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# Graduate Training, Current Affiliation and Publishing Books in Political Science

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**Abstract**

Scores of studies have measured the quality of political science departments. Generally speaking, these studies have taken two forms. Many have relied on scholars' survey responses to construct rankings of the major departments. For example, almost 50 years ago Keniston (1957) interviewed 25 department chairpersons and asked them to assess the quality of various programs, and, much more recently, the National Research Council (NRC 1995) asked 100 political scientists to rate the "scholarly quality of program faculty" in the nation's political science doctoral departments. In response to these opinion-based rankings, a number of researchers have developed what they claim to be more objective measures of department quality based on the research productivity of the faculty (Ballard and Mitchell 1998; Miller, Tien, and Peebler 1996; Robey 1979). While department rankings using these two methods are often similar, there are always noteworthy differences and these have generated an additional literature that explores the relationship between the rating systems (Garand and Graddy 1999; Jackman and Siverson 1996; Katz and Eagles 1996; Miller, Tien, and Peebler 1996).

**Disciplines**

Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research | Higher Education | Political Science

**Comments**

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# Graduate Training, Current Affiliation and Publishing Books in Political Science

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Scores of studies have measured the quality of political science departments. Generally speaking, these studies have taken two forms. Many have relied on scholars' survey responses to construct rankings of the major departments. For example, almost 50 years ago Keniston (1957) interviewed 25 department chairpersons and asked them to assess the quality of various programs, and, much more recently, the National Research Council (NRC 1995) asked 100 political scientists to rate the "scholarly quality of program faculty" in the nation's political science doctoral departments. In response to these opinion-based rankings, a number of researchers have developed what they claim to be more objective measures of department quality based on the research productivity of the faculty (Ballard and Mitchell 1998; Miller, Tien, and Peebler 1996; Robey 1979). While department rankings using these two methods are often similar, there are always noteworthy differences and these have generated an additional literature that explores the relationship between the rating systems (Garand and Graddy 1999; Jackman and Siverson 1996; Katz and Eagles 1996; Miller, Tien, and Peebler 1996).

One reason for the continued interest in department rankings is that they are important for selecting graduate schools and evaluating departments. Miller, Tien, and Peebler (1996) report, for example, that students use the rankings to select graduate programs, universities use the rankings to distribute resources, and peer reviewers may even use the rankings in evaluating research proposals and manuscripts submitted for publication. With so much at stake, it is probably wise that new rankings are developed regularly and that they are scrutinized carefully. In the future, however, it might also be wise to diversify the ways to measure department quality. After all, to depend on survey responses and research productivity to assess the quality of political science faculties is to miss much of the important business that departments do.

The purpose of our brief paper is to build on a small literature that measures the quality of doctoral programs in a different way: by calculating the research productivity of their graduates. One of the central responsibilities of a doctoral program is to train students to do high-quality original research, and the best way to determine the extent to which programs succeed in this endeavor is to measure the productivity of their graduates. McCormick and Bernick (1982) conducted the first such assessment when they ranked schools in terms of the extent to which their graduates published in five leading journals (*American Political Science Review, American Journal of Political Science, The Journal of Politics, Western Political Quarterly*, and *Polity*) for the years 1974 to 1978. Twenty years later, we replicated this analysis for the 1994 to 1998 period (McCormick and Rice 2001).

Both of these studies were well received, but both were criticized for concentrating on journal publications at the exclusion of books. Many scholars felt, perhaps rightly, that schools differed in their research philosophies, with some stressing journal publications and others emphasizing books. If this is the case, then the work that ranks departments by their graduates' production of journal articles may underestimate the research productivity of schools that urge their students to publish books. We test this notion by ranking institutions in terms of how many books their graduates published in the mid-1990s and comparing these data to our recent journal productivity rankings (McCormick and Rice 2001).

## Measuring Book Publication Rates

The first task in determining the book-publication rate of the graduates of the nation's political science doctoral programs is to arrive at a list of books to include in the study. After considerable deliberation, we decided to use all of the books reviewed in the *American Political Science Review* (*APSR*) from 1994 to 1998. *APSR* is one of the flagship journals in the discipline and it has an extensive book review section, evaluating approximately 350 books a year. The books reviewed almost always consist of original research (as opposed to textbooks) and they come in roughly

### From the Authors

In utilizing some of the data from our September, 2001 piece in *PS* (James M. McCormick and Tom W. Rice, "Graduate Training and Research Productivity in the 1990s: A Look at Who Publishes"), we found some coding errors and some missing data from that analysis. As a result, we have gone through our entire dataset and made the necessary corrections. At the same time, we sought to reduce the amount of missing data (i.e., the information on faculty graduate training that we could not previously find) from our original analysis as well. As a result, we have a fuller and cleaner dataset and thus can report more complete results.

The general conclusions about the relationship between reputation and productivity remain the same from our piece, although the rankings of some departments in the top 20 changed and the number of reputational schools in the rankings changed very slightly.

To view the new tables visit the PS web site <www.apsanet.org/PS/>.

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equal numbers from political theory, American politics, comparative politics, and international relations.

To be sure, *APSR* does not review all books of original research in political science, but it is probably the best single listing of such books. We contemplated supplementing the *APSR* books with others reviewed in different journals or listed with various publishing houses, but this was a daunting chore that had no clear end. For example, should we include cross-disciplinary journals such as *Social Science Quarterly* and if so, should we include all of the books reviewed or only those that looked like political science volumes? Similarly, which publishers' lists should we examine and how should we decide which books to include? Because of quandaries like these, we decided to use only the comprehensive list of books reviewed in *APSR*. We chose the years 1994 to 1998 so that we could compare our findings with our journal-publication study covering the same period.

Preparing the *APSR* book review list for analysis was a time consuming task, but relatively straightforward. The book reviews do not include the current affiliations or graduate institutions of the authors, so we had to search for these using other sources. Initially, we looked for this information in four APSA publications: *Centennial Biographical Directory of Members* (2001), *Directory of Members: 1997–1999* (1997), *Graduate Faculty and Programs in Political Science: 1998–2000* (1998), and *Directory of Undergraduate Political Science Faculty: 1996–1998* (1996). If these sources failed to identify an author we conducted an extensive search using the web, and if this also failed, we tried to contact coauthors or others in the field who might know the person.[1]

In all, there were 2,154 authors of books reviewed in *APSR* from 1994 to 1998, and we were able to locate the graduate institutions for 2,034 of these, or 94.4%. For our analysis we excluded 788 of these authors because they did not have doctoral degrees, received their degrees in a field other than political science, or received their degrees outside of the United States. We also collected information on the current professional affiliations of the authors, and we were able to find this information for all but 71 of the 2154 authors, or 96.7%. Of these, we excluded 774 from our analysis because they were not affiliated with academic programs in the United States. It is interesting to note that these data show that over one-third of the people who publish books reviewed in *APSR* are not graduates of American political science doctoral programs or are not members of American political science departments.

We next assigned each author a weight depending on whether he or she was sole author or coauthor. A sole author was scored 1.00, and a coauthor's score was based on the total number of authors—if there were two authors, each was scored .50; if there were three, each was scored .33; and so on. To assess book productivity, and to do so fairly, each book needs to be weighted equally. Giving each book a weight of 1.00 and parceling this out evenly among coauthors ensures that when we calculate book productivity by institution, multi-authored books are apportioned equally among the institutions.

## Findings

For a first look at the book productivity of the graduates of the nation's doctoral programs we simply totaled the author weight by institution. This analysis gives us the number of books and portions of books by each department's graduates that *APSR* reviewed from 1994 to 1998. Column 1 in Table 1 presents the results for the top 20 institutions, and the list is dominated by

**Table 1**
**Comparative Rankings of Political Science Departments in Book and Journal Productivity**

| | Graduate Training Ranking: Books | Graduate Training Ranking: Journals[1] | Reputational Ranking 1995 NRC[2] | Current Affiliation Ranking: Books | Current Affiliation Ranking: Journals[3] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Harvard (99.18)[4] | Michigan | Harvard | Harvard (49.31) | Texas A&M |
| 2. | Cal-Berkeley (78.69) | Cal-Berkeley | Cal-Berkeley | Cal-Berkeley (26.57) | Houston |
| 3. | Yale (65.25) | Chicago | Yale | Wisconsin (24.61) | Indiana |
| 4. | Chicago (64.00) | Rochester | Michigan | Rutgers (18.74) | UCLA |
| 5. | Princeton (48.73) | Indiana | Stanford | Chicago (18.33) | Stony Brook |
| 6. | Michigan (41.64) | Yale | Chicago | Princeton (17.69) | Yale |
| 7. | Columbia (40.52) | Iowa | Princeton | Yale (17.53) | Harvard |
| 8. | Wisconsin (38.49) | Stanford | UCLA | Michigan (17.48) | UC-San Diego |
| 9. | Stanford (35.06) | Wash-St. Louis | UC-San Diego | Texas (15.70) | Ohio State |
| 10. | MIT (22.24) | Minnesota | Wisconsin | Maryland (14.08) | Michigan State |
| 11. | UCLA (21.28) | Harvard | Rochester | Columbia (13.75) | Minnesota |
| 12. | Virginia (19.50) | Wisconsin | MIT | Georgetown (13.65) | Michigan |
| 13. | Minnesota (19.08) | North Carolina | Minnesota | American (13.33) | GeorgeWashington |
| 14. | Northwestern (17.58) | Ohio State | Duke | U. Washington (13.33) | Stanford |
| 15. | Johns Hopkins (16.72) | Princeton | Cornell | Stanford (12.90) | North Texas |
| 16. | Cornell (16.65) | Duke | Columbia | Ohio State (12.49) | Wisconsin |
| 17. | North Carolina (14.95) | UCLA | Ohio State | UCLA (10.83) | Emory |
| 18. | Syracuse (13.08) | Colorado | North Carolina | Colorado (10.48) | Pittsburgh |
| 19. | Indiana (12.99) | Illinois | Texas | UC-San Diego (10.33) | North Carolina |
| 20. | Texas (12.20) | Stony Brook | Indiana | Notre Dame (10.16) | Colorado |

[1]These rankings represent a clarification and updating of those originally reported in McCormick and Rice (2001). A revision of all of the tables from that article are now on the APSA website at www.apsanet.org.

[2]From National Research Council (1995).

[3]See note 1.

[4]The number in parentheses are the author weights by institution.

departments that are commonly considered among the nation's best.[2] In all, the graduates of these departments accounted for 32.4% of all of the books reviewed in *APSR* and an astounding 76.9% of the books written by graduates of American political science doctoral programs. The graduates of the top 10 programs alone accounted for 24.8% of all of the books reviewed and 58.8% of the books written by graduates of American programs.

In column 2 of Table 1 we compare the book productivity of American graduates with their productivity in the major journals (from McCormick and Rice 2001). Twelve schools appear in both lists, and many of these are ranked about the same (e.g., California-Berkeley, Yale, Chicago, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Stanford). The ratings of some schools, however, vary significantly. For instance, Harvard graduates rank first in book productivity, but fall to eleventh in journal productivity, while Indiana graduates rank nineteenth in book productivity, but climb to fifth in journal productivity. It is also interesting to note that many of the schools that appear only in the book list are eastern institutions such as Columbia, MIT, and Virginia, while many of those that appear only in the journal list are Midwest institutions such as Iowa, Washington-St. Louis, and Ohio State. These differences probably stem in part from long-time differences in the research emphases of the programs. Many Midwest schools tend to stress the type of quantitative research that lends itself to journal-length studies, while many eastern schools have a tradition of historical and qualitative scholarship that often leads to book-length manuscripts.

In column 3 we list the top 20 schools in the NRC (1995) report. These data, which are compiled from surveys sent to scholars, allow us to compare book and journal productivity rankings with the most recent opinion-based reputational ranking. Sixteen of the NRC schools are on the book-productivity list, and fifteen are on the journal list. The four schools that make the NRC list but not the book list are UC-San Diego, Rochester, Duke, and Ohio State, while the five NRC schools that do not make the journal list are UC-San Diego, MIT, Cornell, Columbia, and Texas. Overall, then, the reputational schools, as measured by the NRC, dominated both book and journal productivity in political science in the mid-1990s.

Our data also allow us to compute the 1994–98 book productivity of departments based on the current affiliations of the authors. We accomplished this by totaling the author weight by the authors' current affiliations instead of by their doctoral institutions. Column 4 shows the results and the list includes many of the same schools that made the graduate-institution top 20.[3] The top six institutions on the graduate-training list (column 1) are among the top eight on the current-affiliation list (Harvard, Berkeley, Yale, Chicago, Princeton, and Michigan) and five other schools on the graduate list also make the current-affiliation list (Columbia, Wisconsin, Stanford, UCLA, and Texas). Thus, schools with faculty who publish a lot of books also train graduates who go on to publish a lot of books.

Still, a number of institutions make the current affiliation list but not the graduate training list, or vice versa. Consider, for example, Rutgers and MIT. Rutgers ranks fourth in faculty book production, but is unranked in graduate productivity, while MIT does not make the top 20 on the faculty list, but ranks tenth on the graduate list. Some of the other schools that appear on the graduate list but not the faculty list are Virginia, Minnesota, Northwestern, and Johns Hopkins, and some of the schools that appear on the faculty list but not the graduate list are Maryland, Georgetown, American, and the University of Washington. Finally, NRC schools dominate the faculty ranking somewhat less than the graduate-training ranking, with only 13 of the top 20 institutions on the NRC list.

It is also worth reporting that overall book productivity is less concentrated in the current-affiliation list than the graduate-training list. The faculty in the schools listed in column 4 account for 15.8% of all the books reviewed in *APSR* and 40.4% of the books written by faculty of American universities and colleges, compared to 24.8% and 58.8% respectively for graduates of the schools listed in column 1.

The last column in Table 1 displays the current-affiliation ranking of journal productivity from McCormick and Rice (2001). When we compare this with the current-affiliation ranking for books in column 4 we see many differences. Only nine schools have faculty who rank in the top 20 in terms of both book and journal productivity. And, as in the graduate-training lists, many of the departments that rank high in book productivity are on the east and west coasts, while many schools that rank high in journal productivity are in the Midwest and South.

## Relative Productivity

So far we have considered only the absolute book productivity of departments and their graduates. While these are important data, it is also valuable to examine productivity controlling for the size of graduate programs and department faculties. To do this, we use two measures to standardize the graduate-training rankings, one that controls for the number of doctoral graduates by department who currently hold academic positions and the other that controls for the number of recent doctoral graduates by department. For the former, we counted the number of doctoral graduates from each department who are now teaching at departments listed in the *Graduate Faculty and Program in Political Science* (1998). These data provide a reasonable estimate of the number of each department's graduates who are in academics and thus likely to publish books reviewed in *APSR*. For the second control, we used the average number of doctoral degrees granted annually from 1996 to 1998 by each department as reported in the *Graduate Faculty and Program in Political Science* (1998). These data provide an estimate of the number of each department's doctoral alumni. There are, of course, problems with both of these control measures (see McCormick and Rice 2001), but they are operative proxies for the relative size of graduate programs.

We applied these two controls to our graduate-program book-productivity data by dividing them into the raw productivity scores. Column 1 in Table 2 reports the results of controlling for the number of graduates teaching in the profession. This list of schools differs significantly from the unstandardized ranking of graduate programs (from column 1 of Table 1). Only eight of the departments that make the unstandardized top 20 also make the top 20 after controlling for the number of graduates who are teaching, and only seven of the top 20 NRC reputational departments make this list (from column 3, Table 1). Instead, most of the high-ranking departments in column 1 are less-well-known, such as Case Western Reserve, Illinois-Chicago, Northeastern, and Kent State. Although we do not know for sure why this is the case, it may have to do with a bias toward hiring people from reputable departments. Graduates from less prestigious doctoral programs often have more trouble securing academic positions than graduates from the reputable programs. The result may be that generally only the best students from less-well-known programs find

**Table 2**
**Standardized Book-Productivity Rankings of Political Science Departments**

| | Graduate Training Ranking I[1] | Graduate Training Ranking II[2] | Current Affiliation Ranking[3] |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Case Western Reserve | Harvard | Harvard |
| 2. | Illinois-Chicago | Yale | Rutgers |
| 3. | CUNY Grad Center | Stanford | Chicago |
| 4. | Northeastern | Case Western Reserve | Wisconsin |
| 5. | Brandeis | Cal-Berkeley | Cal-Berkeley |
| 6. | Kent State | Princeton | Johns Hopkins |
| 7. | Harvard | Chicago | Yale |
| 8. | Colorado State | Wisconsin | USC |
| 9. | Cal-Berkeley | Syracuse | Cal-Davis |
| 10. | Virginia | Michigan | Brandeis |
| 11. | Yale | Northwestern | Colorado |
| 12. | Boston University | MIT | American |
| 13. | Princeton | Minnesota | Michigan |
| 14. | Cincinnati | U-Mass | U-Mass |
| 15. | Chicago | Cornell | Florida State |
| 16. | U-Mass | Columbia | Maryland |
| 17. | Stanford | Duke | U. Washington |
| 18. | Clarke-Atlanta | Texas | Princeton |
| 19. | MIT | Indiana | Pennsylvania |
| 20. | Howard | Rochester | NYU |

[1]Graduate author weights standardized by the number graduates from that institution currently teaching at American schools listed in *Graduate Faculty and Programs in Political Science 1998–2000* (1998).

[2]Graduate author weights standardized by the annual average number of recent graduates in recent years as listed in *Graduate Faculty and Programs in Political Science 1998–2000* (1998).

[3]Current affiliation author weights standardized for departmental faculty size as listed in *Graduate Faculty and Programs in Political Science 1998–2000* (1998).

employment, and these are the people who are likely to publish. A much higher percentage of graduates from reputable schools find academic jobs, and a good number of these do not go on to be active researchers.

Column 2 in Table 2 displays the leading schools in alumni book productivity controlling for the average annual number of recent graduates. This list looks very much like the unstandardized ranking, with an overlap of 17 schools. Only Case Western Reserve, the University of Massachusetts, and Duke make this list and not the unstandardized top 20. Case Western Reserve is probably the most surprising program on the list, and its appearance is due in part to graduating only about one student per year recently.

In column 3 of Table 2 we look at the book productivity of doctoral programs based on their present faculty controlling for the number of people in the department. The top 20 has many of the same departments as the unstandardized top 20 (from column 4 in Table 1), but there are a few notable exceptions. The University of Southern California, the University of California-Davis, and Brandeis make the top 10 after standardizing for faculty size. Also, many of the very large departments, such as Texas, Ohio State, and UCLA, fall from the top 20 when we standardize for faculty size. Once again, this ranking represents few top-20 NRC reputational departments, with only seven making the list.[4]

## Conclusion

Our analysis of the book productivity of department graduates and current faculties produce several important findings. First, it tells us a great deal about what kinds of people publish books reviewed in *APSR*. Over one-third of these books, which are presumably the most important in political science, are not written by the graduates or department members of American political science programs. Among those books authored by American graduates and department faculty, a good share come from individuals linked either by graduate training or current affiliation to a small number of schools. Approximately 77% of these books were written by the graduates of 20 American doctoral programs and approximately 40% were written by the faculty currently at 20 American doctoral programs.

Second, our findings provide a detailed ranking of which American doctoral programs have the most productive graduates and faculties in terms of book publication. The unstandardized results show that the leading programs in book productivity are among those that are generally considered prestigious in the NRC reputational ranking. Many of the Ivy League, Big Ten, and major West Coast schools appear at the top of productivity lists, and most of these are also in the top 20 NRC reputational list. Thus, departments with productive faculty tend to turn out productive students. When book productivity is standardized by the size of graduate programs and department faculties the rankings change somewhat. Most notably, a number of less-well-known schools appear near the top of the list when we calculate the productivity of departments' graduates controlling for the number of graduates in teaching positions. Case Western Reserve has the most productive graduates and many other less-well-known programs, such as Kent State, Colorado State, and Cincinnati, also rank in the top 20.

Third, when our rankings on book productivity are compared with our data on journal productivity (McCormick and Rice 2001) we find some clear differences. Not surprisingly, the Big Ten schools tend to rank higher in journal productivity and many eastern schools rank higher in book productivity. This probably stems from differences in research and pedagogy that are present in American political science departments today.

## Notes

1. Determining the current affiliation of the authors is a moving target because individuals often change departments. Where possible we tried to assign people to the school they were affiliated with at the time their book was published. In most cases, though, we did not have data sources that provided a detailed listing of people's employment histories, so we coded their current affiliation as the place

where they were in the source we were using.

2. We also calculated book productivity to include only authored books, not edited books. The case could be made that authors tend to put more original scholarship into their books than editors, so authorship should be considered separate from editorship. To be sure, many edited books contain excellent original research, but it is often not the product of the editors. Approximately 28% of the books reviewed in *APSR* from 1994–98 were edited, so excluding these books has the potential to alter the rankings. However, including only authored books changes the ranking very little. Some of the schools move up or down a few positions, but the same schools compose the top 20.

3. As with the graduate-training ranking, we also calculated the current-affiliation ranking excluding edited books. The ranking was almost identical.

4. We also considered standardizing the book-productivity data by the reputational ranking of book publishers. However, the reputational rankings that we were able to locate, such as the recent effort by Goodson, Dillman, and Hira (1999), did not include an exhaustive list of publishers. Many of the books reviewed in APSR were not published by presses in these lists, so we decided against trying to standardize the data by publisher reputation.

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