

Title:

Women in the Legal Profession: A Perspective from Portugal.

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Abstract:

In recent years, the high percentage of lawyers in Portugal became a controversial issue. As a large number of law graduates have been competing for admission at the Bar, this trend is creating new challenges to the profession, with important resonances in the Bar admission policy.

The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate the progress made by women in legal professions, in Portugal, over the last decades. In order to contextualize our analysis, we begin with an overview of the position of women in the labor market and then focus on the legal professions. Firstly, the increasing presence of women in different segments of the legal field is analyzed by means of a statistical approach. Afterwards, we draw a critical analysis highlighting the bearing of these developments and deconstructing their meaning in terms of career patterns, remuneration and professional status.

Our analysis of contemporary official data on legal professions reveals that even though women are occupying a growing number of positions in private practice, they earn lower salaries, have lower job satisfaction and have a more critical reasoning towards the public image of lawyers. Concerning magistrates, women working in superior courts continue to be underrepresented. Overall, we conclude that the increasing integration of women in legal professions is not straightforward, and there are still many aspects that need to be addressed in both the private and public sector.

Keywords:

Career; Gender; Lawyers; Magistrates;