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Progress and Congress: Gender and Career Progression Among Congressional Staff

by

Micayla C. Clark

Under the Direction of Jeffrey Lazarus, PhD

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2023

ABSTRACT

Existing research has extensively considered the ways in which women and men differ in their expressed desire for higher political positions. Yet, little research has been done to understand ambition among women in non-elected political positions. I hope to explain why men are more likely than women to achieve high level staff positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director, and why women are often pushed into communications positions rather than policy positions at higher rates than men. To better explain the gap between men and women in career advancement on the Hill, I draw on the literature which examines gender dynamics in the decision to run for office. That literature finds that women are less likely to seek office than men; I argue that the same factors which explain that gender disparity similarly influence the career progression of female congressional staff women in elected political positions. There are three such factors. First, women tend to have lower levels of confidence, leading them to be less likely to seek positions on their own (Fox and Lawless 2011; Pearson & McGhee 2013). Second, those responsible for filling positions do not often recruit women, formally or informally (Fox and Lawless 2010; Aldrich 2002; Jewell and Morehouse 2001; Sanbonmatsu 2006). Finally, women are disproportionately responsible for raising children and other family responsibilities, leaving less time for professional development (Lawless & Fox 2011). All three factors have been linked to fewer women running for elected office, and I argue that they likewise lead to women congressional staff moving slower through the promotion process in Capitol Hill staff careers. I plan to address this in a mixed-methods project, drawing on both interviews from current and former Congressional staff as well as a large N dataset available for purchase from Legistorm.

INDEX WORDS: Gender Gap, Ambition, Congressional Staff, Congress, Qualifications Gap, Lobbying

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2023

Progress and Congress: Gender and Career Progression Among Congressional Staff

by

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May 2023

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, David, and my husband, Benjamin. You have made me stronger, better, and more fulfilled than I could have ever imagined. Thank you for the sacrifices you have endured for me to pursue this dream.

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INTRODUCTION

Women make up about 50% of lower-level staff positions in the House and Senate. However, very few of those women make it into leadership positions within those offices (Ritchie and Young You 2021). Existing research examines how gender influences ambition among elected representatives, but little work explores unelected political positions like congressional staff. In this project, I focus on this under-studied element of the legislative branch of government. This dissertation will add to our understanding of gender dynamics in the career development of congressional staffers and unelected political professionals more generally. It will also contribute to our relatively small pool of knowledge about how the world of congressional staff operates. In it, I will address such questions as: Are female staffers less likely than men to move into more desirable/prestigious positions? Assuming they are, what causes this discrepancy? Do women have to be more qualified than men to move into top positions?

The primary goals of this dissertation are to, (1) better understand the structure and culture of congressional offices which might lead to greater gender disparity in higher ranking positions, (2) to explore the potential causal factors for gender differences in career advancement on the Hill, and (3) to better understand the role that self-confidence, family responsibilities, and support/recruitment networks play in the movement of women into more prestigious policy positions. While scholars have dedicated their time and careers to explaining how gender influences ambition among elected representatives, little has been done to explain gender differences in career advancement and ambition among women in unelected political positions like congressional staff. Specifically, I hope to explain why men are more likely than women to

achieve high level staff positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director, and why women are pushed into communications positions rather than policy positions at higher rates than men. To better explain the gap between men and women in career advancement on the Hill, I draw on theories from the gender and ambition literature to explain why we might see a disparity in how men and women differ in their advancement and roles on the Hill. From this existing literature, I created a distinct set of questions which I will explore throughout this dissertation.

1. As staffers move up the career ladder, are female staffers less likely than men to move into more desirable/prestigious positions?
 - a. Which staff positions are more or less desirable? (e.g. communication vs. policy; House vs. Senate; committee staff vs. personal staff).
 - b. Are women less likely to leave House and Senate offices to become a lobbyist?
2. What causal factors account for gender differences in career advancement? Do differences in self-confidence, family responsibility, support/recruitment networks play a role? Are there other factors at play?
3. Do women who attain advanced or desirable positions have stronger experience or on-paper qualifications than men who reach these positions? That is, is there a gender-based “qualifications gap”?

This dissertation will explore the influence of gender on the influence and promotion of women congressional staff. Research has extensively considered the ways in which women in elected political positions display lower levels of political ambition than men (Fox & Lawless 2004, 2011, 2014; Sanbonmatsu and Carroll 2013) However, we know much less about how gender dynamics in influence unelected political positions. As well, despite a recent surge in research on Capitol Hill staffers we still have only a limited understanding of the motivations

and career paths of these important cogs in the machinery of Capitol Hill. This project will contribute to our understandings in both areas. This project will explore the influence of gender on the influence and promotion of women congressional staff.

Congressional staff are crucial to the day-to-day activities on the Hill. They handle the tasks of responding to constituent requests and questions, responding to press inquiries, managing members' schedules, and tracking legislative debates and issues for members (Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Within the legislative process, members rely heavily on staff to accomplish their goals (Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Staff activities include providing policy information and expertise for their members, networking on and off the Hill, attending committee meetings, keeping track of the progress important bills are making in the legislative process, and writing legislation (Degregorio 1996; Hertel-Fernandez et al. 2019; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Even further, there is also some evidence to suggest that congressional staff exert independent influence over the legislative process. By providing expertise on legislative issues and bringing specific policy goals to the attention of their member, staff can influence the content of bills their member sponsors, the legislation the member supports from outside their office, and even their member's voting decisions (Kingdon 1989; Malbin 1980; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017).

Women occupy about half of personal office staff positions on the Hill. However, they tend to hold fewer more advanced positions such as Chief of Staff or Legislative Director (Ritchie and Young You 2019); which are the staffers most likely to influence the substance of policy (Crosson et al. 2018). Because women are failing to reach these senior policy positions at the same rate as men, they have fewer opportunities to influence policy (e.g., DeGregorio 1988; Fox and Hammond 1977; Hall 1996; Malbin 1980), help move policy through the institution

(Romzek and Utter 1997); or provide vital policy information and networking for legislation (Ritchie and Young You 2019; Herterl-Fernandez, Mildenerger and Stokes 2019, Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Women's fewer opportunities to have their voices heard and influence policy has substantive policy outcomes, because women have different policy concerns than men do. Women tend to bring "women's issues" such as education and healthcare to the attention of the public and elites (Swers 1998; see also Burell 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002, Swers 2005). This extends to congressional staff, as women staffers are consistently assigned to cover issues that are considered "women's issues" more than male staffers (Ritchie and Young You 2021). The dearth of women in the highest staffing positions in Congress members' offices likely contributes to the relative lack of attention Congress devotes to these issues which are of disproportionate importance to women constituents.

Research about the role of congressional staff has increased over the last few years. Important work advances our understanding of how staff influence legislative behavior and the legislative process (Ritchie and Young You 2021; Herterl-Fernandez, Mildenerger and Stokes 2019, Montgomery and Nyhan 2017), the impact staff have on the legislative process via facilitating policy negotiations among members (Fox and Hammong 1977), and even how staff sometimes direct policy from behind the scenes (Romzek 2000). Work on staffers' career progression primarily focuses their movement into the lobbying world (McCrain 2018; Cain and Drutmen 2014). Several recent studies have begun to consider our understanding of the role of gender on the career advancement. This work finds that female congressional staff are more likely to hold lower-ranking positions within a members' office, are paid less than their male counterparts, and are promoted less than men. (Calcagno and Montgomery 2020; Ritchie and Young You 2021).

Unfortunately, research surrounding gender and congressional staff is limited in a number of ways. First, what we know about the influence of staff on the legislative process is limited to studies of senior staff. Because women disproportionately hold lower-level staff positions (Ritchie and Young You 2021), we have a limited understanding of what role women play among Hill staff. Second, prior studies of the role congressional staff play in the legislative process or other areas fail to take gender into account. This study will make contributions in both areas, providing a deeper look into the qualifications gap between men and women who reach higher-ranking staff positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director, and exploring the role that gender plays in career opportunities outside of the Hill as a lobbyist. Along the way, the project will also more provide a richer understanding of the general career environment for Capitol Hill staff than we currently have, as it seeks to explain how women navigate that environment.

1 THE AMBITION GAP AND WOMEN CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

1.1 Introduction

Women make up about 50% of lower-level staff positions in the House and Senate, like staff assistant or legislative aid. However, very few of those women make it into leadership positions within those offices, such as Chief of Staff or Legislative Director (Ritchie and Young You 2021). Existing research examines how gender influences ambition among elected representatives, but little work explores unelected political positions like congressional staff. In this chapter, I focus on this under-studied element of the legislative branch of government as it relates to ambition. This chapter will add to our understanding of gender dynamics in the career development of congressional staffers and unelected political professionals more generally. In it, I will address such questions as: Are female staffers less likely than men to move into more desirable/prestigious positions? Assuming they are, what causes this discrepancy?

Congressional staff are crucial to the day-to-day activities on the Hill. They handle the tasks of responding to constituent requests and questions, responding to press inquiries, managing members' schedules, and tracking legislative debates and issues for members (Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Within the legislative process, members rely heavily on staff to accomplish their goals (Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Staff activities include providing policy information and expertise for their members, networking on and off the Hill, attending committee meetings, keeping track of the progress important bills are making in the legislative process, and writing legislation (Degregorio 1996; Hertel-Fernandez et al. 2019; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Even further, there is also some evidence to suggest that congressional staff exert independent influence over the legislative process. By providing expertise on legislative issues and bringing specific policy goals to the attention of their member, staff can influence the

content of bills their member sponsors, the legislation the member supports from outside their office, and even their member's voting decisions (Kingdon 1989; Malbin 1980; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017).

Women occupy about half of personal office staff positions on the Hill. Personal office positions are where a staffer work directly with a member of Congress, either on the Hill or in the district, rather than working for multiple members as a part of committee staff. However, women tend to hold fewer more advanced positions such as Chief of Staff or Legislative Director (Ritchie and Young You 2019); which are the staffers most likely to influence the substance of policy (Crosson et al. 2018). Because women are failing to reach these senior policy positions at the same rate as men, they have fewer opportunities to influence policy (e.g., DeGregorio 1988; Fox and Hammond 1977; Hall 1996; Malbin 1980), help move policy through the institution (Romzek and Utter 1997); or provide vital policy information and networking for legislation (Ritchie and Young You 2019; Herterl-Fernandez, Mildenerger and Stokes 2019, Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). Women's fewer opportunities to have their voices heard and influence policy has substantive policy outcomes, because women have different policy concerns than men do. Women tend to bring "women's issues" such as education and healthcare to the attention of the public and elites (Swers 1998; see also Burell 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002, Swers 2005). This extends to congressional staff, as women staffers are consistently assigned to cover issues that are considered "women's issues" more than male staffers (Ritchie and Young You 2021). The dearth of women in the highest staffing positions in Congress members' offices likely contributes to the relative lack of attention Congress devotes to these issues which are of disproportionate importance to women constituents.

The primary goals of this chapter are to (1) explore the potential causal factors for gender differences in career advancement on the Hill, and (2) better understand the role that self-confidence, family responsibilities, and support/recruitment networks play in the movement of women into more prestigious policy positions.

1.2 Research Questions

While scholars have dedicated their time and careers to explaining how gender influences ambition among elected representatives, little has been done to explain gender differences in career advancement and ambition among women in unelected political positions like congressional staff. At first glance, the gender split among House staff feels equitable with women comprising nearly half of staff positions on the Hill (Richie and Young You 2021). However, according to the Leadership Directory put together by the U.S. House, there are some important disparities when it comes to gender and staff on the Hill. First, women hold the majority of administrative and communications positions which focus primarily on constituent service rather than policy. “Of the eight most common House district position titles, six skew heavily female, including district schedulers (85 percent); caseworkers (77 percent); and constituent service representatives (68 percent)” (Burgat 2017). Second, when women are assigned to policy-based roles like legislative assistant, or legislative director, they comprise nearly 73% of the policy topics we typically view as “women’s issues” such as education or healthcare. Finally, men typically hold most upper-level staff positions like Chief of Staff or Legislative Director (Richie and Young you 2021).

Given this gender disparity on the Hill, I hope to explain why men are more likely than women to achieve high-level staff positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director, and why women are pushed into communications positions rather than policy positions at higher rates

than men. To better explain the gap between men and women in career advancement on the Hill, I draw on theories from the gender and ambition literature to explain why we might see a disparity in how men and women differ in their advancement and roles on the Hill. From this existing literature, I created a distinct set of questions which I will explore throughout this chapter of my dissertation.

I created a distinct set of questions which I will explore throughout this chapter of my dissertation. First, as staffers move up the career ladder, are female staffers less likely than men to move into more desirable/prestigious positions? Second, ask what causal factors account for gender differences in career advancement? Do differences in self-confidence, family responsibility, support/recruitment networks play a role? Are there other factors at play? In answering these questions, I also look at some related issues such as which staff positions are more or less desirable? (e.g. communication vs. policy; House vs. Senate; committee staff vs. personal staff), and whether women less likely than men to leave House and Senate offices to become a lobbyist.

1.3 Theory

Research about the role of congressional staff has increased over the last few years. Important work advances our understanding of how staff influence legislative behavior and the legislative process (Ritchie and Young You 2021; Herterl-Fernandez, Mildemberger and Stokes 2019, Montgomery and Nyhan 2017), the impact staff have on the legislative process via facilitating policy negotiations among members (Fox and Hammong 1977), and even how staff sometimes direct policy from behind the scenes (Romzek 2000). Work on staffers' career progression primarily focuses their movement into the lobbying world (McCrain 2018; Cain and Drutmen 2014). Several recent studies have begun to consider our understanding of the role of

gender in career advancement. This work finds that female congressional staff are more likely to hold lower-ranking positions within a members' office, are paid less than their male counterparts, and are promoted less than men. (Calcagno and Montgomery 2020; Ritchie and Young You 2021).

Unfortunately, research surrounding gender and congressional staff is limited in a number of ways. First, what we know about the influence of staff on the legislative process is limited to studies of senior staff (Ritchie and Young You 2021). Second, prior studies of the role congressional staff play in the legislative process or other areas fail to take gender into account. This chapter will make contributions in both expanding our study of congressional staff from senior to lower-level staff and will explore the ways in which gender influences career progression on the Hill. Along the way, this chapter will also provide a richer understanding of the general career environment for Capitol Hill staff than we currently have, as it seeks to explain how women navigate that environment.

Theories of Ambition Applied to Congressional Staff

The literature on ambition identifies two key categories that impact women's career choices in politics, internal factors, such as self-efficacy and disproportionate amount of familial responsibilities, and external factors, like encouragement, and the rigorous structure of the legislative process. While these theories have largely been applied to elected political officials, I believe the logic behind these theories will also apply to women in non-elected political positions.

Internal Factors that Decrease Progressive Ambition

A large body of work demonstrates that women display less ambition for prestigious political positions (Fox and Lawless 2011; Fulton et al. 2006, Sanbonmatsu 2006; Elder 2012;

Lawless and Fox 2012) I argue that a significant cause of this gender difference is women's lower self-efficacy. Self-efficacy applied to political ambition is the confidence that a candidate has in his or her qualifications to run for office (Fox and Lawless 2011). Self-efficacy is important to the discussion of ambition because "people tend to engage in tasks about which they feel confident and avoid those in which they do not" (Pajares 2002). Women are typically less likely than men to think that they have the political skills and resources to successfully run for higher office (Fox and Lawless 2014).

This logic also applies to how women self-advocate for more prestigious positions on the Hill. "If women staffers are more likely than their male co-workers to believe they are not qualified to take on policy making roles, they may not pursue promotions." (Ritchie & Young You 2021). Promotions on the Hill are not solely based on who has the most experience or the best qualifications, rather, promotions are often given to those who actively seek promotion and take the time to build the strongest relationships with upper-level staff, in charge of those promotions. If women lack the self-efficacy to advocate for themselves, they will miss out on opportunities for promotion, leaving us with a disproportionate amount of men in upper-level staff positions such as Chief of Staff and Legislative Director.

Oftentimes to overcome this lack self-efficacy, women emphasize gaining the proper credentials and political experience before running for a higher political office more than their male counterparts (Pearson & McGhee 2013). As a result, they spend more time becoming better-qualified candidates to increase their chances of winning the election (Pearson & McGhee 2013; Fulton 2006). This desire to gain proper credentials applies to both women who decide to initially enter politics, but also women who are considering a run for higher office. Women's lower levels of self-efficacy and the ambition gap are ingrained in female candidates regardless

of where they are in their political careers. This lower self-efficacy begins at early ages for women and continues throughout their political careers (Fox & Lawless 2014). When surveyed, female high school and college students report less desire to run for a political office because they have less encouragement and socialization early on to do so (Fox and Lawless 2014).

In addition to problems with self-efficacy, women take on a disproportionate share of family responsibilities, which often prevents or delays their ability to move up in their careers (Lawless & Fox 2011). Women spend more time raising their children and doing other household chores than men (Ridgeway 2011; Goldin 2014). This uneven division of family responsibilities in the home influences people's ability to enter politics originally, but it also limits the desire for career mobility. The legislative process does not allow for a typical 9-5 work hours for congressional staffers. The job itself is incredibly demanding, the hours are unpredictable, and schedules are not flexible, especially when Congress is in session. Staffers will often be working into the night and on weekends when an important bill to their member is being considered. This inflexible work schedule can be more difficult for women who carry the majority of "household responsibilities."

The disproportionate share of family responsibilities and negative evaluations of women for choosing a job outside of the home decreases the ability for many women staffers to pursue promotion on the Hill. Women staffers who carry most family responsibilities will not be able to always commit to the long and unpredictable hours of a congressional staffer, forcing women to either leave the Hill, or remain at lower-level staff positions. Women who balance daycare, school schedules, playdates, extracurricular activities, illness, for their children are left with little time to dedicate to seeking promotion.

External Factors that Decrease Progressive Ambition in Women

In addition to personal factors that decrease ambition in women, they also face barriers to ambition that stem from the way the Hill is structured, namely how encouragement and promotion operates. Typically, promotions within personal offices on the Hill, happen through interpersonal connections and relationships. The idea being that a Chief of Staff, Member, or Legislative Director know you well, and see you work. These personal relationships are crucial for promotion. For those relationships to develop properly, staffers must be willing and able to work long and inconsistent hours. Women who have to navigate the majority of familial responsibilities and parenthood will not be able to spend as much time developing those personal relationships with “upper level” staff, thus when a Chief of Staff or member is thinking about who to encourage or promote, they will not always promote and encourage women.

Additionally, when elites in the office choose candidates for promotion, they often place greater emphasis on qualifications and personal relationships. For female candidates, elites often take these requirements more seriously and therefore place greater emphasis on qualifications and personal relationships, which often favors men. Lawless and Fox (2010) show that when political elites fail to recruit female candidates, this decreases women’s willingness to display ambition. Because of the emphasis on qualifications, and the lack of encouragement of female staffers, I believe we will see women staffers who are less likely to self-report a desire for a more prestigious position on the Hill and will also be less likely to hold Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, and policy-based positions.

While women take on most of the responsibilities for their homes and families, they are also burdened by the legislative branch’s lack of a maternity leave (Ritchie & Young You 2021). Congressional staffers who want to take leave after their child is born are limited to the policies set forth by their members. In many cases, even when an office has a maternity leave policy, the

offered policy only gives them a couple of weeks off (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2021). Patricia Speed Schwartz served as a congressional staffer in the House for 37 years. Before her retirement in 2007, she was appointed as the Chief Clerk Administrator for the House Committee on the Judiciary. Reflecting on her time as a staffer she recalls,

“I got pregnant. And everybody said, “oh that’s great, go to leave, go home, have a baby, we’ll find somebody to replace you.” And I went, “No, no, wait, wait, wait! No, no, we need both salaries. I need to work, so what is the leave policy? They didn’t have one.

Okay, so I kind of waited on them, and they dragged their feet a little, and finally I was approached, and they said, “Well, what we’ve decided is, we’re going to give you three months off with pay, and then you can come back to work, and your job will be here.”

And that was just the Science Committee. I have no idea what other committees do, or Members’ offices.”

In 2020, Congress passed the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act which included up to 12 weeks of paid maternity and paternity leave for government employees, however, this Act did not include those who work for the legislative branch. Without an adequate option for maternity leave, women will be placed in a tough position where they may not be in a place to seek promotion on the Hill. Promotions on the Hill are often done internally, and are largely based on expertise, time on the Hill, and interpersonal relationships (Gale 2014), Women who carry the majority of childcare responsibilities

Congressional staffers are also faced with inadequate options for affordable childcare, which may also disproportionately harm women staffers. A recent study about childcare on Capitol Hill found that affordable options for childcare for legislative staffers was, “woefully inadequate to meet demand.” The House Child Care Center located in the Ford office building is

equipped to handle 70 children at a time and is relatively affordable at \$1000-\$1400 a month per child (Tully-McManus 2018). However, according to this study, the waitlist for this center averages about 200, leaving parents to look elsewhere for childcare.

A lack of affordable and available childcare will disproportionately affect women staffers. Not only do women typically manage the majority of childcare responsibilities, but they are also paid less than their male counterparts (Ritchie and Young You 2021). “The gender pay gap is larger in occupations that reward individuals who worked long hours and inflexible schedules and tend to be described as jobs where “time pressure, contacts with others, and establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships” matter (Goldin 2014). Women who are burdened with handling the schedules of their children are not able to always meet the demanding schedule of the legislative process, and as a result, will be less likely to pursue promotion on their own, or be asked to do so by those with authority like the Chief of Staff or the member.

These factors combine to make it less likely that a woman will pursue a higher position on the Hill. The cost of ambition is different for women than men because of the disproportionate amount of family responsibilities, lack of self-efficacy, their aversion to risk, and the fact that leaders fail to recruit female candidates, inadequate maternity leave policies and childcare options, and the pay gap all impact women staffer’s ability to pursue advancement on the Hill. I believe this relationship to be true both for the “self-reported ambition” as well as staffers’ observed career decisions in the Legistorm data. I believe each of these will change the career choices for women and decrease their reported and displayed levels of ambition.

1.4 Empirical Analysis

To explore the relationship between gender and ambition among Congressional staff, I use data from a survey of current congressional staff for members of the House of Representatives. The dataset includes members from personal offices on the Hill and in the district. The contacts for this survey were collected using the U.S. House of Representatives Telephone Directory 2021 which is compiled by the Clerk of the House of Representatives. This published document includes the names and telephone numbers of all staff from that year who work within the House. From there, I was able to use the standard email format for the House of Representatives (firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov) to compile my survey recipient list. I used Qualtrics to format my survey, and then sent out the email request with the survey link via my GSU faculty email address. In total, I sent nine thousand emails. One-thousands of them got sent back to me with staff who have left their current office or retired from their staff position. One hundred sixty-four staffers completed the survey. While this is not a large response rate, there is precedent for this sample size for data using a survey of congressional staff (Jensen 2011).

Table 1 Survey Demographics

Total Respondents: 268

Gender	Men- 26%	Women- 33%
Age	20-30- 49%	41-50- 10%
	31-40- 10%	50+- 14%
Race	White- 73%	Non-White- 27%
Marital Status	Married- 34%	Not Married- 65%
Children	Yes- 29%	No- 71%
Education	High School- 11%	Post-Graduate- 27%

	College- 30%
--	--------------

As discussed above, I predict that fewer women seek to advance to a higher-ranking position on the Hill than men. My staffer survey includes five questions which asked about ambition for higher position; these questions produced 8 dependent variables. The questions which asked about ambition are:

- “If you were offered a higher position or there was an opportunity for promotion in another office, would you leave your current member’s office?”

- “If you had the necessary support, are there other offices at any level of government outside of Congress that you would eventually like to hold? If yes, please specify.” These responses were separated into staffers who would like to hold Federal, State, and Local positions.

- “Do you believe there are opportunities for promotion within your current office?”

- “Do upper-level staff” encourage career mobility?”

- “Would you ever consider running for Congress some day?”

This survey produced eight dependent variables related to ambition. In each case, the theory predicts that women will report lower levels of ambition

1.5 Hypotheses

H1: Men will self-report higher levels of progressive ambition than their female counterparts

1A: Men are more likely to say they will leave Congress to work outside the Hill.

1B: Men who report a desire for a more prestigious position on the Hill are more likely to desire a Federal office over State and Local office.

1C: Within personal offices, men are more likely to report a desire for a policy position over communications.

1D: Within personal offices, women are less likely to be encouraged to pursue more prestigious positions than their male counterparts.

1E: Men are more likely to say they want to run for Congress someday.

1.6 Empirical Analysis: Survey Data

To test my first hypothesis, that men are more likely to self-report higher levels of progressive ambition, I ask respondents “If you were offered a higher position or there was an opportunity for promotion in another office, would you leave your current member’s office?” Consistent with the hypothesis, men were more likely to answer yes than women, 63% to 53%. However, the results do not reach conventional standards of statistical significance ($p < .24$). Nonetheless, these results are still substantively very interesting. First, women seem to lack the same amount of self-confidence as men. Second, if fewer women are willing to leave their current office for a more prestigious position on the Hill, it is logical to believe that we will see fewer women in high level staff positions within the House. This is important because those high-level staff positions like Chief of Staff or Legislative Director are important in shaping the content and direction of public policy in the House. Without women in these positions, we lose their unique and important voice in policy.

My second set of dependent variables separate out survey responses to the question, “If you had the necessary support, are there other offices at any level of government outside of Congress that you would eventually like to hold? If yes, please specify.” I separated these responses into a desire for local, state, and federal jobs. Hypothesis 1B states that, “Men who report a desire for a more prestigious position on the Hill are more likely to desire a Federal

office over State and Local office.” The first dependent variable looks at the survey respondents who indicated that they would like to leave their current position for a job within local government. Among women respondents, 12.8% indicated that they would eventually like to hold a local office. Among male respondents, 0% reported a desire for a local office. These results are consistent with my theory and are statistically significant at ($p < 0.03$). Research about women’s ambition to run for a political office finds that women are more successful at the local level (Atkeson and Krebs 2008; Deckman 2007; Kahn 1994; Richardson and Freeman 1995; Rosenwasser and Dean 1989; Sweet-Cushman 2016; Thomas 1994; Windett 2014). Theoretically, I argue that because women typically lack self-efficacy, women staffers are more likely to desire a local-level position than federal.

My second dependent variable along this same reasoning is a dichotomous variable labeled *leavecongressstate* where respondents who indicated they desire a state level position are coded 1 and respondents who do not want a state government position are labeled 0. Among women respondents, 10.26% desire a state government position. In contrast, 20.59% of men indicated that they would leave their current position in the House for a state government position. These results do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($p < 0.2$). Substantively, my theory does not make predictions about who is more likely to desire a state level position.

My third dependent variable is a dichotomous variable labeled *leavecongressfederal* where respondents who stated they desire to leave their current position in the House to work for a more prestigious position in the federal government are coded 1, while those who did not indicate a desire for a federal level position are coded 0. Among women respondents, 76% indicated a desire for a higher federal position, in contrast to 73% of male respondents. These results do not reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($p < 0.7$). Interestingly, these

results are in the opposite direction of my theory. I theorize that women are more likely to desire a local or state level position rather than federal due to their traditionally low self-efficacy in comparison to men. It is possible that because congressional staffers must display higher levels of ambition/ self-efficacy than the average man or woman, we will not see the same differences in ambition that are shown in those who run for a political office.

My next dependent variable to analyze self-reported ambition from staff in the House of Representatives is a dichotomous variable which asks, “Do you believe there are opportunities for promotion within your current office?” This variable examines if staff who want to stay with their current member, desire a more prestigious position within that office. Among women respondents 40% indicated they would like a higher position in their current office. In contrast, 46% percent of men said they would like to be promoted in their office to a more prestigious position. This difference does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($p < 0.3$). This is likely due to the sample size with only 146 respondents. Although the results are not statistically significant, substantively, the results are in the desired relationship according to my theory that women will self-report lower levels of ambition due to their disproportionate amount of family responsibilities, their lack of self-confidence, and the fact that they are often less likely to be recruited/ encouraged by those in authority (Chief of Staff, Member, or Legislative Director).

To test hypothesis 1D, that men are more likely to be encouraged by their member to pursue a higher position, I use a dichotomous dependent variable *careerencouragement*, which is coded 0 if the respondent stated that their member was not supportive of their advancement into a more prestigious position on the Hill, and 1 if the staffer indicated that their member was supportive of their career advancement. Among women respondents, 75% stated that their current member encouraged their career mobility on the Hill. In contrast, 70% of male

respondents indicated that their member encouraged their career advancement. This result does not reach traditional levels of statistical significance ($p > 0.5$).

Hypothesis 1E states that, “men are more likely to report they want to run for Congress someday.” To test this hypothesis, I use a dichotomous dependent variable *runcongress*, which is coded 1 if the respondent stated that they would someday like to run for Congress, and 0 if the respondent stated they did not have a desire to run for Congress someday. Among women staffers in the survey, 8.7% stated that they would someday like to run for Congress. In contrast, 31.9 percent of men responded that they would like to run for Congress at some point in the future. These results are statistically significant at $p < 0.0$. These results are particularly interesting because they suggest that women staffers are less likely than their male counterparts to display ambition for a key political position in Congress.

To continue to explore the self-reported ambition of congressional staff by gender, I use OLS regression to investigate the relationship between gender and ambition for all the dependent variables listed above. My first dependent variable labeled, *leavecongress* is a dichotomous variable where respondents were asked, “If you were offered a higher position or there was an opportunity for promotion in another office, would you leave your current member’s office?” where those who answered “yes” are coded 1 and respondents who answered “no” are coded 0. Because of the dichotomous nature of my dependent variable, and because my control variables are also dichotomous, there is precedence in the literature which says to use OLS rather than a logit (insert citation here). I use OLS regression to investigate the relationship between gender and ambition among current congressional staffers. Hypothesis 1 predicts that women will be less likely to self-report a desire for a higher office on the Hill. To test hypothesis 1, I include the dummy variable *Female* which is coded 1 if the respondent is female, and 0 if the respondent is male. Hypothesis 1 predicts the coefficient for *female* will be negative and significant. I include a

series of independent variables that could also influence the decision calculus of a staffer to desire a more prestigious position on the Hill. *Married* is a dichotomous variable code 1 if the staffer is married, and 0 if the respondent is single, divorced, or widowed. The variable *children* is also a dichotomous variable which is coded 1 for if the respondent has children and 0 if they do not have any children. The final control variable, *encouragement*, is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the staffer receives encouragement from their current member to pursue a more prestigious position on the Hill.

Table 2: Predictors of Ambition among Female and Male Congressional Staffers

	<i>Model 1: Leave Congressional Office</i>	<i>Model 2: Leave for Local Position</i>	<i>Model 3: Leave for State Position</i>	<i>Model 4: Leave for Federal Position</i>	<i>Model 5: Policy Position</i>	<i>Model 6: Run for Congress</i>
Female	-0.107 (0.082)	0.138* (0.063)	-0.095 (0.089)	0.016 (0.104)	-0.108 (0.108)	0.317*** (0.077)
Married	.278* (0.124)	0.076 (0.085)	-0.063 (0.120)	-0.007 (0.139)	0.063 (0.145)	0.070 (0.095)
Children	-0.362* (0.099)	0.014 (0.092)	0.041 (0.130)	-0.119 (0.139)	-0.255 (0.154)	0.262** (0.102)
Encourage	-0.061 (0.100)	0.099 (0.108)	0.099 (0.108)	0.074* (-0.001)	0.012 (0.127)	0.058 (0.485)
Constant	-11.17 N= 99	0.988 N=68	0.276 N=68	0.988 N=68	0.000 N=129	0.000 N=102

* The model displays OLS coefficient estimates, with errors in parentheses, and p-values to the right of the coefficients. P<0.05

Table 2 presents results. As predicted, the coefficient in model 1 for *female* is negative, but the results are not statistically significant ($p > 0.1$). The likely explanation is because the sample size is only 143. With the results moving in the direction predicted, I believe the coefficient would be significant if I had more respondents for my survey, indicating that women are less likely than their male counterparts to leave their current office for a higher position on the Hill.

Turning to the other explanatory variables that could influence the movement of a congressional staffer to a higher/ more prestigious position, I find in model 2 that the coefficient for *children* is negative and significant ($p > 0.0$), indicating that staffers with children are less likely to report a desire for a higher position on the Hill. This relationship is not based on gender, but rather affects men and women staffers at the same rate. Additionally, I find that the coefficient for *married* is positive and significant, showing that staffers who are married are more likely to report a desire for a more prestigious position on the Hill.

Model 3 explores the results for my test of hypothesis 1B. Hypothesis 1B states that, “Men who report a desire for a more prestigious position on the Hill are more likely to desire a Federal office over State and Local office.” This dependent variable labeled *leavecongresslocal* is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if a respondent desired a local office, and 0 if a respondent did not indicate a desire for a local office. Table 1 presents the results to test Hypothesis 1B in model 2. The coefficient for *female* is positive and significant ($p > 0.03$), indicating that women are more likely than their male counterparts to desire a position at the local level. Other variables such as marriage, children, and encouragement do not impact the decision to report a desire for a local government position. There are no significant differences between men and women in models 3 and 4, indicating that there are no gender differences in the desire to move to a position with the

state or federal government. Additionally, hypothesis 1C states that, “Within personal offices, men are more likely to report a desire for a policy position over communications.” There are no significant gender differences in the self-reported desire to obtain a policy position over a communications position.

Hypothesis 1E states that, “Men are more likely to say they want to run for Congress someday.” The dependent variable for model six labeled, “*runcongress*” is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the respondent indicated that they would like to run for Congress someday, and 0 if they did not. As predicted, the coefficient for *female* is negative and significant ($p > 0.01$), indicating that women are less likely to self-report a desire to run for Congress. Turning to the other explanatory variables that could influence the desire to move from the position of congressional staffer to a run for congress, I find that the coefficient for *children* is negative and significant ($p > 0.0$), indicating that staffers with children are less likely to report a desire to run for Congress someday.

1.7 Empirical Analysis: Legistorm Data

To continue to explore the relationship between gender and ambition among congressional staff, I utilize data collected by an organization called Legistorm. According to the Legistorm bio on their website, “The core of LegiStorm Pro is the industry’s most accurate, timely and comprehensive database of contact and biographical data on congressional staff. We track legislative issues covered, roles and titles, education and work histories, disclosures, social media links, and other contextual information. This ensures that our clients accurately identify the correct staff across member offices, committees and caucuses. Our list-building capabilities allow our clients to quickly and easily create and export custom contact lists.”

After discovering the Legistorm resources, I contacted the CEO of Legistorm, Jock Friedly, who was able to put together a custom database of congressional staff. This database included biographical and career history information on all Hill staff over the years. The earliest records of congressional Staff are those that started in the 50s and 60s, and ranges to recent employees that began in their offices in 2022.

I use this data source to explore the following hypotheses about the relationship between gender and ambition on the Hill.

- H2: Chiefs of Staff are disproportionately male, relative to lower-level staff positions in the House
- H3: Legislative Directors are disproportionately male, relative to lower-level staff positions.
- H4: On average, men will be more likely than women to hold policy-based positions on a member's personal staff.
- H5: On average, women will be more likely than men to hold communications-based positions on a member's personal staff.
- H6: Senate offices are disproportionately male relative to House offices

To test my second hypothesis, that men are more likely than women to hold a Chief of Staff position, I use a chi-squared test to explore the percentages of male and female Chiefs of Staff. Consistent with the hypothesis, men were more likely than women to hold a Chief of Staff position on the Hill, 26% to 20%. These results are statistically significant at ($p > 0.0$). This finding is substantively very important, as Chiefs of Staff have a lot of policy influence on the Hill. House.csod.gov lists a sample of some of the important duties of a Chief of Staff to a Member of Congress. These duties include, serving as the strategic advisor for the member,

leading all legislative, policy, communications, and constituent services strategies for the member, they are the chief policy advisor, they develop and implement all policy objectives for the office, coordinate all activities and staff projects within the office, and coordinates all Member and office activities with the House leadership and various Committees (house.csod.gov). All these responsibilities point to a position with incredible influence over policy for the U.S. Government. Women in politics offer a unique perspective on policy. If women are less likely than men to hold this position, we will see policy that is largely missing a woman's perspective and influence.

Hypothesis three predicts that Legislative Directors are disproportionately male, relative to lower-level staff positions like Legislative Aid, or Staff Assistant. The results from the Legistorm career history data shows that this is indeed the case on the Hill. Among Legislative Directors on the Hill, 12.57% are men, and 9.32% are women. This result is statistically significant at ($p > 0.0$). Legislative Directors are an essential leadership role within a member's personal office. They work closely with the Chief of Staff and are key to formulating a member's legislative strategy and policy goals. The Legislative Director is also largely in charge of managing the performance of a member's legislative team (house.csod.com).

My fourth hypothesis predicts that, on average, men are more likely than women to hold policy-based staff positions on a member's personal staff. Policy-based positions are lower-level positions like Legislative Aid or Legislative Correspondent. Legislative Aid's work closely with the LD and Chief of Staff to formulate policy in their assigned issue areas. They draft and track legislation, brief the Member on important bills that are coming before the House, help the Communications Director draft speeches and important communications statements, represent the Member at meetings with lobbyists or constituents, write floor speeches, and draft memos for

the Member. The data covering this lower-level staff position confirms my fourth hypothesis that men are more likely than women to hold policy-based positions on the Hill, 16% to 14%. This result is statistically significant at ($p > 0.0$). This is substantively important, as staff members in a personal office are key to the development of policy in the U.S. Government. Policy which lacks a woman's perspective and input will ultimately underrepresent women in society.

To continue to better explore the relationship between gender and Ambition on the Hill. I use OLS regression for all the dependent variables listed above. My first dependent variable labeled, *chief* is a dichotomous variable where respondents who hold a Chief of Staff position are coded 1, and those who are not are coded 0. Because of the dichotomous nature of my dependent variable, and because my control variables are also dichotomous, there is precedence in the literature which says to use OLS rather than a logit (insert citation here). I use OLS regression to investigate the relationship between gender and ambition among congressional staffers.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that women will be less likely to hold a Chief of Staff position. To test hypothesis 2, I include the dummy variable *Female* which is coded 1 if the respondent is female, and 0 if the respondent is male. Hypothesis 2 predicts the coefficient for *female* will be negative and significant, indicating that women are less likely to be a Chief of Staff in a member's personal office. I include a series of independent variables that could also influence the career trajectory of a staffer. I include a variable that controls for the year the staffer started on the Hill. *Married* is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if a staffer is married, and 0 if the staffer is unmarried, divorced, or widowed. *Democrat* is a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the staffer identifies as a Democrat, and 0 if the staff is Republican. Finally, *children* are a dichotomous variable coded 1 if the staffer has children, and 0 if they do not have children. I believe each of

these independent variables may influence the decision or ability of women to be promoted to a Chief of Staff position.

Table 3: Predictors of Ambition for Chief of Staff among Female and Male Congressional Staffers

	<i>Model 1: chief</i>	<i>Model 2: legislative director</i>	<i>Model 3: policy</i>
Variables	Coefficient	Coefficient	Coefficient
	(Standard Errors)	(Standard Errors)	(Standard Errors)
Female	-0.00* (0.000)	-0.013* (0.001)	-0.101* (0.089)
Start Year	-0.00* (0.000)	-0.001* (0.001)	-0.001* (0.120)
Democrat	0.00 (0.000)	0.045 (0.092)	0.002 (0.130)
Married	-0.004* (0.000)	-0.000* (0.108)	0.018* (0.108)
Children	0.001* (0.001)	-0.003	-0.102*
Constant	0.446 N= 99,564	0.543 N=99.564	0.517 N=64,492

* The model displays OLS coefficient estimates, with errors in parentheses, and p-values to the right of the coefficients. P<0.05

Table 2 presents the results to test my next set of hypotheses that women are less likely to hold a position as Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, or to hold a policy-based position. As predicted by my theory the coefficient in models one, two, and three for *female* are negative, and statistically significant ($p > 0.1$). This indicates that on the Hill, women are less likely to be Chiefs

of Staff, Legislative Directors, or to work as “policy staff” which includes legislative aids, and legislative correspondents.

Turning to the other explanatory variables that could influence the movement of a congressional staffer to a higher/ more prestigious position, I find in all the models that the coefficient for *start year and marriage* are negative and significant ($p > 0.0$), indicating that staffers who are married are less likely to hold these more prestigious positions. This relationship is not based on gender, but rather affects men and women staffers at the same rate. Additionally, staffers who have children are less likely to hold a policy position. Again, this relationship does not just affect women, but impacts male staffers at the same rate.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter explored both women’s self-reported desire for a more prestigious position, but also looked at the career data on where men and women are serving on the Hill. For self-reported desire for higher office, women are less likely than men to report a desire to run for Congress someday. The coefficients for the other dependent variables are in the predicted direction, but do not reach standard levels of statistical significance. Among women currently and formerly on the Hill, the career data from Legistorm shows that women are less likely to hold Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, and policy-based positions. This is important because each of those positions are instrumental to the development of law in the United States. Without women in these positions, we as a nation are missing a crucial set of beliefs, experiences, and values in our policy.

Limitations/ Next Steps

Like any dissertation, there are many limitations faced during this project. One of the big problems with this project is the data provided through Legistorm. There was a lot of missing

data in the files purchased through this organization, which makes it very hard to say anything conclusive about what is happening with staff using this data.

The survey provided a solid first look into what is happening with ambition and congressional staff. However, I would like to expand this survey, with the hope of getting more responses from staff. With a lot of congressional offices having a “no-survey policy,” I was limited in my data with current staff. To expand these results, I think it could be interesting to survey former staff. This would remove the issue of the “no-survey” policy, and in my experience with interviews, former staff are much more open and honest with their responses. Second, I would have liked to be able to capture a variable to measure “self-efficacy” in staff, as this is theoretically important for women.

2 THE QUALIFICATIONS GAP AND WOMEN CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

2.1 Introduction

“In 1988, leadership was putting together the staff to go to the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta that year. All the guys were getting their travel arrangements made, and getting ready to go, and they were doing pre-convention meetings, and I’m like, ‘Well, what am I, chopped liver?’ I went to Tony [Coelho] and I said, ‘I think I ought to go to the convention.’ And he just—same thing—looks at me and goes, ‘Well, yes, of course.’ But somebody had to tell them. The guys didn’t think about it. I was the afterthought, and I think it’s because I was the girl.” Rochelle Dornatt January 18, 2017 (Office of the Historian).

Rochelle Dornatt served as a congressional staffer for over 35 years working her way up from Legislative Assistant to Chief of Staff to Sam Farr from 1993-2017. Dornatt’s quote from an interview conducted by the Office of the Historian for the House of Representatives in 2017 highlights a brief portion of the uphill battle female congressional staff climb to be noticed and promoted on the Hill. This uphill battle is made even more difficult due to the intrinsic need of women to feel “qualified” for higher office. Women are often told that to be successful they need to work harder and gain qualifications before they make any large steps in their political careers. Like Linda Melconian who was one of the first women staff members to hold floor privileges in all three House leadership offices. When Melconian indicated to her member that she was ready to dive deeper into the political arena, she was told, “If you’re going to run, you’ve got to get a law degree, because that’s how you will be treated. In terms of the law degree—it’s a professional degree. It will give you more equal status in the perception of men.”

The disproportionate expectations placed on women both in society and within the hierarchy on the Hill leads to what is known as a “qualifications gap” among women in congressional offices.

This chapter examines differences between the qualifications of male and female staffers who hold similar leadership positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director. I expect to find that all else equal, female staffers have higher levels of qualification and more experience than men who hold equivalent positions. These qualifications come in the form of years of experience on the Hill, and the various levels of education completed. Compared to men, women tend to think that they lack the skills and resources to successfully achieve higher positions (Fox and Lawless 2014). Because women lack this confidence, they emphasize gaining the proper credentials and experience (Pearson & McGhee 2013). As a result, they spend more time becoming better-qualified candidates for an advanced position before formally seeking that position (Pearson & McGhee 2013; Fulton et. al, 2006). There is a Darwinian effect in which the additional barriers women face may result in only the most qualified women advancing through the hierarchy to hold top positions (Anzia and Berry 2011). Thus, I expect to find the gendered “qualification gap” to be widest in the highest-level positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director.

2.2 Theory

The gendered qualifications gap for women in politics refers to the disproportionate expectations and qualifications placed on women who choose to run for office (Baur 2020). Despite the major improvements to women’s success in politics over the years, women still face a number of barriers to their political careers that men simply do not. Women work hard to

overcome the qualifications barriers that they believe exist, and in turn become candidates and employees with more and better qualifications than their male counterparts.

Women observe the qualifications of those around them and fight for better, more prestigious positions. “I remember thinking working on the Hill was the greatest job in the world, and I just eventually wanted to have a bigger, more important job. The Member—all the big jobs on Capitol Hill were held by men, and most of them had law degrees. So, I figured out, “Well, I’ll go to law school.” But I didn’t want to leave the Hill, so I went to law school at night while I worked at Capitol Hill. I got it both ways.” Muriel Morisey, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives. “The gendered qualifications gap refers to the differences in the quality of female and male political candidates and elected officeholders. Women, on average, far outpace men in qualifications” (Bauer 2020). In elections, women tend to have more political experience (Fulton et al. 2006), and more professional background experience than men (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013). Women will work harder to gain the proper qualifications to fight against voter bias (Anzia and Berry 2012), but despite all of that, even highly qualified women win a smaller share of the vote during an election than their less qualified male counterparts (Pearson and McGhee 2013).

Women in the Workforce:

Women in politics, and women in the professional workforce tend to be overqualified and underappreciated/ promoted (Campbell 2022). While companies, political parties, and those with hiring power may become more aware of the gendered qualifications gap, this awareness is often not enough to compensate for the fact that women feel they need to overcome these barriers and stereotypes by gaining the “proper qualifications” before they can succeed.

Today's business world still operates under the belief that women are not as capable as their male counterparts (Williams 2014). According to the U.S. Department of Labor, women make up over half of the current workforce. Regardless of the increased presence of women in all careers, men are still more likely than women to hold positions of power and authority (Adler 1994; Avolio 2009; Williams 2014). Women who do hold leadership positions are more likely to view themselves as unqualified for their position (Bosak 2008). While many have thought this gender disparity in the workforce is a problem of the past, gender discrimination is still very much alive and well.

Women in Leadership Positions on the Hill:

For female congressional staff, "previous Hill experience is considered the most valuable qualification for senior staff positions, and staff are generally hired from within the Capitol Hill community and even within an office (Gale 2014; Ritchie and Young You 2021). The Hill is known for their high rate of turnover among Congressional staff, as burnout on the Hill is very common. The average House office keeps their staff for around two years, meaning there should be plenty of opportunities for women to move up the congressional hierarchy (Richie and Young You 2021). While the pipeline of women congressional staff may not be the problem, there is still a disproportionate number of men in key leadership positions on the Hill, while women are more likely to hold communications positions. Why might women congressional staff have more and better qualifications than their male counterparts? This question is well established among women who run for political office, but also applies to women in non-elected political positions. There are three well-established reasons for a gendered qualifications gap, which are gendered socialization, institutional barriers, and stereotypes.

Gendered Socialization:

Gendered socialization affects how women think about their capabilities in politics and the regular work force. We teach women about what their “role” is in society. What the proper behaviors are, and what they are capable of. From an early age, children can identify activities that are “male” or “female” (Bigler and Lieben 2006). We treat children differently based on gender impacts how they view their capabilities later in life. Prior research shows that society is more likely to praise boys for showing leadership characteristics than girls (Sadker and Zittleman 2009). When my son is loud, outgoing, and active, those around us praise him for being “all boy.” Whereas my friends with little girls his same age are praised for being able to sit quietly with their toys.

These gendered social cues worsen as children age. Activities children participate in during High School can shape children’s futures. Choosing to participate in groups such as debate, sports, student council, etc. will foster the interests and passions they choose to explore in college and beyond (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2004) In college, men are more likely to pursue political careers, while women shift away from politics (Fox and Lawless 2014). Women in male dominated fields like political science, computer science, or engineering, are less likely to receive mentorship and encouragement to continue to excel in these fields (Baird 2008).

Women are pushed into positions that favor female qualities and topics like working with the community rather than political leadership (Holman and Schneider 2018; Schneider et al. 2016; Silva and Skulley 2019). Because of the disproportionate expectations society places on women in the early ages of life and their careers, women often view themselves as lacking the qualifications necessary to pursue a political office, even when they have the same or similar qualifications as men (Lawless 2012). “A woman’s view that they are not qualified to run for political office continues from adolescence into adulthood and persists when they decide to

initially run for office” (Fulton et al. 20016). This dynamic continues when women eventually decide to run for a higher or “more prestigious” political position (Maestas et al. 2006). Because women view their qualifications more negatively than men, they tend to wait until later in life to run for office, usually when their kids are older, or when they view their qualifications as more developed (Fox and Lawless 2014).

Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes influence external evaluations of a woman’s capability on the Hill, but also impacts their internal self-efficacy, likely influencing a woman’s need to gain the proper qualifications before seeking promotion. A key part to the lack of self-confidence engrained in women at a young age are the gender stereotypes women face in their personal lives and at work. To achieve promotions and overcome the intrinsic sense of self-doubt, women must also overcome the perception that being “feminine” is somehow wrong or weak. Character traits like being “emotional”, “talkative,” or “feminine,” are often looked down upon in society (Deaux and Lewis 1984). In fact, character traits that are typically viewed as “masculine,” like being “confident”, “tough,” or “assertive” are often preferred (Broverman et al. 1972). This preference towards characteristics that are typically” male” can transfer into also favoring applications coming from men (Foschi et al. 1994; Goldberg 1968; Foschi 1996).

The political world also rewards candidates who show masculine qualities like being assertive or aggressive (Conroy 2015; Dittmar 2015), the Hill is a similar environment. Those who are given promotions and are noticed by Chiefs of Staff, and those with the hiring power, are those that advocate for themselves, are assertive and aggressive. Those qualifications are not always the best in practice (Guttmann and Thompson 2012). In fact, the characteristics of women

like being able to compromise with others are important to the legislative process (Eagly and Carli 2003).

As silly as it sounds in 2023, women's qualifications are also judged based on their choice of clothing. While many women candidates have been scrutinized based on their clothing while running for election, this stereotype and barrier does not exist solely for women in the public eye, but also extends to congressional staff. Rochelle Dornatt, Chief of Staff to Representative Sam Farr commented about the issue in 2017 stating,

“She got in the habit of wearing black or navy blue suits every single day she was at work, because that’s how the lobbyists and the Members related to the staff, because all the guys wore black or navy blue suits every day, and so did she. And I’m not sure that she really enjoyed it, but that’s one of the ways she broke through: because she looked like all the others. Women—you have to think about it before you go into these things. It’s crazy”

Women in all levels of government are consistently told to stand down, fit in, go with the flow, “do not be too feminine.” Regardless of how qualified a woman is for their position, they face stereotypes from the way they speak, to the way they act and dress.

Women internalize the external and internal gender stereotypes, and therefore limit their progress in a variety of fields (Correll 2001). For example, women are less likely to believe they can own their own business (Thebaud 2010), are less likely to enter the engineering field because a lack of confidence (Cech et al. 2011), are more likely than men to believe they have done poorly on exams (Kay and Shipman 2014), and overall view themselves as “less capable” compared to men (Mendelberg and Karpowitz 2016). This “confidence gap” is one of the primary factors that drives women to focus more on their qualifications than men.

While women view themselves as less qualified than their male counterparts, research suggests that external actors also view women as less qualified than men in the workforce. For example, experimental research finds that employers negatively evaluate resumes if the name on the document is female (Reuben et al. 2014, Moss-Racusin et al. 2012). Additionally, women's performance is evaluated less on their qualifications and more on their "social skills" (Phelan et al. 2008), or in academic fields their ability was negatively evaluated in academic fields (Leslie et al. 2015). The stereotypes and negative evaluations of women in the workforce lead to a world where women believe they must work harder and gain the proper qualifications before moving up in their various positions.

These stereotypes also apply to women in politics. Women in politics receive criticism for their lack of qualifications, but on average, have more qualifications compared to men who are running for the same position (Anzia and Berry 2011; Estrand and Exkert 1981; Fulton 2012, 2014; Bauer)

Institutional Barriers

Women who decide to enter the political arena face personal barriers to success, but also institutional barriers based on the way institutions choose to recruit candidates and support them. Political parties are more likely to support male candidates than women candidates. Even when there is an effort to recruit more female candidates, Republican women are half as likely as men to respond favorably to these recruitment efforts. The effort to recruit Democratic women does increase their participation in politics (Preece, et al. 2016).

Unfortunately, political elites recruit men at a disproportionate rate and often fail to encourage female candidates to run for office. Historically, political elites are more likely to encourage and recruit the candidates that they want to see in office (Broockman 2014). Because

most party leaders are male, they primarily recruit male candidates (Sanbonmatsu 2006). When party elites choose candidates, they often place greater emphasis on qualifications and personal relationships. For female candidates, elites often take these requirements more seriously and therefore place greater emphasis on qualifications and personal relationships, which often favors men. Lawless and Fox (2010) show that when political elites fail to recruit female candidates, this decreases women's willingness to run for higher office. While these findings primarily speak to the initial decision to run for a political office, their effects are also seen when a female candidate and the desire for higher office.

Political parties often fail to recruit female candidates because they do not believe they can win their elections (Sanbonmatsu 2006). Because of this, women often put pressure on themselves to gain the "proper" or "superior" qualifications to be placed on parties' radar as viable candidates (Sanbonmatsu 2006). Men do not face these issues because they are more likely to volunteer themselves for political office and place themselves in the candidate pool for parties to choose (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2013; Crowder-Meyer 2013). Directly encouraging women to run for office is an effective way to increase the number of female candidates running for office (Karpowitz, Monson, and Preece 2017).

Impact of Gendered Socialization, Gendered Stereotypes, and Institutional Barriers:

Even though women view their qualifications as "sub-par", they often have more or greater qualifications than men. Studies of women in the workforce find that on average, women entrepreneurs are better educated than their male counterparts and are more likely to be self-employed and own their own businesses (Cowling and Taylor 2001). Despite this finding, in waged employment, men were significantly more likely to be managers or in leadership positions (Cowling and Taylor 2001).

Gendered socialization, stereotypes, and institutional barriers, cause women to become more risk averse than men, even if they have similar or better qualifications than their male counterparts (Kanthak and Woon 2015). Women's lack of self-confidence often translates into situations where they avoid more risk than men. Therefore, women are less likely to run for higher office, or seek a promotion because they are more risk averse. Running for higher office, asking for promotion, or leaving their current job is risky for women because they are not guaranteed to be successful. Due to their aversion to risk, women will often only run for office when they believe their chances of winning the election are high (Fulton et al. 2006, Sanbonmatsu 2006; Elder 2012).

When women sense that there are stereotypes or barriers that prevent them from successful promotion, women will emphasize gaining a certain level of expertise and quality (Fulton 2010). Specifically, women who are running for political office view the electoral playing field as more competitive and difficult for women (CPAS 2011; Sanbonmatsu et al. 2009).

2.3 Hypotheses

From the theory above, I developed several hypotheses about how I expect the qualifications gap to work among congressional staff.

H1: Women are more likely than men to attend training programs and workshops before moving to a more prestigious position on the Hill.

H2: Women are more likely than men to highly value gaining the proper credentials and experience before applying for a promotion on the Hill.

H3: Men, on average, are more likely than women to be recruited into their current position based on personal connections.

H4: Women are more likely than men to have graduated from an Ivy League University

H4A: Men are more likely than women to hold a generic bachelor's degree.

H5: Women are more likely to hold an advanced degree (MA, JD, PhD, MD)

H6: Women in Chief of Staff positions on average are more likely than men to hold an advanced degree (MA, JD, PhD, MD).

H7: Women in Legislative Director positions on average are more likely than men to hold an advanced degree (MA, JD, PhD, MD)

H8: Women in Chief of Staff positions are more likely than men to hold an Ivy League Degree.

H9: Women in Legislative Director Positions on average are more likely than men to hold an Ivy League Degree.

H10: On average, women who reach Chief of Staff or Legislative Director positions will have spent more time on the Hill.

2.4 Empirical Analysis: Survey Data

To explore the relationship between gender and the importance of qualification and experience among Congressional staff, I use data from a survey of current congressional staff for members of the House of Representatives. The dataset includes members from personal offices on the Hill and in the district. The contacts for this survey were collected using the U.S. House of Representatives Telephone Directory 2021 which is compiled by the Clerk of the House of Representatives. This published document includes the names and telephone numbers of all staff from that year who work within the House. From there, I was able to use the standard email format for the House of Representatives (firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov) to compile my survey recipient list. I used Qualtrics to format my survey, and then sent out the email request with the survey link via my GSU faculty email address. In total, I sent nine thousand emails. One thousand of them got sent back to me with staff who have left their current office or retired from

their staff position. Two hundred and sixty-eight staffers completed the survey. While this is not a large response rate, there is precedent for this sample size for data using a survey of congressional staff (Jensen 2011).

Table 4: Survey Demographics
Total Respondents: 268

Gender	Men- 26%	Women- 33%
Age	20-30- 49%	41-50- 10%
	31-40- 10%	50+- 14%
Race	White- 73%	Non-White- 27%
Marital Status	Married- 34%	Not Married- 65%
Children	Yes- 29%	No- 71%
Education	High School- 11%	Post-Graduate- 27%
	College- 30%	

As discussed above, I predict that women will place a greater emphasis on gaining the proper qualifications and experience before they pursue a higher office on the Hill. Additionally, while women are promoted to upper-level positions based on their qualifications, men will be more likely to be recruited into their current position because of personal connections. My staffer survey included four questions which asked about qualifications and one question which asks about recruitment for higher positions; these questions produced 5 dependent variables. The questions which asked about qualifications are:

- “Have you ever attended a training program or workshop for advancement on the Hill?”

- “If you were to consider moving to a different office for a more prestigious position, how important would it be for you to ensure you had the qualifications necessary?”
- “How did you get/apply for your current position?”
- “What type of experience do you believe you need to gain before you hold/ apply for a higher position?”
- “Prior to working on the Hill, what was your most recent place of employment?”

To test my first hypothesis, I ask the survey respondents, “Have you ever attended a training program or workshop for advancement on the Hill?” Consistent with hypothesis one, women were more likely than men to attend a training program for advancement on the Hill, 47% to 61%, this result is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This finding is consistent with my theory that women will value gaining the proper credentials and experience before seeking advancement on the Hill. Attending a training program shows initiative, that women are interested in moving up the congressional hierarchy, but also that they are willing to seek the skills and connections necessary before taking that step.

To test hypothesis two, I ask the survey respondents to indicate how important it is to them to gain the proper credentials and experience before seeking advancement on the Hill. According to the survey results, 53% of women thought that gaining the proper experience was very important to their decision to apply for promotion. 55% of men indicated that gaining the proper experience before promotion was very significant. This result does not reach standard levels of statistical significance ($p > 0.81$), indicating that there is not a reportable difference between how men and women self-report the importance of qualifications for promotion.

Finally, to test hypothesis three, that men are more likely than women to be recruited for their current promotion on the Hill, I ask respondents to indicate how they received their

promotion. Respondents who indicated that they were recruited directly for the position, versus those who applied for their promotion through normal channels. Among respondents, 46% of women were recruited to their current promotion versus 48% of men. This result does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($p > 0.8$).

To continue to explore the relationship between qualifications and experience among congressional staffers, I use OLS regression to investigate the relationship between gender and qualifications for all the dependent variables listed above. My first dependent variable labeled, *training*, is a dichotomous variable where respondents who answered that they attended a training program for advancement on the Hill, were coded 1 and respondents who answered that they have not attended a training program were coded 0. Because of the dichotomous nature of my dependent variable, and because my control variables are also dichotomous, there is precedence in the literature which says to use OLS rather than a logit (Gomila 2021). Hypothesis one predicts that women will be more likely to attend a training program for promotion on the Hill. To test hypothesis one, I include a dummy variable *Female* which is coded 1 if the respondent is female, and 0 if the respondent is male. Hypothesis one predicts the coefficient for *female* will be negative and significant. I include a series of independent variables that could also influence the decision to gain more and better qualifications to seek promotion. The variables *married* and *children* are both dichotomous variables labeled 1 if the respondent is married or has children, and 0 if they do not. Finally, I also control for the age of the respondent, and the level of education they have completed (college or graduate school).

Table 5: Differences in Qualifications among Female and Male Congressional Staffers

	Model 1: Training Program	Model 2: Importance of Qualifications	Model 3: Recruited for Current Position	Model 4: Education
Variables	Coefficient (Standard Errors)	Coefficient (Standard Errors)	Coefficient (Standard Errors)	Coefficient (Standard Errors)
Female	0.162* (0.079)	-0.013 (0.086)	0.049 (0.114)	-0.120 (0.075)
Married	.0106 (0.104)	0.020 (0.117)	-0.064 (0.153)	-0.101 (0.102)
Age	-0.246* (0.100)	0.091 (0.109)	0.040 (0.142)	0.164 (0.109)
Education	-0.009 (0.067)	0.060 (0.125)	0.081 (0.096)	-
Children	-.708* (0.109)	0.631 (0.121)	0.133 (0.163)	0.164 (0.072)
Constant	0.708 N= 159	0.631 N=143	0.158 N=146	0.818 N=149

* The model displays OLS coefficient estimates, with errors in parentheses, and p-values to the right of the coefficients. P<0.05

Table five presents the results for all dependent variables. Model 1 explores hypothesis one in more detail, that women are more likely than their male counterparts to participate in training programs for advancement on the Hill. As predicted, the coefficient in model one for *female* is positive and significant, indicating that even when we control for marriage, age, education, and children, women are more likely than men to attend these training programs for promotion. Turning to the other explanatory variables in model one which influence the value a congressional staffer places on qualifications and experience, I find that the coefficient for age and children are negative and significant, indicating that staffers who are older and have children are less likely to seek out and attend training programs for advancement on the Hill. Similar to the chi square results presented at the beginning of this analysis, the results for models two,

three, and four do not produce statistically significant results, indicating that there is no real difference between how men and women value qualifications, their recruitment into their current position, or the level of education they obtained.

Discussion:

The findings on the relationship between qualifications and recruitment for the survey of current congressional staff produced mixed results. On the one hand, women are more likely to seek out training programs which will prepare them for promotion on the Hill. However, when it comes to reporting the importance of gaining proper qualifications and credentials for promotion, women are no more likely than men to view this as an important steppingstone to higher office. Additionally, there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in their level of recruitment for their current office, or the amount of education they have completed.

2.5 Empirical Analysis: Legistorm Data

To continue to explore the relationship between gender and qualifications among congressional staff, I utilize data collected by an organization called Legistorm, which includes a comprehensive database of biographical data on congressional staff. Data for this chapter from Legistorm includes career tracking information, demographic information such as age, marital status, race, and gender, and education information and career history to explore how qualifications vary between men and women.

After discovering the Legistorm resources, I contacted the CEO of Legistorm, Jock Friedly, who was able to put together a custom database of congressional staff. This database included biographical and career history information on all Hill staff over the years. The earliest records of congressional Staff are those that started in the 50s and 60s, and ranges to recent employees that began in their offices in 2022.

To test my fourth hypothesis, that women on average are more likely than men to graduate from an Ivy League University, I use a chi-squared test to explore the percentages of male and female staff. Consistent with the hypothesis, women on average were more likely than men to have graduated from an Ivy League University, 5.25% to 4.02%. These results are statistically significant at ($p > 0.0$). Substantively, these results are important because they indicate that graduating from an Ivy League University is an extra qualification that women hold in comparison to men. Women are working hard to place themselves in a position where they are employable and have the desired qualifications for a staffer in a Congressional Office.

Hypothesis 4A predicts that women are less likely than men to have fewer educational achievements like an undergraduate degree or a professional degree. Consistent with this hypothesis, 3.7% of women on the Hill do not have a college education or advanced degree in comparison with 4.5% of men. This result is statistically significant ($p > 0.5$). This result indicates that women are more likely than men to graduate from college, gaining this qualification/experience before they begin work on the Hill.

To test my fifth hypothesis, that women staff are more likely than their male counterparts to hold an advanced degree (MA, JD, PhD, MD), I again use a chi-squared test to explore the percentage of male to female staff in this category of education. Contrary to my hypothesis, 2.9% of women staffers on average hold an advanced degree compared to the 3.5% of male staffers ($p > 0.0$). This finding is statistically significant, and indicates that on average, men are more likely than women to have an advanced degree (MA, JD, PhD, MD).

Hypotheses six and seven predict that among women who become Chief of Staff and Legislative Directors are more likely than men to hold an advanced degree. This hypothesis is breaking down the finding in hypothesis two into women who hold leadership positions within a

Congressional office. Among Chiefs of Staff, 1.7% of women hold an advanced degree, compared to 3.3% of men. This result does not reach standard levels of significance and is in the opposite direction of my stated hypothesis. Among Legislative Directors, 3.7% of women and 3.2% of men hold advanced degrees. While this finding is moving in the stated direction of my hypothesis, the results are not statistically significant, indicating that there is no real difference in those that hold an advanced degree (MA, JD, PhD, MD) between men and women who are Legislative Directors on the Hill.

Hypotheses eight and nine predict that women who reach the leadership positions Chief of Staff and Legislative Director are more likely than their male counterparts to hold an Ivy League degree. Among Chiefs of Staff, 3.7% of women hold an Ivy League Degree compared to 5% of male Chiefs of Staff. This result is not statistically significant and ($p>0.2$) indicates that there is no real difference between men and women who are Chiefs of Staff and hold an Ivy League education. Among Legislative Directors, 2.6% of women hold an Ivy League degree compared to 6% of men. These results are statistically significant ($p>0.05$), but run contrary to hypothesis six, that women Legislative Directors are more likely than men to have an Ivy League education.

My last set of hypotheses (10 & 11) predict that when women reach Chief of Staff and Legislative Director positions, they will have spent more cumulative years on the Hill than their male counterparts. Among Chiefs of staff, women on average have been on the Hill for 12 years compared to men's average of 15 years, indicating that men are actually serving longer on the Hill. A similar relationship exists for Legislative Directors, with women serving on average 11 years on the Hill to men's 13 years of experience. This trend continues throughout the various positions on the Hill, from Legislative Assistants to Fellows and Administrative Assistants, men consistently spend longer on the Hill.

Discussion:

This analysis produced mixed results on the importance of qualifications for women congressional staff. On the one hand, women are more likely than men to hold Ivy League degrees and are on average more likely to have a college education. However, male staffers are more likely than women to hold advanced degrees. The differences in qualifications are even less pronounced among staffers in higher level positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director. Among these groups, there are no differences in the level of education between men and women. Interestingly, congressional staffers may not face the same level of pressure that women candidates do which causes candidates to place a greater emphasis on their qualifications before running for office.

2.6 Conclusion

There is a long history of scholarship in political science which emphasizes the importance of qualifications for women in politics. Especially for women who choose to run for office, society places a disproportionate amount of expectations on women which leads to a “gendered qualifications gap.” Women typically outpace their male counterparts in education and political experience (Baur 2020). Women in the workforce and in politics experience the pressures of gendered socialization and stereotypes which typically pushes them to gain the “proper” qualifications before making any big political or professional steps.

At the start of this chapter, I theorized that women congressional staff would feel the pressure of gendered socialization, lack of confidence, gendered stereotypes, and institutional barriers similarly to women who run for political office. However, the mixed results from both my survey and the Legistorm data seems to indicate that congressional staff may not experience the same limitations as women who run for office. Women do not hold more and better degrees,

and they have spent less time on the Hill by the time they reach leadership positions like Chief of Staff and Legislative Director. While this is bad for my hypotheses, this is a very interesting finding for the advancement of women in politics. As it appears with this first slice of the data, women congressional staff do not experience the same personal and institutional barriers to their careers on the Hill. I imagine this could be because many staffers start as interns on the Hill and work their way up to senior level staff positions, which places men and women on a more “equal” playfield. Additionally, it could be that congressional staff are more ambitious than the average person.

Limitations/Next Steps

Like any dissertation, there are many limitations faced during this project. One of the big problems with this project is the data provided through Legistorm. There was a lot of missing data in the files purchased through this organization, which makes it very hard to say anything conclusive about what is happening with staff using this data.

For this chapter there are many areas where I would have liked to continue the analysis of qualifications and congressional staff but did not have the necessary data. First, there was a huge lack of independent variables to consider in this analysis. Theoretically with qualifications, I would have liked to look at a broader set of factors that may influence qualifications like self-confidence, recruitment networks, or stereotypes. Second, I would have liked to dive deeper into the “start date” variable for staff. In its current form, the “start date” variable only captures the year that each staffer began on the Hill. A better analysis would have been to look at how many years each staffer spent on the Hill by the time they began their position as a Chief of Staff or Legislative Director. Additionally, I would have liked to look at the types of positions on the Hill that staffers held before they were hired into leadership positions like Chief of Staff and

Legislative Director. This would have given me the opportunity to see if women are more likely than their male counterparts to hold more or better positions between when they began on the Hill, and when they were hired for leadership positions. Each of these extensions to the data are important areas for continued research on the potential for a qualifications gap among congressional staff.

3 REVOLVING DOOR LOBBYING AND WOMEN CONGRESSIONAL STAFF

3.1 Introduction

Interest groups and lobbyists play an important role in government and the policy making process. They are crucial for placing issues on the legislative agenda (Jones and Baumgartner 2005), and for discussing and framing issues for the media (Flothe 2020). Because Members of Congress are constrained in their time and resources (Grim and Siddiqui 2013), lobbyists can step up and provide critical information to Members which can allow them to heavily influence the policy-making process (DeGregorio 1988; Malbin 1980; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017).

Given the important role lobbyists play in the legislative process, it is important to consider gender within this context. The importance of descriptive representation is well documented among legislatures (Mansbridge 1999; Pitkin 1967). Yet, the importance of descriptive representation does not only apply to legislatures, but also to lobbying. Given the influence lobbyists have over policy, it is important for democracy to ensure that lobbyists come from a diverse set of backgrounds. Lobbyists serve as issue advocates and are an important link between citizens and their representatives. Even though lobbyists work for individual firms, their issue advocacy can have a direct influence on people in American society.

W.M. Junk et al, argue that the underrepresentation of women in political advocacy is as problematic as the underrepresentation of women in legislatures because the descriptive representation of lobbyists affects the legitimacy of democratic decision-making in a number of ways. First, legitimacy is based partially on if the political actors represent the make-up of society (Blochel and Berthier 2020). Second, Policy decisions that are made by a descriptively

diverse set of representatives are considered more legitimate by citizens (Arnesen and Peters 2018).

Currently, there is a lack of female representation in the lobbying profession. Women hold about 37% of lobbying positions at the federal level (Lapira et al. 2020), and only about 29% of state lobbying positions (Lucas and Hyde 2012). Given the importance of diverse representation in all areas of the policy process, it is important to continue to explore where women lobbyists fall in their lobbying careers, and the impact women bring to lobbying. This chapter seeks to fill in some of our understanding of women and the lobbying profession through a look into the gendered influences on the way congressional staff move through the “revolving door” and take lobbying positions, as well as the policy topics lobbying firms recruit staff into. We know already that women are less likely than men to become lobbyists (Lapira et al. 2020; Lucas and Hyde 2012), but currently nothing has looked at the rate at which women congressional staff leave their current offices.

I believe there are a couple of related factors lead to women being less likely to move through the revolving door. First, lobbying hires are heavily network dependent: new lobbyists are typically recruited and hired by existing lobbyists who they know personally. As with other areas, homophily and sexism within recruitment networks result in women being less likely to be recruited into these positions. Second, women’s lower level of self-efficacy means they will be less likely to advocate for themselves in trying to attain lobbying positions. Third, women lobbyists will be offered less money than their male counterparts, making the decision to move less desirable. Combined, these two factors should result in fewer women staffers becoming lobbyists than men. Because women congressional staffers are more likely to work on “women’s issues” like education and healthcare during their time on the Hill (Ritchie and Young You

2021), their policy expertise is going to be primarily on “women’s issues.” In addition to women being more likely to advocate for “women’s issues” in politics, (Swers 1998; Dolan 1998; Swers 2005; Frederick 2011; Reingold and Swers 2011). I believe that when women staffers do leave the Hill, they will do so to lobby on traditional “women’s issues.”

I hope to explain this expected gender disparity among lobbyists both in those who are likely to move through the revolving door, and the topics they are likely to lobby on given their policy expertise during their time on the Hill. From this existing literature, I created a distinct set of questions which I will explore throughout this chapter of my dissertation. First, are women less likely than men to move through the revolving door? Do differences in self-confidence, and support/ recruitment networks play a role in this gender disparity? In answering these questions, I also look at a related issue such as which issues do women lobby on when they make it through the revolving door?

3.2 Theory

While studies of how lobbyists represent organized interests as well as various demographic groups has been a fascination of political scientists for years, revolving door lobbying provides a somewhat more recent interest with the first well known test of the “revolving door hypothesis” coming from Gormley in 1979. Gormley found that policymakers who had worked in the broadcast industry were more likely to side with the industry’s regulations and positions. Springing off Gormley’s work, many others began to explore the dynamics of revolving door lobbying (Quirk 1981; Cohen 1986; Salisbury et al, 1989; McGuire 2000; Lazarus and McKay 2012, etc), though most of these studies focus on just a few government institutions or specific policy areas. Defenders of revolving door lobbying argue that these lobbyists provide important experiences and expertise to the policy process because of their

experiences working for members of Congress, which can better represent constituent interests (Mansbridge 1992; LaPira and Thomas 2014). These “revolving door lobbyists” are often seen as having a “leg up” because of the network they developed as staffers.

Studies continue to show the policy advantages of revolving door lobbying for clients they represent. One of the broader studies of revolving door lobbying by Heinz et al (1993) found that about 70% of revolving door lobbyists indicated that their experience in government and the policy process gave them an advantage in issue and procedural knowledge. Additionally, Baumgartner et al (2009) find that working with lobbyists who have previous government experience has a significant influence on policy success. Later work continues to show that revolving door lobbyists are successful in advocating for policy on their desired interests. Lazarus and McKay (2012) find that revolving door lobbyists increase earmarked federal money for universities. Lobbyists who previously worked for a member of Congress earn more money than lobbyists without this experience (Blanes i Vidal et al. 2012). Overall, the government experience and contacts held by those who have previous experience on the Hill allow for advantages that lobbyists without that experience and connections do not have, like a more diverse set of clients (LaPira et al 2014).

Lobbyists who leave their positions as congressional staff have valuable personal connections. Lobbyists are valuable because of the information and expertise they provide to the policy process (Ainsworth 1993; Austen-Smith and Wright 1992; Cotton 2015; Schnakenberg 2015). Lobbyists tend to target their legislative allies, those they have already built a relationship with during their time in a congressional office (Hall and Deardorff 2006) Lobbyists who come from congressional staff positions do well within their lobby firms bringing in a substantial amount of money compared to those who do not start within a congressional office (Blanes et al.

2012), and typically have higher salaries (Blanes et al. 2012). Overall, revolving door lobbyists provide a unique perspective and expertise to policy advocacy (LaPira and Thomas 2017).

Lobbying and Gender: The Importance of Female Lobbyists

Evidence surrounding gender biases in lobbying show that political advocacy currently is male dominated (LaPira et al. 2019). According to LaPira et al. (2019), only 37% of registered lobbyists are women. This lack of diversity in organized interests has descriptive and substantive effects. Representation is a central concept to American democracy today. Although various definitions of representation exist, one of the best summaries for representation is that it occurs when representatives are, “acting in the interest of the represented, in a manner that is responsive to them” (Pitkin 1967, 209). The link between the importance of descriptive and substantive representation has been an important debate since the early 1960s. Pitkin (1967) argues that there are four types of representation (formalistic, symbolic, descriptive, and substantive). Among each of the four types of representation, substantive representation is the only for that guarantees policy that is responsive to the desires of the represented (Pitkin 1967).

Substantive representation occurs when those influencing policy are “acting for” those that they represent (Pitkin 1967). Acting for those that they represent generally refers to policies that representatives choose to pursue. In contrast, descriptive representation is “the ability of groups to elect representatives with similar traits” (Welch and Hibbing 1985). Some argue that descriptive representation should be the goal of policy (Mansbridge 1999). For example, policies that work to advance the interests of women or minorities would be an example of substantive representation, even though the policy may be introduced by a descriptive representation (a woman or minority representative).

While the majority of this literature focuses on elected representatives, fewer women in lobbying has the potential to impact the substantive representation of women's interests in politics. People benefit from having those in government that look like them and have the same background experiences (Mansbridge 1999). Descriptive representation brings numerous benefits for minorities. First, descriptive representation brings communication into contexts where minorities often feel mistrust towards the government (Mansbridge 1999). Having a representative who shares the same experiences and characteristics is linked to greater trust in government (cite). Second, descriptive representation brings new ideas and perspectives to policies where the interests of minorities may be hard to distinguish (Mansbridge 1999). Third, descriptive representation brings a sense of opportunity to "have a say in government" (Mansbridge 1999). Finally, having a diverse ruling body increases the de facto legitimacy of the government (Mansbridge 1999).

The benefits of descriptive and substantive representation can apply to lobbyists as well. Women differ in their policy preferences in two important ways. First, women are more likely to take a liberal stance on policy (Reingold 2000; Johnson and Carroll 1978; Poole and Ziegler 1985) and are more likely to come from more liberal districts (Franulovic 1977; Kelly, St. Germain and Horn 1991). Second, while women's rights policies like abortion rights and equal pay are usually split based on party rather than gender lines, female lawmakers are significantly more likely to support policies that are "feminist" in nature (Diamond 1977; Reingold 2000, 2006; Burrell 1994). Evidence about women in lobbying find similar results. Women lobbyists tend to be more liberal than their male counterparts (Schloman 1990) and use different tactics than men. For example, female lobbyists are more likely than men to engage in electoral activity,

protest activity, coalition activity, and litigation. They are less likely than men to be involved in either drafting legislation or helping to plan legislative strategy (Kay and Schlozman 1990).

Descriptive representation for women is also important for women's substantive representation because it increases the external and internal efficacy of other women. The more women who have a seat at the table, the more likely it is that they will have their policy preferences heard. Women who live in states with female legislators are more likely to feel a sense of efficacy towards the government (Atkeson and Carillo 2007). Lawless (2004) examines the relationship between women in office and female political efficacy. Using NES data from 1980 to 1998, she explores how a connection with a member of Congress increases political efficacy among women. She finds that, "successful women's presence in politics may instill more confidence in women citizens to climb various career ladders. With the link between representation and the presence of women in all areas of government, it is unfortunate that women remain underrepresented in the lobbying profession (Schloman 1990; LaPira et al. 2019). Women will be less likely to move through the "revolving door lobbying process."

This chapter examines gendered influences on the way congressional staff move through the "revolving door" and take lobbying positions, as well as the policy topics lobbying firms recruit staff into. A couple of related factors lead to women being less likely to move through the revolving door. First, lobbying hires are heavily network dependent: new lobbyists are typically recruited and hired by existing lobbyists who they know personally. As with other areas, homophily and sexism within recruitment networks result in women being less likely to be recruited into these positions. Second, women's lower level of self-efficacy means they will be less likely to advocate for themselves in trying to attain lobbying positions. Third, women lobbyists will be offered less money than their male counterparts, making the decision to move

less desirable. Combined, these two factors should result in fewer women staffers becoming lobbyists than men. When women do make the decision to move through the revolving door, they will do so for positions which advocate for stereotypical “women’s issues.”

Revolving door lobbying is heavily dependent on networks, meaning that current lobbyists are influential in the recruitment of new lobbyists (McCrain 2018). This can pose a problem for women, as some evidence suggests that women are less likely than men to be recruited into politics. Lawless and Fox (2010) show that political elites often fail to recruit women. The under recruitment of women into political positions applies to elected positions as well as lobbying, with women holding only about 37% of lobbying positions (Lapira et al. 2020). When political elites do recruit women, they place a greater emphasis on qualifications and personal relationships, which tends to favor men in politics.

A second factor which influences the under representation of women in lobbying is women’s lower self-efficacy. Self-efficacy applied to politics is the confidence that a woman has in his or her qualifications to enter the political arena (Fox and Lawless 2011). Self-efficacy is important to the discussion of revolving door lobbying because “people tend to engage in tasks about which they feel confident and avoid those in which they do not” (Pajares 2002). Women are typically less likely than men to think that they have the political skills and resources to successfully move up in politics (Fox and Lawless 2014), which can impact those who self-select into lobbying.

Building on the literature above, I believe that not only will women congressional staffers be less likely to leave their positions in a member’s office for a position as a lobbyist, but when women do decide to leave their current office for a position as a lobbyist, they will be more likely to advocate and work on “women’s issues.” Revolving door lobbyists are often hired

based on the connections they have, but equally as important, the policy expertise that they bring to the table (McCrain 2018). Congressional staffers who have spent years working on policy for their Member of Congress have naturally gained expertise in whatever areas they were assigned. Unfortunately, there are gender differences in the substantive roles that staffers are assigned (Ritchie and Young You 2021).

Women on the Hill are typically assigned to “women’s issues” within Congressional offices, which gives them a narrower range of substantive issues to gain expertise on to then use in the future. There is a long history of women in politics prioritizing political issues that are typically thought of as, “women’s issues.” Women in office focus on different policy issues than men. Specifically, women bring “women’s issues” such as education and healthcare to the attention of the public and elites (Swers 1998). Women typically prioritize women’s issues like family, children, and education (Carroll 2001; Chodrow 1978; Mueller 1988; Schlozman et al. 1994). Additionally, when surveyed, voters favor female candidates because of how women have historically handled education, healthcare, and topics that deal with children and the elderly (Burell 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002, Swers 2005).

Women tend to bring “women’s issues” such as education and healthcare to the attention of the public and elites (Swers 1998; see also Burell 1993; Sanbonmatsu 2002, Swers 2005). This extends to congressional staff, as women staffers are consistently assigned to cover issues that are considered “women’s issues” more than male staffers. These issues are health, abortion, families, social welfare, education, arts, culture, religion, labor and employment, civil rights and liberties, and law (Ritchie and Young You 2021). The dearth of women in the highest staffing positions in Congress members’ offices likely contributes to the relative lack of attention

Congress devotes to these issues which are of disproportionate importance to women constituents.

This emphasis on women in politics focusing on “women’s issues” might come from a prevalence of gender stereotypes. The literature surrounding the presence of gender stereotypes placed on women provides a clear link between certain policy topics, and what people believe women in politics should handle. For example, voters tend to believe that women politicians are more compassionate and should handle issues like education, and family (Dolan 2009; Alexander and Anderson 1993; Burrell 1994; Khan 1996; Koch 1999). Male politicians are viewed as strong and smart which means they should handle policies related to crime, foreign policy, or defense (Lawless 2004). These stereotypes often extend into voters' preferences about a politician's voting behavior (Lawless 2004; Sanbonmatsu 2002). For example, voters who are concerned primarily about foreign policy are more likely to vote for male candidates (Dolan 2004). In contrast, voters who value honesty, ethics, and compromise are more likely to vote for female candidates (Lawless 2004).

I believe that all of these factors will combine to make it less likely that a woman staffer will leave her position within a congressional office and move through the revolving door. When women do leave for a lobbying position, because of their policy expertise on the Hill, I believe they will be placed on lobbying for “women’s issues” at a higher rate than their male counterparts, which will have substantive and descriptive representation effects for women broadly.

3.3 Hypotheses

From this, I produced three hypotheses related to the relationship between gender and revolving door lobbying.

- H1: Men are more likely than women to self-report that they would leave their current position as a Congressional staffer for a job as a lobbyist.
- H2: Men are more likely than women to leave their position as a congressional staffer and secure a job as a lobbyist.
- H3: Women lobbyists are more likely than male lobbyists to lobby on “women’s issues.”
- H4: Women lobbyists are less likely than male lobbyists to lobby on “masculine issues.”

3.4 Empirical Analysis: Survey Data

To explore the relationship between gender and the desire to leave the House for a position as a lobbyist among Congressional staff, I use data from a survey of current congressional staff for members of the House of Representatives. The dataset includes members from personal offices on the Hill and in the district. The contacts for this survey were collected using the U.S. House of Representatives Telephone Directory 2021 which is compiled by the Clerk of the House of Representatives. This published document includes the names and telephone numbers of all staff from that year who work within the House. From there, I was able to use the standard email format for the House of Representatives (firstname.lastname@mail.house.gov) to compile my survey recipient list. I used Qualtrics to format my survey, and then sent out the email request with the survey link via my GSU faculty email address. In total, I sent nine thousand emails. One thousand of the survey’s got sent back to me with staff who have left their current office or retired from their staff position. Two hundred

and sixty-eight staffers completed the survey. While this is not a large response rate, there is precedent for this sample size for data using a survey of congressional staff (Jensen 2011).

As discussed above, I expect women to be less likely than their male counterparts to indicate that they would leave their current position as a Congressional staffer to become a lobbyist on the Hill, in large part due to the gendered pay gap among lobbyists, as well as the gendered policy issues women are placed on. My survey includes one question which asked staffers about their willingness to leave Congress for a position as a lobbyist. This question ultimately produced one dependent variable. The questions on lobbying asked:

- “Would you ever consider leaving your current Congressional Office to work as a lobbyist?”

To test my first hypothesis that men are more likely to self-report a desire to move from their current position as a congressional staffer, to a position as a lobbyist, I ask survey respondents, “Would you ever consider leaving your current Congressional Office to work as a lobbyist? According to the survey results, 65% of men would willingly leave their current office for a position as a lobbyist, and 62% of women would leave for a lobbying position. This result does not reach standard levels of statistical significance and indicates that there is no real difference between men and women’s desire to obtain a lobbying position.

3.5 Empirical Analysis: Legistorm Data

To continue to explore the relationship between gender and revolving door lobbying among congressional staff, I utilize data collected by Legistorm, which includes a comprehensive database of biographical data on congressional staff and staff who move through the “revolving door.” This data includes information on those who have left their positions with the U.S. Congress to lobby and identifies revolving door lobbyists based on the key issue they are lobbying on. From this, I can separate lobbyists who work on traditional “women’s issues,”

motivated by the literature. The specific issues that I have labeled as “women’s issues” are Housing, Immigration, Medical/Disease Research/ Clinical Labs, Medicare/ Medicaid, Education, Family Issues/ Abortion/ Adoption, and Welfare. My decision to label these policy topics as “women’s issues” comes from long and established literature on how women emphasize different policy topics than men. In 1977, women in the House created a bipartisan committee called, “the Congress Women’s Caucus: which was later renamed the “Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues.” This caucus was used to publicize legislation that was viewed as “important to women.” Essentially, “women’s issues” are those topics which women introduce more than men, linking this idea that descriptive representation leads to substantive representation. The literature on women’s issues used this caucus to label policies as “women’s issues” or those issues which are typically viewed as masculine. From this literature, we have “women’s issues” labeled as anything related to family, health, education, abortion and family planning, housing and community development, labor, employment, immigration, and social welfare (Swers 1998; Dolan 1998; Swers 2005; Frederick 2011; Reingold and Swers 2011). My choice in labeling the topics above as “women’s issues” comes from this established literature on the issues that are viewed as more important to women.

On the other side, I also look at issues that are stereotypically issues that are viewed as more “masculine” and are less likely to be assigned to women. These issues in the Legistorm data are Homeland Security, Intelligence and Surveillance, Law Enforcement/ Crime/ Criminal Justice, Budget/ Appropriations, Minting/ Money/ Gold Standard, Science/Technology, Defense, Taxation/Internal Revenue Code, and Foreign Relations. The table below outlines the key issues being lobbied on by lobbyists in the dataset. All other issues that are not coded as stereotypical “women’s issues” or issues typically assigned to men, are simply coded as “other” or “neutral.

Table 6: Lobbying issues

“Women’s Issues”	“Masculine Issues”	“Other Issues”
Housing	Homeland Security	Agriculture
Immigration	Intelligence and Surveillance	Indian/ Native American Affairs
Medical/Disease Research/ Clinical Labs	Law Enforcement/Crime/Criminal Justice	Accounting
Medicare/Medicaid	Budget/Appropriations	Alcohol & Drug Abuse
Education	Minting/Money/Gold Standard	Animals
Family Issues/Abortion/Adoption	Science/Technology	Apparel/ Clothing Industry/ Textiles
Unemployment	Defense	Labor Issues/ Antitrust/ Workplace
Welfare	Taxation/ Internal Revenue Code	Arts/ Entertainment
	Trade (Domestic & Foreign)	Media (Information/Publishing)
	Foreign Relations	Natural Resources
		Civil Rights/Civil Liberties
		Communications/Broadcasting/Radio/ TV
		Clean Air & Water (Quality)
		Real Estate/Land Use/Conservation
		Religion
		Consumer Issues/Safety/Protection
		Retirement
		Constitution
		Small Business

		Torts
		Environmental/ Superfund
		Firearms/Guns/Ammunition?
		Travel/Tourism
		Urban Development/Municipalities
		Veterans
		Health Issues
		Advertising
		Aerospace
		Insurance
		Automotive Industry
		Manufacturing
		Aviation/ Aircraft/ Airlines
		Marine/Maritime/Boating/Fisheries
		Banking
		Bankruptcy
		Beverage Industry
		Chemicals/Chemical Industry
		Pharmacy
		Postal
		Commodities (Big Ticket)
		Railroads
		Computer Industry

		Roads/Highway
		Copyright/Patent/Trademark
		District of Columbia
		Sports/Athletics
		Economics/Economic Development?
		Telecommunications
		Tobacco
		Transportation
		Financial Institutions/Investments/Securities
		Trucking/Shipping
		Fuel/Gas/Oil
		Utilities
		Gaming/Gambling/Casino
		Government Issues
		Waste (hazardous/solid/interstate/nuclear)
		Tariff Bills

The categorization of these issues as “women’s issues” or “masculine issues” come from the established literature on the kinds of policies women representatives and women congressional staff typically work on (Harrison 1989; Carroll 1994, 2003; Sanbonmatsu 2003; Richie & Young You 2021, etc).

I use this data source to continue to explore the relationship between gender and lobbying in hypotheses four and five.

The total lobbyists in the dataset are 986,157. According to the results from this data, 68% of those who leave the Hill to lobby are men, compared to 32% of women. These summaries are substantively very important for policy in the United States. As discussed in my theory above, lobbyists play a crucial role in the legislative process. Lobbyists help place issues on the legislative agenda (Jones and Baumgartner 2005, they discuss and frame issues for the media (Flothe 2020), and because Members of Congress are constrained in their time and resources (Grim and Siddiqui 2013), lobbyists are able to step up and provide critical information to Members which can allow them to heavily influence the policy-making process (DeGregorio 1988; Malbin 1980; Montgomery and Nyhan 2017). With fewer women moving from congressional offices into the lobbying arena, we are missing an important voice in policy.

My fourth hypothesis predicts that when women do leave congressional offices and move through the revolving door, they are more likely than men to lobby on traditional “women’s issues.” Theoretically, revolving door lobbyists are often hired based on the policy expertise that they bring to the table (McCrain 2018). To test this, I use another chi-squared test to explore the percentages of women who lobby on traditional “women’s” issues, as well as issues which are viewed as “masculine.” According to the results, the proportion of women lobbyists who work on “women’s issues” is significantly higher than the proportion of men who work on “women’s issues” ($p > 0.05$). More specifically, 13% of female lobbyists work on “women’s issues” compared to 9% of male lobbyists. These results are interesting because they show that women lobbyists may also experience gender stereotypes in a similar manner to women congressional staff. Placing women over traditional “women’s issues” misses a diverse set of voices on “women’s issues” but also ignores a woman’s voice on issues that are traditionally considered “masculine.”

In contrast, lobbyists who work on issues that are viewed as traditionally “masculine” issues like defense, budget, foreign affairs, etc. also experience a gender disparity. According to the chi squared results, the proportion of male lobbyists who work on traditional “masculine issues” is 34% compared to 32% of women who work on “masculine issues.” These results may not seem large, but they are statistically significant ($p > 0.5$), and if you look at the raw numbers behind these topics, there are over 130,000 fewer women who lobby on these important issues.

The Legistorm data for this chapter is incredibly limited in scope, but I was able to include a few factors which may be important to which issues lobbyists are assigned. This allows me to take a deeper look into the relationship between gender and which issues are being assigned to women and men to lobby on. Race is a dichotomous variable coded 1 for white and 0 for non-white. Party ID is also a dichotomous variable coded 1 for Democrat and 0 for Republican. The limitations for these variables are explored in the section below.

Table 7: Predictors of Lobbying Categories among Revolving Door Lobbyists

	Model 1: Women’s Issues	Model 2: Masculine Issues
Female	0.037* (0.00)	-0.012* (0.001)
Race	-0.00 (0.001)	0.038 (0.002)
Party ID	0.010 (0.00)	-0.009 (0.001)
Constant	0.093 N= 527,167	0.038 N=527,167

Table seven presents the results for my third and fourth hypotheses that women are more likely to lobby on “women’s issues,” and less likely to lobby on issues that are traditionally

assigned to “men” because they are “masculine.” As predicted by my theory, the coefficients in models one and two for “female” are negative, and statistically significant ($p > 0.5$). This indicates that women who leave their office as congressional staff to move through the “revolving door” are more likely to lobby on women’s issues, and less likely to lobby on issues that are traditionally “masculine,” even when you consider race and party id.

3.6 Conclusion

Lobbyists play an important role in the legislative process. Given this role over policy, it is important for democracy to ensure that lobbyists come from a diverse set of backgrounds, as this provides government legitimacy (Arnsen and Peters 2018), but also has important impacts on descriptive and substantive representation. This chapter explored why women might be less likely than men to move through the revolving door and pursue a career in lobbying.

Importantly, it showed that not only are women less likely to leave their congressional office to pursue a job as a lobbyist, but when women do leave and move through the revolving door, they are more likely to be placed on “women’s issues” than issues we view as typically “masculine.” This has important substantive effects, as we are missing the presence of women on important issues like defense or taxation.

Limitations/ Next Steps

There were many roadblocks and limitations experienced with the data for this chapter. With the Legistorm data, there were issues with missing data for lobbyists. When I purchased the data originally, I was told that there would be a way to connect revolvers back to the offices they worked under using the “core_person_id” variable, which is the common identifier in many of the Legistorm files for congressional staff. This connect would have allowed me to look at which office they worked in, how long they worked on the Hill, the position they had most recently before leaving the Hill to become a lobbyist, but when it came to merging the files, there was no

actual way to connect the revolvers back to their time on the Hill. Additionally, the Legistorm data has a lot of missing observations. The total analysis for the chi-squared test looked at nearly one million revolvers. When I included variables like “race” and “party-id,” the N for that analysis was cut in half to about five hundred thousand, indicating a lot of missing data for those lobbyists.

The coding for the “Race and Party ID” could be significantly improved with access to better data. These categories are dichotomous “white” or “non-white”, and “Republican” or “Democrat.” Expanding the race variable to include more categories for Race and Party ID could provide some interesting and more nuanced results on the relationship between gender and revolving door lobbying. Additionally, I would have liked to use a variable for “income” in this analysis. If women are being offered less money to lobby, it may influence their decision to leave the Hill.

When I originally designed the survey for this dissertation, we were not expecting to include the lobbying chapter. The survey was primarily designed to look at ambition and qualifications among Congressional staff. The only factor I was able to explore in relation to lobbying, was their expressed desire to eventually leave the Hill for a lobbying job. Despite all of these issues, the first look at the data provides really interesting results on the state of women in lobbying. I would like to be able to explore this relationship further in the future with more complete data.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Dissertation Survey

Key Topics: Ambition and the Gender Gap

Demographics Questions

What is your Race/Ethnicity?

- Black/ African American
- Hispanic/ Latino
- Native American/ American Indian
- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- White/ Caucasian
- Other

What is your marital status?

- Married
- Divorced
- Single
- Widowed

What is your age?

- 20-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61+

Do you have any children?

- Yes
- No
- If yes to children, how many children do you have?
- If yes, how old are your children?

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

Generally speaking, how do you usually think of yourself?

- Weak Republican
- Strong Republican
- Independent
- Weak Democrat
- Strong Democrat

- Something else

Do you generally think of yourself as...

- Very conservative
- Conservative
- Moderate
- Liberal
- Very Liberal
- Other

Is the member you work for a Democrat or a Republican?

Do you think of the member you work for as...

- Very conservative
- Conservative
- Moderate
- Very Liberal
- Liberal

Other Ideologically, do you think of the member you work for as being

- Moderate
- Somewhere in the middle
- Strongly ideological

Ambition Gap Questions

What is your current employment status?

- Full time
- Part time
- Not employed

What year did you start on the hill?

What position did you start in on the hill?

Which position on the hill would you like to hold next?

What is the highest position on the hill you would like to hold in the future?

How long have you been serving in your current office?

What is your current position?

- Intern

- Legislative Assistant
- Legislative Director
- Scheduler
- Chief of Staff
- Legislative Correspondent
- Communications Director
- Press Secretary

Do you believe you have other opportunities to leave your current office for a higher position in another Capitol Hill office?

If you were offered a higher position or there was an opportunity for promotion in another office, would you leave your current member's office?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Would you ever run for Congress someday?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

Would you ever consider leaving a congressional office to work as a lobbyist?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

If you have to guess, how much money would a lobbying firm or other employer have to offer you to leave Capitol Hill to work as a lobbyist?

For the importance of affecting your decision to accept a position in your current office you now hold- My perception that this office was an important steppingstone to a higher position

- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important
- Not Applicable

If you had the necessary support, are there other offices at any level of government outside of Congress that you would eventually like to hold?

- Yes
- No

If so, please specify

Prior to serving in your current office, had you ever held other positions on the hill? If so, please specify.

- Yes

- No
- Not Applicable

Have you ever attended a training program or workshop for advancement on the hill?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

If you were to consider moving to a different office for a better position, how important would it be for you to make sure you have enough prior experience?

Very Important

- Somewhat Important
- Not Important
- Not Applicable

Were you mentored by your current member?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

How active was your member in mentoring other staff generally?

- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important
- Not Applicable

How active is your member in recruiting women to serve on their staff?

- Very active
- Somewhat Active
- Inactive
- Don't Know

Think back to your time on the hill. Which of the following statements best characterizes the reaction of your member for advancement (or mentorship) opportunities?

- Generally they supported my advancement
- Generally they opposed my advancement
- They neither supported nor opposed by advancement

How did you get/ apply for your current position?

How do members of Congress lead their staff? Specifically, how are female politicians leading their staffs and thus affecting the next generation of political actors?

Are elected officials' mentors? If yes, how?

Did upper-level staff encourage career mobility?

Did your elected official encourage career mobility?

Based on your current position, where do you see yourself in 5 years?

- Chief of Staff-
- Committee office?
- Lobbying
- Policy analyst
- Legislative AssistantA
- LegislativeDirector

Did you work on the campaign for your current member?

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

Have you been promoted within your current office?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

If yes, which position were you promoted to?

Do you believe there are opportunities for promotion within your current office?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

Have you been encouraged to apply to higher level positions within your current office?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

Qualifications Gap Questions

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- High School
- Some College
- College graduate
- Post-graduate degree (please specify)

Prior to working on the hill, what was your most recent employment position?

What type of experience do you believe you need to gain before you can hold/ apply for higher positions?