

## The Gender Composition of Editorial Boards in Economics

*Relatively little is known about the gender composition of the economics profession. As part of its fact finding activities, the Royal Economic Society's Committee on Women in Economics examined the gender composition of editorial boards of economics journals with at least one editor located in the UK. This report was prepared by Katherine Green, University of Bristol.*

This survey was undertaken because being an editor of a journal is part of shaping the profession within which academic economists operate. Being part of an editorial board contributes to this too, and both are external recognition of an individual's contribution to the profession. The choice of journals was driven in part by the need to draw a limited size sample which wasn't too large. If economics is an international subject which country the sample is picked from should be irrelevant: if boards are picked by editors from whom they know, then location of the managing editors might matter.

The journals in the sample are listed below, with the proportion of editors/co.-editors and editorial board who are female. Different journals have different labels for these groups: the figures and the categorisation have been checked with the editors of these journals. Across all the journals listed, the proportion of women in managing editor/editor positions is about 4 percent. But most journals in the sample have no women in this position: only 4 out of the 29 journals account for all the women in this category. The proportion of women on editorial boards is 6 percent.

The comparable figures for the *AER*, *QJE*, *JPE* and *Econometrica* together are 6.3 and 9.3 percent respectively. So these journals have a higher proportion of women, though again numbers are small. Given that boards are driven to some extent within country, the other distribution which may be relevant is

the gender composition of academic departments in the UK. The RES Committee Survey suggests that around 5 percent of professors are female and 10 percent of readers and senior lecturers. If we assume that editors are drawn from professors and boards from readers, senior lecturers and above, then we might expect that around 5 percent of editors and 10 percent of editorial board members would be women. It appears therefore that women in academic departments in the UK are underrepresented on these journal boards.

Why this is the case is unclear. Editors of all of the journals in the sample were asked for their views on these figures. No single reason for this distribution of women emerged from their replies. It was clear that some editors did not consider the gender composition of an editorial board to be an issue. Others thought that the problem was the lack of women in the profession as a whole. Yet others thought that insufficient consideration has been given to the selection of editorial teams. The RES Women's Committee does not know the reasons, but is interested by evidence from nomination of members of the Canadian equivalent of the Fellows of the Royal Society. Analysis of nominations suggested that women might be outside the usual 'networks'. Once nominators were asked to look outside these, the proportion of women elected increased considerably. Perhaps networks are one reason for the composition of journal editorial boards?

## Economics Journals with at least 1 Editor or Co.-Editor located in the UK

Journal	Editor/Co.-Editor			Associate Ed./Board		
	No. F	Total	% F	No. F	Total	% F
Applied Economics	0	2	0	0	13	0
Applied Economics Letters	0	2	0	0	20	0
Applied Financial Economics	0	1	0			
Bulletin Economic Research	0	2	0	0	15	0
Cambridge Journal of Economics	2	16	12.5	3	22	14
Economic Journal	0	5	0	2	12	16.7
Economic Modeling	0	2	0	0	17	0
Economic Policy	0	4	0	2	17	11.8
Economica	0	3	0	1	18	5.6
Education Economies	1	4	25	1	15	6.7
Fiscal Studies	1	3	33.3	1	15	6.7
Health Economics	0	2	0	3	13	23.1
International Tax & Public Finance	0	2	0	0	28	0
Journal Applied Econometrics	0	5	0	2	31	6.5
Journal Health Economics	0	3	0	1	23	4.3
Journal of Economic Surveys	0	4	0	0	16	0
Journal of Industrial Economics	0	4	0	3	35	8.6
Journal of Public Economics	0	7	0	2	31	6.5
Manchester School Econ/Soc.	0	5	0	1	11	9.1
Oxford Bulletin Econ/Stats.	0	7	0			
Oxford Economic Papers	0	2	0	2	20	10
Oxford Review Economic Policy	0	2	0	0	13	0
Review of Development Economics	0	1	0	1	24	4.2
Review of Economic Studies	0	3	0	1	33	3
Scottish Journal Political Economy	0	4	0	1	11	9.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>6.0</b>

### Notes

1. F=female
2. 1998 data
3. All Journals have at least 1 academic at a UK institution as an editor
4. Energy Economics has been omitted due to lack of data

### RES Women's Committee 1998