

The Health of Sociology: Statistical Fact Sheets, 2007

American Sociological Association, Research and Development Department

Sociology is a broad and diverse field bound by a fundamental insight that the social matters: our lives are affected not only by our individual characteristics but by our place in the social world, not only by natural forces but by their social dimension. The discipline uses multiple methods to answer questions about social processes and social forces and their impact for individuals and institutions. Sociology's mission is to advance scholarship, and to teach, apply, and disseminate the discipline's knowledge and methods in order to build bridges to policy makers and an informed public. This summary contains facts about sociology as a profession and a discipline. For additional information see the figures and charts that follow this executive summary by clicking on the section titles.

Executive Summary

Impact of Scholarly Journals

The American Sociological Association (ASA), the discipline's national professional society, publishes nine scholarly journals. The *American Sociological Review* (ASR), ASA's flagship journal, has a higher impact (or citation score) than all other flagship journals in social science fields.

Informing Publics

Sociological research on topics about social processes and institutions such as social networks, markets, communities, states, families, education, crime, health, race, and volunteering informs the public, the media, educators, officials, and policy makers.

R&D Funding

As of 2004, sociologists received 277 million dollars in research and development money, with steady increases over the previous decade.

Merit Awards

Sociologists have received numerous awards from prestigious scientific societies.

Job Placement

There were 1,650 positions listed for PhDs in the American Sociological Association's Job Bank in 2006. This is the highest listing of jobs over the last decade. The Job Bank is a voluntary listing and shows only that portion of the job market that is for sociology PhDs. Assistant professors are the most frequently listed position.

Labor Force Participation

The vast majority of PhD sociologists in the labor force were employed and working their field. Only 1.3% of sociologists were unemployed, and 4.4% were working out-of-field. These figures were slightly higher than some social science disciplines and slightly lower than others.

Faculty Salaries

In AY 2006/07, the average salary of sociology faculty was \$66,207, an annual salary lower than other social science faculty. The relatively low salaries of sociologists can be explained partly by variation in the age composition of the social science disciplines. In spite of these differences, sociologists appear to be underpaid.

Courses Taught

Faculty members in bachelor's degree-granting departments in the U.S. teach nearly 50,000 sociology courses in an academic year. On average, sociology departments require theory, research methodology, and statistics courses as part of the undergraduate curriculum. Sociologists taught more courses per faculty member than all but one social science discipline.

Degrees Earned

Since 1990, the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded in sociology has increased by 70 percent from about 16,000 to about 27,000. Sociology majors plan to go into careers in education, law, medicine, politics, public administration, social work, or business. More than 45 percent intend to go on to graduate or professional school.

Over the last decade between 9,000 and 10,000 graduate students enrolled each year in masters and PhD programs in sociology departments. The number of

doctoral degrees awarded in sociology has increased steadily from 1990 through 2004 for an average of 470 per year in 1990/91 to the current 598 in 2003/04.

Reasoning for Majoring in Sociology

Sociology majors are inspired by the discipline's mission and are strongly attracted to sociological concepts.

Satisfaction with the Major

Almost two-thirds of majors are "very satisfied" with the quality of teaching; two-thirds are very satisfied with their out-of-class access to these teachers, and 7 out of 10 are very satisfied with the major.

Identification with The Field

Sociologists have a strong positive identification with their field. More than 43% of eligible members voted in the last (2007) ASA presidential election. The American Sociological Association, the discipline's national professional society, has the highest rate of voter participation among social science disciplinary societies.

Interdisciplinary Studies

Along with a strong disciplinary identification, sociologists work with members of other disciplines to create scientific breakthroughs and solutions of social problems.