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**ADD WOMEN AND STIR:  
THE EFFECT OF FEMALE MENTORSHIP ON WOMEN'S LAW SCHOOL  
EXPERIENCES**

by Riley Smith

An Independent Study Thesis  
submitted to the Department of Political Science  
at the College of Wooster  
March 2022  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of I.S. Thesis

Adviser: Dr. Angela L. Bos

Second Reader: Dr. Désirée Weber

# Abstract

This Independent Study examines the effect that female mentorship has on women's experiences in law school. Previous literature indicates seven areas in which women's experiences differ from men's: their attitudinal changes over time in law school, their relationships with professors, their participation in class, their perception of their academic achievement, their feelings of alienation, and their confidence. In every way, women's experiences are worse than men's. Some mentorship literature suggests that these experiences could be improved by female mentorship, though other literature demonstrates that female mentorship has no effect. Therefore, I ask, what is the effect of female mentorship on women's experiences in law school? I hypothesize that women with female mentors will have less attitudinal change, better relationships with professors, higher levels of participation, improved perception of their academic achievement, reduced feelings of alienation, increased confidence relative to women without female mentors, and more political ambition. Through a survey including close-ended and open-ended questions and a series of interviews, I find partial support for these hypotheses. There is support for the hypotheses in the qualitative analysis of the open-ended questions and interview responses, though no support for the hypotheses in the quantitative analysis of the survey results. The qualitative results indicate that, regardless of measurable quantitative effect, women seek out and gain from female mentorship, which has important implications. The literature surrounding political ambition finds that women, including women lawyers, do not have as high ambition as their male

counterparts. If female mentorship in law school can improve women's experiences, making them more confident, they may be encouraged to run for political office.

# Dedication

*To all the women of my family who wanted an education and never got one—I hope I've made you proud.*

# Acknowledgments

As one of my interviewees for this Independent Study put it, “you can’t do anything without someone to guide you.” I have never found that to be truer than during my time at Wooster.

Through four years of Sunday video calls—usually started right as they wanted to eat lunch—my parents watched this project and my college experience as a whole take shape. And of course, without their tireless efforts to fund my education (and hunt down the perfect college—thanks, Mum!), I wouldn’t have ever written this IS.

My sister, Maeve, was my very first mentee and has put up with twenty years of advice-giving, whether she wanted it or not. Thank you for smiling and nodding whenever I answered, ‘how are you?’ with an update on how many surveys had been returned.

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And, of course, thank you, Abby, for four years of the best friendship of my life. I couldn’t imagine Wooster without you.

Rachel, thank you for making me laugh so hard that I get tears in my eyes. And Saralee, thank you for letting me tag along on the very first night—and every night since.

Thank you to Owen for taking every one of my stressed moments in stride and always cheering me on—I know this year wouldn’t have been the same without you.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1870, Ada Kepley became the first woman law graduate in United States history. When she graduated, she could not practice because women could not be admitted to the Illinois bar, so she became a different sort of advocate, campaigning for women's suffrage and other issues (13 Pioneering Women in American Law - ABA Journal 2022). In the last century and a half, women have continued to follow her example and enter law school, and their numbers have continued to grow. Back in 1963, women only made up 3.6% of law classrooms, but by 1980, women comprised a third of law students (Ginsburg 1982, 272). Finally, since 2016, women have been the majority (Olson 2016).

Though women are entering law school in higher numbers than ever before, this does not necessarily mean that their experiences have improved. Historically, women have struggled with the law school socialization process—that is, the process of becoming a lawyer, which requires students to approach the world from an objective legal perspective. Several scholars have suggested that having more women faculty in law school to mentor women students would improve women's experiences. Therefore, I ask: what is the effect of female mentorship on women law students' experiences?

This study is grounded in three areas of literature: women's experiences in law school, the effects of female mentorship, and women's political ambition. First, the literature demonstrates that women's experiences in law school differ from men's, largely to women's detriment. For instance, women enter law school with different attitudes than men; they are more likely to want to pursue careers in the public interest and they are

more liberal. Over time, though, the law school socialization process trains women to think more like men, leading many to feel like they have abandoned their values. Additionally, women tend to have more negative relationships with their professors than men, which leads to them participating less frequently in class than their male counterparts. This in turn makes women less likely to feel positively about their academic achievement. Furthermore, women often feel alienated from the law school socialization process, as well as from themselves as a result of it. All of these difficulties culminate in women feeling less confident than their male peers. Second, the literature surrounding female mentorship is inconclusive; some studies have found that female mentorship is beneficial for women students, but others have concluded that there is no effect. Third, the literature concerning women's political ambition shows that women—including women lawyers—are less ambitious than their male counterparts. This study closes a gap in the literature by combining these three areas to build a case for testing my hypothesis that female mentorship will improve women's law school experiences.

If this is the case, there are several important implications. First, this could create important changes in law school and in the legal field more generally. Currently, women have to learn to accommodate the legal perspective throughout law school; in the future, it is possible that the legal profession will have to learn to accommodate women's perspectives, which more than one participant reported during this study are different from men's perspectives. Additionally, because women have been present in the legal profession for quite some time now, and lawyers make up such a large part of legislatures and the judiciary, more women lawyers should have started running for and winning

office. However, that has not been the case. There is something preventing otherwise-eligible women candidates from running for office. I argue that this obstacle is created in the crucible of legal education.

Law school is widely considered to be a test in and of itself. My participants described it as an institution that “throw[s] everything at you to see if you can handle it,” and uses a “weeding-out process...to get the people who actually want to be [in law school].” That law school is intentionally grueling is acknowledged as fact; that men and women experience it differently is far less recognized. However, the gender differences in the law school experience are real, and this study adds to a long history of literature demonstrating that women feel alienated and lost in the law school environment.

Like other research concerning women in law school before it, this study utilized a survey, which was approved by the College of Wooster Human Subjects Research Committee, as well as interview sessions with participants. The survey was distributed using a snowball sampling method and targeted both current law students and recent graduates. All survey participants were offered the opportunity to provide their email address in order to be contacted for a follow-up interview.

Ultimately, there was partial support for the hypothesis that female mentors improve women law students’ experiences. When the qualitative data was analyzed, it was clear that participants felt that the female mentors they have in their lives have had an enormous impact on their law school experience and their ability to thrive in the legal profession. Though there was no support from the quantitative survey results for the hypothesis, further analysis revealed that having more female professors improved

women's relationships with professors, so the quantitative results still showed the importance of having women faculty. Additionally, as Homer and Schwartz (1989) argue, women's experiences are often too complex for a close-ended survey to completely capture. Therefore, it may be more important to consider the positive effect of mentorship reported by interview participants than the lack of effect found in the quantitative results.

These results matter. Lawyers make up a disproportionate share of the American political system, and unless women lawyers begin to have the same level of political ambition as their male peers, it is likely that women will remain underrepresented in American government. At the present, due to their negative experiences in law school, it seems unlikely that women lawyers will begin running with the same frequency as men. Female mentorship could be one patch on the way to sealing the pipeline and ensuring that women are equally represented.

In Chapter 2, I begin with a review of the relevant literature, including literature surrounding women's experiences in law school, the effect of female mentorship, and women's political ambition, in order to inform my hypotheses. Chapter 3 details the methodology, including the construction of my variable measurements, the distribution of the survey, and the format of the interviews. In Chapter 4, I examine the results, concluding that that interviewees had a positive view of the effect of women mentors on their lives, but that there is no significant empirical outcome for the hypothesis. Finally, in Chapter 5, I explain the results, examine the weaknesses of my theory and study, suggest directions for future research, and discuss the implications of my results.

# Chapter 2: Literature Review

## Introduction

Women have made incredible gains in American law schools where, after decades of not even being allowed to be students, they have become the majority (Olson 2016). Unfortunately, there has not been an accompanying shift in the law school socialization process, which was created by men for men. Even as the majority of law students, women often struggle with this process, which negatively affects their law school experiences in a number of ways. First, they enter law school with noticeable attitudinal differences from their male colleagues; however, by the end of law school, men's attitudes have not changed, while women's have been socialized to match men's, indicating that the law school socialization process changes women more than men (Bashi and Iskander 2006; Granfield 1992; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Krauskopf 1994; Schleef 2001; Weiss and Melling 1988). Additionally, women have more negative relationships with their professors than men (Banks 1988; Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Krauskopf 1994), causing them to participate in class at a lower rate than their male colleagues (Banks 1988; Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil 2014; Krauskopf 1994). These classroom difficulties manifest in academic differences between men and women, despite similar qualifications on entry to law school (Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 2014; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Howell 2008; Weiss and Melling 1988). Perhaps because of these other differences, as well as the way that learning to "think like a lawyer" is often conflated with learning to "think like a man," women law students often feel alienated

from the process of becoming a lawyer (Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Kindschy, Perrin, and O’Neil 2014; Krauskopf 1994; Schleef 2001; Weiss and Melling 1988). Finally, all these differences culminate in a confidence gap between men and women (Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Howell 2008; Krauskopf 1994).

These differences, created by the law school experience, have political implications. As lawyers make up a substantial portion of the legislature and all of the judiciary, where women remain underrepresented, it is likely that there is something causing American women lawyers to seek political office at a lower rate than their male colleagues. The many differences in women’s experiences in law school compared to men seem like a likely culprit—after all, women who feel less confident in their abilities following law school thanks to these differences will hardly wish to seek political office. As a consequence, women continue to be underrepresented in American legislatures and judiciaries at both the federal and state levels, largely due to lower levels of political ambition among American women (Fox and Lawless 2004; Lawless and Fox 2004; Lawless and Fox 2005; Lawless and Fox 2010).

That leads to the reasonable question of how best to close these gaps. The idea that women working in historically male-dominated fields such as STEM and the law would benefit from female mentorship is well-documented (Canes and Rosen 1995); however, there is little research addressing if female mentorship improves women’s experiences in the most relevant areas. Therefore, I ask: What is the effect of female mentorship on women law students’ experiences?



I hypothesize that women mentors will improve women's experiences in law school in seven key ways. First, female mentorship will help women students maintain the attitudinal differences that initially separate them from their male colleagues before they are ordinarily socialized to think more like men. Second, female mentorship will improve women students' relationships with all of their professors, both male and female. Third, female mentorship will encourage women to participate more frequently in class. Fourth, female mentorship will reduce feelings of alienation that women experience in response to the fact that law school asks them to "think like a man." Fifth, female mentorship will improve how women feel about their academic achievement. Sixth, female mentorship will make women students feel more confident in themselves and their abilities. Finally, female mentorship will increase women's political ambition.

To reach these hypotheses, I have reviewed three areas of literature: that surrounding women in law school, that concerning the effectiveness of female mentorship for women students, and that addressing women's political ambition. In Part I, I will address the many gaps between men and women in law school, including the attitudinal differences between them, their different perceptions of professors, the participation gap, the difference in their feelings of alienation, the achievement gap, and the confidence gap. In Part II, I will consider the role that female mentorship can play in improving women's experiences, including literature suggesting that it has a positive effect and literature suggesting that it has no effect. Lastly, in Part III, I will turn to a discussion of women's lack of political ambition. Together, these literatures demonstrate

that female mentorship could improve women's experiences in law school, which could then have profound effects on women's political representation.

### **Part I: Women in Law School**

As previously discussed, women have negative experiences during their legal education that men do not seem to share, likely as a result of differences between men and women in law school. Luckily, there is a possibility that women mentors could help improve women's experiences, which will be more extensively discussed in Part II of this chapter.

First, men and women enter law school with different reasons for attending, as well as different attitudes (Bashi and Iskander 2006; Granfield 1992; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Krauskopf 1994; Schleef 2001; Weiss and Melling 1988). As law school was designed by men for men, it largely matches and encourages men's attitudes while squashing women's. Having more women mentors available may help women either learn to assimilate less painfully or perhaps how to avoid assimilation while still succeeding. Additionally, men and women have different experiences with the still largely male faculty; women often fail to make meaningful connections with their instructors, largely due to a belief that professors do not respect students (Banks 1988; Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Krauskopf 1994). Increasing female mentorship opportunities would allow more women to make these connections because they view women as less intimidating. This belief appears again in women's participation rates in law school. They are far less likely to participate regularly—or at all—in class compared to men, but this disparity shrinks when women professors lead a class, which

indicates that female mentorship could help close the participation gap (Banks 1988; Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil 2014; Krauskopf 1994).

This would be useful because, largely due to the participation gap, there is an achievement gap between men and women in law school. Women are less likely to be represented at the top of their class, and they feel worse about their academic performance than men (Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Howell 2008; Weiss and Melling 1988). As the different ways in which men and women process legal information likely contributes to this gap, more women mentors would help women students improve their grades. Similarly, women and men's differing approaches to legal thinking means that many women law students feel alienated by their legal education (Banks 1988; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil 2014; Krauskopf 1994; Schleaf 2001; Weiss and Melling 1988). Women mentors likely had similar approaches when they were in law school and can provide advice about how to cope with alienation. Finally, thanks to all these other differences, there is a severe confidence gap between men and women; after being in law school, once-confident women are no longer confident in themselves or their abilities (Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Howell 2008; Krauskopf 1994). Given that women professors have gone through this experience themselves and come out the other side with enough confidence to teach the law, they could potentially help women remain confident. Overall, it seems that the many issues that women have with

their law school experience could be partially assuaged by access to more women mentors.

### *Attitudinal Differences Between Men and Women Upon Entry*

Even before beginning their first year of law school, men and women express attitudinal differences, including differing motivations for attending law school, differing political opinions, and differing academic interests. Therefore, when women work alongside female mentors, they may be more likely to have a mentor who understands and shares their values and goals, which can improve mentoring outcomes, as I will discuss in Part II of this chapter.

The first important attitudinal difference between men and women upon entry to law school is students' expressed reason for attending. A study of students at nine Ohio law schools finds that only 19% of white men enter law school out of a desire to serve society, whereas 26% of women and 31% of women of color indicate that desire (Krauskopf 1994, 322). Similarly, in a study of law students conducted at Boalt Hall School of Law at the University of California, Berkeley, 42% of white women and 40% of women of color express a desire to work in the public interest or public sectors rather than in the private sector, while only 35% of men of color and 29% of white men express the same desire (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 31). Public interest law concerns the "well-being, the rights, health, or finances of the public at large" and public interest lawyers "most commonly advocat[e] for those living in poverty or marginalized populations," (Mazumder n.d.). Meanwhile, the public sector includes government work. Much like the women at the Ohio law schools, therefore, the women at UC Berkeley have an interest in

serving society. Women's needs, therefore, may be better met by female mentors, who are more likely to share those values and career goals than men.

These different motivations for attending law school may be partially explained by the political differences between first year women and first year men, because more politically progressive individuals tend to be interested in changing society through public interest work. In the same study of Ohio law schools, 50% of men define themselves as politically right, compared to 27% of women overall and a mere 20% of women of color (Krauskopf 1994, 323). On the other end of the spectrum, 46% of women overall and 45% of women of color label themselves as politically left, compared to 32% of men (Krauskopf 1994, 323). As a person's placement on the political spectrum usually at least partially indicates their values, women may find mentors that best match their values in other women.

The differences in both motivations to attend law school and political preferences between men and women express themselves in the academic interests of women and men in law school. In a study of one of the top fifteen law schools in the country, women are twice as likely as men to volunteer or to work in clinics, which are academic settings that often center around public interest work (Schleef 2001, 81). In a study of Yale Law School students, nearly half of the women interviewed mention their satisfaction with clinic work, often citing the real, human connection that it provides (Weiss and Melling 1988, 1348). Additionally, women tend to cluster in classes and clinics that concern discrimination, indicating an academic interest that may stem from their experiences as part of a marginalized group (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 404). Therefore, it is possible that

women mentors will be able to foster and encourage these academic interests because they themselves likely have similar interests.

Evidently, there are several differences between men and women's attitudes and beliefs upon entry to law school. Preserving these differences, as female mentors may be able to do, could have a positive effect on students' well-being. For women students who are enrolled in an institution that often does not reflect their values or encourage their career interests, a female mentor who does could have a positive impact. Additionally, there could be a profound effect on not just the legal profession but the political sphere if more women mentors were available to help women maintain these differences. Having more judges and justices who primarily want to serve society or having congresswomen who have a background in understanding marginalized populations and discrimination would add much-needed perspectives to United States politics.

#### *Difference in Relationships With Professors Between Men and Women*

Another aspect of women's difficulties in law school is that women often report more negative experiences with and attitudes towards their professors than men do. This limits women's ability to find mentors and to network. Additionally, it makes it more difficult for women to feel at home in law school and in the broader legal community.

The issue stems from the perspective—justified or not—that women are treated differently than men by their professors, both in the classroom and outside of it. Seventy-six percent of women surveyed at Yale Law School agree with the statement that professors address women's questions or comments differently than they address men's (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 409). Students consistently refer to two types of differences

when asked to elaborate: that faculty members challenge women's ideas less, and that professors are dismissive of women's contributions. However, students also note that only some of the faculty behave this way and that professors are mainly reacting to the different demeanors of men and women (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 410). Students also emphasize that faculty members direct their attention to students with speaking styles more common among men and those who speak up most frequently, who tend to be male as well (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 412). Additionally, 63% of women, compared to only 28% of men, notice differences between women's and men's interactions with faculty outside of the classroom (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 419). This may be linked to male faculty members' fear of the perception of impropriety in their relationships with their women students (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 429). Clearly, women students perceive a difference in how they are treated by professors.

Reacting, perhaps, to this perception, women are more likely than men to indicate that it is important to them that professors respect their students. When asked for the three qualities that they admire most in a professor, both men and women select "knowledge of subject matter" and "enthusiasm for teaching" as their top two traits; however, 93% of women select "treats students with respect" as their third option, while 82% of men select "expresses ideas clearly" (Guinier et al. 1994, 34-35). This difference likely stems from the fact that men assume that they will be respected in the classroom and therefore do not have to consider how *much* a professor would respect them. That is not the case for women. In a survey of five different law schools, more men than women believe that professors respect students' comments and ideas (Banks 1988, 143). This belief appears

again in a study of Ohio law schools, in which 18% percent of women generally and 18% percent of women of color report feeling that professors do not value their opinions as much as men's due to their gender (Krauskopf 1994, 326). This perceived lack of respect undoubtedly harms women's relationships with professors.

Due to these differences, women are less comfortable engaging with and approaching faculty. Sixty percent of men and only 40% of women report feeling "very comfortable" in interactions with professors outside of the classroom (Guinier et al. 1994, 35). When asked about six different ways of engaging with professors, such as attending office hours or sending an email, men report being more comfortable than women with all six methods (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 419). Given the fact that a majority of law school professors are men, gender may be a contributing factor in this discomfort. Therefore, increasing women's opportunities to engage with women professor mentors and, in turn, learn that faculty are more approachable than they may have thought, could help them in their relationships with all faculty, male and female.

These differences have implications for women's ability to thrive in law school and beyond. Lacking meaningful interaction with the male law professors, who remain the majority, diminishes women's networking opportunities both in law school and in the professional world afterwards. Additionally, women without positive working relationships with their professors may find the material more challenging, which could contribute to the achievement gap discussed later in this section. Lastly, these differences likely contribute to the participation gap between men and women, which has its own host of implications. Access to female mentorship would help most simply by allowing



women to form connections with women professors; additionally, it could demonstrate that making such connections is possible, encouraging women to seek them out with male professors as well. Further in the future, better-connected women lawyers would improve their political prospects. As I will discuss in Part III of this section, lawyers make good candidates because of their connections—their networks contribute to their high fundraising capacity, which improves their electoral chances. With more connections to professors, who can help them broaden their networks, women may become better candidates.

#### *The Participation Gap Between Men and Women*

Likely as a result of the alienation they feel due to their attitudinal differences and their lack of connections with their instructors, women are much less likely to participate in class than their male counterparts. Several studies conducted over the last few decades at a wide variety of law schools confirm this lack of participation. In a pilot study conducted at one unnamed law school in 1988, 60% of women report seldomly or never participating in class, compared to 43% of men (Banks 1988, 139). A follow-up study conducted across five law schools reveals a similar pattern; 50.3% of women infrequently participate, compared to 46.1% of men, and 17.6% of women report never volunteering, compared to only 9.6% of men (Banks 1988, 141). Later, in a 1989 study conducted at Berkeley's law school, a majority of women—as well as a majority of students of color—report never speaking up in class, compared to two-thirds of white men, who say they do so with frequency (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 29). While both of these studies happened over thirty years ago, similar effects persist even as more women enrolled in law school;

in an observational study of Yale Law classrooms in the early 2000s, women are 29% more likely than men to never speak at all (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 406). Overall, women speak up less in the classroom than men.

Perhaps more alarmingly, women become less likely to talk in class over time. This is not a trend shared by men. Sixty percent of women overall indicate that they seldomly participate in class, and when only second- and third-year women are counted, that number spikes to 75%, whereas it falls from 43% to 40% when the same is done for men (Banks 1988, 139-140). This indicates that the socialization process in law school has a silencing effect on women; while they may be able to stand up to social pressures preventing them from participating at first, over time, they are worn down.

These social pressures include the pedagogy common in law school, which discourages women's participation. The Socratic method, or the use of "participatory learning and discussions with a few students on whom [professors] call (in some classrooms, randomly) to explore very difficult legal concepts and principles," often creates this silencing effect (Garrett 1998). A majority of students—51% of men, 66% of women generally, and 63% of women of color—think that this method does not allow the respondent to "exchange ideas freely with the professors" (Krauskopf 1994, 326). However, women are more likely than men to describe it as alienating, finding it like a performance or an intimidation tactic designed to establish a hierarchy in the classroom (Guinier et al. 1994, 46). The adversarial and competitive nature of the Socratic method, Homer and Schwartz suggest, may contribute to an unspoken code of women not participating in class (1989, 37).

Women may also be reluctant to speak up in the classroom due to a lack of confidence, which will be addressed later in this section. Eleven percent of men who do not speak up attribute their lack of participation to a lack of preparedness, whereas only 6.6% of women who remain silent blame their unpreparedness. Rather, women cite their insecurity. Twenty-one percent of women, compared to only 15.6% of men, state that they do not participate in class for that reason (Banks 1988, 142). These differences are striking because they demonstrate that women who may know the answer nevertheless choose not to participate due to their feelings of insecurity.

Unfortunately, professors do little to ameliorate this insecurity or to encourage women to speak up. Focus group participants in a study of Ivy League law classrooms indicate that professors engage more frequently with male students (Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil 2014, 87). For example, men are 17% more likely to be cold called than women when their hand is not in the air (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 407). Additionally, when asked whether they had been ignored in class when they attempted to participate, 17% of women report being ignored three or more times, compared to 9% of men (Banks 1988, 140). While this may seem like a blessing, it prevents women who may gain confidence from getting called on and producing the correct answer from learning that they can participate in class without embarrassing themselves. Professors' choices not to cold call women and to choose to call on men when women raise their hands contribute to the 31.8% of women who feel that their professors are ignoring them, compared to only 12.8% of men (Banks 1988, 140). In fact, some professors seem to actively discourage women's participation, as some women students have noted the use of

gendered speech, such as “feisty” or even “bitchy” used to describe them (Kindschy, Perrin, and O’Neil 2014, 89). Ultimately, professors could be doing more to close the participation gap—or, at least, to stop it from widening further.

It is likely that women professors can help mitigate these issues. Women’s participation—and, in fact, student participation regardless of gender—increases in classes that are taught by women (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 405). Additionally, the gap between men and women’s participation decreases by 24% in women-taught classes (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 406). This indicates that women professors can help women participate more, likely because they encourage their students, interact with women at a higher rate, foster a classroom environment that does not alienate women students, or any combination thereof. However, women law professors are still in the minority, and women still must take the majority of their classes with male professors, leaving them less likely to participate.

This lack of participation is incredibly harmful for women. Much of the learning in law school comes from the classroom, and not participating may make it more difficult for women to retain and engage with the material. Additionally, it hinders women’s ability to build relationships with their professors and develop the skills necessary in a courtroom. Increasing the number of female faculty would allow more women to practice speaking up in a more comfortable environment, which could allow them to then speak up in other classrooms as well. This would improve the quality of women’s legal education and likely their confidence, which, as discussed later in this chapter, could increase their political ambition.

### *The Achievement Gap Between Men and Women*

Women's lack of participation in the classroom and their decreased likelihood of forming positive relationships with their professors translate to a noticeable achievement gap between men and women in law school. This gap is not a question of qualifications; upon entry to law school, women and men have similar GPAs from similar undergraduate institutions, as well as similar LSAT scores and similar class ranks (Guinier et al. 1994, 21-22). Therefore, it is far more likely that it is something related to the law school socialization process—such as lower participation rates—that leads to lower achievement among women.

A study of the academic records of students at the University of Pennsylvania concludes that there are “strong academic differences” between men and women in law school; at the end of the arduous first year, men are three times more likely than women to be in the top 10% of their class (Guinier et al. 1994, 3). In law school, this class rank is particularly important because at the end of the first year, students compete to join the law review, which is one of the most prestigious items a student can have on their résumé, and higher-ranked students are more likely to be selected. This can be harmful in the long run, as women lack credentials that can get them higher-paying jobs and better networks for future work, such as running for political office.

Aside from their lack of participation and incompatible attitudes with law school, women face several other difficulties when attempting to rise to the top of their class. As will be discussed later in this section, women often navigate law school with a dual—or, if they are a racial minority—multiple consciousness (Matsuda 1989, 297). This allows

them to see the law both as a lawyer and as a woman. However, only the dominant consciousness, the lawyer consciousness, is recognized as valid in grading. Any student who rejects this consciousness during exams will “generally do enough to get by,” but will not be rewarded with high grades because they have not reached the so-called ‘correct’ answer (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 40). Additionally, on a less theoretical level, women, more so than men, feel the need for feedback to improve their performance over the course of the semester—or, indeed, over the course of law school. However, feedback is rare in law school, which can leave some women feeling untethered without concrete ways to improve their performance (Howell 2008, 36; Weiss and Melling 1988, 1342).

Women are aware of their lower performance than men, which has real effects on their confidence in their academic abilities. Part of the problem is that, as will be discussed later in this section, women are simply less confident in law school than men are. For instance, when asked about their perceived class rank, men are more likely to place themselves in the upper tenths of the class, whereas women are more likely to place themselves in the lower tenths (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 428). As this particular study does not include actual class rank, there are two possibilities: the first is that women are actually, in large enough numbers, doing more poorly than men to accurately affect their perceptions, and the second is that women perceive themselves as less successful than they are. Both are problematic. Furthermore, a majority of women report that they are dissatisfied with their grades, while a majority of men report that they are satisfied (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 30).

This achievement gap has political implications because it may help contribute to the well-documented pay gap between men and women in law (Olson 2018). One of the many barriers to women's ambition, as will be discussed in Part III of this chapter, is financial. If women overall are not achieving at the top of their class at the same rate as men, then they will likely not get the same lucrative job offers upon graduation, which would hinder their political aspirations.

### *Women's Alienation in Law School*

Another potential cause of women's lack of achievement in the law school classroom is their discomfort with the process of learning how to "think like a lawyer" and the feelings of alienation that it can elicit. The style of thinking that law school prioritizes is "adversarial, logical, dispassionate, and acontextual," which rewards people who have been socialized to be more masculine (Schleef 2001, 82). Oftentimes, women are socialized to be caring and contextual thinkers, which means that, to be effective law students, they must learn an entirely different mode of analysis, which can feel cold, unfeeling, and incomplete to them. Several women in a study of Yale Law School students indicate that they feel that the academic study of the law often oversimplifies the real world and its complexities (Weiss and Melling 1988, 1348). This is not to say that women are incapable of learning to use this mode of analysis; many not only succeed but thrive. However, many are uncomfortable even as they do so. When asked if they feel pressured to set themselves and their values aside to "think like a lawyer," more than half of women say yes, compared to only 29% of men (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 32). Mari Matsuda, a founding critical race theorist, suggests that women of color are aware of the

multiple perspectives that they possess—those of a woman, a person of color, and a lawyer—and can consciously rotate between them as necessary (1989, 297-298). While this may give women of color a unique and helpful point of view, it is likely exhausting to cycle through perspectives, aware that there are certain circles in which one or more of these ways of seeing the world is not welcome. All these facts contribute to women's feelings of alienation.

During the process of learning to “think like a lawyer,” women's values and learning styles are often absent. While 77% of men think that their values are respected by the law school experience, only 58% of women generally and 47% of women of color agree (Krauskopf 1994, 327). This outcome is likely a response to the fact that women are socialized to avoid certain traits, like being aggressive, adversarial, and competitive, that are rewarded in men and emphasized in law school. Additionally, the learning styles that women have been socialized to prefer are not generally promoted in law school; for example, women tend to prefer working together and negotiating, but law school tends to be more solitary (Schleef 2001, 84). Furthermore, women like to bring personal experience into the classroom, but that is discouraged in law school (Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil 2014, 86). As a consequence, women rarely speak about their personal experiences, even though those experiences may be relevant, especially when discussing women's issues in the classroom. Ultimately, women find that their ways of thinking are not compatible with “thinking like a lawyer.”

All of these discrepancies between women's values and learning styles and those present in law school contribute to a distinct feeling of alienation among women law



students. Women often feel as if they are performers for their gender or race; essentially, they feel the need to succeed in order to prove that women, or members of their racial group, can be successful (Guinier et al. 1994, 46). They feel similarly about speaking up in the classroom, where they feel the burden of choosing to be the woman who talks or not (Weiss and Melling 1988, 1334). Additionally, women report feeling that their failure to pursue their education aggressively enough, or to succeed enough, will be seen as a reflection of women as a whole and reinforce gender stereotypes (Weiss and Melling 1988, 1319). Unfortunately, it is often difficult to succeed in an environment that can be hostile to women. Textbooks and professors occasionally use sexist language that makes women feel uncomfortable and out of place (Banks 1988, 139). Women also face gender discrimination in their daily lives in law school; 31% of women, 37.5% of women of color, and only 9% of men report facing such discrimination (Krauskopf 1994, 324). Furthermore, even when professors are not being overtly sexist, their behavior can be alienating to women. As previously discussed, they may ignore women entirely. Additionally, professors may use analogies unfamiliar to women, such as sports analogies, when explaining material (Weiss and Melling 1988, 1337). Of course, women can be sports fans just like men; however, they are not socialized to understand the rules of football as often as men are, for example. All of these situations contribute to women's feelings of alienation from law school and the learning process.

Women professors, having gone through law school themselves, are well-aware of the difficulty that women can have in assimilating this way of thinking into their worldview. They may be able to provide useful strategies for the women in their classes

to move between their multiple perspectives with less struggle. This would help women become more ambitious as well; if women are comfortable in the legal profession and are still able to see things from a less objective, more connected point of view, they may seek out office more often. Moreover, they may bring a new way of thinking into politics.

### *The Confidence Gap Between Men and Women*

Unsurprisingly, these myriad ways that law school can be uncomfortable for and even outright hostile toward women results in a final, critical gap: the confidence gap. It manifests in two key ways: first, women feel worse about their lives overall when they are in law school, and second, women feel less confident about their ability to successfully practice law than their male counterparts, likely due to all of the previously discussed differences.

In various questions about the self in a study of the University of Pennsylvania's law school, women are 20% more negative than men; for example, 40% of women report feeling less confident after having been in law school, compared to 21% of men (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 33). For women of color, things are worse—30% of women of color report in the same study that they feel bad about their lives overall since entering law school (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 34). Women also report higher levels of anxiety, stress, and depression than their male counterparts in law school, although that may be a function of men underreporting their feelings (Howell 2008, 36). These negative feelings about the self likely result from the fact that women report that the law school socialization process makes it so that they cannot recognize their former selves (Guinier et al. 1994, 43).

On a less personal but no less important level, women's performance in law school—or, more accurately, their perception of their performance in law school—makes them feel both less confident and less able to practice law. A full 41% of women generally, along with 41% of women of color, report that the law school experience has reduced their confidence, compared to only 16.5% of men who say the same (Krauskopf 1994, 328). Additionally, 27% of women report that their experiences in law school have made them doubt their ability to successfully practice law, compared to 19% of men (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 31). It is ultimately unsurprising that women, more often than men, view law school as a painful experience; in one study, nearly all of the women surveyed use language of that sort describing the process (Guinier et al. 1994, 42)

Of the differences between women and men throughout the law school process, this is the most concerning, and the most critical for this study. For one, it is gap best explained by all the others; women who do not participate in class, who do not perform as they would like academically, who do not form meaningful relationships with their professors and who feel alienated by the masculine institution that is law school are not likely to come away from the experience feeling more confident. This is devastating for women's political ambitions; as will be described in Part III of this section, women often fail to run for all kinds of office simply because they do not feel qualified, even though similarly qualified men frequently run for and win those positions. This feeling of under-qualification for women lawyers begins in law school.

*Attitudinal Differences Between Men and Women by Graduation*

Ultimately, law school is a transformational experience—just not always a transformation of the kind that the women who go through it enjoy. The socialization process that creates lawyers does not just create lawyers; as Guinier et al. (1994) put it, it creates “gentlemen” out of women by socializing them to think more masculinely (5), mainly in their reasons for attending law school and their political beliefs.

As previously discussed, women generally enter law school with the intentions of pursuing public interest or government work. However, over time, women’s interest in this kind of work wanes. Twenty-five percent of women in their first year of law school indicate that they would like to pursue public interest work, but this number drops to a mere 8% in the third year. Men experience no such drop; 7% of first year men and 7% of third year men say that they want public interest jobs (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 39).

It is easy to explain away these changes as a result of women coming to the realization that their law school debt is staggering, and that public interest work often does not pay as well as the private sector. However, this is not the full story. While women enter law school with more liberal political beliefs than their male colleagues, these begin to fade over time. For all students in law school, legal education requires them to adopt a legal consciousness, which in turn requires them to accept social conditions as they currently are, which they previously did not accept (Granfield 1992, 56). This is a more conservative attitude that formerly liberal women learn to adopt over time in law school.

Lastly, women become desensitized to sexism. In the first year of law school, women see sexism frequently, but by the third year, they are no longer reporting it (Guinier et al. 1994, 38). It is possible that sexism becomes less frequent, but that seems unlikely. The more logical explanation is that women become desensitized to occurrences of sexism, or simply become tired of recognizing or reporting it. In this sense, women are also becoming more like men, who are more likely to explain away sexism or claim that it does not exist in the law school setting (Guinier et al. 1994, 53).

This is not to say that there are not women in law school who are conservative upon entry, or that women do not enter law school with the intention of becoming corporate lawyers. Many are and do. However, it is significant that those ideological and career ambition differences that exist at the beginning of law school, when a majority of women are more liberal and desire more publicly focused careers, largely dissipate by the end. This indicates that there is something about the law school socialization process that changes women but does not change men, often to women’s detriment. If women professors and mentors can mitigate these changes, women will likely have improved experiences.

*Conclusion*

All these differences between men’s and women’s experiences in law school help explain why women emerge feeling alienated from law school and the legal profession, as well as from themselves (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1: Summary of Women's Experiences in Law School

Attitudinal Differences Between Men and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women begin law school with attitudinal differences from men.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ More motivated by the idea of serving society with a law degree</li> <li>○ More liberal</li> <li>○ More interest in volunteering and clinic work</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over time, women are socialized to have more similar attitudes to men.</li> </ul>
Differences in Relationships With Professors Between Men and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women believe that they are treated differently from men by faculty in the classroom.</li> <li>• Women feel that they are not respected in the classroom.</li> <li>• Women are not as comfortable engaging with faculty as men.</li> </ul>
Participation Gap Between Men and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are less likely to participate in class than men, and their participation decreases over time.</li> <li>• Women dislike the Socratic method, which is common in law school classrooms.</li> <li>• Professors interact more frequently with men.</li> <li>• Many women prefer women professors, but a majority of law school professors are men.</li> </ul>
Achievement Gap Between Men and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women enter law school with the same LSAT scores and GPAs as men, but men are more likely to be in the top 10% of the class.</li> <li>• Women have a different way of thinking about the law, which disadvantages them in test-taking.</li> <li>• Women are dissatisfied with their grades and often rank themselves lower than men.</li> </ul>
Alienation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women's values and learning styles are absent from law school.</li> <li>• Many women feel as if they need to prove that women, or members</li> </ul>

	of their racial group, can be successful.
The Confidence Gap Between Men and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women feel more negatively about their law school experience, as well as their lives outside of law school during their legal education, than men.</li> <li>• Women often doubt their ability to become a lawyer.</li> </ul>

There are real consequences to this alienation; women are consistently underrepresented in prestigious positions and extracurricular activities in law school, which negatively affects their future endeavors (Guinier et al. 1994, 27). More importantly, this alienation helps explain a leaky pipeline; even though women have reached parity in law school and even outnumber men, the number of women who pursue political careers in the judiciary and the legislature after completing law school is far from equal. If women feel out of place in the legal community, it is no wonder that they do not pursue political careers. It is possible, however, that women professors and mentors can help women find their place in the legal community.

## **Part II: Female Mentorship**

Given the many differences between men and women law students' experiences, which are often to women students' disadvantage, it is important to consider how women's law school experiences can be improved. Many authors assume that female mentorship would help women in historically male-dominated fields succeed (Canes and Rosen 1995, 486), and it seems likely here. For instance, women who would have otherwise been swayed into more 'masculine' fields of law because that is the norm in law school may continue to pursue 'feminine' fields. Women students who have a

positive interaction with a female mentor may be encouraged to improve their relationships with other professors or participate more frequently in class. Additionally, women who may have been discouraged by law school requiring them to ‘think like a man,’ or by their perception of their grades or abilities, may be encouraged by a woman mentor who has undergone the same difficult experience in the past and can provide support. Therefore, these gaps between men and women could be narrowed by female mentorship.

Mentorship is “a developmental relationship between a more experienced individual (mentor) and a less experienced individual (protégé), wherein the mentor provides support to the protégé with the aim of enhancing [their] personal development and integration or socialization into a profession” and provides many benefits (Hernandez et al. 2017, 451). Mentorship can be formal, in which an institution assigns protégés to mentors, or informal, in which mentors seek out protégés of their own accord or vice-versa. Mentors provide psycho-social support, which may include activities like counseling, encouraging, and role modeling, as well as instrumental support, which “consists of activities such as assistance on challenging tasks, coaching, and providing opportunities for advancement” (Eby et al. 2013, 443). Both of these kinds of support are critical; mentorship is correlated with additional positive career outcomes, fewer negative work outcomes, higher job satisfaction, and less psychological stress (Allen et al. 2004; Chao 1997; Dreher and Ash 1990; Eby et al. 2008; Kammeyer-Mueller and Judge 2008; Kram and Hall 1989; Nielson, Carlson, and Lankau 2001; Richard et al. 2009; Taylor and Curtis 2018; Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller, and Marchese 2006). In a study of STEM



undergraduate students, researchers also find that students with mentors report higher academic self-efficacy and a greater sense of belonging (Apriceno, Levy, and London 2020, 646). Lastly, mentorship in the workplace is associated with increased productivity and professional skills, increased self-efficacy and ability to cope with bias, and reduced burnout (Ehm and Phillips 2013.; Green 1991; Lyons, Scroggins, and Rule 1990; Paglis, Green, and Bauert 2006; van Emmerik 2004; Schlosser et al. 2011). Clearly, mentoring improves outcomes.

Various studies ask what about a mentoring relationship makes it most effective. Good mentors for women especially are aware of the different experiences of women and are sensitive to their feelings of marginalization and doubt (Ehm and Phillips 2013; van Emmerik 2004). Additionally, it is particularly important that mentors and their protégés share values and worldviews (Hernandez et al. 2017, 465). Given the discussion in Section I of this chapter concerning the myriad differences between men and women in law school, it seems reasonable to believe that women professors would be more likely to understand those differing perspectives and experiences, as well as to share values with their women protégés. Scholars in other fields agree. For example, it is generally accepted that women's representation on undergraduate faculties increases women's enrollment, which is why increasing the percentage of women professors on faculties has been the subject of plenty of public policy (Canes and Rosen 1995, 486).

Despite this effort, however, women are not well-represented on law school faculties. According to a American Bar Association survey of law school faculties, women only make up 25.2% of the overall faculty (Mertz et al. 2011, 14). This is

problematic for women, as mentors often practice self-replication; that is, they mentor students who remind them of themselves (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 431). Unfortunately for many women students, they often do not remind men of themselves, as suggested by the fact that women in a variety of industries are less likely to be mentored than men (Linehan and Scullion 2008; Noe 1988; Ragins and Cotton 1991).

A variety of studies conducted across the educational process, from K-12 schooling to other forms of graduate school, indicate that female mentorship can be beneficial for women students' achievement and outcomes, and that the lack of available female mentorship can be harmful (Bettinger and Long 2005; Betz and Fitzgerald 1987; Birdsall, Gershenson, and Zuniga 2020; Dee 2004; Hernandez et al. 2017; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Mason, Goulden, and Frasch 2009; Neumark and Gardecki 1998). On the other hand, other studies find that specifically female mentorship is not particularly helpful (Bettinger and Long 2005; Canes and Rosen 1995; Hernandez et al. 2017; Neumark and Gardecki 1998; Saffie-Robertson 2020). However, given the masculine framework of law school, it seems likely that there is a substantive difference between male and female mentorship in law school.

### *The Potential Helpfulness of Female Mentorship*

Many of the scholars concerned with the difficulties faced by women in law school suggest that more women professors would be beneficial for women students' comfort with the process of legal education (Bashi and Iskander 2006; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Weiss and Melling 1988). More specifically, Guinier et. al suggest that increased mentoring through a school-organized program would help reduce the

alienation that women feel (1994, 97). These suggestions are not simply based on the feeling that women professors would be able to more effectively mentor women students; empirical data from law schools and other levels of education suggest that the lack of available female mentors is detrimental and that women would benefit from female mentorship.

Surveys of law students find that there is an insufficient number of available mentors and role models for women in law school. In a study of Berkeley's law school, fully 75% of the women surveyed note that the lack of women faculty deprives them of legal role models, compared to only 26% of male respondents (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 35). The women role models who do exist in law schools are disproportionately relied-upon by women students. At Yale Law School, only 20% of the faculty is made up of women, but 40% of women students surveyed report that their mentor is a woman, indicating that women take on a disproportionate share of mentoring other women, despite their underrepresentation as professors (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 423).

This lack of women faculty is detrimental to women, as it affects their comfort in the classroom. Fifty-seven percent of women students indicate that they are more comfortable with women professors' approaches in the classroom, and 46% agree that they would be more likely to participate in a woman-led classroom (Homer and Schwartz 1989, 35). Additionally, women often cluster in classes that are taught by women (Bashi and Iskander 2006, 404). This is likely because 70.8% of women find that women professors are more encouraging (Banks 1988, 143), and 31.5% of women think that

women professors are less likely to make offensive jokes (Banks 1988, 145). When there is a dearth of women on the faculty, women students suffer.

The absence of women faculty is also harmful for women's grades. In a study of administrative data from a top-100 law school in the United States, researchers discover that having a professor of another gender decreases a student's course grade by 0.02, when the average grade was a 3.36 (Birdsall, Gershenson, and Zuniga 2020, 468). On the flipside, when women have women instructors, their likelihood of receiving a good grade—that is, an A or an A minus—increases by 3.5% (Birdsall, Gershenson, and Zuniga 2020, 471). These numbers may seem small; however, given that the majority of faculty in law school are men, these small differences begin to compound, as women students are far more likely to have an other-gender professor than men. Therefore, there can be a much larger effect on overall GPA. Furthermore, these differences are most salient at the top of the class (Birdsall, Gershenson, and Zuniga 2020, 469). These competitive top spots open doors, from being on the law review to getting elite internships. As a result, women's grades and overall outcomes suffer from a lack of women faculty.

Literature concerning other levels of education agrees; when women students do not have women faculty, their ability to succeed suffers. For instance, even at the K-12 level, demographic mismatch—that is, female students having male instructors—harms achievement (Dee 2004, 2007). Once students reach college, this does not change. First, women students whose first experience in the classroom of their chosen field is with a woman professor are more likely to continue in the field in geology, mathematics,

statistics, psychology, sociology, journalism, communications, and education (Bettinger and Long 2005, 156). Interestingly, this is also true of male students who had a male professor in their first course in a field that is traditionally considered more feminine (Bettinger and Long 2005, 157). Second, in STEM undergraduate fields, where women students are also learning in a historically male-dominated space, it is more likely for women students with female mentors to become coauthors on faculty papers when the mentor and mentee are close than women students with male mentors who also have a close relationship with their mentors, indicating a greater likelihood among close pairs of mentors and mentees of the same gender to actually work together (Hernandez et al. 2017, 461). Lastly, a lack of women faculty at the undergraduate level can be a deterrent for women students (Betz and Fitzgerald 1987).

Furthermore, literature at other graduate levels also finds that there are positive effects on women students when women faculty are present, as well as negative effects when they are not. When women have a female advisor in graduate-level economics, the time they spend in school is reduced, which allows students to enter the workforce more quickly (Neumark and Gardecki 1998, 238). Perhaps aware of some sort of benefit, women in graduate school tend to seek out same-gender role models and mentors (Gilbert 1985). Additionally, when there are women faculty present in a department, 46% of women doctoral students think that the tenure track is family-friendly—and, therefore, more friendly to women—compared to only 12% of women who think the same when there are not as many women faculty present (Mason, Goulden, and Frasch 2009). Lastly, mentorship overall—whether by a man or a woman—is helpful for graduate students. In

one study, 100% of mentored women graduate from their graduate program, whereas only 60% of unmentored women do the same (Preston 2004).

The suggestions of various studies that increased female mentorship in law school is important makes a certain amount of sense. The insufficient number of female mentors in law school harms students, and the lack of women faculty damages both women's comfort in the classroom and their grades. Furthermore, in other fields and levels of education, there are similar effects. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume that women's situations in law school will improve with mentoring.

#### *The Potential Lack of Helpfulness of Female Mentors*

Of course, various scholars criticize the 'add women and stir' model, suggesting that merely the presence of women faculty—and therefore the availability of female mentors—is not sufficient for improving women's experiences (Howell 2008, 38). Part of the problem is that women faculty themselves face significant barriers that may make it difficult for them to break through the masculine framework of law school in order to help improve women students' experiences. For instance, women professors are often held to standards that their male colleagues are not. In a survey of Ohio law school faculty, 41% of women faculty respond that male faculty members are rewarded for their aggressiveness; however, 36% of women faculty think that women faculty members are disadvantaged when viewed as aggressive, indicating that men are rewarded and women are sanctioned for displaying the same behavior (Krauskopf 1994, 329). This may make it more difficult for female mentors to teach women how to be confident and assertive, because such behavior may be mistaken for aggressiveness, which women faculty likely

try to avoid. Additionally, 48% of women students surveyed in an accompanying study feel that women professors have a unique need to prove themselves, compared to only 18% of men (Krauskopf 1994, 327). Evidently, even women students are aware of the difficulties that women professors face. Furthermore, 38% of women professors report encountering hostility from their students, compared to only 20% of men (Krauskopf 1994, 330), and even when faculty do not face outright hostility, they have good reason to feel that their students doubt them. Fifty-five percent of men believe students think that women faculty are competent, but only 15% of women agree (Krauskopf 1994, 329). There is evidence that gender is a factor in this hostility and disbelief in competence or, at least, that it is perceived as a factor by women professors. Fifty-six percent of women faculty and only 16% of men believe that student gender influences how students treat a professor (Krauskopf 1994, 330).

Increasing their struggle, women professors themselves lack mentors. A majority of men, but only 44% of women, believe that mentors are equally accessible to male and female faculty (Krauskopf 1994, 329). This is likely the result of women's hesitancy to discuss important aspects of their work with male colleagues; over a quarter of women do not feel comfortable going to a colleague of a different gender with their work troubles, and only 3% of men feel similarly (Krauskopf 1994, 330). If it is true that women students suffer when there are not female mentors, it is likely that potential female mentors are not at their best when they do not have opportunities to be mentored themselves.

Literature from other educational levels and the workforce indicates that women instructors and potential mentor figures may not be as helpful as they appear. In college courses, women who initially had women professors were actually less likely to continue in the subjects of biology, physics, and political science (Bettinger and Long 2005, 156). Additionally, the gender composition of faculty in a given department cannot be proven to affect the gender composition of the students who make up the majors, which indicates that the lack of or inclusion of women in a department may not have an effect on major choice among women students (Canes and Rosen 1995, 499). Lastly, a study concerning women STEM students' satisfaction with their mentors concludes that it is not demographic match but rather similar values and ways of thinking about the world that predicts whether a student is satisfied with the mentoring they receive (Hernandez et al. 2017). Studies at other graduate levels demonstrate the same. In a study of women economics PhDs, there is no support for the hypothesis that women's initial job placements are improved when the number of women faculty is increased or a woman department chair is added (Neumark and Gardecki 1998, 238). Finally, women in the STEM workforce, which is also historically predominantly male, may not benefit from specifically female mentors. In a study of thirty-six women STEM professionals, researchers determine that there are four important aspects of mentorship, such as the need for fit, which indicates the personal connection necessary between mentor and mentee. However, nowhere in those four aspects of mentorship is demographic match necessary for good outcomes (Saffie-Robertson 2020, 566). Essentially, these studies demonstrate that evidence is mixed.



Finally, even in studies of law school itself, it is unclear whether female mentors are helpful for women students. A study of a top-100 law school at which students are randomly sorted into their first-year classes indicates that women are no less likely to drop a class or take additional classes in a particular legal discipline due to the gender of their first professor in that area (Birdsall, Gershenson, and Zuniga 2020, 465).

Additionally, there is evidence that women law professors are socialized to behave just as their male colleagues, since they themselves have gone through the process of learning to “think like a man,” which may be actively harmful for their women students. Women law students often report the feeling that women professors contribute to the problems that women face in law school. For instance, students report that women faculty favor male students by returning to their ideas periodically and crediting them by name without doing the same for women, as well as by giving male students more encouragement (Kindschy, Perrin, and O’Neil 2014, 88).

However, though there is evidence that women do not need specifically female mentors, that does not mean that hiring more women faculty and providing increased access to women mentors is not worth doing. Women in the legal field do not have many role models; five Supreme Court justices total in the Court’s two-century history, 35.14% of Article III court judges, 37.14% of circuit court judges, (Diversity of the Federal Bench 2022) and 22.7% of partners is simply not enough (2017 Report on Diversity in U.S. Law Firms 2017).

### *Conclusion*

While the evidence is mixed, it seems likely that increasing access to female mentors on law school faculties will be beneficial for women students. Women professors serve as role models, demonstrating to women that it is possible to succeed as a woman in the legal profession and potentially increasing their confidence. Additionally, having more women professors would allow women students to speak up more frequently in class and receive higher grades, both of which address major gaps between men and women in law school. With higher confidence, participation, and grades, women will be better equipped to pursue political careers, which would increase their political ambition.

### **Part III: Political Ambition**

One of the largest pipelines to leadership roles in American politics is the legal profession, which has contributed to women's underrepresentation. The judiciary is entirely made up of law school graduates, and even among the legislatures, where a law degree is not necessary, a large portion of lawmakers are lawyers. Despite increasing gains for women in the past few decades, the outlook is still grim. In state legislatures, women only hold 31.1% of seats, and women of color only hold approximately 8.2% of seats (Women in State Legislatures 2022 2022). The situation is similar in the national legislature; in total, women hold 27.1% of Congressional seats (Women in the U.S. Congress 2022 2022), and women of color hold only 9.2% of seats (Women of Color in Elective Office 2021 2022). Women are also underrepresented on various levels of the United States judiciary. On the Court of Appeals level, only one of the circuit courts is comprised of at least 50% women, and eight of the circuit courts do not have a single

woman of color on the bench (The Democracy and Government Reform Team 2020). Among the District Courts, women comprise at least 50% of judges on only 16% (The Democracy and Government Reform Team 2020). And, of course, the Supreme Court has never consisted of more than three women at one time. Women are underrepresented in both the legislature and judiciary.

Because women are now the majority of law students, the dearth of women in these positions that are so often filled by lawyers suggests that there is a leaky pipeline. Something is happening that discourages them from pursuing political careers. The many disparities between men and women discussed in Part I would help explain the leak. If these disparities can be decreased, perhaps by female mentorship, the political ambition of women exiting law school should increase.

At present, however, women lack political ambition. In positions in which women can run for judicial office, they often feel that they are unqualified and therefore fail to run (Williams 2008). Furthermore, while women in appointed positions often manifest ambition to reach higher appointed positions (Jensen and Martinek 2009), women are not appointed frequently enough to make a difference. In the United States Congress, there are many lawyer-legislators; however, women are even more poorly represented among them than among legislators generally (Bonica 2020). This indicates that the law school experience, or the experience of being a lawyer, makes it less likely for them to be ambitious. As lawyers make up such a large portion of American political positions, unless women lawyers begin to be represented at the same rate as their male colleagues in the judiciary and the legislature, women as a whole will likely remain underrepresented.

### *Judicial Ambition*

Given that women were excluded from law school and, therefore, legal careers for many years, it is unsurprising that there was a gap between the number of women and men in the judiciary. Scholars have referred to this as a pipeline problem (Lawless and Fox 2010, 30). However, as women now make up the majority of law students and have been making their way to parity for some time now, this gap should have begun to get smaller. Today, though, the proportion of women on state judiciaries has not kept up with the proportion of women in the legal profession (Williams 2007, 1201). While this is likely at least in part a result of the judiciary's history of discrimination, political ambition among women plays a role as well (Jensen and Martinek 2009, 382). There is not much literature concerning political ambition in the judiciary, but the literature that exists suggests that women are hesitant to both run for office and to put themselves in a position to be appointed.

One way in which women could demonstrate political ambition in the judiciary is to run for office, as many states have judgeships that are subject to election, but women lawyers have less interest than their male counterparts in seeking office in such a way. In fact, in a 1994 poll, men report a potential candidacy twice as often (Lawless and Fox 2004, 10). There are several reasons that women lawyers, and women generally, do not want to seek out these positions. For example, women do not like the idea of becoming involved in an adversarial race. Additionally, women are more risk-averse than men are, and they generally feel more negatively about campaigning (Lawless and Fox 2005). It is possible that these women are remembering the way that their women professors were

negatively viewed as aggressive, or the terrible way adversarial classes using the Socratic method made them feel. Furthermore, women do not run for these judicial positions because they do not feel qualified (Williams 2008, 69). Among potential political candidates, a list which includes lawyers, educators, and political activists, women are twice as likely to rank themselves as ‘not at all qualified’ as men (Lawless and Fox 2004, 7). Among just lawyers, this difference grows still larger; 21% of women report their lack of qualification as a reason to not seek office, compared to only 7% of men (Williams 2009, 173). This brings to mind the confidence gap that is created while women are in law school. Lastly, women often lack the connections they feel are necessary to run. Sixteen percent of women indicate that they needed to be convinced to run (Williams 2009, 164); however, women are not recruited at the same rate as men (Williams 2008, 69). This lack of recruitment is related to another barrier. Ten percent of women lawyers who may have otherwise considered running express concern about their lack of relevant connections (Williams 2009, 173). It is likely that this perceived lack of access to the pipeline prevents women from running for office. This issue calls to mind the difficulty that women experience in law school while trying to connect with their professors, who likely would have been able to help them make these networks back in law school.

Since there is a lack of women with the necessary ambition to run for judicial office, it is worth asking what makes women run for these positions. In a study of lawyers and judges who had run for state judiciary positions in the past, the question of qualification is raised again. These women cite the fact that they finally felt qualified for the job—12%—at a much higher rate than the men—4% (Williams 2009, 164).

Additionally, women with financial resources are more inclined to run for office. As women's annual income increases, they consider running for office at higher rates; men have a similar, though much smaller, response to higher incomes (Lawless and Fox 2004, 5). This is unfortunate because a pay gap persists between men and women in the legal profession; for example, at top United States law firms, women face a 53% pay gap (Olson 2018). As this pay disparity likely has roots in the law school culture that helps perpetuate women's inferiority, law school is still the problem.

In one of the only studies comparing men and women lawyers' judicial political ambition, Williams (2008), researchers find that, when controlling for other factors, men and women's judicial political ambition is the same (75). However, this finding is misplaced for a number of reasons. This study uses data from Texas, a state notable for its large number of judicial seats, which overstates women's likelihood of running in two ways. First, the mere fact that there are so many seats means that there is simply more opportunity to run. Second, the large number of seats also decreases the prestige of each individual seat, which encourages women to run due to decreased attention on the races. Additionally, many of the controlled factors that Williams cites are necessary for a gendered analysis. For instance, Williams controls for women who see barriers to women in the legal profession, who are less likely to run. However, this is a major portion of women lawyers who, thanks to their experiences in law school and the legal profession, notice the ways in which women face barriers. Controlling for this factor omits a major reason for women's lack of ambition—to then state that women and men have similar levels of ambition does not make sense.

Of course, judicial positions are also appointed. It becomes slightly more difficult to measure political ambition in this sense, as judges who are appointed do not really make the choice to take new office, but Jensen and Martinek measure what they call progressive judicial ambition in a study of New York State Supreme Court justices by asking questions about justices' willingness or desire to be promoted to a higher bench (2009). In general, they find that women are actually more likely than men to manifest progressive judicial ambition (Jensen and Martinek 2009, 385). In fact, women of color are six times more likely to manifest progressive judicial ambition than white men (Jensen and Martinek 2009, 385). This is with the caveat that women, as well as men of color, are more likely to be influenced by a belief that connections matter; when they have this belief, their progressive judicial ambition is checked, although not enough to make them less ambitious than white men. While this is largely good news, it is worth noting that the women who manifest ambition are those that have already been selected once and therefore assured that they belong in these positions. Furthermore, these appointed women do not have control over whether they continue to progress. If women were encouraged earlier, like in law school, they may be more likely to manifest other kinds of ambition as well. However, even among the appointed judiciary, women are underrepresented, as demonstrated by the low numbers of women on the Court of Appeals and District Courts. As such, there are simply not enough women to even manifest progressive judicial ambition in the first place.

Women's lack of representation has profound effects on the judiciary and the decisions that it makes. First, women's motivations for serving, just like their motivations

for going to law school, are different than men's. When asked why they wanted to serve, 53% of women cite being able to make a difference, compared to 43% of men (Williams 2009, 169). Women also reference the prestige, pay, and challenge of the job less often than men—though the interest of the challenge of the job is the only statistically significant difference—indicating more of a dedication to the job itself than what the job can give them (Williams 2009, 169). Additionally, while some scholars theorize that the law school socialization process has a neutralizing effect which causes men and women to come to similar conclusions (Boyd, Epstein, and Martin 2010; Steffensmeier and Herbert 1999), it stands to reason that women who have been less affected by the law school socialization process—due to having a female mentor, perhaps—will have gendered differences in their decision-making processes and their actual decisions compared to male judges. Finally, there are a few small but important differences between male and female judges, even if they do come to similar decisions. For example, women judges foster successful settlements more often and more quickly than men judges (Boyd 2013, 193), and the likelihood that a judge will decide in favor of the party alleging sex discrimination decreases by 10% when a judge is male (Boyd, Epstein, and Martin 2010, 389). These differences mean that having more women judges will have an effect on the American judiciary as a whole.

### *Legislative Ambition*

Political ambition among women lawyers—or the lack of political ambition among women lawyers—is particularly important in the legislature because of the large role played by lawyers within it. In the 117th U.S. Congress, 173 of the 435 members of



the House, or 39% of members, previously had a law-related profession, and 57 out of the 100 Senators did as well (Manning 2021). As a result, lawyers are wildly overrepresented in government. This overrepresentation is unsurprising—lawyers are more likely than those in similar high-status professions to run and win due to the political nature of their work and their high fundraising capacity (Bonica 2020, 254).

However, even though women make up an increasing portion of lawyers, there has not been a corresponding increase in the portion they make up of lawyer-legislators. Women currently make up 19% of the United States Congress. When Congress is just limited to lawyer-legislators, however, the percentage of women shrinks to 9% (Bonica 2020, 277). This is also true when just focusing on the Democratic Party, where women are better represented. Women make up 30% of the Democratic Party in Congress, but only 13% of lawyer Democrats (Bonica 2020, 277). In essence, women lawyers have not been improving their proportion in Congress relative to their male colleagues.

This is likely because women lawyers, just like women generally, lack political ambition. Even when controlling for other factors, women are 15.6 percentage points less likely than men to even consider running for office (Lawless and Fox 2005, 46). Barriers to women's political ambition come in a variety of forms: political parties' failures to recruit, issues regarding the family, and a sense among women that they are not qualified to seek elected office. First, women often need encouragement to run for office; they are more likely than men to say that the biggest contributing factor to their decision to run is their recruitment by a party leader or an elected official (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013, 125). However, women are under-recruited compared to men, which means that they do

not get this necessary push as often (Niven 1998.) Additionally, women are more likely to consider the concerns of their families in deciding to seek office. In Lawless and Fox's study of the 'candidate eligibility pool'—that is, lawyers, business leaders, educators, and activists—sixty-five out of one hundred women interviewed make some mention of the impact of their children on their decision to seek elected office, while only three out of the one hundred men interviewed say the same (2005, 67). Lastly, women are more concerned with their qualifications—or, more accurately, their perceived lack thereof. When asked about this issue, 28% of women from the candidate eligibility pool indicate that they were not at all qualified, but only 12% of men feel this way (Lawless and Fox 2005, 98). This, again, recalls the law school confidence gap. All these differences between men and women contribute to an ambition gap that helps explain women's underrepresentation in the legislature.

This lack of ambition holds true for women lawyers, despite the fact that the legal profession is a pipeline for political leadership. Male lawyers have more political ambition than most other people in the candidate eligibility pool. Among the overall sample, 19% of men have considered running for office, while 23% of male lawyers have done so (Lawless and Fox 2005, 44). However, there is no such corresponding leap for women lawyers. Ten percent of women in the overall sample have considered running for office, as have 10% of women lawyers (Lawless and Fox 2005, 44). That is, there is no 'boost' to political ambition by virtue of profession for women lawyers, though there seems to be one for men. This is likely a result of women's law school socialization,

which has created women lawyers who are less confident, exacerbating the pre-existing problem of women failing to recognize their own qualifications.

That lack of ambition among women, especially among women lawyers, has enormous ramifications for the political sphere. On the legislative side, women tend to focus on different issues than men do. For instance, women legislators are often proponents of women's issues bills, which are not supported as much by men (Osborn 2012, 149), and pursue women's interests more frequently than their male colleagues (Swers 2002, 127). They also can have better outcomes; for example, women in the minority party in the United States House advance their sponsored bills further than men in the minority party due to their focus on coalition-building and consensus (Volden, Wiseman, and Wittmer 2013, 326). Women politicians also tend to be more responsive to public opinion. When city managers are asked about the importance of public opinion, women respond that public opinion matters more to them than men respond it does (Fox & Schuhmann 1999, 238). There are significant differences between men and women legislators that could improve overall government with more female representation.

### *Conclusion*

Despite women's increasing representation in law school, there has not been a corresponding increase in representation in women lawyers in the judiciary and the legislature, largely due to women's lack of ambition. In the judiciary, women choose not to run for seats thanks to their belief that they are underqualified, which is likely at least in part a consequence of their decreased confidence from law school. Once their competence has been demonstrated by their appointment to one seat, women manifest

more ambition, but as women are underrepresented in appointed seats, this does not make as much of a difference as it could. In the legislature, women lawyers are more underrepresented than non-lawyer women, likely due to the normal reasons women choose not to run for office being exacerbated by the law school experience. Therefore, if the law school experience were to be improved—by, for example, increasing the amount of female mentorship to which students have access—women’s political ambition might be improved as well.

### **Conclusion**

Despite all the gains that women have made since they were a mere 3.6% of law students in 1963 (Ginsburg 1982, 272), including becoming the majority of law students, significant problems remain. Women experience several particular hardships in law school that are not shared by their male colleagues. Though they enter law school with different attitudes and ambitions from the men in their cohorts, they exit changed, shifting more towards male attitudes and ambitions. In classes, they find it more difficult to connect with their professors, which often results in women participating less frequently than men. Additionally, women often feel alienated by being asked to “think like a man,” as law tends to reward socially masculine ways of approaching the world. Both of these problems contribute to an achievement gap, in which women are not as academically successful as their male counterparts. All these disparities contribute to a confidence gap; once-confident women leave law school with a diminished sense of their own abilities. It is possible that female mentorship would ease these difficulties despite literature suggesting otherwise, as women professors have themselves gone through them

in the past. If that is the case, female mentorship in law school may be able to increase women's political ambition in the judiciary and legislature and therefore combat women's underrepresentation in American government.

# Chapter 3: Methods

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between having a female mentor in law school and better experiences for women law students. If this is the case, law schools ought to hire more women and facilitate mentorship between them and female students, who have historically had more negative law school experiences than men, as noted in Chapter 2 (Banks 1988; Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Kindschy, Perrin, and O’Neil 2014; Krauskopf 1994; Schleef 2001; Weiss and Melling 1988). To that end, this study asks, what is the effect of female mentorship on women’s experiences in law school?

This study contributes to previous survey and interview research interrogating the differences that exist between men and women’s law school experiences. Unlike most previous studies, this research does not target only one law school at one moment in time; rather, it includes students from a broad range of law schools across the United States, as well as recent law school graduates. Additionally, unlike many previous studies, which took place before intersectionality was a consideration, this research includes race as a control variable and recognizes its effects. Also unlike previous studies, which have assumed that female mentorship would improve the law school experience for women without testing this assumption, this study tests it directly. Furthermore, this study utilizes questions from previous studies, which occurred before women were equally represented in law school, so it provides an interesting comparison between women’s experiences in

the past and the present. Finally, this study also extends our understanding of the effects of gender-matched mentorship in education.

## **Research Design**

### *Survey*

The primary method of investigating this hypothesis is a survey, which allows the researcher to “accurately measure people’s attitudes, beliefs, and behavior by asking them questions” (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2020, 197). As this research seeks to understand women’s attitudes towards law school, their beliefs regarding the law school socialization process, and their behaviors as a result of their law school experience, a survey is an appropriate method of investigation. Additionally, surveys have been used in a number of past studies of women in law school to investigate similar questions (Bashi and Iskander 2006; Guinier et al. 1994; Homer and Schwartz 1989; Krauskopf 1994; Weiss and Melling 1988). This is an observational study, not an experimental design, because it is beyond the scope of this study to randomly assign the independent variable of interest—female mentorship—to participants, so a survey is the best method.

Survey research is associated with strengths, as well as a few drawbacks. Results have high external validity “if they hold for the world outside of the experimental situation” (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2020, 129). As this survey asks the desired population, women in law school and recent female graduates, about their real-world experiences, it is highly externally valid. By questioning respondents about their lives outside of the survey, rather than by creating conditions to ask questions about within the survey, the survey prompts natural and realistic responses that hold for the outside world.

Additionally, the large sample size of this survey allows for more observations and, therefore, for more generalizable results. Finally, the broad range of the surveyed population, which will be discussed in more detail in the Procedure portion of this chapter, also means that the results are more generalizable. On the other hand, this survey has low internal validity because it cannot be definitively proven that “the manipulation of...the independent variable itself, and not some other variable, did in fact bring about the observed effect on the dependent variable” (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2020, 128). Even with various control variables, there are likely other factors that affect a student’s law school experience for which the construction of this survey did not account. Regardless of these drawbacks, since the independent variable of interest, mentorship, can only be observed, not assigned, a survey is necessary in this case.

### *Interviews*

In addition to utilizing a survey, this study uses interviews with willing respondents to flesh out its findings. While survey response items help demonstrate the existence of a correlation, the more in-depth responses of an interview contribute to understanding why that correlation exists. These interviews are semi-structured for two reasons. First, semi-structured interviews allow for the possibility that there is a dimension of the law school experience that I have not addressed in the survey or interview questions that matters to participants. Second, this structure allows interviewees to talk more about a particular aspect of the law school experience that is more important to them than the others addressed by the questions. This way, the most important findings will be highlighted and augmented.



Much like surveys, interviews have advantages and disadvantages. The main advantage of conducting interviews is the depth they add to research. For example, an interview can explore the underlying mechanisms behind whether a particular mentorship works or does not work in a way that merely answering a survey question cannot. Additionally, as Homer and Schwartz note, women's experiences in law school are often more complex than a close-ended survey can capture (1989, 24). Essentially, the interview portion of this study helps bolster and explain the findings of the survey portion. For this reason, several other studies exploring similar topics utilized interviews (Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil 2014; Schleef 2001). While this method is helpful, there are disadvantages associated with interviews of this nature. First, this method does not have high external validity. The small sample size of respondents who are willing to be interviewed following the survey means that the results of the interviews are not generalizable. Second, interviews do not have high internal validity. As with a survey, it is impossible to tell whether the manipulation of the independent variable—in this case, the presence of female mentorship—is the cause of the hypothesized effects. Even so, given the depth that interview responses give to the study, they are still helpful.

I have taken steps to ensure the best interview responses. First, interviewees are asked to provide their email after completing the initial survey described above, meaning that anyone who makes it to the interview stage has already spent some time thinking about their law school experience and the effect of mentorship on it. Furthermore, as the interviewer, I present myself as a prospective law student in order to facilitate camaraderie and encourage honesty. Finally, these interviews are recorded to ensure that

no important information is missed. All these measures make these interviews as helpful as possible.

## Hypotheses

I hypothesize and test whether having a female mentor improves women's experiences (see Figure 3.1) based on multiple dependent variables.



Figure 3.1: Hypothesis Arrow Diagram

First, I predict that women with female mentors will maintain the attitudes that are more typical of women than men when they enter law school. Second, women with female mentors will have more positive relationships with professors. Third, women with female mentors will participate more frequently in class. Fourth, women with female mentors will feel less alienated from the law school socialization process and themselves. Fifth, women with female mentors will have a more positive perception of their academic achievement. Sixth, women with female mentors will have more confidence. And, finally, women with female mentors will have more political ambition.

## Variables

### *Independent and Control Variables*

The independent variable of interest is mentorship—essentially, whether the respondent has a person in their life whom they consider a mentor and then, if so, if that person is female (see Table 3.1). It is analyzed dichotomously, comparing women who

answer the first question with ‘I have a female mentor’ to women who answer the first question in any other way. Those with a female mentor are coded with a 1, while the others are coded with a 0. This measure is reliable because respondents are provided with an accepted definition of mentorship and then presented with examples of mentorship to increase consistency of responses between respondents. This measure is not very valid, as simply knowing that a respondent has a mentor does not guarantee the quality of that mentorship—for example, the student may have a school-assigned mentor who meets with them twice a year but does not work with them on a regular basis. The second independent variable of interest is the comprehensiveness and depth of the mentorship a participant receives, if they have a mentor (see Table 3.1). This variable is measured by asking participants which of three types of mentorship—psycho-social mentorship, instrumental support, and coauthoring—identified by Eby et.al (2013), they receive, along with an ‘other’ category. Participants who indicate receiving multiple types of mentorship are considered more extensively mentored than participants who have a mentor and do not receive multiple types of mentorship. This measure is valid, because considering the form of mentorship helps indicate the quality of mentorship that a respondent receives. It is also reliable, because participants are provided with accepted definitions of types of mentorship and, as with the previous variable, are provided with examples to increase consistency.

Table 3.1: Independent Variable

Independent Variable	Question(s)	Source
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Mentorship	<p>A mentor is a more experienced individual who provides support to you with the aim of enhancing your personal development and/or integration into the legal profession. This may be a formal mentor through a program at your school, a professor you've had, or someone you worked with at a summer internship, etc. Describe your primary mentor, if you have one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not have a mentor</li> <li>• I have a female mentor</li> <li>• I have a male mentor</li> <li>• I have a transgender or non-binary mentor</li> </ul>	Hernandez et al. (2017)
	<p>What kind of mentoring do you receive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psycho-Social Support (counseling, encouragement, role-modeling)</li> <li>• Instrumental Support (assistance on challenging tasks, coaching, providing opportunities for advancement)</li> <li>• Coauthoring Experience (collaborative presentations and publication of research)</li> <li>• Other (please describe)</li> </ul>	Eby et. al (2013)

There are four other control variables to consider that could have similar effects on a woman’s law school experience (see Table 3.2). These considerations are critical in observational studies such as this one in order to rule out other potential explanations during my analysis. One such variable is race; in other studies, women of color report a “multiplied disadvantage due to the intersection of race and gender” (Krauskopf 1994, 331). Therefore, it is important to note a respondent’s race and ethnicity because the difficulties associated with being a woman in law school may be exacerbated by these identities. Additionally, such an intersectional approach is important in general, as “when feminists ignore or obscure the dimension of race...they risk a politics that excludes women of color” (Ramachandran 1998, 1771). This variable is analyzed dichotomously, with white participants in one category coded with a 1 and non-white participants in

another, coded with a 0. Latinx descent is also be analyzed dichotomously, with non-Latinx participants coded with a 1 and Latinx participants coded with a 0. The inclusion of the ‘Other’ option ensures that every respondent will have an accurate category from which to choose, making this measure valid.

Another control variable is first-generation student status. First-generation law students, defined as the first person in their family to graduate from college, come into law school “lacking networks, financial support, and often family support” (Molina 2020). A lack of networks and support would likely have negative effects on a person’s law school experience, so it is worth controlling for this variable. It is analyzed dichotomously, with first-generation students being coded with a 0 and non-first-generation students being coded with a 1. This measure is reliable because it utilizes a commonly accepted definition of a first-generation student, and it is valid because asking whether a student has a family member who has graduated from college reflects whether they are a first-generation student.

A third control variable is undergraduate success. Many of the difficulties that women experience in law school are related to their academic success, so it is important to determine if a particular respondent’s negative academic experiences are consistent with a negative academic experience during their time as an undergraduate or if their negative academic experiences are unique to law school. This variable is measured in undergraduate GPA and is divided into intervals to increase its reliability; even if respondents do not remember their exact undergraduate GPA, they will likely be able to give an accurate answer within a range. Participants with an undergraduate GPA under

2.0 are coded with a 0, participants with a 2.0-2.49 GPA are coded with a 1, participants with a 2.5-2.99 GPA are coded with a 2, participants with a 3.0-3.49 GPA are coded with a 3, participants with a 3.5-4.0 GPA are coded with a 4, and participants who cannot recall their GPA are excluded from analysis. As for validity, this measure reflects undergraduate success because students with a higher GPA in their undergraduate education were likely more successful.

Finally, a fourth control variable is how many women faculty with which a female student has come into contact, which is a categorical variable. Participants with mostly men professors are coded with a 1, participants with mostly men and some women professors are coded with a 2, participants with mostly women and some men professors are coded with a 3, participants with mostly women professors are coded with a 4, and participants who do are not sure are excluded from analysis. If a female student goes to a law school that has a large majority of male faculty, then the student’s ability to even find a female mentor will be hindered, so it is important to control for this variable. This measure is reliable because respondents with more experience with female faculty will select options that reflect that experience. However, this measure is not very valid because respondents may perceive the percentage of female professors that they have had inaccurately.

Table 3.2: Control Variables

Control Variable	Questions	Source
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Race	What is your racial identity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• American Indian or Alaska Native</li> <li>• Asian</li> <li>• Black or African American</li> <li>• Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</li> <li>• White</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>	N/A
	Do you identify as Hispanic/Latino? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	N/A
First-Generation Status	Are you the first in your family to graduate from college? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	Molina (2020)
Undergraduate Success	What was your approximate undergraduate GPA? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under 2.0</li> <li>• 2.0-2.49</li> <li>• 2.5-2.99</li> <li>• 3.0-3.49</li> <li>• 3.5-4.0</li> </ul>	N/A
Presence of female faculty	At my law school, my classes are taught by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mostly men</li> <li>• Mostly men and some women</li> <li>• About half men and half women</li> <li>• Mostly women and some men</li> <li>• Mostly women</li> </ul>	N/A

### *Dependent Variables*

There are seven dependent variables that are examined in this study, which are all coded toward a more positive law school experience. The first is ‘feminine attitude,’ which refers to the extent to which the respondent maintains the attitudes that are more typical of women than men when they enter law school. The questions measuring this variable are related to women’s career ambitions and values (see Table 3.3). They are reliable because they are drawn from an earlier study, Homer and Schwartz (1989), and they are valid because they measure changes in feminine attitude over time in law school,

where a high score indicates less change in the respondents' attitudes. The first two questions in Table 3.3, which are shaded, are combined into one index. Women who select the public sector and public interest nonprofit association options are considered to have a feminine attitude because women are more likely to enter law school with those interests. If a respondent maintains her feminine attitude—that is, if she selects a feminine option in both the first and second questions—her response is coded with a 1. If a respondent does anything else, her response is coded as a 0. The third question in Table 3.3, which is unshaded, is coded as follows: strongly disagree (1), somewhat disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat agree (4), strongly agree (5). The results are analyzed separately, as a 'feminine attitude – career variable,' which includes the shaded questions in Table 3.3 below, and a 'feminine attitude – value variable,' which includes the unshaded question in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Dependent Variable - Feminine Attitude

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
Feminine Attitude - Career	(1) Which of the following best describes your primary career goal at the time you entered law school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Sector, Public Interest Nonprofit Association, Private Law Firm, Sole Practitioner, Corporate In-House Counsel, Academic, Other (please describe)</li> </ul>	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(2) What kind of job do you currently expect to have after law school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Sector, Public Interest Nonprofit Association, Private Law Firm, Sole Practitioner, Corporate In-House Counsel, Academic, Other (please describe)</li> </ul>	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
Feminine Attitude - Values	(3) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: My values have not changed since starting law school.	Homer and Schwartz (1989)



The second dependent variable is women students' relationships with professors, which is measured with several questions concerning women's interactions with professors both during and after class (see Table 3.4). These questions are reliable because they originated in another study, Homer and Schwartz (1989). They are valid because they measure students' thoughts about professors. Respondents' relationships with professors are measured with the questions in Table 3.4 below. The first is coded like this: strongly agree (1), somewhat agree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat disagree (4), strongly disagree (5), and the second is coded like this: never (1), about once every four weeks (2), about once every two weeks (3), and about once a week or more (4). The two questions are added together in an index ranging from 2 to 9, where higher scores indicate better relationships with professors.

Table 3.4: Dependent Variable - Professor Relationships

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
Professor relationships	(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: I am more likely to speak in a class taught by a female professor than one taught by a male professor.	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(2) How often do you do the following?: Go see a professor during their office hours	Homer and Schwartz (1989)

Next, the measure of the third variable, class participation, is valid because it measures how often women interact with their professors. Responses to the questions in Table 3.5 below are coded like this: never (1), about once every four weeks (2), about once every two weeks (3), and about once a week or more (4). Respondents are given a total score between 1 and 12, which is divided by the number of questions, three, to find

an average score, where a higher score indicates more participation. (see Table 3.5). This measure is reliable because the questions come from a previous study, Homer and Schwartz (1989).

Table 3.5: Dependent Variable - Class Participation

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
Class participation	(1) How often do you do the following?: Ask a professor a question during class	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(2) How often do you do the following?: Ask a professor a question after class	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(3) How often do you do the following?: Volunteer answers during class	Homer and Schwartz (1989)

The fourth variable, degree of alienation, refers to the extent to which a participant feels alienated from the law school socialization process, or alienated from themselves because of that process. This measure is reliable because the questions are drawn from a previous study, Homer and Schwartz (1989) (see Table 3.6). It is valid because the questions concern women's comfort levels in law school and the ways in which they perceive themselves, both of which contribute to feelings of alienation. Question 1 will be coded as follows: strongly disagree (5), somewhat disagree (4), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat agree (2), and strongly agree (1). Question 2 is coded like this: terrible/unhappy (1), mostly dissatisfied (2), mixed (3), mostly satisfied (4), pleased/delighted (5). These responses are added together and then divided by the number of questions, two, with a higher score indicating less alienation.

Table 3.6: Dependent Variable - Alienation

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
Alienation	(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: I feel pressured to set aside my values to think like a lawyer.	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(2) Overall, how do you feel about your life since entering law school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrible/unhappy, mostly dissatisfied, mixed, mostly satisfied, pleased/delighted</li> </ul>	Homer and Schwartz (1989)

The fifth dependent variable is perception of academic achievement, which is measured by asking women questions about their confidence in their level of academic achievement (see Table 3.7). This measure is reliable because the questions were asked in Homer and Schwartz (1989), and it is valid because the questions concern women's perception of their academic achievement in law school. The first two questions are coded like this: strongly disagree (1), somewhat disagree (2), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat agree (4), and strongly agree (5). The third question is coded like this: strongly disagree (5), somewhat disagree (4), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat agree (2), and strongly agree (1). The responses are added together to create an index from 3-15 and then divided by the number of questions, three, to create an average score, where a higher score indicates that the respondent has a better perception of her academic achievement.

Table 3.7: Dependent Variable - Academic Achievement

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
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Academic Achievement	(1) Do you agree or disagree?: I am satisfied with my law school grades.	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(2) Do you agree or disagree?: My law school grades reflect the amount of time I put into studying	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(3) Do you agree or disagree?: My academic performance has caused me to question my ability to practice law	Homer and Schwartz (1989)

The sixth dependent variable is overall confidence. This variable is measured by questions addressing women’s feelings regarding themselves and their abilities before and after their law school experience, making it a valid measure (see Table 3.8). Questions 1 and 2 are coded as follows: strongly disagree (5), somewhat disagree (4), neither agree nor disagree (3), somewhat agree (2), and strongly agree (1). Question 3 is coded like this: never true (1), rarely true (2), sometimes true (3), often true (4), always true (5). The responses are added together into an index ranging from 3-15 and then divided by the number of questions, three, for an average score, where a higher score indicates more confidence. This measure is reliable because the questions are drawn from Homer and Schwartz (1989).

Table 3.8: Dependent Variable - Confidence

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
Confidence	(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: Before law school, I thought of myself as intelligent and articulate, but often I don't feel that way about myself now.	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
	(2) Do you agree or disagree?: I lose confidence when I am in law school classes.	Homer and Schwartz (1989)

	(3) Comparing yourself to other people at your law school would you agree that the statement “I feel that I am a competent person, at least as much as others” is... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never true, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, always true</li> </ul>	Homer and Schwartz (1989)
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Lastly, the seventh variable, political ambition, is measured by asking women whether they have ever considered running for political office and if so, what steps they have taken to pursue that ambition (see Table 3.9). The first question is coded like this: yes (1), and no (0). The second question is coded with every option being an additional point, so if a respondent has done none of the options, she gets a score of zero, and if she has done all of the options, she gets a score of 5. These questions are analyzed separately, as a ‘political ambition - willingness to run’ variable and a ‘political ambition - preparedness to run’ variable. This is a valid measure because it addresses both the theoretical and practical aspects of running for office, and it is reliable because it is drawn from Lawless and Fox (2004).

Table 3.9: Dependent Variable - Political Ambition

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Source</b>
Political Ambition – Willingness to Run	(1) Have you considered running for any political office? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, no</li> </ul>	Lawless and Fox (2004)
Political Ambition – Preparedness to Run	(2) Which of the following have you done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed running with family and friends</li> <li>• Discussed running with community leaders</li> <li>• Investigated how to place name on the ballot</li> <li>• Discussed running with party leaders</li> </ul>	Lawless and Fox (2004)

## **Procedure**

This survey was approved by The College of Wooster's Human Subject Research Committee. I employ a multi-pronged approach to recruit current and recent law students to participate in the survey. First, I am contacting the leadership of women's organizations and other affinity groups at fifty United States law schools. These law schools are selected randomly from the American Bar Association's list of accredited law schools (List of ABA-Approved Law Schools in Alphabetical Order 2022). Consenting leadership distribute the survey to the members of their organization. To supplement my survey responses, I am contacting College of Wooster alumnae who are women currently in or recently graduated from law school through the Alumni Office. Finally, I am contacting social media accounts that support women in law school and the legal profession—for example, @msjdorg on Twitter and womenoflaw on Instagram—and requesting that they share my survey to their followers. Consenting social media managers distribute my survey on social media. Finally, I am distributing the survey through a snowball sample approach. I am reaching out to professor and lawyer contacts through email and asking them to share the survey with others they know who may be interested. The survey respondents are limited to female-identifying individuals who are currently in law school or graduated from 2010-2021. All participants are invited to provide their email addresses to be contacted for a follow-up interview if they wish.

## **Plan for Analysis**

The survey results are analyzed in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), using multivariate regression and logistic regression models. This analysis is

appropriate because the dependent variables are continuous and there are multiple independent variables, including the independent variable of interest and a number of control variables. If my hypotheses are correct, I see a positive coefficient on the female mentorship variable that is statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) in the multivariate regression model for each of the dependent variables. That is, when there is a female mentor present, women students maintain their attitudinal differences, have better relationships with their professors, participate more frequently, feel less alienated, perceive their academic achievement more positively, have higher confidence, and have more political ambition. Furthermore, the results of this survey are used to compare the past and present; the results to questions I have drawn from prior studies in this survey are compared to the results of those same questions in the past to analyze changes in women's experiences over time. Finally, the results of the open-ended survey questions, as well as the interview questions, are utilized to illustrate trends in women's law school experiences and to demonstrate how women feel about mentorship.

This analysis of my survey and interview data allows me to test whether female mentorship has a positive effect on women's experiences in law school. The answer to this question contributes to the literature concerning women's law school experiences, the literature concerning gender-matched mentorship, and the literature concerning political ambition in women. Most importantly, the results of this study can demonstrate the importance of gender-matched mentorship, suggesting that school-facilitated mentorship programs or professors' concerted efforts to mentor female students can improve women's experiences in law school. This, in turn, can have enormous political

ramifications, as women's negative experiences in law school likely negatively affects women lawyers' political ambition.



# Chapter 4: Results

## Introduction

In response to previous research concerning women's experiences in law school, as well as research concerning mentorship, I expected to find that women who are mentored by other women in law school will have better law school experiences than their women peers without female mentors. First, women with female mentors will maintain the feminine attitudes that characterize women when they enter law school more than their counterparts without female mentors. Second, women with female mentors will have better relationships with their professors than women without female mentors. Third, women with female mentors will be encouraged to participate more in class. Fourth, women who are mentored by women will have fewer feelings of alienation in response to law school's demand that they "think like a lawyer." Fifth, women who have female mentors will have a more positive perception of their academic achievement. Sixth, women being mentored by other women will have more confidence. Finally, women with female mentors will have increased political ambition. To test these hypotheses, I conducted a survey, consisting of close-ended and open-ended questions, of women who are currently in law school or have graduated since 2010, as well as a series of interviews with willing survey participants.

I begin by summarizing the survey participants, including relevant information such as their gender identities, law school status, and mentorship status, which are presented in Table 4.1. Other information, including race, Latinx identity, first-generation status, undergraduate GPA, and female professor encounters are presented in Table 4.2.

Then, I compare the results of this survey to past surveys studying women in law school. Finally, I present the results, testing my hypotheses with multivariate and logistic regression models as outlined in Chapter 3.

### Participants

Four hundred and twenty-seven current and former law students participated in this survey. Of those, 3 individuals identifying as male, 5 individuals identifying as genderqueer/gender non-conforming, 1 individual identifying with a different identity, and five individuals who elected not to provide their gender identity were excluded from analysis (see Table 4.1). Additionally, participants who had already graduated from law school (sorted by stating that their graduation year was between 2010 and 2021) were given a set of questions in the past tense, while participants who are currently in law school (sorted by stating that their graduation year was between 2022 and 2026) were given a set of questions in the present tense. More current law students (65.3%) than law school graduates (30.0%) participated in the survey (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics

Identity Gender	Female	413 (96.7%)
	Male	3 (0.7%)
	Trans Female/Trans Woman	0 (0.0%)
	Trans Male/Trans Man	0 (0.0%)
	Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming	5 (1.2%)
	Different Identity (please describe)	1 (0.2%)

	Missing Data	5 (1.2%)
Law School Status	Currently in Law School	279 (65.3%)
	Law School Graduate	128 (30.0%)
	Missing Data	20 (4.7%)
Mentorship Status	Female Mentor	191 (48.1%)
	Male Mentor	85 (21.4%)
	No mentor	121 (30.5%)

Other factors that could affect a participant’s experience in law school were included as control variables, including a participant’s race, Latinx identity, first-generation student status, undergraduate GPA, and how many female professors the participants encountered in law school (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Control Variables – Descriptive Statistics

Race	American Indian or Alaska Native	4 (0.9%)
	Asian	19 (4.4%)
	Black or African American	19 (4.4%)
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1 (0.2%)
	White	235 (55.0%)
	Other	22 (5.2%)
	Missing Data	127 (29.7%)

Latinx Identity	Latinx	34 (8.0%)
	Not Latinx	267 (62.5%)
	Missing Data	126 (29%)
First-Generation Status	First-Generation Student	76 (17.8%)
	Not First-Generation Student	224 (52.5%)
	Missing Data	127 (29.7%)
Undergraduate GPA	Under 2.0	1 (0.2%)
	2.0-2.49	3 (0.7%)
	2.5-2.99	17 (4.0%)
	3.0-3.49	81 (19.0%)
	3.5-4.0	192 (45.0%)
	I don't recall	7 (1.6%)
	Missing Data	126 (29.5%)
Female Professor Encounters	Professors were mostly men	61 (14.3%)
	Professors were mostly men and some women	113 (26.5%)
	Professors were about half men and half women	117 (27.4%)
	Professors were mostly women and some men	9 (2.1%)
	Professors were mostly women	1 (0.2%)

	Not sure	9 (2.1%)
	Missing Data	117 (27.4%)

While the participant demographics were slightly different from real-world conditions, they did not differ greatly. In 2021, the enrolling class of women in law school was 64% white (Various Statistics on ABA Approved Law Schools 2022). In this sample, 72.8% of the respondents who revealed their race were white. Additionally, 22.5% of the graduating class in 2020 were first-generation law students, meaning that no one in their immediate family had attended law school (Leipold and Taylor 2021). In this sample, 17.8% of participants identified as a first-generation student, meaning that no one in their immediate family has a college degree. This discrepancy in percentages makes a certain amount of sense. Fewer people overall have law degrees than college degrees, so it is more likely for law students to have an immediate relative who is a college graduate than a law school graduate. Finally, the sample's experience with female professors is consistent with national data; the most recent data available, from 2011, indicates that 25.2% of tenured or tenure-track faculty at law schools are female (Mertz et al. 2011). In the sample, 56.2% of participants indicated having experienced more male professors than female professors.

### **Comparing the Past and Present**

As this survey utilized questions from a variety of other surveys, it was possible to compare the results from those surveys to the results of this survey. These past studies were all conducted prior to 2014, when women were not yet the majority in law school.

Many scholars have theorized in other fields that when women reach parity in a field, their situation improves. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case here. Rather, many of the results from before women were the majority of law school students remained the same.

Some were not quite as negative as others. For instance, part of the feminine attitude measure of this study was predicated on the idea that women are more likely than men to enter law school with aspirations in the public interest sphere and in the public sector on the basis of prior surveys. While no men were surveyed in this study, it is still possible to measure the proportion of women who were interested in those jobs today as compared to the past. When Homer and Schwartz (1989) asked this question, 42% of white women and 40% of women of color indicated that they were pursuing jobs in the public interest sphere or the public sector (31). In this study, 20.9% of women wanted a public interest job and 31.5% wanted a job in the public sector in their first year, bringing the total percentage of women interested in these areas to 52.4%. If anything, then, women were more interested in these feminine occupations in this study than in the past. Homer and Schwartz (1989) also noted a drop in the percentage of women pursuing the public interest sphere specifically; in that study, 25% of first year women intended to seek employment in the public interest sphere, whereas only 8% were still interested by their third year (39). There was a similar drop in this study; while 20.9% of women aspired for jobs in the public interest sphere in the first year, only 13.8% were still interested in the third year or after graduation. This indicates that it might be more acceptable now for women to continue to pursue these areas than it was in 1989. That is

not to say, though, that it is not difficult. One survey participant pointed out that “[c]hoosing to do public interest work requires a lot of carving your own path” because “there’s a culture of valuing corporate-related tax matters above others.”

The other part of the feminine attitude measure, values, produced more negative results. Like in the past, women’s learning styles and values were often absent from participants’ law school experiences. One survey participant said that she “did not feel that the overall structure of law school suited [her] learning strengths,” and another participant clarified that she hated law school because “it was competitive rather than collaborative.” As for values, one respondent found that she did not fit in at law school, but it was okay because she “[didn’t] want to fit in with the people” in law school. Similarly, an interview participant found that “it was hard to square [her] values with professional responsibility,” suggesting that, for some women, their personal values are incompatible with the legal profession.

On another upsetting note, women’s experiences with male professors did not improve. When Bashi and Iskander (2006) asked women in their study if they felt that the nature of interactions between professors and students varied based on the student’s gender, 63% reported that they noticed a difference (419). When asked the same question in this study, 48.4% noticed a difference sometimes, 14.6% noticed a difference about half the time, 10.8% noticed a difference most of the time, and 4.8% noticed a difference always, totaling 78.6% of women who noticed a difference. Some differences were more problematic than others; for instance, one survey participant even said that she had a professor call her a bitch. Sexual assault and harassment were also to be recurring issues.

More than one survey participant recalled being sexually assaulted by a professor, and others noted flirting, “special attention,” inappropriate comments, and sexually charged hazing. All these problems make it difficult to connect with professors.

On the issue of participation, much remained the same. Homer and Schwartz (1989) reported that the majority of women said that they never spoke up in class (29). No numbers were quite that high in this study. Only 19.7% of women never asked questions in class, only 17.2% never asked questions after class, and 14.3% never answered questions in class. However, it is worth noting that when participants who answered “once a month” in response to these same questions were combined with the percentage of women who never spoke up, the percentages spiked to 69.4%, 64.3%, and 40.1% respectively. These results remained in line with Banks (1988), who found that 60% of women seldom or never spoke up in class (139). Therefore, women were still not frequent participators in the law school classroom.

This is not shocking, considering some of the open-ended responses. First, women were afraid of being perceived as the gunner—the person in a law school classroom who speaks too much; one interview participant said that she did not “want to dominate the conversation, because people hate that.” Additionally, women were occasionally patronized. One professor an interview participant had would let women off the hook during cold calls if they smiled at him. While the interviewee noted that it could be useful at times if she really did not know the answer, it still “felt like [she] wasn’t being taken seriously because [she was] a woman.” Finally, women took issue with cold calling for a number of reasons. Some agreed with the interview participant who called it the “most



patriarchal, archaic thing in the world,” feeling that professors who did it were “out to get [students] and hope that [students] make a mistake.” In an interview, one participant said that she did not go to some classes unless she was “110% prepared.” Other students were troubled by the way cold calling works. One relayed a story of a professor who “tried to call on more men because there were ‘too many women’ in the class;” another complained that “professors don't call on women when talking about women’s rights issues in the classroom.” Professor behavior, then, seemed to stifle women’s participation.

The alienation issue was somewhat improved. In Homer and Schwartz’s study (1989), more than half of women surveyed reported that they felt that they must put themselves aside in order to “think like a lawyer” (32). That was somewhat reduced today; 9.6% of participants strongly agreed with that statement, and 35% somewhat agreed, so only 44.6% of women still felt that way. However, given that many more women are lawyers today than in 1989, this result demonstrated that women were still using the dual or multiple consciousness described by Matsuda (1989) and separating their perspective from the lawyer perspective. The interview responses were instructive here. Consistently, women recognized that “you definitely do have to take your own feelings and kind of push them aside” because “it’s not necessarily about what might be morally or ethically right, but about...what will win, legally speaking.” Some women described rotating through their perspectives in order to cope. One said that “you can still have your own set of values, but you do need to address the other argument,” and another reported that she did assignments “as she [was] supposed to,” but “in reality, that [was]

not who [she was] or how [she thought].” Though women did not seem to feel the need to put their feelings aside as frequently, there were still many rotating through their consciousnesses.

Additionally, many women still struggled with their mental health during law school and found that there was not a supportive community on which to lean. Participants reported that law school “takes everything from you” and “sucks the life out of [you].” They faced “indescribable” levels of stress” and felt “like [they] were drowning.” Alarming, it seemed that many of these women had nowhere to turn. One participant noted that it was “hard to find community with your peers you’re competing against,” and many others referred to the environment of law school as “toxic.” On the other hand, one woman noted that “having a friend that aligns with my values as a woman of color is really important...it helps me feel less alone,” which demonstrated that, when community exists, it can help women.

On academic achievement, women felt better today than in the past. Homer and Schwartz (1989) reported that the majority of women in their study felt unsatisfied with their grades (30). In this study, however, 6.7% strongly disagreed with the statement ‘I feel satisfied with my grades,’ and 21.0% somewhat disagreed, meaning that only 27.7% of women felt unsatisfied. However, many women were concerned with the curve system utilized in law schools. Respondents said that the curve is “obnoxious and unnecessary” and “makes you feel like you’re never good enough or done preparing.” It “pits students against each other” and makes it “difficult to...work together with others.” So, while

women may have felt better about their achievement, they still took issue with the grading system in law school.

Unfortunately, that improved academic achievement did not translate into improved confidence. Homer and Schwartz (1989) found that 40% of participants felt less confident after attending law school (33). In this study, 20.8% of participants strongly agreed with that statement, and 26.5% somewhat agreed, meaning that 46.8% of participants felt less confident now than they did when they started law school. Similarly, 27% of women reported doubting their ability to practice law in Homer and Schwartz (1989), and 15.2% strongly agreed and 22.3% somewhat agreed with this statement today, totaling 37.5% (31). Therefore, women were even less confident in this later study. This was confirmed in the many times that women who were interviewed or who wrote open-ended responses referenced imposter syndrome. They may be performing well, but that does not mean that they feel that they are performing well. As one woman put it, she felt “more lost than ever.”

Earlier studies also occurred before women of color had begun entering law school in high numbers. However, today, there are many women of color attending law school, so their voices are incredibly important to consider because, as one respondent noted, law school is “designed for white, privileged people.” Another pointed out that at her law school, “more than gender issues, issues of race were problematic.” One respondent said that “as a Black law student, the odds are stacked 10x against us,” and another said that because of how her law school handles race, she felt like she should “drop out at least once a month.” Based on these responses, many of the issues with race

in law school seemed to be structural. Some participants suggested that it would be better if there were more professors of color, and another said that it would be helpful if schools took steps to make “people of color or [those with] diverse backgrounds feel more welcome to talk in the classroom and beyond with other students.” Ultimately, while there are more women of color in law school today than when past surveys were conducted, there were still a number of issues surrounding race in law school reported.

The comparisons between the past and present are presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Past Survey Results Compared to Present

Question Response	Past Study	Current Study
Primary goal entering law school: public interest or public sector	42% (white women) 40% (women of color)	52.4%
Drop in public interest focus from first year to third year	25% → 8%	20.9% → 13.8%
Noticed that the nature or content of classroom interactions between professors and students was affected by the gender of the student	63%	78.6%
Never spoke up in class/seldom or never spoke up in class	Majority/60%	69.4% ( <i>never asked questions in class or asked one question per month</i> )
		64.3% ( <i>never asked questions after class or asked one question per month</i> )
		40.1% ( <i>never answered</i> )

		<i>questions or answered one question per month)</i>
Had to put themselves or their values aside to “think like a lawyer”	Majority	44.6%
Unsatisfied with grades	Majority	27.7%
Less confident after attending law school	40%	46.8%
Doubted ability to practice law	27%	37.5%

While much has changed for women in law school and in the legal profession, it is evident from these results that the same difficulties that motivated these past studies persisted today. Women in law school agreed—they saw a need for change, even though many of them have found law school to be a “profound and significant experience” that gave them “intellectual puzzles and opportunities to learn.” One participant pointed out that law school “is structured entirely to benefit men” and that “outside of law school, it feels like, as a woman, [she was] still expected to do everything that is expected of women.” Others described the experience as “dehumanizing and demoralizing” and “like a hazing ritual or a rite of passage as opposed to helpful for [a] career.” One participant summed it up, saying that “law school broke [her] and then built [her],” but that “the breaking [was] not necessary or useful.”

## Results

### *Hypothesis 1: Feminine Attitude*

I expected to find that women law students with female mentors would maintain the ‘feminine’ attitudes that distinguish them from their male counterparts at a higher rate than women law students without female mentors. Specifically, women with female mentors would be more likely to maintain the career aspirations that are more common among women throughout law school and women with female mentors would be less likely than women without female mentors to feel that their values have changed as a result of going to law school. These were measured using questions drawn from Homer and Schwartz (1989) (see Table 4.4), and control variables included race, Latinx descent, first-generation status, and how many female professors a student had for career aspirations, and all those variables with the exception of first-generation status for changing values.

Table 4.4: Feminine Attitude Variable

Career Aspirations	<p>(1) Which of the following best describes your primary career goal at the time you entered law school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Sector, Public Interest Nonprofit Association, Private Law Firm, Sole Practitioner, Corporate In-House Counsel, Academic, Other (please describe)</li></ul> <p>(2) What kind of job do you currently expect to have after law school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public Sector, Public Interest Nonprofit Association, Private Law Firm, Sole Practitioner, Corporate In-House Counsel, Academic, Other (please describe)</li></ul> <p><i>Respondents maintained feminine career aspirations if they answered public sector or public interest nonprofit association for both questions 1 and 2.</i></p>
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Changing Values	(3) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: My values have not changed since starting law school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strongly disagree (1) - Strongly agree (5)</li> </ul>
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The coefficient for female mentorship in the first component of the feminine attitude variable, participants’ career aspirations, was positive as expected; however, it was not significant (see Table 4.5). This component was constructed by checking for changes between a participant’s answer to the first question and the second question in Table 4.4. If a participant stayed with a feminine career option—public sector or public interest nonprofit association—her response was coded with a 1. If a participant answered any other way, her response was coded with a 0. Ultimately, there was a positive correlation between having a female mentor and maintaining feminine career aspirations as expected, but it did not meet the conventional standard of statistical significance. Reality, however, may be more nuanced. In the open-ended responses to this study, participants noted a variety of reasons for leaving a feminine-coded field. For example, a participant who changed her interest from healthcare to data privacy noted that she had not even known that data privacy litigation existed when she entered law school. Furthermore, one participant who had originally wanted to do civil rights law cited the “emotional strain” of such work when indicating why she had elected to pursue contract law instead. In short, there are other reasons to leave a feminine career field for which this study did not account.

Table 4.5: Feminine Attitude - Career Aspiration Results

Variable	Coefficient (Standard Error)
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Mentorship	0.211 (0.267)
Race	-0.256 (0.327)
Latinx Identity	-0.519 (0.437)
First-Generation Status	-0.019 (0.321)
Female Professor Encounters	0.010 (0.167)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

Additionally, the coefficient for female mentorship in the second component of the feminine attitude variable, participants' changing values, was positive. Like the first component, however, this coefficient did not reach significance (see Table 4.6). Participants who strongly disagreed with the third question in Table 4.4, and therefore did not maintain their values in law school, were coded with a 1, all the way up to participants who strongly agreed and therefore maintained their values in law school, who were coded with a 5. There was a positive correlation between having a female mentor and maintaining values in law school, as anticipated, but it did not rise to the level of statistical significance. This mixed finding was corroborated by the interviews I conducted, as well as the open-ended responses to the survey. One participant with a female mentor said that she has “never felt like [she had] had to completely argue a different way because [she was] quote, unquote ‘a lawyer’ or something like that.” On the other hand, another participant with a female mentor felt oppositely; she said that, in



order to be a lawyer, “you have to take your own feelings and kind of push them aside because at the end of the day, the law is the law.”

Table 4.6: Feminine Attitude - Changing Values Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	0.087 (0.156)
Race	-0.105 (0.199)
Latinx Identity	0.407 (0.259)
Female Professor Encounters	0.155 (0.098)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

While both components of the feminine attitude variable were positively correlated with female mentorship, neither component was significant, so there was no clear evidence supporting Hypothesis 1. It was unsurprising that the gender of a participant’s mentor does not have much of an effect on their perception of their values, given the finding that mentees’ similarity with their mentors’ values matters more than similarity in gender (Hernandez et al. 2017).

*Hypothesis 2: Relationships with Professors*

I hypothesized that women law students with female mentors would have better relationships with their professors, regardless of professor gender. Questions from Homer and Schwartz (1989) constructed this measure (see Table 4.7), and control variables included race, Latinx identity, first-generation status, and female professor encounters.

Table 4.7: Professor Relationship Variable Measurement

<p>(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: I am more likely to speak in a class taught by a female professor than one taught by a male professor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly agree (1) - Strongly disagree (5)</li> </ul> <p>(2) How often do you do the following?: Go to see a professor during their office hours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never (1), about once every four weeks (2), about once every two weeks (3), about once a week or more (4)</li> </ul>
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This measure was constructed by adding the results from the first and second questions in Table 4.7 into an index, scored from 2-9; participants with a higher score had a better relationship with their professors, regardless of gender. The coefficient for female mentorship was negative, which was not expected. However, it was not significant (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Professor Relationship Variable Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	-0.176 (0.198)
Race	-0.207 (0.251)
Latinx Identity	0.187 (0.344)
First-Generation Status	0.102 (0.241)
Female Professor Encounters	0.355** (0.125)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

Since the correlation between female mentorship and professor relationships was negative, as well as statistically insignificant, there was no evidence supporting

Hypothesis 2. However, it is interesting to note that participants who had more female professors were more likely to have better relationships with their professors, which was statistically significant. Given the responses to the open-ended portions of this study, this was unsurprising. Female professors seemed to be preferred. One interviewee stated that “female professors...seem a little more emotionally aware at times...more understanding, less likely to be as harsh or dismissive or...talk over students” and are “really good at making a space for female students [and] shut[ting] down mansplaining students.” In response to an open-ended question, one participant wished there were more female professors because “male professors don’t often think about how a woman might read a case.” Additionally, it seemed that women simply have worse relationships with male professors. One participant found it “extremely hard to connect with professors, especially the typical white male law school professors.” Another noted that she preferred her female professors because “they reaffirmed that [she] was in a space that remained critical of the lasting effects of law, which [has] racist effects on poor low-income communities of color.” Finally, a participant shared that, after a death in the family, it was her women professors who “went above and beyond to check on [her]” and “see if [she] was okay.”

### *Hypothesis 3: Participation*

I anticipated that women law students with female mentors would be more likely to participate in class than their classmates without female mentors. Participation was measured with questions from Homer and Schwartz (1989) (see Table 4.9). Control

variables included race, Latinx identity, first-generation status, and female professor encounters.

Table 4.9: Participation Variable Measurement

(1) How often do you do the following?: Ask a professor a question during class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never (1), about once every four weeks (2), about once every two weeks (3), about once a week or more (4)</li> </ul>
(2) How often do you do the following?: Ask a professor a question after class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never (1), about once every four weeks (2), about once every two weeks (3), about once a week or more (4)</li> </ul>
(3) How often do you do the following: Volunteer an answer during class
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never (1), about once every four weeks (2), about once every two weeks (3), about once a week or more (4)</li> </ul>

The index was constructed by adding participants’ responses to the three questions in Table 4.9 together and then dividing by three to reach an average score, where a higher score indicated better participation. The coefficient for female mentorship was negative, which was unexpected; however, this was not statistically significant (see Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Participation Variable Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	-0.141 (0.095)
Race	0.255* (0.120)
Latinx Identity	0.042 (0.165)
First Generation Status	-0.076 (0.116)
Female Professor Encounters	0.027

	(0.060)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

The coefficient for mentorship was neither positive, nor statistically significant, so there was no evidence supporting Hypothesis 3. The only significant result was for non-white participants, who were more likely to participate in class than their white peers. This also ran contrary to expectations, as the literature indicates that women of color often face worse experiences than white women in law school.

*Hypothesis 4: Alienation*

I expected to find that women with female mentors would be less alienated than women without female mentors. Alienation was measured with two questions from Homer and Schwartz (1989) (see Table 4.11). Respondents' scores from questions one and two were added together and then divided by two to reach an average, and a higher average indicated less alienation. Therefore, a positive coefficient would indicate that female mentorship was correlated with less alienation. The control variables were race, Latinx identity, first-generation status, and female professor encounters.

Table 4.11: Alienation Variable Measurement

<p>(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: I feel pressured to set aside my values to think like a lawyer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly disagree (5) - Strongly agree (1)</li> </ul> <p>(2) Overall, how do you feel about your life since entering law school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terrible/unhappy (1), mostly dissatisfied (2), mixed (3), mostly satisfied (4), pleased/delighted (5)</li> </ul>
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The coefficient for mentorship was negative, which was unexpected. It was also statistically significant, demonstrating that female mentorship was negatively correlated

with alienation (see Table 4.12). In other words, women who had a female mentor were more likely to be alienated than their peers without a female mentor. Given the results of the open-ended aspects of the survey, this was surprising. Arguably the most positive comment in the entire survey came from a participant with a female mentor, who said that “from a personal development standpoint, [law school] was the best three years of [her] life.” Others with female mentors said that they felt like they were meant to be in law school. There were, of course, women with female mentors who felt alienated; however, they mostly attributed this feeling to a lack of community in law school, with one calling it “cutthroat” and several others calling it “toxic.” The most negative alienation comments came from participants who either did not have a mentor or who had a male mentor. One called the stress of law school “indescribable,” and another said law school “sucked the life out of [her].”

Table 4.12: Alienation Variable Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	-0.315* (0.123)
Race	0.088 (0.156)
Latinx Identity	0.225 (0.214)
First Generation Status	-0.318* (0.150)
Female Professor Encounters	0.119 (0.078)

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001

Since mentorship was negatively correlated with alienation, Hypothesis 4 could be rejected. The other statistically significant correlation—first-generation status and alienation—was unsurprising. First generation students often do not have the same resources as their peers, which could lead to increased alienation.

#### *Hypothesis 5: Academic Achievement*

I hypothesized that women with female mentors would feel better about their academic achievement than women without female mentors. This feeling was measured using three questions drawn from Homer and Schwartz (1989) (see Table 4.13), and control variables included race, Latinx identity, first-generation status, undergraduate GPA, and female professor encounters. The measure was created by adding participants' responses to the three questions in Table 4.13 and dividing by three to achieve an average score. A higher score indicated a better feeling regarding the participant's academic achievement.

Table 4.13: Academic Achievement Variable Measurement

- (1) Do you agree or disagree?: I am satisfied with my law school grades.
  - Strongly disagree (1) - Strongly agree (5)
- (2) Do you agree or disagree?: My law school grades reflect the amount of time I put into studying.
  - Strongly disagree (1) - Strongly agree (5)
- (3) Do you agree or disagree?: My academic performance has caused me to question my ability to practice law.
  - Strongly agree (1) - Strongly disagree (5)

The coefficient for female mentorship was negative, although it was not significant (see Table 4.14). The responses to the open-ended questions provided some

clarity as to why this result ran contrary to expectations. In general, participants seemed to appreciate the academics themselves at law school, finding them “intellectually stimulating,” and “challenging, interesting, and engaging.” A primary complaint participants had with law school had to do with the curve on which law school is graded. Students wrote that “[l]aw school is entirely a competition for gold stars” with “extremely intelligent people [in the class], and only 10 available As to give out.” These are institutional difficulties that female mentors cannot overcome.

Table 4.14: Academic Achievement Variable Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	-0.162 (0.121)
Race	0.334 * (0.154)
Latinx Identity	0.219 (0.210)
First-Generation Status	-0.045 (0.147)
Undergraduate GPA	0.195* (0.092)
Female Professor Encounters	0.054 (0.076)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

The correlation between female mentorship and perception of academic achievement was negative, contrary to expectations. However, it was not statistically significant. Therefore, there was no evidence supporting Hypothesis 5. Interestingly, race



was positively correlated with perception of academic achievement and statistically significant. This, again, ran contrary to expectations about women of color’s experiences in law school. Unsurprisingly, individuals with a lower GPA in undergraduate school felt more negatively about their achievement in law school, which was also significant.

*Hypothesis 6: Confidence*

I anticipated that women with female mentors would be more confident than women without female mentors. Confidence was measured with three questions from Homer and Schwartz (1989) (see Table 4.15). Participants’ answers to these three questions were totaled and then divided by three to reach an average score, where a higher score indicated more confidence. I controlled for race, Latinx identity, first-generation status, undergraduate GPA, and female professor encounters.

Table 4.15: Confidence Variable Measurement

<p>(1) Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: Before law school, I thought of myself as intelligent and articulate, but often I don't feel that way about myself now.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly agree (1) - Strongly disagree (5)</li> </ul> <p>(2) Do you agree or disagree?: I lose confidence when I am in law school classes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strongly agree (1) - Strongly disagree (5)</li> </ul> <p>(3) Comparing yourself to other people at your law school, would you agree that the statement “I feel that I am a competent person, at least as much as others” is...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never true (1), rarely true (2), sometimes true (3), often true (4), always true (5)</li> </ul>
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The coefficient for female mentorship was both negative and significant, which was unanticipated (see Table 4.16).

Table 4.16: Confidence Variable Results

Variable	Coefficient (Standard Error)
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Mentorship	-0.263* (0.118)
Race	-0.004 (0.151)
Latinx Identity	0.102 (0.205)
First Generation Status	0.102 (0.144)
Undergraduate GPA	0.112 (0.090)
Female Professor Encounters	0.133 (0.074)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

Given that the coefficient was both negative and significant, there was no evidence supporting Hypothesis 6. Interestingly, interaction with female professors did not seem to be the problem—the female professor encounter coefficient was positive, and although it did not reach statistical significance, its p-value was smaller than any other control variable. Rather, it may be that female students who do not feel confident are more likely to seek out female mentors than their peers who do feel confident. One participant, who had previously dropped out of law school, did not have much confidence in herself; however, at the encouragement of a female mentor, she returned to law school. Women with female mentors often mentioned imposter syndrome and feeling as if they did not belong in law school, which further suggested that alienation may cause women to seek out specifically female mentors.

*Hypothesis 7: Political Ambition*

Lastly, I predicted that women with female mentors would have more political ambition than women without female mentors. This measure was constructed using questions drawn from Lawless and Fox (2004) (see Table 4.17). First, participants were tested for their willingness to run for office, using question 1 in Table 4.17. Control variables included race, Latinx identity, and female professor encounters.

Table 4.17: Political Ambition Variable Measurement

Willingness to Run	(1) Have you considered running for any political office? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Yes (1), no (0)</li></ul>
Preparedness to Run	2) Which of the following have you done? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussed running with family and friends</li><li>• Discussed running with community leaders</li><li>• Investigated how to place name on the ballot</li><li>• Discussed running with party leaders</li><li>• Discussed financial contributions with potential supporters</li></ul>

The coefficient for female mentorship was positive but did not reach statistical significance (see Table 4.18). This made a certain amount of sense—there is only so much female mentors can do against the culture of law school, which seemed to discourage the participants from seeking leadership. Many women told stories that would likely harm their political ambition. For instance, one suggested that she was “held back from a leadership position” because of her gender. Another said she was “the most qualified candidate” during law review elections, but “didn't make it past the first round of votes,” again due to her gender. Most importantly, one participant noted that “people often think [she is] ‘bitchy’ or ‘bossy’ rather than a stronger leader like they may think for a man.”

Table 4.18: Political Ambition – Willingness to Run Results

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	0.244 (0.243)
Race	-.0176 (0.307)
Latinx Identity	-0.097 (0.399)
Female Professor Encounters	0.117 (0.152)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

Second, participants who said that they were willing to run for office were asked what steps they had taken to run. Participants who had taken zero steps were coded with a 0, and so on, all the way up to participants who had taken 5 steps being coded with a 5.

Table 4.19: Political Ambition – Preparedness to Run

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Mentorship	-0.031 (0.179)
Race	-0.068 (0.224)
Latinx Identity	0.244 (0.289)
Female Professor Encounters	-0.072 (0.107)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

Interestingly, for this aspect of the political ambition analysis, the coefficient for female mentorship was negative, though not significant (see Table 4.19). Therefore, as political ambition was split, with one aspect being positively correlated and the other being negatively correlated—though neither being significant—there was no evidence supporting Hypothesis 7.

*Current vs. Former Students*

When the participants were separated into former law students—those who graduated law school between 2010 and 2021—and current law students—those who will graduate between 2022 and 2026—several differences from the overall data emerged (see Table 4.20).

Table 4.20: Current vs. Former Students

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Current Student Female Mentor Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>	<b>Former Student Female Mentor Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Feminine Attitude (Career)	-0.015 (0.321)	0.487 (0.508)
Feminine Attitude (Values)	-0.141 (0.182)	0.305 (0.289)
Professor Relationships	-0.166 (0.252)	-0.177 (0.328)
Participation	-0.138 (0.117)	-0.358 (0.205)
Alienation	-0.254 (0.157)	-0.358 (0.205)
Academic Achievement	-0.166 (0.146)	0.039 (0.216)
Confidence	-0.249	-0.157

	(0.151)	(0.197)
Political Ambition (Willingness to Run)	0.038 (0.303)	0.494 (0.428)
Political Ambition (Preparedness to Run)	-0.086 (0.211)	0.058 (0.358)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001		

None of the female mentorship coefficients were significant; however, a few were different than when the two groups were combined. For instance, for the feminine attitude variable, the current student group had a negative coefficient, whereas the group overall had a positive coefficient. There were other differences as well—for instance, the alienation, academic achievement, and confidence variables were negative for the former law students group but insignificant, whereas they were significant in the main group. However, this is likely due to sample size; there were simply fewer former law students who participated in this study. The most interesting difference is the political ambition variable, particularly concerning participants’ preparedness to run. Current law students had the same overall result as the study—a negative but insignificant correlation. However, former law students had a positive but insignificant correlation.

*Mentorship Regardless of Gender*

Hernandez et al. (2017) suggest that it is not demographic match that makes mentorship successful, but value match. That is, a male mentor will be more effective for a woman student if they share values than a female mentor would be if the female mentor and mentee do not share values. Therefore, I decided to test whether having a mentor, regardless of mentor gender, had an effect on women law students by constructing a new

measure using the question below, with a definition drawn from Hernandez et al. (2017, 45) (see Table 4.21). While this approach did not account for values, as in Hernandez et al. (2017), it did allow me to test whether mentorship regardless of gender had a different effect on female students than female mentorship. After all, Preston (2004) finds that mentorship of any kind improves outcomes.

Table 4.21: Mentorship Regardless of Gender Measurement

<p>(1) A mentor is a more experienced individual who provides support to you with the aim of enhancing your personal development and/or integration into the legal profession. This may be a formal mentor through a program at your school, a professor you've had, or someone you worked with at a summer internship, etc. Describe your primary mentor if you have one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I do not have a mentor</li> <li>• I have a female mentor</li> <li>• I have a male mentor</li> <li>• I have a transgender or genderqueer/gender non-conforming mentor</li> </ul>
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Participants who selected 'I do not have a mentor' were coded with a 0, and participants who selected any other option were coded with a 1. Then, each of the hypotheses were tested again with the same control variables. The results are reported in Table 4.22 below.

Table 4.22: Mentorship Regardless of Gender Results

Hypothesis	Mentor Coefficient (Standard Error)
Feminine Attitude (Career)	0.100 (0.295)
Feminine Attitude (Values)	-0.166 (0.171)
Professor Relationships	0.131 (0.216)

Participation	0.032 (0.104)
Alienation	-0.023 (0.136)
Academic Achievement	-0.037 (0.134)
Confidence	-0.055 (0.131)
Political Ambition (Willingness to Run)	-0.007 (0.266)
Political Ambition (Preparedness to Run)	0.180 (0.196)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

There were a few differences between the female mentorship coefficients and the coefficients of mentorship generally. First, the coefficient for the ‘feminine attitude – values’ variable was negative for mentorship generally, whereas it was positive for female mentorship. Furthermore, while the coefficients were negative and insignificant for female mentorship in professor relationships and participation, they were positive and insignificant for mentorship generally. Additionally, neither of the negative and significant results in female mentorship—alienation and confidence—were significant here, though they were still both negative. Lastly, the political ambition results flipped. For female mentorship, willingness to run was positive and insignificant and preparedness to run was negative and insignificant. Here, willingness to run was negative and insignificant, and preparedness to run was positive and insignificant. Overall, there was no statistically significant difference between women’s experience when they have a mentor and when they do not. However, in the qualitative data, women still reported



seeking out mentors, and they still faced barriers in this area—as one respondent noted, her “male classmates are far more likely...to be favored by professors or to seek out faculty mentorship in a way that [she does not] feel comfortable doing because it doesn’t feel organic.” Another stated that she “had very few interactions with professors and very minimal mentorship, which was frustrating,” suggesting that even women who seek out mentorship may not get the opportunity. Ultimately, it is interesting that no sort of mentorship appeared to improve women’s experiences; perhaps there would be a difference if, as in Hernandez et al. (2017), this study had measured mentees’ matched values with their mentors.

#### *Quality of Mentorship*

Of course, not all mentorship is created equal. Therefore, I decided to test whether the quality of mentorship had an effect on women’s experiences in law school. This measure was constructed using the question seen below in Table 4.23, taken from Eby et al. (2013, 443).

Table 4.23: Quality of Mentorship Measurement

<p>(1) What kind of mentorship do you receive? Select as many as apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psycho-Social Support (counseling, encouragement, role-modeling)</li><li>• Instrumental Support (assistance on challenging tasks, coaching, providing opportunities for advancement)</li><li>• Coauthoring Experience (collaborative presentations and publication of research)</li><li>• Other (please describe)</li><li>• None of the above</li></ul>
---

Participants who did not select any options, or who selected ‘none of the above’ were coded with a 0. Participants who selected any of the other options were given a score corresponding to the number of selections they made. For instance, someone who

selected ‘psycho-social support’ and ‘instrumental support’ received a score of 2.

Participants without mentors were not included in this analysis, the results of which are reported below in Table 4.24.

Table 4.24: Quality of Mentorship Results

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Mentorship Quality Coefficient (Standard Error)</b>
Feminine Attitude (Career)	-0.294 (0.233)
Feminine Attitude (Values)	-0.215 (0.135)
Professor Relationships	0.077 (0.165)
Participation	0.155 (0.080)
Alienation	0.156 (0.106)
Academic Achievement	0.042 (0.100)
Confidence	0.148 (0.101)
Political Ambition (Willingness to Run)	0.383 (0.214)
Political Ambition (Preparedness to Run)	0.159 (0.145)
*p<0.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001	

Apart from the feminine attitude measures, all the results were positive, though insignificant.

### *Qualitative Analysis of Female Mentorship*

Still, as Homer and Schwartz (1989) note, women's experiences in law school cannot be fully captured quantitatively, so this study utilized interviews as well. These interviews revealed that mentorship, especially by other women, matters to women in law school. These important mentors came in a variety of forms, both formal and informal.

First, interviewees had formal mentors through their state bar associations. These sorts of programs paired them with mentors based on experience and their career interests. One participant described her formal mentor, who worked with her "well after the formal program had ended" in order to help her get a clerkship and provide advice. Another recently signed up for a bar association mentorship program in the hopes of matching with another woman.

Additionally, interviewees reported mentoring relationships with their female professors. Interestingly, all of the interviewees who experienced this sort of relationship brought up their favorite professor's gender unprompted, and several of them indicated that their professor's gender was at least part of the reason for the mentoring relationship. One interviewee, when asked, said that it was "a range of...mostly the female professors that [she] worked with who ended up playing that role." Another participant described her relationship with her legal writing professor, a woman who provided all sorts of instrumental support, from giving the participant with advice to helping her get an externship.

One woman stressed the importance of mentoring relationships among her classmates. She found that other students, especially those in their second and third years,

were useful in providing advice about coursework and the bar exam. She was also the only participant to mention race being a factor in mentorship, talking specifically about the Black Law Students Association and the Native American Law Students Association and their mentorship programs when discussing the benefits of being mentored by her classmates. Another participant discussed the informal mentorship she received from a sorority sister from college. When she posted on social media that she was going to law school, her mentor reached out and sent her “a bunch of outlines from every single doctrinal class,” even though the two women did not know each other.

Finally, others reported being mentored by women in their workplace. One woman discussed her relationship with a female mentor at a summer internship, with whom she has kept in contact throughout law school. According to this participant, this mentor was at “a time in her life when she...was ready to take on a mentee,” which provided the participant with several opportunities, including the chance to help out on her mentor’s judicial campaign, which she won. Another woman, who had previously dropped out of law school, had a particularly helpful experience with a female mentor. She said that, at her old law school, where she was not mentored, felt that she “[did not] belong” and that she was “never gonna practice law.” When she started working for a large law firm, one of her coworkers, a female partner at the firm, became her mentor. The partner encouraged her to return to law school—something the participant said she would not have done without her mentor—and pursue her degree. Her mentor even has weekly meeting with her to discuss not only her job, but her legal education. Clearly, for these women, mentorship has had a positive effect.

The results of the empirical piece of this study would suggest that female mentorship is not particularly important. However, to the women that I interviewed, mentorship mattered. As one woman put it, “you can’t do anything without someone to guide you.” The qualitative aspect of this study, then, demonstrated that women seek out female mentors and that these female mentors had a positive effect on their experiences.

### **Conclusion**

Ultimately, there was support for the hypotheses in the qualitative analysis, though there was no support for any of the seven hypotheses in the quantitative analysis. The women interviewed emphasized that their female mentors improved their experiences in law school, though perhaps not in a way that is measurable by this study. On the quantitative side, while both aspects of the feminine attitude measure and the first part of the political ambition measure—willingness to run—were positively correlated with female mentorship, as expected, none of them were significant. Contrary to expectations, the professor relationship measure, the participation measure, the academic achievement measure, and the second part of the political ambition measure—preparedness to run—were negatively correlated with female mentorship, though not significantly. Most unexpectedly, the alienation measure and the confidence measure were negatively—and significantly—correlated with female mentorship. It is possible that individuals who are less confident or more alienated are more likely to seek out female mentors than those who are more confident or less alienated. Additionally, when the quality of mentorship, rather than the gender of the mentor, was tested, nearly all of the coefficients were positive, as had been expected for female mentorship. Overall, the

only support for the hypothesis that mentorship—female or otherwise—improves women’s experiences came from the qualitative analysis.

# Chapter 5: Conclusion

## **Introduction**

Based on the literature surrounding women's experiences in law school and the literature concerning female mentorship, I anticipated that when women in law school had a female mentor, their experiences would improve. Specifically, I hypothesized that there would be improvement in seven key areas: feminine attitude, professor relationships, participation, alienation, academic achievement, confidence, and political ambition. These hypotheses were partially confirmed—they could be rejected by the empirical results of my survey, but the qualitative data of answers to the open-ended responses in the survey and to questions in the interviews demonstrated that there is more to female mentorship than the quantitative survey results would suggest.

In order to explore these results more fully, I revisit and explain the discrepancies between my hypotheses and results, examine the weakness of both the theory guiding this research and the study itself, suggest directions for future research, and explore the implications of the results.

## **Results**

There was partial support for the hypothesis that female mentorship improves women's law school experiences. On the qualitative side, participants revealed that their female mentors were an integral part of their experiences. As one participant argued, "you can't do anything without someone to guide you." Women mentors did everything from providing advice about classes and internships to giving their mentees the confidence they needed to approach law school. Therefore, even if the effects of female

mentorship could not be quantitatively measured by this particular survey instrument, it was clear that, according to women law students themselves, female mentorship matters.

Still, female mentorship was not significantly, positively correlated with any of the seven hypotheses in the quantitative analysis. In fact, for the alienation and confidence variables, female mentorship was significantly negatively correlated with the dependent variables. In other words, women with female mentors were more likely to be alienated and to have less confidence than women without female mentors. One possible explanation for this unexpected outcome is that women who feel more alienated, less confident, or both are simply more likely to seek out female mentors rather than male mentors. While less alienated, more confident women law students may feel empowered to seek out a mentor regardless of gender, these alienated, unconfident students may limit their choices to women because they feel more comfortable with female mentors. This point was illustrated well by an interview participant who noted that female professors “seem a little more emotionally aware at times...more...understanding, [and] less likely to be as harsh or dismissive” than male professors.

This supposition was also supported by the only non-demographic result to be both positive and significant. Women who had more female professors were more likely to have better relationships with their professors. That is, when women encountered more female professors, they were more likely to approach professors overall than women who encountered fewer women professors during their time in law school. This demonstrates that women are simply more comfortable with other women.



It is also important that all the participants in this study were current law students or had graduated from law school. Therefore, the study did *not* include any students who had dropped out of law school for any reason. It is possible that the alienated, unconfident women surveyed represent only a fraction of the total alienated, unconfident women who have attended law school, and that others with those feelings have chosen to drop out. This study provided some evidence for this claim—one interviewee left law school when she was unmentored and only returned at the encouragement of a female mentor in her workplace. Therefore, it may be that some of the alienated, unconfident women in this study would have dropped out if not for their female mentors.

The quantitative results may seem discouraging. However, it is worth noting that the quantitative results and the qualitative results were, in some ways, measuring different things. The quantitative results were attempting to determine if female mentorship improved women's experiences on average. On the other hand, the qualitative results make it clear that for *individual* women who have powerful mentoring relationships, female mentorship improves their experiences. Essentially, while female mentorship may not be a cure-all that improves experiences for every woman, it can still have powerful effects on individual experiences.

### **Weaknesses of the Theory and Study**

I theorized that female mentors would be able to improve women's law school experience. However, such a narrow focus ignores the reality of law school and, in fact, the reality of any institution—while individuals may have an effect, there are many systemic issues that are often more consequential. For instance, many of the study's

interview participants discussed their struggle with the law school grading system. Even though a particular student may be doing what could be considered ‘A work,’ if there are too many students in the class turning in work at that level, then some of them will not receive As because the class must be graded on a curve. Female mentors cannot change that fundamental fact of law school. Nor can they do much to lessen the many inequalities beyond gender inequality that women face in law school. Many participants noted, correctly, that law school is a racist institution. Others pointed to the economic inequalities that emerge from the prohibitive cost of law school, the way that LGBTQIA+ individuals are discriminated against, and the lack of disability accommodation. While female mentors may be able to give their students coping strategies, those only go so far in the face of structural inequality. Therefore, there are some issues with the theory forming the basis of this study.

Even without theoretical issues, the results of the quantitative aspect of this study would have been affected by problems related to the sample. First, while the number of responses exceeded my expectations, the n of workable responses—about 300—was rather small. It is likely that more of the results would have been significant with a larger n, and the results that do exist are not particularly generalizable due to the small size of the sample. Furthermore, as this was a survey with no true reward, there was a significant self-selection bias among the participants. Women who participated in the survey were probably more likely to have a mentor than the average woman in law school, as the preamble of the survey discussed its focus on mentorship. It is likely that women without mentors decided that the survey was not worth their time. Additionally, participants in

this survey likely took it because they had something to say, as there was no reward. This means that they either had a very positive or a very negative experience in law school. The middle, then, was likely underrepresented. Finally, as noted earlier, women who did not complete law school were not included in this survey. As a result, particularly negative results were likely excluded. Clearly, there are some issues with the survey sample.

Finally, even if the sample had been better, the independent variable and the dependent variables were difficult to measure. First, for the independent variable, participants were given a definition of mentorship in an attempt to get them to recognize the mentors in their own lives, but it is likely that women will underreport their own mentorship. This is especially true of the women who had unconventional mentors, like the interviewees who reported being mentored by other students or sorority sisters from college. Additionally, while there was some measurement of the quality of mentorship—the question asking how participants were mentored—that was not incorporated into the mentorship variable itself. That is, a female mentor was considered a female mentor regardless of whether the mentor did anything to help the mentee. Therefore, in some ways, female mentorship was likely overreported as well. Additionally, for the dependent variables, participants answered one to three questions on a particular topic, which were then constructed into indices as explained in Chapter 3. However, it is difficult to measure something like confidence with only three questions. A participant could have—or lack—confidence in areas that were not touched upon by the survey. Additionally, the survey did not consider the fact that participants were taking it at different times in the

academic year. Many participants completed this survey while on their winter break, which is likely a less stressful time for students. However, many took this survey during a trimester or at the beginning of a semester, which can both be stressful times in their own ways. A student who feels confident looking back on her last semester, for example, may not feel as confident looking forward into an unknown semester. Evidently, there are some measurement issues for the independent and dependent variables.

### **Future Research**

Future research concerning female mentorship in law school ought to consider two important aspects of the issue that this study did not: quality of mentorship and dropouts. It is very possible that it is not necessarily the gender of the mentor, but the quality of mentorship a student receives that has a positive effect on students. If this is the case, then law schools should focus on creating effective mentorship programs and encouraging faculty to mentor more attentively. In order to determine if this would improve women's experiences, future researchers will have to accurately measure not just the existence of mentorship, but its quality. Additionally, future research should include not only current law students and former law students who graduated successfully, as this study did, but also law students who did not complete school. Women who drop out of law school likely have negative experiences. If these women were also unmentored or mentored by men, that would have implications for this research—perhaps a female mentor would have encouraged them to stay in school. Additionally, future research ought to consider the importance of qualitative data; the results in this study were very different from quantitative and qualitative perspectives, so having additional qualitative

data that is more closely analyzed than the qualitative data in this study may yield interesting results.

There are a number of better ways to test this study's hypothesis. The simplest would be to repeat this study but with a much larger n. First, having a larger n would make the results of the study more generalizable. In addition, having students from a broader range of law schools would be useful. While this study did not ask which law schools participants attended, it only targeted students at fifty law schools. Ideally, students at every law school in the United States would at least be contacted to take the survey. Future researchers could also offer some sort of incentive to participants in order to increase the response and completion rates, as law students are busy by nature. This would result in a larger n and a broader range of opinions.

Another way of testing this study's hypothesis would be to assign mentors to law students. A future researcher could partner with a law school and create a program for an incoming class of women students in which some are paired with female mentors, some are paired with male mentors, and some are not paired at all. Then, the participants' progress through and feelings about law school could be tracked over time to determine if female mentorship influenced their experiences.

Lastly, while it does not pertain directly to the hypothesis, this study demonstrated that women largely felt the same about law school as they did in 1989, when Homer and Schwartz published their findings regarding UC Berkeley's law school; in 2006, when Bashi and Iskander published results concerning Yale University's law school; and in 2014, when Kindschy, Perrin, and O'Neil published their study of an Ivy League law

school. In the intervening years, however, women have become the majority of law students, which indicates that simply being in law school in greater numbers has not significantly improved women's experiences. In order to confirm that this is the case, it would be ideal to repeat those studies—among others cited in Chapter 2—at the schools at which they originally took place. If it is in fact true that women's situation in law school has not improved, schools ought to do something about it.

### **Implications**

The qualitative aspect of this study demonstrated that, while the quantitative results did not show a positive effect of female mentorship, female mentorship is still an integral part of women's experiences in law school. The women I interviewed and those who responded to the open-ended parts of the survey stressed that it was their female mentors who reached out in times of stress or grief and provided them with the resources they needed to succeed in law school. These women's lived experiences showed that female mentorship matters. Therefore, law schools ought to invest in providing women the opportunity to be mentored, especially by other women. This may take the form of formal mentorship programs or simply hiring more female faculty.

Additionally, this study showed that many women were not happy about their time in law school. Too many women had negative experiences with their professors that translated into failing to participate in class, or participating infrequently, and far too many women lost confidence as a result of going to law school. Therefore, large, structural change—in addition to female mentorship—is necessary to improve women's experiences in law school. For example, a new grading system that does not pit students

against each other would improve the community that many women in this study called “toxic.” Professors could learn to build their students up rather than tear them down through the Socratic method, which one participant called “patriarchal.” Finally, law schools could recognize the immense intellectual and emotional strain the law school experience places on students—especially students with multiple marginalized identities—and create programming to help students cope with that strain.

Another important change, as previously noted, would be to hire more women as law school professors. Students ought to be taught by a community of faculty that reflects the real world. With women making up an increasing proportion of the country’s lawyers, it is more important than ever that they make up an equal share of law school faculty. The results of this study made it clear that women seek out female mentors in law school. Of the participants, 48.1% had a female mentor, despite the fact that only 25.2% of law school faculty are female (Mertz et al. 2011). This indicates that female faculty members are shouldering a large mentorship burden that male faculty members do not share. They may be able to provide higher-quality mentorship if they are not spread quite as thin. Hiring more women has implications beyond mentorship as well. The only positive and significant result in this study demonstrated that women with more female professors are more likely to have better relationships with their professors. Those relationships are extremely important—students who are unafraid of their professors make better connections, improve their networks, and are simply able to learn more.

Lastly, another benefit, further in the future, could be improved political ambition among women. While the quantitative results were not significant, the qualitative results

are hopeful. For instance, the women who were interviewed indicated that their female mentors provided them with job advice and recommendations, helping them get good jobs. As women are more likely to run when they are financially well-off, this is good news. Furthermore, interviewees pointed out that their female mentors became part of their networks. Women often lack these networks, which are critical for running for office. Finally, these women stressed the confidence that their female mentors gave them, which could eventually translate into the confidence to run for office.

In the one hundred and fifty years since Ada Kepley made history as the first woman law graduate in the United States, much has changed—however, women still struggle with the task of “becoming a lawyer.” Thankfully, it appears that there is something that can help—women looking out for other women and helping them reach their full potential.



# Appendix A: The Survey

## Law School Experience

Q1. By selecting yes below, you consent to participate in the study, certify that you have read and that you understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age. This survey has been approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee at the College of Wooster. HSRC #2021/11/7

- Yes
- No

*Logic: Participants who selected 'No' were skipped to the end of the survey.*

Q2. What is your gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Trans Female/Trans Woman
- Trans Male/Trans Man
- Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming
- Different identity (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

*Logic: Participants who selected 'Male,' 'Trans Male/Trans Man,' 'Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming' or 'Different identity' were skipped to the end of the survey.*

Q3. What year did you graduate from law school or what year do you anticipate graduating from law school?

- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014
- 2015
- 2016
- 2017
- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
- 2023

- 2024
- 2025
- 2026

*Logic: Participants who answered with 2010-2021 were directed to Block B, and participants who answered with 2022-2026 were directed to Block A.*

**Block A:**

Q4A. A mentor is a more experienced individual who provides support to you with the aim of enhancing your personal development and/or integration into the legal profession. This may be a formal mentor through a program at your school, a professor you've had, or someone you worked with at a summer internship, etc. Describe your primary mentor if you have one.

- I do not have a mentor
- I have a female mentor
- I have a male mentor
- I have a transgender or genderqueer/gender non-conforming mentor

*Logic: Participants who answered 'I do not have a mentor' were skipped to Question 6A. Participants who answered 'I have a female mentor,' 'I have a male mentor,' or 'I have a transgender or genderqueer/gender non-conforming mentor' continued to Question 5A.*

Q5A. What kind of mentorship do you receive? Select as many as apply.

- Psycho-Social Support (counseling, encouragement, role-modeling)
- Instrumental Support (assistance on challenging tasks, coaching, providing opportunities for advancement)
- Coauthoring Experience (collaborative presentations and publication of research)
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

Q6A. Which of the following best describes your primary career goal **at the time you entered law school**?

- Public Sector
- Public Interest Nonprofit Association
- Private Law Firm
- Sole Practitioner
- Corporate In-House Counsel
- Academic Position
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Q7A. What kind of job do you **currently** expect to have after law school?

- Public Sector
- Public Interest Nonprofit Association
- Private Law Firm
- Sole Practitioner
- Corporate In-House Counsel
- Academic Position
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Q8A.1: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My values have not changed since starting law school.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.2: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Female professors must prove themselves.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.3: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I am more likely to speak in a class taught by a female professor than one taught by a male professor.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.4: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I am more likely to speak in a class taught by a professor of color than one taught by a white professor.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.5: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I feel more comfortable with a female professor's approach to legal reasoning than a male professor's approach.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.6: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I feel more comfortable with a professor of color's approach to legal reasoning than a white professor's approach.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.7: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have chosen a particular course because it was taught by a woman professor.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.8: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have chosen a particular course because it was taught by a professor of color.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.9: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I feel pressured to set aside my values to think like a lawyer.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8A.10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Before law school, I thought of myself as intelligent and articulate, but often I don't feel that way about myself now.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q9A.1: How often do you think the following things occur? Students of one gender are called on more frequently than students of another gender.

- Never
- Sometimes
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Q9A.2: How often do you think the following things occur? The nature or content of classroom interactions between professors and students is affected by the gender of the student.

- Never
- Sometimes
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Q9A.3: How often do you think the following things occur? Professors respect the opinions and comments given by yourself and other students in your class.

- Never
- Sometimes
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Q10A.1: How often do you do the following? Ask a professor a question during class.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q10A.2: How often do you do the following? Ask a professor a question after class.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q10A.3: How often do you do the following? Go see a professor during their office hours.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q10A.4: How often do you do the following? Volunteer answers during class.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q11A.1: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? I am satisfied with my law school grades.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11A.2: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? My grades represent an accurate evaluation of my abilities as a law student.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11A.3: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? My academic performance has caused me to question my ability to practice law.

- Strongly disagree

- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11A.4: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? My law school grades reflect the amount of time I put into studying.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11A.5: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? I lose confidence when I am in law school classes.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q12A: At my law school, my classes are taught by:

- Mostly men
- Mostly men and some women
- About half men and half women
- Mostly women and some men
- Mostly women

Q13A: Comparing yourself to other people at your law school, would you agree that the statement “I feel that I am a competent person, at least as much as others” is...

- Never true
- Rarely true
- Sometimes true
- Often true
- Always true

Q14A: On the whole, how do you feel about law school?

- Dislike it

- Dislike it more than I like it
- Like it more than I dislike it
- Like it

Q15A: Overall, how do you feel about your life since entering law school?

- Terrible
- Unhappy
- Mostly dissatisfied
- Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)
- Mostly satisfied
- Pleased
- Delighted

Q16A: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: There is a lack of female law role models at my law school.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q17A: Have you considered running for any political office?

- Yes
- No

*Logic: Participants who answered 'No' were skipped to Question 19A. Participants who answered 'Yes' continued to Question 18A.*

Q18A: Which of the following have you done? Select all that apply.

- Discussed running with family and friends
- Discussed running with community leaders
- Investigated how to place my name on the ballot
- Discussed running with party leaders
- Discussed financial contributions with potential supporters
- I have not done any of these activities

Q19A: The following three questions are open-ended and do not require responses. Have you experienced gender discrimination in law school? If so, how did it manifest?

Q20A: On the whole, how do you feel about law school?



Q21A: Have you ever felt, in any context, that a professor treated you inappropriately based on your gender? If so, how?

Q22A: What is your racial identity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Q23A: Do you identify as Hispanic/Latino?

- Yes
- No

Q24A: Are you the first in your family to graduate from college?

- Yes
- No

Q25A: What was your approximate undergraduate GPA?

- Under 2.0
- 2.0-2.49
- 2.5-2.99
- 3.0-3.49
- 3.5-4.0

Q26A: Did you attend the College of Wooster?

- Yes
- No

Q27A: I would like to be contacted for a follow-up interview about my law school experience.

- Yes
- No

*Logic: Participants who selected 'No' were skipped to the end of the survey. Participants who selected 'Yes' continued to Question 28A.*

Q28A: My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_

**Block B:**

Q4B. A mentor is a more experienced individual who provides support to you with the aim of enhancing your personal development and/or integration into the legal profession. This may be a formal mentor through a program at your school, a professor you've had, or someone you worked with at a summer internship, etc. Describe your primary mentor **while you were in law school**, if you had one.

- I did not have a mentor
- I had a female mentor
- I had a male mentor
- I had a transgender or genderqueer/gender non-conforming mentor

*Logic: Participants who answered 'I did not have a mentor' were skipped to Question 6B. Participants who answered 'I had a female mentor,' 'I had a male mentor,' or 'I had a transgender or genderqueer/gender non-conforming mentor' continued to Question 5B.*

Q5B. What kind of mentorship did you receive? Select as many as apply.

- Psycho-Social Support (counseling, encouragement, role-modeling)
- Instrumental Support (assistance on challenging tasks, coaching, providing opportunities for advancement)
- Coauthoring Experience (collaborative presentations and publication of research)
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_
- None of the above

Q6B. Which of the following best describes your primary career goal **at the time you entered law school**?

- Public Sector
- Public Interest Nonprofit Association
- Private Law Firm
- Sole Practitioner
- Corporate In-House Counsel
- Academic Position
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Q7B. What kind of job do you **currently** have?

- Public Sector
- Public Interest Nonprofit Association
- Private Law Firm
- Sole Practitioner
- Corporate In-House Counsel
- Academic Position
- Other (please describe) \_\_\_\_\_

Q8B.1: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? My values did not change throughout law school.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.2: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Female professors must prove themselves.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.3: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I was more likely to speak in a class taught by a female professor than one taught by a male professor.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.4: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I was more likely to speak in a class taught by a professor of color than one taught by a white professor.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.5: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I felt more comfortable with a female professor's approach to legal reasoning than a male professor's approach.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.6: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I felt more comfortable with a professor of color's approach to legal reasoning than a white professor's approach.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.7: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have chosen a particular course because it was taught by a woman professor.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.8: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I have chosen a particular course because it was taught by a professor of color.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.9: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I feel pressured to set aside my values to think like a lawyer.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q8B.10: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Before law school, I thought of myself as intelligent and articulate, but often I don't feel that way about myself now.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q9B.1: How often do you think the following things occurred when you were in law school? Students of one gender were called on more frequently than students of another gender.

- Never
- Sometimes
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Q9B.2: How often do you think the following things occurred when you were in law school? The nature or content of classroom interactions between professors and students was as affected by the gender of the student.

- Never
- Sometimes
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Q9B.3: How often do you think the following things occurred when you were in law school? Professors respected the opinions and comments given by yourself and other students in your class.

- Never
- Sometimes
- About half the time
- Most of the time
- Always

Q10B.1: How often did you do the following? Asked a professor a question during class.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q10B.2: How often did you do the following? Asked a professor a question after class.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q10B.3: How often did you do the following? Went to see a professor during their office hours.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q10B.4: How often did you do the following? Volunteered answers during class.

- Never
- About once every four weeks
- About once every two weeks
- About once every week or more

Q11B.1: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? I was satisfied with my law school grades.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11B.2: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? My grades represented an accurate evaluation of my abilities as a law student.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11B.3: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? My academic performance caused me to question my ability to practice law.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11B.4: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? My law school grades reflected the amount of time I put into studying

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q11B.5: Overall, do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your legal academic performance and training? I lost confidence when I was in law school classes.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q12B: At my law school, my classes were taught by:

- Mostly men
- Mostly men and some women
- About half men and half women
- Mostly women and some men
- Mostly women

Q13B: Comparing yourself to other people who graduated from your law school, would you agree that the statement “I feel that I am a competent person, at least as much as others” is...

- Never true
- Rarely true
- Sometimes true
- Often true
- Always true

Q14B: On the whole, how did you feel about law school?

- Disliked it
- Disliked it more than I liked it
- Liked it more than I disliked it
- Liked it

Q15B: Overall, how did you feel about your life in law school?

- Terrible
- Unhappy
- Mostly dissatisfied
- Mixed (about equally satisfied and dissatisfied)
- Mostly satisfied
- Pleased
- Delighted

Q16B: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?: There was a lack of female law role models at my law school.

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Q17B: Have you considered running for any political office?

- Yes
- No

*Logic: Participants who answered 'No' were skipped to Question 19B. Participants who answered 'Yes' continued to Question 18B.*

Q18B: Which of the following have you done? Select all that apply.

- Discussed running with family and friends
- Discussed running with community leaders
- Investigated how to place my name on the ballot
- Discussed running with party leaders
- Discussed financial contributions with potential supporters
- I have not done any of these activities

Q19B: The following three questions are open-ended and do not require responses. Did you experience gender discrimination in law school? If so, how did it manifest?

Q20B: On the whole, how did you feel about law school?

Q21B: Did you ever feel, in any context, that a professor treated you inappropriately based on your gender? If so, how?

Q22B: What is your racial identity?

- American Indian or Alaska Native



- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

Q23B: Do you identify as Hispanic/Latino?

- Yes
- No

Q24B: Are you the first in your family to graduate from college?

- Yes
- No

Q25B: What was your approximate undergraduate GPA?

- Under 2.0
- 2.0-2.49
- 2.5-2.99
- 3.0-3.49
- 3.5-4.0

Q26B: Did you attend the College of Wooster?

- Yes
- No

Q27B: I would like to be contacted for a follow-up interview about my law school experience.

- Yes
- No

*Logic: Participants who selected 'No' were skipped to the end of the survey. Participants who selected 'Yes' continued to Question 28B.*

Q28B: My email address is: \_\_\_\_\_

*Many of these questions were drawn or adapted from past studies:*

- Banks (1988): Question 9.3
- Eby et al. (2013): Question 5
- Guinier et al. (1994): Questions 9.1, 9.2, and 21
- Hernandez et al. (2017): Question 4

- Homer and Schwartz (1989): Questions 6, 7, 8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 11.1, 11.2, 11.3, 11.4, 11.5, 13, 14, 15, and 16
- Krauskopf (1994): Questions 8.2, 19
- Lawless and Fox (2004): Questions 17 and 18

## Appendix B: The Interviews

Hello! Thanks for being here.

I wanted to get started with just a little bit about myself. My name is Riley Smith, I use the pronouns she/her/hers, and I'm a senior at the College of Wooster, where I'm completing my senior thesis, which you're participating in! I'm also a prospective law student with plans to start school in August.

Before I go any further, is it all right if I record this meeting?

Thanks. I'm going to pull up a consent form now. Read through it, and when you get to the bottom, please verbally consent. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Great, thanks! Here we go with the first question.

*Note: The questions would be asked in any order that seemed natural, but all participants were asked all questions.*

1. What was your career goal when you entered law school? What is it now? Why do you think it changed/stayed the same?
2. Do you think that attending law school changed your values?
3. How often do you approach your professors after class or in their offices? How receptive are your professors to students approaching them?
4. Have you ever felt, in any context, that a professor treated you inappropriately based on your gender?
5. Do you feel like you have access to role models in law school?
6. Do you participate? How has your participation changed over time? If so, why?
7. Are you comfortable with your level of voluntary participation in class?
8. Have you experienced gender discrimination in law school?
9. Do you feel that you have to set aside your values to think like a lawyer? Why or why not?
10. Have you ever chosen a class because it was taught by a woman? Why or why not?
11. Are you satisfied by your grades? Do you feel that they reflect your abilities and time spent studying?
12. Has your academic performance ever made you question your ability to practice law?
13. Does being in class make you lose confidence?
14. On the whole, how do you feel about law school? Your life in law school?

*Many of these questions were drawn or adapted from previous studies:*

- Guinier et al. (1994): Questions 3, 4, and 7

- Homer and Schwartz (1989): Questions 1, 2, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14
- Krauskopf (1994): Question 8
- Weiss and Melling (1988): Question 6

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