IPSA AISP

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Summary

Highlights:

1. Persistent Gender Barriers to Career Progression and Leadership

Across all global regions, women consistently report higher levels of perceived and experienced obstacles to career progression and academic leadership than men. These include restricted access to leadership roles, symbolic exclusion from decision-making, and devaluation of their intellectual contributions.

2. Incidence of Misconduct

Political science professionals in Latin America and Africa/the Middle East report the highest levels of professional misconduct, with women disproportionately affected in both frequency and severity.

3. Parenthood Deepens Gender Inequality in Academic Careers

The negative impact of parenthood is reported overwhelmingly by women, particularly in academic roles, revealing institutional structures that inadequately accommodate caregiving responsibilities and disproportionately penalize mothers.

4. Limited Institutional and Peer Support After Misconduct

Most victims of harassment or abuse report receiving little or no meaningful support from their institutions, despite high rates of disclosure to colleagues. Individuals may hesitate to report issues to institutions or peers, often due to fear of retaliation and the lack of effective accountability mechanisms.

5. Gendered Barriers Emerge Early and Persist Across Career Stages

Postgraduate students – particularly in Europe, Latin America, and North America – already perceive gender as a career barrier. These perceptions not only persist but are often reinforced as individuals transition into academic employment, where unequal task distribution, harassment, and misattribution of work become more commonplace.

Introduction

Since 2009, the International Political Science Association (IPSA) has implemented a gender monitoring system aimed at tracking the status of women in political science. In 2017, IPSA expanded this initiative to include diversity surveys. This initiative seeks to raise awareness of the persistent underrepresentation of women, address issues of gender equality, and enhance the roles of both women and diverse groups in scientific research and organizations (IPSA Gender and Diversity Monitoring Report). In 2023, IPSA published the fourth report based on a survey conducted with 34 of the 59 affiliated regional and national political science associations (PSAs) (Korkut and St-Laurent, 2023). The report emphasizes the continued underrepresentation of women in political science associations, particularly in leadership roles and senior academic positions. Despite limited progress, significant disparities remain, underscoring the need for ongoing efforts to promote equity within the discipline.

These disparities are consistent with a growing body of literature highlighting persistent gender inequality in academia despite increasing female participation at the entry levels. Although parity has been achieved in many graduate programs, it has not translated into equal representation in senior positions, leadership roles, or high-impact publications. Stubborn structural barriers – including the "glass ceiling," gendered expectations regarding care responsibilities, and epistemic devaluation – act to constrain women's advancement across disciplines, including political science (van Veelen and Derks, 2022; Ceci et al., 2014; Evans and Moulder, 2011).

To mark the 75th anniversary of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) and further consolidate our commitment to monitor and foster diversity and gender equality in political science, we conducted the survey titled Gender Inequalities in Political Science among IPSA's individual members. The survey's primary objective was to understand how our community perceives work conditions, inappropriate behaviors in interpersonal relations, and gender inequalities within the field. This report presents the results and highlights the key challenges and dynamics that perpetuate inequality.

The IPSA Survey on Gender Inequalities in Political Science was distributed to individual IPSA members and members of affiliated national political science associations by email and via IPSA social media from December 3, 2024, to March 3, 2025. Many respondents were not IPSA members but were connected through these associations, ensuring a broad and diverse sample of political scientists worldwide.

This report is divided into nine interconnected sections that together present a detailed analysis of gender inequalities in political science, drawing on the IPSA global survey. Section 1 explores the historical and structural dimensions of gender inequality in academia. Section 2 presents the methodology used, while Section 3 outlines the demographic, geographic, and professional characteristics of respondents. Section 4 sets out the core findings, examining experiences of discrimination, obstacles to career advancement, harassment, and authorship misappropriation, disaggregated by gender and region. Building on these findings, Section 5 looks at the extent and limitations of

institutional responses and peer support in cases of misconduct. Section 6 widens the focus to assess everyday workplace environments and perceptions of inequality. Complementing this, Section 7 contrasts the perceptions and experiences of postgraduate students with those in academic employment. The report concludes with a synthesis of key findings and policy implications.

1. Gender Inequality in Science and Political Science

Despite a greater proportion of women in early academic career stages, significant gender inequalities persist in political science. Parity at the base, such as among doctoral students or early-career researchers, has not translated into equality of opportunity at the more advanced stages. Even in areas considered more receptive to female participation, such as the social, behavioral, and life sciences, women face persistent obstacles to reaching leadership positions (van Veelen and Derks, 2022). In these areas, the so-called "glass ceiling" is more pronounced, operating through subtle barriers that are difficult to name but have profound structural effects (van Veelen and Derks, 2022).

In traditionally male-dominated fields, such as natural sciences, technology, and economics, inequalities are manifest from the early stages of the trajectory, reflecting social factors at play prior to university life (Ceci et al., 2014). According to Ceci et al. (2014), the underrepresentation of women in these fields stems in part from pre-university factors, including the lower likelihood that girls will choose math-intensive careers due to cultural and social conditioning. Even when women choose these fields and obtain equivalent qualifications, they still face discriminatory evaluations. Through an experiment with identical resumes, Moss-Racusin et al. (2012) demonstrated that faculty members – men and women alike – attribute greater competence, employability, and mentoring potential to candidates with male names, thereby confirming the presence of unconscious biases in academic recruitment.

These patterns recur even more acutely in political science. Data from Brazil show that it is the most male-dominated discipline in the social sciences, with men accounting for 67% of faculty, and significant racial inequality: 81% of faculty are white, and faculty in some programs are exclusively white, even in regions with a majority Black or mixed-race population (Candido et al., 2019). In addition to being under-represented, women are more penalized by academic evaluation metrics, which ignore the impacts of motherhood on their trajectories, for example.

These asymmetries are also evidenced in scientific production. Studies on authorship in prestigious journals indicate that women are less frequent as lead authors and have less visibility in the most symbolic and valued editorial spaces (Evans and Moulder, 2011; Breuning and Sanders, 2007). Evans and Moulder (2011) show that, between 2000 and 2009, only 20% of the articles in leading political science journals cited women as lead authors, while men continue to account for the majority of the articles written. The situation is compounded in journals that prioritize quantitative methods and formal models, such as American Journal of Political Science (AJPS) and JOP, where female participation is even lower (Breuning and Sanders, 2007). Though advances have been noted in journals

more open to qualitative methodologies, such as Comparative Politics, methodological segmentation serves to keep women in areas of lower prestige and impact.

Goldfrank and Welp (2023) show that women in Latin America continue to be underrepresented on editorial boards (28%), in faculty positions (34%), and as journal editors (37%), even after cycles of feminist mobilization. Elizondo (2015) points out that, although women make up almost half of doctoral candidates in Spain, they represent only 7.3% of full professors, indicating a clear asymmetry in career progression. Kantola (2008) observed a similar situation in a Finnish department, where women reported experiences of exclusion in teaching and mentoring opportunities, as well as the devaluation of research topics associated with them. Institutional silence and fear of stigmatization often prevent the labeling of these experiences as discrimination.

The pipeline idea suggested that time would correct these inequalities, but this notion has proven to be illusory (Monroe and Chiu, 2010). The increase in the number of qualified women has not been sufficient to ensure equity, as institutional mechanisms of recruitment, evaluation, and promotion continue to reproduce exclusionary patterns. As Monroe and Chiu (2010) argue, gender inequality in academia will not be overcome by the system's inertia; active policies must be implemented to increase transparency in processes and review professional valuation practices. Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll (2006) reinforce this analysis by showing how the discipline of political science, historically, has been constituted by masculine norms and values that continue to marginalize both women and gender studies.

2. Methods

The IPSA survey titled Gender Inequalities in Political Science was distributed via email and IPSA's official social media platforms from December 3, 2024, to March 3, 2025. The initiative sought to gauge the perceptions and experiences of individual IPSA members and members of its affiliated national political science associations, which were asked to distribute the survey to their respective communities. A significant proportion of the respondents are not members of IPSA, but rather are political scientists affiliated with other national or regional associations.

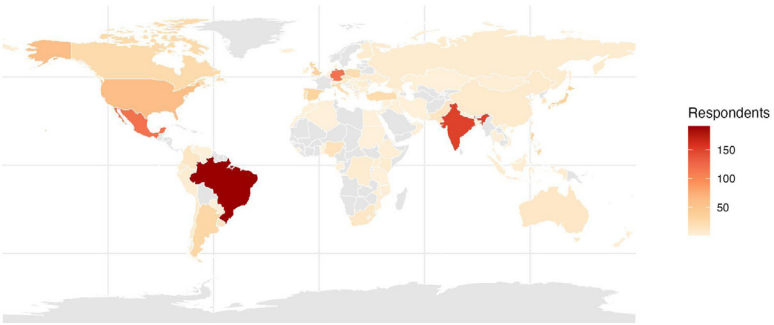
The questionnaire aimed to gather demographic and experiential data from individuals engaged in political science either as professionals or students. The survey included closed-ended questions on gender identity, racial or ethnic identity, academic status, country of birth and residence, educational attainment, professional field, and parental responsibilities. Participants were asked about their experiences and perceptions concerning discrimination, harassment, and institutional culture within the field of political science. The primary inquiries examined whether gender or race were viewed as obstacles to career progression or leadership, whether parenthood adversely affected professional trajectories, and whether participants experienced moral or sexual harassment, inappropriate physical contact, or unauthorized appropriation of their work. Supplementary items examined responses to misconduct, including whether such incidents were reported and whether the respondents received support.

Following data collection, we conducted descriptive statistical analyses to identify patterns of inequality and discrimination among different groups. The comparisons focused on respondents' gender, racial or ethnic identity, geographical region, academic status (postgraduate students versus those in academic employment), and, when applicable, parental status. The analysis examined perceptions, including the belief that gender or race acts as a career obstacle, and documented experiences of harassment, symbolic discrimination, and institutional support. Percentages were calculated based on valid responses within each subgroup. The data offer insight into the perceptions and experiences of inequalities among the global community of political scientists. Additionally, we reviewed all responses to the open-ended questions. This method served to supplement data analysis, and symbolic questions were used to illustrate and discuss the results.

3. Sample Description

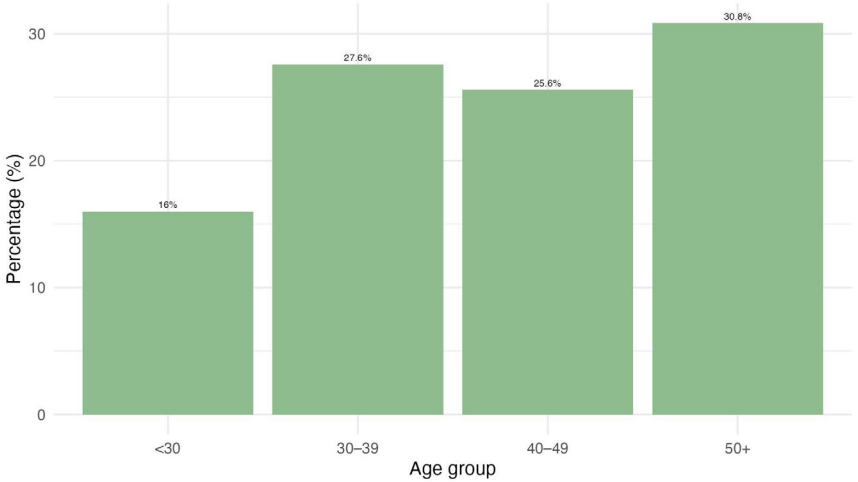
The survey sample comprises 1,200 respondents across 88 countries, based on their country of employment, studies or place of residence. The largest proportion of participants is located in Brazil (15.9%), followed by India (12.5%), Mexico (9.8%), and Germany (9.8%). The United States accounts for 5.1% of the sample. Other countries with smaller percentages include Japan (2.9%), the United Kingdom (2.8%), the Philippines (2.8%), Spain (2.7%), and Argentina (2.4%). Most respondents are concentrated in the Americas, South Asia, and selected countries in Western Europe.

Figure 1 - Distribution of Survey Respondents by Country



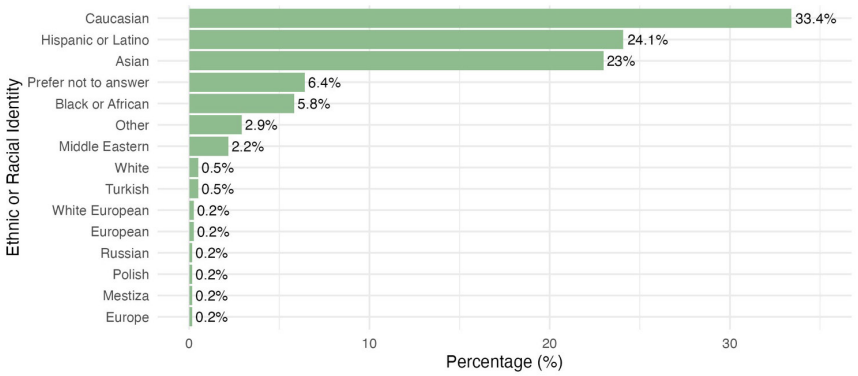
The sample is composed mostly of individuals who identified as female (57.9%) and male (40.4%). Regarding age distribution, 16% are under 30 years old, 27.6% are between 30 and 39, 25.6% are between 40 and 49, and 30.8% are 50 or older.

Figure 2 - Distribution of Survey Respondents by Age Group



Regarding ethnic or racial identity, 33.4% of respondents identified as Caucasian, 24.1% as Hispanic or Latino, and 23% as Asian. Other groups include individuals who preferred not to answer (6.4%), identified as Black or African (5.8%), or selected the "Other" category (2.9%). Respondents who identified as Middle Eastern represent 2.2% of the sample. Other categories were also mentioned, such as "White," "Turkish," "White European," "European," "Russian," "Polish," "Mestiza," and "Europe," but each accounted for fewer than 1% of responses.

Figure 3 - Ethnic or Racial Identity of Survey Respondents



In the distribution by number of children, 56.8% of respondents reported having no children. Among those with children, 18.2% reported having one child, 15.2% reported having two, 6.5% reported having three, 0.7% reported having four, and 0.5% reported having five. Small percentages indicated "other" (0.1%) or chose not to answer (2%).

Regarding temporal trends in education, Figure 4 illustrates the distribution of respondents according to the decade in which they attained their highest degree. A discernible upward trend over time signifies an increased concentration of respondents who obtained their degrees in more recent decades. A mere fraction of respondents attained their degrees in the 1960s (0.3%), 1970s (1.2%), and 1980s (2.2%). Beginning in the 1990s, these percentages exhibit a more pronounced increase, with 5.2% in the 1990s, 15.9% in the 2000s, 33.9% in the 2010s, and reaching a peak of 41.2% in the 2020s.

Figure 4 - Decade of Completion of Highest Degree

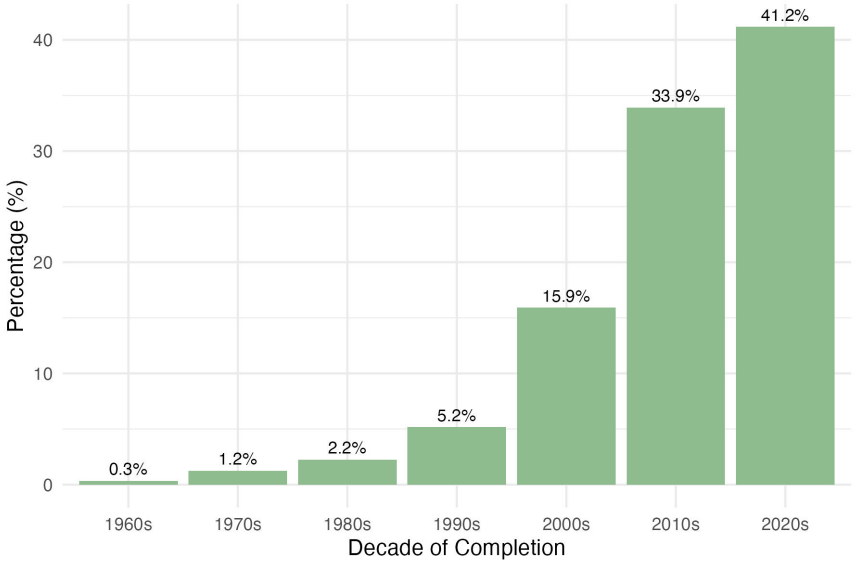
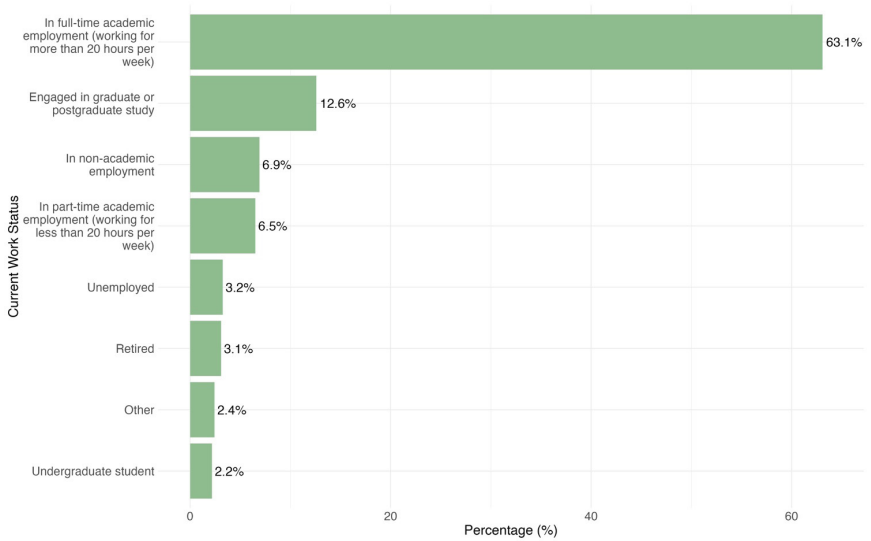


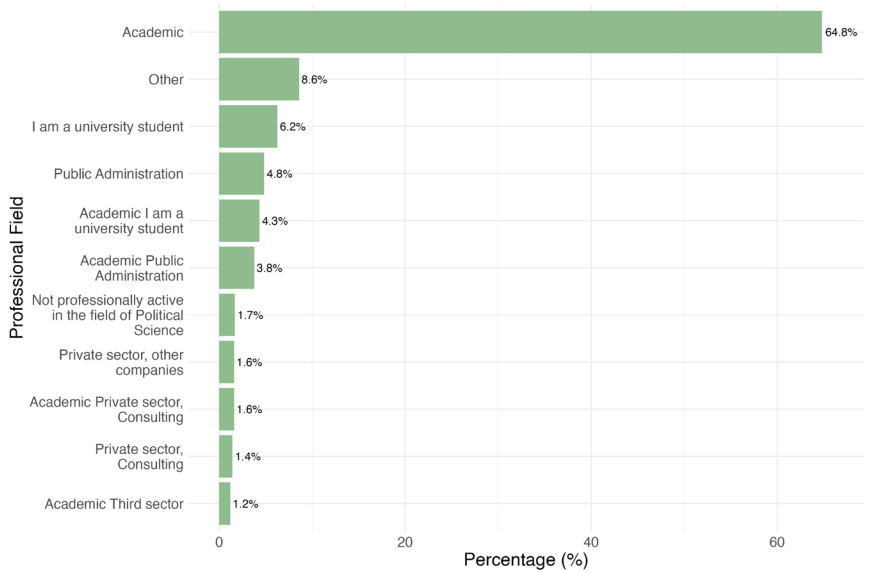
Figure 5 shows the current work status of respondents. The vast majority of respondents (63.1%) reported being in full-time academic employment (working more than 20 hours per week), followed by those engaged in graduate or postgraduate studies (12.6%). Other relevant categories include non-academic employment (6.9%), part-time academic positions (6.5%), unemployment (3.2%), and retirement (3.1%). A smaller proportion identified as undergraduates (2.2%). Together, these eight categories account for nearly all responses.

Figure 5 - Current Work Status of Respondents



Regarding the professional field, 64.8% of respondents work in academia. Other fields mentioned include "other" (8.6%), university students (6.2%), and public administration (4.8%). There are also combinations, such as academic and student roles (4.3%) and academic work within a public administration (3.8%). Smaller percentages include professionals outside political science (1.7%) and those working in the private sector or consulting (ranging from 1.2% to 1.6%).

Figure 6 - Professional Field of Respondents



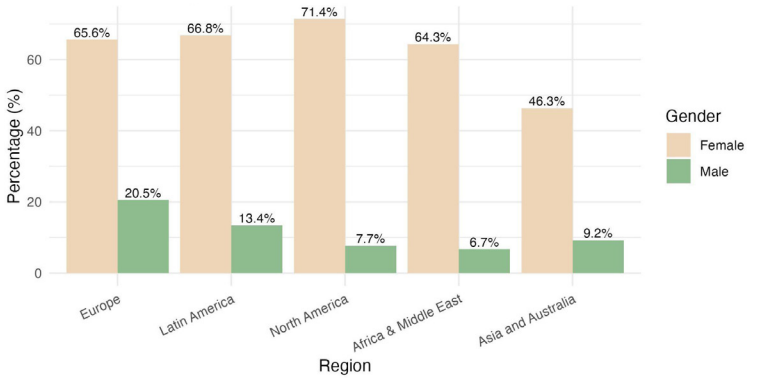
4. Experiences of Discrimination and Career Barriers

This section explores how gender shapes career trajectories in political science, with a focus on perceptions of professional advancement, access to leadership positions, and the impact of parenthood. Across all regions, women report significantly higher levels of perceived barriers than men, both in general career progression and in securing academic leadership positions. These patterns are amplified by structural inequalities and everyday practices that limit women's recognition, mobility, and authority within the field. Through both survey data and personal accounts, this section highlights how institutional norms, informal male networks, and caregiving responsibilities intersect to constrain women's opportunities and reinforce gendered hierarchies in academic life.

4.1. Gender-Based Inequalities in Career Progression Specific to Political Science

Across all regions, women report this perception at significantly higher rates than men. The highest percentages among women are observed in North America (71.4%) and Latin America (66.8%); followed by Europe (65.6%), Africa and the Middle East (64.3%), and Asia and Australia (46.3%). Among men, the perception is considerably lower, ranging from 20.5% in Europe to only 6.7% in Africa and the Middle East.

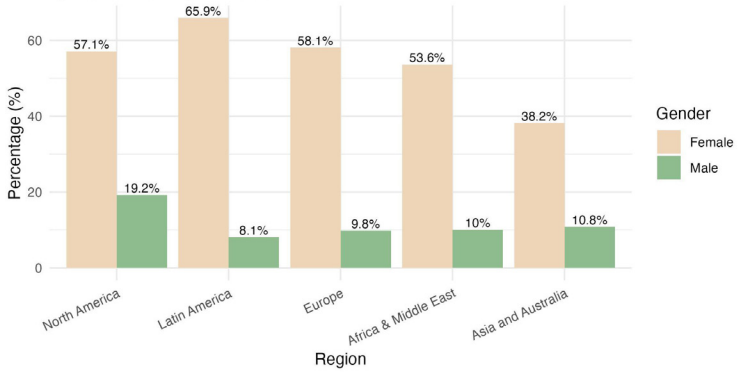
Figure 7 - Perception of Gender as a Barrier to Advancement in Political Science



Note: Percentage calculated as the number of respondents who answered "Yes", divided by the total number of respondents of the same gender and region.

A similar pattern emerges in responses concerning gender-based barriers to advancement into leadership and management positions in academia. In all regions analyzed, women report this perception at significantly higher rates than men. The highest such percentages are observed in Latin America (65.9%), North America (57.1%), and Europe (58.1%). Among men, the figures are substantially lower, ranging from 8.1% in Latin America to 19.2% in North America.

Figure 8 - Gender Barrier in Academic Leadership



Note: Proportion of respondents who answered "Yes" out of all same-gender respondents from the same region to the question: Have you ever felt that your gender has been a barrier to your advancement in academic leadership and management?

These findings suggest that gender inequality in access to academic leadership is predominantly perceived by women across diverse regional contexts. These perceptions are echoed in numerous testimonials from respondents:

> "My male colleagues who study the same topic are invited to more events, receive more scholarship opportunities, and gain more public recognition for their research. As a woman, I am overlooked. I have experienced situations where men further along in their careers ask me out or express interest in intimate relationships. When I do not accept, they begin to undermine me."

This scenario illustrates how gendered power dynamics and harassment can intersect with professional marginalization. Another respondent called attention to the structural barriers that persist even after women attain leadership roles:

> "There are invisible barriers in the professional area, including to real participation in decision-making and exercising effective leadership positions. It is possible to hold a certain job position, but that does not mean equal participation in decision-making and management. Still observing salary differences and discrimination in spaces where motherhood is seen as a detriment or hindrance to the company."

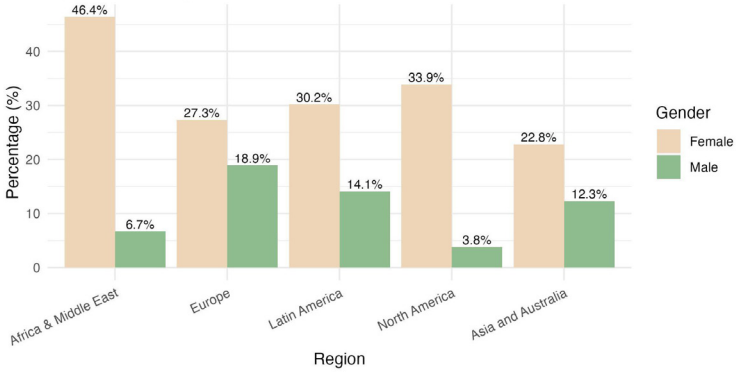
Certain accounts illustrate how informal male networks sustain exclusion. Numerous respondents referred to it as "the boys' club":

> "Political science often feels like a "boys club" where men support their peers, and it seems impossible to break into the circles or be evaluated equally in professional settings or on the job market/on promotion panels".

> "There is a sudden announcement of career advancement, but it's a closed announcement. Only the men who gather for futsal (football) after work know about it. Needless to say, even though I wrote many reputable publications, won a competition, and received a scholarship, my career level is lower than that of my male colleagues."

Across all regions, a greater proportion of women reported that the experience of parenthood had a negative impact on their professional trajectories. The largest gender gaps are observed in Africa & the Middle East (46.4% of women vs. 6.7% of men) and North America (33.9% vs. 3.8%). Although the gaps are somewhat narrower in other regions, the trend remains consistent: motherhood is widely perceived by women as a barrier to career progression, whereas men are far less likely to report similar obstacles. This disparity illustrates how the burdens of caregiving are unevenly distributed and how not enough is done to make the necessary accommodations within academic and professional environments.

Figure 9 - Perceived Impact of Parenthood on Career



Note: Percentage of men and women in each region who stated that parenthood negatively affected their careers. This statistic is calculated based on the total number of respondents who share the same gender and region.

Several testimonies illustrate the lived consequences of these institutional shortcomings. One woman recounted how the responsibilities of motherhood limited her academic opportunities abroad:

> "During my PhD, I could not pursue a dual degree at a European university because I had commitments related to my maternity (an 8-month-old baby). My classmate, who had a baby of similar age, was able to travel abroad for his studies and obtain the dual degree (our translation)."

Her account makes clear how institutional expectations – often framed as gender-neutral – fail to consider the asymmetrical impact of parenting, ultimately restricting the mobility and credentials of women scholars. Another respondent described the challenges of navigating departmental expectations while caring for a young child:

> "As the only female faculty with a young child, I found it hard to negotiate my care needs with my department (such as no weekend meetings or leaving the meeting after 5 p.m.). Because my male colleagues with children could usually 'function as usual' with their partners helping out to cover the care needs."

Here, the lack of flexibility and empathy within academic culture exposes the gendered assumptions underpinning everyday routines. Another testimony highlights the long-term effects of this imbalance:

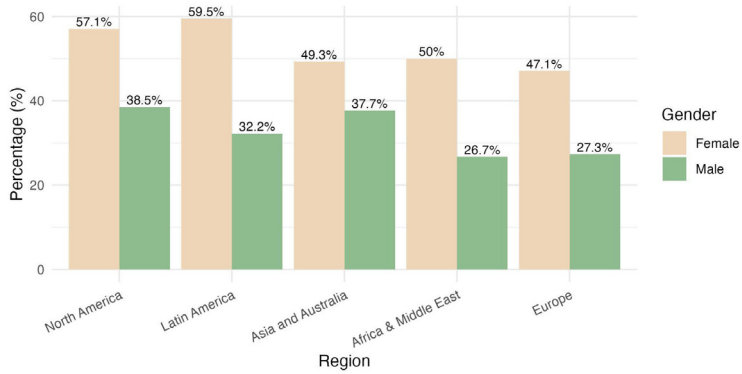
> "When you are a mother, you have less time to dedicate to research and projects, which hinders recognition and opportunities. Specifically, as I work in the public service, I don't feel the salary difference, but I feel that I am not invited to participate in projects as often, which makes me question my ability."

Across all regions, women more frequently perceive gender as a barrier to career advancement and access to academic leadership positions. What's more, the parenting experience is perceived as exerting a significantly more negative impact on women than on men. Regional comparisons reveal important nuances in how these inequalities are experienced. In North America and Latin America, women report the highest levels of perceived barriers, particularly in relation to leadership and the impact of parenthood. Europe also shows high levels of perceived inequality among women, yet stands out for a relatively higher proportion of men acknowledging gender-based obstacles. In contrast, Africa and the Middle East display the widest gender gaps, especially regarding the career impact of parental responsibilities, with very few men perceiving any disadvantage.

4.2. Harassment and Professional Misconduct Experiences in Political Science Projects

Figure 10 illustrates the percentage of individuals who reported encountering workplace moral harassment in projects or employment related to political science. Women across all regions report encountering such situations more frequently than men, with percentages ranging from 47.1% in Europe to 59.5% in Latin America, compared to a range of 27.3% to 32.2% for their male counterparts. While high rates of workplace bullying were observed among both genders in certain regions, including North America, Asia and Australia, women consistently report higher levels of exposure.

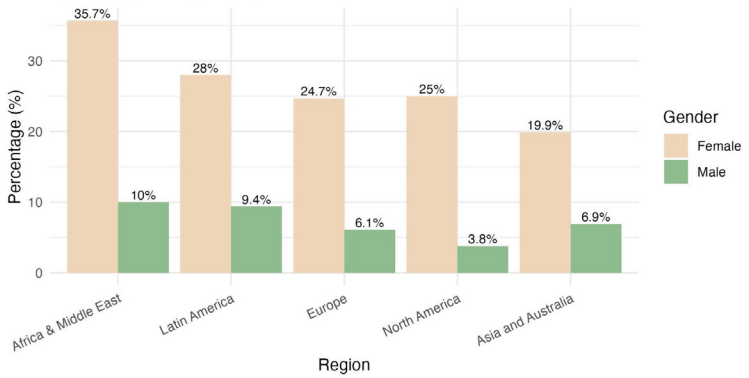
Figure 10 - Encounter with Moral Harassment in Political Science Initiatives



Note: Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "Have you ever personally suffered any situation of moral harassment (insults, derogatory comments, aggressive behavior to instill fear or control, unequal treatment based on gender, race, or other personal characteristics, excessive control beyond reasonable limits, etc.) by a colleague or superior in a job or project related to political science?"

Women across all regions report experiencing sexual harassment at significantly higher rates than men. While the prevalence of sexual harassment is lower overall compared to other forms of misconduct, the gender disparity is particularly stark. Among women, reported rates range from 19.9% in Asia and Australia to 35.7% in Africa and the Middle East. Among men, the figures are consistently and substantially lower—ranging from just 3.8% in North America to 9.4% in Latin America. This contrast reveals not only the gendered nature of exposure to harassment but also the persistent vulnerability of women in academic environments, particularly in regions where institutional responses to gender-based violence remain limited.

Figure 11 - Experience of Sexual Harassment in Political Science Projects



Note: This percentage represents the respondents who answered "Yes" to the following question: "Have you ever personally experienced any form of sexual harassment (such as excessive invitations, phone calls, messages with inappropriate content, or persecution at work or outside the workplace) by a colleague or superior in a job or project related to political science?"

The experiences shared by respondents sharply highlight these statistics. Reporting harassment can result in professional retaliation, underscoring the power asymmetries and risks faced by those who choose to denounce such behavior:

> "Had a job offer in an interdisciplinary lab revoked by the deputy director for objecting to the sexual harassment I and others experienced at the hands of the latter."

The respondent exposes the presence of sexual violence and describes a broader environment of symbolic violence, where male dominance in discourse and institutional recognition further marginalizes women:

> "The way men discuss is more violent, I always feel uncomfortable. When I was a master's student, some of them yelled at my advisor. I suffered sexual violence from a colleague in the department. Those considered geniuses are always men, and few women pass the competitions to become political science professors in Brazil."

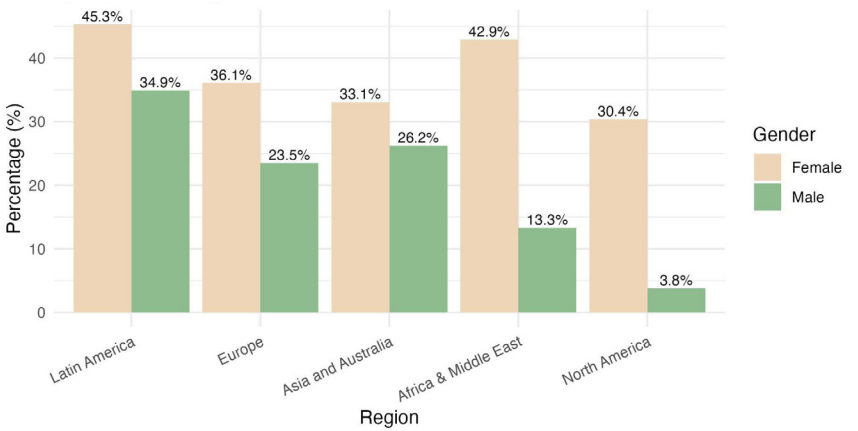
Another testimony reveals the institutional resistance often encountered when harassment is reported. The following account sheds light on the structural denial and devaluation of gender studies as a worthy field of academic endeavour and the difficulties inherent in confronting harassment. It shows how institutions may simultaneously fail to protect harassment victims and delegitimize the academic fields that seek to analyze such injustices.

> "I suffered sexual harassment. I now suffer prejudice because my work in gender studies is viewed as insufficiently scientific. As head of the anti-sexual harassment committee at my university, the resistance I faced on the part of academic authorities and colleagues was overwhelming."

These testimonies illustrate a dual predicament for women in academia: not only are they disproportionately subjected to harassment, but they are often penalized – either overtly or covertly – for confronting the cultures that perpetuate it. The data and personal narratives show that sexual harassment is not limited to isolated incidents but rather is a systemic issue embedded in the power structures, epistemic prejudices, and disciplinary conventions of political science and academia at large.

Women across all regions report having their work used without proper attribution at significantly higher rates than men. The highest such percentages are observed in Latin America (45.3%), Africa and the Middle East (42.9%), while the corresponding figures are considerably lower for men, ranging from 3.8% in North America to 34.9% in Latin America. While cases of authorship misappropriation are not exclusive to women, the disproportionate rates reported by female respondents suggest a structural issue rooted in academic hierarchies, power asymmetries, and gendered norms around intellectual labour.

Figure 12 - Work Used Without Proper Credit



Note: This percentage represents the respondents who answered "Yes, once" or "Yes, more than once" to the question, "Was the result of your work ever used by a superior without properly crediting your work, authorship, or input?"

The testimonies collected reveal different layers of this problem—from the erasure of ideas in informal settings to the appropriation of full research products. Some respondents emphasized the subtle, normalized forms of epistemic marginalization:

> "(...) And I would add that, once in these environments, politeness in communicating can be manipulated by male listeners, such as by repeating an idea that I expressed, or distorting the meaning of my sentence. Or when I am assertive to avoid this position of misunderstanding, I can be seen as rude."

Others described more overt acts of plagiarism and denial of authorship:

> "I wrote a chapter (handwritten) for a book and handed it over to the editor. When I didn't receive a response for about six months, I contacted him to enquire about

> the publication timeline. He informed me that the plan for publication was delayed. After a few more months, I came across a book that he had edited, which had my chapter under his name. That said, I feel that he did this not because I am a woman but because he was used to it."

Another example illustrates how gender and academic seniority are used to justify the denial of credit:

> "I was a research assistant but did tasks of a senior researcher, including research, and when the results were published in reports or books, my name was not considered as a co-author (our translation)."

In many of these cases, women are d enied visibility and discouraged from challenging these practices due to power imbalances, fear of retaliation, or the lack of institutional mechanisms meant to protect authorship rights:

> "I filed a formal denouncement of plagiarism. Most of my department colleagues neglected the problem and kept their support for the plagiarist."

These experiences point to a systemic pattern of academic exploitation, particularly involving women and early-career scholars. The problem transcends individual misconduct and reflects a pervasive pattern of intellectual appropriation inherent in departmental operations, project execution, and publication procedures. Institutional silence, peer complicity, and the lack of enforceable standards facilitate the continuation of these practices.

Survey data and testimonies reveal a persistent and multidimensional pattern of gender-based inequality in the field of political science. Women report more frequent barriers to career progression, limited access to leadership roles, and a stronger negative impact of parenthood on their professional trajectories compared to men. These obstacles are reinforced by symbolic exclusion, informal male networks, and institutional norms that devalue caregiving and administrative work—responsibilities disproportionately assigned to women. Moral and sexual harassment are also more commonly reported by women, often without an effective institutional response. What's more, women – particularly early-career scholars – experience higher rates of authorship misappropriation, whereby their work is used without proper credit or recognition.

Regional differences further nuance these patterns. In North America and Latin America, women report the highest levels of perceived gender-based barriers, particularly insofar as leadership and the impact of parenthood are concerned. High rates of inequality are also prevalent in Europe, albeit with a relatively greater share of men acknowledging these gender-related challenges. In contrast, Africa and the Middle East present the widest gender gaps, with women reporting major disadvantages and men largely unaware of them. These disparities highlight how structural and cultural factors intersect to shape the experience of gender inequality in political science, in turn pointing to the importance of regionally sensitive but globally coordinated institutional reforms.

4.3. Male Perceived Discrimination

Policies that promote gender equality in universities have become more well-known and supported by institutions, but the survey responses also show that some men are resistant to these changes. This resistance often shows up as a feeling of reverse discrimination, whereby efforts to make up for past exclusions are seen as giving women and other marginalized groups unfair advantages. Some men claim that diversity programs hurt them personally because they think that hiring and funding decisions now place gender identity ahead of merit:

> "Being male is a clear disadvantage in the current European job market, as many hires are rigged to select often less qualified women. Job ads often contain codes like 'gender competencies required', meaning that a woman will get the job no matter what."

In some cases, male respondents express frustration with what they view as institutional funding or employment policies that favour women and are often justified as ways to address structural inequalities. Some men see these measures as unfair:

> "There were instances in which I could not be considered for certain categories of jobs as they were earmarked for (affirmative action) women in my university."

> "Reserved funding for women. Preference for female applicants. That is, if two applicants are equally qualified, women will automatically be chosen."

In addition to institutional mechanisms, many testimonies saw women talk about how they feel when they think that they are being pushed aside in male-dominated environments. Male scholars report feeling isolated, unwelcome, or distrusted—especially in departments or subfields where women or gender studies are prominent. One participant noted: "A male isn't always welcome in gender studies." Another explained: "I recall a situation in which I felt that I was being associated with 'the enemy', being the only man in a female-dominated workplace."

Some male respondents also resist what they perceive as ideological expectations within the discipline. For instance, one respondent took aim at citation parity requirements in journals: "I faced backlash on social media for presenting arguments against a top journal's requirement of gender parity in citations. I believe this measure harms young male scholars because most people 'you must cite' are old men."

Lastly, several male respondents pointed to the lack of support structures for men in institutions that explicitly fund mentoring and professional development programs for women. These comments highlight a perceived imbalance in institutional attention, especially in contexts where gender equity initiatives have made significant strides. As one respondent lamented, "Women have access to a mentoring programme that men do not have access to... During a recent restructure, 3 of the 4 men in senior roles lost their positions (including me) but only 1 of the 13 senior women lost their position." While these concerns reflect real experiences with professional transition, they also illustrate how redistributive policies can be perceived as exclusionary when equity is mistaken for zero-sum competition.

4.4. Beyond Women and Men: Addressing LGBTQ+ Inequalities in Academia

In addition to the inequalities faced by women in political science, the survey data reveal that LGBTQ+ professionals also experience specific forms of exclusion, often intersecting with other academic hierarchies. As one respondent notes:

> "While researching LGBTQ+ topics is no longer stigmatized in the same way and there is acceptance of LGBTQ+ people at an individual level, we're still a long way from colleagues being interested in my research—it's notable that all four of my PhD students are not in political science/IR, and my main academic networks are outside of my institution. This lack of interest/understanding limits opportunities for collaboration with disciplinary colleagues both in relation to publications and grants, especially in combination with the focus on research that aligns with national priorities, which is harder for critical approaches in general."

This testimony highlights the combination of thematic delegitimization, institutional isolation, and the devaluation of critical approaches that restrict full academic recognition for LGBTQ+ scholars. The marginalization of research topics related to sexuality and gender identity reveals how disciplinary norms continue to shape what is considered legitimate or fundable scholarship, often sidelining critical or intersectional approaches.

Hostility also takes the form of harassment, discrimination, and both symbolic and explicit forms of violence—often normalized within academic or professional environments. Several accounts describe instances of humiliation and surveillance along with efforts to undermine authority, particularly targeting LGBTQ+ individuals whose research focuses on controversial or marginalized topics such as sexual rights or far-right movements:

> "Throughout my career, I have faced multiple episodes of violence and harassment that reflect broader systemic challenges for women and LGBTQ+ professionals, particularly those whose work addresses sensitive or controversial topics. These incidents, while distinct, share a common thread of hostility toward my identity and research focus."

One respondent describes being subjected to deliberate disruptions by far-right students, online threats, and efforts to discredit her work on the basis of her identity and scholarly focus. Another testimony details how structural hostility is often silenced or normalized:

> "Since I started to work, both on administrative issues and as an academic, I have been subjected to unwanted physical attention, comments regarding my appearance, comments on my work, being overshadowed by superiors who tend to take all credits, and so on... The thing is, it happens with everyone here, so everyone tends to think it is normal. [...] I truly hate it, and I try my best to warn newer people on this, but sadly I cannot do much. I need the job, and I need my scholarship to survive... it is an awful situation that has led me to several burnouts and constant psychiatrist help."

These patterns underscore that violence and discrimination against LGBTQ+ academics are not isolated events, but rather symptoms of institutional cultures that continue to punish dissent and non-conformity in gender and sexuality. This is especially true when multiple dimensions of marginalization overlap, as one respondent painfully summarized:

> "Creo que por ser gay y no ser mexicano por nacimiento, sufro de doble discriminación [I think that because I am gay and not Mexican by birth, I suffer from double discrimination]."

Furthermore, the lack of institutional accountability extends to cases of misconduct within academic spaces, with one respondent reporting:

> "Senior male colleague, who was not only clearly inappropriate with a female undergrad (in my presence), but also made obviously inappropriate comments to me, referencing my sexuality (lesbian)."

Such incidents reveal how power asymmetries and heteronormative assumptions still inform daily interactions and professional dynamics, reinforcing the precarity of LGBTQ+ individuals in academia.

These findings point to a dimension of inequality in political science that remains largely underexplored. While the survey provides important information about the experiences of LGBTQ+ academics, the depth and complexity of these challenges call for further empirical investigation and conceptual development. Understanding how gender identity and sexual orientation intersect with academic norms, career trajectories, and institutional cultures is essential to the advancement of a more inclusive and equitable discipline.

4.5. Racial or Ethnic Identity Perception

Although this report centers on gender inequalities in political science, the data make it clear that racial and ethnic identity play a crucial and intersecting role in shaping experiences of exclusion, marginalization, and professional disadvantage. Respondents who identify as Black or African, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, or Middle Eastern describe not only the tendency to underestimate their intellectual contributions, but also a persistent sense of isolation within academic environments. As several testimonies illustrate, these inequalities are not always overt, but often manifest in symbolic devaluation, epistemic doubt, and the absence of safe spaces for expressing concerns about race:

> "Apparently, because I am a Black woman, my knowledge is often disregarded and questioned in the workplace. It is normal for people to underestimate my intellectual capacity."

Another emphasized the difficulty of navigating both racial and gender bias simultaneously:

> "I suffered racism and sexism most of the time. Especially when I give political views about geopolitics and opportunities are more difficult."

These accounts reveal that racial inequalities are often compounded by gender, producing layered forms of exclusion that are difficult to disentangle. Importantly, the data suggest that perceptions of racial barriers do not always align neatly with reported incidents of discrimination or harassment. Different groups experience distinct forms of disadvantage—some more symbolic and implicit, others more material or overt:

> "I just don't feel there is a safe environment to express my concerns about race most of the time and there are comments that make me feel unwelcomed sometimes due to my race."

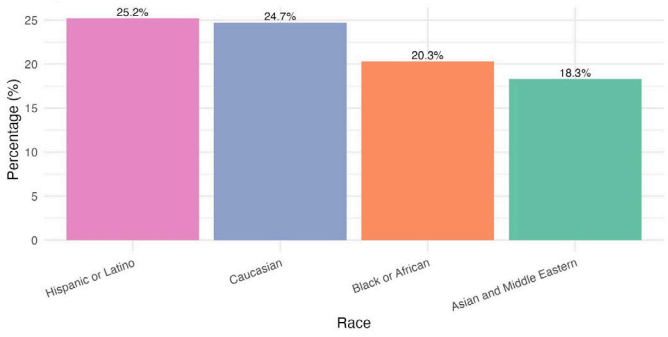
In some contexts, the absence of explicit hostility may mask deeper patterns of racial exclusion embedded in institutional cultures. The intersection between race, gender, and other identity markers is particularly evident in the way that respondents describe their visibility – or lack thereof – within the discipline:

> "I often feel that I am intimidated just because I am an Asian woman in the United States, where racial hierarchy is obvious."

This convergence of racial and gendered hierarchies intensifies the experience of marginalization, producing what some scholars have called "epistemic exclusion"—the systematic questioning or erasure of certain voices from intellectual spaces.

Additionally, perceptions of parenthood as a barrier to academic progression vary by racial group, suggesting that caregiving responsibilities intersect with racialized expectations and constraints. Hispanic or Latino respondents (25.2%) and Caucasian respondents (24.7%) reported the highest perceived impact of parenthood on their careers, followed by Black or African (20.3%) and Asian and Middle Eastern (18.3%) individuals. While these differences are not extreme, they point to how institutional responses to parenthood may be uneven across racial lines, with some groups benefitting from greater accommodation or empathy than others.

Figure 13 – Impact of Parenthood on Career by Race

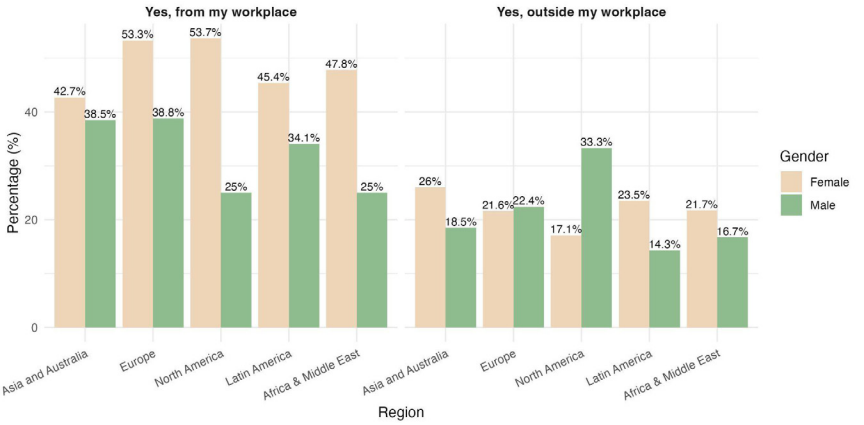


Taken together, the survey findings stress the importance of bringing a racial and intersectional perspective to bear on any discussion of gender inequality in political science.

5. Institutional Response and Peer Support

Although many victims of harassment or symbolic violence in political science report having confided in someone, often in the workplace, this did not consistently result in meaningful support or institutional action. Women more frequently reported seeking peer support at work, with the highest rates in North America (53.7%) and Europe (53.3%). Support from individuals outside the workplace was less frequent, although noteworthy in some contexts, including among women in Asia and Australia (26%) and Africa and the Middle East (21.7%).

Figure 14 - Who Victims Talked to After Incident, by Gender and Region



Note: This percentage represents respondents who reported experiencing violence or harassment and indicated that they discussed the incident with someone either from or outside of their workplace. The percentage is specific to gender and region, relative to the total number of victims in each group.

The testimonies offer insight into how fear, isolation, and distrust in institutional processes shape the way victims respond. Often, silence is a survival strategy:

> "It is common that the aggressions come from the top leader of the group or organization, and the fear of reprisals makes those who suffer violence of any kind prefer not to aggravate the situation."

> "This situation happened when I was working at a university in a different country many years ago. I had a colleague who made sexual advances towards me. There were no real administrative processes to formally complain and I did not feel comfortable doing so anyway. So, I only discussed it with friends outside of work and avoided the person as much as I could until he eventually left the institution."

> "I shared my experience of not being credited for my work with my colleagues. One of them told me that the supervisor who stole my credit often does this. I was afraid of confronting him and did not recognize how serious it was at that time. I left that job."

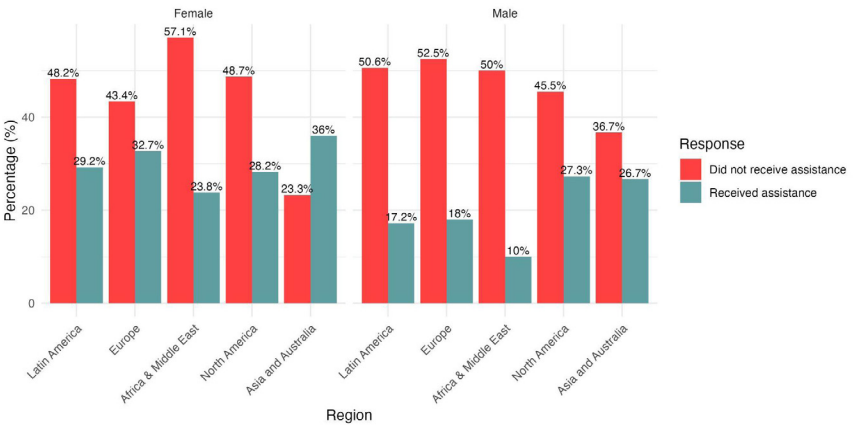
When victims do attempt to seek redress through institutional channels, they are often met with superficial or inadequate responses, reflecting broader failures of accountability and due process:

> "I had faced discrimination and credit robbery. I was among the teaching faculty at an institute coordinated by a representative of the university where I am doing my PhD. If I raised the issue, there were high chances of being targeted by the university administration, which could spell disaster for my research and my academic journey. So, I chose not to raise any flags."

> "It is time-consuming and stressful to report and object to illegal behavior, a burden my male colleagues are not obliged to face. The opportunity costs are enormous. I am taking a medical leave to cope with PTSD stemming from sexual harassment by the deputy director of an interdisciplinary lab. While my department is supportive, the fact that I am dealing with this at all is driven by my gender."

Across all regions, women more frequently reported the absence of assistance compared to men. The highest rate of unassisted female victims is observed in Africa and the Middle East (57.1%), followed by North America (48.7%) and Latin America (48.2%). Among men, the highest levels of unassisted experiences are seen in Europe (52.5%) and Latin America (50.6%).

Figure 15 - Received Assistance After Incident



Note: This percentage represents the respondents who experienced violence or harassment and reported receiving support from their colleagues. This data is calculated by gender and region, taking into account the total number of victims.

Even when victims request support, they often face implicit pressures to protect the aggressor, which serves to deter them from taking further steps. These responses undermine justice and exacerbate the emotional toll of the abuse:

> "Instead of looking for colleague's support, I asked for help directly to the authorities. But it was in vain."

> "I did not tell anyone because I knew they would not help me, and the person who committed the act has years of experience and friendships that protect him. Speaking up could harm me even further."

> "When I experienced moral and sexual harassment, I confided in my supervisor and my husband. My supervisor asked me not to file a complaint, arguing that it would ruin my colleague's career. My husband suggested that we report it to the police, but within the institution, the process was stalled due to the alleged lack of 'evidence'."

> "The colleagues were afraid to intervene but offered moral support outside the classroom."

In many instances, assistance came primarily from peers rather than formal institutional structures. That said, peer support was limited by fear and uncertainty. One respondent remarked:

> "Help relates to people being there to listen, offer advice etc. especially among peers and other PhD scholars. The universities themselves don't offer much help", while another noted: "The only people who provided assistance were the students among themselves, in the same hierarchy of the environment, and who suffered similar aggressions."

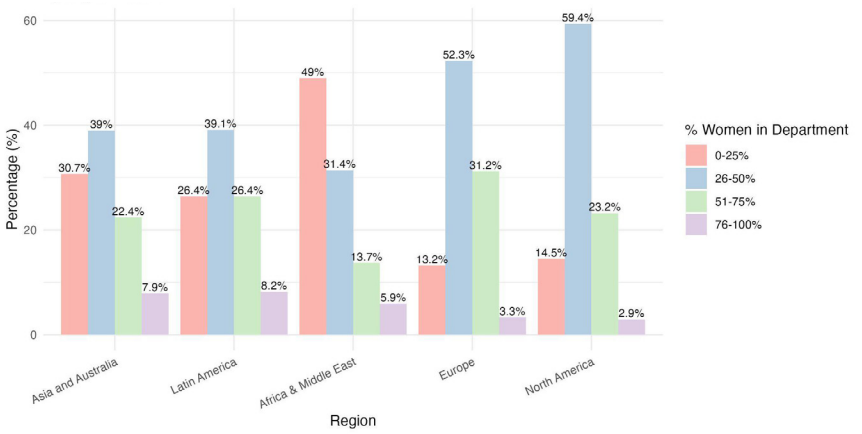
The data show that while many victims of harassment or symbolic violence seek out support by confiding in colleagues within their workplace, this rarely results in meaningful assistance. Support tends to be informal and localized, with institutional channels perceived as ineffective, slow, or even risky. Fear of retaliation, reputational harm, or career setbacks often leads individuals to remain silent or limit disclosures to trusted peers outside of formal mechanisms. Even when victims pursue institutional remedies, they frequently encounter resistance, dismissal, or protective responses that favour the aggressor. These dynamics emphatically create a culture where silence is a survival strategy, and reporting is considered burdensome. The gap between disclosure and actual support reveals the fragility of institutional accountability and the need to strengthen protective frameworks for victims of violence and misconduct in academia.

6. Workplace Environment and Perceptions

While discussions on gender inequality in academia often focus on underrepresentation in absolute terms, the survey data reveal a more complex and layered picture—one in which women, while not absent altogether, are relegated to roles that are less prestigious, secure, and visible (van Veelen and Derks, 2022). This form of horizontal gender segregation is

evident across regions. In many departments, women are present in moderate proportions (26%–50%), yet their participation tends to cluster in administrative or adjunct positions rather than in full faculty roles. In North America and Europe, for example, the majority of departments fall into the 26–50% category, suggesting some representation, but not necessarily in senior or tenured positions. Conversely, in regions like Africa and the Middle East, nearly half of departments report female representation below 25%, indicating deeper exclusion. Even in Latin America, where distribution is more varied, women are not consistently represented in positions of power or permanence.

Figure 16 - Percentage of Women Faculty/Staff in Department



This stratification is echoed in testimonies from respondents. One woman recounts:

> "In my department, all the tenured professors are men. Of the 16 faculty members, there are only three women, and we are classified as 'temporary'. That is to say, we don't have all the labor benefits of a tenured professor despite having or pursuing doctorates" (our translation).

Another reflects on a pattern that goes beyond political science:

> "Through mere observation: the percentage of women faculty members is lower than men, yet on the administrative side, the percentage of women far outnumber men. In political science yes, but it's a problem pervasive throughout the entire university."

Numerical representation alone is not a sufficient indicator of gender equality. When women are over-represented in support roles but under-represented in decision-making positions, institutional gender balance becomes a façade that belies enduring hierarchies. Addressing this form of horizontal inequality requires a focus not just on hiring metrics, but also on the quality, stability, and prestige of the roles that women occupy within academic departments.

The incidence of jokes, sarcasm, or mockery related to gender, gender identity, or sexual orientation varies significantly across regions and genders. In all regions analyzed, women

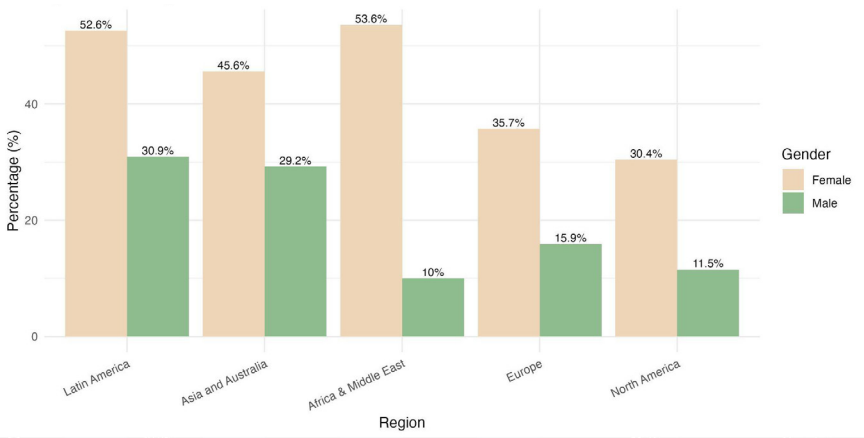
reported these experiences at significantly higher rates than men. The highest levels of female exposure to such behavior are found in Africa and the Middle East (53.6%) and Latin America (52.6%). Reports are substantially lower among men, with the highest rates observed in Latin America (30.9%) and Asia/Australia (29.2%), and the lowest seen in Africa and the Middle East (10%). Such acts are often dismissed as minor or isolated, but they accumulate over time and are conducive to environments where women's expertise is doubted or ignored. One respondent described:

> "Sometimes I face discriminatory behavior in the workplace, face inappropriate comments, assuming women are less capable"

Another recounted how her authority was undermined even in areas where she holds recognized expertise:

> "I am often overlooked when it comes to being invited to lectures on topics in which I am a specialist—terrorism, for instance, is usually discussed by men. In research settings, my input is frequently disregarded, and on several occasions, I have experienced mansplaining and/or sexist jokes."

Figure 17 - Experienced Mockery or Sarcasm



Note: Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" to the question "In your field of work related to political science, are there frequent jokes, mockery, or sarcasm related to being male, female, trans, or other gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity?"

The perception of gender-based pay disparity in political science differs significantly by region. The greatest proportions of individuals reporting lower compensation than male colleagues for identical work were observed in Latin America (35.4%) and Europe (33.7%). Conversely, the regions exhibiting the lowest reported perception of inequality are Africa and the Middle East (4.1%) and North America (12.8%). Asia and Australia exhibit a moderate percentage (14%).

Moreover, pay disparity encompasses not only salary comparisons but also the nature of work allocated and its perceived value. Women indicate that they are disproportionately assigned responsibilities that are deemed "non-intellectual" or do not facilitate career progression. According to one respondent:

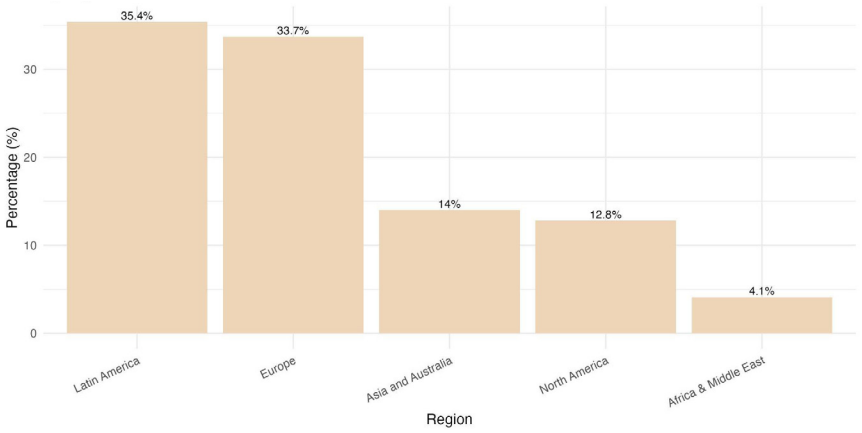
> "Women are assigned tasks that are not recognised as intellectual work, such as coordinating bachelor's and master's programs and managing departmental affairs, assistant tasks that do not add value to their CVs."

Others describe more explicit instances of unequal pay and funding resources for the same work or for less work:

> "I had access to the payroll and saw that I was paid half of what my male colleagues earn."

> "After negotiating my professorship, I realized that a male colleague with fewer credentials (publications, third-party funds) was awarded more in the way of resources."

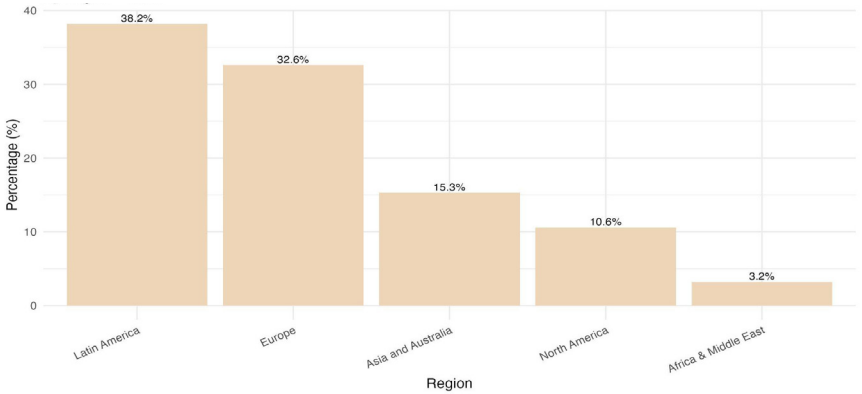
Figure 18 - Perceived Gender-Based Pay Inequality in Political Science by Region



Note: Percentage of respondents who answered "Yes" to experiencing lower pay than a male colleague for equivalent work.

As observed in the perception of gender-based pay inequality, data on the unequal distribution of tasks also reveal significant regional disparities. Latin America (38.2%) and Europe (32.6%) once again stand out with the highest percentages of respondents reporting that they were assigned more tasks than male colleagues for equivalent pay. In contrast, regions such as Africa and the Middle East report the lowest levels of perceived pay inequality, along with the lowest levels of perceived unequal workload (3.2%).

Figure 19 - Perceived Workload Inequality in Political Science by Region



Note: Percentage of respondents who reported receiving more tasks than male colleagues for equal pay

Reports reveal that men and women encounter differences in workloads and the types of activities that they are expected to perform. Moreover, greater opportunities to participate in research and career progression activities are made available to men, whereas women tend to be assigned administrative duties and positions of lesser significance. Unequal workload is both normalized and internalized, and often framed as natural or expected for women:

> "When I first began working at the university, it was assumed that academic-administrative activities were carried out by women."

Others describe a broader institutional culture where the distribution of duties is guided by gender stereotypes, with corresponding assumptions related to availability, parental status, and a willingness to perform service-related tasks.

> "As a female faculty member, I perceive a systemic bias in the allocation of both academic and non-academic responsibilities. This bias often reflects gender stereotypes, leading to an unequal distribution of workload. Furthermore, I have experienced significant pay disparity due to my marital status as an unmarried woman. This includes expectations of longer working hours, a higher number of lectures and student engagements, stemming from the assumption of fewer family responsibilities. My research endeavors have also been impacted by gender discrimination. I have encountered instances where my presence was unwelcome during interviews with senior officials, and I have been subjected to inappropriate and demeaning remarks disguised as 'jokes'."

Even in the absence of explicit mandates, many women take on administrative burdens that limit their capacity to conduct research or build academic capital:

> "I have the feeling that, as a woman, I tent to take in charge administrative tasks that hinder my investment in research."

> "In the name of productivity, I have been assigned more work than my colleagues, but when it comes to credit, I was never given as much credit as them."

> "I know some of my male colleagues with similar seniority have higher pay. I was given more admin and service tasks or tasks with less scientific rewards."

The findings, taken collectively, demonstrate a complex framework of gender inequality in political science that transcends mere representation. Women are not only under-represented in senior roles, but they also disproportionately hold precarious or undervalued positions. Compouding matters, they are often exposed to symbolic violence and they bear the brunt of material disadvantages, such as wage disparity, along with a more burdensome, less fulfilling workload. These patterns highlight how academic institutions perpetuate gendered hierarchies not just vertically (in terms of position) but also horizontally (in terms of the type and value of work performed).

7. Distinctions Between Postgraduates and Individuals with Academic Employment

This section compares the professional and institutional experiences of two groups in the field of political science: individuals with academic employment (n = 920) and postgraduate students (n = 186). The analysis explores key dimensions, including perceptions of gender-based barriers, the impact of parenthood, unequal task distribution, and experiences of harassment and recognition in the workplace. The testimonies suggest that many of the gendered inequalities reported by individuals with academic employment have roots in earlier stages of their careers, particularly during postgraduate training. Prior research indicated that the presence of women decreases as hierarchy increases (Tolleson-Rinehart; Carroll, 2006; Monroe; Chiu, 2010; Elizondo, 2015).

Abuse of power, institutional neglect, and intellectual exploitation can affect researchers at career stages. Still, one respondent described encountering these experiences early in the career:

> "I have experienced sexual harassment at work. I also experienced sex-for-grades as a student."

For many, the terms of academic survival are defined by precarious contracts and informal expectations:

> "As a female and 'young' (35) academic, I´m always doing extra work for my male superiors in the hope of one day landing an indeterminate contract."

> "In the category of postdoctoral researchers, there are no work benefits, rights, or social security. Consequently, institutions are not co-responsible for self-care, nor are they responsible for the care of others, which is mainly carried out by women postdoctoral researchers. In addition, research on care and democracy is not recognized as a legitimate and relevant area of inquiry in political science, specifically in areas dominated by traditional disciplinary perspectives that remain largely closed to contributions informed by contemporary feminist theories."

Some individuals, once they achieve more secure positions, reflect on how fear once shaped their behavior and how only structural shifts made it possible to assert boundaries:

> "I was very afraid of losing my job and not being able to advance in academia. Now that I have a tenured position (and after the metoo movement) I feel a bit safer to set more boundaries."

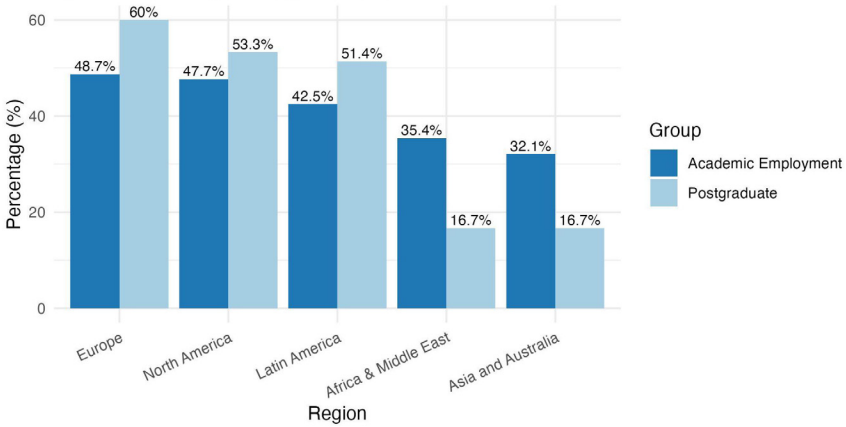
> "In one instance where I felt severely mistreated by a supervisor during my postdoc, I went to an HR counselor, who basically told me that this was unfortunately common and I should from now on write down exactly what happened in any situation that made me uncomfortable, but basically advised against taking further steps."

> "This happened in 1995, and we had no possibility to report the harassment."

7.1. Gender as a career barrier

Postgraduate students and individuals already in academic positions hold differing beliefs as to whether gender impedes progress in political science, with regional variations shaping these perceptions. In three of the five examined regions – North America, Latin America, and Europe – postgraduate students report higher levels of perceived gender-based barriers compared to individuals in academic employment. This disparity is especially pronounced in Europe, where 60% of postgraduate respondents view gender as an obstacle, in contrast to 48.7% among academics. A similar, though less marked, pattern is observed in North America and Latin America. Conversely, in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Australia, people already employed in academia more frequently identify gender as a barrier than do postgraduate students, suggesting that exposure to institutional dynamics may heighten awareness of gendered obstacles over time.

Figure 20 - Perception of Gender as a Barrier in Academic Careers



Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "Have you ever felt that your gender has been a barrier to your advancement in political science?" Results are shown separately for postgraduate students and individuals in academic employment, based on valid responses by region and group.

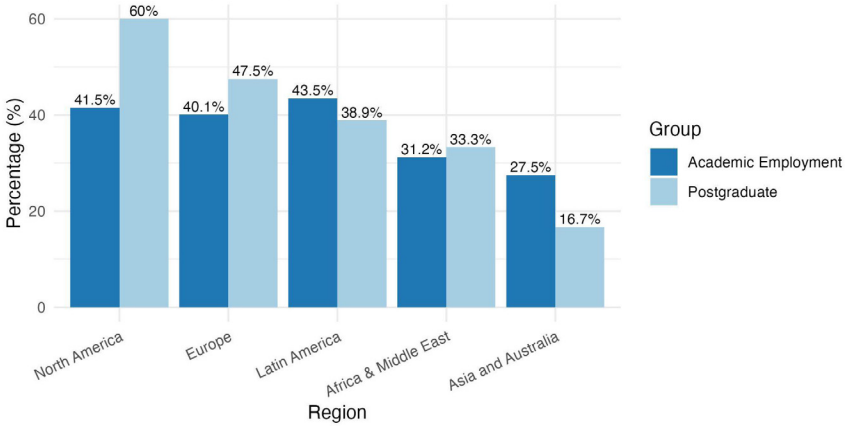
Qualitative accounts, particularly at transitional career stages, support these perceptions by highlighting the structural nature of gendered exclusions:

> "It seems that men usually have better academic networks than women, which has sometimes affected the job and other opportunities available. I have felt that this has affected also my situation, especially at the postdoctoral stage where competition for positions becomes even harder than before."

The belief that gender impedes access to academic leadership roles differs between postgraduate students and those in academic positions, with significant regional variations. Postgraduate students in North America, Europe, and Latin America report encountering these barriers more often than individuals already employed in academia, indicating a pessimistic view of their future career prospects. In North America, 60% of postgraduate respondents reported that gender constituted a barrier, compared to 41.5% of individuals in academic roles.

Conversely, in regions such as Africa and the Middle East and in Asia and Australia, the percentages between the two groups are more comparable, with a significantly lower incidence of this perceived obstacle observed among postgraduate students. The findings indicate that institutional experience may reinforce or diminish specific perceptions of inequality; however, such views develop in large part prior to formal entry into academic power structures.

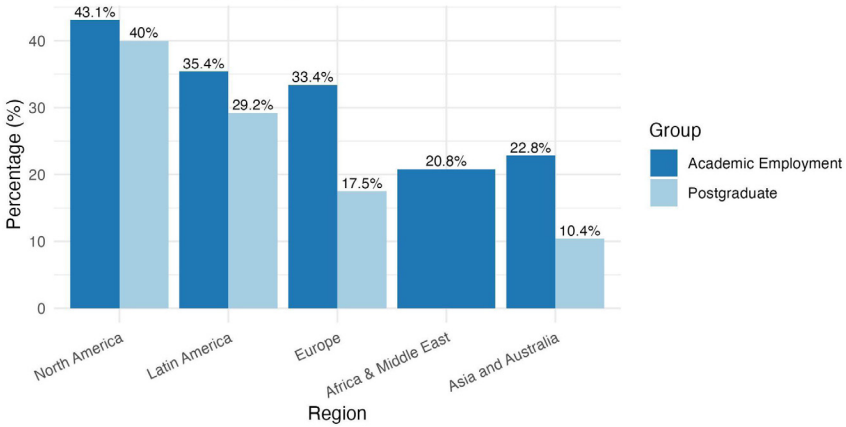
Figure 21 - Perceived Gender Barrier in Accessing Academic Leadership



Note: Percentages represent respondents who answered "Yes" to the question, "Have you ever felt that your gender has been a barrier to your advancement in academic leadership and management?" Results are shown separately for postgraduate students and individuals in academic employment, based on valid responses by region and group.

Individuals in academic positions more frequently perceive workload inequality in comparison to male colleagues receiving equal pay than postgraduate students, particularly in North America (43.1% and 40%) and Latin America (35.4% and 29.2%). In Europe, the disparity between the two groups is considerable, with 33.4% among academics and 17.5% among postgraduates. Africa and the Middle East, as well as Asia and Australia, exhibit the lowest overall percentages; still, at least one-fifth of academics in these areas report inequitable task distribution. Significantly, there were no postgraduate responses documented for Africa and the Middle East regarding this question.

Figure 22 - Unfair Task Assignment Compared to Male Colleagues

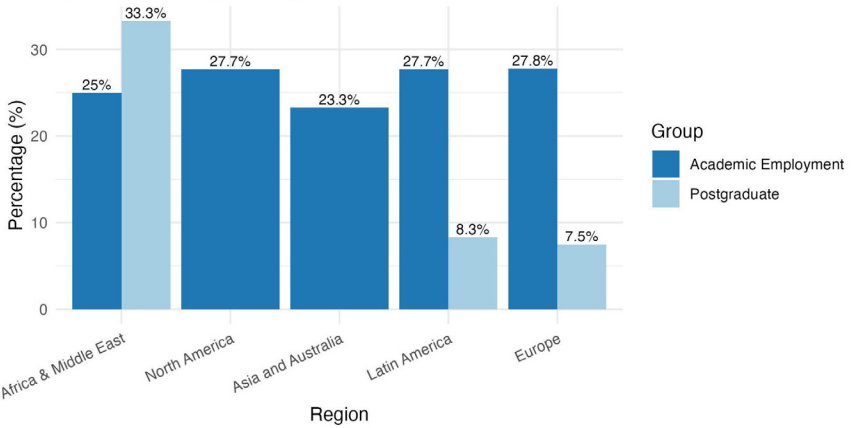


Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "Have you ever noticed that, in a job or project related to political science, for equal pay, you were unfairly assigned more tasks than a male colleague?" Results are shown separately for postgraduate students and individuals in academic employment, based on valid responses.

7.2. Impact of motherhood/fatherhood on career

Postgraduate students and individuals in academic roles hold differing perceptions regarding the potentially adverse effect of parenthood on one's career, with notable regional variations. In numerous areas, individuals already involved in academic careers more often indicate that parenthood has adversely affected their professional advancement. Europe, Latin America, Asia and Australia exhibit comparable rates among academics (between 27.7% and 27.8%), whereas the percentages among postgraduates are significantly lower (ranging from 7.5% to 8.3%), indicating that the impact of parenthood becomes more pronounced or intensified when the latter enter the professional domain. In North America, 33.3% of postgraduate students cited a negative impact, exceeding the 27.7% reported by those in academic employment.

Figure 23 - Perceived Impact of Parenthood on Academic Careers

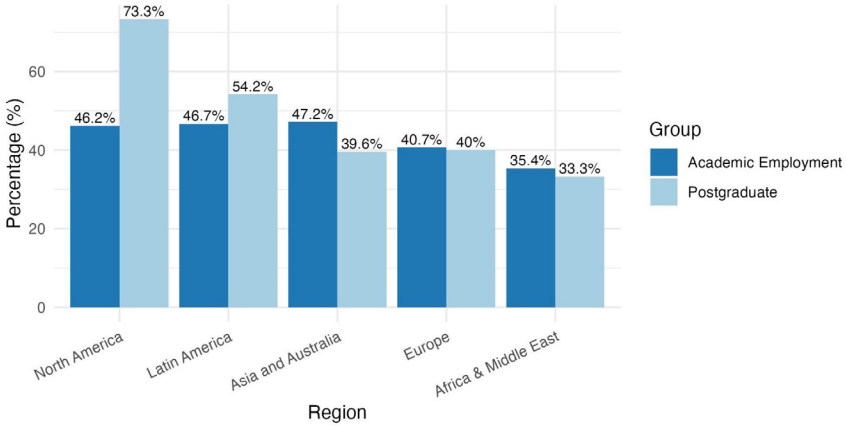


Note: Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "If you have children, have you ever felt that your maternity/paternity has negatively impacted your career advancement or workload or salary?" Results are shown separately for postgraduate students and individuals in academic employment, based on valid responses by region and group.

7.3. Moral and sexual harassment

A significant share of respondents across all regions report experiencing moral harassment in professional or academic settings, with variations between postgraduate students and individuals in academic positions. North America presents the most alarming figure, with 73.3% of postgraduate respondents reporting that they experienced moral harassment, compared to 46.2% among those employed in academia. In Latin America, the percentages are also high and relatively close between the two groups (46.7% and 54.2%). In contrast, somewhat lower rates, ranging between 33.3% and 40.7%, were reported in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

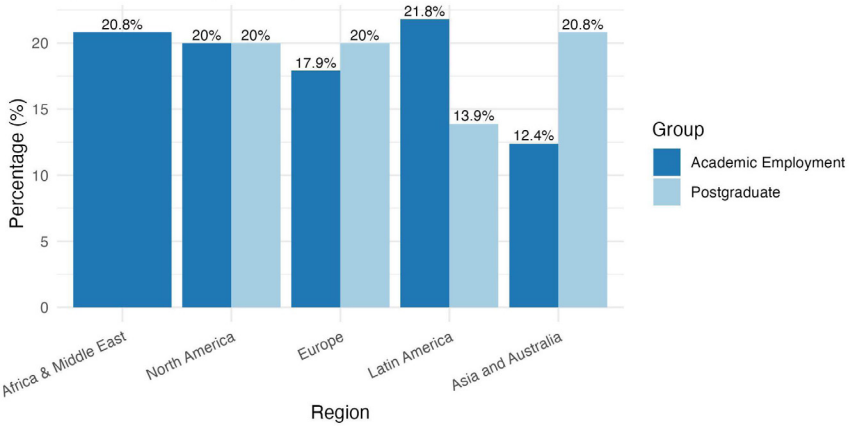
Figure 24 - Experience of Moral Harassment



Note: Percentages are based on affirmative responses to the question, "Have you ever personally suffered any situation of moral harassment (insults, derogatory comments, aggressive behavior to instill fear or control, unequal treatment based on gender, race, or other personal characteristics, excessive control beyond reasonable limits, etc.) by a colleague and superior in a job or project related to political science?" The data are presented by group (postgraduate and academic employment) and by region, considering only valid responses.

The experience of sexual harassment is reported in a relatively consistent manner across academic groups and regions, with some specific variations. In Africa and the Middle East, 20.8% of individuals in academic positions report having been victims of harassment. A similar pattern is observed in North America (20% for both groups) and in Europe (17.9% for academics and 20% for postgraduate students). In Latin America, however, the percentage is higher among academics (21.8%) compared to postgraduate students (13.9%). In Asia & Australia, the pattern is reversed, with postgraduate students reporting more experiences of harassment (20.8%) than those already working in academia (12.4%).

Figure 25 - Experience of Sexual Harassment



Note: Percentages are based on affirmative responses to the question: "Have you ever personally suffered any situation of sexual harassment (excessive invitations, phone calls, messages with inappropriate content, persecution at work or outside the workplace, etc.) by a colleague and superior in a job or project related to Political Science?" Results are organized by group (postgraduate and academic employment) and by region, considering only valid responses.

These patterns reflect how sexual harassment can occur at any career stage but also suggest that earlier incidents often lay the groundwork for long-term vulnerability. Respondents' testimonies exemplify this trajectory of harm across the academic career continuum:

> "As an undergraduate in the early 1980s, I was sexually harassed by a professor who had written a recommendation for grad school and in return wanted me to go on a date. In the later 1980s, there was exclusion and discrimination by some professors in grad school, but no harassment. When I was a junior faculty in the late 1990s, a senior male tried to intimidate and control me, stating that as a younger woman, I should not have influence over decisions, and threatening my tenure. I told my middle-aged male Chair, who protected me."

> "It was 25 years ago, during the completion of my PhD. One of the committee members invited me to lunch, and when I declined his invitation, he threatened to fail me during my dissertation defence. During the defence, he asked me many questions, to which I responded well. Therefore, his threats turned out to be futile."

The improper use of academic contributions without proper credit from superiors is reported at notable levels across all regions, with the highest incidence among individuals already employed in academia. In Latin America, 44.2% of academics and 34.7% of postgraduate students reported having their work used without acknowledgement, indicating that both early-career and established researchers are affected, although those with longer tenure in academia may face more frequent or visible instances. Similar patterns are observed in Europe, Asia, and Australia, where rates remain above 25% for both groups. The lowest

levels are observed in North America, with 23.1% of academics and 20% of postgraduate students reporting misappropriation. While comparatively low, these figures remain concerning: Testimonies illustrate how this denial of intellectual recognition reflects deeper structural inequalities within academic hierarchies:

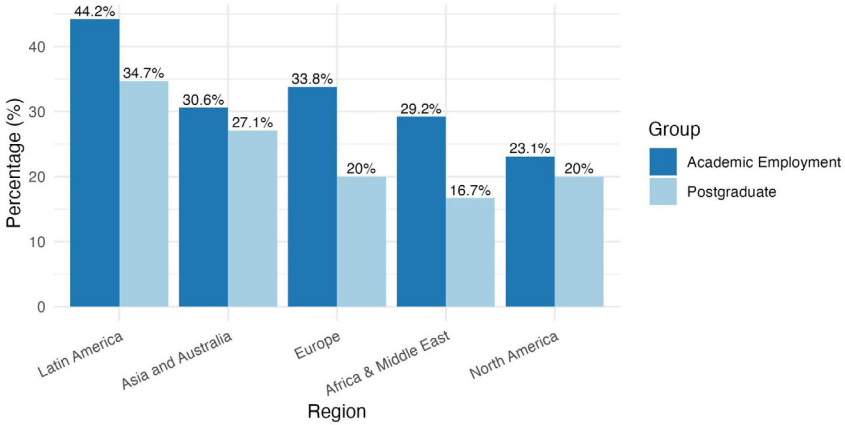
> "A supervisor extracting ideas from my PhD thesis without crediting and coauthoring with male teams. The use of post-docs for data collection needs to be looked into because they can be problematic and extractive. Especially if these data collection duties are not shared equally in the team."

This account serves to show how gender and seniority intersect in the division of labour, where junior scholars contribute substantively but are denied authorship or visibility, reinforcing epistemic marginalization:

> "I worked on two projects with a (male) professor (writing a syllabus and a research paper), and my name did not appear in either publication."

Such experiences reveal that misappropriation is not only a breach of academic ethics, but its practice is also embedded in institutional cultures that normalize the invisibility of junior collaborators.

Figure 26 - Work Used Without Proper Credit



Note: Percentages reflect respondents who answered "Yes" to the question: "Was the result of your work ever used by a superior without properly crediting your work/authorship/input?", disaggregated by region and academic group (postgraduate and academic employment), based on valid responses.

Access to support after experiencing symbolic or institutional violence remains limited across all stages of the academic trajectory. Among individuals already employed in academia, the highest rates of lack of assistance are reported in Africa and the Middle East (55.2%), followed by North America (52.5%), Latin America (48.6%), Europe (47.3%), and Asia and Australia (29.4%). The situation is similarly concerning among postgraduate students, with half of respondents in Africa and the Middle East and in Latin America indicating that they received no support, and 47.8% reporting the same in Europe. Asia and Australia stand out as the only regions where a greater proportion of postgraduate respondents reported receiving support (34.5%) than not (27.6%).

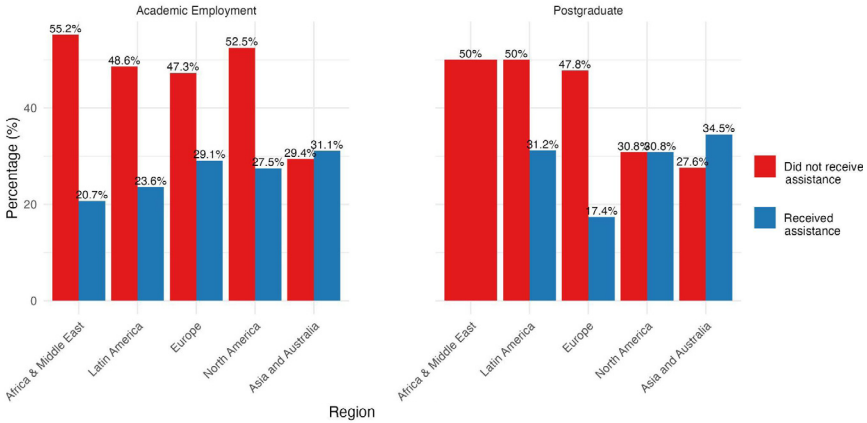
These figures underscore a widespread institutional failure to respond meaningfully to reports of abuse or marginalization—a failure often shaped by rigid hierarchies and a pervasive culture of silence. This experience illustrates how power asymmetries in academia – especially within evaluative and supervisory structures – can be leveraged to intimidate and silence students, often with no institutional consequences for the aggressor.

The lack of institutional safeguards and accountability mechanisms is further reflected in another account, which highlights how academic hierarchies not only tolerate efforts to discourage reporting but may actively discourage it:

> "Superiors often take advantage of hierarchies at universities, especially senior researchers towards junior researchers/PhDs. There is basically no safety net for these young academics which reduces the attractiveness of academia as an employer as well as mental fatigue for those who stay in academia."

Together, these testimonies and regional data point to a systemic gap in protection and redress whereby institutional inertia and normalized power imbalances make it difficult for victims to speak out, let alone obtain justice or sustained support.

Figure 27 - Support Received After Incident (Among Victims Only)



Note: Percentages refer to respondents who reported experiencing violence, harassment, or lack of credit and answered whether they received support from colleagues. Results are categorized by region and academic group (postgraduate and academic employment), based on valid responses.

These data indicate that perceptions of gender-based disparity in political science manifest early and become more pronounced as individuals advance through their academic journey. Postgraduate students frequently call attention to significant gender obstacles and a bleak outlook on prospective leadership opportunities. Nonetheless, it is within academic circles that the tangible repercussions of these disparities – inequitable task allocation, the professional ramifications of parenthood, ethical and sexual harassment, the expropriation of intellectual labour – are more commonly documented. Testimonies indicate that numerous experiences date back to postgraduate training, thereby implying a continuum of susceptibility influenced by academic hierarchies and institutional inaction. While regional disparities are present, a consistent theme among various groups and contexts is the restricted access to assistance subsequent to occurrences of symbolic or institutional violence.

Conclusions

The survey results indicate the prevalence of extreme gender inequality in political science. In spite of advancements, patterns of exclusion affecting women, present since the discipline's inception, continue to be reproduced (Tolleson-Rinehart and Carroll, 2006). Increased female participation at early-career stages, including at the doctoral level, has failed to translate into a greater female presence in leadership positions or into institutional recognition. In other words, mere presence in numbers does not guarantee equitable access to power, nor does it ensure that women's intellectual work is recognized. Persistent structural barriers serve to limit their advancement and reinforce inequalities both vertically, in terms of access to higher positions, and horizontally, in regard to the distribution and valuation of the roles performed. Despite the growing presence of women and LGBTQ+ groups in the field, these populations continue to experience systematic forms of discrimination and exclusion. Among the reports, recurring episodes of moral and sexual harassment stand out, its victims often silenced by fear of retaliation and the absence of effective institutional channels for reporting and protection. The data highlights four points that merit attention.

1. Persistent Gender Barriers to Career Advancement and Leadership

Gender barriers to professional advancement and the occupation of leadership positions remain consistent across all analyzed regions, indicating a structural pattern that transcends national contexts. Women systematically report greater obstacles to career advancement in academia and access to management and decision-making positions. This exclusion is expressed in limited formal opportunities and in symbolic forms of delegitimation, including the absence or underrepresentation of women in collaboration networks, the lack of institutional recognition of their trajectories, and difficulties in influencing the direction of the discipline. Although women are increasingly present in graduate programs, mechanisms of exclusion continue to hinder upward academic career mobility.

One of the most relevant aspects lies in the devaluation of women's intellectual contributions, manifest in the reduced visibility of their research, restricted access to competitive grants, and the recurring assignment of tasks – including administrative or pedagogical support activities – not recognized as "prestigious academic work." Moreover, the reproduction of informal male-dominated power networks hinders women's accession to and retention in leadership positions. Testimonies indicate that, even when they do hold leadership positions, many women continue to be excluded from strategic decision-making processes. Gender inequality is not limited to numerical representation, therefore, but is rooted in institutional cultures and the criteria for valuing academic authority.

2. Parenthood Deepens Gender Inequality in Academic Careers

Parenthood, particularly motherhood, is among the primary factors exacerbating gender-based career inequalities in political science. Women consistently report that the arrival of children negatively impacts their productivity, availability for academic mobility, and access to strategic research and funding opportunities. In contrast, men are less likely to perceive fatherhood as a career obstacle— revealing an institutional model that operates on the assumption that family care is the exclusive responsibility of women. This asymmetry results in the professional penalization of mothers, who have greater difficulty matching their male peers' productivity rates, particularly in contexts where performance is evaluated on the basis of rigid and decontextualized metrics.

Aside from the practical difficulties, the impact of motherhood is exacerbated by the lack of institutional policies in support of work-family reconciliation, including adequate leave, flexible hours, and access to childcare services. Even when these policies exist formally, reports point to institutional resistance to their implementation or the devaluation of needs specific to academic mothers. This neglect reinforces the perception that motherhood is incompatible with academic excellence, thus contributing to its symbolic and material exclusion from prestigious spaces.

3. Incidence of Misconduct and Limited Institutional and Peer Support for victims

The survey highlights an alarming incidence of moral and sexual harassment in political science. These episodes disproportionately affect women in frequency and severity, showing that gender inequality is expressed in both opportunities (or the lack thereof) and daily violence and disrespect. Academic environments, often hierarchical and competitive, offer few safe channels for reporting, which perpetuates the impunity of aggressors and discourages victims from seeking institutional support. In various accounts, it becomes evident that reporting abuse can lead to retaliation, stigmatization, or professional harm, creating a system that protects the aggressor rather than the victim.

Episodes of misconduct are not limited to individual interactions but reflect structural failures in the institutional culture of the discipline. The normalization of power abuse, improper appropriation of intellectual work, and disrespect for professional boundaries constitute a recurring pattern in the analyzed testimonies. Survey participants reported cases of public humiliation, sexist comments, deliberate exclusion from projects, and even physical violence. Rather than take preventive measures or make reparations, many academic institutions tend to minimize these occurrences, thereby reinforcing the normalization of symbolic and material violence.

4. Gendered Barriers Emerge Early and Persist Across Career Stages

Gender barriers in political science manifest early in the academic career trajectory. Graduate students, especially in Europe, Latin America, and North America, report clear perceptions that gender constitutes an obstacle to career progression. These data reveal that inequality is not just a phenomenon accumulated over time, but rather a reality perceived early on by those entering academia. This scenario undermines the professional expectations of women and other marginalized groups from an early stage, affecting their self-confidence, their decisions on whether to remain in the field, and their opportunities for inclusion in strategic research and collaboration networks.

As these individuals advance in their careers, the barriers become more concrete and institutionalized. The transition to formal academic employment is marked by an intensification of asymmetries, evidenced in the unequal distribution of tasks, misappropriation of authorship, moral and sexual harassment, and reduced access to leadership positions or institutional recognition. These practices become normalized in work environments and help maintain gender hierarchies. The recurring report illustrates how inequality is perpetuated not only by formal exclusion, but also by everyday mechanisms of devaluation, as women are assigned administrative or parenting roles that contribute little to their advancement.

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