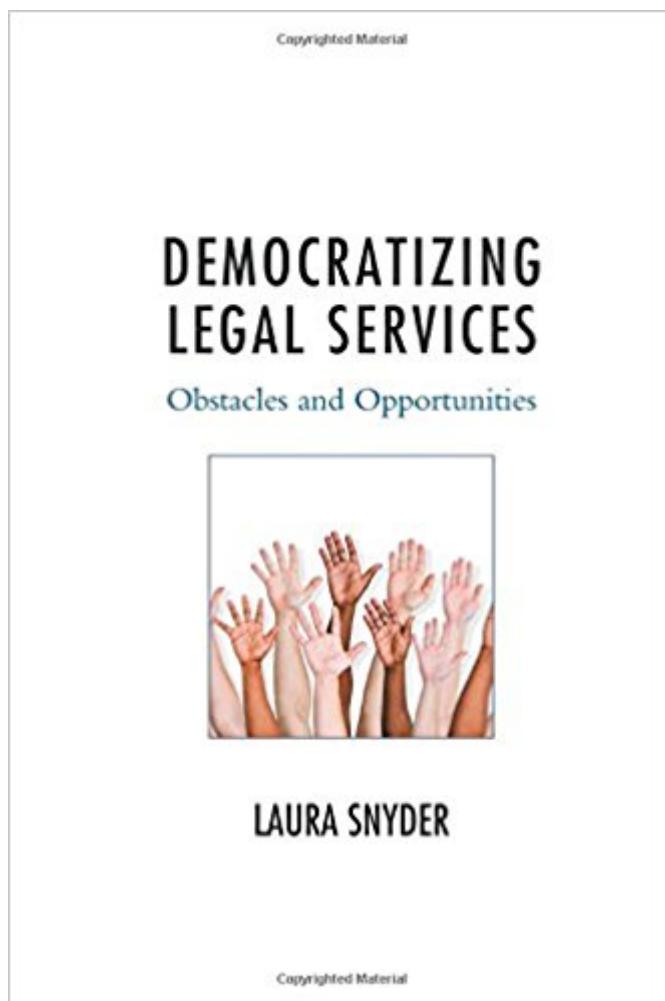


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# Democratizing Legal Services: Obstacles And Opportunities



## **Synopsis**

We live in a "law-thick" world. For individuals and organizations in both the public and private sectors, navigating the large number of complex laws, rules, institutions, and procedures that pervade American life is virtually impossible without some assistance. Some argue that "there are too many lawyers." Others argue that the unmet need for legal services is so high that it constitutes a human rights crisis. This book exposes why it is easy to access legal services for some, while it is virtually impossible for others, and why some lawyers have successful careers, but others cannot. This book argues that the problems plaguing legal services in the US can be only be addressed by a radical overhaul of the rules that govern how legal services may be delivered, as well as radical changes to who exercises the power to make those rules. Through interviews with those with experience with alternative legal service providers, this book exposes the formidable obstacles that exist along the path to those changes, as well as the opportunities that await. More information can be found at: [www.notjustforlawyers.com](http://www.notjustforlawyers.com)

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In 2007 a quiet but cataclysmic event occurred in the legal world: the enactment of the UK Legal Services Act. It enabled non-lawyers to own and run legal practices. The shocks have since been felt around the world. Using forensic analysis, Snyder dissects how the legal profession has tried, and failed, to protect its monopoly as its world turned upside down. And in telling the stories of those involved, she powerfully brings it all alive. (John A. Flood, Griffith University)The global acceptance of MDPs and ABS is undeniable. Laura Snyder has added her voice to those who call on the

organized American legal profession to look forward and not backward regarding the business associations permitted to lawyers. She correctly concludes that unless the American legal profession acts soon, it will be alone in the world, inhibiting the capacity of American lawyers to compete in rapidly expanding global markets. Failing to act, the American legal profession will once again see change flood over the walls it erects in its misguided efforts to remain the same. (James E. Moliterno, Washington and Lee University) This is an optimistic book. It sets out clearly and persuasively the case for opening up the legal market and why it should be seen as exciting, not threatening, for lawyers and clients alike. Alternative structures are not a panacea and are only a means to an end. But, by giving lawyers and others more means to deliver legal services, we should move closer to the end of democratizing the law. (Neil Rose, Legal Futures)

Laura Snyder has been a lawyer, both in law firms and as in-house counsel, for over twenty years. She received her JD from the University of Illinois, a DEA from the University of Paris I, and a TRIUM Executive MBA.

This is a truly fascinating work! The depth of Snyder's supporting research is astounding. She really did her homework. Most likely, there are few attorneys "in the trenches" aware of what is/has recently occurred worldwide with changes in legal structures - I certainly wasn't until a friend challenged me to read this book. Do NOT miss going to the author's website that fleshes out all of her interviews. They should be required reading for business students and lawyers. Backed up by all this research, interspersed with stories, Snyder asks some very tough questions for the legal community, "If the laws of the United States accord to the legal profession the exclusive privilege to serve the entire market, shouldn't the counterpart to that exclusive privilege be the corresponding obligation to serve the entire market? If it is the legal profession - and the legal profession only - that has the right, by law, to serve the legal services market, then shouldn't the legal profession have the obligation, by law, to develop and implement solutions that do effectively serve the entire market?" The book is not full of "finger pointing" but is a well developed, full analysis of where legal services are in this nation, how they've recently developed in some competing nations and exactly how the legal world is changing, and could change, around us. Personally, my worldview of legal services has shifted. I have the author to thank for that. Definitely an insightful and timely book, especially for business and legal services students and professionals. Definitely worth the read.

I had the pleasure of first meeting and hearing Laura Snyder present at a small professionals

conference we both attended in Hawaii in 2013. Laura spoke knowledgeably and passionately about the transformation that was then happening to the UK legal profession based on her research, her discussions with many incumbent law firms, several disruptors and start ups, regulators and commentators. Laura is correct as she states in her book that when she sat down next to me after making her presentation I did ask her "what are you now going to do with all that knowledge and research?" The rest as they say is now history. Laura has now undertaken even more detailed research and interviewed countless of people involved in the legal professions of the UK, US, Canada and Australasia, culminating in this almanac of how legal services can and are being democratized- essentially by the use of alternative business structures. If there are deeper and more meaningful research and stories out there of the pros and cons of law firms being owned and operated by those that do not possess a law degree I do not know of same. Laura has interviewed some of the most informed, creative and smartest professionals involved in law and obtained their views and documented an understanding of their own personal stories which proves compelling reading. Whether you are a lawyer who supports greater deregulation of the profession or not; an advisor or commentator to the legal profession; a regulator or a law society; a client of the profession; an undergraduate about to enter the profession; an academic or a student of the study of professions and how they might face increasing challenges and opportunities in the 21st century; or simply an interested observer on how vested interests can create obstacles to those seeking better access to justice, then this is a welcome read. You will not be disappointed. It should be mandatory reading for any US attorney.

This book is an essential and important contribution to the discussion of alternative business structures and is a must-read for anyone interested in how legal services are provided the US (as well as in Canada). Laura Snyder lays out and then dismantles the arguments opposing alternative business structures in a methodical and convincing fashion. Most powerful are the interviews that Ms. Snyder included in her book, with a variety of players at the forefront of these changes in the legal services marketplace; they provide firsthand storytelling about the creation and development of alternative business structures in several anglo-saxon countries. There is even a great website [notjustforlawyers.com](http://notjustforlawyers.com) that provides the full text of these absorbing interviews. The extraordinary treatise provides an illuminating survey of the the rise of alternative business structures in the context of the regulation of legal services, in a manner that is comprehensive, unique and highly compelling. It's a fascinating read.

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