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THE ETHNIC, RACE, AND GENDER GAPS IN WORKPLACE AUTHORITY: Changes over Time in the United States

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We analyze factors explaining differences in hierarchical authority between men and women within and across categories of race and ethnicity in two time periods, finding that the processes leading to authority within the workplace operate differently by gender than by race or ethnicity. The demand-side factor, percentage of women in an occupation, helps explain authority differences between men and women in most groups. Supply-side factors, and, in white–black comparisons, occupational location, contribute to differences by race and ethnicity within genders. In the later period, education is particularly important for Hispanic men reflecting, we believe, the recent surge in immigration rates.

INTRODUCTION

Authority in the workplace has long been recognized as an important dimension of social stratification, and, as Smith and Elliott (2002) suggest, it is often considered a central mechanism for maintaining race and gender inequities. Research in this area has demonstrated that authority is unevenly distributed along lines of race, ethnicity, and gender, and that these differences are consequential in a variety of ways. No matter how authority is measured, a variety of studies have found that, after controlling for an assortment of relevant variables, whites are more likely to exercise authority at work than minorities (Kluegel 1978; McGuire and Reskin 1993; Smith 1997, 1999; Wilson 1997; Smith 2001; Elliott and Smith 2004), and men are more likely to do so than women (Wolf and Fligstein 1979a; Jaffee 1989; Jacobs 1992; Reskin and Roos 1992; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993; Huffman 1995). And, importantly, the financial costs of these differences have been consistently documented (Kluegel 1978; Parcel and Mueller 1983; Smith 1997; Wilson 1997).

Over the course of the past few decades, gender, race, and ethnic occupational segregation has been declining within categories presumably rich in authority. In 1970, for instance, 16 percent of managers were women, but by 2000, the percentage had increased to 39 percent. For African Americans, the figure rose from 2.5 to 6.9 percent, and from 0.7 to 6 percent for Hispanics (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975, 2001).[1] Given such dramatic changes in the gender, race, and ethnic composition of pertinent

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occupations, we might anticipate corresponding gains in authority attainment among women and minorities. This has not been studied extensively, but available research suggests that until the 1990s, at least, this assumption was false: the gender gap in authority remained (Jacobs 1992; Reskin and Roos 1992), while the racial gap for men increased over time (Smith 1999).

In this article, we are interested in the processes leading to continued inequality in workplace authority, given the recent entry of excluded groups into relevant occupations. The little work available in this area has demonstrated that obstacles to authority attainment differ by race, ethnicity, and gender (McGuire and Reskin 1993; Elliott and Smith 2004), and that race/ethnicity and gender intersect to produce independent, interactive, systems of control (King 1989). Yet we do not understand the ways in which authority attainment varies within these categories, and we do not know whether established patterns have changed over time to reflect recent mobility trends.

To address these issues, we examine differences in supervisory authority attainment between groups, utilizing data on African American, Hispanic, and white men and women from the General Social Survey (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 2007).[2] We ask how race/ethnicity and gender overlap in the authority attainment process.

Previous research has demonstrated that white men are particularly privileged when it comes to authority wielding, and, therefore, comparing them to other racial/ethnic and gender groups, as previous work has done (McGuire and Reskin 1993; Elliott and Smith 2004), is of particular interest. However, we know that workplace inequality transcends the white male-other dichotomy. Earlier work has found, for example, a racioethnic hierarchy in the distribution of authority among nonwhite men (Smith 2001), and we imagine that authority differences among women may vary by race and ethnicity as well. Further, although numerous studies have found that men as a group attain higher levels of authority than women, we do not know if this is true across race and ethnicity. This suggests that a particularly fruitful way of sorting out the details of race/ethnicity and gender inequality is to explore the full range of intergroup differences, and, to do so, we compare authority differentials within and between these categories.

We have documented authority gaps between groups for two time periods: 1972–1989 and 1990–2006.[3] As Table 1 demonstrates, there are statistically significant differences in authority attainment between white men and women and Hispanic men and women in the early period; in the late period, gender differences are significant for each of the racial/ethnic groups under investigation. In the early period, there are statistically significant gaps between black and white men, black men and Latinos, and black and white women. In the late period, we see black-white and Hispanic-white authority gaps for both men and women.

In this article, we examine possible causes of these authority differences. Distinguishing between supply and demand-side variables, we address one primary question: what factors explain the authority gaps between groups that we have uncovered in each time period. As secondary considerations, we examine if these factors operate similarly in all of our inter-group comparisons and whether their effects have changed over time.

TABLE 1. Probit Effects of Race, Ethnicity, and Gender on Authority

	Gender				Race/ethnicity	
	Whites	Blacks	Hispanics		Men	Women
Early period						
Gender (female)	−.263*	−.059	−.248*	Black versus White	−.386*	−.184*
				Hispanic versus White	−.105	−.087
				Black versus Hispanic	−.280*	−.112
Late period						
Gender (female)	−.222*	−.278*	−.215*	Black versus White	−.145*	−.209*
				Hispanic versus White	−.143*	−.137*
				Black versus Hispanic	−.002	−.072

*$p < .05$.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND-SIDE MODELS

Supply and demand-side frameworks have dominated the literature on race, ethnicity, and gender inequality in the workplace, and both have contributed to our understanding of workplace differences between groups. Many studies have found the organizational and economic structures of demand-side explanations to be particularly useful in understanding the details of labor force inequities, including the cases of occupational segregation (Bielby and Baron 1986; Reskin 1993; Tomaskovic-Devey 1993; Kaufman 2002) and authority differences (Smith 2002). Few studies, however, have examined differences in the explanatory power of supply versus demand side explanations by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Here we use the individual characteristics suggested by supply-side approaches and structural factors captured by demand-side views as vehicles for exploring the causes of the authority differences that we have uncovered. We pay particular attention to whether supply and demand side processes operate differently for race, ethnicity, or gender, and whether this has changed over time. For the supply side, we are interested in assumptions generated by human capital theory; we use occupational characteristics to examine demand-side processes.

Thus, we use previous literature to speculate about the role of both supply and demand-side factors in explaining differences between groups; when the only work available has provided information on workplace outcomes without addressing authority specifically, we generalize from those other findings to theorize authority differences. We organize our analysis around our major research question.

Human Capital Theory: Education

Human capital theory, with its roots in neoclassical economics, argues that individuals are rewarded for investing in skills and training, and, thus, people seek training or pursue skill acquisition when they anticipate a positive return on their investment, be it in financial or other terms (Becker 1993). In the workplace, education is the investment

that has most typically been found to contribute to increases in authority levels, and our understanding of its role in the authority attainment process is better developed than any other potential factor.

We know, for example, that after controlling for education, men wield more authority in the workplace than women, and they enjoy a higher return on educational investments (Smith 2002). We do not know whether this varies by race or ethnicity, but previous research has pointed out that grouping women in one large category masks very important racial and ethnic differences (Catanzarite 2003). Given that whites comprise the largest segment of the population, we assume that earlier findings on the authority gap between men and women are driven by the situation for whites. Although we do not know if this varies by race or ethnicity, we have no reason to assume that it does. Thus we hypothesize that for the early period at least, education will not explain the authority gaps between men and women that we uncovered for each group.

By the later period, women of all races and ethnicities had made substantial gains in educational attainment (Bae et al. 2000; Freeman 2004), with white, black, and Hispanic women all equaling or surpassing their male counterparts (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2007). These advances might have changed the gendered nature of authority wielding within the workplace but, given the weak role of education in explaining the authority gap between men and women in earlier work, we do not hypothesize this to be so. The Hispanic case may be particularly interesting, however, given that the later time period was characterized by very high rates of immigration. Indeed in 1980, about 6 percent of the U.S. population was Hispanic, jumping to 13 percent by 2000 (Pew Hispanic Center 2006). And by 2000, approximately 40 percent of Hispanics included in the census were foreign born (Pew Hispanic Center 2006). More recent figures indicate that as of 2007, 54 percent of Hispanics in the U.S. labor force were foreign born, and almost 40 percent of the Hispanic population had less than a high school education (Pew Hispanic Center 2009).

Given this remarkable transformation, we follow the suggestion of Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (1999) and ask if changes in educational attainment accompanying a dynamic Hispanic population contributed to some of the authority differences that emerged between groups. For Latinas, previous research has demonstrated that Latino immigrants earned a higher return on their human capital investments than their female counterparts (Sullivan 1984), perhaps because occupational gender segregation concentrates Latinas in a small number of occupations yielding fewer employment opportunities (Elmelech and Lu 2004). Thus for women in general and Latinas in particular, we assume that returns to education will be less than for men.

Unlike gender differences, a number of studies have reported that education explains part of the authority gap between black and white men (Kluegel 1978; Parcel and Mueller 1983), even though white men receive a much higher authority return on educational investments than their black male counterparts (Smith 1997). And although the literature has not been able to identify the processes generating these differences,

many assume that discrimination is at its root (Leicht 2008). We have no reason to expect that the role of education should be different in our analysis, and thus we hypothesize that it will explain some, but only some of the differences in authority attainment between African American and white men, and do so in both time periods. We assume that educational returns will be higher for whites, however.

Research on Hispanics is more sparse, but educational differences seem to explain much of the authority gap between white men and Latinos, both in general (Smith 2001) and at increasingly higher levels of power within organizations (Elliott and Smith 2004). Little, however, is known about the role of education in a racioethnic hierarchy in authority attainment between black men and Latinos. Since level of education explains a larger part of the difference in authority attainment between Hispanic and white men than for African American and white men, we anticipate that education will explain a part, but only a part, of the authority gap between these groups that we uncovered in the early period.

Previous research has not examined the impact of education on authority gaps between women of different races or ethnicities. There is much evidence to suggest, though, that educational differences play an important role in other types of workplace inequalities among women, including wage disparities (England, Christopher, and Reid 1999; Alon and Haberfeld 2007) and employment status (England, Garcia-Beaulieu, and Ross 2004). Generalizing from these findings, we hypothesize that education will also help explain the differences in authority attainment between white and black women, and do so in both time periods. We imagine that, similar to the black–white male dynamic, returns will be greater for whites.

We are particularly interested in the role of education in explaining the authority gaps that emerged between whites and Hispanics in the later years, given recent immigration trends. Since previous research has demonstrated the importance of educational attainment in explaining authority differences between white men and Latinos (Smith 2001), we expect that changes in educational attainment accompanying the large influx of immigrants will help explain the authority gap between white and Hispanic men that emerged in the later period. Previous research has not examined the role of education in authority gaps among women of different races or ethnicities, and recent work has produced contradictory results on its impact on other workplace outcomes. England et al. (1999) and Elmelech and Lu (2004), for example, found that education contributes to wage differences between Hispanic and white women, although Browne and Askew (2005) did not, so guidance here is not clear.

Human Capital Theory: Work Experience

A second human capital variable, work experience, has been found to contribute to authority attainment differences between white men and women at increasing levels of authority (Elliott and Smith 2004); between blacks and whites, in general (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993), and between black and white men in upper command positions (Smith 1999). And similar to educational attainment, employees return on investment in on-the-job experience, as defined by job tenure at least, seems to be

more generous for men than for women, for white than black men, and for white than black women (McGuire and Reskin 1993). We know little about the role of work experience in authority outcomes for Hispanics.

Here we are interested in whether work histories help explain authority differences among the groups that we are examining. Given previous findings on the impact of work experience on authority differences between men and women, we hypothesize that this factor will explain a part of the gender gap in authority in the early period. Relying on McGuire and Reskin's (1993) findings described above, we see no reason for this to vary by race; although we have no guidance from previous research, we assume that this will not vary by ethnicity either.

For the later period, we hypothesize that the rise in white women's labor force participation in the United States and hence the increase in their work experience, will make this a less of a distinguishing factor in authority outcomes between white men and women. For African Americans, we see no reason to anticipate any change over time. For the Hispanic comparison, on the other hand, we expect that increasing immigration rates will heighten the role of work experience in explaining the authority gap between men and women. In particular, we believe that the less formal work histories of women will place them at a disadvantage. And drawing on Sullivan's (1984) work, discussed above, demonstrating that among Hispanic immigrants, men are more able translate their human capital investments into positive workplace outcomes than their female counterparts, we hypothesize that Latinos will earn a higher return on work experience than Latinas.

For the within gender differences, we expect that the role of work experience in explaining the authority gap between African Americans and whites, for both men and women, will be consistent with trends found in earlier research. Thus, we hypothesize that this will contribute to authority differences between groups and do so in both time periods, but we assume that returns on work experience will be greater for whites. And although we know little about the role of work experience in explaining the authority gap between Hispanic and African-American men, we generalize from earlier research suggesting that returns on human capital investments, in the form of education at least, are better for the former than the latter.

In the later period, we are again interested in immigration patterns, and we wonder if the increasing numbers of Hispanics entering the United States may have contributed to the authority gap between Hispanics and whites that emerged. Thus, we hypothesize that work experience will explain part of the white–Hispanic authority gap and do so for men and women both. We also assume that an immigrant's work experience is devalued in U.S. labor markets, so we therefore expect Hispanics of both genders will receive lower returns on work experience than whites.

Demand Supply Explanations: Occupational Location

For demand-side explanations, research on occupational location has demonstrated that an individual's position within the occupational structure impacts authority attainment. Kluegel (1978), for example, found that occupational location explains some of

the authority gap between black and white men, and Smith (2001) suggests that this is because minorities tend to be concentrated in occupations with relatively few positions that carry authority. Indeed, minority men tend to be underrepresented in positions with control over monetary resources, and working in a professional occupation is particularly important for the authority prospects of Latinos (Smith 2001).

This literature understands the process through which occupational location contributes to authority differences between groups as exclusionary: Access to positions that carry authority is not equally available to minorities (Smith 1999). Kluegel (1978) argues that the vagueness of promotional criteria lends itself to discriminatory processes, and results of previous research are consistent with this interpretation. For example, Wilson (1997) and Smith (2001) both found that routes to positions with higher levels of authority were more circuitous for African Americans than whites. And although Latinos tend to be similar to white men in many workplace outcomes, occupational location is more important in explaining authority attainment for them then for their white counterparts (Smith 2001).

We know little about the role of occupational location in explaining differences in authority attainment between men and women, but it is well understood that women are subject an assortment of discriminatory practices in the workplace that block access to attractive positions. This suggests to us that for white women, occupational location operates much as it does for minority men, and, therefore, we hypothesize that differences in occupational location will help explain the authority gap between white men and women. Available literature has demonstrated that gender and race concurrently structure labor market outcomes such that black women pay higher authority penalties than either black men or white women (McGuire and Reskin 1993). From this we assume that within minority groups, gender remains a discriminating factor and thus we expect that occupational location will help explain authority differences between black and Hispanic men and women.

As noted earlier, by the later period, women had experienced noticeable upward mobility, having made inroads into an assortment of high-status occupations. Since this is true for each group under investigation, we expect that occupational location will become less important in explaining the gender gap in authority.

For men in the early period, we assume that the exclusionary processes described in the literature privilege whites over African Americans; we have no reason to think that this would operate differently for women. Thus, we hypothesize that occupational location will help explain the authority gap between white and African-American men and women.

We know little about the contribution of occupational location to the authority gap between black and Hispanic men but, as mentioned above, we do know that occupational location is particularly important in understanding authority differences between Hispanic and white men. This suggests to us that the relationship between occupational location and authority attainment turns on more than possible discrimination in access to attractive positions; returns on securing these positions seem to vary by race and ethnicity in ways that privilege white men and Latinos. Thus, we hypothesize that

occupational location will explain some of the difference in authority attainment between black and Hispanic men; we also expect that black men will received lower returns to this than Latinos.

By the later period, African-American and Hispanic men and women both had moved into occupations from which they were once excluded. Because of this type of progress, we assume that occupational location will be less important in explaining the authority gap between blacks and whites in later years. We suggest that for Hispanics, however, occupational location may have increased in import, thus contributing to the gap between Hispanics and whites that emerged. This assumes that increasing numbers of immigrants overshadowed the occupational upward mobility of one segment of the Latino community, generating the gap that we observed.

Demand Side Explanations: Occupational Gender Composition

Previous research has found that occupational gender composition affects authority attainment. Indeed, available work suggests that the percentage of women in an occupation accounts for a much larger share of the gender gap in authority than supply-side differences (Tomaskovic-Devey 1993; Huffman 1995). But there is little agreement on exactly why gender composition affects worker outcomes (Reskin, McBrier, and Kmec 1999). We know, for example, that women who work in female-dominated occupations have limited access to workplace authority, and, thus, one of the reasons for the importance of gender composition in authority gaps may be this concentration in occupations that include few positions carrying authority. This would help explain why, in the United States, at least, female concentration also affects men's authority outcomes (Jaffee 1989; Huffman and Cohen 2004).

But if it is lack of positions carrying authority that explains the role of gender concentration in authority outcomes, we would expect this to be consistent across labor markets. Huffman and Cohen (2004) findings suggest, however, that this is not so. They demonstrate that the effect of percent female on authority attainment is stronger in national, as opposed to local, labor markets, and in Israel, men enjoy similar levels of authority in male and female-dominated occupations (Kraus and Yonay 2000). Thus, different processes may be at work in different labor markets.

Since we are examining national labor markets, we follow the lead of previous research and hypothesize that the percent of women in an occupation will help explain gender differences in authority attainment, perhaps because female dominated occupations have fewer positions carrying authority, as suggested above. And given the tenacity of occupational gender segregation, we have no reason to believe that this has changed over time.

The question of whether working in an occupation dominated by women explains differences in authority attainment by race and ethnicity has not been examined, but we know that, by definition, men account for relatively few positions in this category. If it is the scarcity of positions carrying authority that is important here, then it is that relatively few men are subject to the limitations in authority attainment explicit in these occupations. And for women, it is their overrepresentation in these positions, rather

than racial or ethnic differences, that should be relevant. Therefore, we hypothesize that percent female should not contribute to authority differences between either men or women of different races or ethnicities. And with one exception, this should be true for both time periods.

For Hispanics in the later period, we wonder if a different process is at work. We are again interested in immigration, and we ask if this indirectly contributed to the authority gap between white women and Latinas that emerged in our data. Catanzarite (2003) notes that, in Latino-dense areas, Hispanics are highly concentrated in a limited number of occupations. We have no reason to believe that Hispanic men are concentrated in female-dominated occupations, but we wonder if this tendency has increased Latinas' presence in "women's" occupations, and whether these effects might be large enough to account for authority differences between the two groups. If so this may illustrate different processes at work in different labor markets. Thus, we hypothesize that the percent women in an occupation should help explain the authority difference between white women and Latinas in the later period.

Finally, we hypothesize that the returns to percentage female in an occupation are different for white men and members of the other groups. Based on the idea of a promotional "glass escalator" for white men versus a "glass ceiling" for everyone else in women's occupations (Maume 1999), we anticipate that percentage female will have a positive effect on authority for white men but a negative effect for all other groups.

DATA AND METHODS

All data are drawn from the General Social Survey (GSS), other than percentage of women in an occupation, which is taken from the Current Population Survey (CPS, U.S. Bureaus of the Census and Labor Statistics). The GSS is the only nationally representative data set of which we are aware that has a measure of authority and also allows an examination of trends. For our analyses, we group the GSS data into two time periods: 1972 to 1989 and 1990 to 2006. We aggregate the data because when we cross-classify respondents by gender and race/ethnicity, there are not enough cases to conduct a more finely grained analysis; sample sizes for all groups are presented in Table A1. In our early period, for example, we have only 157 Hispanic men and 148 Hispanic women.[4] We choose 1989/1990 as the dividing line for the two periods for two principal reasons. First, it yields approximately the same number of years in each period. Second, and more importantly, there has been discussion in the stratification literature on gender, race, and ethnicity about differences between the 1970s and 1980s on the one hand, and the time since then on the other. Indeed, the 1970s and 1980s saw much economic progress for people of color, while the period since 1990 seems to have witnessed little or no such improvement (see, e.g., Browne 1999; Stainback, Corre, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2005).

We use a three-level measure of hierarchical authority in which the lowest level includes respondents who did not supervise others, the second level features those individuals who were supervisors but whose subordinates did not supervise other

workers, and the top level includes those who supervised others and whose subordinates were also supervisors. We experimented with more detailed measures of authority but found that there were too few cases to make such a measure practical. A basic descriptive table of authority level by group is provided in Appendix Table A1.

Our independent variables include those frequently used in analyses of authority. As measures of human capital, we utilize years of education, work experience (via the often-used proxy: age-education-6) and work experienced squared. We include two additional variables derived from human capital theory as controls: marital status (married or not), and the presence of children in the home (yes or no). We do so because gender-based differences in workplace equality are often located in the division of labor in the traditional family, and research on this question has found that family structure is relevant to authority attainment for both men (Wolf and Fligstein 1979a,b) and women (Okamoto and England 1999; England et al. 2004). Moreover, we know that marital status operates differently by race, ethnicity, and gender (Smith and Elliott 2005).

We use an update of the Duncan SEI to measure occupational location. Some studies use the full set of 10 or so major occupational groups to model occupational location, but we follow the lead of Kluegel (1978), Jaffee (1989), and Wright, Janeen, and Birkelund (1995) in avoiding such measures. Wright et al. (1995) argue that when studying authority, traditional occupational classification systems risk problems of circularity: Many managers, for example, wield authority by definition. Smith and Elliott (2005) and Smith (1999) fear that using an SEI-type measure would also result in circularity, so they opt for a small set of occupational categories which, among other things, combines managers with other professionals. We prefer the more finely grained SEI-type measure and note that its correlation with supervisory authority in our data is only .224.

Our second occupational measure is percentage of women in an occupation. We construct this using data from the CPS: the 1978, 1980, and 1982 surveys were utilized for the early period, and the 1996, 1998, and 2000 surveys were utilized for the late period. These survey years represent approximate midpoints of our two periods.[5]

The GSS did not employ the same occupational classification scheme in all of its surveys. From 1972 until 1987, occupations were coded only according to the 1970 Census Occupational Classification System. Between 1988 and 1990, occupations were double coded, employing both the 1970 and 1980 Census schemes. Subsequently, the GSS has used only the 1980 scheme. To ensure that any trends we document are not a result of changing occupational classifications, we utilize 1970 codes throughout our analyses. This necessitates a recoding of GSS occupational data for the 1991 to 2006 period from 1980 to 1970 codes. We do this using a protocol developed by Weeden (Weeden and Grusky 2005).

We also include several variables that have been identified in previous research as relevant to this type of analysis as additional controls. Following Smith (1999) and Elliott and Smith (2004), we include the average number of hours worked per week; and following Browne (1997) and Smith (1999), we include population of residential area

(square root) and region (South versus non-South). Mean values of all the independent variables can be found in Appendix Table A2.

To assess the effects of these variables on supervisory authority, we employ ordered probit regression models. This seems appropriate given that we measure authority at the ordinal level. To test the assumption of ordinality we compared ordered to unordered logit models utilizing the BIC statistic (Raftery 1995); in all cases, the ordered models had superior BIC statistics. Our analytic strategy is to enter sets of independent variables in a series of blocks, each time assessing the degree to which the gender, race, or ethnic differences identified in contiguous models in Table 1 change.[6] As a quantitative measure of this change, we compute a statistic called the "proportion of difference" explained and display it in our tables. This statistic is computed as follows:

$$\textit{Proportion of difference explained} = \frac{\textit{Group coefficient for model } X - \textit{Group coefficient for model } X+1}{\textit{Group coefficient for model } X}$$

We display this measure only when it is greater than or equal to .2. This means that we do not present it when the intergroup difference of interest increases in absolute value, nor do we present it when the reduction in the size of the difference is small.

To assess the impact of the addition of a new "block" of independent variables, we think it is most appropriate to compare coefficients from contiguous models. However, at times, we also compare coefficients from models I and IV, allowing us to gauge the total impact of all "human capital" factors on intergroup differences. Comparing this with the equation above, "model X" would become "model I," and "model X + 1" would become "model IV"; we make it clear in the text when we are doing this comparison. Finally, in order to test our predictions about intergroup differences in rates of authority returns to human capital characteristics, we use ordered probit regression models with interaction effects between sex, race, and ethnicity on the one hand, and all of the independent variables on the other. Since our models utilize both a linear and a quadratic term for work experience, we remove the quadratic term when testing for interaction effects.

FINDINGS

Tables 2 and 3 present the results of our probit regression analyses. In Table 2, we examine authority differences between white men and women, black men and women, and Hispanic men and women. In Table 3, we look at differences in authority between white, black, and Hispanic men on the one hand, and white, black, and Hispanic women, on the other. Each table is divided into early and late periods.

These analyses evaluate the effects of our independent variables on authority levels. They address two questions: (1) which variables contribute to the authority attainment of each group under investigation; (2) what role do these factors play in explaining gender differences in authority levels within each racial and ethnic group under

TABLE 2. Ordinal Probit Regressions of Authority Level on Gender and Other Blocks of Independent Variables

Early period

Independent variables	Model I			Model II			Model III			Model IV			Model V			Model VI			Model VII		
	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H
Gender (female)	−.263*	−.059	−.148*	−.270*	−.126	−.317*	−.271*	−.124	−.296*	−.254*	−.112	−.278*	−.246*	−.133**	−.270**	−.152*	−.134	−.063	−.076**	−.089	−.114
Education				.084*	0.105*	.081*	.092*	.114*	.097*	.092*	.114*	.095*	.036*	.044*	.080*	.041*	.044*	.092*	.040*	.044*	.083*
Experience							.039*	.024*	.022	.029*	.019**	.022	.025*	.018**	.020	.025*	.025*	.020	.020*	.013	.023
Experience squared							−.001*	.000**	0	.000*	.000	.000	.000*	.000	.000	.000*	.000*	.000	.000*	.000	.000
Married										.254*	.148**	.215	.236*	.162**	.216	.237*	.237*	.233	.246*	.153**	.185
Kids										.027	.041	−.129	.032	.024	−.120	.034	.034	−.148	.035	.019	−.154
Occupational prestige													.012*	.017*	.005	.011*	.011*	.004	.010*	.016*	.005
Percentage female																−.211*	−.211*	−.478**	−.152*	.042	−.393
South																			−.091*	−.149**	.481**
Size of place																			−.001	−.004*	−.002
Hours worked																			.012*	.011*	.003
Proportion of sex difference explained																.382		3767	.500	.336	

TABLE 2. *Continued*

Late period

Independent variables	Model I			Model II			Model III			Model IV			Model V			Model VI			Model VII		
	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H	W	B	H
Gender (female)	−.222*	−.278*	−.215*	−.230*	−.295*	−.259*	−.234*	−.289*	−.258*	−.231*	−.243*	−.272*	−.240*	−.307*	−.286*	−.154*	−.162**	−.217*	−.088*	−.138	−.152
Education				.069*	.054*	.072*	.069*	.058*	.071*	.068*	.052*	.072*	.032*	−.006	.046*	.036*	.000	.048*	.035*	−.002	.041*
Experience							.028*	.017**	.017	.022*	.008	.009	.020*	.009	.010	.019*	.009	.010	.012*	.002	.004
Experience squared							−.001*	.000	.000	.000*	.000	.000	.000*	.000	.000	.000*	.000	.000	.000*	.000	.000
Married										.171*	.321*	.064	.157*	.325*	.037	.156*	.325*	.034	.164*	.327*	.036
Kids										.035	−.029	.122	.030	−.027	.136	.031	−.009	.137	.048	.008	.126
Occupational prestige													.008*	.015*	.009*	.008*	.015*	.009*	.007*	.014*	.009*
Percentage female																−.244*	−.425*	−.136	−.184*	−.408*	−.085
South																			.034	−.102	.153
Size of place																			.002*	.000	.001
Hours worked																			.012*	.008*	.013*
Proportion of sex difference explained																.358	.472	.241	.429		.300

*$p < .05$, **$p < .10$ (two-tailed).

B, black; W, white; H, Hispanic.

TABLE 3. Ordinal Probit Regressions of Authority Level on Race/Ethnicity and Other Blocks of Independent Variables

Early period

	Model I		Model II		Model III		Model IV		Model V		Model VI		Model VII	
Independent variables	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Black versus white	−.386*	−.184*	−.305*	−.144*	−.296*	−.135*	−.272*	−.088	−.212*	−.057	−.201*	−.054	−.151*	−.019
Hispanic versus white	−.105	−.087	.073	.042	.096	.067	.076	.074	.063	.073	.076	.078	.104	.088
Black versus Hispanic	−.281*	−.097	−.378*	−.186	−.392*	−.202	−.348*	−.162	−.275*	−.130	−.277*	−.132	−.255*	−.107
Education			.083*	.094*	.093*	.098*	.093*	.099*	.037*	.048*	.039*	.055*	.038*	.057*
Experience					.043*	.031*	.034*	.024*	.031*	.019*	.030*	.018*	.024*	.014*
Experience squared					−.001*	−.001*	−.001*	.000*	−.001*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*
Married							.182*	.258*	.161*	.257*	.157*	.268*	.133*	.299*
Kids							.067	−.024	.062	−.007	.060	−.001	.042	.030
Occupational status									.013*	.011*	.013*	.009*	.012*	.008*
Percentage female											−.183*	−.245*	−.145**	−.179*
South													−.095*	−.075*
Size of place													−.001	−.003*
Hours worked													.012*	.012*
Proportion B–W difference explained			.210	.217				.348	.221	.352			.249	.648
Proportion B–H difference explained									.210					

TABLE 3. *Continued*

Late period

	Model I		Model II		Model III		Model IV		Model V		Model VI		Model VII	
Independent variables	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Black versus white	−.145*	−.209*	−.087	−.169*	−.091	−.170*	−.079	−.120*	.039	−.109*	−.034	−.107*	−.040	−.138*
Hispanic versus white	−.143*	−.137*	−.057	−.087	−.012	−.084	−.011	−.075	−.023	−.057	−.015	−.042	−.024	−.054
Black versus Hispanic	−.002	−.072	−.030	−.082	.079	−.086	−.068	−.045	−.016	−.052	−.019	−.065	−.016	−.084
Education			.069*	.066*	.071*	.064*	.069*	.063*	.025*	.032*	.028*	.038*	.026*	.038*
Experience					.035*	.015*	.029*	.009**	.028*	.008**	.027*	.007	.020*	.000
Experience squared					−.001*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000*	.000
Married							.110*	.226*	.087*	.220*	.084	.224*	.067	.253*
Kids							.076**	−.011	.076**	−.013	.076*	−.004	.073**	.027
Occupational status									.010*	.008*	.010*	.007*	.010*	.006*
Percentage female											−.138**	−.407*	−.102	−.351*
South													.021	.017
Size of place													.002**	.001
Hours worked													.013*	.011*
Proportion B–W difference explained			.400					.294						
Proportion B–H difference explained			.601	.365										

*$p < .05$, **$p < .10$ (two-tailed).

M, male; F, female; B, black; W, white; H, Hispanic.

investigation, and to what extent do they account for racial and ethnic differences among men and women. Since the first question is well understood, our primary interest is in the latter.

In both tables, the ways in which the independent variables affect authority levels are generally consistent with previous findings: education, work experience, marriage, SEI, and hours worked have a positive impact upon authority level for most groups. Percentage of women in an occupation generally has a negative effect, while having children at home is not significant.[7]

In Table 2, we examine the effect of gender on authority for each racial/ethnic group under investigation. We add blocks of independent variables in a number of successive models and note changes in the gender difference. Since the gender effect among African Americans is small and not statistically significant, we do not discuss it here.

For the early period, comparing models I and IV demonstrates that although human capital variables had an impact on authority levels, they did not explain the gender effects. This suggests that differential investment in skills and training does little to explain the gendered nature of authority attainment, and this is true for both whites and Latinos. Contrary to our expectations, occupational location, too, failed to provide much insight into these differences. The difference between models V and VI indicates, however, that percentage of women in an occupation accounted for nearly 40 percent of the authority differential between white men and women, and more than three-quarters for Hispanics. Consistent with our expectations, then, these findings demonstrate that occupational gender segregation and authority deficits go together. What we did not anticipate, however, is that the impact of this would vary by ethnicity and that it would so forcefully affect Hispanic women. The control variables explained part of the remaining gender gaps for whites, but not for Hispanics.

Turning to the later period, since the authority gap between African-American men and women was now statistically significant, we include them in our discussion of results. In general, the findings were fairly similar to the early period, but, here, percent female is important in explaining the gender gap for African Americans as well. One particularly interesting change is that percent female in an occupation was no longer statistically significant for Hispanics (Model VI), and hence accounted for only about 25 percent of their gender gap in the later period. Finally, note that our control variables explained part of the gender gap for whites and Hispanics.

Table 3 examines the effects of race and ethnicity on authority by gender. Here we are interested in the declines in the racial and ethnic differences as we add blocks of independent variables. Since the following were not statistically significant, we do not include them in the "proportion of difference explained" part of the table: difference between whites and Hispanics in the early period and the difference between blacks and Hispanics in the late period.

Unlike gender differences within racial and ethnic groups, a good part of the authority gap between blacks and whites in the early period is explained by human capital variables: more than half for women and about 30 percent for men, if we compare the racial differences in models I and IV. As model II demonstrates, educational attainment

is important in understanding the racial gap for both men and women, but work experience is not. And marital status contributes to these differences, especially among women (note that the effect of having children is small and not statistically significant in model IV). This suggests that one reason white women wield more authority than black women is because they are more likely to be married. As hypothesized, occupational location also accounts for a part of the racial differences for men and women both (model V); as predicted, it also explains part of the African-American–Hispanic male authority gap. Unlike in the case of gender differences, however, the percentage of women in an occupation does not help us understand authority differentials by race or ethnicity (model VI). Finally, the control variables also contribute to differences for both men and women, albeit modestly.

In the late period, comparing models I and IV indicates that human capital variables remain important in explaining black-white authority differences, accounting for more than 40 percent of the gap for both men and women. As hypothesized, education continues to account for much of the black–white difference for men, while for women, being single remains costly particularly for black women.

Human capital variables are also important in understanding the differences that emerged between white and Hispanic men: they explained 92 percent of the gap (again, compare the coefficients in models I and IV). For women, too, human capital variables are important, explaining 45 percent of the difference between white women and Latinas. And as predicted, educational differences explain a good part (about 60 percent) of the authority gap between Latinos and white men; it is important in differences between white and Hispanic women as well. Lack of formal work experience seems to emerge as more of a disadvantage for Hispanic men than for Latinas.

Model V indicates that, as expected, occupational location, as measured by SEI, continues to explain part of the authority gap between black and white men; it helps explain differences between white and Hispanic women as well, although less forcefully. This suggests that occupational location remains salient in creating authority differences between these groups but, interestingly, not for either the Hispanic–white male or white–black female difference. Finally, for women, the independent variables account for less of the racial gap than in the earlier period. Human capital continues to play an important role here, but the other variables do not display much explanatory power.

Based on previous research, we hypothesized that two of our human capital variables—level of education and work experience—operate differently for men, when compared with women, and for whites, as opposed to blacks. To examine whether this is so in our data, we added interaction effects to model VII between these variables and gender for each racial and ethnic group, and between race/ethnicity for each gender. Only 4 of the resulting 36 interaction effects were statistically significant at the .05 level, and none of the 4 represented effects that were significant in each time period. Taking into account the fact that some interaction effects can arise by chance, we conclude that these variables generally operate similarly across groups. We also hypothesized that black men would receive lower returns to authority than Latinos; we did not find this to be the case in either time period.

In examining the interaction between percentage female in an occupation and gender, however, we found that in the later period the effect is significant for both whites and Hispanics. Interestingly, the effect is negative for whites and positive for Hispanics, suggesting that in female occupations, white women's authority opportunities have decreased, while those of Latinas have increased. For the interaction effect between race/ethnicity and percentage female, we found that African Americans received greater returns on this characteristic than white females in the early period, while Hispanic women received greater returns than both their black and white counterparts in the late period. The effect of percentage female on authority was generally negative for all groups, however, with the exception of Hispanic females in the late period.

Finally, we ran global interaction tests by period to see if the magnitude of the effects of the independent variables changed over time. That is, for each group, we compared the fit of a model with all interaction effects between our independent variables and time period to that for a model without these effects. Except in the case of Hispanics, all of these global tests were statistically significant. However, the number of variables that actually displayed statistically significant interaction effects was small. For men, women, and whites, the impact of living in a highly populated area changed from negative in the earlier period to positive in the later period. We found that same pattern for Southern residence, for men and whites. For African Americans, working in a female occupation had a larger negative impact in the later period than in the earlier period.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

We have examined the factors contributing to authority attainment in two time periods and found that the processes leading to positions of authority within the workplace operate differently by gender than by race or ethnicity. We have also found differences by gender within racial and ethnic groups, as well as differences by race and ethnicity within genders. Moreover, we have found relatively little change over time in these patterns.

For the gender gap, the demand-side factor, percentage of women in an occupation, explained a significant proportion of the authority differences between men and women in most groups for both time periods. This suggests that the process of occupational segregation remains a major source of inequality for women, independent of race or ethnicity. But we did find some interesting changes over time in the way that this factor operated. In the early period, the authority gap between African-American men and women was not statistically significant. By the late period, a gender difference emerged, and percentage of women in an occupation became an important factor in understanding this. What explains the change? In a supplementary analysis, we examined the authority levels of incumbents of female occupations, and, although our findings are tentative given small sample sizes, it seems that African Americans in occupations with more than 80 percent women experienced a decline in authority. This would contribute to the power of percentage women in explaining the gender gap that developed. A closer look at the precise occupations in this category indicates that African Americans did not change the type of work they were doing, but the occupations that they occupied lost

authority over time. Thus, African Americans in female-dominated occupations may have experienced job erosion in a process similar to that identified by Reskin and Roos (1992) in their classic work on labor queues.

For Hispanics, in the early period, percentage female explained a large share of the authority gap between men and women, but by the late period, this share had declined; here, too, we wondered why.[8] Unlike African Americans, Hispanics in female-dominated occupations (in this case, more than 50 percent women) seemed to have experienced *increases* in their authority levels. This decreased the power of percentage female in explaining the authority gap. Unlike the African-American case, however, Hispanics did seem to change occupations over time: they were more likely to move into management, and, as a group, increased their average occupational status from 29 to 35.[9]

A possible explanation for the difference in the Hispanic and African-American experience may be discrimination. A number of studies have found that African Americans face discrimination in hiring (Kirschenman and Neckerman 1991; Holzer 1996). And although this is a gendered process, it privileges both Hispanic men and women over their black counterparts, at least among low-skilled workers (Shih 2002). Little research is available on the managerial level, and thus, the impact of discrimination on the employment differences between African-American women and Latinas provides an interesting question for further research.

Our findings on female dominated occupations become more interesting still when we consider the interaction effects between gender and percentage female in the late period. Although we found few statistically significant interaction effects between gender and the human capital variables, we identified the following pattern for gender and percent female: the effect is negative for whites, zero for African Americans, and positive for Hispanics. This is consistent with the "glass escalator, glass ceiling thesis," which posits that white men earn greater authority returns to working in female occupations than white women (Maume 1999), but the thesis does not predict comparable differences between other groups. Thus, that Latinas actually received greater returns than Latinos underscores the importance of examining both race and ethnicity in stratification research.

The progress that women have made in recent years in entering managerial occupations has not translated into authority gains for women as a whole, however. This is probably because women who became managers tended to move into positions that did not carry high levels of authority. In 2004, for example, women accounted for 23.3 percent of CEOs and 26.7 percent of general and operations managers, but they were overrepresented as human resource mangers (64.4 percent), social and community service managers (67 percent), medical and health service managers (71.7 percent), and educational administrators (62.6 percent) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2006).[10]

Thus, one of the processes contributing to the continuing gender gap in authority seems to be the reproduction, within managerial ranks, of the occupational gender segregation characterizing the broader labor market. The smaller proportion of women who occupy positions that wield genuine authority is not large enough to increase the overall authority rankings of women as a group, and this is true across race or ethnicity.

Finally, these finding suggest that demand-side processes are particularly important in creating a gendered system of authority attainment in the U.S. workplace.

Working in a "women's" occupation does not contribute to authority differences between racial or ethnic groups, either for men or for women. Some have speculated that the reason that working in an occupation dominated by women affects authority attainment is because there are few positions that carry authority in those occupations. Following this lead, we suggested that this factor would not contribute to authority differences by race or ethnicity, since it was gender that was important. Our results are consistent with this explanation. We also speculated, however, that since Latinas are concentrated in a limited number of occupations in times of mass immigration, they may be overrepresented in female-dominated occupations, and, thus, this might help explain the gender gap between Hispanic and white women that emerged in the later period; we did not find this to be so.

Instead, it is supply-side factors, and in white–black comparisons occupational location, that contribute to race and ethnic differences in authority attainment; education is particularly important for Hispanic men, at least in the later period. And unlike previous research, we found little indication that authority returns on human capital investments vary by either race or ethnicity (or gender).

However, even though education and work experience explain most of the authority gap between white and Hispanic men, they are not nearly as important in the difference between black and white men. Instead, demand-side processes account for most of the gap between these groups, suggesting that Latinos can control authority outcomes by investing in skills and training in ways unavailable to black men; the same dynamic is at work for women, but not as strongly.

Nevertheless, our findings suggest that the recent disappearance of what Smith (2005) has called a racioethnic hierarchy in authority attainment among men, in which Hispanics are more successful than African Americans, is driven by changes in the educational attainment and work experience of Latinos. We believe that this reflects the changing demographic composition of the Hispanic population accompanying the recent surge in immigration rates. Moreover, the importance of individual attributes in the Hispanic case suggests that the labor market continues to distinguish between race and ethnicity in employment practices, and we imagine that this process is at work in the early period under investigation, where our models did little to explain the authority gap between black men and Latinos.

Human capital variables are also important in understanding authority gaps between women of different races and ethnicities. Most noteworthy is the role of marital status in explaining the authority gap between African-American and white women. Unlike earlier literature, our analyses suggest that it is differential marriage rates, rather than differential penalties for single status, that drives this.[11]

It is not clear to us why marital status should be a defining characteristic in authority attainment for women. Indeed, a common explanation for traditional employment differences among women is the division of labor in which women's household responsibilities limit their options outside of the home. Although this may have been true for

white women, at least, sometime in the past, recent research has found that married African-American women tend to have higher employment rates than their single counterparts (Corcoran 1999). England et al. (2004) have speculated that this might not be a causal relationship, but rather a situation in which women whose social networks include marriageable men may have other class-based characteristics that facilitate positive employment outcomes. Thus, applied to our results, it may be that the same social and cultural capital facilitates success in both marriage and labor markets. With that said, we would still like to raise the possibility that the authority penalty that African-American women face for being single is rooted in the larger process that generates racialized differences in marriage rates.

Taken together, our analysis suggests that demand-side processes are particularly important in generating authority differences between men and women, while human capital variables explain much variation in authority outcomes by race and ethnicity. We emphasize, however, that these patterns differ by race and ethnicity within genders and by gender within race and ethnicity and, thus, our study reinforces that importance of an intersectional approach.

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NOTES

[1]Research utilizing a common, single, occupational classification scheme has documented that these changes are not an artifact of changing classifications (e.g., Jacobs 1992).

[2]Because of limitations in sample sizes created by examining both race/ethnicity and gender, we consider Hispanics as one group. Although there is much precedent for doing this (cf. Smith 2001; Smith and Elliott 2002), the little research available that has distinguished between Hispanics by country of origin has found important differences between groups (Browne 1999; England et al. 2004), suggesting that a more detailed analysis is a fruitful avenue for future research.

[3]Details on how we did this, as well as the reasons for our time period selection, are included in the methods section.

[4]Other racial and ethnic groups have even smaller numbers in the GSS. For instance, there are only 83 individuals of Asian origin in our entire cumulative data set, a number far too low for analytic purposes. The GSS data were weighted to adjust for nonresponse and to reflect the fact that the GSS is a sample of households, not individuals. Also, the interviews conducted in Spanish in 2006 were excluded in order to enhance comparability with earlier years.

[5]Percentage female in an occupation did not change much during this time frame, however. The correlation between percentage female in an occupation in 1983 and 2002 was .95 in the CPS data.

[6]An important idea behind the ordinal probit (or logit) model is that the measured dependent variable can be viewed as a discrete realization of a latent continuous variable whose metric is unknown. Thus, in order to estimate the model, identifying restrictions must be imposed. In the ordered probit model, one restriction is that the error variance is equal to 1; it is set to $\pi^2/3$ in the ordered logit model. This implies that the variance of the latent variable changes when additional independent variables are added to the equation, making it, strictly speaking, incorrect to compare coefficients across models with different sets of independent variables. To deal with this problem, a number of authors have recommended the computation of "y*-standardized" coefficients (see, e.g., Long 1997:128–9). We computed these coefficients and found the comparisons between them across models to be qualitatively identical and quantitatively very similar to the results reported herein. These analyses are available from the authors upon request.

[7]We also examined the effect of age of children and an interaction effect between having children and gender. We found no statistically significant effects for these factors.

[8]An anonymous reviewer noted that such changes over time might reflect nonlinearities in the relationship between authority and percentage female. If, for instance, the relationship was nonlinear for Hispanics in the late period, then the size of the linear effect we estimated might be too low; this in turn might impact upon the percentage of the gap that is explained. We examined a number of different nonlinear specifications but still found no effect of percentage female on authority for Hispanics in the late period.

[9]We again would like to point out that these results are tentative given small sample sizes.

[10]An anonymous reviewer suggested that perhaps women are more likely to be employed in large organizations, which have recently witnessed declines in opportunities for exercising authority owing to restructuring of various kinds. This would explain why the increase in women's representation in the managerial ranks has not been accompanied by an increase in access to authority. We looked at firm size by gender in both the CPS and the GSS and found little association between these variables.

[11]We also conducted a test for an interaction effect in this context and found that the effect of being married on authority is the same for black and white women.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A1. Authority Levels by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Time Period (Percent)

		Early period		Late period	
	Authority level	Men	Women	Men	Women
Non-Hispanic whites	Low	53.18	63.27	55.76	63.04
	Medium	29.48	25.52	27.56	26.76
	High	17.34	11.21	16.68	10.20
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	N	3,667	2,872	4,053	3,696
African Americans	Low	68.13	70.86	62.45	71.23
	Medium	22.52	19.85	22.76	20.95
	High	9.35	9.29	14.79	7.82
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	N	524	549	514	716
Hispanics	Low	58.86	64.63	58.54	69.55
	Medium	24.05	29.25	31.66	20.73
	High	17.09	6.12	9.80	9.71
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
	N	158	147	398	381

TABLE A2. Means of Independent Variables by Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Time Period

		Early period		Late period	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Non-Hispanic whites	Years of education	12.97	13.00	13.89	13.94
	Work experience	21.07	20.26	21.17	21.37
	Married	.75	.68	.64	.61
	Kids at home	.45	.44	.34	.37
	TSEI2	38.06	36.79	39.43	40.73
	Percent female in occupation	.22	.68	.29	.66
	South	.24	.23	.24	.23
	Size	239.32	299.63	205.98	215.13
	Hours worked	44.29	36.04	45.20	38.16
African Americans	Years of education	11.73	12.41	13.03	13.35
	Work experience	21.84	20.65	20.43	19.73
	Married	.62	.50	.52	.38
	Kids at home	.44	.53	.33	.46
	TSEI2	28.19	31.21	31.19	35.76
	Percent female in occupation	.26	.70	.31	.67
	South	.41	.40	.49	.47
	Size	912.25	958.01	568.78	720.73
	Hours worked	40.60	36.57	43.59	39.64
Hispanics	Years of education	10.70	11.52	12.59	13.09
	Work experience	20.94	17.01	16.24	17.34
	Married	.79	.66	.50	.54
	Kids at home	.65	.61	.40	.49
	TSEI2	29.79	30.37	33.96	34.83
	Percent female in occupation	.26	.70	.33	.69
	South	.06	.08	.15	.13
	Size	1,024.43	746.52	818.47	884.76
	Hours worked	41.68	35.61	43.79	37.31