Parliamentary Affairs (2022) ***75***, *699–726*
Advance Access Publication 29 April 2022
https://doi.org/10.1093/pa/gsac011

The State of the Sub-discipline: Mapping Parliamentary and Legislative Studies Using a Survey and Bibliometric Analysis of Three of Its Journals

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We map the current state of parliamentary and legislative studies through a survey of 218 scholars and a bibliometric analysis of 25 years of publications in three prominent sub-field journals. We identify two groupings of researchers, a quantitative methods, rational choice-favouring grouping and a qualitative methods, interpretivism-favouring grouping with a UK focus. Upon closer examination, these groupings share similar views about the challenges and future of the sub-discipline. While the sub-discipline is becoming more diverse and international, US-focused literature remains dominant and distinct from UK-focused literature, although there are emerging sub-literatures which are well placed to link them together.

Keywords: Bibliometrics, Diversity, Legislative Studies, Parliamentary Studies, Political Science, Survey

1. Introduction

In this article, we seek to map the sub-discipline of parliamentary and legislative studies (PaLS) at the beginning of the 2020s. To do so, we draw on a survey of the sub-discipline we ran in early 2021 and a bibliometric analysis of every article

published in *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, *Legislative Studies Quarterly* and *Parliamentary Affairs* over the past 25 years. In relation to the latter, we find that female authorship is on the rise and that the sub-discipline is becoming increasingly international in terms of authors and collaborations. Nonetheless, the divide between the UK-focused literature and the US-focused literature persists, with studies on committees and an emerging literature on women and ethnic minorities potentially building bridges. In relation to the former, using hierarchical and *K*-means cluster analyses, we identify two PaLS groupings in the survey data: (i) a quantitative methods, rational choice-favouring grouping and (ii) a qualitative methods, interpretivism-favouring grouping who tend to study the UK. As might be expected, members of these groupings tend to have different backgrounds and characteristics (pertaining to place of birth, route into academia and age) and hold different views about the purpose of the sub-discipline. However, what is perhaps most notable about the groupings is that they seem to share more in common than perhaps we thought and as often expressed in the survey.

The article contains a further seven sections. In the first, we review the literature which concerns both professional diversity within, and the intellectual development of, PaLS. We then introduce our data and outline our methods in the third section before outlining the results of the survey and bibliometric analysis in the fourth and fifth sections, respectively. We then discuss the results in the sixth section before ending with a short conclusion. We argue that divisions do not run as deeply as often perceived and portrayed, but there is certainly room both to make the sub-discipline more inclusive of scholars of different backgrounds and of non-mainstream approaches and cases, and to foster more dialogue across the different groupings.

2. Literature review

Although there is a growing body of scholarship on professional diversity within political science, the literature has yet to develop an explicit focus on the composition of, and diversity within, the sub-discipline of PaLS. There are, however, some encouraging signs in this regard. Taking the lead from research on the gendered composition of political science departments, for example in Germany (Schröder *et al.*, 2021) and the UK (Pflaeger Young *et al.*, 2021), scholars are beginning to consider how the sub-discipline of PaLS compares with wider gender diversity trends. In the USA, questions have been asked about whether there is a gender bias within legislative and congressional studies (Powell, 2020), with calls for better mentoring of women embarking upon academic careers in these fields (Rosenthal, 2020). In terms of ethnic diversity, the explosion of interest in the racial and ethnic composition of legislatures (e.g. Mügge *et al.*, 2019) has not been matched by a commensurate level of interest in the racial and ethnic composition of PaLS.

Bhopal and Henderson (2021) argue that efforts to address gender inequality in higher education have been prioritised above issues of race and there is certainly some evidence to support this conclusion in political science too (e.g. Barnes and Clark, 2020, although see Hanretty, 2021).

Much more has been written about intellectual developments within the sub-discipline (see especially Martin *et al.*, 2014, this issue; Geddes and Rhodes, 2018; Benoît and Rozenberg, 2020a; Crewe *et al.*, this issue; Taylor-Robinson *et al.*, this issue). As Benoît and Rozenberg (2020b) note, PaLS is located at a point of overlap between contributions from practitioners, legal scholars, historians, philosophers, sociologists, economists and political scientists, which arguably makes it difficult to pinpoint the genesis of PaLS as a distinctive subject in its own right. Nonetheless, in terms of tracing theoretical roots and establishing core areas of interest in the study of legislatures, Benoît and Rozenberg (2020b, p. 3) point towards a number of canonical authors who are regularly cited across disciplinary boundaries: philosophers such as Burke (1774) and Mill (1859), who discuss—among other things—concepts such as representation and deliberation in the legislative process and authors such as Wilson (1885), Bagehot (1893) and others who detailed parliamentary and legislative rules and procedures.

This latter group of scholars are seen by Martin *et al.* as part of the first of three stages in the evolution of legislative studies, all of which 'received major impulses from America' (2014, pp. 5–6). Martin *et al.* (2014) associated the first wave, which existed between the late nineteenth century and the 1940s, with the old institutionalism. The prominence of the old institutionalism is arguably evident in early issues of *Parliamentary Affairs*. The journal, established in 1947, was initially dominated by in-depth dissections of legislative procedures and structures in the UK (e.g. Perceval, 1949; Lascelles, 1953) and elsewhere (e.g. Cheng (1949) on China and Miller (1949) on Australia), which, in turn, helped to provide the basis for the sub-discipline to develop a comparative focus (e.g. IPU, 1963).

Martin *et al.* argue that a second wave, which focused on individual behaviour, emerged in the 1950s and 1960s with prominent and influential scholarship including Wahlke *et al.*'s work (1962) on representational role orientation and Fenno's work on 'home style' (1978). This second wave, they argue, mirrored the rise of behaviouralism in political science more generally and, accordingly, interest in (formal) institutions decreased. It was towards the end of this wave that *Legislative Studies Quarterly* was launched in 1976 with the aim of rectifying perceived weaknesses in legislative research by paying more attention to the development of theory and encouraging comparative analysis, especially that which includes non-western legislatures (Jewell, 1976).

There is a general recognition in the literature about the importance of new institutionalism to parliamentary studies over the past four decades and the third wave of what Martin *et al.* (2014), following Coleman (1986), call macro-micro-macro

perspectives, both as a reaction to the old institutionalism of the first wave and the behaviouralism and rational choice theory of the second wave. Geddes and Rhodes (2018) note that the study of parliaments increasingly (re)turned to informal behaviours and social rules during this period and Benoît and Rozenberg note that the new institutionalist turn 'helped restore parliament to the centre of research agendas' (2020b, p. 5), after its relegation to a 'black box' during the second wave.

Often drawing on new institutionalist frameworks, the sub-discipline became increasingly (re-)engaged towards the end of the twentieth century in debates about representation, with focus tending to fall on the descriptive and substantive representation of ethnic minorities and, particularly, women in legislatures (e.g. Norris, 1985; Howard-Merriam, 1990; Norris *et al.*, 1992). Taylor-Robinson (2014) argues that this increase in scholarship evolved as representation of women in government expanded. More recently, this focus on representation and inclusion has extended into new avenues of academic inquiry, with important research on the representation of disabled people (Chaney, 2015), for example, appearing in the UK-based *Journal of Legislative Studies*, established in 1995.

Taylor-Robinson *et al.* (this issue) argue that the sub-discipline in this century—and the past decade in particular—has been characterised by increasing methodological diversity. While surveys and interviews remain popular (Martin *et al.*, 2014), technological advances have opened the door to powerful new research tools. Automated computer packages, for example, have facilitated content analysis of legislation on a scale and at a level of sophistication that would have been unthinkable at the turn of the century (e.g. Williams, 2018). The Internet is largely responsible for the growth in experimental PaLS, especially the sending of fictitious emails to test legislators' responsiveness (e.g. Umit, 2017). A recent controversy surrounding fictitious emails has, however, prompted debate about the ethics of deceiving parliamentarians (Campbell and Bolet, 2021). The growth in ethnographic approaches to the study of parliaments (e.g. Crewe, 2015; Geddes, 2019) is perhaps testament to what can be achieved via good relations between parliaments and academics. Inside access to the UK Parliament has also facilitated some of the most impactful research to emerge in British PaLS in recent years, with the House of Commons implementing several of the recommendations made by Childs (2016) to address its diversity issues. Elsewhere, Childs and colleagues contend that impact of this kind, especially as it pertains to improving the status of women in legislatures, should be considered a feminist imperative (Childs and Challender, 2019), reflecting, perhaps, a growing notion within the sub-discipline that research need not only be about understanding legislatures but should also seek to improve how they operate.

Opportunities to address issues and problems facing PaLS have yet to be fully grasped. For example, while a growing number of disciplines are taking more of an interest in parliaments—for instance, constitutional law, mathematics and political economy (Benoît and Rozenberg, 2020b)—Taylor-Robinson in Taylor-Robinson *et al.* (this issue) argue that the lion's share of PaLS continues to be conducted in disciplinary silos, echoing what Loewenberg noted over a decade ago vis-a-vis the lack of interdisciplinary research on legislatures (Loewenberg, 2011, p. 6). Moreover, while academic interest in subnational legislatures is increasing (Downs, 2014; Noble, 2019; Odeyemi and Abati, 2021), perhaps in the form of a delayed response to Jewell's call (1976), much remains to be done to fully realise the potential of these local institutions as sites of academic inquiry. One reason for this might be that research on national parliaments is associated with higher 'impact' potential. If so, PaLS would not be alone in having the direction of its research shaped by the 'impact agenda' (Boswell and Smith, 2017). Wider debates about the direction of political science, especially in terms of intellectual pluralism and methodological cultures (Kuehn and Rohlfing, 2016), have not fully taken shape in the context of PaLS. In that regard, this article offers a starting point for these and related conversations. The literature discussed above offers us valuable but fragmented insights into trends and developments within PaLS. What we attempt below is a bespoke 'state of the discipline' analysis of PaLS, capturing key demographics of PaLS scholars, mapping methodological and publishing trends and shining a light on the issues and challenges affecting the sub-discipline as expressed by its members.

3. Data and methods

3.1 Survey

To identify trends and map the makeup of PaLS, we ran a survey under the auspices of the PSA Parliaments specialist group of the UK Political Studies Association of which we are, or were at the time, convenors or officers. The survey ran between 1 March and 31 May 2021 and was advertised globally across different communication channels. We received 218 responses from academics in 48 countries mainly working in political science, history and law.

The survey contained 56 questions over seven sections on research, publications and research dissemination, research career, opinions about the sub-discipline of PaLS, respondents' background and additional information. Most of the questions were multiple choice but there were open-ended questions at the end of each section for additional comments and the section on opinions included two additional open-ended questions which allowed respondents to reflect upon

the purpose of the sub-discipline, how it could be improved and the challenges and threats that it faces.[1] Descriptive statistical analysis of the survey results was undertaken for Bhattacharya *et al.* (2021a). We build on this analysis in three main ways here.

First, we undertake a cluster analysis of all non-open-ended questions concerning respondents' research, as well as whether respondents have co-designed research with parliamentary actors. It is important to note that *this clustering only pertains to the political scientists who responded to the survey* (n = 169; 77.5% of respondents), as it became clear during analysis that the responses of all respondents were unamenable to clustering. We first transformed the responses into variables with binary measures. We then ran a hierarchical cluster analysis (Bridges, 1966), using Ward's method and binary squared Euclidean distance measure, to produce a dendrogram, from which we determined the optimal number of clusters for the data by identifying the largest difference in length between branches (see Figure A1 in the Online Appendix). We then ran a *K*-means cluster analysis (Wu, 2012, pp. 1–16) to place the cases into one of the appropriate number of clusters.

Second, we present the results of thematic analysis of the responses to the relevant open-ended questions. Two of the authors discussed, refined and then agreed upon the themes for each question (nine for *improvements*, *challenges and threats* and three for *purpose of the sub-discipline*) before separately coding each response. The codings were then assessed for reliability using Deen Freelon's *ReCal2*.[2] With regard to the *improvements*, *challenges and threats* question, the two coders agreed 86.2% of the time (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.83$); with regard to the *purpose of the sub-discipline* question, the two coders agreed 90.2% of the time (Krippendorff's $\alpha = 0.85$). In both cases, drawing on Krippendorff (2004, p. 429), levels of reliability were deemed to be acceptable and analysis proceeded on the basis of one set of codings.[3]

Third, we analyse the identified clusters and themes both in terms of how the backgrounds and careers of respondents relate to membership of a cluster, and in terms of how membership of a cluster affects opinions held about the sub-discipline. To achieve these ends, we employ tree-based models (Clark and

[1]Please see the Appendix of Bhattacharya *et al.* (2021a) for a list of all the questions.

[2]Accessed at http://dfreelon.org/utils/recalfront/recal2/ on 10 April 2022.

[3]For the tree-based analysis, each theme was turned into a binary variable, rather than being included as part of a non-binary nominal variable. Following Krippendorff's recommendation that 'All distinctions that matter should be tested for their reliability' (2004, pp. 429–430), tests were also undertaken for each binary variable. As can be seen in Online Appendix Table A1, all variables had a percent agreement of at least 93% and a Krippendorff's α coefficient of at least 0.81.

Pregibon, 2017), using the CHAID growing method and crossvalidation across 10 sample folds. We use a maximum tree depth of 3 and a minimum number of cases of 25 for the parent node and 10 for the child node.

3.2 Bibliometrics

Bibliometrics is the study of research outputs through statistical methods. Though the use of bibliometric measures to evaluate the scientific value or impact of scholars and their contributions is often seen as contentious, bibliometric tools enable us to identify trends in publication and citation patterns, thus providing valuable insights into the evolution of PaLS over time.

We created a dataset of all full articles (n = 2431) published in *Parliamentary Affairs*, *The Journal of Legislative Studies* and *Legislative Studies Quarterly* since 1996 and their authors (n = 2355).[4] We then assigned by hand the author's gender based on our own familiarity with them, their name or cues on their online profiles.[5] In addition to statistical analyses, we perform further analysis on co-authorship, citation and topical co-occurrence networks, which were generated with the help of the *VOSviewer* tool (Van Eck and Waltman, 2014a), *CitNetExplorer* (Van Eck and Waltman, 2014b) and *Gephi* (Bastian *et al.*, 2009).

4. Surveying the sub-discipline

Of the survey's 218 respondents, 37% were female, 7.1% and 12.4% were a member of an ethnic minority grouping in their country of birth and work, respectively, and around two-fifths (39.4%), a quarter (25.2%) and close to one-sixth (15.6%) were based in the UK, Europe (excluding the UK) and the USA, respectively. A shade under four-fifths (79.4%) were political scientists, nearly half (48.8%) considered their work to be interdisciplinary, over three-fifths (61.3%) said they had undertaken comparative work and nearly a fifth (19.0%) had co-designed research with parliamentary actors within the past five years. Just under half (48.1%) used institutionalism in their work and a third (33.0%) said they drew on rational

[4]We downloaded the list of publications with their bibliometric information from Scopus on 19 April 2021 and removed 201 documents which did not constitute full articles. Using the author identification number and *pybliometrics* package (Rose and Kitchin, 2019), we crawled the author's full name and latest institutional affiliation from Scopus.

[5]We assigned 1691 (71.8%) as male, 655 (27.8%) as female and none as trans or non-binary (and we were unable to assign a gender to nine authors). We try to overcome the problem of potentially misgendering a small share of the authors by approximating ranges in each gender category. On the basis that 0.1–2% of populations are estimated to be trans and gender-diverse (Spizzirri *et al.*, 2021), between 70.4% and 71.7% of authors in our dataset are male and between 27.3% and 27.7% are female. For further details, see Bhattacharya *et al.* (2021b).

choice in some form. In terms of methods, 11.5% said they only used qualitative methods, 36.4% said mostly qualitative methods, 29.0% said mostly quantitative methods, 7.4% said only quantitative methods and 15.7% said both equally. Case studies, semi-structured interviews and archival research were the most popular methods (for a complete list, see Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2021a, p. 9). The three most popular topics of study (out of the 37 listed) were representation, legislative-executive relations and committees (see Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2021a, p. 8).

4.1 Cluster analysis results: Two PaLS groupings

Focusing only on respondents who were political scientists (n = 169), there are two clusters of PaLS scholars of roughly the same size (see Figure A1 and Table A1 in the Online Appendix). Table 1 summarises all variables where $p < 0.01$ and, thus, where there is the most evidence that the variables shape membership of the two clusters in a meaningful way.

The differences in memberships between the two clusters are quite easy to see: members of Cluster 1 favour quantitative methods, rational choice approaches and use parliaments and legislatures as vectors to study closely related political phenomena (individual politicians, coalitions, parties and elections); members of Cluster 2 favour qualitative methods and interpretivism, are more likely to undertake interdisciplinary work and tend to have a UK focus. In addition, and probably in part because they are more likely to have a parliament and/or legislature that is their main focus, members of Cluster 2 tend to focus on what parliaments and/or legislatures do as corporate bodies (accountability, policymaking, public engagement and scrutiny) and how they operate (rituals/traditions and transparency/openness). On the basis of these results, then, we can perhaps label members of Cluster 1 as the *Quantitative-*, *Rational Choice-Favouring Grouping* (Quantirc) and members of Cluster 2 as the *Qualitative-*, *Interpretivist-Favouring and UK-Focused Grouping* (Qualint).

Table 2 provides an overview of the makeup of each grouping. Turning to the tree-based analysis (see Online Appendix Table A3 for the model's accuracy statistics), the decision tree in Online Appendix Figure A2 shows the most significant factors in determining membership of the groupings (with the terminal nodes summarised in Online Appendix Table A2). As can be seen when moving down through the branches, the most important characteristic is *whether or not the member was born in the UK*—if a respondent was born in the UK, there is an 80.6% chance that they will be in Qualint. The second most important characteristic is *whether or not the respondent (part) self-funded their PhD*—if a respondent was not born in the UK and (part) self-funded their PhD, there is a 56.1% chance of being in Qualint. The third most important characteristic is *the respondent's*

Table 1 Summary of variables which most affect cluster membership (political scientists only; $p < 0.01$).

	Cluster 1	**Cluster 2**
Geographical Focus		• Has a main geographical focus • The Commonwealth • UK non-exclusively • UK exclusively • UK at a devolved level
Methods	• All quantitative • Majority quantitative • Multivariate statistics • Natural experiments • Regression analysis	• All qualitative • Majority qualitative • Case study • Documentary analysis • Participant observation • Focus groups • Semi-structured interviews
Approach/Theory	• Rational choice • Rational choice institutionalism	• Interpretivism • Interdisciplinary
Research focus within parliamentary and legislative studies (PaLS)	• Candidates • Electoral systems • Careers • Coalitions • Political Parties/Elections	• Policymaking • Scrutiny • Bureaucracies • Transparency/openness • Accountability • Rituals/traditions • Privilege • Public engagement
Research focus beyond PaLS		• Other

age—if a respondent was not born in the UK, was not self-funded and is *over* 50, there is a 72.7% chance of being in Qualint; if a respondent was not born in the UK, was not self-funded and is *under* 50, there is a 72.0% chance of being in Quantirc.

4.2 Thematic analysis results

We received 106 meaningful responses to the question regarding improvements, challenges and threats to PaLS[6] and 87 responses to the question regarding the purpose of the sub-discipline.

[6]Question 43 asked: Thinking about the sub-discipline as a whole, how could research of parliaments be improved and what are the main challenges and threats faced by parliamentary studies? Question 44 asked: What, in your opinion, should be the purpose of research in the sub-discipline of parliamentary studies?

Table 2 Summary of membership characteristics of, and opinions held by, members of Quantirc and of Qualint

	Variable	Quantirc (0%)	Qualint (0%)
Characteristics	Age		
	• 200–29	11.3	6.8
	• 300–39	49.3	31.5
	• 400–49	28.2	31.5
	• 500–59	7.0	17.8
	• 600+	4.2	12.3
	Has a disability	3.8	7.8
	Ethnic minority in country of birth and/or work	18.1	12.9
	Female	37.5	38.2
	Non-heterosexual	9.7	16.2
	Place of birth		
	• North America	22.0	14.8
	• Europe (excluding the UK)	42.7	27.2
	• UK	8.5	35.8
	Rest of the world	26.8	22.2
	First generation to go to university	28.4	35.5
	First generation to study for a PhD	73.6	79.5
	Has a PhD	80.2	77.8
	PhD is/was (part) self-funded	24.0	39.5
	Highest degree years held:		
	• 0<5	40.8	39.7
	• 60–10	30.3	21.9
	• 110–20	15.8	17.8
	• 210–30	10.5	12.3
	• 0>30	2.6	8.2
	Highest degree held from:		
	• Europe (excluding the UK)	22.0	21.0
	• North America	15.9	16.0
	• UK	36.6	43.2
	• Rest of the world	25.6	19.8
	Currently working in:		
	• North America	26.8	13.6
	• Europe (excluding the UK)	30.5	24.7
	• UK	24.4	43.2
	• Rest of the world	18.3	18.5
	Mobility:		
	• No mobility	58.1	66.7
	• Some mobility	32.4	32.1
	• High mobility	9.5	1.3
	Position held:		
	• Professor or higher	18.3	19.8
	• Assistant or associate professor (or equivalent)	43.9	30.9
	• PhD or Post doc	23.2	28.4
	Currently teaching	59.8	55.6

Table 2 Continued

	Variable	Quantirc (0%)	Qualint (0%)
Opinions	Female academics are underrepresented in PaLS in your country of work		
	• Strongly disagree	1.3	1.3
	• Disagree	17.5	23.8
	• Neutral	26.3	22.5
	• Agree	41.30%	37.5
	• Strongly agree	13.8	15.0
	Academics from ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented in PaLS in your country of work		
	• Strongly disagree	0.0	1.3
	• Disagree	3.8	3.8
	• Neutral	11.4	16.3
	• Agree	44.3	33.8
	• Strongly agree	40.5	45.0
	Female academics are underrepresented in PaLS in general		
	• Strongly disagree	0.0	0.0
	• Disagree	14.3	14.1
	• Neutral	31.2	29.5
	• Agree	45.5	37.2
	• Strongly agree	9.1	19.2
	Academics from ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented in PaLS in general		
	• Strongly disagree	1.3	2.6
	• Disagree	3.9	2.6
	• Neutral	18.4	19.5
	• Agree	44.7	45.5
	• Strongly agree	31.6	29.9
	PaLS would benefit from more diversity in terms of case selection		
	• Strongly disagree	2.7	0.0
	• Disagree	2.7	1.3
	• Neutral	10.7	15.4
	• Agree	41.3	32.1
	• Strongly agree	42.7	51.3
	PaLS would benefit from more diversity in terms of methods		
	• Strongly disagree	2.6	0.0
	• Disagree	10.5	1.3
	• Neutral	34.2	25.6
	• Agree	26.3	28.2
	• Strongly agree	26.3	44.9
	PaLS would benefit from more diversity in terms of theoretical background		
	• Strongly disagree	2.7	0.0
	• Disagree	6.7	3.8
	• Neutral	33.3	23.1

Table 2 Continued

Variable	Quantirc (0%)	Qualint (0%)
• Agree	32.0	30.8
• Strongly agree	25.3	42.3
Improvements, challenges and threats to PaLS:		
• Too descriptive and/or weak methods	4.9	0.0
• Gatekeeping, cliques, silos and/or lack of communication	13.4	12.3
• Too close to parliamentarians	2.4	1.2
• Lack of diversity, theory, methods and/or cases	19.5	30.9
• Lack of generalisability	1.2	1.2
• External threats	4.9	2.5
• Proving relevance and/or improving engagement	0.0	9.9
• Problems with access to data and/or politicians	9.8	7.4
• Lack of diversity among those who research	1.2	7.4
Purpose of PaLS:		
• To explain and/or understand	19.5	25.9
• Normative concern	11.0	27.2
• To inform	4.9	11.1

With regard to the latter, three themes, which sometimes overlapped, could be identified. First, an *intellectual* concern with explaining and/or understanding parliaments (n = 52[7]) which was the most popular purpose. For example, one respondent said the purpose was 'To describe and explain the role of legislatures in political systems, including their impacts'. Secondly, there was a *normative* concern expressed about improving parliaments (and the broader political system and/or society of which it is a part) (n = 43). One respondent, for instance, said that the purpose of PaLS was: 'To strengthen parliaments, to strengthen democracy and to contribute to a wider public discourse around why parliamentary democracy is important (and how it works)'. This response also contains the third, less prevalent, theme identified: an *educational* concern with informing the public (n = 20).

With regard to improvements, challenges and threats, nine themes emerged, some of which overlapped and, as you might expect given the diversity of focus and methods indicated above, some of which were contradictory.

One opinion expressed not particularly often but perhaps the most forcefully was about the lack of diversity of scholars in the field (n = 8). A relatively

[7]The number of responses for each theme adds up to more than the total number of responses received for the question because some responses touched upon issues covered by more than one theme. The responses quoted below may have been edited to correct grammatical errors and typos in order to make them easier to read.

small minority of respondents referred to the dominance in the sub-discipline of white men from, and studying, the global north and the intellectual and political consequences of this. The following are comments on this theme made by three respondents:

> Parliamentary studies has been the mainstream of political science since the beginning. While women and ethnic minorities in the discipline are usually at the cutting-edge, studying what is brand new and innovative, obscure, unusual, and with a variety of methods, the majority of scholars in the subdiscipline (white men, including young ones), have stayed firmly in the 1980s and 90s, not to say the 1960s. That is clear in any specialist conference for parliaments where the theory is always the same, the methods are always the same, the objects of study are always the same. At one event, I didn't even bother participating in discussions, because I'd be starting a question with the basics: 'Did you consider gender differences when you ran this regression?'.

> We need to have more diversity and intellectual pluralism, and understand that these two are interdependent. The underrepresentation of certain regions and institutions could, for example, be addressed to a certain degree by increasing the diversity of scholars, thus, a higher share of people having the language skills to research understudied institutions.

> [We need to improve the] representation and experience of ethnic minority and women scholars in parliamentary studies. This is a political-science wide problem, but is particularly pressing given the connection of the sub-discipline to representative institutions and the practical and policy-relevant work it often produces. With that kind of responsibility as a sub-discipline should come leadership on these points.

The most prevalent opinion was again concerned with a lack of diversity but, in this instance, referring to case selection, methods and/or theoretical approach (n = 50). In terms of case selection, there were concerns expressed about too much emphasis being placed on the USA and Europe (and the UK in particular within Europe). With regard to theory and methods, the main view expressed was about the dominance of quantitative methods and, to a lesser extent, rational choice, often related to the dominance of US political science and US-based journals. As two respondents put it:

> The main threats faced by parliamentary studies (broadly defined) in my view primarily come from methods-driven (as opposed to

> question-driven) research. Parliaments are seen by too many people as a 'data playground', providing opportunities for lots of elaborate quant analysis which is often of extremely limited use in the real world, and even to some extent risks bringing academia into disrepute. Too many people in the field of legislative studies understand little about how legislatures actually work, do not care very much, and indeed often have little interest in actual politics—being more driven by outdoing each other in terms of methods.
>
> The US sub-discipline in particular is very distinct to what we do in the UK (and in Europe many are now following the US model). This is mainly highly theoretical and/or narrow research which has almost no linkage to the reality of parliaments. Bridging the divide between that type of research and a more open/plural approach that combines different methods (some of which may be narrow and highly quantitative) would enhance the sub-discipline very significantly. The US dominance of a specific model is particularly a problem due to their dominance of the wider politics discipline, rating of journals, *etc*.

Views about the debilitating dominance of rational choice and quantitative methods were not universally held. There were a small minority of respondents who bemoaned either the lack of generalisability (n=2) or the lack of theory and/or quantitative methods in (UK) scholarship PaLS (n=4). There was a 'lack of cumulative knowledge and common theoretical frameworks' one respondent reported, while another one said:

> The UK is lagging behind the US and large parts of the Western Europe. There is still too much descriptive work being published, to a large extent the 'Hull school of legislative studies' has done parliamentary research in the UK a disservice. In the UK more focus is needed using quantitative methods, and the old gatekeepers need to be open for this. A threat is also the very cosy relationship that some researchers are building with parliamentary institutions which might be good for them, but excludes other researchers.

The view about cliques articulated in the last sentence, and similar views concerning gatekeeping, silos and a lack of communication, was the second most prevalent opinion expressed by respondents, although who was gatekeeping and who was inside and outside the cliques was contested. As shown in some of the responses quoted above, gatekeepers identified by respondents include: (i) quantitative and/or US political scientists; (ii) the editors and reviewers of 'top ranked' journals within which 'non-causal work' and 'qualitative work based on a single

case face miserable odds of being accepted'; (iii) owners of datasets who only share data 'among friends or with a considerable time delay (i.e. long after the project has ended), which is a huge challenge for scholars outside these networks' and (iv) the 'old grandees' of parliamentary studies who dominate funding. One respondent talked about the consequence of such silos:

> Subdivisions into niche specialisms based on theoretical preoccupations, disagreement over the value of quantitative vs. qualitative methods, and a tendency to consider empirical case study data exclusively in terms of how it validates one or another such position are threats to broad-scale, multi-focal analysis of contemporary problems. This also makes our findings inaccessible to the public/non-specialists, and limits their usefulness for legislators and policy makers.

This concern about proving relevance and improving engagement was expressed by 17 respondents. Proving relevance was directed at a number of actors: the general public—'One of the key possible areas for improvement would be to reach beyond the scholarly community and to communicate more effectively with the wider public'; funders—'It's not a "sexy topic" to funders'; parliamentarians and practitioners—'There is often a mis-match between the needs of academia and what is useful to the institutions of parliament' and other political scientists/academia more generally. When talking about this latter group, one respondent said:

> [We need to] make our colleagues understand (and sometimes ourselves) that the scope of parliamentary studies is much wider than just an interest in the legislatures. Studying parliaments is studying the society as a whole, with an original perspective. So, the main threat is the opposite: to be considered as a very specific field of research, in which only a few specialists are interested.

Only a small minority of respondents (n = 3) were concerned about the 'risk of "capture" when working closely with parliamentarians'. More commonly expressed concerns were problems with access (n = 21) and external threats scholars face when trying to undertake their research (n = 11). With regard to the former, concern was articulated not only about colleagues not sharing data in a timely or fair manner, but also about: (i) the quality and availability of data provided by parliaments and legislatures; (ii) a lack of access to parliaments and parliamentarians and (iii) a lack of funding to help facilitate access. One respondent believed that the difficulty in gaining access to parliaments and parliamentarians was 'why in the USA there has been such significant emphasis on quantitative analysis'.

With regard to the latter, the main threats mentioned by respondents were: interference with academic freedom; marketisation of Higher Education; a lack of job positions and funding; time constraints on research; the politicisation of research and academia more widely and the 'marginalisation of many traditional methods/approaches used in UK parliamentary studies within Masters/PhD training of many leading departments'.

Returning to the PaLS groupings again, as can be seen in Table 2, differences in the opinions of the members are in degree, rather than in kind. As shown in the decision tree in Online Appendix Figure A3 (see Online Appendix Table A5 for the model's accuracy statistics), there is only one opinion where there is evidence of a meaningful difference in viewpoint between the two groupings: members of Qualint are more likely to believe that research should have a normative purpose compared with members of Quantirc.

5. A bibliometric analysis of 25 years of parliament research

Our dataset covers 25 years of research on parliaments and legislatures published in the three main specialist journals (at least in the English-speaking world). Approximately, 23.9% of publications have been written by a woman as the first or only author, though the overall share of female (co-)authors is higher at ≈27.8%. Female first authorship has increased over time (see Online Appendix Figure A4), but differences between journals remain: around 25.5% of articles in *Parliamentary Affairs* have a female first/single author (2020: ≈33.9%), compared with around 23.8% (2020: ≈28%) in *The Journal of Legislative Studies* and approximately 21.2% (2020: ≈20.4%) in *Legislative Studies Quarterly*. There is no notable difference in the average number of citations received by publications with a female or male first author, nor in their inclination to co-author (see Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2021b, p. 7).

Confirming an earlier study by Martin (2008), we find that almost two in three publications were written by a single/first author based in the USA or UK. However, there is evidence that the sub-discipline is becoming increasingly international, which, according to a recent study by Carammia (2022), mirrors a larger trend in political science: The share of authors based in the UK and USA is declining, and there is a rise in cross-country collaborations over time (e.g. 23.6% of multi-author publications in 2020 involved researchers from more than one country compared with 5.6% in 1996). We found 54 groups of co-authors (see Figure 1), some of which form a larger sub-network revolving around prolific UK-based scholars such as Leston-Bandeira, Tonge, Norton, Mitchell, Pattie, Johnston, Thrasher, Rallings and Whiteley, among many others. There are 14 groups with five or more authors, and looking at these co-authorship communities by gender, we find two groups in which there is at least an equal number of women and men, two all-male groups and three groups of 10 or more authors with only 1 woman.

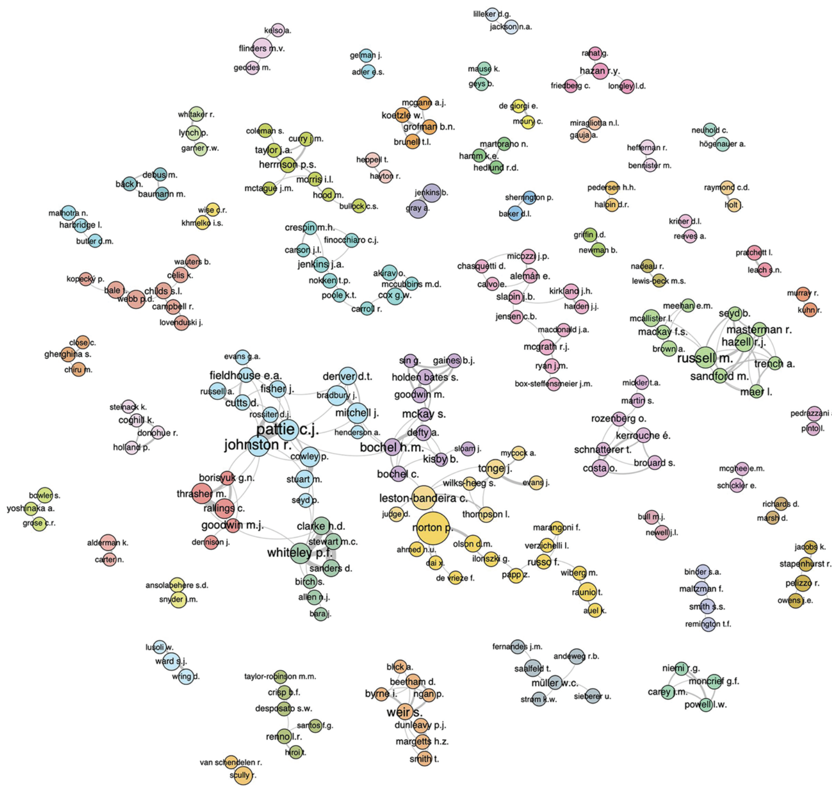

Figure 1 Co-authorship network, colour-coded by cluster. *Notes*: The network includes authors with a minimum of three publications in the dataset, who have links to other authors with at least three publications. The node size reflects their number of publications in the data set and the label size is proportional to the degree (i.e. the total number of links to other authors).

With the help of *CitNetExplorer*, we identified 121 key works, which have been cited or published in the three parliament journals and have citation links with at least 10 other core publications (see Online Appendix Table A6 for the full list).[8] Figure 2 provides a dynamic overview of how the literature has evolved over time. Reading the graph from top to bottom along the vertical time axis on the left, we find three groups of publications: Originating from Shepsle's (1979) and Cooper and Brady's (1981) classic articles on institutional arrangements, a literature (blue cluster) emerged dealing with institutional design, rules and reform in legislative institutions, which was then complemented by studies on minority rights

[8]Since this part of the analysis includes works that are frequently cited in our dataset of journal articles, it also contains books and thus provides a more global view.

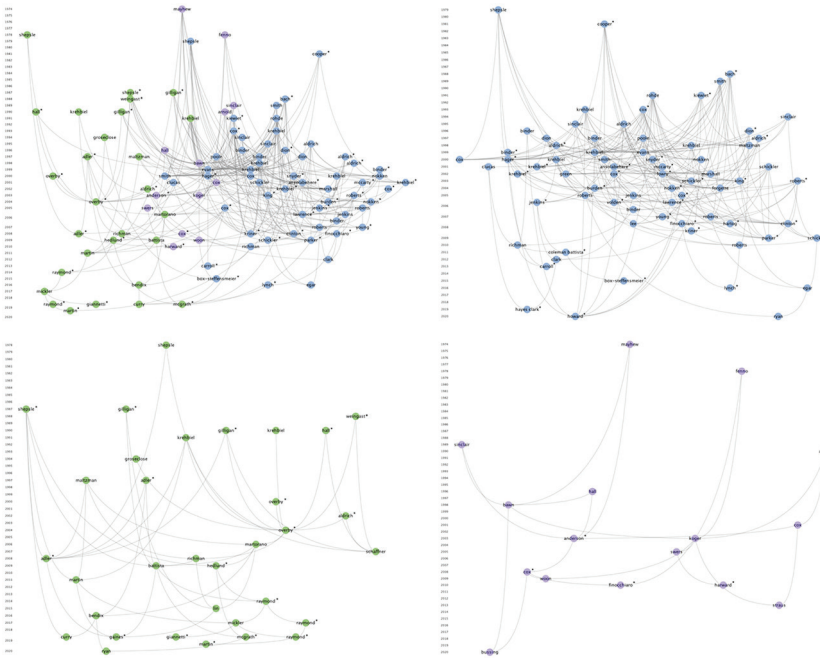

Figure 2 Citation network of global core publications and clusters as vertical timeline. *Notes*: The last name of the first author is displayed and multi-author publications are marked with an asterisk. Transitive reduction of edges has been applied for better visualisation.

and majority bias, the role of political parties, roll-call voting and agenda control. Most of this literature is very US-centric and closely connected to studies (purple cluster) on legislative behaviour, policy-making, co-sponsorship and agenda-setting in the USA, which evolved from Mayhew's (1974) development of a rational choice model for Congress members and Fenno's (1978) seminal book on how Congress members' view of their constituency affects their political behaviour. The third cluster (green) represents a distinct literature including a recent wave of key publications around committees, covering topics such as committee powers, outliers, assignments and informativeness. Overall, we observe that the classic works, which keep getting cited, tend to be US-focused and often employ a rational-choice methodology.

To gain a more comprehensive picture, we also conducted a more fine-grained local-level topic analysis of the last 25 years of parliamentary and legislative research by extracting the most frequent and relevant terms from the titles and abstracts of the articles in our dataset.[9] The analysis reveals six topical clusters, which are

[9]2002 (82.4%) of 2431 articles have an abstract, while only 688 (28.3%) have keywords. For a more detailed description of the methods, see Bhattacharya *et al.* (2021b, pp. 12–13).

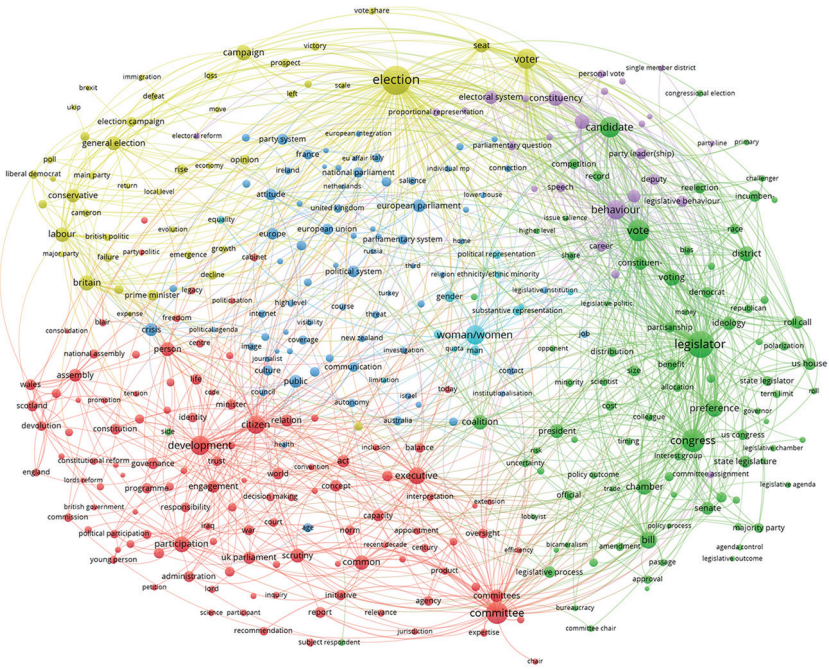

Figure 3 Co-occurrence network of terms, colour-coded by cluster. *Notes*: The network includes the 366 most relevant terms that appeared in a minimum of 10 publications.

visualised in Figure 3 (for a more detailed summary, see Table 7 in Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2021b, p. 15). The main insight is that the sub-discipline is less US-centric than the global overview of core publications suggests. One cluster (green) clearly relates to US legislative politics and institutions, complemented by the purple cluster focusing on different aspects of legislative behaviour, speech and party politics. There are two clusters (red and yellow) which revolve predominantly around the UK parliament and devolved parliaments as well as electoral politics and parties in the UK and the blue cluster reflects topics related to the European Union and different parliamentary and party systems in a range of European countries and Oceania. Finally, a separate literature on women, ethnic minorities and different concepts of representation has emerged (cyan cluster). Studies on parliamentary engagement, communication and political participation seem to be more closely connected to the UK literature, while the topic of committees links European and American PaLS.

6. Discussion

We wish to focus our discussion on whether the opinions held by respondents about the state of PaLS and the status of certain groups of scholars within it is accurate. We argue that, on the basis of the responses to other questions and the bibliometric analysis, the evidence is somewhat mixed.

On the one hand, the concern expressed about the lack of diversity of cases is probably borne out by the survey results concerning comparative analysis[10] and the bibliometric analysis. While there is evidence that the sub-discipline is becoming more international in outlook, and its journals, especially *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, are becoming (even) more likely to publish scholars based in areas beyond Europe and/or North America (which is suggestive that research on a wider range of geographical areas is being published), it remains the case that other areas of the world are understudied, at least among those who responded to the survey. Jewell's lament from 1976 that 'there has not been much integration of the findings from a variety of [non-western] countries' into PaLS (1976, p. 3) appears to retain some truth nearly half a century later.

Concern about the lack of diversity among researchers also appears to be justified. Turning to the UK only (for which we have the most available evidence), while the proportion of female scholars in the sub-discipline is only slightly lower than in UK political science more broadly, the proportion of scholars from an ethnic minority background is over 10 percentage points lower. Hanretty (2021) reports that 39% and 22% of political scientists based in the UK are female and from an ethnic minority background, respectively. This compares with 37.0% and 11.2% for those UK-based PaLS scholars who responded to the survey. In both cases, women and people with an ethnic minority background are under-represented in the UK-based sub-discipline compared with their presence in UK society. In addition, the proportion of sole or first female authors for the latest year in our data is similar to female presence within the sub-discipline in only two of the three journals considered.

Turning to another aspect of the diversity of scholars, perhaps one of the most notable results in the survey is the proportion of respondents who were not first-generation PhD students. Nearly a quarter of respondents had at least one parent who held a doctorate. The proportion of 25- to 64-year-olds across all OECD countries who held a doctorate in 2018 was 1.1%.[11] This discrepancy, which suggests that working-class people find it considerably harder to enter the sub-discipline than members of other classes, is reflective of broader trends concerning the social background of academics. For instance, research into the background of US academics suggests that around 22% of all professors have parents who are qualified to doctoral level (Morgan *et al.*, 2021, p. 3) and, in the UK,

[10]The survey suggests that Europe is by far the most studied region followed by North America, with 84.7% and 42% of parliamentary scholars researching these regions, respectively. Africa, Asia, South America and Oceania are studied by one in four or one in five researchers (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2021a, p. 5).

[11]Accessed at https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/education/education-at-a-glance-2019_f8d7880d-en#page248 on 10 April 2022.

access to postgraduate qualifications is becoming more class-stratified (Wakeling and Laurison, 2017).

As shown above, problems of a lack of diversity are not the sub-discipline's alone and are reflective of societal and/or academic and/or disciplinary-wide issues. However, at least in some areas, PaLS seems to be doing worse than political science as a whole, if not other disciplines as well. Initiatives such as the relatively recently established *Women in Legislative Studies* group[12] and the PSA Parliament's *Parliamentary Studies is for Everybody* workshop[13] should help in this regard. However, we need not only to encourage scholars from under-represented backgrounds who are already within the sub-discipline but also to encourage scholars from under-represented backgrounds to enter the sub-discipline in the first place. This, arguably, requires us to think more creatively about outreach and to demonstrate more persuasively the relevance of PaLS to the lives and concerns of a wider range of students at undergraduate level.

On the other hand, some of the opinions expressed by respondents do not seem to be supported completely by the evidence we present above. In particular, concern about a lack of diversity in the theories and methods used in the sub-discipline often associated with an uneasiness over the (perceived) dominance of US political science, rational choice and quantitative methods, appears to be (somewhat) overblown. The two groupings of political science parliamentary and legislative scholars uncovered by the cluster analyses are of roughly equal size; a majority of members in both groupings believe the discipline would benefit from the use of a wider diversity of methods and theories; 90.5% use at least some qualitative methods in their work and 40.8% use qualitative methods either a majority or all of the time; a wide range of specific qualitative techniques are employed by scholars (and of specific quantitative techniques too) and 69.2% do not use rational choice in their research, whether in its institutionalist guise or otherwise. US-based/focused political science certainly still dominates the global citation network, (very) often—but certainly not always (e.g. Fenno, 1978; Hall, 1996)—with a rational choice and/or quantitative flavour. However, the local-level analysis of the three PaLS journals demonstrates a much more theoretically and methodologically diverse sub-discipline (albeit one which still tends to study the global north). One of the most important emerging sub-literatures concerns women, ethnic minorities and different concepts of representation in that it is well-placed to play an increasingly key role in linking other sub-literatures together.

[12]Accessed at http://www.womeninlegislativestudies.org/ on 10 April 2022.

[13]Accessed at https://psaparliaments.org/2021/09/15/parliamentary-studies-is-for-everybody/ on 10 April 2022.

What, then, explains this discrepancy between the opinions often held on these issues and the evidence on research and publications presented in the survey results and bibliometric analysis which, although it does not negate the opinions, certainly paints a more nuanced picture? We believe that the answer can be found in two interconnected issues. First, we suspect that our survey especially, and the bibliometric analysis to a lesser extent, has not mapped the sub-discipline *tout court* but rather has mainly captured the UK-based sub-discipline and those scholars who are (also) part of a more outward looking, international network who were more likely to gain knowledge of the survey through Twitter, academic newsletters and mailing lists, etc. and who are more likely to use rational choice and quantitative methods in their research. We further suspect that, if the French equivalent of PSA Parliaments, for instance, were to run a similar survey, they might similarly uncover two clusters of scholars: one analogous to Quantirc and one which mirrors Qualint but with a French rather than UK focus.

Second, because of the gravitational pull of US political science (as well as the intellectual merits of the works which make the global citation network), scholars must often start their research with an engagement with work underpinned by rational choice and/or quantitative methods, whether or not they are of the same theoretical and methodological persuasion, which has the effect of overblowing the dominance of rational choice and/or quantitative methods.

None of the above is to argue that rational choice and quantitative methods do not have dominant positions in the sub-discipline and that it is just as easy to publish qualitative work as it is to publish quantitative work in the journals usually considered the most prestigious. Rather it is to argue: (i) that this dominance is not as complete as is often felt and that this dominance is not preserved in aspic; (ii) that there are other approaches and areas of study which, while more on the periphery of the sub-discipline, are still thriving and have further room to develop and (iii) that those who use those other approaches can be more self-confident and optimistic about the future than often suggested by the tenor of the open-ended comments.[14] For example, despite arguably greater practical difficulties when compared with using quantitative methods, there are huge opportunities for larger-n comparative work using qualitative methods; opportunities that can be facilitated through developments in methodology—such as with regard to fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (Ragin, 2009), which remains comparatively rare in the sub-discipline despite being around for a decade or more—and through the IPSA Research Committee of Legislative

[14]See also Taylor-Robinson *et al.* (this issue) on the future of parliamentary studies in this issue and, especially, Crewe's discussion of recent ethnographic work.

Specialists[15] who are arguably best placed to encourage more collaboration by bringing together the more dispersed pockets of qualitative-informed research around the world.

7. Conclusion

Without wishing to sound mawkish, what is perhaps most notable about our findings is the lack of sharper distinctions between PaLS scholars in the two groupings. To begin with, there are only two groupings which is not suggestive of a fractured and segregated sub-discipline. Where there are differences apparent, they appear to be more an indication of a healthy pluralism than sclerotic entrenchments. Second, although there is evidence that age and place of birth make a difference to cluster membership, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and whether or not you have a disability appear not to. Third, a majority of both groupings share both a concern over the status and (lack of) presence of women and people from an ethnic minorities background and a wish for a greater diversity of cases, methods and theories in the sub-discipline. In short, when we are considering the two groupings of PaLS scholars, we are not talking about the Sharks and the Jets, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie or Blur and Oasis.[16]

In 2000, Mr Perestroika called for the 'dismantling of the Orwellian system that we have in APSA'[17] and railed, according to Monroe, against the 'narrow parochialism and methodological bias toward the quantitative, behavioral, rational choice, statistical, and formal modelling approaches' within political science (2005, p. 9). Over two decades later and on the basis of our analysis here, there is probably not an immediate need for the return of Mr Perestroika within PaLS. However, it may well be that a Ms Glasnost should make an appearance; someone who can foster an (even) greater openness within the sub-discipline towards: disseminating findings; debating differences; reading, engaging with and publishing work on different cases using different theories and methods; welcoming scholars from under-represented backgrounds and dismantling silos. Our evidence confirms that it is not the case that 'the theory is always the same, the methods are always the same, the objects of study are always the same' within PaLS, even if it is often that way on certain panels, and maybe within certain conferences and journals. We suggest the task of parliamentary and legislative scholars, perhaps especially those in privileged positions, is both to cultivate an even playing field and to engineer a more interconnected, open sub-discipline in order for these insular and exclusionary tendencies to disappear.

[15]Accessed at http://rc08.ipsa.org/ on 10 April 2022.

[16]Compare, for example, the tenor of the comments in our survey to those made by and about qualitative and quantitative historians over the years (Ruggles, 2021).

[17]Accessed at https://www.uvm.edu/~dguber/POLS293/articles/mrperestroika.pdf on 10 April 2022.

Supplementary data

Supplementary data are available at *Parliamentary Affairs* online.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the School of Government, University of Birmingham and to the Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool for providing funds for research assistance for the survey and bibliometric analysis. We would like to thank all those who responded to our survey and helped to distribute it and Claire Bloquet, Chen Friedberg, Stephen McKay, Hilmar Rommetvedt, Sven Siefken and Hanna Wass for their comments on the survey, the cluster analysis, the bibliometric analysis and/or earlier versions of this paper. Finally, we are grateful to the previous editor and current editors of *Parliamentary Affairs* for their help and understanding regarding the timing of our submission.

Funding

None.

Conflict of interests

The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.

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