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Abstract

This article argues that cross-national diversity in women's concentration in the public sector explains a substantial part of the cross-national variation in the gender gap in job authority. Using data on individuals in 26 countries represented in the 2005 International Social Survey Program module on Work Orientation (supplemented by societal-level information), this study supports this argument. The authors find that in countries with high levels of women's concentration in the public sector, the gender gap in job authority is wider than in countries with lower levels of public sector feminization. The implications of these results are discussed in the context of state interventions in gender inequalities.

Keywords

job authority, women's employment, gender gap, public sector

While women's inferior position in the labor market is largely attributed to their familial responsibilities, much scholarly interest is devoted in recent years to understand if and how policies and work arrangements may alleviate women's work–family imbalance. Studies in this area stress the importance of family-friendly environment as a major facilitator of women's

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employment—especially when family demands are high (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005; Stier & Yaish, 2008). An undesirable effect of such environment, however, is manifested in high levels of gender segregation in the workplace, which is generally perceived to have negative employment consequences for women (cf. Trappe & Rosenfeld, 2004). This article examines this claim, namely, that gender segregation in the workplace goes hand in hand with women's inferior position in the labor market. More specifically, it examines the impact of women's concentration in the public sector on the gender gap in job authority.

In most societies, the public sector provides a “family-friendly” work environment. Employment in this sector offers benefits and protection, flexible, often shorter working hours, and good opportunities for promotion and authority (Gornick & Jacobs, 1998; Wright, Baxter, & Birkelund, 1995). More important, the public sector is the context in which such arrangements are adhered to closely (Bihagen & Ohls, 2006; Okun, Oliver, & Khat-Marelli, 2007). Indeed, the expansion of the female-friendly public sector is said to be a major force propelling women into the labor market (Gornick & Jacobs, 1998; Yaish & Kraus, 2003) as well as facilitating their relatively high level of attachment to the labor market (Okun et al., 2007; Stier & Yaish, 2008). Yet it is also argued that arrangements that support women's employment may have adverse effects on women's market prospects and attainments (Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). This is because such arrangements do not necessarily facilitate women's entry into lucrative and rewarding jobs.

Job authority is one such a reward, which pertains to “control over resources, people, and things” (Wolf & Fligstein, 1979). Whereas authority in the workplace is often viewed as legitimate relations of domination, it also has implications for inequality in society at large (Dahrendorf, 1959). Research has shown, for example, that authority position at the workplace is an important determinant of income (Halaby, 1979; Reskin & Padavic, 1994; Reskin & Ross, 1992; Smith, 1997; Spaeth, 1985), among other things (cf. Schieman & Reid, 2008). The above suggests that inequality between men and women in access to authority positions in the workplace may lead to other forms of gender inequality in society. Thus, job authority is central to our understanding of gender inequalities in the labor force, and in society at large.

To properly study the interplay between women's concentration in the public sector and the gender gap in job authority, one has to adopt either a longitudinal or a cross-national perspective. Because comparable cross-national data of high quality are readily available through the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), we adopt a comparative perspective to study this topic.

As is the case in many aspects of inequality in the labor market, in general, and the gender gap, in particular (cf. Blau & Kahn, 1995; DiPrete, 2005; Gangl, 2005; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, 2006), a substantial cross-national variation in the gender gap in job authority exists (Charles, 1992; Rosenfeld, Van Buren, & Kalleberg, 1998; Smith, 2002; Wright et al., 1995). Studies attempting to reveal the mechanisms that might account for this cross-national variation are relatively rare, and based mostly on a small number of countries. This makes it hard to undertake a systematic examination of the societal factors that might account for the cross-national variations in the gender gap in job authority, while at the same time controlling for individual characteristics (see, e.g., Ishida, 1994; Wright et al., 1995).

The only large-scale comparative study in this field to date is that by Charles (1992). This study compares how macro-societal characteristics, across 25 industrial countries, may account for over- or underrepresentation of women in administrative and managerial occupations, as well as in other occupational categories. However, that study lacks individual-level information, hence it cannot control for compositional differences in individual characteristics that may affect the distribution of women in administrative and managerial occupations in each of these 25 countries.

Rosenfeld et al.'s (1998) study is an exception. These authors studied nine industrialized countries and were the first to apply to their data statistical models tailored to explain cross-national variation in the gender gap in job authority by cross-national variation in societal characteristics, while controlling for individual characteristics. Their results suggest that in countries with higher industrial sex-segregation the gender gap in job authority was narrower.

Their study, however, was limited in two, related, ways: First, because it analyzed only few industrialized nations, its results are hard to generalize. Second, the small number of nations made it impossible to apply multivariate analysis on the societal level to account for cross-national differences in the gender gap in job authority. Hence, this study was unable to illumine clearly the mechanisms that may impinge on cross-national disparities in the gender gap in job authority.

The present study elaborates on both Charles's (1992) and Rosenfeld et al.'s (1998) studies, in two main ways. First, it pertains to a relatively large number of countries ($N = 26$) that represent both industrialized and industrializing societies, providing greater variation in societal characteristics. Second, it relies on data that encompass both individual- and country-level characteristics. This rich and relatively large data set enables the application of multivariate multilevel analytical techniques to examine the effect of women's concentration in the public sector on the gender gap in authority positions. That is, we are able to test specific arguments about the mechanisms, at both

the individual and the societal levels, responsible for cross-national variations in gender gaps in job authority, while ruling out alternative explanations.

Theoretical Considerations

The gender gap in job authority is synonymous with women's disadvantage in access to powerful positions in the labor force, and is often associated with claims about gender-based discriminatory processes in the labor market (Kanter, 1977; Kraus & Yonay, 2000). Another prominent explanation of this gap has its roots in human capital theory. Accordingly, women are absent from authority positions because they have lower levels of human capital than men (Becker, 1985). Men work longer hours, are more likely to acquire on-the-job training, and accumulate more years of experience along their life course (Mincer & Polachek, 1974; Polachek, 1981). Women, in contrast, are often constrained by their family responsibilities and therefore invest less in human capital and in the formal economy.

The dual role of working mothers in most societies has led scholars to propose that women's absence from power positions in the labor force is partially the result of their constraints and partially reflects their preferences and aspirations (Parcel, 2006). According to Becker (1985), who views the household as an economic unit, rational calculations lead wives to specialize in child caring and home duties, and husbands to invest in the workplace. A more sociological account of the origins of these preferences and aspirations are socialization processes that emphasize women's roles as their families' caretakers (Marini & Brinton, 1984). It is also possible, as Hakim (2004) argues, that women have a genuine preference to care for the family while combining work in the marketplace. In this context, a recent study in the United Kingdom shows that such preferences develop throughout women's work experiences and are therefore endogenous to their employment attainment process (Kan, 2007). Whether due to preferences, experiences, or to familial constraints, women would appear to self-select into positions less likely to involve authority, and look for jobs that allow them to combine paid and unpaid work, especially when their children are young and demand much of their time and energy. As a consequence, many women are employed on a part-time basis, where opportunities for advancement are relatively low, and work in segments of the economy dominated by female workers, particularly in the public sector (Gornick & Jacobs, 1998; Okun et al., 2007; Yaish & Kraus, 2003). Recent scholarly work also points to recruitment patterns (Skuratowicz & Hunter, 2004) and organizational practices (Kmec, 2005) as important determinants of gender segregation in the workplace.

However, the consequences of women's concentration in the public sector of the economy are not straightforward. On the one hand, the public sector is said to increase women's likelihood to hold a supervisory position. This sector of employment is also said to employ more universalistic criteria of recruitment and promotion (Blank, 1985; Maume, 1985; Zwerling & Silver, 1992). Finally, this is the sector where affirmative action policies and anti-discrimination practices are strictly maintained. Consequently, disadvantaged groups in the labor market (such as women and ethnic minorities) are more likely to be found in this segment of the economy (Blank, 1985) and enjoy a more equal treatment (Grotsky & Pager, 2001). Because the state as employer is concerned not only with economic benefits but also in advancing political goals (Esping-Andersen, 1990) such as the facilitation of women's employment, it is expected to provide a more family-friendly work environment with better opportunities for women to combine work and family responsibilities (Stier & Yaish, 2008; Yaish & Kraus, 2003). As a result, women are more likely to hold managerial and supervisory jobs in the public sector than in other sectors of the economy. This argument resonates well with findings in the literature that suggest that higher concentration of women in specific occupations and sectors provides better opportunities for holding authority positions because women are more likely to supervise other women than to supervise men (Clement & Myles, 1994; Rosenfeld et al., 1998).

On the other hand, it is argued that in segments of the economy dominated by women, (such as the public sector) positions of authority are more likely to be filled by men than by women (Kanter, 1977; Kraus & Yonay, 2000). Furthermore, because the public sector offer better conditions to combine work and family duties (cf. Okun et al., 2007; Stier & Yaish, 2008), it is possible that a high concentration of women there indicates lower levels of aspirations and commitment to a demanding career (Hansen, 1995; Wright et al., 1995; but see, Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). From a macro-level perspective, Charles and Grusky (2004) argue, that the growth in service sector employment opportunities, mostly in routine nonmanual occupations, became "a home" especially for the more traditional women with domestic responsibilities (p. 303).

The Institutional Context

Recent scholarship on labor market inequalities has focused on national institutional differences in accounting for cross-national variation in employment behaviors and economic outcomes (DiPrete, 2005; Gangl, 2005; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, 2006; Pettit & Hook, 2005; Trappe & Rosenfeld, 2004). Thus, for example, studies have highlighted the importance of structural

differences in educational and employment systems (e.g., Trappe & Rosenfeld, 2004); in the organization of the labor market and employment relations (Brady, 2007; Ebbinghaus & Kittel, 2005); and in policies related to wages and employment opportunities (DiPrete, 2005; Gangl, 2005; Hancké & Rhodes, 2005). In studying gender inequality in labor market outcomes, comparative studies have focused on cross-national variations in employment-supportive policies, particularly for women (Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, 2006; Pettit & Hook, 2005). These studies show that such policies affect both women's labor force participation and their market attainments, though not necessarily in the same direction. Whereas such policies are positively associated with women's access to paid employment, they are detrimental to their attainment. The availability of part-time employment opportunity, for example, not only enable women to enter the labor force, but it also determines the extent and nature of gender segregation in occupations (Trappe & Rosenfeld, 2004), women's opportunities for advancement, and their access to lucrative jobs (Bardasi & Gornick, 2008).

An important sector of the economy, which greatly affects women's employment opportunities and their market prospects, is the public sector. The growth of the public sector is strongly associated with the incorporation of women to paid employment (Charles & Grusky 2004). However, countries differ in the size of their public sector and in the extent to which women are concentrated in this sector (Clement & Myles, 1994; Gornick & Jacobs, 1998). In their study, Gornick and Jacobs question the claim that employment in the public sector is necessarily good for women. Instead, they argue that an important factor underlying country variation in employment outcomes is the size of the public sector, and that the size of the public sector is negatively associated with pay advantages.

Building on these findings and our contentions regarding the effect of segregation on women's prospects in the labor market, we further argue that cross-national variations in women's concentration in the public sector may contribute to explain cross-national variations in job authority. Here, however, the direction of the effect is not entirely clear. The gender gap in job authority may be smaller in countries with high concentration in the public sector to the extent that this sector offers more opportunities for women to enter supervisory positions, or the gap may be higher because there are fewer supervisory positions and men are more likely to control them.

Although our study pertains to the effect of women's concentration in the public sector, we recognize that other macro-societal characteristics may affect the net gender gap in job authority. Recent studies on different aspects of the gender gap in the workplace discuss at great length the potential effect

of social policies on gender equality (cf. Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, 2006; Rosenfeld et al., 1998). In many countries various policies were implemented to provide women the necessary conditions to combine work and family: fully paid maternity leave, subsidized daycare arrangements, tax deductions, and the like. From the point of view of gender equality, however, these policies can be seen as a double-edged sword. On the positive side, research has shown that by providing women the necessary conditions to combine work and family both their labor force participation and their attachment to the labor force increase (Daly, 2000; Esping-Andersen, 1990, 1999; Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Gornick, Meyers, & Ross, 1998; Korpi, 2000; Stier, Lewin-Epstein, & Braun, 2001; Stier & Yaish, 2008). On the negative side, however, it had been argued that these policies preserve women's inferior position in the labor market and contribute to employers' tendency to discriminate against women in recruitment to powerful positions (Gornick & Meyers, 2003; Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). Just as important, it is argued, in a society with an egalitarian gender ideology men are more likely to tolerate women coworkers as their managers and supervisors (see, Charles, 1992; Goode, 1963 for related arguments).

An advantage of our data set is that it enables us to apply a multivariate multilevel analysis, and thus to control for intervening factors at both the individual and the societal levels in assessing the association between women's concentration in the public sector and the net gender gap in job authority.

Data, Variables, and Analytic Strategy

Data

The study uses several sources of data. At the individual level, we employ the ISSP (International Social Survey Program) module on Work Orientation, conducted in 2005 in 30 countries. The ISSP is designed to provide high-quality and comparable data with the explicit purpose of multicultural, multinational comparative research. As we are interested in the gender gap in job authority, we include in the analysis only respondents who participated in the labor force at the time of the study and provided information on whether they had authority in their job. At the societal level, we collected data from publications of the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2005), the Clearinghouse on International Development in Child, Youth, and Family Policies (2004), and UN reports on women's development (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2002); we also aggregated data to the country level from the 2002 ISSP module on changing family and gender roles. Because

information at this level was not available for all 30 countries represented in the ISSP 2005 data set, we limited the analysis to the 26 countries for which information was available. All in all, our analysis is based on 19,124 individuals clustered in the following 26 countries: Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada, Germany, Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Belgium (herein Flanders),¹ Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Israel, Japan, the Philippines, the Czech Republic, Russia, Latvia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Mexico.

Variables

Our dependent variable is based on the question “In your main job, do you supervise anyone or are you directly responsible for the work of others?” Respondents who supervised others were coded as having job authority (1 = *supervises others*, 0 = *otherwise*). We preferred this measure to a job title indicating managerial position because the latter underrepresents authority positions in the labor force (Rosenfeld et al., 1998). Furthermore, direct supervision is a very useful indicator of job authority in a cross-national comparison because it does not involve variation that may result from country differences in job titles and occupational categorizations (Rosenfeld et al., 1998; Wright et al., 1995).

The independent variables expected to affect job authority pertain to two levels of analysis: the individual level and the societal level. The main independent variable on the individual level is gender (coded 1 = *female*; 0 = *male*). All other individual-level characteristics are used mainly as controls, and include indicators for three factors commonly used in studies on the gender gap in job authority: human capital, employment characteristics, and family composition. *Human capital* is indicated by years of schooling and by age—and its square, which is commonly used as a proxy measure for labor force experience (Rosenfeld et al., 1998). *Employment characteristics* are indicated by the number of weekly hours allocated to market work; a dummy variable representing employment in the public sector (coded 1 = *public sector*; 0 = *private sector*), a dummy variable representing self-employment (coded 1 = *self-employed*; 0 = *employee*),² and a set of dummy variables representing four occupational categories, based on the 1988 ISCO codes. *High white-collar occupations* (reference category)—professional, semiprofessional, and managerial occupations; *Low white-collar occupations*—clerical and service occupations (codes 4000-5999); *High blue-collar occupations*—including craft workers, foremen, and farmers, codes 6000 to 7999; and *Low blue-collar occupations*—including laborers and machine operators in occupations coded 8000 to 9995. Finally, we tap *family composition* by two

indicators: a dummy variable representing marital status (coded 1 = *married or cohabiting*; 0 = *otherwise*) and a dummy variable indicating the presence of young children at home (coded 1 = *children present*; 0 = *otherwise*).

The main independent variable on the societal level is percentage of women (out of the total female labor force) working in the public sector (calculated from ILO, 2005). We include three other macro-level characteristics to control for alternative explanations to country variation in the gender authority gaps. Because the public sector attracts women into the labor force, it is possible that our indicator for women's concentration in the public sector is merely a good proxy of women's labor force participation rate. Therefore, we control for women's labor force participation rate (UNDP, 2002). We also include in our models indicators for policies in support of women's employment and gender ideology.

To tap *policies in support of women's employment* we used information on the number of weeks of maternity leave (Clearinghouse on International Development in Child, Youth, and Family Policies, 2004). This measure captures policy variation among countries as suggested by Gornick and Meyers (2003), and was found to affect women's labor force participation (Mandel & Semyonov, 2006) as well as the gender gap in job authority (Rosenfeld et al., 1998).

To measure *gender ideology* we constructed a gender role index obtained from the 2002 ISSP module on changing family and gender roles. The index was calculated separately for each of the 26 countries, based on the following statements:

1. A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.
2. All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.
3. A job is alright, but what most women really want is a home and children.
4. Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay.
5. A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family.

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree with each statement on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*). The inverse mean score in each country is our gender ideology index (Cronbach's alpha ranges from .48 in Japan to .84 in Germany, with overall median .74), so that a high score represents a more egalitarian disposition (see also Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2007). Descriptive statistics of both the individual- and the societal-level indicators are presented in the appendix.

Analytic Strategy

Because we are interested in the gender gap in job authority within countries as well as between them, we employ hierarchical linear modeling (HLM). An advantage of using HLM is that we can model simultaneously the effects of societal-level characteristics on the odds of having a supervisory position while controlling for individual-level characteristics (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). More important, however, this method allows testing for whether the individual-level effect of gender on the likelihood to enter supervisory positions at work differs cross-nationally and the extent this variation is associated with country-level characteristics. Thus, a two-level model allows the researcher to define any number of individual-level variables as random variables, which are then regressed on the societal-level variables. Such a model can be represented by a set of equations, as follows:

$$\log \left(\frac{\text{job authority}_{ij}}{1 - \text{job authority}_{ij}} \right) = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{gender}) + \beta X + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad (1)$$

The first is a within-country equation, where the log odds of individual i in country j to hold job with authority (relative to not holding a job with authority) is the dependent variable, β_{0j} is the intercept denoting the average jobs with authority in country j , "gender" denotes women, and its coefficient β_{1j} represents the average gap between women and men in job authority in country j . The vector X denotes the individual-level control variables (education, age, and the like), β represents their coefficients, and ε_{ij} is the error term. In this equation, both the intercept and the gender coefficients (β_{0j} and β_{1j} , respectively) are allowed to vary cross-nationally (i.e., are random variables), whereas the effects of the control variables are constrained to be the same across countries (i.e., fixed variables). We explain these between-country variations with the country-level characteristics, as presented in Equations 2 and 3:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\% \text{ women in public sector}) + \dots + v_{0j} \quad (2)$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\% \text{ women in public sector}) + \dots + v_{1j} \quad (3)$$

In Equation 2, the average job authority in country j (β_{0j}) is explained by women's concentration in the national public sector (and other societal control variables) and its effect (γ_{01}), whereas v_{0j} is the error term. Our main interest is in Equation 3, which implies a cross-level interaction term, between gender

and women's concentration in the public sector, in explaining cross-national variations in the net gender gap in job authority. In this equation, the average gender gap in job authority in country j (β_{1j}) is explained by women's concentration in the public sector and its effect (γ_{11}), whereas v_{1j} is the error term. For example, a negative sign for the coefficient denoting percentage of women in the public sector (γ_{11}) implies that among our 26 countries the gender gap in job authority tends to widen as women's concentration in the public sector increases (net of other control variables).

Results

We begin the analysis by describing cross-national variations in rates of supervisory positions. As can be seen in Figure 1, substantial cross-national variation exists in the distributions of men (black bar) and women (gray bar) in supervisory positions. For example, of the total sample of working men and women, in Hungary, the Philippines, and Portugal fewer than 20% of all workers reported on supervising others on their job, whereas in Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Germany, and New Zealand more than 40% reported on supervising others. The figure also demonstrates gender differences in authority, with men constituting the majority of workers with job authority in most countries. However, substantial cross-national variations are evident in this respect. Whereas in most countries men dominate authority positions, in countries such as the Czech Republic and Latvia the distributions are more equal.

Although Figure 1 demonstrates distinctly the country variation in supervisory positions, it does not clearly indicate cross-national differences between men and women in their probabilities of having authority positions. This is partially because the gender gap in job authority is also related to the overall supervisory positions in each country. To obviate this, we present in Figure 2 the gender gap in job authority, for each country, in terms of odds ratios. A ratio equal to 1 means that women are as likely as men to hold supervisory positions, whereas a ratio <1 means that women are less likely than men to hold supervisory positions. The odds ratios presented in Figure 2 portray similar patterns to the one discussed above. First, in most countries the odds ratio is smaller than one, indicating that women are less likely than men to hold supervisory positions. Second, substantial cross-national variation exists in the gender gap in job authority. On the one hand, women in Cyprus, Finland, and Switzerland are about three times less likely than men to hold supervisory positions. On the other hand, women in Mexico and the Czech Republic are somewhat more likely than men to supervise others. To explain this cross-national variation, we apply the HLM technique to these data. The main advantage of the HLM technique is that the macro-societal effects are estimated while controlling for

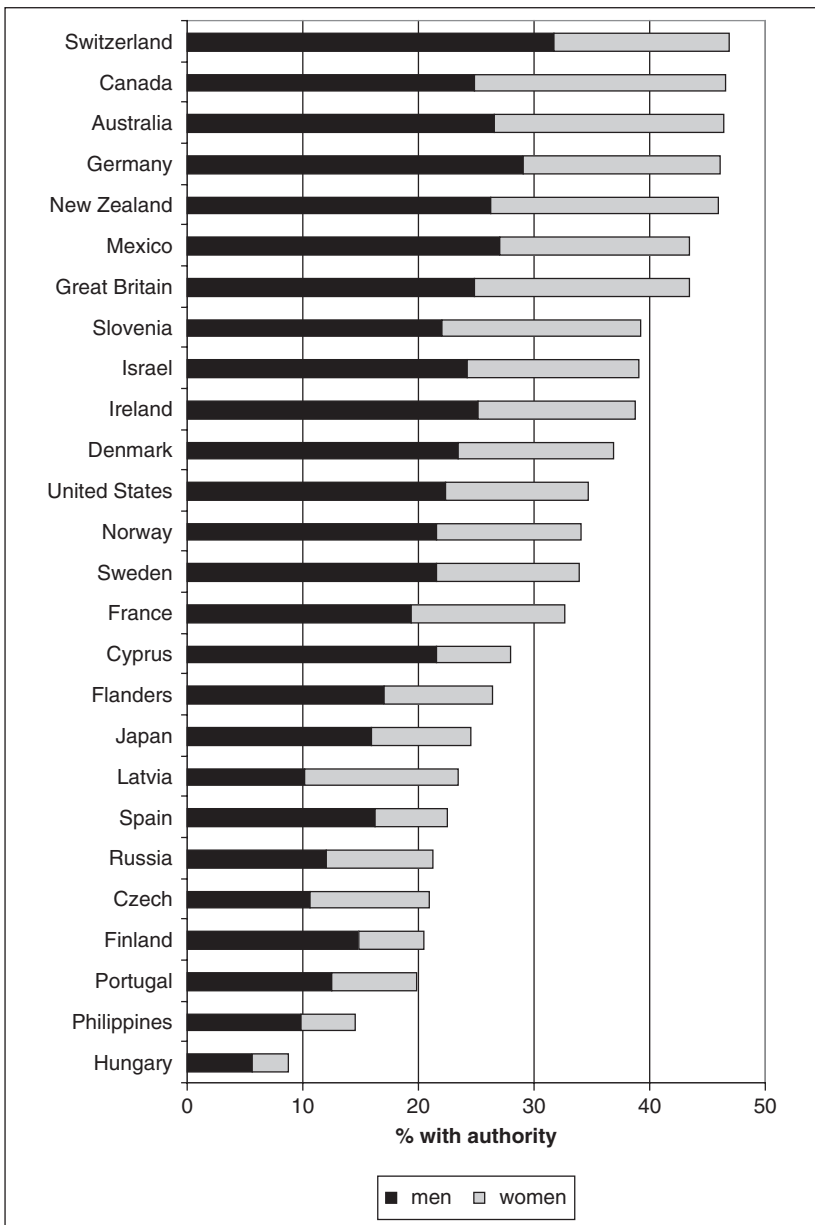


Figure 1. Percentage of men and women workers having job authority by country (weighted)

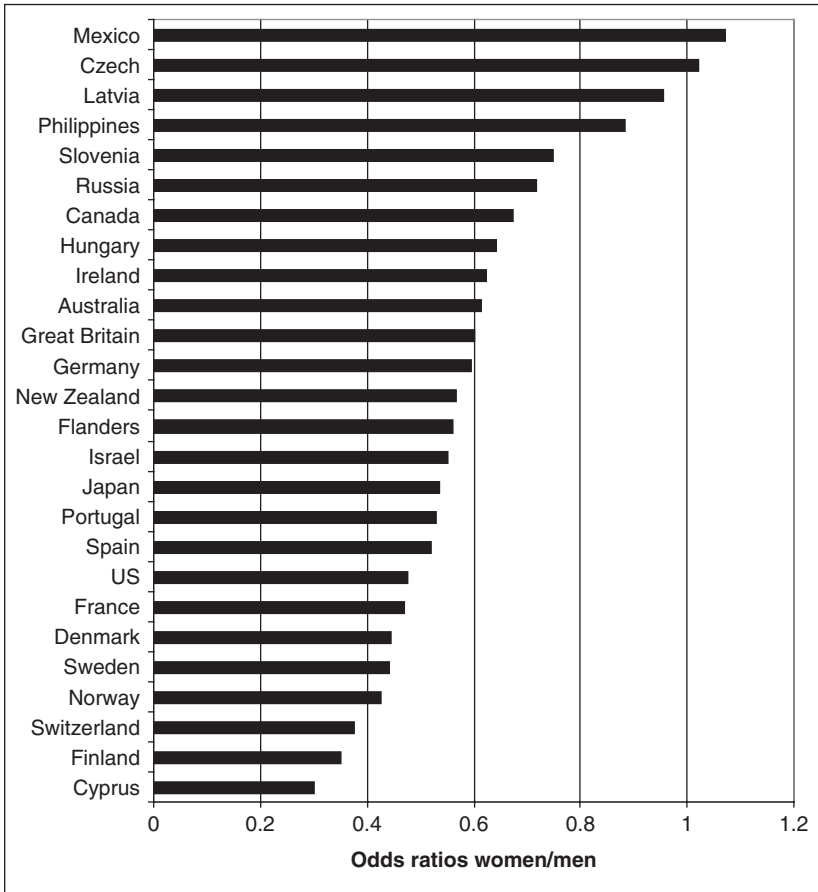


Figure 2. Odds ratios (women to men) of holding supervisory position by country (weighted data)

compositional differences within each country. Having made these clarifications, we can move next to our multivariate, cross-level, analysis.

Multivariate Analysis

This stage of the analysis focuses on the effect of women’s concentration in the public sector on the gender gap in job authority, controlling for individual characteristics. In Table 1, we present three models that are designed to test our hypotheses concerning the association between women’s concentration in the public sector and job authority. The first model controls only for

individual-level characteristics, whereas both the intercept and the gender coefficients (β_{0j} and β_{1j} , respectively) are random effects with error terms (i.e., without predictors). This model serves as a benchmark against which we can assess the amount of variance explained in the random effects by the inclusion of macro-level characteristics in subsequent models. In the second model we then add an indicator for women's concentration in the public sector, whereas in the third model we also control for gender ideology, the length of maternity leave and the participation rate of women in the labor market.

The models in Table 1 indicate, as expected, that the effects of individual-level characteristics are in line with findings in prior studies. For example, those who invest more hours on the job and hold high white collar occupations (professional, technical, or managerial) are more likely to have job authority. Similarly, older workers—and therefore with more labor force experience—and married workers are more likely to have job authority. Interestingly, working in the public sector reduces the likelihood to supervise others, net of personal and employment characteristics.³ At the individual level, however, our main interest is in the effect of gender on the likelihood of having job authority, which indicates the average gender gap in job authority across the 26 countries in the study.

The models in Table 1 indicate that even after controlling for human capital, family constraints and employment characteristics, women, on the average, are significantly less likely than men to supervise others in the workplace. For example, Model 1 in Table 1 indicates that the gender effect (a log-odds coefficient) on job authority is -0.563 (this gender effect is similar in all models), suggesting that across the 26 countries we study women are, on average, only about half as likely as men to have job authority ($e^{-0.563} = 0.569$). However, this net gender gap varies cross-nationally, as is indicated by the deviance of the gender slope at the foot of the table ($\chi^2 = 63.85$ with 25 degrees of freedom [df]). In Models 2 and 3, our interest is then to relate this variation to national differences in women's concentration in the public sector.

We begin with Model 2, which focuses solely on percentage of women in the public sector. Because this model includes an interaction term for gender and percentage of women in the public sector, the coefficient in the second panel of Table 1 pertains to the effect of women's concentration in the public sector on men's level of job authority among the 26 countries in the study. This coefficient is not statistically significant although the direction of the effect indicates that as more women are concentrated in the public sector the level of supervisory positions increases for men.

More important to our research questions is the effect of this macro-societal factor on the gender gap, which we presented in the third panel of Table 1. Here we find an interaction between the gender gap in authority and the share of women in the public sector. The effect of women's concentration in the public

Table 1. Estimates (Standard Errors) From Multilevel Models Predicting Job Authority in 26 Countries

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Individual-level variables			
Intercept	-0.406 (0.127)	-0.411 (0.127)	-0.412 (0.109)
Gender (1 = female)	-0.563* (0.050)	-0.556* (0.044)	-0.552* (0.043)
Age	0.061* (0.016)	0.061* (0.017)	0.061* (0.017)
Age square	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001 (0.000)
Education	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Married/cohabiting	0.117* (0.042)	0.119* (0.042)	0.118* (0.041)
Presence of children	0.108* (0.036)	0.108* (0.036)	0.109* (0.036)
Weekly working hours	0.012* (0.002)	0.012* (0.002)	0.012* (0.002)
In public sector	-0.105* (0.047)	-0.099* (0.047)	-0.099* (0.047)
Self-employed	0.429 (0.231)	0.435 (0.232)	0.429 (0.232)
Occupational categories			
Low white-collar	-0.875* (0.073)	-0.874* (0.073)	-0.873* (0.073)
High blue-collar	-0.912* (0.086)	-0.908* (0.085)	-0.907* (0.085)
Low blue-collar	-1.691* (0.094)	-1.694* (0.094)	-1.692* (0.093)
Country effects on intercept ^a			
Percentage women in public sector		0.013 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.010)
Percentage women in labor force			0.022 (0.017)
Length of maternity leave			-0.009 (0.007)
Gender ideology index			0.894* (0.301)
Country effects on gender			
Percentage women in public sector		-0.016* (0.004)	-0.014* (0.005)
Percentage women in labor force			-0.010 (0.007)
Length of maternity leave			0.002 (0.002)
Gender ideology index			-0.023 (0.120)
$\chi^2(df)$ —intercept	803.68 (24)	778.22 (23)	615.06 (20)
$\chi^2(df)$ —gender slope	63.85 (25)	38.39 (24)	35.79 (21)

a. Models also control for percentage of women in each national sample.

* $p < .05$.

sector on the gender gap is negative and statistically significant ($\gamma = -0.016$) indicating that the gender gap in job authority widens in countries with higher concentration of women in the public sector. That is, women's concentration in the public sector has negative consequences for the gender gap in job authority.

Finally, Model 2 also indicates that women's concentration in the public sector explains about 40% of the variation in the gender gap in job authority amongst our 26 countries. This can be seen at the foot of the table by comparing the deviance of the gender slope between Model 1 and Model 2 ($63.85 - 38.39 = 25.46$; $25.46/63.85 = 0.40$).

In Model 3, we exploit the advantage of our rich data set to estimate the net effect of women's concentration in the public sector. We do this by controlling for additional macro characteristics that may bear on the gender gap in job authority. To begin with, we control for the rate of female labor force participation to test whether the effect of the public sector does not indicate variation in women's economic activity. This is done in Model 3. Second, it is argued that in society with egalitarian gender ideology men are more likely to tolerate women coworkers as their managers and supervisors (see Charles, 1992; Goode, 1963 for related arguments). Thus, we control in Model 3 for gender ideology as well. Finally, studies have shown that employment-supportive policies affect the gender gap in job authority (Rosenfeld et al., 1998) and in pay (Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). We thus add in Model 3 a control for number of weeks of maternity leave to tap these employment supportive policies.

Model 3 in Table 1 indicates that none of these control variables has a statistically significant effect on the gender gap in job authority, whereas the effect of women's concentration in the public sector remained negative and statistically significant as it did in Model 2.⁴ These findings suggest that the effect of women's concentration in the public sector that was estimated in Model 2 is not confounded with other macro characteristics. That is, the gender gap in job authority is stronger in countries with larger public sectors, net of other macro-societal factors. Put differently, our models indicate that the cross-national variation in the gender gap in job authority is largely associated with women's concentration in the public sector.

These findings resonate well with arguments in the literature that men benefit in terms of job authority from women's concentration in the labor market (Kanter, 1977; Kraus & Yonay, 2000). It is also consistent with the argument that women self-select into woman-friendly segments of the labor market, such as the public sector, because they have low levels of aspirations and commitment to a demanding career (Hansen, 1995; Wright et al., 1995; but see, Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). We now elaborate on this latter explanation, and indirectly test its implications.

Employment in the public sector offers a family-friendly environment that allows mothers to combine work and family duties (Mandel & Semyonov, 2005; Okun et al., 2007; Stier & Yaish, 2008). Studies have shown a strong and positive correlation between the size of the public sector and female labor force participation rate (cf. Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). Because the public

sector provides a woman-friendly work environment, it encourages women who are not necessarily career-oriented to participate in the formal economy (Hansen, 1995). This implies, particularly in countries with high concentration of women in the public sector, that the public sector is composed of many women who are mainly interested in combining work and familial duties and less in attaining power positions in the labor market. Applying this logic to employment in the private sector suggests that women in this sector are more oriented to career building and striving for authority positions.

Two hypotheses can be formulated from this explanation of self-selection. First, the gender gap in job authority is expected to be wider in the public sector than in the private sector. Second, an increase in women's concentration in the public sector will result in a widening gender gap in job authority, more in the public sector than in the private sector. This is because the rate of women's concentration in the public sector affects more significantly women who work in this sector. We test these hypotheses by fitting the second model (Model 2) from Table 1 to workers in the public and the private sectors separately.⁵

The results of this test are presented in Table 2. As seen in the first panel, the gender effect is negative in the two sectors but it is stronger in the public than in the private sector. As the first hypothesis postulates, then, we find that the gender gap in job authority is wider in the public sector than in the private sector.⁶ Just as important, the third panel of Table 2 reveals that the negative effect of women's concentration in the public sector on the gender gap in job authority is stronger in the public than in the private sector. This finding suggests that an increase in women's concentration in the public sector widens the gender gap in job authority more in the public sector than in the private sector.⁷

These results would appear to provide some support for the selection hypothesis. Accordingly, the public sector, which provides a woman-friendly work environment, attracts women whose attachment to the labor force is conditioned by their familial responsibilities, so their aspirations for advancement in the labor force are relatively low. Our results suggest that the growing concentration of women in the public sector inflates the gender gap in job authority more in the public sector than in the private sector.

Discussion

Although a large portion of the gender gap in job authority in the labor market is explained by personal and employment characteristics, a significant gap between men and women remains unexplained while substantial cross-national variation is apparent in this unexplained gap (Mandel and Semyonov, 2005, 2006; Rosenfeld et al., 1998; Wright et al., 1995). Nonetheless, studies that have tried to reveal the mechanisms that account for cross-national variations in job authority are relatively rare.

Table 2. Estimates (Standard Errors) of Societal-Level Indicators and Gender From Multilevel Models Predicting Job Authority in 26 Countries, by Economic Sectors (Based on Model 2)

	Public Sector	Private Sector
Individual-level variables ^a		
Gender	-0.640* (0.065)	-0.505* (0.052)
Country effects on intercept ^b		
Percentage women in public sector	0.014 (0.015)	0.011 (0.008)
Country effects on gender		
Percentage women in public sector	-0.021* (0.005)	-0.009* (0.004)
$\chi^2(df)$ —intercept	366.13* (23)	410.19* (20)
$\chi^2(df)$ —gender slope	25.78 (24)	36.86* (23)
N (countries)	5,558 (26)	12,788 (26)

a. Models include intercept and controls as in Table 1.

b. Models also control for percentage of women in each national sample.

* $p < .05$.

Following Charles (1992), in adopting a comparative perspective, but controlling also for individual characteristics (see also Rosenfeld et al., 1998), we showed that the size of the gender gap in job authority varies mainly with women's concentration in the public sector. In countries with relatively higher levels of women's concentration in the public sector, the gender gap in job authority is significantly higher than in countries with relatively lower levels of public sector feminization. Although this finding supports the contention that men benefit in terms of job authority from women's concentration in the labor market (Kanter, 1977; Kraus & Yonay, 2000), it is also consistent with the argument that women with low levels of aspirations and commitment to a demanding career self-select into the more woman-friendly sectors of the economy (Hansen, 1995; Wright et al., 1995; but see Mandel & Semyonov, 2006). These findings also support Charles and Grusky's (2004) argument that vertical segregation is to a great extent a product of postindustrial processes that attracted women to routine nonmanual service occupations. In this regard we showed that the growing concentration of women in the public sector enlarges the gender gap in job authority more in the public sector than in the private sector.

Conclusions

Our analysis emphasized the conflicting force of the state as both perpetuating and reproducing gender inequalities in the labor force. The state provides—through its public sector—employment opportunities for women who might

otherwise not engage in the formal economy (cf. Gornick & Jacobs, 1998; Mandel & Semyonov, 2005, 2006; Okun et al., 2007; Stier & Yaish, 2008). This in itself is a positive effect, which alleviates only one important aspect of the gender inequality in the formal economy. However, instead of providing women the opportunity to be fully committed to paid work, the state structures employment in its public sector in a way that mimics the gendered division of labor in the family. By offering women employment positions with very little job authority, and by promoting men to the more powerful positions, the state contributes to the reproduction of women's inferior position in their households, the labor markets, and society at large.

This conclusion has very clear implications for those interested in the mechanisms generating gender equality. It mainly suggests that family-friendly policies should focus on family members in need of assistance and care rather than on assisting the person "responsible" for them (usually women). Thus, for example, instead of providing women a flexible work schedule that coincides with school hours, the state should provide daycare facilities that operate for longer hours.

Appendix

Descriptive Statistics of the Individual-Level Variables

Variable	Mean (SD)	Range
Individual level		
Gender (% women)	0.49	0-1
Age	42.03 (12.22)	16-88
Education	15.75 (16.01)	0-44
Married/cohabiting	0.64	0-1
Presence of children	0.55	0-1
Weekly working hours	41.72 (16.76)	1-96
In public sector	0.30	0-1
Self-employed	0.13	0-1
Occupational categories		
Low white-collar	0.24	0-1
High blue-collar	0.15	0-1
Low blue-collar	0.16	0-1
N	19,124	
Macrolevel		
Percentage women in public sector	36.80 (10.80)	14.15-56.80
Percentage women in labor force	52.99 (6.14)	39.9-63.1
Weeks maternity leave	26.73 (17.19)	0-52
Gender ideology index	3.05 (0.36)	2.12-3.62
N	26	

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Notes

1. Only Flanders took part in the ISSP project.
2. The self-employed include both employers and self-employed without employees. In unreported analysis, we have excluded the self-employed from the data and the results remained largely unchanged. What is more, the effect for self-employment is not significant statistically, as can be seen below.
3. Preliminary analysis on men and women separately revealed very few differences in the effect of the individual-level variables. Mainly, married women were more likely to have authority than nonmarried women, whereas the effect was not significant and close to zero for men. The effect of the public sector was significant only for men but it did not differ significantly from the effect observed for women.
4. Although Model 3 indicates that gender ideology is positively and statistically significantly associated with cross-national variation in job authority, it exerts no effect on the gender gap in job authority.
5. In an unreported analysis we also fitted a model that controls for percentage of women in the labor force (both on the intercept and on the gender effect) as well for gender ideology (only on the intercept). The results of this model were very similar to the ones reported here and can be obtained from the authors on request.
6. Our hypothesis states that the gender gap in job authority is expected to be wider in the public sector than in the private sector. This being the case, a one-sided *t* test was applied to the difference between the gender coefficients in the two economic sectors. The one-sided *t*-statistics for this difference is 1.62, and its *p* value is only marginally statistically significant ($p = .06$). This result is not surprising, with only 26 countries in the analysis.

7. Because our second hypothesis also states that the gender gap in job authority is expected to widen more in the public sector than in the private sector as more women are concentrated in the public sector, a one-sided t test was applied to the difference between the percentage of women in the public sector coefficients in the two economic sectors. The one-sided t -statistics for this difference is 1.87, and its p value is statistically significant ($p = .03$).

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