

Data Snapshot: The Proportion of Women in the Political Science Profession

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The American Political Science Association recently analyzed data on political science professors in the United States, providing a look into the numbers of women in the academic political science profession. Of nearly 13,000 political science professors in the US professoriate, women compose 36% of assistant professors and 26% of the professoriate overall (Table 1).

Table 1: Breakdown of Political Science Faculty by Rank and Sex, 2006¹
 Number in parenthesis is percentage of rank

	Assistant	Associate	Full	Total
Female	36%	28%	17%	26%
Male	64%	72%	83%	74%
Total	3791	3655	5436	12882

Since 1991, the first year that APSA has consistent and comparable data, the percentage of women has increased gradually. Women composed 19% of the professoriate in 1991 and now make up 26%, a 7% increase over a 15-year period (Table 2).

Table 2: Progression of the Sex Gap in Political Science, 1991-2006

	Male	Female
1991	81%	19%
1995	78%	22%
2001	76%	24%
2006	74%	26%

Major Specializations by Sex²

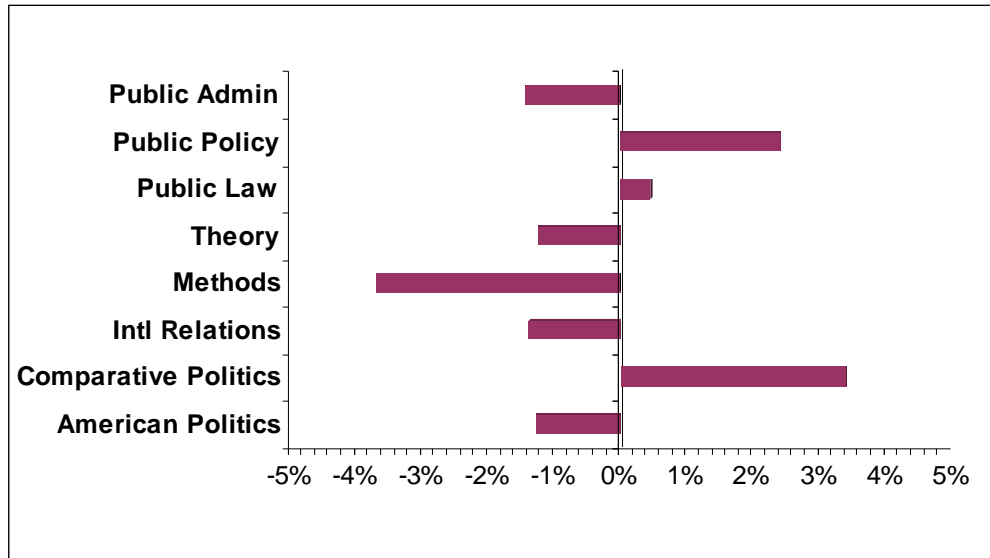
Professors of different ranks and sex have a slight tendency to identify different specializations as their major area of study. While comparative politics, American

¹ Data are from APSA's database of all political science faculty

² Please note: Faculty stated an average of 2 specializations, but did not rank them. Thus, the number of faculty who indicated their specializations will not add up to the total number of faculty for which there is data. The numbers these figures below are based on are out of the total number of faculty who responded to the question, and why the numbers, if totaled across will be equal to more than the number of professors who responded to the question.

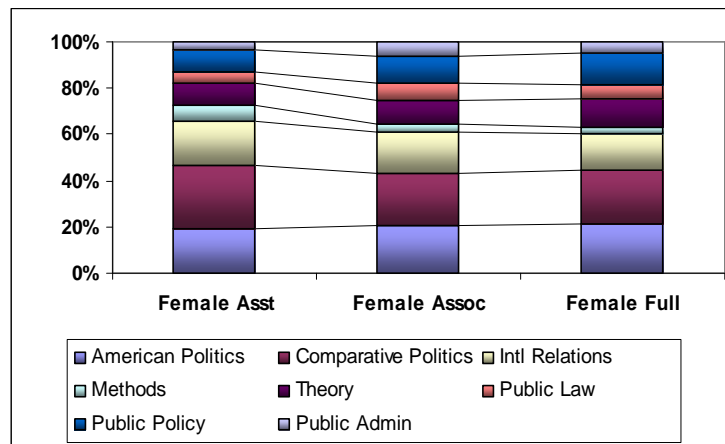
politics, and international relations are the most common specializations for all political science scholars, on a relative basis women are slightly more likely than men to be found in the fields of comparative politics and public policy, while men are more likely to identify research methods as their major field (Figure 1). Both men and women name the other major specializations in approximately equal proportions.

Figure 1: Specialization Preference by Percentage Difference between Women and Men



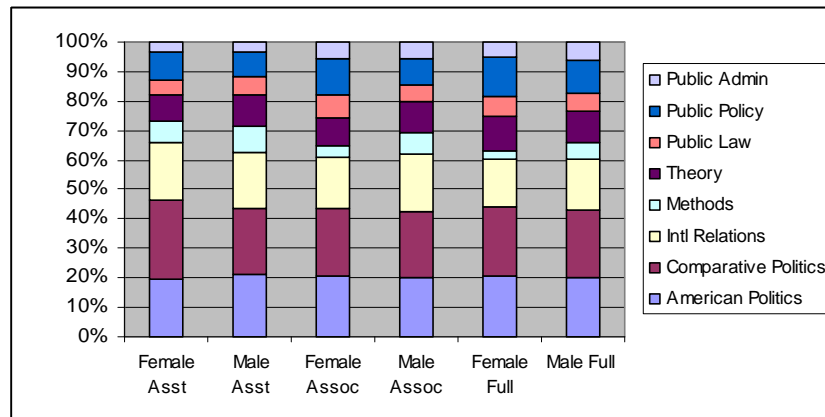
Differences in specialization occur across academic rank as well. Female assistant professors proportionally study comparative politics, international relations, and methods more frequently than women in more senior ranks, while more female associate professors are found in public law and public administration (Figure 2). Compared with females at other ranks, female full professors more frequently specialize in theory and public policy.

Figure 2: Female Professors' Field Preferences by Rank



When comparing across rank and sex by the eight primary specializations, other patterns emerge (Figure 3). Female assistant professors are more likely to study comparative politics and public policy than male assistant professors. Male assistant professors are more likely than females at the same rank to identify methods, American politics or theory as their specialization. At the associate level, female associate professors are more likely than male associate professors to be in public law and public policy, while male associate professors are more likely to be in international relations and methods. Female full professors are slightly more likely than male full professors to be in the public policy and political theory specializations, while male full professors are more likely to be in international relations and methods.

Figure 3: Major Field by Rank and Gender



Conclusion

Women comprise just over one-quarter of the US professoriate in political science, though they are better represented in the junior ranks. Diversifying the discipline by gender remains an important challenge that clearly calls for attention both to entrance into the professoriate and retention.