

Career Paths of Clergy: Describing Change Since 1994



***U.S. Congregational Life Survey:
A National Study of Worshipers,
Congregations, and Their Leaders***

Cynthia Woolever

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Key Questions about Clergy Careers

- Career transitions: Assistant to Solo Pastor to Senior Pastor?
- Differences between men and women clergy?
- Differences by faith tradition?
- Comparisons to 1994: What has changed in the past 15 years?



Current Research

- 2008 - 2009 U.S. Congregational Life Survey
- Senior and solo pastors of participating and non-participating congregations
- 693 key leaders surveyed by mail
- 673 ordained clergy, currently serving in congregations (94%)



Gender of Clergy: Senior/Solo

	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
2008			
Women	0%	28%	0%
2001			
Women	0%	20%	1%
1994			
Women*	0%	16%	6%

* Estimated from 15 Protestant denominations



Years in Ministry: Career Stage

	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
Early < 10			
All	14%	34%	9%
Mid 10 - 20			
All	20%	31%	40%
Mature 21+			
All	67%	35%	50%

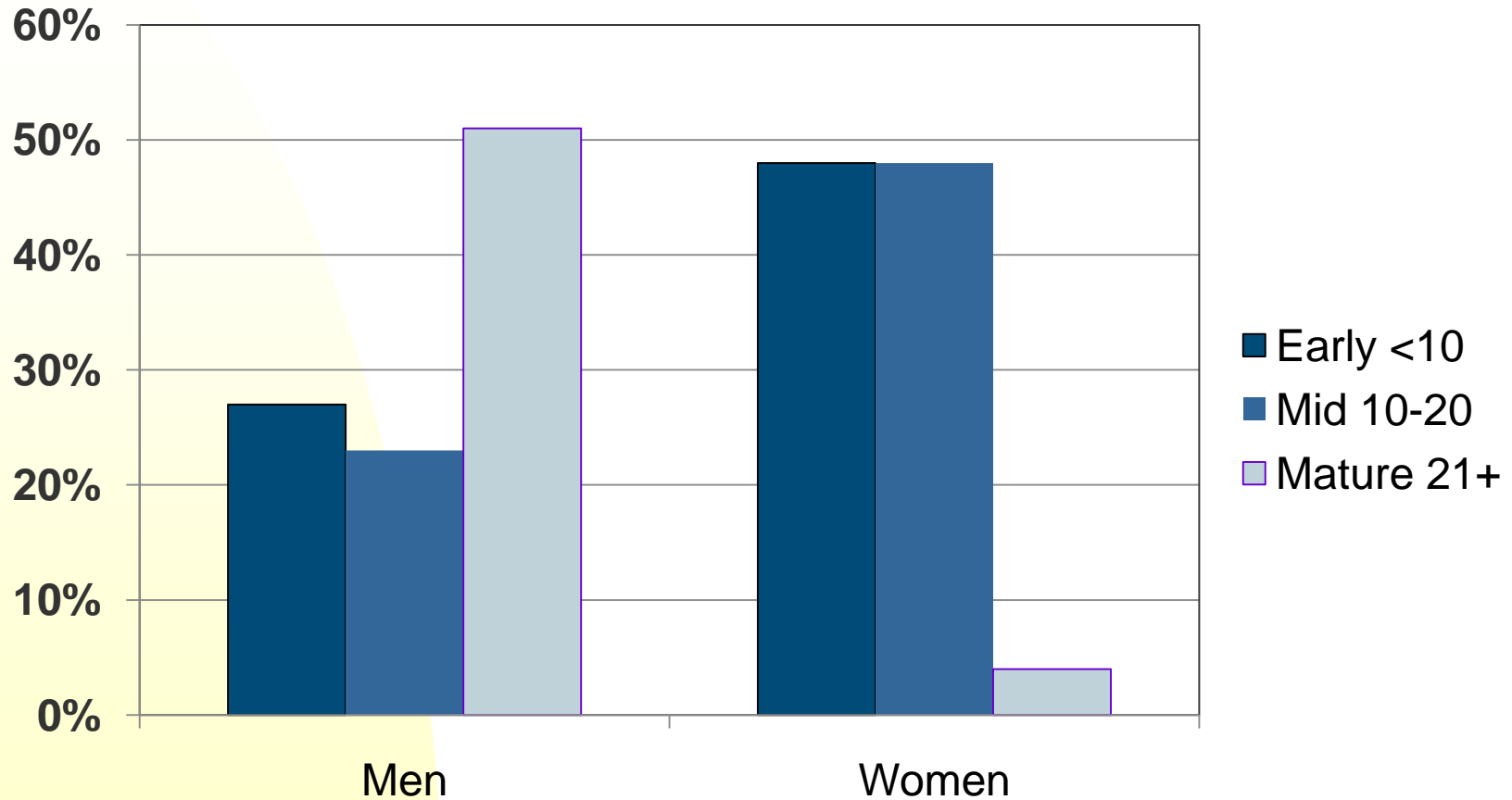


Career Stage: Mainline Protestants

	Mainline Protestant MEN	Mainline Protestant WOMEN	Mainline Protestant ALL
Early <10	27%	48%	34%
Mid 10-20	23%	48%	31%
Mature 21+	51%	4%	35%



Career Stage: Mainline Protestants



Worked in Another Occupation Before Entering Ministry

	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
2008/2009			
All	30%	61%	68%
<i>Men</i>		51%	
<i>Women</i>		90%	
Median Yrs	6	7	10
<i>Men</i>		5	
<i>Women</i>		13	



Left Parish Ministry for a Time to Work Elsewhere?

	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
Non-parish	18%	12%	9%
Secular	>1%	11%	17%
<i>Men</i>		15% - 13%	
<i>Women</i>		2% - 2%	
Median Yrs	6	2	2
<i>Men</i>		2	
<i>Women</i>		1.5	



of Job Positions by Faith Tradition*

	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
One	5%	13%	24%
Two	10%	17%	24%
Three	22%	18%	17%
Four	10%	18%	10%
Five+	53%	34%	25%
Median #	5.0	4.0	3.0

* Includes current position



of Job Positions by Career Stage*

	Early Career	Mid-Career	Mature Career
One	39%	12%	4%
Two	43%	27%	5%
Three	6%	23%	18%
Four	7%	18%	13%
Five+	4%	20%	60%
Median #	2.0	3.0	5.0

* Includes current position



Length of Time in Current Job

	Catholic	Mainline Protestant	Conservative Protestant
2008/2009			
Median Yrs	5.4	4.8	10.2
<i>Men</i>		4.9	
<i>Women</i>		4.7	



Time in Current Job by Career Stage

	Early Career	Mid-Career	Mature Career
2008/2009			
Median Yrs	2.6	5.5	8.6
<i>Men</i>	2.6	5.3	9.0
<i>Women</i>	3.2	5.0	—



Previous Research

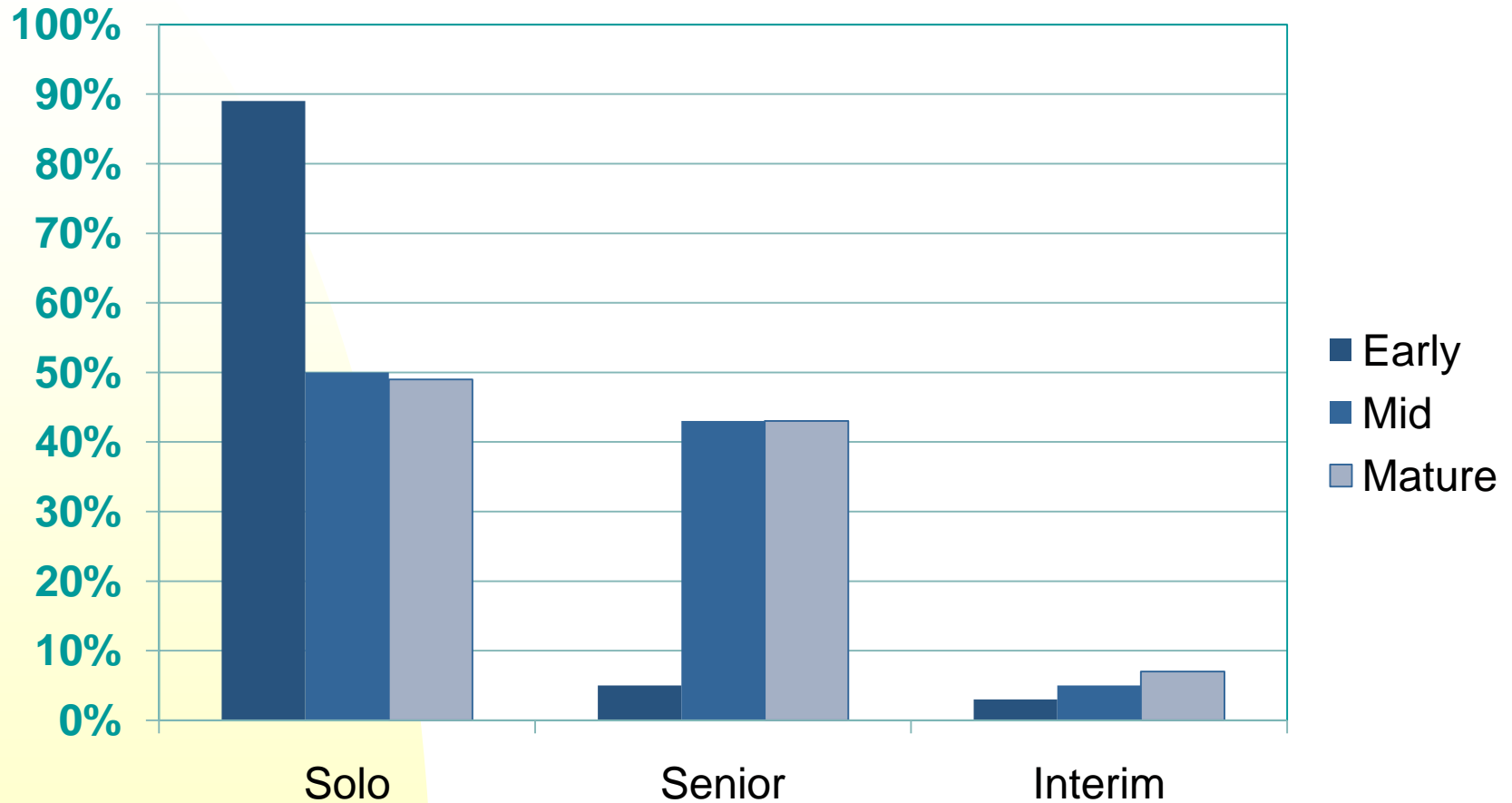
- 1994 Hartford Seminary study of ordained women in 15 ***Protestant*** denominations
- ***All*** fully ordained, non-retired clergy
- 4,838 clergy; 49% response rate
- *Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling* (Zikmund, Lummis, Chang; 1998)
- *Factors Shaping Clergy Careers* (Patricia Chang; 2002)



Comparison of 1994 and 2008/2009

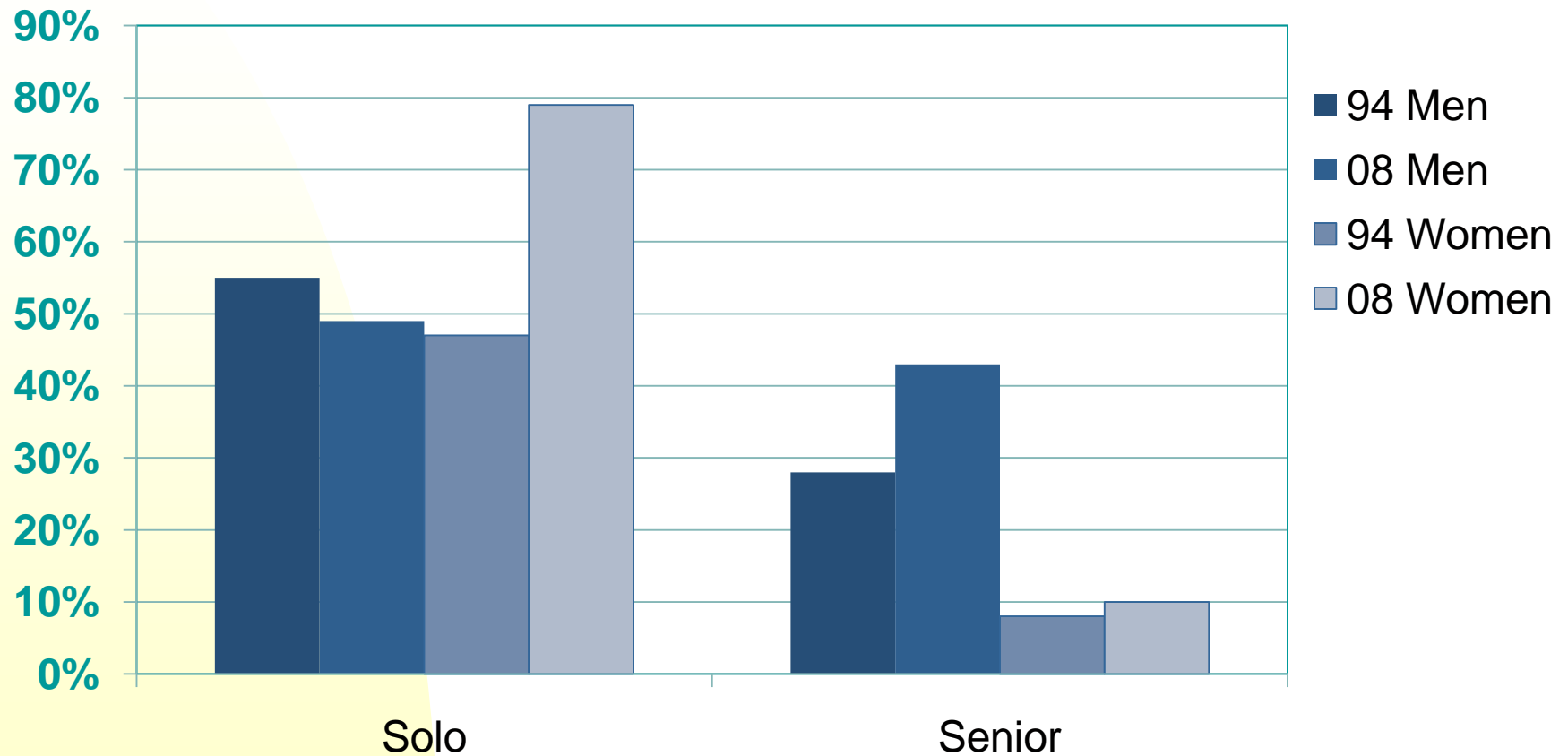
- Protestant clergy only
- **All** fully ordained, non-retired clergy
- 2008/2009 national random sample of **pastors** serving as solo or senior in local churches
- 1994 sample of clergy in 15 denominations in **all types of jobs** —pastors, non-parish, secular

Distribution of Current Position: 2008

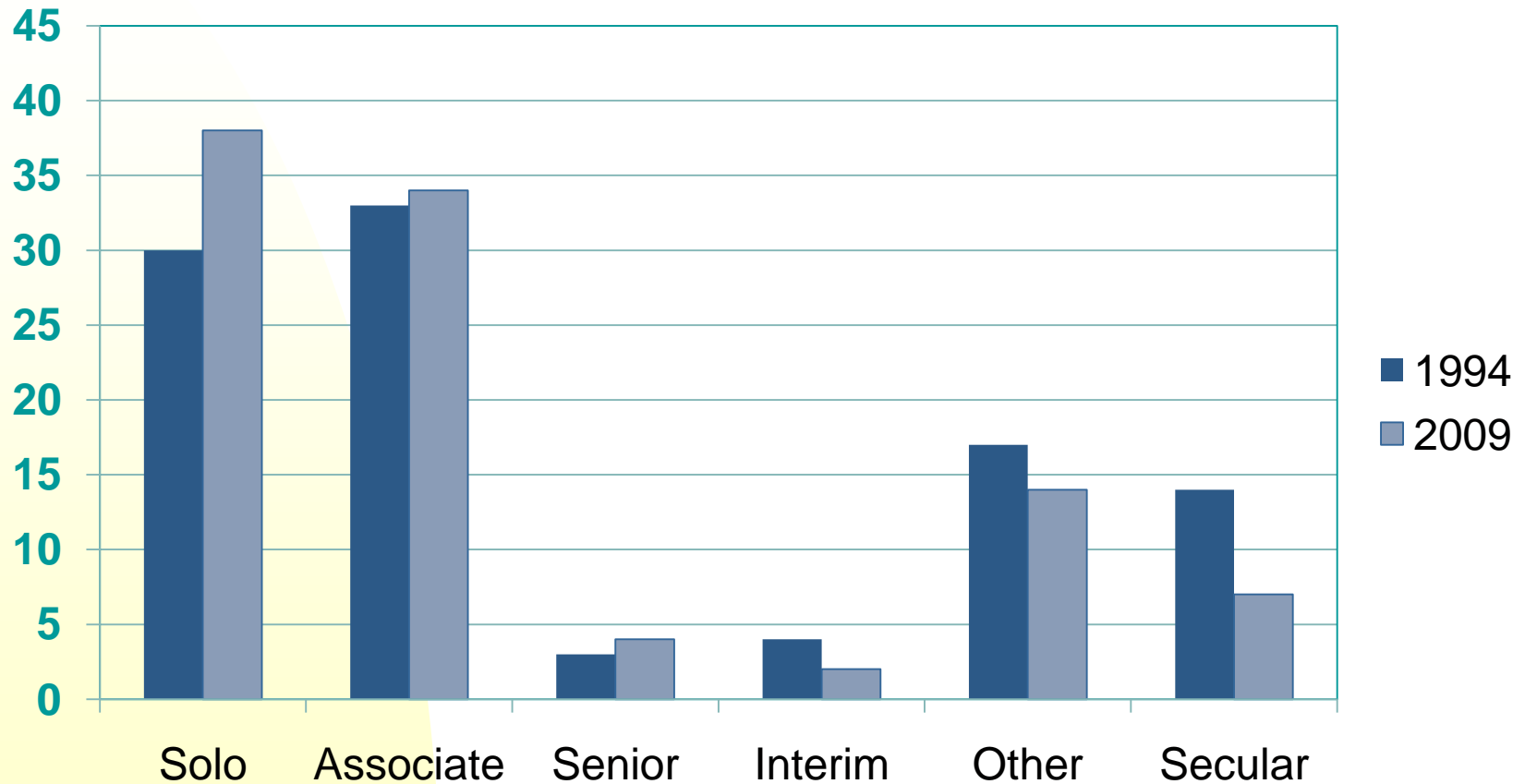


*** Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only**

Current Position: Protestant Clergy



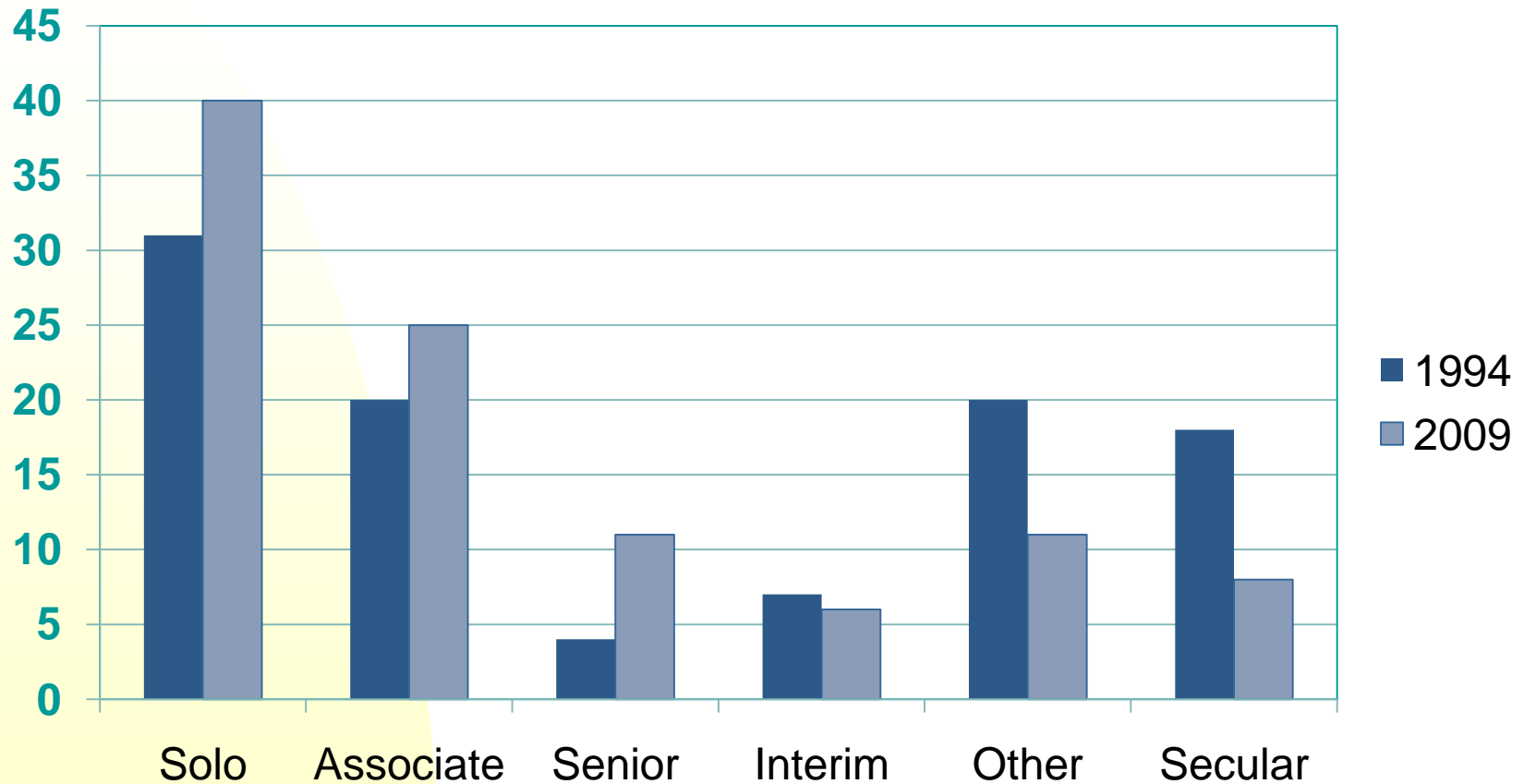
Distribution of First Job Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

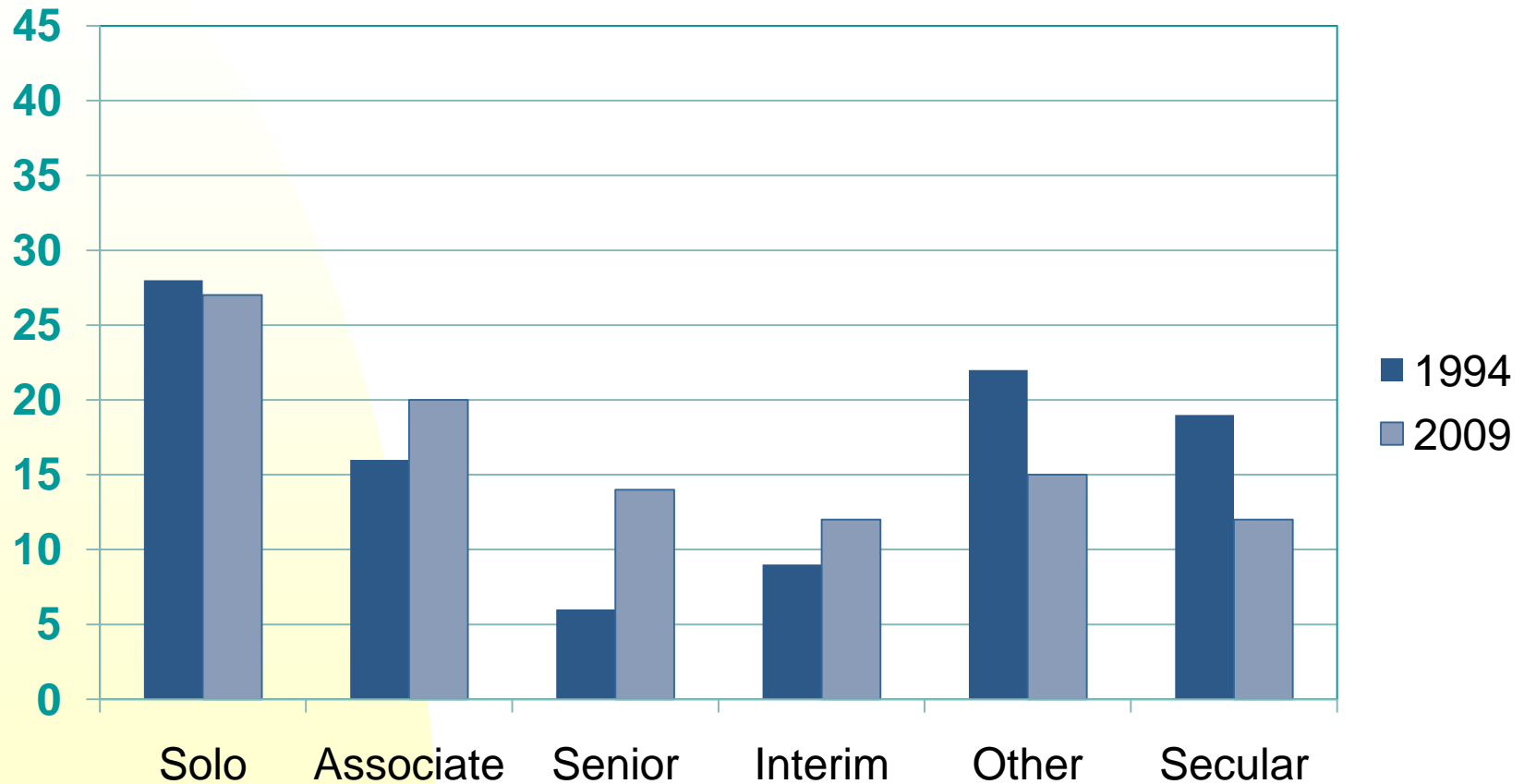


Distribution of Second Job Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

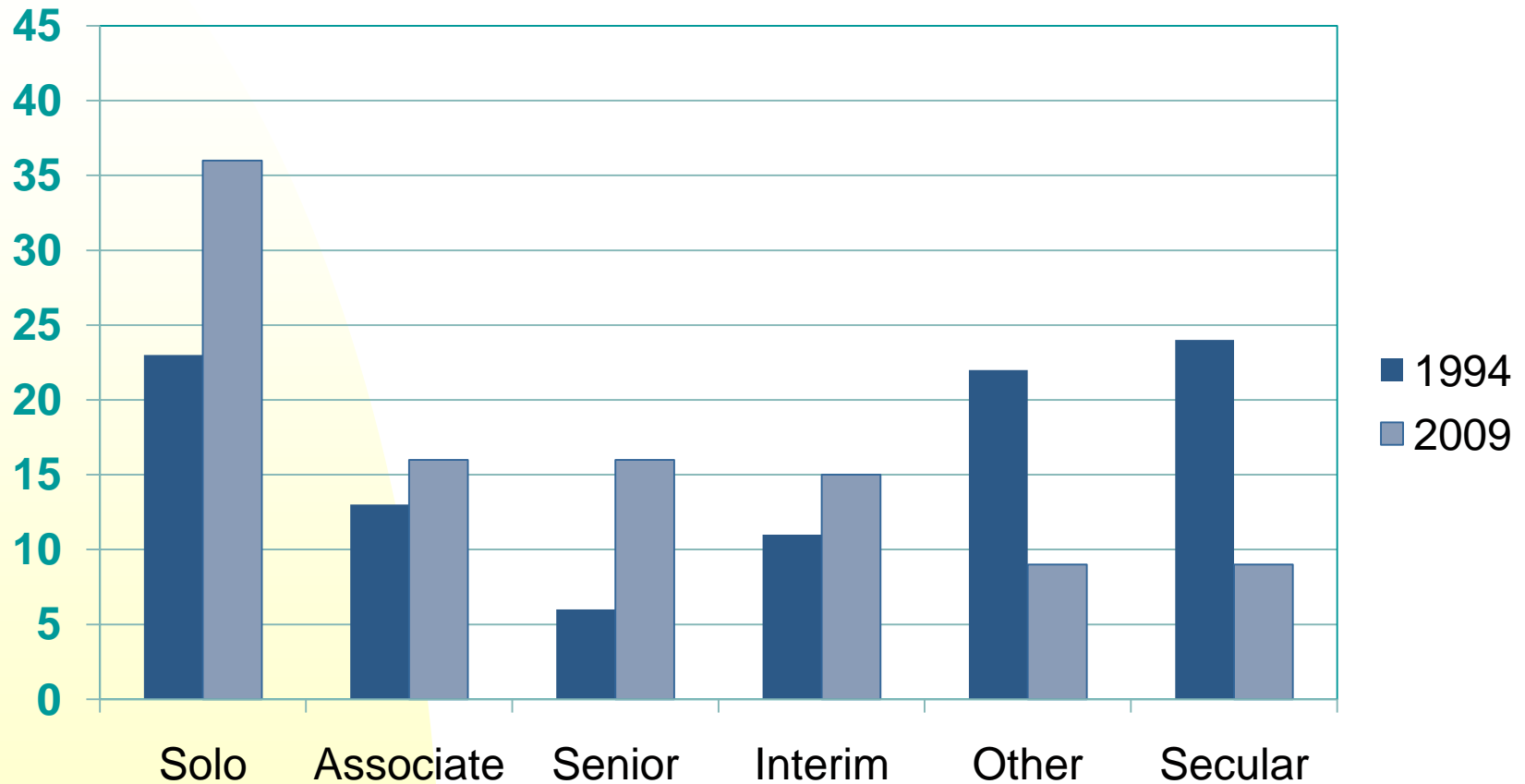
Distribution of Third Job Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

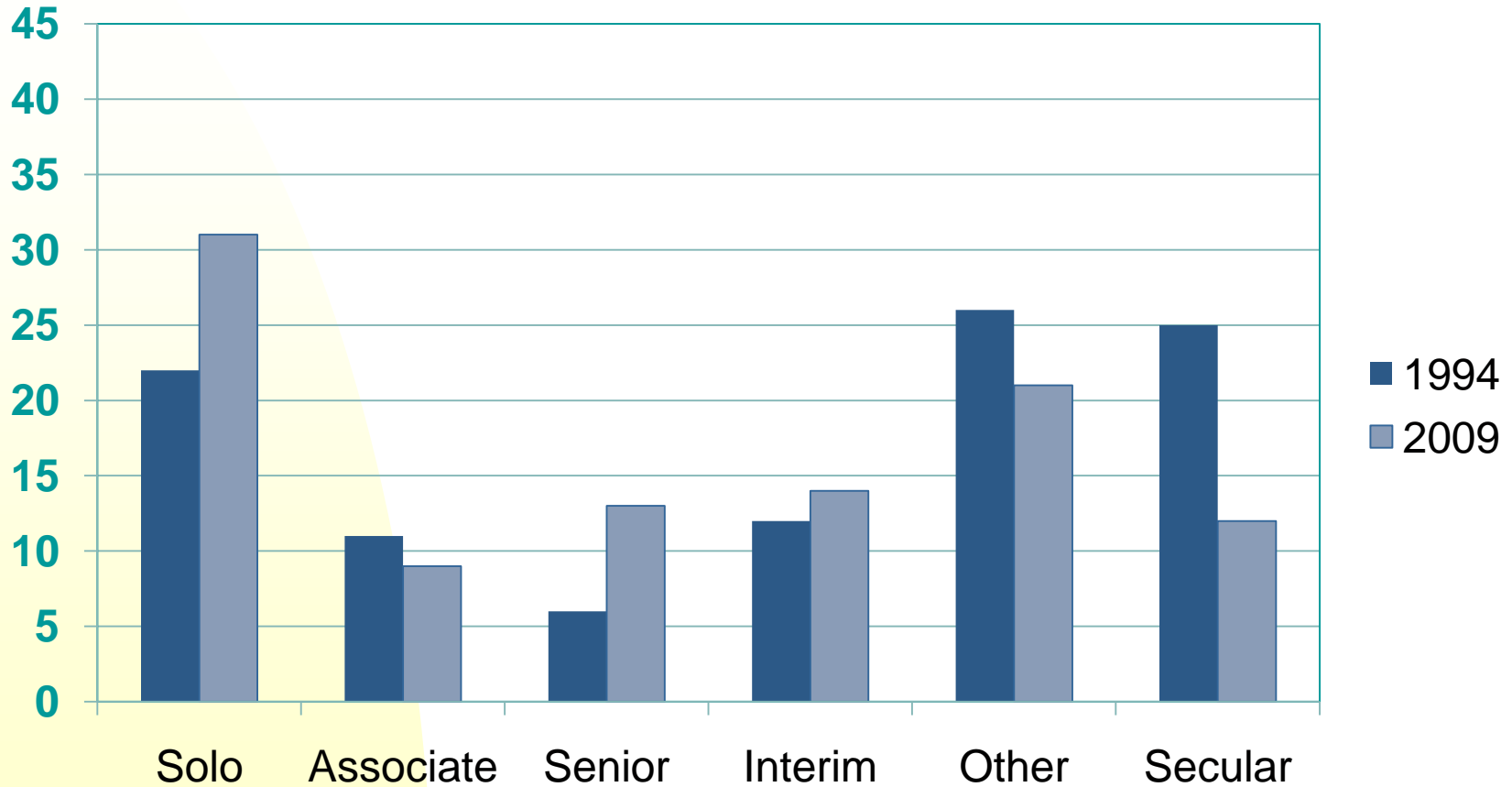


Distribution of Fourth Job Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

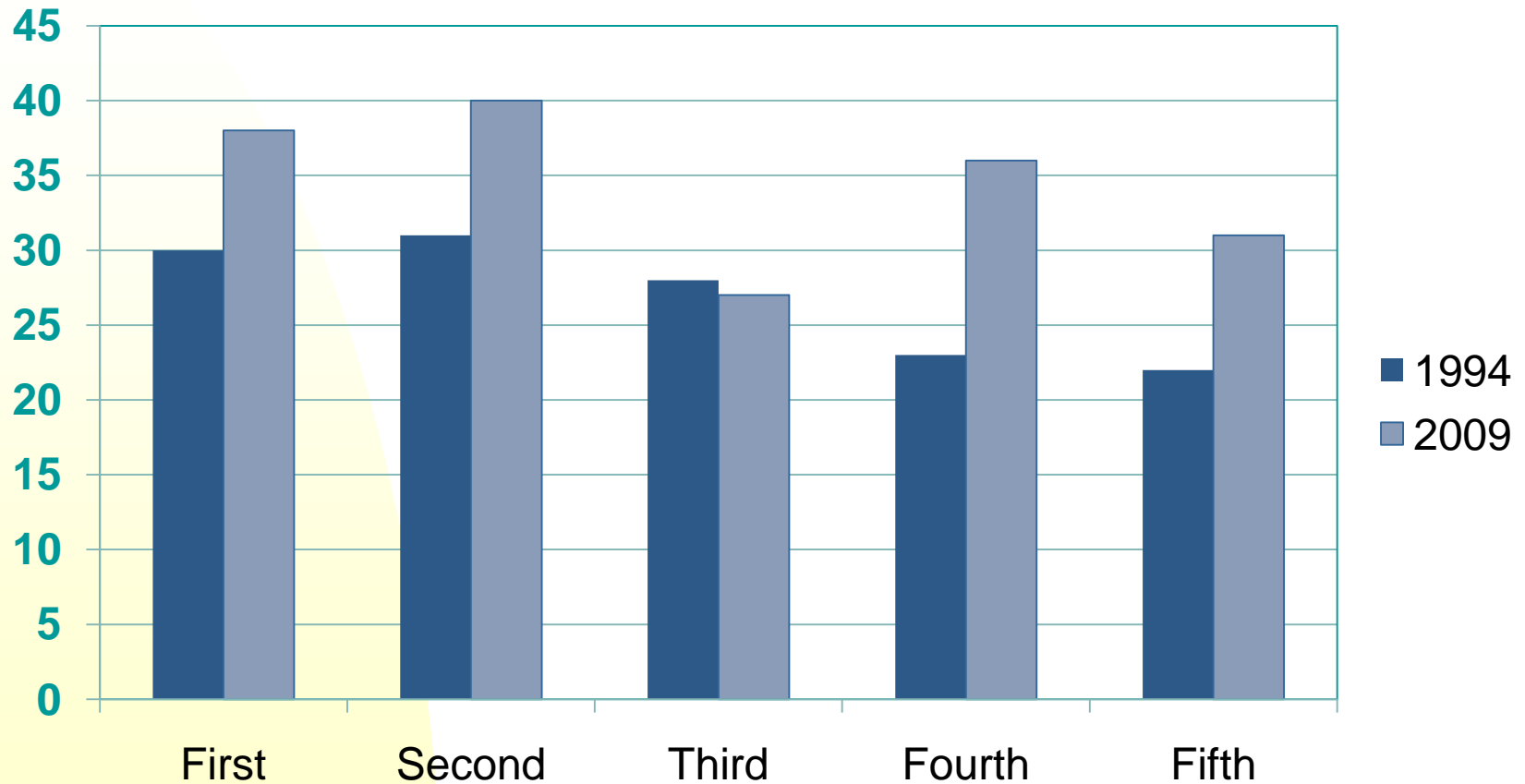
Distribution of Fifth Job Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only



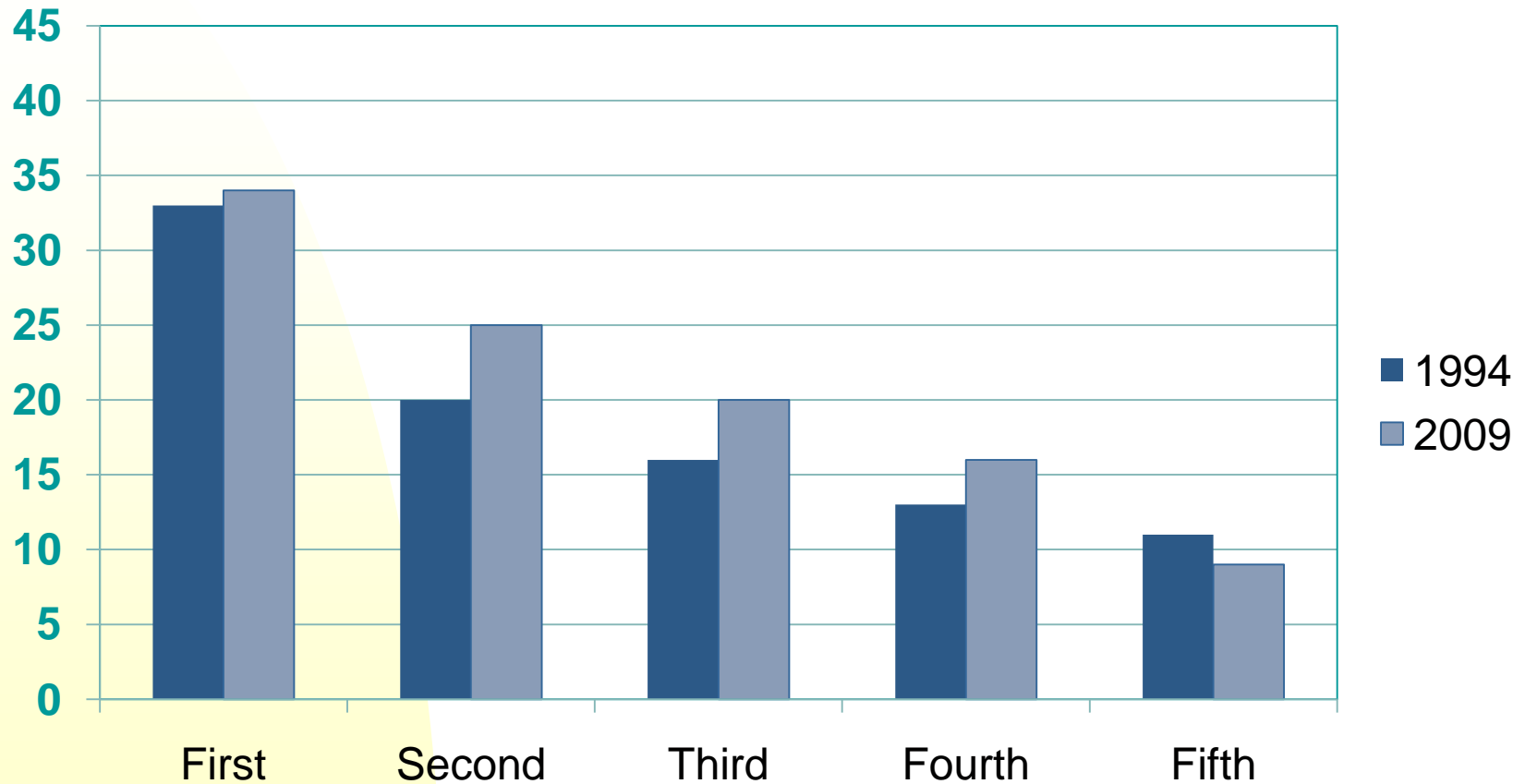
Distribution of Solo Pastor Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

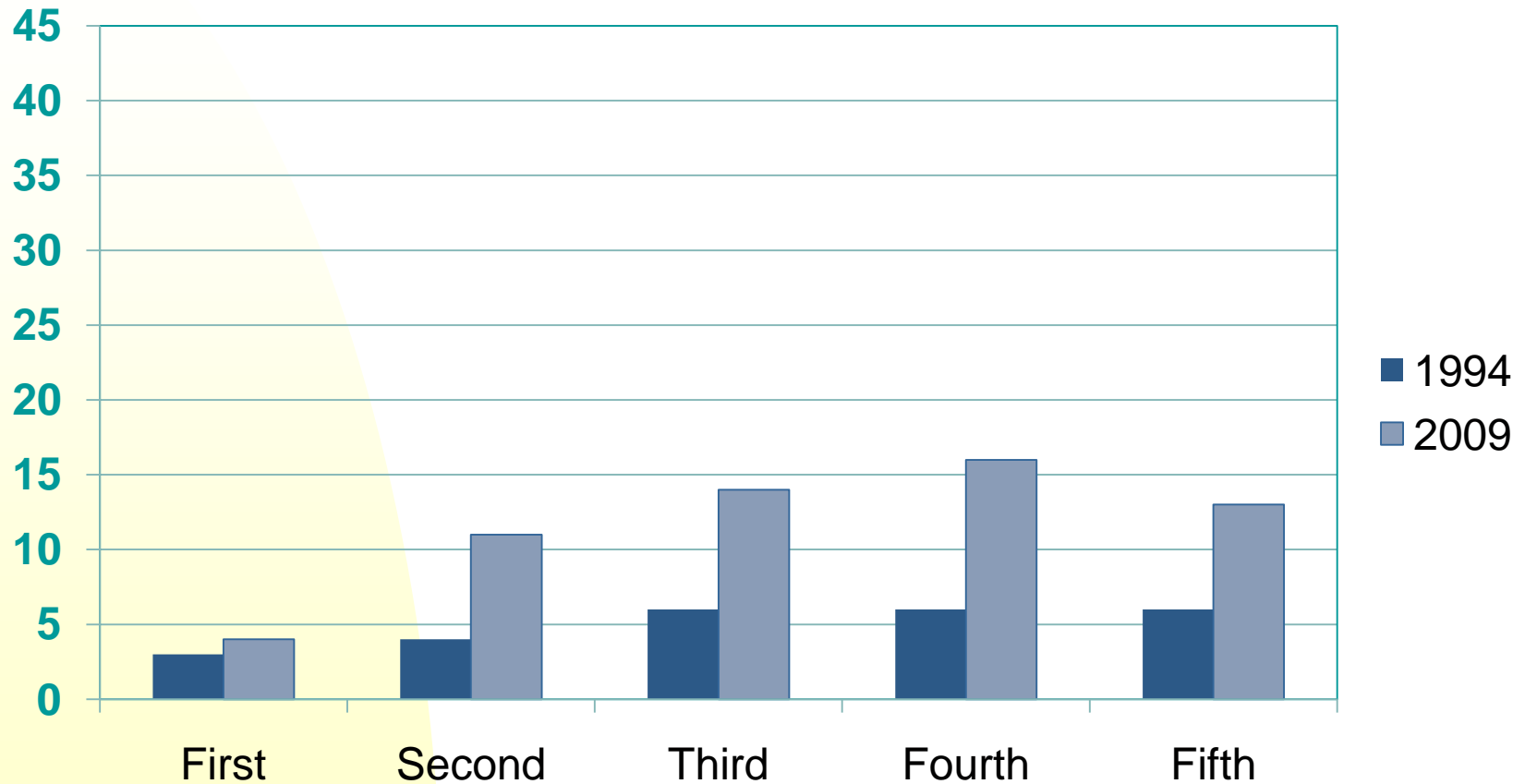


Distribution of Associate Positions*



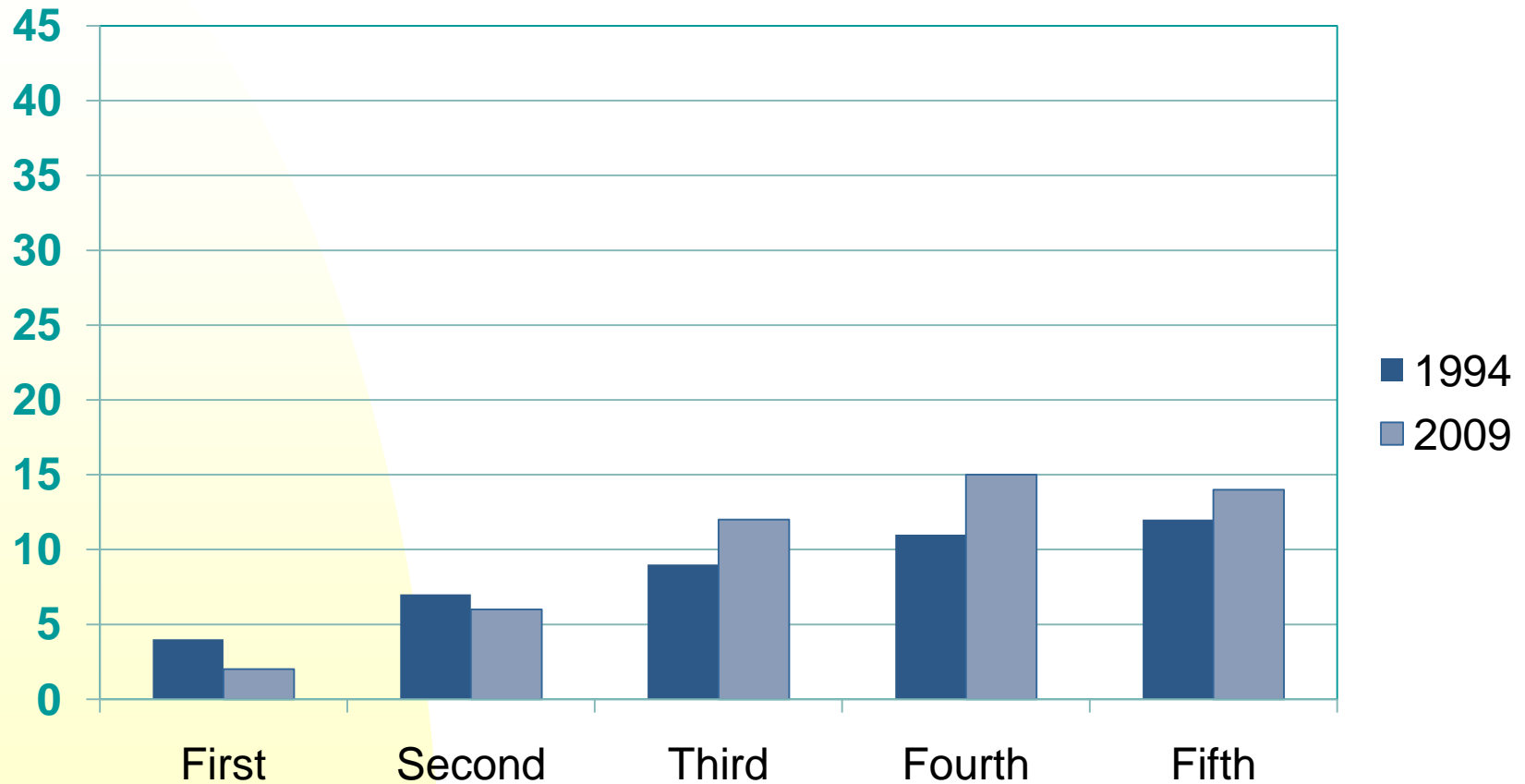
* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

Distribution of Senior Positions*



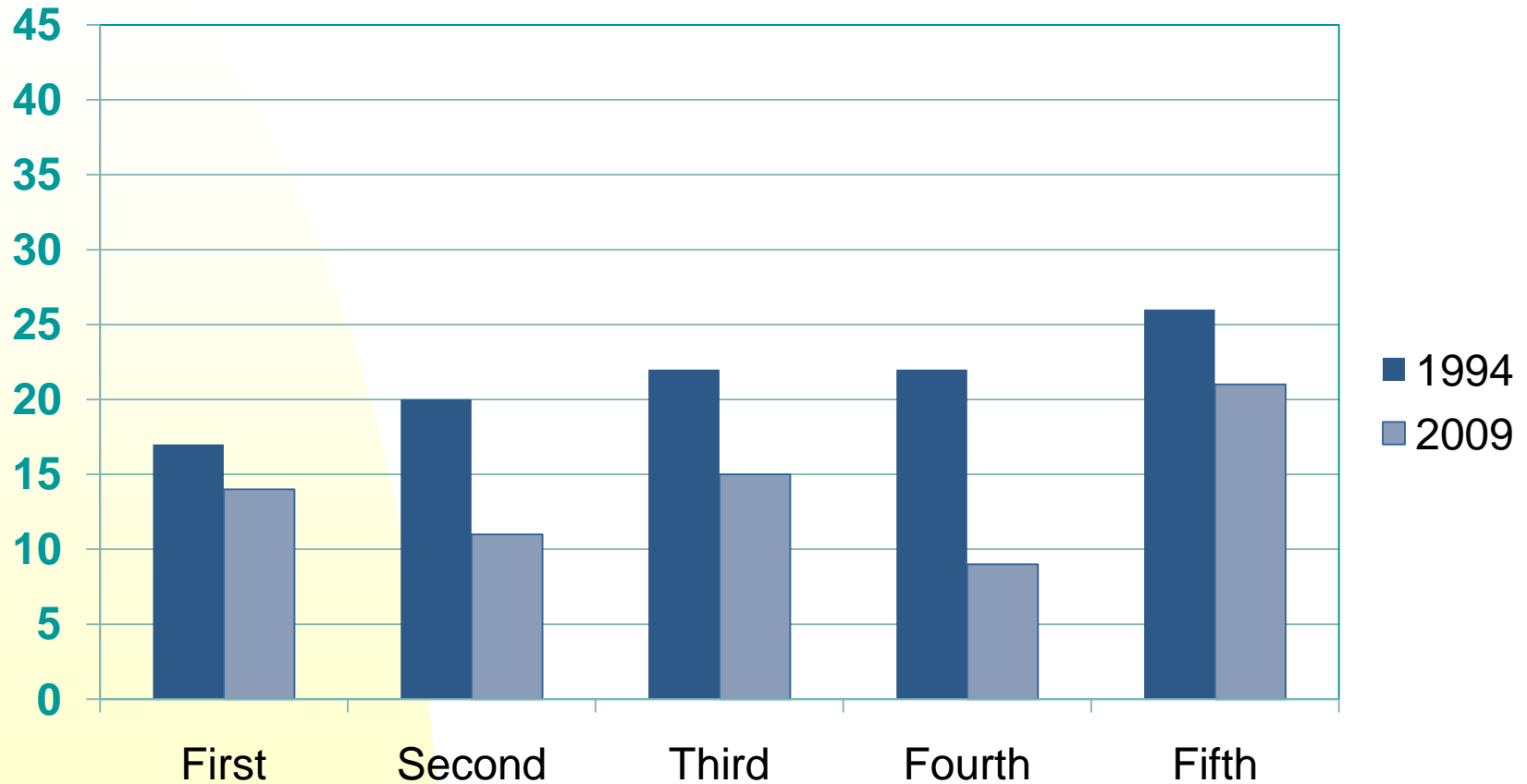
* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

Distribution of Interim Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

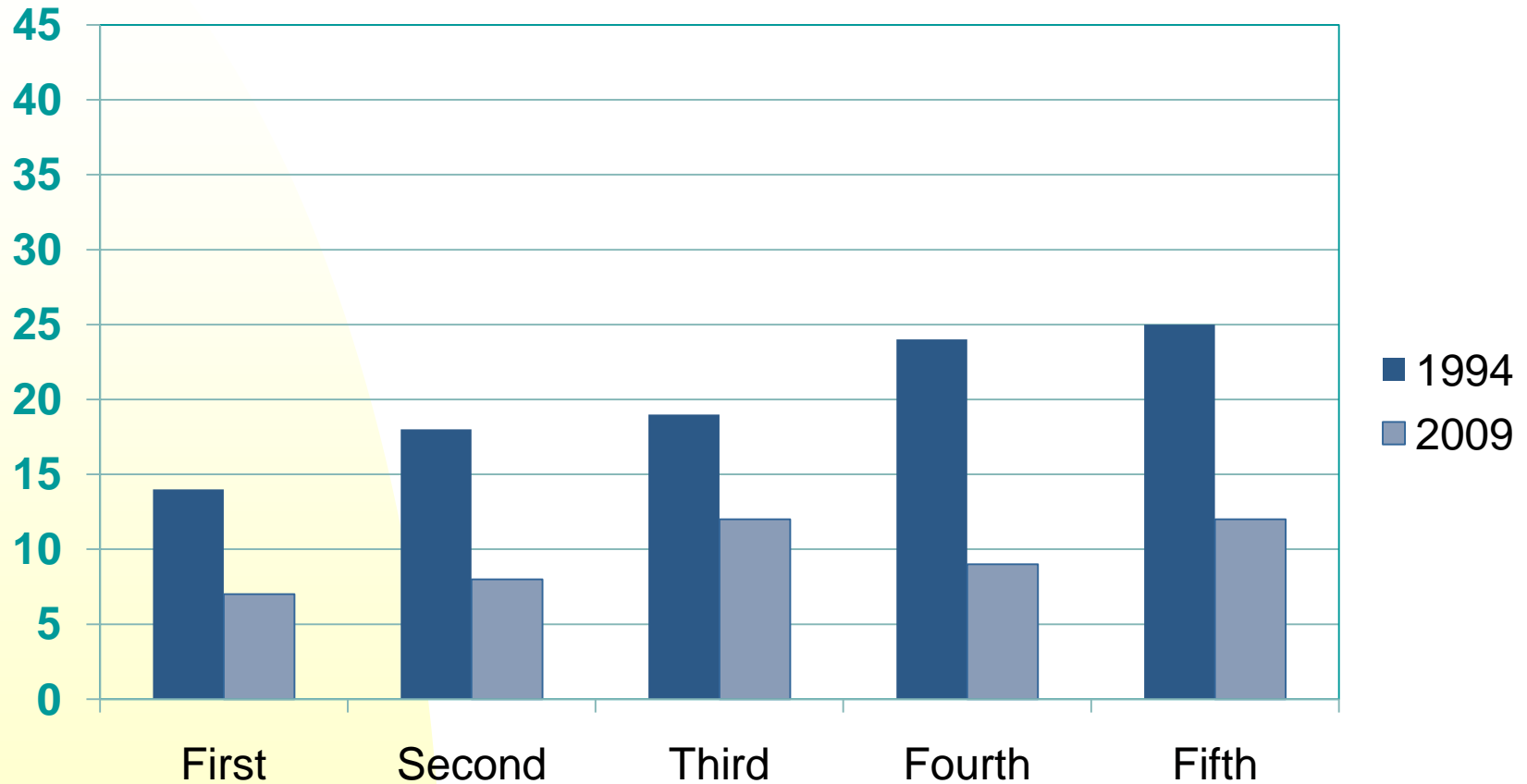
Distribution of Other Ministry Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only



Distribution of Secular Positions*



* Comparisons of Protestant Ordained Pastors only

Summary and Conclusions

- Distinctive career paths for Catholic priests: More than 2 decades in ministry, moved the most from job to job compared to other clergy
- Distinctive career paths for mainline Protestant women clergy: Most second-career, clustered in early to mid-career stage, % higher
- Distinctive career paths for conservative Protestant clergy: Long tenure in current job, fewer jobs over career, previous occupation



Summary and Conclusions

- Distinctive career paths for Protestant clergy currently serving as parish pastors: More likely to become senior pastors; move out of associate pastor roles
- Parish pastors stay in positions longer as they move through their career
- 1994: Clergy move out of parish ministry over time; true in 2008/2009?

