

Gender, Family, Socioeconomic Status, and Work Values in China

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Abstract

This study examines gender differences in work values in China and the underlying mechanisms of these differences using data from a nationally representative sample of 10,332 adults from the 2005 Chinese General Social Survey. Results from ordinal logistic regressions show that women are more likely than men to rank earnings, security, short work time and autonomy higher, while men are more likely than women to rank prestige, authority, interest, promotion opportunity, serving others and sense of achievement higher. Marriage and family status only help explain gender differences in ranking job interest. However, SES and occupational characteristics have fully explained gender differences in ranking earnings and security, and also partially explain gender differences in other work values.

Keywords: work values, gender, family, socioeconomic status, China

Introduction

Work is commonly understood as the central and most time-consuming activity linking individuals to modern industrial society. Thus, work values, defined as those attributes of occupations that allow workers to judge and choose which jobs to seek and to evaluate their present job in terms of satisfaction (Kalleberg, 1977; Ros et al., 1999), are an important component of personal values. Studies on work values gained momentum during the 1970s, but focused on men (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979). With women's emerging status as workers and their growing importance to the labor force, investigations of male-female work value differences have been growing since the mid-1980s in western countries (Roe & Ester, 1999). The internationalization of western economies combined with the advent of globalization drew scholars' attention to national differences in work values. Generally, the national dissimilarities were attributed to historical, cultural and economic causes (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Focusing on China, some scholars argued that the unique Chinese cultural tradition and its formerly strict socialist system greatly affected extant work values (Chow & Ngo, 2002). China has a deep-rooted patriarchal tradition in which a woman was to be subordinate to her father in youth, her husband in maturity, and her son in old age (Jiang & Yang, 2011). After the May 4th Movement in 1919, especially since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, women have broken away from traditional roles and become active participants in the paid labor force. The socialist system greatly liberalized women as workers, encouraged initiative, and provided state-run day care facilities and food services (Granrose 2007; Zhang et al., 2008). A 2010 survey on the social status of women showed that 71% of Chinese women aged 18-64 years are in the labor force (All-China Women's Federation, 2011).

Even though women are encouraged to take initiatives to find their own positions in society, gender differences remain in the workplace (Granrose, 2007). Since the economic restructuring and "opening" began in 1978, the nature, composition and international orientation of the Chinese economy have undergone deep-seated changes from a socialist command economy to a mixed economy that includes private ownership of capitals. Privatization has mixed effects for women.

Privatization increases the range of job choices and opportunities. However, support declines for women-as-mothers as features such as free daycare disappear under the capitalistic pressure for larger profit margins (Zhang et al., 2008). Research on gender differences in job attainment and wages in China indicates that the gender wage gap is widening and that different groups of women confront with different types of gender discrimination (Chu, 2007; Cohen & Wang, 2009; Wang & Cai, 2008). The 2010 survey indicates an increase in both men and women who believe in traditional gender roles as compared with the year 2000 (All-China Women's Federation, 2011).

Changes in women's status in the Chinese economy intensify the need to investigate gender-specific work values. Previous studies of gender differences in work values in China have focused on certain groups such as college students (e.g., Jin & Li, 2005), managers (e.g., Guo, 2009), nursing staff (e.g., Cheng et al., 2011) and teachers (e.g., Xu & Zhang, 2011). These inquiries, though important, were mostly descriptive and relied on small or specialized samples that are not representative of the adult population in China. The current study examines gender differences in work values and the underlying mechanisms that influence these differences using a national sample of the general adult population in China. Compared to many previous studies, this study examines a broad array of work values and provides the first analysis of the underlying social mechanisms that bring about gender variations in Chinese adults' work values. The three main research questions are: (1) Are there any gender differences in work values? (2) Are gender differences in work values in part explained by gender differences in family roles and statuses? (3) Are gender differences in work values in part explained by gender differences in SES status and occupational characteristics?

Literature Review

Gender Differences in Work Values

Research on gender differences in attitudes and behaviors are often grounded on the fundamental ideas of socialization and self-formation. These perspectives tell us that individuals become particularly expressive, feeling, behaving and thinking persons through their ongoing and lifelong interaction with the social environment (Wentworth, 2001). Men and women internalize different roles and values that are seen as expected of them respectively (Marini et al., 1996). Feminist scholars argued that women's stated "work values" are heavily influenced by structural barriers to their career advancement, and thus gender differences in work values should be understood in the broader context of structural gender inequality in the workplace (Acker, 1990; William et al., 2012). Government policies and support also play a very strong role in women's labor force participation and such policies tend to support the more conservative elements of a country's culture (Misra et al., 2007).

There are many studies on the relationship between gender and work values in the West. The results from workers' responses to attitudinal surveys in the Hawthorne studies from 1927 to 1932 showed that men cared more about pay and working conditions than women; by comparison, women cared more about social relations with colleagues than men (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939/1975). The findings from later studies were generally consistent with those from earlier studies: men place greater importance on earnings, job security, promotion opportunities, power and influence while women place greater importance on the sense of accomplishment, job interests, job autonomy, working with people, and opportunity to help others (Kalleberg & Marsden, 2013; Konrad et al., 2000; Marini et al., 1996; Tolbert & Moen, 1998). Gender differences in preferred working time are also observed. Krings and colleagues (2009) discovered that in Europe long working hours is largely a male phenomenon and part-time work is predominantly a female phenomenon; 45% women versus 15% men work part-time. Additionally, as compared to men, women participate more in flexible or temporary jobs to reconcile work with family responsibilities.

Limited research from Taiwan and Mainland China revealed some similarities and differences compared to the West. Like their Western counterparts, Chinese men value high earnings, job authority and job prestige more than Chinese women while Chinese women value social relations and job autonomy more than Chinese men. However, contrary to their Western counterparts, Chinese men place greater importance on the sense of achievement, creativity and intellectual stimulation than Chinese women and Chinese women place more importance on job security than Chinese men (Chow & Ngo, 2002; Hu, 2006; Bu & McKeen, 2001). The differences in work values between China and the West have been attributed to socio-cultural differences between these societies. In societies with Confucian tradition (e.g., China, Japan, and Korea), the sense of achievement, creativity and intellectual development are much encouraged for men, but not encouraged for women (Wong, 2002).

In this study, we hypothesize that *(H1) Chinese men place more importance on job characteristics of high income, prestige, authority, personal interest, sense of achievement, and promotion opportunities than Chinese women, whereas Chinese women place more importance on short hours, autonomy, job security, social relations, and opportunity to help others than Chinese men.*

Gender Differences in Work Values and Marriage and Family Statuses

Research on gender differences in work values attributes some of the differences (e.g., time demands, job autonomy, and earnings) to gendered roles in society (Marini et al., 1996; Tolbert & Moen, 1998). The effects of marriage and childbearing have been closely linked with work-family role conflict (De Vaus & McAllister, 1991; Wiersma, 1990). Women enter marriage at earlier ages than men and take on the larger share of childbearing and rearing responsibilities. Married women, particularly those who have children, often engage in less demanding and lower paying jobs so that they can combine family life with their career (Beauregard, 2007).

Some Chinese studies showed that family responsibilities reduce women's job involvement, though no studies have examined how work values are related to marital and family status. For example, Zhang and colleagues (2008) found that being a mother, in a sense, means that women would confront with some challenges such as career breaks after childbirth, low-status jobs and a disproportionate share of family responsibility. Cao and Chai (2007) found that marriage and childbearing reduce the competence of women in the labor market and affect women's employment and career development.

Since women are more likely to be married and take on the primary responsibility for housework and childcare after marriage, this may lead them to placing more importance on job characteristics that allow them to balance work and family responsibilities, such as short work hours, job autonomy and job security, and placing less importance on job characteristics that mainly fulfill personal interest or status advancement, such as job prestige, job authority and promotional opportunities. In this study, we test the hypothesis that *(H2) Gender differences in work values are partially explained by gender differences in marriage and family statuses.*

Gender Differences in Work Values and Socioeconomic Status and Occupational Characteristics

Gender differences in SES and occupational achievements have been well studied in the Western countries (Acker, 1990; Johnson & Mortimer, 2002; Lee & Rojewski, 2009; Williams et al., 2012). In general, women still lag behind men in education attainment in many developing countries (Domenico & Jones, 2006). Women are more likely to have lower paying jobs and even with the same job, they are paid less than men (Hausmann et al., 2011). In the West, SES background was found to affect occupational aspirations and vocational development. People with higher education value self-improvement, self-realization, decision-making power, and opportunities for development more in work (Johnson & Elder, 2002). More educated people also have higher expectations for better paying jobs and career advancement (Domenico & Jones, 2006).

The relationship between income and work values is less clear. People with higher income may value higher earnings more because in a capitalist society success is often measured with higher earnings. However, Maslow's theory of human motivation suggests that the most basic level of needs (physiological and safety) must be met before an individual will strongly desire the higher level needs (love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization) (Maslow, 1943). Thus, people with lower income may desire more earnings because they need the money to meet their physical needs. With regard to the relationship between occupational characteristics and work values, some scholars suggest that people's work values reflect their adaptations to different structural conditions; regardless of gender, fewer opportunities and less authority in workplace lead to lower interest in career advancement and greater interest in social rewards (Kanter, 1977). Since women are more likely than men to be in positions with relatively fewer opportunities and less influence, they tend to value career advancement less and value social rewards more. Some studies showed that there are no gender differences in work values when people are in the same occupation in the U.S. (Gomez-Mejia, 1990).

Chinese studies have found similar results as Western studies. For instance, Chinese people with more education generally have higher demands for self-improvement, self-realization, personal growth, and opportunities for development (Li et al., 2008; Liu & Zhao, 2001). However, these studies have not examined education attainment as a potential mediating factor in the relationship between gender and work values. Recent educational statistics showed that except for Doctoral degrees, the percentage of female students in higher education is slightly higher than that of male students (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2010).

The 2010 survey also showed a narrowed gender gap in education attainment among Chinese adults aged 18-64 years old: narrowed to 0.3 years from the 1.5 years a decade ago (All-China Women's Federation, 2011). Therefore, it is important to explore whether there are gender differences in work values when Chinese women's education has substantially improved today.

In terms of occupational characteristics, Nielsen and Symth (2008)'s study of 32 cities of China found that blue-collar workers care more about job security and job stability and care less about income and promotion whereas the white-collar workers are more concerned about sense of achievement and job prestige. Ngo (2000)'s analysis of the 1991 and 1996 Hong Kong Census discovered that female workers are predominantly in clerical, service, and sales workers, while male workers are more represented in skilled, crafts and managerial positions. Similar to Hong Kong, mainland China is still characterized by a noticeable gender division of labor in the workplace. Thus, it is reasonable to explore the work value differences of men and women in different occupations.

In addition to SES and occupational characteristics, Chinese Communist Party membership is also an important status symbol. Although political background is not as important and helpful for reward and promotion in China today as in the past, career advancement and earnings are still linked with Chinese Communist Party membership. Being a Communist Party member in China is almost a prerequisite for working in government agencies and for promotion, and party members are often viewed as more capable and responsible by job recruiters. Women, however, are underrepresented in the Communist Party; only 22% of over 80 million party members are women (China Daily, 2011). Zhang and colleagues (2008) suggest that Communist Party membership is one of the reasons causing gender gap in labor market outcomes in China. No previous studies, however, have looked at the relationship between party membership and work values. Since an individual must demonstrate altruism and willingness to serve the country and others and forfeit material needs in order to become a party member, the Communist Party members can be expected to place greater importance on intrinsic work values and serving others and place less importance on extrinsic work values than non-party members.

Based on the literature reviewed above, we test the hypothesis that *(H3) Gender differences in work values can be explained in part by gender differences in SES and occupational characteristics.*

Methods

Data

Data for this study come from the 2005 Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS), which was jointly conducted by the Division of Social Science of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and the Department of Sociology of Renmin University of China. CGSS is an annual/biannual survey of a nationally representative sample of adults aged 18 or above in both urban and rural China (except for Tibet) since 2003, and it tracks economic, political, social, and cultural changes and public opinions. We used CGSS 2005 since this is the only year questions on work values were asked. The sampling frame was China's 2000 population census. The survey used the multistage stratified sampling method with unequal probabilities of selection. The four main stages include (1) 125 principal sampling units selected from 2,798 county or county-level districts, stratified by region, rural and urban populations, and education levels; (2) four townships, town seats and city sub-districts (streets) selected; (3) two urban neighborhood committees and rural villager committees selected; and (4) ten households selected and then one eligible household member was selected to be the survey respondent. The CGSS 2005 includes 10,372 Chinese adults aged 18 years or over who were interviewed in person with a response rate of 53% (Bian & Li, 2012). After deleting missing cases, 4,897 men and 5,435 women are included in the analytical sample.

Measures

Work Values

The question on work values asked: "People want to get some benefits or rewards from their work. Among the following work rewards, which one do you want to get first, second and third?" The choices were: (a) high income; (b) long-term job security; (c) social prestige and respect; (d) more authority; (e) satisfy personal interest; (f) opportunity for promotion; (g) short working hours; (h) extend personal social network; (i) serve the public and society; (j) display personal intelligence and attain sense of achievement; and (k) more free time. Three variables included in the data file recorded respondents' first, second and third ranked work values.

Based on this information, we created one variable for each work value item with four categories: first ranked (coded 4), second ranked (coded 3) and third ranked (coded 2), and not ranked (coded 1).

Marriage and Family Statuses

Measures of marriage and family statuses include marital status (currently married, divorced/separated, widowed, and never married) and the number of children. One variable was created to indicate the total number of children the respondent has who are living either inside or outside the household. We also created a variable indicating the number of children under age 18 living in the household since these children have a stronger impact on women's time allocation (Cao and Chai, 2007). The total number of children and the number of children under age 18 in household are moderately correlated ($r=.20$).

Socioeconomic Status and Occupational Characteristics

Measures of SES and occupational characteristics include education, party membership, occupation type, work hours, earnings, and job benefits. Education was measured with the highest year of education completed. We include a dummy variable to indicate whether the respondent is a Communist Party member. Occupation was grouped into six categories: professional, manager and technician; clerical and service; skilled labor; semiskilled and unskilled labor; never worked; and farmer. Paid work hours are the average number of hours the respondent works for pay per week.

For earnings, respondents were asked, "How much is your total income in 2004 including salary, bonus, allowance, dividends, insurance, pension and interest on banking accounts?" Mean substitution was used to replace missing data in this variable and a dummy variable was created to indicate these missing cases. For job benefits, a count of available benefits (free medical care, basic and supplemental medical insurances, basic and supplemental retirement insurance, unemployment insurance, and housing allowance) was calculated.

Demographic Variables

Gender was dummy coded (female=1). Age (years since birth), residence (urban versus rural) and ethnicity (Han versus others) were controlled for in all multivariate analyses.

Statistical Procedures

All results were weighted so that the findings can be generalized to the larger Chinese adult population. First, descriptive statistics stratified by gender were analyzed. T-tests and Chi-square tests were used to test the significance of gender differences. Second, ordinal logistic regression models were estimated to examine gender differences in work values. For each work value item, four hierarchical models were estimated. The first model includes gender and all control variables to determine if men and women differ on each work value when controlling for age, Han ethnicity and urban/rural residency. The second model adds marital status and number of children to model 1 to determine if the gender effect on each work value is explained by marriage and family status. The third model adds SES and job characteristics to model 2 to determine if the gender effect on that work value is explained by SES and job characteristics. Since rural areas of China are more traditional and less developed compared to urban areas and this could shape the expectations of men and women in both work and nonwork spheres, we also ran analysis including an interaction term between gender and urban/rural residence, but few of the interaction terms were statistically significant.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics in Table 1 show that there are significant differences between men and women in marriage and family status, SES and occupational characteristics. For marital status, a higher percentage of women than men are married and widowed. However, a higher percentage of men than women are never married and divorced. The total number of children is greater for women than for men, though the difference is very small. Also, the total number of children under 18 living in the household is greater for women than for men. For SES, the percentage of men being a party member is higher than their female counterparts. Men receive more education than women. Men are more likely to have a professional, managerial or technical job and have a skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled job. At the same time, women are more likely to have a clerical or service job, be a farmer, or have never worked. In addition, men reported working longer hours for pay, having higher earnings, and getting more job benefits than women.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics by gender

	Men (N=4,897)		Women (N=5,435)		<i>p</i>
	Mean/Percent	Std	Mean/Percent	Std	
<i>Marriage and Family Status</i>					
Marital status					***
Married	84.4		87.5		
Never married	11.0		6.3		
Divorced	1.5		0.9		
Widowed	3.1		5.3		
Number of children (0-9)	1.50	(1.14)	1.58	(1.11)	***
Number of children under 18 in HH (0-7)	.66	(.81)	.73	(.79)	***
<i>SES and Occupational Characteristics</i>					
Party (Yes)	16.9		4.5		***
Education (0-20)	8.69	(4.50)	7.03	(4.82)	***
Occupation type					***
Prof/managerial/tech	18.2		13.0		
Clerical/service	14.0		16.0		
Skilled/labor	14.1		12.5		
Semi/unskilled labor	13.9		5.6		
Farmer	36.7		44.0		
Not work	3.0		8.9		
Weekly working hours (0-168)	51.09	(18.38)	47.02	(21.48)	***
Total income in 2004 (in ¥ 1000)	9.62	(14.21)	5.99	(10.16)	***
Missing income	2.2		3.4		***
Job benefits (0-7)	1.24	(2.05)	.81	(1.70)	***
<i>Control Variables</i>					
Age (18-94)	45.42	(15.06)	43.53	(14.05)	***
Urban	51.3		52.0		
Han	92.9		93.5		

Note: All results are weighted.

p indicates significance of gender differences from t-tests or Chi-square tests: ⁺ *p* < .1, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

Gender Differences in Work Values

Table 2 presents the distribution of the ranking of each work value item by gender. The general ranking patterns are quite similar for men and women. For both men and women, most rank high earnings as the first choice, followed by job security and job prestige. However, there are gender differences in the percentage distributions. A higher percentage of women than men rank high earnings and job security as first, but a lower percentage of women than men rank job prestige as first. Although the numbers of respondents choosing the other work value items are small, there are statistically significant gender differences in the ranking of job authority, job promotion, short work time, serving people, sense of achievement and job autonomy. A higher percentage of men than women choose job authority, job promotion, serving people or sense of achievement as the top three work values. A slightly lower percentage of women than men rank short work time as the first choice, but a much higher percentage of women rank it as a second or third choice. For job autonomy, the percentage of ranking it as the first choice is the same for men and women. Men are slightly more likely than women to rank it as the second choices, but they are less likely than women to rank it as the third choice, and overall a higher percentage of men than women do not rank it as the top three choices. There are no significant gender differences in ranking job interest and social relations.

Table 2: Cross tabulation of job rewards by gender

	Men (N=4,897)				Women (N=5,435)				P
	1st ranked	2nd ranked	3rd ranked	not ranked	1st ranked	2nd ranked	3rd ranked	not ranked	
High earnings	50.0	17.7	8.6	23.7	53.9	18.0	7.2	20.9	***
Job security	22.5	26.3	9.2	42.1	23.2	29.2	8.7	38.9	**
Job prestige	6.8	12.3	12.9	67.9	4.8	10.8	11.5	73.0	***
Job authority	2.3	7.0	7.6	83.2	1.7	5.7	6.1	86.6	***
Job interest	4.3	9.4	11.4	74.9	3.7	9.4	10.8	76.1	
Job promote	.7	2.6	4.4	92.3	.6	2.0	3.7	93.7	+
Short work time	1.3	4.8	8.1	85.8	1.2	7.3	12.4	79.1	***
Job social relations	.5	2.1	4.6	92.8	.3	1.8	4.5	93.4	
Serving people	2.3	3.8	6.7	87.2	1.6	2.4	5.5	90.4	***
Sense of achievement	4.1	5.5	10.9	79.5	2.4	3.7	9.2	84.7	***
Job autonomy	1.8	3.9	8.8	85.5	1.7	3.2	11.7	83.4	***

Note: weighted percentages.

p indicates significance of Chi-square tests of gender differences: ⁺ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

After controlling for age, urban/rural residency and ethnicity, gender differences in work values are still significant (Table 3). The most substantial gender differences are in the ranking of short work time and sense of achievement; women’s odds of ranking short work time higher are 58% more than men’s, while their odds of ranking sense of achievement higher are 35% less than men’s. In addition, the odds for women to rank high earnings, job autonomy and job security higher are 15%, 14% and 10% respectively more than the odds for men. On the other hand, women are less likely than men to have higher ranking on serving people, job authority, job promotion and job prestige (OR=.74-.80). There is no significant gender difference in the ranking of social relations and the gender difference in the ranking of job interest is only marginally significant.

Table 3: Odds ratios from ordinal logistic regressions of work values on gender and control variables (Model 1)

	High earnings	Security	Prestige	Authority	Interest	Promotion	Short work time	Social relations	Serving people	Sense of achievement	Autonomy
Women	1.15***	1.10**	0.80***	0.76***	0.92+	0.78**	1.58***	0.88	0.74***	0.65***	1.14*
Age	0.98***	1.00**	1.02***	1.00*	0.99***	0.98***	1.00	0.98***	1.02***	0.98***	1.00*
Han	0.89	1.15+	0.96	1.57***	0.91	1.04	0.95	1.80**	1.21	1.51***	0.99
Urban	0.71***	1.29***	0.92+	1.32***	1.17**	1.57***	0.70***	1.22*	0.99	1.42***	1.05

Note: N=10,332. Results are weighted. ⁺ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Thus, the results partially support our first hypothesis that there are gender differences in work values in China. Men place more importance on job prestige, job authority, sense of achievement and job promotion, while women place more importance on short working hours, job autonomy and job security. However, the results are not all consistent with our predictions. For example, we predicted that men value high earnings more than women and the results show that men value it less. Also, we predicted that women value serving people more than men, but the results show that women value it less. Finally, we predict that women value social relations more than men but the results show no gender difference.

Gender Differences in Work Values and Marriage and Family Statuses

When marital status, number of children, and number of children under 18 in the household are added to the models, the associations between gender and work values do not change much (see Table 4). Only the gender difference in ranking job interest becomes non-significant. Marriage and numbers of children seem to explain the relationship between gender and valuing job interest; Table 1 shows that women are more likely to be married and having more children than men, and Table 4 shows that people who are married and with more children have a lower ranking on job interest than those who are never married and have fewer children.

Table 4: Odds ratios from ordinal logistic regressions of work values on gender, marriage, family status, and control variables (Model 2)

	High earnings	Security	Prestige	Authority	Interest	Promotion	Short work time	Social relations	Serving people	Sense of achievement	Autonomy
Women	1.14**	1.07+	0.80***	0.78***	0.96	0.78**	1.57***	0.89	0.73***	0.66***	1.13*
Age	0.98***	0.99***	1.02***	1.00	1.00*	0.98***	1.00	0.99**	1.01***	0.98***	0.99**
Han	0.89	1.14	0.97	1.57**	0.89	1.04	0.96	1.83**	1.19	1.49**	0.99
Urban	0.72***	1.29***	0.96	1.29***	1.10*	1.61***	0.70***	1.23*	1.03	1.37***	1.07
Marital status (ref=Married)											
Divorced	1.13	0.94	1.20	1.26	0.68+	1.05	0.96	0.67	0.98	0.55*	1.10
Widowed	0.78*	1.06	0.98	0.75+	0.76*	0.79	0.98	1.10	0.76+	0.76	1.11
Never married	0.72***	0.54***	1.08	1.10	1.34**	1.09	0.90	1.32+	0.86	1.06	0.97
Children	0.97	0.95*	1.08**	0.96	0.94*	1.09	0.96	1.01	1.09**	0.96	1.06+
Children < 18 in HH	1.04	0.98	1.01	1.03	0.96	0.96	1.09*	1.05	0.92+	0.94	0.96

Note: N=10,332. Results are weighted. + $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

In addition, the largest noticeable attenuation in gender differences in work values is in the ranking of job security; the difference is only marginally significant when marital and family status variables are added. Women are more likely to be married than men (see Table 1) and married people are more likely to value job security than those who have never married (see Table 4). Thus marital status seems to explain the relationship between gender and valuing job security. Marital status also affects the importance placed on earnings. Those who are currently married rank earnings higher than those who are widowed or never married, but this does not seem to explain much of the gender difference in ranking high earnings. Similarly, the number of children under age 18 in the household increases the ranking of short work time, but it does not seem to explain much of the gender differences in ranking short work time.

Gender Differences in Work Values and Socioeconomic Status and Occupational Characteristics

When SES and occupational characteristics are added to the regression models, the associations between gender and work values change more substantially (see Table 5).

Table 5: Odds ratios from ordinal logistic regressions of work values on gender, marriage, family status, SES, occupational characteristics, and control variables (Model 3)

	High earnings	Security	Prestige	Authority	Interest	Promotion	Short work time	Social relations	Serving people	Sense of achievement	Autonomy
Women	1.04	1.04	0.84***	0.75***	1.02	0.80*	1.53***	0.94	0.82**	0.80***	1.14*
Age	0.98***	0.99***	1.02***	1.00	1.00	0.97***	1.00	0.99*	1.01***	0.99***	0.99*
Han	0.94	1.15+	0.95	1.55**	0.85+	1.02	1.00	1.75**	1.12	1.34*	0.99
Urban	0.99	1.19**	1.01	1.19*	0.95	1.49**	0.95	0.87	0.71**	0.83*	0.89
Marital status (ref=Married)											
Divorced	1.08	0.92	1.25	1.21+	0.66+	1.07	0.97	0.68	1.03	0.56*	1.10
Widowed	0.76**	1.02	1.04	0.75	0.80+	0.79	0.95	1.11	0.81	0.86	1.11
Never married	0.74***	0.55***	1.17	1.09	1.37**	1.17	0.91	1.22	0.88	1.16	0.91
Children	0.96+	0.95*	1.09***	0.98	0.95+	1.10+	0.94*	1.02	1.10**	1.00	1.06+
Children < 18 in HH	1.02	0.98	1.01	1.02	0.98	0.96	1.08*	1.07	0.94	0.9	0.97
Education	0.98***	1.00	1.01+	1.00	1.05***	0.99	0.98**	1.02	1.04***	1.08***	1.00
Party member	0.67***	0.99	1.21**	0.64***	0.81*	1.18	1.15	1.10	1.40***	1.23*	0.95
Occupation (ref=Professional/managerial/tech)											
Clerical/Service	1.17*	1.24**	0.80**	1.23*	0.85*	1.14	1.22+	0.88	0.83+	0.87	0.96
Skilled/labor	1.12	1.35***	0.84*	1.29*	0.93	1.22	1.21+	0.77+	0.58***	0.93	0.85
Semi/unskilled labor	1.15+	1.33***	0.71***	1.03	0.91	1.04	1.32*	0.83	0.61***	0.99	0.95
Farmer	1.39***	0.84*	1.03	1.04	1.00	0.96	1.42**	0.62**	0.57***	0.76*	0.85
Not worked	0.83	0.83	0.55***	0.73	1.10	0.66+	1.43*	1.13	0.68+	0.95	1.59**
Income	1.00	0.98***	1.00	1.01+	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.01*	0.99+	1.01*	1.01**
Missing income	1.06	0.82+	0.96*	0.77**	0.84	0.31**	1.02	1.32	1.11	1.75***	1.36*
Weekly work hours	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.99***	1.00	1.00	1.01**	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00+
Job benefits	0.99	0.97*	1.01	1.01	1.04*	1.02	0.96*	0.98	1.00	1.02	1.04*

Note: N=10,332. Results are weighted. + $p < .1$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Gender differences in the rankings of high earnings and job security become non-significant. Thus these gender differences are fully explained by gender differences in SES and occupational characteristics. We see from Table 1 that women receive less education, are less likely to be a Chinese Communist Party member, are more likely to have a clerical or service job, and are more likely to be a farmer, and we see from Table 5, those with less education, being a non-party member, having a clerical/service or farming job place greater value on high earnings. Lower income and fewer job benefits are significantly associated with ranking job security higher which explains the attenuation of gender differences in valuing job security when these variables are added.

Substantial attenuations in gender differences also occur in the rankings of serving others and sense of achievement although they remain statistically significant. Education, party membership and having a professional, managerial or technical job are significantly associated with ranking higher on serving people, and thus women's lower ranking on serving people can be in part explained by their lacking of these characteristics as shown in Table 1. Education, party membership, and earnings are positively associated with the ranking of sense of achievement which helps explain the reduction in gender difference in valuing sense of achievement when SES and occupational characteristics are added. In addition, gender differences in the rankings of prestige, promotion, and short work time also decrease, but to a lesser extent. Taken together, the results provide strong support for our third hypothesis that gender differences in work values can be explained in part by gender differences in SES and job characteristics.

Discussion

This study examined gender differences in work values in China and the factors that explain these differences, including marriage, family status, SES, and occupational characteristics. The first hypothesis that there are gender differences in work values in China is supported (see Tables 2 and 3). The results corroborate those of previous Chinese studies using other samples (e.g., Chow & Ngo, 2002; Hu, 2006), and indicate that men attach more importance to job prestige, job authority, sense of achievement, and job promotion while women attach more importance to short work time, job autonomy and job security. Seen as a key pillar of economic security in most families, men's success is largely measured by the degree of their career advancement. Women may also hope for career development, but the majority of Chinese women would ultimately put family first, and reduces the pursuit of work accomplishments in order to balance work-family conflicts.

As gender roles assign men the financial responsibility for the family, it might be presumed that men should value earnings more than women. But we found that, on the contrary, Chinese women value earnings more than men. It is possible that because of the increasing gender pay gap in the market economy (Cohen & Wang, 2009; Zhang et al., 2008), women's awareness of pay inequality along with their increased labor force participation have led them to desire higher earnings and greater gender equality in the workplace.

The second hypothesis that gender differences in work values are partially explained by gender differences in marriage and family statuses received limited support. We saw few changes in gender differences in work values when marital and family statuses were added. These findings suggest that perhaps it is not the marital and family statuses *per se*, but what people do in their marriage and family life, that explains gender differences in work values. Future research with more detailed information on how men and women shoulder their responsibilities in housework and childcare may shed more light on these issues.

The third hypothesis that gender differences in work values can be explained in part by gender differences in SES and occupational characteristics is strongly supported. SES and occupational characteristics fully explained the relationship between gender and valuing high earnings and job security. Women now value high earnings more because they have received lower education, are not a Communist Party member or have a clerical or service job. Women value job security more because they have a clerical or service job, earn lower income or have fewer job benefits. These findings further attest to the impact of gender inequality in SES and occupational segregation on values and attitudes.

Additionally, men's higher rankings on serving people and sense of achievement than women are associated with men receiving higher education, being a Communist Party member, having a professional, managerial or technical job or earning higher income. It is possible that people with more education and professional occupations value more the intrinsic job awards, such as sense of achievement, self-realization, and the meaning of work (Nielsen & Symth, 2008). Nevertheless, the finding that those with more education rank lower on high earnings is somewhat unexpected.

With the expansion of college enrollment in China since 1999, more students have had the opportunity to go to college. However, the value of a college degree may have declined with increased employment pressure. It is not easy for students with a Bachelor or even a Master degree to find a decent job (Wu & Zheng, 2008), and as a result most graduates are willing to accept low-paying jobs.

Although our findings on gender differences in work values are generally consistent with previous research, the current study has several limitations. First, because the survey was conducted in 2005, the data may be somewhat outdated. China has undergone rapid economic development since 2005 which may have led to changes in work values. Although more recent Chinese General Social Surveys are available, work value questions were not asked in the later surveys, and thus it is not possible to directly conduct a trend analysis. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to believe that the gendered patterns we found in work values still hold true today. According to the three national surveys on the social status of women conducted by All-China Women's Federation and the National Bureau of Statistics of China in 1990, 2000, and 2010, many of the changes in gender relations which took place between 1990 and 2000 continued in the same direction from 2000 to 2010 (All-China Women's Federation, 2011; Attane, 2012). For example, employment rates for urban women have fallen from 76.3% in 1990, to 63.7% and to 60.8% in 2010, and the average income for urban women as of men's has decreased from 77.5% in 1990, to 70.1% in 2000, and to 67.3% in 2010. In addition, the division of household labor remains deeply gendered; in both 2000 and 2010, women shared more than 70% of the total time devoted to housework (Attane, 2012). In the meantime, support for traditional gender roles has increased from 2000 to 2010 among both women and men. Based on this information, we can expect that work values remain gendered today as they were in 2005, though this hypothesis needs to be empirically tested with new data collection effort in the future.

Second, additional factors, such as family socioeconomic status, ownership type of an enterprise, and specific job characteristics may also affect work values and can be taken into consideration (Xie & Li, 2009). People could have different career perceptions and expectations under different work environments. For example, workers in foreign-invested enterprises may be more concerned about job interest, while workers in state-owned enterprises may be more concerned about job security. Other job characteristics, such as job authority, autonomy, security and physical demands, may also influence work attitudes. Third, due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, the causal directions between the theorized explaining factors, such as marital and family statuses, SES and occupational characteristics, and work values cannot be ascertained. The relationships between them could be reciprocal. For example, marriage, family status and occupations can determine work values, but it is also possible that work values affect an individual's family life and career choice. Future research needs to collect longitudinal data on these variables in order to gain a better understanding of the causal relationships among these variables.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive investigation of gender differences in work values in China. It shows that these differences do exist and they are mainly explained by gender differences in SES and occupational characteristics rather than by marriage and family statuses. Since gender stereotype and gender inequality are the root causes of gender differences in work values, greater effort should be made to change gender roles and promote gender equality in both private and public spheres, which in turn, will facilitate both men and women to realize their full potentials.

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