

Sex and Power 2011 Scotland

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Missing women

The progress of women to positions of authority in Scotland, and in Britain, has been tortuously slow. This year's Sex and Power Report - an index of women in positions of power and influence - shows a trend which is not abating; while women make progress in some sectors, that progress regularly stalls or even reverses in other sectors. It is a trend of waxing and waning; not one of constant upward movement.

Women in this country are better educated than ever before. They are graduating from university in ever increasing numbers and achieve better degree results than men¹. Intelligent, competent women are flooding the junior ranks of law firms, accountancies and medical practices.

These women step on the career ladder and work hard, with the corner office firmly in sight. In their twenties they level peg with men and therefore we would expect them to enter the management ranks at the same rate as men. However, several years down the track a different picture emerges – one where many have disappeared from the paid workforce or remain trapped in the 'marzipan layer' below senior management, leaving the higher ranks to be dominated by men².

These talented women are missing from the top jobs.

If women were to achieve equal representation among Britain's 26,000 top positions of power, the Commission estimates that 5,400 'missing' women would rise through the ranks to positions of real influence.

Findings

This survey measures the number of women in positions of power or influence in Scotland and, more generally, in Britain in 2010/11.

For the Scottish study this year, 14 occupation categories were reviewed. The results show that there were more women in top posts in 10 of the 14 categories compared to 2007/08. These include:

- local authority chief executives
- senior police officers
- university principals, and
- health service chief executives.

However, increases have been small in most areas and in many cases the increases are attributable to just one or two women joining senior posts. For example, while there has been an increase in the proportion of members of the Scottish Parliament that are women - from 34.1 per cent to 34.9 per cent – this is still significantly less than the figure from 2003 (39.5 per cent). Similarly, for Scottish trade union general secretaries, the proportion of women in these posts rose from 20.6 per cent to just 25.7 per cent. For ministers in the Scottish Government, the increase is less than one percentage point.

There have been drops in women's participation in four sectors compared to 2007/08 figures:

- Scottish local authority council leaders
- public appointments
- Scottish MEPs, and
- further education college principals.

The fall was most substantial with local authority council leaders. Since 2007/8, the percentage of council leaders who are women has halved, falling from 18.8 per cent to 9.4 per cent – from six female council leaders to only three.

There was also a reduction in the proportion of women holding public appointments. Even more worrying is that the proportion of women is less than it was in 2003.

Across Britain, the survey was wider, with 27 occupational categories being reviewed. The results show there were more women in top posts in 17 of the 27 categories in Britain compared to 2007/08. These include:

- members of the senior judiciary
- heads of professional bodies
- chief executives of national sports bodies
- senior police officers, and
- trade union general secretaries.

Again, increases have been small in many areas and in many cases the increases are attributable to just one or two women joining senior posts. For example, for senior managers in the civil service the increase is from 26.6 per cent to 29.2 per cent. For senior ranks of the armed forces, the increase of three women brought the percentage to only one per cent.

There have been drops in women's participation in 10 sectors, including:

- members of Cabinet (except Scotland)
- National Assembly for Wales
- local authority council leaders
- public appointments
- editors of national newspapers
- chairs of national arts bodies, and
- health service chief executives.

In three of these cases, falls have been substantial. The number of female chairs of arts companies had reached four in 2007/8. This year, that figure has fallen to one - Zoë van Zwanenberg at the Scottish Ballet.

The proportion of women Cabinet ministers is currently 17.4 per cent - effectively four women. The number of female editors of national newspapers has declined from a peak of four to two in 2011 - Dawn Neesom at the *Daily Star* and Tina Weaver at the *Sunday Mirror*.

The results of this year's survey indicate that it will take another 70 years to achieve an equal number of women directors in the FTSE 100 and another 45 years to achieve an equal number of women in the senior judiciary. It will take another 14 general elections – that is, up to 70 years - to achieve an equal number of women MPs in the UK parliament.

Sex and Power Scotland 2010/11 index

The following are comparative figures for women and men in selected 'top jobs' in Scotland, 2010/11.

Politics	Women	Men	Total	% women
MPs with Scotland constituencies ³	13	45	58	22.4%
Ministers in The Scottish Parliament ⁴	6	13	19	31.6%
Members of The Scottish Parliament ⁵	45	84	129	34.9%
Local authority council leaders ⁶	3	29	32	9.4%
Scottish Members of the European Parliament ⁷	1	5	6	16.7%
Public sector	Women	Men	Total	% women
Public appointments ⁸	198	416	614	32.2%
Local authority chief executives ⁹	9	23	32	28.1%
Senior police officers ¹⁰	4	23	27	14.8%
Judges of the Court of Session ¹¹	5	28	33	15.2%
Head teachers of secondary schools ¹²	110	246	356	30.9%
Further education college principals ¹³	12	30	42	28.6%
University principals ¹⁴	4	10	14	28.6%
Health service chief executives ¹⁵	8	14	22	36.4%
Trade Union general secretaries ¹⁶	9	26	35	25.7%

The following are figures for women in selected 'top jobs' in Scotland since 2003¹⁷.

	% Women					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2011
Politics						
MPs with Scotland constituencies	15.3	15.3	15.3	13.6	13.6	22.4
Ministers in The Scottish Parliament	22.2	27.8	27.8	27.8	31.3	31.6
Members of The Scottish Parliament	39.5	39.5	39.5	38.8	34.1	34.9
Local authority council leaders	18.8	18.8	18.8	18.8	18.8	9.4
Scottish Members of the European Parliament	25.0	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	16.7

Figures taken from Sex & Power 2008¹⁸

	% Women					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2011
Public and voluntary sectors						
Public appointments	32.2	33.6	34.7	34.7	32.4	32.2
Local authority chief executives	9.4	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	28.1
Senior police officers	6.9	7.1	7.1	10.7	7.4	14.8
Judges of the Court of Session	9.4	9.4	12.5	11.8	11.8	15.2
Head teachers of secondary schools	17.6	17.6	21.0	23.2	25.9	30.9
Further education college principals	22.9	26.1	22.7	27.3	29.5	28.6
University principals	14.3	14.3	14.3	21.4	21.4	28.6
Health service chief executives	23.8	23.8	19.0	23.8	23.8	36.4
Trade Union general secretaries	Figures not available			18.6	20.6	25.7

Figures taken from Sex & Power 2008¹⁹

Sex and Power GB 2010/11 Index

The following are figures for women in selected 'top jobs' in Great Britain since 2003²⁰.

	% women					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2010/11
Politics						Women's average representation 26.2%
Members of Parliament ²¹	18.1	18.1	19.7	19.5	19.3	22.2
Members of the Cabinet ²²	23.8	27.3	27.3	34.8	26.1	17.4
Members of the House of Lords ²³	16.5	17.7	18.4	18.9	19.7	21.9
Members of the Scottish Parliament ²⁴	39.5	39.5	39.5	38.8	34.1	34.9
Members of the National Assembly for Wales ²⁵	50.0	50.0	50.0	51.7	46.7	41.7
Local authority council leaders ²⁶	n/a	16.6	16.2	13.8	14.3	13.2
UK Members of the European Parliament ²⁷	24.1	24.4	24.4	25.6	25.6	31.9

	% women					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2010/11
Business						Women's average representation 10.2%
Directors in FTSE 100 ²⁸	8.6	9.7	10.5	10.4	11.0	12.5
Directors in FTSE 250 ²⁹	n/a	n/a	n/a	6.6	7.2	7.8

	% women					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2010/11
Public and voluntary sectors	Women's average representation 26.1%					
Public appointments ³⁰	35.7	35.9	35.0	35.5	34.4	32.6
Local authority chief executives ³¹	13.1	12.4	17.5	20.6	19.5	22.8
Senior ranks in the armed forces ³²	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	1.0
Senior police officers ³³	7.5	8.3	9.8	12.2	11.9	16.8
Senior judiciary ³⁴	6.8	8.3	8.8	9.8	9.6	12.9
Civil service top management ³⁵	22.9	24.4	25.5	26.3	26.6	29.2
Chief executives of voluntary organisations ³⁶	45.2	45.4	45.2	46.0	46.4	48.0
Head teachers of secondary schools ³⁷	30.1	31.8	32.6	34.1	36.3	35.5
FE college principals ³⁸	25.8	28.0	27.5	30.7	31.4	33.7
University vice chancellors ³⁹	12.4	15.0	11.1	13.2	14.4	14.3
Health service chief executives ⁴⁰	28.6	27.7	28.1	37.9	36.9	31.4
Trade union general secretaries ⁴¹	18.3	16.9	22.4	23.0	20.7	27.3
Heads of professional bodies ⁴²	16.7	25.0	33.3	33.3	25.0	33.3

	% women					
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007/8	2010/11
Media and culture						Women's average representation 15.1%
Chief executives of media companies in the FTSE 350 and the DG of the BBC ⁴³	7.4	4.3	9.5	10.5	10.5	6.7
Editors of national newspapers ⁴⁴	9.1	9.1	13.0	17.4	13.6	9.5
Directors of major museums and art galleries ⁴⁵	21.1	21.1	21.7	17.4	17.4	26.1
Chairs of national arts companies ⁴⁶	27.3	27.3	33.3	33.3	33.3	8.3
Chief executives of national sports bodies ⁴⁷	14.3	6.3	6.7	6.7	13.3	25.0

Note: The statistics in this index have been selected to represent positions considered to have power or influence in Scotland and Great Britain. For each statistic included, the percentage of women has either been taken directly from the source, or it has been calculated from the actual numbers of women and men. For GB statistics, a summary index has also been calculated for each of the four areas: politics, business, media and culture, public and voluntary sectors. The summary shows women's representation in each area, calculated as a simple average of the most recent percentage figures for each indicator within the area.

Women in Britain: Missing in action

Women make up 51 per cent of the British population⁴⁸. They are better educated than ever before, with girls routinely outperforming boys at both school⁴⁹ and university.

These young, well-qualified women are entering the labour market in increasing numbers, as well as populating the ranks of middle management. Over 45 per cent of solicitors are now women⁵⁰ and it is predicted that there will be more female than male doctors by 2017⁵¹. Women also account for the majority of full-time teachers across Great Britain.

However, these changes are not yet reflected in the senior ranks of the judiciary or health service. In political life, a record number of 143 women were returned to the House of Commons at the 2010 general election, but very few made it into the top posts. And, even in occupations where women have a long history of representation, they remain under-represented at the top. Women account for the majority of full-time teachers across Great Britain, but just over a third of secondary school head teachers.

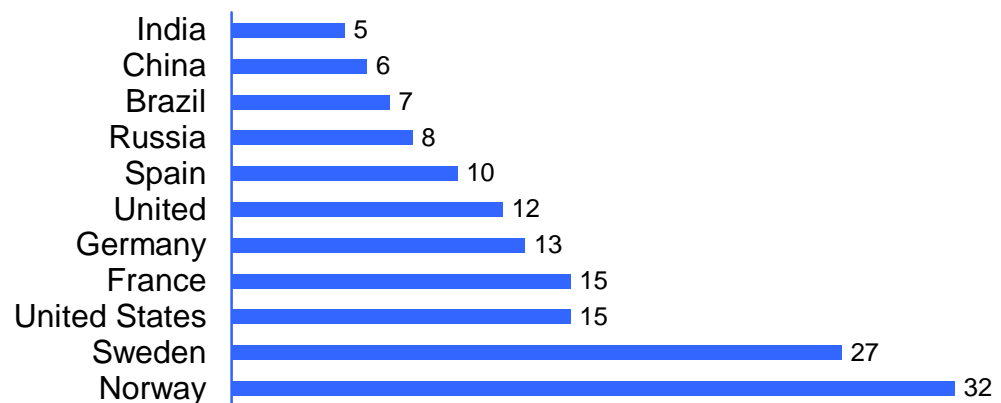
Excluding women already on FTSE 100 boards, the numbers of women directors and senior managers in all companies on the FTSE listings jumped once again from 2,281 in 2009 to 2,551 just one year later⁵². This means that, despite the small incremental increase in women on FTSE 100 boards, there is a growing assemblage of potential women candidates to these seats.

This year's index shows that where women do find positions of power and influence, it is more likely to be in the public and voluntary sectors. For example, our index shows that the proportion of chief executives of voluntary organisations that are women now almost matches that of men.

The difference in female representation in the top posts of these sectors supports research published elsewhere that is suggestive of a growing gap between the public and the private sectors in terms of opportunities for women. Women in the public sector are more likely than those in the private sector to consider having or enlarging a family because of the relative job security, more flexible working hours and more generous family-friendly policies that tend to be available there⁵³, making it increasingly attractive to women who want a balance between their work and home lives.

Women's representation on the board of directors of the largest publicly listed companies across Europe⁵⁴

The UK lags behind the rest of Europe in terms of women's participation on corporate boards.



Source: *Women at the top of corporations: Making it happen 2010*

'Women are under-represented in all forms of leadership positions: political leadership, the senior civil service and corporate boardrooms. At the same time, the companies where women are most strongly represented are also the companies that perform best financially.'

The EU European Economic and Social Committee. October 2009

(Cited in *More Women in Senior Positions*, European Commission, 2010.)

An age-old problem

Outdated working patterns and inflexible organisations continue to be major barriers to women's participation in positions of authority. Company cultures where long hours are the norm and the unequal division of domestic responsibilities limit women's potential to find the time and energy these top posts demand.

Employees in the UK work some of the longest hours in Europe⁵⁵. The assumption that employees must work these hours in order to advance their careers imposes greater career penalties on women who often have to reconcile unpaid and paid work and want a balance between their work and home lives.

In the Inquiry into Sex Discrimination in the Finance Sector, the Equality and Human Rights Commission found that women are prominent in secretarial and administrative positions, but are significantly under-represented in managerial jobs and top posts⁵⁶. As in many other industries, the long hours culture that is prevalent in the finance sector – and particularly at senior levels - can make it difficult for employees who want to combine work and family life. Research with some of the female managing directors of London's top investment banks has found that nearly half were childless, and of those who did have children, a quarter had a partner who assumed the role of primary carer⁵⁷.

But this is not just a problem for women. Men suffer too. Long hours are most common among married men with children⁵⁸, but fathers are increasingly saying that they want to spend more time with their families and less time at work, and they want to play a more equal part in childcare⁵⁹.

Women also face barriers because part-time work remains undervalued. For example, one survey of NHS nurses found that the career progression of part-time nurses lags considerably behind that of full-time nurses and that posts at the highest NHS grades are generally only advertised as full-time posts⁶⁰.

The fact that the rate of female employment-to-self-employment migration far outstrips the rate at which women are moving into senior management roles⁶¹ suggests that women are seeking alternate ways to work. Women who are talented, bold and highly qualified are leaving corporate careers in their droves, many to set up their own business or work as consultants in their old field. The most commonly cited reasons for women's exit from corporate life are the desire for greater freedom, autonomy, work-life balance and professional development⁶².

Missing women in Scotland

This index shows that we still have a long way to go in Scotland before there is an equal distribution of women and men in decision-making positions. There are over 282 women missing from Scotland's top jobs. This includes:

109 missing from 614 public appointments.

19 missing from the 129 members of the Scottish Parliament.

68 missing from the 356 head teachers of secondary schools.

The index also shows that:

Of Scotland's 27 senior police officers, only four are women.

Of Scotland's 32 local authority council leaders, only three are women.

Note: Missing women equal half the total number of posts minus the number of posts held by women.

The picture across Great Britain as a whole is stark - at the current rate of progress it will take another:

30 years to achieve an equal number of women senior police officers

70 years to achieve an equal number of women directors in the FTSE 100

45 years to achieve an equal number of women in the senior judiciary

14 elections, or up to 70 years, to achieve an equal number of women MPs

The challenge ahead

As Britain strives to recover from the economic slowdown, this index serves as an important reminder of why gender equality issues must remain at the forefront of the policy debate.

The squandering of talent is coming at a cost. We are losing out on what women can contribute, with the Women and Work Commission estimating that unlocking women's talent in the workplace could be worth £15 billion or more⁶³

As a society we invest positively in educating girls. These girls devote time and effort to acquiring an advanced education and forgo income to do so. Denying business full access to their skilled labour leaves many women feeling frustrated and unfulfilled and provides a negative return on the investment that we make in their education.

As a society, we need to find a way to harness these women's skills and experience, partly because it makes good business sense. It has been suggested that greater diversity on corporate boards would improve business performance⁶⁴ and increase levels of corporate social responsibility⁶⁵.

Norway imposed a 40 per cent quota for women on corporate boards as the result of studies that showed that 'the more women there are at the top of a company, the better its financial performance'⁶⁶.

As a nation, we cannot afford to waste the talent available to run our national institutions. As well as the moral argument for gender equality in positions of power and influence, women's equal participation in public, political and cultural institutions can play a pivotal role in the advancement of women.

With little or no voice in the country's largest and most powerful organisations, the status of women will remain unchallenged. Likewise, the inclusion of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, the media, education and law can have a significant impact on the diversity of those institutions, as well as their internal policies and procedures.

The slow pace of change in gender equality, and the sheer number of 'missing women' reflects structural and attitudinal barriers that need to be addressed if Scotland and Britain more generally is to succeed in the global marketplace.

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