

1 **A Case of Love and Hate: Four Faces**  
2 **of Alienation Among Young Lawyers**  
3 **in France and Switzerland**

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5 AQ2

6 *Over the past three decades, the legal profession has experienced globalization, the rise*  
7 *of mega-law firms, and intensified competition. These transformations have been associ-*  
8 *ated with declining career perspectives, the hyper-specialization of legal work, and*  
9 *increased levels of stress. We argue that the concept of alienation offers valuable insights*  
10 *onto these changes, by providing an original analysis of the objective and subjective*  
11 *experiences of early career lawyers at work. We elaborate a multidimensional typology*  
12 *that covers the content and retributions of legal work. By categorizing experiences of*  
13 *alienation along these two axes, we identify four ideal-types of alienation: powerlessness,*

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14 *purposelessness, time deprivation and unfairness. Based on qualitative studies carried out*  
15 *in France and Switzerland, we illustrate how young lawyers differentially experience each*  
16 *type of alienation, according to gender, status and firm size. We conclude by suggesting*  
17 *how these factors combine to produce long-terms effects, such as the high female attrition*  
18 *rates observed in the Swiss and French legal professions.*

## 19 INTRODUCTION

20 For the last three decades, the legal profession has experienced important changes  
21 related to the rise of globalization (Dezalay and Garth 2011) and mega-law firms  
22 (Nelson 1988; Galanter and Palay 1991), the intensification of competition  
23 (Wilkins and Gulati 1998), and increasing levels of job mobility (Kay et al. 2013).  
24 Some authors have taken these transformations as a sign of a “crisis of professionalism”  
25 (Abel 1999), or of the “deprofessionalization” (Rosen 1999) or “proletarianization”  
26 (Derber 1983; Derber, Schwartz, and Magrass 1990), of whole swathes of the occupa-  
27 tion. For much of the legal profession, this crisis is associated with declining career per-  
28 spectives, a routinization and hyper-specialization of legal work, and increased levels of  
29 stress and depression (Collier 2016; Plickert, Kay, and Hagan 2017). In Europe, scholars  
30 have also noted a tendency toward the fragmentation of legal labor markets, character-  
31 ized by increasing internal stratification.

32 These changes are the product of broader social and economic trends that have  
33 impacted highly qualified occupations and professions in post-industrial societies  
34 (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012). New forms of labor organization in a neoliberal glob-  
35 alized context have transformed the nature of professional work. Among other changes,  
36 increasing workloads and time pressure in many economic sectors have pervasive effects  
37 on working conditions, including in highly skilled occupations. These trends have led  
38 to an increase in inequalities between different categories of workers (Fligstein and Shin  
39 2004), to heightened forms of precariousness (Kalleberg 2013; Snorradóttir et al. 2015),  
40 to a rise in the reporting of depression, ill health, and stress (Karasek and Theorell  
41 1990), and to the deterioration of employment relations (Roscigno et al. 2009;  
42 Crowley and Hodson 2014; Thornton 2016a). This situation has paradoxical conse-  
43 quences on the relationship that skilled workers have with their work: they continue  
44 to demonstrate high levels of commitment to work and sometimes, as in the case of  
45 lawyers, high levels of satisfaction, while the deterioration of working conditions has  
46 a particularly marked impact on their stress levels (Schieman, Whitestone, and Van  
47 Gundy 2006), their ability to achieve work-life balance (Thornton 2016b), and their  
48 health (Carter et al. 2013; Collier 2016). Daniel Wheatley, for example, shows the  
49 direct impact of low job autonomy and schedule control on occupational well-being  
50 even for professional workers (Wheatley 2017). In a similar vein, Bailey and  
51 Madden (2017) describe the erosion of “meaningful work” in many occupations at  
52 all levels of the social hierarchy.

53 This picture of highly skilled professions, and in particular of the work of lawyers, is  
54 not entirely new. Indeed, as early as the 1950s, Charles Wright Mills emphasized the  
55 transformation of the legal profession in the United States into a routinized and over-  
56 specialized occupation, peopled by “mechanics,” or specialized workers (2002 [1951]).

57 A couple of decades later, Charles Derber also pictured lawyers, among other highly  
 58 skilled professionals, as suffering from forms of alienation and proletarianization induced  
 59 by a capitalist economy of the professions and by their subordination to management  
 60 control through salaried employment (1983). He identified a form of “ideological prole-  
 61 tarianization” experienced by professionals, because of “their orientation towards ends  
 62 defined by the interest of their employers” (ibid., 319).

63 In the contemporary context of neoliberal globalization, these processes described  
 64 decades ago as producing feelings of alienation have taken a new dimension. Firms have  
 65 become larger in the hopes of increasing profitability, which has translated into  
 66 increased pressure on lawyers, heightened specialization, and focus on reporting of bill-  
 67 able hours. In addition, the number of lawyers is exploding in many countries, increas-  
 68 ing competition for jobs, fueling the “up or out” system that prevails in big firms, and  
 69 increasing precariousness in the lower echelons of the profession (small firms, solo prac-  
 70 titioners). Simultaneously, the legal profession has witnessed a rapid rate of feminiza-  
 71 tion, especially at the lower echelons of the occupational hierarchy (Epstein et al. 1995;  
 72 Schultz and Shaw 2003), but this increasing numerical presence of women has not  
 73 brought gender equality in law firms. Women are in fact the primary victims of the  
 74 internal “fragmentation” of the profession (Sommerlad 2002).

75 How have these changes impacted the subjective relationship that young lawyers,  
 76 men and women, have to their work as a career, a status, but also as a daily experience  
 77 shaped by these changing working conditions? What are their effects on lawyers’ rela-  
 78 tion to work and potential experience of alienation today, especially young lawyers who  
 79 are the most exposed to precariousness? Do women, newcomers in the profession who  
 80 are often overrepresented in the lower echelons, have similar or different experiences  
 81 compared to their male counterparts? How does firm size and type affect lawyers’ work  
 82 experience?

83 Drawing on interviews with early career stage lawyers in France and Switzerland,  
 84 we argue that the concept of alienation still provides an illuminating perspective on  
 85 young lawyers’ relationship to their work by exploring both lawyers’ concrete experi-  
 86 ence and its subjective dimension, and therefore enriches our understanding of con-  
 87 temporary legal practice. Of course lawyers, and even young lawyers, do not always  
 88 experience alienation. Legal work also brings a host of gratifications and many lawyers  
 89 declare to be satisfied with their profession (Dinovitzer and Garth 2007). However, as  
 90 our data show—in line with other studies on the profession in other national contexts  
 91 (Kay, Alarie, and Adjei 2013; Thornton 2016a; Collier 2016)—there is ample evi-  
 92 dence of dissatisfaction, ill health, and feelings of estrangement among young lawyers  
 93 as well.

94 This Article is organized in four parts. First, we present the methodology and data  
 95 collected in the framework of our research carried out in France and Switzerland. In the  
 96 next part, we discuss theories of alienation and distinguish four types of work experi-  
 97 ences leading to alienation for young lawyers. These experiences are *powerlessness*, *pur-*  
 98 *poselessness*, *time deprivation*, and *unfairness*. We argue that their prevalence depends on  
 99 four variables: the size of firms where lawyers work, their job status in the firm, their  
 100 gender, and their family situation. In the third part we illustrate our conceptual frame-  
 101 work with our interview and survey data. In the conclusion, we emphasize the relevance  
 102 of our approach to understanding work experiences in an occupational context marked

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103 by increasing uncertainty, competition and fragmentation, and we identify research  
104 questions that merit further exploration.

#### 105 DATA AND METHODS

106 Our research project is based on a mixed methods approach combining survey data  
107 and interview data to analyze the professional lives of young lawyers in France and in  
108 the French-speaking region of Switzerland who entered the legal profession after 1998.  
109 The survey, which included questions about current job practices, professional paths  
110 and aspirations, and personal and family life, was prepared in collaboration with the  
111 research team involved in the U.S. “After the JD” survey, and in particular, with col-  
112 leagues involved in the extension of this survey outside the United States (Plickert and  
113 Hagan 2011). In France, the web survey was administered between March and July  
114 2016 in collaboration with the French National Bar Council (*Conseil National des*  
115 *Barreaux*) and the Paris Bar (*Ordre des Avocats de Paris*). In Switzerland, it was adminis-  
116 tered between May and June 2016 in collaboration with the Bar organizations in  
117 Geneva (*Ordre des Avocats de Genève*) and Lausanne (*Ordre des Avocats Vaudois*).  
118 We collected a sample of 1,129 respondents, 878 from the Paris Bar and 251 from  
119 the Geneva Bar and Lausanne Bar. We also conducted 41 semi-structured interviews  
120 between September 2015 and May 2017, with 26 female and 15 male lawyers or  
121 ex-lawyers (16 in Switzerland, 25 in France). While this Article is mainly based on  
122 our interview data, the survey provides important additional information, in particular  
123 the prevalence of feelings of discrimination and dissatisfaction and a desire to leave the  
124 profession.

125 While studies on lawyers’ working conditions and the impact of globalization on  
126 the legal profession are well developed on countries such as the UK, the United States,  
127 and Australia (Sommerlad 2002; Kay et al. 2013; Thornton 2016b), there are only very  
128 limited studies on the French or Swiss legal professions (Karpik 1999; Bessy 2015), and  
129 especially on the effects of the recent transformation of the legal market and the sharp  
130 increase in the number of young lawyers. Unlike North-American lawyers, for whom  
131 student debt is a major issue, French and Swiss lawyers do not face significant financial  
132 burdens at the beginning of their professional lives (Dinovitser, Garth, and Sterling  
133 2013). Compared to the United States, the varied prestige of law schools is less blatant  
134 in France and Switzerland, suggesting that the place of study may be a weaker determi-  
135 nant of legal careers. These differences make these countries interesting sites to explore  
136 the effects of globalization and neoliberalism in the legal professions. Switzerland, and  
137 to some extent France, may appear as relatively more protected from the effects of glob-  
138 alization, with fewer mega-law firms structuring the legal markets. However, this relative  
139 protection may not compensate for the demographic expansion of the profession and its  
140 consequences for young lawyers (Boni-Le Goff et al. 2020).

141 Because the French and Swiss legal professions present structural similarities (e.g.  
142 similar rates of feminization in law schools) and similar formal processes of access to the  
143 labor market (bar exams and training processes), we analyze them together, rather than  
144 in a comparative perspective.

145 Interviews were secured first through contacts with the bar associations in the cities  
 146 in our sample, and then through a snowball process. We also relied on the completed  
 147 questionnaires of our web survey, since respondents had the opportunity to leave their  
 148 phone number or email address at the end of the survey if they were willing to contrib-  
 149 ute to the qualitative interviews. A rather high proportion of respondents for this kind  
 150 of survey (18.8 percent) left their contact information. With the data available on each  
 151 voluntary respondent we were then able to select and contact potential interviewees  
 152 with specific professional and organizational characteristics; 12 persons out of 41 were  
 153 contacted through this selection process. Through this combined selection process, we  
 154 reduced the selection bias that may potentially occur through a single snowball process,  
 155 especially when interviewees tend to recommend people with similar social character-  
 156 istics or working experience.

157 We made sure that our sample reflected the sex ratio of young lawyers' general  
 158 population in France and Switzerland; the average sex ratio for lawyers practicing  
 159 law since 1998 is 62 percent<sup>1</sup> and the sex ratio of our sample is 63.4 percent. We only  
 160 interviewed lawyers who passed the bar exam after 1998 (clocking up an average of ten  
 161 and a half years of bar practice).<sup>2</sup> We made sure to select lawyers practicing in the dif-  
 162 ferent types of law,<sup>3</sup> in different practice settings (solo partnership, small, medium, or  
 163 large firms), and in different job positions (associate or "collaborateur," solo partner,  
 164 partner) (see [Appendix](#): Table of Interviewees). Our biographic approach enabled us  
 165 to collect longitudinal data on the 41 interviewees' whole professional trajectories  
 166 and to analyze 121 different job positions and work experiences (see [Appendix](#):  
 167 Table of Interviewees).

168 While the web survey revealed how many lawyers perceive discrimination and how  
 169 many intend to leave the profession, the interviews helped us identify processes and  
 170 mechanisms through which lawyers manage their relationship to work, and in particular  
 171 alienation at work (see for example Lamont and Swidler 2014). The interviews lasted  
 172 90 minutes on average and gave the interviewees the opportunity to address objective  
 173 and subjective aspects of their life course, career, everyday work practices, and the work-  
 174 life interface. With the permission of the interviewees, all the interviews were recorded  
 175 and fully transcribed. We then conducted an inductive thematic analysis of the inter-  
 176 view data using Atlas-Ti, a qualitative data analysis software package. We started listing  
 177 references to subjective feelings of estrangement from work and used this list as the basis  
 178 to identify the four-fold typology of experiences of alienation detailed in the following  
 179 section. Segments of each interview referring to one of these dimensions were then sys-  
 180 tematically coded using Atlas-Ti, in order to increase inter-coder reliability. These  
 181 statements were typically elicited when respondents were asked to describe their every-  
 182 day experiences as a lawyer, what they most appreciated or disliked about their job, their

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1. Sources: Ordre des Avocats du Barreau de Paris, Ordre des Avocats de Genève, Ordre des Avocats Vaudois.

2. Two lawyers with longer seniority were also included in our study, because their accounts offer vivid descriptions of different experiences of alienation at different career stages.

3. Our interview sample covers the different legal areas listed in the After the JD study (2015): commercial law, corporate law, tax law, commercial litigations, criminal law, business criminal law, civil law, employment law, insurance, social security and health law, intellectual property law, environmental law, family law, civil rights, immigration law, public law, and real estate law.

183 past and current workplaces, or their career development. This approach enabled us  
 184 to elicit direct and indirect accounts of alienation: direct, through accounts of pro-  
 185 fessional practices and attitudes, sense of achievement, and feelings regarding the  
 186 workplace; and indirect, through accounts of the different actions, efforts, or strate-  
 187 gies developed by professionals to reinforce the positive content and the social util-  
 188 ity of their work.

## 189 REFINING THE THEORY OF ALIENATION IN THE LEGAL 190 PROFESSION

191 The legal profession offers a Janus-like picture. On the one hand, scholars have  
 192 shown how neoliberalism, with the combined effects of globalization, pressure for prof-  
 193 itability, and the numerical expansion of large law firms, has profoundly transformed the  
 194 profession (Flood 2013; Sommerlad 2002). Early career lawyers feel this transformation  
 195 of legal work all the more powerfully. Their work has intensified and become ever more  
 196 specialized. There seems to be no limit to the pressure from clients and partners on their  
 197 productivity. Attrition rates are high during the early stages of the legal career, with  
 198 women lawyers being particularly likely to express the desire to leave the occupation  
 199 after a relatively short period of time (Kay et al. 2013, 2016).

200 On the other hand, many studies find feelings of satisfaction among lawyers with  
 201 respect to their career choices and achievements. Thus, much research on lawyers in the  
 202 United States has documented the persistently high levels of satisfaction among North  
 203 American lawyers, despite blatant gender inequalities, increasing student debt, and fall-  
 204 ing income levels (Sterling and Reichman 2010; Dinovitzer et al. 2013).

205 This Janus-like picture requires a new theoretical vocabulary to capture how the  
 206 neoliberalization of the legal profession impacts the subjective relationship to work of  
 207 young practitioners in an elite profession such as law. The concept of alienation appears  
 208 to be a good candidate for this task insofar as it focuses on the *concrete* experience of  
 209 work and refers to feelings of disempowerment that, we argue, occur even in the most  
 210 prestigious occupational contexts.

211 Marx initially formulated the concept of alienation to describe the experiences of  
 212 manual workers in the first stages of capitalist industrialization (Yuill 2011). However,  
 213 the concept has also been used to analyze the experiences of white-collar workers (Mills  
 214 2002 [1951]; Seeman 1975), including scientists and engineers (Miller 1967). Also dis-  
 215 cussing Marxist theory, other scholars (Derber 1983; Derber, Schwartz, and Magrass  
 216 1990) have focused more on the notion of proletarianization but similarly insisted  
 217 on the loss of autonomy and sense of purpose experienced by professionals in late capi-  
 218 talism. More recently, several authors have used the concept of alienation to account for  
 219 the manifold psychosociological effects of post-industrial neoliberalism on the experi-  
 220 ence of workers. For example, Marilyn Strathern has used the concept of alienation to  
 221 describe the effects of the expansion of an “audit culture” in academic organizations  
 222 (2000). Likewise, Christophe Dejours has used it to describe the new health risks asso-  
 223 ciated with individualized, performance-based evaluation procedures in contemporary  
 224 firms (2004, 2006).

**TABLE 1.**  
**The Four Experiences of Alienation**

Forms of Alienation	Dispossession	Contradiction
Linked to the intrinsic content of work	<i>Powerlessness</i>	<i>Purposelessness</i>
Linked to the extrinsic rewards of work	<i>Time deprivation</i>	<i>Unfairness</i>

225 The heuristic value of this concept lies in its ability to focus on work as an *experi-*  
 226 *ence* and to take into account both objective working conditions and the ways in which  
 227 these are subjectively interpreted by the people concerned. For Marx (1972 [1844]) and  
 228 his followers, the concept of alienation (*Entfremdung*) designates a social process of  
 229 *estrangement* from oneself and from society. Marx referred to a three-fold subjective  
 230 and objective experience of estrangement: from control over work content (powerless-  
 231 ness); from the intrinsic meaning of work and sense of self (meaninglessness); and from  
 232 others and social utility, or “estrangement of man from man” (Marx 1972 [1844]).  
 233 Contemporary studies adapt this theoretical framework to understand how contingent  
 234 work, especially temporary work, affects workers’ experience with a threefold deterio-  
 235 ration of their relations to work, to others, and to themselves (Rogers 1995; Halbesleben  
 236 and Clark 2010).

237 The concept of alienation, however, demands further clarification and elaboration  
 238 in the case of an elite profession that supposedly provides its members with intrinsic  
 239 sources of satisfaction (e.g. meaningful work) and extrinsic gratifications (e.g. monetary  
 240 and symbolic status rewards), and for which levels of satisfaction are often high. The  
 241 literature nevertheless shows that lawyers, like other elite professionals, experience var-  
 242 ious processes that can be captured under the theoretical concept of alienation, even  
 243 when scholars do not systematically use the concept (Kay et al. 2013; Collier 2016;  
 244 Plickert et al. 2017). Indeed, they describe social mechanisms that are typical of alien-  
 245 ation in that they affect and “distort” the relationship to the self, to others and to the  
 246 world. The work environment for lawyers generates a loss of “agency” and a feeling of  
 247 *dispossession*—understood in the sense of the ability to create, explore and enlarge one’s  
 248 inner and outer worlds. It also generates a gap between desires or aspirations and con-  
 249 crete experiences which fuels a feeling of *contradiction*, because efforts remain unre-  
 250 wardered and promises unkept (Haber 2007, 2008).

251 Drawing both on this literature, and, inductively, on our empirical data,  
 252 we propose a typology of four alienation processes: powerlessness, purposelessness,  
 253 time deprivation, and unfairness (Table 1). The first two processes, powerlessness  
 254 and purposelessness, are the most evidently linked to alienation, while unfairness  
 255 and time deprivation have mostly been studied outside of this theoretical  
 256 framework.

257 We first use the term of *powerlessness* to designate the various forms of dependency  
 258 experienced by young lawyers and their effects. Young lawyers are dependent on the  
 259 partners in their firm for *all* the aspects of their job, especially in big law firms: partners  
 260 assign clients and cases and decide to impose (or not) large amounts of paperwork and  
 261 repetitive tasks on their subordinates. The vivid descriptions of the first years as junior

262 associates<sup>4</sup> in our interviews often resemble accounts of secretarial work in industrial  
 263 bureaucracies in the mid-twentieth century (Kanter 1977). For Rosabeth Moss  
 264 Kanter, work in secretarial pools involved three characteristics: “status contingency,”  
 265 “principled arbitrariness,” and “fealty” related to the “patrimonial power” of managers.  
 266 Partners in law firms have a similar kind of “patrimonial power”: junior lawyers also rank  
 267 the interest of their tasks according to the prestige of their boss (status contingency).  
 268 Partners frequently impose sacrifices on associates, seemingly without motive (principled  
 269 arbitrariness). Finally, after completing an unequal share of “dirty work” (Hughes 1971),  
 270 associates may be rewarded with the opportunity to work on an interesting case  
 271 (Kanter’s “fealty”). Feelings of powerlessness are also fueled by the fact that the quantity  
 272 and quality of a lawyer’s workload depends to a large extent on their clients (Beckman  
 273 and Philipps 2005). This dependency is further enhanced by the uncertainty of legal mar-  
 274 kets. Hence young lawyers’ three-fold dependency—on partners, on clients, and on the  
 275 market—can fuel intense feelings of powerlessness, or dispossession of one’s own work.

276 Workers in diverse occupations or professions share a quest for “meaningful work,”  
 277 (Bailey and Madden 2017) or for “task identity”—“being able to see the end-to-end  
 278 connection of their work” (Shantz et al. 2015, 385). *Purposelessness*, or a perceived lack  
 279 of meaning and utility of one’s work, is experienced by many young lawyers.<sup>5</sup> They  
 280 express a growing gap between their initial expectations of being a lawyer and their  
 281 work experience. They came to the job with expectations about the profession valuing  
 282 creativity and social justice, a symbolically valued dimension especially in the French  
 283 context (Karpik 1999). Rather than pursuing legitimate and socially valued goals, such  
 284 as defending the interests of low-income private clients, they find themselves working  
 285 on, for example, the technical routines of fiscal optimization.

286 The third type of experience of alienation that we identify is *time deprivation*, a  
 287 direct consequence of the well documented “long hours culture” (Sommerlad 2002;  
 288 Flood 2013) within the legal profession, characterized by the norm of unlimited dedi-  
 289 cation to the firm and to clients (Hagan and Kay 2010; Kay et al. 2013, 2016). While  
 290 time deprivation is documented in literature focused on work-life balance (Sommerlad  
 291 2016; Thornton 2016b), it can easily and productively be included in the broader con-  
 292 ceptual framework of alienation. Indeed, it captures lawyers’ experience of being dispo-  
 293 sessed of their personal time. While elite professions are supposed to reward their  
 294 members with extrinsic rewards, such as time sovereignty or leisure time, young lawyers  
 295 experience a “time bind” (Hochschild 1997), which is simultaneously orchestrated by  
 296 their firm and their clients. The time pressure put on lawyers generates a general sense of  
 297 “missing out on life” and a feeling of confinement, including feelings of being “caught  
 298 up in work” while friends and relatives are living more fulfilling lives. It affects lawyers’  
 299 sense of social integration and brings a general feeling of having no time for oneself,  
 300 even when lawyers do have a family and close relationships. The notion of time deprivation  
 301 brings attention to the intertwining of professional and private lives (Walsh 2013).

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4. In this Article, we use the terms typically used in law firms—“associate” and “partner”—to distin-  
 guish two different types of positions in the organizational hierarchy of law firms. “Associate” designates  
 junior lawyers contributing to the legal activities of a law firm without ownership of the clientele, whereas  
 “partner” labels lawyers owning the firm and the clientele.

5. This second dimension is consistent with Marx’s idea of “estrangement of man from man” or “social  
 isolation” and with Dejours’s dimension of “social alienation” (2006).

302 The long hours culture weighs heavily on personal decisions (e.g. the timing and num-  
 303 ber of children), while marital or family arrangements in turn open certain career  
 304 options and potentially close others (Plickert and Hagan 2011).

305 A last component of alienation that we identify is *unfairness*, which refers to sit-  
 306 uations experienced by lawyers—particularly those with low professional status and/or  
 307 at the beginning of their careers—who feel that the rules that preside over career  
 308 advancement, workload definitions, or working time requirements, are in contradiction  
 309 with the meritocratic ideal defended in corporate official rhetoric. While inequalities in  
 310 legal careers have been the object of much research (Hagan and Kay 1995; Epstein et al.  
 311 1995; Sommerlad 2002; Garth and Sterling 2009; Kay, Alarie, and Adjei 2016), we  
 312 argue that perception and feelings of unfairness are also part of alienation processes,  
 313 a theoretical relation rarely identified in the literature. Perception of unfairness in  
 314 the workplace can arise from direct experiences of being treated badly, but also from  
 315 witnessing colleagues being unfairly treated or discriminated against on the basis of their  
 316 gender, family status or ethnicity. It can also arise from the feeling that expectations  
 317 (such as the number of billable hours to be clocked up) are unrealistic. These subjective  
 318 perceptions of unfairness damage young lawyers' relationship to their work and to the  
 319 profession as a whole. Unfairness means that expected rewards are not received and this  
 320 threatens the willingness of lawyers to accept unfavorable working conditions over  
 321 extended periods of time, and fuels desires for career changes.

322 As Table 1 shows, powerlessness and time deprivation relate analytically to alien-  
 323 ation as “dispossession,” while purposelessness and unfairness describe experiences of  
 324 “contradiction.” These four dimensions of alienation also distinguish experiences that  
 325 are directly linked to work as an activity—powerlessness and purposelessness— and expe-  
 326 riences relating to the rewards and gratifications derived from work—time deprivation  
 327 and unfairness. While these processes of alienation often interact and can be experienced  
 328 simultaneously, we have chosen to treat them separately for analytical purposes.

329 What are the variables that may influence young lawyers' feelings of alienation?  
 330 We draw four variables from the literature. While they do not exhaust all the variables  
 331 that may influence feelings of alienation, they are central to explaining who among  
 332 young lawyers is susceptible to experience more or less alienation at work. These var-  
 333 iables are: firm size, professional status, gender, and family situation (being a parent  
 334 or not).

335 Research has shown that different size law firms provide very different professional  
 336 environments (Flood 2013; Heinz et al. 2005). Studies on big law firms show, for  
 337 instance, the importance of work intensification (Sommerlad 2016), which has poten-  
 338 tial effects on autonomy. Additionally, subordinate positions differ significantly from  
 339 management and self-employed positions as they expose even highly qualified profes-  
 340 sionals to specific situations of “principled arbitrariness” and “fealty” (Kanter 1977), as  
 341 noted before. Hence, we can hypothesize that firm size and the position in the firm, in  
 342 particular associate or partner, will impact reported powerlessness and purposelessness.

343 Two dimensions of alienation—unfairness and time deprivation—can easily be  
 344 related to the negative effects of a gendered professional ethos. The ethos of extensive  
 345 dedication to work and the long hours culture (Seron and Ferris 1995; Sommerlad  
 346 2002), as well as the definition of merit shared by many professional services  
 347 (Kumra 2014), is inherently shaped by a “masculine mystique” (Acker 1992; Hagan

348 and Kay 2010). This ethos impacts men and women differently since it favors lawyers  
 349 who can easily delegate domestic labor and care in the private sphere. However, despite  
 350 lower salaries and more limited career prospects (Epstein et al. 1995; Schultz and Shaw  
 351 2003; Sommerlad 2016; Kay et al. 2013, 2016), empirical studies in the United States  
 352 show that female lawyers declare higher rates of satisfaction than their male counter-  
 353 parts (Hagan and Kay 1995; Heinz et al. 2005). Women in a variety of other professions  
 354 echo these relatively high satisfaction rates (Zou 2015). Our empirical data helps  
 355 explain the “paradox” of satisfaction (Hull 1999, cited in Dinovitzer and Garth  
 356 2007)<sup>6</sup>—high levels of declared satisfaction accompanied by high attrition rates and  
 357 declared desire to leave the profession—and the extent to which gendered inequalities  
 358 shape experiences of alienation for women and men.

359 Last, being a parent is also expected to deeply affect lawyers’ relationship to  
 360 work. Although having children probably has no direct effect on a lawyer’s sense  
 361 of powerlessness or purposelessness, in a profession still dominated by a long-hours  
 362 culture, parenthood may be associated with the experience of alienation as time dep-  
 363 rivation. This effect may of course be gendered. Although a long-term historical shift  
 364 toward a more involved and caring fatherhood model has been identified (Brannen  
 365 and Nilsen 2006), on average, women still have a greater share of parental labor and  
 366 domestic chores especially following the birth of their first child (Bühlmann,  
 367 Elcheroth, and Tettamanti 2009). Parenthood is also likely to trigger discrimination  
 368 and experiences of unfairness. In the legal profession, because of the masculine ethos,  
 369 mothers appear very often exposed to a specific set of discriminations, while fathers are  
 370 rewarded with career opportunities, provided that they stick to a male breadwinner model  
 371 (Hagan and Kay 2010).

## 372 HOW YOUNG FRENCH AND SWISS LAWYERS EXPERIENCE 373 ALIENATION

374 We find that all young lawyers interviewed reported at least one form of alienation  
 375 when narrating their work experience.

376 Table 2 displays the distribution of the four types of alienating experiences in the  
 377 interviews. It shows that each type of alienation was elicited in more than half of the  
 378 interviews. Time deprivation (195 codes) was the most frequently expressed dimension,  
 379 followed by powerlessness (152) and unfairness (147 codes). Purposelessness was men-  
 380 tioned less frequently, but was nevertheless identified in 24 interviews (76 codes). Thus,  
 381 our qualitative data suggests that the lawyers we interviewed express more easily alien-  
 382 ation as deprivation (powerlessness and time deprivation) than alienation as contradic-  
 383 tion (purposelessness and unfairness).

384 References to the different types of alienation were not evenly distributed across  
 385 the full range of occupational contexts and types of practice. In Table 3, we consider

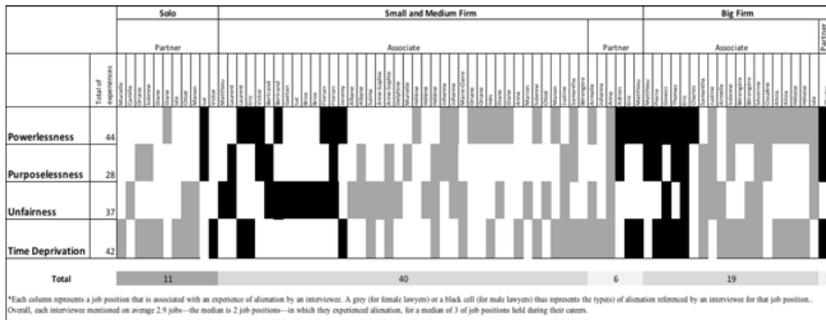
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6. It is beyond the scope of this Article to discuss in depth why satisfaction indexes (e.g., Hagan and Kay 1995; Heinz et al. 2005) may miss part of the picture of lawyers’ work experience. Scholars have already provided convincing elements to explain the paradox of satisfaction (Dinovitzer and Garth 2007). Our aim here is rather to complement this approach, taking a new angle to understand young lawyers’ experience as one of alienation rather than one of dissatisfaction.

**TABLE 2.**  
The Four Faces of Alienation in Interviews

N = 41 interviews	Time				Total
	Powerlessness	Purposelessness	Deprivation	Unfairness	
Occurrences	152	76	195	147	570
Nb. %					100%
Interviews referring at least once to each dimension	34	24	36	35	38
					100%

**TABLE 3.**  
The Four Faces of Alienation Across Various Job Positions and Practice Settings



386 each experience of alienation as an analytical unit and analyze how it relates to specific  
 387 work environments and job position. For example, when an interviewee recounted  
 388 three different job positions in which s/he experienced alienation, three separate occur-  
 389 rences appear in the table. This analytical technique provides a visual illustration of  
 390 how episodes of alienation are distributed across different career stages and occupational  
 391 contexts. Table 3 shows that as lawyers move up in the status hierarchy of the law firm,  
 392 they may experience alienation as deprivation related to work (powerlessness) less  
 393 strongly than before, but they experience alienation as time deprivation as strongly  
 394 as—if not more strongly than—before. This finding is interesting, suggesting that alien-  
 395 ation never disappears, but that its forms change over a career. Table 3 also suggests that  
 396 for each form of alienation, episodes seem more frequent in big law firms than in smaller  
 397 size law firms, although the data is suggestive rather than conclusive.

398 **Powerlessness**

399 Within our interview sample, 34 interviewees out of a total of 41 mentioned experi-  
 400 ences of powerlessness. These feelings arose in situations where lawyers felt strongly  
 401 dependent: on their firms, on the partners they work for, on their clients, or sometimes  
 402 on the structure of legal markets. Associates in large law firms and solo practitioners  
 403 were particularly prone to feelings of powerlessness. The powerlessness of the associates

404 was mainly the result of their dependency on the partner they work for, while the pow-  
 405 erlessness of solo practitioners was the result of their unremitting search for (solvent)  
 406 clients in an increasingly competitive economic context.

407 Many interviewees emphasized the nature of their relations with partners in their  
 408 law firm and gave examples of “fealty” (Kanter 1977), describing different forms of per-  
 409 sonalized pressure and authoritarian practices of the partners. The decisive impact of  
 410 “the boss” on the general workplace atmosphere was frequently mentioned. Alicia, a  
 411 thirty-eight-year-old Parisian in-house lawyer specializing in anti-trust regulation  
 412 described her previous place of work as “a good firm, but the partner was very . . .  
 413 bad-tempered so she tended to give everyone a hard time.” Dimitri, a thirty-seven-  
 414 year-old Swiss business development manager who had previously worked for a big  
 415 law firm, also described the whims of his former senior partner, who made him come  
 416 into work even when he had pneumonia, resulting in him ending up in the hospital. For  
 417 young associates, these experiences of dependency have practical consequences. Their  
 418 future career prospects depend directly on the cases they are given and thus on the good  
 419 will of the partners on whom they depend.

420 The bureaucratized structure of large law firms also resulted in young lawyers feeling  
 421 that they lacked autonomy. Experiences of dependency leading to feelings of powerlessness  
 422 appear to be particularly frequent in junior positions in large law firms (17 interviews),  
 423 especially in the most prestigious ones where junior associates are expected to play by  
 424 the rules of the “up-or-out” Cravath system and to perform a large number of high-quality  
 425 assignments to be promoted to partnership (Galanter and Paley 1991).<sup>7</sup> Lawyers who had  
 426 worked in such settings emphasized feelings of organizational entrapment, and of being  
 427 “a pawn in the game.” Interviewees often referred to these bureaucratic working environ-  
 428 ments as a “huge machine” or even a “war machine.” In these organizations, the require-  
 429 ment of billing hours produces a culture of surveillance and control that made many  
 430 interviewees uncomfortable. For Matthieu, a forty-one-year-old French partner in a small  
 431 law firm that specializes in employment law, large firms “with their demands, their financial  
 432 constraints, require tools (in fact, loads of tools) to control time, to control the time of  
 433 partners, of associates, of paralegals as well.” In justifying his decision to work in a small  
 434 law firm, he stated, “I don’t fit into this mold, I can’t work like that.”

435 Some interviewees working in solo practice or in small- and medium-sized law  
 436 firms also experienced a sense of powerlessness. In these cases, this feeling came from  
 437 their sense of being trapped in relations of service. These interviewees said that their  
 438 dependence on clients—a matter of survival—made control over their workload  
 439 impossible. As Armelle, a thirty-six-year-old French partner in a medium-sized firm,  
 440 stated:

441 Here, it’s a very competitive environment, you can’t afford to say “no” to a big  
 442 client who asks you on a Friday to check over and validate a corporate agree-  
 443 ment . . . before Monday. . . . No, if you do that, you lose your client, so . . .

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7. This system—established by Paul Cravath’s firm at the end of the nineteenth century—entails “hiring outstanding graduates straight out of law school on an understanding that they might progress to partnership after an extended probationary period; requiring them to work for the firm only” (Galanter and Palay 1991, 9).

444 For Diane, a thirty-six-year-old employment law specialist, being a solo partner meant  
 445 feeling isolated while facing multiple types of “stress” coming from different quarters  
 446 (judges, clients, etc.):

447       And then it’s . . . well, you have to face the stress of colleagues, the stress of  
 448 judges, the stress of clients. And on top of that, you know, the stress related to  
 449 our independent status, which means: “How am I going to pay my social secu-  
 450 rity contributions this month?” I’m fine now, but the stress is always there . . .

451 Depending on whether lawyers are in solo practice or working in a big law firm, alien-  
 452 ation presents different features. On the one hand, solo practitioners’ experience of  
 453 powerlessness appears more related to their economic precariousness and to their  
 454 dependency on ever-elusive clients. In big law firms, the inherent dependency of  
 455 junior lawyers on partners, the techniques used to control their working time and  
 456 work content and their ultimate dependency on clients converge to produce intense  
 457 feelings of dependency and dispossession.

#### 458 **Purposelessness**

459 Experiences of purposelessness appeared in two contexts. In the first case, lawyers  
 460 mentioned purposelessness as the result of overspecialization in their work, which they  
 461 found far removed from the professional ideal of intellectual stimulation and creativity.  
 462 Purposelessness was also in evidence when interviewees felt that their work was lacking  
 463 social utility. In this case, purposelessness often acted as the justification for a spectac-  
 464 ular career change. When asked why they decided to turn to a different type of legal  
 465 practice, interviewees often described their decision to change jobs as a matter of solv-  
 466 ing a moral inner conflict and sometimes even of psychological survival.

467 Feelings of purposelessness were particularly prevalent among interviewees from  
 468 large-scale corporate law firms, where the extensive division of labor offers few oppor-  
 469 tunities for autonomous and creative work. Speaking about her former corporate law  
 470 firm, Samantha, a forty-year-old Swiss lawyer currently working for a medium-sized  
 471 company in international arbitration, expressed the sheer boredom of routinized paper-  
 472 work. While a position in a big prestigious corporate law firm might be socially valued,  
 473 she emphasized the lack of creativity that such law practice entails, especially in big  
 474 practice settings.

475       Because of this huge machine, you usually only have control over a little piece  
 476 of the puzzle . . . I did corporate law for almost four years, then I got bored of  
 477 that . . . [laughs] because corporate law, even if it sounds extremely glamor-  
 478 ous, in the end it’s all about writing a contract.

479 Along with overspecialization, a sense of purposelessness also arises when lawyers  
 480 feel that their work does not meet the aspirations for social justice they pursued as stu-  
 481 dents. For example, in her former job as associate for a small firm specializing in labor  
 482 law for corporate clients, Johanna, a thirty-five-year-old French lawyer, managed only

483 occasional *pro bono* work for non-profit organizations. In contrast, her present job in a  
 484 solo practice—specializing in defending unemployed clients against social security  
 485 institutions—appeared much more fulfilling and consistent with her vision of legal  
 486 work. Another example is that of Léa, a twenty-eight-year-old French lawyer who  
 487 was also in solo practice. She insisted on her need to “make a difference” by helping  
 488 individuals rather than corporations. After graduating from a prestigious French busi-  
 489 ness school and then completing law school, she “logically” started her career as a well-  
 490 paid associate in a corporate law firm. However, she soon quit, and was much more  
 491 enthusiastic about her current general practice, despite her smaller salary:

492 I didn’t like my previous position at [big law firm], because I only worked for  
 493 big companies. And at the end of the day, winning a litigation of 3 million  
 494 Euros for [name of a major company] didn’t change anything. Whereas now,  
 495 I mean, fighting for a child’s custody, that’s far more rewarding.

496 Charles, a lawyer in his sixties with a successful career as a partner in a big and  
 497 prestigious Swiss law firm from which he had recently resigned, recounted how his  
 498 recurrent feelings of purposelessness grew over time. He described how he became aware  
 499 of divergences with the rest of the partners about the fundamentals of legal practice, an  
 500 issue they had previously agreed on. Like Léa, Charles differentiated between corporate  
 501 law and what he saw as the “true aim of the legal profession”—defending *people*. For  
 502 him, a majority of today’s lawyers do not really practice law. In his words:

503 Lawyering is about defending someone against the state, defending someone  
 504 who’s in trouble. Well . . . that’s what attracted me to this line of work, . . .  
 505 that’s my conception of this job. Doing corporate law, I have nothing against  
 506 it, but you could be a lawyer or a fiscal consultant. From a job content per-  
 507 spective, there’s no difference, because it’s really about collaborating and  
 508 helping the clients’ business. . . . It’s just that, simply stated, they have noth-  
 509 ing to do with the bar.

510 Interviewees who had already passed through a career “turning point” (Hughes  
 511 1971) were most likely to recount explicit tales of purposelessness, notably related to  
 512 their experience in large, corporate law firms. These lawyers insisted on their current  
 513 feelings of “rebirth” thanks to the new direction in their careers, and provided vivid  
 514 descriptions of the moral contradictions and dilemmas experienced in their former jobs.  
 515 Lawyers who expressed purposelessness in their current position did so when mention-  
 516 ing their “dream” of setting up their own practice. Claudine, a thirty-five-year-old senior  
 517 associate in a French corporate law firm, believed that she was fortunate, because her  
 518 firm encouraged her to undertake *pro bono* activities. However she indirectly expressed  
 519 the purposelessness of her present job position when she described her “dream” for the  
 520 future:

521 I would like something . . . well, something old-fashioned in the sense of,  
 522 well, a firm that would be both excellent in the legal sense and that would  
 523 be involved in the community, as lawyers used to be in the past.

524 Experience of purposelessness generally appears less easy to capture, because  
 525 expressing such a feeling can involve the idea of having made the “wrong” life choices.  
 526 However, a significant number of lawyers working in very specialized domains and in  
 527 business law appear to be particularly prone to this kind of alienation.

## 528 Time deprivation

529 Both interviews and survey data confirmed that a vast majority of lawyers work  
 530 long hours, although these have to be considered in relation to the average (statutory)  
 531 length of the working week in each national context. Based on the web survey, the  
 532 average declared working time for lawyers at the Geneva Bar amounted to 47.1 hours  
 533 (median: 48 hours) while it was 49.7 hours (median: 50 hours) at the Paris Bar and 46.4  
 534 hours (median: 47 hours) in Lausanne.<sup>8</sup> The figures were higher when part-time workers  
 535 were omitted. In French and Swiss corporate law firms, the working hours appeared  
 536 particularly high, with an average of 52.5 hours a week. These figures appeared particu-  
 537 larly high in the French context where the maximum working hours are supposed to be  
 538 35 hours a week while they are supposed to be 45 hours a week in Switzerland.

539 Long work hours have pervasive effects on lawyers’ lives. They reduce the time  
 540 available for personal and social life and can lead to an overwhelming feeling of being  
 541 “eaten up by the job,” both physically and psychologically. Interviewees often told sto-  
 542 ries of cancelled weekends or holidays, of emergency calls, and last-minute cases. They  
 543 expressed a general feeling of being dispossessed of any time sovereignty with a perma-  
 544 nent and unpredictable demand on their time from work. Regardless of practice setting,  
 545 they unanimously defined time patterns at work as “unpredictable.” However, once  
 546 again, large, corporate law firms stand out as places where extensive working hours  
 547 are seen as part and parcel of the job (Collier 2013). In these environments, 24/7 avail-  
 548 ability is usually presented as the “price to pay” for comfortable incomes and promising  
 549 career prospects. As Eric recalled, the prestigious Swiss law firm he used to work for had  
 550 such a tradition of long hours that any newcomer was immediately aware of the stand-  
 551 ards of unlimited availability to which they were expected to comply.

552 We were not forced in any way, we were not told, “This is the best option. It’s  
 553 better to do this rather than that.” But you clearly had to make a choice: “If  
 554 you’re expecting to eventually earn your two million Francs a year, then, this  
 555 is the price you have to pay.” . . . You have the feeling you can’t stop this  
 556 mad horse.

557 The accumulation of long working hours came with many additional sacrifices  
 558 regarding life outside work. Whether single or with a partner or a family, interviewees  
 559 emphasized the negative effects of their job on their social life. After four years with a  
 560 big U.S. law firm (first in New York, then in Paris), Bérèngère realized she was suffering  
 561 from her total lack of personal life. She joked that her cat was her only company when

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8. Respondents answered the question: “How many hours did you work last week (including any professional activities including client meetings, meetings at the Bar Association, etc.)?”

562 she came home late at night. She recalled that she finally started looking for a less  
563 demanding job after one cancelled weekend too many:

564 In fact, the last straw was, I had plans for a weekend break . . . . I knew this  
565 holiday would be just after an important deadline, so I told myself that this  
566 was perfect. . . . And then, the same old story happened, the deadline was  
567 extended. . . . In my friends' eyes, I had already this reputation of being  
568 the girl who has no life, who never goes out.

569 In such narratives, the workplace experience was often linked with the physical  
570 and psychological costs of not having clear time boundaries around work. Manon, a  
571 twenty-eight-year-old French lawyer in a solo criminal law practice, related her feeling  
572 of being "eaten up from the inside" by her job and the psychological balance required to  
573 "survive."

574 For people with a family, sacrificing one's private life was often associated with a  
575 feeling of guilt and with the idea of missing out on important moments. However, the  
576 way the fourteen women and the eight men with children discussed their experience of  
577 parenthood appears very gendered and in vivid contrast. Women, much more than  
578 men, insisted on the guilty feelings they experienced on a daily basis because of the  
579 "time bind" (Hochschild 1997). Of the total of fourteen mothers, all expressed feeling  
580 a permanent "mental burden" (Waltzer 1996), while only two men out of eight explic-  
581 itly talked about moral dilemmas and guilt related to their conflicting parental and pro-  
582 fessional roles. For example, Marie-Claire, a thirty-seven-year-old former partner in a  
583 Swiss medium-sized firm, now a law professor, recalled how, as a divorced mother of  
584 two, she often had her head full of professional "worries" and "deadlines" even when  
585 on vacation with her children and how she was "vaguely aware of their presence near  
586 her while thinking about something else."

587 Above all, many interviewees described time deprivation as a direct consequence  
588 of the professional ethos. Occurring in various organizational settings, it was depicted as  
589 a routine experience of being dispossessed of one's time sovereignty and of one's per-  
590 sonal life.

## 591 **Unfairness**

592 Whereas large- and medium-sized law firms often display apparently formal merit-  
593 ocratic rules inspired by the "up or out" Cravath system, internal promotions and espe-  
594 cially the recruitment of new partners are often the product of biased decision making,  
595 with frequent direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of gender, race/ethnicity,  
596 or other social characteristics (Schultz and Shaw 2003; Garth and Sterling 2009;  
597 Sommerlad 2016).

598 Women were particularly likely to relate experiences of being discriminated against  
599 in their workplace. Some women lawyers become skeptical of their own career prospects  
600 after experiencing or witnessing gender discrimination, which, in interviews, appeared  
601 to be routine in the corporate law firm environment. Anne-Sophie, a twenty-eight-  
602 year-old Swiss former associate in a medium-sized firm who is now a court clerk, insisted

**TABLE 4.**  
**Discriminatory Practices Experienced or Witnessed by Male and Female Lawyers in France and Switzerland over the Past Five Years**

		Have you experienced discriminatory practices in the workplace in the last 5 years?	Have you witnessed discriminatory practices in the workplace in the last 5 years?
	N = 1378		
Women	France	33.3%	35.4%
	Switzerland	32.1%	29.2%
Men	France	7.5%	23.8%
	Switzerland	11%	17.5%

603 on the frequent discrimination that female interns experienced in her previous firm,  
 604 where only men were recruited as associates after their internship. This blatant inequal-  
 605 ity left her feeling like a “second-rate” lawyer. The sense of unfairness was enhanced by  
 606 the disparity she perceived between the claim to value equality espoused by the firm and  
 607 its actual practices.

608 Results from the quantitative survey shed light on the gendered nature of the  
 609 unfairness dimension of alienation. The proportion of women who reported having  
 610 been discriminated against in the last five years in both countries was very high; almost  
 611 one out of three young female lawyers (of the 1,378 surveyed in Paris, Geneva, and  
 612 Lausanne) claimed to have experienced discriminatory practices in the workplace,  
 613 and almost as many women claimed to have witnessed discriminatory practices against  
 614 others (see Table 4). This proportion was three times higher than the proportion of  
 615 French or Swiss male lawyers who claimed to have been the object of discriminatory  
 616 practices, although a quarter of male lawyers in France (and one out of six in  
 617 Switzerland) reported having witnessed discriminatory practices against others.

618 Along with witnessing or experiencing discrimination, unfairness was also associ-  
 619 ated with prevalent gender stereotyping in legal workplaces. Pregnancy often triggered  
 620 negative reactions from colleagues and bosses. Women who had announced their preg-  
 621 nancy at work described being excluded from the most interesting cases. Interviewees  
 622 also said that partners often denied any organizational support to mothers-to-be and  
 623 young mothers, a finding consistent with other studies (Wallace and Kay 2012),  
 624 and that law firms management often suggested that pregnant professionals should  
 625 simply opt out of lawyering, because their future status as mothers would  
 626 prevent them from managing the workload expected of them. Some even reported preg-  
 627 nant that the contracts of women lawyers were terminated under some false pretext.  
 628 Interviewees reported that the ideal image of a lawyer as someone extensively and  
 629 exclusively dedicated to his/her job permeated workplace small talk and meant that  
 630 pregnant lawyers were automatically assigned an inferior rank in the occupational hier-  
 631 archy of prestige. Evidence of sexual harassment practices was also found both in inter-  
 632 views and in the survey and disrespectful comments toward women were very frequently  
 633 reported. The witnessing of disrespectful comments toward women colleagues was  
 634 reported by 67 percent of women respondents and 70 percent of men respondents.

635 The ethos of exclusive commitment to work also affects those men who express the  
 636 desire to reduce their working hours when becoming a parent; they can also be the tar-  
 637 get of negative stereotyping, although less systematically than their female counterparts  
 638 (Burnett et al. 2013). Survey respondents with children were asked whether becoming a  
 639 parent had negative consequences on their professional lives. A significant share of law-  
 640 yers (60.3 percent in Paris, 48.7 percent in Lausanne, 33.6 percent in Geneva) felt they  
 641 had experienced at least one negative consequence of becoming a parent, such as losing  
 642 access to the most interesting caseloads (9.1 percent of total respondents). For instance,  
 643 Eric's initial "fast-track" career slowed down significantly when he decided to ask for a  
 644 90 percent "part-time" position. As he recounted:

645 It was also made perfectly clear that I had no chance of ever becoming a part-  
 646 ner, absolutely no chance. My [decision to work part-time] was like a stigma.  
 647 It was as if it was written all over my face "his job is not his priority."

648 The stigma faced by Eric and by the other rare part-time men lawyers illustrates the  
 649 resistant gender stereotypes that are part of a particularly virile professional ethos.  
 650 However, within this context, male and female junior lawyers face unequal risks of dis-  
 651 crimination and lack of recognition of their professional worth. They are not affected in  
 652 exactly the same way by the observed hiatus between the professional ideal of total ded-  
 653 ication and their actual work practices.

## 654 CONCLUSION

655 This Article goes beyond other scholarship documenting lawyers' lives by offering  
 656 a conceptual framework of alienation that analytically captures how various processes  
 657 influence lawyers' relationship to work that is becoming increasingly intense and spe-  
 658 cialized. This framework helps explain how lawyers' relation to work can deteriorate or  
 659 be tainted over the course of a career. The concept of alienation reveals how various  
 660 aspects of the professional life of young lawyers, marked by increasing uncertainty and  
 661 competition, combine to produce long-term effects on lawyers' relation to their jobs. It  
 662 helps us understand why some lawyers, especially women, may leave law firms, signifi-  
 663 cantly change their type of legal practice, or leave legal practice altogether. Indeed, this  
 664 framework provides a more nuanced picture of the experiences of alienation, as it shows  
 665 how alienation morphs depending on various factors, like career advancement, gender,  
 666 parental status, or the size of the law firm.

667 Mapping the causal relations between each type of alienation and the work expe-  
 668 rience of lawyers would require more systematic exploration. Nevertheless, our inter-  
 669 view data indicates the effects of gender, family situation, firm size, and job status  
 670 on the various forms of alienation lawyers experience. Our data suggests that large  
 671 law firms tend to be more alienating than small-sized law firms (except possibly with  
 672 respect to fairness), that alienation is more often experienced as unfairness by junior  
 673 associates than by senior partners, and that senior partners experience alienation more  
 674 often as time deprivation than do junior partners.

675 Further research could provide additional detail on each of our findings. It could  
 676 investigate how gender, family situation, status, and firm size combine to produce each  
 677 type of alienation. For instance, it would be interesting to explore how the organiza-  
 678 tional resistance to working-time flexibility in large-scale law firms pressures men to  
 679 adhere to a model of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005). Indeed, a fruitful area  
 680 of further research lies in a more refined analysis of strategies that lawyers develop  
 681 in the face of the different experiences of alienation. For instance, interviewees  
 682 described important career turning points as a direct or indirect consequence of expe-  
 683 riences of alienation, however, it is not clear whether women and men lawyers' coping  
 684 strategies differ or how different national gender regimes impact these strategies. At the  
 685 same time, an increasing number of women are gaining political influence within the  
 686 profession by succeeding in getting elected and becoming members of governing bodies  
 687 in bar associations. Thus, a useful line of inquiry might explore whether alienation cop-  
 688 ing strategies contribute to reproducing or to modifying gender relations of power and  
 689 the gendered professional ethos.

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## 860 APPENDIX: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Name (current position)*	Sex	Age	Date/ Bar exam	Legal practice areas	Nb. Of Job Positions as Solo Partner	Nb. Of Job Positions in small & medium firm(s)	Nb. Of Job Positions in big firm(s)**	Nb. Of Job Positions outside the Bar
<b>FRANCE</b>								
Héloïse (In house)	F	38	2000	Corporate Law & securities			2	2
Claudine (senior assoc.)	F	35	2004	Commercial Law			2	
Léa (solo partner)	F	28	2013	General practice, Criminal law, family law	1	2	1	
Manon (solo partner)	F	31	2007	Criminal law	1	1		
Solenne (solo partner)	F	50	1995	Employment law (management & employees)	1	1	1	
Hélène (associate)	F	32	2008	General corporate and commercial law		3		
Alicia (in house)	F	38	2002	Corporate & EU antitrust litigations			2	1
Oriane (solo partner)	F	35	2004	Employment law (employees)		2	1	
Armelle (partner)	F	36	2003	Employment law (management)		2		
Diane (solo partner)	F	37	2002	Employment law (employees)	1	3		
Johanna (Solo partner)	F	35	2010	Social security law	1	2		2
Murielle (solo partner)	F	40	2004	Public & administrative law	1	3		
Albane (partner)	F	43	1999	Commercial & Employment law (managt.)		4		
Camille (partner)	F	45	1998	Criminal law	1	1		
Delphine (senior associate)	F	35	2005	Criminal law	1	2	1	
Laurent (senior assoc.)	M	47	1998	Commercial law	1	2	1	1
Matthieu (partner)	M	41	2002	Employment law (managt.)	1	2	1	

APPENDIX *Continued*

Name (current position)*	Sex	Age	Date/ Bar exam	Legal practice areas	Nb. Of Job Positions as Solo Partner	Nb. Of Job Positions in small & medium firm(s)	Nb. Of Job Positions in big firm(s)**	Nb. Of Job Positions outside the Bar
Jeremy (senior assoc.)	M	40	2003	Intellectual property		1		
Pierre (associate)	M	34	2010	Employment law (managt.)			1	
Bertrand (solo partner)	M	35	2011	Insurance law, General practice	1	2		
Gaetan (associate)	M	32	2012	Public & Administrative law		2		
Luc (solo partner)	M	36	2006	Environmental law	1	1	1	
Florian (solo partner)	M	39	2006	Intellectual property	1	2	1	
Adrien (partner)	M	43	1999	Commercial law, criminal law	1	2		
Brice (senior assoc.)	M	36	2011	Insurance & real estate law		2		1
<b>SWITZERLAND</b>								
Anna (Partner)	F	37	2004	Commercial & tax law		1		1
Séverine (In house)	F	34	2007	Employment law & immigration law		1	1	2
Chloé (Solo partner)	F	34	2007	Criminal law & family law	1	1		
Inès (Partner)	F	41	2005	Immigration law & civil rights	1	1		1
Salma (associate)	F	28	2012	Business crime litigations & commercial law		2		
Samantha (partner)	F	40	2000	International arbitration		1	3	
Bérengère (senior assoc.)	F	32	2008	International arbitration		1	2	1
Anne-Sophie (greffière)	F	28	2012	Criminal law		2		1
Justine (Partner)	F	35	2006	Commercial law, tax law, intellectual property		2	1	
Marie-Claire (Prof.)	F	37	2004	Insurance, health, civil & environment law		2		1

APPENDIX *Continued*

Name (current position)*	Sex	Age	Date/ Bar exam	Legal practice areas	Nb. Of Job Positions as Solo Partner	Nb. Of Job Positions in small & medium firm(s)	Nb. Of Job Positions in big firm(s)**	Nb. Of Job Positions outside the Bar
Marion (partner)	F	32	2014	General practice		2		1
Thomas (Partner)	M	36	2009	Commercial & corporate law		2	1	
Dimitri (in house)	M	37	2006	Commercial & tax law, sport law			1	1
Eric (Partner)	M	38	2006	Commercial & tax law		2	1	
Charles (Solo partner)	M	60	1984	Civil & commercial litigations	1		1	1
Victor (partner)	M	40	2006	General practice	1	1		

\*Unless stated otherwise, all names have been changed in order to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewees.

\*\*The columns display the numbers of job positions held by interviewees in each type of practice settings during their professional trajectory. They give a rapid summary of the type and variety of professional experiences for each interviewee.