



Center on the Legal Profession
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

*Researching Professional Careers in the Age of AI:
What Career Studies Across Professions and Jurisdictions Can Teach
Us About the Future of Professional Careers*

April 8-9, 2024
Cambridge, MA

GOALS AND FORMAT

As we indicated in our initial invitation, the goal of the workshop is to facilitate an open and wide-ranging discussion about the future of research on professional careers, informed by what we each have learned from our research to date. We therefore are not having participants make formal presentations. Instead, we have organized the Workshop around four Discussion Sessions: the first two on Day 1 looking back at what we have learned from our research about how structures and inequalities shape professional careers, and how the strategies used by individual professionals both reify and challenge these structures; and the second two on Day 2 looking forward to how AI and other new technologies may – or may not – disrupt these existing patterns, and the theories and methodologies we might employ to make this determination.

We will begin the discussion on Day 1 by giving a brief introduction to the theory, methods, and conclusions from *The Making of Lawyers' Careers* and then use the examples of our use of sequence analysis and qualitative interviews as a way of framing the broader discussion about how each of you have studied the interplay between structures and strategies in your own research. To that end, we will ask each of you to say a few words (perhaps 5-8 minutes) reflecting on these issues. To help focus the discussion, we have included Discussion Questions for each session, although you should certainly feel free to introduce questions/issues of your own. Please feel free to bring a slide or two or to present data in some other form if you think it would be helpful. Please send any materials to us in advance and our team will be prepared to present/distribute them when appropriate. To ensure that everyone has a chance to speak, we will generally follow Robert's Rule of allowing each participant to speak once before anyone speaks twice, although everyone should feel free to ask questions where appropriate.

On Day 2, we will begin our discussion by giving a brief overview of what we know – and don't know – about how artificial intelligence and other new technologies are likely to affect the future of work. This will be followed by two Discussion Sessions in which we hope that each of you will share how you think these new technologies are likely to affect the work of the professionals that you examine, and how you are thinking about studying these changes. Once again, we have offered some Discussion Questions to guide – but certainly not to limit – what we hope will be a free-flowing discussion about the future of professional careers in the age of ChatGPT, and how our prior research can and should inform this analysis.



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AGENDA

Monday, April 8, 2024

Check-in

1:30 – 2:00 p.m.

All times eastern

Harvard Law School
Lewis Hall, Room 200
1557 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
Map of the [HLS Campus here](#).

Opening for Day 1: Introduction to the Workshop and to the Theory, Methods, and Findings of The Making of Lawyers' Careers

2:00 - 2:45 p.m.

*David B. Wilkins, Lester Kissel Professor of Law and Faculty Director,
Center on the Legal Profession, Harvard Law School*

*Robert Nelson, Professor of Sociology and MacCrate Research Chair at the
American Bar Foundation*

Discussion Session 1: Studying Structure and Inequality

*Framing: Using Sequence Analysis to Map the Structure of Legal Careers -
Ronit Dinovitzer, Professor of Sociology, University of Toronto*

Discussion Questions:

2:45 – 3:15 p.m.

- What theories of professions and professional work have you used to animate your studies?
- What are the structures and axes of inequality that shape careers in your field (e.g., gender, race, class, educational hierarchies, fields of practice, others?)
- Have these structural constraints shifted over time? Why or why not?



3:15 – 3:45 p.m.

Eclipse Viewing Break

We will provide viewing glasses for participants.



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3:45 – 4:30 p.m.

Continuation of Discussion Session 1

Discussion Session 2: Studying Strategies

Framing: Using Qualitative Interviews to Explore How Individuals Both Maintain and Resist Structure - Bryant Garth, Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus, University of California at Irvine

Discussion Questions:

4:30 - 5:50 p.m.

- What strategies do professionals deploy in navigating these constraints?
- How do professional structures, practices, and strategies reproduce, amplify, or resist old and new forms of inequality?
- How have you studied this interplay between structure and strategies (e.g., longitudinal, comparative, multimethod, national samples, detailed career histories, administrative/big data, methodological tools from other disciplines such as sequence analysis, observing underrepresented social groups via oversampling techniques, using online resources such as LinkedIn)

5:50 - 6:00 p.m.

Closing for Day 1: Is the Past Prologue?

David B. Wilkins, Lester Kissel Professor of Law and Faculty Director, Harvard Law School Center on the Legal Profession

Dinner @ Nubar (Sheraton Commander Hotel)

6:15 - 8:00 p.m.

Nubar is a 5-minute walk from Campus. There is no set programming and dinner is primarily social.



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Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Light Breakfast Available

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

All times eastern

Harvard Law School
Lewis Hall, Room 200
1557 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
Map of the [HLS Campus here](#).

Opening for Day 2: An Introduction to Technology and the Future of Work

9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

*David B. Wilkins, Lester Kissel Professor of Law and Faculty Director,
Center on the Legal Profession, Harvard Law School*

Fabrizio Dell'Acqua, Harvard Business School on “Navigating the Jagged Technological Frontier: Field Experimental Evidence of the Effects of AI on Knowledge Worker Productivity and Quality”

Discussion Session 3: How might AI and other new technologies disrupt professional work?

9:30 – 10:45 a.m.

- How might technological innovations like digitization and AI impact professional work, careers, jurisdictions, and boundaries (inter-professional, intra-professional, and geographic), and disrupt the institutional arrangements of professions?
- How do professionals think about/make sense of the impact of AI on their futures and the future of their professions?
- How might AI and other technologies impact the nature, demand, and cost of professional work and professional education?

10:45 – 11:00 a.m.

Break



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Discussion Session 4: Conclusion: The Future of Studying Professional Careers

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

- How can we develop more cross-professional and cross-jurisdictional studies in a world in which the boundaries of professional work are increasingly blurred?
- How can we use AI and other new technologies to study the impact of technology on professional practice?
- How can we continue to explore and reveal the structural forces that continue to replicate inequality even in the face of change?

Optional Book Talk

Transition to Book Talk

12:00 – 12:30 p.m.

All times eastern

Harvard Law School
Milstein East A
1585 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA 02138
Map of the [HLS Campus here](#).

Harvard Law School Community Book Talk

The Making of Lawyers' Careers: Inequality and Opportunity in the American Legal Profession

*David B. Wilkins, Lester Kissel Professor of Law and Faculty Director,
Center on the Legal Profession, Harvard Law School*

*Robert Nelson, Professor of Sociology and MacCrate Research Chair at the
American Bar Foundation*

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

Ronit Dinovitzer, Professor of Sociology, University of Toronto

*Bryant Garth, Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus, University of
California at Irvine*

Meghan Dawe, Research Fellow, HLS Center on the Legal Profession

Lunch will be provided.