

The Profession

A Survey of the Graduate Academic Marketplace in Political Science

For approximately a decade, an optimistic attitude concerning demand for political scientists, particularly teachers of political science at all levels, has prevailed.¹ It was part of a wider set of attitudes shared by the higher education community generally, encouraged by the governmental education agencies and helped along by the attitudes of legislators, public educators, parents and citizens. But recent indications have raised questions about this view.²

The Survey and Its Findings

To provide information on the employment supply and demand situation for political scientists, a survey of graduate departments in political science was conducted for the Association's Committee on Program Planning and Review, Council, and members. The survey consisted of a brief questionnaire sent out with a covering letter from the Chairman of the Committee, Frank J. Sorauf, to graduate department chairmen. The questionnaire requested information on political science Ph.D.'s or candidates entering the job market, new graduate student admissions, and positions being filled in the graduate departments.³ The first mailing took place on February 18 and the second mailing was made a month later. Of the 93 doctorate-granting departments, 76 or 82% responded.⁴

The results can be summarized as follows.

1. After an increase of 40% over the past two years in the number of people entering the job market, 1970 and 1971 appear to be a period

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of peak supply for political scientists emerging from professional training, over 1100 each year. There is virtually no increase (3%) expected from 1970 to 1971, with an 8% decline in market entry the following year. (Figure 1)

2. New graduate students admitted for the academic year 1970 were approximately 2500, while departments anticipated admitting 2100 for 1971. This 16% drop would represent a return almost to the 1966 level of 2000 entering political science graduate students.⁵ (Figure 2)

3. Graduate departments expect to hire about 200 people during 1971, the same number hired in 1969 and 1970. In each year half of this number, 100, are *new* positions, not made available by replacement hiring. (Figure 3)

The survey included only doctorate-granting departments. Thus it did not cover M.A. granting departments and the four year colleges with political science departments (about 1000), nor did it include the less defined market of colleges without political science departments, the expanding number of junior and community colleges, or non-academic employment.⁶ The master's degree and four year college departments were surveyed separately by Martin O. Heisler, Director of Graduate Placement at the University of Maryland, in cooperation with the Association.⁷

The Survey of Earned Doctorates shows that the number of Ph.D.'s awarded in political

1 U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment Outlook for Social Scientists* (Political Scientists), 1968-69 (Washington, D.C.).

2 One indicator of concern about employment in political science has been registration in the Association's Personnel Service. Normally membership in the service falls off abruptly from over a thousand, after January (when all memberships expire) to a few hundred as those who have found jobs or lose interest in following the job market drop out of the service. The buildup of new members then takes place slowly, reaching a peak toward the end of the year. In 1970, this trend was dramatically reversed, with *no* drop-off in membership at all at the end of the membership year.

3 See Appendix for questionnaire.

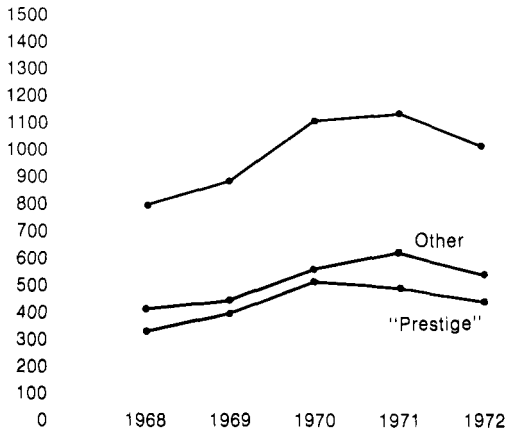
4 Since the non-responding institutions were known adjustments could be made for them in the tabulation of responses for questions 1 and 2.

5 Office of Planning and Policy Studies, National Science Foundation, *Graduate Student Support and Manpower Resources in Graduate Science Education*, Fall 1965-Fall 1966 (Washington, D.C., 1968).

6 Most full time political scientists are employed in the academic field. Of those qualified for the political science section of the National Science Foundation Register of Scientific and Technical Personnel, 76% were employed in academic institutions. "Initial Report: Information on Political Scientists in the NSF Register," *PS*, Winter, 1969, p. 4. This agrees with the percentage of new doctorates entering teaching over the past ten years. National Academy of Sciences, *Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities, 1958-1966* (and supplements), (Washington, D.C.).

7 Results of the Heisler study are published in this issue of *PS*, "The Academic Marketplace in Political Science for the Next Decade: A Preliminary Report on a Survey." The opportunity to exchange information and ideas with Professor Heisler has contributed to the preparation of this article.

Figure 1. Entry Into Market of Ph.D.'s and Ph.D. Candidates in Political Science



Total	819	911	1127	1164	1059
"Prestige"	364	423	532	503	478
Other	455	488	595	661	581

Figure 2. New Ph.D. Students Admitted in Political Science

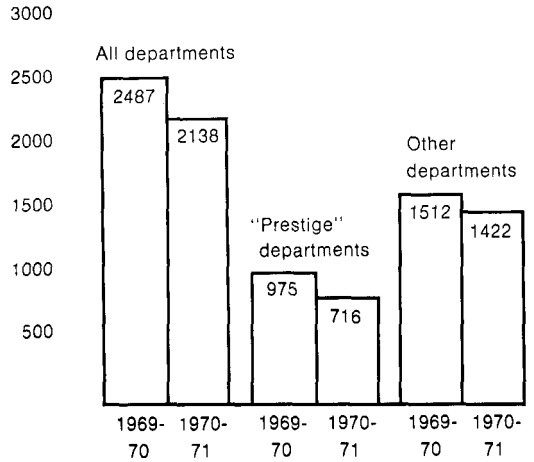


Figure 3. Positions Filled in Graduate Departments in Political Science

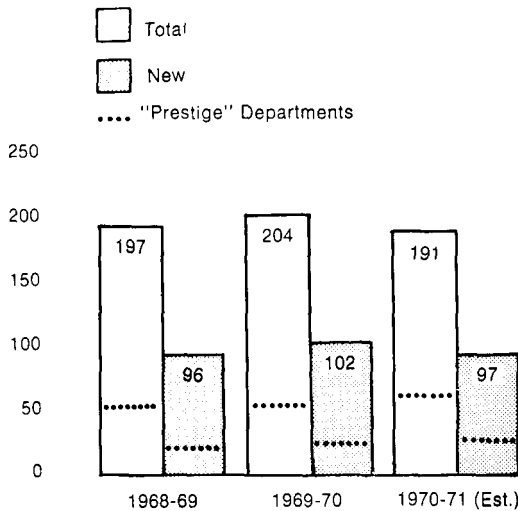
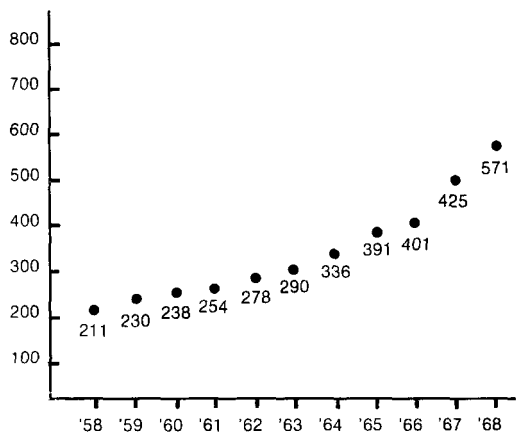


Figure 4. Number of Ph.D.'s Awarded in Political Science (Including Public Administration and International Relations) from Survey of Earned Doctorates. Source: National Academy of Sciences.



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science in 1969 was 559 and this figure did not include most of the students admitted during the years of highest graduate school admission, who are entering the market now and in 1971.⁸ The APSA survey figures thus reveal that the traditionally sought-after appointments at the graduate school level are relatively scarce, by a ratio of at least 5-1 (and higher if non-degree market entry is included). That is, for every 5 Ph.D.'s leaving graduate school, there is one new opening at the graduate school level.

“Prestige” and Other Departments

To trace the effects of the market situation on the internal structure of the discipline of political science, separate tabulations were also made for departments rated “distinguished” and “strong” in the Cartter survey.⁹ Those institutions, numbering 18, were compared with all other institutions. The prestige schools as a group have normally produced about 40% of political scientists coming onto the market although this group of institutions is only 1/5 of the total number of departments.

The difference between the two groups of schools can be seen in Figure 1 with the peak taking place this year among prestige schools, while for others the momentum continues through next year.

On the admissions questions, the difference is more marked. Among prestige schools, admissions will drop about 25% from this year to next as projected by the chairmen, while for other institutions the drop is less than 10%. (Figure 2)

The prestige schools account for about 25% of the graduate school openings each year, 50 or so, with the same proportion as among all institutions – half – being *new* positions. This is true for last year, this year and 1971, a stable prediction given the trends in admission and production. (Figure 3)

There are implications for the makeup of the discipline in the role of the developing Ph.D. programs. A count of new Ph.D. programs in the compendium of graduate studies published by the American Council on Education reveals that over the brief period from 1965-1969 17 new Ph.D. programs had been added.¹⁰ These are generally institutions which do *not* intend to cut back on graduate student admissions according to the survey, while those gearing their intake to perceived requirements of the traditional market tend more to have established programs.

Comparison of Surveys

Although the time periods, populations, and estimating methods are overlapping rather than comparable, by putting the findings of the APSA and Heisler surveys together, accepting the trends (if not the absolute number estimates) indicated, it is possible to foresee a change in the employment structure in the discipline. If new openings do average 480 per year between 1970 and 1973, with about 20% at the graduate level,¹¹ this would indicate a generally lagging market given the predicted market entry. Since the APSA survey used absolute numbers in the questionnaires, it is possible the APSA figures for *graduate* employment needs indicate the higher end of the Heisler all-institution ranges should be accepted. If that is the case, the Ph.D. supply and demand during the three years would be approximately in balance at perhaps 625-650 per year. This does *not*, however, account for the yearly increment of non-degree holders entering the market, and would imply an even greater drop in graduate admissions than is already evidenced by the APSA survey results. And that balance would extend only through 1973. After that year, the demand estimates fall off even more. Even if the drop in graduate admissions continues in anticipation of the trends suggested in both the APSA and Heisler surveys, the “surplus” of political scientists

8 National Academy of Sciences, *op. cit.*, 1969 Supplement.

9 Allan M. Cartter, *An Assessment of Quality in Graduate Education* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1966), p. 40.

10 American Council on Education, *A Guide to Graduate Study* (Washington, D.C.: 3rd Edition, 1965; 4th Edition, 1969).

11 The Heisler mean figures would suggest about 60 new openings per year. If the maximum figures are used, 90, it coincides with the APSA survey estimate of 100.

which will be created by the entry of students admitted during the high admissions era will make new job situations in political science. What could happen would be the movement of trained political scientists into the junior and community colleges, secondary schools and non-academic employment such as private and non-profit policy research or governmental program analysis. This would include the "enrichment" model for higher education now being forecast by Falk and others in the light of tightening academic markets.¹² It raises the question of the adequacy of a "filter-down" or "bumping" process, since oversupply is now being recognized in the secondary teaching field, with the possibility of a "floor" being established below which Ph.D.'s are not welcomed, or will not be satisfied.

Information on the Marketplace

As most of the information on employment in higher education, the results of this exploratory survey should be used with some restraint. One of the side-effects of a slack job market is the lack of attention to its operation, and the kind of information needed to detect change is not highlighted. This survey is just the beginning of a continuing program of survey and analysis by the Association on the manpower needs of political science. As Cartter recently put it, referring to apparent shifts in higher education's need for new doctorates:

Such a dramatic change should also give us pause to reflect upon how little we know about ourselves – how little thought we have given to the development of our educational system, and how inaccurately we have cast our objectives and done our planning. No great powers of intuition or prophecy were required to see that the academic environment was about to change dramatically; all one really had to do – like Al Smith – was to look at the facts and not put the blind eye to the telescope.¹³

12 Charles E. Falk, "Science and Engineering Doctorate Supply and Utilization, 1968-80," *Mosaic*, Spring, 1970, pp. 14-19.

13 Allan M. Cartter, National Conference on Higher Education, March 1970.

14 Allan M. Cartter and Robert L. Farrell, "Academic Labor Market Projections and the Draft," in Joint Economic Committee, *The Economics of Higher Education* (Washington, D.C., 1969), pp. 357-374.

The disagreement and lack of comparability of projections in higher education are not unusual,¹⁴ and this study reveals another set of questions about the projections which emerge from the survey and the figures recently published in the Behavioral and Social Sciences Survey.¹⁵ The National Academy of Sciences data on Ph.D.'s awarded show that the BASS survey understates the supply of Ph.D.'s in political science for the most recent years. The survey reported here asked for information on political scientists entering the market – whether or not the Ph.D. had been awarded – and thus the market entry figures are somewhat higher than simply degrees awarded.

Another lack in information on political science is the propensity of some statistical sources to classify all social sciences in one category. For instance NDEA Fellowships are now approximately one third of the number of such fellowships two years ago, yet the changes this means in political science must be inferred from aggregate figures. Office of Education statistics on the demand for college teachers suffer from the same deficiency. The recent National Research Council study on the academic employment situation, which indicated "unemployment" of 1969 Ph.D.'s in social sciences as .7%, used that same inclusive, thus somewhat uninformative, category.¹⁶

Note on the Survey

The questionnaire used in the APSA survey called for some choices on the part of chairmen which the language of the questionnaire did not define for them. "Ph.D. candidates or new Ph.D.'s seeking academic employment" could be interpreted according to the formal categories of the institution or vary from those who must find a job to those who are "looking around" and not certain of market entry. Asking for candidates "admitted" left open the possibility that admissions and enrollments differ. And those questions that call for estimates of future numbers are obviously just that.

15 Heinz Eulau and James G. March (eds.), *Political Science* (Behavioral and Social Sciences Survey) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 70.

16 *Science Magazine*, "Employment Status of Recent Recipients of Doctorate," May 22, 1970, p. 932.

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Residual differences between market entry and graduate student admissions figures in the APSA survey are assumed to be caused by attrition.

Tabulations were adjusted in Figure 1 for partial information (no response for a year while providing information on another), and for the non-responding institutions in Figures 1 and 2. A continuity model was used to adjust partial information, using comparable data for nearest subsequent year, with 1969-70 as a base since there was complete response information for it. This adjustment builds in a slight static bias. Non-response in Figure 1 was adjusted by projecting from the National Academy of Sciences doctoral survey data, 1960-1966, a factor which (accounting for growth and non-degree market entry), when compared as a possible check, agreed with the proportion of non-responding departments.

These limits on the survey information mean the figures should be used carefully. Since the purpose of the survey, however, was to provide information fairly rapidly on a subject on which almost no data has been available, the value of the survey is that it 1) emphasizes the importance of collecting and distributing such information on the discipline in as complete a form as possible, 2) illustrates several trends affecting supply and demand which converge in the market of any given period, and 3) contains information for establishing some idea of where we are now.

Conclusion

In the face of a great deal of doubt about the direction of the present job market in political science, it may be well to remember that the employment market is cyclic, and there have been other periods when jobs seemed scarce.

In one year during the 1930's, for instance, there were only four openings for teachers of political science in graduate schools in the United States. But there was balance, in that there were also only four new Ph.D.'s, and each was interviewed for each job!¹⁷ The nomi-

nee for President-Elect of the APSA, Heinz Eulau, has written of his entry onto the political science job market.

*In June, 1941, when I was issued my walking papers by the University, properly certified as a Ph.D., there were no teaching jobs to be had – at least none of the kind I might have cared for.*¹⁸

He was voicing a similar reaction to a restricted market situation which illustrates that it may not be the *jobs* that are scarce, but the jobs the individual *expected* to obtain. Thus instead of widespread unemployment in political science, what we are likely to see – and are now seeing – is a widespread readjustment of expectations about the type of jobs with which one will be satisfied. Hans Rosenhaupt, President of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation discussing those trained as scholar-teachers, has said:

*Sooner or later, many will have to accept jobs which, while socially useful and intellectually challenging – and, incidentally, decently paid – do not carry the prestige of academic appointments at the leading institutions.*¹⁹

The prospects for political science are not bleak, but cautionary, and the trends indicated in the survey are problematic enough to suggest that we are just beginning to see the structure of political science as a profession.

18 Heinz Eulau, "The Behavioral Movement in Political Science: A Personal Document," in *Micro-Macro Political Analysis: Accents of Inquiry* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), p. 375.

19 Hans Rosenhaupt, "Are There Too Many Doctors in the House?," Woodrow Wilson Fellowship Newsletter, May, 1970, p. 1, 8.

17 Related by Professor Howard Penniman, Georgetown University.

Appendix

- I. How many doctorate candidates or new Ph.D.'s were (or are) there in your department seeking academic jobs (junior or community colleges, college or university):
- two years ago (jobs beginning Sept., 1968)?
 - last year (jobs beginning Sept., 1969)?
 - this year (jobs beginning Sept., 1970)?
 - next year (jobs beginning Sept., 1971)?
 - in two years (jobs beginning Sept., 1972)?

- II. How many new graduate students did your department admit for:
- this academic year (1969-70)?

How many are you admitting for:

- the coming year (1970-71)?

Of the numbers reported in a and b, what number were admitted to terminal M.A. or non-Ph.D. programs?

- in this academic year (1969-70)?
- for the coming year (1970-71)?

- III. How many new academic colleagues did your department hire on regular appointments:

- for the academic year 1968-69?
- for the academic year 1969-70?

How many are you hiring this year

- for the coming year 1970-71?

- IV. For the same years, how many colleagues did you hire on regular appointments for *new positions* or to fill *old positions vacated* by someone no longer in college teaching? (That is, take the totals listed above in III and subtract the number that were replacements for people still in teaching.)

- for the academic year 1968-69
- for the academic year 1969-70
- for the coming year, 1970-71