

Gender in the Journals, Continued: Evidence from Five Political Science Journals

Introduction to Gender in the Journals, Continued: Evidence from Five Political Science Journals

Nadia E. Brown, *Purdue University*

David Samuels, *University of Minnesota*

This special issue considers potential gender bias in internal editorial processes at five political science journals: *The American Political Science Review* (APSR), *Comparative Political Studies* (CPS), *World Politics* (WP), *Political Behavior* (PB) and *International Studies Quarterly* (ISQ).

These works were inspired by Teele and Thelen's (2017) exploration of "Gender in the Journals," the relative presence of women as authors of articles in top political science journals. Teele and Thelen documented a significant "gender gap" in publication rates of peer-reviewed articles between men and women: Women

Teele and Thelen simply counted authors by gender. Their findings raised important questions, but cannot explain *why* women are under-represented, and why women are under-represented more or less at certain journals. Journals' tables of contents reflect several factors, especially the pool of submissions and the editorial process. Most obviously, if a journal receives relatively few submissions from women, its table of contents will not reflect women's relative presence in the discipline. Likewise, Teele and Thelen's findings also cannot tell us whether actual bias—conscious or not—exists in the editorial process. Do editors discriminate by gender (or in some other way)? Perhaps the fact that most journal editors are male leads to biased outcomes, due to selection bias in the internal or peer review stages of the process. In any case, journal editorial processes are non-standardized and remain something of a "black box" to outsiders. Teele and Thelen's data cannot pinpoint where bias might occur, if it does occur.

We hope to shed some light on these and related questions. As journal coeditors (*of Politics, Groups and Identities* and *Comparative Political Studies*, respectively), we were intrigued by Teele and Thelen's findings. We had also both expressed a desire to further explore what journal editors could do to assess the sources and extent of gender bias in the editorial process. Kathleen Thelen (MIT), in her capacity as president-elect of APSA, had formed a task

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were under-represented relative to their numbers in the discipline, and did not appear as coauthors as frequently as men. The authors also speculated that top journals might be biased against the sorts of work that female scholars are more likely to engage in, whether in terms of substantive questions asked or methods employed.

force on the Status of Women in the Profession, co-chaired by Mala Htun (University of New Mexico) and Frances Rosenbluth (Yale). The task force is currently exploring several aspects related to gender and professional career paths in political science. Htun and Rosenbluth appointed us to the task force, as co-chairs of the working group on publications. We then coordinated a roundtable

at the 2017 APSA meeting, inviting editors of four journals (plus *CPS*) to conduct similar internal audits to consider the question of gender bias. These particular journals/editors were invited because they had all informally expressed interest in the question or had already done preliminary analysis on gender in their editorial decision processes in the wake of Teele and Thelen's paper.

This special issue presents polished versions of the reports presented at the APSA meeting. As will become clear, the results across journals were remarkably similar. Even though the journals differ in terms of substantive focus, management/ownership, as well editorial structure and process, none found evidence of systematic gender bias in editorial decisions.

These findings raise additional questions about where gender bias may occur and why. We urge a continued conversation and examination of why women remain underrepresented as

authors in political science journals, particularly top-ranked journals. Although the reports that follow provide no clear evidence of gender bias, other factors may impact why women are under-represented in political science journals. For example, to address questions about the pool of submissions, the APSA task force sponsored an all-members survey in the fall of 2017 that asked where and why scholars prefer to submit manuscripts. The results from that survey will eventually complement the reports presented here to offer a more holistic view the status of gender in the publication process. ■

REFERENCE

- Teele, Dawn Langan, and Kathleen Thelen. 2017. "Gender in the Journals: Publication Patterns in Political Science." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50 (2): 433–47.

SPECIAL ISSUE CONTRIBUTORS

Nadia E. Brown is a university scholar and associate professor of political science and African American studies at Purdue University. Her research interests lie broadly in identity politics, legislative studies, and Black women's studies. She may be reached at brown957@purdue.edu.

Thomas König is professor of political science at the University of Mannheim. Since August 2016, he has served as lead editor of the *American Political Science Review*. He may be reached at tkoenig@uni-mannheim.de.

Dani K. Nedal is a PhD candidate at Georgetown University and a Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was a managing editor at *International Studies Quarterly* in 2015 and 2016. He can be reached at dkn6@georgetown.edu.

Daniel H. Nexon is associate professor in the Department of Government and the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. From 2014 to 2018 he has served as lead editor of *International Studies Quarterly*. He may be reached at dhn2@georgetown.edu.

David A. M. Peterson is professor in the Department of Political Science at Iowa State University and editor of *Political Behavior*. He can be reached at davamp@iastate.edu.

Guido Ropers is a PhD student at the Graduate School of Economic and Social Sciences at the University of Mannheim. Since August 2016, he has worked as an editorial assistant at the *American Political Science Review*. He may be reached at gropers@mail.uni-mannheim.de.

David Samuels is Distinguished McKnight University Professor at the University of Minnesota. He has been coediting *Comparative Political Studies* since 2013. He may be reached at dsamuels@umn.edu.

Carissa L. Tudor is a PhD candidate in the Department of Politics at Princeton University. She may be reached at ctudor@princeton.edu.

Deborah J. Yashar is professor of politics & international affairs at Princeton University and lead editor of *World Politics*. She has been affiliated with *World Politics* since 1999: as an associate editor (1999–2003), a member of editorial committee (2003 to date), book review coeditor (2004–2006), and lead editor since 2013. She may be reached at dyashar@princeton.edu.