

Life with a PhD



Findings from *Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out*

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The Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE)
University of Washington, Graduate School & College of Education

(Maresi Nerad)

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LIFE WITH A PHD



- **Findings from *Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out***
 - **Career Outcomes**
 - **Work and Family**
 - **Graduate School Experiences**
- **Forces & Forms of Change in Doctoral Education Today**

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out Survey Sample



Survey: April 2005-March 2006,
PhD Cohorts: 1995 – 1999

Response Rate 45%

65 US universities (accounted for 63% of PhDs in years surveyed)

	N	(% women)
Anthropology	432	(56.5)
Communication	343	(52.2)
Geography	164	(32.3)
History	839	(43.4)
Political Science	701	(35.9)
Sociology	546	(59.2)
<i>Total</i>	3025	(46.8)

Common Assumptions about US PhDs' Employment



- 1. All PhD students want to become professors.**
- 2. The “best” PhD students do become professors.**
- 3. PhD recipients' academic career paths are linear and smooth.**
- 4. Everybody can take the “best” job offered.**
- 5. Professors enjoy the highest job satisfaction.**

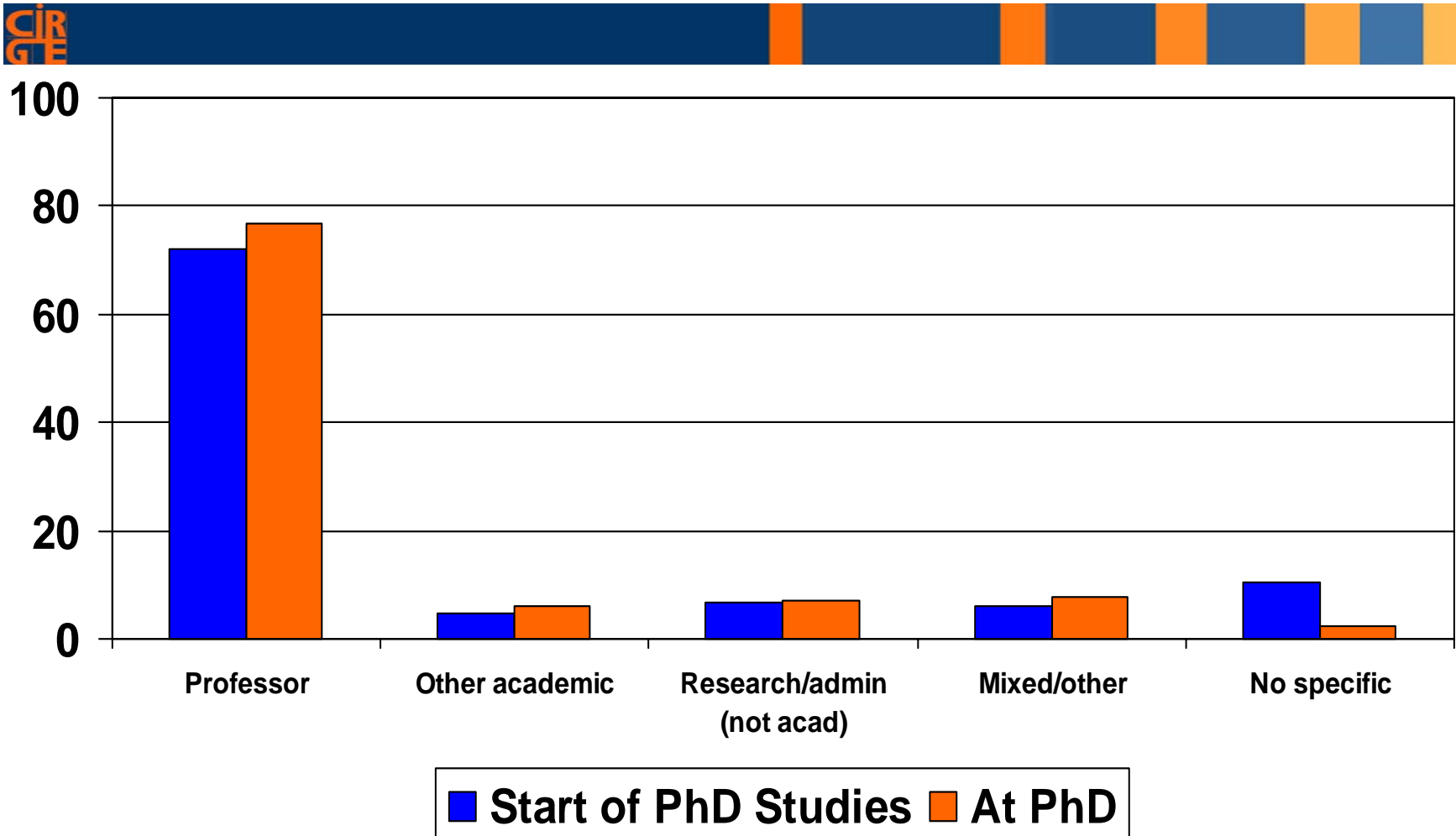
Common Assumption 1



**All students who pursue a PhD
want to become professors.**

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Career Goals at Begin & End of PhD Studies

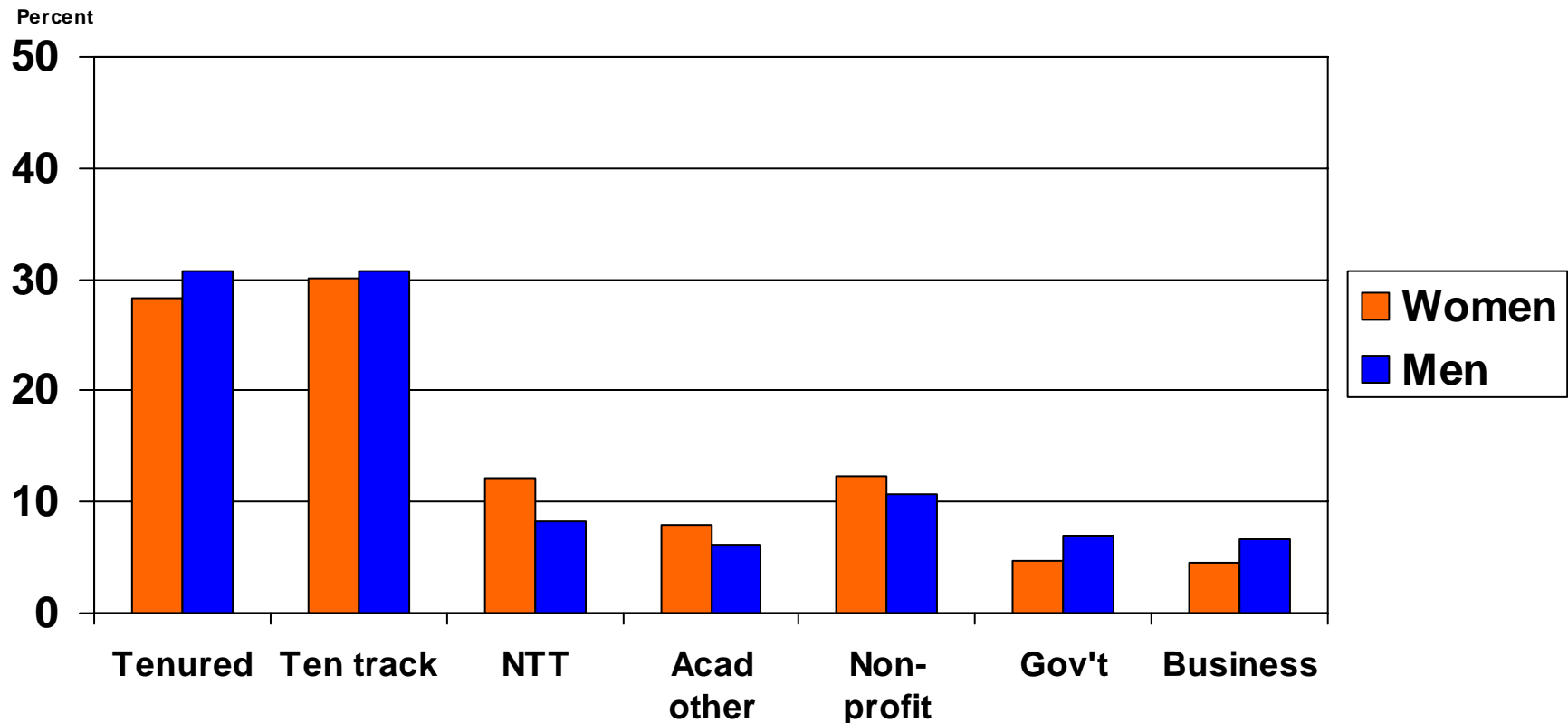


Career Goal at PhD Completion and % Tenured or Tenure-Track 5+ Years Later



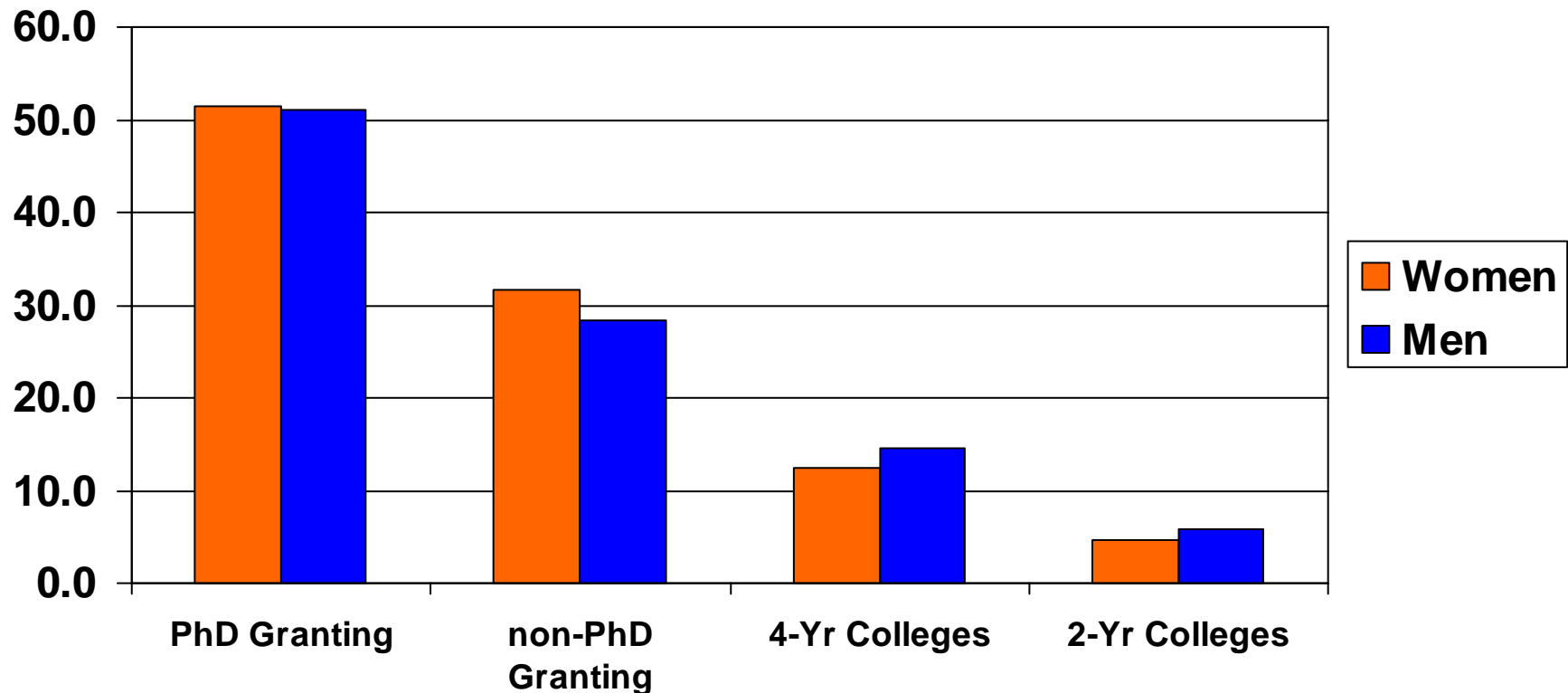
	(1) % Wanted to Be Professor	(2) % Tenured + TT of (1)	(3) % Tenured+T-T of All PhDs	N of All PhDs
Anthropology	72	59	49	(407)
Communication	75	78	66	(319)
Geography	65	69	49	(155)
History	84	72	62	(789)
Political Sc.	76	76	63	(674)
Sociology	75	74	60	(521)

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out Jobs at Survey by Gender (2005/2006)



Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out (2005/2006)

TT Faculty by Type of Institution and Gender



Common Assumption 2



**The “best” PhD students do
become professors**

**measures: many publications
short time-to-degree**

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out **Publications During Graduate School**



Peer-reviewed Journal Articles (author or co-author published or in press at PhD)

#	Percent Respondents
0	49%
1	25%
2	13%
3+	13%

Publications at PhD Completion by Last Employment Sector (**Social Sciences**)



	Academe			BGN Business/Government/Non-Profits		
	% None	% 1 - 2	% ≥ 3	% None	% 1 - 2	% ≥ 3
Anthropology	34	43	23	37	31	32
Communication	37	40	23	61	14	25
Geography	26	48	26	32	32	36
History	42	38	19	47	37	17
Political Science	45	40	14	46	40	14
Sociology	24	47	30	35	41	24

Common Assumption 3



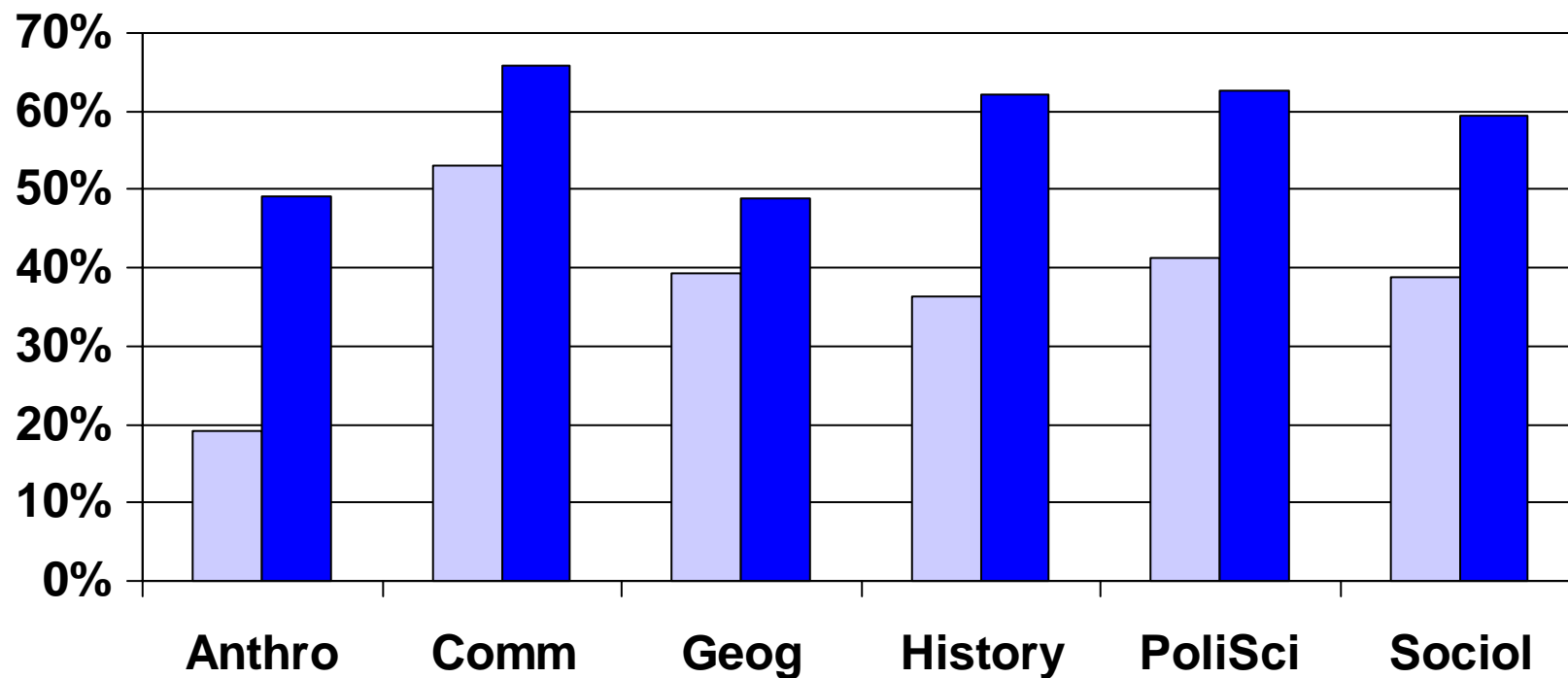
PhD recipients' academic career paths are linear and smooth

% Whose First Job was Tenure Track, and % whose Last Job was Tenured/Tenure Track

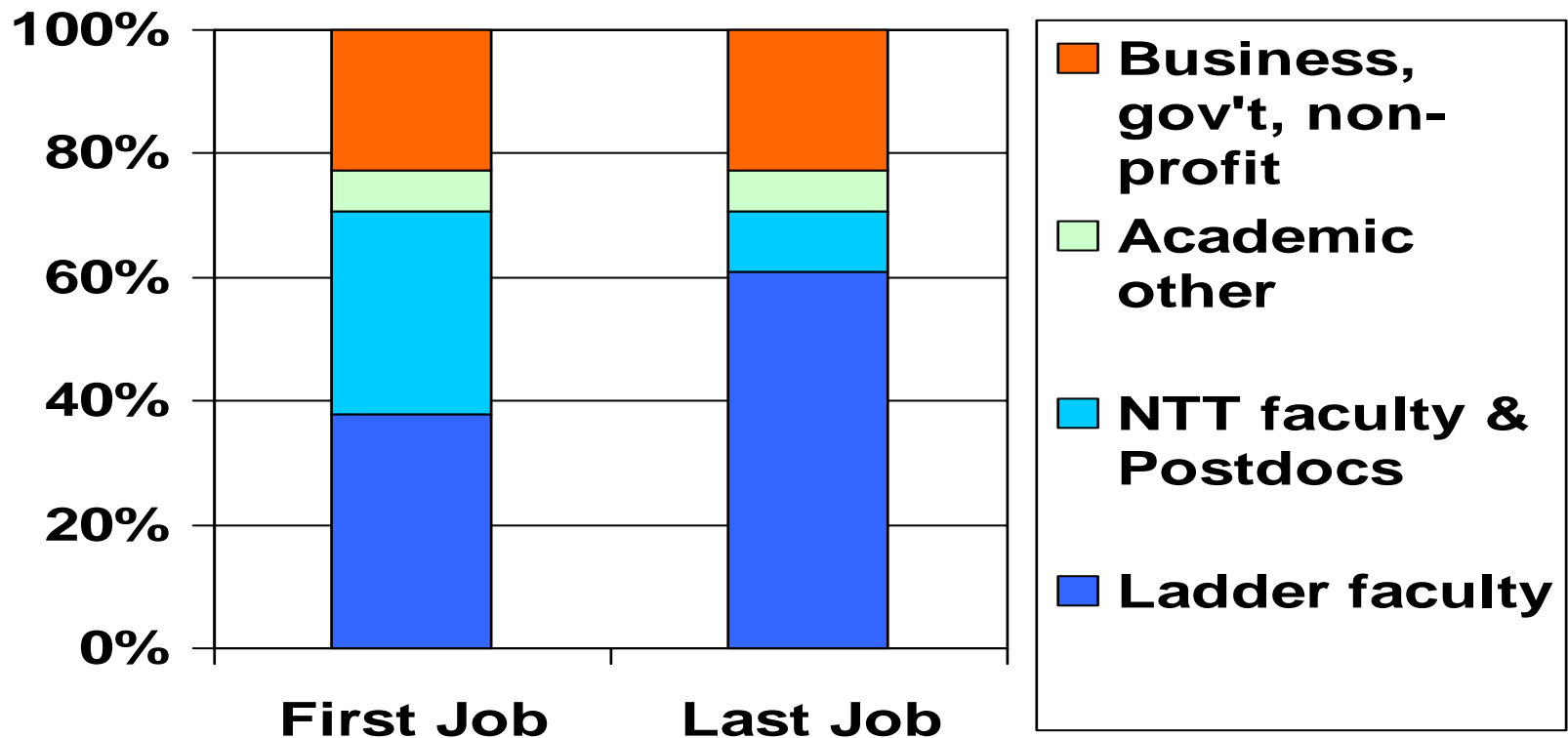


□ First Job Tenure track

■ Last Job T/TT

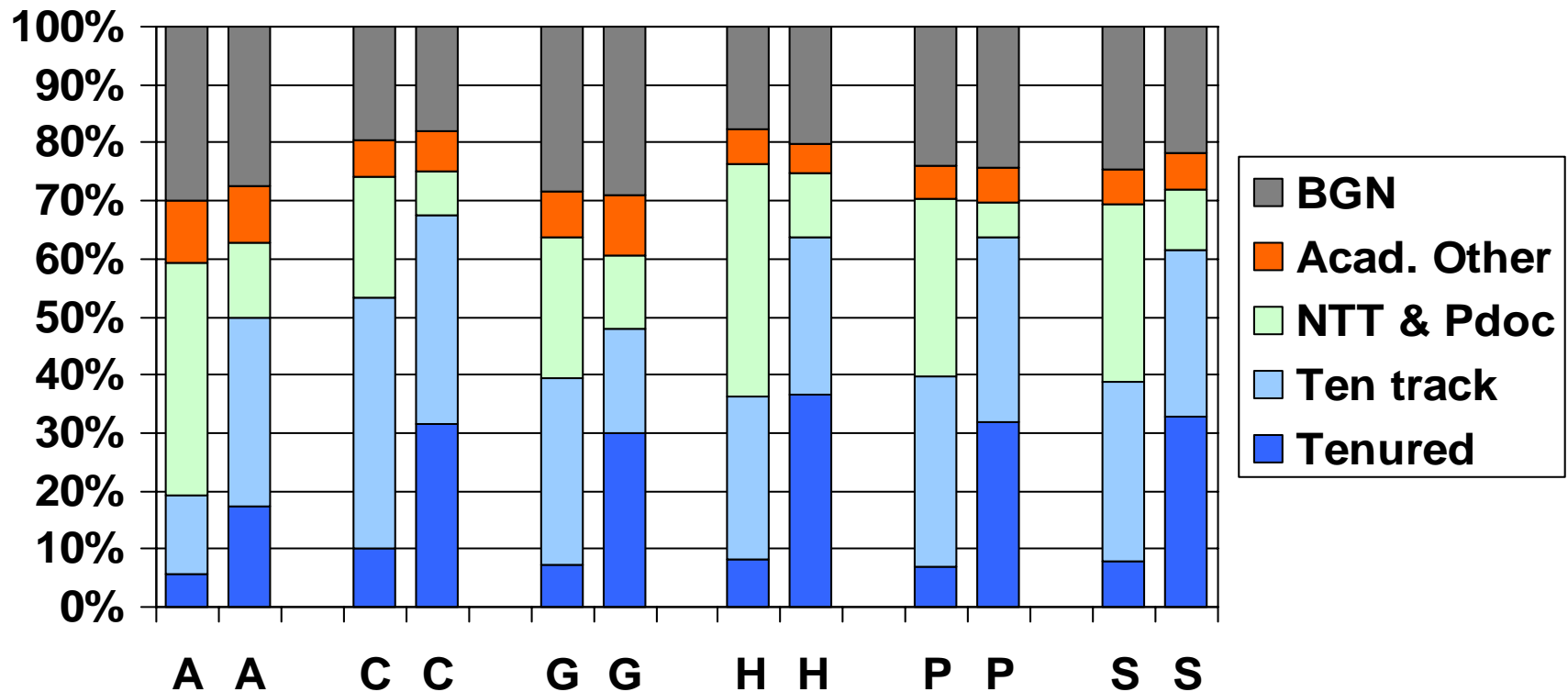


Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out First and Last Jobs



Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

First & Last Job by Discipline



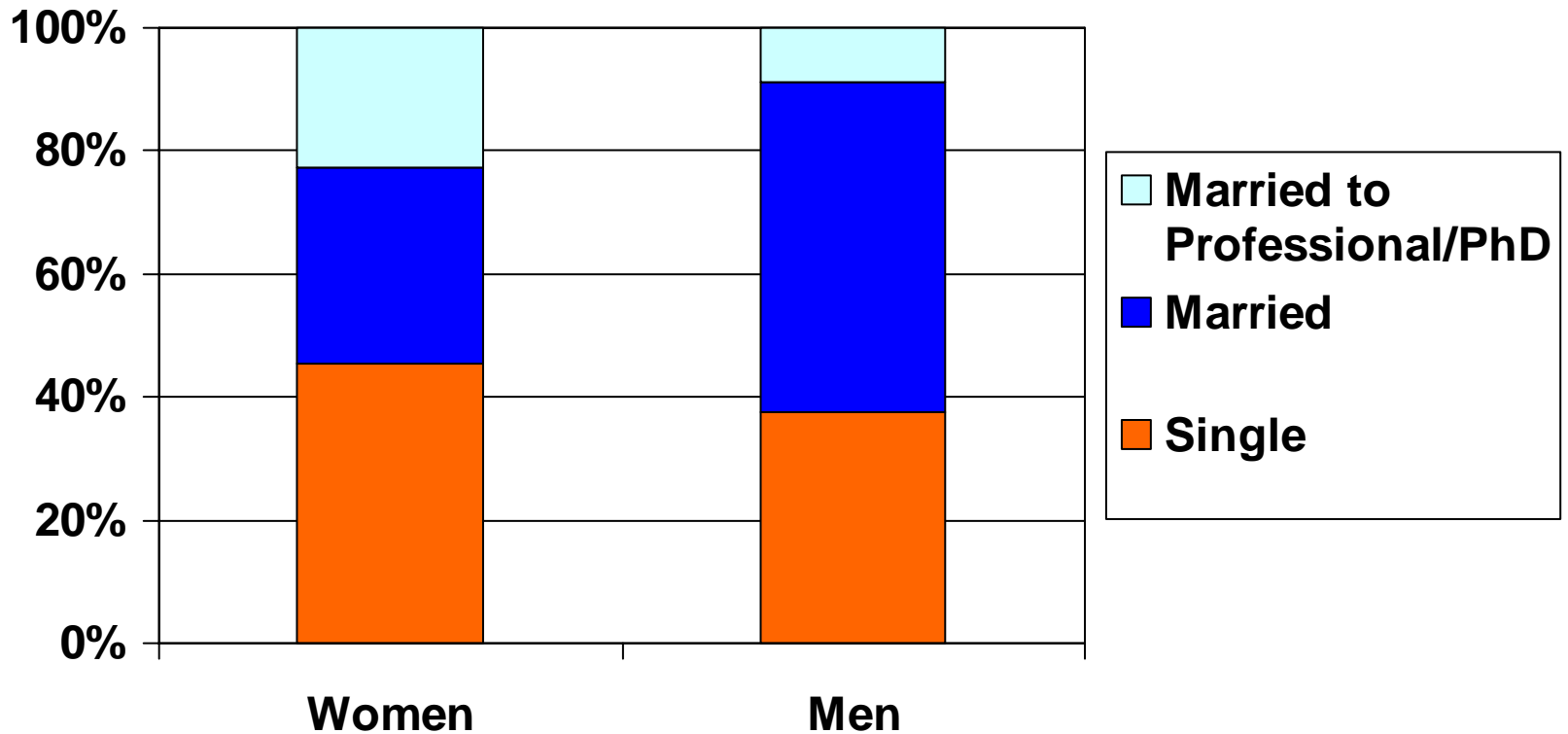
Common Assumption 4



**Everybody can take the “best”
job offered,
everybody is mobile!**

Gender – Family - Career

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out



Educational Level of Spouse At Time of Survey by Gender (all social science fields)



Women in Our Survey

Married to PhD/JD/MD: 32%

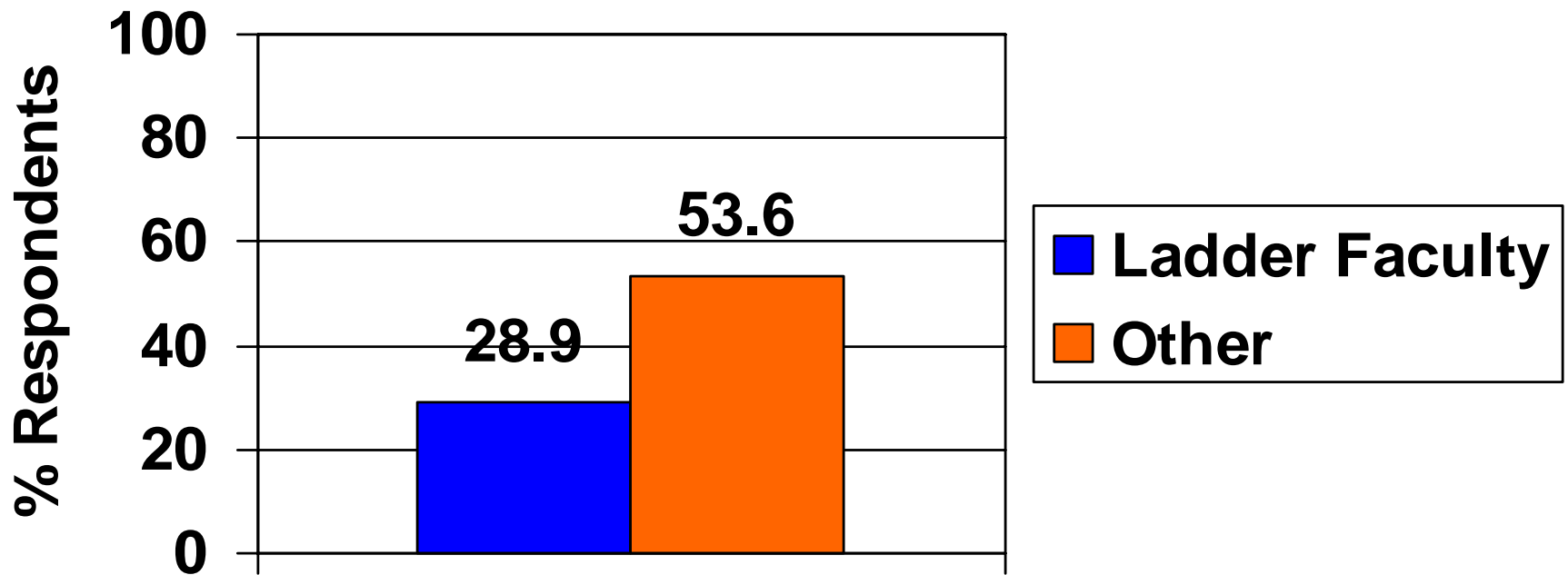
Men in Our Survey

Married to PhD/JD/MD: 18%

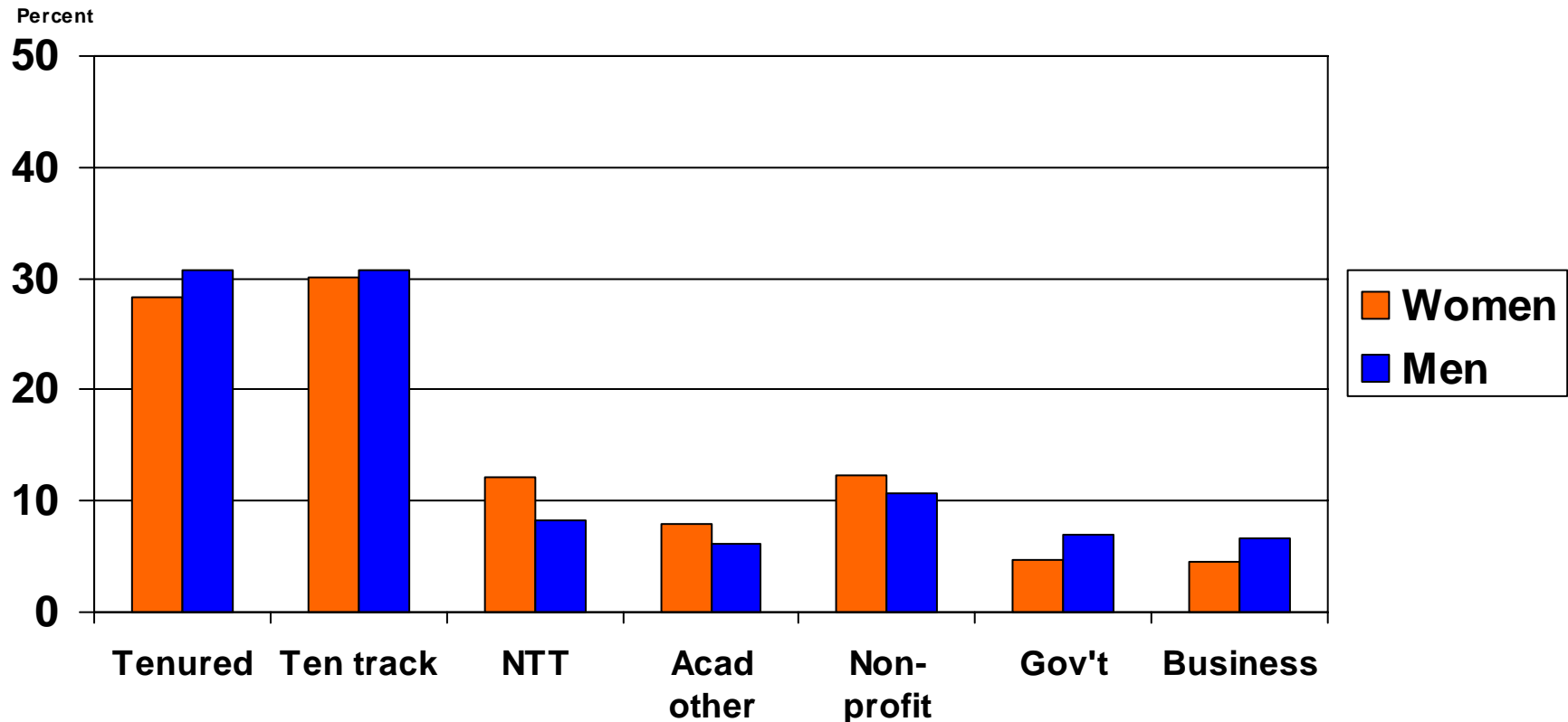
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Mobility

**Job and PhD Institution in SAME
Area (Census Division)**



Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out Jobs at Survey by Gender (2005/2006)



Common Assumption 5



Faculty enjoy the highest job satisfaction

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out Indexes of Career Satisfaction



Indexes for 3 Dimensions of Current Job

- 1. The Work**
- 2. Status**
- 3. Quality of Life**

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Indexes of Career Satisfaction



With the Work

Intellectual Challenge

Autonomy

Level of Responsibility

Contribution to Society

Use of dr. education

**Good fit with my abilities
and interests**

With Status

Career growth opportunities

Prestige

Job security

Salary

Availability of resources

Recognition

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out Indexes of Career Satisfaction



Quality of Life

Ability to balance work + family/personal life

Support/tolerance for all types of people

Opportunities for spouse/partner in area

Proximity to extended family

Geographic location

Flexibility in schedule or location

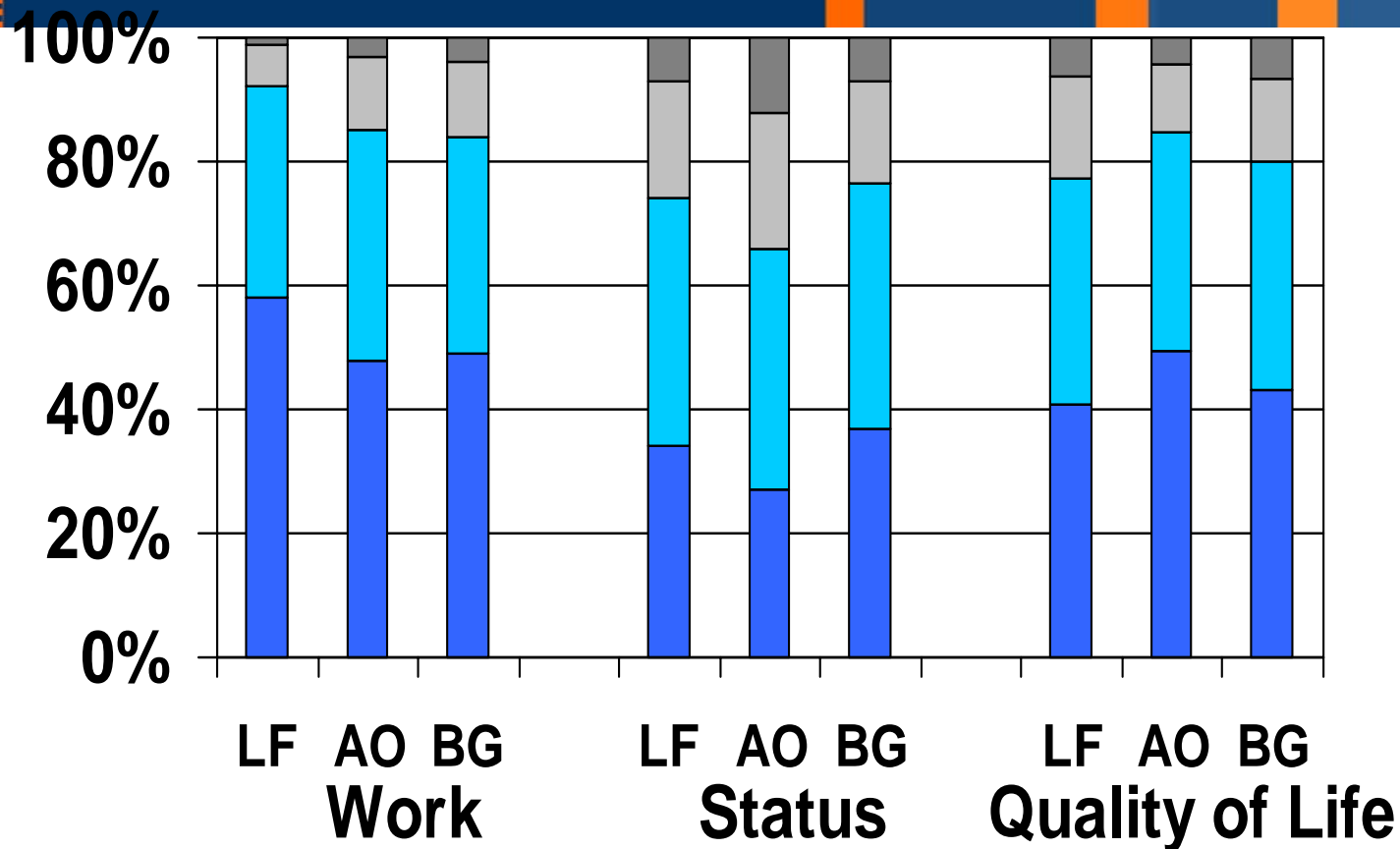
Overall Satisfaction with Current Job (**Social Sciences**)



Major Field	Rank	Mean Satisfaction (1=very dissatisfied to 4=very satisfied)
Ten + TT Faculty	1	3.20
Government	1	3.20
Industry	3	3.18
Foundation/Social (non) Profit	4	3.17
Lecturer	5	3.12

Three Dimensions of Career Satisfaction by Job Type

LF 'ladder faculty' AO 'acad. other + NTT' BG 'BGN'



■ Very satisfied
 ■ Somewhat satisfied
 ■ Somewhat dissatisfied
 ■ Very dissatisfied

Median Salary at Time of Survey (2005/2006) among Full-time and Self-employed PhDs: **Social Sciences**



Thousands



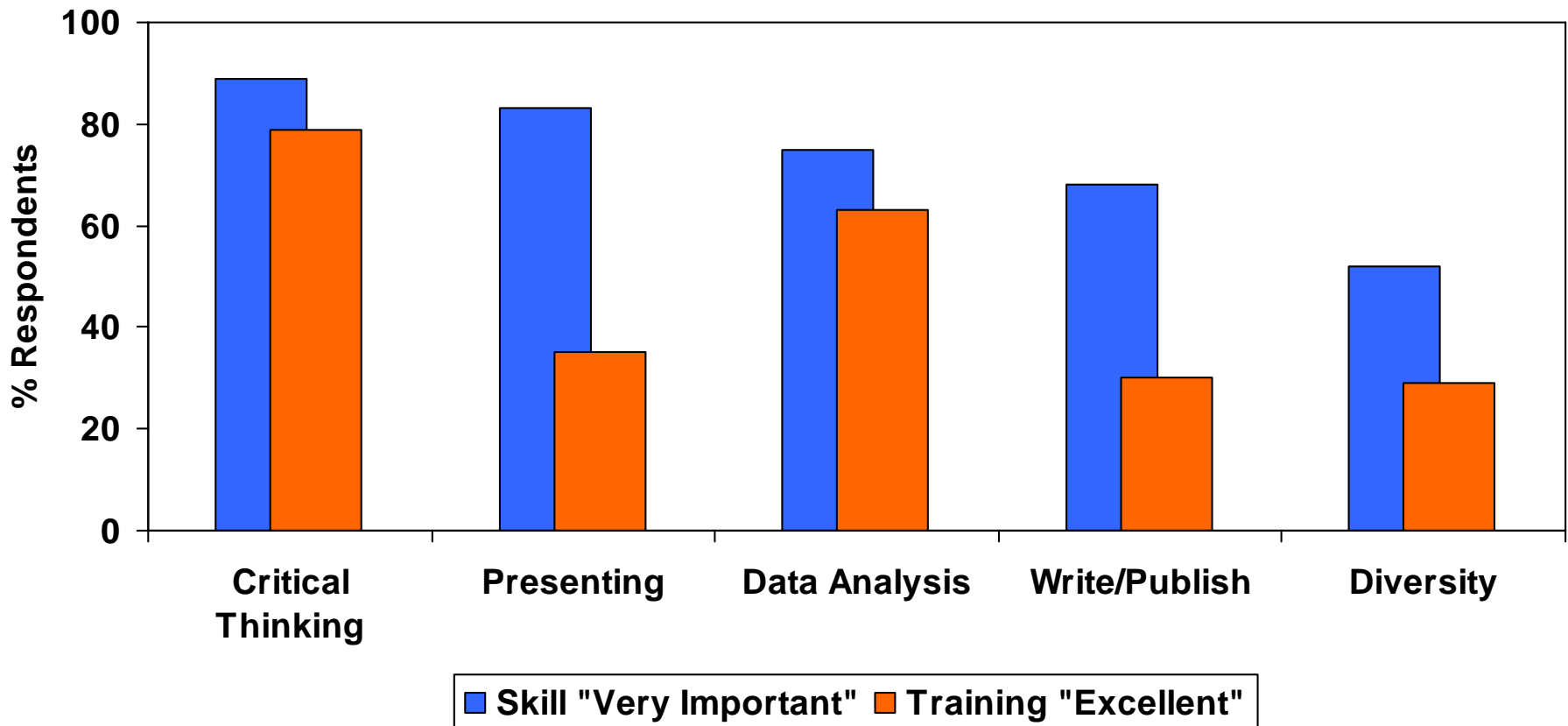
Anthro. Comm. Geogr. History PoliSci. Sociology

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

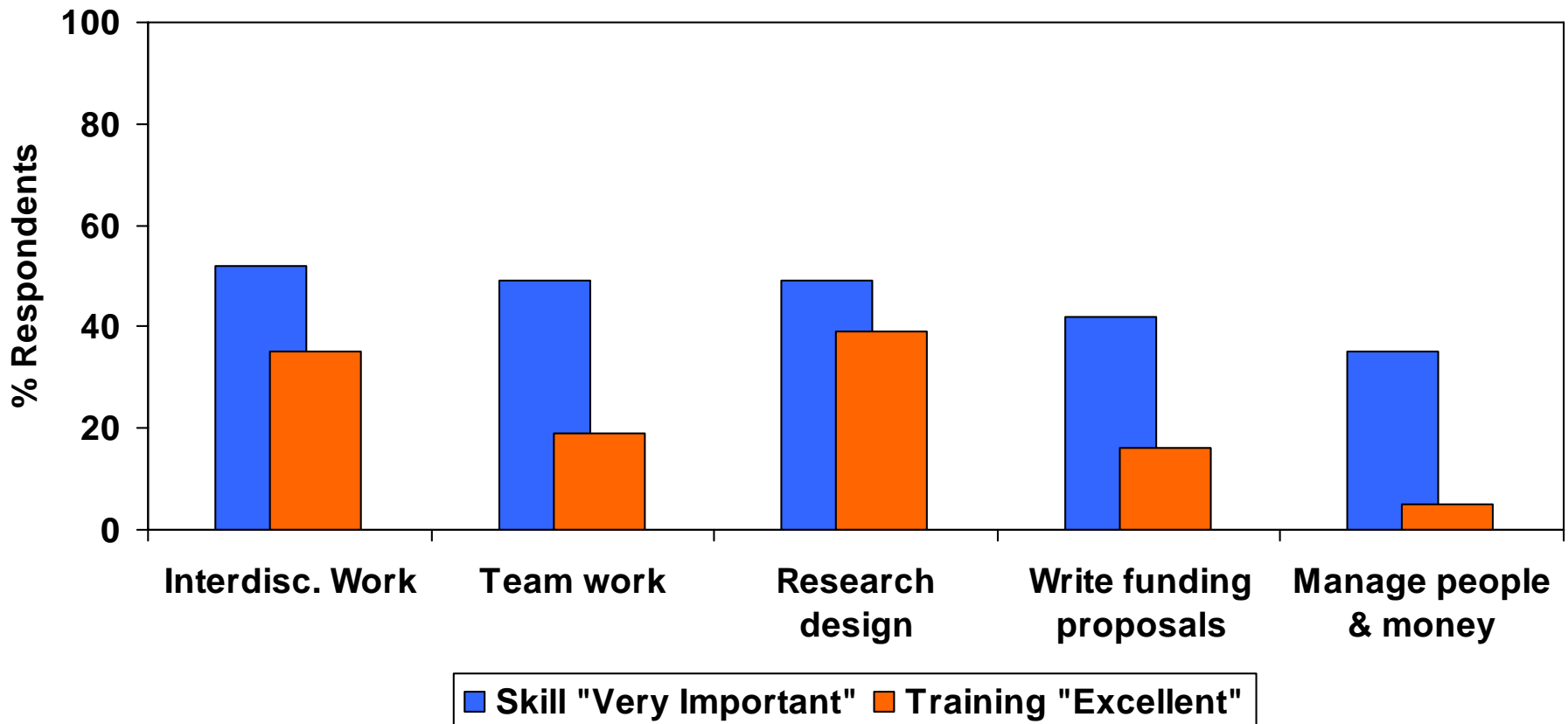


Graduate School Experiences

Importance of Skill vs. Quality of Training during PhD Studies



Importance of Skill vs. Quality of Training during PhD Studies



Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Evaluation of Program Elements



<i>% Rating the item “excellent”:</i>	
Academic rigor	66%
Clear requirements	54%
Overall quality	49%
Support/guide dissertation writing	42%
Preparation for Qual. Exam	37%
Students encouraged to take initiative in academic activities	36%

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out **Evaluation of Program Elements**



<i>% Rating the item “excellent”:</i>	
Financial support	35%
Socializing students into an academic community	32%
Feedback on student progress	32%
Academic career preparation	32%
Having a diverse student population	28%
Non-academic career preparation	6%

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out **Quality of Mentoring by Thesis Advisor**



	% “Very Satisfied”
Advice with PhD Topic	55%
Guidance to finish	55%
Overall mentoring	48%
Support in career decisions	51%
Support in job search	43%
Help in publishing	27%

Life with a PhD



Forces & Forms of Change in PhD Education Worldwide

Forces of Change in PhD Education Worldwide



- **Globalization**
- **Knowledge-based economy (theory)**
- **Expanded notions of need for PhD-educated workers**
- **Interdisciplinary work**
- **ACCOUNTABILITY demands!**

Forms of Change in PhD Education Worldwide



- **Internationalization**
- **Interdisciplinary**
 - *supported by general course on different ways of knowing*
- **Professional skills development**
- **Teamwork more important**
- **Education for labor market beyond academy**
- **Foreign language requirements**
- **More in-built evaluation and assessment**

Thank you!



CIRGE website

<http://depts.washington.edu/coe/cirge/index.html>

Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE), Graduate School & College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle, <http://depts.washington.edu/coe/cirge/>

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out **Postdoctoral Fellowships**



	%	(n)
Anthropology	16%	(57)
Communication		(3)
Geography	10%	(14)
History	7%	(50)
Political Science	7%	(42)
Sociology	16%	(80)

Common Assumption 2

The “best” become professors (*PhD10*)



Short time-to-doctoral degree and number of publications only mattered significantly for **English** and **political science** PhDs.

These factors did NOT matter for PhDs in **biochemistry**, **electrical engineering**, and **mathematics**. Time-to-degree mattered for computer scientists

What mattered is the **RANK** of PhD-granting program.

However in fields with an **attractive job market outside academia** -- **computer science** and **electrical engineering** -- **RANK** did NOT matter significantly.

(logistic regression analysis).