

# **Women in Top Ranks Pull Up the Pay of Others**

## Study Says Existing Salary Gap Fades When Female Managers Are in Charge

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MONTREAL -- American women earn substantially more money and narrow the long-standing gender gap in income if other women in their workplaces reach the ranks of senior management, according to a new national study presented here.

By contrast, the study found, increasing the number of women managers in junior positions makes no difference to the gender gap -- women on average continue to earn about 20 percent less than men.

Surprisingly, men who work for women managers seem to do slightly worse in income than men who work for men, irrespective of whether the women managers are in senior positions.

The study answers for the first time what happens to workers when women break through the glass ceiling, and is based on 1.3 million American workers in nearly 30,000 jobs and 79 metropolitan areas.

"The glass ceiling is about all women, not just women who become managers," said Philip N. Cohen, a sociologist at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who announced the study here Friday at the 101st meeting of the American Sociological Association. "If women break through the glass ceiling, it helps other women."

The study comes at a time when there has been renewed discussion of gender roles in America. From talk of a 2008 presidential race between Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the movie "The Devil Wears Prada," there are often unstated political, cultural and economic implications attached to the idea of women acquiring power.

Cohen said the study of gender and income disparities is more complicated than it looks. For example, while it is true that employees who work for women seem to be penalized, compared with those who work for men, that is largely because women tend to become managers in professions that have a lot of women to begin with -- and those professions usually pay less than professions with a lot of men.

Men work in jobs that are 70 percent male on average; women work in jobs that are 70 percent female on average. Jobs with similar educational requirements can pay very differently: Truck drivers earn far more than nurse's aides, for example, and corporate lawyers earn more than family lawyers, Cohen said.

"Nothing stops you from paying a nurse's aide less than a truck driver," Cohen said. "That is not against any law."

Even within the same industry, or within a single company, women tend to be distributed unequally in high- and low-profile divisions, said Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, a sociologist at the City University of New York and the president of the sociology association. One reason men are more likely to reach upper management, Fuchs added, is that the express elevators to the top -- high-profile jobs -- tend to be filled with men, whereas the elevators that stop at more floors along the way tend to be filled with women.

There is a stereotype in the United States that women who become bosses are ruthless and that they treat female subordinates worse than they treat men. Advocates for diversity, by contrast, have long argued that opening the management door to women is not only the right thing to do but will lead to more equitable workplaces in general. Cohen's study is the first empirical evidence that these advocates are right -- but only when women get to very senior positions.

Cohen and University of California at Irvine sociologist Matt L. Huffman found that women earn about 81 percent of what men make, and that figure remains unchanged when the number of junior-level women managers rises from 2 percent to more than 50 percent. But when women become senior managers, female workers earn 91 percent of men's salaries.

The sociologists used data from the 2000 census that asked Americans about their professional lives, including the industry they work in and their incomes. The sociologists then compared the information against what was known about the ratio of male and female managers in particular industries, and how senior the female managers were in each of those local industries. They accounted for dozens of other variables, including race, geographic location, size of workers' families, education and experience.

For example, the sociologists found 1,887 restaurant managers in the Los Angeles area and 10,422 restaurant workers. There were far more

female restaurant managers in Los Angeles than in New York, but the Los Angeles female managers were more likely to be low-level. Consistent with the study's findings, women restaurant workers in New York earned 95 percent of the pay of their male counterparts, while workers in Los Angeles earned 92 percent of what men made.

Cohen and Huffman said there are multiple possible explanations of why men seem to earn less money with female managers than with men. One possibility is that the gender gap in income is not just because women are underpaid, but because men are overpaid, and the slight decline in men's wages is bringing their salaries into line with actual productivity. But it is also possible that to get gender equity, the extra money for women has to come from somewhere, and it partly comes from higher-paid men.

The income study was part of an array of gender issues discussed at the sociologists' meeting. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who spoke at the meeting Friday, noted that she is now the only woman on the high court and called for redressing enduring disparities in the judiciary. Since Sandra Day O'Connor's retirement, Ginsburg said, "I have been all alone in my corner on the bench."