An Empirical Look at Gender and Research Specialization

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Outline

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Gender representation varies by academic discipline. Since philosophy interacts with almost every academic discipline, it might provide insight on the source(s) of these differences while also providing insight on issues of gender representation within philosophy, itself.

E.g. Leslie, et al. (2015)—disciplines with more emphasis on innate ability have fewer women. Do the specializations in philosophy that correspond with these disciplines demonstrate this effect?

1. Background & Motivation
In general, we hypothesize that gender interacts with specialization in philosophy.

In this study, we specifically aim to test the hypothesis that the proportion of women in philosophy who specialize in value theory fields, such as ethics, political philosophy, and philosophy of law, is higher than the proportion of men in philosophy who specialize in these fields.

2. Hypothesis
Study 1) Placement Data: women and men placed in tenure-track, postdoctoral, visiting professor, and instructor positions between 2011 and 2014.

Study 2) APA Data: women and men acting as symposium and colloquium chairs, speakers, and commentators in 1975 and 2015 (Pacific only).

Study 3) Women of Philosophy Data: women working in philosophy across the professional ranks, from 2014.

3. Methods (1 of 3)
3. Methods (2 of 3)

All Studies:

**Specialization** — anonymous categorization into 1 (e.g. ethics, political, social, law), 0 (e.g. metaphysics, language, logic, mind), or X (e.g. feminist, action, ancient, modern)

**Gender** — categorization by name into 1 (e.g. Aida, Julie, Sharyn, Wanda), 0 (e.g. Bryan, Jason, Nils, Tommy), or X (e.g. Alex, Chris, H., Sun)
Study 2:
**Role**—categorization into symposium speaker, symposium commentator, symposium chair, colloquium speaker, colloquium commentator, colloquium chair, author-meets-critics author, and author-meets-critics critic.

Study 3:
**Professional Rank**—categorization into emerita, full/reader/distinguished, associate/senior lecturer, assistant/lecturer, postdoctoral/visiting, adjunct/instructor, and other (e.g. liaison, advisor, editor).

3. Methods (3 of 3)
Overall representation of women:
Study 1) 30.47% women, 69.64% men

Study 2) 11.63% women, 88.37% men in 1975
32.12% women, 67.87% men in 2015

Study 3) 1398 women—3% Emerita, 34% Full/Reader/Distinguished/Chair, 26%
Associate/Senior Lecturer, 26% Assistant/Lecturer, 11% Postdoctoral/Visiting

4. Initial Findings (1 of 5)
Specialization in 1:
Study 1) 42.23% of women, 38.96% of all (p=.22)

Study 2) 37.5% of women, 30.23% of all (p=.29); 40.73% of women, 35.06% of all (p=.003)

Study 3) 76% of Emerita, 49% of Full, 52% of Associate, 53% of Assistant, 43% of Postdoctoral (p=.007)

4. Initial Findings (2 of 5)
Further Detail, Study 1:
21.51% of women, 18.34% of men list their first AOS as within 1 and later specializations as within 1 or X

19.92% of women, 24.57% of men list their first AOS as within 0 and later specializations as within 0 or X (p=0.11)
Prestige, Study 2 (2015):
Highest prestige—4.36% of women, 6.88% of men
(author, award winner, symposium speaker with at least one commentator focused exclusively on your work)
Average prestige (highest=1, lowest=5)—
- 3.79 for men, 3.87 for women, 4.06 for X
- 3.67 for non-value, 3.90 for value, 4.23 for X
- 3.63 for women in non-value, 3.64 for men in non-value; 3.89 for women in value, 3.89 for men in value; 4.4 for women in X, 4.02 for men in X.

4. Initial Findings (4 of 5)
Frequency of first-reported AOS:

Study 1: Ethics—15.26% women, 14.49% men; greater differences for science, feminist, bioethics, mind, modern, social, political, metaethics (women); metaphysics, religion, ancient, epistemology, logic, language (men).

Study 3: Ethics—14.81% Emerita, 9.69% Full, 9.60% Associate, 9.64% Assistant, 7.06% Postdoc; Runners up include, in order, feminist (4.82%), political (4.50%), science (4.23%), mind (3.87%), and social (3.70%).

4. Initial Findings (5 of 5)
The hypothesis is supported: a higher proportion of women than men specialize in value theory fields.

Yet, the effect is small and the proportion of women specializing in value theory is smaller in lower rank positions.

This does not seem to be an effect of prestige but of time, since prestige is higher for women in non-value fields.

Prestige is lowest for X gender and X fields, perhaps implicating ESL philosophers and feminist philosophy as trouble spots.

5. Discussion
More placement data to test whether the difference in value theory specialization is statistically significant.


Other potential projects:
1) Philosopher’s Index to look at time course
2) SEP citation patterns to look at prestige

6. Future Directions
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