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# The Gender Gap in Peace and Conflict Journals, 2000–2024*

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**Abstract**

While the issue of gender representation has gained increasing recognition across various academic disciplines, existing knowledge about the current state of gender representation in peace and conflict studies remains limited. This study aims to investigate gender representation in peace and conflict studies by examining a newly collected dataset of articles published in five academic journals representative of the field between 2000 and 2024. We find that, although the gender gap has not disappeared yet, it has narrowed over time. Our results show that increased collaboration, particularly across genders, appears to be an important driver of this trend. Additionally, we find evidence that gender differences in topical specialization exist in the field and that a gender gap in citation patterns exists for some of the field's core journals. Continued efforts are needed to further improve gender representation.

*Keywords:* peace and conflict science, gender, representation, citation patterns

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# 1 Introduction

The issue of gender balance and representation has gained increasing recognition across academic disciplines.[1] Disparities in gender representation can have significant implications for the production of knowledge, the shaping of research agendas, and the career trajectories of individuals within academia.[2] In the field of peace and conflict science — which focuses on understanding the causes of war and the conditions for peace — gender balance is particularly salient. For instance, a productive body of literature has emerged within the field that investigates the gender(ed) dimensions of the causes of war and the conditions for peace.[3] However, we lack a comprehensive understanding of the field's own gendered dimensions. This is important as diverse perspectives are essential for developing a comprehensive understanding of issues related to equality, justice, and conflict resolution. The under-representation of one gender in this field may have implications for its research questions, methodologies, and interpretations, potentially resulting in blind spots within the field's knowledge base and an ultimately biased understanding of peace and conflict (see Duvendack and Theuerkauf, 2024).

Reflecting the importance of this issue, an increasing number of studies have examined gender representation in the broader fields of political science and international relations publishing. These studies have consistently revealed an under-representation of women, reporting that women scholars are less represented in published works (Young, 1995; Breuning and Sanders, 2007; Østby et al., 2013; Teele and Thelen, 2017), less likely to be cited (Mitchell et al., 2013; Maliniak et al., 2013; Dion et al., 2018), less likely to have stable academic careers (Maliniak et al., 2008; Boroch, 2024), less likely to be trusted as

[1] Throughout this paper, we use the term "gender" rather than "sex." While we acknowledge that gender and sex are distinct concepts and that gender is non-binary, we treat gender as binary (male and female) in this study. This approach was necessitated by our reliance on gender-identifying pronouns, profile pictures, and first names to determine authors' gender, as there is currently no reliable method to systematically identify non-binary genders using these sources. We regret this limitation and recognize that it excludes non-binary individuals, which is an important shortcoming of our study.

[2] We acknowledge that gender is only one of many dimensions along which representation disparities exist and can be problematic. Other important issues include disparities related to race, ethnicity, geographic representation (e.g., scholars from the Global South), and other intersecting identities. In this study, we focus on gender disparities merely as a starting point, with the hope that future research will address these equally critical dimensions.

[3] For recent examples, see Adhikari et al. (2024), Goldberg (2025), and Ryckman and Henshaw (2025).

experts (Ozer, 2023), and less likely to be included in university syllabuses (Colgan, 2017). Scholars have also explored the causes of these patterns and identified several potential explanations. For instance, some studies find that women are less likely to co-author (Maliniak et al., 2013; Teele and Thelen, 2017; Stockemer and Sawyer, 2025), which leads to lower productivity compared to men. Studies analyzing citation patterns report that male authors tend to cite the work of other men more often than that of women (Mitchell et al., 2013; Dion et al., 2018). Women also face challenges in building and joining networks of scholars,[4] which diminishes their capacity to develop collaboration opportunities and obtain citations. Additionally, some studies report that women scholars tend to focus on certain topics, methods, and epistemologies (e.g., post-positivist approaches or qualitative methods) that create additional challenges for publication (Maliniak et al., 2008, 2013; Key and Sumner, 2019; Duvendack and Theuerkauf, 2024).

Despite these efforts, existing knowledge about the current state of gender representation in peace and conflict studies remains limited. An earlier study in this field (Østby et al., 2013), which examined data from one journal (*Journal of Peace Research*) covering the period 1983–2008, reported that the gender gap was "clear but slowly declining" and found no evidence of gender bias in terms of acceptance or citation rates. Another study (Maliniak et al., 2013), which analyzed twelve journals in political science and international relations (including three peace and conflict science journals), covered publications only up to 2006. More than 10 years after these initial studies, it is timely to re-examine whether women's under-representation in academic publications persists and to explore the structural factors that may continue to drive it, such as collaboration networks, topic selection, and citation practices.

This study aims to address these questions by examining a dataset of articles published in five academic journals representative of the field, listed in chronological order of their establishment: *International Studies Quarterly* (established in February 1957), *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (March 1957), *Journal of Peace Research* (1964), *Conflict Manage-*

[4]Recent work considers gender representation and equality in non-publishing aspects of political science and international relations, such as personal networks, invited talks, and course reading lists (e.g., Hardt et al., 2019; Scalera Elliott et al., 2023).

*ment and Peace Science* (1973), and *International Interactions* (1974). The dataset spans the period from 2000 to 2024, covers more than 5,000 articles, and includes information on the gender of their authors, their abstracts, and the citations they received. These data allow us to explore patterns and trends in gender representation within peace and conflict science, as well as the factors that influence these trends, such as collaboration patterns, topic choices, and citation trends.

Our research thus provides an updated and expanded understanding of the gender gap in peace and conflict journals, covering five journals over 25 years and considering this gap in authorship, research collaboration, research topics, and citations. This is important for several reasons. First, it provides an expanded understanding of *who* publishes on peace and conflict, thus also offering indications of *how* peace and conflict are studied (Phillips, 2025), and what analytical focuses and perspectives are accordingly prioritized and normalized[5]. Along these lines, Duvendack and Theuerkauf (2024) argue that the high number of male authors in civil conflict research not only pushes this field towards quantitative methods, but, more importantly, results in important analytical blind-spots, for instance by overemphasizing male experiences of violence. Evidence from, for instance, medicine (Szabo et al., 2024; Singh and Swarup, 2025), highlights that such analytical blind-spots can seriously affect research findings and have negative real world implications. And second, the results presented here also directly speak to normative concerns about equality and diversity within academia in general and peace and conflict studies specifically, pointing out that while recent initiatives to close the gender gap have improved women's representation, we have by no means reached a state of equality. This takeaway is particularly important at the current point in time, when progress towards increased gender equality within academia is under threat both by political pressures targeting diversity-related initiatives and economic pressures threatening many junior scholars' ability to remain in academia.

In what follows, we first describe the dataset and methodology used to examine pat-

[5]This point holds not only for gender, but also several other researcher attributes. Existing work on, for instance, author country of origin and residence (Belgioioso and Mehrl, 2025; Phillips, 2025) or minority status (Reid and Curry, 2019; Zvobgo et al., 2023) should thus be extended to peace and conflict studies.

terns of gender representation in peace and conflict science journals. We then present three sets of findings. First, we document trends in the gender distribution of authors over time, highlighting shifts in solo and collaborative authorship. Second, we explore gendered patterns in the selection of research topics, identifying areas where female and male authors are differently represented. Third, we analyze citation patterns to assess whether gender continues to influence scholarly recognition. Together, these analyses offer a comprehensive and updated perspective on gender dynamics within the field.

## 2 Data Collection

We use the term "peace and conflict science" here to describe the sub-field within Political Science and International Relations that (1) is concerned with studying the causes and consequences of peace and conflict, but (2) draws specifically on scientific methods to do so, privileging positivist approaches such as quantitative methods, experiments, and game theory, but also specific qualitative approaches such as process tracing, over more post-positivist methodologies. As such, we understand "peace and conflict *science*" to be more narrow in scope than "peace and conflict studies" would be, but also argue that it is a more cohesive subfield, making it a useful object of study.

To represent publication activity within this subfield, we collected data on publications over the period 2000–2024 for five journals: *International Studies Quarterly (ISQ)*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution (JCR)*, *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)*, *Conflict Management and Peace Science (CMPS)*, and *International Interactions (II)*. These journals are associated with major societies and institutions of the subfield, such as *Peace Science Society (International)*, the *International Studies Association*, and the *Peace Research Institute Oslo*. Four of these journals have published the highest number of articles on one of the main topics within peace and conflict science, the quantitative study of civil war (Duvendack and Theuerkauf, 2024). They all figure as top sources of citations for each other: for all but *JPR*, articles published in the same or the other four journals constitute the five quantitatively most important sources of citations, while for *JPR*, two

other journals[6] sneak in to make articles published in *CMPS* only the seventh-most important source of citations (Web Of Science, 2024a,b,c,d,e). Starting from the idea that cross-citations indicate belonging to the same scientific discipline (see e.g. McCain, 1991), we take this as evidence that these journals represent a subfield. And finally, our conversations with peace and conflict researchers provide further, at least anecdotal, support for the idea that these journals form the core of the field we choose to call peace and conflict science.

The first step of our study is to collect information on all research articles published in these journals over the past 25 years, from 2000 to 2024. We extracted data from all issues of the five target journals during this period from their websites, including information on author names, article titles, and abstracts. We define "research articles" as those articles published in these journals that include both author information and an abstract. This definition excludes non-research content, such as announcements (e.g., errata, corrigenda, retraction reports) and book reviews, but includes shorter contributions, such as research notes and data feature articles. After applying this definition, our dataset comprises 5,401 articles: 1,524 from *ISQ*, 1,308 from *JCR*, 1,296 from *JPR*, 577 from *CMPS*, and 696 from *II*.

For each of these 5,401 articles, we identify the authors' gender using publicly available information. Specifically, we rely on gender-identifying pronouns (e.g., he/she, his/her) found in the articles or on authors' websites as the primary sources, and on profile pictures from authors' websites as secondary sources. If we are unable to determine an author's gender using these methods, we use their first name as a last resort. When none of these approaches are successful, we classify the author's gender as unknown.[7] From this procedure, we identified a total of 9,990 publishing authors, of whom 7,197 (72%) are

[6]These are *Civil Wars* and *World Development*.

[7]We acknowledge that our coding procedure does not guarantee the identification of an author's self-identified gender. Unfortunately, we were unable to find any reliable methods to systematically identify self-identified gender for a large dataset such as ours. We regret this limitation and recognize the importance of capturing gender identity as defined by the authors themselves. While coding the authors of articles published in the five journal we focus on, we were unable to find individuals self-identifying as "they", that is, non-binary. We would have coded non-binary as an additional category if we had identified a sufficient number of authors where this would apply. When coding the authors of research citing these articles for the analysis presented in table 4, we found a few individuals who self-identify as "they" but these were not sufficiently numerous to allow coding a separate category of citing works.

male, 2,787 (27.9%) are female, and 6 (0.06%) are unknown. Note that these numbers are at the article-level and hence do not account for duplicates. That is, authors publishing multiple times are also counted multiple times.

# 3 Findings

## 3.1 Gender distribution of authors

We begin by presenting descriptive results that document the gender balance in published articles within peace and conflict science journals. Table 1 reports the proportions of female authors for each individual journal. Two aggregated scores are presented: one for the entire study period (2000–2024) and another for the earlier period (2000–2015). The latter is included to facilitate a comparison with the results of a previous study of Teele and Thelen (2017) conducted on the same time frame.

Table 1: Proportion of Female Authors

| Journals | % Female Authors | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2000-2015 | 2000-2024 |
| *ISQ* | 22.9% | 28.4% |
| *JCR* | 22.3% | 25.6% |
| *JPR* | 26.2% | 32.0% |
| *CMPS* | 19.5% | 24.7% |
| *II* | 23.1% | 26.4% |
| All journals | 23.3% | 27.9% |

**Source:** Authors' calculations. The percentage of female authors is calculated by dividing the number of female authors by the total number of authors and multiplying the result by 100.

The overall percentage of female authors across all journals is 27.9%, with *Conflict Management and Peace Science (CMPS)* having the lowest proportion (24.7%) and the *Journal of Peace Research (JPR)* the highest (32.0%). When comparing the gender ratios of peace and conflict science journals to those of political science journals reported by Teele

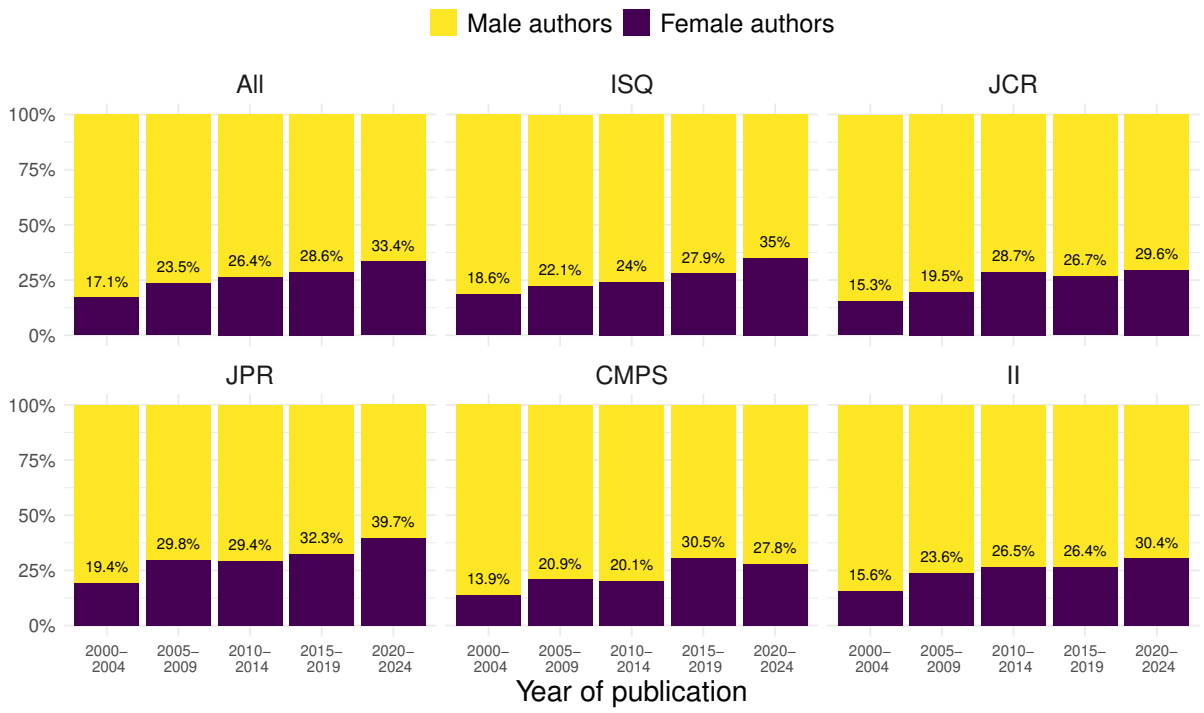


Figure 1: Gender distribution of authors over time (2000–2024)

This figure illustrates the gender distribution of authors publishing in peace and conflict science journals, aggregated into five-year intervals. The unit of analysis is the individual author.

and Thelen (2017) for the same time period (2000-2015), the figures are similar to those of top general-interest journals in political science (e.g., 18% for the *American Journal of Political Science* and 23.4% for *American Political Science Review*) but significantly lower than those of other field-specific journals such as *Comparative Politics* (31.5%) and *Comparative Political Studies* (32.2%).

Notably, a marked improvement is observed when comparing the two aggregated scores in Table 1. To further examine whether the proportion of female authors has increased over the study period, we visualize the female author ratio aggregated into five-year windows. Figure 1 illustrates that the female author ratio nearly doubled across all journals during the study period, rising from 17.1% in 2000–2004 to 33.4% in 2020–2024 in the aggregate. While the proportion remains significantly below 50%, it now ranges from 27.8% (*CMPS*) to 39.7% (*JPR*) in the most recent five-year period.

What explains the slowly declining yet persistent gender gap in authorship? While a full answer lies beyond the scope of this article, it likely involves broader sociopolitical and cultural dynamics—not only academic efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion,


Figure 2: Authorship types over time (2000–2024)

This figure illustrates the distribution of authorship types for articles published in peace and conflict science journals, aggregated into five-year intervals. The unit of analysis is the article.

but also wider societal movements toward gender equality. Nevertheless, we can identify several trends in authorship and publishing that align with the observed narrowing of the gender gap. Figure 2 presents the article-level distribution of author compositions, distinguishing among works authored by one male author, all-male coauthors, mixed-gender coauthors, all-female coauthors, and one female author[8]. Several noteworthy patterns emerge.

First, the decline in the gender gap we saw in the author-level data is also evident in the article-level data. In 2000–2004, more than 75% of articles were authored exclusively by men (either solo male authors or all-male coauthors). By 2020–2024, this proportion had dropped to 50%. In other words, half of the articles published in the most recent five-year period include at least one female author.

Second, coauthorship has become increasingly prevalent over time. In 2000–2004, 56% of articles were single-authored, compared to 37% in 2020–2024. The growing popularity

[8]Similar categories have been used in other recent work on publishing in Political Science and International relations (Dion et al., 2018; Breuning and Akyol, 2024).

of coauthorship is accompanied by an increased prevalence of mixed-gender teams. Between 2000–2004 and 2020–2024, the proportion of articles authored by all-male teams declined from 28% to 25%, while those authored by all-female teams increased modestly from 1.7% to 6.2%. Notably, the proportion of mixed-gender coauthored articles rose significantly, from 14% to 31%.

Third, we observe different trends in solo authorship between men and women. While solo authorship rates have declined for men (from 47% of all articles in 2000–2004 to 24% in 2020–2024), they have increased for women (from 8.5% in 2000–2004 to 12.8% in 2020–2024).

While our quantitative analysis necessarily treats gender as binary, these patterns reflect more than numerical disparities. Authorship trends are shaped by gendered norms about collaboration, career trajectories, and academic recognition.

A possible explanation for these trends is that academic research has increasingly shifted toward collaborative work, contributing to the decline in male solo authorship. Historically, men were more likely to publish independently due to greater institutional support and broader professional networks. As collaboration becomes more central to research practices — driven possibly by interdisciplinary approaches, funding structures, and the demand of increasingly complex and rigorous methodologies — solo authorship, particularly among men, has decreased.

The modest rise in female solo authorship may reflect expanding opportunities and growing institutional support for women, alongside increasing recognition of their research leadership. Nevertheless, the overall level of female solo authorship remains low relative to male solo authorship, likely due to persistent structural barriers and greater risks associated with pursuing independent research.

The increase in mixed-gender teams suggests a shift toward more inclusive collaboration patterns, reflecting broader social and institutional efforts to promote gender equity, as well as the strategic advantages of diverse research teams.

Finally, the relative stability of all-male and all-female teams might indicate that while gender-based collaboration preferences continue to exist and are possibly shaped by

mentorship dynamics and informal networks, they are increasingly balanced by broader trends favoring gender-integrated research collaborations.

## 3.2 Research topics

This section presents an analysis of the topics published in the field of peace and conflict science, and how they differ across genders. To identify the topics associated with each article, we apply a keyword-assisted topic model (keyATM) technique (Eshima et al., 2024) to their abstracts. For this analysis, we accordingly rely on a corpus comprised of the abstracts of the 5,401 articles published in the five academic journals identified as being central to the subfield over the period 2000–2024. KeyATM is a semi-supervised machine learning approach that allows researchers to specify topics prior to estimation, unlike the post hoc interpretation typically required in unsupervised topic models such as Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA).

Prior to applying the keyATM model, the corpus of 5,401 article abstracts underwent a series of pre-processing steps to ensure the quality and suitability of the text data for topic analysis. First, n-grams were created for common multi-word phrases, such as "United Nations" or "Militarized Interstate Dispute." The text was then processed using the `spacyr` library (Benoit and Matsuo, 2023), which facilitated tokenization and lemmatization. Tokenization involved splitting the text into individual tokens, while lemmatization reduced each word to its base or dictionary form (lemma). Following this, standard English stop words were removed, as these words typically convey little substantive information about the topics discussed. Additionally, a custom list of domain-specific stop words frequently found in research articles but not indicative of specific content (e.g., "paper," "article," "results," "study") were also excluded. Finally, frequency filters were applied to the vocabulary. Terms were required to meet a minimum term frequency of five, meaning they had to appear at least five times across the entire corpus, and a minimum document frequency of two, meaning they had to be present in at least two different abstracts. These thresholds ensured that rare or highly idiosyncratic terms were excluded, allowing the topic model to focus on more prevalent and potentially meaningful

Table 2: Prespecified topic-keyword combinations

| **Topic** | **Keywords** |
|---|---|
| Conflict | war, conflict, military, crisis, militarized_interstate_dispute |
| International Security | security, deterrence, alliance, ally, rivalry, power, arms_race |
| Territory | territory, territorial, land, disputed, claim, border, issue |
| Bargaining | bargaining, information, commitment, formal, game, equilibrium |
| Nuclear Weapons | nuclear, weapon, proliferation, arm |
| Conflict Management | peace, agreement, ceasefire, negotiation, mediation, post_conflict, conflict_management |
| Civil War | civil_war, ethnic, armed, group, rebel, insurgency, genocide, grievance, resource_curse |
| Identity Politics | religion, religious, discrimination, minority, group |
| Peacekeeping | peacekeeping, peacekeeper, mission, operation, united_nations |
| Terrorism | terrorism, terrorist, terror, attack, counterterrorism, political_violence |
| Gender Violence | gender, sex, violence, woman, man, female |
| (Forced) Migration | migration, immigrant, host, target, refugee, displacement, asylum |
| IO / multilateralism | intl_organization, united_nations, un_general_assembly, global_governance, intl_institution, nongov_organization |
| Economic Statecraft | sanction, trade, interdependence, world_trade_org, gatt, tariff, foreign_aid, preferential_trade_agreement, investment |
| Finance | intl_monetary_fund, program, conditionality, development, reform, exchange, rate, currency |
| North-South | colony, colonial, north, south, debt, global, globalization, poverty, inequality |
| Climate Change | climate, change, resource, water, natural_disaster, sustainability |
| Human Rights | human_right, abuse, violation, genocide, killing, torture, trafficking |
| Democracy | democracy, democratic_peace, regime_change, democratization, election |
| Autocracy | autocracy, authoritarianism, dictator, coup |
| Nonviolent Protest | protest, nonviolent, movement, campaign, dissident |
| Public Opinion | public_opinion, leader, citizen, support, survey |
| Middle East | israel, palestine, gaza, west_bank |
| Great Power | u_s_a, american, china, chinese, russia, russian, cold_war |
| Constructivism | constructivist, constructivist, idea, norm, social, identity |
| Empirics | data, dataset, variable, hypothesis, quantitative, large_n |

vocabulary within the field.

Although keyATM models do not require the iterative refinement process typical of unsupervised LDA models, we nevertheless conducted several rounds of estimation to address the issue of certain topics appearing infrequently. This refinement process was guided by two primary thresholds. First, we required each pre-determined topic to have a minimum topic proportion of 1%. This criterion ensured that each labeled topic had a meaningful presence, contributing at least 1% to the overall distribution of topics across all articles. Second, we enforced a minimum keyword coverage of 1%. This threshold required that the combined frequency of the keywords associated with each pre-determined topic constituted at least 1% of the total word count in the corpus. These thresholds ensured

that the selected keywords were sufficiently represented in the abstracts to effectively guide the topic modeling process. Through this iterative process, certain topics initially included — such as realism, cybersecurity, and conflict forecasting — were ultimately excluded from the topic list, as they did not consistently meet the criteria we adopted for topic proportion and keyword coverage. The final topic-keyword list comprised 26 pre-determined topics identified based on common themes and research areas within the field of peace and conflict science. For each of these 26 topics, we specified a set of associated keywords, drawing upon our existing knowledge of the field. To allow for the potential emergence of unforeseen themes not captured by the initial list, four "free" (unlabelled) topics were also included in the model. These "free" topics were not associated with any pre-defined keywords, enabling the model to discover patterns in the data without explicit guidance. Table 2 presents the 26 topic-keyword combinations utilized in the analysis.

To interpret the substantive content of each topic, Figure 3 displays the ten words most strongly associated with each of the 30 topics. Seeded keywords (in light yellow), which guided the model, appear alongside estimated words (in dark purple) that the model learned from the data. The x-axis reports the probability of observing a given word conditional on the topic. Notably, most topics show a healthy mixture of seeded and estimated words among their top ten, indicating that the model successfully balanced keyword guidance with data-driven discovery. This suggests the seeded keywords effectively anchored each topic while allowing the model to identify additional relevant terms from the corpus. The distributions indicate that, for the most part, the topics and their associated words are intuitively coherent and align with established areas of study and discussion in peace and conflict research. In general, the dominant words within each topic correspond to the thematic focus implied by the topic labels and seeded keywords, supporting the interpretability of the model's output.


Figure 3: Top ten words by topic

This figure presents top ten words and their probabilities for each of the thirty topics identified by our keyword-assisted topic model. Words shown in lighter shading (yellow in the color version) were seeded keywords used to guide the topic model, while words in darker shading (purple in the color version) were estimated by the model.

The analysis of topic proportions across the corpus of abstracts revealed a notable concentration in two specific areas.[9] The topic labeled **Conflict** exhibited the highest proportion, accounting for approximately 35% of the overall topic distribution. This prominence is unsurprising, given the central focus of peace and conflict science on the study of war, conflict, and related phenomena. Similarly, the topic labeled **Empirics** constituted a substantial proportion of the topic distribution, at approximately 20%. This likely reflects the increasing emphasis on quantitative methods and empirical analysis in the five journals under study, with a significant portion of the literature dedicated to data-driven research and the development of analytical frameworks. The remaining 24 pre-determined topics demonstrated more moderate proportions, ranging from 1% to 5%, with an average proportion of approximately 3%. Meanwhile, the topic proportions for the four "free" topics were each below 1%, suggesting that their contribution to the overall topic distribution was minimal. This indicates a relatively balanced distribution of research interest across these diverse themes within the broader field.

We conducted regression analyses to investigate potential gendered patterns in the topics covered by scholarly articles. For each of the 30 topics, we regressed the estimated article-level topic probabilities on the proportion of female authors among the article's total authorship, while controlling for journal and publication year as fixed effects.[10] This approach allowed us to examine whether articles with a higher proportion of female authors were more likely to focus on certain topics, holding publication outlet and year constant.

Figure 4 presents the results of this analysis. Topics shown in purple are those positively associated with a higher share of female authors; topics shown in green are those negatively associated with a higher share of female authors (i.e., positively associated with a higher share of male authors); and topics in gray are not statistically distinguishable from zero after FDR correction. The results reveal several notable patterns. Topics such as **Gender Violence**, **Human Rights**, and **Civil War** demonstrate the strongest

[9] Figure A1 in the Online Appendix presents the estimated topic proportions of each of the 30 topics, showing the prevalence of different thematic areas across all articles in our corpus.

[10] As we ran 30 separate regressions, we employed the Benjamini-Hochberg false discovery rate (FDR) correction to adjust p-values and confidence intervals for multiple comparisons.

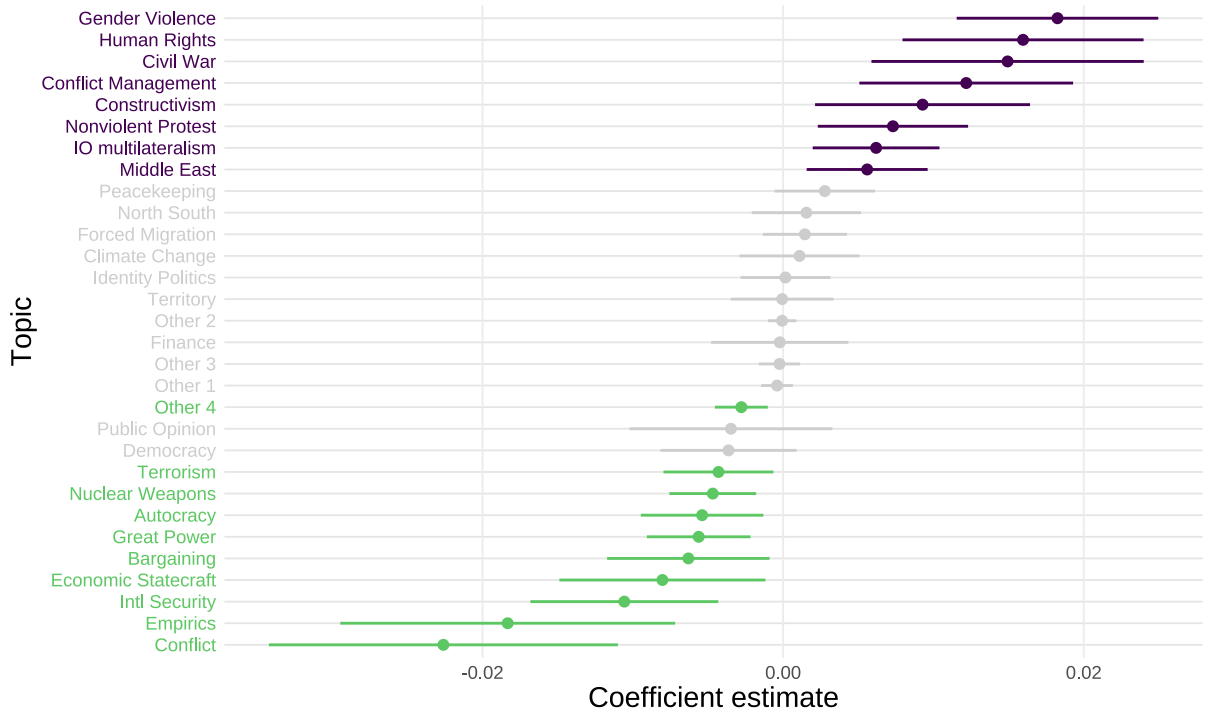


Figure 4: Estimated associations between topic probabilities and female author ratio

This figure displays the associations between article-level topic probabilities and the female author ratio for each of the 30 estimated topics. The regression coefficients for the female author ratio variable are shown alongside 95% confidence intervals, adjusted for multiple comparisons using the Benjamini-Hochberg FDR correction. Statistically significant positive associations (FDR $q < 0.05$) are shown in purple at the top, significant negative associations (FDR $q < 0.05$) are shown in green at the bottom, and non-significant coefficients are shown in gray in the middle.

positive associations with the female author ratio, suggesting that these areas are more heavily represented in the work of female scholars within the field. In contrast, topics such as **International Security**, **Economic Statecraft**, and **Bargaining** exhibit negative associations, indicating a relative under-representation of female authors in these areas. Additionally, the two most prevalent topics, **Conflict** and **Empirics**, also show negative associations with the female author ratio. However, this finding likely reflects the overall gender distribution within the field, where male authors constitute the majority. Given the high prevalence of these topics, their negative association may simply mirror the broader gender imbalance in authorship across the corpus rather than indicating a specific tendency for these topics to be predominantly studied by male authors.

The gendered patterns of topical distribution we identify here align with broader trends in political science (Key and Sumner, 2019). This suggests that such patterns

should not be interpreted merely as individual preferences but as outcomes shaped by gendered academic dynamics. These dynamics may include self-selection into particular research agendas, driven by differential expectations of publication success across genders (Brown et al., 2020), as well as the greater salience of certain topics to women's lived experiences, social roles, and interests (Key and Sumner, 2019). For instance, this may help explain why gender violence is more strongly associated with a higher proportion of female authors. At the same time, historical legacies matter: traditional IR subjects such as bargaining have long been dominated by men, reflecting their emergence in male-centered academic networks. Recognizing gender as a structuring concept thus helps explain not only why women are more represented in certain areas but also why those areas may be differently valued and rewarded within publishing and career advancement.

## 3.3 Citations

Finally, we examine potential gendered differences in the subsequent citations of published articles. For this purpose, we collected two citation datasets: one from citation count data covering all five journals, and one from the journal webpage of *International Interactions (II)* with more detailed information on citing articles. In both cases, the individual article is the unit of observation and, to allow enough time for the work to be read and referenced, we include only articles published over the period 2000–2020.

First, using the OpenCitations Index of Crossref open DOI-to-DOI references,[11] we collected information on how many times each article published in the five journals we study had been cited by September 2025. We matched these data with the data used in the previous section via fuzzy string matching, resulting in 3,604 observations of articles published in 2000–2020. By the time of our data collection, these articles had been cited an average of 46.7 times. The distribution of citation counts is highly skewed, with the median citation count (21) substantially lower than the mean. We use the citation count as the dependent variable for analyses in this section.

[11] We automatically searched using `https://search.opencitations.net/`. For details on the relationship between the OpenCitations Index and Crossref, see `https://opencitations.hypotheses.org/889` (last accessed on 22 October 2025).

Second, we collected citation data specifically from *II*, as the OpenCitations dataset does not contain information on the author gender of the articles citing the work published in the five journals we study. In other words, the first dataset does not allow us to understand *who* cites the work published across peace and conflict journals in 2000–2020, only how much. Focusing on *II* allows us to address this gap because its website provides straightforwardly accessible information for each article on which other published articles have cited it. In 2000–2020, *II* published 523 research articles. By May 2025, when we collected this dataset, these articles had been cited an average of 21.8 times.[12] The *II* data enabled us to construct three additional measures of citation counts: the number of times an article was cited by articles with all-female authors (mean = 3.7, median = 1.0), all-male authors (mean = 11.9, median = 6.0), and mixed-gender authors (mean = 6.3, median = 3.0). We use negative binomial regression models to analyze all four measures of citation counts.

To capture potential gender differences in citations, we focus on the ratio of female authors, defined as the number of female authors divided by the total number of authors per article. This ratio ranges from 0 to 1, with a mean of 0.249 and a median of 0 in the five-journal dataset and a mean of 0.245 and a median of 0 in the *II* data. The female author ratio is our main predictor variable across the analyses presented in this section, as we test how it affects an article's citation count.

In doing so, we account for several potential confounders. To capture the possibility that certain topics may inherently attract more female (or male) authors and receive higher (or lower) citation counts independent of author gender, we include a variable indicating whether a topic is predominantly associated with female or male authors. This variable is defined as the sum of topic probabilities for topics found to be associated with women authors in the analysis presented in the preceding section. Specifically, it is calculated as the sum of per-article topic probabilities for the eight topics found to be associated with a higher ratio of women authors. In the five-journal dataset, this variable ranges from 0.001 to 0.747, with a mean of 0.156 and a median of 0.111, while

[12]There are 11,388 citing articles in total, of which 1,913 (16.8%) have all-female authors, 6,205 (54.5%) have all-male authors, and the remaining 3,270 (28.7%) have mixed-gender authorship.

it ranges from 0.001 to 0.621, with a mean of 0.12 and a median of 0.045, in the *II* data. As expected, the ratio of female authors and the feminine topic indicator are positively correlated; however, the correlation is modest, with a coefficient of 0.223 (95% confidence interval: 0.19, 0.25) for the five-journal dataset and a coefficient of 0.188 (95% confidence interval: 0.10, 0.27) for *II*.

We also control for the number of authors per article, as articles with multiple authors may have greater opportunities to be cited. Additionally, to account for the "age effect," where earlier-published articles have had more time to accumulate citations, we include the natural logarithm of article age (i.e., years since publication) as an offset term in all regression models.[13] Finally, we include journal fixed effects when using the five-journal dataset to capture systematic differences in citation activity between the included outlets. For the five-journal dataset, we cluster standard errors by journal to account for potential within-journal correlation in citation patterns. For both datasets, we use heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors to address potential non-constant variance in the error terms.

Table 3 presents the regression results based for the five-journal dataset. Model (1) estimates the relationship between the ratio of female authors and the subsequent citation counts in the aggregate, whereas Model (2) allows this relationship to vary across journals by introducing an interaction term between female author ratio and journal fixed effects. Both models omit the constant to facilitate interpretation.

[13]Our results remain qualitatively similar when we include publication year fixed effects instead.

Table 3: Negative binomial models of citations (five journals)

| | *Dependent variable:* | |
|---|---|---|
| | Citation Count | |
| | (1) | (2) |
| Ratio of female authors | 0.143 | $-0.256^{***}$ |
| | (0.184) | (0.026) |
| Ratio of female authors × JCR | | $0.440^{***}$ |
| | | (0.004) |
| Ratio of female authors × JPR | | $0.751^{***}$ |
| | | (0.008) |
| Ratio of female authors × CMPS | | $0.270^{***}$ |
| | | (0.006) |
| Ratio of female authors × II | | $0.628^{***}$ |
| | | (0.006) |
| Number of authors | $0.133^{***}$ | $0.134^{***}$ |
| | (0.043) | (0.041) |
| Feminine topics | 0.463 | $0.510^{*}$ |
| | (0.320) | (0.271) |
| ISQ | $1.087^{***}$ | $1.167^{***}$ |
| | (0.068) | (0.058) |
| JCR | $1.312^{***}$ | $1.294^{***}$ |
| | (0.079) | (0.066) |
| JPR | $1.103^{***}$ | $0.989^{***}$ |
| | (0.072) | (0.060) |
| CMPS | $0.738^{***}$ | $0.758^{***}$ |
| | (0.073) | (0.060) |
| II | $0.636^{***}$ | $0.569^{***}$ |
| | (0.080) | (0.063) |
| Number of observations | 3,604 | 3,604 |
| $\theta$ | $0.654^{***}$ | $0.658^{***}$ |
| | (0.014) | (0.014) |

Journal-clustered standard errors are reported in parentheses. $^{*}$ $p < 0.1$; $^{**}$ $p < 0.05$; $^{***}$ $p < 0.01$
All models include age of articles as an offset term.
$\theta$ is the dispersion parameter. The null hypothesis is that $\theta \to \infty$, corresponding to no overdispersion.

The estimated coefficient for female author ratio is indistinguishable from zero in Model (1), but this masks the heterogeneous effects of female author ratio on citations across different journals. Figure 5 visualizes the diverging associations between female author ratio and citation counts based on Model (2). It shows that an increase in the ratio of female authors is associated with an increase in the number of citations for articles

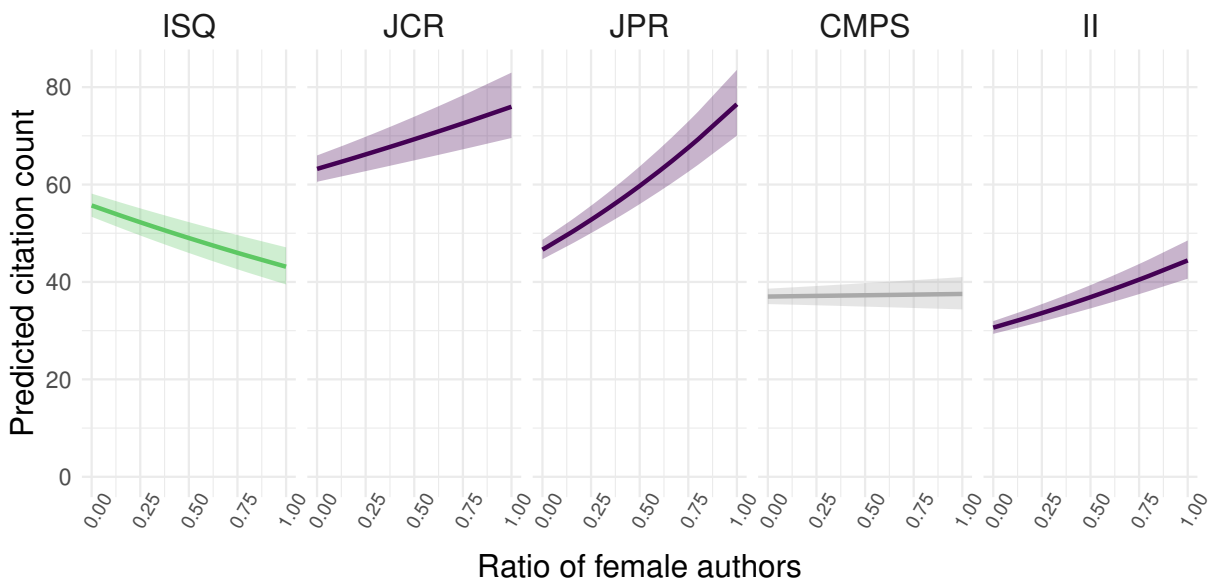


Figure 5: Gender composition and citation outcomes across journals

This figure presents predicted citations from Model (2) in Table 3 showing journal-specific associations between female author ratio and citation counts. Predictions hold constant number of authors and feminine topic (both at median values). Purple lines indicate significant positive slopes, green lines indicate significant negative slopes, and gray lines indicate non-significant relationships.

published in *JCR*, *JPR*, and *II*, whereas the relationship is negative for those published in *ISQ* and null for those published in *CMPS*. Interestingly, as the next analysis shows, *JPR* citations have increased substantially since 2015. Combined with our earlier finding that the gender balance of authors in *JPR* has become more balanced since then, this may suggest that its female authors, in particular, are contributing to the journal's increasing citation counts.

Regarding control variables, we find that whether the topics are associated with female authors or not does not influence the citation count. As expected, co-authored articles are more likely to be cited. Statistically significant estimates of the dispersion parameter, $\theta$, indicate that the citation counts exhibit overdispersion, thereby justifying the use of negative binomial models over Poisson models.

Next, we investigate whether policy interventions aimed at addressing the citation gap have improved the representation of female authors in citations. Jackson et al. (2023) find that recent policy interventions designed to reduce recognition gaps in international relations — such as encouraging gender balance in citation statements — have received broad support among IR scholars. Furthermore, some journals now explicitly request that

authors pay attention to gender balance in their references when submitting manuscripts. Along these lines, the journals of the International Studies Association include such a request in their author instructions. For instance, *ISQ*'s author instructions state: "We strongly recommend that authors check their references to ensure inclusion of authors from disadvantaged groups. *ISQ* is committed to ensuring that scholars receive appropriate intellectual acknowledgment regardless of race, gender, class, professional standing, or other categorical attributes."[14] However, it is not clear when and whether such policies were introduced across journals, and to what extent they are consistently enforced.

To gain insight into how these interventions aimed at greater equality have affected citation counts, we subset the data by journal and interact the ratio of female authors with cubic polynomials of time. Full results are presented in Appendix Table A1. Figure 6 shows, for each journal, how the predicted number of citations changes over time for different values of the ratio of female authors. These results suggest that intervention effects in line with the discussion above have not been observed so far. In fact, citations to all-male, gender-balanced, and all-female articles published in the five journals appear to have either developed in parallel or experienced the clearest growth for the all-male category.

Most strikingly, in *ISQ* since 2015, articles with all-female authors are now *less* likely to be cited compared to articles without female authors (comparing ratio categories 1 and 0, respectively), whereas before, their citation counts were statistically indistinguishable. These findings provide no evidence that recent policy interventions have had any effect on citation counts so far. This finding adds to other areas of intervention to improve women's advancement in political science, some of which have been found to be ineffective (Argyle and Mendelberg, 2020).

One potential explanation for this is that, even if international relations or political science adopted such interventions, other disciplines who cite work from these five journals may not have actively taken similar actions to address the gender gap in the citation patterns. The citation counts analyzed here include all citing articles, both within and

[14]See `https://academic.oup.com/isq/pages/General_Instructions` (accessed on 20 October 2025).

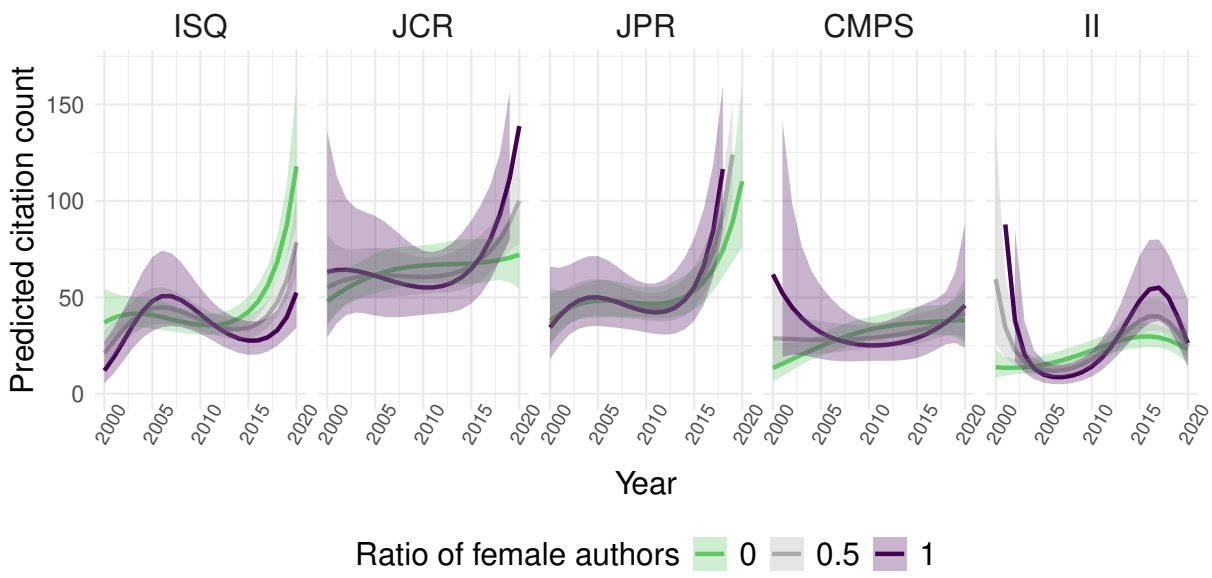


Figure 6: Predicted citation counts by gender composition over time across journals

This figure presents predicted citations from negative binomial models with cubic time trends, estimated separately by journal. Lines show predictions for all-male (0%), gender-mixed (50%), and all-female (100%) author teams. Predictions hold constant article age (median), number of authors (median), and feminine topic (median). Shaded areas indicate 95% confidence intervals with robust standard errors.

beyond the disciplines of international relations and political science, potentially diluting any effects among the former group. That being said, more research on whether citation policy interventions actually work is clearly needed.

Finally, we employ the second, more narrow citation count dataset, which we collected from the website of *International Interactions*, to study whether the female author ratio affects not citations generally, but more specifically citation behavior by all-male, gender-balanced, and all-female author teams. Table 4 presents the regression results from the *II* dataset. In line with our earlier results for this journal, we find that, generally, a higher ratio of female authors is associated with an increase in subsequent citations. Interestingly, the results in Table 4 show that this positive association is not statistically significant for citations by all-male-authored teams (third column), whereas it is significant for citations by all-female and mixed-gender author teams as well as in the aggregate.

Table 4: Negative binomial models of citations (*II*)

| | *Dependent variable:* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Times cited by any articles | Times cited by all-female | Times cited by all-male | Times cited by mixed-gender |
| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
| Ratio of female authors | 0.581*** | 1.152*** | 0.300 | 0.707*** |
| | (0.219) | (0.190) | (0.244) | (0.244) |
| Number of authors | 0.267*** | 0.290*** | 0.243*** | 0.311*** |
| | (0.062) | (0.064) | (0.070) | (0.064) |
| Feminine topics | 0.502 | 1.911*** | −0.010 | 0.507 |
| | (0.439) | (0.519) | (0.451) | (0.478) |
| Constant | −0.065 | −2.318*** | −0.513*** | −1.396*** |
| | (0.139) | (0.156) | (0.145) | (0.157) |
| Number of observations | 523 | 523 | 523 | 523 |
| $\theta$ | 0.880*** | 0.652*** | 0.848*** | 0.646*** |
| | (0.053) | (0.055) | (0.055) | (0.045) |

Robust standard errors are reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.1$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$
All models include age of articles as an offset term.
$\theta$ is the dispersion parameter. The null hypothesis is that $\theta \to \infty$, which corresponds to no overdispersion.

We detect clear differences in the citation increases associated with an increasing ratio of female authors across different citation sources. To estimate substantive effect sizes, we set covariates to their median values, move the female author ratio from 0% to 50% and then to 100%, and report predicted citation counts. When looking at citations by articles of any author composition, the citation count is predicted to increase from 16.5 (95% confidence interval: 14.6, 18.5) when the female ratio is 0% to 22.0 (19.4, 25.0) when it is 50%, and to 29.4 (23.4, 37.0) when all authors of the cited article are women. Similar changes in female author ratio increase citations by articles with all-female authors from 2.0 (1.7, 2.3) at 0% to 3.5 (3.0, 4.1) at 50%, and 6.2 (4.7, 8.2) at 100%. This represents almost a 200% increase. For citations by all-male authors, the predicted increases are from 9.7 (8.6, 11.0) at 0% female ratio to 11.3 (9.9, 13.0) at 50% female ratio, and to 13.1 (10.3, 16.7) at 100% female ratio.

While citations by all-female teams are thus overall more rare (unsurprising given our results in Figure 1), they grow by a moderately larger absolute amount, approximately 3.9, as we move from no female authors to all-female authors, corresponding to a much larger relative increase of approximately 205%.[15] At least in *II*, the detected positive relationship between female author ratio and citations is thus largest for the numerically smaller group of all-female citing articles and weakest for citing works that are solely male-authored.

The estimated coefficients for the two control variables in Table 4 align with expectations. Articles covering topics predominantly associated with female authors are more likely to be cited by articles with all-female author articles, but not by those with all-male author or mixed-gender articles. Additionally, articles written by more coauthors are cited more often. Similarly to the five journal analysis, in Appendix Table A2, we estimated an interactive model where the effect of the ratio of female authors is allowed to vary over years. The results of this analysis indicate again that there are no notable effects of the above-mentioned policy intervention, meaning that there is no significant improvement in the citation patterns of research authored by women over time.

Taken together, the results presented in this section contrast with earlier studies that reported that female scholars were under-represented in citations (Maliniak et al., 2013; Mitchell et al., 2013). We conjecture that two possibilities may explain this difference. First, it may be the case that the gender gap in citations has simply been decreasing, given that these earlier studies of course rely on older data. However, the over-time dynamics presented in Figure 6 offer little support for this interpretation. Second and more intriguingly, the under-representation of female authors in citations may be more prevalent in "elite" journals (i.e., top journals in the field of international relations) than in subfield-specific journals (Zigerell, 2015). Existing studies checked reference lists of particular journals, e.g. Mitchell et al. (2013) focusing exclusively on references in *International Studies Quarterly (ISQ)* and *International Studies Perspectives (ISP)*, whereas

[15]The overall increase is between these two extremes: when looking at all citing articles with a 0% female author ratio, the predicted 10-year citation count is 16.3 (95% confidence interval: 14.4, 18.4). Increasing the female ratio to 50%, the predicted citation count rises to 21.7 (19.0, 24.7). If the female ratio is further increased to 100%, the predicted count increases to 28.9 (22.3, 36.5).

our analyses examined citations across all journals, both within and outside of peace and conflict science and regardless of their ranking. This interpretation points to differing citation practices across fields, sub-fields, and journals, aligning with the finding that the effects of female author ratio differ even when disaggregating the five journals constituting the core of peace and conflict studies (see Figure 5).

Our findings are thus in line with the idea that citation practices are embedded in gendered academic dynamics and norms. The increasing visibility of female-authored work in our data could reflect shifting recognition practices, but our results also underscore that citations are not neutral markers of quality. Rather, they function as social acts of recognition that can both reproduce and challenge hierarchies of academic authority (Mitchell et al., 2013). Editorial initiatives aimed at encouraging gender balance in citation practices, alongside broader awareness of these dynamics, may therefore play an important role in reshaping norms of scholarly recognition (Jackson et al., 2023). But as the analyses presented here also suggest, such initiatives appear to not yet have produced clear effects in citation behavior.

# 4 Conclusions

This study provides an updated assessment of gender representation in peace and conflict science journals over the period 2000–2024. We find that, although the gender gap has narrowed over time, it has not disappeared. Women now constitute a substantially larger share of published authors compared to two decades ago, and mixed-gender collaboration has become increasingly common. Nevertheless, men continue to be overrepresented, and all-female author teams remain relatively rare.

Our findings suggest that broader sociopolitical changes, alongside institutional efforts to promote diversity and inclusion, have contributed to the decline of gender disparities in authorship. Increased collaboration, particularly across genders, appears to be an important driver of this trend. At the same time, the modest growth in female solo authorship reflects both new opportunities and persistent structural barriers that still limit full gender parity. Although we were unable to collect data on early-career versus

later-career publications as well as country where authors base, having such information may unpack the cause of modest growth in female solo authorship.

When we examine the topics scholars choose to work on, the picture is complex. Our analysis of research topics shows clear patterns of gender association. Some topics, such as gender violence, civil war, and human rights, are more frequently associated with female authors, while others, including international security, bargaining, and economic statecraft, are more commonly linked to male authors. These patterns indicate that gender differences in topical specialization remain present across the field, shaping the distribution of scholarly attention. This finding, combined with the under-representation of female in publication, suggests that gendered topics may accompany less research impact on policy due to the limited number of publications. For instance, while the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda shows importance in policy areas (Sjoberg and Thies, 2023), less recognition or emphasis may persist if there is an unequal distribution of publications in the first place associated with WPS. Importantly, however, women also contribute to research on a wide range of topics, and their increasing participation is not limited to a narrowly defined thematic area.

Regarding citation patterns, our analysis shows encouraging trends for *JCR*, *JPR*, and *II*. Regarding *II*, articles with higher shares of female authors tend to receive more citations, including citations from both female-authored and mixed-gender papers. However, higher shares of female authors tend to receive fewer citations in *ISQ*. Moreover, there are also no notable improvements over time. Regardless of greater awareness within the field about gender equity issues and changes in editorial and citation practices, clear changes in citation patterns thus do not appear to follow. This may suggest that such efforts need to go beyond the field.

Overall, our findings suggest that gender is not only a demographic variable but a structuring force in peace and conflict research. Authorship patterns, topical specialization, and citation practices reflect broader academic norms that differentially shape opportunities, recognition, and value. The representation gaps we document are thus not simply numerical imbalances but evidence of deeper hierarchies embedded in the field. Ad-

dressing these requires attention not only to who participates but also to how gendered expectations influence what kinds of research are produced, rewarded, and recognized as central.

Structural barriers to independent research, differential access to networks and resources, and ongoing topic specialization patterns continue to constrain full gender equality. Continued efforts to promote inclusive mentorship, equitable collaboration opportunities, and sustained awareness of citation and publication biases will be critical to achieving a more fully representative and fair academic community. These efforts appear particularly important as, at the time of writing, higher education is increasingly subject to political and economic pressures in many places. In the US, for instance, these pressures specifically target diversity initiatives, trying to halt ongoing progress and to set back what has already been achieved (Lieb, 2023; Speri, 2024). But even where higher education is not explicitly politically targeted but experiencing an economic downturn, such as in the UK or Australia (Adams, 2025; Chau, 2024), the negative consequences for hiring, research funding, and university strategies risk disproportionally affecting less senior, less networked, and less male-dominated cohorts of academics, thus potentially derailing the recent progress towards greater diversity and gender equality documented here.

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