

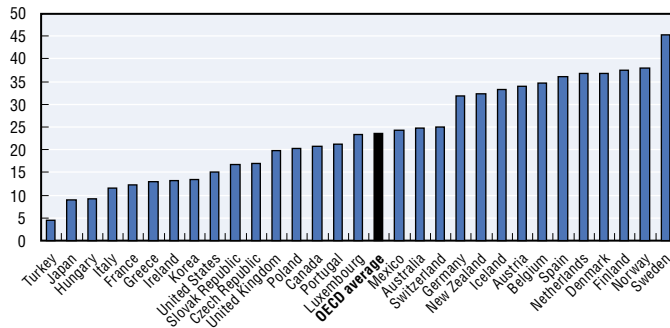
Women in parliament

Did you know?

Women are outnumbered by men in all the world's parliaments. Women hold close to half the parliamentary seats in Rwanda and Sweden and about a third in the Nordic countries, in Cuba, Costa Rica and Argentina. There is no reliable relationship between how rich a country is, and how many women are in parliament.

In nine OECD countries at least one-third of parliamentary seats are held by women. The Nordic countries and the Netherlands stand out with more than 35% of parliamentary seats held by women. In most OECD countries though, women hold under a quarter and the shares are 15% or less in Japan, Italy, France and the United States.

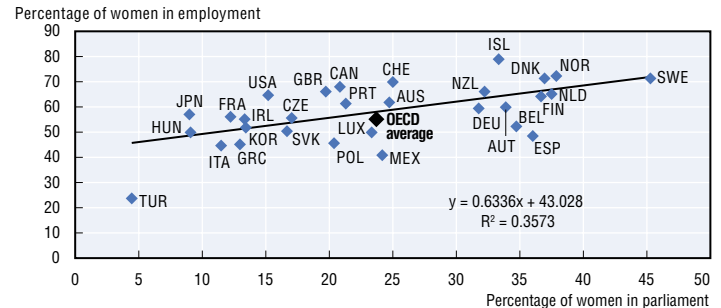
Percentage of parliamentary seats held by women
2005 or latest year available



Do women participate more in political life in richer countries? Not necessarily. Percentages are low in rich countries like the United States, Ireland, France and Japan and are high in countries with lower per capita incomes such as New Zealand, Spain and Austria.

On the other hand, there does seem to be a link between the percentage of women in employment and the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women. The chart below plots the percentage of women in parliament against the percentage of the total female population of working age (15-64) in employment. Women's participation in political life appears to reflect, at least to some extent, their participation in economic life. Percentages of women in parliament are high in Nordic countries where women make up a large part of the labour market and low in Turkey, Greece, Italy and Hungary.

Percentage of women in parliament and percentage of women in employment
2004



Source: Many countries have both a lower and upper house (bi-cameral parliaments) with different election rules for each one. For countries with bilateral parliaments the percentages shown here refer to the total of both houses. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU): www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.

Further reading:

Jütting, J. P., C. Morrisson; J. Dayton-Johnson; D. Drechsler (2006), "Measuring Gender (In)equality: Introducing the Gender, Institutions and Development Data Base (GID)", *OECD Development Centre Working Papers*, No. 247, OECD, Paris.

Managerial and professional posts

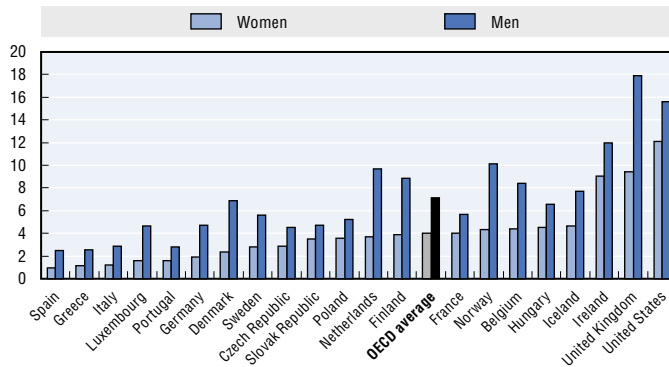
Did you know?

In all OECD countries for which data are available, higher percentages of men work as managers or directors compared to women.

On the other hand, a greater percentage of women who work do so in occupations for which a professional qualification is required than men. However, because more men work than women, this does not mean that there are more professional women than men.

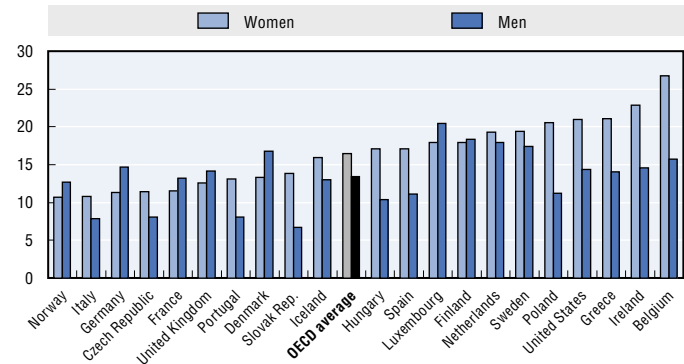
There are huge differences in the percentage of employees who are “managers” across countries, reflecting differences in how different workers see themselves in different countries. Nevertheless, there is a gender gap in managerial posts in all countries. The gender gap is particularly high in the United Kingdom, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands and Denmark. Gaps are much smaller in eastern Europe.

Percentage of employees in managerial posts
2004 or latest year available



Professional posts are those for which a formal qualification is usually required. They include most occupations in the health care and education sectors and in services such as accountancy and the law. In about two-thirds of the countries shown in the chart below, the percentages of the female labour force in professional posts exceed the percentages for males, with the gender gap in favour of women particularly high in Belgium, Ireland, Greece and Poland. Part of the explanation is the preference among women to work in the health and education sectors.

Percentage of employees in professional posts
2004 or latest year available



Source: European Labour Force Survey and March Current Population Survey for the United States.

Further reading:

OECD (2002-2004), *Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life*, series, OECD, Paris.