

# THE HEALTH OF SOCIOLOGY

Statistical Fact Sheets, 2007

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INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES



AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

# 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. 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.

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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. Sociologists address new and recurrent social problems by investigating the social processes that bind and separate people as members of groups, networks, organizations, and institutions. The discipline uses both quantitative and qualitative research 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 important facts about sociology as a profession and a discipline.

This statistical compendium is organized as a series of fact sheets formatted as individual PDF documents. Users may display and print any these fact sheets by clicking on the section titles listed below. The complete report, including the executive summary, is also available as a single PDF document. Readers can put together their own booklets on the health of the discipline by downloading selected fact sheets or by printing the complete PDF document.

[Impact of Sociological Journals](#)

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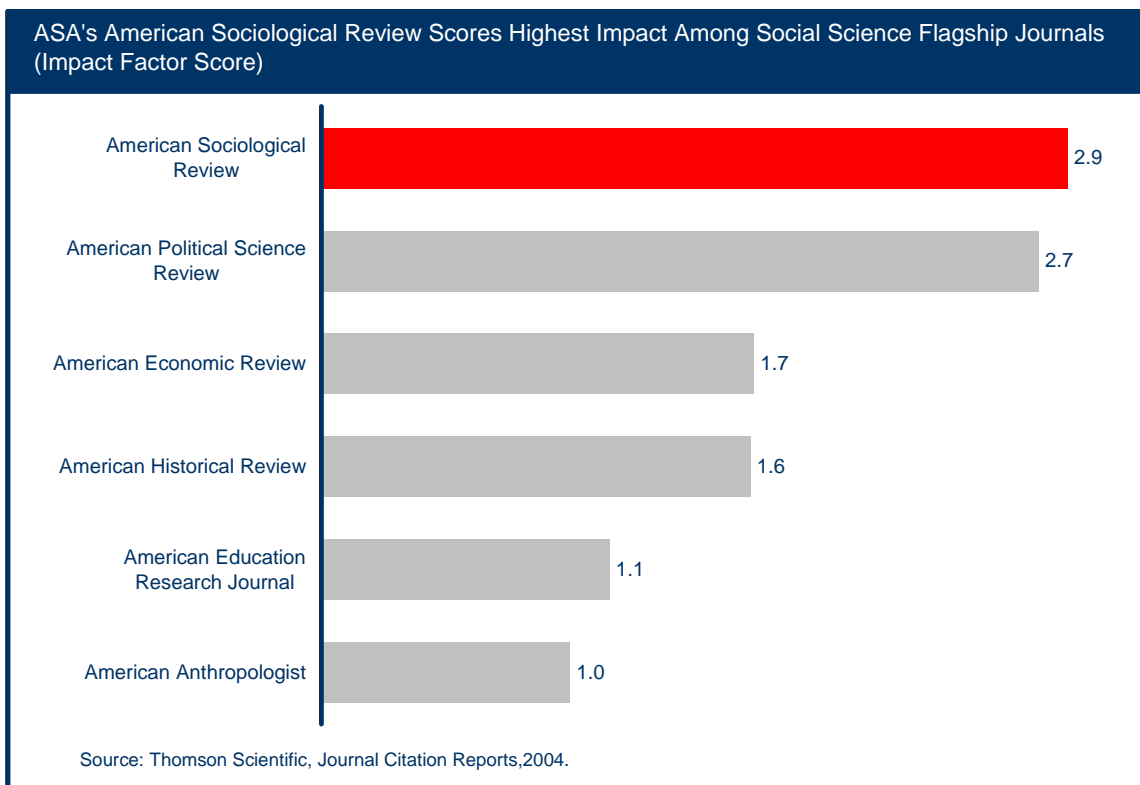
[Interdisciplinary Studies](#)

[Works Cited](#)

## Introduction

Publication in peer-reviewed journals is considered a fundamental indicator of scientific productivity as well as an essential means of communicating findings to other scholars.

The Social Science Index (SSCI), the Journal Citation Reports (JCR) (Social Science Edition) and other web-based products produced by ISI Thomson Scientific provide useful information on citation patterns of various journals and measures of journal impact and influence. The JCR Report also includes an Impact Score which is calculated by totaling the number of citations a journal's article received in the two previous years, divided by the total number of articles the journal published during that period of time. A comparison of impact factor scores across several of the top journals in social science fields indicates that the American Sociological Review, the American Sociological Association's flagship journal, lead other professional societies' flagship journals, according to this measure.



Sociological research on topics about social processes and institutions such as social networks, markets, communities, state building, education, crime, health, race, and volunteering informs the public, the media, educators, officials, and policy makers. Articles in the major media and in *Contexts*, a sociology magazine for understanding people in their social worlds ([www.contextsmagazine.org](http://www.contextsmagazine.org)), raise public awareness of social issues and also inform and instruct the public on the meaning and importance of sociology. Many study findings are counter-intuitive and they provide new knowledge in the face of bias, prejudice, or taken-for-granted assumptions. Much of this research comes from ASA's scholarly journals and is featured at Capitol Hill briefings, at Government Workshops, and on Expert Panels and Commissions. Some examples of this research follow.

## Sociological Research Informs Many Publics

### Buying Congress

Contrary to popular belief, big campaign contributions do not necessarily determine votes in the U.S. Congress. Congressional action is more likely to be a function of public opinion, ideology, and party affiliation (Burstein).

### Counter Insurgency

Counter insurgency is a form of contentious struggle to gain the "hearts and minds of populations" in order to gain control of the state (Roxborough).

### Education and Values

Despite widespread beliefs that U.S. schools no longer teach values, values permeate the primary school classrooms and school life (Brint).

### Family Matters

Getting married can help alleviate depression (Frech and Williams).

Day Care Centers are the safest childcare option because they afford multiple forms of protection (Wrigley).

Mothers today spend more hours per week with their children than mothers of previous generations (Bianchi, Robinson, and Milkie).

### How Markets Work

In the reproductive market place sperm donors are less valued than egg donors, contravening laws of supply and demand because donor eggs are more available than suitable sperm donors. This study is part of a growing set of studies about donations of blood and organs (Almeling).

### Racial Composition

The sense of injustice abates for black and minority students who attend racially integrated high schools (Hagan).

### Importance of Networks

Social network models help identify the transmission of infectious diseases (Watts).

Knowing many kinds of people in different social contexts improves chances of getting jobs, feeling in control of life and feeling healthy (Faust). Yet American's circle of close confidants has shrunk dramatically over the past two decades (McPherson).

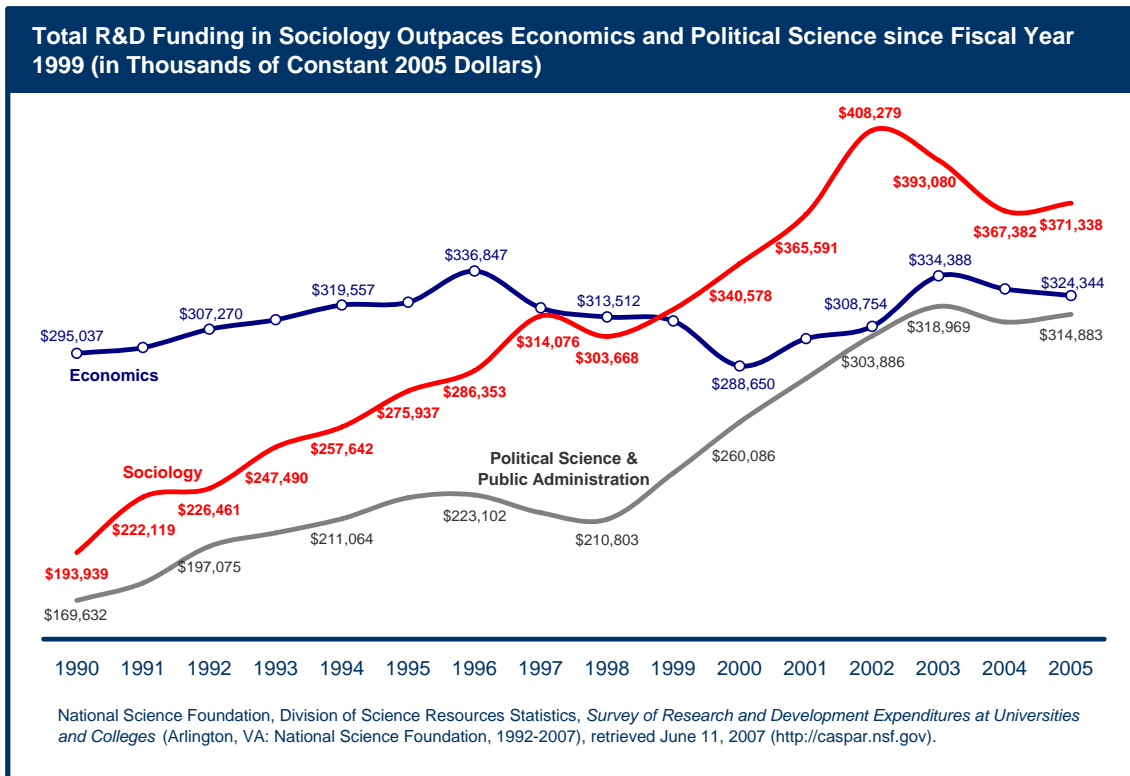
### Strengthening Communities

Living in wired neighborhoods with access to high speed local networks encourages greater community involvement. Members of these neighborhoods recognize and talk with 3 times as many neighbors and those in communities without wiring (Hampton).



Research is a major activity, along with teaching, that results in the reproduction and replenishment of sociology. As a result, the discipline is continuously able to answer new questions about social processes, contexts, conditions, and transformations. Carrying out this research often requires seeking grant support from a variety of institutional funders.

Total Research and Development funding dollars for sociology from public and private sources doubled in real dollars between 1990 and 2003. Although overall R&D funding has declined somewhat since then, sociology was awarded over \$370 million in 2005 compared to about \$320 million each for economics and political science.



Sociologists are recipients of grants to measure and analyze critical public issues including assimilation, immigration, terrorism, work and family, child health, and to train students to become researchers, analysts, and teachers in these topic areas. The grants come from a wide range of government agencies, including the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Aging (NIA), as well as many private foundations.

Sociologists have received numerous honorary awards from scientific institutions for their work confronting new social trends, problems, and transformations. These awards demonstrate that sociology is critical to scientific understanding and scientific policy. A highly selective sampling of these awards is mentioned in the accompanying chart.

## Merit Awards

### Recognition of Merit for Sociology

Sociologists have received honorary awards from scientific institutions for their work of continuously analyzing social trends, problems, and transformations. Sociological knowledge is increasingly recognized by policy makers, funding agencies, and private and public officials as key to solving current social problems including terrorism, natural disasters, pandemics, and the decline in civil society. These awards demonstrate that sociology is critical to scientific understanding and scientific policy. Some of these awards include:

#### National Science Board, Alan T. Waterman Prize

Awarded to **Dalton Conley** in 2005. The National Science Foundation (NSF), the independent federal agency that supports fundamental research across nearly all fields of science and engineering, recognized Conley as one of the nation's top young scientists. The 35-year-old Conley received the 30th annual Alan T. Waterman Award, named for NSF's first director that carries a \$500,000 research award. Dr. Conley's work is the epitome of the kind of research that NSF vigorously supports," said Arden L. Bement, Jr., NSF director.

*"His research is filled with new and untried ideas, carved into a creative path toward solving fundamental questions of society. He communicates his findings directly and eloquently, reaches varied audiences, and by so doing, opens new avenues of interest and study, not to mention he keeps government policy makers on their toes."*

#### National Academy of Sciences

In 2007, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) announced the election of sociologists **Karen Cook** for her research on issues of trust in social relations and networks and **James C. House** for his work on social structure and personality. These newly elected NAS members were recognized for their distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. This brings the total number of active sociologists to over twenty. Membership in the academy is considered one of the highest honors in American science.

#### American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAA&S)

In 2007, almost 80 were listed as Fellows of the Academy (*Bulletin of the American Academy*, Fall 2005). Their interests ranged from the daily interactions to world systems. Their work focuses on processes from scientific productivity to bureaucratic inertia, social networks to civic life, and segregation to social mobility. It focuses on institutions including education, family, law, religion, and the economy. The 2007 Fellows in sociology were **Bruce Western** for his work on punishment and inequality in America, **David R. Williams** for his work on race discrimination and health, and **Viviana Zelizer** for her work on the interplay of economic activity and personal ties.

#### American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

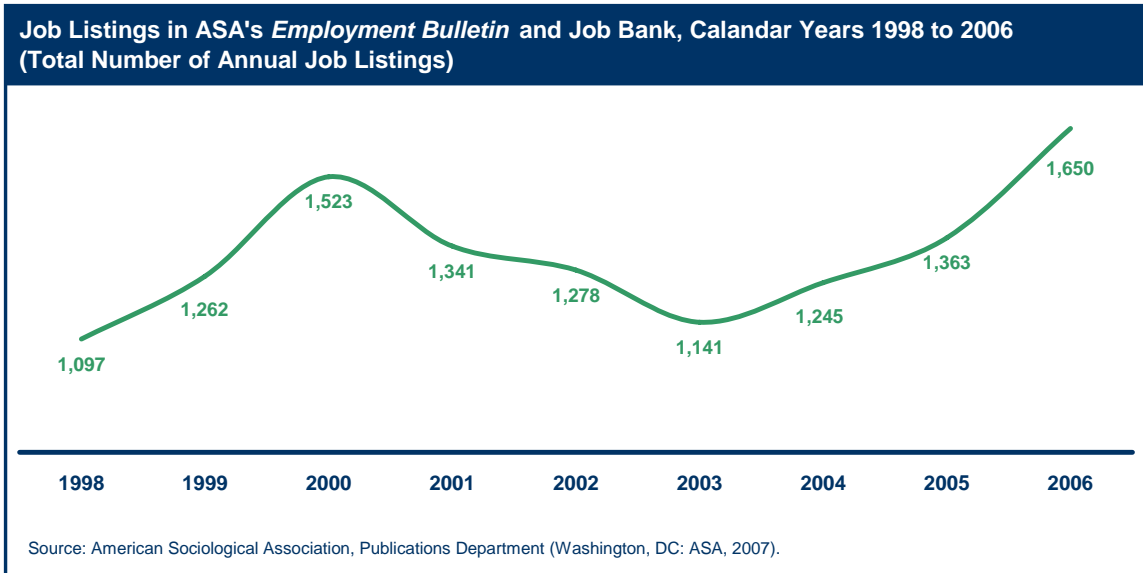
Over 80 sociologists have been appointed as Fellows. In 2005, **Willie J. Pearson Jr.** of the Georgia Institute of Technology was appointed to a fellowship.

#### Association of American Publishers (AAP), Professional and Scholarly Division

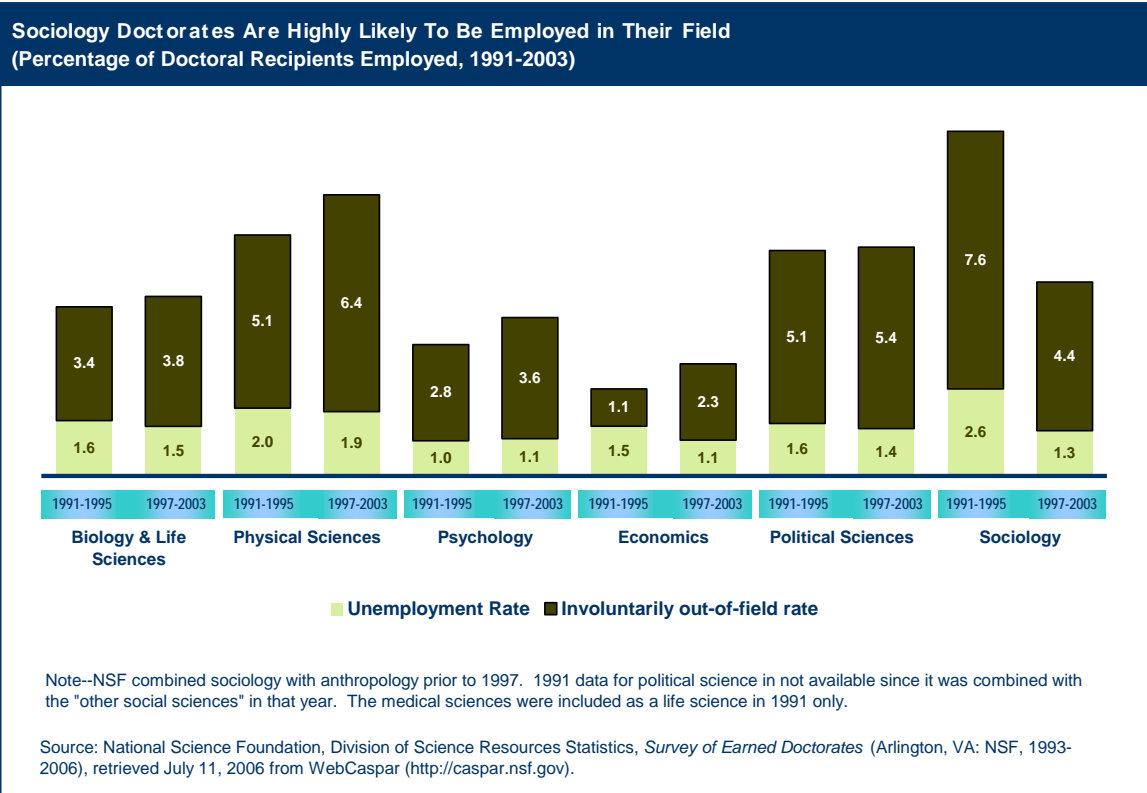
*Contexts: Understanding People in Their Social Worlds* named best journal in the social sciences in 2003 and one of ten Best New Magazines of 2002" by the Library Journal. *Contexts* extends sociological research to both social scientists and general audience readers.



There were 1,650 positions listed for PhDs in the American Sociological Association's Job Bank in 2006, a more than 20% increase over 2005. This is the highest listing of jobs over the last decade. Since 2003, the last year where listings declined to a low point, the number of job listings appearing annually in ASA's *Employment Bulletin* or our web-based job bank has increased steadily by 45%. These job announcements are a voluntary listing of employers agreeing to post open positions either in print or, since 1995, online. They show only that portion of the job market for sociologists with PhDs. Assistant professors are the most frequently listed position.



Sociologists work on important topics of concern in the "real world" inside and outside the university upon completion of their degrees. They apply sociological concepts and methods with them in a wide variety of industries and occupations. An average of 9 out of 10 sociology PhDs under age 75 were in the labor force--that is, employed or looking for work--between 1999 and 2003, the last year for which data were available from the National Science Foundation. This rate is similar to the other social science disciplines.



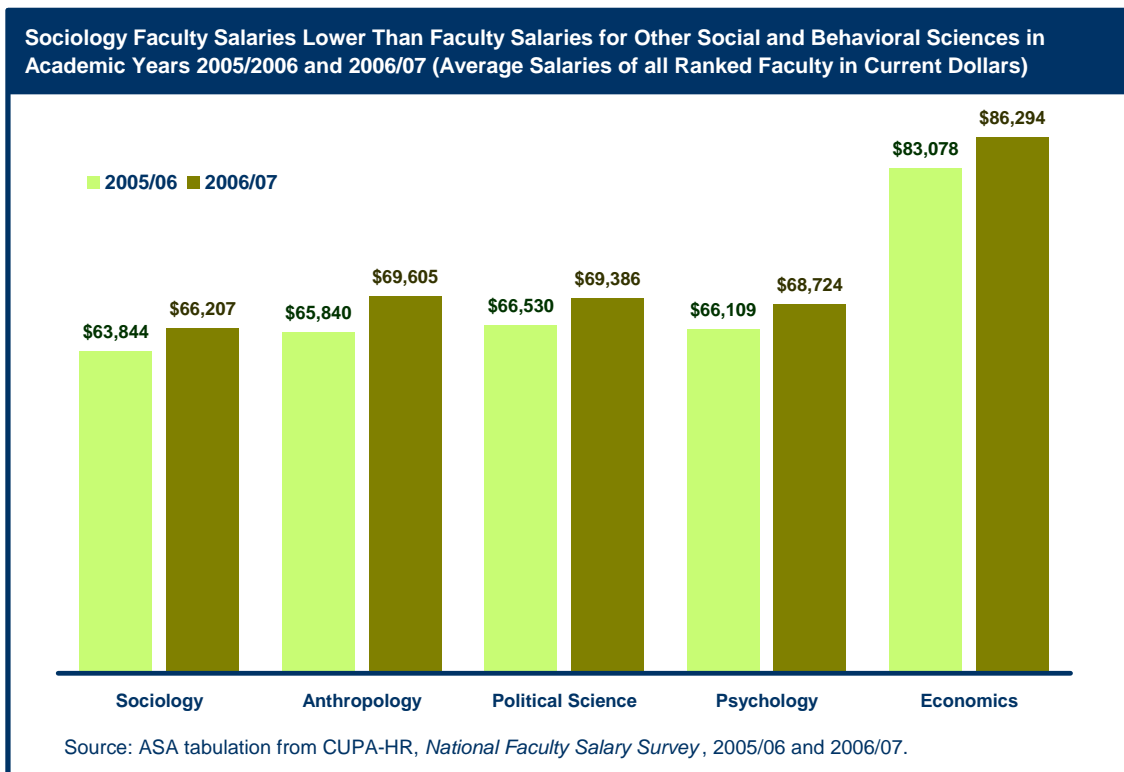
Since 1997, the vast majority of PhD sociologists in the labor force were employed and working their field. Only 1.3 percent of sociologists were unemployed, and 4.4 percent were working out-of-field. These figures are slightly higher than some social science disciplines and slightly lower than others.

Sociology faculty members carry out sociology's mission by teaching, doing research, and administering programs. According to NCES estimates, in AY 2003/04 about 27.2 percent of sociology faculty were employed by research universities, with another 17.5 percent at doctoral institutions, 41.6 percent at master's comprehensive institutions, and 13.8 percent at baccalaureate-only institutions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *NSOPF 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty* (Washington, DC: NCES, 2007), retrieved June 15, 2007 with DAS-T Online Version 5.0 (<http://nces.ed.gov/dasolv2/tables/index.asp>). See also our AY 2001/02 survey results on baccalaureate and graduate programs in sociology available at <http://www.e-noah.net/asa/asashoponlineservice/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=ASAOE624R03>.

In AY 2006/2007, the average salary of sociology faculty was \$66,207 compared to the average salary for anthropologists, political scientists, and psychologists that ranged around \$69,000. Economists had the highest average salaries at \$86,294. The relatively low salaries of sociologists can be explained partly by variation in the age composition of the five disciplines. Despite these differences, sociologists appear to be underpaid.

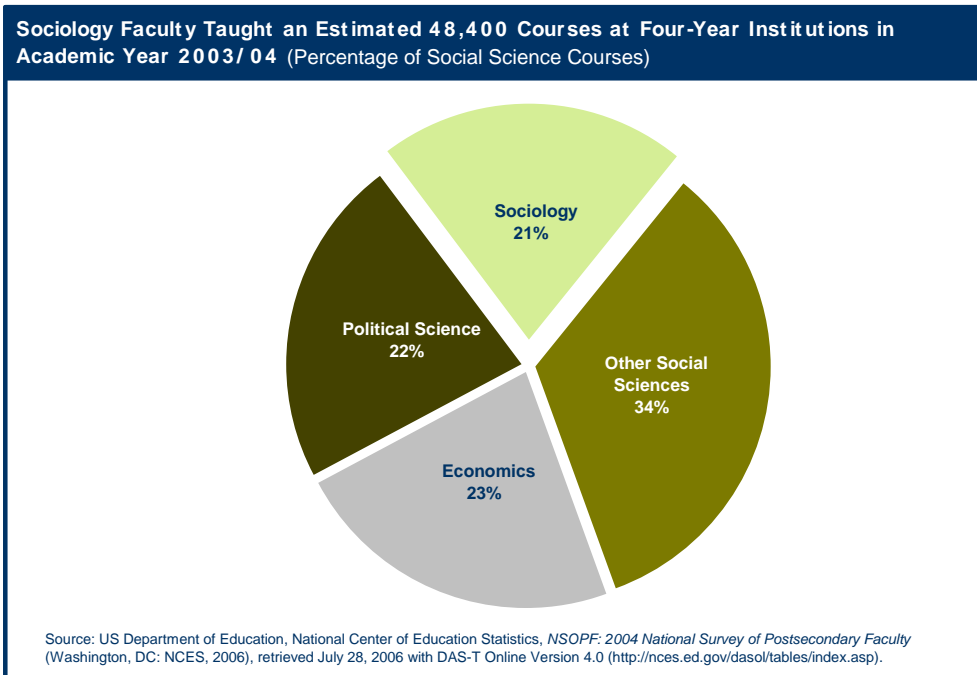
Since AY 2000/2001, the average sociology faculty salary increased by almost \$10,000, or 16 percent, in current dollars (not controlling for inflation). When salaries are controlled for inflation, there was an actual decrease of \$114 dollars during this period. Sociology saw an above inflation salary increase between AY 2005/2006 and AY 2006/2007. Despite this latest increase, sociology professors lost buying power in three of the last seven academic years and had salary increases that just kept up with inflation (.10 and .11 percent above the CPI) in two years. Aside from the 1.2 percent increase in AY 2006/2007, the only other year with an above inflation increase for all ranks of sociology faculty was AY 2001/2002.



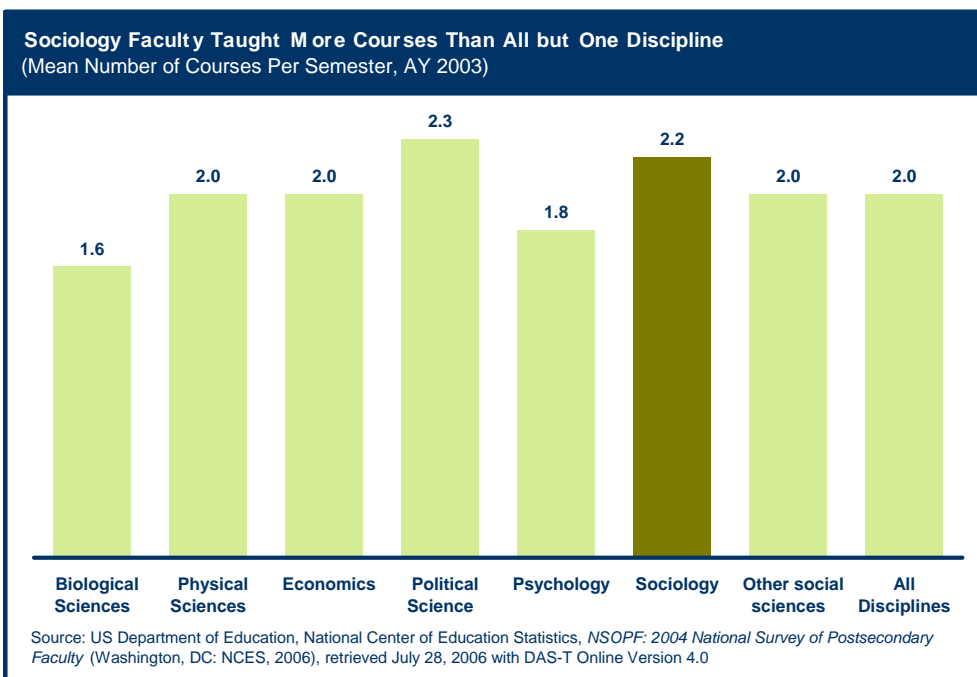
For more details of salary trends for sociology faculty, see our current salary research [brief](#).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Available at <http://www.asanet.org/galleries/Research/SalaryRschBrief51807.pdf>.

Faculty members in bachelor's degree-granting departments in the U.S. teach nearly 50,000 undergraduate sociology courses in an academic year, or about 21 percent of all social science courses. This proportion is comparable to other social science disciplines such as political science and economics, although these disciplines tend to have more faculty in their academic programs. On average, sociology programs require substantive core courses, as well as, at least one course each in theory, research methodology, and statistics, as part of the undergraduate curriculum.



Sociologists teach more courses per semester, on average, than economists, psychologists and biological or physical scientists.



Since 1990, the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded in sociology has increased by 70 percent from about 16,000 to about 27,000. Unlike sociology during this same period, economics has faced both declines and increases, but still has fewer graduates than in 1990.

The number of master's degrees has increased by about two-thirds.

The number of doctoral degrees awarded in sociology has increased steadily from 1990 through 2004 for an average of 470 per year in 1990-1991 to the current 598 in 2003-2004.

More information regarding trends in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees awarded in sociology since 1930 can be found on our [website](#).<sup>3</sup>

### Sociology Degrees Awarded Increase Since 1990 (Number of Degrees Awarded)

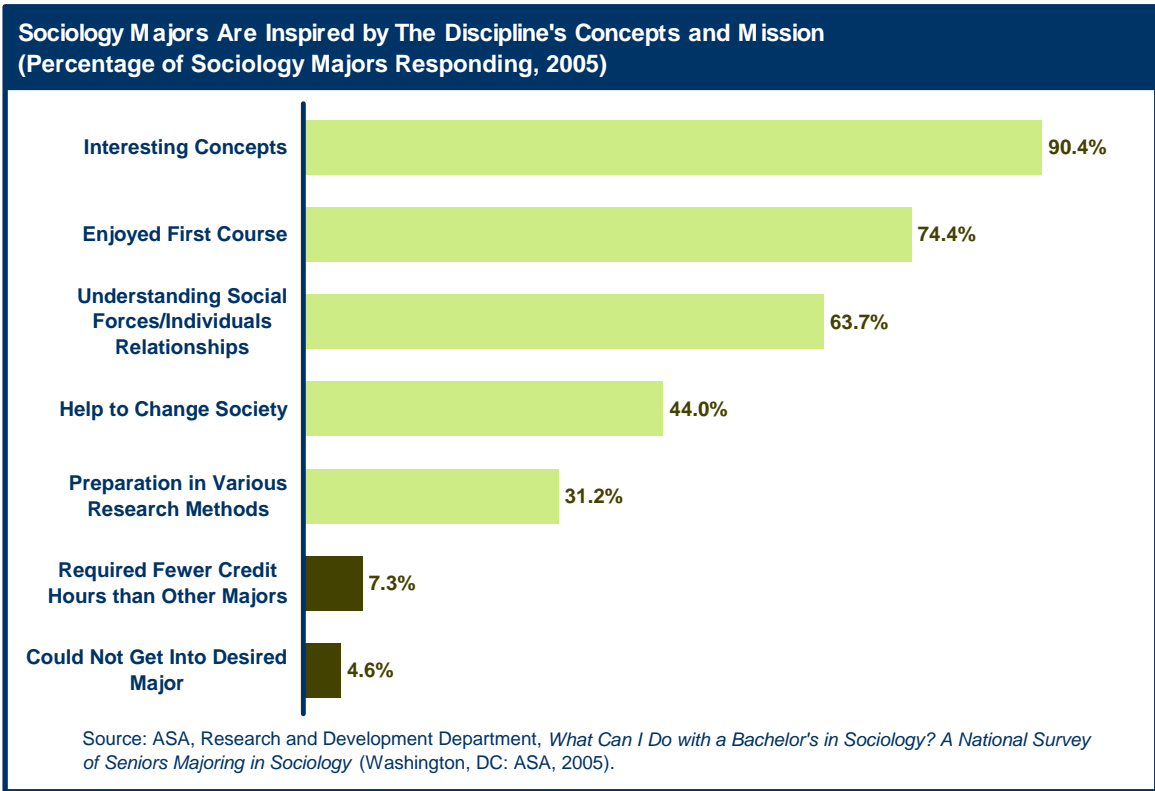
Year	Doctorates	Masters	Bachelor's
1990	446	1,213	15,993
1991	477	1,293	17,632
1992	506	1,379	19,644
1993	549	1,564	21,007
1994	542	1,675	22,468
1995	555	1,790	22,974
1996	531	1,822	24,158
1997	601	1,752	24,749
1998	604	1,774	24,886
2000	602	2,036	25,685
2001	550	1,901	25,357
2002	547	1,957	25,296
2003	598	1,929	26,200
2004	564	2,031	27,020

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), *Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) Completions, 1990-2004* (Washington, DC: NCES, 2006). Retrieved November 8, 2006 (<http://caspar.nsf.gov>).

<sup>3</sup> Available at [http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/leftnav/research\\_and\\_stats/research\\_index\\_page](http://www.asanet.org/cs/root/leftnav/research_and_stats/research_index_page).

Surveys show that sociology majors are inspired by the discipline's mission, are strongly attracted to sociological concepts, and picked sociology as an undergraduate major because of their interest in sociological concepts. They are particularly interested in those that explained relationships among institutions, processes, and individuals. If these concepts are made exciting in their first sociology course, majoring becomes a likely outcome. Few major in sociology for reasons of convenience. These top reasons for majoring do not vary significantly by type of school.

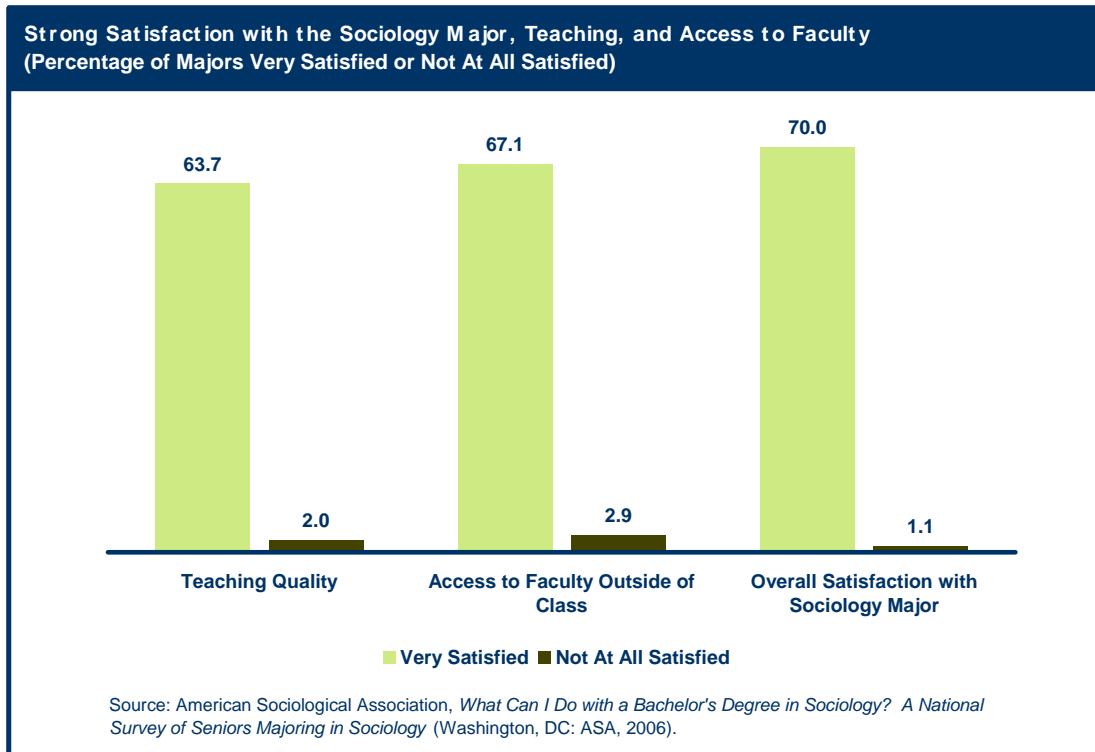
Reasoning  
for Majoring  
in Sociology





Senior sociology majors rate their experience with sociology teachers and with the major very highly. 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. Fewer than 3 percent report being not satisfied at all with the major.

## Satisfaction with the Sociology Major



Sociology majors often plan to apply what they earned in sociology to careers in education, law, medicine, politics, public administration, social work, or business. More than 70% of sociology majors plan to find a new job, and 45 percent intend to go on to graduate school. This finding suggests that many sociology majors will both work and obtain more education and training in the professions including law, the professoriate, counseling, and a research science.<sup>4</sup>

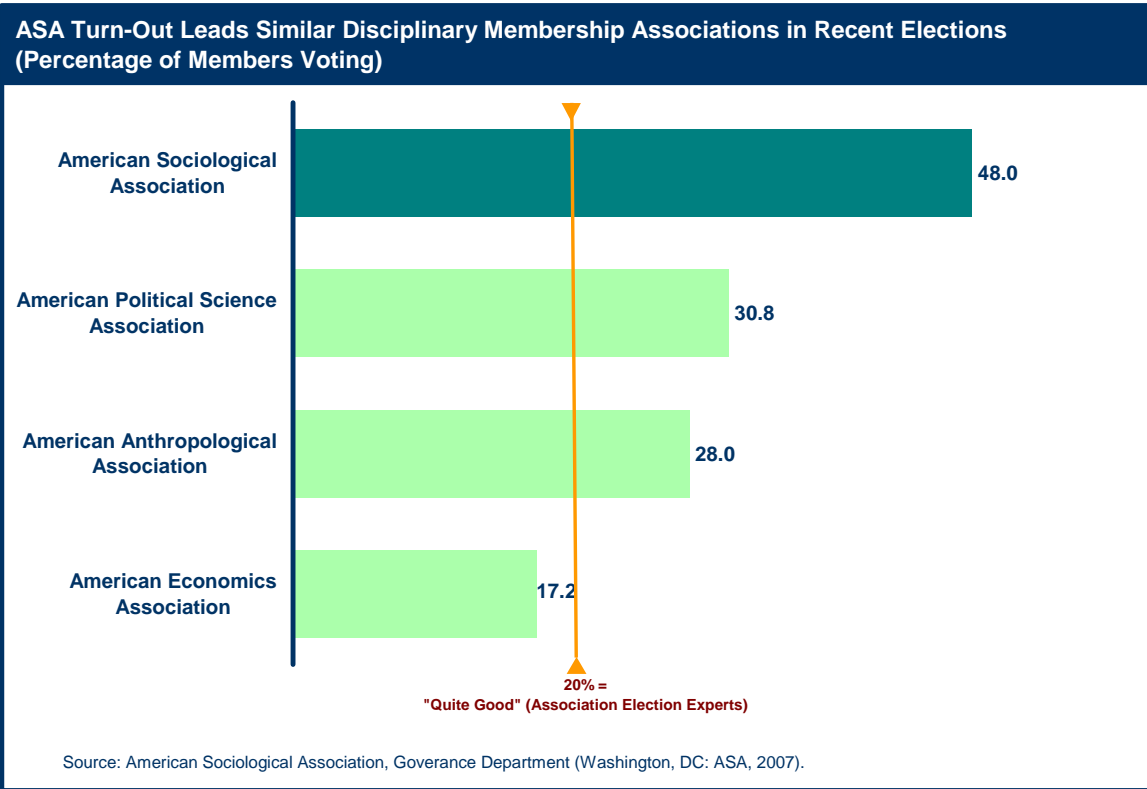
Sociology majors want to work in major social institutions. The largest percentage wants to work in institutions that provide a wide variety of social services, law or criminal justice, education, community development, or government.

Almost half of senior sociology majors have future educational plans.

<sup>4</sup> See American Sociological Association, *What Can I do with a Bachelor's Degree in Sociology? A National Survey of Seniors Majoring in Sociology* (Washington, DC: ASA, 2006), available at <http://www.e-noah.net/asa/asashoponlineservice/ProductDetails.aspx?productID=ASAOE628W06>.

Sociologists have a strong positive identification with their field. More than 43 percent of eligible members voted in the last (2007) ASA presidential election. The American Sociological Association (ASA) the discipline’s professional society has the highest rate of voter participation among disciplinary societies. According to election audit firms with expertise on voting patterns in membership associations, voter participation above 20 percent is considered “very good” with turn-outs above 30 percent rare.

Identification with The Field



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

## Expanding Sociology's Impact Through Interdisciplinary Studies

Sociologists work with members of other disciplines to create scientific breakthroughs and solutions of social problems. Examples of such work can be found among the projects funded by the National Science Foundation's innovative interdisciplinary Human and Social Dynamics initiative. A list of interdisciplinary grants that include sociologists (in bold) follows.

### Global State Formation

**Christopher Chase-Dunn** (University of California-Riverside), Peter Turchin, E. N. Anderson, *Global State Formation: Modeling the Rise, Fall, and Upward Sweeps of Large Polities in World History and the Global Future*. The PIs will develop three models of probable future paths for world integration based on the historical patterns of networks between international governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

### Social and Economic Effects of a National Disaster

**Elizabeth Frankenberg** (University of California-Los Angeles), Jed Friedman, Thomas Gillespie, Nicholas Ingwersen, Bondan Sikoki, Cecep Sumantri, Wayan Suriastini, Duncan Thomas, *Social and Economic Effects of a National Disaster*. The PIs seek to research the costs of the 2004 tsunami in Indonesia and how people cope with a disaster of this magnitude

### Dissent and Repression in the Middle East

**J. Craig Jenkins** and **Katherine Meyer** (Ohio State University), Mary Ann Tetreault, Philip Schrodt, Jillian Schwendler, Christian Davenport, *Dissent and Repression in the Middle East*. The PIs examine the types of relationships between political dissent and repression to overcome the inconsistent results provided by previous studies that neglect context, time, and space, conflicting perspectives, and the status of women.

### Studies on the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

**Yoshinori Kamo** (Louisiana State University), Tammy L. Henderson, Karen A. Roberto, *Aging Families in the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina*. The PIs interview aging families living in Baton Rouge who are recovering from Hurricane Katrina to advance the literature concerning the functioning of aging families in the aftermath of a natural disaster.

**Verna Keith** (Florida State University), C. Airriess, A.C. Chen, W. Li, K. Leong, S. Russaini, *The Aftermath of Katrina: Differential Responses to Trauma among African and Vietnamese Americans in One New Orleans Community*. The PIs studied the spatial, socioeconomic, and psychological effects on two resource-poor groups of evacuees. They found that lack of resources, emotional and financial support, and linguistic isolation increase the incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder.

**Tricia Wachtendorf** (University of Delaware), José Holguín-Veras, Noel Pérez, Satish Ukkusuri, Bethany Brown, *Characterization of the Supply Chains in the Aftermath of Katrina: Logistical Issues and Lessons from an Integrated Social Sciences-Engineering Perspective*. The PIs identified three broad issues that led to the logistical challenges resulting from Hurricane Katrina: initial impact on the system, institutional impact, and logistical impact. The PIs are developing models to make recommendations concerning national response to future extreme events.

### Infrastructure Change, Human Agency, and Social Ecological Systems

**Stephen Perz** (University of Florida), Grenville Barnes, Graeme Cumming, Jane Southworth, *Infrastructure Change, Human Agency, and Resilience in Social Ecological Systems*. The PIs studied the impact of new infrastructure on the social-ecological resilience of complex systems and on human resource and livelihood decisions in Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru in order to develop more complete frameworks of human agency and environmental change.

### Globalization of Innovation, Migration, and Human Capital Development

**Hal Salzman** (Urban Institute), Beatiz Clewell, Leonard Lynn, Carlos Acosta, Robert Lerman, B. Lindsay Lowell, Pamela Meil, *Globalization of Innovation, Migration, and Systems of Human Capital Development*. The PIs examined the new "third generation" stage of globalization in which multinational corporations move high-level knowledge employment to emerging economies. They focus on the effects of this change on specific countries, especially for migration flows, changes in education capacity, and shifts in science and engineering work.

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