The Case for Comparative Ethnography

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In recent years, a number of methodological guides and review articles have attested to a resurgence of ethnographic methods in political science.[1] Undoubtedly part of the appeal of this ethnographic turn, and particularly its interpretive variants, is the ability of a researcher adopting an "ethnographic sensibility"[2] to open up old debates within the discipline and "invite novel ways of imagining the political."[3] The (re)emergence of ethnography in comparative politics, in this sense, can be seen as a disruptive force within the sub-discipline. Indeed, ethnographers challenge how political scientists study everything, from subaltern resistance,[4] to civil war violence,[5] to authoritarian domination.[6]

While such work has made important theoretical advances, ethnography is still often thought of as a method best suited for producing in-depth knowledge about a single case.[7] Ethnographers have good reasons—both epistemological and practical—to conduct in-depth work on single cases or specific contexts. However, many ethnographers conduct field research in multiple sites or compare multiple practices within a single site to develop theoretical insights. One can see, for example, how comparisons have helped ethnographers better recognize changing patterns of global governance and securitization across space by focusing on discrete field sites,[8] reveal how concepts of democracy can have different meanings across language groups within the same country,[9] or identify causes of differing patterns of labor mobilization across regions[10]—all insights that shed light on fundamental questions in comparative politics. However, ethnographers are rarely explicit, either in ethnographic works themselves or methodological work on ethnography, about the comparative logics that inform their claims or the specific benefits that follow from comparison.

This article has two goals: (1) to show that comparative ethnographic research can advance understandings of political worlds and thus deserves a prominent place in the repertoire of comparative politics and (2) to elaborate the logics of inquiry behind such comparisons so that scholars will be better equipped to use them. We do so by making the case for what we call "comparative ethnography," by which we mean ethnographic research that explicitly and intentionally builds an argument through the analysis of two or more cases by tacking back and forth between cases to identify either similarities or differences in the processes, meanings, concepts, or events across them in the service of

broad theoretical arguments. Such a practice would push interpretive ethnographers to think systematically about the process of naming and identifying "family resemblances"[11] across cases through deliberate, extended comparisons. This comparative method would help scholars name and theorize what they see and show how their insights translate to other cases.[12] Moreover, elaborating the logics of comparative ethnography will not only benefit ethnographers by codifying comparative practices appropriate for the method, it may also make comparative ethnographic research more legible to scholars who approach comparison through different methodological lenses than ethnographers and, as a result, often think quite differently about the basic goals and practices of comparison.

Many scholars already practice what we call comparative ethnography, but why the approach is useful for ethnographers is not as straightforward as it may seem. In part, the approach is provocative because many ethnographers are critical of the modes of comparison typically adopted in comparative politics (e.g., Mill's methods[13]), which are rooted in the natural sciences.[14] Ethnographers (particularly interpretive ones) often argue that the value of their method lies in its ability to illustrate the irreducibility of a given explanation to a few variables that can be generalized to cases outside of the ones directly under examination. Geertz's famous dictum that to analyze a culture is "not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" is a tag line that continues to influence countless works of ethnography, political and otherwise.[15] However, this search for meaning has arguably been a central roadblock to ethnographic comparison as ethnographers strive to grapple with the complexities of particular times and places. Indeed, if interpretive ethnography's methodological strengths are its focus on meaning-making practices and the unique features of cultures or practices—all premised on time-consuming, deep immersion in a specific place—it would seem challenging to pair comparative and ethnographic methods.

However, as we argue in greater detail below, scholars can overcome many of the potential epistemological tensions in combining ethnographic and comparative methods to good effect. To that end, we propose seven contributions that comparative ethnography can make to our understandings of politics. We argue that comparative ethnography can (1) allow ethnographers to show how their findings translate to other research contexts (a critique with which many ethnographers who focus on a single case grapple), (2) bring dynamics to the fore that might be missed by focusing solely on one field site or one practice within a field site, (3) help scholars forefend against misplaced critiques about the representativeness of a case, (4) allow ethnographers to better identify the phenomena they study, (5) highlight contrasts in practices within field sites, (6) provide opportunities for collaboration among scholars that could lead to theoretical innovations, and (7) make ethnographic studies more accessible to scholars who do not practice the method. While we do not imagine that comparative ethnography will necessarily produce insights that challenge findings from single-case studies (although they may), we do imagine that comparative ethnographers will be able to say things about those case studies that would not have been possible without explicitly comparative work.

Two or more cases are not always better than one. We do not intend to suggest that comparative ethnography is always the best approach for ethnographic research, nor do

we intend to make light of the challenges that ethnographic fieldwork in two places poses, including financial and time constraints. In some studies, ethnographic research on a single case or a single practice might be the best tactic. We do, however, argue that comparative ethnography might yield new and different insights that sharpen a study's theoretical contribution and enhance its contribution to knowledge in the field. As the examples that follow show, explicit comparison is often essential to generating that knowledge in the first place.

Our perspectives are grounded in our training as scholars of comparative politics, and we contend that comparative ethnography may be particularly useful to researchers in our subfield. However, we hope it becomes clear throughout the article that the approach outlined here is not limited to comparative politics or even to political science. Scholars from a number of sub-disciplines in political science—from international relations,[16] to American politics,[17] to policy-oriented scholarship[18]—can put comparative ethnography to good use, particularly if they are equipped with the language and logics to describe why and how comparison enhances their work.[19]

Conceptualizing Comparative Ethnography

What is comparative ethnography and why is it useful? As we state above, by comparative ethnography we mean ethnographic research that explicitly and intentionally builds an argument through the analysis of two or more cases. This definition requires unpacking.[20] By "ethnographic research" we mean, first and foremost, "immersion in the place and lives of people under study,"[21] not simply extended fieldwork or lengthy interviews (though both are likely involved). The ethnography to which we refer requires participant observation; researchers are both observing and participating in the practices about which they are inquiring.[22] Ethnography, therefore, involves the adoption of an "ethnographic sensibility"[23]—trying to understand the lived experiences of one's interlocutors, including how they make sense of their worlds. This entails attention to practices by which interlocutors make their worlds meaningful, an associated commitment to understanding the work that language and symbols do, an understanding of the world as socially made, and an approach to knowledge that sees it as "historically situated and entangled in power relationships."[24]

Our understanding of cases also requires additional discussion. When we refer to "cases" in political science we often mean particular places, organizations, or time periods. However, in our view, cases can also refer to political processes, meaning-making practices, concepts, or events, precisely the kinds of objects upon which ethnographers focus their attention.[25] We also do not assume, as we detail in greater depth below, that the cases must be chosen ahead of time, although we argue there may be analytic advantages for doing so in some circumstances. Rather, different cases that warrant comparison may emerge through ethnographic immersion as new processes, practices, or meanings are uncovered.

Indeed, comparative ethnography may be particularly useful for scholars to identify new processes, meanings, or practices as they tack back and forth between cases.

Intentionality and explicitness in tacking back and forth across similarities or differences to develop theoretical arguments is key. Ethnographers may implicitly compare cases, for instance, by considering how a given phenomenon might occur differently in their hometown or country. Being explicit about such comparisons, however, would have the analytic advantage of bringing into sharper relief how practices observed in a given field site upend conventional understandings of a political phenomenon, why existing explanations are not compelling for a particular field site, or how political meanings that seem obvious become less so when viewed across cases. We highlight some of these advantages in the next section through a discussion of seven specific works of comparative ethnography.

The Advantages of Comparative Ethnography

When conditions allow, adopting an explicitly comparative approach holds at least seven advantages for ethnographers. First, through demonstrating complexity, analyzing ambiguity, and investigating incoherence, comparative ethnography opens new possibilities for theorizing in ways that are productively different from single-case ethnography. It can also show that these novel explanations have potentially global relevance. For instance, by comparing the daily work of peacekeeping initiatives across multiple places and scales, Severine Autesserre provides new insights on why peacekeeping so often fails to bring lasting peace despite massive monetary and military investments.[26] Where existing scholarship argues that peacekeeping initiatives fail because of a lack of coordination among interveners, vested interests within such organizations, or resource constraints, Autesserre argues that the daily practices, habits, and narratives that peacekeepers use lead to failure. Peacekeepers tend to spend the majority of their time interacting with one another rather than local populations. By talking, eating, and living with one another they become inculcated in ideational frameworks that prevent them from seeing local causes of conflicts and therefore fail to engage in the local-level peacekeeping work necessary to produce durable peace. These arguments are made compelling, in part, by the comparisons across cases and scales that frame the book. By conducting fieldwork in nine countries, in conflict zones' capitals and provinces, and in peacekeeping organizations' headquarters and local offices, Autesserre shows both the surprising breadth and the remarkable durability of the practices she argues are responsible for peacekeeping's failures. In other words, the comparisons show that these are, indeed, general failures of peacekeeping, not problems isolated to a particular case. Thus, comparison allows Autesserre to open up new theoretical terrain for the study of peacekeeping and to show how those theories have global relevance.

Second, comparison can help ethnographers question existing conceptual categories and generate novel understandings of key political topics as a result. Fred Schaffer's work on the language of democracy in Senegal is an exemplar of these tactics.[27] During the course of his fieldwork, Schaffer compares the usage of the French and Wolof words

for democracy (*democracie* and *demokaraasi*, respectively). He finds that Senegalese mean something very different when they use each word, despite the fact that the words seemingly refer to the same abstract concept of a majority-ruled political system. French-speaking Senegalese use the word to connote something akin to a procedural understanding of democracy, whereas Wolof speakers use *demokaraasi* in ways that are closer to ideas of social democracy. The effect of this conceptual tension is that French and Wolof speakers have different concepts of what it means to hold their political leaders accountable. It is Schaffer's comparison across different languages (and, in effect, regions) that enables him to uncover this important conceptual tension, something that a focus on a single language or region would have prevented. It also allows Schaffer to adopt an attitude of reflexivity—taking these two differing concepts of democracy to reflect back on the concept of democracy in English-speaking political contexts—and unearth hidden biases in how the concept is deployed in everyday and academic language.[28] Importantly, Schaffer's research design does not adhere to the norms of qualitative comparison that advocate for selecting cases with negative and positive values on the outcome of interest.[29] Instead, he looks to how language works in two cases where meanings from one case reveal why meanings in the other are politically significant. Moreover, Schaffer's comparison of two different meanings in two different contexts allows him to use those varied meanings reflexively to question concepts of democracy and accountability that prevail in political science.[30]

Third, comparative methodological approaches may forefend against the dangers of seeing specific contexts as necessarily representative of larger entities.[31] The language of "representativeness" might be appropriate for statistical work, but it usually makes little sense for ethnographic analysis. Eric Klinenberg's study of death rates during the 1995 Chicago heat wave is a good case in point.[32] A key part of Klinenberg's explanation relies on a comparative analysis of two adjacent neighborhoods with stunningly divergent rates of elder residents dying despite having similar levels of elderly poverty and numbers of older residents, older residents living alone, and of minority residents overall. The key difference between the two neighborhoods, Klinenberg finds via ethnographic analysis, was their social ecologies. One neighborhood, despite being poor, was populated primarily by Mexican immigrants who had built a bustling commercial corridor where older residents felt safe enough to venture outside and find respite from the lethal heat in their apartments. By contrast, the second neighborhood was populated primarily by African Americans who had experienced the adverse consequences of decades of social and economic segregation, which had left behind a neighborhood with little commercial life and a hefty gang presence that made older residents afraid to leave their homes, trapping them inside despite lethal heat. Klinenberg leverages this comparison to show that poor, urban neighborhoods are not interchangeable and that the subtle differences in the social ecologies of neighborhoods can have major consequences for residents. By engaging in comparative work, as Klinenberg does, ethnographers can forestall assumptions that their field sites are necessarily representative of a larger universe of cases. They can also add precision to

their understandings of how the subtle differences among places that might seem similar at the outset of a study affect politics.

Fourth, comparison may help scholars answer the question, "What type of political phenomena am I observing anyway?" What the events a researcher studies are instances of may be difficult to discern without comparative methodological strategies.[33] Such comparison need not only be across different geographic locations; it could be across different political practices. Consider Mario Small's study of neighborhood effects of social capital in a Boston barrio, Villa Victoria.[34] By comparing the neighborhood involvement of different generations of Villa Victoria residents, Small finds that the neighborhood has much more heterogeneous forms of social capital than extant theories recognized. Older generations evidenced one type of social capital by participating in internal neighborhood associations at higher rates than younger generations. Meanwhile, despite participating less in their own neighborhood than their forbearers, younger generations had built sustained networks with residents of other, often more affluent neighborhoods—a different kind of social capital. In other words, through comparison Small finds that social capital, which had been treated as an undifferentiated, unproblematic analytical category by social scientists, is anything but. Making such a distinction was not his goal when he began his fieldwork in Villa Victoria, but by comparing social processes at work in his field site, Small developed the unexpected and unintended conclusion that the concept of social capital may mask as much about life in poor neighborhoods as it reveals. Small shifted the analytical lens through the process of conducting research and in doing so challenged an important analytical category.

Fifth, comparative strategies allow scholars to contrast specific practices and processes within a single field site with the goal of understanding their effects.[35] Take Timothy Pachirat's study of an industrial slaughterhouse as an example.[36] Pachirat uses an understudied institution as an exemplary case[37] of a widespread political phenomenon—in this instance, the means through which the violence of labor is hidden from those who work in violent organizations—to build a model of "how distance and concealment operate as mechanisms of power in modern society."[38] Thus, while it might seem that Pachirat's research is a classic single-case study, we would suggest that the opposite is true: it is because Pachirat conducted his ethnography in a comparative manner (albeit without prior planning) by being situated by the plant's management in different physical and role-defined sites within the slaughterhouse that he was able to see the institution as an exemplar of modern forms of power. One of the book's key moments is Pachirat's reassignment from working in the liver-hanging room to the kill floor. This transition provided an opportunity for comparison that became available during the course of his single-sited ethnography.[39] In his new position on the "chutes," Pachirat confronts, for the first time, a living cow rather than a part of a cow's carcass. This moment crystallizes the way that his previous labor in the liver room depended on killing. He is thus able to demonstrate how even those who engage in violent labor may remain relatively unaware of this fact because they are physically and visibly separated from direct acts of violence. The same is not true of workers on the kill floor. Analytically, this change in work function is some of Pachirat's best evidence that

sight and concealment are practices through which violent labor can take place on an industrial scale. Pachirat may not have intended to produce a comparative study, but the analytical leverage he gets from comparing specific practices is clear: he can show the processes through which the violence of that labor is hidden.

Although Pachirat may not have set out to work in the different position when he entered the slaughterhouse, the change in job function allowed for a clear comparison of the experience of working in different parts of the plant and the theoretical insights that followed from those differences. Where Pachirat and his co-worker in the liver hanging room were able to work with a certain amount of emotional ease because they did not confront a living animal, working in the killing chutes created pronounced emotional difficulties for the workers. Even as the employment of workers in both job functions relies on the slaughterhouse's killing function, this difference in emotional effects of the labor shows how effective the practices of concealing violence deployed by the plant's management are for allowing individual slaughter.

Sixth, comparative research strategies may offer opportunities for cooperation among ethnographers. Greater cooperation would not only bring valuable collegial interaction to what is often an isolating endeavor but also expands the possibilities for theoretical insights by leveraging the interpretations of multiple scholars. Ethnographies are often produced by a single researcher working intensively in a single field site for years.[40] Yet such an image is increasingly at odds with emerging forms of academic labor that rely on the work of many academics, each of whom brings their own conceptual or methodological strengths to a project. The same could easily be true for ethnographers who could work in teams to conduct more interviews across more field sites while conducting more types of participant observation, in the process generating more insights about the processes they are observing. This kind of collaborative work by no means requires a comparative approach. For example, some scholars are already engaging in collaborative ethnography to effectively study large-scale events like international environmental conventions.[41] Yet if we come to consider comparative ethnography as a broadly valued methodological approach, it might open the door to additional collaborative ventures.[42]

Take Javier Auyero's influential work on food riots and party brokers in Argentina.[43] Working across neighborhoods in Buenos Aries and in provincial towns farther afield, Auyero relies on the work of two research assistants to help him identify field sites, perform interviews, and analyze data to develop a compelling picture of the hidden political party networks that underpinned the riots. Had he been working by himself, it is difficult to imagine that Auyero could have covered as much territory, meaning that collaboration undoubtedly enhanced the amount of data he could analyze. In more recent work, Auyero has coauthored ethnographies with individuals who could spend more time on site and have access to people and materials unavailable to Auyero himself.[44] Doing ethnography comparatively in this way may reframe how we conceive of authorship, in the process pushing us to change how we think of contributions made by research assistants, both locals and those affiliated with a scholar's home university. It would also allow for collaboration by ethnographers who are differently embodied,

diverse in nationality, and varied in temperament. In other words, it would open up greater space for conversation about the relationships of power in which knowledge is produced and what the theoretical consequences of such power might be,[45] while forcing scholars to be reflexive about the conditions under which they conduct their work. In this sense, by potentially opening up the practice of ethnography to more collaboration (and possibly opening up how we conceive of authorship), comparative research designs may have as many intellectual advantages as practical ones.

Finally, incorporating comparative research strategies into ethnographic work may help comparative scholars who are not ethnographers better understand the insights that ethnography brings to broad political theorizing. Comparative methods could encourage other scholars to see ethnographic work as theoretically innovative—as opposed to simply empirical case studies—by refocusing attention on similarities or differences among political processes as opposed to outcomes that may not have been readily apparent until they were brought into relief through explicit comparison. Soss' research on the relationship between political involvement and welfare is an excellent example.[46] In the study, he both disaggregates welfare recipients as a category and tackles the puzzle of their relative quiescence as a larger group. Soss presents a convincing account of how welfare programs are sites of "adult political learning" and how that process relates to broader patterns of political participation by conducting his ethnography comparatively. Through the comparative approach, Soss is able to uncover differences in how experiences with two public assistance programs—Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)—shape beliefs about the efficacy of making demands on their programs and, as a result, "broader orientations towards politics."[47] Following from the institution's organizational configuration, experiences with AFDC led clients to "believe that speaking out is both ineffective and risky" and therefore to choose, more often than not, to remain silent.[48] SSDI clients, on the other hand, "develop a stronger sense that they play an active role in the program" and are willing to speak up more as a result.[49] These experiences then shape impressions of other government institutions and the potential efficacy of political participation.

The patterns that Soss notes can only be uncovered through ethnography, and the importance of those differences in shaping political outcomes can only be uncovered through comparison. Soss deftly shows how the purposeful combination of comparison and ethnography can provide insights that would not be available by working in one organization alone. In doing so, he convincingly demonstrates both how ethnography can make critical contributions to questions at the center of political science research agendas and how comparative methodological strategies can allow ethnographers to make novel theoretical claims.

From our understandings of peace building processes, to our concepts of democracy, social capital, processes of social mobilization, and experiences with welfare, each of the works cited here uses comparative insights to unsettle our assumptions about core concepts in political science. The theoretical models that emerge from this comparative work can strengthen the broad applicability of our analyses and the abilities of scholars of

comparative politics specifically, and political scientists more broadly, to make important contributions to what we know about our political and social worlds. By allowing researchers to theoretically tack back and forth between empirical cases, comparison strengthens understandings of differences and similarities in meaning-making processes and adds to the possible insights generated through ethnographic inquiry.

Challenges of Doing Ethnography Comparatively and Approaches to Addressing Them

Given these advantages, why might there be any issue with doing ethnography in a comparative manner? As it happens, there are numerous possible challenges, which we divide into two categories, one practical—the logistical difficulties of conducting interpretive ethnographic work on more than one case—and one epistemological—the potential tension between an analytical approach committed to meaning-making practices and comparative methods rooted in the natural sciences. We take each in turn.

In a practical sense, comparative ethnography can be time-consuming and resource-intensive. Constrained research timelines, limited budgets, and the challenges of negotiating access to multiple field sites are real obstacles. Each one might make it impractical to engage in research across multiple field sites or organizations and might dilute the quality of the data collected, as an ethnographer's relationships in multiple field sites might be thinner than they would be in a single field site. The challenges are particularly acute for scholars who cannot get research leave during the semester, do not receive sufficient research support, or face pressures to publish quickly.[50] The multi-country, multi-year fieldwork that underpinned Autessere's book on peacebuilding described above, for instance, was made possible by numerous grants that are becoming increasingly competitive and difficult to access in many parts of the academy.[51] Therefore, comparative ethnography simply may not be possible for every project or every scholar.

However, even in the absence of generous funding and/or leave, there are often ways to deal with these challenges. Indeed, while the practical challenges of comparative ethnography may appear daunting, ethnographers informally engage in comparison all the time, even if they are not explicit about how those comparisons inform their analysis. For example, scholars may make comparisons to their hometowns, to previous research sites, or even to other ethnographies. In other instances, and in keeping with the kind of purposive comparison we describe here, they make comparisons among different practices within one field site—as with Pachirat's different forms of labor in the slaughterhouse—or meanings—as with Schaffer's study of the multiple meanings of democracy in Senegal.

In such studies, however, the comparisons often remain implicit. By this we mean one of three things: (1) while comparisons informed the ethnographer's analysis, they are not discussed in the text or remain ancillary (e.g., they were discussed only briefly and not fully developed); (2) two or more cases are the central focus of the analysis, but the researchers do not explicitly and deliberately tack back and forth between cases to

build a theoretical argument informed by the cases in reference to one another; or (3) ethnographers do not discuss why the comparisons they deploy provide coherent insight on the phenomenon they explore. Our point, as the examples above make clear, is that scholars are already overcoming the logistical hurdles of comparative ethnography. The change in analytical lens required to conduct comparative ethnography need not necessarily require additional resources (although it may in some instances); the practical challenges may be easier to overcome for some scholars than they appear.

Some ethnographers—particularly anthropologists, arguably the scholars most closely associated with ethnography today—do explicitly analyze more than one case in the service of a single study. A number of classic works in anthropology compare social phenomena across two different cultural settings.[52] Yet explicit use of comparative methods has fallen out of fashion in the discipline.[53] This points to the second major challenge for comparative ethnography: an epistemological challenge that at first glance appears more difficult to resolve than the practical challenges. Influenced by the advent of poststructuralism and postcolonial studies, anthropologists have critiqued the ways in which their peers from earlier generations often treated societies as closed wholes that could be compared synchronically to one another or compared diachronically to themselves utilizing evolutionary perspectives.[54] Anthropologists, reacting to the generalizing tendencies of these older traditions, questioned the value of comparison so thoroughly that one respected anthropologist could write that by the late-1980s "the word *comparison* itself has completely disappeared from the vocabulary of methodological discourse."[55]

Responding to this skepticism over societal-level comparison, contemporary anthropologists who examine more than one place tend to refer to such research as "multi-sited ethnography," a different practice than what we advocate for here. In his seminal article on multi-sited ethnography, George Marcus argues that the goal of conducting ethnography in multiple places is "to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space."[56] According to Burawoy, Blum, George, Gille, and Thayer, the aim of such multi-sited ethnography is to understand "the relations between sites,"[57] allowing scholars to bring a global lens to their analysis. For example, in a study of the interconnections between global criminal networks and life in conflict zones, Nordstrom tracked the flow of illicit goods into and out of Angola by following trade routes from war-torn towns, across land borders where goods were smuggled, and aboard freighter ships where goods traveled into or out of Africa from ports in Europe, Asia, and the Americas.[58] While she mentions numerous different goods that are traded—gold, diamonds, and narcotics, among others—her goal isn't to show how they are differently traded, but that in following their common, illicit trade routes one can see the broad connections between monetary gain in the global North and war in the global South. The effect is to illustrate how secure areas in the North are inherently connected to insecure areas in the South, regardless of how distant they seem socially and politically.

Thus, multi-sited ethnography is a technique that might be used to examine translocal processes such as the smuggling networks in Nordstrom's analysis, migration

and citizenship as in Ong's work,[59] or resource extraction as in Tsing's work,[60] but not to compare how smuggling, migration, or resource extraction are done similarly or differently in discrete field sites. That is, these studies do not explicitly compare the similarities or differences in a social phenomenon across cases, as, for example, Klinenberg did for the relationship between mortality rates and social structure during the Chicago heatwave in the study cited above. As a result, even as multi-sited ethnographies have enormous intellectual benefits, including recognition that field sites should rarely be treated as contained with their own autonomous logic,[61] they do not exploit the potential benefits of doing fieldwork in multiple field sites with the goal of comparing social phenomena across them. Comparative ethnography seeks to do exactly that—to explicitly compare, as Lee, for example, does to show how different workplace experiences in two factories in China explain why different regimes of production emerged in each place.[62]

If explicit comparison can have important analytical benefits, why has it been critiqued by ethnographers? Underlying epistemic assumptions that many ethnographers make arguably pushed scholars away from comparative forms of ethnography and towards multi-sited studies. Comparative methods—methodological guidelines that in their positivist variants arguably require looking beyond the uniqueness of a place or practice[63]—are seemingly antithetical to ethnographic research. In particular, the idea that we could control for potential alternative explanations through proper case selection chafes with (particularly interpretive) ethnographers' efforts to explore ambiguities, exploit incoherence, and develop theory from meanings as opposed to facts that can be easily identified prior to fieldwork and, therefore, held constant across cases. However, as the works discussed above suggest, this effort to explore ambiguities should be one of the major reasons for ethnographers to pursue comparative strategies, although it requires that comparative ethnographers think differently about comparison than current best practices in the discipline might suggest—what we call elsewhere "comparison with an ethnographic sensibility."[64]

Adopting an "ethnographic sensibility" requires attention not only to context,[65] but also to the political and social meanings that make that context intelligible.[66] When scholars adopt an ethnographic sensibility, they pay attention to how people make sense of their worlds; they seek to "glean the meanings that the people under study attribute to their social and political reality."[67] The approach requires that scholars attend to how an individual's understanding of the world is embedded in their interactions with others, commit to understanding the work that language and other symbols do, and be open to incoherence and instability as part of explanatory frameworks.[68] If ethnographers approach comparison as process, practice, and meaning driven—understanding the dynamics and local understandings at work in specific political phenomena or discrete contexts—scholars could incorporate fluid and seemingly contradictory political processes into their analyses and potentially understand the importance of those meanings better by considering them comparatively (e.g., when Small looks at how urban change interacts with preexisting forms of social capital, in the study described above).

This approach builds on recent scholarly efforts to embrace complexity in historical analysis and to acknowledge that particular political circumstances that appear to be similar cannot always be coded as such.[69] These approaches to comparison are largely compatible with commonly used comparative techniques like Mill's methods of similarity and difference,[70] but they incorporate greater attention to context in their explanatory accounts than strict adherence to Mill's reliance on control would allow. Our work extends these efforts by focusing on one aspect of context in our comparative analysis: meaning-making practices. Instead of approaching comparison through a lens of control over variables and variation in outcomes, comparison would be used by ethnographers to help understand relevant processes at work in specific cases and explore the relationship between local meanings and political concepts[71] as in the example of Schaffer's work on the meanings of democracy in Senegal discussed above.

This approach requires comparative ethnographers to think differently about which kinds of cases to compare and why. Where political scientists typically compare similar or dissimilar outcomes, comparative ethnography might highlight political processes—the dynamics, meanings, and practices that shape political life—as the proverbial outcome of interest. For comparative ethnographers, meanings, processes, and practices could become the core drivers of case selection, and variation in outcomes or perceived starting points might not be critical. Scholars could look to "family resemblances"[72] among cases and use them to produce novel theoretical arguments only possible when one accepts that one's objects of analysis need not map perfectly onto one another but share important similarities nonetheless.[73] Wedeen's work on nationalism in Yemen described below is an example.[74] For comparative ethnographers, ensuring variation on the dependent variable—a classic problem for positivist research designs—is not an impediment because the goals are to provide a thick description of a particular political process and to highlight similarities and differences in the processes at work.[75] To describe Soss' work on the different relationships welfare recipients have with welfare agencies as having a clear positive and negative value on the dependent variable would be methodologically incoherent, for instance. The goal is to describe the difference in the relationship. Moreover, to talk about independent and dependent variables could be counterproductive as such language might artificially dissociate outcome from process, divorce the process from the context, and reduce meaning to the outcome of static variables.

Ultimately, comparative ethnographers will need to expand how they think about what we compare and why. Comparison guided by attention to difference and agreement[76] offers a critical set of tools, but it may not always make the most sense for comparative ethnographers. Indeed, strongly held assumptions about the work that control can do in one's analysis, or about human behavior as naturally interest-maximizing, are likely incompatible with interpretive ethnographic approaches as the two share little epistemological terrain.

There is, however, epistemological overlap between those comparative approaches that allow for the mutually constitutive ways in which people come to understand themselves and their political actions and relationships. Some comparative approaches

require assumptions that different people experience similar events in similar ways across different contexts. For example, they might assume that the impact of an increase in water prices on residents in one region of Bolivia would be the same as the impact of an increase in water prices on residents of another region (assuming similar levels of wealth and quantity or type of water needs).[77] If there was protest in one region in response to the increase, and not in another, we could assume that a similar increase in water prices was not part of the explanation. These kinds of assumptions—that different people experience similar events in similar ways—are ultimately incommensurable with an interpretive ethnographic approach, but the process of comparison does not require making these assumptions. Indeed, some of the best scholars in the comparative historical tradition have shown how comparisons that incorporate the mutually constitutive ways in which people understand themselves and their political actions and relationships are possible.[78] In sum, explicit comparison is not only compatible with ethnographic approaches, but it also offers valuable possibilities for ethnographers.

When and Where Might Ethnographers Consider Employing Comparative Research Designs?

Even as we argue that scholars can overcome the practical and epistemological challenges of doing comparative ethnographic research, our claim is not that all ethnographers can or should employ comparative methods or that all comparison should be done ethnographically. Thus, the question remains: what kinds of research questions or projects might benefit from a comparative ethnographic approach?

Scholars may not know that a comparative methodological approach can enhance their analytical insights until they are already well into a research project. For example, Small's dual conceptualization of social capital described above emerged through the process of ethnography. In this sense, fieldwork may also be necessary for researchers to discover that the practices they are observing might fit into a broader category of analysis, which would then require comparative work to fully explore. While this may pose challenges as researchers will need to adapt projects midstream or perhaps extend research timelines, it does not have to pose undue burdens—and, in fact, adaptability is already a part of some of the best ethnographies.[79]

In other cases, however, certain cues may signal to a researcher well before fieldwork begins that comparison of two or more cases will be valuable. One of these cues might come in the form of preexisting explanations for, or understandings of, the object of inquiry, particularly if there are strong prior claims in the scholarly literature or widespread intuitive assumptions about what produces a given phenomenon. Wedeen's work on nationalism in Yemen offers a good case in point.[80] Wedeen investigates the processes through which national attachments are made. However, where much of the influential literature connects the emergence of nationalism to the rise of the nation state in Europe,[81] Wedeen finds that Yemenis experience feelings of national belonging even in the absence of a strong state. The attachments look different from many of their

European counterparts—they are produced during punctuated moments as opposed to the long-lasting feelings of attachment found in much of the Europeanist literature. She makes these claims through at least two forms of comparison. The first is an implicit comparison between the Yemeni case and the cases at the heart of literature developed in Europe. A second is a comparison of three exemplary events: presidential elections in 1999, the tenth anniversary celebration of the country's unification, and the arrest and prosecution of Yemen's first "serial killer." The events are apparently unrelated, yet through Wedeen's analysis they combine to create a picture of the processes through which national identifications emerge.[82]

Although Wedeen's analysis violates numerous tenets of conventional positivist research design (most notably, selecting on the dependent variable by comparing only "positive" cases of national attachment), it is nonetheless through comparison that her arguments find their analytical strength—even if, at first glance, the events being compared seem too different to be fruitfully compared. It is surprising, after all, that such different events would work in similar ways to produce feelings of national attachment. Through the comparison, Wedeen deftly shows how analysis of multiple exemplary events can produce a coherent, convincing argument without worrying about controlling for alternatives or selecting on the dependent variable. She also produces a theory that challenges much of the existing literature on nationalism. These insights are possible only because Wedeen's ontological assumptions allowed her to categorize them as instances of similar processes.

Second, comparison might be a particularly useful tool in studies where ethnographers reveal what Martin calls "unidentified political objects."[83] Ethnographic immersion often unearths political phenomena that have largely evaded scholarly attention. By rendering these "objects" visible, ethnography offers critical insights into the practice and experience of politics. This methodological strength could be even further enhanced by intentional comparison with objects that already constitute a major field of study. For example, Javier Auyero's study of citizen interactions with state bureaucracies in Argentina highlights the ways in which waiting in government offices produces often overlooked forms of political domination among the country's poor.[84] His insights are only possible because he compares multiple practices by which state institutions and political actors produce subordination. It was only after reflecting on the similar experiences of waiting that research subjects had during previous projects about clientalist networks, service-related protests, and daily life in a shantytown that the importance of waiting as a form of domination for the poor became apparent. The theoretical implications of what might be called, in this case, a revealed comparison emerged slowly, Auyero writes, but they are profound.[85] In particular, by studying the practice of waiting, Auyero reveals the daily practices through which the state interpellates poor subjects to be obedient, a profound form of political domination given how subtle it is. In sum, when ethnographers can compare seemingly mundane practices with often-cited forms of politics, it might unearth previously overlooked political phenomena that add to our theoretical insights.

Finally, ethnography involving the comparison of two or more cases might be particularly useful for answering "how" questions and illustrating political processes.

The approach allows scholars to get at this oft-ignored category of inquiry by emphasizing practices and meanings. When we ask questions such as "how are national attachments produced?"[86]; "how is rebellion sustained?"[87]; or "how are political involvement and welfare programs connected?",[88] ethnography conducted through a comparative methodological lens might be a powerful method through which to approach the question. By comparing these phenomena across different cases—defined variously in these works as events (Wedeen), neighborhoods (Parkinson), and organizations (Soss)—the scholars can show that their arguments about how political processes operate are not limited to one specific case and, therefore, are potentially generalizable to other cases. Thus, comparative ethnography helps address crucial "how" questions embedded in long-standing but under-specified theoretical arguments and, in doing so, draws attention to the nuance and complexity of political processes.

Conclusion

As the preceding discussion shows, explicitly utilizing comparisons can help ethnographers develop new theoretical arguments and illuminate tensions inherent in categories of political analysis. In particular, comparative ethnography can help to advance knowledge of topics that are central to comparative politics specifically, and political science more broadly. A comparative ethnographic approach can advance understandings of subjects ranging from democracy, to nationalism, to collective action, to vigilante violence, just to name a few.[89] Of course, conducting ethnography comparatively is not always going to be useful, necessary, or feasible. It may require funding or leave time unavailable to many scholars. It may also simply not make sense for the question driving a scholar's research.

Nonetheless, we argue that conducting ethnography comparatively can have numerous advantages for ethnographers looking to make novel theoretical claims that translate across field sites. Specifically, comparative ethnographies can uncover new research questions and agendas by expanding the possibilities of what can be compared, embracing context instead of trying to control it away, and allowing contradictions in social practice to inform our understanding of political phenomena. While the utility of this approach is not limited to this list, these areas of inquiry represent key spaces for future theoretical and methodological development. Comparative ethnography adds to both the contributions that ethnographers can make to social science and the insights that comparison can bring to scholarly understanding of the political world. Ethnography informed by comparative methods can unsettle the categories through which politics are seen in the first place and help to generate new understandings of the political.

NOTES

1. Javier Auyero, "Introductory Note to Politics under the Javier Auyero, "Introductory Note to Politics under the Microscope: Special Issue on Political Ethnography I," *Qualitative Sociology*, 29 (Fall 2006), 257–59; Gianpaolo Baiocchi and Brian T. Connor, "The Ethnos in the Polis: Political Ethnography as a Mode

of Inquiry," *Sociology Compass*, 2 (January 2008), 139–55; Edward Schatz, ed., *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Lisa Wedeen, "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13 (2010), 255–72.

2. Ellen Pader, "Seeing with an Ethnographic Sensibility," in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds., *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), 161–75; Edward Schatz, "Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics," in Edward Schatz, ed., *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 5.

3. Lisa Wedeen, "Ethnography as Interpretive Enterprise," in Schatz, ed., 90.

4. James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

5. Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

6. Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

7. This association between ethnography and in depth single-site work has multiple sources. Some reasons are practical including the time intensiveness of ethnographic work. Other reasons, particularly stemming from postcolonial critiques of comparison in anthropology and related disciplines, are theoretical and stem from concerns that comparison "is never neutral" because "it develops within a history of hierarchical relations." Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman, eds., "Introduction," in Rita Felski and Susan Stanford Friedman, eds., *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 1.

8. Paul Amar, *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

9. Frederic Charles Schaffer, *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

10. Ching Kwan Lee, *Against the Law: Labor Protests in China's Rustbelt and Sunbelt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

11. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Preliminary Studies for the "Philosophical Investigations," Generally Known as the Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), para. 67.

12. Dvora Yanow, "Dear Author, Dear Reader: The Third Hermeneutic in Writing and Reviewing Ethnography," in Schatz, ed., 292–93.

13. John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive* (Honolulu: University Press of the Pacific, 2002).

14. See, for example, Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1970); Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *The American Political Science Review*, 65 (September 1971), 682–93.

15. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 5.

16. Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

17. Samantha Majic, *Sex Work Politics: From Protest to Service Provision* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014); Joe Soss, "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action," *American Political Science Review*, 93 (June 1999), 363–80; Katherine Cramer Walsh, *Talking about Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

18. Dvora Yanow, "Interpretive Analysis and Comparative Research," in Isabelle Engeli and Christine Rothmayr Allison, eds., *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 131–59.

19. Paraphrased from Rogers Brubaker, "Beyond Comparativism?," Department of Sociology, UCLA, 2003, 3, http://eprints.cdlib.org/uc/item/7t52j73w.pdf.

20. There are many understandings of what the practice of ethnography entails. We use the term in a way that we hope is inclusive of what most ethnographers agree are the critical elements of the method, while narrowing our scope to focus on interpretive variants.

21. Lisa Wedeen, "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13 (2010), 257.

22. For a discussion of how ethnography has influenced the recent practice of political science, see the recent symposium organized by Schwartz-Shea and Majic. Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Samantha Majic, "Introduction," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 50 (January 2017), 97–102.

23. Edward Schatz, "Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics," in Schatz, ed., 5.

24. Wedeen, 2010, 260.

25. We acknowledge that many scholars draw on George and Bennett to formally define a case as "an instance of a class of events," a definition that includes the recommendations we make here. The overwhelming tendency in political science, however, is to focus on particular classes of events: places, organizations, or time periods. Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 17; For an excellent discussion of case definition and selection that accords largely with the perspective we outline here, see Charles Ragin, "Turning the Tables: How Case-Oriented Research Challenges Variable-Oriented Research," in Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004).

26. Autesserre.

27. Schaffer, 1998.

28. See also Frederic Charles Schaffer, *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2015).

29. Przeworski and Teune; Henry E. Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010).

30. See also Schaffer, 2015.

31. See Mario Luis Small, "`How Many Cases Do I Need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research," *Ethnography*, 10 (March 2009), 5–38.

32. Eric Klinenberg, *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

33. Yanow reminds us that positivist modes of inquiry require that researchers make a priori assumptions about what is comparable in their cases as well as what their independent and dependent variables are prior to actually conducting the study. Yanow, 2014, 144.

34. Mario Luis Small, *Villa Victoria: The Transformation of Social Capital in a Boston Barrio* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

35. This argument shares certain affinities with the case study method outlined by Gerring. John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?," *American Political Science Review*, 98 (2004), 341–54.

36. Timothy Pachirat, *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

37. Bent Flyvbjerg, *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

38. Pachirat, 2011, 3.

39. See also Timothy Pachirat, *Among Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 87, 92–93.

40. Indeed, anthropology to this day often still fetishizes a Ph.D. student's lonesome work in a far-off village field site as a professional rite of passage. This tendency toward a single field site has actually been cited as a primary reason for the need to move toward "multi-sited" ethnography within anthropology. George E. Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24 (1995), 95–117.

41. Peter Brosius and Lisa Campbell, "Collaborative Event Ethnography: Conservation and Development Trade-Offs at the Fourth World Conservation Congress," *Conservation and Society*, 8 (2010), 245–55.

42. Brosius and Campbell call this practice "collaborative event ethnography."

43. Javier Auyero, *Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina: The Gray Zone of State Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

44. Javier Auyero and Debora Alejandra Swistun, *Flammable: Environmental Suffering in an Argentine Shantytown* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Javier Auyero and María Fernanda Berti, *In Harm's Way: The Dynamics of Urban Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

45. Timothy Pachirat, "The Political in Political Ethnography: Dispatches from the Kill Floor," in Schatz, ed.

46. Soss.

47. Soss, 364.

48. Soss, 366.

49. Ibid.

50. For a review of some of these problems, see the papers collected in Schwartz-Shea and Majic. Schwartz-Shea and Majic, "Introduction." These problems would clearly be compounded for the growing ranks of contingent labor. See e.g. Joseph Schwartz, "Resisting Exploitation of the Contingent Faculty Labor

in the Neoliberal University: The Challenge of Building Solidarity between Tenured and Nontenured Faculty," *New Political Science*, 36 (2014), 504–22.

51. Autesserre, xii–xiii.

52. E.g. Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971).

53. A recent exception here is Peter van der Veer, *The Value of Comparison* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

54. van der Veer, 2–3.

55. Ladislav Holy quoted in van der Veer, 3, italics in original.

56. Marcus.

57. Michael Burawoy, Joseph A. Blum, Sheba George, Zsuzsa Gille, and Millie Thayer. *Global Ethnography: Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xii.

58. Carolyn Nordstrom, *Global Outlaws: Crime, Money, and Power in the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

59. Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

60. Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

61. Burawoy et al.

62. Ching Kwan Lee, *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women*(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

63. This kind of comparison, often called "most similar with different outcomes" or "most different with similar outcomes," or the method of agreement and the method of difference, continues to reference Mill, although scholars often fail to acknowledge Mill's own discussion of the limitations of the approach. (For an exception, see George and Bennett.) Regardless, what are often invoked as Mill's methods of difference and agreement are ubiquitous in qualitative comparative work and remain central to the ways in which we question and evaluate comparative case research. For a discussion, see Dan Slater and Daniel Ziblatt, "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison," *Comparative Political Studies*, 46 (October 2013), 1301–27.

64. Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith. "Comparison with an Ethnographic Sensibility," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 50 (January 2017), 26–30.

65. Schatz; see also Pader.

66. While we focus explicitly on comparative ethnography, the embrace of an ethnographic *sensibility* need not be—and is not—limited to the domain of ethnographers. Nor does an ethnographic sensibility require the long-term immersion in field sites or participant observation methods typical of anthropologists, though both may be beneficial. Scholars can develop understandings of the social processes through which people make sense of their worlds through close readings of archival material, examinations of contemporary texts, interviews, and even survey data, to name just a few methods. What matters most is *how* scholars approach the material gathered from these sources; that is, paying attention to the political meanings embedded in these materials. See Pader; Schatz, "Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics," in Schatz, ed.

67. Schatz, "Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics," in Schatz, ed., 5.

68. As we outline elsewhere, scholars can bring an ethnographic sensibility to their research without engaging in ethnography. While an ethnographic sensibility is required for the methodological approach we propose here, it is not enough—to conduct comparative ethnography scholars must also immerse themselves in their field site(s). See Simmons and Smith.

69. See Dan Slater and Erica S. Simmons, "Informative Regress: Critical Antecedents in Comparative Politics," *Comparative Political Studies*, 43 (July 2010), 886–917. Many works of comparative historical analysis use a critical junctures approach as a way to both embrace complexity and exercise some control. See Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics*, 59 (2007), 341–69; Hillel David Soifer, "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures," *Comparative Political Studies*, 45 (December 2012), 1572–97. But as Slater and Simmons argue, the emphasis on critical junctures often encourages scholars to act as if their cases were similar along all relevant dimensions prior to the relevant juncture.

70. Mill.

71. See Jillian Schwedler, "Comparative Politics and the Arab Uprisings," *Middle East Law and Governance*, 7 (2015), 141–52 for a good discussion of some of the limitations created by our focus on particular phenomena as cases and the emphasis on variation in our analyses.

72. Wittgenstein, para. 67.

73. In this regard, our approach to comparison shares some similarities with influential theorizing on concepts. See, for example, David Collier and James E. Mahon, "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *The American Political Science Review*, 87 (December 1993), 845; Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).

74. Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

75. See Ragin for an excellent discussion of why selecting on the dependent variable is not necessarily a problem in qualitative case research.

76. For a discussion, see Slater and Ziblatt.

77. See Erica S. Simmons, *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016a); Erica S. Simmons, "Market Reforms and Water Wars," *World Politics*, 61 (January 2016b), 37–73.

78. For example, Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Harvard University Press, 2004); Andreas Wimmer, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Scott Straus, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership, and Genocide in Modern Africa* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

79. See Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow, *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes* (Routledge New York, 2012).

80. Wedeen, 2008.

81. For example, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983).

82. Wedeen, 2008, 67.

83. Denis-Constant Martin, ed., *Sur la Piste des OPNI (Objets Politiques Non Identifiés)* (Karthala Editions, 2002).

84. Javier Auyero, *Patients of the State: The Politics of Waiting in Argentina* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2012).

85. Ibid., 4.

86. Wedeen, 2008.

87. Sarah Elizabeth Parkinson, "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War," *American Political Science Review* (July 2013), 1–15.

88. Soss.

89. Schaffer, 1998; Wedeen, 2008; Simmons, 2016a; Nicholas Rush Smith, *Contradictions of Democracy: Vigilantism and Rights in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).