



HARVARD LAW SCHOOL
Center on the Legal Profession

**The Women and Men of Harvard Law School:
Preliminary Results from the HLS Career Study**

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We also extend our gratitude to the members of the Harvard Law School (HLS) community, including Deans Elena Kagan and Martha Minow, and the terrific directors and staff of the school’s Registrar’s Office, Admission’s Office, Alumni Office, The Office of Career Services and the Office of Public Interest Advising, and the Dean’s Office for their generous support and many hours of work during the more than seven years between when this project was conceived and the issuance of this Preliminary Report.

We particularly want to thank the world-class statisticians housed at the HLS Library, specifically Constantine Boussalis and Arevik Avedian, without whose tireless help and substantive guidance this project would quite literally never have been completed. Similarly, we want to give special mention to the amazing professionals at the Center on the Legal Profession—particularly Derek Davis, Hakim Lakhdar, and Nathan Cleveland—who have provided endless hours of support in the production of this Preliminary Report.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we wish to extend our deepest thanks to all those HLS graduates who agreed to participate in this study by completing the survey. It is our hope that the findings offered in this Preliminary Report will contribute to their continued growth and development in their professional and personal lives, and to our collective understanding of how best to ensure the continued growth and development of HLS and of the legal profession as a whole.

Section 1—Introduction

There is widespread consensus that the legal profession stands at an important inflection point. Traditional models of professional organization, practice, and education are under increasing pressure to adapt to important changes in the environments in which lawyers work. At the same time, these same forces make the profession's commitment to its traditional ideals of equality and the rule of law more relevant and important than ever.

The current status of women in the legal profession mirrors this complex duality. On the one hand, the number of women entering the profession has increased dramatically in recent decades, and women lawyers can now be found in leadership positions in virtually every major legal institution in the country, including three female justices on the United States Supreme Court. And yet, the percentage of women in these top positions remains far below their representation in the profession, even when adjusted for the fact that women did not begin to enter legal practice in significant numbers until the 1970s. To make matters worse, even women who have achieved important career success appear to be leaving their prestigious positions—and the profession as a whole—in alarming numbers.

It is against this background that we offer this Preliminary Report on *The Women and Men of Harvard Law School*. The Preliminary Report presents the results of the Harvard Law School Career Study (HLSCS), conducted by the school's Center on the Legal Profession (CLP). Begun with a generous grant from a visionary group of women alumnae in connection with the 55th celebration of the graduation of the school's first female students in 1953, the study seeks to deepen the understanding of the career choices made by HLS graduates by providing for the first time systematic empirical information about the careers trajectories of graduates from different points in the school's history. In this Preliminary Report, we offer a first look at the Study's findings about the salient similarities and differences between the careers of the school's female and male graduates.

Before beginning, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the findings we present. This is a study of the careers of students from a single law school—one that arguably occupies a distinctive place in the marketplace. As a result, the experiences of Harvard Law School graduates will undoubtedly differ in important ways from those of the graduates of other law schools—just as the experiences of future graduates of all law schools are likely to differ from those who have come before. This is particularly true, as we explain below, since the data for this study was collected 2009-2010, when many of the changes that we now see in the profession prompted by the economic downturn that began in 2008 were just beginning to be felt. We return to how these changes may affect some of our findings in the Conclusion.

Nevertheless, we hope that this systematic look at the similarities and differences in the careers of a group of women and men who have admittedly had unique opportunities to build successful and satisfying careers will provide an important reference point for those seeking to ensure that the legal profession achieves greater gender equality for all lawyers in the coming decades. And while the past is never a perfect template for predicting the future, it is also true, as famously observed, that those who fail to study the past are often condemned to repeat it. It is in this spirit that we offer our findings on the careers of HLS graduates across the last six decades.

Data and Methodology

HLSCS combines data from three unique sources. (For a more thorough examination of our data collection methods, please consult the Methods section in the Appendix.)

First, and most importantly, CLP designed and administered a comprehensive Career Survey of four graduating classes: 1975 (one of the first classes where women represented a significant percentage of students), 1985, 1995, and 2000 (the last class that had been out of law school long enough to achieve important career milestones, and the class best comparable to the nationwide sample in the *After the JD* study discussed below). In order to offer perspectives on the careers of those who graduated before 1975, as well as to establish a baseline for comparison, we also collected data from a set of graduates from the 1950s and 1960s (the era in which women first entered HLS) comprised of a representative random sample of female and male graduates from this period.¹ Surveys were both mailed to participants and available online between 2009 and 2010. The overall response rate for the survey was 35 percent—a relatively high response rate for a survey of this kind. As an additional check on the representativeness of our data, we conducted an analysis of respondents and non-respondents using information from HLS records (see below). Based on this analysis, we have weighted survey responses to account for the most important differences between respondents and non-respondents in a manner that enhances the integrity of our conclusions.

Second, we also collected data from admissions records and transcripts provided by the HLS Admissions Office and the HLS Registrar. In completing the Survey, respondents were informed that survey responses would be correlated with “historical graduate data maintained by HLS.” In addition, in accordance with Institutional Review Board human subject standards, and the requirements of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), CLP worked with the University Office of General Counsel to set up rigorous procedures to ensure participant privacy and to guarantee that all data collected will only be used for the educational purpose of understanding the aggregate careers of HLS graduates. Pursuant to this agreement, all data collected from the Admissions Office and Registrar has been anonymized and is reported only in the aggregate. There is no identifying information reported about any individual either from the survey or from any of the other data collected from HLS records.

Researchers matched transcript and admissions data with survey responses for the classes of 1975, 1985 1995, and 2000. This data was not available for the 1950-1960s cohort. Researchers also collected from HLS records very limited aggregate data about the size, gender breakdown, and first jobs of the HLS graduating class of 2013 (the most recent cohort for which figures were available for this Preliminary Report) in order to offer a preliminary view about the similarities and differences between these recent graduates and the cohorts studied in HLSCS. No other data about the class of 2013 was collected or examined. Therefore, although we make occasional reference to this basic information about the class of 2013 in this Preliminary Report, we do not in any way purport to present a comprehensive portrait of the experiences and careers of these or any other recent HLS graduates. Instead, we hope that the results we report about the classes of 1975, 1985, 1995, and 2000 (and the 1950-1960s cohort) will encourage further study about the

¹ For ease of reference, this Report refers to graduates from the 1950s and 1960s as the 1950 and 1960s “cohort.”

careers of the schools more recent graduates—and about the experiences of the cohorts that we have studied in the years since 2010.

Finally, researchers compared the findings from the HLSC with those from *After the JD* (AJD), a study conducted under the auspices of the American Bar Foundation, in which one of HLSCS's primary authors is also a principle researcher. AJD is a longitudinal study that tracks the professional lives of more than 5,000 lawyers who entered the bar in or around the year 2000 during their first ten to twelve years after law school.² The first wave of the study, which we will refer to as AJD 1, was conducted in 2002-2003, and provides information about the personal and professional lives of AJD respondents two to three years after passing the bar. The second wave of the study, which we refer to as AJD 2, was conducted in 2007-2008, and therefore provides data about the same respondents seven to eight years into their careers. The third and final wave of the study, which we will refer to as AJD 3, was conducted in 2011-2012 and provides data on these same respondents ten to twelve years into their careers. Although the methods of the two studies differ (the HLSCS collects cohort data on the graduates of a single law school, while AJD collects longitudinal data from a sample that includes graduates from every law school in the country), the two studies contain many similar or identical questions, address comparable issues, and track the careers of a set of graduates (with respect to the HLS class of 2000) who entered law practice at approximately the same time. Therefore, where possible and informative, the HLSCS's findings are compared to those of AJD's nationally representative sample.

Focus and Variables

The data collected above provides insight into a broad range of issues relating to the careers of HLS graduates and how the careers of those in the class of 2000 compare to their peers in AJD nationally representative sample. In this Preliminary Report, we concentrate on what this data tells us about potential gender-related differences in the careers of HLS's female and male graduates. In so doing, we recognize that we are leaving other important issues unaddressed—for example, issues relating to gender differences in the law school experience, or the effects of race or other identity characteristics on careers. As we state in the Conclusions, we plan to return to many of these issues in future work. More and continually updated information about these projects and all of CLP's research can be found on the [CLP website](#) or in forthcoming issues of our digital magazine, *The Practice*. With respect to race, however, we recognize that by not explicitly focusing on this issue here, we are not giving a full account of the gender issues that are the main focus of this Preliminary Report. Over the years, an increasingly large percentage of female students at HLS and other law schools also have other forms of personal identity that are likely to be relevant to their ability to build successful and satisfying careers in the law. Although we touch on these issues briefly, we have unfortunately not been able to explore the intersection between gender and other forms of identity systematically because of the small number of survey responses we received from women of color. To the extent that the relatively small number of women of color in our sample might skew our overall results, we have tried to account for this fact in the weighting process described more fully in the Appendix.

² For more on the AJD study, visit: <http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/publications/afterthejd.html>

With these limitations in mind, the remainder of this Preliminary Report compares the careers of female and male graduates in three primary ways: *within cohort*, to examine the similarities and differences in career patterns of women and men who graduated in the same year; *between cohorts*, to examine how women and men have built careers at different periods of time; and *across cohorts*, to examine aggregate data for women and men from all four primary cohorts. Data from the 1950-1960s cohort is not included in across cohort analyses.

Within each of these frameworks, the Preliminary Report employs a broad range of variables to compare women and men, including age, law school grades, career intentions, marital and family status, labor market participation, and employment sector. We pay particular attention to employment sector. Prior research underscores that “the” legal profession is in fact comprised of distinct elements that play a key role in shaping legal careers. Consistent with this research, we therefore asked survey respondents to chart their careers in reference to 13 different employment categories, which, for ease of exposition and to achieve numerical significance, we have aggregated into four: law firms, the public sector, business (practicing law), and business (not practicing law). The law firm sector includes everything from solo practice to the largest law firms. Although this category is quite heterogeneous, for reasons that we explain below, the majority of respondents in this category work in “large” law firms of 100 lawyers or more. The public sector includes lawyers working in government at every level, as well as federally or state funded legal services and public defenders organizations, private and publicly funded public interest organizations and non-governmental organizations, and educational institutions. (This category does not include law clerks since respondents were instructed to begin their employment history after they completed any judicial clerkship.) The business (practicing law) and business (not practicing law) sectors include large businesses, mid-size businesses, small businesses, banking and finance firms, accounting firms, and management and consulting positions. The distinction between “practicing” and “not practicing” law was made on the basis of the respondents’ self-reporting of their work.

Implications

Although most relevant to HLS and its graduates, we hope the findings in this Preliminary Report will also be useful to a broad spectrum of practitioners, legal educators, and law students—and to the public and institutions that depend in one way or another upon the work of law school graduates.

First, by focusing on HLS graduates, the study examines women and men who are high-achieving and who enter the legal marketplace with largely similar—and, given HLS’s rankings, undeniably impressive—qualifications. By studying women and men who are all graduates of a single prestigious law school, divergences in career paths are more easily associable to things other than qualifications.³ This is particularly relevant given the legal profession’s traditional reliance on “qualifications” as a measure of quality.

³ The HLSCS is similar to a study conducted by Robin Ely, Pamela Stone, and Colleen Ammerman about Harvard Business School (HBS) students published in the *Harvard Business Review*. In it, they address why looking at HBS graduates across issues of gender is informative writing: “We trained our analytical lens on these graduates for two reasons. First, attending a top-tier business school is a reasonable indication of high levels of achievement, talent, ambition, and promise, and by looking at men and women who graduated from the same school, we had a level

Second, while law schools are often very good at knowing the jobs their students take after graduation, most are less knowledgeable about what these former students are—and have been—doing ten, twenty, or more years after law school. By utilizing a cross-sectional cohort-based research design, the HLSCS is able both to study HLS graduates deep into their careers, as well as to illustrate whether different classes have taken different professional and personal trajectories—and whether gender might come into play in different ways for women and men from different generations. The HLSCS therefore shines light onto career choices decades after law school, including on those who have moved out of the legal profession. It also provides a holistic picture, coming full circle by asking questions related to the value of law school and about the respondent's satisfaction with his or her career.

Finally, we believe that our findings are relevant to all of those who care about the role of law in society. Legal professionals play critical roles across all segments of American society, most noticeably through the courts, but also in government, business, non-governmental organizations, and other important institutions. Indeed, the Congressional Research Service's report profiling the 113th Congress (2013-2014) found that 169 Members of the House of Representatives (38 percent of the House) and 57 Senators (57 percent of the Senate) held law degrees.⁴ Many of these representatives—although certainly far from all—graduated from HLS and other prestigious law schools. Simply put: if women who graduate from Harvard and other law schools encounter more challenges and have less opportunity than their male colleagues, then these women may very well be less able to assume the kind of important leadership positions that lawyers have traditionally played in our society. Indeed, given America's commitment to, in the words inscribed above the door of the Supreme Court, "Equal Justice Under Law," a legal world in which women lawyers have less opportunity to succeed than their male peers threatens the very legitimacy with which the public views the law, lawyers, and the legal profession.

Major findings

In the pages that follow, we present a wealth of findings about the changing nature of the legal profession and the role of gender within it. The follow represents a brief summary of those findings that the reader might find particularly important.

playing field for gender comparisons. Second, HBS graduates are trained to assume leadership positions, so their attitudes and experiences—interesting in their own right—shape the policies, practices, and unwritten rules of their organizations." Professor Ely reflects on what she learned in this study in the forthcoming issue of [The Practice](#).

⁴ CRS Report 7-5700, Membership of the 113th Congress" A Profile; August 26, 2014

Major Findings	
The 1950s and 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Female respondents from the 1950s and 1960s were most likely to work in the public sector. Male respondents from this cohort were found most commonly in law firms. Women and men from this early cohort both reported high levels of satisfaction with their law school experiences, satisfaction with becoming a lawyer, and overall career.
Demographic Characteristics of HLS Graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since 1950, there has been steady progress towards gender parity among entering HLS students, with the most recent class of admitted students being 50 percent female. Students with work experience between college and law school have increasingly become the norm at HLS. In the cohorts examined, a grade gap between men and women exists with respect to 1L grades. That gap largely disappears with respect to cumulative grades.
First Jobs Post-HLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Across all cohorts, virtually all HLS students find full-time employment upon graduation, with the majority—just over 60 percent—of women and men entering law firms. Virtually all graduates practice law as their first job post-law school. Just over a third of graduates directly enter public sector positions, with women slightly more represented in this sector than men. Women and men entering the public sector have higher average cumulative grades as compared to those entering law firms—a finding that is statistically significant for the 1995 and 2000 cohorts.
Career Trajectories and Transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With respect to current/most recent job, across all cohorts women are significantly more likely than men to be working part-time or not to be in the paid workforce. Both female and male respondents report steady movement away from law firms to other employment sectors, with women reported leaving law firms at a slightly higher rate than men. Significant proportions of women and men report moving into business careers, with men more likely to move into non-law related business positions than women. There is evidence to support an increase in the average number of employers over time.
Alternatives to Full-time Law Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around a quarter of women and men in our sample working full-time in their current jobs do not practice law. More than three-quarters of women who work part-time continue to practice law. The reasons that respondents leave the practice of law are varied, with the highest proportion of women and men reporting the positive attributes of jobs outside of legal practice as their prime motivation. Both women and men who leave the practice of law say that they are unlikely to return to practicing law. Women and men who move out of the legal profession continue to report high levels of satisfaction with their decision to attend law school.
Law Firms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men are significantly more likely to be in positions of leadership within law firms than women. Grades are not predictive of partnership for women or men. Women in law firms work, on average, more hours than men. Male HLS graduates are more likely to be equity partners than female graduates; however, the overall percentage of female equity partners is far higher than typically reported.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For both women and men, there is an increase in the overall number of non-equity partners, beginning with the 1995 cohort. • Women who become partners are more likely to have had more mentors during their first five years of practice than women who are not partners
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First job post-HLS incomes did not display a large gender gap, likely due to the large proportion of women and men entering law firms with standardized starting salaries. • Income differences between men and women across all cohorts emerge with respect to current job. • The gap is narrowest for the class of 1985 and largest for the 1995 cohort. • The most important explanatory factor for the pay gap appears to be that men are more likely than women to work in business (not practicing law). When they do, they earn total compensation that is far in excess of even their highly paid law firm peers.
Discrimination in the Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female respondents report facing discrimination on the basis of personal characteristics at higher levels than male respondents, though interestingly the number of men reporting discrimination increases over time. • Female respondents report facing gender-based discrimination at higher levels than male respondents.
Work-Life Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Female respondents are less likely to be married than male respondents. • The percentage of male partners who are married far outpaces the percentage of women partners who are married. • The percentage of women partners who have never been married is significantly greater than the percentage of male partners who have never been married. • Twice as many women partners as men partners report having zero children. • Women respondents took significantly more actions, such as going part-time, as a result of having a child as compared to men. • Women respondents report feeling significantly more work place consequences, including loss of seniority, as a result of having a child as compared to men. • Even with no children, women HLS graduates in the sample are just as likely as their male counterparts with two or more children to be in the full-time work force • Less than half of female respondents with two or more children are still in the full time workforce • Women have spouses/partners that work, on average, more hours than the spouses/partners of men. • Women partners have spouses/partners that work, on average, more hours than the spouses/partners of non-partner men.
Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both female and male respondents report extremely high levels of satisfaction with their decision to attend law school and their overall careers. • Male respondents report being more satisfied with the rewards of their work than female respondents. • Conversely, female respondents report being more satisfied with the substance of their work than male respondents. • Neither men nor women reported being particularly satisfied with the control they have over their work and personal lives.

Outline

The remainder of this Preliminary Report proceeds in eleven additional sections: The Baseline: 1950s and 1960s; Demographic Characteristics of HLS Graduates; First Jobs Post-HLS; Career Trajectories and Transitions; Alternatives to Full-Time Law Practice; Law Firms; Income; Discrimination; Work-Life Integration; Dimensions of Satisfaction; and Preliminary Conclusions and Further Research. There is also an Appendix containing further analysis of our methodology. Taken together, the HLSCS Report represents the most comprehensive study done to date about the career paths taken by HLS graduates and the professional and personal choices they make over the course of their careers.

Section 2—The Baseline: 1950s and 1960s

The pioneers

Before examining the four cohort classes that constitute the bulk of the data and analysis of the HLSCS, it is informative to go back to the era in which women first entered HLS. Before 1950, the HLS student body was 100 percent male. That all changed in the fall of 1950, when 14 women entered HLS. Judith Richards Hope, a member of one of those early co-ed classes (1964) and the first female member of the Harvard Corporation, poignantly depicts the environment into which these pioneering women entered:

Long before we arrived in Cambridge, both I and the women in my law school class had become untethered from our pasts. There were no Harvard legacies among us, and no fathers—or mothers—who were lawyers. We were doing something our parents had not done in a place they had not been (Hope, 2003:18).

In this section, we provide a brief snapshot of what it was like for these pioneers (and their male classmates) once they entered the workforce.

Employment status and sector

A high percentage of both female and male graduates from the 1950-1960s cohort found full-time employment, although men (98 percent) were slightly more likely to work full-time than women (93 percent). Women and men displayed greater differences with respect to the job sector that they entered. As Figure 2.1 illustrates, for first job post-HLS, women graduates were more likely to go into the public sector (52 percent) than law firms (46 percent). Conversely, male HLS graduates were more likely enter law firms (61 percent) than the public sector (38 percent). As we indicate below, this percentage of men going into both law firms and public sector jobs is remarkably consistent with the first job patterns of the Class of 2013.

Given that many law firms during this period had express or thinly veiled policies against hiring women, this pattern is hardly surprising—indeed, it is notable that so many of these early HLS female graduates were able to find employment in law firms. This finding also supports the common vision that public sector jobs were generally more open to women during this period.

The same career pattern largely holds when it comes to current, or in the case of retired respondents, their most recent job. As Figure 2.2 illustrates, a much higher percentage of men were in law firm positions than women at the time of the survey—72 percent of men compared to 34 percent of women. The percentage of men in the law firm sector also rose over the six decades of their legal careers, whereas the percentage of women in law firms consistently fell. There was also a large gender gap with respect to partnership rates for those in law firms. Of those who reported advancing to the partnership level, only 19 percent were female. Once again, this is consistent with the standard view that even those law firms that were prepared to hire women during this period, few of the women who got in the door of these institutions were ever able to advance to partnership.

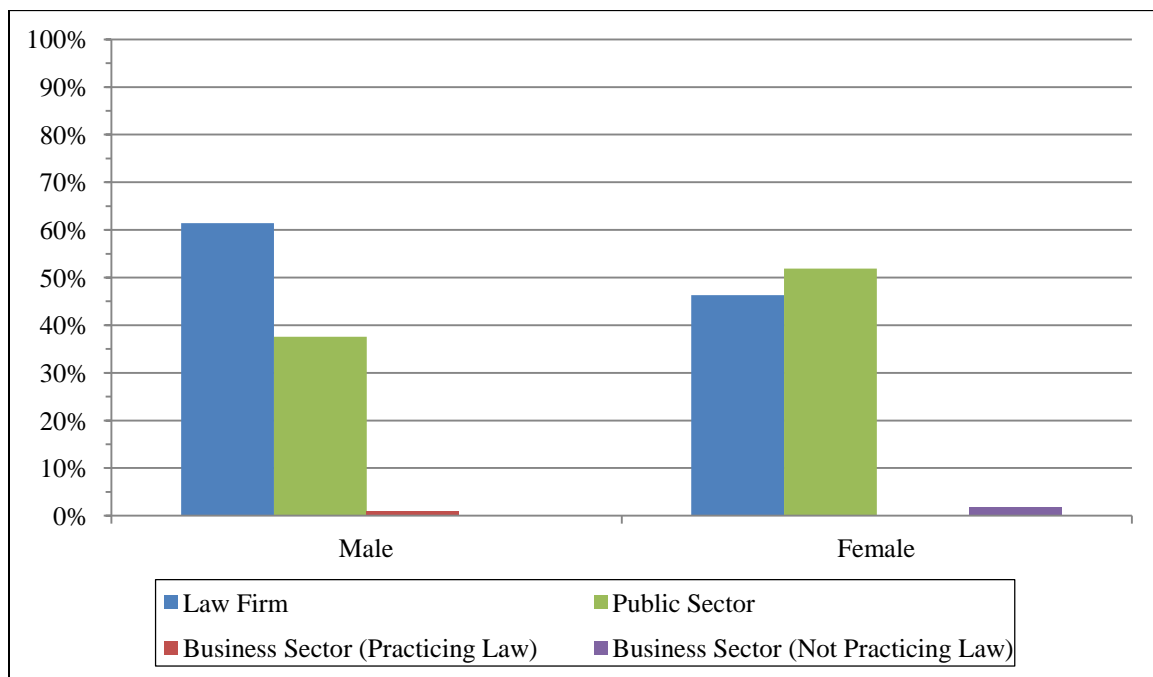
Outside of law firms, throughout their careers women continued to dominate the public sector when compared to men. Nevertheless, the overall percentage of women holding current jobs in this sector also fell when compared to what it had been for their first job post-HLS. Indeed, the biggest difference between the first jobs held by this cohort and their current (or last) position for both women and men, albeit to differing degrees, is a movement away from both law firms and the public sector to business (not practicing law). Thus, while virtually no one worked in the business (not practicing law) sector as their first job post-HLS, 10 percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female respondents moved had into this sector by the time of their current/most recent job. As we will see in Section 5 below, this pattern of movement towards the business sector and away from, most notably, law firms is consistent among the more recent cohorts.

TABLE 2.1 First Job Post-HLS Employment Status—1950-1960s Cohort

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Part-Time	1.8%	2	6.9%	4	3.5%	6
Full-Time	98.2%	111	93.1%	54	96.5%	165

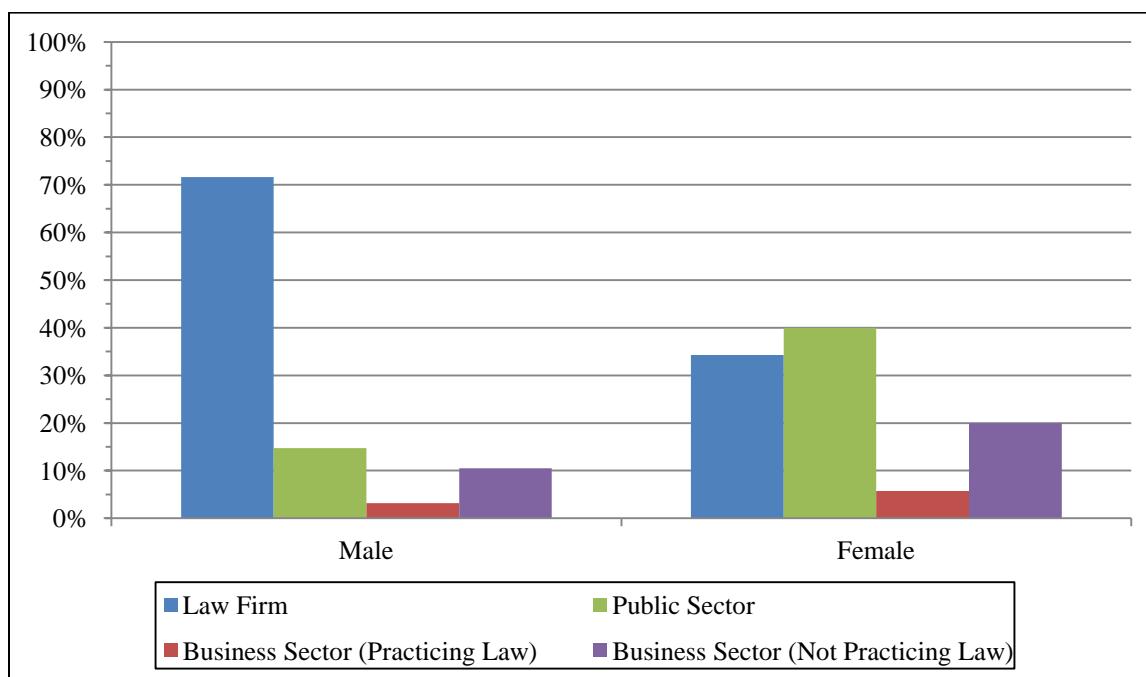
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 2.1 First Job Post-HLS—1950-1960s Cohort



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 2.2 Current Job by Practice Setting—1950-1960s Cohort



Source: HLS Career Study

Discrimination

Survey respondents were asked whether they had experienced any of a variety of forms of discrimination (e.g. a demeaning comment or missing out on a desirable assignment) based on a number of personal characteristics, including gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, and disability. Not surprisingly, almost no men from this cohort reported experiencing discrimination. What is more surprising is that relatively few women did as well. Just 17 percent of women who answered this question reported experiencing any kind of discrimination, as opposed to 83 percent who said that they had not experienced discrimination. Given the express discrimination against women by legal employers during this period, we frankly expected this percentage to be far higher. Interestingly, however, a relatively small percentage of women who responded to the survey chose to answer this question. So perhaps like other stories of discrimination and humiliation suffered by those of this generation—whether these indignities were as a result of gender, race, religion or some other personal characteristic – these early pioneers simply may have chosen not to talk about the difficulties they faced, instead focusing on the opportunities they received. The next section provides some support for this thesis.

Satisfaction

Given the difficult environment in which they entered, one might have thought that the school's early female graduates would be highly dissatisfied with their careers. But this is not the case. Instead, the first cohort of women graduates consistently reported high levels of satisfaction with their decision to attend law school, to become lawyers, and their overall careers. When asked, knowing what they know today, if they would still obtain a law degree, 89 percent of women

reported that they would still matriculate—a slightly higher percentage than men. When asked to rate their satisfaction with their decision to become a lawyer, 100 percent of the women who responded to the survey and answered this question reported being either extremely or moderately satisfied. Finally, when asked how satisfied they were with their overall careers, over 88 percent of female respondents reported being satisfied.

It is important to note that these satisfaction levels are both high in their own right—all are above 88 percent—as well as comparable to, and in some cases even higher than, those of their male classmates. Consequently, and contrary to what one might expect given the “untethering” noted by Hope and the well-known obstacles women of this generation faced, HLS’s earliest women graduates report highly positive views of their entry into and movement through the legal profession. Although the reasons for these high rates of satisfaction are undoubtedly multiple and complex, it is plausible that notwithstanding all of the obstacles they faced as lawyers, that their entry into the legal profession—particularly as Harvard Law School graduates—gave them more opportunities than other careers that were open to them at the time.

TABLE 2.2 Would Still Obtain a Law Degree—1950-1960s Cohort

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
No	12.9%	18	11.1%	8	12.3%	23
Yes	87.1%	121	88.9%	64	87.7%	185

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 2.3 Satisfaction with Becoming a Lawyer—1950-1960s Cohort

Male	Female	Total
93.10%	100.0%	95.0%

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 2.4 Satisfaction with Overall Career—1950-1960s Cohort

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Satisfied	85.0%	102	88.3%	53	86.1%	155
Neutral	7.5%	9	1.7%	1	5.6%	10
Dissatisfied	7.5%	9	10.0%	6	8.3%	15

Source: HLS Career Study

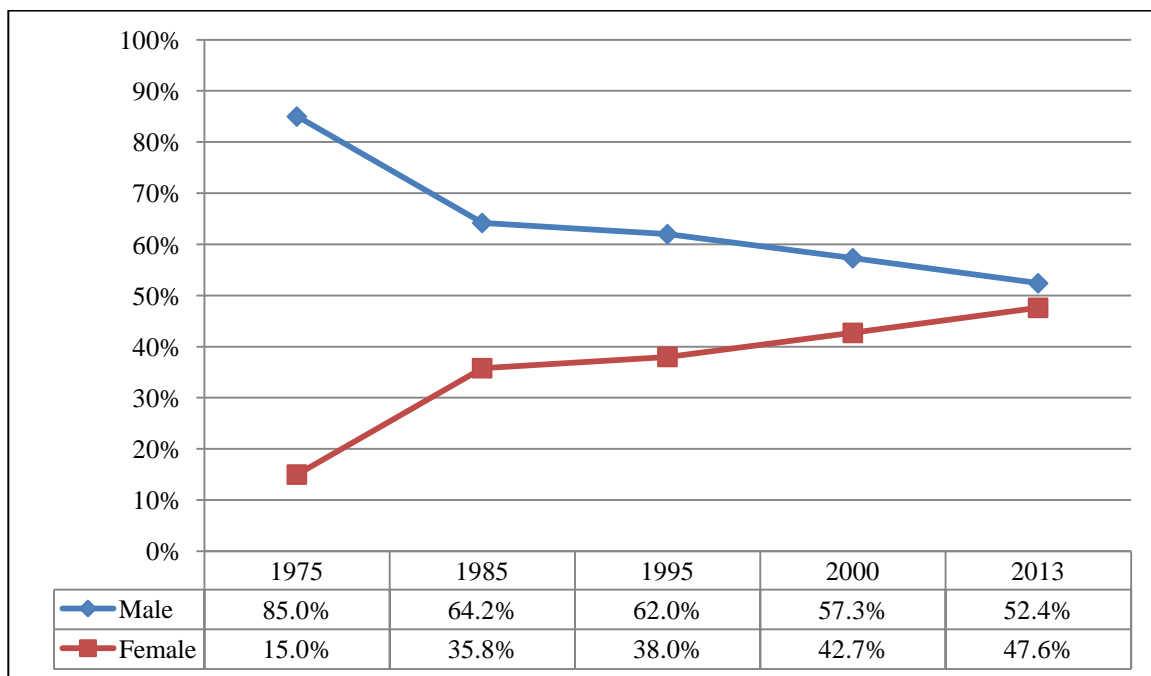
Section 3—Demographic Characteristics of HLS Graduates

Gender

Over the past six decades, the demographic profile of the HLS student body has changed dramatically. In terms of gender, the overall number and the percentage of women graduates has steadily increased, moving from just 15 percent for the 1975 cohort to just under 43 percent for the 2000 cohort. The class of 2013 is just under 48 percent female. And, in recent data provided by the HLS Admission Office, the women now make up a full 50 percent of the class of 2017. The data illustrates that the largest percentage increase in the number of women at HLS—almost 25 percent—occurred between the graduation of the 1975 cohort and the graduation of the 1985 cohort.

These numbers largely mirror those provided by the American Bar Association (ABA). For the 2010-2012 academic year, men made up 53 percent and women 47 percent of all newly enrolling law students at ABA-accredited schools.

FIGURE 3.1 Gender Balance Across Cohorts



Source: HLS Administrative Records

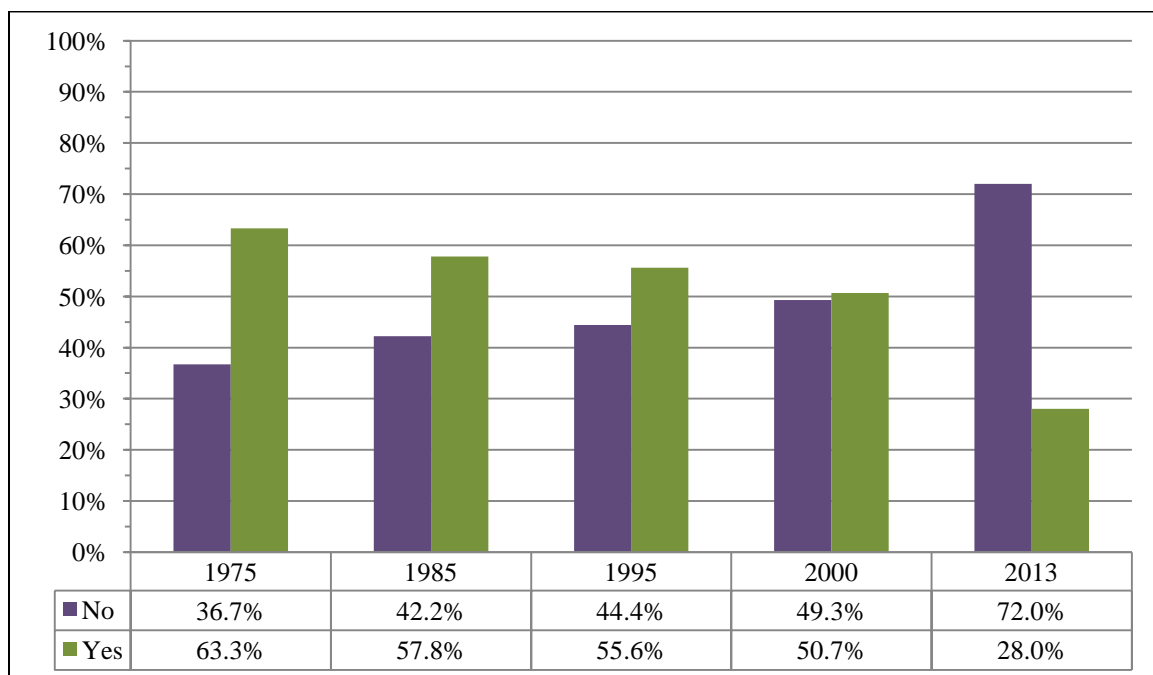
Educational backgrounds

The educational backgrounds of HLS graduates were largely stable across all four cohorts, with the vast majority of graduates entering law school with an undergraduate background in the social sciences, humanities, or business. There was no major gender difference. The undergraduate backgrounds of the HLSCS sample were also largely consistent with the backgrounds of AJD's nationally representative sample.

Experience before law school

Unlike the stability in educational backgrounds of newly entering HLS students, the percentage of students coming directly from college has changed dramatically between 1975 and 2000. Thus, whereas over 60 percent of respondents from the class of 1975 reported going directly from college to law school, that number drops to just over 50 percent for the class of 2000. In looking at more recent data provided by the Admissions Office, the number of students entering HLS directly from college has dropped even more for the class of 2013, in which over 72 percent of the entering class had prior work experience—20 percent with at least one year and 50 percent with more than two years.⁵ These numbers are consistent with a similar trend reported in AJD 1, in which only 38 percent of the national sample went directly from college to law school.

FIGURE 3.2 Straight to Law School from College



Source: HLS Administrative Records

⁵ This data supports the findings of a study of the career paths of seven northeastern area law schools, including Harvard, published in 1986 by the Program on the Legal Profession. That study found that 62 percent of respondents from the classes of 1959, 1969, 1974, and 1981 went directly from college to law school. In contrast, 38 percent of respondents worked before law school.

Law school performance

For law schools, students, and employers, grades have often been at the center of the law school experience. For law schools and students, grades provide a metric of educational achievement. For employers, grades are thought to be predictive of career success. HLSCS examines grades in both contexts, particularly with respect to the relative performance of women and men.

To measure the first issue relating to the relative academic performance of women and men, HLSCS obtained the transcripts of all graduates in our sample, standardized them to a common scale, and compared the performance of students in their first year, and cumulatively at the end of three years.⁶ Three trends emerge from this analysis. First, as Table 3.1 indicates, across all cohorts, male students tend to have higher 1L grades than female students. This trend, however, after increasing for the classes of 1985 and 1995, narrows with the class of 2000, although still remaining significant.

Second, as Table 3.2 indicates, in all classes except for 1985 the grade gap between women and men narrows—and in the case of the class of 2000 disappears—when one compares cumulative grade point averages at the end of law school.

Finally, the most recent graduates in the class of 2000 show the smallest difference between both first-year and cumulative grades.

These findings are consistent with other studies indicating that, while women may take longer to acclimate to law school than their male peers, they tend to “catch up” to, or even surpass, their male classmates by the end of law school, in part because they continue to be engaged in their courses at higher rates than men. As we indicate in Section 11, we find evidence that women’s greater level of engagement may also contribute to their higher level of satisfaction with the substance of their work. Employers interested in finding lawyers with a long-term commitment to their jobs should take note of these findings.

It is important to emphasize, however, that there may be other issues relating to grades as an indication of women and men’s relative experiences in law school that are not captured by our data. Thus, by only looking at grade point “averages” across gender and cohort, our data may not reflect difference in the percentage of women and men in the pool of students who achieve the highest grades, or whether there may be differences in how female and male students perform in different kinds of courses (for example, “classroom” versus “clinical” courses), or in classes with female or male professors. And, of course, since we collected no data on more recent cohorts, our findings say nothing about whether the patterns reported in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 hold for students who attended HLS after 2000. Nevertheless, the fact that average grade differentials between women and men shrink both over time (between the first and the third year) and across cohorts (between 1985 and 2000) reinforces the general assumption that we made at the outset of

⁶ In 2009, HLS moved away from traditional letter grades to a 4-level assessment-based system (honors, pass, low pass, fail), a move that largely mirrored the methods already in place at peer law schools such as Yale and Stanford. In an email to the community, then-Dean Elena Kagan noted that the move was intended to “promote pedagogical excellence and innovation and further strengthen the intellectual community in which we all live.”

this Preliminary Report that the female and male graduates we are studying are equally “qualified” on average to lead successful and satisfying careers in the law. The data we report in Table 7.4, showing no significant correlation between law school grades and partnership, underscores this conclusion.

TABLE 3.1 Average 1L Grades

	Male	Female	Total	p-value
1975	4.6	4.3	4.6	$p \leq 0.05^*$
1985	4.9	4.5	4.8	$p \leq 0.05^*$
1995	4.9	4.7	4.8	$p \leq 0.05^*$
2000	5.0	4.9	5.0	$p \leq 0.05^*$

* Denotes a statistically significant result at the 5 percent confidence level. Note: The grade scale is the following: A+=8; A=7; A-=6; B+=5; B=4; B-=3; C=2; D=1; F=0. Source: HLS Administrative Records

TABLE 3.2 Average Cumulative Grades

	Male	Female	Total	p-value
1975	4.7	4.5	4.7	$p = 0.14$
1985	5.0	4.7	4.9	$p \leq 0.05^*$
1995	5.3	5.1	5.2	$p \leq 0.05^*$
2000	5.4	5.3	5.3	$p = 0.42$

* Denotes a statistically significant result at the 5 percent confidence level. Note: The grade scale is the following: A+=8; A=7; A-=6; B+=5; B=4; B-=3; C=2; D=1; F=0. Source: HLS Administrative Records

Section 4—First Jobs Post-HLS

In this Section, we examine where HLS graduates begin their careers.

Employment status and sector

As Table 4.1 illustrates, the vast majority of HLS graduates entered the full-time workforce upon graduation. Importantly, there are no significant cohort effects or gender differences in this finding. Moreover, the overwhelming number of these graduates (94 percent) practiced law in their first jobs, and again there is no gender or cohort effect. This historical percentage is consistent with the experience of current graduates, which indicates that 96 percent of the class of 2013 entered the full-time workforce within 9 months of graduation. By comparison, according to the ABA only 67 percent of 2013 graduates from all ABA-accredited law schools found full-time, long-term work within 9 months of graduation—with only 57 percent of all graduating law students that year began working in jobs requiring a JD.

With respect to the kind of job, HLS graduates from across all four cohorts were most likely to enter the law firm sector, with 1985 representing the low end (57 percent) and 2000 representing the high end (65 percent). Interestingly, women were slightly over-represented in the law firm sector in all cohorts apart from 2000. After law firms, the second highest proportion of HLS graduates across all cohorts went into the public sector. Once again, women were over-represented in this sector as compared to men. Male HLS graduates, on the other hand, were consistently more likely to enter business (not practicing law and practicing law) than female graduates. These numbers are all largely consistent with employment data for the class of 2013, in which 61 percent of women graduates and 52 percent of male graduates went into law firms, and 33 percent of women and 36 percent of male graduates went into the public sector. It is worth noting that within the law firms sector there has been a general movement towards larger firms, which is undoubtedly due in large part to the fact that the average size of law firms was also increasing during this period. Unsurprisingly, new lawyers who enter law firms were overwhelmingly associates.

By comparison, AJD 1's nationally representative sample of recent law graduates who were 2-3 years into their careers found that that 70 percent of respondents were working in law firms, just less than 25 percent in the public sector, and the small remainder in business (either practicing law or not). HLS graduates from across all cohorts are therefore slightly *less* likely to enter law firms—though data suggest more likely to enter the largest ones—and *more* likely to enter public legal jobs when they graduate from law school than the AJD sample. This finding is likely to be surprising for those who tend to view HLS as a school whose graduates are far more likely than others to enter large law firms.

TABLE 4.1 First Job Post-HLS—Employment Status

		Male		Female		Total	
		%	N	%	N	%	N
1975							
	Part-Time	4.3%	7	3.5%	1	4.2%	8
	Full-Time	95.7%	146	96.5%	27	95.8%	173
1985							
	Part-Time	1.6%	2	1.2%	1	1.4%	2
	Full-Time	98.4%	94	98.8%	73	98.6%	168
1995							
	Part-Time	1.9%	1	5.6%	4	3.6%	5
	Full-Time	98.1%	74	94.4%	60	96.4%	134
2000							
	Part-Time	1.1%	1	2.3%	2	1.8%	2
	Full-Time	98.9%	63	97.7%	73	98.2%	136
Total							
	Part-Time	2.2%	11	3.15	8	2.8%	17
	Full-Time	97.8%	377	96.9%	233	97.3%	611

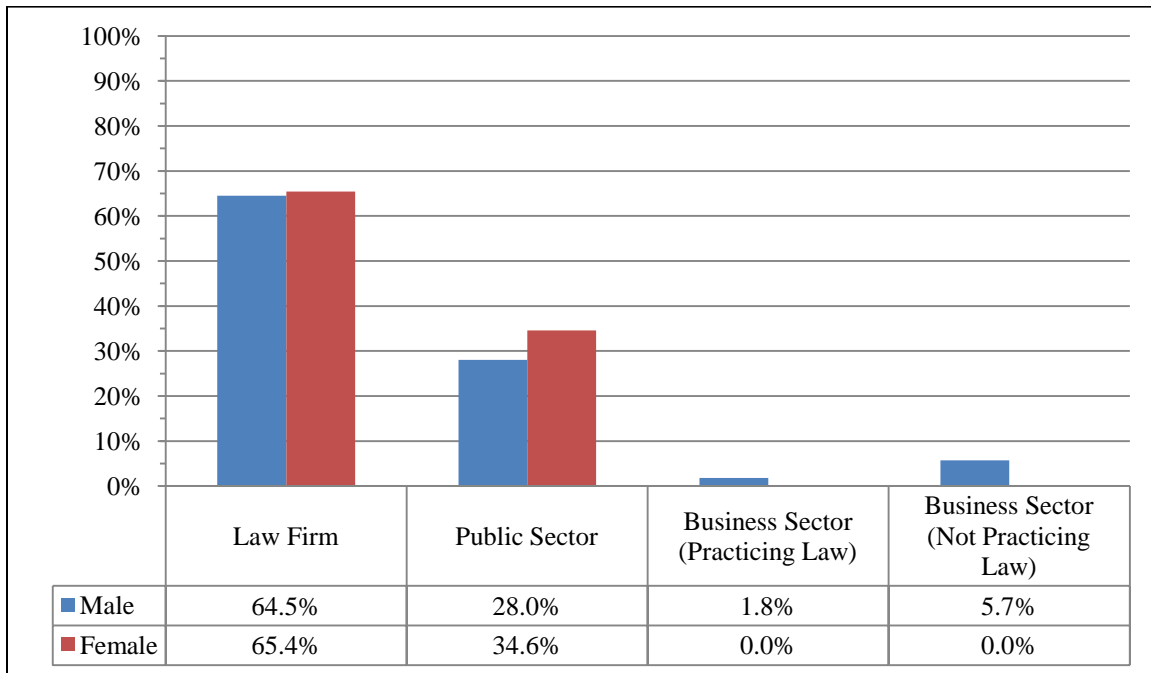
Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 4.2 First Job Post-HLS—Percent Practicing Law

	Male	Female	Total
1975	93%	93%	93%
1985	92%	94%	93%
1995	90%	96%	93%
2000	94%	95%	94.5%
Total	92%	95%	93.5%

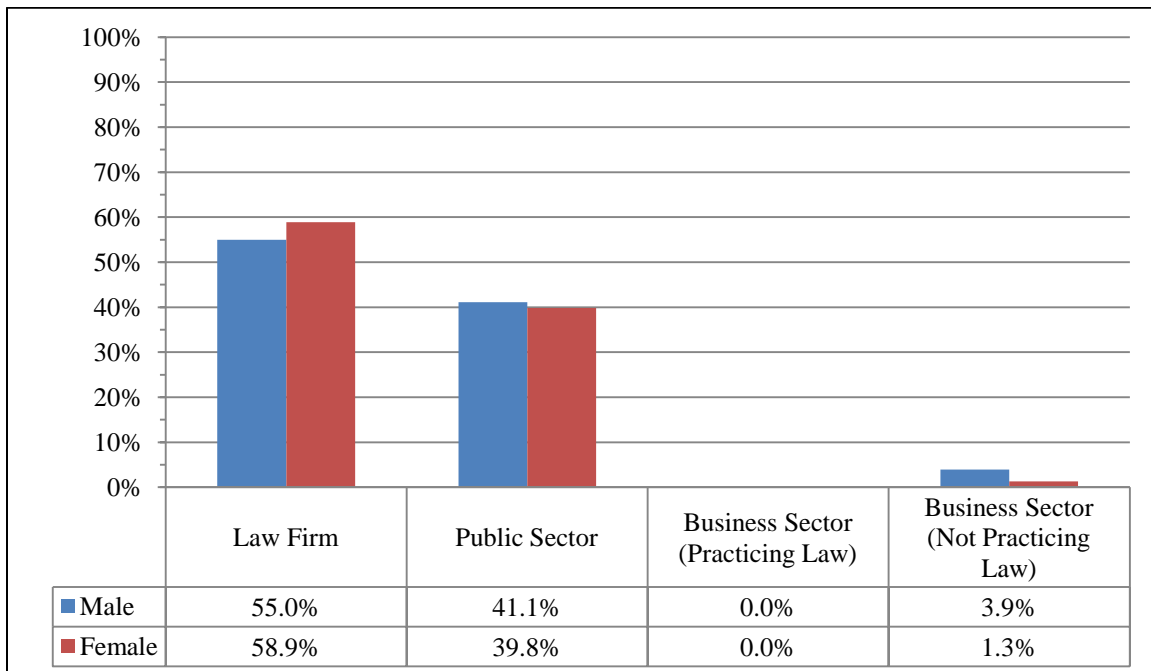
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 4.1 First Job Post-HLS—1975 Cohort



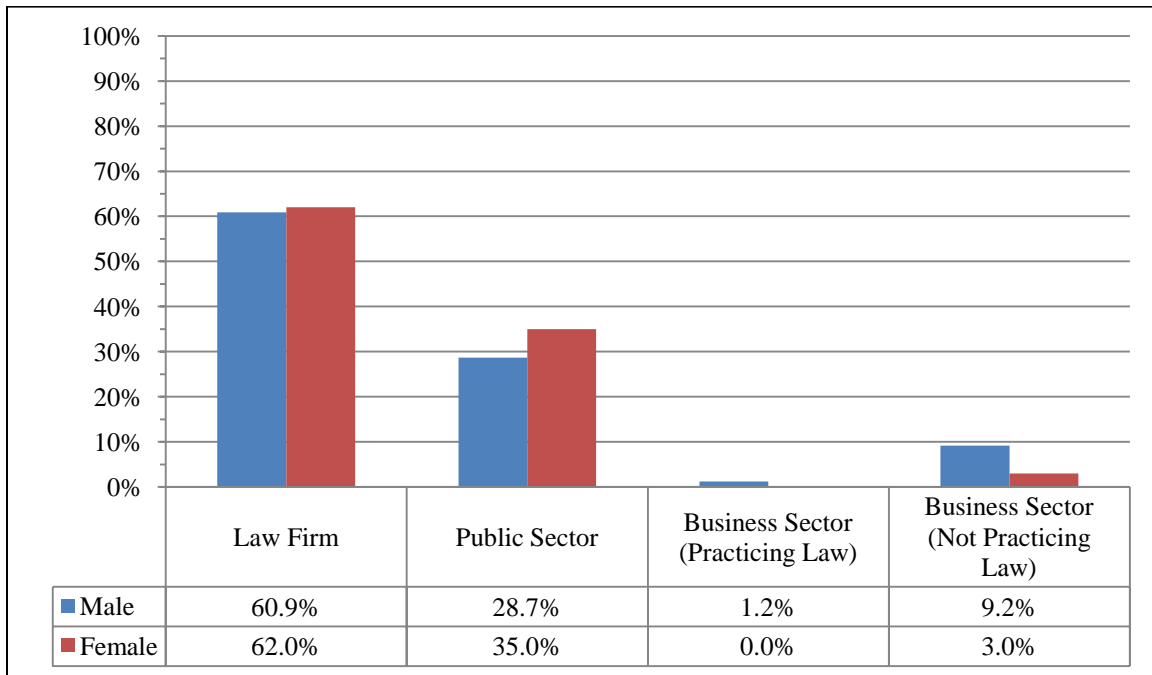
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 4.2 First Job Post-HLS—1985 Cohort



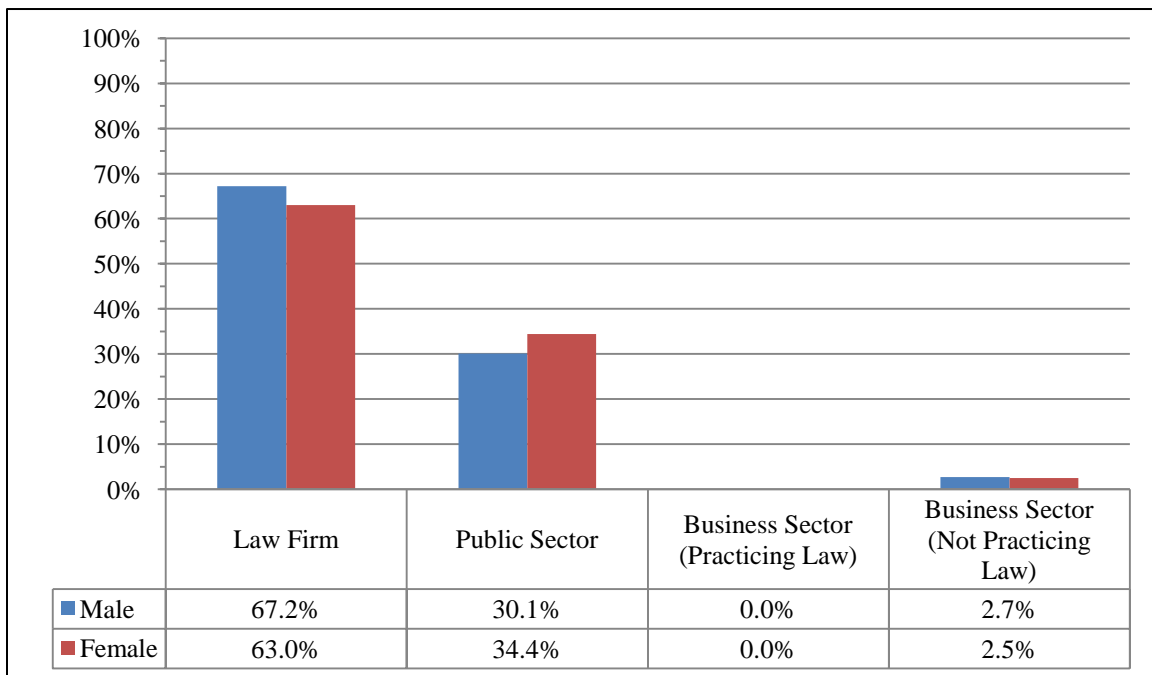
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 4.3 First Job Post-HLS—1995 Cohort



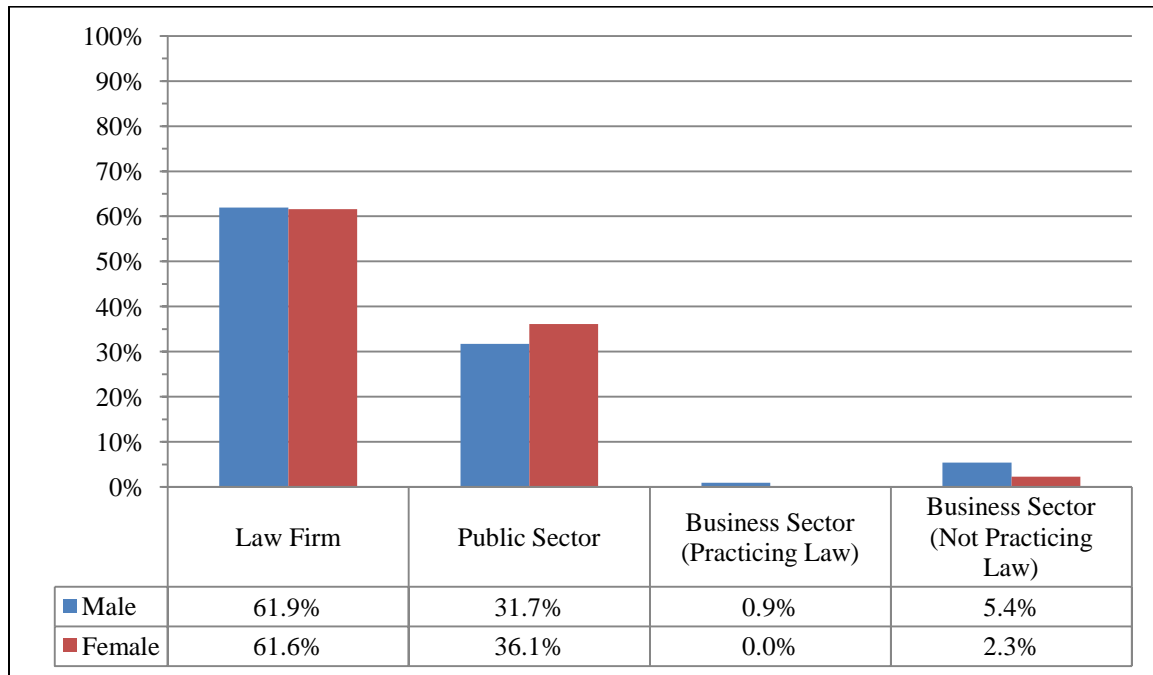
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 4.4 First Job Post-HLS—2000 Cohort



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 4.5 First Job Post-HLS—Across Cohorts



Source: HLS Career Study

Employment sector and grades

As indicated above, grades are relevant both as a mark of educational achievement and as a signal in the employment market. With respect to the latter, it is commonly believed that grades are particularly important in the entry-level market, with students with the highest grades able to have their pick of potential employers. We therefore wanted to know how grades affected the entry-level employment market for HLS graduates. When we conducted this analysis, three important trends emerged. First, those entering the public sector displayed slightly higher cumulative grade point averages than those entering law firms. This is true for both women and men. The grade differential also holds across all four cohorts, and is statistically significant for the 1995 and 2000 cohorts. Second, with few exceptions, there were no significant differences between the cumulative grade point averages of women and men going into all sectors across all cohorts. In 1985, however, men had significantly higher cumulative grades than women in the law firm and public interest sectors. Similarly, men entering the sector of business not practicing law also had higher grades than women entering this sector. By the class of 2000, however, there were no significant differences in the cumulative grades of women and men entering into any sector of the profession.

TABLE 4.3 First Job—Average Cumulative Grades by Employment Sector

	Male	Female	Total	P-Value
1975				
Law Firm	4.5	4.3	4.5	p=0.28
Public Sector	4.6	4.3	4.6	p=0.48
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	4.8		4.8	
Business Sector (Non-Law)	3.9		3.9	
1985				
Law Firm	5.2	4.5	4.9	p≤0.00*
Public Sector	5.3	4.8	5.1	p≤0.05*
Business Sector (Non-Law)	5.1	4.7	5.0	p=0.36
1995				
Law Firm	5.0	5.1	5.1	p=0.54
Public Sector	5.6	5.5	5.6	p=0.68
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	4.1		4.1	
Business Sector (Non-Law)	5.9	5.3	5.8	p≤0.00*
2000				
Law Firm	5.3	5.3	5.3	p=0.99
Public Sector	5.5	5.7	5.6	p=0.41
Business Sector (Non-Law)	5.0		5.0	

*Denotes a statistically significant result at the 5 percent confidence level. Source: HLS Career Study Survey. Note: A+=8; A=7; A-=6; B+=5; B=4; B-=3; C=2; D=1; F=0

Section 5—Career Trajectories and Transitions

As noted in the Introduction, law schools are normally very good at knowing where their students work directly after graduation, but are typically less knowledgeable about where graduates are ten, twenty, or more years into their careers. This section focuses specifically on what happens to HLS graduates beyond their first-job post-HLS, looking at career trajectories and transitions. As the data indicates, where HLS graduates begin their careers is likely simply a first stop along a much longer and more varied career trajectory.

Current employment status

One can see this variation by simply comparing the current employment of the respondents to our survey to their first jobs. As indicated above, virtually all HLS graduates across both cohorts and gender worked full-time upon graduation. As Table 5.1 indicates, with respect to current employment, this percentage changes significantly for both of these variables. Not surprisingly, the class of 1975 has the lowest percentage of those working full-time (75 percent). Given that these respondents were 35 years out of law school, many are undoubtedly in or nearing retirement. But even the in the class of 2000, only 84 percent were working full-time, with ten percent not in the paid workforce. Moreover, there are strong gender differences within these general trends. Across all cohorts, a significantly higher percentages of men reported being in the full-time work force than women. Even for the class of 2000, where 98 percent of HLS women were employed full-time 9 months after graduation, less than 10 years later this percentage drops by nearly a quarter to 75 percent—with 12 percent reporting being out of the paid work force. Men, however, experience no similar decline. With the exception of the class of 1975, where both men and women have entered full or partial retirement in significant numbers, over 90 percent of men continue to work full-time, with over 94 percent of those in the class of 2000 in the full-time workforce.

Significantly, this trend towards HLS women working part-time—or leaving the workforce altogether—mirrors national trends. Thus, AJD 3 found that approximately 12 years out of law school, 76 percent of women in the sample worked full-time (compared to 96 percent of men), with 15 percent working part-time (compared to 3 percent of men), and 9 percent not in the paid work force (compared 2 percent of men). With respect to the likelihood of leaving the full time workforce, therefore, the women in the HLS cohorts we studied appear to be no different than the female graduates of other law schools. In Section 10 below, we will return to the impact that children may have on whether a respondent remains in the full time workforce.

TABLE 5.1 Current Job—Employment Status

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
Full-Time	77.6%	138	61.9%	21	75.1%	160
Part-Time	7.8%	14	14.3%	5	8.9%	19
Not in Paid Workforce	14.6%	26	23.8%	8	16.1%	34
1985						
Full-Time	90.6%	99	66.8%	55	80.4%	154
Part-Time	5.2%	6	20.3%	17	11.7%	22
Not in Paid Workforce	4.2%	5	12.9%	11	7.9%	15
1995						
Full-Time	94.9%	80	59.7%	43	78.5%	123
Part-Time	5.1%	4	23.5%	17	13.7%	21
Not in Paid Workforce	0.00%	0	16.8%	12	7.8%	12
2000						
Full-Time	94.3%	70	74.9%	64	83.9%	134
Part-Time	0.0%	0	13.0%	11	7.0%	11
Not in Paid Workforce	5.7%	4	12.0%	10	9.1%	15

Source: HLS Career Study

Current employment sector

Similar patterns emerge when comparing first versus current employment sectors. Thus, across all cohorts, there is a general migration of HLS graduates out of the law firm sector. For example, 57 percent of the 1985 cohort entered law firms as their first job post-HLS (55 percent of men; 59 percent of women). By the time we surveyed these graduates, the number working in law firms had dropped to 37 percent overall (44 percent of men; 26 percent of women). This trend holds for all four of the cohorts examined. It is also consistent with results reported in AJD. Thus, in AJD 1, just under 70 percent of respondents worked in law firms 2-3 years after law school, with a quarter in the public sector and just under 10 percent in business. By AJD 3 the percentage of respondents who were working in law firms 10-12 years after graduation had dropped to approximately 50 percent, with the rest working in government (30 percent) or business (20 percent, whether practicing law or not).

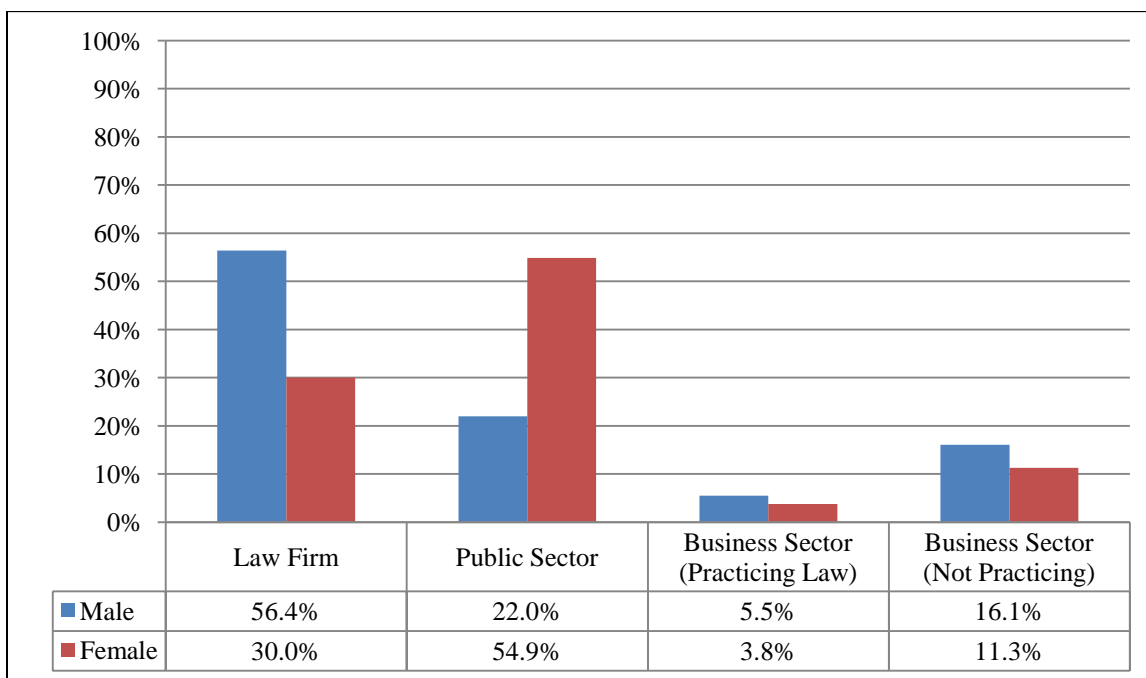
As with the trend away from full-time employment discussed above, however, there are important gender differences. While both men and women have migrated away the law firm sector, women have done so at higher rates than men. This is true for all cohorts until 2000, where women and men left the law firms sector at virtually equal—and equally high—rates. This finding provides some support for diversity advocates who argue that many of the same factors that have traditionally led women to leave large law firms are now causing men to leave as well.

To the extent that this trend continues, it has important implications for the ability of law firms to attract and retain talented lawyers. The findings we present in Section 11 on Dimensions of Satisfaction are also relevant to this issue.

There are also important cohort effects with respect to public sector employment—effects that also highlight important differences in the careers of female and male graduates. With the exception of the class of 2000, the percentage of men currently working in the public sector is significantly smaller than those who initially entered this area. (In 2000 the percentage of men working in the public sector was the same for first and current jobs.) By contrast, the percentage of women in the public sector increased from first to current jobs across all cohorts. As a result, although much has changed in the world of law practice since the women who graduated from Harvard Law School in the 1950s and 1960s, the fact that female graduates are still more likely than their male counterparts to end up working in the public sector has not.

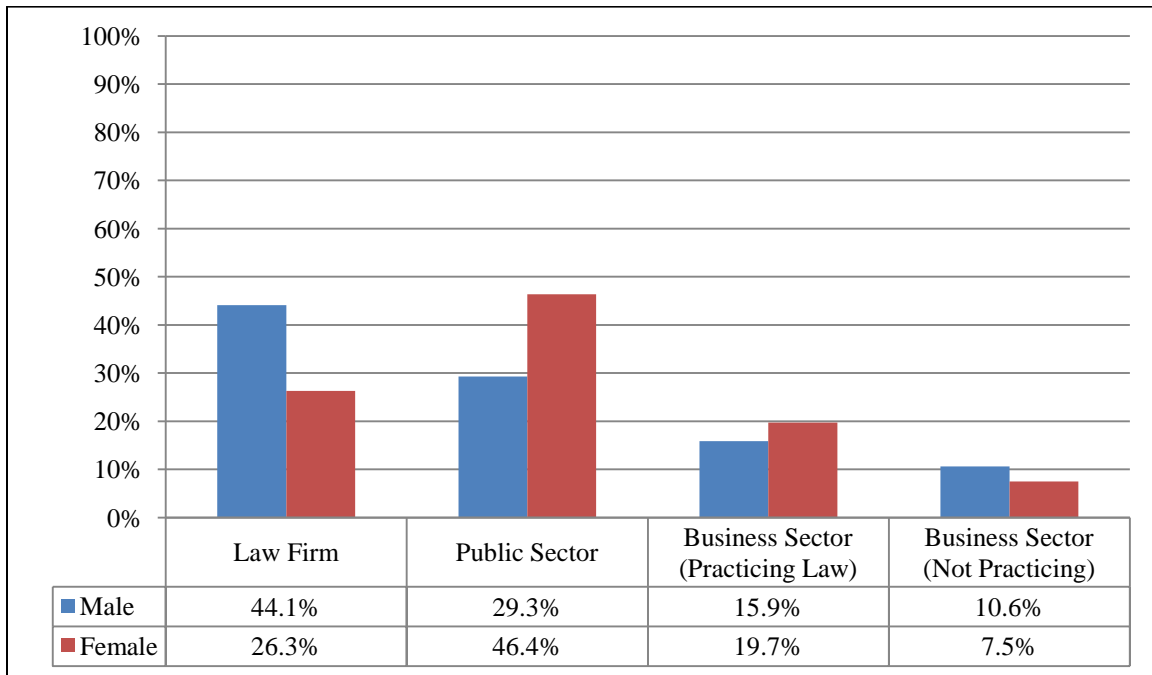
What has changed, however, is the likelihood that all Harvard graduates will pursue careers in the business sector. Across all cohorts, there has been a steady migration of both female and male graduates into the business sector, with the highest percentage of those currently working in this sector in the class of 1995. Once again, there is an important gender difference. Although both men and women have moved into the business sector, men are significantly more likely to do so in positions where they do not practice law. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to hold jobs in the business sector where they still practice law, primarily as in-house counsel.

FIGURE 5.1 Current Job—1975 Cohort



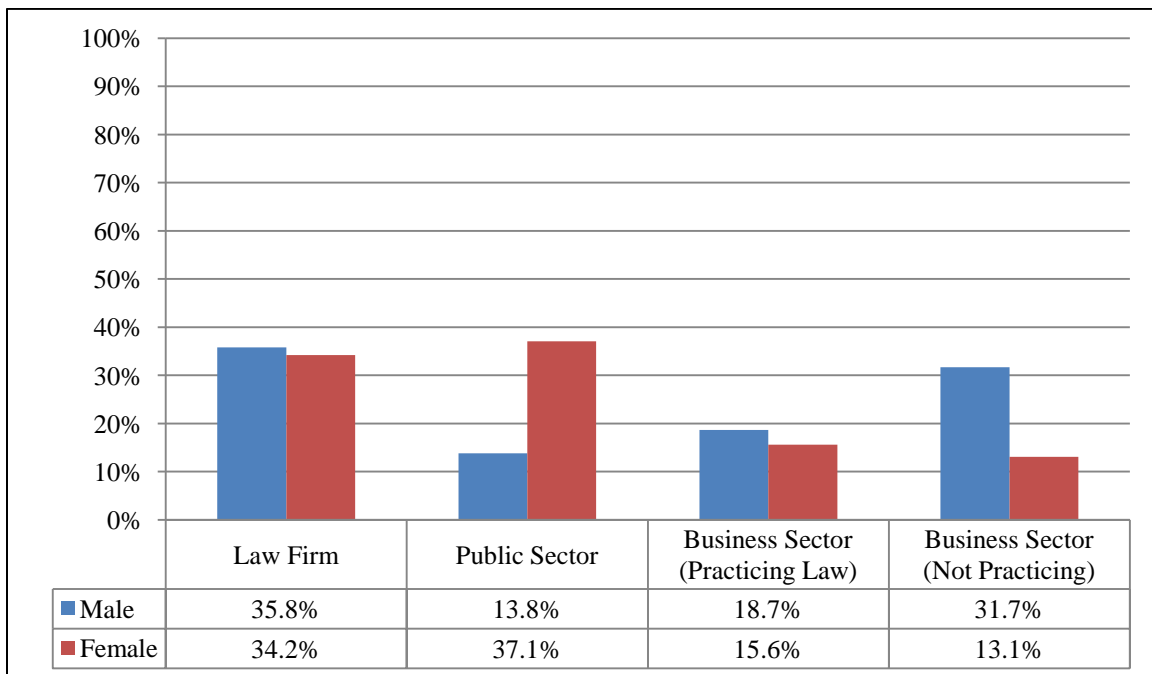
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 5.2 Current Job—1985 Cohort



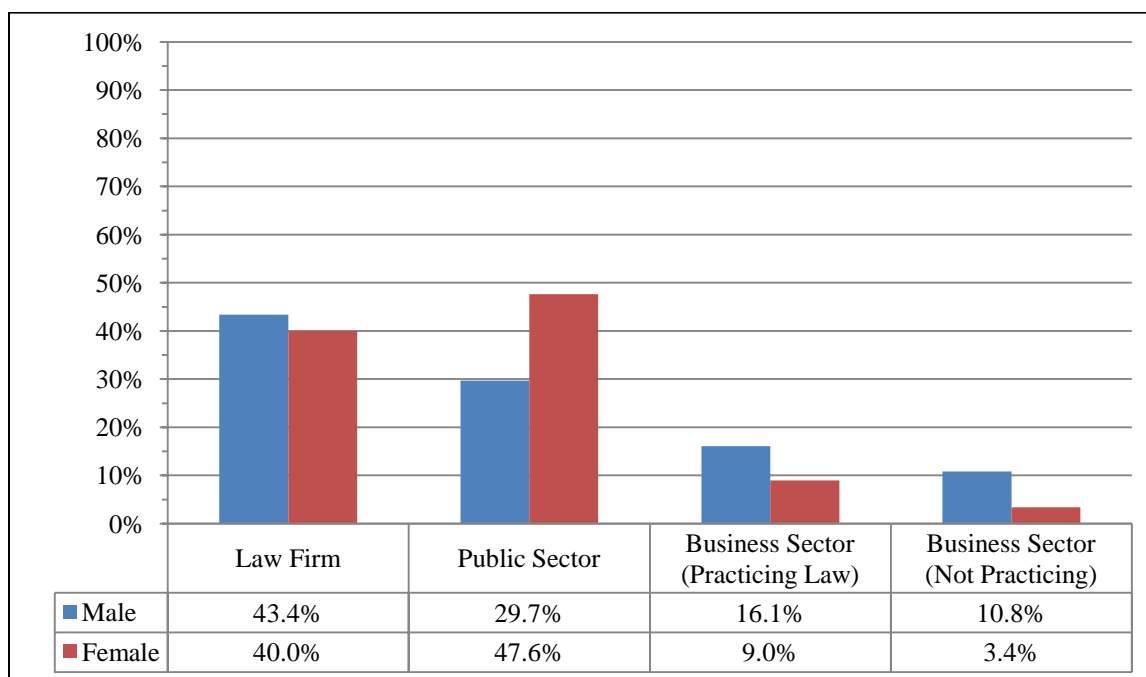
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 5.3 Current Job—1995 Cohort



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 5.4 Current Job—2000 Cohort



Source: HLS Career Study

Trajectories and transitions

Comparing first jobs with current positions, of course, only provides a snapshot of the bookends of a legal career. Within these bookends, there is considerable variation and complexity. In order to get a sense of the full scope of graduates' careers, we asked respondents about the total number of employers for whom they had worked since graduation, as well as the number of years in which they worked in each of the four employment sectors. Table 5.2 reports the average number of jobs held by women and men in each cohort. Although women in the class of 1975 changed jobs more frequently than men, the number of job changes becomes more or less equal over time, with female and male graduates from the class of 2000 experiencing the same number of transitions. Both women and men in this most recent cohort, however, appear to be experiencing more job mobility than their counterparts in earlier cohorts. Thus, whereas over the course of 40-year careers members of the 1975 cohort had, on average, 3.2 employers, in just 10 years, those in the 2000 cohort have already had an average of 2.7 employers. These numbers are consistent with AJD, which found that many lawyers had as many as 4 different jobs in the first 12 years of their careers.

Respondents were also asked how long they intended to stay in their current job (Table 5.3). Across all cohorts, men were more likely than women to intend to stay with their current employer for more than 5 years. While that gender gap narrows over time, it never completely disappears. By comparison, women were more likely than men to report that they intended to stay with their current employer 3-5 years. With respect to the 2000 cohort, the overall percentage of men and women in the "currently looking for a job or up to 2 years" category—24 percent—is the exact same percentage reporting similar intentions in AJD.

Once again, the similarity between HLS and AJD respondents underscores that job mobility among young lawyers is a phenomenon that is likely to cut across traditional law school hierarchies.

There are also potentially important differences between women and men with respect to long term career plans. As Table 5.4 illustrates, respondents were asked their career plans across three time periods—entering law school, leaving law school, and today. Across all three stages, women reported wanting to work in the public sector at higher rates than men. Men, on the other hand, consistently reported wanting to work in law firms and business (not practicing law) at higher rates than women. As we indicate in Section 8, to the extent that men and women act on these differing intentions, it has important repercussions for their respective incomes. Finally, men and women displayed largely similar percentage with respect to wanting to work in business (practicing law).

Looking at the shifts between those three time periods, both men and women are more likely to report an intention to work at a law firm upon leaving law school than they did when they started their legal education. This is likely due to the fact that most HLS graduates in fact enter law firms as their first job upon graduation. However, the number of HLS graduates who currently intend to work in a law firm has dropped significantly from what they reported wanting to do upon graduation. Women display an especially significant gap of almost 35 percent between the 49 percent who reported wanting to work in a law firm after graduation and the 15.4 percent who expressed this intention at the time of the survey.

With respect to long term career plans, there is a consistent increase in the percentage of men wanting to go into business (practicing law) and business (not practicing law). Once again, we will return in section 8 to the potential financial consequences of this gender disparity.

Finally, it is interesting to note that over 22 percent of men and 35 percent of women reported that they had no particular long term career plans at the time they filled out the survey.

TABLE 5.2 Average Number of Employers

Cohort	Male	Female	Total
1975	3.2	4.4	3.4
1985	3.6	3.7	3.6
1995	3.4	3	3.3
2000	2.7	2.7	2.7

Note: Respondents were asked the following question: “Since graduating from HLS, many [Professional employers have you had?]”. Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 5.3 Current Long-Term Career Plans

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
Already looking or up to 2 years	18.2%	24	32.4%	8	20.4%	32
3-5 years	24.6%	33	36.3%	9	26.4%	42
More than 5 years	57.2%	77	31.2%	8	53.1%	84
1985						
Already looking or up to 2 years	18.0%	17	27.7%	17	21.8%	35
3-5 years	14.1%	14	31.1%	20	20.8%	33
More than 5 years	67.9%	66	41.2%	26	57.4%	92
1995						
Already looking or up to 2 years	28.0%	22	14.5%	8	22.3%	30
3-5 years	10.9%	9	26.4%	15	17.5%	24
More than 5 years	61.1%	48	59.1%	34	60.3%	82
2000						
Already looking or up to 2 years	26.4%	16	22.8%	16	24.5%	32
3-5 years	8.1%	5	16.1%	11	12.3%	16
More than 5 years	65.5%	40	61.2%	42	63.2%	82

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 5.4 Long-Term Career Plans at Various Stage of Life

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Plans entering law school						
Law Firm	36.5%	188	22.5%	74	31.0%	262
Public Sector	29.2%	151	40.6%	133	33.6%	284
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	0.9%	5	0.9%	3	0.9%	7
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	4.5%	23	1.8%	6	3.5%	29
No Particular Plans / Other	28.9%	149	34.3%	113	31.0%	262
Plans leaving law school						
Law Firm	57.9%	296	49.0%	161	54.4%	457
Public Sector	22.6%	116	30.1%	99	25.5%	214
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	3.8%	19	4.1%	13	3.9%	33
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	6.7%	34	1.7%	6	4.7%	40
No Particular Plans / Other	9.0%	46	15.1%	50	11.4%	96
Plans today						
Law Firm	32.6%	162	15.4%	49	25.8%	211
Public Sector	20.9%	104	34.4%	110	26.2%	214
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	11.1%	55	8.7%	28	10.2%	83
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	13.0%	64	6.0%	19	10.2%	83
No Particular Plans / Other	22.5%	111	35.6%	114	27.6%	226

Source: HLS Career Study

Section 6—Alternatives to Full-Time Law Practice

Across all cohorts, the overwhelming majority of HLS graduates began their careers working full-time in jobs in which they practiced law. But as the last section demonstrates, as these graduates have moved through their careers, many have moved away from this traditional career path. In this section, we examine the careers of HLS graduates who are no longer in full-time law practice and consider whether there are gender differences within this group.

Employment status out of the profession

Table 6.1 shows the percentage of women and men within each cohort who are practicing law in their current jobs. Although the majority of graduates continue to practice law in their current positions, the percentage of those who do not has increased significantly from where it stood after graduation. Thus, in each class, less than 75 percent of respondents report practicing law in their current jobs—down from around 90 percent who reported doing so in their first job. This percentage is relatively constant across all cohorts, with the class of 1995 reporting the smallest percentage of graduates practicing law in their current jobs (67 percent). The class of 1995 is also the only one of the most recent three cohorts where there is a significantly greater percentage of men who are not practicing law in their current positions than women. As we indicated in Section 5 above, we will see in Section 8 that the large percentage of men not practicing law in this cohort has important implications for the overall compensation received by women and men in the class of 1995.

The same general pattern holds if we focus only on graduates who are working full-time. Only 72 percent of full-time workers report practicing law across all cohorts, as compared to 28 percent who report not practicing law. Women are slightly more likely to be in this latter category, with 30 percent of those in the full-time work force reporting that they do not practice law as compared to 26 percent of men. This pattern also holds for those in the part-time workforce, where 32.1 percent of women who work part-time do not practice law as compared to 27 percent of men.

The fact that the percentage of women practicing law in their current position is virtually identical for full-time and part-time workers suggests that one of the most commonly articulated stories about what happens to women lawyers in their careers may be less true for female HLS graduates. That is, it is often assumed that women lawyers who leave the full-time work force also leave the practice of law. This assumption, however, is not supported by our data. Rather, of those women who work part-time, nearly 70 percent self-identified as practicing law, roughly the same percentage reported by both women and men who continue to work full-time. Therefore, while female HLS graduates are more likely to move into part-time work than their male peers, they are no more likely to leave the practice of law than those women who continue to work full-time. This finding has important implications for both employers and law schools.

TABLE 6.1 Current Job—Practicing Law or Not

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
Non-Practicing	32.8%	50	26.3%	7	31.9%	57
Practicing	67.2%	103	73.7%	19	68.1%	122
1985						
Non-Practicing	19.8%	21	28.9%	21	23.5%	41
Practicing	80.2%	84	71.1%	51	76.5%	135
1995						
Non-Practicing	36.0%	30	28.3%	17	32.7%	47
Practicing	64.0%	53	71.7%	44	67.3%	97
2000						
Non-Practicing	20.8%	14	28.5%	21	24.8%	36
Practicing	79.2%	55	71.5%	54	75.2%	109
Total						
Non-Practicing	28.0%	115	28.2%	66	28.2%	181
Practicing	72.0%	295	71.8%	168	71.8%	463

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 6.2 Current Job—In the Full-Time Workforce by Practicing Law or Not

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Practicing Law	73.6%	318	69.7%	150	72.3%	467
Not Practicing Law	26.4%	114	30.3%	65	27.7%	179

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 6.3 Current Job—In the Part-Time Workforce by Practicing Law or Not

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Practicing Law	73.6%	39	67.9%	48	70.1%	87
Not Practicing Law	27.0%	14	32.1%	23	29.9%	37

Source: HLS Career Study

Reasons for Leaving the Practice of Law and Intentions to Return

Respondents reported a wide range of reasons for leaving the practice of law. In the process of filling out the survey, respondents were presented with a list of seven choices for why they left the practice of law, including not finding legal work interesting/challenging, not finding legal work ethically/socially fulfilling, dissatisfaction with the work/life balance, better financial rewards outside of law, always intending to leave the law, lack of legal jobs, and a residual category of “other” with the option to provide additional reasons. Of the listed choices, roughly equal proportions of men and women reported leaving the practice of law because they did not find the work interesting/challenging or that they always intended to leave for other opportunities. Women respondents were more likely than male respondents to report dissatisfaction with work/life balance or not finding legal work ethically/socially fulfilling.

The majority of both men and women who answered this question, however, chose to check “other” indicating they left the practice of law for a reason not listed among the answers provided. This provides strong indication of both the wide variety of reasons individuals leave the practice of law as well as the intensely personal nature of those decisions. Moreover, in looking at the specific reasons written in for the “other” category, many of these responses had a common theme. Rather than giving reasons that focused on the negative aspects about the practice of law, both male and female respondents in this category tended to frame their move away from law practice in terms of the positive attributes of their new non-legal jobs. The fact that so many respondents framed their decision to leave the practice of law in terms of the affirmative pull of non-legal jobs, as opposed to a reaction to negative features of their experience practicing law, has subtle but important implications for legal employers seeking to retain top talent—as well as for researchers trying to understand the significant migration of lawyers into positions where they do not practice law. We return to these issues in the Conclusion.

Although HLS graduates who have left legal practice therefore expressed a broad range of reasons for their decision, they were much more consistent in their view about whether they were likely to return to the practice of law at a future date. As Table 6.4 indicates, nearly 85 percent of respondents not practicing law reported that they were unlikely to return to legal practice in the future. This was true across all four cohorts and was independent of gender. Although the fact that such a large percentage of those currently not practicing law express a clear intention never to return is significant, the fact that both our sample and the national sample employed by AJD contains many examples of lawyers who have moved back and forth between jobs where they did, and did not, practice law suggests that there is more movement between “law” and “non-law” jobs than Table X appears to suggest.

TABLE 6.4 Likelihood of Returning to the Practice of Law

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Not likely	84.4%	119	83.5%	71	84.1%	190
Neutral	9.9%	14	8.2%	7	9.3%	21
Likely	5.7%	8	8.2%	7	6.6%	15

Note: Respondents were asked how likely they would be to return to the practice of law, answering on a 7 point Likert-scale from not at all likely (1) to very likely (7). Those responding 1, 2, or 3 were grouped as not likely. Those responding 4 were considered neutral. Those responding 5, 6 or 7 were grouped as likely. Source: HLS Career Study

The Value of Law School to Alternative Careers

Although almost a quarter of HLS graduates in our sample no longer practice law in their current job, and though the majority of those who have left the practice of law express a clear intention never to return, the overwhelming majority of these respondents still state that they value their law-school experience. More than three-quarters of respondents no longer practicing law would still obtain a law degree. This finding is broadly consistent across all cohorts and gender, although men were slightly more likely to hold this view than women (78 percent to 73 percent). This finding provides strong support for the widely held view that attending law school has value even for those who end up not practicing law. We return to the relevance of this finding for today's law students in the Conclusion.

TABLE 6.5 Law School as Valuable by Practicing Law or Not

	Male	Female	Total
1975	%	%	%
Practicing Law	94.0%	92.7%	93.8%
Not Practicing	82.0%	85.7%	82.6%
1985			
Practicing Law	85.6%	89.1%	86.7%
Not Practicing	77.8%	85.0%	80.6%
1995			
Practicing Law	94.3%	94.5%	94.4%
Not Practicing	53.9%	43.5%	51.0%
2000			
Practicing Law	89.5%	85.7%	87.8%
Not Practicing	100.0%	78.9%	87.6%
Total			
Practicing Law	90.9%	90.5%	90.7%
Not Practicing	78.4%	73.3%	75.5%

Source: HLS Career Study

Section 7—Law Firms

Although HLS graduates pursue a broad range of careers in all sectors of the legal profession and in many fields outside of the traditional practice of law, it is nevertheless true that private law firms remain a highly significant sector of employment for HLS graduates from across all the cohorts. As noted in Section 4, the vast majority of HLS graduates begin their careers there, and, as Section 5 makes clear, at least a third of all graduates reported still working in law firms at the time of the survey. Moreover, much of the discussion about gender inequality in the legal profession has centered on the experience of women in law firms. We therefore pay particular attention to the experience of female and male graduates working in this sector. As indicated below, the experience of HLS graduates confirms and enriches prevailing accounts of the experience of women in law firms.

Before proceeding, however, it is important to emphasize the heterogeneity of the “law firm” category as we use it in this study. As indicated in the Introduction, this category includes law firms of all sizes, including solo practitioners who constitute 14 percent of respondents in this category. (As indicated, on some occasions we have excluded solo practitioners from our analysis.) Although the category is therefore broad, the overwhelming majority of HLS graduates in this sector work in “large” law firms of more than 100 lawyers. This is particularly true of later cohorts.

Nature of position—partnership

Much of the attention with respect to women in law firms has understandably focused on the question of whether women are making partner at the same rate as men. Our data sheds light on this issue, but also underscores that partnership rates do not tell the full story about gender equality in law firms.

Across all cohorts, just over 60 percent of HLS graduates working in law firms report their current position as being “equity partner/shareholder.” As the literature would predict, men (66 percent) are more likely to report being equity partners than women (48 percent), though this difference is not statistically significant. The overall percentage of female partners in our sample is also far higher than typically reported about women in law firms generally.

Unsurprisingly, there is a significant cohort effect, with members of the class of 1975 (85 percent) far more likely than those from the class of 2000 (25 percent) to be equity partners. When combining these cohort and gender effects, the picture becomes more complex. As one would predict, men in the class of 1975 are more likely to be equity partners than women (71 percent versus 63 percent), as are members of the class of 1995, where 69 percent of men report being equity partners as compared to 52 percent of women. In the classes of 1985 and 2000, however, the percentages of male and female equity partners are roughly equal.

The picture is equally complex with respect to non-equity partners. Consistent with broader trends, there is a significant increase in the number of respondents reporting that they are non-equity partners in their current job, beginning with the 1995 cohort. This is likely both because of the age of the members of these cohorts and the recent rise of non-equity partnerships generally.

The overall percentage of non-equality partners jumps from just under 9 percent and 12 percent for the 1975 and 1985 cohorts, respectively, to over 23 percent for the 1995 cohort and almost 25 percent for the 2000 cohort.

Examining current partnership data by gender, we find that, although women were slightly more likely to be non-equity partners than men across all cohorts, this difference is not statistically significant. Thus, while our data therefore tracks national patterns in the number of HLS graduates moving into non-equity partnerships, it does not confirm reports elsewhere that women are more likely than men to hold these positions. When combined with the relatively large percentage of women in our sample who report being equity partners, this finding might be read to suggest that HLS women are having more success in their law firm careers than their peers from other institutions. Although there may be some truth to this conclusion, as the next sections indicate, it would be a mistake to assume that this means that these women have not faced significant adversity in their careers—or that they are doing as well as their male counterparts in law firms.

TABLE 7.1 Equity Partners Versus All Other Lawyers (Law Firms)

	Male		Women		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
1975						
Equity Partner/Shareholder	85.7%	65	71.4%	5	84.5%	70
All Other Lawyers	14.3%	11	28.6%	2	15.5%	13
1985						
Equity Partner/Shareholder	65.7%	27	69.9%	12	66.9%	39
All Other Lawyers	34.3%	14	30.1%	5	33.1%	19
1995						
Equity Partner/Shareholder	70.7%	23	52.4%	11	63.3%	34
All Other Lawyers	29.3%	9	47.6%	10	36.7%	20
2000						
Equity Partner/Shareholder	21.8%	7	28.1%	8	24.8%	15
All Other Lawyers	78.2%	24	71.9%	20	75.2%	44
Total						
Equity Partner/Shareholder	66.1%	117	48.1%	37	61.0%	155
All Other Lawyers	33.8%	60	51.4%	40	39.0%	99

Note: Solo practitioners are excluded from this analysis. The “All Other Lawyers” category includes non-equity partners, of counsel, contract lawyers, and associates and other. Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 7.2 Equity Partners Versus Non-Equity Partners

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
1975						
Non-Equity Partner	10.0%	7	0.0%	0	9.3%	7
Equity Partner/Shareholder	90.0%	65	100%	5	90.7%	70
1985						
Non-Equity Partner	10.6%	3	14.0%	2	11.6%	5
Equity Partner/Shareholder	89.4%	29	86.0%	13	88.4%	42
1995						
Non-Equity Partner	21.6%	6	24.8%	4	22.7%	10
Equity Partner/Shareholder	78.4%	22	75.2%	11	77.3%	33
2000						
Non-Equity Partner	55.5%	8	45.4%	6	50.5%	15
Equity Partner/Shareholder	44.5%	7	54.6%	8	49.5%	14
Total						
Non-Equity Partner	17.9%	26	25.5%	13	19.9%	39
Equity Partner/Shareholder	82.1%	119	74.5%	38	80.1%	157

Note: Solo practitioners are excluded from this analysis. Source: HLS Career Study

Hours worked

As Table 7.3 demonstrates, those employed full-time in law firms reported working an average of 49 hours a week, well above the traditional 40 hours a week job. This number is largely stable across all four cohorts. There is, however, an important difference between the hours worked by women and men—and it runs in the opposite direction to at least some conventional accounts of why women are less likely to succeed in law firms than men. According to these accounts, women typically work fewer hours than men, therefore making it more difficult for them to succeed in the increasingly competitive world of private law firm practice, where hourly billing is still the key metric of value. Contrary to this standard story, in our sample women in law firms on average worked more hours than men across all cohorts, with those in the class of 2000 working an additional 8 full hours—the equivalent of one normal work day—more than their male peers. Indeed, across our entire sample, women on average worked approximately four more hours a week than their male peers—52 versus 48. At least with respect to HLS graduates, therefore, the story that women tend to work fewer hours than men is more myth than reality. This differential input casts their relative success in achieving partnership in a somewhat different light. So do the differential rewards that they receive once they become partners.

TABLE 7.3 Average Hours Worked Per Week Within Law Firm (Full-Time)

	Male	Female	Total
1975	48.6	54.0	48.8
1985	44.5	47.8	45.4
1995	52.8	52.9	52.8
2000	45.4	53.4	48.9
Total	47.8	52.0	49.0

Source: HLS Career Study

Firm management

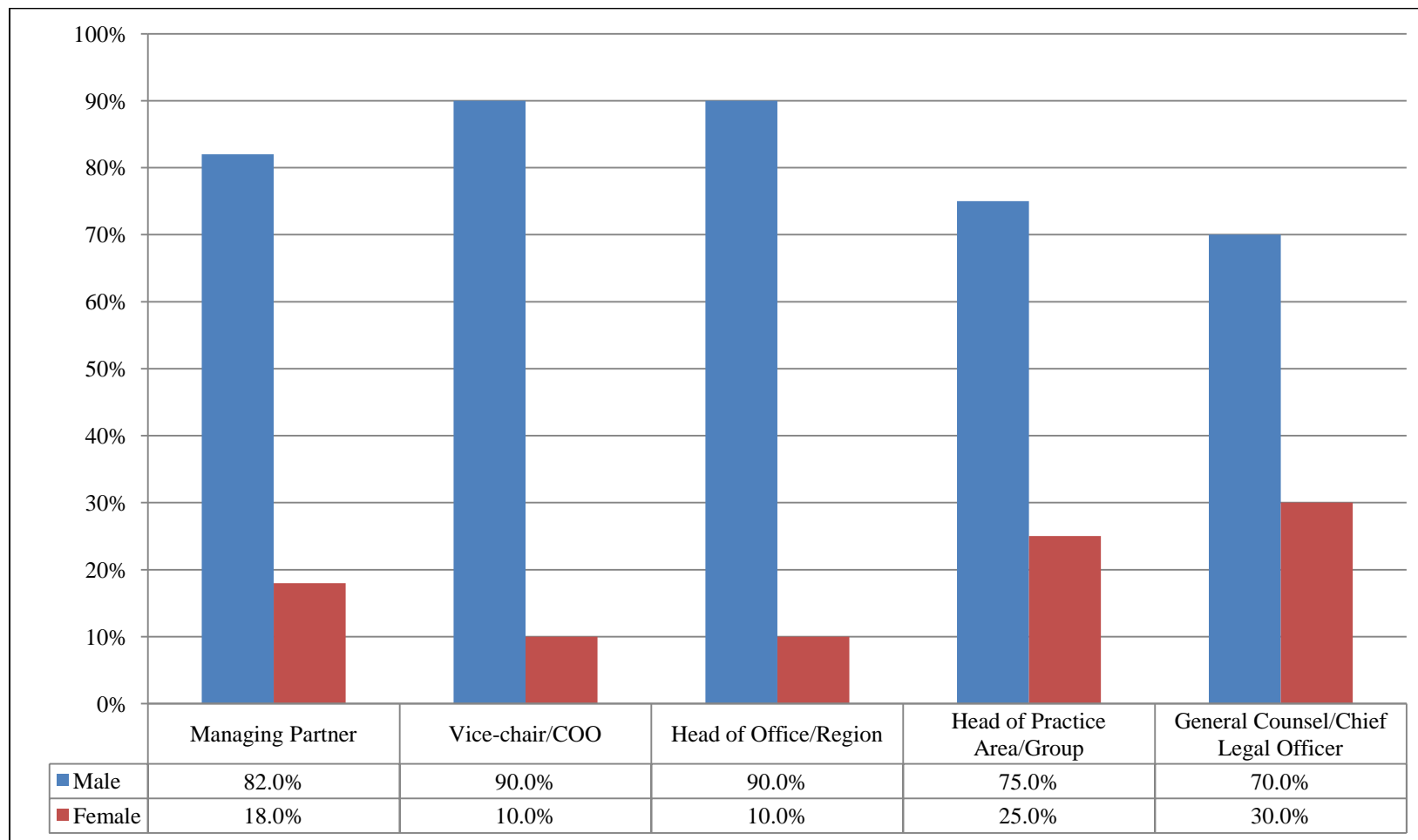
Research on the legal profession makes clear that in today's law firms making partner is just the beginning of a new competition to become a "partner with power" in the organization. One measure of whether a given partner has achieved this status is whether he or she holds an important leadership position within the firm. In examining this question, we found that there are clear and significant gender disparities between the management positions held by women and men in our sample. As Figure 7.1 depicts, male respondents were considerably more likely than female respondents to hold leadership positions within their law firms. Of respondents who ever held the title "managing partner," 82 percent were men. Similarly, 75 percent of those reporting that they had ever held the position of head of a practice group/area head were men. Although the percentages of women holding these positions in our sample is larger than studies of women's representation in these positions typically report, it remains low given the relatively higher percentage of HLS women who have become equity partners in the sample. The fact that women are less likely to hold these leadership positions has important consequences both for their own careers and for the governance, growth, and culture of the law firms in which they work.

A similar pattern emerges when we examine the committees that women and men serve on at the law firms in which they work. Although nearly all of the lawyers working in law firms in our sample reported serving on committees, there was a significant difference in the type of committee on which female and male respondents served. As any observer of law firms knows, not all committees are created equal, particularly with respect to prestige and influence. As Figure 7.2 makes clear, men traditionally have dominated what might be considered the "power" committees—committees dealing with things such as recruiting, promotions, compensation, and management. On the other hand, women were more likely to have served on the diversity and quality life committee. These committees undoubtedly serve an important function—one that arguably has become even more important in the years since 2010 when our data was collected, given the significant emphasis that many law firms are now placing on these issues. Nevertheless, it is also commonly believed that membership on the diversity or quality of life committee does not carry nearly the institutional power and prestige as service on the committees where men have tended to serve. Indeed, to the extent that service on the diversity or quality of life committee is important to a firm, it is likely that the partner who will get the most benefit from this importance is the one who serves as chair. Yet as Figure 7.3 underscores, even in these

committees where women tend to be more highly represented, relatively few women have been selected as chairperson compared to their male peers.

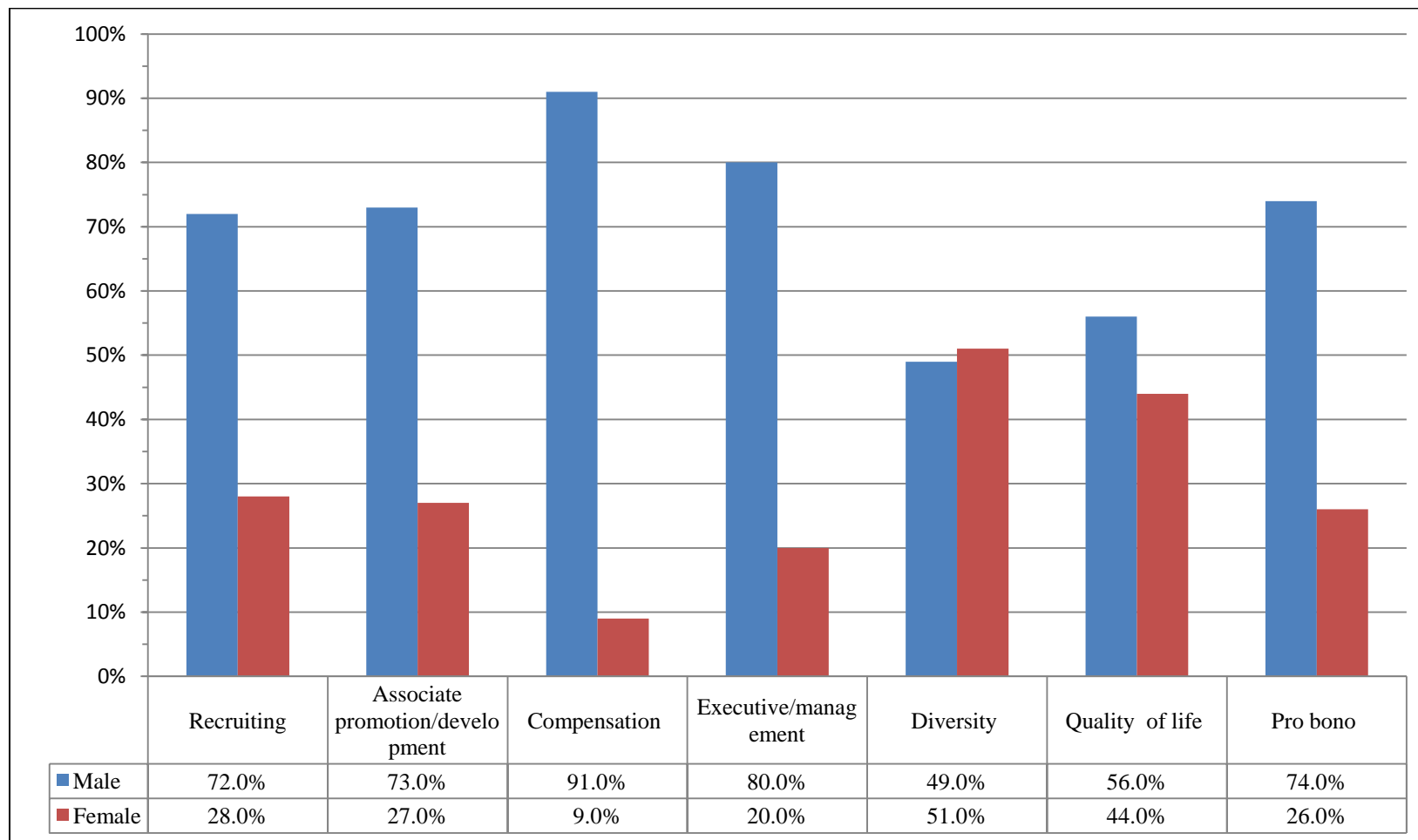
The lack of women in law firm leadership positions has important consequences for law firms as institutions, but also for the aspirations of women lawyers. Figure 7.4 examines law firm management aspirations by gender. Across all categories of potential leadership, men were significantly more likely than women to want to be involved in firm management. One might interpret this finding as an indication that HLS female graduates in fact do not want to hold leadership positions in firms, thereby explaining in part their historically low rates in holding these positions. However, as discrimination scholars have long argued, it is dangerous to attribute women's lack of participation in important positions to a "lack of interest"—particularly with respect to a group of women, such as those in our sample, who have consistently demonstrated their willingness and ability to succeed at the highest levels. It therefore may be more likely that the absence of women in leadership positions in law firms has conditioned what women view as realistic career opportunities in these organizations. Whichever is the case, the fact that so few women in our sample claim to aspire to leadership positions has troubling implications for the future leadership of law firms in a world in which women constitute an increasingly large percentage of the talent pool.

Figure 7.1 Law Firms—Leadership of Firm



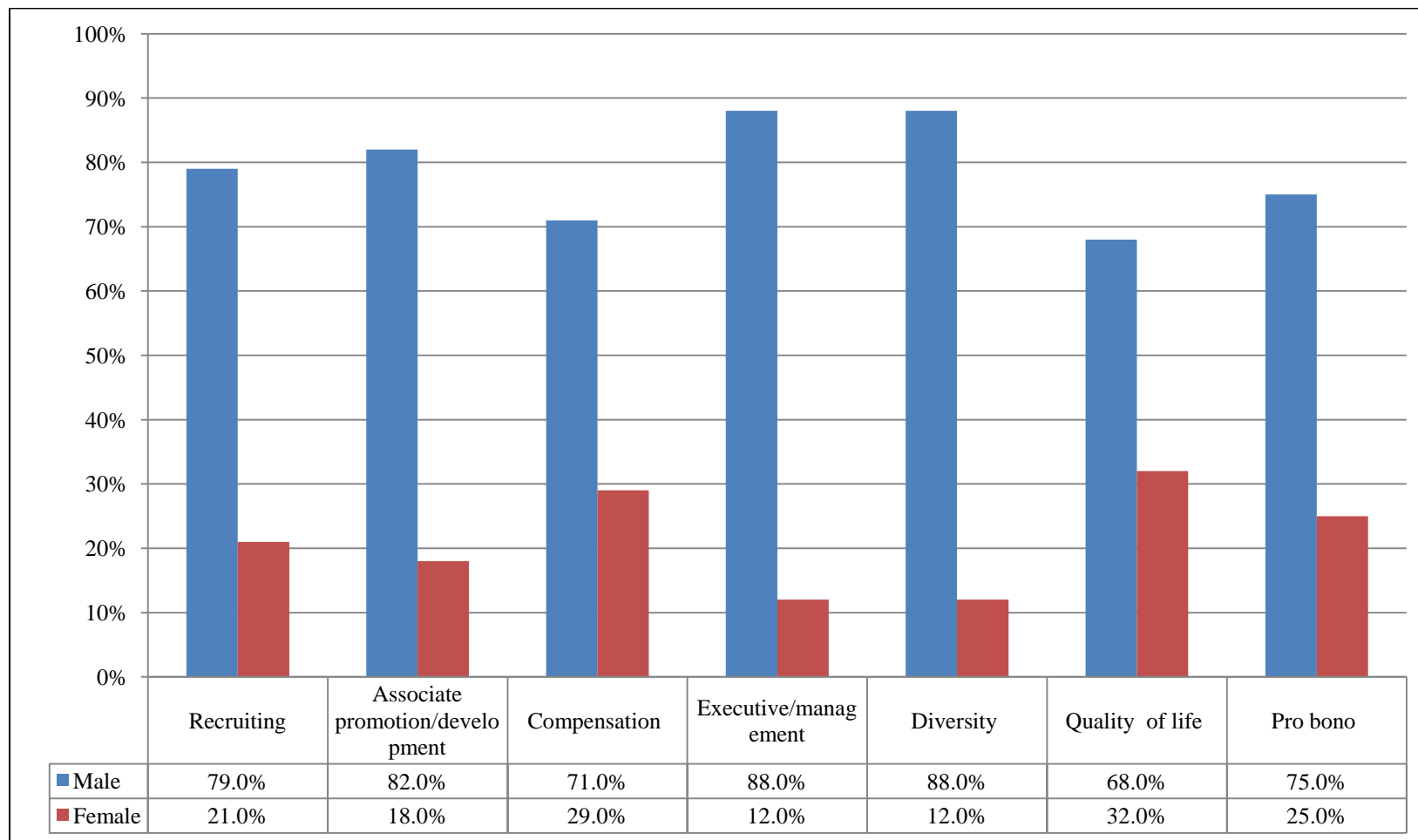
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 7.2 Law Firms—Service on Committees



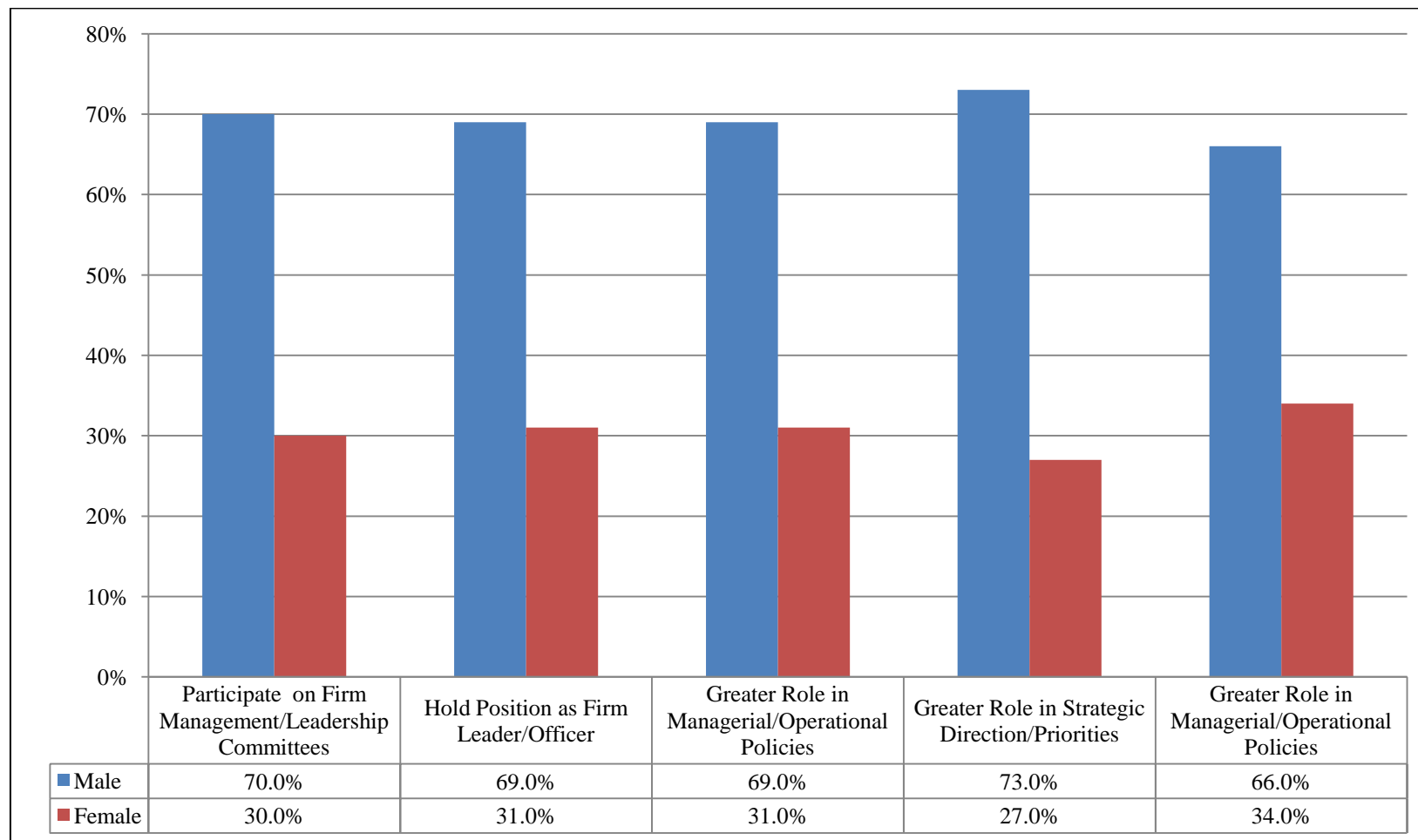
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 7.3 Law Firms—Committee Chairpersonship



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 7.4 Law Firms—Leadership Aspirations



Source: HLS Career Study

Predicting Law Firm Success

Finally, we examine another widely held belief about law firms: that success in these institutions is highly correlated with law school performance. Although less commonly stated today, this assumption has historically been implicitly relied upon to explain differences in the success of women and men in these institutions. If women are less likely to make partner than men, the implication is that they must have been less “qualified” to do so on the basis of their entering credentials.

We find no support for any aspect of this story in our data. Not only is there no difference between the grades of the women and men in our sample who have become partners in law firms, there is also no difference between the grades of those who have become partners in law firms and those who have not.

Our data, however, does provide modest support for a different theory about why women are less likely to make partner in law firms than men. According to this account, career success in a law firm is determined more by whether an associate receives mentoring and training during his or her early years of development than by how he or she performed in law school. Our data provides some support for this story. Although women who have become partners in law firms report having the same average number of mentors during their first five years of practice as men, women who have not become partners have had fewer mentors during this period than either women partners, or men who have not achieved partnership status.

TABLE 7.4 Average Cumulative Grades Whose Current Job Is at a Law Firm

	Male	Female	Total	P-Value
Non-Partner	5.1	5.0	4.9	0.61
Partner	5.0	5.0	5.0	0.98

The grade scale is the following: A+=8; A=7; A-=6; B+=5; B=4; B-=3; C=2; D=1; F=0. Source: HLS Career Study Survey

TABLE 7.5 Partner Versus Non-Partner by Number of Mentors

	Male	Female	Total
Non-Partner	2.8	2.5	2.7
Partner	2.8	2.8	2.8

Note: Number of mentors during the first 5 years of one’s professional career. Source: HLS Career Study

Section 8—Income

Virtually every employment study in nearly every sector of the economy finds that women earn significantly less than their male peers. Studies of the legal profession are no exception. In each wave of the *After the JD* study, for example, women earn significantly less than men in law firms and in business. Explaining these persistent gender disparities in income, however, has proven to be much more difficult than simply identifying them. In particular, there is often disagreement as to whether women and men are in fact doing the “same” work, whether the compensation data typically collected is reliable, and whether other, difficult to observe or quantify factors are actually driving the compensation gap

This study conforms to this general pattern. Although we asked respondents to give us detailed information about their income, including base salary, bonuses, profit sharing/equity distributions, stock options (present value), and any other compensation, many respondents provided only partial information or failed to answer the question altogether. This was particularly true with respect to questions about the respondent’s current income. At the same time, questions about starting salary required respondents to recall information that they may not have thought about for several decades. Given these limitations, we can only draw limited conclusions about gender disparities in earnings.

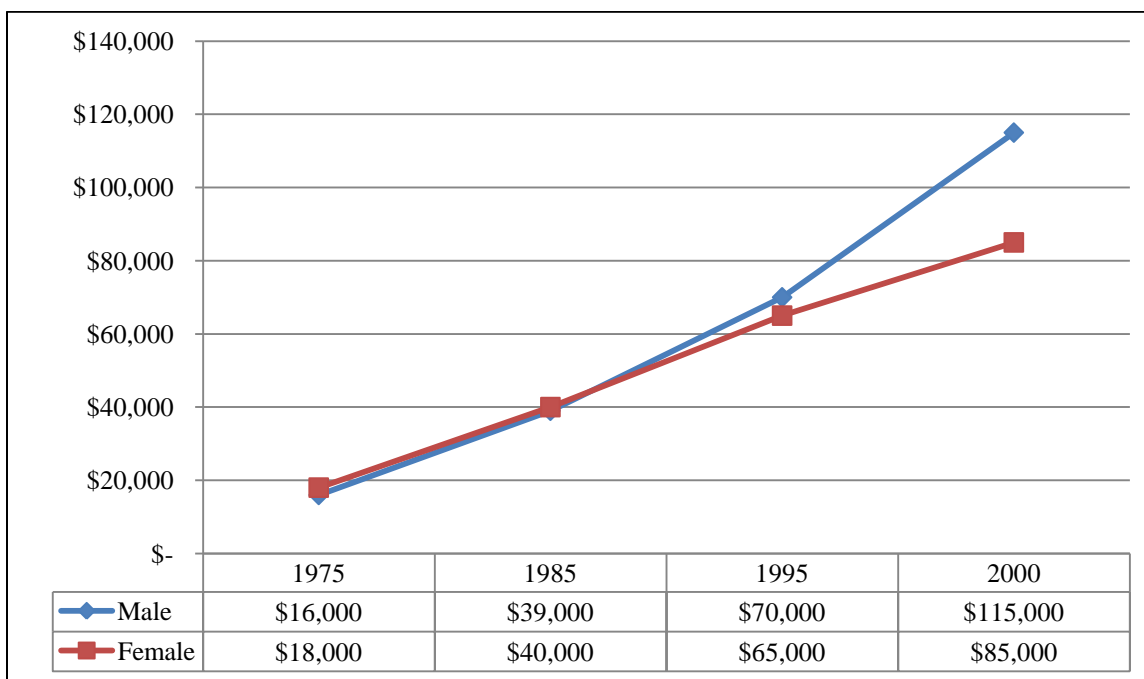
First Jobs

Unlike some sectors of the economy where there are significant gender disparities in entry level salaries, in the legal profession women and men typically begin their careers earning roughly equivalent salaries. Although there are significant differences among the starting salaries paid to lawyers entering different sectors of the profession, there tend to be far fewer distinctions in the compensation paid to entry-level lawyers within a particular sector. This is particularly true among large law firms, which all tend to pay the same “going rate,” at least within a particular geographic location. Given that the majority of HLS graduates across all cohorts begin their careers in this sector, one would expect the starting salaries of women and men to be roughly comparable.

Figure 8.1 documents that this general trend holds true for our sample—with one noticeable exception. With respect to the classes of 1975, 1985, and 1995, there is no substantial difference in the starting salaries earned by women and men—although the graph does dramatically illustrate how much starting salaries have increased for all HLS graduates during this period. This parity is shattered, however, for the class of 2000. In this most recent cohort, male graduates begin their careers making an average of almost \$115,000 a year, while their female counterparts earn just over \$85,000. This gap is partially explained by the fact, as expressed in Figure 4.4, that more women than men began their careers in the public sector, while men were more likely to join law firms. These differences, however, are not large enough to explain this disparity fully. Instead, we suspect (although we cannot prove) that women in our sample were less likely to join the largest and most prestigious law firms—firms often located in New York City and that tend to pay the highest starting salaries (often accompanied by bonuses)—than their male peers. AJD 1 also found gaps between the salaries of women and men in their first two years of legal practice, even when adjusting for the fact that women were more likely to begin their careers in

the public sector, and that even in those firms with more than 250 lawyers, women's salaries were only 93 percent of those of men. More research is needed to understand the causes of these income differences so early in the careers of the 2000 cohort in both HLSCS and AJD 1.

FIGURE 8.1 Median First Job Post-HLS Income (Full-Time)



Note: Figures include 2007 (pre-tax) total compensation from primary employer, including salary, bonus, profit sharing/equity distribution, stock options (present value) and any other compensation. Source: HLS Career Study

Current job income

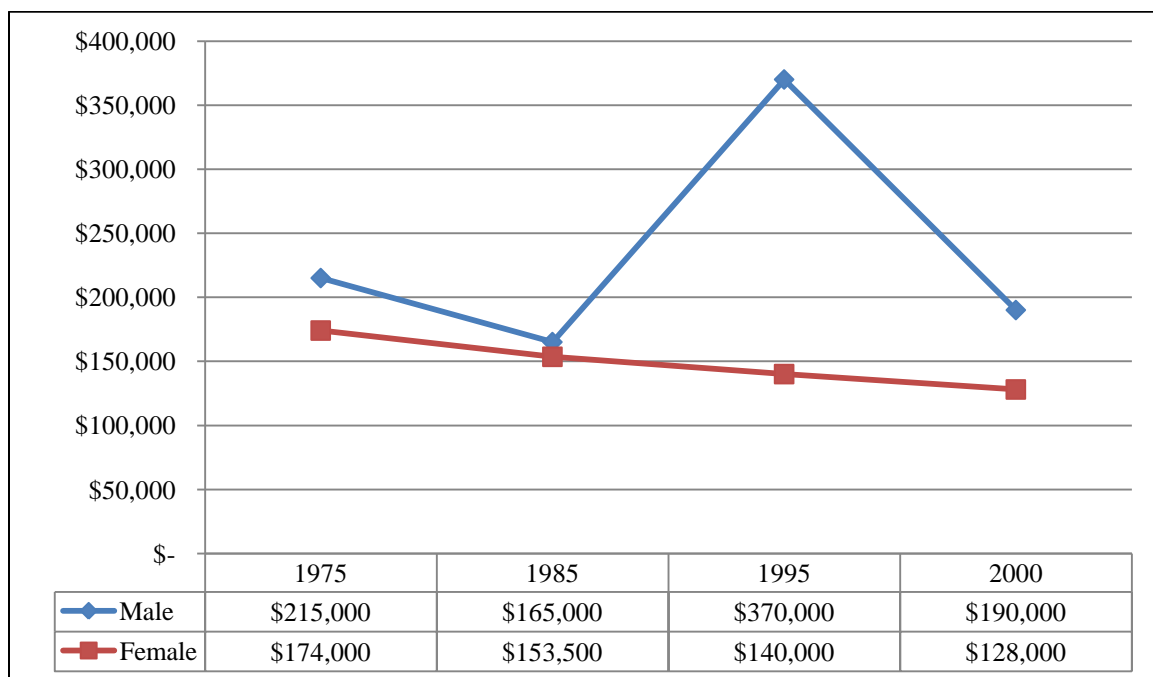
Although we therefore find some gender disparity in entry-level salaries, these gaps become far more pronounced when looking at current income. Figure 8.2 illustrates that there are substantial income differences between men and women across all four cohorts and employment sectors. This gap is narrowest for the class of 1985, and largest for the 1995 cohort, where women on average currently earn only 38 percent of the income earned by their male classmates.

Once again, our data gives us a window into understanding at least some of the causes of these income differences, but is not sufficient to allow us to draw any definitive conclusions. What evidence we have, however, casts doubt on some of the standard explanations for income inequality in the legal profession, while highlighting an alternative explanation that is likely to become even more important in the coming years. Although some of the disparity in income we observed is the result of male partners in law firms earning more than their female counterparts, this gap does not appear to be the major factor at work in producing the large disparities that we see in later cohorts. Indeed, consistent with our finding in Section 7 that HLS graduates are more likely than women in other studies to have become law firm partners, we do not find a substantial difference in the incomes of women and men in the law firm sector for the 1995 and 2000 cohorts, and women actually earn more on average than men in law firms in the 1975 and 1985

cohorts (although as previously noted, the number of respondents who supplied reliable income data across all cohorts is relatively small). Nor does the fact that a higher percentage of women than men currently work in the public sector explain the gender difference in income reported in Figure 8.2, particularly the large difference for the class of 1995. Instead, the most important explanatory factor appears to be the fact that men are far more likely than women to work in business (not practicing law), particularly in more recent cohorts, and that when they do, they earn total compensation that is far in excess of even their highly paid law firm peers.

One can see this most starkly with respect to the class of 1995. This cohort had a higher proportion of men working in business (not practicing law)—over 31 percent—than any of the other four cohorts. Moreover, most of those who work in this sector have jobs in investment banks, hedge funds, and other similar organizations known to provide their workers with extremely high compensation packages. As a result, men in the class of 1995 working in this sector had a median income of over \$400,000, with those with incomes in the 75 percentile taking home in excess of \$1.625 million. Women in the class of 1995 were far less likely to work in the business (not practicing law) sector than their male classmates, and therefore, less likely to earn such outsized compensation. In the coming years, if male HLS graduates continue to migrate into the business (not practicing law) sector in greater numbers than their female peers—a distinct possibility, given the data regarding career intentions highlighted in Section 6, and the common perception that the financial sector is even less welcoming and diverse than the legal profession—than it is quite likely that significant gender gaps in the income levels of HLS graduates will persist even if law firms and other legal employers remedy the many problems that still make it difficult for women to achieve financial parity in the context of practicing law.

FIGURE 8.2 Median Current Job Income (Full-Time)



Note: Figures include 2007 (pre-tax) total compensation from primary employer, including salary, bonus, profit sharing/equity distribution, stock options (present value) and any other compensation. Source: HLS Career Study

Section 9—Discrimination in the Workplace

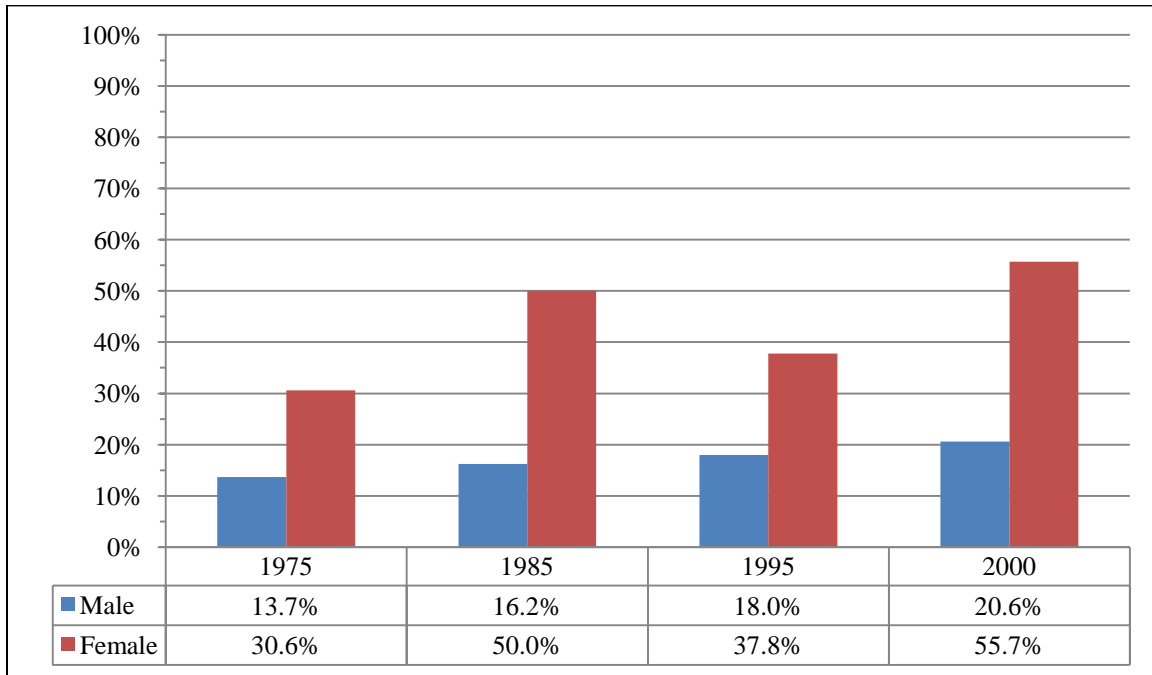
According to at least some accounts, overt gender discrimination is now largely a thing of the past. Our data, unfortunately, presents a more complex picture with respect to the experiences of HLS women and men in the four cohorts we surveyed. In order to explore the continuing effects of gender and other forms of discrimination, we asked respondents to report whether they had ever encountered any of a series of discriminatory experiences, such as being subjected to demeaning comments, missing out on a desirable assignment, or having a client or supervisor request someone else handle a matter, on the basis of a particular personal characteristic, such as gender, race/ethnicity, religion, disability, and/or sexual orientation. Figure 9.1 summarizes the percentage of female and male respondents in each cohort who reported experiencing one or more of these forms of discrimination. As the table makes clear, across all cohorts, women were far more likely than men to report having experienced discrimination in the workplace.

While this is hardly surprising, two aspects of the data reported in 9.1 are worthy of note. First, contrary to the prevailing narrative that discrimination is decreasing significantly over time, the percentage of HLS women who report having experienced discriminatory conduct has actually risen over the years, from a low of 30 percent for the class of 1975 to a high of over 55 percent for the class of 2000. Second, while the percentage of women reporting instances of discrimination remains consistently higher than the corresponding percentage of men making such reports, the latter percentage is also rising, from a low of 13.7 percent for the class of 1975, to a high of 20.6 percent for the class of 2000.

Given the nature of our data, we cannot determine whether these percentages represent an increase in the actual amount of discriminatory conduct or only in the perception of what conduct constitutes discrimination. It is possible, for example, that women in earlier classes were subjected to far more overt forms of sexism than later cohorts, but that the women in more recent cohorts have less tolerance for the subtler forms of discrimination that continue to exist. Similarly with respect to men, it is possible that the increasing diversity within the male population of HLS graduates in later cohorts has made the men of these cohorts more vulnerable to discriminatory behavior on a basis of personal characteristics other than gender than their predecessors in early cohorts.

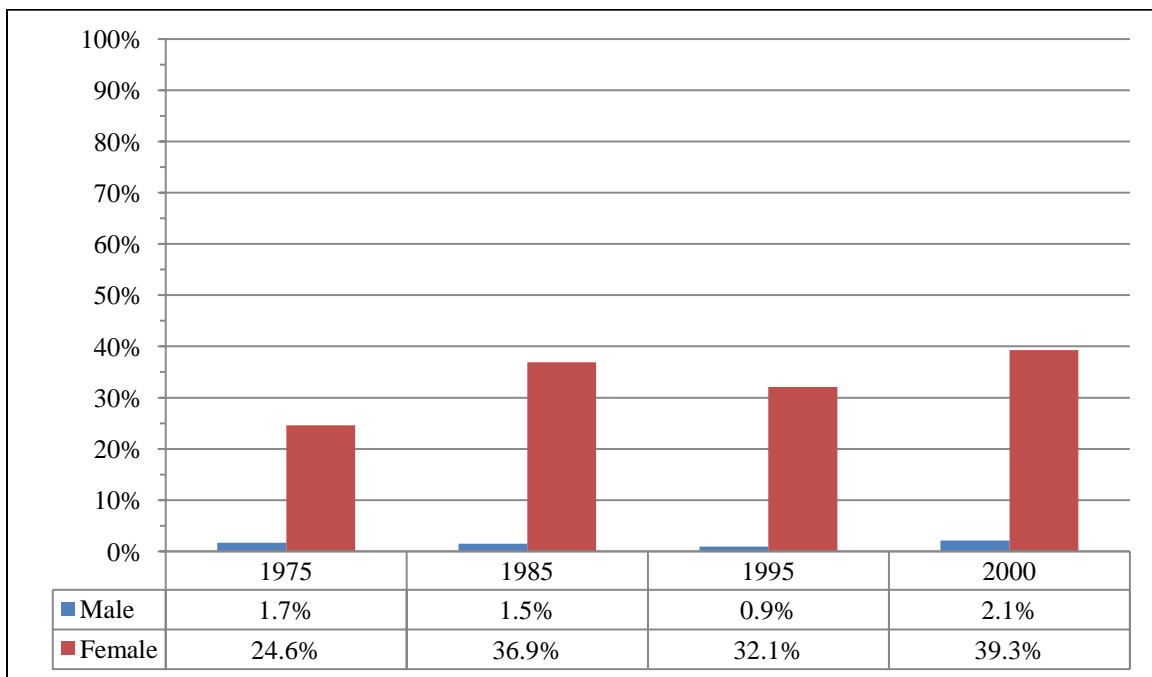
Figure 9.2, by focusing expressly on reports by women and men of gender-based discrimination provides some additional insight on these potential interpretations. The fact that the percentage of men claiming to have experienced gender-based discrimination remains both very small and relatively stable suggests that the growing diversity of the male population is causing the growth in the percentage of men reporting discrimination. On the other hand, although the population of female HLS graduates is also becoming more diverse over time, the fact that nearly 40 percent of the class of 2000 reports that they have experienced discrimination on the basis of gender underscores that those who had hoped that sexism would be a thing of the past by the second decade of the 21st century are likely to be disappointed.

FIGURE 9.1 Reported Instances of Discrimination—General



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 9.2 Reported Instances of Discrimination—Gender-based



Source: HLS Career Study

Section 10—Work/Life Integration

In 1829, Supreme Court Justice and former Harvard Law Professor Joseph Story famously described the law as “a jealous mistress that requires long and constant courtship.” Nearly two centuries later, many believe both the explicit and implicit messages imbedded in Story’s infamous quip continue to hold true. To achieve success, today’s lawyers must put in longer and more constant hours than ever before. And the women and men who do so still work in careers that were not only designed for a man, but for a man who has a wife who does not work. Indeed, more than a few women lawyers have been heard to exclaim in exasperation as they try to manage the competing demands of their careers and personal lives that, “What I really need is a wife!”

In this section, we examine how the women and men in our sample have attempted to integrate work and family commitments. We expressly do not use the word “balance” since, like any other tension among large and complex commitments, it is unlikely that these domains will ever be in equipoise.

Marriage

Table 10.1 reports the marital status of our sample by cohort. Two trends are worth noting. First, across all cohorts, women are less likely to be married than men. Second, apart from the 1975 cohort, women are less likely to have ever been married than men. For example for the 2000 cohort, almost a third of women reported having never been married, as opposed to just 5 percent of men. This percentage is significantly larger than the 10 percent of women from the nationally representative sample of lawyers who entered the bar in 2000 after 10 to 12 years of practice as reported in AJD 3. Indeed, HLS women from the 1985 and 1995 cohorts—women significantly older than those surveyed by AJD 3—were still more likely to have never been married (17 and 12 percent respectively) than those in the AJD 3 sample. Similarly, women from AJD 3’s cohort are also more likely than women from the HLS 2000 cohort to be married at the time of the survey—76 to 67 percent.

Table 10.2 considers these marriage rates in the context of whether a lawyer working in a law firm has become a partner. As the table illustrates, virtually all (94 percent) of the male law firm partners in our sample are married, compared to only two-thirds of female partners. A similarly large disparity exists with respect to partners who have never been married, with 18 percent of female respondents falling into this category as compared to 2 percent of male respondents. There is, however, no difference between the percentage of married women who have become partners in law firms (66 percent) versus those women who are not partners (65 percent).

TABLE 10.1 Current Marital Status

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
Never married	4.2%	7	9.5%	3	5.1%	11
Married / Civil union	84.4%	149	73.3%	26	82.5%	175
Living with domestic partner	2.4%	4	0.0%	0	2.0%	4
Divorced	6.6%	12	14.3%	5	7.9%	17
Separated	1.4%	3	2.9%	1	1.7%	4
Widowed	1.0%	2	0.0%	0	0.8%	2
1985						
Never married	6.7%	7	17.2%	14	11.1%	21
Married / Civil union	88.8%	98	66.2%	53	79.3%	151
Living with domestic partner	2.1%	2	3.7%	3	2.8%	5
Divorced	1.4%	2	9.1%	7	4.6%	9
Separated	1.1%	1	2.6%	2	1.7%	3
Widowed	0.0%	0	1.1%	1	0.5%	1
1995						
Never married	10.2%	9	12.2%	9	11.1%	17
Married / Civil union	88.9%	75	75.6%	54	82.8%	128
Living with domestic partner	0.0%	0	4.8%	3	2.2%	3
Divorced	0.8%	1	7.5%	5	3.9%	6
2000						
Never married	4.8%	4	30.3%	26	18.5%	29
Married / Civil union	88.7%	65	66.8%	57	76.9%	122
Living with domestic partner	1.0%	1	2.9%	3	2.0%	3
Divorced	1.9%	1	0.0%	0	0.9%	1
Separated	3.7%	3	0.0%	0	1.7%	3

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 10.2 Current Marital Status by Partnership

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Non-Partner						
Never married	6.3%	20	20.9%	46	12.2%	66
Married / Civil union	87.5%	279	64.8%	141	78.3%	420
Living with domestic partner	0.9%	3	2.9%	6	1.7%	9
Divorced	3.3%	10	8.4%	18	5.4%	29
Separated	1.3%	4	1.4%	3	1.3%	7
Widowed	0.7%	2	1.6%	4	1.1%	6
Partner						
Never married	2.4%	4	18.0%	11	6.5%	15
Married / Civil union	93.6%	160	66.4%	40	86.5%	201
Living with domestic partner	0.5%	1	7.2%	4	2.3%	5
Divorced	3.0%	5	6.7%	4	4.0%	9
Separated	0.5%	1	0.0%	0	0.4%	1
Widowed	0.0%	0	1.7%	1	0.4%	1

Note: Respondents within law firms as their current/most recent job only. Source: HLS Career Study

Hours worked of spouse/partner

Table 10.3 reports the average weekly hours worked by the survey respondent's spouse/partner. Across all cohorts, there is a general trend that the spouse/partner of male respondents work fewer hours per week—approximately 35 hours—than the spouse/partner of women respondents—approximately 49 hours. This gap is the narrowest for the 1975 cohort and the largest for the 2000 cohort. This cohort effect may partially be explained by the fact that the older cohorts are more likely not to have children living at home, whereas members of the class of 2000 often are the parents of small children. As we indicate in the next section, having children tends to lead to men working more hours and women working fewer hours—a tendency that likely helps to explain the unusually large variance in the hours worked by the spouse/partner of female (50) and male (34.8) respondents in this cohort.

Table 10.4 tabulates the hours worked by a spouse/partner with the respondent's status as either being a partner or not a partner in a law firm. A few interesting trends emerge from this comparison. First, both female partners and non-partners have a spouse/partner that averages more hours per week at work—37 and 49 respectively—than the spouse/partner of male partners and non-partners—31 and 34 respectively. Second, male and female respondents who are partners in law firms have spouse/partner who, on average, work fewer hours per week than the spouse/partner of respondents who are not law firm partners. Third, the hours worked for the spouse/partner of female law firm partners (37 hours) is significantly less than the hours worked by the spouse/partner of women who are not law firm partners (49 hours). By comparison, that

difference—12 hours—is significantly greater than the difference—a mere 3 hours—between the hours worked by the spouse/partner of male law firm partners (31 hours) and male non-partners (34 hours). This data provides some support for the view that women who become law firm partners benefit from having a spouse/partner who works relatively fewer hours, although to the extent that this is an advantage, the data also indicates that men continue to benefit more than women, given that their spouse/partner continues to work the fewest hours.

TABLE 10.3 Average Weekly Work Hours of Spouse/Partner

	Male	Female	Total
1975	34.2	44.8	36.4
1985	34.6	48.1	39.9
1995	35.4	49.4	42.3
2000	33.8	50	42.4
Total	34.5	48.6	40.2

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 10.4 Average Weekly Work Hours of Spouse/Partner by Partnership

	Male	Female	Total
Non-Partner	34.4	48.6	40.2
Partner	31.4	37.3	32.9
Total	33.5	46.5	38.3

Note: Respondents within law firms as their current/most recent job only. Source: HLS Career Study

Income of spouse/partner

A similar story holds with respect to income. As Table 10.5 indicates, across all cohorts, women reported having a spouse/partner who earned a higher income than male respondents. This trend continues with respect to those respondents who are partners in law firms, with the spouse/partner of female law firm partners earning more than twice as much as the spouse partner of male law firm partners. Once again, this data provides some modest corroboration of the data presented above about the hours-worked by a woman's spouse/partner in supporting the thesis that male lawyers are more likely to have a spouse/partner who is in a less demanding job than the spouse/partner of a female partner. Unlike with respect to hours-worked, where the spouse partners of female law firm partners worked significantly fewer hours than the spouse/partners of women lawyers who were not law firm partners, we find no difference in the incomes of the spouse/partner of female respondents who are law firm partners compared to those who are not law firm partners.

TABLE 10.5 Median Income of Spouse/Domestic Partner

	Male	Female
1975	\$75,000	\$200,000
1985	\$75,000	\$160,000
1995	\$120,000	\$200,000
2000	\$65,000	\$140,000

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 10.6 Median Current Income of Spouse/Domestic Partner and Partnership Status

	Male	Female
Non-Partner	\$75,000	\$150,000
Partner	\$70,000	\$150,000

Note: Respondents restricted to those working within the law firms sector as their current/most recent job only. Source: HLS Career Study

Children

Studies of legal careers consistently underscore that the most difficult work-life integration issues arise in the context of caring for children. These issues are reputed to be especially difficult for lawyers working in law firms. We therefore pay particular attention to the consequences associated with having children for lawyers working in this sector.

As a preliminary matter, across all cohorts and job sectors, men are likely to have slightly more children (2.3) than women (2.1). However, when we look specifically at lawyers with no children, the difference between women and men is far more dramatic. As Table 10.7 illustrates, across all employment sectors, women are far more likely than men to have no children (31 percent to 19 percent respectively). Although the gap is significant for lawyers working in law firms (7 percent), it is significantly higher for lawyers working in the public sector and in business (practicing law)—15 percent and 13 percent respectively.

Although Table 10.7 might make law firms appear to be relatively family-friendly compared to other employment sectors, when we look more specifically at the correlation between partnership and children, we see a far different story. Thus, as Table 10.8 underscores, the percentage of female partners who have no children (24 percent) is twice as large as the 12 percent of male partners with no children. Second, while most partners—almost three-fourths—have two or more children, men are significantly more likely than women to be in this category (77.5 percent to 64.1 percent).

Although there are undoubtedly many factors that have contributed to the differential rates at which the women and men in our sample have decided to have children, many will believe that the time required to care for children may conflict with the “long and continuous” hours required to succeed as a lawyer. To test this proposition, we asked respondents two sets of questions designed to explore how having children has affected their careers. The first asked respondents to report actions that *they took* in response to having children. The second inquired about actions

that *were done to them* by employers as a result of having children. As Figures 10.1 and 10.2 underscore, in both instances it is clear that having children results in far more reported negative career consequences for women than men. Indeed, a significant number of women across all cohorts reported that they had experienced one or more of these negative consequences—with several reporting having experienced many more than one.

With respect to actions taken by the respondent, women were far more likely than men to decide to work part-time after having a child (84 percent to 16 percent), to leave their current job (77 percent to 23 percent), or to leave the work force altogether (89 percent to 11 percent). Men, on the other hand were far more likely than women to respond to having a child by working *more* hours (8 percent to 16 percent) and encouraging their partner to work *fewer* hours (59 percent to 41 percent). The combination of these trends for women who are married to lawyers or other professionals who may behave in a similar fashion is likely to have clear negative consequences for their career advancement.

Figure 10.2 tells a similar story with respect to the negative actions taken by employers. Once again, women are overwhelmingly more likely to suffer these negative consequences than men, beginning from the moment of the child's birth. Women report experiencing a litany of broken promises and unfair treatment surrounding parental leave and work schedules at rates that are overwhelmingly higher than similar incidents reported by their male peers, including pressure to work while on parental leave (69 percent to 31 percent), unreasonable work demands thereafter (90 percent to 10 percent), and difficulty in obtaining flexibility or part-time work (82 percent to 18 percent). These disparities persist as women seek to continue to advance in their careers, with many more women than men reporting that they have lost clients (87 percent to 13 percent), timely promotions (83 percent to 17 percent), seniority (80 percent to 20 percent), income (82 percent to 18 percent), and even office space (66 percent to 34 percent) as a result of having children.

Uniting all of these adverse actions is a powerfully pernicious assumption experienced by women far more frequently than men that lawyers with children are “less committed” to their careers than their childless peers (72 percent to 28 percent). When combined with the fact that women with children are far more likely than their male counterparts to lobby their employers for more family-friendly policies, it is painfully evident that female lawyers still bear the overwhelming burden of the legal profession's continuing struggles to integrate work and family. Notwithstanding all of their many advantages, HLS female graduates have not been able to escape this burden.

Given these disparities, it is not surprising that we continue to see significant differences in work force participation between HLS female and male graduates. Figure 10.3 reports the relationship by gender between work force participation and the number of children across the entire sample. Not surprisingly, for both women and men, as the number of children increases, participation in the full-time work force declines. The rate of decline, however, is significantly different for the two groups. Men with one child are only slightly less likely than men with no children not to work full-time (83 percent to 88 percent). Although the percentage of full-time workers declines more significantly for men who have two or more children, their overall participation in the full-time workforce remains well above 70 percent.

Women, however, follow a very different path. Even with no children, female HLS graduates in our sample were as likely as their male counterparts with two or more children (73.7 percent to 73.6) to be in the full-time workforce. This percentage declines by 6.7 percentage points to 67 percent when having one child, and by another 18.7 percentage points to 48.3 percent when female respondents have two or more children.

Although there are undoubtedly many reasons why women leave the full-time paid work force after having children, the fact that more than half of women in our sample with two or more children have done so, with nearly a quarter out of the workforce altogether, is nevertheless a cause for concern. Whether purely as a matter of voluntary choice—or, as is often the case, a choice made in the shadow of what women reasonably believe is possible given the expectations of employers and society—the fact that so many talented women lawyers are not working full-time, particularly at a time when the demand for talented and highly credentialed lawyers to tackle the complex problems facing the world today is so high, represents both a lost opportunity and a potentially looming crisis.

TABLE 10.7 Percentage of Women Without Children

	Male	Female	Total
Law Firm	15.0%	22.0%	17.0%
Public Sector	22.0%	37.0%	30.0%
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	24.0%	37.0%	29.0%
Business Sector (Not practicing law)	21.0%	28.0%	23.0%
Total	19.0%	31.0%	23.0%

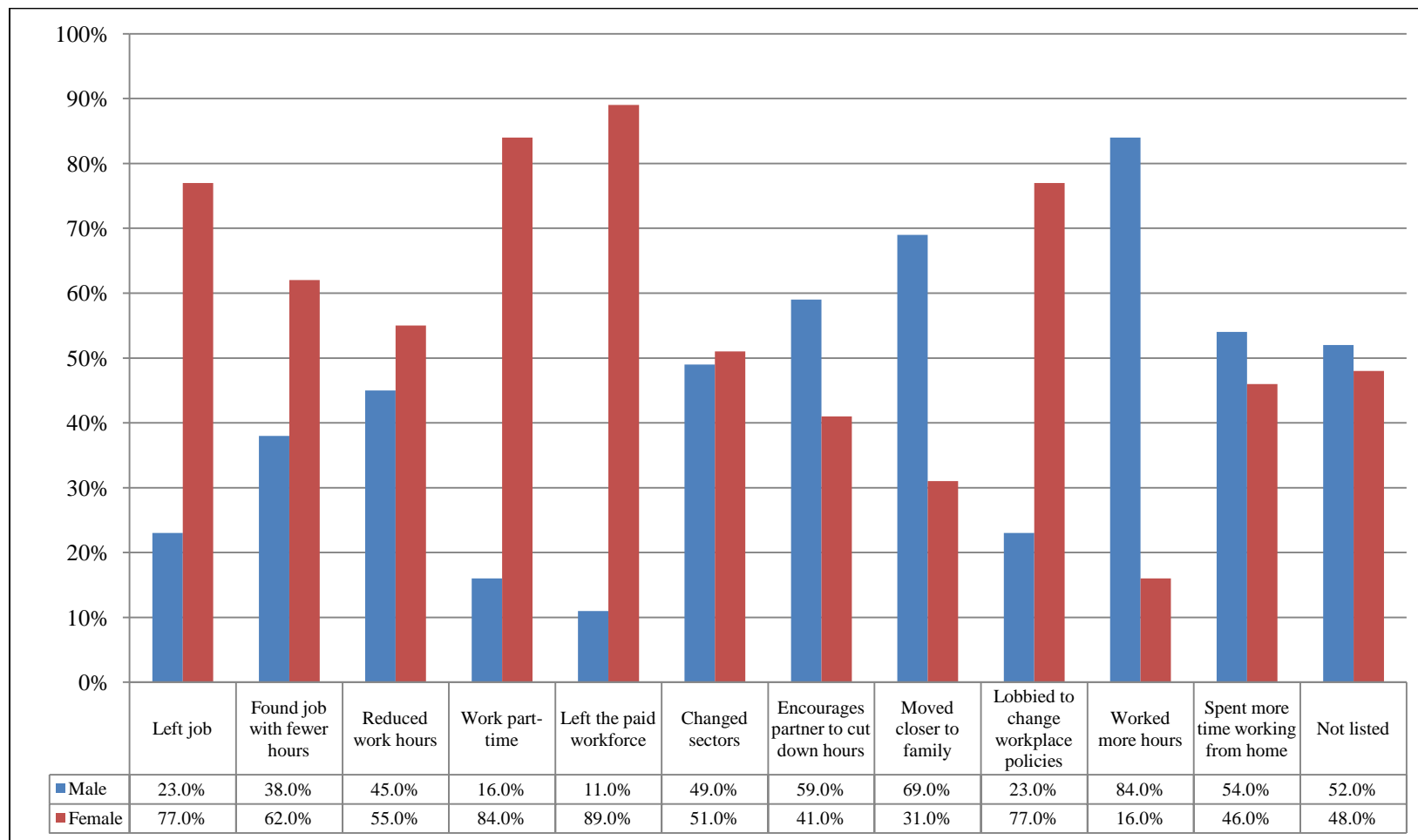
Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 10.8 Average Number of Children of Law Firm Partners

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0	12.1%	19	24.1%	14	15.2%	33
1	10.4%	17	11.9%	7	10.8%	23
2 or more	77.5%	124	64.1%	36	74.0%	161

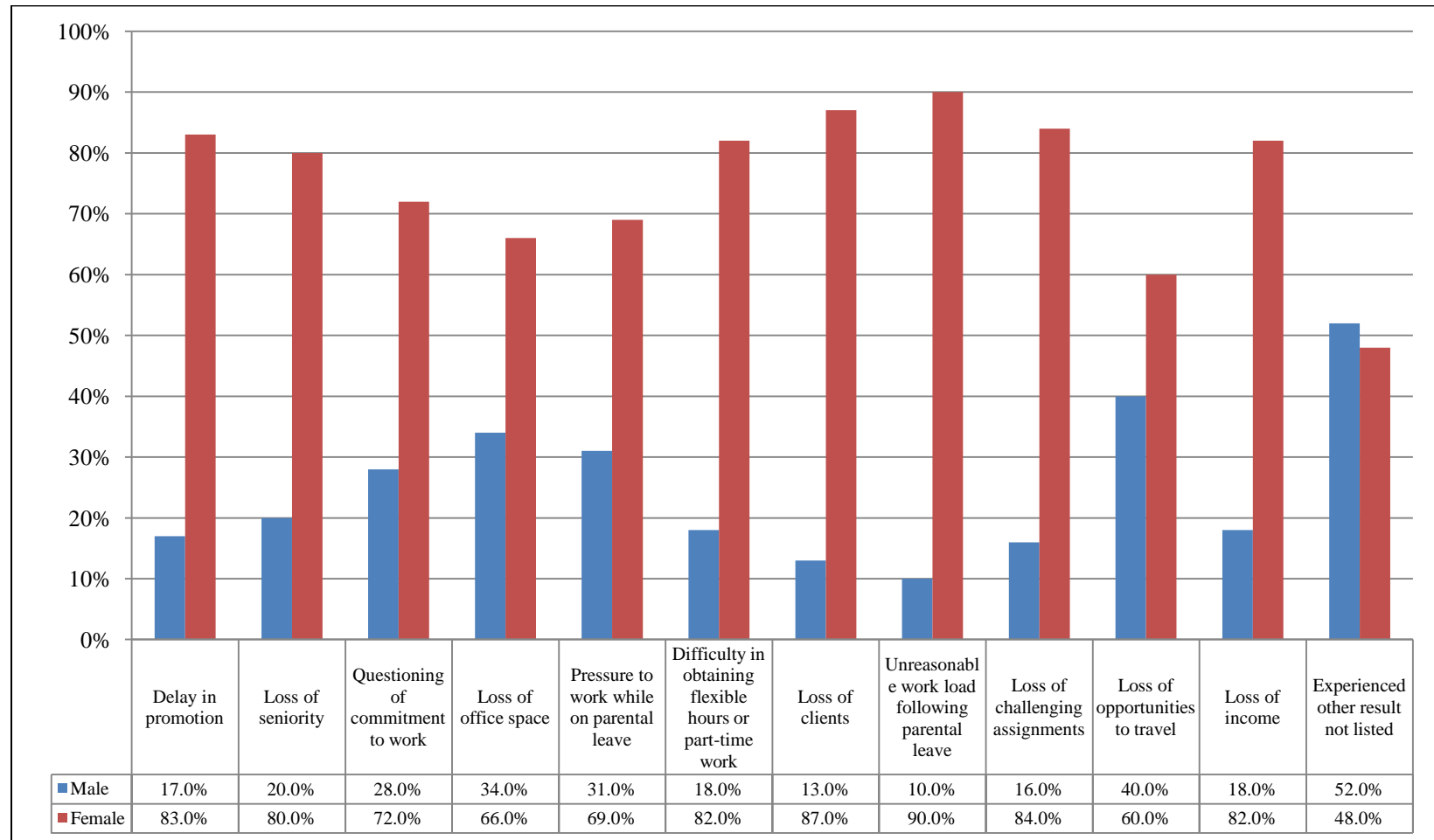
Note: Respondents restricted to those working within the law firms sector as their current/most recent job only. Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 10.1 Actions Taken as a Result of Having a Child



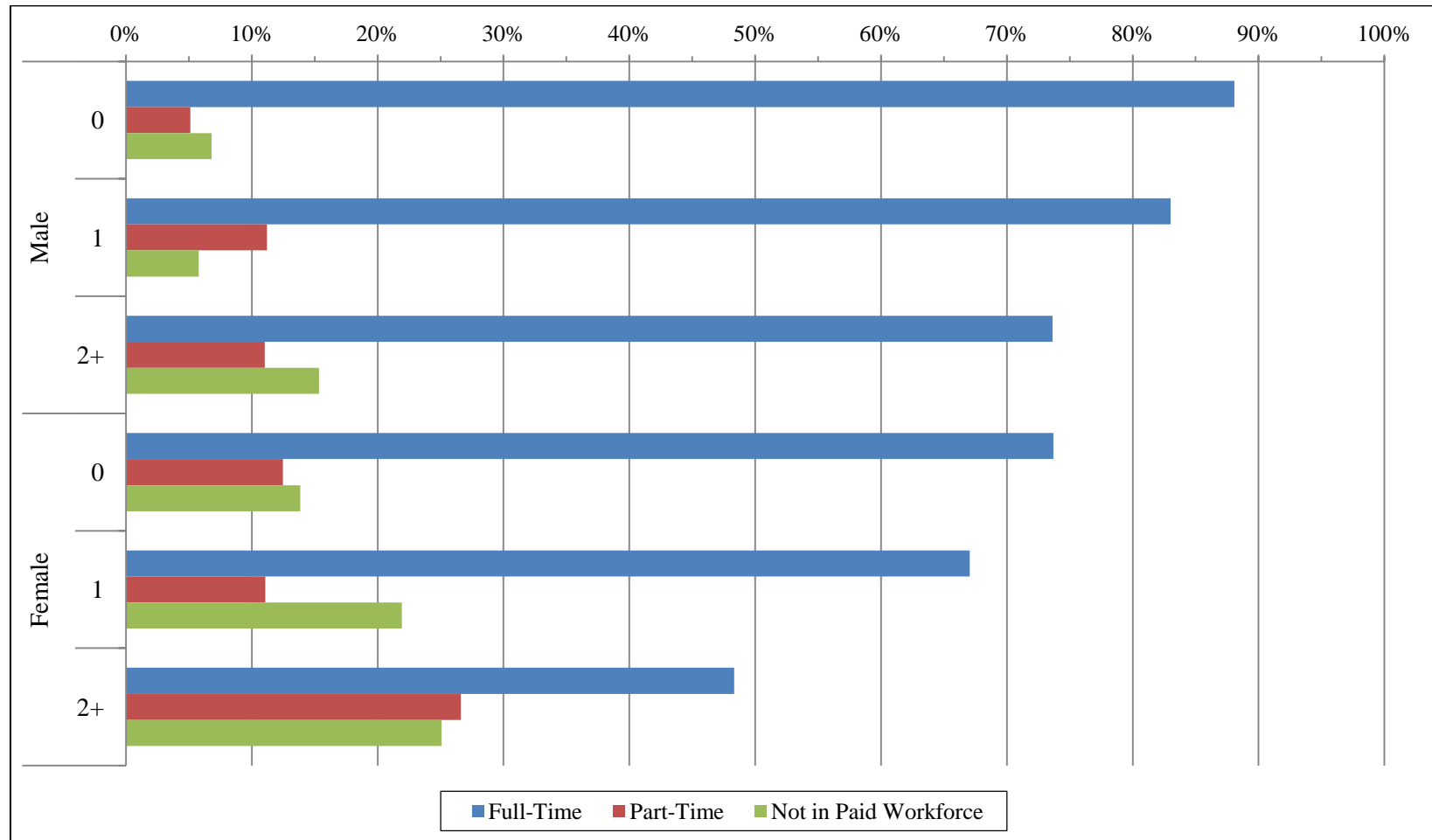
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 10.2 Work Place Consequences as a Result of Having a Child



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 10.3 Employment Status by Number of Children



Source: HLS Career Study

Section 11—Dimensions of Satisfaction

Notwithstanding the many differences in their careers, female and male graduates from across all cohorts report high levels of satisfaction with the value of their legal education and their careers. These overall satisfaction levels, however, mask important gender differences that potentially influence how women and men experience their careers and their choices.

Overall Satisfaction

By every measure, HLS graduates are extremely satisfied with their careers. As Table 11.1 indicates, more than 80 percent of respondents across all cohorts would still obtain a law degree today. As Table 11.2 indicates, this result generally holds across all job settings. Not surprisingly, those in business who are not practicing law are somewhat less likely than others to express this sentiment than others, but even those in this category remain overwhelmingly positive about the value of their legal education, with three quarters stating that they would still go to law school. Similarly, Tables 11.3 and 11.4 report that over 80 percent of respondents are extremely or moderately satisfied with their legal careers, with over 70 percent stating that they would recommend to a young person that he or she should obtain a law degree. Once again, these results do not differ significantly by gender or cohort. This is in line with a large body of research that has explored what is known as “the paradox of the contented female worker,” meaning that notwithstanding receiving lower pay and less authority in the workplace, women nevertheless express equal job satisfaction as their male peers.

Although these high levels of overall satisfaction undoubtedly have something to do with factors specific to Harvard Law School, it is important to note that virtually every systematic study of lawyers has found similarly high levels of overall satisfaction. Thus, in each wave of the AJD study, more than 70 percent of the nationally representative cohort that entered law practice in 2000 reported being moderately or extremely satisfied with both their decision to become a lawyer and their legal career. These comprehensive studies serve as an important counterpoint to the torrent of reports, frequently less systematic, claiming that large numbers of lawyers are extremely dissatisfied with their careers.

TABLE 11.1 Would Still Obtain Law Degree

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
No	12.1%	19	9.1%	3	11.6%	22
Yes	87.9%	138	90.9%	29	88.4%	167
1985						
No	19.4%	20	16.8%	11	18.4%	31
Yes	80.6%	84	83.2%	55	81.6%	139
1995						
No	19.4%	15	19.5%	14	19.5%	29
Yes	80.6%	64	80.5%	56	80.5%	120
2000						
No	11.7%	8	15.4%	12	13.7%	20
Yes	88.3%	58	84.6%	66	86.3%	123
Total						
No	15.3%	62	16.3%	40	15.4%	102
Yes	84.7%	344	83.7%	206	84.4%	550

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 11.2 Would Still Obtain Law Degree by Practice Area

	Male	Female	Total
1975	%	%	%
Law Firm	95.6%	85.7%	94.7%
Public Sector	90.6%	93.2%	91.5%
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	90.0%	100.0%	91.1%
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	72.6%	66.7%	71.9%
1985			
Law Firm	83.1%	93.5%	85.6%
Public Sector	84.6%	76.3%	80.5%
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	81.9%	92.1%	86.2%
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	85.4%	80.0%	83.8%
1995			
Law Firm	97.5%	95.5%	96.7%
Public Sector	100.0%	88.3%	92.4%
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	78.4%	79.9%	79.0%
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	55.5%	46.6%	53.4%
2000			
Law Firm	83.6%	92.6%	88.2%
Public Sector	100.0%	83.9%	89.6%
Business Sector (Practicing Law)	93.3%	74.9%	86.1%
Business Sector (Not Practicing Law)	100.0%	66.2%	91.6%

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 11.3 Would Recommend Law to a Young Person

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
No	27.1%	42	24.2%	7	26.6%	49
Yes	72.9%	113	75.8%	21	73.4%	134
1985						
No	33.5%	34	21.7%	14	29.0%	48
Yes	66.5%	67	78.3%	50	71.0%	117
1995						
No	34.6%	27	26.4%	18	30.8%	45
Yes	65.4%	52	73.6%	50	69.2%	102
2000						
No	24.3%	15	32.6%	24	28.8%	40
Yes	75.7%	48	67.4%	50	71.2%	98
Total						
No	29.6%	118	26.9%	63	28.6%	181
Yes	70.4%	280	73.1%	171	71.4%	451

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 11.4 Extreme/Moderate Satisfaction with Decision to Be Lawyer

	Male	Female	Total
1975	90.8%	91.9%	91.0%
1985	91.0%	89.3%	90.3%
1995	94.3%	89.6%	92.2%
2000	89.5%	89.5%	89.5%
Total	91.4%	89.7%	90.8%

Source: HLS Career Study

TABLE 11.5 Satisfaction with Overall Career

	Male		Female		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
1975						
Satisfied	84.9%	145	80.2%	26	84.2%	171
Neutral	6.2%	11	13.5%	4	7.4%	15
Dissatisfied	8.9%	15	6.3%	2	8.4%	17
1985						
Satisfied	78.3%	85	71.8%	53	75.7%	138
Neutral	11.3%	12	16.5%	12	13.4%	24
Dissatisfied	10.4%	11	11.7%	9	10.9%	20
1995						
Satisfied	82.2%	68	80.7%	53	81.5%	121
Neutral	6.9%	6	9.1%	6	7.9%	12
Dissatisfied	10.9%	9	10.2%	7	10.6%	16
2000						
Satisfied	77.9%	57	76.5%	62	77.2%	119
Neutral	7.8%	6	8.3%	7	8.0%	13
Dissatisfied	14.4%	10	15.2%	12	14.8%	22
Total						
Satisfied	81.6%	355	76.7%	194	79.9%	549
Neutral	8.0%	35	11.5%	29	9.2%	63
Dissatisfied	10.3%	45	11.8%	30	10.9%	75

Source: HLS Career Study

Satisfaction unbundled

Overall satisfaction with one's decision to become a lawyer, or even with one's entire career, however, is admittedly a crude measure. We therefore asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with more than 20 aspects of their careers, including job responsibilities, relations with colleagues, control over work, compensation, the value of their work to society, and work/life integration. After performing a factor analysis, we concluded that answers to these disparate issues clustered around three central themes: satisfaction with the *substance* of one's work (level of responsibilities, tasks performed, substantive area of work, intellectual challenges, opportunities for building skill, and value of work to society); satisfaction with the *rewards* of the job (including opportunities for advancement, compensation, method by which compensation is determined, and the performance evaluation process); and satisfaction with the *control* over the work and the working environment (including control over the amount of work and the integration of personal life and work).

Figure 11.1 presents the factor analysis by gender across all four cohorts. The higher the bar reaches above the “0” line, the greater the level of satisfaction, while the depth of the bar below the “0” line indicates the amount of dissatisfaction. The results of this analysis add considerable nuance to the data about overall satisfaction presented above.

While men and women may be similarly satisfied with their careers as a whole, they express significantly different levels of satisfaction with each of the three factors. Thus, men’s satisfaction levels are driven primarily by their satisfaction with the rewards they have received in their careers—rewards sufficient to offset significant dissatisfaction with the substance of their work. Women present the exact opposite pattern, finding far greater satisfaction in the substance of their work than men, while expressing significant dissatisfaction with the rewards that they have received for their efforts. Given our findings that women are more likely to work in public sector jobs, and when working in law firms, are less likely to become partners or serve in important leadership roles or on powerful committees (all while bearing more of the responsibility for childcare and other family responsibilities) it is not surprising that they express greater dissatisfaction with the rewards of their legal careers than their male counterparts. What is surprising is how positive they remain about the substance of their work—far more positive than men who have arguably been given a greater chance to succeed. These findings should be of great interest to employers who are looking to hire lawyers who are committed to their work—and the importance of rewarding fairly those women who display such commitment.

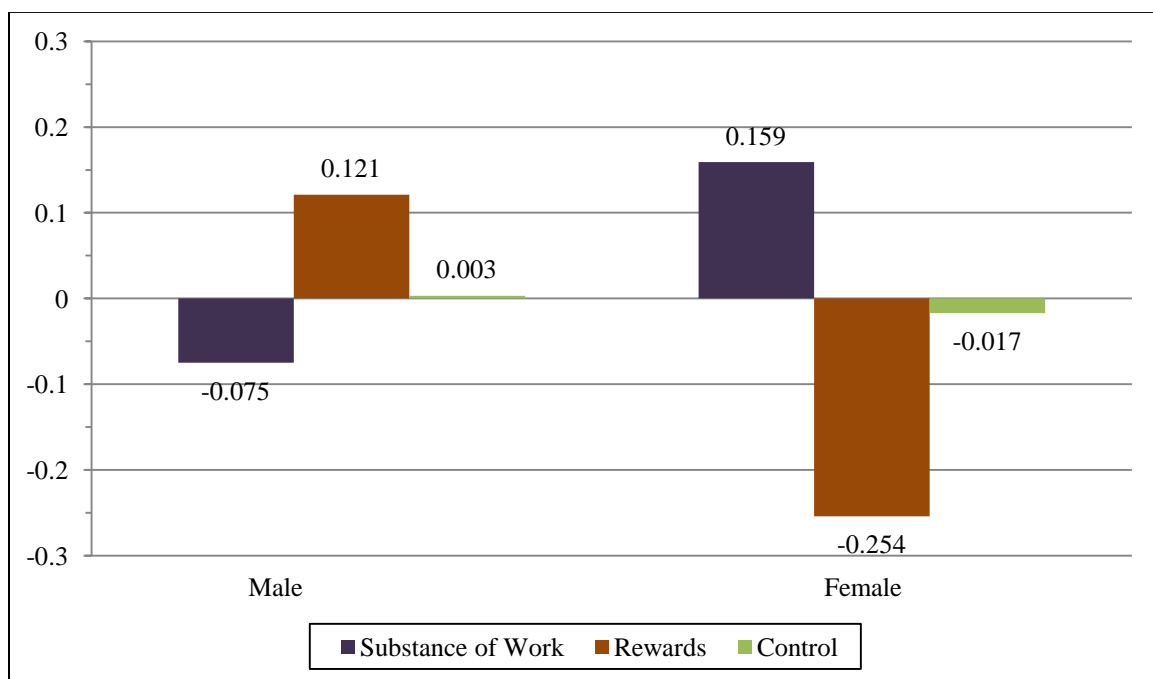
Figure 11.2 displays a similar pattern with respect to lawyers working in law firms. Although women working in law firms are more satisfied with the rewards that they are receiving from their careers than women as a whole—likely as a result of the higher compensation that they receive in this setting relative to those in other settings, particularly public service—they remain significantly less satisfied with this factor than men, who as we have seen, receive higher rewards in law firms than women in terms of both compensation and position. Nevertheless, women still report liking the substance of their work significantly more than their male peers. Both men and women express dissatisfaction with the control that they exercise over their work and lives—dissatisfaction that is significantly greater for both genders than that expressed by the sample as a whole. Thus, our data provides further support for the common view that lawyers in law firms have less control over their lives than in other employment sectors. To the extent that having control over one’s life is increasingly important to lawyers in the “millennial” generation, as some research suggests, these findings should raise cautionary flags for law firm managers seeking to ensure a continued supply of top talent.

Turning to the public sector, a different—and far less gendered—pattern emerges. As Figure 11.3 indicates, both women and men express satisfaction with the substance of their work in public sector jobs, although women continue to express stronger levels of satisfaction than men. Both genders are also satisfied with the control that they feel over their jobs and lives in this sector, although here men are more satisfied than women. However, both women and men are dissatisfied with the rewards of public sector employment, where salaries tend to be considerably lower than in the private sector, particularly for earlier cohorts.

Finally, the two business sectors present a more complex picture. As Figure 11.4 indicates, both women and men are relatively dissatisfied with the business (practicing law), with the exception of men who report being extremely satisfied with the control that they have over their work and lives. Figure 11.5 indicates that women and men in business (not practicing law) both express relative dissatisfaction with the substance of their work and mild satisfaction with the control they have over it. Men report higher satisfaction with the rewards of their jobs in this sector than women. More analysis will be required to interpret these somewhat contradictory findings.

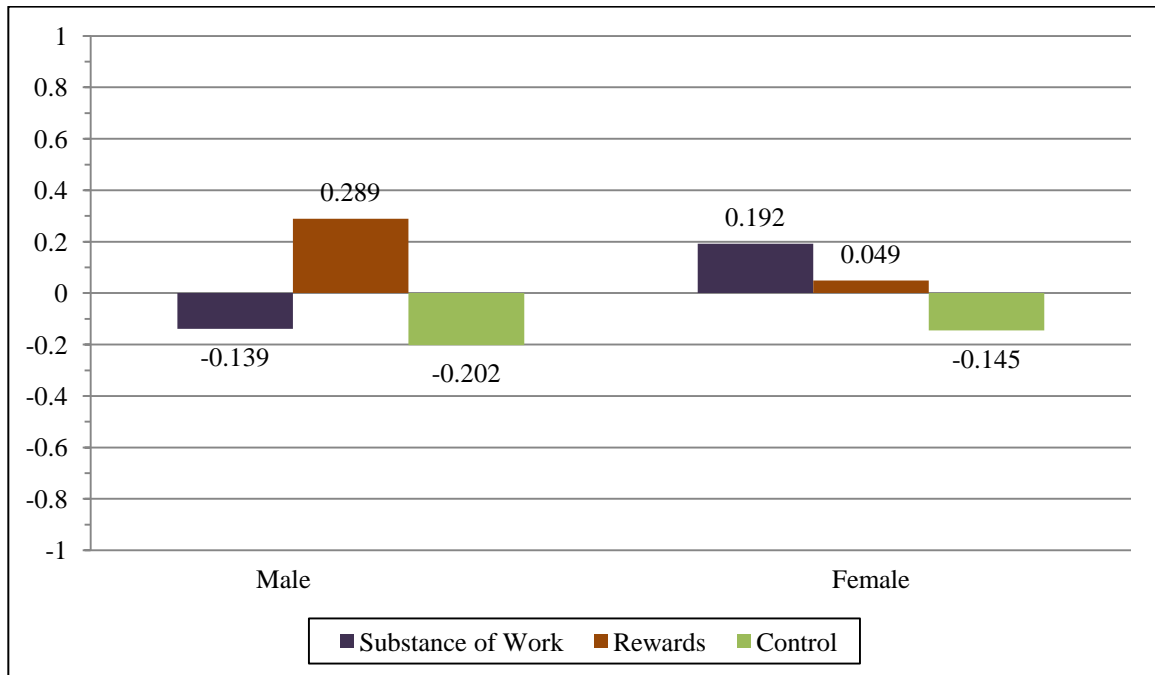
Stepping back from the particular details, this analysis underscores two important conclusions relevant to those concerned about the satisfaction of future generations of law school graduates. First, jobs in different legal sectors offer a different mix of potential opportunities, challenges, and rewards. Law schools and legal employers should help graduates understand these different profiles and help them to select careers that provide the mix of substance, rewards, and control that best fits their interests and needs. Second, while many factors will undoubtedly influence how a given lawyer perceives the mix of goods presented by any particular job, gender is likely to continue to play a significant role. As the prior sections underscore, even women who graduate from Harvard Law School continue to face important challenges in the workplace. These challenges have undoubtedly shaped the way these graduates understand the benefits and burdens of particular legal careers. As more women move into the legal profession both in the United States and around the world, understanding these distinct challenges and opportunities will be increasingly important to the ability of every employment sector to attract and retain top talent.

FIGURE 11.1 Factors of Satisfaction—Across Employment Sectors



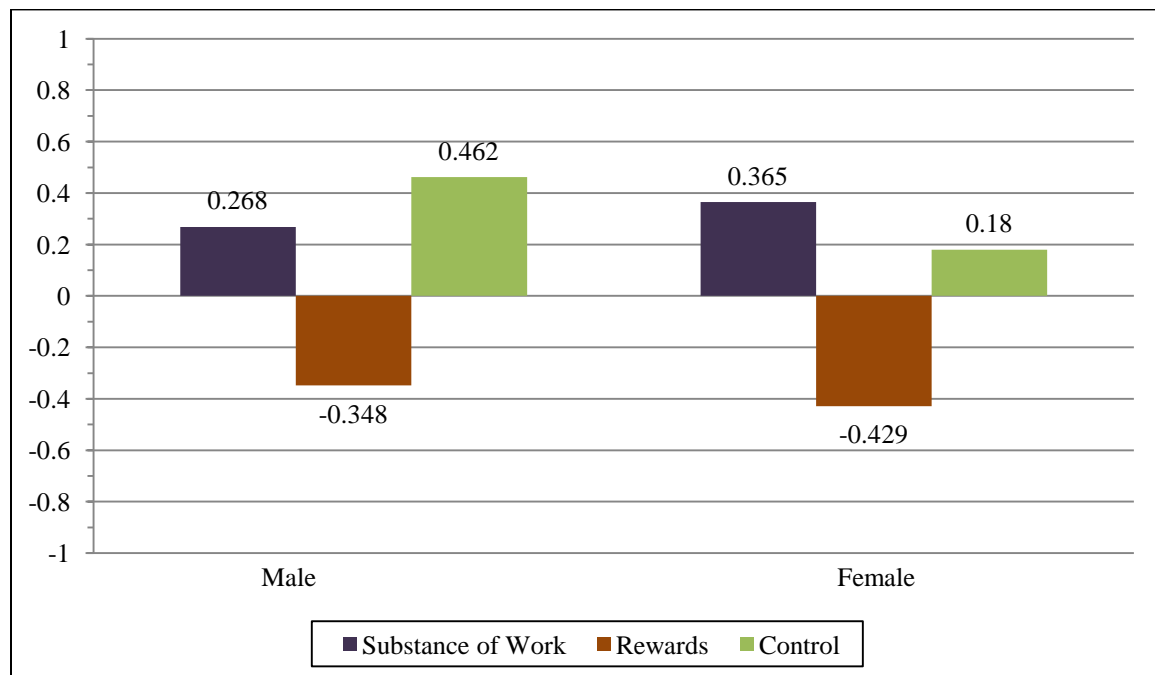
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 11.2 Factors of Satisfaction—Law Firms



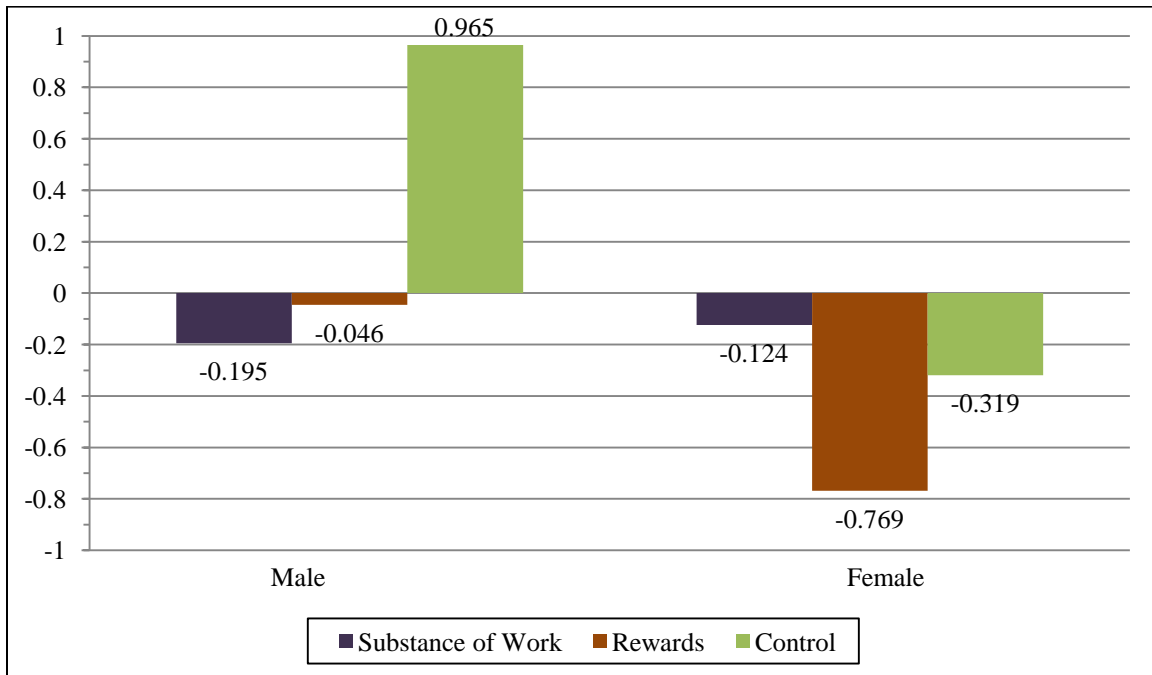
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 11.3 Factors of Satisfaction—Public Sector



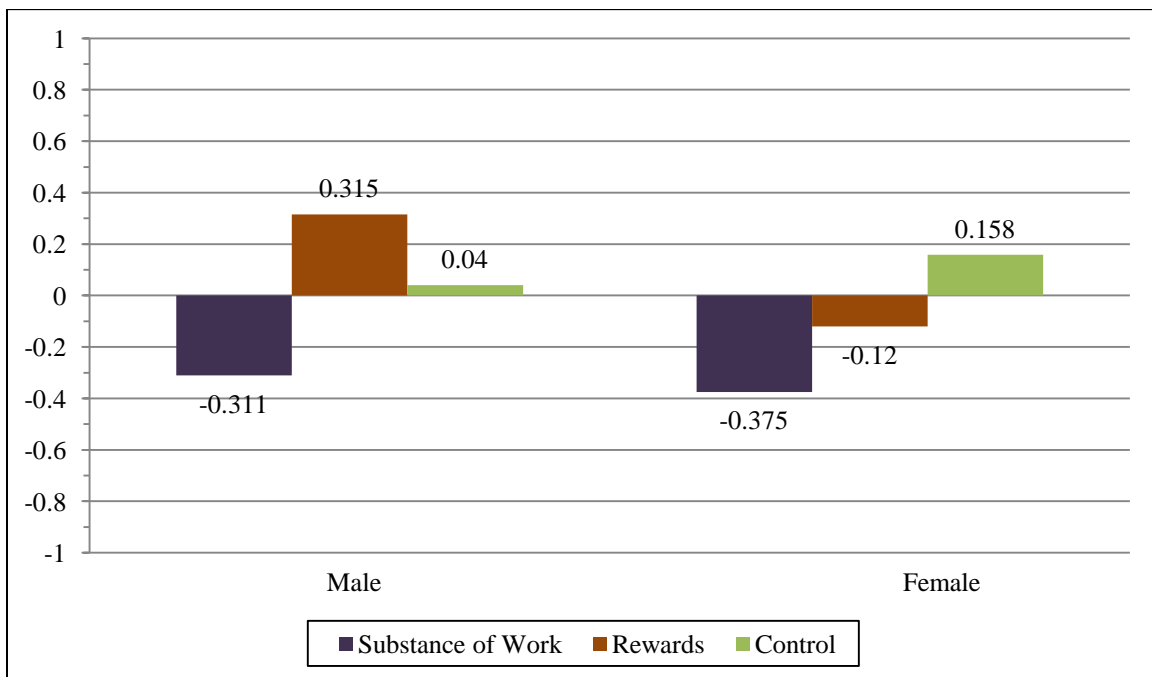
Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 11.4 Factors of Satisfaction—Business (Law)



Source: HLS Career Study

FIGURE 11.5 Factors of Satisfaction—Business (Not Practicing Law)



Source: HLS Career Study

Section 12—Conclusion and Future Research

More than sixty years after the first 14 women graduated from Harvard Law School—and almost 150 years after Myra Bradwell was “admitted” to the bar in 1869 (an admission that was granted retroactively more than twenty years later by the Illinois Supreme Court after bar officials and courts had repeatedly refused to admit Bradwell because she was a woman, and a married woman at that)—there is much to celebrate about the progress women have made in the legal profession. The data in this Preliminary Report certainly demonstrates this conclusion with respect to the female HLS graduates in the cohorts that we have studied. But some of the findings also underscore that the hard work of ensuring equal opportunity for women in the myriad private, public, and business settings in which today’s lawyers now build their careers is far from over. Even women who start their careers with the benefit of an educational credential traditionally thought to be an important hedge against adversity nevertheless continue to encounter greater obstacles than their male classmates—particularly when they attempt to integrate family obligations with professional goals. Notwithstanding the undeniable advances in co-parenting that have taken place over the past decades, HLS women with children continue to face significant adverse consequences in the workplace. Indeed, given the growing competition and uncertainty in the market for legal services in the years since 2010 when the data for this study was collected, there is a very real danger that many of the disparities we have identified between the careers of HLS women and men have become even more pronounced as the pressures on all lawyers have been ratcheted up as the legal economy has slowed down.

It is precisely because both the experience of women in the profession—and the broader economic, political, and social world in which lawyers work—are continuing to evolve at an ever more rapid pace that this Preliminary Report on the women and men of Harvard Law School is intended to be just that: preliminary. Our goal is to contribute to the necessarily ongoing discussion about the complex ways that gender continues to shape legal careers, and to encourage the kind of systematic empirical study that we believe will help to advance and sharpen this discussion. To that end, CLP and its researchers are engaged in four interconnected projects that we hope will deepen and extend the work that we have begun in HLSCS.

First, we are continuing and expanding upon the kind of comparative analysis between the HLSCS and the AJD presented in this Preliminary Report. To facilitate this comparative work, in 2016 CLP will convene a major Career Study Conference. This conference will have an important comparative dimension. In recent years, there have been a number of important studies across a range of disciplines—including law, business, medicine, and engineering—that address many of the same questions we have examined in this Report. By looking comparatively, we can begin to investigate whether some or all of the phenomena identified in the HLSCS and other individual studies are the product of broader structures and processes that are affecting similar institutions and occupations.

This kind of comparative analysis is particularly important given the fact that so many lawyers in the HLSCS will spend some or all of their careers not practicing law. Therefore, our second related project is to study this important group. Building on the HLSCS, AJD, and other sources of data, this project will investigate why law school graduates decide not to practice law, and what happens to them once they leave the profession. As the findings in this Preliminary Report suggest, this project has important implications both for gender and for legal education.

Third, the movement of law graduates away from the “practice of law” highlights an even more profound movement in the understanding of what constitutes legal practice, and which individuals and institutions should be entitled to deliver legal services. The legal profession is increasingly being “disrupted” by a series of innovations—many of which are being developed by lawyers turned business entrepreneurs—that are likely to play a critical role in shaping legal careers in the middle decades of the 21st century. CLP has launched a major research initiative to study these disruptive innovations, and to evaluate their potential implications for legal careers, legal education, the cost—and even more importantly the quality—of legal services, access to justice, and the rule of law.

Finally, this innovation—and much of what lawyers do wherever they work—is increasingly being driven by globalization and the important shift in economic activity from the developed economies of the Global North to the emerging economies in the Global South. Since 2011, CLP has led a multidisciplinary and multijurisdictional research collaborative entitled Globalization, Lawyers, and Emerging Economies (GLEE) to understand how globalization is reshaping the market for legal services in countries such as India, Brazil, and China. One of the key issues GLEE investigates is how globalization is affecting the roles women lawyers are playing in the development of a new “corporate” legal sector in these jurisdictions, and what these developments can teach us about globalization’s likely impact on the careers of women lawyers in law firms, in-house legal departments, and other “corporate” legal jobs in the United States.

We look forward to reporting on these projects in the coming months, and to engaging in a long and fruitful dialogue about the most pressing issues shaping—and re-shaping—the careers of female and male lawyers in this next, critical phase of the legal profession’s history.

Appendix—Methods

Survey

Members of the classes of 1975, 1985, 1995, 2000, and a representative sample of men and women from the 1950-1960s, were invited to complete the survey. The survey included 85 closed and open-ended questions structured around four sections: (1) current professional employment; (2) professional employment history; (3) education and HLS experience; (4) other background information. A copy of the survey can be obtained from the Center on the Legal Profession. Respondents could complete the survey via mail, web or phone. Table 13.1 lists response rates.

TABLE 13.1 Response Rates to Survey

1950s-1960s	32.2%
1975	40.6%
1985	40.7%
1995	29.7%
2000	29.7%
Total	34.6%

Note: Response rates for the four main cohorts reflect the total number of surveys received over the total population, as derived from HLS Administrative Records. The 1950s-1960s reflects total number of survey received over the total number mailed.

Alumni records

To contact members of the various cohorts, researchers received records from the HLS Alumni Center indicating where graduates resided and worked. For the 1950-1960s cohort, a representative random sample comprised of female and male graduates from this period were selected to participate.

Transcripts

Academic transcripts of HLS students were received from the Office of the Registrar. No transcripts were provided for the 1950-1960s cohort. Transcripts contained information on course selection, grades, credits, undergraduate and graduate degrees, undergraduate school attended, and the year undergraduate and graduate degrees were obtained. Transcripts also contained information regarding birth date, location, age of matriculation at HLS, and citizenship. Pursuant to the requirements of Harvard's Committee on the Use of Human Subjects and the requirements of the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), transcripts were anonymized with a unique ID number, and a separate identification key was used to merge data from other sources.

Admissions records

Admissions records were received from the Office of the Registrar. Admissions records contained information on age, gender, race/ethnicity, year of birth, undergraduate school, undergraduate major, and grade point average. Admissions documents for the 1975 cohort did not include race/ethnicity; however this data was provided in survey responses. As with HLS transcripts, this data was anonymized and protected pursuant to the requirements of the Harvard Committee on the Use of Human Subjects and FERPA, restricting its use only to aggregate form.

Merging of data sources

Survey responses were merged with HLS administrative records and anonymized to protect privacy. Survey responses were matched based on name as well as a number of other identifying characteristics common to both HLS records and survey responses including last name, undergraduate school, and age. During the merging phase, all cases were reviewed to find discrepancies in name changes—for instance, of individuals who may have assumed a different last name due to marriage.

Non-respondent Analysis and Weighting

A non-respondent analysis was performed to determine whether survey responses differed in meaningful ways from those who did not respond, as derived from administrative records, across three variables: gender, race, and age. For gender, a difference in proportion test determined that women were slightly more likely to be in the survey group than the overall HLS population ($p=0.019$). For race, a difference in proportion test found that survey responses were more heavily white than the overall HLS population ($p<0.001$). There was no statistically significant difference in entry age between survey responses and the overall HLS population derived from administrative records. In order to account for these differences, survey data was weighted for each HLS class to control totals from HLS administrative records on gender and race (white/non-white).

About the Center on the Legal Profession

The Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession (CLP) seeks to make a substantial contribution to the modern practice of law by increasing understanding of the structures, norms and dynamics of the global legal profession.

In pursuit of accomplishing our mission, we:

- Conduct, sponsor and publish world-class empirical **RESEARCH** on the profession;
- Innovate and implement new methods and content for **TEACHING** law students, practicing lawyers and related professionals about the profession; and
- Foster broader and deeper connections **BRIDGING** between the global universe of legal practitioners and the academy.

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