



Lawyers at the Peak of Their Careers: A 30-Year Longitudinal Study of Job and Life Satisfaction

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A decade ago, we conducted a 20-year longitudinal study of career and life satisfaction among the class matriculating at the University of Virginia School of Law in 1987. Here, we extend our repeated measures follow-up from 20 to 30 years—from the time when respondents were a mean of 43 to the time they were a mean of 53 years old. The 2017 survey employed substantially the same instrument used in 2007, with the addition of a new section assessing potential period effects occurring over the past decade that might have influenced respondents' working conditions, including a stronger stress on economic sustainability. The 2017 response rate was 81 percent of those who had responded to the 2007 survey (constituting 58 percent of the class matriculating in 1987). We found respondents to have taken diverse career paths, with no single work setting accounting for more than one-quarter of the respondents and with fully one-third of the respondents changing jobs in the past decade. Marked gender differences in the professional lives of respondents persisted (e.g., women continued to be much more likely than men to forego full-time employment "in order to care for children" (30 percent vs. 4 percent)). Working conditions at large private law firms stayed problematic, with the portion of respondents negatively affected by a stronger stress on economic sustainability being twice as high among those working in large firms (77 percent) than among those working in other settings (38 percent). Finally, both career satisfaction and life satisfaction again were found to be high, with 77 percent of respondents satisfied with the decision to become a lawyer, and 91 percent satisfied with their lives more broadly.

I. INTRODUCTION

A decade ago, we published in this journal research that simultaneously measured the predictors of lawyers' satisfaction with their careers and the predictors of lawyers' satisfaction with their lives more broadly.¹ Our research was longitudinal—the same

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¹John Monahan & Jeffrey Swanson, *Lawyers at Mid-Career: A 20-Year Longitudinal Study of Job and Life Satisfaction*, 6 J. Empirical Legal Stud. 451 (2009).

respondents were studied at matriculation to law school and during the three-year course of their legal education,² and again 20 years after they matriculated—permitting a number of factors relevant to career and life satisfaction to be examined over time. In the current research, we extend this longitudinal project from 20 to 30 years.

Before describing the study and its findings, we briefly situate them within two disparate research traditions, the body of work specifically addressed to career satisfaction among lawyers and the empirical literature on life satisfaction. We focus in these sections on work published in the decade since our last follow-up.³

A. *The Career Satisfaction of Lawyers*

There are two literatures on lawyer satisfaction, and their findings differ so starkly that one might wonder whether they are studying the same phenomenon. The first literature is vast and much better known both to lawyers and nonlawyers alike. In this body of work, “lawyers [are] more prone than anyone else to the dangerous disease of depression,”⁴ “drug abuse among America’s lawyers is on the rise and deeply hidden,”⁵ America is experiencing “an epidemic of lawyerly anxiety,”⁶ and suicide is also “an epidemic among lawyers.”⁷ Not only do lawyers experience “striking levels of behavioral health problems,” they do so “while simultaneously refusing to acknowledge or deal with them.”⁸ The titles of popular books on the legal profession reflect the dystopian landscape portrayed by their authors: *Way Worse Than Being a Dentist*:

²John Satterfield, John Monahan & Martin Seligman, Explanatory Style Predicts Superior Law School Performance, 15 Behav. Sci. & L. 1 (1997). Satterfield et al. studied the “explanatory style” of students in the Class of 1990. Explanatory style, or “the habitual way an individual explains the causes of events” to himself or herself, id at 95, had been found to be useful in predicting success in areas as diverse as undergraduate academic grades, political elections, athletic contexts, and many types of jobs. A “pessimistic” explanatory style—a tendency to believe the cause of negative events to be stable, far reaching, and internal—had been related to depression, passivity, and poor performance. An “optimistic” explanatory style—a tendency to believe the cause of negative events to be unstable, highly specific, and external—had been associated with motivation, resiliency, and good performance. The goal of the Satterfield et al. study was to determine whether this finding could be replicated among law students.

³For a review of earlier work, see Monahan & Swanson, n.1.

⁴C. Stuart Mauney, The Lawyers’ Epidemic, S.C. Law. January 2012.

⁵Eilene Zimmerman, The Lawyer, The Addict, N.Y. Times, July 16, 2017.

⁶Leslie Gordon, How Lawyers Can Avoid Burnout and Debilitating Anxiety, ABA J. July 1, 2015.

⁷Virginia Bryan, Suicide and the Bar, 37 Mont. Law. 16 (2012).

⁸Patrick Krill, The Impaired Professional, Part II: The Attorney as Client: Insights for Understanding an Especially Challenged and Challenging Population, Counselor, May 2015. Available at <http://www.counselormagazine.com/detailpageoverride.aspx?pageid=1729&id=6442455507>.

The Lawyer's Quest for Meaning,⁹ and *The Addicted Lawyer: Tales of the Bar, Booze, Blow and Redemption*.¹⁰

These surveys of lawyers reported in the popular literature typically are characterized by very low, if not entirely unknown, participation rates, and therefore are open to statistical challenge on the ground of sample bias, that is, the likelihood that the distressed portion of the legal profession is heavily overrepresented among those who volunteer to participate in the surveys. For example, a recent survey characterized by the *New York Times* as "one of the most comprehensive studies of lawyers" ever done, analyzed the responses of 18,825 practicing attorneys from 19 states and concluded that "levels of depression, anxiety, and stress among attorneys reported here are significant, with 28%, 19%, and 23% experiencing mild or higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, respectively."¹¹ How representative is this sample of the general population of practicing lawyers? The authors concede that "[d]ue to the nature of recruitment (e.g., e-mail blasts, web postings), and that recruitment mailing lists were controlled by the participating bar associations, it is not possible to calculate a participation rate."¹²

The second body of literature on career satisfaction among lawyers derives from more traditional—and rigorous—behavioral science methods, rather than anecdotal accounts or unsystematic surveys. This body of work finds that lawyers are not nearly as desolate in their jobs as the popular literature would have it.¹³ Indeed, it uniformly finds that "only a small portion of attorneys hold negative views overall about their jobs or careers."¹⁴

⁹Will Meyerhofer, *Way Worse Than Being a Dentist: The Lawyer's Quest for Meaning*, Minneapolis, MN: Mill City Press (2011).

¹⁰Brian Cuban, *The Addicted Lawyer: Tales of the Bar, Booze, Blow and Redemption*, Brentwood, TN: Post Hill Press (2017).

¹¹Patrick Krill, Ryan Johnson & Linda Albert, The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys, 10 *Am. J. Addiction Med.* 46, 51 (2016).

¹²*Id.* See also Kennon Sheldon & Lawrence Krieger, Service Job Lawyers Are Happier than Money Job Lawyers, Despite Their Lower Income, 9 *J. Positive Psychol.* 219 (2014).

¹³Ronit Dinovitzer & Bryant Garth, Lawyers and the Legal Profession, in *The Handbook of Law and Society* (eds A. Sarat & P. Ewick), Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons (2015).

¹⁴David Chambers, Overstating the Satisfaction of Lawyers, 39 *L. & Soc. Inquiry* 330 (2014). See also Jerome M. Organ, What Do We Know About the Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction of Lawyers? A Meta-Analysis of Research on Lawyer Satisfaction and Well-Being, 8 *U. St. Thomas L.J.* 225 (2011); Gabriele Plickert, Fiona Kay & John Hagan, Depressive Symptoms and the Salience of Job Satisfaction Over the Life Course of Professionals, 31 *Advances in Life Course Res.* 22 (2017); John Hagan & Fiona Kay, Even Lawyers Get the Blues: Gender, Depression, and Job Satisfaction in Legal Practice, 41 *L. & Soc. Rev.* 51 (2007); Randy Hodson, Gender Differences in Job Satisfaction: Why Aren't Women More Dissatisfied?, 39 *Soc. Q.* 385 (1989); Gabriele Plickert & Joyce Sterling, Gender Still Matters: Effects of Workplace Discrimination on Employment Schedules of Young Professionals, 6 *Laws* 28 (2017); Milan Markovic & Gabriele Plickert, Attorneys' Career Dissatisfaction in the New Normal, 25 *Int'l J. Legal Prof.* 147 (2018).

A major advance in the study of lawyers' satisfaction with their careers occurred with publication of the results from the *After the JD* project. Sponsored by the National Association for Law Placement Foundation and with support from the American Bar Foundation, *After the JD* tracked the careers of a statistically representative sample of over 8,000 lawyers admitted to the bar in 2000.¹⁵ The third and most recent follow-up took place in 2012. These data "largely indicate continuity with previous responses to the questionnaire, with relatively high levels of satisfaction."¹⁶

B. Life Satisfaction

An enormous body of psychological research on life satisfaction—often subsumed within the concept of "subjective well-being" (SWB)—has emerged. A recent overview of 140,000 articles, chapters, and books published on SWB over the past three decades focuses on several broad conclusions that have emerged from the research.¹⁷ First, SWB is malleable and identifiable factors can influence SWB. One meta-analysis of prospective longitudinal studies, for example, found that changes in circumstances—including marriage and unemployment—continue to affect life satisfaction long after they had taken place.¹⁸ Second, cultural factors can strongly influence SWB. To illustrate, one study reported that objective social status (e.g., educational level) was a stronger predictor of life satisfaction among Japanese than among Americans, whereas subjective social status was a stronger predictor of life satisfaction among Americans than among Japanese.¹⁹ Third, high SWB does not merely correlate with beneficial outcomes, it causes them: people with high SWB tend to live longer than people with low SWB, in part because people high in SWB are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors such as exercising, not smoking, and wearing seat

¹⁵American Bar Foundation, *After the JD*. Available at <http://www.americanbarfoundation.org/research/project/118>.

¹⁶*After the JD III: Third Results from a National Study of Legal Careers* (2014), at 49. Available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/young_lawyers/meetings/2015/midyear_meeting/diversity_perspectives_legal_profession.authcheckdam.pdf. Compare this study to American Bar Association, *The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change* (2017). Available at <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/images/abanews/ThePathToLawyerWellBeingReportRevFINAL.pdf>.

¹⁷Ed Diener, Samantha Heintzelman, Kostadin Kushlev, Louis Tay, Derrick Wirtz, Lesley D. Lutes & Shigehiro Oishi, Findings All Psychologists Should Know from the New Science on Subjective Well-Being, 58 *Canadian Psychol.* 87 (2017). See also Peter Huang, Happiness Studies and Legal Policy, 6 *Ann. Rev. L. & Soc. Sci.* 405 (2010).

¹⁸Maike Luhmann, Wilhelm Hofmann, Michael Eid & Richard Lucas, Subjective Well-Being and Adaptation to Life Events: A Meta-Analysis on Differences Between Cognitive and Affective Well-Being, 102 *J. Personality & Soc. Psychol.* 592 (2012).

¹⁹Katherine Curhan, Tamara Sims, Hazel Markus, Shinobu Kitayama, Mayumi Karasawa, Norito Kawakami, Gayle Love, Christopher Coe, Yuri Miyamoto & Carol Ryff, Just How Bad Negative Affect Is for Your Health Depends on Culture, 25 *Psychol. Sci.* 2277 (2014).

belts.²⁰ Finally, interventions are in development to increase SWB. Expressing gratitude to others, sharing positive experiences with others, and savoring rather than rushing-through positive experiences, appear to be associated with subsequent gains in SWB.²¹

II. METHOD

A. Participants

Since we wanted to employ repeated measures of the key variables, only members of the class that matriculated at the law school in 1987 who had responded to the 2007 survey were surveyed again in 2017 ($n = 260$). One class member had died since 2007, resulting in a sample size for this study of 259 graduates.

The study was administered by the University of Virginia's Center for Survey Research. Mail, web, and telephone options for completing the survey were provided to the respondents. All survey responses were confidential. The fielding of the survey involved various contact attempts through email and U.S. mail, as well as reminder telephone calls. To encourage participation, all participants received a token gift, a pen embossed with the logo of the University of Virginia School of Law.²²

B. Instrument

The 2017 survey instrument largely replicated the instrument administered in 2007, with one major exception, noted below.²³ It consisted of four sections. One section of the instrument solicited *Background Information* from the respondent. Nine questions were asked, including marital status and number of children, the employment status of respondent's spouse/partner (if married/partnered), a rating of the respondent's health,²⁴ and an estimate of pretax annual salary and pretax household income.

Another section of the instrument addressed the respondent's *Work Setting*. Eleven questions asked about whether the respondent currently was employed full

²⁰Ed Diener, Satoshi Kanazawa, Eunkook Suh & Shigehiro Oishi, Why People Are in a Generally Good Mood, 19 *Personality & Soc. Psych. Rev.* 235 (2015).

²¹Acacia Parks & Stephen Schueller (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Positive Psychological Interventions*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell (2014); Jordi Quoidbach, Moira Mikolajczak & James Gross, Positive Interventions: An Emotion Regulation Perspective, 141 *Psychol. Bulletin* 655 (2015).

²²The study was classified as exempt by the Institutional Review Board for the Social and Behavioral Sciences at the University of Virginia.

²³The instrument is available by email from John Monahan (jmonahan@law.virginia.edu).

²⁴The question, from the General Social Survey, was: "Would you say your own health, in general, is excellent, good, fair, or poor?" The response scale ranged from 1 (excellent) to 4 (poor).

time, part time, or was not employed, and (if employed) questions were asked about the type, duration, and location of the respondent's employment, about the nature of the position the respondent held, and about the type of law that was the primary focus of the respondent's practice. Questions also addressed whether the respondent had changed employers since the 2007 survey.

A third section of the instrument was largely adapted from the *After the JD* survey and focused on *Satisfaction*. It contained items that addressed the respondent's satisfaction in several domains, including satisfaction with the decision to become a lawyer²⁵ and with his or her legal education.²⁶ The two primary outcome variables were satisfaction in one's current job and satisfaction with life more broadly. Three dimensions of current job satisfaction,²⁷ derived and validated by factor analysis in the *After the JD* study, were measured in our survey as well: "job setting satisfaction," which concerned approval with the operation of the workplace;²⁸ "work substance satisfaction," reflecting the intrinsic interest of the work;²⁹ and "power track satisfaction," which consolidated ratings of contentment with compensation levels and opportunities for advancement.³⁰ In addition, a single item on satisfaction with the "balance between professional life and personal or family life" was included.³¹

²⁵The question, taken from the *After the JD* study, read: "How satisfied are you with your decision to become a lawyer?" with a response scale ranging from 1 ("extremely satisfied") to 5 ("extremely dissatisfied").

²⁶The two questions that addressed satisfaction with respondent's legal education were: "The University of Virginia School of Law prepared me well for my legal career," which was adapted from the *After the JD* study, and "The prestige associated with being a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law benefited my career," which was adapted from Richard Lempert, David Chambers & Terry Adams, Michigan's Minority Graduates in Practice: The River Runs Through Law School, 25 L. & Soc. Inquiry 395 (2000).

²⁷The items on satisfaction with respondent's current job were taken from the *After the JD* study. Respondents were asked: "How satisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your current position?" A seven-point response scale was provided, on which 1 was "highly dissatisfied" and 7 was "highly satisfied."

²⁸The seven items included in the job setting satisfaction dimension were: "Recognition you receive for your work," "Relationships with colleagues," "Control you have over the amount of work you do," "Control you have over how you do your work," "Job security," "Level of responsibility you have," and "Performance evaluation process." These items formed a coherent scale, with $\alpha = 0.85$. After the JD, supra note 15.

²⁹The four items included in the work substance satisfaction domain were: "Substantive area of your work," "Tasks you perform," "Intellectual challenge of your work," and "Opportunities for building skills." These items formed a coherent scale, with $\alpha = 0.88$. After the JD, supra note 15.

³⁰The two items included in the power track satisfaction domain were: "Opportunities for advancement" and "Compensation including salary, benefits and bonus (if applicable)." These items formed a coherent scale, with $\alpha = 0.62$. After the JD, supra note 15.

³¹See New York State Bar Association, Final Report, Special Committee on Balanced Lives in the Law (2008), available at http://www.nysba.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Special_Committee_on_Balanced_Lives_in_the_Law_Home&Template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentFileID=10947.

Life satisfaction was measured by administering the widely-used Satisfaction with Life Scale.³²

The section that was new to the 2017 survey inquired about *Changes in the Work Setting*. Longitudinal studies, such as this one, often attempt to measure changes in individual variables at different points in time, and attempt to attribute such changes to age, period, or cohort effects³³. Age-related changes are associated with maturation over the human life course, for example, the average difference between 25-year-olds and 50-year-olds. Period effects have to do with the common experience of significant historical events that may shape people's lives at whatever age, for example, being alive during the period following the 9/11 attack, or the so-called Great Recession of 2008. Cohort effects derive from the shared experiences of a particular age group at a particular time, for example, being a "Baby Boomer" in the 1970s or a "Millennial" in the early 2000s.

Methodologically, it can be difficult to separate age, period, and cohort effects without having comparable data on people of different ages, measured at different times, and in different historical moments. However, using qualitative data to capture respondents' own interpretations of period effects—for example, asking whether people experience a significant change in the environment affecting their career—can sometimes illuminate such effects in ways that statistics alone cannot. We attempted to identify period effects in the life and career satisfaction of our subjects by asking this question: "The last time you received a survey from *The Class of 1990 Study* was just before the beginning of the 'Great Recession' in 2007. Some observers believe that work settings have changed greatly in the decade since the Great Recession began. Have you experienced any of the following changes in your own work setting in the past 10 years?"

Based on numerous popular³⁴ and scholarly accounts, we focused on three possible perceived period effects: (1) "increased emphasis on globalization (e.g., more international

³²Ed Diener, Robert Emmons, Randy Larson & Sharon Griffin, The Satisfaction with Life Scale, 49 J. Personality Assessment 71 (1985). See also William Pavot & Ed Diener, Review of the Satisfaction with Life Scale, 5 Psychol. Assessment 164 (1993); William Pavot & Ed Diener, The Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Emerging Construct of Life Satisfaction, 3 J. Positive Psychol. 137 (2008); Mark Whisman & Charles Judd, A Cross-National Analysis of Measurement Invariance of the Satisfaction with Life Scale, 28 Psychol. Assessment 239 (2016). The scale consists of five items: "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal," "The conditions of my life are excellent," "I am satisfied with my life," "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life," and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing." Items are rated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), and summed. Diener proposed that the summed scores be categorized as follows: 30–35, very highly satisfied; 25–29, highly satisfied; 20–24, average satisfaction; 15–19, slightly dissatisfied; 10–14, dissatisfied; and 5–9 extremely dissatisfied. See Diener, Understanding Scores on the Satisfaction with Life Scale, available at <https://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/Documents/Understanding%20SWLS%20Scores.pdf>.

³³Katherine M. Keyes, Ryan Nicholson, Jolene Kinley, Sarah Raposo, Murray B. Stein, Elliot M. Goldner & Jitender Sareen, Age, Period, and Cohort Effects in Psychological Distress in the United States and Canada, 179 Am. J. Epidemiology 1216 (2014).

³⁴See, in general, Sarah Kellogg, *The Uncertain Future: Turbulence and Change in the Legal Profession*, Wash. Law. (April 2016).

transactions, more reliance on international trade agreements),³⁵ (2) “enhanced uses of technology (e.g., more computer-assisted document review, more use of online legal services),”³⁶ and (3) “stronger stress on economic sustainability (e.g., more corporations doing legal work in-house, more use of non-traditional legal service providers).”³⁷

For each of these three potential period effects, we asked whether the subject had experienced no changes, minor changes, significant changes, or profound changes in his or her work setting over the past decade. If any change had been experienced, we asked “How have these changes affected you personally?” on a five-point scale from very positively to very negatively.

Personal written comments were solicited from the respondents at several places on the survey instrument.

III. RESULTS

Of the 259 living graduates of the University of Virginia School of Law Class of 1990, 209 completed surveys were returned in 2017; 128 of these respondents (61.2 percent) were men and 81 (38.8 percent) were women. The response rate to the 2017 survey was 80.7 percent (constituting 58.2 percent of the living members of the class of 1990).

A. Personal Background

At the time of completing the 2017 survey, the graduates were a mean of 53.7 years old ($SD = 3.0$ years). The great majority of respondents (85.5 percent) were currently married or partnered. Information about children (of any age) living at home was provided by 195 respondents (122 men and 73 women). Of the men, 84 (68.9 percent) had children living at home. Of the 73 women, 38 (52.1 percent) had children living at home. The

³⁵Scott A. Westfahl & David B. Wilkins, *The Leadership Imperative: A Collaborative Approach to Professional Development in the Global Age of More for Less*, 69 *Stanford L. Rev.* 1667 (2017); John Coffee, *The Globalization of Entrepreneurial Litigation: Law, Culture, and Incentives*, 165 *Univ. Penn. L. Rev.* 1895 (2017); Susan Block-Lieb & Terrence Halliday, *Global Lawmakers: International Organizations in the Crafting of World Markets* (2017); David Wilkins & Maria Esteban Ferrer, *The Integration of Law into Global Business Solutions: The Rise, Transformation, and Potential Future of the Big Four Accountancy Networks in the Global Legal Services Market*, *L. & Soc. Inquiry* (2017), available at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/lsi.12311/epdf>.

³⁶Lois Lupica, Tobias Franklin & Sage Friedman, *The Apps for Justice Project: Employing Design Thinking to Narrow the Access to Justice Gap*, *Fordham Urban L.J.* (2017) available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3086674; Benjamin Alarie, Anthony Niblett & Albert Yoon, *How Artificial Intelligence Will Affect the Practice of Law*, available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3066816.

³⁷Ronit Dinovitzer & Bryant Garth, *supra* note 13; Deborah J. Merritt, *What Happened to the Class of 2010? Empirical Evidence of Structural Change in the Legal Profession*, 2015 *Mich. St. L. Rev.* 1043 (2015); Atinuke Adediran, John Hagan, Patricia Parker & Gabriele Plickert, *Making the Best of a Bad Beginning: Young New York Lawyers Confronting the Great Recession*, 9 *Northeastern L. Rev.* 259 (2017); Bryant Garth, *Notes on the Future of the Legal Profession in the United States: The Key Roles of Corporate Law Firms and Urban Law Schools*, 65 *Buffalo L. Rev.* 287 (2017).

gender difference in having children living at home is significant (chi-square = 5.5 with 1 DF, $p < 0.05$). This is partly explained by the association between gender and being divorced (and not remarried), which in turn is related to not having children at home. Only 2.3 percent of the men were currently divorced and not remarried, compared to 12.3 percent of the women (chi-square = 8.3179, $p = 0.0039$). Of the divorced people, 25.0 percent had children at home, compared to 65.0 percent of notdivorced people (chi-square = 7.7 with 1 DF, $p < 0.01$).

Respondents ($n = 181$) with spouses/partners provided information about their spouse's/partner's employment status. Of 114 men reporting, 35 (30.7 percent) had a spouse who was working full time, 27 (23.7 percent) had a spouse who was working part time, and 52 (45.6 percent) had a spouse who was not working outside the home. Of 67 women reporting, 52 (77.6 percent) had a spouse who was working full time, five (7.5 percent) had a spouse who was working part time, and 10 (14.9 percent) had a spouse who was not working outside the home. The gender difference is statistically significant: chi-square = 37.2 with 2 DF, $p < 0.0001$.

The median total pretax household income for 2016 was \$350,000.³⁸ Almost one-quarter of the respondents had a total pretax household income \$150,000 or less, and about one-quarter had a total pretax household income of more than \$650,000. Thirty-six respondents (17.7 percent) reported an annual household income of a million dollars or more. There were no significant gender differences in reported household income.

Ratings of their health status revealed that 109 respondents (52.7 percent) reported being in excellent health, 86 (41.6 percent) reported being in good health, 12 (5.8 percent) reported being in fair health, and none reported being in poor health. There was no significant gender difference in reported health status.

B. Current Work Setting

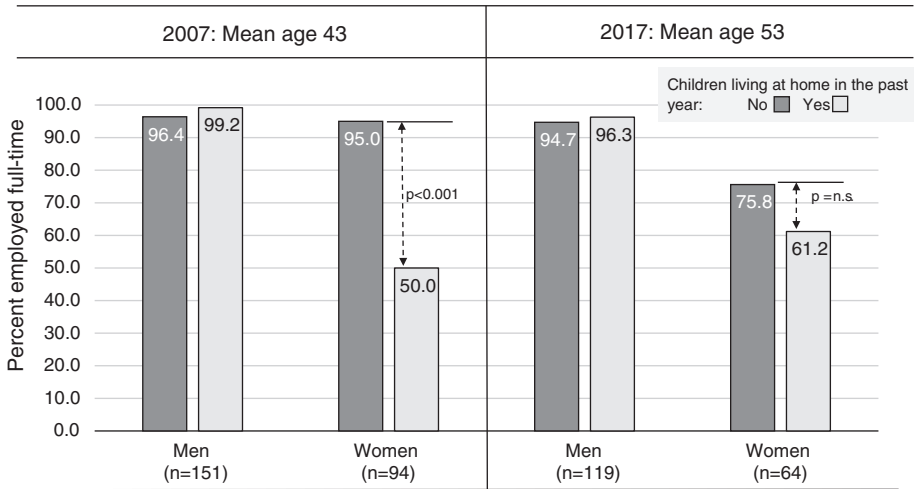
At the time of the 2017 survey, 122 (96.1 percent) of the men and 49 (70.0 percent) of the women were employed full time, three (2.4 percent) of the men and 16 (22.9 percent) of the women were employed part time, and two (1.6 percent) of the men and five (7.1 percent) of the women were not employed outside the home. These differences were statistically significant (chi-square = 27.12 with 2 DF, $p < 0.0001$).

As we reported for the 2007 survey, the presence of children living at home had no association with the full-time employment rate of men and a profound negative association with the full-time employment rate of women. The 2017 survey provides an opportunity to retest this finding. Figure 1 displays respondents' full-time employment status in 2007 and in 2017, by gender, and by the presence of any children living at home in the past year.

Figure 1 shows that the presence of children living at home had no association with the full-time employment rate of men in 2007 (96.4 percent of men without children at home, and 99.2 percent of men with children at home, were employed full time).

³⁸Income was measured in intervals (e.g., \$100,000–\$200,000), with the mid-point in the interval (\$150,000, in this example) used as the value in the analyses.

Figure 1: Graduates' full-time employment at two points in time, by gender and presence of children living at home.



In contrast, the presence of children living at home had a significant association with the full-time employment rate of women in 2007 (95.0 percent of women without children at home, and 50.0 percent of women with children at home, were employed full time).

The 2017 survey replicated the finding that the presence of children living at home had no effect on the full-time employment rate of men (94.7 percent of men without children at home, and 96.3 percent of men with children at home, were employed full time). In 2017, however, the full-time employment rate of women without children at home had declined from 95.0 percent to 75.8 percent, while the full-time employment rate of women with children living at home had risen from 50.0 percent to 61.2 percent. The difference between the full-time employment rates of women without and women with children living at home—which was highly significant in 2007—was no longer statistically significant in 2017.

Of the 18 women without children at home who were working full time in 2007 and responded to the 2017 survey, 15 (83.3 percent) were still working full time in 2017, while three women had left full-time employment.

Of the 21 women with children at home and who were not employed full time in 2007, 14 women (66.7 percent) were still not employed full time in 2017, while seven women (33.3 percent) had returned to full-time employment by 2017. The 14 women with children who did not work full time in 2007 and who remained without full-time employment in 2017 reported a mean household income of \$518,000—higher than the mean household income of \$443,000 for the seven women who had returned to full-time employment by 2017. One plausible hypothesis is that the women with children who were not employed full time in 2007 and who remained without full-time employment in 2017 did not feel a financial need to work full time.

Of the seven women who had children at home and who were not employed full time in 2007 but who had returned to full-time employment by 2017, two were working in large law firms, two were working in small law firms, two were working in corporations, and one was an in-house counsel.

"I started to practice in a major market at a [large] firm, made partner and had two children, whom I did not get to see much. I made a lot of money but had no life. I moved and was able to work at a small firm with a friend from UVA when my kids were at school, started with just an hour a day, increasing as they grew older. The practice of law has been good to me."

"I have no regrets about my decision. I am married, have three wonderful children and am general counsel of a large publicly traded company. I worked part-time for 12 years when my children were younger. I would encourage any lawyer to take the time with their family. You don't get it back. And when I was ready to work full-time again, the opportunities were still there."

"I was out of practice for a number of years, to raise my lads. I loved that time. If you do that, you should continue to work part-time, so you can keep your foot in the door. I was able to land an in-house position when I was ready to go back to work full-time, because I had stayed in the field."

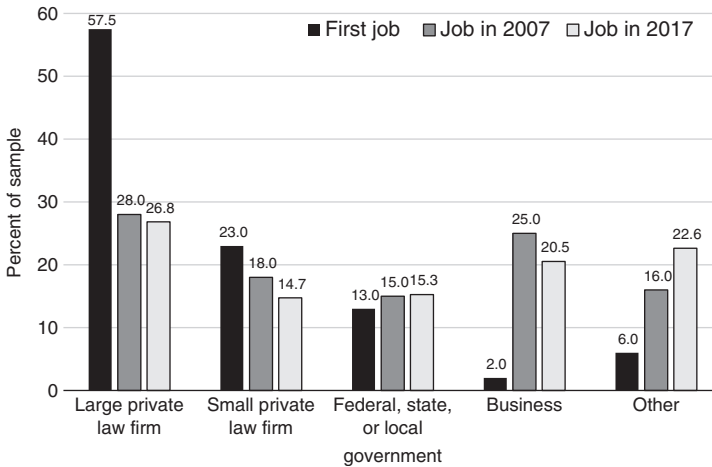
Respondents—both men and women—had been working with their current employer for a median of 13.6 years, (*SD* = 8.2 years). Most (64.7 percent) of the respondents are currently employed by the same organization that employed them in 2007, but fully one-third (35.3 percent) of respondents have changed employers in the past decade. When asked if they were practicing law in their current job, 74.5 percent of graduates responded yes and 25.3 percent answered no. The types of organizations in which respondents are currently employed are presented in Table 1. Large private law firms were defined as firms that employed 100 or more lawyers, and small private law firms were defined as firms that employed fewer than 100 lawyers. The “other” category consists of academia, nonprofit organizations, and self-employed “consultants.” Large private firms (31.2 percent) and businesses (23.2 percent) are the primary employment settings in which men are employed, and small private firms (23.1 percent) and “other” (30.8 percent) are the primary settings in which women are employed.

The change in the type of organization in which respondents work, from their first job after graduation from law school in 1990, to the job they held in 2007, to their current job in 2017, is displayed in Figure 2. Change in employment setting over the decade from 2007 to 2017 is less dramatic than it was between respondents’ first job out of law school in 1990 and their jobs in 2007, particularly in the case of employment in large private law firms. But more modest changes in employment setting continue to take place:

Table 1: Type of Organization Where Currently Employed, by Gender

	Total		Men		Women	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Large private firm	51	26.8	39	31.2	12	18.5
Small private firm	28	14.7	13	10.4	15	23.1
Government	29	15.3	21	16.8	8	12.3
Business	39	20.5	29	23.2	10	15.4
Other	43	22.6	23	18.4	20	30.8

Figure 2: Percent of graduates working in different types of organizations at three points in time.



between 2007 and 2017, employment in small private law firms decreased from 18.0 to 14.7 percent, and in businesses from 25.0 to 20.5 percent, while “other” employment settings increased from 16.0 to 22.6 percent of respondents. Several respondents described a change in employment setting as potentially beneficial.

“My advice would be to avoid an overly linear view of practice and options.”

“Don’t be afraid to break out of any legal rut you may find yourself stuck in. Life is too short to not love what you do when you go to work.”

“I would highly recommend taking opportunities in your career to change it up—whether by a stint in government service, working in-house, or with a non-profit—to gain valuable perspective and experiences that you do not get in a law firm. It makes for a more well-rounded lawyer, and a more well-rounded person.”

“I was miserable in a firm when I first started, so I switched to the government. It made a huge difference and I was much happier. I work in a law firm again now, and still am generally happy.”

The mean annual pretax salary³⁹ for respondents working full time, by employment setting and gender, and for both 2006 and 2016, is presented in Table 2. From this table, it can be seen that salaries vary drastically from one work setting to another, between genders, and over time. While in all work settings—for both 2006 and 2016—women report lower mean salaries than men, the inflation-adjusted percent gain in salary from 2006 to 2016 is higher for women than for men for every employment setting except business. With due caution for the small sample sizes, the inflation-adjusted gain in salary from 2006 to 2016 for women is particularly striking in the case of law firms, that is, a 55.0

³⁹Including estimated bonus, if applicable.

Table 2: Average Annual Salaries of Graduates Working Full Time at Two Points in Time, by Type of Work Setting

		Salary 2006			Salary 2016			Inflation-Adjusted Percent Gain in Salary from 2006 to 2016 ¹
		N	(Percent)	Mean	N	(Percent)	Mean	Mean
Men								
	Large private firm	45	(30.2%)	\$536,000	39	(33.1%)	\$671,000	21.5%
	Small private firm	21	(14.1%)	\$286,000	12	(10.2%)	\$427,000	7.6%
	Government	26	(17.4%)	\$138,000	21	(17.8%)	\$157,000	4.8%
	Business	37	(24.8%)	\$374,000	25	(21.2%)	\$510,000	41.3%
	Other	20	(13.4%)	\$268,000	21	(17.8%)	\$290,000	-4.6%
	Total	149			118			16.8%
Women								
	Large private firm	10	(17.9%)	\$473,000	9	(18.8%)	\$667,000	55.0%
	Small private firm	11	(19.6%)	\$257,000	10	(20.8%)	\$315,000	33.5%
	Government	9	(16.1%)	\$103,000	8	(16.7%)	\$134,000	13.7%
	Business	12	(21.4%)	\$217,000	9	(18.8%)	\$408,000	28.4%
	Other	14	(25.0%)	\$119,000	12	(25.0%)	\$156,000	3.8%
	Total	56			48			24.10%

¹ Mean of individual differences in salary in 2016 dollars for graduates reporting their salary in both surveys.

percent gain for women employed in large firms and a 33.5 percent gain for women employed in small firms (compared with gains in salary for men in large firms of 21.5 percent and for men in small firms of 7.6 percent).

C. Changes in Work Setting, 2007–2017

Of the 189 graduates who responded to the questions concerning changes in their work setting since 2007, 182 (96.3 percent) reported at least some change in one or more of the three areas of globalization, technology, and economic sustainability; 141 (74.6 percent) reported *significant* change in at least one of these areas; 41 (21.7 percent) reported *profound* change in one or more of these areas. We consider each area in turn.

1. Increased Emphasis on Globalization

As can be seen in Table 3, the majority of graduates (74.8 percent) reported experiencing either no changes (52.2 percent) or only minor changes (22.6 percent) in their work setting over the past decade due to an increased emphasis on globalization. Significant changes due to globalization were experienced by 20.4 percent and profound changes by 4.8 percent of graduates. Those changes due to globalization affected 41.8 percent of the graduates positively (very positively, 14.3 percent and moderately positively, 27.5 percent); 48.4 percent of the graduates neither positively nor negatively; and 9.9 percent of the graduates moderately negatively. No graduate reported being affected very negatively.

Table 3: Impact of Changes in Legal Profession from 2007 to 2017: Globalization

		N	Percent
Change in work setting:	No changes	97	52.2
	Yes, minor changes	42	22.6
	Yes, significant changes	38	20.4
	Yes, profound changes	9	4.8
Changes affected you personally:	Very positively	13	14.3
	Moderately positively	25	27.5
	Neither positively nor negatively	44	48.4
	Moderately negatively	9	9.9

2. Enhanced Uses of Technology

As can be seen in Table 4, 33.8 percent of graduates experienced either no changes (5.3 percent) or only minor changes (28.6 percent) in their work setting over the past decade due to enhanced uses of technology. Significant changes due to technology were experienced by 51.9 percent and profound changes by 14.3 percent of graduates. Those changes due to enhanced uses of technology affected 72.5 percent of the graduates positively (very positively, 21.4 percent; moderately positively, 51.1 percent); 20.9 percent of the graduates neither positively nor negatively; and 6.6 percent of the graduates negatively (moderately negatively, 5.5 percent; very negatively 1.1 percent).

“Many more people working remotely and telecommuting.”

“Our corporate office went 100% remote, so we no longer have a brick and mortar office.”

“With greater technology, there seems to be a greater emphasis and expectation from clients on being ‘on-call’ and responsive 24/7, even on vacations. As a result, it is difficult to have truly ‘free time’ for attorneys to unwind and recharge their batteries.”

3. Stronger Stress on Economic Sustainability

As can be seen in Table 5, 68.8 percent of graduates reported experiencing either no changes (32.8 percent) or only minor changes (36.0 percent) in their work setting over the past decade due to stronger stress on economic sustainability. Significant changes due to economic sustainability were experienced by 23.1 percent and profound changes by 8.1 percent

Table 4: Impact of Changes in Legal Profession from 2007 to 2017: Technology

		N	Percent
Changes in work setting:	No changes	10	5.3
	Yes, minor changes	54	28.6
	Yes, significant changes	98	51.9
	Yes, profound changes	27	14.3
Changes affected you personally:	Very positively	39	21.4
	Moderately positively	93	51.1
	Neither positively nor negatively	38	20.9
	Moderately negatively	10	5.5
	Very negatively	2	1.1

Table 5: Impact of Changes in Legal Profession from 2007 to 2017: Economic Sustainability

		N	Percent
Changes in work setting:	No changes	61	32.8
	Yes, minor changes	67	36.0
	Yes, significant changes	43	23.1
	Yes, profound changes	15	8.1
Changes affected you personally:	Very positively	5	3.9
	Moderately positively	15	11.7
	Neither positively nor negatively	41	32.0
	Moderately negatively	60	46.9
	Very negatively	7	5.5

Table 6: Perceived Personal Effect of Stronger Stress on Economic Sustainability, by Type of Work Setting in 2017

		<i>Very Positively</i>	<i>Moderately Positively</i>	<i>Neither Positively nor Negatively</i>	<i>Moderately Negatively</i>	<i>Very Negatively</i>	<i>Total</i>
Large private law firm	N	0	0	10	32	1	43
	(Pcnt)	(0.0)	(0.0)	(23.3)	(74.4)	(2.3)	(100.0)
Other work setting	N	5	14	26	24	4	73
	(Pcnt)	(6.9)	(19.2)	(35.6)	(32.9)	(5.5)	(100.0)

of graduates. Those changes due to economic sustainability affected 15.6 percent of the graduates positively (very positively, 3.9 percent; moderately positively, 11.7 percent); 32.0 percent of the graduates neither positively nor negatively; and 52.4 percent of the graduates negatively (moderately negatively, 46.9 percent; very negatively 5.5 percent).

The negative effects due to stronger stress on economic sustainability over the past decade were not equally distributed across work settings. Table 6 compares large private law firms with the sum of all other work settings (i.e., small private law firms, government, business, and “other”). It can be seen there that 76.7 percent of respondents working in large private law firms were either “moderately negatively” or “very negatively” affected by changes due to stronger stress on economic sustainability compared with 38.4 percent of

Table 7: Satisfaction with Decision to Become a Lawyer

	<i>Total</i>		<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Extremely satisfied	86	43.2	51	42.2	35	44.9
Moderately satisfied	68	34.2	47	38.8	21	26.9
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14	7.0	7	5.8	7	9.0
Moderately dissatisfied	17	8.5	8	6.6	9	11.5
Extremely dissatisfied	13	6.5	8	6.6	5	6.4

respondents working in other settings, a difference that is statistically significant (chi-square with 4 DF = 22.8; $p < 0.001$).

"Many areas have had to revamp how legal services are delivered, e.g., 10 years ago my firm had no 'staff attorneys.' Now, they are the fastest growing segment of the firm."

"Added focus on non-equity partnership as a new tier in the associate-to-partnership track."

"Far less client loyalty."

"Higher emphasis on metrics and numbers—more a business, less a profession."

D. Career Satisfaction

Respondents' satisfaction with the decision to become a lawyer is presented in Table 7. Overall, 77.4 percent of all respondents—81.0 percent of the men and 71.8 percent of the women—are either "extremely" or "moderately" satisfied with that decision. Only 15.0 percent—13.2 percent of the men and 17.9 percent of the women—are either "extremely" or "moderately" dissatisfied to have become a lawyer. There is no significant gender difference in satisfaction with the decision to become a lawyer.

Respondents' satisfaction with how well prepared they were by their legal education is presented in Table 8. The mean score on the item, "The University of Virginia School of Law prepared me well for my legal career," is 5.9 ($SD = 1.3$) on a seven-point scale, with 1 being strongly disagree, 4 being neither agree nor disagree, and 7 being strongly agree. The mean score for both men and women is 5.9. Collapsing across the three "agree" and the three "disagree" categories, 4.8 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement that the University of Virginia School of Law prepared them well, 7.2 percent neither agree nor disagree with the statement, and 87.9 percent agree with it. Again collapsing across the agree and disagree categories, 3.0 percent of the male respondents and 6.2 percent of the female respondents disagree with the statement that the University of Virginia prepared them well, 6.2 percent of the male respondents and 8.6 percent of the female respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement, and 90.0 percent of the male respondents and 85.2 percent of the female respondents agree that the University of Virginia prepared them well for their legal careers. None of these differences is statistically significant.

Table 9 presents the satisfaction that respondents feel with how the reputation of the school from which they graduated affected their careers. The mean score on the

Table 8: The University of Virginia School of Law Prepared Me Well

	<i>Total</i>		<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	0.5	0	0.0	1	1.2
	7	3.4	4	3.2	3	3.7
	2	1.0	1	0.8	1	1.2
Neither agree nor disagree	15	7.2	8	6.3	7	8.6
	30	14.4	22	17.3	8	9.9
	65	31.3	43	33.9	22	27.2
Strongly agree	88	42.3	49	38.6	39	48.2

Table 9: The Prestige of the University of Virginia School of Law Benefited My Career

	Total		Men		Women	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Strongly disagree	4	1.9	2	1.6	2	2.5
	2	1.0	0	0.0	2	2.5
	1	0.5	1	0.8	0	0.0
Neither agree nor disagree	9	4.4	7	5.6	2	2.5
	18	8.7	13	10.3	5	6.3
	58	28.2	41	32.5	17	21.3
Strongly agree	114	55.3	62	49.2	52	65.0

item, “The prestige associated with being a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law benefited my career,” is 6.2 ($SD = 1.2$) on a seven-point scale with 1 being strongly disagree, 4 being neither agree nor disagree, and 7 being strongly agree. The mean score for men is 6.2 ($SD = 1.1$) and for women is 6.3 ($SD = 1.3$), a difference that was not statistically significant. Collapsing across the three “agree” categories and the three “disagree” categories as above, 3.4 percent of the respondents disagree with the statement that the prestige associated with being a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law benefited their careers, 4.4 percent neither agree nor disagree with the statement, and 92.2 percent agree with it. Again collapsing across the agree and disagree categories, 2.4 percent of the male respondents and 5.0 percent of the female respondents disagree with the statement that the prestige associated with being a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Law benefited their careers, 5.6 percent of the male respondents and 2.5 percent of the female respondents neither agree nor disagree with the statement, and 92.1 percent of the male respondents and 92.5 of the female respondents agree that the University of Virginia School of Law benefited their careers.

As described above, three dimensions of current job satisfaction were measured. The items for each dimension were taken from the *After the JD* study:⁴⁰ “job setting satisfaction,” which concerned approval with the operation of the workplace; “work substance satisfaction,” reflecting the intrinsic interest of the work; and “power track satisfaction,” which consolidated ratings of contentment with compensation levels and opportunities for advancement. In addition, a single new item on satisfaction with the “balance between professional life and personal or family life” was included. Each item was rated on a seven-point scale, from 1 (“highly dissatisfied”) to 7 (“highly satisfied”).

Table 10 presents the mean scores on the job satisfaction items for the total sample and for men and women separately. Each of the items was rated above the scale midpoint of 4 (“neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”) in the satisfied direction. The mean overall score on the job setting dimension of job satisfaction is 5.6 ($SD = 1.1$); the mean for men is 5.6 ($SD = 1.1$) and for women 5.4 ($SD = 1.2$). On the work substance dimension, the overall mean score is 5.7 ($SD = 1.3$); the mean for men is 5.7 ($SD = 1.2$) and for women

⁴⁰After the JD, supra note 15.

Table 10: Mean Scores on Job Satisfaction Items

<i>Dimension/Item</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Job Setting Dimension			
Level of responsibility	6.1	6.1	6.1
Recognition of your work	5.4	5.5	5.2
Control over amount of work	5.3	5.4	5.2
Control over how you work	6.0	6.1	5.8
Relationships with colleagues	5.8	5.9	5.8
Job security	5.6	5.7	5.5
Performance evaluation	4.7	4.7	4.5
Work Substance Dimension			
Substantive area of work	5.9	6.0	5.9
Tasks you perform	5.7	5.7	5.5
Intellectual challenge	5.8	5.9	5.8
Opportunities to build skills	5.4	5.5	5.3
Power Track Dimension			
Compensation	5.1	5.3	4.8
Opportunities for advancement	4.7	4.8	4.6
Work/Life			
Work/life balance	5.3	5.2	5.6

5.6 ($SD = 1.5$). On the power track dimension, the overall mean score is 4.9 ($SD = 1.5$); the mean for men is 5.0 ($SD = 1.4$) and for women 4.7 ($SD = 1.7$). There were no significant gender differences on any of the composite mean scores measuring these dimensions of job satisfaction, nor on work/life balance. However, women scored significantly lower than men on one individual item—satisfaction with compensation, including salary, benefits, and bonuses. The mean score on satisfaction with compensation was 4.8 ($SD = 1.9$) for women, compared to a mean score of 5.3 ($SD = 1.6$) for men, a statistically significant difference ($F = 4.23$ with 1 DF, $p < 0.05$).

E. Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction was measured by the five-item Satisfaction with Life Scale, each item being scored on a seven-point scale, with 1 being strongly disagree, 4 being neither agree

Table 11: Life Satisfaction Scale

	<i>Total</i>		<i>Men</i>		<i>Women</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very highly satisfied (30–35)	83	39.9	45	35.2	38	47.5
Highly satisfied (25–29)	66	31.7	44	34.4	22	27.5
Average satisfaction (20–24)	40	19.2	25	19.5	15	18.8
Slightly dissatisfied (15–19)	10	4.8	9	7.0	1	1.3
Dissatisfied (10–14)	5	2.4	4	3.1	1	1.3
Extremely dissatisfied (5–9)	4	1.9	1	0.8	3	3.8

nor disagree, and 7 being strongly agree. The mean overall score is 5.4 ($SD = 1.2$). The mean for men is 5.3 ($SD = 1.2$) and the mean for women is 5.5 ($SD = 1.3$), a difference that is not statistically significant. Table 11 displays the life satisfaction scores by categories, using the category labels and cut-off scores provided by Diener.⁴¹ Collapsing the three highest categories into “satisfied,” and the three lowest into “dissatisfied,” 90.8 percent of the respondents—89.1 percent of the men and 93.8 percent of the women—are satisfied with their lives, and 9.1 percent of the respondents—10.9 percent of the men and 6.3 percent of the women—are dissatisfied with their lives.

Comparison of the 2007 and 2017 survey responses shows remarkable stability over time in both work satisfaction and life satisfaction; scores remained high, on average, with no statistically significant differences found between these repeated measures in the same individuals a decade apart. The mean composite score on work satisfaction (all three dimensions combined) was 5.6 ($SD = 0.9$) in 2007 and 5.5 ($SD = 1.1$) in 2017, with an average within-respondent difference of -0.08 . ($SD = 1.1$). Mean composite score on life satisfaction was 5.3 ($SD = 1.3$) in 2007 and 5.4 ($SD = 1.2$) in 2017, with an average within-respondent difference of 0.07 ($SD = 1.02$).

IV. DISCUSSION

As previously noted,⁴² this study has three advantages over most other research on the satisfaction of lawyers. First, it employed a longitudinal, repeated-measures design to follow the same respondents from entry into law school, through graduation from law school three years later, again 17 years into their professional lives, and now 27 years into their professional lives. Second, it was conducted on a highly representative sample, having located 100 percent of the living graduates of one law school class and having achieved a response rate of 72.2 percent in 2007, and 80.7 percent of the 2007 respondents in 2017 (constituting 58.2 percent of the total living members of the class who matriculated in 1987 and graduated in 1990). Finally, the study employed empirically validated measures of both career satisfaction and life satisfaction.

We also acknowledge significant limitations of the research. Only one class at only one law school was surveyed. Surveying different classes at the same law school, or the same class at different law schools, may well have produced different results. In addition, because this study was limited to one class at one law school, the sample size, particularly in 2017, is not large enough to statistically test for many effects that would be of interest (e.g., the effect of race on career and life satisfaction).

In this section, we reprise the principal conclusions of our previous follow-up a decade ago, when our respondents were an average of 43 years old. For each conclusion, we indicate where we have found continuity and where we have found change.

⁴¹Supra note 32.

⁴²Monahan & Swanson, supra note 1.

A. Law Graduates Take Many Diverse Career Paths

It is still the case that no single setting accounts for the employment of more than one-quarter of the graduates studied here, and that one-quarter of the graduates are not practicing law in their current jobs. Although fully one-third of all respondents have changed employers in the past decade, change in the *type* of organization in which they were employed is much less dramatic than it was between respondents' first job out of law school in 1990 and their job in 2007 (particularly in the case of employment in large private law firms, which fell from 57.5 percent at the time of law school graduation in 1990 to 28.0 percent 17 years later). Modest changes in employment setting, however, continue to take place: between 2007 and 2017, employment in small private law firms decreased from 18.0 to 14.7 percent, and in businesses from 25.0 to 20.5 percent, while "other" employment settings (e.g., academia, nonprofits, and self-employed "consultants") increased from 16.0 to 22.6 percent of respondents.

B. Gender Differences in the Personal and Professional Lives of Lawyers are Pervasive

"Pervasive" still appears an apt descriptor of the gender differences we found a decade ago. In 2017, 96.1 percent of the men and 70.0 percent of the women were employed full time. The current survey replicated the finding in 2007 that the presence of children living at home had no effect on the rate of full-time employment among men and a strong effect on the rate of full-time employment rate among women. However, we also found that the full-time employment rate of women with children living at home had risen from 50.0 percent in 2007 to 61.2 percent in 2017. In addition, and mindful of the small sample size, of the 21 women who had children living at home and were not employed full time in 2007 (when they were an average of 43 years old), seven had returned to full-time employment in the following decade, and all had obtained legal or corporate positions.

The inflation-adjusted percent gain in salary from 2006 to 2016 is higher for women than for men for every employment setting except business. The gain in salary from 2006 to 2016 for women is particularly striking in the case of large private law firms (i.e., a 55.0 percent gain in salary for women employed in large firms). However, women still report lower mean salaries than men in every organizational setting, although the gap is narrowing. In large private law firms, for example, women have gone from earning 88.2 percent of the average salary that men earned in 2006 to earning 99.4 percent of the average salary that men earned in 2016.

C. Working Conditions at Large Private Law Firms are a Problem—Perhaps the Problem—for Many Lawyers

We studied three potential period effects occurring over the decade since our 2007 survey that might have influenced the working conditions of our respondents: (1) an increased emphasis on globalization; (2) enhanced uses of technology; and (3) a stronger stress on

economic sustainability. For each of these potential period effects, we inquired as to whether the respondent had experienced a change in his or her work setting over the past decade, and, if so, whether the personal valence of that change was positive or negative.

We found that almost all respondents (96.3 percent) reported experiencing at least one of these three changes in their work setting over the past decade: one-quarter reported experiencing an increased emphasis on globalization, two-thirds reported experiencing enhanced uses of technology, and one-third reported experiencing a stronger stress on economic sustainability.

The affective impact of these changes in work settings on the respondents varied greatly. Of those who experienced an increased emphasis on globalization, approximately 40 percent described the change in positive terms and approximately 10 percent described the change in negative terms (with the remainder being neutral). Of those who experienced enhanced uses of technology, many more—approximately 70 percent—described the change positively and the same approximately 10 percent described the change negatively (with the remainder being neutral). Of the respondents who experienced a stronger stress on economic sustainability, however, only 16 percent portrayed the change as positive, and fully half (52 percent) depicted its impact on them as negative (with the remainder again being neutral). Analogous to what we found in our 2007 survey, respondents working in large private firms fared much worse than those working in other settings on this measure. The percentage of respondents who reported being negatively affected by changes due to stronger stress on economic sustainability over the past decade was more than twice as high among those working in large private law firms (76.7) than among those working in other settings (38.4).

D. Overall, Lawyers' Career Satisfaction Is High

Overall, over three-quarters of all respondents are either “extremely” or “moderately” satisfied with the decision to become a lawyer. Almost nine in ten respondents agree that the University of Virginia School of Law prepared them well for their legal careers. Over nine in ten respondents agreed that the prestige associated with being a graduate of that law school benefited their careers. In none of these findings were there significant gender differences.

Comparison of the 2007 and 2017 survey responses shows remarkable stability over time in career satisfaction, with no statistically significant differences between these repeated measures in the same individuals a decade apart. In 2017, respondents on average scored in the positive direction on every item on all three dimensions of job satisfaction developed for the *After the JD* study: “job setting satisfaction,” “work substance satisfaction,” and “power track satisfaction.” There were no gender differences in composite dimension scores or in any item scores, with one exception: women scored significantly lower than men on satisfaction with their compensation (with good reason; see above). Respondents also scored in the positive direction on the measure of work-life balance, with no significant gender difference.

E. Overall, Lawyers' Life Satisfaction Is High

As with work satisfaction, comparison of the 2007 and 2017 survey responses shows remarkable stability over time in life satisfaction, with no statistically significant differences between these repeated measures in the same individuals a decade apart. Over nine in ten respondents scored as being satisfied with their lives, and over seven in ten scored as “highly satisfied” or “very highly satisfied” with their lives, with no significant gender difference in life satisfaction.