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Gender Inequality in the Legal Market

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Where are women in the legal market?

Women are getting into the legal profession worldwide, but not at the top. Though women have nearly equalled men in new hires at large law firms, they still hold a disproportionately small number of leadership positions.

Women are economically disadvantaged by gender disparities everywhere in the world, which leads to glaring economic imbalances. Despite making up half of the world's working-age population, women only comprise roughly a third of the labour force internationally. In comparison to men, about 700 million fewer women are employed. Even when they are, they frequently labour in less secure positions with fewer career opportunities, worse working conditions, and lower pay. It is also generally known that women's participation in various economic activities, such as asset ownership and involvement in financial markets, is still far less widespread than that of men.

Women are underrepresented in top positions in the corporate, financial, and legal sectors and among top earners. For example, women's presence is 29.1% of all lawyers in the legal profession. It has been observed that women holding positions in Law firms also differ from below to top-level firms. As 45.34% of associates and 18.74% of partners at large law firms, which is way less than the man holding the position as we move more to the top level, the presence of women is diminishing.

Compared to other professions, the legal sector has some of the most significant gender gaps in leadership positions, despite entry levels being near parity for many years.





Why do gender gaps in the legal sector emerge at a particular point in a career's trajectory? Does the legal profession have gender disparities all over the world? If this is the case, how have they evolved over time and across countries?

The closing of the gender gap in legal education resulted in a rapid increase in female employment in a previously male-dominated field. Nonetheless, **gender disparities persist, particularly in some of the world's leading law firms.** Multinational law firms are taking a larger share of the global market. However, they also face similar gender imbalances along the career path, with rough parity at entry-level positions and a significant gender imbalance skewed towards men at the highest levels of the organisation.

A comparison of various countries

The average proportion of women among new associates has risen in many countries, reaching parity in the most recent cohorts. Moreover, over time, more females were hired in entry-level positions in countries with sizeable initial gender gaps, such as France. However, after the 2008 financial crisis, no new female lawyers in entry-level positions were hired in some countries, including Japan and Sweden.

We note that the proportion of women among associates increased in most countries between 2004 and 2011; in Poland, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Hong Kong, the proportion reached 50% or higher. However, there is a significant gender gap at senior levels; in 2011, only Sweden had 50% female partners, while several countries had no female partners. This fact is noteworthy: closing the gender gap at entry levels while maintaining the gender gap at senior levels. The gap has closed at the entry level.



What occurs along the way?

Except in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Japan, we find a promotion gender gap in most countries: men are more likely than women to be promoted. However, at the highest level of promotion, from managing associate to partner, the gender gap in promotion probability is smaller.

Women perceive an unfair playing field. Only 14% of males share this concern, compared to more than 60% of women who believe their gender will hinder their possibilities for success. Women are far less likely than males to believe that assignments and promotions at their company are determined by fair and impartial standards.

At the highest level of promotion, from managing associate to partner, the gender gap in promotion probability is smaller for women. The women's gender disparity is more than 50% in cases of promotion to higher position. It has been observed among S&P 500 companies; women account for only 5% of CEOs, 21% of board members and 26% of managers.

Among the top 10 UK law firms, only one has 30 percent female partners and therefore (just) makes it into 20-first's 'Progressing' category (the other nine are either 'Asleep' or 'Starting' to make progress).





EU members

First Women in the Legal Profession

COUNTRY	1 st WOMAN ADMITTED TO LAW FACULTY	1 st WOMAN LAW GRADUATE	1 st FEMALE LAWYER ADMITTED	1 st FEMALE JUDGE ADMITTED	1 st FEMALE LEGAL ACADEMIC
Belgium	1882	1923	1921	1948	1933
Czech Rep.				1930	
Denmark			1919	1933	
Estonia	1905		1935	After WW II	1939 (lecturer)

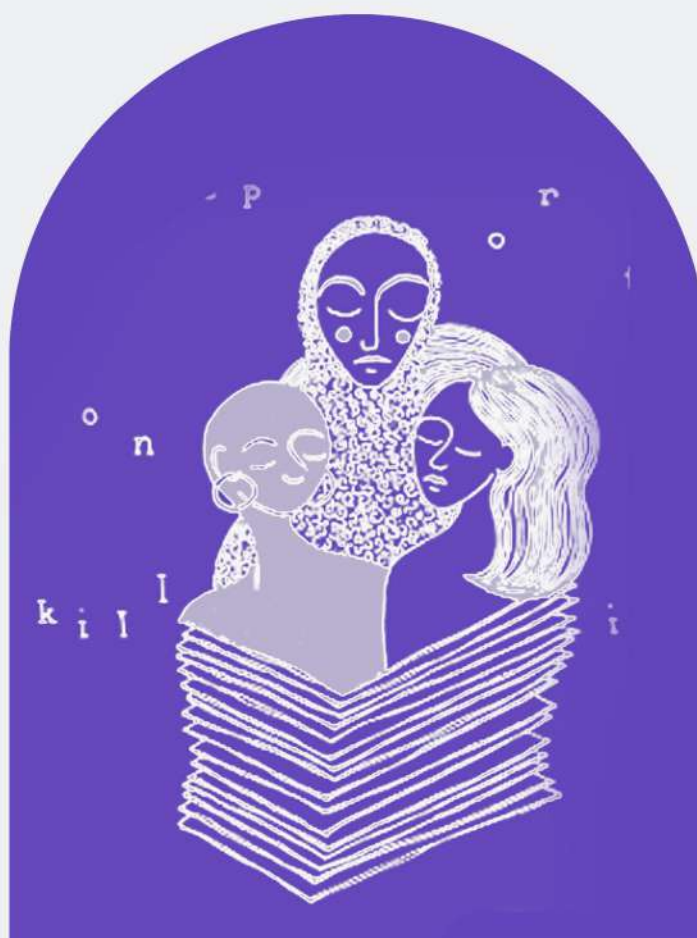
COUNTRY	1 st WOMAN ADMITTED TO LAW FACULTY	1 st WOMAN LAW GRADUATE	1 st FEMALE LAWYER ADMITTED	1 st FEMALE JUDGE ADMITTED	1 st FEMALE LEGAL ACADEMIC
Finland	1899	1906	Female lay advocates end of 19 th century	1930s	1961
France	1887	1897	1900	1946	1931
Germany	1900-1908	1912	1925/1926	1927	1965 law prof.
Italy	1976	(1777)	1919	1963	
Ireland			1920		
Netherlands	1897	1901	1903	1947	1932
Norway		1890		1968 (Supr. Court)	
Poland	1915		1925	1929	
Portugal			1918	1974	
Sweden	1912	1897/1918	1918		
England/Wales	1873	1917	1920-1922	1945/1956/ 1962/1965 ⁷ Appeal Court	
Scotland	1906	1912	1919		1990



Women were among the last to enter the legal profession. The constitutions passed in continental European countries during the nineteenth century contained equality principles, but women were omitted. **Women were systematically denied civil rights in the grand legislations' civil codes and were legally subordinate to their fathers and husbands. They were denied access to higher education and the professions because they were deemed unsuitable due to perceived gender characteristics. It was assumed they would jeopardise the professions' status, prestige, and income level.** The early women's movement harshly criticised this situation as discrimination and fought for women's admission to universities first, then to professions and public office.

With the introduction of a formal qualification system in education and professional orders, women could demonstrate that they could meet the set criteria.

Even though some countries had granted women access to legal professions at the beginning of the twentieth century, access to public office, the judiciary, and the prosecution were linked to full civic rights with suffrage. Moreover, women gained the right to vote in many Western European countries with new constitutions before or after World War I (ranging from Finland in 1906 to the United Kingdom in 1928). Still, in others, it took until after World War II (e.g., France in 1944, Hungary in 1945, and Italy in 1946), and in some countries even longer (e.g. Greece in 1952).





Until the 1950s, celibacy clauses in some countries required women in the civil service and the judiciary to leave their institutions upon marriage. Later, double-income earner discussions condemned women in the professions.

Eastern European countries were faster than Western European countries in granting women access to legal professions during communism. However, this did not guarantee them prestigious positions.

As previously demonstrated, the history of women in European legal professions is varied. The European Union's antidiscrimination policies and legislation eventually created a common legal framework. However, the social reality in the Member States still shows deficiencies in access to higher positions and income. **As a result, women in law were and continue to be more vulnerable than men.**

For a long time, legal professions were dominated by men.

INTERESTINGFACT #1

The first woman admitted to a law faculty in the United Kingdom was in 1873, Italy in 1876, France in 1887, and Germany between 1900 and 1908.





However, being admitted to university did not automatically grant them the right to pursue a law degree. Women first had the opportunity to graduate in the United Kingdom in 1917, Germany in 1912, and Norway and Sweden a little earlier in 1890 and 1897, respectively.

The next battleground for women was admission to practical training and practice. In Germany, for example, a special act allowing women to practise law was finally passed in 1922.

Women gained access to the legal profession in several countries at the beginning of the twentieth century but were not admitted as judges until decades later. In France and Italy, the first woman was admitted to the bar in 1900 and 1919, respectively, while the first woman was admitted to the judiciary in 1946 and 1963. Following the end of the Salazar regime in 1974, Portugal's first female judge was appointed.

A similar disparity existed between women's first access to advocacy and the judiciary in the United Kingdom and Ireland, albeit for different reasons. Access to judicial positions in these Common Law Countries is not based on academic qualifications, but rather on individual recruitment from among older and especially meritorious members of the bar. Women were not appointed to county or high courts until the 1960s and 1970s. The first female judge in Northern Ireland was appointed to a county court in 1998, and the first female high court judge was appointed in 2015.



INTERESTING FACT #2

The first female judge in Ireland was appointed in 1980.



Canada

As gender roles transform, the evidence shows the wage gap in Canada remains significant. **Over the last 70 years, women have successfully asserted themselves in the Canadian workforce.** In 1950, only 21.6 per cent of women aged 25 to 54 were working.

In 2015, that number was 82 per cent, according to the Canadian Women's Foundation. But as gender roles transformed and generations of women have been expected to earn a living, the evidence shows the gender wage gap remains significant.

In addition, Statistics Canada in 2018 found that women made 87 cents for every dollar earned by men. This disparity amounted to \$4.13 less per hour (\$26.92 versus \$31.05).

The legal profession is not immune. For example, **in a famous law firm in Canada, female equity partners made 25 per cent less than male partners, each of whom made \$200,000 more annually.**

Clara Brett Martin (25 January 1874 – 30 October 1923) was a Canadian lawyer. She opened the way for women to become lawyers in Canada by being the first in the British Empire in 1897.





UK 



After the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act received royal assent in 1919, it began to pave the way for women to become lawyers for the first time in the UK. Much has been achieved since then, but as in many professions, women working within the legal sector still face many distinct challenges.

The good news is that there have been significant advances. For example, women couldn't be members of the Law Society or Inns of Court until 1919, when Parliament forced the doors open with the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act. But, unfortunately, even steps as big as this do not mean the job is done. "Now women can get into the legal profession, but their barrier is to stay and to rise to the top."

According to the Law Society, women have represented more than 60% of entrants into the solicitor profession since 1990. Yet while just more than half of the practising solicitors are female, women account for only 30% of partners in private practice. The fact that women outnumber men entering the legal profession is significant, and the message to the next generation is that numbers do matter.

A survey of 3,500 families with opposite-gender parents by IFS and UCL Institute of Education looked at how domestic responsibilities and paid work are shared across all professions, not just law. Although the results demonstrate that fathers have taken on an increased share of childcare during the pandemic, it's important to note that this time remains 2.3 hours less than mothers. The report also indicates that "mothers in two-parent households are only doing, on average, a third of the uninterrupted paid-work hours of fathers".



China

In China's urban context of labour retrenchment, women are faring poorly relative to their male counterparts. Is the same true in China's incipient? Dynamic, and expanding legal profession? Findings from four sources of quantitative data suggest that gender inequality in China's private and higher market-driven legal profession is a microcosm of larger patterns of female disadvantage in China's evolving urban labour market.

Although employment opportunities for women lawyers have greatly expanded quantitatively, their careers are qualitatively less successful than those of their male counterparts in terms of both income and partnership status.

In the Chinese bar, women's significantly shorter career trajectories are perhaps the most important cause of their lower incomes and slimmer chances of becoming a law firm partner. Although employment opportunities for women lawyers have greatly expanded quantitatively, their careers are qualitatively less successful than those of their male counterparts in terms of both income and partnership status.





Australia

Among newly hired employees in Australia's top law firms in 2019, only 1 in 3 were women, and similarly, in our Federal Court, the current ratio of men to women was 3 to 1.

The reasons behind the underrepresentation of women in Australia's legal profession continue as a stark example of the sexist culture in our society.

In itself, the idea that a woman should be paid less than a man for carrying out the same task is absurd, but when accompanied by a heavily male-dominated system that dictates how far a woman can progress in the legal profession, (to the point where 90 percent of its senior positions are held by men), the undertaking of such roles as a female requires battling with an immense amount of ingrained sexism.

To create change, the culture we uphold must be based upon what we want to see for our world and be supportive of a system in which a woman can really succeed as much as her male peers, without being treated differently based on her gender. This is something we really can instigate into our own lives!





Chile

In Chile, however, just as in other Latin American countries and all around the world, much remains to be done to narrow gender gaps and ensure the benefits of a more equitable division of paid and unpaid work for family well-being and human capital development. Chilean women are less likely to work for pay, especially full-time. Instead, they typically spend more hours looking after children and the elderly, doing housework, shopping for food, cooking, and so on.

This unequal partition of paid and unpaid labour is not merely an equal trade by which women exchange one “unit” of unpaid work for one “unit” of paid work by their partners. In Chile and Latin America, women’s total work burden – that is, the overall number of paid and unpaid working hours combined – exceeds that of men by a large margin. This is why female legal professionals are far less than their male counterparts.





France

In a policy paper (*Agir pour la parité, performance à la clé*) published in 2019, Institut Montaigne demonstrated that beyond the equality issue, gender diversity - in other words, the presence of women at all levels of an organisation - is also a performance issue and a growth lever. In France, several measures have been implemented in the last few years in this regard.

For example, in 2018, Marlène Schiappa, the Secretary of State for Gender Equality, and Muriel Pénicaud, the Minister of Labour, unveiled a gender equality index to eliminate professional inequality in three years. Every year, companies are required to publish a score out of 100 based on the following five main criterias:

- The wage gap (40 points).
- The percentage of men and women who received a raise during the year (20 points).
- The percentage of men and women who received a promotion (15 points).
- The raise after maternity leave (15 points).
- The number of women among the ten highest-paid employees (10 points).



In 2020, the obligation to publish their professional equality score by March 1 was met by 70% of companies with more than 50 employees, compared to 59% in 2019. Average scores have increased since last year: 87 for companies with more than 1,000 employees (83 in 2019), 85 for companies with 250 to 1,000 employees (82 in 2019), and 83 for companies with 50 to 250 employees. The index is ten points above the minimum requirement, with an overall score of 85 out of 100. However, only 2% of companies scored 100 - 98% and thus have room for improvement.



South Africa

There is no point in skirting around the issue: gender inequality is a tradition that persists and thrives in post-apartheid South Africa even- somewhat ironically – in the country's legal landscape. It's incredibly alarming that an institution that's in place to enforce and be representative of a fair and equal South Africa perpetuates the discrimination that it should be fighting.

To put things in perspective, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) released an investigative report in 2016 titled "The Lack of Gender Transformation in the Judiciary". The report states that: "Over the past 20 years, the number of women on the Constitutional Court has remained unchanged: two in 1994 and two in 2014. While the percentage of women in the other High Courts remains below 30%: as of October 2013, there were 77 female judges out of 239 in South Africa".



Across the US, women earn 10% lower rates than their male counterparts. In law firms, women are billed at significantly lower rates per hour than men no matter what size of firm they work at. The average female partner's hourly rate is 47\$ less per hour than her male counterpart. Female roles tend to be skewed towards entry positions. **The exciting fact is women bill 24 minutes per day more than men.**

On the same note, in the top law firms in the United States, women account for only 17 per cent of law firm's equity partners (those who occupy the most prestigious, powerful positions, and who hold an ownership interest in their firm).

Do male and female partners enjoy pay equality?



-8%

-16%

-6%

-12%

-20%

-7%



Singapore

Historically, women have played a significant role in the legal profession and the area of legal education in Singapore. No men stood in the law school doors or took women to court for taking their places. Rather than a battle of action and reaction, this appears to have been a quiet revolution of attitude formed in the minds of young Singaporean women, who looked beyond their gender's traditional roles and saw themselves as lawyers, judges, and even deans of law school.

The movement began in the 1960s and gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, by the mid-1970s, more than half the students entering law schools were women, and this trend continued into the new Millennium.

Now that women have achieved parity with men in law school admissions, is it only a matter of time before they achieve parity in the profession?

Admittedly, the numerical gap is quickly closing. In 1973, only 70 of 461 (15 percent) lawyers in Singapore were women. Today, their share of the profession has risen to more than one-third. More women have become partners, senior counsel, judicial officers, judges, and law professors than ever before. Perhaps the only statistical category men may expect to dominate for the next several decades will be in lawyer deaths, as the men who built and sustained the old boy networks pass on.

38 percent of all lawyers in Singapore holding practising certificates as of February 2005 are women. Of these women lawyers, 39.8 percent hold the position of director or partner in a law firm (as against 52.5 percent of men), with another 7.4 percent of women lawyers managing their own law firm as a sole proprietor (as against 16.8 percent for men).

The majority of women lawyers (48.6 percent) as of February 2005 are found to be at the level of associates (as against only 27 percent of men). As of February 2005, there was a higher percentage of women lawyers (46.2 percent) in large law firms (characterised as practices with more than 30 lawyers) as compared to male lawyers (31.4 percent). On the other hand, 45.6 percent of male practitioners practised in small firms of one to five practitioners as against 25.3 percent of female practitioners.



Nigeria



Women legal practitioners are victims of cultural perceptions and gender stereotypes. Owners of private law firms and clients often refuse to employ female legal practitioners; even when employed, female lawyers are perceived to be less competent than their male counterparts. The assumptions regarding women's special personality traits lead employers to assign cases or duties to women lawyers that are less challenging or less prominent than those assigned to men.

The perception holds that male legal practitioners are considered more committed to their work than female legal practitioners; female lawyers are viewed as less aggressive than their male counterparts. These perceptions and stereotypes persist in the legal profession despite their vast knowledge and understanding of the law.

The lack of prescribed promotion policy by the firms, coupled with the fact that the majority of the decision-makers are men, has resulted in women legal practitioners being discriminated against and passed during promotions in law firms. Most, if not all, law firms in Nigeria do not have a prescribed promotion policy, which has undermined women's progress in equity shares ownership in law firms.

In most law partnerships, there are still very few women partners. The majority of women legal practitioners hold lower associate positions in law firms. Female advocates in practice are very few in partnerships, sole proprietors, and at the associate level. Men have continued to remain at the frontiers of the legal profession, not minding the increased number of admissions of female advocates and the majority of them have opted not to practice law.



Barriers to achieving gender equality in the legal professions:

- Implicit gender bias
- Difficulties in balancing personal and professional life
- A paucity of effective mentors and support networks
- Hitting the glass ceiling
- A Lack of transparency in the appointment procedure

Measures to promote gender equality in the legal professions:

- Establishment of impartial and transparent recruitment processes
- Enhancement of analysis and development of action plans
- Promoting networking and mentoring
- Continuing judicial education on gender equality
- Introducing more flexible working conditions





Some country-based facts about gender quotas:



Belgium:

On the 4th of April 2014, the Belgian Parliament passed a Bill that introduced a quota in the composition of the Constitutional Court. It requires the Court to be composed of at least a third of judges of each sex.



Spain:

In Spain, gender quotas have been adopted in different domains and their expansion to the legal field is discussed. Observing a very low representation of women in the High Courts, the Commission of Equality of the General Board of the Judiciary, brought forward a number of proposals with regard to reforming the selection criteria of judges, including “to introduce a system of quotas to ensure balanced representation, to be applied in cases where candidates have the same level of merits and capacity.” This recommendation was however not put into practice by the government.



France:

In France, the vast majority of magistrates are women, although the situation is reversed at the top of the profession. The existing gender imbalances led the Conseil Supérieur de Magistrature (CSM) to establish a ‘parity group’ to analyse the issue and prepare recommendations and commissioned a study on the matter.



United Kingdom:

In the United Kingdom, where the proportion of female judges is one of the lowest in Europe, the introduction of quotas was promoted in 2014 by the labour shadow government as a 'nuclear option' for appointing female and black and ethnic minority judges to avoid a 100-years wait to achieve a judiciary reflecting the composition of the population.



Latvia:

In Latvia, the Law on Judicial Power requires that the elections to the Supreme Court should take into account the principle of equal representation of gender. The research concludes that these provisions have the characteristics of soft quota because there is no guarantee that Plenary Session members will follow the gender balance principle and because there are no sanctions for non-observation of such principle.



Europe in General



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In Europe, the situation of women in the legal profession, particularly at the top levels, seems quite diverse. In Eastern European countries, where women have been educated for decades to develop their own professional lives, there are more women at the top levels of bar and lawyers' associations and as partners in law firms.

In Western Europe, the legal profession still seems to be characterised more by traditional role models and conservative thinking.

There is widespread acceptance that the problem is not attracting women to the profession but retaining them when they get to the stage of considering partnerships in law firms. Thus, the presence of women in the top levels of law firms remains rather an exception and does not reflect the percentage of women as members of bars or law societies.

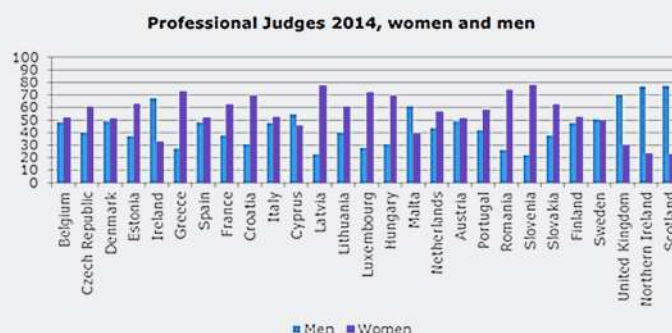
There is still largely insufficient commitment to diversity at all levels in firms, particularly at the lower management level, since gender equality is not only a senior management issue. Furthermore, only a few law firms address the issue concerning women and men. Therefore the general attitude of all members of the firms and their cultural Professional judge positions are quite evenly distributed.

On average, between women and men in the European Union, though females are consistently in a slight majority (2010:53%; 2012: 53%; 2014: 55%). However, this average hides some considerable variation. A consistent majority (over 60%) of males occupy professional judge posts in Common Law Countries (IE, MT, UK (England & Wales), UK (Northern Ireland) and UK (Scotland).

In contrast, judge positions are predominantly held by females (over 60%) in 11 Civil Law Countries (CZ, EE, FR, HR, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, SI, SK). In three cases (LV, RO, SI), females occupy over 70% of such posts. In most of the former communist countries, the number of women in the judiciary stagnates (CZ, EE, HR, HU, PL, RO, SI, SK) while it is rising in all other countries (including also LT and LV).

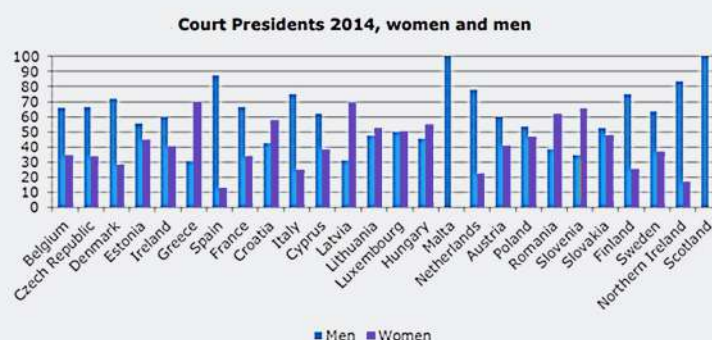


The high number of women in the judiciary in post-communist countries might be explained by the relatively low profile and Mapping the Representation of Women and Men in Legal Professions Across the EU reputation and low-income possibilities in this profession in these countries that men prefer employment in the financially more rewarding and more prestigious private sector.

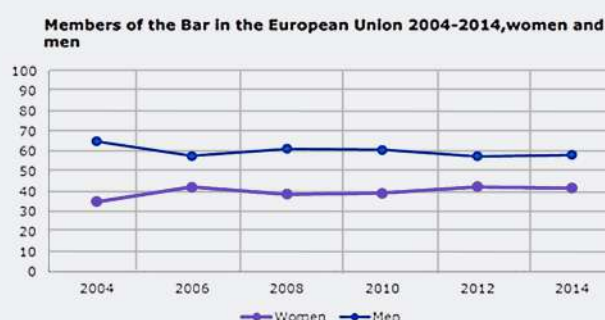


The analysis now turns to court presidents, the most senior individual judges at each level. Overall, males are in a majority (over 60%) in these positions (average 2010, 64%; 2012, 61%; 2014, 61%). As above, these average figures hide wide variation, with Malta and Scotland having 100% male occupancy of these posts (MT n=3; Scotland n=1), while the highest female rates of occupancy were in Greece (70%), Latvia (69%) and Slovenia (65%).

There is also a pattern of a decline in male post-holding over the 2010-14 period in nine countries (AT, BE, EE, FR, IE, IT, LU, NL, SE), though only in Estonia and Luxembourg does this decrease bring the gender distribution to parity.



There has been a gradual increase overall in the proportion of females practising as lawyers since 2004, rising from 35% to 43% in 2015.



Gender inequality in developing countries



Legal discrimination is only one among many sources of gender imbalances. Passing better laws does not guarantee that these laws will be enforced, especially in countries with social norms that hold women back from participating in the formal economy.

Nevertheless, laws do matter because they are actionable in the short run, compared to norms and attitudes which often take longer to change. The finding of a causal effect of legal reforms on female labour force participation in legal professions suggests that laws can lead to positive change. And it is worth emphasizing that, the effect of legal reforms increases with the passage of time after their initial enactment.

Achieving gender equality is not a short-term process. It requires strong political will and a concerted effort by governments, civil society, and international organisations, but legal reforms can play a foundational role as an essential first step.

In the past two years, 40 economies enacted 62 legal reforms in total, but the picture varies widely from region to region, with scores ranging from 49.6 in the Middle East and North Africa to 94.6 in high-income OECD countries on a scale from 0 to 100. Globally, women are still only three-quarters equal to men on average in the legal areas measured.



Still a boys' club?

To put it bluntly, male lawyers appear to care less than their female counterparts about diversity. They're also less keen on transparency in compensation and origination credit, and less concerned that everyone has a voice within their firms. Men and women are equally indifferent to things like the importance of a firm's heritage or its "elite" status.



That's where the genders split, with 45% of women including diversity in their top 10 priorities, compared with 35% of men. Moreover, 45% of women also said they'd like to see more emphasis placed on women and people of colour occupying "significant positions of leadership" at their firms. By contrast, only 26% of men picked this trait. For the other three-quarters, it didn't make their top 10 list.

**"You can't be what you can't see":
time for (time-limited) quotas?**

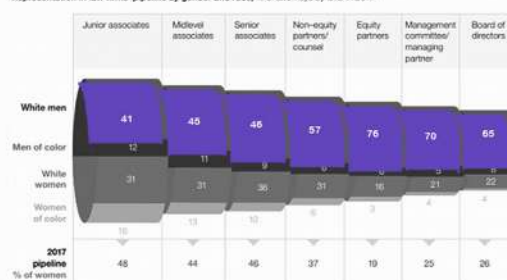
Another old idea that may be gaining new momentum is that of introducing quotas to make a swift change to the numbers of women in senior positions in the law, such as in the judiciary and at the equity partner level. Quotas, and targets, have often been dismissed as a means of improving the representation of women: they can be seen as patronising and anti-meritocratic, and face opposition from women and men alike. However, it is possible that the tide is turning on this issue too.



Women in law firms

Representation of women decreases rapidly at post-associate levels.

Representation in law firms' pipeline by gender and race, % of attorneys by level in 2017¹



Law firms have many of the right policies and programs in place to improve gender diversity, but more can be done to translate stated commitments into measurable outcomes.

We measured 3 dimensions of gender diversity and found that law firms have room to improve along each one:

Representation. Are women represented fairly at each level?

Representation of women decreases rapidly at post-associate levels. Women are relatively well represented at all three associate levels (junior, midlevel, and senior), where they account for about 46 percent of attorneys. **Fewer women than men advance at the pre-partner level, but female attorneys advance more often than women in other industries.** External hires for more senior positions are less likely to be women than men.

Promotion. Do women advance as rapidly as men?

Women want the promotion to the next level as much as or even more than men but are less excited about making partners. Across the associate levels, women express a strong desire for promotion to the next level. But when asked specifically if they want to make partners, the desire drops sharply compared with men.

External hiring. Are women hired at the same rate as men?

Female attorneys feel forced to make significant trade-offs between career success and their personal lives. Only 44 percent of women believe that they can have both, compared with 60 percent of men who do.

Law firms clearly take gender diversity seriously and have made efforts to increase their diversity. But challenges remain, and the law firms committed to superior performance and employee satisfaction will act to address them.



What can men in the industry do to help their female colleagues' career progression?

- Take parental leave, and take responsibility for childcare and other outside-of-work requirements so that the perception moves from it being a 'woman's thing' to a 'person's thing'.
- Most men are not sexist but many men do not think about the absence of women on pitch teams or client teams or slates for partnership promotion.
- Be open-minded to difference, ask questions and listen to understand, not just reply, think about inclusiveness and difference before taking action, and above all, challenge their own prejudices.
- If women stay during those crucial development years, they have every chance of being promoted. By supporting lawyers in those early years, a more senior lawyer can make a huge difference in a junior lawyer's career trajectory.



What Law Firms (And Men) Can Do to Improve Gender Diversity, According to Top Female Lawyers

Law firms need to get to the point where they pivot their diversity and inclusion focus from education to meaningful action.

Clients are frequently the biggest advocates for diversity and inclusion and sending work or taking work away because of gender diversity in any particular firm will move the needle.

Coaching and mentoring are incredibly valuable. Having support and guidance from someone in a more senior position as you move through key stages of your career can really help focus your mind on what goals and ambitions you have and how you're going to achieve them. **We have to challenge each other to move from looking at potential talent and thinking, 'I don't see any value in you so you don't have any,' to 'I don't see any value in you, what am I missing?'**

Firms should not be afraid to set clear goals to improve the representation of women.





What are the most common mistakes made by women pursuing a career in law, and the most common misconceptions about the industry? What is the best way to rectify them?

- It is really unfair to think of this in terms of women making mistakes. Asking this question leads us to conclude that the problem is with the women, that we need to change and that the solutions lie in ‘fixing the women’. **We are 50% of the population!**
 - One practical thing women need to try to do is to have the courage to bring their whole selves to work. Disguise is dead. Be completely authentic. No one wears Armani suits anymore. Whatever angle you are observed from, be the same.
 - There is nothing wrong with being polished and well-prepared; indeed, this is essential. **But we have to be real – We profoundly disagree with the suggestion we all have to ‘lean in’.**
-
- One of the biggest misconceptions is that you have to be aggressive, ruthless and (seemingly) unemotional to succeed (i.e. all characteristics commonly associated with men rather than women).
 - To correct those misconceptions, leaders should be authentic and not be afraid to promote different value systems; firms should also ensure strong role models (male and female) at all levels of seniority, including mid-senior associates. Young lawyers may find it hard to relate to or emulate a senior partner, whereas a junior partner or senior associate may be more immediately accessible.
 - The women pursuing a career in law are doing a lot of things right — they’re hard-working and ambitious and are building strong networks to support them as they progress through their careers. And there is no one way or right way to pursue a career in law, and we all make mistakes or have second thoughts about decisions we’ve made. **The important thing is to back yourself up and trust your instincts.**





- Perhaps more so in years past, women felt that it was a sign of weakness to ask for help or that they may be passed over for promotion unless they were visible at all times in the office or if they could not spend evenings socialising. These fears may still exist depending on the law firm environment she is in.
- Whilst providing exceptional client service is, of course, imperative, it is essential that all lawyers receive the mentoring and support they require and the appropriate flexible working opportunities so that they feel they can achieve their best.
- Women have to find their own way to promote themselves; if you want to have a successful legal career, this isn't something you can opt out of doing. But you have to promote yourself in an authentic way which is true to yourself.
- Bragging may be anathema to many women; Instead, many women choose to showcase their skills in a different, often more low-key, way. **It's important to watch how other senior women promote themselves and learn from it, but always remember that the goal is to develop your own style rather than seeking to slavishly follow the style others have developed.**





What are the biggest challenges facing women in law at the moment?

- Law firms cannot assume that placing women in leadership positions will organically inspire the new generation of female lawyers to strive for the same positions in the future. It requires changing the perception, both by men and women, of women as leaders.
- As senior business leaders and litigators, women face a variety of conscious and unconscious gender biases. To change that bias, law firms need to see more women as leaders. It also means not just hiring female lawyers and saying the problem is "fixed." It means finding ways to retain and promote women.
- Despite attempts to address the disparity, women's talent is still untapped as the rate of change is too slow. We need to have policies in place to promote diversity and inclusion and to drive positive action to ensure that we do what we say we will do.



Reason for inequality

Not only do female lawyers face difficulty in advancing their careers as opposed to their male counterparts, but a recent study has also indicated that seemingly a large number of women leave the legal profession due to factors such as harassment, bullying and bias against women who adopt different working arrangements for their family commitments.

Many women, most have to take time off work should they desire to start a family. **During the time that they are away, a range of many things can happen which will hinder their ability to progress in their career when they return, including changes in law, developments in technology, and the lost connection with professional networks.**

Thus, discrimination still exists in the legal profession for these reasons, and these discriminatory practices have seen adverse effects on the retention and progression of female lawyers, most commonly experienced by female barristers.

Better gender equality recommendations:

- Encourage men to become champions for change;
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment;
- Ensure women support other women;
- Establish targets and quotas to rebalance inequalities;
- Create a values-based business and development network;
- Lead from the top by example; and
- Implement strong recruitment and selection processes.





Women supporting women

“

The most important thing one woman can do for another is expanding her sense of actual possibilities.”

”

What this quote comes down to is women supporting women. Women encouraging other women and women making their colleagues see the best in themselves. And whilst it is a wonderful notion, it also – in a way – came from necessity.

“In 2021, 26% of all CEOs and managing directors were women, compared to only 15% in 2019. The Fortune Global 500 reported an all-time high of 23 women CEOs in 2021, including six women of colour.”

Let's think about that for a second. Only 26% of all CEOs are women. Fortune 500 celebrated the fact that there is an “all-time high” of 23 CEOs in 2021.

Wait. Is that serious?

“As a heart attack”, we would say (with all due respect).





“Fair to Legal Women”

We won't just watch while the majority of the legal community leaves, taking with them their knowledge and expertise at a crucial time. That's bad for business, bad for the industry, and bad for customers. And it's incorrect. Women attorneys deserve to work in a just and equal environment where the culture and rules support them and do not discourage them from succeeding. For individual female attorneys, the legal profession, and the clients, we can do a lot, a lot better.

Country Rankings

Explore the global index that ranks countries on women's workforce equality. Although inequality for women in the workforce persists worldwide, governments are beginning to understand the costs—and take action.

This report measures the formal legal obstacles to women's economic participation worldwide. While there is often a large gap between laws on the books and their implementation, formal legal equality is a critical first step to closing the gap between women and men in the economy.

All the top-ranked countries score at least 90 out of 100 on protecting women's access to institutions and their use of property. Many countries miss the mark on protecting women from violence, providing incentives to work, and eliminating barriers to jobs.

No country gets a perfect score on women's workplace equality, but Australia comes closest, with a score of 94.9 out of 100.





The World Bank's Women, Business and the Law 2018 report, presents data on close to 170 gender inequalities in legal treatment in 189 countries, grouped into seven categories:

- Accessing institutions.
- Building credit.
- Getting a job.
- Going to court.
- Protecting women from violence.
- Providing incentives to work.
- Using the property.

The World Bank then scored countries on a narrower list of fifty legal gender inequalities selected from the full data set. For completeness, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) added six additional legal gender inequalities from the World Bank data set selected because of their significance to women's rights and opportunities. CFR then calculated a ranking of countries, giving each an overall average score between 0 and 100 (100 being the best).

Country rankings

Top 10 countries



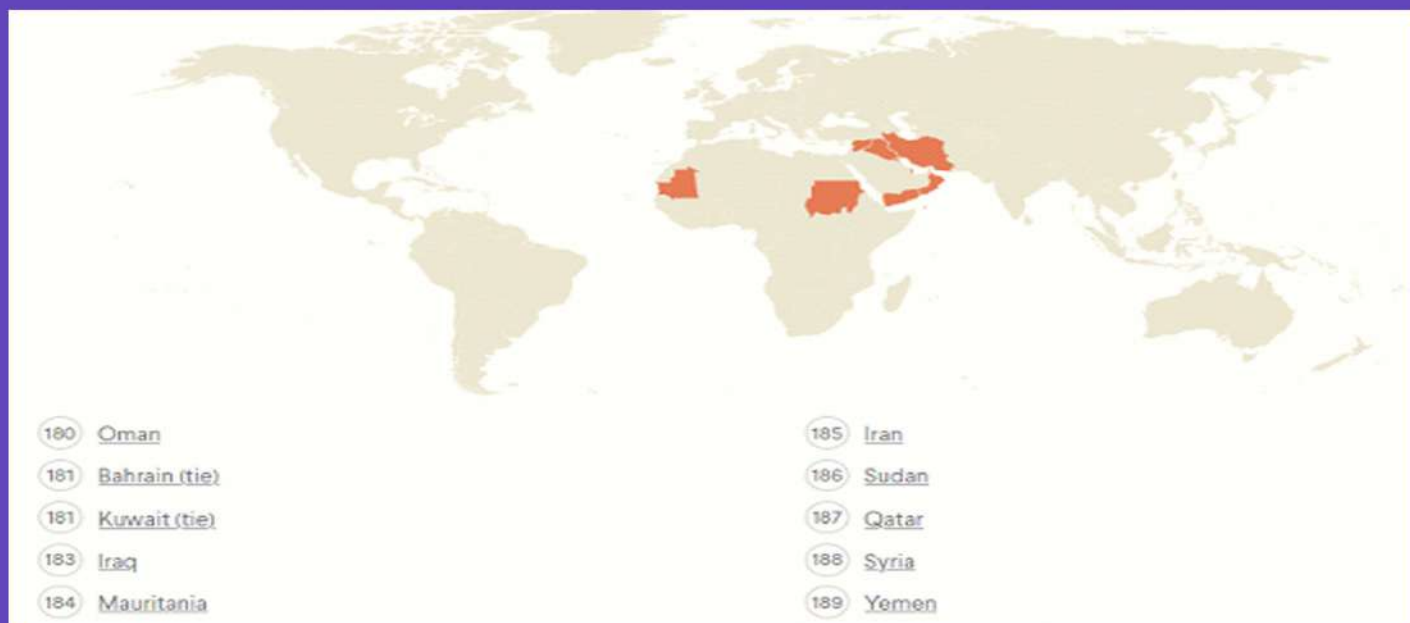
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	Australia Region: OECD Income group: High Global rank: 1	94.9 Score	>
	Canada Region: OECD Income group: High Global rank: 2	94.5 Score	>
	New Zealand Region: OECD Income group: High Global rank: 3	93.6 Score	>
	Spain Region: OECD Income group: High Global rank: 4	92.9 Score	>
	Mexico Region: Latin America and the Caribbean Income group: Upper middle Global rank: 5	92.8 Score	>
	Bosnia and Herzegovina Region: Europe and Central Asia Income group: Upper middle Global rank: 6	92.2 Score	>
	United Kingdom Region: OECD Income group: High Global rank: 7	91.8 Score	>
	Lithuania Region: Europe and Central Asia Income group: High Global rank: 8	91.4 Score	>
	Iceland Region: OECD Income group: High Global rank: 9	90.5 Score	>
	Latvia Region: Europe and Central Asia Income group: High Global rank: 10	89.6 Score	>

Bottom 10 countries

Out of the 189 countries covered, none of those ranked at the bottom scores highly on a single indicator. The ten bottom-ranked countries have near-zero scores for protecting women from violence and allowing women to build credit.

Yemen is ranked last, with a score of 24.2 out of 100.



3 Common Obstacles Faced by Female Lawyers

Traditional sexual stereotypes or gender discrimination

Women are no strangers to gender discrimination. The problem in the legal profession, however, takes a slightly different turn. Though the number of female solicitors is almost equal to their male peers at the junior levels, they remain severely underrepresented at higher levels.

Work-life balance

The lack of work-life balance is one of the significant obstacles that female lawyers face. Most lawyers have to work late hours and remain accessible almost 24/7. It can be challenging for a woman, particularly a single mother, to practice law in such arduous time frames.

Gender-wage gap

Though the gender pay gap exists in almost all professions, female lawyers earn significantly less pay compared to their male counterparts. The latest statistics published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the gender wage gap in the legal occupation (not controlled by education and experience) was as high as 40 percent in 2015. This means women earned 60 cents for every dollar earned by a man.





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Suggestions for the Future

Mentoring & political involvement

For the number of women in the judiciary to increase, women must be provided equal opportunities to groom themselves for judicial appointments. A vital component of this process involves mentoring, training, and greater involvement in politics.

Increased education

Education about the benefits of a diverse judiciary is a crucial step to bringing more women into the ranks of the judicial branch. This educational process must begin early, long before admission to law school. With this increase in education, many young lawyers will understand the benefits of a diverse judiciary.

Male and female lawyers and judges alike must emphasize the importance of this issue by banding together to raise public awareness of the need for more women judges. Male and female role models must be available to serve as mentors, aiding young women in becoming the best and brightest in whatever profession they select. In particular, women lawyers and judges must play a special role in nurturing and encouraging young women to reach the apex of the legal profession.

Changes in the workplace

The legal profession must find ways to help women stay full-time within the profession. Statistics show that most women lawyers continue to be the primary caregiver for children, the parent who shoulders most of the family responsibility. This leads some women away from the full-time practice of law. Inevitably, this negatively impacts a woman's chances for judicial selection.

Law firms, corporations, government agencies, and other legal employers must seek more family-friendly solutions that allow women to pursue advancement within their profession while juggling parental and other family responsibilities. If women are driven from the workforce early in their careers, they will be less likely to be considered for positions on the bench.



There is some form of legal inequality in every country – either because the law is sexist, or because the impact of the law is discriminatory, or because the laws aren't implemented effectively enough, resulting in a climate of inequality, which permits violence and discrimination to continue unabated. **In LegaMart, you join lots of women lawyers from all over the globe.** This is the best chance to raise your voice. LegaMart, moreover initiates **training women lawyers courses and mentorships.** This is how we believe in unity!

The survey of 1,141 in-house counsel in Canada revealed the average base salary for men was \$177,000 and \$158,000 for women.

Same situation for you in America? Europe? Africa? Asia?
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In discussing how we, women lawyers_ can become our best legal selves, we know that **women are better able to tackle the challenges this world faces when they have a seat at the table.** Our future depends on the contributions of women to solve global inequality and develop new approaches to environmental sustainability.



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Women make on average 15% less than men & Only 5% of CEOs are women.
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Research suggests that the globalization of large firm practice has not erased gender inequality, and, in fact, may have reinforced and strengthened existing gender disparities.

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