Stopgappers? The Occupational Trajectories of Men in Female-Dominated Occupations

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This study examines the determinants of men's exits from female-dominated occupations. Using Census data and the *National Longitudinal Survey of Youth* dataset, the author analyzes the job history of men employed in the United States between 1979 and 2006. Supporting the theoretical model, evidence indicates a group of *stopgappers*—men entering female-dominated occupations and leaving soon after their entry, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of segregation in female settings. By identifying the *stopgapper* occupational trajectory, this paper contributes to the development of a comprehensive theory accounting for the way structural inequality is reproduced.

Introduction

Compared with the increasing participation of women in male-dominated occupations, the presence of men in female-dominated occupations remains low (England, 2010; Hardie, 2015; Snyder, 2008; Williams, 2013). Several explanations for the continuing segregation in female-dominated occupations have been proposed. For example, it has been argued that men avoid female-dominated occupations because such occupations offer lower pay and have a lower social status than male-dominated jobs (England, 2010; Jacobs, 1993). Other scholars contend that men fear that being associated with female trades will stigmatize them (Lupton, 2000; Williams, 1992, 1995). However, prior research has tended to neglect the relevance of male's attrition from female jobs in explaining persistent sex-segregation (Jacobs, 1993; Williams and Villemez, 1993). How long, for instance, do men remain employed in female-dominated occupations? Where do they find employment after working in a female-dominated job? Are the experiences of men in high-status occupations comparable to those of men in low-status occupations? Providing satisfactory answers to these questions is crucial in understanding male occupational trajectories and accounting for the perpetuation of occupational segregation.

The case of token female workers exiting non-traditional female occupations, well documented by Jacobs (1989), is instrumental to my argument. Jacobs claimed that women are subject to a lifelong system of social control that continually channels them into female-dominated fields, further contributing to the gender segregation of such occupations. This study builds on Jacobs's theory and examines men's attrition from male-dominated occupations. Here, I argue that since there is still a social stigma attached to men who work in women's occupations (Lupton, 2000; Williams, 1992, 1995), female jobs are often undertaken for a limited rather than a long, indefinite term. In other words, gender-specific pressures manifest themselves in higher exit rates and fewer transfers

to other female-dominated occupations, thus perpetuating the sex-segregation patterns in traditionally female occupational settings. Specifically, I introduce the term *stopgapper* to define the occupational trajectory of men who transition from the non-female to the female-dominated sector and who are likely to reverse course eventually.

Additionally, I draw on previous research to argue that this *stopgap scenario* is particularly prevalent in lower-status occupations—namely, clerical, service, and blue-collar occupations—as opposed to high-status occupations—managerial and professional. This difference arises in part because gender-egalitarian attitudes are more pronounced among highly educated people (Cotter et al., 2011). Furthermore, the professional qualities associated with high-status jobs are not perceived as particularly feminine traits, unlike those qualities associated with traditionally female occupations (e.g., nursery or elementary school teachers). All in all, the stigmatization men face is presumably greater in low-status occupations, increasing the cost of their being employed in a female domain.

My empirical analysis relies on two different data sources. First, Census data from 1980, 1990, and 2000 are used to examine the distribution of workers across sex-typed fields over time. Second, I use the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLYS79) to examine the work histories of men employed in the United States between 1979 and 2006. These analyses contribute to prior research in several ways. First, while prior research has examined segregation as a rather static phenomenon, this study delves deeply into the changing, more nuanced dynamics of occupational segregation. Second, whereas most prior research on men exiting male-dominated occupations has focused on the differences between men and women, this paper points to a new source of inequality—not between men and women but between professional/managerial men and men employed in less prestigious occupations. Third, this study is based on a national longitudinal

sample and incorporates more recent data than prior research (Jacobs, 1993; Oppenheimer, 1990; Oppenheimer et al., 1997; Williams and Villemez, 1993). In addition, the study's multivariate analyses include detailed information on individuals, occupational-related attributes, and prior career trajectories. All in all, this paper offers broad, systematic insights into the gendered employment phenomenon.

This paper's core finding is that men leave female-dominated fields in part because they face gender-specific pressures, mainly those exerted in less prestigious occupations. Certain terms have been used to describe men in female-dominated occupations. *Glass escalator riders* (Williams, 2005) refers to those men who benefit from their minority status to rise through the ranks; *settlers* (Simpson, 2005) refers to those men who renounce gendered career expectations and commit to their given career. I argue that a third term, *stopgappers*, complements existing research. By introducing and documenting this category, the study provides new insights into male occupational trajectories in female-dominated occupations and contributes to the development of a comprehensive theory accounting for the way structural inequality is reproduced (Hayes, 1986; Jacobs, 1989, 1993; Williams, 2015).

Sex-Segregation in Female-Dominated Occupations

Much scholarly attention has been devoted to explaining men's reluctance to work in female-dominated fields. First, male-dominated occupations offer higher pay, more fringe benefits, and more promotion opportunities than jobs in female-dominated fields (England, 2010; England et al., 1994; Glass, 1990; Levanon, England, and Allison, 2009). Given this situation, while access to male-dominated fields appears to be crucial for women's economic and social advancement (Moore, 2018), men have little reason to choose female-dominated jobs (England 2010; Jacobs, 1993). Moreover, those men who do enter female-dominated occupations feel more strongly than their female counterparts that their wages are unjustly low (Valet, 2018). A second explanation for

male reluctance is that many more fields are male-dominated than female-dominated (Jacobs, 1989, 1993), which gives men more options to avoid entering certain gendered occupations. Third, there is substantial evidence that men working in female jobs suffer negative stereotyping (Lupton, 2000, 2006; Simpson, 2005; Allan, 1993; Heikes, 1991; Williams, 1992). The kind of discrimination and stigmatization that men encounter in female-dominated occupations differs from the discrimination mechanisms that push women out of male environments. Whereas women in male-dominated environments are exposed to homophile behavior (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001), homo-social reproduction (Moore, 1988), tokenism (Kanter, 1977; Seron et al., 2018), discrimination against men in the so-called female professions comes primarily from people outside of these fields (Kimberly, Ricciardelli and Bartfay 2015; Williams, 1992). Qualitative research has found that male nurses are perceived as deviants, effeminate, and homosexual (Kimberley et al., 2015; Bartfay and Bartfay, 2007; Harding, 2007) or unable to succeed in higher status specialties—for example, as doctors (Bradley, 2011). Similarly, men employed in specialties closely associated with children, such as kindergarten or elementary school teachers, have even been branded as sexual predators (Allan, 1993; Lupton, 2006; Simpson, 2005). Some men react to these stigmas by overemphasizing their heterosexuality (Morgan, 1992), stressing the more *masculine* attributes of the occupations, such as physical strength (Lupton, 2000), or even by disassociating themselves from the job when outside the workplace (Williams, 1995).

Paradoxically, men can sometimes benefit from their numerical rarity in female fields. Unlike women employed in male-dominated fields, these men tend to report good relationships with their supervisors—themselves often male (Kimberley et al., 2015; Allan, 1993; Williams, 1992, 1995)—and they perceive their token status as an advantage with respect to hiring and promotions in occupations (Kleinman, 2004; Evans, 1997; Allan, 1993; Williams, 1992). In short, the

favorable treatment received by token male employees can translate to upward mobility, leading Williams (1992) to coin the well-known term *glass escalator*. According to recent research, men in female-dominated occupations may be recruited for higher-paying and higher-status positions in male-dominated occupations without even actively searching for them (Kmec, McDonald and Trimble, 2010). The notion of the *glass escalator* has triggered extensive qualitative research in the last two decades. While some of these studies have confirmed or refined William's findings (Kleinman, 2004; Hultin, 2003; Maume Jr., 1999; Evans, 1997), other scholars have found that certain kinds of men are excluded from the *glass escalator*, for example black men in nursing (Harvey Wingfield, 2009) or gay men and transmen (Connell, 2012; Schilt, 2011). Moreover, using the National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses, Snyder and Green (2008) found no conclusive evidence for vertical segregation in the nursing industry. Acknowledging recent findings, Williams (2015) herself recognized that the *glass escalator* is a privilege accorded to some men but not others (Williams, 2015), and that the concept is based on assumptions about stable employment and career ladders that no longer define many jobs in today's market (Kalleberg, 2000; 2009). In this light, she questioned the relevance of the concept and called for new research, especially concerning low-status, precarious occupations.

This article takes up Williams's call and thoroughly examines the role of occupational status on men's mobility patterns. More specifically, it studies how male attrition from female jobs varies according to their position in the job market. The next section takes a more detailed look at the determinants of men's exit from female-dominated occupations and its consequences for the perpetuation of segregation.

Stopgappers: Entering and Exiting Female-Dominated Occupations

According to the socio-cultural explanation of employment gender segregation, one group of individuals is socialized into preferring to undertake “women’s work,” while another group is encouraged to pursue jobs traditionally viewed as “men’s work.” The former’s preference for female-typed fields may be due to pull factors—such as the desire for jobs compatible with child care—or push factors—the avoidance of fields that require math and science (Reskin, 1993; Marini and Briton, 1984). Whatever the specifics of these preferences, women predominate in the former group and men in the latter. Thus, the differentiation of jobs by gender maps onto preferences that are established in the pre-career phase of individuals’ lives (England et al., 1994).

What, then, do these socialized preferences imply for career mobility? From this socio-cultural perspective, gender stereotypes learned during childhood are later carried over into the labor market, pushing men and women to self-select sex-typical jobs (England et al., 1994). In other words, people are sorted into “men’s” or “women’s” jobs relatively early in life, and this initial sorting process is crucial in determining one’s career arc. According to this view, any resorting that occurs subsequently largely reinforces the initial pattern, or, at best, has a marginal effect on altering the initial distribution. Thus, people who initially chose a female-dominated occupation would be more likely to switch into another female-dominated one, given their pre-career preference for this type of work.

Jacobs’s “revolving doors” thesis (1989), by contrast, presents a distinctly different approach. He argues that gendered preferences are not entirely set early in life. For example, he shows that gendered career aspirations frequently change. Indeed, in tracking initial and subsequent preferences, the data show considerable mobility between male-dominated, gender-neutral, and female-dominated fields (Jacobs, 1989; Levine and Zimmerman, 1995). Jacobs’s findings pose a

major challenge to the socialization approach. The author argues that while sex-role socialization is important in initiating the dynamics of sex segregation, it is not in itself sufficient to maintain this system. Another factor is at play, which Jacobs identifies as the continuing effect of gendered pressures. In other words, the pressure on women to avoid male-dominated fields does not end at the point of career entry but continues to persist after women have entered the workplace.

What does Jacobs's revolving door perspective predict for men in female-dominated fields? While all sides agree that these men constitute a minority group (Hardie, 2015; England, 2010; Williams, 2013), the key issue for career analysis is whether that group remains stable over time. The revolving doors theory holds that it will not be stable, and that men will tend to move back and forth between female- and male-dominated jobs. Because the pressures of gender-role conformity continue to affect men after they begin to work in such occupations, career movement patterns should reflect greater attrition of men from female-dominated settings, even among those who were willing to initially select work in a female-dominated field.

Empirical evidence on men exiting female-dominated occupations is mostly limited to the Williams and Villemez study (1993). By examining the Chicago SMSA 1981 survey, the authors identified 105 men who had previously worked in a female-dominated occupation and reported that approximately 75 percent had later moved into a male-dominated occupation. The study, which was limited to data from the early 1980s, did not explore the men's reasons for leaving or analyze the differences between those who left and those who stayed. This study builds on these and previous theoretical and empirical findings (Jacobs, 1993; Oppenheimer, 1990; Oppenheimer et al., 1997; Williams and Villemez, 1993) to examine the determinants of men's attrition from female-dominated occupations. To be more specific, it considers segregation to be the result of a dynamic process that does not end once men enter female-dominated occupations.

When men enter female-dominated occupations, they violate stereotypical prescriptions about how men *should be*. At the workplace, men are supposed to be ambitious, competitive, task-focused, assertive, and rational (Heilman, 2012; Koenig et al. 2011). Moreover, they are expected to be economically independent and the primary provider in the household (Meisenbach, 2010; Cunningham, 2008; Warren, 2007). What happens when men do not display these stereotypically male attributes? More often than not, they are likely to suffer negative social consequences. Here, I contend that gender-specific pressures manifest themselves in higher male exit rates and fewer transfers to other female-dominated occupations, contributing to the perpetuation of segregation in female settings. More specifically, I introduce the term *stopgapper* to describe the mobility pattern of men who enter female-dominated occupations but leave after a short time. Figure 1 below illustrates the mobility pattern of a *stopgapper*:

(Figure 1 about here)

For the *stopgap scenario* to hold true, the following three conditions will be observed. First, if men exit female-dominated occupations at a higher rate than they do male-dominated occupations of roughly the same status, then it is plausible to conclude that the exit is due in part to the feminine nature of their careers. Second, we will find men to be more likely to exit from than transfer to other female-dominated occupations. Third, men transitioning from the male- to the female-dominated sector are likely to reverse course eventually, as indicated in Figure 1. Thus we can predict:

H1a. Men leave female occupations at a higher rate than they leave male occupations.

H1b. Men's occupational destinations are more likely to be outside of the female field.

H1c. The probability of exiting women's occupations is higher among men who recently moved over from the non-female sector (*newcomers*).

Should the data show that H1a, H1b, and H1c were true, it would support the idea that men in female-dominated occupations are *stopgappers*. The *stopgap scenario* complements prior research examining the occupational trajectories of men in female fields. The experiences of men entering female-dominated occupations are diverse. Some men maintain an ambitious attitude (Evans, 1997; Isaacs and Poole, 1996) and strive for *fast-track* careers (Williams, 1993), aided by the aforementioned *glass escalator* (Williams, 1995). Others, however, “settle” into the female field and reject the ideal male career progression model of steady increases in status and power (Simpson, 2005). *Stopgappers* represent a third group of men who, due to gender-specific pressures, leave the female-dominated sector soon after their entry. This mobility pattern has negative consequences for segregation, because *stopgappers* do not contribute to the long-term integration of occupations. Rather, the continual exit of men from female occupations only further reproduces gender segregation patterns. By contrast, retaining even a small number of men within a female-dominated profession would spur long-term integration. To the extent that the presence of men would elevate the perceived status of an occupation, that career would attract more men, thereby initiating a virtuous cycle for occupational integration.

However, we should note that the prevalence of *stopgappers* might be a function of men's relative position in the labor market, in which more liberal gender ideas have not yet worked their way down to lower-status positions. Several factors sustain this claim. First, changes in gender-egalitarian attitudes have been greater among high-status workers (those working in managerial and professional occupations) than low-status workers (employees from the service, clerical and

blue-collar sectors). Empirical evidence shows an increase in liberal attitudes throughout the 1970s and 1980s for all workers, followed by a downturn in the 1990s. After 2000, we do observe a new upsurge in egalitarian attitudes, but this late rebound has been more marked among better educated individuals (Cotter et al., 2011). Indeed, the gender revolution has generated important reductions in vertical gender inequality over the past thirty years (Charles and Grusky, 2004; Weeden, 2004), but many occupational ghettos stubbornly persist in low-status, female-dominated fields (e.g., secretaries, nursery school teachers).

In addition, I expect stigmatization to be higher in low-status occupations. Scholarly studies demonstrate how women are culturally devalued (England, 1992), as are qualities associated with women (Acker, 1990; Bradley, 1992); indeed, both men and women tend to assign more worth to work performed by men (Deaux, 1985). As a consequence, skills perceived as female are systematically under-rewarded (Folbre, 2002; England, 1992; Jacobs and Steinberg, 1990), and men often refuse to be associated with women's work, so much so that some even prefer unemployment to taking female jobs (Epstein, 1989; Bradley, 1992). As Bradley bluntly notes, "Men will truly have to be desperate to take female jobs."

However, the general bias against female-dominated work does not preclude the possibility of significant variability in devaluation across various contexts (Cotter and Huffman, 2003; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993); that is, certain gendered occupations might not be as stigmatizing. Also, as much of the literature is based on the study of the most populated and traditional female occupations (e.g., nursery and elementary school teachers), it has tended to assume that all female-dominated occupations share the attributes of those particular professions. However, some female-dominated occupations are not as heavily associated with *feminine attributes* (e.g., caretaking) as others. This is especially true today, as the female-dominated sector has expanded due to the

increased presence of women in the labor market. According to the 2000 Census data (Census Bureau, 2000), approximately 40 percent of the men employed in female-dominated, high-status positions worked in occupations that were non-female-dominated in 1980 (e.g., service and health organization managers, legal assistants, education counselors and vocational supervisors). These occupations, in that they involve extensive coordinating, training, and supervising duties, as well as specific vocational preparation, resemble stereotypical male-dominated occupations more closely than low-status female jobs.¹ Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect that the negative stereotypes and discrimination associated with men doing this work might be significantly lower than for other traditional female professions. Overall, I anticipate the following:

H2. The prevalence of stopgappers is higher in low-status occupations than in high-status occupations.

Data and Methods

Data

This paper draws on two different data sources. First, Census data for 1980, 1990, and 2000 are used to explore variations in sex-typed fields over time. Second, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY79) is used to examine the entry and exit patterns of men in female-dominated occupations. The survey data comes from a nationally representative 1979 sample of 3,108 young women and 3,003 young men in the civilian population who were born in the 1950s or 1960s. The period analyzed here runs from the first survey, conducted in 1979, until 2006. In line with prior research (Harvey and Myles, 2014; Torre, 2014 2017), I decided to end the analysis in 2006 to avoid noise derived from the economic crisis.

The NLSY79 offers detailed information about employment status, current occupation, job tenure, hours worked, and earnings. Also, respondents are asked about educational attainment, training, and marital histories. In addition, the NLSY79 provides detailed (3-digit) occupational data, making it possible to capture occupational shifts that would be missed if only a limited set of broadly defined occupations were measured. Altogether, this survey is particularly suitable for this paper's aim.

Appended to the NLSY79 is the sex composition of three-digit Census occupations. Census data represents the best source of occupational data for estimates of segregation, as it provides large sample sizes and a detailed occupational breakdown into a large number of categories (Blau et al., 2013). This is a very relevant feature since a smaller number of categories would result in certain male-dominated and female-dominated occupations to be grouped into larger, apparently, sex-neutral categories.

Occupational codes are standardized and expressed as the 1990 three-digit occupational codes to make them comparable over time.

Dependent Variables

The multivariate analyses in this paper examine the occupational trajectories of men in female-dominated occupations. In a first step, I estimate the likelihood of changing occupations, which allows me to observe whether men display different rates of mobility in male- and female-dominated occupations. The dependent variable *occupational change* is scored 1 if a man

employed in a male or female occupation changes jobs and 0 otherwise. In a second step, I estimate the likelihood of transitioning from a female-dominated occupation to a non-female occupation. The dependent variable *exit from female-dominated occupations* is coded 1 if a man moves from a female to a non-female occupation and 0 if he changes occupations within the female-dominated field. Occupations are defined as *female-dominated* if women's representation is 66.6 percent or above and as *male-dominated* if the female presence in the occupation is below 33.3 percent. All other occupations are *gender-neutral*.² I run separate regressions for high-status workers (managers and professionals) and low-status workers (service, clerical, and blue-collar workers).

Covariates

The analyses include both time-dependent and non-time-dependent covariates. The main interest of this study lies in the variable *last occupation*, which indicates the type of occupation that the individual held at moment $t-1$. Specifically, this variable distinguishes whether a man arrived at his current female occupation from a *male-dominated occupation*, a *neutral occupation*, another *female-dominated occupation*, or whether he was *unemployed*. This variable is meant to capture whether the probability of *exit from female-dominated occupations* is higher among those who arrived recently than among insiders.

Models include relevant work-related variables, such as *full-time* work (as opposed to *part-time*), number of *unemployment episodes*, years of *job tenure*, *job tenure of the occupation*, number of *job spells*, and *years of experience in the labor market*. These variables allow us to control for early episodes in “female” jobs before men settle into a career (Oppenheimer, 1990). Controls for major occupational groups are added to capture possible inter-group differences. Thus, for high-status workers, I distinguish between *top-managers*, *managers*, and *professionals*. Top managers

and managers differ in their individual hourly rates of pay relative to the average hourly rate of pay in their occupation (weighted by both year and job tenure). Men whose hourly rate of pay is in the 75th percentile and above are classified as *high-paid managers*. The remaining men are defined as *managers*. For low-status workers, I differentiate between *service, clerical and sales*, and *blue-collar workers*.

Finally, socio-demographic variables control for differences in educational attainment (*college or more* vs. *less than college*); the sex composition of the field of study—scored 1 for those men who studied a *female-dominated major* (female presence of 66 percent or higher) and 0 otherwise; changes in marital status (*getting married* and *marriage dissolution*); and changes in parental status (*having a child*). This last variable allows us to assess whether exiting from female jobs is motivated by the man's need to earn more money after having a child.

Table 1 summarizes the main descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analyses. The table provides average values for men and women in female-dominated occupations and for men in non-female-dominated occupations, enabling us to discern whether men in female-dominated occupations have a different occupational profile.

(Table 1 about here)

Analytical strategy

The empirical part of the paper is divided into three sections. First, I trace the distribution of workers across sex-typed occupations in 1980, 1990, and 2000, discussing the changes in occupational composition that have occurred within female-dominated fields. Second, I examine the flux of entries into and exits from male-dominated occupations between 1979 and 2006, paying attention to the occupations of origin and destination. Third, I model career experiences using a

discrete-time hazard model. Specifically, the analyses estimate the conditional probability (P_{it}) that individual i will experience an event at time t , given that the individual has not already undergone such an event in the past (Allison, 1984). In a first step, I estimate the risk of *changing occupations* (H1a). In a second step, I focus on men from female-dominated occupations changing careers and estimate the *probability that the occupation of destination is a female/non-female occupation* (H1b). Finally, I estimate the probability of *exit from the female field*, depending on prior occupation (H1c), and evaluate the differences among workers in high- and low-status occupations (H2). In all regressions, the probability P_{it} defined above is related to the covariate vectors by a logistic regression equation, which can be specified as follows:

$$(1) \text{Log}\left(\frac{P_{it}}{1-P_{it}}\right) = \alpha + \beta X_{it} + \gamma Z_{it} + \delta W_{it}$$

Respondents who were unemployed or working in a neutral or male-dominated occupation in the first wave could enter the risk set in subsequent years. In the case of repeated events, the clock is reset to 0 each time the individual enters the risk set, and the intervals between events are treated as distinct observations (Allison, 1995). Using this approach, two observations will be created for a man who took a job in a female-dominated occupation twice during the observation period. This approach provides more statistical power, which is clearly an advantage, but it also raises the likelihood of dependence between observations. To correct for dependence derived from repeated events, I calculate robust standard errors (Allison, 1995). Finally, I model time dependence by introducing both time and time squared (Carter and Signorino, 2010). Additionally, I provide supplemental analyses using time dummies (Beck et al., 1998). Results are consistent (see Appendix I). The sum of person-year data in the pooled data set from 1979 to 2006 was 6,317.

Findings

The distribution of men and women across sex-typed occupations in 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Figure 2 below shows the distribution of workers across sex-typed occupations in the 1980, 1990, and 2000 Censuses. In 1980, male-dominated fields harbored approximately 45 percent of the working population, 22 percent worked in neutral jobs, and the rest, approximately 33 percent, were employed in female-dominated occupations. In 2000, these percentages shifted to 36, 33 and 31, respectively, primarily due to women's increasing ability to enter previously male-dominated occupations (Cotter et al., 2004; England, 2010; Jacobs, 1989).

The plot on the right shows male labor force diversion between 1980 and 2000. As observed, the proportion of men in male-dominated occupations dropped moderately from 71 percent in 1980 to 58 percent in 2000, with an increase from 20 percent to 31 percent in neutral occupations during the same period. Interestingly, the presence of men in female occupations remained low and largely constant over the entire period. In fact, the representation of men in female-dominated jobs rose by barely 1.5 percentage points, from 8 percent in 1980 to 9.5 percent in 2000.

(Figure 2 about here)

Figure 3 displays the distribution of workers within female-dominated occupations by occupational group. The continuous line represents both females and males, and the dashed line represents only men.

(Figure 3 about here)

The upper part of the panel shows a substantial rise in the relative size of both managerial (1.6 percent increase) and professional occupations (13 percent increase). Relative to 1980, men in

2000 were slightly overrepresented among managerial workers and equally represented in professional occupations. The opposite trend was observed for low-status occupations. While the low-status sector continues to account for most of the working population, it has tended to shrink in recent decades. Interestingly, the male presence in non-professional occupations has decreased to female levels.

Mobility fluxes, 1979-2006

Turning to male mobility patterns, Table 2 below reflects the flows of men into and out of female-dominated jobs between 1979 and 2006. The upper part of the table displays results for men employed in high-status positions. The data show that only 28 percent of men moving into a female-dominated occupation had previously worked in another female-dominated occupation (*insiders*), while over 64 percent arrived from other fields (*newcomers*). Among those newcomers, almost 40 percent were previously employed in a male-dominated occupation, 25 percent were previously employed in a gender-neutral occupation, and the remaining 6 percent were unemployed. The difference between insiders and outsiders is even more noticeable in low-status occupations. In this case, roughly 15 percent of the male workers were already employed in a female-dominated occupation. The majority of low-status workers, 52 percent, moved from a male-dominated occupation, and approximately 24 percent moved from a neutral occupation. The remaining 7.5 percent were unemployed at the time of entering the female field.

The proportion of males exiting a female-dominated field is also considerably higher in low-status occupations than in high-status occupations. When switching from a low-status occupation, only 18.5 percent stay in the female-dominated field. More than half of the men (52.4 percent) move to a male-dominated occupation, and another 24 percent move to a gender-neutral occupation. For high-status workers, the proportion staying in the female-dominated field increases to 33.5 percent,

while 37.39 percent and 27 percent move to a male-dominated or a neutral occupation, respectively. Finally, 5 percent of low-status workers and 2 percent of high-status workers become unemployed. Descriptive results indicate higher rates of attrition among newcomers and suggest that by increasing retention rates, aggregate levels of segregation would decrease over time, both for high- and low-status occupations.

(Table 2 about here)

In the data, we find men working in 85 of the 93 occupations classified as female-dominated. More concretely, men are spread over 25 of the 28 managerial and professional female occupational titles. Attrition is observed from 21 of these occupations, principally: “Teachers, elementary school” (18.98 percent), “Health technologist and technicians” (12.77 percent), and “Social workers” (12.70 percent). The male presence in low-status occupational categories is spread across 58 of the total 65 female-dominated jobs. Attrition to neutral or male-dominated occupations is observable from at least 57 of these occupations, in particular: “Sales workers, other commodities” (20.53 percent), “Housekeeper and butlers” (11.50 percent), and “Kitchen workers, food preparation” (7.56 percent).

Compellingly, the average time a *stopgapper* spends in a female-dominated occupation is 2.7 years for professionals and 1.71 years for non-professionals. For those changing occupations within the female-dominated sector, these durations rise to 6.2 and 4.1 years, respectively. Moreover, switching to the male field often involves moving to a new industry. This is important because such changes indicate a different kind of occupational mobility from the one described in previous research, according to which men move into more prestigious, higher-paying, male-dominated occupations within their profession (Kmec, McDonald and Trimble, 2010; Williams, 1992, 1995).

The next section takes a more detailed look at the determinants of mobility in and across gender boundaries.

Multivariate analyses.

In the following analyses, I calculate the probability of changing occupations based on the sex composition of the occupation, work-related characteristics, and individual attributes (H1a, Figure 4, and Appendix II). Next, for those within the female field changing occupations, I estimate the probability that their occupation of destination will be outside of the female-dominated field (H1b, Table 3 and Figure 5). Finally, I examine the effect of previous occupation on men's exit from female-dominated occupations (H1c, Table 3, and Figure 6), both for high- and low-status occupations (H2).

As Figure 4 shows, the probability of changing occupations for men and women varies according to the occupation's sex composition (Appendix II displays the estimated coefficients). The left plot represents men and women in high-status occupations. As we can observe, men are less likely than women to change occupations when employed in male-dominated and neutral occupations, while the opposite holds true in female-dominated occupations. The same pattern is observed in low-status occupations. All in all, the figures corroborate H1a, suggesting that differences in mobility patterns might be attributable to gender issues.

(Figure 4 about here)

Findings in Table 3 (Column 1) and Figure 5 support the hypothesis H1b, as results show that for men who change occupations within the female field, the occupation of destination will most likely be a non-female one. Concretely, as shown in Figure 5, the probability of leaving the female field

is 0.66 for men in high-status occupations and 0.8 for men employed in low-status occupations. These findings are in line with Williams and Villemez's study (1993).

(Table 3 and Figure 5 about here)

Also, given the aims of this paper, it is significant that the risk of men leaving the female field was found to be significantly lower among workers who had previously worked in a female-dominated profession (*insiders*) than for workers who had previously worked in a male-dominated profession or were unemployed. The coefficients in Table 3 (Column 2 and Column 3) show that in both high- and low-status occupations, men's exit rates continue to be higher among newcomers, particularly if they have arrived from a male-dominated occupation. Moreover, the upper plots in Figure 6 represent the effect of a worker's previous occupation on the probability of exit for both high- and low-status workers.³ The results confirm two of the paper's hypotheses. First, according to H1c, newcomers are most likely to exit the occupation, while those changing occupations within the female field are least likely to leave. Second, as predicted in H2, this gap is larger in low-status occupations than in high-status occupations. The difference in exit rates between those who were previously employed in male- and female-dominated occupations is 7 percentage points for high-status occupations but 15 percentage points for low-status occupations. Discrete change effects on the bottom plots show the specific average increase on the exit risk for men arriving from non-female-dominated occupations versus female-dominated occupations⁴.

(Figure 6 about here)

The central and bottom sections of the table show the coefficients for other relevant occupational mobility variables. Not surprisingly, the probability of moving out of the female field is higher in the first few years and tends to decrease with time (see also Appendix I). However, occupational

tenure does not have a significant effect, indicating that longevity does not affect men's mobility patterns. Being employed full-time also does not significantly impact the probability of leaving low-status occupations. In addition, increases in the number of previous jobs, unemployment episodes, and years of labor market experience lower the probability of exiting. Finally, mobility does not vary substantially with individual attributes. Changes in marital status is positively associated with men leaving female-dominated occupations, but no differences were observed regarding level of education or field of study or parental status.

It could be argued that differences in male workers' decisions to stay or leave female settings might be economically driven. To the extent that high-status female occupations are better remunerated than service and blue-collar occupations, professionals and managers might have less economic incentive to exit. That would explain, at least in part, the lower attrition rates from high-status occupations. To account for this possibility, the figure presented in Appendix IV displays the probability of receiving a wage increase when changing occupations, as a function of the occupation of destination.⁵ The left plot represents a wage increase of 10 percent or higher, and the right plot a wage increase of 15 percent or higher. As shown by the data, workers moving from a female- to a male-dominated occupation are significantly more likely to receive a wage hike than workers changing occupations within the female field. These results reflect the fact that male-dominated occupations are on average better remunerated than female-dominated occupations. However, differences do not exist between high- and low-status occupations. Roughly 52 percent of men in high-status occupations and 53 percent of men in low-status occupations experience a 10 percent wage increase when exiting to the male field. Yet when transferring to another female-dominated occupation, low-status workers are significantly more likely to gain than high-status workers. Findings remain robust if we consider higher wage increases (i.e., 15 percent or higher).

Consequently, differences in attrition rates cannot be easily attributed to differences in the economic incentives of both groups.

Finally, one could contend that findings in this paper are a function of being a newcomer of either sex to a given workplace, rather than the result of gender differences. To address this crucial issue, I examine women's mobility patterns in female-dominated occupations along with men's. The results in Figure 4 (see also Appendix II) reveal that women in female-dominated occupations are less likely to change occupations than their male counterparts, exactly the opposite of what happens in male-dominated occupations. Furthermore, unlike men, women transfer more often to other female-dominated occupations and have lower exit rates. Also, arriving from a male-dominated occupation does not have any impact. These trends hold true both for high- and low-status occupations. All in all, findings corroborate that the *stopgap scenario* is the result of a gendered mobility process.

Discussion

Compared with the increasing number of women entering male-dominated occupations, the number of men in female-dominated occupations remains very low. The data in this study show that male presence in female-dominated occupations has hovered at the levels observed in 1980, barely rising from 8 percent to 9.5 percent over the ensuing two decades. Building on leading explanations, this study has argued that these high levels of segregation persist at least in part because men transitioning from non-female occupations are likely to move back out—acting as *stopgappers*. This *stopgap scenario* implies that the occupational structure operates in a gendered way to restrict an individual's occupational choice.

The *stopgap scenario* was tested using NLSY79 data. Findings reveal a disproportionate risk of attrition among male newcomers to female-dominated occupations, not only when compared to women but also to other men already employed in the female field. The exit of token female workers from non-traditional female occupations has been well documented by Jacobs (1989). Using the image of the *revolving door*, the author illustrated the continual departure of women from male-dominated occupations and the concomitant perpetuation of segregation despite women's ability to enter male-dominated fields. Jacobs (1989) claimed that women are subject to a lifelong system of social control that continually channels them into female-dominated fields. Women are not only discriminated against at the point of hiring but also continue to face numerous impediments to effectively performing their job once installed. The factors leading men to exit female-dominated occupations are significantly different. While women often leave male-dominated fields as a result of exclusionary processes (Jacobs, 1989; Kanter, 1977; Moore, 1988), men are often welcomed by their female colleagues, who believe that recruiting men will raise the status and pay of their profession (Taylor, 2010; Williams, 1995). Nonetheless, these men are likely to leave. Results point to the existence of gender-specific social pressures derived from violated expectations about stereotypically male attributes, such as ambitiousness, competitiveness, dominance, and economic leadership (Heilman, 2012; Meisenbach, 2010). Such pressure can keep men from entering women's occupations, so much so that some men would rather endure unemployment than accept a relatively high-paying women's job and suffer the potential social stigma (Epstein, 1989). Alternatively, this pressure can influence men who have decided to enter the female workplace to exit. Regardless, the end result is the perpetuation of segregation.

Conclusions

These findings contribute to prior research examining the occupational trajectories of men in female fields. To the *glass escalator* (Williams, 1993) and the *settler* (Simpson, 2004) scenarios, I add another career trajectory for men in female-dominated occupations: *stopgapper*. The underlying characteristics of *stopgappers* are higher male exit rates and fewer transfers to other female-dominated occupations, both contributing to the perpetuation of segregation in female settings. Also, results reveal significant class differences in male mobility patterns, with those in less prestigious occupations more prone to abandon female settings. Thus, whereas most prior work has focused on the differences between men and women, this study has addressed differences among men themselves.

These findings also shed light on possible future trends in the segregation of gendered occupations. Egalitarian attitudes, better working conditions, and lower rates of stigmatization have slowly increased the presence of males in high-status female-dominated occupations relative to low-status female-dominated ones. This trend will presumably contribute to the gender neutralization of some occupations, thereby raising their status and initiating a virtuous cycle. In contrast, it seems as if low-status occupations will continue to be highly segregated and suffer from a process of devaluation (Levanon, England and Allison, 2009). In this scenario, the inequality between high- and low-status occupations will increase with time. Consequently, increasing male retention in female-dominated occupations would have a positive effect on both gender and class equality.

Inevitably, this study raises questions that will need to be addressed in future research. The analyses do not allow us to discern whether men who stay in the female field do so willingly or are simply unable (for financial or professional reasons) to leave. The results thus provide avenues

for further research to examine the extent to which stints in the female field hinder men's ability to reenter the male-dominated field. On a related note, recent research (Torre, 2014) revealed that time spent in female-dominated occupations has a negative impact on women's careers within male-dominated occupations. More research is needed to determine whether time spent in female-dominated occupations might likewise damage the future careers of men in male-dominated occupations. Future work could also, with these findings in mind, explore the increase in men entering so-called "women's professions" after the disappearance of many well-paying, stable, middle-class jobs following the 2008 global recession (Harvey and Myles, 2014).

Finally, because the mechanisms that contribute to the perpetuation of segregation in female occupations are different from those involved in male-dominated occupations, specific policy actions need to be developed to promote integration. Only by revealing and eradicating the disincentives to work in female-dominated occupations will it be possible to reduce gender inequalities in the labor market.

Notes

1. For detailed information on occupational characteristics, see O*Net Database (<https://www.onetonline.org/>).

2. These cutoff points allow us to compare our results with those of prior studies (Jacobs, 1989; Torre, 2014). The results are consistent when using alternative frames (e.g., defining a strong female-dominated occupation as one with an 80 percent female presence). To account for the shifting sex composition of occupations, I updated the classification every ten years, using Census data from the closest decade. For each employment period, the sex composition of the occupation

is kept constant. Therefore, while the most appropriate occupational data are assigned to each employment experience, the occupational sex composition remains the same for each experience.

3. Figure 5 shows the lowest predicted probability of a switch to a non-female-dominated occupation.

4. It could be argued that the *stopgap* effect is present in all sex-typed occupations. To test this possibility, all regressions have been calculated for men in male-dominated occupations. The number of men making the *male-female-male* transitions represented less than 3.5 percent of the total male mobility rate. Additionally, no significant differences were found between newcomers and insiders in terms of the probability of exit, or between high- and low-status occupations.

5. Controlled for by work experience and socio-demographic characteristics. Interestingly, the probability of wage increase is largely unrelated to occupation or individual attributes (the only exceptions being possession of a *male-field degree* and *years of work experience* among low-status workers). *Occupation of destination* is the main explanatory factor.

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Table 1. Variables included in the analyses. Average values

	Men		Women
	in female- dominated occupations	in non-female- dominated occupations	in female- dominated occupations
<i><u>Socio-demographic characteristics</u></i>			
Age	30.86	32.43	31.85
High school or more	0.55	0.38	0.46
Male-dominated major	0.18	0.17	0.03
Married	0.45	0.53	0.58
Children	0.23	0.41	0.45
<i><u>Occupational Category</u></i>			
Top-managers	0.01	0.05	<0.01
Managers	0.02	0.10	0.01
Professionals	0.15	0.13	0.20
Service, clerical, sales workers	0.81	0.14	0.76
Blue-collar workers	0.02	0.55	0.03
<i><u>Work experience</u></i>			
Full-time employment	0.86	0.90	0.71
Tenure	4.03	4.66	4.49
Tenure of the occupation	3.7	4.9	4.7
Job spells	5.97	6.71	5.88
Unemployment episodes	0.08	0.11	0.14
Total years of work experience	21.19	20.63	20.70

Table 2. Occupation of origin and destination of men in female-dominated occupations. Only men.

Managerial and Professional workers			
Type of occupation	t-1	T	t+1
Female-dominated	28.66	100	33.53
Neutral	25.61		27.30
Male-dominated	39.43		37.39
Unemployed	6.30		1.78
Sales, Clerical, Service and Blue-collar workers			
	t-1	T	t+1
Female-dominated	15.75	100	18.56
Neutral	24.36		23.87
Male-dominated	52.42		52.38
Unemployed	7.47		5.20

Table 3. Odds-ratio coefficients of exit from a female-dominated occupation. Only men.

	Exit		
	All workers	High-status	Low-status
High-status occup (rc: low-status occup)	0.723*** (0.084)		
Top-manager (r.c.: professionals)		0.951 (0.291)	
Managers (r.c.: professionals)		1.262 (0.343)	
Blue-collar (r.c.: service, sales, clerical workers)			1.214 (0.213)
Last occupation (rc: female)			
Male	2.053*** (0.199)	1.472 (0.731)	1.565** (0.299)
Neutral	1.678*** (0.172)	1.830*** (0.427)	2.005*** (0.199)
Unemployed	1.597*** (0.277)	1.600* (0.404)	1.615*** (0.169)
<u>Work-experience</u>			
Tenure (years)	0.334*** (0.014)	0.423*** (0.040)	0.309*** (0.016)
Tenure2 (years)	1.049*** (0.003)	1.030*** (0.006)	1.056*** (0.005)
Tenure of the occupation	0.965 (0.025)	1.018 (0.043)	0.986 (0.032)
Full-time worker	1.073 (0.105)	1.047 (0.290)	1.057 (0.113)
Number of prior jobs	0.899*** (0.016)	0.913** (0.036)	0.892*** (0.017)
Unemployment episodes	0.929** (0.029)	0.955 (0.058)	0.922** (0.031)
Total years of work experience	0.944*** (0.017)	1.035 (0.045)	0.929*** (0.017)
<u>Socio-demographic controls</u>			
College	1.668*** (0.310)	1.935** (0.601)	1.181 (0.398)
Field of study: female-dominated	0.895 (0.072)	0.786 (0.146)	0.893 (0.081)
Getting married	1.227** (0.106)	0.891 (0.211)	1.324*** (0.116)
Getting separated or divorced	1.445*** (0.164)	1.250 (0.462)	1.476*** (0.177)
Change in parental status	1.205** (0.105)	1.349 (0.311)	1.210** (0.111)
Time	1.119***	1.190**	1.138***

	(0.028)	(0.105)	(0.031)
Time2	0.996***	0.995**	0.995***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
N	5252	1009	4243
chi2	1.195.755	272.110	1.035.086
Clusters	1,293	199	1,218

Exponentiated coefficients; Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors.
Individuals are clustered. ***p < .01 **p < .05

Figure 1. Stopgappers' mobility pattern

Figure 2. Distribution of workers across sex-typed occupations. Census 1980, 1990 and 2000

Figure 3. Distribution of workers in female-dominated occupations by occupational category.
Census 1980, 1990 and 2000

Figure 4. Probability of changing occupations by occupation type and sex of the worker

Figure 5. Men's probability of changing occupations from a female-dominated occupation

Figure 6. Effect of the previous occupation on men's exit from female-dominated occupations

Appendix I. Odds-ratio coefficients of exit from a female-dominated occupation. Time dummies.
Only men.

	Exit		
	All workers	High-status occup.	Low-status occup.
High-status occup (rc: low-status occup)	0.708*** (0.082)		
Top-manager (r.c.: professionals)		0.877 (0.316)	
Managers (r.c.: professionals)		1.402 (0.431)	
Blue-collar (r.c.: service, sales, clerical workers)			1.352* (0.247)
Last occupation (rc: female)			
Male	2.031*** (0.197)	2.014*** (0.517)	2.025*** (0.205)
Neutral	1.740*** (0.179)	1.724† (0.483)	1.709*** (0.183)
Unemployed	1.596** (0.306)	1.495 (0.890)	1.549** (0.315)
<u>Work-experience</u>			
Tenure (years)	0.321*** (0.014)	0.403*** (0.044)	0.297*** (0.016)
Tenure2 (years)	1.051*** (0.003)	1.031*** (0.007)	1.058*** (0.005)
Tenure of the occupation	0.984 (0.029)	1.010 (0.049)	0.969 (0.034)
Full-time worker	1.115 (0.110)	1.089 (0.345)	1.100 (0.119)
Number of prior jobs	0.900*** (0.017)	0.895** (0.042)	0.892*** (0.018)
Unemployment episodes	0.928** (0.035)	0.949 (0.080)	0.924** (0.034)
Total years of work experience	0.950*** (0.017)	1.031 (0.047)	0.933*** (0.017)
<u>Socio-demographic controls</u>			
College	1.865*** (0.382)	2.184** (0.758)	1.280 (0.414)
Field of study: female-dominated	0.891 (0.074)	0.759 (0.154)	0.916 (0.085)
Married (r.f.: single)	1.341*** (0.109)	1.112 (0.231)	1.403*** (0.121)
Separated or divorced (r.f.: single)	1.461*** (0.169)	1.406 (0.542)	1.481*** (0.179)
N	5,252	1,009	4,243

Clusters	1,293	199	1,218
Chi2	1,181.122	226.652	1,039.589

Time dummies not shown. Exponentiated coefficients; Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. Individuals are clustered. ***p < .01 **p < .05 †p < .01

Appendix II. Probability of change in occupations. Odds-ratio coefficients for men and women.

	High-status occupations	Low-status occupations
Top-manager (r.c.: professionals)	0.882** (0.044)	
Managers (r.c.: professionals)	1.060 (0.043)	
Blue-collar (r.c.: service, sales, clerical workers)		1.112*** (0.043)
Sex composition of the occupation (r.c.: Male)		
Neutral	1.065 (0.072)	0.918 (0.061)
Female	0.519*** (0.033)	0.760*** (0.046)
Male	0.809*** (0.038)	0.679*** (0.035)
<i>Sex composition of the occupation * Male</i>		
Neutral*Male	0.970 (0.081)	1.278*** (0.101)
Female*Male	1.896*** (0.221)	1.987*** (0.138)
<u>Work-experience</u>		
Full-time worker	0.860*** (0.040)	0.750*** (0.021)
Number of prior jobs	1.061*** (0.007)	1.083*** (0.005)
Unemployment episodes	1.051*** (0.011)	1.037*** (0.007)
Total years of work experience	0.994 (0.008)	1.033*** (0.006)
<u>Socio-demographic controls</u>	0.786**	1.327**
College	1.051 (0.048)	1.124*** (0.051)
Field of study: female-dominated	0.967 (0.041)	0.941** (0.026)
Getting married	1.011 (0.062)	1.042 (0.038)
Getting separated or divorced	1.101** (0.042)	1.108*** (0.028)
Change in parental status	0.897***	0.923***
Time	(0.013)	(0.007)
Time2	0.998*** (0.000)	0.997*** (0.000)
N	26855	62671
Chi2	3.231.911	7.722.902

Exponentiated coefficients; Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. Individuals are clustered. ***p < .01 **p < .05

Appendix III. Odds-ratio coefficients of exit from a female-dominated occupation. Only women.

	Exit		
	All workers	High-status occupations	Low-status occupations
Top-manager (r.c.: professionals)		1.166 (0.458)	
Managers (r.c.: professionals)		1.465** (0.263)	
Blue-collar (r.c.: service, sales, clerical workers)			2.112*** (0.218)
Last occupation (rc: female)			
Male	1.046 (0.058)	1.023 (0.149)	1.041 (0.062)
Neutral	0.498*** (0.025)	0.336*** (0.043)	0.549*** (0.029)
Unemployed	0.654*** (0.054)	0.569** (0.127)	0.678*** (0.060)
<u>Work-experience</u>			
Tenure (years)	0.520*** (0.010)	0.551*** (0.027)	0.509*** (0.011)
Tenure2 (years)	1.020*** (0.001)	1.016*** (0.003)	1.022*** (0.001)
Tenure of the occupation	0.978** (0.011)	1.030 (0.023)	0.995 (0.015)
Full-time worker	1.156*** (0.053)	1.018 (0.136)	1.176*** (0.058)
Number of prior jobs	0.958*** (0.009)	1.011 (0.022)	0.945*** (0.010)
Unemployment episodes	0.949*** (0.012)	0.963 (0.037)	0.946*** (0.014)
Total years of work experience	0.979** (0.010)	1.004 (0.022)	0.995 (0.011)
<u>Socio-demographic controls</u>			
College	1.438** (0.246)	1.630* (0.446)	1.414* (0.279)
Field of study: female-dominated	0.634*** (0.064)	0.468*** (0.108)	0.689*** (0.076)
Getting married	1.002 (0.051)	1.141 (0.154)	0.975 (0.053)
Getting separated or divorced	1.124* (0.079)	0.832 (0.167)	1.143* (0.084)
Change in parental status	1.004 (0.047)	1.076 (0.126)	0.982 (0.049)
Time	1.209***	1.183***	1.217***

	(0.017)	(0.051)	(0.018)
Time2	0.994***	0.993***	0.994***
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)
N	25144	5905	19239
chi2	2.242.783	418.760	1.826.061
Clusters	2140	770	2013

Exponentiated coefficients; Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors.
Individuals are clustered. ***p < .01 **p < .05

Appendix IV. Probability of wage increase by occupation of destination