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## Elitism in the legal world: A comparison between the U.K. and U.S.A

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**Elitism in the legal world: A comparison between the U.K.  
and U.S.A**

*By: Michael Johnson Jr*

## **Abstract**

In this paper I will be discussing the various ways that the United Kingdom has played an integral part in creating the way the world looks at and practices common law, while also addressing the systemic racism and elitism entrenched in the U.K. legal system. I will also be comparing the U.K. to the United States as American law was built on the influence of British law and share deep similarities to how minorities are treated due to constant and ongoing systemic disadvantages and legal elitism. I will be discussing how the U.K. and U.S. are trying to address the various ways both countries are working to bridge the diversity gap within each respective legal systems, and to do this I will be heavily reliant on peer-reviewed sources and articles to relay my point; which is that it is quite clear that the U.K. and U.S. have built their legal systems on oppressive and separatist ideals and as times changed, they are being forced to address the lack of diversity and equality within the profession.

## ***Methodology***

For this research paper, I plan on utilizing a multitude of peer-reviewed sources, and few personal accounts from current solicitors in the UK legal system to answer my question of how legal elitism has been prevalent in the past and currently, throughout its inception in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Though used very little, using first-hand accounts from current actors of the UK legal system and what they have endured is important as it allows for me and readers to understand what legal elitism is like in its current manifestations in the UK. Relying on peer-reviewed sources and scholarly articles, along with my own deep knowledge, allows me to draw a connection on legal elitism from the United States perspective, drawing intellectual comparisons between the two ally nations.

## ***Ethical Considerations***

I want to take note that I acknowledge there could be themes of potential biases that may be displayed in my own voice, as I am affected by the topic for which I am writing about giving that I happen to be one of the minority groups plagued by legal elitism. It should also be acknowledged that the topic I had chosen is not meant to anger those within or related to the legal field, but in full transparency, I do hope to inspire reflection and allow a space where meaningful dialogue can be shared regarding the lack of diversity, which is prominent within both countries respective systems—and reflect on how prevalent elitism causes irreparable damage to not only the profession, but the communities its meant to serve.

Also given the fact that I have used personal accounts of those within the legal field and their relationship with it, it is important to consider that the tone of my texts may not one-

hundred percent relay the individuals exact feelings on my topic, and in no way would I want to cause any discourse regarding my topic of choice.

### ***Introduction***

Legal elitism refers to a system where certain individuals or groups are privileged over others in accessing and participating in the justice system. These groups are referred to as the legal elite, and they have been criticized for their exclusive control over the justice system, resulting in inequality and injustice for the common citizen. Legal elitism has been a prevalent issue in both the United States and the United Kingdom, where the legal profession is highly regarded and holds a prominent position in society. In this paper, I will explore legal elitism in the United States and the United Kingdom and its implication on the justice system. We will also examine the protentional causes of legal elitism and possible solutions to address this issue.

### ***Historical Origins of Legal Elitism in the United States and the United Kingdom***

The origins of legal elitism in both the United States and the United Kingdom can traced back to their respective colonial history. Within the United States, legal elitism can be traced back to his colonial era, where the legal field was exclusively accessed by wealthy white men. In contrast, the origins of legal elitism in the United Kingdom can be traced back to the feudal system, where the ruling class had exclusive control over the legal system. The legal profession was also restricted to members of the ruling class, and legal education was only accessible to a select few individuals. These individuals, typically members of the aristocracy or gentry, used their legal knowledge to uphold their own social and economic advantages; and commoners who had little access to justice, were often forced to settle disputes through trial by combat or ordeal.

One of the earliest examples of legal elitism in the UK dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the “serjeant-at-law”<sup>1</sup> position was established. This position was restricted to a small group of lawyers who had demonstrated exceptional legal skills and were appointed by the monarch. Serjeant-at-law had a higher social standing than other lawyers and were given exclusive privileges, such as the right to wear unique garments and sit in a separate section of the courtroom.

Although the legal profession in the UK became more open to people of different backgrounds over time, the influence of legal elitism persisted. Nowadays, graduates of the most prestigious universities still dominate the top law firms in the UK, and the legal profession remains one of the most socially exclusive in the country.

The origins of legal elitism in the United States can also be closely connected to the establishment of the American legal system. The US system was heavily influenced by the British legal system, and many of America’s first lawyers were educated in England.

One of America’s earliest examples of legal elitism can be traced back to the founding of Harvard Law School in 1817. The school quickly became one of the most prestigious in the country, with its alumni holding influential positions in government and society. Other elite law schools, such as Yale and Columbia soon followed, further cementing the perception that a legal education was reserved for a privileged few.

Not long after, the American Bar Association (ABA) was formed in 1878 to promote the interests of lawyer and enhance the quality of legal education. However, the organization rapidly

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<sup>1</sup> “West's Encyclopedia of American Law. Encyclopedia.com. 22 Mar. 2023” Encyclopedia.com (Encyclopedia.com, April 12, 2023), <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/modern-europe/british-and-irish-history/serjeant-law>.

became dominated by a select group of powerful lawyers, who utilized their influence to maintain their privileged position within the legal profession.

Today, legal elitism remains a significant problem in the United States and United Kingdom. In both countries, a small, privileged group of lawyers holds an excessive amount of power and influence over the legal and justice systems, reinforcing existing social and economic privileges. Legal elitism in both countries is a deep and systemically ingrained issue that has been perpetuated for centuries, and while we live in a society today that has become slightly more representative of the communities, we are apart, there must be efforts by both countries to increase diversity and accessibility with the profession—two pressing issues that have been the point of contention for years.

### ***Diversity within the Legal Profession***

The legal profession has long been criticized for its lack of diversity and the concentration of power and privilege within a small group of individuals. The phenomenon that is legal elitism, has been shaped by a variety of factors, including history and socioeconomic inequalities. However, in recent years, there have been efforts to increase diversity within the legal profession in both the United States and the United Kingdom.

In the United States, diversity within the legal profession has been a topic of discussion for many years. Historically, the legal profession has been dominated by white, male lawyers from privileged backgrounds. And, according to the American Bar Association (ABA) most recent statistics, there are 1.3 million lawyers in the United States. Within that 1.3 million, 5.5% are Asian American, 5.8% are Hispanic, 4.5% are Black, 0.5% are Native American, 2.7% are mixed race, and there's still an overwhelming majority of white lawyers—saturating the legal

profession with a whopping 81%.<sup>2</sup> Though there has been some success in pushing to increase diversity within the profession, with a particular focus on increasing the representation of women and minorities.

For example, the American Bar Association has also noted that the percentage of minority lawyers in the United States has increased from 10% in 1990 to 16% in 2020. However, despite these gains, there is still a significant underrepresentation of minorities and women in the most prestigious law firms and judiciary positions. Furthermore, diversity within the legal profession is not just about representation but also about inclusion. The legal profession must create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of individuals from diverse backgrounds.

In the United Kingdom, diversity within the legal profession is also a topic of heated conversation. Historically, the legal profession in the UK has been dominated by individuals from privileged backgrounds as well, who have attended elite schools and universities. However, in recent years, there has been efforts to increase diversity within the profession, with a particular focus on increasing the representation of individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Though in the U.K., the white population make up 84% of the barrister demographic—52% men and 32% women, while they also lead in the solicitor’s demographic with a staggering 81% (41% men and 40% women respectively). On the other, not so surprising hand, ethnic minorities make up 15% of all barristers—8% men and 7% women respectively, and they make up 19% of all solicitors—11% women and 8% men.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “ABA Survey Finds 1.3M Lawyers in the U.S.,” Americanbar.org, accessed February 14, 2023, <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2022/06/aba-lawyers-survey/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Diversity of the Judiciary: Legal Professions, New Appointments and Current Post-Holders - 2022 Statistics,” GOV.UK, accessed February 14, 2023, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/diversity-of-the-judiciary-2022-statistics/diversity-of-the-judiciary-legal-professions-new-appointments-and-current-post-holders-2022-statistics>.



With each profession there is an undeniable need to diversify and become inclusive to all backgrounds—omitting race, gender, sexual identity, etc.—as a determinate in hiring processes, but it is within the legal profession across borders that we continue to see a struggle with encompassing diversity, equity, and overall inclusivity. Using the United States as an example, the lowest average a person may pay for lsat (Law School Admission Test) prep is \$700, with the highest reaching well over \$3,500; this is an obstacle for many minorities—minorities who are socioeconomically disadvantaged—from being able to reach the same level as of their white counterparts, thus providing a greater chance of receiving skewed results from the opposing groups. And then on top of it all, law institutions expect students to then tackle on \$250k+ of debt over 3 years—which again, hurt minority populations as they are disproportionately paid less than their white counterparts.

There is an argument to be made that while elitism—especially within the legal sector—is meant to keep the same “demographic” in these spaces, it actually causes more harm than good by diluting the field with repeated perspectives and creating strategic obstacles to bar individuals of less affluent or minority backgrounds. With the article written by Jill Switzer entitled, “Elitism Puts Our Profession in Peril,” we are able to see the effects that elitism has on the legal industry within the United States. Switzer states, “Our profession suffers from elitism; it permeates every aspect of practice. Where we went to law school and how we ranked affects our abilities to get jobs, move up the ladder, become partner, or whatever goals we have.”<sup>4</sup>

In regard to diversity within the legal profession in the U.K., solicitor, Waleed Tahirkheli gave his perspective on the matter after being asked if he felt as though he had to hide parts of his identity to better assimilate into the legal profession. He responded saying, “Yeah, in

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<sup>4</sup> Jill Switzer, “Elitism Puts Our Profession in Peril,” Above the Law, November 16, 2016, <https://abovethelaw.com/2016/11/elitism-puts-our-profession-in-peril/>.

particular my name, and that there's a perception on my [Waleed] part that certain clients conceive a certain impression on whether you're not as professional or seen as prestigious if not associated with a typical English name." Asking his partner, Jenna Kruger an immigrant from South African, on whether or not she believes legal elitism has drown the profession, especially as a woman, she answered stating, "I do believe that it [legal elitism] did play in terms of there's a lot of expectations on you [women] to constantly be available; and I think the biggest issue particularly with females is the ability to have a family, which can jeopardize your experience by taking time away to have a family." Ms. Kruger also alluded that the elitism in education and training has diluted the diversity within the profession. She stated, "I think even from being foreign qualified, the U.K. is very elitist in terms of where you studied, pointing to Oxford and Cambridge."

While work still has to be made, there have been efforts in both the United Kingdom and United States to increase legal services and to diversify the legal profession. In the United States, some law firms have instituted diversity initiatives aimed at increasing the representation of minorities and women in the legal field. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, there have been efforts to diversify the legal profession through initiatives such as the "Social Mobility Business Compact," which encourages law firms to take on more apprenticeships and internships from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The legal profession must continue to address issues such as unconscious bias and create opportunities for mentorship and career advancement for individuals from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, there must be a focus on increasing representation within the most prestigious law firms and judiciary positions to address the issue of legal elitism and focus on creating a more diverse and inclusive legal profession reflective of their respective societies.

## *Social and Cultural Contexts of Legal Elitism*

The social and cultural context of legal elitism in the United States and the United Kingdom are influenced by their respective societal and cultural paradigms. In the United States, legal elitism is influenced by a capitalist society where individuals with wealth and power have more access to legal services than those who do not. The United States is also a country with a diverse population, where race and ethnicity play a significant role in determining access to legal services. Historically, marginalized communities in United States, such as African Americans, Native Americans, and immigrants, have had limited access to legal services, and their representation in the legal profession has remained low.

In the United Kingdom, legal elitism is influenced by a hierarchical society where class and status play a significant role in determining access to legal services. The United Kingdom is also a country with a long history of colonialism, where the ruling class has had a significant influence on the system. The legal profession in the United Kingdom is also heavily influenced by the Oxbridge system, where graduates of Oxford and Cambridge have a higher chance of entering and succeeding in the legal profession.

Interviewing a seasoned solicitor in the United Kingdom, Waleed Tahirkheli, he gave his take on the social context surrounding legal elitism. He stated, I think that there's truisms to everything, and that if you have contacts within any part of society, it'll benefit you; and the legal profession is no different in that regard—also aiding the profession's elitist stance. And that the legal profession in normal ways favors those that have certain contacts and know certain individuals.”<sup>5</sup> U.K. solicitor Jenna Kruger also stated on the culture of the legal profession saying, “I believe that the profession has previously been quite an unaccommodating and

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Waleed Tahirkheli, U.K. Solicitor Partner, March 27, 2023.

cutthroat profession, and my experience has been quite similar in the U.K. as in South Africa, though more prevalent being an immigrant trying to immerse myself within the legal profession.”<sup>6</sup>

While professionals such as Mr. Tahirkheli and Ms. Kruger have previously pointed out the progress made within the legal profession to diversify in recent years, the legacy of this history is still evident in the legal system. It again has been pointed out that there’s a concentration of power and privileges within certain law firms, chambers, and even individuals, which then can lead to a limited perspective on legal issues.

Overall, the social and cultural contexts of legal elitism in the United States and the United Kingdom are complex and multifaceted. They are shaped by historical, political, and social factors that have influenced their legal systems. While efforts have been made to diversify the legal profession, there is still much more work to be done to create a more equitable and unprejudiced legal system. This requires a commitment diversity and inclusivity from both countries, as well as a willingness to challenge the entrenched powers that have perpetuated legal elitism for so long.

### ***Role of the Legal Profession***

The legal profession, though persuaded by legal elitism, plays an essential role in maintaining law and order in the United States and the United Kingdom. The legal profession is composed of lawyers, judges, paralegals, legal secretaries, and other professionals who work within the legal field. Their job is to interpret, enforce, and protect the law. And in this section, I aim to explore the role of the legal profession in the respective countries.

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Jenna Kruger, U.K. Solicitor, March 30, 2023.

In the United Kingdom, the legal profession—excluding the judiciary—is broken into two parts: barristers and solicitors; where in the United States, the term lawyer and attorney have different meanings, though are used interchangeably and it presents having one distinct role, where the U.S. attorney does the work of both the barrister and solicitor. Where attorneys in the United States are generally employed through a legal firm and are able to present in court, barristers are the only ones capable of “giving audience” in court proceedings, and are generally self-employed “in that they operate in sets of ‘chambers’ but are not employed by a law firm as such.”<sup>7</sup> Solicitors on the other hand—opposite of barristers—do “not generally have rights of audience in court but there are some exceptions, they generally do the legal research and can represent their clients in legal negotiations but then pass the case over to a barrister if it is necessary to take action in court. It is rare that a client will directly employ a barrister.”<sup>8</sup>

The legal profession in the United States is an integral part of its justice system. Lawyers are responsible for representing clients in court, negotiating settlements, and drafting legal documents. They also provide legal advice to individuals and businesses. The role of lawyers in the United States is to ensure that justice is served, and the rights of citizens are protected.

One of the significant roles of the legal profession in the United States is to uphold the Constitution. Lawyers and judges are responsible for interpreting the Constitution and ensuring that the laws passed by Congress (and enforced by the Executive Branch) are constitutional. This role is essential in ensuring that the rights and freedoms of its citizens are protected.

The legal profession in the United States also plays a vital role in promoting justice and fairness. Lawyers are responsible for representing clients from all walks of life, regardless of

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<sup>7</sup> “United Kingdom Law: Legal Profession,” Legal Profession - United Kingdom Law - Oxford LibGuides at Oxford University (Bodleian Libraries, 2023), <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/c.php?g=422832&p=2887402>.

<sup>8</sup> United Kingdom Law: Legal Profession,” Legal Profession - United Kingdom Law - Oxford LibGuides at Oxford University (Bodleian Libraries, 2023), <https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/c.php?g=422832&p=2887402>.

their socioeconomic status. This ensures that everyone has access to justice and can receive a fair trial.

Finally, the legal profession in the United States is responsible for promoting and upholding the rule of law. The rule of law means that everyone is subject to the law, and no one is above it, even through elitist barriers. The legal profession ensures that the law is enforced equally and fairly, regardless of a person's status or position in society.

The legal profession in the United Kingdom is equally important in upholding the rule of law and ensuring justice for all. The profession being made up of solicitors, barristers, judges, and other legal professionals who work in various capacities.

Another essential role of the legal profession in the United Kingdom is to ensure that the law is enforced equally and justly. Jurists are responsible for interpreting the law and ensuring that it is enforced fairly, regardless of a person's background or financial status.

All things considered, the legal profession plays a vital role in maintaining law and order in the United States and the United Kingdom. The legal profession is responsible for upholding the rule of law, promoting justice and fairness, and ensuring that everyone has access to justice. It is a crucial profession that helps to ensure the stability and integrity of the justice system. Without the legal profession, it would be challenging to interpret, enforce, and protect the law, which is essential for the smooth functioning of society. Overall, the legal profession's contributions are fundamental to upholding the principles of justice, fairness, and equality in both nations.

### ***Education and Training***

While the legal profession is of vital importance, it also must be addressed that elitism in the profession in both the U.S. and U.K. not only entrenches and dilutes the diversity within the profession, but it also occupies the education and legal training in the respective countries. With each profession there is an undeniable need to diversify and become inclusive to all backgrounds—omitting race, gender, sexual identity, etc.—but it is within the legal profession across borders that we continue to see a struggle with encompassing diversity, equity, and overall inclusivity.

In both the United States and the United Kingdom, there are certain law schools that are widely recognized as producing the best lawyers, and graduates of these schools often have an easier time securing prestigious jobs and advancing within the legal profession. This in turn creates a cycle of privilege, leading to an unequal distribution of power and privilege within the legal system.

In the United States, legal elitism is often associated with the Ivy League law schools, which are considered to be among the most prestigious and selective institutions in the country around the world. The admission process at these schools is highly competitive, and many applicants are required to have exceptional academic records and LSAT scores to be considered. This leads to a situation in which a small percentage of the population, predominately from affluent backgrounds, has access to these elite institutions.

Though legal elitism is a pressing issue, various initiatives have been introduced in recent years as a means to rectify the problem. Some law schools have implemented affirmative action programs to increase diversity among their student body. Additionally, there has been a growing movement towards offering alternative forms of legal education, such as online courses or

apprenticeships, which are more accessible to individuals from a wider range of socioeconomic backgrounds.

In the United Kingdom, the education and training required to become a barrister or solicitor is highly structured and competitive, with limited places available each year. The path to a career in law typically involves completing a law degree, followed by additional vocational training and work experience. The cost of legal education in the UK is also a significant barrier to entry, with many students facing significant debt upon graduation as well. Moreover, there has been contention over the lack of diversity within the legal profession, with individuals from ethnic minority and lower socioeconomic backgrounds underrepresented.

Efforts have been made in recent years to address the issue of legal elitism in the UK. The Solicitors Regulation Authority has introduced a new qualifying exam, the Solicitors Qualifying Examination (SQE), which aims to make the process of becoming a solicitor more accessible and affordable. Additionally, law firms and bar associations have implemented diversity and inclusion initiatives to increase representation of individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.

In essence, access to legal education and training is often limited to those from privileged backgrounds, leading to a concentration of power and privilege within the profession. However, initiatives aimed at increasing diversity and accessibility, such as affirmative action programs and alternative forms of legal education, are beginning to address these issues in both countries. And it is imperative that these efforts continue to ensure that the legal profession reflects the diverse and inclusive communities it serves.

### ***Impact on Access to Justice***



In a world that's ever-changing and in need of justice systems that are right alongside it, it is incredibly damaging to the larger general population when justice is primarily sought after for white, financially privileged men and women, due to an elitists and race-conscious legal system. The legal profession which has been plagued by elitism and white-race focused ideals, causes a situation where other races—other demographics that are not afforded the privileges that society has bestowed upon Caucasian men and women—have fostered a relationship with the legal system built on distrust, and thus gives the appearance that the justice system is one of no credibility.

In the article titled, “Lawyers, the Legal Profession & Access to Justice in the United States: A Brief History,” Robert W. Gordon notes, “In the last century, legal professions, governments, and charitable providers have taken small, partial steps to provide access to legal processes and legal advice to people who could not otherwise afford them. By doing so, they have inched closer to the ideals of universal justice. They have also, on occasion, acted to restrict access to law by the poor and powerless.”<sup>9</sup> Agreeing with Gordon, I would say the United States legal system has made small efforts to truly be inclusive and provide justice for all, but the system itself has been created to shield the rich and the powerful, not the poor and defenseless, which Gordon speaks to as well. He states,

“Despite inspiring rhetoric—and more inspiring models and exemplars—that American lawyers use to trumpet their commitment to equal justice for all, they have generally served their own interests before those of the public, in particular the poor and economically struggling. They serve best the rich and powerful, serve

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<sup>9</sup> Robert W. Gordon, “Lawyers, the Legal Profession & Access to Justice in the United States: A Brief History,” *Judicature* (Duke Law School, March 3, 2021), <https://judicature.duke.edu/articles/lawyers-the-legal-profession-access-to-justice-in-the-united-states-a-brief-history/>.

some middle-class clients and interests to the extent that it generates adequate fees, and, with notable exceptions, either serve minimally or not at all virtually everyone else.”<sup>10</sup>

When asking U.K. Solicitor Jenna Kruger on if she believes that legal elitism has impacted the justice system and its role in servicing its communities, she stated,

“In terms of serving their communities (i.e., clients), I think that firms are money driven, I think that if you come across a client that isn’t economically stable enough to afford legal fees, they’re sort of pushed aside.” She also stated, “I think it’s elitist in that law firms are also beholden to how well-known their clients are, large corporations, and high net worth individuals, and this behavior is very much promoted within the profession.”

Legal elitism has caused the greatest impact on the access of justice, by creating a general lack of trust in the legal system among certain groups, particularly among communities of color and low-income individuals. This lack of trust can be attributed to a history of systemic discrimination and unequal treatment within the legal system. Thus, it is important to acknowledge and address this lack of trust, as it undermines the legitimacy and effectiveness of the legal system as a whole.

Addressing legal elitism will require a long-term commitment from various stakeholders to increase access to legal resources and opportunities, and to address systemic barriers that perpetuate inequality within the legal system. Ultimately, creating a more just and equitable legal

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<sup>10</sup> Robert W. Gordon, “Lawyers, the Legal Profession & Access to Justice in the United States: A Brief History,” *Judicature* (Duke Law School, March 3, 2021), <https://judicature.duke.edu/articles/lawyers-the-legal-profession-access-to-justice-in-the-united-states-a-brief-history/>.

system will require a collective effort to ensure that everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status or background, has equal access to justice.

### ***Current Manifestations of Legal Elitism in the United States and the United Kingdom***

Despite significant progress increasing access to legal services in both countries, legal elitism continues to exist in various forms. In the United States, legal elitism is observed in the disproportionate representation of certain groups in the legal profession, including women, people of color, and individuals from low-income backgrounds. The legal profession in the United States is also characterized by the dominance of large law firms, which tend to cater to corporate clients and wealthy individuals. The legal profession in the United States is one of the most elite professions, and access to legal education and employment opportunities is often determined by factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and educational background. Women, people of color, and individuals from low-income backgrounds continue to be underrepresented in the legal profession, particularly in higher-paying and more prestigious positions.

According to a study by the American Bar Association, only 36% of lawyers in the United States are women, and even fewer women hold leadership positions in the leadership profession. The study also found that women of color are particularly underrepresented in the legal profession, with only 2% of partners in law firms being women of color. Similarly, people of color are underrepresented in the legal profession, with only 13% of lawyers being persons of color in the States; in 2022 that number rose to 19%.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> “Demographics: American Bar Association Profile of the Legal Profession,” Demographics | American Bar Association Profile of the Legal Profession, 2022, <https://www.abalegalprofile.com/demographics.php#anchor5>.

Another manifestation of the legal elitism in the United States, which was alluded to before, is the dominance of law firms. These firms—similarly to the United Kingdom—tend to cater to corporate clients and wealthy individuals, and their high billing rates are often unaffordable to individuals who do not hold the same financial and social capital. As a result, many people cannot afford legal services and are forced to represent themselves in court or forgo legal action altogether. This lack of access to legal services, as addressed earlier, can exacerbate existing inequalities, and perpetuate legal elitism even more.

While in the United Kingdom, legal elitism is also observed in the lack of diversity in the legal profession, particularly in the higher echelons. The legal profession in the United Kingdom is heavily dominated by white, male, and privately educated individuals. This has led to concerns about the lack of representation of women, people of color, and individuals from low-income background within the U.K. legal profession.

In the United Kingdom, legal elitism is reflected in the composition of the legal profession. Similar to the United States, the profession remains predominantly white and male, with a lack of diversity in the judiciary and the highest echelons of the profession. This can result in a biased and a narrow perspective on legal issues, as well as create barriers for underrepresented groups seeking to enter the profession. In addition to the manifestations mentioned above, legal elitism in both countries can also be seen in the disproportionate representation of certain socioeconomic classes in the legal system.

One example of how legal elitism is manifested in the United States is in the criminal justice system. Studies have shown that race and socioeconomic status play a significant role in who is arrested, prosecuted, and sentenced in the criminal justice system. For instance, Black

Americans are more likely to be arrested, receive harsher sentences, and be incarcerated for longer periods than their white counterparts, even when controlling for the severity of the crime.

An example of how legal elitism is manifested in the United Kingdom is in the appointment of judges. The process of appointing judges in the UK has been criticized constantly for its lack of transparency and accountability, leading to concerns about elitism and favoritism. The current system relies heavily on political patronage, which can result in a lack of diversity among judges and a perceived bias towards certain political ideologies. This in turn, can also result in a lack of trust in the judiciary and undermine the legitimacy of the legal system as a whole.

Overall, legal elitism remains a significant challenge in both the United States and the United Kingdom, manifesting in various forms, including lack of diversity in the legal profession, unequal access to legal services, and disproportionate representation of certain socioeconomic classes in the legal system. Addressing these issues requires a collaborative effort from legal institutions, the legal profession itself, and policymakers. Only by addressing legal elitism can we hope to create a more just and equitable legal system for all, one that is truly reflective of the diverse societies we live in.

### ***Conclusion***

Legal elitism continues to exist in both the United States and the United Kingdom, and it is characterized by the disproportionate representation of certain groups in the legal profession, as well as the dominance of large firms that cater to corporate clients and wealthy individuals. To address legal elitism, there needs to be increased diversity in the legal profession, including more representation of women, people of color, and individuals from low-income backgrounds. Law

firms also should be further encouraged to provide pro bono services and reduce their billing rates to make legal services more accessible to everyone.

Additionally, there should be increased regulation and oversight of the legal profession to ensure that access to legal education and employment opportunities is fair and equitable. This could include measures such as increased funding for legal aid programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives within law firms, and stricter enforcement of anti-discrimination laws.

It is also important to acknowledge that legal elitism is not limited to the legal profession itself, but also extends to the justice system as a whole. There are systemic biases and inequalities within the justice system that disproportionately affect marginalized communities, such as people of color, low-income individuals, and immigrants. These inequalities contribute to legal elitism by perpetuating a system where certain individuals have greater access to legal representation and protection under the law than others.

Furthermore, legal education can also play a crucial role in addressing legal elitism. Law schools should strive to create a more diverse and inclusive learning environment that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve. This can include recruiting more diverse faculty, offering scholarships and financial assistance to students from underrepresented backgrounds, and providing training and education on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Ultimately, to truly address legal elitism, there needs to be a multi-faceted approach that addresses both the systemic inequalities within the justice system and the lack of diversity and accessibility within the legal profession. By working towards a more equitable and just legal system, we can ensure that everyone has equal access to legal representation and protection under the law, regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, or education background.

This again, requires a joint, continuous effort from all stakeholders in the legal system, including law firms, law schools, regulators, and policymakers.

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