

AUSTRALIAN POLITICAL SCIENCE: JOURNAL AND PUBLISHER RANKINGS

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Prepared for the Australian Political Studies Association (AusPSA)

Introduction

The main body of this paper provides rankings for journals (see Table 1) and publishers (see Table 2) in political science, international relations and public policy and administration. This commentary describes how the Australian Political Studies Association (AusPSA) organised the rankings exercise, and identifies the issues posed by the exercise. The aim of the exercise was to rank journals solely on their quality (that is, the quality of the research articles they contain) not their importance to Australian researchers.

How we compiled the rankings

The Metric

The Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) has been advised that splitting the top journals into A* and A is the only way to identify the very best journals and distinguish effectively between groups. They are deliberately called A* and A (rather than A and B, or Tier 1 and Tier 2) to make as clear as possible the assumption underlying the ranking is that ALL A and A* journals will be of VERY

high-quality (see definitions below). The distinction between A* and A is necessary to make this work as a metric. In so doing, we follow the science disciplines which are ranking their journals on this basis. There is one important difference. The sciences rely heavily on the impact factor. The social sciences and humanities cannot rely on impact factors to the same extent because ISI coverage is incomplete or non-existent. So, the judgement of the AusPSA panel (see below) which played a greater role in the final rankings and journal reputation in the political science community was an important factor. However, the lists are roughly comparable to the science lists.

Data sources

The data sources consist of:

- between 2000 to 2005, all journals and publishers from the 17 Australian political science departments covered by the DEST pilot study;
- any journals listed by Thomson ISI in its subject categories, ‘Political Science’, ‘International Relations’ and ‘Public Administration’;
- journals listed in Ulrich’s Periodicals Directory (<http://www.ulrichsweb.com>) in its subject categories ‘Political Science’, ‘Political Science – International Relations’, and ‘Public Administration’;
- DEST’s list of accredited publishers.

Defining the bands

A* (top 5%)

Typically an A* journal and publisher would be among the best in its field or subfield in which to publish and would typically cover the entire field and subfield. These are journals and publishers where most of the work is important (it will shape the field)

and where researchers boast about getting accepted. Acceptance rates would typically be low and the editorial board would be dominated by field leaders, including many from top institutions.

A (next 15%)

Publishing in an A journal and book would add to the author's standing, showing that they have real engagement with the global research community and that they have something to say about problems of some significance. Typical signs of an A journal are low-ish acceptance rates and an editorial board which includes a reasonable proportion of well-known researchers from top institutions.

B (next 30%)

Tier B covers journals with a solid, though not outstanding, reputation. In a Tier B journal, one would expect fewer papers of very high quality. There are, however, good journals under B and such journals are important outlets, especially for the work of PhD students and early career researchers. Typical examples would be regional journals with high-ish acceptance rates, and editorial boards that have fewer leading researchers from top international institutions.

C (next 50%)

All the rest.

The process

We adopted a four-step process. First, we sent a provisional list based on our data sources to a small panel asking them to do a provisional ranking. Second, the National Office collated the response and circulated the revised ranking to all members of AusPSA. The National Office collated these responses and the panel adjusted the list to meet DEST's specifications and adjudicated competing assessments. Finally, we

brought this penultimate list to the AusPSA annual conference and made it available for comment to all members on our website. The National Office revised the list. It was then approved by the Panel for final submission to DEST.

We checked the listings against the ISI journal impact factors. There are 85 political science journals, 50 international relations journals and 25 public administration journals. There are also separate listings for area studies and gender studies. A* journals have a top-20 impact score in one or more of these groupings. A journals have a top-40 score. Most B journals have an impact factor. Most C journals do not have an impact factor. Our listings are broadly consistent with existing world rankings (see for example: *Political Studies Review* 3/1 2005: 293–313).

It would be foolish to claim there was unanimity on the rankings but AusPSA can make two claims. First, there was unanimity that AusPSA should compile such rankings for the political science community. Second, there was a substantial measure of agreement about the top journals. Most disagreements focused on the A*/A border and the B/C border. For the former, the panel believes such disagreements are of little consequence because all journals in these categories are world class. For the latter, the panel had to make judgements and it recognises that they will not command everyone's agreement.

Issues

ISI Journal Impact Factor

For many years, bibliometricians and journal editors have raised concerns over the construction and use of ISI's Journal Impact Factor. The methodological concerns surrounding the way it is calculated have been well documented, with Henk Moed (Leiden University) as the most authoritative voice. Thus:

ISI classifies documents into types. In calculating the numerator of the IF, ISI counts citations to all types of documents, whereas as citeable documents in the denominator ISI includes ... only normal articles, notes and reviews. However, editorials, letters and several other types are cited rather frequently in a number of journals. When they are cited, these types do contribute to the citation counts in the IF's numerator, but are not included in the denominator. In a sense, the citations to these documents are 'for free'. (H Moed and T van Leeuwen, *Nature* 381, 1996: 186)

He goes on to make the prophetic statement:

Our analysis suggests that journal editors or scientific publishers could, in principle, artificially raise the IFs of their journals. To put it bluntly, if a scientific publisher succeeds in publishing important review articles as an editorial, or including a lively correspondence section, the IF of his or her journal may go up substantially.

Whether or not editors are trying to play the game and inflate the IF for their journal (and a few unscrupulous ones have been caught), it still highlights the problems with ISI's method of calculation. Attempts to get them to change have so far failed, though there was a session devoted to the problems in a recent international bibliometric's conference.

There is a second and chronic problem for the social sciences. The impact factor assumes a two-year citation life cycle, which is common in the natural sciences. For the social sciences 3–5 years would be more accurate.

Possible biases

Australian political science is not a natural science. Aus PSA is not American. So, political science is disadvantaged. There is a clear bias for northern hemisphere English language journals and against area studies, regional and foreign language journals. The Anglo-centric bias is even more prominent for publishers. The A* band is made up only of American and British university presses. One member expressed a widespread concern:

I am concerned about the impact on the field if more Australian journals are not recognised as suitable venues for publishing. I say this as someone who does manage to publish Australian material in reputable international journals as well as Australian ones but who knows how rare this is. Basically, I can only do it when I am undertaking one of my comparative studies; for example, on Britain or the USA. Otherwise, I know that reputable international journals usually just are not interested in taking material on Australian politics. This is not because of the poor quality of the work on Australian politics but simply because of US and British intellectual biases that see work on Australia as being of little significance or interest to their readers.

I'm therefore very worried about what will happen to some of my colleagues who don't do comparative work and yet publish work on Australian politics that is just as good as the equivalent British or American work. They can't all publish every time in AJPS for example. Top ranking Australian politics experts do therefore have to publish in a range of Australian journals, some of which would

not be ranked highly internationally or read by an international academic readership.

We can make a similar point by focusing on the effects of the size of American political science. We would not expect most people to publish in the A* journals, if the journals are indeed the top 5 per cent of the world. We are competing with everyone else in the world for those spots and we probably have less than 0.5 per cent of the world's political scientists. So, in some journals, no one from Australia will appear and in all the others it will be rare. There are around 350 individual political scientists in Australia. The American Political Science Association lists 700+ departments as members of its departmental services programme. So, there are two US departments for every single political scientist in Australia, all competing for the same outlets. That only takes into account the departments that are affiliated to the American PSA among the 4,000 US universities. There will be many more. After that, we can add all the political scientists in every other country in Europe, South American China, India and the rest of the world who often have the same rankings and targets.

There are two other possible biases.

1. For journals and against books

The natural sciences are more easily served by metrics in the RQF. Most researchers publish primarily in journals, and bibliometrics occupy centre stage, with journal rankings an additional, but probably less important, metric. Books are in the wings. The mechanics of the RQF also favour journal articles. Electronic copies of articles are available for 2001–6. Most books have only recently become available in electronic form. Books remain the main research output for political science.

There is also one special feature of book publishing to note that is hard to rank. The top university presses also have elite series; for example, Cambridge University Press on international relations. Such series should be drawn to the assessors' attention. AusPSA is not confident we can list all such series. So, we note the fact. We have advised members to make the claim in their 100-word justification for their choice of four 'best' research outputs for RQF.

2. Against 'public intellectuals'

The following quote makes the point cogently

I don't believe that Julie Bishop, Howard and our other political masters want the RQF to result in the major decline of Australian politics and policy as a field. ... Australian politics departments have a special responsibility to research Australian politics and policy? (We are funded by Australian taxpayers after all).

In short, we need to protect, even promote, the role of public intellectuals even though their publications tend not to be in high-ranked international journals.

'Local' journals

There are international assessors on the panels who will have views on the rankings – we must be able to defend them based on quality. Local journals may be important for Australian academics, but they are not necessarily the best in the world. The RQF is about the best in the world – international quality, with rankings not weighted for or against local journals. We have included only two local journals in a top category: both are in the A category. They are middle-ranking journals on their impact factor, but have international standing. For example, Simon Hix's list of top political science journals included the *Australian Journal of Political Science* (see *Political Studies Review* 3/1 2005: 293–313).

Related areas

Political science spans the humanities and the social sciences and overlaps with many specialised subfields. Political scientists write political history and biographies. They make a substantial contribution to area studies and gender studies. All such rankings should be available to the political science assessors. At the instigation of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, we agreed that they would rank Asian Studies journals.

Other uses

The danger with these rankings is that university management will use them to set targets for their staff. The rankings were not designed to do this job, and should not be so used. For example, Rod Rhodes was an external assessor recently on a promotion to lecturer B. The applicant was advised to submit to a top international journal and had done so. Not only was she asked to compete with the best in the world in the first three years of her career, but she was also still waiting for referees' reports six months later. To compound her problem, if accepted, she would wait at least a further 12 months for publication. The advice was unhelpful. B grade journals are good quality journals and the obvious place for the early career researcher (ECRs) to start. Any lecturer B is an apprentice. Choose your cliché – put in the miles, walk before you run, learn the craft – but senior colleagues should set ECRs practical goals. If nothing else the positive reinforcement of being accepted and getting into print boosts careers. Delay and rejection are just plain discouraging.

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Table 1 Final Journal Rankings

A* Category Journals

Public Administration-Public Policy

Public Administration	
Public Administration Review	
<i>Sub-total</i>	2

Political Science

American Journal of Political Science	
American Political Science Review	
British Journal of Political Science	
Comparative Politics	
European Journal of Political Research	
History of Political Thought	
Political Analysis	
Public Opinion Quarterly	
Political Studies	
Political Theory	
<i>Sub-total</i>	10

International Relations

European Journal of International Relations	
International Organization	
International Security	
International Studies Quarterly	
Journal of Conflict Resolution	
Review of International Studies	
World Politics	
<i>Sub-total</i>	7

TOTAL		19	5.09%
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A Category Journals

Public Administration-Public Policy

Administration and Society
Governance
Journal of European Public Policy
Journal of Public Administration Theory and Research
Journal of European Public Policy

Policy and Politics
Sub-total

6

Political Science

Annals
Annual Review of Political Science
Australian Journal of Political Science*
Comparative Political Studies
Electoral Studies
Environmental Politics
Government and Opposition
Human Rights Quarterly
Journal of Political Philosophy
Journal of Politics
Journal of the History of Ideas
Journal of Theoretical Politics
Legislative Studies Quarterly
Journal of Women, Politics and Policy
New Left Review
New Political Economy
Philosophy and Public Affairs
Political Communication
Political Geography
Political Science Quarterly
Politics, Philosophy and Economics
Presidential Studies Quarterly
Public Choice
Publius - The Journal of Federalism
Review of Politics
Theory and Society
West European Politics

Sub-total

27

International Relations

Asian Survey
Australian Journal of International Affairs *
China Journal
China Quarterly
Conflict Management and Peace Research
Conflict Resolution Quarterly
Cooperation and Conflict
Ethics and International Affairs
Ethnicities
Foreign Affairs
International Affairs
International Politics
International Relations of Asia Pacific
Journal of Common Market Studies
Journal of Contemporary Asia

Journal of Development Studies			
Journal of Peace Research			
Journal of South Asian Studies			
Marine Policy			
Millennium			
Pacific Affairs			
Pacific Review			
Review of International Political Economy			
Studies in Comp Int Development			
Survival			
<i>Sub-total</i>	25		
TOTAL		58	15.54%

* top national journal in category

B Category Journals

Public Administration- Public Policy

American Review of Public Administration
 Australian Journal of Public Administration*
 Environment and Planning C
 Journal of Policy Analysis and Management
 Journal of Public Policy
 Policy Sciences
 Policy Studies Journal
Sub-total

8

Political Science

Acta Politica
 American Politics Quarterly
 Arena Journal
 Asian Journal of Political Science
 Australian Journal of Politics and History*
 British Journal of Politics and International Relations
 British Politics
 Business and Politics
 Canadian Journal of Political Science
 Citizenship Studies
 Commonwealth and Comparative Politics
 Comparative European Politics
 Constitutional Political Economy
 Contemporary Political Theory
 Contemporary Politics
 Contemporary Security Policy
 Contemporary South Asia
 Democratization
 European Union Politics
 Gender and Politics
 German Politics
 Global Environmental Politics

Harvard Int J Press Pol
Human Rights Quarterly
International Feminist Journal of Politics
International Journal of Public Opinion Research
International Political Science Review
Journal of Australian Studies
Journal of Democracy
Journal of East Asian Affairs
Journal of Political Ideologies
Local Government Studies
New Political Economy
Parliamentary Affairs
Party Politics
Patterns of Prejudice
Perspectives on Politics
Political Behavior
Political Psychology
Political Quarterly
Political Research Quarterly
Political Science
Politics and Society
Polity
Rationality and Society
Review of Political Economy
Revue Française de Science Politique
SAIS Review
Scandinavian Political Studies
Scottish Journal of Political Economy
Security Dialogue
Social Alternatives
Telos
Sub-total

53

International Relations

Alternatives
Asian Security
Biosecurity
Biosecurity and Bioterrorism
Cambridge Review of Internat Affairs
Canadian Journal of Pacific Studies
Communist and Post-Communist Studies
Comparative International Development
Contemporary South East Asia Research
Europe-Asia Studies
Foreign Policy
Global Governance
Global Society
International Interaction
International Relations
International Journal
Journal of Contemporary China
Journal of Conflict Studies

Journal of Strategic Studies			
National Identities			
Nationalism & Ethnic Politics			
Nations and Nationalism			
Post-Soviet Affairs			
Problems of Post-Communism			
Security Dialogue			
Security Studies			
Studies in Comparative International Development			
Terror Polit Violence			
Third World Quarterly			
Washington Quarterly			
<i>Sub-total</i>			
TOTAL B	30		
TOTAL A*+A+B		91	24.39%
		168	45.04%

C Category Journals

American Asian Review
 American Politics Research
 American Review of Politics
 Analyse and Kritik
 Analysis
 Anarchist Studies
 antiTHESIS
 Armed Forces and Society
 Asia - Pacific Review
 Asia Affairs: An American Review
 Asia Europe Journal
 Asia Pacific Journal of Public Admin
 Asian Perspective
 Asian Profile
 Asian Studies Review
 Atlantis
 Australasian Journal of Enviro Mg'ment
 Australasian Journal of Human Security
 Australasian Parliamentary Review
 Australasian Review of African Studies
 Australian Journal of Irish Studies
 Australian Journal of Social Issues
 Australian Review of Public Affairs
 Australian Slavonic & East European Studies
 Australian-Canadian Studies
 Canadian Foreign Policy
 Canadian Journal of Public Administration
 Catalyst
 Cato Journal: an interdisciplinary journal of public policy analysis
 Central Asian Survey
 CESAA Review
 China Information
 China Report: a journal of East Asian Studies
 China Review (HK)
 China Studies

Chinese Journal of International Politics
City and Community
Civil Liberty
Civil Wars
Colloquy
Commentary
Comparative European History
Comparative Strategy
Conflict Management and Peace Science
Conflict Resolution & Negotiation Journal
Congressional Studies Series
Constellations
Contractualism and Citizenship
Contributions
Critical Asian Studies
Critical Horizons
Critical Policy Analysis: theory, methods and practice
Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy
Critique: a journal of socialist theory
Development Bulletin
Dissent
Documentos y Aportes en Admin Pub y Gestion Estatal
Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs
East European Politics and Societies
Ecopolitics: Thought and Action
Ephemera: theory and politics in organization
European Foreign Affairs Review
European Integration
European Journal of Political theory
European Review
European Union Politics
Foreign Policy Analysis
Foreign Policy Bulletin: the documentary record of US foreign policy
Global Change, Peace and Security
Global Development Studies
Global Environmental Change
Harvard Journal of World Affairs
Historical materialism: Research in Crit Marx Theory
Idealistic Studies
Indian Journal of Political Science
International Insights
International Journal of Political Economy: a journal of translations
International Journal of Politics, Culture & Society
International Journal of World Peace
International Peacekeeping
International Public Management Journal
International Public Policy Review
International Public Relations Review
International Relations
International Review of Administration Science
International Studies Perspectives
Internationale Politik
Issues and Studies

Italian Journal of Political Science
Japanese Journal of Political Science
Japanese Studies
Jnl of Communist Studs and Trans Pols
Journal of Australian Political Economy
Journal of Australian Indigeneous Issues
Journal of Canadian Studies
Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics
Journal of Conflict, Security & Development
Journal of Contemp Issues in Business and Government
Journal of Contemporary Analysis
Journal of Contemporary European Studies
Journal of Contemporary Politics
Journal of Critical Realism
Journal of Defence Studies
Journal of Diplomacy & Foreign Relations
Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties
Journal of European Integration History
Journal of Government and Political Studies
Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs
Journal of International Relations
Journal of Military and Political Sociology
Journal of Military Ethics: Normative aspects of the use
Journal of Modern African Studies
Journal of Policy Modelling
Journal of Political Science
Journal of Social and Political Thought
Korean Journal of Defence Analysis
Latin American Perspectives
Latin American Politics and Society
Legislative Studies
Local Government Studies
Melbourne Journal of Politics
Middle East Journal
Middle East Policy
Middle Eastern Studies
Modern and Contemporary France
Modern China
Nation
National Political Science Review
Nationalities Papers
New England Journal of Political Science
New Political Science: a journal of politics & culture
Nonproliferation Review
Northern Review
Oceania
Organization
Organization and Environment
Osteuropa
Pacific Affairs: an international review of Asia and the Pacific
Pacific and American Studies
Pacific Focus
Panorama
Parallax

Peace and Change
Peace and Democracy in South Asia
Peace and Policy
Peacekeeping & International Relations
Pensee
People and Place
Perspectives on European Politics and Society
Perspectives: the Central European Review of International Affairs
Phillipine Political Science Journal
Policy and Society
Policy Forum
Policy Review
Polis
Politica Y Gobierno
Politicka Ekonomie
Politics
Politics & Policy
Politique Etrangere
Politische Vierteljahresschrift
Portugese Studies Review
Pretexts
Promethus
Public Administration and Development
Public Culture
Public Personnel Management
Public Policy
Public Policy and Administration
Public Money and Management
Public Right to Know
Quorum
Regulation and Governance
Representation
Review of Policy Research
Revue D' Economie Politique
Round Table
Russian and Euro-Asian Bulletin
Russian Review
Seachanges
Social Analysis
Social Identities
Social Justice Research
Societas: A Journal for Philosophical Study of Public Affairs
South African Journal of International Affairs
South Asia
South East Asia Research
South Pacific Study
Southern Review
Space Policy
State Politics and Policy Quarterly
Stockholm Journal of East Asian Studies
Strategic Studies
Studia Islamika
Studies in American Political Development
Studies in Conflict and Terrorism

Taiwan Journal of Southeast Asian Studies			
Taiwan Journal of Australian Studies			
Taiwan Journal of Democracy			
Terrorism and Political Violence			
Third Sector Review			
World Journal of International Relations			
World Journal of Peace and Security			
World Journal of Political Studies			
World Policy Journal			
World Today			
<i>Sub-Total</i>	206	55.23%	
TOTAL			
TOTAL A*+A+B+C		373	100.00%

Table 2 Ranking of Book Publishers

A* Category

Cambridge University Press		
Chicago University Press		
Columbia University Press		
Harvard University Press		
MIT Press		
Oxford University Press/Clarendon (UK/US)		
Princeton University Press		
Stanford University Press		
University of California Press		
Yale University Press		
<i>Sub-total</i>	10	5.80%

A Category

Alfred A Knopf		
Allen & Unwin		
Cornell University Press		
Duke University Press		
Edward Elgar		
Manchester University Press		
Melbourne University Press		
New York University Press		
Oxford University Press (Australia)		
Palgrave MacMillan (UK & Australia, St Martins' Press in US)		
Penguin		
Politico's		
Polity Press		
Routledge (Taylor and Francis)		
Sage Publications		
Univ of Pennsylvania Press		
University of Michigan Press		
University of Minnesota Press		
University of New South Wales Press*		
University of Toronto Press		
Wiley-Blackwell		
<i>Sub-total</i>		
A*+A	21	12.20%
		31
		18.00%

B Category

Addison Wesley
Black Inc Press
Butterworth Heinemann
Continuum/Cassell
Duckworth
Edinburgh University Press

Elsevier Science Ltd			
Federation Press			
Hale & Iremonger			
Harper Collins			
Hodder			
John Hopkins University Press			
Jossey-Bass			
Springer (including Kluwer Academic)			
Longman			
Lynne Rienner			
Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft			
Open University Press (McGraw-Hill)			
Pearson Education Australia			
Pennsylvania State University Press			
Pluto Press			
Praeger Publishers			
Prentice Hall			
Queen's McGill Press			
Rowman and Littlefield			
Russell Sage Foundation			
Rutgers University Press			
Scribe Publications			
M E Sharpe			
Singapore University Press			
State University of New York Press			
United Nations University Press			
University of Hawaii Press			
University of Ottawa Press			
University of Queensland Press			
VERSO			
Wiley Publishing			
WW Norton and Company			
<i>Sub-total</i>	37		21.50%
A*+A+B		68	39.50%

C Category

Academic Affairs SIL Philippines
Akademischer Verlag
Allyn and Bacon
Alpmann-Schmidt Verlag
Altamira Press
Anthem Press
Ashgate
ANU E Press
ASEAN Academic Press Ltd
Associated University Presses
Association for Asian Studies
Ateneo de Manila University Press
Atlantic Publishers and Distributors
Australian Humanities Press
Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd
Autonomea

Beacon Press
Beijing University Press
Berg Publishers
Bookman Press
Broadview press
Bruno Mondadori
C Hurst & Co (Publishers) Ltd
Cafoscarina
Canadian Scholars' Press Inc
Carus Publishing Company
Charles Darwin University Press
City University of Hong Kong Press
Crawford House Publishing
Deakin University Press
DJOF Publishers
Farmer Press
Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli
Gerald Duckworth and Co.
Global Oriental
Greenwood Press
Houghton Mifflin Company
IB Taurus
Indiana University Press
Intersentia
Iowa State University Press
IP Communications
Irish Academic Press
ISEAS Publications
IWGIA
JAI Press
Jessica Kingsley
Kalinga Publications
Klartex Verlag
Lang - Peter Lang
Language Australia
Leicester University Press
Lianjing Publishers Ltd
LIT Verlag
Liverpool University Press
Longueville Media
Marcel Dekker Inc
Monash University ePress
Monash University Press
Network Books
Olzog
Pandanus Books
Pearson Education Australia
Peter Lang
Physica-Verlag
Prestige Books
Prometheus Books
Select Publications
Shipra Publications
South Asian Publishers

Southern Highlands Publishers			
Spinifex			
Sussex Academic Press			
Syracuse University Press			
The University Press of Kentucky			
Transaction Publishers			
UBC Press			
UNESCO Publishing			
Universal Academy Press			
Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez			
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Press			
University of Arizona Press			
University of British Columbia Press			
University of Frieberg Press			
University of Georgia Press			
University of Illinois Press			
University of Luton Press			
University of Nebraska Press			
University of North Carolina Press			
University of Queensland Press			
University of Virginia Press			
University of Western Australia Press			
University of Wollongong Press			
University Press of Colorado			
University Press of Florida			
University Press of Mississippi			
University Press of New England			
UWA Press			
VS Verlag			
Wakefield Press			
Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG			
Wollongong University Press			
Women's Press			
Yayasan Obor Indonesia			
<i>Sub-total</i>	104		60.50%
TOTAL		172	100.00%