

Still Marginalized? Gender and LGBTQIA+ Scholarship in Top Political Science Journals

Jennifer M. Piscopo, *Royal Holloway University of London, UK*

ABSTRACT

Is political science research that explores gender and LGBTQIA+ politics still underrepresented in the discipline's top journals? This article examines publication trends in gender research and LGBTQIA+ research in five top political science journals, between 2017 and 2023 (inclusive). I find that gender research and LGBTQIA+ research together account for 5% to 7% of published research in the selected top journals; however, most of this research is on gender politics rather than LGBTQIA+ politics. Overall, gender research and LGBTQIA+ research largely appears in top journals when it conforms to disciplinary norms about methods and author gender. The majority of published gender and LGBTQIA+ research is quantitative. Men author gender research at rates almost three times their membership in the American Political Science Association's Women, Gender, and Politics research section and also are overrepresented as authors of LGBTQIA+ research. This study suggests that editorial teams' signaling influences which manuscripts land at which journals.

Is political science research that explores gender and LGBTQIA+ politics still underrepresented in the discipline's top journals? Research on structurally marginalized social groups helps political scientists analyze countless political phenomena, from measuring the depth and strength of democracy to understanding voter mobilization, electoral and party politics, social movements, and international conflict—among other topics. Yet, political science has not always regarded all axes of marginalization as equally serious lines of academic inquiry. In particular, research exploring gender and LGBTQIA+ politics traditionally has been regarded as “niche” and treated as less rigorous. For instance, the 2005 American Political Science Association (APSA) report on Women's Advancement in Political Science documented an “outright hostility toward feminist scholarship” (American Political Science Association 2005, 13). At the time, articles about gender, women, and politics appeared rarely in top political science journals, and women

graduate students and junior scholars reported being actively discouraged from pursuing gender research (American Political Science Association 2005). Accounts focusing on the discipline's LGBTQIA+ members reached similar conclusions about LGBTQIA+ research. In 2011, for example, Smith (2011, 35) reflected that political science “frames any consideration of LGBT issues as either aberrant or trivial” and “thus the LGBT community is marginalized individually and collectively.”

Current evidence paints a more hopeful picture, at least for gender research. Barnett et al. (2023) find that although political science journal prestige is negatively correlated with publishing gender research, some top journals recently increased their gender output. In some cases, editors have acknowledged gaps and are committed to remedying them. For example, when the all-women editorial team began their 2020–2024 term at the *American Political Science Review* (APSR), their vision statement read: “We are committed to increasing the range of research topics published in the journal, since we believe a critical marker of excellence in a political science journal with a global audience is its engagement with the fundamental, foundational, and constitutive roles of,

Jennifer M. Piscopo  is professor of gender and politics at Royal Holloway University of London. She can be reached at Jennifer.Piscopo@rhul.ac.uk.

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inter alia, race, class, gender, and sexuality in structuring power, politics, and policy” (American Political Science Association 2019).

To what extent have top political science journals met this commitment to publishing more research on gender and sexuality? I extend the work of Barnett et al. (2023), who examine trends in gender research in 37 political science journals between 1980 and 2019. Building on their article, I analyze the most recent seven years and add LGBTQIA+ research. My data are from 2017 to 2023 (inclusive) and cover all peer-reviewed items in five top political science journals: the *APSR*, the *American Journal of Political Science* (*AJPS*), the *Journal of Politics* (*JOP*), the *British Journal of Political Science* (*BJPS*), and *Comparative Political Studies* (*CPS*). By “gender and politics” and “gender research,” I mean scholarship examining how hegemonic and/or cisgender constructs about men and women and/or about masculinities and femininities shape politics, policy, and the lived experiences of men and women as political actors. By “LGBTQIA+ politics” and “LGBTQIA+ research,” I mean scholarship on the politics and policy of sexuality, gender identity, queerness, LGBTQIA+ identities and inclusion, and the experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals as political actors.

The 2020–2024 *APSR* editorial team’s tenure informed the period selected. Along with their statement, the editors’ profiles suggested that *APSR* would publish more gender and LGBTQIA+ research. Collectively, the editors represented considerable expertise in studying marginalization and inclusion, including gender and sexuality. By choosing the period 2017–2023, I analyze overall recent trends and compare the three years corresponding to

conforms to certain norms about which methods “count” and which authors utilize these methods, then gendered patterns among *scholars* are being reproduced even if gender and LGBTQIA+ *scholarship* is becoming more mainstream.

I find evidence that these patterns indeed persist. The publication rates of both gender research and LGBTQIA+ research in the selected top journals has improved, relative to the period studied by Barnett et al. (2023) and especially recently (2021–2023). Gender research and LGBTQIA+ research together represent 5% to 7% of top journals’ publications from 2017 to 2023. However, most of these items are gender research, indicating that gender research has become more mainstream when compared to LGBTQIA+ research. Still, any mainstreaming for both subfields has been achieved through conforming to disciplinary norms: almost all gender and LGBTQIA+ research published by the five top journals is empirical and uses quantitative methods. And while the increase in gender research has benefited women authors—that is, women publish more gender items in top journals than non-gender items—men nevertheless author a much larger share of gender items (22%) than their membership in APSA’s Women, Gender, and Politics research section would suggest (8%) (Piscopo et al. 2023). Moreover, men are overrepresented among authors of LGBTQIA+ scholarship—although this pattern may be more sensitive to the small number of LGBTQIA+ articles overall. At present, the top political science journals are publishing more gender research and LGBTQIA+ research, and this research is predominantly quantitative and frequently conducted by men scholars.

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publications under the earlier *APSR* team (2017, 2018, and 2019) to the three years corresponding to publications under the all-women *APSR* team (2021, 2022, and 2023).

Overall and by *APSR* teams, I examine three features of published work: the items’ content, the items’ methods, and the authors’ gender. Items’ method and authors’ gender address gendered patterns among political science *scholars* that affect gender and LGBTQIA+ research within political science *scholarship*. One reason for the diminished prestige of gender and LGBTQIA+ research is the discipline’s prioritization of empirical approaches using quantitative methods and the perception (correct or not) that gender and LGBTQIA+ research is insufficiently empirical and quantitative (Ayoub 2023; Shames and Wise 2017; Teele and Thelen 2017). A triple disadvantage appears for gender research: gender scholarship is held in less prestige; most gender scholars are women; and women scholars are underrepresented in political methodology (Piscopo et al. 2023; Shames and Wise 2017; Teele and Thelen 2017). Reason exists to suspect a similar compounding disadvantage for LGBTQIA+ research: it is (presumed to be) conducted by those who identify as LGBTQIA+, who face disciplinary marginalization for reasons of their LGBTQIA+ identity and/or their perceived epistemology (Ayoub 2023; Novkov and Barclay 2010). Ultimately, if the top journals are publishing more gender and LGBTQIA+ research but this research

GENDER AND LGBTQIA+ SCHOLARS AND SCHOLARSHIP IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

This study builds on two intertwined strands of research about the profession. First, scholars point out that political science sidelines and trivializes both gender research and LGBTQIA+ research. Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll (2006) recount that the “women and politics” subfield emerged in the 1970s and solidified in 1986, when the APSA Women and Politics research section was founded. Nevertheless, they observed as late as the mid-aughts that “many political scientists remain unfamiliar with gender politics research, even in their areas of expertise” (Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll 2006, 512). Indeed, gender research was almost nonexistent in political science journals until the 1980s, and growth since the 1990s has been driven by gender-dedicated journals (Barnett et al. 2023). LGBTQIA+ research appears even more profoundly marginalized. As late as the 1990s, scholars report that *APSR* had an informal policy of desk-rejecting LGBTQIA+ research (Ayoub 2023, 160). In a 2007 APSA membership survey, respondents reported being reluctant to conduct LGBTQIA+ research for fear of discrimination or backlash (Novkov and Barclay 2010, 100). Well into the 2010s, major international conferences lacked panels that featured LGBTQIA+ scholarship (Ayoub 2023, 160). For both gender and LGBTQIA+ research, stereotypes painting gender and LGBTQIA+ scholarship

as “me-search” that is insufficiently empirical and quantitative may contribute to its minimization (Shames and Wise 2017; Teele and Thelen 2017).

Second, not all gender research and LGBTQIA+ research is conducted by people who identify as women and/or LGBTQIA+, but scholars point out that colleagues with these identities *also* face persistent marginalization within political science. Women graduate students describe their departments as “boys’ clubs” (Almasri, Read, and Vandeweerd 2022) and women receive fewer invitations to subfield conferences, workshops, and seminars (Barnes and Beaulieu 2017). Women are published and cited less frequently than men, especially in top political science journals (Atchison 2017; Breuning and Sanders 2007; Dion, Sumner, and Mitchell 2018). Women also edit top journals less frequently than men (Palmer, van Assendelft, and Stegmaier 2020). These patterns persist even when accounting for women’s underrepresentation in the discipline overall: women comprise 39% of all political science faculty and 31.5% of political science faculty at the largest PhD- and MA-granting institutions (American Political Science Association 2023). These institutions offer more research support, and so they represent the pool from which top journal authors are more likely found (Evans and Moulder 2011). Yet, women comprised only 18% to 23% of authors published by *AJPS*, *APSR*, and *JOP* between 2000 and 2015 (Teale and Thelen 2017, 435). LGBTQIA+ scholars face more hurdles, including ongoing data gaps relative to even estimating their inclusion in the profession (Novkov and Barclay 2010). Qualitative accounts emphasize the barriers faced by LGBTQIA+ colleagues, including “active and passive homophobia and transphobia in teaching, getting hired and promoted, gaining access to research funding, and publication” (Ayoub 2023, 155).

Disciplinary examination of women and gender research, on the one hand, and of LGBTQIA+ scholars and research, on the other, often has proceeded separately. Yet, the subfields have overlapped: as “women and politics” became “women, gender, and politics” (the APSA section changed its name in 2020), “gender” came to embrace the study of men and masculinities alongside the study of sexuality and sexual identity. In this article, I examine gender and LGBTQIA+ research together precisely because scholars with these identities and/or scholars researching these topics have a shared—although not an equivalent—history of marginalization within political science. By examining the subfields together, I can also compare them, revealing how their fates converge but also diverge. Specifically, I turn to (1) how often gender and LGBTQIA+ scholarship appears in certain top political science journals; and (2) how this scholarship comports to or departs from disciplinary norms around methods and author gender.

METHODS

With my supervision, an undergraduate research student compiled a database of all peer-reviewed items that appeared in five top journals (*APSR*, *AJPS*, *JOP*, *BJPS*, and *CPS*) in seven calendar years (2017–2023, inclusive). Peer-reviewed items are primarily research articles but also include letters at *APSR* and *BJPS* and shorts at *JOP*. For each of these peer-reviewed items, the student recorded the journal title, volume, issue, year, item type (research article, letter, or short), abstract, and author names. (I use “output” and “item” interchangeably to refer to the peer-reviewed article, letter, or short.) I include only those items with assigned volume and issue numbers, excluding output on first view or early view to

facilitate comparability, because journals vary in how quickly they advance pieces to early view.

After compiling the database, the research student hand-coded articles for content, methods, and authors’ gender. I manually checked all of this work. Content codes used titles and abstracts. To be coded as gender or LGBTQIA+ research, the title and abstract needed to frame the article, letter, or short in relation to theories and research questions in gender or LGBTQIA+ politics. Examples of gender items include output centering cisgender and/or sex differences in political phenomenon (e.g., political representation, candidate evaluations, and public opinion) and output explaining political or policy outcomes by appealing to gendered processes that follow hegemonic and/or cisgender ideas of men and masculinities and women and femininities. For instance, an article asking how misogyny affects voter support for Donald Trump counted as gender research because this article centers a gendered phenomenon (negative attitudes about women) to explain a political outcome. By contrast, an article asking how voters’ socioeconomic status affects support for Trump but that includes sex as a control variable in its regression models would not count as gender research because this article’s main explanatory focus is class.

This approach follows that of Barnett et al. (2023, 513), who opted to adhere “as closely as possible to a ‘literal’ reading of the article abstracts, setting aside our own proclivities to see gender implications across a wide range of topics in favor of coding articles from the information explicitly presented by the authors.” Likewise, output counted as LGBTQIA+ research when the abstracts engaged substantively with LGBTQIA+ individuals as candidates, politicians, citizens, or voters or when they applied theories of sexuality or queerness to examine political or policy processes. This output included, for instance, studies examining voter evaluations of transgender candidates and voter support for marriage equality.¹

For methods, abstracts and full texts were used to assign a binary code based on whether the item employs quantitative or qualitative methods. In cases in which items use mixed methods, the code was based on the methodology delivering the authors’ main results. The fact is that the dataset’s mixed-methods items do not give qualitative and quantitative data equal weight. Most commonly, quantitative items *supplement* their argument with qualitative data. For example, authors use qualitative data (e.g., focus groups, interviews, and anecdotes) to build a theory and then test their theory with observational or experimental data, or they bolster findings from quantitative analyses with anecdotes or case studies. Items relying on statistical or computational approaches to test their hypotheses and present their findings—even when they include qualitative data to build theory or to illustrate results—were coded as *quantitative*. Items coded as qualitative include normative items (meaning scholarship in the subfield of political theory) and items basing their main findings on qualitative data *analyzed as* qualitative data. For instance, when authors interpret interview data by writing an analysis of the interviewees’ words or statements, this narrative interpretation counts as qualitative. However, when authors transform interview transcripts into numeric data using machine learning and computational techniques, this transformation counts as quantitative.

Authors’ gender was coded based on inferred sex using their first name and, if ambiguous, cross-checked with biographical information and headshots found on institutional and personal

Table 1
Peer-Reviewed Items (Research Articles, Letters, and Shorts) on Gender and LGBTQIA+ Politics in Five Political Science Journals, 2017–2023

Journal	All Items		Gender Items		LGBTQIA+ Items	
	Count	Count	Proportion	Count	Proportion	
<i>APSR</i>	583	35	6.00%	3	0.51%	
<i>AJPS</i>	426	26	6.10%	2	0.47%	
<i>BJPS</i>	522	32	6.13%	2	0.38%	
<i>CPS</i>	481	26	5.40%	3	0.62%	
<i>JOP</i>	880	46	5.34%	6	0.68%	
Totals	2,892	165	5.71%	16	0.55%	

websites. This approach follows other studies of gender equality in the profession (Atchison 2017; Piscopo et al. 2023) but remains problematic. Using names and photographs over-relies on and reinforces cisgender assumptions, making inferred sex an imperfect proxy for gender. Moreover, this approach forces individuals into binary categories, a boxing-in anathema to many, including cisgender colleagues. In cases where websites indicated a scholar identified as nonbinary and/or I had personal knowledge about the individual’s nonbinary identity, I marked them as such. However, internet sources and personal knowledge do not provide complete information and the data inevitably contain errors. For this reason, all quantifications related to author gender indicate broad patterns, not precise counts. Given that attempting to impute the LGBTQIA+ identity of authors violates their privacy, I do not analyze publication patterns by this metric—but I reflect on these limitations in the conclusion. The dataset and replication code are available at the *PS: Political Science & Politics* Harvard Dataverse (Piscopo 2024).

GENDER AND LGBTQIA+ SCHOLARSHIP IN THE TOP JOURNALS

The final dataset contains 2,892 peer-reviewed items published in the five top journals between 2017 and 2023 (inclusive). The vast majority are research articles (87.6% or 2,534 items). Relative to all output, gender research amounts to 5.7% (165 items) and LGBTQIA+ research amounts to 0.6% (16 items). Relative to only research articles, the proportions are similar: gender research accounts for 5.5% (139 items) and LGBTQIA+ research accounts for 0.5% (12 items).

Table 1 shows that the five top journals publish gender research and LGBTQIA+ research at approximately the same rate. Relative to their total output, *AJPS*, *APSR*, and *BJPS* publish the most gender items and *CPS* and *JOP* publish the least. The differences among the five journals on gender output are not statistically significant. The count of LGBTQIA+ output is too small for significance testing.

The proportions of gender research are higher than those found by Barnett et al. (2023), likely because of the different period. Barnett et al. reported that gender research accounted for less than 1% of articles published by *AJPS*, *APSR*, *BJPS*, *CPS*, and *JOP* between 1980 and 2019. They note, however, an uptick in the

later years. My data further quantify this growth: gender output amounts to 5% to 6% of peer-reviewed publications in top journals from 2017 to 2023, with no substantive difference among the five outlets. Gender research is becoming more common, with no one journal appearing to take the lead.

LGBTQIA+ research, however, remains largely missing. Barnett et al. (2023) historicize publication trends in gender research, but no equivalent study exists for LGBTQIA+ research. Qualitative accounts, however, emphasize the paucity of LGBTQIA+ research in top journals (Ayoub 2023; Smith 2011). Table 1 shows that LGBTQIA+ research indeed remains sparse, accounting for less than 1% of top journals’ output. This percentage corresponds to 16 items in total, with each journal publishing between two and six items. Although 16 items in seven years constitutes a notable step forward from a baseline of zero or almost zero, LGBTQIA+ research is far less mainstreamed when compared to gender research.

The increase for both gender and LGBTQIA+ research may be explained by the publications’ analytic approaches. The items largely follow political science’s prioritization of quantitative methods, especially common among the top journals. For instance, Teele and Thelen (2017) found that between 2010 and 2014, *AJPS* and *JOP* published almost no qualitative articles. Echoing this trend, all 16 LGBTQIA+ items are empirical and 15 use quantitative methods. *APSR* published the only qualitative item. Of the gender output, 94% is empirical (155 of 165 items). Of these, 98% (152 items) use quantitative methods. *CPS* published the three qualitative items. The remaining 6% of gender output is normative, meaning that the items fall within the subfield of feminist political theory, and they appear across the outlets.

Patterns in author gender further underscore that gender research and LGBTQIA+ research follow disciplinary norms, as shown in table 2. Women—either alone or in all-women teams—publish 14.9% of the non-gender and non-LGBTQIA+ items. Women’s authorship is far less than their proportion in the likely pool of top-journal authors, which is 31.5%. Men generally dominate as authors, and there was no statistical or substantive difference by journals. Altogether, men publish 58.8% of the non-gender and non-LGBTQIA+ items, either as solo authors (24.6%) or in all-male teams (34.2%).² Men also author most of the LGBTQIA+ scholarship: in this sample—which albeit is small and therefore only suggestive—men published 81.3% of the LGBTQIA+ items (31.3% as solo authors and 50% as all-men teams). This proportion far exceeds men’s membership in APSA’s Sexuality and Politics section, which was 44% in 2023 (American Political Science Association 2023).

For gender items, the pattern of male dominance is reversed: women publish 37.6% of the gender items (17% as solo authors and 20.6% as all-women teams), whereas men publish 21.7% (9% as solo authors and 12.7% as all-men teams). Still, men’s authorship of gender items is almost threefold their membership in APSA’s Women, Gender, and Politics section. Specifically, men are almost 22% of gender-item authors but only 8% of section members. The larger sample of gender items offers more confidence in this conclusion.

As the comparisons with section membership show, table 2 speaks to the supply of author gender in top journals rather than the distribution of author gender in the subfields overall. The top journals are known to prioritize empirical approaches and quantitative methods, and men are overrepresented in political

Table 2

Gender Composition of Authorial Teams in Five Political Science Journals, 2017–2023

	All Items	Other Items	Gender Items	LGBTQIA+ Items
Solo Authored				
–Men	23.7% (686)	24.6% (666)	9.0% (15)	31.3% (5)
–Women	11.4% (328)	11.1% (300)	17.0% (28)	0% (0)
All–Men Team	33% (954)	34.2% (925)	12.7% (21)	50.0% (8)
All–Women Team	4.7% (137)	3.8% (103)	20.6% (34)	0% (0)
Mixed Team	27.2% (785)	26.4% (715)	40.4% (67)	18.8% (3)
Totals	100% (2,890)	100% (2,709)	100% (165)	100% (16)

Nevertheless, men’s authorship of gender items is almost threefold their membership in APSA’s Women, Gender, and Politics section.

methodology relative to the discipline as a whole (Piscopo et al. 2023; Shames and Wise 2017). The pattern confirms Teele and Thelen’s insight (2017) that top journals may attract submissions heavily weighted toward empirical approaches and quantitative methods, which also may be disproportionately authored by men. Scholars using qualitative methods to study gender or LGBTQIA+ politics simply may submit their studies elsewhere, perhaps prioritizing subfield-specific or interdisciplinary journals.

CHANGES IN GENDER AND LGBTQIA+ OUTPUT AT APSR

The previous analysis pools the data from all seven years. Yet, could an explicit shift in editorial commitment change output within a single journal? Here, I examine the paradigmatic case of APSR. The 2017–2023 period covers two editorial teams: (1) the team led by Thomas König and colleagues; and (2) the all-women team, which adopted a collegial leadership model that rotated lead editors.

The König team began on September 1, 2016, and the all-women team began on June 1, 2020. I compare the proportion of gender items and LGBTQIA+ items published in 2017, 2018, and 2019 (corresponding to the König team) to the proportion published in 2021, 2022, and 2023 (corresponding to the all-women team). I exclude each team’s transition years (2016 and 2020) because issues in these years could have contained articles accepted by previous teams. Table 3 compares the gender and LGBTQIA+ output across the two APSR teams.

A quick look shows that both teams published practically zero LGBTQIA+ items. A closer look, however, reveals that the all-women team doubled the number of LGBTQIA+ items relative to the König team. Furthermore, the König team’s sole LGBTQIA+ item was a letter, whereas the all-women team’s two LGBTQIA+ items were research articles. Turning to gender items, the König team published only two gender items (both research articles) in three years, compared to the all-women team, which published 28 gender items (23 research articles and five letters). The difference between the two teams’ gender output is statistically significant (p=0.000), even when including only research articles (p=0.001).³ As the all-women APSR team explains, the previous team had not used all allocated pages. The all-women team “realized that using more pages could provide a way to

pursue the dual goals of maintaining its high quality while simultaneously expanding the kinds of work we published” (*American Political Science Review* 2023, v).

Yet, did the all-women team’s increased publication of gender items differ substantially from upticks in other top journals? Figure 1 arrays the gender output under the two APSR teams against the other journals’ gender output during the same comparison periods: 2017–2019 and 2021–2023. This comparison helps to determine whether the all-women APSR team’s editorial commitment led them to publish more gender items relative to their peers.

Figure 1 indicates that both outcomes occurred: the all-women team notably increased the publication of gender scholarship at APSR, but several other journals were not far behind. First, during the König team’s years at APSR (2017–2019), other top journals published substantially more gender research. Their proportions ranged from a low of 4.7% (*CPS*) to a high of 6.5% (*BJPS*) compared to 1% at APSR. Second, during the all-women team’s years at APSR (2021–2023), the increased proportion of gender items at APSR unfolded alongside increases at *AJPS* and *CPS*. During the all-women team’s years at APSR, gender research in the other journals ranged from 4.1% (*JOP*) to 7.3% (*AJPS*).

In summary, the 2020–2024 all-women APSR team published notably more gender articles relative to its predecessors and relative to its contemporaries. A significance test for journal differences relative to the proportions of published gender research in the 2021–2023 period is outside the conventional 5%

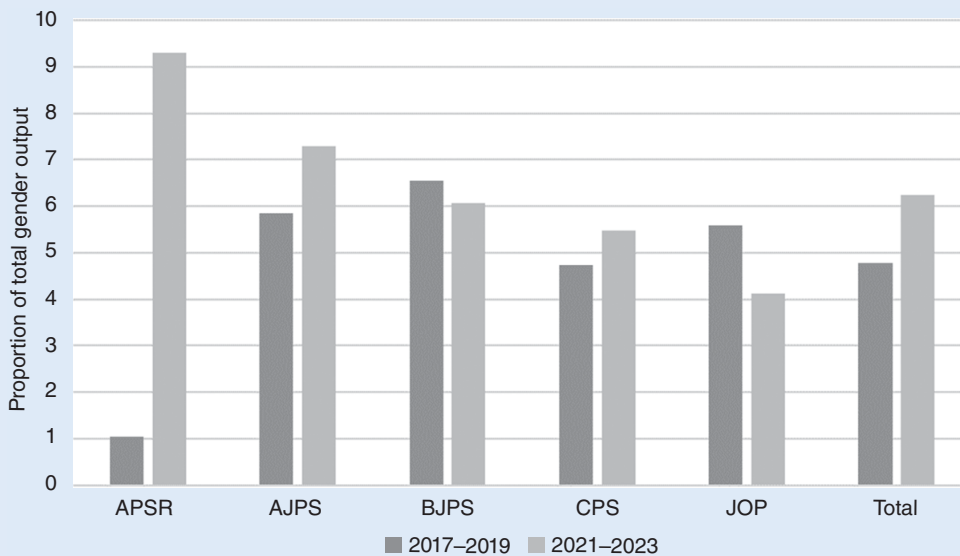
Table 3

Comparing Gender and LGBTQIA+ Output in the APSR

	Gender Items	LGBTQIA+ Items	Other Items	Total
König Team (2017–2019)	1.1% (2)	0.5% (1)	98.4% (188)	100% (191)
All–Women Team (2021–2023)	9.3% (28)	0.7% (2)	90.0% (271)	100% (301)

Figure 1

Proportion of Gender Items Published in Top Journals, by Two Different APSR Editorial Teams



level but within the suggestive 10% level ($p=0.067$). A plausible interpretation is that the all-women team helped APSR catch up to—or even possibly exceed—its peers. Moreover, the all-women team published more gender output during a period when the supply was increasing overall. That is, the proportions in figure 1 correspond to 50 total gender items between 2017 and 2019 compared to 89 items between 2021 and 2023.

By 2023, women’s share of editorial positions also had increased: two women editors (with a mixed-gender group of associate editors) took over at AJPS in 2019; a woman became lead editor (with a deputy male editor) of JOP in 2021; and CPS added a woman to their previously all-male team in 2022. Women editors generally may encourage submissions from women scholars (Gethen and Sauer 2016), but not all women scholars conduct gender research. The APSR all-women team combined all possible signals: the editors received coverage as an all-women team with considerable expertise in gender and LGBTQIA+ politics, and they explicitly signaled their commitment to diversifying journal content (American Political Science Association 2019).

The data indeed suggest that APSR’s all-women team shifted supply, encouraging certain subgroups of scholars to submit their work to APSR before other journals. First, marginalized scholars—those who identify as women and/or LGBTQIA+—especially may have responded. The all-women team published more gender items authored by solo women relative to the four other journals in the same 2021–2023 period (see online appendix A). Women

(including a reviewer of this article) support this intuition. LGBTQIA+ scholars also reported feeling more welcome to submit manuscripts to the all-women team (Ayoub 2023, 161).

Second, normative theorists as well as empirical scholars using qualitative, interpretative, and/or interdisciplinary approaches also may have responded to this signaling. For instance, six of the 10 feminist political theory items published between 2017 and 2023 appeared in APSR, all under the all-women team. Overall, the all-women team possibly published gender output that in their predecessors’ era might have landed at JOP or AJPS. Notably, JOP published the most gender articles during the König team’s tenure at APSR but the least during the all-women team’s tenure.

CONCLUSIONS

This exercise provides an important initial look at published gender research and LGBTQIA+ research in a sample of top political science journals. Whereas past research emphasized the marginality of scholars of and scholarship on gender and LGBTQIA+ politics, recent trends suggest that gender research has become mainstream and that LGBTQIA+ research has made notable—although still limited—inroads. In the past seven years (2017–2023), gender and LGBTQIA+ research combined amounts to 5% to 7% of all peer-reviewed items published in five top journals: APSR, AJPS, JOP, BJPS, and CPS. However, most of the gains remain concentrated among gender research.

The case of APSR demonstrates that an editorial team’s explicit commitment to widening what counts as political science research sends important signals to authors and that these signals, in turn, can shift publication rates within a single journal.

scholars may have felt more comfortable submitting their manuscripts to the all-women team. Anecdotal, my own experiences as a gender scholar as well as accounts from other women scholars

The case of APSR demonstrates that an editorial team’s explicit commitment to widening what counts as political science research sends important signals to authors and that these signals, in turn,

can shift publication rates within a single journal. Still, what appears in the top journals in *any* subfield—not only in gender and politics and LGBTQIA+ politics—reflects disciplinary trends, including the predominance of empirical approaches using quantitative methods and an overrepresentation of men authors. I find suggestive evidence that gender research and LGBTQIA+ research enters the mainstream the more that this research comports to disciplinary norms about methods and author gender. I also find suggestive evidence that applying quantitative methods to study gender may boost men’s authorship in a subfield where they are otherwise less active.

That said, this study has certain limitations and opens important directions for future research. First, I focused on two axes of marginalization—gender and LGBTQIA+ identity—because political science traditionally has treated gender and LGBTQIA+ scholarship as niche and less rigorous. Future work might compare publication rates of gender and LGBTQIA+ research to publication rates of research on other forms of marginalization (e.g., race and ethnicity), in order to establish more clearly which subfields benefit from mainstreaming and how and when. Such research might further examine publication patterns for intersectional research, especially given debates over the appropriateness of applying empirical approaches and quantitative methods to examining overlapping forms of marginalization.⁴

Second, I account only for items published, not items submitted. Taking a closer look at submissions would better show the changing popularity of gender and LGBTQIA+ research and also illuminate whether and how editors’ signaling shapes supply. Interviewing authors also could reveal how scholars with different identities, subfields, and methodological approaches receive and respond to editors’ signaling.

Third, my sample of top journals is representative but limited. Scholars can expand this dataset by applying web-scraping tools and machine-learning techniques and/or by working with more undergraduate coders. For example, coding articles for content, method, and author gender could be an engaging group project for an undergraduate methods class.

Fourth, while I find that men are overrepresented as authors of gender research, the challenges with identifying LGBTQIA+ authors means I could not explore the corollary for this subfield—that is, I cannot say whether non-LGBTQIA+ scholars are overrepresented as authors of LGBTQIA+ research. The correspondence between scholars’ identity and their research matters: the higher prestige accorded to cisgender and/or straight scholars could lead them to be perceived as more authoritative sources about the lived experiences of LGBTQIA+ people than LGBTQIA+ scholars themselves. To better understand who researches whom, both APSA and the journals should consider collecting and reporting data on scholars’ LGBTQIA+ identity.

Fifth, publication rates are only one metric for measuring marginalization. Research on the profession should continue to explore and elevate the experiences of scholars minoritized due to their identity, specialization, epistemological approach, or any combination of these characteristics. The data presented in this article perpetuate the discipline’s reliance on quantifiable patterns when ultimately it is scholars’ qualitative experiences within the profession that matter. Only women and LGBTQIA+ scholars, and authors of gender and LGBTQIA+ scholarship, can tell the discipline whether or not they have become mainstream.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Research documentation and data that support the findings of this study are openly available at the *PS: Political Science & Politics* Harvard Dataverse at <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/WW4OUZ>.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <http://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096524000441>.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares that there are no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research. ■

NOTES

1. In only one instance did I need to look beyond the abstract and title. This article examined a woman political figure, Michelle Obama. The full text revealed a substantive engagement with gender and politics research questions, and the article was coded as gender research.
2. The total number is less than 2,892 because solo-authored items written by known nonbinary authors were omitted. When nonbinary authors have coauthors, the team is coded as mixed.
3. As an extra hedge against lengthy backlogs, I repeated the comparison, omitting the transition year *and* the first full calendar year for each team. The pattern remained: the all-women team published more gender research in 2021 and 2022 than the König team in 2018 and 2019 ($p=0.001$ for all items and $p=0.008$ for research articles only).
4. Of the 165 gender items and the 16 LGBTQIA+ items, 17 (10.3%) and none, respectively, examine intersectionality. The majority of the gender items examine the overlap between race/ethnicity and gender, although some consider class or age.

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