

**Crossing the Charles:  
The Experiences, Networks, and Career Paths of Harvard JD/MBA Alumni**

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## I. Introduction

The JD/MBA program at Harvard University requires a student to successfully complete a four-year academic curriculum which spans both banks of the Charles River. Since the joint degree program's official beginning in 1971, 350 students have graduated with both a Juris Doctorate ("JD") and Masters of Business Administration ("MBA") degree.<sup>1</sup> After graduation, JD/MBAs have exited the gates of Harvard to pursue vastly different career paths, ranging from becoming Wall Street financiers and lawyers to leading entrepreneurs to the Governor of Massachusetts to professors teaching future generations of Harvard students.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of these notable alumni accomplishments, we know surprisingly little about the student experiences and career paths of Harvard JD/MBA alumni. To date, no systematic study of the JD/MBA program and its alumni has ever been undertaken. Given that the Harvard JD/MBA program has served as a model of interdisciplinary education (as well as our own personal experiences as Harvard JD/MBAs),<sup>3</sup> we were interested in gaining a better understanding of how the JD/MBA program has evolved over the past three decades. Therefore, we designed and conducted a study of the Harvard JD/MBA alumni to better understand their educational experiences, networks, career paths, and relationships to Harvard Business School ("HBS") and Harvard Law School ("HLS").

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<sup>1</sup> Harvard Law School Association records indicate that 350 students received JD/MBA degrees between 1971-2004. Prior to 1971, some students obtained separate degrees from HLS and HBS. However, 1971 was the first year in which the program was officially recognized.

<sup>2</sup> Numerous JD/MBAs have had successful business and legal careers on Wall Street, including Adebayo Ogunlesi '79 of Credit Suisse First Boston, John Carr '83 of Simpson, Thacher, and Bartlett, and Glenn Hutchins '84 of Silver Lake Partners. After a long career in private equity, Mitt Romney '75 is now the Governor of Massachusetts. Joy Covey '89 is the former Chief Financial Officer of Amazon.com. Two members of the Harvard Law School faculty, Howell Jackson '82 and Guhan Subramanian '98, have Harvard JD/MBA degrees.

<sup>3</sup> Building on the success of the JD/MBA and JD/MPP programs, Harvard recently announced a new JD/MD program. See Clinton Dick, *Harvard Increases Joint Degree Programs*, THE RECORD (Feb. 5, 2004) available at <http://www.hlrecord.org/news/2004/02/05/News/Harvard.Increases.Joint.Degree.Programs-599216.shtml> (last accessed Feb. 22, 2005).

This study provides considerable insights into the Harvard JD/MBA program. First, it indicates that JD/MBAs have substantially different experiences at HBS and HLS. Our study suggests that JD/MBAs, on average, prefer the HBS experience and have a stronger long-term emotional and financial relationship to HBS. While JD/MBAs appear to favor the HBS experience, this does not lead them to dismiss the value of the joint degree. Rather, respondents report that the joint degree is “worth the investment.”

Second, JD/MBAs seem to perceive important differences between the networks of HLS, HBS, and their fellow JD/MBAs. On average, JD/MBAs perceive that the HBS network has more meaningfully influenced their careers than the HLS and JD/MBA networks. Yet when one considers the choice of profession and demographic characteristics of JD/MBA graduates, the story appears to become somewhat more complicated. While JD/MBAs in legal careers and minority JD/MBAs still perceive the HBS network as more valuable, they simultaneously perceive more value in the HLS network than Caucasian JD/MBA alumni or those in business careers. In the process, interesting questions emerge regarding whether demographic and professional characteristics cause JD/MBAs to develop and maintain their networks differently.

Third, our study indicates that the career paths of JD/MBAs have changed markedly over the past few decades. While a majority of JD/MBAs in the 1970s initially pursued legal careers, JD/MBA graduates over the last two and a half decades have gravitated towards business careers (by either starting on a business path or switching from initial legal jobs). Moreover, while the sample size of the female and minority respondents is too small to draw statistically significant conclusions, these respondents suggest that female and minority career paths may substantially differ from those taken by males and Caucasians.

This study, therefore, offers many insights – and raises important questions – about the Harvard JD/MBA program and joint degrees more generally. The remainder of this paper is divided into five parts. Part II outlines the structure and history of the Harvard JD/MBA program and the methodology of our study. Part III then reviews the academic commentary relevant to understanding the experiences and career paths of JD/MBAs. While little academic literature exists regarding JD/MBA programs specifically, this section reviews relevant commentary and studies of law and business school experiences, networks, and career paths. Part IV presents the results of our survey on the JD/MBA experience and discusses their relationships to each school, networks, and career paths. Part V then discusses these results, and synthesizes important themes that emerged in our in-depth interviews with JD/MBA alumni. Finally, Part VI concludes by raising important questions about the JD/MBA program and offering frontiers for future research.

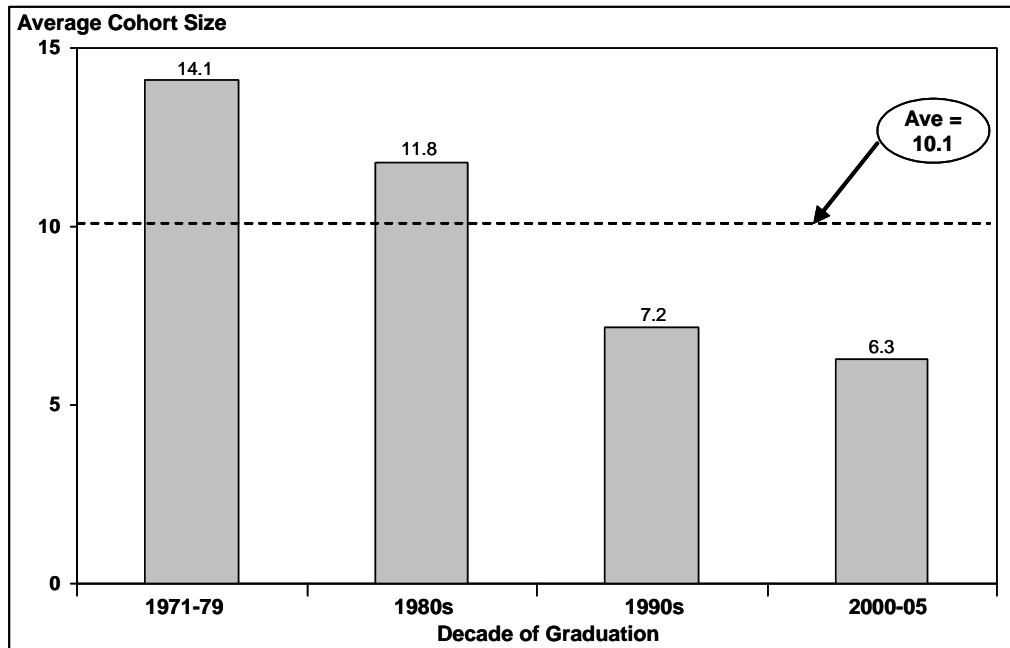
## II. Background on Harvard JD/MBA program and study methodology

This section begins with a brief overview of the history and structure of the Harvard JD/MBA program. While the basic academic structure of the program has remained similar over the course of the past three decades, it identifies a few dimensions along which the program has changed. Then, it proceeds to discuss our study's methodology.

### A. The history and structure of the JD/MBA program

While students separately obtained graduate degrees from HLS and HBS prior to the 1970s, the first class to graduate from the combined JD/MBA program was the Class of 1971. From 1971 to 2004, 350 students graduated with JD/MBA degrees. **Figure 1** reveals how the average cohort size of JD/MBAs has changed over the last three decades.

**Figure 1: Average Cohort Size**



As **Figure 1** demonstrates, the average JD/MBA cohort size has progressively declined. During the first 15 years of the JD/MBA program, only two cohorts had fewer than 10 graduates. Since

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the mid-1980s until the present, approximately 75 percent of JD/MBA cohorts have had fewer than 10 graduates.

Although the average JD/MBA cohort size decreased substantially over the past three decades, the basic academic structure of the JD/MBA program has remained quite similar. To enter the JD/MBA program, a student must first be admitted independently to both HLS and HBS. After gaining each school admission, the student then applies officially to enter the JD/MBA program.<sup>4</sup> The initial two years of the JD/MBA experience are spent separately at HLS and HBS, with academic requirements identical to those of a typical first-year law school and first-year business school student.<sup>5</sup> On average, 60 percent of JD/MBA students attend HLS for their first year and HBS for their second year.<sup>6</sup> During the final two years of the program, a Harvard JD/MBA student simultaneously attends the business and law schools with reduced credit requirements at each school.<sup>7</sup>

The reason students more often attend HLS for their first year is likely influenced by the differential time commitments to receive a JD degree and an MBA degree. When a student completes her first year at HLS, she still has two years remaining to receive her JD degree. Entering the JD/MBA program adds one additional year of graduate school, increasing her remaining commitment by 50 percent. In contrast, a student who has completed her first year at HBS will receive her MBA degree after only one additional year. Entering the JD/MBA program adds two additional years of graduate school, increasing her remaining commitment by

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<sup>4</sup> The Joint Program application to the JD/MBA program is largely a formality. To the knowledge of Professor Vagts, no eligible student has ever been denied admission.

<sup>5</sup> Assuming the student has been admitted to both schools prior to matriculation, the student can attend the schools in whatever order he or she prefers.

<sup>6</sup> This result is derived from analyzing survey results, and the trend appears to have peaked in the 1980s when 81 percent of respondents reported spending their first year at HLS.

<sup>7</sup> Graduation requirements include 20 academic credits at Harvard Law School and 12 credits at Harvard Business School in each of the final two years. During two of a student's final four semesters, an approved Harvard Business School course can count for dual credit at Harvard Law School.

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200 percent. Professor Detlev Vagts<sup>8</sup> explained that this discrepancy may encourage potential JD/MBA students to withdraw from the program after their first year of business school, and provides a disincentive for first-year business students to apply for admission to HLS and the JD/MBA program.<sup>9</sup>

### *B. Study methodology*

The findings of this study are based on analysis of several sources of data. First, we analyzed data provided by the Harvard Law School Association and Harvard JD/MBA Alumni Association. Second, we conducted a survey of all known JD/MBA alumni regarding their demographic backgrounds, school experiences, networks, and career paths.<sup>10</sup> Third, we performed in-depth interviews with a subset of the alumni population. Finally, we interviewed relevant members of the Harvard community. This section describes these sources of data and how they were used in the study.

According to HLS Alumni Association and Harvard JD/MBA Alumni Association records, 350 students graduated from the JD/MBA program from 1971-2004. Using these records, we sent an e-mail in March, 2004 to the 290 JD/MBA alumni with valid known e-mail addresses.<sup>11</sup> In the e-mail, we requested that recipients complete an online Internet survey created on the HBS Java Poll technology platform which included questions regarding their demographics, JD/MBA experiences, relationships to each school, and career paths. Respondents had the ability to answer anonymously, and were informed that individual responses to this survey would remain anonymous even if they provided their contact

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<sup>8</sup> Professor Vagts has been the Harvard Law School faculty sponsor of the JD/MBA program since its inception.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with authors (September, 2004). It is important to note that this observation was offered on a strictly anecdotal – and not statistical – basis.

<sup>10</sup> A copy of this survey is provided in Appendix A.

<sup>11</sup> The initial e-mail was sent to 338 alumni, but 48 e-mails were returned to sender because the recipient's e-mail address was invalid.

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information. Most of these questions were based on quantitative scales; however, the online survey also included open-ended questions to allow for more qualitative responses. A second reminder e-mail was sent in April, 2004. Finally, identical paper surveys were mailed in September, 2004 to those alumni whose addresses were available and had not completed the online survey.

In total, 110 Harvard JD/MBA students responded to the online and paper surveys, representing approximately 31 percent of the overall JD/MBA alumni population.<sup>12</sup> These responses form the basis of our findings on JD/MBA experiences, networks, and career paths.<sup>13</sup> The composition of our respondent pool generally resembles the aggregate JD/MBA alumni pool along several dimensions. First, the respondents were distributed fairly evenly by decade of graduation, with a somewhat higher response rate from more recent graduates. Twenty-three percent of survey respondents graduated in the 1970s, 24 percent in the 1980s, 24 percent in the 1990s, and 29 percent in the 2000s. Second, while the respondent pool was predominantly male (84 percent), this response rate is consistent with the HLS Alumni Association database which indicates that 88 percent of JD/MBA graduates are male. Overall, 18 women and 92 men responded to the survey. Third, 28 of the 110 survey respondents were members of minority groups.<sup>14</sup> While the data does not exist to compare the minority respondent pool to the actual proportion of minority JD/MBA graduates, the 25 percent minority response rate is likely higher than the actual proportion of minority JD/MBA graduates.

While the survey provides much information on the experiences and network perceptions of JD/MBA alumni, the analysis of JD/MBA career paths incorporates two other sources of data.

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<sup>12</sup> Of these 110 respondents, 104 responded to the online survey. It is also worth noting that some deviation in the number of responses exists by survey question because respondents were provided the option not to answer every question.

<sup>13</sup> Analysis of the statistical significance of these findings is provided in Appendix B.

<sup>14</sup> Minority respondents are defined as any non-Caucasian respondents.

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Based on Harvard Law School Association records, we were able to ascertain the first jobs of 218 JD/MBAs and the current jobs of 270 JD/MBAs. However, because this data was limited to the first and current jobs of JD/MBAs, it did not provide insight into career *paths*. In addition, since the data was from a source independent of the survey, it was not possible to reliably assess how it might relate to other dimensions of the survey responses. To address those issues, we requested that survey respondents also provide current versions of their resumes. In total, we received 72 resumes. From these resumes, we were able to derive more substantial insights about career paths and their relationships to other survey variables.

In addition to the surveys and analysis of Harvard Law School Association data, we also conducted 10 phone interviews with JD/MBA alumni to obtain more in-depth perspectives. Interviewees were selected from survey respondents who indicated a willingness to be contacted for follow-up interviews. The interviewee pool included alumni of diverse races, genders, decades of graduation, and career paths to elicit a wide ranging set of perspectives on the program. The average interview lasted approximately 45 minutes.

Finally, we interviewed other members of the Harvard community who could offer relevant insights on the JD/MBA program. Interviewees included Professor Detlev Vagts, Scott Nichols (HLS Associate Dean for Development, Alumni Relations, and Communications), David Lampe (Executive Director of HBS Communications and Marketing), and Lawrence Golub (President of the Harvard University JD/MBA Alumni Association). These interviews enabled us to further expand our perspective on the program's evolution and relationship to the broader Harvard community.

### III. Academic commentary and related studies

There is a surprising dearth of commentary on JD/MBA programs. While modest academic commentary exists on the structure of joint degree programs,<sup>15</sup> we could find no studies that systematically examine the JD/MBA experience. Similarly, although graduate school and career advice Internet sites contain general debates over the value of a JD/MBA degree, few sources appear to shed meaningful insight on the career paths of JD/MBAs.<sup>16</sup>

Although this sizable gap in the literature exists regarding JD/MBA programs, a more extensive commentary exists on the separate law school and business school experiences, networks, and career paths. While not capturing all the complexities inherent in the JD/MBA and Harvard experience, this literature nonetheless offers important insights. In addition, two recent studies of the HLS and HBS communities provide a useful foundation in which to situate our results. This section, therefore, explores the relevant aspects of the academic commentary and prior studies.

#### A. Law and business school experiences

Over the past two decades, numerous studies have examined the law school experience. These studies have employed substantially different methodologies, ranging from those focused on specific law schools<sup>17</sup> to those examining issues across law schools.<sup>18</sup> While these studies

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<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Steve O. Michael & Leela Balraj, *Higher Education Institutional Collaborations: An Analysis of Models of Joint Degree Programs*, 25 J. HIGHER EDUC. POL'Y & MGMT. 131, 141 (2003) (briefly situating JD/MBA programs within other models of joint degree programs).

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Vault.com, *The JD/MBA for the Corporate Lawyer: A Mixed Blessing?* at [http://www.thevault.com/nr/main\\_article\\_detail.jsp?article\\_id=22612008&ht\\_type=5](http://www.thevault.com/nr/main_article_detail.jsp?article_id=22612008&ht_type=5) (last accessed Feb. 11, 2005); Northwestern University JD/MBA Association, *JD/MBA Program Overview* available at <http://www.law.northwestern.edu/jdmba/About.htm> (last accessed Feb. 21, 2005) [hereinafter "Northwestern Report"] (providing information on careers of Northwestern JD/MBA alumni).

<sup>17</sup> See Catherine Weiss & Louise Melling, *The Legal Education of Twenty Women*, 40 STAN. L. REV. 1299 (1988) (discussing the ways in which twenty female Yale Law School students felt isolated and subordinated to male classmates); Lani Guinier et al., *Becoming Gentlemen: Women's Experiences at One Ivy League Law School*, 143 U. PA. L. REV. 1 (1994); Allison L. Bowers, *Women at the University of Texas School of Law: A Call for Action*, 9 TEX. J. WOMEN & L. 117 (2000); Lisa A. Wilson & David H. Taylor, *Surveying Gender Bias at One Midwestern Law*

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examine several dimensions of the law school experience, they frequently have a particular focus on gender issues. They collectively document that women face many unique challenges in law school, and notable gender differentials exist across many contexts ranging from academic performance to psychosocial well-being.<sup>19</sup>

Given that our study of Harvard JD/MBAs also suggests that some differences may exist by gender, these studies provide a useful backdrop in which to situate our results.

Simultaneously, however, the empirical research prior to 2005 had a significant shortcoming for our purposes. Because none of these studies focused directly on HLS, it was possible that they omitted important institutional specific effects.

In 2005, Adam Neufeld, a recent HLS graduate, published the results of his year and a half long study of women's experiences at HLS.<sup>20</sup> This study in many ways amplifies the earlier findings of differential gender experiences at law school. Neufeld employed various methodologies, including monitoring student class participation patterns, evaluating the gender composition of extracurricular activities, tracking mental health visits, and analyzing course grades and academic honors data.<sup>21</sup> In addition, this study evaluated over 1,000 responses to a survey on career ambitions, academic experiences, self-assessment, extracurricular participation, and demographic composition.<sup>22</sup>

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*School*, 9 AM. U.J. GENDER SOC. POL'Y & L. 251, 255-58 (2001) (reporting that 96 percent in their sample believed that they received less recognition in class and suffered greater ostracization than men).

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Linda F. Wightman, *Women in Legal Education: A Comparison of the Law School Performance and Law School Experiences of Women and Men*, LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION COUNCIL RESEARCH REPORT SERIES (1996); Joan M. Krauskopf, *Touching the Elephant: Perceptions of Gender Issues in Nine Law Schools*, 44 J. LEGAL EDUC. 311, 328 (1994) (comparing across several Ohio law schools).

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Guinier et al. at 3-6.

<sup>20</sup> This study was conducted in conjunction with the Working Group on Student Experiences. See Adam Neufeld, *Costs of an Outdated Pedagogy? Study on Gender at Harvard Law School*, \_\_\_ AMER. UNIV. J. GENDER. SOC. CHANGE & L. \_\_\_ (forthcoming 2005) (manuscript on file with authors).

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 11-21.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.*

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The findings of Neufeld's study strikingly document the numerous ways in which women experience HLS differently from men. Women consistently speak less than men in class, and are substantially less likely to make multiple comments in a single class session.<sup>23</sup> While women hold a majority of top leadership positions at HLS academic journals, they comprise on average only 36 percent of the *Harvard Law Review* editorial board.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, women consistently perceive that their abilities in legal reasoning and quantitative analysis lag those of men.<sup>25</sup> Finally, women receive somewhat lower grades than men and are more likely to graduate without honors.<sup>26</sup> While this study does not directly capture all aspects of the JD/MBA experience, it provides substantial insight into the HLS experience, particularly for women.

Similar to the law school literature, we could find no study that systematically examines the business school student experience. While commentary has focused on how MBA students conceive management roles,<sup>27</sup> how business schools can market the MBA experience,<sup>28</sup> and the implications of distance learning on an MBA education,<sup>29</sup> there appears to be little formal exploration of the business school experience itself. However, although this gap exists in the academic commentary, an internal HBS study of its alumni sheds substantial insights into the experience of Harvard MBA students.

In 2004, HBS initiated an Alumni Career Tracking Program to understand how HBS impacted the professional and personal growth of its graduates.<sup>30</sup> It surveyed 4,856 HBS alumni

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<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at 22-29.

<sup>24</sup> Neufeld at 44-46.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 29-38.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., J Viljoen et al., *The MBA Experience: Participants Entry Level Conceptions of Management*, MGMT. EDUC. & DEVELOPMENT (1990).

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., J Nicholls et al., *Marketing Higher Education: The MBA Experience*, 9 INTL. J. EDUC. MGMT. 31 (1995).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., D Holt, *The MBA Experience by Distance Learning: What MBA Participants Bring to Their Studies*, OPEN LEARNING (1990).

<sup>30</sup> Harvard Business School, *Alumni Career Tracking Program: HBS MBA Alumni Study* (2004) [hereinafter "HBS Alumni Study"].

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who had graduated over the past 80 years by Internet and mail regarding their HBS experiences, career paths, continuing educational needs, and the perceived impact of HBS. This study finds that HBS graduates overwhelmingly value the HBS experience. Eighty-three percent indicate that HBS had a positive impact on their professional lives, and only 4 percent report that HBS was too competitive, intimidating, or pressured.<sup>31</sup> On the whole, Harvard MBA graduates appear quite satisfied with HBS.

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<sup>31</sup> HBS Alumni Study at 22, 65.

## *B. Networks*

Like all Harvard students, JD/MBAs have access to – and become members of – the school’s alumni network. In the process, they form relationships with three alumni networks: HBS, HLS, and their fellow JD/MBAs. In our study, we sought to better understand how JD/MBAs interact with and perceive the relative strength of these three networks. To contextualize the study’s network findings, this section discusses two threads of networking literature which are relevant for understanding JD/MBA networks. First, it examines how social networks can impact career trajectories. Second, since the JD/MBA study findings suggest that networks may differ based on demographic characteristics, this section briefly explores the academic commentary on female and minority networks.

People choose to attend HBS for many reasons, but its alumni network is one of the school’s most important differentiating factors. The HBS alumni network is both massive and loyal. HBS boasts the largest alumni network of any business school with over 65,000 alumni spread across 130 countries.<sup>32</sup> Of those 65,000 alumni, a majority (38,000) have consented to be a resource to assist the careers of HBS students and their fellow alumni.<sup>33</sup> However, the HBS Alumni Study suggests that understanding the operation of the HBS alumni network transcends its mere size. Rather, it indicates that there is something uniquely important about the HBS “section” experience as HBS alumni feel substantially stronger ties to members of their specific HBS section than to the institution as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Harvard Business School, *The HBS Network* available at <http://www.hbs.edu/mba/yourcareer/hbsnetwork.html> (last accessed Feb. 20, 2005) [hereinafter “HBS Network”]; David Leonhardt, *A Network to Call Your Own: The Value of B-School Ties Last a Lifetime*, BUSINESS WEEK 128 (Oct. 21, 1996) (describing the HBS alumni network as the largest of all business schools).

<sup>33</sup> HBS Network at <http://www.hbs.edu/mba/yourcareer/hbsnetwork.html> (last accessed Feb. 20, 2005).

<sup>34</sup> HBS Alumni Study at 59.

To understand the network findings of the HBS Alumni Study and our JD/MBA study, it is useful to examine the background literature on social network theory. A central tenet of social network theory is that any set of social relationships is embedded within a larger structural context that precludes or makes possible various kinds of social contacts.<sup>35</sup> In understanding the range of social contacts that are possible, it is necessary to analyze both the structural context and the nature of an individual's relationships. Mark Granovetter's seminal 1973 paper, "The Strength of Weak Ties," asserts that an individual's network relationships fall into two general categories – strong ties and weak ties.<sup>36</sup> Weak ties, or mere acquaintanceships, loosely link members of different small groups while strong ties, or close friendships, tend to be concentrated within particular groups.<sup>37</sup>

Using this basic framework, Granovetter then offers a hypothesis that at first glance seems counter-intuitive: weak ties have a greater impact on career direction than strong ties. Because individuals to whom one has weak ties tend to move in circles different from one's own, they have access to information different than that shared by strong ties.<sup>38</sup> In an employment context, the information asymmetries inherent in weak ties serve as essential nodes for career mobility. Granovetter points to several instances where individuals received information crucial to career direction from other individuals in their network whose very existence they had forgotten.<sup>39</sup>

As we report on the JD/MBA study's findings, it is useful to consider whether the relationships of JD/MBAs are more accurately characterized as strong or weak ties – and

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<sup>35</sup> Herminia Ibarra, *Race, Opportunity, and Diversity of Social Circles in Managerial Networks*, 38 ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT JOURNAL 675 (1998).

<sup>36</sup> Mark S. Granovetter, *The Strength of Weak Ties*, 78 AMER. J. SOCIOLOGY 1360 (1973).

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* at 1376.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.* at 1371-72.

<sup>39</sup> *Id.*

whether the nature of those relationships may differ for certain JD/MBA demographic subgroups. Over the past three decades, much research has evolved the basic theories of Granovetter's network model. One particularly interesting aspect of this commentary suggests that female and minority networks often dramatically differ from those of Caucasian males. Research indicates that women and minorities gain access to resources differently than their male counterparts in regard to homophily (the number of same-sex ties), tie strength, tie density, and range.<sup>40</sup> These network differences frequently lead to the marginalization of women and minorities, but for different reasons. The marginalization of racial minorities results both from exclusionary pressures and from a minority individual's own preferences for same-race friends. In contrast, female marginalization results more from exclusionary pressures than from preferences for women friends.<sup>41</sup>

Differences between how women and men build relationships has an impact on their career networks. In the case of women, commentators have posited that these network differences have contributed in maintaining the glass ceiling for two reasons. First, women tend to develop a greater number of intense expressive ties than men, and therefore struggle to build and maintain a weak ties network that is so essential for career mobility with Granovetter's framework.<sup>42</sup> Second, men tend to develop networks on the basis of group activities. For this reason, male networks tend to be larger than female networks and include more bosses and subordinates.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Richard W. Stackman & Craig C. Pinder, *Context and Sex Effects on Personal Networks*, 16 J. SOCIAL & PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS 42 (1999).

<sup>41</sup> Ajay Mehra et al., *At the Margins: A Distinctiveness Approach to the Social Identity and Social Networks of Underrepresented Groups*, 41 ACADEMY MGMT. J. 441 (1998).

<sup>42</sup> Ibarra at 676 (discussing how African-Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are underrepresented in private-sector managerial positions).

<sup>43</sup> Stackman & Pinder at 45.

Similarly, important differences appear to exist between the networks of minorities and Caucasians. Research suggests that the racial composition of U.S. work environments causes the networks of minorities and Caucasians to diverge.<sup>44</sup> The network of an African-American not only includes linkages to the dominant Caucasian culture, but also has separate linkages to the African-American community. This different structural context, known as biculturalism, has three important consequences. First, minority managers tend to have a much smaller set of minority peers with whom to have informal interaction. In contrast to Caucasian managers, minority managers will have the majority of their informal encounters with dissimilar others. Second, cross-race relationships tend to be weaker than same-race ties due to a lack of homiphily, potentially leading to the segregation of informal networks.<sup>45</sup> Research has documented that Caucasian mentors tend to identify less positively with African-American protégés due to racial differences.<sup>46</sup> Third, weaker cross-race relationships, coupled with non-overlapping social circles outside the workplace, may produce non-overlapping social and work-related circles in the workplace.<sup>47</sup> In fact, studies suggest that minority career advancement may relate to their ability to incorporate Caucasians into their personal networks.<sup>48</sup> For these reasons, the networks of minorities tend to differ along numerous dimensions from Caucasian networks.

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<sup>44</sup> *Id.* at 46.

<sup>45</sup> Mehra et al. at 441-452.

<sup>46</sup> Ibarra at 673-703.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.* at 676.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.* at 673-703.

### *C. Career paths*

Similar to the gap in the commentary on the JD/MBA experience, the career paths of JD/MBA graduates have received scant attention in the academic literature. However, a growing body of literature has focused on post-law school career paths and provides an interesting lens through which to evaluate the career choices of JD/MBAs. Not surprisingly, the vast majority of law school students enter the legal profession upon graduation. Less obvious is the insight that most law school graduates enter practice in the private sector – a finding that has been validated across numerous studies using different methodologies and student populations.<sup>49</sup> This private sector trend seems to have become more pronounced over the past several decades. For instance, one study documents that while 72 percent of law school students were employed in the private sector in 1980, this proportion had increased to over 76 percent in 1991.<sup>50</sup>

Studies have further shown that the career paths and aspirations of law students vary meaningfully by gender, race, and age. First, the legal career paths of women often differ from those of men. One component of this gender gap is found in public sector legal work, where research indicates that women are more likely than men to have public sector employment.<sup>51</sup> Kornhauser and Revesz document that females were three times more likely to work in public interest jobs in 1980.<sup>52</sup> While this gender gap decreased over the course of the 1980s, women

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<sup>49</sup> See James R. P. Ogloff et al., *More than “Learning to Think Like a Lawyer:” The Empirical Research on Legal Education* 34 CREIGHTON L. REV. 73, 205-07 (2000) citing Paul W. Mattessich & Cheryl W. Heilman, *The Career Paths of Minnesota Law School Graduates: Does Gender Make a Difference?*, 9 LAW & INEQ. J. 59 (1990); Rita J. Simon et al., *Have There Been Significant Changes in the Career Aspirations and Occupational Choices of Law School Graduates in the 1960’s*, 8 L. & SOCIETY 95 (1973); Francis K. Zemans & Victor G. Rosenblum, *The Making of a Public Profession* (American Bar Foundation, ed. 1981).

<sup>50</sup> See Lewis A. Kornhauser & Richard Revesz, *Legal Education and Entry into the Legal Profession: The Role of Race, Gender and Educational Debt*, 70 N.Y.U. L. REV. 829, 839 (1995) citing Barbara A. Curran & Clara N. Carson, *The Lawyer Statistical Report: The U.S. Legal Profession in the 1990s* (1994).

<sup>51</sup> Kornhauser & Revesz at 850.

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

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still held twice as many public service jobs as men in 1991.<sup>53</sup> This effect may partially be explained by the finding that women enter law school with different career aspirations than men. For example, Guinier et al. observed that women entering law school at the University of Pennsylvania were 3.5 times more likely to believe they wanted to practice in the public sector than their male classmates.<sup>54</sup>

Significant differences in the career paths of minority law students also exist. Similar to the gender gap in public sector employment, Spanhel and Prince document that African-Americans in Texas are less likely to work in private practice than Caucasians.<sup>55</sup> In addition, African-American and Hispanic lawyers were nearly twice as likely to hold government legal jobs.<sup>56</sup> A 1996 National Association for Law Placement (“NALP”) survey suggests that this finding is not limited geographically to Texas.<sup>57</sup> However, the explanations on why race seems to influence legal career paths are complex. Rationales in the academic commentary include that institutional factors help explain the underrepresentation of minorities, including challenges in the hiring process and promotion to partnership.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Id.*

<sup>54</sup> See Guinier et al. at 39. This finding is further reinforced by other studies. See Robert Granfield, *Making Elite Lawyers: Visions of Law at Harvard and Beyond*, 3 (Routledge ed., 1992) (including the insights of a female student who, although believing that she was destined for a career as a social activist during her 2L year, ultimately decided that she was “going to Wall Street to do commercial transactions and there is nothing better I would like to do”); Robert Stevens, *Law Schools and Law Students*, 59 VA. L. REV. 551 (1973) (demonstrating that law student career expectations were quite different in the 1960s) cited in Guinier et al. at n 34.

<sup>55</sup> While 68 percent of Caucasian lawyers in Texas were in private practice in 1998, only 55 percent of African-American lawyers held private sector legal jobs. In addition, 23 percent of African-American lawyers and 19 percent of Hispanic lawyers held public sector jobs (versus 10 percent of Caucasian attorneys). See Cynthia L. Spanhel & Janis A. Prince, *State Bar of Texas Department of Research & Analysis, Annual Report on the Status of Racial/Ethnic Minorities in the State Bar of Texas (1998-99)* at 4.

<sup>56</sup> *Id.*

<sup>57</sup> See National Association for Law Placement, *Selected Class of 1996 ERSS findings (1997)* at 69.

<sup>58</sup> Much excellent literature exists exploring a range of issues that impact the career paths of African-Americans and other minority groups. See, e.g., David B. Wilkins & G. Mitu Gulati, *Why Are There So Few Black Lawyers in Corporate Law Firms? An Institutional Analysis*, 84 CALIF. L. REV. 493 (1996) (describing institutional factors that play a role in the underrepresentation of minorities); David B. Wilkins, *Partners Without Power? A Preliminary Look at Black Partners in Corporate Law Firms*, 2 J. INST. FOR STUDY LEGAL ETHICS 15, 16-18 (1999) (offering factors that help explain why minority partners are more likely to have less powerful roles in the internal political dynamics of law firms); Alex M. Johnson Jr., *The Underrepresentation of Minorities in the Legal Profession: A*

While early research into the career choices of law students tends to center on initial employment decision, a new focus on career paths has emerged in the more recent literature. As manifested by the dramatic rates of law firm associate attrition,<sup>59</sup> the notion that a graduate of law school will work their entire career for one firm seems to be one of a bygone era. NALP reports that over 25 percent of associates leave a law firm within two years after joining, and the majority of entering associates have left by the end of their fourth year.<sup>60</sup> This attrition rate is even more pronounced among female and minority associates. Nearly one-third of female and minority associates leave their first law firm job within two years, and a majority departs by the end of year three.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, a pattern has emerged where law school graduates now switch jobs several times over the course of a “boundaryless career.”<sup>62</sup> This trend has profound implications on the initial and subsequent employment choices of graduating law students.<sup>63</sup>

Consistent with the legal literature, the HBS Alumni Study portrays how the careers of HBS graduates evolve. A majority of HBS graduates take their first graduate jobs in the finance or consulting industries.<sup>64</sup> However, like law graduates, HBS alumni tend to switch from their initial positions relatively quickly, and on average are employed by 3.6 different companies over

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*Critical Race Theorist's Perspective*, 95 MICH. L. REV. 1005 (1997) (noting that the widespread rhetoric of equality in the legal profession is not reflected in law firm hiring practices); Linda E. Davila, *The Underrepresentation of Hispanic Attorneys in Corporate Law Firms*, 39 STAN. L. REV. 1403 (1987) (observing that Hispanic attorneys face unique challenges).

<sup>59</sup> See National Association for Law Placement, *Keeping the Keepers: Strategies for Associate Retention in Times of Attrition* 54-55 (1998).

<sup>60</sup> *Id.*

<sup>61</sup> See National Association for Law Placement, *Keeping the Keepers: Strategies for Associate Retention in Times of Attrition* 54-55 (1998).

<sup>62</sup> The term “boundaryless career” derives from the research of David Thomas and Monica Higgins. They observe that “multiple developmental relationships, including extrafirm relations, will be necessary to provide the kinds of...instrumental career support that will enable individuals in today’s environment to...navigate their own careers.” See David Thomas & Monica Higgins, *The Boundaryless Career: A New Employment Principle for a New Organizational Era* 269 (Michael B. Arthur, ed. 1996).

<sup>63</sup> See Thomas & Higgins at 277-78.

<sup>64</sup> HBS Alumni Study at 35.

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the course of their careers.<sup>65</sup> As a group, HBS alumni tend to be quite entrepreneurial. Over half of HBS graduates found or co-founded a company at some point during their careers,<sup>66</sup> and over 40 percent work for companies with fewer than 100 employees.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, the HBS Alumni Study suggests that compensation may vary substantially by gender. For instance, while a majority of men who graduate HBS from 1983-1993 earn over \$300,000, only 23 percent of female graduates during that time period earn similar salaries.<sup>68</sup>

Finally, a report by the Northwestern University JD/MBA Association provides insight into the careers of Northwestern JD/MBAs. According to this report, a majority (54%) of Northwestern JD/MBAs work in the legal profession.<sup>69</sup> While this study provides a basic overview of the Northwestern JD/MBA alumni population, it seems to have significant limitations for our purposes for several reasons. First, institutional specific differences between Northwestern and Harvard may limit the applicability of comparisons. For instance, 42 percent of Northwestern JD/MBA alumni reside in Illinois (the state in which Northwestern University is located).<sup>70</sup> In contrast, only 17 percent of Harvard JD/MBA graduates reside in Massachusetts.<sup>71</sup> Second, the Northwestern report sheds no light into career *paths*, but instead only provides information on current employment. Recognizing these limitations, the Northwestern data nonetheless provides potentially valuable insights into how JD/MBAs choose between and navigate the legal and business professions.

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<sup>65</sup> *Id.* at 33.

<sup>66</sup> *Id.* at 27.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>68</sup> *Id.* at 24.

<sup>69</sup> Northwestern Report at 10.

<sup>70</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>71</sup> Based on authors' analysis of Harvard Law School Association records.

#### **IV. Survey results**

This section presents and discusses our findings from the survey of JD/MBA alumni. It is divided into three subsections. First, it discusses the respective graduate school experiences and relationships to each school. Second, it examines the perceptions of JD/MBA alumni regarding their social networks. Finally, it analyzes the career paths of JD/MBAs.

##### *A. HLS and HBS experiences and relationships*

“Given the small scale of the JD/MBA program relative to the schools, I believe both schools did a good job of coordinating and handling the unique nature of the program.”

-- JD/MBA alumnus who graduated in the mid-1990s

“HBS and HLS are mirror images of one another. An HBS classroom has a conductor eliciting performances from the student body while law school students listen to a virtuoso performance by a professor. One is participatory; one is not. One is where students are engaged and the other is not.”

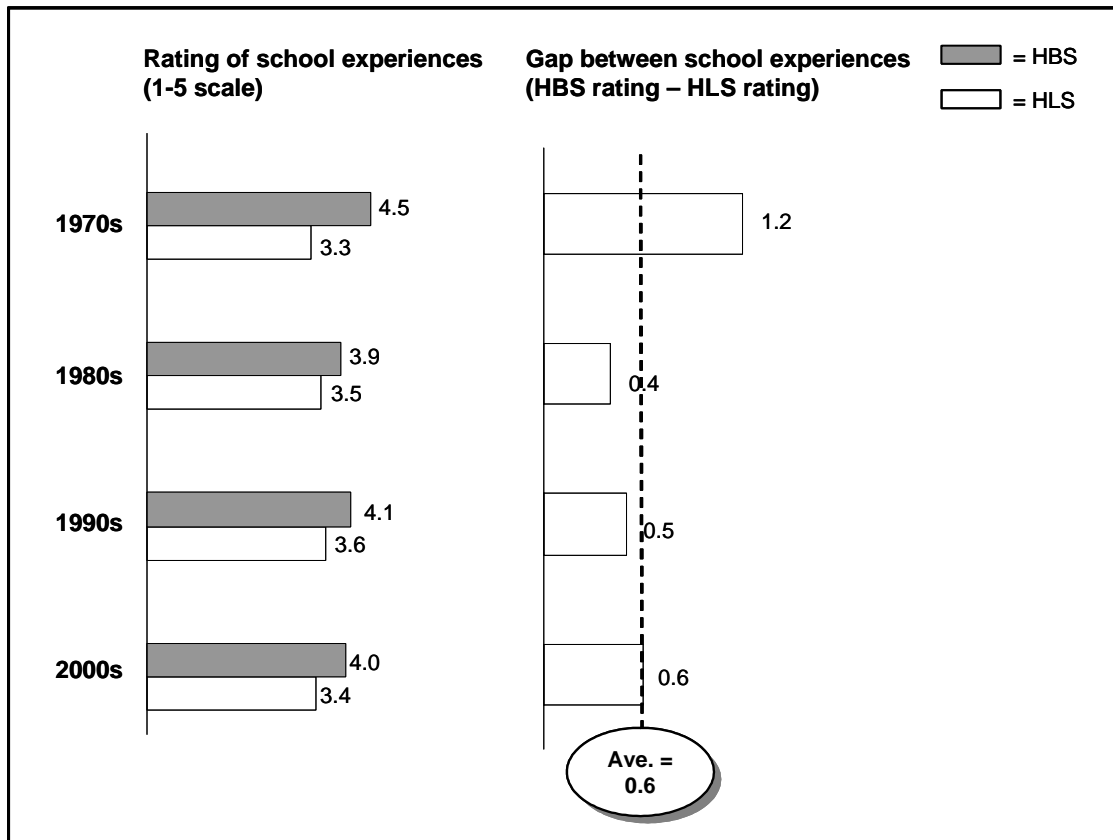
-- JD/MBA alumnus who graduated in the mid-1990s

As evidenced by the two above quotes, alumni can have very different experiences in the JD/MBA program. While some alumni fondly relate anecdotes of memorable experiences at – and ongoing relationships with – both HBS and HLS, others recount markedly different stories. This section presents the survey’s findings on the ways in which the experiences and ongoing relationships with HBS and HLS differ for JD/MBAs. After first analyzing the overall experience and relationship trends, it then explores how these results may differ across demographic subgroups of the JD/MBA alumni population.

Although individual experiences vary widely, the JD/MBA alumni survey suggests a striking overall result. On the whole, JD/MBAs seem to prefer the HBS experience to the HLS experience. Survey respondents report that, on average, they had a more positive experience at HBS, have a more positive attitude towards HBS, have more positive memories of HBS, stay in closer contact with HBS, and contribute more financially to HBS than HLS.

The experiences of the JD/MBA alumni at HBS and HLS provide a logical starting point to analyze how they differently perceive each school. **Figure 2** reveals that when alumni rate their HBS and HLS experiences, a substantial differential between the schools emerges.

**Figure 2: HLS and HBS Experience Ratings**



Across decades, JD/MBA alumni seem to prefer the experience at HBS to HLS – a statistically significant difference that was particularly pronounced in the 1970s. Nonetheless, JD/MBAs report that the dual degree was “worth the investment.”<sup>72</sup>

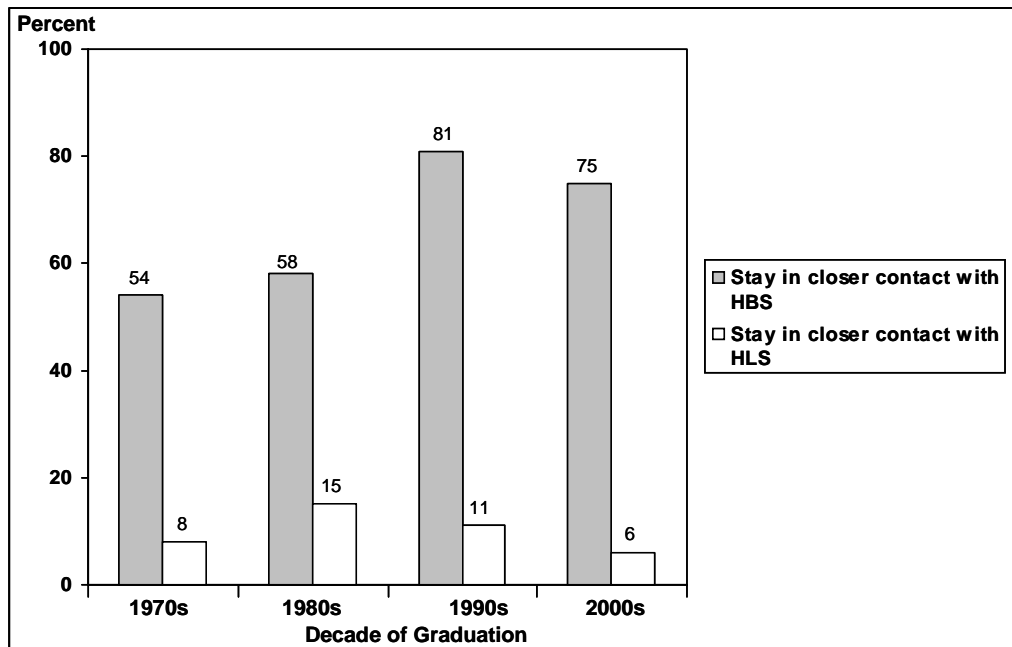
In light of the different responses about the HBS and HLS experience, it is not surprising that, on average, respondents also report more favorable attitudes towards and memories of HBS than HLS. Similar to the experience findings, JD/MBA alumni on average rate their attitude

<sup>72</sup> The average rating on whether the JD/MBA was “worth the investment” was 4.3 (on a 1-5 scale). This result was similar across decade of graduations and demographic subgroups.

towards HBS a 4.1 (on a 5-point scale) versus an average 3.4 rating for HLS. Moreover, 66 percent of respondents claim to have more positive memories of HBS.<sup>73</sup>

These experiences, attitudes, and memories seem to impact the relationships of JD/MBA alumni with each school. **Figure 3** reveals that, on average, JD/MBA alumni stay in closer contact with HBS than HLS, and that this trend has increased over time.

**Figure 3: School Contact by Decade**<sup>74</sup>



Across decades, the majority of respondents reported staying in closer contact with HBS than HLS. This statistically significant difference has grown particularly pronounced with more recent alumni; in the 1990s and 2000s, over 75 percent of respondents report staying in closer contact with HBS.

Not only do alumni stay in closer contact with HBS, but they also appear to contribute

<sup>73</sup> In fact, only 15 percent of respondents had more positive memories of HLS. The remaining 19 percent did not differentiate between the two schools.

<sup>74</sup> In Figure 2, the proportion of respondents reporting that they stay in closer contact with HLS and HBS in each decade does not total to 100 percent because some respondents reported staying in identical contact with both schools.

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more financially to the business school than the law school. Although 45 percent of JD/MBA alumni report identical lifetime financial contributions to both institutions, 40 percent report that they donate more to HBS than HLS. However, financial contributions may differ by gender and minority status. A majority (64 percent) of women respondents do not differentiate between the schools in terms of financial contributions while the majority of males (68 percent) donate more to one school than the other. While overall 38 percent of minority respondents report making greater lifetime contributions to HBS than HLS, minorities simultaneously seem more likely to give more to HLS than HBS. Twenty-five percent of minority respondents favored HLS in giving patterns as opposed to just 12 percent of Caucasian respondents.

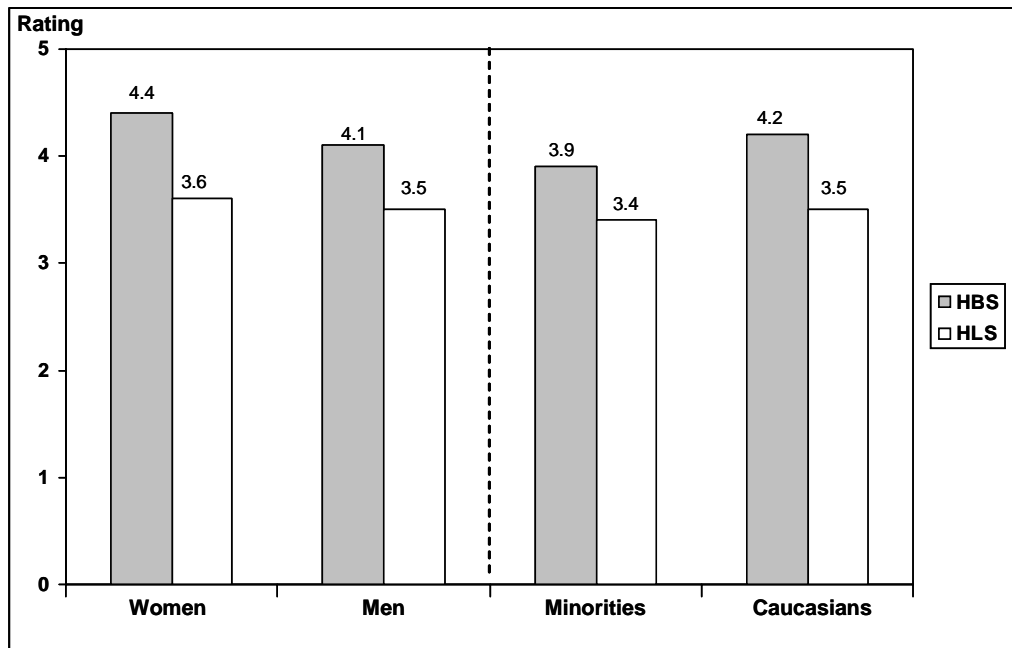
In addition to finding general differences in how Harvard JD/MBAs experienced and relate to HBS and HLS, the survey also indicates that the experiences and attitudes of female and minority JD/MBA alumni may differ from those of Caucasian males. While our female and minority respondent samples are too small to draw any statistically significant conclusions, the data nonetheless raises interesting issues and questions.<sup>75</sup>

**Figure 4** demonstrates that regardless of gender or minority status, JD/MBA alumni prefer the HBS to the HLS experience.

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<sup>75</sup> Eighteen women (and 92 men) responded to the survey. Twenty-eight minorities (and 82 Caucasians) responded to the survey.

**Figure 4: Women and Minority JD/MBA Experiences**



Yet, while the results in **Figure 3** are consistent with the notion that JD/MBA alumni prefer the HBS experience, they also may portray a more complicated story. They suggest that the experiences of subgroups at HBS may have more variation. While women rate the HBS experience a 4.4, minorities rate it a 3.9. On the other hand, the HLS experience ratings fluctuate more narrowly between 3.4 and 3.6, suggesting that somewhat less variability may exist in the HLS experience for different demographic subgroups.

Moreover, although JD/MBA alumni seem to have worse experiences at HLS, substantial variation seems to exist in how closely women and minorities stay in contact with HLS after graduation. Sixty-eight percent of all respondents report staying in closer contact with HBS than HLS, and this general result holds for women (61 percent) and minority (61 percent) respondents. However, while minorities appear more likely than Caucasians to stay in closer contact with HLS than HBS (18 vs. 8 percent), women seem less likely than males to stay in closer contact with HLS (0 vs. 12 percent). Although none of these results are statistically

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significant, we found them directionally interesting, particularly in light of the responses indicating that female JD/MBA graduates may be more likely than male graduates to take first jobs and hold current jobs in the legal profession.<sup>76</sup>

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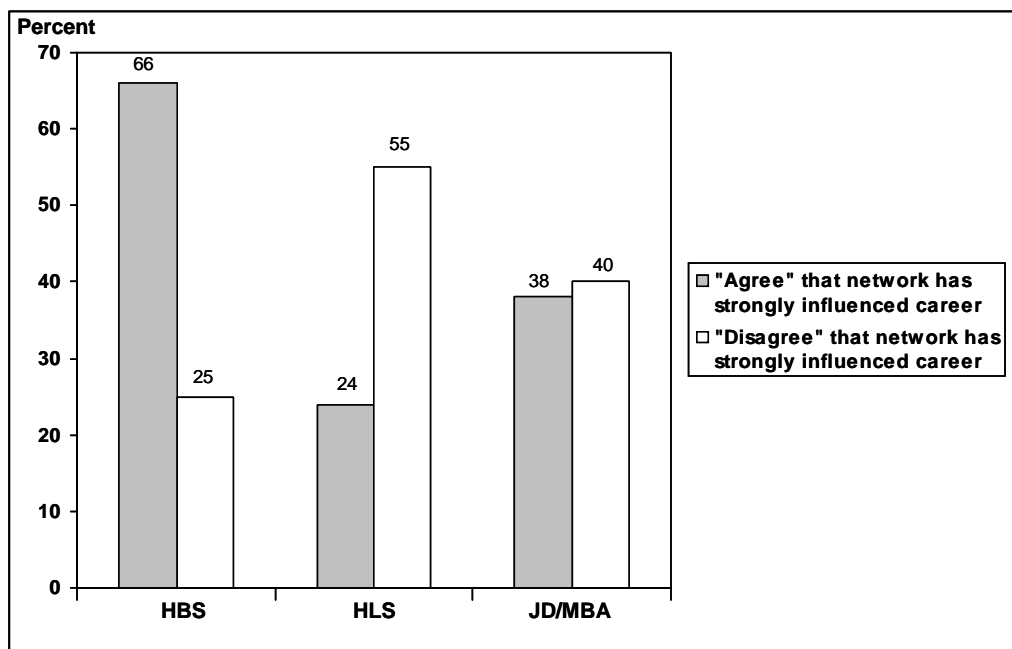
<sup>76</sup> See discussion, *infra*, at 31-36.

*B. Networks*

Each graduate of the Harvard JD/MBA program becomes a member of three networks: the HBS network, the HLS network, and the network of fellow JD/MBA alumni. In our survey of JD/MBA alumni, we sought to test whether these various networks were perceived as equal. Consistent with the findings on the experiences and relationships to HBS and HLS, the survey results suggest that profound differences exist in how JD/MBAs perceive these three networks. Across all demographics, individuals report that HBS offers the strongest network.

**Figure 5** reveals that, on average, JD/MBA alumni strongly perceive that the HBS network has the greatest influence on their careers.

**Figure 5: Network Impacts**

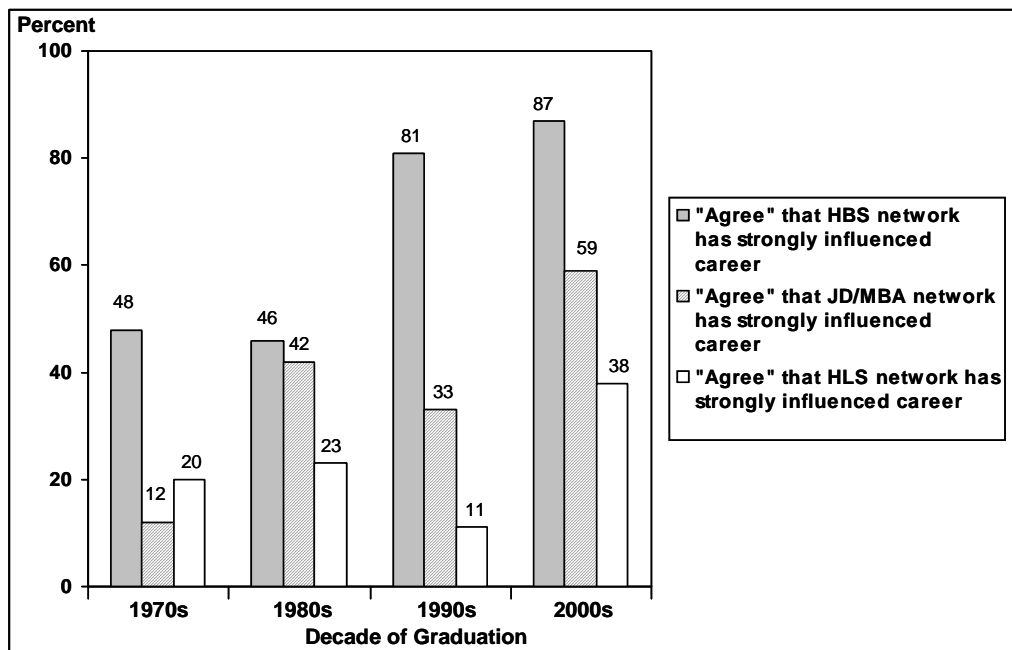


**Figure 5** suggests that the perceived impact of the HBS and HLS networks are nearly mirror images of one another. While 66 percent of survey respondents agree with the statement that the HBS network has strongly influenced their careers, only 24 percent of respondents would answer

similarly about the HLS network.<sup>77</sup> In fact, a majority of JD/MBA alumni actively disagree with the statement that the HLS network has had a strong influence on their career. The impact of the JD/MBA network itself appears to lie somewhere between the HBS and HLS networks with approximately the same proportion of respondents agreeing and disagreeing with the notion that it has strongly influenced their careers.

With this overall understanding of how JD/MBA alumni perceive the three networks, it is next useful to examine how these perceptions have evolved over time. **Figure 6** suggests that the perceived impact of these networks appears to have changed over the past three decades.

**Figure 6: Network Impacts by Decade**



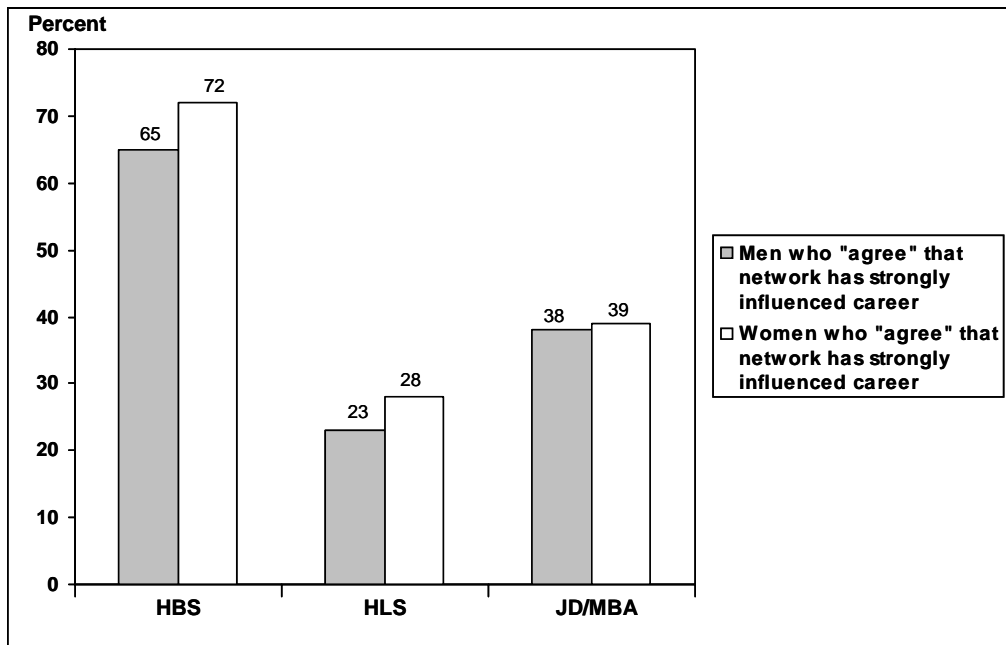
Across all decades of graduation, the HBS network has on average had the greatest career impact for JD/MBA alumni. But the importance of the HBS network increased during the 1990s and 2000s for JD/MBA alumni, with over 80 percent of respondents in both decades agreeing that the

<sup>77</sup> Respondents were given the option to strongly agree, slightly agree, be neutral, slightly disagree, and strongly disagree. For purposes of this analysis, “agreement” refers to slight or strong and “disagreement” refers to slight or strong.

HBS network has strongly influenced their careers. While the HLS and JD/MBA networks were not perceived to have a similar career impact in the 1990s, both of those networks appear to have become relatively more important for 2000s graduates.

Interestingly, the ranking and perceived strength of these networks appears not to vary substantially by gender as demonstrated in **Figure 7**.

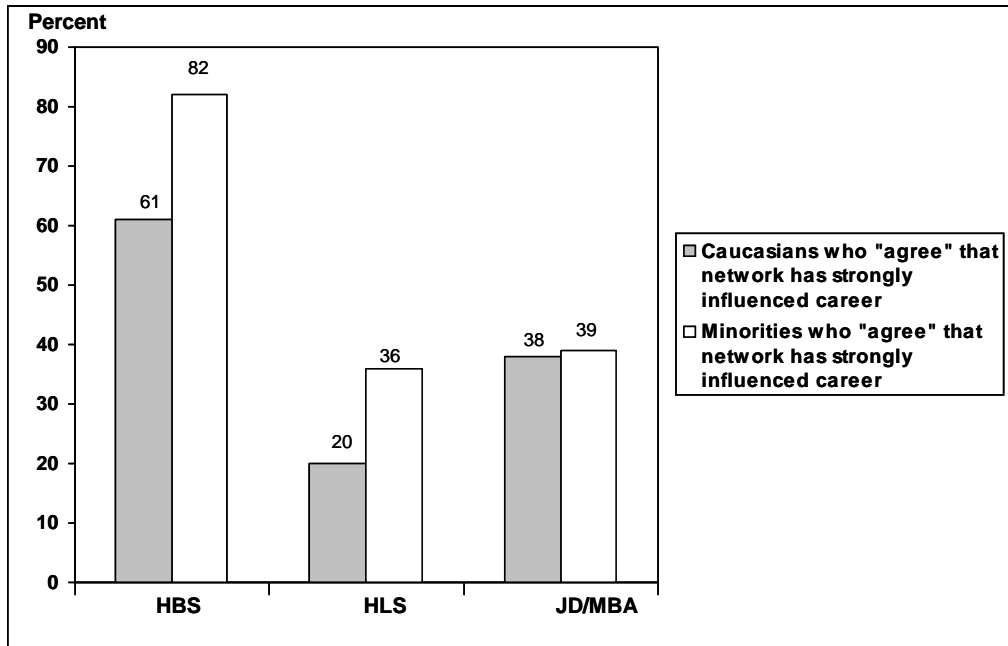
**Figure 7: Network Impacts by Gender**



Like the overall JD/MBA alumni population, women perceive that the HBS network has had the strongest influence on their careers. While not a statistically significant finding, the proportion of female respondents agreeing that each of the three networks has impacted their careers seems similar to the proportion of male respondents.

However, minorities on average appear to perceive stronger networks at both HBS and HLS as shown in **Figure 8**.

**Figure 8: Network Impacts by Minority Status**



Like the general JD/MBA alumni respondent pool, minorities perceive that the HBS network was the strongest.<sup>78</sup> However, a substantially higher proportion of minorities than Caucasians respond that the HBS and HLS networks had strongly impacted their careers. Unlike the HBS and HLS networks, the JD/MBA network appears to have similar perceived impacts on the careers of minorities and Caucasians.

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<sup>78</sup> It is important to note that this result is not statistically significant.

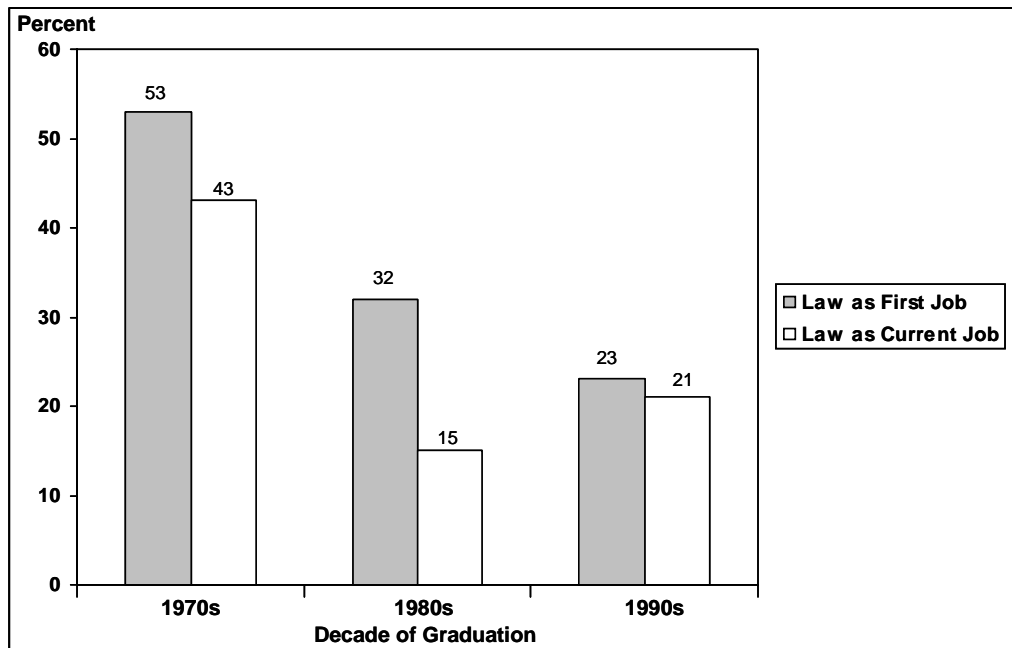
### C. Career Paths

Our survey provides numerous insights about the career paths of Harvard JD/MBAs. It reveals that a notable shift has occurred from the 1970s to today in the types of jobs that JD/MBAs pursue after graduation. In addition, it suggests that women and minorities may pursue quite different career paths than Caucasian male JD/MBA graduates. The first part of this section outlines the survey results for the career paths of JD/MBA alumni as a whole. The second part then narrows the focus to examine how the career paths of female and minority graduates may differ from those of Caucasian males.

#### 1. General evolution of JD/MBA career paths

Over the past three decades, an important shift appears to have occurred in the career paths of JD/MBA alumni. During the 1970s, the majority of JD/MBAs took first jobs in law – rather than business – as revealed in **Figure 9**.<sup>79</sup>

**Figure 9: Jobs by Decade**



<sup>79</sup> Harvard Law School Association records provide information on the first jobs of 218 JD/MBAs and on the current jobs of 270 JD/MBAs.

As **Figure 9** evidences, the trend of JD/MBAs entering the legal profession has shifted. As opposed to the 45 percent of JD/MBA graduates during the 1970s, over 75 percent of JD/MBA graduates took first jobs in business in the 1990s.<sup>80</sup> In addition, the resumes provided by survey respondents indicate that over 90 percent of JD/MBAs took first jobs in business in the 2000s. Moreover, to the extent that graduates begin careers in legal jobs, they are now likely at some point to transition to the business world. Resumes of survey respondents indicate that although over 30 percent of 1980s graduates entered the legal profession for their first job, only 13 percent remain in law for their current job. Similarly, 24 percent of graduates in the 1990s took first jobs in law, but a mere 6 percent remain in the legal profession for their current job. It is therefore unsurprising that this shift in career paths has been accompanied by a growing perception that HBS has more impact on career paths than HLS. While 54 percent of 1970s graduates perceived that HLS had a greater impact, 63 percent perceive that HBS has a greater impact today.

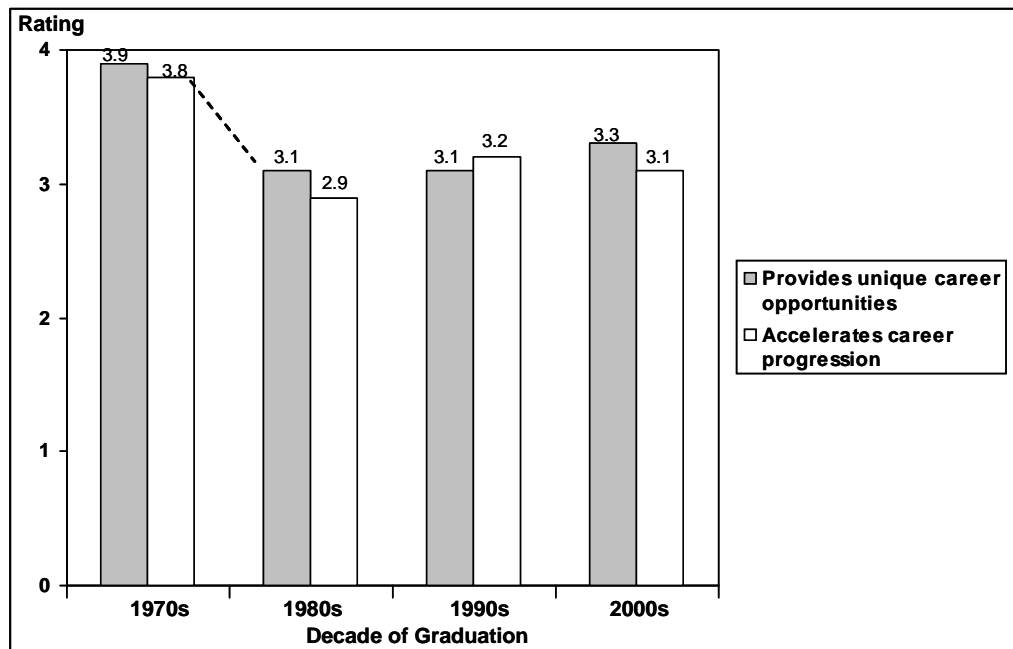
Simultaneously, this transformation in the career paths of JD/MBA graduates from law and business has been accompanied by a marked increase in the professional experience that students have prior to entering the JD/MBA program. While a majority of respondents who graduated in the 1970s and 1980s entered the program without prior work experience, virtually no JD/MBAs now enter the program straight from college. The average interim experience between graduating college and entering the JD/MBA program increased from 0.7 years in the 1970s and 1980s to 2.5 years in the 2000s.

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<sup>80</sup> It is worth noting that although a smaller subset ( $n = 72$ ) of the overall survey respondent pool provided resumes, they reveal a trend directionally consistent with the Harvard Law School Association data. Similar to the Harvard Law School Association data, the resumes indicate that 65 percent of JD/MBAs took first jobs in business in the 1970s, 35 percent in the 1980s, and 24 percent in the 1990s. In greater contrast to the Harvard Law School Association data, the resumes reveal that 47 percent of JD/MBAs who graduated in the 1970s have current jobs in business as opposed to 13 percent of 1980s graduates and 6 percent of 1990s graduates.

As more JD/MBAs have entered the business world upon graduation, there has on average been a corresponding decline in the belief that a JD/MBA degree provides unique career opportunities and accelerates a graduate's career progression as revealed in **Figure 10**.

**Figure 10: Career Opportunities by Decade**



While graduates in the 1970s rate the unique career opportunities and career acceleration as a 3.9 and 3.8 on a scale of 1-5, respectively, graduates in subsequent decades provide notably lower scores. The decline in survey scores may indicate that a JD/MBA degree provides more unique career opportunities and accelerated career progression in the legal profession (entered by the majority of 1970s graduates) than the business world (entered by the majority of today's graduates).

Indeed, the survey suggests that graduates who took a first job in the legal profession perceive that the JD/MBA degree provides more unique career opportunities, acceleration of career progression, and use of both degrees than business graduates. Respondents whose first job was in law rated the uniqueness of career opportunities as a 4.1, on a scale of 1-5, versus 3.1

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for those whose first job was in business.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, they offered higher ratings for the acceleration of career progression (3.8 versus 2.9) and the usefulness of both degrees (4.5 versus 3.8).

The survey further indicates that students that enter graduate school in the same year that they graduate from college are more likely to go into law. Fifty percent of such students entered legal careers while only 27 percent of students with work experience entered the legal profession.

## *2. Differences in career paths of female and minority JD/MBAs*

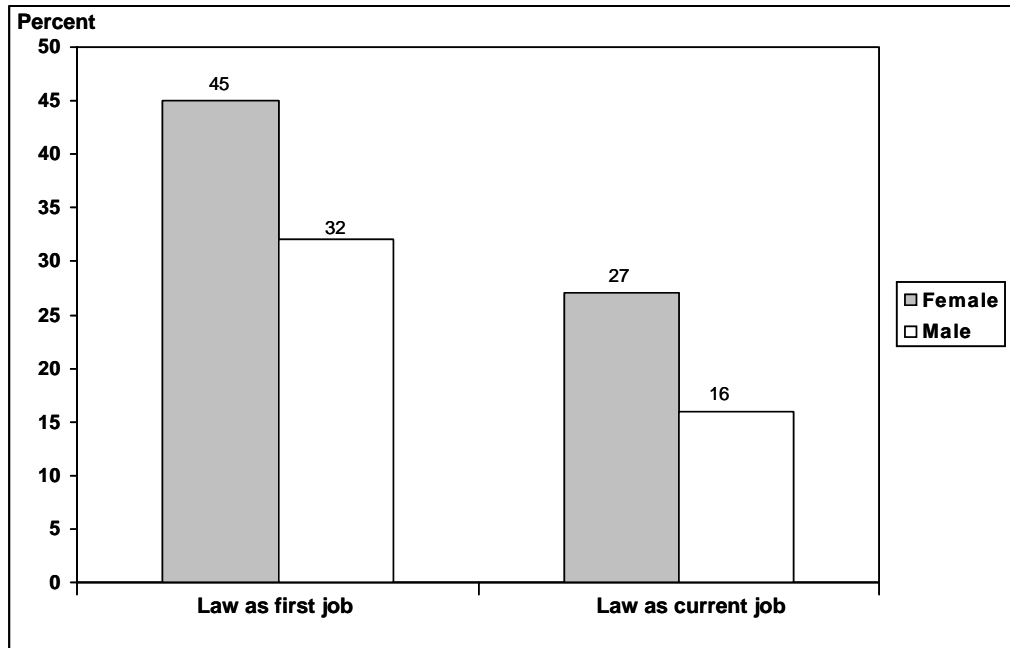
In addition to finding intertemporal differences in the career paths of Harvard JD/MBAs, our research also suggests that the career paths of female and minority JD/MBA graduates may differ from those of Caucasian males. While our female and minority respondent samples are too small to draw any statistically significant conclusions, the data nonetheless offers interesting insights along numerous dimensions.<sup>82</sup> First, female JD/MBAs seem more likely to take first jobs in law and ultimately stay in the legal profession than males as demonstrated in **Figure 11**.

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<sup>81</sup> The results in this paragraph are based on analysis of resumes and survey responses (n = 72).

<sup>82</sup> Career data was based on analyzing resumes provided by survey respondents and career data of the Harvard Law School Association. Therefore, these responses comprise a subset (smaller sample) of the overall survey responses. Such data was only available for 11 female and 12 minority respondents.

**Figure 11: Jobs by Gender**



Similar to this gender differential, minorities appear more likely than Caucasians to take first jobs in law and remain in the legal profession. Forty-two percent of minority respondents pursued a legal path directly after graduation versus 33 percent of Caucasian graduates. In addition, 25 percent of minority respondents work in legal jobs versus 18 percent of Caucasian respondents.<sup>83</sup> Second, both females and minorities appear more likely to have non-linear career trajectories where they take positions in both the legal and business worlds.<sup>84</sup> Forty-five percent of female respondents took non-linear career paths as opposed to 25 percent of males, and 33 percent of minority respondents took such paths versus 27 percent of Caucasians.

Finally, differences may exist in how women and minorities perceive the value of the JD/MBA degree and in the sources that influence their career paths. Women appear to perceive a more favorable employer reaction to the JD/MBA degree than men, rating the reaction 4.5 versus a 4.1 rating by men. Minorities are more likely to perceive unique career opportunities

<sup>83</sup> The results in this and the following paragraph are based on analyzing resumes and survey responses (n = 72).

<sup>84</sup> A non-linear career trajectory is defined as one that includes positions both in the legal and business professions.

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(3.6 versus 3.3 for whites) and career acceleration (3.5 v. 3.2 for whites) from the JD/MBA degree.

## V. Discussion

The survey results are striking. On average, JD/MBA alumni prefer the HBS experience and have stronger ongoing relationships with the business school. They perceive more value in the HBS network, and today's JD/MBA graduates are more likely to pursue business than legal career paths. Drawing on a series of in-depth interviews with JD/MBA alumni, this section examines potential explanations for the survey findings and analyzes the insights that they may offer into the JD/MBA experience and program. Consistent with the presentation of the survey results, the discussion is divided into three parts on the experience and relationships to HBS and HLS, networks, and career paths of JD/MBA alumni.

### *A. HLS and HBS experiences and relationships*

The survey findings suggest that important differences exist in how JD/MBAs experience and relate to HBS and HLS. Drawing on our interviews with JD/MBA alumni, this section analyzes the dimensions along which the HBS and HLS experiences differ. In the process, it outlines several potential explanations for the survey results and ways potentially to improve the JD/MBA experience.

HBS and HLS differ in several important ways and these divergences may help explain why JD/MBA students prefer the HBS experience. First, numerous interviewees explain that the HBS culture provides a better general environment than HLS. As a JD/MBA alumnus who graduated in the 1990s explains, "My view is that the business school has a better culture. At HLS, people say it sucks for all three years and it's accepted. I'd equate HBS to my Stanford undergraduate experience. There's a positive culture and you feel lucky to be there." To the extent that cultural distinctions between HBS and HLS are a factor in the experiences differential, it is simultaneously important to note that HLS may currently be undergoing a

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cultural transformation. As a recent African-American female graduate notes, “I didn’t like the community in 2000 because it was soulless and didn’t get people involved to build community...But that seems to have changed with Dean Kagan and the smaller sections...At the business school the classes were so-so but it was all about the community.” Thus, interviewees suggest that the different cultures of HBS and HLS may help explain the experiences of JD/MBA alumni, but also that the cultures of the two schools may be converging as HLS becomes more student-centric.

Second, JD/MBA alumni point to differences in the compositions of the student bodies that can affect the JD/MBA experience. Several interviewees criticize the HLS student body as immature and lacking real world experience. As a graduate of the JD/MBA program from the 1970s notes, “To be candid, I liked attending the business school better than the law school. At the business school my colleagues were my age (26) or older...they had already done some interesting things. I felt at ease with them and the experience was better. A great deal of the experience is the time you spend with students.” This same interviewee had a much different experience at HLS. He states, “The law school was completely different...two-thirds of the class was straight from undergrad and were primarily Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Young, arrogant, and privileged kids attended law school...the experience at the law school was horrible.” On the other hand, a JD/MBA alumnus from the 1990s based his preference for HLS on its student body. He explains, “I thought the business school was like a big cocktail party and it was fun. But as a serious school it didn’t make the grade. The law school was completely different. The level of intellectual power was better at the law school and the people were more stimulating.” While these two interviewees experienced HBS and HLS quite differently, the central theme of their comments is telling. While both HBS and HLS have similarly talented applicant pools,

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their different student bodies which can greatly impact how a JD/MBA experiences the two schools.

Third, JD/MBA alumni note differences in the schools' faculties and pedagogical approaches impacted their experiences. It has long been observed that law school and business schools generally – and HLS and HBS specifically – adopt quite distinct pedagogical approaches. As Professor Vagts noted in 1977, “For all the superficial similarities, a law school and business school are very different institutions coping with very different student bodies to whom they are trying to teach very different skills or bodies of subject matter.”<sup>85</sup> For these reasons, while “each purports to operate chiefly by the case method,” the pedagogical techniques at HBS and HLS differ along numerous dimensions.<sup>86</sup>

Our interviewees reflect that these observations on pedagogical differences from the 1970s have remained salient over the course of subsequent decades. For instance, an alumnus from the early 1990s passionately criticizes the HLS pedagogy in explaining why he had a better experience at HBS. He states, “HLS has a pedagogical approach of ‘hide the ball.’ ...If you were to construct the most difficult, challenging, alienating educational experience possible, it would look like HLS.” However, that alumnus' perspective is far from universal. For example, an alumnus who graduated in the late 1990s states why he preferred the HLS faculty: “The law school professors were much stronger than HBS professors. They are extremely smart and impressive... I found that fabulous even though it's harder to have a conversation with them. The best and brightest in law are Supreme Court [Justices] or professors. The best and brightest in business are out running companies.” Pedagogical differences, therefore, can help explain differences in the experiences of JD/MBA alumni. To the extent that a given JD/MBA student is

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<sup>85</sup> Detlev F. Vagts, *The “Other” Case Method: Education for Counting House and Court House Compared*, 28 J. LEGAL EDUC. 403, 420 (1977).

<sup>86</sup> Vagts at 403.

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more frustrated than impressed with the classroom environment at HLS, it may help explain why he or she will prefer the HBS experience.

Finally, JD/MBA alumni emphasize that the campus infrastructure and amenities at HBS far surpass the facilities at HLS. A male graduate from the early 2000s contends that the differences in the campus facilities reflect that HBS cares more about its students than HLS. He states, “Anyone can walk across the river and feel the different experience at each school. I know HLS spent a lot of time and money improving the law library, but students also spend a considerable time at the Hark. HBS is more focused on the student and takes the time to do continuous improvements and fixes any problems. The law school is just a bunch of old white men that do not care about the students and are in no rush to make changes.” While HLS has undertaken major renovations since this student’s graduation, his perspective nonetheless seems important. Particularly to JD/MBA students who attend both schools, differences in campus facilities may help reinforce impressions that HBS is a more student-orientated environment.

In addition to providing potential explanations for why JD/MBAs appear to prefer the HBS experience, the interviews also shed insights into why the experiences of women and minorities may differ. Consistent with the results of Neufeld’s study on women’s experiences at HLS,<sup>87</sup> female interviewees particularly stress the challenges faced by female students at HLS. As one African-American female graduate comments, “I thought there was male/female discrimination at HLS. Men felt more comfortable volunteering and doing things with professors which is bad since we often discussed some controversial issues. I didn’t like the monolithic perspectives given on some controversial topics as a result of only one professor’s or student’s view.” Another female alumnus commented on her experience at HLS and HBS states, “As a 22 year-old I didn’t need all the things that HBS provided. But the law school’s general

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<sup>87</sup> See Neufeld study, *supra*, at 10-11.

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negativity spread to the kids that made the atmosphere bad overall. The students were smart but the school became stressful even though Harvard Law itself wasn't stressful so the experience was not necessary. The administration is what makes HLS bad and that rubs off onto the students which I just don't think is necessary." These interviewees suggest that some of the well-documented gender differences in the law school experience may also help explain why female JD/MBA alumni prefer HBS.

In addition, our interviews provide potential explanations on why minority financial contribution patterns differ from those of Caucasians. One JD/MBA alumnus who is actively involved in the fundraising process explains that "HLS is better at tying their financial requests to social and public interest functions in its development material...In fundraising campaigns, HBS is more focused on itself...So maybe women and minorities see more benefits in giving to the law school." To the extent differential giving patterns exist for women and minorities (and the survey data only suggests this for minorities), the explanation likely includes other factors as well. For instance, given that minority networks appear to be stronger, minority contributions may exceed those of Caucasians due to peer influences. As stated by a female alumna of the 2000s, "I perceive that women and minorities worked harder to get to where they are and may be more appreciative [financially] than men or whites." This would be an interesting area for further exploration in future research.

Therefore, our interviews establish that the HBS experience differs from the HLS experience along several important dimensions. These differences likely help to explain why JD/MBA alumni generally prefer the HBS experience, and also potentially account for the differences in female and minority responses.

*B. JD/MBA Networks*

The survey results establish that JD/MBA alumni perceive that the HBS network is stronger than either the HLS or JD/MBA networks. In our interviews, several explanations arose to help explain this particularly robust finding. JD/MBAs believe that the HBS network is stronger for four reasons: the unique nature of the HBS “section” experience, HBS’ explicit institutional emphasis on the importance of networking, the career paths of JD/MBAs, and geographic clustering. In addition, these interviews provide insight into why the networks of minorities and recent graduates may differ from the networks of other JD/MBA alumni. This section analyzes the survey findings on JD/MBA networks in light of these potential explanations.

JD/MBA alumni offer numerous explanations for why the HBS network has had more of an impact on their careers than the HLS and JD/MBA networks. First, HBS as an institution places more emphasis on networking than the law school and, therefore, students are encouraged to form stronger networks while in school. JD/MBA alumni differentiate the nature of network formation at HBS and HLS. Across decades, they characterized HBS as having a strong emphasis on forming lifelong relationships with classmates. As one 1970s alumnus who pursued a legal career stated, “In terms of networking, the business school plays it up much more and people are more likely if passing through some city to call up a section mate.” While HBS fosters relationships among students, JD/MBA alumni describe a more superficial relationship with their HLS classmates. An alumnus explains, “If networking is just dropping names, nothing compares with HLS. In terms of who are the judges or prestigious (Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, faculty at law schools, etc.), HLS dominates. But I don’t think that impacts networking [at HLS given] the way that people acted.” Therefore, because HBS stresses the importance of

networking more heavily than HLS, JD/MBA alumni perceive that they form stronger HBS networks.

Second, this institutional emphasis is reinforced by the unique nature of the HBS section experience. The HBS section experience is profoundly different from the HLS section experience. Not only have HLS sections historically been larger than HBS sections (though they are now approximately the same size), but the day-to-day experience is markedly distinct. At HBS, a section has all of its classes in a dedicated classroom. Students are assigned seats for an entire semester, class attendance is mandatory, and everyone has name-cards prominently displayed. Section “traditions,” such as “Sky Deck” presentations, are passed on through the generations.<sup>88</sup> Sections elect officers, including lifetime positions related to maintaining section communication and camaraderie after graduation. When alumni attend classes, their introductions include reference to the letter of their section.<sup>89</sup>

In contrast, the section experience at HLS is more sterile. Students lack name-cards and are generally referred to by their last names in class comments. A section switches rooms with every law school class, and a student has a different seat in each room. There are neither intergenerational section traditions to foster a sense of community nor institutionalized section specific mechanisms to stay in contact after graduation. It is possible that HLS intentionally designs its section experience to provide students with the ability to remain relatively more anonymous than in an HBS classroom, potentially to enable students to feel more comfortable advancing controversial positions in class discussions.<sup>90</sup> Simultaneously, however, these

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<sup>88</sup> “Sky Decks” are weekly presentations that occur throughout the first year of HBS that commemorate (and poke fun at) the section-related events of the week. Attendance at Sky Deck presentations is limited to members of a single section and no faculty members are present.

<sup>89</sup> Every year, each HBS section is assigned a letter (A-J). The authors of this paper are members of Sections E and H.

<sup>90</sup> See Vagts at 421.

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features of the HLS section experience can promote feelings of isolation and have a chilling effect on student participation.<sup>91</sup>

In light of these fundamental differences, it is not surprising that JD/MBA alumni associate more with their HBS sections. Consistent with the HBS Alumni Study which shows the strongest affiliation of HBS alumni is to their section,<sup>92</sup> JD/MBA alumni emphasize the importance of the section experience. As one alumnus comments, “At HBS, sections had a life of their own. This is why [even as a lawyer] I have experienced more networking at the business school.” Thus, the section experience seems to be an important driving factor behind the strength of the HBS network.

Third, since JD/MBAs are more likely to work in the business than legal profession, the HBS network is more relevant to their career trajectories. Even if a student had closer relationships with law students while in school, the HBS network may be more useful as she enters the business world. A 2000s graduate of the JD/MBA program comments, “I keep in contact with almost 100 percent business school...even though I spent more of my time over at the law school [because I was on the *Harvard Law Review*]. I guess it’s partly because of the professional contact I have and the business I’m in.” The trend towards JD/MBA alumni entering the business rather than legal profession suggests that the HBS network has grown progressively more important to the careers of JD/MBAs.

Fourth, not only do JD/MBAs tend to pursue business careers, but also seem to be geographically clustered which may reinforce the strength of the HBS and JD/MBA networks. According to Harvard Law School Association records, 58 percent of JD/MBA alumni reside in

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<sup>91</sup> *Id.*

<sup>92</sup> HBS Alumni Study at 59.

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New York, Massachusetts, and California.<sup>93</sup> The combined effects of industry and geographic clustering of JD/MBA alumni appears to bolster the strength of the HBS and JD/MBA networks.<sup>94</sup> A 2001 alumnus states, “I do keep ties with the JD/MBAs. I see them in New York City and find that I keep greater contact with those in similar fields. I will help out another JD/MBA...because there is a small enough number of us.” Conversely, a 1970s JD/MBA graduate in Tennessee comments that geographical separation has become an obstacle to maintaining his networks. He comments, “Usually you end up networking with those in your geographic area,” and therefore the three Harvard networks seem less relevant to his career.

While the above explanations help establish why the HBS network may be stronger than the HLS or JD/MBA networks, they fail to address the issue of why minority JD/MBA networks may differ from those of Caucasians. Consistent with the networking literature, our interviews suggest that minority JD/MBAs may affiliate more with fellow minorities than with school or Caucasian networks. An African-American male alumnus explains, “I must say that I’m not the network guy. I haven’t kept up with any of [the HLS, HBS, or JD/MBA alumni networks] them. But I’ve kept up with the African-American folks. I can’t say if it’s been a bias one way or another with either school.” It seems plausible that the survey findings reflect that minority JD/MBA networks evolve differently than Caucasian networks. This would be an interesting area for further inquiry.

Finally, the survey results suggest that the importance of the HLS and JD/MBA networks has increased for 2000s JD/MBA alumni. This effect may merely reflect the proximity of these JD/MBA alumni to their date of graduation and the strength of these networks may wane over

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<sup>93</sup> This is based on analysis of Harvard Law School Association records of the known addresses of 293 JD/MBA alumni.

<sup>94</sup> It is not clear, however, why this geographic clustering also would not strengthen the HLS network. This may offer an interesting area for future research.

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time. However, it may also capture two other trends. First, as suggested in the career path literature, the nature of legal and business career paths more closely resemble each other today. This trend may create more impetus for recent JD/MBA alumni to invest in their HLS and fellow JD/MBA networks. Second, and somewhat in tension with this first potential explanation, since today's JD/MBAs are far more likely to pursue business paths, they may have more incentive to develop closer bonds with fellow JD/MBAs. These findings raise interesting questions for exploration in future research.

*C. JD/MBA Career Paths*

Our interviewees suggested many potential explanations for why JD/MBA graduates appear far more likely today to enter immediately – or eventually assume roles in – the business world rather than the legal profession. First, numerous interviewees describe a notable discrepancy between their law school classes and the actual work that they performed as summer (or junior) law firm associates. As a 1970s graduate of the JD/MBA program states, “HLS and most law schools don’t prepare students for the amount of tedious and boring work you’d do as a lawyer.” For this reason, JD/MBA students that entered the legal profession often look for a rapid exit. He explains that “the grass starts to look greener on the other side.”

Second, some interviewees expressed the opinion that greater support from the HBS Office of Career Services, coupled with the more diverse HBS curriculum, contributes to students entering the business profession. While HBS encourages and facilitates the networked job searches of students, HLS confines its primary recruiting support to the on-campus interviewing process. For this reason, according to a female JD/MBA graduate of the 2000s, “it’s easier to find alternative avenues from HBS.” In addition, while the HLS pedagogical method focuses more narrowly on teaching legal doctrine and principles, the case method of HBS inherently provides a broad exposure to general career directions because many companies that serve as case subjects could simultaneously be interesting employers. One graduate of the JD/MBA program in the 2000s explains that “I was able to see numerous industries through the HBS case method,” and these insights deeply informed his job search.

Third, some JD/MBA alumni enter the program with preconceived notions of their ultimate career directions. Interviewees suggest that JD/MBAs in the 1970s were more likely to believe that law was the correct career direction while more recent graduates never planned to

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enter the legal profession. For example, one 1970s graduate who is now a partner in a large national law firm explains that “when I graduated, most JD/MBAs went on to legal careers...the only way you got to do that was to go to a law firm – that’s how I planned things.” On the other hand, a female JD/MBA graduate of the 2000s reveals that her initial reluctance to enter the legal profession was further reinforced by the “general negativity” and “bad atmosphere” of HLS.

Fourth, this evolution in career paths may partially be explained by the increase in professional experience prior to entering the JD/MBA program. While JD/MBAs of the 1970s were more likely to arrive straight from undergraduate and pursue legal careers, today’s JD/MBAs are more likely to have interim work experience and pursue business careers. To the extent that students previously viewed work in a law firm as a temporary – rather than permanent – path, students straight from undergraduate may be more willing to invest time in this training. A JD/MBA graduate of the 1970s states that “it’s easier to afford time in a law firm and leave to do other things if you didn’t take time off.” In contrast, today’s JD/MBA students already have significant work experience and may have less interest in accepting an initial job in a profession where he or she lacks long-term career aspirations.

Many of these explanations for why JD/MBAs today gravitate more towards business jobs than prior generations of JD/MBA graduates seem quite convincing. However, analyzing why JD/MBAs have non-linear career trajectories appears more nuanced. Two reasons that arose in our interviews struck us as particularly compelling. First, the JD/MBA program may self-select a group of students that is likely to follow non-linear career trajectories. As a JD/MBA graduate from the 2000s states, “I’m always looking for options. I had two degrees in undergrad. When I was at Goldman, I had two different positions offered and went with the one that I thought would provide more options. Then I did the dual degree program at Harvard.” If

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JD/MBA students are likely to possess numerous diverse interests (or want to hedge their bets), this would help to explain why they pursue non-linear career trajectories. Second, because the JD/MBA academic experience lasts longer than either school independently, JD/MBAs have substantial time to reflect on their ultimate careers in schools. As a JD/MBA graduate explains, “four years is a long time to think about what you want to do with your life and that’s a benefit.” For this reason, the enhanced time for contemplation may encourage non-linear trajectories among JD/MBA graduates.

In addition, the non-linearity of career paths may relate to the value that many JD/MBAs perceive in both degrees. While JD/MBA graduates who enter law rated the utility of the joint degree higher than those who went into business, numerous business interviewees referred to the value of both degrees. One graduate described the two degrees as complementary. He states that “both degrees have helped me,” but in different ways. While law school provided classroom learning, business school was valuable “less for the knowledge than for the people and networks I was able to build.” Another graduate from the 1970s refers to the intellectual approach taught in law school. He states “though I can’t practice law, I retained enough to ask the right questions and guide my lawyers to find the right answers.”

In addition, it is worth considering why the career paths of female and minority JD/MBAs may differ from those of Caucasian males. While the differences in career paths of women and minorities were based on small samples, these directional findings from the survey data strongly resonated in subsequent interviews. The interviewees offered several explanations for the potential career path differences of females and minorities. First, females and minorities may be socialized to see the law as an especially respected, honorable career path. As one African-American female JD/MBA alumna states, “growing up I knew I wanted to be a lawyer

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because I thought it involved everything I liked...and is a well-paying, respectful profession.” In addition, females and minorities may feel more pressure to have a less volatile stream of income than a business career often provides. As a female JD/MBA graduate remarks, “I would be interested in seeing people’s economic backgrounds because I think minorities/women need a guaranteed constant paycheck – at least that was true for me.” Moreover, women and minorities may perceive that discrimination and the glass ceiling is less prevalent in law than in business. An African-American female JD/MBA graduate states, “In business you sort of know your salary but your bonus fluctuates and you don’t know if there is parity. On the other hand, there is less initial inequity in law as everyone is paid the same to some degree with lockstep compensation schemes. This leads to less discrimination.”

Finally, the career decisions of women and minorities may be strongly influenced by factors that are less prominent in the decision making process of whites. Fifty-nine percent of women claimed that their job prior to graduate school affected their career choice versus 40 percent of men. Similarly, 54 percent of minorities were influenced by their job prior to graduate school versus 38 percent of Caucasians, and 54 percent of minorities were influenced by the current business cycle versus 39 percent of Caucasians. While these explanations may explain only part of the apparent gender and race differences, they certainly raise interesting questions for future research.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Although the Harvard JD/MBA program has existed for over three decades, this study represents the first systematic view of the experiences, networks, and career paths of its alumni. It suggests that Harvard JD/MBAs have distinct experiences at HBS and HLS, perceive the respective networks quite differently, and today are more likely to pursue business career trajectories than in the past. At the same time, it also reveals that the experiences, networks, and career paths of female and minority JD/MBAs may substantially differ from those of Caucasian males.

While we believe that this study offers an important contribution, it is important to acknowledge several potential shortcomings. First, the study respondents only represent a sample of the overall JD/MBA population. It is, therefore, possible that biases in this respondent pool may make it difficult to extrapolate from these findings. Second, partially based on the historical student body composition, the sample of female and minority respondents is quite small. While their responses offer interesting dimensions to the study, it is important to recognize that they may also provide incomplete perspectives on the female and minority experience. Finally, since this is a pioneering study, there is a lack of prior empirical research in which to situate these results. Future research is necessary to provide a more robust foundation to explore many of the issues surfaced in this initial study.

In spite of these limitations, we believe that this study offers important findings on the JD/MBA program. Simultaneously, it raises a series of issues and questions for further exploration both regarding interdisciplinary programs generally and the Harvard JD/MBA program specifically. Important questions include:

- 1. Are there ways in which interdisciplinary programs can enhance the curricular integration between graduate schools?*

Several interviewees commented that the JD/MBA curriculum lacked sufficient integration. Particularly during the final two years, they expressed a desire for more interdisciplinary courses. As a 1990s alumnus reflects, “I believe the program is more interesting when you take advanced classes on related subjects at each school. Even when you get the same material overlapping, the analysis is different. And that is the benefit of the program if you approach the program from an intellectual perspective.” Anecdotally, we have heard similar observations about other Harvard joint degree programs, such as the joint JD/Master of Public Policy (“MPP”) program between HLS and the John F. Kennedy School of Government (“KSG”) and the MPP/MBA program between HBS and the KSG. While the JD/MBA seminar helps provide a capstone experience for JD/MBAs, the potential seems to exist for more formal and meaningful curricular integration between graduate schools.

*2. Are there ways to improve the scheduling integration across Harvard graduate schools?*

A common complaint of JD/MBA alumni was that scheduling courses across the two campuses is extremely difficult. In the words of one alumnus who graduated in the 1990s, “there were huge scheduling issues. The Dean [of the business school] hated all the interdisciplinary programs and tried to get rid of them. In my time, there was a latent hostility toward JD/MBAs and other joint programs at the business school.” Not only do the school holidays not overlap, but the HBS and HLS classroom times create many conflicts. Enrolling in a class at one school frequently eliminates the ability to take two classes at the other school. Alternatively, a JD/MBA student may be consistently late for class at HLS because its time overlaps with an HBS course (a predicament so common that it has developed its own name – “the nick”).<sup>95</sup> Improving the scheduling integration seems to offer an important consideration not only for the Harvard JD/MBA program, but for interdisciplinary programs generally. To the extent that schedules

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<sup>95</sup> This term was coined by Professor Vagts.

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conflict, it can substantially diminish the student experience and provide a disincentive to enroll in an interdisciplinary program.

3. *How can the social cohesiveness of the JD/MBA program – and interdisciplinary programs in general – be increased?*

Many JD/MBAs report feelings of isolation during their final year of the program. If a student begins the program at HLS, both her HLS and HBS entering classes will have graduated prior to her fourth year. Coupled with the fact that many JD/MBA cohorts are quite small, JD/MBAs can have few social connections to the campuses during the final year. Similar issues will exist for other interdisciplinary programs between schools where the normal path to graduation takes different amounts of time (e.g., MPP programs are generally two-year programs and therefore raise similar issues). Efforts to formalize the connections between interdisciplinary cohorts could play important roles in a student's experience during her final year.

4. *Can interdisciplinary programs help lead to pedagogical evolution at participating graduate schools?*

While both HBS and HLS use the case method, their pedagogical approaches are quite different. JD/MBAs comment that the HLS learning model could be improved by creating a more participatory classroom environment that resembles the model at HBS (perhaps by grading class participation). Simultaneously, they point to shortcomings in teaching “hard skill” business subjects like finance and accounting exclusively through business school cases. Although HBS and HLS historically have operated in isolation from one another, these reflections from JD/MBA alumni demonstrate the potential for curricular and pedagogical innovation that could provide enhance both the experiences of JD/MBAs and the broader student bodies. Particularly in upper level courses at graduate schools, there may be substantial room for interdisciplinary innovation. For instance, in the 2004-05 HLS upper level elective course curriculum, ten courses

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were jointly taught by an HLS professor and a non-legal professor (e.g., a KSG, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, or HBS professor) or non-legal practitioner.<sup>96</sup> These courses represent less than five percent of the overall elective course curriculum at HLS.<sup>97</sup> Using these course offerings as a starting point, it seems possible for joint degree programs to serve as liaisons of curricular and pedagogical innovation both at Harvard graduate schools and other universities.

##### 5. *Should the JD/MBA program consider structural changes?*

Some alumni comment that the JD/MBA program could benefit by being shortened to three years. For instance, a 1999 graduate states, “Let JD/MBA students spend the first or second summer in classes so that the program can be 3 or 3.5 years. [There should be more assistance to] develop career paths with certain employers who can utilize [the] uniqueness of JD/MBA degrees.” Northwestern transitioned to a three-year JD/MBA format in 2000, and claims that this switch created a more competitive student admissions profile.<sup>98</sup> Yet, such a shift requires students to forsake summer internship opportunities which can play crucial roles in developing career directions and networks. Similar structural changes to the Harvard JD/MBA program may offer benefits to future generations of JD/MBA students.

It is, therefore, evident that this study raises many questions for future exploration.

While offering important insights into the JD/MBA experience, networks, and career paths, it

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<sup>96</sup> These 10 courses were “The Law and Business of Patents” (HLS Professor William Fisher and HBS Professor Josh Lerner), “American Democracy” (HLS Professor Roberto Unger and KSG Professor Robert Putnam), “Human Nature” (HLS Professor Roberto Unger and Professor Steven Pinker of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences), “Terrorism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” (HLS Professor Philip Heymann and Louise Richardson, Executive Dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study), and six “Negotiation Workshop” courses (taught by HLS Professors Robert Bordone and Robert Mnookin in conjunction with members of the Triad Consulting Group). This list excludes courses that were jointly taught by multiple HLS professors, HLS professors and people who had formal affiliations with HLS (e.g., the Harvard Negotiation Project and Berkman Center), or HLS professors and visiting professor from other law schools. See HLS Office of the Registrar, *Elective Courses, Reading Groups, and Seminars* available at <http://www.law.harvard.edu/academics/registrar/catalog/electives.html> (last accessed Mar. 11, 2005).

<sup>97</sup> In total, 267 courses were offered to second- and third-year HLS students. See HLS Office of the Registrar, *Schedule of Classroom Courses, 2004-05* available at <http://www.law.harvard.edu/academics/registrar/schedule/2004-05sched.htm> (last accessed Mar. 11, 2005).

<sup>98</sup> Its claim of a more competitive admissions pool is based on higher average GMAT scores and greater work experience. See Northwestern Report at 3-6.

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simultaneously introduces new areas for future research and consideration. For this reason, this study not only provides a retrospective lens on how the JD/MBA program has changed, but also will hopefully contribute to future thinking on how the program should evolve.

## APPENDIX A: HARVARD JD/MBA ALUMNI SURVEY

We are current students conducting a study of J.D./M.B.A. alumni in conjunction with the J.D./M.B.A. seminar. The information that you provide will be used in this study and may be shared with other individuals inside and outside the Harvard community at some point in the future. Information will be reported in a form that preserves the anonymity of individual respondents, unless we receive express consent from an individual to discuss their specific experiences. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Justin Osofsky ([jsofsky@mba2005.hbs.edu](mailto:jsofsky@mba2005.hbs.edu)) or Lynn Wood ([lwood@mba2005.hbs.edu](mailto:lwood@mba2005.hbs.edu)).

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

### Career Information

1. If you are willing to be interviewed about your career experiences, please provide current contact information:

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please attach a **resume** or **curriculum vitae** in chronological order with positions held prior to entering **and** after graduating the J.D./M.B.A. program, including any judicial clerkships.

### Demographic Information

JD/MBA Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Gender M/F

Race/Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate/Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Marital status at start of program Single/Married

Parental occupation Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

### J.D./M.B.A. Experience

Were you admitted to both programs in the same application cycle? Yes No

At which school did you spend your first year? HBS HLS

Please list your 3 most significant extracurricular activities, including offices held (in order of significance):

1. HBS HLS

1.

2.

3.

Did you work (for pay) while in the JD/MBA program? Yes No

Did you take any clinical courses at HLS? Yes No

Did you take the JD/MBA seminar? Yes No

Did you attend JD/MBA social events as a student? Yes No

If you attended JD/MBA social events, did they contribute to a Yes No

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more cohesive JD/MBA experience?

Did you graduate with honors (circle which school)?

HBS

HLS

**Impact of the J.D./M.B.A. Experience**

Please circle your answers to the following questions on a scale of 1 (Very Negative) to 5 (Very Positive)

	<b><u>Very Negative</u></b>			<b><u>Very Positive</u></b>	
How would you rate your experience at Harvard Law School?	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate your experience at Harvard Business School?	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate your current attitude toward Harvard Law School?	1	2	3	4	5
How would you rate your current attitude toward Harvard Business School?	1	2	3	4	5

Please list any Directorships and Board Memberships below.

	<b>Name of organization</b>	<b>Title/Position Held</b>	<b>Years of Involvement</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			

Please list any significant charitable, civic, and voluntary activities below.

	<b>Name of organization</b>	<b>Title/Position Held</b>	<b>Years of Involvement</b>
1.			
2.			
3.			

Which professor(s) at Harvard had the greatest impact on you? Please also indicate the school at which the professor taught and, if you can recall, the name of the course.

1. Name of professor _____	HBS/HLS	Course _____
2. Name of professor _____	HBS/HLS	Course _____
3. Name of professor _____	HBS/HLS	Course _____

If you have any specific comments about how the JD/MBA program (structure, time frame, etc.) can better meet the needs of students and alumni, please comment below.

Please circle your answers to the following questions on a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree):

	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b>			<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b>	
The J.D./M.B.A. degree has provided career opportunities that I would not have had with either degree alone.	1	2	3	4	5
The J.D./M.B.A. degree accelerated my career progression.	1	2	3	4	5

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Both degrees have been (or will be) very useful in my career. 1 2 3 4 5

The following factors strongly influenced my initial career direction:

	<b><u>Strongly Disagree</u></b>				<b><u>Strongly Agree</u></b>
a. Job prior to entering the J.D./M.B.A. program	1	2	3	4	5
b. Course curriculum during the program	1	2	3	4	5
c. Job market/business cycle at the time of graduation	1	2	3	4	5

The following networks strongly influenced my overall career:

a. The Harvard Business School network	1	2	3	4	5
b. The Harvard Law School network	1	2	3	4	5
c. The network of fellow J.D./M.B.A. students	1	2	3	4	5

I entered the J.D./M.B.A. program with a clear idea of what I hoped to gain from the experience. 1 2 3 4 5

Potential employers have reacted favorably to my J.D./M.B.A. degree. 1 2 3 4 5

Overall, the J.D./M.B.A. was worth the investment 1 2 3 4 5

For the following questions, please circle the answer that is most accurate:

Which degree has had a greater impact on your career?	J.D.	M.B.A.	No difference
With which group of alumni do you stay in closer contact?	H.B.S.	H.L.S.	No difference
Of which school do you have more positive memories?	H.B.S.	H.L.S.	No difference
To which school have you contributed more financially over your lifetime?	H.B.S.	H.L.S.	No difference

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If you have any comments or suggestions regarding the study, or any other issues involving the J.D./M.B.A. program, please comment below:

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Would you like the J.D./M.B.A. Alumni Association to have your current contact information? If so, please provide your current mailing address, e-mail address, and phone number:

**APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SURVEY RESULTS**

Statistical significance tests for differences in means (t-tests)								
		Inputs						
		x-bar1	x-bar2	N1	N2	stdev1	stdev2	t-statistic
<u>Background</u>								
1	Average cohort size (1970s v. 1980s)	14.1	11.8	9	10	5.0	4.4	2.31*
2	Average cohort size (1970s v. 1990s)	14.1	7.2	9	10	5.0	2.7	7.59**
3	Average cohort size (1970s v. 2000s)	14.1	6.3	9	5	5.0	2.5	7.59**
4	Average cohort size (1980s v. 1990s)	11.8	7.2	10	10	4.4	2.7	5.46**
5	Average cohort size (1980s v. 2000s)	11.8	6.3	10	5	4.4	2.5	5.67**
6	Average cohort size (1990s v. 2000s)	7.2	6.3	10	5	2.7	2.5	1.03
<u>Law and business school experiences</u>								
7	Experience rating (HBS - HLS)	0.7	0	109	109	1.0	0	7.31**
8	HBS experience rating (women v. men)	4.4	4.1	18	92	0.9	1.0	1.22
9	HLS experience rating (women v. men)	3.6	3.5	18	92	1.0	0.9	0.39
10	HBS experience rating (Minority v. Caucasian)	3.9	4.2	28	80	0.8	1.1	-1.46
11	HLS experience rating (Minority v. Caucasian)	3.4	3.5	28	80	0.9	0.9	-0.48
<u>Networks</u>								
12	Network impact rating (HBS - HLS)	1.1	0	110	110	1.6	0	9.12**
13	Network impact rating (HBS - JD/MBA)	0.9	0	110	110	1.6	0	7.46**
14	Network impact rating (HLS - JD/MBA)	-0.2	0	110	110	1.5	0	-1.71
<u>Career paths</u>								
15	Years of experience when entering (1970s v. 1980s)	0.7	0.7	25	26	1.4	0.9	0.00
16	Years of experience when entering (1970s v. 1990s)	0.7	1.5	25	27	1.4	1.4	-2.44**
17	Years of experience when entering (1970s v. 2000s)	0.7	2.5	25	32	1.4	1.5	-5.61**
18	Years of experience when entering (1980s v. 1990s)	0.7	1.5	26	27	0.9	1.4	-2.72**
19	Years of experience when entering (1980s v. 2000s)	0.7	2.5	26	32	0.9	1.5	-6.31**
20	Years of experience when entering (1990s v. 2000s)	1.5	2.5	27	32	1.4	1.5	-3.18**
21	Unique career opportunities rating (1970s v. 1980s)	4.0	3.1	25	26	1.3	1.5	2.72**
22	Unique career opportunities rating (1970s v. 1990s)	4.0	3.1	25	27	1.3	1.4	2.79**
23	Unique career opportunities rating (1970s v. 2000s)	4.0	3.3	25	32	1.3	1.3	2.30*
24	Unique career opportunities rating (1980s v. 1990s)	3.1	3.1	26	27	1.5	1.4	0.00
25	Unique career opportunities rating (1980s v. 2000s)	3.1	3.3	26	32	1.5	1.3	-0.64
26	Unique career opportunities rating (1990s v. 2000s)	3.1	3.3	27	32	1.4	1.3	-0.66
27	Career acceleration rating (1970s v. 1980s)	3.8	2.9	25	26	1.2	1.2	2.93**
28	Career acceleration rating (1970s v. 1990s)	3.8	3.1	25	27	1.2	1.3	2.26*
29	Career acceleration rating (1970s v. 2000s)	3.8	3.1	25	32	1.2	1.2	2.39*
30	Career acceleration rating (1980s v. 1990s)	2.9	3.1	26	27	1.2	1.3	-0.65
31	Career acceleration rating (1980s v. 2000s)	2.9	3.1	26	32	1.2	1.2	-0.69
32	Career acceleration rating (1990s v. 2000s)	3.1	3.1	27	32	1.3	1.2	0.00

\* Statistically significant at 0.05 level.  
 \*\* Statistically significant at 0.01 level.  
 Note: Given the small sample, non-parametric tests should be used in some instances for more precise results.

Statistical significance tests for proportions (z-tests)							
		Inputs					
		$p_1$	$p_2$	$p$	$N_1$	$N_2$	<u>z-statistic</u>
<u>Law and business school experiences</u>							
33	Closer contact (HBS v. HLS proportion)?	0.68	0.10	0.39	109	109	8.78**
<u>Networks</u>							
34	Greater career impact (HBS v. HLS proportion)?	0.66	0.24	0.45	110	110	6.26**
35	Greater career impact (HBS v. JD/MBA proportion)?	0.66	0.38	0.52	110	110	4.16**
36	Greater career impact (HLS v. JD/MBA proportion)?	0.24	0.38	0.31	110	110	-2.24*
37	HBS network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.48	0.46	0.47	25	26	0.14
38	HBS network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.48	0.81	0.65	25	27	-2.49*
39	HBS network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.48	0.87	0.70	25	31	-3.15**
40	HBS network strong impact proportion (1980s v. 1990s)	0.46	0.81	0.64	26	27	-2.65**
41	HBS network strong impact proportion (1980s v. 2000s)	0.46	0.87	0.68	26	31	-3.31**
42	HBS network strong impact proportion (1990s v. 2000s)	0.81	0.87	0.84	27	31	-0.63
43	HLS network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.20	0.23	0.22	25	26	-0.26
44	HLS network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.20	0.11	0.15	25	27	0.90
45	HLS network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.20	0.38	0.30	25	32	-1.47
46	HLS network strong impact proportion (1980s v. 1990s)	0.23	0.11	0.17	26	27	1.17
47	HLS network strong impact proportion (1980s v. 2000s)	0.23	0.38	0.31	26	32	-1.23
48	HLS network strong impact proportion (1990s v. 2000s)	0.11	0.38	0.26	27	32	-2.37*
49	JD/MBA network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.12	0.42	0.27	25	26	-2.40*
50	JD/MBA network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.12	0.33	0.23	25	27	-1.80
51	JD/MBA network strong impact proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.12	0.59	0.38	25	32	-3.62**
52	JD/MBA network strong impact proportion (1980s v. 1990s)	0.42	0.33	0.37	26	27	0.68
53	JD/MBA network strong impact proportion (1980s v. 2000s)	0.42	0.59	0.51	26	32	-1.29
54	JD/MBA network strong impact proportion (1990s v. 2000s)	0.33	0.59	0.47	27	32	-1.99*
55	HBS network strong impact proportion (women v. men)	0.72	0.65	0.66	18	92	0.57
56	HBS network strong impact proportion (Minority v. Caucasian)	0.82	0.61	0.66	28	80	2.03*
57	HLS network strong impact proportion (women v. men)	0.28	0.23	0.24	18	92	0.46
58	HLS network strong impact proportion (Minority v. Caucasian)	0.36	0.2	0.24	28	80	1.70
<u>Career paths</u>							
59	Greater career impact (MBA v. JD proportion)?	0.57	0.28	0.43	109	109	4.33**
60	First job (business v. law proportion)?	0.65	0.35	0.50	69	69	3.52**
61	Current job (business v. law proportion)?	0.81	0.19	0.50	69	69	7.28**
62	JD greater career impact proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.54	0.19	0.36	24	26	2.58**
63	JD greater career impact proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.54	0.22	0.37	24	27	2.36*
64	JD greater career impact proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.54	0.19	0.34	24	32	2.74**
65	JD greater career impact proportion (1980s v. 1990s)	0.19	0.22	0.21	26	27	-0.27
66	JD greater career impact proportion (1980s v. 2000s)	0.19	0.19	0.19	26	32	0.00
67	JD greater career impact proportion (1990s v. 2000s)	0.22	0.19	0.20	27	32	0.29

\* Statistically significant at 0.05 level.  
 \*\* Statistically significant at 0.01 level.

Statistical significance tests for proportions (z-tests) (cont.)							
68	MBA greater career impact proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.42	0.54	0.48	24	26	-0.85
69	MBA greater career impact proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.42	0.67	0.55	24	27	-1.79
70	MBA greater career impact proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.42	0.63	0.54	24	32	-1.56
71	JD greater career impact proportion (women v. men)	0.22	0.29	0.28	18	91	-0.61
72	JD greater career impact proportion (Minority v. Caucasian)	0.29	0.28	0.28	28	80	0.10
73	MBA greater career impact proportion (women v. men)	0.44	0.59	0.57	18	91	-1.17
74	MBA greater career impact proportion (Minority v. Caucasian)	0.39	0.63	0.57	28	80	-2.21*
75	First job law proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.65	0.35	0.48	17	23	1.88
76	First job law proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.65	0.24	0.45	17	17	2.41*
77	First job law proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.65	0.08	0.41	17	12	3.07**
78	First job law proportion (1980s v. 1990s)	0.35	0.24	0.30	23	17	0.75
79	First job law proportion (1980s v. 2000s)	0.35	0.08	0.26	23	12	1.73
80	First job law proportion (1990s v. 2000s)	0.24	0.08	0.17	17	12	1.12
81	Current job law proportion (1970s v. 1980s)	0.47	0.13	0.27	17	24	2.41
82	Current job law proportion (1970s v. 1990s)	0.47	0.06	0.27	17	16	2.65**
83	Current job law proportion (1970s v. 2000s)	0.47	0.08	0.31	17	12	2.24*
84	Current job law proportion (1980s v. 1990s)	0.13	0.06	0.10	24	16	0.72
85	Current job law proportion (1980s v. 2000s)	0.13	0.08	0.11	24	12	0.45
86	Current job law proportion (1990s v. 2000s)	0.06	0.08	0.07	16	12	-0.21
87	First job law proportion (women v. men)	0.45	0.32	0.34	11	59	0.84
88	First job law proportion (Minority v. Caucasian)	0.42	0.33	0.35	12	60	0.60
89	Current job law proportion (women v. men)	0.27	0.16	0.18	11	61	0.88
90	Current job law proportion (Minority v. Caucasian)	0.25	0.18	0.19	12	60	0.56

\* Statistically significant at 0.05 level.  
 \*\* Statistically significant at 0.01 level.