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**Motivations, goals and life strategies of
Hungarian law students based on an
empirical study**

The international literature on the selection, motivation, beliefs and socialization of law students is very extensive¹. Such studies can strengthen the conviction that the society of

¹ Nicolae, M.: Legal education, legal practice and ethics. *Legal Education Review*, 25(1), 2015, 237-250.; van Zyl, CH. IV– Visser, J.: Legal Ethics, Rules of Conduct and the Moral Compass – Consideration from a Law Student’s Perspective. *PER/PELJ* 2016(19) – DOI, 2016; Townes O’Brien, M. – Tang, S. – Hall, K.: Changing our Thinking: Empirical Research on Law Student Wellbeing, Thinking Styles and the Law Curriculum. *Legal Education Review*, 9 (2011) 21 149; Rathjen, GJ.: The Impact of Legal Education on the Beliefs, Attitudes and Values of Law Students. *Tennessee Law Review*, Vol. 44. 1976. 85-118; W Larcombe, I Malkin, P Nicholson: Law students' motivations, expectations and levels of psychological distress: Evidence of connections. *Legal Education Review* 22, 71., 2012.; Watson, P.: Leading Change in Legal Education: Interesting Ideas for Interesting Times. *Legal Education Review* 9; (2012) 22(1) 199; Townes O’Brien, M.: Connecting Law Student Wellbeing to Social Justice, Problem-solving and Human Emotions. *QUT Law Review* Volume 14, Number 1, 2014, 52; Henderson, B. R.: Asking the lost question: what is the purpose of law school. (2003) 50 *Journal of Legal Education* 48.; Christopher Gane, Robin Hui Huang: *Legal Education in the Global Context: Opportunities and Challenges*. Routledge, New York, 2016 3 Wolff, L. – Nicolae, M.: *The first-year law experience : a new beginning*. Ultimo, N.S.W. Halstead Press, 2014 4 Stuart, S. – Vance, R.: Bringing a Knife to the Gunfight: The Academically Underprepared Law Student & Legal Education Reform. 48 Val. *U. L. Rev.* 41 (2013-2014) ; Flanagan, R.: The Kids Aren't Alright: Rethinking the Law Student Skills Deficit. 2015 *BYU Educ. & L.J.* 135 (2015); Field, R. – Duffy, J. – James, C.: *Promoting Law Student and Lawyer Well-Being in Australia and Beyond*. Routledge, New York, 2016; Balázs Fekete – Péter Róbert: *Magyar jogi attitűdök tipizálása nemzetközi kontextusban*. *MTA Law Working Papers*, 2017/06 5; Attila Badó – Tamás Nagy: Attitűdvizsgálatok az amerikai joghallgatók körében. *Jogelméleti Szemle*, 2000/3.

the lawyers of the future, the training of law students, should be dealt with scientific rigour.

Based on the analysis of the literature, legal sociological research on Hungarian law students has shown a gradual expansion in recent decades. While in the period of socialism such studies were conducted primarily in the framework of empirical studies of the legal society as a whole² or in research focusing on students in higher education³, today we have several studies specifically examining the social background, motivations and career paths of law students.⁴

Mihály Fónai aptly summarized the conclusions of one of the most comprehensive studies analysing the recruitment of students, the choice of major and profession, the social background of students, and their self-image and professional image: “Based on the results, a group of students with a middle-class background, a solid, consistent professional image and a high level of self-esteem emerge before our eyes, among whom the proportion of women is decisive, and the number of students studying in Budapest the capital, which also strongly attracts graduates from the countryside, is steadily on the increase. These results are also confirmed by the data recordings of the national Graduate Career Tracking System (in Hungarian: Diplomás Pályakövető Rendszer).⁵

In 2016 and 2018, our research group conducted a survey involving Hungarian legal education institutions and gathered the opinions of 1,150 students from eight law faculties⁶ during this quantitative survey. Based on the extremely complex questionnaire,

² Róbert Angelusz – Zoltán Balogh – Mária Körmendy – Pál Léderer – Mária Székelyi: *A jogászság társadalmi helyzete és szakmai életútja (Kutatási beszámoló)*. Oktatási Minisztérium Marxizmus-Leninizmus Oktatási Főosztálya. Budapest, 1977

³ Rudolf Andorka: Az egyetemi és főiskolai hallgatók társadalmi összetétele, 1898–1942. *Statisztikai Szemle* 57. évf. 2. 1979. 176–198. pp.

⁴ Mihály Fónai: *Végzett hallgatók rekrutációja és motivációi*, 2001–2004. Manuscript. Debrecen, 2005.; Mihály Fónai: *A Debreceni Egyetem Állam-és Jogtudományi Kara elsőéves hallgatóinak rekrutációja, valamint szak- és pályaválasztási motivációi*. Manuscript. Debrecen, 2007.; Mihály Fónai: *A jogi és igazgatási képzési területen végzettek elhelyezkedésének presztízs szempontjai*. In: Orsolya Garai – Tamás Horváth – László Kiss – Lilla Szép – Zsuzsanna Veroszta (eds.): *Diplomás pályakövetés IV. Frissdiplomások*. Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft. Felsőoktatási Osztály. Budapest, 2010 27–244. pp. László KELEMEN: *Joghallgatók a jogról*. Sprinter Kiadó. Budapest, 2009.

⁵ Orsolya Garai – Tamás Horváth – László Kiss – Lilla Szép – Zsuzsanna Veroszta (eds.): *Diplomás pályakövetés IV. Frissdiplomások*. Educatio Társadalmi Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft. Felsőoktatási Osztály. Budapest, 2010. 352. p.

⁶

in which the group was curious about a variety of issues, we were able to gain a wide range of knowledge about the Hungarian law student society.

The study was made especially important by the fact that in the years preceding the study we witnessed changes in legal education that could have had an elementary effect on the motivations, social background, performance and self-image of law students.

Research objective and point of departure

The aim of our planned research was to gain comprehensive knowledge of the Hungarian law student society. Our aim was to explore the legal knowledge attitudes, motivations and preferences of law students (especially in public law) regarding the values appearing in the new Fundamental Law, which provoked extensive domestic and international debates in 2011. One of our goals was to gain knowledge about the efficiency of the Hungarian legal training, which can provide usable knowledge for both the Faculties of Law and the legislature.

Our study was based in part on a comparative sociological survey of law students conducted in December 1996 in Szeged and in the summer of 1997 at the University of Göttingen, Germany. In this previous study, we analysed students' attitudes, motivations, and commitment in relation to their legal careers.

However, the 2018 research was not limited to a replica of the previous study, but an attempt to conduct a much more comprehensive, large-sample study with a significant expansion of the study framework.

Research methodology

In Hungary universities epitomise a single location for lawyers to receive formal training before being employed. Legal education lasts 10 semesters (5 years) and at the end of their studies, law students are required to take an oral examination in the most significant subjects, as well as the obligation to submit a thesis. Having passed the final examinations, the student is conferred the degree of doctor of law. (This title is especially attractive for Hungarian high school students, as it gives them a doctoral degree without obtaining a PhD title. After obtaining a degree and the accompanying doctorate, they can start working in one of the classic legal careers to pass the single Bar exam with a minimum of 3 years of experience, entitling them to pursue a career as a lawyer, a judge or a prosecutor, usually depending on the field in which they gained experience before the Bar exam.)

The target groups of the study were first and fourth year law students from the five-year training. Of the 1,150 students, 679 were freshmen (first year students) and 379 were students in their fourth year. 92 people did not specify such information. When interviewing law students, we chose the format of a group self-administered

questionnaire, so students could seek the help of a coordinator familiar with the questionnaire in both cases if they found themselves facing an interpretation problem.

The questionnaire contained 46 closed as well as 13 open questions. The response was voluntary and anonymous. The selection of the sample was randomised among first years and fourth-year law students.

The questionnaire contained questions suitable for follow-up examination, so we will have the opportunity to re-interview the same students in the near future, learning about possible changes in their attitudes.

The aim of the motivational examination

In this study, we present the results of the questionnaire-based quantitative study, which presents the circumstances of law students entering the legal career and their ideas about the career. With our questions, we sought to answer the question of what primarily influences the career choices of law students. Was the decision made as a result of their interest or some external (e.g. parental) influence? We also examined how students perceive the prestige of different professions (including the legal profession), which can fundamentally determine motivation. We also examined their ideas in terms of how legal careers are valued in terms of prestige. In connection with the exploration of the “internal” prestige structure, we also wanted to get an idea of their long-term ideas.

In 2012, a significant change manifested itself in the field of legal training as a result of a government decision that minimised the state-funded places in legal training. Until then, the Hungarian State had provided specific funding to state and non-state-maintained (e.g. church) institutions after each Hungarian law student. The vast majority of students were thus able to continue their studies free of charge. As a result of the changes (which, in addition to the training of lawyers, affected the training of economists in Hungary), a large number of law students were suddenly obligates to pay tuition for their university studies. (State-funded financing remained available only to a negligible proportion of students with the highest enrolment scores.)

The above changes resulted in a significant decline in interest in legal training. In parallel with the decline in interest, it was also observed that students were now able to enter tuition courses with significantly lower average admission scores nationwide. The essence of the Hungarian higher education admission system is that on the basis of secondary school studies and certain other results (e.g. knowledge of a foreign language), applicants obtain a score. The State determines the minimum score for law faculties above which students can enter each institution. (The admission threshold may vary by training site based on complex algorithms.)

According to our hypothesis, the indicated changes had a more significant effect on the level of legal knowledge measured in other parts of the research or on the social situation of students not analysed in the present study. However, this is difficult to prove in the absence of previous similar measurements.

1. Commitment to the legal profession

The first question of our study focused on the period in which law students made the decision to choose the legal profession. The longer this decision is made, the more motivated the student is to be admitted, and we assume that he or she will feel more committed to the legal profession. The vast majority of students appear to have made the decision to enrol in law school during their high school studies. However, one fifth of the students made this decision earlier, back in primary school.

In the 2018 survey, 20.5% of law students in primary school, 61.3% in high school, 7.3% immediately upon filling in the application form, and only 3.1% after having found employment that they decided to apply for a law degree.

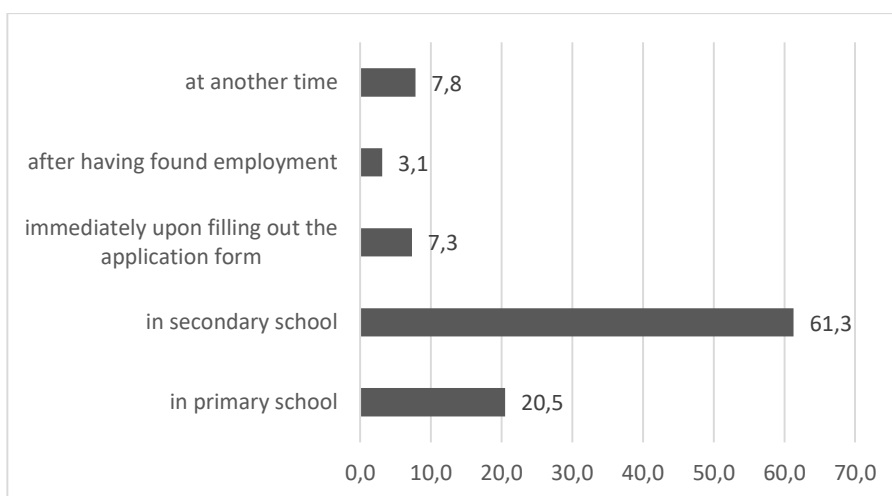
Table 1

When did you decide to apply to law school?

	%
in primary school	20.5
in secondary school	61.3
immediately upon filling out the application form	7.3
after having found employment	3.1
at another time	7.8

Chart 2

When did you decide to apply to law school?



In 2018, students who applied to law school after starting or completing another BA degree or after completing higher vocational education fall into the category of those who decided at “another time” - which is almost 8% of the sample.

Based on the answers of the students, other professions and occupations occurred in 62.9% of cases, only 37.1% of them aimed exclusively for the legal career.

2. Targeted career choice or collision of professions?

We also asked students if another profession was in store when choosing a career.

Table 2

In addition to a legal career, did you have any other professional aspirations when choosing your career?

	%
No	37.1
Yes	62.9

Table 3

What other professions have occurred to you more seriously when choosing a career?

	%
[economist]	16
[teacher]	12
[physician]	9
[historian]	10

Of the listed occupations, economics (16%) and teaching (12%) are the two most frequently mentioned occupations, despite the fact that by 2018 the mention rate of both careers decreased significantly compared to the 1996 survey in Szeged. The medical and historian careers became much more popular by 2018 than they were in 1996, with many choosing these occupations as an alternative. The choice of alternative occupations is certainly related to the evaluation of the popularity, social perception and prestige of the given occupation at the time of the evaluation, so these changes also appear in the choice of alternative occupations.

We also looked for the answer to the question of what other profession and occupation arose in the form of an open-ended question among those students who were not exclusively prepared for a legal career before applying for admission. The result is very diverse, almost all fields are represented, from agricultural occupations to technical occupations to occupations in humanities (psychologist, sociologist, political scientist), but there are also artistic occupations such as musician, music historian, dancer, but e.g. that of a police officer as well.

3. Parental support

The parents of the responding law students generally agreed with their children's career choice, 65.2% very much agreed, and 30.1% agreed. Only 4.1% indicated that their parents did not really agree with their career choice, and 0.5% of parents explicitly opposed the legal career. Overall, parents supported their children's legal studies. 95.3% of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the choice of their child.

Table 4

To what extent did your parents agree with your application to law school?

	%
did not agree at all	.5
did not really agree	4.1
agreed	30.1
fully agreed	65.2

Parents influenced 29.9% of the responding students in their career choice, while in the case of 70.1% of them exercised no such influence. Compared to the previous study in Szeged in 1996, the proportion of those who were not influenced by their parents in their choice increased, in other words, we can observe a type of “independence” process, where parents increasingly let their children choose their future occupation.

Table 5

Did your parents influence your career choice?

	%
No	70.1
Yes	29.9

4. Interest in humanities or sciences?

As in the 1996 study, we were still curious to what extent law students could be considered to be interested in humanities or sciences. In a comparative study of Hungarian and German students in the 1990s, we were able to conclude that German students are typically rationally oriented and have less interest in humanities than Hungarian law students.⁷

The 2018 study does not show much change compared to the 1996 results. 85% of the respondents had History as one of their favourite subjects in secondary school, 54% marked Hungarian literature and grammar, 60% marked a foreign language as a favourite subject, 17% Mathematics, 22% Geography, 16% Art subjects, and 13% of law students marked Biology. Physics and Chemistry were the least marked as favourite subjects, with only 5% of respondents indicating that Physics was their favourite subject. Furthermore, Chemistry was also considered by a few, only 6% of the respondents, as a beloved subject.

Table 6

Favorite subjects in secondary school

	%
[History]	85
[Foreign language (English, German, French, Italian, etc.)]	60
[Hungarian literature and grammar]	54
[Geography]	22

⁷ ATTILA BADÓ – HELGA FEITH: *Magyar joghallgatók motivációs vizsgálata*. Jogelméleti Szemle. 2000/ 4. szám. <http://jesz.ajk.elte.hu/bado4.html>

[Mathematics]	17
[Art subjects (drawing, singing-music, art history, etc.)]	16
[Biology]	13
[Chemistry]	6
[Physics]	5

5. Motivation

The choice of legal career was and is still influenced by several factors. We sought the answer to what motivates students most when deciding on a career in law.

- Table 7

Distribution of factors influencing the career choice of law students (expressed as a percentage of respondent students)

	was not important at all	was not important	was important	was very important	important and very important combined
profession with high social prestige	3.4	10.2	53.9	32.5	86.4
parental pressure	47.7	30.3	16.6	5.5	22.06
better long-term job opportunities	2.8	5.0	39.2	53.1	92.27
examples by parents, siblings and friends	38.4	27.5	24.6	9.6	34.2
good earning opportunities	1.5	7.4	48.8	42.3	91.1
due to admission subjects	16	26.9	39.6	17.5	57.1
doctoral title	11	27.2	37.8	24	61.8

As the data in the table above show, both “Better long-term job opportunities” and “Good earning opportunities” were over 90% important (both factors were considered

important by more than 90% of students) and “career prestige” was also proved to be an important factor in choosing a legal career.

As can be seen from the data in the last row, the obtainable “Doctoral title” and the subjects taken into account in the admission proved to be more significant motivating factors; however, the importance of “examples by parents, siblings and friends” and “parental pressure” are not strong motivating factors.

6. Evaluation of the legal profession

We have considered and continue to consider it an important issue to examine how law students see where their future profession is placed compared to other intellectual careers. We selected five intellectual occupations - being a physician, secondary school teacher, engineer, lawyer and economist - which had to be ranked according to three different criteria - social prestige, financial esteem and post-graduate employment opportunities. The following table shows the proportion of each occupation selected for first, second, third, fourth, and fifth place in 2018.

Table 8

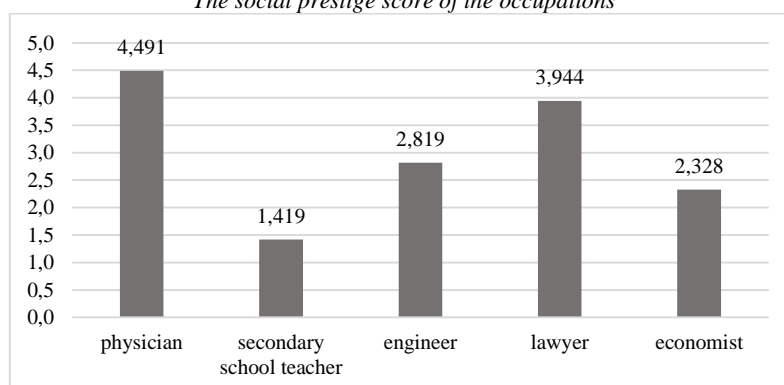
Ranking of social prestige (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

	physician	secondary school teacher	engineer	lawyer	economist
	%	%	%	%	%
First place	70	4.1	3.3	20.8	1.9
Second place	18.6	2.3	11.1	61.4	6.5
Third place	4.7	4.3	53.6	11.1	26.3
Fourth place	3.9	10.1	28.1	4.8	53.1
Fifth place	2.8	79.1	4	1.9	12.2

It can already be seen from the data in the table that physicians and lawyers were placed at a much higher rate at the top of the rankings and at a lower rate at the end of the rankings than other occupations, that is, according to social prestige, these two occupations stand out from the rest according to law students.

For the clarity of interpretation, we created prestige scores from the percentages of the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth places by multiplying the percentage of the first place by 5, the second place by 4, the third by 3, and the fourth by 2. , the fifth by 1, and after summing, the amount was divided by 100. If everyone (100%) were to put an occupation in the first place, then $100\% * 5/100$ would be an integer of 5, i.e. the maximum value of the measure expressing prestige was 5, while if everyone would put that occupation in the last place, then $100\% * 1/100$, i.e. 1 integer would be the smallest value on the scale. The scale thus formed expresses the prestige of a given occupation with a value between 1 and 5.

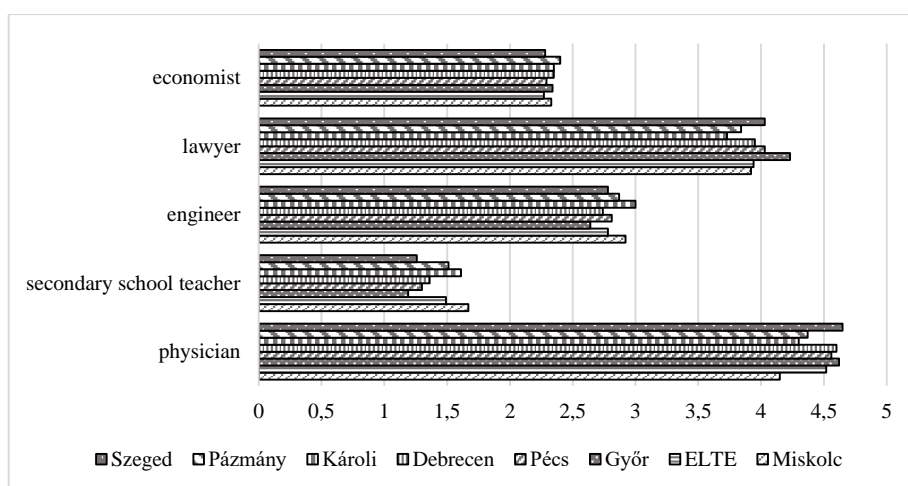
Chart 3

The social prestige score of the occupations

The above diagram confirms our previous finding that, in addition to medicine, the prestige of the legal career was rated as outstanding by law students, so the order of physician - lawyer - engineer - economist - secondary school teacher was formed. Law students therefore value the social prestige of their future profession as good - second only to physicians among the listed professions.

As the following graph shows, examining the assessment of social prestige according to training places, we do not find any significant differences in evaluations, so it can be stated that all students have a similar view of the prestige of occupations and rank their future professions in the second place.

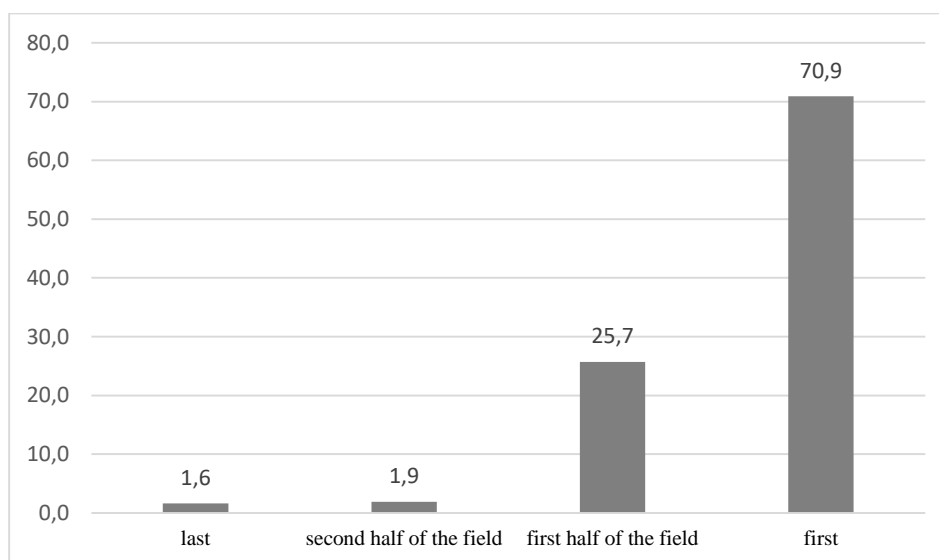
Chart 4

Social prestige score of occupations by training places

Assessing the prestige of the professions differently "Where is the law in general compared to other intellectual careers in terms of social prestige?" the responding law students ranked lawyers among the first and in the first half of the field, similarly to the previous results.

Chart 5

In your opinion, where is the law in general compared to other intellectual careers in terms of social prestige?



In terms of profitability, the situation of law is assessed even more favourably by law students than in terms of social prestige, with lawyers ranked first and second by 61.9% of respondents, engineers by 53.5% and doctors by 47.5%.

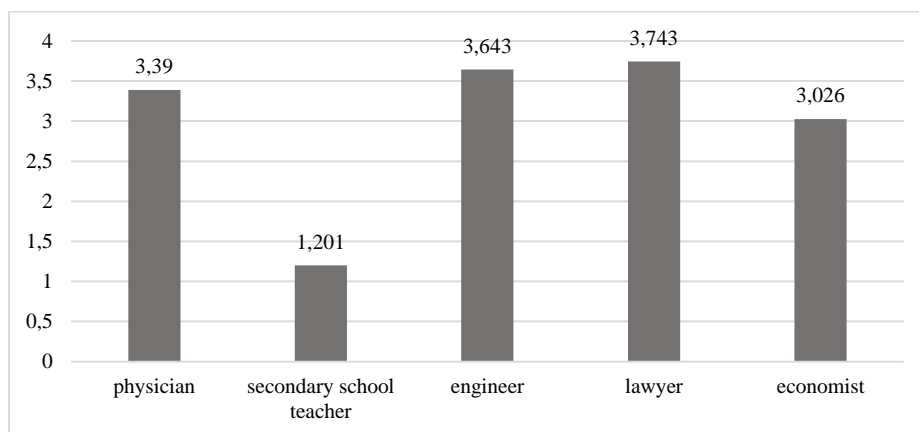
Table 9

Income ranking (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

	physician	secondary school teacher	engineer	lawyer	economist
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
First place	27.5	3.2	31.2	25.8	12.3
Second place	20	0.4	22.2	36.1	21.3
Third place	19.3	0.9	27.4	26.7	25.7
Fourth place	30.2	4.2	18.1	9.4	38.2
Fifth place	3.2	91.4	1.1	2	2.4

Based on income prestige scores, lawyers thus ranked first, with almost the same score as engineers and slightly ahead of physicians. There is almost no difference between lawyers (3.74) and engineers (3.64) and physicians (3.39) are also not significantly behind the previous two occupations.

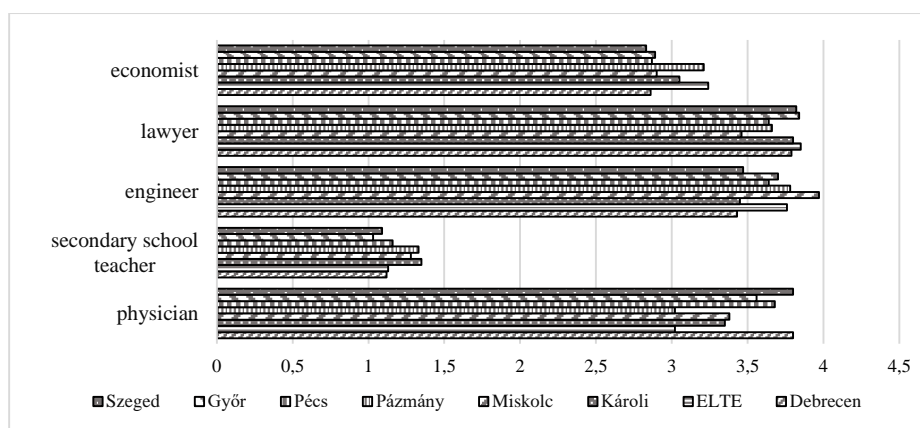
Chart 6

Income prestige scores

Regarding some training places, despite the small differences, a similar order was formed in terms of structure, in one of the two cases it was not the lawyers who came first in terms of financial appreciation, for example, students from University of Miskolc and Catholic University of Péter Pázmány ranked engineers before lawyers in terms of financial esteem.

Chart 7

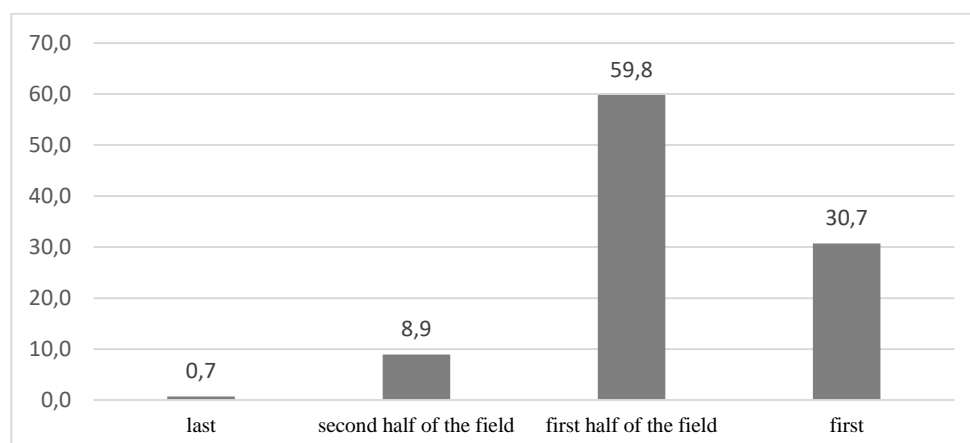
Income prestige scores by training location



Compared to other intellectual careers, similarly to the above assessment, the situation of lawyers is financially favourable, 90.5% of the respondents placed lawyers in the first half of the field and among the first.

Chart 8

In your opinion, where is the law in general compared to other intellectual careers by net monthly income?



In terms of employment opportunities, the chances of employment of physicians and engineers are considered the best by law students, 64.6% of physicians and 56.8% of engineers ranked first and second. From this point of view, the chances of lawyers are seen as worse than those of the previous two occupations, with only 26.3% of respondents placing them in one of the first two places.

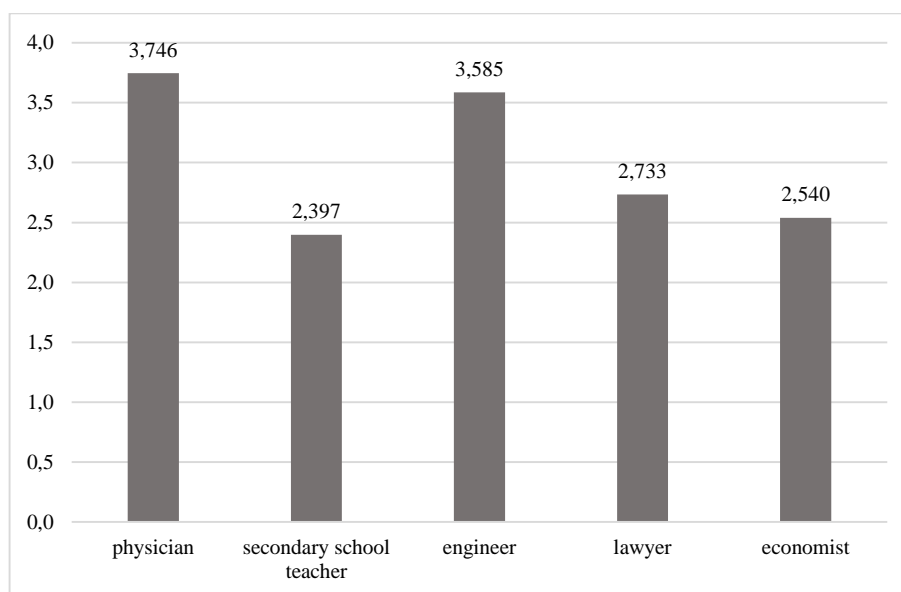
Table 10

Ranking of employment opportunities (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

	physician	secondary school teacher	engineer	lawyer	economist
	%	%	%	%	%
First place	40.1	11.3	28.9	11.9	7.8
Second place	24.5	14.5	27.9	14.4	18.8
Third place	13.8	16.7	22.2	28.2	19
Fourth place	13	17.6	14.9	26.1	28.4
Fifth place	8.7	39.9	6	19.4	26

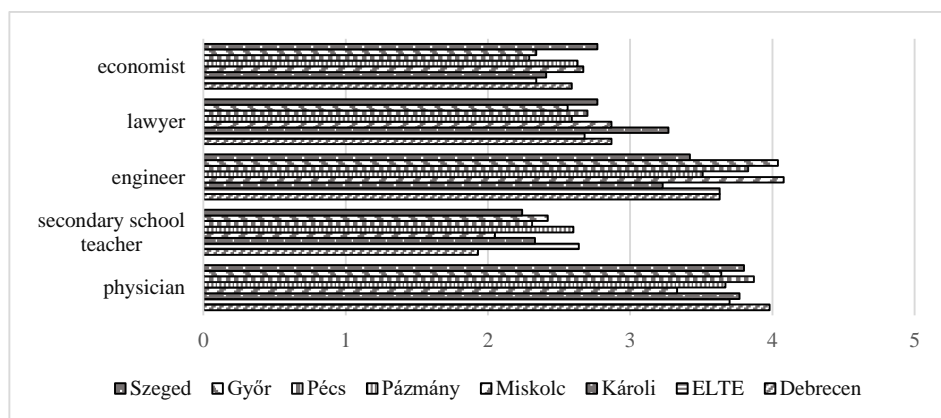
Prestige scores show even more clearly that the chances of finding employment in medical and engineering professions are seen by law students as significantly better than in the other three occupations. Although lawyers are in third place in this respect, they do not go far ahead of the chances of employment for economists and even high school teachers.

Chart 9

Employment opportunities

In terms of training location, a similar order developed for each training place - despite the small differences here as well, in one of the two cases it happened that the lawyers did not rank third in terms of employment chances. For example, students at the Gáspár Károli Calvinist University see much better employment opportunities - almost identical to those of engineers - than others. Although it is not close to the tasks of our analysis to analyse the employment opportunities of other occupations, it is worth pointing out that an important differentiating factor in this respect is the specificity of the settlement that characterises the seat of the university. For example, the size of the settlement, or the employment structure of the settlement, which determines, influences the employment opportunities of each occupation in the settlement.

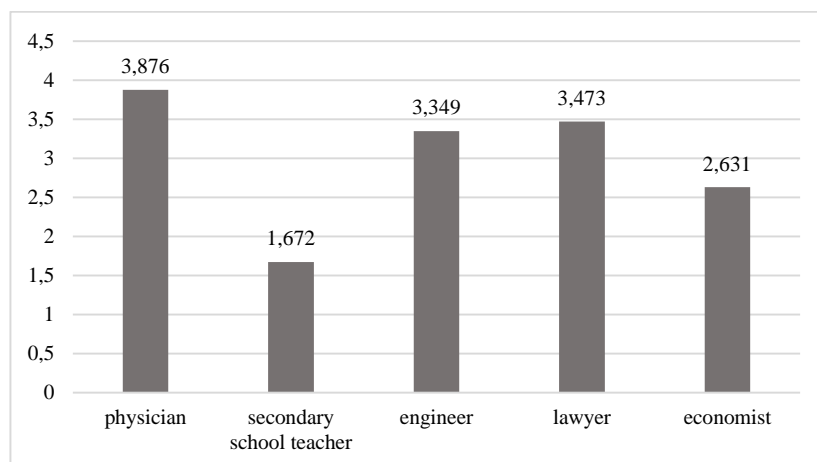
Chart 10

Employment opportunities in terms of training location

According to the interviewed law students, the legal profession is the leading intellectual career in Hungarian society in terms of social prestige based on its monthly net income. According to social prestige, it ranks second after physicians and first in terms of net income. However, in terms of employment opportunities, it lagged behind physicians and engineers in third place, slightly ahead of economists and high school teachers. Overall, the legal career was positively assessed by the interviewed law students among these intellectual occupations, but it can also be a warning sign about the attractiveness of the career in terms of employment opportunities evaluation where it attained a not very favourable ranking, all the more so because better long-term job opportunities were mentioned as motivations. If we consider the three aspects together (all three with the same weight), the order of physician - lawyer - engineer - economist - high school teacher is formed, that is, after physicians the legal career takes the second place, not long but ahead of the engineers.

Chart 11

Aggregate status indicator



7. The internal prestige structure of Hungarian law - based on the opinion of law students

When examining the prestige of law, in addition to comparing it with other intellectual professions, we also considered and still consider the examination of how law students see the internal prestige structure of the profession, in other words, whether they see a difference among judges - prosecutors - lawyers - corporate lawyers - administrative, public administration lawyers - notaries. The occupations had to be ranked according to three criteria - social prestige, financial esteem and the general education and cultural capital of the representatives of the given profession. The following table shows the proportion of each occupation selected for first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth place in 2018.

Table 11

Ranking of social prestige (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

	judge	prosecutor	attorney at law	corporate lawyer	administrative, public administration lawyer	notary
	%	%	%	%	%	%
First place	78.2	5.1	8.8	.9	2.4	4.6
Second place	12.4	46.4	25.0	3.8	2.8	9.6
Third place	5.4	29.3	34.3	7.9	4.5	18.5
Fourth place	1.2	12.6	21.7	25.1	13.4	26.0
Fifth place	1.4	5.0	7.0	40.5	26.5	19.7
Sixth place	1.5	1.6	3.3	21.7	50.4	21.6

As can be seen from the data in the table, judges stand out in terms of social prestige, ranked in either the first and second places by 90.6% of respondents, followed by prosecutors with 51.5% and lawyers with 33.8%. The social prestige of the other three legal professions is significantly lower compared to the previous three, 4-5% of the respondents placed the corporate lawyer and a lawyer working in public administration, 14.2% of them a notary in one of the first two places in the ranking.

Chart 12



The prestige scores show the ranking even more accurately, according to which a judge - prosecutor - lawyer - notary - corporate lawyer - administrative lawyer is the order.

Table 12

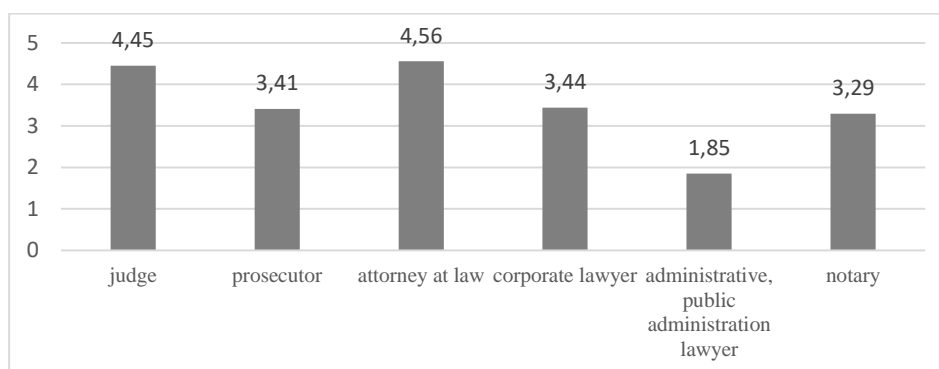
Income ranking (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

	judge	prosecutor	attorney at law	corporate lawyer	administrative, public administration lawyer	notary
	%	%	%	%	%	%
First place	31.0	3.4	34.1	14.6	3.0	13.9
Second place	21.9	18.0	22.4	18.3	3.9	15.4
Third place	20.9	25.7	20.4	12.9	4.8	15.3
Fourth place	15.8	26.9	13.7	17.3	9.4	16.8
Fifth place	7.8	21.3	6.9	24.0	21.3	18.7
Sixth place	2.6	4.7	2.4	12.7	57.6	19.9

As can be seen from the data in the table, in terms of financial esteem, lawyers ranked first, 56.5% of respondents ranked first and second, followed by judges with 52.9%, and

then corporate lawyers (32,9%), notaries (29.3%) and prosecutors (21.4%) and, far from them, lawyers working in public administration, who were only placed in 6.9% of the respondents' answers in the first and second place, but more than half of the respondents ranked this occupation in the last place.

Chart 13

Profitability and financial esteem of legal professions

On the basis of prestige scores, law students also consider that the profession of lawyer was rated the most profitable and that of the judge more financially favourable than the others, the average of the prestige scores of these two professions being above four, while that of the other professions below four. The financial esteem of the career of a prosecutor, a corporate lawyer and a notary public was assessed as almost the same, while the least profitable legal career - far behind the others - is considered to be a lawyer working in public administration.

Table 13

General literacy ranking (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

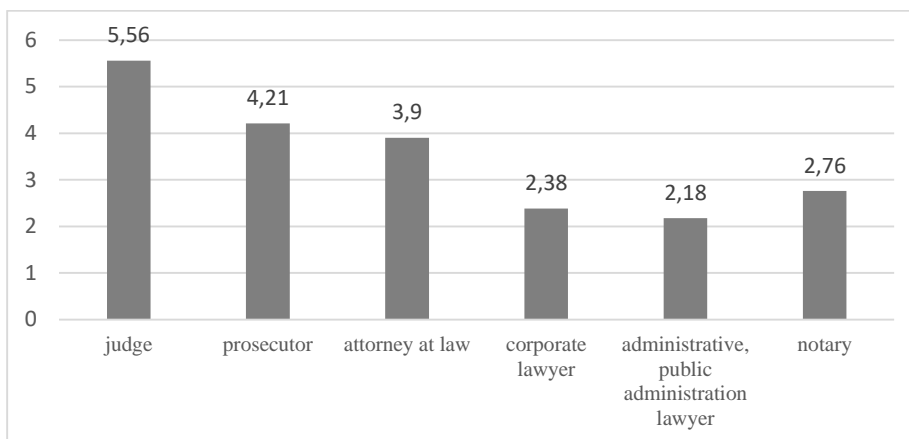
	judge	prosecutor	attorney at law	corporate lawyer	administrative, public administration lawyer	notary
	%	%	%	%	%	%
First place	77.6	4.8	9.5	2.3	2.6	3.1
Second place	11.3	45.5	23.5	3.9	5.3	10.3
Third place	5.7	27.6	33.4	9.2	7.8	16.2
Fourth place	2.5	13.2	19.0	25.0	14.6	25.7
Fifth place	0.9	6.2	9.9	33.0	30.5	19.5
Sixth place	1.7	2.6	4.8	26.6	39.3	25.0

In terms of general education and cultural capital, judges ranked first, 88.9% of respondents ranked them in one of the first and second places, judges are followed by prosecutors with 50.3%, followed by lawyers (33%) and far behind them public notaries

(13.4%), lawyers working in administrative, public administration (7.9%), and corporate lawyers (6.2%).

Chart 14

Perception of lawyers according to their general education



Regarding the order, based on the prestige scores, - judges (5.56) - prosecutors (4.21) - lawyers (3.90) - notaries (2.76) - corporate lawyers (2.38) - lawyers working in public administration, state administration (2.18) - was established.

When comparing the prestige of lawyers to other intellectual careers and comparing them within the legal profession, we could observe such changes between the data of the 1996 Szeged legal study and the 2018 national study, which are certainly related to the social situation and environment in which the evaluations were made. The data of 1996 can be interpreted in a social context when the social and economic transformation after the change of regime and the establishment of the rule of law took place in Hungary. Accordingly, both legal and economics expertise was sought after, ranking these two occupations high in terms of financial esteem and employment opportunities. Similarly, within the legal profession, lawyers and corporate lawyers were in a favourable financial and employment position, which can also be explained by the 1996 social and economic transformation.

By 2018, the social environment had changed, and so had the evaluation of different professions. At the time of the change of regime, occupations with high social prestige, good earning opportunities and a good labour market position - primarily economists, but to a lesser extent also lawyers - lost their prestige and were replaced by physicians and engineers. The reorganisation within the legal profession - the decline in the prestige of lawyers and corporate lawyers - can also be explained by the changes that have taken place in Hungarian society over the past twenty-two years.

8. Long-term goals of law students, plans related to the legal career

In the form of a closed question, we sought the answer to which of the listed life goals are considered the most important by law students, what life goals they prefer, and what life strategy they have. The table below summarises our findings.

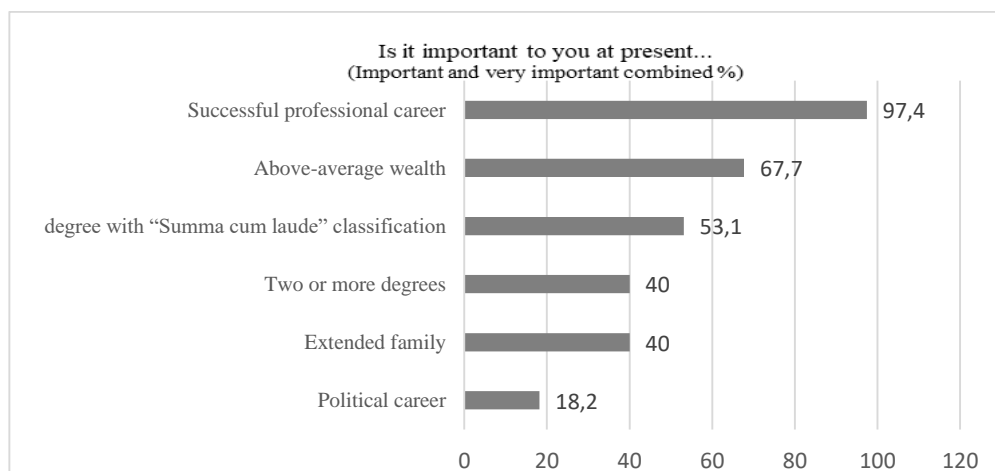
Table 14

Life strategies of law students (expressed as a percentage of respondents)

	not important at all	not important	important	very important
	%	%	%	%
degree with "Summa cum laude" classification	11.0	35.9	38.1	15.0
Successful professional career	.4	2.1	35.9	61.5
Two or more degrees	11.5	48.5	28.5	11.5
Above-average wealth	3.5	28.8	46.5	21.2
Political career	42.5	39.3	13.1	5.1
Extended family	22.6	37.4	24.8	15.2

Chart 15

Life strategies of law students



The life strategy of the law students, their order of priority was practically the same as in the 1996 study in Szeged: successful professional career, above-average wealth, "Summa cum laude" degree, extended family, two or more degrees, and in both surveys the political career was last and the least important.

Slightly more than half (52.9%) of the surveyed law students have a specific idea of the career to be chosen.

Table 15

Do you already know which legal career you would like to choose as your profession after graduation?

	(%)
I do not know yet	47.1
Yes, I do	52.9

It also seems realistic and logical that with the advancement of legal studies, due to the more and more knowledge and information gained about the profession, it becomes more and more clarified what legal career students choose, what interests them and what they consider appropriate for themselves. It follows from this assumption that older students, in this case fourth-years, have already chosen a higher proportion of occupations than first-year students. This hypothesis also proved to be true, with 63% of quarters and only 46% of first-year students deciding which legal career to choose.

Table 16

Do you already know which legal career you would like to choose as your profession after graduation?

Which year are you in?	already knows (%)
first-year	46
fourth-year	63

Analysing the prestige of legal careers, we have seen that the social prestige of judges and prosecutors and their general education and cultural capital are among the first in the legal professions, preceded only by lawyers in the field of financial esteem. The question is whether high social and cultural prestige (judge, prosecutor) or financial esteem (lawyer) will be the determining factor in choosing a career in law. If the first aspect determines the direction after the order, then the students choose the career of a judge, a prosecutor, if the financial motivation is stronger, then a lawyer. Of the students who already know which career they are choosing, 47.6% would like to work as a lawyer, 12.1% as a judge and 14.5% as a prosecutor. Thus, among the motivations for the choice within the legal profession, the financial aspect proved to be decisive, although the social and cultural prestige of the judiciary and the prosecutor's office is high, the financial possibility of lawyers proves to be decisive in the choice. The priority of the financial aspect is also shown by the fact that the profession of corporate lawyer was chosen by more people than that of judges or prosecutors, which is probably related to the fact that the corporate lawyer is seen in a favourable position by students, lawyers and following

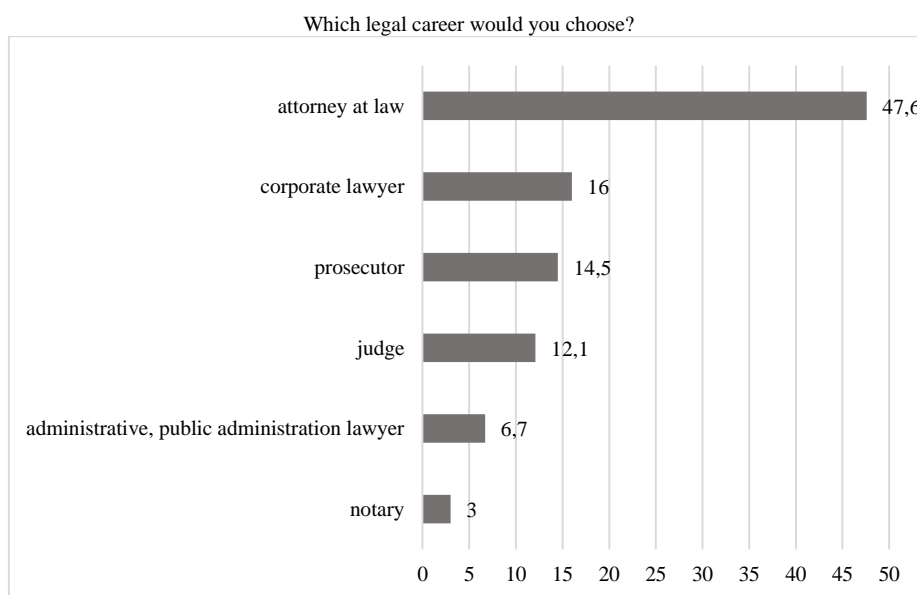
the ranking of judges, they finished in third place, ahead of prosecutors as well, while in the other two respects they figured last or in the penultimate place.

Table 17

Specific career ideas of law students

Which legal career would you choose?	
	%
judge	12.1
prosecutor	14.5
attorney at law	47.6
corporate lawyer	16.0
administrative, public administration lawyer	6.7
notary	3.0

Chart 16

Specific career ideas of law students

9. Evaluation of employment opportunities

24.3% of the responding students believed that they would be able to find a job after graduation, 68.0% said that they might be able to find a job, 7.6% said that they were not sure, and 0.2% stated that they would not be able to find a job as a lawyer at all after graduating.

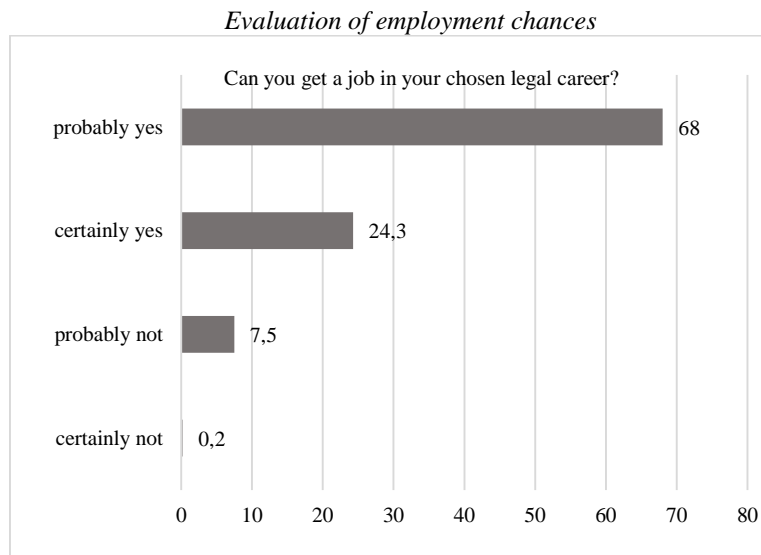
Table 18

How successfully do you think you will be able to find employment in the legal field of your choice?

	%
certainly not	.2
probably not	7.6
probably yes	68.0
certainly yes	24.3

Despite the fact that the legal career was rated the worst in terms of job placement when compared to other intellectual careers, the vast majority (92.3%) are optimistic, thinking it likely that they will be able to find employment in the chosen legal career. The proportion of moderately pessimistic students - who are likely to have no employment - is 7.6%, and the proportion of pessimists who do not see any chance of finding a job is very low, with 0.2% of respondents finding it completely hopeless to get employed.

Chart 17



By grades, there is no significant difference between the first and fourth-years, those in the upper years are a bit more pessimistic, but there are only a few percent fewer optimists among them and more pessimists than the first years.

Table 19

How successfully do you think you will be able to find employment in the legal field of your choice?

	first years (%)	fourth years (%)
certainly not		.4
probably not	6.6	9.3
probably yes	70.1	69.5
certainly yes	23.4	20.8

When asked if there is currently any unemployment among lawyers, the students who completed our questionnaire, 77.6% of them answered yes, while 22.4% said they did not think so.

Table 20

Do you think there is currently unemployment among graduated lawyers?

	%
No	22.4
Yes	77.6

Compared to other intellectual careers, the employment prospects of a newly graduated lawyer is much better, according to 9.6% of responding students, 67.3% better, 22% worse, and only 1.2% much worse.

Table 22

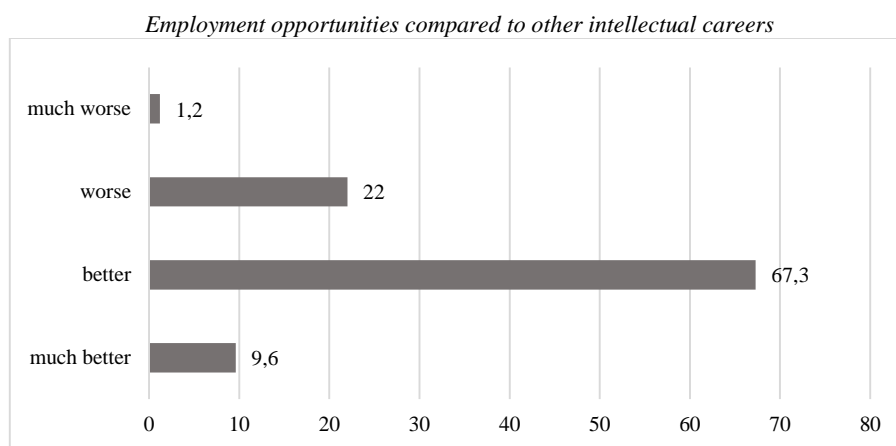
Employment opportunities compared to other intellectual careers

Compared to other intellectual careers, what opportunities do you think a newly graduated lawyer has in general today to find a permanent job that matches his or her qualifications?

	%
much worse	1.2
worse	22.0

better	67.3
much better	9.6

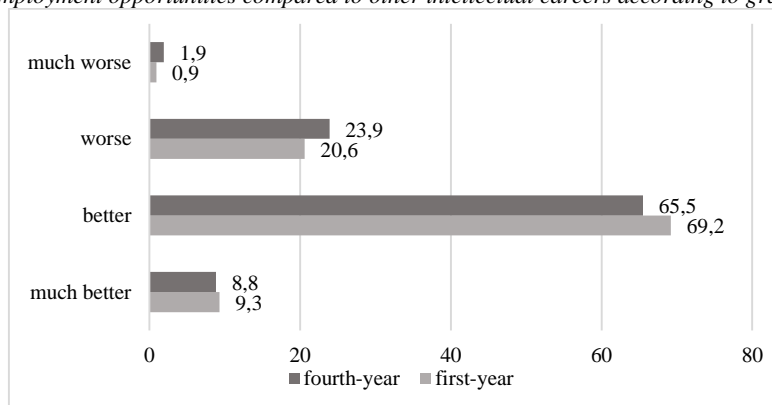
Chart 20



According to grades, there is no significant difference between the answers of first- and fourth-year students here either, with both grades giving the same answer with essentially a few percent difference.

Chart 21

Employment opportunities compared to other intellectual careers according to grades



Conclusion

In this study, we presented the results of a questionnaire-based quantitative study that outlines the circumstances of law students entering the legal career and their ideas about the career. With our questions, we sought to answer the question of what primarily influences the career choices of law students. Was the decision made as a result of their interest or some external (e.g. parental) influence? We also examined how students perceive the prestige of different professions (including the legal profession), which can fundamentally determine motivation. We also examined their ideas in terms of how legal careers are valued in terms of prestige. In connection with the exploration of the “internal” prestige structure, we also wanted to get an idea of their long-term ideas. We were also curious about how much they feared the possibility of unemployment and how much they expected to be able to find a job of their choice.

In the 2018 survey, 20.5% of law students in primary school, 61.3% in high school, 7.3% immediately upon filling out the application form, and only 3.1% after employment that they decided to apply for a law degree. All of this shows that secondary schools remain the central arena for career choices. Students’ career choices are primarily determined by their belief in “Better long-term job opportunities” and “Good earning opportunities”. Both factors were considered important by more than 90% of students. The prestige of the profession was also important. Even the obtainable “Doctoral title” and the subjects taken into account during the admission proved to be a more significant motivating factor. The vast majority of law students continue to be interested in the humanities, and a negligible proportion of them have identified science subjects as areas of interest. It can also be shown that the importance of the “example of a parent, sibling, friend” and “parental pressure” are not strong motivating factors.

It was found that in addition to medicine, the prestige of the legal career was also valued by law students, and in the ranking of social prestige, the order of physician-lawyer - engineer - economist - secondary school teacher was established. Law students therefore continue to value the social prestige of their future profession as good. In terms of profitability, the situation of law is assessed even more favourably by law students than on the basis of social prestige. Lawyers were ranked first and second by 61.9% of respondents, while engineers were ranked first and second in 53.5% and doctors in 47.5% of the responses provided.

Analysing the internal prestige of legal careers, we have seen that the social prestige of judges and prosecutors and their general education and cultural capital are also among the first in the legal professions, while they are preceded by lawyers in the field of financial esteem. In parallel with this student belief, 47.6% of students plan their careers as lawyers, 12.1% as judges, and 14.5% as prosecutors.

In terms of placement on the track, students rated the legal career as the worst of the listed professions. However, the vast majority (92.3%) are optimistic and are likely to be able to find employment in their chosen legal career.

During the analysis of “life strategy” it was found that the order of priority of law students practically coincides with the results of the 1996 study in Szeged: successful professional career, above-average wealth, outstanding (“Summa cum laude”) degree, extended family, two or more degrees, and in both surveys, political career was the last and least important aspect.

The above findings are in themselves telling, but rather “dry” findings of fact, which will be further analysed after processing the data on the students' social background, economic situation and previous study results.

ATTILA BADÓ – JÁNOS LŐRINCZI – ZSÓFIA PATYI

MOTIVATIONS, GOALS AND LIFE STRATEGIES OF
HUNGARIAN LAW STUDENTS BASED ON AN EMPIRICAL
STUDY

(Summary)

This study covers the research aimed at gathering comprehensive knowledge of the Hungarian law student community. The underlying objective lies in revealing law students' legal knowledge, attitudes and motivations as well as their preferences regarding the values set forth in the Fundamental Law of Hungary. Another objective of this research encompasses obtaining information on the efficiency and effectiveness of legal training in Hungary, which potentially results in providing useful knowledge for both law faculties and the legislator.

The research is in part based on the comparative legal sociological survey which was carried out among law students in the Law Faculty of Szeged University, at the time known as Attila József University, Hungary in December 1996 and that of Göttingen University, Germany in the summer of 1997. This previous research involved an in-depth analysis of law students' attitudes, motivations and vocation.

This study reveals the findings of the questionnaire-based quantitative research which showcases the circumstances under which law students entered the legal field and what they have envisaged in connection with it.

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