

Women and Wealth: Does the Combination Equal Divorce?

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Ongoing efforts to address women's rights have done wonders to allow women to succeed in their careers. Your office very likely consists of an equal representation of men and women, and you probably have many women in senior roles.

Although this is a positive reality when it comes to gender equality, a recent Cornell University study has produced a theory that, if true, could mean that women in senior, high-income professional roles might be taking a great risk.

What's the risk? A cheating husband.

And because infidelity is one of the leading causes of divorce, the ultimate cost of a woman making "*a lot*" more money than her husband could be that her marriage ends in [divorce](#). Keep in mind, however, that the researchers in the study did not find that husbands always cheat when they earn less; rather, the role of income differences played a definite, significant role in the rate of infidelity.

When a woman earns a much higher income the study shows that she is also more likely to cheat than a woman who earns less than her husband. Researchers suggest that the reason behind that behavior is because women feel less dependent on their husbands when they earn enough to support themselves and, therefore, they feel freer to seek satisfaction outside of their marriages.

As for why men, according to research, cheat on their wives who earn more money, researchers think that men have affairs in order to reassert their power as the stereotypically dominant sex. They are trying to compensate for the lack of masculinity they feel as the low-income earners by asserting control in another aspect of their lives.

The complete Cornell University study will be shared next week at an American Sociological Association meeting. Because of the study's results, the project is somewhat risky in its conclusion. Should women be afraid to pursue advancement in their careers because their successes might result in [divorce](#)?

That's a dangerous message.

Perhaps when the researchers present their entire project they will include a message that addresses how families can avoid divorce despite different income levels. Our country is in the midst of a recession, and that means that many women have had to go back to work and are probably making more than their husbands who have been laid off from work.

Therefore, if the Cornell study is correct, their findings, combined with the current economy, could create a perfect storm that would destroy countless marriages in its path.

Resource

Bloomberg Businessweek: [Infidelity Rises When She Makes More Than He Does](#) (8/16/2010)

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