After the JD:

First Results of a *National Study* of Legal Careers

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For more information on the organizations participating in this study, see page 93.

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Associate Dean for Career Services & Public Initiatives, University of Chicago Law School

The dedication of the members of the AJD first-wave ECC is unparalleled. These legal scholars and social scientists were scattered across the country; thus, they convened by conference call and gathered during breaks in professional conferences to contemplate issues the study posed. They also dedicated their weekends many, many times to formulating sampling

frames, structuring methodology, considering strategy and scope, and otherwise dealing with the complex nuances of steering a massive national research initiative. They did so without compensation or reward — because they have believed in the importance of these data and the impact this study might have on how lawyers are educated, recruited, trained, and developed — and, subsequently, on how legal services are delivered to Fortune 500 clients in cities across the globe as well as to small businesses or individuals in diverse locales. The ECC members have given not only their time and expertise to this project, but also their standing and status as well-respected scholars and scientists. For all that they have done, these individuals have our enduring gratitude for the many ways in which they have contributed to the realization of these data and for the personal sacrifices they have made toward that end.

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Finally, sincere appreciation is extended to the more than 5,000 lawyers whose candid responses to the *After the JD* survey provide a new window on the nature and complexities of lawyer careers that would otherwise have been impossible to obtain. Their representative experiences are providing new understandings about how lawyers' careers evolve. Additionally, we are grateful to the 500 lawyers who have participated or will participate in face-to-face interviews, providing qualitative data that adds depth and richness to our knowledge. Their willingness to contribute in a very personal way to this study is of great value and is appreciated.

The publication of the initial findings of the first wave of the *After the JD* research study is a proud moment for everyone associated with the project. Together, we have realized the first step of a very important goal — a ten-year, longitudinal examination of lawyers' careers. Thank you to everyone for taking an interest in, contributing toward, or otherwise supporting this effort. The initial data are rich and abundant — a prelude to what can be expected as the second- and third-wave initiatives are undertaken.

On behalf of The NALP Foundation Board of Trustees,

Paula A. Patton
CEO/President

SECTION 1:

Introduction — Rationale and Origins of This Study

Introduction – Rationale and Origins of This Study

The *After the JD* project will track the professional lives of more than 5,000 lawyers during their first ten years after law school. While most of the project will unfold in coming years, the data presented here provide a first snapshot of the stratified random national sample, based on questionnaires administered two to three years into the new lawyers' careers. The findings presented here will be elaborated and augmented through face-to-face interviews with a sub-sample of roughly 10% of the survey respondents. Building on this first wave, the future work of AJD will employ follow-up questionnaires and personal interviews six and ten years into the respondents' careers. When completed, it will be the first national study of the factors — personal and professional — that account for the wide spectrum of legal careers and experiences.

Many law schools and other institutions involved with the profession have been deeply engaged over the past generation in efforts to expand access to, and diversity within, the legal profession. Various types of gender, racial, ethnic, or religious exclusion characterized much of the legal profession during the 20th century; more recent research suggests that while many barriers have fallen, lawyers are still highly stratified in many ways. A key goal of AJD is to better understand how legal careers are launched, what sorts of environments and skills most help young attorneys to reach their goals, and how the experiences and opportunities of these new lawyers may vary according to a variety of characteristics — especially race, ethnicity, and gender.

History of the Project

After the JD came about because of strong interest from three different constituencies — practicing attorneys, institutions involved with legal education, and academics studying the profession. They were interested in exploring the consequences of the changing demographics of American society and of law school applicants, escalating student loan debt, dramatic fluctuations in the economy and corporate world, and widening gaps between private, public sector, and public interest salaries. The AJD project will map these changes and trace their effects through the study of a cohort of new lawyers — those entering practice in the year 2000.

The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) has long been active in gathering data on the career choices of new lawyers, and, as early as 1983, NALP leaders identified the need for a systematic, national study of careers in the law. In the mid-1990s, NALP commissioned the development of a proposal for a comprehensive longitudinal study focused on the

first ten years of law graduates' careers. As a means of providing long-term oversight and funding for such a massive undertaking, NALP authorized the incorporation of a 501c(3) organization, The NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education, to serve as the sponsor of the study. The NALP Foundation secured seed funding from the Open Society Institute (OSI) of the Soros Foundation and, in September 1998, The NALP Foundation, with the support of the OSI funding, brought some thirty leading research specialists to the American Bar Foundation (ABF) to explore the idea of a longitudinal study. From this meeting, the Executive Coordinating Committee (ECC),[1] a group of premier social scientists charged to implement *After the JD,* was established.[2] Under the auspices of The NALP Foundation and the American Bar Foundation, the ECC formulated detailed research plans, obtained additional funding, recruited staff, and retained a national survey organization to assist with locating and contacting a national sample of new lawyers. The AJD project has been based at the ABF office in Chicago.

The ECC selected a sample that is representative of the national population of lawyers first admitted to the bar in 2000. It sampled lawyers from eighteen geographic areas across the country, including the four largest legal markets (New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles), and fourteen other areas ranging from small metropolitan areas to entire states. New attorneys in the sample from these areas collectively mirror the national population of new attorneys. Roughly 70% of those located by the AJD study responded to either mail, phone, or web versions of the survey. In order to better explore issues of race and ethnicity,[3]

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1 The ECC members who provided leadership for the first wave were: Terry Adams, Ronit Dinovitzer, Bryant G. Garth, Jeffrey Hanson, David Hill (*through June 2003*), Robert Nelson, Paula Patton, Richard Sander, Joyce Sterling, Gita Wilder, David Wilkins, and Abbie Willard.

2 ECC members, as scholars, will publish a variety of articles and reports based on these data, and these data will also be made available to other researchers in due course. Individual scholars who have been part of the ECC come to this project with a range of research interests and scholarship agendas. The various themes and perspectives that characterize individual ECC member research interests have encouraged debate and analysis of the issues involved in lawyer careers and in the role of law more generally, thereby strengthening this first phase of the study. Differences in approach and data interpretation are a natural outcome of these various perspectives and will certainly lead to differing and controversial analyses of the AJD data not endorsed by the ECC as a whole or by the various funding organizations that have made the first phase of this study possible. With the publication of this first report, the ECC takes this opportunity to note that they believe it is premature to draw conclusions about career satisfaction and success as lawyers begin and become established in the early stages of their careers.

3 This report and the data upon which it is based serve as an initial exploration of the factors that contribute to or diminish the opportunities experienced by all lawyers and particularly by women and minority lawyers early in their careers. All members of the ECC hope that this longitudinal research will contribute to and enhance opportunities for these groups that — as this document shows — remain relatively disadvantaged in the legal profession.

the sample was augmented with a minority oversample, which resulted in an additional 600 Black, Hispanic, and Asian respondents.[4]

This report is divided into twelve sections, ten of which summarize initial findings. After the main body of the report, an appendix is included detailing the study's methodology for selecting and contacting study participants.

[4] As described in the appendix, of the 5,267 respondents to the AJD survey, 4,538 were defined as eligible respondents, and, of those, 3,905 were part of the national sample. Most of the initial report is based on these 3,905 respondents. The data in this report are presented in unweighted form, and results will be slightly different once differential selection probabilities and nonresponse are taken into account in weights.

SECTION 2:

Demographic Characteristics of AJD Lawyers

Demographic Characteristics of AJD Lawyers

There are roughly one million practicing lawyers in the United States today. The number of new lawyers entering the profession each year tripled between 1960 and the late 1970s, but growth has been fairly stable — about 40,000 per year — for the past 20 years. The new lawyers of the 21st century are more diverse in terms of gender and race than lawyers of a generation ago.

Gender, Ethnicity, and Sexual Orientation

Forty-six percent of the AJD sample are women (compared to women's representation as 5% of new lawyers in 1970), and 17% are non-white (up from about 5% in 1970). On another dimension of diversity, 2.5% of the AJD respondents reported that they are gay or lesbian. This figure is not very different from the 2.1% of the general population, and 3.5% of the college-educated population, that self-identified as homosexual in the 1991 Laumann et al survey (Laumann and Michael, 2001).[5]

Education

Nearly every accredited and unaccredited law school in the nation is represented in the AJD sample — a total of some 200 schools. The sample as a whole illustrates the strong pool of talent that moves into the legal profession annually. Over 40% of the lawyers report that they graduated in the top 10% of their undergraduate classes, and 75% report graduating in the top quarter. The competition for this talent came especially from teaching/academia and business, with 48.7% reporting that they considered a teaching/academic career, and 43.7% considering business (multiple responses were permitted to this question). The most common undergraduate majors were the social sciences (31.7%), humanities (21.1%), and business (14.5%), but the group also includes 4.3% with engineering majors.

Only 38% of respondents went directly from college to law school, although 54% attended law school within three years of graduation from college. Accordingly, at graduation from law school, half of the lawyers in the sample were 27 or younger and a quarter of them were 30 or older. Among those who took a less direct path to law school, 82% held one or more

[5] Given that younger people may be more likely to report homosexuality, and that more people are openly gay now than a decade ago, it is likely that the AJD sample reflects some underreporting by the respondents. Those who reported being gay or lesbian were distributed very much like the rest of the respondents by gender, race, practice settings, and income, with a slight geographic overrepresentation in New York and San Francisco.

full-time jobs; 21% went to graduate school, another 6% delayed law school because of family responsibilities, and 4% served in the military.

Socioeconomic Background

The newly admitted lawyers come generally from relatively privileged socioeconomic backgrounds. Sixty-three percent of AJD respondents' fathers graduated from college, as did 51% of their mothers — about three times the rate for comparable parents nationally. Sixty-nine percent of respondents' fathers are managers or professionals, compared to 20% of the general workforce. About 12% of the lawyers in the sample are the children of lawyers, and another 36% had some other close relative who was an attorney.

Despite the general pattern of relative privilege, the data also demonstrate that the legal profession provides opportunities for some individuals to become upwardly mobile. Fully 21% of respondents' fathers and 28% of respondents' mothers did not attend college; 15% of the fathers had blue-collar occupations, and 15% of respondents' parents were born outside the United States. Those from different socioeconomic backgrounds, however, are not evenly distributed in the law schools they attended. The more selective the law school, the more likely it is to educate the children of relative privilege, and the less selective schools are notably more accessible to the less privileged students.

Religion

The AJD respondents can also be mapped by religion. The largest group, 30%, reported Protestant affiliations; 27% reported Roman Catholic affiliations; 7% stated they were Jewish; and 23% reported no religious identity. Earlier studies have shown that religious background has historically worked as a proxy for ethnicity and, at times, social class (Heinz and Laumann 1982). Catholics, especially the Irish, tended to be close to politics and government, and their legal careers were disproportionately linked to those sectors. Protestant groups historically tended to represent the social elite, closely connected to economic power, and they therefore tended to dominate corporate law. The recent study of Chicago lawyers finds that much of that legacy has disappeared (Heinz, Nelson, Laumann, and Sandefur, forthcoming 2005). The social legacy, nevertheless, still accounts for an overrepresentation of Catholics in government and a Protestant edge in the likelihood of partnership in a corporate law firm and/or very high legal earnings. The AJD data do not show the same pattern at this point with one exception: Catholic lawyers are indeed already overrepresented in government.

TABLE 2.1. Distribution of Sample by Race and Gender Using Comparative Data

	AJD National Sample		National Comparisons*	
Female	1,729	46.2%	19,409	46.0%
Male	2,016	53.8%	22,777	54.0%
American Indian	46	1.2%	430	0.3%
Asian	254	6.5%	9,715	6.3%
Black	217	5.6%	9,410	6.1%
Hispanic	146	3.7%	6,482	4.2%
Other	116	3.0%	2,298	1.5%
White	3,089	79.1%	126,888	81.8%
TOTAL	3,868		*	*
Missing	37			

* Sources: Data on gender are based on the ABA Survey of Law Schools, 1997 Cohort of first-year law students (n = 42,186) accessible at http://www.abanet.org/legaled/statistics/le_bastats.html. Data on race/ethnicity are based on 2000 Public-Use Microdata 5% Samples weighted (all lawyers and judges, ages 27-32, n = 155,223).
The counts of Black, Hispanic, and Asian AJD respondents reported here include only those in the "National Sample," which is intended to be representative of the national population of new lawyers. The AJD study also included a minority oversample; with this oversample, the AJD study includes 1,185 minority respondents (about 400 for each of the three minority groups).

TABLE 2.2. AJD Parental Education Compared with the General Population

Highest Grade or Degree Earned	AJD Mother*	AJD Father*	National Women**	National Men**
Grade school	3%	3%	6%	7%
Some high school	3%	3%	11%	10%
High school diploma or equivalent	22%	15%	31%	26%
Some college or vocational training	21%	16%	29%	27%
Bachelor's or four-year degree	25%	19%	14%	16%
Some post-graduate work or graduate/professional degree	26%	44%	10%	13%
Total N	2,210	2,192	31,290,000	29,580,000

* National Sample, mail questionnaire respondents only.
** Source: 2000 Public-Use Microdata 5% Samples weighted (restricted to general population ages 45-64).

SECTION 3: Practice Setting

Practice Setting

Geographic location and practice setting together account for many of the key differences within the AJD sample — including the qualifications necessary to obtain the job, the nature of and supervision over their work, satisfaction with various aspects of the position, pro bono opportunities, and incomes. The importance of the differences in practice setting described here will therefore be seen in every subsequent section of this report.

The vast majority of the lawyers (97%) in the AJD sample reported that they were employed, with 94% working full time and 91% practicing law in their primary jobs. Almost 70% of respondents worked in private law firms, and about 16% of respondents worked in government. Of those in government, 11% were in state or local government and 5% in the federal government.[6] Other settings accounted for very small proportions of the AJD sample.

Private Practice

New lawyers are much more concentrated in large firms than are lawyers as a whole, but even at this stage a great many new lawyers go into what, by modern standards, are comparatively small firms. About one-quarter of the new lawyers in private practice are in offices with more than 100 lawyers, but a substantially larger proportion (48%) are in offices with 20 or fewer lawyers. Even in large metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles, a substantial proportion of new attorneys are working in relatively small settings. If prior patterns persist, the relative numbers of the AJD sample practicing in smaller firm settings will increase over time (ABF Lawyer Statistical Report, 1994).

Respondents working in the largest offices (251+) comprise 6.6% of the sample. The greatest representation of lawyers in this setting is in New York (24%), with at least 10% of respondents in Boston, Chicago, Houston, and Washington, D.C., also working in this very large office setting. The proportions working in small offices of 2 to 20 lawyers range from a low of 15% in New York (but 28% in Los Angeles) to an average of 35% in the least urbanized markets, such as Oklahoma, Utah, and Indiana.

Most of the data in this report are based on office size rather than firm size, but the relationship between the two merits some attention. Three times as many lawyers work in *firms* of more than 250 lawyers than are found in *offices* of that size. While a substantial number of law-

[6] This figure is somewhat higher than the 58% reported by NALP for the percentage of new lawyers in 2000 that entered private practice. The difference may be attributable in part to the fact that the AJD data were collected two years later, but also by the selection of the particular markets in which AJD data were collected. Percentages for the remaining categories of settings also vary, but slightly. The most divergent of these is between NALP's figure of 12% — as opposed to AJD's 16% — in government positions.

yers do work in offices connected to large law firms, it is important to note that about 80% of the lawyers in small offices (2 to 20 lawyers) are in stand-alone offices.

Government

About 16% of new lawyers work in government. Of those in government, two-thirds work at the state or local level and one-third work for the federal government. The proportion of new lawyers who work in government is remarkably similar across regions; even in Washington, D.C., only 23% of the sample were government lawyers.[7] Nearly one-fifth of these attorneys in government characterize their work as mostly non-legal.

Public Interest

Just over 4% of the lawyers in the sample work in public interest or legal services organizations. Of all groups, the public interest lawyers are the most geographically concentrated — 42% of those in the AJD sample are in New York, D.C., or Chicago.

Business

About 9% of the new lawyers work in business settings (compared to 8% of all attorneys). This is a very heterogeneous group. Most do not work at Fortune 1000 corporations, and about a third are doing primarily non-legal work.

The Rest

Another 2% of the lawyers studied are outside any of these standard career patterns.[8] Some of these lawyers are pursuing academic careers; others work in non-profit settings; and another portion work in accounting or consulting firms. About half of this group report that they are functioning primarily as non-lawyers in their jobs.

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[7] In 15 of the 18 sampling areas, government lawyers make up between 14% and 20% of all new lawyers.

[8] These 2% are in the categories of nonprofit, education, and "other." It is likely that the true proportion is higher, and the AJD study was less likely to locate, or get a response, from lawyers outside the mainstream. Also note that many law school graduates pursuing non-traditional careers do not take the bar. The AJD sample does not include graduates who did not take and pass the bar.

TABLE 3.1. AJD Respondents by Practice Setting Compared with the General Population of Lawyers

Setting	AJD (by office size)	AJD (by firm size)	All Lawyers* (by firm size)
Solo	5%	5%	32%
Private firms of 2-20 lawyers	28%	25%	19%
Private firms of 21-100 lawyers	19%	13%	8%
Private firms of 101-250 lawyers	11%	8%	8%
Private firms of 251+ lawyers	7%	20%	
Government – federal	5%	5%	6%
Government – state or local	11%	11%	16%
Legal services or public defender	3%	3%	
Public Interest	1%	1%	1%
Nonprofit or education and other	2%	2%	2%
Business	9%	9%	8%
Total N	3,611	3,663	–

* Sources for last column are 2000 Public-Use Microdata 5% Samples weighted (all lawyers and judges), used to separate out lawyers into government, nonprofit, legal services, and private practice; ABF Lawyer Statistical Report (1994), used to distribute private practice lawyers by firm size.

Figure 3.2. Practice Setting by Geographic Market

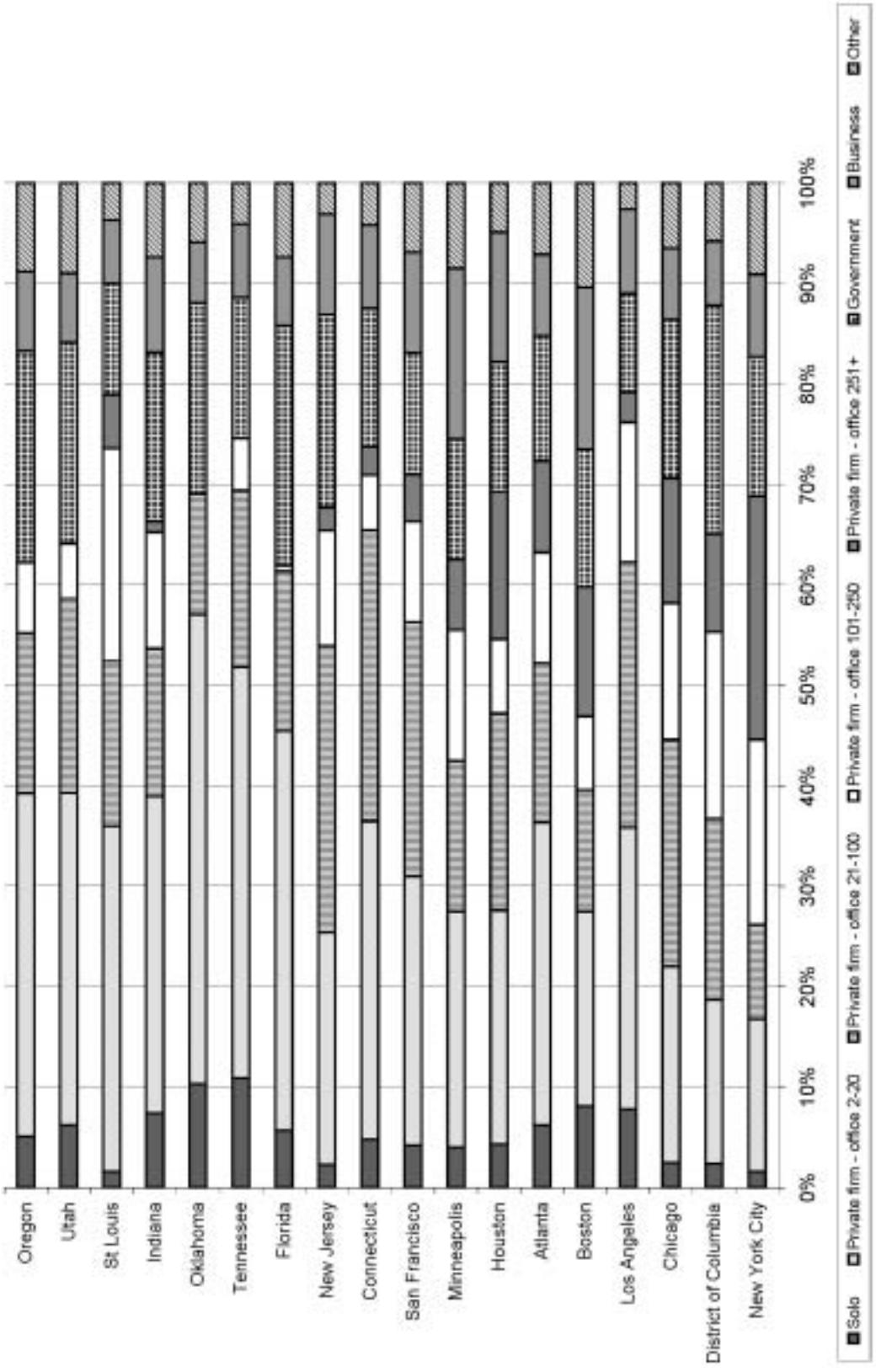

TABLE 3.2. Practice Setting by Geographic Market

Market	PRIVATE FIRMS					Govern-ment	Business	Other
	Solo	Office of 2-20 Lawyers	Office of 21-100 Lawyers	Office of 101-250 Lawyers	Office of 251+ Lawyers			
Oregon	5%	34%	16%	7%	–	21%	8%	9%
Utah	6%	33%	19%	6%	–	20%	7%	9%
St. Louis	2%	34%	16%	21%	5%	11%	6%	4%
Indiana	7%	32%	15%	12%	1%	17%	10%	7%
Oklahoma	10%	47%	12%	–	–	19%	6%	6%
Tennessee	11%	41%	18%	5%	–	14%	7%	4%
Florida	6%	40%	16%	1%	–	24%	7%	7%
New Jersey	2%	23%	29%	12%	2%	19%	10%	3%
Connecticut	5%	32%	29%	6%	3%	14%	8%	4%
San Francisco	4%	27%	25%	10%	5%	12%	10%	7%
Minneapolis	4%	24%	15%	13%	7%	12%	17%	9%
Houston	4%	23%	20%	7%	15%	13%	13%	5%
Atlanta	6%	30%	16%	11%	9%	12%	8%	7%
Boston	8%	19%	12%	7%	13%	14%	16%	10%
Los Angeles	8%	28%	26%	14%	3%	10%	8%	3%
Chicago	3%	20%	23%	14%	12%	16%	7%	7%
District of Columbia	2%	16%	18%	19%	10%	23%	6%	6%
New York City	2%	15%	9%	18%	24%	14%	8%	9%

The information illustrated by Figure 3.2 on the opposite page is presented here as a table.

SECTION 4:

What New Lawyers Do

What New Lawyers Do

The work that new lawyers do varies by practice setting and legal market, as emphasized above, both because of different regional expectations and because of different distributions of practice settings. The paradigmatic distinction is between the largest law firm as a practice setting and New York City as a legal market, versus government and public interest lawyers and practice in locations other than New York City.

Hours Worked

New lawyers are generally portrayed in the legal press as overworked to a point of exhaustion. The AJD study suggests that this image is greatly exaggerated, even for large firm lawyers.[9] In the entire sample, the mean number of hours reported for a typical work week was 49 and the median 50 — compared with a median of 40 hours for all full-time workers in the United States (US Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census of the United States, 5% Public Use Microdata Sample, 2002). The reported time commitment for new lawyers also is consistent with data reported on the general population of American lawyers (US Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census of the United States, 5% Public Use Microdata Sample, 2002).

The stereotypes, however, are not without some basis. About 20% of all new attorneys reported working 60 or more hours a week, and those who did were most likely to be in the largest firms; not surprisingly, the highest percentage of lawyers working more than 60 hours are those working in New York City (28% — rising to 39% working these hours in New York City's largest private offices). Those least likely to report these long hours are working in government and public interest, where the means and medians for hours worked are also lower than the other practice settings. Substantial differences in practice settings are important, but the more general point is that 60-hour weeks do occur, but are not the norm, in every sector and market.

Specialization

Evidence from the AJD responses suggests that new lawyers develop a specialization fairly early in their careers. Two separate measures of specialization contribute to this conclusion. Respondents to the questionnaire stated whether or not they consider themselves specialists, and they also indicated the amount of time they spend in each of 20 different practice areas.

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[9] Data on hours worked are based on the question "How many hours did you actually work last week even if it was atypical (include evenings and weekends worked)?" It is possible that the hours reported in this study were somewhat lower due to the fact that the economy had not fully recovered from the recession at the time of the survey.

Over two-thirds of the AJD respondents report that half or more of their recent work has been in a single substantive field, but only 40% actually describe themselves as "specialists." This may reflect the difference between being assigned to a particular concentrated area as a new lawyer and making a conscious commitment to specialize in that area.

Specialization (measured by spending at least 50% of time in one area) was most common in those public sector jobs where work in a particular agency necessarily implied specialization (e.g., legal services for the poor or public defenders' offices) and in medium and large firms. Within the firm setting, there is more reported specialization in terms of time in the larger office settings of more than 100 lawyers.

The Nature of Work

Within private law firms, the data suggest two general patterns in the work assignments of new lawyers. Some attorneys are given a large number of comparatively small projects and a commensurately large level of responsibility for each project. Others play minor, supporting roles on bigger, more complex projects. As one might imagine, new lawyers in smaller firms tend to follow the first pattern — that is, learning by taking primary responsibility for relatively small projects. New lawyers in large firms tend to follow the second pattern — learning by playing sometimes minor or routine roles in big, complex projects. Those in large firms are also, as suggested above, relatively more likely to already be specialized in the kind of work they do.

At this stage of their careers, the majority of lawyers — with the exception of lawyers in public interest settings and those in the largest private firms — report that they work on many different matters. Following the pattern described above, the percentages of lawyers who report having worked on nine or more matters (during a three-month period) varied inversely with the size of the office, from 45% among lawyers in offices with more than 250 lawyers to 90% in offices of between 2 and 20.

The differences among the practice settings are further emphasized by examining the type of work that lawyers report doing within each setting. Using a statistical technique termed "factor analysis," the AJD data analyses combine these tasks into three major groupings, or factors. One factor was labeled "routine," to indicate work such as routine research or due diligence; a second, "independence," represents tasks that allow the lawyers some degree of autonomy in their performance; and a third, "trust," represents tasks for which a great deal of responsibility is vested in a lawyer.

It is not surprising that lawyers in venues where resources are stretched thin — public defenders and legal services lawyers — report relatively high trust and independence. Lawyers in private practice generally report lower levels of trust and independence, with strikingly lower levels in the largest firms. These large firm lawyers also report correspondingly high levels of routine activity but not as much routine as for the solo practitioners.

Pro Bono Work

ABA Model Rule 6.1 provides an aspiration for all lawyers of 50 hours of pro bono work per year. Over the past decade, most big private firms have participated in a survey of pro bono work undertaken by the *American Lawyer*, which, for 2000, found the average lawyer in the largest firms spending about 39 hours per year on pro bono matters (*American Lawyer*, 2001).

Pro bono commitments in the AJD sample vary considerably by practice setting. Lawyers outside private firms (e.g., in government or corporations) report little pro bono, and the amount of pro bono done within private firms is strongly related to office size. The highest percentage of participation is found among solo practitioners and respondents in the largest law firms (251+). Among those who report engaging in some pro bono work, the amount of pro bono time new lawyers spend varies by the size of their office. While lawyers undertaking pro bono in all private practice settings reported an average of 58 pro bono hours a year, respondents in offices with 100 or more attorneys reported an average of 75 hours of pro bono work. In all private firm settings, small numbers of lawyers account for a disproportionate amount of pro bono work.

There are several possible explanations for this pattern aside from differences in personal commitment to pro bono work. The largest firms may be more likely to express an institutional commitment to pro bono work, and they may also be more likely to have a formal institutional mechanism for linking attorneys to pro bono opportunities.[10] Some law firms may also encourage pro bono partly to give associates valuable experience, especially in litigation. Evidence for the last possibility is suggested by the finding that associates in large firms who do more pro bono work are less likely to report that they would like more training.

Relatively small percentages of the sample — an average of about 18% across settings — said that they would like more opportunities for pro bono work. The highest percentages came from private practitioners in small-to-medium offices. That one quarter of respondents in offices of between 21 and 100 lawyers express a desire for more pro bono work suggests that better opportunities and stronger institutional commitment in this setting would increase pro bono hours.

[10] It is also possible that small firm lawyers are less likely to categorize informal work done for indigent clients as "pro bono" work. Note, too, that many lawyers in sectors other than private firms frequently report significant amounts of pro bono activity.

FIGURE 4.1. Mean Hours and Percent Working over 60 Hours by Setting (full-time workers only)

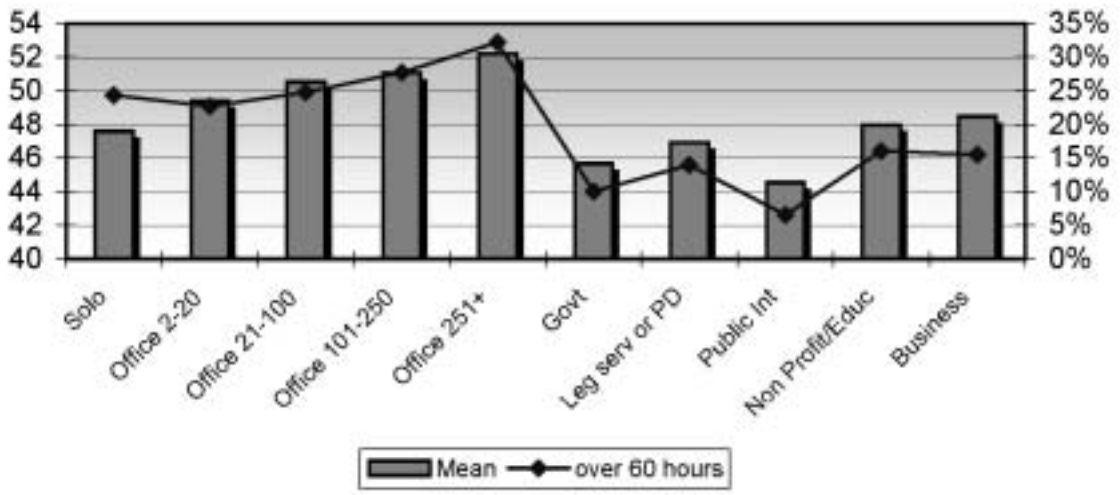

TABLE 4.1. Mean and Median Hours and Percent Working over 60 Hours by Setting (full-time workers only)

	HOURS WORKED LAST WEEK			Over 60 Hours
	Mean	Median	Valid N	
Solo	47.6	50	152	24%
Private firm – office of 2-20 lawyers	49.39	50	919	23%
Private firm – office of 21-100 lawyers	50.5	50	602	25%
Private firm – office of 101-250 lawyers	51.03	50	350	28%
Private firm – office of 251+ lawyers	52.15	50	205	32%
Government	45.66	45	432	10%
Legal services or public defender	46.93	45	86	14%
Public interest	44.55	45	31	7%
Nonprofit or education	47.96	45	25	16%
Business	48.48	48	142	16%

TABLE 4.2. Specialist by Practice Setting

	50% or More Time in One Area	Self-reported as "Specialist"
Solo	49%	37%
Office of 2-20 lawyers	65%	36%
Office of 21-100 lawyers	75%	40%
Office of 101-250 lawyers	81%	44%
Office of 251+ lawyers	79%	37%
Government	78%	38%
Legal services or public defender	85%	54%
Public interest	65%	47%
Nonprofit/education	48%	46%
Business	63%	51%
Other	100%	25%
TOTAL	71%	40%

TABLE 4.3. Pro Bono Statistics by Practice Setting

	Average Pro Bono Hours (including 0 hours)	% Engaging in Some Pro Bono	Average for Those Engaging in Some Pro Bono	Median for Those Engaging in Some Pro Bono
Solo	40.5	81%	49.8	30
Office of 2-20 lawyers	17.7	56%	31.9	20
Office of 21-100 lawyers	22.0	55%	39.7	24.5
Office of 101-250 lawyers	46.7	73%	64.3	40
Office of 251+ lawyers	68.5	81%	84.5	45
Government	4.1	18%	22.6	10
Business	11.2	47%	24.1	20
Total N	1,595	1,595	865	865

SECTION 5:

The Income of New Lawyers

The Income of New Lawyers

The median income of the full-time lawyers in the sample is $73,000. This figure appears relatively high for new lawyers, given that the Current Population Survey of 2002 indicated a nationwide median income for all lawyers of $85,000.[11] These relatively high figures for new lawyers may reflect the dramatic escalation of lawyers' starting salaries in the mid-1990s and/or some compression of salaries over time in certain practice settings. Recent studies also suggest a widening of the gap generally between high-earning lawyers and those at the lower end of the income spectrum (Heinz, Nelson, Laumann, and Sandefur, forthcoming 2005). Consistent with that pattern, the median figure in the AJD study of $73,000 already conceals an enormous range of incomes. About 25% of the attorneys in the sample reported incomes of more than $110,000 (and 10% were over $150,000), while another 25% reported incomes below $50,000. Table 5.1 outlines median incomes by the crucial determinant, practice setting.

Private Practice

Within private practice, accordingly, income tends to rise with the number of lawyers working within the office. The actual levels of income in these settings, however, are constrained by their geographic market. Median incomes in the largest law firms (251+), for example, range from a low of $100,000 in Minneapolis, to $172,500 in Connecticut and $170,000 in New York City.

Government

Salaries in the public sector are generally well below those in private firms, though within the public sector the median lawyer working for the federal government earns 35% more than the median lawyer working for state or local governments. (A part of this difference is due to the greater concentration of federal lawyers in major metropolitan areas.) The medians for legal services lawyers, public defenders, and public interest lawyers are only 10–15% lower than the median for state and local government lawyers generally, but they make less than a third of the earnings of their peers at the largest firms.

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[11] Data on the general population of lawyers from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002 Current Population Survey.

Factors Contributing to Salary

At this early stage of lawyer careers, the ability to obtain high salaries depends largely on practice setting, which in turn depends on the credentials new lawyers have when they graduate from law school: what law school they attended and how well they performed academically. For purposes of discussion, this first analysis of the AJD data relies on the five groupings of law schools publicized by *US News and World Report* because these rankings reflect a general reputational hierarchy that has important consequences in lawyer careers. *After the JD* respondents who graduated from the more selective law schools, as ranked in the aforementioned publication, work disproportionately in the larger offices in private practice and in the markets where the highest paid lawyers are located. When they work for government, they are more likely to be employed by the higher-paying federal government.[12] Those graduating from the so-called medium and low selectivity schools, in contrast, are more likely to work in smaller firms, in state and local government, or in the business sector, where salaries tend to be somewhat lower. Although law school attended correlates highly with salary, it is not the entire story; some 15–18% of those working in the largest private offices in NYC and in other major metropolitan areas graduated from schools that are relatively low in selectivity.

Law school performance largely accounts for the ability of graduates of less selective schools to work in the most lucrative settings. Grades are not equally important in all law schools, however. In many of the most selective schools, virtually all grades are B or higher and salaries have no apparent relationship to grades.[13] For the vast majority of law graduates, however, a higher GPA is correlated with a higher salary. There is also a strong penalty for low grades. Outside of a relatively small number of selective schools, those with lower GPAs (under 3.0) have dramatically lower salaries across the board — suggesting that GPA, mediated through practice setting, is the key factor for those lawyers.

The discussion of lawyer incomes is, of course, incomplete without analysis of the effects of gender, ethnicity, and race on the structure of opportunity. These analyses are deferred until Sections 8 and 9, which focus directly on issues of equality and equity in early careers.

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[12] Determining the selectivity of law schools is itself a controversial and subjective undertaking. As noted, for ease of discussion, this first analysis of the AJD data relies on the five groupings of law schools publicized by *US News and World Report*. Use of the broad general categories found in this particular ranking system in no way indicates endorsement of the *US News* approach. The AJD study uses these categories because they are the most widely known, and because they provide a shorthand for describing clusters of schools that have reputational similarities. In using these categories, the AJD researchers acknowledge that categories used in this ranking system mask many exceptional schools that defy some of the aggregate relationships found in the AJD data.

[13] Note that all grades in these analyses are self-reported and subject to possible inflation by respondents.

TABLE 5.1. Salary by Setting of AJD Respondents (full-time workers only)

	Salary – Median	Salary – Percentile 25	Salary – Percentile 75
Solo	$55,000	$45,000	$75,000
Office of 2-20 lawyers	60,000	48,500	78,000
Office of 21-100 lawyers	97,000	78,000	132,500
Office of 101-250 lawyers	125,000	96,000	145,000
Office of 251+ lawyers	140,000	125,000	158,000
Federal government (including judiciary)	63,000	54,275	70,000
State or local government (including judiciary)	45,000	40,000	53,500
Legal services or public defender	40,100	36,000	45,000
Public interest organization	38,500	34,000	48,000
Other nonprofit organization	51,650	42,000	69,500
Educational institution	51,800	43,000	70,000
Professional service firm (e.g., accounting or investment banking)	77,500	61,000	110,000
Other Fortune 1000 industry/service	84,000	63,000	120,000
Other business/industry	75,500	60,000	100,000
Labor union trade association	71,200	46,200	90,000
Other (specify)	40,200	33,000	47,400
TOTAL	73,000	50,000	110,000

Note: Much of the variation between practice settings displayed in this table is also accounted for by geographic variations.

TABLE 5.2. Law School Selectivity, Median Income, and Percent Practice Setting (full-time workers only)

	TOP 10		TOP 11-20		TOP 21-100		TIER 3		TIER 4	
	Median Salary	%	Median Salary	%	Median Salary	%	Median Salary	%	Median Salary	%
Solo	–	0%	–	2%	$50,000	4%	$55,000	6%	$57,500	8%
Office of 2-20 lawyers	135,000	6%	75,500	16%	60,000	29%	55,000	36%	54,500	41%
Office of 21-100 lawyers	130,000	20%	130,000	27%	94,000	20%	85,000	15%	79,500	12%
Office of 101-250 lawyers	145,000	25%	135,000	22%	107,000	10%	95,000	6%	–	2%
Office of 251+ lawyers	150,000	25%	140,000	11%	135,000	5%	137,000	3%	–	1%
Government - federal	74,000	7%	64,892	5%	59,500	6%	60,000	3%	56,000	3%
Government - state/local	53,000	3%	50,000	6%	45,000	12%	43,450	13%	45,000	17%
Legal services or public defender	37,500	3%	–	2%	41,000	3%	45,425	3%	40,250	3%
Public interest	39,000	4%	–	2%	–	1%	–	1%	–	0%
Nonprofit/ education	–	2%	–	2%	52,600	2%	52,500	2%	–	2%
Business	120,000	6%	80,000	5%	84,000	9%	70,000	11%	80,000	11%
Total Median	135,000	100%	107,000	100%	72,787	100%	60,000	100%	56,182	100%
Total N	295		375		1,459		503		433	

TABLE 5.3. Grades, Law School Selectivity, and Median Salary (full-time workers only)

	Top 10	Top 11-20	Top 21-100	Tier 3	Tier 4
GPA 3.75 - 4.00	$130,000	$135,000	$100,000	$93,000	$79,000
GPA 3.50 - 3.74	140,000	127,460	90,000	90,000	79,000
GPA 3.25 - 3.49	135,000	105,000	80,000	65,000	57,000
GPA 3.00 - 3.24	125,000	100,000	63,000	55,820	60,000
GPA 2.75 - 2.99	–	56,000	51,025	55,000	50,000
GPA 2.50 or lower	–	49,000	51,500	51,000	50,000

Note: n < 10 are suppressed.

SECTION 6:

Dimensions of Satisfaction for New Lawyers

Dimensions of Satisfaction for New Lawyers

The AJD respondents report relatively high levels of satisfaction with their decisions to become lawyers and with their legal practices. Consistent with the findings of other systematic studies of the legal profession, including the recent Chicago Lawyers study (Heinz, Nelson, Laumann, and Sandefur, forthcoming 2005), there is no evidence in the AJD data of any pervasive unhappiness in the profession. The Chicago Lawyers study found that in the profession as a whole the level of satisfaction is highly correlated with the incomes of the lawyers. For the AJD lawyers, who are at the beginning of their careers, the story is more complex and somewhat paradoxical. Those with the highest incomes report relatively less satisfaction with the work they do and the practice settings in which they work than those earning far less from the practice of law.

Levels of Satisfaction

The AJD respondents report a relatively high level of general satisfaction, with 80% expressing that they were "moderately" or "extremely" satisfied with their decision to become a lawyer. This figure does not differ greatly from the Chicago Lawyers finding that 83% of Chicago lawyers (of all ages) report being "fairly" or "very" satisfied with their jobs (Heinz, Nelson, Laumann, and Sandefur, 2005).

In the *After the JD* questionnaire, when respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with 16 specific aspects of their jobs, the average response of the AJD lawyers in every category was on the "satisfied" portion of the continuum. Respondents are most satisfied with their "relationships with colleagues" and "level of responsibility" and least satisfied with the "performance evaluation process."

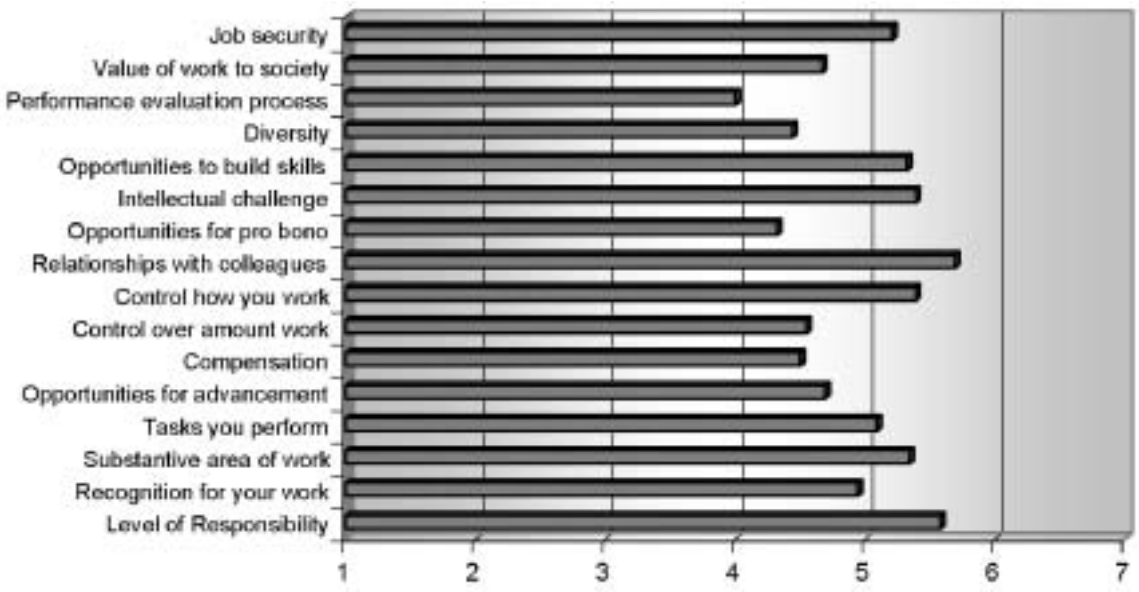
Dimensions of Satisfaction

Factor analysis (see Section 4 above) was used to distill four dimensions of job satisfaction from the AJD data: "Job Setting Satisfaction," which consolidates ratings of recognition received at work, relationships with colleagues, control over the work, and job security; "Work Substance Satisfaction," which reflects the intrinsic interest of the work; "Social Value Satisfaction," which concerns the reported relationship between work and broader social issues (workplace diversity, opportunities for pro bono work, and the social value of the work); and "Power Track Satisfaction," comprised of two items, satisfaction with compensation levels and satisfaction with opportunities for advancement.

The first three dimensions of satisfaction tend to correlate highly with one another — people happy with the substance of their work also tend to like their work environment and its social value. But "power track" satisfaction is often inversely related to the others. For example, attorneys in large firms tend to report the highest levels of satisfaction on the power track measure, but they tend to express much less satisfaction with the other dimensions of their jobs. These findings are supported by data showing that lawyers in the largest firms (251+) are also substantially more likely to express a desire to work fewer hours, to have less pressure to bill, and to have greater opportunities to shape decisions on matters on which they work. The smaller the law firm, the more likely it is that new attorneys will report relatively high satisfaction with the work that they do. On the other hand, they report relatively low satisfaction with the "power track" aspects of their job. (Of course, compensation does in fact generally decline with firm size.) With respect to attorneys in government and in public interest, the pattern is much the same as in smaller firms.

These different patterns help provide a context for the literature that purports to find high levels of dissatisfaction among associates in large law firms. The relative dissatisfaction reported by associates suggests that high salaries and a perception of strong prospects for the future are counterbalanced by the less desirable aspects of their current work environment.

FIGURE 6.1. Detailed Measures of Job Satisfaction
(mean scores, national sample = 3,905)



1 = highly dissatisfied and 7 = highly satisfied

TABLE 6.1. Detailed Measures of Job Satisfaction

	Mean
Job security	5.21
Value of work to society	4.67
Performance evaluation process	4.00
Diversity	4.44
Opportunities to build skills	5.32
Intellectual challenge	5.39
Opportunities for pro bono	4.32
Relationships with colleagues	5.69
Control how you work	5.39
Control over amount work	4.55
Compensation	4.5
Opportunities for advancement	4.69
Tasks you perform	5.09
Substantive area of work	5.34
Recognition for your work	4.94
Level of responsibility	5.58

FIGURE 6.2. Job Satisfaction Scores (Means) by Practice Setting
(the mean for each satisfaction factor score in the sample is 0; national sample = 3,905)

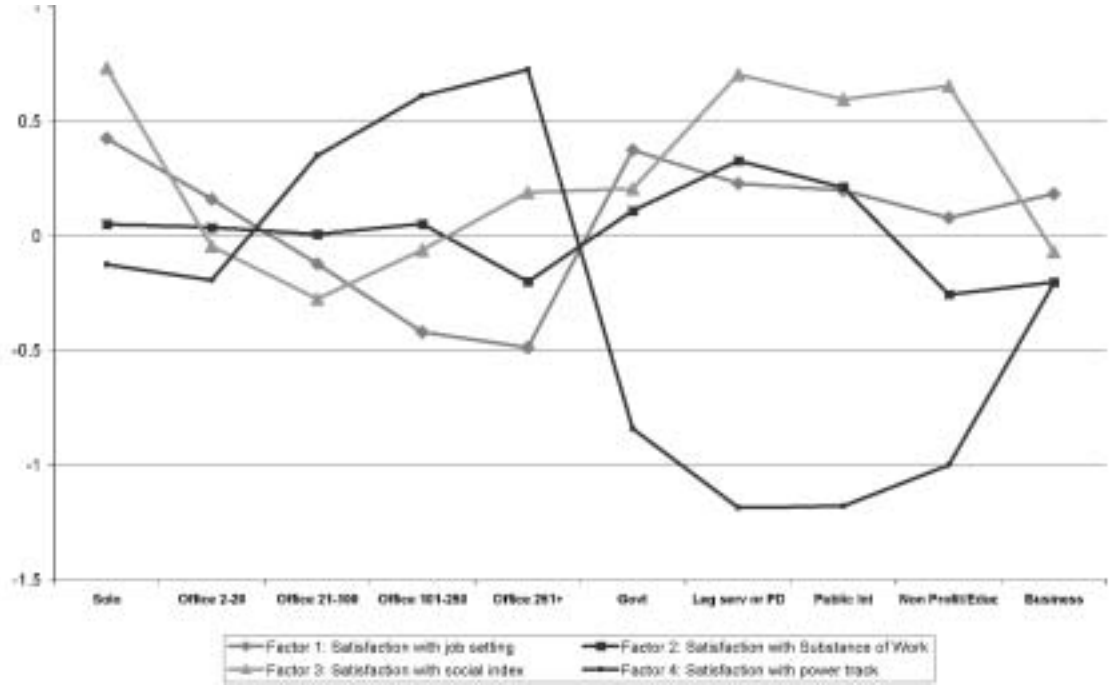


TABLE 6.2. Job Satisfaction Scores (Means) by Practice Setting (the mean for each satisfaction factor score in the sample is 0; national sample = 3,905)

	Factor 1: Satisfaction with Job Setting	Factor 2: Satisfaction with Substance of Work	Factor 3: Satisfaction with Social Index	Factor 4: Satisfaction with Power Track
Solo	0.426284	0.053592	0.734866	-0.12434
Office of 2-20 lawyers	0.162442	0.038821	-0.0439	-0.1926
Office of 21-100 lawyers	-0.12048	0.009602	-0.27366	0.351867
Office of 101-250 lawyers	-0.41768	0.054715	-0.06036	0.612294
Office of 251+ lawyers	-0.4847	-0.1985	0.192385	0.727267
Government	0.375479	0.11231	0.20797	-0.84009
Legal services or public defender	0.230343	0.329442	0.706815	-1.18333
Public interest	0.200473	0.212216	0.596733	-1.17607
Nonprofit/education	0.081501	-0.253970	0.655231	-0.99712
Business	0.184924	-0.20108	-0.0662	-0.20597

SECTION 7: Mobility and Turnover

Mobility and Turnover

There is no question that mobility in legal careers has increased in recent decades, particularly in private practice (Heinz, Nelson, Laumann, and Sandefur, forthcoming 2005). The AJD sample confirms that a great deal of mobility takes place early in careers and reveals quite a bit of self-reporting of plans to move within a few years. High mobility is also evidenced by the difficulties AJD researchers encountered in attempts to locate many sample members. Despite obtaining initial mailing addresses from state bar authorities and extensive Internet and other follow-ups, the AJD team could not locate 20% of the individuals in the original sample.

Mobility and Turnover by Employment Sector

Even though most respondents in the AJD data set were fewer than three years out of law school, more than a third had already changed jobs at least once (and 18% twice or more) during their legal careers — not counting as a job change those lawyers who obtained clerkships after law school. Least likely to move were lawyers in practice settings with the highest incomes. Only 16% of those in the largest (251+) offices had moved, suggesting that their satisfaction with the "power track" has tempered their relative dissatisfaction with the work itself. In contrast, one-half of the solos and 42% of those in offices of 2–20 lawyers had already moved. In these small-firm settings, approximately two-thirds of the movers had already changed jobs two or more times. Some of the early mobility of solo practitioners may reflect an underestimation of the demands and costs of going solo — or the fact that some lawyers choose solo practice while searching for other employment options. Relatively high mobility is found also in the government and legal aid spheres, with about one-third already reporting a job change, and the figures for public interest, nonprofit, and education are comparable to the solo and small firm numbers.

Intentions to Move

The theme of relatively high mobility generally is found also in expressed intentions to move in the future. In the sample as a whole, 44% report plans to move within two years; 22% of the sample as a whole plan to move in less than a year. The data by specific sectors of practice reveal an interesting asymmetry, again revolving around the contrast between the large law firms and most of the other work settings. Respondents in large firms are less likely than anyone else to have changed jobs since law school, as noted above, but over half of them (along with government lawyers) state that they are planning to change jobs within the next two years. On the other hand, lawyers in the smaller firms, who tend to have experienced more job changes than those in other settings, are relatively less likely to report that they are planning to seek another job in the coming years.

The contrast between actual mobility and intentions to move may be a matter of timing. It could be that those in the larger firms are beginning to translate their relative dissatisfaction with job settings into a search for new positions — or it could be that many intended all along to remain at their initial firms for several years while paying down student loans and gaining experience and then to consider other options. Another possibility is that planned moves relate to a perception of lack of success on the track to partnership. Yet another explanation could be a proliferation of other opportunities in other firms or settings in an increasingly competitive environment.

For the solo and small firm lawyers, it could be that they have already spent some time developing credentials and experience — reflected in their job changes — that will place them in a niche where they no longer feel the need to move. It could also be that the movement of solos is dictated less by long-term plans and more by particular situations, or similarly that large firm lawyers cope with their dissatisfactions in part by perpetually planning to move. Statements of intention to move do not necessarily mean that the intention will be carried out.

TABLE 7.1. Prior and Future Job Mobility by Setting

	At Least One Job Change	Intends to Change Jobs within Two Years	Total N for Job Changes	Total N for Future Mobility
Solo	50%	12%	164	147
Office of 2-20 lawyers	42%	39%	980	958
Office of 21-100 lawyers	29%	41%	650	619
Office of 101-250 lawyers	23%	45%	384	374
Office of 251+ lawyers	16%	55%	229	219
Government	33%	54%	553	542
Legal services or public defender	33%	47%	100	99
Public interest	41%	67%	39	39
Nonprofit/education	55%	48%	67	67
Business	43%	41%	304	295

SECTION 8: Gender

Gender

The entry of women into the legal profession over the last two decades has raised expectations for full gender integration. The AJD study will examine how those expectations are being fulfilled for the new generation of lawyers. Since the year 2000, women and men have been attending law school in virtually equal proportions, and the AJD study reflects this move toward parity, with women comprising 46% of the respondents (Glater, 2001). The AJD data confirm this relative convergence of numbers of women entering the legal profession compared to men, but they do not point toward full gender integration. There is continuing evidence of divergence in career paths and of relative gaps in the income of female lawyers.

Studies have shown that despite the increasing numbers of women entering the legal profession in recent decades, the proportion of women partners in private practice has remained static since the mid-1990s (NALP Foundation, 1999). Other studies suggest that women and men are increasingly occupying very different spaces in the legal landscape (Heinz, Nelson, Laumann, and Sandefur, forthcoming 2005).

Practice Setting

Women in the AJD sample are found in roughly similar numbers to the men in the different practice settings. Nevertheless the evidence of divergence at this very early stage is striking. Women are more likely than men to work in government, legal services, or public defender positions, public interest law positions, and nonprofit or education positions. Higher numbers of men are found in private practice than their female counterparts (almost three-quarters of the men and two-thirds of the women report that they are working in private practice). Current patterns suggest that women will increasingly move out of private law firms and into positions in government and in corporate counsel. Future waves of the AJD study will document whether that pattern continues to be true, and — perhaps more importantly — what accounts for individual exceptions.

Specialization

As reported in Section 3, substantial proportions of these new lawyers view themselves as, or are *de facto*, specialists. The concentrations of men and women in particular areas are, for the most part, comparable. However, there is still evidence of some of the traditional gendered divisions in areas of specialization: women are found more frequently to be practicing family law, while men are more likely to be found in intellectual property.

Earnings Disparity

One of the most salient findings with respect to gender is that the women in the AJD sample, even at this early stage of their careers, are earning significantly less than their male counterparts. The median salary for women is $66,000 compared to $80,000 for men. This difference is not explained by practice setting alone. In the largest law offices (251+), there is a $15,000 gap in men's and women's salaries. And with the exception of only two categories where the difference is fairly small (private firms of 101-250 and in nonprofit/education), men outearn women in every setting.[14] Further exploration of the factors that contribute to this disparity is necessary.

Satisfaction

There are also important differences in the current satisfaction levels of women and men. While both are generally satisfied with their decision to become lawyers, important differences are found in the four dimensions of satisfaction discussed in Section 5. Women are significantly more satisfied than men with the substance of their work. Satisfaction with substance, however, must be distinguished from the three other dimensions of satisfaction where women's ratings are significantly lower than those of men: namely job setting, social index of work, and the power track. That the experiences of women diverge from those of men is evident also in the fact that women are significantly more likely than men to report discriminatory behavior based not only on gender but also on race.

This relative dissatisfaction may be one of the factors translating into intentions to move to new employment. Women are significantly more likely to indicate that they intend to change jobs within the next two years (48% of women compared to 38% of men). As suggested above, correlations between future intentions and actual behavior remain to be charted.

Networking

One of the goals of AJD is to track the role of social networks in career success. Similar to the divergence of career paths seen earlier, AJD women exhibit different networking patterns just two to three years into their careers. Men are more likely than women to join partners for breakfast or lunch, to write for publications, and to join law firm governance committees, while women are more likely than men to participate in less influential firm committees. While it is too early in the AJD study to say much about networks and relationships, women's participation on less influential committees may be the type of "service" work that does not translate into higher compensation or advancement.

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[14] In contrast, NALP's annual survey of law graduates found only a $5,000 gap in median salaries at the time men and women of the Class of 2000 began their careers — and this gap was primarily attributable to the fact women in the overall Class of 2000 were somewhat less likely to have entered private practice than their male counterparts (NALP, 2001).

Marriage and Family

The role of marriage and family in structuring careers is a fundamental concern of the AJD study. The general pattern for lawyers is that marriage and children imply significant career sacrifices for women and career advantages for men. (The usual case is that male lawyers who are married earn more than unmarried lawyers, and married male lawyers with children earn even more.) Evidence of differential "sacrifice" is already apparent. Men in the AJD sample are more likely to be married than AJD women, and in fact relatively more AJD men are married than in a similar age cohort in the general population. While both AJD men and women are less likely to have children than their age cohort in the general population, this gap is much larger for women than for men. Differences are already apparent, but it remains very early in the study and in these careers. The majority of this relatively young sample of lawyers has not yet had to confront many of the tough decisions involving family/children and professional careers.

TABLE 8.1. Gender by Setting

	FEMALE		MALE	
	Number	%	Number	%
Solo	64	4%	114	6%
Private firm - office of 2-20 lawyers	415	26	573	30
Private firm - office of 21-100 lawyers	275	17	377	19
Private firm - office of 101-250 lawyers	175	11	204	11
Private firm - office of 251+ lawyers	97	6	138	7
Government	287	18	269	14
Legal services or public defender	66	4	36	2
Public interest	31	2	9	1
Nonprofit or education	50	3	26	1
Business	123	8	188	10
Total N	1,583	–	1,934	–

TABLE 8.2. Salary by Setting and Gender (full-time workers only)

	FEMALE		MALE		Female/Male
	Median	N	Median	N	
Solo	$50,000	40	$55,000	74	91%
Private firm - office of 2-20 lawyers	$56,000	364	$60,000	511	93%
Private firm - office of 21-100 lawyers	$90,000	245	$100,000	347	90%
Private firm - office of 101-250 lawyers	$125,000	162	$120,000	193	104%
Private firm - office of 251+ lawyers	$135,000	86	$150,000	131	90%
Government	$50,000	262	$50,000	258	100%
Legal services or public defender	$38,500	62	$43,000	35	90%
Public interest	$37,750	30	$48,000	8	79%
Nonprofit or education	$53,300	42	$51,000	20	105%
Business	$65,000	110	$87,000	165	75%
Missing and other	–	109	–	172	
Total (based on valid N)	$66,000	1,445	$80,000	1,779	83%

TABLE 8.3. Marriage and Children among *After the JD* Respondents and in the General Population

	AJD Respondents Ages 27-32		All US Residents Ages 27-32 in 2000 Census (5% PUMS)	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Marital Status				
Never Married	33%	38%	38%	29%
Married	60	51	53	59
Domestic Partnership	3	4	n/a	n/a
Divorced or Separated	3	5	8	12
Widowed	0	0	0	0
Number of Children				
None	64	76	53	36
One	18	15	19	23
Two or More	18	9	28	42

Notes: PUMS (Public Use Micro Data Sample) data are based on those 27-32 years of age in April 1999, and AJD data are based on those ages 27-32 at time of graduation. Numbers for AJD marital status do not add to 100% due to suppression of the "other" category.

SECTION 9: Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity

Members of minority groups have enjoyed a small but steady increase in the legal profession over the past 20 years. At the same time, with the exception of Asians, their representation in the law has not kept pace with their presence in the U.S. population. Opportunities within the legal profession continue to vary by race and ethnicity, even at this early stage of legal careers.

Minorities and Markets

Because location is so central to the careers of lawyers, the fact that minorities are not arrayed proportionally across the 18 markets included in the AJD sample mediates other data about their experiences. The largest minority groups are clustered in the four largest markets, although occasionally a small concentration of a single group appears in one of the second-tier markets. For example, 49% of the Asians in the sample work in one of the four largest markets (New York City, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles) as do 40% of the Blacks and 39% of the Hispanics. Only 30% of white sample members work in these markets. Other notable concentrations are 12% of the national sample of Blacks located in Atlanta and 15% of Asians located in San Francisco. These geographic distributions may help to account for differences between minority and white lawyers in work setting, the nature of their work, and their salaries.

Race and Demographics

Apart from racial and ethnic identification, there are differences among racial and ethnic groups in a number of demographic measures..

As could be expected, Hispanic and Asian respondents are considerably more likely than those from other groups to have parents — mothers and/or fathers — who were not born in the United States. In fact, over 85% of Asian and just over half of Hispanic respondents report that their mother and father were born outside of the U.S. Parents' levels of education among Black, Hispanic, and Asian respondents were lower than those of whites, although the distribution of education, especially among fathers, of Asian respondents tends to be bi-modal, that is, with concentrations in the less-than-high-school category, on the one hand, and bachelor's and post-baccalaureate degree categories, on the other. Black and Hispanic respondents, more than other groups, reported that their fathers had completed only trade or vocational school. Members of all minority groups represented in the study were considerably less likely than white respondents to have claimed relatives (fathers and grandparents in particular) who were lawyers. Despite these internal variations, however, it is important to

note that all groups in the AJD sample report that their parents worked in occupations characterized by a higher socioeconomic status when compared to the general population. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census of the United States, 5% Public Use Microdata Sample, 2002.)

Practice Setting Differences

Differences among racial and ethnic groups in the work settings they inhabit relate to geographic distribution. Black sample members are significantly more likely than members of other groups, including whites, to be working in government and, along with Hispanic and Asian sample members, more likely to be working in not-for-profit organizations. Asians are more likely than other members of all groups except whites to be working in business settings.

Median salaries reflect these differences in practice settings and region. Black and Hispanic lawyers in the AJD sample reported overall median salaries that were generally lower than those of other groups, mainly because they tended to cluster in lower-paying sectors (predominantly government and not-for-profit). The mean salaries reveal even larger differences. Within settings, however, the differences moderate and are, in some cases, reversed. So, for example, Black respondents in solo practice and in business settings reported higher salaries than those of any of the other groups in those sectors, although the numbers in these settings are relatively small. Asians in private practice offices of between 21 and 100 lawyers earn the highest salaries in those settings and also earn among the highest salaries in private offices with more than 100 lawyers.

Satisfaction

Although the vast majority of respondents to the survey expressed satisfaction with their decision to become lawyers, satisfaction with that decision was highest among Black respondents, and almost as high among Hispanic respondents. More than 80% of Black sample members and almost 80% of Hispanic sample members said that they were extremely or moderately satisfied with that decision. The racial and ethnic differences with regard to various aspects of practice are more contradictory. Returning to the satisfaction index described in Section 6, Black respondents expressed the highest levels of satisfaction — higher than the average for all other groups — with the substance of their work, but lower levels with "social index," and the lowest level among all groups with the "power track." And, although their reactions to the substance of their work were close to the average for the entire sample, Hispanic respondents' satisfaction with social index and power track indices were similar to those of Black respondents (that is, lower than average). Asian respondents expressed the lowest levels of satisfaction with the substance of their work but, along with whites, the highest level with their job setting and, along with white respondents, high levels of satisfaction with the power

track. These differences in satisfaction are undoubtedly explained in some measure by the differences in practice setting described above.

Respondents from the three major minority groups — Blacks, Hispanics, and Asians — were all more likely than their white peers to report that they were already looking for another position or intended to remain in their current positions for less than a year. For the Asians, this expression may partly be a function of their disproportionate representation in the largest firms, but for Hispanics and Blacks, as was the case for women in the preceding section, the expressed intention appears to relate to their relative dissatisfaction with at least the job setting and the power track.

Race and Gender

Minority status interacts with gender among new lawyers in major ways. One difference is that the ratio of females to males varies as a function of race and ethnicity. While white men outnumber white women in the AJD sample (54% are male and 46% are female), women comprise 61% of the Black lawyers and 55% of the Asian lawyers in the study sample.

This intersection of race and gender results in differences in the magnitudes of the male-female salary discrepancy when they are viewed separately by race. Across all groups, male respondents reported higher salaries, on average, than female respondents. The largest of the gaps are found in the median salaries of Asian male and female lawyers who work full-time (a difference of $20,250) and Hispanic male and female lawyers (a difference of $14,800). The salary discrepancy between men and women was smallest for Black respondents, amounting to less than $5,000 in the median salaries of the two groups (by way of contrast, the difference among white respondents was $13,000).

The major story to date for minority groups is again stratification, both by practice setting and by geographic market. Documenting the career patterns of AJD sample members over time and identifying the exceptions to the basic patterns will tell much about the current structure of opportunity for minorities in the legal profession.

TABLE 9.1. Distribution of Sample by Race, Comparing *After the JD* with the 2000 Census PUMS (Public Use Micro Data Sample) 5% Sample

	AJD National Sample		2000 PUMS 5% Sample Weighted	
	Number	%	Number	%
American Indian	46	1.2%	430	0.3%
Asian	254	6.5%	9,715	6.3%
Black	217	5.6%	9,410	6.1%
Hispanic	146	3.7%	6,482	4.2%
Other	116	3.0%	2,298	1.5%
White	3,089	79.1%	126,888	81.8%
TOTAL	3,868	–	155,223	–
Missing	37			

Data on race/ethnicity are based on 2000 Public-Use Microdata 5% Samples weighted (all lawyers and judges, aged 27-32, n = 155,223).
The counts of Black, Hispanic, and Asian AJD respondents reported here include only those in the "National Sample," which is intended to be representative of the national population of new lawyers. The AJD study also included a minority oversample; with this oversample, the AJD study includes 1,185 minority respondents (about 400 for each of the three minority groups).

TABLE 9.2. Distribution of Race in AJD National Sample by Geographic Market

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White
New York City	12%	5%	10%	6%
District of Columbia	13	7	11	8
Chicago	8	9	9	9
Los Angeles	7	19	19	7
Atlanta	12	6	3	6
Houston	9	7	3	4
Minneapolis	2	2	4	6
San Francisco	3	9	15	5
Connecticut	3	1	1	4
New Jersey	2	4	6	4
Florida	7	9	2	5
Tennessee	6	0	2	6
Oklahoma	3	3	1	5
Indiana	6	4	2	6
St Louis	5	3	3	6
Utah	1	6	2	5
Oregon	2	3	3	7
Boston	2	4	5	4
Total N	217	146	254	3,088

Note: Native Americans and "other" are excluded due to low numbers.

TABLE 9.3. Median Income by Setting and Race (full-time workers only)

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White
Solo	$75,000	–	–	$50,000
Office of 2-20 lawyers	$65,000	$61,500	$62,500	$58,500
Office of 21-100 lawyers	$110,000	$100,000	$135,000	$95,000
Office of 101-250 lawyers	$115,000	$106,000	$130,000	$125,000
Office of 251+ lawyers	$137,500	–	$150,000	$140,000
Government	$54,000	$60,000	$60,000	$48,000
Legal services or public defender	$41,000	–	–	$40,500
Public interest	–	–	–	$39,500
Nonprofit/education	–	–	–	$52,600
Business	$90,500	$78,000	$80,000	$75,500
Overall Median	$65,000	$71,000	$80,000	$73,000

Note: Cells with n < 10 are suppressed.

TABLE 9.4. Likelihood of Leaving Employer within Two Years

	Black	Hispanic	Asian	pWhite
Solo	–	0%	–	21%
Office of 2-20 lawyers	44%	49	53%	38
Office of 21-100 lawyers	68	60	53	37
Office of101-250 lawyers	44	57	72	42
Office of 251+ lawyers	67	–	55	54
Government	69	58	63	52
Legal services or public defender	–	–	–	–
Public interest	–	–	–	–
Nonprofit/education	–	–	–	48
Business	55	60	62	38

Note: Cells with n < 10 are suppressed.

SECTION 10: Financing a Legal Education

Financing a Legal Education

The cost of higher education has risen at twice the rate of inflation for the past 30 years, and with it the difficulty of financing the pursuit of a professional degree. Respondents in this AJD study reported a median undergraduate and law school debt upon graduation of $60,000 (including those with no debt). The question of the impact of this debt on career choices and opportunities over time is complex and is one of the key concerns of the *After the JD* project. The data at this stage of lawyer careers, however, reveal no simple pattern relating job choice to debt. Indeed, in contrast to what has been seen in the other sections, the initial AJD data show debt levels that are fairly constant across practice settings.

Overall Debt Levels

Roughly 15% of the national sample reported leaving law school with no educational debt. Among the remainder, removing those with zero debt, the median educational debt was $70,000.

Sources of Support

Regardless of the amount of their debt leaving law school, AJD respondents reported that loans were by far the most frequently used source of support for their education, and loans also accounted for the highest proportion of the total support. Table 10.1 displays both the percentage of respondents who reported a particular source of support and the percentage of their total support that came from each source. While most respondents reported having used some combination of the sources listed in the questionnaire in varying proportions, loans — especially federal Stafford loans — made up the lion's share of that support.

Asian and white respondents were more likely than members of other groups to have received support from parents and relatives, averaging 22% and 14% of total support in the two groups. The comparable figures were 9% among Hispanics and 5% among Blacks. Blacks received more of their support than any other group from law school-based grants and scholarships (17%, compared with around 5% among Asians, Hispanics, whites, and "others").

Levels of Indebtedness

About 15% of the national sample, as noted before, reported leaving law school with no educational debt, and about 60% reported no — or negligible amounts of — credit card debt.[15]

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[15] Individuals with no educational debt leaving law school were more likely than their peers in the sample to be white or Asian, and of higher socioeconomic status, based on a coding of their mothers' and fathers' occupations.

The median level of educational debt reported above ($70,000) masks a very broad range, from a minimum of $100 to more than $200,000. As with sources of support, there are some differences in average levels of debt among members of different racial and ethnic groups, though the medians are quite similar. Hispanic and Black respondents reported the highest levels of educational debt and Asians the lowest.

Of those reporting any debt, students from the most selective schools reported the highest debt load. Reflecting the higher socioeconomic status of the students at those schools, a higher percentage also graduated with no debt than those graduating from other law schools. Public school graduates had substantially less debt than private school graduates, which no doubt relates to the lower average tuitions of the public schools.

Debt and Practice Settings

Seventy percent of AJD respondents said that when they looked for their first legal job, the goal of paying off debt was one of their top four concerns. Despite this sentiment, however, the impact of debt on job choice seems relatively muted. The median level of debt for AJD respondents hardly varies at all across practice settings; big-firm attorneys, government attorneys, and public interest lawyers all finished law school with very similar levels of aggregate debt.

At the same time, however, respondents' evaluations of the importance of monetary concerns in their choice of sector in which to work do appear to be highly related to their levels of debt. Those with the lowest levels of debt accorded less importance to salary and those with higher levels accorded considerably more. The mean educational debt level of respondents who judged salary "not at all important" was $64,814, compared with $90,300 among those who judged salary to be "extremely important."

Furthermore, there is support in the data for some relationship between debt and certain jobs that are identified with public service. Those with zero debt are more likely to work in nonprofits or education (4.4% vs 1.6%). There is no such pattern for the public interest category, but it is instructive that 11 of the 23 public interest lawyers who responded to this question stated that the availability of a loan forgiveness program was "extremely important" in their choice. The figure for public defender or legal aid offices is less dramatic, but 11 of 65 of these respondents also indicated the program was extremely important in their choice.

In short, the new lawyers represented by the AJD sample leave law school with considerable amounts of debt, but the career implications of that debt for various job settings remain to be determined. Debt levels do not vary systematically by job sector at this early stage in lawyer careers.

TABLE 10.1. Paying for Law School – Relative Contribution of Specific Sources of Support during Law School (values are mean percent of support reported)

	Total	Female	Male	Black	Hispanic	Asian	White
Federal Stafford	41%	42%	40%	48%	55%	36%	40%
Employment	17%	14%	19%	14%	12%	14%	17%
Parent or relative	13%	15%	12%	5%	9%	22%	14%
Law school grants/scholarships	7%	7%	6%	17%	5%	5%	6%
Spouse/partner	6%	7%	6%	3%	5%	6%	6%
Alternative private loans	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%
Other student loans	5%	5%	4%	5%	4%	6%	4%
Previous savings	4%	3%	4%	2%	2%	5%	4%
Other	1%	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	2%
Other (non-school)	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%
Veterans benefits	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Total N for Sources of Support	2,128	1,071	1,051	106	73	118	1,745
Median Debt*	$70,000	$70,000	$68,000	$70,000	$70,500	$70,000	$70,000
Percent Reporting $0 Debt	15%	16%	15%	5%	5%	18%	16%

Note: This analysis is restricted to only those respondents whose total is between 90 to 110 of what should total 100 of educational loans.

* For those reporting any debt.

FIGURE 10.2. Median Debt (for Those Reporting Any Debt), and Percent Reporting Zero Debt, by Practice Setting

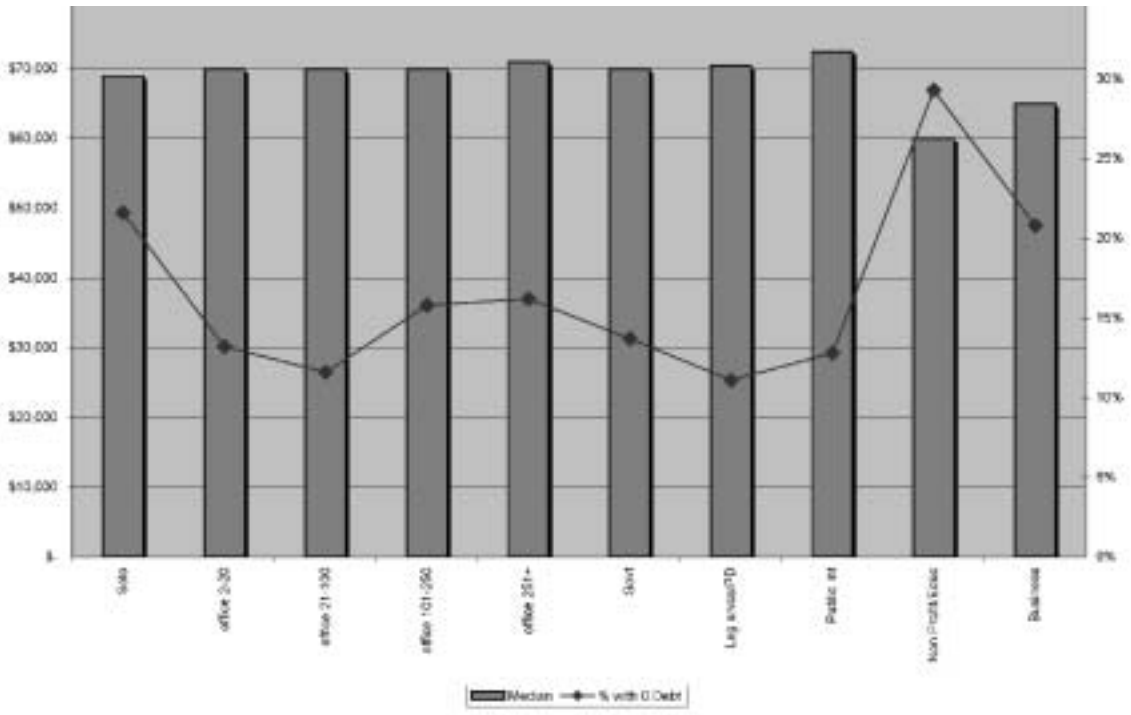

TABLE 10.2. Median Debt (for Those Reporting Any Debt), and Percent Reporting Zero Debt, by Practice Setting

	Median Debt	% Reporting Zero Debt
Solo	$69,000	22%
Office of 2-20 lawyers	$70,000	13
Office of 21-100 lawyers	$70,000	12
Office of 101-250 lawyers	$70,000	16
Office of 251+ lawyers	$71,000	16
Government	$70,000	14
Legal services or public defender	$70,500	11
Public interest	$72,500	13
Nonprofit/education	$60,000	29
Business	$65,000	21

FIGURE 10.3. Selectivity, Median Salary, Median Debt (for Those with Any Debt), and Percent with Zero Debt (full-time workers only)

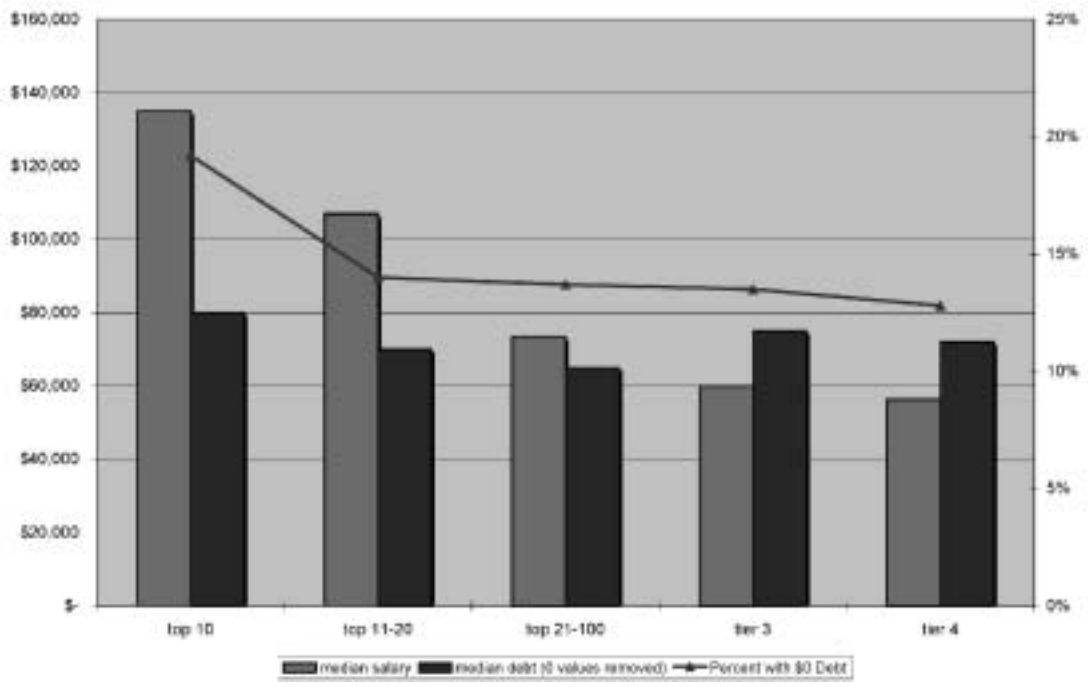

TABLE 10.3. Selectivity, Median Salary, Median Debt (for Those with Any Debt), and Percent with Zero Debt (full-time workers only)

Law School Selectivity	Median Salary	Median Debt (0 values removed)	Percent with $0 Debt
Top 10	$135,000	$80,000	19%
Top 11-20	107,000	70,000	14
Top 21-100	73,500	65,000	14
Tier 3	60,000	75,000	14
Tier 4	56,341	72,000	13

SECTION 11: Law School and the Transition to Practice

Law School and the Transition to Practice

A large majority of AJD respondents, as noted above, expressed high satisfaction with their decision to become a lawyer. When asked to reflect on their legal education, however, most were not especially enthusiastic about the specific role of their law schools in the transition to practice. On the question of whether law school prepared them well for their legal careers, the median response is exactly in the middle (neither agree nor disagree). Respondents tended to agree[16] — but not strongly — with the proposition that law school teaching is too theoretical and unconcerned with real-life practice. They also evinced a desire for more practical training in their assessment of the most helpful law school courses. Both clinical and legal writing courses received higher ratings than more conventional law school offerings. Most helpful in the transition to practice, however, was experience working during law school summers and during the year.

Bar Passage

The first hurdle faced by law graduates in the transition to practice is bar passage. While respondents had to pass a bar to be selected for the AJD sample, and therefore the sample does not include those not (yet) admitted to practice, there are still notable differences in the role of the bar exams in limiting access to legal careers. AJD respondents were most likely to pass the bar on the first try in Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Utah, and they had the most difficult time in Boston and Los Angeles — where about 20% of respondents took the bar more than once.

Law School Experience

Section 5 indicated that two credentials are crucial to finding the first job after law school: the reputation of the school and law school grades. The data reveal a wide range of strategies that mediate between those credentials and first jobs. The strategies, in turn, relate to the selectivity of law schools. When asked to rate the sources of first jobs, a majority of those from the most selective schools rated as "very" or "extremely important" their summer positions (over 70%) and on-campus interviews (over 60%). In contrast, the role of friends — between 20 and 30% as compared to 10% for the most selective — and family (between 15 and 20% as opposed to about 5%) is much more pronounced for the less selective law schools. The differences, while substantial, are also somewhat misleading, because graduates from all the law

[16] Median 5, on a 7 point scale.

schools used all the sources. Indeed, across all law schools roughly the same percentage — about 30% — gave high importance to direct unsolicited contact with potential employers.

Role of Mentors

While law schools are the formal training ground for new lawyers, once they graduate from law school and begin working, mentors (in and out of the workplace) are often the source for insight and advice into legal practice. The topic of mentoring is one of the more difficult ones to probe in studies of legal careers. Mentoring is often informal, casual, and difficult to quantify and recognize. The results may also be elusive. Mentoring can be a key to success, and it may be a way to cope with, and perhaps accept, repeated disappointment. What is clear at this point in lawyer careers is that informal mentoring in law firm settings — however difficult to measure — is central in the careers of new lawyers. Well over a third (and as high as half) of respondents in these settings identify informal mentors as the first most important source of assistance for learning office protocols/customs and for having a personal advocate in the firm.

As the lawyers in the sample change jobs and build their careers, it will be important to look at the role of mentoring and personal relationships more generally, as compared to the more formal credentials so vital in initial job placement.

FIGURE 11.1. Mean Attitudes toward Dimensions of Law School Experiences (on a scale where 1 = not at all helpful and 7 = extremely helpful)

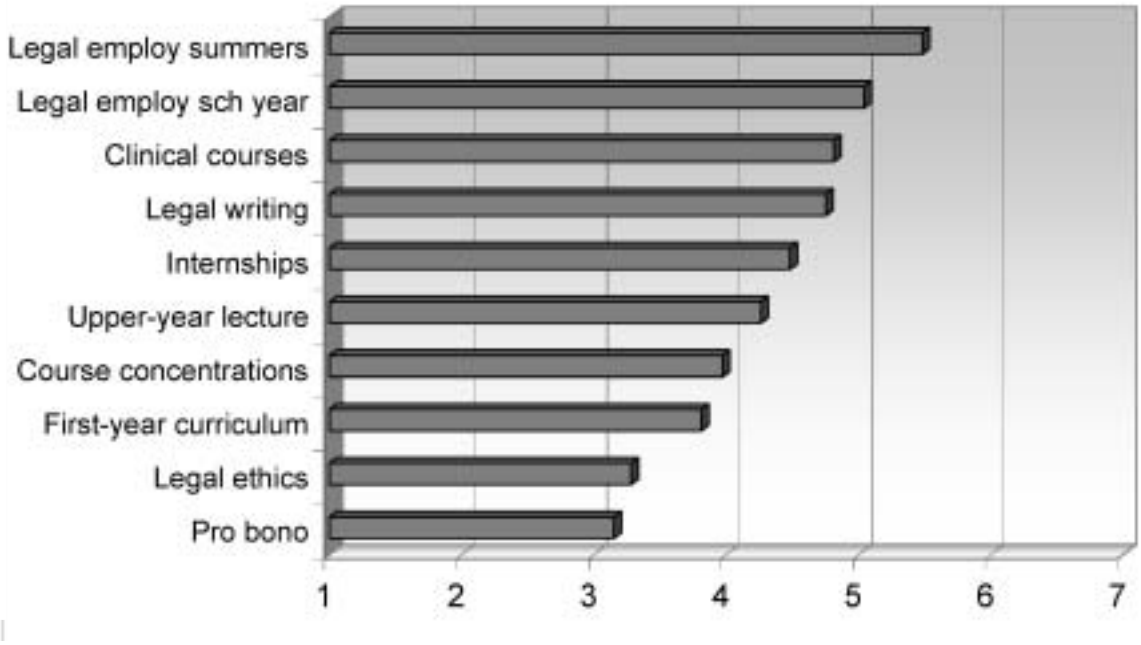

TABLE 11.1. Mean Attitudes toward Dimensions of Law School Experiences (on a scale where 1 = not at all helpful and 7 = extremely helpful)

	Mean*	Median*	Valid N
Legal employment during summers	5.48	6	1,868
Legal employment during school year	5.04	6	1,433
Clinical courses	4.81	5	1,723
Legal writing	4.75	5	2,029
Internships	4.48	5	1,179
Upper-year lecture	4.26	4	1,798
Course concentrations	3.97	4	1,700
First-year curriculum	3.81	4	2,052
Legal ethics	3.28	3	1,923
Pro bono	3.15	2.5	1,098

FIGURE 11.2. Mean Ratings of the Importance of Strategies for Obtaining Jobs by Law School Selectivity
(on a scale where 1 = not at all important and 7 = extremely important)

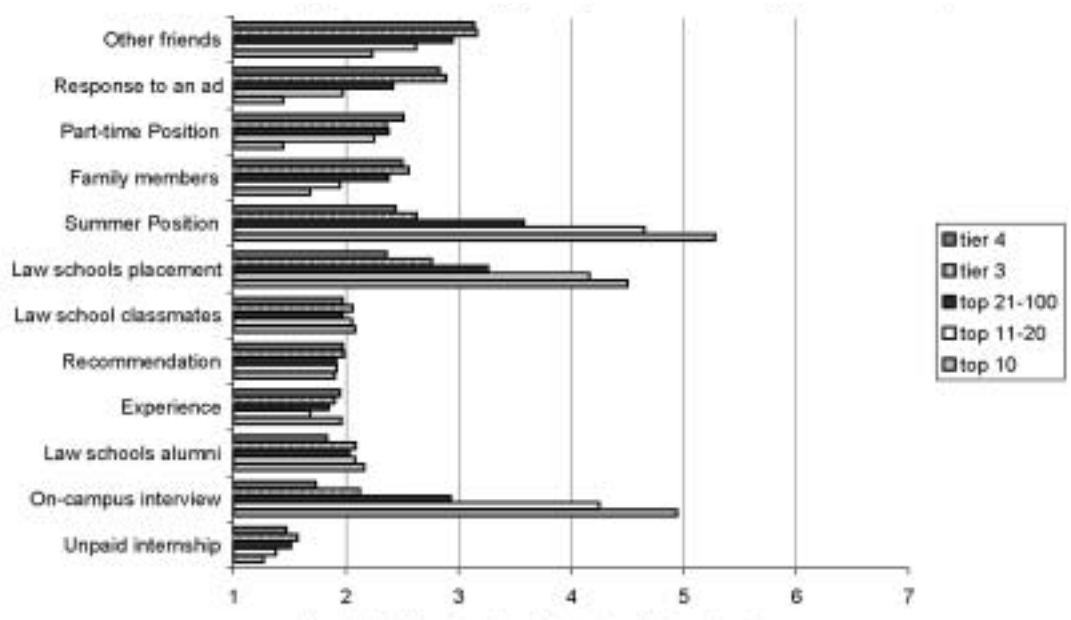

TABLE 11.2. Mean Ratings of the Importance of Strategies for Obtaining Jobs by Law School Selectivity
(on a scale where 1 = not at all important and 7 = extremely important)

	Top 10	Top 20	Top 21-100	Tier 3	Tier 4
Other friends	2.23	2.62	2.95	3.16	3.14
Response to an ad	1.44	1.97	2.42	2.89	2.83
Part-time position	1.44	2.25	2.38	2.36	2.51
Family members	1.68	1.95	2.38	2.56	2.5
Summer position	5.28	4.65	3.58	2.63	2.44
Law school's placement	4.5	4.16	3.26	2.76	2.36
Law school classmates	2.08	2.05	1.97	2.06	1.97
Recommendation	1.9	1.92	1.91	1.98	1.97
Experience	1.96	1.68	1.85	1.9	1.95
Law schools alumni	2.16	2.08	2.03	2.09	1.83
On-campus interview	4.94	4.25	2.93	2.12	1.73
Unpaid internship	1.27	1.38	1.51	1.57	1.47

SECTION 12:

Conclusions and Next Steps in the *After the JD* Study

Conclusions and Next Steps in the *After the JD* Study

This report highlights some of the important patterns evident in the data collected in the first phase of the *After the JD* study. It examines the initial stage of lawyer careers, and, in particular, which lawyers move into the various practice settings and how those practice settings differ. The strikingly clear example of difference in settings, as noted several times in the report, is between the very largest firms and offices on one side and government and public interest practices on the other. While most of the AJD lawyers are not found in the largest firms or the government, many dimensions of practice, including compensation, time devoted to law practice, satisfaction, mobility, and responsibility, are illuminated by this basic contrast. Another focal point of this report is the impact of race, ethnicity, and gender as new lawyers begin to build their careers. Although still at a very early stage, there are already notable impacts, mediated through — but not entirely explained by — the differences in practice settings.

The findings presented here will be elaborated in coming months. The challenge is to understand better the processes that account for the differences identified and to elaborate on the ways in which the various features of lawyers' careers are interwoven. The methods of data analysis will accordingly become more sophisticated. Multivariate techniques will allow AJD researchers to control for a range of overlapping influences and to distill underlying mechanisms from a large number of potential connections. As more sophisticated methods are used to analyze the data, AJD researchers are also gathering richer, more in-depth perspectives through face-to-face interviews with roughly one-tenth of the survey respondents. The interviews provide more candid information on sensitive issues, allow exploration of topics in more detail, and enable an understanding of how different influences on new lawyers' professional lives interact with one another.

The most significant findings, however, will come from the ability to track the lawyers in the AJD sample over a ten-year period. The initial pattern of stratification described in this report is relatively straightforward. Initial jobs, and therefore the salaries recent graduates command, depend to a great extent on law school attended and academic performance in law school. But as noted many times in this report, the respondents in the AJD sample are at an early stage in their careers, and much richer and more complex patterns are anticipated as their careers develop. The subsequent waves of AJD surveys will explore, among other things, the role of social networks, including family, friends, colleagues, and classmates; the factors that lead lawyers to change practice settings, between and among firms of varying size, government, and public interest organizations; how differences in fields of practice shape career trajectories; the impact of family considerations on career opportunities and choices;

the role of public service in lawyer careers; and how relative satisfaction levels may change as lawyers become more established in different practice settings.

There is no one model of professional — or what might be termed "professional/personal" — success that will characterize these lawyers as their careers further evolve. Subsequent waves of the AJD study will explore various models of satisfaction and success distilled from the data; and the longitudinal follow-up with these lawyers will enable researchers to identify which factors — with variations that may relate to race, ethnicity, and gender — promote or hinder that satisfaction and success.

APPENDIX:

Summary of Methodology and Works Cited

Summary of Methodology

After the JD is designed to be longitudinal, seeking to follow a sample of slightly more than 10% of all the individuals who became lawyers in 2000. AJD researchers selected a sample that would be at once representative of the national population of lawyers who were first admitted to the bar in 2000, and that could also characterize key markets for lawyers across the country.[17] The first phase of the study began with a mail survey to the lawyers in the sample. The survey results, of which only the most central are presented here, provide a great deal of data about more than 4,500 individuals. The survey data will be elaborated and augmented by data from face-to-face interviews, currently underway, with a sub-sample of roughly 10% of the survey respondents.

The study employed a two-stage sampling process. In the first stage, AJD researchers divided the nation into 18 strata by region and size of the new lawyer population. Within each stratum one primary sampling unit (PSU) — metropolitan area, portion of a state outside large metropolitan areas, or entire state — was chosen. The PSUs included all four "major" markets, those with more than 2,000 new lawyers (Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC); five of the nine "large" markets, those with between 750 and 2,000 new lawyers; and nine of the remaining, smaller markets. In the second stage, AJD researchers sampled individuals from each of the PSUs at rates that would, combined, generalize to the national population. Resarchers also added an oversample of 1,465 new lawyers from minority groups (Black, Hispanic, and Asian American). The final sample included just over 9,192 lawyers in the 18 PSUs.

Working with a major academic survey organization (NORC, a national organization for research), AJD researchers attempted to locate all of these lawyers and administer a questionnaire to them. The questionnaire included sections on the respondent's job history and search process; the nature of the respondent's current job, including its content, the work environment, and the respondent's satisfaction with it; the respondent's law school history; and a variety of background and contextual information. Following the initial mailing of surveys in May 2002, nonrespondents were followed up by mail and phone (with the telephone survey using a somewhat abridged version of the mail questionnaire).

About 20% of the individuals in the sample could not be located, and roughly 20% of those AJD researchers were able to locate proved to be lawyers moving from one state bar to another rather than lawyers entering a bar for the first time. Researchers opted to keep these "movers" in the sample so long as they had graduated from law school no earlier than 1998.

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[17] The sample frame construction was designed to exclude individuals who did not enter a state bar in 2000, and thus excludes 1998-2000 law school graduates who never took a bar exam or never passed it.

(Consequently, about 6% of the AJD sample began law practice in 1999, and 1.5% began practice in 1998.) Of the original sample members who were located and who met the criteria for inclusion in the study, 71% responded either to the mail questionnaire or to a telephone interview based on it, for a total of 4,538 valid responses. This report presents data mainly from the national sample of 3,905 individuals. The minority oversample of 633 respondents (and, of course, the "all eligibles" sample of 4,538, which combines the national sample with the minority oversample) is used to augment the national sample when comparisons are made among different minority groups. The data in this report are presented in unweighted form, and results will be slightly different once differential selection probabilities and nonresponse are taken into account in weights.

One of the most important methodological goals for any survey is a close match between the people who respond and the general population from which the sample was selected. This study's 71% response rate is certainly encouraging in this regard, but it is also necessary to compare the characteristics of AJD respondents to what is known about lawyers in the general population. Assessments of the representativeness of the sample are very encouraging. The AJD national sample almost exactly matches the racial composition[18] of young lawyers as tabulated by the 2000 Census and, to the extent practice settings can be inferred from census data, the sample closely approximates the distribution of lawyers across firms, government, and business employers. Comparing the AJD sample with ABA data along gender lines, the AJD cohort of lawyers produces another very close match.[19]

The *After the JD* project will continue by contacting and surveying both the respondents and the nonrespondents from the original sample. AJD researchers plan to mail questionnaires in March of 2006 and again in March of 2010.

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[18] The AJD survey asked respondents to identify their racial/ethnic group, and the indication of multiple categories was permitted. In the data analyses in this report, AJD researchers employ the following coding mechanism to deal with multiple racial and ethnic self-identifications: All persons giving "Black" as one of their races were coded as "Black"; all other persons giving "Asian" as one of their races are coded as "Asian"; all other persons giving "American Indian" as one of their races were coded as "American Indian"; all other persons giving "Hispanic" as one of their races were coded as "Hispanic"; all other persons giving "White" as one of their races were coded as "White"; everyone else was coded as "other."

[19] Census data are not as appropriate for evaluating the gender makeup of the AJD sample, since there was a surge in women's law school enrollment in the late 1990s.

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