

Graduate Career Consortium
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Social Science PhDs- 5+ Year Out

A National Study of PhDs in Six Social Science Fields



**Maresi Nerad
Elizabeth Rudd
Emory Morrison
Joseph Picciano**

University of Washington, Seattle, Graduate School
College of Education

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>	<i>3025</i>	<i>(46.8)</i>

Common Outdated Assumptions about US PhDs' Employment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.**

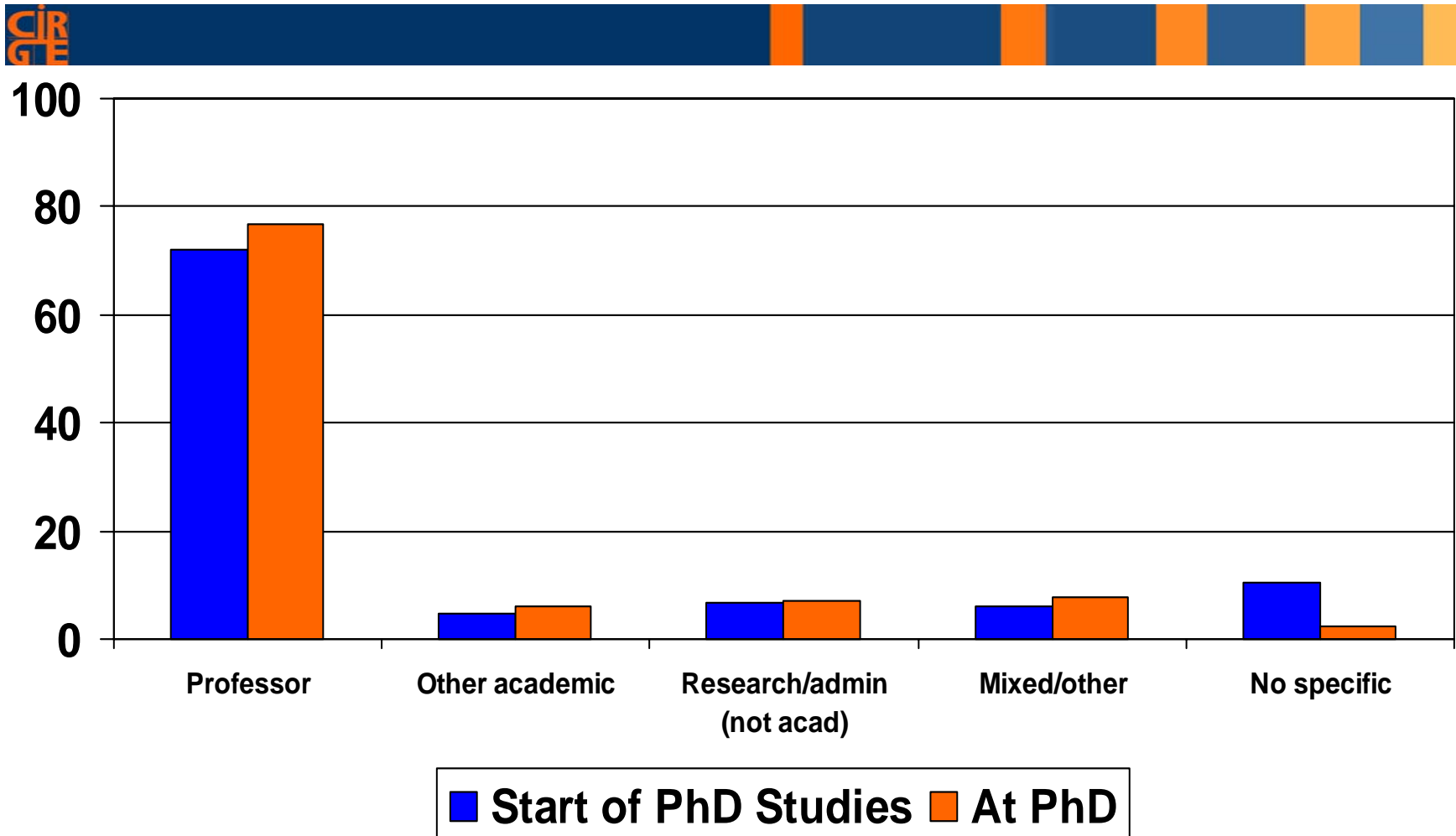
Common Assumption 1



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

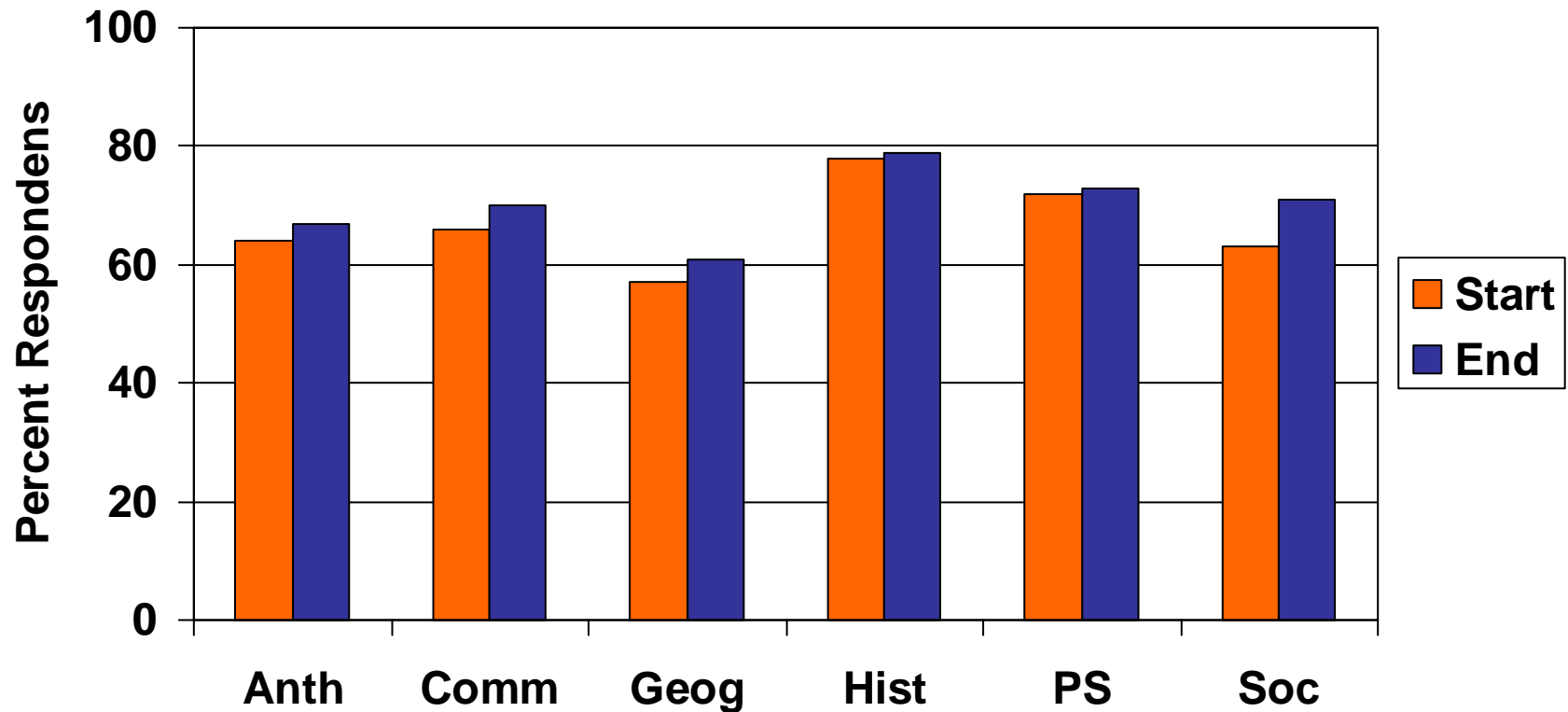
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

Career Goals at Begin & End of PhD Studies



Social Sciences 5+ Years Out Career Goal “Professor”

CIRGE at Start & End of PhD

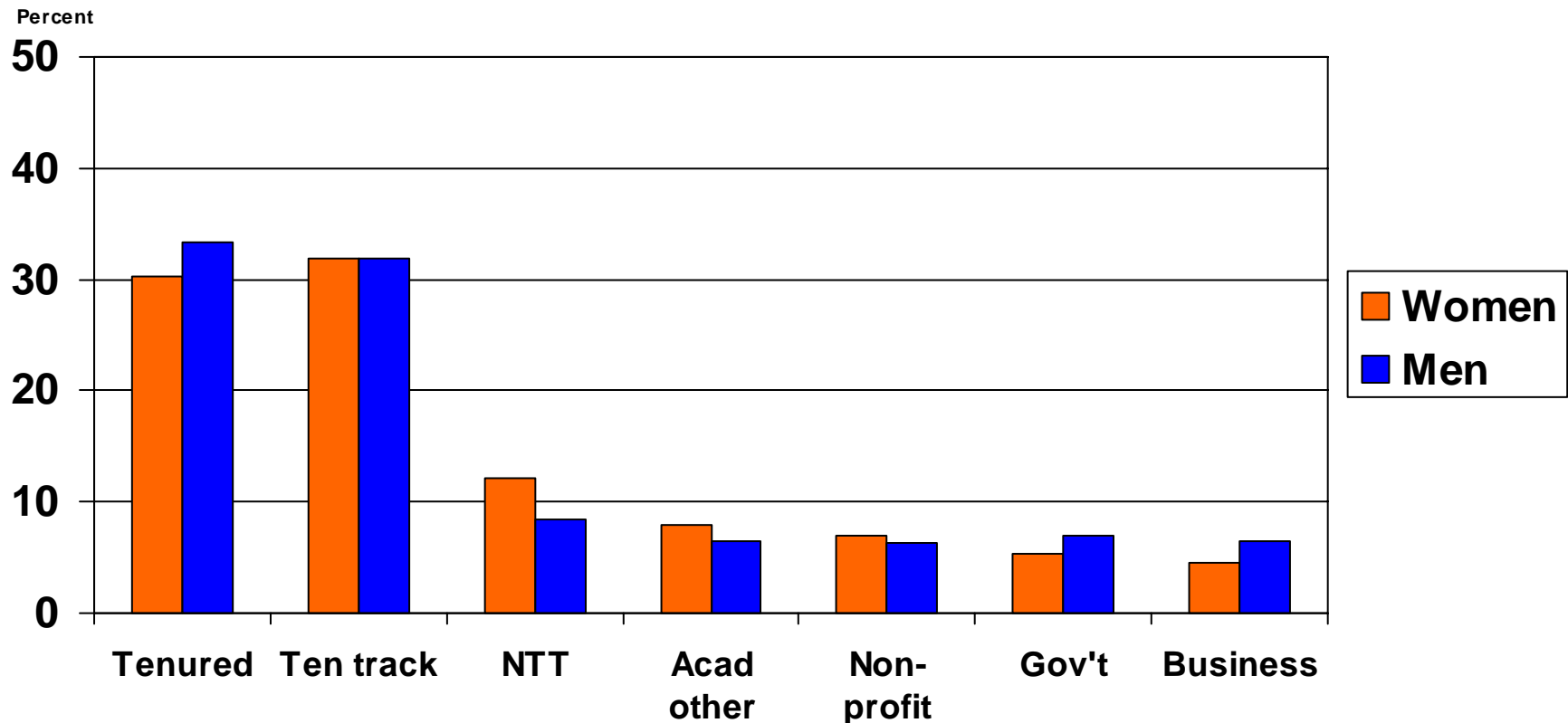


Career Goal at PhD Completion and % Tenured or Tenure-Track 5+ Years Later



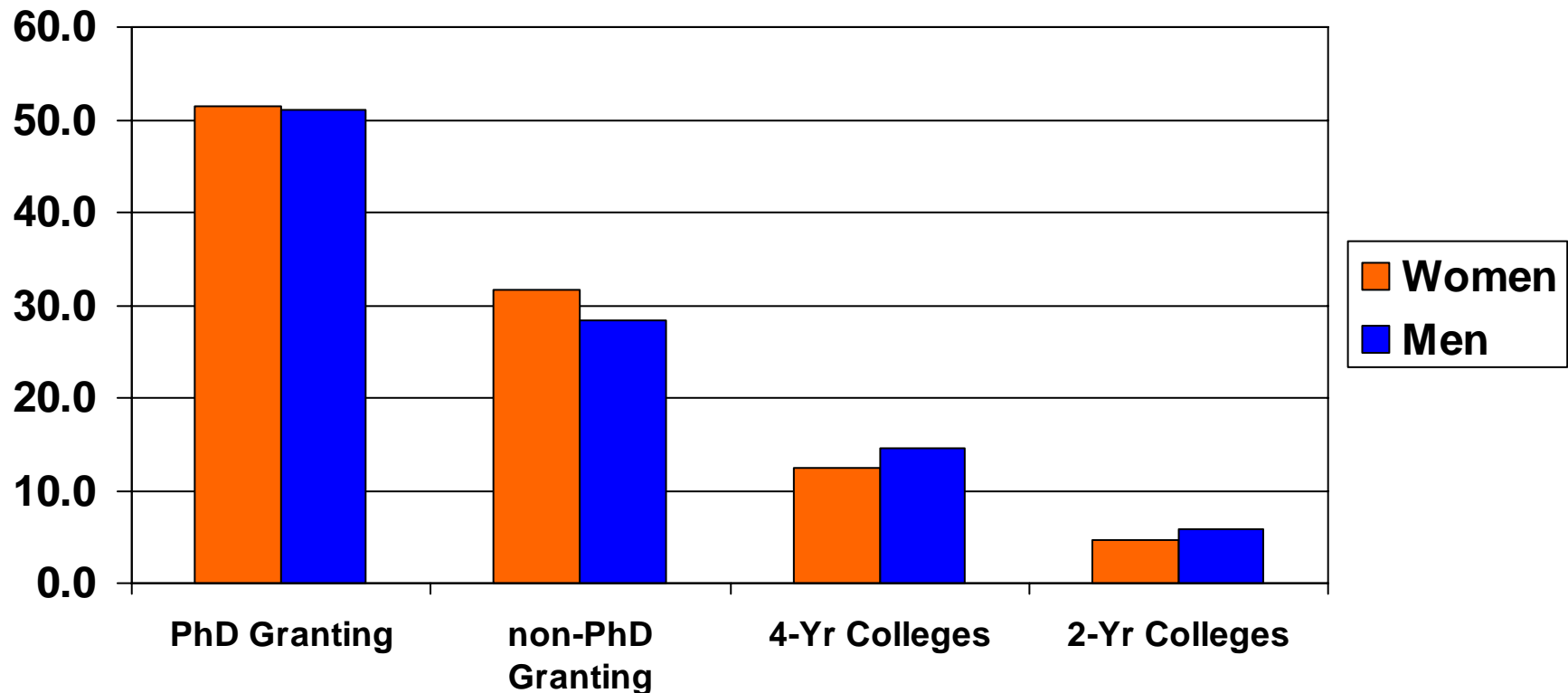
	(1) % Wanted to Be Professor	(2) % Tenured + TT of (1)	(3) % Tenured+T-T of All PhDs	N of All PhDs
Anthropology	72	64	52	(407)
Communication	75	84	71	(319)
Geography	65	74	53	(155)
History	84	76	66	(789)
Political Sc.	76	80	66	(674)
Sociology	75	78	63	(521)

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**

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)

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

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

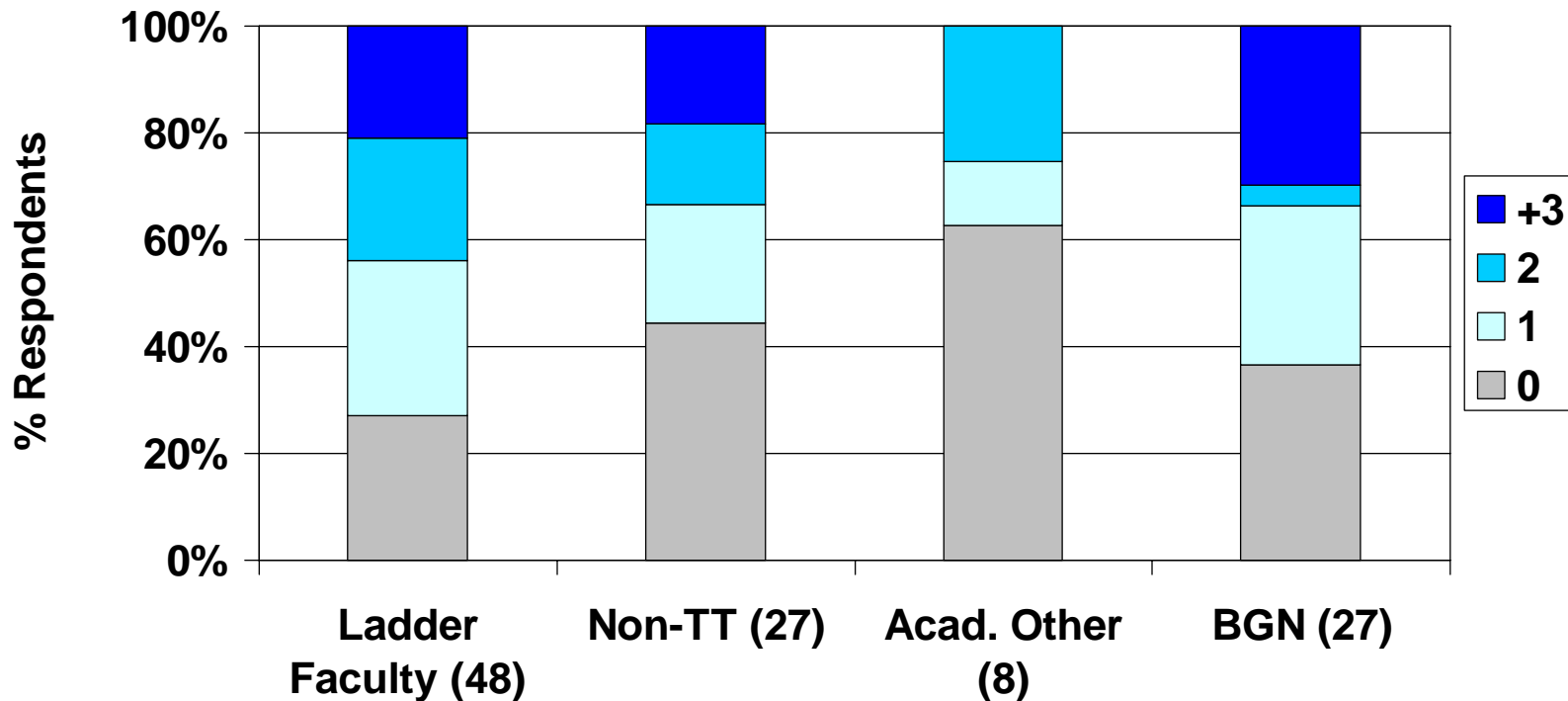


	Academe			BGN Business/Government/Non-Profits		
	% None	% 1 - 2	% ≥ 3	% None	% 1 - 2	% ≥ 3
Anthropology	34	43	23	37	31	32
Communication	37	40	23	61	14	25
Geography	26	48	26	32	32	36
History	42	38	19	47	37	17
Political Science	45	40	14	46	40	14
Sociology	24	47	30	35	41	24

Geography: Publishing at PhD completion: 1st job



Peer-reviewed publications (author or co-author)



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



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

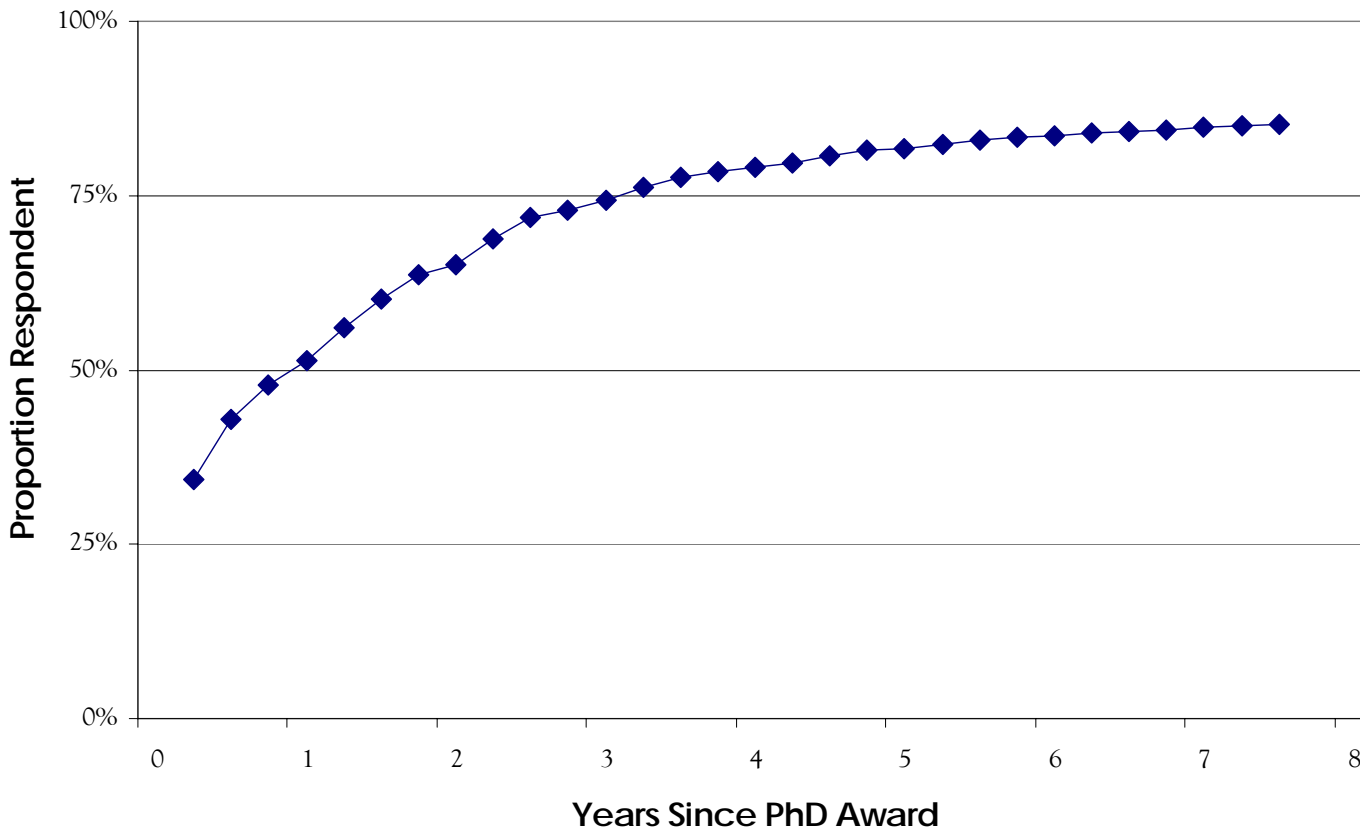
Common Assumption 3



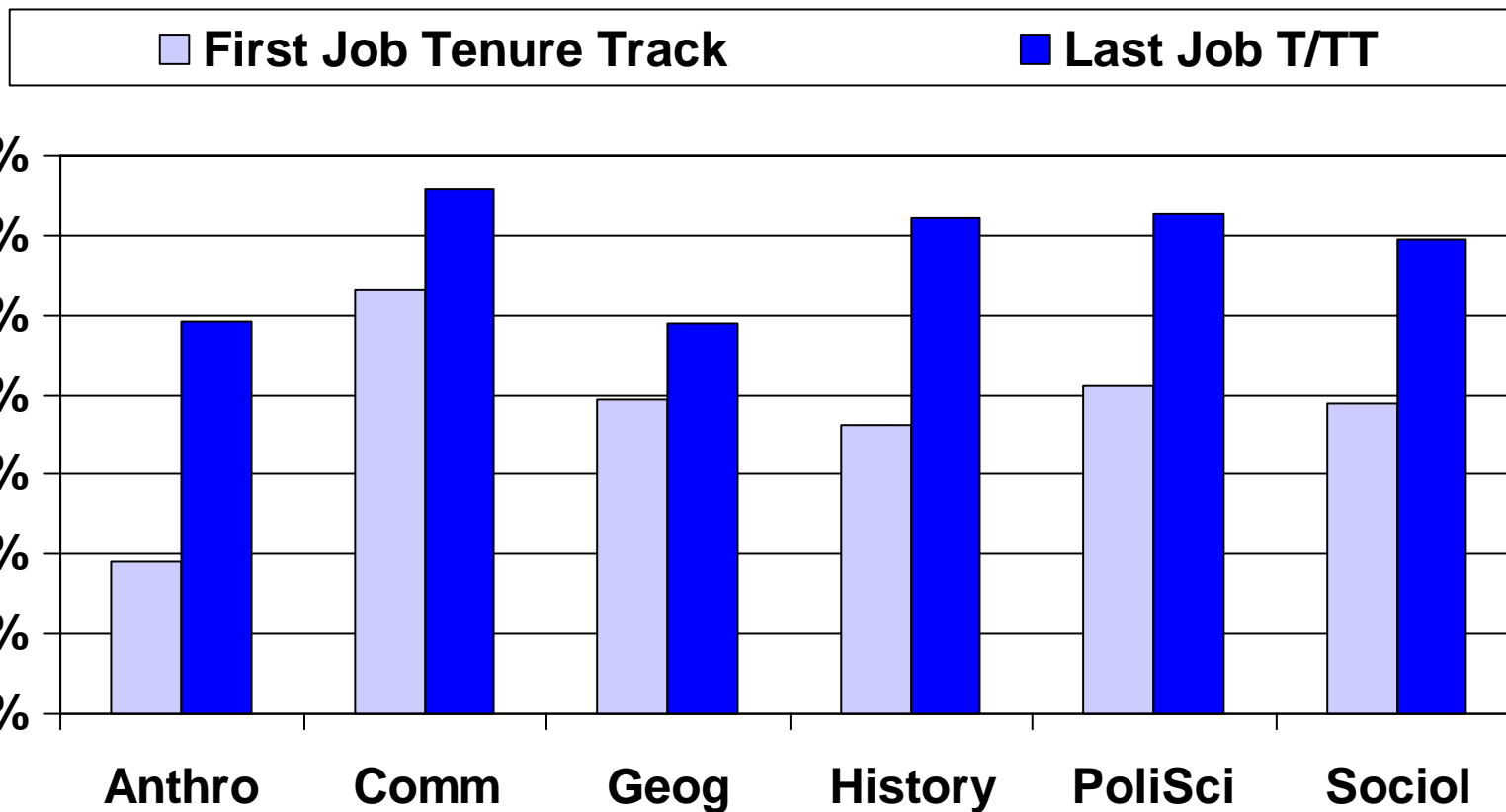
PhD recipients' academic career paths are linear and smooth

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

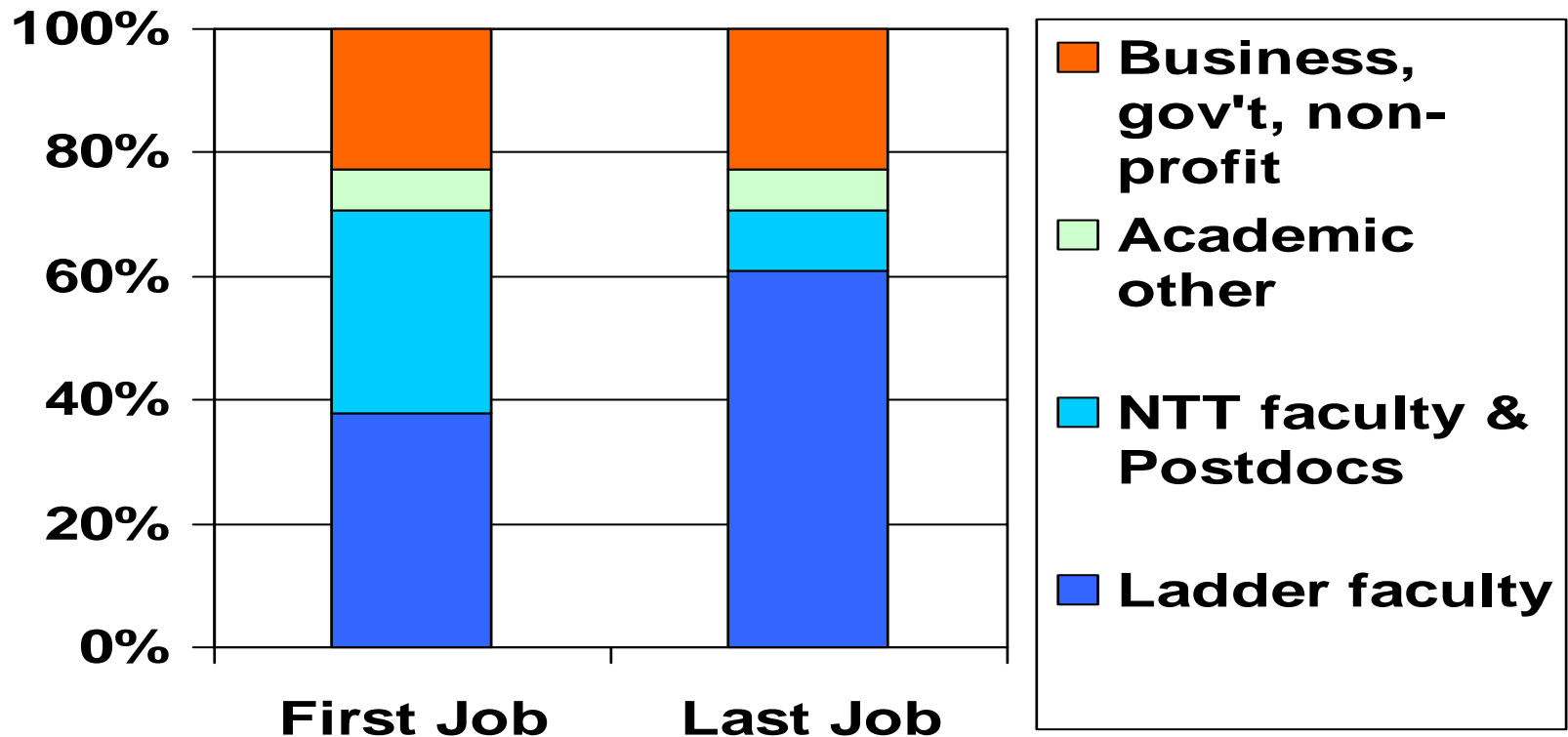
Time to stable, full-time Job



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



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



Common Assumption 4



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

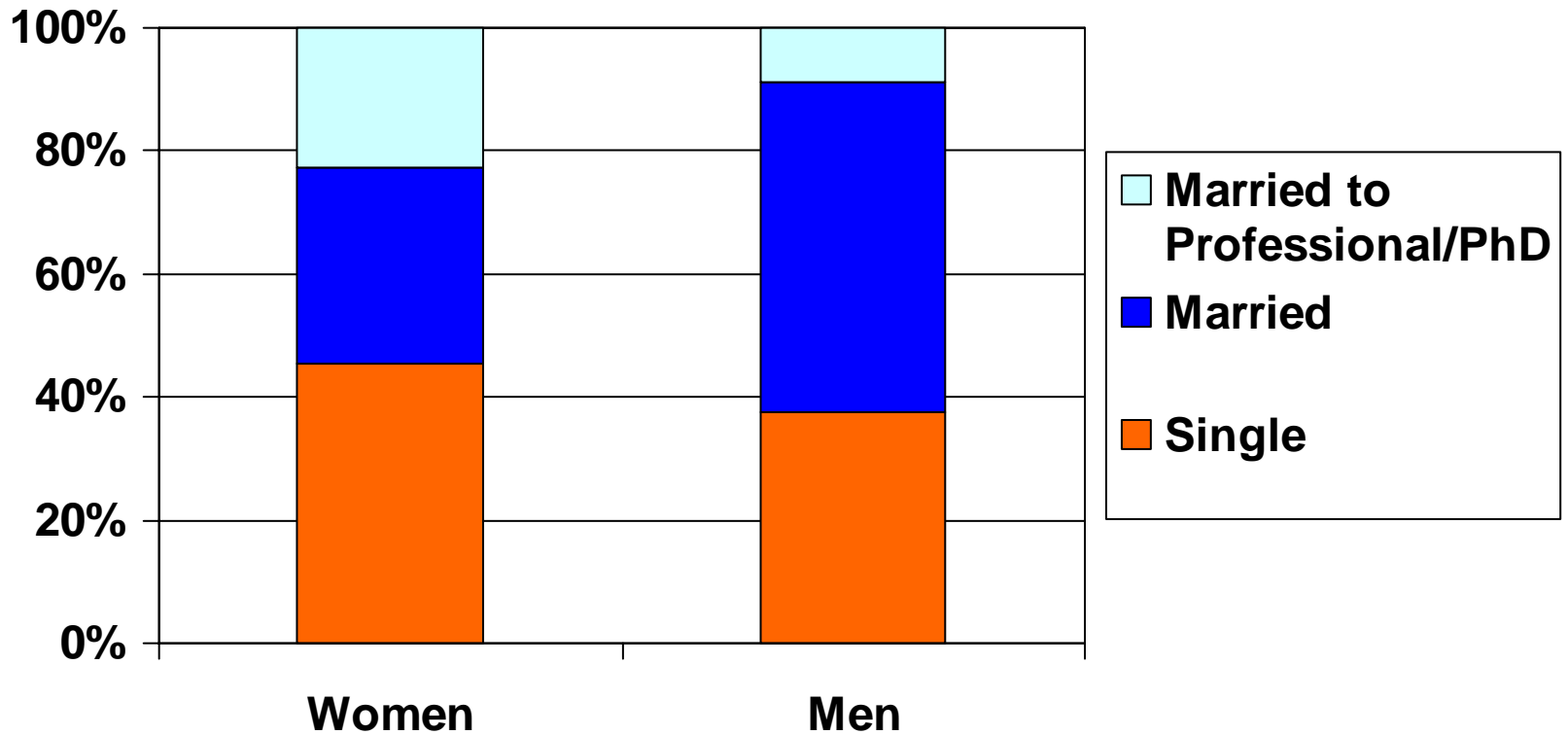
Gender – Family - Career

Women Make More Compromises Related to Family and Career



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

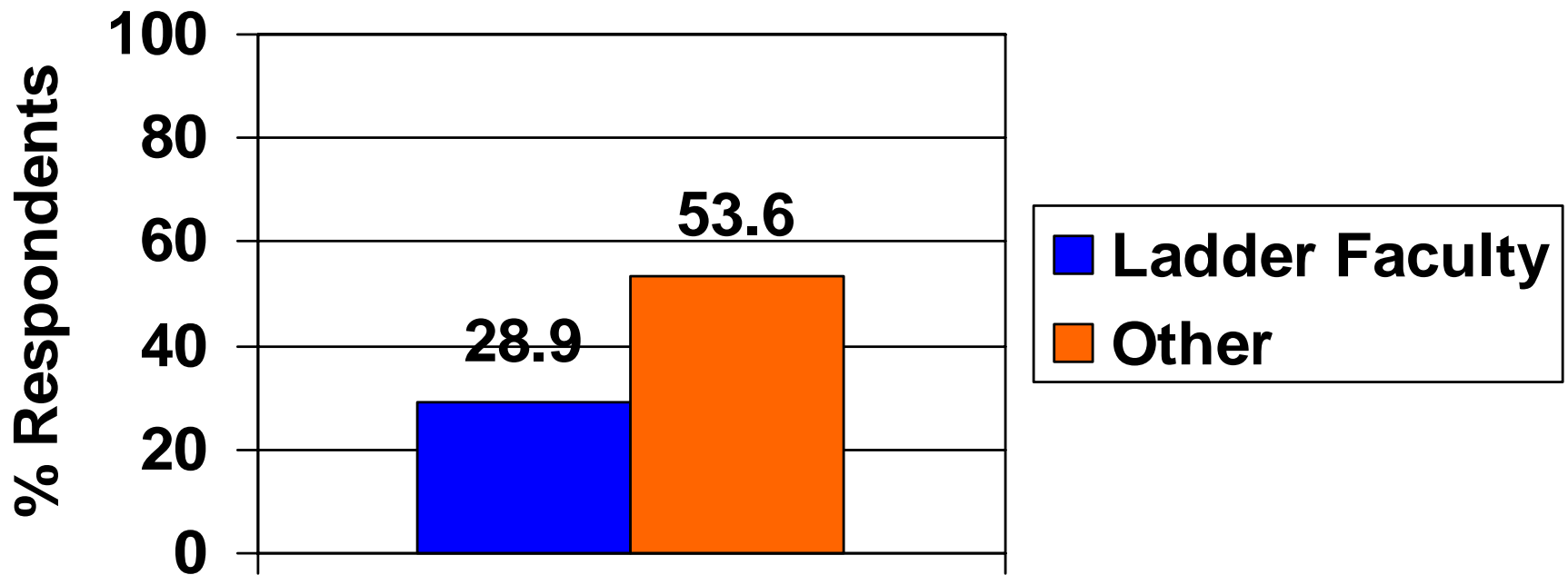
Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out



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)

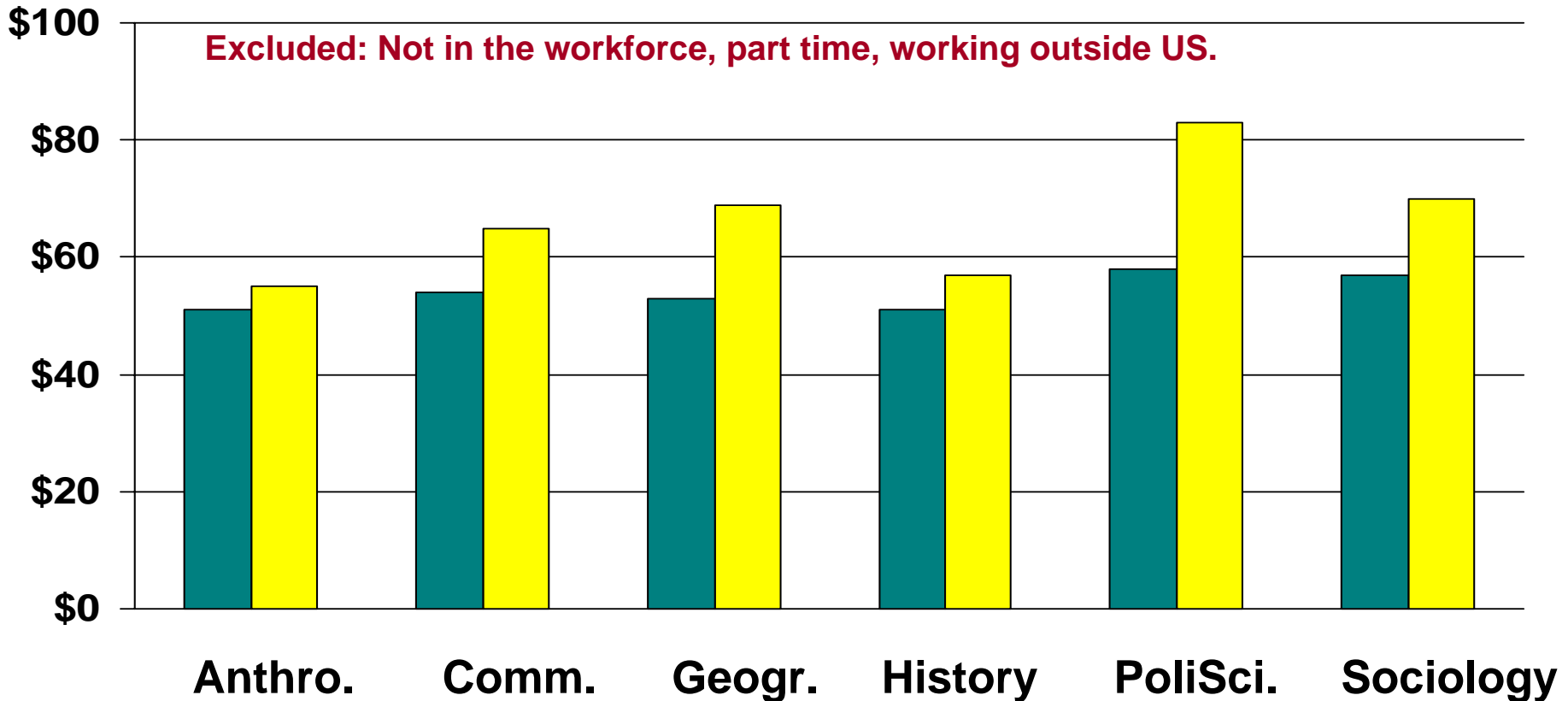


Major Field	Rank	Mean Satisfaction (1=very dissatisfied to 4=very satisfied)
Ten + TT Faculty	1	3.20
Government	1	3.20
Industry	3	3.18
Foundation/Social (non) Profit	4	3.17
Lecturer	5	3.12

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



Thousands



Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out



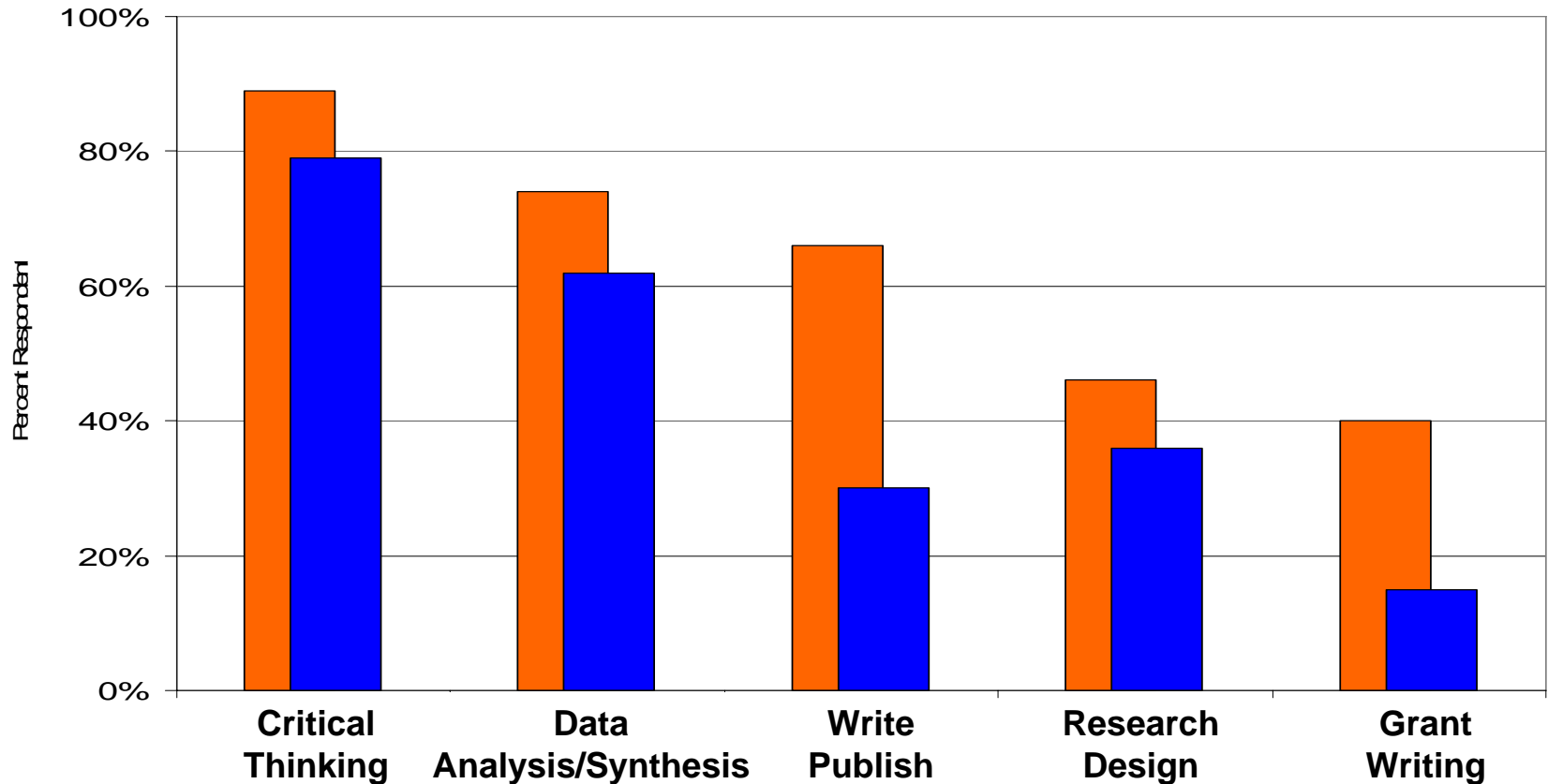
Graduate School Experiences

Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out

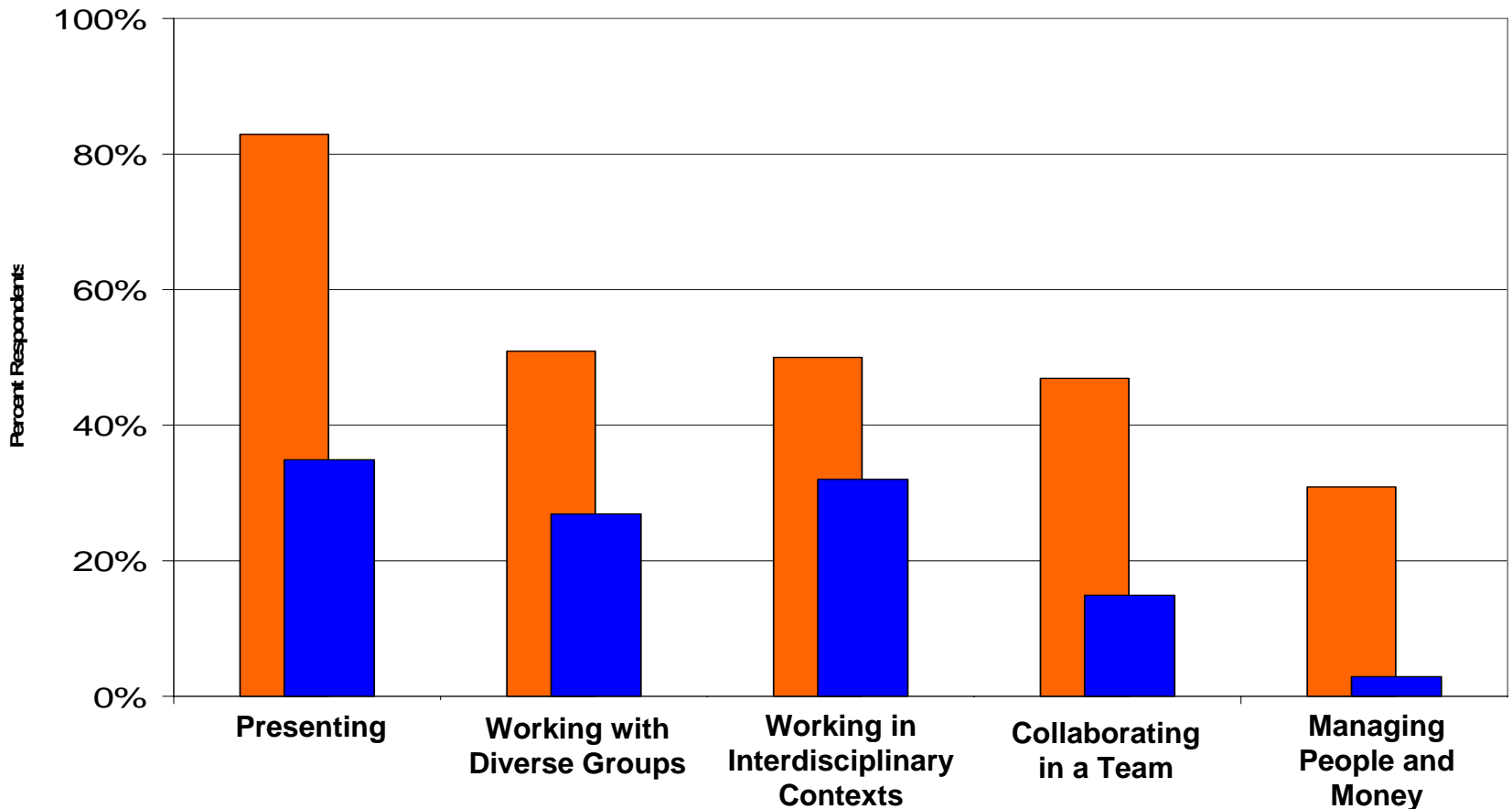


**Mismatch of skills needed and
training received**

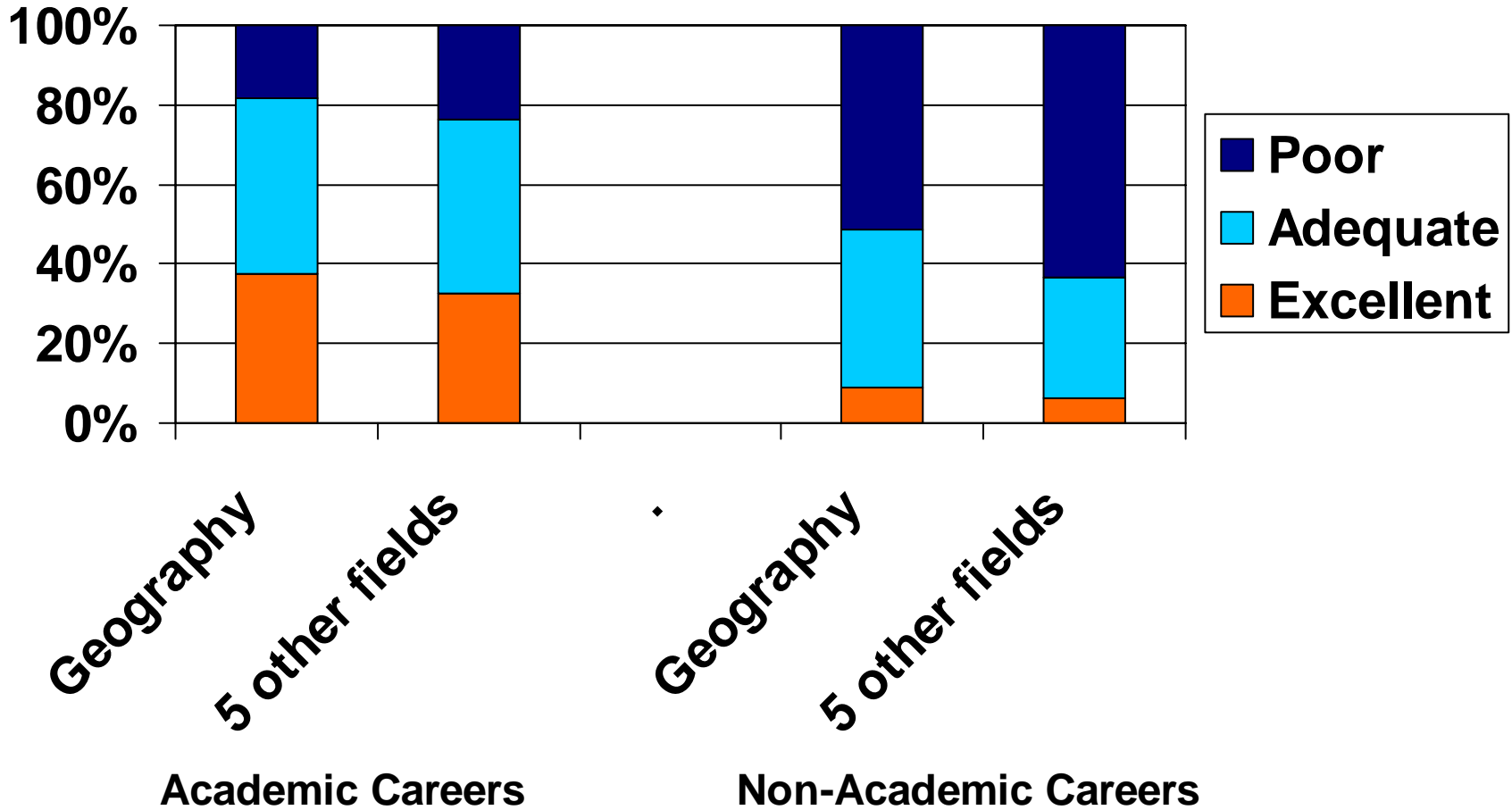
Importance of Skill at Current Job versus Quality of Training in this Skill During PhD Studies



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



Comparative Evaluation of Career Preparation



Social Science PhDs—Five+ Years Out



Doctoral program evaluation

- essential program elements**
- mentoring**

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 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%

Social Science PhDs **Use** Their PhD Education 5+ Years Out



Used Social Sc. Knowledge “often” or “sometimes” in Current Job (vs. rarely/never)

	PhD Field	Thesis Topic
Ten./TT	97%	87%
Academic Other	83%	64%
BGN	76%	49%

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!



Center for Innovation and Research
in Graduate Education



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: Government

- Management (6)
- Demographer (2)
- Researcher/Analyst (17)
- Environmental scientist/Engineer (12)

Job Titles: Non Governmental

- Management (4)
- Researcher (1)
- Environmental Scientist (1)

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

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)

Social Science PhDs 5+ Years Out First & Last Job by Discipline

