RESPONSE FROM *COMPARATIVE POLITICS* TO "WHAT HAPPENS AT THE JOURNAL OFFICE STAYS AT THE JOURNAL OFFICE"

The editors of *Comparative Politics* appreciated the article by Stephen Yoder and Brittany Bramlett on journal transparency both for the wealth of data it contained and for the authors' efforts to identify professional dilemmas that can arise from a "lack of transparency" in the procedures of many political science journals. In surveying the editors of the top thirty political science journals, Yoder and Bramlett found that most journals do not publicly release submission and decision data, which they suggest may owe in part to poor recordkeeping due to staff shortages, rapid staff turnover, and the migration of journals from one sponsoring institution to another.

Comparative Politics was among the journals that did not provide all the data requested by the authors, largely for the reasons they indicated. At the time, our transition from one managing editor to another was part of a larger process of change—from one printer and distributor to another, and from production of a print-only to a print+online journal. During the very month that *CP* received the survey invitation, the journal editors and staff were working to modernize the journal's production process and broaden its access without disrupting its timely delivery to subscribers. Unfortunately, we did not have the resources to respond to the survey questions in a timely manner.

CP's submission data have been fairly consistent for the past several years. Of the 206 manuscripts submitted in 2010, 9% were accepted and 10% were sent back to the authors with an invitation to revise and resubmit their manuscripts for a second round of external peer review. As we gratefully acknowledged in the January 2011 issue of the journal, 342 colleagues served as external reviewers in 2010, some more than once during the year. The average turnaround time was 91 days—a slight improvement over previous years—though in rare instances the review process took a bit longer. Maintaining this average or, better yet, reducing the time to decision remains a goal of the Editorial Committee. We greatly depend, of course, on our external readers for the pace of the review process and the success of the journal.

Because *CP* has remained independent of the large publishing houses, resources for projects such as expanding fields of data collection and analysis are not available. While an all-electronic submissions and tracking system may leave more time for data collection, it would greatly reduce the individualized correspondence between our editorial office and our authors and peer reviewers. One goal we have successfully pursued is keeping our subscription prices for the print and online versions of the journal within reach and thus broadening access for students, colleagues, and institutions. We continue to urge libraries to add the online format to their subscriptions.

We hope these data and brief comments will contribute to the conversation on how to improve the publishing process in our profession.

Sincerely,
Kenneth Paul Erickson
Irving Leonard Markovitz
Editors-in-Chief
Comparative Politics

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