Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank in 2019

This brief reports on the position advertisements in the American Sociological Association (ASA) Job Bank in 2019.[1] Before 2016, data focused only on academic positions, so trend analysis in this report is limited to the academic sector.

The ASA Job Bank is a primary source for job advertisements that may be of interest to sociologists, particularly for tenure-line and full-time visiting academic positions. However, it does not represent the universe of jobs available to sociologists; contingent faculty positions and jobs outside of academia are underrepresented. Thus, these data represent the jobs advertised in the ASA Job Bank in 2019, not the jobs available for MA-level and PhD-level sociologists more broadly.

Figure 1 plots trend lines for the number of tenure-system positions advertised in the ASA Job Bank from 2010 to 2019. The total number grew steadily from 2010 to 2016, when 526 tenure-line positions were advertised, and has declined since then. In 2019, 413 tenure-line positions were advertised. The number of positions advertised at the assistant professor level peaked at 351 in 2013 and declined to a ten-year low of 269 in 2018. In 2019, 289 tenure-track assistant professor positions were advertised, a 7 percent increase from 2018.

Figure 1. Tenure-System Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank, 2010-2019
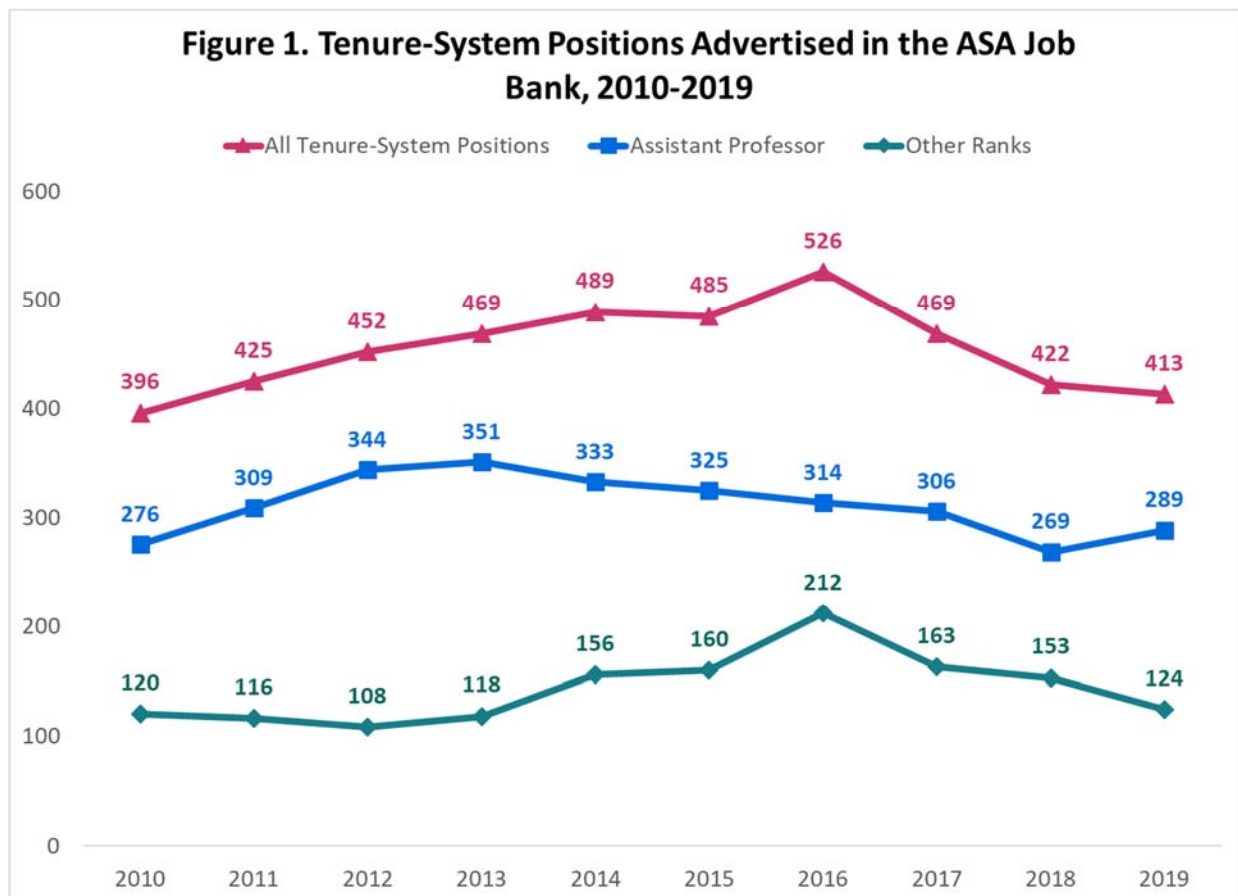
Table 1 reports the number and percent of all U.S. based jobs advertised in the ASA Job Bank. In 2019, 734 positions in the U.S. were advertised. Three-quarters of the 2019 positions were for jobs in the academic sector: 56.3 percent were for tenure-track positions, 14.4 percent were for non-tenure-track academic positions, and 4.8 percent were for academic administrator positions. Among the tenure-track positions, 70.0 percent were for assistant professors and 13.1 percent were open rank. For the non-tenure-track academic positions, over half (57.5 percent) were at the visiting assistant professor level, and 35.8 percent were instructors or lecturers. Academic administrators include both department chairs and heads (28.6 percent of the category) and other administrators (71.4 percent), which includes deans, program directors, and other administrative positions in the academic sector.

Fellowships, primarily postdoctoral fellowships, make up 19.9 percent of the positions advertised. Finally, 4.6 percent of the positions in the Job Bank in 2019 were for jobs in sociological practice, including research scientists, policy analysts, statisticians, and center directors. This is likely an undercount of the number and kinds of positions available to PhD sociologists in the non-academic sector. According to the 2018 Survey of Earned Doctorates, 23 percent of new PhD recipients in sociology who had definite employment plans had jobs in practice settings.[2]

Areas of Specialization

Figure 2 shows the ten areas of specialization sought most frequently in advertisements for academic positions, both tenure-track and non-tenure-track, in 2019. (For a complete list of the 54 areas that were sought in the advertisements, see Appendix A.) Like in previous years, open area positions were mentioned most frequently. When employers listed a specialization, criminology/ delinquency was the most frequently sought, followed by racial and ethnic relations. Other areas that were frequently sought in advertisements for academic positions were criminal justice; medical sociology; race,

class, and gender; other program/area; quantitative methodology; environmental sociology; and organizations, formal and complex. Together, 63.3 percent of the academic positions advertised in 2019 were seeking sociologists with expertise in at least one of these nine topical areas.

As noted in Table 1, fewer fellowships and sociological practice positions are advertised in the ASA Job Bank. Appendix B and Appendix C list the areas of specialization for these positions. The largest number of fellowships (71) were open to all areas, followed by

Table 1: All Positions in the ASA Job Bank by Category, 2019

	Count	Percent
Academic: Tenure-Track Positions		
Assistant Professor	289	70.0%
Associate Professor	27	6.5%
Full Professor	5	1.2%
Assistant or Associate Professor	38	9.2%
Open Rank	54	13.1%
Subtotal	413	100.0%
Percentage of Total Positions Advertised		56.3%
Academic: Non-Tenure-Track Positions		
Instructor/Lecturer	38	35.8%
Assistant Professor	61	57.5%
Other	7	6.6%
Subtotal	106	100.0%
Percentage of Total Positions Advertised		14.4%
Academic: Administrators		
Chair/Head	10	28.6%
Other Administrator	25	71.4%
Subtotal	35	100.0%
Percentage of Total Positions Advertised		4.8%
Fellowships		
Predoctoral	7	4.8%
Postdoctoral	113	77.4%
Other	26	17.8%
Subtotal	146	100.0%
Percentage of Total Positions Advertised		19.9%
Sociological Practice		
Researcher/Statistician	25	73.5%
Director/Assistant Director	2	5.9%
Program Manager	2	5.9%
Other	5	14.7%
Subtotal	34	100.0%
Percentage of Total Positions Advertised		4.6%
Total U.S. Positions Advertised	734	100.0%

Figure 2. Ten Most Frequent Areas of Specialization for Academic Positions

Percent of advertisements for academic positions in the ASA Job Bank, 2019

Area	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	30.5%
Criminology/Delinquency	11.6%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	10.8%
Criminal Justice	9.7%
Medical Sociology	6.9%
Race, Class, and Gender	6.3%
Other Program/Area	5.1%
Quantitative Methodology	4.7%
Environmental Sociology	4.2%
Organizations, Formal and Complex	4.0%
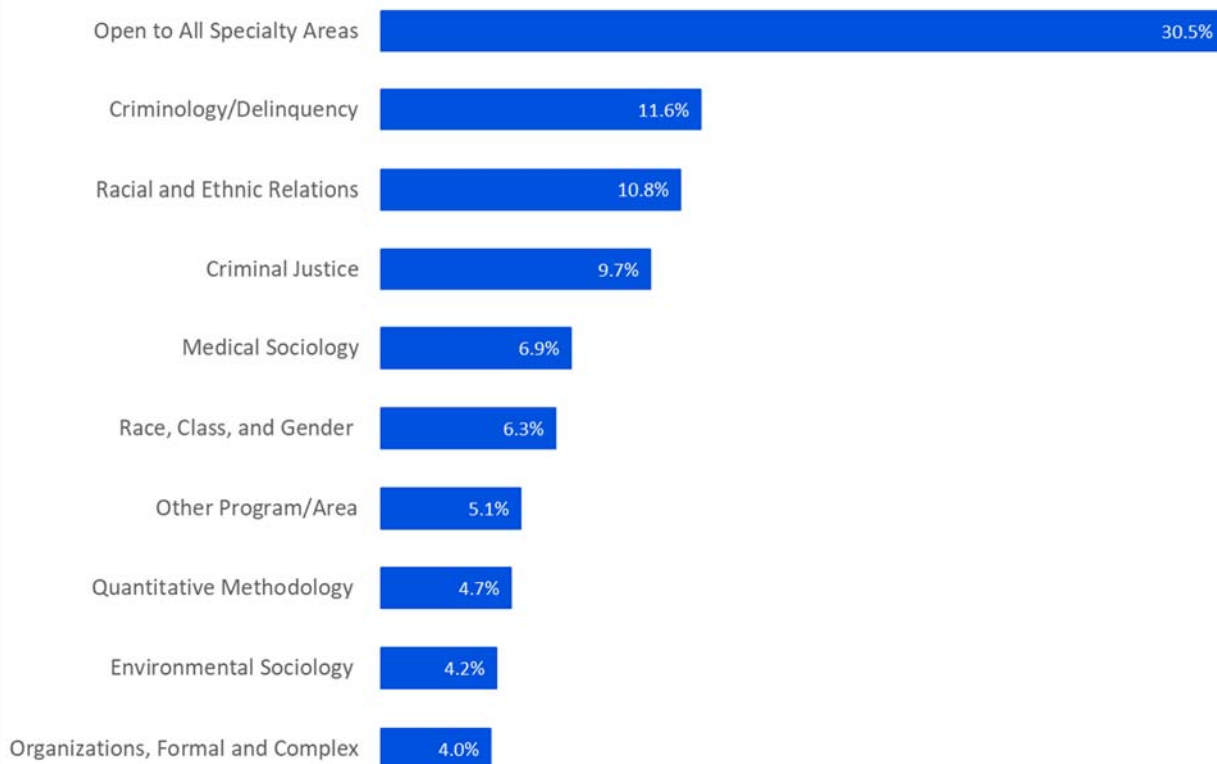
demography, with 17 positions. Thirteen of the 34 positions in sociological practice were advertising for open areas of specialization. Criminal justice was mentioned in five of the advertisements for practice positions, followed by education and religion, with four mentions each.

Although we do not have measures for the areas of expertise of graduate student job seekers, the sociology interest areas identified by student members of ASA could be a proxy measure. Appendix D presents these data. In 2019, the top five areas of interest for student members of ASA were race, class, and gender; sex and gender; cultural sociology; political sociology; and education. Notably, the high frequency of position advertisements looking for specialists in criminology/delinquency, criminal justice, medical sociology, quantitative methodology, environmental sociology, and organizations is not matched by the popularity of these areas among ASA student members. Similarly, the high proportion of student members in 2019 interested in cultural sociology, political sociology, and education is not reflected in the position advertisements. A similar mismatch was evident in previous years.

Regions

Table 2 shows the geographic distribution of the academic, fellowship, and practice positions advertised in the ASA Job Bank in 2019. The regions are based on U.S. Census Bureau definitions. Each region had at least 20 percent of advertised academic jobs. The highest proportions were in the Northeast (31.2 percent) and South (25.8 percent).

Fellowships advertised in the Job Bank are more heavily concentrated in the Northeast

Table 2: All Listings in the ASA Job Bank by US Region, 2019

	Count	Percent
Academic Positions		
Midwest	114	20.6%
Northeast	173	31.2%
South	143	25.8%
West	121	21.8%
All US Regions	3	0.5%
Total	554	100.0%
Fellowships		
Midwest	21	14.4%
Northeast	88	60.3%
South	23	15.8%
West	11	7.5%
All US Regions	3	2.1%
Total	146	100.0%
Positions in Sociological Practice		
Midwest	3	8.8%
Northeast	11	32.4%
South	8	23.5%
West	8	23.5%
All US Regions	4	11.8%
Total	34	100.0%

(60.3 percent). For positions in practice settings, about a third (32.4 percent) of advertised positions in sociological practice were in the Northwest and about a quarter were in the South (23.5 percent) and West (23.5 percent).

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[1] Analysis for previous years can be found at http://www.asanet.org/research-and-publications/research-sociology

[2] Table 63 (https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf20301/data-tables/). For more information on the characteristics of new PhD recipients in sociology, go to https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/files/pdf/2018_new_phds_snapshot.pdf

Methodological Notes

The data used in this report come from an export of all advertisements that appeared in the ASA Job Bank in 2019. Information for the Job Bank is entered by employers, including department chairs, human resource professionals, and administrative staff. From these administrative data, an analytical dataset with one record for each advertisement was created; each record included the job titles, descriptions, position ranks, areas of expertise, tenure status, and regions that were provided by the employers. Additional cases were added to the dataset for any job descriptions advertising more than one position (31 percent of the ads) to ensure each available position would be included in the analysis. Any positions based outside of the U.S. or that were identified as duplicate advertisements were removed from the dataset.

Employers were required to select a position-rank from a dropdown menu of 25 options: Academic Positions: All; Academic Positions: Instructor; Academic Positions: Lecturer; Academic Positions: Assistant Professor; Academic Positions: Associate Professor; Academic Positions: Full Professor; Academic Positions: Other; Academic Positions: Assistant/Associate Professor; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: All; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Researcher; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Director; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Assistant Director; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Training; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Program Manager; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Statistician; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Human Relations/Personnel; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Clinical Work; Sociological Practice/Applied/Other: Other; Fellowships/Post-docs: All; Fellowships/Post-docs: Predoctoral; Fellowships/Postdocs: Postdoctoral; Fellowships/Postdocs: Other; and Open. When the position-rank chosen by the employer from the dropdown was inconsistent with the job title as entered by the employer, the job description was used to determine the

position-rank to include in the analysis. In addition, every position labeled "open" was reviewed and recoded into one of the other categories as appropriate; 14 were academic positions (13 open rank and 1 other) and 12 were positions in the practice sector.

For job descriptions with two ranks indicated, a standard set of recategorization rules was applied. Jobs that were at the assistant or associate level are coded in their own category; jobs at the associate or full level are included in the associate category; and jobs that were at the instructor or assistant level, where the title depends on the highest degree held by the employee (e.g., employees with a PhD are assistant professors and employees without a PhD are instructors), are categorized at the rank of assistant professor. In total, 170 position-ranks were recoded.

Employers could describe the tenure status of the position by selecting one of the following categories from a dropdown menu: tenure-track, tenured, tenure-eligible, not tenure-track, and not applicable. For all academic positions, the tenure status item was reviewed. If the status chosen by the employer was inconsistent with the job title entered by the employer (e.g., a "Visiting Assistant Professor" position was listed as tenure-track), tenure status was coded to reflect the information in the job description. If the description was ambiguous, tenure status was left as the employer submitted it. In addition, all jobs with the status "tenure-eligible" were reviewed and recoded into other categories based on title and description. The status was left as "tenure-eligible" for four postdoc positions that were described as having the potential to convert to tenure-stream. In all, tenure status was recoded for 72 positions. The tenure-track category in the analysis includes both tenure-track and tenured positions.

The academic administrator category was created based on job title, position-rank, and job description. Administrators who are also professors (e.g., department chairs) are not included in the professor counts.

Employers are required to select one area of expertise from a dropdown list of 82 areas of specialization in sociology; they have the option to select a second area as well. The areas of "teaching and learning in sociology," "education," and "sociological practice" are sometimes chosen by employers to describe the sector or type of employment, rather than the area of sociological specialization for the position. Advertisements that had one of these three areas as an area of expertise were reviewed: when the job description indicated an area of specialization that was inconsistent with the one chosen by the employer, it was recoded to be consistent with the description. This was the case for 5 of the 18 positions labeled with "education." In addition, all 8 positions labeled "sociological practice" (which the descriptions revealed were academic positions with other areas of expertise, not positions in practice settings) and all 3 of the positions labeled as "teaching and learning in sociology" were also recoded to reflect areas of expertise in the descriptions. Counts for areas of specialization are based on the number of times the area was selected as the first or second area of specialization. Percentages report the proportion of positions that mention that area.

When joining or renewing their ASA membership, sociologists are asked to identify their areas of interest from among the same list of 82 areas. The areas of interest selected by ASA student members was used as a proxy measure of interest area supply.

The geographic location of each position was recoded into Census categories based on the location of the employer. The "All U.S. Regions" category includes remote positions and positions that could be filled in one of several regional offices.

Appendix A. All Areas of Specialization or Expertise for Academic Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank, 2019

Area	Count	Percent	Area	Count	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	169	30.5%	Alcohol and Drugs	2	0.4%
Criminology/Delinquency	64	11.6%	Art/Music	2	0.4%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	60	10.8%	Collective Behavior/Social Movements	2	0.4%
Criminal Justice	54	9.7%	Biosociology	1	0.2%
Medical Sociology	38	6.9%	Ethnography (Anthropology)	1	0.2%
Race, Class, and Gender	35	6.3%	Mass Communication/Public Opinion	1	0.2%
Other Program/Area	28	5.1%	Socialization	1	0.2%
Quantitative Methodology	26	4.7%			
Environmental Sociology	23	4.2%			
Organizations, Formal and Complex	22	4.0%			
Public Policy	19	3.4%			
Science and Technology	19	3.4%			
Sex and Gender	18	3.2%			
Global and Transnational Sociology	15	2.7%			
Urban Sociology	15	2.7%			
Latina/o Sociology	14	2.5%			
Law and Society	14	2.5%			
Education	13	2.3%			
Stratification/Mobility	13	2.3%			
Cultural Sociology	12	2.2%			
Mental Health	12	2.2%			
Social Welfare/Social Work	12	2.2%			
Human Rights	10	1.8%			
Migration/Immigration	10	1.8%			
Family	9	1.6%			
Political Sociology	9	1.6%			
Statistics	9	1.6%			
Asians/Asian-Americans	8	1.4%			
Communication and Information Technologies	8	1.4%			
Economic Sociology	7	1.3%			
Qualitative Methodology	7	1.3%			
Sexualities	7	1.3%			
Political Economy	6	1.1%			
Theory	6	1.1%			
Community	5	0.9%			
Development	5	0.9%			
Labor and Labor Movements	5	0.9%			
Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research	4	0.7%			
Children and Youth	4	0.7%			
Demography	4	0.7%			
Disabilities	4	0.7%			
Religion	4	0.7%			
Social Psychology	4	0.7%			
Work and Labor Markets	4	0.7%			
Policy Analysis	3	0.5%			
Social Change	3	0.5%			
Aging/Social Gerontology	2	0.4%			

Note: Employers can select up to two areas of specialization. Counts indicate the number of times each area was selected. The percentage indicates the proportion of the 554 academic positions that list the area.

Appendix B: All Areas of Specialization or Expertise for Fellowship Positions Posted in the ASA Job Bank, 2019

Area	Count	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	71	48.6%
Demography	17	11.6%
Other Program/Area	12	8.2%
Asians/Asian-Americans	9	6.2%
Comparative Sociology/Historical Sociology	8	5.5%
Sex and Gender	8	5.5%
Education	7	4.8%
Political Sociology	7	4.8%
Public Policy	7	4.8%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	7	4.8%
Religion	7	4.8%
Environmental Sociology	6	4.1%
Latina/o Sociology	6	4.1%
Science and Technology	6	4.1%
Criminal Justice	5	3.4%
Policy Analysis	5	3.4%
Quantitative Methodology	5	3.4%
Communication and Information Technologies	3	2.1%
Criminology/Delinquency	3	2.1%
Economic Sociology	3	2.1%
Race, Class, and Gender	3	2.1%
Urban Sociology	3	2.1%
Cultural Sociology	2	1.4%
Global and Transnational Sociology	2	1.4%
Medical Sociology	2	1.4%
Organizations, Formal and Complex	2	1.4%
Political Economy	2	1.4%
Stratification/Mobility	2	1.4%
Aging/Social Gerontology	1	0.7%
Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research	1	0.7%
Art/Music	1	0.7%
Children and Youth	1	0.7%
Disabilities	1	0.7%
Family	1	0.7%
Migration/Immigration	1	0.7%
Occupations/Professions	1	0.7%
Social Change	1	0.7%
Social Welfare/Social Work	1	0.7%
Statistics	1	0.7%
Work and Labor Markets	1	0.7%

Note: Employers can select up to two areas of specialization. Counts indicate the number of times each area was selected. The percentage indicates the proportion of the 146 fellowship positions that list the area.

Appendix C: All Areas of Specialization or Expertise for Practice Positions Posted in the ASA Job Bank, 2019

Area	Count	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	13	38.2%
Criminal Justice	5	14.7%
Education	4	11.8%
Religion	4	11.8%
Demography	3	8.8%
Law and Society	3	8.8%
Quantitative Methodology	3	8.8%
Aging/Social Gerontology	2	5.9%
Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research	2	5.9%
Other Program/Area	2	5.9%
Policy Analysis	2	5.9%
Public Policy	2	5.9%
Communication and Information Technologies	1	2.9%
Community	1	2.9%
Cultural Sociology	1	2.9%
Economic Sociology	1	2.9%
Environmental Sociology	1	2.9%
Political Economy	1	2.9%
Political Sociology	1	2.9%
Social Psychology	1	2.9%
Statistics	1	2.9%
Work and Labor Markets	1	2.9%

Note: Employers can select up to two areas of specialization. Counts indicate the number of times each area was selected. The percentage indicates the proportion of the 34 positions in practice settings that list the area.

Appendix D: ASA Student Member Interest Areas, 2019

Interest Area	Count	Percent	Interest Area	Count	Percent
Race, Class, and Gender	783	22.3%	Marxist Sociology	105	3.0%
Sex and Gender	591	16.8%	Deviant Behavior/Social Disorganization	102	2.9%
Cultural Sociology	494	14.1%	Community	99	2.8%
Political Sociology	468	13.3%	Knowledge	98	2.8%
Education	456	13.0%	Statistics	96	2.7%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	448	12.8%	Occupations/Professions	95	2.7%
Stratification/Mobility	431	12.3%	Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research	91	2.6%
Medical Sociology	413	11.8%	Communication and Information Technologies	91	2.6%
Migration/Immigration	345	9.8%	Human Rights	90	2.6%
Social Psychology	340	9.7%	Body and Embodiment	84	2.4%
Urban Sociology	334	9.5%	Rural Sociology	83	2.4%
Family	328	9.3%	Emotions	78	2.2%
Qualitative Methodology	322	9.2%	Policy Analysis	61	1.7%
Criminology/Delinquency	307	8.7%	Peace, War, World Conflict, & Conflict Resolution	61	1.7%
Collective Behavior/Social Movements	293	8.3%	Consumers and Consumption	59	1.7%
Quantitative Methodology	289	8.2%	Disabilities	58	1.7%
Economic Sociology	281	8.0%	Alcohol and Drugs	58	1.7%
Theory	270	7.7%	Social Control	57	1.6%
Global and Transnational Sociology	259	7.4%	Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity	54	1.5%
Environmental Sociology	253	7.2%	Other	52	1.5%
Sexualities	250	7.1%	Social Welfare/Social Work	52	1.5%
Demography	223	6.3%	Mass Communication/Public Opinion	47	1.3%
Organizations, Formal and Complex	213	6.1%	Art/Music	44	1.3%
Work and Labor Markets	212	6.0%	Social Organization	41	1.2%
Social Networks	206	5.9%	Animals and Society	36	1.0%
Comparative Sociology/Historical Sociology	196	5.6%	Socialization	35	1.0%
Law and Society	190	5.4%	Leisure/Sports/Recreation	31	0.9%
Mental Health	183	5.2%	Visual Sociology	31	0.9%
Criminal Justice	175	5.0%	History of Sociology/Social Thought	31	0.9%
Religion	174	5.0%	Mathematical Sociology	28	0.8%
Science and Technology	174	5.0%	Military Sociology	25	0.7%
Public Policy	168	4.8%	Biosociology	24	0.7%
Political Economy	167	4.8%	Penology/Corrections	24	0.7%
Children and Youth	161	4.6%	Sociological Practice	22	0.6%
Development	154	4.4%	Language/Social Linguistics	21	0.6%
Aging/Social Gerontology	131	3.7%	Ethnomethodology/Conversational Analysis	19	0.5%
Social Change	126	3.6%	Small Groups	17	0.5%
Teaching and Learning in Sociology	124	3.5%	Clinical Sociology	14	0.4%
Latina/o Sociology	120	3.4%	Human Ecology	14	0.4%
Labor and Labor Movements	115	3.3%	Evolution and Society	8	0.2%
Ethnography (Anthropology)	111	3.2%	Rational Choice	4	0.1%
Asians/Asian-Americans	108	3.1%	Microcomputing	3	0.1%
			Total Student Members	3512	

Source: American Sociological Association Membership Database, 2019

Note: Members may select up to four areas of "sociological interest" on their membership forms.