

## Introduction

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## **introduction: women in european political science**

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The ECPR has a highly active and impressive standing group on Gender and Politics; and clearly there are senior women in political science such as Nancy Fraser, Pippa Norris, Drude Dahlerup, Joni Loveduski and the late Elinor Ostrom, to name but only a few. Indeed, women have gained considerable ground since the days when Universities were ‘male only’ places. Yet, women are still under represented across the academy (see, for example, *Nature* [2013]) on the under representation of women in science). With respect to Political Science, there has been both growing recognition of the under-representation of women in the discipline (e.g. Bates, Jenkins & Pflaeger et al, 2012), and increasing discussion about the issues that women may face both as political scientists (Karpowitz, Mendelberg & Shaker, 2012; Hesli, Lee, Mitchell, (2012) and in academia more widely (Savigny, 2015). This symposium seeks

to contribute to this growing debate about the status of women in the academy by exploring the position of women in European political science. The symposium is structured around the central question: How are women (descriptively) represented in political science? All contributors have reflected on this question either by exploring where women are positioned in institutions within the country in which they work, or looking more widely at external structures, such as HE policy, or citation practices.

While the pages of this journal are not sufficient to enable a case study from all constituent European countries, we have sought to offer a sample, as a starting point for comparative analysis and discussion. We have pieces from Finland (as an illustration from Scandinavia, often perceived to be at the forefront of 'equality' issues), from Germany and the UK (which provide comparative examples of some of the larger national political science communities) and Spain (as an illustration from Southern Europe and of a country in which the discipline is comparatively young). What these pieces collectively suggest and remind us is that women may be disadvantaged structurally (and this is not to deny that some men are also disadvantaged in this structure) and that this structural disadvantage is not specific to national boundaries. The source of this structural disadvantage, for many feminists, is located within the patriarchy (cf. Millett, 1977) with disadvantages becoming institutionalised through cultural norms and instantiated in daily working practices. Our premise is that recognition, description and discussion of those structural disadvantages provides a site where change becomes possible. As such, discussion of practical possibilities is the focus of the conclusion.

## **ARTICLES**

Johanna Kantola locates her analysis of women in Finnish Political Science both historically and in terms of recent higher education reforms. She notes that, while some positive

developments can be identified, in 2013 only 8% of women hold professorial positions. Gabriele Abels and Dorian Woods highlight the ways in which women are under-represented in German Political Science, again with particular under-representation at senior level. They argue that while some progress has been made because of legislative reform, gender inequalities are still in evidence across the profession – with women representing only 28.6% of the professoriate in 2013. In her data presentation on women in Spanish Political Science, Arantxa Elizondo shows that while women may be equal in numbers in gaining PhDs, men are likely to predominate among the lecturing staff. She demonstrates that, while women make up about a third of the profession in Spain, they are still scarce at senior professorial levels: only 7.3% in 2011/12. In their article on UK political science, Lisa Harrison and Jacqui Briggs place the discipline within a broader context both in terms of UK academia and higher education reform and in terms of the status of women in other sectors of society. They explore the gendered nature of the dichotomy between teaching and research and the opportunities and risks this poses to female academics operating within a newly marketised higher education environment. In their article, Helen Williams, Stephen Bates, Laura Jenkins, Darcy Luke and Kelly Rogers offer a differing perspective on women's representation in Political Science, exploring the way that women are both under-represented as sole authors, and over-represented as co-authors, in the pages of journals. Although all the articles demonstrate at least some positive developments, these studies also paint concerning pictures, about cultural norms, and the ways in which institutions, and in this case, an academic discipline, may operate in gendered ways. These case studies in their variety of foci thus point to the complex and myriad ways in which women may be structurally and culturally disadvantaged within the academy.

## **STRUCTURES, CULTURES AND AGENTS.**

Cynthia Enloe (2013) reminds us that to ‘take women seriously’ in our analysis enables us to reflect on the ways in which institutions can be culturally constructed as gendered. All of the papers highlight that, despite different European cultural contexts, women face structural barriers to their progression in the contexts that are examined here. The descriptive representation of women in the discipline, as outlined in the pages that follow, point to the existence of a complexity of iterative and interactive structures, which can become culturally embedded. The papers within the symposium also draw our attention to the existence of national initiatives in place designed to counter existing structural barriers, such as equal opportunities legislation. However, the data that we have invites us to ask: if these structural remedies are in place, why do these inequalities persist? For some this is an issue around ‘leaky pipelines’ or ‘chilly climates’ (Hall & Sandler, 1982; for a critique, see Savigny, 2015). The focus here is often on childcare: Women leave the profession to have children, or are disadvantaged by children in their absence at conferences or the lack of opportunities to be part of research teams. The bigger issue this points towards is the positioning of women as primary child carers. While women may be child bearers, it is our society and cultural practices which constitutes them as child *carers*. An academia which recognises parental responsibilities more fully is likely to be better positioned to support women’s advancement.

Positioning women as child carers is, of course, not the only way in which women can be disadvantaged. Recent research has pointed to the ways in which ‘unconscious gender bias’ (Editorial, *Nature*, 2013) can work against women in the academy. For example, a recent experiment has demonstrated how selectors behaved when faced with candidates with identical CVs, they overwhelmingly concluded that the male candidate was the better one (Moss-Racusin *et al.*, 2012). Yet earlier research has shown when faced with gender-blind CVs, it was women who fared better (Goldin & Rouse, 2000).

Women themselves are also less likely to put themselves forward and the absence of role models may well have an unconscious effect (Hesli *et al.* 2012) Over thirty years ago Adrienne Rich argued that ‘The University is likewise a replica of the patriarchal family. .. [and] it is the absence of the brilliant and creative mother, or woman teacher, that is finally of more significance than the presence of the brilliant and creative male’ (1979/1986: 139). Where leadership norms are masculinised (Amey & Eddy, 2002; Amey & Twombly, 1992) women may well become disincentivised, or not recognize the cultural and structural barriers in existence, and come to perceive themselves as not ‘good enough’. For Knights and Richards (2003) masculinised discourses are at the heart of sex discrimination in organisations (which may play out in structural arenas such as selection and promotions criteria, as well as in cultural practice for example, in expectations such as working beyond 5pm).

Clearly we cannot tackle all the underlying issues in the short space of this symposium, but what we can do is open up a space where we can talk about this, with a view to improving ways in which we as a profession tackle this issue. That conversation is continued over the following pages of this symposium in which women’s descriptive positioning is charted in a number of national and structural contexts.

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