

Gender equality is increasingly considered as a key policy priority in the LAC region. As a result, many governments have put forward initiatives aimed at achieving gender equality in their workforce. Achieving gender equality in the public sector is not only an issue of fairness but a means of maximising the use of talent and ensuring that policies reflect the different perspectives existing in the society. In addition, striving for a numerical balance between men and women in the various occupations and by job levels, including managerial positions is also very important. A concrete example of a mechanism that could be used to improve gender balance within the public sector is gender diversity targets.

According to the latest available data, representing 2014, men and women in the LAC region are almost equally represented in public sector employment reaching 49.7% and 50.3% respectively. This is in stark contrast to OECD countries, where women represent on average 59.0% of employment in the public sector. However, there is significant variation on the representation of women in the public sector across LAC countries, ranging from 59.2% in Brazil to 43.8% in El Salvador. Specifically, 6 out of 12 LAC countries analysed below have a higher share of women working in the public sector. Between 2009 and 2014, on average, there has been a general increase (2.1 p.p.) in the level of representation of women in public sector employment. Conversely, in Ecuador and El Salvador, the level decreased by 2.1 p.p. and 0.5 p.p. respectively.

Historically, the public sector has attracted women due to the stability of working conditions, the existence of family-friendly policies and the peculiarity of professions such as teachers and nurses where women are over-represented and the public sector tends to be the main provider. When compared to the overall economy, public sector employment displays a different pattern. Even though in numerical terms women are properly represented in the public sector, true gender parity would require guaranteeing that women have access to high-level positions and that there is equal compensation between men and women. In 2014, in LAC countries, men represented 59.4% of total employment, outnumbering women who accounted for 40.6%. Furthermore, between 2004 and 2014 the increase of women employed in total employment (1.0 p.p.) has been slower than their increase over the same period in public sector employment (2.1 p.p.) Barbados is the only LAC country where women represent more than 50% of total employment. On the other end, the Dominican Republic is the country with the highest under-representation of women, with only 36.3% of them in total employment.

Methodology and definitions

Data were extracted from the International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT Database. Public sector employment covers all employment of the general government sector as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA) plus employment of public corporations. The general government comprises all levels of government (central, state, local and social security funds) and includes core ministries, agencies, departments and non-profit institutions that are controlled by public authorities. Public corporations are legal units producing goods or services for the market and that are controlled and/or owned by government units. Public corporations also include quasi corporations. Data represent the total number of persons employed directly by those institutions, without regard for the particular type of employment contract. Total employment comprises all persons of working age who, during a specified brief period such as one week or one day, were in the following categories: paid employment or self-employment. For purposes of international comparability, the working-age population is commonly defined as persons aged 15 years and older, although this might vary in some countries. A gender diversity target is a numerical objective established by the government to promote gender balance and diversity in the workplace.

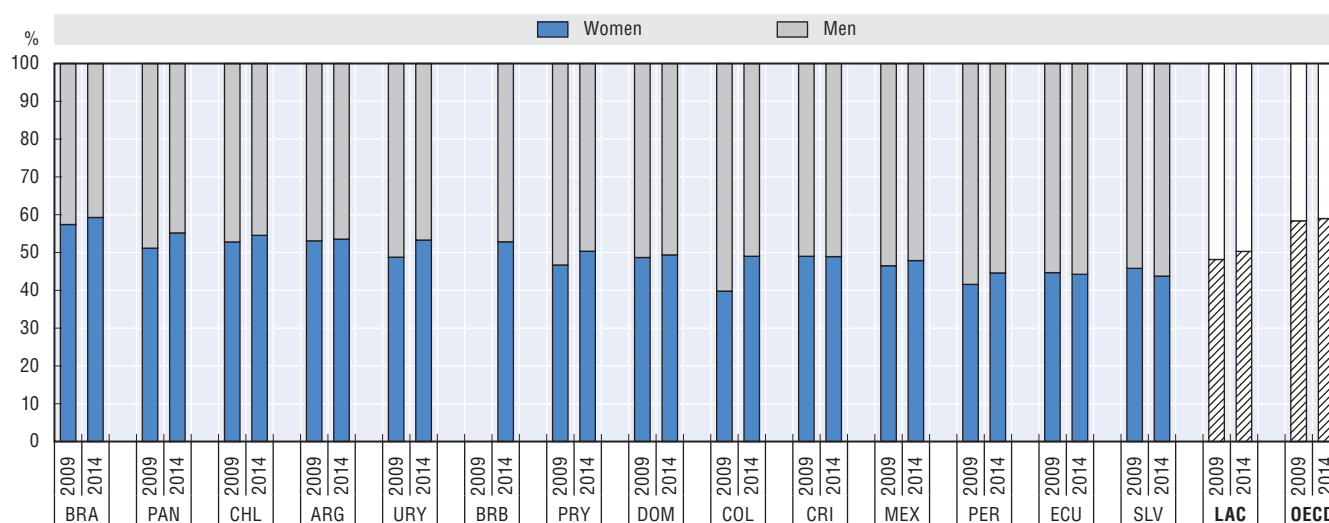
Further reading

OECD (2014), *Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: Fostering Diversity for Inclusive Growth*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264210745-en>.

Figure notes

3.3 and 3.4: Data for Argentina are for 2010 rather than 2009. Data for Brazil are for 2011 rather than 2009. Data for Costa Rica are for 2010 and 2013, rather than 2009 and 2014. Data for Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru are for 2013 rather than 2014. Data for Barbados are not included in the LAC average. Data for Argentina refer to urban areas only. OECD average: data for Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Turkey and the United States are not available. Data for Australia, Denmark, Finland, Korea, Latvia and Portugal are also not included in the average due to missing time-series.

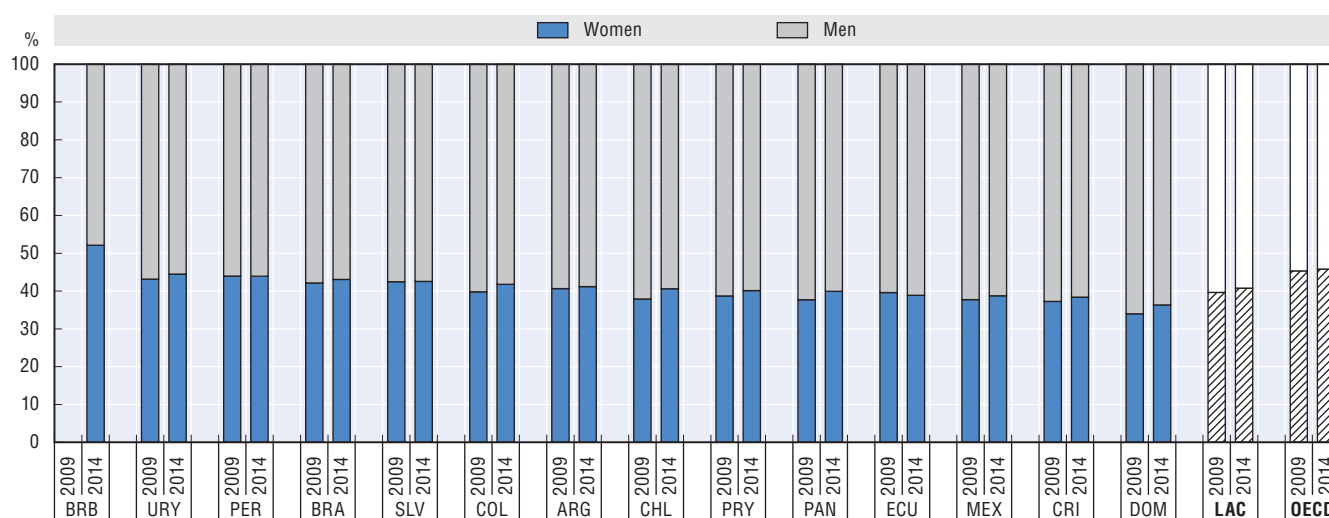
3.3. Share of public sector employment filled by women and men, 2009 and 2014



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT Database 2015.

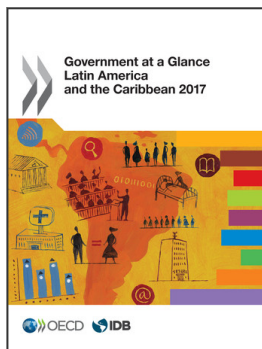
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933431127>

3.4. Share of employed women and men in total employment, 2009 and 2014



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT Database 2015.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933431139>



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