

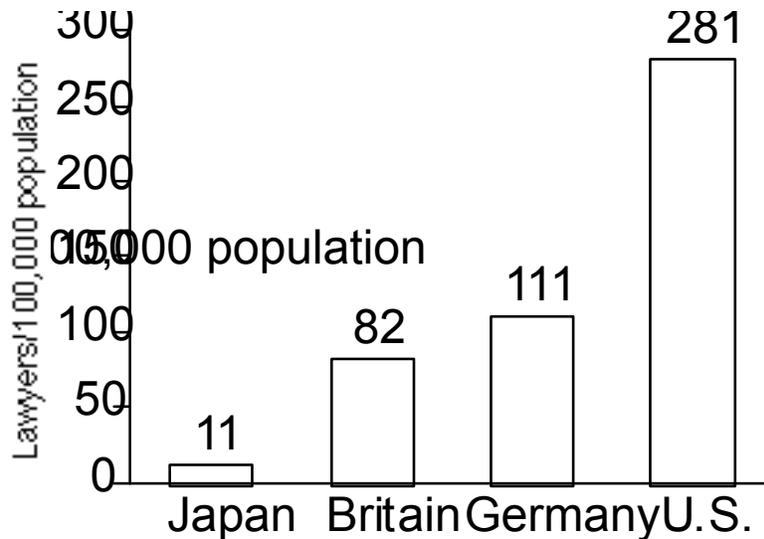
Lawyers and the GNP

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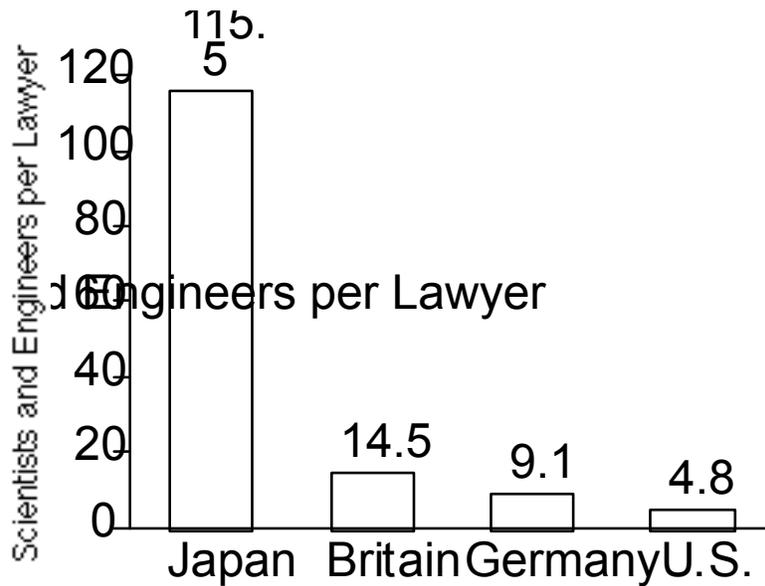
Recently, Vice-President Dan Quayle upset the American Bar Association's annual meeting by giving a speech questioning whether the United States, with 5 percent of the world's population, really needs 70 per cent of the world's lawyers.

University of Texas finance professor Stephen Magee has put numbers to Quayle's criticisms. He claims that his research suggests that the real cost of lawyer induced civil suits reduced the national GNP by 10 per cent during the 1980s. He further estimates that, all things considered, the real cost to the economy/per person comes to a chilling \$1 million dollars per lawyer. (Maybe we should pay them to do stay out of the office.)

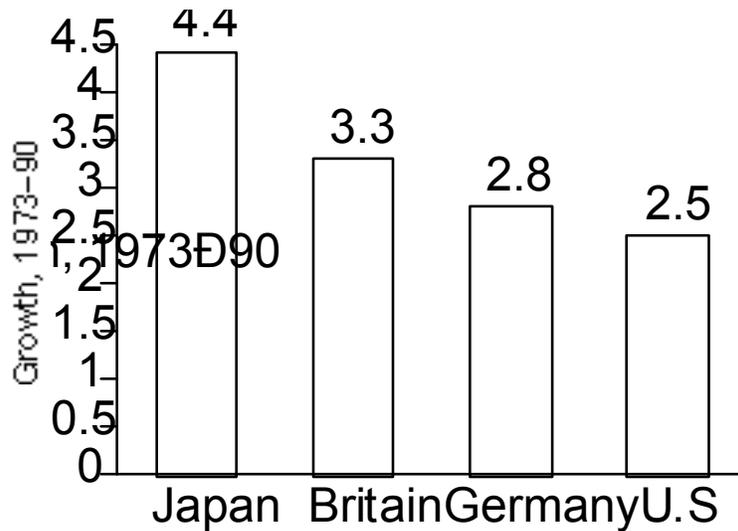
Charting the data yields interesting results. Here, for instance, is the number of lawyers per hundred thousand population for several major industrialized countries.



Even more disturbing is a ratio critical to technologically advanced societies, that of scientists and engineers to lawyers:



Finally, here's a chart of the result of all those busy lawyers, the average annual growth in the GNP as a function of output per hour worked between 1973 and 1990:



Remember these numbers the next time you hear of Apple, Microsoft or Lotus unleashing an army of lawyers against their business competitors. The real winners aren't the ones who, millions of dollars later, win in court. The real winners are our foreign competitors. As a nation, we are suing ourself into the poor house.

(Data from *National Review*, November 4, 1991, page 16.)