

Astin H S. *The woman doctorate in America: origins, career, and family.*
New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969. 196 p.
[Institute for the Study of Human Problems, Stanford University, CA]

The book deals with issues of career development among highly educated women. It examines the labor force participation of women who hold doctorate degrees and assesses the factors that inhibit or facilitate such participation. It explores such key issues as the extent to which marriage and children may act as career barriers and whether there are hiring practices and promotion policies that inhibit women's career progress. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI®)* indicates that this book has been cited in over 165 publications since 1969.]

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The story behind this project begins in the summer of 1965. We had just moved to Washington, DC, from Chicago. As the wife of a professional, I left my job in Chicago and followed my husband's career move to Washington. I had no job. I looked for employment at the local universities but had no luck because I had not published. (I had one publication to my name.) However, I was offered two positions as a research associate. I chose one of them. It was a staff research position with the Commission on Human Resources and Higher Education at the National Academy of Sciences.

As the only woman professional among 15 professional staff and commission members, I was distressed that the commission's deliberations about talent development did not deal with the utilization of women's talents. I suggested that there was a need to conduct studies on women to assess some of the issues surrounding their talent development and utilization. I was given the go-ahead and was provided with support to undertake re-

search on these issues. The basic questions that led to the study described in the book were: Is graduate education wasted on women? Do women choose to become mothers and housewives rather than to work at their professions? What are the barriers to high-level talent development and utilization among women? At that time, no good information on these questions was available, and myths abounded about how high-level training was being "wasted" on women.

The study surveyed all women (about 2,000) who had received doctorates in the US during 1957 and 1958. The findings dispelled a number of myths: more than 90 percent of the women were in the labor force and only 25 percent had ever interrupted their careers, usually for just a short period of time. At the same time, the study identified and documented various kinds of discrimination experienced by these women. In summary, this study represented the first national assessment that documented the contributions of women doctorates as well as the problems and barriers they face.

The findings enabled me to formulate a number of policy recommendations designed to facilitate women's career progress. These recommendations included suggestions for encouraging women to enter nontraditional careers, setting up part-time training and employment opportunities, adjusting tax laws, establishing more and better day-care centers, and abolishing differential pay scales for men and women. I believe that these findings and recommendations contributed significantly to the establishment of Affirmative Action regulations and implementation guidelines.

I am especially pleased that the study still continues to have an impact on policy nearly 20 years after its inception. This was my first major study, and it launched a research career that continues even today to focus on problems of career development and equity.¹⁻⁷

The book has been cited extensively for at least three reasons: it was the first empirical study of its kind, its publication coincided with the advent of the Women's Movement, and it has provided the background for subsequent research and scholarship in the area of women's studies.

- 1 Astin H S. Factors associated with the participation of women doctorates in the labor force. *Pers Guidance J* 46:240-6, 1967
- 2 -----, Stability and change in the career plans of ninth grade girls. *Pers Guidance J* 46:961-6, 1968
- 3 -----, Career development of girls during the high school years. *J Couns Psychol.* 15:536-40, 1968. (Cited 25 times)
- 4 Astin H S & Bayer A E. Pervasive sex differences in the academic reward system: scholarship, marriage and what else? (Lewis D R & Becker W E, Jr., eds.) *Academic rewards in higher education* Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1979 p 211-29
- 5 Astin H S. The meaning of work in women's lives: a sociopsychological model of career choice and work behavior. *Couns Psychol* 12:117-26, 1984
- 6 -----, Academic scholarship and its rewards (Maehr M L & Steinkamp M W, eds.) *Advances in motivation and achievement: women in science* Greenwich, CT JAI Press, 1984, p. 259-79.
- 7 Astin H S & Davis D. Research productivity across the life and career cycles: facilitators and barriers for women. (Fox M F, ed.) *Scholarly writing and publishing issues, problems, and solutions.* Boulder, CO Westview Press, 1985 p 147-59