

## **Who is your boss?**

### **Explaining gender inequality in being supervised by a woman**

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#### **Abstract**

In this article, we analyze the extent and possible explanations of the gender gap in the probability of being supervised by a woman. Little is known about who the people are that are supervised by the increasing number of female managers, except that they are predominantly women. Mechanisms behind this particular form of gender inequality may be gender segregation in the labor market, gender norms, and the power of men and women to realize homophilous preferences. Data from the *European Working Conditions Survey* along with country-specific information are used to analyze 35 countries over the period from 1995 to 2010. We find that in all countries and years women are much more likely than men to be supervised by a woman. The gender gap can partly be explained by gender norms and power dynamics, while the gender segregation effect was not present.

#### **1. Introduction**

There is a substantial body of research on gender inequality in terms of labor force participation (e.g. Mandel and Semyonov 2006; Pettit and Hook 2005) and attaining managerial positions (e.g. Abendroth et al. 2011; Gorman and Kmec 2009; Maume 2004; Kraus and Yonay 2000). Several studies show that women occupy an increasingly larger part of the labor force (Cipollone, Patacchini & Vallanti 2012) and of managerial positions (Bygren and Gähler 2012; Cohen et al. 2009; Ayman et al. 2009; Grant Thornton 2013). However, one related aspect of gender inequality has seldom been analyzed – namely,

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