

*Mentors as Social Capital: Gender, Mentors, and Career Rewards in Law Practice**

Fiona M. Kay, *Queen's University*
Jean E. Wallace, *University of Calgary*

Previous studies have demonstrated that mentoring provides numerous career benefits to individuals and organizations. This article advances past work by examining the effects of individuals' primary and multiple developmental relationships in a longitudinal study of the careers of lawyers. We develop a social capital perspective on mentorship emphasizing reciprocity of exchange, resource mobilization, and normative expectations embedded within mentoring relationships. We empirically assess mentoring benefits across a diverse range of career rewards. The results provide evidence that male lawyers gain more from their mentor-derived social capital than female lawyers. Specifically, male lawyers with mentors of senior status benefit with elevated earnings, greater perceived fairness in their workplace, and greater work satisfaction. Women with multiple mentors, however, report enhanced work satisfaction. Implications for research on mentoring, social capital, and professional careers are discussed.

The careers of professionals are undoubtedly enriched through the developmental assistance offered by dedicated mentors. A diverse array of benefits from mentoring has been documented in the research literature, including: elevated earnings (Kay, Hagan, and Parker 2009; Smith, Smith, and Markham 2000), rapid career progress (Dansky 1996; Scandura 1992), enhanced job satisfaction (Higgins and Thomas 2001; Wallace 2001), and greater commitment to the organization (Aryee, Wyatt, and Stone 1996). Yet, substantial gaps remain in our understanding of the process by which mentorship yields benefits, under what conditions benefits are obtained, and for whom.

Empirical research on mentoring has remained largely focused on single or primary mentoring relationships, with mentors defined as individuals in more senior organizational positions (e.g., Noe 1988a). Few studies have examined multiple developmental relationships, either as concurrent (Baugh and Scandura 1999; Higgins 2000; Higgins and Thomas 2001) or as a series of dyadic relationships (Turban and Dougherty 1994). Furthermore, little work has attended to which specific career rewards are fuelled through

these different mentor functions and to the process through which mentoring functions are cultivated in developmental relationships (Allen and Eby 2004; Krakauer and Chen 2003; Ragins 2002; Seibert 1999). Put simply, more fully developed theoretical models are needed to understand the composition of factors that shape successful mentorship (de Janasz and Sullivan 2004; Young, Cady, and Foxon 2006). In this study, we draw on social capital theory as a conceptual framework to advance our understanding of mentoring relationships and their associated career benefits.

Our aim in the present article is to expand the traditional treatment of mentoring relationships in two important ways. First, our design moves beyond considering only the effects of a single or primary mentor to investigate the effects of a “constellation” of mentoring relationships (Kram 1985). In doing so, our study captures not only reliable and consistent measures of psychosocial and career mentor functions that have been previously studied in the dyad mentor literature (Noe 1988a), but also introduces innovative measures that tap specific network aspects of mentoring relationships. This approach, we contend, more closely mirrors the reality that many individuals experience. Individuals may have one or two special mentors early on in their careers, yet most actually rely on a broader span of colleagues for significant shares of support (Higgins and Thomas 2001; Kram and Hall 1996).

Second, our study examines gender differences in the mentoring process. Young, Cady, and Foxon (2006:148) argue that “[r]esearchers have only touched the tip of the iceberg in terms of understanding gender differences in mentoring.” Even more concerning is the fact that the limited research on gender and mentoring reveals contradictory findings. For example, some work suggests men and women have equal access to mentors (Cox and Nkomo 1991) and that men and women are equally willing to serve as mentors to others (Allen et al. 1997). Meanwhile, other work suggests that men who are mentored by male mentors receive greater benefits than women or than men mentored by women (Ragins and Cotton 1999; Wallace 2001).

Our study addresses three specific research questions: (1) Do male and female protégés differ in the quality of the mentoring relationships they obtain? (2) What specific characteristics of mentoring relationships contribute to career rewards? and (3) Do male and female protégés’ careers benefit in different ways from mentoring relationships?

We begin with a brief review of the literature to contextualize our understanding of the mentor–protégé relationship and what is known about mentorship within the profession of law. Next, we assess the potential contribution of social capital theory to our understanding of mentoring relationships. This

discussion leads to the formulation of a conceptual model that guides our analysis.

Review of the Literature

Studies of the benefits of mentoring have been conducted across a range of occupations and organizational contexts, including accounting firms (Scandura and Viator 1994), academe (Johnson-Bailey and Cervero 2004), service firms in the technology industry (Fagenson 1994), manufacturing managers (Scandura 1992), engineering (Wallace and Haines 2004), financial institutions (Parise and Forret 2008), business graduates (Lyness and Thompson 2000), and health-care professionals (Koberg, Boss, and Goodman 1998). Curiously, only a handful of studies have empirically examined mentorship in the legal profession.

The scarcity of research on mentorship in law is surprising as law is an occupation that emphasizes apprentice-type relationships and therefore should be more conducive to the development of mentoring relationships than occupations that emphasize independent activities (e.g., computer programmers, stockbrokers, and teachers; Ragins 1989). The legal profession models apprentice-type relationships in at least two ways. One is through the partnership pyramid within law firms whereby associates train for a period of 4–8 years under the close supervision of senior lawyers (Dezalay and Garth 2004). This extended probationary term of employment ideally leads to an invitation to join the partnership circle but increasingly may result in being shunted from the firm or blocked at mid-level as a permanent associate. Another apprentice-type model exists in Canada and the United Kingdom where graduates of law school programs spend 6 months to 1 year working as articling students within various settings (often law firms). During articling, law students are supervised by a principal, receive practical training, and prepare for the bar admission examination. Both scenarios, the partnership structure of law firms and the requirement of articles, suggest that the legal profession offers work arrangements that are primed to foster mentoring relationships.

The few studies examining lawyers document substantial benefits from mentoring relationships. For example, Laband and Lentz (1995) analyzed the ABA's *National Survey of Career Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction* and found that mentorship among lawyers dramatically reduced employee turnover. In a study of large New York State law firms, Higgins and Thomas (2001) revealed that a lawyer's primary developmental relationship affects short-term career outcomes such as work satisfaction and intentions to remain, whereas a larger constellation of mentors accounts for lawyers' longer-term career outcomes, such as organizational retention and career advancement. In a survey of Canadian lawyers, Wallace (2001) found that female protégés benefited with more promotional opportunities and higher earnings than non-mentored

women, and female protégés also reported a range of emotional benefits derived from mentoring. These lawyer studies reveal both the benefits of mentoring and the relevance of relationship factors, including breadth (number) of mentors and gender, for specific career rewards.

Theoretical Framework

Social capital has the potential to offer a significant contribution to our understanding of mentoring relationships (Hezlett and Gibson 2007). Yet, despite its burgeoning volume, the literature on social capital is anything but unitary and cohesive. One of the main distinctions is between those who understand social capital as normative structure and those who view it as embedded resources within networks or groups.

The first approach emphasizes a relatively normative view of social capital and examines collective stocks of social capital, often linked to democracy and wider societal benefits (Putnam 2000). It describes levels of trust between people developed through interactions (Sagas and Cunningham 2004) where crucial to trust formation are norms, obligations, and shared identification (Chow and Chan 2008). Ostrom (2000), for example, treats social capital as shared knowledge, understandings, norms, rules, and expectations about patterns of interaction that individuals bring to a recurrent activity. Others speak of social capital as a stock of trust, goodwill or generosity, mutual understanding, and shared values that bind networks and enable cooperative action (Adler and Kwon 2002; Hooghe 2007).

The second approach highlights the role of social networks and explores benefits that social capital provides for the individual or for select groups of individuals (Lin 2000; Rhee 2007). This more instrumental and individual-level approach conceives of social capital as a resource that actors derive from specific social structures and use to pursue their interests (Chiesi 2007; Wu 2008). Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1990), and Lin (2000) each provide definitions of social capital that emphasize people's access to resources in their networks. Bourdieu's (1986) definition is perhaps the most eloquent:

Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (p. 248).

We adopt this second approach, offering a social capital as resource conceptualization. This approach is preferable for three reasons. First, an individual-level approach is better suited for the task of studying mentoring relationships. Second, social capital as resources embedded in networks offers

greater conceptual focus and measurement precision. Third, we argue that, although the normative structure of a group or network (or other aggregate) may be conducive to generating social capital (embedded network resources), this structure is not itself social capital.

Understanding how social capital is mobilized through mentoring relationships requires that we explicitly map the contours of this capitalization. To the extent that social capital theory¹ conceptualizes a process by which dividends are generated through investment in social relations (Lin 2001, 2008), it becomes critical to examine the social connectedness of mentorship from the inside. We turn next to this task, detailing the explanatory mechanisms and causally linking: (1) network properties, (2) relevant resources, and (3) access to resources to attain outcomes (Son and Lin 2006). We conclude our theoretical discussion by considering the impact of gender and social capital's hidden liabilities.

Mobilizing Social Capital through Mentoring Relationships

(1) *Network Properties*: Social capital theory asserts that access to embedded resources depends on network size, intensity, and hierarchy (Chow and Chan 2008).² Network size, applied to mentoring, has only recently received attention (Higgins 2000; Higgins, Dobrow, and Chandler 2008). More typically, mentoring research has focussed on the pairing of a single mentor and a single protégé (Gentry, Weber, and Sadri 2008; Parise and Forret 2008). Yet, mentorship may involve several dyads or even composite group dynamics. Some lawyers may be privileged to have a "portfolio of mentors" (de Janasz and Sullivan 2004), either concurrently or sequentially, who will fulfill various capacities of the mentor profile (Higgins and Thomas 2001; Kram and Isabella 1985). A composition of mentors, we expect, will lend diversity to mentorship (Erickson 2006) and enrich resource dissemination.

Network intensity is also salient to mentoring. Granovetter (1973) introduced the useful distinction between strong and weak ties. He contended that weak ties are more valuable to individuals because they allow greater diffusion to people outside of one's own social circle, and therefore provide greater resources and distinct information not available in one's inner circle. Interestingly, mentoring research has emphasized the value of close relationships (Eby et al. 2006) to information sharing and professional development, yet the possibility exists that loose ties to several mentors may offer precious windows of access to repositories rich with information and opportunities (Palgi and Moore 2004).

The status of the mentoring relationship is also beneficial to careers. Indeed, social capital is thought to be more valuable (or perhaps more

accessible) if the relationships are with those possessing power and authority at higher organizational levels (Seibert, Kraimer, and Liden 2001). In the practice of law, mentoring relationships may be hierarchical (e.g., to a senior lawyer) or characterized by status equivalence (e.g., peer mentoring; Higgins 2000). We expect that relationships with well-stationed mentors will smooth the path to challenging and gratifying work assignments as well as recommendations to powerful players within professional hierarchies.

(2) *Relevant Resources*: As resources embedded in networks, social capital highlights information, sponsorship, and professional skills afforded through mentoring relationships (Chow and Chan 2008). Mentoring relationships constitute conduits for the communication of professional norms—a set of norms that may be unclear to neophytes. These norms may include expectations about hours on the job, access to coveted files, honing of legal talents under close supervision, and appreciation for unspoken views about organizational commitment (McKenzie Leiper 2006). Perrewé, Young, and Blass (2002) emphasize the importance of acquiring political savvy, noting that individuals must understand both the formal written rules of an organization as well as the informal and often unspoken norms of conduct. These normative expectations of legal practice are conveyed and deciphered through mentoring relations. In the mentoring literature, these norms are best understood as *psychosocial* (e.g., role model, advice, and problem-solving) and *career-related* (e.g., teaching, client and case management, and protection) *mentor functions*. To the extent that individuals acquire rich stocks of support, they will possess in essence primed human capital, legal knowledge, and professional acumen, grooming them for career success (Kram 1985).

(3) *Access to Resources*: Although social capital is a commodity that can be readily exchanged for a broad array of positive outcomes by both protégés and mentors (Eby et al. 2006), it “must be mobilized and transacted to be used” (Sapiro 2006:161). Some individuals are better placed to successfully marshal their sum of social capital and convert it into meaningful outcomes, including, for example, remuneration, promotional ladders, or professional reputation (Burt 2005; Dinovitzer 2006). Therefore, one’s structural location within networks and the characteristics of those relationships are of vital importance to our understanding of “access to social capital” (Lin 2008). Traditional “outsiders” to the legal profession, such as ethnic and racialized groups (Wilkins 2004), and women (Kay, Hagan, and Parker 2009), may find themselves on the periphery and excluded from valuable mentoring opportunities in the profession. To the extent that social capital is an important mechanism embedded within the mentoring process (Higgins 2000; Higgins and

Nohria 1999), these groups may find themselves “out of the loop” and disadvantaged professionally.

Is Social Capital Gendered?

This brings us to the intersection of gender, social capital, and mentorship. In traditionally male-dominated professions, such as law, numerical imbalances may cause women to be excluded from informal interactions (Koberg, Boss, and Goodman 1998; Noe 1988b). Women’s networks are often more limited than men’s (Bourdieu 1984) especially at the start of their careers (Moore and White 2000). These networks are important sources of information and support that in turn generate influence and career mobility. Increasing women’s access to capable mentors may not be sufficient, however, to overcome women’s network barriers (Lyness and Thompson 2000; Palgi and Moore 2004). It is also important that mentors hold sufficient power to confer legitimacy to their protégés and to provide them with essential career skills and opportunities. In law, same-gender mentorship relationships may not offer junior female lawyers exceptional resources because senior women have not acquired status and influence comparable with their male counterparts (Kay and Hagan 1994; Ragins 1997; Reciniello 1999).

That said, most women in law experience cross-gender mentorship (Noe 1988b). Given that past studies reveal female professionals with male mentors earn higher salaries than women with female mentors (Dreher and Cox 1996; Ragins and Cotton 1999; Wallace 2001), can we then assume that women necessarily benefit from having men, rather than women, as their mentors in law practice? Some other work suggests that, although male mentors may possess more power and influence, female mentors may serve as valued confidantes and provide important information specific to women’s entry and success in still largely masculine work environments (Wallace 2001). This may include, for example, how best to build a strong professional reputation in practice settings where women are vastly under-represented, how to manage conflicting demands of career and family responsibilities, and how to deal with issues of conflict in the workplace, such as sexual harassment or discrimination (Ragins 1989, 1997). It is therefore important to examine whether gender (of protégés and mentors) plays a role in understanding mentoring relationships in male-dominated occupations such as law.

Social Capital’s Liabilities

Although we focus on social capital as access to resources embedded in mentoring relationships and mobilized to produce tangible career benefits, we acknowledge that social capital has a dark side (see Portes 1998; Schulman and Anderson 1999; Warren 2008). Social capital is not an unqualified good,

and mentoring relationships do not necessarily assure either protégés or mentors of outcomes beneficial to their careers. Studies of mentorship demonstrate that there are potential risks and detrimental effects associated with mentorship relationships (Eby and Allen 2002; Eby et al. 2004; Fagenson 1994). Colleagues may resent a fellow lawyer's mentoring relationship and view it as patronage or worse, nepotism. The relationship itself may lack qualities of trust, full disclosure of information, or access to broader networks of power and influence. Moreover, the relationship may be characterized by misdirected guidance, sexual harassment, manipulation, a lack of closeness or compatibility, and irregular communications (Young, Cady, and Foxon 2006). Future research should examine destructive mentoring relationships as well as negative outcomes that may result from even well-intended mentoring.

Conceptual Model of Mentoring and Social Capital

Our social capital approach to mentoring relationships suggests a conceptual model for understanding the career rewards yielded through these developmental relationships. Figure 1 outlines these suggested pathways of influence. Several individual and contextual characteristics form the foundation for mentorship relationships. These include: demographics, human capital, organizational context, and individual aspirations and empowerment. Together this set of exogenous factors shape potential for selection into mentoring relationships, as well as the qualities within these mentoring relations. Mentor relationship qualities, in turn, promote psychosocial and career-mentoring support functions, which are closely inter-related. Finally, mentoring functions

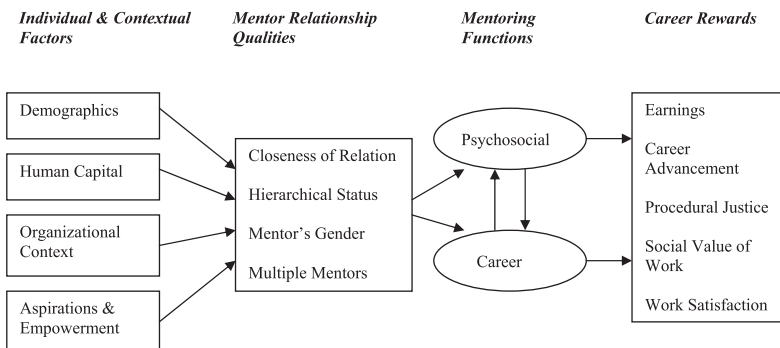


Figure 1
Conceptual Model of Mentor Capitalization:
Relationship Qualities, Mentoring Functions, and Career Rewards

operate as powerful resources in and of themselves that can lead to career rewards.

Data, Measures, and Methods

The Sample

The data for this study are drawn from a longitudinal panel survey of Ontario lawyers collected in three “waves,” one every 6 years, over a 12-year period. Ontario is an ideal setting in which to study legal careers because the province is home to 41 percent of Canada’s lawyers (Kay and Hagan 2005). The 6-year duration between waves of the survey was intended to capture life-course events, such as timing of children, marriages, and divorces, while allowing a sufficiently short interval between surveys for accurate recall of job changes and promotion dates. The first survey was administered in 1990, with a second wave in 1996, and a third wave in 2002. The original survey in 1990 consisted of a disproportionately stratified random sample of Ontario lawyers drawn from the membership records of the Law Society of Upper Canada. The questionnaires were mailed directly to the lawyers’ places of employment. The sample was stratified by gender to include equal numbers of men and women called to the Ontario Bar between 1975 and 1990, a 15-year period in which the first sizeable number of women entered law practice. The survey, with one reminder, received a 68 percent response rate ($N = 1,597$). In 1996, we conducted the second survey of this same sample of lawyers who participated in the 1990 survey. Through a single reminder, we obtained a response rate of 70 percent. The third wave of survey, conducted in 2002 and using two reminders, received a response rate of 73 percent.³ In total, 743 individuals responded to this third panel survey. The total number of cases included in the analysis to follow is 468 *mentored* lawyers.⁴

The measurement of concepts and variables is detailed in Table 1. We provide a brief discussion of the mentorship and career reward measures next.

Mentor Relationship Qualities. The extant research is clear that *career* and *psychosocial functions* are the core distinct and reliable overarching conceptualizations of mentoring activities (Allen et al. 2004). Mentor functions are measured in this study as career development and psychosocial mentoring functions as initially formulated by Kram (1985) and refined by Noe (1988a) with a two-factor structure. Participants were asked to rate the quality of the mentorship they received on a five-point Likert-type response scale that ranged from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). One set of seven items assesses career-related mentoring (e.g., “instruction, client management, and organization,”

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations (SD) for Mentored Male and Female Lawyers

Variable	Measure	Men (<i>N</i> = 184)		Women (<i>N</i> = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Mentoring variables					
Multiple mentors	Had multiple mentors over course of legal career = 1; 0 = single mentor	.65	.48	.62	.49
Closeness of relation	Closeness of relationship (<i>I</i> = not at all close to 4 = very close)	2.85	.69	2.85	.73
Hierarchical status	Mentor in position of seniority relative to protégé in organizational hierarchy (seniority = 1; equivalence = 0)	.90	.30	.89	.32
Mentor's gender	Male mentor = 1, female mentor = 0	.98	.15	.84***	.37
Psychosocial mentoring	Quality of mentorship (<i>I</i> = very poor to 5 = very good): role model, confidante, advice, problem-solving, and sounding board (α = .85)	3.93	.63	3.99	.73

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Career mentoring	Quality of mentorship (1 = very poor to 5 = very good); teacher/instruction, client management, organization, office politics, case management, advocate, and protection from errors ($\alpha = .82$)	3.53	.62	3.51	.62
Dependent variables					
Earnings	Self-reported annual earnings after business deductions and before taxes (2001)	205,502.72	143,417.21	134,577.46***	109,730.42
Career advancement	“This is the kind of position I expected to hold at this stage of my career” and “I have made good progress toward meeting my overall career goals” ($\alpha = .83$)	3.41	1.01	3.25*	.96

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Procedural justice	“I was rewarded for the amount of effort that I put in,” “I was rewarded fairly considering the responsibilities I had,” “I was rewarded reasonably given the market for legal services,” and “I was not rewarded fairly in view of my experience” (reverse coded) (<i>I = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; $\alpha = .91$</i>)	3.47	.98	3.29*	.92
Social value of work	Factors of importance to respondent in their job: influence in the community, helping people, and opportunity to be of service to society (<i>I = not at all important to 5 = extremely important; $\alpha = .81$</i>)	3.52	.92	3.47	1.00

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Work satisfaction	“The pay is good,” “I have the freedom to decide what I do in my job,” “The benefits are good,” “The job allows me to use my talents and legal skills,” “The work is intellectually challenging,” “The job gives me a feeling of accomplishment,” “I look forward to coming to work,” “I find real enjoyment in my work,” “I have stayed in this job because of financial necessity” (reverse coded), and “The job security is good” (1 = <i>strongly disagree</i> to 5 = <i>strongly agree</i> ; $\alpha = .80$)	3.69	.62	3.64 [†]	.58

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Independent variables					
<i>Demographics</i>					
Ethnic minority	Self-identified ethnic minority = 1, majority (Caucasian) = 0	.08	.27	.05	.21
Married	Married or co-habitation = 1, single, divorced, or widowed = 0	.90	.30	.76***	.43
Parent	Parent = 1, childless = 0	.89	.32	.77***	.42
<i>Human capital</i>					
Elite education	University of Toronto = 1, other law schools = 0	.17	.38	.09**	.29
Experience	2002 minus year since called to the bar (range = 12–27 years)	19.60	4.00	17.92***	3.78
Prestige of field	Mean average score accorded by respondents to each field of law (1 = very low to 10 = very high prestige) where scores were then assigned to field of law reported as area in which respondent practices most often (range = 3.52 for landlord and tenant to 7.17 for taxation)	5.68	1.05	5.59	.87

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Hours per week	Total hours = hours worked each workday × 5 plus hours worked, on average, each weekend	48.80	8.49	45.73***	10.25
<i>Organizational context</i>					
Government	Government = 1	.13	.33	.17	.37
Large law firm	Law firm of 50 or more lawyers = 1	.17	.38	.10*	.29
Firm of 20–49 lawyers	Law firm of 20–49 lawyers = 1	.07	.26	.01**	.12
Firm of 10–19 lawyers	Law firm of 10–19 lawyers = 1	.04	.19	.02	.16
Small law firm	Law firm of 2–9 lawyers = 1 (comparison category)	.15	.36	.11†	.31
Solo practice	Sole practitioner = 1	.22	.42	.16*	.37
Other work setting	Practicing law in other settings (corporation, legal aid or law clinic, private industry, and other workplaces) = 1	.16	.37	.25**	.44

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Toronto (GTA)	Greater Toronto Area (GTA) consists of the City of Toronto and regional municipalities of York, Halton, Peel, and Durham = 1, else = 0	.51	.50	.48	.50
<i>Aspirations and empowerment</i>					
Status achievement goals	Importance of achieving the following goals for professional advancement: bencher in law society, seniority in large law firm, seniority in medium or small law firm, leader in a corporation, leadership in government, and financial rewards (1 = not important to 4 = very important). Lawyer responses are drawn from 1990 Wave 1 survey to capture early career aspirations ($\alpha = .60$)	2.63	.71	2.53 [†]	.64

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Social advocate goals	Importance of achieving the following goals for professional advancement: leader in politics, leader in legal education, leader in law reform, service to disadvantaged groups in society (1 = not important to 5 = very important). Lawyer responses are drawn from 1990 Wave 1 survey to capture early career aspirations ($\alpha = .72$)	2.74	.80	2.78	.82

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (<i>N</i> = 184)		Women (<i>N</i> = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Locus of control	“I am responsible for my own success,” “I can do just about anything I really set my mind to,” “My misfortunes are the result of mistakes I have made,” “I am responsible for my failures,” “The really good things that happen to me are mostly luck” (reverse coded), “There is no sense to planning a lot—if something good is going to happen it will” (reverse coded), “Most of my problems are due to bad breaks” (reverse coded) (<i>1</i> = <i>strongly disagree</i> to <i>5</i> = <i>strongly agree</i> ; α = .70)	3.98	.50	3.90 [†]	.49

(Continued)

Table 1
(Continued)

Variable	Measure	Men (N = 184)		Women (N = 284)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Negative affectivity	How many days in the past week (0-7) have you: felt you just couldn't get going, felt sad, had trouble getting to sleep or staying awake, felt that everything was an effort, felt lonely, felt couldn't shake the blues, had trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing, felt you were worrying a lot about little things, felt tense or anxious, felt restless, felt annoyed with things or people, felt angry, felt like yelling at someone, had aches and pains, had headaches, felt weak all over ($\alpha = .91$)	.99	.95	1.27**	.99

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, † $p < .10$ (two-tailed).

$\alpha = .83$). A second menu of five items assesses psychosocial mentoring (e.g., “role model, confidante, and advice,” $\alpha = .91$). Higher scores indicate a greater degree of mentoring received.

We also introduce several innovative measures intended to grasp networking aspects of mentoring relationships. These include a distinction between having a single mentor versus multiple mentors, closeness of mentor–protégé relations (rated on a four-point scale from 1 = not at all close to 4 = very close), hierarchical status (whether mentor was senior to the respondent or of equivalent status), and mentor’s gender. Closeness, hierarchical status, and mentor’s gender are based on the respondent’s evaluation of his or her primary mentor during his or her career.

Career Rewards. Two extrinsic and three intrinsic career rewards serve as dependent variables in this study. With the exception of earnings, career reward variables are measured using multiple-item Likert indices. The values obtained for these variables represent the mean scores calculated by summing responses to items and dividing the sum by the number of items for each index. *Earnings* is measured as self-reported annual earnings after business deductions and before taxes in 2001. Salaries appear high and this is largely because lawyers in our sample are 12–25 years along in their professional careers. *Career advancement* is measured adapting two items from Greenhaus, Parasuraman, and Wormley (1990) and Wallace (2001) to tap the degree to which legal professionals felt they had achieved progress toward their career goals ($\alpha = .83$). *Procedural justice* refers to “employee perceptions of the fairness of the application of rules in decisions regarding resource allocation” (Wallace 2001:369). We measure procedural justice by four items used by Mueller and Wallace (1996) that tap the extent to which respondents feel that they are rewarded fairly in view of their efforts, responsibilities, experience, and market for legal services ($\alpha = .91$). *Social value of work* is measured by three items that reflect the degree of importance respondents place on having a job that affords the opportunity to be of influence in the community, to help people, and to be of service to society ($\alpha = .81$). *Work satisfaction* is measured through 10 items designed to assess a wide range of work criteria in generating global work satisfaction (Ducharme and Martin 2000; Hull 1999; $\alpha = .80$).

Data Analytic Strategy

To answer our first research question as to whether male and female protégés differ in the quality of their mentoring relationships in law, we compute mean difference tests for women and men across the mentor capitalization variables. To answer our second research question as to what specific characteristics of mentoring relationships contribute to lawyers’ career rewards,

we regress the five career outcomes on closeness of mentorship, hierarchical relationship, multiple mentors, psychosocial functions and career mentor functions, and mentor's gender. We control for demographics, human capital, organizational context, and aspirations and empowerment.⁵ To answer our third question as to whether male and female protégés benefit differently from mentorship in law we compute five cross-product, interaction terms by protégé gender—one for each of the five mentorship variables. Following the lead of Paternoster and Mazerolle (1994), the interaction terms are then entered one at a time into the equations, and the regressions are repeated to evaluate the conditioning effects of these variables on the relationship between mentoring dynamics and career rewards. In addition, we examine whether having a same-sex mentor is beneficial for protégés. Mentor's gender among male protégés is a near constant. The overwhelming majority of men have men as their mentors (98 percent); therefore, we are unable to compute an interaction effect between protégé's gender and mentor's gender. Instead, we test whether female protégés benefited more often from male or female mentors.

Results

Table 1 presents the mean differences in mentoring relationships for men and women. The results show that women and men are equally likely to have the privilege of multiple mentors. Men and women did not differ in their reports of mentorship quality in terms of closeness of relationship, hierarchical status of their mentor, or level of career mentoring (e.g., client management, instruction, and protection from errors). Not surprisingly, women are more likely than men to be mentored by women, although the majority of both men (98 percent) and women (89 percent) are mentored by men. Several studies found women were more likely to receive psychosocial mentoring than men (e.g., role model, sounding board, and confidante; Reich 1986). Our study shows women report receiving the same degree of both psychosocial and career mentoring as men. In sum, the results suggest that overall, male and female protégés do not differ dramatically in the quality of their mentoring relationships.

In Table 2, we explore the relationships between dimensions of mentoring relations and the professional rewards yielded to mentored lawyers.⁶ Three patterns of influence stand out as particularly noteworthy. First, having multiple mentors, rather than a single mentor, yields career advancement ($b = .25$) and a sizeable earnings dividend of \$32,120. Perhaps multiple mentors represent an expansive network of social capital, yielding resources and benefits over and above the mentoring support offered by a single mentor. Second, for the intrinsic career rewards, psychosocial support is a key mentoring quality. Psychosocial support produces a greater sense of procedural fairness ($b = .17$),

Table 2
 Ordinary Least Square Regression Models of Career Rewards among Mentored Lawyers, Unstandardized Coefficients

Variables	Earnings (in 1,000)		Career advancement		Procedural justice		Value of work		Work satisfaction	
	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)
Mentoring variables										
Closeness of relation	5.29	(7.19)	.10	(.07)	-.01	(.07)	-.08	(.07)	.04	(.04)
Hierarchical status	4.10	(14.49)	-.17	(.15)	-.06	(.14)	-.20	(.14)	-.03	(.08)
Mentor's gender (male = 1)	9.24	(14.81)	.03	(.15)	.24	(.15)*	-.09	(.14)	.02	(.09)
Psychosocial mentoring	13.60	(9.06)	-.04	(.09)	.17	(.09)*	.17	(.09)*	.11	(.05)*
Career mentoring	-8.57	(8.84)	.12	(.09)	.09	(.09)	.04	(.08)	.05	(.05)
Multiple mentors	32.12	(9.19)***	.25	(.09)**	.12	(.09)	.03	(.09)	.08	(.05) [†]
Demographics										
Gender (male = 1)	35.19	(9.79)***	.11	(.10)	.14	(.10)	.11	(.09)	.07	(.06)
Ethnic minority	-16.63	(18.61)	-.13	(.19)	-.12	(.18)	.18	(.18)	-.03	(.11)
Married	-15.59	(12.19)	-.09	(.12)	-.00	(.12)	.24	(.12)*	-.02	(.07)
Parent	-6.81	(12.36)	-.06	(.12)	-.21	(.12)*	-.29	(.12)**	-.18	(.07)**
Human capital										
Elite education	49.32	(14.12)***	.04	(.14)	-.02	(.14)	.03	(.13)	.03	(.08)
Experience	3.63	(1.17)**	-.01	(.01)	-.02	(.01) [†]	.00	(.01)	-.01	(.01)*
Prestige of field	8.99	(5.12)*	-.09	(.05)*	.06	(.05)	-.13	(.05)**	-.01	(.03)
Hours per week	2.61	(.46)***	.01	(.01)**	-.01	(.01)	.00	(.00)	.00	(.00)

(Continued)

Table 2
(Continued)

Variables	Earnings (in 1,000)		Career advancement		Procedural justice		Value of work		Work satisfaction	
	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)
Organizational context										
Government ^a	-16.51	(14.66)	-0.9	(.15)	-0.06	(.14)	.52	(.14)***	.28	(.08)***
Firm > 50 lawyers	178.30	(16.69)***	.50	(.17)**	.51	(.16)***	-.35	(.16)*	.32	(.10)***
Firm 20-49 lawyers	83.02	(25.38)***	.39	(.25) [†]	.42	(.25)*	.46	(.24)*	.44	(.15)**
Firm 10-19 lawyers	76.45	(26.42)**	-0.00	(.26)	-.02	(.26)	-.29	(.25)	.04	(.15)
Solo practice	-18.07	(13.35)	-.30	(.13)*	-.19	(.13) [†]	.17	(.13) [†]	-.21	(.08)**
Other work setting	8.64	(12.78)	.13	(.13)	-.25	(.13)*	.14	(.12)	.19	(.07)**
Toronto (Greater Toronto Area)	25.41	(9.35)**	-.04	(.09)	-.02	(.09)	-.13	(.09) [†]	.00	(.05)
Aspirations and empowerment										
Status achievement goals	13.30	(7.44)*	-.13	(.07)*	-.04	(.07)	-.18	(.07)**	-.10	(.04)*
Social advocate goals	5.49	(5.94)	.16	(.06)**	.12	(.06)*	.23	(.06)***	.12	(.03)***
Locus of control	18.71	(9.03)*	.21	(.09)**	.12	(.09) [†]	.07	(.09)	.20	(.05)***
Negative affectivity	.04	(4.60)	-.14	(.05)***	-.10	(.05)*	-.11	(.04)**	-.11	(.03)***
Constant	-309.92	(69.02)***	2.11	(.69)**	1.91	(.68)**	3.36	(.65)***	2.46	(.40)***
R-squared	.52		.18		.16		.24		.27	

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$, [†] $p < .10$ (one-tailed); $N = 468$; SE, standard error.

^aExcluded category is small law firms of less than 10 lawyers.

greater recognition of social value to one's law practice ($b = .17$), and higher work satisfaction ($b = .11$). Third, having a male mentor improves a lawyer's sense of procedural fairness in the workplace ($b = .24$), yet fails to significantly shape other career outcomes.

Two mentor capitalization dynamics do not have their predicted impact on career rewards. The closeness of the primary mentoring relationship fails to make a significant difference to career outcomes, lending support to Granovetter's (1995) claim that strong ties are not necessarily more productive than weak ones. Hierarchical relationships (mentor's status as higher than that of the protégé) fail to yield sizeable rewards in terms of earnings, career advancement, or any of the intrinsic career rewards.

We further explore the possibility that gender of protégés conditions the impact of mentoring dimensions across all five career outcomes (see Table 3). Having a mentor of senior status yields a sizeable income advantage of \$48,409 to male lawyers. Male lawyers with mentors of senior status also perceive their workplace to have greater procedural justice ($b = .56$). Male lawyers also benefit through having mentors above their own status through improved work satisfaction ($b = .51$). These interaction effects suggest that men derive greater benefits from their social capital, specifically their ties to mentors of senior status, than do women (see also Molyneux 2002). This dynamic raises troubling questions about the gendered processes of inclusion and exclusion embedded *within* mentoring relationships.

Yet, it appears that women, rather than men, stand more to gain through multiple mentors. Women with multiple mentors benefit through improved work satisfaction ($b = -.21$). Women also benefit from close relationships with their mentors—a benefit that narrows the gendered earnings gap by \$24,823 and boosts the career advancement of female protégés ($b = -.19$).

Finally, we considered the impact of having a man versus a woman as one's mentor in law for female protégés. The results reveal that, for female protégés, having a male lawyer as a mentor significantly improves their view of procedural fairness in the workplace ($b = .34$). Yet, having a male mentor compared with a female mentor does not offer benefits for female protégés' careers in terms of their earnings, career advancement, social value of legal work, or overall work satisfaction.

Discussion and Conclusions

Our study demonstrates that lawyers with mentoring relationships characterized by specific network properties and access to valued professional resources garner differential career rewards. Having a broader network span through multiple mentors results in lawyers obtaining more extrinsic career rewards, specifically greater earnings and career advancement, than protégés

Table 3
 Ordinary Least Square Regression Interaction Terms for Mentor Dynamics Conditioned by Gender of Protégé,
 Unstandardized Coefficients

Variables	Earnings		Career advancement		Procedural justice		Value of work		Work satisfaction		
	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	<i>b</i>	(SE)	
Mentored lawyers (N = 468)											
Closeness × gender of protégé	-24822.60	(12939.97)*	-.190	(.130) [†]	-.131	(.127)	-.096	(.122)	.026	(.075)	
Hierarchical status × gender of protégé	48409.09	(29601.57) [†]	.457	(.299) [†]	.561	(.290)*	.212	(.279)	.508	(.169)**	
Psychosocial mentoring × gender of protégé	-20374.10	(13738.59) [†]	-.033	(.139)	-.157	(.135)	.121	(.130)	-.059	(.079)	
Career mentoring × gender of protégé	-16219.80	(14203.60)	-.174	(.143)	-.157	(.139)	.064	(.134)	-.080	(.082) [†]	
Multiple mentors × gender of protégé	4988.00	(18618.24)	-.179	(.186)	-.123	(.182)	.012	(.175)	-.214	(.106)*	

(Continued)

Table 3
(Continued)

Variables	<i>b</i>	(SE)	Earnings	<i>b</i>	(SE)	Career advancement	<i>b</i>	(SE)	Procedural justice	<i>b</i>	(SE)	Value of work	<i>b</i>	(SE)	Work satisfaction	<i>b</i>	(SE)
Female-mentored lawyers (N = 284)^a																	
Mentor's gender (male = 1)	16754.46	(14002.81)	.023	(.155)	.344	(.153)*	-.087	(.152)	.072	(.090)							

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, † $p < .10$ (two-tailed); SE, standard error. All models also include controls for demographic, human capital, organizational context, and aspiration and empowerment variables, as presented in Table 2 (coefficients not shown).

^aAn interaction term between gender of protégé and gender of mentor cannot be computed for male protégés because the vast majority of male protégés had men as their mentors (98 percent). We present the results for the sample of female protégés (with control variables as presented in Table 2) to show the effect of having a male mentor on career rewards.

possessing a single mentor.⁷ A multitude of mentors may possess complementary qualities and a wider repertoire of resources with which to develop eager protégés. For example, some mentors may be strategically placed to provide visibility and profile to senior management, introductions to clientele, and valuable legal knowledge and strategy planning (e.g., career-related support); whereas other mentors may be valued for their friendship and ability to offer emotional support (e.g., reassurance, listening, and concern) and serve as influential role models through their professionalism. A sequencing of mentors, sometimes overlapping or more sporadic in their presence, may offer social capital that when accessed may be pivotal to promotions (Smith, Smith, and Markham 2000), skill acquisition, reputation, and financial raises (Dreher and Cox 1996). Meanwhile, single mentors may offer various combinations of mentor functions, but they must be exceptional mentors to offer a comparably strong combination of mentoring abilities, especially if they are to surpass the efforts and resources afforded through a bevy of mentors.

Turning next to psychosocial mentoring, this embedded professional resource yields significant intrinsic career rewards. Specifically, this resource provides protégés with a sense of procedural fairness in their work context, cultivates appreciation for the social value of law practice, and enriches work satisfaction. Mentors' psychosocial functions as confidants, problem-solvers, and as sounding boards appear to be particularly important in fostering intrinsic career rewards. These consultations perhaps allow lawyers to place their career in perspective and better acknowledge (or change their jobs to achieve) satisfying intrinsic rewards. Future research might examine who is more effective in providing psychosocial functions—male or female mentors, mentoring teams or solo mentors, the closeness of these relationships, and social distance (e.g., hierarchical status as well as ties inside and outside of the organization) between protégés and mentors.

In examining the role of protégés' gender in mentoring relationships, we uncovered several interesting results. First, we found that women and men in law are able to secure mentoring relationships of nearly identical quality in terms of social network properties and embedded resources. Specifically, men and women are similar in their shares of multiple mentors, close relationships with their mentors, mentors of higher professional status, male mentors, and the amount of career and psychosocial support they receive. Thus, contrary to our expectations, women in law appear successful in securing mentoring relationships that are as promising in their pool of social capital as those obtained by male colleagues. Women do not appear to be disadvantaged in this regard. However, when we examined how mentoring relationships are *utilized* to achieve career rewards, gender disparities emerged. Specifically, male protégés benefit from access to senior status mentors (in terms of earnings, perceived

procedural justice, and work satisfaction), whereas women benefit from close mentoring relationships (narrowing the gendered earnings gap and furthering career advancement) and having multiple mentors (improving their work satisfaction).⁸

Although female lawyers are just as likely to seek out and secure mentors, the relationship does not necessarily yield the same benefits accrued to male lawyers. The social position of women within the legal profession does not afford them the strategic capacity to mobilize their social capital through mentoring relationships to secure coveted career outcomes, particularly in the forms of earnings and career advancement. For example, consistent with the social network literature, we found that hierarchical relationships, that is, having mentors who are well placed to provide powerful influence and resources, yield an earnings advantage, although exclusively to male protégés. Furthermore, male protégés with mentors of senior status also benefit with greater work satisfaction and a sense that their workplace is fair. This is a case where male protégés are *more* successful than their female counterparts in utilizing their social capital (e.g., mentorship relations) to attain valued career outcomes.

However, having multiple mentors provides leverage to lawyers, specifically women, as they navigate career ladders. The gender advantage (of men over women) in work satisfaction is reversed for women protégés with *multiple* mentors. Research reveals that professional women in male-dominated occupations often encounter “glass ceilings” to career advancement because of a lack of female mentors (Javidan et al. 1995). Therefore, having multiple mentors (even exclusively male mentors) may offer compensation against a lack of female role models in senior positions. Having mentors, possibly at different stages of one’s career, who are able to offer advice at challenging career junctures, may provide a diversity of resources and opportunities that collectively enhance the satisfaction female lawyers enjoy from their legal work (Higgins 2000; Higgins and Thomas 2001). This understanding of the potential of multiple mentors for women is consistent with the recent work of Erickson (2006) that focuses on social capital conceived as network diversity among women. For women, as minorities in a traditionally male-dominated profession, multiple mentors may offer a winning composition of complementary resources and information channels.

What is perhaps more troubling is the question: Why does having multiple mentors enhance women’s subjective work satisfaction levels, but not *other* career rewards, particularly status-related outcomes, such as earnings and career advancement? Work satisfaction may be one of the *few* professional outcomes where women stand to gain more than men from their mentor-as-social-capital resource.

Finally, we considered the impact of mentors' gender. Having a male mentor, rather than a female mentor, significantly improves female protégés' views of the degree of procedural fairness in the workplace. This pattern of enhanced perceptions of fairness within organizations generated through male mentors holds true across protégé gender lines. Perhaps male mentors are better placed to provide new recruits with knowledge about decision making and policies within the organization, justifying decisions and distribution of rewards, thereby reducing perceptions of unfair practices. Or perhaps it is the case that male mentors are better placed to protect the interests of junior lawyers, ensuring their protégés are treated fairly within the organization. Alternatively, perhaps female mentors raise protégés' awareness of gender discrimination (as a result of their own heightened awareness and/or experiences of discrimination) in an effort to prepare and protect their protégés.

These findings suggest that social capital has a qualitative element and a context-dependent value. Specifically, male protégés benefit directly through senior status mentors; whereas women protégés benefit through a combination of close relationships, male mentors, and multiple mentors. The associated benefits to men are primarily extrinsic or objective (e.g., earnings, advancement), whereas the benefits for women are more often intrinsic or subjective (e.g., work satisfaction and perceived fairness). This finding is of crucial importance, not just for its implications for mentorship, but for social capital theory in general.

In closing, our study suggests that *access* to mentors may not be the major hurdle toward creating more inclusive professions and reducing "glass ceilings" for women. Rather, the key may lie in unpacking how the social position of junior professionals and the social network qualities of mentoring relationships either ease or hinder protégés' abilities to capitalize on those relationships, accessing vital resources of professional support in their efforts to build rewarding careers.

ENDNOTES

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Upper Canada. The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Law Society of Upper Canada. Please direct correspondence to Fiona M. Kay, Department of Sociology, Queen's University, 99 University Avenue, D-431 Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Kingston, ON, Canada, K7L 3N6; e-mail: kayf@queensu.ca.

¹Some scholars treat social capital as a concept (Esser 2008), whereas others argue that social capital is both a concept and a theory (Lin 2008). As a concept, it maps investment in resources of value. As a theory, it describes "the process by which capital is captured and reproduced for returns" (Lin 2008:51). By following the general premise that social capital is network-based, we agree with Lin (2008) that social capital allows us to formulate theoretical propositions for identifying the sources of social capital and the returns to social capital.

²We borrow several measures from the social network field, including closeness, hierarchy, and multiple ties. However, our data do not afford a full-scale sociometrical analysis, including network dimensions of precise size, density, tie strength, and network range. Our emphasis on social networks is therefore more conceptual, while acknowledging the significant place of social network analysis to the "conceptual genealogy of social capital" (Schuller, Baron, and Field 2000:1).

³A common problem of longitudinal research design is panel attrition—the loss of survey participants over time (as a result of incorrect mailing addresses, inability to track respondents, death, refusal to participate, etc.). We were fortunate to have strong response rates across all three waves of this longitudinal panel design. The strong response rates are attributable to three factors: (1) the high degree of accuracy maintained in the membership records of the Law Society of Upper Canada; (2) the use of post-card reminders (1 week after survey mailing) and follow-up reminder letters with a replacement questionnaire (3 weeks after initial mailing); and (3) efforts made by the researchers to locate current addresses for individuals who had left the practice of law since the 1990 survey. Many individuals provided contact information at the end of their earlier surveys (the name and address of one family member or friend who could serve as a contact in the future) that the researchers could call to aid in locating the study participants. Nonetheless, attrition remains. We know that 1 percent of cases, on average, per panel were returned as undeliverable; approximately 2 percent of the original sample's surveys were returned and noted as "deceased" by wave 3; and 1.5 percent of the surveys could not be linked together owing to the removal of identification numbers from the top corner of the surveys; and finally, non-response accounts for the largest share of attrition over time. In this third wave of data collection, surveys were mailed to 1,083 individuals (total number of lawyers who responded to 1990 and 1996 surveys). After adjustment for death, retirement, and those no longer practicing law, the response rate is 73 percent (or 743 individuals).

⁴The majority of survey participants (63 percent) had experienced mentoring over the course of their legal careers. As this article focuses on the qualitative gradients of mentoring relationships, only those lawyers with mentoring experiences are included in the analysis. The 468 cases included in this analysis have complete longitudinal data across all three panel surveys.

⁵We treat aspirations and empowerment variables as controls for two reasons. First, these variables have been described as relatively stable traits over the life course (Hagan et al. 1999). Second, social capital theorizing suggests motivation and goals precede resources causally (Finsveen and van Oorschot 2008). That said, one could also model aspiration and empowerment variables as mediators or intervening variables that help us to understand the effect of mentor variables on career rewards. For example, negative affectivity may be reduced and self-empowerment enhanced through close and informative mentoring dynamics that in turn lead to advancement in the firm, raises, or a sense of accomplishment in law practice.

⁶We examine collinearity diagnostics, including variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerances for individual variables. Scores were within acceptable ranges, suggesting multicollinearity and heteroskedasticity do not pose problems in these models.

⁷We conducted separate analyses contrasting lawyers with multiple mentors to those without any mentors. The results are impressive. Lawyers with multiple mentors benefit across our range of career outcomes. The effects are more muted when we contrast lawyers with multiple mentors to lawyers with only a single mentor. However, lawyers with multiple mentors still come out ahead in terms of earnings and career advancement.

⁸This finding contrasts with the work of Burt (1998) who found that for women smaller networks are more effective than larger ones. He concluded that women with networks that connect them to senior levels in the organizational hierarchy benefit with higher rates of promotion over women with networks that are close but horizontal.

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