



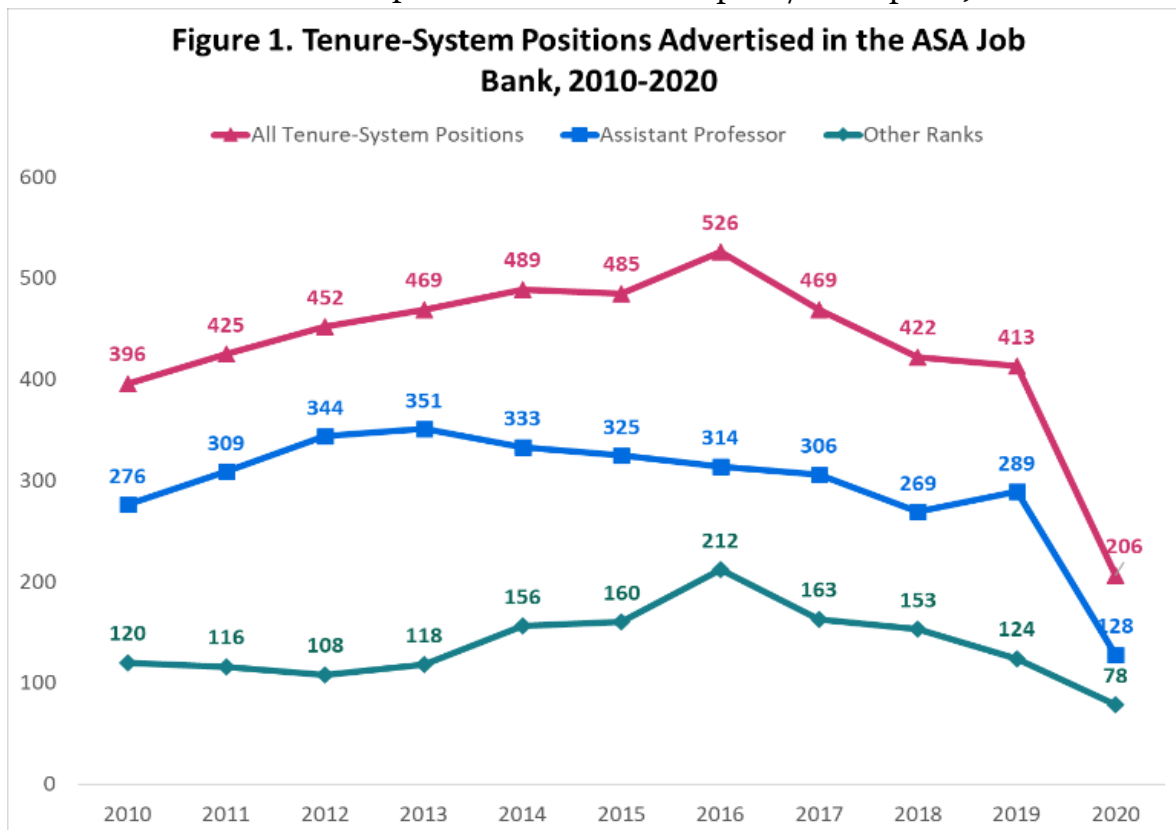
Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank in 2020

This brief reports on the position advertisements in the American Sociological Association (ASA) Job Bank in 2020. We report on each year's Job Bank listings in an effort to document the direction of sociology as a field, and to inform job seekers and hiring units about the larger context in which their activities take place.

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. There is no comprehensive source of job listings for sociologists with graduate degrees, but ASA is likely the best proxy available. We recognize that the ASA Job Bank does not represent the

universe of jobs available to sociologists; contingent and community college faculty positions and jobs outside of academia are likely underrepresented, for example, and most positions advertised are located in the United States. Thus, these data represent recent trends in the jobs advertised in the ASA Job Bank, not the jobs available for MA- 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 2020 (for detailed trend analysis and pre-2020 job bank reports, see <https://www.asanet.org/academic-professional-resources/data-about-discipline/asa-reports>).



In 2020, 206 tenure-line positions were advertised, compared with 413 in 2019. While the number of positions had slowly been declining since the 2016 peak, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a more precipitous drop in the past year.

The Job Bank generally includes more academic positions at the rank of assistant professor than other ranks, and a large proportion of job seekers are recent or upcoming graduates interested in these entry-level rank positions. In 2020, 128 tenure-track assistant professor positions were advertised, a 55.7 percent decrease from 2019. This drop reflects an overall shrinking of the number of faculty nationwide in the 2020-2021 academic year (<https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/live-coronavirus-updates/job-cuts-and-stagnant-salaries-a-new-report-details-the-pandemics-toll-on-the-faculty>.)

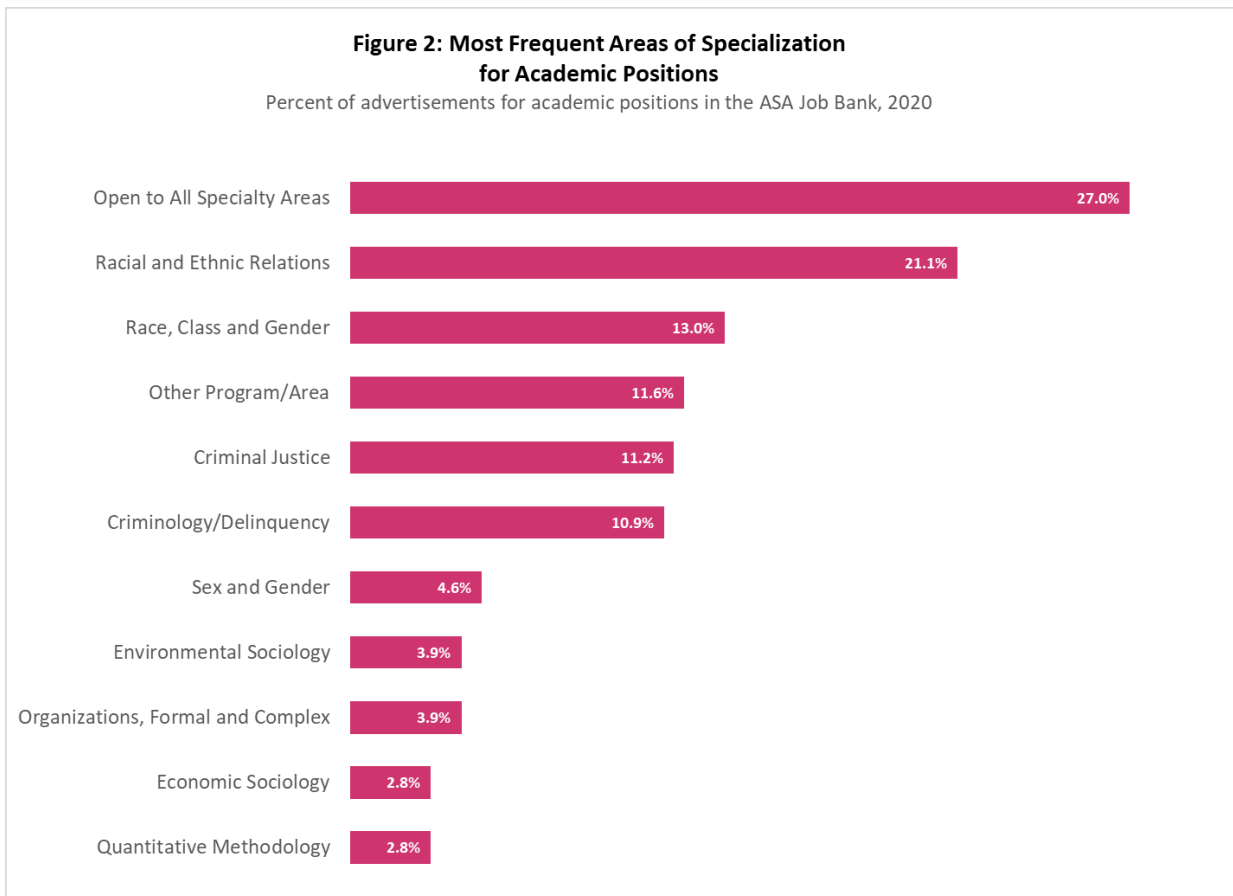
Table 1 reports the number and percent of all U.S.-based jobs advertised in the ASA Job Bank. In 2020, 439 positions in the U.S. were advertised, compared with 734 positions in 2019. While the overall number of jobs decreased, there were some differences in the proportion of the types of jobs advertised compared to 2019. Nearly two-thirds (64.9 percent) of the 2020 positions were for jobs in the academic sector, down from 75.5 percent in 2019: 46.9 percent were for tenure-track positions, 13.4 percent were for non-tenure-track academic positions, and 4.6 percent were for academic administrator positions (compared with 56.3 percent tenure-track, 14.4 percent non-tenure-track academic, and 4.8 percent administrator positions in 2019). Among the tenure-track positions, 62.1 percent were for assistant professors and 18 percent were open rank. For the non-tenure-track academic positions, about half (47.5 percent) were at the visiting assistant professor level, and 45.8 percent were instructors or lecturers. Academic administrators include both department chairs/ heads (45 percent of the

Table 1: All Positions in the ASA Job Bank by Category, 2020

	Count	Percent
Academic: Tenure-Track Positions		
Assistant Professor	128	62.1%
Associate Professor	20	9.7%
Full Professor	2	1.0%
Assistant or Associate Professor	18	8.7%
Open Rank	37	18.0%
Tenure Track Instructor	1	0.5%
Subtotal	206	100.0%
<i>Percentage of Total Positions Advertised</i>		46.9%
Academic: Non-Tenure-Track Positions		
Instructor/Lecturer	27	45.8%
Assistant Professor	28	47.5%
Other	4	6.8%
Subtotal	59	100.0%
<i>Percentage of Total Positions Advertised</i>		13.4%
Academic: Administrators		
Chair/Head	9	45.0%
Other Administrator	11	55.0%
Subtotal	20	100.0%
<i>Percentage of Total Positions Advertised</i>		4.6%
Fellowships		
Predocctoral	2	1.7%
Postdoctoral	100	87.0%
Other	13	11.3%
Subtotal	115	100.0%
<i>Percentage of Total Positions Advertised</i>		26.2%
Sociological Practice		
Researcher/Statistician	20	51.3%
Director/Assistant Director	10	25.6%
Other	9	23.1%
Subtotal	39	100.0%
<i>Percentage of Total Positions Advertised</i>		8.9%
Total U.S. Positions Advertised	439	100.0%

category) and other administrators (55 percent), which includes deans, program directors, and other administrative positions in the academic sector.

Fellowships, primarily postdoctoral fellowships, increased to 26.2 percent of the positions advertised in 2020 compared to 19.9 percent the previous year. Finally, 8.9 percent of the positions in the Job Bank in 2020 were for jobs



in sociological practice, up from 4.6 percent in 2019 (these percentages represent 39 positions in 2020, compared with 35 positions in 2019). These positions include 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 2020 Survey of Earned Doctorates, 23 percent of new PhD recipients in sociology who had definite employment plans had jobs in practice settings (<https://nces.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf22300/data-tables>, Table 63).

Areas of Specialization

Figure 2 shows the areas of specialization sought most frequently in advertisements for academic positions, both tenure-track and non-tenure-track, in 2020. (For a complete list of the 59 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, racial

and ethnic relations was the most frequently sought, followed by race/class/gender. Other areas that were frequently requested in advertisements for academic positions were criminal justice; criminology; sex and gender; environmental sociology; organizations, formal and complex; economic sociology; and quantitative methodology. Together, 74.2 percent of the academic positions advertised in 2020 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 than academic positions. Appendix B and Appendix C list the areas of specialization for these positions. The largest number of fellowships (76) were open to all areas, followed by public policy, race/class/gender, and racial and ethnic relations, each with nine positions. Nineteen of the 39 positions in sociological practice were advertising for open areas of specialization. Quantitative methodology was mentioned in five of the advertisements for practice positions,

followed by “other program/area”, then criminal justice, public policy, and race/class/gender, with three 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 2020, the top five areas of interest for student members of ASA were race, class, and gender; family; education; political economy; and alcohol and drugs. Notably, the high frequency of position advertisements looking for specialists in criminology/delinquency, criminal justice, 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 2020 interested in family, education, and political economy 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 2020. The regions are based on U.S. Census Bureau definitions. The highest proportions of academic positions were in the South (32 percent) and Northeast (27.1 percent). Fellowships advertised in the Job Bank were more heavily concentrated in the Northeast (38.3 percent). For positions in practice settings, a full 38.5% of advertised positions in sociological practice were in the South, followed by the Northeast (28.2 percent) and West (17.9 percent).

Summary

As expected with the disruption of the pandemic, the total number of positions in the ASA Job Bank was much lower in 2020 than in 2019. While the proportions of non-tenure

Table 2: All Listings in the ASA Job Bank by U.S. Region, 2020

	Count	Percent
Academic Positions		
Midwest	55	19.4%
Northeast	77	27.1%
South	91	32.0%
West	61	21.5%
All U.S. Regions	0	0.0%
Total	284	100.0%
Fellowships		
Midwest	22	19.1%
Northeast	44	38.3%
South	20	17.4%
West	27	23.5%
All U.S. Regions	2	1.7%
Total	115	100.0%
Practice Positions		
Midwest	4	10.3%
Northeast	11	28.2%
South	15	38.5%
West	7	17.9%
All U.S. Regions	2	5.1%
Total	39	100.0%

track academic positions and administrator positions remained roughly the same, we noted increases in non-academic positions and fellowships. While 27 percent of academic positions advertised did not specify an area of specialization, two areas of specialization combined to make up more than a third of these positions: racial and ethnic relations and race/class/gender. It is likely that the continued salience of race and racism, along with massive mobilizations in support of Black lives, are shaping decisions to hire new faculty with this expertise. The overlap of high levels of student member interest in race/class/gender with related job searches stands out as a positive in our analysis of the Job Bank data.

It is worth noting that, while fellowships were concentrated in the Northeast and West regions of the United States, the largest

proportion of academic and practice positions were located in the South region.

While we will not begin to analyze 2021 job bank advertisements holistically until the end of the calendar year, we know that the number of advertisements posted to date in 2021 exceeds the number of advertisements posted as of this time in 2020, and is even higher than the number at this point in 2019. We therefore expect to see a rebound in 2021, though we do not yet know whether the market will have recovered to pre-COVID (2019) levels or what types of positions have been advertised in 2021.

(For details on the methods used to conduct this analysis, see Appendix E at the end of this document.)

Appendix A. All Areas of Specialization or Expertise for Academic Positions Advertised in the ASA Job Bank, 2020

Area	Count	Percent	Area	Count	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	77	27.0%	Social Welfare/Social Work	2	0.7%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	60	21.1%	Sociological Practice	2	0.7%
Race, Class and Gender	37	13.0%	Stratification/Mobility	2	0.7%
Other Program/Area	33	11.6%	Teaching and Learning in Sociology	2	0.7%
Criminal Justice	32	11.2%	Alcohol and Drugs	1	0.4%
Criminology/Delinquency	31	10.9%	Art/Music	1	0.4%
Sex and Gender	13	4.6%	Biosociology	1	0.4%
Environmental Sociology	11	3.9%	Deviant Behavior/Social Disorganization	1	0.4%
Organizations, Formal and Complex	11	3.9%	Development	1	0.4%
Economic Sociology	8	2.8%	Human Ecology	1	0.4%
Quantitative Methodology	8	2.8%	Human Rights	1	0.4%
Family	7	2.5%	Leisure/Sports/Recreation	1	0.4%
Global and Transnational Sociology	7	2.5%	Mental Health	1	0.4%
Medical Sociology	7	2.5%	Military Sociology	1	0.4%
Public Policy	7	2.5%	Occupations/Professions	1	0.4%
Social Change	7	2.5%	Peace, War, World Conflict, & Conflict Resolution	1	0.4%
Latina/o Sociology	6	2.1%	Policy Analysis	1	0.4%
Law and Society	6	2.1%	Rural Sociology	1	0.4%
Urban Sociology	6	2.1%	Social Organization	1	0.4%
Children and Youth	5	1.8%	Statistics	1	0.4%
Aging/Social Gerontology	4	1.4%			
Demography	4	1.4%			
Political Sociology	4	1.4%			
Science and Technology	4	1.4%			
Social Psychology	4	1.4%			
Asians/Asian-Americans	3	1.1%			
Community	3	1.1%			
Political Economy	3	1.1%			
Qualitative Methodology	3	1.1%			
Theory	3	1.1%			
Work and Labor Markets	3	1.1%			
Collective Behavior/Social Movements	2	0.7%			
Communication & Information Technologies	2	0.7%			
Cultural Sociology	2	0.7%			
Education	2	0.7%			
Labor and Labor Movements	2	0.7%			
Migration/Immigration	2	0.7%			
Sexualities	2	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 285 academic positions that list the area.

Appendix B: All Areas of Specialization or Expertise for Fellowship Positions Posted in the ASA Job Bank, 2020

Area	Count	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	76	66.1%
Public Policy	9	7.8%
Race, Class and Gender	9	7.8%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	9	7.8%
Sex and Gender	8	7.0%
Demography	7	6.1%
Asians/Asian-Americans	6	5.2%
Medical Sociology	6	5.2%
Quantitative Methodology	6	5.2%
Religion	6	5.2%
Criminal Justice	5	4.3%
Other Program/Area	5	4.3%
Political Sociology	5	4.3%
Science and Technology	5	4.3%
Mental Health	4	3.5%
Criminology/Delinquency	3	2.6%
Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research	2	1.7%
Cultural Sociology	2	1.7%
Migration/Immigration	2	1.7%
Policy Analysis	2	1.7%
Urban Sociology	2	1.7%
Aging/Social Gerontology	1	0.9%
Altruism, Morality, and Social Solidarity	1	0.9%
Alcohol and Drugs	1	0.9%
Biosociology	1	0.9%
Children and Youth	1	0.9%
Collective Behavior/Social Movements	1	0.9%
Communication & Information Technologies	1	0.9%
Economic Sociology	1	0.9%
Education	1	0.9%
Environmental Sociology	1	0.9%
History of Sociology/Social Thought	1	0.9%
Human Rights	1	0.9%
Labor and Labor Movements	1	0.9%
Mass Communication/Public Opinion	1	0.9%
Social Change	1	0.9%
Social Psychology	1	0.9%
Statistics	1	0.9%
Work and Labor Markets	1	0.9%

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 115 fellowship positions that list the area.

Appendix C: All Areas of Specialization or Expertise for Practice Positions Posted in the ASA Job Bank, 2020

Area	Count	Percent
Open to All Specialty Areas	19	48.7%
Quantitative Methodology	5	12.8%
Other Program/Area	4	10.3%
Criminal Justice	3	7.7%
Public Policy	3	7.7%
Race, Class and Gender	3	7.7%
Community	2	5.1%
Demography	2	5.1%
Economic Sociology	2	5.1%
Labor and Labor Movements	2	5.1%
Mental Health	2	5.1%
Political Sociology	2	5.1%
Qualitative Methodology	2	5.1%
Urban Sociology	2	5.1%
Alcohol and Drugs	1	2.6%
Asians/Asian-Americans	1	2.6%
Communication & Information Technologies	1	2.6%
Criminology/Delinquency	1	2.6%
Cultural Sociology	1	2.6%
Education	1	2.6%
Migration/Immigration	1	2.6%
Policy Analysis	1	2.6%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	1	2.6%
Science and Technology	1	2.6%
Statistics	1	2.6%

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 39 positions in practice settings that list the area.

Appendix D: ASA Student Member Interest Areas, 2020

Interest areas	Count	Percent	Interest areas	Count	Percent
Race, Class and Gender	321	10.8%	Clinical Sociology	74	2.5%
Family	317	10.7%	Law and Society	74	2.5%
Education	316	10.7%	Peace, War, World Conflict, & Conflict Resolution	68	2.3%
Political Economy	221	7.5%	Labor and Labor Movements	67	2.3%
Alcohol and Drugs	214	7.2%	Social Change	64	2.2%
Sex and Gender	201	6.8%	Environmental Sociology	63	2.1%
Urban Sociology	187	6.3%	Religion	63	2.1%
Disabilities	186	6.3%	Work and Labor Markets	62	2.1%
Latina/o Sociology	184	6.2%	Occupations/Professions	61	2.1%
Racial and Ethnic Relations	171	5.8%	Demography	60	2.0%
Migration/Immigration	168	5.7%	Criminal Justice	60	2.0%
Political Sociology	154	5.2%	Ethnography (Anthropology)	59	2.0%
Theory	154	5.2%	Social Networks	57	1.9%
Cultural Sociology	152	5.1%	Leisure/Sports/Recreation	56	1.9%
Asians/Asian-Americans	147	5.0%	Deviant Behavior/Social Disorganization	55	1.9%
Stratification/Mobility	140	4.7%	History of Sociology/Social Thought	53	1.8%
Qualitative Methodology	140	4.7%	Communication & Information Technologies	51	1.7%
Global and Transnational Sociology	139	4.7%	Teaching and Learning in Sociology	51	1.7%
Community	138	4.7%	Animals and Society	49	1.7%
Rural Sociology	138	4.7%	Body and Embodiment	49	1.7%
Science and Technology	138	4.7%	Marxist Sociology	48	1.6%
Children and Youth	127	4.3%	Applied Sociology/Evaluation Research	46	1.6%
Medical Sociology	119	4.0%	Ethnomethodology/Conversational Analysis	44	1.5%
Comparative Sociology/Historical Sociology	117	4.0%	Aging/Social Gerontology	42	1.4%
Collective Behavior/Social Movements	117	4.0%	Small Groups	42	1.4%
Social Psychology	115	3.9%	Mass Communication/Public Opinion	40	1.4%
Development	112	3.8%	Social Control	38	1.3%
Quantitative Methodology	107	3.6%	Sociological Practice	36	1.2%
Altruism, Morality and Social Solidarity	103	3.5%	Other	33	1.1%
Art/Music	103	3.5%	Socialization	33	1.1%
Economic Sociology	102	3.4%	Social Organization	33	1.1%
Organizations, Formal and Complex	102	3.4%	Human Rights	31	1.0%
Public Policy	101	3.4%	Policy Analysis	26	0.9%
Knowledge	97	3.3%	Military Sociology	26	0.9%
Rational Choice	96	3.2%	Evolution and Society	26	0.9%
Biosociology	94	3.2%	Consumers and Consumption	25	0.8%
Sexualities	92	3.1%	Human Ecology	20	0.7%
Emotions	90	3.0%	Visual Sociology	19	0.6%
Language/Social Linguistics	90	3.0%	Social Welfare/Social Work	17	0.6%
Mental Health	86	2.9%	Penology/Corrections	17	0.6%
Mathematical Sociology	83	2.8%	Statistics	17	0.6%
Criminology/Delinquency	82	2.8%	Microcomputing	2	0.1%
Total Student Members				2961	

Source: American Sociological Association Membership Database, 2020

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

Appendix E: Methodological Notes

The data used in this report come from all advertisements that appeared in the ASA Job Bank in 2020. 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 (36 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; 10 were academic positions (9 open rank and 1 Assistant Professor), 5 were positions in the practice sector, and 2 were fellowships.

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; and jobs at the associate or full level are included in the associate category. In total, 131 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 one practice position at a university that was also eligible for a tenured appointment in an academic department. In all, tenure status was recoded for 95 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 half of the 8 positions labeled with “education” and 3 of the 5 positions labeled “sociological practice.” In addition, all 5 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 fully remote positions and positions that could be filled in one of several regional offices.