Social Science PhDs- 5+ Year Out

A National Study of PhDs in Six Social Science Fields

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University of Washington, Seattle, Graduate School
College of Education
### Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

#### Survey Sample

Survey: April 2005-March 2006, Response Rate 45%
PhD Cohorts: 1995 – 1999
65 US universities (accounted for 63% of PhDs in years surveyed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(% women)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>(56.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>(52.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>(32.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>839</td>
<td>(43.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>(35.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>(59.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3025</td>
<td>(46.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE), Graduate School & College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle, http://depts.washington.edu/coe/cirge/ 6-25-2008
Common Outdated Assumptions about US PhDs’ Employment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

- **Professor**
- **Other academic**
- **Research/admin (not acad)**
- **Mixed/other**
- **No specific**

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Social Sciences 5+ Years Out
Career Goal “Professor”
at Start & End of PhD

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>(1) % Wanted to Be Professor</th>
<th>(2) % Tenured + TT of (1)</th>
<th>(3) % Tenured+T-T of All PhDs</th>
<th>N of All PhDs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>(407)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>(319)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>(155)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>(789)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Sc.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>(674)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>(521)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out
Jobs at Survey by Gender (2005/2006)

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Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out (2005/2006)
TT Faculty by Type of Institution and Gender

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Common Assumption 2

The “best” PhD students do become professors

measure: many publications
# Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Publications During Graduate School

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Percent Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3+</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Academe</th>
<th></th>
<th>BGN</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% None</td>
<td>% 1 - 2</td>
<td>% &gt; 3</td>
<td>% None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Geography: Publishing at PhD completion: 1st job

Peer-reviewed publications (author or co-author)

% Respondents

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Ladder Faculty (48)  Non-TT (27)  Acad. Other (8)  BGN (27)

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## Graduate School Performance by Job Type at Survey, SS5: **Political Science**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ladder Faculty</th>
<th>NTT faculty</th>
<th>Academic other</th>
<th>BGN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median time-to-degree</strong></td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3+ presentations at national meetings</strong></td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1+ peer reviewed articles (1st or co-author)</strong></td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prestige of department (median NRC rank)</strong></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Common Assumption 3

PhD recipients’ academic career paths are linear and smooth
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Time to stable, full-time Job

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

First Job Tenure Track  Last Job T/TT

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

First Job
- Business, gov't, non-profit: 40%
- Academic other: 20%
- NTT faculty & Postdocs: 20%
- Ladder faculty: 20%

Last Job
- Business, gov't, non-profit: 60%
- Academic other: 20%
- NTT faculty & Postdocs: 20%
- Ladder faculty: 20%
Common Assumption 4

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

Gender – Family - Career

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## Women Make More Compromises Related to Family and Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner has PhD/JD/MD</strong> (among those partnered at survey)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partner never worked full-time</strong> (among ever married or partnered from start of PhD program to survey)</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moved or changed jobs because of partner’s career</strong> (of ever married or partnered)</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postponed or did not have child because of own career</strong> (of those wanting children)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Mobility
Job and PhD Institution in SAME Area (Census Division)
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
## Satisfaction with Current Job (Social Sciences)

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

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

Excluded: Not in the workforce, part time, working outside US.

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Graduate School Experiences
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Mismatch of skills needed and training received
Importance of Skill at Current Job versus Quality of Training in this Skill During PhD Studies

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Importance of Skill at Current Job versus Quality of Training in this Skill During PhD Studies

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Comparative Evaluation of Career Preparation

Academic Careers

- Geography
- 5 other fields

Non-Academic Careers

- Geography
- 5 other fields

Legend:
- Poor
- Adequate
- Excellent
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Doctoral program evaluation
– essential program elements
– mentoring
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out
Evaluation of Program Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Rating the item “excellent”:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic rigor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support/guide dissertation writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation for Qual. Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students encouraged to take initiative in academic activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Evaluation of Program Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Rating the item “excellent”:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing students into academic community</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback on student progress</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic career preparation</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a diverse student population</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-academic career preparation</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out
### Quality of Mentoring by Thesis Advisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>% “Very Satisfied”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advice with PhD Topic</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance to finish</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall mentoring</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support in career decisions</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support in job search</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help in publishing</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Social Science PhDs Use Their PhD Education 5+ Years Out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Used Social Sc. Knowledge “often” or “sometimes” in Current Job (vs. rarely/never)</th>
<th>PhD Field</th>
<th>Thesis Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ten./TT</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Other</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGN</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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3 Key Messages

1. **Use of Social Science Knowledge**: Social Sc. PhDs use the knowledge of their fields and their thesis topics in ALL jobs 5+ years out.

2. **Career Path**: A smooth linear faculty career path is a myth. 60% of first jobs are temporary and part-time. Only 5+ years later 63% are faculty, 19% other academic, 18% in BGN stable, full-time jobs. Women make more family/career compromises than men.

3. **Program Evaluation**: Social Sc. programs need to move from the 19th to the 21 century and bring professional competencies to the center (writing, publishing, etc) and offer career management.
Advice for Career Counselors

1. Work with Professional Associations
2. Reach out to Deans and the Graduate School
3. Provide career development and career management workshops within departments and separate from the department at critical transition points (year1/QE/dissertation proposal)
   - Become familiar with spousal hiring policies
   - Make students aware of dual career couple ramifications and strategies
4. Prepare for globalization
   Offer panels about careers with an international perspective
Thank you!

CIRGE website

http://www.cirge.washington.edu
Advice to Incoming PhD Students

Top Five Comments:
1. Organize studies strategically/ stay focused
2. Inform yourself about job market beyond the academy
3. Be sure to get good research skills and professional development (job )skills
4. Focus on writing, publishing
5. Look for a caring advisor/mentor
Advice to Departments

Top Five Comments:

1. Inform and accept non-academic jobs/beyond research I universities
2. Prepare better for teaching
3. Provide better preparation for research experience/fieldwork
4. Provide more know-how on publishing and presenting
5. Prepare for interdisciplinarity
Geography: PhD Important for Career Advancement in Business/ Government/ Non-profit Sector?

Percent Respondents Indicating “YES”:

71%

Job Titles: Business
- Management (11)
- Consultant (2)
- GIS (4)
- Researcher/Writer (7)

Job Titles: Non Governmental
- Management (4)
- Researcher (1)
- Environmental Scientist (1)

Job Titles: Government
- Management (6)
- Demographer (2)
- Researcher/Analyst (17)
- Environmental scientist/Engineer (12)
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anthropology</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>(57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>(50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>(80)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Science PhDs 5+ Years Out
First & Last Job by Discipline

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