Misdirected Backlash: The Evolving Nature of Academia and the Status of Women in Political Science

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The backlash remarkets old myths about women as new facts and ignores all appeals to reason.
– Susan Faludi (1991, xxii)

When we began to study the status of women in the professorate, we naively assumed that this research would be rather straightforward. It seemed that there was little if any data concerning women's status in political science, and that this discipline warranted investigation, complementing similar research conducted in other fields. What we were unprepared for, and were dismayed to discover, was the existence and the extent of the backlash against women in our field. This backlash manifested itself to us in a variety of forms, including derisive comments and questionable jokes during panel presentations, hostility from some colleagues over the desirability of such research, and disheartening stories from female graduate students.[1] The basis of this backlash seemed to be the conclusion that women are in an advantaged (not disadvantaged) position within the profession. This conclusion is based not upon any existing studies, but upon perhaps one incident or individual from which the critics are willing to generalize to the entire profession (this is especially discordant given the quantitative bent of political science). The backlash incorrectly portrays the situation in academe currently to be one in which men are suffering increased discrimination due to women's success at obtaining a disproportionate share of the jobs. An even more disturbing aspect of this backlash is the degree to which these attitudes are being transmitted to graduate students, who thus gain a distorted picture of the profession and their chances of success within it.

In contrast to these perceptions, many recent studies have found that women are in disadvantaged positions within academia (Blum 1991; Davidson 1997; Hensel 1991). Similar findings have been made regarding the status of women in political science (Hesli and Burrell 1995; McGlen and Sarkees 1988; Meyer and Baker 1991; Sarkees and McGlen 1992). In a continuation of this theme, this paper is intended as a response to the backlash. Our major thesis is that the backlash is misguided because it arises from an inaccurate perception of the state of the discipline as one of constant conflict between women and men. Instead, we argue, it is the field itself that is in decline, a decline that benefits neither women nor men, and in which neither sex is faring exceptionally well.

Backlash

On a societal level, Susan Faludi discussed the backlash against women within a broad spectrum of activities in her book *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women* (1991). This society-wide backlash can also be seen in the recent proliferation of anti-affirmative action cases in the wake of Proposition 209 (see Carney 1997).

In the academic sphere, the backlash has taken the forms of both creating a "chilly climate" for women (see Meyer and Baker 1991) and of hostility toward feminist scholarship. For instance, in a recent article, Steve Smith indicated that he had been amazed at the hostile reaction to feminist scholarship in international relations, and he concluded that the backlash against feminism was becoming even more marked. He admitted that in his experience this backlash "is more often discussed by the boys in private than in print. After all, it is not good for one's image to appear to oppose gender concerns" (1998, 57).

There are a number of hypotheses as to the origins of this backlash as it pertains to academia. These include perceptions of a decline in academic standards brought about by affirmative action hiring practices (Allen 1997), uneasiness due to the shifting relationship overall between men and women, reactions against sexual harassment lawsuits, and apprehensions that feminist work threatens male academics in a personal way (Smith 1998).

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Economic Conditions in Academe

While all of the above explanations probably point to important causes of the backlash, Faludi argues that the real source of men's frustrations is declining general economic conditions, reflected in too few jobs or too few good jobs. We also believe that economic conditions are the primary precipitant of the backlash in academia: or as Henry Allen succinctly concluded, "Accusations of reverse discrimination accompany increased competition for scarce jobs" (1997, 25). There has been a steady decline in the overall status of and financial reward for employment in academia, as can be seen in limited job prospects (or a shortage of jobs coupled with an increase in the number of applicants), the increasing proportion of part-time and temporary jobs, and less-than-desirable faculty salaries.

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Job Prospects

In recent years, laments about the lack of jobs in academia have become a constant refrain (Brodie 1995; Magner 1994, 1997). Though promised a faculty shortage and abundant jobs in the late 1990s, job candidates in many fields "are finding a shortage of tenure-track openings and a glut of candidates." (Magner 1994, A20). This lack of opportunities for scholars has been reflective of the financially motivated shifts in university priorities. For instance, Bérubé (1995, 28) reported a decline of 11.3% in the total number of new faculty hires between 1991 and 1995. While there is some hope that increases in undergraduate enrollments will have a positive effect on the demand for new Ph.D.s, some analysts continue to argue that the situation may get worse. "Indeed, as CD-ROM and other computer technologies improve over the next year and more complex pre-packaged courses gradually become available, technology will begin to place even more downward pressure on the depressed academic market. CD-ROMs may actually be the first technology to hold real promise of eliminating teaching jobs" (Nelson 1995, 20). Even the apparent slight upswing of job listings in the last two years is a situation of only relative improvement compared to the dismal job market of the last decade. As one commentator noted, "It seems there is a beginning of a slight upturn, but the problem is we still have a backlog of people who have been unemployed or underemployed in the past few years" (quoted in Magner 1997).

Meanwhile, the number of doctorates awarded has been steadily rising. Coincidentally, since the early 1970s, the number of women entering academe has increased, often dramatically. For example, the percentage of Ph.D.s earned by women rose from 19% in 1974 to nearly 40% in 1996 (Magner 1997, A10). In the social sciences, women earn one out of every two Ph.D.s. While research suggests women are not advancing as they should given the number of Ph.D.s granted, many of the white males confronting their dismal job prospects still "contend that colleges are mostly hiring women and minority candidates" (Magner 1997, A20).

Types of Positions

Institutional cost-cutting moves have also led to an increase in the number of temporary positions. The use of adjuncts has doubled over the past 25 years to more that 40% in 1997 (Leatherman 1997, A14). Full-time faculty accounted for 77% of all professors in 1970, yet less than 50% by some estimates in the 1990s (APSA 1997b; Benjamin 1998, 26; Brodie 1995, 12). Furthermore, perhaps as many as 27% of full-time faculty are off the tenure track, up by more than 14% since 1986 (Committee G 1992, 40; Magner 1997). Combining these trends, the current estimate is that 65% of all faculty teaching in colleges and universities are part-time or full-time "temporary." As Rhodes and Hendrickson (1997, 63) have noted, administrators have been "reconfiguring" the college and university workforce, using "contingent" employees (part-time, temporary, and nontenure-track) to replace full-time employees. An accompanying trend has been the increasing practice of universities to use graduate student instructors in lieu of full-time faculty. This situation has prompted many professional associations, including the APSA, to issue a statement about part-time employment ("Statement" 1998).

Because women faculty are disproportionately found among the Ph.D.s hired in the last two decades, these trends have had a more noticeable impact on them than on male professors (taken as a group). The most recent *Annual Report on the Economic Status of the Profession*, conducted each year by the American Association of University Professors, has found that women now constitute almost 30% of all professors; they are, however, more likely to be untenured and in nontenure positions (Hamermesh 1994, 24). These differences are also evident in analyses of faculty workload. Allen (1997, 25, 34) found that males are more likely to be tenured, to hold higher ranks, and to spend more time on research, whereas women tend to hold positions that require them to devote more time to teaching. Moreover, women are more likely than men to be in less prestigious universities (Bell 1997, 17, 33). Data gathered by the National Center for Education Statistics show that while women comprised 35.3% of all 1995–96 faculty on 9–10 month contracts, their representation was skewed by rank and type of institution. Women were least represented as professors in Ph.D. institutions (14.1%) and most commonly found as

instructors in M.A. and Ph.D. programs (62.2% and 62.5% respectively) (Lee 1997, 20).

Salaries

Correspondingly, all faculty salaries, after tumbling in purchasing power in the 1970s and inching backup in the 1980s, have been largely stagnant during the 1990s. The result is that the average real salary for faculty in 1997–98 was 4.4% below that earned by faculty in 1972–73 (Bell 1998). When professors' salaries are compared to those of other professionals, the picture is even more dismal, with professors earning 42% less than other professionals with similar education. Combined, these trends in job opportunities and compensation signal a decline in the academic profession. Declining salaries are not evidence of women's gains at the expense of men. Studies have shown that the long-discussed "gender gap" in salaries remains. Bell found that at all ranks and for all types of institutions, there was a "male salary premium" of from 2.7% to 11.4%. The largest differences are within doctoral-level institutions and in the full-professor rank. Bell further noted that while the salary premium has declined for full professors in private institutions (from 17.8% to 14.7%), no such decline has occurred in public institutions (Bell 1998, 18–19).

The coincidence of two phenomena—the decline in economic conditions and the influx of women into academe—has led some to connect the two, blaming women (and minorities entering the profession) for precipitating the economic downturn of the professorate. This flawed reasoning has fomented the backlash. As the overall data demonstrate, however, there is little evidence that women are benefitting at the expense of men. The question now becomes, "To what extent do these overall trends apply in our sector of academia?" Is the economic situation in political science one of decline, that benefits neither men nor women, or have women come to dominate the field of political science at the expense of men?

Economic Conditions in Political Science

Job Prospects in Political Science

Undergraduate enrollment drives the demand for faculty, and, unfortunately, the number of students pursuing a political science degree has declined over the last two decades. Drops in enrollment were most pronounced between 1973–74 and 1988–89, when overall enrollment began to rise once again. However, since 1990–91, self-reports of department chairs indicate that there has been "a dramatic reduction in the proportion of departments reporting increases in enrollments of bachelors degrees" (Mann 1996, 527). These reports are confirmed by Department of Education statistics that indicate a reduction in the number of students earning a BA in political science starting in 1993–94 (National Center for Education Statistics 1996, 307). While APSA has begun to look for the causes of this decline, it may be reflective of the relatively low esteem in which politics is held by the public and entry-level students.

TABLE 1
Jobs Listed in October APSA Newsletter

1989	306
1990	306
1991	243
1992	238
1993	251
1994	250
1995	228
1996	227
1997	254

Source: Brintnall (1995); Williams (1997).

As anticipated, this declining enrollment translates into a reduction in the need for political science professors. As shown in Table 1, the number of available faculty positions is declining. Seventy-nine fewer jobs were advertised in the October 1996 issue of APSA's *Personnel Services Newsletter* than in the October 1989 issue; an average loss of over eleven joblistings each year and an especially bad sign since October is *PSN's* largest issue (Brintnall 1995; Williams 1997).

A chart of *PSN's* monthly first-time job listings (Mann 1997, 609) indicates approximately 680 job listings for 1996–97. This number of

TABLE 2
Trends in Placement

	1982	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996
Number of firm candidates	611	672	715	690	604	740	823	763	1037	799	984
Percentage repeats	36	38	37	32	36	32	32	33	40	41	46
Percentage Ph.D.	64	64	69	69	76	64	59	59	59	56	57
Percentage women	21	25	27	26	27	25	26	30	27	28	29

Source: Brintnall (1992, 102; 1996, 211); Mann (1997, 604).

TABLE 3
Placement Success*

	1982	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996
Overall	62	72	70	69	72	69	72	74	69	72	65
Ph.D.	68	77	81	83	80	83	78	79	82	85	77
A.B.D.	55	68	51	57	68	53	63	66	50	56	49
Men	61	72	70	67	70	70	73	73	67	72	62
Women	64	71	69	74	75	67	70	75	74	71	70
Percentage in temporary positions	36	33	43	38	27	38	21	32	29	34	29
Men	37	33	43	38	27	38	NA	34	29	36	30
Women	36	34	43	35	24	33	NA	28	29	31	26

Source: Brintnall (1992, 102; 1996, 212); Mann (1997, 605).

*Number of candidates placed within each category as a percentage of the total candidates within each category.

positions is significantly less than the number of job candidates.

While undergraduate enrollments and job demands in political science have declined, paralleling academe overall, there has been a recent growth in the number of political science graduate students. Cumulative data collected by APSA from graduate departments indicate that in 1996-97, there were 7,079 students enrolled in Ph.D. programs, with an average of 713 degrees granted annually over the last three years (APSA 1997a, 1). These num-

TABLE 4
Women and Men in Political Science Academic Rank Over Time

Year	Full-Time Faculty		Full-Time Full Professors		Full-Time Associate Professors		Full-Time Assistant Professors		Full-Time Lecturers/ Instructors	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
72–73	91.1%	8.9%	95.9%	4.1%	91.9%	8.1%	90.3%	9.7%	80.7%	19.3%
73–74	91.1%	8.9%	96.0%	4.0%	92.2%	7.8%	87.6%	12.4%	81.7%	18.3%
74–75	90.0%	10.0%	95.1%	4.9%	92.2%	7.8%	86.1%	13.9%	79.2%	20.8%
75–76	89.4%	10.6%	95.3%	4.7%	92.7%	7.3%	83.6%	16.4%	76.8%	23.2%
76–77	89.4%	10.6%	95.7%	4.3%	92.1%	7.9%	83.1%	16.9%	76.1%	23.9%
77–78	90.0%	10.0%	95.6%	4.4%	92.5%	7.5%	83.3%	16.7%	81.5%	18.5%
78–79	89.4%	10.6%	95.3%	4.7%	91.3%	8.7%	81.9%	18.1%	75.2%	24.8%
79–80	89.0%	11.0%	95.2%	4.8%	90.5%	9.5%	80.3%	19.7%	77.6%	22.4%
80–81	88.7%	11.3%	94.8%	5.2%	89.6%	10.4%	81.1%	18.9%	77.5%	22.5%
81–82	88.3%	11.7%	94.6%	5.4%	88.3%	11.7%	79.9%	20.1%	77.6%	22.4%
82–83	87.9%	12.1%	94.7%	5.3%	88.2%	11.8%	79.1%	20.9%	73.0%	27.0%
83–84	88.0%	12.0%	94.6%	5.4%	85.1%	14.9%	81.6%	18.4%	88.2%	11.8%
84–85	87.0%	13.0%	93.8%	6.2%	86.3%	13.7%	78.1%	21.9%	71.4%	28.6%
85–86	87.3%	12.7%	94.1%	5.9%	86.4%	13.6%	79.1%	20.9%	69.2%	30.8%
86–87	86.6%	13.4%	93.9%	6.1%	86.4%	13.6%	75.3%	24.7%	72.1%	27.9%
87–88	85.5%	14.5%	93.1%	6.9%	84.9%	15.1%	74.5%	25.5%	65.1%	34.9%
88–89	85.3%	14.7%	92.9%	7.1%	85.8%	14.2%	72.9%	27.1%	66.0%	34.0%
89–90	84.1%	15.9%	92.4%	7.6%	83.8%	16.2%	71.9%	28.1%	75.4%	24.6%
90–91	83.2%	16.8%	91.9%	8.1%	83.6%	16.4%	71.9%	28.1%	65.9%	34.1%
91–92	82.0%	18.0%	90.6%	9.4%	81.8%	18.2%	70.4%	29.6%	62.9%	37.1%
92–93	82.1%	17.9%	90.3%	9.7%	81.5%	18.5%	70.4%	29.6%	65.6%	34.4%
93–94	80.8%	19.2%	90.1%	9.9%	80.3%	19.7%	68.9%	31.1%	53.6%	46.4%
94–95	79.5%	20.5%	89.5%	10.5%	78.0%	22.0%	67.7%	32.3%	60.0%	40.0%
95–96	79.0%	21.0%	89.5%	10.5%	77.1%	22.9%	65.2%	34.8%	58.2%	41.8%
96–97	79.0%	21.0%	88.0%	12.0%	76.7%	23.3%	67.4%	32.6%	62.3%	37.7%
97–98	78.9%	21.1%	88.8%	11.2%	77.2%	22.8%	65.0%	35.0%	68.3%	31.7%

Source: APSA (1972–1998).

TABLE 5
Gender of Full and Part-Time Faculty in Political Science Departments

Year	Total Faculty		Full-Time Faculty		Part-Time Faculty		Expanded Definition Part-Time		Full-Time Tenure Track	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
72–73	89.3%	10.7%	91.1%	8.9%	80.8%	19.2%	80.5%	19.5%	91.5%	8.5%
73–74	89.7%	10.3%	91.1%	8.9%	81.3%	18.7%	83.5%	16.5%	91.3%	8.7%
74–75	89.0%	11.0%	90.0%	10.0%	81.8%	18.2%	82.8%	71.2%	90.4%	9.6%
75–76	88.3%	11.7%	89.4%	10.6%	81.4%	18.6%	80.7%	19.3%	90.0%	10.0%
76–77	88.2%	11.8%	89.4%	10.6%	81.6%	18.4%	80.9%	19.1%	90.0%	10.0%
77–78	88.4%	11.6%	90.0%	10.0%	78.2%	21.8%	78.3%	21.7%	90.5%	9.5%
78–79	88.1%	11.9%	89.4%	10.6%	80.3%	19.7%	80.6%	19.4%	89.8%	10.2%
79–80	87.6%	12.4%	89.0%	11.0%	79.3%	20.7%	80.4%	19.6%	89.4%	10.6%
80–81	87.3%	12.7%	88.7%	11.3%	79.4%	20.6%	79.4%	20.6%	89.2%	10.8%
81–82	86.9%	13.1%	88.3%	11.7%	79.0%	21.0%	78.9%	21.1%	88.8%	11.2%
82–83	86.5%	13.5%	87.9%	12.1%	79.2%	20.8%	78.6%	21.4%	88.5%	11.5%
83–84	87.2%	12.8%	88.0%	12.0%	84.0%	16.0%	83.7%	16.3%	88.4%	11.6%
84–85	85.1%	14.9%	87.0%	13.0%	74.4%	25.6%	75.8%	24.2%	87.5%	12.5%
85–86	85.6%	14.4%	87.3%	12.7%	78.1%	21.9%	77.6%	22.4%	87.9%	12.1%
86–87	85.3%	14.7%	86.6%	13.4%	78.8%	21.2%	78.4%	21.6%	87.2%	12.8%
87–88	83.3%	16.7%	85.5%	14.5%	75.2%	24.8%	76.5%	23.5%	86.1%	13.9%
88–89	83.3%	16.7%	85.3%	14.7%	75.8%	24.2%	77.0%	23.0%	85.7%	14.3%
89–90	81.6%	18.4%	84.1%	15.9%	72.5%	24.8%	76.5%	21.5%	86.1%	13.9%
90–91	81.6%	18.4%	83.2%	16.8%	76.1%	23.9%	75.2%	24.8%	84.2%	15.8%
91–92	80.8%	19.2%	82.0%	18.0%	74.5%	25.5%	73.5%	26.5%	82.8%	17.2%
92–93	80.4%	19.6%	82.1%	17.9%	74.2%	25.8%	74.4%	25.6%	82.6%	17.4%
93–94	79.3%	20.7%	80.8%	19.2%	73.7%	26.3%	73.1%	26.9%	81.4%	18.6%
94–95	77.8%	22.2%	79.5%	20.5%	71.8%	28.2%	71.0%	29.0%	80.3%	19.7%
95–96	76.4%	23.6%	79.0%	21.0%	69.7%	30.3%	70.0%	30.0%	80.0%	20.0%
96–97	76.6%	23.4%	79.0%	21.0%	70.8%	29.2%	70.9%	29.1%	79.4%	20.6%
97–98	77.3%	22.7%	78.9%	21.1%	72.9%	27.1%	72.2%	27.9%	79.7%	20.5%

Source: APSA (1972–1998).

bers reflect a slight decline from the high point of 876 Ph.D.s in 1994–95, yet still represent a significant increase over the 506 Ph.D.s awarded in 1987 (APSA 1996, 1). APSA's 1996–97 analysis indicated an adjusted average of the number of women Ph.D.s at 28.6% (APSA 1996, 7), up from 14.5% in 1974 (National Center for Education Statistics 1996).

Relatedly, Michael Brintnall and Sheilah Mann have examined the number of yearly job applicants by surveying the Ph.D. granting programs, and the results are reported in Table 2. The number of firm candidates increased from 672 in 1984 to 984 in 1996 (with a high point again in 1994 of 1,037); a 46% increase in job candidates over the past 14 years. Of the 1996 candidates, 29% were women. One cautionary note should also be included at this juncture. The APSA figures tend to underestimate the numbers of people seeking positions since they include only people who are entering the job market from Ph.D. programs. These figures do not include those who are seeking employment while holding less-than-satisfactory positions (such as part-time or nontenured faculty). Even using the conservative yearly average of candidates (984) and comparing it with the reported yearly average of 680 faculty jobs mentioned earlier, it becomes clear why some candidates are experiencing difficulty in finding employment. Brintnall's overall figures indicate that, on the average, only 70% of all job candidates in political science in a given year are able to secure positions (see Table 3).

However, as David Schultz has noted, these average placement figures are somewhat deceptive, or at least overly optimistic (1991, 2). As Brintnall less optimistically noted, almost one-third of successful candidates accept temporary positions, leading him to conclude that "just one-third of job seekers newly out of graduate school in political science will find a tenure-track (or comparable non-academic) position" (Brintnall 1996, 211–12). This is borne out by the high number of "repeats" on the job market (46% of the 1996 placement class [Mann 1997, 603]).

The "backlash" supporters could argue that the declining job prospects are worse for males because women secure all the available positions. However, overall placement figures in Table 3 suggest few differences in the success rates of men and women. Though the figures fluctuate yearly, in any one year, men were as likely to exceed as follow women in placement success. Yet, since men constitute 71% of the job candidates, and men and women have equivalent placement success, men are still securing a vast majority

TABLE 6
Percentage of Women and Men in Political Science Who Occupy Full-Time and Part-Time Positions

Year	Percentage of all Women (Men) Who Are Full-Time		Percentage of all Women (Men) Who Are Part-Time		Percentage of all Women (Men) Who Are Expanded Part-Time		Percentage of all Women (Men) Who Are Full-Time Tenure-Track	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
72–73	68.0%	83.8%	32.0%	16.2%	37.1%	18.5%	62.9%	81.5%
73–74	74.1%	87.0%	25.9%	13.0%	33.5%	19.6%	66.5%	80.4%
74–75	78.8%	88.2%	21.2%	11.8%	29.8%	17.7%	70.2%	82.3%
75–76	77.8%	87.1%	22.2%	12.9%	30.1%	16.7%	69.9%	83.3%
76–77	76.0%	85.8%	24.0%	14.2%	31.9%	18.1%	68.1%	81.9%
77–78	74.0%	87.7%	26.0%	12.3%	32.0%	15.2%	68.0%	84.8%
78–79	76.4%	87.0%	23.6%	13.0%	30.3%	17.0%	69.7%	83.0%
79–80	75.0%	86.5%	25.0%	13.5%	31.3%	18.2%	68.7%	81.8%
80–81	75.5%	86.1%	24.5%	13.8%	31.8%	17.8%	68.2%	82.2%
81–82	75.5%	86.1%	24.5%	13.9%	30.8%	17.3%	69.2%	82.7%
82–83	74.0%	84.5%	26.0%	15.5%	33.2%	19.2%	66.8%	80.8%
83–84	75.1%	80.9%	24.9%	19.1%	31.6%	23.8%	68.4%	76.2%
84–85	73.8%	86.6%	26.2%	13.4%	33.7%	18.5%	66.3%	81.5%
85–86	72.0%	83.2%	28.0%	16.8%	35.1%	20.4%	64.9%	79.6%
86–87	75.2%	84.1%	24.8%	15.9%	32.4%	20.3%	67.6%	79.7%
87–88	68.4%	80.9%	31.6%	19.1%	40.1%	26.1%	59.9%	73.9%
88–89	69.2%	80.6%	30.8%	19.4%	38.5%	26.0%	61.5%	74.0%
89–90	68.6%	81.4%	31.4%	18.6%	41.4%	26.2%	58.6%	73.8%
90–91	70.7%	78.9%	29.3%	21.1%	39.3%	26.9%	60.6%	73.1%
91–92	79.4%	85.7%	20.6%	14.3%	29.4%	19.4%	70.6%	80.6%
92–93	71.8%	80.3%	28.2%	19.7%	34.7%	24.5%	65.3%	75.5%
93–94	72.4%	79.7%	27.6%	20.3%	33.9%	28.1%	66.1%	75.9%
94–95	71.9%	79.5%	28.1%	20.5%	34.7%	24.2%	65.3%	75.8%
95–96	64.7%	74.9%	35.3%	25.1%	40.8%	28.9%	59.2%	83.2%
96–97	65.0%	74.2%	35.0%	25.8%	40.5%	30.0%	59.5%	70.0%
97–98	67.4%	74.2%	32.6%	25.8%	39.4%	30.1%	60.6%	69.9%

Source: APSA (1972–1998).

of the positions in political science. Indeed, a 1992 analysis of the employment of white males in 311 fields revealed that political science (at 75%) trailed only philosophy (82.1%), the physical sciences (76.7%), and occupationally specific programs (75.7%) (National Center for Education Statistics 1996, 240).

The placement figures also chart an interesting trend that has significant implications for the profession. Over time, the percentage of job seekers possessing the Ph.D. has steadily declined (data not shown here). In 1996 only 57% of the candidates had the Ph.D. in hand, which represents a significant increase in the percentage of ABDs on the market in comparison to the 1980s. Since ABDs have a much lower rate of placement success than do Ph.D.s (49% to 77% in 1996), their increasing entry into the job market fuels the perception of graduate students being unable to obtain positions (Table 3). This premature entry into the job market may reflect the increased time it takes to complete the Ph.D. and/or tight academic budgets that leave graduate students without adequate assistantships or fellowships. It may also be that students facing a dismal job market feel they have to try to get a position "early and often."

Types of Positions

Not only are women no more likely than men to secure a position, but their late entry into the profession means that women in political science disproportionately hold part-time and off-the-tenure-track positions. Using the data APSA has collected in its annual surveys of political science departments, Table 4 indicates that even though the number of women receiving Ph.D.s in political science has increased steadily (up to 29% in 1996), women constituted just 21.1% of all full-time faculty in 1997–98. Moreover, women were only 11.2% of the full professors. At the other end of the spectrum, as shown in Table 5, women (21.1%) hold a disproportionate share of the "dead-end" slots, comprising 27.1% of part-time faculty and 27.9% of faculty "gypsies" who hold part-time or off-the-tenure-track positions. Similarly, Table 6 reveals that among faculty,

TABLE 7
Women & Men in Political Science Academic Rank and Type of Institution 1997–98 (1979–80)

Type of Institution	Full-Time Faculty		Full-Time Full Professors		Full-Time Associates		Full-Time Assistants		Full-Time Lecturers & Instructors		Full-Time Nontenure Track		Part-Time Faculty	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Ph.D. granting w/21 or more	80.8% (90.4)	19.2% (9.6)	88.9% (97.5)	11.1% (2.5)	77.4% (90.7)	22.6% (9.3)	69.5% (78.3)	30.5% (21.7)	66.7% (73.1)	33.3% (26.9)	71.2% (82.6)	28.8% (17.4)	76.8% (77.8)	23.2% (22.2)
Ph.D. w/20 or less	79.0% (89.6)	21.0% (10.4)	89.3% (96.3)	10.7% (3.7)	75.2% (90.5)	24.8% (9.5)	65.0% (78.9)	35.0% (21.1)	100.0% (86.7)	0.0% (13.3)	65.6% (81.4)	34.4% (18.6)	74.5% (84.8)	25.5% (15.2)
Masters w/11 or more	77.9% (89.7)	22.1% (10.3)	86.1% (93.3)	13.9% (6.7)	77.7% (90.3)	22.3% (9.7)	62.7% (84.5)	37.3% (15.5)	85.7% (87.5)	14.3% (12.5)	81.1% (85.7)	18.9% (14.3)	71.8% (71.6)	28.2% (28.4)
Masters w/10 or less	79.5% (90.8)	20.5% (9.2)	89.7% (94.6)	10.3% (5.9)	79.8% (94.6)	20.2% (5.4)	65.8% (82.9)	34.2% (17.1)	0.0% (71.4)	100.0% (28.6)	60.0% (83.3)	40.0% (16.7)	68.9% (82.3)	31.1% (17.7)
Undergrad. Political Science-Public	78.7% (88.1)	21.3% (11.9)	90.3% (95.9)	9.7% (4.1)	76.4% (89.6)	23.6% (10.4)	65.2% (77.9)	34.8% (22.1)	62.5% (75.0)	37.5% (25.0)	63.2% (87.5)	36.8% (12.5)	70.9% (85.7)	29.1% (14.3)
Undergrad. Political Science-Private	75.7% (86.9)	24.3% (13.1)	87.8% (92.5)	12.2% (7.5)	75.2% (91.0)	24.8% (9.0)	60.1% (78.4)	39.9% (21.6)	45.5% (80.9)	54.5% (23.1)	62.6% (78.6)	37.4% (21.4)	70.3% (71.4)	29.7% (28.6)
Undergrad. Social Science & Combined	81.1% (86.5)	18.9% (13.5)	92.3% (90.5)	7.7% (9.5)	81.7% (87.2)	18.3% (12.8)	63.8% (85.7)	36.2% (14.3)	83.3% (76.2)	16.7% (30.8)	77.7% (74.7)	22.2% (25.3)	74.3% (77.8)	25.7% (22.2)

Source: APSA (1972–1998).

almost one out of three women (as compared to one out of four men) were part-time, and 39.4% of women and 30.1% of men are "gypsies." Thus, in 1997–98, only 60.6% of all women in political science are full-time tenure-track, compared to 69.9% of men. Similarly, as shown in Table 7, though women's representation in the profession has increased significantly over the past 17 years, it is also skewed by rank and type of department. In 1997–98, women were more likely to be found in nontenure-track, instructor, and/or assistant positions at private undergraduate institutions and underrepresented in graduate programs.

There also appears to be a "revolving door" policy in terms of women faculty. Women are hired as assistant professors but never make it into the higher ranks (Davidson 1997; Hensel 1991, 12; Wilson 1997a, 1997b). Hensel also found evidence to indicate that women may be dropping out of academia more often than men before they reach tenure, or that women are more likely to leave because of negative tenure decisions (Hensel 1991, 14). This seems to be particularly true at Ivy League schools, where women have had a difficult time gaining tenure.[2] Data gathered by APSA also suggests this latter possibility has occurred in political science. Departments are asked annually to report on the various reasons for faculty leaving their institutions, with seven possible reasons listed. "Tenure denial" is a commonly cited reason for both women and men (APSA 1972–98). However, if one deletes the numbers of those who cited retirement from position or death (which are dominantly male phenomena due to women's more recent entry into the profession), and collapses the responses into positive reasons (hired by another institution) and negative reasons (tenure denial, likelihood of tenure denial, appointment ended, and no employment prospects), women were consistently more likely to leave their positions for negative reasons than were men. For instance, in 1997–98, 65.9% of the women leaving their positions cited negative reasons, which was true for only 55.4% of the men. Conversely, 44.6% of the men indicated leaving because they had been offered another position, which was true for only 34.1% of the women (APSA 1998). This latter disparity may reflect the more hostile environment faced by women and their disproportionate presence in temporary positions. Overall, the number of both sexes who leave positions without having another job in hand is further evidence of the problems in the profession and of the fact that neither men nor women are faring very well in this climate.

Salaries

Along with faculty salaries in academe generally, salaries in political science have stagnated. The social sciences, in general, found themselves in the bottom 20 academic disciplines, with salaries increases in the last ten years averaging one-half of those of faculty in the top 20 fields (Bell 1997, 18). Even among the social sciences, political science

TABLE 8
Men and Women in Political Science Median Salary by Academic Rank

Year	Full Professor		Associate		Assistant		Instructor	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
81–82	$32,500	$32,500	$24,500	$23,500	$19,500	$19,500	$16,500	$15,500
83–84	$36,500	$32,500	$27,500	$26,500	$21,500	$21,500	$18,500	$18,500
84–85	$38,500	$36,500	$28,500	$29,500	$22,500	$22,500	$18,500	$18,500
85–86	$41,500	$38,500	$30,500	$30,500	$24,500	$23,500	$21,500	$20,500
86–87	$43,500	$39,500	$32,500	$32,500	$25,500	$24,500	$22,500	$21,500
87–88	$47,250	$41,500	$34,500	$34,500	$26,500	$26,500	$23,500	$21,500
88–89	$47,250	$44,500	$35,500	$35,500	$28,500	$27,500	$24,500	$24,500
89–90	$52,250	$47,250	$37,500	$37,500	$30,500	$29,500	$25,500	$25,500
90–91	$54,750	$49,750	$40,500	$40,500	$32,500	$32,500	$26,500	$26,500
91–92	$53,500	$48,500	$40,000	$40,000	$32,000	$32,000	$28,000	$27,000
92–93	$56,000	$53,500	$40,000	$40,000	$33,000	$35,000	$27,000	$27,000
93–94	$58,000	$54,000	$42,000	$42,000	$34,000	$34,000	$26,000	$30,000
94–95	$60,000	$60,000	$44,000	$44,000	$36,000	$36,000	$26,000	$30,000
95–96	$62,000	$60,000	$44,000	$44,000	$36,000	$38,000	$32,000	$30,000
96–97	$64,000	$62,000	$46,000	$46,000	$38,000	$38,000	$30,000	$32,000
97–98	$67,000	$65,000	$41,000	$41,000	$41,000	$39,000	$31,000	$31,000

Source: APSA (1972–1998).

has not done well. For instance, in 1996–97, the average salary of political scientists at public institutions was $50,748, while the comparable figure for computer information was $57,709 and psychology was $51,607 ("Average Faculty Salaries" 1997). However, in political science the wage gap between men and women is narrowing, though there is still a disparity of over $2,000 in median salaries at the full professor level (see Table 8).

Conclusion

The prospect of women "taking over the academic discipline" is even more remote if we turn our attention from women as professors to women as the subject of academic research. Data compiled by Kelly, Williams, and Fisher suggests few of the mainline publications in our discipline have devoted many of the pages in their journals to women's studies. In nearly 100 years, only 433 female-focused articles have been published by the top 15 journals in political science (Kelly, Williams, and Fisher 1994, 10–11). As Kelly and her coauthors noted, "The discipline of political science has, for the most part, ignored the contributions of feminist epistemology and theory" (3).

In conclusion, in academia in general and within political science in particular, it does not appear that women are in an advantaged position. Overall, there are few significant differences between the experiences of men and women. The picture is not of a profession in which women are benefitting at the expense of men, but of one in which both women and men are being hurt by declining job prospects. If the problem is not women taking jobs from men, but the more systematic decline of academia generally, then the backlash is misdirected. Furthermore, the backlash may, in fact, make the job search more difficult for both women and men by inducing a sense of complacency among women students and dampening the spirits of the male students, neither of whom confronts the reality of the job market. Simplistic answers like blaming women (the backlash) for the inability to find or place students in good jobs distracts the academic community from addressing the real problems: namely, What are the long-range employment prospects in academia? How will the policies of the federal and state governments accelerate or depress these trends? Should we be producing Ph.D.s for a market that can not absorb them? How can we stop the downsizing and restructuring of academic jobs? These are not easy questions, but they demand our attention.

Notes

1. For a more complete discussion of the backlash, see McGlen and Sarkees (1995) and Sarkees and McGlen (1995).

2. For recent cases at Harvard, Yale, and Stanford, see Haworth (1997), Rimer (1997), and Wilson (1997a, 1997b).

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