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6 Women Accuse Citigroup of Gender Bias

9:37 a.m. | Updated *Citigroup reviewed the lawsuit and responded Wednesday evening with a statement addressing the women's claims.*

Six current and former female employees sued **Citigroup** on Wednesday, accusing it of being an “outdated ‘boys club’” that systematically discriminates against women at all levels of the bank.

The women contend that Citigroup fails to compensate female employees as much as their male counterparts, overlooks them for promotions and is more inclined to part ways with them in companywide layoffs, according to the complaint, which was filed in United States District Court in Manhattan.

“The outdated ‘boys club’ is alive and well at Citigroup, where women are denied equal terms and conditions of employment that are provided to similarly situated male employees,” the lawsuit said. “As a result of this ‘boys club,’ men dominate the senior ranks of Citigroup’s management and executive positions.”

Five of the six women who brought the suit worked in the public finance department within the bank’s municipal securities division and were among those laid off in November 2008, when Citigroup cut more than **a tenth of its work force** in the midst of the financial crisis. The sixth woman, who currently works in the asset finance group in Citigroup’s capital markets origination division, contends she was demoted after returning from maternity leave and also has faced numerous offensive comments in the workplace.

A spokeswoman for Citigroup, Danielle Romero-Apsilos, said the bank had not yet been served with the suit.

“We will respond to the specifics when we have a chance to review the allegations,” Ms. Romero-Apsilos said in a statement. “Citi has a longstanding commitment to equal employment practices and to provide a professional and respectful workplace free of unlawful discrimination.”

The complaint paints another picture. It asserts that the “boys club” mentality “filters down through the management ranks to affect all senior and junior level professional positions at Citigroup,” resulting in “systematic and pervasive discrimination and retaliation” against

women across the bank, from managing directors to analysts.

The complaint, which seeks class-action status, asserts that Citigroup's 44-member senior leadership committee includes only five women, and that its 19-member executive committee is composed entirely of men.

Moreover, the complaint said that there was a statistically significant disparity in the number of women and men laid off in the November 2008 cuts "that was unlikely to have occurred by chance, and instead was the result of intentional gender discrimination."

The complaint is the latest in a series of lawsuits accusing Wall Street banks of favoring men over women, or fostering a culture in which female employees did not have the same opportunities as their male peers to advance to more senior positions.

Last month, three former female employees at **Goldman Sachs** filed [their own bias lawsuit](#) against Goldman, also claiming systematic gender discrimination. And in March, three investment advisers who worked at **Bank of America Merrill Lynch** filed [a lawsuit](#) in federal court accusing the bank of gender bias. Both Goldman and Bank of America have denied the accusations.

Update: As promised, Citigroup reviewed the lawsuit Wednesday and released a statement Wednesday evening addressing the specific claims in the suit.

The five women who were laid off in November 2008 "were selected based on legitimate business reasons, not based on their gender," Ms. Romero-Apsilos said.

"Many of their allegations are either totally inaccurate or selectively incomplete," she said. "The facts do not support their claims of gender discrimination."

Citigroup also defended its treatment of the one plaintiff who remains employed at the bank, Dorly Hazan-Amir, who claimed, among other things, that she was demoted after returning from maternity leave

"Many of her allegations are false, unsupported or taken completely out of context," Ms. Romero-Apsilos said. "The facts demonstrate that the employment decisions involving her role were based on her performance and not her gender or her pregnancy or the fact that she took family leave."

– *Thomas Kaplan*

[Lawsuit Accusing Citigroup of Bias Against Women](#)