

Who is writing and what are they writing about? Text analysis and publication patterns in *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 2000-2020*

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Abstract

This research examines publication patterns in Asian studies by using *The Journal of Asian Studies* from 2000 to 2020 as a case study. Employing computational text analysis, I collect and analyze data about JAS authors and research articles. The findings reveal interesting patterns, in particular about authors' gender, academic rank, affiliation, discipline, and geographic area of study. The results show an imbalance in publication rates for men and women in the JAS. The number of male authors is 414 (60%), while the number of female authors is 276 (40%). We also see a significant gender imbalance for female authors in all tenured and tenure-track positions. Furthermore, the analysis shows that historians and China scholars make up the bulk of JAS authors. Historians represent 42% of published authors (288 authors). Mainland China is the most studied geographical area, accounting for 199 (29%) of articles. JAS publication patterns in the 21st century have not been written about elsewhere. This essay is a first step in understanding gendered patterns of publications in Asian studies. It can help Asianists prioritize publishing articles about under-represented authors, disciplines, and geographic areas in the field.

Keywords: Asian studies, digital humanities, text analysis, gender, multidisciplinary

Word count: 8,980 (including references, abstract, table, etc.)

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Introduction

The well-known phrase — “publish or perish” — is more real than ever. Universities, colleges, even community colleges insist that faculty publish scholarly research, and the more papers the better. Publications in top-tier journals not only play a big role in determining who will be granted tenure, research funding, and promotions but also play a role in the job market for many entry-level positions. On top of that, it is getting harder to publish in prestigious journals if you have not previously done so (Sekara et al., 2018). Since scholarly publications are enormously important to tenure and advancement in the profession, it is important to analyze publication patterns: who is writing and about what. Moreover, publication patterns vary across disciplines and journals (Andrikopoulos and Trichas, 2018), but very few authors have studied publication patterns in area studies, let alone Asian studies. Therefore, I explore publication patterns in *The Journal of Asian Studies* (JAS) from 2000 to 2020 to discover how these trends have played out in the field of Asian Studies.

The JAS is a quarterly peer-reviewed journal published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS). The journal is widely accepted as one of the most authoritative publication venues in Asian Studies. To the extent of my knowledge, the last time JAS publication patterns were examined was in 1973 by Charles O. Hucker.¹ Considering the prominent role it has played in the field, it seems pertinent to update the literature and explore contemporary publication patterns in the JAS. Employing a combination of hand-coding, computer-assisted text analysis, and web-scraping techniques, I collect and examine data about JAS authors and articles.² These methods allow us to analyze previously untapped large sets of unstructured text data. The analysis reveals interesting publication patterns, in particular about authors’ gender, academic rank, affiliation, discipline, and geographic area of study.

The results show a gender imbalance in publication rates for men and women in the JAS. Men represent the majority of authors published in the journal. The number of male authors is 414 (60%), while the number of female authors is 276 (40%). Through the analysis, we can also see a significant gender imbalance for female authors at nearly every professional rank, except researchers and postdocs. Interestingly, these are both non-tenure-track, temporary positions. This gender imbalance for female authors at tenure-track positions reflects a larger issue in academia. Research across

¹Charles O. Hucker (1919-1994) was a Chinese historian and leading promoter of academic programs in Asian Studies during the 1950s and 1960s. Hucker (1973). He wrote a history of the Association for Asian Studies and briefly examined publication patterns in *The Far Eastern Quarterly / Journal of Asian Studies* from 1949 to 1970.

²Note the findings I report stem from an analysis of research articles only, and not book reviews or other essays.

a range of different disciplines has uncovered subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle biases against women in teaching evaluations (MacNeill et al., 2015), letters of recommendation (Trix and Psenka, 2003), and publication rates (Teele and Thelen, 2017). In addition, appointments at the associate professor rank or higher, usually granted with tenure, disproportionately do not go to women (Kelly, 2019). This study takes place in the context of renewed interest in the role of women in the field.

The analysis reveals that the National University of Singapore (NUS) is the most prolific producer of JAS authors. The visibility of Asian studies scholars outside the Western (Euro-American and Australian) academies has increased substantially in the past decades. Despite this, a great majority of JAS authors seem to come from institutions located in the United States. Harvard University is the second most prolific producer of JAS authors, followed by UCLA, Stanford, and Columbia. The overwhelming majority of JAS authors are affiliated with American institutions. Of all the JAS authors, 439 (63 percent of all authors) are affiliated with institutions in the States. In fact, most JAS authors come from Western (Euro-American and Australian) institutions. It seems the West still dominates the production of knowledge about Asia, which could have serious implications for future of the field.

The analysis confirms a common notion that Asian studies is dominated by historians. Although the journal claims to be a multidisciplinary journal, historians represent the majority of articles' authors in the last two decades. There are 288 (42%) historians as authors published in the journal. After history, the two largest disciplines in the JAS are anthropology and political science, each with 102 authors (15%). This findings is consistent to the findings by Hucker (Hucker, 1973).

Another common perception in Asian studies is that the field is dominated by China scholars. For instance, China scholars have historically been the bulk of AAS membership (Hucker, 1973). The analysis confirms this common notion, Mainland China is the most common geographic area of study for the JAS with a total of 199 articles (29%), followed by India with 125 articles (18%) and Japan with 100 articles (14%). A quantitative text analysis of the articles sheds further light on China's dominance in the field. The term "China" is the most common term referring to a particular geographical area.

Although most articles in the JAS study a single country, some study multiple countries. Employing network analysis, this research shows that China is a central node in the network of geographic areas studied by JAS authors. In addition, the pair of countries that are most often studied together is China-Japan. There are 18 articles simultaneously

studying these two countries.

I begin by introducing the data collection process, and then turn to an analysis of the patterns I observe. The results are divided into patterns of publications according to gender, academic affiliations, academic disciplines, and geographic areas of study. The last section highlights the implications of the findings for the field and points out some recommendations.

Data collection

This paper focuses on the JAS, which is widely accepted as one of the most authoritative publication venues in Asian Studies and has played a defining role in the field for over 75 years. The JAS is a quarterly peer-reviewed journal published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS). The journal's first issue was in November 1941 under the name *The Far Eastern Quarterly*. In September 1956, the journal became *The Journal of Asian Studies* when the Far Eastern Association became the AAS (Hucker, 1973, 25). The JAS includes research articles, book reviews, and other feature articles. In what follows, I describe the variable generation process for all types of information in the dataset, but note the findings I report stem from an analysis of research articles only, and not book reviews or other essays.

The data collection efforts began by acquiring the meta-data on all articles published in the JAS from 2000 to 2020. This was done with a combination of hand-coding and web-scraping techniques. The title and name of the author(s) were extracted from the Cambridge University Press website. Then, I proceeded to code the academic institution, academic rank (e.g., assistant professor or associate professor), discipline, and gender of the authors at the times of publication. The issues vary in terms of the level of information they provide about the nature of each article, but it was generally possible to identify most of these variables, except gender and discipline.

An accurate assessment of an author's gender is critically important for the validity of the analysis. Sociological studies of gender are careful to distinguish between sex (a biological identity) and gender (a socially constructed category built around cultural expectations of male and female appropriate behavior). Gender is part of an ongoing performance based on producing a configuration of behaviors that are seen by others as normative (MacNeill et al., 2015). Although gender is socially constructed, the dichotomy (men, women) has been historically important and is therefore useful for quantitative analysis.

Given the large number of articles in the sample and the high levels of coauthorship, I automated the process of assigning a gender to authors. First, the *predictrace* package in the R programming language allows me to predict the most likely gender of a first name (Kaplan, 2021). The package uses data from the United States Social Security Administration that tells how many people of a given name are women and how many are men (no other genders are included). I use this to determine the proportion of each gender a name is, and use the gender with the higher proportion as the most likely gender for that name. According to the software, for example, the probability that the first name “Tyron” is male is 0.99 percent, while the probability that the first name “Sansa” is female is 100 percent. Finally, a web search was conducted for any author for which gender was uncertain. For example, web searches were conducted for Chinese names, which are hardly gender-specific without Chinese characters (汉字). The gender of the authors was retrieved from departmental websites, personal profiles, news reports, etc. In practice, I am “imputing” gender because it is not plausible to know each authors’ real gender identity. These strategies are used by other scholars examining publication patterns in academia (e.g., Teele and Thelen, 2017).

Similar to an author’s gender, an accurate assessment of an article’s academic discipline is difficult. Coding an article’s academic discipline was done taking into consideration both the article’s topic and author’s departmental affiliation. Traditionally, university campuses and departments are designed to keep disciplines apart (often in separate buildings). Faculty hiring and research funding are still largely discipline-specific. However, Asian studies combine aspects of literature, history, political science, anthropology, and many other disciplines to study Asian traditional and contemporary societies. Many authors and articles in the field cut across disciplines. For example, Perry’s (2008) work on the Chinese Communists’ mobilizational efforts at the Anyuan coal mine, Jiangxi Province in the early 1920s could be considered as both political science and history. In cases like this one, the article’s discipline is coded based on the author’s departmental affiliation.

As an example of what the data looks like, Table 1 shows the twenty most cited research articles in the JAS from 2000 to 2020. The average citation number of JAS articles is 9 citations. From 2000 to 2020, Peluso and Vandergeest (2001) is the most cited article. They examine the genealogies of contemporary political forests and the creation of Customary Rights in selected regions of today’s Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The 20 most cited articles in these two decades offer a good balance of geographic areas, including the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, China, South Korea, India, Japan, Bangladesh, and Indonesia.

Table 1: The 20 most cited articles in the JAS, 2000–2020

	Title	Authors	Issue	Year	Citations
1	Genealogies of the Political Forest and Customary Rights in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand	Nancy Lee Peluso, Peter Vandergeest	Vol. 60, no. 3	2001	234
2	Food Safety and Social Risk in Contemporary China	Yunxiang Yan	Vol. 71, No. 3	2012	127
3	The Quest for "Siwilai": A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam	Thongchai Winichakul	Vol. 59, no. 3	2000	107
4	State Formation in Community Spaces? Decentralization of Control over Forests in the Kumaon Himalaya, India	Arun Agrawal	Vol. 60, no. 1	2001	100
5	Dangerous Desires: Television and Erotics in Late Twentieth Century India	Purnima Manekar	Vol. 63, no. 2	2004	91
6	Blogging Alone: China, the Internet, and the Democratic Illusion?	James Leibold	Vol. 70, No. 4	2011	79
7	Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia	Nancy J. Smith-Hefner	Vol. 66, No. 2	2007	74
8	Stateless in South Asia: The Making of the India-Bangladesh Enclaves	Willem Van Schendel	Vol. 61, no. 1	2002	74
9	Colonialism and the 'Korea Problem' in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article	Andre Schmid	Vol. 59, no. 4	2000	73
10	China's Provincial Identities: Reviving Regionalism and Reinventing "Chineseness"	Tim Oakes	Vol. 59, no. 3	2000	71
11	England's Divergence from China's Yangzi Delta: Property Relations, Microeconomics, and Patterns of Development	Robert Brenner, Christopher Isett	Vol. 61, no. 2	2002	69
12	Development or Involution in Eighteenth-Century Britain and China? A Review of Kenneth Pomeranz's The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy	Philip C. C. Huang	Vol. 61, no. 2	2002	68
13	Relational Histories and the Production of Difference on Sulawesi's Upland Frontier	Tania Murray Li	Vol. 60, no. 1	2001	66
14	Spatial Struggles: Postcolonial Complex, State Disenchantment, and Popular Reappropriation of Space in Rural Southeast China	Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang	Vol. 63, no. 3	2004	59
15	Is India Becoming More Democratic?	Ashutosh Varshney	Vol. 59, no. 1	2000	57
16	Carving Out Space: Civil Society and the Women's Movement in South Korea	Seungsook Moon	Vol. 61, no. 2	2002	56
17	State of the Field: Women in China's Long Twentieth Century	Gail Hershatter	Vol. 63, no. 4	2004	54
18	Sufism and the Indonesian Islamic Revival	Julia Day Howell	Vol. 60, no. 3	2001	52
19	Precarization or Empowerment? Reflections on Recent Labor Unrest in China	Ching Kwan Lee	Vol. 75, No. 2	2016	50
20	Colonial Masters, National Politics, and Provincial Lords: Central Authority and Local Autonomy in the American Philippines, 1900-1913	Paul D. Hutchcroft	Vol. 59, no. 2	2000	49

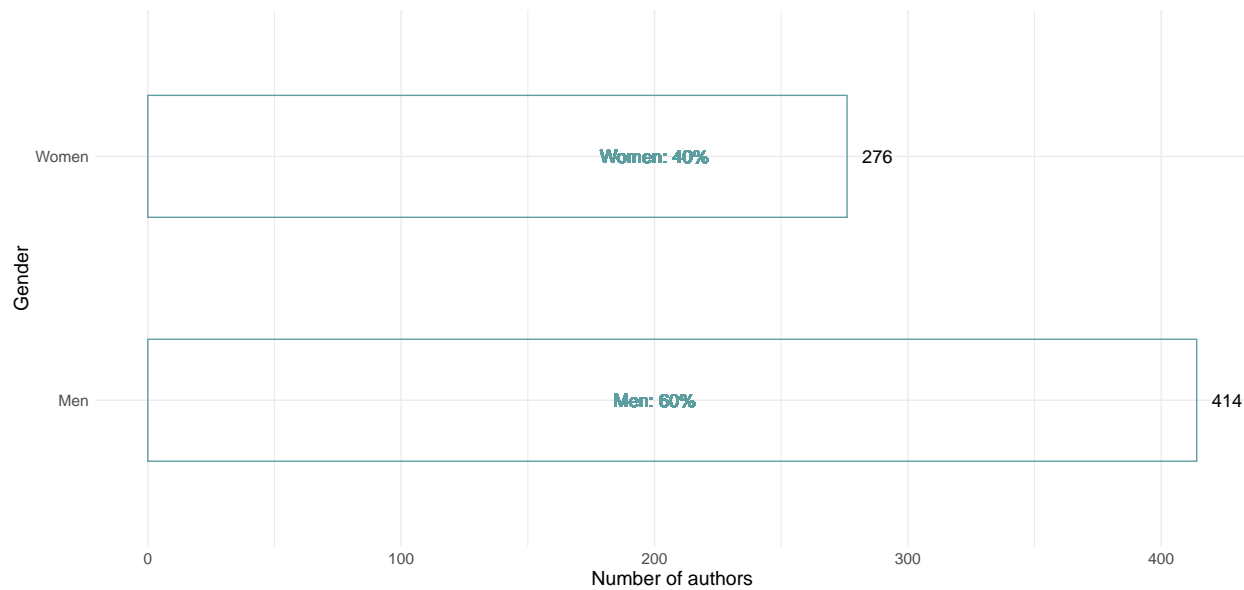
Finally, web-scraping via the *fulltext* package in the R programming language allowed me to gather information on citation numbers and abstracts (Chamberlain, 2021). Cambridge University Press “cited by” feature uses Google scholar and CrossRef citations. Since Google Scholar also pulls citations from non-scholarly sources, the citation numbers for the analysis are generated based on data provided by CrossRef, a nonprofit membership organization that makes research outputs easy to find and cite.

Using titles, keywords, and abstracts, I was able to code the article’s geographical area of study. Many articles in the JAS study a single nation-state like Japan or South Korea. However, some articles study multiple states, such as works about transnational issues, comparative studies, international relations, etc. Each article was coded based on all the geographic areas it studied. For example, Le’s (2019) work on war memory and reconciliation between Japan and the Republic of Korea is coded as pertaining to both Japan and South Korea. An automated validation of this process was done verifying the most common nation-states mentioned in each article.

Gender

As a first step, let us examine the number of women and men as a share of all authors of research articles in the JAS, 2000-2020. How well represented are women in the pages of the top journal in Asian studies? The analysis reveals a gender imbalance in publication rates for men and women in the JAS. Figure 1 illustrates that men represent the majority of authors published in the journal. The number of male authors is 414 (60%), while the number of female authors is 276 (40%).

Figure 1: Authors of research articles by gender in the JAS, 2000-2020

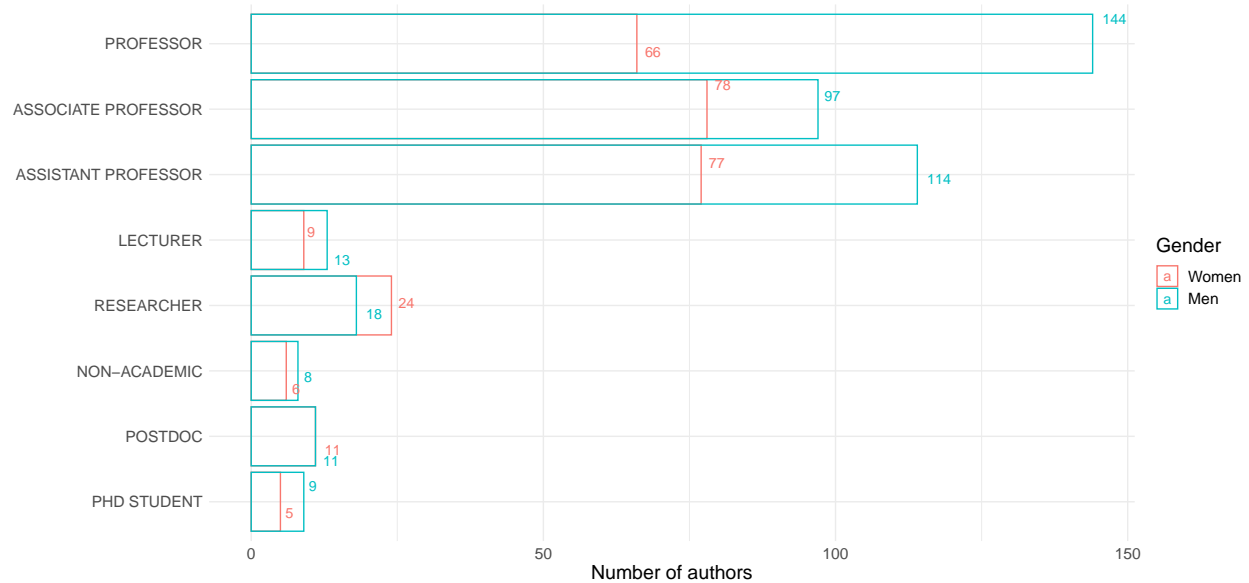


The proportion of female scholars published in the JAS is lower than their male counterparts. Compared to other journals, the proportion of female scholars published in the JAS is higher. From 2000 to 2015, for instance, women represented only 18 percent of all authors in the *American Journal of Political Science*, one of the top-tier journals in political science (Teele and Thelen, 2017).

The next step would be to determine whether the JAS is publishing women at rates consistent with women’s presence in the field as a whole. Future studies can do this by comparing the share of women among all authors for the JAS (40%) to the share of all members of the AAS who are women. However, this data is not currently publicly available.

Gender and academic rank. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of all authors by gender and rank. The y-axis is the academic ranks at time of publication, while the x-axis is the total number of authors. Women are represented with the pink color, while men are represented with the turquoise color. Authors in the JAS come from all over the world and ranks are not standardized across the globe, so academic ranks from institutions outside the United States are converted to their closest American equivalent. For example, the British rank senior lecturer is converted to associate professor. The category “researcher” includes almost all non-tenure-track research only positions, such as research fellows or research assistants, while “professor” includes everything above full professor, including endowed or distinguished professors. “Non-academics” are authors that are not directly affiliated with a higher education institution, such as journalists, political activists, secondary education teachers, etc.

Figure 2: Authors of research articles by gender and academic rank in the JAS, 2000-2020



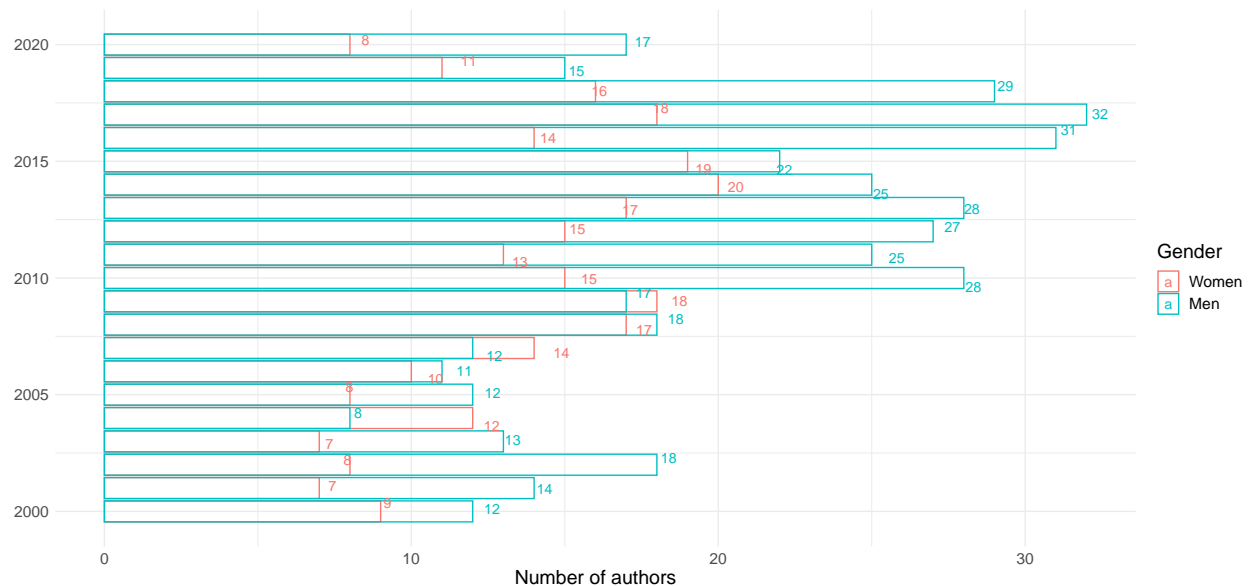
As Figure 2 shows, we can see gendered patterns of publication at nearly every professional rank. Full professors are the largest group with 210 authors, representing 30 percent of all authors. Of the 210 full professors, 144 (69%) are men and 66 (31%) are women. Male associate and assistant professors are also publishing in the JAS at higher rates than their female counterparts. For instance, of the 176 associate professors (25% of all authors) 97 are men and 78 are women. Of the 191 assistant professors (28%), 114 are men and 77 are women. In terms of the academic career ladder, the gap for female assistant professors is especially consequential, as this is the group most needing publications to advance to tenure.

Women equal or surpass men in only two positions, namely researchers and postdocs. Of the 22 postdocs (3% of all authors) published in the JAS, 11 are men and 11 are women. Of the 42 researchers (6%), 18 are men and 24 are women. Interestingly, these are both non-tenure-track, temporary positions. This gender imbalance for female authors at tenure-track positions reflects a larger issue in academia. Women make up less than forty percent of tenure-track faculty members in U.S. higher education (Kelly, 2019). Appointments at the associate professor rank or higher, usually granted with tenure, disproportionately do not go to women.

Gender and time. The last section illustrates that men represent the majority of article authors in the JAS. But has this gender imbalance changed over time? There has been slow but steady progress towards gender equality in academia in the last years, so it is possible that women represent a higher share of authors in recent years. Figure 3 examines whether this gender imbalance among authors has changed over the past two decades. The y-axis is the year of the issue, while the x-axis is the total number of authors. Again, women are represented with the pink color, while men are represented with the turquoise color.

It seems gendered patterns of publication have not changed much over the past two decades. Women have only been the majority of authors in three of those twenty years. Specifically, women have been the majority of authors in 2009, 2006, and 2004. For most of the years, however, men represent the higher proportion of article authors in the JAS.

Figure 3: Authors of research articles by gender and year in the JAS, 2000-2020



Gender and editors. Interestingly, however, the proportion of women authors seems to vary depending on who is the JAS editor. Table 2 shows the percentage of men and women authors of each of the following editors: Anand A. Yang (1995-2000), Ann Waltner (2001-2004), Kenneth M. George (2005-2008), Jeffrey Wasserstrom (2008-2018), Vinayak Chaturvedi (2018-2021). As the table shows, some editors achieve a closer gender balance than others. Southeast Asian anthropologist Kenneth M. George achieves the closest gender balance with 48% women authors and 52% men authors. While the gender balance seems to vary depending on the editor, men represent the majority of authors during

all editors' tenures.

Table 2: Authors of research articles by gender and editor in the JAS, 2000-2020

	Yang	Waltner	George	Wasserstrom	Chaturvedi
Women authors	43%	39%	48%	39%	36%
Men authors	57%	61%	52%	61%	64%

Another interesting question to examine is whether gender in editorship influence gender in authorship. The results suggest gendered publication patterns, on average, do not significantly vary according to the gender of the editor. When JAS has a male editor the proportion of male authors is 60%, while the proportion of female authors is 40%. Almost identical, when JAS has a female editor the proportion of male authors is 61%, while the proportion of female authors is 39%. To the extent of my knowledge, Chinese historian Ann Waltner is the only JAS editor in the period between 2000 and 2020 who identified as a woman.³

Academic affiliations

This section explores JAS authors by academic affiliation (i.e., university). This information is usually listed below the author names, as the “department” or “university” of the institute each author worked at during the time that the study was conducted. It is plausible to think that elite universities will dominate publications in the JAS. For example, we could expect a handful of universities (e.g., Ivy Leagues) to be the most prolific producers of research published in Asian studies. However, the analysis reveals that authors come from a diverse list of universities. No academic institution has more than 3% of article authors published in the JAS between 2000-2020.

Figure 4: Top 30 academic institutions appearing with the most frequency in the JAS, 2000-2020

³It would also be interesting to examine whether gendered publication patterns vary according to the composition of the editorial board. A women-majority editorial board might prioritize a gender balance in their decision-making process. However, historical data on JAS editorial board members is not publicly available.

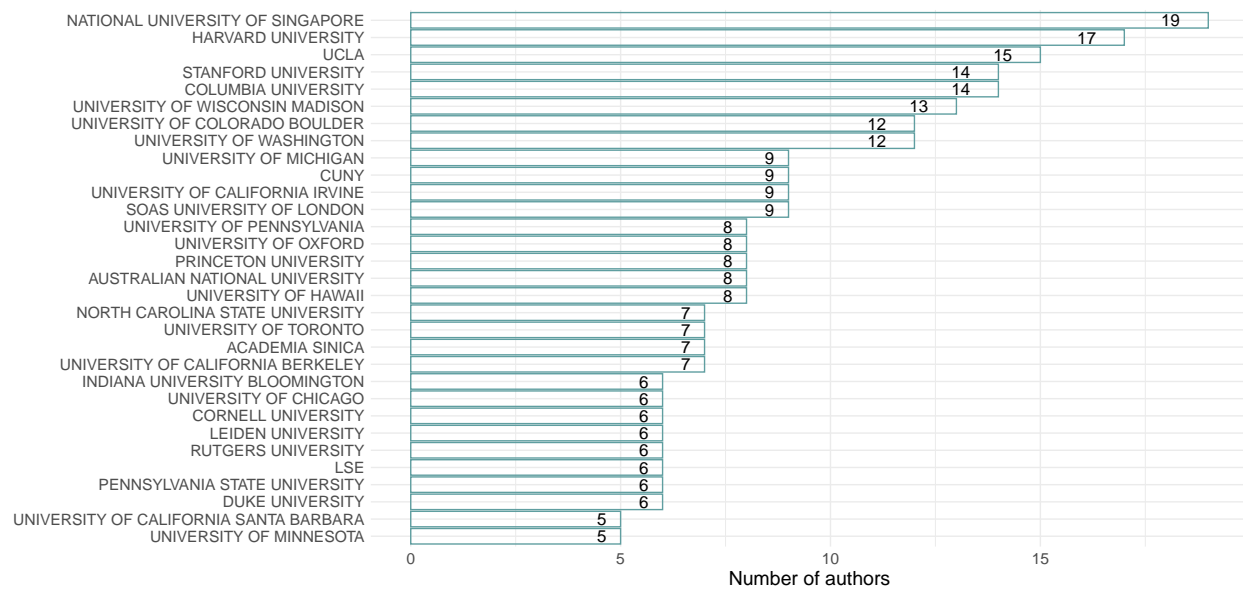


Figure 4 plots the top 30 academic institutions appearing with the most frequency in the JAS, 2000-2020. The National University of Singapore (NUS) is the most prolific producer of authors. A total of 19 authors were affiliated with the oldest higher education institution in Singapore. It is encouraging to see a university located in Asia being the top producer of authors in the most prestigious publication in the field of Asian studies. This contributes to the “decentering” of Asian studies from their established bases in a few preeminent institutions in the U.S. and Western Europe.

Harvard University is the second most prolific producer of JAS authors. This comes as no surprise since Harvard has long been one of the centers to study Asia in the United States. For instance, Chinese language has been taught at Harvard on a regular basis since 1921, while Japanese language instruction on a regular basis began in 1931.⁴ UCLA is the third most prolific producer of JAS authors, followed by Stanford and Columbia.

Asian studies was constituted, like most area studies, in the immediate postwar period. At that time, centers for the study of Asia were developed in specific universities, especially Harvard, Columbia, Berkeley, and the University of Washington (Lanza, 2017, 12). These institutions are traditional powerhouses in the field of Asian studies. As such, all of them are in the list of the top academic institutions appearing with the most frequency in the JAS, 2000-2020. However, there are also some newcomers. For example, while having a relatively new Department of Asian Studies (founded in 2013), the Pennsylvania State University is among the top producers of JAS authors.

⁴Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations. “A Brief History of EALC and Asian Studies at Harvard.” Harvard University. <https://ealc.fas.harvard.edu/about>.

As the figure shows, Academia Sinica in Taipei is also one of the institutions appearing with the most frequency in the JAS. It is fair to say that the visibility of Asian studies scholars outside the Western (Euro-American and Australian) academies has increased substantially in the past decades. With the economic rise of Asia, there are increasingly more top universities in the region. Moreover, there are more Western-trained scholars of Asian descent (those born in Asia or first-generation children of Asian immigrants) that work in important universities in the region. There are also more non-native Asians from the United States and European countries who teach Asian studies in Asian countries (Winichakul, 2014, 883).

Despite this, a great majority of JAS authors seem to come from institutions located in the United States. One question we can ask ourselves is whether most JAS authors come from American universities. Which country dominates the knowledge production of Asian Studies?

Figure 5: Geographic location of authors' affiliation in the JAS, 2000-2020

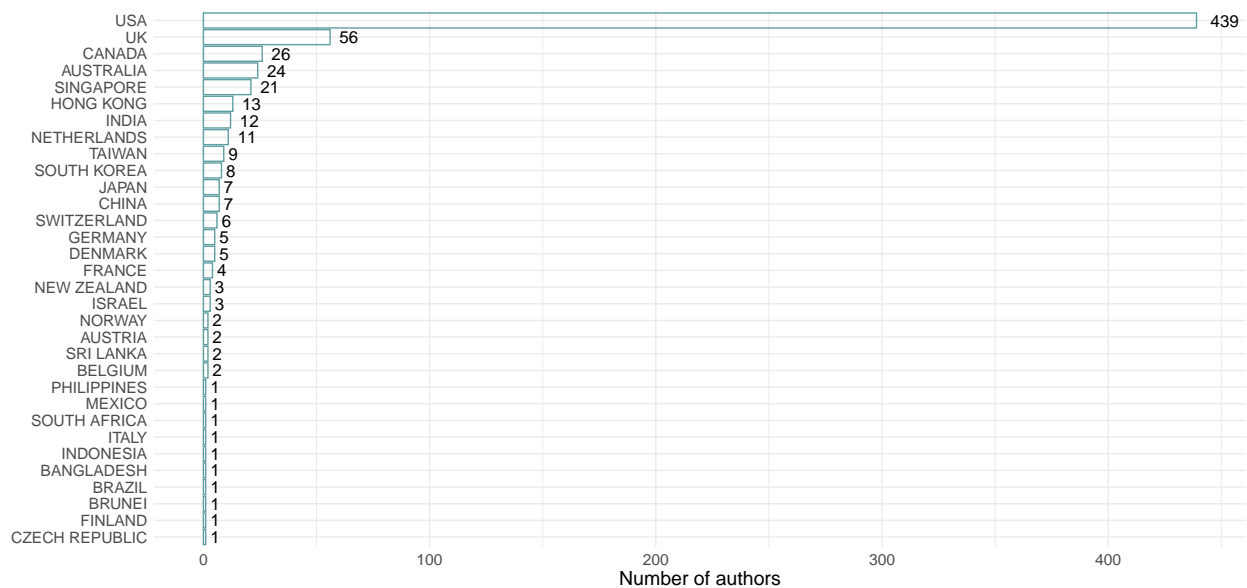


Figure 5 plots the location of authors' academic affiliations. As the figure shows, the overwhelming majority of JAS authors are affiliated with institutions located in the United States. Of all the JAS authors, 439 (63% of all authors) are affiliated with institutions in the States. This might not be surprising to some since the AAS was born and is based in the U.S. However, it is interesting that such an overwhelming majority of authors come from American universities when one of the main objectives of the AAS is to facilitate contact and exchange of information between scholars and

scholarly organizations in North America interested in Asian studies and those in other countries.⁵ In addition, the AAS has adopted some measures to promote the contact and exchange between scholars outside North America, such as hosting the Asian Studies Conference Japan and the AAS-in-Asia conferences.

The United Kingdom is the second most common location of authors' institutions, followed by Canada, Australia, and Singapore. Note that four of the top five locations of authors' academic affiliations are in the West. It seems the West still dominates the production of knowledge about Asia. However, we also have to consider that JAS is an American publication produced in English. The top seven locations in Figure 5 are all territories that have English as an official working language.

Although most authors work at Western institutions, there is also a significant minority of authors affiliated with Asian institutions. Five regions in Asia are in the top ten locations of JAS authors' academic affiliations, namely Singapore, Hong Kong, India, Taiwan, and South Korea. Some of the best institutions representing these regions are NUS, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, University of Hong Kong, Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, Academia Sinica, Yonsei University, Seoul National University, etc.

Interestingly, there are some JAS authors affiliated with institutions outside both the West and Asia. There are authors affiliated with institutions in Brazil (Institute of International Relations in Rio de Janeiro), Mexico (*El Colegio de Mexico*), and South Africa (University of the Witwatersrand).

Academic disciplines

Although the journal claims to be a multidisciplinary journal, *The Journal of Asian Studies* (JAS) has historically been dominated by a few disciplines, in particular history. In Volume 26 (1966-67), for example, 66.6 percent of all articles published in the JAS were by historians (Hucker, 1973). The exact numbers vary from issue to issue but the number of historians among JAS authors tends to be high. From 1954 to 1966, the most common discipline for JAS authors was history (39%), followed by political science (13%) and sociology (12%) (Hucker, 1973). Is the JAS still dominated by historians?

⁵Since December 2020, the AAS Constitution reads: "The objectives of the Association shall be (a) to form a scholarly, nonpolitical, and nonprofit professional association of all persons interested in Asian studies; (b) to promote interest in and scholarly study of Asia; (c) to provide means for the publication of scholarly research and other materials designed to promote Asian studies; (d) to promote cooperative activities and exchange of information within the field of Asian studies; and (e) to facilitate contact and exchange of information between scholars and scholarly organizations in North America interested in Asian studies and those in other countries."

Figure 6: Academic disciplines in the JAS, 2000-2020

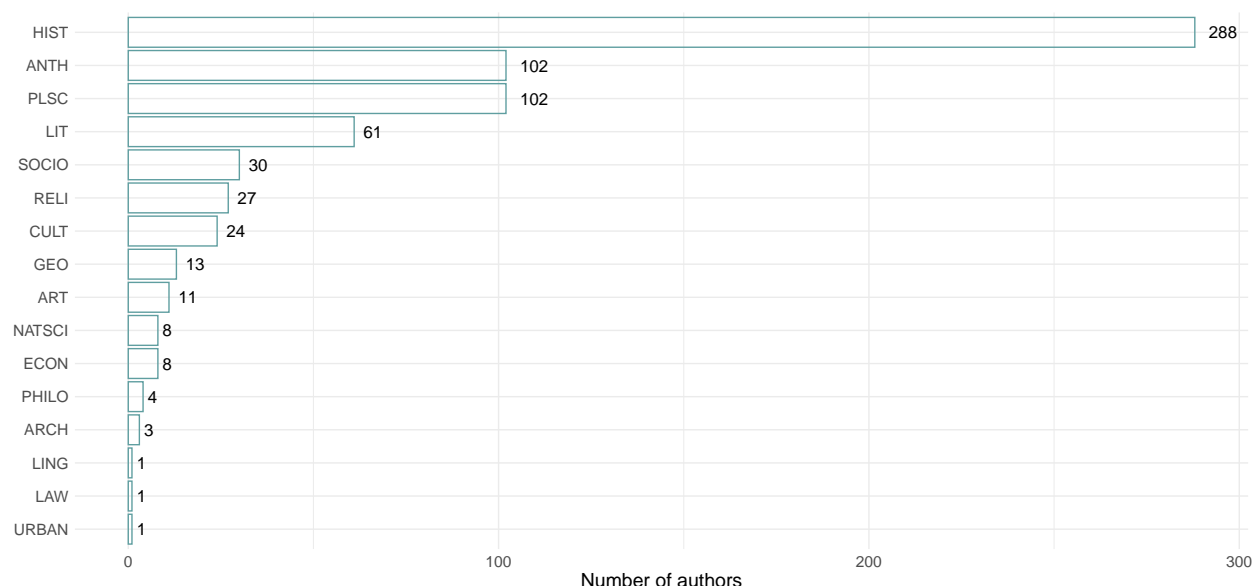


Figure 6 reveals each JAS author's academic disciplines.⁶ Like in the 1960s, most JAS authors are in fact historians. There are 288 historians as authors, representing 42 percent of all articles' authors in the last two decades. This is not a huge surprise, but it empirically confirms the common notion that Asian studies is dominated by historians. After history, the two largest disciplines in the JAS are anthropology and political science, each with 102 authors (15%). The bulk of anthropologists in Asian studies are social anthropologists, while political scientists in the field often are qualitative and comparative scholars. Since the 1960s, political scientists (especially East Asia scholars) have played a prominent role in the field. However, something to consider is that many early-career scholars in the social sciences are encouraged by their departments to publish in their disciplinary journals rather than area studies journals.

Showing the multidisciplinary framework of the JAS, there are many authors engaged in fields rather than disciplines. There are 27 authors (4%) doing religious studies, 24 authors (3%) doing cultural studies, and 1 author doing urban studies. Interestingly, the figure also shows that there are JAS authors outside the social sciences and humanities. For instance, there are 8 authors (1%) belonging to various natural sciences (NATSCI). These are distributed among the following: physics, health promotion, and environmental and atmospheric sciences. Finally, there are 3 architects and 1

⁶ As a reminder, coding academic disciplines was done taking into consideration both the article's topic and the author's departmental affiliation. More often than not these aligned with each other, but when they did not, the discipline is coded based on the author's departmental affiliation. Despite these rules, the author acknowledges that the lines dividing disciplines are blurry. Most research questions need to be answered by working beyond the confines of academic disciplines.

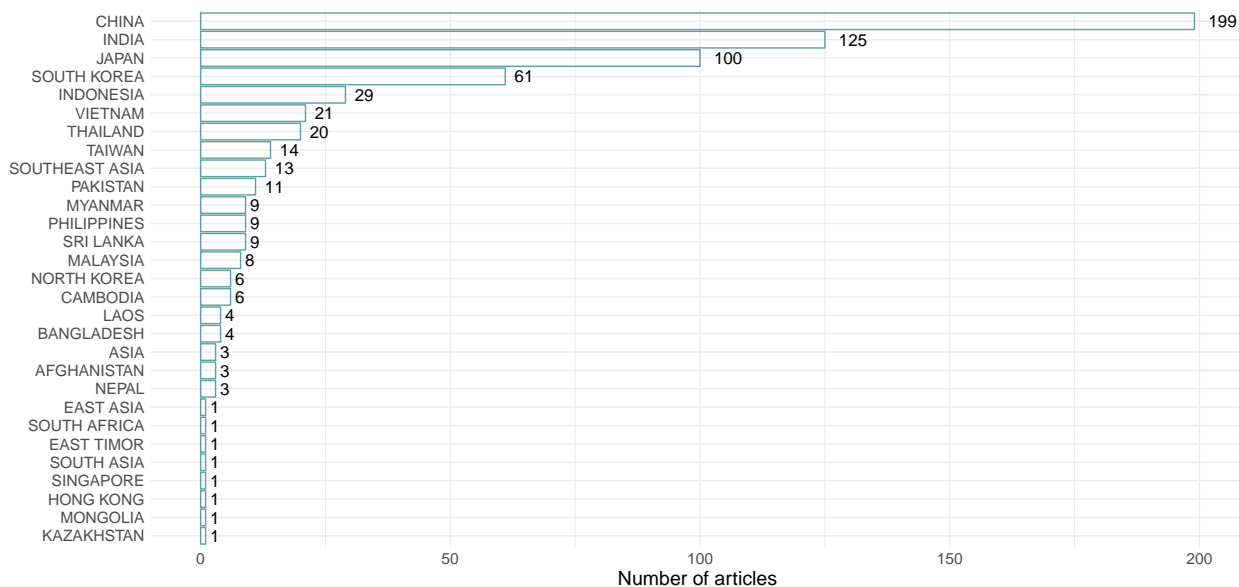
lawyer among JAS article authors.

Geographic areas of study

This section explores JAS articles by geographic areas of study. Today, there are four regional councils operating within the AAS, namely South Asia, Southeast Asia, China and Inner Asia, and Northeast Asia. Note that China is the only nation-state represented in one of the four regional councils. China scholars have historically been the bulk of AAS membership. From 1954 to 1970, for example, the largest area of interest of the AAS membership was China (Hucker, 1973). The AAS did not expand the association to South Asian fields until 1955-56.

The JAS has historically reflected this strong presence of China scholars in Asian studies. In Volume 17 (1957-58), for example, 53 percent of all articles published in the JAS were about China (Hucker, 1973). The exact numbers vary from issue to issue but the number of China research among JAS articles tends to be high.

Figure 7: Number of articles by geographical area of study in the JAS, 2000-2020



The analysis here reveals that JAS pages are still dominated by research about China. Figure 7 shows the division by geographical area of research articles published in the JAS.⁷ A total of 199 articles (29%) in the JAS are about China. This is not a huge surprise, but the figure confirms the common notion that Asian studies is dominated by China

⁷As a reminder, each article was coded based on all the geographic areas it studied. For example, Le's (2019) work on war memory and reconciliation between Japan and the Republic of Korea is coded as pertaining to both Japan and South Korea.

scholars. Some common defenses for China's dominance among the field in the U.S. are China is important to the United States as a matter of national interest (e.g., China is presumed the largest long-term threat to the U.S., its largest trading partner, etc.), China has one of the largest population and territory in the world, it embodies one of the world's great ancient civilizations, etc.

I expected another East Asian nation to be second on the list. South Korean and Japanese language and cultural exports (e.g., K-pop, anime, etc.) are globally popular. But to my surprise, the second most common area of study for JAS articles is India with 125 articles, representing 18 percent of all articles. India studies, and South Asia studies in general, have grown a lot in the last decades. From being almost entirely restricted to humanistic subjects as taught by professors of Sanskrit in American universities, South Asian studies have expanded by adding the study of modern languages and social science subjects (Brown, 1964). Today, government language scholarships in the U.S., such as the Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program, encourage people to study Hindi, Bangla, Urdu, Punjabi, etc. In addition, South Asian studies has gained visibility from its close relationship with postcolonial studies (SAR, 2017). The re-emergence of India on the world's strategic, power, and economic stage has certainly contributed to this change.

As Figure 7 shows, the third, fourth, and fifth most common areas of study are Japan with 100 articles (14%), South Korea with 61 articles (9%), and Indonesia with 29 articles (4%). Indonesia is the most popular Southeast Asia nation studied by JAS authors, which makes sense since it is the biggest and most populous country in the region. Interestingly, three of the top five geographic areas of study in the JAS are in East Asia. Perhaps this is because the China Inner Asia and the Northeast Asia councils make up the bulk of the AAS membership.

As the figure shows, there are some geographic areas of study that break with common JAS practices. For example, there are articles on some Asian countries like East Timor, Mongolia, and Afghanistan that are uncommon in JAS pages. Also, there is one article about a non-Asian nation. The article about South Africa during the 2010 FIFA World Cup by Menon (2010), a scholar of Indian history at the University of the Witwatersrand, is one of a kind among JAS articles. Similarly, there is a unique article about the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site in Kazakhstan by Stawkowski (2017). Studies about Kazakhstan and other former Soviet Socialist republics tend to be confined within Eurasian, Russian, or East European studies rather than Asian studies. More articles on these territories in the JAS could help to encourage more dialogue between Asian and Eurasian Studies.

[illegible]

Frequency

Terms

artici
china
oloni
tiali
cultu
new
saudi
jaganes
chines
nation
chines
histori
one
india
examin
world
japan
attudi
earli
author
korea
form
patri
work
local
descrip
argu
women
economi
power
among
paper
way
histor
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recent
swiss
war
asian
chang
claus
understand
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⁸As mentioned earlier, all the abstracts were gathered via web-scraping using the *fulltext* package in the R programming language (Chamberlain, 2021).

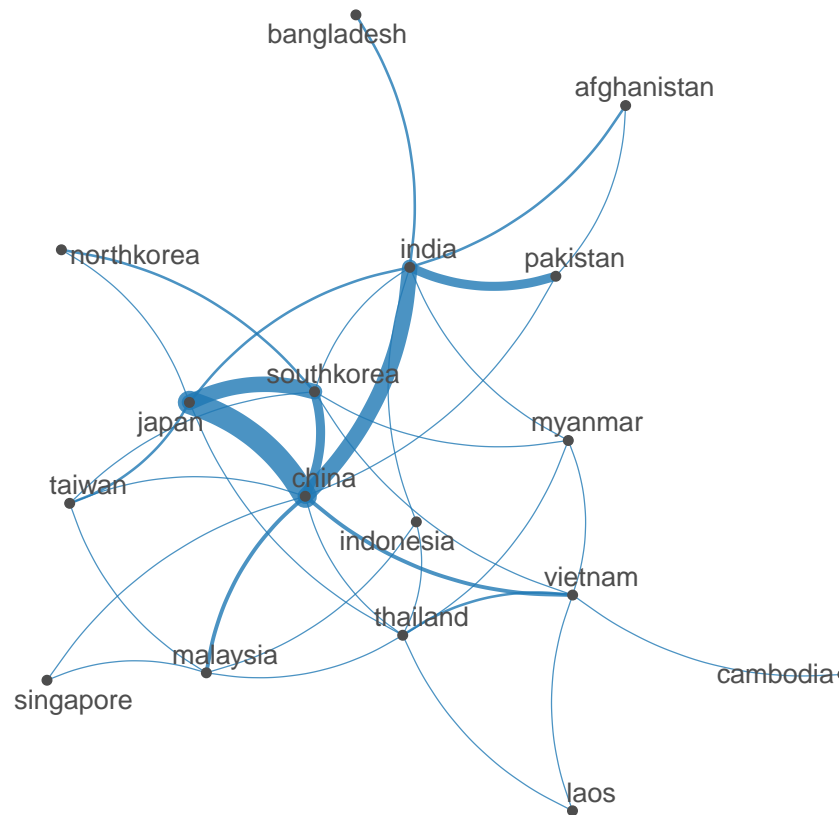
collection or cluster of words depicted in different sizes. The bigger and bolder the word appears, the more often it's mentioned within a given text and the more important it is. As the figures show, the most common words in JAS articles are "articl", "china", "coloni", "state", and "polit".⁹

The terms "islam" and "muslim" are some of the top 100 words in the JAS articles. This is interesting considering that the study of Islam in Asian studies has struggled to emerge for the past half century. For instance, although almost half of all Muslims live in Southeast Asia, the literature has fostered a misunderstanding of Southeast Asia as "foreign" to Islam. The attempts made at considering Southeast Asia an integral part of the Muslim World remain obfuscated by a continued effort to place the region in its "original" religious-cultural pre-Islamic, Hindu- Buddhist, context (Formichi, 2016). In addition, the study of the cultures, media, literatures, and languages from the Middle East has been usually done by Islamic Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, or MENA studies rather than Asian studies. More articles on these topics in the JAS will help to encourage engagement between Asian and Middle East Studies.

The worldcloud again confirms that most JAS research articles are about China. The term "china" is clearly the most common term referring to a particular geographical area. The term "china" is mentioned a total of 220 times. This further confirms the strong presence of China scholars in Asian studies. Other terms referring to particular geographical areas are "japanes", "chines", "india", "asia", "japan", "korea", "korean", "indian", and "asian". Interestingly, the term "british" is also one of the most common words in JAS articles. This might be because many articles about India study British colonial rule in South Asia.

Figure 10: Network of geographic areas of study in the JAS, 2000-2020

⁹Documents may use different forms of words (jumped, jumping, jump), or words that are similar in concept (bureaucratic, bureaucrat, bureaucratization) as if they are different tokens, so the words in the figures are stemmed. Stemming is a technique used to extract the base form of the words by removing affixes from them. For example, a stemming algorithm reduces the words "politics", "political", "politician" to the root word, "polit".



A network analysis further confirms the large presence of China scholars. Figure 10 plots a network of the geographic areas studied together by JAS authors. A network is a representation of a set of units and the relations between them. The nodes (geographic areas) are connected to each other through edges (lines). Thicker, denser colored lines indicate a higher frequency of co-occurrence. For example, the line connecting China-Japan is thicker than the line connecting Vietnam-Cambodia, so this means that there are more JAS articles researching China-Japan than studying Vietnam-Cambodia.

Further illustrating China's dominance in the field, we can see that the ticker lines in the figure are all connecting to China. China is a central node in the network of geographic areas studied by JAS authors. In fact, the pair of countries that are most often studied together is China-Japan. This is not surprising since China and Japan have been closely intertwined for over 1,500 years through economic, cultural, and political connections (Vogel, 2019). There are a total of 18 articles simultaneously studying these two countries. These articles include research about cultural links between the two countries, such as Clements' (2017) work on the cultivation of spoken Chinese learning and the patronage of Chinese émigrés by members of Japan's warrior elite in the late seventeenth century. They also include work on

Sino-Japanese political relations, like Hang's (2016) work on the alliance between Japan's Tokugawa bakufu and the Zheng organization of southeastern China and Taiwan in the seventeenth century.

After China-Japan, the most popular pair of countries are Japan-South Korea and China-India. There are 12 articles researching Japan-South Korea and 12 articles studying China-India. In the figure, there is a notable triangle connecting China, Japan, and South Korea. It is not surprising to see many studies about the East Asian trio, since these areas are neighbours, share many cultural elements, and have close economic ties. In addition, there is a relatively thicker line connecting India and Pakistan. There are 7 articles studying India-Pakistan. Similar to the East Asian trio, the history between India and Pakistan is inextricably linked. Interestingly, there is no line connecting Pakistan and Bangladesh even though the two countries formed a single state for many years.

Discussion

This paper explores article publication patterns in *The Journal of Asian Studies* from 2000 to 2020. It is important to analyze publication patterns because scholarly publications are enormously important to tenure and advancement in the profession. In addition, very few authors have studied publication patterns in area studies.

The analysis shows that there is a gender imbalance in publication rates for men and women in the JAS. Men represent the majority of authors published in the journal. The number of male authors is 414 (60%), while the number of female authors is 276 (40%). Through the analysis, we can also see a significant gender imbalance for female authors at nearly every professional rank, except in two non-tenure track positions. Women are still under-represented in publications and tenure-track positions, despite slow and steady progress in the last decades.

The results presented here are but a first step in understanding gendered patterns of publications in Asian studies. More research is clearly needed to explain the patterns documented here. In the meantime, what we know for sure is that the gender imbalance in the field's top journal that we have documented is a problem for women in the profession because of the indisputable importance attached to publications at all stages, from hiring, to tenure, to promotion decisions. In 2019, women made up 59 percent of all Asian studies degrees awarded at the 5 institutions that graduate the most students in Asian Studies.¹⁰ More and more women are seeking degrees and careers in the field, making equal access to the field's top journal extremely important, indeed, urgent.

¹⁰U.S. Department of Education. "Gender Imbalance for Common Institutions." National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). <https://datausa.io/profile/cip/asian-studies>.

Although the analysis reveals that NUS is the most prolific producer of JAS authors, it seems the West still dominates the production of knowledge about Asia. A great majority of JAS authors come from Western (Euro-American and Australian) institutions. Of all the JAS authors, 439 (63%) are affiliated with institutions in the U.S. The United Kingdom is the second most common location of authors' institutions, followed by Canada and Australia.

It is well-known that Western knowledge production about Asia has its implications. In the U.S., for example, area studies programs have been critiqued as sites for the production of contemporary versions of Orientalism. They privilege the nation-state as the elementary unit of analysis, which makes area studies conceive "areas" as if they were the natural or historically necessary formations for the containment of differences within and between cultures (Chow, 1993). Privileging the nation-state as the main unit of analysis may also discourage research on topics that challenge the nation-state framework, such as Tibetan kingdoms or Tamil nationalism.

A limited presence of authors who might call Asia their "home" also limits the engagement between North American and Asian scholarship. While it is easy to recommend a bigger proportion of authors located in Asia in JAS pages, this is not always an easy task. Academic standards and priorities vary from country to country. Also, scholarship in some Asian countries becomes intellectual enclaves due to language barriers. For example, Thai scholars, particularly in the humanities and social sciences, can survive in the academy and spend their whole careers without active engagement with scholarship in English (Thongchai, 2014). While offering a solution is beyond the scope of this paper, we may ask ourselves: Are we (scholars located in the West) imposing our academic norms unfairly to Asian scholars?

In addition, the analysis shows that historians and China scholars make up the bulk of JAS authors. More than half of JAS article authors in the past twenty years are historians (42%), anthropologists (15%), or political scientists (15%). The analysis also shows that Mainland China is the most common geographic area of study with 29% JAS articles, followed by India (18%), and Japan (14%).

For a multidisciplinary journal that covers from South and Southeast Asia to China, Inner Asia, and Northeast Asia, having a single discipline or geographical region dominating its pages might not be the best thing. One recommendation is for JAS editors to actively prioritize under-represented disciplines outside history, anthropology, and political science. Similarly, editors can actively prioritize publishing articles about under-represented nation-states outside China, India, Japan, and South Korea. Of course, JAS like any other journal cannot provide full, complete, or equitable representation at every level. However, even if we agree that perfect representation is impossible, that does not mean that we should

give up any attempt to try.

In closing, I note a number of future directions for research. First, the findings here are limited to only one journal. JAS does not represent the entire field of Asian studies. Future studies should examine publication patterns in other journals. Second, it would be interesting to study the relationship between gender and citation patterns in Asian studies. Other scholars have identified gendered citation patterns in academic journals. For example, Mitchell et al. (2013) find that male authors in international relations journals are less likely to cite work by female scholars in comparison with female authors. Since there seems to be a gender imbalance in publication rates for men and women in the JAS, it would be worthwhile to see if this gender imbalance in publications extends to citations. Finally, there is a tendency among many area specialists (especially historians) to divide the area's history into a "classical" period wholly distinct from the "modern" era. While such divisions have been criticized because they divide academic labor by assigning the "classical" period to the humanities and the "modern" era to the social sciences (Chow, 1993), future studies should examine publication patterns in Asian studies across historical periods.

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