

Who is publishing in the *Journal of Sociology*? An analysis of author trends 1965–2008

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Abstract

This paper presents the author characteristics of papers published in The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) journal, the *Journal of Sociology* (formerly the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*) between 1965 and 2008. The aim of the paper is empirically to identify trends in authorship. The review examines all articles published in the period (excluding book reviews). The rationale of the study is to reveal trends in who publishes in the journal in terms of authors' academic rank, gender, institution, and country. A table of those who have published the greatest number of papers is also presented. Findings show that over time the gap between the proportion of males and females publishing has closed; more PhD students and research fellows are publishing in the journal in recent decades; the highest proportion of authors consistently come from the Australian National University and The University of Queensland; and most authors are located in Australia. Information such as this can inform editorial practices and serve to inform the membership and readership on the nature of the journal.

Keywords: Australian Sociology, Authorship, History of Sociology, *Journal of Sociology*, Publication Trends, The Australian Sociological Association (TASA)

Introduction

The project reported in this paper is a content analysis of the *Journal of Sociology* (*JOS*).

While the project collated data on a wide range of aspects about *JOS*, this paper focuses on the author characteristics of those publishing in the journal. The paper begins with a brief history of *JOS* and some background information about the bibliometrics of the journal. This is followed by a description of the methodological approach taken in the study and a brief description of the analytical technique. The findings are presented and

discussed around the themes of: gender, academic rank, institutional affiliation, and geographical location.

A brief history of the journal

The *Journal of Sociology* is the official journal of The Australian Sociological Association (TASA). The journal began its life as the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology (ANZJS)* and was established in 1965 with Jerzy Zubrzycki as the first editor¹ following the formation of the Sociological Association of Australia and New Zealand (SAANZ)—the forerunner of TASA—in 1963. Initially, the journal was published biannually, moving to three issues in 1971, and four issues in 2001. The change of name from *ANZJS* to *JOS* occurred in 1998, and was a change primarily aimed at broadening the journal's potential appeal to an international readership. What has helped most in this regard was the decision in 2001, after a tender process, to have the journal published by the international publisher SAGE. In 2002, SAGE began making the full content of the journal accessible via electronic journal databases and in 2004 began digitising the back catalogue so that all volumes of the journal since its inception are available online; moreover, in 2006, it introduced an online article submission and reviewing process.

Up until the move to SAGE, it is fair to say the journal had a modest international readership; hard copies were available at less than 10 UK university libraries and even fewer in the US². Since then, improved international distribution, no doubt aided by the growing reliance of university libraries and researchers on online journal databases, along with the introduction of an annual thematic issue in 2002³, have seen a progressive

improvement in the journal's ranking based on impact factor analysis. Table 1 lists the journal's impact factor ranking based on data sourced from the ISI Web of Knowledge *Journal Citation Reports*.

Table 1: Rank and impact factor of the *Journal of Sociology* within sociology journals

Year	Sociology Journal Rank	Impact factor
2003	65/93	0.256
2004	47/90	0.467
2005	47/92	0.455
2006	62/93	0.419
2007	34/96	0.833
2008	44/99	0.791

Source: ISI Web of Knowledge *Journal Citation Reports*

The history of the journal has seen relatively few controversies. Arguably, the three most notable events were the move towards democratising the appointment of editors, the split with New Zealand (NZ) members, and the change of journal name. At the Association's 1972 AGM, growing criticism from the membership that the journal had a conservative approach and was overly controlled by a select group of male professoriate came to a head with the election of Lois Bryson as the first female editor (Bryson 2005). Interestingly, the Association was later to return to appointing editors, a situation that remains today. While the 'young Turks' (as they were known) ushered in journal changes such as a special features section that dealt with contemporary social and professional issues, along with a research notes section to encourage early career academics to publish, Bryson was later to admit that 'a journal can only print what it has access to ... [and the content] changed relatively little' (2005: 39).

The controversy surrounding the split with NZ members followed. As the original name—SAANZ—indicated, the Association had intended to be a joint Australia–New Zealand network, but NZ members never accounted for more than a quarter of the membership (Western 2005). With the establishment of the journal *New Zealand Sociology* in 1986, pressure for an independent NZ body mounted. In 1988, NZ members seceded to form the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (NZ)—effectively keeping the original acronym. TASA was born in the same year (formally incorporating in 1989), with John Western as President. The journal retained its original *ANZJS* name for a further decade (Germov and McGee 2005a; Germov and McGee 2005b). The final controversy, if it can be called that, was the debate over the proposal to change the name of the journal from *ANZJS* to *JOS*. While a vocal minority preferred to maintain tradition and stick with the original name, and others suggested alternative titles, in the end the decision to adopt *JOS* as the journal name was passed by a clear majority at the 1997 AGM.

Method

The focus of this paper is on research articles published in *ANZJS/JOS* and excludes editorials, symposia, and book reviews. While some reviews of this nature restrict analysis to only empirical papers (see for example, Wingate 2003), it was recognised that such a criterion was inappropriate for the discipline of Sociology. The approach taken is consistent with content analyses of other journals (cf. Anderson 2002; Wall et al. 2006). All issues of the journal were coded from 1965 up to and including 2008, yielding a total of 823 papers. The type of information included in the journal, particularly in relation to

author information, has changed over time. Therefore, some of the analyses presented in this paper only refer to a subset of the total papers. Where relevant, this is noted in the footnotes of the tables presented below.

The development of a coding sheet was informed by the information available in the journal as well as the coding activities of other researchers in their examinations of other journals (Anderson 2002; Kim and Chung 2007; Weiss and Qiu 2008; Wingate 2003). The coding sheet was piloted with two research assistants coding one volume of the journal. One of the research assistants then compared the results of the two coding exercises in order to identify any inconsistencies. The researchers reviewed these inconsistencies and established that the discrepancies were due to lack of clarity in coding instructions, ambiguity of available data, and lack of specific discipline knowledge of the coders. These problems were addressed in the development of a shortened and revised coding sheet that was used for the study.

The final coding sheet was translated into the format of an SPSS database with drop-down lists of categories. Fifteen years of the journals were initially coded by one of the researchers and another research assistant working together. This allowed for hands-on training of the research assistant and any judgement calls in coding to be discussed. Furthermore, 10 per cent of the coding was double coded by the researcher to ensure consistency. The research assistant carried out the remainder of the coding. The coding sheet covered a variety of aspects, but those reported in this paper relate to author characteristics including gender, academic rank, geographical location, and institutional affiliation.

Upon completion of the coding exercise, many cases were missing gender information due to initials rather than full first names being used in earlier volumes, or to the lack of biographical descriptions, which often use gendered pronouns. Personal knowledge of colleagues in Australian Sociology and online search engines were used to identify the gender of the authors.

The key focus of this paper is to examine trends in authorship over time; therefore, the results are divided into decades. Given that the journal was first published in 1965, the data displayed in the 1960s columns only ranges from 1965–1969. Furthermore, given that the data coding exercise took place in the summer of 2008, only journals published from 2000–2008 are included in the 2000s column. The characteristics of the authors on multiple author papers vary, and the focus of these analyses is only on the first author or sole author of each paper. The unit of analysis is the paper not the author.

Findings

There has been a marked change over time in the proportion of male and female authors. Table 2 shows the gender of the sole author or first author of the articles published in *ANZJS/JOS* across the decades. Overall, 74.6 per cent of the papers have a single author. Less biographical information was provided in earlier decades; this led to the gender of some authors remaining ‘unknown’.

Upon exclusion of the unknown cases, males constituted 78.7 per cent of authors in the 1960s; this dropped to 50.5 per cent in the 2000s, possibly reflecting the growing number and seniority of female sociologists in the academy (see Figure 1).

Table 2: Gender of the sole author or first author in *ANZJS/JOS*, 1965–2008

Gender	1960s n (%)	1970s n (%)	1980s n (%)	1990s n (%)	2000s n (%)	Total N (%)
Male	37 (71.2)	146 (76.8)	159 (71.9)	114 (64.8)	93 (50.5)	549 (66.7)
Female	10 (19.2)	32 (16.8)	60 (27.1)	62 (35.2)	91 (49.5)	255 (31.0)
Unknown	5 (9.6)	12 (6.3)	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (2.3)
Total	52 (100.0)	190 (100.0)	221 (100.0)	176 (100.0)	184 (100.0)	823 (100.0)

While this shows that in the current decade the journal is publishing a fairly equal balance of male and female authors, this gender split does still not reflect the membership of TASA more generally. For example, in 2004, females constituted 66 per cent of TASA members (Germov and McGee 2005a). It is also important to note that the gender balance is not necessarily due to the editorial decisions of *JOS* editors, but rather could be a reflection of the papers being submitted.

Figure 1: Proportion of male and female authors in each decade, *ANZJS/JOS*

Note: Cases where the gender of the author was unknown have been excluded.

Most people who publish in *ANZJS/JOS* have a university connection. In the 1970s, 96.6 per cent of authors were affiliated with a university and this remained fairly constant until the 2000s when 97.8 per cent of authors were university based. The remainder of authors were located in the private sector, government, or non-government organisations. This trend reflects the history of the discipline as very strongly located within the university sector. It would be interesting to compare this finding with other related disciplines within the social and behavioural sciences, such as Australian criminology, which has a strong base in both government and academia.

Table 3: Academic position of authors in *ANZJS/JOS*, 1980–2008

Academic rank	1980s n (%)	1990s n (%)	2000s n (%)
Professor	16 (9.30)	22 (12.87)	29 (15.93)
Associate Professor	8 (4.65)	17 (9.94)	15 (8.24)
Senior Lecturer	18 (10.47)	27 (15.79)	24 (13.19)
Lecturer	87 (50.58)	63 (36.84)	41 (22.53)
Research Fellow (incl. postdoctoral)	16 (9.30)	20 (11.70)	36 (19.78)
Director of research centre	1 (0.58)	0 (0.00)	7 (3.85)
Tutor	3 (1.74)	2 (1.17)	2 (1.10)
PhD Student	4 (2.33)	12 (7.02)	21 (11.54)
Student	4 (2.33)	5 (2.92)	1 (0.55)
Adjunct, Conjoint, Honorary	0 (0.00)	1 (0.58)	2 (1.10)
Non-Academic	15 (8.72)	2 (1.17)	4 (2.20)
Total	172 (100.00)	171 (100.00)	182 (100.00)

Notes:

1. The academic rank of authors was not routinely included with the author information in the 1960s and 1970s and therefore has not been included here.
2. Cases with missing data are excluded from analyses. Number of cases missing: 1980s n=49; 1990s n=5; and 2000s n=2.
3. The academic rank of Emeritus Professor was not nominated by any of the authors.

The academic position of authors who come from universities showed some changes over time (see Table 3). In the 1980s, just over half of the authors were lecturers. This proportion dropped over subsequent decades with the difference being taken up with higher numbers of research fellows and PhD students publishing in *JOS*. This finding

perhaps reflects the change in trend towards an expectation that PhD students publish during their candidature. Furthermore, research fellows have become more common in recent years with many PhD students going into postdoctoral research fellowships rather than standard academic positions, and some continuing in this research-only role.

Table 4: Leading institutional contributions to *ANZJS/JOS*, 1965–2008

Rank	Institution ¹	N ²	% ³
1	Australian National University	64	7.78
2	University of Queensland	57	6.93
3	La Trobe University	52	6.32
4	Monash University	42	5.10
5	University of New South Wales	33	4.01
6	University of Tasmania	29	3.52
7	Flinders University	28	3.40
8	University of Sydney	25	3.04
9	Macquarie University	25	3.04
10	University of Melbourne	24	2.92
11	Griffith University	21	2.55
12	University of Newcastle	16	1.94
13	Victoria University	15	1.82
14	University of New England	15	1.82
15	Murdoch University	13	1.58

Notes:

1. The institutional affiliation of authors was not routinely included with the author information in the 1960s. Where data were missing, cases were excluded from the analysis.
2. This is the total number of papers with authors affiliated to each institution.
3. This is a proportion of all published papers.

An examination of the institutional affiliation of the authors shows that overall, the authors most commonly came from The Australian National University, The University of Queensland, La Trobe University, Monash University, and The University of New South Wales (see Table 4). Upon examination of this leader-board decade by decade, it becomes clear that The Australian National University and The University of Queensland were consistently in the top six. La Trobe University was in the top six from the 1970s through to the 1990s but not in the 2000s. Monash was in the top six in the 1970s, 1980s,

and 2000s. The University of New South Wales was only in the top six in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 2000s, the universities from which the most papers came from (in descending order) were: The University of Queensland, University of Tasmania, The Australian National University, The University of Melbourne, and The University of Sydney.

The internationalisation of the journal has been a focus of TASA in recent years. Measures to do this have included changing the title of the journal in 1998, moving to international publisher SAGE in 2001; making the journal available on electronic databases and appointing an international advisory board in 2002; and digitising the back catalogue in 2004. While this has been positive for Australian sociology in terms of increasing the profile of the research published in *JOS* and the reputation of the journal through higher impact factors, this drive towards internationalisation is not reflected in the geographical location of the authors who publish in the journal.

As can be seen in Table 5, the large majority of authors are located in Australia and this proportion has increased over time from 78 per cent in the 1970s to 88 per cent in the 2000s. While this trend may seem counterfactual given the efforts to internationalise, it could be that more Australians are viewing *JOS* as a good outlet for their research given its improved rankings. In addition, authors outside Australia may see a journal such as *JOS* as inappropriate because of its Australian heritage. Authors from outside Australia predominantly come from New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It is interesting to note that the contribution from New Zealand-based authors dropped off considerably after the split of SAANZ in the late 1980s. Also, further examination of the

research being published by authors located in the UK and USA shows that the country of focus is usually Australia or New Zealand.

Table 5: Geographical location of authors in *ANZJS/JOS*, 1970–2008

Rank	Country	1970s number (%) of articles	1980s number (%) of articles	1990s number (%) of articles	2000s number (%) of articles
1	Australia	113 (77.93)	178 (80.91)	153 (86.93)	162 (88.04)
2	New Zealand	14 (9.66)	28 (12.73)	9 (5.11)	7 (3.80)
3	UK	4 (2.76)	6 (2.73)	6 (3.41)	6 (3.26)
4	USA	9 (6.21)	7 (3.18)	5 (2.84)	5 (2.72)
5	Canada	1 (0.69)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.57)	1 (0.54)
6	China	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	3 (1.63)
7	Other	4 (2.76)	1 (0.45)	2 (1.14)	0 (0.00)
	Total	145 (100.00)	220 (100.00)	176 (100.00)	184 (100.00)

Notes:

1. The geographical location of authors was not routinely included with author information in the 1960s.
2. Cases with missing data are excluded from analyses. Number of cases missing: 1970s n=45 and 1980s n=1.
3. The 'other' category includes: India, Papua New Guinea, Netherlands, Israel, and Japan.

In order to see which sociologists were making the greatest contribution (in number of papers) to *ANZJS/JOS*, the number of times each author appeared in the journal was tallied. The most frequent contributor was Frank Jones with 10 papers, and the second most frequent contributor was Raewyn Connell, who published nine papers in the journal. A list of the top nine contributors appears in Table 6. The top nine (rather than a greater or lesser number) were chosen because it includes people who published five or more papers; the number of people publishing four or fewer papers is much higher.

Table 6: Author appearances in *ANZJS/JOS* as first or sole author, 1965–2008

Rank	Author	Institutional affiliations	Total number of articles ²
1	Frank Jones	Australian National University (9) and Not specified (1)	10
2	Raewyn Connell ¹	Macquarie University (4); University of Sydney (3); University of California (1); and Not specified (1)	9
3	Deborah Lupton	Charles Sturt University (6) and University of Western Sydney (1)	7
4	John J. Ray	University of New South Wales (5) and Not specified (2)	7
5	Ken Dempsey	La Trobe University (6)	6
6	Bryan Turner	Flinders University (3); University of Essex (2); and The State University of Utrecht (1)	6
7	Lois Bryson	University of New South Wales (3); Monash University (1); and Victorian Department of Community Welfare Services (1)	5
8	Gary Marks	University of Melbourne (2); Australian National University (2); and University of Queensland (1)	5
9	Bruce Tranter	University of Tasmania (4) and Princeton University (1)	5

Notes:

1. Raewyn Connell has published under both R.W. Connell and Raewyn Connell. Both are combined here.

2. Only the top nine authors are published here as there are many authors who have been first/sole author on four papers.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings show that over time the gap between the proportion of males and females publishing in the journal has closed; still, it is not reflective of the gender distribution of TASA, which has a higher ratio of female to male members. The findings show that more PhD students and research fellows are publishing in the journal in recent decades—potentially reflecting an increased focus on doctoral candidates publishing and the changing landscape of academic employment opportunities post-PhD. Consistently, the highest proportion of authors come from The Australian National University and The University of Queensland; and most authors are located in Australia. This suggests that

the attempts toward internationalisation of the journal may not have been as effective as hoped, as an internationalisation trend is not reflected in the publication data.

The results of this investigation can assist in the journal's continued goal of internationalisation, as well as in further bridging the gender gap. They may also assist the journal and the readership by shedding light on the nature of the impact of institutional and wider structural changes in the university sector on authorship. Considering the changing patterns of academic affiliation in the data, this research can add to our understanding of the evolving nature of the academic publishing climate.

Notes:

- 1 A chronological list of editors up to 2008 is available in Germov and McGee (2005a). The editors at the time of writing (2009-2012) are: Andrew Bennett (Editor-in-Chief), Malcolm Alexander, Sarah Baker, Simone Fullagar, Margaret Gibson, Suzanne Goopy, Georgina Murray, and Ian Woodward (all at Griffith University).
- 2 Originally published in-house, the journal was subsequently published by La Trobe University Press, and then by the commercial publisher Longman (1995-2001).
- 3 The fourth issue of each volume of the journal is published as a thematic issue, usually with guest editors. Topics addressed by thematic issues to date have included: 'Flexibility: Families, Self and Work' (JOS 2002, 38, 4), 'Commercializing Emotions' (JOS 2003: 39, 4), 'Fear and Loathing in the New Century' (JOS 2004: 40, 4), 'Life Pathways: Insights from Longitudinal Research' (JOS 2005: 41, 4), 'Beyond the Margins/Beyond Marginality' (JOS 2006: 42, 4), 'Economy and Society' (JOS 2007: 43, 4), 'Cultural Sociology: Australian Perspectives and Themes' (JOS 2008: 44, 4).

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