



# Women in Law & Leadership

Senegalese Bar, Bench and Academy



**PATTERNS | PROGRESS | PROSPECTS**

# **WOMEN IN LAW AND LEADERSHIP: SENEGALESE BAR, BENCH AND ACADEMY**

Patterns, Progress, and Prospects



**Institute for African Women in Law**  
**African Women in Law and Leadership Initiative**



**The Institute for African Women in Law (IAWL)** is a non-profit, non-governmental organization established in 2015. The Institute is committed to supporting the formidable works of women in law across the continent of Africa and the Diaspora. Our mission is to be a focal point for addressing issues across the legal and judicial professions. The Institute is headquartered in Washington, DC, USA.

This report is a part of IAWL's African Women in Law and Leadership Initiative.

This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Disclaimer:** Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of data received from the field research. IAWL has no control over publicly available data on professional, government or institutional websites. All attempts were made to validate the data received through multiple rounds of peer review and editing. All data sources received at the time of this publication have been duly cited.

Fair use and global access: The information and findings in this report are free and publicly accessible. Any part of this publication may be used and reproduced by acknowledging the source.

**The Institute for African Women in Law**

16192 Coastal Hwy  
Lewes, DE, 19958  
USA

**Copyright © 2023**

Institute for African Women in Law  
All Rights Reserved.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<hr/>	
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<hr/>	
<b>2. WOMEN AND THE SENEGALESE LEGAL PROFESSION: A REVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. Gendered challenges	5
2.2. Contributions of women to the justice sector	8
<hr/>	
<b>3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>10</b>
<hr/>	
<b>4. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>12</b>
<hr/>	
<b>5. WOMEN AT THE BAR</b>	<b>17</b>
5.1. Entry and promotion	17
<b>A.</b> Leadership at the bar	19
5.2. Retention, points of attrition, and barriers to progress	21
<b>A.</b> Early attrition as a barrier to entry	21
<b>B.</b> Personal challenges and ambition	22
<b>C.</b> Unfavorable work environment and conditions for female lawyers to succeed	23
<b>D.</b> Mixed reactions about sexual harassment	25

<b>5.3.</b>	Promoters and facilitators of progress	<b>25</b>
<b>A.</b>	Addressing attrition at the entry-level	<b>26</b>
<b>B.</b>	Government and policymakers	<b>26</b>
<b>C.</b>	Law firms	<b>27</b>
<b>D.</b>	Bar association	<b>27</b>
<b>E.</b>	Civil society organizations and advocacy groups	<b>27</b>
<b>F.</b>	Sexual harassment, gender stereotypes and unconscious bias training	<b>28</b>
<b>G.</b>	Male allies	<b>28</b>

---

<b>6.</b>	<b>WOMEN IN THE JUDICIARY</b>	<b>29</b>
-----------	-------------------------------	-----------

<b>6.1.</b>	Entry and promotion	<b>30</b>
<b>A.</b>	Women in leadership	<b>33</b>

<b>6.2.</b>	Retention, points of attrition, and barriers to progress	<b>35</b>
<b>A.</b>	Mobility and transfers	<b>35</b>
<b>B.</b>	Professional and private life	<b>36</b>
<b>C.</b>	Safety and security	<b>36</b>
<b>D.</b>	Relationships with colleagues	<b>37</b>

<b>6.3.</b>	Promoters and facilitators of progress	<b>37</b>
<b>A.</b>	The Judiciary	<b>37</b>
<b>B.</b>	Civil society and female judges' associations	<b>39</b>
<b>C.</b>	Personal factors	<b>39</b>
<b>D.</b>	Funding agencies	<b>40</b>
<b>E.</b>	Male allies	<b>40</b>
<b>F.</b>	Other	<b>40</b>

---

<b>7.</b>	<b>WOMEN IN THE LEGAL ACADEMY</b>	<b>41</b>
-----------	-----------------------------------	-----------

<b>7.1.</b>	Entry, retention, and promotion	<b>41</b>
<b>A.</b>	Women in leadership	<b>44</b>

---

<b>7.2.</b>	<b>Retention, points of attrition, and barriers to progress</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>A.</b>	Demands of an early career sets the tone for progression	<b>45</b>
<b>B.</b>	Work–life balance	<b>46</b>
<b>C.</b>	Female academics are faced with a difficult choice	<b>47</b>
<b>D.</b>	Sexism, gender-based biases, and stereotypes	<b>49</b>
<b>E.</b>	Publications and research output	<b>50</b>
<b>F.</b>	Lack of mentoring and academic support	<b>51</b>
<b>7.3.</b>	<b>Promoters and facilitators of progress</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>A.</b>	University/law faculties	<b>51</b>
<b>B.</b>	Socialization, harassment policies, and unconscious bias training	<b>52</b>
<b>C.</b>	Professional development	<b>52</b>
<b>D.</b>	Mentoring and support networks	<b>52</b>
<b>E.</b>	Male allies	<b>52</b>
<hr/>		
<b>8.</b>	<b>LEGAL EDUCATION AS A PIPELINE TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>8.1.</b>	Law school students	<b>53</b>
<b>8.2.</b>	Decision to study law	<b>53</b>
<b>8.3.</b>	Challenges as a law student	<b>54</b>
<b>8.4.</b>	Gender bias and sexism	<b>55</b>
<b>8.5.</b>	Social norms and expectations	<b>56</b>
<b>8.6.</b>	Sexual harassment	<b>57</b>
<b>8.7.</b>	Career choices	<b>57</b>
<hr/>		
<b>9.</b>	<b>GENERAL TRENDS AND PATTERNS</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>9.1.</b>	Numbers	<b>59</b>
<b>9.2.</b>	Women in leadership	<b>60</b>
<b>9.3.</b>	Pathways	<b>61</b>
<b>9.4.</b>	Barriers and challenges	<b>61</b>
<hr/>		
<b>10.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>63</b>
<hr/>		
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>64</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This research output is part of a four-nation study made possible by the generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) initiative on women in law and leadership. The research was designed by the lead investigator, J. Jarpa Dawuni, Ph.D. We would like to acknowledge the tireless contributions of the Institute for African Women in Law research team, Maame Efua Addadzi-Koom, Esq., Stephen Muthoka Mutie, Ph.D., and Nonhlanhla Hlazo, Ph.D.

This report would not have been possible without the contributions of dedicated in-country consultants. IAWL is grateful for the contributions of Professor Babacar Kantè, Alassane Fall, Coudou Sow Seck, Monique Sambou and Jenson Mahotiere. We acknowledge the work done by the anonymous peer reviewers who provided input throughout the editing and peer review rounds.

We extend our special thanks to the women legal professionals who gave us their time and talent in answering our survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Your willingness to share your time and insights from your lived experience is what made this report possible.

We are thankful for the support received from all the government officials, institutional heads, and statisticians who helped us with our data sourcing. Special thanks to the UNDP office in Senegal for supporting the finalization of the report.

We are forever indebted to the women in law who keep pushing forward against all the odds to be heard, seen, and acknowledged for their contributions to their institutions, even if they are not rewarded with the leadership roles they deserve.

# FOREWORD

---

I have had the privilege of working extensively in two of the three main sectors within the legal profession – the bar and the bench. In 1976, I was nominated to be a public prosecutor. Being the first woman to serve in that position was an honor. Yet, after my time as the pioneer female public prosecutor, only two additional women have been appointed to this position. So, for the past 46 years, Senegal has had just three women occupy the public prosecutor position. There are about 715 judges in the judiciary, of which 92 are women at the time of writing. These numbers show that even though women's entry into Senegal's legal profession is gradually increasing, the terrain remains largely masculine.

In decision-making, women's voices in the legal profession are rarely heard. Men usually make decisions about women or issues affecting them based on patriarchal assumptions. This comprehensive report breaks that perennial culture of silenced women at the bar, bench and legal academy in Senegal by giving a voice to women in all three sectors to articulate their concerns, challenges and proposals based on their experiences. The report's central aim is to spotlight the barriers and points of attrition to women's entry and promotion in the profession and provides recommendations on the factors that enhance promotion. It recognizes the need for equal representation of women in the profession and its leadership while also noting women's unique and distinctive role in shaping the profession now and in the future.

This report's findings confirm and, most importantly, document the cyclical and repetitive nature of the challenges various generations of Senegalese women have faced since they entered into the profession. The report provides some targeted recommendations, having named the problems sourced from the women. I was particularly excited that the report breaks additional linguistic barriers by presenting the enriching data collected in English and French. This way, the report's reach is widened to go beyond the Francophone world to engage with a larger readership and stakeholder groups. The Institute for African Women in Law deserves commendation for its work which has broken new grounds regarding research on women in law in Senegal. To all readers, I believe you will enjoy turning the pages of this insightful report that will encourage you to learn about women in the Senegalese legal, judicial, and academic professions.

**Elisabeth Dior Sow Fall**  
**First Female Prosecutor**  
**Senegal**



# FOREWORD

---

It is an honor and privilege to write the foreword of this study devoted to women's representation and leadership in law in Senegal. It is an absolute pleasure because, for the first time, attention has been paid to careers in the legal professions, such as the judiciary, the bar, and the legal academy in Senegal.

Even if it is true that there is no shortage of publications on the place of women in the public sphere, the fact remains that certain aspects of the problem are still poorly understood. The field distinguishes this report it covers, a space where the law is thought about, discussed, and applied, knowing that the law itself, when it is neutral, is a source of inequality. The higher representation of men in these careers promotes and justifies inequalities, as women's perspectives are either not present or, when present, not considered in decision-making. To remedy these inequalities, it is necessary to act on relevant levers, and the law is one of them, if not the only one.

Thus, addressing the question of the presence of women in the legal professions leads to an important discussion of their access to leadership. The report is presented very didactically, which makes it very easy to read. The approach is educative and reconciles a theoretical and practical approach to the subject because the figures and graphics come to support the assertions. The theoretical explanations are well-developed in the text. The evolution, the difficulties as well as the challenges faced by women are analyzed.

Although many women have distinguished themselves in legal careers in Senegal, women remain under-represented in the professions, specifically in leadership. It is as if the adoption of the various instruments, notably CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, have only served to fuel the debates in conferences on the discrimination women go through. The progress is not significant. The promise of parity and equal opportunity has not been kept.

Prejudices are certainly to blame; these include the stereotypes that certain responsibilities would be too heavy or unsuited for women: this is the presumed ineptitude or incompetence of women. But we should also note that the weight of family responsibilities often leads to the abandonment of studies or even a discontinuation in the professional aspirations of young women. And these considerations are valid in all areas to the point of wondering if Senegalese society would resist women's promotion. It is important not to underestimate the conservative practices of the system. The report is timely and addresses the nagging issue of sexual harassment, which, unfortunately, is not always dealt with openly.

The women interviewed for the report make relevant recommendations, and the report ends with a strong bibliography, guaranteeing a very methodical and perfectly documented work. This report will undoubtedly help to formulate new policies for equalizing rights between men and women.

**Aminatta Cissé Niang**  
**Dean, Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences**  
**University of Cheikh Anta Diop**

# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AJS</b>	l'Association des Juristes Sénégalaises
<b>CAMES</b>	Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>IAWL</b>	Institute for African Women in Law
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UCAD</b>	Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar
<b>WAEMU</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union

# LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> Number of Female and Male Registered Lawyers in Senegal, March 2022	<b>18</b>
<b>Figure 2:</b> Members of the Council of the Order of the Senegalese Bar	<b>20</b>
<b>Figure 3:</b> Do Women Face Discrimination Linked to the Legal Profession?	<b>21</b>
<b>Figure 4:</b> The Judicial Structure in Senegal	<b>29</b>
<b>Figure 5:</b> Gender Distribution of Male to Female Judges in Senegal	<b>30</b>
<b>Figure 6:</b> Decision to Study Law	<b>54</b>
<b>Figure 7:</b> Difficulty of Pursuing Education	<b>55</b>
<b>Figure 8:</b> Sexist Remarks and Prejudice	<b>55</b>
<b>Figure 9:</b> Impact of Societal Cultural Norms	<b>56</b>
<b>Figure 10:</b> Does Sexual Harassment Occur in Your Environment?	<b>57</b>
<b>Figure 11:</b> Law Student Career Pathways and Choices	<b>58</b>
<b>Figure 12:</b> Women in the Legal Professions	<b>59</b>

# LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Research Methodology Per Category	<b>13</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> Presidents of the Ordre des Avocats (Bâtonniers)	<b>19</b>
<b>Table 3:</b> Presidents of the Supreme Court, 1992–2022	<b>33</b>
<b>Table 4:</b> Women Who Have Served on the Constitutional Council, 1992–2002	<b>33</b>
<b>Table 5:</b> Current Number of Professors at the Two Largest Public Universities	<b>42</b>
<b>Table 6:</b> Past Deans and Heads of Departments Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (1957–2022)	<b>44</b>
<b>Table 7:</b> List of Past Deans at University Gaston-Berger (St. Louis) 1990–2002	<b>45</b>
<b>Table 8:</b> Women's Leadership Within the Legal Sectors	<b>60</b>

# Executive Summary




---

This study provides a broad overview of women's representation in leadership roles in Senegal's legal professions (bar, bench and legal academy). This study serves as a foundation for understanding the dynamics of gender inequality and the obstacles that impact the retention and advancement of women to leadership positions in the three legal professions.

The legal system plays a unique role in addressing gender-based discrimination. Therefore, women must be well-represented in the legal sector. Based on their unique perspectives, women's participation and leadership in the justice system can play a valuable role in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically goal number five on gender equality. This goal can be achieved by ensuring women's specific interests and priorities are represented in decision-making processes. The mere presence of women in a legal decision-making role can counteract both actual and perceptions of gender bias. For this reason, it is critical to document the existing quantitative and qualitative data that identifies women's representation in the legal profession in general and analyze it to assess the points of attrition in the pipeline, barriers to retention, facilitators of promotion, and progress and trends over time.

This report adds to the thin literature on women's leadership in the legal sector across the bar, the bench, and the legal academy – in four priority countries, of which Senegal is one. The theoretical framework for this report is based on intersectionality, which explains the nature of the multiple social categories, identities, and contexts that influence women's ascent to leadership in Senegal's legal profession.

The data presented in this report was obtained from comprehensive interviews and surveys involving 38 participants: six judges, eight lawyers, six academics, two corporate lawyers, and 16 law students. The sample size of data across all professions is limited due to the challenges faced in conducting interviews with women with limited time to devote to work and family obligations. Additionally, we encountered challenges with judges who take their judicial oath to observe silence and not share their judicial functions very seriously. Lastly, the fieldwork was conducted during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, thereby limiting physical access to informants for interviews. Using zoom as an alternative to meeting in person was the best alternative, yet it increased the respondents' fear regarding the confidentiality of their responses. This report is the first comprehensive study on women in the Senegalese legal professions. It is anticipated that future studies will build on these findings and expand the sample size and causal variables to elicit new findings. By combining the rich qualitative responses from interviews with the quantitative data, the report provides a broad overview of women's underrepresentation in leadership. The findings from this study highlight the impact of intersectional challenges and key barriers to women's rise to leadership. These challenges affect the entire pipeline, leading to low retention in the profession and high attrition from the leadership pipeline.

	<b>The major challenges and barriers identified include:</b>
	Unfavorable work environment and conditions
	Women's personal challenges and ambitions
	Sexual harassment
	Mobility and transfers
	Sexism, gender-based biases, and stereotypes
	Lack of mentoring

Using action-oriented and solution-driven approaches, the study draws on suggestions from the study participants and the research analyses to provide robust suggestions and recommendations on interventions that can lead to positive outcomes for women.

	<b>The facilitators of women's promotion to leadership and recommendations for supporting women in leadership include:</b>
	Training on sexual harassment, gender stereotypes and unconscious bias
	Creating male allies' networks
	Funding more research and training programs on women in law and leadership
	Establishing institutionally sponsored mentoring and support networks
	Enhancing women's professional and personal development

The general trends and patterns indicate several outcomes. Firstly, the number of women in the three sectors of the profession remains low. Secondly, the bar has the least representation of women in its leadership. Thirdly, there are restricted pathways for women in leadership due to the mix of institutional, structural, and individual factors that converge to create narrow pathways to leadership.

The findings from this study indicate the need to use multi-pronged approaches to address the intersectional challenges women face in the three sectors of the legal profession. These solutions will require key actors and actions from the government, legal professional organizations, civil society actors, women's groups, and male allies in the profession. The role of philanthropic organizations and governmental funding agencies is also vital to pushing the UN SDG goal # 5 forward to provide women equal and complete access to decision-making.

The report's findings indicate the need for more research and data collection on women in the legal profession and investment in relevant leadership-boosting initiatives due to the legal sector's use of the law to either support discriminatory practices or upend them.



# 1 | INTRODUCTION



Senegal has a robust institutional framework to promote women's rights and achieve gender equality. Article 7 of the 2001 Constitution (as amended in 2016) provides for gender equality and women's rights. In addition, Senegal signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and Optional Protocol on Violence Against Women and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) in 2000. Additional frameworks to protect and enforce women's rights include the National Strategy for Equity and Gender Equality (SNEEG), developed with the support of the United Nations (UN) Women (n.d.).

Progress for women in public service appears to be strongest in the legislature; with 44.2% of women in parliament, Senegal is number 17 in the global ranking IPU, 2022). In the executive branch, women have also made some gains, with the appointment of Mame Madior Boye (2001–2002) and Aminata Touré (2013–2014) as prime minister, respectively. Touré also served as Minister of Justice (2012–2013). This report provides detailed quantitative and qualitative analyses of the situation of women in law and leadership in Senegal. Against the backdrop of the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 on gender equality, the report examines the entry, retention, points of attrition, and facilitators of promotion for women in the legal profession.

Senegal, a West African country with an estimated seventeen million people, has been praised around the continent and the globe as unique due to its democratic and human rights records. The study of women's leadership within the legal system is understudied. This report contributes to the literature on women in law and leadership specifically and the debates on gender equality in Senegal generally. The findings can be used to shape policies promoting women's leadership in law nationally and inform investments in programs that can accelerate that leadership in subregions.

Advancing women's equality is a fundamental objective in light of the roles women play in building society and economic, social, and cultural systems. Representation in the legal sector is significant because of the sector's unique role in addressing gender-based discrimination and the legal profession's potential role in sustaining gendered work conditions. Over 2.5 billion women and girls are affected by discriminatory laws and lack legal protections. In many countries, women are subject to laws that impact their economic, property, and reproductive rights, including their ability to apply for a passport, travel outside their home, inherit property, and pursue certain jobs, as well as criminal laws that impact their autonomy and reproductive rights (World Bank, 2022).



Women bring a unique perspective, meaning their participation and leadership in the justice system can be valuable in achieving the SDGs by ensuring their specific interests and priorities are represented. The mere presence of women in a legal decision-making role can counteract actual bias and perceptions of gender bias.

In Senegal, the significant gap between the number of professionally active men and women and the low representation of women in leadership highlights substantial inequalities. These inequalities are noted in all areas, political, administrative, or private. This imbalance led us to identify the legal, cultural, or social factors determining the persistently disproportionate representation of women in law. Paradoxically, soon after independence, women distinguished themselves in professions usually dominated by men, notably in the legal professions, such as the bench, bar, and, years later, in academia. However, even if women manage to reach the same level as their male counterparts, it is often after personal sacrifices and a long and arduous career pathway. The urgency to understand the root cause of this imbalance and recommend solutions amply justifies the importance of this study. This report is a metric to measure how Senegal is faring regarding SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality by ending all forms of discrimination and harmful practices against women and girls in both the public and private spheres.

Target 5.5 of SDG 5 calls for women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life, which is necessary for societies to develop. As the literature review discusses, Senegal has been ahead of some of these requirements by implementing the parity law with President Wade and creating the "*Ministère de la Femme*" (Ministry of Women and Family Affairs) under President Senghor. Women have always led this ministry. Still, Senegal ranks number 23 in Sub-Saharan Africa and number 112 in the global rankings out of 156 countries, according to the Global Gender Gap Index 2022 rankings (World Economic Forum, 2022). This report presents an opportunity to further evaluate Senegal's progress toward achieving SDG 5 by identifying and analyzing the challenges and making recommendations on what factors could facilitate the promotion of women in law and leadership in Senegal.

The report is divided into three sections, focusing on the bar, bench, and legal academy. Each section is structured as follows:

- a** a general overview of the profession;
- b** pathways to the profession;
- c** challenges, attrition, and retention; and
- d** facilitators of promotion/recommendations.

The next section discusses the literature on women in Senegal and the legal professions drawing on existing scholarship on women in law in Africa. Part three discusses the theoretical framework. Part four discusses the methodological approach of the study. Part five presents the findings on each of the three sectors studied. Part 6 six provides a comparative discussion of the general trends and patterns in the three sectors, and part seven concludes the report.



# 2

## WOMEN AND THE SENEGALESE LEGAL PROFESSION: A REVIEW



The first obstacle that any researcher faces when analyzing women's representation in the Senegalese justice sector is the scarcity of scholarly literature. This scarcity is particularly an issue at the African continental level and is more pronounced in Senegal. Research is more advanced in other jurisdictions (Boigeol, 1996; Nandrin, 2016; OECD, 2017); some authors are already discussing the feminization of the legal profession (Mekki, 2011; Michelson, 2013).

The role of women in the judiciary has been a topic of interest to international organizations. The International Commission of Jurists organized the Geneva Forum on “Women and the Judiciary” in 2014. The event brought together senior female judges and lawyers worldwide, focusing on the Middle East/North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Discussions focused on overcoming barriers to full and equal participation in the judiciary and possible links to better protection of women's human rights by the judiciary (ICJ, 2014). However, no French-speaking sub-Saharan African countries were represented, including Senegal.

In recent years, a growing body of research on women in the justice sector in Africa has emerged, beginning with the pioneer volume *Gender and the Judiciary in Africa: From obscurity to parity?* (Bauer & Dawuni, 2016). This book is the first to examine the presence of female judges in African countries, thereby highlighting some of the historical pathways to women's entry into judiciaries, the institutional contexts within which they operate, the challenges they navigate, and their contributions to justice and women's rights. The field of gender and judging in Africa is developing rapidly, with increasing scholarship by African writers (Dawuni, 2016, 2020, 2021a, 2022; Dawuni & Kuenyehia, 2018; Dawuni & Masengu, 2019; Dawuni & Kang, 2015; Ibrahim, 2016; Gayoye, 2021; Masengu, 2016, Uzebu-Imariagbe, 2020).

The study of women and the justice sector generally presents them as the object of the rule of law (Camara, 2007; Ndiaye, 2017). In other words, it seeks to analyze how justice treats women. This theme has proven particularly relevant insofar as the Senegalese judicial system results from a pluralistic legal system that gives precedence to French law (inherited from colonization) and Arab-Muslim law at the expense of local culture and traditions (Camara, 2006). As a result, women are generally treated as the “weaker sex.” Camara (2007) evokes a clear desire by the state architects to neutralize women's leadership and capacity for representation after independence in the public, economic, and private spheres. Using the work of Diop, she maintains that indigenous law was more favorable to the participation of women in all decision-making bodies (Camara, 2007; Diop, 1960). Based on this observation, the representation of women in the legal sector in Senegal is marked by challenges and obstacles.

However, female lawyers in Senegal have noted these challenges and taken steps to address them. They have undertaken many initiatives to change their situation through associations and groups, such as the association of women jurists. Some of these initiatives are discussed by respondents later in the report.

## 2.1. Gender challenges

---

The UN formulated SDG 5 as "[a]chieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls". Senegal has opted for a proactive policy to reach priority target 5.5, which aims to "ensure the full and effective participation of women and their equal access to leadership positions at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" as defined by the UN. Senegal's legal and institutional framework is generally in line with the requirements of international institutions. The numerous signed and ratified international conventions have played a preeminent role in positioning women in general, particularly in the field of politics. These laws have served as a basis for advocacy by women's community organizations and enabled international organizations to support women's movements (Faye, 2021). These international conventions include CEDAW and the Maputo Protocol, which have been at the forefront of women's struggles in Senegal. However, one challenge for women and all other actors fighting for more women in leadership has been a better articulation and enforcement of these international instruments in local realities.

The 2001 Constitution also includes the CEDAW in its preamble. Although the legislature has made some changes to address discrimination against women, many inequalities remain (Tøraasen, 2017). The law on parity passed in 2010<sup>1</sup> placed Senegal at 41.82% of women in parliament (World Bank, 2020). The average in the world broke a record of 25.5% in 2020 (IPU, 2021), and Senegal is gradually positioning itself among the leading countries. However, this law has not fundamentally changed the judicial sphere, where access to positions is based on the nomination or passing a competitive exam, which makes meritocracy prevail. In law, as in the intellectual and liberal professions, Nandrin (2016) notes that women's access has not been easy due to the limited pool acquiring a university education because of the historic and persistently low enrollment of girls at the early stages of education.

Consequently, due to the low number of women in the profession, the pool to appoint female judges has been much smaller. Dawuni and Kang's (2015) study on the rise of female leaders in the African judiciaries confirms this assertion for Senegal. Dawuni and Kang (2015) assert that, in contrast to common-law nations, civil-law countries like Senegal typically require both women and men to pass an exam and attend law school to enter the judiciary. At first glance, treating women and men as the same sounds quite positive. However, considering that women have always been at a disadvantage, it tends to reinforce inequalities by disregarding the issue of women's underrepresentation in leadership (Randolph, 2017).

---

<sup>1</sup>See Law No. 2010-11 of May 28, 2010, instituting absolute parity between men and women. This law applies at the level of all fully or partially elective institutions. It requires that other candidacies be alternately conferred to persons of both sexes, under penalty of inadmissibility (Enforcement Decree No. 2011-819 of June 16, 2011, implementing the law instituting absolute male–female parity (Journal Officiel du Sénégal. Online, 6614 of Saturday, September 17, 2011: [www.http:jo.gouv.sn/yip.php?article9160/](http://www.http:jo.gouv.sn/yip.php?article9160/)).

Moreover, since 2014, Senegal has adopted the Plan Sénégal Émergent as the reference framework for its economic and social policy. The axes of the Priority Action Plan (2019–2023) integrated gender for an inclusive, equitable, or equal participation of actors in the development process. Similarly, Senegal has adopted the Strategy for Gender Equality and Equity (SNEEG), which runs through 2026, to achieve equality between women and men in all sectors. Despite these achievements, Senegal still has a long way to go, ranking 130 out of 162 countries in the 2019 Gender Inequality Index.<sup>2</sup> Its social configuration presents a major obstacle to women's advancement to leadership positions. The trend is improving, but it was not uncommon to find families who firmly refused to send their daughters to schools modeled on the Western format. For example, the father of Maimouna Kane Touré, one of the pioneers in the judiciary, preferred not to let her go to school because it is perceived as a threat to their traditional African values and customs (Diouf, n.d.).

Girls' schooling has been steadily increasing in Senegal for several years. Nevertheless, the representation of girls in higher education institutions and specialized schools, such as the law faculty, is still low. In addition, the dropout rate is high. This pattern is partly linked to the long distances traveled to school, early marriages and pregnancies, the high cost of teaching materials, inadequate infrastructure and equipment, and the growing impoverishment of families. This pushes girls into the productive sphere and marriage early (SNEEG, 2015).

There is a notable lack of representation of women as students and teaching staff in higher education. At Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (UCAD), women are better represented in the faculties of medicine (34%), legal and political sciences (32%) and letters (30%). However, in the science faculty, they were only 14% in 2001 (SNEEG, 2015). According to the former Minister of Higher Education, Mary Teuw Niane, in 2015, Senegal had a rate of 33% female students and 25% female researchers (Chongwang, 2015). This low representation is linked to real support problems and overall policy from the state authorities to enable girls to complete their studies.

With specific reference to the representation of women in the justice sector, Senegal established a precedent as early as 1964, just four years after gaining independence, when Marie Jose Crespin was appointed as the first female magistrate in 1961. She was among the first Senegalese lawyers and magistrates trained in France.<sup>3</sup> In 1964, Suzanne Soukeyna Diop joined the judiciary as the first indigenous female lawyer in the country (Awa Magazine, 1964). Following these two pioneers, many other women became leaders, such as Mame Boye, Andrésia Vaz, Mame Bassine Niang, and Maimouna Kane. In 1976, Dior Fall Sow became the first female prosecutor.

---

<sup>2</sup>Senegal has a rating of 0.533; the index reflects gender inequality in three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent birth rates; empowerment by the share of parliamentary seats held by women and the level of secondary and tertiary education for each gender; and economic activity by the labor force participation rates of women and men.

<sup>3</sup>Crespin was born in Benin to French parents. Although she is considered Senegalese, many still see her as White/French and therefore consider Diop the first "indigenous" or "native" Senegalese in the judiciary.

In 1992, Crespin became the first female member of the Constitutional Council (Conseil Constitutionnel). The following year witnessed the promotion of the first female professor of law, Amsatou Sow Sidibé. The latter was also the first female candidate in a presidential election in 2012 and the first female member of the National Observatory of Elections (L'Observatoire National des Elections) in 1998. Following the changeover in the early 2000s, women gained more leadership positions, with the appointment of Boye as prime minister (2001–2002) and Mireille Ndiaye as president of the Constitutional Council in 2002 (Gueye, 2001). Despite these achievements, many obstacles remain.

The justice system has undertaken many reforms aimed at modernizing itself. However, none of these express a genuine willingness to promote a better representation of women. An analysis of the literature suggests that such representation is not a priority. The first significant reform, in 1984, instituted collegiality at the level of the courts of first instance (Tribunaux de première instance), which were replaced by regional courts (Tribunaux régionaux) and the justices of the peace (Justices de paix) by departmental courts (Tribunaux départementaux). The objective was to review the judicial map to bring justice closer to the people.<sup>4</sup>

In his publication entitled "*La modernisation de la Justice au Sénégal: Vers la recherche de la performance*" (*The Modernization of Justice in Senegal: Toward the Search for Performance*), Cheikh Tidiane Lam (2018) explains that the Constitutional Council (Conseil constitutionnel), Council of State (Conseil d'Etat), and Court of Cassation (Cour de Cassation) emerged with a reform of the Supreme Court (Cour Suprême) on May 30, 1992. He notes that this reform restructured the judicial system. It introduced the specialization in the courts and tribunals, democratized the composition of the Judicial Council (Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature) by admitting members elected by their peers, and abolished exceptional jurisdictions, such as the State Security Court (Cour de Sûreté de l'Etat) (Lam, 2018).

According to Lam (2018), it was by application of Directive No. 5 of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) in 1999 that the Court of Accounts (Cour des comptes) was created "on the flanks of the Council of State." A regrouping of the Council of State and the Court of Cassation into a single jurisdiction through the organic law of August 8, 2008, re-established the Supreme Court. It is composed of a social chamber, an administrative chamber, a criminal chamber, and a civil and commercial chamber. It also has advisory powers (AHJUCAF, n.d.). In 2014, a law and its implementing decrees redrew the judicial map of Senegal by reinstating the courts of higher instance (Tribunaux de grande instance) and the district courts (Tribunaux d'instance). Criminal chambers at high courts' level also consider the increase in the competence of the magistrates' courts and the introduction of collegiality among judges.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Law No. 84-19 established the organization of the judiciary, Law No. 84-20 the powers of departmental courts in correctional matters, and Law No. 84-21 the status of the judiciary. All three were passed on February 2, 1984.

<sup>5</sup>The principle of collegiality means that a case is judged by several judges, sitting and deliberating together.



However, in January 2017, the organic law 2017-09 repealed the law of August 8, 2008, and is mainly based "around the objectives of controlling the processing time of cases, simplification of procedures and more rational use of human resources" (AHJUCAF, n.d.). This is the organization in place at the time of writing this report. In addition, the Justice Sector Program (Programme Sectoriel de Justice) from 2004 to 2013 had as its major objectives to increase the efficiency of justice, its accessibility, and legal and judicial security (Ministry of Justice, n.d.). When analyzing these main reforms and their objectives, the emphasis seems to be placed on the organizational component of justice, which suggests a lack of consideration for the issue of leadership and representation of women in the judicial system.

## 2.2. Contributions of women to the justice sector

---

The role of women in leadership in general dates to the precolonial period. According to Camara (2007), in the precolonial Wolof and Serer kingdoms, each time a new king was elected, a female head of state, the *Lingeer*, was appointed. In certain circumstances, the king could even appoint female governors or provincial chiefs, and they bore the title of *Jee* (Dieng, 1993).

The colonial period partially thwarted this dynamic through the patriarchal culture introduced by Islam and Christianity. Women's leadership positions in traditional Senegalese society centered around their roles as mothers, sisters, aunts, and grandmothers. They intervened primarily as mediators to resolve potential conflicts (Barry, 1985; Diouf, 1990; Fall, 1994; Gueye, 2013; Kamara & Kanji, 2000). Women's leadership gradually shifted toward challenging colonial power (Gueye, 2013). From the 1855 opposition of the *Lingeer Ndate Yalla* of the *Waalo*<sup>6</sup> to the struggle led by the *Union des Femmes Sénégalaises*<sup>7</sup> to the resistance of *Aline Sitoé Diatta*<sup>8</sup> in Casamance, women have been essential leaders.

After independence, women benefited from the progressive and gender-inclusive approach of President Senghor, who, inspired by Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia, was interested in women in leadership positions (Thiam & Seck, 2015). To promote African literature at the University in Dakar in 1963, he boldly recruited courageous women who were not afraid to push boundaries and tackle controversial topics, such as Professor Lilyan Kestellot,<sup>9</sup> who was treated poorly because of her gender. In addition, President Senghor once personally reviewed and validated one of Professor Lilyan Kestellot's final exams because her colleagues and senior management refused to do so (Fall, 2018).

---

<sup>6</sup> Ndaté Yalla Mbodj is considered a heroine of the resistance against French colonization and a great ruler of the *Waalo*, a historical region of Senegal. When she died in 1860, her son, *Sidya Ndaté Yalla Diop*, succeeded her in the revolt against the French.

<sup>7</sup> The Union of Senegalese Women (*Union des Femmes Sénégalaises*) was a nonpolitical women's association created in 1954 that brought together female activists for independence. The slogan was "Independence above all."

<sup>8</sup> *Aline Sitoé Diatta*, proclaimed queen of Casamance (southern region of Senegal), was a heroine of the resistance against French colonization by inspiring her compatriots to civil disobedience and resistance to colonial orders. She is also considered a fetish and high priestess.

<sup>9</sup> Often considered a pioneer in research on *negritude* and francophone African literature, Kestellot is of Belgian origin and lived for many years in Congo and Senegal, where she taught at UCAD.

With a favorable global context for promoting women's rights in the early 1970s, Senegal experienced a proliferation of women's associations (Niang & Ba, 1998/9; Niang, 2000). The Association of Senegalese Female Lawyers (l'Association des Juristes Sénégalaises—AJS) was formed in 1974. It was the first women's association that advocated for equality before the law. Four women created it: two magistrates, Mame Boye and Maimouna Kane, and two labor inspectors, Madeleine Dewez and Tamara Touré. They carried the fight for equal rights in the legal field (Solé, 2019).

The AJS has long worked to improve the representation of women in the judiciary and Senegalese society in general. In a predominantly Muslim country where most women do not even attend high school, these women have used their legal skills to make a change. Despite operating under difficult cultural circumstances, with minimal financial and human resources, their relentless commitment has significantly updated the family code provisions. They have contributed to creating a "human rights consciousness" (Scales-Trent, 2010).

According to Sow,

At the beginning, we focused on the family code. We had noticed many discriminations against women. Gradually, we realized that this discrimination extended to other areas. This pushed us to get involved in promoting and [defending] women's rights. This advocacy first took the form of awareness-raising activities, as the population was unfamiliar with these rights. We had to do a lot of advocacy, we did conferences, dinner debates, meetings, open houses, free consultations. At that time, with the participation of volunteer lawyers, we had specialists in all fields (Solé, 2019).

The AJS is a serious interlocutor for the government and international partners, especially because of its political neutrality and the expertise of its members. This neutrality was in contrast to the method used by other women's movements that claimed to be "feminist" around 1985. Embodied mainly by *Yeewu Yewwi PLF* (For the Liberation of Women), the Women's Movement of the Marxist Democratic League, and later by *Femme et Société* (Woman and Society) in the 1990s, these organizations can be classified, according to Kathy Cissé (2004), as radical left movements.

Today, women enjoy certain rights, such as paid maternity leave, access to militarized functions (police, army, and gendarmerie), access to diplomacy, and mechanization to facilitate work in rural areas. These rights result from the relentless struggles waged over many years by women's rights advocates. The development of rights is a positive signal of opportunities to increase women's leadership in law and the justice sector, which is fundamental in expanding access to justice for all women.



# 3 | THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



The theoretical framework for this research is based on intersectionality. For Cooper (2016), the theme was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in her pair of essays published in 1989 and 1991. Crenshaw introduced it to the field of legal studies in the United States. However, Collins<sup>10</sup> (2000, pp. 252, 297) is acknowledged as the author who first spoke of intersectionality as a paradigm around the 1990s, and political scientist Ange-Marie Hancock proposed its formalization.

Crenshaw introduced a threefold definition of intersectionality as structural, political, and representational. This approach makes intersectionality "an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege." "It provides, beyond the language, an enabling mindset to better examine the interconnections and interdependencies between categories (race, gender, class, disability, sexuality, etc.) and social systems. In intersectional analysis, various forms of discrimination do not operate independently but converge to produce specific forms of social oppression for individuals who inhabit multiple identities or belong to multiple categories.

By highlighting the dynamics often ignored by feminist theory and movements, intersectionality offers relevant theoretical explanations for how heterogeneous members of specific groups may experience the workplace differently based on their ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, and other social circumstances (Thompson, 2002). According to Atewologun (2018), intersectionality has the advantage of being sensitive to differences while providing a better understanding of issues of social justice and inequality in organizations and other institutions, thereby maximizing the chances for social change.

As a critical theory, intersectionality conceptualizes knowledge as situated, contextual, relational and reflective of political and economic power. It is particularly associated with the qualitative research method privileged in this study because of the central role of expression, achieved through focus groups, narrative interviews, action research, and observations.

<sup>10</sup>Collins is a social theorist and one of the leading theorists in Black feminist thought.

<sup>11</sup>What is Intersectionality? <https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/intersectionality/15537>.

Although it was developed in a U.S. context of a comparison between White and Black women, it seems quite applicable to other spheres. Collins supports this idea by arguing that "Crenshaw has replaced her previous currency of 'black feminist thought' and increased the general applicability of her theory of African American women to all women" (Mann & Huffman, 2005, p. 61). Developed by Dawuni (2019), *matri-legal feminism* is an African feminist response to international law. Although existing "global" theories are significant, they face challenges in accounting for the lived experiences, positions, and realities of women on the African continent (Dawuni, 2019). They often prove ineffective in fully grasping and acknowledging specific aspects of the continent, such as the historical matriarchal African feminist ways of being.

In a study that connects intersectionality in the African context to women's access to justice, Dawuni (2022, p. 8) argues that "a contextualized framing of intersectionality within the African context must be viewed through a decolonial lens, to better situate the experiences of women across the continent of Africa." Consequently, we cannot fully understand intersectionality and how historical factors have converged with existing customary practices to produce and reproduce gendered hierarchies of representation in decision-making processes.

For this report, matri-legal feminism will, therefore, be useful in considering three important aspects that form the basis of the assumptions of this African theory: the issue of recognizing women's unequal subordination in law; gender duality in African systems that privilege women's leadership roles in the social, cultural, spiritual, and political realms; and the recognition of cultural difference and diversity with a particular focus on the inherent differences between and within categories of women (Dawuni, 2019). Matri-legal feminism is helpful by illuminating both the subordination women have faced in Senegal and the windows of opportunity that exist due to matriarchal foundations of women's societal roles, which have contributed to women taking up leadership positions, especially in the judiciary.



# 4 | METHODOLOGY



The study collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data using a mixed-method approach. However, the emphasis was on the qualitative approach because it provided more flexibility, captured the interviewees' sentiments, and clarified the trends in the quantitative data. Female lawyers (*avocates*), judges (*juges*), law school students (*étudiantes en droit*), faculty members in law schools (*professeurs de droit*), and female jurists (*juristes*) with credibility and sector experience and expertise were the target group. The target number in each category of interviewees was 5–10.

The team selected lawyers and judges in leadership, mid-career, and entry-level positions, to allow for diverse experiences and thought. Three challenges limited this methodological approach: First, many Senegalese stakeholders were becoming less receptive to research conducted by or under the name of foreign organizations due to what they deemed exploitative, extractive practices by foreign entities. Second, the lawyers and judges were often reluctant to participate in a focus group format due to the high respect for their professional obligation of confidentiality. Third, collecting in-person data was difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research team conducted the fieldwork using questionnaires, survey questions, and in-person or Zoom interviews. A survey questionnaire was sent through the female lawyer and judge associations. The snowball recruitment technique was used to solicit recommendations from some respondents to reach others in the legal academy. All efforts were made to ensure that the standard research ethics were met. Respondents consented to be interviewed and were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. They were also guaranteed anonymity, and all interview transcripts were deidentified and stored in a safe place. To ensure safety and anonymity, the report on the findings uses alphabetical letters to refer to respondents, with no direct reference to their names or place of work.

Thirty-eight individuals participated: six judges, eight lawyers, six academics, two corporate lawyers, and 16 students. Five questionnaires were developed and tailored for each category. A few preferred to fill out the questionnaire and email it back rather than having a face-to-face interview. A Google Form questionnaire was used for students. Zoom and WhatsApp technologies were crucial tools to enable different activities and team coordination. These methods, tools, and procedures allowed the research team to accommodate interviewees' availability, convenience, and preferences.

The research team identified a list of women who have distinguished themselves in their field. An initial telephone contact invited them to participate. It became clear from these brief telephone interviews that the issue was very interesting to them; most welcomed the idea. Though this group of women did not agree to be interviewed initially, they readily accepted receiving the documentation (presentation of the study and questionnaire) by email. Some were quite willing, but others were reluctant and did not follow up on the emails. Two (a judge and a senior official of the administration who had held a management position) formally declined, after having read the documents sent, without any further explanation.

Even if the women were aware of the issues related to the topic and the need to discuss it, they appeared hesitant to speak candidly and share their experiences in an interview for a study that would become publicly available. Some officials explained their reluctance by the duty of confidentiality to which they were bound, even if they do not always sufficiently control it. On the other hand, a senior female lawyer noted that:

Some women are reluctant to speak out because they have confidence problems. This is largely due to the basic education they have received, the family being the mold that forges their personality. This is what leads young girls to have inhibitions about speaking in public. They must be trained to express themselves and to speak in public. We need to work on this more and more.

**Table 1 | Research methodology per category**

Target group/area	Leadership	Midcareer	Entry level
Judges	√	√	√
Lawyers	√	√	√
Jurists	√	√	√
Professors	√	√	
Law students	√		
<b>Investigation method</b>	<b>Judges</b>	<b>Lawyers</b>	<b>Jurists</b>
Questionnaire	√	√	√
Interview	√	√	N/A
Focus group <sup>12</sup>	N/A	N/A	N/A
Literature Review	√	√	√
<b>Communication tools</b>	Email	Phone call	Zoom

<sup>12</sup>The research team had to abandon attempts at focus groups because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These approaches and methods enabled us to answer crucial questions, such as questions on the challenges that Senegalese professional women encounter in accessing leadership positions, workplace discrimination and harassment, their career motivations, and contributions to advancing the cause of women breaking glass ceilings. In line with the overarching goals of this study, the research team summarized the evidence base that supported the understanding of the specific contextual factors that affected women's advancement into leadership.

**A note on translation:**

Senegal is predominantly a French-speaking country, and the country consultants were all Senegalese with varying levels of English proficiency. Attempts were made to validate translations of interviews and other words adopted from texts to ensure English equivalency.





# FINDINGS



Female jurists in Senegal (magistrates, lawyers, and academics) project the image of free-spirited, strong personalities who have braved obstacles to get to where they are in society. They have proven that they are as competent as men. However, the quantitative data show that women still have a long way to go to achieve gender parity across the three sectors covered in this report. The same probably holds true for other legal sectors, such as notary positions and clerkships.

What factors explain the overall low representation of women? Although the responses to the questionnaires and in-depth interviews were as varied as they were diverse, two trends emerged. First, the challenges and gender-based discriminations noted within the three categories examined in this report overlapped. Second, in all groups combined, the women agreed that the rules of access to the profession and selection processes guarantee equal treatment and that recruitment processes are open and transparent. The ensuing discussions focus on each of the three categories—lawyers, judges, and academics. Adopting a uniform system of analysis allows for an easy overview of the trends *within* and *between* the three categories.



# 5 | WOMEN AT THE BAR



## 5.1. Entry and promotion

In Senegal, the standard pathway to becoming a lawyer, judge, legal academic, or work in any legal capacity requires a law degree. As in other civil-law countries, a person who has completed four years of training at the law department (often classified as the faculty of law and politics) is a *juriste*. A person with this title can work in any law or nonlaw field. However, the title *juriste* does not qualify a person to be a lawyer, judge, or legal academic, as more training is needed. Upon completion of the five-year university program, successful candidates graduate with a master's degree and can pursue different career pathways. Those who choose to become lawyers (either as a barrister or practicing lawyer-*avocat*) must take an exam and receive a high pass. They are then sworn in before the Court of Appeal of Dakar and undergo a competitive three-year apprenticeship with a law firm that also requires classes organized with the Senegalese Bar Association (le Barreau du Sénégal). After that, a person is fully qualified as an *avocat* and can practice in the private or public sector. Practicing lawyers are called *avocat* and are regulated by the Internal Rules and Regulations of the Senegal Bar Association.<sup>13</sup>

Access to the profession is also governed by the WAEMU,<sup>14</sup> of which Senegal is a member. The Union's Commission has adopted regulations on the Certificate of Aptitude for the Legal Profession and the initial and continuing professional training of lawyers registered in one of the bars of the WAEMU. The organization of admission to the profession has slightly changed, now allowing citizens from other WAEMU member states to practice in Senegal.<sup>15</sup>

The pathways to becoming a lawyer (*avocat*) are straightforward. The competitive exams mean that everyone has equal access. However, the data show a severe deficit in the number of female lawyers. Figure 1 presents the gender distribution as of June 2022. Of the 418 lawyers registered, only 67 (16%) are women. Another important consideration is that these numbers may not reflect all lawyers called to the Senegalese bar. Some are trained in France, most often work in France and other jurisdictions outside of Senegal. The absence of longitudinal data obscures the complete picture. Nonetheless, given the numbers, it is safe to say that women are still woefully underrepresented.

<sup>13</sup> Law 84-09 of 4 January 1984 establishing the Bar association; Internal Rules and Regulations of Senegal Bar Association; & Regulation 05/CM/WAEMU on the harmonization of the rules governing the legal profession in WAEMU.

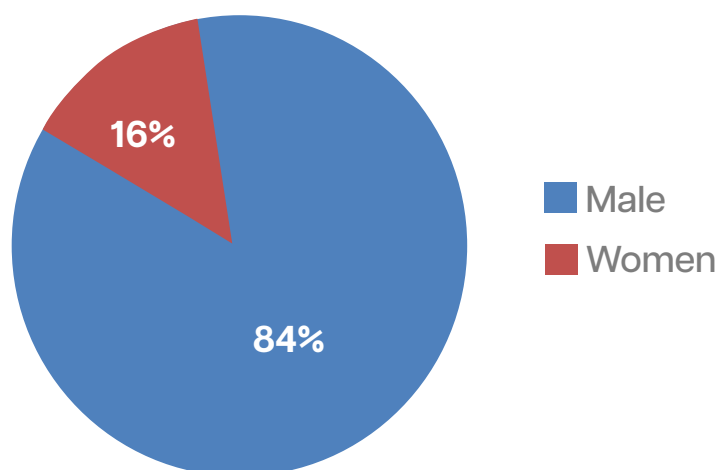
<sup>14</sup> Regulation 10/2006/CM/UEMOA of July 25, 2006, relating to the free movement and establishment of lawyers who are nationals of the Union within the WAEMU; Regulation 05/CM/UEMOA of September 25, 2014 relating to the harmonization of the rules governing the profession of lawyer in the WAEMU area.

<sup>15</sup> Regulation 10/2006/CM/UEMOA of July 25, 2006, relating to the free movement and establishment of lawyers who are nationals of the Union within the WAEMU; Regulation 05/CM/UEMOA of September 25, 2014 relating to the harmonization of the rules governing the profession of lawyer in the WAEMU area.



---

**Figure 1: Number of female and male registered lawyers in Senegal, December 2022**



Source: Ordre des avocats du Sénégal (Bar Association of Senegal)

---

Law firms are relatively small, with most of them operated by an average of three lawyers. Interviewees were unanimous that no affirmed policy of negative or positive discrimination against women exists for entry into the bar. Female lawyers believe that the exam and selection processes guarantee equal opportunities to candidates regardless of gender. However, they note that the intake of women into the program is low, so fewer women are successful. Respondents believe that the obstacles hindering women's access to the profession are exogenous and intersectional factors, such as sociocultural, religious, and economic variables that affect women's ability to stay in school longer than the five years to become a *juriste* and onward to qualify as an *avocat*. As discussed later, the greatest attrition begins at the university, where most female students either drop out or do not continue after graduation. This challenge also means that the problem starts much earlier, at the basic educational level, where fewer girls are enrolled.

Despite the trailblazing women in law mentioned earlier, women's symbolic representation in the profession does not seem to have had an impact on encouraging younger women to pursue a career in law. Female lawyers remain underrepresented in the leadership of law firms and organizations. Their numeric representation has remained low. The next section discusses some of their challenges.

## A. Leadership at the bar

The Senegalese bar was officially created in 1960 by Ordinance 60-309, establishing it at the Court of Appeal of Senegal.<sup>16</sup> The bar association's president (*le bâtonnier*) is elected by members of the bar in good standing. Since 1960, no woman has held the position of president of the bar.

**Table 2 | Presidents of the Ordre des Avocats (Batonniere)**

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TERM
Pierre	Geni	1960–1961
Abdourahmane	Diop	1961–1963
Edouard	Monville	1963–1965
Malick	Dione	1965–1967
Edmond	Devarieux	1967–1969
Ogo	Gueye	1969–1971
Doudou	Thiam	1971–1973
Sidy Kharachy	Diagne	1975–1977
Moustapha	Seck	1977–1979/1980–1981
Ogo KANE	Diallo	1981–1982
Babacar	Seye	1973–1975/1982–1984
Fadilou	Diop	1979–1980/1984–1986
Boubakar	Gueye	1986–1989
Alioune Badara	Sene	1989–1991/1991–1994
Bokar	Niane	1994–1996
Yérin	Thiam	1996–1998/1998–2000
Ely Ousmane	Sarr	2000–2002/2002–2004
Papa Moussa Félix	Sow	2004–2006/2006–2008
Mame Adama	Gueye	2008–2010
Alioune Badara	Fall	2010–2013
Ameth	Ba	2013–2016

<sup>16</sup> History of the Senegal Bar: The Senegalese Bar created by Ordinance No. 60-309 of September, '960. <https://ordredesavocats.sn/histoire-du-barreau-du-senegal/>.

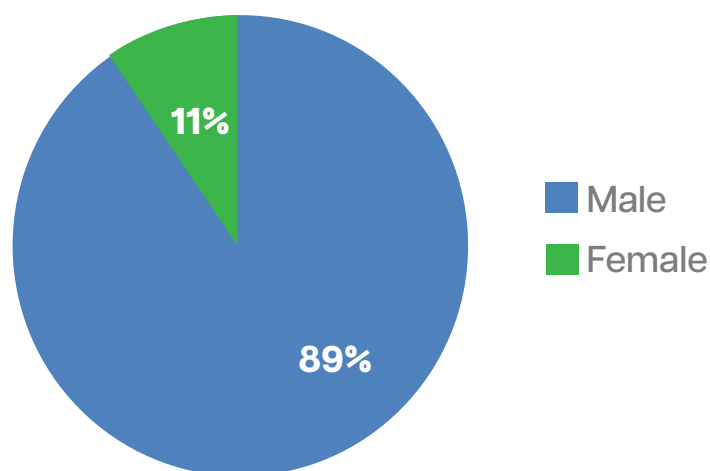
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	TERM
Mbaye	Gueye	2016–2019
Papa Laïty	Ndiaye	2019–2022
Mamadou	Seck	2022–2025

Data source: <https://ordredesavocats.sn/les-anciens-batonniers/>

The *Ordre des Avocats du Senegal*, the body responsible for regulating the legal profession, was formed in 1984.<sup>17</sup> It is led by the bar president and assisted by an 18-member council. The president and council members are elected for 2-year terms by members of the association in good standing for the past 10 years. From 1984 to the present, no woman has ever been the president of the council. As of October, 2022, the 18-member council has only two women (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Members of the Council of the Order of the Senegalese Bar**

**18-member panel of the Council of the Order of the Senegalese Bar**



Source: <https://ordredesavocats.sn/conseil-de-lordre-des-avocats/>

The historical male-dominated leadership of the Senegalese Bar strongly implies many challenges in the pipeline that affect the chances of women rising to leadership within law firms and the profession. The following section discusses certain factors explaining the situation.

<sup>17</sup>History of the Senegal Bar: The Ordres du Avocats, created by Law 84-09 of January 1984. <https://ordredesavocats.sn/histoire-du-barreau-du-senegal/>.

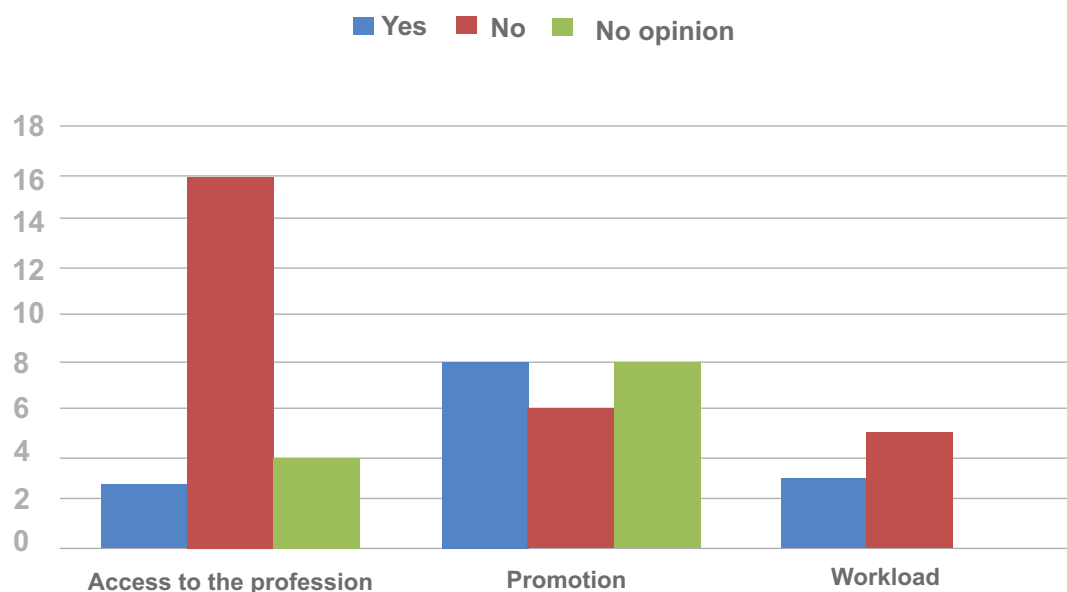
## 5.2. Retention, points of attrition, and barriers to progress

---

This report identified three stages that affect women's entry into the profession, retention and promotion into leadership. A survey was administered to all respondents to assess their perceptions of what factors affect women in the profession (Figure 3).

---

**Figure 3: Do women face discrimination linked to the legal profession?**



*IAWL survey, 2022*

---

The responses corroborate the general perceptions among female lawyers that there are no barriers to women's access and entry into the profession at the university level, so access to the profession is not restricted. However, the results are inconclusive on whether women face challenges during promotion: eight believed women had challenges, another eight had no opinion, and six felt there were no challenges.

### A. Early attrition as a barrier to entry

---

Since the founding of the Senegalese bar in 1960, female lawyers and judges have made their mark. Organizations such as the AJS have made important contributions to women's rights, national debates on women and girls' rights, provided general guidance to successive governments on women and children's rights issues and represented the country at international conferences (Scales-Trent, 2010).

Nevertheless, women remain underrepresented, strongly suggesting a numerical and leadership pipeline issue. This position is shared by respondent B: *“fortunately, there is no obstacle to the entry of women to the bar. It is moreover paradoxical to note that while at the university, women are numerous and are among the most brilliant, at the bar and on the bench, there are fewer women.”* This statement reflects the shared belief of other respondents that underrepresentation is due to the large number of female students who do not continue after four years at a university. Many marry during their studies and find it difficult to combine higher education with family obligations. This is followed by childbearing, which hampers their motivation and capacity to pursue the examination and internship required to become a lawyer.

Family and marital factors are alluded to as deterrents from pursuing the profession and, therefore, a strong source of attrition. Respondent Y maintains that “in the texts, there is no legal obstacle, nor barrier, but in reality, we note that there are many more men who pass the exam than women.” A few women take the qualifying exam, and even fewer are successful. Women's poor performance was attributed to the lack of confidence in the oral part and the challenges of studying while maintaining their domestic obligations. More research is needed to diagnose women's barriers and provide targeted support and interventions.

## **B. Personal challenges and ambition**

---

Respondents generally attribute the low representation to social and family constraints. Some respondents also cite a lack of personal commitment to pursue professional goals and ambitions.

This is the opinion of respondent O:

**The low percentage of success of women in the [bar exams] compared to men is because women are held back in their studies by personal obligations or are afraid to participate in certain competitions and refrain from registering. There is a lack of ambition, and that must be revived among female lawyers.**

The lack of ambition requires targeted mentoring of girls and young women by exposing them to successful female lawyers.

### C. Unfavorable work environment and conditions for female lawyers to succeed

---

Even if no discrimination was noted in entry to the profession, female lawyers agreed that the workplace is not gender-inclusive. Despite no affirmed negative policies against women's entry to the bar, sociocultural obstacles create unfavorable work conditions for their promotion. As in other jurisdictions, the legal profession requires long and unpredictable hours. It also requires occasional travel to jurisdictions outside the capital city, which burdens women with domestic caregiving roles who cannot leave their families for too long.

Respondent L said that it is not access that is the challenge but the difficulty of finding a balance:

I wonder how many young, married colleagues with children manage to get by. It is not easy for them at all; the volume of work in the office is tremendous, and they go home late, which is hard to reconcile with family life. [Office] work requires far greater sacrifices for women than for men.

Moreover, as in many other sectors, respondent O believes that:

**There are still prejudices about married women. Law firm managers tend to think that a married woman will often be absent from work to take care of her home, have a baby or take care of her children. And so, they conclude that these absences and the organization of the home from a distance result, in their opinion, in women being less productive. So [there are] many prejudices that we must absolutely fight.**

Respondent B agrees and declares that being a woman, especially married and a mother, constitutes an obstacle to promotion in law firms: “when I had just gotten married, a colleague told me outright: ‘I hope you won’t get pregnant right away because we have a lot of women who have gone on maternity leave.’”

These sexist remarks are common at the bar. They are often presented as mere jokes, which could indicate high levels of unconscious biases that need to be addressed. A respondent recounted how her first contact with a member of the Bar Council left her feeling that women should not become lawyers and had no place in the bar. While she was expecting a child, a judge even asked her to “go give birth” and systematically referred her cases without her consent or consulting with her. She viewed this experience and many others as aggressions that women face in the work environment, both within law firms and in the courtroom.

According to respondent B, being a full-fledged lawyer is a daily challenge:

**Colleagues are sometimes paternalistic. I have noticed that in law firms, women tend to be given family cases, and then they label us. The high-value cases are handled by the men. It is very sociological and cultural, the place of a woman is at home, a woman must not speak in the presence of a man. Worse, when you are married to a colleague, you are always seen as the "spouse of" but not as a lawyer. In my firm, when I became a partner, I also managed the staff, but the men couldn't stand it when I gave them instructions. This spoiled my relationship with some of the men.**

The same attitude is noted at the courthouse from less senior colleagues who have the prejudice of thinking that women are naturally afraid to plead, and male colleagues generally do not take them seriously. However, when women stand up to them in oral arguments, *they are seen as women who think like men*. Apart from the bad-taste jokes, relations between men and women are generally good. In addition to the paternalistic attitude that female lawyers perceive from some of their colleagues, very few are promoted to partners. Most remain associates until they leave to set up their practice. Law firms have no uniform requirements on what it takes to become a partner. Like other jurisdictions in Africa, promotion to partnership is based on compatibility with firm leadership, one's ability to bring in money and clients, handle a high volume of cases, and the general assessment of one's output. These vague requirements tend to be unfavorable to women, who are often seen as support staff and not full-fledged lawyers. These gender biases that prevent women from being given high-profile cases that bring in more money must be addressed. Additionally, the challenge of not being able to network with potential clients further diminishes the chances of landing those high-profile cases. These intersectional challenges cumulatively affect their chances of promotion.

## D. Mixed reactions about sexual harassment

---

The International Bar Association report on bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace indicated that globally, out of 7,000 respondents, 37% of women reported they were sexually harassed in a law firm, compared to 7% of men (Pender, 2019). Other studies on women in the legal profession point to the incidence of sexual harassment by colleagues, clients, and judges. IAWL (2020) showed 64.1% of respondents had experienced harassment in the workplace, 21.8% had not, and 14.1% said they were not sure. The forms of harassment included “inappropriate touch” and “sexist language.”

In contrast to popular beliefs and existing scholarship, the female lawyers interviewed had not witnessed sexual harassment. They faced some derogatory jokes, but they did not go beyond the boundaries. Respondent L. remarks, *“I find the American concept of sexual harassment appallingly sad. I find it charming that a lawyer is complemented, but one has to know how far to go.”* The reference to the “American concept of sexual harassment” raises the importance of understanding the cultural context and the role of sociocultural socialization in Senegal generally. That allusion suggests that women in Senegal may be socialized to expect and accept unwanted male gestures (both sexual and nonsexual) as complementary and, therefore, not an infringement on their rights. This remark and the idea of complementary statements will require further research to understand how and whether women and men see such acts as constituting sexual harassment— an endeavor currently beyond this report's scope.

Nevertheless, the statement by the respondent, *“... but one has to know how far to go,”* implies boundaries beyond which such actions may still be considered unacceptable. It is unclear who sets those boundaries and what may be considered “going too far.” The lack of clarity clearly demonstrates a power dynamic at play, compounded by gender, which may be worsened by the victim's marital status. The variables of gender, cultural expectations, years at the bar and marital status, among others, intersect to create unfavorable working conditions for women. Such work environments position women in stressful situations that can lead to attrition from law firms to set up their businesses or focus on marital and parenting responsibilities to avoid toxic and sexist work environments.

## 5.3. Promoters and facilitators of progress

---

Female lawyers face many challenges due to the intersectional nature of the sociocultural context. These are compounded by non-inclusive work environments, juggling womanhood, motherhood, family obligations, and persistent patriarchal attitudes permeating the workplace. The following recommendations could be helpful tools and strategies for facilitating their progression.



## **A. Addressing attrition at the entry-level**

---

As noted above, the biggest challenge to women's representation at the bar begins at the entry level. The high levels of attrition at the university and bar exam stages must be addressed to create a critical mass of women (at least 30%). Doing so could lead to two outcomes. Firstly, it could set in motion a change in institutional cultures and attitudes toward women. Symbolic representation could strongly signal men in the profession that women have a right to be there, thrive, be respected, and be treated as equals. Secondly, it could lead to a trickle-up scenario by creating a bigger pool of female lawyers to draw candidates for leadership positions in the bar council and presidency of the bar association.

Female leaders could have a positive impact in moving the needle on the issues that affect women within the larger decision-making table at the bar association level. Having more women in decision-making will also expand the opportunities for a holistic approach to addressing gender-based issues of inclusion and equity and not limit such discussions within the female lawyers' associations, which predominantly consist of women. The Bar Association can implement rules and regulations regarding other measures, such as mentoring and training for the examinations and interviews to support women (and men) needing extra assistance to scale through the final stage.

## **B. Government and policymakers**

---

The government of Senegal has ratified several regional and international instruments to promote the rights of women and girls in Senegal. As a UN member, Senegal must create conditions to promote UN SDG 5 on gender equality. Senegal has a record of putting legal frameworks in place to promote women's rights, such as the electoral quota, which guarantees 30% of seats in public office. The effects of the quota are already being felt in the legislature, with Senegal placing number seventeen in the global rankings of women in parliament (IPU, 2022). The legal profession is important in national development, as government officials are sometimes drawn from it. Mame Boye, the first woman Prime Minister, for example, was a lawyer. The government has relied on female lawyers and their associations for important national debates on human rights and women's rights (Scales-Trent, 2010). The government must therefore play a role in expanding opportunities for women to enter and thrive in the profession. It must increase its investment in girls' education at the basic and secondary school levels. Special programs must be put in place to support young women pursuing a law degree to help reduce the high attrition rates at the university level. Such programs can include awards and scholarships for women who complete their degrees successfully and go on to the internship phase. Lastly, the legislature must pass and enforce laws that criminalize sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based discrimination in the workplace.

### C. Law firms

---

Most female lawyers work in law firms. As described, the intersection of masculinity and the sociocultural expectations of women's position in society has permeated the legal profession. Women at the bar are not immune from some of the sexist comments and behaviors in their workplaces. Law firms must engage in unconscious bias training for all their staff to understand the impact of sexism and gender-based microaggressions on women's well-being and productivity. Furthermore, the unconscious biases that hold that women cannot be caregivers and still work efficiently disadvantage them from being considered for promotion. Interviewees recommended that the bar association adopt policies that encourage transparent promotion rules in law firms to allow for uniform career development for both men and women. These policies would help to increase promotion to higher levels, such as senior associates and partners.

### D. Bar association

---

The bar association is a critical gatekeeper in creating a gender-inclusive legal profession. It has an important role in changing the deeply steeped patriarchal perceptions of the role of men and women. Given the predominance of men in the *Ordre des Avocats*, changing patriarchal perceptions will be difficult. However, it is necessary, and it can begin with professional development opportunities that seek to make a human rights and business case for women's equal symbolic, descriptive, and substantive representation within the leadership of the bar and the legal profession generally. The bar association can adopt proportional representation policies such as equal lists of male and female candidates. These policies might give women an equal chance at being elected to its leadership. A critical question is whether women are interested in pursuing leadership at the bar? From the interviews, the answer appears negative, given the intersectional challenges they face that compete for their time to be divided between their professional and personal obligations.

### E. Civil society organizations and advocacy groups

---

Over the years, the AJS has done much to promote women's rights in Senegal since it was founded in 1974. However, it appears to be doing more to help other women in society than it does to develop its members' capacity, skills, and needs. AJS must be commended for its remarkable interventions to advance gender equality, protect the rights of vulnerable groups, and protect the rights of women and girls subjected to rape, sexual violence, and other forms of human rights abuses (Scales-Trent, 2010). To support its service to the community, the organization must receive philanthropic support from donor agencies specifically aimed at bolstering its internal capacity. Providing skills training and leadership development tools will help members reorient their activities toward strengthening their capacity, which will accelerate and scale up its work. Advocacy groups that promote women's leadership, such as the IAWL, are developing partnerships with the AJS to help with leadership training and feminist consciousness-building among female lawyers in Senegal. Adopting a feminist consciousness approach rooted in understanding intersectionality and matri-legal feminism and the Senegalese feminist movements will be critical to breaking down the sociocultural norms and practices that hold most women captive and limit their ability to advance.

## **F. Sexual harassment, gender stereotypes and unconscious bias training**

---

The findings from the barriers women face in the profession indicate that female lawyers did not think sexual harassment was a problem. A similar survey conducted among sixteen law students for this report asked if they face sexual harassment; 50% of the respondents agreed, 39% disagreed, and 11% were neutral. The fact that half of the respondents agreed shows that sexual harassment is indeed a problem. Some respondents disagreeing does not negate its existence. Therefore, to address this issue and create a working environment that is not hostile to young lawyers, unconscious bias training programs must be provided to women and men to understand what constitutes sexual harassment and how it affects the productivity and well-being of women at work.

## **G. Male allies**

---

Men have mainly set societal norms. Therefore, any attempts to break these power hierarchies and gender privileges must include men. Interventions to cultivate men as allies in the fight for gender equality must be at the center of all gender equality interventions through programs such as the Men Allies in Law for Equality (M.A.L.E) run by the IAWL. Cultivating male allies within the bar is another strategy to develop networks between men and women to begin having open and honest conversations on the impact of negative gender constructs on women's presence and well-being. These conversations can change perceptions about women's ability as lawyers and leaders.

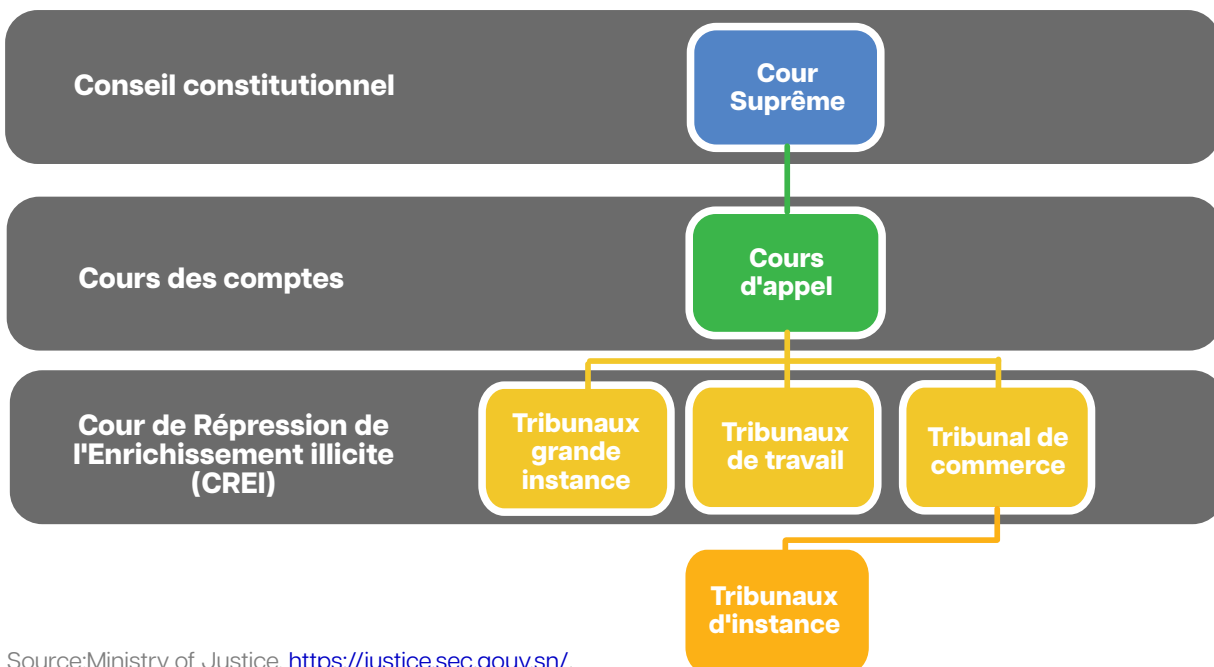
# 6 | WOMEN IN THE JUDICIARY



A growing body of scholarship exists on African female judges, pioneered by Bauer and Dawuni (2016). Other studies have examined women's pathways to judiciaries (Dawuni, 2016; Uzebu-Imarigbe, 2020), challenges (Ibrahim, 2016; Kang, 2016; Kamatali, 2016), contributions to the judiciary (Addadzi-Koom & Nkansah, 2019; Gayoye, 2021), and pathways to leadership (Dawuni & Kang, 2015) and the need for the transformation of judiciaries (Albethyn & Bonthuys, 2016; Andrews, 2021; Masengu, 2016). However, no work has focused explicitly on female judges in Senegal. This report provides the first exploratory study on the topic. Under the civil law tradition, judges are commonly referred to as *magistrat*. This report uses the word “judge” to refer to the *magistrat* and other judicial officers who decide cases in court.

Similar to the pathways to becoming a lawyer in Senegal, the first step to becoming a judge is a five-year degree from the faculty of law at an accredited university. After that, candidates must take a competitive exam. Successful candidates are admitted to the Judicial Training Center (*Centre de formation judiciaire*) for 24 months. Candidates are trained in various aspects of the law, judicial function, and ethics. They must further complete an internship in the jurisdictions in the hinterlands and the basic jurisdictions in the city of Dakar. At the end of the internship, students are invited to submit a thesis before taking the final exam. Only those admitted to this exam will become magistrates and be assigned a position. Judicial assignments are based on the needs of the different courts. Figure 4 shows the court structure in Senegal.

**Figure 4: The judicial structure in Senegal**



Source: Ministry of Justice, <https://justice.sec.gouv.sn/>.

Civil-law countries tend to have more female judges because the competitive nature of the exams creates opportunities for women to excel and be appointed (Schultz & Shaw, 2003). Despite the equal entry opportunities, women tend to stagnate at the lower levels of these courts due to nontransparent promotion processes, persistent institutional gender-based stereotypes and hierarchies, and challenges in negotiating the power hierarchies within the civil service bureaucracies (Bourouba, 2022; Cohen, 2018; Escobar-Lemmon et.al, 219; Kang, 2016). Senegal has female representation in the judiciary that does not appear to follow the trends in other civil-law countries. The first part of the discussion examines women's pathways to the judiciary, retention, and rise to leadership. The second part synthesizes the challenges, points of attrition, and barriers to leadership. The third section provides recommendations on actions that can be taken to facilitate women's promotion.

### 6.1. Entry and promotion

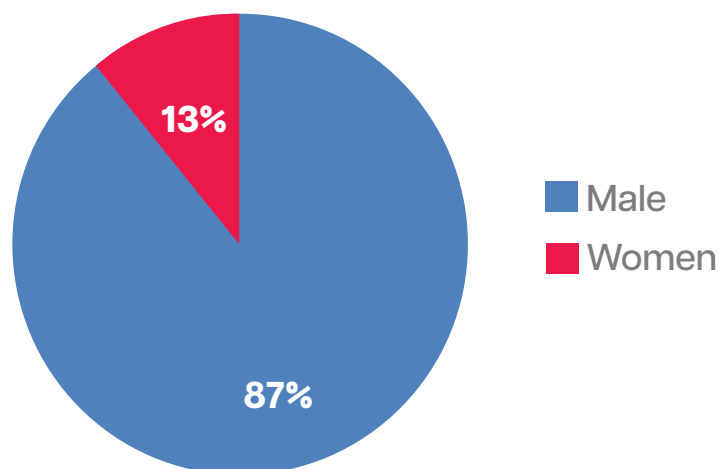
---

Women began to join the judiciary in earnest after the appointments of Crespin and Diop as the first and second female judges (Awa Magazine, 1964). Many other women have made their mark on the Senegalese judicial system and in leadership. Nevertheless, female judges remain extremely few. As of December 2022, out of 715 magistrates nationwide, only 92 (13%) are women compared to 623 (87%) men (Ministry of Justice, n.d.).

---

**Figure 5: Gender Distribution of male to female judges in Senegal**

Sex disaggregated data of judges in Senegal,  
2022



Source: Le Ministère de la Justice (The Ministry of Justice), 2022

---

The factors that explain women's pathways to the bar largely reflect those that define women's access to the judiciary. The entry requirements to the judiciary are considered open and accessible to both men and women. Participants did not know of any discrimination in the recruitment process that adversely affected women's chances of becoming judges or magistrates.

Below is the position of respondent N, the head of a court:

**I had no concerns during the magistrate's selection exam. There was an equal opportunity because, as I always maintain, we do not beg for anything; we do not want discrimination [affirmative action] because discrimination is never positive. I did not have any problems with the written or oral exams. It is a competition that guarantees equal opportunities.**

Although respondent F agrees and does not feel any discrimination in the exams, her position as a jury member in the clerk's exam allowed her to notice this:

**Women are excellent at the written test but often miss out on the oral tests. I think that men get their oral fluency from being more likely to be involved in associations where they are trained in public speaking, and this is not always the case for women. Women's difficulty in public speaking is somewhat related to culture. For example, in the Serer culture, once the men have spoken, the women no longer have a voice.**

Some magistrates, such as respondent D, think that traditionally, women are more oriented toward professions that grant them the flexibility and time to take care of their family:

In the past, women were more inclined toward the teaching profession with a shorter curriculum and the possibility of having fixed hours and more vacation time to care for the family. But in recent years, women have been more ambitious than that and think more about personal fulfillment rather than thinking first about having a family. You see more and more female engineers, doctors, scientists etc.

Respondent D hints at family constraints but also points out **poverty** in these terms:

**The low representation of female judges in Senegal is a result of the social and cultural constraints that limit women's access to education, especially higher education. These constraints are linked to early marriages, family environment, and poverty, which affects women more than men, especially in rural areas.**

Respondent D's observation relates to the discussion of the early attrition of girls from schools and, consequently, the university. Poverty means that families often choose to send a boy to school, leaving girls to work in the market supporting their mothers. In most cases, girls end up being married off early to lessen the caretaking obligations of parents. Early marriage leads to early childbirth, ending many young women's educational and professional aspirations.

Respondent F thinks that the weight of **culture** prevents ambitions beyond marriage:

**Women have little ambition. More and more, young women's only ambition is to have a good husband, and they are satisfied with a high school diploma. This results from cultural norms since in our society women are believed to be only fulfilled in marriage.**

The above remarks show the intersectional nature of the challenges affecting women's access to education and, consequently, to judicial positions. The effect of culture, marital expectations, poverty, and gender socialization appear to affect women more negatively. Thus, women's opportunities are limited and narrower in pursuing their professional goals and aspirations. However, respondent D concluded on an optimistic note by indicating that "in recent years, we have noted an increase in the number of women recruited to the bench." She links this change to the expanding opportunities for education and the personal drive of today's youth to pursue their professional aspirations. This observation will need further research and testing to provide a longitudinal analysis of factors affecting women's choices to join the judiciary. The promotion facilitators (below) could provide some entry points for increasing women's representation.

## A. Women in leadership

Women's representation in the higher courts and leadership positions reflects their low representation in the judiciary. Even though some women have risen to head the higher courts, such as Vaz and Ndiaye, their representation pales compared to the number of men who have served in leadership positions. Table 3 shows the leadership of the Supreme Court, 1992–2022.

**Table 3 | Presidents of the Supreme Court, 1992–2022**

Name	Year	Gender
Cheikh Tidiane Coulibaly	2020–present	M
M Mamadou Badio Camara	2015–2020	M
M Papa Oumar Sakho	2008–2015	M
M Guibril Camara	2001–2006	M
Mme Andrezia Vas	1997–2001	W
M Seydou Ba	1993–1997	M
M Youssoupha Ndiaye	1992–1993	M
All male	* 1960–1992	M
Mme Mireille Ndiaye (Procureur general pres la cour)	2001–2002	W

Source: Supreme Court of Senegal, <https://conseilconstitutionnel.sn/les-anciens-membres/>

More women have been members of the Constitutional Council (Table 4).

**Table 4 | Women who have served on the Constitutional Council, 1992–2022**

Name	Gender
Awa DIEYE	2022–present
Aminata Ly Ndiaye (council member)	2021–present
Bouso Diao Fall (council member)	2017–2021
Mireille Ndiaye (president) <sup>18</sup>	2002–2010
Marie Jose Crespin (first woman on the court)	1992–2000

Source: Supreme Court of Senegal, <https://conseilconstitutionnel.sn/les-anciens-membres/>

<sup>18</sup> Former vice president of the Constitutional Council, Ndiaye was appointed president in 2002 to complete Youssoupha Ndiaye's term and reappointed for a new term in 2004.



Some respondents think that women do not occupy many positions of responsibility, especially as heads of the courts, because of their insufficient numbers.

For Respondent C:

[The lower number of women in leadership] reflects the relatively low number of female judges compared to their male colleagues. For example, currently, out of six Court of Appeals judges, Senegal has only one female first president (Head of Court at the Court of Appeal of Thiès) and no female general prosecutor (*procureur general*). At the level of the High Courts, we have only one female public prosecutor (TGI of Saint-Louis of Senegal). However, a few decades ago, the two highest jurisdictions (Court of Cassation and Constitutional Council) were headed by female judges. The Court of Cassation of Senegal was headed by a female judge (Andrésia VAZ) and the Constitutional Council (Mireille NDIAYE). However, out of seven members, only two women currently sit on the Constitutional Council.

Notwithstanding the low representation of women in the judiciary generally, respondents had a consensus that some discrimination existed at the level of promotion, with fewer women being appointed to leadership. Some felt that the fundamental problem lies in the responsibilities entrusted to women.

Respondent D stated:

In fact, women are already few among the magistrates, but they are not appointed to leadership positions. During the last judicial council, there was an extraordinary movement with 120 leading positions, [but] only 20 women were appointed to these positions. For example, after I left the prosecutor's office of Saint-Louis in 1984, it was only recently that a woman was appointed to this position, that is to say, for more than 30 years, there were only men.

All the judges interviewed noted no discrimination in salary or rank. Salary is the same for all, and court assignments and promotions follow a clear and predefined criterion. Case or court assignments had no notable exceptions; female and male judges decide the same cases.

Respondent S remembers that:

**“At the beginning, there were some attempts to entrust the children's court to women. But at that time, there was an outcry, and that changed. But I do not think that in the assignment of tasks, there is a difference in the cases entrusted to the women magistrates.”**

The overall picture presented in the preceding discussion shows that the progression of women in the judiciary has stagnated over the years. The early influx of pioneer lawyers and judges was not sustained, and fewer have become judges, leading to the negligible current number (13%). The next section discusses some of the challenges that explain this low representation.

## **6.2.Retention, points of attrition, and barriers to progress**

---

The report's investigation into the intersectional challenges women face as judges and magistrates is presented in this section. Despite the challenges encountered, female judges appear to be content with their work, with most of them seeing it as a service to their communities. The general infrastructural challenges, such as poor physical facilities, limited technological access, and poor remuneration, are not necessarily gendered. This section focuses on discussing challenges peculiar to female judges in the discharge of their duties. These challenges exist and impact women differently, but no evidence suggests that they have caused women to move laterally out of the profession. Thus, retention of female judges is maintained, with no attrition. The biggest challenge lies in advancing up the hierarchy and into leadership positions.

### **A. Mobility and transfers**

---

The challenges female judges face in balancing their work obligations with family and childbearing obligations are well noted in the literature (Dawuni, 2016; Kang, 2016; Masengu, 2016). It is intersectional, as it combines gender, age, judicial rank, and family status, thus affecting younger women of childbearing age, most often junior on the judicial hierarchy, and therefore, likely to be posted to the regions outside of the capital city.

Generally, among the fourteen regions of Senegal, female judges are assigned to the big cities, especially in the capital city, Dakar. Family responsibilities prevent most of them from accepting leading positions in the regions. Undeniably, some receive offers in the hinterland but feel compelled to decline because of their family obligations.

For respondent N:

The *Tribunal du travail de Dakar* (Labor Court of Dakar), which is reputed to be one of the most difficult jurisdictions because of the volume of work, has eleven women out of the fifteen judges of the jurisdiction. Many of them end up there because they asked for a family move from the regions to Dakar or because it is considered (without asking their opinion) that being assigned to the regions is hard on a woman (which is not the case because the volume of work is less important).

Respondent N's account indicates that the decision to post female judges outside of the capital may have been an institutional one that was made without consulting the female judges themselves. Although being in the capital may have some advantages, the response also shows that courts within the city have large caseloads, posing further disadvantages to women juggling work and family obligations.

The challenges encountered in transferring to different jurisdictions could affect women's upward mobility and promotion to leadership, as they cannot build professional experience in a range of judicial functions and court management. However, to respondent S, the issue of mobility should not be considered a hindrance and should be combated. She believes that *“women cannot advocate for equality without bearing all the consequences. If a woman wants to be a magistrate, she must be aware that there are constraints in the judiciary, that there are even more constraints than advantages,”* stating that women have a role to play in their professional mobility. Whether personal circumstances will allow them to make those choices depends on their situation.

## **B. Professional and private life**

---

Closely linked to the issue of mobility and transfers is the challenge of balancing professional and personal demands. The difficulty of achieving work–life balance is noted in the literature on gender and judging (Bauer & Dawuni, 2016; Dawuni, 2021a). Although many of the magistrates interviewed find their profession very demanding, they generally manage to find a balance by keeping to a rigorous schedule.

Respondent F, who self-defines as a judge and human rights activist, takes it further:

**“My activism helps me a lot in capacity building. Some people think it is overwhelming, but it allows me to find my balance. As a mother, I manage with what I have. I devote myself to my family, especially on weekends, and I have the support of my husband, who is a colleague and, therefore, aware of the constraints of the profession.”**

This self-reflection is not an isolated incident. However, respondent F is fortunate to have the support of an understanding husband, which is not a circumstance that all judges share. In addition to nuclear family obligations, most judges across Senegal have obligations to their extended families, which can take a toll on their ability to juggle simultaneous responsibilities. This latter obligation is an aspect of the lived realities of female judges in Senegal and across Africa that is not captured in the existing discourse on gender and judging. Thus, matri-legal feminism provides a prism through which we can better understand and evaluate the specific experiences of female judges in Africa.

## **C. Safety and security**

---

Some citizens of Senegal have persistent cultural and religious beliefs that women should not be judges. These perceptions are more pronounced in rural areas, increasing the risks for women appointed there. As some respondents noted, female judges and magistrates have to deal with challenges to their authority, which can sometimes have implications for their safety and well-being.

This implication is the case of respondent S, whose daughter suffered an attempted kidnapping while she was a prosecutor in Saint-Louis:

It is necessary to correct this at the state level, because it is correct to say that women are not always in conditions that allow them to reconcile [professional demands and the safety of their personhood and family]. It is necessary to ensure we can care for our children.

This challenge points to yet another intersectional challenge of the gendered expectations society has for women and how these perceptions can threaten the career of a female judge.

#### **D. Relationships with colleagues**

---

The magistrates consider their work environment respectful and cordial. None reported being sexually harassed or having such reports in their work environment. The consensus among the interviewees is that women judges who prove their competence earn the respect of their male colleagues. This finding confirms scholarship on why women have to work much harder before being accepted as equals. Drawing on the examples from Zambia, Masengu (2021) notes the persistent perceptions of incompetence female judges suffer from their male colleagues and litigants. Similarly, female judges in Malawi must consistently prove their capabilities beyond what men have to do (Ellett, 2022). The added burden imposed by men and society is a gendered challenge, which combines with age and intersectional biases to create obstacles for women on the lower rungs. These conditions prevent a conducive and inclusive working environment, with negative implications for promotion and horizontal mobility.

### **6.3. Promoters and facilitators of progress**

---

A well-functioning judiciary contributes to the rule of law and good governance. Its legitimacy can only be complete by considering those who comprise it. Consequently, for Senegal to meet its benchmarks for SDG 5 on gender equality and other rights enshrined in regional laws promoting women's rights, such as the Maputo Protocol, efforts must be made to address the equitable representation of women in the judiciary. Women's challenges intersect at the individual, institutional, and structural levels. Addressing them requires strategies working in tandem to facilitate women's progress. The following recommendations are provided as starting points.

#### **A. The Judiciary**

---

- 1 The judiciary must adopt a policy of targeted recruitment of qualified female candidates from universities and provide them with the support they need to apply for admission into the judicial training institute. The positive outcomes of such recruitment efforts have been noted in other jurisdictions, such as Kenya (Kamau, 2013) and South Africa (Andrews, 2021; Kamatali, 2016; Masengu, 2016).

- 2 The judiciary must review its promotion criteria to ensure they are open, transparent, and gender sensitive. The role of gender biases and stereotypes in women's promotion and assignments must be evaluated periodically, and promotions to higher courts must be made open and accessible to the public.
- 3 The judiciary must complete annual gender audits to assess the challenges women face in passing the entrance exams. Targeted interventions should be provided to female candidates on how to prepare for the examination. One respondent indicated that women do well on the written exam but poorly on the interview/oral exams because they are generally not given opportunities to network and gain public speaking skills.
- 4 The judiciary as an institution must provide periodic training on gender and unconscious bias to all staff members. These trainings should provide opportunities for openly discussing the issues women face and the role of men as allies in deconstructing these long-held patriarchal gendered institutional norms.
- 5 To facilitate equitable opportunities for women's progress, the judiciary should review promotion policies periodically to make them gender-inclusive and gender-sensitive. Where institutional policies are developed and best suited for men, women will not thrive in practices and policies that do not consider their lived realities.
- 6 The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the urgency of the digitalization of justice systems. The judiciary should take advantage of these shifts in working arrangements and upskill on e-justice systems. Training all judges will help them to deliver justice. It will still be essential to help female judges work remotely from locations that allow them to juggle their domestic caregiving obligations with work. Using remote technology will help address some mobility and transfer concerns women face. Arrangements could be made for hybrid working conditions that allow women with children to work onsite at some periods and off-site at other periods (e.g., when schools are not in session and young children are home).
- 7 The judiciary should provide resources to ensure that women are in conditions that allow them to reconcile their family and professional lives (e.g., create kindergartens in specific structures to care for children during working hours).
- 8 The judiciary should invest in providing professional training and leadership programs for female judges to equip them with the skills for leadership positions.

## B. Civil society and female judges' associations

---

- 1 Civil society organizations have been shown to play important roles in expanding opportunities for female judges. In Kenya, for instance, the International Federation of Women Judges (FIDA) used strategic litigation to demand the government adheres to the constitutional provision guaranteeing a two-thirds minimum for all appointive public offices (Murungi & Meroka-Mutua, 2022). Similarly, in Botswana, FIDA supported the appointment of the first female judge to the High Court in the face of mounting opposition (Bauer & Ellett, 2016). Female judges' associations have also been key in supporting the nomination and appointment of female judges to higher courts, socializing female judges, and providing capacity-building and training opportunities to their members (Dawuni, 2016). Female judges in Senegal should work closely with the AJS, whose membership is open to lawyers and judges, to ensure a critical mass of women who can demand systemic change.
- 2 Female judges should also build strong networks with outside organizations, such as FIDA and other women's rights groups in Senegal, to provide a broader network to lobby the governments for changes conducive to women's working conditions.
- 3 Female judges should build networks or strengthen existing ones with other female judges in Francophone Africa to share experiences and engage in cross-learning. They can collectively learn and adopt best practices from other countries where female judges are progressing in leadership.

## C. Personal factors

---

- 1 Female judges are responsible for re-socializing themselves by engaging with academics who can help them understand the theoretical frameworks of feminist consciousness and the role of gender constructs in their work.
- 2 Some respondents also hinted at the need for female judges to challenge themselves to take up leadership positions by positioning themselves in judicial stations where they can gain the experience needed to take up leadership roles.
- 3 Some respondents also mentioned the need for female judges to share their experiences while respecting their duty of confidentiality.
- 4 Female judges should be active in the AJS to push for the necessary reforms to protect their rights. The AJS was created by former female magistrates who influenced several women's rights reforms. They can broaden such activism by advocating for women's rights in the profession.

- 5 Female judges' networks and associations should support other women in accessing the most important management and leadership positions. Women's groups should advocate for change in leadership recruitment policies.
- 6 Female judges should continue to seek opportunities to improve themselves to overcome the "presumption of incompetence" that often weighs on women.

#### D. Funding agencies

---

- 1 Funding agencies should invest in programs that will help women overcome the entry hurdles, such as providing law school scholarships and sustained mentoring.
- 2 Funding agencies should fund research on female judges and gender-related issues within the Senegalese judiciary. More knowledge and information on gender-related aspects of judging will provide important quantitative and empirical data for policymakers and other organizations interested in addressing the challenges women face on the bench.

#### E. Male allies

---

Societal norms have been largely set by men, and any attempts to break these power hierarchies and gender privileges must include men. Interventions to cultivate men as allies in the fight for gender equality must be at the center of all such interventions through programs such as the MALE Allies program run by the IAWL.

#### F. Other

---

- 1 Mentoring plays an important role in professional development. As in other parts of Africa, no institutionalized mentoring exists among female judges in Senegal. Newly appointed judges are left on their own. Mentoring should be institutionalized to promote collegiality and support the professional growth of all judges. Younger judges can gain from the experiences of older judges, and older judges can also learn from them about technological advancements, innovations in legal instruments and jurisprudence, and the drive of the younger generation to resist institutional patriarchy.
- 2 Professional development and skills building are essential to career progression. The AJS and female judges should partner with organizations such as IAWL and the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ) to provide leadership training for female judges and magistrates.



# 7 | WOMEN IN THE LEGAL ACADEMY



Scholarship on women in the legal academy across Africa is limited. As part of the women in law and leadership initiative of the IAWL, this report is the first comprehensive study that combines quantitative and qualitative analyses with in-depth interviews of female legal academics to understand their experiences. This section also includes law students to understand their experiences and pathways to the legal profession. A major variable that explains the paucity of women in law is the high attrition rates that begin from the law faculties, where students are trained to become lawyers, judges, legal academics, and other legal professionals.

## 7.1. Entry, retention, and promotion

An academic career often begins with a public recruitment process that includes universities publishing an advertisement for vacancies. Since the introduction of the bachelor's, master's, and doctorate educational systems, the minimum qualification is a master's degree, although most universities require a doctorate. After reviewing the applications and conducting interviews, the departments select the best candidates. The body in charge of assessing academic credentials, promoting professors, and recognizing the diplomas of its member states is the Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) (African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education), created by a convention signed into law in 1972 in Lome, Togo. CAMES provides the overall processes for Francophone and Madagascar member states. Despite the attempt to achieve a standardized outcome, individual countries sometimes adopt domestic processes that differ from the CAMES policy. Through the work of teachers' unions, Senegal and other countries have created national laws to provide better conditions for teachers.

According to the CAMES rules governing the legal profession, the academy has four ranks: *Assistant*, *Maitre assistant* (assistant professor), *Maitre de conferences* (which may correspond to senior lecturer or associate professor), and *Professor titulaire* (full professor). The recruited person begins their career as an *assistant*. After successfully defending a thesis at the end of three years, they can move to the rank of assistant professor. To qualify for tenure as a *Maitre Assistant* and be registered on the List of Aptitude for the Functions of *Maitre Assistant*, a candidate must write at least two articles after two years in their position. After gaining tenure as an assistant professor, they can apply for the rank of senior lecturer/associate professor via one of two routes. The short route consists of a very selective competition (*Agrégation*). The long route requires successfully presenting several works before a CAMES specialized technical committee. An academic reaches full professorship by being registered on the List of Aptitude to the Functions of Full Professor after successfully presenting and defending at least four articles before a CAMES specialized technical committee.



As noted in the literature review, women's access to the legal academy has not been smooth. The recruitment included women such as Kestellot, and it took the commitment of President Senghor to ensure that she was given the necessary accommodations (Thiam & Seck, 2015). Mbow's (2000) analysis of women in the Senegalese academy highlighted many challenges, including family and social obligations and the lack of networks to connect for research and consultancies.

The intersection of the individual, institutional, and structural challenges led Mbow to conclude:

Senegalese female academics are truly behind the times. They have no women's journals or magazines, and certainly no seminars or updates on gender issues. It seems they do not clearly perceive the issues, which would explain why they dedicate very little time to feminist studies. Certain male researchers have managed to convince them that discussing women's issues is secondary and will only further marginalize them, trapping them in a “ghetto”. It is urgent that we change the social relationships in university institutes, research centres, research and publications as well as within civil society. (Mbow, 2000, p. 71).

In 1993, Amsatou Sow Sidibé made history as the first woman to receive the title of full professor of law. Women have equal opportunities in joining the academy. The academics interviewed for this report were unanimous. They have not noticed any barriers to entry, at least from the procedural requirements in the CAMES process. The written and oral tests are the same. No discrimination is noted in the texts governing recruitment. Nevertheless, intersectional obstacles explain the low presence of women. Table 5 shows the current gender demographics at the two largest public universities—UCAD in Dakar and the University of Gaston-Berger (UGB) in St. Louis.

**Table 5 | Current number of professors at the two largest public universities**

INSTITUTION	MEN	WOMEN
University Cheikh Anta Diop (UCAD)	108 (83.7%)	21 (16.3%)
University Gaston-Berger (UGB)	34 (94.5%)	2 (5.5%)

Source: UCAD and University of Gaston-Berger administrators

At the oldest university, UCAD, women make up only 16.3% of the faculty. While at UGB, the numbers are even lower, with women accounting for only 5.5% of the academic staff. The reasons for these differences are explored in this study. However, it will require further research to understand why the problem persists. The fewer women at Gaston Berger contradicts the findings from Ghana, where Dawuni (2021a) suggests that the newer (private) universities tend to create better opportunities for women to apply and join than the older, more established universities, which perpetuate gender hierarchies.

As explained in the section on female lawyers and judges, the low representation starts with societal perceptions of women and girls in the educational system.

According to Professor N:

**The social factor is a big part. Women's education is taken less seriously in the family in some communities. This makes access to universities materially impossible for women facing this problem. Another category of social constraint can also be targeted, such as marriage, which constitutes a real obstacle to the advancement of women and, by extension, their integration into certain sectors, such as the university.**

The academics interviewed were unanimous on the impact of the early attrition in the educational pipeline, with most women giving up their career plans in favor of marriage. That early attrition explains the low representation. Most young women drop out of law school to marry or, after marriage, cannot keep up with their studies, given their new family responsibilities.

Professor W notes with sadness:

**Two of my brilliant students who got married during their master's degree are giving up. This is why I make it my duty to draw their attention to their true value by talking to them, by encouraging them as much as possible on their capacity to lead brilliant careers. But I think they don't want to carry this fight. More and more, it is men who are in the lead, and women are disappearing from the front of the stage; it's a pity.**

Another factor that explains the low representation and the restricted pipeline is the required time. As more universities require a doctorate, fewer women can commit to that timeline. The sociocultural expectations placed on women to marry and start a family are a significant burden for those with professional ambitions to pursue higher education. Promotion is well-calibrated, organized, and based on clear rules. Promotions are managed independently by CAMES.

According to Professor W, one has to write a certain number of articles to reach a certain rank. “For example, to be a lecturer, you must defend your thesis, teach for two years, and write two articles. After that, the file is submitted to the [judgment] of our peers, members of CAMES.” The evaluation is anonymous, independent, and transparent and guarantees equal opportunities. Despite that transparency, once women reach the academy, the promotion process becomes challenging due to the convergence of factors (see the section on attrition).

### A. Women in leadership

Women continue to be underrepresented in leadership in all the universities and law faculties. The leadership glass ceiling was finally broken on July 27, 2022, with the appointment of Aminata Cissé Niang as the first female law dean of the UCAD Department of Legal and Political Sciences.<sup>19</sup> Before this historic appointment, only one woman—Madjiguene Diagne served as an interim assistant dean (1999-2001). All UGB deans have been male, except Mame Penda Ba, who served as an assistant dean (2017–2020).

**Table 6 | Past deans and heads of departments Université Cheikh Anta Diop (1957–2022)**

Deans	Year	Gender
Aminata Cissé Niang	2022–present	F
Alassane Kante	2019–2022	M
Mamadou Badji <sup>7</sup>	2013–2019	M
Ndiaw Diouf	2007–2013	M
Isaac Yankhoba Ndiaye	2001–2007	M
Abdel Kader Boye	1999–2001	M
Moustapha Sourang	1984–1999	M
Ibou Diaite	1981–1984	M
Ibrahima Fall	1975–1981	M
Alain Bockel	1972–1975	M
Abddoulaye Wade	1971–1972	M
Seydou Madani Sy	1968–1971	M
Roger Decottignies	1957–1968	M
<i>Madjiguene Diagne (Assistant Dean)</i>	1999–2001	F

Source: UCAD

<sup>19</sup> The Daily, August 1, 2022. Professor Aminata Cisse Niang appointed dean of law. <https://lequotidien.sn/ucad-fsjp-la-professeure-aminata-cisse-niang-un-decanat-qui-consacre-lexcellence-et-le-triomphe-du-leadership-universitaire-au-feminin/>.

**Table 7 | List of past deans at University Gaston-Berger (St. Louis) (1990–2022)**

Deans	Year	Gender
Pape Samba Ndiaye	2020–2023	M
Mbissane Ngom	2014–2020	M
Tidiane Ndiaye	2010–2013	M
Babali Sall	2007–2010	M
Abdallah Cissé	2003–2006	M
Samba Traore	2000–2003	M
Babacar Kante	1990–2000	M
**Mame Penda Ba (assistant dean)	2017–2020	F

Based on the data from the two universities, there is a positive correlation between the number of female faculty and the chances of a woman serving in a leadership position. Further studies may need to examine the factors that explain when a female dean will be appointed. The limited pool, persistent gender stereotypes of women's ability as leaders, and a limited number of female full professors may be some explanations for the absence of women in leadership.

## **7.2. Retention, points of attrition, and barriers to progress**

Women account for only 14% of academics at the two public universities with legal and political science departments. This paltry number reflects the low number of women in leadership. To date, only one woman has been appointed a dean, accounting for 5% of the total number of male deans, and only two women have served as assistant deans at the two public universities. The challenges women face in the legal academy are similar to those women face at the bar and on the bench. The following discussion engages with some of these intersectional challenges.

### **A. Demands of an early career sets the tone for progression**

The major challenge for female academics is organizing their time around the enormous teaching workload without sacrificing research, service, and career advancement. This observation is especially noted among new recruits who have difficulty defending their thesis to become an assistant professor. For Professor C, her slow career evolution can be explained by the constraints of the profession, which certainly has advantages (flexibility) but also the obstacle that what happens behind the scenes is much more demanding than what happens in a classroom.

According to Professor C, the beginnings are tough because:

When you start, you look for your marks; you reinforce your knowledge because you have gaps in certain fields. There is a lot of work to be done, especially when one has been recruited before the thesis. Preparing [for] the thesis is a lot of work. If you have to reconcile that with teaching, evaluation and marking tasks, it is hellish. That is why some teachers are late in defending their thesis. Things are indeed beginning to change gradually. Changes are coming, but not necessarily in terms of quality. We have five years to our theses; it is incredibly complicated for someone who has been recruited before the thesis, who has personal and professional commitments. It requires a lot of personal and individual discipline, commitment, and motivation. Men have an easier time because they are freer. They have more time; they have less extra-professional responsibility in the household so they can advance in their careers.

Professor D agrees and suggests that women should be supported:

The support is not necessarily done in a financial form but in another form, notably by reducing the workload (the marking load is time-consuming) to allow doctoral students who are well advanced in the writing of their thesis to prepare themselves well for their defense.

Professor B also points out the understaffing of women in the academic community, which she finds fundamentally masculine and often difficult for a woman to keep up. The stress is very significant for her, and she recommends supporting and mentoring newly recruited young colleagues in navigating the environment. After their thesis, young academics generally find themselves in classrooms with more than 250 students without any preparation. This experience can sometimes traumatize young research teachers, which affects their career development. For example, Professor B mentioned four female colleagues who were depressed and had to take a break to rest.

## **B. Work–life balance**

---

The study revealed that work–life balance is a major challenge. It is no secret that women who have achieved the highest levels of success in their profession have had to make sacrifices in their family and social life at some point. For example, Professor W was obliged to take a post in the interior of the country, far from home, with an infant in her arms.

She had to alternate between her professional and marital obligations, making short stays on both sides:

**For me, it didn't work out; I couldn't reconcile my work life with my married life. Leaving your home for two weeks or even three weeks in some cases is problematic, especially for a young couple, it does not work, and it did not work for me. ... Right now, as far as my daughter is concerned, that's my big handicap. As an academic, I must travel, and my schedule does not always fit hers. When I travel, I must leave her with someone. I have tried twice to bring her to live with me, but it did not work out. It is hard because she is so young and does not see her mother. It is also hard to go a month without seeing my daughter. All this makes me think about exploring other possibilities, like changing careers.**

The stresses women face with balancing their familial and caregiving roles and obligations have detrimental effects on their well-being and ability to be effective at both. For young female academics, the intersectional challenges of gender are heightened by the demands of motherhood, marital obligations, and academic rank. The will to succeed places unbearable pressure on most women, thus explaining the higher rates and chances of attrition they may face.

### **C. Female academics are faced with a difficult choice**

---

Some female academics have realized that they cannot win and prioritized their profession, but others are still trying to survive in an unfavorable societal environment, where marital obligations compete for priority with social obligations, not to mention maternity and childcare. These competing obligations certainly affect their career development.

For Professor D:

It is at [the entry level] that they must be supported. The problem is not specific to Senegal; in France, for example, during the last competitive exam for the “agrégation,” it was noted that women were very brilliant but had constraints to advance in the same way as men.

At some point in their careers, female academics are forced to prioritize their profession over their private life or vice versa.

The experience of Professor C confirms this observation:

It is a matter of choice between professional life or neglecting a home and children, or we do the opposite. And the problem for us as women is to be forced to make this choice. Men do not have to make this choice; they can have children and advance in their careers. For my part, I had my children very late after the diploma of "agrégation"; it was not voluntary, but fate decided it that way. So, when my children arrived, I said to myself that I had given a lot to the faculty, and now I restrict my professional activities, and I deploy myself on a personal and extra-professional level. So, when I was asked to take on certain responsibilities, I declined. At that time, I had made an obvious and lucid choice: after the diploma of "agrégation," I said to myself that I had to take care of my children's education. Success professionally is good, and to be beneficial to society is essential, but one is also helpful to society by educating one's children well.

Professor B has not been able to balance her professional, family, and social lives:

**I have had three unsuccessful experiences with relationships. I try my best to take care of my children, even though I am aware that this aspect of my life is often sacrificed. As for my social life, it is almost non-existent. However, I can say that I have managed to find a balance between teaching and research.**

These honest narratives highlight the absence of a shortcut to a balanced life regardless of career stage, marital status, or time spent in the academy. Professor C referred to being able to decline certain administrative obligations as a privilege that a junior or younger academic cannot claim. For Professor B, the choice was to give up on a social life so she could focus on her children and her career. These tough choices show the intersectional nature of each person's experiences regardless of the stage in her academic journey.

## D. Sexism, gender-based biases, and stereotypes

---

Female academics shared that relationships with their colleagues are quite good. However, they note certain stigmatization of women who are considered by their male counterparts as “apart,” and often, it is due to criteria that are not purely professional and instead based on the intersection of “social,” “cultural,” and/or “religious” norms. These gender-based expectations and the presumption of incompetence are confirmed in scholarship both within (Bruey, 2021; Mbow, 2000) and beyond the African continent (Schultz et al., 2021).

Professor P notes that academia can sometimes have a certain misogyny and sexism that is sometimes hidden, overt, or unconscious and that the marital situation of female teachers is often scrutinized and sometimes subject to unpleasant reflections. She reveals that universities are adding protocols to deal with harassment and gender-based violence, especially for young female students who may be defenseless against all-powerful professors who abuse their authority.

Professor P further attributes this attitude to:

The way in which the “male” elites have been socialized is the result of education, cultural and religious beliefs that are not always well interpreted and that make men believe, in this case, [that] male colleagues should not be left out, that they have a certain precedence over women.

She notes, however, the revolution is taking place among women who are increasingly becoming aware of their rights and asserting them. In an effort to adapt to a very masculine environment, some female academics have come, probably unconsciously, to accept stereotypes about how they dress and speak. Their colleagues often do not appreciate their independent tone and label them as “stubborn,” “daring,” or “obstinate.”

For Professor C:

We will hear everything, but we should not let ourselves be overpowered. When we express certain points of view, some of my men colleagues say, “*you women are so hard.*” Concerning this, it is up to each woman to realize that we should not act to please or displease. I think we just do what we have to do. Temperament is just a person's personality; it's natural in itself.... It is necessary to accept whatever space women occupy, that they have a place, a role, a word. It does not matter whether men accept it, but women must assume it. There is a cost to pay, but women must carry their identity altogether. Some people have a natural authority that their background will reinforce, while others tend to let themselves go. Not everyone is cut out to be a leader.... You have to live with that and not hide from it, be ashamed, or feel guilty, and not try to be someone else. An entity, whatever it is, needs rules. Changing mentalities starts at home, and it takes a lot of time. It will come because some men accept helping women with household tasks.



For Professor D, relations with male colleagues are based on mutual respect. However, men remember women's attachment to their family obligations and link this to the lack of time they often face in career advancement. She considers, however, that these are harmless remarks that are not meant to denigrate women. Women show them that these situations do not handicap them in any way, and men recognize it.

Professor D notes:

**They [male colleagues] positively appreciate efforts. The challenges we face are much more complex than theirs. They have a lot of respect for us women. Nevertheless, there is no lack of bad jokes. Sexism is decreasing because women are fighting to succeed, and we distinguish ourselves.**

These statements from interviewees show that women face sexism and gender-based biases and stereotypes from their male colleagues. What is remarkable about these reflections is that female academics appear to be fighting back and claiming their voice. As more women join the legal academy, the critical mass of women would facilitate institutional changes to make the environment more female-friendly.

## **E. Publications and research output**

---

One of the metrics for evaluations for promotion in the academy is research output. The departments have different research requirements, but CAMES must still conduct the assessment. Research requires time and focus, and the general teaching load in universities makes it nearly impossible to engage in active and productive research. For women, this challenge is compounded by other challenges—time management and balancing work and family obligations. Some respondents also highlighted the lack of professional development opportunities for newly hired academics to understand the academic publication landscape and indicated that men have the advantage of male networks where they share opportunities for research funding, conferences, and publication. Women, therefore, have to navigate these institutional barriers of lack of research funding and structural barriers of lack of networks and combine those with individual-level challenges of caregiving and domestic roles. The result is a prolonged rate at which women can publish and apply for promotion. The slow promotion rate also explains the smaller pool of women who are full or associate professors to serve in leadership.

## **F. Lack of mentoring and academic support**

---

Academic mentorship and career support are necessary for advancement. Mentors provide essential institutional knowledge, subject matter direction, and advice on navigating the intricacies of applying for promotion. Mentoring networks remain masculine spaces, mirroring the “old boy networks” that offer privileges and opportunities for those who can meet and socialize. Drawing on the example from Ghana, Dawuni (2021b) explains how academic networks are often built outside regular working hours, usually evenings or weekends, when women have to attend to their familial and caregiving duties. Respondents noted that for the few women who could serve as mentors, dealing with their personal intersectional challenges and demands from university committees and external service obligations left them with little time to mentor others.

## **7.3. Promoters and facilitators of progress**

---

Women's representation in the legal academy is the highest compared to the bar and the bench. However, they continue to face challenges. Since the academy is the gateway for all legal professionals, addressing its issues could have positive ripple effects for the other legal professions. Below are some recommendations to facilitate the process of increasing symbolic representation through advocacy for change at the institutional and structural levels.

### **A. University/law faculties**

---

- The university and law faculties should mainstream gender into the curriculum to allow for a critical understanding of how gender constructs are created by social, cultural, and religious beliefs and affect the position of women in society.
- Universities should provide adequate funding, with special interventions for women to take time off for research and scholarly engagement with colleagues within and outside Senegal to broaden their research networks.
- The law faculty should consider a fair and equitable distribution of teaching loads and service obligations to help lessen the double burden women face. These accommodations will help women to devote time to completing a thesis and producing publications to help them get promoted.
- This report has shown that the highest attrition happens at the university level, with some students dropping out due to financial issues or family pressure to marry. Most young women who earn a university degree are not interested in taking the exam to become lawyers, judges, or law professors. The government should adopt policies to support girls to stay in school, thrive, and continue their studies. Decentralize policies and projects to support young girls in disadvantaged areas to promote higher education since the profession requires at least a master's degree.

## **B. Socialization, harassment policies, and unconscious bias training**

---

- Women face gender biases and stereotypes that have mental health implications for their well-being. The universities and law faculties should adopt policies against institutional sexual harassment of female academics, staff, and students. The university and staff trade unions must be fully committed to fighting against institutional sexism and gender-based harassment.
- Some women also need targeted training to overcome unconscious negative perceptions about their capabilities. Adopting African feminist approaches and epistemologies of feminist empowerment will be one possible strategy.
- To challenge the notion that marriage is an essential accomplishment for women, it is crucial to engage in sensitization efforts to demystify this belief among families. Mentoring programs should be developed between female law students and academics to encourage them to stay and complete their education.

## **C. Professional development**

---

- Female academics should be provided with specialized professional training opportunities to help them understand the academic landscape, requirements for promotion, and effective strategies for successfully navigating the academy.
- Leadership training skills should be provided periodically to expose women to leadership and reinforce their equal right to leadership positions.

## **D. Mentoring and support networks**

---

- Institute a mentoring system to help young colleagues starting their teaching, often without any preparation and who may have had traumatic experiences that may affect their career development.
- Provide funding to support young female teacher-researchers and female doctoral students to stay in the system and continue their careers.
- Create institutionalized mentoring networks that attach junior female academics to senior academics to foster cross-gender and cross-generational mentoring.

## **E. Male allies**

---

- Institutions of higher education must cultivate male allies by promoting gender-conscious training and unconscious bias to support a gender-inclusive environment for women academics and female students.

# 8

## LEGAL EDUCATION AS A PIPELINE TO THE LEGAL PROFESSION



A major finding from this report is the impact the attrition in the educational pipeline has on women's pathways to the profession. In a report on law student experiences in Africa, IAWL (2020) found that out of 334 respondents, 76.9% indicated that they had no mentor. Their experiences mirror those of law students in Senegal. This section of the report presents a preliminary exploratory finding on the factors that affect women in legal education in Senegal. More research is needed to trace these and provide tailored interventions to address the pipeline leakage.

### 8.1. Law school students

---

Sixteen law students from the two main universities—UCAD and UGB—were surveyed. A questionnaire was developed and deployed through law student networks, targeting only female students. All responses were anonymous. The results are presented below.

### 8.2. Decision to study law

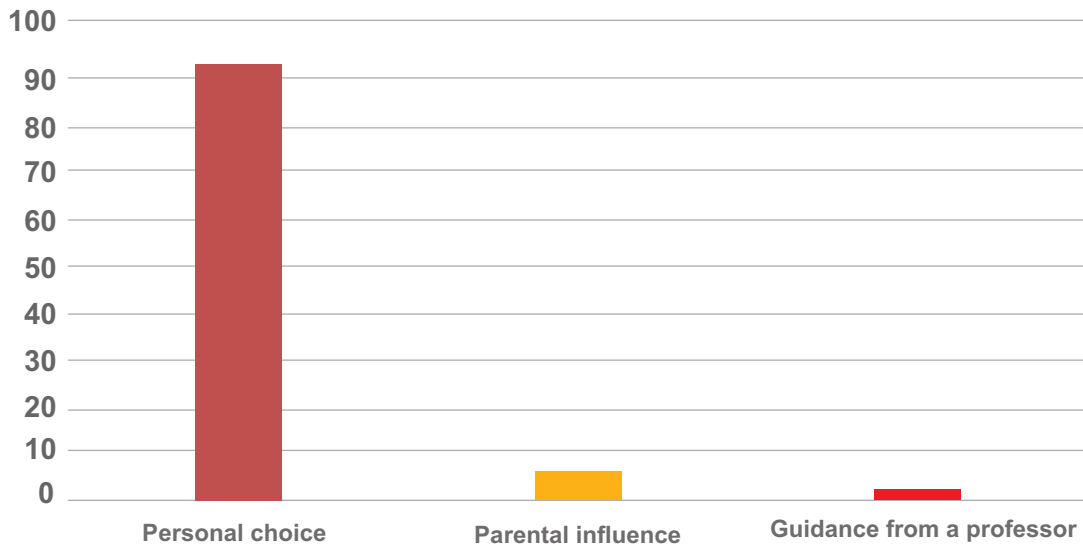
---

It appears that the choice to study law is primarily personal. When asked *what prompted you to study law?*, 92% of the students said it was a choice they made on their own. The other 6% were influenced by a parent or relative. Only 2% followed the advice of a professor.



---

**Figure 6: Figure 6: Decision to study law**



Source: IAWL survey, 2022

---

The results show that women are exercising their agency. Further studies can expand on these variables through more survey questions, interviews, and focus groups to see what other factors explain women's pathways to legal education.

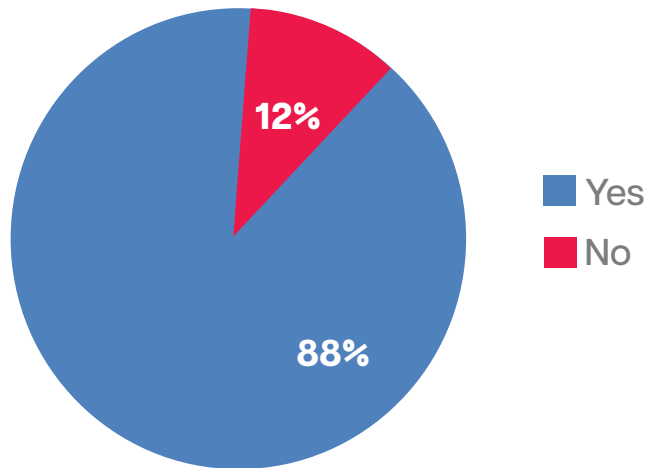
### **8.3. Challenges as a law student**

---

Given the previous discussion on Senegal's sociocultural and religious context, female students might be expected to have more difficulty because of their gender and the intersection of cultural and societal perceptions and expectations. However, 88% of women indicated they had no difficulty attending law school. Of the 12% who did, the challenges they faced included gender biases and sexism, sexual harassment, economic challenges, and sociocultural and family expectations to marry.

**Figure 7: Difficulty pursuing education**

**Challenges attending law school**



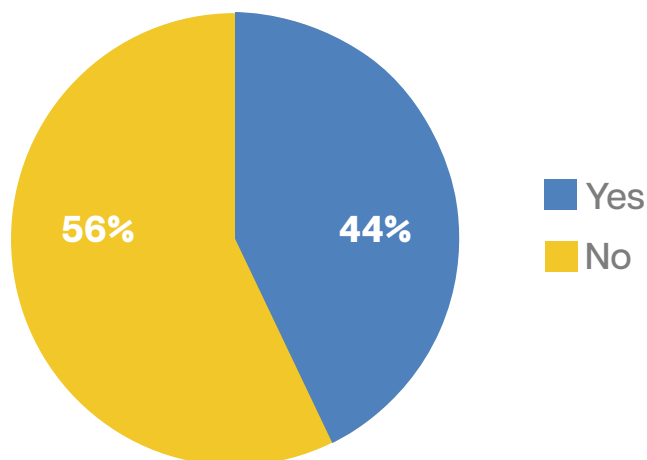
Source: IAWL survey, 2022

**8.4. Gender bias and sexism**

To explore the previous question, we wanted to understand whether female law students are subject to prejudice or jokes in their educational environment because of their gender; 56% disagreed, and 44% agreed. These biases include the negative perception that women cannot achieve academic excellence and cannot matriculate to the next stage. Some respondents also mentioned sexist comments by their male peers and some professors on the perceived incompatibility of their roles as women and law students.

**Figure 8: Sexist remarks and prejudice**

**Do female law students experience the prejudice or jokes in their educational environment because of their gender?**



Source: IAWL survey, 2022

## 8.5. Social norms and expectations

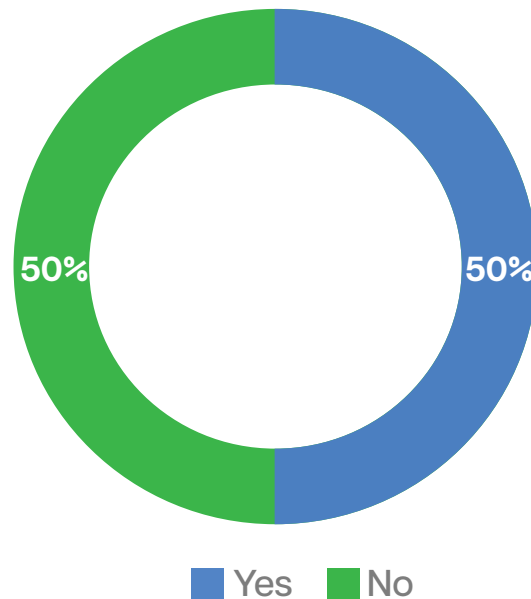
---

The most polarizing question was about societal or cultural norms that hinder women in their studies. The opinions are divided evenly. These expectations include an emphasis on early marriage and starting a family. Empirical research using in-depth interviews and focus groups will be helpful in unpacking the specific norms and expectations imposed on different students.

---

**Figure 9: Impact of socio-cultural norms**

**Do you think there are any societal or cultural norms that would be a hindrance to women in their law studies?**



Source: IAWL survey, 2022

---

The 50/50 split in the students' responses is enlightening. While most respondents (older women) indicated that cultural norms hinder women from advancing in their careers, the younger generation (university students) did not place a heavy premium on culture. This response either shows that the younger generation will not allow cultural expectations to affect them, or it could also mean they need to be fully aware of how cultural expectations affect their professional trajectories. This finding is an important one to be addressed in future mentoring programs.

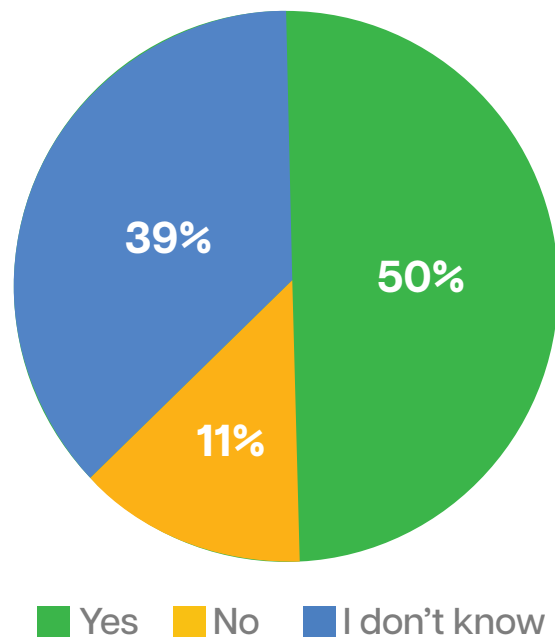
## 8.6. Sexual harassment

---

For sexual harassment in their environment, 50% of students reported that it is a known practice, 11% thought these practices did not exist, and 39% were unaware of sexual harassment. The latter is alarming. This finding may indicate the absence of a feminist consciousness of what constitutes women's rights or the convergence of socialization practices that do not allow women to exercise their right to bodily integrity. As with the earlier variable, due to the restrictive nature of survey questionnaires, empirical research using in-depth interviews and focus groups will help unearth what sexual harassment means and how law students may be experiencing it, with or without a feminist consciousness.

---

**Figure 10: Does sexual harassment occur in your environment?**



Source: IAWL survey, 2022

---

## 8.7. Career choices

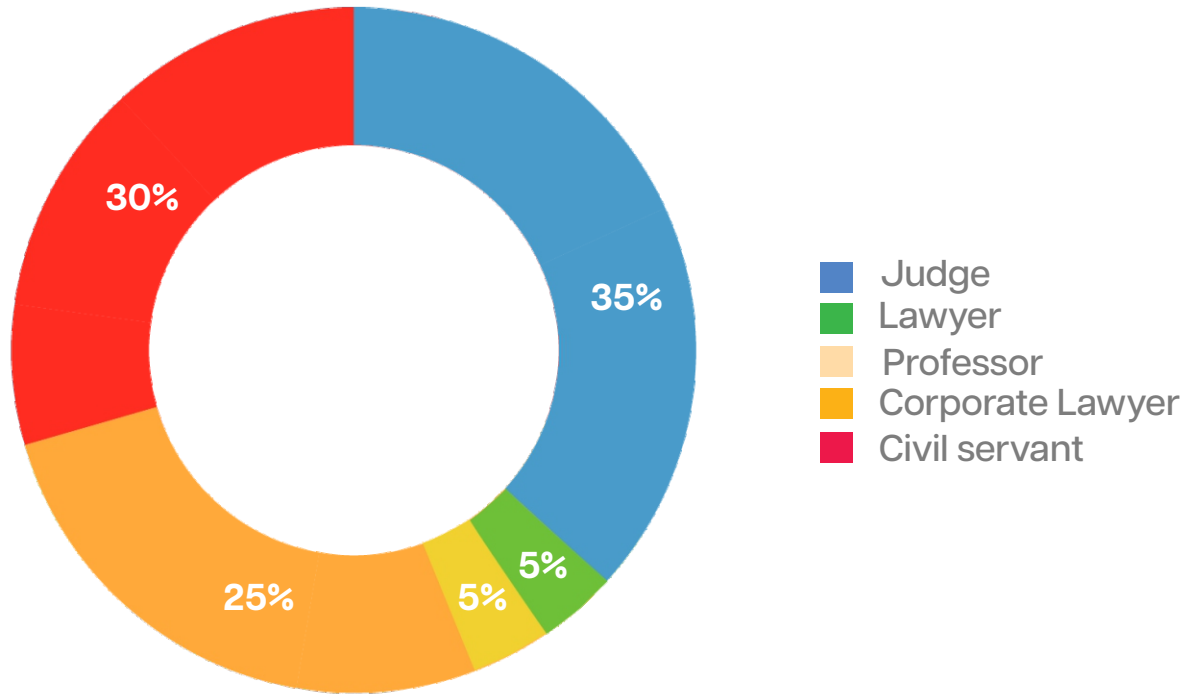
---

Magistrate seems to be the most attractive career option, with 35% of respondents wanting to join the judiciary. Civil servant and corporate lawyer come next, with 30% and 25%, respectively. Only 5% wanted to become a lawyer or professor, respectively. The judiciary is most appealing because it provides some of the best employee benefits, set working times, and state-sponsored maternity and health benefits. These provide flexibility and certainty, allowing women to plan how to manage their personal and professional obligations efficiently.



**Figure 11: Law student career pathways and choices**

**What career do you plan to pursue after law studies?**



Source: IAWL survey, 2022

# 9 | GENERAL TRENDS AND PATTERNS

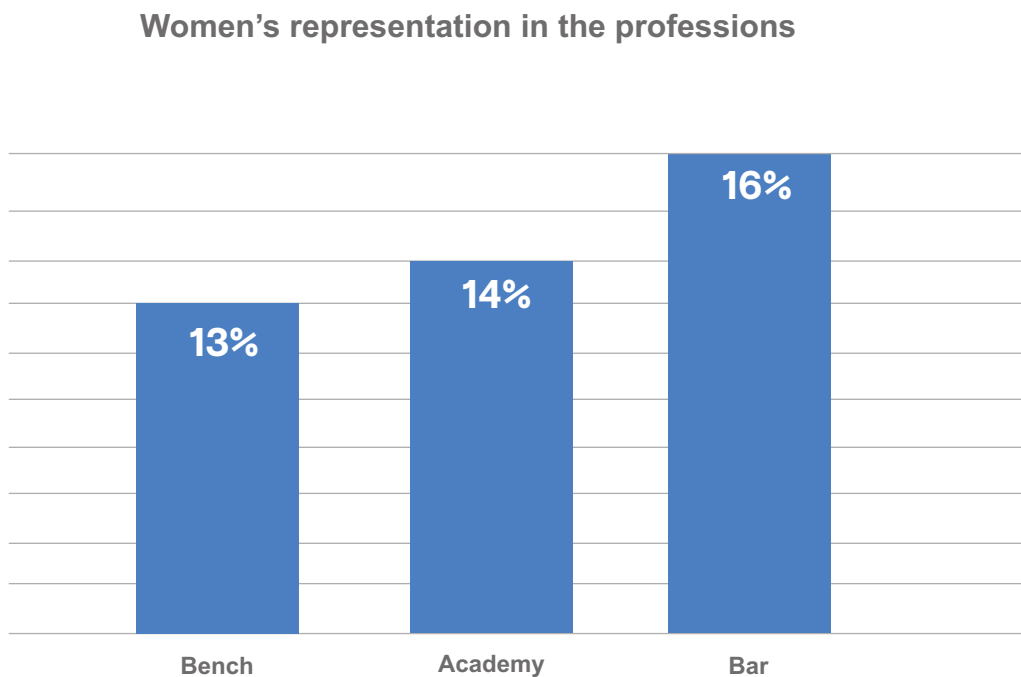


This report has shown that women are seriously underrepresented in the legal professions at the bar, bench, and academy. Persistent intersectional challenges have converged to create a small pool of women in law and even fewer in leadership. This exploratory report is the first to engage with this topic in Senegal and has barely scratched the surface. More research is needed to understand the nuances and intricacies within each profession. A longitudinal study will be necessary to understand and evaluate the professional trajectory of women in law. The summary presents comparative analyses of the trends and patterns within the legal professions.

## 9.1. Numbers

Overall, the number of women in the three professions remains low.

**Figure 12: Women in the legal professions**



Source: Multiple data sources collected directly from the institutions

## 9.2. Women in leadership

---

- 1 Despite the few women in the judiciary, it has done better in terms of leadership, with women having been president of Cour de cassation and the Constitutional council.
- 2 In the legal academy, the glass ceiling was finally broken by the first female dean of law at UCAD in July 2022.
- 3 The bar remains the least representative, with no woman ever elected as president of the bar association and very few serving on the eighteen-member council of the bar.

Table 8 summarizes where and when women rose to leadership positions within the main legal and judicial institutions.

**Table 8 | Women's leadership within the legal sectors**

---

Position	Status
Head of the bar association	No woman as of January 2023.
Dean of law faculty	Aminata Cissé Niang: First female dean appointed at UCAD in 2022.
President of the Constitutional Council	Mireille Ndiaye First female president of the constitutional council in 2002.
Attorney General/Minister of Justice	Mame Madior Boye in 2000. Aminata Touré in 2012.
Prosecutor	Dior Fall Sow: First female prosecutor in Senegal in 1976.

### 9.3. Pathways

---

- 1 All interviewees agreed that women have equal access to pursue a legal education and join the profession of their choice. However, persistent sociocultural and religion-informed gender norms, expectations, and biases that intersect to prevent girls from progressing beyond secondary school may restrict such access. These biases follow young women throughout their lives, as those who make it to the university face many challenges that lead to their early attrition in the legal pipeline.
- 2 Respondents identified the early attrition from university as a challenge that accounts for the small pool of women in the legal profession.
- 3 Women's pathways to leadership in law remain restricted, resulting from a combination of institutional, structural, and individual factors that converge to create narrow pathways.

### 9.4. Barriers and challenges

---

- 1 The significant challenges and barriers identified in this report are common across all three sectors and located at multiple levels—institutional (such as policies), structural (such as sociocultural expectations), and individual (such as the challenges of managing professional and personal demands) factors.
- 2 The current low numbers of women are the effects of the historical and sociocultural factors that prevented women from pursuing higher education.
- 3 Lingering sociocultural and religious practices and beliefs, such as early marriage, religious beliefs that women cannot judge men, and the difficulty of balancing professional and personal expectations, converge to create multiple axes of challenges.
- 4 The educational pipeline still has a high level of attrition. More research is needed to engage in a historical and longitudinal analysis of the number of female versus male law students over the years to assess the rates and patterns of attrition.
- 5 Perceptions of sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination are mixed. The gendered socialization of women and cultural context could explain why some respondents are not conscious of discrimination.
- 6 Working arrangements, policies, and conditions do not accommodate intersectional challenges.
- 7 Opaque promotion policies and slow promotion rates affect upward mobility.

- 8 Balancing professional and personal obligations is a common challenge all women in the three sectors face.
- 9 Gender-based stereotypes, such as the presumption of incompetence based on gender and false perceptions of women's ability to be leaders, are also common in all three sectors.

# 10 | CONCLUSION



This report presented a sectoral analysis of women in three critical areas of the Senegalese legal profession—the bar, bench, and academy. The findings show that women are still woefully underrepresented. The biggest challenge lies in the pipeline. The challenges of keeping women in school and pursuing further studies are linked to the convergence of historical, cultural, social, religious, and structural factors that intersect with gender to produce multiple challenges.

Overall, all interviewees agree that their professions' exams and recruitment procedures are organized transparently and provide equal opportunities. The legal framework surrounding all targeted professions is deemed transparent and free of discrimination, which is easily noted during the recruitment process by these professionals. The respondents all confirm that they have not noticed any discrimination in the selection process for each target group. Therefore, they attribute the low presence of women to social, cultural, and family constraints.

Undeniably, women are as competent as men but still underrepresented in the profession and severely underrepresented in leadership. Thus, targeted interventions must encourage and support more young women to pursue diplomas that open access to the bar, bench, academy, and higher civil service. It will be necessary to engage in gender sensitization, raise African feminist consciousness, and provide targeted interventions and support that focus on the specific needs of women who have difficulty balancing their professional and personal obligations. Those who stand out from the crowd are often obliged to sacrifice their family life and/or personal obligations. Women must also dare to express their ideas and needs and defend their rights in solidarity. The facilitators discussed in this report are a starting point for more research and investment to achieve gender equality and SDG 5 in the Senegalese legal profession.

# REFERENCES

---

- Addadzi-Koom, M. E., & Nkansah, L. A. (2021). Women at the bench: Does it make a difference? Assessing the impact of female judges in addressing gender-based issues in Ghana. In *Oñati Socio-Legal Series: Gender and Judging in the Middle East and Africa*.  
<https://doi.org/10.35295/OSLS.IISL/0000-0000-0000-1175>
- AHJUCAF. (n.d.). Sénégal Cour supreme. <https://cutt.ly/sVWoWFs>
- Albertyn, C., & Bonthuys, E. (2016). South Africa: A transformative constitution and a representative judiciary. In G. Bauer & J. Dawuni (Eds.), *Gender and the judiciary in Africa: From obscurity to parity?* (pp. 49–66). Routledge.
- Andrews, P. (2021). Pursuing gender equality through the courts: The role of South Africa's female judges. In Dawuni, J. (Ed.), *Gender, Judging, and the Courts in Africa: Selected Studies* (pp. 189–208). Routledge.
- Atewologun, D. (2018). Intersectionality theory and practice. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Business and Management*. <https://bit.ly/3KxYgbB>
- Awa Magazine. 1964. Suzanne Diop: Première Sénégalaise dans la magistrature. No. 4.  
[https://www.awamagazine.org/acr\\_posts/april-1964-page-16/](https://www.awamagazine.org/acr_posts/april-1964-page-16/)
- Barry, B., (1985). *Le royaume du Waalo. Le Sénégal avant la conquête*. Karthala.
- Bauer, G., & Dawuni, J. (2016). *Gender and the judiciary in Africa: From obscurity to parity?* Routledge.
- Bauer, G., & Ellett, R. (2016). Botswana: Delayed indigenization and feminization of the judiciary. In *Gender and the judiciary in Africa: From obscurity to parity?* (pp. 33–48). Routledge.
- Boigeol, A. (1996). Les femmes et les cours. La difficile mise en œuvre de l'égalité des sexes dans l'accès à la magistrature. In *Genèses*, 22. La ville: postures, regards, savoirs (pp. 107–129).  
<https://cutt.ly/xO5Hbr6>
- Bouruoba, S. (2022). Status of female judges in Algeria: Achievements and pathways for the future. In J. Dawuni. (Ed.), *Intersectionality and Women's Access to Justice in Africa*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Bruey, V. (2021). Misogyny, xenophobia, and masculinity in the academy: An epicenter of violence, abuse of power and humiliation. In V. Bruey (Ed.), *Patriarchy and Gender in Africa* (pp. 195–226). Rowman and Littlefield.

- Camara, F. K. & Kanji, S. S. M., (2000). *L'union matrimoniale dans la tradition des peuples noirs*. L'Harmattan.
- Camara, Fatou K. (2006). Le Code de la Famille du Sénégal ou de l'utilisation de la religion comme alibi à la légalisation de l'inégalité de genre. Conference paper, Premier Colloque inter-réseaux du Programme thématique Aspects de l'État de Droit de l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) *Genre, inégalités et religion*, Université Cheikh Anta Diop/Institut des Droits de l'Homme et de la Paix, Dakar, 25–27.
- Camara, Fatou K. (2007). Women and the law: A critique of Senegalese family law. *Social Identities*, 13, 787–800. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630701696542>
- Cissé, K., (2004). La revendication politique et citoyenne comme réponse à la Marginalisation des Femmes dans le Développement : le cas du Sénégal, CODESRIA, *Assemblée générale*. <https://urlz.fr/jFmT>.
- Chongwang, J. (2015). La place de la femme dans l'enseignement supérieur au Sénégal. *SciDev*. <https://urlz.fr/h8vN>
- Cohen, M. (2018). Judicial diversity in France: The unspoken and the unspeakable. *Law and Social Inquiry*, 43(4), 1542–1573.
- Cooper, B. (2016). Intersectionality. In L. Disch & M. Hawkesworth (Eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (pp. 385–406). Oxford University Press.
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Dawuni, J. (2016). To “mother” or not to “mother”: The representative roles of female judges in Ghana. *Journal of African Law*, 60(3), 419–440. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021855316000115>
- Dawuni, J. (2019). Matri-legal feminism: An African feminist response to international law. In S. Sterett & L. Walker (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Law and Courts*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Dawuni, J. (2020). Women in judiciaries across Africa. In O. Yacob-Haliso & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies*. Palgrave Macmillan. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7\\_75-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_75-1)
- Dawuni, J. (2021a). Introduction: Gender and judging across Africa: A case of old wine in new skins or new wine in old skins? In J. Dawuni (Ed.), *Gender, Judging, and the Courts in Africa: Selected Studies*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429327865>
- Dawuni, J. (2021b). Breaking the veil of masculinity? Women in the legal academy in Ghana. In U. Schultz et al. (Eds.), *Gender and Careers in the Legal Academy*. Hart Publishers.
- Dawuni, J. (2022). Layered intersectionality and framing feminist legal discourse on access to justice for women. In J. Dawuni (Ed.), *Intersectionality and Women's Access to Justice in Africa*. Rowman and Littlefield.



- Dawuni, J., & Kang, A. (2015). Her ladyship chief justice: The rise of female leaders in the judiciary in Africa. *Faculty Publications: Political Science*, 70. <https://cutt.ly/4O5HSBf>
- Dawuni, J., & Kuenyehia, A. (2018). *International courts and the African woman judge. Unveiled narratives*. Routledge.
- Dawuni, J., & Masengu, T. (2019). Judicial service commissions and the appointment of women to high courts in Nigeria and Zambia. In S. M. Sterett & L. D. Walker (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Law and Courts*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Diop, Cheikh A. (1960). L'Afrique noire précoloniale. *Présence Africaine*.
- Diouf, M., (1990). *Le Kajoor au XIXe siècle. Pouvoir ceddo et conquête coloniale*. Karthala.
- Diouf, S., (n/d). Maimouna Kane Toure: Justice of the Supreme Court. *Institute for African Women in Law*. <https://urlz.fr/jFeH>.
- Escobar-Lemmon, M., Hoekstra, V., Kang, A., & Kittilson, M. (2019). Appointing women to high courts. In S. Sterett & L. Walker (Eds.), *Research Handbook on Law and Court* (pp. 200–212). Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Ellett, R. (2022). “Your whole life is an interview to get to the bench”: Gender and judicial appointments in Malawi. In J. Dawuni (Ed.), *Intersectionality and Women's Access to Justice in Africa*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Fall, A. (2018). President Leopold Sedar Senghor, An exceptional statesman and leader. In J. Gordon & S. Acheampong (Eds.), *African Presidential Leaders: Selected Case Studies* (pp. 142–177).
- Faye, F. (2021). État de droit et émancipation de la femme au Sénégal: Lorsque l'engagement des femmes prend de l'avance sur la justice. *Les Possibles*, 28. <https://cutt.ly/jO5HXht>
- Gayoye, M. (2021). Why female judges really matter: The impact of female judges on property law outcomes in Kenya. *Social & Legal Studies*, 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09646639211007905>
- Gueye, Ndeye S. (2013). *Mouvements sociaux des femmes au Sénégal*. UNESCO, Codesria, ONU-Femmes. <https://cutt.ly/SO5HMTI>
- Gueye, S. (2021, January 4). *Mame Bousso Fall Diaw, Marie-José Crespin, Mireille Ndiaye: L'histoire de Sages au féminin*. Le Soleil. <http://urlr.me/Rpnrnc>
- IAWL (Institute for African Women in Law). (2020). Unveiling subalternity: Women and the legal professions in Africa. [https://www.africanwomeninlaw.com/\\_files/ugd/dc397a\\_f4ad148771d44bea826991d7c95e87c4.pdf](https://www.africanwomeninlaw.com/_files/ugd/dc397a_f4ad148771d44bea826991d7c95e87c4.pdf)

- Ibrahim, J. (2016). Nigeria: Women judges enhancing the judiciary. In G. Bauer & J. Dawuni (Eds.), *Gender and the Judiciary in Africa: From Obscurity to Parity?* (pp. 67–79). Routledge.
- International Commission of Jurist (ICJ). (2014). *Women and the judiciary: Geneva forum series no. 1*. <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Universal-Women-and-Judiciary-Gva-For-1-Publications-Conference-Report-2014-ENG.pdf>
- IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union). (2022). *Women in parliament in 2022. The year in review*. <https://cutt.ly/FO5KQRH>
- Kamatali, J. (2016). Rwanda: Balancing gender quotas and an independent judiciary. In G. Bauer & J. Dawuni (Eds.), *Gender and the Judiciary in Africa: From Obscurity to Parity?* (pp. 137–153). Routledge.
- Kamau, W. (2013). Women judges and magistrates in Kenya: Challenges, opportunities, and contributions. In U. Schultz & G. Shaw (Eds.), *Gender and Judging* (pp. 167–232). Hart Publishing.
- Kang, A. (2016). Benin: Women judges promoting women's rights. In G. Bauer & J. Dawuni (Eds.), *Gender and the Judiciary in Africa: From Obscurity to Parity?* (pp. 108–119). Routledge.
- Lam, C. T. (2018). *La modernisation de la Justice au Sénégal: Vers la recherche de la performance*. Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté. <https://cutt.ly/pVnyoAw>
- Mann, S. A., & Huffman, D. J. (2005). The decentering of second wave feminism and the rise of the third wave. *Science & Society*, 69(1), 56–91. <https://bit.ly/373OmRe>
- Masengu, T. (2016). It's a man's world: Barriers to gender transformation in the South African judiciary. Perspectives from women advocates and attorneys. *International Journal of the Legal Profession*, 23, 305–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09695958.2016.1179639>
- Masengu, T. (2021). One sauce for the goose, another for the gander: Zambian female judges and perceptions of illegitimacy. In J. Dawuni (Ed.), *Gender, Judging, and the Courts in Africa: Selected Studies* (pp. 209–230). Routledge.
- Mbow, P. (2000). Academic freedom and the gender issue: A report from Senegal. In Sall, Ebrima (Ed.), *Women in Academia: Gender and Academic Freedom in Africa* (pp. 64–78). Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.
- Mekki, M. (2011). *La féminisation des métiers de la justice*. *Legal Studies* 39, Economica.
- Michelson, E. (2013). Women in the legal profession, 1970–2010: a study of the global supply of lawyers. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 20(2), pp. 1101.

- Minister of Justice. (n.d.). *Lettre de politique sectorielle de développement du ministère de la justice 2018–2022*. République du Sénégal. <https://cutt.ly/AVndkGz>
- Murungi, A., & Meroka-Mutua, A. (2022). Making gains for women's rights: Using gender quotas to achieve gender equality in the composition of the supreme court of Kenya. In J. Dawuni (Ed.), *Intersectionality and Women's Access to Justice in Africa*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- National Strategy for Equity and Gender Equality (SNEEG). Available at <https://www.empowerwomen.org/en/community/stories/2015/2/senegal-national-strategy-for-women-s-empowerment>
- N'Diaye, M. (2017). Au croisement des inégalités de genre et de classe: Les défis de la justice familiale au Sénégal. *Droit et société*, 95, 57–70. <https://doi.org/10.3917/drs.095.0057>
- Nandrin, J. (2016). L'accès des femmes aux professions juridiques. In *Hommes et normes: Enjeux et débats du métier d'un historien*. Presses de l'Université Saint-Louis. <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pusl.2897>
- Ndiaye, Isaac I. (2014). Le Conseil constitutionnel sénégalais. *Les Nouveaux Cahiers du Conseil constitutionnel*, 45, 77–103. <https://doi.org/10.3917/nccc1.045.0077>
- Niang, A. & Ba, A., (1998/9). Le mouvement associatif féminin : une société civile en acte. *Revue Sénégalaise de Sociologie*, 2/3, 295-317. <https://urlz.fr/jFmL>.
- Niang, A., (2000). Les associations en milieu urbain dakarais : classification et capacités développantes. *Africa Development*, Vol. XXV, 1-2. <https://urlz.fr/jFmQ>.
- OECD. (2017). Les femmes dans l'appareil judiciaire. In *Government at a Glance 2017*, Éditions OECD. [https://doi.org/10.1787/gov\\_glance-2017-29-fr](https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-29-fr)
- Pender, K. (2019). *Us Too? Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession*. International Bar Association. <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=Regulatory-Responses-to-Bullying-and-Sexual-Harassment>
- Randolph, S. (2017, November 3). What is gender blindness and why is it a problem for women? *Medium*. <https://cutt.ly/005Ygwx>
- Scales-Trent, J. (2010). Female lawyers, women's rights in Senegal: The association of Senegalese female lawyers. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 32(115). <https://cutt.ly/o05JuB5>
- Schultz, U. & Shaw, G. (eds). (2003). *Women in the world's legal professions*. Hart Publishers. Schultz, U, Shaw, G, Thornton, M & Auchmuty, R (eds.) (2021). *Gender and Careers in the Legal Academy*. Hart Publishing.
- Solé, L. (2019, June 5). Dior Fall Sow et les droits des femmes: Un combat acharné. *Le Petit Journal*. <https://cutt.ly/KO5JoBx>

- Tørraasen, M. (2017). Gender parity in Senegal—A continuing struggle. *CMI Insight* 2: 1–8.
- Thiam, A. F., & Seck, N. F. (2015). *Maimouna Kane Touré: Voici la première femme ministre sous Senghor*. Senxibar. <https://urlz.fr/h8u7>
- Thompson, B. (2002). Multiracial feminism: Recasting the chronology of second wave feminism. *Feminist Studies*, 28(2), 337–360. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3178747>
- UN Women. (n.d.). Senegal. [https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/senegal\\_africa~:text=Senegal's%202001%20constitution%20guarantees%20equality,against%20women%20\(in%202000\)](https://africa.unwomen.org/en/where-we-are/west-and-central-africa/senegal_africa~:text=Senegal's%202001%20constitution%20guarantees%20equality,against%20women%20(in%202000))
- Uzebu–Imarhiagbe, E. (2020). Women in the Nigerian judiciary: Considerable headway or organised progress? *International Journal of the Legal Professions*, 27(2), 175–188.
- World Bank. (2022). Women in business and the law: Executive summary. [https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36945/WBL2022%20Executive%20Summary\\_EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/36945/WBL2022%20Executive%20Summary_EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)
- World Economic Forum. (2022). Global gender gap index rankings. <https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2022/in-full/1-5-performance-by-region>

Visit our website at:  
[www.africanwomeninlaw.com](http://www.africanwomeninlaw.com)

Email us at:  
[info@africanwomeninlaw.com](mailto:info@africanwomeninlaw.com)

Follow us on:  
Facebook | Institute for African Women in Law  
LinkedIn | IAWL – Institute for African Women in Law  
Instagram | @AfricanWomenInLaw  
Twitter | @AfricaWomenLaw

Copyright © 2023  
Institute for African Women in Law  
All Rights Reserved.



**Women in Law & Leadership**  
Senegalese Bar, Bench and Academy