The publishing practices of Australian sociology PhD students

Do they achieve outputs in sociology journals?

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In this article, we investigated the publishing practices of Australian sociology PhD students during enrolment. It examines a five-year cohort of PhD completions 2013-17 from sociology departments and interdisciplinary schools of social sciences for all Australian universities. The key question considered is: do sociology PhD students publish in sociology journals? We used the Web of Science (WoS) to analyse disciplinary classification of journals where students' articles were published. By a ratio of 1:10, students' articles mostly appeared in non-sociology journals. We then compared these data with a recent study of new sociology faculty in the United States, who showed a similar diversity in publication patterns beyond recognised sociology journals. These empirical data contribute to debates about the adequacy of the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) framework: is practically technically correct if that can be done in measuring sociology's contribution when a major part of this exists outside conventional output metrics. Formal systems like Scopus and WoS provide extensive sets of data for comparing research outputs including by disciplinary classification; these journal indexes of research articles are commonly taken as a basic measure of research quality by universities and ERA. WoS journal disciplinary classification provided a useful basis of comparison with Warren's data on sociology in the US.

Keywords: sociology, sociology journals, PhD students, publishing

Introduction

Australian sociology doctoral students represent the newest cohort of academics and researchers in the discipline and the future of its workforce. Their sociological training during enrolment and the influence of supervisors and academic programs and departments would suggest that, except for specialised instances, the output of their research would appear mostly in sociology and related journals. The reality is, however, much more complicated. Factors such as the push to interdisciplinarity, the constant merging and re-arranging of social science organisational units, and the rebundling of academic staff and research clusters, create a range of consequences. At the university level, managerial focus on the organisation-wide impact of research that brings in funding accords selective attention to disciplinary contribution. This works to the disadvantage of sociology's broad combination of theoretical and empirical skills.

Within this contemporary Australian academic milieu, the present article reports findings about the journal publication practices of the most recent cohort of Australian sociology PhD students. The focus here is across all Australian

universities and all sociology PhD completions within main sociology teaching organisational units (i.e., Schools of Social Sciences or Sociology Departments). We have examined PhD completions with a significant component of sociology as defined by Fields of Research (FoR) codes (ABS, 2008) that are outside these organisational units in other schools and research centres within universities, but these are not included in the analysis presented here.

The data described in this article show that, rather than a coherent and disciplinary specific publishing program, these recent sociology PhD completers have published in a wide range of journals, as described below. For a fuller description of the method of selection of PhDs, see Rajčan and Burns (2020). Personal motivation and expectations that led to this diversity of publication outlets could be usefully investigated in further qualitative research projects such as interviewing individual participants or using focus groups to explore their experience. This article presents several confirmatory bodies of evidence about the pattern of sociology PhD students in Australia publishing well beyond boundaries of formally recognised sociology disciplinary journals. Several well-known avenues of journal disciplinary identification, such as 2018 Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) journal list (ERA, 2020a) or Web of Science (WoS) journal classification, invite a comparative consciousness outside sociology even though the focus here is on one discipline.

For instance, contemporary comparative evidence from the United States is brought into the discussion and provides further assessment of this pattern of doctoral journal publication. Again, the statements of academic leaders in The Australian Sociology Association (TASA) over several years provide a series of insights into their responses to the steadily changing academic publishing environment in the Australian and global tertiary sectors. These comparisons help contextualise and draw out implications of the current generation of PhD students' publication activity.

Theoretical underpinnings to understand these data

Disciplinary introspection in sociology ranges from positive to negative (Holmwood, 2010; Rosenfeld, 2010; Savage, 2010). An optimistic view is that the discipline is well embedded in the academy. There are scores of new PhDs being completed nationally across Australia each year, interdisciplinary involvement in other fields is high and, currently, there is even renewed interest and some formation of sociology organisational units in the higher status Australian premier Group of Eight universities (Go8). Nationally, from our research it appears that approximately half of sociology PhDs are gained within the Go8 and half within the other universities. A more pessimistic view sees constant restructuring and shrinking of academic staff numbers – long before COVID-19 – amalgamation into anodyne social science clusters with names like 'global studies' or 'social inquiry,' the distorting pressure of science-oriented measurement of outputs in ERA and sometimes a perception of hostility to critiques of neoliberal governance in universities.

In recent work we explored the tension between contrasting processes evident in discussions about the dangers and opportunities for sociology within the contemporary academy. We called the two ends of this polarity the 'invisibilisation' of sociology and the 'sociologification' of the academy. The first of these, invisibilisation, is the significant disappearance of sociology's institutional profile within Australian universities. First, there is the reduction or elimination of 'sociology' in identifiable labels and titles across universities. Second, the work of sociologists contributing to the research enterprise is easily attributed elsewhere in output metrics. Third, poor accessibility of links to find out about sociology PhD completions and sociology teaching and research programs on university websites. This information is often buried in webpages presenting information about interdisciplinary social science programs or schools. Collectively, these pressures generate disciplinary invisibilisation, a problem given the importance of sociology to the social sciences more generally.

At the other end of the polarity, the second of these concepts is the contrasting idea of the spread of sociology into sub-specialty areas and into other disciplines and organisational units across the university through either personnel, ideas or practices. We have dubbed this process 'sociologification'. In the present article we consider it in relation to these recent sociology PhD completions. The significance of this trend in how other professions and disciplines apply sociological concepts and methods to those fields is not explored here though it supports the wider interpretation of how sociologification operates. As we shall see, within the idea of sociologification, it is possible to include the tendency of sociology PhD students and academics to publish across established disciplinary boundaries and therefore to contribute to other disciplines' outputs. Different commentators view these trends in either a positive light as ensuring the future of sociology while others view this negatively as part of the erosion of the discipline.

These contrasting abstract trends find points of specification in two features of the contemporary university. The first of these is the increasing use of metrics to measure research outputs and other aspects of university life. The second is the repositioning of management in today's corporate universities in their primary relationship to government funding and the desire to manage staff closely. These two elements are important parts of what is often termed neoliberalisation, Americanisation or corporatisation of the Australian

university system (Connell, 2013; Murphy, 2015). In this article we largely avoid engaging in the analysis of the politics around these macro processes. However, there are clear connections between these and efforts of senior university managers to exert much tighter controls on the productivity of their institutions and staff and the intersection of these efforts with technological advances enabling precise and pervasive measurement of many aspects of research activity (Beer, 2016; Feldman & Sandoval, 2018; Kelly & Burrows, 2012; Possamai & Long, 2020).

The aim of managing postgraduate units within universities is to train and develop PhD students to be research productive for their own careers and to contribute to institutions' research outputs. Doctoral students' socialisation into research through PhD training is a different experience to even a decade ago, let alone further back in time. The development of ERA and other measures appears to have permanently changed expectations of research activity (e.g., Warren, 2019).

Method

In Australia for the years 2013-17 we identified 305 PhD theses completed in the field of sociology within sociology departments or interdisciplinary schools of social sciences. Three universities did not take part in the study, and we estimate that if these 'missing' theses were included, this might bring the total to an overall number of completions of around 330-340. During enrolment, the identified students published 361 articles, plus book chapters, a total of 443 research outputs, not counting the theses. The calculation of these figures allows a period at the end of the formal completion of the thesis itself, described in Rajčan and Burns (2020), but does not include publishing activities in post-doctoral or new employment situations.

To explore the dispersal of sociology publications of this cohort of sociology PhD students, we used three recognised tertiary sector quantitative measures and one qualitative measure. First, WoS is one of two global citation databases. Its Master Journal List is used world-wide to measure and compare research outputs across all academic disciplines. For journals to be included in the WoS list certain quality standards have to be met and the list provides information about journal disciplinary classification. The WoS data enables comparison with data from Warren's (2019) United States study. Second, the ERA initiative within the Australian Research Council was established in 2008 to cover all tertiary institutions; WoS was the citation provider for the 2018 ERA round. Its journal list classifies academic journals according to discipline. Third, since 2008, Australia and New Zealand have used a shared disciplinary classification system, Fields of Research (FoR), with the ability to distinguish overlapping disciplinary boundaries by assigning numeric codes and subcodes (ABS, 2008). Fourth, a valuable source of insight into the current publication practices of the sociology discipline in the period these PhD students have been enrolled, is commentary by Australian sociology discipline leaders. We analysed the in-house Nexus newsletter of TASA for 2011-15, particularly the presidential addresses and special sections on ERA. This information is useful in interpreting the quantitative measures. These four ways of measuring the spread of sociology outputs in this cohort of recent sociology PhDs speak to the tension between invisibilisation and sociologification.

Measuring and comparing the spread of sociology PhD students' outputs

The widespread nature of Australian sociology PhD student publications across many different journals provides one way of assessing the presence of sociology in the academy. Our research into publication patterns of Australian sociology PhDs is considered, in this section, as one part of extending the assessment of sociology's disciplinary presence and position within the Australian academy.

From the cohort of students completing an Australian sociology PhD (n=305) 2013-17, 156 students achieved 361 articles in 279 journals. Overall, 186 journals out of these 279 were indexed in WoS (66.7 per cent). In trying to understand the disciplinary focus of this publishing pattern, only 22 of the 186 journals (11.8 per cent) were categorised as 'Sociology' according to the WoS rubrics. The remainder of the journals (n=164) were categorised either as 'multidisciplinary' or as journals in other disciplines. 122 out of 156 students producing articles did so in WoS journals achieving 254 journal articles. Of these only 46 (18.1 per cent) were in sociology classified journals and 208 (81.9 per cent) appeared in other academic disciplinary outlets.

Table 1 summarises the evidence from our five-year cohort (2013-17) of Australian sociology doctoral students' publication patterns in terms of WoS journal disciplinary categories.

Table 1: Publishing practices of Australian sociology PhD students Web of Science

Category	*Sociology*	*Non-sociology**	*Both*		*Total*
			Sociology	*Non-sociology**	
Journals	22	164	N/A	N/A	186
Students	9	89	24		122
Articles	13	160	33	48	254

**a) multidisciplinary journals or b) journals in other disciplines*

This diversity of engagement by our cohort of doctoral sociologists demonstrates some surprising, but presumably productive, associations with other disciplines. Several dozen WoS journal categories outside sociology include, for example, limnology, agriculture, clinical medicine, ergonomics, forestry, hospitality, leisure and many others. The supporting nature of sociology's contribution is the additional value that a sociological perspective added to another field in the preparation of each of these articles. While valuable in itself, this contribution often does not appear explicitly. The earlier discussion of the tension between invisibilisation and sociologification of the discipline is illustrated in this example: at the same time that it is contributing to the wider academic project the evidence of that contribution is often subsumed in crediting the research output to the other field.

In Figure 1 Warren's (2019) data shows that even in the US newly appointed assistant and associate professors at top sociology departments also publish more than half of their research outputs outside formally recognised sociology outlets. Warren applied a similar methodology to the present study, using the WoS data (Journal Citation Reports-JCR) to analyse publishing practices.

Some explanation about the different samples in Figure 1 helps understand the differences within the wider trend towards more academic publication. Currently in the United States, among academics working as sociologists, most articles are produced in non-sociology journals, as defined by WoS. This trend is reflected in our data for Australia. Several factors influence the differences in the means between the enrolled Australian PhD students and the United States academics. First, the American cohort are newly established sociology career academics. Second, a number of them may have spent a gap year in post-doctoral writing. Third, there are national differences in the importance of publishing between the two countries and many Australian sociology departments are still ambivalent about the desirability of publishing during PhD enrolment (Hatch & Skipper, 2016). Fourth, Warren's data are from the top 21 United States sociology departments in contrast to our cohort which includes all sociology PhD completions from all Australian universities. Table 1 and Figure 1 show the diversity of publishing across the established disciplinary boundaries when looking at both the number of journal outlets and the number of journal articles.

Warren makes the additional point from his data that the number of outputs per academic has increased considerably across a generation of academics. We do not assemble data here to test whether that pattern exists in Australia, but it seems likely that the pressure to publish in Australia is at least in the same direction, in part fuelled by the advent of the ERA and a tighter monitoring of research productivity against global standards. Warren provides evidence of United States sociology becoming much more diversified in where its younger academics publish. He offers several overlapping explanations for this shift, including technological change, but particularly the need of universities, especially those funded publicly, to bring in research monies, given financial pressures from government restraints on funding. By collaborating in teams, institutes or research clusters – as well as relocation into other fields as we noted in the first finding of the section above – sociologists find productive ways to deploy their skills and sociological knowledge. Outputs from this work, however, frequently appear in WoS categories other than sociology implying they have been achieved outside sociology. The success of this work meets the needs of the institution but may reduce recognition of the contribution that sociology as a discipline is making to university research outcomes on various measures. The sociologification – the spread of sociology to other fields – seen in the doctoral publishing patterns is parallel with the Australian discipline generally, but in the early ERA research rankings this diversity worked against sociology, a matter of sustained concern for the discipline's peak body TASA.

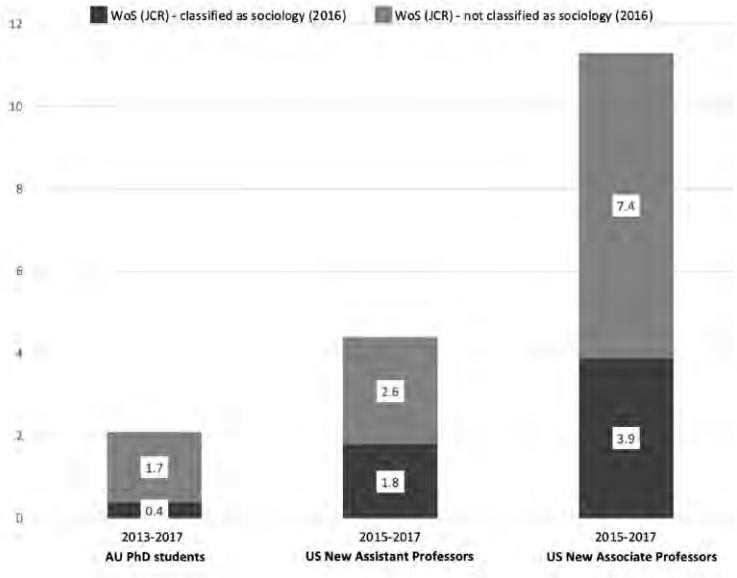

Figure 1. Mean output comparison (Australia-United States) of journal articles by destination and spread between sociology and non-sociology outlets

Advent of ERA and commentary of sociology academic leaders

A third strategy in assessing the sociology PhD publication data of this cohort is to understand the context in which these students worked. This decade has seen the establishment in

Australian academia of the ERA and Engagement and Impact (EI) processes to distribute research funding according to the newly established metrics.

> ERA evaluates the quality of university research. EI assesses the engagement and impact of university research. Both ERA and EI are based on the principle that transparent assessment and reporting of university performance provides incentives to universities to improve research quality, engagement and impact. The comprehensive and fine-grained information from ERA and EI assessments provides a valuable resource for universities to use in their strategic planning and research management, and for Government to use to inform research policy. (ERA, 2020b, pp. 5-6)

Significant internal processes of debate, adjustment and partial reconciliation to the new managerial and audit regimes ensued within TASA. In this section a window on this process is provided through sociology leaders' statements in the pages of the TASA newsletter, Nexus.

In 2011 then TASA president King, stated that 'the very nature of our discipline is being challenged by the inception of ERA rankings' (TASA, 2011, p. 1). Part of the problem was that, at the advent of the ERA process over a decade ago, sociology appeared in a poor light because the ERA system did not capture its diversity of outputs. But this was not simply because of the measurement process, there were internal disciplinary factors as well. As then TASA's Vice-President Lindsay shows, several influences positioned sociology in Australia at 'below world standard' in 2010's first ERA round (TASA, 2011, p. 17). Further, Lindsay's comments here show that the cohort of PhD students that we studied were publishing in a broadly similar pattern to Australian sociology academics in the spread and range of journal outlets.

> Why did the social sciences do so poorly? The social science disciplines are large which makes it more difficult to score a higher average (the denominator is too large) and there is disagreement among ourselves about what constitutes quality in terms of publications. Moreover, our publication outlets are spread across disciplines – we publish in public health, education and multi-disciplinary journals, perhaps spreading ourselves too thinly. Sociology is a diverse discipline and researchers publish in a variety of outlets including those coded as sociology, education, public health and in specialist area journals – we welcome the development of measures that take multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary work into account. (TASA, 2011, p. 17)

Another response to the 2010 ERA exercise presented on behalf of sociologists from Charles Sturt University reflected similar problems for the discipline:

> [T]he two main problems with the ERA are (a) the seemingly arbitrary ranking of many journals; and (b) the diversity of our discipline which creates challenges in publishing only in journals with sociology FoR. There is also the difficulty of publications arising from multi-disciplinary research teams that can end up in a whole range of journals... With leading research institutes, such as the Institute for Land, Water and Society, at CSU encouraging multi- and trans-disciplinary research, many communities and disciplines stand to benefit greatly from the input sociologists can bring to interdisciplinary research teams, as well as the multidisciplinary courses we teach into. An ERA process which fails to consider the diversity of contributions sociologists can make, nationally and internationally, risks limiting the impact and pursuits of Australian sociologists in the long term if we are overly preoccupied with measuring our worth and choosing future research endeavours using such reporting mechanisms. (TASA, 2011, p. 20)

Even after the second ERA round in 2012, in which Australian sociology nationally again failed to score well (i.e., being ranked 'below world standard'), the consequences of the new measurements for the discipline were only just starting to become apparent. Fozdar, a sociology discipline leader (TASA, 2013, p. 33) stated:

> FoR of journals – the Field of Research, to which each journal is coded, is very important. While the ARC allowed, in the last round, individuals to argue that their article fits more accurately under a code different from the one the journal has been coded for, it seems most universities did not really make those arguments on behalf of individuals. The result is that sociologists' work may be lost to the various sociology FoRs (my own and colleagues' work has been coded as cultural studies, demographics, anthropology, law, political science, policy studies, etc.). While we could approach this generously, supporting our colleagues in other disciplines, the practical effects of the ERA mean that our discipline group may be disadvantaged if too much of our work ends up building other disciplines' outputs. Eventually research monies will be distributed within universities according to the rank achieved in the ERA, thus the more our work crosses into other disciplinary territory (journals) the less money our discipline stands to secure. Yes, this militates against interdisciplinary work, but that is the system we are working within. So, check the FoR code of the journal before sending your papers (TASA, 2013, p. 33).

Other factors supporting a more recent improvement in sociology's ERA ranking have been raised but go beyond the data presented here. Possible explanations include: some change in the ERA process that better recognises the diversity of sociologists' publishing practices; fewer universities submitting under sociology, lessening the impact on the mean; and university administrators' choice of allocation of outputs to FoR codes; deliberate strategising that Fozdar pointed to; and sociologists themselves adapting and aiming to publish in more positively sanctioned journals.

Holmwood's (2010) concept of sociology as an exporter discipline is relevant here to the discussion of the very wide

spread of journals that are the destination of Australian sociology PhD writing efforts. The concept helps illuminate the fact that a high proportion of journals in which this cohort of new sociologists publish are outside of what might be called 'core sociology journals' at least as this is measured by WoS. As Fozdar noted above, the success of outputs in these other places does not visibly benefit sociology as a discipline when formal output discipline classifications are applied. There is a considerable variability, however, in how different universities go about such allocation for ERA purposes. Lyle (2016, p. 1170) noted in commenting on Holmwood:

> [Sociology's] rich theoretical and methodological resources are drawn upon by other disciplines. Holmwood argues that the evaluation of research outputs is problematic for exporter subjects – with their resources on loan, their academic output is at risk of being subsumed by other disciplines. Holmwood suggests that sociology is particularly vulnerable to this risk because of its ambiguity as a discipline. Sociology is a broad and varied discipline, with a lack of internal coherence that enables other disciplines to redefine sociological subjects as their own.

This disciplinary phenomenon in sociology is expressed as core and frontier by Campbell (2019): 'frontier' meaning specialisms and sub-specialities within the larger enterprise, such as sociology of health; and 'core' meaning near universally read disciplinary texts and authoritative journals, addressing central theoretical questions of the discipline. A parallel might be drawn between Holmwood's (2010) idea of sociology as an exporter discipline with Campbell's idea of a contributory shift beyond the discipline. For Campbell the 'centre of gravity' of sociology has moved to the frontiers from the centre with sociologists tending to read and publish in their specialty rather than addressing common or central questions of the discipline. There is, however, a strong nostalgia or 'paradise lost' claim here suggesting that mid-century western British or American sociology was the benchmark, forgetting the sexism, colonialism and racism amongst other deficiencies of sociology and academia in that era that nobody would want to go back to as 'the core'. In one way, Campbell's comments acknowledge the differentiation and specialisation of the discipline of sociology as it has expanded within a growing academy documented by Abbott (1988) when 'publish or perish' was beginning to accelerate.

Table 2. ERA 2010-18 results for FoR-1608 sociology

	2010	*2012*	*2015*	*2018*	*Mean*
Universities submitting under 1608-sociology	34	29	27	28	
Mean ERA score: Go8	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.25	3.81
Mean ERA score: non-Go8	2.03	2.66	3.0	3.4	2.77
Mean ERA score overall: Go8+non-Go8	2.38	2.89	3.29	3.64	3.05

This is consistent with the evidence of Table 1 and Figure 1 for current sociology doctoral students. It is interesting that diversity of publication is also seen in Warren's United States data used for comparison, showing empirically greater output spread across the wide non-core sociological journal domain.

As the tertiary sector has grown, there are more academics, students, research projects and journal outlets. Rather than seeing this as a dilution or loss, it is possible to read the same data in a more positive way, to say that this opening of the discipline provides space for additional voices and published scholarship that had not previously been possible. In institutional terms, this uncomfortably means the politics of disciplinary and departmental formation and restructuring continue in every university across Australia; this is the contemporary reality. Fozdar, above, mentioned several disciplinary formations adjacent to sociology; these wax and wane over time. Pressures from organisational structures rather than disciplinary knowledge/content are variously constituted from the contributions of individual sociologists and departments, the focus of TASA, the managerial logics of individual universities for control and outputs, and the national settings of government funding and priorities for admission or prioritised qualifications.

The experience of sociology in this competitive disciplinary division of expert labour has some points of similarity with other disciplines in the ERA transition. In Table 2 the average sociology ERA disciplinary ranking was low in the initial rounds in 2010 and 2012, only achieving 'world ranking' in 2015 and 2018 (on a scale of 1 to 5). As this discussion has shown, substantial debates within the discipline canvassed many aspects of the causes and the possible solutions for sociology appearing to underperform.

Other disciplines also experienced difficulties in transitioning to the new ERA system. Crowe and Watt (2016), focusing on psychology in Australia, described a similar trajectory of that discipline being below world ranking before 2015. As a citation-based discipline, psychology occupies a different place on the metrics compared to sociology as a peer-reviewed discipline. Even so, the two disciplines achieved quite similar rankings in the first two ERA rounds. Whereas sociology expressed concern about its 'service' function exporting expertise, Crowe and Watt (2016) did not invoke a similar reason for being 'below world ranking' in psychology. They saw the citation-based system meant psychology's low citation rate relative to STEM sciences placed their discipline at a disadvantage. Three takeaways from their analysis of psychology also apply to sociology. First, the

metrics, even when improving do not necessarily reflect the overall quality of research outputs. Second, the necessary discretion ERA grants universities in allocating outputs to FoR codes also provides space for opportunistic or 'strategic' gerrymandering to maximise selected ERA scores. Third, larger institutions have correspondingly larger numbers of outputs to manoeuvre and exploit their size, and this warrants investigation in interpreting differences between Go8 and non-Go8 universities, as one obvious example. Fourth, other less tangible factors (esteem, research income etc.) are not transparently reported by ERA so cannot be adequately judged for individual institutions. Each of these points also inevitably influences where sociologists and sociology PhD students publish.

In a different field, Possamai and Long (2020) described the position of Religion and Society (FoR code 2204) as a peer-reviewed discipline and provided a detailed analysis comparing ERA scores of peer-reviewed and citation disciplines. For the latest 2018 ERA (2020a) round they found that when the scores of individual disciplines were averaged, collectively, peer-reviewed disciplines in Australia were ranked at 'world standard' (i.e., 3/5), compared to citation disciplines being ranked at 'above the world standard' (i.e., 4/5). These authors discuss possible reasons for this discrepancy. First, there could be harsher assessments by peer-review disciplines than those evaluated by citation metrics. Second, in the alternative, their further analysis could suggest that there is a systemic bias towards sciences in the ERA discipline rankings. These concerns mirror some of the statements made by Australian sociology academic leaders cited above. Even with disciplinary variations across the social sciences and humanities, the size of sociology as a discipline and its service function do not protect it from these two issues.

Conclusion

This article considered the spread of Australian sociology PhD publications across a wide variety of destination journals. Contextualising the data in terms of interpreting the causes and effects of this diversity was supported though a brief comparison with Warren's data in the United States where he examined newer sociology academics' surprisingly diverse spread of research outputs. The latter parts of the results and discussion returned the conversation to Australia and the turning point of ERA metrics being introduced and applied to sociology and other disciplines nationally. The deleterious effects for sociology were recognised at an early stage by sociology leaders cited here. Sociology academics have had to adjust their research practice in light of these measurements. Sociology's location in non-sociology environments, while beneficial in multiple ways, nevertheless has at least two disadvantages for the discipline. The first of these is achieving appropriate recognition and the second is in facing the pressures of funding, both direct and indirect.

In terms of the spread of sociology publications presenting Australian sociology research outputs, our primary interest in this article, these data do not address the long historical trend of increasing publication and increasing diversity. We note the pattern in Warren's United States data, increasing and more diverse production, and the confirmatory evidence in the emerging academic cohort considered in Australia. The continuing resistance or disinclination by some supervisors to encourage sociology students to actively publish during their PhD enrolment means a partial change rather than a more substantial change in practice under the new ERA system.

The information presented here suggests multiple ways that sociology is being collegial and useful across the breadth of disciplines within Australian universities. This contribution is, however, under-recognised in boosting university outputs, and the consequences might mean inadequate or redirected funding. If the discipline significantly disappears from view, accessing this contribution will diminish further across the university, rather than the discipline being able to maintain its research activity and theoretically benefit other fields. The partially recognised contribution in FoR codes seen in PhD completions in other schools and faculties shows that it is possible to provide some measure of contribution by sociology. To do this adequately requires changes not just in the software systems, but more consistent and complete school-level and central university procedures and record keeping. Each of these measures locates broader issues for the profession of sociology in the dispersed publishing practices of both sociology academics and PhD students beyond disciplinary outlets.

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