

## *Handbook on Gender and Public Administration*

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By Patricia M. Shields and Nicole M. Elias  
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Reviewed by Suparna Soni

The *Handbook on Gender and Public Administration*, edited by Patricia M. Shields and Nicole M. Elias, is a crucial foundational text for integrating a gender-focused perspective into public administration scholarship and practice. Dr. Patricia M. Shields, a Regents' Professor at Texas State University, demonstrates exceptional scholarly and professional achievements across diverse fields, including civil-military relations, peace studies, and gender in public policy. As the editor of *Armed Forces & Society* and the author of influential works on Jane Addams and research methods, she bridges disciplines, promotes interdisciplinarity, and influences global scholarship.

Dr. Nicole M. Elias, an associate professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, specializes in research on equity in public administration, focusing on ethics, human resource management, and the impact of public policy on diverse populations. As the founding co-director of Women in the Public Sector at John Jay College, Dr. Elias has shown exemplary leadership in advancing inclusivity and equity in governance. Her interdisciplinary approach, combined with collaborations with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and scholars, highlights her significant contributions to social equity and public administration.

Moreover, the gender of theorists is an important factor because there is increasing attention to gender equity and inclusion in both public administration practice and research, and theorizing is a creative process

that often benefits from demographic diversity (Hattke and Vogel 2023). This comprehensive edited work examines the intersection of gender with policy and practice, tracing the discipline's historical trajectory, current status, and future directions. Roddrick Colvin, in the foreword, rightly underscores the urgent need for this work, emphasizing that men have taken too long to acknowledge and embrace their responsibility in advancing gender equity in public administration. In short, as recognized by Pandey, Newcomer, DeHart-Davis, Johnson, and Riccucci (2022), this book is both timely and impactful.

The book is organized into an introduction and three comprehensive sections. The first section explores the theoretical and historical foundations, the second section delves into the core pillars of public administration, and the third section examines the various contexts of gender within the field. Spanning 27 chapters, the book addresses a wide range of topics related to gender, policy, and the public sector, offering a thorough overview of the field's past, present, and necessary future developments.

In the introductory chapter of this book, coeditors Patricia M. Shields and Nicole M. Elias (2022), both highly respected scholars, set the tone by highlighting the evolving role of gender in public administration studies. They offer a critical analysis of the field's historical exclusion of women, arguing that this overlooked history remains a present-day issue. The authors stress

that students of public administration should recognize that both men and women play significant roles in shaping the field. They acknowledge Camilla Stivers for being the first to highlight women's contributions, noting that women were practicing the New Public Administration paradigm long before men received recognition for it. Additionally, they point to the COVID-19 pandemic as a pivotal event that laid bare the depth of gender inequities, using it as a central focus for their examination of gender in the public sphere.

Following the introduction, the first section of the book delves into the historical and theoretical underpinnings of gender studies within public administration. It brings to light historically marginalized works and ideas, particularly focusing on gender theory. This section not only addresses existing gaps in the literature but also adopts a broader perspective on gender, examining intersectionality and the interplay between gender, race, and sexual orientation. Chapter 2 (Alexander and Elías 2022) revisits Camilla Stivers's *Gender Images in Public Administration*, summarizing her arguments about the dominance of masculine ideals in the field's leadership. Chapter 3 (Shields 2022) traces Florence Nightingale's influence on public administration, rooted in an ethic of care. Chapter 4 (Burnier 2022) uses Jane Addams's metaphor of women's long historical memory to reassess the narrative of American public administration, integrating concepts of gender, care, and social justice from the Progressive and New Deal eras.

Subsequent chapters further explore gender as a construct. Chapter 5 (Ganapati, Remington, and Newman 2022) investigates the theory, practice, and scholarship of emotional labor, connecting it to gender and public administration. Chapter 6 (Heckler 2022) suggests that scholars in public administration should consciously study hegemonic masculinity to gain a more complete understanding of how gender shapes public organizations. Chapter 7 (Elias 2022) discusses moving beyond the gender binary, celebrating strides in LGBTQ+ inclusive policies, and the addition of a non-binary gender option on official documents. Finally, Chapter 8 (Diggs 2022) uses the concept of intersectionality to address the challenges black women face in leadership, highlighting the importance of an intersectional approach to studying and practicing public administration.

Thus, this section offers an excellent overview of the gendered history of public administration, illustrating how this history continues to shape contemporary

practice and scholarship. It demonstrates how emerging approaches can help advance the field for scholars and practitioners alike. As the most crucial part of the handbook, it sets the stage for the subsequent chapters by providing essential context. The only downside—or perhaps the positive aspect—is that it leaves readers wanting more.

The second section offers a detailed analysis of public administration's functions through a gender lens, providing valuable insights for practitioners. It features scholarship on common topics such as bureaucracy, human resources, ethics, and budgeting, all examined with a gendered perspective. Chapter 9 (Rubin and Bartle 2022) discusses the global adoption of gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) to promote gender equality through equitable resource allocation and revenue generation, highlighting successful initiatives and policy outcomes across over 80 countries. Chapter 10 (Rangarajan and Lottman 2022) reviews recent scholarship on gender in public personnel administration from 2008 to 2019, categorizing research into themes of inclusivity, incentives, career advancement, and hazards. Chapter 11 (Fenton 2022) examines Jane Addams's philosophical contributions and her leadership in public service, emphasizing her feminist and pragmatist approach that redefines professional values and positions social equity as a core aspect of administrative ethics.

The subsequent chapters explore diverse aspects of gender within public organizations, including gender norms, organizational structures, the nonprofit sector, representative bureaucracy theory, and performance measurement systems. Each chapter provides a thorough analysis of the challenges and opportunities in striving for gender equality in public administration. Chapter 12 (Bishu 2022a) and Chapter 14 (Hooker and Guy 2022) emphasize the issue of representation, highlighting that women and gender non-conforming individuals remain underrepresented in the public sector due to entrenched masculine norms and practices within organizational culture. These chapters provide valuable material for teaching about diversity, equity, and inclusion in public administration and organizational studies.

Chapter 13 (Evans and Knepper 2022) takes a historical and forward-looking view of nonprofit administration, showcasing its feminine origins. Chapter 15 (Larson 2022) examines the pivotal role of organizational culture in promoting social equity, noting

that women-led organizations often outperform their male-led counterparts despite the additional challenges women face in the workplace. It also demonstrates how performance measurement can support gender equity objectives. Chapter 16 (Humphrey 2022) investigates the neglected nexus of gender and public service motivation, underscoring the importance of organizational culture in the public sector and showing that different aspects of public service motivation can affect men and women differently.

In summary, this section provides a thorough examination of the challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality within public administration. It highlights how traditional aspects of the field can be reevaluated through a gendered lens, offering valuable insights for advancing public administration toward greater equity and inclusion. The analysis effectively illustrates how gender dynamics influence the field and provides practical recommendations for fostering a more inclusive landscape. However, while the chapters present important insights, a broader inclusion of international perspectives would significantly deepen the analysis and increase its global relevance. Although the section addresses gender-responsive budgeting and gender scholarship from an international viewpoint, the section is largely focused on developed nations, offering limited representation of developing or underdeveloped countries. For example, discussions on the disadvantages women face in the public sector, gender roles in the nonprofit sector, representative bureaucracy, and public service motivation lack an international perspective. Exploring how different forms of marginalization—like poverty, class, caste, and other social factors—intersect with gender as a power structure would have added further depth to the analysis.

In the third and final section, the handbook broadens the discussion to include international perspectives, which are essential for developing inclusive models for understanding gender dynamics beyond conventional frameworks. Chapters 17 to 27 cover a diverse array of topics, including second-generation gender bias, the global impact of the #MeToo movement, challenges that women face in military roles, and evolving gender terminology in public administration.

Chapter 17 (Levine, D’Agostino, and Sabharwal 2022) compellingly tackles deceptive forms of gender bias in public administration, showing how workplace gender bias has evolved, particularly focusing on sec-

ond-generation gender bias. This chapter provides nuanced insights that enhance classroom learning in gender-specific courses.

Chapter 18 (McCandless 2022) explores how federal and state workplace legal requirements have changed in response to the #MeToo movement, highlighting the organized protest and policy changes it has spurred. Chapters 19 and 20 focus on women’s roles in administration. Chapter 19 (Mastracci and Mahallati 2022) replicates a 1986 study on Utah women administrators with a 2016 survey, finding persistent salary disparities and noting that contemporary women administrators are more likely to be married with small children. Chapter 20 (Wayman, Alexander, and Shields 2022) uses résumé data from Texas City managers and survey data from women in the city manager pipeline, recommending mentoring programs to increase the proportion of women city managers. Chapters 21 to 23 examine gender dimensions in broader policy contexts. Chapter 21 (Hatch 2022) reveals how seemingly gender-neutral housing programs can result in gender discrimination through disparate impacts, despite the United States outlawing gender discrimination in housing in 1974. Chapter 22 (Samanta, Viswanath, and Tran 2022) discusses the multiple representation challenges women face in natural resource conservation agencies due to the historically masculine nature of the agricultural sector. Chapter 23 (Heinecken 2022) recounts the uneven progress of women’s integration into militaries worldwide.

Chapters 24 to 26 delve into gender in academia and policy. Chapter 24 (Klobus, Evans and Knepper 2022) examines gendered dimensions in public administration scholarship, highlighting disparities in who produces scholarship and its influence. Despite women filling graduate public administration classes, they are less likely to achieve full professorship or leadership positions. Chapter 25 (Rauhaus and Schuchs Carr 2022) explores the reasons behind the “leaky pipeline” in academia, noting that the environment of higher education and academic leadership makes excessive demands on women. Chapter 26 (Gómez Hernández 2022) examines the role of gender in the 2016 Colombian peace agreement, initially inclusive of women’s and LGBTQ+ rights but later diluted by conservative backlash. The section concludes with a success story in Chapter 27 (Bishu 2022b) about Ethiopia’s National Policy on Women. This chapter details Ethiopia’s commitment

to gender equality reform since 1993, highlighting significant female leadership by 2019, including the first woman president and female head of the highest court, with women holding 38% of parliamentary and 50% of cabinet seats. This third section is very engaging as it covers a variety of topics and methods. However, it could benefit from a more cohesive synthesis to tie the diverse topics together.

Overall, the *Handbook on Gender and Public Administration* offers a groundbreaking perspective on gender in public administration, challenging traditional views and deepening the understanding of gender-related social constructs. This handbook addresses a broad spectrum of international and nuanced topics relevant to contemporary discourse. It offers valuable insights through its diverse chapters, making it an excellent resource for enhancing classroom teaching in public administration, nonprofit management, and gender studies courses. It provides readers with essential tools to address and dismantle gender inequities, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable discipline. However, a more robust inclusion of intersectional perspectives—particularly beyond gender, race, and sexual orientation, such as the experiences of immigrants—would have been useful. Nevertheless, it is an invaluable resource for scholars, practitioners, and advocates dedicated to advancing gender equity in public administration, suggesting that achieving gender parity is not just a distant ideal but a tangible goal within our reach. The handbook serves as a foundational guide for continued exploration of gender in public administration, inviting further detailed and nuanced investigation.

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