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**WOMEN AND PUBLIC POWER:
CLASS DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

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GENDER, CLASS AND PUBLIC POWER

Introduction

This is a study of men and women in positions of public power in 28 industrialised countries, including west and east Europe, north America, Japan and Australasia. The question we are asking in this paper is: does class background differentiate men and women in positions of public power, and if so how? We use several different dimensions of class to examine this question, drawing on the information in the questionnaires from the whole international sample. Our hypothesis is that women leaders come from higher class backgrounds than male leaders, and the evidence suggests that in most of the dimensions of class examined, there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and class in the direction proposed.

Women's Participation in Public Life

Women are heavily under-represented in positions of public power. In most industrialised countries it is no longer the case that women are confined to the domestic sphere and excluded from public life, yet despite radical changes in gender relations over the last fifty years, women's participation in institutions of public policy- and decision-making, such as business and politics, has had limited effects in changing the gender balance of public power. To take just a few examples, in the most recent elections before 1997, women comprised only 9% of members of parliament (lower house) in the UK, 11% in the USA, 2% in Japan, 16% in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS: the major part of the former Soviet Union), and 36% in Norway (Nelson & Chowdhury 1994:774-5). Only the Scandinavian countries show a consistently improving and significant level of representation for women in politics (Jaquette *Foreign Policy* 1997:26). In central and eastern Europe and the CIS, women's representation in parliamentary bodies dropped from 23% in 1987, to 11.5% in 1997, as women's participation in formal politics was detached from communist party control (ibid:26-7, Dale and Glover 1989, Vianello and Siemienska 1990). In the economic arena, women's participation looks better: women were 45% of the labour market in the UK in 1996 (Labour Force Survey 1996), 46% in the US in 1992 (Clark & Clark 1996:172), 39% in Japan in 1993 (AMPO 1996:67), ? % in the CIS and ? % in Norway, but at the higher levels their representation is still low. Women are participating in public life, but not where it matters; in many countries they are largely excluded from positions of power where their interests can be effectively represented and they can act as a force for change.

Research Questions and Conceptual Approach

Several explanations have been put forward to understand women's segregation into low value, powerless positions in public life (see Collinson, Knights & Collinson 1990:chs 1 & 2 for a review). The most influential explanations have attempted to understand women's exclusion or marginalisation from power within the context of the intersection of important structural divisions in society such as class, gender and race (for example, Walby 1990 on the labour market, Norris & Lovenduski 1995 on political recruitment). The two major conceptual approaches which emerged from particular theoretical perspectives and were developed in the 1980s and early 1990s are Marxist feminism (for example, Barrett 1980; Beechey & Perkins 1987) and the 'dual systems' thesis (for example, Cockburn 1986; Walby 1990). Each of these perspectives has been extensively criticised (Collinson et al 1990, Pollert 1996) for leading to 'an impasse, regarding the relative significance of class and gender ... where reductionism or dualism threaten' (Coole 1996:24). Marxist feminism has tended to reduce the operation of gendered power to the class structure, whilst the dual systems thesis treats gender relations as if the systems of race, class and gender were separate and additive, suggesting that a particular woman or man could be gendered alone, without this gendering itself being constituted by, and constitutive of, the dimensions of class and race (Spelman 1988:115).

Into the gap created by this impasse in materialist theorising has stepped post-modernist feminism with its focus on discourses of difference and debates about diversity. Yet as Diana Coole points out, amid all the discussion of difference amongst women, differences of class are rarely 'even mentioned in the capacious lists of significant differences' (1996:17). The decline of class politics in its traditional forms in many established capitalist countries in the context of global economic restructuring, and the breakdown of the communist system in eastern Europe, have both led to an erosion of the resonance, if not of the significance of the concept of class, and this political eclipse of class has contributed to the analytical disappearance of the concept within feminism. Yet its importance to questions concerning gender and power still makes itself felt in women's everyday lives.

In the last decade women have made significant encroachments into areas of public influence that were once the preserve of men, and in which even twenty years ago women were considered exceptional, if not abnormal (Adler 1996:135-8). It is therefore appropriate at this stage to ask: why and how is a minority of women able to achieve representation in influential positions in the managerial and political hierarchies, given the gendered nature of the power relations operating to exclude women from public decision-making in many parts of the world? Are women in powerful positions simply to be regarded as exceptions, or can their participation be understood with reference to the same structural features which figure in the theories of women's exclusion or marginalisation from public power? Do women who have reached positions of power present a challenge to or a confirmation of such explanations? The specific research questions we will address in this paper, then, are:

- 1) how far is class background associated with women's entry into positions of public power compared with men?
- 2) what different dimensions of class, if any, are associated with women's achievement of positions of public leadership in comparison with men?
- 3) how are gender and class related, if at all; that is, what is the direction of any relationship?
- 4) which dimensions of class, if any, show the strongest relationship with gender?
- 5) how far are any significant relationships maintained when the business and political sectors, and various country groupings, are examined separately?

Our hypotheses in relation to these questions are as follows: first, that class background will be associated with women's entry into positions of public power, and will significantly differentiate female from similarly placed male leaders; second, that all the dimensions of class under examination will be associated with women's achievement of leadership positions, in comparison with men; third, the direction of the relationships will be that women leaders' class background will be higher on all dimensions than that of male leaders. The fourth question will be addressed after it is clear from the analysis which dimensions, if any, are statistically significant. fifth, the business and political sectors will be equally affected by any significant correlations, whilst the countries classified as 'full capitalist' will be more affected by any class-gender associations than countries categorised as 'post-communist' or 'social democrat'. What we are examining, therefore, is the socio-economic and class origins of the men and women in our sample, to assess how far women in positions of public power come from more privileged backgrounds than their male comparators.

We hope that this chapter will contribute to the revival of interest in class as a significant difference in the understanding of gendered power, from the point of view of women's inclusion in power rather than their exclusion from it. We intend to use several different indices of class, drawing on a range of approaches to the concept, but broadly we will use class as a descriptive concept to refer to a number of aspects of social life which differentiate hierarchically ordered groups in society materially and culturally.

First we will use class as a description of social status or prestige, a concept which has emerged from Weber's idea of status groups (Crompton 1993:10,13). As Crompton points out, occupational prestige scales measure the relative distribution of rewards, reflecting the outcome of class processes, rather than explaining the structure of class relations which brought those outcomes about (1993:57). She further suggests that employment-based measures of class, whilst not comprehensive, are both effective and essential for a class analysis of structured social inequality (1993:118-9). We will operationalise our use of class as social status by using two occupational class indices based on the employment of the respondents' parents. One of these is a measure of the occupational prestige of the respondent's mother (where relevant) and father when the respondent was 14, assessed by the Treiman standard international occupational prestige index. There are several problems with the Treiman index, such as the need to up-date the occupational classifications, and its tendency to be overly centred on U.S. job categories, but in the absence of a more sensitive comparative index, we will use Treiman as a measure of occupational prestige. The second index is a simple measure of whether or not the job of the respondent's mother (where relevant) and father included supervisory and managerial responsibilities. We will refer to these measures as occupational class.

Second, following both Coole (1996:17) and Crompton (1993:119) we will use class as a description of structured social inequality, where material differences are stable over time and reproduced within a group. We will operationalise this use of the term by using Erik Olin Wright's second class map, which aims to measure class differences in terms of the social relations of production, rather than in terms of a scale of occupational positionings. Ideas of exploitation and control within production relations as a way of understanding the outcomes of class relations are central to Wright's models, as opposed to Weberian models based on exchange relations in the market (Crompton 1993:57, 70-71). In attempting to produce an index of the theoretical construct of class based on a Marxist perspective, Wright devised two maps or models. The first produces six class categories from bourgeoisie to proletariat (Wright 1980) although as Wright later argued (1985:56-7), this is actually a descriptive account of domination, not an analysis of the Marxist account of exploitation. He therefore produced a second class map which produced twelve categories based on the ownership or control of labour, capital, organisations, and skills or credentials (Wright 1985; see Crompton 1993:69-75 for an outline and review, and Marshall et al 1988 for empirical tests in a U.K. context). We will use the second class map to assess the social class of the respondents' mothers and fathers when the respondents were 14. We will refer to this measure as social class.

Third, in the absence of reliable objective data on family income and assets when the respondents were aged 14, we will use a subjective measure of economic capital based on a five-point scale which asked respondents to assess the economic position of their family when they were 14. This scale represents an assessment of how the respondents saw the positioning of their natal family in its social and economic context, and should be seen as a measure of subjective economic status. We will refer to this measure as subjective economic capital.

Fourth, we will use three indices based on Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, as indicators of cultural and educational knowledge (Bourdieu 1984). Although educational and cultural capital are not exactly synonymous, Bourdieu regards them as sufficiently close to allow educational credentials to serve as an index of cultural capital: '[educational qualifications] ... guarantees cultural capital more or less completely ... and so it is an unequally adequate indicator of this capital' (Bourdieu 1984:13). The indices we will use consist of the highest level of educational qualification attained by the respondents' mothers and fathers. We will refer to this as cultural capital.

Fifth, we will use several indices of social capital, based on Bourdieu and Passeron's idea of social networks (1979) and Hiroshi Ishida's broader concept of the social circumstances surrounding childhood development (1993:53,80). This will comprise family size and birth order, the activism of the respondents' natal families in political and professional associations and networks, and the availability of mentors in the respondents' progression into public life. We will refer to this as social capital.

Clearly none of these measures is a perfect or objective index of class, and each measure has specific problems associated with it. For this reason we do not regard any one of the measures as adequate on its own. However, examining a range of indices representing several different dimensions of class will enable us to have greater confidence in the results.

Methods of Data Analysis

This chapter focuses on a statistical analysis of some of the important factors which are differentially associated with the achievement of positions of power in public life by men and women. It looks at the combined international data as a whole, then at the business and political sectors separately, and at three country groupings. It does not examine the different processes by which these positions of power are obtained by men and women. The statistical analysis cannot show *how* specific variables are associated with the achievement of powerful positions, only that they *are* associated. For a detailed explanation of how and why men and women obtain positions of public leadership, it is necessary to examine the everyday practices and processes affecting the construction of gendered power in men's and women's careers in specific cultural contexts (see Crompton 1993:128). A qualitative analysis of the process and construction of power is therefore considered central to the research, and will be undertaken at a later stage. The fact that it is not undertaken here does not mean that we regard it as insignificant or as less important than the quantitative analysis. We regard both quantitative and qualitative analysis as vital to the understanding of gender and public power, in that they reveal different aspects of the problem. What the paper does is to set out some statistical patterns and conclusions as a context for future papers; in these later articles we will try to explain any associations between gender and class, what the statistical relationships may say about the facilitation or inhibition of women's entry into public power, and what the specific forms of facilitation and inhibition may signify about the ways in which the class and gender systems are constituted.

The following five sections discuss the results of the statistical tests on the international sample, assessing the significance of gender differences in the five aspects of social stratification identified above, that is, occupational class, social class, subjective economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. After this we look at how far these patterns are maintained by sector and country grouping. Tables are presented only when the data show statistically significant patterns. Whenever possible we have used Pearson's Chi-square to test statistical significance. Where this is not possible, because more than 20% of the cells have expected counts of less than five, we have used Kendall's Tau-b.

Occupational Class

The first set of measures consists of the occupational prestige index of the respondents' mothers and fathers when the respondents were 14. A large proportion of the respondents' mothers (55%) did not engage in paid work at that time, and these mothers are excluded from the analysis: we will examine the issue of unpaid housewives in another article. Tables 1 and 2 show the occupational prestige index grouped into eight categories.

Table 1: Mothers' Occupational Prestige

Mothers' Prestige Index	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
0 to 30	35.1	27.0
31 to 40	12.6	13.6
41 to 50	16.9	19.9
51 to 60	25.0	24.8
61 to 70	7.9	9.4
71 to 80	2.5	5.2
81 to 90	0	0
91 to 100	0	0
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (357)	100.0 (405)

*Kendall's tau-b: 0.022 **

Table 2: Fathers' Occupational Prestige

Fathers' Prestige Index	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
0 to 30	7.9	4.7
31 to 40	16.2	13.2
41 to 50	19.1	18.3
51 to 60	26.8	26.2
61 to 70	18.8	20.6
71 to 80	10.1	16.7
81 to 90	75.0	.3
91 to 100	0	0
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (611)	100.0 (647)

*Pearson Chi-square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .003 ***

These are highly significant for both mothers and fathers, which means that the occupational prestige of the female respondents' parents is significantly greater than the occupational prestige of the male respondents' parents across the entire international sample.

The second set of measures of occupational prestige consists of mothers' and fathers' supervisory functions (if they were in paid work) when the respondent was 14. These categories look at whether or not the parents' jobs involved a supervisory role.

Table 3: Mothers' Job Supervisory Functions

Supervisory Functions	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
Yes	28.3	38.4
No	71.7	61.6
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (305)	100.0 (354)

*Pearson Chi-Square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .006 ***

Table 4: Fathers' Job Supervisory Functions

Supervisory Functions	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
Yes	67.8	75.4
No	32.2	24.6
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (612)	100.0 (642)

*Pearson Chi-Square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .003 ***

These too are highly significant, showing that significantly more of the parents of women leaders had jobs involving supervisory responsibilities than the parents of male leaders.

The statistics in this section indicate that status measures of occupational class based on occupational prestige scores and the holding of supervisory jobs amongst the parents of the respondents are significantly different for male and female members of the sample. Women leaders' parents were both more likely to have supervisory jobs than male leaders, and to have jobs with a higher prestige rating, suggesting that the women come from a significantly higher occupational class background than the men in the sample.

Social Class

The social class measure is based on Wright's second class map, comprising twelve categories.

Table 5: Fathers' Class - Wright (2)

Wright (2) Index	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
Bourgeoisie	7.0	11.8
Small employer	5.6	5.3
Petty bourgeoisie	19.7	18.4
Expert manager	24.5	29.1
Expert supervisor	1.5	2.5
Expert non-manager	7.5	5.7
Semi-credentialled manager	8.0	7.4
Semi-credentialled supervisor	3.6	3.3
Semi-credentialled worker	9.0	6.4
Uncredentialled manager	1.3	0.5
Uncredentialled supervisor	1.3	0.9
Proletariat	6.0	4.4
Outside Wright (2) Index <i>(through unemployed or unpaid work at home)</i>	5.0	4.2
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (602)	100.0 (635)

*Pearson Chi-Square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .049 **

The statistics for the social class of respondents' mothers is not significant. Part of the reason for this is that Wright's measure is not a good index of women's social class, since so many of the respondents' mothers were not in the labour market when the respondents were 14, and cannot therefore be categorised in terms of employment relations. However, the statistics are significant at the 5% level for the social class of respondents' fathers. This means that women leaders come from significantly higher social class backgrounds than male leaders, on the basis of Wright's categories as applied to the fathers of the respondents.

Subjective Economic Capital

This consists of a subjective measure of the family’s economic position when the respondent was 14. The question posed was: ‘Where on the following scale would you place your family’s economic position when you were 14?’ to be answered on a five-point scale from ‘very comfortable’ to ‘not very comfortable’.

Table 6: Subjective Economic Capital

Family’s economic position when 14 years old	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
Very comfortable	4.8	8.6
Comfortable	18.2	20.1
Average	42.9	42.9
Less comfortable	22.7	18.6
Not very comfortable	11.5	9.8
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (692)	100.0 (726)

*Pearson Chi-Square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .016 **

This measure too is significant, and suggests that, according to the self-perceptions of the respondents, the families of the women leaders were economically better off than the families of male leaders.

Cultural Capital

The possession of cultural capital is assessed by the educational level of the respondents’ mothers and fathers.

Table 7: Mothers’ Education

Mother’s education	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
Elementary not completed	2.0	1.6
Elementary school	22.8	15.8
Junior secondary	23.7	21.0
Senior Secondary	22.5	23.4
Vocational training	11.0	16.1
Bachelor degree/ College	11.6	14.7
Master	5.2	6.1
Doctorate	1.2	1.3
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (653)	100.0 (685)

*Pearson Chi-Square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .007 ***

Table 8: Fathers' Education

Father's education	Sex of Respondents %	
	Male	Female
Elementary not completed	2.3	0.7
Elementary school	15.8	9.1
Junior secondary	19.1	14.4
Senior Secondary	16.4	15.6
Vocational training	12.3	16.9
Bachelor degree/ College	16.7	20.9
Master	13.1	16.0
Doctorate	4.4	6.4
TOTAL (n)	100.0 (667)	100.0 (699)

*Pearson Chi-Square Asymp.Sig. (2 sided): .000 ***

These two indices are both highly significant, indicating that the educational level of women leaders' parents is significantly higher than that of male leaders' parents. This suggests that both mothers and of women in positions of power possess significantly greater amounts of cultural capital than those of comparable men.

Social Capital

Social capital comprises measures of family size and birth order, the natal family's political and professional activism, and mentoring. Ishida (1993:53) defines social capital as the social circumstances surrounding childhood development, including number of siblings and, we would argue, birth order. Ishida argues that parents of large families will have less time and money to invest in each child, and therefore smaller families result in greater social capital for the child (Ishida 1993:54). We would suggest further that being a first child or an older sibling produces family circumstances in which the first or older child is often constructed as a leader in the family, providing both a learning experience and a sense of identity which may facilitate the achievement of leadership positions in later life. Bourdieu's concept of social capital concerns social networks, which we have measured in terms of the respondents' access to mentors in their political or professional lives. We have also used the respondents' subjective view of the political and professional activism of their natal family, as a measure which is indicative of both social networks and the circumstances of childhood development.

The results show that neither family size and birth order, nor natal family's activism in political and professional associations are statistically significant in differentiating between male and female leaders in positions of public power. However, the availability of certain kinds of mentors is reported in significantly different numbers by men and women. We do not show detailed tables for the mentor measures, because this question is covered in more detail in Michal Palgi's chapter, but we will report significance levels in summary form.

Table 9: Type of Mentor Significantly Differentiating Male and Female Leaders

Type of mentor	Significance level
Male relatives	.000 **
Female work colleagues	.001 **
Female supervisors	.000 **
Female friends/colleagues in other organisations	.000 **
Female political acquaintances	.015 *

The only male mentors who significantly differentiated women from men leaders were family members. This index of social capital was highly significant, showing that women in positions of power were much more likely than men to have had male family members to act in a mentoring capacity. The other mentors important in differentiating between male and female leaders were all women: colleagues and supervisors at work, friends or colleagues in other organisations, and political acquaintances. Women in powerful positions were more likely than men to have female colleagues, female supervisors, and female friends or colleagues in other organisations acting in a mentoring role, and these correlations were all highly significant. Women leaders were also significantly more likely than men to have female political acquaintances to act as mentors. The results in this section do not necessarily mean that men failed to act as mentors to women other than within the family, but that male mentoring was not a factor which distinguished between male and female respondents. In other words, except in the family, male mentors were equally active or inactive in a mentoring role for both male and female leaders.

In terms of social capital then, Ishida’s concept of the social circumstances surrounding childhood development is not important in distinguishing men’s and women’s access to positions of public power, whereas Bourdieu’s more limited idea of social networks, as operationalised in mentoring activity, is of value in understanding gendered access to public power. This form of social capital is itself gendered, since mentors in the public arena who have an important influence in facilitating women’s access to power, in comparison with men seeking power, are exclusively female. The only important male mentors who significantly differentiate between men’s and women’s access to power consist of those from the private sphere of the family. The results of this section also reveal the importance of female networking in terms of the mentoring role for the achievement of positions of public power by women.

Sector and Country Differences

Finally, we examine how far the significant gender differences in the various dimensions of class demonstrated so far on the whole international sample are maintained when the sample is divided first by political or business sector, and second by particular country groupings. In this section we look at all the indices except mentors, since this is examined elsewhere. The following table reports the significance levels of the gender-class correlations by sector for each class measure.

Table 10: Significance Levels for Gender-Class Correlations by Sector

Class measure	Significance Level	
	Politics	Business
Mother’s job prestige	.438	.126
Father’s job prestige	.024 *	.155
Mother’s job supervisory	.254	.004 **
Father’s job supervisory	.041 *	.034 *
Father’s Wright class (2)	.164	.094
Subjective economic position	.464	.037 *
Mother’s education	.780	.032 *
Father’s education	.003 **	.010 **

Note: Bold figures represent significant correlations

Five of the eight measures continue to show significant differences when the business sector is examined alone, namely parents’ education, parents’ job supervisory function and subjective economic position, but only three of the eight remain significant when the political sector is examined alone, all of them concerned with the position of the respondents’ fathers: that is, father’s education, father’s job supervisory function and father’s job prestige. Only two of the measures

remain significant for both sectors independently: these are father’s education and father’s job supervisory function. These results suggest that the association of gender and class is stronger for women’s entry into top positions in the business world than the political world. This may be connected with the greater legitimacy attached to achieving a representative mix of identity groupings in the political sphere compared with the business sphere. The argument that a democratic institution which excludes important sections of the population is hardly democratic at all is a strong one, and so perhaps the requirements for women gaining access to political power are slightly less class-bound than in the business world. For those measures that remain significant in the political milieu, it does seem that it is the position of the father rather than of both parents that is particularly important, and this may relate to sectoral differences in the extent to which the mothers of male and female respondents undertake paid work. This will be explored in a later article. In terms of the two class measures which remain significant in both sectors, it seems that father’s education and father’s job supervisory function are of particular importance in differentiating women and men leaders, and therefore we can reject the assumption that gender operates independently of the cultural capital and occupational position of the father in the two sectors.

The following table reports the significance levels by country groupings of the gender-class correlations for all the class measures except mentors. We have modified the OECD country groupings slightly for reasons of theoretical consistency. The relevant OECD groupings consist of three categories: post-communist, full capitalist and social democratic. These are based mainly on economic ratings of development, and place Greece and Portugal with the less economically developed countries in the post-communist group. Japan and Israel are placed with the full capitalist countries of western Europe, north America and Australasia, whilst Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, and the Netherlands, with long histories of welfare capitalism, are grouped in the social democratic category. For this study, it is clearly vital to group together countries with a similar political economy, rather than rely on purely economic ratings, since the history of class politics is likely to affect how class divisions interact with gender. We have therefore moved Greece and Portugal from the post-communist to the full capitalist grouping.

Table 11: Significance Levels for Gender-Class Correlations by Country Grouping

Class measure	Significance Level		
	Post communist	Full capitalist	Social democrat
Mother’s job prestige	.768	.144	.130
Father’s job prestige	.300	.001**	.527
Mother’s job supervisory	.654	.003**	.586
Father’s job supervisory	.867	.002**	.200
Father’s Wright class (2)	.996	.016*	.282
Subjective economic position	.374	.022*	.492
Mother’s education	.515	.016*	.006**
Father’s education	.288	.000**	.069

Note: Bold figures represent significant correlations

What this analysis shows is that class effects on gender are extremely significant in the full capitalist countries, whereas in the post-communist and social democratic countries, where conscious attempts have been made at the level of state policy to break down the class structure or to mitigate its effects, the effects of class on gender are much reduced. It should be noted that the results in the post-communist and social democratic country groupings do not necessarily mean that class does not affect people’s access to power: it may or may not, but the results do not tell us anything about this question. What it does tell us is that class does not differentiate between men’s and women’s access to power in these country groupings. This could either mean that class divisions are negligible, and affect neither women nor men, or it could mean that class divisions

still exist but affect women and men equally in their access to power. Further studies would be necessary to answer this question. What the results do indicate is that, compared with men, class strongly affects the access of women to power in countries where attempts to undermine class privilege and class disadvantage have been minimal. In other words, when all the countries in the sample are looked at together, we can reject the idea that gender operates independently of class on the variables we have tested, but when we look at the different country groupings separately, we can see that in the full capitalist countries the class effects on gender are very strongly maintained and are therefore extremely significant,

Gender, Class and Power

The statistical evidence suggests that there is a highly significant relationship between gender and class. The remarkable feature of the statistical analysis is that for all the dimensions of class and for almost all the specific measures, a strongly significant association is found across the entire international sample of nearly fifteen hundred men and women in positions of public power. This relationship occurs for definitions of class based on occupational status and measured by both parents' job prestige and supervisory or non-supervisory role of parents' occupations; for concepts of class based on the social relations of production and assessed by Wright's second class map in relation to fathers; for subjective definitions of the possession of economic capital based on self-assessment of the natal family's economic position; for the concept of cultural capital based on education and measured by the educational credentials of the respondents and their parents; and to a limited though significant extent for the definition of social capital based on the concept of social networks and measured by respondents' access to mentors in pursuance of their career. The fact that these relationships are revealed consistently across the various dimensions and definitions of class, often at extremely high levels of significance, suggests that what is being identified here is an important structural relationship rather than a statistical artefact or accident. It also suggests that the various measures used to operationalise the different concepts of class may be valid assessments of structural divisions occurring in society at a global level.

The direction of the correlations follows that predicted by the hypotheses, demonstrating that women in powerful positions show consistently higher or more privileged class backgrounds than comparable men. The occupations of women's parents are more prestigious, their fathers come from a higher social class, the women leaders see their families as possessing more economic capital, the women's parents and the women themselves possess more cultural capital in the form of education, and the women have greater access to social capital compared with men in similar positions of power.

The measures showing the strongest relationship with sex are father's occupational prestige, mother's and father's job supervisory function, mother's and father's education and four of the five mentor measures. Finally the class-gender correlations are maintained more strongly in the business than in the political sector, which may be connected to the greater legitimacy of ideas of democratic representation in the political than in the business arena. The significant association between class and gender is much more strongly maintained in the full capitalist countries than in the post-communist and social democratic countries, suggesting first that attempts to break down class disadvantage do erode class-related effects on women's access to power compared with men, whatever the process is by which this has come about; second, that class divisions may indeed be more prominent in full capitalist countries; and third, that the measures of class used in this study may indeed be valid, since the theoretical basis on which they are constructed would predict that class effects on gender would be greater in full capitalist than in the post-communist or social democratic countries.

It is clear, therefore, that the hypotheses are supported, except for mothers' social class, the broader definition of social capital, and the sectoral imbalance in the gender-class relationship. The

evidence from the international sample demonstrates that structural, status, subjective, cultural and social dimensions of class are significant in the gendered production of public power and leadership, and that these relationships are maintained more in the full capitalist countries and in the business sector. How to explain these class differences between male and female leaders is the next task and cannot be determined from the statistics alone. We may, however, speculate on the possible directions in which such an explanation may lead. First, we may propose that a more privileged position in the class system offers a form of facilitation to women attempting to enter into positions of power through the effects on others and themselves of the advantages in class position, status, finance, knowledge and social networks, as well as in what may be termed class authority in general. We may also speculate that the authority of masculinity makes it easier for men to overcome the various dimensions of a disadvantaged class background compared with women in similar positions in public life, although we should be clear that if this takes place, it is in the context of a very limited entry of lower class men into powerful positions. The implication is that class may be one of the most important mechanisms through which women are challenging gendered disadvantage in public power. Such a mechanism may operate as a compensatory form of authority, enabling women to replace the gendered 'power deficiencies' attached to their femininity, that is, their right to public power, with an alternative form of influence and authority based not on gender, but on the different yet equally powerful structural division of social class. If this is happening, it must be questioned how far women's entry into positions of power is really an advance for women rather than a reconstruction and reinforcement of the class divisions. If differences of class distinguish men and women in power, then we can see that they also distinguish women *in* and *out* of power. Women who reach the most influential positions in public life are already of a higher class background than comparable men; so that women expecting female leaders to represent their interests in the economic and political arenas are already separated by a greater social distance than the mass of men are from male leaders in comparable positions of public power.

What we can say from these statistics, however, is that it is a mistake to see women in leadership positions as merely exceptional. On the contrary, there are very clear class patterns in the production of gendered power; and it is likely that the inclusion and participation of women in public power may be understood with reference to the same conceptual frameworks which help to explain their exclusion or marginalisation from economic and political leadership. Class, in whatever way we wish to define it, is central to women's challenge to men's monopoly on public power at a global level.

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