

# Norwegian Perspectives on Gender Equality at Work

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# A few words about me

Born in **Novi Sad** in 1970, moved to Norway in 1988

IT studies: BSc and MSc in Informatics, University of Oslo, **Norway**

Academic research: PhD in Maths, **Oxford** University, Fellow Magdalen College

Teaching: Prof in **Saudi Arabia**, Advisor in China

Software Development: DEC SRC in **Silicon Valley**, Alta Vista

Business studies: MBA at INSEAD, **France**

Operational management: Fast Search & Transfer, Microsoft, **Norway & USA**

**Board Work: Statkraft, Norsk Tipping, Aschehoug,...**

Married, with 4 children



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# Norwegian setup

#1: Prosperity Index, Legatum Institute

Unemployment rate: 3,6%  
Female employment rate 73.8

Proven history of sustainable  
usage of natural resources: fish,  
timber, energy, oil and gas.  
I would also add women.

Population 4,9M  
Visitors per year 2,5M  
Renewable energy 46,24%

#1: EIU Democracy Index

	Rank	Overall score	Category scores				
			I Electoral process and pluralism	II Functioning of government	III Political participation	IV Political culture	V Civil liberties
			Full democracies				
Norway	1	9.80	10.00	9.64	10.00	9.38	10.00
Iceland	2	9.65	10.00	9.64	8.89	10.00	9.71
Denmark	3	9.52	10.00	9.64	8.89	9.38	9.71
Sweden	4	9.50	9.58	9.64	8.89	9.38	10.00

Among the top countries on most  
life quality and equality indices

Housing
Income
Jobs
Community
Education
Environment
Civic Engagement
Health
Life Satisfaction
Safety
Work-Life Balance

#4: OECD  
Better life  
index

HDI rank	Human Development Index (HDI)	Inequality-adjusted HDI		Gender Inequality Index	
	Value	Value	Rank	Value	Rank
VERY HIGH HUMAN DEVELOPMENT					
1 Norway	0.943	0.890	1	0.075	6
2 Australia	0.929	0.856	2	0.136	18
3 Netherlands	0.910	0.846	4	0.052	2
4 United States	0.910	0.771	23	0.299	47
5 New Zealand	0.908	..	..	0.195	32
6 Canada	0.908	0.829	12	0.140	20
7 Ireland	0.908	0.843	6	0.203	33
8 Liechtenstein	0.905	..	..	..	..
9 Germany	0.905	0.842	7	0.085	7
10 Sweden	0.904	0.851	3	0.049	1

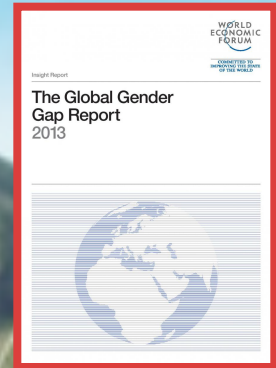
#1: UN Human Development Index

Based on transparency and trust



# Norwegian women

Women's life expectancy: 83.6 (vs 82.6 in EU)  
Female labour participation: 70% (vs 59% in EU)  
Female political participation: 40% (vs 20% world)  
Female board participation: 40% (vs 16% in EU)



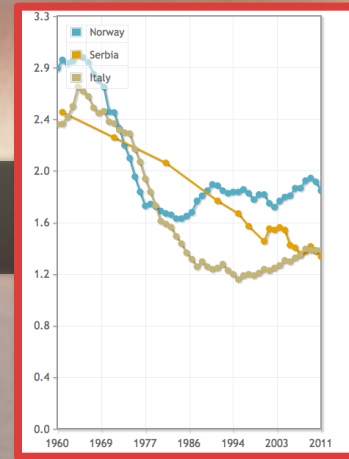
Independent and satisfied

Focus on equality over many years.  
Great infrastructure.  
Productive work culture.  
Healthy family culture.  
Great access to equal education and healthcare.



# Fertility and work

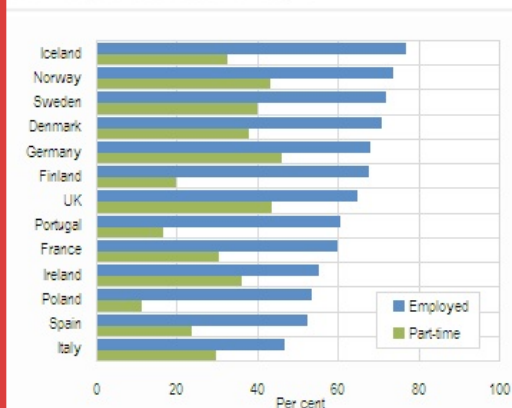
Fertility rate, total (births per woman): 1.9



Labor participation rate: 73%

Gender gap in labor force halved over last two decades

Women in the labour force<sup>1</sup> aged 15-64, and proportion of part-time workers. Selected countries. 2011



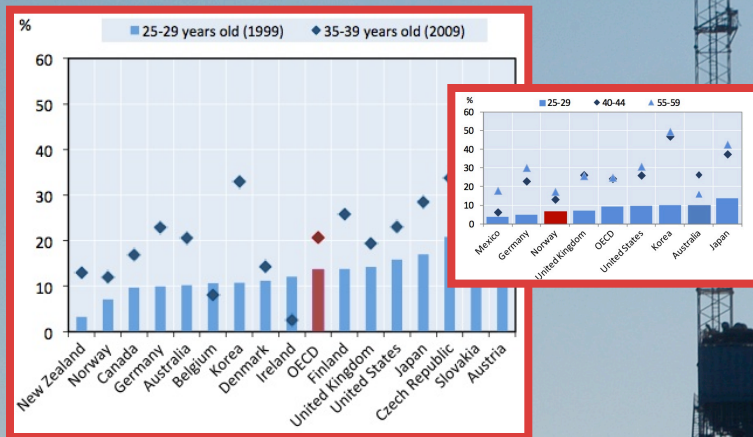
<sup>1</sup> Percentage of women in the same age group in the population.  
Source: Eurostat.

In Norway, 73% of women have jobs. This is more than the OECD average of 60% and relatively close to the 77% employment rate of men in Norway. This 4 percentage point gender difference is much lower than the OECD average difference of 12 percentage points and suggests Norway has been successful in addressing the constraints and barriers women face accessing work.



# How do Norwegian women work?

At median incomes, the gender pay gap in Norway is among the lowest in the OECD. Wage gaps are narrow at the bottom end of the earnings distribution but wider at the top (17% less).



Gender pay gap by age, 1970-74 cohort

Average monthly pay <sup>1</sup> for men and women in selected industries. 2011			
Industry	NOK		Women's pay as percentage of men's Per cent
	Men	Women	
All employees	40 800	34 800	85
Oil and natural gas production	59 300	55 100	93
Manufacturing	39 100	34 700	89
Construction	36 000	36 200	101
Wholesale and retail trade	36 800	30 300	82
Transport	38 500	34 400	89
Information and communications	51 700	25 700	50
Financial services	62 700	42 900	68
Professional, scientific and technical services	52 500	40 600	77
Business services	33 300	30 200	91
Public administration (central and local government)	41 400	37 300	90
Education	39 700	36 800	93
Health and social services	39 700	34 100	86

<sup>1</sup> Pay for part-time workers converted to full-time equivalents.  
Source: Statistics Norway.

Cultural bias?

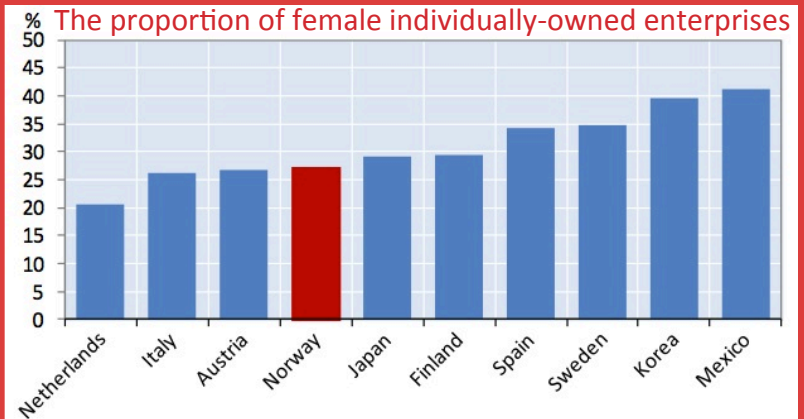
Young women may have overtaken young men in all levels of educational attainment, but there remain persistently wide gender gaps when it comes to the field of study: in 2010 the proportion of tertiary degrees awarded to Norwegian women was 83% in health and welfare studies but only 20% in computer sciences. Female employment tends to be concentrated in fewer occupations than men: in 2009, half of the working women in Norway were employed in seven occupations while this concerned 14 occupations for men.

	2012			2013		
	Both sexes	Males	Females	Both sexes	Males	Females
In total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
1. Managers	6.6	8.5	4.5	6.7	8.5	4.6
2. Professionals	25.9	20.7	31.7	26.5	21.0	32.7
3. Technicians and associate professionals	16.4	18.6	14.0	16.6	18.8	14.1
4. Clerical support workers	6.7	4.9	8.8	6.4	4.7	8.2
5. Service and sales workers	21.6	12.1	32.1	20.9	11.6	31.3
6. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers	2.0	3.2	0.7	2.0	3.1	0.7
7. Craft and related trades workers	9.7	17.4	1.0	9.6	17.2	1.1
8. Plant and machine operators and assemblers	6.6	10.7	2.1	6.6	10.7	1.9
0,9. Other occupations	4.6	4.0	5.2	4.9	4.5	5.4



# Female ownership?

The proportion of female individually-owned enterprises in distribution Norway is lower than in many OECD countries



Women are a major untapped resource of business creation. The proportion of individually-owned enterprises owned by women in Norway was 27% in 2010.

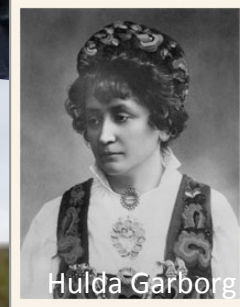
In 2008, the Norwegian government launched an integrated national plan to promote female entrepreneurship. The plan provides dedicated resources and targets related to the financing of growth and innovation in women-owned firms as well as the right to maternity and parental benefits for the self-employed.

Skills?  
Financing?  
Network?



# History, traditions and culture

Gro Harlem Brundtland



Lutheran values

Medieval Viking law prohibited women from bearing arms or even having short hair. Viking women could not be chiefs or judges, and they had to remain silent in assemblies .

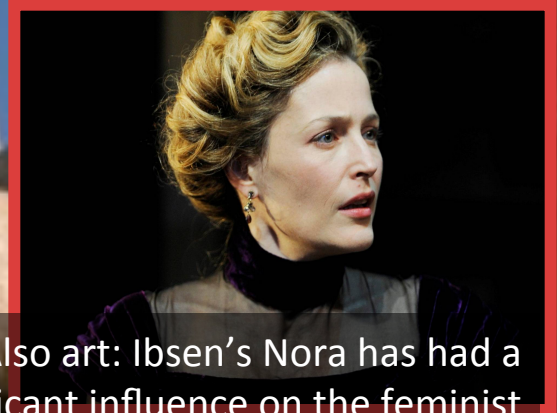
1910 Women won the right to vote in local authority elections  
1911 First female deputy member in the Storting (Anna Rogstad)  
1913 Women won the universal right to vote on the same terms as men.  
1922 First female member of the Storting (Karen Platou)  
1945 First female cabinet minister (Kirsten Hansteen)  
1961 First female vicar (Ingrid Bjerkås)  
1968 First female Supreme Court judge (Lilly Bølviken)  
1974 First female chief administrative officer of a county (Ebba Lodden)  
1978 First female gender equality ombud (Eva Kolstad)  
1981 First female prime minister (Gro Harlem Brundtland)

# Policies work – but take a long time

At least 30 years of  
patient policy building and heavy  
investments in healthcare,  
education, family funding etc

e.g. 6+3 parental leave

I cannot be a good mother or wife without  
learning to be more than a plaything



Also art: Ibsen's Nora has had a  
significant influence on the feminist  
movement also outside Norway.



# So, is glass ceiling no more?



Stine Bosse, CEO Tryg, twice nominated as the most powerful woman in Scandinavia, has left recently because "she couldn't stand being at the top any longer"



# Recent votes...

Kristin Skogen Lund, head of Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO) recently stated that the lack of female leaders in corporate life is caused by women themselves.

“

I have never experienced anything like a glass ceiling at work. I think the lack of female leaders in the corporate world is to a large extent caused by women themselves. They are often not willing to make the necessary sacrifices. I understand that well. It is not comfortable being a leader, but it is extremely inspiring.

**Elisabeth Grieg  
(shipping magnate):  
Not so fast!**



# Time is of essence

The 40% club  
vs  
The 4% club



70 hour weeks and breast pumps...  
Time cost of child bearing  
Opportunity cost of childbearing

Even in Norway the unequal career  
development starts at child bearing age.



# Infrastructure



Affordable and good formal childcare  
Free and good schooling  
Free and good healthcare  
Shared maternity/paternity leave  
Non-discrimination laws  
Student financing

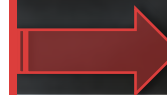


# Work culture

*How do you attract,  
develop  
and keep  
the best female talent?*

Non-hierarchical, effective, open and inclusive.  
Family friendly work hours  
Available mentors

Strong labor unions  
Public ownership  
Strict labor laws  
Transparent tax lists



# Family values

Atomic families  
Co-habitation  
Outdoors focus  
Pro-active fathers  
Divorce rate  
Male/female ideals and stereotypes





# A Woman in the Board Room - an Insider's View

A typical Norwegian PLC board:

- 5-8 members
- Subcommittees - a recent phenomenon
- Mostly non-executive members
- CEO cannot be chairman
- The nomination committee elected by shareholders (not a subcommittee)

2002: Voluntary gender quota law for PLCs.  
2008: Non-compliance leads to fines, then deregistration from the Oslo Stock Exchange and finally dissolution



It is not about fairness  
Diversity is a value in itself  
it creates wealth



# From 2002 to 2014

Despite concerns in other European nations about affirmative action or tokenism, “back in Norway, the ‘tokenism or talent’ debate has already been consigned to history. Women just picked up the baton and ran with it.

2003

7% women on  
PLC boards



2013

42% women on  
PLC boards

Training programs have helped “demystify” board work to unseasoned women, while networking and mentoring programs have allowed women who do not necessarily “fit the formula” of typical board members to gain access to previously-closed networks.

# Golden skirts



Most companies did not experience serious problems in finding competent women. Some board professional women became “golden skirts”.

## Who were “the women”?

- Senior women with long corporate executive experience, already with directorships
- Former politicians/ministers with public sector experience
- Women leaving middle/top management to “work” boards
- Younger, less-experienced women with top qualifications in specialized areas
- A few “imported” women from abroad



# One swallow does not make a spring

## Entering the board room

- Most women were well received, but generally started out in passive or listening mode
- Women often focus on value preservation, not value creation – typically become Audit Committee members
- Women are “independent” board members, as generally not shareholders – taking the monitoring role
- After the first election period, a few women left the boards, new ones entered

You need to  
be an eagle,  
not a  
swallow!



Being “the token” woman is challenging – often the woman adapts to existing board culture

Companies need at least 3 women to make a difference in a board room



Group think can be strong in a board. A lot of confidence is needed to take a different approach



# So what?

Recommendations on the next slides:

1. For women
2. For companies
3. For regulators



Serbia's currently strong points:

- Highly educated women, not only in the "soft" subjects
- High female participation in the work force, full-time, also in middle-management



# Some advice to women

1. Think life phases – life is long, spend each phase wisely; stay true to your priorities
2. Choose your partner wisely – behind every successful woman...(this goes for bosses and companies too)
3. Control your control impulses, and accept help; time is limited, so both housework and extended family need to adjust to your work needs – it is OK; stop feeling constantly guilty about children, parents, in-laws... it really is OK
4. Build a strong network – it is both what you know and who you know; identify and listen to your mentors
5. Increase risk tolerance – avoid non-effective perfectionism; work hours are too short, so use the 20/80 principle
6. Create a real and unique position – combine deep skill with great commercial instincts
7. Do not aim to enter the boys club – never lose your female identity
8. Be a confident, straight speaker – build vision and inspiration – brand YOU
9. See and use to opportunities that come your way – perfect timing is a myth
10. Stay motivated, stay patient, stay hungry – enjoy the journey, and remember that goals can change

Learn the rules of the game,  
play by the rules of the game,  
until you are in a position to  
change the rules of the game





# Some advice to companies

1. Think life phases – allow all your employees to have a balanced life; they will repay with loyalty; there is a time for fast track and time for a family track, and back again
2. Expect results and growth, but allow for flexibility in “face time”; rethink your incentive structures: measure results rather than hours
3. Effectively recruiting, leading and coaching women requires some different techniques from the same tasks directed at men; build these skills
4. Establish clear and fair leadership and career development plans for both sexes
5. Establish mentoring structures; “adopt a boss” programs; social incentives for mixing
6. Showcase role models and a culture of high performance balanced with good family values
7. Ensure transparent leadership
8. Provide female networking environments
9. Be an attractive employer both for women and men, a good growth case worth some sacrifice; help with infrastructure, enable personal and professional growth
10. Beware the halo effect at hiring and promotions



Speed is no replacement  
for direction

# Some advice to regulators

There is a big difference  
between  
doing things right  
and  
doing the right things

1. Build infrastructure that alleviates typical women's work: childcare, healthcare, care for elderly
2. Build incentives: shared parental leave, free days for parents with sick children, student financing
3. Promote examples of companies with strong female participation in management and boards
4. Work long-term on family and work culture; be patient, and make room for a few heroes
5. Enable and promote continued education; establish programs a la "Female Future", "Board Skills" etc
6. Establish legal protection at work against any discrimination, provide whistleblowing mechanisms
7. Promote transparency at all levels of society
8. Provide good framework for part time work, and labor protection laws
9. Require reporting on gender pay gap and gender balance in managerial positions in companies
10. Support economic independence for women



# Equality pays off in long term



well distributed wealth  
and  
well used talent

# What could you learn from Norway?



+

1. Great society
2. Work culture
3. Life balance
4. Innovation clusters
5. Transparency & trust
6. Petroleum fund
7. Healthy environment
8. Social mobility
9. Well distributed wealth

0



1. Powered by nature
2. Birkebeiner

-



1. Weather
2. Low level of diversity
3. Lack of urgency
4. Some cultural stereotypes
5. Lack of extended families
6. Lutefisk



**Thank you!**

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**You *can* have it all,  
but not all of the time.**