



Non-Academic Careers for Social and Behavioral Scientists

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Alt-Ac Careers

- Traditional model of academic career: finish your dissertation, maybe do a postdoc, then get a tenure-track job. Publish, teach, a little community service, get tenure. Nice.
- Another is to be a low paid temporary lecturer, with no benefits, no status, few resources. Okay to establish a teaching record, or to have the cachét of a university affiliation.
- Or work outside of academia as a researcher, consultant or some other creative profession.
- Or: to support yourself and your career through 'soft money' that is, through grants.
 - Write your own.
 - Work with someone else.
 - Might even involve research & publishing.

Applied versus Tenure Track

- Differences abound and there are advantages and disadvantages
- Differences – writing to a broader audience, teaching in professional settings, purposeful research, 'deliverables'... The politics, personalities, professional approaches...
- Advantages: all forms of flexibility (geographic, topical, methodological, professional...). More income unless at top tier schools.
- Disadvantages: instability, no pension, less prestige.



Lessons Learned

- Follow your dreams
- Be humble
- Embrace a multi-disciplinary approach
- Be patient and flexible
- Take advantage of training that you don't get in your courses (management, grant writing, marketing, etc.)

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Employed US Social Scientists with Doctoral Degrees

Employed U.S. Social and Other Scientists with Doctoral Degrees by Employment Sector, 1997-2001

Field of Study	Year	Employment Sector					(Total Number Employed)
		Educational Institutions	Private-For Profit	Private Not-for-Profit	Government	Self-Employed & Other Sector	
Economics	1997	57.7%	16.7%	5.0%	13.9%	6.7%	(20,080)
	1999	59.2	17.0	3.7	11.2	8.8	(21,190)
	2001	55.7	17.0	3.5	15.0	8.9	(21,690)
Political Science	1997	70.5	9.5	5.0	11.3	3.6	(15,820)
	1999	69.9	9.8	4.5	10.4	5.5	(16,090)
	2001	70.3	10.5	4.4	10.3	4.6	(16,910)
Psychology	1997	39.8	21.9	10.1	11.2	17.0	(79,320)
	1999	40.2	20.7	9.7	10.2	19.2	(84,300)
	2001	40.1	22.0	9.7	10.1	18.1	(88,890)
Sociology	1997	75.5	6.2	7.6	7.1	3.4	(13,230)
	1999	74.1	8.0	8.0	6.7	3.1	(13,420)
	2001	73.2	6.0	10.1	7.4	3.4	(13,710)
Other Social Sciences	1997	67.5	12.3	6.3	9.1	4.8	(21,940)
	1999	66.0	13.4	6.2	8.6	5.7	(23,590)
	2001	66.1	14.6	5.8	9.4	3.9	(23,850)
All Social Sciences	1997	66.9	11.8	5.9	10.6	4.9	(71,070)
	1999	66.3	12.7	5.5	9.4	6.1	(74,300)
	2001	65.3	12.8	5.6	10.8	5.4	(76,170)
All Sciences	1997	51.1	27.0	5.6	10.7	5.7	(429,820)
	1999	50.1	28.4	5.4	9.8	6.4	(457,470)
	2001	49.5	29.0	5.4	9.9	6.1	(475,300)
All Degree	1997	47.6	31.8	5.1	10.3	5.2	(518,440)

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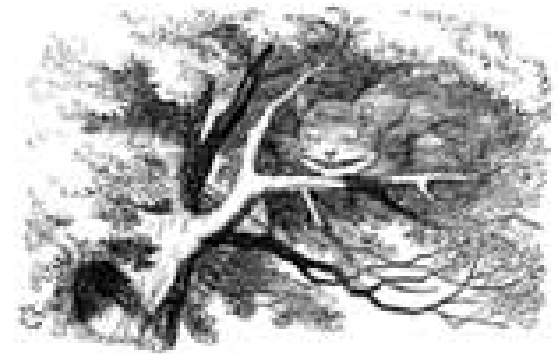
What Kind of Work

- Research and analysis for products, evaluation of programs, customer satisfaction, employees, benefits, political polls, needs forecasts e.g., for urban planning.
- Jury consulting
- Organizational consulting
- Focus group moderation
- Program design and management of operations
- Policy briefs, 'white papers' and layperson education.
- Methodologist: data collection, weighting, incentives, statistical support, computer software expertise
- Grants specialist
- Institutional research

You can either do the work, manage the work, or bring in (sell) the work.

Creating a vision

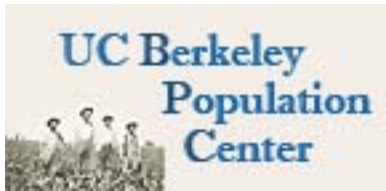
- *"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"*
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.
"I don't much care where—" said Alice.
"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the Cat.
"—so long as I get SOMEWHERE," Alice added as an explanation.
"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."
- Deconstruct "what do you want to do?"
 - How do you like to work – full-time, part-time, flex-time. Structured or unstructured, work in an office or moving around.
 - What do you like to do? Write? Do statistics? Observe? Organize? Plan?
 - What kind of daily life do I want? Commute or not? Travel or not? Weekends off or not?
 - Do you do better with stability or can you tolerate risk?
 - Do you have political or social preferences?
 - Geographic preferences?
 - How you want to see yourself in five years?
- Take a piece of paper and write down your answers.
- Then ask:
 - Who would hire someone like me?
 - What do I have to do to get to where I want to go?





Where to work

- For profit research,
 - consulting firms and divisions within firms,
 - very large and very small.
- Government agencies of all sorts
- Non-profit organizations (charities) that do research and/or advocacy
- Non-profit research firms (e.g., RAND, PPIC, WestEd).
- Health care organizations (e.g., Kaiser has a research arm).
- Other jobs within universities
- Start your own business (eventually)



Finding a job

- Jobs are not usually titled “sociologist,” “political scientist,” and often not even “economist.” Rather it’s “researcher,” “Consultant,” “program analyst” “methodologist” “policy analyst”, “evaluation specialist” “project director”
- Network, Network, Network.
- Check www.eval.org, www.popassoc.org and other interdisciplinary websites in addition to your own main discipline. Join sections that support applied social scientists. Join an interdisciplinary group and attend local chapter meetings.
- When writing: response precisely to the advertisement, which usually means a cover letter about why you are qualified and why you want the job.
- Send a resume, not a vita, unless otherwise requests.
- If you have an example of the work they do, include it, especially in ‘cold’ letters. If you don’t have an example, create it.
- Increasingly email is fine but snail mail still works.
- Get a LinkedIn presence. Contact people on LinkedIn, even if you don’t know them, and ask for advice.

Vitas versus Resumes

- Vita
 - A statement of what you've accomplished, that is, employers will ask "what is the evidence that you do research, publish and teach at the level we need?"
- Resume
 - A statement of what you can do, that is, employers will want to know "can you do the job I need you to do?"
 - You are selling your skills and knowledge. No one is giving you a job. Rather, you have something they need so they are willing to pay you for your time.

Strategies

- Acquire skills now
- Continue acquiring them throughout your career
- Stay connected in your discipline
- Publishing keeps options open but it's time consuming
- Learn management, marketing, business structures

'Sales'

- Sales is an honorable profession
- If you bring in money – through contracts, development, grants – you can control your own destiny.
- Learn how to write proposals. All proposals have a similar structure.
- Learn how to be a consultant. All highly educated professionals function as consultants on some level.

Working with Clients

An example of a different business mindset:

- Develop objectives in collaboration with the client, including how they want the results delivered.
- What does the client need to do with the results?
- Who are the audiences for the results?
- Respond within 1 business day to all voice mails and emails.
- Interpret the results in intelligent but not technical language.
- Keep the client informed of the project progress. Share interesting results before the draft report.
- Avoid telling the clients they 'should' and be kind in giving over critical findings.
- Deliver more than was promised.

Internal Processes

- **Often overlooked soft skills of business:**

For employees and employers:

- Keep track of your hours on projects, by task, at least once daily. An Excel spreadsheet is fine. Do this even if you are an employee and your employer doesn't ask you to.
- Develop templates for as much as possible – reports, proposals, invoices.
- Document your processes.
- Learn about management (business and staff).
- Learn about the world from your clients' perspective.

For employers:

- Go to your accountant and learn how to categorize expenses and income. Again, some use Quicken or other formal software, but even Excel suffices.



The Website

- You need a professional-looking website:
 - It should describe what you do, who you are.
 - Contact information
 - Optional:
 - Clients served, references.
 - Publications (.pdf links, or registration for business leads)
 - Links to relevant organizations
 - Any helpful material
 - Blogs are really time-consuming.
 - Authenticated (userid/password) login for clients.



Improve the understanding of the profession

TRAIN STUDENTS

- Curriculum
 - Learn computer skills; policy, and writing and presentation for lay audiences.
 - Soft skills
 - Entrepreneurial spirit
 - Solution providing, not just problem identification. Proactive versus reactive.
 - Time frames
 - Collaborations
 - Business management
 - Even a non-profit isn't for loss. The bottom line matters when you can't pay the bills or do anything due to lack of funds.
 - That means, knowing how a business is run: process, documentation, bookkeeping, customer service. Marketing. Business plans. Structure.
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Business Plans

- Often used for external funding, e.g., bank loans, but also in other legal and financial situations.
- A business plan is a written document that can be used as a tool to clearly articulate the vision of your business

Business Plans

- **Table of Contents**

- Mission – what are you going to do...this should be your elevator speech.
- Product (and service) – what specifically are you going to provide. What do you do better than others? (Method, content knowledge?)
- Pricing – how will you charge and how much for your work
- Promotion – how will you get the word out.
- Distribution – how do you deliver it? Office, online, phone, in person?
- People – will you have staff or not? What are the implications?
- Competition – what kinds of other business are there out there? Why should people come to you?
- Money – it can take 2 years to get financially viable. How will you support yourself till then?



Business Plans and Business Planning

- Learning how to write a good plan:
 - A good business plan should be:
 - Focused, concise, easy-to-read, clear flow and logic. Use sections, bullets, lists.
 - There are free or low-cost workshops offered through the Small Business Administration.
 - Here's a link to find your regional office:
<http://www.sba.gov/localresources/index.html>
 - Related to this is SCORE, which works in conjunction with the SBA and local governments to provide training, <http://www.score.org>. (This tends to be in effect the same as SBDC).
<http://www.sba.gov/aboutsba/sbaprograms/sbdc/index.html>