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### Up or out? Archetypes and person-organization fit in Dutch law firms

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**Publication date**  
2013

[Link to publication](#)

#### **Citation for published version (APA):**

de Haas, M. J. O. M. (2013). *Up or out? Archetypes and person-organization fit in Dutch law firms*.

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*P-O fit lawyers – law firms  
Objective and subjective fit  
Effects on satisfaction, commitment  
and intention to stay*

1. *Introduction*

In the preceding Chapter I investigated the HRM practices in relation to the archetypes of the largest law firms in the Netherlands. I found that the HRM practices reveal the archetypical character of the firm. It is reasonable to presume that firms recruit and select lawyers who fit into their archetypical character, because these lawyers are attracted by the values and goals that are reflected in and communicated by the firms' recruitment and other HRM practices.

On the other hand, professional service firms such as law firms appear to find it difficult to distinguish themselves from competitor firms, also in their communication with potential recruits (De Haas, 2005). Traditionally, professionals tend to identify themselves with their profession rather than with their organization (Wanrooy, 2007; Weggeman, 1997). A marketing survey in 2008 (Advocatie November 18, 2008) concluded that the positioning and market communication of law firms in the Netherlands is hardly distinctive. Recently, two very different law firms, Lexence and Houthoff, chose by coincidence exactly the same words for their marketing campaign slogan (Advocatie January 20, 2009). The chances that a prospective lawyer will find a firm that fits her values and expectations do not always seem to be improved by pre-entry information and communication. This has been confirmed in the interviews with young lawyers that will be discussed later in this study.

Do law firms succeed in attracting and selecting lawyers who fit with their organization? What are the effects of fit or misfit? Can the effects of Attraction, Selection and Attrition, proposed by the ASA-theory, be observed? This part of the study is dedicated to answering these questions.

This and the following Chapter discuss the results of two consecutive surveys of the values of young lawyers at the big law firms, their perceptions of the values of their firms, the fit between personal and firm values and the effects of fit on their satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. I will discuss the development of fit and fit effects over time in Chapter 5.

## 2. *Person – organization fit*

Fit between a person and his or her work environment (P-E fit) occurs when their characteristics are well matched (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Persons who fit better into their environment perform better, are more satisfied and more committed to their job and organization (Bretz & Judge, 1994; Moynihan & Pandey, 2007). Bretz and Judge (1994) even state that "... individuals should be very concerned about the degree to which they fit into their organization. Since... the consequences of not fitting may be quite serious" (p. 49). These consequences range from dissatisfaction, underperformance and lack of development to departure. The work environment in the concept of P-E Fit has different elements. The most frequently investigated elements are the fit between person and job and between person and organization, but also person-group and person-supervisor fit have been studied (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005).

Most law graduates probably first choose the law (i.e., the law practice at a law firm) as a profession or even, for some, as a vocation. For the legal profession and its institutes, even for society as a whole, the fit between the profession and the lawyer is certainly of vital importance. Does the law attract a sufficient number of young lawyers who appear to fit into the profession? Lawyers' jobs have many common characteristics. In the research on careers, the law is characterized as an "investigative" career that attracts conscientious, academically oriented, not very extraverted persons (Holland, 1985, cited by Schaubroeck, Ganster & Jones, 1998). On the other hand, law firms and law practices have been diversifying rapidly; a family law practice requires quite different abilities, values and attitudes than corporate work.

However interesting the lawyer-profession fit may be, the subject of this study is the fit between lawyer and law *firm*, therefore between person and organization (P-O fit). Insofar as the characteristics of lawyers' jobs can be separated from the characteristics of the law firms, these job characteristics are only marginally different in different firms. At least one study, testing the attraction-selection-attrition theory, has demonstrated that

even within single-occupation organizations such as law firms (Schneider et al. 1995), firms were clearly different in relation to P-O fit. Next to person-job fit, P-O fit has been extensively described and investigated (Chatman, 1991; Cooper-Thomas, Van Vianen, & Anderson, 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Moynihan et al., 2007). P-O fit has predominantly been defined as a congruence of values of the employee and the organization. Values can be understood as stable beliefs about what is important, desirable, just or proper (Cable et al., 1996; O'Reilly et al., 1991). The value dimension of P-O fit is extensively studied and the effects of value congruence are well established.

Fit also has been studied as a similarity of personality, goals and attitudes. Fit on the personality dimension is defined as congruence of personality traits of employees in the same organization (Chatman, 1991; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Research on the effects of personality congruence appears to have rendered mainly weak results (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Schaubroeck, Ganster, & Jones, 1998; Schneider et al., 1995). It is not expected that, in addition to the values dimension, the personality dimension of P-O-fit will offer substantially more or other insights in the subject matter of this study.

Goals are less stable than values, they may change over time, but the congruence between the goals of the employee and those of the organization is nevertheless an important factor in P-O fit (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). As with values, the more important a goal is to an employee, the more consequential the fit with the goals of the organization is. The influence of values normally will be stronger than that of goals, but adding goals will enlarge the possibilities to analyze the character and effects of P-O fit. This addition is welcome and necessary, because some elements of the archetypes can be related to values – especially the elements that are part of the organizational culture, as used by O'Reilly et al. (1991) – but others correspond better with goals – such as pay or promotion for performance. The importance of occupational goals for the motivation of an employee has been extensively demonstrated (Abele & Spurk, 2009).

### *2.1. Fit and archetype elements*

The HRM practices and the related archetypical elements of the law firms that I distinguished in chapter 2 are summarized in Table 1, with a description of the difference between the professional partnership and the managed professional business. I selected the elements that were clearly distinctive for the archetypes and that I could assume relevant and meaningful to starting young lawyers.

These elements can be related to five categories of values and goals of

starting lawyers, as follows:

- a. their ambition to develop profound legal expertise (expertise ambition), hereafter abbreviated as Exp.;
- b. their appreciation of a thorough and detailed management style, abbreviated as Mgmt.
- c. their need for short time reward (Short),
- d. their long term career perspective and ambition, especially partnership, (Long) and
- e. their appreciation of the partnership position itself (Part).

Hereafter I will refer to the personal values and goals of the lawyers and the firm by adding 'lawyer' or 'firm' to the value abbreviation. (Values lawyers meaning: all values and goals of the lawyers, Exp. lawyers = expertise values lawyers, likewise values firm, Exp. firm, Short firm etc. In the figures, the values are abbreviated by the first letters, EL = expertise values lawyers, LF = long term perspective values of the firm etc.).

**Table 1 Differentiating archetype elements <sup>4</sup>**

<b>Expertise value elements</b>	<b>PP</b>	<b>MPB</b>
Focus of reputation: what is the essential perception of quality in the firm's services?	Scientific, creative solutions, judged by law community.	Client service and satisfaction, judged by clients and general public.
<b>Management value elements</b>		
What range of authority is reserved for the partners vs. the board?	Broad range of subjects discussed by partners, strategic but also several operations issues e.g. lateral staffing, HR-policies, budgets, communication. Frequent informal consultation of partners on board issues.	Narrow. Partner involvement is limited to only the most crucial strategic matters, annual budget en reports, selection of board and admission of partners.

<sup>4</sup> Some elements are relevant for more than one value set and included in Table 1 under more than one value.

Frequency and character of partner meetings.	Frequent, monthly plus frequent informal occasions.	Infrequent, formal meetings (< 4/year), content restricted to formal range of authority.
Practice group management.	Subsidiary responsibility of a partner, < 10% of time, mostly facilitating and coordinating partner (inter)action; communication channel with board.	Extensive, integral responsibility of a partner; financial, commercial, HRM. Formal delegation of management authority. Practice group managers have formal dispensation for management tasks. Possibly several management levels.
Tolerance for (marginal, temporary) underperformance.	Tolerant. Efforts directed at improvement, consequences only after several years.	Intolerant, directly followed by dismissal or share reduction through differentiated profit shares.
Formal, separate mentoring structure.	No.	Yes.
<b>Short term reward elements</b>		
Salary systems.	Fixed tenure based, no performance link.	Performance based.
Performance related variable pay, bonuses.	No	High (>20% annual income).
Partner profit sharing.	Equal shares/lock step.	Differentiated shares, performance or merit based.
Consequences of underperformance.	Dismissal.	Share reduction.
<b>Long term perspective values</b>		
Importance of partnership perspective for associate promotion.	At least some perspective is conditional.	None.

Up-or-out career system.	Yes.	No.
Permanent senior associate positions.	No (only opportunistic and incidental).	Two or more different end-of-career senior positions, part of staffing strategy, several different roles.
Perspective for non-promoted.	Departure.	Other career paths.
<b>Partnership elements</b>		
Tolerance for (marginal, temporary) underperformance.	Tolerant. Efforts directed at improvement, consequences only after several years.	Intolerant, directly followed by dismissal or share reduction through differentiated profit shares.
Consequences of underperformance.	Dismissal.	Share reduction.
What range of authority is reserved for the partners vs. the board? Partnership culture.	Broad range of subjects discussed by partners, strategic but also several operations issues, among which lateral staffing, HR-policies, budgets, communication. Frequent informal consultation of partners on board issues.	Narrow. Partner involvement is limited to only the most crucial strategic matters, annual budget en reports, selection of board and admission of partners.
	Partner contacts and solidarity stand out. Frequent informal contacts, partners seek mutual advice on personal and professional matters clearly more than others. Partnership dominates firm culture.	Partnership is highest status, but significance is limited to business related issues. Is a choice between different career options. Partner contacts do not stand out amidst all internal contacts.

The manifestations of the values of the firm, such as organizational structure, career and HR systems render rewards and opportunities that may be or may not be congruent with the values and goals of the lawyer. This study investigates fit as the congruence of these five sets of values and goals of person and organization.

## *2.2. Actual, objective fit versus subjective fit.*

The use of the archetype elements enables measuring actual, objective fit (Cooper-Thomas et al. 2004, Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). I will follow the distinction made by Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) between direct, perceived fit measures, indirect subjective and indirect objective measures. Direct, perceived fit measures investigate employees' perceptions of their fit with their organization. Subjective, indirect measures of fit compare the employee's own values with his perceptions of the values of the organization. Objective fit is measured by comparing the values of the employee with the values of the organization that are assessed independently from the employee's perceptions. Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) found that objective fit and subjective fit become more congruent as time passes and newcomers gain more insight in the organization. Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found measures of subjective fit to have stronger effects on outcome variables than objective measures. However, objective fit measures avoid the problem of unrealistic perceptions of entrants (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Scholarios, Lockyer, & Johnson, 2003).

Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) assume that subjective and objective fit represent different concepts. They are joined by other authors in their desire for more research that compares both kinds of measures (Cable & Judge, 1996); they suggest that the strength of the effects of subjective fit on employee's attitudes compared with the effects of objective fit may be partly due to the reduction of cognitive dissonance; this means that they will downplay perceived differences. By investigating objective and subjective fit, I will be able to compare the results of both measures.

Both the objective and subjective fit measures as discussed here are indirect measures; they indicate respondents' perceptions of values and goals, rather than their perception of fit with the organization. Direct measures of perceived fit presume that respondents have a good insight into the character of the firm which normally comes with longer tenure and experience than those of the lawyers in the current study.

One of the problems of investigating objective fit is the difference between the sources and measures of employees' values and the values of the organization. Some studies have tried to solve this problem by



making different measures and scales commensurate (Ambrose, Arnaud, & Schminke, 2007; Wessel, Ryan, & Oswald, 2008). The difference of sources may contribute to the weaker results of objective fit studies; nevertheless, there is consensus among researchers that investigating objective fit is an important goal of fit research (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Wessel et al., 2008).

### *2.3. Effects of P-O fit.*

Better fit between employee and organization leads to higher satisfaction, more commitment and reduces the intention to leave the organization. Satisfaction with the job, the organization and the career are well established outcomes in the Person-Environment fit research (Bretz & Judge 1994, Chatman 1991, Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). The effects of P-O fit on these outcomes are independent from the effects of Person-Job fit; the effects of P-O fit are found to be stronger than those of Person-Job fit (O'Reilly et al. 1991, Cable & Judge 1996). Organizational commitment and turnover intention are comparable but separate variables (Kristof-Brown et al. 2005). Organizational commitment can be defined as the motivation to act in the interest of the organization. Kristof-Brown et al. found in their 2005 meta-analysis a stronger relation between fit and attitudinal outcomes (like satisfaction and intention) than with behavior. Actual turnover was not included in any of the studies that they analyzed. Individuals may experience practical barriers to act upon their intentions, especially when consequences are severe or unknown (Solinger, Olffen, & Roe, 2008). This applies particularly to lawyers in their first three year traineeship period. Many will choose to stay and complete their traineeship, even when they are less than satisfied with their jobs or with the organization. For the motives of starting lawyers, attitudes will be more indicative than actual behavior. Also, actual turnover will be difficult to investigate within a limited time span. Nevertheless, when people indicate an intention to leave, they generally do, sooner or later (Hay Group, 2001, O'Reilly et al. 1991).

The strong incentives to stay during traineeship imply that intention to leave before the end of this traineeship would not be a useful indicator of P-O-fit. More relevant is the intention to leave after the traineeship. Intentions to leave therefore have to be specified according to the time of the intended departure.

## *3. Hypotheses*

*Hypothesis 1.* Objective fit between lawyers' values and goals concerning

expertise ambition, management, short term reward, long term perspective and partnership and the archetypical character of their law firm is positively related to their satisfaction with the organization, their organizational commitment and their intention to stay after the traineeship period. Misfit between lawyers' values and goals and the character of the firm will lead to reduced satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay.

*Hypothesis 2.* Fit between lawyers' values and goals concerning expertise ambition, management, short term reward, long term perspective and partnership and the perceived values and goals of their firm is positively related to their satisfaction with the organization, their organizational commitment and their intention to stay after the traineeship period. Misfit between lawyers' values and goals and the perceived values of the firm will lead to reduced satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay.

Following the findings of Kristof-Brown et al. (2005), I expect that objective fit based upon the archetype characteristics of the firm will have weaker effects than subjective fit. Measuring objective fit involves matching data from different sources, in this study the archetype measures and the lawyers' response on the personal value items. Both were measured using the same Likert scale, but results of this comparison, if any, will probably be weak. Nevertheless, the relations between objective and subjective fit are of interest, as discussed, and will be explored.

#### 4. *Development of fit over time*

Studies of fit, socialization and its consequences applied and advised different timings. In the first few months after entering a "new and relatively unstructured psychological field" (Allen, 2006), newcomers discover the realities of their jobs, their colleagues and the organizational environment (Bauer, Erdogan, Liden, & Wayne, 2006; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004). Cooper-Thomas et al. (2004) note that "organizational socialization research has consistently shown that the first 3 to 4 months following entry are critical for newcomers' long term adjustment". The same time span is seen as crucial for newcomers to acquire more realistic perceptions of the values and goals of the organization (Cable et al., 1996). Cooper-Thomas & Anderson (2002) also observe that in the early months, adjustment to the organization has the biggest impact on newcomers. Entrants are still regarded as newcomers in the first year of employment; Bauer et al. (2005) see entrants as newcomers during the first 13 months of employment. This certainly applies to lawyers who follow an intensive professional training

program in the first year.

Nevertheless it might be expected that views, insights and perceptions of newcomers continue developing also after the initial year. Some longitudinal studies have followed P-O fit and socialization during several years after entry and found a continuing change of fit and attitudes such as satisfaction, intention to leave or career ambitions (Cooman et al., 2009; Sturges, Guest, Conway, & Davey, 2002). Although investigating a time span of four months only, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2005) noted that newcomers learn about the organization only later on; in the early months, learning about the job is most critical. Learning and socialization programs affect newcomers' attitudes (Chatman, 1991; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2005; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Sturges et al., 2002). Also, entrants gradually get acquainted with colleagues and supervisors and form their organizational networks (Moynihan et al., 2007). For newcomers, several manifestations of the organization occur or become meaningful only later on; examples are the first serious performance appraisals, pay decisions, work changes or career advises.

These experiences may influence the values and goals of the newcomers themselves (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Authors have pointed out the lack of realistic perceptions of newcomers before entry (Boon et al., 2001; Cable et al., 1996). Values that they had on entry might change as they adapt their expectancies and ambitions to the reality of the firm. Together with their socialization and the increase of their experience, they come to understand the character and values of their firms (Allen, 2006; Bretz et al., 1994; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004). In this process, also objective and subjective fit is expected to develop. Objective and subjective fit are presumed to converge (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Some authors have found a diminishing P-O fit, poorer attitudes, less satisfaction and intention to stay during the first year after entry (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2005). This appears to be contrary to the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) theory, that predicts an increase of P-O fit over time (Cooman et al., 2009; Schneider et al., 1995). However, the ASA-effect depends on turnover of non-fitting employees. It may take some time before employees decide to leave and act upon their decision. During this period, perceived P-O fit will probably diminish as entrants develop more realistic perceptions but do not yet leave the firm. Bretz and Judge (1994) observed that fit effects probably lead to increasing differences between fitting and non-fitting employees. Fitting employees receive more attention, challenging assignments and mentoring relationships, leading to stronger perceptions

of fit and positive attitudes; the opposite applies to employees that do not experience fit with their firms.

Changes in fit through the adjustment of values and of perceptions predict changes of the outcomes of fit, of satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay (Chatman, 1991).

In order to investigate the changes of values and of value fit during the first years and the effects of these changes on satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay, longitudinal research is necessary, as many researchers have pointed out (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Schneider et al., 1995). Most research has chosen a time interval of about one year (Allen, 2006; Sturges et al., 2002), but also shorter intervals have been advised and applied (Bauer et al. 2005). Chatman (1991) advises 10 to 12 months. O'Reilly et al. (1991) have found that P-O fit predicts job satisfaction and organizational commitment one year after fit was measured and actual turnover after two years. Effects of changes in values and value fit after entry have also been found two years after entry (Cooman et al., 2009). To study the changes of values and fit and the effects of value fit over times, I used two consecutive surveys among young lawyers, employed by the big Dutch law firms. In this Chapter and in Chapter 4, I will discuss the results of both surveys. The analysis of the changes over time will follow in Chapter 5.

## 5. *Methods*

I will refer to the two consecutive surveys among young, starting lawyers as survey T1 and survey T2.

### 5.1. *Sample and procedure, survey T1*

In survey T1 I included starting lawyers with 3 to 13 months of employment, following Cooper-Thomas et al. (2005) and Bauer et al. (2005). I approached 305 lawyers who had started their traineeship with one of the 19 big law firms that participated in the first part of the study, described in Chapter 2. Email addresses were provided by the Dutch Bar Association. I also found most managing partners and HRM departments of the 19 firms prepared to recommend participation. After several reminders, 95 lawyers completed the survey (31%), but 18 of them did not fill in their firms' name. I could therefore analyze the objective fit for the remaining 77 lawyers (25%).

The age of the respondents varied from 23 to 35, with an average of 26.2 years (men 27.0, women 25.6). Of the 77 respondents, 33 were male and 44 female (57%). These demographics closely resemble those of all starting lawyers in The Netherlands (Ned. Orde van Advocaten, Annual Report 2009;

m/f = 47/53%).

### 5.2. *Sample and procedure, survey T2*

I repeated the survey ten months later; at this time, the lawyers in the target population had between one and two years of working experience at their firms. The survey was distributed by e-mail to the same lawyers of survey T1. Five of them had requested not to be approached for the follow up survey, four lawyers had left their firms, nine others could not be reached by e-mail – possibly some of them had left as well. 66 lawyers completed the survey (23% of the remaining 287). Even with support of most firms and with several reminders, this number could not be increased. Probably, lawyers have become a bit weary of the many survey requests for research, marketing or professional purposes. Of these respondents, 39 could be matched with the respondents of survey T1 (12.8% of 305). One of these 39 could not be linked to a firm. So only a small group remained that had replied to both surveys, too small for longitudinal statistical analyses. In Chapter 5, I will look further into the cases of the 38 lawyers who responded to both surveys.

The age of the respondents again varied from 23 to 35, with an average of 27.0 years (men 28.1, women 26.5). Of the respondents, 35% were male and 65% female, so there was a small female overrepresentation.

### 5.3. *Measures.*

With the exception of intention to stay, I measured all items on a five point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = totally disagree, very unimportant, completely inapplicable to 5 = totally agree, very important or completely applicable. For intention to stay, I used a four point scale related to the expected time of departure.

*Values and goals lawyers.* I developed a questionnaire to investigate the values and goals of the lawyers, inferred from the HRM practices and related archetype elements. To measure the values and goals of the lawyers, I formulated four items for each of the following five categories of personal values and goals:

- *expertise development*; an example of the items is “I want to contribute to the development of the law and the legal system”,
- *management*, e.g.: “I prefer to work in an environment with very clear rules and division of tasks”,
- *short term reward*, e.g. “I prefer to work for a firm that rewards different performances differently”,
- *long term perspective*, e.g. “I prefer to work for I firm that offers me the perspective of becoming partner” and

- *partnership*, e.g. “It is my ambition to belong to the top of my organization”.

*Pilot.* To test the meaningfulness, relevancy and clarity of the value and goals items to young lawyers, I asked 96 young lawyers at middle sized firms (not included in the final survey population) to complete the questionnaire. I interviewed six of them by telephone, asking directly their opinion on the items. These interviews led to some improvements in the wording of the items, but none of the items had to be deleted due to a lack of clarity or relevancy. The pilot survey results showed a sufficient reliability of the scales: perceived organization values Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.76$ , lawyers’ values, satisfaction and commitment all above 0.80. I used factor analysis to evaluate the consistency of the four items of each of the five value and goal elements and rewrote some items that were insufficiently linked to the others. Appendix II contains the resulting final survey items.

In survey T1, the reliability of the value items could be improved by dropping one item for each value, resulting in  $\alpha = 0.60$  for Exp. Lawyers, 0.58 Mgmt lawyers, 0.57 Short lawyers and  $\alpha = 0.89$  Long lawyers. Deleting the corresponding items on firm values resulted in firm  $\alpha = 0.70$ , Mgmt firm  $\alpha = 0.60$ , Short firm  $\alpha = 0.69$  and Long firm  $\alpha = 0.71$ . It was not feasible to improve the reliability of the partnership values to a sufficient level, so I had to leave out this scale altogether from my further analyses.

In survey T2, the reliability of most of the value scales was sufficient to good. As in survey T1, the reliability of the partnership value scales was too low and could not be improved sufficiently by deleting an item. Many lawyers will probably consider the desirability of a partnership position only after the first three traineeship years (Boon et al., 2001). The reliability of the other value scales improved after deleting the same items as in survey T1, the resulting Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ ’s were: Exp. lawyers 0.82, Mgmt lawyers 0.62, Short lawyers 0.59, Long lawyers 0.85; Exp. firm 0.79, Mgmt firm 0.60, Short firm 0.73 and Long firm 0.66.

*Objective fit.* The score on each personal value item indicated if a value or goal is more in line with the PP or the MPB. For instance, a high score on short term reward items indicated a preference for a MPB-like firm, as variable, performance related pay is a feature of this archetype. Objective fit was measured by comparing the values and goals of the lawyers as measured by the survey with the archetype elements of their firms: the average score on all archetype elements as established in Chapter 2.

*Perceived values firms.* I measured firm values as perceived by the lawyers by reformulating the survey items on the lawyers’ values and

goals into organizational values and goals and asking, to what degree the respondents recognized a value or goal in their firm. (E.g., for expertise values, "The firm aims at contributing to the development of the law and the legal system" and for short term reward "The firm rewards according to performance"). A comparable approach was followed by Bretz & Judge (1994).

*Satisfaction.* I translated the general work satisfaction scale of Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins & Klesh (1983); this scale consists of three items and has been widely applied and has the advantage of brevity. An example is: "I like working with this firm" ( $\alpha = 0.84$ , survey T2 0.82).

*Commitment.* Following the advice of Solinger et al. (2008), I used the affective commitment items from the three-component model of Meyer and Allen (1990) with a small adjustment for the legal environment: "I am proud working at this firm", "I don't feel that I really belong in this firm", "I like to work hard for this firm and to contribute more than normally is expected" ( $\alpha = 0.72$ , survey T2 0.65).

*Intention to stay* was measured by one item: how long do you expect to stay with your firm? This item could be answered in four categories: less than 3 years, 3-5 years, 5-8 years and more than 8 years. In the perspective of starting lawyers, as confirmed by the pilot survey, these categories can be assumed to represent a continuum from leaving very shortly to staying very long. I treated the scale as a four point Likert scale.

The survey items are listed in Appendix II.

## 6. Results

### 6.1. Surveys T1 and T2.

Survey T1 had a better response and produced more significant results than survey T2. I will therefore start each Subsection with describing the results of survey T1 completely and then follow with the results of survey T2 insofar as these differed from or added to the results of the first.

### 6.2. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Tables A and B in Appendix III contain the mean scores, standard deviations and correlations of all variables of survey T1 and survey T2. In survey T1, the Exp. lawyer ( $r = 0.30$ ), Short lawyer (0.23), Exp. firm (0.26) and Short firm values (0.26) showed significant correlations with the firms' archetype (PP-MPB) scores. These correlations were found again in survey T2: Exp. lawyer ( $r = 0.39$ ), Short lawyer (0.23), Exp. firm (0.39) and Short firm values (0.43).

The correlation between Mgmt lawyer and Short lawyer (both MPB-like values) was as expected, but the significant positive correlation between Short lawyers and Long lawyers was not. The Exp. firm values were positively correlated to all other firm value elements and Mgmt firm also to Long firm. There appeared a tendency to evaluate one's firm more or less positively on all aspects. The only significant correlation between lawyers' values and firm values appeared between firms' and lawyers' long term perspective values. So lawyers with high long term ambitions found themselves at firms with higher long term perspectives, but tend to appreciate short term rewards as well.

There was a significant negative correlation between both Mgmt and Short lawyers and satisfaction: lawyers who value management quality and short term rewards were less satisfied with their firms. All firm values elements except Short related positively with commitment and satisfaction. Intention to stay had similar correlations with the values. The correlation between satisfaction and commitment was very strong (0.80), the correlation with intention to stay was lower. However, satisfaction had a significant negative correlation with the lawyers' management and short term reward values, commitment had not. Female lawyers were less ambitious (correlation gender and long term perspective values  $r = -0.25$ ).

In survey T2, all lawyers' values scales appeared positively intercorrelated except Mgmt and Long, with the highest correlation between Mgmt and Short lawyers. Exp. lawyers was positively correlated to satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay; this was not found in survey T1. The only significant correlation between lawyers' and firm values appeared for the Mgmt values in stead of the Long values in survey T1. Contrary to survey T1 I found no significant correlations with application success. The negative correlation of Mgmt Lawyers and Short Lawyers with satisfaction was not repeated neither was the correlation between Long lawyers and gender. Instead, a correlation between gender and lawyers management values appeared: female lawyers reported higher management values. Career studies indicate a (negative) relationship between female gender and intention to stay (Dikkers et al., 2007; Dinovitzer et al., 2007; Hagan et al., 2007), but this was not supported by the correlations in the surveys.

I analyzed the differences between the means and correlations of survey T1 and survey T2. The means showed some decline in commitment, satisfaction and intention to stay in survey T2. All perceived firm value levels showed a tendency to decline somewhat, except for Short values. Expertise firm values decreased the most. However neither of these differences was



significant. Only the increase of the lawyers long term values (from 2.77 to 3.7,  $p = 0.01$ ) and the increase of the correlation between management and short term reward firm values (survey T1  $r = 0.14$ , T2 0.42;  $p = 0.03$ ) were significant.

To explore possible effects of the value variables proposed in the hypotheses, regression analysis was conducted for all firm values and lawyers' values scales together, after controlling for age and gender. The regression of neither age nor gender on the outcome variables was significant. All value scales together had a considerable explanatory effect on commitment ( $R^2 = 0.245$ , survey T2 0.404), on satisfaction (0.194 and 0.218) and on intention to stay ( $R^2 = 0.173$ , survey T2 0.234). However, the contribution of the lawyers values on commitment is small ( $R^2$  of lawyers values is 0.048; survey T2 0.094). Within the firm values, the Mgmt and Long scales (survey T2: Exp. and Long) have the greatest explanatory potential – but, as we will see, Mgmt and Long values each in a different direction. These regression outcomes justified the detailed analyses of the proposed effects.

### *6.3. Polynomial regression analysis*

I applied polynomial regression and response surface analysis to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. Polynomial regression analysis has been proposed by Edwards (1993, 1994) to avoid methodological problems in congruence (e.g. fit) studies. These problems arise from collapsing different variables (personal and organizational values) into a single index (Edwards, 1993, 1994; Shanock, Baran, Gentry, Pattison, & Heggstad, 2010). Polynomial regression analysis has been increasingly accepted as the standard analytical instrument in fit studies (Hecht & Allen, 2005; Shanock et al., 2010; Vuuren, Veldkamp, Jong, & Seydel, 2007).

The three-dimensional surfaces of the regression equations were calculated and plotted using Excel and analyzed visually and by slope analysis, as proposed by Hecht & Allen (2005) and Shanock et al. (2010). I used the Excel format made available by Shanock et al. (2010).

### *6.4. Hypothesis 1, Objective fit*

Besides the correlations analysis including the actual PP-MPB scores of the firms that I found in the first part of this study, I used regression analysis to study the effect of objective fit on satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. Objective fit in this study is the fit between the values and goals of the lawyers and the values and goals of their firms, as expressed by the archetypical PP-MPB character of the firm. The regression equation was  $VL + PPMPB + VL^2 + VL * PPMPB + PPMPB^2$ . Of all regressions of lawyers'

values and PPMPB on satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay, only one outcome was significant: the regression of lawyers' expertise values and the PPMPB score on intention to stay ( $R^2 = 0.216$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ) in the first survey. In the second survey, this regression came closest to significance ( $R^2 = 0.201$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ).  $R^2$  and  $p$  of all regression equations are included in Appendix IV. The significance of the expertise values regression gives some support to the congruence of perceived and actual values and to the relation between lawyers' expertise values and intention to stay, as will be discussed hereafter. However, since almost no regression outcomes were significant, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

### 6.5. Hypothesis 2, Subjective fit

The variance explained ( $R^2$ ) of the polynomial regression analyses is shown in Tables 4 (survey T1) and 5 (survey T2).

**Table 3.1.  $R^2$  and  $p$ 's of the regressions of personal values and perceived firm's values, survey T1**

Values	Satisfaction		Commitment		Intention to stay	
	$R^2$	$p$ .	$R^2$	$p$ .	$R^2$	$p$ .
Expertise	0.140	0.03	0.119	0.06	0.146	0.02
Management	0.294	0.00	0.279	0.00	0.090	0.17
Short term reward	0.201	0.00	0.118	0.07	0.134	0.04
Long term perspective	0.289	0.00	0.321	0.00	0.119	0.06

**Table 3.2.  $R^2$  and  $p$ 's of the regressions of personal values and perceived firm's values, survey T2**

Values	Satisfaction		Commitment		Intention to stay	
	$R^2$	$p$ .	$R^2$	$p$ .	$R^2$	$p$ .
Expertise	0.201	0.03	0.272	0.00	0.226	0.01
Management	0.195	0.03	0.117	0.22	0.042	0.78
Short term reward	0.073	0.51	0.048	0.74	0.021	0.95
Long term perspective	0.145	0.13	0.250	0.01	0.109	0.28

For all regression equations ( $VL+VF+VL^2+VL*VF+VF^2$ ), I calculated the slopes and curvatures of the regression lines. Following the hypotheses, I expected a "straight saddle" shape of the graphs of the polynomial regression equation. The highest level of the outcome variables is supposed to be reached when lawyers values (VL) and firm values (VF)

are in agreement. This “fit” line  $VL = VF$  is supposed to be straight and horizontal, as there is no reason to assume a different level of the outcomes according to different levels of value agreement. On both sides of this line, as incongruence of values increases, the level of the outcome variable drops and the graph is expected to show two downward wings. The line of disagreement (misfit)  $VL = -VF$  can be expected to have an inverted U shape, the outcome variable dropping more sharply as the divergence of VL and VF increases.

Appendix V contains the Tables (A and B) with the coefficients, standard errors and significance tests.

6.5.1. Expertise values

The expertise values resulted in significant regression results on satisfaction and intention to stay, but the explanation of variance was weak on all outcome variables, see Table 3.1. Only the slope of the fit line of the regression of intention to stay was significant. The graph of this regression is shown in Figure 3a.

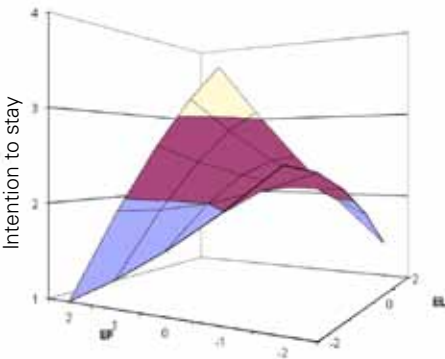


Figure 3a. Intention to stay as predicted by lawyers’ expertise values (EL) and perceived expertise values of the firm (EF)

The graph shows the expected saddle shape, but the fit line (visualized from front to back of the plot) – with a significant slope - rises as the level of fitting values is higher. Intention to stay decreased more sharply at the left hand side, where lawyers’ values are low and firm values high

In survey T2, the regression explained a moderate amount of variance of satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. Neither slopes nor curvatures of the regression for satisfaction are significant. I plotted the regression equations for commitment and intention to stay, Figures 3b and 3c.

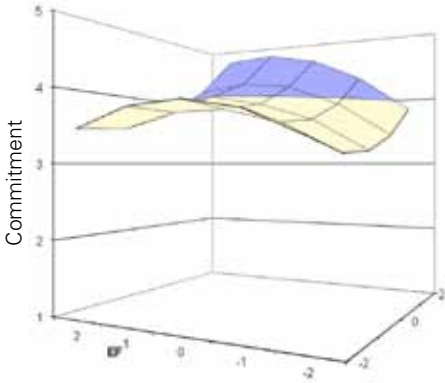


Figure 3b. Commitment as predicted by lawyers' expertise values and perceived expertise values of the firm, survey T2

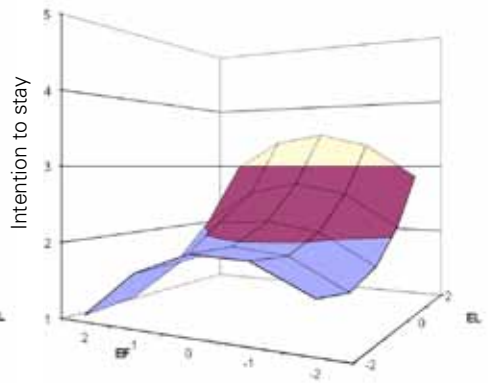


Figure 3c. Intention to stay as predicted by lawyers' expertise values and perceived expertise values of the firm, survey T2

The slope of the  $EL = EF$  fit line in Figure 3b is significant, indicating a straight line of fit. As is visible in the graph this line rises gradually as the fitting value level is higher. In Figure 3c, the line of misfit is significant. The surface pattern shows a steep increase of intention to stay as lawyer's values are higher. Firm values appeared to have hardly any impact on this outcome, as can be seen by the small differences in height along the EF axis.

### 6.5.2. Management values

Management values explained a significant amount of the variance of satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.294$ ) and commitment (0.279) but not of intention to stay. The graphs of the regression equations are shown in Figures 3d and 3e.

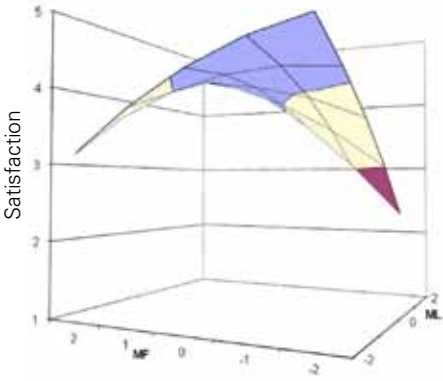


Figure 3d. Satisfaction as predicted by lawyers' management values (ML) and perceived management values of the firm (MF)

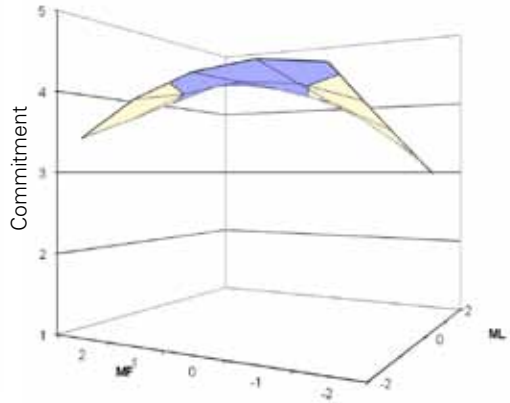


Figure 3e. Commitment as predicted by lawyers' management values and perceived management values of the firm

The curvature of the line of misfit  $ML = -MF$  is significant in both graphs, resulting in an inverted U-shape as presumed. The satisfaction graph shows a steeper decrease at both sides of the fit line, more pronounced at the right side where ML are high and MF low. On the  $ML = MF$  line of fit, the graph resembles the proposed shape, but the coefficients are not significant.

Survey T2 resulted in similar surface patterns for satisfaction and commitment. Figure 3f shows the satisfaction pattern.

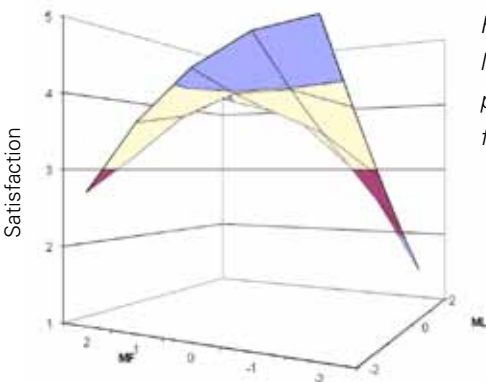


Figure 3f. Satisfaction as predicted by lawyers' management values (ML) and perceived management values of the firm (MF), survey T2

### 6.5.3. Short term reward values

Short term reward values explained a reasonable amount of variance of satisfaction and intention to stay. The satisfaction graph has a similar shape

as Figure 3d, but more pronounced. The regression of intention to stay produced a significant slope of the line of misfit and a surface pattern similar to Figure 3g.

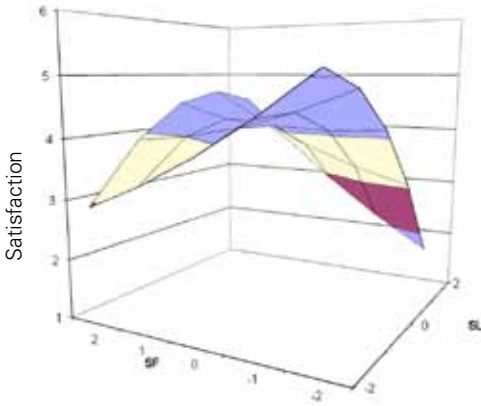


Figure 3g. Satisfaction as predicted by lawyers' short term reward values (SL) and perceived short term reward values of the firm (SF)

The slope as well as the curvature of the line of misfit in the regression of satisfaction is significant. This confirms the proposed inverted u-shape. The specific direction of the inclines, especially the steeper incline at the right hand side, where Short values of the lawyers are high and firm values are low, is in line with the negative correlation between Short lawyers values and satisfaction. The negative effect of higher lawyers values at low or medium firm value levels is clear in the slope along the SF = -2 line.

Survey T2 did not produce significant results for the short term reward values.

6.5.4. Long term perspective values

Long term perspective values explained a considerable part of variance of satisfaction ( $R^2 = 0.289$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ) and commitment ( $R^2 = 0.321$ ,  $p < 0.00$ ). The graphs of the regression equations are shown in Figures 3h and 3i.

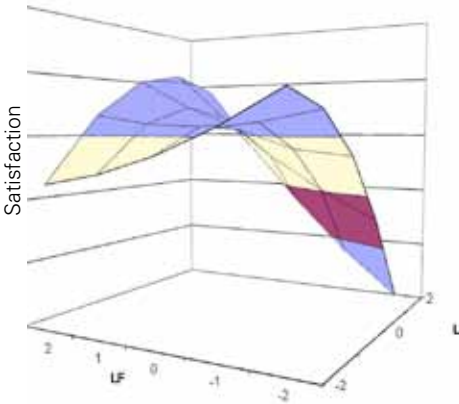


Figure 3h. Satisfaction as predicted by lawyers' long term perspective values (LL) and perceived long term perspective values of the firm (LF)

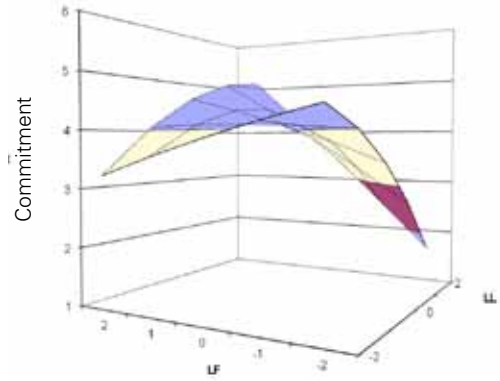


Figure 3i. Commitment as predicted by lawyers' long term perspective values and perceived long term perspective values of the firm

The graphs show irregular saddle shapes. For satisfaction, the slope and curvature of the  $LL = LF$  axis are not significant. The line of misfit  $LL = -LF$  has a significant slope and curvature. Satisfaction decreases sharply at the right side of the 'saddle': when lawyer's long term ambitions are high, they seem to be out of place – clearly less satisfied - in firms with lower long term values. The decline in satisfaction is less pronounced at the low lawyer/high firm value side.

For commitment, the plot shows a similar and significant slope and curvature of the line of misfit, a little less pronounced than on satisfaction. For the  $LL = LF$  axis, the slope is significant, indicating an incline that rises slightly to the high  $LL = LF$  end. Lawyers with higher Long values are more committed to firms with similar high values than low value lawyers to low value firms

Survey T2 produced significant curvatures of the lines of misfit in the surface patterns of satisfaction and commitment that closely resembled the misfit line in Figure 3i.

#### 6.5.5. Summary; hypothesis 2.

The regression analyses supported Hypothesis 2, insofar as the fit between lawyers' and firm values concerning expertise, management, short term reward (survey T1) and long term perspective has an effect on satisfaction and commitment. The proposed effect on intention to stay is supported only for expertise value fit and in survey T1 for short term reward

value fit. The graphs of the regression lines show the expected saddle shape. However, except for expertise values, the misfit between high personal values and low firm values have stronger negative effects than the opposite misfit of low personal values and high firm values. Further, the lines of fit are not completely level; the fit lines of management and short term reward values rise as the value level declines and the fit lines of long term perspective values rise as the value level increases. Coefficients indicate that lawyers' short term reward values have stronger effects than firm values. On long term perspective, the opposite patterns appeared. The effect of long term perspective value fit on commitment comes closest to the expected pattern. The negative effects of misfit on satisfaction appeared stronger than the effects on commitment.

In survey T2, only the Mgmt values produced a saddle shaped surface pattern as expected, the surfaces of the Exp. and Long values being more irregular. The surface pattern of the regression for Exp. values shows a positive relation between lawyer values and outcomes, as was indicated by the correlations. Similar to survey T1, the misfit of Mgmt and Long values had stronger effects at the right, low VF/high VL side. Even within this smaller sample the proposed fit and misfit effects are visible.

## *7. Discussion*

The purpose of this study, consisting of two consecutive surveys, was to investigate the effects of fit between the values and goals of young lawyers and the values of their firms. Firm values were studied as perceived by the lawyers and as deduced from the archetypical character of their firms. From the results of the first part of the study described in Chapter 2, I identified four sets of values or goals that could be linked to the firm's archetype: the level of expertise ambition (Exp.), the appreciation of a well organized and regulated firm (Mgmt), the need for short term reward (Short) and for long term career perspective (Long).

The correlations indicated an interrelation between lawyers' short and long term perspective values. However, contrary to the Short values of the firm, the perceived Long firm values were positively correlated to intention to stay, while personal Short values were negatively related to satisfaction and intention to stay.

The only significant correlation with gender was found for lawyers' long term perspective values in survey T1. Male lawyers seem to have stronger long term career ambitions. Similar gender differences were reported in



other studies in the legal as well as other professional industries (Dijkers et al., 2007; Groeneveld, Tijdens, & Kleef, 2009).

I studied the effects of fit of each of the values using the polynomial regression analysis as described by Edwards (1994), Hecht & Allen (2007) and Shanock (2010). I hypothesized that fit between lawyers' values and firms' archetypical characteristics (objective fit), as well as between lawyers' values and perceived firm values would be positively related to satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. Analyses of the objective fit effects did not result in significant outcomes in either survey, with the exception of the regression of the effects of expertise value fit on intention to stay. The expectation that subjective fit measures would show stronger effects than objective fit was confirmed. I also expected that perceived and objective fit would be positively related, as should be visible in the correlation between perceived firm values and the objective fit measures. In both surveys I found significant positive correlations of expertise firm values and short term reward firm values with the PP-MPB position of the firms, as was expected. Expertise and Short values as defined in the survey items appeared to approach the actual archetypical characteristics of the firm; regarding expertise values, the significant regression outcome supported this finding. These values are possibly the most apparent and perceivable for starting lawyers. There were no significant correlations between the other perceived firm values and the PP-MPB scores. The evaluation of the management values of the firm might be more difficult without work experience elsewhere. As for long term perspective, uncertainty about the continuation of employment after the trainee period may have contorted the evaluation of these values. In the economic insecure years 2008-2009, this uncertainty probably was even stronger than otherwise. Especially firms 1, 6 and 9, that have big corporate finance and banking practice areas, may have suffered in the first year of the financial crisis. Evidence for a relationship between the perception of firms' values and the interview outcomes was partial and weak.

The measuring of the PP-MPB archetype of the firms was derived from the interviews with managing partners, a source quite different from the surveys that measure the lawyers' values. The difference between these sources might preclude a combined analysis. The way that young lawyers perceive their firms might deviate from the reality or the perceptions of managing partners. Probably there are several archetypical elements that are still relatively obscure to entrants.

Analyses of the fit effect between lawyers' and perceived firm values

resulted in significant and meaningful outcomes. In general, the surface patterns that resulted from the regression analyses exhibited the expected saddle shapes with a high level line of fit and downward ‘wings’ at both sides of this line. In survey T2, probably due to the smaller sample size, the number of significant and meaningful results was smaller.

#### *7.1. Expertise values.*

Fit of expertise values (values, ambitions of distinguishing oneself professionally) only accounted for a substantial part of variance of intention to stay, in the regression analysis of survey T1. Also, objective fit of expertise values appeared to have a significant effect on intention to stay. Young lawyers who applied with the big law firms all had high expertise ambitions and perceived the expertise values of their firms generally as very high; however, the fit between their level of ambition and the expertise level of their firms made a difference for their staying intentions. In survey T2 the regression for expertise values showed a relationship between value fit, satisfaction and commitment. Fit at a higher value level was related to higher outcomes; lawyers’ values were dominant in producing this effect. The significant correlation between lawyers’ expertise values and the PP archetype of the firm indicated that lawyers with the highest expertise values seem to be more attracted to the PP.

#### *7.2. Management values.*

Misfit of lawyers’ and firm management values (values attributed to an orderly, well structured, transparent and predictable organization) is related to a decrease of satisfaction and commitment. Misfit effects appeared strongest when lawyers’ values are high and firm values low; low lawyers’ values appeared to dominate the fit effect. Fit at lower value levels appeared to be related with somewhat higher outcomes. Effects on satisfaction were more pronounced than on commitment. Surface patterns of the regression results showed the expected saddle shape, in survey T1 and survey T2.

#### *7.3. Short term reward values.*

The surface patterns of the regression of short term reward values (appreciation of direct, differential rewards –tangible or not- for performance) on satisfaction and intention to stay resemble the saddle shape, with a steeper incline at the right, low firm values/high lawyer values side. High lawyers’ values appear to have the strongest negative effect, as supported by the significant slopes of the misfit lines. Satisfaction is highest when the level of fitting values is low. Survey T2 produced no significant results.

#### *7.4. Long term perspective.*

Long term perspective values (value of career, especially partnership

perspective) have clear and significant effects on all outcome variables in survey T1. All surfaces of the regression equations show the expected saddle pattern, with a shallow U-shaped curvature of the line of fit. All misfit lines have a steeper decline at the right, low firm values/high lawyer value side. Here, low firm values are the dominant factor. Satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay reach the highest levels on the line of fit; this line is slightly higher – for intention to stay more pronounced – at a high level of value fit (in contrast with Mgmt and Short values).

In survey T2, regression results were significant on commitment. Firm values appeared to dominate the effects. Misfit lines showed the inverted U-shape with a steeper decline at the low firm value/high lawyer value side.

So, in survey T1, expertise values show some fit effects but are probably (still) hardly distinctive for law graduates. For management values and short term reward misfit effects are dominant, especially high expectations and low firm standards. For long term perspective values, fit as well as misfit effects are evident. This may be contrary to the belief that is expressed more and more frequently in professional literature (Vodeb, 2011) that partnership ambitions are of diminishing importance for starting as well as more experienced lawyers. Probably due to a smaller sample size, survey T2 produced less or weaker results than the first. In general, results affirmed the findings in survey T1. Effects of expertise value fit appeared stronger in survey T2, effects of Long value fit weaker. Long values produced the clearest results in survey T1, Mgmt values did so in survey T2.

Following the fit and socialization literature as discussed, I had expected that the outcome variables would be lower in survey T2, diminishing with tenure (Cooper-Thomas et al., 2005). Satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay had diminished, however not significantly. I also expected the fit as well as misfit effects to be more pronounced in survey T2. However, a general increase of differentiation of the effects of fit and misfit could not be discerned. Standard deviations of the outcome variables had not increased in survey T2. Comparing the surface patterns, some fit effects were more and others less pronounced in survey T2; I could not observe a general pattern.

#### *7.5. Satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay.*

Satisfaction and commitment appeared strongly correlated but different outcomes. Satisfaction correlated negatively with lawyers' management and short term reward values, commitment did not. In general, the effects of fit and misfit on satisfaction are more pronounced than the effects on commitment. Commitment appeared as a more stable affect of young lawyers who recently joined their firm. Nevertheless the surfaces of the

regression equations on satisfaction and commitment have the same general shape and patterns. Possibly, more pronounced negative effects of misfit on commitment will appear only later in time.

Intention to stay is different from the other outcome variables. Partly, this may be due to the response scale. However, the results of the regression of intention to stay on perceived as well as actual expertise value fit were significant and meaningful. Also, the regression of short term reward value fit produced significant results that were hypothesized and similar to other outcome variables.

### *7.6. Summary*

Fit of management and short term reward values has some effects on satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay. However, misfit appears to be more important, particularly between high expectations and lower firm standards, and, for short term rewards, also between high firm values and low personal ambitions. The clearest effects are produced by the fit and misfit of long term perspective values in survey T1, where firm values have an important, possibly dominant role in determining fit. Young lawyers who are already motivated by long term (partnership) perspectives probably are a small group, according to recent surveys among young professionals (Dijkers et al., 2007; Vodeb, 2011), with still a disproportionate share of male lawyers. But law firms will try to attract and retain precisely these 'bright and ambitious'. Partnership focused PP firms might have an advantage in appealing to these long term ambitions, but will also have to match their needs for short term rewards or recognition.

Lawyers who expect a clearly structured, transparent, predictable organization and value a prompt reward and recognition of their performance will be less satisfied and committed than their peers and probably will leave their firms sooner. Lawyers' expertise values and the level of value fit appeared to have a clear positive effect on their intention to stay and, in survey T2, on their other attitudes. The stronger the ambition to develop into a legal expert, the stronger the attachment to a career as a lawyer. Many professionals might share this expertise ambition, but in our sample of lawyers at the big firm it may be even more pronounced.

### *7.7. Limitations*

It can be argued that the (mis-)fit that I analyzed in these surveys only develops gradually and is not subject to sudden and radical change; that therefore the simultaneously measured satisfaction, commitment and intention to stay have followed from the development of (mis-)fit over time. However, one cannot be certain that the time-sequential or causal

relations are as presumed. The sample size of respondents to both surveys was insufficient for longitudinal statistical analysis. In Chapter 5, I will try to discover some patterns of change from the cases of the respondents to both surveys, but the lack of data that support longitudinal analysis data is a serious limitation of this study.

Besides the small number of respondents to both surveys, the sample sizes of the surveys were relatively small. This may have limited the number of significant results.

With one exception, objective fit could not be observed or analyzed, probably due to the difference between the measures. Apart from a few indications from the correlations, this research therefore could not contribute substantially to clarifying the relation between subjective and objective fit. Future studies might invest in developing more comparable measures of organization's characteristics and personal attitudes.

Finally, the measurement of intention to stay that I developed for the purpose of this study produced some significant results, but less so than satisfaction and commitment, both well established measures. The different timing of the intention to stay answering options might, as presumed, be congruent with a regular Likert scale, but might also distort some of the results. Further testing is necessary.