



HOUSE OF LORDS

# Library Note

## Women's Economic Empowerment

This Library Note provides background reading for Members in advance of the debate to be held on 5 March 2015:

“Women’s Economic Empowerment both Nationally and Internationally”.

UN Women has suggested that to invest in women’s economic empowerment is to set “a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive economic growth” ([Economic Empowerment of Women](#), November 2013). This Library Note provides a snapshot of recent statistics relating to women’s economic status, both in the UK and internationally, with regard to employment and pay; boards and senior positions; and education.

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27 February 2015  
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## I. Employment

### Employment Rates

In October 2014 to December 2014, 68.5 percent of women aged from 16 to 64 were in employment in the UK.<sup>1</sup> The Office of National Statistics (ONS) notes that this was “the highest since comparable records began in 1971. This reflects ongoing changes to the state pension age for women resulting in fewer women retiring between the ages of 60 and 65”.<sup>2</sup> The employment rate for men in October 2014 to December 2014 was 78.0 percent—lower than it has been previously but still higher than employment rates for women.<sup>3</sup> The European Commission noted that in 2013, the EU28 employment rate for women aged 20–64 was 62.5 percent and for men it was 74.2 percent.<sup>4</sup>

The number of women working full-time in the UK has increased by 149,000 since October–December 2013, with a total of 8.32 million women in full-time employment in October–December 2014.<sup>5</sup> In the same period, the number of UK women working part-time increased by 170,000, reaching 6.14 million. The number of men working full-time increased by 311,000 to reach 14.27 million, whereas men working part-time fell by 22,000 to 2.15 million.<sup>6</sup>

Following a review of female labour force participation globally in 2012, the World Bank revealed that since 1980 the female participation rate had “increased sharply over time” at each level of income, showing that “at every level of per capita income, more women are now engaged in economic activity outside the home than ever before”.<sup>7</sup> However, employment gaps between men and women persist, with recent data from the International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasising gender gaps in the labour market globally:

Overall, women continue to suffer from [...] lower rates of employment, are less likely to participate in the labour force and face higher risks of vulnerable employment. [...] In addition to the discrimination suffered by women, these gender gaps also represent a substantial loss in income and economic development.<sup>8</sup>

In 2013, all EU Member States had lower employment rates for women than men, with large variations across the EU (see Figure 1).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ONS, [UK Labour Market: February 2015](#), 18 February 2015, p 9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, [Female Labour Market Participation](#), May 2014, p 1.

<sup>5</sup> ONS, [UK Labour Market: February 2015](#), 18 February 2015, p 10.

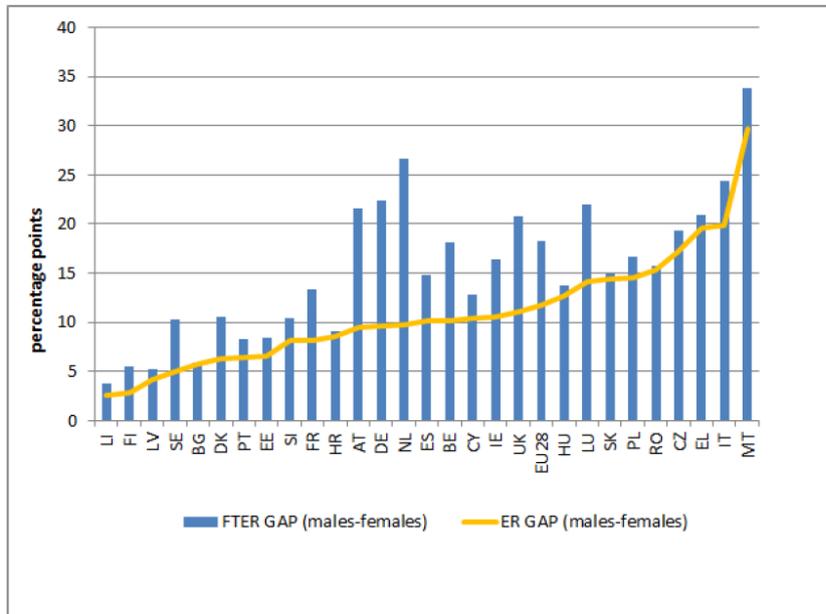
<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> World Bank, [‘2012 World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development: Female Labour Force Participation’](#), 2012, accessed 24 February 2014.

<sup>8</sup> International Labour Organization, [World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2015](#), p 21.

<sup>9</sup> European Commission, [Female Labour Market Participation](#), May 2014, p 1.

**Figure 1: Gaps Between Male and Female Full-time Equivalent Employment Rates (FTEER) and Employment Rate (ER) in 2013 in Women and Men Aged 20–64:**



(Source: European Commission, [Female Labour Market Participation](#), May 2014)

When employment is measured in full-time equivalents, Member States where the female employment rate is considered to be relatively high actually had larger gaps between men and women's employment rates, such as in the UK.<sup>10</sup> According to the European Commission:

[t]he share of part-time employment among women is very high in some Member States, some of which have high female employment rates but these rates are diminished when measured in full-time equivalents [...] The situation is very typical in the Netherlands, where almost 75 percent of employed women worked part-time in 2013, but it is also high in Germany, Austria, Sweden, United Kingdom, Denmark, Belgium and Luxembourg.<sup>11</sup>

Women are the majority of part-time workers in the EU, with 34.9 percent of women working part-time against only 8.6 percent of men.<sup>12</sup> Globally, in nearly all countries with available data, the proportion of women in part-time employment is more than twice that of men.<sup>13</sup> The Women's Business Council reported in 2013 that over 1.3 million women in the UK wanted to increase the hours they worked.<sup>14</sup> The Family and Childcare Trust has stated that "parents, usually mothers, become trapped in low-paid and low status part-time work and the high cost of childcare prevents them from extending their hours".<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p 8.

<sup>12</sup> European Commission, [Tackling the Gender Pay Gap in the EU](#), p 2.

<sup>13</sup> UN, [The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014](#), 2014, p 22.

<sup>14</sup> Women's Business Council, [Maximising Women's Contribution to Future Economic Growth](#), June 2013, p 3.

<sup>15</sup> Family and Childcare Trust, [Childcare Costs Survey 2014](#), 2014, p 14. For the most recent survey, which includes information on childcare costs, please see Family and Childcare Trust, [Childcare Costs Survey 2015](#), 2015.

## Self-employment and Entrepreneurship

In 2014, 1.4 million women were in self-employment in the UK—just under one third of the total number of self-employed.<sup>16</sup> Over the past five years, the number of self-employed women in the UK has increased by 34 percent.<sup>17</sup> An ONS publication on self-employed workers in the UK revealed that, in 2014, the top three occupations for self-employed women were:

- cleaners and domestics;
- childminders and related occupations; and
- hairdressers and barbers.<sup>18</sup>

Most recent statistics confirm that the number of women in self-employment has increased at “double the rate” that it has for the number of self-employed men.<sup>19</sup> By way of an explanation for this, the ONS suggests that:

[W]ork in skilled trades in male-dominated industries such as construction have suffered more from the effects of the economic crisis than the service sector and professional occupations that self-employed women tend to work in.<sup>20</sup>

However, even with the increase in self-employed women since 2009 and the number of self-employed men having risen by a relatively lower 15 percent, men still make up 68 percent of the total number of self-employed workers in the UK, at 3.1 million in 2014.<sup>21</sup>

A January 2015 report from the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)—a British think tank that conducts research into the economic, social and political sciences—has indicated that men are 90 percent more likely to be self-employed than women across Europe and that, in every European country, the rate of female self-employment “lags behind” the rate for males.<sup>22</sup> The greatest differences between male and female self-employment rates has been noted by IPPR to be in Ireland, Sweden and Denmark, and the lowest differences in Luxembourg, Switzerland and Portugal.<sup>23</sup>

An RBS Group-commissioned report in 2012 noted that among small firm owners and the self-employed, there were in reality few gender-related performance differences.<sup>24</sup> However, the report also noted that throughout most developed and developing economies, women were “about half as likely as their male counterparts to begin new firms”, as it found to be the case in the UK.<sup>25</sup> A 2012 global report on women and entrepreneurship by Global Entrepreneurship Monitor measured whether people perceived that they had the capabilities to start a business.<sup>26</sup> The measure could reflect prior experience or training, as well as a person’s confidence in their own abilities. In every economy, women had lower capabilities perceptions than men.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> ONS, [Self-Employed Workers in the UK: 2014](#), 20 August 2014, pp 10–11.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> IPPR, [Self-Employment in Europe](#), January 2015, pp 16–18.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> RBS Group, [Women in Enterprise: A Different Perspective](#), October 2012, p 4.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, [2012 Women’s Report](#), 2013, p 25.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*

Women's participation in entrepreneurship "varies markedly" around the world, according to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor—an annual assessment of the entrepreneurial activity, aspirations and attitudes of individuals across a wide range of countries.<sup>28</sup> In 2012, only 1 percent of Pakistan's female population were engaged in entrepreneurial activity, while 40 percent of women were engaged in entrepreneurial activity in Zambia.<sup>29</sup> Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest regional female Total Entrepreneurial Activity (TEA) at 27 percent; Latin America and Caribbean economies were also high comparatively, at 15 percent. Lower female TEA levels, however, were seen at both ends of the economic development scale:

The MENA/Mid-Asia region reports the lowest average TEA levels among women (4 percent). Developed Europe and Asia, and Israel also show low rates (5 percent). In general, female TEA rates track similarly to that of males, albeit at lower levels. In just seven economies (Panama, Thailand, Ghana, Ecuador, Nigeria, Mexico and Uganda), women had equal or slightly higher levels of entrepreneurship than men. For the rest, women represented a smaller share of the entrepreneur population. The MENA/Mid-Asia group shows the greatest gender disparity, where male TEA rates are four times that of females.<sup>30</sup>

In 2012, the EU Commission noted that 29 percent of active entrepreneurs in Europe-37 were women, at 11.6 million.<sup>31</sup> Within each designated country's total number of entrepreneurs, Liechtenstein had the highest percentage of women entrepreneurs (43 percent), followed by Latvia (40 percent), Lithuania (40 percent) and Luxembourg (39 percent). Turkey had the lowest percentage (15 percent) followed by Malta (18 percent) and Ireland (20 percent). In 2008, the percentage of women entrepreneurs was 30 percent for Europe-37 and 28 percent for EU28.<sup>32</sup>

A Women's Business Council paper in 2012 noted that, in the UK, maternity can be a "particular challenge" for women who are small business owners or self-employed, as "legal framework and protections available for employees do not apply, although in the UK they may be able to claim non-statutory maternity allowance".<sup>33</sup> The ONS also notes that self-employed workers also do not get the same benefits that employees do in terms of paid leave, sick pay or maternity pay.<sup>34</sup>

## Vulnerable Employment

Persons in vulnerable employment are defined by the ILO as "those who are less likely to have formal work arrangements or access to benefits or social protection, and are therefore more exposed to volatilities of economic cycles".<sup>35</sup> Vulnerable employment rates are defined by the UN as the percentage of "own-account and unpaid family workers in total employment".<sup>36</sup> When providing an update in 2014 on its target to achieve "full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people", the UN explained that low-quality

<sup>28</sup> Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, [2012 Women's Report](#), 2013, p 8.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> European Commission, [Report: Statistical Data on Women Entrepreneurs in Europe: 2014](#), p 7. The group of countries referred to as Europe-37 are the 28 EU Member States as well as Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Iceland, Israel, Turkey, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway and Serbia.

<sup>32</sup> European Commission, [Report: Statistical Data on Women Entrepreneurs in Europe: 2014](#), p 7.

<sup>33</sup> Women's Business Council, [Women and Enterprise: Evidence Paper](#), 2013, p 4.

<sup>34</sup> ONS, [Self-Employed workers in the UK: 2014](#), 20 August 2014, p 11.

<sup>35</sup> ILO, [Gender-Equitable Rural Employment](#), accessed 27 February 2015.

<sup>36</sup> UN, [The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014](#), June 2014, p 10.

employment was “widespread” in most developing countries and that “limited progress” had been made on its reduction.<sup>37</sup> In 2013, an estimated 56 percent of all employment in developing regions was vulnerable employment, in comparison with 10 percent in regions that were developed. This rate of vulnerable employment decreased by 2.8 percentage points between 2008 and 2013—less than it did between 2003 and 2008, which saw a decrease of 4.0 percentage points.<sup>38</sup>

Vulnerable employment rates are higher for women than for men. In 2014, the UN stated that:

[I]n developing regions, 60 percent of women were in vulnerable employment in 2013, compared to 54 percent of men. The largest gender gaps (all exceeding 10 percentage points) were found in Northern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Western Asia and Oceania. The gender gap has closed in Latin America and the Caribbean in recent years and was very small (1 percentage point) in Caucasus and Central Asia.<sup>39</sup>

According to the UN, a high proportion of workers in vulnerable employment signifies widespread informal working arrangements and those in vulnerable employment usually “suffer low incomes and arduous working conditions under which their fundamental rights may be violated”.<sup>40</sup>

## Unemployment

For October to December 2014, there were 822,000 unemployed women in the UK. This was 50,000 fewer than for July to September 2014 and 205,000 fewer than for a year earlier.<sup>41</sup> In the same period, 1.04 million men were unemployed—47,000 fewer than for July to September 2014 and 281,000 less than for a year earlier.<sup>42</sup>

In keeping with international guidelines specified by the ILO, unemployment rates are measured by the proportion of the economically active population who are unemployed and are seeking and available to work.<sup>43</sup> This includes those who are in full-time education and are seeking part-time work.<sup>44</sup> A person who is unemployed and is neither seeking work nor available for work is deemed to be “economically inactive”.<sup>45</sup> For July to September 2014 in the UK, there were 163,000 economically inactive men aged from 16 to 24 who were not in employment, education, or training (NEET), and 340,000 economically inactive women aged from 16 to 24 who were NEET. The economic inactivity rate for women has been gradually falling since comparable records began in 1971, whereas for men it has been gradually rising.<sup>46</sup>

Of 9.05 million people aged from 16 to 64 who were economically inactive for October to December 2014, 2.31 million people were looking after the family or home, little changed from a year earlier.<sup>47</sup> Of the 2.31 million, 2.08 million were women.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p 11.

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.*, p 10.

<sup>41</sup> ONS, [UK Labour Market, February 2015](#), 18 February 2015, p 23.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.*, p 22.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid.*, p 32.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*, p 31.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.*, p 30.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.*, pp 31–32.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, pp 31–32.

## Pay Gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between men's and women's pay, which the ONS bases on median hourly earnings excluding overtime, for full-time employees.<sup>49</sup> The ONS found that the UK gender pay gap for 2014 was 9.4 percent compared with 10.0 percent in 2013—the 2014 figure is the lowest since records began in 1997.<sup>50</sup> The ONS noted a “relatively large increase” between 2012 and 2013, but an overall downward trend, from 17.4 percent in 1997. The IPPR suggested in 2014 that there was evidence that the gender pay gap was greater in self-employment than in paid employment, with the self-employed earnings gap possibly as high as 40 percent in the UK.<sup>51</sup>

In August 2014, data from the Chartered Management Institute's (CMI) National Management Salary Survey, which covered more than 68,000 UK professionals, revealed that “women aged 40 and over are earning 35 percent less money than men, with the average wage gap between men and women in the 45-to-60 age bracket coming to £16,680 per year”.<sup>52</sup> The CMI noted that the data in particular highlighted a “startling chasm” between the earnings of male and female managers in the UK:

[...] the latter are hit the hardest during the second half of their working lives. If an all-ages average is taken into account, the average male salary is still £9,069 greater than the annual female takings of £39,461—a 23 percent difference. For women over 40, though, the naturally higher salary and rank is deflated by a glaring gap in bonus pay. The average bonus for a female director, for example, stands at £41,956, while a man in a similar role receives £53,010. As such, the growing gender disparity is most prominently on show at senior levels, with male directors' basic salaries increasing by 2.7 percent compared to 1.9 percent for women. When bonus payments are added to basic pay, male directors take home £204,373—compared to £171,945 for women.<sup>53</sup>

By contrast, the CMI data also showed that annual female pay rises are reportedly surpassing those of men (2.4 percent compared to 2.3 percent) in three of the five most junior job levels.<sup>54</sup>

According to the European Commission, the gender pay gap differs across Europe, but on average, women earn approximately 16 percent less per hour than men.<sup>55</sup> It is below 10 percent in some countries, such as Slovenia, Malta, Poland, Italy, Luxembourg and Romania, but wider than 20 percent in other countries, such as Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Germany, Austria and Estonia. The overall gender pay gap in the EU “has narrowed in the last decade” but, in a number of countries, such as Hungary and Portugal, the national gender pay gap has been widening.<sup>56</sup> The UN notes that, globally, in the majority of countries “women's wages represent between 70 and 90 per cent of men's, with even lower ratios in some Asian and Latin American countries”.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>49</sup> ONS, [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings: 2014 Provisional Results](#), 19 November 2014, p 10.

<sup>50</sup> *ibid.*, p 1.

<sup>51</sup> IPPR, [Self-Employment in Europe](#), January 2015, pp 16–18.

<sup>52</sup> Jermaine Haughton, [‘Most female managers would have to work up to 80 to get equal pay’](#), Chartered Management Institute, 19 August 2014.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> European Commission, [Tackling the Gender Pay Gap in the EU](#), 2014, p 2.

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p 2.

<sup>57</sup> UN Women, [Economic Empowerment of Women](#), November 2013, p 1.

Following an interview with more than 2,000 parents who had children aged between 0 and 5 years about their views on work and childcare in the UK, Aviva revealed in 2014 that “one in ten of those paying for childcare said that one earner effectively brings in nothing after work and childcare costs are paid for, while four percent of women in this position are actually paying to work, since childcare and commuting costs mean that they spend more than they bring in”.<sup>58</sup>

## 2. Corporate Leadership

### Women on Boards

As at 16 February 2015, according to the Professional Boards Forum, of FTSE 100 companies there were no all-male boards, down from 21 all-male boards in 2011 and 37 FTSE 100 companies had 25 percent or more women directors.<sup>59</sup> 23 percent of directors of FTSE 100 companies were women, with 28.2 percent women Non-Executive Directors and 8.3 percent women Executive Directors—up from 15.6 percent in 2011 and 5.5 percent in 2011, respectively.<sup>60</sup> This was a notable increase from 2010, when women represented only 12.5 percent of board members.<sup>61</sup> In February 2011, Lord Davies of Abersoch, a Labour peer, published a report, commissioned by the Government to address the low percentage of women on boards, which suggested that companies should aim to achieve 25 percent female membership on corporate boards by 2015.<sup>62</sup> In his foreword to the 2011 report, Lord Davies stated:

Board appointments must always be made on merit, with the best qualified person getting the job. But, given the long record of women achieving the highest qualifications and leadership positions in many walks of life, the poor representation of women on boards, relative to their male counterparts, has raised questions about whether board recruitment is in practice based on skills, experience and performance.

Having noted in the 2011 report that those gathering evidence for the review on boards had received mixed views regarding the introduction of quotas, Lord Davies, on balance, did not recommend that quotas be implemented. Lord Davies, however, added that the “Government must reserve the right to introduce more prescriptive alternatives if the recommended business-led approach does not achieve significant change”.<sup>63</sup> In November 2013, the European Parliament voted in favour of quotas, but the 28 member states of the European Council reached deadlock on the matter with the UK opting to self-regulate along with several other EU member states.<sup>64</sup>

The 2014 annual report by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) updated progress with regard to women on boards. This expressed the view that, internationally, European partners and also other regulators, investors and other stakeholders were looking to the UK to see whether its voluntary, business led approach would deliver change “without resorting to legislative measures”.<sup>65</sup> It noted that British business overwhelmingly asked to

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<sup>58</sup> Aviva, [Family Finances Report](#), 2014, p 19.

<sup>59</sup> Professional Boards Forum, [Boardwatch](#), accessed 16 February 2015.

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Lord Davies of Abersoch, [Women on Boards](#), February 2011, p 3.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p 4.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*, p 2.

<sup>64</sup> BIS, [Women on Boards: Davies Review Annual Report 2014](#), 2014, p 6.

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*

resolve the issue of women on boards on their own and that they “now need to prove they can”.<sup>66</sup>

Yet, with 63 companies, according to Boardwatch, still to appoint one woman or more to their board in order to achieve this, Lord Davies’ voluntary target has not been met.<sup>67</sup> This failure, it has been suggested by BIS, might “again raise the prospect of compulsory measures being enacted by Government or from the European Union”.<sup>68</sup>

The issues that can prevent women from accessing boards have been described as “complex”—including performance management systems, unconscious bias, limited access to challenging career opportunities and cultural factors within organisations.<sup>69</sup> The report suggests that companies need to address these issues in order to achieve “sustainable change”.<sup>70</sup> In response to the 2014 update report, the then Minister for Women and Equalities, Maria Miller commented that:

The workplace was designed by men for men. Women don’t need special treatment they just need a modernised workplace that gives them a level playing field. Supporting women to fulfil their full potential should be a core business issue; not just so we can reach our target of 25 percent of female appointments to FTSE100 boards by next year (2015), but for the long term sustainability of our economy.<sup>71</sup>

The lack of women on boards has been dubbed a “global” issue.<sup>72</sup> In the United States the percentage of board seats held by women (across 500 companies) in October 2014 was 19.2 percent; in Canada (across 60 companies) it was 20.8 percent.<sup>73</sup> Data for Asia-Pacific stock index companies in October 2014 showed that board seats held by women in Australia accounted for 19.2 percent, Hong Kong 10.2 percent, India 9.5 percent, and Japan only 3.1 percent.<sup>74</sup> Figure 2 (below) provides statistics on women’s share of board seats at European Stock Index Companies, as at October 2014.

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<sup>66</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Professional Boards Forum, ‘[Boardwatch](#)’, accessed 27 February 2015.

<sup>68</sup> BIS, [Women on Boards: Davies Review Annual Report 2014](#), 2014, p 6.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*, p 4.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*

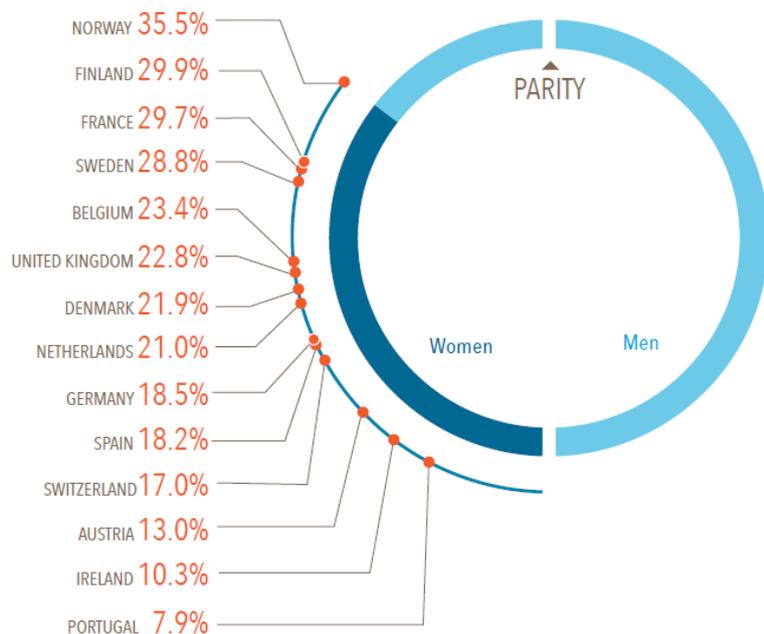
<sup>71</sup> BIS, ‘[Women on Boards 2014: 3 Years On](#)’, 26 March 2014.

<sup>72</sup> BIS, [Women on Boards: Davies Review Annual Report 2014](#), p 6

<sup>73</sup> Catalyst, [2014 Catalyst Census: Women Board Directors](#), p 3.

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.*

**Figure 2: Women's Share of Board Seats at European Stock Index Companies from Highest to Lowest, as at October 2014:**



(Source: Catalyst, [2014 Catalyst Census: Women Board Directors](#), p 3)

Although opinion has been divided when it comes to quotas, *Management Today* argues that, nonetheless, introducing quotas “quickly increases numbers”.<sup>75</sup> It also notes, with caution at making an automatic link, a correlation between the above figures and quotas:

Leading the pack is Norway, where women held 35.5 percent of board positions in major companies. The other Scandinavian countries and France followed not far behind, while Portugal (7.9 percent) and Japan (3.1 percent) languished at the back. Those in the first group have quotas; those in the second do not.<sup>76</sup>

## Management Positions

The ILO notes that during the last decade, the proportion of managers who were women had increased in 80 of 104 countries.<sup>77</sup> In 23 countries, the number of women managers had increased by 7 percent or more. However, despite higher levels of education for women and an increasing labour force participation, in another 23 countries, women's share of management decreased in all regions and levels of development.<sup>78</sup> In middle to large national companies in the developing regions, an ILO company survey found, just over 20 percent of CEOs were women in 2013. The report suggested that this “reflects that more women are able to reach top jobs in local companies as compared to large publically traded businesses and international companies”.<sup>79</sup> Notably, though Norway and Finland excel in female board ratios, *Management Today* have observed that, of the largest 13 Norwegian and Finnish firms in 2013, there are no women among the executive directors.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Adam Gale, '[Women on Boards: Quotas Work](#)', *Management Today*, 13 January 2015.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> ILO, [Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum](#), January 2015, p 22.

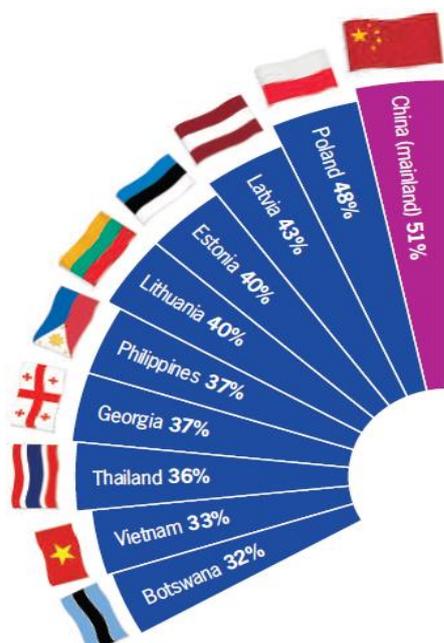
<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*, p22.

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> Adam Gale, '[Women on Boards: Quotas Work](#)', *Management Today*, 13 January 2015.

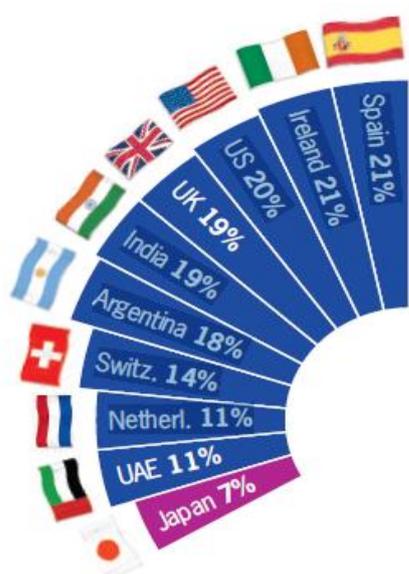
In 2013, it was reported by Grant Thornton, UK based Chartered Accountants, that, globally, women hold 24 percent of senior management roles, a three point increase over the previous year.<sup>81</sup> China had 51 percent of senior management positions held by women, in comparison with 25 percent in 2012, and the proportion of businesses employing women as CEOs had grown, from 9 percent to 14 percent. Figure 3 (below) shows the top ten countries that had the highest percentage of women in senior management in 2012, globally. Figure 4 shows the bottom ten countries that had the lowest percentage of women in senior management in 2012, globally.

**Figure 3: Women in Senior Management Around the World—Top 10:**



(Source: Grant Thornton, [Women in Senior Management: Setting the Stage for Growth](#), 2013, p 4)

**Figure 4: Women in Senior Management Around the World—Bottom 10:**



(Source: Grant Thornton, [Women in Senior Management: Setting the Stage for Growth](#), 2013, p 4)

<sup>81</sup> Grant Thornton, [Women in Senior Management: Setting the Stage for Growth](#), 2013, p 4.

Grant Thornton has suggested that education and talent management may work in tandem with flexible work arrangements to increase the number of women in top leadership.<sup>82</sup> However, rather than limitations on women reaching leadership positions being caused by a lack of flexibility or a need to look after their families, new research from the United States has suggested that the largest reason that there are not more females in top American leadership positions in business and politics was due to women having to “do more than their male counterparts to prove themselves”, with about four in ten Americans suggesting that they felt this was the case for women seeking to climb to the highest levels.<sup>83</sup> The findings, based on a Pew Research Center survey of 1,835 randomly selected adults in November 2014, also showed that a similar number of participants held the view that “the electorate and corporate America are just not ready to put more women in top leadership positions”.<sup>84</sup>

### 3. Education

The UK was ranked at number 32 for education in the 2014 World Economic Forum global gender gap report, with literacy rates, primary school enrolment and secondary school enrolment rates being equal between males and females.<sup>85</sup> Tertiary enrolment rates, however, were higher for females at 72 females for every 53 males.<sup>86</sup>

In September 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which set out eight Millennium Development Goals which they aimed to meet by 2015.<sup>87</sup> The third Millennium Development Goal, MDG 3, was to “promote gender equality and empower women” with a target to “eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015”.<sup>88</sup> The ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education was one of three indicators used by the UN to measure progress.

According to the UN, gender parity in education is reached when the gender parity index (GPI)—defined as girls’ gross school enrolment ratio divided by the corresponding ratio for boys—is between 0.97 and 1.03.<sup>89</sup> Trends in GPI for 2012 showed that gains had been made in all developing regions in primary, secondary and tertiary education and gender parity in primary education was reported to have been achieved—or nearly achieved—in all developing regions.<sup>90</sup> However, the higher the level of education, the higher the prevalence of gender disparity:

While the Caucasus and Central Asia, Northern Africa, South-Eastern Asia and Eastern Asia have achieved gender parity [in secondary education], girls’ enrolment ratios are still lower than boys’ in sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, Western Asia and Southern Asia [...] In tertiary education, enrolment ratios in most regions have improved substantially over the years, but considerable disparities exist in all regions. Enrolment ratios of

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid*, p 4.

<sup>83</sup> Pew Research Centre, [‘Women and Leadership’](#), 14 January 2015.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> World Economic Forum, [‘Gender Gap Report 2014: Rankings United Kingdom’](#), accessed Tuesday 24 February 2015.

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>87</sup> House of Lords Library, [The Challenges Faced by Women in Developing Countries](#), 24 June 2013, LLN 2013/015, p 3.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*. See also UN General Assembly, [United Nations Millennium Declaration](#), A/RES/55/2, 18 September 2000.

<sup>89</sup> UN, [The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014](#), 2014, p 21.

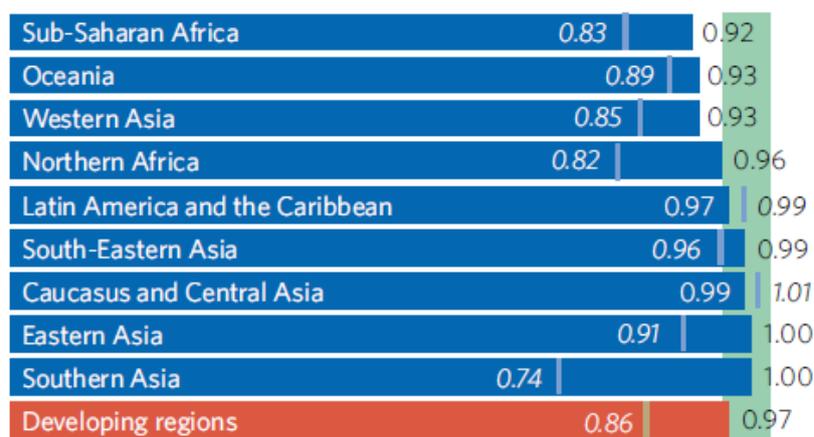
<sup>90</sup> *ibid*, p 4. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, there are “at most” nine girls enrolled for every ten boys and gender parity has not yet been reached, *ibid*, p 21.

young women are significantly lower than those of young men in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia. In contrast, young women in Caucasus and Central Asia, Eastern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Africa and South-Eastern Asia have higher enrolment ratios than young men.<sup>91</sup>

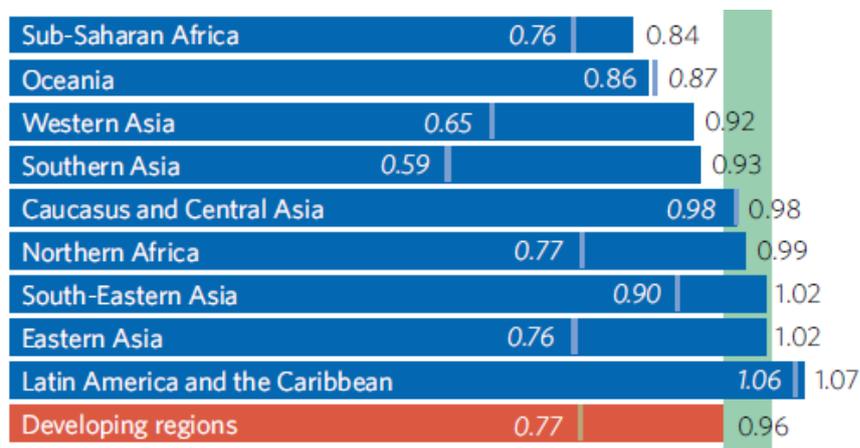
Figure 5 (below) shows the gender parity index for gross enrolment ratios in primary, secondary and tertiary education, respectively, in developing regions in 1990 and 2012.

**Figure 5: Gender Parity Index for Gross Enrolment Ratios in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education in Developing Regions, 1990 and 2012:**

#### Primary Education

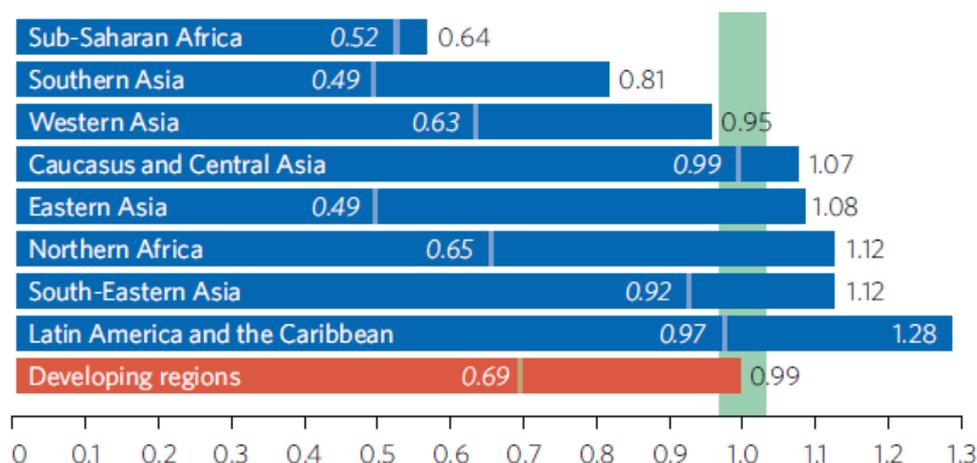


#### Secondary Education



<sup>91</sup> *ibid*, p 21.

## Tertiary Education



(Source: UN, [The Millennium Development Goals Report 2014](#), 2014, p 20. In secondary and tertiary education, 1990 data for Caucasus and Central Asia refer to 1993. In tertiary education, 2012 data for Oceania are not available.)

According to the UN, gender is one of three most pervasive factors linked to disparities in school attendance in children of primary-school and lower-secondary school age, along with poverty and location:

An analysis of 61 household surveys from developing countries between 2006 and 2012 shows that children of primary-school age from the poorest 20 percent of households are over three times more likely to be out of school than children from the richest 20 percent of households. Among the poorest households, girls are more likely to be excluded from education than boys. [...] Rural primary school-aged children are twice as likely to be out of school [...] In sub-Saharan Africa, only 23 percent of poor, rural girls complete their primary education.<sup>92</sup>

In spite of “remarkable progress” in literacy rates, in 2012, women accounted for more than 60 percent of both the illiterate adult and youth populations.<sup>93</sup>

In the EU, 83 percent of young women reached at least upper secondary school education in 2012.<sup>94</sup> This was compared to 77.6 percent of men. Women also represented 60 percent of university graduates in the EU.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>92</sup> *ibid*, p 17.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid*, p 18.

<sup>94</sup> European Commission, [Tackling the Gender Pay Gap in the EU](#), 2014, p 2.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid*.