

Gender Audit of the Political Studies Association of Ireland, 2020

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Introduction

The aim of this Gender Audit is to provide an overview of the gender composition of different areas of the Association. The audit was carried out using data collected after the last PSAI Conference, hosted by NUI Maynooth, and up to and including the most recent conference, held online via Zoom due to the ongoing pandemic.

The data were collected from the PSAI membership list (provided to the Association by Taylor & Francis), the official website of the PSAI, and the 2020 conference programme. It is the practice of the editorial team of the Association's journal, *Irish Political Studies*, to monitor gender diversity in submissions and publications independently. Information regarding the relative participation of men and women in this aspect of the PSAI's activities therefore does not appear here.

However, the report does include some data from the 2015-2018 Gender Audit of the Association carried out by Claire McGing (Maynooth University) in her capacity as Gender Mainstreaming Officer for the Association. This role has since been renamed Equality and Diversity Officer in recognition of the existence of identities beyond gender identity that the Association may wish to target with initiatives in order to foster broader levels of participation. Such categories of identity include age, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. While this report focuses only on gender the PSAI's Executive Committee is currently pursuing other initiatives to promote greater diversity and inclusion within the Association.

In 2015, it was decided by the Executive Committee that a Gender Audit of the organisation would be carried out every three years and presented at the annual conference during the AGM. Since the 2015-2018 audit, it has since been agreed that the audit will take place on an annual basis, with the findings being made available on the Association's website in line with the EC's desire to foster transparency and accountability on this issue.

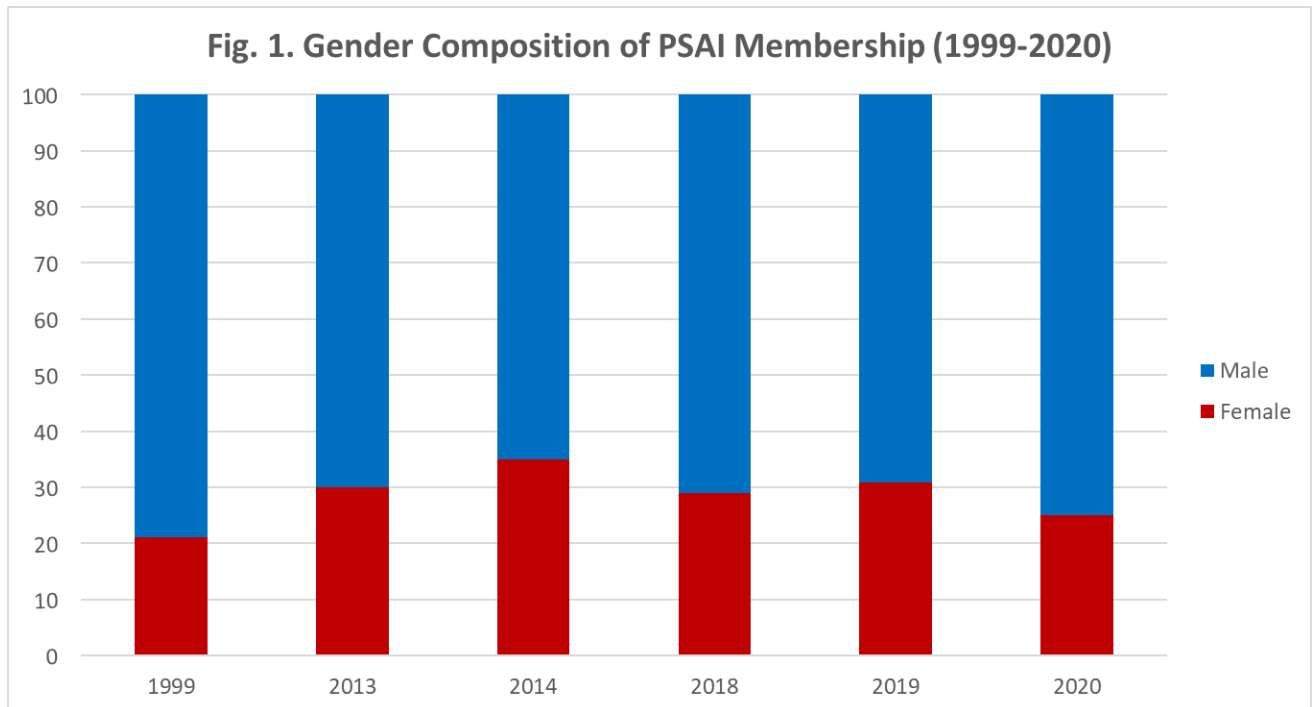
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Membership of the Association

The membership list was provided by Taylor & Francis and covers all those members who paid their dues in 2020¹. 139 individuals were recorded as members of the Association in 2020, 34 of whom were female². Figure 1. below presents the 2020 figures on the gender composition of the Association with those included in the 2015-2018 and 2019 Gender Audits for the purposes of comparison.



The share of female members has never exceeded its peak of 35 percent in 2014 and after a period of relative stability it has fallen by six points since 2019. In 2020, women made up 1 in every 4 members of the PSAI. This figure is significantly below those presented in the most recent International Political Science Association (IPSA) Gender and Diversity Monitoring Report³. The IPSA carries out a survey of its membership every four years as part of its gender equality monitoring. In 2017, the IPSA reported that women made up 33.9 percent of the members of the largest political science associations (where a large association is defined as one that has a minimum of 400 members). There is, however, significant variation in the share of women members across these fifteen associations. The organisation with which the PSAI is best compared is the UK PSA. In 2017, women made up 31.2 percent of its members.

¹ The Membership list covers start of 2020 up until the 23rd of December that year. It is possible that some individuals paid their membership fees in 2020 but after this date. As a result, it may be the case that the membership figures are slightly underestimated for the year. Also, it is important to mention that many members pay their membership at the same time as registering for the annual conference in order to avail of the reduced registration fee for members. Since the online conference was free and did not require proof of membership in order to participate, it may be that these figures are slightly reduced. However, there is no reason to expect this to be the case more so for women than for men.

² The Association had 143 members in 2019. 44 of them were women, while 99 were men.

³ The full report is available to read online or download here: <https://www.ipsa.org/publications/ipsa-gender-diversity-monitoring-report>.

Executive Committee

The PSAI elects its Executive Committee annually at the AGM, taking place at the Association's conference. Not all positions are elected, however, and the EC has the capacity to co-opt members to serve as required.

In 2019-2020, 4 out of 13 or 30.77 percent of the members of the EC were women. Three officers' terms expired in 2020 and their replacements were elected at the annual conference AGM. The share of women will be unchanged for the 2020-21 term.

The presidency of the PSAI has been held by a man since 2005, while women have held the vice-presidency since 2012. This trend continues in 2020-2021. One of the four officer roles is now held by a woman, down from two in 2019-20.

Specialist groups

Members of the PSAI have established 11 specialist groups that are supported by the Association⁴. These groups exist to promote research and networking activities in relation to a specific specialism. Each group has a minimum of two convenors, each of whom is usually located in a different institution. Table 1. provides the most recent data on the gender composition of the leadership of these Specialist Groups.

Table 1. Gender composition of PSAI Specialist Groups (2020)

Specialist Group	Female convenor(s)	Male convenor(s)
Big Data, Text Analysis, and Methodology	0	2
Environmental Politics Specialist Group	1	1
European Studies Specialist Group	0	2
Gender and Politics Specialist Group	3	0
International Relations and Area Studies Specialist Group	1	2
Participatory and Deliberative Democracy Specialist Group	1	2
Peace and Conflict Specialist Group	2	1
Political Theory Specialist Group	1	1
Public Policy Specialist Group	0	2
Teaching and Learning in Politics Specialist Group	2	0
Voters, Parties and Elections Specialist Group	0	2
Total	11	15
Percent	42.31	57.69

In 2015, 68 percent of the convenors of the Specialist Groups were women. Gender balance in this area has improved over time, with that share standing at 54 percent in 2018. As of the end of 2020, the 11 specialist groups comprise 26 convenors in total, 11 of whom are women, indicating that for the first time since the Gender Audit has been carried out, there are more male than female convenors.

It should be noted that just five of the 11 Specialist Groups have gender diversity in the composition of their convenors. Two committees have all-female leadership and four have all-male leadership. In addition, these figures have nothing to say about the diversity of the membership of these groups.

⁴ This number is down from 12. The Local Government Specialist Group was disbanded in 2020.

Prizes

A new prize was launched at the 2020 AGM, a prize for Best Postgraduate Paper on the topic of Gender/Diversity. Its aim is to recognise quality research related to gender and/or diversity. The prize also aims to promote the Association among postgraduates. The paper will be awarded for the first time in 2021.

Of the four established prizes that are awarded by the PSAI, one is not named after an individual (the Teaching and Learning Prizes), and two are named after men (the Brian Farrell Book Prize, and the Basil Chubb Prize for Best PhD Thesis). The most recent prize established by the Association is the Elizabeth Meehan Prize for Best Paper.

The Teaching and Learning prize was not awarded this year. Of the two prizes awarded at the 2020 Annual Conference, two were awarded to men and one was awarded to a woman.

Annual Conference

The most recent Annual Conference of the PSAI took place on the 9th and 10th of October 2020. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the conference took place via Zoom.

An audit of the online programme of this conference was carried out. However, it should be noted that it was not possible to ascertain which of the authors of co-authored papers both attended the conference and presented their work. In addition, there were no doubt last minute alterations to the composition of panels that it is not possible to take into account here.

Of the 99 authors⁵ that appear on the programme, 39 (or 39.39 percent) were women. This is in line with the figure of 38 percent reported in the 2015-2018 Gender Audit and 39.34 percent in 2019. All panels featured both male and female named authors.

These 2020 figures do not include invited speakers. Due to the disruption surrounding the pandemic, the conference did not feature the annual Peter Mair lecture or an invited speaker. Since it was first established in 2012, 50 percent of speakers delivering the Peter Mair Lecture have been women.

Prof Ken R. Carty was named Fellow of the Political Studies Association at the 2019 Conference. He will deliver his Fellowship Lecture at the 2021 Conference.

In the place of an after-dinner speaker, the Conference hosted a Roundtable on Global Ireland consisting of four invitees and one chair. Two of the five members were women.

Postgraduate Conference

The PSAI's Postgraduate Conference takes place on a biannual basis and was scheduled to be held in 2020 before being cancelled due to the pandemic. The conference took place on 30th January 2021.

Six panels were scheduled in the conference programme. Of the 21 named authors, 57 percent are male, down from 60 percent at the 2018 conference. Two-thirds of the conference chairs were male.

⁵ Please note that chairs were allocated on an ad hoc basis and therefore did not appear on the programme.