

Nevertheless, She Persisted: Women's Experiences and Perceptions within the International Studies Association

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Abstract: The Women's Caucus for International Studies and the ISA Committee on the Status of Women conducted a survey of the membership concerning the effects of gender on members' professional and personal lives in November and December 2015. Other iterations of this survey using similar questions were conducted in 1995 and 2006. A plurality of women and a majority of men responded that things have gotten better for women in the discipline. However, using more specific questions and asking for open responses, the survey uncovered that men and women still have very different experiences within the discipline and that the chilly climate continues to persist in international relations. The 2015 survey reveals continued concerns regarding the tension between familial responsibilities and the academic environment, overt and structural discrimination, and the perception of "reverse discrimination" against men.

Resumen: Entre noviembre y diciembre de 2015, el Comité de Mujeres del área de Estudios Internacionales y el Comité sobre la Situación de la Mujer de la Asociación de Estudios Internacionales (ISA, por sus siglas en inglés) les hicieron una encuesta a los miembros sobre las repercusiones del género en sus vidas personales y profesionales. Esta encuesta ya se realizó en 1995 y 2006 con preguntas similares. Muchas mujeres y la mayoría de los hombres respondieron que la situación de las mujeres ha mejorado en esta disciplina. Sin embargo, al hacer preguntas más específicas y pedir respuestas abiertas, la encuesta reveló que hombres y mujeres siguen teniendo experiencias muy dispares en la disciplina y que sigue habiendo un clima distante en el área de relaciones internacionales. La encuesta de 2015 muestra que sigue habiendo una preocupación por el equilibrio entre responsabilidades familiares y el entorno académico, una discriminación patente y estructural, y una percepción de "discriminación inversa" hacia los hombres.

Extrait: Le Women's Caucus for International Studies (groupe collaboratif de soutien et de promotion des intérêts des femmes dans les Études internationales) et le Committee on the Status of Women de l'ISA (Comité de travail sur le statut des femmes de l'International Studies Association) ont mené en novembre et décembre 2015 une enquête auprès de leurs adhérents pour savoir si les différences entre sexes produisaient des effets sur leurs vies professionnelles et personnelles. D'autres itérations de cette enquête utilisant des questions similaires avaient été menées en 1995 et 2006. De nombreuses femmes et une majorité d'hommes ont répondu que la situation s'était améliorée pour les femmes dans la discipline. Toutefois, lorsque des questions plus spécifiques ont été posées et que des réponses ouvertes ont été demandées, l'enquête a permis de découvrir que de grandes différences subsistent dans le vécu des hommes et des femmes au sein de la discipline et que la frilosité perdure dans les relations internationales. L'enquête de 2015 a mis au jour des

préoccupations persistantes relatives à la tension entre responsabilités familiales et environnement académique, au caractère flagrant et structurel de la discrimination, ainsi qu'à la «discrimination inverse» ressentie à l'encontre des hommes.

Keywords: gender, women, chilly climate, international studies, structural discrimination

The Women's Caucus for International Studies (WCIS) celebrated its 20th anniversary at the 2016 International Studies Association meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. The Women's Caucus was founded "to upgrade the status of women in the profession of international studies and to promote their professional development; to advocate for the inclusion of women of diverse ethnic, racial, and national backgrounds...; [and] to promote equal opportunities for women in international studies in their professional lives..." (WCIS 2015). The membership of WCIS has grown exponentially over the years, from less than 200 members in 2011 to 459 in 2015. The growth of WCIS might suggest that women have found a place of their own within the ISA organization.

Simultaneously, it is hard to ignore the pervasiveness of institutionalized biases within our discipline that perpetuate the chilly climate toward female scholars. Scholars have discussed the deep-rooted issues of graduate mentoring (Hesli, Fink, and Duffy 2003a, b), the gender gap in citations and publishing (Mathews and Andersen 2001; Breuning and Sanders 2007; Maliniak, Powers, and Walter 2013; Mitchell, Lange, and Brus 2013; Østby, Strand, and Gleditsch 2013; Zigerell 2015), the fact that women are less likely than men to be invited to coauthor (Teele and Thelen 2017), and the fact that women often carry heavier service commitments than male colleagues (Guarino and Borden 2017). These factors also contribute to issues regarding the confidence gap (Merriman-Goldring, Nelson, and Petrie 2015), tenure attainment (Hesli, Lee, and Mitchell 2012; Hancock, Baum, and Breuning 2013; Monroe 2013), promotion/leadership (Kadera 2013), and overall job satisfaction (Hesli and Lee 2013). The leaky pipeline problem continues to plague international studies and political science as a whole, with men reaching prominence in the field at a faster pace than women (Masuoka, Grofman, and Feld 2007; Lake 2016).

Women in international studies and political science have sought ways to mitigate this bias. In the past decade, various types of formal and informal women-mentoring-women opportunities have arisen, from workshops like Journeys in World Politics and ISA's Pay It Forward, to the WCIS ISA breakfast meeting, to happy hours sponsored by the Women in Conflict Studies group and WCIS. More research-oriented sections, such as the ISA Feminist Theory and Gender Studies section, also provide a space for mentoring and networking among female scholars. Facebook groups and email listservs allow these conversations to expand beyond annual meetups at conferences. Female graduate students and junior scholars are seeking out senior women mentors in these various contexts, as they may not have that opportunity in their own departments (Blau et al. 2010; Chenowith et al. 2016). More recently, a group of mid-career female political scientists created a website called "Women Also Know Stuff" as a way for women scholars to self-promote their work in a database that is available for other scholars and journalists to use to find women who are experts on specific political science/international relations topics (Beaulieu et al. 2017).

While women are seeking support among their peers and from senior women scholars to combat the structural barriers to their success in the field, recent issues in international studies and academia illustrate that sexism and sexual harassment

continue to be prevalent. In the United States, Title IX has come under attack over the past decade as it has become clear that large universities consciously choose to ignore the protections provided by this legislation to female students and scholars who are victims of sexual violence and harassment. A recent *Guardian* expose uncovered that “sexual harassment, misconduct, and gender violence by university staff are at epidemic levels in the UK” (Batty, Weale, and Bannock 2017). In fact, because of the number of complaints made by conference attendees in recent years (none of them formal), ISA introduced a series of ten panels at the 2017 annual meeting with the point of “challenging systemic oppression” against women, the LGBTQ + community, and Global South scholars, as well as other underrepresented groups. These panels were organized by broad coalition of sections and caucuses within ISA as well as by individuals who were committed to these issues. Discussion centered around “the systemic roots of marginalization, discrimination, and violence within ISA, the profession, and the world” (WCIS 2016) and provided a space for those who wanted to share personal stories and experiences (MacKenzie 2015) for their own benefit as well as providing advice for navigating this hostile environment.

The names of these related panels reveal some of the issues that women and other underrepresented groups continue to face within our discipline and the neoliberal university. Panel titles such as “confronting systems of power and privilege in higher education,” “the academy as a hostile work environment,” “how to cope with retaliation,” and “speaking truth to power: challenging toxic masculinities, faculty predators, and institutional betrayal” illustrate that women (and others) face challenges that are unique to their position and situation in the discipline and academia. Many of these panels provided participants with a safe space to “share and discuss experiences in the academy” as well as to suggest mechanisms “to survive and flourish under such [hostile] conditions.”

Conversations about the omnipresent sexism in our discipline and academia can also be found in much more informal settings than at annual conventions or in journal articles. Blogs and online forums have become a space in which both men and women discuss sexism in international studies and political science. Sexism, sexual harassment, and diversity issues have been discussed by many of the most visible blogs in the discipline such as *The Duck of Minerva* (Sjoberg 2012; Merriman-Goldring et al. 2015; Weber 2015; Wilkinson 2015; Saideman 2015a, b; 2016; Cunningham 2016; Wibben 2016; Fujii 2017) and *The Disorder of Things* (Shepherd 2015; Särämä and Wilkinson 2016; Zalewski 2016; Kirby 2017; Yao and Delatolla 2017). Interestingly, many sexism deniers utilize their ability to hide behind anonymity in such online forums to complain about mentoring programs that are exclusive to women as being “reverse sexist.”

While published scholarship, informal blog posts, and panels at annual conferences have been drawing attention to the issue of sexist behavior and sexual harassment in our discipline, there are critiques that the apparent pervasiveness of hostile behavior is misleading because many discussions make use of hearsay or gossip. The truth of the matter is that women, especially those that are most vulnerable in the profession, are unlikely to share their experiences for fear of retribution or ridicule. In order to combat this, WCIS (joined later by the ISA Committee on the Status of Women) has surveyed both women and men about their experiences and observations regarding the gender climate of the discipline. The first survey was via mail in 1995, with the next survey emailed to members in late 2005–early 2006. This study compares the results of the 1995 survey (Henehan and Sarkees 1996), the 2005/2006 survey (Henehan and Sarkees 2009), and a more recent survey from November–December 2015 (Hudson, Haight, and Fattore 2016). The main hope/assumption was that the survey would show that the chilly climate for women in international relations had indeed warmed. However, the survey responses indicated that women still need a space of their own to survive and thrive in international studies.

Survey Administration and Sample

The 2015 survey included many of the same questions used in the 1995 and 2005 surveys to make longitudinal comparisons possible. Prior to the administration of the survey, the Institutional Review Board at West Virginia University provided an “exempt” status for this study. The survey was administered through a Google Form and was available to all ISA members who were interested in participating from November 17 to December 11, 2015. An email from ISA headquarters dated November 17, 2015, notified the membership of the availability of the survey. ISA HQ sent email reminders from time to time over the course of the open period. Informal reminders were sent to various caucuses and groups within ISA through social media.

Like the 1995 and 2005 surveys, the response pool was “self-selected” and “not a random sample of the ISA membership, [therefore] there are limits to what one can infer from statistical patterns” (Henehan and Sarkees 2009, 431). With 696 respondents out of a total ISA membership of 6,080, the response rate was 11.45 percent. The response rate was lower than the 2005–2006 survey, which had an estimated response rate of 21 percent. Clearly, there are limits to the representativeness of this sample. ISA does not collect data on age, race, or religiosity of its membership. However, it does collect data on sex and rank of its membership. While some groups are overrepresented in this sample, as will be described more fully in the next section, this study does allow for a comparison between what men and women experience in our discipline and how their sex affects their experiences.

Descriptive Statistics

Demographics

The respondents of the 2015 survey were more likely to be female than the ISA membership overall: 68.5 percent of the respondents identified as female, while only 40.1 percent of ISA members are women. While women are overrepresented in our sample, this is to be expected given the subject matter of our survey. As a whole, the survey’s respondents were among the younger members of the association: 18.68 percent of all respondents were either age 30 or below, while 60.34 percent were age 40 or below. This seemed to be consistent across the sexes: 53.3 percent of male respondents and 63.3 percent of female respondents were age 40 or below. Additionally, more than two-thirds of the respondents had belonged to ISA for ten years or less. This also illustrates the “young” nature of the sample. Finally, the US was strongly represented among the respondents: 54 percent of all respondents identified themselves as being US citizens, while 31.9 percent of all respondents belonged to non-US, Global North countries, while 12.5 percent came from the Global South. Both the 1995 and 2006 surveys also had disproportionalities regarding participation. Henehan and Sarkees (2009, 431) suggest that “rather than expecting the responses to paint a representative picture of the field, we should see this survey as giving voice to an interested population... to whom gender issues are important enough to respond to a survey.” While a more representative sample that reflects the composition of ISA membership would be ideal, there are still important observations to be garnered from this survey and its results.

Employment

As with the two previous surveys, some groups were underrepresented in the sample (students, specifically) while other groups were overrepresented (male assistant and full professors as well as female assistant and associate professors). Continuing the trend from 2006, men were still more likely to be employed full-time (82.7 percent of men in 2015 versus 74.5 percent in 2006) than women (74 percent of women

Table 1. Salary by sex.

Salary	1995			2006			2015			
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
<i>Under \$20,000</i>	#	80	85	165	74	96	170	14	67	82
	%	16.2	28.2	20.7	19.0	26.0	22.4	6.9	15.4	12.9
<i>\$20,001 to \$40,000</i>	#	131	103	234	39	58	97	24	62	86
	%	26.5	34.2	29.4	10.0	15.7	12.8	11.9	14.3	13.5
<i>\$40,001 to \$60,000</i>	#	138	86	224	97	96	193	41	86	129
	%	27.9	28.6	28.1	24.9	26.0	25.5	20.3	19.8	20.3
<i>\$60,001 to \$80,000</i>	#	88	21	109	80	81	161	46	89	137
	%	17.8	7.0	13.7	20.6	22.0	21.2	22.8	20.5	21.5
<i>\$80,001 to \$100,000</i>	#	58	6	64	38	22	60	30	63	93
	%	11.7	2.0	8.0	9.8	6.0	7.9	14.6	14.5	14.6
<i>Over \$100,001</i>	#				61	16	77	47	68	115
	%				15.7	4.3	10.2	23.3	15.6	18.1
<i>Total</i>	#	495	301	796	389	369	758	202	435	637
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

1995: Chi-square = 55.0, degrees of freedom = 5, $p = 0.000$

2006: Chi-square = 36.6, degrees of freedom = 5, $p = 0.000$

2015: Chi-square = 13.2, degrees of freedom = 5, $p = 0.022$

in 2015 versus 66.6 percent in 2006). The gap between men and women who were employed part-time shrank in the ten years since the last survey (9.2 percent of women and 6.5 percent of men in 2006; 5.5 percent of women and 4.2 percent of men in 2015), which illustrates some gender parity at this level of employment. Only four female respondents (<1 percent of women) identified themselves as being retired, while seven male respondents (3.3 percent of men) did the same.

The gender gap regarding attaining tenure persists in the 2015 sample: 30.6 percent of female respondents and 46.3 percent of men were tenured. The percentage of women who are tenured shrank in the ten years between surveys (41.9 percent of women in 2006). The 2015 result was similar to that in the original 1995 survey (36.7 percent of women had tenure). This could be due to the sample makeup. However, at a minimum, this suggests that obtaining tenure remains a challenge for women.

Examining salary also provides a measure of professional advancement and success (see Table 1). In both the 1995 and the 2006 surveys, there was a statistically significant relationship between sex and salary. While the significant relationship persists in the 2015 survey, it is a statistically weaker relationship (significant at the $p = 0.05$ level rather than the $p = 0.000$ level in the two previous surveys). Women are still disproportionately represented in the less-than \$60,000 categories, but that margin decreased over the years. In 1995, 91 percent of the women and 70.6 percent of the men made less than \$60,000 annually. The gap got smaller in 2006 with 67.7 percent of women and 53.9 percent of men identifying their salary in these categories. In 2015, 49.5 percent of women and 39.1 percent of men were still earning less than \$60,000. While the income gap at the lower end of this scale persists, it has gotten smaller. It is especially interesting that there is relative equality in the \$80,001–\$100,000 category (14.5 percent of female respondents and 14.6 percent of male respondents reported this salary range in the 2015 survey). In the highest income category (salary more than \$100,000), the gap between men and women lessened over the past ten years but continues to be noticeable. This trend should persist because of the structural issues relating to the promotion of women from associate professor to full professor.

Table 2. Rank by sex.

Rank	1995			2006			2015			
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<i>Full Professor</i>	#	176	31	207	94	41	135	56	60	116
	%	36.7	10.8	27.1	23.4	11.0	17.4	26.3	12.7	16.9
<i>Associate Professor</i>	#	72	46	118	70	61	131	47	96	143
	%	15.0	16.1	15.4	17.5	16.4	16.9	22.1	20.3	20.8
<i>Assistant Professor</i>	#	93	85	178	70	78	148	65	167	232
	%	19.4	29.7	23.3	17.5	20.9	19.1	30.5	35.3	33.8
<i>Instructor/Adjunct</i>	#	31	26	57	38	35	73	13	27	40
	%	6.5	9.1	7.5	9.5	9.4	9.4	6.1	5.7	5.8
<i>Student</i>	#	66	73	139	37	48	85	19	74	93
	%	13.8	25.4	18.2	9.2	12.9	11.0	8.9	15.6	13.6
<i>Other</i>	#	41	25	66	92	110	202	13	49	62
	%	8.6	8.7	8.7	22.9	29.5	26.1	6.1	10.4	9.0
<i>Total</i>	#	479	286	765	401	373	774	213	473	686
	%	100	99.8	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

1995: Chi-square = 68.0, degrees of freedom = 5, $p = 0.000$

2006: Chi-square = 24.0, degrees of freedom = 5, $p = 0.000$

2015: Chi-square = 25.2, degrees of freedom = 5, $p = 0.000$

When we examine academic ranks by sex, we can see this structural barrier (see Table 2). The 2015 results resemble the 1995 and 2006 results in that there are similar percentages of men and women at the associate professor rank and the instructor/adjunct rank. The gap between how many male and female full professors responded to the 2015 survey is similar to the ratio in the 2006 survey. There is a strong statistically significant relationship between sex and rank. The clearest differences between male and female respondents in our survey are at the student rank and the full professor rank. Similar to what we see in the discipline, there are more female students, but a significantly larger number of male full professors. This also supports the leaky pipeline scenario.

Focusing on the trends relating to full professor, the percentage of female respondents who have achieved this rank has inched up over the past twenty years. In the 1995 survey, 10.8 percent of female respondents were full professors. That number increased microscopically to 11 percent with the 2006 responses, and to 12.7 percent with the 2015 survey. Henehan and Sarkees (2009, 434) expected that “people can move one or two ranks” within a “10 year time span.” The virtual stagnation of women who achieved the full professor rank over the ten-year period they were examining was disappointing, and this trend continued in the ten years since. A closer examination of men and women at the rank of full professor revealed some interesting trends: 65 percent of the women who responded to the 2015 survey as full professors only achieved that rank within the previous seven years. On the other hand, less than 40 percent of the male full professor respondents have held that rank for seven years or less. Forty-one percent of male full professors who participated in the 2015 survey had held that rank for 12 or more years, where only 23.4 percent of women had been a full professor for that same amount of time. While there may have not been a significant change when comparing the percentages of women who achieved the rank of full professor over these three surveys, the relative newness of these female full professors may be indicative of some changes within the makeup of senior IR faculty.

In their 2009 study, Henehan and Sarkees utilized various controls to see if the differences regarding sex and rank remained statistically significant. They found that, even when controlling for the number of years in the profession as well as the

number of books and articles a scholar had published, the statistically significant differences between men and women's salary and academic rank remain. Using the 2015 data, I ran similar controls and found that only one control was statistically significant. That is, there is a nonrandom difference between men's and women's salaries when they have been a part of the profession for 16 to 20 years. However, this statistically significant difference goes away in the next category, which is more than 20 years in the profession.

Similar results were found when examining if there was any statistically significant difference between men's and women's ranks when controlling for years in the profession and for productivity. [Henehan and Sarkees \(2009, 434\)](#) claimed that "if the relationship between the two [variables] completely disappeared, we could conclude that the most egregious aspects of the overt discrimination of the past have been largely corrected." While they were unable to find support for this with the 2006 data, the 2015 data illustrates that the profession has moved closer to rectifying these blatant biases. While these findings regarding salary and rank are important to moving toward equity, other evidence suggest that the chilly climate toward women continues to exist within our discipline.

Workplace Environment

Another straightforward indicator of the status of women in our profession is to examine their presence in the workplace. The inclusion of women in the average department has steadily increased over the past 20 years. In 1995, 40.6 percent of survey respondents were in departments where women were less than 15 percent of its composition. In 2006, that number shrank to 22.1 percent. In 2015, 7.8 percent of the respondents worked in a department with less than 15 percent women. Two-thirds of the 2015 survey respondents report working in departments comprised of 21–50 percent women. This is probably the most marked improvement apparent in the 2015 survey. It also begs the question of why this statistic improved so markedly. There are three possible answers as to why there are more women in academic departments over the past 20 years: First, it is possible that college- and university-level policies are addressing structural issues that may have previously excluded women from being included in hiring "short lists." Second, more women are earning tenure, and/or third, the problems associated with the "leaky pipeline" are being addressed and senior women are growing in number.

Other aspects of department life can illustrate whether women are gaining more equal footing with their male counterparts. In 2015, women (43.5 percent) were less likely than men (57.6 percent) to have held an administrative position in their department. Women were also more likely to feel that their departmental service was overwhelming (41.4 percent female; 30.6 percent male). Historically, women have carried the departmental service load ([Misra et al. 2011](#); [Flaherty 2017](#)). [Guarino and Borden \(2017\)](#) found that women in academia spent more time weekly on service activities than their male counterparts. The question that was included in the 2015 survey of ISA members asked about perception of service being overwhelming rather than the number of service activities or the weekly amount of time spent on service. Unfortunately, this is not a direct measurement of whether women continue to be overburdened with service when compared to their male counterparts. While there is a substantial gap between women and men perceiving their service load to be overwhelming, knowing the actual amount of time spent on service would allow for a better understanding of whether men and women carry unbalanced service loads.

Respondents were asked whether they have observed, perceived, or experienced certain behaviors that would contribute to a chilly climate for women in the discipline. The first question asked: "How... intense is the 'chilliness' for women in your workplace?" An overwhelming majority of male respondents claimed that inappropriate behavior in their workplace was rare (55.6 percent) or present but in an

insignificant manner (26.2 percent). A noticeable portion of female respondents claimed that inappropriate behavior in the workplace was common (18.9 percent), while 31.7 percent of female respondents also claimed that inappropriate behavior was rare and 39.8 percent felt that the behavior was present but insignificant. Only 5 percent of women and 0.5 percent of men felt that inappropriate behavior was intense and pervasive in their work environment. In another question, respondents were asked about how proactive their workplace is regarding sex/gender issues; 32.2 percent of men and 30 percent of women claim that their workplace has proactive efforts in place to create a positive climate. This is indeed an improvement from the 2006 survey, where only 13.2 percent of women felt their workplace was proactive on gender issues. In the 2015 survey, 36.9 percent of men and 38.6 percent of women felt that their workplace was “somewhat supportive” with occasional efforts to improve the chilly climate. Only 8.9 percent of men and 8.8 percent of women report chronic and deep-seated problems in their workplace based on sex/gender.

In contrast, 40.5 percent of female respondents report having experienced sexual harassment “a few times” over the past ten years, while 82.7 percent of men experienced no sexual harassment in the same period. 75.5 percent of women and 47.2 percent of men have observed or perceived the “leaky pipeline” problem, in which women are disproportionately dropping out of the discipline at various stages of their career. 25.4 percent of women feel that their sex has adversely affected their treatment in their workplace, with only 4.2 percent of men feeling similarly. Almost half (42.3 percent) of women reported that their sex has both hurt and helped them in their workplace, while only 1.9 percent of women felt their sex affected them positively (15 percent of men felt this way). More than a third (34.6 percent) of women felt they are underemployed (defined as being at a rank/status or salary lower than one’s record merits). Women are still experiencing discriminatory behavior in the workplace, whether measured by overt sexual harassment, respondents’ comments on new trends such as the gender citation policy, or the inflexibility of family leave policy. These trends are examined more in the next section.

The Role of Gender in Professional Life

Similar to the 2005 survey, participants were asked about 15 different professional situations and whether they perceived them to be “harder for women,” “harder for men,” “gender neutral,” or “don’t know.” Unlike the previous survey, participants could only pick one answer per situation. Again, these perceptions were based on a person’s own experiences and observations within the discipline and are not generalizable. However, they do provide a better understanding of the discipline since more than two-thirds of female respondents reported that their sex had affected their treatment in the workplace in some fashion. These responses are aggregated in [Table 3](#) (grad school/early career situations) and [Table 4](#) (tenure/mid-to-late career situations).

From the 2015 survey, only two categories were deemed gender neutral by both men and women: entry to graduate school and financial aid in graduate school. More than two-thirds of both male and female respondents reported that entry to graduate school was gender neutral while two-thirds of men and a majority of women felt that financial aid in graduate school was gender neutral. Also, men and women agreed that salary (which is a vague descriptor in the survey; it could mean many different aspects of salary) was harder for women (men, 52.4 percent; women, 80.8 percent, the highest percentage for female respondents in any situation and category).¹

¹This vague descriptor could mean that women have a lower salary or that women are less likely to negotiate (or be successful at negotiating) for a higher salary. In future iterations of this survey, it would be important to clarify exactly what is being asked here.

Table 3. Perceptions of gender effects in graduate school/early career, 2015 survey.*

	Financial Aid		Entry to Grad School		Success in Grad School		Mentored in Grad School		Obtaining Post-Doc		Entry Job Market		Salary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Neutral														
#	133	267	138	321	90	164	82	161	75	135	59	99	65	48
%	62.7	57.2	65.1	68.3	42.7	35	38.9	34.3	35.7	28.9	27.8	21.3	30.7	10.2
Harder for Women														
#	14	63	27	78	96	274	89	245	43	178	65	263	111	379
%	6.6	13.5	12.7	16.6	45.5	58.4	42.2	52.2	20.5	38.1	30.7	56.6	52.4	80.8
Harder for Men														
#	14	10	18	10	7	5	8	9	15	3	42	14	2	2
%	6.6	2.1	8.5	2.1	3.3	1.1	3.8	1.9	7.1	0.6	19.8	3	0.9	0.4
Don't Know														
#	51	127	29	61	18	26	32	54	77	151	46	89	34	40
%	24.1	27.2	13.7	13	8.5	5.5	15.2	11.5	36.7	32.3	21.7	19.1	16	8.5
Totals														
#	212	467	212	470	211	469	211	469	210	467	212	465	212	469
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.1	99.9	100	99.9	100	100	100	99.9

*These data here are slightly different than in Henehan and Sarkees (2009). I have decided to present them in chronological order and will emphasize the biggest differences in the text. Additionally, respondents were permitted to choose only one option for the 2015 survey, while they were able to choose more than one option in the 2006 survey.

Table 4. Perceptions of gender effects on tenure/mid-late career, 2015 survey.*

	Tenure		Promotion		Publications		Influence		Honors & Awards		Leadership	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Neutral												
#	59	99	79	59	137	174	90	94	101	123	105	132
%	34	13.1	37.3	12.7	64.6	37.2	42.7	20.1	47.9	26.4	49.5	28.2
Harder for Women												
#	65	263	87	350	28	201	96	334	51	246	73	253
%	42.5	71.4	41	75.1	13.2	42.9	45.5	71.5	24.2	52.8	34.4	54.1
Harder for Men												
#	42	14	10	2	3	2	7	1	14	3	8	10
%	5.2	0.4	4.7	0.4	1.4	0.4	3.3	0.2	6.6	0.6	3.8	2.1
Don't Know												
#	46	89	36	55	44	91	18	38	26	73	26	73
%	18.4	15.1	17	11.8	20.8	19.4	8.5	8.1	21.3	20.2	12.3	15.6
Totals												
#	212	465	212	466	212	468	211	467	211	466	212	468
%	100.1	100	100	100	100	99.9	100	99.9	100	100	100	100

*These data here are slightly different than in [Henehan and Sarkees \(2009\)](#). I have decided to present them in chronological order and will emphasize the biggest differences in the text. Additionally, respondents were permitted to choose only one option for the 2015 survey, while they were able to choose more than one option in the 2006 survey.

From these points of agreement, perceptions from men and women diverge. Men tended to feel that most situations are gender neutral or biased against women. While these responses do not reach a majority, a plurality of men said that women have it harder when it comes to success in graduate school (45.5 percent), being mentored in graduate school (42.2 percent), getting tenure (42.5 percent), promotion (41 percent), and being influential within the department (45.5 percent). Men also felt that publishing in good quality outlets (64.6 percent) and getting grants (54.7 percent) are not affected by gender. Finally, it is important to mention that, in all but one of the scenarios provided to our respondents, less than 10 percent of men chose "harder for men" as an option. The only scenario where there was an unexpectedly high response was regarding obtaining a tenure track position after graduate school where 19.8 percent of male respondents felt that it was harder for men.

There are a number of categories where women recognize that they are in a situation that is biased against them. A majority of women felt they were at a disadvantage because of their sex regarding success in grad school (58.4 percent), being mentored in grad school (52.2 percent), obtaining a tenure track position after graduate school (56.6 percent), getting tenure (71.4 percent), promotion (75.1 percent), being an influential member of their department (71.5 percent), receiving honors and awards (52.8 percent), being appointed to leadership positions in one's department (54.1 percent), and being competitive in the senior job market (66.9 percent). These results are very telling about the path of a woman's career. Getting into graduate school and obtaining funding for one's studies is perceived as a level playing ground, but the rest of a woman's career is an uphill battle.

Family Concerns

Discussions of work-life balance have been pervasive in academia over the past few decades. While some may feel that academia fosters a more flexible work environment, it does not always lend itself to creating the space for strong work-life balance since academic jobs lack the boundaries that one might find in a traditional 9-to-5 job. Many women are also burdened with the "second-shift" of traditional home responsibilities related to childrearing and housekeeping. Over the past 20 years, there has been a noticeable increase in married women in the discipline; 87.9 percent of male respondents and 71.3 percent of female respondents of the 2015 survey were married. In 1995, only 53 percent of female respondents were married, while in 2005, 69.2 percent were married. In 2015, 40.2 percent of men and 57.3 percent of women did not have children. Men were more likely to have more than three children (8.9 percent) than women (4.6 percent). Half of all male respondents and more than one-third (37.5 percent) of female respondents had one or two children.

Some of the most interesting results of this survey stem from the questions related to the personal consequences of pursuing an academic career. In the 2006 survey, there were some significant differences between the sexes and how they answered these questions. Men were much more likely to feel like there was no personal effect on their lives due to their career. Women were more than twice as likely to say that their career limited the number of children they chose to have. In 2015, the answers were extremely similar between the sexes as illustrated in [Table 5](#). About one-quarter of respondents felt their career had no effect on their personal lives. About one-third of all respondents mentioned that their career influenced how many children they had. More significant were the increased numbers of people who indicated that their career contributed to a breakup/divorce (14.5 percent of men and 14.7 percent of women). Similar amounts of men (28 percent) and women (23.7 percent) also said that their careers prevented them from living with their partner/spouse, which was also an increase from 2006. Finally, and probably most telling, 54.2 percent of men and 48.8 percent of women admitted that their career

Table 5. Personal consequences of pursuing an academic career, 2015 survey

	Limited # of Children		Contributed to Breakup/Divorce		Prevented from Living with Partner		Hindered Home Life		No Personal Affect		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Yes											
#	80	147	31	70	60	113	116	233	55	128	
%	37.4	30.8	14.5	14.7	28	23.7	54.2	48.8	25.7	26.8	
No											
#	134	330	183	407	154	364	98	244	159	349	
%	62.6	69.2	85.5	85.3	72	76.3	45.8	51.2	74.3	73.2	
Totals											
#	214	477	214	477	214	477	214	477	214	477	
%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

hindered the type of home life they had envisioned for themselves. This is a significant increase from the 2006 result, where only one-quarter felt that way. While this survey intended to focus solely on the status of women in the discipline, this finding suggests that workplaces and departments need to do a better job of promoting work-life balance and self-care within realistic expectations of the demands of an academic career.

Open-Ended Responses

The open-ended comments provided by the respondents also illustrate the environment of our discipline for both men and women. In the 2015 survey, 68.7 percent of all respondents provided comments, with comments from 70.6 percent of the female participants and 47.7 percent of the male participants. Many of the men and women had similar concerns, which reflects previous iterations of the survey, but a concern for reverse discrimination seemed to persist.

The main concern (69 total comments) expressed in these comments focuses on family obligations (and mainly motherhood), and expresses worry that these are not compatible with the expectations of an academic career. These comments from both men and women concentrate on the imbalance between evening activities on campus, conferences, or research opportunities and their impact on family time. Women repeatedly mentioned that some of their colleagues only see them as mothers once they have children and that these same colleagues ask them more about their children rather than about their research. Women also mention how they are perceived to be “choosing the ‘mommy track’” rather than pushing for their next promotion while their children are young. Finally, both men and women mention the imbalance of family leave time (if it is at all available; many graduate students mentioned how family/maternity leave is not an option for them at their institutions) and how faculty colleagues and administration then interpret that time. Some women voiced concern that men might be able to utilize tenure clock stoppage and family leave for research purposes rather than child-rearing purposes, which has been illustrated as an advantage in research by [Antecol, Bedard, and Stearns \(2016\)](#).

The next largest category of comments focused on overt sexist behavior, discrimination, and the pervasive chilly climate in academia (57 comments). Women shared stories about male faculty discouraging women from being “serious” about their careers because they would eventually get married and/or have children. Other women discussed how they were asked illegal questions about their relationship status during formal, on-campus job interviews and less formal job interviews at large discipline-wide conferences. Still others discussed how they felt uncomfortable after comments were made about their clothing or their looks. A handful of comments made by younger female scholars (less than 30 years old) indicated that they had not been targets of gender-based discrimination. Finally, there were multiple mentions that in Brazil and Mexico gender-based discrimination continued to be rampant, even for the younger generation.

The biggest example of this chilly climate is the omnipresent “old boys’ club.” There were mentions of scenarios where male faculty members assisted male graduate students in ways that were unethical. Other respondents discussed how networking seems to be dominated by men and how that can diminish a scholar’s chances for publishing in top journals. For instance, one participant shared this perception of the challenges associated with publishing: “Women often do not have these personal connections or mentor-mentee relationships with senior male faculty that can provide positive [article] reviews. As a result of less access to these informal male networks, women are less likely to receive positive reviews.” Women also discussed how some male colleagues excluded them from socializing outside of the office, which led to exclusion from some informal mentoring and networking.

Women were also concerned that their research is perceived in a gendered context (21 comments). Some mentioned that they did not think they were considered to be “serious scholars” by their male colleagues, particularly in the security studies field. One participant mentioned how one of her most supportive colleagues “talks about [her] to others in an occasionally patronizing way, as if [her] skills and tendencies as a scholar are ‘cute’ or amusing.” Feminist scholars also discussed in their comments how members of the security studies field exclude them and their research, as if feminism is not a “real” approach to studying international security. A different respondent said that her work sometimes was seen as “emotional.” Finally, there were multiple mentions about how women who utilize qualitative research methodologies were perceived as not as rigorous with their studies as those who use quantitative approaches.

There were 27 comments about the need for (or the positive effects of) gender balance in various professional contexts. Many participants lauded the movement to create balance in conference panels after the “Congrats! You Have An All Male Panel!” movement created by Dr. Saara Särnä in 2015. Both men and women also have discussed the benefits related to adhering to creating more of a gender balance in their citations and in their syllabi (Maliniak et al. 2013; Colgan 2017). In fact, most men (65.7 percent) and women (81.8 percent) responded that they either already do check for gender balance in their citations or are open to doing so in the future. Survey respondents who revealed in their open-ended comments that they worked in a relatively gender-balanced department generally reported more positive experiences than those who did not.

There were also a number of other issues that were mentioned repeatedly in response to the survey’s request for comments. First, many women discussed a bias against those who identified as feminists and/or as feminist scholars, as if that label automatically meant they were not “team players” within departments. In fact, there were 12 comments written by men about “reverse discrimination” and how women have an advantage in the job market. This was a small percentage of the open-ended responses, but still significant enough to be mentioned in this report. Second, some respondents focused on discrimination happening outside traditional academic departments. Women mentioned experiencing discrimination and harassment at academic conferences. They also discussed cyberbullying and discrimination occurring on blogs and online forums. Finally, eight respondents brought up the lack of intersectionality in the survey. These people felt that although gender was one aspect of discrimination they experienced, other dimensions of their identity (such as race, nationality, religious identity, gender identity, and sexual orientation) played into discrimination in a much deeper manner.

Conclusion

The results of this survey beg two questions. First, have things gotten better? Second, are women nearing equal status with men within the International Studies Association? Like the 2006 survey, the 2015 survey asked whether things have gotten better, worse, or better and worse. 62.6 percent of men and 40.5 percent of women agreed that the situation for women has gotten better, with no men and only 2.9 percent of women responding that it had gotten worse. However, women did not perceive themselves to be treated as equals to men. Only 1 percent of women and 10.7 percent of men felt that equality had been achieved. On the other hand, 35.4 percent of women expressed that women are still at a disadvantage when compared to men.

The perceptions that were uncovered by this survey illustrate that men and women have different experiences in our discipline. One respondent commented: “There is a lot of talk/theoretical issues surrounding female equality, but this doesn’t always become a reality.” This reflects the frustration that, while there are greater formal institutional policy efforts to keep women in academia, the chilly

climate persists. While there has been progress, it is apparent that there is still so far to go.

Over the past ten years, there has been an explosion in-group mentoring opportunities for women, the sharing of advice via social media, and a very public recognition that all scholars can take specific steps to help their female colleagues overcome the structural and informal factors that lead to gender discrimination in our field. This certainly needs to continue. However, positive progress without any real gains for equality will continue to be the trend if more men do not proactively become a part of the solution to gender discrimination in our discipline.

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