

Research Workshop – November 5, 2010

Laura Hunter

### **“When Dr. Miller is a Man”**

Previous research has found that negative stereotypes about female bosses persist, but does the boss’s gender affect evaluations of the job itself? Using an experimental design, I test whether the gender of a scientist directing a scientific research job affects how individuals evaluate the job, such as its prestige. Drawing from devaluation theory, which states that women and women’s work tend to be culturally devalued, I hypothesize that when a boss is a woman, a job will be seen as less prestigious and valuable, and even less interesting and exciting, than when the same job is directed by a man. The results generally support the hypotheses, and simply having a male boss makes a job appear more prestigious. I discuss the implications of the results for gender inequality in the labor market and for future research on prestige.

Laura Hunter is a Moreau Postdoctoral Fellow in the sociology department. She received her Ph.D. at the University of Arizona, and her dissertation – titled “The Role of Gender in Evaluations of Scientific Competence” – assessed how gender influences an individual’s self-assessments of their own competence in science, as well as how a scientist’s gender affects how other scientists evaluate them. Her previous published work includes research on gender inequality in academic careers, such as her article on how children have differential effects on women’s and men’s research productivity and visibility, which partially explains the gender gap in productivity. Her current work focuses on gender inequality in the labor market and gender dynamics in families.