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Version Post-Print/Accepted Manuscript

Citation Schieman, Scott, Markus Schafer, and Mitch McIvor. 2013. "The
(published version) Rewards of Authority in the Workplace: Do Gender and Age Matter?"
Sociological Perspectives 56:75-96.

Publisher's Statement The final publication is available at SAGE Publications via
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1525/sop.2012.56.1.75>.

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The Rewards of Authority in the Workplace: Do Gender and Age Matter?

Sociologists have long sought to discover the personal and social consequences of working life. A recent advance towards this agenda has been to clarify the types of work conditions which influence levels of intrinsic rewards, well-being, and other relevant outcomes (Kalleberg 2011; Mirowsky and Ross 2003a). Research has emphasized the importance of “job control”—a broad set of resources that include authority, autonomy, and challenging activities that require creativity, thought, and skill utilization (Karasek and Theorell 1990; Tausig and Fenwick 2011). High levels of job control have been linked to greater productivity and job satisfaction, and may offset the consequences of excessive job demands (Demerouti et al. 2001).

Among the various aspects of job control examined in previous research, *authority* over others stands out as a uniquely relational resource. Holding the legitimate power to direct others’ behaviour introduces dynamics and other rewards that make job authority a “highly coveted workplace resource” (Smith 2002:511). This characterization is partly due to authority’s connection with other favourable conditions such as autonomy, greater pay, and chances for advancement (Halaby and Weakliem 1993; Kalleberg, 2011; Reskin and Ross, 1992; Tausig and Fenwick, 2011). According to Wright and colleagues (1995), “authority is a valued attribute of jobs, both because it confers status on a person and because the responsibilities it involves may be intrinsically rewarding...authority is one of the central ways in which the financial rewards of work are allocated” (p. 407). While the literature reveals a variety of different conceptualizations and measurements of authority, including debates about the most optimal form (see Smith 2002, p. 511), we follow the guidelines set forth by other researchers in which workers with no authority are contrasted with groups in positions of higher *levels* of authority; that is, as we will

describe in detail below, these workers are classified in categories that involve either supervisory, sanctioning, or managerial authority (Elliott and Smith, 2004; Smith, 2002, 2012).

The antecedents and consequences of job authority have been focal concerns for sociologists seeking to explicate processes of social ascription, status attainment, and income inequality (Elliott and Smith 2004; Smith 2002). While numerous studies have established a positive association between levels of job authority and income in the American context (Kluegel 1978; Lopreato 1968; Reskin and Ross 1992; Smith 1997; Spaeth 1985), surprisingly little is known about the ways that job authority is associated with wages in the contemporary Canadian context. Moreover, few studies (if any) have assessed how job authority is associated with other, non-pecuniary job rewards and the potential variations in such relationships across social statuses like gender and age. By addressing these questions, we seek to extend research on status inequality beyond income to include other workplace rewards.

The first objective of this paper therefore is to investigate the ways that job authority is related to two main job rewards and forms of job control: *job autonomy* and *challenging work*. Consistent with Kalleberg's (2011) claim that "jobs are made up of bundles of rewards" (p. 5), we hypothesize that these job characteristics should tend to *co-occur* in the workplace—but we are unaware of any systematic investigation of this claim for the connection between levels of job authority and both job autonomy and challenging work a representative sample of workers. Following this, our second objective is to compare these observations with the more conventional association between authority and income—and test the relevance of autonomy and challenging work as explanations for any observed association between authority and income.

Our third objective is to examine whether any observed "payoffs" for job authority differ by gender and age. Although we hypothesize that authority and other job rewards tend to bundle

together as components of positions within organizations, authority may become decoupled from, or more closely connected to, these rewards for some workers more than others. As suggested above, this has generally been evident in studies of income—but it remains unknown if this extends to autonomy and challenging work. Specifically, we assess the possibility that women and younger workers may not experience the same rewards from authority as men and older workers. To test these hypotheses, we analyze data from a national sample of workers: the 2011 *Canadian Work, Stress, and Health Study*. This survey is ideally suited for our objectives because it includes workers across a range of statuses, sectors, occupations, and income levels.

BACKGROUND

Conceptual Distinctions and Empirical Connections

One of the major challenges in this area of scholarship involves the conceptualization of the constructs involved—and the empirical connections among them. In the Job Demands-Control model (JD-C), the conceptualization of *job control* was based primarily on *decision latitude*, which is comprised of two main components: “skill discretion” and “decision authority” (Karasek and Theorell 1990). According to Karasek and associates (1998), skill discretion involves “the level of skill and creativity required on the job and the flexibility permitted the worker in deciding what skills to employ,” and decision authority entails the “organizationally mediated possibilities for workers to make decisions about their work” (p. 323).

While some prior research in this literature treats job control as a single dimension (c.f., Karasek et al. 1998:323/338), we believe it is important to differentiate several interrelated themes: (a) control over others’ work (*job authority*); (b) freedom from the close supervision of others and control over one’s own work (*job autonomy*); and (c) control as reflected in skill

discretion and the engagement in creative, substantively complex activities (*challenging work*). In the current study, we emphasize the importance of first drawing clear conceptual distinctions between each of these forms of job control and then documenting their empirical connections.

Authority in the workplace is a foundational form of job control with connections to the manner in which people have “control over resources, people, and things” (Wolf and Fligstein 1979:96). Forms of authority within organized settings are not simply inherent to individuals; rather, control is legitimized through formal positions and roles in a workplace’s structure (Smith 2002). Scholarship on social class and status achievements describes job authority as a micro dimension of power (Wright and Perrone 1977). We draw directly from Elliott and Smith’s (2004) conceptualization and operationalization of job authority: the extent to which one has the power to set other workers’ pay, the ability to hire and fire others, and supervisory influence over other workers’ activities; these elements and their combinations of differing levels of power and influence have been variously referred to in the literature as “supervisory authority,” “sanctioning authority,” and “managerial authority” (Carayon and Zijlstra, 1999; Smith, 2002, 2012; Mueller et al., 1989; Mueller and Parcel, 1986; Wright et al., 1982; Wright et al., 1995).

Despite empirical overlap, there are conceptual distinctions between job authority and the two other forms of job control being considered. *Job autonomy* involves the ability to decide how one does his or her own work—that is, workers have “control over decisions related to their jobs” (Choi, Leiter, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2008:422). It is the antithesis to being closely supervised and the freedom from the “psychological weight of the hierarchy bearing down on an individual” (Mirowsky and Ross 2007:388). By contrast, jobs that are characterized as *challenging* allow workers to do different things at work, use their skills and abilities, learn new things, and engage in creative tasks. The concept of challenging work blends interrelated themes

that researchers have referred to with different terms, including “complexity,” “variety,” “non-routine work,” “creative work,” “skill discretion” “learning possibilities,” “intrinsic rewards,” and “opportunities for professional development” (Bakker and Geurts, 2004; Bakker, Boyd, Dollard, Gillespie, Winefield, and Stough, 2010; Bakker, Demerouti, Taris, Schaufeli, and Schreurs 2003; Dean and Snell, 1991; Hackman and Oldham, 1975; Karasek, 1979, 1985; Loscocco, 1989; Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Schieman and Young 2010b).

Both job autonomy and challenging work have conceptual origins in the JD-C model’s “decision latitude,” which, as noted above, underscores the degree of *skill discretion* and *creativity* required on the job (Karasek and Theorell, 1990; Karasek et al., 1998: 323; Van der Doef and Maes, 1999). Challenging work and autonomy are conceptually distinct but empirically related. As Mirowsky and Ross (2007) argue, “[s]ome degree of autonomy is necessary but not sufficient for creativity. A lack of autonomy can restrain creativity, but no amount of autonomy can guarantee creativity” (386). For these reasons, we assess the relevance of challenging work as distinct from job autonomy; both are linked to a range of favorable outcomes (Choi, et al. 2008; Kalleberg, 2011; Loscocco, 1989; Schieman 2002; Tausig and Fenwick, 2011).

Researchers have established that workers with greater authority tend to have higher earnings—but does authority also predict greater autonomy and challenging work? Authority represents a central indicator of status and legitimacy in many work contexts (Elliot and Smith 2004; Smith 2002; Wolf and Fligstein 1979). People with authority tend to be more engaged in leadership tasks, decision-making and the expression of judgments, and the direction of the labor of others to meet objectives (Tausig and Fenwick 2011); moreover, they tend to have enhanced accountability in tasks that contribute to organizational directions and outcomes (Hodson 2001;

Wright et al. 1995). Workers with authority have access to a range of psychosocial rewards, including messages of worth, esteem, and status accord (Reskin and Ross 1992; Schwalbe 1985).

Collectively, these ideas contribute to the hypothesis that job authority should be associated with greater autonomy and challenging work. As a basis of comparison, we will also evaluate the more conventional prediction that workers with authority tend to have higher income. This strategy allows us to evaluate whether the advantages of job authority extend in similar degree to pecuniary and non-pecuniary rewards—and whether or not those pecuniary rewards are attributable to authority’s link to greater job autonomy and challenging work.

While it is one thing to inquire about the potential unequal distribution of job authority across social statuses like gender (as many of the above-cited studies have done), it is another to inquire as to whether the rewards associated with greater job authority *differ* across social statuses. Having described the conceptual distinctions and empirical connections between job authority and these other rewards, we now turn our attention to whether or not the hypothesized associations differ across social statuses: Do any observed associations between levels of job authority and these other job-related rewards vary across gender or age?

Gender and the Rewards Associated with Job Authority

Job authority has been described as a key indicator of stratification—perhaps even more useful than other indicators of SES—and this characterization has enhanced understanding of gender inequality at work, especially with regard to pecuniary rewards (Smith, 2002; Smith and Elliot 2002). According to Wright and colleagues (1995), “because of the real power associated with positions in authority hierarchies, gender inequalities in authority may constitute one of the key mechanisms that sustain gender inequalities in workplace outcomes” (p. 407). Theoretical

perspectives and empirical evidence identify gender differences in *levels* of authority and the reasons for them. For example, as Kalleberg (2011:46) asserts: “men generally have better-quality jobs than women, as reflected in the persistent wage gap in earnings and men’s greater autonomy and control over their jobs.” Other studies of job quality show that women are more likely to work in positions and occupations with fewer opportunities for authority—a pattern which persists net of position, industry, and human capital (Smith 2002). Similar patterns for gender differences in job autonomy have been observed (Adler 1993; Lincoln and Kalleberg, 1990; Schieman 2002). Despite this apparent disparity, studies show that women report slightly higher levels of organizational commitment net of job-, family-, and career-related conditions; while these patterns are not definitive, they go against the pattern of women’s disadvantages in work conditions (Cohen and Lowenberg, 1990; Marsden et al., 1993; Mathieu and Zajac, 1990).

Apart from gender inequalities in *access* to job authority, the current study assesses whether the *benefits* of authority—in terms of its bundling with other job rewards—differs for women and men. As noted above, there is ample prior evidence that women have generally tended to receive fewer pecuniary rewards than men for the same level of job authority (Reskin and Ross 1992; Smith 2002; Wolf and Fligstein 1979). In addition, Marsden and colleagues (1993) suggest that women have also tended to hold jobs with fewer “commitment-enhancing features” (e.g., supervisory positions), but even when women hold similar positions of job authority as men, there is some indication that the scope of their authority is more narrow.

To our knowledge, no studies have explicitly assessed the non-pecuniary rewards associated with job authority in the contemporary context of Canadian workers. We therefore test if the association between authority and other rewards mirrors the income disadvantages that women have experienced—even when they share similar levels of authority as men. We propose

two competing hypotheses. First, as a parallel to women's traditional disadvantage in the authority-earnings association, the *limited job rewards* hypothesis predicts that women may also tend to experience fewer non-pecuniary rewards for the same level of job authority as men. Increases in levels of job authority should be associated more strongly with greater autonomy and challenging work among men compared to women. Another reason may be structural, specifically women's concentration in the public sector or particular kinds of occupations (Kraus and Yonay, 2000; Yaish and Stier 2009). Women tend to cluster in positions of more *circumscribed* authority, in which they have narrower responsibilities for overseeing other workers with fewer of the other benefits typically associated with authority (Reskin and Ross 1992). This scenario would be evident if women are disproportionately represented in lower-status occupations. In our analyses, we adjust for occupation and job sector to rule out the possibility that gender differences in the rewards associated with authority are due to gender differences in occupation or job sector. Here, a somewhat-related idea that contributes to the *limited rewards* hypothesis derives from a sceptical view of women's progression in management and questions if women's job positions have simply been "renamed to increase the appearance of managerial integration" (Jacobs 1992, as cited in Cohen, Huffman, and Knauer, 2009, p. 319); this "faux authority" implies that women should tend to derive fewer non-pecuniary rewards associated with job authority compared to similarly situated men.

As an alternative to the *limited rewards* hypothesis, we propose the *diminishing disadvantage* hypothesis, which posits that the rewards associated with job authority should be greater among women than among men. The rationale for this view derives from scholarship that focuses on the social-structural arrangements among groups that have traditionally been disadvantaged (Mirowsky, Ross, and Reynolds 2000). The underlying logic is straightforward:

Given historical obstacles to advancement, groups that are able to achieve higher statuses may benefit more from those gains. For the most part, the empirical tests of this idea have focused primarily on health-related outcomes, indicating that women's health disadvantages relative to men diminish when women achieve higher levels of education, greater earnings, and better jobs. We seek to extrapolate from those status- and health-related observations to argue that, given traditional gender distinctions in status advantages at work, women may sense a "relative gain," which, in turn, enhances the link between authority and other job rewards.

Prior research on gender and the payoffs of authority offers mixed evidence about the predictions of the *limited rewards* versus *diminishing disadvantage* hypotheses. Reskin and Ross (1992) observe that men who achieve positions of authority often experience more power than women in decision-making as represented in "the number of arenas in which managers had *any* input and especially the number of arenas in which they made *final* decisions" (p. 354). Moreover, with income as the dependent variable, Reskin and Ross document an interaction between gender and decision-making authority such that authority paid off for men but reduced women's pay "because of the contexts in which they exercised authority" (p. 359). However, Reskin and Ross also found that job authority is associated in similar ways to the number of arenas of final decision making for women and men—even though, overall, women were disadvantaged in the number of arenas of final decision making. Those authors conclude that women managers "were substantially less likely than men to exercise decision-making authority" (p. 359). Other prior evidence suggests that supervisory authority is more strongly associated with work commitment among men (in manufacturing industries)—potentially due to gender differences in the quality of authority in the supervisor role or because "female supervisors have

fewer resources and less power than their male counterparts, which are the keys to success in a supervisory position” (Loscocco, 1989, p. 387).

While these observations are consistent of the *limited rewards* hypothesis, other studies find patterns that concur with the *diminished disadvantage* hypothesis. For example, Adler (1993) observes that the positive association between supervisor position and job autonomy is stronger among women compared to men. However, Adler’s index of job autonomy blends heterogeneous survey items associated with schedule control, flexibility, and challenging work. Separate analyses of the individual job autonomy items reveals that supervisor status is more strongly associated with the ability to introduce new ideas, decide when to work, and to slow down the pace of work among women compared to men. This pattern suggests that the payoff of authority for decision-making latitude may be stronger among women. Collectively, however, contrasting theoretical and empirical perspectives appear to point to divergent paths for the association between authority and non-pecuniary rewards like autonomy and challenging work.

Age and the Rewards Associated with Job Authority

Like gender, age is a demographic attribute with potential implications for job-related resources. In general, older workers tend to have more highly rewarded jobs (Kalleberg and Losocco 1983). This may partly be a function of life stage differences; older workers have had more time to achieve rewards and resources, have built up seniority in their firm, and are in line for promotions to higher status positions (Wright and Hamilton 1978). Developmental and career stage perspectives suggest that, over time, workers may develop the capacity to access and make use of resources like job autonomy (Janson and Martin 1982; Wright and Hamilton 1978).

As with gender, however, our interest lies beyond age-based disparities in job rewards. The main question is whether the benefits of authority for autonomy and challenging work accrue differently depending on a worker's age. A first expectation is that authority is more strongly associated with these job rewards among older workers, a prospect we label the *seniority rewards* hypothesis. One rationale for this hypothesis is that experience in the firm enhances the value of older workers (DeLong 2004). Having authority can position older workers to leverage their intellectual capital and create synergy between levels of job authority and other job-related rewards like autonomy or challenging work.

Additional rationale derives from the literature on age and organizational norms about “appropriate” levels of status and power (Lawrence 1988). Traditional age norms imply that supervisors *should be* older than their supervisees, and deviations from this pattern can generate status inconsistency (Collins, Hair, and Rocco 2009). Under this logic, people with authority should exceed their subordinates in experience and knowledge—qualities assumed to correlate positively with age (Tsui, Xin, and Egan 1995). As a diffuse status characteristic, age signals competency in supervisory roles (Ridgeway 2002). Younger workers with authority may encounter more difficulties in garnering confidence about their leadership abilities from older subordinates and convincing co-workers that they are capable of meeting mentorship expectations (e.g., Tsui et al. 1995). Some evidence supports this thesis, suggesting that workers age 50 and older evaluate bosses under 40 less positively than those of similar or older age (Collins, Hair, and Rocco 2009). Another study found that workers perform better on objective indicators if they have older supervisors (Liden, Stilwell, and Ferris 1996). Taken together, these ideas provide a basis for our prediction that authority should be associated more positively with autonomy and challenging work among older workers.

An alternative view that we refer to as the *fast-track rewards* hypothesis predicts that younger workers may experience greater payoffs for job authority. Drawing from theories of work and the life cycle, Kalleberg and Losocco (1983) suggest that job-related resources “such as challenge and autonomy may become less important to workers over time” (80). Consequently, older workers may not be as motivated as younger workers to experience connections between their own levels of authority and these other resources. Returning to the arguments about age norms, people who surmount traditional age-based organizational norms and achieve supervisory status at a young age may also signal exceptional value to the firm (Tsui et al. 1995), meriting a greater net gain in financial compensation. Some evidence supports the idea that workers on a non-normative “fast-track” to higher levels of authority get better performance ratings from managers (Lawrence 1988). We recognize this possibility and test whether the bundling of job authority and other resources disproportionately accrues to younger workers. In summary, we hypothesize that authority is associated not only with pecuniary rewards but also autonomy and challenging work—but in ways contingent on a worker’s age.

METHODS

Sample

To test the hypotheses outlined above, we analyze data from the 2011 *Canadian Work Stress and Health* study (CAN-WSH), a nationally representative sample of the Canadian labour force. Interviews were conducted by telephone between January and July 2011. We hired the company R.A. Malatest and Associates to collect the data. To be eligible to participate in the study, individuals had to be: (1) residing in Canada; (2) 18 years of age or older; (3) currently working at a paid job or operated an income-producing business; (4) employed in the civilian

labour force; and 5) living in a non-institutional residence. In households with more than one eligible person, we used the “next birthday” method to randomly select a study participant. Calls were made to a regionally stratified unclustered random probability sample generated by random-digit-dial methods. Interviews were conducted in English or French and averaged approximately 30 – 35 minutes. Study participants received a \$20 gift card for completing the interview. The final full sample was 6,004. The response rate was approximately 40 percent.¹ In our analyses, we restrict the sample to individuals working at least 20 hours per week and we exclude the self-employed (N = 4,267). All analyses are weighted to more accurately represent the gender, age, and educational composition of the Canadian population (based on the latest Canadian Census). Appendix A provides summary statistics for all focal study variables.

Measures

Job authority. We use responses to three items to assess job authority: “Do you supervise or manage anyone as part of your job?” “Do you influence or set the rate of pay received by others?”; “Do you have the authority to hire or fire others?” To create a series of classification categories, we followed the procedures set forth in other recent research (Elliott and Smith, 2004; Smith, 2012). Individuals who responded “no” to all three items are classified as having no authority (the reference group). Those who responded “yes” only to the “supervise or manage”

¹ Some readers might have concerns about the response rate. One potential problem associated with lower response rates is the possibility of nonresponse bias in estimates (Babbie 2007). While research challenges the link between response rates and nonresponse bias (see Grove 2006; Curtin, Presser, and Singer 2000; Merkle and Edelman 2002), we nevertheless address the possibility that our results were unduly influenced by nonresponse bias. In order to do this, we compared results from unweighted and weighted analyses in which we weighted the sample based on a key set of demographic statuses (e.g. gender, age, marital status, education). We found few differences between the weighted and unweighted results. Winship and Radbill (1994) argue that controlling for characteristics on which individuals may be under- or over-sampled adjusts for biases due to these characteristics; all of our analyses include a robust set of controls to adjust for this potentiality. In addition, sample descriptive statistics for our variables are indistinguishable to the weighted descriptive statistics, and similar to those in other national surveys. As a result, we are confident that our sample is representative of the intended population, and that nonresponse bias is not an issue.

item are classified as having *supervisory authority*. Those who responded “yes” only to the “set the rate of pay” and/or the “hire or fire others” item are classified as having *sanctioning authority*. Those who supervise *and* have sanctioning authority have *managerial authority*.

Job autonomy. Three items assess job autonomy. Participants are asked the extent that they agree or disagree with the following statements: “I have the freedom to decide what I do on my job,” “It is basically my own responsibility to decide how my job gets done,” and “I have a lot of say about what happens on my job.” Response choices are coded “strongly disagree” (1), “somewhat disagree” (2), “somewhat agree” (3), and “strongly agree” (4). We averaged responses to create the index; higher scores reflect more job autonomy ($\alpha = .78$). The items used to measure both autonomy and challenging work are similar to those found in the 2002 and 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce (see <http://www.familiesandwork.org/>).

Challenging work. Four items assess challenging work: “My job requires that I keep learning new things,” “My job requires that I be creative,” “My job lets me use my skills and abilities,” and “I get to do a lot of different things on my job.” These items blend a variety of interrelated themes including what have been referred to as “creative work,” “non-routine work,” or “job complexity” (Mirowsky and Ross 2003; Schieman and Young, 2010b). Response choices are coded “strongly disagree” (1), “somewhat disagree” (2), “somewhat agree” (3), and “strongly agree” (4). We averaged responses; higher scores reflect more challenging work ($\alpha = .78$).

Personal income. We use one item to assess total personal earnings in the previous year from all sources. Study participants were asked to indicate their 2010 total personal income before taxes. Respondents who reported that they did not know the exact dollar amount or refused to answer this question (18 percent of the full sample) were asked a follow-up question about whether or not their income fell within a set of different ranges (e.g., “between \$50,000

and \$75,000”). With this additional step, we were able to obtain responses from 60 percent of those who were initially missing income values on the original open-ended question. To retain the continuous nature of income variable, we assigned the midpoint value of these selected categories. In our analyses, we logged personal income to reduce its positive skew.

Gender. We use dummy codes for men (0) and women (1).

Age. Age is measured in years.

Control variables. All analyses include the following control variables: marital status (married versus never married, divorced, separated, or widowed), number of children younger than age 18 in the household, region of residence, education, job sector, occupation, work hours, location of work, and job pressures. Education is coded as “less than high school” (1), “high school or GED” (2), “associate/2-year degree” (3), “some college, no degree earned” (4), “4-year university degree” (5), and “graduate or professional degree (MA/Ph.D.)” (6). We use the modal category “high school” as the omitted reference group.² For job sector, we contrast people who work at a “private for-profit business” with those in government or a non-profit organization. To assess occupation, we asked participants: “What kind of work do you do? That is, what is your occupation?” Using the open-ended information provided, we first coded occupations into thirty-three categories using the 2006 Canadian National Occupation Classification. We then collapsed these codes into seven categories in accordance with the 1990 US census standard occupational classification system. This includes the following occupational groups: “executives,” “professionals” (the reference group), “technical,” “service,” “sales,” “administrative” and “production.” For work hours, we compare study participants who work “40 – 50 hours per week” (the reference group) with people who work “20 to 30 hours per week,” “between 30 and

² We treat education as a categorical variable to allow potential non-linear relationships between formal schooling and job rewards (e.g., from credentialing effects).

39,” and “more than 50 hours per week,” and “work hours vary too much weekly to categorize easily.”³ Work location contrasts those who work at a “fixed location” with “primarily at home,” “on the road,” “at various client locations,” or some other location. To measure job pressure we use three items: (In the past three months...) “How often did you feel overwhelmed by how much you had to do at work?” “How often did you have to work on too many tasks at the same time?” “How often did the demands of your job exceeded the time you have to do the work?” Response choices are: “never” (1), “rarely” (2), “sometimes” (3), “often” (4), and “very often” (5). We averaged the items; higher scores indicate more job pressure ($\alpha = .85$).

Plan of Analyses

The results in Tables 1 - 3 show the associations between authority and: (1) autonomy; (2) challenging work; and (3) income. Using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression techniques, we test hypotheses using a series of models for each of these outcomes. In the base model, we regress the focal dependent variable on authority, gender, and age in order to establish baseline differences; all regression models include the control variables. In models 2 and 3, we test whether or not any observed associations between the categories of job authority and each of the job rewards varies first for men and women and then by age. In model 4 of Table 3, we include job autonomy and challenging work to test their relevance as explanations for any observed association between job authority and income, including an social status contingencies. We centered age prior to creating interaction terms to reduce multicollinearity between their lower-order and interaction terms. We also include a series of figures to help illustrate the size and direction of any observed interaction effects.

³ Work hours are coded as categorical dummy variables in order to retain those who reported that their hours varied too much to provide one specific value and to account for any potential non-linearities in its effects.

RESULTS

Job Autonomy

Model 1 of Table 1 shows that, compared to workers—that is, individuals with no job authority—individuals who have either supervisory, sanctioning, and managerial authority tend to report significantly higher levels of job autonomy. In particular, those who possess the highest level of authority—managerial authority—tend to report the most autonomy. We also find that women and men report similar levels of job autonomy; likewise, age is unrelated to autonomy.

Turning to the potential contingencies in the association between job authority and autonomy, in model 2 we observe that the interaction for *women x managerial authority* is negative and statistically significant. This indicates that the autonomy-related rewards associated with having managerial authority are weaker for women compared to men. Figure 1 illustrates this interaction effect, showing that differences between those with no authority versus those with managerial authority are significantly stronger among men compared to women. While the other two interaction terms are negative, neither reaches statistical significance. Thus, there is some evidence that the highest levels of job authority do not seem to yield the same level of rewards for women as they do for men—at least when job autonomy is the job reward being evaluated. By contrast, as shown in model 3, none of the age interaction terms are statistically significant, indicating that the authority-based differences in job autonomy do not vary by age.

[INSERT TABLE 1 AND FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Challenging Work

Model 2 of Table 2 shows that, compared to workers with no job authority, those with supervisory, sanctioning, and managerial authority report significantly higher levels of

challenging work; in fact, individuals with managerial authority report the most challenging work. While women have a higher average level of challenging work compared to men, we observe no significant age differences in challenging work.

Turning to the potential contingencies in the association between job authority and challenging work, in model 2 we observe two negative and statistically significant interaction effects: *women x sanctioning authority* and *women x managerial authority*. This indicates that the rewards associated with having sanctioning or managerial authority are weaker for women compared to men. Figure 2 illustrates these differences, showing that the differences between those with no authority versus those with sanctioning and managerial authority are greater among men compared to women. While women with higher levels of authority tend to report similar levels of challenging work compared to men with similarly higher levels of authority, the overall relationship between job authority and challenging work is stronger among men.

In contrast to these gender contingencies, model 3 shows that none of the age interaction terms are statistically significant. This indicates that authority-based differences in challenging work do not vary significantly by age.

[INSERT TABLE 2 AND FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Income

Model 1 of Table 3 shows that, compared to workers with no job authority, individuals with supervisory and managerial authority report significantly higher levels of income—and managerial authority has the largest payoff. By contrast, those with sanctioning authority do not report a higher average income compared to those with no authority. In addition, women report a lower average income compared to men; age is associated positively with income.

Turning to the potential contingencies in the association between job authority and income, in model 2 we observe two negative and statistically significant interaction effects: *women x supervisory authority* and *women x managerial authority*. This indicates that the pecuniary rewards associated with having supervisory or managerial authority are weaker for women compared to men. Thus, there is evidence that higher levels of some aspects of job authority do not seem to yield the same level of rewards for women as they do for men when income is the job reward being assessed. Figure 3 illustrates these patterns, showing that the difference in average levels of income between individuals with no authority compared to those with supervisory or managerial authority is significantly stronger among men. Moreover, as shown in model 4, that the inclusion of job autonomy and challenging work has a trivial influence on the gender-based contingencies that are demonstrated in model 2. In sum, possessing greater levels of job authority tends to have greater pecuniary rewards for men compared to women—net of the other non-pecuniary job rewards.

By contrast to the gender contingencies, in model 3, none of the age interaction terms are statistically significant. This indicates that authority-based differences in income do not vary by age. Moreover, the adjustments for job autonomy and challenging work in model 4 show that the differences between women and men in the authority-income association are not attributable to any differences in autonomy or challenging work.

[INSERT TABLE 3 AND FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

DISCUSSION

In analyses of a 2011 national sample of Canadian workers, the present study examined the ways that levels of job authority are associated with different forms of job-related rewards. In

comparisons of workers with no authority to those with supervisory, sanctioning, or managerial authority, we document the ways that these job conditions “bundle together,” and whether or not the associations vary across key social statuses of gender and age. Our observations indicate that workers with more authority tend to also report more autonomy, challenging work, and income. However, we also find three sets of contingencies that compare women and men: (1) managerial authority is associated more strongly with job autonomy among men; (2) sanctioning and managerial authority are associated more strongly with challenging work among men; and (3) supervisory and managerial authority are associated more strongly with income among men. By contrast, we found no age-based contingencies in the link between authority and these outcomes.

First and foremost, it is worth underscoring that different levels of job authority have different associations with job rewards. Our analyses highlight the importance of others researchers’ calls for making comparisons between workers with no authority and those with supervisory, sanctioning, or managerial authority (Elliot and Smith 2004; Smith 2002, 2012). For all three of our focal outcomes, we found somewhat different contrasts among these groups. In the case of job autonomy, the overall extent of authority-based differences is the most evident. When we assess challenging work and income, however, possessing managerial authority has the strongest overall impact. Moreover, workers with sanctioning authority are not significantly different than individuals with no authority when income is the outcome being considered.

Having established overall patterns in the rewards associated with authority, we then turned our attention to whether or not any of these observed associations differ between women and men. Prior research has shown that women are traditionally disadvantaged when it comes to achieving higher levels of job authority—and the extent that having higher levels of authority translates into better earnings. Based on that evidence and theoretical ideas about the gendered

nature of workplace rewards, we proposed the limited rewards hypothesis—and our findings seem to partially confirm it. That is, for all three of our outcomes, the rewards associated with the highest level of job authority—managerial status—are not as strong for women compared to men. Thus, our observations are consistent with the tradition of research that shows that, at the same level of job authority, women do not appear to derive the same level of rewards as men—at least when job autonomy, challenging work, and income are being assessed. We should note, however, that these patterns are not identical across each level of authority. The comparisons between workers with no authority versus those with managerial authority are significantly different for women and men across all three outcomes. By contrast, having sanctioning authority pays off more for levels of challenging work among men (relative to women), while having supervisory authority pays off more for income among men.

As for age-based patterns, we proposed competing alternative views about age as a contingency which we labelled the seniority rewards and the fast-track rewards hypotheses. The former was based on the notion that age might position older workers to leverage their intellectual capital and use their authority to more effectively generate other job-related rewards. We also suspected that age and organizational norms about the “appropriate” levels of status and power might also contribute to age contingencies because of what they suggest about perceptions and expectations associated with power. The alternative—the fast-track rewards hypothesis—predicted that younger workers may experience greater payoffs for job authority. Kalleberg and Losocco (1983) have argued that job-related resources “such as challenge and autonomy may become less important to workers over time” (80). We had extrapolated from this the possibility that older workers may not be as motivated as younger workers to link authority with other resources. Moreover, we cited arguments about age norms which suggest that workers who

surmount traditional age-based organizational norms and achieve higher levels of authority at a younger age may be of greater value to the firm, meriting more rewards like autonomy and challenging work. Thus, the fast-track rewards hypothesis predicted that the bundling of job authority and other resources disproportionately accrues to younger workers. However, we found no evidence to support either the seniority rewards or the fast-track rewards hypotheses; the association between levels of job authority and each of the other rewards did not vary by age.

Collectively, our findings offer several important contributions to the literature on authority and workplace inequality. First, the results highlight that authority provides key rewards that extend beyond higher earnings. We identified two other main forms of job control as important rewards: autonomy and challenging work. Broadening the analysis beyond pecuniary rewards to include these dimensions of decision-latitude provides a crucial insight: On average, the rewards associated with higher levels of authority are not as strong for women compared to men. These patterns are consistent with numerous prior studies among American workers that show that women receive lower monetary pay-off when they wield authority (Smith 2002). We have extended that important finding to include the rewards associated with autonomy and challenging work. While we do not wish to downplay the significance of material compensation, resources associated with autonomy and challenging work are also of critical value because they have direct day-to-day influence on workers' well-being, life satisfaction, and health (Karasek and Theorell 1990; Tausig and Fenwick 2011). Future work might further expand this perspective on non-pecuniary rewards, giving attention to workplace resources such as co-worker support and schedule flexibility, as well as their consequences for such outcomes as job commitment and satisfaction. Moreover, it would be worth investigating the micro-dynamics of gender, job authority, and rewards—with a more detailed qualitative analysis of the processes

by which authority is related to autonomy and challenging work, and why these patterns differ for women and men.

In addition to our observations about decision-latitude, this study also provides an important replication of the long-standing finding that women tend to derive less of a wage benefit to authority than do men. While we acknowledge that this finding is not necessarily novel, it is important nonetheless for several reasons. First, most current knowledge on gender inequality in the connection between authority and earnings is derived from data collected in the 1970s, 80s, and early 90s, and mostly in American samples (Reskin and Ross, 1992; Smith 2002; Smith 2012). By contrast, the data in the current study derive from a large sample of Canadian workers, allowing us to generalize a core sociological finding beyond the American context. Replications of key findings such as these are critically important to the field (Freese 2007; Nosek, Spies, and Motyl in press; Schmidt 2009). Verifying key social patterns across time and in novel study populations is a central—though frequently overlooked—task in social science. Moreover, replications and extensions of such findings also speak directly to concerns about the ways that status inequalities and workplace experiences change (or fail to change) over time.

A few study limitations deserve brief mention. First, these results are from the initial *baseline* wave of a planned longitudinal study. Our aim moving forward is to explore how these processes and patterns change over time. We acknowledge that these data are cross-sectional and therefore limit definitive conclusions about causal ordering. With this in mind, we have sought to focus on the associations and emphasize the ways that these conditions bundle together. In some instances there are underlying assumptions about the *potential* causal connections in these processes. Nonetheless, more analyses with longitudinal data are required to clarify such processes and their implications over time.

A second study limitation involves some of the measures. It would be helpful, for instance, to have a detailed work history record of the adults in our sample; such information would be beneficial for understanding the consistent patterns of gender inequality observed in our data. Some evidence suggests that a major explanation for why women receive lower wages relative to men owes to fertility-related time out of the workforce (e.g., Erosa, Fuster, and Restuccia 2002). Detailed work history data would be useful for determining whether discontinuities in labor force participation explain the gender gap in the authority-resource association, and whether such a factor is equally important for pecuniary and non-pecuniary rewards. These concerns do not necessarily detract from the credibility of the patterns documented here, but it does underscore the value of replicating and extending our observations.

In closing, there is little doubt that higher levels of job authority typically come with many rewards. We know, for example, that authority generally yields higher earnings. Our study has sought to determine if that observation extends to other rewards. For the most part, the results reported here suggest that they do when the outcomes being considered are job autonomy and challenging work. Moreover, these rewards of authority are differentially distributed for men and women. Along with the enduring case of income inequality, men and women derive different benefits from authority when it comes to decision-latitude. By contrast, however, older and younger workers appear to share the rewards associated with greater authority. Collectively, our observations about job authority's bundling with other job rewards further bolsters—and, more importantly, elaborates on—the declaration that job authority is a “highly coveted workplace resource” (Smith 2002:511).

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Appendix A. Descriptive Statistics for Focal Study Variables (N = 4,267)

	Men	Women	Total
No Job Authority	.473*	.521	.502
Supervisory Authority	.253*	.291	.276
Sanctioning Authority	.035	.031	.033
Managerial Authority	.238*	.157	.189
Job Autonomy	2.885*	2.784	2.824
Challenging Work	3.289	3.364	3.334
Personal Income	72864.402*	50551.015	59435.581
Age	43.656	44.409	44.109

* Difference between men and women is significant at $p < .01$ (two-tailed test).

TABLE 1. Regression of Job Autonomy on Job Authority, Gender, Age, and Interactions (N=4,267)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Job Authority</i>			
Supervisory Authority ^a	.186*** (.034)	.204*** (.054)	.183*** (.032)
Sanctioning Authority ^a	.228* (.094)	.310* (.144)	.206* (.086)
Managerial Authority ^a	.502*** (.042)	.561*** (.058)	.502*** (.038)
<i>Gender and Age</i>			
Women	-.038 (.032)	.001 (.046)	-.039 (.032)
Age	.003 (.001)	.003 (.001)	.003* (.002)
<i>Interactions</i>			
<i>Women x</i>			
Supervisory Authority ^a	—	-.034 (.067)	—
Sanctioning Authority ^a	—	-.178 (.178)	—
Managerial Authority ^a	—	-.138* (.070)	—
<i>Age x</i>			
Supervisory Authority ^a	—	—	-.001 (.003)
Sanctioning Authority ^a	—	—	-.007 (.009)
Managerial Authority ^a	—	—	.001 (.004)
Constant	3.000	2.985	3.002
R ²	.153	.154	.153

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

^a Compared to workers with no job authority.

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients shown in table (robust standard errors shown in parentheses). All models control for marital status, children living in the household, region, education, occupation, job sector, work hours, work location, and job pressure. Full results for these control variables are available upon request.

TABLE 2. Regression of Challenging Work on Job Authority,
Gender, Age, and Interactions (N=4,267)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Job Authority</i>			
Supervisory Authority ^a	.117*** (.031)	.124* (.049)	.129*** (.026)
Sanctioning Authority ^a	.157* (.069)	.303** (.105)	.147* (.063)
Managerial Authority ^a	.281*** (.033)	.335*** (.047)	.283*** (.031)
<i>Gender and Age</i>			
Women	.116*** (.030)	.153*** (.044)	.115*** (.030)
Age	.002 (.001)	.002 (.001)	.002 (.002)
<i>Interactions</i>			
<i>Women x</i>			
Supervisory Authority ^a	—	-.014 (.061)	—
Sanctioning Authority ^a	—	-.325** (.126)	—
Managerial Authority ^a	—	-.125* (.059)	—
<i>Age x</i>			
Supervisory Authority ^a	—	—	.002 (.003)
Sanctioning Authority ^a	—	—	-.004 (.007)
Managerial Authority ^a	—	—	-.000 (.003)
Constant	3.145	3.135	3.143
R ²	.162	.165	.163

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

^a Compared to workers with no job authority.

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients shown in table (robust standard errors shown in parentheses). All models control for marital status, children living in the household, region, education, occupation, job sector, work hours, work location, and job pressure. Full results for these control variables are available upon request.

TABLE 3. Regression of Income (Logged) on Job Authority, Gender, Age, Interactions, and Decision-Latitude (N=4,267)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Job Authority</i>				
Supervisory Authority ^a	.093*** (.027)	.158*** (.042)	.073*** (.022)	.146*** (.041)
Sanctioning Authority ^a	.051 (.086)	.040 (.140)	.055 (.069)	.018 (.141)
Managerial Authority ^a	.183*** (.032)	.253*** (.039)	.174*** (.029)	.220*** (.039)
<i>Gender and Age</i>				
Women	-.225*** (0.26)	-.163*** (.035)	-.224** (.026)	-.167*** (.035)
Age	.013*** (.001)	.013*** (.001)	.013*** (.001)	.012*** (.001)
<i>Interactions</i>				
<i>Women x</i>				
Supervisory Authority ^a	—	-.129* (.053)	—	-.127* (.053)
Sanctioning Authority ^a	—	.031 (.156)	—	.047 (.157)
Managerial Authority ^a	—	-.158** (.060)	—	-.149* (.059)
<i>Age x</i>				
Supervisory Authority ^a	—	—	-.004 (.003)	—
Sanctioning Authority ^a	—	—	.003 (.011)	—
Managerial Authority ^a	—	—	-.002 (.003)	—
<i>Decision-Latitude</i>				
Job Autonomy	—	—	—	.044* (.016)
Challenging Work	—	—	—	.025 (.021)
Constant	10.851	10.819	10.857	10.608
R ²	.468	.470	.469	.473

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed test).

^a Compared to workers with no job authority.

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficients shown in table (robust standard errors shown in parentheses). All models control for marital status, children living in the household, region, education, occupation, job sector, work hours, work location, and job pressure. Full results for these control variables are available upon request.

FIGURE 1. The Association between Job Authority and Job Autonomy by Gender

FIGURE 2. The Association between Job Authority and Challenging Work by Gender

FIGURE 3. The Association between Job Authority and Income by Gender