General Assembly 3

Research Report

The Question of:

Women's participation in the workforce

Introduction

For every 100 women walking around 101 men walk with her. Virtually equal, just like in the real world. In most Western countries women and men are granted the same rights, but when one looks closer one can see that even in those societies both sexes are not always treated the same. Especially not when it comes to jobs. The *gender gap* still exists, meaning that men get payed more than women for the same efforts in general around the world. Also, public positions like CEO's, managers and even politics are more often filled by men.

This phenomenon can be explained by the *survival of the fittest.* Centuries ago, when mankind was still evolving into the humans we are today, a difference between men and women was already discovered. Perhaps it could even have been created by the force of nature, as it granted us an advantage those times. Men are built tougher than women, and women are built more delicate than men. In those times, it resulted in the men hunting, getting food and securing the family, whilst the women took care of the kids. The same principle can be seen with other species, this clear distinction in 'jobs'. When time elapsed, mankind had never really grown out of the difference. The Greek times, the Medieval century, the Renaissance, and lots of revolutions passed but it was not until the late 19th century that female persons were granted voting rights, something men had had for ages by then. Ever since, some countries in the world have tried to minimize the differences in treatment, payday and opportunities, but did they succeed?

The Committee

The General Assembly 3 (GA3) is one of the three GAs of LEMUN 2018. All three of them have the same rights. The GA3 talks about Social, Cultural and Humanitarian issues. This means we will talk about issues in the world from those three perspectives: bearing in mind relations, traditions and human rights. As in the United Nations the bigger part of the power lays with the Security Council, the General Assembly is only allowed to *recommend* actions and not permitted to force member states to do something. What it can do, is use less strong Operative Clauses which could have a negative fallout in the news, such as 'Draws the attention to', and it has the executive power to make new committees, groups or to send funds. This GA will be a normal committee. This means that all delegates will have to prepare resolutions, which we will entertain as a whole at once. In order to put your own resolution on the agenda, you have to reach the number of eight co-submitters, who also want it to be talked about, but are not necessarily in favor of it. These will all have to sign a form, which can be handed in at the chairs desk. If the chairs have received this form, they will send the resolution to the Approval Panel, and if it approves the resolution is likely to be debated upon if time allows us.

All three GAs will be reunited in the plenary session on Sunday. Every committee will pass forward one of the resolutions it has passed, and they will be debated and voted upon once more. Amendments are not anymore permitted though, but one can speak in favor or against the resolution as a whole, and the main submitter gets the floor with the starting and ending of the debate. During the main part of the conference however, we will be debating in our own committee room.

Key Terms

Gender gap:

The gender gap is quite a new term, which effectively means the dissimilarity between a male and female payday for the same job. In short: if a man earns $100 for a day of work and a female $90, the gender gap would be $10. In real life the gender gap entails 32.0% as of 2017, which has grown since 31.7% in 2016. These numbers come from the World Economic Forum, which brings out a report every year about this issue. This is the adjusted version, that has been adapted to account for the difference in opportunities, efforts and workplaces. The unadjusted version is a lot rougher and is therefore not used in general.

Sex ratio:

The sex ratio, or the male-to-female ratio, is the number of women that exist on this earth in comparison with the number of men. A ratio of 1.0 means a rate of 1.0 man : 1.0 women, one of 0.5 means a rate of 0.5 man : 1.0 women and so on. This means that the pinnacle is the number one, where complete numeric equality is achieved. However, the scientifically proven global sex ratio lays at 1.01, so slightly more to the male side, and the unproven but estimated one lays around the 1.05-1.07, so with a bigger disadvantage for females.

Labor force participation:

This is a strong-worded term, but actually is quite easy. This measure means the greatness in participation of one specific group in the labor force, so in the job pool of society in general. These jobs only include ones that fall under the label of 'economic activity'. It is often used to indicate how much one group is represented in the workforce and is quite common around this issue. The current percentage for female participation in the labor force is 48.7%.

Fertility:

Perhaps this is one of the tougher key terms, especially because the explanation of the term implies in itself that a difference between men and women is usual. Fertility means birth rate, and it has been scientifically proved that there is a direct positive link between the number of children being born and less participation of women in the workforce. The more kids walking around, the less women working. Another way in which fertility can play a role in this issue can be seen in the a new sex ratio, the Birth Sex Ratio or the Secondary Sex Ratio. It speaks for itself that if more boys are being born than girls the numeric difference between them will grow.

Economic activities:

Economic activities are another quite easy concept, and yet are not negligible at all when talking about this issue. They are, briefly stated, merely paid jobs. This entails jobs for which one has a contract and gets paid for every hour he or she works/for every job he or she has finished. These do not include for example volunteering efforts, who of course do not directly bring more money into the economy. Lots of women spend their efforts in this category, more than men. Because those people do not officially count as 'part of the workforce', they are not to be counted together with all the women who work for paid jobs. The result naturally is that the women percentage in the official workforce decreases.

Gender Inequality Index (GIP):

The GIP is an index that is made between men and women with regards to three factors: empowerment, reproductive health and labor force participation. A country scores a rate from zero to one, and the higher you score, the less equal you are seen and measured internationally. The United Nations Development Programme introduced the concept and it has been in use ever since.

General Overview

Differences, we see lots of them every single day. Immigrants to native citizens, lower class to higher class and of course: male to female. The latter has already been described shortly, and in this part, it will be explained and described in more detail. Also, the differences and situations in society around the world right now will be elaborated on.

History:

The human body is built in two main streams: men and women. In general, the males use more of their energy to create new muscles, whilst females build energy reserves. This has been the case ever since the beginnings of mankind, when males hunted for food and protected the family, jobs that require real muscles, while the women took care of shelter and 'educated' the kids. The latter could also have partially been caused by the fact that from day one the women had and have another, in the beginning often stronger, relation with their children since they gave birth to them. All of this probably has been set up by nature, because of *survival of the fittest*. Apparently, having this separation is an advantage because of some kind of natural order.

This development is not limited to our species. Most of the animal species in this world differentiate between two sexes, the females being the ones giving birth. In most cases the females also are not as strong as the males are, and the males are gathering food while the ladies remain with the children. It can be found everywhere, from rainbow fish to sparrows to lions.

Later on, after the hunter times, globalization made its way in the centuries after the Romans and the Ottomans and the Greek made their rise. Now that a bigger part of the population lived in cities, the tradition of women staying home remained. The real muscle-requiring jobs were taken over by specialized workers instead of the common males. The men remained the ones going out of the house and making the money, and the women stayed at home, took care of the house and looked after the children. Pursuant to these different tasks, the women did not receive the same education as men did. Consequently, men claimed a *superior* role, since they were stronger, better educated and made the money. This resulted in men having more rights. This distinction became a red lining in history, and would still cause lots of demonstrations, revolutions and hate.

During the 16th and the 17th century, 'witches' were burned. Of these accused 'sorcerers' 75-95% was female. Around the 18th century, the Scientific Revolution and the Age of Reason rose in the Western part of the world. This was a shock in the world, everything was started to be looked upon in a scientific, and less biased way. That judgement gave ground to females starting to get better education, home schooled, and also to them being taken more serious in the world of science. The ideal of *equality* from the Age of Reason did wonders for the emancipation of women, but in real life lots of men disagreed with these ideas and women still could not have the jobs they wanted.

The usual days women spent at home, as they could not work due to their education and the social norms. In the years that followed, the idea of equality never became outdated. People and activist groups were writing transcripts, declarations and bills that promoted granting the same (voting) rights to men and to women. Back then they did not achieve the big ideal: equality. Around the world, double measures were still in place. From the United Kingdom to Australia to Russia, everywhere women were judged differently than men.

During these developments in the Western regions, in other regions the situation stagnated. Look at the history of Asia, some countries did industrialize and create an almost completed equality like Nepal, while others insisted on their traditions, like Afghanistan. In Africa the entire process was not that much influenced, apart from colonization. The *bushmen* stayed bushmen, where the males did the hunting and the females took care of the children. The difference in those regions is that the males in the truly remote areas they do different jobs but are not seen as unequal. In the industrialized regions on the other hand the differences on that part also occurred. Islamic countries also merely persevered in following their traditions and beliefs.

The start of the 20th century was iconic: in 1902, women in Australia were officially granted *suffrage*, the right to vote. This started a chain of events that resulted in lots of bills being passed around the world and women starting to become more equal. But did it work? Is our society right now truly equal? That remains to be seen.

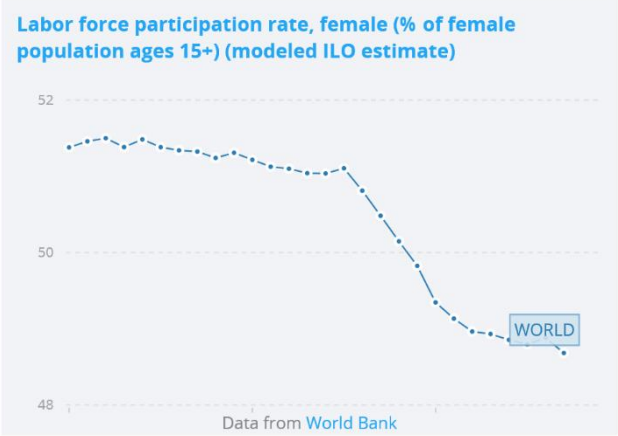
Society nowadays:
Earlier in this report, the *sex ratio* was explained. Around the world there are slightly more men than women, but those numbers do not differ that much. However, the position of women in society is still to be debated upon, as the opinions on the matter differ per country. Another real cause for this which is yet undiscussed is religion. The Islam but also Christianity in general see the place of men in society differently over that of women. This causes in the real, fundamental believers of either of these religions being of the opinion that the status quo is way too feministic. On the other side of the isle, people fundamentally protest against that way of thinking. The demonstration they cause or participate in are becoming a more frequent scene globally.

In some countries around the world, parties who are lead or inspired by these religions rule. Take for example Saudi-Arabia, where the Sharia law is still in place, and women can be sentenced to death for cheating on their husband and the males are less punished for the crime. This can be explained with the basis of sovereignty, which allows them to determine themselves which traditions to follow and laws to implement. Following this stance, an outside government could never force you to change your values and beliefs. A fundamental other way to look at the issue is that of respect. Women wear headscarves so that men are not attracted by their faces, they cannot meet in small rooms because that could make the ladies uncomfortable and most of the different treatments can be comprehended in this line of thinking. This remains controversial to the eyes of others and causes a lot of anger to rise against them.

Apart from religion and rights, there are people around the world who (unconsciously) differ between the role in society of females and males. That feeling causes most of the issues arising right now, and it also the one the hardest to tackle. We could secure rights and punishments in law, but in order to make someone value a group differently, one has to make them believe it by heart. Only that way the complete equality in payday for men and women with the same jobs could be truly secured, as the gender gap is still big and slightly growing right now. If hearts and minds are changed, this difference potentially could be helped. And that is the reason so many people protest and ask for public attention these days regarding this issue. They are trying to make the

world see what is regarded as unjustness, in order to change it. On the other hand, of course, nations might disagree with this line of thinking due to religionist reasons or traditions.

Finally, to end with some numbers. The society of the world nowadays is not fully equal. If a male banker wants to work he will be faster instated and will be paid 32.0% more on average than if his twin sister with the same capabilities would have applied for the job. Also, just 48.7% of the people who are working right now is female, whilst 49.9% of the world population is female. The remaining 1.2% decides not to work, or to do a non-economic activity. Something that should be reviewed each way. If a woman demands the same rights for herself as granted for men in the country she's travelling through or living in, she will not always get them. Some countries are soaked with ancient traditions, thoughts or even religions. And these ideologies can be interpreted in a way in which they choose one sex over the other. If done so, it creates a polarization. In other countries however, the public opinion is shifting. Mostly the Westernized countries are trying very hard to become impartial in the treatment of men and women. Lots of actions around the world are pleading for more women's rights and a better place for them in society. But these actions also attract opposition, who think that the whole problem and the treatment of it is overdone. That is the state the world is in right now, with lots of argue. Some of the numbers are roundabout equal, but the devil is in the details and the women that are present are not always treated equally. And in order to achieve a bigger participation of women in the workforce, we would have to change that attitude. If women feel more welcome in the new world, or perhaps just equal to the male employees, they are more likely to start working on higher positions. Once some women are in charge of the really big companies, or governments, these could become an example for others to follow. If they do, permanent changes can be made that will maybe last for centuries. It is to be kept in mind that the ideal of full equality is not globally agreed upon, and that when taking these measures that disagreement would first have to be solved.

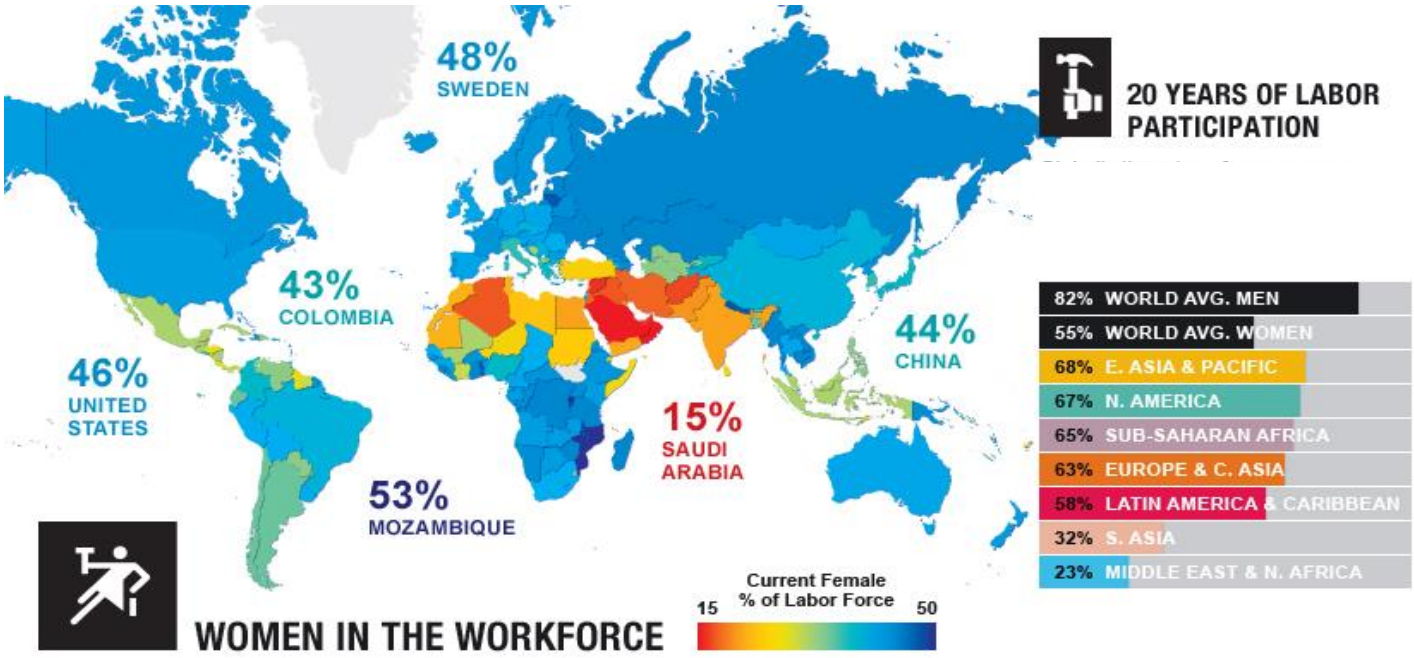


Major Parties Involved

This issue involves the entire world, and not a small selection of countries in specific. However, some countries are doing better than others on the topic and the world powers have a big role on every issue so those will be discussed too, together with regions and law systems.

Islamic countries
Islamic countries, who follow Sharia law or acknowledge the Islam as the official national religion, choose their traditions over the ideal of equality between men and women. After all, the world is made and created with the difference. Besides, also in the Koran is stated that women are to be treated differently than men are. This can also be seen from a side of respect, that is explained earlier. You do respect and honor women, but everyone has their rightful place in society. All this is protected from your point of view by sovereignty. The reason that Islamic countries are looked upon much worse than Christian ones on the matter is because they outnumber them.

Christian countries
Countries that call themselves Christian or follow the Bible as law are not big on women participation in the workforce. Also, in the Bible is stated that women should take a less active role with jobs and look after the kids. God after all has created this world, and his wishes and creations should be honored. You think that everyone who disagrees does not respect your freedom as a sovereign state. Besides, also women can climb on the ladder of jobs if they really want it and persevere.



China
China is a communist state, and therefore strives towards complete equality. However it has a longstanding tradition ever since the Qing dynasty in which men were seen as superior, so in order to filter all that out a lot of work is going to be needed. As long as other countries will not decide what it has to do, China probably agrees with the resolving of this issue.

Russia
Russia is not that big on human rights in general. However, women in the Russian society are quite emancipated. But if you belong to a minority or lower class, these rights will parish and you will not have much other options to go to. The gender gap is not that big in Russia, probably also because of its communistic roots.

United States
The United States is a difficult country in this issue. It is one of the leading parties in the world in general, but regarding this issue stays rather quiet based on their Christian roots. However, one of the fundaments of the American Constitution is equality. The gender gap and the GIP still remain quite negative in general about the USA. Also, the situation regarding this issue can differ based on which state you visit.

Europe
Europe has been a less prominent speaker in the debates on the issue, but remains a world force and therefore is important to be heard. It has always spoken in favor of women's rights and has always encouraged them to take a better place in the working class. But, because this opinion has to be derived out of lots of European Member States, of which some have religion backgrounds, it is always more nuanced than countries would say it when they would bring it on their own. In the past, most of them were Christian and followed the Bible strictly, but the progressive movement is spreading through Europe and it is becoming more and more equal and tolerant.

Africa
Africa naturally consists of various states, each following different laws and traditions. Therefore it is almost impossible to state one opinion that speaks for the entire continent. It is true, however, that due to the late industrialization of most parts and the living in groups of *bushmen* in quite some areas throughout history that the gender tends to divide by the force of nature. The question here is of course which jobs to count to the workforce and which not. On the other side, looking at the numbers, some African countries have a rather high ladies percentage in their economy. Take for example Zimbabwe with a percentage of 52.8% or Gambia with 50.8%.

Asia:
The same as Africa goes for Asia. The participation in the workforce of females ranges from 16% in Afghanistan to 83% in Nepal, whilst the male participation ranges from 52% in Timor-Leste to 89% in Nepal. One can conclude that through all the differences per country, over all Asia tends to favor the male side slightly, but it really depends on the area you are in.

Yemen:
The Islamic Yemen has the smallest amount of women in their workforce. It consists 94% of men and only 6% of women. Besides, it scores quite consequently as one of the highest countries in the Gender Inequality Index, and therefore is looked upon as one of the more discriminating countries in the world. Regarding this issue, it follows the beliefs described by the Islamic countries.

Timeline of Events

Lots of events could be placed in this timeline, as there are and have been lots of events and ratifications around the world in the past centuries regarding this issue. However, here is a smaller pick:

Late 18th century:
The Age of Reason; This meant that people truly started to think scientifically, which resulted in a world view from a new perspective of equality instead out of one consisting from biased views.

1821: The first endowed school for girls was instated in New York by E. Willard, until then in the whole of the USA not a single school, apart from home schools, existed for girls.

1837: In this year, the first National Female Anti-Slavery convention of the United States was organized. In those times, this was quite an iconic new thing and it moved quickly over the entire world.

1902: Australia became the first country to allow women to vote, in the century thereafter most other countries in the world did so too but Australia was the first one, consequently with its current imago of a tolerant country.

1910: Poliksena Shishkina-Iavein became the new prominent leader of the Russian League for Womens Rights, and only seven years afterwards the women suffrage was officially granted in Russia.

1979: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, of the United Nations. This was the first big gathering of the UN regarding this issue, and at the summit an 'international bill of rights' has been formed and ratified amongst lots of other nations.

1995: The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, and also there was again talked about the position of Women in society, this was a good year as lots of new deals and promises were made and as it was really constructive for the situation right now.

1995-now: Multiple UN investigations have been made, researching terms such as the gender gap or the GIP. The results can be found online at the site of the UN.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

The issue has already been discussed many times. Ever since the Age of Reason, bills and ideas were formed and written with the goal of complete equality, also in the workforce. A good example straight out of the real UN is the resolution A/RES/65/191, which affirms and ratifies the Beijing Agreement. In making that agreement, Beijing hosted the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, which has done lots to decrease gender inequality too.
Apart from these official meetings and resolutions, the UN has often urged all nations to pursue women's rights and place in the workforce. The question is of course if it really has worked, and the opinion on that matter differs per country. Of course, if we count all the protests in favor of women's rights with these attempts to solve the issue we would end up with a list of thousands, as they have been executed a lot. And, of course, lots of countries have undertaken steps

themselves to eliminate this form of discrimination, which could also be counted and at least noted in this list.

The Future

What is going to happen in the future is hard to tell, as always. Activist groups are gaining velocity, but the fundaments of countries who follow their traditions by heart are only strengthening. The other point slowing the process is the ancientness of the issue. The fact that the difference has always been implemented in our society, as well as the discussion since several centuries, makes the entire issue 'old'. This causes people to look upon it as a less urgent matter, which delays actions being taken.

Important Decisions a Resolution Must Take

The main point that has to be decided upon, a rather fundamental and necessary decision in this resolution, would be a stance on the issue itself. It should be clear from the resolution to what extent the committee values the sovereignty of a country to stick to its own values and traditions in comparison to the equality of men and women in the workforce.

The second question that has to be answered in the debate is in what ways this committee will improve the participation of women in the workforce. This committee, and the UN in general, is not allowed to force countries to implement a certain thought or ideal in their own laws. Therefore, your options are limited. However, your committee could do things such as:

- Encourage all nations to implement a form of emancipation in their own law systems, this reaction could be enhanced with a show of goodwill of others;
- Gain social velocity by condemning an action by your government or not approving of it in the GA, this could start a chain with lots of protests and demonstrations in which new images and/or laws can be formed, this method has the biggest impact;
- Start small, propose companies a deal or give them an advantage if they minimize their gender gap, or use other stimuli, also change the status of for example volunteers, and classify their jobs as economic activities, from the bottom-up, you could make lasting changes;
- There is of course also the case in which your country follows the Sharia of Christian law, or strongly sympathizes and follows the religion, in that case your main case is that of sovereignty: you believe everything right now is just fine and that what is believed and which traditions are followed in your country are nobody's business but your own.

And last but not least, discussing the activist groups currently active would further broaden the issue and the resolving of it. Does our committee want to encourage them to continue? What is constructive and what not? Answering those questions would bring a whole new layer to the resolution.

Please note that you should not limit yourselves to these questions and methods, and that all delegates are encouraged to form their own plans for the issue.

Further Reading

Some numbers about the female participation in the work force, with infographics: https://ourworldindata.org/female-labor-force-participation-key-facts

Major achievements for the women (feminist) community in 2017: https://www.globalfundforwomen.org/top-10-moments-for-womens-rights-2017/#.WybGHUxuK3A

An article of the UN describing the inequality: https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/01/488022-un-study-finds-increase-women-managers-urges-greater-efforts-workforce-equality

Resolutions from the real UN in order to combat inequality between genders: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/ianwge/resolutions.htm

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