

Gender Bias in the Evaluation of Scholarship: Problems and Solutions

This contribution to the panel examines the problem of gender bias in the metrics by which academic success is measured. Scholars in the humanities are increasingly required to adopt (or to position themselves against) academic metrics emerge from the STEM disciplines (e.g., the h-index and citation counts) in the context of university-wide funding competitions, while at the same time striving to meet the standards of academic competence traditional to the arts (peer reference, production of grant applications, consistent publication). The prevalence and easy accessibility of tools for creating metrics, such as Google Scholar and Academia.edu, has changed the nature of academic assessment in disciplines across the university, and will continue to do so. Both new and traditional models of academic assessment, however, include aspects of gender bias. This paper reviews some recent scholarship on gender bias in academic metrics and suggests strategies for identifying and working against such bias in Classical Studies.

Gender disparity in academia is decreasing by certain metrics: grant funding, hiring, acceptance at journals, and productivity (West et al. 2013). Double-blind peer reviewing for journals continues to be best practice for ensuring gender equality in authorship (Budden et al., 2008). Female authorship (as identifiable by name) of articles in JSTOR stands at 26% since 1990 while women currently make up 25% of full professors (West et al.2013). Beyond blind peer review, however, gender bias emerges in most other aspects of academic assessment in pervasive and often subtle ways. Citation patterns, for example, differ for men and women: a study of citation in the field of International Relations shows that articles by women are consistently cited less than articles by men, and that women remain on the periphery of male-centered networks of citations (Maliniak et al, 2013). The same study shows that women are far less likely to cite their own work than men are. A recent study on the communication of

scientific knowledge shows that abstracts perceived to have been written by women were consistently deemed to be of less scientific quality than those perceived to have been written by men (Knoblech-Westerwick et al. 2013). The effect was compounded when the topic of the abstract was deemed to be female-typed as opposed to male-typed, i.e., to address a topic such as family and children or body image. Again in the field of International Relations, syllabi presented to graduate students in core IR courses were found to assign 81% male-authored readings (Colgan 2015). This normalization of the centrality of male-authored scholarship and the marginalization and tacit devaluation of female-authored scholarship is therefore inculcated in students at the beginning of their academic careers. Women were also found to be less likely to achieve tenure when the language of the university's tenure criteria included the male-associated word "leader" as opposed to the gender-neutral "leadership" (Marchant et al. 2007).

The ways to measure success in academia are disproportionately based on and consistent with male experience (Knights and Richards 2003; Krefting 2003). While double blind review may provide one area of gender-neutral assessment, the biases occurring in most other aspects of the measurement of academic "success" continue to keep the field uneven. The paper concludes with a discussion of strategies for achieving neutral frameworks of assessment at all stages of an academic career.

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