

# Online Appendix: Gender and Ambition among Potential Law Clerks

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## Abstract

Law clerks hold immense responsibilities and exert influence over the judges they work with. However, women remain underrepresented in these positions. We argue that one reason for this underrepresentation is that — like potential political candidates — female law students may have lower levels of ambition compared to men. Using a survey of student editors at 33 top law reviews, we find that there is a gender gap in ambition for clerkships with the Supreme Court and Federal Courts of Appeal. Examining potential sources of this difference, we find that while women view themselves to be just as qualified for these positions as men, men are more willing to apply with lower feelings of qualification. Likewise, while women and men report similar levels of encouragement, more encouragement is required before women express ambition to hold these posts. The findings presented here have implications for research on judicial politics, political ambition, and women’s representation.

Keywords: Ambition; Gender & Politics; Judicial Politics; Law Clerks

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## Ambition by Institution

Table 1: Summary statistics

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Applied Supreme Court	0.004
Applied Circuit Court	0.265
Applied District Court	0.293
Applied State Superior	0.116
Applied Other State	0.08
Will Apply Supreme Court	0.112
Will Apply Circuit Court	0.414
Will Apply District Court	0.434
Will Apply State Superior	0.225
Will Apply Other State	0.084

## Schools in Sample

Table 2: Student Participant Schools

Item	Number	Percent
Arizona State	13	5
Alabama	6	2
Berkeley	22	8
Boston	10	4
Case	5	2
Chicago	19	7
Columbia	12	4
Cornell	7	3
Davis	10	4
Harvard	10	4
Houston	9	3
Illinois	1	0
Indiana	11	4
Minnesota	16	6
Notre Dame	11	4
Ohio State	15	6
Pennsylvania State	2	1
Penn	6	2
South Carolina	7	3
Stanford	8	3
Tulane	6	2
UCLA	1	0
University of Michigan	12	4
University of Tennessee	1	0
Utah	7	3
Vanderbilt	2	1
Virginia	7	3
Washington University – St. Louis	10	4
Wake Forest	9	3
Yale	14	5

## Summary Statistics — Sample Breakdown

Table 3: Summary Statistics Entire Sample

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
Female	0.616	-	0	1
qualified for Supreme Court	1.679	0.757	1	4
Qualified Court of Appeals	2.659	0.925	1	4
Qualified District Court	3.221	0.748	1	4
Qualified State Superior	3.367	0.757	1	4
Qualified other State	3.524	0.736	1	4
Encouragement Received	0.508	0.21	0	1
White	0.741	0.439	0	1
Law School Year	2.58	0.495	2	3
Clerk Workshop	0.129	0.335	0	1
Total Groups	2.253	1.328	0	7
Age	27.411	3.186	23	48
Ideology	2.793	1.536	1	7
Legal Interest	2.698	0.872	1	4
Family Importance	2.565	1.008	1	4

Table 4: Summary Statistics Men

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Qualified Supreme Court	1.736	0.8
Qualified Court of Appeals	2.769	0.955
Qualified District Court	3.319	0.648
Qualified State Superior	3.418	0.731
Qualified other state court	3.604	0.681
Encouragement	0.495	0.21
White	0.824	-
Law School Year	2.58	.495
Clerk Workshop	0.055	0.229
Total Groups	1.868	1.204
Age	27.633	3.248
Ideology	3.066	1.718
Family Importance	2.527	1.068

Table 5: Summary Statistics Women

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
Qualified Supreme Court	1.648	0.741
Qualified Court of Appeals	2.579	0.895
Qualified District Court	3.145	0.799
Qualified State Superior	3.331	0.773
Qualified other state court	3.49	0.746
Encouragement	0.515	0.231
White	0.856	-
Law School Year	2.57	0.49
Clerk Workshop	0.178	-
Total Groups	2.493	1.356
Age	27.274	3.15
Ideology	2.623	1.39
Family Importance	2.607	0.952

# Summary Plot for Ambition by Qualifications and Gender

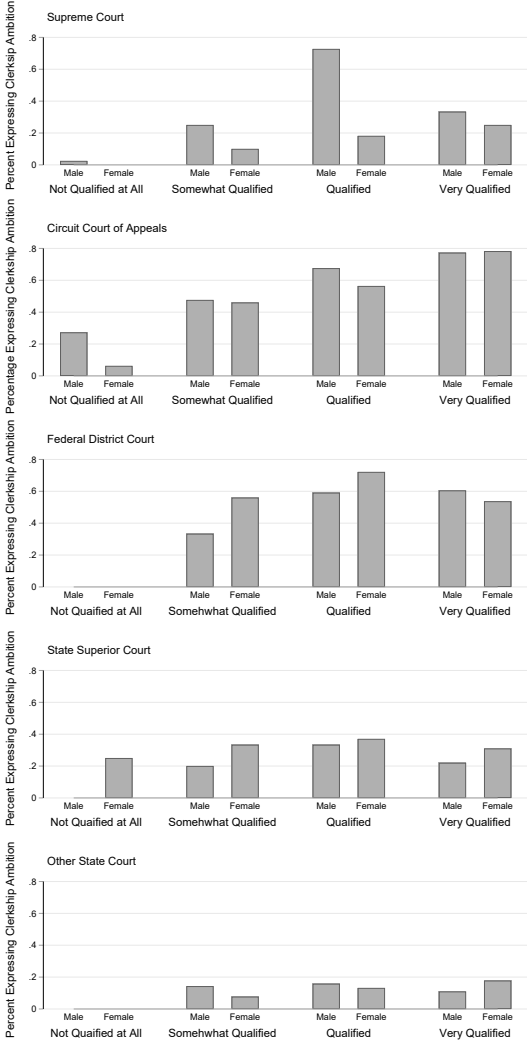


Figure 1: Descriptive Plot: Ambition by Gender and Qualification

## Differences in Family Considerations

To determine if family considerations were especially important to women editors, our survey asked participants to rate how important it was for a potential clerkship to be located close to home or their family. Response options included: “very important”, “important”, “not very important” and “not important at all.” We then conduct an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to determine if women viewed being close to home and family as more important than men. Our model also controls for the same factors included the models presented in the main text. The results of the OLS model are presented in Table 6. Our results indicate that there is not a gender gap in the extent to which women and men rate the importance of being close to home and family as they decide whether or not to apply for clerkships.

Outside of a desire to be close to family, another way to conceptualize the importance of family considerations is relationship status. If an individual is partnered, they may more focused on family building and less likely to express ambition. To test this explanation for the gender gap in clerkship ambition, we asked the student editors their relationship status. Those who are married or living with their partner are considered to be partnered.<sup>1</sup> . To determine whether women who are coupled express less ambition for clerkships, we re-estimate our models from Table 1 of the published manuscript and include an interaction between gender and whether the individual is currently partnered. The results to these models are presented in Table 7 and Figure 2. As the results demonstrate, there is no effect of being partnered on ambition for men or for women. This finding is true across each of the institution analyzed.

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<sup>1</sup>We find that women are no more likely than men to be partnered.

Table 6: OLS Regression: Family Considerations

	(1)
	Importance of Being Close to Family
Female	0.00893 (0.143)
White	0.212 (0.186)
Law School Year	-0.165 (0.138)
Clerk Workshop	0.0584 (0.198)
Total Groups	0.000764 (0.0537)
Age	0.0361 (0.0215)
Ideology (↑ conservative)	-0.0229 (0.0436)
Legal Interest	-0.159* (0.0771)
Encouragement Received	0.619* (0.306)
Constant	2.000** (0.675)
Observations	235

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$



Table 7: Logit Model: Relationship Status

	(1) Supreme court	(2) Court of Appeals	(3) District	(4) State Supreme	(5) Other State
Female	-2.262** (0.761)	-0.663 (0.437)	-0.118 (0.409)	0.271 (0.419)	0.00718 (0.527)
Partnered	-0.471 (0.662)	0.223 (0.532)	-0.345 (0.475)	-0.0574 (0.505)	-1.077 (0.757)
Female × Partnered	0.954 (1.042)	-0.203 (0.655)	-0.110 (0.603)	-0.0664 (0.621)	0.827 (0.888)
Perceived Qualification	1.545*** (0.337)	0.842*** (0.188)	0.106 (0.212)	-0.0485 (0.208)	0.285 (0.321)
White	0.0474 (0.697)	0.976* (0.444)	0.262 (0.416)	0.305 (0.436)	0.770 (0.664)
Law School Year	-0.412 (0.539)	0.0110 (0.332)	-0.191 (0.315)	-0.349 (0.312)	-0.401 (0.417)
Clerk Workshop	-0.399 (0.886)	0.787 (0.514)	0.394 (0.464)	-0.00675 (0.447)	-1.877 (1.050)
Total Groups	0.221 (0.207)	0.262* (0.125)	0.261* (0.123)	0.164 (0.120)	-0.0233 (0.159)
Age	-0.172 (0.0976)	-0.214*** (0.0641)	-0.0557 (0.0500)	0.00273 (0.0512)	0.0918 (0.0579)
Ideology (↑ Conservative)	0.149 (0.155)	-0.131 (0.107)	-0.311** (0.0992)	-0.105 (0.103)	-0.0597 (0.133)
Legal Interest	-0.221 (0.302)	0.370* (0.183)	0.356* (0.172)	0.154 (0.176)	-0.182 (0.237)
Encouragement	2.933* (1.344)	1.794* (0.766)	1.835* (0.724)	0.184 (0.720)	0.687 (0.989)
Constant	-0.187 (2.683)	1.124 (1.782)	0.466 (1.591)	-0.846 (1.643)	-4.317* (2.051)
Observations	234	234	234	234	234

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

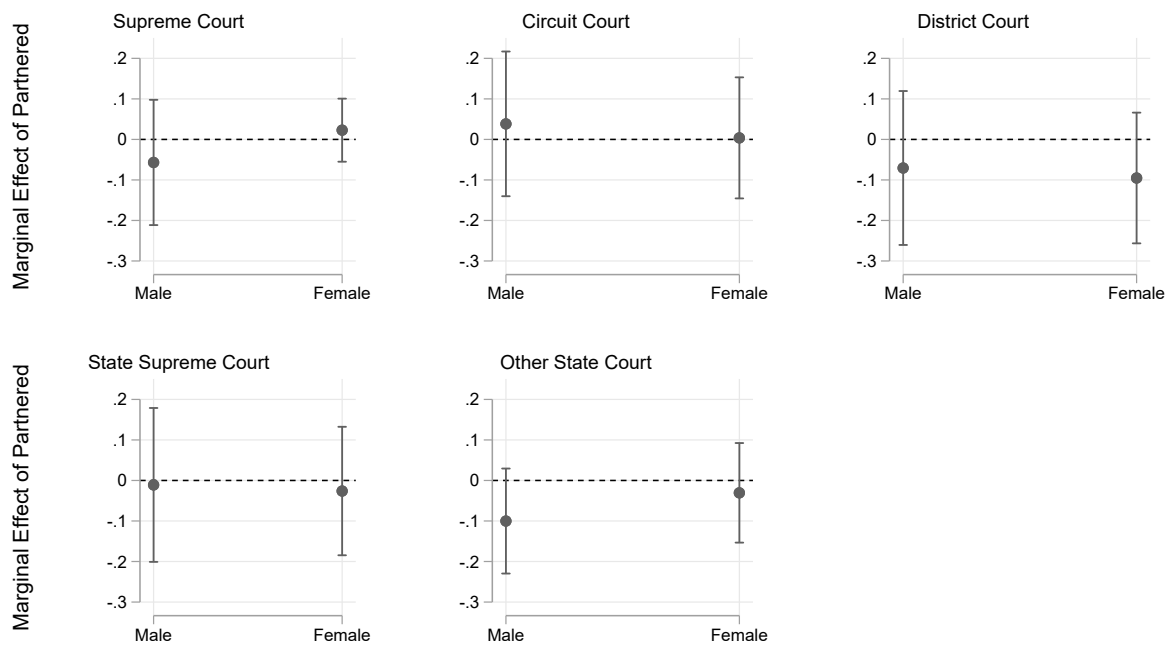


Figure 2: Gender Gap in Clerkship by Relationship Status

## Differential Weight Given to Family Considerations

Our first set of results demonstrate that women do not place significantly more focus on closeness to family than men. However, while the baseline numbers appear equal, it may be that women weigh family considerations more than men when deciding whether or not to apply for clerkships. To investigate whether women and men weigh family considerations are a different rate, we re-estimate the logistic regression models presented in Table 1 in the published manuscript with an interaction between female and importance of family considerations. The results to this model is presented in Table 8 and Figure 3.

Our results indicate that for the most part, women and men do not weigh the importance of family at different rates. At the level of Supreme Court, the gender gap in ambition is distributed roughly equal across the levels of family importance. At the Court of Appeals level, the gender gap is statistically significant only where the student editors ranked closeness to family as “not very important.” This finding, however, is inconsistent with the expectation that women would weigh family considerations more heavily than men. If this was true, it would be anticipated that the gender differences in ambition would be isolated to the “very important” and or the “important” response options. The remaining institutions display no significant differences across the range of family importance. Thus, it appears that attention to family concerns plays a minimal role in formulating the gender gap in ambition that we observe for the Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals

Table 8: Logit Regression Model: Predicting Ambition

	(1) Supreme Court	(2) Court of Appeals	(3) District	(4) State Supreme	(5) Other State
Female	-1.426 (1.340)	-1.249 (0.904)	-0.756 (0.817)	0.621 (0.886)	1.943 (1.335)
Family importance	-0.470 (0.306)	-0.146 (0.240)	-0.130 (0.215)	0.316 (0.236)	0.688* (0.343)
Female × Family importance	-0.202 (0.552)	0.193 (0.320)	0.243 (0.295)	-0.136 (0.309)	-0.565 (0.430)
Perceived Qualification	1.517*** (0.345)	0.842*** (0.190)	0.100 (0.213)	-0.0106 (0.213)	0.283 (0.328)
White	0.230 (0.725)	0.969* (0.446)	0.180 (0.417)	0.254 (0.441)	0.763 (0.674)
Law School Year	-0.472 (0.549)	0.0220 (0.332)	-0.138 (0.313)	-0.330 (0.313)	-0.420 (0.423)
Law School Workshop	-0.460 (0.934)	0.785 (0.511)	0.352 (0.462)	-0.0304 (0.451)	-1.888 (1.049)
Total Groups	0.284 (0.210)	0.261* (0.125)	0.264* (0.123)	0.163 (0.121)	-0.00863 (0.161)
Age	-0.139 (0.0960)	-0.211*** (0.0630)	-0.0733 (0.0487)	-0.00914 (0.0496)	0.0602 (0.0558)
Ideology (↑ conservative)	0.146 (0.151)	-0.138 (0.108)	-0.303** (0.0985)	-0.101 (0.104)	-0.0221 (0.133)
Legal Interest	-0.288 (0.308)	0.362* (0.184)	0.371* (0.173)	0.192 (0.178)	-0.105 (0.232)
Encouragement	3.296* (1.367)	1.817* (0.771)	1.707* (0.729)	-0.00974 (0.734)	0.291 (1.002)
Constant	-0.229 (2.849)	1.505 (1.873)	1.072 (1.662)	-1.529 (1.710)	-5.866** (2.184)
Observations	234	234	234	234	234

Standard errors in parentheses

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

### Gender Gap in Clerk Ambition by Institution and Family Considerations

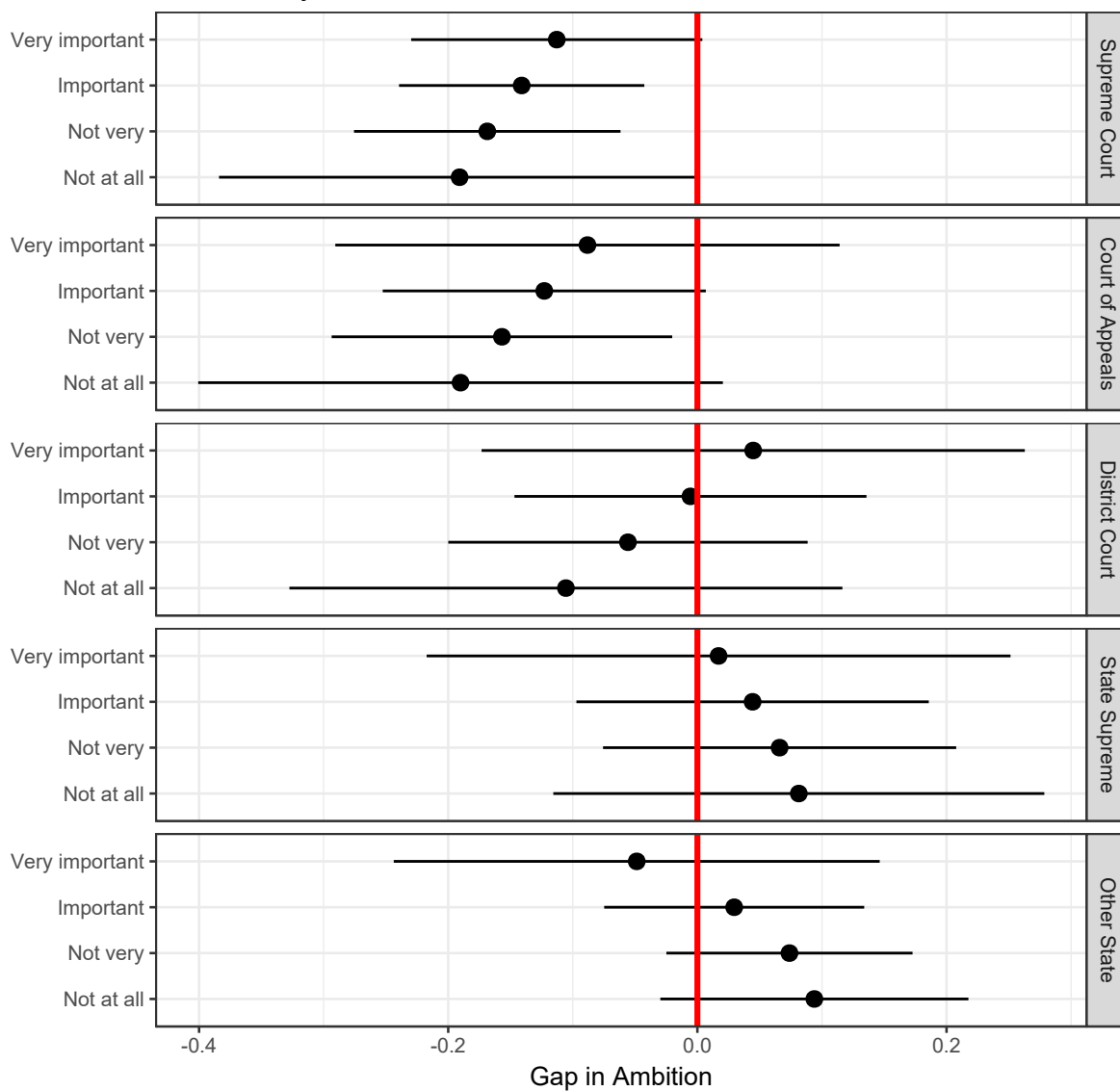


Figure 3: Gender Gap in Clerkship Ambition by Importance of Family

Results from this supplemental analysis indicate that family considerations did not play a significant role in shaping the gender gap among our respondents. However, these results should be interpreted with caution, as the survey items used to test these expectations may not adequately capture family considerations in among respondents. Moreover, we caution readers against viewing this finding as definitive. Because our sample is comprised of students, family considerations may not weight into their decision-making in the same way that it might later in life. As students enter careers and begin to start families it is possible that these considerations will significantly influence decision-making.