

# ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY: FINDINGS FROM THE ASA 2012-2013 JOB BANK SURVEY<sup>†</sup>

Roberta Spalter-Roth  
Michael Kisielewski

Department of Research on the Discipline and Profession  
American Sociological Association



## MAIN FINDINGS

- The academic job market for new sociology PhDs continued to rebound from the dismal conditions that occurred as a result of the Great Recession in 2008-2009.
- Nearly all of the academic jobs advertised in the American Sociological Association's 2012 Job Bank were for assistant or open rank positions.
- 95% of responding departments reported that searches were conducted for the positions that they posted.
- The average "success rate" or "yield" for filling those positions was 84%—a continuation of increasing success rates over the past three years.
- The percentage of advertised jobs that were not filled in 2012 and 2011 was essentially the same, and the most commonly reported reason was rejection of an offer by a candidate.
- There were several divergences between sociological specialization areas sought by advertising departments and areas of sociological interest identified by ASA graduate student members.
- Of all sociologists reportedly hired by departments that advertised in the 2012 Job Bank, 89% were hired by sociology or joint sociology departments—an 11 percentage point increase over the number hired by such departments in 2011.
- In general, there was a rebound for all reporting social science disciplines.

## OVERVIEW: CHANGES IN THE PHD JOB MARKET ACROSS THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

The number of positions advertised in the American Sociological Association (ASA) Job Bank in 2012 for new assistant professors continued to rebound and climbed above its pre-Recession 2008 high. Other social science and humanities disciplines experienced rebounds as well, but only one besides sociology reached its pre-Recession peak. For example, the jobs for new PhDs in communications—advertised with the National Communications Association—recovered from its 2009 Recession trough, when only 351 jobs were advertised. In 2012, the number of positions advertised had increased to 661, higher than the 2008 peak. The news was not quite as good for jobs advertised in history, political science, and economics. History has not recovered from the sharp drop in positions listed with the American Historical Association that followed the economic recession in 2008. However, the number of job openings continues to rise, with 740 positions advertised in Academic Year 2011/2012 reflecting substantial growth from the low of 569 positions in 2009-2010, though still below the AY 2007-2008 pre-Recession year. The number of positions available for new PhDs in political science that were advertised in the American Political Science Association's *e-jobs* database declined between AY 2011/2012 and AY 2012/2013 by 9% for assistant professors, 37% for the small number of non-academic positions, and 13% for open and multiple rank positions, while the number of available postdoctoral and research positions remained stable (American Political Science Association 2013). Compared to the post-Recession year of 2009-2010, when political science hit bottom, the 2013 figures are an improvement. The American Economics' Association reported an increase in jobs—especially academic jobs—for new PhDs. This year's positions in economics represent a steady increase since the 2009 low, when the U.S. financial downturn was most evident for hiring in economics (Jaschik 2011a). The 2012 jobs advertised in *Job Openings for Economists (JOE)* have not caught up with the 2008 high.

The growth of jobs in 2012, especially in sociology, is a cause for some optimism among new PhDs seeking positions as assistant professors. However, the surplus of unplaced or under-placed scholars desiring academic positions will likely continue to make the job market challenging for newly-minted PhDs across the social sciences for several years to come. Yet, the prospects for new PhDs in sociology improve considerably when non-academic positions are added. These

<sup>†</sup>The job bank data reported here are for positions advertised in 2012, many of which began in Academic Year 2012-2013.

positive changes in sociology—and in other social science disciplines—differ from the most pessimistic predictions made about post-Recession academic employment, which suggested that the job crises would continue. In the remainder of this brief, we discuss changes in the availability of jobs advertised in the ASA Job Bank since 2008, and the outcomes for the jobs that were advertised in 2012. The ASA Job Bank is the major source of job listings for the discipline (although not all jobs available to sociologists—especially non-academic jobs—are listed).

### SOCIOLOGY: THE 2012 NUMBERS

Last year, when we reviewed the 2011 figures we found that the academic job market for newly-minted PhD recipients in sociology was “on the upswing.” This year’s analysis of academic position postings and searches from the ASA’s annual Job Bank survey demonstrates a continuation of that trend, albeit at a more tempered pace. The steady rise in academic positions for sociology doctoral degree recipients suggests that the increase during the 2011-2012 Academic Year was not a fluke, and that there is a continuing

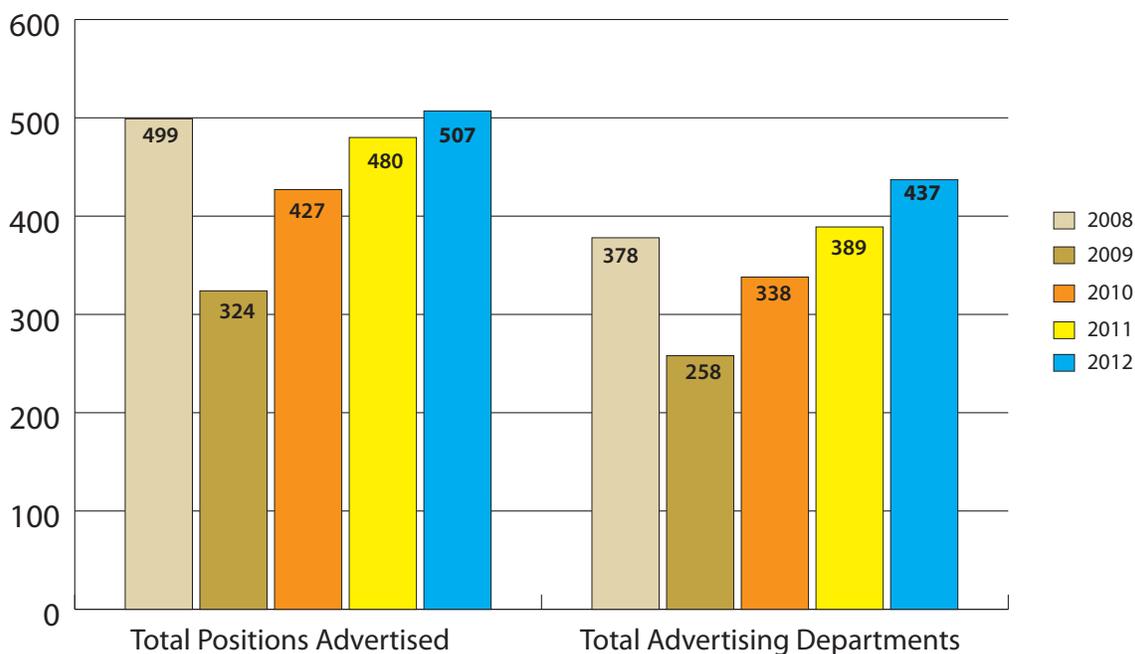
positive trend from the dismal job market conditions that appeared to be a consequence of the Great Recession, with significant declines in academic positions between 2008 and 2009 across the social sciences (Diascro 2011; Jaschick 2011b, 2011c; Townsend 2011). In sociology, academic jobs for new PhDs have increased above their 2008 levels, and academic departments are less likely to be experiencing hiring freezes than they were during the preceding “down” years, with universities opening lines that had been canceled.

By the end of 2012, the number of assistant and open/multiple rank positions continued to increase since 2011 (to 507 positions), even though the increase occurred at a slower rate of 5.6% (compared to 12% for the previous year). Although the number of open and multiple rank positions remained stable for the third consecutive year (see Figure 2), the number of assistant professor positions increased by 9%.

### Academic and Non-academic Jobs for Emerging Sociology Scholars

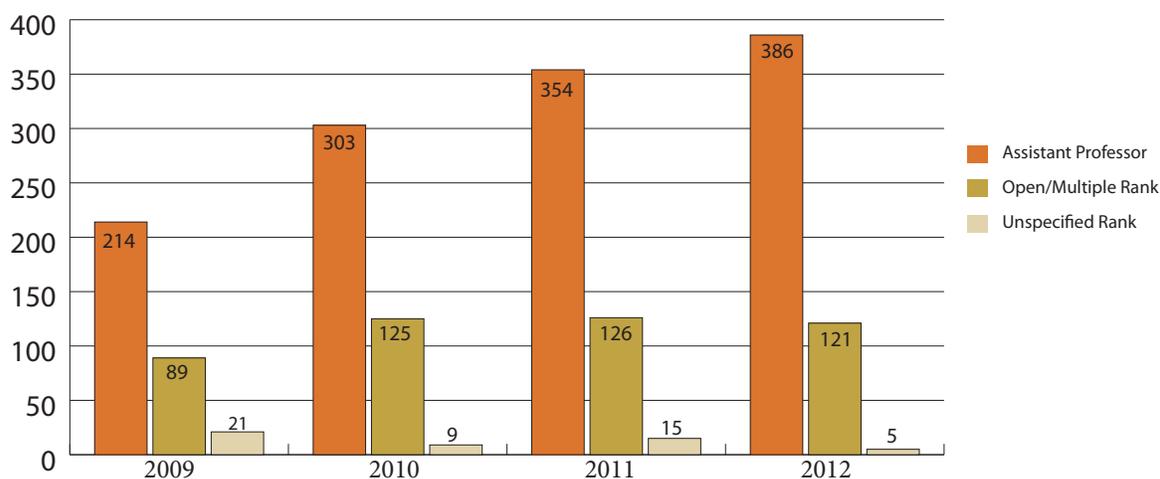
Table 1 illustrates the total count of U.S.-based positions advertised in the ASA Job Bank in 2012.

**Figure 1. Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Faculty Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank: 2008-2012.**



**Note:** Excludes non-U.S. institutions.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

**Figure 2. Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank: 2009-2012, by Rank.**

Note: Excludes non-U.S. institutions.

Source: ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

**Table 1. Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank by U.S. Institutions in 2012.**

| Type of Teaching Position           | Number Advertised |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Assistant Professor                 | 386               |
| Open/Multiple Rank                  | 121               |
| Unspecified Rank                    | 5                 |
| Associate Professor                 | 2                 |
| Full Professor                      | 1                 |
| <b>Subtotal</b>                     | <b>515</b>        |
| Other Academic*                     | 98                |
| Instructor/Lecturer                 | 57                |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>670</b>        |
| Type of Non-teaching Position       | Number Advertised |
| Sociological Practice               | 74                |
| Postdoctoral Position               | 103               |
| Multiple Non-faculty Position Types | 4                 |
| <b>Total Nonacademic Positions</b>  | <b>181</b>        |
| <b>Total Positions Advertised</b>   | <b>851</b>        |

Note: Temporary, visiting, and part-time faculty positions are excluded. Excludes non-U.S. institutions.

\*“Other Academic” includes academic administration positions, such as deans, chancellors, provosts, department chairs, and program/institute/center directors.

Source: ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

About 79%—or 670 out of 851 positions—were academic; most (77%) of the advertisements for academic positions were either for assistant or open/multiple rank positions, in addition to five positions of unspecified rank, two at the associate professor level, and one at the full professor level. This year’s analysis included

those latter three types of positions because they were advertised in the 2012 Job Bank as being available to junior scholars. Had non-U.S.-based assistant and open/multiple rank positions posted in the Job Bank been considered in the analysis, an additional 35 positions would have been included.

As with previous ASA Job Bank position postings, there was a high percentage of positions available to junior scholars or scholars soon to be entering the workforce. This might reflect the retirement of senior faculty and their replacement by junior faculty. However, positions posted in the Job Bank might not depict the entire landscape of higher-ranking faculty positions available annually, given that those positions might be part of closed search processes conducted by third parties or through scholarly networks.

If we included “other academic,” instructor/lecturer, postdoctoral, and sociological practice positions along with the assistant professor and open-rank positions posted in the 2012 Job Bank, there would be almost exactly one position available for each of the 656 new doctoral degree recipients in sociology.<sup>1</sup> This count does not include part-time or adjunct faculty positions. As noted, this assumption does account for PhD recipients from recent years who did not find positions aligned with their areas of academic interest or specialization.

<sup>1</sup>In 2011 (the year for which the most recent data are publicly and freely available), approximately 656 new sociology PhDs were graduated in the United States. The 2012 ASA Job Bank included 386 assistant professor positions, 103 postdoctoral positions, 98 “Other Academic” positions, and 74 positions in sociological practice, for a total of 661 positions, which is essentially equal to the 656 new sociology PhD graduates. See NSF (2012) for a breakdown of PhDs awarded in the United States, by academic discipline.

## THE 2012-2013 SURVEY

### Research Design

This research brief represents the fifth job market survey conducted by the ASA Department of Research on the Discipline and Profession.<sup>2</sup> The survey is administered to determine the outcome of position postings in the ASA Job Bank: whether academic departments that advertised jobs conducted successful searches, whether those positions went unfilled and for what reason(s), whether or not a sociologist was hired, and how searches varied by institutional characteristics (see the Appendix for details on the study/survey methodology). In 2011-2012, we reported on the top-three areas of academic specialization described in each position advertisement, according to type of Carnegie academic institution classification (i.e., very high research, high research/doctoral, master's comprehensive, baccalaureate only, associate, and unknown). In addition, this year we compared those areas of specialization to the areas of sociological interest indicated by U.S. graduate student members of ASA on their annual membership forms. For reporting purposes in this brief, additional areas were created for subjects of interest not listed on the membership form but which occurred with sufficiently high frequency to warrant their own category.

As with previous Job Bank surveys, response rates by departments were not identical to advertised positions because some departments advertised multiple jobs. As a means of ensuring the highest response rates possible, two department contacts were sent an email invitation to participate in the survey—typically a department or search committee chair and a staff member such as an administrative associate or department secretary—one of whom had placed the advertisement in the Job Bank. Nonrespondents received three email follow-up reminders; those who did not respond after the fourth reminder were contacted via telephone by ASA staff, asking them to complete the survey and providing them with the option to take the survey verbally. The response rate for departments placing advertisements for assistant and open/multiple rank positions (including those of unspecified, associate, and full professor rank) was 79%, or 349 departments (see Table 2), which was similar to the previous year's response rate of 78%. The 349 responding departments

**Table 2. Response Rates for Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Faculty Positions Advertised in 2012.**

|                        | Total Departments |            | Total Jobs |            |
|------------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                        | N                 | %          | N          | %          |
| Respondents            | 349               | 79         | 422        | 82         |
| Non-respondents        | 92                | 21         | 93         | 18         |
| <b>All Departments</b> | <b>441</b>        | <b>100</b> | <b>515</b> | <b>100</b> |

**Notes:** Excludes foreign institutions.

Also includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

represented 422 out of a possible 515 total positions, or 82% of the total positions. This is on par with the 2012 position response rate of 81%.

Table 3 shows that response rates varied considerably between freestanding and joint sociology departments compared to non-sociology departments. As with 2011-2012, the majority of positions in the Job Bank this year were advertised by freestanding sociology departments, followed by non-sociology departments (e.g., criminal justice, anthropology, political science, gender studies, public affairs, and communications). Although non-sociology departments posted the second-largest number of positions, they responded at a considerably lower rate than freestanding sociology departments (56% and 87%, respectively). Perhaps non-sociology departments were less likely to respond because they advertised in other disciplinary job banks and did not feel obligated to respond to a survey sponsored by ASA, despite placing advertisements in the ASA Job Bank. Joint sociology departments had the third-highest number of jobs posted. In contrast to freestanding sociology departments, however, joint sociology departments responded at a slightly higher rate (89% compared to 87%). Unknown department types (of which there were only two) responded at the lowest rate. Similar to 2010 and 2011, business schools also advertised in the Job Bank—likely because sociologists oftentimes are hired to teach courses such as organizational theory or analysis, and because of the increasing interdisciplinary interests of departments.

<sup>2</sup>For the results of all previous Job Bank surveys, see [www.asanet.org/research/briefs\\_and\\_articles.cfm#careers\\_and\\_salaries](http://www.asanet.org/research/briefs_and_articles.cfm#careers_and_salaries).

**Table 3. Response Rates for Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Faculty Positions Advertised in 2012, by Type of Academic Department.**

| Department Type        | Academic Departments          |                   | Jobs                  |   |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---|
|                        | Total Advertising Departments | Response Rate (%) | Total Jobs Advertised | Jobs Advertised by Responding Departments (%) |
| Freestanding Sociology | 191                           | 87                | 218                   | 88  |
| Joint Sociology        | 112                           | 89                | 130                   | 89  |
| Non-sociology          | 136                           | 56                | 163                   | 69  |
| Unknown                | 2                             | 50                | 4                     | 75  |
| <b>All Departments</b> | <b>441</b>                    | <b>79</b>         | <b>515</b>            | <b>82</b>                                     |

**Notes:** Excludes foreign institutions.

Also includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

### Searching for Scholars

The process of filling vacant academic positions occurs in multiple phases. Once advertisements are placed to attract potential candidates, departments usually conduct searches. If the search results in acceptable candidates, interviews (typically) occur. If departments agree upon a candidate to whom they wish to make an offer, the offer must be made and the candidate must accept. As noted, not all of those hired were sociologists, given the array of departments that advertised for an assistant or open-rank faculty member. The hiring process is not necessarily straightforward and sometimes results in position searches being suspended or canceled, or with first-choice candidates refusing an offer made to them.

### Positions Filled

For the 422 assistant professor and multiple-rank positions offered by the 349 responding departments in this survey, 399 searches were conducted—thus, searches were conducted for 95% of the positions advertised (see Table 4). This figure represents a slight decline since the 2011 year when searches were conducted for 99% of positions. Among the 399 searches that were conducted for the positions advertised in 2012, the success rate was 84%: that is, a candidate was offered an academic position, accepted it, and was hired. This is just slightly higher than the 2011 success rate of 83%, and lower than the success rate of 86% observed in 2009. Nevertheless, success rates since 2009 have far exceeded that of 2008, when the rate was a

reported 69%. This finding suggests that departments were more likely to hire post Recession, because they might have feared that they would lose the position if they did not do so.

### The Search Process

At each stage of the search process, there is an observable decrease in the number of actions taken. For example, although 399 searches were conducted, 371 job offers were made, and 333 candidates ultimately were hired (see Figure 3). Of those 333 hires, 93% (308 positions) were filled by assistant professors, which is closely similar to the 2011 percentage of 91%. Moreover, 255 of the 333 positions that were filled were offered to sociologists, for a rate of 77% of all hires by responding depart-

**Table 4. Searches Conducted by Responding Departments in 2012: Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Positions.**

|  | N          | Percent    |
|--|------------|------------|
| <b>Total Jobs Advertised by Responding Departments</b> | <b>422</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <i>Searches conducted</i>                              | 399        | 95         |
| <i>Successful</i>                                      | 333        | 84         |
| <i>Later canceled</i>                                  | 5          | 1          |
| <i>Search suspended</i>                                | 9          | 2          |
| <i>Not filled for other (specified) reasons*</i>       | 52         | 13         |
| <i>Searches not conducted</i>                          | 23         | 6          |
| <i>Search conducted, but hiring status not stated</i>  | 5          | 1          |

**Notes:** Excludes foreign institutions.

Also includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

\*See Table 6 for complete breakdown of "other reasons."

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

ments. Similarly, that rate was 78% in 2011, suggesting that sociologists continue to be considered a desirable hire outside of sociology departments.

Examining which types of academic departments hired sociologists showed that freestanding sociology departments did so at the highest rate (58% of all hires; see Table 5), probably because they advertised the most jobs. Predictably, joint sociology departments hired sociologists at the second-highest rate (31% of all hires), with non-sociology departments hiring only 24 sociologists (a rate of 9% of all hires). In some instances, positions advertised in the Job Bank were intended for scholars with a variety of professional backgrounds, reflecting the nature of sociology as a “go-to” field for interdisciplinary studies. Still, not all interdisciplinary programs that used the Job Bank in 2012 hired sociologists. The following quote was provided by a respondent from a program in law and politics:

*The position was open to multiple disciplines. A geographer was hired.*

In other instances, sociology departments that hired

**Table 5. Sociologists Hired, by Type of Academic Department.**

| Department Type        | Number of Sociologists Hired | Percent of All Sociologists Hired |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Freestanding Sociology | 148                          | 58                                |
| Joint Sociology        | 80                           | 31                                |
| Non-sociology          | 24                           | 9                                 |
| Unknown                | 3                            | 1                                 |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>255</b>                   | <b>100</b>                        |

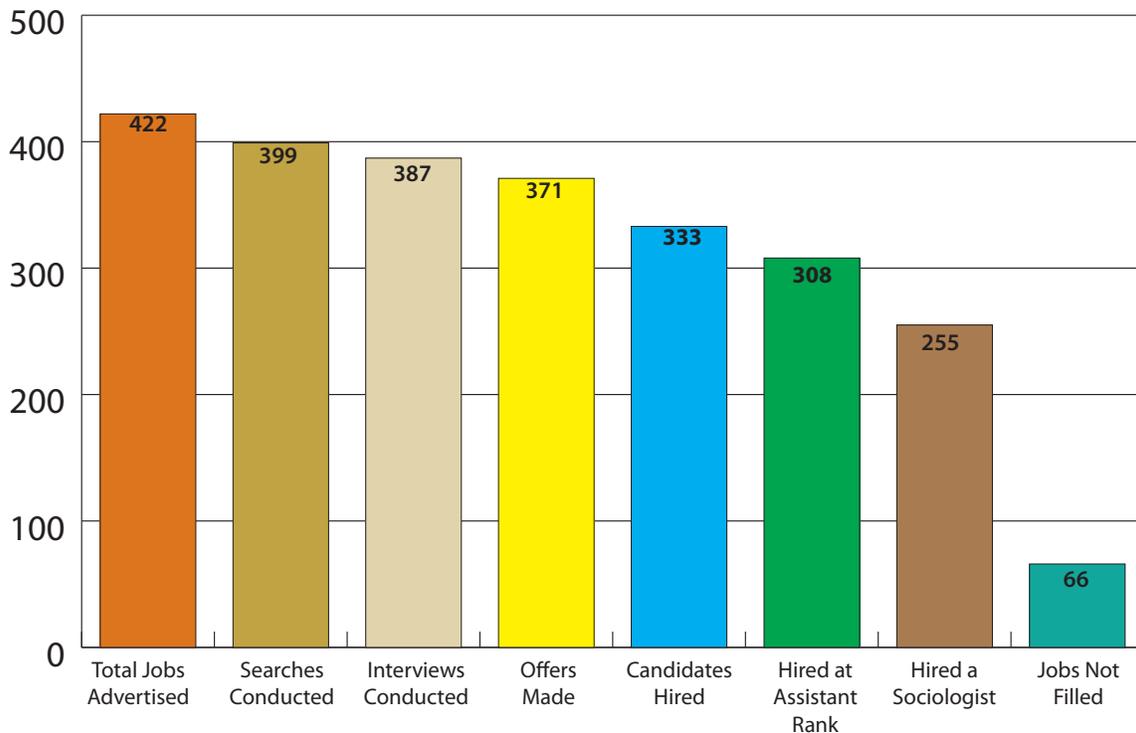
**Notes:** For 349 responding departments.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

sociologists still emphasized the importance of hiring a scholar with interdisciplinary training. As one respondent whose department hired a sociologist stated:

*I will note, however, that interdisciplinary ability (particularly in this case to teach in the Urban Studies minor) was viewed as an important asset.*

**Figure 3. The Hiring Process for Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Positions Advertised Through the ASA Job Bank, 2012: Responding Departments Only.**



**Notes:** Excludes foreign institutions.

Also includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

### Jobs not Filled

Not all positions advertised result in successful outcomes. Position searches sometimes are canceled or suspended, candidates are offered positions but reject them or tentatively accept but subsequently reject them, or departments fail to reach a consensus as to the most appropriate candidate to hire. As one survey respondent stated:

*There was consensus on [a] top candidate, but in negotiations the complexity of a spousal appointment surfaced. As a result, we lost the other two top candidates to other positions (one of these was a sociologist). We will reopen the search early this academic year.*

Similarly, departments sometimes find that none of the candidates whom they interviewed are appropriate for the advertised position:

*No candidate was considered suitable.*

Of the 66 positions for which searches were conducted but which were reported not to have been filled this year, 39% were turned down by the candidate of choice, 21% were not filled due to a lack of consensus as to a candidate of choice, 14% resulted in a search that was suspended, and 16% were not filled either because the search later was canceled or because the hiring process was in negotiation at the time the survey was administered. Another 10% of positions were not filled due to “other” reasons (see Table 6). Whereas in 2011, 18% of positions for which searches were conducted were not filled (i.e., they were “unsuccessful”), 17% were unsuccessful in 2012. These rates generally have been similar after the 2008-2009 Academic Year, when 29% of searches were unsuccessful.

As in 2011, the majority of unsuccessful searches were due to candidates rejecting an offer that was made to them (37% in 2011 and 39% in 2012). This suggests that candidates have more options, which in turn suggests an improvement in the academic job market for new sociology PhDs. As one respondent stated:

*A candidate was offered the position, ac-*

**Table 6. Reported Reasons Why Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Faculty Positions Were not Filled in 2012: Responding Departments Only.**

|  | N         | Percent*   |
|--|-----------|------------|
| <b>Total Jobs Not Filled</b>                               | <b>66</b> | <b>100</b> |
| <i>Later canceled</i>                                      | 5         | 8          |
| <i>Search suspended</i>                                    | 9         | 14         |
| <i>Search conducted, but hiring process in negotiation</i> | 5         | 8          |
| <i>Position turned down by candidate</i>                   | 26        | 39         |
| <i>No consensus as to candidate of choice</i>              | 14        | 21         |
| <i>Other**</i>   | 7         | 11         |

**Note:** For 349 responding departments.

\*Might exceed 100 percent due to rounding.

\*\*Breakdown of “other:” insufficient number of candidates (3); candidates found to be unsuitable (3); unspecified (1).

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

*cepted verbally, then after not receiving an acceptance letter for 6 weeks...the candidate declined in writing (after sending in his book orders, etc.). Faculty members were very upset.*

Unlike previous years with more frozen or canceled searches, this year we noticed that multiple respondents reported that their departments went on to hire more candidates than originally intended when their searches were initiated. For example:

*We actually were allowed to hire 2 of the applicants for this position. Both were hired as assistant professors.*

*We advertised for 1 position, but we successfully argued to hire 2 of the 4 candidates we interviewed.*

*We were allowed two hires based on the enrollment needs of the department.*

### Position Hires Varied by Institution Type

As in 2011, the 2012 results suggested that the hiring process across types of institutions of higher education were not uniform. Table 7 depicts the hiring process in 2012 according to academic institution type. The latest (2010) codes (“Carnegie Codes”) from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

were used to categorize institutions. Very High Research institutions had the highest number of faculty per academic department and advertised the most positions in 2012, just as they did in 2010 and 2011.

In 2012, departments from Very High Research institutions constituted 36% of all departments advertising for assistant and open/multiple rank positions, which was very close to the percentage of advertisements by this type of institution in 2011 (35%). Moreover, the percentages of positions filled by institution type in 2012 were similar to the rates reported in the 2011 survey. Table 7 displays response rates and positions filled by institution type for 2012. Departments at Very High Research institutions again reported the lowest rate of positions filled. This failure to fill positions might reflect the more selective nature of such institutions, which typically have greater resources at their disposal in the event that they are not comfortable with hiring a particular job candidate. For example, it could be that they were able to postpone or delay the filling of a position because they have a sufficient number of instructors/lecturers, graduate students, or adjunct faculty to whom they can “farm out” the duties associated with the unfilled position. In the words of one respondent from a Very High Research Institution that failed to make a hire:

*[We are] continuing [our] search to get a*

*wider range of applicants.*

The highest rate of positions filled (apart from Associate-level institutions and institutions whose Carnegie Classification was unknown—both of which placed considerably small numbers of postings in the 2012 Job Bank) was by Master’s-level institutions, at 88%. This could reflect the premium that Master’s degree-granting universities and colleges place on teaching, and the need to maintain a full roster of teaching faculty at all times. The percent of searches that led to hires was 85% for both Research/Doctorate and Baccalaureate-only institutions.

### Areas of Specialization

In an effort to learn whether there was a mismatch between the areas of expertise that departments desired to fill with new PhDs and the academic areas of interest that graduate students listed on the ASA membership form, we first examined the fields of academic specialization sought by departments (see Figure 4). We identified up to three areas of expertise stated in each position description, although many advertisements contained fewer than three areas. Desired areas of expertise were coded drawing upon “areas of sociological interest” from the ASA 2012 membership form; additional codes were developed

**Table 7. Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank Faculty Positions Advertised in 2012, by Type of Academic Department.**

| Type of Institution*     | Total Advertising Departments | Responding Departments |                           |                    |                        |             |             |                 |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                          |                               | Response Rate (%)      | Number of Jobs Advertised | Searches Conducted | Candidates Interviewed | Offers Made | Jobs Filled | Jobs Filled (%) |
| Very High Research       | 160                           | 84                     | 175                       | 158                | 154                    | 143         | 123         | 78              |
| High Research/Doctorate  | 66                            | 86                     | 70                        | 68                 | 65                     | 63          | 58          | 85              |
| Masters                  | 136                           | 74                     | 113                       | 112                | 108                    | 107         | 98          | 88              |
| Baccalaureate            | 52                            | 72                     | 40                        | 40                 | 39                     | 37          | 34          | 85              |
| Associates/Special Focus | 7                             | 58                     | 6                         | 6                  | 6                      | 6           | 6           | 100             |
| Unknown                  | 20                            | 75                     | 18                        | 15                 | 15                     | 15          | 14          | 93              |
| <b>All Departments</b>   | <b>441</b>                    | <b>79</b>              | <b>422</b>                | <b>399</b>         | <b>387</b>             | <b>371</b>  | <b>333</b>  | <b>84</b>       |

**Note:** Also includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

\*Academic institution types are determined according to classification data provided by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching; data available at <http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/resources>.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

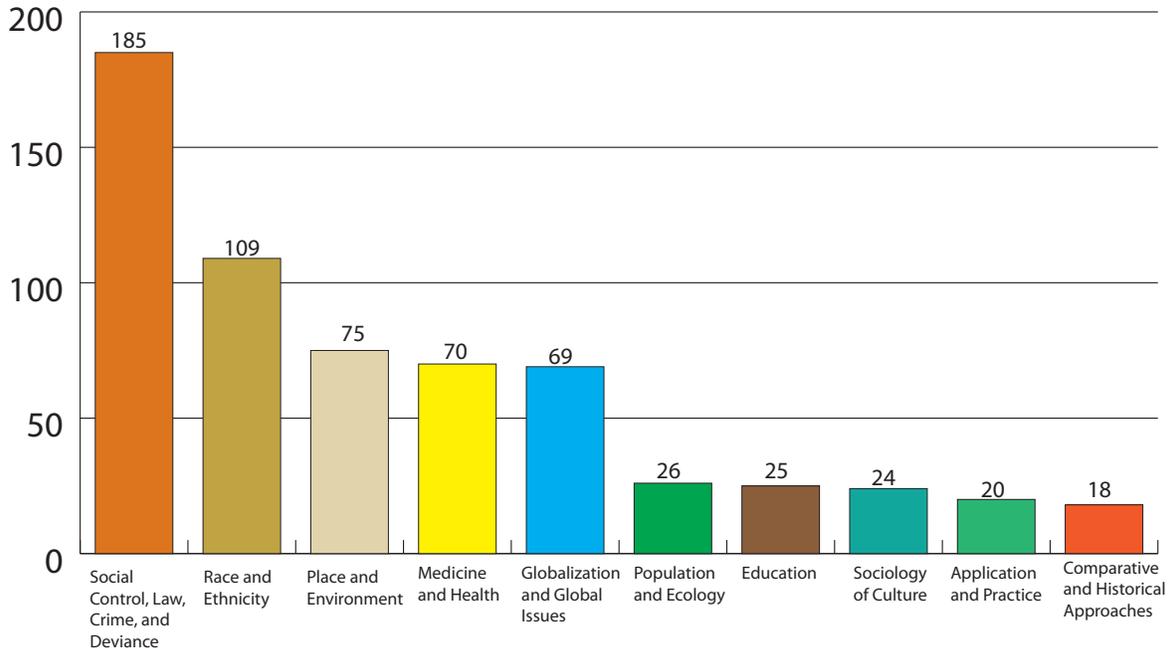
for areas not included on the form. As shown in Figure 4, Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance was the most heavily advertised specialization (identified in 185 position postings), as it was in 2010 and 2011. Whereas in 2011 Race and Ethnicity was the third-highest ranked specialty, it was second in 2012 (identified in 109 positions). Medicine and Health again was the fourth-highest ranked specialty, and Globalization and Global Issues was ranked fifth. As in 2011, Sociology of Culture, Application and Practice, and Comparative and Historical Approaches ranked in the bottom-five areas of specialization advertised.

Appendix Table 1 presents areas of specialization by type of academic institution classification (Carnegie Codes). For all types of institutions, Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance was the highest-ranked area of specialization. Race and Ethnicity ranked second for Very High Research, High Research/Doctoral, and Master's institutions. Curiously, Place and Environment ranked third for Very High Research institutions

but not for the other institution types. For most institution types, however, Sociology of Culture, Application and Practice, and Comparative and Historical Approaches ranked at the bottom. We have found that there generally has been some variation across years in terms of areas of specialization sought by academic departments. Nevertheless, the annual consistency in ranking among certain specialties (e.g., Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance) provides some direction in terms of what the most sought-after specialties have been and continue to be.

To continue our examination, we next compared the areas of specialization identified in all assistant and open/multiple rank positions with the "areas of interest" identified on the membership forms of ASA graduate student members in 2012 (see Figure 5 and Appendix Table 2). There was a mismatch between the highly-valued area of Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance, ranked first among position advertisements but ranked fourth by graduate students. Likewise, Race

**Figure 4. Count of Five Most-Frequent and Five Least-Frequent Advertised Areas of Specialization,\* Listed in All Assistant and Open/Multiple Rank ASA Job Bank Advertisements: 2012.**



**Note:** Also includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

\*Derived from top three most-occurring areas of specialization listed in position descriptions in the Job Bank database.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

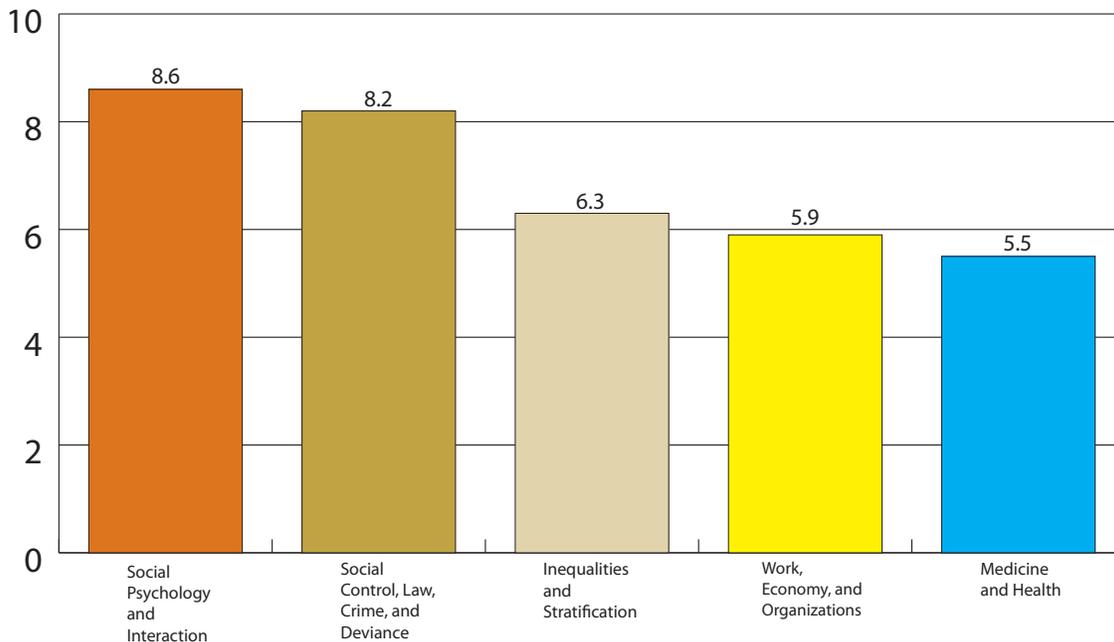
and Ethnicity (ranked second in 2012 position advertisements) was ranked ninth among ASA graduate student members. Globalization and Global Issues—ranked fifth in position advertisements—ranked 15th among graduate students. These findings of mismatch might be important for directors of graduate studies as they guide graduate students and for graduate students as they consider academic careers. The smallest discrepancies between advertised specializations in the Job Bank and areas of student interest were found among Place and Environment, Qualitative Approaches, Population and Ecology, and Application and Practice. We note, however, that comparisons between advertised areas of specialization and areas of student interest must be interpreted with caution because of the substantial difference in the number of positions advertised in the 2012 Job Bank and the number of ASA (U.S.-based) graduate student members (515 versus 3,330, respectively), which can affect the comparability of percentages and rankings.

### Sociologists Hired by Non-sociology Departments

As discussed above, non-sociology departments advertised the second-highest number of assistant and open/multiple rank positions in the 2012 Job Bank—136 departments, representing 163 position advertisements. However, those departments also had the lowest response rate (56% of responding departments, although—due to departments that posted multiple positions—the responding departments accounted for 112 positions for which we have information on outcomes). Table 8 displays the number and percent of sociologists who were hired by non-sociology departments that reported filling the positions that they advertised. These positions were probably an undercount, since non-sociology departments may advertise in other disciplinary job banks.

In 2012, Population Studies departments hired the most sociologists among non-sociology departments—11 sociologists out of 13 positions that were

**Figure 5. Area of Specialization Listed in All Assistant and Open Rank Job Bank Advertisements in 2012, and Areas of Interest Selected by Graduate Students on ASA Membership Forms in 2012: Top-five Mismatched Areas (Percentage Points).\***



**Notes:** Represents percentage point difference between “advertised specializations” and “areas of student member interest in 2012) in Appendix 2.

For 515 assistant or open/multiple rank positions; includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin.

\*Excludes non-U.S. student members.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

**Table 8. Sociologists Hired, by Type of Non-Sociology Departments.**

| Department Type                             | Number of Sociologists Hired | Total Number of Positions Filled | Percent Filled by Sociologists |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Population Studies                          | 11                           | 13                               | 85                             |
| Criminal Justice                            | 4                            | 16                               | 25                             |
| Communication                               | 2                            | 9                                | 22                             |
| Agricultural Economics and Education        | 1                            | 1                                | 100                            |
| American Studies                            | 1                            | 7                                | 14                             |
| Asian American Studies                      | 1                            | 6                                | 17                             |
| Environment and Natural Resources           | 1                            | 2                                | 50                             |
| Nongovernmental Organization and Leadership | 1                            | 5                                | 20                             |
| Public Affairs                              | 1                            | 14                               | 7                              |
| Transborder Studies                         | 1                            | 2                                | 50                             |
| <b>Total</b>                                | <b>24</b>                    | <b>75</b>                        | <b>32</b>                      |

**Note:** For 76 responding departments, representing 112 positions (36 departments posted multiple positions). Of those 112 positions, 75 were filled, and of those 75, 24 (32%) were filled by sociologists.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

filled by those departments in 2012—or 46% of all sociologists who were hired by non-sociology departments. That contrasts with findings from 2011, in which Criminal Justice departments hired the most sociologists. In 2012, Criminal Justice departments hired four sociologists, or 17% of all sociologists who were hired by non-sociology departments. However, the total number of sociologists hired by non-sociology departments (24) is relatively low, and lower than it was in 2011, when 34 sociologists were hired by such departments. It is possible that a higher response rate from non-sociology departments would have given a better idea of their hiring patterns.

## CONCLUSIONS

The sociology job market continued to rebound in 2012 with the numbers of positions advertised in the ASA Job Bank, nearly all of which were available to new PhDs, surpassing slightly the 2008 pre-Recession level. The percentage growth in jobs available to new PhDs in sociology was as high as or higher than that of other social science disciplines, further suggesting an improved job market in the field. The largest number

of available positions was found at Research Intensive institutions, although these institutions had the lowest percent of successful hires, perhaps because of the alternatives available to hiring somebody whom they do not fully agree about. Almost all reporting departments conducted searches for the positions that they had advertised, while the most commonly reported reason why a position went unfilled was the rejection of an offer by a candidate. Of all sociologists hired by reporting departments, just under 90% were employed by sociology or joint sociology departments, despite the nature of sociology as a “go-to” field for interdisciplinary studies. There were several mismatches between sociological specialization areas sought by advertising departments and areas of sociological interest identified by ASA graduate student members. These findings of mismatch might be important for directors of graduate studies as they guide graduate students and for graduate students as they consider academic careers.

Despite the growth in the number of jobs in social science disciplines, including sociology, there were fewer academic positions available than there were new PhDs and members of earlier cohorts that did not find appropriate positions. However, the ratio would improve if non-teaching positions were included in the existing job market. In sociology, there is close to a perfect match between available jobs and new PhDs. Since many non-academic positions such as research analysts are not advertised in the Job Bank, the number of jobs available probably exceeded the number of new PhDs in sociology. Previous studies have suggested that faculty members in many sociology departments were either unaware of these jobs or did not consider them to be appropriate for their graduate students, although increasing numbers of graduate students are interested in these positions (Anwar 2013; Spalter-Roth 2007). Graduate students with these interests should be searching government and nonprofit websites and contacting university career services.



## REFERENCES

- American Political Science Association. 2013. "A Longitudinal Look at Political Science Job Postings in APSA e-Jobs, 2002-2013." [www.apsanet.org/content-7623.cfm](http://www.apsanet.org/content-7623.cfm).
- Anwar, Yasmin. 2013. "PhD Students Rethink the Tenure Track." Berkeley: UC Berkeley News Center. Available at <http://newscenter.berkeley.edu/2013/03/20/beyond-academia/>.
- Diascro, Jennifer Segal. 2011. "The Job Market and Placement in Political Science in 2009-10." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (3):597-603.
- Jaschik, Scott. 2011a. "Flat job market in economics." *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved July 8, 2013. [www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/12/19/job-market-economics-phds-flat](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/12/19/job-market-economics-phds-flat).
- Jaschik, Scott. 2011b. "More Options for History Ph.D.s." *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved January 19, 2012 ([www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/10/31/historians-continue-debate-about-career-tracks-phds](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/10/31/historians-continue-debate-about-career-tracks-phds)).
- Jaschik, Scott. 2011c. "Recovery in Political Science." *Inside Higher Ed*. Retrieved January 19, 2012 ([www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/07/28/political-science-job-market-shows-signs-of-recovery](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/07/28/political-science-job-market-shows-signs-of-recovery)).
- NSF (National Science Foundation). 2012. *Doctorate Recipients from U.S. Universities: 2011. TABLE 12. Doctorate recipients, by major field of study: Selected years, 1981-2011*. Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation. [www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2011/data\\_table.cfm](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/sed/2011/data_table.cfm).
- Spalter-Roth, Roberta. 2007. *Beyond the Ivory Tower: Professionalism, Sills Match, and Job Satisfaction in Sociology*. Washington, DC: The American Sociological Association. Available at [www.asanet.org/images/research/docs/ppt/ASA%20Beyond%20Ivory%20Tower%20Slideshow.PPT](http://www.asanet.org/images/research/docs/ppt/ASA%20Beyond%20Ivory%20Tower%20Slideshow.PPT).
- Townsend, Robert B. 2011. "Small Signs of Improvement in Academic Job Market for Historians." Washington, DC: American History Association. Retrieved January 19, 2012 ([www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1201/Small-Signs-of-Improvement-in-Academic-Job-Market-for-Historians.cfm](http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1201/Small-Signs-of-Improvement-in-Academic-Job-Market-for-Historians.cfm)).

## APPENDIX: CONDUCTING THE ANNUAL JOB BANK SURVEY

Each year, the ASA Research and Development Department receives a listing and a description of all jobs advertised in the ASA Job Bank—a web-based repository for positions placed by advertising institutions including but not limited to the sociology discipline. ASA staff receive position announcements that were emailed to ASA but originated through regional professional (sociological or affiliated) societies and ASA Section listservs. To create the Job Bank database that is used for survey and analysis purposes, the Research Department staff first examines each posting placed in the Job Bank database and verifies whether any employers submitted an announcement for the same position more than once; duplicates are then removed. The next step is for staff to code single postings for which multiple position openings have been included. For example, it is not uncommon for an employer to advertise “three assistant professor positions” with the same or different required areas of expertise. That posting would become three separate records in the Job Bank database used for analysis, representing a single employer/academic department. In other instances, job postings will be made for single or multiple positions with a specified or unspecified number of positions. Thus, staff code employers/departments as advertising positions as “single,” “multiple: specified number of jobs,” and “multiple: unspecified number of jobs.” Departments then are coded according to that scheme. For the 2012-2013 survey, only three departments advertised an unspecified number of positions—the majority of which were for “one or more” positions. When the Job Bank Survey is administered, department contacts are given an opportunity to specify how many positions were filled; thus, Research Department staff err on the side of caution in terms of determining how many positions were advertised by a department, and treat “one or more” positions as one, unless specified by a respondent during administration of the survey—in which case the precise number of positions that were advertised and/or filled are reflected in the survey results.

Next, research staff processes each position announcement that was emailed to ASA, and inserts them into the new database. As with jobs posted in the online database, staff must verify whether duplicate positions exist, and parse out multiple position announcements. The final database consists of a single record so that each position represents the unit of analysis, but academic or administrative contacts are emailed a single invitation to take the online survey, which then presents questions about each position advertised by their department. The survey was administered online through *Snap Surveys Version 10* and *Snap Surveys WebHost*, which is an online survey authoring and administration platform that allows respondents to take surveys securely with high encryption and a unique online code that respondents must enter in order to begin the survey.

With the 2012 Job Bank, 441 academic departments placed advertisements for assistant or open/multiple rank faculty positions (in addition to five positions of unspecified rank, two associate professor positions, and one full professor position), representing 515 advertised positions. Of those 441 advertising departments, 74 posted multiple positions. Thus, response rates for number of departments and positions generally are similar—but not identical—because of departments that post multiple positions. Data tabulations and coding for the 2012-2013 survey were performed by ASA Research Department staff using the statistical software package *SPSS Statistics 20*.

**Appendix Table I. Top-three Most-cited Areas of Specialization\* Listed in All Assistant and Open/  
Multiple Rank ASA Job Bank Advertisements, 2012.**

| Specialization                           | Very High Research | High Research/<br>Doctoral | Masters    | Baccalaureate | Associates | Unknown   | Total       |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance | 56                 | 26                         | 70         | 23            | 6          | 4         | 185         |
| Race and Ethnicity                       | 40                 | 23                         | 26         | 9             | 6          | 5         | 109         |
| Place and Environment                    | 34                 | 14                         | 15         | 6             | 4          | 2         | 75          |
| Medicine and Health                      | 31                 | 6                          | 25         | 3             | 2          | 3         | 70          |
| Globalization and Global Issues          | 30                 | 17                         | 13         | 5             | 3          | 1         | 69          |
| Politics and Social Change               | 22                 | 5                          | 23         | 10            | 3          | 5         | 68          |
| Quantitative Approaches                  | 21                 | 12                         | 13         | 6             | 1          | 2         | 55          |
| Family, Life Course, and Society         | 24                 | 8                          | 9          | 4             | 4          | 2         | 51          |
| Unspecified                              | 20                 | 9                          | 9          | 2             | 2          | 4         | 46          |
| Work, Economy, and Organizations         | 15                 | 12                         | 9          | 3             | 2          | 3         | 44          |
| Inequalities and Stratification          | 15                 | 4                          | 13         | 4             | 2          | 2         | 40          |
| Other Specialization                     | 17                 | 7                          | 6          | 4             | 3          | 3         | 40          |
| Gender and Sexuality                     | 12                 | 3                          | 9          | 3             | 6          | 3         | 36          |
| Theory, Knowledge, Science               | 9                  | 6                          | 10         | 4             | 3          | 3         | 35          |
| Social Psychology and Interaction        | 15                 | 6                          | 6          | 3             | 2          | 3         | 35          |
| Research Methods                         | 15                 | 6                          | 10         | 2             | 1          | 1         | 35          |
| Open Specialization                      | 17                 | 2                          | 8          | 1             | 2          | 4         | 34          |
| Qualitative Approaches                   | 9                  | 8                          | 6          | 3             | 1          | 2         | 29          |
| Population and Ecology                   | 9                  | 7                          | 5          | 2             | 2          | 1         | 26          |
| Education                                | 9                  | 2                          | 8          | 2             | 1          | 3         | 25          |
| Sociology of Culture                     | 10                 | 3                          | 6          | 3             | 1          | 1         | 24          |
| Application and Practice                 | 7                  | 3                          | 4          | 3             | 2          | 1         | 20          |
| Comparative and Historical Approaches    | 4                  | 4                          | 4          | 2             | 3          | 1         | 18          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>441</b>         | <b>193</b>                 | <b>307</b> | <b>107</b>    | <b>62</b>  | <b>59</b> | <b>1169</b> |

**Note:** For 515 assistant or open/multiple rank positions; includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin; average specialty areas per position posting: 2.3.

\*Derived from top three most-occurring areas of specialization listed in position descriptions in the Job Bank database.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

**Appendix Table II. Comparison of Specializations Listed in All Assistant and Open Rank Job Bank Advertisements in 2012 to Areas of Interest Selected by Graduate Students on ASA Membership Forms in 2012.\***

| Specialization                           | Advertised Specializations (N=515) |      | Areas of Student Member Interest in 2012 (N=3,330) |      | Difference in Percent of Interest Areas |
|--|------------------------------------|------|--|------|---|
|  | Percent                            | Rank | Percent  | Rank | Percentage Point                        |
| Social Control, Law, Crime, and Deviance | 15.8                               | 1    | 7.6  | 4    | 8.2                                     |
| Race and Ethnicity                       | 9.3                                | 2    | 5.2  | 9    | 4.1                                     |
| Place and Environment                    | 6.4                                | 3    | 6.5  | 7    | -0.1                                    |
| Medicine and Health                      | 6.0                                | 4    | 11.5   | 2    | -5.5                                    |
| Globalization and Global Issues          | 5.9                                | 5    | 2.4  | 15   | 3.5                                     |
| Politics and Social Change               | 5.8                                | 6    | 7.2  | 6    | -1.4                                    |
| Quantitative Approaches                  | 4.7                                | 7    | 1.6  | 17   | 3.1                                     |
| Family, Life Course, and Society         | 4.4                                | 8    | 2.6  | 14   | 1.8                                     |
| Unspecified                              | 3.9                                | 9    | 0.04   | 20   | 3.9                                     |
| Work, Economy, and Organizations         | 3.8                                | 10   | 9.7  | 3    | -5.9                                    |
| Inequalities and Stratification          | 3.4                                | 11   | 9.7  | 3    | -6.3                                    |
| Other Specialization                     | 3.4                                | 11   | 6.5  | 8    | -3.1                                    |
| Gender and Sexuality                     | 3.1                                | 12   | 7.3  | 5    | -4.2                                    |
| Theory, Knowledge, Science               | 3.0                                | 13   | 4.2  | 12   | -1.2                                    |
| Social Psychology and Interaction        | 3.0                                | 13   | 11.6   | 1    | -8.6                                    |
| Research Methods                         | 3.0                                | 13   | --   | --   | --                                      |
| Open Specialization                      | 2.9                                | 14   | --   | --   | --                                      |
| Qualitative Approaches                   | 2.5                                | 15   | 1.9  | 16   | 0.6                                     |
| Population and Ecology                   | 2.2                                | 16   | 2.9  | 13   | -0.7                                    |
| Education                                | 2.1                                | 17   | 5.1  | 10   | -3.0                                    |
| Sociology of Culture                     | 2.1                                | 17   | 5.0  | 11   | -2.9                                    |
| Application and Practice                 | 1.7                                | 18   | 0.9  | 18   | 0.8                                     |
| Comparative and Historical Approaches    | 1.5                                | 23   | 0.3  | 19   | 1.2                                     |

**Note:** For 515 assistant or open/multiple rank positions; includes five (5) positions of unspecified rank, two (2) associate professor positions, and one (1) full professor position; those positions are included for analysis because they were available to scholars who recently completed their doctoral degrees or were expected to have had their PhD awarded by the time the position was to begin; average specialty areas per position posting: 2.3.

Excludes non-U.S. student members.

\*Derived from top three most-occurring areas of specialization listed in position descriptions in the Job Bank database.

**Source:** ASA Survey of Academic Employers, 2012-2013.

The following are selected research briefs and reports produced by the ASA's Department of Research on the Discipline and Profession for dissemination in a variety of venues and concerning topics of interest to the discipline and profession. These and all research briefs are located at [www.asanet.org/research/briefs\\_and\\_articles.cfm](http://www.asanet.org/research/briefs_and_articles.cfm). You will need Adobe Reader to view our PDFs.

| Title  | Format | Year |
|--|--------|------|
| Strong Ties, Weak Ties, or No Ties: What Helped Sociology Majors Find Career-Level Jobs?                                   | PDF    | 2013 |
| The Victory of Assessment? What's Happening in Your Department?: The AY 2011-2012 Department Survey                        | PDF    | 2013 |
| Changes in Technology, Courses, and Resources: What's Happening in Your Department?: The AY 2011-2012 Department Survey    | PDF    | 2013 |
| Postdocs: Another Stage in the Sociology Pipeline?   | PDF    | 2013 |
| Sociology Majors: Before Graduation in 2012  | PDF    | 2013 |
| Recruiting Sociology Majors: What Are the Effects of the Great Recession?: Concepts, Change, and Careers                   | PDF    | 2012 |
| What Leads to Student Satisfaction with Sociology Programs?  | PDF    | 2012 |
| What Do We Know About the Dissemination of Information on Pedagogy?: 2008, 2010, and 2011                                  | PDF    | 2012 |
| Mothers in Pursuit of Ideal Academic Careers   | PDF    | 2012 |
| Research about Minorities in Sociology: Surveys, Datasets, and Measurement   | PPT    | 2012 |
| The Effects of New Technology on the Growth of a Teaching and Learning Network   | PDF    | 2011 |
| The Future of Sociology: Minorities, Programs, and Jobs  | PPT    | 2011 |
| The Impact of Cross Race Mentoring for "Ideal" and "Alternative" PhD Careers in Sociology                                  | PDF    | 2011 |
| Sociology Master's Graduates Join the Workforce  | PDF    | 2011 |
| Are Masters Programs Closing? What Makes for Success in Staying Open?  | PDF    | 2011 |
| Falling Behind: Sociology and Other Social Science Faculty Salaries, AY 2010-2011  | PDF    | 2011 |
| A Decade of Change: ASA Membership From 2000 - 2010  | PDF    | 2011 |
| Findings from ASA Surveys of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD Recipients   | PDF    | 2011 |
| Homosociality or Crossing Race/Ethnicity/Gender Boundaries? Pipeline Interventions and the Production of Scholarly Careers | PDF    | 2011 |
| Networks and the Diffusion of Cutting-Edge Teaching and Learning Knowledge in Sociology                                    | PDF    | 2010 |
| The Gap in Faculty Pay Between Private and Public Institutions: Smaller in Sociology than in Other Social Sciences         | PDF    | 2010 |
| From Programs to Careers: Continuing to Pay Attention to the Master's Degree in Sociology                                  | PDF    | 2010 |
| Teaching Alone? Sociology Faculty and the Availability of Social Network   | PDF    | 2010 |

Follow the Department of Research on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/ASAResearchDepartment> and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ASAResearch>.

**American Sociological Association**  
 Department of Research on the Discipline and Profession  
[www.asanet.org](http://www.asanet.org)  
[research@asanet.org](mailto:research@asanet.org)

