

Economic empowerment

## Discriminatory attitudes towards women in paid employment



## Key points

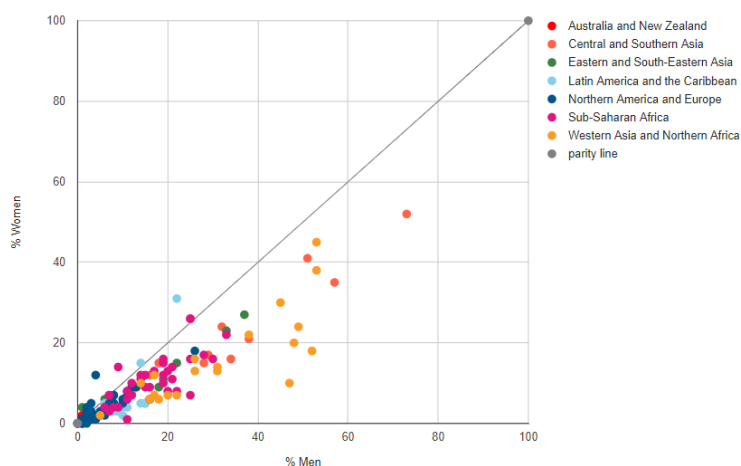
- Globally in 2016, men were more likely than women to disapprove of women's engagement in paid employment outside the home (20% versus 14%, respectively). Disapproval rates were higher among men than women in 111 out of 139 (80%) Member States and territories with available data.
- The gender gap increased when children were present in the household, swaying men's attitudes more negatively than women's: 25% versus 16%, respectively.
- Discriminatory attitudes towards women in paid employment outside the home were most prevalent both among women and men in Central and Southern Asia and Western Asia and Northern Africa. In developed regions, disagreement with women's paid employment outside the home was low both among men (5.5%) and women (3.8%).

## Men are less in favour than women of women's engagement in paid employment outside the home

Harmful social norms and discriminatory attitudes, especially when combined with a shortage of **protective legislation**, can severely impede women's access to employment. In 2016, in 139 Member States, men were more likely than women to disagree that it was acceptable for women in their families to have a paid job outside the home if they wanted to do so (20% of men versus 14% of women, respectively). The gender gap increased when there were children in the household, swaying men's attitudes more negatively than women's: 25% of men versus 16% of women in households with children, respectively, disagreed with the above statement.<sup>1</sup> When asked, 29% of men and 27% of women stated that they preferred women in their families to stay at home rather than work at a paid job or to do both.

In 2016, disapproval of women in paid employment outside the home was more prevalent among men than women in 111 out of 139 (80%) Member States and territories with available data. Disapproval was five or more percentage points higher among women than men in only three countries: Haiti (nine percentage points), Slovenia (eight percentage points) and Togo (five percentage points) (see figure I).

**Figure I:** Attitudinal discrimination against women engaging in paid work outside the home by sex: 2016 (Percentage)

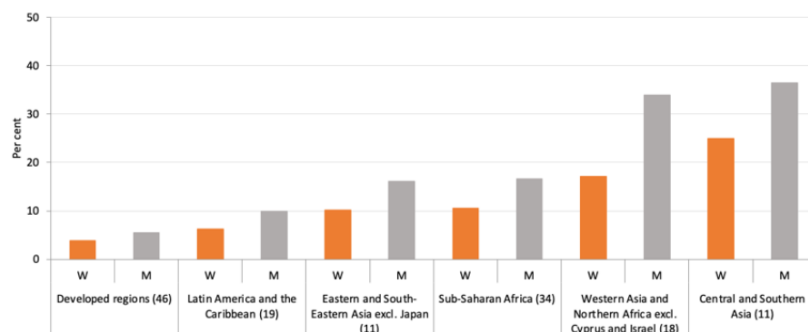


Source: Gallup World Poll, 2016 (last accessed on 9 April 2020) (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/201056/gallup-top-world-findings-2016.aspx>).

## Women's engagement in paid employment outside the home is more acceptable in developed regions

Across regions, significant variations are found in terms of discriminatory attitudes towards women in paid employment outside the home. These attitudes were most prevalent both among women and men in Central and Southern Asia and Western Asia and Northern Africa (see figure II), where women's **labour force participation rate** was also considerably low. In 13 out of 15 countries in those two regions the overall rate of disagreement with the statement was the highest. In developed regions, disapproval of women's paid employment outside the home was low both among men (5.5%) and women (3.8%), although men disagreed with the statement at a higher rate than women by five percentage points or more in Greece, Malta and Slovakia.

**Figure II:** Attitudinal discrimination against women engaging in paid work outside the home, by sex and region: 2016 (Percentage)



**Source:** Calculated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Statistics Division, using data retrieved from the Gallup World Poll, 2016 (last accessed on 9 April 2020) (<https://news.gallup.com/poll/201056/gallup-top-world-findings-2016.aspx>).

**Note:** Unweighted averages; data for the highlighted regions represent at least 50% of the regional population; the numbers in brackets indicate the number of countries with available data; developed regions include countries in Europe and Northern America, as well as Australia, Cyprus, Israel, Japan and New Zealand.

## About the data

### Definitions

- **Proportion of women and men who disagree with the statement: "It's perfectly acceptable for any woman in your family to have a paid job outside the home if she wants one"**: This indicator provides information about the prevalence of discriminatory attitudes among women and men towards women engaging in paid employment outside the home.

### Coverage

Women and men aged 15 and older.

### Availability

139 United Nations Member States and territories (2016).

### Limitations

The sample size per country for the nationally representative Gallup World Poll (2016) was 1,000 individuals, except in large countries such as China and the Russian Federation, where the sample size amounted to at least 2,000 individuals. In some instances, the sample size was between 500 and 1,000. Administration of both face-to-face interviewing and telephone interviewing may have led to some mode effects.

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## Footnotes

1. International Labour Organization (ILO) - Gallup, Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men, 2017 .