

Sociology Majors: Before Graduation in 2012

From the First Wave of the Study

SOCIAL CAPITAL, ORGANIZATIONAL CAPITAL, AND THE JOB MARKET FOR NEW SOCIOLOGY GRADUATES



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~CONTENTS~

INTRODUCTION.....1

STUDY METHODS.....1

 Sample Selection.....1

 Questionnaire and Responses.....2

 Weighting.....2

FINDINGS.....2

 Academic and Demographic Characteristics of Majors.....2

 Why Do They Major in Sociology?.....4

 Have They Learned Sociological Concepts?.....6

 Have They Learned Methodological Skills?.....7

 Activity Participation.....8

 Satisfaction with Sociology Programs.....8

 Future Plans.....9

 Contacts.....13

CONCLUSIONS.....14

REFERENCES.....14

~LIST OF TABLES~

Table 1. Institutional Type..... 3

Table 2. Academic Characteristics of Students..... 4

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Students..... 5

Table 4. Reasons for Majoring in Sociology.....6

Table 5. Content Learning..... 7

Table 6. Methodological Skill Learning.....9

Table 7. Activity Participation.....10

Table 8. Satisfaction with Sociology Department Experiences.....11

Table 9. Graduate/Professional School Plans.....11

Table 10. Employment and Job Search Plans.....12

Table 11. Job Search Methods Used or Intended to be Used.....13

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For more information about this publication, please contact the ASA Research Department at research@asanet.org or spalter-roth@asanet.org. For more information about this study, please visit www.asanet.org/research/bacc_survey/jobs_for_sociology_majors.cfm.

~INTRODUCTION~

The American Sociological Association (ASA) began its first longitudinal study of senior sociology majors in 2005. This study was repeated in 2012 after the recession of 2008 that led to a period of increased student debt and higher parental unemployment. The question of “what can I do with a bachelor’s degree in sociology?” may be of greater concern for students and their parents in 2012, after the “Great Recession.” Both studies were funded by the National Science Foundation, in order to obtain comparative data about student experiences at the two points in time. Both studies have found that students were excited by the sociological concepts that they learn in their courses. In spite of this finding, many sociology departments are concerned about losing the competition for undergraduate majors given a current job market with the highest unemployment in a generation, and students saddled with increasing levels of debt. As a result of this changing context, departments need more information about the factors that explain student recruitment into the major as well as the factors that explain satisfaction with the major. In addition, given that about 60 percent of sociology majors enter the job market upon graduation (Spalter-Roth and Van Vooren 2008), more information is needed about how sociology majors search for and secure jobs, and the kinds of social capital that help them in this process. This publication is designed to provide departments with information to help guide students to use the sociological skills and concepts that excited them in their post-baccalaureate lives.

What follows is a summary of the findings from the first wave of the longitudinal study of sociology majors, designed to follow the senior class of 2012. Findings presented center on six topics:

1. the demographic and academic characteristics of sociology majors;
2. the reasons students chose to major in sociology;
3. the knowledge and skills students gained as sociology majors;
4. student participation in activities associated with sociology majors and departments;
5. student satisfaction with sociology departments; and
6. majors’ initial plans after graduation and their job-search strategies.

Data are provided both for the total national sample and for three types of higher education institutions: Doctoral, Masters, and Baccalaureate-only. Under separate cover, we have also provided departments that participated in the survey with a summary of data from respondents in their own departments. Our hope is that departments will use these data to compare the experiences of their own students to those of comparable institutions. Data such as these should prove useful to departments interested in understanding and improving the quality of their students’ experiences as well as to those departments engaged in formal program assessment or program review efforts.

~STUDY METHODS~

In this section we review study research methods including sample selection, survey design, and data weighting.

SAMPLE SELECTION

The 104 departments that participated in the 2005 *Bachelor’s and Beyond* study were invited to take part in the 2012 study. Included in the 2005 group of departments was the stratified sample of 80 departments (20 from PhD granting institutions, 20 from MA institutions, and 40 from Baccalaureate institutions), as well as any additional volunteer departments. Along with matched departments, the 2012 invitation was extended to any department that wished to have its students included in the study. Departments were notified of the study via email, ASA’s member newsletter *Footnotes*, and *Chairlink*, a listserv used to disseminate information to all department chairs. The result was an additional 129 interested departments for a total of 233 departments that were expected to participate. Departments were asked to send a list of the names of their senior sociology majors graduating between April and August 2012, along with their email addresses. Departments that did not yet know who of their majors was graduating sent lists of all senior majors, and the response rate was later adjusted. Ultimately, 160 departments sent the ASA research department their lists after obtaining institutional review board (IRB) and/or any institutional approval necessary to disclose this information beyond the IRB approval granted to ASA by the Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB).

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESPONSES

ASA's Department of Research on the Discipline and Profession created the student survey, along with the help of the study's Advisory Committee.¹ The 2012 survey replicated many questions from the 2005 questionnaire, with additional questions about the social networks students used or planned to use in pursuing jobs or admission into graduate school. Questions focused on students' experiences as sociology majors, including why they majored, skills and concepts they learned, activities they participated in, their job and graduate school aspirations, and the types of relations used in finding appropriate jobs and graduate schools.² Respondents were expected to use an online version of the survey, created by Indiana University's Center for Survey Research. The survey was pretested in November 2011 by the Advisory Committee members' students. The final version of the survey was launched with an invitational email to students in March 2012, which was followed up with four reminder emails before the survey closed in early May. By the time it closed, 2,695 students had participated in the survey, for an average departmental response rate of about 40 percent (36.8 percent).

WEIGHTING

As is typical in studies such as this one, male students were underrepresented among respondents to the final survey. To compensate, the data presented below are weighted by gender. Weights were created based on the most recent data on the population of sociology majors provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

~FINDINGS FROM THE 2012 BACHELOR'S AND BEYOND SURVEY~

In this section we examine both the academic and demographic characteristics of respondents as well as their reasons for majoring, skills and concepts they learned, the activities in which they participated, and their satisfaction with the major.

ACADEMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF MAJORS

Institutional Types. The *Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* revised its system for classifying types of higher education institutions in 2010.³ In Table 1 we use the categories from the current classification system to identify the type of institution in which these majors were enrolled. In order to facilitate comparisons with data from the 2005 *Bachelor's and Beyond* study, we collapsed the eight categories into the three that we will use throughout this report, labeling them Doctoral, Masters, and Baccalaureate institutions.

More than one-half of the senior sociology majors who responded to this study were enrolled in Doctoral institutions, with the largest number in institutions of very high research activity. About one-third of students were graduating from Masters' comprehensive institutions, with many of these respondents enrolled in the schools with an applied orientation (Spalter-Roth and Van Vooren 2011). In contrast, only 10 percent of majors were enrolled in Baccalaureate institutions.

Given the increased interest in interdisciplinary programs as well as administrative marriages that decrease program costs, students were asked a series of questions about the type of sociology major they were pursuing. They were asked further about their enrollment and academic success. Table 2 summarizes these survey responses for both the total sample and for the three broad institutional types.

The sample of senior majors is almost evenly split between students whose major is "sociology alone" and those whose major combines sociology with a related field such as criminal justice or psychology. About half of respondents graduating from Baccalaureate institutions major in "sociology alone," while those from the two remaining institutions are more likely to be located in combination departments. The largest category of joint majors is sociology and with a discipline not specified in the table, including education, race and ethnic studies, and gender and sexual-

¹The Advisory Committee consisted of John Kennedy, Indiana University; Margaret (Peggy) Nelson, Middlebury College; Mary S. Senter, Central Michigan University; and Pamela Stone and Michael Wood, Hunter College, City University of New York.

²See complete questionnaire at www.asanet.org/documents/research/pdfs/student_social_cap_web.pdf.

³See <http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org>.

TABLE 1. INSTITUTIONAL TYPE: PERCENTAGES FOR CARNEGIE CATEGORIES AND COLLAPSED CATEGORIES.

	Number Categories	Percent All Categories
RU/VH: Research Universities (very high research activity)	1,026	38.0
RU/H: Research Universities (high research activity)	381	14.1
DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	131	4.9
All Doctoral	1,538	57.1
Masters L: Masters Colleges and Universities (larger programs)	705	26.1
Masters M: Masters Colleges and Universities (medium programs)	147	5.4
Masters S: Masters Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)	29	1.1
All Master's	880	32.6
Bac/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges—Arts & Sciences	244	9.1
Bac/Diverse: Baccalaureate Colleges—Diverse Fields	34	1.2
All Baccalaureate	278	10.3
Total	2,696	100.0

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

ity. About one-quarter of responding senior sociology majors at Doctoral institutions fell into this category. The second-most frequent combination is sociology with criminal justice.

Almost 90 percent of sociology majors attended school full time, although full-time attendance was most common at Baccalaureate institutions and least common at Masters' institutions, where more students work at paid employment. Similarly, almost 90 percent of students at Baccalaureate schools began their studies there as freshmen, while only about one-half of students at Masters' institutions reported that they enrolled there first as freshmen. Many of the transfer students undoubtedly began their studies at two-year community colleges. Finally, respondents' overall GPA is lower than their GPA in sociology and students at Baccalaureate institutions report higher grades. Yet, the average GPA at all types of schools is above a three-point average.

Demographic Characteristics. Students were also asked a variety of questions about their demographic characteristics, which are summarized in Table 3. These data show significant variations among the three types of schools.

About 70 percent of senior sociology majors were female, and the gender distribution does not vary significantly by institutional type. The growing diversity within the discipline is highlighted by the finding that 40 percent of our graduating majors, on average, chose a category other than white or Caucasian to describe their race/ethnicity. The highest level of diversity was at Doctoral institutions, closely followed by Masters' institutions. The lowest level of diversity is found at Baccalaureate institutions, where about three students in four describes herself as white. For example, departments at Baccalaureate schools have the smallest percentage of Hispanic students (2.4 percent compared to 13.4 percent in departments at

TABLE 2. ACADEMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS:
PERCENTAGES FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Major***				
Sociology alone	49.4	46.7	53.6	49.0
Sociology with anthropology	2.7	3.5	10.4	3.7
Sociology with social work	3.2	5.2	2.9	3.8
Sociology with criminal justice	9.8	19.9	5.8	12.7
Sociology with psychology	10.3	7.1	4.7	8.7
Sociology with other discipline	24.6	17.5	22.7	22.1
Enrolled full-time***	90.0	87.6	96.9	89.9
Started here as a freshman***	66.6	53.5	87.7	64.5
Mean Sociology GPA***	3.39	3.29	3.42	3.36
Mean Overall GPA***	3.23	3.15	3.32	3.21

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

Doctoral institutions and 12.7 percent at departments in Masters' institutions).

On average, almost 30 percent of senior majors were 24 years or older at the time they completed the survey. Baccalaureate institutions were most likely to enroll traditional-age students, with more than 60 percent of students reporting that they were 22 years of age at the time of the survey. In contrast, about 40 percent of respondents at Masters' institutions were 24 years of age or older, suggesting that respondents at this type of institution may spend more time in the labor force than Baccalaureate students and hence graduate later.

More than half of respondents' mothers did not have a college degree, and almost 30 percent of these mothers have a high school degree or less. Fathers had similar levels of education to mothers. The parents of students at Baccalaureate institutions were most likely to be highly educated: more than one-third of these students reported that their mothers and their fathers have at least some graduate or professional schooling. By contrast, only about 15 percent of students at Masters' institutions reported mothers or fathers who are

so highly educated. These data suggest that, especially at Masters' institutions, respondents were first generation college graduates.

WHY DO THEY MAJOR IN SOCIOLOGY?

Why do students choose to major in sociology, rather than a more vocationally-oriented degree in a tight job market? To answer this question, sociology seniors were asked whether each of 11 reasons was an important or not an important reason for choosing to major in sociology. Table 4 provides the percentages of the total sample and of students from each institutional type reporting that the reason was "important."

The top-five reasons for majoring involve a strong interest in the substantive content of sociology. Students are excited about sociological concepts: for example, how to apply their sociological imagination in order to understand how individuals function in different socioeconomic situations and how to change society. Nearly all respondents chose the major

**TABLE 3. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS:
PERCENTAGES FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.**

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Gender				
Female	68.5	69.5	73.4	69.3
Race/Ethnicity***,a				
White or Caucasian	56.7	60.8	74.7	60.0
Black or African American ^b	14.6	13.2	11.1	13.8
Hispanic or Latino	13.4	12.7	2.4	12.0
Asian	6.4	3.6	3.6	5.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	--	0.1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0.4	0.1	0.4	0.3
Other	1.9	2.7	2.4	2.2
Multiracial	6.5	6.6	5.5	6.5
Age in years***				
19-21 years	2.7	3.0	0.8	2.6
22 years	45.7	33.3	61.1	43.4
23 years	24.1	24.3	28.3	24.6
24 years or more	27.5	39.4	9.7	29.4
Mother's education***				
Not applicable/no female guardian	0.7	1.6	0.4	1.0
Less than high school	8.6	9.4	3.6	8.4
High school	19.6	24.7	8.4	20.1
Associate/nursing/vocational	9.7	13.8	9.6	11.0
Some college	16.2	16.3	14.4	16.1
College graduate	26.8	21.8	28.4	25.3
Some graduate or professional school	2.3	1.5	2.0	2.0
Graduate/professional school	16.7	12.5	33.6	17.1
Father's education***				
Not applicable/no male guardian	4.3	4.0	2.8	4.0
Less than high school	9.6	11.9	4.0	9.8
High school	21.4	27.3	11.5	22.4
Associate/nursing/vocational	6.1	5.9	5.2	5.9
Some college	14.5	15.5	10.7	14.4
College graduate	21.7	20.2	30.2	22.1
Some graduate or professional school	2.3	1.6	0.8	1.9
Graduate/professional school	20.2	13.6	34.9	19.5

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

^aTests of statistical significance based on recoded variable with categories white, black, Hispanic, Asian, and other.

^bTo adjust for the underrepresentation of Blacks we coded anyone who selected black into Black/African American, even if they also selected another racial category. This also adjusted for the fact that the NCES data do not have a multiracial/ethnic category.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

because the concepts interested them. Further, almost 90 percent of students reported choosing their major after enjoying their first sociological course. This latter finding suggests that attention should be paid to the quality of teaching and the clarity of conceptual explanations in introductory sociology courses. About one-half of students in the total sample majored in sociology because they had heard good things about the sociology department at their school, although students from Baccalaureate institutions were more likely to report that a positive reputation was an important reason for their choice in major. However, along with a strong interest in content, more than one-half of responding sociology majors, on average, also recognize that the sociology major has vocational aspects. It can provide them with research skills and prepare them for desired jobs or for graduate or professional school. Students from Doctoral and Masters' institutions were more likely than those from Baccalaureate institutions to select these latter two careerist reasons for majoring, suggesting that many are first generation college graduates whose parents are less able to support them after they finish college. Relatively few students chose their sociology major because they could add it without taking many additional credit hours or because it required fewer

credit hours than others to begin with. Students from Doctoral and Masters' institutions were somewhat more likely to select these reasons for majoring than students from Baccalaureate institutions.

HAVE THEY LEARNED SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPTS?

Students were asked a variety of questions to gauge the extent to which they had mastered sociological concepts and analysis associated with an undergraduate sociology major. Six questions focused on the learning necessary to develop a sociological imagination. These questions were introduced by telling students that they would be asked whether they had gained "the ability to describe and explain the following as part of your sociology major." More specifically, they were asked: "As part of your major did you learn to explain, present, discuss, or identify each of six substantive tasks." Response options ranged from "yes, definitely" to "not at all." Table 5 summarizes the percentages of respondents who reported that they have definitely gained the ability in question.

TABLE 4. REASONS FOR MAJORING IN SOCIOLOGY: PERCENT "IMPORTANT" FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Interesting concepts	96.9	97.4	98.5	97.2
Understand individuals within social forces*	88.6	92.4	90.4	90.0
Enjoyed first course	87.2	88.8	91.1	88.1
Understand my life**	74.8	80.6	76.2	76.9
Change society	74.4	78.1	75.1	75.7
Job preparation***	60.4	73.5	50.2	63.7
Research preparation	58.6	62.1	62.9	60.2
Graduate school preparation***	53.8	59.7	39.0	54.2
Good department reputation***	46.3	51.4	61.6	49.6
Few additional credit hours needed***	28.3	26.0	13.2	26.0
Fewer credit hours required than other majors**	19.3	20.2	11.2	18.8

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

Students reported high levels of conceptual learning, and these self-reports do not vary by institutional type in most cases. They were most likely to report mastery of basic concepts and of understanding the impact of social forces for diverse social groups (close to 90 percent, on average). They were least likely to believe that they had gained the ability to identify the impact and consequences of social policy. Respondents from Baccalaureate schools were least likely to report that they have mastered doing this type of analysis.

HAVE THEY LEARNED METHODOLOGICAL SKILLS?

Fifteen questions on the survey focused on learning skills that were largely methodological in nature. Respondents were told that “...we would like to know whether you gained proficiency with each of the following skills as part of your sociology major.” They were then asked to “please select the extent to which you believe you learned or improved each skill.” Response options ranged from “a great deal” to “very

little.” Table 6 presents the percentage of students choosing “a great deal” as their response.

By and large, students were less likely to report that they had mastered these methodological skills compared to their reported mastery of conceptual skills. For no skill did more than 70 percent report “a great deal” of learning. At least 60 percent of respondents, on average, reported a great deal of learning or improvement in six skill areas: gathering information to make an argument based on evidence; identifying ethical issues in research; writing a report; using computers to find bibliographic/reference information; and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of different research methods. They were also likely to report learning/improving their ability to work with people from diverse groups. In contrast, fewer than one-third of students reported a great deal of learning in graphically displaying data; writing a résumé; writing research or grant proposals; or using qualitative data analysis packages. These are the vocationally oriented skills that students need in order to successfully join the labor market.

TABLE 5. CONTENT LEARNING: PERCENT “YES, DEFINITELY” GAINED ABILITY FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Explain basic concepts in sociology	86.1	87.8	86.6	86.7
Explain important differences in the life experiences of people as they vary	85.5	87.8	88.9	86.7
Present sociological explanations about current social issues	78.3	81.7	80.4	79.6
Discuss basic sociological theories or theoretical orientations	77.4	77.7	84.2	78.2
Discuss what is meant by a social institution and give examples of their impact on individuals	76.6	78.1	82.8	77.7
Identify the impact and consequences of social policy ^{*a}	62.9	65.5	56.9	63.1

* $p < .05$.

^aTests of statistical significance run with recoded variables. Categories include “yes, definitely,” “yes, somewhat,” and the combined “not too much” and “not at all.”

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

Respondents from Baccalaureate institutions were more likely to report learning 10 of the 15 skills, with at least a 10 percent difference for five of the skills. Students from Masters' institutions were most likely to report learning to write research or grant proposals, to write a résumé, and to make presentations, with a 10 percent difference for the latter two skills. These findings suggest that Masters' institutions may best prepare their students for the job market.

ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

Increasingly, departments find that administrators and students are asking them to organize a variety of activities for students outside of the traditional “sage on a stage” class session. The first *Bachelor's and Beyond* project (2005) showed that participation in these types of activities was associated with success in finding jobs close to sociology and in gaining admission to graduate school, especially for underrepresented minorities with parents who had less than a college degree (Spalter-Roth, Van Vooren, and Senter 2009). For the 2012 study, sociology seniors were once again asked whether they had participated in each of 15 different activities as part of their undergraduate experience (see Table 7).

Some activities—especially those linked to classes—seem to be ubiquitous across sociology programs while others are relatively rare. For example, more than 90 percent of students reported participating in a group or team project for at least one of their classes. By contrast, less than one student in five reported having been part of an Honors program associated with their sociology department or having attended a sociology meeting at the local, state, regional, or national levels. Advocacy, service learning, and community volunteering (apart from service learning and internships) are relatively common across types of schools, with between 43 and 68 percent of students from each institutional type reporting involvement.

About one-half of students reported participating in activities that are explicit in their focus on career development. These included internships (whether paid or unpaid); talking with a career advisor; and attending “jobs fairs, on-campus interviews by

firms, career-related mentorship programs, or other networking opportunities.”

Students graduating from Baccalaureate schools reported much higher levels of participation in activities that prepare students for graduate school or to enter the job market. For example, they were almost twice as likely to have worked on an independent study or research project with a faculty member or to have studied abroad. They were also much more likely to have received mentoring from a faculty member, to have participated in a leadership development program/seminar or internship, or to have attended a professional sociology meeting. These findings suggest that sociology programs at Baccalaureate schools provide more scholarly mentoring and greater focus on a wider variety of student needs than the departments at other types of schools. Additionally, the fact that respondents at Baccalaureate schools have highly educated and probably higher income parents may mean that they can afford to participate in extracurricular activities rather than working at part-time jobs.

SATISFACTION WITH SOCIOLOGY PROGRAMS

In 2012 students were asked nine questions about their levels of satisfaction with “their experiences with the sociology department.” Response options were “very satisfied,” “somewhat satisfied,” and “not at all satisfied.”⁴ Table 8 reports the percentages of students who were “very satisfied.”

Levels of overall student satisfaction were high, with almost three-quarters of students reporting the highest level of satisfaction. And, at least two out of three students were very satisfied with the quality of teaching as well as the ease of contacting faculty outside of class, and with the opportunity to interact with peers. While more than one-half of students were very satisfied with the quality of undergraduate advising, much lower percentages of students—less than 30 percent—were very satisfied with the quality of career advising or the quality of advising about graduate school. Given that approximately 60 percent of sociology majors head straight for the job market, this low score represents a mismatch between student needs and department activities.

⁴The response option “not applicable” was removed as missing data from this analysis.

TABLE 6. METHODOLOGICAL SKILL LEARNING: PERCENT “A GREAT DEAL” FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Make an evidence-based argument*	68.2	68.2	78.5	69.3
Identify ethical issues in sociological research***	66.9	71.7	74.9	69.3
Work with people who differ in race, ethnicity, gender, or class	66.0	70.8	65.4	67.5
Write a report that can be understood by non-sociologists***	60.6	65.9	74.3	63.8
Develop a bibliography or a list of references***	56.9	64.7	70.8	60.9
Evaluate strengths and weaknesses of different research methods*	58.6	62.7	67.6	60.9
Create hypotheses***	54.9	60.0	65.0	57.7
Interpret results of different types of data gathering***	53.7	57.8	66.5	56.4
Make presentations using software such as PowerPoint***	43.3	58.8	54.5	49.7
Analyze data with statistical software packages (SPSS, SAS, Stata)***	35.5	42.1	44.3	38.7
Describe percentages and statistics in a bivariate table*	35.8	38.4	39.2	37.0
Graphically display data**	31.0	33.5	39.6	32.8
Write a résumé***	26.0	41.9	31.1	32.1
Write research or grant proposals**	28.4	34.8	33.8	31.2
Use qualitative data analysis packages, such as NVivo, Atlas.ti, or Ethnograph	24.6	24.6	24.6	24.6

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

Respondents graduating from Baccalaureate colleges are more satisfied than other students on seven of the satisfaction dimensions, with differences among school types of least 20 percentage points for five specific types of experiences with sociology departments. These include satisfaction with the quality of teaching and undergraduate advising, satisfaction with their ability to see faculty, interact with peers, and engage in activities outside of class. The smaller sizes of classes and larger focus on teaching at Baccalaureate-only schools may result in greater attention paid to students. In contrast, respondents at Masters' institutions are more satisfied than those graduating from other types of schools with career advising, and students at Masters' and Baccalaureate institutions are equally likely to be satisfied with graduate school

advising (although levels of satisfaction are relatively low). These findings suggest that students' needs are least likely to be met and doctoral institutions.

FUTURE PLANS

A number of questions in the survey focused on students' plans after graduation. In particular, they were asked about their plans regarding graduate and professional school and about their employment and job search efforts. Table 9 summarizes information about planning for continuing schooling, while Table 10 focuses on current employment and plans for employment in the next year.

TABLE 7. ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION:
PERCENTAGE “YES” FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Group or team projects*	91.1	92.3	96.1	92.0
Study groups for a class*	81.0	80.3	88.3	81.5
Received mentoring advice from a faculty member***	63.7	74.6	90.9	70.1
Community or other volunteer activity*	64.5	60.3	68.0	63.5
Saw a career advisor***	55.3	53.0	69.8	56.0
Jobs fairs, on-campus interviews by firms, career-related mentorship programs, or other networking opportunities*	50.6	53.4	60.2	52.5
Internship***	46.3	54.0	65.4	50.9
Work with a group advocating some cause	51.0	48.4	56.1	50.7
Service learning project***	43.0	52.0	54.8	47.2
Independent study or research project with faculty member***	31.6	32.5	60.3	34.9
Leadership development program or seminar***	28.9	31.0	42.0	30.9
Alpha Kappa Delta or other Sociology Club***	21.4	28.9	28.2	24.6
Study abroad***	21.0	13.3	53.5	21.8
Departmental honors program***	16.4	20.6	25.2	18.7
Attended a local, state, regional, or national sociology meeting***	12.6	18.5	24.4	15.8

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

More than one-half of these graduating seniors plan to go on to graduate or professional school in the next year, although in our 2005 study we found that more students went directly into the labor market than had originally planned to do so. In addition, planning to go on to graduate school does not necessarily mean that respondents will not enter the job market. Less than half of respondents at Baccalaureate institutions reported that they were planning to go to graduate school, which is surprising, given the mentoring that they received as well as their parents' education level. Of those respondents who were planning to go to graduate school, the largest percent—more than 60 percent—plan to pursue a Masters degree, and this degree choice is most likely to be mentioned by students at Masters institutions. Some of these respondents may decide to go on for a PhD after they complete their master's degree. About 12 percent of students

reported moving on to study for the PhD and a comparable number plan on going to law school in the next year. The largest percentage of students, about one-third, who plan to go to graduate or professional school, report that they intend sociology to be their major field, an indicator of their satisfaction with sociology. More than one student in four plans to pursue social work, and slightly more than one in five plans to study psychology/counseling. These two fields suggest that a relatively large proportion of majors wants to apply their sociological training in areas that focus on the impact of social forces on diverse individuals and groups. These two applied fields of study were most likely to be reported by students graduating from Masters' institutions.

Almost all students from each type of institution reported that they plan to work at a job in the next 12

TABLE 8. SATISFACTION WITH SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT EXPERIENCES: PERCENTAGE “VERY SATISFIED” FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Overall satisfaction***	70.7	76.7	85.8	74.2
Ease of contacting faculty outside of class***	67.4	70.1	89.5	70.6
Opportunity to interact with peers***	62.4	71.3	84.0	67.6
Quality of teaching***	62.3	69.2	82.7	66.7
Ease in getting the courses you needed to graduate***	61.3	62.8	76.7	63.4
Quality of undergraduate advising***	50.9	54.6	71.4	54.3
Out of class activities***	35.8	45.4	54.0	41.0
Quality of graduate school advising***	25.3	35.3	34.8	29.7
Quality of career advising***	22.6	33.0	27.2	26.7

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

TABLE 9. GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL PLANS: PERCENTAGES FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Plan to go to graduate or professional school***				
Yes	58.5	57.6	47.9	57.1
Degree intended to pursue**				
PhD	13.3	10.5	15.1	12.6
Master's	60.2	70.9	56.3	63.4
Law	13.3	9.5	11.9	11.9
Medical	2.7	1.1	5.6	2.4
Other	5.0	3.0	4.0	4.2
Undecided	5.6	5.1	7.1	5.5
Field for this degree				
Sociology	32.4	33.6	37.5	33.2
Social Work**	25.0	34.0	26.3	28.3
Psychology/Counseling**	20.2	26.1	12.6	21.6
Education***	21.1	12.9	24.2	18.5
Criminal Justice	9.6	11.7	12.6	10.6
Public Policy/Affairs	11.0	8.5	11.6	10.1
Public Health	9.7	10.7	10.5	10.1
Business/Management*	8.5	4.0	6.3	6.7
Law	4.8	4.0	4.2	4.5
Undecided**	19.8	23.1	34.7	22.2
Other*	19.6	21.1	32.6	21.2

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

TABLE 10. EMPLOYMENT AND JOB SEARCH PLANS:
PERCENTAGES FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Plan to work at a job in the next 12 months				
Yes	91.0	93.2	92.7	91.9
Description of work plans***				
Find a job	56.1	55.2	73.6	57.7
Change jobs	28.0	29.7	19.7	27.7
Continue working at current job	15.8	15.1	6.7	14.6
Currently employed 20 hours per week or more***				
Yes	36.5	44.6	21.9	37.7
Job categories of current job^a				
Commercial Services such as business or retail services	14.9	16.8	17.6	15.7
Social Services, Counselors, Psychologists	11.9	16.8	23.5	14.2
Clerical/administrative support	14.9	11.8	--	13.1
Management	10.4	9.2	5.9	9.8
Teaching, Librarian	6.5	5.9	11.8	6.5
Other Professional (includes PR, IT, etc)	6.0	1.7	11.8	4.7
Social Science, Research	3.5	2.5	--	3.0
Criminology	0.5	1.7	--	0.9
Other	31.3	33.6	29.4	32.0
Status of job search***				
Started looking for a job	55.1	59.5	58.2	56.9
Haven't started looking for a job	27.8	28.8	17.8	27.0
Accepted an offer, but not yet working	12.7	6.7	17.8	11.3
Internship will lead to a job/no job search required	4.3	5.0	6.2	4.8

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

^aNo tests of statistical significance were run.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

months, a substantially higher percent than in 2005. Almost three-quarters of seniors at Baccalaureate institutions report that they plan on finding a job, since they are the least likely to plan to go on to graduate school, while about 55 percent of students at Doctoral and Masters institutions have these plans. Respondents from Baccalaureate institutions were less likely than those at Doctoral and Masters institutions to be

currently employed, which, in part, explains why they were less likely than other students to report plans to either change jobs or continue working at their current job in the next year. Sociology seniors who were currently employed were most likely to work in social services, clerical/administrative support, or commercial services (including business and retail). More than one-half of responding sociology seniors inter-

**TABLE 11. SEARCH METHODS USED OR INTENDED TO BE USED:
PERCENTAGES FOR TOTAL SAMPLE AND BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE.**

	Doctoral	Masters	Baccalaureate	Total
Informal channel (e.g., colleague, family or friend)	74.0	73.8	80.9	74.7
Publicly available job advertisements (e.g., Monster.com, USAjobs.gov, newspaper advertisements, etc.)***	67.4	74.9	61.9	69.3
Job advertisements through networks (e.g., LinkedIn, email listserv)	62.3	61.5	63.2	62.1
Unsolicited résumé to prospective employer*	56.9	63.3	61.1	59.6
Internship***	45.4	54.0	56.6	49.6
Consultation with Career Services***	43.5	48.3	60.3	47.1
Workshop or job fair sponsored by college career services	40.6	45.7	41.1	42.4
Faculty advisor(s) or job workshop in the sociology department***	33.3	46.8	49.5	39.8
Employer through former job or position	32.1	34.1	37.0	33.3
Current job (other than an internship)*	25.7	32.2	29.4	28.3
Employment agency*	26.8	29.2	18.7	26.6
Activities/assignments in capstone seminar in sociology***	17.3	32.9	25.2	23.5
Other method	14.9	12.7	10.2	13.5

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Source: American Sociological Association. *Social Capital, Organizational Capital, and the Job Market for New Sociology Graduates Survey*, 2012.

ested in a job have started looking for one, although more than one-quarter had not yet started the job search. Seniors at Baccalaureate institutions were more likely than others to have accepted an offer, although they were not yet working at it.

CONTACTS

Seniors who have found a job or who plan to find a new job were asked to “please tell us the people and/or resources that you have used or intend to use.” They were presented with 15 different options, and could choose more than one response. Table 11 summarizes responses to a question asking students about job search methods.

The largest number of respondents—about three out of four—report that they used or plan to use an informal channel such as a colleague, family, or friend. The highest percent of those who have used or expect to use informal channels were from Baccalaureate

institutions, although the difference between types of school is not significant. Given the high educational level of their parents, they may have more access to social capital and a wider circle of appropriate contacts than students at the other types of schools. Between 60 and 70 percent of seniors, including those at Baccalaureate institutions, report that they used or plan to use publicly available, and anonymous, job advertisements in newspapers and through networks such as LinkedIn. A similar percent proposed to send unsolicited résumés to prospective employers. And 25 percent of seniors also reported using or planning to use an employment agency to help with their job search. These later three strategies do not call for the social capital of close friends or relatives.

Potential job search resources that stem from students’ institutions or sociology departments were less likely to be used than the close ties or the anonymous sources. Nonetheless, between 40 and 50 percent of students report using internships and consultation with college career services as part of their job search,

with students from Baccalaureate institutions being more likely to report using each of these school-linked job search resources. The use of activities/ assignments in capstone courses was most likely to be reported by students from Masters institutions—about one-third of them reported using this job search resource. And, about one-half of seniors at Masters and Baccalaureate schools report using faculty advisor(s) or job workshops in the sociology department, while only about one-third of seniors at Doctoral students used this job search resource. In general, respondents at Doctoral institutions were less likely to report getting help through departmental and institutional supports, possibly because faculty at these institutions assume that majors will most likely go on to graduate school and do not need help to find appropriate jobs.

~CONCLUSIONS~

This publication provides findings from the first wave of the 2012 *Bachelors and Beyond* survey. In contrast to the previous study of the cohort of students that graduated in 2005, prior to the Great Recession, the 2012 cohort of senior sociology majors faces a tighter job market and increasing levels of debt. The findings presented here compare the backgrounds, experiences, concepts and skills mastered, levels of satisfaction, and future plans and sources of job information of students at three types of institutions. Although all students majored because they liked the concepts that they learned, enjoyed their first course, and were satisfied with their overall experiences, there were significant differences among majors at each of these types of institutions. Students in departments at Baccalaureate institutions appeared to be the most satisfied and to be able to avail themselves of the most resources. In contrast to respondents from Master's institutions, respondents from Baccalaureate institutions have parents with higher levels of education and are less likely to work part-time, suggesting that they have more time to avail themselves of resources. Majors at Doctoral institutions appear to have the least institutional and departmental support in terms of resources that would help them pursue future goals. For students not at Baccalaureate institutions, we would suggest participation in activities such as internships and service learning as a means of gathering non-familial and non-departmental social capital.

Along with this publication, we are issuing a series of research briefs that provide more in-depth information and analysis on specific topics and issues than we provide here. In addition, second and third follow-up surveys ask about majors' post-graduation experiences in the labor market, on the job, and in graduate school. We will compare the findings from these later waves of the survey with those from the first wave. For example, we will see whether there is a positive correlation between students' mastery of skills, their job search strategies, and their ability to obtain jobs that reflect their learning as a sociology major.

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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. You will need Adobe Reader to view our PDFs.

Title	Format	Year
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What Leads to Student Satisfaction with Sociology Programs	PDF	2012
On the Upswing: Findings from the ASA 2011-2012 Job Bank Survey	PDF	2012
What Do We Know About the Dissemination of Information on Pedagogy?: 2008, 2010, and 2011	PDF	2012
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Two Years of Lost Purchasing Power: 2011-2012 Faculty Brief for Sociology and Other Social Science Disciplines	PDF	2012
The Effects of New Technology on the Growth of a Teaching and Learning Network	PDF	2011
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