mean of citations of all CP articles across all countries and time periods is 0.69. This number varies very little across time. The majority of the CP articles are written in local language, which, in turn, is often spoken only in the (small) country where the journal and the author are based. Hence, the low citation indices might be due to simple language barriers. However, some of

**Table 1: Share of Comparative Politics articles in the major national journal**

	BU	CR	CZ	HU	MK	MD	PL	RO	SK	SR	SV
Total nr. articles	631	?	130	284	119	533	139	111	500	164	540
Percentage of CP articles	4	?	18	19	42	6.75	15.1	18	9.4	12.8	6.11

Source: CPCEE 2011.



**Figure 1** How cited is CEE Comparative Politics scholarship?

Source: CPPCEE 2011 and Google Scholar.

the articles in our sample are written in English but – somewhat surprisingly – they do not receive significantly more citations than those written in local languages ( $R=0.003, p=0.94$ ).

Journals from two countries stand out as being the most cited from the sample: the Czech *Politologický časopis* with a mean of 3.1 citations per article and the Serbian *Srpska Politička Misao* and *Nova Srpska Politička Misao* with an average of 2 citations per article.<sup>10</sup> The CP articles published in the Romanian and Croatian journals also enjoy more citations than the regional average; the mean number of citations received by the Hungarian *Politikatudományi Szemle* and the Slovenian *Teorija in praksa* is slightly below the average. The rank order is similar with regard to the proportion of articles that are cited at least once. Half, or more than half, of the Czech and Serbian articles, respectively, belong to this category. In Romania, Slovenia, and Croatia, this is true only for approximately 40 per cent of the articles.

In sum, both the number and citation of CP publications indicate that CP is rather marginal in CEE.

## TOPICS ADDRESSED IN CP PUBLICATIONS

### THE RISING INTEREST IN TYPES OF DEMOCRACIES

What are the topics studied in CP publications? We apply the widely used scheme by David Easton (1965) and distinguish between three categories: input, political system, and output. Each of our twenty-six (Appendix A) items can be attributed to one of these three categories (Table 2). In the following, we analyse the frequency of topics from these three categories over time.

Figure 2 displays the number of articles dealing with input, output, or political system topics, respectively. It reveals that in the beginning of the 1990s, CPP in CEE focused in types of political regimes, thus taking a predominantly (neo-) institutionalist perspective. This is in line with findings from others who found that '[f]unctionalist, institutionalist and neo-institutionalist approaches predominate in Central-Eastern European Political Science' (Eisfeld and Pal, 2010b: 228; see also: Klingemann *et al*, 2002).

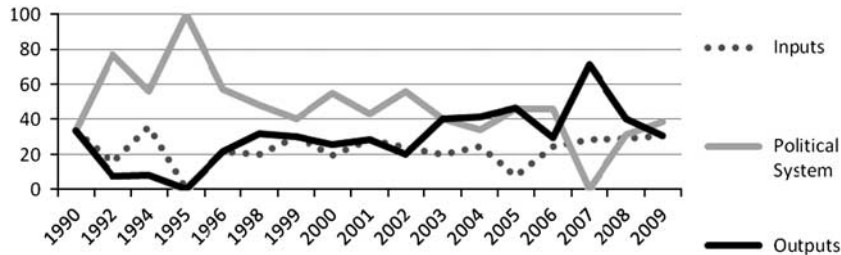
**Table 2: A classification of topics studied comparatively in CEE**

Inputs	Political System	Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nationalism</li> <li>● Religion</li> <li>● Citizen attitudes and political culture</li> <li>● Social movements and civil society (includes social capital, strikes, and protests)</li> <li>● Interest groups (includes business and labour studies)</li> <li>● Globalisation (includes cross-national migration)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Varieties of political regimes</li> <li>● Elections, voting, and electoral rules</li> <li>● Political parties</li> <li>● Democratic institutions (executive and legislative branches of government)</li> <li>● Federalism and decentralisation</li> <li>● Judiciary</li> <li>● Bureaucracy</li> <li>● Military and police, including secret services</li> <li>● Policy making in general</li> <li>● Political Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State formation and state collapse</li> <li>● War</li> <li>● Revolutions</li> <li>● Civil wars and violence</li> <li>● Ethnicity and ethnic conflict</li> <li>● Democratisation and democratic breakdowns</li> <li>● Clientelism</li> <li>● Economic policy and reform (includes the welfare state, the developmental state, neoliberalism, and varieties of capitalism)</li> <li>● Economic development</li> <li>● Supranational integration and processes (e.g., EU)</li> </ul>

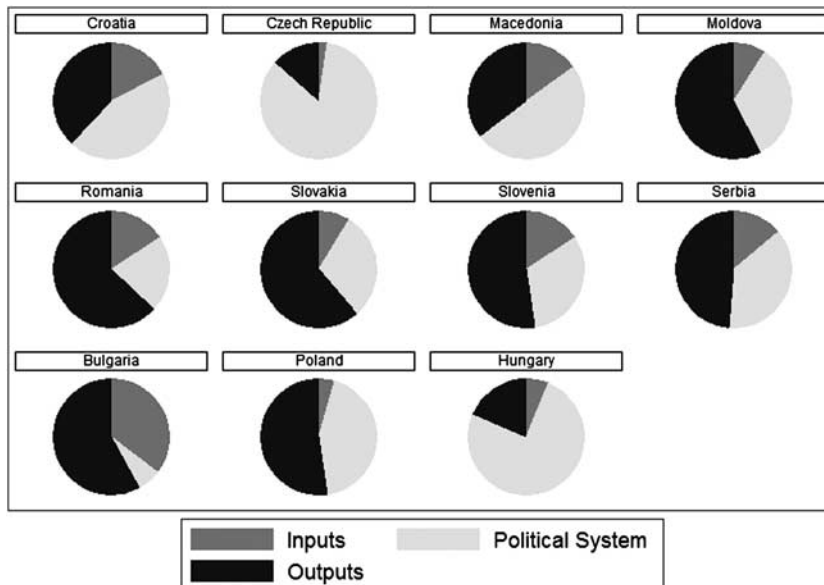
This focus is in decline, though. Since the beginning of the new millennium, the interest in political regimes is being replaced by studying the consequences of political processes. A disaggregated look at the output category reveals that this shift in focus is largely driven by an increased interest in policymaking, economic development, and supranational integration.

Figure 3 explores the distribution of topics in each country. In several countries (Slovenia, Romania, Serbia, and to

a lesser extent, Slovakia), there is a remarkable balance between the three grand categories. In other countries, however, one topic dominates – and it is always the focus on political systems. This is the case in Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The gaps in the pace of democratic consolidation between the four countries (Croatia versus the other three), but also within the whole sample, do not seem to be related to the cross-country differences in choice of the



**Figure 2** Topics addressed over time.  
*Source:* CPPCEE 2011.



**Figure 3** Topics addressed by country.  
*Source:* CPPCEE 2011.

topics. Roughly speaking, though, our findings are in line with the existing literature on Political Science writ large in the region (Eisfeld and Pal, 2010b: 228).

### **DISAGGREGATING TOPICS**

The single most studied topics belong to the 'political system category': political parties (11.5 per cent) and elections, voting and electoral rules (11.3 per cent). They are followed by citizens' attitudes and political culture (9.6 per cent), part of the 'input' grouping, and by democratisation and democratic breakdown (6.8 per cent) from the 'output category'. Especially, the prominence in election studies comes somewhat as a surprise. This field of Political Science is by now dominated by highly powered statistical analysis. As we show below, in CEE the percentage of publications using more sophisticated quantitative methods is very low, though (see Figure 7). Nevertheless, roughly one-third of all articles that used statistical techniques were electoral studies, while another third are articles looking at citizens' attitudes, which is, of course, another field that lends itself to large *N* statistical analyses.

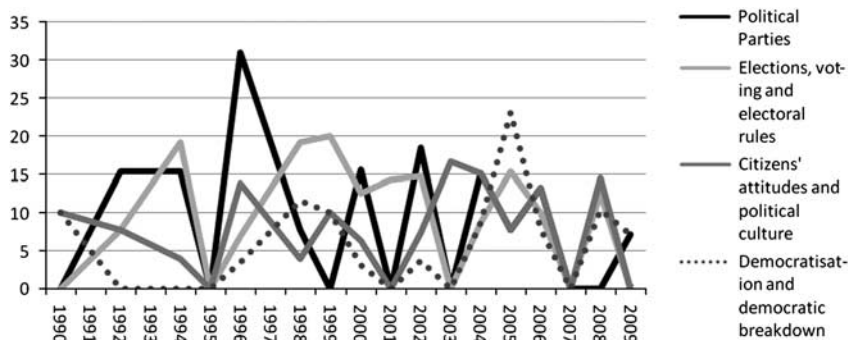
Figure 4 reveals several interesting, if not counterintuitive, insights. First, in the

early 1990s, that is, precisely when democratisation and democratic breakdown were most relevant for citizens and elites in the East (and, incidentally, also academics in the *West*), the percentage of publications in CEE on these topics is strikingly low. Second, interest in the topics of political parties, on the one hand, and elections, voting behaviour and electoral rules, on the other, both remain constant over time. Finally, there is a slight increase in publications on mass attitudes. Without over-interpreting these small numbers, this might be partially a result of a greater integration of scholars and institutions from CEE into those networks that produce mass survey data, such as the World Values Survey, the European Values Study, or the Eurobarometer series (Tóka, 2000; Mochmann *et al*, 2010).

## **DATA AND RESEARCH DESIGN USED IN CP**

### **THE DATA USED**

CP, perhaps more than any other sub-discipline, depends on the availability of good data, which, however, is usually hard to get. Data gathering is time-consuming, expensive, or both. The lack of



**Figure 4** Development of specific topics over time.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

good data seems to be exacerbated in CEE. Studies of Political Science in the region often report frustration of scholars with the difficulty to get access to comparative data (Klingemann *et al*, 2002, Eisfeld and Pal, 2010a). Either data on young democracies simply does not exist, is not reliable, or difficult to obtain, especially in the case of archives and governmental data for which sometimes Kafkaesque bureaucratic hurdles have to be overcome.<sup>11</sup> In addition, intra-regional networks of cooperation have not (yet) developed sufficiently,<sup>12</sup> depriving scholars of the help of colleagues in order to get access to data from countries other than their own. Moreover, CP scholars rarely have access to funds for collecting their own data: 92 per cent of the studies covered by our analyses did not report any funding.<sup>13</sup>

Generally, only one in five CP articles uses data that was either new (17 per cent) or came from updated data sets (4 per cent). As Figure 5 reveals, the situation slightly improves since the early 2000s but then stagnates again towards the end of the last decade. In contrast, the use of off-the-shelf data constantly increases, although not in a monotonic fashion.<sup>14</sup> For a stunning 22 per cent of the articles, our coders were unable to discern which data was used at all. This is

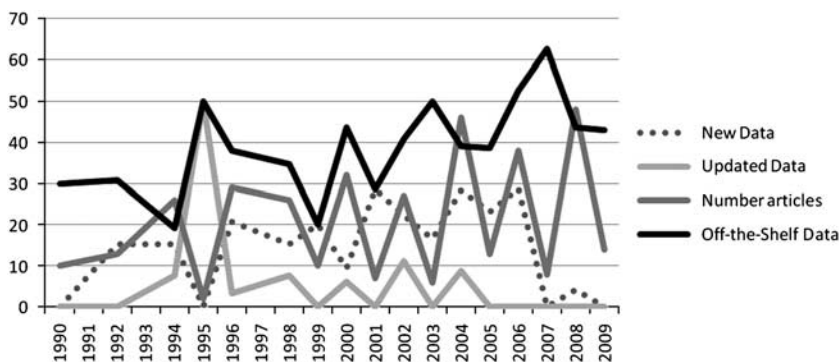
*'The lack of good data seems to be exacerbated in CEE'.*

worrisome, as this bars readers from any possibility to cross-check, let alone reproduce the findings. It also prevents such articles from being published in journals of international standing, which, by now, virtually all require that supporting material, such as data, is made available to the public.

### THE RESEARCH DESIGNS EMPLOYED

Very few articles can be classified as large *N* studies<sup>15</sup> (9.3 per cent). Most of these few appear in the Croatian and the Polish journals. The journals in Moldova, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia did not publish a single CP article using a large *N* approach, and the Romanian journal only one such article.

With large *N* studies being so rare, it comes as no surprise that qualitative research designs heavily dominate CP publications in CEE. From the early 1990s to the present, qualitative designs were virtually always in the majority, and for some periods even represent more than 75 per cent of all CP publications in



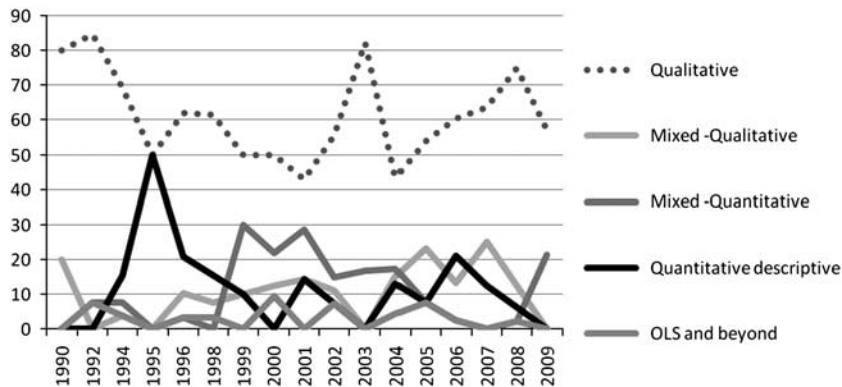
**Figure 5** The type of data used.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.



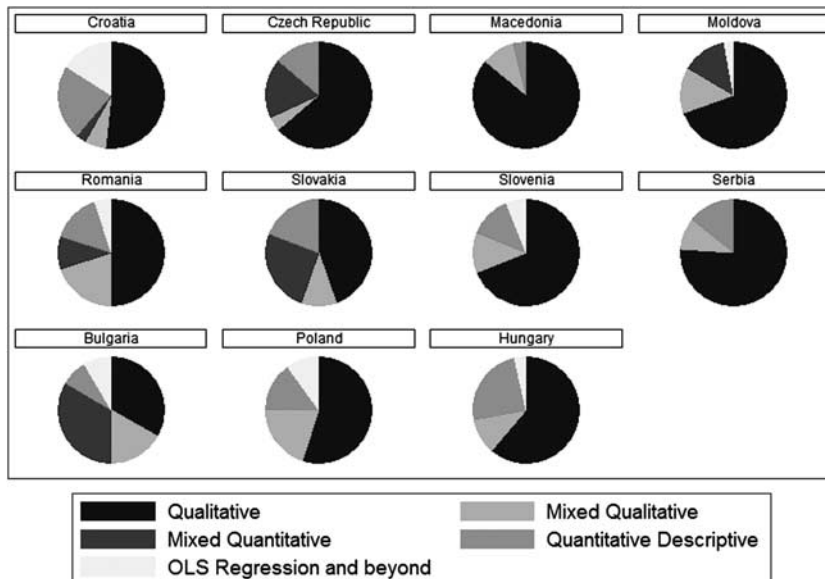
the region. The percentage of studies deploying descriptive or multivariate inferential statistics has unevenly increased over time. In addition, there is a slight but noticeable increase in the percentage of studies adopting a mixed methods research design, which are becoming fashionable in Political Science,

especially in the US (e.g., Brady and Collier, 2010) (Figure 6).

Figure 7 seems to indicate that CP scholars publishing in journals from the Visegrad countries (i.e., Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) and Croatia are the most trained in quantitative methods in the region.<sup>16</sup> Never-



**Figure 6** The evolution of research designs.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.



**Figure 7** Research design by country.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

theless, even in these cases the percentage of articles deploying OLS or more sophisticated techniques is quite small (15.2 per cent in Croatia and 10 per cent in Poland).

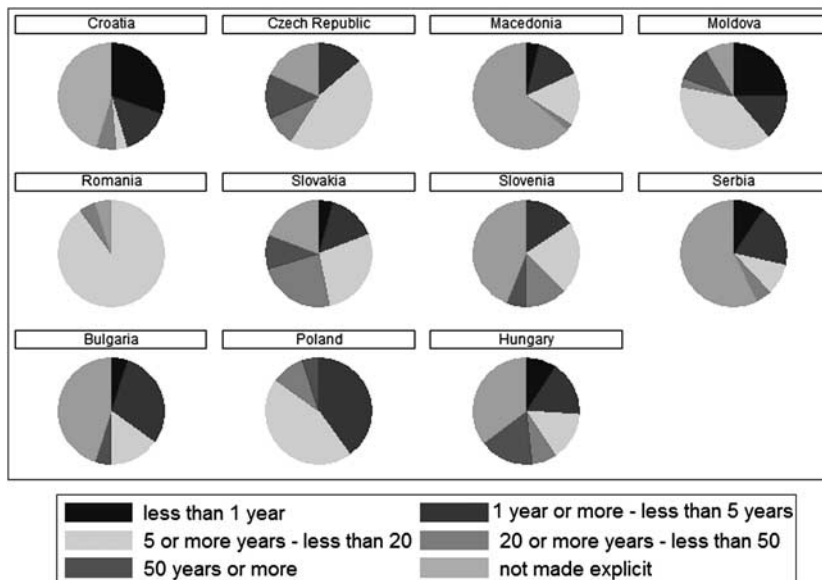
## IS THERE ROOM FOR HISTORY IN CP PUBLICATIONS?

The majority of articles in all countries (except Croatia) analyse the time period ranging from 5 years to two decades prior to their publication. This predominance of contemporary studies is in line with what one would expect, given the general agreement that the 1989 Revolutions opened a remarkable epoch, with societies being challenged by double and even triple transitions: to democracy, market economy, and in some cases, to a new state (Elster *et al*, 1998). However, the research taking a historical, *longue durée* approach is not completely missing from our sample; it is more visible in our

Czech, Slovak, Slovenian, and Hungarian journals than in the others (Figure 8).

## THE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Regarding the geographical scope, the first relevant pattern is that the most studied region is the one to which the country where the journal is published belongs. The Czech journal represents the sole exception: the majority of publications deals with countries in Western Europe (more than 68 per cent, compared with 41 per cent that look at either the Czech Republic or Slovakia). However, for most journals the comparison of countries from the region is the norm. This is true for 90 per cent of the articles in the Polish sample, for 95 per cent of the Moldovan sample, and for 84 per cent of the Slovenian articles. In Hungarian, Romanian, and Macedonian journals these numbers are also above 75 per cent. The second most studied countries are either the immediate neighbours (usually



**Figure 8** Time horizon.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

in the West or North) or Western democracies (Figure 9).

We find that the formerly united federal countries (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union) still constitute important units of analysis, especially in the successor states. Almost in every successor state (Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia), the former confederates are the single most important category of countries used in comparative analysis. Often even more than half of the cases studied are the former confederates. One reason for this case selection strategy might be that for many CP analyses, formerly united countries can be used as very similar cases with common political legacies, thus 'holding constant' for a range of potentially relevant country characteristics.

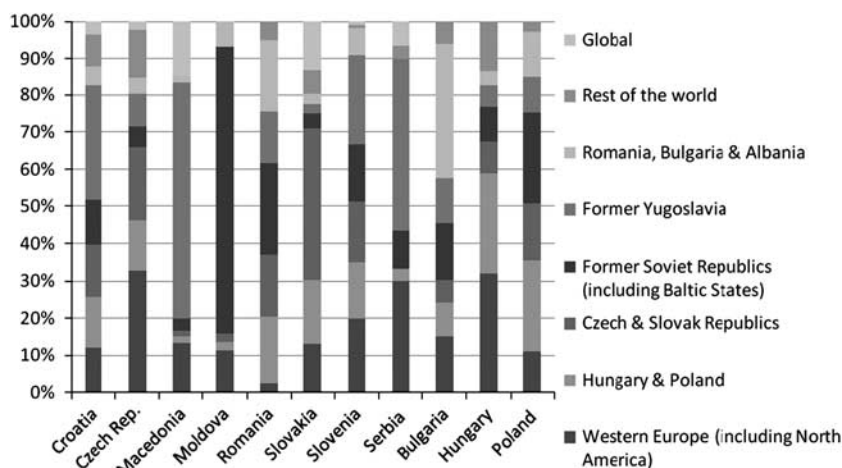
For some countries, specific cases are frequently used for comparison. In Croatia, for example, most articles take as reference points the Visegrad countries; many Polish articles include the Czech Republic and Slovakia; and the Romanian and Slovenian journals often include Hungary and Poland. The Czech, Hungarian, Slovenian,<sup>17</sup> Serbian, Slovak, and to a lesser extent also the Macedonian and

Moldovan, journals are characterised by a higher number of comparisons involving Western democracies.

Outside Europe, the region most present in the analyses is North America. Comparisons with Latin American countries are mostly missing, with the notable exception of the Hungarian journal. This finding is somewhat surprising given the strong emphasis of the democratisation literature in the 1990s (Karl and Schmitter, 1991; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Greskovits, 1998) on the analytically fruitful similarities and differences between the two regions, which could have well created a propensity for more inter-regional comparative scholarship (see e.g., Schneider, 2009).

## WHO ARE THE AUTHORS OF CP IN CEE?

So far, our analysis has focused on characteristics of the articles. We now shift perspective and focus on features of the authors of these articles. We do so by looking at various aspects, such as the practice of co-authorship, the choice of language for publication, and, in a special



**Figure 9** Geographic scope.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

section, the strategies of international cooperation.

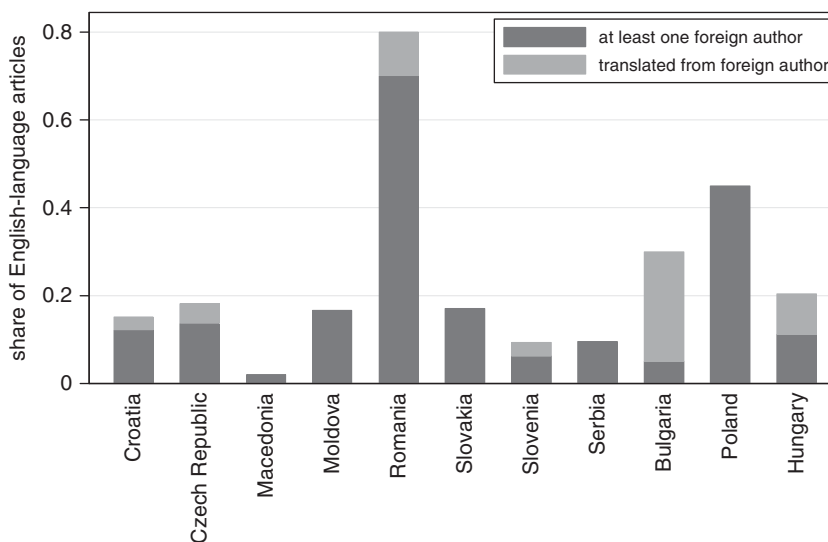
**ORIGIN OF AUTHORS AND STRATEGIES OF CO-AUTHORSHIP**

Where do authors come from? Our data shows that CP publications in national journals remain a field of national dominance. Articles by foreign authors are rare. Out of 355 analysed articles, only 71 (20 per cent) include at least a foreign co-author. The *RJPS* is an outlier, with 80 per cent of the articles (co-)authored by foreign-based authors. The low percentage of non-national authors is similar to those reported in the US, where only about 22 per cent foreign authors are reported to publish in leading journals (Munck and Snyder, 2007b). However, we need to consider that the size of the national CP community in CEE countries is negligible compared with that in the US. Hence, the percentage of foreign-based authors should be (much) higher in CEE. Instead, the picture is more one of academic isolation. The elevated rates of foreign authors in the Polish *Studia*

*'... the percentage of foreign based authors should be (much) higher in CEE. This leads to a picture of academic isolation'.*

*Polityczne* (45 per cent) and the Bulgarian *Sociologicheski Problemi* (30 per cent) are mainly due to articles being translated into Polish or Bulgarian (Figure 10).

The scarcity of foreign authors might be partially explained by the fact that the overwhelming majority of CP articles in all analysed journals are in local language, which obviously makes it close to impossible for most foreign authors to publish in these outlets. Only some of the journals in our sample publish English-language CP articles. The language policy of the journals might also explain the low degree to which foreign authors publish in those journals. The Romanian journal, which is most open to authors from abroad, publishes mainly in English, whereas we could not detect any English-



**Figure 10** Share of foreign authors.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

language CP article in the Czech, Macedonian, Slovenian, and Hungarian journal (Figure 11).

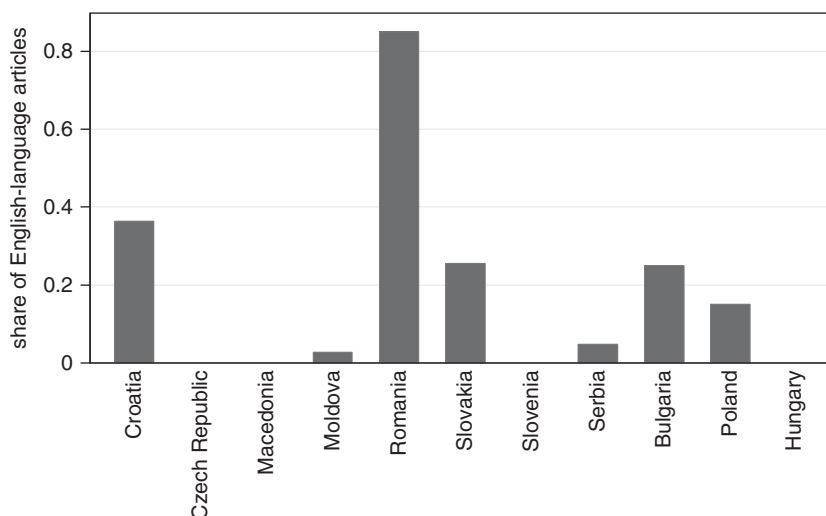
Despite the multi-linguistic character of quite a few countries of the region, apart from English-language publications, most journals only publish CP articles in *one* local language. The only exception is the Moldavian *Moldoscopie*, which publishes CP articles both in Romanian (or Moldavian, how the language is called in the Republic of Moldova) and in Russian, the second most frequent language in Moldova. Consider, however, that in most multi-linguistic countries, either there are no Universities or at least no Political Science departments working in minority languages. Or, if they exist, they have their own journals, which were not subject to this analysis.<sup>18</sup>

Co-authorships between domestic and foreign authors are extremely rare. The seventy-one articles with foreign (co-) authors are mainly written exclusively by foreign-based authors. We find only five co-authorships between locals and foreign co-authors from Western Europe or in Northern America. Perhaps even more surprising and worrisome is our finding that scholars from different countries in

CEE do not tend to collaborate. We only detect a meagre two intra-regional co-authorships (a Polish–Bulgarian and a Slovenian–Czech team of authors).

With regard to the provenience of foreign-authored articles, we are particularly interested in geographical and regional patterns of academic exchange. We find that in the national journals of Political Science, a regional exchange of scholarship in CP is almost absent. Noteworthy exceptions are the journals in Slovakia and in Moldova (see below). Two-thirds (forty-eight out of seventy-one) of the foreign-(co-)authored articles come from researchers affiliated with an institution beyond the regional borders – mainly Western Europe (thirty-one), North America (fourteen), but also from East Asia, Oceania or the Caribbean countries (each one or two, respectively).

There are big differences with regard to the practice of co-authorship in the region. While in some of the analysed journals, articles are mainly (Slovakia, Serbia, Romania) or only (Croatia) single-authored, the rate of co-authored articles is considerably larger in countries such as Moldova or Slovenia (Figure 12). Overall,



**Figure 11** Share of English-language articles.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

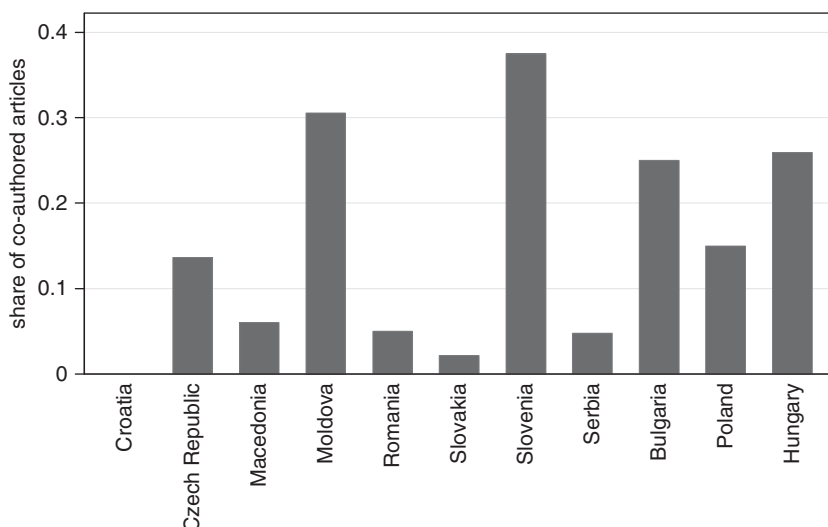
however, CP scholars in CEE do not collaborate significantly less than their colleagues in other world regions. The number of co-authored articles in top international CP journals, such as *CP*, *Comparative Political Studies*, or *World Politics* is roughly the same as that in our sample (Munck and Snyder, 2007a, b).

### **PATTERNS OF ACADEMIC EXCHANGE BETWEEN BREAKAWAY STATES**

Co-authoring is rare not only within-CEE. Also, and perhaps even more noteworthy, is the isolation of the academic journals towards their new neighbours and former compatriots, in those countries which emerged from former federal Republics. One would expect that the shared political legacy and internal migration, and in many of these countries also the same (or at least perfectly mutually intelligible) languages would create the opportunity for regional academic exchange across new borders. According to our data, it does not.

Little to no academic collaboration in terms of co-authorship or cross-country publication seems to be happening between scholars from countries of former Yugoslavia. In our sample, we do not find a single article from another former Yugoslav country that is published in the Serbian or the Slovenian journals, and only one each in the Macedonian and the Croat journals. This lack of academic cooperation might be overcome in the near future, as several projects of cooperation, both in teaching and in research, have been launched in recent years, and a new, peer-reviewed journal of Political Science, *Političke Perspektive*, which is edited jointly by scholars from Croatia, Serbia, and should be extended to Bosnia, has just been launched in 2011, when this analysis was written.

To some degree, the common federal legacy creates a common academic area of the Czech and the Slovak Republic. In the Czech and Slovak case, the pattern of exchange is very asymmetric, though almost all foreign-authored CP articles published in the Slovak *Politické vedy* come from the Czech Republic, but not a single of the four foreign-authored



**Figure 12** Share of co-authored articles.  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

articles that were published in the Czech *Politologický časopis* was written by a Slovak-based author. Note, however, that this asymmetry corresponds to a more general pattern of the state of Political Science in former Czechoslovakia: The discipline is considered to be stronger and has more international reputation in universities in the Czech Republic, attracting students and faculties from neighbouring countries (Rybář, 2010: 274).<sup>19</sup>

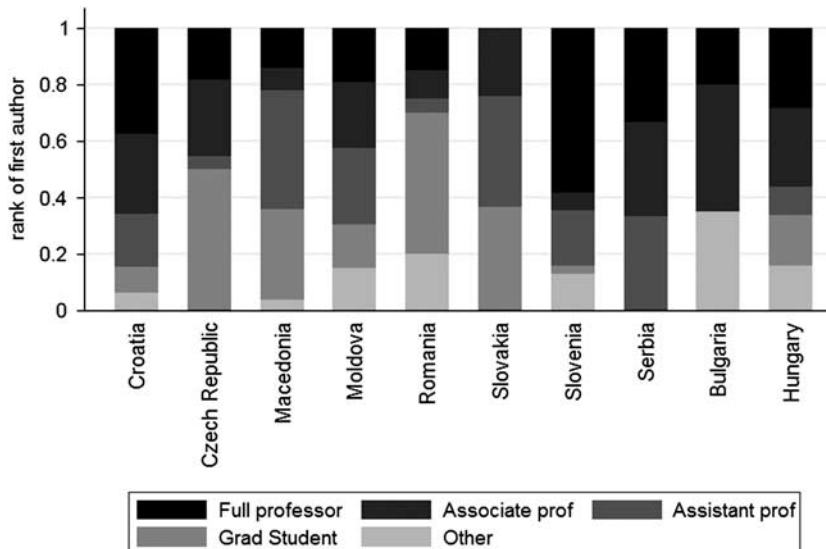
A joint past also had its impact in Moldova. The Moldova based journal *Moldoscopie* published several articles from scholars from neighbouring Ukraine. (Moldova is the only post-Soviet country included in our analysis.) We could not find, however, any traces of academic exchange between Moldova and Romania, which many see as the new kin state for the Moldavian/Romanian-speaking majority of Moldova.

### THE RANK OF AUTHORS

Analysing the rank of authors who publish CP articles in CEE, we find interesting

cross-country differences. CP articles published in the Slovenian journal *Teorija in praksa*, and to a lesser degree in the Croatian *Politička Misao* and the Serbian *Nova Srpska Politička Misao*, are mainly written by full professors. In contrast, no full professor has published any CP article in the Slovak journal *Politické vedy*. Eye-catching is further the very elevated rate of articles written by graduate students in the *RJPS*. One reason for the latter finding might be that *RJPS* regularly publishes calls for papers in (international) academic forums, which, in turn, seem to be frequently consumed by graduate students (Figure 13).

There might be several plausible explanations for the cross-country variation in terms of the rank of authors. In some of the countries, the discipline 'CP' is young, so that there might be only a few full professors in this field. Also, if the journal has an open procedure of paper submission, graduate students might be more likely to submit and publish their work there, than if journals invite submissions through personal networks and



**Figure 13** Academic rank of authors (co-authored articles: first author considered).  
Source: CPPCEE 2011.

opaque acceptance procedures. To ascertain the reasons for the cross-country differences, further analysis of the structure of academic staff in CP and of the journal submission procedures are needed.

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, we believe it fair to conclude that when publications are used as an indicator, CP plays a marginal role in Political Science in CEE. Their overall share among all publications is low and citation rates are dismal. Most of the CP articles exhibit a strong focus on the authors' respective countries. This might be so because the national journals mainly target a national audience. Another important finding is that the journals are dominated by scholars who use off-the-shelf data – a rather unsurprising situation given the scarcity of resources available for research – and the under-development of data sharing networks within the region. We also found that the use of (advanced) statistical tools of analysis is rare. There is relatively little collaboration of authors from different countries in the region. We find this particularly striking for those journals that come from countries that less than a quarter of a century ago belonged to the same state.

As mentioned in the Introduction, studies that use a sample of journals in order to assess the state of CP in a country or region are subject to criticism because the sample of journals might be biased and the quality of a discipline is not only reflected by its publication output. We agree in principle, but would like to point out two arguments. Regarding the selection of journals, we are, of course, aware that the nature of the journals differs and that some CP publications remain hidden to us. We believe, however, that there is no systematic bias, that is, none of our findings would dramatically change if other or additional journals had been chosen. Regarding the use of

*'... the interesting puzzle  
... why above average  
investment into teaching  
is apparently not  
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output'*

publications as a measure of quality, we fully agree that the relevance, importance, and quality of a (sub)discipline should also be assessed on other indicators, such as the number of departments and faculty members within CP and the number of CP courses taught. We do believe, however, that publications are one essential feature in this assessment. Studies that take a more comprehensive approach to assessing the discipline in CEE find that within Political Science departments, CP was the single most taught subject (Klingemann, 2002).<sup>20</sup> This creates the interesting puzzle just why above average investment into teaching is apparently not reflected in above average publication output, a puzzle not fully solved by recent assessments of the discipline of Political Science in CEE (Eisfeld and Pal, 2010a; Holzer, 2011).

In sum, we believe that the findings we present here should provide cause for critical reflection. Much further research on the state of CP in CEE can and should be done. Further research could go into tackling more rigorously the question of why differences between countries exist and why trends over time develop. Of interest would also be a more systematic comparison with similar data from the US and Western Europe (Munck and Snyder, 2007a,b; Dethloff *et al*, 2007). Also, including articles published by authors from CEE countries in international non-CEE journals might reveal further information on the over-arching question of the state of CP in CEE in the early twenty-first century.



## Notes

- 1 One was the replication of the World Values Survey in 1982–1983 (Tóka, 2000: 13).
- 2 As a matter of fact, the majority of the coding questions and procedures directly stem from Munck and Snyder's study. We are grateful to them for generously sharing this information with us.
- 3 The data is available at the Web site of the Center for the Study of Imperfections in Democracies (disc.ceu.hu).
- 4 Further research should aim at including the Baltic States.
- 5 Bulgaria, Moldova, Poland, Romania, and Serbia.
- 6 Some differences between journals exist that are relevant for some, but not all of our subsequent analyses. For instance, they differ in scope, with some being inter-disciplinary rather than purely Political Science journals (e.g., Slovenia, Bulgaria, Macedonia); in affiliation, with some linked to a particular academic (e.g., Czech Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, Slovenia) or research institution (Poland, Romania, Slovakia); and in age.
- 7 Our coder identified four other Political Science journals besides *Godishnik*.
- 8 On the basis of our data, we cannot tell which sub-discipline is dominating Political Science journals in CEE, though.
- 9 Not only can one argue that the frequency of citation is an imperfect measure of the impact of a publication, let alone its quality, but it is also plausible to expect the sheer citation numbers to be imprecise. For instance, citations for articles written in transliterated languages (e.g., Bulgarian or Russian) might be under-estimated, the same as articles on niche topics or from countries and journals that do not provide electronic versions of their publications.
- 10 In both instances, most of the references are self-citations, though.
- 11 In addition, gathering information through interviews is made difficult by the elevated level of distrust that many politicians in the region have. We thank one anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to us.
- 12 As one partial exception, Eisfeld and Pal (2010a, b: 239–240) mention the collaboration within the Central European Political Science Association.
- 13 Funds for the remaining studies (8 per cent) mainly came from national funding authorities (two thirds). Only five studies (1.4 per cent) reported funding received from the EU agencies. The overall proportion of funded research might be somewhat higher given the fact that the culture of citing funding sources is still in the process of development in the region. We thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this point.
- 14 The use of empirical data in CP in CEE might also be scarce because of the strong tradition of critical theory-oriented scholarship, such as in the Ljubljana Institute for Social Sciences (Zajc, 2010) and the Zagreb University's Political Science Department (Kasapović *et al*, 2010).
- 15 Defined as analyses where  $N > 35$ .
- 16 An alternative, mutually not exclusive interpretation is that quantitative scholars in other countries publish their articles in journals outside CEE.
- 17 Equal proportions of the Slovenian sample include in their comparisons Western European states and Hungary or Poland.
- 18 For instance, there is a journal edited at an Albanian-speaking University in Macedonia (*SEEU Review*, which is published in English, though), and a Hungarian-language journal in Romania, which publishes mainly articles in Political Science (*Magyar Kisebbség*).
- 19 For instance, the Political Science Department at the Masaryk University in Brno (Czech Republic), located a 90 min train ride from Bratislava, is known for numerous enrolments of students from Slovakia.
- 20 The investigation covered thirty-seven of the forty-one departments in the region, granting Political Science diplomas.

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