

CENTRAL ASIAN LAWYERS: A PROFILE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Most people would agree that the legal profession remains one of the most intriguing, secretive and controversial professions across the globe. Interestingly, it seems that the general perception of lawyers is largely based on what is observed on television and in books, and does not necessarily have any basis in reality. Considering that lawyers play a critical role in creating and sustaining a healthy institutional environment for businesses and people, it is interesting to explore the factors that determine lawyers' behaviour.

This report provides evidence to supplement the currently scant pool of literature on the popular image of lawyers in Central Asia. Using the primary data collected by CENTIL in spring 2016, this report reveals the basic personal characteristics of Central Asian lawyers and outlines a profile of legal practitioners. It also provides interesting and revealing information about personal and household characteristics, along with lawyers' preferences, traits and beliefs. These characteristics, in turn, allow us to answer interesting questions about Central Asian lawyers, such as: what determines and affects wages, what makes lawyers happy, how do personal traits, lifestyle, health, incentive mechanisms such as wages, education and experience, and non-pecuniary factors such as employment conditions affect employment decisions, and how can cultural values be used to predict lawyers' behaviour.

We hope the efforts made in this report to portray the image of the Central Asian lawyer will provide a number of important insights, not only for employers but also for potential and existing clientele.

INTRODUCTION

If you were asked to give a general characterisation of a lawyer and/or legal practitioner, which words would you choose? How closely is your perception of lawyers intertwined with what is portrayed in literature, movies, and on the Internet? Or is your depiction of the lawyer based solely on your first-hand work with legal practitioners? Alternatively, if you yourself have been practising law for years, how would you describe yourself?

In literature, movies and television series, lawyers are portrayed in a variety of ways – as heroes or villains, as caring or selfish - and are generally very complex in nature and behaviour¹. These images of lawyers, of course, are not necessarily "socially representative" of all lawyers; still, they seem to capture, to some extent, certain personal characteristics of legal practitioners.

The history of the image of the lawyer goes back a long way, starting from Shakespeare's "let's kill all the lawyers" to Sir Thomas More's exclusion of lawyers from his Utopia because they are "a sort of people, whose profession it is to disguise matters."²

Across the Central Asian region, it seems that the most commonly cited images of lawyers are Fedor Plevako, Andrey Vyshinsky, Pavel Astakhov, Genrikh Padva, Antonin Gregory Scalia, Erin Brockovich, Henri Reznik, Saul Goodman (portrayed by Bob Odenkirk), Kevin Lomax (portrayed by Keanu Reeves), Fletcher Reede (portrayed by Jim Carrey) and Lieutenant Daniel Kaffee (portrayed by Tom Cruise).

When describing a good lawyer, frequently mentioned personal characteristics include being smart, self-sacrificing, analytic, honest, loyal, caring, justice-seeking, flexible, creative and compassionately defending their clients' interests. At the same time, a description of a bad lawyer includes qualities such as being dishonest, greedy and fee-focused, manipulative, selfish, disloyal, negative and indifferent to the consequences his/her actions may have on society, to name just a few.

In this report we shall provide evidence from Central Asia that supplements the existing literature on the complex but canonical image of the lawyer . However, in contrast to previous studies, our portrayal of the lawyer³ does not rest on public polls but rather on the results of an individual survey conducted with Central Asian lawyers, which was carried out by Colibri Law Firm in 2016.

SURVEY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The data used in this study originates from the individual online survey conducted by Colibri Law Firm during the spring of 2016. The sample of lawyers is restricted to all lawyers that, in some capacity, practise or have practised business law in Central Asia for the past 5 years or more.

The questionnaire consisted of 83 questions covering individual and household characteristics such as general lifestyle, employment, health, personal interests and family relations, among other topics. To access the questionnaire, refer to *Centil's Individual Lawyer Survey*.

The cross-section data collected contains individual responses for more than 100 lawyers working in the Central Asian region. Although the dataset contains a fairly large sample, the complete information on all questions is only available for 75% of respondents. Therefore, to avoid potential missing variable biases in our estimations of various empirical relations (for example, hours of work and wages) we used modern econometric and statistical techniques that allow us to predict the values of the missing variables on the basis of personal and household characteristics.

¹ Menkel-Meadow (2001)

² Post (1987), p. 3

³ Cushing (1961), Post (1987), Smolla (1997), and Menkel-Meadow (2001)

FINDINGS

1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Below is the discussion of the descriptive statistics of the basic characteristics of the respondents in Central Asia, namely age, gender, monthly hours of work, net monthly wages, etc.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age. The age range of the Central Asian lawyers in the sample is 23-51 years. On average, male lawyers are 32 years old, whereas female lawyers are 33 years old.

Gender. The majority of the respondents (61%) are male.

Education. In our study, we broke up the level of educational attainment into the following three categories: lawyers with graduate and postgraduate diplomas (complete higher education), lawyers with undergraduate diplomas (higher education), and lawyers with only secondary education but possessing additional professional training (secondary professional education).

We found that 86% of Central Asian lawyers possess complete higher education, with 56% of these degrees received from academic institutions outside of the Central Asian region.

Breaking this down further by gender, we found that only 48% of female lawyers possess a foreign degree, compared to 69% of male lawyers.

Religion and beliefs. We found that 62% of the lawyers identify as Muslim, 15% as Christian, and 15% of respondents claim to be atheists. The remaining 8% claimed to be believers, without specifying their specific religious affiliation.

Interestingly, 77% of respondents believe in life after death and 44% believe in hell.

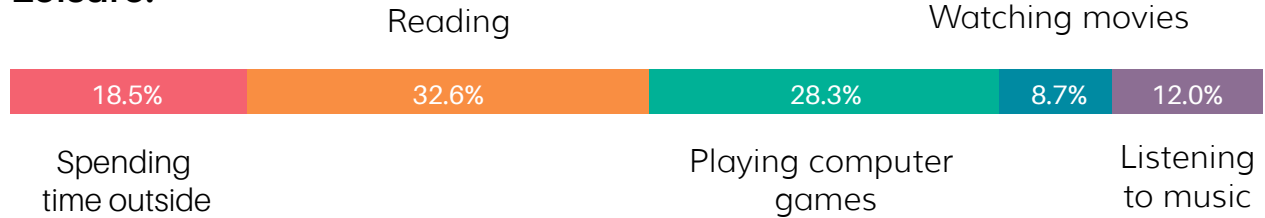
We also found that atheists are more prevalent amongst females than males (13% compared to 11%, respectively).

Preferences, lifestyle and health. The majority of lawyers cite running and going to the gym as their preferred forms of physical exercise. Their favourite leisure time activities are reading and watching movies.

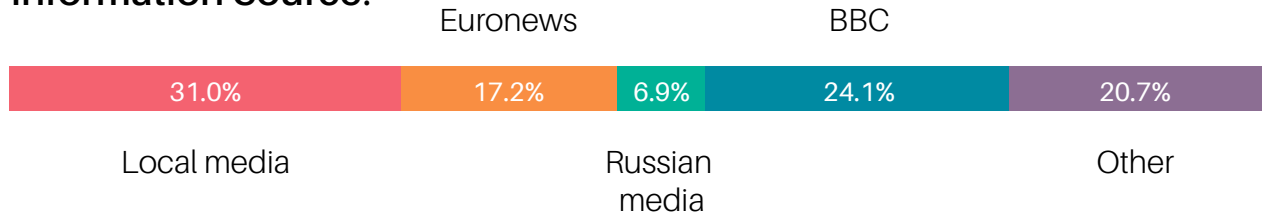
The musical preferences of Central Asian lawyers are rather diverse, with rock music being the most popular choice (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics for an average lawyer (both genders)

Leisure:



Favourite Information Source:



Music Preferences



Most of the lawyers indicated Telegram (46%) as their favourite messenger, followed by WhatsApp (30%) and others. The preferred social network is Facebook (92%) followed by LinkedIn (8%). We also found that Facebook is popular for both genders (95% males and 91% females), with LinkedIn (5% and 9%, respectively) being used more by females.

Turning to behavioural tendencies we found that smoking rates substantially differ between genders. In particular, almost half (48%) of males smoke while among female respondents only

1% possess smoking habits. At the same time 67% of respondents consume alcohol occasionally and the most popular alcoholic beverages are beer and wine. The favourite tobacco products among male lawyers are cigarettes produced by BAT and Phillip Morris. Cognac is the most "masculine" alcohol, consumed only by male respondents. The average frequency of alcohol intake is 4.3 times per month (4.5 for males and 3.2 for females). Finally, the favourite places to drink are restaurants and bars, dominated by males' choices (45% males compared to 16% females).

Figure 2. Preferred alcoholic beverage (for males)

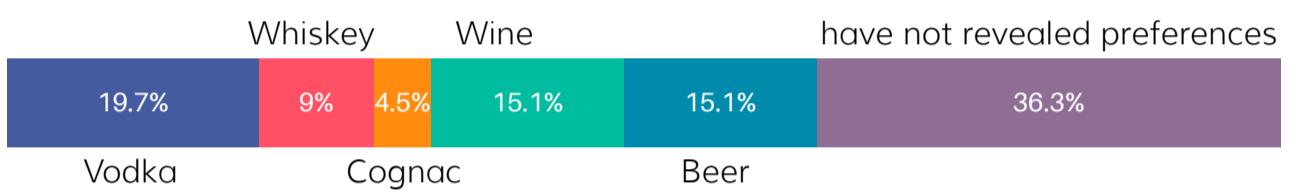
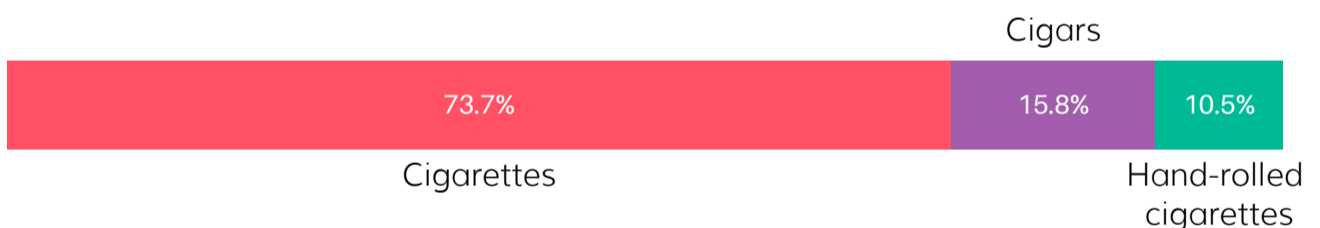


Figure 3. Favourite place to drink (both genders)



Figure 4. Smoking preferences (for males)



We also found that the majority of respondents eat out about 2-3 times per week. Furthermore, nearly 16% of Central Asian lawyers suffer from gastroenterological diseases, with such diseases more prevalent among female lawyers compared to male lawyers (11% males compared to 20% females). We also found that the majority of respondents (over 50%) who suffer from such diseases eat outside almost all working days.

Our results reveal interesting patterns in the sexual behaviour of both genders. Specifically, we found that, on average, male lawyers are much more sexually active (having sex more than 12 times per 3 months) compared to their female counterparts (less than 6 times per 3 months). Thus, we observed that 80% of male lawyers reported to have had sex at

least 12 times in the last 3 months in contrast to only 10% of female lawyers. Moreover, we found that the majority of the surveyed lawyers are heterosexual. Still, there were numerous responses amongst both genders indicating bisexual preferences. Interestingly, these bisexual preferences are more common for female lawyers than male lawyers.

Finally, we found that Central Asian lawyers have very strong environmental attitudes. For example, 64% of respondents claim that the environment is more important than economic growth, with 56% of lawyers willing to pay higher taxes to combat air pollution. Such altruistic behaviour is more common amongst female lawyers than male lawyers (66% compared to 52%, respectively).

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Marital status. We subdivided our sample into two types of lawyers: those who are married and those who are single.

It appears that the majority of lawyers are married, with the average rate of marriage across both genders standing at 58%. We found that the difference in marital statuses across male and female lawyers is substantial, with 63% of males being married compared to 48% of females. We believe that this can be explained by the cultural and religious traditions that are prevalent in this region. Nevertheless, such low female marriage rates (especially amongst those over 30) across the Central Asian region comes as a surprise.

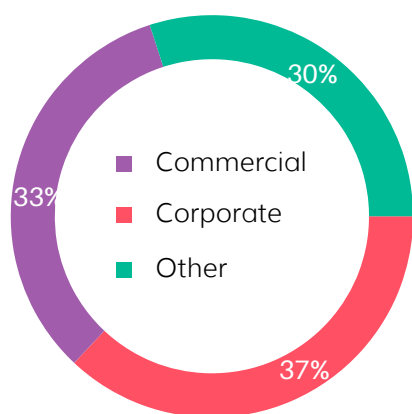
EMPLOYMENT

Area of expertise and employment record. Turning our attention to areas of expertise, we found that 37% of Central Asian lawyers specialise in corporate law, and 30% in commercial law. The remaining one-third of the respondents report focusing on litigation, trade policy, banking and other fields.

Half of the lawyers are employed by international firms, whereas the other half work for local firms. The majority of Central Asian lawyers practice private law (69%) and work full time (95%).

A typical Central Asian lawyer in our sample possesses 11 years of employment, with male lawyers having slightly more experience (1-2 years more) in legal practice than females.

Figure 5. Main fields of legal practice (both genders)



Position, hours of work and wages.

Although volatile, the reported hours of work in all countries under analysis are in the range of 30-40 hours per week, which is a standard range in most of the countries of Central Asia. However, the surveyed lawyers reported that on average they billed only 30% of their working time.

From our sample, a typical Central Asian lawyer is found to earn an average net monthly wage of \$2000-3000.

Breadwinners and household composition. Our findings suggest that, on average, 64% of Central Asian lawyers have at least 1 child. We also found that female lawyers, on average, tend to have more children than male lawyers do.

Interestingly, in families with a higher number of children, regardless of gender, individuals working as lawyers are found to be the main breadwinners.

Differentiating by gender, we found that female lawyers work less, bill less and earn lower salaries than their male counterparts (30-40 hours compared to more than 40 hours per week; 27 billable hours compared to 48 billable hours per month; and, \$1000-2000 per month compared to \$2000-3000 per month, respectively).

Satisfaction with working environment and beliefs. To assess the lawyers' satisfaction with their jobs, we created a number of indicators (on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied) of satisfaction with work in general, working conditions and environment, salary, relations with colleagues and relations with managers and senior staff.

On average, Central Asian lawyers reported that they were satisfied with their jobs overall, less satisfied with their salaries and gave mixed results for other categories. Interestingly, we found that in all countries lawyers were uniformly very satisfied with their relationships with colleagues and managers.

Secondary job. Our observations suggest slight differences between the responses on the possession of additional sources of earnings (i.e. secondary jobs).

According to the survey results, 30% of Central Asian lawyers had secondary jobs with an average net monthly income of under USD 500. Moreover, the average weekly workload at the second job did not exceed 10 hours.

We found that 33% of male lawyers have an additional source of income, compared to only 25% of female lawyers.

2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

DETERMINANTS OF WAGES AND INCOME

Considering that over 90% of respondents reported that good pay is the most important aspect of a job, we explored the main socio-economic characteristics that affect the salaries of Central Asian lawyers. To do this, we estimated canonical earnings function (common in labour economics literature) for a sample of 75 lawyers for whom earnings data was available, both overall and by gender. First, we found that age is non-linearly (inverted U-shape) related to the earnings of individual respondents. For instance, our results show that earnings increase with lawyers' age until they reach their midlife (44 years) and gradually decline as they approach retirement age. Whilst this relationship applies to male lawyers (with the turning point standing at 36 years old), the earnings of females largely increase with age.

Similar to a number of studies in labour economics literature, our findings suggest the presence of a gender pay gap within the Central Asian legal market. Thus, by comparing male and female lawyers with similar characteristics in terms of age, experience and level of education, we found that female lawyers typically earn nearly \$250-350 less than their male counterparts. Moreover, the gender pay gap remains strong even after we account for different levels of experience.

Considering that throughout literature one of the most important determinants of wages is experience, we regress the employment record against wages. Our findings suggest that each additional year of experience, on average, increases wages by \$150-200 per month for both male and female lawyers in Central Asia. We also find that experience alone,

being one of the most important determinants of wages, explains 25% of its variation.

Turning to the effects of education on wages and income, we found rather mixed results. Interestingly, we documented that wages of lawyers do not depend on education level per se, but rather on the country in which lawyer obtained a degree. For example, we found that lawyers (both males and females) who graduated from non-Central Asian institutions may expect up to a 115% increase in wages. Moreover, this effect is stronger for female lawyers.

Finally, in line with previous studies we also explored the impact of various behavioural tendencies on wages. Our results suggest that occasional alcohol consumption is positively correlated with higher earnings. Specifically, we found an approximately \$700 wage premium for those who consume alcohol. Moreover, the wage premium for alcohol consumption for male respondents is \$1000. One of the potential explanations for such a significant effect of alcohol intake on wages is that lawyers who occasionally consume alcohol do it while socialising with clients or colleagues, and particularly with executives. As a result, such informal relations may lead to positive and more favourable employment outcomes, such as higher wages.

In contrast, we failed to find any meaningful relationship between smoking and earnings.

We also found that, with each additional child, average net income increases by approximately \$500 per month. Disaggregated by gender, this effect is stronger for male respondents.

DETERMINANTS OF HAPPINESS

Although many believe that money can buy happiness, there is plenty of research evidence across countries and occupations that shows that higher incomes do not necessarily guarantee greater happiness, a phenomenon known as the “Easterlin paradox”. Therefore, taking into account the field of occupational literature on the causes of subjective wellbeing and its consequences on productivity, turnover intentions and even suicidal behaviour, we believe it is important to explore the determinants of happiness in Central Asian lawyers. Interestingly, only 21% of lawyers reported being 'very happy' when answering the question “Taking all things together, would you say you are: very happy, quite happy, not happy at all?”

Our results indicate that one of the strongest and most notable determinants of lawyers' life satisfaction is the presence and number of children in the family. In particular, we found that each additional child in a typical lawyer's household increases the likelihood of being very happy by approximately 18%. Interestingly, the positive effect of children on life satisfaction is stronger for female lawyers. Furthermore, our findings support the general belief that a better self-reported health status is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction.

We also found that while female lawyers tend to bill fewer hours and earn less, their happiness levels are 40% above those of their male counterparts. More interestingly, we found that the presence of “very happy” lawyers (more than 45%) is more common amongst single females compared to married female lawyers (only 25%).

Turning to the relationship between earnings and life satisfaction, in line with the existing evidence we do not find evidence that more money equals more happiness for Central Asian lawyers. However, we should note that the effect of wages on life satisfaction may be driven by education (e.g. the possession of a Master's degree) and experience, which are significantly correlated with life satisfaction in our sample. For instance, we found that having a PhD marginally decreases the life satisfaction levels of Central Asian lawyers. Moreover, we found that lawyers working for international firms and specialising in private law are less satisfied with their lives overall. Disaggregated by gender, women tend to be less satisfied working in international firms.

Finally, in a similar vein, we fail to find any evidence that dissatisfaction among lawyers leads to increased levels of alcohol consumption for both genders.

DETERMINANTS OF LABOUR SUPPLY AND EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

In our study, we used effective hours of work as a measure of labour supply or hours worked. The findings of statistical modelling suggest a positive relationship between experience/education and labour supply. In particular, when experience increases by 2-3 years, labour supply increases by approximately 2 hours per week. Moreover, the effect remains strong even when we control for education, indicating that experience in the legal market has an education-independent effect on working hours. We also found that being a female lawyer decreases labour supply by approximately 5 hours per week.

Interestingly, we found that lawyers in international law firms work less than lawyers in local law firms. However, when disaggregated by gender, we found that on average females work more in international law firms than male lawyers, whose working weekly hours tend to be 5-6 hours lower.

Our results also show that, on average, lawyers who have secondary jobs tend to work 4-5 hours less in

their primary job. This trend is more pronounced for female lawyers, with an average reduction of 5-6 working hours per week in the primary job.

According to our results, male lawyers who believe in hell tend to have 4-5 hours fewer effective hours of work per week. Moreover, we found that having sex more frequently is positively related with labour supply: those who have had sex 12 times over the past three months work 2 hours more per week than those who have had sex more than 6-11 times in the same period.

We also estimated the sensitivity of the duration of respondents' self-reported working week with effective wages (billed hours multiplied by rate). The results suggest that, on average, a USD 1,000 increase in effective wages leads to an increase of 2-3 hours of work per week. With respect to gender, this USD 1,000 rise in wages increases the working week of female lawyers by 3-4 hours per week and only by 2 hours for their male counterparts.

CULTURAL VALUES

Finally, to fully capture and depict the profile of Central Asian lawyer we decided to investigate the impact of inherent cultural values on lawyers' behaviour. To do this, we first studied the forces that, one way or another, affect Central Asian lawyers' attitudes towards environmental concerns. Our empirical results reveal that lawyers with a greater number of children are inclined to be more altruistic and agree that taxes should be raised to tackle air pollution. Interestingly, this effect is stronger for male respondents.

More significantly, we found that lawyers younger than 31 years old are predominantly less willing to accept higher tax burden for environmental concerns. Furthermore, we found that lawyers practising private law tend to be less altruistic overall and more reluctant in terms of environmentalism. For example, only 1 out of 4 male (and 1 out of 3 female) lawyers that specialize in private law were willing to pay higher taxes for environmental

issues. On the other hand, we fail to find any evidence that earnings, gender, marital status or level of religiosity can be used to predict pro-environmental behaviour amongst lawyers.

We went further to explore the individual characteristics associated with belief in supernatural forces. For this purpose, we used two proxies: belief in life after death and belief in hell. Our results show that female lawyers are less likely to believe in supernatural forces than their male counterparts. Somewhat surprisingly, we found a U-shaped correlation between age and belief in life after death. Our data shows that lawyers tend to believe in supernatural forces after the midlife (30-31 years old) period. Conversely, we find that married lawyers, atheists and those who work in public law predominantly do not believe in hell.

PROFILE OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN LAWYER

So, how would we characterise or depict the Central Asian lawyer? Well, we hope the infographic below is self-explanatory:



Height:

167 cm

177 cm

Illnes:

Gastrointestinal
disease

Gastrointestinal
disease and spine issues

Weight:

60 kg

80 kg

Age:

33 y

32 y

Salary:

\$ 1-2 thousand

\$ 2-3 thousand

Monthly billing:

27 hours

48 hours

Job satisfaction:

3.7 out of 5 pts.

3.9 out of 5 pts.

Education level:

Masters
degree

Masters
degree

Alcohol consumption:

66%

66%

Children:

1 child

1 child

Smokers:

1%

48%

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Centil advises within the jurisdictions of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and is one of the largest law firms in the region. The firm's core team has been established in 2003 and since then has been advising on banking and finance, energy, M&A, and infrastructure projects across the region.

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CENTIL'S CENTRAL ASIA RESEARCH GROUP (CARG)

provides consultancy and analytical support on a broad array of issues, including market and sector-specific analyses, impact assessment and policy design, capacity building, and, business consulting for entities operating in or considering entry into the Central Asian region and Iran. Our consultancy and recommendations are grounded not only in international and regional best practices, but also in our expertise in data modeling and analysis.

Our network of consultants includes professionals with rich and diverse backgrounds, from private sector companies, international organisations, government institutions and the academic sphere. Importantly, all members of our team have either lived or currently live in the Central Asian region. They therefore bring unique and relevant perspectives and experiences to analysing and understanding the complex relationships and processes that underpin publicly available data and observations.

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