

# A Gender Gap in Publishing? Women's Representation in Edited Political Science Books\*

**A. Lanethea Mathews**, *Syracuse University*  
**Kristi Andersen**, *Syracuse University*

Academic publishing is tightly connected to college and university faculty members' prospects for promotion, tenure, salary increases, and professional recognition, and is often regarded as an index of one's scholarly contribution to a given field (Blackburn and Lawrence 1995). This is problematic because, as many researchers have clearly documented, women publish less than men. Because female faculty produce fewer publications on average than their male counterparts, they also receive lower pay and are more likely to hold the ranks of assistant and associate professor (Blackburn and Lawrence 1995; Creamer 1998; Dinauer and Ondeck 1999; Roland and Fontanesi-Seime 1996; Schneider 1998). And, although gender differences in publishing have narrowed in most disciplines over the past two decades, in most cases, men still out-publish women by a ratio of two to one (Roland and Fontanesi-Seime 1996). Among the factors cited as being important to publishing regularly are ambition, reputation, merit, institutional support and resources, professional networks and collegial/

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**A. Lanethea Mathews** is a doctoral candidate in political science at Syracuse University. Her research concerns women's civic activities and political power, gender and American political development, and women and electoral politics.

**Kristi Andersen** is professor and chair, department of political science, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University. Her most recent book is *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal*. She has written on women and politics, public opinion, and political parties.

mentoring relationships, research topic and methodology, and time.

We wish to contribute to the growing body of research on gender and academic publishing by examining male and female publishing in edited collections of political science literature. By focusing on edited books, we want to draw attention to professional and collegial networks that are essential to initiating and sustaining publishing. After briefly reviewing the literature on sex differences in academic publishing and the status of women in political science, we examine 78 edited political science books and compare women's representation as contributing authors to their representation in the American Political Science Association.

## Gender Disparities in Academic Publishing

According to a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the Higher Education Research Institute found that, as of 1989, 43% of women in colleges and 20% in universities had never published a single journal article. The same was true of only 23% of men in colleges and 7% in universities (Schneider 1998). Gender gaps in productivity persist even when controlling for educational origin, academic rank, institutional type, and professional age (Creamer 1998; Dinauer and Ondeck 1999; Schneider 1998). In addition, men continue to out-publish women even in fields in which women have been receiving the majority of Ph.D.s for some time (Creamer 1998; Schneider 1998).

Women are also less likely to be highly prolific writers (writers who

account for a large proportion of the literature in their field) (Creamer 1998). Men are three times more likely to have published more than 10 journal articles than are their female counterparts (Dinauer and Ondeck 1999).<sup>1</sup> Creamer (1998) suggested that prolific publishers are disproportionately white males because the career paths, work assignments, research interests, and access to resources conducive to frequent publishing are more characteristic of white men than of women and minorities.

Women's lower publishing rates are not indicative of less ambition. A survey of full-time college and university faculty at 384 institutions revealed that 54% of female faculty and 58% of male faculty considered becoming an authority in their field important. Likewise, 44% of female faculty and 46% of male faculty considered obtaining recognition from their colleagues to be important (Dinauer and Ondeck 1999).

Other explanations for the gender gap in academic publishing are that female faculty are more likely to work in nontenure-track, part-time, or temporary positions, to work at teaching colleges, and to lack access to the institutional support, resources, or time needed for prolific publishing (Roland and Fontanesi-Semi 1996; Schneider 1998). Even when all else is equal, female faculty tend to be more involved than their male counterparts in activities that detract from research, such as advising, administrative work, and serving on departmental committees (APSA Committee on the Status of Women 1992; Sarkees and McGlen 1992; Schneider 1998).

Women are also more likely than

men to interrupt their careers for child-bearing, child-rearing, caring for an elderly relative, or supporting a spouse (Dinauer and Ondeck 1999; Long 1990; McElrath 1992; Schneider 1998). However, family responsibilities probably have less effect on women's publishing activity than work assignments and time. Even when controlling for marital status, women are less likely to publish than are their male counterparts (Sarkees and McGlen 1992).

Cheryl Young (1995) suggested that the content of women's scholarship may lead to the marginalization of the voices, perspectives, and methods of women in top academic publications. According to Young, women's research styles and topic choices might not fit traditional notions of what many reviewers and editors consider to be the best or most rigorous research. Few articles about women and politics, for example, have been published in leading political science journals other than *Women & Politics* (Sarkees and McGlen 1992). In consequence, women's publishing opportunities may be restricted, or ghettoized, to specific and gendered domains.

Finally, women's lower publishing rates may be a consequence of a "chilly climate" in some academic departments. Women are more likely than men to be excluded and isolated from the types of professional and social networks that define the life of a department (Anonymous and Anonymous 1999; APSA Committee on the Status of Women 1992; Long 1990; Tripp-Knowles 1995). Subtle (and not-so-subtle) forms of discrimination include exclusion from institutional rewards like tenure and salary increases, sexual harassment, and a disregard for feminist or gender-related research (Benokraitis 1998; Creamer 1998; Hopkins 1999; McElrath 1992; Tripp-Knowles 1995). Likewise, women may be less likely than men to receive visiting appointments and participate in editorial boards, professional panels, committees, and research teams—activities that encourage the building of professional networks and contacts outside home institutions. As Lewis noted, building professional networks is essential

for scholars wishing to initiate and sustain a publishing career.

It is almost a truism to state that those who do not have a number of students, colleagues, or mentors to call new ideas to their attention, those who are not consulted by others for advice and information, those who are not in correspondence with those on the frontiers of research, those who do not have friends in high and important places who might help them advance their careers, are not in the best position to know what is going on in their field. And as far as such factors are concerned, women are in a more disadvantaged position than men. . . . For most, productivity is a function of one's position in the communication system in a discipline. (1975, 134)

Many women first experience gender-based professional inequality in graduate school. Female graduate students often have a harder time than males finding and developing meaningful mentor relationships with senior scholars and may receive less credit for collaborative research when they do develop such relationships (APSA Committee on the Status of Women 1992; Creamer 1998). Male mentors may have different relationships to male proteges than to female proteges, and some academic departments still suffer from a lack of female researchers and mentors. The failure of female graduate students to develop meaningful networks in graduate school has an important impact on the rest of their careers. Indeed, Long (1990) found that collaboration with a mentor is the most important factor affecting a faculty person's publishing productivity following the completion of his or her doctoral training.<sup>2</sup> Thus, gender seems to have a cumulative, if indirect, effect on academic publishing. When a small unit of time is analyzed, gender differences in publishing productivity are generally small (Blackburn and Lawrence 1995), but become greater as longer units of time are considered (Creamer 1998).

In sum, it seems women's publishing productivity is constrained by the particular gendered milieu in which they work and by their placement

outside of professional networks and collegial relationships. Institutional policies and practices may contribute to, but do not determine, whether a faculty member initiates and sustains a strong publishing record. However, as Creamer (1998) noted, colleagues external to a scholar's immediate institution are important sources of recognition and reinforcement. Because women are less likely than men to be fully integrated into collegial networks, they find it more difficult to receive the acclaim necessary to partake of the institutional rewards that increase publishing productivity.<sup>3</sup>

## Women in Political Science

In 1992, Sarkees and McGlen reported that while women continue to obtain record numbers of political science degrees, the percentage of female faculty in political science departments lags considerably behind that of many other disciplines. Likewise, female political scientists continue to be overrepresented in part-time and nontenure-track positions—positions which make publishing and the forming of collegial networks and relationships more difficult.<sup>4</sup> In addition to these obstacles, female political scientists are less likely than males to say that they have adequate resources for scholarly work, that they are involved in department information networks, or that their colleagues refer students interested in research to them for collaboration and mentorship.

These differences, which remain even when controlling for rank, tenure, and institution type, are reflected in low publishing rates among female political scientists in top political science journals. Between 1980 and 1990, women authored or coauthored only 12% of all articles published in the *American Political Science Review* (Sarkees and McGlen 1992). Looking beyond the *APSR*, Young (1995) examined 15 top political science journals and found that only 24% of all articles published between 1983 and 1994 had at least one female author. Only 18% of the articles examined had one female author only. In contrast,

**TABLE 1**  
**Male and Female Membership in APSA Fields of Specialization, 1995–97**

	Total Members	Male*	Female*	Percent Male	Percent Female
Electoral Behavior	168	136	32	81%	19%
Environmental Policy	477	366	111	77	23
Latin American Politics	538	396	142	74	26
Political Philosophy and Theory	2177	1707	470	78	22
International Politics	3587	2776	811	77	23

\*We divided members whose sex was unknown according to the proportions of known males and females.

over 80% of the articles had a single male author or a male lead author. Male authors dominated the publications in every political science journal examined except *Women & Politics*, in which 82.6% of the articles had at least one female author (only 30% of the articles published in *Women & Politics* had one male author). These findings suggest that articles related to women and/or gender have a much lower chance of being published in top-rated political science journals that are not specifically targeted to such concerns. Indeed, in just the first 12 years of its existence, *Women & Politics* published one-third of the total number of women and politics articles ever published in the top 15 political science journals combined (Kelly, Williams, and Fisher 1994).<sup>5</sup> Political science, like other male-dominated disciplines, may be resistant to research that concerns women and gender (Sarkees and McGlen 1992, 1999; Young 1995).

### Data Collection and Method

We examined the proportion of male and female authors contribut-

ing to 78 edited political science books because, perhaps more so than articles in journals, contributions to edited books are structured by networks and personal connections among scholars. In this sense, examining the representation of women in edited books may provide clues as to how female and male faculty develop the kinds of networks that eventuate in publications. What is at issue here is not female publishing productivity *per se*, but rather whether female political scientists are represented in important research and professional networks compared to their proportion in the discipline as a whole.

A sample consisting of all advertised edited books was taken from the advertising sections of four issues of the *American Political Science Review* published in 1996 and the official program for the American Political Science Association's 1995 Annual Meeting. Selecting books through advertisements allowed us to examine books published at a particular point in time, rather than previously published or highly cited books. This initial sample included 364 books, a majority

**TABLE 2**  
**Male and Female Authorship by Field, 1995–97**

	Books	Authors	Male Authors	Female Authors
Electoral Behavior	10	182	89%	11%
Environmental Policy	10	152	84	16
Latin American Politics	6	91	59	41
Political Philosophy and Theory	30	307	70	30
International Politics	22	310	86	14

of which were published between 1995 and 1997.<sup>6</sup> We chose five categories to represent the diversity of fields within political science—electoral behavior, environmental policy, Latin American politics, political philosophy and theory, and international politics—and retained in our sample books falling into these five categories for which we could identify all the contributors. We collected the names of contributing authors from the actual book itself if it was located in the Syracuse University library, from the original advertisement, or by contacting the publisher via email or phone. We excluded from our analysis books for which the contributing authors are deceased (e.g., those containing works by authors such as Adam Smith and Karl Marx). This resulted in a sample of 78 books. We then calculated the percentages of female and male contributing authors for each book and for all the books in each category.

To determine whether women were underrepresented among authors contributing to edited political science books, we compared our findings to the percentages of female and male scholars in each subject category published in APSA's 1995–97 *Directory of Members*. APSA membership rolls are helpful in two respects. First, because members report their own fields of specialization, the directory gives some indication of how political scientists characterize themselves and their own research. Second, while not every political scientist participates in APSA, membership reflects a certain commitment to the profession and scholarship in the field as well as, possibly, an eagerness to participate in the kinds of influential networks that lead to publications and academic advancement (Young 1995).

### Analysis and Findings

As reported by the American Political Science Association's membership office, women now constitute about 26% of the total membership. In 1995, this figure was about 23% (Young 1995). Table 1 indicates the proportion of male and female

**TABLE 3**  
**Female Representation by Field, 1995–97**

	Female Members	Female Authors	Membership-Authorship Difference	Adjusted Female Authors*	Adjusted Difference
Electoral Behavior	19%	11%	8%	11%	8%
Environmental Policy	23.3	16	7.3	16	7.3
Latin American Politics	26.4	41	-14.6	33	-6.6
Political Philosophy and Theory	21.6	30	-8.4	16	5.6
International Politics	22.6	14	8.6	14	8.6

\*Adjusted figures exclude those edited volumes that contain an unusual percentage of female authors due to their content, such as volumes about “feminist interpretations” of political theory or “feminine” subjects.

APSA members in each field of specialization examined for this study. Fairly consistent with the proportion of female APSA members, the percentages of women in each area of specialization considered hovers between 19 and 26.

An overview of male and female authorship by each subject area is presented in Table 2. For the 78 edited books examined, women made up only 22% of all contributing authors—a percentage consistent with their overall membership in APSA from 1995 to 1999. Although the gender gap in publishing appears to be narrower in some subfields rather than others (e.g., 41% of contributing authors in Latin American politics are women), in all cases men appear to out-publish women. Women make up only 11% of authors contributing to electoral behavior edited books, and only 14% of those contributing to international politics collections.

As shown in Table 2, the percentage of female authors contributing to books in some fields exceeds female representation in APSA for those fields. However, the figures in Table 2 reflect the inclusion of collections of gender-related research and works of feminist theory, subfields which are dominated by women. Table 3 reports the basic gender differences among APSA members and contributing authors by field and also the difference when edited books that contain an unusual percentage of female authors due to their content are excluded from the sample. Once these “outliers” are excluded, women’s representation as contributing authors in

every field except Latin American politics drops below their proportion of APSA membership.<sup>7</sup> The results in the political philosophy and theory category are most striking. When gender-related content is controlled, the percentage of female contributors drops almost by half, from 30% to 16%. Consistent with Young’s (1995) finding that most gender-related research is confined to *Women & Politics*, gender-related research (particularly in political theory) seems to be ghettoized into particular books.

Table 4 presents evidence for whether women’s participation as editors or coeditors has any bearing on whether females were more likely to author contributions to the books under study. As indicated, women make up only 15% of authors contributing to those books edited by male editors and coeditors only. However, women make up more than half (52%) of authors for books with a female lead editor or at least one female coeditor. These results suggest that establishing professional networks is important for women pursuing publishing opportu-

nities and that these networks themselves are in part structured by gender relations.<sup>8</sup>

## Discussion

Three important findings from above bear repetition and further elaboration. First, the percentage of females contributing to edited political science books is relatively consistent with the percentage of women in the American Political Science Association. Second, women’s representation among contributing authors falls considerably once controls for content and topic are introduced. Thus, while women are increasingly entering the research and publishing world, their participation is often relegated to separate and gendered domains. Third, female political scientists may be publishing less in edited books because they are not able to establish the professional connections and collegial networks that would facilitate publishing. Given the disparity in female participation in female-edited books and male-edited books (52% and 15%, respectively), it is also likely that female political scientists have fewer

**TABLE 4**  
**Women’s Representation in Female Edited or Coedited Volumes**

	Total Volumes*	Male Authors	Female Authors
All	78	88%	22%
Female Edited or Coedited	16	48%	52%
No Female Editors	62	85%	15%

\*From adjusted figures in Table 1.

opportunities to establish connections with their male colleagues than with other women in the discipline.

Political science departments and the discipline as a whole can take steps to increase female faculty publishing rates and recognition of the contributions of female researchers and publishers. Young (1995) suggested that as gender-related studies become more theory driven and data dependent, traditional political science journals will become more

accepting of articles that consider them. This will not happen, however, unless political science departments begin to give more attention to the experiences of their female researchers. In 1992, the APSA Committee on the Status of Women suggested that improving the status of women in political science required accepting both the differing points of view that women bring to the discipline and the corresponding ways in which

these points of view are altering the discipline.

The committee also recommended that departments take steps to improve the likelihood of women succeeding at research by, among other things, enhancing the visibility of female faculty within the department and profession, encouraging mentoring, and providing research support. Our findings suggest that mentoring and forming professional networks are particularly important.

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## Notes

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1. Creamer estimated that about 15% of all faculty produce about 50% of all publications.

2. Long (1990) also found that opportunities for collaboration were significantly reduced for female graduate students with children. This obstacle to predoctoral productivity has a significant impact on initiating and sustaining a record of publishing.

3. Institutional reward structure is most influential in determining whether a faculty person begins a publishing record early in his or her career. Although the institution plays a role in helping faculty, a commitment to publishing (especially through work assignments), time, and interest in research are stronger predictors of publishing activity than is institutional reward structure, including salary (Creamer 1998).

4. Since the 1980s, women have constituted a majority of both undergraduate and graduate political science students but, as of 1990-91, women made up only 8.1% of all full professors in the institutions participating in the American Political Science Association annual departmental survey. Between 1972 and 1990, the biggest gains for women in political science have been at the instructor and assistant professor levels, suggesting that women may encounter a "glass ceiling" in political

science departments (Sarkees and McGlen 1992, 55).

5. Even when women do publish in political science journals, they are less likely to be cited by their male colleagues. The compounding effect of lower publication rates and lower citation rates leads to the perception that few women are top scholars in their field (Creamer 1998; Young 1995).

6. Four books were published in 1993, three in 1994, and one in 1992.

7. Publishing among scholars who study "ethnicity" or "race" mimics the experience of scholars who study gender (Young 1995).

8. This is consistent with Ward, Gast and Grant (1992). Their study of citations to sociology articles revealed that women scholars and gender-related research have high visibility within a network of women scholars.

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