
Minding the Gap: Length of precarious employment increasing for tenure-track linguists over time

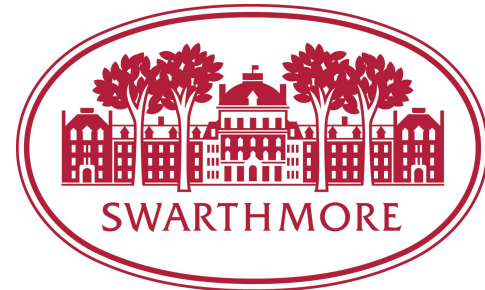
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*...please mind the gap
between train(ing)
and platform...*

MIND THE GAP

Motivations

- Public discourses indicate a sense that the academy is in trouble
- Casualization of academic employment, neoliberal “administrative solutions,” reduction of tenure lines, particularly in the humanities
- Epistemic injustice & exclusion
- A new groundswell of simultaneous AI utopianism & dystopianism

Motivation: Adjunctification of academic teaching

Are these concerns really true? Yes! And it's important to confirm it.

- 4.5M people aged >25 have PhD in the US; doubled in two decades ([Census Bureau 2018](#))
- 189,692 professors, 162,095 associate professors, 166,543 assistant professors, 96,627 instructors, 44,670 lecturers, and 164,720 other full-time faculty ([NCES 2021](#))

How many people get a PhD in linguistics every year? (A lot!)

- Since 1966, **10,134** linguistics PhDs were awarded worldwide ([LSA 2019](#))
- Over 50 years, US full time faculty fell 77.8% → 54.5% ([NCES 2020](#))
- % full time faculty with tenure is falling each year ([NCES 2019](#))
- See also: [Hill & Klockslem 2021](#), AAUP 2020, L.A. Times Editorial Board 2021
- Causes are economic and ideological ([Newfield 2011](#), [Childress 2019](#))
- With further ✨**enshittification** ✨ since the pandemic began

Motivation: Discrimination

- Sex ([Dyer 2004](#))
- Motherhood ([Moors et al. 2022](#))
- Race & gender ([Ward & Hall 2022](#), [Flores 2023](#))
- “Cultural taxation”, the expectation that gender minorities, women (esp. WOC) do more service ([Guillaume & Apodaca 2020](#), [Zambrana et al. 2023](#)) taking time away from dossier big ticket items
- Signed languages ([Hochgesang 2019](#), [Henner and Robinson 2021](#))
- Biased course evals ([Hefferman 2021](#))

Motivation: Epistemic injustice

- Behavior in contexts related to knowledge production that excludes, silences, or ignores the contributions of certain people, often those historically excluded (Dotson 2012, Settles et al. 2022).
- Who determines the direction of the discipline of linguistics?
([Charity Hudley & Flores 2022](#))
- Liberatory research directions discouraged by superiors (Lanehart 2021, Charity Hudley & Flores 2022)
- Citational injustice ([Citational Justice Collective 2022](#))

Response: Studying institutions to work for change

- Research that tests pervasive ideologies sometimes produces “obvious” results, but that is important too!
- Create awareness where there might not have been
- Arm colleagues who are working for change with citations and data and graphs (and fervor!) to aid in their advocacy

Linguistics job placements

Haugen, et al. (to appear)

- Haugen, Margaritis & Calvo (“A Snapshot of Academic Job Placements in Linguistics in the US and Canada”), 2019 data
- Investigated unequal distribution of the **733** PhD graduates in tenure-stream jobs in the **63** standalone Linguistics departments at PhD-granting Institutions (**PGIs**) in the U.S. and Canada

Haugen, et al. (to appear)

Some of their findings include:

- In 2019, **12%** of full-time permanent positions were occupied by graduates of **1** department (MIT), **25%** were graduates of **3** schools (MIT, UMass, Berkeley), and **50%** percent graduated from just **10** departments
- **Fully 36%** have placed **zero** (5/63) or **one** (18/63) current tenure-stream faculty member in Linguistics PGIs
- Demonstrating the presence of deeply hierarchical hiring patterns (cf. [Clauset et al. 2015](#))

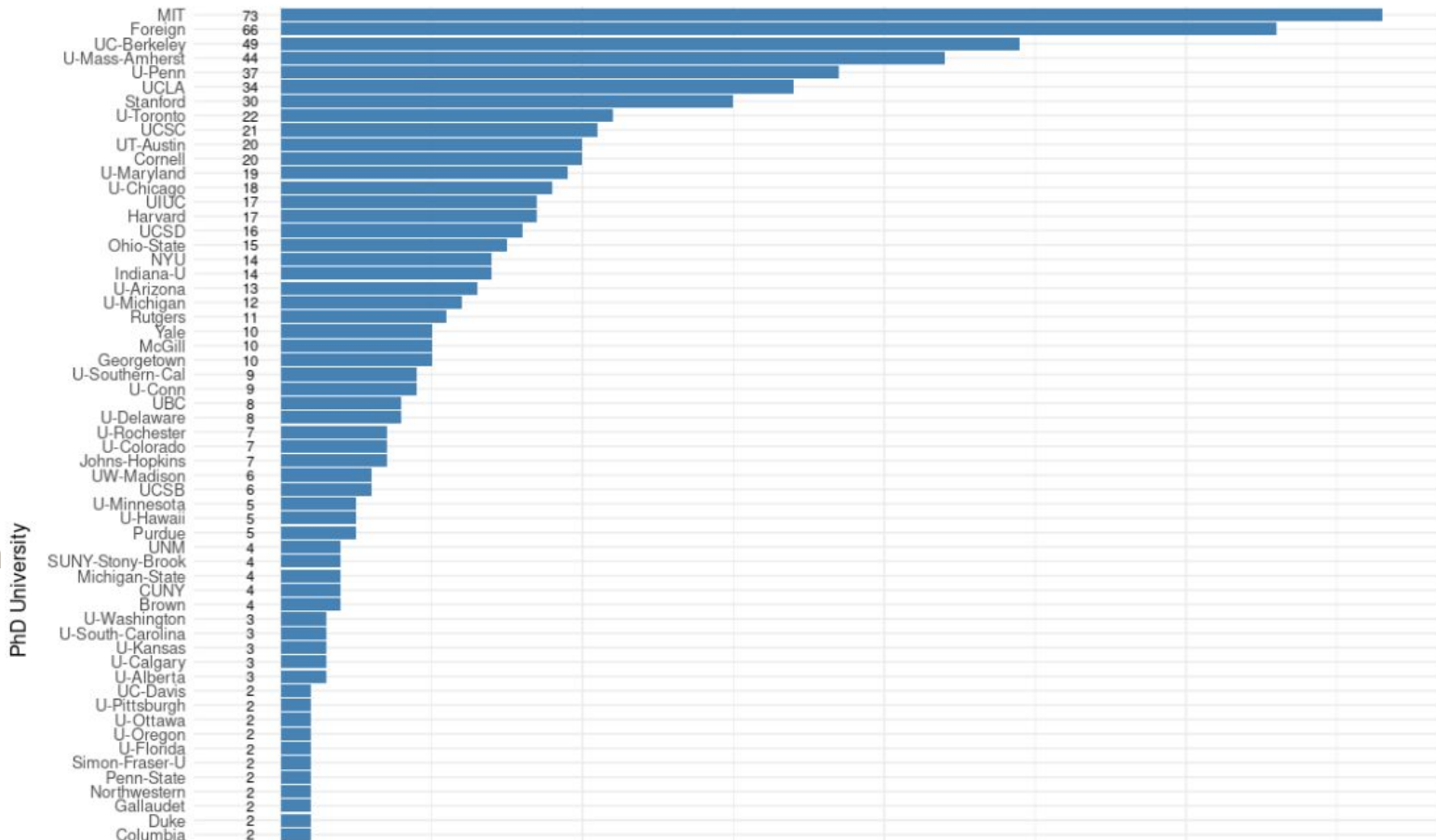
Our contribution: Expanding the historical perspective

- **Documentation:** Bring data to bear to confirm or complicate “common-sense” observations about hiring trends in linguistics and beyond
- **Intervention:** Asking about trends over time allows us to discover and identify potential sources of shifts, with the goal of enacting change → Swarthmore has already begun using this research to advocate for more tenure lines!
- Take this data to an Administration Near You!
- Argue for the **necessity to collect** this type of data

Replicating portions of Haugen et al. for 2023 (N=775)

Top 10

- 9.4% MIT
- 6.3% Berkeley
- 5.7% UMass
- 4.8% Penn
- 4.4% UCLA
- 3.9% Stanford
- 2.8% Toronto
- 2.7% UCSC
- 2.6% UT Austin
- 2.6% Cornell
- = 45.2%



Expanding the dataset

How we built on Haugen et al.

- **Expanding the dataset diachronically**
 - Surveying the same 63 departments' (52 U.S., 11 Canada) faculty positions in Linguistics departments
 - Tracking employment trajectories of tenure-track and tenured professors from PhD to current position
 - Covering tenure-track hires publicly announced as of the end of academic year 2022-2023 and extending back as far as possible with publicly available data
- **Adding more categories to the datasheet**
 - Details on job promotion, data sources, and possible demographics

Coding categories

Categories from Haugen et al.:

- **Name**
- **AcademicRank** - Professor, associate professor, or assistant professor
- **Year** of PhD completion
- **DestU** - Destination university, i.e. where they were hired after PhD
- **Gender***

Categories added after Haugen et al.:

- **JobStart** - Year they began working in that position
- **JobEnd** - Year they stopped working in that position
- **JobEnd2**- Reason for job change
- **JobSequence** - Number that corresponds to their current position out of their total number of faculty positions
- **DataSource**
- **LSADirectory**
- **Ethnicity***
- **Subfield***
- **Carnegie Classification***

Coding categories: Gender, Ethnicity, Subfield, Carnegie Class

Some categories were more difficult to code for

- Lack of available data
- Categories including:
 - Gender
 - Originally in Haugen et al. dataset
 - Renamed to InferredGender in our expansion
 - Ethnicity
 - Very scarce results using LSA member directory
 - Subfield
 - Difficult to compartmentalize
 - Carnegie Classification (= R1, R2, etc)
 - Uninformative results based on university ranking

Methodology of data collection

- All publicly available online data
 - University faculty websites, personal websites, ResearchGate, LinkedIn, Orcid, etc.
- Demographic information collected from LSA's opt-in directory
- Utilizing Internet Archive's WayBack Machine to systematically scan through older versions of linguistics department websites
 - Often does not extend past ~5 years
 - Some department sites go all the way back to 2000

Step-by-step building on Haugen et al.

1. Phase 1: Filling in Haugen et al
 - a. Internet scouring for data focusing on JobStart, JobEnd, JobSeq, and AcademicRank
 - b. Adding rows for each new promotion and position change - DataSource for CVs
2. Phase 1.5: Incomplete rows
 - a. Attempting to fill in rows with ? values
3. Phase 2: Back-filling: Retired or deceased faculty
 - a. Adding professors from emeritx and in memoriam pages
 - b. Same school set and columns/categories as Phase 1
4. Phase 2: Forward-filling
 - a. Same institutions as Phase 1
 - b. Faculty hired since Haugen et. al (since 2019)
 - c. Faculty found through the Wayback Machine

Difficulties that arose

- Lack of consistent data reporting
 - Out-of-date departmental and personal webpages, etc.
 - Lack of CVs published online (esp. senior faculty members)
- Inconsistencies in CVs versus university faculty or personal webpages
- Lack of detail in the CVs we could find
 - Big holes in the data for
 - Year of promotion
 - Previous positions

A view of our spreadsheet

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
1	Sort_ID	Status	Name	InferredGender	Ethnicity	LSADirect	AcademicRank	SourceU	JobStart	JobEnd	JobEnv	JobSeq	regieClass	DataSource	YearPhD	DestU	Department	DeptSubfield	ForeignS
4	p0504	I	Narasimhan, Bhuvana	F	Not public	https://www	Assistant	Boston U	unk	2008	P	?	R1	CV	1998	?	Linguistics	Cognitive scienc	n/a
5	p0504	C	Narasimhan, Bhuvana	F	Not public	https://www	Associate	Boston U	2008	current	C		1 R1	CV	1998	U Colorado	Linguistics	Cognitive scienc	n/a
6	p0316	C	Hestvik, Arild	M	Not found	n/a	Professor	Brandeis	2007	current	C		2 R1	Orcid	1990	U Delaware	Linguistics	Cognitive scienc	n/a
7	p0316	C	Hestvik, Arild	M	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brandeis	1994	2006	I		2 n/a	Research	1990	U of Bergen	Linguistics	Cognitive scienc	n/a
8	p0316	I	Hestvik, Arild	M	Not found	n/a	Assistant	Brandeis	unk	1994	P		1 n/a	Research	1990	U of Bergen	Linguistics	Cognitive scienc	n/a
9	p0552	C	Piñango, Maria	F	Not public	https://www	Professor	Brandeis	2023	current	C		1 R1	https://	1999	Yale	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
10	p0552	C	Piñango, Maria	F	Not public	https://www	Associate	Brandeis	2008	2023	P		1 R1	https://	1999	Yale	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
11	p0552	C	Piñango, Maria	F	Not public	https://www	Assistant	Brandeis	1999	2008	P		1 pre2000	https://	1999	Yale	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
12	p0015	C	Almor, Amit	M	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brown	2003	current	C		1 R1	CV	1995	U South Carolina	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
13	p0015	C	Almor, Amit	M	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brown	2002	2003	I		1 R1	CV	1995	U Southern Cal	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
14	p0015	C	Almor, Amit	M	Not found	n/a	Assistant	Brown	1996	2002	P		1 pre2000	CV	1995	U Southern Cal	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
15	p0198	C	Elsner, Micha	M	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brown	2018	current	C		1 R1	CV	2011	Ohio State	Linguistics	Computational	n/a
16	p0198	C	Elsner, Micha	M	Not found	n/a	Assistant	Brown	2012	2018	P		1 R1	CV	2011	Ohio State	Linguistics	Computational	n/a
17	p0214	C	Feldman, Naomi	F	Not found	n/a	Assistant	Brown	2011	unk	P		1 R1	Article	2011	U Maryland	Linguistics	Computational	n/a
18	p0214	I	Feldman, Naomi	F	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brown	unk	current	C		1 R1	Article	2011	U Maryland	Linguistics	Computational	n/a
19	p0359	C	Jongman, Allard	M	Not found	n/a	Assistant	Brown	1991	unk	P		1 pre2000	LinkedIn	1986	Cornell	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
20	p0359	I	Jongman, Allard	M	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brown	unk	1999	I		1 pre2000	LinkedIn	1986	Cornell	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
21	p0359	C	Jongman, Allard	M	Not found	n/a	Associate	Brown	1999	2006	P		2 pre2000	LinkedIn	1986	U Kansas	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
22	p0359	C	Jongman, Allard	M	Not found	n/a	Professor	Brown	2006	current	C		2 R1	LinkedIn	1986	U Kansas	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
23	p0381	C	Keating, Patricia	F	Prefer not to s	https://www	Professor	Brown	1991	2022	R		1 pre2000	CV	1980	UCLA	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
24	p0381	C	Keating, Patricia	F	Prefer not to s	https://www	Assistant	Brown	1980	1985	P		1 pre2000	CV	1980	UCLA	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
25	p0381	C	Keating, Patricia	F	Prefer not to s	https://www	Associate	Brown	1985	1991	P		1 pre2000	CV	1980	UCLA	Linguistics	Phonetics	n/a
26	p0634	C	Sereno, Joan	F	Not found	n/a	Assistant	Brown	1992	1999	I		1 pre2000	CV	1988	Cornell	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a
27	p0634	C	Sereno, Joan	F	Not found	n/a	Professor	Brown	2009	current	C		2 R1	CV	1988	U Kansas	Linguistics	Psycholinguistic	n/a

+ ☰ 56 phase 1 - edited sheet ▾ 24 phase 2 - emeritx / deceased ▾ sheet 10 ▾ 1 phase 2 - KIT ugrad people ▾ 12 phase 2 - forward-filling ▾ 3 dept_d < >

Ordered alphabetically by SourceU

Summary snapshot of the dataset

Total unique individuals: ~**1500**

Total number of actual CVs found: ~**500**

Total unique departments: ~**200**

Non-U.S./Canada institutions collapsed into single category for now

Non-PGIs partially coded but excluded from present results

Total rows: ~**3600** (one row per rank per institution, for each individual)

We know this dataset has a strong survivorship bias!

Exploratory Results

Gap from PhD to first tenure-track job has grown, even among “survivors” escaping the precariat

Mosaic plot: A type of stacked bar chart

bar height = proportion within a category

bar width = proportions of categories within the whole dataset

Gap from PhD to first tenure-track job has grown, even among “survivors” escaping the precariat

Overall
N=874

Gap between PhD and tenure-track start

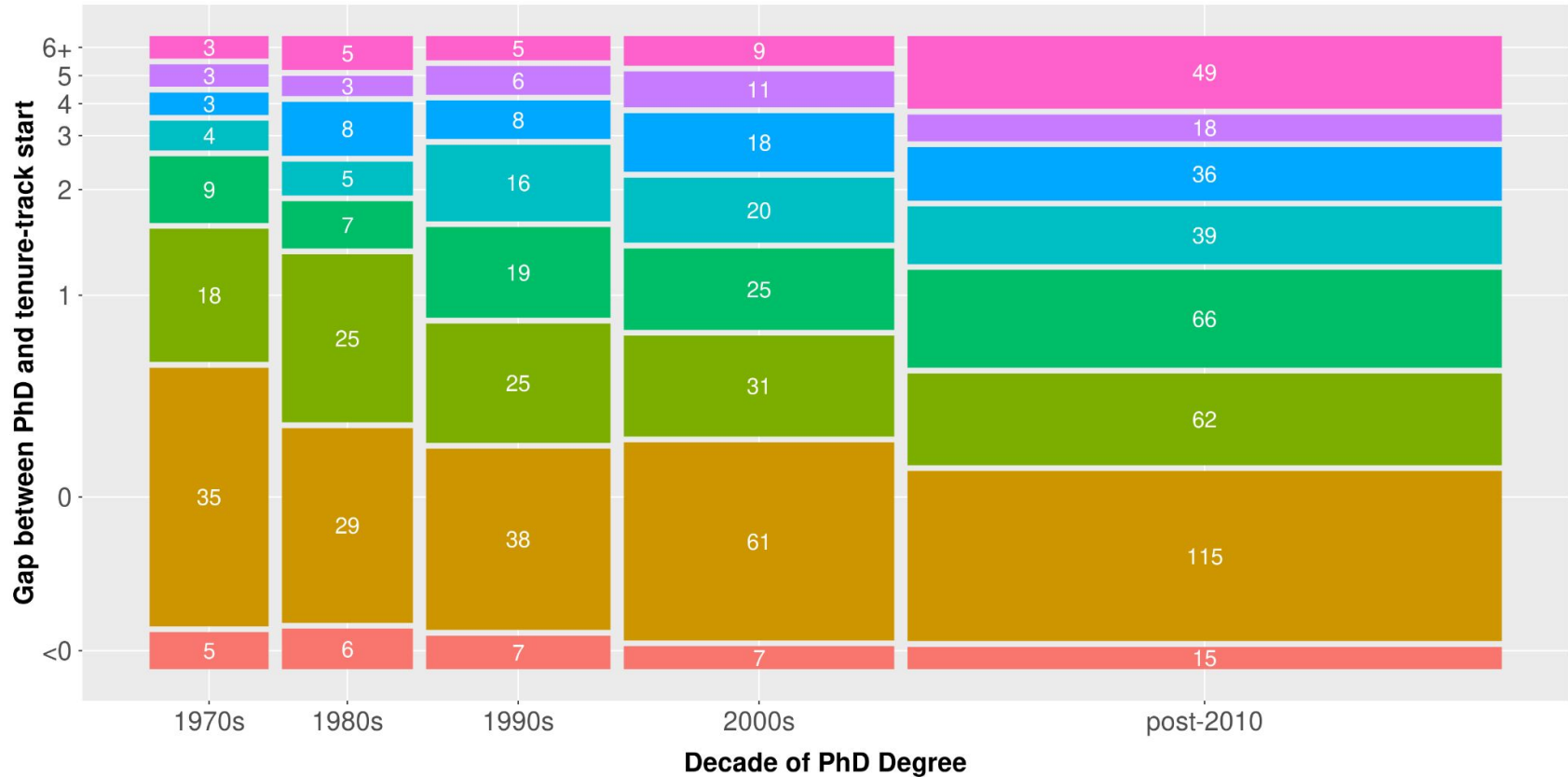
y axis = Gap
between **year of PhD** and **year of starting first tenure-track job**

x axis = Decade of **PhD degree**

Decade of PhD Degree

Gap from PhD to first tenure-track job has grown, even among “survivors” escaping the precariat

Overall
N=874



Gap between PhD and promotion to Assoc. Prof. has also grown

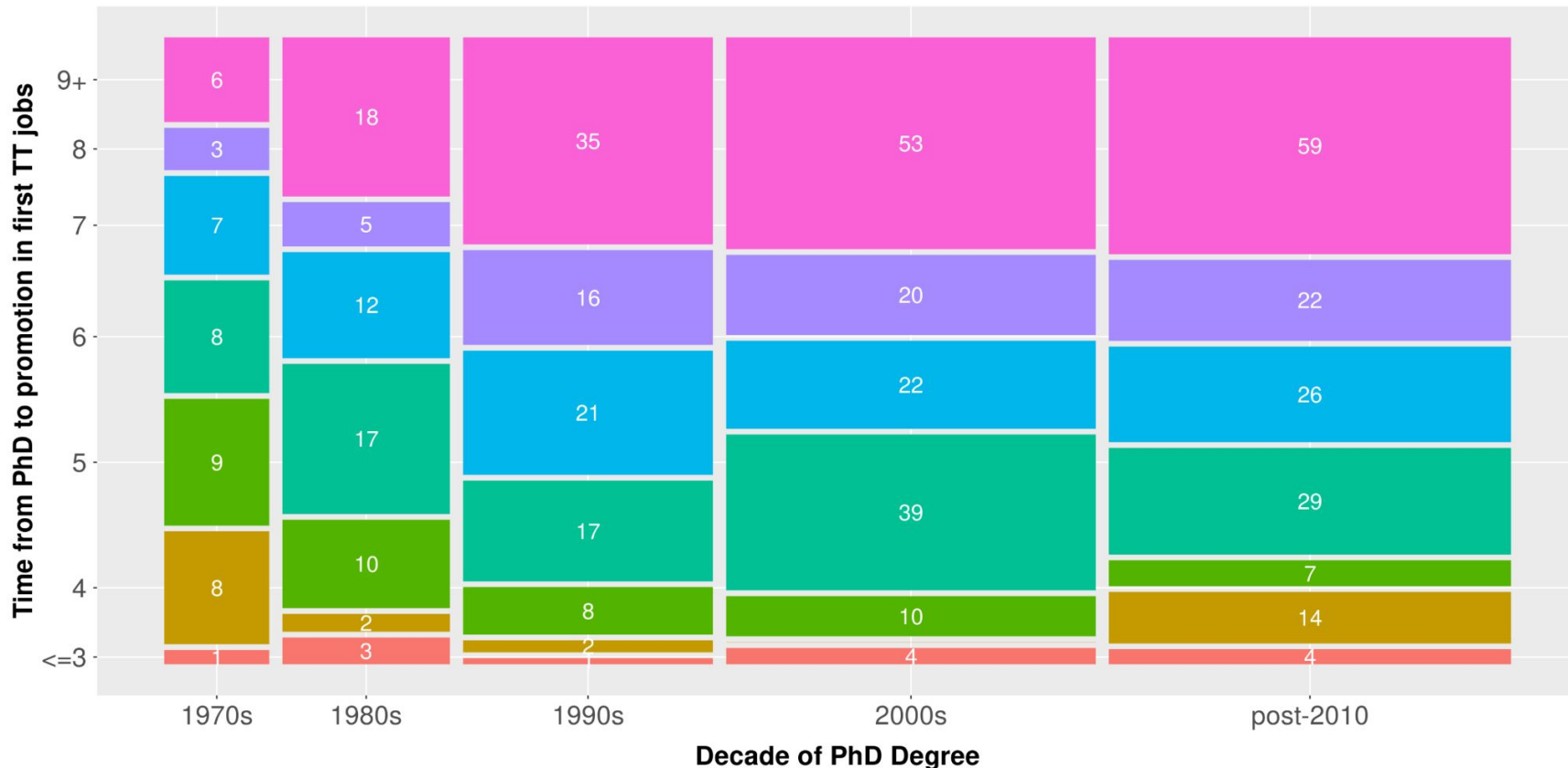
Overall
N=518

Time from PhD to promotion in first TT jobs

Decade of PhD Degree

Gap between PhD and promotion to Assoc. Prof. has also grown

Overall
N=518



Questions which arose for us, i.e., immediate next steps

- The increased gap in hiring is likely not distributed uniformly. What factors are relevant?
 - Discipline-specific? Are traditionally postdoc-having psycholinguists driving this pattern? What about the increase in postdoc-to-TT position programs which focus on DEI?
 - Institutions?
 - Demographic factors?
- What would the Haugen et al. graphs have looked like in the past?
 - How has the ordering of institutions shifted within the 'core'?
 - Have institutions tended to hire within-"network" more or less over time?

What's next?

(suggestions for questions to 'ask' the data, or how to visualize these results?)

In progress:

- Proper statistical analysis!
- Tenure-stream positions beyond Linguistics PGIs
 - non-PhD Ling. depts & programs; other types of destination depts. for Ling PHD
- Another perspective: Looking at people who get their PhDs and where they end up! Rather than looking at people who get hired on the TT
- More complete demographic information
- Information about shifting department types, breaking down non-US/Canada information
- Figure out best ways to study people who 'slip through the cracks'
- Code for research sub-disciplines

What's next?

(suggestions for questions to 'ask' the data, or how to visualize these results?)

Potentially:

- Collect primary data?
- Seek cooperation from departments or individuals
- Collaborate with LSA committees
 - Ad-hoc Demographics working group
 - Coordinate across committees and SIGs who may have different data on this

What can we/YOU do with this information?

- Inform students, postdocs! (Chat, it's rough out there on the job market)
- Aid with / agitate for labor organizing in academia
- Further motivation for departments and institutions to continue to integrate non-academic career paths as part of graduate training and mentorship
- Use this information to advocate for tenure lines
- As longer postdoc precarity becomes the norm, we can/should advocate for higher wages, benefits, etc.
 - Increased gaps could also be an element of choice, with longer postdocs being preferred to shorter ones! (very short-term postdocs can be inhumane)
- Useful context to evaluate candidates for hiring, tenure, and promotion

Thank you for minding the gap!

We welcome your feedback! What pervasive ideologies about academic employment can/must we address?

Remember to update your (department's) website and your LSA directory info!

Plug for the LSA's demographics committee!

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