

# **Gender Audit of the Political Studies Association of Ireland**

## **Aims and Objectives of this Gender Audit**

This Gender Audit aims to provide an organisational assessment of the relative participation of women and men in the Political Studies Association of Ireland (PSAI).

The data used is as of August, 2015. Unless otherwise cited, the data was calculated by the author from membership lists, AGM minutes, conference programmes and other sources.

It is recognised that a range of other characteristics, such as socio-economic status, age, race and ethnicity, may work in tandem with gender to influence individual levels of participation in the PSAI and political studies on the island more broadly. Unfortunately, limitations to existing data mean that it has not been possible, for now at least, to provide an analysis of data combining gender with these other characteristics. The audit would also be greatly supplemented by a qualitative analysis of the dynamics of gender in the Irish political studies sphere more broadly.

The Audit does not examine the PSAI's peer-reviewed journal, *Irish Political Studies*, as the editorial team is working separately on this issue.

It is recommended that the PSAI institutionalises the role of Gender Mainstreaming Officer and undertakes a gender audit every couple of years to allow the organisation to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in relation to gender equality and to work towards addressing any gaps. While I would hesitate to propose adopting gender quotas in an organisation of its size, the PSAI should aim towards gender parity and awareness, or as close as possible to it, in all aspects of its internal and outreach work.

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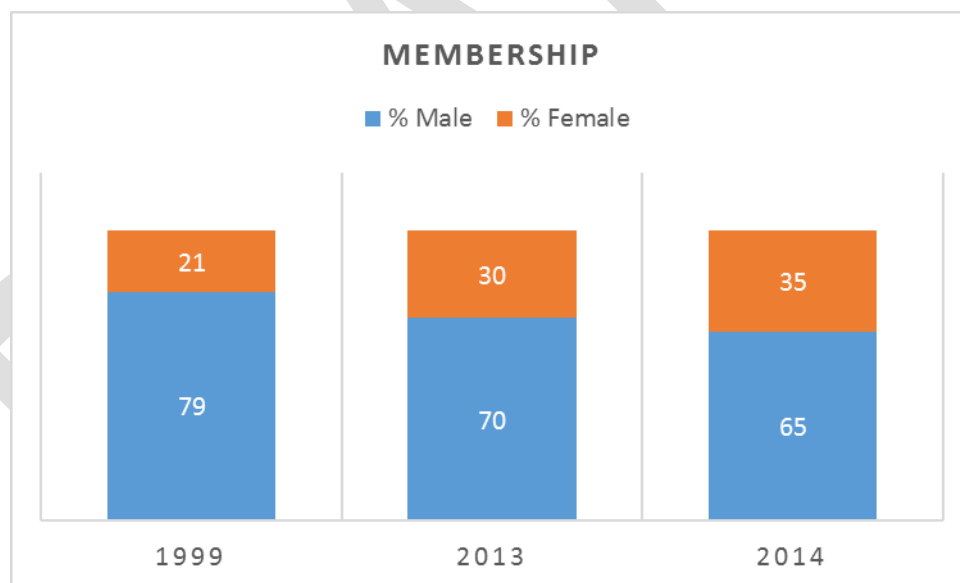
## Part 1 - Internal Participation

### Membership

In 2014 the PSAI had 209 members, of which 136 were male (65%) and 73 (35%) were female. Though still a long way off from parity, women's membership of the PSAI has been increasing overtime. Coakley's analysis of the organisation in 1999, for example, showed that only 21% of members at that point were female.<sup>1</sup> By 2013 this figure had risen to 30%.<sup>2</sup>

Between 2013 and 2014 the PSAI increased its number of members overall by 29 (from 180 to 209) which was a 16% increase. Interestingly in terms of gender, there was a 35% increase in female membership (from 54 to 73) compared to an 8% increase in male membership (from 126 to 136). So women's membership of the organisation, last year at least, is growing at a faster rate than men.

Comparatively speaking, women's PSAI membership is nearly on par with that of IPSA which had a 37% female membership rate in 2013.<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> John Coakley (1999) Political Science in Ireland. Third Edition. Dublin: Political Studies Association of Ireland.

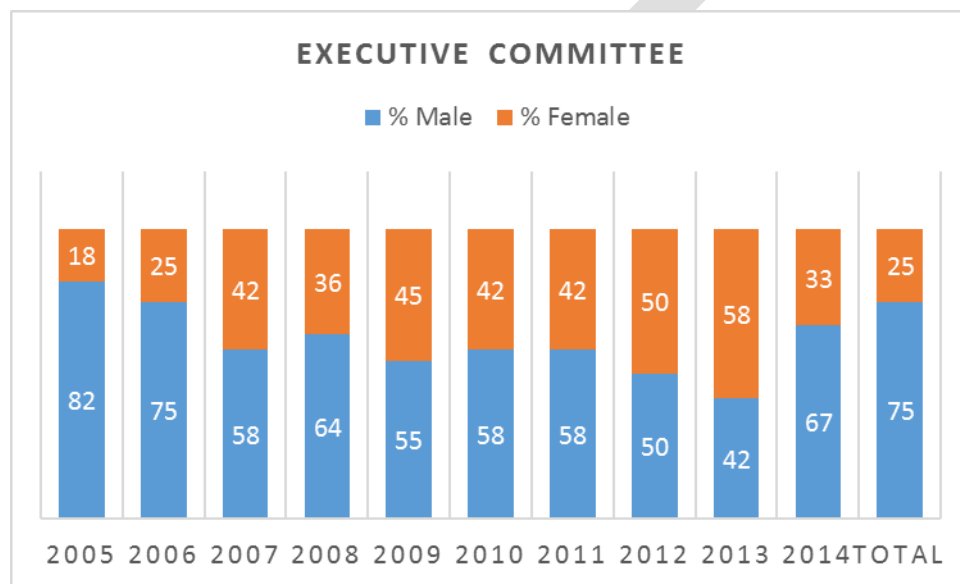
<sup>2</sup> Figure provided by Fiona Buckley, UCC.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.ipso.org/sites/default/files/gender\\_monitoring\\_report\\_2013.pdf](https://www.ipso.org/sites/default/files/gender_monitoring_report_2013.pdf).

### *Executive Committee*

The PSAI's Executive Committee is elected each year at the Association's AGM, held during the annual conference.

Between 2005 and 2014, 71 men (61%) and 46 women (39%) held seats on the Executive Committee. Only in 2012 was gender parity reached, and women actually comprised a majority of the committee in 2013. However female representation slipped back to one-third of members in 2014, the lowest level since 2006.



## *Officerships*

Even though women have held one-half of officerships on the Executive Committee since 2005 – proportionally higher than their committee membership - a gendered division of labour is evident with all presidencies held by men and women occupying a majority of supportive functions.

Throughout the PSAI's history, only two women have served as president and a decade has passed since a female last held this position.<sup>4</sup> Though the vice-presidency has been occupied by a woman since 2012, the role was all-male between 2005 and 2011. In contrast women have held eight of the ten secretary and treasurer roles. Over this time the postgraduate representative position has been the most gender-balanced role, held by 4 men and 5 women.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from the lowly figure of 20% in 2005 (reflective of women's poor representation on the committee that year) women have always held at least 40% of officerships and held four of the five positions in 2012 and 2013. On the current committee this has fallen back to two.

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>President</b>	10	0
<b>Vice-President</b>	7	3
<b>Secretary</b>	2	8
<b>Treasurer</b>	2	8
<b>Postgraduate Representative<sup>6</sup></b>	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>25 (51%)</b>	<b>24 (49%)</b>

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<sup>4</sup> Maura Adshead 2002-2005; Yvonne Galligan, 1999-2002.

<sup>5</sup> Data from 2009 is missing.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

### *Specialist Groups*

The PSAI currently has 11 specialist groups which support those who teach and research across the disciplinary spectrum and offer potential networking opportunities and research partnerships. Each specialist group has two co-convenors, usually located in different institutions.

The table below lists co-convenor numbers by gender at the time of writing. Women are in the majority here – overall, seven co-convenors are male (32%) and 15 are female (68%). Only three groups have gender-balanced representation at this level, while both co-convenors in six groups are female and in two groups are male.

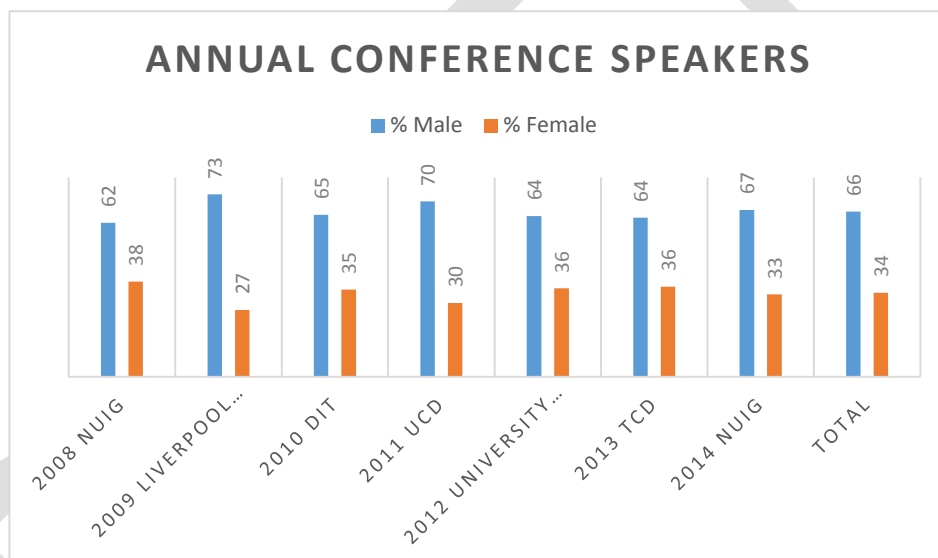
<b>Specialist Group</b>	<b>Male Co-Convenor</b>	<b>Female Co-Convenor</b>
Voters, Parties and Elections	0	2
European Studies	1	1
Gender and Politics	0	2
Interest Groups and Lobbying	2	0
International Relations and Area Studies	1	1
Local Government	2	0
Participatory and Deliberative Democracy	2	0
Peace and Conflict Studies	1	1
Political Theory	0	2
Public Policy	0	2
Teaching and Learning	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 (32%)</b>	<b>15 (68%)</b>

## Part 2 – External Participation

### *Annual Conferences*

Since 2008, 530 men (66%) and 270 women (34%), including keynote speakers, roundtables and plenary sessions, haven given papers at the PSAI’s Annual Conference. Gender participation rates have been relatively stable and generally reflect the organisation’s membership base, apart from 2009 when the proportion of female speakers fell to just 27% - interestingly, the conference was held in Liverpool that year but whether this had an impact on women’s participation remains unclear.

A total of 45 panels across the various conferences have consisted of entirely male speakers and 12 panels had only female speakers.

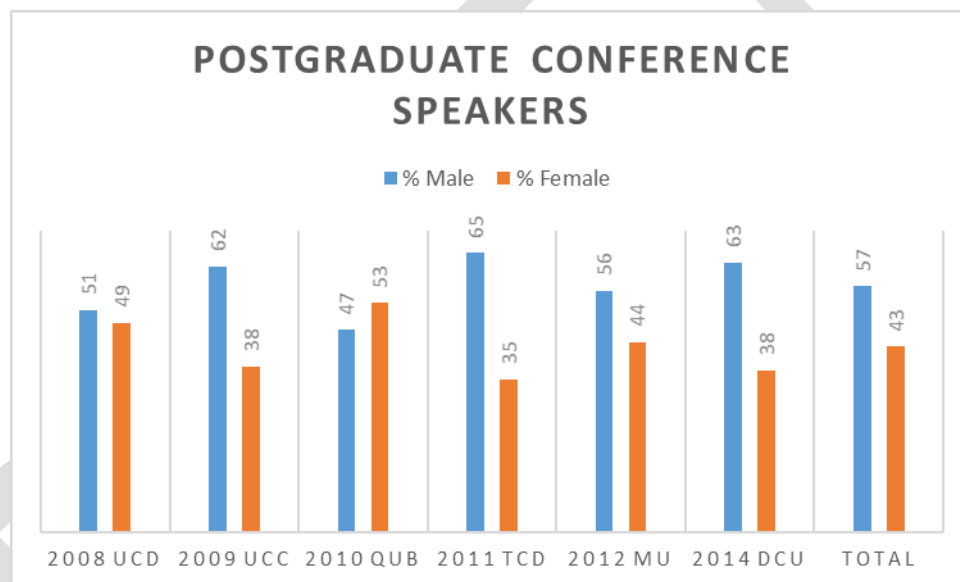


Based on the data available 36% of panel chairs/discussants since the 2008 conference have been female, but the proportion of women and men carrying out these roles tends to vary by conference.

### Postgraduate Conferences

Reflecting the fact that there are higher numbers of women undertaking postgraduate study in politics than there are working in this area at senior academic levels, the PSAI's postgraduate conferences tend to have a higher proportion of women giving papers than the annual conference. Of the six postgraduate conferences held since 2008, 102 men (57%) and 78 women (43%) gave papers (including keynotes, plenaries and roundtables). However, there tends to be some variation in female participation by conference – for example, 53% of paper-givers at QUB in 2010 were women compared to just 35% the following year in TCD.

Nine panels across the various conferences had all-male speakers and six panels had only female speakers.



Available data shows that 42% of chairs/discussants at postgraduate conferences have been female though, like the main conference, gender rates tends to vary by year.