

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/interactions-with-powerful-female-colleagues-promote-diversity-in-hiring/>

The study examines whether working with women influences federal appellate judges in hiring female clerks. The context is the federal appellate court system, where judges have significant power and their clerkships are critical for future legal careers. Currently, women represent about 25% of appellate judges but make up around 40% of clerks, despite over half of recent law graduates being female. This video indicates that women are underrepresented in top legal positions compared to their male counterparts.

Previous research in social psychology suggests that working with diverse individuals can reduce prejudice and change attitudes. The study utilizes a unique setting in appellate courts, where judges are randomly assigned to cases and staff (clerks) to analyze how interactions with female colleagues affect hiring decisions. The findings reveal that increased interactions with women lead to a higher likelihood of hiring female clerks, specifically a 7% increase for each standard deviation rise in such interactions.

However, the effect does not persist over time, suggesting that while exposure to female colleagues positively influences hiring decisions, it does not lead to permanent changes in attitudes. The study implies that fostering workplace diversity at high levels (like judicial appointments) may create a feedback loop, promoting more gender diversity in lower ranks and ultimately benefiting the legal profession.

The broader implications of the research suggest that meaningful interactions among diverse groups can reduce prejudice and improve workplace dynamics, calling for policies that encourage such interactions to combat societal segregation and its negative effects.