

UCLA

UCLA Public Law & Legal Theory Series

Title

Perceptions of Lawyers - a Transnational Study of Student Views on the Image of Law and Lawyers

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2dz6w0t7>

Journal

International Journal of the Legal Profession, 12(3)

Authors

Asimow, Michael

Greenfield, Steve

Machura, Stefan

et al.

Publication Date

2005

PERCEPTION OF LAWYERS--A TRANSNATIONAL STUDY OF
STUDENT VIEWS ON THE IMAGE OF LAW AND LAWYERS

by

Michael Asimow, Steve Greenfield, Stefan Machura, Guy Osborn, Peter Robson,
Robert Sockloskie, Cassandra Sharp and Guillermo Jorge

12 *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION* 407-36 (2005)

This is a preprint of an article whose final and definitive form has been published in the *International Journal of the Legal Profession*. (c)(2005) Copyright Taylor & Francis.

International Journal of the Legal Profession is available online at
<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09695958.asp>

This paper may be downloaded without charge at:
The Social Science Research Network Electronic Paper Collection
<http://ssrn.com/abstract=882204>

Perceptions of lawyers—a transnational study of student views on the image of law and lawyers

MICHAEL ASIMOW,^{*} STEVE GREENFIELD,^{**}
GUILLERMO JORGE,^{***} STEFAN MACHURA,[†] GUY OSBORN,^{**}
PETER ROBSON,[§] CASSANDRA SHARP & ROBERT SOCKLOSKIE^{*}

^{}UCLA School of Law, Los Angeles, USA, ^{**}University of Westminster, London, UK,
^{***}San Andrés University, Argentina, [†]Ruhr-Universität, Bochum, Germany, [§]University
of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK, and [‡]University of Wollongong, Australia*

Introduction

The study upon which this article is based arose from a series of seminars on Law and Film Studies during 2002 and 2003.¹ More broadly it taps in to an ongoing question that has been at the heart of debates within the nascent law and film movement.² Historically, the published writing on film in relation to law has assumed that popular culture must have *some* kind of impact on the general zeitgeist and on individuals in particular. As soon as lawyers started to feature in film there were concerns that the legal profession might be shown in a bad light, and what the implications of this would be.³ The assumption was that films had ‘effects’, and that ‘bad effects’ were to be avoided or at least balanced. The Hays Code is the best known example of the industry controlling its own output to avoid censorship. The Hays Code basically sought to preserve social values within the production of films; for example, one of the principles underlying the Code was that “Law . . . should not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation”.⁴ With the demise of such production codes, and their replacement by much softer touch Codes of Self Regulation, there has been a major shift away from protecting the public from having to confront bad characters without ‘balance’.

This issue, in common with many other areas of popular culture, has not been subject to detailed academic treatment. Legal scholars have tended to avoid the area of popular culture whilst concentrating on doctrine, and even contextual legal scholars have rarely directed their gaze in this direction.⁵ Important exceptions include Stewart Macaulay’s Presidential address to the Law and Society

Address for correspondence: Peter Robson, The Law School, Stenhouse Building, University of Strathclyde, 173 Cathedral Street, Glasgow G4 0RQ, UK. E-mail: peter.robson@strath.ac.uk

Association in 1986,⁶ where Macaulay importantly suggested that popular culture was a major source of popular legal culture:⁷

Most Americans learn about their legal system from television and film than from firsthand experience . . . Few of us have ever been in a squad car, a jail, a courtroom, a lawyer's office, an administrative hearing, or legislative committee meeting. Most of us know these places only from film and TV.⁸

This notion, then, that our ideas about law and lawyers are shaped by popular culture remains rooted in writing about the role of media.⁹ However the exact nature of this process has rarely been tackled, Salzmann and Dunwoody's work being a notable exception, and carried out at much the same time as our own project,¹⁰ and Lieve Gies' important work on the role of the media as a resource for shaping our understanding of law notwithstanding.¹¹ On a micro level we were interested in the question of *whether* popular culture had an impact upon perceptions, and if so, then *which* films and *which* TV programmes (Asimow, 1999)? The difficulties in producing rigorous results on such an area without huge funding are considerable. Steven Stark made the point forcefully in 1987:

. . . assessing the effects of television on our society is a bit like calibrating the impact of water or the air. Television is so pervasive and taken for granted that it is difficult to imagine—much less measure—what things would be like without it. What is your control group? How do you calibrate empirically the effect of a Perry Mason or a Batman?¹²

This has perhaps discouraged work on looking at the impact of popular legal culture on the public's perceptions and we were unaware of any studies which had been carried out on a large scale looking at this. Hence the initial approach was to embark on a relatively modest research project to see whether the extent of consumption of law films and TV lawyer shows within a particularly sensitive group could be established. In addition, the study was concerned with the impact such media might have had on their views of law, lawyers and legal practice. The research was undertaken in law schools in Argentina, Australia, England, Germany, Scotland and the United States. Acknowledging the additional difficulties of working across borders, we were, nonetheless, keen to establish some kind of baseline from which subsequent more ambitious work might proceed. The study undertaken was completed in order to see what kinds of differences and similarities we would discover in the process of seeking to delve behind these cardinal assumptions of impact. In simple terms we were keen to discover whether there was any empirical evidence to support these assumptions around the significance of popular cultural images of law. We wanted to do this within the context of a short research instrument that was practicable to administer in the brief space between individuals reaching the law school and their learning to operate predominantly within the legal paradigm.¹³

The focus of the study was first year law students at the point at which they enter law school. Our premise was that when students arrive at law school, they carry with them an enormous amount of ideological baggage, including information and misinformation about law, lawyers, and the legal system. These notions will have been

distilled from a number of sources. These sources may be broad and eclectic, drawing on experiential issues as well as external factors such as the mass media.¹⁴ It is, however, important to note at the outset that, popular culture is not the only way in which we glean our ideas about the law. Indeed, Salzmann and Dunwoody posit that what they term the “legal realists” may place too much store in the power of popular culture.¹⁵ Their research focussed upon the accuracy of television portrayals of lawyers’ day-to-day activities. A series of television programmes were analysed for their content, and these findings were compared with the actuality of legal experience via a survey of lawyers. Unsurprisingly, a disparity was found between the two.¹⁶ The research went on to test whether a lay person’s perceptions of lawyers and lawyering were conditioned via popular cultural references—interestingly Salzmann and Dunwoody used first year law students at the beginning of their studies for this purpose. Their conclusion was that the claims of the influence of popular culture were perhaps overstated:

(the research) indicates that the legal-realist theory about the amount of influence popular culture has on perceptions of lawyering may be too far reaching. The legal realist believe [sic] there is a synergism between popular culture and the realities of legal practice. Our data indicates that the gap between the real legal process and how law is generally portrayed in popular culture *is* quite wide.¹⁷

In essence they demonstrated that there was a difference between what lawyers on screen did, as opposed to what lawyers in real life did. They went on to establish that law students, nonetheless, did not assume that actual lawyers really did all the exciting things that TV lawyers did. Salzmann and Dunwoody’s research was using law students to establish the accuracy of the ideas of law which can be derived from popular culture. We were more concerned with the law student as a conscious being *reflecting* on law and lawyers. The research was focussed more upon where first year law students themselves—hereafter law students, or students—obtained their ideas of law and to see whether popular culture had influenced their opinions at all. To this end a large number of first year law students, from six law schools across the jurisdictions indicated, were surveyed at the beginning of their legal education, to ascertain their perceptions about the law and lawyers, where they obtained this information, and what helped them form this opinion. In particular, the vexed issue of media effects informed the study—to what extent did law students draw their information and opinions from fictitious stories about law and lawyers in the movies or on television? Would it be possible to show that popular culture had influenced their opinions and would the results vary across the various countries?

This article reports those findings and analyses law student perceptions, and attempts to highlight some correlations between student background and perceptions of law and lawyers, and to examine the role of popular culture within this process. We found that a large number of law students in each of the countries (other than Argentina) report that movies and television shows are quite helpful in forming their opinions about lawyers. Generally, only news coverage is more helpful than popular cultural media in assisting students to form their opinions. News and pop

culture media are generally more helpful than having lawyers as friends or family members, personal experience with lawyers, conversations with family and friends, or classes in school. Those results are surprising, since traditionally respondents in surveys in this field deny that their opinions were influenced by popular culture.¹⁸

Before dealing with the survey and its findings and implications it is important to place this within the context of the media effects debate, and to review work conducted in this area to gauge the role of film within this process.

Part I. Media effects

There are a number of approaches to the vexed area of media effects, and analyses in related areas have proved problematic and difficult in the past.¹⁹ A guiding tenet of the research conducted for this article was that the literature suggested that the public's perception of law and lawyers is influenced by popular legal culture (that is legally themed films, TV programmes, and novels).²⁰ Whilst studies such as that of Salzmänn and Dunwoody might argue that the accuracy of this processing is questionable, there appears little doubt that it has at least some effect.²¹ Indeed, if there were no such influence, advertisers would be wasting tens of billions inserting resonant images into television commercials, and, in the United States, political candidates would be squandering hundreds of millions of dollars selling images in political advertisements.²²

Psychologists have produced a large body of research concerning the so-called 'cultivation effect'. This work assesses the influence of media exposure on a consumer's conception of social reality, by which we mean the viewer's store of information, beliefs and attitudes. Cultivation theorists²³ discovered that heavy television viewers entertain beliefs about the social world that are quite different from the beliefs of light viewers.²⁴

In US studies, cultivation researchers found that heavy television viewers believe in a 'meaner' world than light viewers; heavy viewers believe there is a higher crime rate and there are more police officers, lawyers, or prostitutes, and more alcoholism or drug abuse, than do light viewers of television. Heavy TV viewers believe that people have more possessions and engage more frequently in behaviour associated with an affluent lifestyle than do light viewers.

Cognitive psychology researchers believe that there is a causal relationship, not merely a correlation, between belief formation and heavy television watching. Their explanation is derived from what they call a "heuristic processing model". Heuristic reasoning consists of snap judgments based on rules of thumb (such as 'lawyers are sleazy'). People make heuristic judgments when their involvement with making the judgment is relatively low or when they must decide quickly. For example, the process of answering a pollster's questions calls for heuristic reasoning, since there is no penalty for giving a wrong answer.

An explanatory device often utilised for this is as follows. The mind contains a huge number of 'bins' or 'files' on various subjects, new items are constantly placed into the bins as they are learned, be it from personal experience or from the media or other sources. People make heuristic judgments by extracting the necessary

information from these bins. Generally, the bins are accessed from the top down. As a result, the likelihood that a particular item will be pulled from the bins depends on both the frequency and recentness of exposure. The more recently an item was acquired, and the greater the extent to which the item is similar to others already in the bin, the more likely that a particular item will be retrieved. In addition, the more vivid the event in which a particular item was acquired, the more likely that the material will be accessed.

People often fail to consider that the information extracted could be from fictitious sources. In other words, they don't always 'source discount' information derived from media, meaning that they forget that the information was derived from stories rather than real events. Information and attitudes gained from personal experience are also likely to be accessed, even though that experience may have been random and untypical.

While most of the research on cultivation theory relates to television, by analogy the same psychological dynamics will very likely apply to film as well. Cultivation theory supports the hypothesis that frequent and recent exposure to vividly negative films about lawyers should increase the number of people who will make negative heuristic judgments about lawyers. On the other hand, heavy consumption of positive TV shows about lawyers should increase the number of people who make positive heuristic judgments about lawyers. As discussed below, our data suggest the presence of a cultivation effect among first year law students.

While this cultivation effect is one way of explaining how the media can influence its audience, it is certainly less refined than more recent approaches to explaining such behaviour. That said, it undeniably does still retain an influence:

Although the hypodermic syringe model was challenged and refined after the Second World War, it was not until the late 1970s that audience research witnessed the kind of methodological and epistemological shift that was necessary to dethrone behaviourism and break the spell which the question of media effects had had on generations of researchers. Even today, the tap on the knee metaphor is unmistakably present in contemporary efforts to locate and explain the importance of the media.²⁵

A related approach to studying media effects is the 'active audience' paradigm, which itself had its roots in the 'uses and gratification' approach. The active audience approach, as espoused by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, is based in cultural studies, and contends that audiences are not cultural 'dopes' but instead are active producers of meaning from within their own cultural context.²⁶ Audiences 'decode' the message, often giving it a meaning completely at variance with the meaning originally 'coded' into it by the writer and director.²⁷ The active audience paradigm is opposed to the notion that watching television is passive in character with the audience simply absorbing the televised messages like a sponge.

The cultivation approach and the active audience approach are not actually inconsistent given the huge differences among audiences of popular culture products. It is likely that some consumers fall into the passive sponge cultivation model, paying little attention to the contents of the movie or TV show they are watching while storing

away in their memories bits of information gleaned from the show. Other viewers are more active consumers, constructing their own realities out of the raw material provided by the cultural product. These are likely to be people who are paying attention to the show, who already have some information about the subject, and are at least moderately interested in the issue.

It is clear that popular cultural representations of lawyers have played an important part in constructing law students' understandings of what lawyers are like and what they do, although the actual extent may be subject to further scrutiny.²⁸ This is confirmed by the study and the correlation data.

Whilst our empirical work focused upon the perceptions of law students and how these views were framed, it is useful to make a comparison with the general public perceptions of law and lawyers. Here we draw mainly on surveys and polls conducted within the countries that were within the scope of the survey.²⁹

Part II. The public's opinion of lawyers³⁰

Polling data that we have analysed in our six comparison countries indicate that the public's opinion of the character of lawyers is below that of professions such as medicine, nursing, or the clergy. This is hardly surprising. Many people distrust lawyers because their assigned task is to represent and advise one party in a potentially adversarial situation. In addition, the public may associate lawyers with some of life's worst moments, such as divorce, bankruptcy, loss of employment, the juvenile court, or tax disputes. Perhaps more significant is the most public manifestation of lawyering, criminal defence. Nevertheless, lawyers remain reasonably popular in England, Australia, Germany and Scotland. In the US and Argentina, however, lawyers are among the most distrusted professions.

In the US³¹ a recent Gallup poll reiterated the same dismal results as numerous other surveys: the public image of US lawyers is extremely poor.³² Lawyers are distrusted more than such normally suspect groups as journalists, politicians, and business executives. Lawyers come in ahead only of advertisers, stockbrokers, health maintenance organisation managers, and car salesmen. Journalists and politicians are rated as having higher levels of honesty and ethical standards. A 1997 Harris Poll contained this sobering note on the public perception of the character of American lawyers:

Recent Harris Polls have found that public attitudes to lawyers and law firms, which were already low, continue to get worse. Lawyers have seen a dramatic decline in their 'prestige' which has fallen faster than that of any other occupation over the last twenty years. Fewer people have confidence in law firms than in any of the major institutions measured by Harris including the Congress, organized labor, or the federal government. It is not a pretty picture.

In 1977 over a third of the public (36%) believed that lawyers had very great prestige; 20 years later that had fallen to 19%. In other words, almost half of the people who accorded lawyers great prestige then do not do so today. No other occupation

has fallen so sharply. For the last 30 years Harris has been tracking the confidence the public have in the leaders of various institutions. In the most recent survey, only 7% of the public said they had a great deal of confidence in the people running law firms. This places law firms at the bottom of the institutions on the list. The 7% figure is not just the lowest number recorded for law firms over 30 years, it is *actually the lowest number recorded for any institution over 30 years*.³³

In England the MORI 'Opinions of Professions Surveys' asked about the public's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the way various professions do their jobs.³⁴ In 2003, it found that generally people are fairly satisfied with the way that lawyers, judges, and accountants do their jobs, although not to the extent of public sector professionals such as doctors, nurses, dentists, police, and teachers. Lawyers, judges, and accountants came in far ahead of politicians and government ministers in the net satisfaction column.

However the polling data for the last few years show a gradual drop in the public's satisfaction with lawyers' work. In 1999, 58% were satisfied with lawyers and 59% with judges, in contrast to the 53% and 52% figures in 2003. The rate of dissatisfaction with lawyers remained almost the same—14% for lawyers in 1999 as compared with 15% in 2003. However, the dissatisfaction rate for judges increased from 15% to 21% from 1999 to 2003. The MORI survey of professions also asked whether the public believes that various professionals are likely to tell the truth. Unfortunately, MORI does not ask this question about lawyers. However, it does ask about judges. In 2003, judges came in a very respectable fourth out of 16 professions surveyed.

According to the same MORI survey, the public views law as a very well paid profession. None of the respondents felt that the profession was underpaid. By comparison, relatively high percentages believed that the following professions were significantly underpaid in 2003: nurses (81%), teachers (54%), and doctors (25%). Consequently in England and Wales, law is perceived as an attractive career option. In the 2001 MORI Schools Survey,³⁵ 16% of schoolchildren in England and Wales aged 10–16 wanted to become lawyers. This tied for first with professional athlete and 'none of these' and came in ahead of vets (14%), army/navy (14%), and doctors (8%). Law as a career option also did well in the 1996 and 1998 editions of this survey.

MORI also collated data concerning the public opinion of lawyers in Scotland. Of Scottish respondents, 64% were satisfied with the way lawyers do their jobs, as opposed to 53% in England; 12% were dissatisfied in Scotland, as opposed to 15% in England. Thus the net satisfaction with lawyers was 52% in Scotland as opposed to 38% in England. We suggest that these results have their sources in two features of Scottish life. First, there is an absence of expensive litigation in the Scottish courts. In general, lawyers' earnings are more modest than their London equivalents. Second, people seem to identify with the Scottish legal system as part of what distinguishes Scottish society from its larger English neighbour. Lawyers may be lawyers, but they are Scots lawyers which produces more positive views of the profession. As in England, none of the Scottish respondents thought lawyers were underpaid.³⁶ In Scotland law is one of the top three career options for secondary school graduates. It is the most sought after degree along with medicine and accountancy. The highest scores in the relevant Scottish examinations are required for entry into these courses.³⁷

In Germany, the public does not dislike lawyers. Regulations establish maximum legal fees and restrict lawyers' behaviour—for example, by requiring decent advertisements.³⁸ Lawyers are officially described as an “organ of jurisdiction” (“Organ der Rechtspflege”), not as private entrepreneurs operating in a competitive market. The public image of German lawyers appears to be relatively favourable when compared to other professions. A 2001 poll asked the public which professions they most valued and respected. The list consisted of 18 professions and was headed by medical doctors, priests and professors. Lawyers were ranked fourth with 31% approval. In West Germany, lawyers were ranked fifth with entrepreneurs coming in fourth.³⁹ In a 2003 poll, lawyers ranked number five nationwide.⁴⁰ However, the percentage of West Germans counting lawyers among the most admired professions fell from 37% to 29% between 1966 and 2001.⁴¹ This decline seems to be representative of a general trend in Germany of falling prestige for almost all professions, even for the beloved doctors.⁴²

In another 2001 poll, 18% held lawyers as ‘particularly honest’ and 16% as ‘particularly dishonest’. On the honesty standard, lawyers were a highly respectable number six on a list of 26 professions, headed by the clergy, pharmacists and policemen.⁴³ Despite the prestige of the legal profession, most people do not want to become lawyers. According to a 2000 poll,⁴⁴ men rated law, journalism, and locomotive engineering as the least desirable occupations—10% in favour of each of these. Instead, the most popular dream of German men was to become a top athlete (19%). Women placed lawyers at the bottom of their list (8%), while 19% wished to be a stewardess. In another survey the same year, 12% of German school girls and 10% of school boys were interested in becoming a lawyer. Girls much preferred becoming a doctor (27%) and boys preferred becoming a software engineer (33%).⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the number of German lawyers has risen by 81% between 1992 and 2002 to 116,000.⁴⁶ Each year another 6,000–8,000 start their careers as lawyers.⁴⁷ Many young lawyers, solo practitioners, and partners of small newly established firms do not earn significantly more than a minimum wage. The incomes of West German lawyers are apparently declining.⁴⁸ As a result, the issue of whether lawyers make too much money or deserve their incomes has not been a subject of public debate. These relatively low incomes may help to explain why the legal profession is such an unattractive career for most German men and women.

The annual Morgan Poll in Australia contains information—dating back to 1976—on the public's opinion of the ethics and honesty of various professions.⁴⁹ In 2002, the poll indicates that lawyers fell in the middle of all professions. By comparison to other countries, particularly the US, this is a credible showing. According to the poll, 30% of Australians gave lawyers a ‘very high’ or ‘high’ rating for ethics and honesty. This ranked 13th out of the 28 professions surveyed. The various medical professionals had much higher ratings as did teachers, university lecturers, and the police. The ratings of both the clergy and accountants dropped sharply in 2002. Morgan attributed these drops to allegations of sexual abuse in the case of the clergy and to various corporate and accounting scandals in the case of accountants. Lawyers came in well ahead of business people such as executives, media professionals, politicians, trade union leaders, and salesmen. Nevertheless, the public's opinion of lawyers' honour

has declined considerably since the mid-1970s. In 1976, lawyers rated 43%, and this was seventh on the list of the 14 professions surveyed. From 1976 to 1989, the public gave lawyers ratings between 41% and 44%. In 1990, the rating fell to 37% and dropped as low as 26% in 1998 before recovering slightly.

The Argentine public has a poor opinion of the ethics of lawyers and judges relative to other professions. The data indicate the percentage of respondents who were confident or very confident about the ethics of various professions including lawyers and judges.⁵⁰ It also indicates the percentage of respondents with low levels of confidence about the ethics of these professions—meaning little confidence or none at all (see Table 1).

This survey indicates that lawyers are strongly distrusted by the Argentine populace. Indeed lawyers are the third most distrusted profession out of ten (only politicians and labour leaders are more distrusted)—51% have little or no confidence in the ethics of lawyers. Judges are the fourth most distrusted profession—47% have little or no confidence in judges. In terms of confidence levels and net confidence levels, lawyers are fifth from the bottom (ahead of police, judges, politicians, and labour leaders); 18% are very confident or confident in the ethics of lawyers and only 12% have similar levels of confidence in judges (minus 33% and minus 35% respectively for net confidence levels). These figures were relatively consistent between men and women and over various age groups.

Unfortunately, polling data about the public's opinion of lawyers for earlier years is unavailable so we cannot say whether it has declined. However, the Argentine Gallup Poll does provide such information about judges. To the question "do you trust the judicial system", the public responded as follows: 1984—57%; 1991—26%; 1995—26%; 1999—21%; 2000—18%. The sharp decline in judicial prestige probably occurred because of an institutional crisis in the Argentine judicial system. This crisis was triggered by Presidential court packing. The new judges were chosen because they would validate the President's economic programme and, perhaps, obstruct political corruption investigations.

Despite the public's low level of confidence in the honour of lawyers, law continues to be one of the preferred options for university studies. An average of 14%

Table 1. *Survey of levels of confidence in the ethics of various professions—Argentina*

Profession	High levels of confidence (%)	Low levels of confidence (%)	Net confidence (%)
Nurses	78	8	70
Doctors	62	9	53
Teachers	56	13	43
Priests	29	37	-8
Journalists	28	29	-1
Lawyers	18	51	-33
Police	15	50	-35
Judges	12	47	-35
Politicians	6	88	-82
Union leaders	3	84	-81

of university students has chosen law since 1988. Argentina has one of the highest ratios of lawyers to population in Latin America with 453 law students and 345 lawyers for every 100,000 inhabitants.⁵¹

Part III. The study

This section is divided into two parts. The first details the study instrument (the questionnaire), while the second part provides some details of the law schools where we administered of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire

A questionnaire was distributed to all first year law students in class at the six participating law schools during their first week of study. The American version of the questionnaire is reprinted in Appendix A. The questionnaire was modified slightly for each sample to take account of demographic differences, absence of juries in certain jurisdictions, and the availability of the media itself. Students were not told the purpose of the survey until after they had responded. The questionnaires were anonymous and, in each country, the response rate was extremely high, giving us a good set of data upon which to draw our conclusions. Almost all students in the classes in the six countries filled them out—between 95% and 98%.

The aim of the survey was to obtain a snapshot of what these groups of impending law students thought about the legal set up on which they were embarking. The questionnaire therefore sought a mix of demographic material as well as opinions and sources of perspectives. We specifically sought the following information.

- **Demographic information**

Information on a range of issues that might reasonably be expected to have some impact on views of law and lawyers. These covered basics of age, ethnicity and gender. We also inquired as to whether students came from within a legal culture by asking about the number of lawyers in the family.

- **Opinions**

A range of questions designed to elicit information on different aspects of the legal profession. Hence we were concerned as to how lawyers were viewed as social actors. An important distinction was made between the prestige of lawyers on the one hand, and the rather different assessment of whether lawyers deserved their income on the other. It would be quite conceivable to perceive the legal profession as commanding a high degree of social cachet without accepting that this also implied they should receive a high income. Nurses are one group who have traditionally been highly regarded in terms of their public esteem without this converting into concrete public support for high salaries. A third aspect of the public perception of lawyers was covered in our question about the reputation of lawyers. We asked whether lawyers were seen as trustworthy and ethical since this was an area where we impressionistically suspected that there would be significant differences between how lawyers were talked about in the different countries.

- Sources of information

The study sought to identify not only their perceptions of lawyers, but also whether they were able to identify *how* they had come to form these opinions. These sources included lawyers in the family, lawyer friends, personal experience, jury service (where applicable), discussions with friends, news coverage and popular culture media (novels, TV shows, or movies about lawyers).

- TV shows and movies/films

Individual experiences teaching law and film in a range of jurisdictions had shown that students tended not to recall the precise titles of films and TV shows they had seen. Accordingly the questionnaire provided lists of films and TV shows. We asked the respondents to indicate which particular television shows and which particular movies they had seen.

Information about the law schools

Coming as we did from six different countries with separate legal jurisdictions we were aware of the problems of comparing like with unlike. We did feel, however, that each law school possessed the standard features encountered in a law school in that country. All produced law graduates for the profession. None was atypical in size, student numbers nor faculty quality. Insofar as it is possible for a single institution to be representative of the law schools in that country we feel confident that the law schools selected met this criterion. Working in the institutions the researchers had the ability to conduct the surveys without experiencing difficulties of access. Rather than simply presenting individual studies for each location we felt it might be helpful to present the material in a single report. In order to make it possible to make meaningful assessments of this information we have placed the law schools in context. This section provides information about the law schools whose students participated in the study (see Table 2). As will be apparent, there are some differences between the law schools and the age and demographics of their students. We accept that on the face of it these differences might imply that comparisons between the students in the various countries are problematic. However, we were concerned in this project with what those who are embarking upon law as a career think about law. Thus the core of this study is that it shows us something of how first year law students perceive law, lawyers and popular culture and demonstrates some of the variations between cultures. The differences in law training within the countries mean that equalising a factor such as age would not allow us to address the crucial first year law student element. The extent to which the individual law school's cohort is representative of a particular jurisdiction is one we are not in a position to address at this stage of the research and intra-jurisdictional variations are not something we can rule out. At this stage, however, each of the researchers has enough experience of other law schools to suggest that huge disparities are not envisaged.

UCLA. UCLA Law School is generally ranked among the top 20 US law schools (typically around 16th out of 185 schools ranked).⁵² Thus its students tend to be academically elite (having excellent undergraduate grades and high scores on the Law

Table 2. *Comparative law school demographic information*

School	Sample size	Median age	Mean age	% 'white' students	% male	% with lawyers in family
UCLA	151	24	25	65 ^a	52	39
Westminster	208	19	21	33	33	33
Strathclyde	73	18	19	95	21	22
Bochum	277	21	22	85 ^b	53	26
Wollongong	163	19	21	85 ^c	43	27
Buenos Aires	184	20	24	61 ^d	47	46

Notes: ^aThe term 'white' here does not include Hispanics.

^bThe term 'white' refers to Germans and excludes other nationalities.

^cThe term white here means Anglo and also 'other European'.

^dMost Buenos Aires students reported they were Hispanic (34%) or white (61%). Only 1% were Asian, 2% were Native American, and 2% were 'other'. Probably the distinction between white and Hispanic in Argentina is more a matter of self-identification than actual ethnic difference.

School Admission test). Like all US law schools (and unlike those of the other countries involved in this study), entering students have completed at least 4 years of undergraduate education (some have graduate degrees). Many have worked before coming to law school.⁵³

Thus UCLA students tend to be considerably older than the English, Scottish and Australian students, and somewhat older than the German or Argentine students. As a result, UCLA students generally have more previous education and more experience than undergraduate students in the comparison countries. Also, a large number of the students who chose law as an undergraduate major in Argentina and England do not intend to actually practise law; whereas almost all of those who go to US law schools intend to practise law.⁵⁴

UCLA differed from the comparison schools in several other ways. It was more ethnically diverse than any of the schools except Westminster,⁵⁵ and more of its students had lawyers in the family than any of the other schools except Buenos Aires.

Westminster. The University of Westminster School of Law is part of a 'new' university that arose in 1992 from the oldest polytechnic in Britain.⁵⁶ The University has well over 20,000 students enrolled in a typical year across a range of graduate and undergraduate courses. The ranking of British universities, and the subjects and departments contained therein, is complicated by a number of factors and value judgments. This is partly because the various ranking processes employ different criteria. The official government bodies measure the quality of scholarship and teaching separately. Other newspapers take account of matters such as levels of graduate employment and accessibility. In the Research Assessment Exercise of 2001, the Law School performed extremely well being the only former polytechnic to gain a 5 grade (5F).

The law degree is a first degree in England and Wales. It exempts students from the academic stage of legal training and prepares them for practitioner training and

legal practice. Around 50% of any given Westminster cohort would be expected to go on to further legal training. Over two-thirds of Westminster students are female, which was the second largest gender imbalance among the comparison schools.⁵⁷ It was by far the most ethnically diverse of any of the comparison law schools, with only 33% categorised as white.⁵⁸ There may be a number of reasons for this, not least the multi-racial backdrop of London and the University's location in the heart of London. While the median age was 19, the mean was higher at 21 reflecting in part Westminster's commitment to access to education for mature non-traditional applicants and life-long learning more generally.

Strathclyde. Strathclyde is a recent creation being founded as a university in 1964 from the coming together of two previous non-university colleges and has a student population of some 20,000. Law was originally taught as a service class to other disciplines like Economics, Architecture and Politics. Scotland's legal system is separate from England and Wales, so potential Scots lawyers must undergo separate training to become practitioners—solicitors and advocates. The Law School of Strathclyde University has an intake of 100 undergraduates which has traditionally been smaller than that of other LL.B. programmes in Scotland.⁵⁹ Most are secondary school graduates and entry is competitive.⁶⁰ The degree involves 3 years of study for an ordinary degree. Most students complete a fourth year in order to obtain an honours degree.

Strathclyde received a grade of 5A in the 2001 research assessment. This was the best grade achieved by any of the Scottish law schools for combined research and teaching quality. Strathclyde is the most junior of the law schools having started in offering law degrees as recently as 1968 and attracts less students from fee-paying schools than the law faculties of Edinburgh and Glasgow. In the recent lists of law schools in the United Kingdom it ranks in the top quintile and was in *The Times* Top 10 in 2004.⁶¹ The entry requirements of the top five Scottish law schools are similar because of the tendency for students to attend the university nearest to their home. The great majority of the law students who enter the Law School enter the legal profession, mostly in Scotland.

Strathclyde was the least ethnically diverse school among the comparison group (it was 95% white) but had the highest percentage of female students (79%). Students were younger at Strathclyde. This reflects two features of Scottish life. Secondary [high school] education before university lasts for 5 years rather than the 7 years in England. Students can attend university from 16 and many attend when only 17. The degree time for an honours degree is 4 years. In addition the notion of the gap year working or travelling before attending university is found infrequently. It also had the lowest percentage of lawyers in the family (22%) of any of the comparison schools.

Bochum. The Ruhr-Universität Bochum was founded as a reform university by the Province of North-Rhine Westphalia in the 1960s. It is the central university for the industrial Ruhr area and attracts mainly students commuting from neighbouring cities. Aspiring students from better-off backgrounds often prefer to attend the

traditional old German universities. However, Germany has no elite law schools such as those in the US, France or the UK.⁶²

At the time of the study, Bochum enrolled 3,760 law students, of which 85% identified themselves as German;⁶³ thus it is non-diverse ethnically compared to UCLA or Westminster. A minority of students in Bochum have previously studied law (for example, at a technical college) or have prior work experience related to law (such as case-worker in court service, clerk of the revenue authority, or paralegal). As a result, the median age of the students (21) was higher than any of the comparison schools except UCLA (where law is a graduate programme). A majority of German law students enter the legal profession.

Wollongong. The University of Wollongong Law Faculty was established in 1990, and offers both postgraduate and undergraduate provision, in addition to hosting a number of Centres including the Centre for Transnational Crime Prevention. The faculty is ranked among the top ten of the 28 law schools in Australia and attracts students who have achieved excellent undergraduate or secondary schooling results in their final exams. About 85% of law students have only secondary education.

The sample of 163 for Wollongong had a marked gender imbalance (43% male), but not as extreme as that of Westminster or Strathclyde. The sample was predominantly 'white' with the same breakdown as Bochum (85% white students); again this was not as pronounced as the results from Strathclyde (95%). Interestingly, the percentage of lawyers in the family of Wollongong students was the second lowest, after Strathclyde, at only 27%. At the end of their studies, a very high proportion (93%) enter into legal practice of some kind.

Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires University Law School was traditionally perceived as a prestigious public school. Until the mid-1980s, private education in Argentina was associated more with religious affiliation or wealth than with academic quality. As a result, the University of Buenos Aires was attractive because it was tuition-free and had considerable prestige. Indeed, the University provided a motive for people to move from the provinces to Buenos Aires. According to Fucito,⁶⁴ 75% of its students belong to middle class families.

After democracy was restored in 1984, however, the number of law students tripled,⁶⁵ while the budget for public education decreased.⁶⁶ In addition, a number of secular private law schools were founded, attracting more students interested in academic quality and in avoiding extremely large classes. Both phenomena conspire nowadays against Buenos Aires University. Fucito⁶⁷ showed that while 80% of students were in favour of free tuition, only 11% favoured maintaining an unrestricted system of entry.

The median age of Buenos Aires students exceeded the median age in England, Scotland, and Australia. Their mean age of 24 was higher than any country except the US indicating the presence of a larger number of much older students (17% were 25 or older, a higher percentage than any country other than the US). High school graduates must pass through a 1-year programme before entering the University. In addition, students may jump from one major to another before settling on law

school. Finally, as unemployment rose sharply in Argentina, some unemployed people decided to go to law school as a second career.

Most students in Argentina are part-time rather than full-time students. In 1997, only 16% of students were full-time,⁶⁸ while 25% out of the remaining 84% were working more than 41 hours a week.⁶⁹ Of those working part-time,⁷⁰ almost 30% were employed in the judiciary. The employment situation has a great impact on graduation rates⁷¹ and on students' ages.⁷²

The school was not ethnically diverse (all but 5% described themselves as either white or Hispanic). Interestingly, more students at Buenos Aires had one or more lawyers in their family than any of the comparative countries (46%).

Part IV. The character of lawyers

The study found that lawyers, on the whole, enjoy high prestige. They were, however, not regarded as being very trustworthy or ethical. Their income levels were regarded as reasonably merited by the students.

One of the aims of the study was to see what perceptions law students had about the legal profession. This involved selecting the most salient issues which have occurred in critical discourse in relation to lawyers. Given the modest nature of the survey the issues we opted to make inquiries about focused on the principal concerns identified from the literature. The comparisons are detailed in Table 3 below and analysed in the following sections. The questionnaire focussed upon the areas of prestige (social cachet and standing), deserving (whether the perceived high levels of pay were merited) and honour (whether they were perceived as trustworthy). The overall results are presented in Table 3.

The 'prestige' question

Students at all of the schools except Buenos Aires believed that lawyers have high prestige. Their social standing is lower in Argentina with only 44% of Buenos

Table 3. *Opinions of lawyer character—comparison schools^a*

	PRESTIGE Lawyers have a lot of prestige (%)	DESERVING Lawyers deserve the amount of income they earn (%)	HONOUR Lawyers are trustworthy and ethical (%)
UCLA	71	55	21
Westminster	80	68	18
Strathclyde	87	66	37
Bochum	76	61	17
Wollongong	74	62	22
Buenos Aires	44	51	19

Note: ^aThe responses to the three questions are highly correlated with each other, so that, for example, those who find the profession most prestigious are most likely to find lawyers honourable. Prestigious and honourable: $r = 0.25$, $p < 0.0001$. Prestigious and deserving: $r = 0.18$, $p < 0.0001$. Honourable and deserving: $r = 0.14$, $p < 0.0001$.

Aires' students thinking them to be prestigious. The much lower Argentine figure fits with the strongly negative public opinion of lawyers in Argentina.⁷³

The high British figures for Westminster (80%) and Strathclyde (87%) are in line with broad general perception that lawyers mix in the same social circles as doctors and accountants. This perception also persists to a lesser degree in Germany and Australia with lower figures at Bochum and Wollongong (both 76% and 74% respectively). The relatively low US figure of 71% reflects the negative feelings toward lawyers that have become deeply embedded in American culture. The prevalence of lawyer jokes in the United States, for example, partly evidences a loss of prestige of the legal profession.⁷⁴ As one student in Asimow's class in law and popular culture wrote, "Every time I tell someone that I am in law school, I am universally greeted with a look of horror and disgust". Lawyer jokes are phenomena which are not part of the other cultures where they have a more limited resonance even when they are repeated due to the high level of penetration of American culture.

The 'honour' question

It is one thing to have a high social standing but there is a related question which is of central concern in relation to the character of lawyers. This concerns the extent to which lawyers are regarded as moral role models. On this question, students at five of the schools had quite low opinions of lawyers' honour. The lowest opinions were held by students at Bochum (17%), Westminster (18%), and Buenos Aires (19%). The results at UCLA (21%) and Wollongong (22%) were slightly higher. The figures nationally are not impressive and the image of lawyers is seldom hugely positive in popular culture.⁷⁵ The opinion of Strathclyde students about lawyers' honour (37%) was much higher than the five comparison schools. The Strathclyde results fit well with the data suggesting that public satisfaction with lawyers in Scotland is considerably higher than in England. In Scotland, in particular, legal practice continues to be perceived by those students commencing their courses as being one of the 'caring' professions.⁷⁶ Given that 40% of lawyers receive part of their income from the Legal Aid scheme to assist the poorer members of the community this is not surprising. This principle of public service reflects the local nature of many lawyers and their existence as members of the communities.

The American and Argentine figures were not surprising, given the low levels of public opinion about the honesty of lawyers in those countries noted above. However, the English, Australian, and German results required further consideration. In those countries, the law students thought lawyers had plenty of prestige and deserved their incomes, yet their opinion about lawyers' honour was much more negative than the general public.

The Bochum results were also somewhat surprising, given the relatively high German public opinion of lawyer character. German students showed remarkable distrust of lawyers' honesty and trustworthiness. This result seems to reflect general patterns in German society. Honesty is regarded as a prime educational objective and is very highly valued in Germany. Yet Germans seem to be somewhat sceptical about the degree of honesty in professional practice.⁷⁷ The questionnaire in the present study

contained an opportunity to note comments on lawyers. Some comments on lawyers' honesty and trustworthiness were positive, but many strongly negative answers appeared.⁷⁸ Such responses suggest that a number of students have high expectations of lawyers' ethicality, but they are disappointed when reality falls short of these expectations.

The 'deserving' question

The assumption across the board is that lawyers' incomes are relatively high. This is one of the reasons students in all the common law jurisdictions give for entering the world of law. This perception is generally sustained by the media, as well as the lifestyles of the lawyers observed in modern popular culture. The simple pleasures and absence of income noted by *Anatomy of a Murder's* protagonist Paul Biegler and Horace Rumpole have been replaced by the fast cars and luxury of *LA Law* and *Trust's* Stephen Bradley.

About two-thirds of the law students questioned in England, Scotland, Germany and Australia felt that lawyers deserved the income they earned. Given the fairly high likelihood of their entry into such a world this might not be seen as an altogether surprising finding. There is however a marked contrast with Argentina where barely half of the interviewees were satisfied that income was deserved (Buenos Aires—51%). Given the low reputation of lawyers generally in Argentina this lower figure is to be expected.

In the United States, the figure at UCLA of 55% also falls below that in Europe and Australia which range from Bochum (61%) to Westminster (68%). The low American figure reflects the high (and well publicised) incomes of many American lawyers, particularly those of lawyers who represented plaintiffs in class-action tobacco litigation.

Part V. Sources of information for forming opinions about the character of lawyers

The study found that students drew to the largest extent on news sources for their views on law and lawyers. This is a crucial finding which merits investigation in its own right. We were, naturally, interested to discover that our particular area of interest, popular culture, was a significant source of information in all the jurisdictions.

A crucial focus of the survey was to attempt to glean material on where students gain their opinions of law and lawyers. In particular, this was important in terms of our hypothesis that popular culture had an important effect in terms of image formation. Table 4 shows which sources of information were deemed helpful⁷⁹ by the students.

News coverage was the most helpful input to UCLA students in forming their opinions about lawyers (53%). They found popular culture media quite helpful (43%) along with discussions with friends (42%) and having lawyers in the family or as friends (43%).⁸⁰ Classes in school (35%) and personal experience (23%) came in well behind these information sources. Oddly, UCLA students found personal experience less helpful than did the students at any of the comparison schools

Table 4. *Sources of information for forming opinions of lawyers—% who found source helpful*

	Lawyers— family or friends	Personal experience	Jury service	Classes in school	Discussion with friends	News coverage	Popular culture
UCLA	43	23	7	35	42	53	43
Westminster	35	31	13	41	49	60	53
Strathclyde	50	38	4	27	55	75	43
Bochum	26	34	—	8	28	41	34
Wollongong	35	28	4	45	41	54	42
Buenos Aires	17	21	—	27	30	56	19

except Buenos Aires, even though UCLA students are older and thus more likely to have had such experience.

A surprising 53% of Westminster students found popular culture helpful (the highest of any of the six schools). They also found news coverage (60%), school classes (41%) and discussions with friends (49%) helpful. Other sources of information ranked behind: family or friends who are lawyers (35%) and personal experience (31%). The high figure relating to jury service (13%) is perhaps curious; this figure is by far the highest across the survey. Given the small number of jury trials in England and the low median age of the Westminster respondents, this seems surprising. However, Westminster does have a strong history of promoting mature students and it may be that it is their experience that is reflected here. Alternatively, possibly the respondents are reflecting jury experiences of relatives or older friends.

The largely Scottish students at Strathclyde found news coverage especially helpful (75%) in forming their opinions about lawyers (the highest of any of the schools) and many (43%) found popular culture helpful. Also helpful were discussions with friends (55%) (again the highest of any country) and having lawyers as friends or family members (50%). A relatively low 27% found classes in school helpful. The curriculum in Scottish primary and secondary education is independent of the curriculum south of the border. The major source of information on civic issues such as law comes in Modern Studies. The principal focus has for some time been on the political process, race and race relations, and women's rights. This suggests that Scottish schools may teach less about law and lawyers than English schools.

Bochum students found each of the various sources of potential information about lawyers (other than personal experience) *less helpful* than did students at any of the comparison schools except Buenos Aires. For example, Bochum students found news coverage (41%) and popular culture (34%) less helpful than did students in other countries. Other sources also ranked lower than the comparison schools: lawyers in the family or friends (26%), discussions with friends (28%), classes in school (a surprisingly low 8%). In each case, however, Buenos Aires students found these sources even less helpful than the Bochum students.

The fact that Germans found each of these possible sources of information less helpful than in the comparison countries other than Argentina raises interesting

questions. These figures seem to reflect a common law/civil law distinction (since the German figures were lower than the four common law countries and the Argentine figures were much lower). Law seems to be discussed less in German news coverage, and in conversations with friends and family, than in the other countries.⁸¹ The extremely low percentage of German students who found classes in school helpful (8%) reflects the fact that pre-university courses focusing on law and lawyers are rare in Germany.

The most important sources of information for Wollongong students were news coverage (54%), classes in school (45%—the highest of any of the comparison countries), popular culture (42%), and discussions with friends (41%). Friends and family who are lawyers (35%) and personal experience (28%) were less helpful. Many Australian students take a subject called 'Legal Studies' as part of their high school assessment, particularly those who plan to go to law school. This probably explains the fact that Australian students found classes in school more helpful than in any other country.

The Argentine students found several of the sources of information about law and lawyers far less helpful in making judgments about lawyers than did the students in any of the other countries. With the exception of news, which 56% found helpful, few of the students found *any* of the other sources helpful. Although the survey instrument left a space for 'other', the answers of the few students who responded were not helpful in explaining the Argentine results. For example, only 17% found lawyers in the family or friends helpful—even though a higher percentage of the Argentine students had lawyers in their families than any of the other countries in our study. Similarly, only 19% of Argentine students found popular culture sources helpful, far below the level of any of the other countries.

With respect to lawyers in the family, we speculate that this may be a case of cognitive dissonance. Most of the Argentine students believe that lawyers have low prestige and are dishonourable, yet a large number have lawyers in the family or lawyers as friends. Presumably, most of them believe in the honour of their friends and family members. Thus they must reconcile the fact that lawyers who they know well are honourable with the fact that lawyers in general are dishonourable. To achieve this reconciliation, and perhaps out of loyalty to friends and family, they must discount the influence of their lawyer friends or family members in forming their general opinion of lawyers.

With respect to popular culture, we suggest two hypotheses. First, Argentina is a civil law country and most of the popular culture sources available to them are American products. There is relatively little indigenous popular culture about the Argentine legal system. Argentine students might well believe that what they see in American movies or TV is so dissimilar to the legal system with which they are familiar that it is useless in forming judgments about the people who function in that legal system. For example, the function of prosecutors differs so radically between the American media and Argentine reality that a show like *Law & Order* would tell a viewer nothing about that reality. Consequently, pop culture sources would not be helpful in forming their opinions of lawyers. Germany is also a civil law country; a considerably higher percentage of German students found popular culture helpful

to them than Argentine students, but the Germans were well behind the four common law countries in this respect.

Our second hypothesis concerns the difference between developed and developing countries. Argentina is certainly in the latter category, particularly since the tragic economic collapse of the 1990s. The American judicial system that Argentine students observe in American pop culture seems to possess vastly greater resources than the Argentine judicial system. For example, computerised legal research is virtually unknown in Argentina. Argentine students might feel that news media about Argentine justice, such as stories about police corruption or political court packing schemes, presents a more accurate picture. American models might seem irrelevant to the realities of Argentine justice.

Exposure to popular culture

Table 5 focuses more explicitly on the exposure to popular culture of the sample. In reporting results about television, the survey asked whether students watched a particular show 'frequently', 'rarely', or 'never'. When we use the term 'watch' we refer to those who marked 'frequently'.

UCLA students consume a high level of legal popular culture. On average, they saw 3.49 of the ten movies on the list, the second highest figure.⁸² On television, 33% watch *Law & Order* and 18% watch *The Practice*.⁸³

Westminster students were the most avid TV watchers (1.17) and consumed the second most total media (4.41). This is reflected in the finding that more than half of the sample of Westminster students found popular culture helpful in forming their opinion of the law. Scottish students had the lowest movie consumption (2.71) of any of the comparison schools, although their consumption of lawyer shows, at second highest in the survey, brings their total exposure figure to fourth in the list. Interestingly the UK respondents (Strathclyde and Westminster) show the highest figures for television viewing of lawyer shows, but trail Australia and the US in terms of mean numbers of lawyer movies viewed.

Although the German students watched a high amount of movies (3.34), they consumed much less legal TV than the comparison countries (0.27). Most of the shows they did watch were German shows rather than the American fare consumed

Table 5. *Exposure to legal popular culture*

	Mean number of lawyer movies seen (out of ten listed)	Mean number of lawyer television shows watched frequently	Total movies and television shows
UCLA	3.49	0.57	4.06
Westminster	3.24	1.17	4.41
Strathclyde	2.71	0.91	3.63
Bochum	3.34	0.27	3.61
Wollongong	4.13	0.83	4.96
Buenos Aires	3.05	0.50	3.55

in other countries.⁸⁴ The relatively light exposure to legal TV shows in Germany could account for the fact that a lower percentage of German students found popular culture helpful in forming their opinions about lawyers.

Australian students consumed a high level of American legal TV (0.83) and film (4.13). As a result, they consumed more legally oriented media than any of the other countries (4.96). The Argentinean students scored low on mean number of lawyer shows watched regularly (0.5), surpassing only the German students. In terms of mean number of lawyer movies viewed, again only one set of students (in this case Strathclyde) consumed less, but the mean number was still over three and broadly in line with those of Westminster and Bochum.

Part VI. Correlations and conclusion

The study has discovered that law students have a low opinion of the trustworthiness and ethical standards of lawyers. They also draw heavily on media news sources in forming their views on lawyers as well as on our area of focus, popular culture. There is evidence from our study of the effects of media on a number of issues.

Furthermore, the research has uncovered significant data that merits further consideration. Firstly, law students have a very low opinion about whether lawyers are trustworthy and ethical. In the US and Argentina, it was as low as that of the general public and in England, Australia, and Germany, it was much lower than that of the general public. Only in Scotland did at least a third of students find lawyers trustworthy and ethical. This in itself is something worthy of further research—why would students pursue a profession that they believe consists of so many unethical practitioners? Is it just the money? Are they prepared to be as dishonourable as many of their future colleagues if that's what it takes to succeed? Do they believe they will be among the relatively scarce honourable members? Do they trust the lawyers they know but distrust the ones they don't know? Have they selected law as a fallback career option because they have no special talents or opportunities in other fields or because they want to keep their options open? Where law is an undergraduate programme, not all students plan to pursue law as a profession. If students are treating law as a career option to fall back upon if nothing better emerges, the honour of people in the profession might not be important to them.

In terms of the sources of opinions, the study identified the important role that the news media played in the formation of law students' opinions. Perhaps surprising was the high percentage of law students who credit popular culture as a significant factor in forming their opinions of lawyers. After news coverage, popular culture was often the *most* important data source, more even than conversations with friends or having family members or friends who are lawyers. Popular culture was far more helpful than personal experience or classes in school. This tends to confirm both the cultivation effect and the active audience theories, although it does not help to determine which of the theories is more helpful in predicting media effects. Theorists pursuing both approaches agree that consuming *fictional* popular culture sources (television, film, and novels) is a significant source of

information to people engaged in constructing their opinions—although they may disagree about the mechanism by which this media effect occurs.

An analysis of the findings of the study provided some interesting information in terms of correlations between students' opinion of lawyers' character (prestige, deserving and honour) with the sources of information they found helpful and with the news and pop culture media they consume. However, there were relatively few *significant* correlations overall. The relevant correlations can be seen Table 6 below.⁸⁵

It was not unduly surprising to see the weakness of the various correlations in light of the difficulties of measuring media effects and sources of opinion in a survey of this nature.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the data suggested, at least in the US, Germany, Australia and Argentina, that the amount of legal popular culture consumed was positively correlated with law students' opinion of the character of lawyers. This data may well support the presence of 'media effects'.

The fact that there were few significant correlations was disappointing but not surprising, especially given the great variety of influences that come into play in the process of construction of opinion. How people respond to media with respect to a particular issue depends critically on their prior level of general knowledge about the issue as well as their predispositions about the issue.⁸⁷ The media is unlikely to influence someone (such as a child or a new immigrant) who has no fixed perception of the justice system or what lawyers do. Someone who already either strongly respects, or strongly dislikes, lawyers, is unlikely to change that opinion because of information transmitted by a given movie or TV show or even many such shows. Since law students have already committed themselves to law school and, in many cases, a future of law practice, many have already crystallised their opinions about lawyers in a way that particular pop culture products are unlikely to alter.

Someone who does not already have a strong opinion about lawyers, but has some understanding of the justice system and the role played by lawyers in that system, is most likely to be affected by media inputs. Also important in the construction of opinions is the amount of consistent information received, the recency with which it was received, and the vividness of the event that caused the reception. The complexity of all these factors made it unlikely that we would discover strong correlations between students' opinions and the pop culture they have consumed.

Table 6. *Correlations between popular culture consumed and opinions about lawyer character*

UCLA	Honour question and combined pop culture consumed: $r = 0.18, p = 0.03$
	Honour question & number of movies seen: $r = 0.16, p = 0.05$
	Deserving question and combined pop culture consumed: $r = 0.17, p = 0.04$
	Deserving question and number of movies seen: $r = 0.18, p = 0.03$
Strathclyde:	Honour question and combined pop culture consumed: $r = -0.24, p = 0.04$ [negative correlation]
Bochum:	Prestige question and combined pop culture consumed: $r = 0.15, p = 0.01$
Wollongong:	Deserving question and number of TV shows watched: $r = 0.15, p = 0.05$
Buenos Aires:	Prestige question and number of movies seen: $r = 0.15, p = 0.05$
	Honour question and number of TV shows seen: $r = 0.15, p = 0.04$

There are additional reasons why it is difficult to correlate media exposure with opinions about lawyers. People are usually oblivious to the sources of information on which they relied in forming a particular opinion. Some people may have no opinion at all on a particular question but will still respond to the question thus producing essentially a random response. The way a question is worded may drastically affect the responses it generates. Finally the survey was completed quickly and, as mentioned above, it called for heuristic reasoning—meaning there is no penalty for a wrong answer. As a result, the answers involve relatively little deliberation.

Lawyer TV shows (other than *Ally McBeal*) are generally positive about the character of the lawyers in the stories. In contrast, the ten movies we chose contained predominantly negative characterisations.⁸⁸ Consequently, we hypothesised that the number of television shows watched would be positively correlated to opinions about lawyer character and the number of movies watched would be negatively correlated. Since students consume vastly more television than movies, it seemed likely to us that those who consume a lot of pop culture might have more positive views about lawyers than those who consume relatively little. This conclusion is strengthened because of the surprisingly high percentages for students who claim that popular culture affected their opinions about lawyers.

To the extent we found any significant relationships, we discovered that the more legally-themed television and movies that law students consumed, the higher their opinions of lawyers. This held for UCLA on the honour and deserving questions, for Bochum on the prestige question, for Wollongong on the deserving question, and for Buenos Aires on the prestige and honour questions (however, there was a negative correlation for Buenos Aires students between finding pop culture helpful in forming opinions and lawyer honour). The Scottish data showed a strong *negative* correlation between the honour question and total media consumed. Scottish students are relatively light consumers of legal popular culture, but 53% of them frequently watched *Ally McBeal* that painted a rather negative picture of lawyerly honour.

These findings suggest that the media did indeed have an effect in terms of students forming their opinions about lawyers—many were willing to admit that legal popular culture was helpful in forming their opinions. This illustrates that, at the very least, the area is a fruitful one for exploring the media effects debate, and that future work needs to be undertaken to ascertain the precise nature of the role of popular legal culture in terms of constructing our idea of law and lawyers.

Notes

- [1] In particular at the Film and Law workshop at the International Institute for the Sociology of Law in Onati (24–26 April 2002) and at the Institut des Hautes Etudes Judiciaires sessions in Paris in February and November 2003.
- [2] See generally the review and bibliography in S. Machura & P. Robson, *Law and Film* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2001) and the review of the movement in S. Greenfield, G. Osborn & P. Robson, *Film and the Law* (London, Cavendish, 2001).
- [3] The danger of any ridicule of the law was that it might lead to negative consequences [see: A study of portrayals of lawyers, judges and court room scenes in motion pictures (March 1939) xxv(3) *Journal*

of American Bar Association 191–194 at 191]. The Hays Code had sought to provide in its 1930 Production Code that “law ... shall not be ridiculed, nor shall sympathy be created for its violation”. This was extended to cover professions including lawyers in 1938 where it was stated that;

Where dishonest or unethical, lawyers appear in pictures there should be shown also ethical and high principled lawyers who off-set the other type, and who condemn them (at 192).

- [4] The Motion Picture Production Code (as published 31 March 1930) [reproduced as Appendix 1 of Richard Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, 2nd edition (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003)].
- [5] Anthony Chase, Towards a legal theory of popular culture (1986) *Wisconsin Law Review* 527.
- [6] Stewart Macaulay, Images of law in everyday life: the lessons of school, entertainment and spectator sports (1987) 21(2) *Journal of Law and Society* 185.
- [7] In the sense used by Lawrence Friedman, Law, lawyers and popular culture (1998) *Yale Law Journal* 1579.
- [8] Macaulay, *op. cit.*, at 197.
- [9] In relation to the image of women and ethnic minorities there was an effects assumption whether looking at women in *LA Law* or in Hollywood’s treatment of women. In addition the scholarship which analysed individual films was premised on the effectiveness of those films to affect thinking or perceptions as well as to be useful teaching tools. For further references see Greenfield *et al.*, *op. cit.*
- [10] V. Salzmann & P. Dunwoody, An empirical analysis of prime time law: the end to ‘legal reelism’.
- [11] L. Gies, Explaining the absence of the media in stories of law and legal consciousness (2003) 2(1) *Entertainment Law* 19.
- [12] Stephen Stark, Perry Mason meets Sonny Crocket. The history of lawyers and the police as television heroes (1987) 42 *University of Miami Law Review* 229–283 at 280.
- [13] G. Osborn, Borders and boundaries: locating the law in film, in: Machura & Robson, *op. cit.*, 164 at 165.
- [14] See Gies, *op. cit.*
- [15] Salzmann & Dunwoody, *op. cit.*
- [16] Greenfield *et al.*, *op. cit.*, have previously argued that filmic portrayals are rarely accurate for a variety of reasons.
- [17] Salzmann & Dunwoody, *op. cit.*, at 453.
- [18] In an American survey [*Perceptions of the US Justice System* (American Bar Association, 1999), p. 93], respondents were asked for their opinions about a variety of issues concerning the US justice system. They were also asked about the sources of information that they found helpful in forming these opinions. They used a five-point scale, ranging from extremely important to not at all important. The term ‘very important’ in this footnote covers those who said a particular source was ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’ (that is, 5 or 4 on the five-point scale). Only 11% of American respondents ranked court programmes like *Judge Judy* as very important; 9% said television dramas were very important; 7% said that movies or videos were very important. These three sources were the least helpful sources on the entire list. In contrast, 63% said that personal experience was very important, a surprising 59% said that school or college courses were very important, and 57% said jury service was very important. Obviously, these respondents were, on average, much older than the law students we surveyed (only 26% were in the age range of 18–34) and so are more likely to have had personal experience with lawyers and to have served on juries. Nevertheless, the contrast with our findings is striking: the students we asked found pop culture sources much more helpful to them in forming opinions about lawyers than did the ABA respondents.
- [19] See for example the review of the literature in: L. Gies, Beyond textual analysis: are the media really shaping people’s understanding of the law? in: S. Greenfield & G. Osborn (Eds) *Readings in Law and Popular Culture* (London, Routledge, 2005).
- [20] Michael Asimow, Bad lawyers in the movies (2000) 24 *Nova Law Review* 533.
- [21] See also M. Pfau, L. Mullen, T. Deidrich & K. Garrow, Television viewing and public perceptions of attorneys (1995) 21(3) *Human Communication Research* 307.

- [22] Obviously, commercials and political ads are more blatantly manipulative than are fictional dramas, but the psychological dynamic of influence seems similar.
- [23] George Gerbner, Growing up with television: the cultivation perspective, in: Jennings Bryant & Dolf Zillman (Eds) *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (Mahway, NJ, L. Elbaum Associates, 2002); Kimberlianne Podlas, Please adjust your signal: how television's syndicated courtrooms bias our juror citizenry (2001) 39 *American Business Law Journal* 1.
- [24] A psychology dissertation concluded that German children and adolescents acquired their knowledge about the German legal system from American TV series and movies of the detective and police genres [Petra Wolf, *Was wissen Kinder und Jugendliche über Gerichtsverhandlungen?* (Regensburg, Roderer, 1997)]. One of the authors has run focus groups among Australian law students [Cassandra Sharp, Scarlet letter or chastity belt? What legal dramas of the 21st century are 'telling' our law students about a career in law (2002) *Legal Ethics* 90]. She found a substantial correlation between the aspirations, expectations and professional identity construction of students and their opinions of television lawyers.
- [25] Gies (2005), *op. cit.*, 4.
- [26] John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London, Routledge, 1987); Lawrence Grossberg, Ellen Wartella & D. Charles Whitney, *MediaMaking: Mass Media in a Popular Culture* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage Publications, 1998); David Morley, *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies* (London, Routledge, 1992).
- [27] Denvir (1996).
- [28] See Gies (2003, 2005), *op. cit.*
- [29] It is hoped that further research will be conducted on this, in particular looking at perceptions of law and lawyers from students from different disciplines.
- [30] Because the polling data we rely on in this section does not ask or answer the same questions in each country, there is an obvious problem of incommensurate metrics. Nevertheless, the available data is sufficient to support the conclusions we have drawn.
- [31] For additional US polling data, see Asimow (2000), *op. cit.*
- [32] CNN/USA/Gallup Poll, 14–16 November 2003. $N = 1,004$ adults nationwide. MoE ± 3 . Gallup has asked the same question since the 1970s, so longitudinal comparisons are possible. In 1976 and 1985, 25–27% of respondents gave lawyers high or very high ratings. Then the figure started to slide, falling to approximately the present low levels in each of the surveys taken since 1988.
- [33] Harris Poll No. 37, 11 August 1997. According to a 2002 Harris poll, 24% of respondents trusted lawyers to tell the truth; in comparison, 65% of respondents trusted ordinary men and women to tell the truth. Only stockbrokers (at 23%) came in behind lawyers.
- [34] See <http://www.mori.com/polls/trends/trust.shtml> (last visited 4 August 2003). We appreciate the assistance provided by Michele Corrado of MORI.
- [35] See <http://www.mori.com/polls/2001/emta-topline.shtml> (last visited 4 August 2003).
- [36] According to Genn and Paterson [Hazel Genn, Alan Paterson & National Centre for Social Research, *Paths to Justice Scotland—What People in Scotland Do and Think About Going to Law* (Oxford, Hart Publishing, 2001), p. 219], the Scottish public's responses to questions exploring attitudes to the legal system (such as the courts, judges, and reasonableness of lawyers' fees) "produced, on the whole, rather negative responses". However, the MORI data was based on a more extensive survey group than that of Genn and Paterson.
- [37] Information from Scottish Universities Registries (1990–2003) per Joint Standing Committee on Legal Education.
- [38] Ulrike Schultz, Die deutsche Anwaltschaft zwischen staatlicher Gebundenheit und Markt, in: S. Machura & S. Ulbrich (Eds) *Recht–Gesellschaft Kommunikation* (Baden-Baden, Nomos, 2003).
- [39] Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann & Renate Köcher (Eds), *Balkon des Jahrhunderts*, Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie 1998–2002, Vol. 11 (München/Allensbach, Saur/Verlag für Demoskopie, 2002), at p. 206.
- [40] Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach, Ärzte weiterhin vorn (2003) (7) *Allensbacher Berichte* 2.
- [41] East Germany needed few lawyers. Independent professionals were marginal to the justice system. This changed with the end of communism and the rise of a bourgeois society. At first, lawyers were

greeted with much respect. One year after reunification, East Germans gave lawyers the second best rating (51% 'admire' in 1991). But lawyers dropped significantly 10 years later (36% in 2001), close to the West German opinion (29% in 2001) (Noelle-Neumann & Köcher, *op. cit.*, 207).

- [42] *Ibid.*
- [43] *Ibid.*, 206.
- [44] *Ibid.*, 208.
- [45] *Ibid.*, 209.
- [46] At the beginning of 2004, there were 127,000 lawyers in Germany: Harald Kilger, 'An-Akademisierte' Berufe und 8,000 Neuanwälte jährlich (2004) 54 *Anwaltsblatt* 273.
- [47] Data from the German Bar Association (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 15 March 2003, p. 55); Kilger, *op. cit.*
- [48] According to a recent survey of the Institut für Freie Berufe, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, reported in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 December 2002, p. 14.
- [49] See <http://oldwww.roymorgan.com/polls/2002/3581/3581.pdf> (last visited 5 August 2003). Morgan Poll, *Professional Ethics and Honesty* (Australia, 2002).
- [50] Because there is no available polling data on this issue, we commissioned a poll from Delfos, an established polling organisation in Buenos Aires. The survey consisted of 300 persons who were contacted by phone. The margin of error was ± 5 . Michael Asimow has a copy of this poll which will be made available on request. We express appreciation to Sr. Gustavo Bastos for conducting this poll.
- [51] C.A. Lista & A.M. Brígido, *La Enseñanza del Derecho y la Formación de la Conciencia Jurídica* (Cordoba, Sima Editora, 2002).
- [52] For the 2004 survey, see http://www.usnews.com/edu/grad/rankings/law/brief/lawrank__brief.php.
- [53] Of course, that is not to say that the other universities will not have a number of (mature) students in this position. However, the US experience is different due to this experience or prior degree being a pre-requisite.
- [54] As with Australian, German and Scottish law students, almost all of whom intend to practise law.
- [55] UCLA students were white 65%, Asian-American 17%, Hispanic 6%, African-American 5%, Native-American 1%, 'other' 6%. Westminster has only 33% white students.
- [56] The polytechnic was founded in 1838. See *History of the University of Westminster*, available at <http://wmin.ac.uk/static/history.asp> (last accessed 26 June 2003).
- [57] The gender imbalance at Westminster is partly attributable to recent developments in UK higher education generally. In the UK, in the 2002–03 academic year, there were 517,160 female students as opposed to 452,230 men, whereas in 1994 the gender split was fairly equal. See W. Berliner, 'Where have all the young men gone?', *Education Guardian*, 18 May 2004. A second factor concerns the feminisation of the legal profession with law being seen as an attractive option for women. In 1987, women were less than one-fifth of all solicitors but women now make up a third of all practising solicitors. In each of the last 5 years, women have formed the majority of new entrants to the profession. In 1996–97, 52% of admissions to the roll were women. There are now more women than men under 30 in the profession. The average age of female PC holders in 1996–97 was 35 compared to 43 for male PC holders (see *Law Society Fact Sheet 2: Women in the Profession*).
- [58] Other ethnic groups included African 11%, Caribbean 6%, Indian 9%, Pakistani 11%, Bangladeshi 7%. The categories of 'other', 'white and Asian', and 'mixed other' totalled 20%. Of the entire entering class at the University of Westminster, 35% were white. Thus the Law School was slightly more ethnically diverse than the University as a whole.
- [59] To this number it should be noted there are some 70 graduate entrants who were not included in this research. Law is taught in some form in all the Scottish universities. However, it has been possible to do a full law degree (LL.B.) only in the ancient Scottish universities (other than St. Andrews) plus the newer universities of Dundee and Strathclyde. These degrees allow graduates an exemption from further professional examinations. The post-1992 universities of Abertay, Glasgow Caledonian, Robert Gordon and Stirling have, in 2003, been granted this ability too. In addition, it is necessary to complete a Diploma in Legal Practice at one of four centres in Scotland (including Strathclyde). See Alan Paterson, T. St. J. N. Bates & Mark R. Poustie, *The Legal System of Scotland*, 4th edition (Edinburgh, W. Green, 1999).

- [60] Some places are set aside for mature students with other qualifications and students may gain entry upon completion of the open entry access course. In addition, a number of graduates from other disciplines are admitted.
- [61] *The Guardian*, however, ranked it very low in 2004—the criteria they use as is noted in relation to Westminster are somewhat idiosyncratic including percentage of students from poorer backgrounds and student accommodation availability and leisure facilities.
- [62] Michael Hartmann, *Der Mythos von den Leistungseliten* (Frankfurt, Campus, 2002), pp. 106–107.
- [63] Some 4% indicated a Turkish nationality. The percentage of students with Turkish background is actually higher, since many have a German passport and prefer to self-identify as German. Another 4% have an East European nationality, while 7% come from other countries in Europe and world-wide.
- [64] F. Fucito, *El Perfil del Estudiante de Derecho de la Universidad de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires, Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires, 1997).
- [65] An average of 4,500 students per year have entered Buenos Aires Law School since 1995.
- [66] Maria Inés Bergoglio, *Las Facultades de Derecho Argentinas. Entre las Tradiciones y los Esfuerzos de Cambio*, in: R. Perez Perdomo (Ed.) *La educación jurídica en América Latina* (Mexico City, UNAM, 2004).
- [67] Fucito, *op. cit.*
- [68] Remarkably, half of the full-time students stated that they did not work only because they could not find a job.
- [69] Fucito, *op. cit.*
- [70] Of the students who work part-time, 17% work less than 20 hours per week; 56% work between 20 and 40 hours per week (*Ibid.*).
- [71] Only about 17% of students ultimately graduate.
- [72] Fucito showed that 53% of law students at Buenos Aires University were older than 26. Bergoglio, *op. cit.* states that 14% of students in public law schools were over 30 years old.
- [73] Several of the students commented in this vein: “I don’t think lawyers have the prestige they should have; their reputation is very discredited” (Form 26). “They have a bad reputation that is due, in large part, to the discredit of some of the most famous ones” (Form 78). “The masses believe, in general, that lawyers are people who abuse their prestigious title” (Form 123).
- [74] See here for example, M. Galanter, *The faces of mistrust: the image of lawyers in public opinion, jokes and political discourse* (1998) 66 *University of Cincinnati Law Review* 805.
- [75] See above and Asimow (2000), *op. cit.*
- [76] Information based on both formal and informal inquiries over the past 30 years of students entering the Law School.
- [77] See polling data in Noelle-Neumann & Köcher (2002), *op. cit.*, 206 and 132. A general population survey in 1998 showed that 61% of all respondents (68% of those under the age of 30) suspected that their fellow citizens are not honest in discussions (*Ibid.*, 89).
- [78] To note some examples: “They do almost everything for money” (female). “Arrogant, presumptuous, hot for money” (female, two lawyers in family). “One of few professions which allow to take money out of clients’ pockets” (male). Other students saw a clash between the lawyer’s duty to fight for their clients’ rights and the duty to stick to ‘truth’ and serve the administration of justice (‘Rechtspflege’). While some admired the way that professionals grapple with this dilemma, there were markedly disgusted responses. “Wes Brot ich ess, des Lied ich sing”, quoted a student. Literally translated: Whose bread I eat whose song I sing. (Our Bochum sample included students who were past the first semester but these students were not counted in our statistical data.)
- [79] In reporting the results of the questions relating to the source of information for forming opinions about lawyers, the word ‘helpful’ includes both ‘very helpful’ and ‘helpful’ (that is, 1 or 2 on the five-point scale).
- [80] More UCLA students have lawyers in their family than any of the other schools except Buenos Aires.
- [81] German TV news programmes report very few civil cases. The programmes do, however, give prominent coverage to criminal and constitutional cases.

- [82] We assumed the number of movies seen by UCLA students would be higher than for non-US institutions since UCLA students are older and thus more likely to have seen some of the older movies on the list. This assumption proved incorrect. Australian students had seen the most movies (4.13 per student). UCLA (3.49), Bochum (3.31), and Westminster (3.24) were about the same. Buenos Aires students had seen fewer (3.05) and Strathclyde students—the youngest—had seen the fewest (2.71).
- [83] Unfortunately, the much-watched *Ally McBeal* was inadvertently omitted from the survey, or UCLA's TV watching (0.57) and sum of total media (4.06) would probably have been higher than the other countries.
- [84] *Ally McBeal* was also omitted from the German survey. The show was popular during 2002 when the survey was taken; if it had been counted the TV consumption would have been considerably greater.
- [85] In the following discussion, we use two statistical tools. A correlation coefficient is a number between -1 and $+1$ and is represented by the letter r . An r of 1 would show a perfect positive relationship between the two variables studied, and an r of -1 would show a perfect negative relationship. An r of 0 suggests that there is no relationship (or a random relationship) between the variables. The square of r indicates the amount of variance between the two variables. For example, a correlation of 0.2 indicates that 4% of the variance between the variables is shared in common. Many of our r -squares may seem quite low, but it should be noted that such correlations may still be significant, especially when one considers the various types of error variance that pencil and paper measures usually contain. The more important criteria for determining whether we should infer a significant relationship between two variables is the probability. Typically, a p -value of 0.05 or below is used to infer a statistically significant relationship. A p -value of 0.05 means that we are 95% sure that such a correlation did not occur by chance alone. One should be aware that p -values are partly determined by sample size; with smaller samples, a larger r is needed to be statistically significant. It is thus the p -value, and not the r -square, that determines whether a relationship may have occurred by chance.
- [86] See above at Part I.
- [87] John R. Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992).
- [88] Asimow (2000), *op. cit.*, considers each of these ten films as involving negative portrayals of lawyers. Obviously, the classification of lawyer characters in movies as positive or negative presents serious methodological problems. Among the numerous problems are the subjectivity of the evaluation and the fact that movie characters frequently describe an 'arc' going from greedy or inept to noble (as in *The Verdict*, *Prime Suspect* and *A Civil Action*) (see pp. 562–569; also see Greenfield *et al.*, *op. cit.*, 100–110 and Asimow (2001) Embodiment of evil: law firms in the movies, *UCLA Law Review*, 48, p. 1339.

Bibliography

- ASIMOW, M. (Fall 1999) 'Justice with an attitude: Judge Judy and the daytime television bench, *Judges' Journal* 38, p. 24.

Appendix

SURVEY OF OPINIONS ABOUT LAWYERS

This survey is voluntary and anonymous. Your answers will be combined with others and not individually identified. You can decline to answer any question or all of the questions. Thanks very much for answering!

A.1 What year were you born? _____.

A.2 What is your gender? M(1) _____
F(2) _____

A.3 How many lawyers are in your family, not counting yourself (siblings, spouse, significant other, parents, aunts-uncles, grandparents, or cousins)? _____

A.4 What is your ethnicity?
White ----- 1
African-American----- 2
Asian ----- 3
Latino----- 4
Native American ----- 5
Other ----- 6

B. What is your opinion about lawyers in general (not about any specific lawyer or about yourself). Please indicate your opinion by circling a number between one and five.

Disagree **Agree**
Strongly **Strongly**

1. Lawyers have a lot of prestige.----- 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5
2. Lawyers are trustworthy and ethical.----- 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5
3. Lawyers don't deserve the amount of income they earn.
----- 1 -- 2 -- 3 -- 4 -- 5

Comments about lawyers in general _____

C. People often form their opinions based on different sources of information. To what degree were your opinions influenced in answering question B by:

	Very Unhelpful			Very Helpful	
1. Lawyers in the family or lawyer friends.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Personal experience with hiring a lawyer or being in court	1	2	3	4	5
3. Being on a jury	1	2	3	4	5
4. Classes in school	1	2	3	4	5
5. Discussions with friend about lawyers	1	2	3	4	5
6. News coverage about lawyers or trials	1	2	3	4	5
7. Novels, television shows, or movies about lawyers	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other (Identify _____)	1	2	3	4	5

D. Do you watch the following television shows:

	Frequently	Rarely	Never
1. Law & Order	1	2	3
2. The Practice	1	2	3
3. Judge Judy	1	2	3
4. JAG	1	2	3
5. Perry Mason	1	2	3

E. Have you seen the following movies? (Check box if “Yes.”)

- 1. The Rainmaker ☐
- 2. A Civil Action ☐
- 3. Primal Fear ☐
- 4. The Firm ☐
- 5. Liar Liar ☐
- 6. The Verdict ☐
- 7. Class Action ☐
- 8. Body Heat ☐
- 9. Jagged Edge ☐
- 10. The Devil’s Advocate ☐