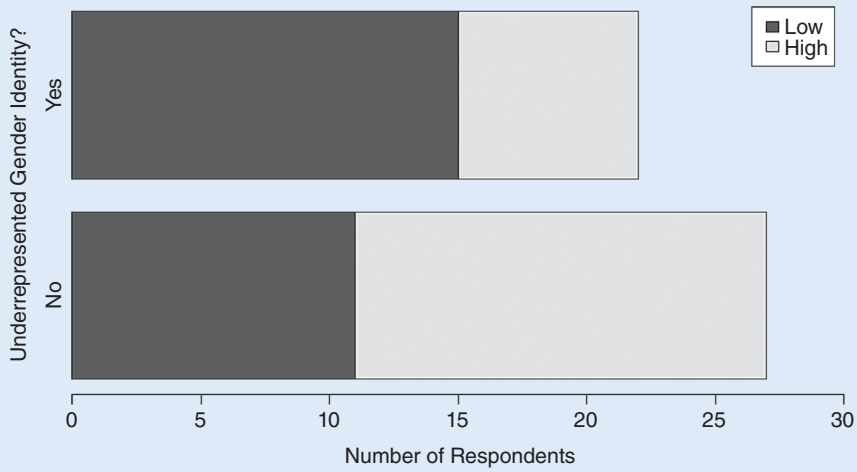
Figure 1

Faculty with Underrepresented Gender Identities May Attend Fewer Social Activities



What proportion of these social activities (with faculty and/or graduate students) would you say you attend each month? (Faculty only).

as group lunches or family-friendly activities at other times, may encourage broader participation.

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Data Availability Statement

Replication materials are available on Harvard Dataverse at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/TQYVoI.

Supplementary Materials

To view supplementary material for this article, please visit http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S104909652100007X. ■

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NOT A LEAKY PIPELINE! ACADEMIC SUCCESS IS A GAME OF CHUTES AND LADDERS

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The structure of academia is a hierarchal, patriarchal system, and success depends on familiarity with a hidden curriculum and hidden shortcuts in what we call the game of Academic Chutes and Ladders (Crawford and Windsor 2021). This system and its hidden curriculum—that is, the unwritten set of rules and norms rooted in traditional routes to academic advancement—disproportionately benefit men, who historically have participated only

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marginally participated in the movement toward gender parity in academia. Because men occupy the majority of positions in the highest ranks of the discipline and therefore are in a position to make and enforce more equitable policies, we call on them join the conversation to facilitate and support efforts to rewrite academia's rules in favor of gender egalitarianism.

This article focuses on three specific changes through the gendered lens of academic parenthood: (1) universal, transparent, and equitably applied parental-leave policies; (2) men's involvement in formal and informal mentorship focused on equitable parental leave and burden sharing in the profession; and (3) support for academics in contingent positions who are the "essential workers" of the profession. Although these changes seem narrow in scope, assumptions about gender and parenthood are at the heart of the chutes and ladders problem in academia.

Those who enter the profession with an awareness of—and access to—informal networks, resources to support research, and myriad other advantages can ascend the ladders more quickly and avoid the chutes more deftly.

Academia Has a Chutes and Ladders Problem and the Hidden Curriculum Reinforces It

Crawford and Windsor (2021) describe the path from graduate school to the rank of full professor as a game of Academic Chutes and Ladders rather than the conventional image of the "leaky pipeline." They point out that academic careers often do not proceed in a linear fashion from graduate school through ascension to full professor. For many, the reality of academia is an unpredictable route, much like the children's board game with a winding path and spaces that suddenly deliver players closer to the win or drive them back to the starting line. The chutes and ladders metaphor more closely resembles the many ways in which gender inequality manifests in the academy, leading some to exit the profession or linger in untenured or contingent positions (Alter et al. 2019; Artz, Goodall, and Oswald 2018; Babcock et al. 2003; Barnes and Beaulieu 2017; Fattore 2019; Hesli and Lee 2011; Manchester, Leslie, and Kramer 2010; Mitchell and Hesli 2013; Mitchell, Lange, and Brus 2013). Chutes take the form of sudden and consequential changes in personal and professional circumstances that derail career trajectories—including pregnancy; struggles with infertility; bias in hiring decisions; daily parenthood challenges; gender-based harassment or the cumulation of microaggressions; and precarious employment in short-term, contingent, or adjunct faculty positions. These more often affect women and impede their attempts to climb the academic ladders.

Furthermore, the ladders presume the preeminence of tenure-track employment. Many view other forms of employment (e.g., lecturer, adjunct, and community college positions) as an academic underclass where one lands due to individual—rather than systemic—failure. However, the patriarchal academic system permits—even relies on—the economic exploitation of non-tenure-track and contingent faculty, who exit the system via the many "chutes" when budgets tighten. Women disproportionally occupy these impermanent positions due to tenuous spousal accommodations in a highly competitive job market. The chutes and ladders metaphor explains the biases, presumptions, and sudden positive or negative changes in academic careers.

First-generation scholars, women, people of color, non-neurotypical scholars, and people from other marginalized groups do not enter academia with an insider's knowledge of the many unwritten rules and norms—or how to use them to their advantage. Taken together, these unwritten rules and norms constitute a hidden curriculum in academia (Chatelain 2018; Rosenberg 2017). Those who enter the profession with an awareness of—and access to—informal networks, resources to support research, and myriad other advantages can ascend the ladders more quickly and avoid the chutes more deftly. The prevailing mentorship model inculcates even those men *without* awareness of the importance of networking with this skill set; their gender identity is the key that unlocks mentorship doors.

Transparency: Equitable Parental Leave Will Help Scholars Avoid Some of the Chutes

Equitable and transparent parental-leave policies help to mitigate the chutes and ladders dynamic. Specifically, institutions of higher education must have universal, clearly communicated, transparent, and equitably applied parental-leave policies for faculty, staff, and students. Administrators, department chairs and unit heads, and deans must ensure that all faculty are aware of parental-leave policies. In Crawford and Windsor's (2021) survey on family formation, an astounding proportion of scholars were unaware of parental-leave policies at their institution. Parental leave is not a "women's issue." It is not sick leave and neither is it vacation leave, and universities should not treat it as such by requiring women faculty to rely on those forms of paid time off for family-formation purposes. Parental leave also is not research leave; therefore, departments and universities should establish accountability practices to ensure that male non-birth partners do not use that time to increase their publication pipeline (Antecol, Bedard, and Stearns 2016). Research on the effect of equitable parental-leave policies on women's status in academia is, to date, inconclusive. Recognizing that parental leave is not a panacea, we also advocate for a semester of research leave for women who are new parents to level the playing field.

Stand Up: MENtorship Programs Will Help Address the Hidden Curriculum

A key factor in the loss of women from the discipline has been the informal mentoring—that is, the hidden curriculum—that men received from senior colleagues. Women typically did not receive this guidance because there were few senior women scholars to provide mentorship and because women often were excluded from the types of informal gatherings in which men shared information to help junior men colleagues "learn the ropes" through a hidden curriculum.

Formal mentoring such as panels and workshops on the topic of mentoring *itself* are disproportionately organized, implemented, and attended by women, giving the impression that concerns about disciplinary inequity are "women's work." Because they have experienced the effects of Academic Chutes and Ladders

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more acutely than their male colleagues, women take on the bulk of the unrecognized and uncompensated mentorship labor in their departments, professional associations, and the discipline. Women spearhead programs designed to keep women in the discipline and educate them on the hidden curriculum (Barnes and Beaulieu 2017). Because these programs target junior women almost exclusively, men in all ranks are absent from conversations about bias and inequity. Men also need mentoring on gender (in) equity issues because they are colleagues; supervisors; letter-writers; and article, manuscript, and tenure-case reviewers for women colleagues. We call on men to join as active allies in the pursuit of gender parity. Male colleagues with tenure have a crucial role in changing departmental, institutional, and professional culture.

Whereas women are socialized to recognize, understand, and navigate the patriarchal structures of the academic profession, men are not. Men are not taught to recognize the unearned privileges they inherit as beneficiaries of patriarchal systems. Unless an individual man makes an effort to look for, learn about, and understand the inequalities that threaten to hold his women colleagues back, he will not be exposed to these realities. To this point, we recommend implicit bias training to help all faculty—not only those serving on hiring, tenure, and promotion committees—better understand existing inequities.

When mentorship efforts target women alone, we miss the vital opportunity to engage with the "men in the middle"—those men with secure academic jobs and awareness of broader societal discussions regarding the need for more equal burden sharing in the profession. These men in the middle have the leverage to facilitate change in their department, on their campus, and in the discipline—and they can serve as effective mentors to junior scholars.

Much of the informal mentorship that occurs in conference bars and dinners after research presentations benefits early-career men. Women do not so much "leak out" of the career pipeline but rather have less knowledge about the location of the career chutes (and therefore are less able to avoid or overcome them) and ladders (and therefore are less well equipped to identify and take advantage of them). We propose the creation of MENtorship panels and workshops at conferences that match students and junior faculty with senior men scholars to formalize, institutionalize, and professionalize the skill set that male colleagues need to have to be exceptional advocates and allies. Our point about mentorship *programs* is that the work of creating and maintaining formal mentorship networks and efforts aimed at increasing diversity and inclusivity in the discipline should not be assumed solely by women. Senior men colleagues must have a stake in increasing women's access to upward mobility within our discipline.

Women faculty often integrate hidden-curriculum lessons in their lectures and class discussions (e.g., email etiquette, contacting difficult-to-reach faculty, proper forms of address, and resumé and cover-letter preparation); this is yet another form of women caring for the academic family. Women's contributions often are essentialized, and women—especially women of color—often are besought to serve on committees for descriptive representation. Undergraduate and graduate women seek out women faculty for their credentials as *women* rather than *scholars* for the same reason. Desperate for mentorship by demographically similar scholars, women students may fail to scrutinize their choice of mentor.

If women are the only ones voicing criticism of the discipline as currently structured, gender inequities are written off as "women's issues" and we miss the broader implications for people of all genders and identities. Men who are secure in their career with tenure must raise their voice in support of women students and colleagues.

Culture Change: Gender Parity Will Promote Systemic Change

We need "culture change" in academia. Such a shift in the norms and perceptions of fairness and inclusion requires the creation of new policies and/or the enforcement of existing ones to eliminate bias and make the academic profession more inclusive of people of all genders and identities. The current academic culture is deeply patriarchal and hierarchical.

Approximately three quarters of faculty positions are non-tenure-track (Flaherty 2018). Men also take these jobs, although proportionally less often than women. The status of all faculty in non-tenure-track positions could be improved with greater appreciation for the essential functions fulfilled by faculty in lecturer, adjunct, and community college positions, which often focus on introductory courses and skills for success. To make the discipline more inclusive for everyone, we need better policies and systems. Faculty with job security must lead the charge.

The competitive nature of "publish or perish" contributes to an unsustainable and gender-biased work–life imbalance and leads to "manels"—all-male panels—at conferences. We must move away from the expectation that academic work can and should continue without interruption from inconvenient factors such as health concerns or pregnancy, disruptions in childcare schedules, family crises, and the daily mental load of working while managing household and caregiver work—which has been acutely problematized during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also must question the glorification of quantitative (i.e., masculine) scholarship over qualitative (i.e., feminine) scholarship and the marginalization of non-canonical perspectives such as feminist political studies. The patriarchal academic culture is structured to punish women for the choice to become a parent while rewarding men for the same. If institutional policies are designed, implemented, and enforced to ensure that everyone can find and ascend the ladders while avoiding the chutes, parenthood will become less punitive to women's careers.

The current culture absolves men of responsibility for creating a more equitable system that will benefit all genders. It is time for men to stand up to help bridge the chutes and keep the ladders open for everyone. ■

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MESSENGERS MATTER: WHY ADVANCING GENDER EQUITY REQUIRES MALE ALLIES

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Making progress toward gender equity in political science requires the efforts of many, including those who have directly experienced inequity and those who have not felt its immediate impact. This *must* include both women *and* men in the discipline. Men, in fact, may have a unique role to play. Our research suggests that some men will avoid hearing messages from women advocating for gender equity. However, these same men are open to that message when it is delivered by a man. For this reason, one of the most important contributions that men can make to advance gender equity is to confront discrimination and champion messages about gender equity with other men. Although this strategy has limitations, we believe it has important practical benefits, especially in areas of the discipline in which women are few in number.

Allies are particularly important in the fight against sexism because many factors can make it difficult for targets of discrimination to directly address its effects. In some cases, gender discrimination can happen in rooms without women present. Even when discrimination happens in clear view, its targets must contend with the fact that claims of discrimination often are met with doubt, denigration, and even retaliation (Czopp and Monteith 2003; Dodd et al. 2001; Fitzgerald, Swan, and Fischer 1995; Kaiser and Miller 2001; Rasinski and Czopp 2010). These dynamics provide not only a challenge for rooting out discrimination but also an opportunity for allies.

Research in social psychology and political science confirms that those who are not targets of discrimination often can be more successful when addressing it. In laboratory experiments, men who confront gender discrimination were more likely to change their behavior without facing backlash (Dodd et al. 2001). Similarly, Munger (2017) found that high-status whites were most successfully able to reduce racist expressions in online spaces. Both strains of research demonstrate that allies have an ability to confront inequity without facing negative social costs. Furthermore, this work suggests that to oppose prejudice, discrimination, and inequity, we must change social norms around these issues and practices.

Even in the absence of overt discrimination, men can be allies in the fight for gender equity. Our research used a choice-based experimental design that allowed respondents to either choose to listen to a woman's perspective on the #MeToo movement or to avoid that content (Testa et al. forthcoming). Among those who avoided the message, we used a second round of randomization to assess how those who avoided the message from a woman reacted to that same message when provided by a different woman or a man.[1] Our results suggest two potential reactions to these messages among the avoiders. When those who would prefer not to hear the message about #MeToo from a woman were forced to hear a message from a woman, there was a backlash effect. The message, when delivered by a woman, provoked a more negative response toward the movement, particularly among male respondents. When these respondents received the same message from a man, however, it made them increasingly sympathetic to the movement (Testa et al. forthcoming). Essentially, people who otherwise would avoid listening to a message about sexual harassment or discrimination from a woman can be persuaded by that message if it is delivered by a man. Our results echo previous scholarship, affirming that for people most likely to avoid a woman's message about gender equity, the same message from a man leads to more openness to it.

Essentially, people who otherwise would avoid listening to a message about sexual harassment or discrimination from a woman can be persuaded by that message if it is delivered by a man.

Although our experiments relied on samples from the general population, we expect that similar trends hold true for political scientists. First, there are many documented incidences of discrimination and harassment in the discipline. As recent scholarship underscores, experiences of harassment and discrimination occur in our academic institutions (Brown 2019; Sulfaro and Gill 2019) as well as in disciplinary conferences

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