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available tool and all possible energy to accomplish specific goals, Martin would be seen as brilliant strategist or skillful, determined and, at times, ruthless antagonist or charming raconteur of Texas anecdotes. How one viewed him and his accomplishments frequently depended on the positions in which colleagues, competitors or old friends found themselves when dealing with this formidable Texan now transplanted to the South.

Certainly one of Roscoe Martin's most important legacies to political science and government is the *Journal of Politics* that has more than fulfilled its original promise and premises.

Note

All materials cited in this article, except one, were taken from the Syracuse University Archives in the George Arents Research Library, Roscoe C. Martin Papers, Box 1, Folder: Committee on Publication, 1937-1938.

Reference

Harris, Robert J., Jr. and Weldon Cooper. 1972. Roscoe Coleman Martin, 1903-1972. *Journal of Politics* 34: 1341-1344.

Reflections on Doing Dissertation Work Abroad

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Graduate students in comparative politics or policy bring certain problems on themselves: not only are they expected to know the language(s) and political situation of their chosen area, but they also need to go abroad and do research for their theses. From a distance, one can imagine the pleasant nature of some foreign research—a fellow student of my acquaintance was reputed to be drafting a re-

search proposal to examine the effects of outdoor cafe life on French intellectual life, the research for which would involve endless cups of cafe au lait and more Croques Monsieur than anyone would want to eat—but there are also frustrating aspects of trying to do research in foreign environments.

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understands.*

There is little to go by when one heads out into the field. Previous comparativists sank or swam, and so, presumably, shall future comparativists. The uniqueness of any given research project inevitably means that everyone goes through their own little travails, but the school of experience is a harsh mistress. Anyone can encounter difficulties in obtaining access to archives, permission to interview or decent data (the privilege is not reserved to comparativists), but encountering such problems in foreign environments exacerbates the situation. It seems appropriate that at least a few experiences from the field be passed on to others about to head out beyond our familiar shores.

Anthropologists have a distinct advantage over other social sciences, since in the last 15 years they have made something of a virtue out of fieldwork accounts.¹ Some tales are enough to make comparative politics research experiences seem painless and pleasant. Sir Edmund Leach, for example, lost all his field notes during the Second World War due to enemy action but nevertheless managed to write *The Political Systems of Highland Burma*; some have claimed this resulted in a better book. An analogous tale exists about Ferdinand Braudel's wartime experiences. Anthropologists are also sometimes disturbingly frank about how personally intolerable research can be, as in Colin Turnbull's *The Mountain People*.

So other disciplines at least discuss the

topic. In what follows, I would like to present a few jocular rules I learned while doing dissertation research last year in West Germany. Like all lessons, the generalizability is questionable, though I hope that those about to go off to do research will take heart from the following, and those who have had similar experiences will just shake their heads at my naivete. . .

"So What Are You Doing Here?"

My thesis compared foreign worker policies in Germany and the United States, and the first thing I noticed was that it was almost impossible to explain to anyone, particularly strangers, just what I was doing in Germany. There are a surprising number of people who live outside of universities who have no idea what research is, no matter how painstakingly you try to describe what you are up to. Of course, the fact that you may not yourself be too sure of just what it is you are going to do may have some influence on the comprehension of other people.

Rule 1: "Research" is a power word which no one outside of a university really understands. It engenders awe, so use it sparingly.

In trying to explain what you are doing, remember that your committee members are a long way away.

If I did succeed in convincing the odd German that I was not in fact an illegal immigrant trying to benefit from generous German welfare provisions, but was instead trying to study those people Germans *believed* were sponging off welfare, I ran into another problem. Germans did know about foreign workers, so their response was often "Oh, does America have foreign workers too?" Since the

answer to this query was in my grant application, I had to go back and memorize what I'd said there so I'd at least have a response. Upon hearing my response, the knowledgeable would then say, "Yes, but the differences between the two cases outweigh the similarities: how can you think of comparing them?" This question created a severe methodological crisis for me until I realized that Higher Authorities wrote whole books about "How to Compare Nations," and even they didn't have all the answers.

All graduate students endure hassles in the course of their research.

More difficult still were those who, upon hearing the topic, would launch into what I began thinking of as the "My Encounters and Experiences with Foreign Workers" tales. Such tales were fascinating as they reflected the social difficulties Germans had in dealing with foreign workers, but it was a little hard to know how to continue the conversation. My inclination to stand on the nearest table and make impassioned speeches about the virtues of tolerance had to be quickly and firmly quashed.

Rule 2: In trying to explain what you are doing, remember that your committee members are a long way away.

The Home of Bureaucracy

When I first arrived I went to the university. I was told I had to register for classes. Why?, I said, I'm only here to do research. It didn't matter if I didn't take any classes, I was informed, I had to register because all students registered and I could then obtain cheaper health care and tram fares. I had to admit this was a different justification for registering than I'd ever heard in America. So I said I'd like to register, and the university employee, looking disdainfully at the sheaf of documents I was clutching, asked me whether I had my little

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sheet from the police. I said, "What little sheet from the police?"

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As is true for all residents in the country, I had to register with the police. But the relevant office in my quarter of the city had moved up the street, and by the time I found it, it was closed. The next morning I was too early. Then I did indeed get a small sheet of paper which I had to take to the family I was living with, and they had to sign it. Fortunately, my very accommodating host, having been through this before, knew that he had to come back with me to the police, or they would send me home to fetch him since he had to appear in person. When we arrived at the police again, they said, "Do you have the certificate of the city health department that you are in good health?" I had just had a physical in America as a requirement of the grant giver, so I pulled that out, and the bureaucrat gave a long, slow shake of his head, "No, no, that won't do." He did stamp my little sheet, and then sent me off to the city health department for another physical. The city health department made me wait two days for an appointment, but fortunately took cognizance of my previous physical and only made me pay 25 Marks to have a blood sample drawn at yet another office five blocks away.

So I went back to the university two weeks later. Did the university employee want the notarized copy of my high school diploma which had taken me weeks to get in America, and which my grant giver had told me I absolutely had to have? No, and neither did anybody else. He was pleased to see my police slip and medical certifications, however. "And where was my insurance card?" "My insurance card?" I repeated dumbly. "Yes, you have to pick an insurance company to get additional health care coverage," he said. So I picked

the one out of the phone book that was closest to the university and walked there. But it was only open in the mornings and it was already afternoon. The next morning it took so long at the insurance office that I was no longer able to register at the university, since they too only had morning office hours.

Rule 3: All graduate students endure hassles in the course of their research. These hassles were not designed to only make *you* miserable, they were designed to make *everybody* miserable.

Nevertheless, I was more fortunate than some other friends who were also doing research that year. One of them arrived in Italy a week after they'd passed a new and stringent anti-foreigner law which forbade her from buying a second-hand car that was essential for her to do her research. As a result, she ended up spending a month figuring out a way, with the help of friends, to circumvent the law. Another friend had gone to Togo to study rituals, and had unwisely tried to build a grass hut for himself on a piece of land which was contested between two chiefs. The resulting clash was so bad that he had to leave the community entirely and move to the capital. Subsequent visits to his research area had to then be done more or less on the fly since he had become persona non grata in the community.

*Find out how natives get
past the doorkeepers before
you try it yourself.*

Rule 4: The natives may be friendly, but you may be surprised by facets of the political culture you hadn't anticipated. Or to put it another way, when those in power take action which affects foreigners, you can bet it won't benefit your research.

Research

My grant givers had supported me on

the assumption that I actually had some knowledge of German culture, right? But my first research attempts proved otherwise.

Getting access to information may be harder to obtain than you thought.

I went to the employer's association because I wanted to talk to some of their experts and examine the publications in their library. I walked up to the double-glass doors which were guarded by the watchful eye of a video camera, and pulled out my recommendations as I climbed the steps. I had some of them in German just for encounters like this one. When I reached the guard/porter I said I wanted to get into the building to look at the archives and talk to some people and here was some proof of who I was. He looked at me skeptically and asked me if I had an appointment. I said no, but I'd like to look at the library anyway. The porter started getting irate—"Who do you think we are?," he demanded, "Do you think we just let in people off the streets?" The door remained closed.

Rule 5: Find out how natives get past the doorkeepers before you try it yourself.

I did eventually get in about two weeks later, having now learned that all institutional entry must be preceded by letters of introduction which must bear not only the right imprimatur but also the right signature at the bottom. In my case that meant well-known heads of university institutes who certified my legitimacy. The sending of letters and awaiting replies ate up enormous amounts of time, but it proved to be the proper way to gain entrance to the various institutions. While the people I talked to at the employer's association were quite helpful once I got past the door, they were also nervous about what I might find and what use I might put it to. This was, after all, the organization that Hanns Martin Schleyer presided over before he was killed by the Red Army Fac-

tion, but somehow it didn't dawn on me that they would have introduced security measures subsequently and would be suspicious of strangers.

There seemed to be a correlation between the political orientation of the institution and their openness to outside researchers. At the union federation headquarters, as at research and clearinghouse institutes, employees were very open and friendly, perhaps because they were more used to sympathetic researchers. In fact, the particular problem at the union federation seemed to be a rivalry between their own library and the research institute library located one floor directly above—the librarians practically fought over which library I was going to visit when I arrived and seemed upset I would think of using both.

The federal offices in Bonn turned out to have their own strategies. A number of them had special employees whose major function appeared to be greeting people and routing them through the building, in a mixture of security precautions and formality. In one building, you were given personal routing slips: each person you encountered had to sign off on the paper you carried and your paper had to be given to the entrance porter when you left. I went several times, foolishly, to Ministries with only my driver's license as identification, and then had to spend half an hour or more convincing the porters

Few people who read your work will have any idea what kind of libraries you were using.

that Americans do not have proper ID cards but use driver's licenses instead. I became resigned to carrying my passport with me on these occasions, even though I would have preferred not to. The Bundestag library turned out to have a maddening on-again, off-again schedule; it was open to outsiders only when the Bundestag was *not* in session because it func-

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tioned as a Congressional Research Service when the Bundestag was in session.

I also confronted the statute of limitations problem. I knew there were restrictions on the access to federal documents and was prepared to find substitute sources, and so was not surprised when the Federal Archives said they regretted they could not help me. I was rather baffled when I received the same response from the Protestant Church, however. They took their status as a "state" church rather seriously, it appeared, and their negative response made it easy to conclude that they had reasons for concealing information. They did say that if I made formal application and could wait for 2-3 months, they had a committee which processed requests, but they gave no assurances that I would be successful.

Rule 6: Getting access to information may be harder to obtain than you thought. If you can't get it at all, be inventive about alternative sources (interviews, biographies, newspaper accounts, histories, etc.).

Of course, one reason to do research abroad at all is to examine the contents of various libraries. I have been in reputable libraries in Europe where the books are catalogued according to date of acquisition, or shelved according to size, or placed on the shelves so the numbers run from bottom to top and right to left, or where the concept of open stacks is regarded as so avant-garde that it can't possibly be introduced for another 20 years. The university library where I was had a computerized system, but it was organized so that you brought in the slip with your book request, the library took several days to a week to see if they had it, and then you could go and pick it up if they did indeed find it. This was so enervating for the researchers in the institute I was attached to that they had hired a number of undergraduate slaves whose main occupation was to run back and forth to the library.

Rule 7: Few people who read your work will have any idea of what kind of libraries you were using.

There is perhaps no great lesson which can be drawn from such experiences. The difficulties of any given research project are naturally rather specific—but when you get back home and see your fellow graduate students, you may find yourself wondering why you didn't choose to do a library dissertation at home instead. On the other hand, you have no one but yourself to blame for having become interested in doing research elsewhere.

About the Author

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Notes

1. See G. Spindler, *Being an Anthropologist* (1970); P. Golde, *Women in the Field* (1970); M. Freilich, *Marginal Natives at Work: Anthropologists in the Field* (1977); and R. Georges and M. O. Jones, *People Studying People* (1980). Richard Shweder, "Storytelling Among the Anthropologists," *New York Times Book Review*, Sept. 21, 1986.

Social Scientists and Rural/Agricultural Policy

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A community of social scientists has grown up around the study of agriculture and rural affairs. This community is providing an interdisciplinary experience for scholars from economics, sociology, anthropology, home economics, history, philosophy, and political science. Its research agenda includes major subjects in political science, including theories of political community, representation of inter-