

Women in Academia: Key Studies on Gender in Political Science

Key problems:

- Leaky Pipeline
- Double Bind
- Gender Devaluation
- A 'Chilly Climate'
- The Chronological Crunch
- Culture of Research

Some key strategies:

- Reform institutional climate
- Mentoring: focus on graduate students and early years leading up to tenure
- Reforming the culture and style of performing our research (and how this might not just have important outcomes for women alone)

Leaky Pipeline

Fewer women in higher ranks of political science, some may abandon the academy altogether. Family accounts for lower rate at which women obtain tenure-track jobs (Wolfinger et al., 2008).

Leaky Pipeline Strategies:

1. Raise expectations that senior faculty and professional bodies will mentor, train, and conduct more professional interventions for early-career political scientists in teaching, research, and professional networking

Double Bind

"situations in which options are reduced to a very few and all of them expose one to penalty, censure, or deprivation" (Anonymous and Anonymous, 1999). "When confronted with women faculty, students may expect a more nurturing role, but then judge that behavior as less than professorial" (Andersen and Miller, 1997; cf. Williams et al., 2006).

The problem is not just that of students' perceptions of women, but of women's perceptions of women. Williams et al. (2006) explain that: "The sensationalized depiction of the 'mommy wars' neglects to recognize that these are fights among women over what are proper roles for women."

Double Bind Strategies:

Student evaluations:

1. teaching evaluations should involve multiple methods
2. should legitimate and value universities' in-service training as well as evaluations
3. should make tenure committee members aware that student reactions to male and female professors' teaching styles have been found to differ—in particular, the way they evaluate 'likeability' and 'competence' (Andersen and Miller, 1997)

Attitudinal changes in the department:

1. Williams et al. (2006) suggest recourse to law
2. Collective action, although this can be seen as 'stirring up trouble' and comes at a cost to one's individual career (Kantola, 2008)
3. Recognise that some issues cross gender lines (Mackenzie and Vromen, 2012)

"Service is for women" or Gender Devaluation

In analysis of interviews with 80 female faculty members at a large Research One university, Monroe et al. (2008) suggest that overt discrimination has largely given way to less obvious, but still deeply entrenched inequities. The status and power of an authoritative position is downplayed when the position is held by a woman. Women are more likely to do service.

Gender Devaluation Strategies:

1. Clear definitions and expectations of 'service' at departmental and university level
2. Written guidelines for graduate study. When standards of performance are informal and unspecified, bias by gender and race is more likely to operate (Fox, 2000)
3. Provide adequate mentoring for grad students, women in particular

A "Chilly Climate"

APSA's 2004 report confirms that there still exists an institutional climate that is often inhospitable to women students and young faculty of both sexes, with too few professional development opportunities via mentoring and other interventions, including lack of access to "unofficial flows of information" (Kantola, 2008).

Noteworthy, however, is Hesli and Burrell's (1995) finding that reports of a chilly climate are likely to occur less frequently among faculty members who are further along in their careers.

Chilly Climate strategies:

1. Incidents of harassment should be dealt with promptly and effectively
2. Hold workshops on various subjects, provide an avenue for networking
3. Reduce or eliminate part-time and off-the-track positions
4. Examine content of courses offered in Political Science in an effort to improve the culture and style of performing political science research (cf. Beckworth, 2005)
5. Critical mass: women's presence in institutions, on editorial boards, may be a catalyst for higher female publications productivity (Childs and Krook, 2006)
6. 30% of all recruitment panels should be women (Mackenzie and Vromen, 2012).
Open recruitment processes are more likely to recruit women, whereas closed recruitment processes where individuals are cherry-picked, particularly for short-term positions, are more likely to recruit men. (Kantola, 2008; cf. Valian, 2004).
7. Availability of pregnancy and parental leaves

However, family friendly policies are a double-edged sword:

Taking advantage of family-friendly policies may reduce professional perception and, in some cases, result in denial of tenure (cf. "Faux Family Friendly" in *Chronicle of Higher Education*). Similarly, there is evidence that family-friendly policies allow men to produce more research, while women tend to take care of their family (Hakim, 2008).

Chronological Crunch

According to the APSA report (2004), the most intense demands for research, publications, and service in tenure-track positions overlap with the heaviest family responsibilities. Compounding these problems, is that promotion typically requires relocation, while significant overseas experience is often seen as a hallmark of excellence (Cowden et al., 2012).

Chronological Crunch Strategies:

1. Publicise parental leave policies of universities like Duke and Minnesota, and urge department chairs to lobby for modern policies
2. Offer more flexibility in scheduling classes and department/committee meetings
3. Provide help in finding jobs for partners/spouses
4. Senior scholars should identify information and put it in the hands of junior scholars
5. Assess/amend requirements for grants (esp. those that require recipients to be out of the country for extended period, with no funds for visits/support of dependent care)

Culture of Research

APSA identifies a culture of research that offers insufficient opportunity and support for collaboration, peer work-shopping of drafts, idea-sharing, and networking. Additionally, "political science has not yet developed a full appreciation of gender as an analytical construct." (Tolleston-Reinhart and Carroll, 2006).

Culture of Research Strategies:

1. Reading lists and course content should try to include scholarship by women and gender-focused scholarship (Mackenzie and Vromen, 2012)
2. Provide incentives and training and possibly compensation for faculty who mentor post-graduate students