

The [Human Resource Management] Revolution Will Not Be Televised: The Rise and Feminization of Human Resource Management and Labor Force Equity

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Abstract

Since the late 1970s, the profession of human resource management has grown in both size and influence. The number of human resource managers in 2010 is almost twice the number that existed in 1980. Furthermore, this profession has become increasingly feminized since the '70s – today, around 60 percent of human resource managers are women. While previous research has found that women's presence in certain occupations can improve gender equity, there has yet to be an examination of whether the increased representation of women in human resource management has affected gender equity more broadly. In this paper, I analyze data from the U.S. Census from 1980 to 2000 and from the American Community Survey for 2010 to explore whether the rise and feminization of human resources has affected women's representation in management. The findings reveal that the increased presence of both white and black women in human resources has been accompanied by greater representation of women in management, although the effects are much larger for white women's presence in human resources.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender progress in the labor force over the past 60 years has been impressive, yet the goal of equality remains far from realization. As of 2012, women's wages were 20 percent less than men's (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014). This is, however, a dramatic improvement from the 1960s, when women earned only 60 percent of what men earned (Hegewisch, Williams, and Henderson 2011). The massive feminist movement of the 1970s coupled with legislative decrees such as the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments helped usher women into the sphere of paid labor in the U.S. and removed many obstacles to their success. In the 1960s, there was nearly complete workplace segregation between men and women (Bielby and Baron 1986; Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback 2007) and white men held 91 percent of managerial jobs (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2009). Today, workplace gender segregation is still widespread, but not nearly at the same levels observed in the 1960s (Tomaskovic-Devey and Stainback 2007). Furthermore, women hold a substantial share of managerial positions (as I will show below). Indeed, women's integration into the workforce and their increased representation in managerial positions are some of the key drivers reducing gender inequality in the labor force since the 1960s (Charles 2011; Charles and Grusky 2004; Cohen and Huffman 2007; Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2004).

Yet, broad and overly-optimistic discussion of labor force gender equality obscures the ways progress has recently stalled and has been historically uneven (England 2010). As I will show, progress in women's managerial representation has stalled substantially since the 1990s. Furthermore, there are important differences between women in patterns of gender equality. The

wage gap between white women and white men is considerably smaller than that between black women and white men (Browne and Misra 2003). Black women and Latinas are the least likely to occupy positions of authority (Browne et al. 2001). In the service sector, a field that employs a high percentage of women, white women are most likely to hold upper-level management jobs while women of color disproportionately occupy the lowest paid positions (Aldridge 1999; Dwyer 2013). In short, while broad measures of labor force gender equality show some degree of progress, women remain considerably disadvantaged in the realm of paid labor, particularly women of color.

In light of these patterns, sociologists have investigated the processes involved in labor force inequality. One research agenda finds that women's presence in some, but not all occupations is associated with improved gender equity outcomes. Women's representation in management and corporate boards, for example, predicts lower levels of gender segregation and greater pay equality between women and men (Cohen and Huffman 2007; Cook and Glass 2014; Huffman, Cohen, and Pearlman 2010; Stainback and Kwon 2012; Skaggs, Stainback, and Duncan 2012). At the same time, however, greater representation of women as supervisors and corporate CEOs has no effect on gender equity outcomes (Cook and Glass 2015; Stainback and Kwon 2012). In this article, I argue that discretion may be the key mechanism allowing women to promote gender equity in some occupations but not others. To examine the effect of women's occupational discretion on gender equity outcomes, I investigate the impact of women's representation in human resources management as a position where individuals have a tremendous amount of discretion to design and implement policies that can directly promote labor equity (Dobbin 2009; Edelman 2002; Edelman, Uggen, and Erlanger 1999). Specifically, I

examine whether the increased presence of women in human resources has a positive effect on black and white women's representation in management occupations.

In the following section, I review the history of human resource management to illustrate how this occupation developed in a way that provided HR managers with considerable discretion to define the parameters of their job. Next, I review research on the effects of women's presence in key occupations and outline my rationale for examining the mechanism of occupational discretion through a focus on women's presence in HR management. In the analysis section, I present a series of descriptive statistics and fixed effects models examining the relationship between black/white women's representation in HR and their presence in managerial occupations. My findings show that black and white women's representation in human resources positively affects women's presence in management, but white women's representation has a larger effect than black women's. These results suggest that black women may have less discretion than white women as HR managers.

THE RISE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE NEOLIBERAL ERA

To understand the present role of human resource managers in the American labor force, we must first delve into the dynamic history that has shaped this cadre of managers. In the midst of the civil rights movement and the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, personnel managers scrambled to make sense of new pressures to racially integrate American workplaces. As a result, these corporate leaders spearheaded efforts to diversify the workforce through targeted recruitment of underrepresented groups and removing discriminatory hiring practices (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012). During the feminist movement in the 1970s, workplaces faced mounting pressure to address gender inequality. Just as in the previous decade, personnel

managers shouldered the responsibility to satisfy external pressures through hiring women in entry-level and managerial positions.

By the end of the 1970s, however, political shifts and the waning influence of social movements severely weakened the role of federal regulation. Without heavy pressure for compliance, personnel managers redefined their purpose in workplaces (Dobbin 2009). They no longer referred to themselves as personnel managers, but rather as human resource managers. This shift was more than just a change in name. While the personnel managers of the 1960s and 70s focused on complying with federal and normative pressures to address workplace discrimination, human resource managers *managed diversity*, with the ultimate goal of improving company productivity. Without external pressure, human resource managers refocused their attention on satisfying internal constituents – company CEOs and other leaders whose interests were very different than that of the social movements and federal regulations of the 1960s and 70s. Instead of promoting equity, HR managers were tasked with improving business efficiency through the effective management of diversity (Dobbin 2009).

In the absence of federal oversight and normative pressure from social movements, human resource managers had tremendous discretion in the creation of programs designed to address workplace diversity. As a result, a wide variety of human resource initiatives were developed. A study by Kalev, Kelly, and Dobbin (2006), aptly entitled “Best Practices or Best Guesses” illustrates the array of practices developed by human resource professionals. These programs include affirmative action goals, full-time diversity monitors, diversity committees/task forces, diversity trainings, specialized performance evaluations, networking programs, and mentoring systems – all designed to manage diversity in innovative and effective ways. Kalev and colleagues (2006) found that some of these practices work better at improving

equity than others – particularly those that include accountability structures such as diversity task forces and affirmative action goals. Meanwhile, some of the more popular practices, such as diversity training and mission statements, are ineffective at promoting workplace diversity (Kalev, Kelly, and Dobbin 2006) and may even create a backlash that further alienates women and racial minorities (Kaiser et al. 2013). Regardless of effectiveness, the variety of programs used by human resource managers illustrates the considerable discretion of these professionals in designing programs that address diversity.

Human resource managers are not only pivotal in shaping workplace policies around race/gender equity and diversity, but they also play large part in determining the legal parameters through which companies are held accountable to discrimination law. In a series of papers, Edelman and colleagues illustrate how workplace structures spearheaded by human resource managers actually come to define the way judges determine liability in cases of discrimination (Edelman et al. 2011; Edelman, Uggen, and Erlanger 1999). In the absence of clear guidelines defining workplace discrimination, judges decide what constitutes legal compliance on a case by case basis. As a result, judges often refer to the presence of diversity programs in workplaces as evidence that discrimination does not exist. These programs, designed by human resource managers, develop into important legal structures over time as judges frequently point to the existence of HR initiatives, such as diversity training, to suggest that companies are not discriminatory. Through this process of legal endogeneity, the influence of human resource managers extends far beyond their workplace, shaping widely adopted practices across an array of industries.

My analysis begins with 1980 – the year when Reagan won the presidential election and pressures around EEO compliance diminished both normatively and by regulation. In the

absence of external pressure, human resource managers had a tremendous amount of discretion in determining the form and function of their work. As a result, the persons occupying HR positions became increasingly important in gender/race equity outcomes. While there is considerable research examining the impact of human resources on various labor force equity outcomes, there has not yet been a study investigating whether women's presence in human resources affects gender equity. An additional contribution of this paper is to fill that void by asking whether the presence of women in HR management is related to improvements in gender equity.

RELATIVE NUMBERS, DISCRETION, AND WORKPLACE EQUITY

Jobs are not gender or race neutral (Acker 1990; 2006). Instead, the expectations and structures that characterize any particular job are imbued with principles of sexism and racism that both reflect and reinscribe systems of stratification (Tilly 1998). As a result, the structure of work today is one that benefits white men who are privileged by both their race and gender. Nonetheless, a wealth of previous research has found that when women and racial minorities occupy positions of power they often act as *agents of change*, promoting policies that improve workplace equity (Cohen and Huffman 2007; Stainback, Kleiner, and Skaggs 2015).

The idea that changing the demographic composition of a workplace can also alter structures of inequality was introduced by sociologists in the late 1970s, which was, coincidentally, around the time that the occupation of human resource managers began to proliferate across American industries. In *Men and Women of the Corporation*, Kanter (1977) argued that changing the representation of women in management to be more equal with men can foster a workplace environment more conducive to women's success. While Kanter's work has been critiqued for ignoring the power relations between workers (Harvey-Wingfield 2009;

Williams 1992) and assuming organizational structures are gender neutral (Acker 1990, 2006), a large body of research continues to show how the representation of women and racial minorities in an organization can promote equity outcomes.

Contemporary research has found that women's presence in some, but not all, positions has a positive effect on gender equality. At the top of corporate firms, women CEOs operate more as "cogs in the machine" rather than "agents of change" (the language of "cogs in the machine" and "agents of change" is adopted from Cohen and Huffman 2007). Corporations with female CEOs have the same percentage of women managers and are just as likely to institute equity policies as corporations with male CEOs (Cook and Glass 2014; Skaggs, Stainback, and Duncan 2012). Corporate boards, however, are places where actors can promote practices that benefit underrepresented groups. Cook and Glass (2015) found that corporations with more racial/ethnic diversity on their boards institute policies that promote diversity and inclusion.

One need not be atop the corporate hierarchy, however, to have a substantial impact on workplace equity. Cohen and Huffman (2007) found that women's representation in management significantly decreases the gender wage gap. Other research has found that women's presence in management decreases segregation (Huffman, Cohen, and Pearlman 2010; Stainback and Kwon 2012). A larger proportion of women in supervisory roles, however, has the unintended consequence of increasing workplace segregation (Stainback and Kwon 2012).

In sum, the previous literature examining the impact of women's representation on equity outcomes shows that in some roles, women act as "agents of change", while in others their presence resembles that of a "cog in the machine". Women's representation as corporate CEOs and mid-level supervisors produces little change in equity outcomes. Their increased presence on corporate boards and management, however, decreases levels of segregation and improves wage

equality. Why is it, then, that women's representation is meaningful in some positions but not others?

Theories of public administration may be able to answer this question. Research on the theory of street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky 1980) has found that discretion is necessary for bureaucrats to perform their job in ways that provide a greater benefit to same-race/gender constituents. Discretion, according to public administration scholars, is the general degree of control workers have in the performance of everyday duties (Meier and Bohte 2001; Scott 1997). If tasks are highly regulated through a set of prescribed rules, personnel have low levels of discretion. Positions with high levels of discretion, on the other hand, provide workers with greater autonomy over the way they fulfill their duties.

Differing levels of discretion may explain why diversity in corporate boards and management has positive effects on equity measures, while diversity among CEOs and supervisors does not. Board members occupy positions at the very top of the organizational hierarchy and their decisions are accountable only to stock-holders, who are often removed or relatively powerless. As a result, there is little oversight regulating the actions taken by board members. The ascendance of managerialism in U.S. workplaces was fueled by the idea that managerial discretion would improve firm efficiency (Chandler 1977; Micklethwait and Woolridge 2003). Thus, managers today continue to have significant autonomy and independence in their responsibilities. The high levels of discretion among managers and board members provides the opportunity for women and racial minorities who occupy these positions to institute policies that improve workplace equity. CEOs and supervisors, on the other hand, may have far less discretion in the fulfillment of their workplace duties. Supervisors are subject to intense oversight from mid- and upper-level managers, thereby limiting autonomy and

discretion. While it may seem counter-intuitive to assume that CEOs lack discretion, their ability to make autonomous decisions is severely hampered by hyper visibility and direct scrutiny by boards of directors. The key factor then, in determining which positions will be “cogs in the machine” and which will allow workers to be “agents of change”, may well be traced to the role of discretion.

If discretion is the key ingredient allowing women to be “agents of change” in certain occupations, then women’s presence in human resource management should put them in an ideal position to make changes that promote gender equity. Limited government oversight and little pressure from social movements means that human resource managers have a tremendous amount of discretion in the design and implementation of policies that can improve equity. In this study, I examine whether the presence of women in human resources affects women’s representation in managerial positions. By examining the relationship between women’s representation in HR and their entry into management occupations, this paper provides one test of whether occupational discretion is a mechanism allowing women to be “agents of change” when in certain positions.

HYPOTHESES

Disaggregating the category of women into racial sub-groups complicates the assumptions around in-group support. Once in a position of influence, will women behave in ways that benefit all women, or just those in their race group? Previous research on managerial representation suggests that white women tend to benefit from their racial privilege in access to managerial positions relative to black women (Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2009). Therefore, instead of women acting as a united group, my hypotheses are framed around the idea that the benefits of increased representation are both gender and race specific.

Additionally, I use fixed effects models to test whether the impact of black and white women human resource managers is due to shifts in their representation over time or due to characteristics of industries where black/white women are represented in human resources. The first hypothesis tests whether industries with more black/white women in human resources have greater representation of these groups in management.

H1: Industries with greater representation of black/white women in human resources will be associated with a higher percentage of management positions held by black/white women

The second hypothesis tests the assumption that black/white women human resource managers are able to use discretion to improve labor force equity outcomes. Instead of looking at differences between industries, the second set of hypotheses focuses on changes in HR composition within industries over time. If black/white women human resource managers use discretion to improve labor force equity outcomes, then an increase in the percentage of HR management positions held by black/white women within a specific industry will relate to improved equity outcomes.

H2: An increase in the representation of black/white women in human resources within industries over time will be associated with an increase in the percentage of management positions held by black/white women

RESEARCH DESIGN

Sample

The data I use in this study were obtained through the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) (Ruggles et al. 2015). I use samples representing 5 percent of the U.S. population working full-time (at least 35 hours for at least 50 weeks a year) in each of the

following years: 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010. For the years 1980, 1990, and 2000, I use census data. In the year 2010, the American Community Survey (ACS) replaced the census as the primary survey tool used to collect detailed information from large nationally representative samples. Therefore, the five percent national sample for the year 2010 is made up of the cumulative one percent ACS samples for the years 2006 through 2010. In my analyses, I treat my dependent and independent variables as industry-level characteristics. One of the issues with using industry-level variables in longitudinal studies, however, is that the census codes for industries change periodically. To remedy this problem, I rely on the industry codes from 1990 that IPUMS uses to catalogue industries from 1950 onwards using detailed information on the classification scheme in each census. My analyses exclude industries with less than 500 human resource managers during any given year as well as observations that were identified as overly-influential through a measure of Cook's distance. The final sample consists of 384 industry-year observations.

Measures¹

Representation in Management. The dependent variable in my analyses is the logged percentage of management positions held by black/white women. To obtain these figures, I took the log of the percentage of managerial positions in an industry held by black/white women, expressed as $\ln PMW_{it} = \frac{WM_{it}}{TM_{it}}$, where WM_{it} is the total number of black/white women managers in an industry during a given year, TM_{it} is the total number of managers in an industry during a single year, and PMW_{it} is percentage of managers who are black/white women during a year in the data. While this measure provides a valid estimate of women's managerial representation, in

¹ All measures of industry composition are calculated using person weights to ensure generalizability to the U.S. population.

supplemental analyses (found online) I confirm the findings presented here using a measure of women's representation calculated as the percentage of all women in an industry who occupy management positions. I define managerial positions as any of the occupational categories indicated as managerial in the U.S. Census. I did not include the occupational category of human resource manager in these measures because this group is given explicit attention as a key independent variable.

Representation in Human Resources. I measure the representation of black, white, and other race women in human resource management by dividing the total number of white/black/other race women human resource managers in a specific industry from the total number of human resource managers in that industry, expressed as, $PHRW_{it} = \frac{WHR_{it}}{THR_{it}}$ where WHR_{it} is the total number of black/white/other race women human resource managers in an industry in a given year, THR_{it} is the total number of human resource managers in an industry in a given year, and $PHRW_{it}$ is the percentage of HR managers who are black/white/other race women during a year recorded in the data. All findings presented here are confirmed using an alternative measure of HR representation calculated as the percentage of women in an industry who work as HR managers (see online supplement). My analyses also include a variable measuring the proportion of all managers in an industry that are human resource managers to account for the proliferation of human resources in the neoliberal era.

Control Variables. In my analysis of women's managerial representation, I control for several industry-characteristics including industry median annual earnings, the total number of people employed in an industry, the percentage of white/black/other race women in an industry, and the percentage of individuals working within an industry in management roles.

Analytic Plan

In the results section that follows, I first discuss descriptive trends in managerial representation and the composition of human resources between 1980 and 2010. Then, I present the results from my analysis exploring the relationship between the composition of human resources and managerial representation at the industry-level. In these models, I leverage two different fixed effects specifications. In the first two models, I specify fixed effects for year to examine the within-year between-industry variation in managerial and HR representation, modeled as:

$$\ln PMW_{it} = B_0 + B_1 IND_{it} + B_2 PHRW_{it} + v_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [1]$$

Where $\ln PMW_{it}$ is the logged percentage of management jobs held by black/white women in an industry at a given year, B_0 is the intercept, B signifies regression coefficients, IND_{it} represents the industry covariates in each model, $PHRW_{it}$ is the percentage of HR positions occupied by black/white/other women in an industry during given year, v_t represents the differences between years, and ε_{it} is the error term. Including v_t in these models specifies the fixed effects for year, essentially allowing me to control for unobserved differences between 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 and focus on the variation of women's managerial representation between industries within years of observation.

I also perform two additional models that specify fixed effects for year and industry to examine the within-industry variation over time, modeled as:

$$\ln PMW_{it} = B_0 + B_1 IND_{it} + B_2 PHRW_{it} + v_t + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad [2]$$

Equation 2 is nearly the same as equation 1, only it adds the specification for industry-level fixed effects by including α_i . This method is equivalent to having a dummy variable for each industry in the model and allows me to account for unobserved stable characteristics of industries that may affect the dependent variable (Allison 2005). In other words, the results produced by this

model will not be biased by the fact that some industries are consistently different from others in terms of culture and content. Instead, these models focus on within-industry variation over time, examining whether changing characteristics of specific industries (such as the composition of HR management) affect gender equity outcomes. One limitation of these models, however, is that they are unable to control for the effects of non-stable industry characteristics. Therefore, I include several control variables (reviewed above) to account to for shifting industry characteristics. The models in this section are split to provide separate analyses of black women's and white women's managerial representation. Model specifications are the same in each case, only the dependent variable changes to apply to either black or white women.

RESULTS

Descriptives

Figures 1 and 2 show the general rise in the total number of people employed in management² and concomitant changes in the composition of management between 1980 and 2010. In 1980, there were about five million people in the U.S. who were employed as managers. By 2010, that number increased to over 11 million. White men have always held the greatest share of management jobs. Even though the overall percentage of management jobs held by white men has declined from 69 percent to 52 percent (see Figure 2), the total number of white men in management in 2010, at over 5.7 million, is the highest it's ever been, with over two million more white men in management than there was in 1980. White women's presence in management has grown both in sheer numbers and as a proportion of total management jobs. In 1980 white women accounted for 22 percent of managers. From 1980 to 1990, white women's share in management increased six percentage points. Beyond 1990, the total percentage of

² Excluding human resource management jobs, which are given special attention below.

management jobs held by white women consistently remained just under 30 percent, although the total number of jobs held by this group continued to grow. Figure 2 also shows the extreme underrepresentation of black women in management, with only 1.6 percent of management positions belonging to black women in 1980 and, after decades of limited, but steady, growth, 3.6 percent of management positions in 2010.

[SUGGESTED PLACEMENT OF FIGURES 1 AND 2]

Variation in the composition of management was accompanied by equally dramatic changes in the number and composition of human resource managers. Figure 3 charts the expansion of human resource managers in gross numbers and Figure 4 illustrates the changing proportion of human resources managers that are white men, white women, and black women. We can see clearly that there was a dramatic rise in the number of human resource managers during the period of time covered in this study. Between 1980 and 2000, the number of human resource managers in the United States more than doubled from about 170,000 in 1980 to a peak of over 370,000 in the year 2000, followed by a slight decline in the number of human resource managers between 2000 and 2010. Despite the decline, in 2010 there was still over 330,000 human resource managers in the U.S., a number far above what was observed in 1980 and 1990. The dramatic rise in the number of human resource managers speaks to the growing influence of these professionals in the neoliberal era (Dobbin 2009; Stainback and Tomaskovic-Devey 2012).

[SUGGESTED PLACEMENT OF FIGURES 3 AND 4]

In addition to the dramatic rise in the sheer number of human resource managers between 1980 and 2010, Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the increasing feminization of this profession. In 2010, the majority of all human resource managers were women, a substantial increase from 1980 when women made up about a third of HR managers. Women's growing representation in

human resources was observed for both black and white women, although white women experienced greater gains that were proportional to their larger share of the labor force. The percentage of HR management positions held by white women increased from 30.5 percent in 1980 to 44 percent in 2010, by far the largest gain observed by any group. In fact, from 2000 onwards white women constituted the largest group represented in HR management. The proportion of black women in human resources also increased steadily between 1980 and 2000, from a low-point of 2.7 percent in 1980 to nearly 7 percent in 2010. Overall, figures 3 and 4 indicate that white women have replaced white men as the largest group represented in HR management, while black women, despite continual gains, are largely outnumbered and likely remain tokens in many of these positions.

[SUGGESTED PLACEMENT OF TABLE 1]

Table 1 presents summary statistics describing industry characteristics across all years included in the study. Over 25 percent of management jobs in industries included in this study are occupied by white women, while less than 3 percent of these jobs are held by black women. These numbers are higher for human resource managers, where white women hold about 40 percent of these positions compared to the 5 percent that are held by black women.

Representation in Management

To further explore the relationship between the composition of human resources and black/white women's representation in management, Table 2 presents the results of a series of fixed effects regression models. Models 1 and 2 include fixed effects specifications for year, but not industry, to examine the within-year, between-industry variation in management composition.

[SUGGESTED PLACEMENT OF TABLE 2]

Focusing only on the control variables, we find that industries with higher median annual earnings ($p < .001$), a larger number of total people employed ($p < .05$), a higher percentage of employees working as a manager ($p < .001$), and a greater proportion of white ($p < .001$) and black ($p < .001$) women tend to have higher representation of black women in management jobs. White women are more represented in management in industries with a greater proportion of white women employees ($p < .001$) and a higher percentage of employees working as managers ($p < .01$).

Examining the effect of industry-level human resource variables, we find that industries with a greater proportion of management jobs devoted to HR are associated with higher representation of black ($p < .01$) and white ($p < .1$) women in management positions. Industries with a greater proportion of black women in human resources are also associated with increased levels of both black and white women in management, although there were differences in effect size. Industries with a one standard deviation higher percentage of black women HR managers are predicted to have 21 percent more black women ($p < .001$) and 7.8 percent more white women ($p < .001$) represented in management. White women's presence in HR also had different effects between black and white women's managerial representation. Industries with a higher percentage of white women in human resources had higher levels of white women in management ($p < .001$) but not black women. The percentage of other race women in HR was marginally related to higher levels of black women's representation in management ($p < .1$) and unrelated to white women's presence in management.

Models 3 and 4 in Table 2 specify fixed effects for both year and industry. Most of the control variables that were significant in models 1 and 2 become non-significant in models 3 and 4 that control for the between-industry variation and focus, instead, on within-industry change over time. There was, however, a few exceptions. An increase in the percentage of black women

employed in an industry is significantly related to an increase in black women's managerial representation ($p < .001$). Parallel to this, industries that had an increase in the percentage of white women employees experienced growth in white women's presence in management ($p < .001$). White women's managerial representation was also negatively affected by an increase in the total number of workers in an industry ($p < .001$).

Models 3 and 4 also show significant, although dynamic, effects of changing HR composition on women's managerial representation. An increase in the percent of all managers who work in HR was marginally related to black women's managerial representation ($p < .1$), while being unrelated to white women's presence in management. In contrast to what was observed in models 1 and 2, models 3 and 4 show that after controlling for the stable effects of industry characteristics, black women's representation in HR does not have a significant effect on black or white women's managerial representation. This suggests that the association between black women's HR presence and black/white women's representation in management found in models 1 and 2 is due to the characteristics of industries with high concentrations of black women in HR rather than the discretion that black women HR managers may use to promote equity outcomes. This null effect persists when using alternative measures of women's representation, operationalized as the percent of women in an industry holding HR and management positions (see online supplement). We observe much different effects, however, for white women's presence in human resources. The increased representation of white women in HR promoted both black ($p < .001$) and white ($p < .001$) women's presence in management. A one standard deviation increase in the percentage of HR positions held by white women predicts a ten percent increase in black women's managerial representation and a 7.3 percent increase for white women. These findings persist when measuring women's representation as the percentage

of all women in an industry who work in HR and management (see online supplement). The larger effects of white women's HR representation compared to black women's HR representation suggests that white women human resource managers may have more discretion to promote gender equity outcomes. Finally, the models also reveal that the percentage of other race women in HR does not affect black or white women's presence in management.

HYPOTHESES REVISITED

These findings highlight the important role of human resource composition in women's workforce opportunities. Focusing on between-industry variation, industries with a higher percentage of black women in human resources were associated with greater representation of both white and black women in management. Industries with a higher percentage of white women in HR tend to have greater representation of white, but not black, women in management.

Examining the effect of within-industry change in the composition of human resources, we find important differences between black and white women's presence in HR. Growth in the percentage of white women in human resources within an industry promoted the percentage of both black and white women in management. Increases over time in the proportion of HR positions occupied by black women, on the other hand, did not significantly influence black or white women's entry into management. The different effects observed between black and white women's HR representation suggest that white women in these roles are able leverage the discretion available to them as human resource professionals to promote gender equity, while black women's discretion may be constrained due to their status as racial minorities and likely tokens in most HR departments across the U.S.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Broadly, the results presented above indicate that women's representation in human resources improves gender equity by promoting women's entry into management occupations. Because HR managers have a great deal of discretion to define the parameters of their job, these findings support the idea that discretion is a key ingredient in occupations that allow women to be "agents of change" to promote equity rather than "cogs in the machine" that reproduce patterns of inequality. Yet, the results also suggest that some women have more discretion than others. The representation of white women in human resources had a stronger effect on women's presence in management occupations than black women's HR representation. These differences suggest that white women may have more discretion as HR managers than black women. One reason for this difference could be the fact that black women remain largely outnumbered by white women and men in human resources and are likely to be tokens in these positions. Since 2000, white women have made up the largest portion of people employed in HR management positions. Their majority status may come with considerable influence. As human resource management increasingly becomes a white women's profession, white women's efforts to promote gender equality may be supported or, at least, go unnoticed by male colleagues and superiors. As a result, white women in HR can leverage their discretion to promote equity outcomes for both black and white women. Black women in human resources, however, remain tremendously underrepresented, making up between two and seven percent of all HR managers during the period covered in this study. In an environment where black women are largely outnumbered by white peers, there may be significant pressure to avoid the appearance of favoritism towards similarly situated others. Previous research by Watkins-Hayes (2011) found that black and Latino public caseworkers, who have a great deal of discretion in the rendering of services to clients, avoided behavior that could be interpreted as favoritism towards same-race

clients. In the context of human resource management, where black women may share the same gender as white women but stand out as racial minorities, black women may be under increased surveillance due to their token status and, therefore, be constrained in promoting equity outcomes for other women.

The findings here suggest that HR managers leverage their discretion to promote gender equity. Yet, future research is needed to confirm this conclusion. Because HR managers have significant discretion in defining the parameters of their jobs, an examination of this position makes for an ideal study of whether discretion plays a part in women's ability to promote gender equity. Yet, this study did not operationalize discretion, per se. Future research may build on this study by attempting to operationalize occupational discretion more directly, perhaps by measuring certain characteristics of jobs. Another limitation of this study is that it is unable to account for organizational characteristics, relying instead on industry-level variables. Future research may benefit by replicating this study using organizational-level data (akin to Huffman, Cohen, and Pearlman 2010, but focusing on HR managers).

The findings from this study also inspire a host of new questions. How might the representation of black and other race men in human resources affect labor force equity? How do shifts in HR composition affect gender and race equity? Future research may benefit from using an intersectional framework to explore these questions about the processes of gender and race inequality in the labor force.

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TABLES

TABLE 1: JOB AND INDUSTRY DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
<i>Industry Characteristics</i>				
Total Managers	67,338	88,305	3,130	746,864
Percent Black Women in Management	2.48%	2.55%	0.07%	19.34%
Percent White Women in Management	26.00%	13.15%	5.76%	82.48%
Total People in Industry	603,593	695,511	58,290	6,173,833
Percent Black Women in Industry	4.71%	3.56%	0.30%	19.82%
Percent White Women in Industry	29.03%	13.32%	5.73%	76.51%
Percent Other Race Women in Industry	5.67%	4.07%	0.39%	27.32%
Total HR Managers	2,385	2,390	500	14,965
Percent Black Women HR Managers	4.87%	4.41%	0.00%	27.78%
Percent White Women HR Managers	38.22%	13.18%	4.48%	84.38%
Percent Other Race Women HR Managers	5.79%	4.73%	0.00%	30.25%

TABLE 2: FIXED EFFECTS MODELS PREDICTING LOGGED % OF MNGMT JOBS OCCUPIED BY BLACK/WHITE WOMEN

Variables ⁱ	1 Logged % of MNGM. Jobs Occupied by Black Women	2 Logged % of MNGM. Jobs Occupied by White Women	3 Logged % of MNGM. Jobs Occupied by Black Women	4 Logged % of MNGM. Jobs Occupied by White Women
Median Industry Annual Earnings	0.126*** (0.035)	-0.011 (0.013)	0.021 (0.071)	0.043 (0.026)
Total People Employed in Industry	0.077* (0.030)	0.002 (0.011)	-0.045 (0.060)	-0.076*** (0.022)
Percent Other Race Women in Industry	-0.070 (0.048)	0.019 (0.018)	-0.078 (0.067)	0.031 (0.024)
Percent White Women in Industry	0.350*** (0.055)	0.363*** (0.021)	-0.066 (0.111)	0.267*** (0.040)
Percent Black Women in Industry	0.432*** (0.050)	-0.014 (0.019)	0.356*** (0.095)	0.049 (0.035)
% of Employees in Industry Working as a Manager	0.108** (0.036)	0.041** (0.014)	0.101 (0.071)	0.031 (0.026)
Percent of All Managers who are HR Managers	0.096** (0.036)	0.026 (0.013)	0.090 (0.053)	-0.010 (0.019)
Percent Other Race Women HR Managers	0.068† (0.038)	0.012 (0.014)	0.054 (0.036)	-0.019 (0.013)
Percent White Women HR Managers	-0.003 (0.046)	0.073*** (0.017)	0.100* (0.048)	0.073*** (0.017)
Percent Black Women HR Managers	0.212*** (0.041)	0.078*** (0.015)	0.029 (0.037)	0.022 (0.014)
Constant	-4.620*** (0.090)	-1.698*** (0.034)	-4.609*** (0.088)	-1.712*** (0.032)
N	384	384	384	384
Fixed Effects Specifications	Year	Year	Year Industry	Year Industry

ⁱIndependent variables are standardized

Standard errors in parentheses

† p<.1; * p<0.05; ** p<0.01; *** p<0.001

FIGURES

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN MANAGEMENT, 1980 TO 2010

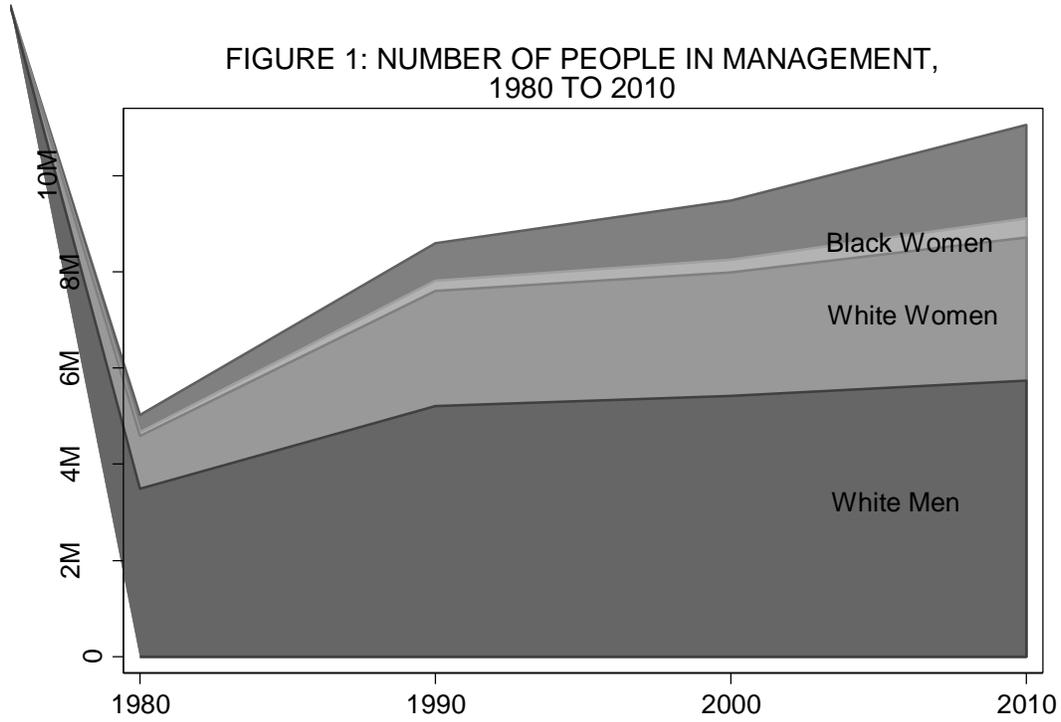


FIGURE 2: COMPOSITION OF MANAGEMENT, 1980 TO 2010

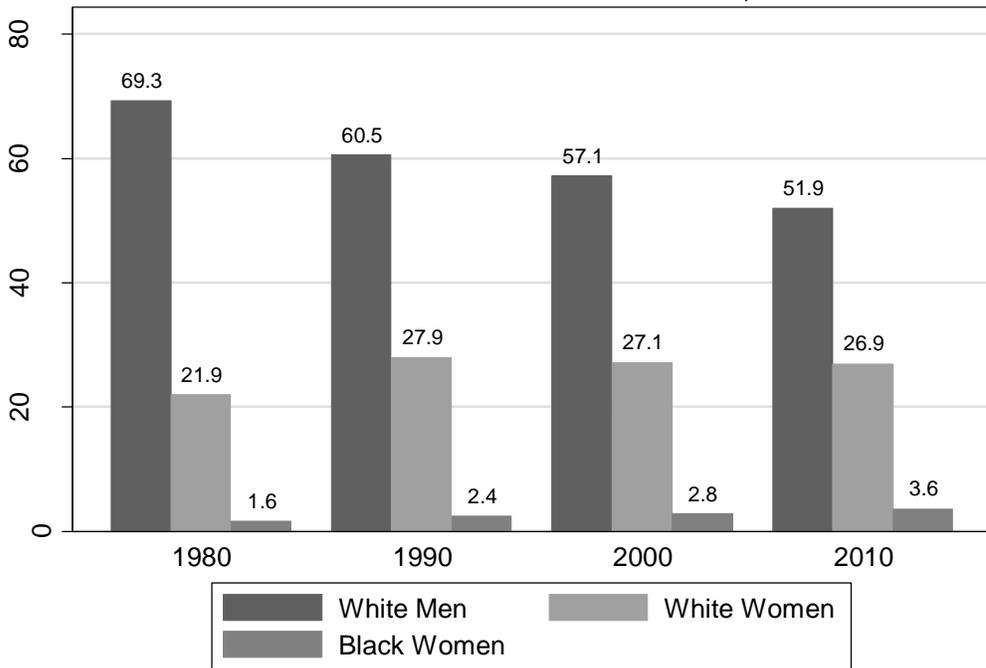


FIGURE 3: RISE OF HR MANAGEMENT, 1980 TO 2010

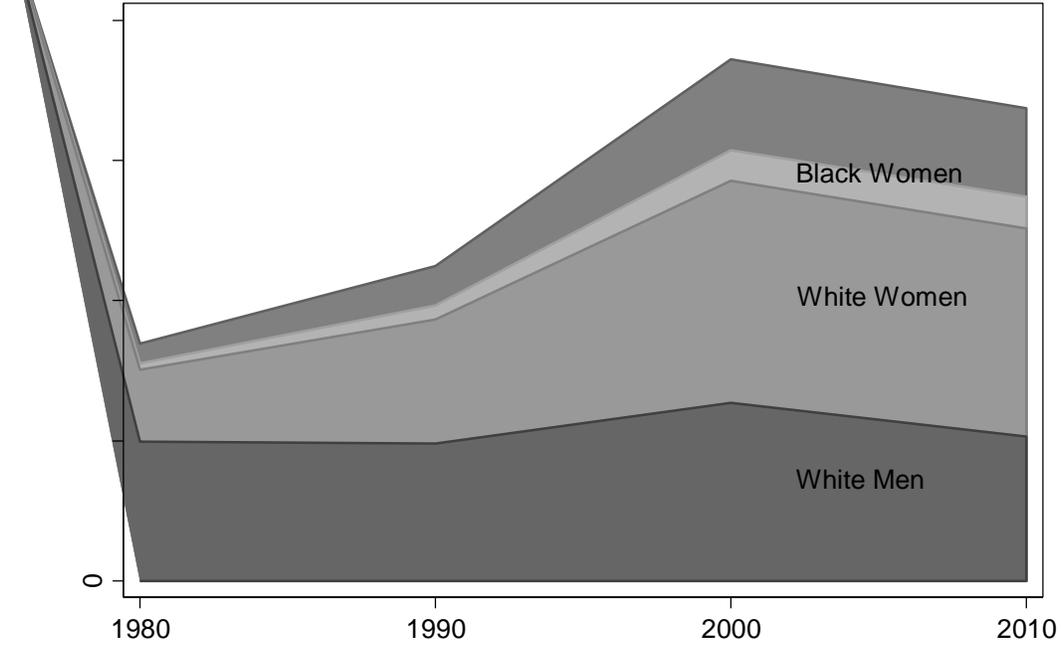


FIGURE 4: COMPOSITION OF HR MANAGEMENT, 1980 TO 2010

