

A Response to Barbara Keys H-Diplo Board of Editors

Editors note: This response includes a number of letters previously sent from H-Diplo to Dr. Keys. They are reprinted here as originally sent, except in a few instances where the names of third parties were removed. The decision to excise these names was made by the Passport editor, not by H-diplo.

M.L.

We appreciate the chance to address the issues Prof. Keys has raised in her essay. In the interest of full disclosure and to provide some context for *Passport's* readers, we are also releasing the contents of two previous responses that we sent as members of H-DIPLO's Editorial Board and staff to Prof. Keys. We hope they will be helpful both to readers of this exchange and to the broader discussion of fair representation.

While H-DIPLO welcomes comments and suggestions from subscribers, the decision not to post Prof. Keys's message that has now been published here followed standard policy based on H-DIPLO's published guidelines. Like most scholarly publications, H-DIPLO discusses editorial matters at the editorial level. In view of the list's overall purpose as well as a desire to avoid adding to the deluge of email that we all experience, H-DIPLO limits online discussions and publications to the subject of international relations.

Subscribers who wish to appeal the decisions of the list moderators may do so according to H-DIPLO's published procedures. Prof. Keys submitted an appeal, and she received a thorough and fair hearing from the Editorial Board, which has expressed full confidence in the list editors. We also concluded that the charges of sexism at H-DIPLO do not stand up to serious scholarly investigation.

We should note that there is a back story to Prof. Keys's essay about the representation of women on H-DIPLO. While we are not able to publish correspondence with subscribers without their permission, we must point out that the issue at hand originated thirteen months ago in a dispute over a review—one written by a woman, incidentally -- that appeared in a roundtable about Prof. Keys's book, *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s*. The H-DIPLO Editorial Board considered this matter, and concluded that the editorial staff had handled the review properly.

You will find, below, the Editorial Board's responses to Prof. Keys's appeal. Those responses contain important statistical information that shows that women have indeed been active and frequent participants in H-DIPLO roundtables and reviews relative to the field as a whole.

Since its inception in 1993, H-DIPLO's policy has been to offer an inclusive and welcoming site for all scholars. There is always room for improvement, since we have consistently maintained that H-DIPLO is a work in progress. We are proud, however, of

the participation of women in discussion threads, in book and article reviews, as scholars whose books and articles are the subject of reviews, and as members of the Editorial Board. H-DIPLO will continue to evolve in response to new developments in academia and in the field of international relations. As always, we welcome suggestions that will improve H-DIPLO.

In June 2008, along with a few other founding H-NET lists, H-DIPLO will celebrate its fifteenth anniversary. We have grown from a fledgling list to one with 4000 subscribers, and we rank among the top five H-NET lists. This growth is primarily the product of countless hours of volunteer work done in the spirit of fairness and good faith by the editors and moderators who maintain H-DIPLO on a daily basis. Through their careful management and steady work to professionalize our publication, they have created the flagship electronic forum about international relations. As a survey of our web site will indicate, H-DIPLO publishes scholarly exchanges on a wide range of international topics. And, of course, what makes H-DIPLO so vital and valuable is the participation of scholars from around the world who often have different views, different interpretations, or different interests, but share a commitment to one of the most important areas of historical scholarship.

With Best Wishes,
Signed,
The H-Diplo Editorial Board
Tom Blanton,
Malcolm Byrne,
Diane Clemens,
Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman,
Robert Hanks,
Jim Hershberg,
William Keylor,
Fredrik Logevall,
Sally Marks,
Chester Pach,
Yone Sugita,
Janice Terry,
Odd Arne Westad,
Thomas Zeiler

Part Two: Christopher Ball's response to Prof. Keys

Prof. Keys:

While I appreciate the time that you put into this submission, H-Diplo does not publish threads on H-Diplo's editorial practices. These issues should be raised before H-Diplo's editorial advisory board, whose members are listed here:

<http://www.h-net.org/%7Ediplo/personnel.html#board>

Since I am dual-hatted as the book review editor, handling H-Net Book Reviews but not review essays, article reviews, or RTs, I would note that the majority of the H-Net book reviews are based on books submitted to H-Net by publishers, and most submit only one copy of a book for all H-Net lists. If another list selects the book first, H-Diplo cannot readily review it. For example, according to H-Net's database, Harvard did not submit your 2006 book to H-Net (there have been several recent Harvard books that were relevant to H-Diplo but not submitted to H-Net). While H-Net has a procedure for review editors to request specific books from publishers, few publishers respond to these requests.

The real question is how many books submitted to H-Net and within the parameters of diplomatic or international history broadly conceived are authored by women. This is a hard figure to come by. According to H-Net's database, over 5,000 books were received in 2007. Coding over 5,000 books is not easy. Not all of them are relevant to H-Diplo's coverage, but H-Net only provides for words searches based on Bowker or BISAC subject guides or title; there is no "keyword anywhere" capability. BISAC has no category for women's history at all. A search for books published in 2007 with the Bowker tag "UNITED STATES FOREIGN RELATIONS" produced only 32 books, with two authored by women. I've appended that list below. One is the Statler book that was the subject of an RT published earlier this month. Of course, there were more books that fell under the broad rubric of diplomatic or international history, but H-Net, and by derivation, H-Diplo is dependent largely on the books made available to it via H-Net since H-Diplo has no funds to mail books on its own.

We are also limited on the reviewer side. Our decline-to-review rate is over 40%. When we issued a call for H-Diplo reviewers in Oct. 2004, only 7 of the 50 respondents were women, or 14%. I made an effort to recruit female reviewers when I took over as review editor, but it remains an issue of matching expertise to books available to willingness to review. We have many would-be reviewers for whom we lack relevant books, and many books for which we lack relevant reviewers.

I did compile a list of all single-authored books reviewed since 1996 (when H-Net's on-line archive begins), excluding RTs and edited volumes. Of the 183 books, 30 were authored by women, or 16.4% (I've attached the Excel file).

Christopher Ball
H-Diplo List Editor & Book Review Editor

Part III:

Dear Dr. Keys:

We write in response to your letter of appeal concerning the decision of the H-Diplo Editors to reject your submission, "Women, Subfields, and the Future of H-Diplo."

On behalf of the list editors, Christopher Ball sent the following response:

"While I appreciate the time that you put into this submission, H-Diplo does not publish threads on H-Diplo's editorial practices. These issues should be raised before H-Diplo's editorial advisory board, whose members are listed here..."

Mr. Ball was correct: we refer to Article 12 of the H-Diplo Guidelines:

12. H-DIPLO has an appeal mechanism in case objections to these procedures arise. Moderators will first refer unresolved disputes to the editors. If the editors are unable to resolve them to the satisfaction of the subscriber in question, they will then refer the issue to the Editorial Board, whose collective decision will be final. Procedural disputes that come before the Board for resolution are considered matters of privacy and may not be divulged without the permission of everyone concerned. Even if permission is granted, H-DIPLO will not disseminate such information to the list in keeping with its mission as a forum purely for discussing the history of international relations.

We have now reviewed your submission and we report for the record that we concur with the decision of the list editors. Your submission does indeed involve the editorial practices of H-Diplo. It is list policy not to discuss such matters online, in keeping with H-Diplo's "mission as a forum purely for discussing the history of international relations." Moreover, your "call for a change at H-Diplo" is a matter that concerns the H-Diplo Editorial Board only. List governance is the purview of the Editorial Board. The moderators and editors are responsible to us.

Since you have raised serious issues that concern the members of the Editorial Board, we offer the following response to the two main arguments in your letter:

A. Regarding your "call for a change at H-Diplo" we state for the record that we are completely satisfied with the H-Diplo editors and moderators. We are unanimous in our total confidence in the abilities of Diane Labrosse as H-Diplo Managing Editor as well as the abilities of Thomas Maddux, Christopher Ball, and George Fujii as Editors. We also fully support and have total confidence in the team of review editors that Diane has recruited.

We will also note that we are in possession of the full record of your correspondence with Diane Labrosse concerning [...] review of your book. We are satisfied that your book was fairly reviewed [...] and that any possible concerns that you might have had about H-Diplo's Review process were fully met by the subsequent roundtable on your book.

B. The charge that H-Diplo discriminates against women is one that we take very seriously. We have examined this charge and we find it to be groundless. One of our members took the trouble of comparing the participation rate of women on H-Diplo with that of *Diplomatic History*, the flagship journal in the field.

Here is the substance of the report:

BEGIN QUOTATION:

I also compiled some statistics about female reviewers and reviewers of books by women in *Diplomatic History*. This is what I found.

I surveyed the *Feature Reviews* in *DH* from January 2005 through January 2008. During the time, *DH* ran reviews of 100 books. (I did not count reviews of three volumes of the *Foreign Relations* series.) Of those, 82.5 books were written or edited by men; 17.5 written or edited by women. (The .5 arises from one book having a male and a female editor.) The reviews were written by 84 men and 14 women. (There are fewer reviewers than books, since a couple of reviews were of two books.) That means that over a period of a little more than three years, 17.5 percent of the reviews in *DH* were of books that had female authors or editors, and 14.3 percent of the *Feature Reviews* had female authors.

I did a count of both the book reviews and the roundtable reviews on H-DIPLO during the same period of time. Taking the book reviews first, 25 percent of the books had female authors or editors, and 13.5 percent of the reviews were by women. For the roundtables, 10.3 percent of the books had female authors or editors, and 18.3 percent of the roundtable reviewers (I did not count the roundtable editors) were women.

The combined totals for both the book reviews and roundtables are these: 18.1 percent of the books under review had female authors or editors, and 17.1 percent of the reviews were by women.

Thus, my count shows that H-DIPLO and *DH* had almost identical figures for the percentage of female-authored or edited books that they reviewed, and H-DIPLO had a slightly higher percentage of female reviewers.

Someone might review these figures and conclude that women are under represented in both H-DIPLO and *DH*. I think one would need much more data about the subscribers to each publication and the percentage of women in international/foreign relations/diplomatic history before reaching that conclusion.

Instead, I would conclude from the data that H-DIPLO is doing about as well--or even a little better--than the leading publication in U.S. international history in reviewing books by women and in publishing reviews by women. Of course, both publications could do better, and we ought to discuss ways to accomplish that goal on H-DIPLO.

END QUOTATION

Christopher Ball sent you a detailed response that contains similar findings regarding H-Diplo reviews in general. The roundtable review on your book, of course, was commissioned by a female and had two female reviewers. As scholars in the field, we are all concerned with the fair treatment of women on H-Diplo, in SHAFR, and in the

profession as a whole. Certainly there is room for improvement on the matter of representation of women -- as well as minorities -- in the field, and we will continue to pursue that goal at every opportunity.

We welcome your future participation on H-Diplo, subject to the list guidelines. We also consider the file on this particular matter to be closed.

Signed,
The H-Diplo Editorial Board

Tom Blanton,
Malcolm Byrne,
Diane Clemens,
Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman,
Robert Hanks,
Jim Hershberg,
William Keylor,
Fredrik Logevall,
Sally Marks,
Chester Pach,
Yone Sugita,
Janice Terry,
Odd Arne Westad,
Thomas Zeiler