

Who Gets Accepted and Who Gets Rejected? Status in the Production of Social Science



KEVIN NAZAR, ROBERTA SPALTER-ROTH, AND JAMES C. WITTE 

This article considers science as a stratified social system that may reflect and reproduce broader social patterns of stratification. Analyses are based on a unique data archive with more than ten thousand published and unpublished manuscripts and the associated peer reviews, all submitted between 1990 and 2010 to the American Sociological Review, a leading journal in the discipline. The analysis considers how race, gender, manuscript topic, and institutional affiliation are associated over time with publication decisions. These decisions shape the future of the discipline and have broader social implications. The findings show patterns that may limit emerging perspectives in the discipline and provides recommendations as to how the discipline can not only make the stratification system more permeable, but also emphasizes the significance of flattening the hierarchy altogether.

Keywords: gender, knowledge production, peer review, publication bias, race, status, stratification

Science is a highly stratified social system (Nielsen and Andersen 2021). It is a process of knowledge production that can create or reinforce status inequalities. Studies have found steep academic hierarchies within sociology and other disciplines in regard to interdepartmental prestige hierarchies, citation counts, editorships in top-tier journals and areas of specialization. The prestige gap between elite and non-elite sociology departments in universities in the United States has proved enduring (Weakliem, Gauchat, and Wright 2012). Earlier studies show that status markers such as the race and gender of individuals and especially the status of employing academic departments or institutions are related to publication and

Kevin Nazar is a doctoral candidate in public and applied sociology at George Mason University, United States.

Roberta Spalter-Roth is a senior research fellow at George Mason University, United States. **James C. Witte** is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and director of the Institute for Immigration Research at George Mason University, United States.

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can therefore shape what is deemed legitimate science (Bakanic, McPhail, and Simon 1987; Crane 1967). These authors' findings are decades old now and are limited to publications, the end of the knowledge creation process. Since then, sociology has seen a growth in women and scholars of color. The question is whether this growth is reflected in manuscript acceptance rates that lead to publication? Has it democratized the discipline by narrowing race and gender gaps in publication, leveling the status hierarchy of academic departments, and increasing the scope of the manuscript topics accepted?

Within academic disciplines publications are thought of as an objective measure of status and institutional or departmental prestige (Wellmon and Piper 2017). We would expect that members of elite departments publish the most. Based on forty-five years of publications in four leading journals, faculty in the top twenty-five institutions account for 89 percent of the published articles; PhDs from Yale and Harvard account for 20 percent of all published articles. These are the markers that are typically used to define "elite departments" and the faculty associated with them (West et al. 2013). Those academics in departments with high levels of prestige can claim special monopolies, such as selecting (as an editor) or endorsing (as a reviewer) publishable manuscripts by virtue of their positions (Weber 2018, 144).

Along with institutional and departmental prestige characteristics, demographic characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnicity can likewise be status attributes that influence the knowledge production process in sociology (Bakanic, McPhail, and Simon 1987; Moore et al. 2018; Spalter-Roth et al. 2019).

Manuscript acceptance in elite scientific journals has been called the most important measure of social capital and legitimacy in a discipline (Wellmon and Piper 2017). Yet relying solely on published articles for researching what topics, departments, institutions, and demographic characteristics are most prevalent in a given period is a flawed method. It can lead to publication bias because researchers cannot compare manuscripts that are accepted with those that are rejected, and whether acceptances versus rejections vary by status charac-

teristics (Begg and Berlin 1988; Delgado and Delgado 2018; Radicchi, Fortunato, and Castellano 2008). As a result, we know relatively little about how the peer-review process constrains knowledge production in sociology and in other disciplines and if these practices are influenced by status characteristics (Camic, Gross, and Lamont 2011). An exception is a study based on forty-three thousand reviews that finds that women were underrepresented in the peer-review process; female editors are more likely to suggest female reviewers and male editors are more likely to suggest male reviewers (Helmer et al. 2017). In contrast, most studies are both based on manuscripts that are published and are a potentially biased examination of the review process.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this article is to overcome this bias by examining manuscripts submitted to the *American Sociological Review* (ASR), the discipline's most prestigious journal, to find whether biases are present in the selection process by analyzing which manuscripts are accepted as publishable, which are rejected or assigned a revise and resubmit. Our analysis answers a series of research questions as to whether demographic, departmental, and topic area characteristics are more or less likely to gain status as legitimate science in the form of acceptance of manuscripts for publication, when controlling for other factors. We are able to answer the study research questions using a new digital archive (DA) that includes the status characteristics of accepted, rejected, and revise and resubmit (R&R) manuscripts. Specifically, it enables us to answer the following research questions related to status:

Does the peer-review process result in equal acceptance rates by race and gender? Has this changed over time, so that there is greater equity among manuscript submitters?

Is elite departmental status still a key predictor of the acceptance of manuscripts? Are there still significant race and gender effects once elite departmental status is considered?

Are race and gender-themed manuscripts more likely to be accepted or rejected than those on other topics? Who is most likely to submit manuscripts on these topics and who is most likely to have theirs accepted?

We examine twenty-one-years' (1990–2010) of manuscripts submitted to *ASR*, plus a more detailed examination of 2007–2010 manuscripts. In short, we study inequalities in manuscripts' acceptance rates among race and gender groups, employment in elite or non-elite departments, and topic areas, as well as interaction effects of race, gender, and elite department affiliation. Our emphasis is on the structural determinants of the construction of sociological knowledge.

To answer these questions, this article uses the DA created by the authors that includes both published and unpublished manuscripts, and the associated peer-review documents, in order to measure status in the production of legitimate science in sociology and how status, in the form of prestigious publications is gained (Leahey and Moody 2014; Ridgeway 2011). Having both published and unpublished manuscripts and their peer reviews in a research archive helps shed light on the complete practice of scholarly journal peer review.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Over the last several decades, interest has increased in the processes of scientific knowledge production to analyze why some groups, topics, institutions, and paradigms gain or lose status over time (Calhoun and Van Antwerpen 2007; Camic, Gross, and Lamont 2011; Fortunato et al. 2018). The processes of scientific production emphasize the relational structure between demographic characteristics, departmental status, and topic area. (Fortunato et al. 2018).

Race and Gender in the Publication Process

The academic stratification process appears to legitimate a non-Hispanic White male set of rules and practices including value neutrality and objectivity that can be a veneer for maintaining (Bonilla-Silva 2015) White male power (Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2005; Zambrana et al. 2017; Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). “White

logic and White methods” have been seen as hegemonic (Zuberi and Bonilla-Silva 2008). These norms may constrain non-elite faculty careers, especially if these scholars want to follow career paths that include many peer-reviewed publications and teaching at research extensive institutions (Allen et al. 2008; Burawoy 2005; Bonilla-Silva and Embrick 2005; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bowles and Gintis 2011; Darity 2010). During the period we investigate, *ASR* editors, who make final determinations of what is legitimate science, were predominately White male full professors in elite departments of sociology.

Despite progress toward gender equality in institutions of higher education and some progress in racial equality, deep patterns of discrimination against women and non-White male faculty appear to persist. From the “chilly climate” to the “old boys’ club,” women and minority academics must navigate structures and cultures that continue to marginalize, penalize, and undermine their success. For example, women attempting to publish in psychiatry journals face inequality in a male-dominated hierarchical system (Uptegrove et al. 2020). These hierarchical differences are on the rise and exist across countries and disciplines (Nielsen and Andersen 2021). One reason for these differences are that women are younger, on average, and are not, or have not yet been, promoted to higher ranks. In the research in psychology that Kevin Laland (2020) conducted, he finds that of the sixty editors-in-chief between 1974 and 2018, 83 percent were White and 5 percent were people of color. Further, these data also show that when editors are White, empirical papers included fewer participants of color when written by White authors (Williams 2020). These conditions may be worse for Black women (Spalter-Roth 2021), if they do not follow historically White male norms for an “ideal” career in the academic world (Bonilla-Silva 2017; Embrick 2017).

Research finds among underrepresented minority (URM) scholars (that is, African American and Latinx scholars) a series of significant differences in women’s and men’s daily experiences, with women having more negative experiences than men (Spalter-Roth 2021). Relative to their male colleagues, women are nearly

twice as likely to report unequal treatment in recruitment processes, and almost twice as likely to report not receiving resources to help them balance work and family obligations. More than twice as many women of color report experiencing verbal abuse or ridicule, although the numbers are small. An additional 17 percent of women report others have failed to legitimize or take their scholarship seriously. To a lesser degree, URM men have negative experiences as well, although it may be that men are more reluctant to report negative experiences than women. However, none of the findings indicate that these men had significantly worse experiences, on average, than their female colleagues, although in some cases their experiences are just as damaging. For example, equal percentages (48 percent) of URM men and women report that they do not spend time with other faculty members in their departments, suggesting that they do not have the potential for coauthoring or other networking activities and, therefore diversity is less likely to be sustained because URM academics have less opportunity to participate in publishable research (Spalter-Roth 2021).

Although they appear to be dominant in publishing, the share of White men who are members of the American Sociological Association (ASA) has decreased from 52.1 percent in 2002 to 44.2 percent in 2020. This is because White men eschewed graduate training in sociology as research and development funding dropped, real earnings declined, and the academic labor market contracted (ASA 2020). At the same time, women and URM students increasingly chose graduate training in sociology because sociology's subject matter lent itself to the inclusion of issues central to their lives (Reskin and Roos 1987). So, in recent years, the dominance of White males in the discipline should have declined but does not appear to have done so.

Likewise, in academic psychiatry, women face gender inequality, including in publication. Women have fewer high-impact publications, are more likely to be rejected, and spend longer time in review (Uptegrove et al. 2020). In addition, looking across fields, previous authors also find that women are likely to have publications in a narrow range of gender or

family-focused topics that are considered less prestigious (West et al. 2013). These authors use JSTOR's large-scale data sets of publications in a wide variety of journals to examine the percentage of articles published by women compared to men, the order in which authors are listed, and the topics that have been published. The study authors find significant disparities between the genders with women publishing less, although the gap appears to be narrowing over time. The percentage of women with published articles in JSTOR from 1990 to 2011 ranged from 10.6 percent in mathematics to 46.4 percent in education. The percentage in sociology was among the highest, at 41.4 percent. The authors find, however, that women are less likely than men to be first authors on joint articles.

The Ideal Career Path: Elite Departments and Institutions

The "ideal" academic career path starts at a Research I graduate program, leads to employment in a tenure-track position and tenure at elite departments—all leading to increasing status in the discipline. Such a career path is assumed to be the model for graduate training and is promulgated in graduate programs and is the career path into which many graduate students are socialized (Burawoy 2005; Golde and Walker 2006; Walker et al. 2008). Historically, women, Blacks and Latino/as were excluded from or marginalized in predominantly White departments and institutions that produce cultural capital in the form of publications within academia (Blackwell and Janowitz 1974; Moore et al. 2018; Spalter-Roth et al. 2019). Most URM faculty are now educated and teach in historically White or predominantly White departments or institutions, but are less likely to teach at the most prestigious ones (CSMGEP 2018; Spalter-Roth and Erskine 2007). Previous authors do find that women and URM are likely to have publications in a narrow range of gender or family-focused topics (West et al. 2013). Research on publications in *ASR* for earlier years suggests that elite institutional affiliation is significantly related to manuscript acceptance (Bakanic, McPhail, and Simon 1987).

In conclusion, the history of White women, Black men, and Black women as "outsiders

within” higher education is a long one; nevertheless, they create new paradigms such as intersectionality, critical race theory, and Black and Latina studies (Brewer 1989; Collins 1986, 1990; Collins and Bilge 2016). This history includes efforts to build Black and Latina/o sociologies separate from the paradigms created by White sociologists, which often treated URM as Others or as the problem (Moore 2017). Often these scholars have made use of their outsider or marginal status to produce particular standpoints different from those of White sociologists and organizations on the basis of their own interests (Collins 1990, 1986).

The Scientific Process: Evaluation of Manuscripts

The dominant method for evaluating what should be published as legitimate science is peer review, conducted by editors and reviewers for a journal. Following Max Weber (2018), we suggest that editors have special status monopolies in that they pick the reviewers for articles. Editors and assistant, or deputy, editors have special power in the process in that they both select reviewers, who may have identical disciplinary interests to their own or are in the same professional networks or in similarly high-status departments. Editors, and deputy editors, unlike reviewers, have institutional and demographic knowledge of submitters. Most important, editors make the final decision, after reading the reviews, whether the submission is accepted, rejected, or suggested for revision (Bakanic et al. 1987; Crane 1967).

Although reviewers do not have access to manuscript authors’ institutional and demographic characteristics, they may use a variety of techniques to intuit the gender and other status characteristics of manuscript authors such as the degree of self-references, labeling of the research as unique, and topic area (Flaherty 2019). For example, one study concludes that in the last few decades men self-cited 70 percent more often than women (King et al. 2017).

RESEARCH DATA AND DESIGN: THE ASR DIGITAL ARCHIVE

As outlined, the coin of the realm in an academic career is publication in high-status jour-

nals (Burawoy 2005; Darity 2010, 175). Thus we identify manuscript acceptance in *ASR* as the dependent variable in this analysis to see whether status characteristics are associated with acceptances. Until now, sociologists had no opportunity to directly examine the production of scientific knowledge because they were limited to the manuscripts that made it through the review process and were accepted. Even for the published articles, reviewers’ comments and documentation of the changes made to the submitted manuscript prior to publication were not available. The DA used in this article is unique in that it is based on both the published and unpublished manuscripts and their peer reviews to shed light on the complete practice of scholarly journal peer review through which sociological knowledge is legitimated, communicated and preserved. By examining changes over time based on analysis of all submissions rather than just publications, this work may support or cast doubt on the existing literature as to the status of women, people of color and the significance of institutional affiliation, as well as a focus on gender and race topics in the production of legitimate science.

Over the course of several years, researchers from the ASA and from the Center for Social Science Research at George Mason University developed the DA based on more than two decades of archived materials. Paper records from ASA’s journals were housed in a traditional archive at Pennsylvania State University. When the university decided to deaccession these records, they were stored in a climate-controlled warehouse by ASA, but were slowly deteriorating. The choice between letting these files degenerate and creating a new form of archive was made by the ASA Council. The result was a proposal to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for “Creating a Digital Archive for Research on the Production of Scientific Knowledge” that was funded by NSF in 2015. The goal of the project was to develop a digital research archive from the paper manuscripts, corresponding reviews, and editorial materials submitted to the ASA’s six journals. The first step of this process was to curate the boxes of manuscripts, reviews, and letters to determine the completeness of the paper files for each journal. *ASR*, ASA’s flagship peer-reviewed research

journal, contained the most organized files for each year of data and these materials were scanned into machine-readable files to create the foundation for the DA.

Since 1990, the ASA has used an editorial administration tool, Journal Builder, to manage and process submissions and reviews. The Journal Builder information provided accurate metadata to maintain a record of every manuscript submitted to each journal each year, its title, author or authors, reviewers, transaction dates, reviewer decisions and final outcome all connected through the unique manuscript, revision, author and reviewer ids. Based on the metadata, the DA included 10,551 manuscripts, linked to 18,554 authors, and 26,693 reviews; combined with editorial correspondence, the entire DA includes eighty-three thousand documents.

Demographic Data for Authors and Reviewers

Additional information from the ASA Graduate Department Guide and the ASA membership data base was linked to authors and reviewers present in the DA. ASA annually publishes a guide to sociology departments that offer graduate degrees and that wish to be included in the guide. This guide is organized by the name of university and the name of department. The guides could be used to determine departmental affiliation at the time of the article or review submission. The ASA membership files, are filled out by ASA members on an annual basis at the beginning of each membership year. For those who were ASA members during this period, gender, race, and ethnicity, current department and institution, as well as current email addresses for the most recent year of membership were extracted. For those characteristics that could not be obtained through the membership files, we engaged in a series of online searches and sent authors and reviewers a survey, which also asked for information on race, ethnicity, gender, and institution that could be used to populate the files when membership information was missing.

Departmental Affiliation

Based on a list developed by Phillip Korom (2020) of 346 elite sociologists—identified through citation accounts for scholars in de-

partments of sociology—fifty-five departments at U.S. universities were classified as elite departments because one or more elite sociologists were affiliated with these departments between 1990 and 2010 (see table A.1). Then, for the analysis that follows, looking specifically at publication outcomes between 2007 and 2010, the *ASA Guide to Graduate Programs* from 2007 was used to define all faculty members and Ph.D. recipients from those programs as elite sociologists. This allows the analysis to examine the extent to which an organizational feature, elite departmental affiliation, combines with individual status markers such as race, gender, and topic area to influence publication outcomes.

Manuscript Topic

To determine the status of various topics, the first step of the coding process involved manually obtaining references related to specific topics in sociology within *ASR* manuscripts. To do this, we manually coded 168 abstracts for *ASR* manuscripts from 1990, 2001, and 2008. The codes were related to fifteen topics of the discipline of sociology; this article focuses on the significance of the topics of gender and race. Using this manual coding as a reference, a second step involved using NVivo software and its programmable autocoding function to automatically code raw PDF files of all but 124 of the 3,046 submissions to *ASR* between 2007 and 2010. The NVivo autocoding was based on the sentences coded from the selected abstracts of the years 1990, 2001, and 2008 to code for references related to gender, race, and family topics in the raw files for the years from 2007 through 2010. References from those abstracts that the authors coded as belonging to gender and race themed manuscripts—and not a simple set of search terms—were used for the autocode of the other files. The output of the autocoding process yielded the number of references to the chosen topics found in each raw file. This resulted in a count of topic references per manuscript.

The next step was to compare the autocoding reference scores of sentences in abstracts initially coded manually to an autocoding based on basic definitions and themes related to the topics of gender or race. This way we

could analyze the correlation between the autocoding based on our coding references and more basic sentences about gender and race that the autocode could search for in the raw files. The correlation yielded a Pearson's r value of 0.72 ($p < .01$) for the gender topic and 0.40 ($p < .01$) for the race topic, which means that the coding based on the sentence references from the abstracts is similar to what would result if we based the coding on standard descriptions of gender and race. The basic sentences about gender and race that were tested against the manual sentence references to gender and race were based on a list from the journals *Gender and Society* and *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* (Golash-Boza 2016). For example (a full list is available on request):

Gender is related to class inequality.

Division of household labor is a central theme of gender.

Feminist identity is part of gender.

Sociologists have a critical sociological theory of race and racism.

Race is a modern concept and a product of colonial encounters.

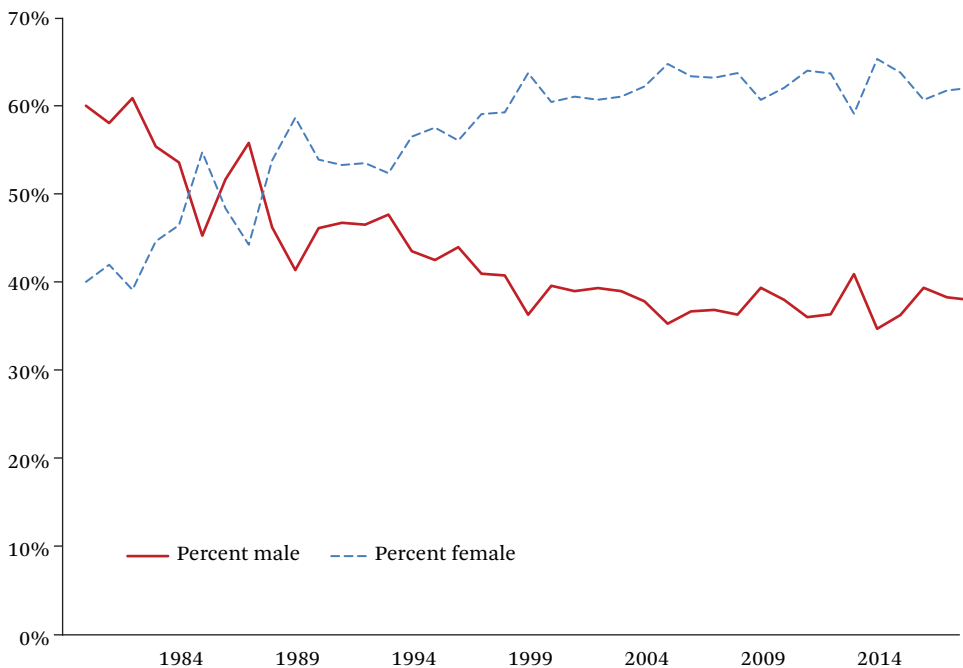
Most of the world has been affected by "global White supremacy."

Having topic information for gender and race for both the published and unpublished manuscripts, peer reviews, and departmental and demographic data in a unified research archive helps shed light on the complete practice of scholarly journal peer review through which sociological knowledge is codified and communicated.

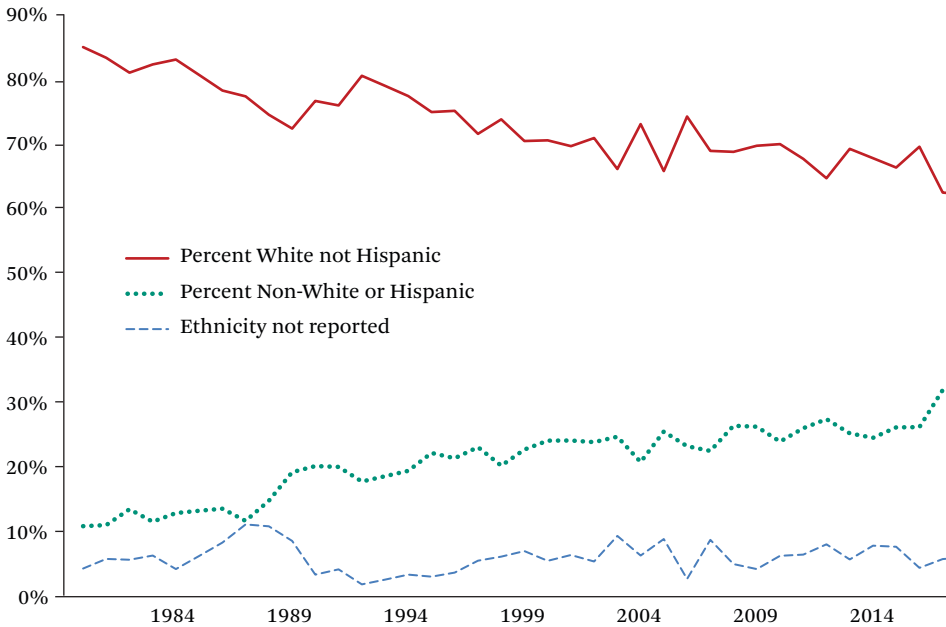
FINDINGS

Figures 1 and 2 show the gender and race composition of each cohort of new sociology doctoral recipients from 1980 through 2018 to set the stage for the analyses based on the DA, which covers the period from 1990 to 2010. Figure 1 shows that prior to 1985, more men were receiving doctorates in sociology than women, but that by 1990 53 percent of the new doctoral recipients in sociology were female. In 2010, 64 percent were female. Figure 2 portrays a sig-

Figure 1. Sociology Doctorate Recipients in the United States by Gender



Source: Authors' calculations based on NSF 2020.

Figure 2. Sociology Doctorate Recipients in the United States by Race-Ethnicity

Source: Authors' calculations based on NSF 2021.

nificant decline in the proportion of non-Hispanic Whites among sociology doctoral recipients over the same period. With more women and non-Whites entering the discipline, along with retirements among older cohorts, where more White non-Hispanic men were in the discipline, the overall percentage of women and minorities in the discipline has presumably grown over time. The question then is whether the overall change in the demographics of the discipline also led to a shift in status recognition within the discipline as measured by publication in *ASR*, sociology's flagship journal.

The first set of DA findings is based on all authors who submitted manuscripts to *ASR* between 1990 and 2010. As table 1 shows, despite a small but significant increase in the percentage of non-Whites among those who submitted papers to *ASR* during this period, from 18.4 percent to 24.7 percent, the proportion of women authors has increased even more from 26 percent to 36.5 percent in 2010.

As table 2 shows, this period is marked by a notable decline in manuscript acceptances. Although the acceptance rate in the final two periods, especially the last one, is influenced by

open R&R manuscripts, some of which will turn into acceptances, it declined by roughly 50 percent compared to 1990. Also noteworthy is the dramatic increase in the number of authors submitting, from 2,347 in the 1990 to 1993 period to 3,046 in the 2007 to 2010 period. This is then matched by a sharp increase in the number of manuscripts rejected without review (313) or withdrawn (2) for a total of 10.3 percent between 2007 and 2010 relative to earlier periods.

To simplify the analysis and focus on the most meaningful categories, yet remain mindful of the right censoring of final decisions obvious in the 2007 to 2010 period, subsequent analyses rely on two dichotomies: papers accepted or conditionally accepted relative to all other types of final decisions, and publishable papers that combine open R&Rs with those that are accepted in contrast to those who were rejected, rejected without review, or withdrawn.

To move beyond bivariate relationships, we estimated a series of logistic regression models. In table 3, exponentiated logistic regression coefficients are reported for manuscripts submitted by White authors, male authors, and pa-

Table 1. Race and Gender of ASR Authors

	1990– 1993	1994– 1996	1997– 2000	2001– 2003	2004– 2006	2007– 2010	Total
Race^a							
White	81.6	78.7	77.2	77.7	76.2	75.3	77.6
Non-White	18.4	21.3	22.8	22.3	23.8	24.7	22.4
Gender^b							
Male	74.0	70.3	64.4	66.2	61.8	63.5	66.4
Female	26.0	29.7	35.6	33.8	38.2	36.5	33.6
Total within period	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
# of authors	2,347	1,699	2,461	1,975	2,140	3,046	13,668

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: 175 cases missing gender and 913 missing race. All figures except number of authors in percentages.

^a $\chi^2 = 32.036$ with 5 df, $p < .001$.

^b $\chi^2 = 106.352$ with 5 df, $p = .000$.

Table 2. ASR Final Editorial Decisions by Period

	1990– 1993	1994– 1996	1997– 2000	2001– 2003	2004– 2006	2007– 2010	Total
Accepted or conditional acceptance	17.8	15.9	12.5	10.2	12.7	8.6	12.7
Revise and resubmit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	1.3	8.4	2.2
Reject	76.1	82.5	85.5	82.8	82.2	72.7	79.7
Reject-no review or withdrawn	6.1	1.6	2.0	6.5	3.8	10.3	5.4
Total within period	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
# of authors	2,347	1,699	2,461	1,975	2,140	3,046	13,668

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: All figures except number of authors in percentages.

$\chi^2 = 1121.780$ with 15 df, $p < .001$.

pers submitted in each of the last five time periods with non-White authors, female authors, and the 1990 to 1993 period serving as reference categories. In models 1 and 2, the analysis is based on all manuscripts submitted between 1990 and 2010; in models 3 and 4, it considers only sole-authored manuscripts.

The results are consistent across all four models. Race is the strongest predictor. Manuscripts submitted by White authors are approximately 28.5 percent more likely to be accepted (model 1) or 29.0 percent more publishable (model 2). This remains the case when the analysis is limited to sole-authored papers (models

3 and 4). The effect of gender is weaker than that of race, but in all four models between 1990 and 2010 White and male authors are significantly more likely to have their manuscripts accepted or to be eventually publishable than female authors.

Once race and gender are considered, the period effects observed in the bivariate relationships generally remain strong and significant in table 3. With 1990 to 1993 serving as the reference category in all four models, the exponentiated logistic regression coefficients are under 1.000, indicating a lower probability of acceptance or possible acceptance. This is par-

Table 3. Exponentiated Logistic Regression Coefficients Decision

	All Authors		Single Authors	
	Accepted Authors ^a [1]	Publishable Authors ^b [2]	Accepted Authors ^c [3]	Publishable Authors ^d [4]
Race				
White	1.285***	1.290***	1.362***	1.370***
Gender				
Male	1.136*	1.114*	1.84*	1.163*
Period				
1994–1996	0.916	0.915	0.830	0.829
1997–2000	0.698***	0.700**	0.669***	0.672***
2001–2003	0.545***	0.579***	0.568***	0.607***
2004–2006	0.708***	0.794**	0.629***	0.717***
2007–2010	0.447***	0.937	0.423***	0.894
Constant	0.164***	0.981	0.142***	0.143***
Total number	13,493	13,493	7,845	7,845

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: 1,044 cases missing gender or race.

^a $\chi^2 = 140.436$ with 7 df, $p < .001$.

^b $\chi^2 = 80.070$ with 7 df, $p < .001$.

^c $\chi^2 = 85.131$ with 7 df, $p < .001$.

^d $\chi^2 = 46.325$ with 7 df, $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

ticularly the case, for example, in the 2001 to 2003 period, all papers were about 45 percent (model 1) and sole-authored papers 43 percent (model 3) less likely to be accepted than in the 1990 to 1993 period. The trend for the final period, from 2007 to 2010, is somewhat ambiguous because, as shown in table 2, 8.4 percent of the authors' manuscripts were still in the R&R category. However, based on the results from models 1 and 3, it appears the trend will hold for this period as well.

Now, focusing attention on the most recent period, from 2007 to 2010, the analysis of publication outcomes includes manuscript topic and elite departmental affiliation. Overall, with the 2007 to 2010 data set, the acceptance rate is 8.6 percent, and an additional 8.4 percent of the authors' papers may still be publishable because they were out for revision and possible resubmission at the end of 2010 (table 2). To extend this analysis, table 4 provides an overview of the bivariate relationship between manuscript topic and departmental affiliation with

the interaction of race and gender, that is, a comparison between non-White women, White women, non-White men, and White men. With regard to topic, a significant relationship is observed between race and gender and the submission of gender-related manuscripts. Non-White women are the most likely to submit gender-themed manuscripts, and the relationship between race and gender and manuscripts with a race theme is significant; moreover, the relationship between race and gender and whether a manuscript addresses either a gender theme or a race theme is also significant. Of the manuscripts submitted by non-White women, 37.8 percent addressed either gender or race, relative to 30.8 percent of White women or 31.1 percent of White men, and 37.0 percent of non-White men. To our surprise, non-White men were equally likely to submit manuscripts on race and gender topics as women of color were.

Clearly though, the strongest relationship found in table 4 is between the interaction of

Table 4. Interaction Effects Between Race and Gender for Topic and Affiliation

	Non-White Women	White Women	Non-White Men	White Men
Gender topic^a				
Other topics	69.6	76.7	74.5	77.6
Gender topic	30.4	23.3	25.5	22.4
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Race topic^b				
Other topics	77.5	82.3	73.5	78.9
Race topic	22.5	17.7	26.5	21.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Gender or race topic^c				
Other topics	58.1	66.4	61.9	66.4
Gender or race topic	37.8	30.8	37.0	31.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Departmental affiliation^d				
No elite affiliation	77.2	74.8	74.7	68.3
Elite affiliation	22.8	25.2	25.3	31.7
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total number	246	806	459	1,377

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: 158 cases missing gender or race. All figures except total number in percentages.

^a $X^2 = 7.631$, 3 df, $p = .05$.

^b $X^2 = 12.791$, 3 df, $p = .005$.

^c $X^2 = 9.823$, 3 df, $p = .020$.

^d $X^2 = 17.329$, 3 df, $p = .001$.

race and gender, which represents the concept of intersectionality (Collins 1990; Collins 1986; Collins and Bilge 2016; Crenshaw 1989) and affiliation with an elite department of sociology: 31.7 percent of White male authors were affiliated with an elite department relative to 25.3 percent of non-White men, 25.2 percent of White women, and 22.8 percent of non-White women.

Table 5 then moves the analysis of *ASR* publication outcomes to a multivariate framework. The analysis considers race, gender, elite departmental affiliation and manuscript topic. Preliminary analyses tested for interaction effects between gender and elite departmental affiliation, race and elite departmental affiliation, and for the combination of gender and race with elite departmental affiliation, that is, White males affiliated with elite departments. None of these interaction terms were signifi-

cant; nor did they significantly improve the overall fit of the models. Therefore they are excluded from the models.

Models 1 and 2 in table 5 provide the exponentiated logistic regression coefficients for the proposed multivariate models. In both cases, the overall model is significant, affiliation with an elite department standing out as the most important predictor, and the effects of race and gender are not significant. This finding is evidence of continued White male dominance, as they are more likely than other demographic groups to hold positions in elite departments. However, in model 1 and model 2, which includes papers with an open R&R along with the accepted papers, there is a significant, positive coefficient for authors of race-focused manuscripts.

Model 3 then considers the impact of the same variables on a slightly different definition

Table 5. Exponentiated Logistic Regression Coefficients Editorial Decisions

	Accepted Authors Model 1 ^a	Publishable Authors Model 2 ^b	Rejected Without Review Model 3 ^c
Race			
Non-White	—	—	—
White	1.058	1.089	0.761
Gender			
Female	—	—	—
Male	1.018	1.033	1.257
Departmental affiliation			
No elite affiliation	—	—	—
Elite affiliation	1.607***	1.635***	0.424***
Topic			
Nongender focused	—	—	—
Gender focused	0.993	1.251	0.524**
Nonrace focused	—	—	—
Race focused	1.359*	1.421**	0.255***
Neither gender nor race focused	—	—	—
Constant	0.079***	0.118***	0.202
Total number	2,647	2,647	2,647

Source: Authors' calculations.

Note: 399 cases missing gender, race, or topic.

^a $\chi^2 = 15.082$, 6 df, $p = .007$.

^b $\chi^2 = 32.302$, 6 df, $p < .001$.

^c $\chi^2 = 96.934$, 6 df, $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

of the dependent variable, in this case, whether a manuscript was rejected without a review. Reviews of this sort are done solely at the discretion of the *ASR* editors and, in some instances, deputy editors. As a result, these are not masked decisions but rather are taken with knowledge of the author's name and institutional or departmental affiliation and potentially also the author's race and gender. Here too, race, gender, and topic were not significant; however, if authors are affiliated with an elite department, then they are 58.1 percent less likely to have their papers rejected without a review. Moreover, gender-focused topics are 47.6 percent less likely to be rejected without a review, whereas manuscripts focused on race are 74.5 percent less likely.

Summary of Findings

To analyze the importance of status characteristics in academic publication, considered the key indicator of prestige in the discipline of sociology, this article addresses a series of research questions related to status and research publications. Based on unique archival data of *ASR* published and unpublished manuscripts, the analyses are situated in a stratified academic environment that creates and maintains status hierarchies. The analysis focuses on race, gender, the intersection of race and gender, departmental affiliation, and manuscript topics as predictors of successful publishing outcomes. Using data from the DA, the findings indicate the following for the period from 1990 to 2010:

Submissions to *ASR* by non-White and female authors have increased significantly, acceptance rates have declined, and rejections without review, that is, editorial desk reviews have increased (tables 1 and 2).

White authors and male authors were significantly more likely to have their manuscripts accepted or have open R&R as the final editorial decision, most of the open decisions occurring toward the end of the observation period (in 2010).

These relationships are seen in multivariate models that look at race, gender, and submission date (table 3). Unlike the analyses focusing on the 2007 to 2010 period, however, they do not consider manuscript topic or departmental status.

In analyses looking specifically at manuscripts submitted between 2007 and 2010, there are clear indications of the extent to which race and gender intersect with one another in the *ASR* publication process. Notably, non-White women are significantly more likely to submit gender-themed manuscripts, and relations between the interaction of race and gender and affiliation with an elite department of sociology are highly significant (table 4).

When the 2007 to 2010 data is viewed in a multivariate framework (table 5), race and gender are not significant predictors of publication outcomes, which may well be related to the increase in submissions by non-White and female authors over time. However, the significance of departmental affiliation remains; after controlling for race and gender, authors with an elite affiliation are 60 percent more likely to have positive publication outcomes than those from non-elite departments. Similarly, authors from elite departments are about 60 percent less likely to have their manuscripts rejected without review.

Along with the finding that desk rejections are less likely for authors affiliated with an elite department, it can also be seen that desk rejections were also significantly less common for manuscripts focused on gender (47 percent) and race (74 percent) than manuscripts without such an emphasis. This finding suggests that

race and gender topics may have become a central focus of the field, at least for *ASR* editors.

Implications

To the extent that gaining status in the discipline of sociology rests on publications in top journals such as *ASR*, we have seen White males remain the dominant group in securing these publications, though this is mediated through their affiliation with elite departments of sociology. We have seen that race and gender are significant predictors of manuscript acceptance with women and men of color least likely to have their manuscripts accepted. Yet, when we include departmental status in the equation, race and gender drop out as significant predictors. We suggest that the reasons for this situation are that they are less likely to be recruited into elite departments. Those who are not in elite departments, we speculate, are less likely to have resources to publish their research. In addition, members of non-elite departments are less likely to have high-status mentors, must teach more courses, have fewer resources, such as availability of travel costs to ASA meetings, and are less likely to have graduate research assistants. In addition, their scholarship may be less likely to be thought of as legitimate and more likely to be subjects of harassment (Moore 2017; Moore et al. 2018).

What means are available for addressing these status disparities? These suggestions are based on a 2017 ASA membership survey (ASA 2019).

Increase Mentoring

Mentoring is viewed as a crucial part of the process of professional training and especially of increasing the number and proportion of underrepresented minorities in the scientific workforce. Academic mentoring is designed to create conditions for success by expanding social capital, networks, and other resources that result in greater productivity and archetypal employment (Lamont and Huutoniemi 2011). One long-term concern is that members of underrepresented minority groups are still being insufficiently mentored for academic career trajectories that are oriented toward scientific research, scholarly productivity, and the contri-

bution of new perspectives to the work of science (Dixon-Reeves 2003; Olson and Fagen 2007; Walker et al. 2008).

Although many White women and Black men and women prefer mentors “who look like them,” some hotly debated findings suggest that having a White male mentor at a Research I graduate school significantly improves the chances of obtaining a tenure-track position at a Research I institution (Spalter-Roth and Erskine 2007). This finding is likely a result of the professional networks in which these faculty advisors participate and their status in the discipline. ASA holds workshops and programs to increase support for mentoring and increase access to professional development activities. By and large, these workshops are held at annual national and regional sociology meetings, but many faculty members and graduate students, particularly those not affiliated with elite departments, do not have the funds to attend.

Networks

Gaining access to professional networks is important for sociologists who want to do research and publish (Moody 2004). As noted, Black men and women often do not have close colleagues to publish with in their home departments (Spalter-Roth 2021). An alternative method for gaining networks in the discipline is to participate in ASA sections, representing specific subfields within the discipline. A number of large sections focus on race and gender. Others are not exclusively focused on these topics, but could afford men and women of color the opportunity to interact with a variety of other sociologists, present papers, gain comments, and find coauthors. These include the sociology of culture, medical sociology, organizations, occupations, and work, and community and urban sociology,

A possible outcome may be to legitimize “outsider perspectives” across the discipline. Yet the majority of ASA survey respondents are neutral as to whether sections help their professional status, especially if they are not in a top-tier department. Thomas Pettigrew suggests that more study is needed of the processes of intergroup contacts to see which processes lead to integration and which lead to

separation (2007). Other survey respondents suggest that ASA should do more to make sociologists from all types of departments feel welcome. One idea is that membership fees should be reduced so that more sociologists can afford to participate or that as part of the membership, those who join the association should receive one free section membership (ASA 2019).

Resources

Research by the ASA Membership Task Force has suggested that women, and especially men and women of color, have fewer resources and often heavier teaching loads and service responsibilities because they are less likely to participate in elite departments. These resources, including time, are critical for research and publishing (ASA 2019). They remain a serious problem and limit opportunities to gain status in the discipline, especially in the form of publications. Selective programs such as the ASA Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) provide graduate support for a limited number of participants who are expected to go on to prestigious careers. The ASA Fund for the Advancement of the Discipline (FAD) provides limited funding for early stages of research to early-career faculty members to increase their status in the disciplines. However, the majority of the recipients are already employed by high-status Research 1 departments. Without a greater allocation of resources, inequalities will remain. This is a difficult issue that the discipline needs to address.

Composition of Editorial Boards and Editorial Decision-Making

Our findings also further explicate the special monopoly power of editors at high-status journals such as *ASR*. The significantly lower desk rejection rates for papers on race and gender during the 2007 to 2010 period—despite an overall increase in the number of desk rejections during this time period—are a sign that editors were making a conscious effort to have manuscripts related to these topics go through the peer-review process. However, the significantly lower probability of a desk rejection for authors affiliated with elite department suggests that authors submitting papers from non-

elite departments are systematically not having the opportunity to have their work evaluated through the peer-review process. ASR editors have significant power to ensure that these papers get the benefit of the expertise and opinions of peer reviewers. Extending this discretion to ensure full consideration of all manuscripts, regardless of departmental affiliation, would be a way to further confirm that the journal publishes the “best” submissions.

CONCLUSION

Providing avenues for non-Whites and women to enter elite departments of sociology that are capable of providing the mentoring, networks, and resources key to publishing in journals such as *ASR*, then, offers such individuals career opportunities. It also opens up the disci-

pline to a new range of research and paradigms that will benefit it as a scientific enterprise. Thus far, the purpose of programs such as MFP and FAD is to elevate the status of minorities and professionally younger members of the discipline rather than to diminish the distance between status ranks. Addressing status inequality is not just about elevating a few individuals to high-status groups, but also about reimagining the determinants of status at the group or departmental level. For the good of underrepresented individuals, but also the discipline of sociology and the broader sociological audience, it is important for the discipline to do both—to open opportunities for all individuals to participate in high-status academic work, but also to broaden the definition of what it means to do high-status sociology.

Table A.1. Elite Sociology Departments

Arizona State University	University of California, Los Angeles
Boston College	University of California, Riverside
Brandeis University	University of California, San Diego
Columbia University	University of California, San Francisco
Cornell University	University of California, Santa Barbara
Duke University	University of Chicago
George Washington University	University of Florida
Harvard University	University of Illinois at Chicago
Indiana University Bloomington	University of Iowa
Johns Hopkins University	University of Kansas
Kent State University	University of Maryland, College Park
New School for Social Research	University of Massachusetts Amherst
New York University	University of Michigan
Northwestern University	University of Minnesota
Penn State University	University of Nebraska–Lincoln
Princeton University	University of New Mexico
Rutgers University	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Stanford University	University of Notre Dame
State University of New York–Albany	University of Oklahoma
State University of New York–Binghamton	University of Oregon
State University of New York–Stony Brook	University of Pennsylvania
Syracuse University	University of Southern California
Texas A&M	University of Texas–Austin
The Ohio State University	University of Washington
Tulane	University of Wisconsin–Madison
University of Arizona	Western Michigan
University of California, Berkeley	Yale University
University of California, Irvine	

Source: Authors' calculations based on elite sociologists identified in Korom 2020.

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