



**EQUAL RIGHTS EQUAL HEIGHTS**

**UNIS-UN**  
**2024**

**CLIMBING THE LADDER OF GENDER EQUALITY**



**UNIS UN 2024**

*Working Paper*

*The views expressed in this working paper and at the UNIS-UN conference are not necessarily those of UNIS, The UNITED NATIONS, or their affiliates.*

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## A LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

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Dear Participant,

We'd like to take this moment to thank you for coming to this year's conference, and to introduce ourselves and the rest of the UNIS-UN organizing and executive committees.

The UNIS-UN Conference was founded in 1976 by Ms. Sylvia Gordon, a teacher at the United Nations International School. Her dream was to create an event that would draw attention to the world's most pertinent issues while embodying the values of education and cross-cultural understanding shared by UNIS and the UN. Over the years, UNIS-UN has evolved into the largest student-run conference held in the United Nations General Assembly, with over 500 students attending from six continents.

Each year, the responsibility of carrying on UNIS-UN and the legacy of Ms. Gordon is placed on a group of highly dedicated UNIS students who have shown responsibility and passion for continuing her efforts. Our planning begins in April by interviewing and selecting students for the Executive Committee. We are then divided into six committees: Editing, Finance, Logistics, Speakers, Technology, and Visiting Schools. Together, we work with the UNIS students who make up the Organizing Committee to plan all aspects of the conference, from website design and social media presence to speaker and participant invitations.

In the last few years, the responsibilities of the UNIS-UN executive committee have significantly changed as we have had to adapt to the challenges presented by the pandemic. This year will be our second year back in the UN General Assembly. We have built on what we learned from last year's conference and worked to make this year's event even better. Committees were tasked with finding innovative ways to continue to grow and make our conference more engaging and informative. Through another year of successful teamwork and collaboration, we have planned a conference that we are incredibly proud of.

Over the coming days, you will have the opportunity to listen, discuss, and debate a broad spectrum of themes concerning gender equality. As you hear from speakers and debate panelists, we hope you will not only express your voice but also bring what you learn and experience here to your own countries and communities. We've worked hard to plan a marvelous experience for you, and we are excited to welcome you to our 48th annual UNIS-UN Conference.

Here's to a wonderful conference!

Sincerely,

Justa van Gaal and Aaliya Malhotra  
*Co-Chairs of UNIS-UN*

## DEBATE MOTION I

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*“Should transgender people be allowed to compete in sports in the category of their gender identity?”*

In debating this topic, we want students to consider transgender inclusion in sports. We encourage the evaluation of advantages and disadvantages regarding transgender people competing in the category of their gender identity, along with whether it creates fair or unfair competition. Transgender inclusion in sports is evolving, challenging norms, and fostering a more inclusive athletic landscape, however a lot of questions have been raised regarding inclusion. With this in mind, students should consider the following questions about the topic: is this inclusion fair competition or unfair advantage? Should there be a separate category for transgender athletes? Is integration or separation more appropriate? How is transgender inclusion reshaping athletics? How does the exclusion from sports based on gender identity affect the mental health and overall well-being of transgender athletes? What role can sports play in fostering a sense of belonging? Will advancements in science and technology help address concerns related to fairness in competition?

## DEBATE MOTION II

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*“Is the feminist movement effective?”*

In debating this topic, we want students to consider the effectiveness of the feminist movement and evaluate its impact on gender equality and societal norms. Students should evaluate the historical context, achievements and challenges the feminist movement faces and generate convincing arguments on whether the movement has successfully addressed issues such as the wage gap, representation, and reproductive rights. The multifaceted public opinion on the feminist movement is constantly changing, and questions have been raised on the intersectionality and inclusivity of the movement on people of different backgrounds, such as women of color and non-binary/transgender people. Taking this into account, students should consider some of the following questions: how successful is the feminist movement in achieving its goals? Is the movement effective in promoting gender equity in various sectors, even in male or female-dominated industries? Is the feminist movement completely inclusive for everyone? Does the feminist movement exclude anyone? How successful has the movement been in adapting to and addressing new challenges in the 21st century? In what ways does cultural resistance impact the effectiveness of the feminist movement in different societies? What steps can the feminist movement take to continue progressing and remain relevant in the future?

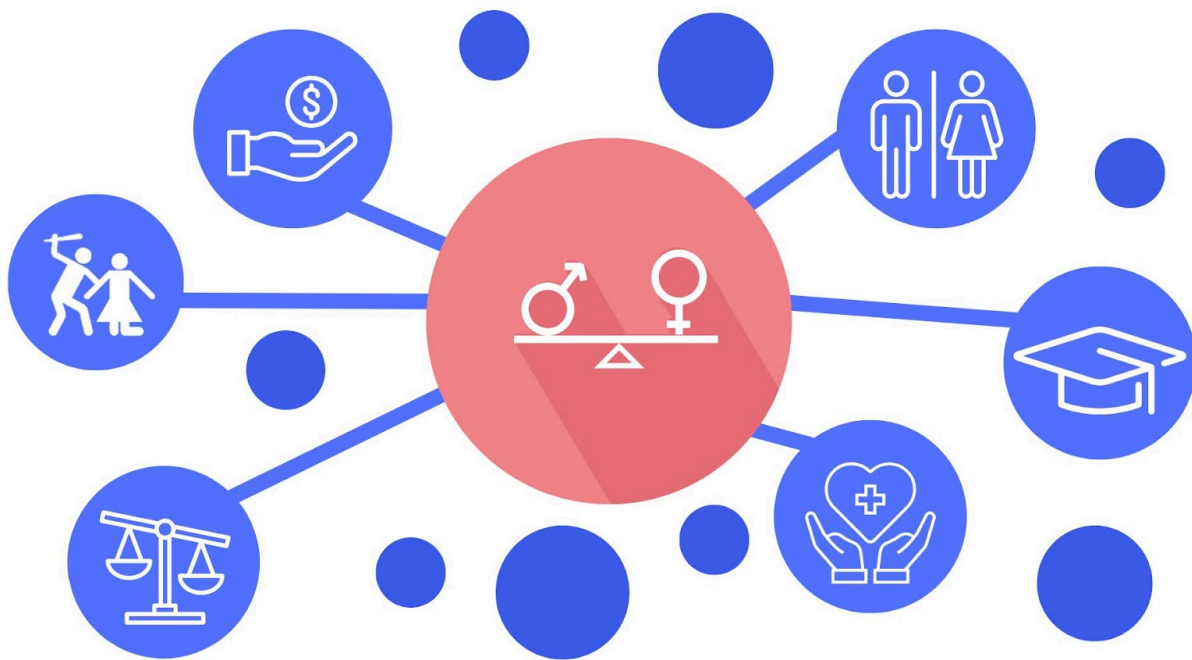
## FOREWORD

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Gender equality is a fundamental human right and central to sustainable development. Every human being, regardless of gender, deserves to be treated equally and have the same opportunities in their lives. However, gender inequality reigns around the globe, and there is a lot of work to be done to achieve true gender equality. It is time to focus on the future of gender equality for everyone.

This working paper addresses and informs on the importance of gender equality and the barriers that must be overcome to provide equal opportunities and protection to people of all genders. Our hope is that its contents will allow you to further develop your understanding of the issue as a whole and how to address the struggle many individuals, communities, and countries face due to the lack of gender equality. How do factors such as race, refugee status, or socioeconomic status intersect with gender and one's livelihood? How does one's gender impact their rights, legal protection, and how they are treated in the healthcare system? How is violence against women ingrained into certain cultures? How does one's gender affect their access to education? How has the media impacted gender roles? How is gender linked to mental health? How does gender inequality show up in sports and in the workplace? How have ideas of gender shifted over time? What gender inequalities exist globally and what solutions have been introduced to address these inequalities?

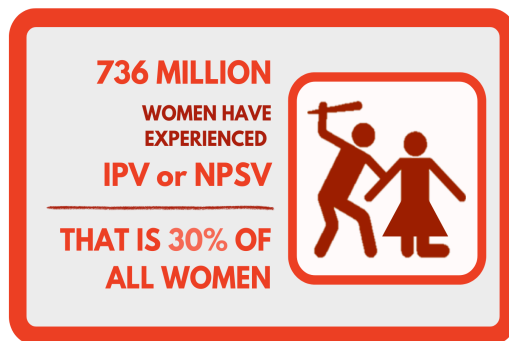
We hope that the following articles assist you in answering these ambitious questions and that they nurture compelling discussions. As you hear from debate panelists and speakers, this information is at your disposal for contribution to the discussion.



## VIOLENCE & CONFLICT AGAINST WOMEN

Elenathan Kassa

Violence and conflict against women remain widespread issues that transcend ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries. Women experience violence and conflict in a variety of ways that can happen in a wide range of situations. Harmful views, cultural traditions, societal norms, and economic issues greatly influence environments where women are constantly in danger. This essay will analyze the problem associated with the four common forms of violence<sup>1</sup> against women.



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), two of the most prominent forms of violence towards women are intimate partner violence (IPV) and non-partner sexual violence (NPSV). Around the world, 736 million women have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence, accounting for 30% of all women. IPV is referred to as behavior by an intimate partner or ex-partner that results in physical, sexual, or psychological harm. This fact includes controlling, physically aggressive, and sexually coercive behaviors. More than one in four

women (26%) who are over the age of fifteen have experienced violence at the hands of their partners at least once. Based on the World Population Prospects' 2018 population data<sup>2</sup> and this percentage, the WHO calculates that 641 million women have been impacted. Although these figures are already extremely high, the actual figures are expected to be even higher. Research demonstrates that, because of social stigma and women's reluctance to put themselves through more hardship, IPV frequently goes unreported.<sup>3</sup>

Sub-Saharan Africa, where 33% of women aged 15–49 have experienced IPV in their lifetime and 20% in the last year alone, and South Asia, where 35% of women in the same age group have experienced it in their lifetime and 19% in the previous year, are the two regions with the highest known prevalence of IPV.

IPV most commonly affects young women between the ages of 15 and 19. Nearly one in four teenage girls (24%) who have been in a relationship by the time they are 19 years old have already experienced physical, sexual, or psychological abuse at the hands of a partner (WHO). In Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where one in five teenagers has experienced IPV in the past year, the prevalence of IPV among this demographic is highest.

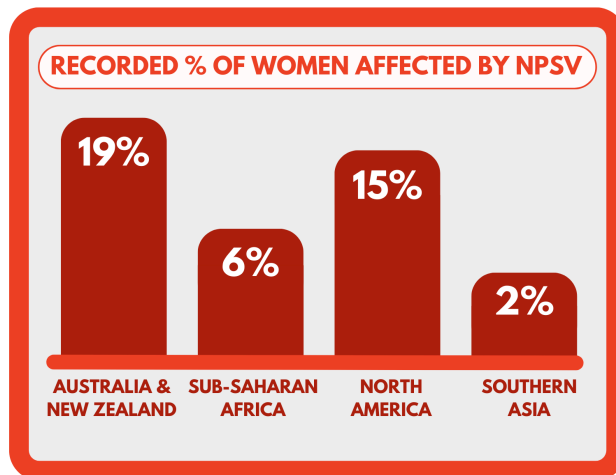
<sup>1</sup> "Types of Violence against women and girls." *UN Women*, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence#:~:text=Intimate%2Dpartner%20violence&text=This%20is%20one%20of%20the,viole%20experienced%20by%20women%20globally>

<sup>2</sup> "Violence against women and girls - what the data tells us." *The World Bank*, 30 Sep 2022, <https://genderdata.worldbank.org/data-stories/overview-of-gender-based-violence/>

<sup>3</sup> "Violence Against Women." *World Health Organization*, 9 March 2021, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

Apart from IPV, women's safety and physical integrity are at risk from non-partner sexual violence (NPSV), which refers to sexual assaults committed by anyone who is not a male intimate partner or a husband. A stranger, friend, acquaintance, or family member may save NPSV. An estimated 6% of women and girls between the ages of 15 and 49 worldwide have experienced sexual violence from a non-partner at least once.

Higher-income nations have seen a higher prevalence of NPSV, particularly Australia and New Zealand, where 19% of women have been affected, and North America, where 15% of women have been affected (WHO). The estimated prevalence rates in Sub-Saharan Africa (6%) and Southern Asia (2%) are significantly lower in comparison. It is essential to take into account the stigma attached to these forms of violence, too. In traditional or patriarchal societies, survivors are frequently blamed and may choose not to come forward to lessen the possibility of adverse outcomes.



Another typical example of violence towards women is conflict-related sexual violence. This event occurs in conflict settings where sexual violence is often used as a weapon<sup>4</sup> of war<sup>5</sup> to humiliate, dehumanize, and terrorize women. For instance, during Ethiopia's latest civil war in the Tigray region, women have been subjected to sexual violence, displacement, and exploitation by the Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF), Amhara Militia (Fano), and the Eritrean Defense Forces (EDF).<sup>6</sup> According to the Washington Post, an estimated 100,000 women and girls have been raped during the conflict in Tigray.<sup>7</sup> Most survivors reported that they were being brutalized

because of their identity and the need to "cleanse" or destroy them. These attacks could amount to crimes against humanity and potentially even genocide, as they are also ethnically motivated. Although the conflict ended on November 4, 2022, the brutal impacts of sexual violence, such as HIV, mental health disorders, and stigmatization, have continued to persist. Most survivors of gender-based violence have also been unable to have access to medical or psychological services as they have been deliberately destroyed or are occupied by armed groups.

In Sudan, 4 million women are at risk of sexual violence and other human rights violations by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).<sup>8</sup> The RSF has subjected women to forced

<sup>4</sup> Salama, Hana. "Sexual Violence in conflict and weapons: unpacking the links better prevention." *Humanitarian Law and Policy*, 28 Sep 2023, <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2023/09/28/sexual-violence-in-conflict-weapons-unpacking-the-links-for-better-prevention/#:~:text=Not%20only%20are%20weapons%20and,conditions%20that%20lead%20to%20the>

<sup>5</sup> Mlaba, Khanyi. "How Do Women and Girls Experience the Worst of War." *Global Citizen*, 23 March 2022, <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/women-and-girls-impacts-war-conflict/>

<sup>6</sup> Chakrabarty, Malancha. "A war within a war: Sexual Violence as a weapon of war." *Observer Research Foundation*, 23 March 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/Sexual-violence-as-a-weapon-of-war>

<sup>7</sup> Houreld, Katharine. "Raped during Ethiopia's war, survivors now rejected by their families." *The Washington Post*, 26 Nov 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/11/26/ethiopia-tigray-rape-survivors-stigma/>

<sup>8</sup> Al-Karib, Hala. "Violent Conflict in Sudan Has Impacted on Nearly Every Aspect of Women's Lives." *ReliefWeb*, 30 October 2023, <https://reliefweb.int/report/sudan/violent-conflict-sudan-has-impacted-nearly-every-aspect-womens-lives#:~:text=More%20than%204%20million%20women,human%20rights%20and%20humanitarian%20law>



disappearances, sexual assault, slavery, exploitation, and detention in hostile and degrading conditions. After experiencing torture and violence at the hands of the RSF, countless amount of girls have been reported to have died by suicide. As a result of occupation and limited access to services, women in Sudan also have limited access to health care, especially comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care.

Another common form of violence against women is child marriage.<sup>9</sup> Despite a decline in this practice throughout the past decades, it remains widespread, with approximately one in five girls married across the globe. Before the age of 18, girls are less likely to finish school and are more likely to become victims of domestic abuse. Their unmarried peers experience better economic and health outcomes, eventually carried on to their kids, which strain a nation's ability to provide high-quality healthcare and educational services. Child brides often become pregnant during adolescence, when the risk of complications during pregnancy and childbirth increases. Girls' mental health may suffer significantly as a result of the practice, which can also isolate them from friends and family.

Poverty exacerbates the global problem of child marriage. The issue of child marriage affects people's nationalities, cultures, and religious backgrounds. The belief that marriage will provide "protection," customs or religious laws, unequal gender norms, poverty—particularly in rural areas—weak laws and enforcement are some of the main factors that put a girl at risk of getting married. Despite progress in reducing child marriage and pregnancy, 12 million girls in Africa are married each year.

In conclusion, violence and conflict against women are common and occur everywhere in varying degrees of severity. Because of its prevalence and lasting impact on women and girls, resolving this issue requires a coordinated effort at local, national, and global levels that adheres to the needs of the survivor. One of the ways to implement this survivor-based approach is through holding perpetrators accountable and ensuring access to justice for survivors.



Additionally, providing victims with medical, mental health, and financial support becomes an essential tactic in minimizing the effects of this kind of violence.<sup>10</sup>

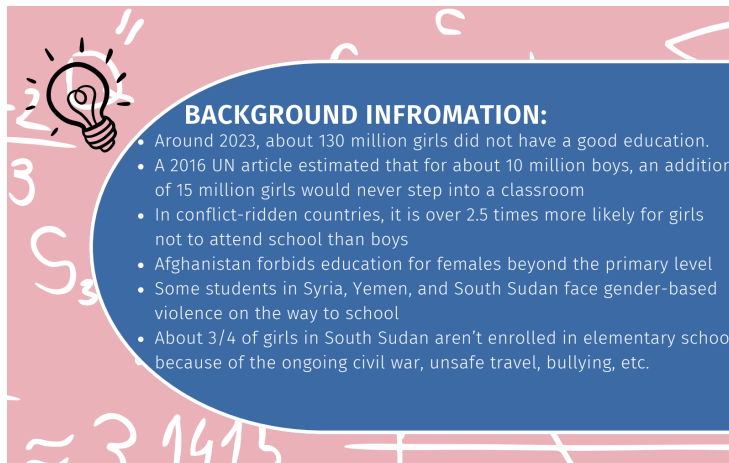
<sup>9</sup> “Child Marriage.” *UNICEF*, <https://www.unicef.org/protection/child-marriage>

<sup>10</sup> “Facts and Figures: Ending violence against women.” *UN Women*, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures>

## EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Ananya Ghose

Today, equitable access to education remains an important concern in society, with gender impacting an individual's access to education significantly. Cultural norms, societal expectations, and economic factors are some components that often collectively limit access to education solely based on an individual's gender. While this issue varies by country, it has persisted for centuries and remains present today, making it difficult to achieve gender equality and inclusive education for all.



The impact of gender on access to education is profound. As of early 2023, 130 million girls are deprived of proper education. This figure, which only continues to increase, displays the effects of gender discrimination in various societies, where girls are often the last to be considered—or are not at all—for educational opportunities. A United Nations report published in 2016 states, "Girls are more likely than boys to never attend school." The same report also estimates that compared to 10 million

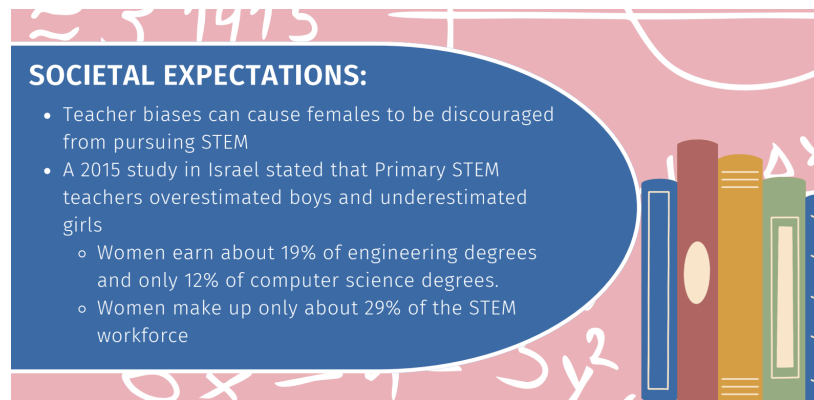
boys, an additional 15 million girls will never even set foot in a classroom. In some areas of the world, such as rural parts of Africa and South Asia, obstacles such as traditional belief systems and gender stereotypes perpetuate discriminatory practices. This realism leads to this imbalance becoming even more profound.

The gender gap widens for conflict-ridden regions in the world, where girls are over 2.5 times more likely to be out of school compared to boys. Afghanistan is a prime example of this, where the Taliban have strictly prohibited education beyond the primary level for all women and girls. Since March 2022, over 1 million girls have been prevented from attending secondary school, and more than 100,000 young women have been banned from attending university. Similarly, in countries such as Syria, Yemen, and South Sudan, girls frequently face threats of gender-based violence on their journey to and from school. Many girls often experience sexual harassment, assault, abduction, and other forms of violence. For example, it is estimated that three-quarters of girls in South Sudan are not enrolled in elementary school as a result of the ongoing civil war, partially because of the unsafe journey they face on the way to school. Within the school itself, girls are targets of bullying and psychological attacks perpetrated mainly by male students, instructors, and even by other girls. Such violence further discourages girls and parents of girls who attend school and leads to higher dropout rates. Achieving equal access to education for all requires addressing these barriers to guarantee inclusive and accessible education for women worldwide.

Cultural norms are another significant factor that contributes to unequal access to education, particularly for girls. Many cultures have various perceptions of a woman's role in society; therefore, girls' opportunities are often reduced to childbearing, raising kids, and domestic work. For households who

follow these traditions, investing in a boy's education rather than a girl's is a frequent practice. This practice is called the "son's preference," an attitude that boys are more valuable and will, therefore, succeed more than girls, leading to the likelihood that they will be sent to school first and will get more financial support for their education than another girl in the same family. This statistic is linked to long-standing patriarchal gender roles and ideologies that view girls as caregivers and boys as providers.

While many societal issues exist in how girls may access education, school systems exhibit their own set of unique flaws, with women being disproportionately affected by sexism within the education system. This truth is notably evident in women's discouragement from pursuing STEM fields due to teacher biases in their first few years of education. Recent studies have shown that early educational experiences significantly impact the courses students ultimately choose and the jobs and salaries they subsequently achieve. A 2015 study from Israel revealed an ongoing bias where primary school teachers in science and mathematics tended to overestimate the boys' abilities and underestimate the girls. This "teacher bias," as the study noted, has had a lasting impact on the attitudes of many girls towards the subjects, as well as the courses they choose and their future career paths. The same study found that many educators, through



**SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS:**

- Teacher biases can cause females to be discouraged from pursuing STEM
- A 2015 study in Israel stated that Primary STEM teachers overestimated boys and underestimated girls
  - Women earn about 19% of engineering degrees and only 12% of computer science degrees.
  - Women make up only about 29% of the STEM workforce

explicit or implicit means, encourage them to abandon their ambitions in the STEM fields. As a result, girls begin to opt out of STEM courses at a young age, which is why women earn around 19% of engineering degrees and only 12% of computer science degrees. Together, women make up only 29% of the STEM workforce.

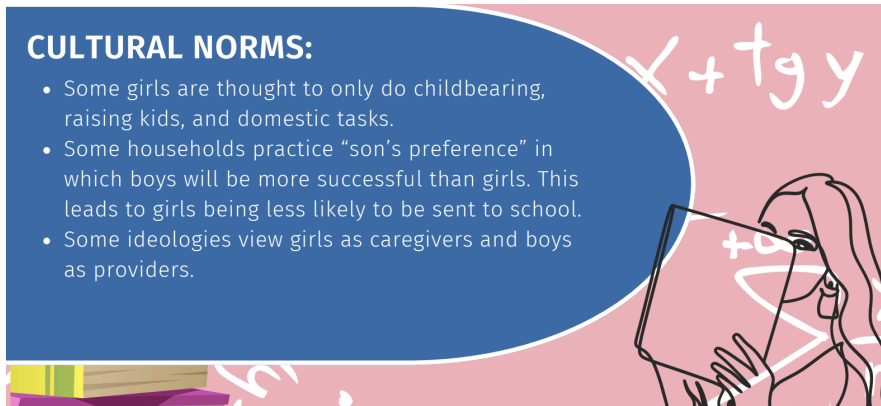
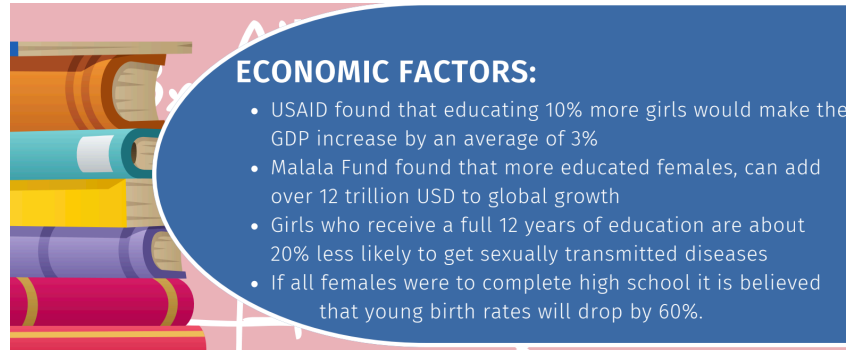
Gender stereotypes and biases that girls and boys encounter from a very early age often directly affect their choices regarding the kinds of futures they should plan for. Society and many school curricula often maintain that women are best suited for jobs such as childcare, nursing, and midwifery, as women are believed to be naturally warm, nurturing, and soft-hearted. Meanwhile, society pushes men towards professions like finance, construction, and manufacturing due to perceptions of strength and assertiveness. According to a study conducted by the Government of Quebec, children as early as the age of three unwittingly tend to associate specific fields with one gender due to the stereotypes propagated by the people around them and the media they are exposed to. As they grow older, these stereotypes are, once again, spread through curriculums and, therefore, become another factor that influences how boys and girls choose their college majors and universities. For example, many STEM curriculums often fail to mention the contributions of women in science and engineering and focus on a very male-centered narrative. This principle limits many girls' perceptions of potential career paths and reinforces traditional gender roles.

As these stereotypes continue to persist, girls also continue to choose jobs in the health-care and social service industries, while boys continue to choose jobs in business and STEM fields. Furthermore, they prevent students from envisioning themselves in jobs traditionally associated with the opposite gender,

even if these roles align perfectly with their personal interests.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, this trend leads to a limited range of role models for future generations, and dissuades more girls and boys both from considering alternative career paths. This is part of the reason as to why fewer women enter STEM fields and fewer men choose professions in teaching, health, and social service.

Equal access to education for both boys and girls has been shown to have positive impacts on economic growth and foster healthier societies. A study conducted by USAID found that educating only 10% more girls would lead to a country's GDP increasing by an average of 3%.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, the Malala Fund

found that more educated girls, and therefore more working women, can add over 12 trillion USD to global growth. In terms of healthier societies, girls who receive twelve full years of education would be less susceptible, by up to 20%, to receiving sexually transmitted diseases like HIV. Furthermore, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, if all women were to complete high school, the frequency of early births would drop by 60% and child deaths would be cut in half. This achievement would also lead to improved pre- and post-pregnancy care.<sup>13</sup>



The impact of gender on access to education is a complex issue that is rooted mainly in cultural norms, and stereotypes. The effect gender has on educational opportunities is evident globally, with millions of girls facing barriers such as cultural norms and gender-based violence.

Within school systems, the presence of sexism further reinforces traditional roles and limits career choices for both girls and boys from a young age. Overcoming these challenges requires significant efforts to eliminate patriarchal belief systems and stereotypes, discriminatory practices, and most importantly, ensure both safe and accessible education for women worldwide. Achieving equitable access to education is a paramount step towards creating more inclusive and gender equal societies around our world.

<sup>11</sup>"Effects of Stereotypes on Career Choices." *Government Du Quebec*, 30 Aug. 2023, [www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/childhood/child-development/effects-stereotypes-personal-development/effects-stereotype-s-career-choices](http://www.quebec.ca/en/family-and-support-for-individuals/childhood/child-development/effects-stereotypes-personal-development/effects-stereotype-s-career-choices).

<sup>12</sup>"Girls' Education." *USAID*.

<https://2017-2020.usaid.gov/education/girls#:~:text=More%20girls%20in%20school%20%3D%20greater,earnings%20by%2010%2D20%25>.

<sup>13</sup>"10 Things That Happen When Girls Stay In School." *World Vision Advocacy*, 28 Aug. 2019, <https://worldvisionadvocacy.org/2019/08/28/10-things-that-happen-when-girls-stay-in-school/>

## LAW & POLICY

Amaya Parekh

Worldwide, more than 2.4 billion women are affected by gender-discriminatory laws and a lack of legal protections. It's estimated that, on average, women are afforded only  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the rights that their male counterparts are. Though severity levels differ, laws and policies that discriminate based on sex exist in every country and are systemically entangled in legal and justice systems around the world. The sexism in laws and policies negatively impacts women in ways such as access to menstruation products, abortion, contraceptives, and disparities between men's and women's pay, constructing the gender pay gap.<sup>14</sup> This article will explore how laws and policies affect women.

### 500 MILLION

*people who menstruate lack access to sanitary period products and clean bathrooms*

While menstruation is a basic fact of the female human body, millions are denied adequate care for this bodily function. Worldwide, approximately 500 million people who menstruate lack access to sanitary period products and clean bathrooms. Period poverty, defined by CAS Professor Rita Jalali as “the lack of access to menstrual hygiene products, water, soap, and private, safe, clean sanitation services to manage menstrual cycles,” affects millions around the world. Period poverty affects those in both high and low-income countries. Within the US, homeless, incarcerated, and transgender individuals who menstruate are all disproportionately impacted. While food banks and other programs under WIC (women, infants, and children) in the US provide groceries, they do not include period products. It has been found that period poverty affects several aspects of life for those who experience it.<sup>15</sup> Studies have shown that income, education, and both physical and mental health are affected by a lack of access to period products. An individual's ability to attend work or school may be impaired, and a student's likelihood to participate in sports or other extracurriculars also decreases with period poverty.

Despite extensive research on the effects of period poverty on women, menstruation products still need to be affordable for many. The majority of workplaces and educational institutions need to provide them. Food, a basic necessity for all, is not taxed in the US. The pink tax refers to the sales taxation of menstruation products worldwide and the higher expenses of items marketed for women.<sup>16</sup> Menstruation is unavoidable for 50% of the population, yet menstruation products remain taxed. By depriving many women of continued access to affordable, safe, and sanitary menstruation products, policies that make them unaffordable are impairing women's income, education, and mental and physical health, as unclean and unsafe products and care methods increase the risks and concerns of infection and health issues.

In recent years, abortion and subsequent laws regarding access to contraceptives have been a topic of controversy, specifically within the US. Contraceptives are protected in the US under two Supreme Court

<sup>14</sup> Michelle, Milford Morse. "Gender Discrimination Is Enshrined in Law. That Needs to Change." *United Nations Foundation*, United Nations, 8 Mar. 2022, [unfoundation.org/blog/post/gender-discrimination-is-enshrined-in-law-that-needs-to-change/](https://unfoundation.org/blog/post/gender-discrimination-is-enshrined-in-law-that-needs-to-change/). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

<sup>15</sup> Jan. 2024. Hassenstab, Nicole. "Globally to Locally, Period Poverty Affects Millions." *American University*, 1 Mar. 2023, [www.american.edu/sis/news/20230301-globally-to-locally-period-poverty-affects-millions.cfm#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20World%20Bank,use%20during%20their%20menstrual%20cycles](https://www.american.edu/sis/news/20230301-globally-to-locally-period-poverty-affects-millions.cfm#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20World%20Bank,use%20during%20their%20menstrual%20cycles). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

<sup>16</sup> Farid, Huma. "Period Equity: What it is and Why it Matters." *Harvard Health Publishing*, 1 June 2021. *Harvard Health Publishing*, [www.health.harvard.edu/blog/period-equity-what-is-it-why-does-it-matter-202106012473](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/period-equity-what-is-it-why-does-it-matter-202106012473). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

rulings, *Griswold v. Connecticut* (1965) and *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972).<sup>17</sup> Worldwide, approximately 30 countries have legalized both non-prescription pills and IUDs in the last decade, allowing millions of



women easy access to contraception.<sup>18</sup> Abortions are procedures classified as healthcare and can be life-saving for many women, both health-wise and financially. The right to receive this procedure is deemed a fundamental right by the UN, protected under the rights to privacy and life. Despite this, the legality of these surgeries is considered controversial and up for legal debate worldwide. Almost 100 countries have laws limiting abortions in some way, ranging from situational denials to complete prohibitions. 24 countries have completely banned abortion, combined with denying 90 million women access to safe abortions.<sup>19</sup>

On June 24th, 2022, the Supreme Court voted to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, eliminating the federal guarantee of legal abortions in the US. Since then, 24 states have placed some restrictions in place, and 14 states have nearly completely banned abortion. Denying access to safe abortions has been shown to affect maternal health rates, maternal mortality rates, health risks due to unsafe substitutes, and women's mental health suffers with the denial of safe and legal abortions, specifically in black and brown women of color.<sup>20</sup> The gender pay gap is a consistent problem for women worldwide. The wage gap has existed since women entered the workforce, and there continues to be a global discrepancy between men's and women's pay. In the US, women earn, on average, 82 cents for every dollar that a man makes. While countries such as Iceland and Belgium have made further progress in closing the wage gap, it persists within all nations.

One significant contributing factor to the wage gap is the discrimination that women face, forcing them into lower-paying jobs than their male counterparts. According to Forbes, studies have shown that jobs demanding caregiving pay significantly lower than others. This practice disproportionately affects women, as women work the majority of these jobs. Another contributing factor is that women are more likely to work part-time due to expectations to take on more significant familial duties, such as childcare. Women are societally expected to be primary caregivers and nurturers to their children and families; therefore, they are more likely to take time off work to fulfill these responsibilities, while their male co-workers can work full-time without the expectation of bearing the majority of them.

Besides receiving less pay because of familial obligations, women are less likely to receive higher-paying jobs due to the fewer hours worked. Similar to the factor above, women's domestic responsibilities are expected to prevent them from performing the hours it takes for promotions, allowing them to earn as much as male co-workers.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Felix, Mabel, et al. "The Right to Contraception: State and Federal Actions, Misinformation, and the Courts." *KFF. KFF*, [www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/issue-brief/the-right-to-contraception-state-and-federal-actions-misinformation-and-the-courts/#:~:text=Currenly%2C%20the%20right%20to%20contraception,married%20people%20to%20obtain%20contraceptives](https://www.kff.org/womens-health-policy/issue-brief/the-right-to-contraception-state-and-federal-actions-misinformation-and-the-courts/#:~:text=Currenly%2C%20the%20right%20to%20contraception,married%20people%20to%20obtain%20contraceptives). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

<sup>18</sup> "Abortion." *World Health Organization*, 25 Nov. 2021, [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/abortion). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

<sup>19</sup> Council on Foreign Relations. "How the U.S. compares with the rest of the world on abortion rights." *PBS*, 1 July 2022, [www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/how-the-u-s-compares-with-the-rest-of-the-world-on-abortion-rights](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/how-the-u-s-compares-with-the-rest-of-the-world-on-abortion-rights). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

<sup>20</sup> Barry, Eloise. "The State of Abortion Rights Around the World." *Time*, 2022. *Time*, <https://time.com/6173229/countries-abortion-illegal-restrictions/>. Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

<sup>21</sup> Rho, Deborah. "What Causes the Wage Gap?" *University of Minnesota*, Feb. 2021, [genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/what-causes-the-wage-gap/](https://genderpolicyreport.umn.edu/what-causes-the-wage-gap/). Accessed 12 Jan. 2024.

## PORTRAYAL OF GENDER IN MEDIA

Basil Moore

People are typically exposed to traditional and digital media forms from a young age. A study by Common Sense Media found that in the United States, 68% of children five to eight years old use computers at least once a week, and two-thirds of newborns to eight-year-olds watch television at least once per day.<sup>22</sup> 5.4 billion people worldwide have a television in their homes,<sup>23</sup> and just above 60% of the global population use social media.<sup>24</sup> Media generally represents gender as binary and associates specific characteristics to either gender. Women are portrayed as nurturing and supportive, while men are associated with ambition, dominance, and skill. Women are also often underrepresented in the media compared to men.<sup>25</sup> This article explores the portrayal of gender in both traditional and digital media and its widespread effect on people's mental and physical health, as well as its contribution to social issues such as sexism and sexual abuse.

The news media, both in traditional and digital forms, has many issues with the representation of women as compared to men. In television news programs, the people brought on as experts on specific topics are usually men. In the United States, only 36% of news stories feature women as experts.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, sports news coverage heavily favors coverage of men's sports. Women's sports comprise around half of all competitions on the collegiate and professional levels in the U.S while only making up 15% of all sports news coverage.<sup>27</sup> Women also lack representation as the subjects of news stories. A long-term study by the Global Media Monitoring Project that studied 114 countries concluded that only 24% of the people portrayed in the news media are women. In digital news, that number is only 26%.<sup>28</sup> There is also an issue in the news with how women are portrayed. When women are shown, they are more often depicted in pictures rather than shown speaking. This conclusion was drawn by researchers at the University of Bristol, who stated that their findings support the belief that the news media upholds the traditional association of women to their bodies and appearance and men to knowledge.<sup>29</sup> This research shows that women are significantly underrepresented in the news media, and the representation of men compared to women affirms traditional stereotypes of gender.

Films predominantly stereotypically present gender and have issues with how and how much women are represented. According to a 2014 study by the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media of popular films worldwide, less than one-third of all speaking characters are women, and only 23% of films feature a female protagonist. This study also found that in films, women and girls are twice as likely as men and

<sup>22</sup> Rideout, Victoria. *Zero to Eight: Children's Media Use in America*. 2011. *Common Sense Media*, [www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/public\\_comments/california-00325%C2%A000325-82243.pdf](http://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/public_comments/california-00325%C2%A000325-82243.pdf). Accessed 31 Dec 2023.

<sup>23</sup> "The Big List of TV Viewership Statistics [Updated for 2023]." *TV Scientific*, [www.tvscientific.com/insight/tv-viewership-statistics](http://www.tvscientific.com/insight/tv-viewership-statistics). Accessed 31 Dec 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Petrosyan, Ani. "Number of Internet and Social Media Users Worldwide as of October 2023." *Statista*, 25 Oct. 2023, [www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/617136/digital-population-worldwide/). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>25</sup> Santoniccolo F, Trombetta T, Paradiso MN, Rollè L. *Gender and Media Representations: A Review of the Literature on Gender Stereotypes, Objectification and Sexualization*. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 May 9;20(10)

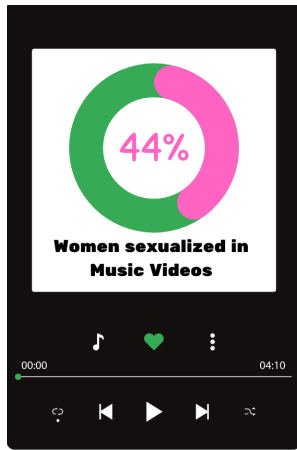
<sup>26</sup> Kitch, Carolyn, editor. "Women in the Newsroom: Status and Stasis." *Sage Journals*, [journals.sagepub.com/page/jmq/women-in-the-newsroom/virtual-collection](http://journals.sagepub.com/page/jmq/women-in-the-newsroom/virtual-collection). Accessed 5 Jan. 2024.

<sup>27</sup> "New Study: Women's Sports Comprise 15% of Sports Media Coverage." *Wasserman*, 24 Oct. 2023, [www.teamwass.com/news/new-study-womens-sports-comprise-15-of-sports-media-coverage/](http://www.teamwass.com/news/new-study-womens-sports-comprise-15-of-sports-media-coverage/). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>28</sup> "Visualizing the Data: Women's Representation in Society." *UN Women*, 25 Feb 2020, [www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2020/2/infographic-visualizing-the-data-womens-representation](http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/multimedia/2020/2/infographic-visualizing-the-data-womens-representation). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Jia S, Lansdall-Welfare T, Sudhahar S, Carter C, Cristianini N. *Women Are Seen More than Heard in Online Newspapers*. *PLoS One*. 2016 Feb 3

boys to be shown in sexually revealing clothing and five times as likely to be mentioned as attractive.



While attention is often brought to the sexuality and attractiveness of female characters, male characters are much more likely to be represented in high-paying jobs or jobs that require a large amount of education. In films, men are shown as attorneys and judges at a ratio of thirteen to one compared to women. That ratio is sixteen to one as professors and five to one as doctors.<sup>30</sup> These findings suggest that, in the film industry, women are not represented nearly as much as men. When they are featured, they are shown in ways that highlight their sexuality rather than their education or knowledge, which is usually associated with men. In music videos, women are also often objectified and sexualized. According to the American Psychological Association, 44% to 81% of music videos contain sexual imagery. Additionally, women are significantly more likely than men to be portrayed as objects or in revealing clothing in music videos.<sup>31</sup>

Social media, across the world, is an integral part of today's society. An estimated 4.9 billion people globally use social media.<sup>32</sup> However, just as has been observed with traditional media, social media often perpetuates stereotypical views of gender. A study published by the European Union found that social media algorithms use gender stereotypes to push advertisements to different people.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, according to a report by the German Federal Government, female social media influencers find more success obtaining brand deals with products and brands that stereotypically target women, like beauty or fashion brands, rather than brands that focus on things like gaming or learning.<sup>34</sup>

Advertisements, which appear in everyday life in many forms, including on television, in magazines, and on social media, often reflect traditional views of gender and objectify and sexualize women. In a Wesleyan University study of 58 print magazines, 51.8% of advertisements that featured women portrayed them as sex objects. That number increased to 76% when the study was limited to just men's magazines.<sup>35</sup> Advertisements also often promote gender stereotypes, depicting men more in professional roles and women more in recreational roles.<sup>36</sup>

A global study by faculty at the University of Vienna found that women were likelier to be featured in advertisements for cleaning, beauty, and self-care products than men, with men depicted in

<sup>30</sup> "Global Film Industry Perpetuates Discrimination against Women." *UN Women*, 22 Sept. 2014, [www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/geena-davis-study-press-release](http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/9/geena-davis-study-press-release). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>31</sup> American Psychological Association, Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. (2007). Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report-full.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Wong, Belle. "Top Social Media Statistics and Trends of 2023." Edited by Cassie Bottorff. *Forbes*, 18 May 2023, [www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-statistics/](https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-statistics/). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>33</sup> Park, Kirsty, et al. *The Impact of the Use of Social Media on Women and Girls*. Mar. 2023. *European Parliament*, [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/743341/IPOL\\_STU\(2023\)743341\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/743341/IPOL_STU(2023)743341_EN.pdf). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>34</sup> "Social Media." *Dritter Gleichstellungsbericht*, Oct. 2021, [www.dritter-gleichstellungsbericht.de/kontext/controllers/document.php/202.f/7/98ad9c.pdf](http://www.dritter-gleichstellungsbericht.de/kontext/controllers/document.php/202.f/7/98ad9c.pdf). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>35</sup> Swift, Jaimee, and Hannah Gould. "Not an Object: On Sexualization and Exploitation of Women and Girls." *UNICEF USA*, 11 Jan. 2021, [www.unicefusa.org/stories/not-object-sexualization-and-exploitation-women-and-girls-0#:~:text=In%20a%20study%20of%20print,76%20percent%20of%20the%20time](https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/not-object-sexualization-and-exploitation-women-and-girls-0#:~:text=In%20a%20study%20of%20print,76%20percent%20of%20the%20time). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>36</sup> Santoniccolo F, Trombetta T, Paradiso MN, Rollè L. Gender and Media Representations: A Review of the Literature on Gender Stereotypes, Objectification and Sexualization. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 May 9;20(10):5770.



advertisements associated with cars and technology. Women were also more likely to be found in home settings in many tested countries than men.<sup>37</sup>

The many skewed and stereotypical representations of gender in the media have been observed to affect social and health issues. A study published in the Society for the Psychology of Women found that men exposed to media that objectified women were more likely to engage in acts of sexual coercion or harassment.<sup>38</sup> A link between sexualization and sexism has also been documented.<sup>39</sup> The confidence of women to report sexual violence is also an issue. According to the United States Department of Justice, in the United States, only one in five female student victims of sexual harassment report the incident to the authorities. An article by UNICEF reports that a contributing factor to this issue is media that portrays men as dominant and women as submissive since this representation of the power dynamic between men and women can trivialize sexual violence.<sup>40</sup> Social media has had a significant effect on women's mental health. An article authored by faculty at University College London found that the over-sexualized and idealized body images found on social media can lead to dissatisfaction with one's body.<sup>41</sup> Research published as part of the Dove Self-Esteem Project found that only 11% of girls globally call themselves beautiful and that 81% of girls in the United States report being afraid of becoming fat.<sup>42</sup> A study published in the *Lancet Child and Adolescent Health* journal found that social media use can cause sleep deprivation and inadequate exercise, as well as mental health issues, mainly in girls.<sup>43</sup> Media that causes people to internalize traditional beliefs about gender roles has been found in multiple studies to cause depression, anxiety, and eating disorders in women, as well as substance abuse, risky behavior, and domestic violence in men.<sup>44</sup>

In conclusion, there has been a vast body of research conducted that proves that media, both in traditional and digital forms, often upholds conventional gender stereotypes and under-represents women. This fact has been linked to sexism, sexual violence, and mental and physical issues in both men and women. The news, advertising, television, and social media industries must be pressured to represent women and men equally to ensure a better understanding of gender in today's society and greater tolerance of other people and their differences.

<sup>37</sup> Matthes J, Prieler M, Adam K. Gender-Role Portrayals in Television Advertising Across the Globe. *Sex Roles*. 2016;75(7):314-327.

<sup>38</sup> Galdi, Silvia, et al. "Objectifying Media." *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 3, 16 Dec. 2013, pp. 398-413, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684313515185>.

<sup>39</sup> Santoniccolo F, Trombetta T, Paradiso MN, Rollè L. Gender and Media Representations: A Review of the Literature on Gender Stereotypes, Objectification and Sexualization. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 May 9;20(10):5770.

<sup>40</sup> Swift, Jaimee, and Hannah Gould. "Not an Object: On Sexualization and Exploitation of Women and Girls." *UNICEF USA*, 11 Jan. 2021, [www.unicefusa.org/stories/not-object-sexualization-and-exploitation-women-and-girls-0#:~:text=In%20a%20study%20of%20print,76%20percent%20of%20the%20time](http://www.unicefusa.org/stories/not-object-sexualization-and-exploitation-women-and-girls-0#:~:text=In%20a%20study%20of%20print,76%20percent%20of%20the%20time). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>41</sup> Pan, Jing. "The Influence of Social Media on Women's Objectified Body Consciousness and Body Dissatisfaction." *2021 International Conference on Social Development and Media Communication*, 17 Jan. 2022, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220105.062>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Swift, Jaimee, and Hannah Gould. "Not an Object: On Sexualization and Exploitation of Women and Girls." *UNICEF USA*, 11 Jan. 2021, [www.unicefusa.org/stories/not-object-sexualization-and-exploitation-women-and-girls-0#:~:text=In%20a%20study%20of%20print,76%20percent%20of%20the%20time](http://www.unicefusa.org/stories/not-object-sexualization-and-exploitation-women-and-girls-0#:~:text=In%20a%20study%20of%20print,76%20percent%20of%20the%20time). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>43</sup> Ducharme, Jamie. "Social Media Hurts Girls More than Boys." *TIME*, 13 Aug. 2019, [time.com/5650266/social-media-girls-mental-health/](http://time.com/5650266/social-media-girls-mental-health/). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Santoniccolo F, Trombetta T, Paradiso MN, Rollè L. Gender and Media Representations: A Review of the Literature on Gender Stereotypes, Objectification and Sexualization. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2023 May 9;20(10):5770.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Lian Zhu

The role of gender inequality compromises individuals' everyday lives despite our knowledge of its inevitable presence. From a pay disparity to society's pressing gender expectations, gender inequality presents itself in more ways than one. The intersection between gender inequality and mental health is often overlooked but must be considered. Gender inequality contributes significantly to the prevalence of mental health issues, as individuals facing discrimination and disparities based on their gender often experience heightened stress and reduced self-esteem, which could lead to more severe mental health issues in the future.

Gender inequality plays a significant role in the opportunities that people, primarily women, receive, which can cause a decline in self-esteem and motivation for success. The lack of opportunities and undermining of work that women receive through many unequal work environments lead women to lose motivation or the will to continue with a job. Insurance Business Magazine states that in 2022, “29% of women thought about reducing their hours, taking a less demanding job, or leaving the workforce altogether—compared to 22% of men [...] One of the potential reasons could be the gender pay gap that continues to plague women who do equal work but remain woefully underappreciated.”<sup>45</sup>

This demonstrates how the pay and opportunity gap between men and women leads women to accept the message that all the work they put in will never amount to that of a man's job, causing increased resignations and economic stress.



Regretfully, the women who stay with a job despite the wage gaps also experience other mental health issues. According to County Health Rankings, “Women who earn a lower income for the same work [than men] are more likely to suffer from mood disorders including depression and anxiety.”<sup>46</sup> This data demonstrates how women face these mental health illnesses as a direct effect of the unequal work environment. Women need jobs to support themselves, but they frequently face these hardships and are often unable to afford to speak out against them from an economic standpoint so as not to lose their jobs.

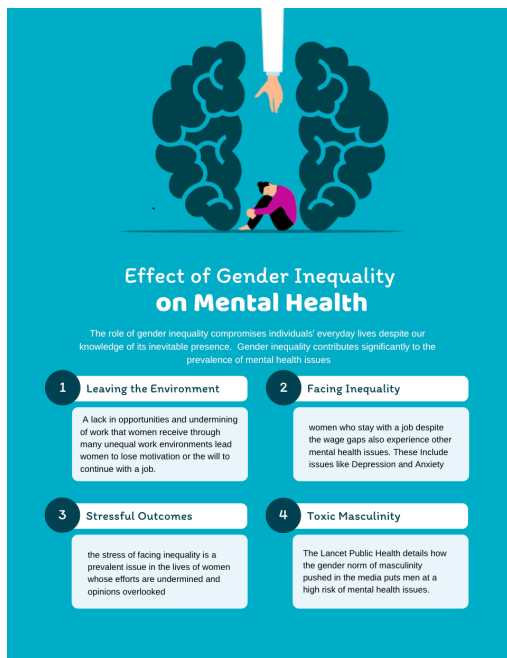
Additionally, the stress of facing inequality is a prevalent issue in the lives of women whose efforts are undermined and opinions overlooked. *Medical News Today* states, “Gender discrimination is a source of stress, and like any

<sup>45</sup> Dujay, John. "Why are more women leaving their jobs than men?" Insurance Business Magazine, 24 Oct. 2022, [www.insurancebusinessmag.com/us/business-strategy/why-are-more-women-leaving-their-jobs-than-men-424968.aspx](http://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/us/business-strategy/why-are-more-women-leaving-their-jobs-than-men-424968.aspx). Accessed 15 Jan. 2024.

<sup>46</sup> "Gender Pay Gap." County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, [www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model/health-factors/social-economic-factors/income/gender-pay-gap?year=2023](http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/explore-health-rankings/county-health-rankings-model/health-factors/social-economic-factors/income/gender-pay-gap?year=2023). Accessed 15 Jan. 2024.

other stressor, it can directly affect mental health. Research from 2020 Trusted Source refers to a study in which women who reported experiencing gender discrimination in the past 12 months scored more highly than others on a depression screening tool.<sup>47</sup> This shows just one example of the extreme mental health issues that are inflicted on women as a result of gender inequality. *Medical News Today* states in another article that women are “twice as likely to have generalized anxiety disorder, twice as likely to have panic disorder, approximately twice as likely to develop depression during their lifetime, 4–10 times more likely to have an eating disorder, more than twice as likely to develop PTSD, and more likely to attempt suicide (though men are 3.63 times more likely to die by suicide).”<sup>48</sup> These statistics show the deeply rooted effects of gender inequality on the mental health of society as a whole. Despite the problems that men also face due to harmful gender stereotypes, the lack of opportunities for and discrimination against women causes a greater amount of severe mental illnesses within them.

However, there are opposing views on mental health for people of different genders. The Lancet Public Health details how the gender norm of masculinity pushed in the media puts men at a high risk of mental health issues. The mental health of male adolescents is not discussed as commonly as that of their female counterparts. According to the Lancet Public Health, the global rate of male suicide ranges from 2 to four times that of females. The attention on the mental health of men is often neglected and brushed aside in favor of the harmful stereotype of being masculine and burying emotions.<sup>49</sup>



In conclusion, the gender inequalities that affect the opportunities of women often cause heightened stress and lower self-esteem, which develop into severe mental health illnesses such as depression and anxiety. Furthermore, there is an alarming disparity in attention towards mental health issues among genders, with a heightened risk for men, particularly adolescents, due to societal pressures promoting masculine norms and the under-discussed prevalence of male suicide. Gender inequality is a daily occurrence for most people on Earth and needs to be addressed and its effects mitigated due to its severe impact on mental health for everyone.

<sup>47</sup> "Effects of gender discrimination on health." *Medical News Today*, [www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-gender-discrimination?scrllybrkr=4d889c9e](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/effects-of-gender-discrimination?scrllybrkr=4d889c9e). Accessed 15 Jan. 2024.

<sup>48</sup> "What are the psychological effects of gender inequality?" *Medical News Today*, [www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/psychological-effects-of-gender-inequality#what-is-gender-inequality](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/psychological-effects-of-gender-inequality#what-is-gender-inequality). Accessed 16 Jan. 2024.

<sup>49</sup> Rice, Simon, et al. "Gender norms and the mental health of boys and young men." *The Lancet Public Health*, Aug. 2021, [www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667\(21\)00138-9/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanpub/article/PIIS2468-2667(21)00138-9/fulltext). Accessed 17 Jan. 2024.

## BIOETHICS & MEDICINE

Kitty Jiang

Medical care should be accessible and beneficial for everyone, but currently, gender inequality makes it impossible. Women are underrepresented in the healthcare industry, from employment opportunities and medical research to patient diagnoses and treatment: women and men, doctors and patients, all struggle in a gender-segregated system. In 2019, a study published by Nature Communications on the Danish population found that women were diagnosed later than men with over 700 diseases, leading to severe and fatal consequences.<sup>50</sup>

“Men” and “women” are terms used throughout this article, referring to the gender of individuals, which encompasses the social and cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity that can be connected to or separate from one’s biological sex. However, many issues of gender inequality are based on sex and gender differences together, so they will be discussed in this format. It is crucial to recognize that transgender individuals have unique struggles that are equally significant and will be discussed later on.

What is often overlooked is that gender inequality is deeply rooted in every level of the healthcare system, starting with our most straightforward understanding of health. Historically, due to assumptions that women are more affected by hormones or are more “complicated” because of menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause, most medical research has been conducted on men.<sup>51</sup> Less than 6% of studies on athletes in Europe focused on a female-only sample,<sup>52</sup> and the percentage is reflected in other fields, too. The result is for diseases affecting both sexes, female symptoms and responses to treatment are understudied. Examples include cardiovascular disease and AIDS (Auto-Immune Deficiency Syndrome). Women worldwide are more likely to die from heart attacks than men<sup>53</sup> and constitute 53% of people with HIV,<sup>54</sup> yet receive fewer diagnoses and delayed treatment.

Biomedical research on mainly female-dominated diseases also receives significantly less funding than diseases common among men. Statistics published by *Nature* show that in the US, male-dominant diseases affecting fewer people, such as HIV, still receive more funding than female-dominant ones, like anxiety disorders, with more stakeholders.<sup>55</sup> Women receive worse quality health care due to overgeneralized understandings of how each disease should be treated based on studies of men alone.

Gender biases also determine how patients are diagnosed. Different diseases are given male or female associations. For example, women in Spain are often underdiagnosed for chronic obstructive lung

<sup>50</sup> Westergaard, D., Moseley, P., Sørup, F.K.H. *et al.* Population-wide analysis of differences in disease progression patterns in men and women. *Nat Commun* 10, 666 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-019-08475-9>.

<sup>51</sup> Lamon, Severine, and Olivia Knowles. “Why Are Males Still the Default Subjects in Medical Research?” *The Conversation*, 4 Oct. 2021, <https://theconversation.com/why-are-males-still-the-default-subjects-in-medical-research-167545>.

<sup>52</sup> Cowley, Emma S., et al. “Invisible Sportswomen”: The Sex Data Gap in Sport and Exercise Science Research.” *Human Kinetics Journals*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2021-0028>.

<sup>53</sup> “Women More Likely to Die After Heart Attack than Men.” *European Society of Cardiology*, 22 May 2023, [www.escardio.org/The-ESC/Press-Office/Press-releases/Women-more-likely-to-die-after-heart-attack-than-men#:~:text=Some%2011.3%25%20of%20women%20died,of%20men%20\(HR%202.15\)](http://www.escardio.org/The-ESC/Press-Office/Press-releases/Women-more-likely-to-die-after-heart-attack-than-men#:~:text=Some%2011.3%25%20of%20women%20died,of%20men%20(HR%202.15)).

<sup>54</sup> “The Global HIV and AIDS Epidemic.” *HIV.Gov*, 15 Nov. 2023, [www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/global-statistics/](http://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/global-statistics/).

<sup>55</sup> Smith, Kerri. “Women’s Health Research Lacks Funding – These Charts Show How.” *Nature*, 3 May 2023, [www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-023-01475-2/index.html](http://www.nature.com/immersive/d41586-023-01475-2/index.html).

disease,<sup>56</sup> while men in the US are underdiagnosed for clinical depression.<sup>57</sup> Women are also overdiagnosed for mental illness or are told that their symptoms are the results of psychological perception. In a study titled “*Brave Men*” and “*Emotional Women*,” authors discovered that women with chronic pain are taken less seriously than men, are referred to as emotional or “fabricating” the pain, and receive less effective pain relief and more mental health referrals.<sup>58</sup> However, men are put under societal pressure to appear brave and strong, also reducing their ability to receive treatment. In South Africa, men make up over 60% of all diagnosed cases of pulmonary tuberculosis (TB), but only 53% of all those who successfully complete treatment. Many feel that visiting a doctor reduces their masculine image in their community, and the nature of their jobs means they can get fired for missing work for treatment.<sup>59</sup> Overall, the combination of men following treatment programs less and women with worse treatment programs means that neither gender receives the best quality healthcare.

The efficacy of diagnoses and treatment may also depend on the gender of the medical professionals. According to many studies, women reported their male health providers telling them they “looked healthy,” revealing the social association between femininity and appearance that disregards their health concerns. The healthcare industry is also largely segregated. In the US, specializations like allergy & immunology or dermatology are dominated by women, with 73.5% and 60.8% of all their professionals being women, respectively. By contrast, fields like neurological surgery and pain medicine are dominated by men, holding 82.5% and 75.3% of all positions, respectively.<sup>60</sup> These gender-dominated fields may discourage patients of all genders from seeking medical aid. For example, men may feel uncomfortable discussing symptoms in detail with a female doctor, while women are not taken seriously for their pain. Therefore, it is crucial that hospitals hire diverse experts and consider patients’ personal preferences.

In India,  
women occupy only  
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healthcare industry  
and earn... 34% less!  
than their  
male counterparts

The gender imbalances in medical fields also harm female doctors disproportionately. Despite the rising employment of female doctors worldwide, they receive less pay, worse treatment, and are discouraged from pursuing promotions. In India, women occupy only 18% of leadership roles in the healthcare industry and earn 34% less than their male counterparts.<sup>61</sup> The pay gap is slowly decreasing, but the current lack of opportunities discourages women from joining male-dominant specializations, leading to a perpetuating lack of female doctors in essential fields that would make patients more comfortable.

<sup>56</sup> Ancochea, Julio, et al. "Underdiagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease in Women: Quantification of the Problem, Determinants and Proposed Actions." *PubMed*, 2013, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.arbres.2012.11.010>.

<sup>57</sup> Call, Jarrod B. BS, and Kevin Shafer PhD. "Gendered Manifestations of Depression and Help Seeking Among Men." *American Journal of Men's Health*, 2015, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988315623993>.

<sup>58</sup> Samulowitz, Anke, et al. "“Brave Men” and “Emotional Women”: A Theory-Guided Literature Review on Gender Bias in Health Care and Gendered Norms towards Patients with Chronic Pain." *Pain Research and Management*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1155/2018/6358624>.

<sup>59</sup> Daniels, Joseph, et al. "Masculinity, Resources, and Retention in Care: South African Men’s Behaviors and Experiences While Engaged in TB Care and Treatment." *Soc Sci Med*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113639>.

<sup>60</sup> Murphy, Brendan. "These Medical Specialties Have the Biggest Gender Imbalances." *AMA*, 1 Oct. 2019, [www.ama-assn.org/medical-students/specialty-profiles/these-medical-specialties-have-biggest-gender-imbalances](http://www.ama-assn.org/medical-students/specialty-profiles/these-medical-specialties-have-biggest-gender-imbalances).

<sup>61</sup> Jaswal, Mansi. "Women Occupy Only 18% of Leadership Roles in India’s Healthcare Sector, Earning 34% Less than Male Counterparts: Report." *Mint*, 6 Dec. 2023,

[www.livemint.com/industry/women-occupy-only-18-of-leadership-roles-in-indias-healthcare-sector-earning-34-less-than-male-counterparts-report-11701758705523.html](http://www.livemint.com/industry/women-occupy-only-18-of-leadership-roles-in-indias-healthcare-sector-earning-34-less-than-male-counterparts-report-11701758705523.html).

In underprivileged regions, hospitals are vastly underfunded and understaffed, exacerbating the health risks of women. In China, rural-urban migrant workers reside in large cities but do not receive the social benefits there. Most workers prefer to seek treatment in their hometown, where they receive the maximum healthcare cost reimbursement from the government.<sup>62</sup> However, the quality of care is much lower in rural areas,<sup>63</sup> and due to older women having received lower levels of education, many are unaware of potential health risks or have less income. Both factors significantly worsen their health.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, in the US, social inequalities disproportionately harm women of color. In addition to having low insurance coverage and less access to healthcare, black women experience much higher mortality rates through health complications than any other group. The five-year survival rate for Black women with cervical cancer is 56%, 10% lower than the national average<sup>65</sup>. More despairing is the maternal mortality rate during childbirth. Between 2011 and 2013, Black women faced 44 maternal deaths for every 100,000 live births, 273% higher than white women<sup>66</sup>. These discriminations in society magnified the lack of attention to female issues, and experts were finally alerted to the most severe problems in the healthcare system. Governments from all countries need to consider how their services can help women cope with life-threatening pregnancy or birth complications, putting emphasis on extending these services to underprivileged groups.

Finally, a growing discussion surrounds LGBTQ+ individuals and access to gender-affirming care. Gender-affirming care is a range of services, from mental health counseling to physical alterations, that allow individuals to cope with gender dysphoria, a constant distress associated with a mismatch of one's gender and biological sex.<sup>67</sup> Many people support increased funding in this medical field, including extending these resources to children, whereas others emphatically reject these new policies. For nonbinary youth, gender-affirming care can be life-saving, protecting them from depression and mental suffering caused by the worst of discrimination. In 2022, 54% of nonbinary youth in the US without support reported having suicidal thoughts.<sup>68</sup>

In conclusion, healthcare saves lives and minimizes suffering from the worst illnesses. However, without proper consideration of gender differences in research, diagnoses, and policy-making, most people do not feel its benefits. Governments should allocate increased funding for balanced research, encourage women to pursue medical careers, and hospitals should train their professionals to treat patients without gendered biases. In our daily lives, encouraging everyone to seek medical help is essential. No one, regardless of gender, should feel shame about their identity or health conditions.

<sup>62</sup> Qiu, Fengxian, et al. "Migration and Health—Freedom of Movement and Social Benefits for Chinese Migrant Workers." *Sustainability*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212371>.

<sup>63</sup> "Chinese Healthcare: The Rural Reality." *Collective Responsibility*, 23 Jul. 2018, [www.coresponsibility.com/chinese-healthcare-the-rural-reality/](http://www.coresponsibility.com/chinese-healthcare-the-rural-reality/).

<sup>64</sup> Tian, Yi Hao, et al. "Gender Differences in Migrant Workers Health in China." *International Journal of Public Health*, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.3389/ijph.2023.1605018>.

<sup>65</sup> Washington, Ariel, and Jill Randall. "'We're Not Taken Seriously': Describing the Experiences of Perceived Discrimination in Medical Settings for Black Women." *Springer Nature*, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40615-022-01276-9>.

<sup>66</sup> Montagne, Renee. "Black Mothers Keep Dying After Giving Birth. Shalon Irving's Story Explains Why." *Npr*, 7 Dec. 2017, [www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why](http://www.npr.org/2017/12/07/568948782/black-mothers-keep-dying-after-giving-birth-shalon-irvings-story-explains-why).

<sup>67</sup> "Get the Facts on Gender-Affirming Care." *Human Rights Campaign*, [www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-on-gender-affirming-care](http://www.hrc.org/resources/get-the-facts-on-gender-affirming-care).

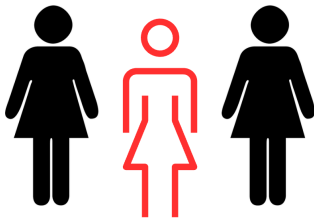
<sup>68</sup> Matouk, Karen M., and Melina Wald. "Gender-affirming Care Saves Lives." *Columbia University Department of Psychiatry*, 30 Mar. 2022, [www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/gender-affirming-care-saves-lives](http://www.columbiapsychiatry.org/news/gender-affirming-care-saves-lives).

## GENDER EQUALITY WITH REFUGEES

Jayden Link

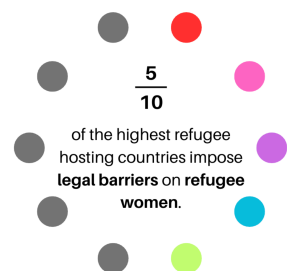
The situation of refugees is intricate and multidimensional, and gender significantly influences the particular difficulties and opportunities that displaced people confront. The conversation examines female refugees' unique challenges in receiving nations and suggests methods for making asylum and resettlement procedures gender-responsive. The interplay between gender and other variables, like age, disability, and race, highlights the complex vulnerabilities that refugees who possess multiple marginalized identities must contend with. Access to healthcare and feminine products within the refugee system is a critical issue that demonstrates these aspects' considerable influence on the well-being and dignity of women refugees. The need to promote inclusive policies and practices that protect the rights and dignity of all displaced people grows as concerns about international war and refugee women continue to rise.

$\frac{1}{3}$   
 Women Is Predicted to Encounter Physical or Sexual Abuse at Some Point in Their Lives.



One issue affecting refugee women is gender-based violence (GBV). GBV poses a major threat to the health and safety of refugee women, not to mention the fact that it is a grave violation of human rights. People who escape their homes are frequently more vulnerable to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, including forced prostitution, rape, and sexual assault.<sup>69</sup> Men, women, and girls are all susceptible to violence based solely on their gender or sex, but women and girls are particularly vulnerable. One in three women is predicted to encounter physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives.<sup>70</sup> The primary goal of the UNHCR is to "safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and other people who were forced to flee." They support states in upholding their obligation to help refugee women avoid encountering situations of GBV.<sup>71</sup>

Women refugees pursuing employment and financial prospects are forced to navigate a labor market afflicted by intricate, gender-based discriminatory laws and policies. Their potential and aspirations are hindered by the consequences of violence, trauma, and displacement, as well as the burden of starting over in a foreign nation.<sup>72</sup> For example, five out of ten of the highest refugee hosting countries impose legal barriers on refugee women in the majority of areas measured by the World Bank's Women Business and Law Index.<sup>73</sup> According to



<sup>69</sup> European Commission. "What Is Gender-Based Violence?" *European Commission*, European Union, [commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence\\_en#:~:text=gender%2Dbased%20violence-,Gender%2Dbased%20violence%20\(GBV\)%20by%20definition,of%20a%20particular%20gender%20disproportionately](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en#:~:text=gender%2Dbased%20violence-,Gender%2Dbased%20violence%20(GBV)%20by%20definition,of%20a%20particular%20gender%20disproportionately.). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>70</sup> World Bank. "Violence against Women and Girls – What the Data Tell Us." *Gender Data Portal*, World Bank Group, 30 Sept. 2022, [genderdata.worldbank.org/data-stories/overview-of-gender-based-violence/](https://genderdata.worldbank.org/data-stories/overview-of-gender-based-violence/). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>71</sup> "Gender-Based Violence." *UNHCR USA*, UN Refugee Agency, [www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/protection/gender-based-violence](https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/protection/gender-based-violence). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>72</sup> "Ruled out of Work: Refugee Women's Legal Right to Work." *Rescue UK*, International Rescue Committee, Dec. 2019, [www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/4312/ruledoutofworkpolicybriefv3.pdf](https://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/document/4312/ruledoutofworkpolicybriefv3.pdf). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>73</sup> World Bank Group. 2019. *Women, Business and the Law 2019 :A Decade of Reform*. World Bank, Washington, DC. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31327>.

research, increasing the number of decent positions available to refugee women—whether through formal employment or alternative sources of income—benefits both the host nation's economy and the women themselves significantly. According to research, increasing the number of decent positions available to refugee women—whether through formal employment or alternative sources of income—benefits both the economy of the host nation and the women themselves significantly.<sup>74</sup>

An additional issue of disproportionality affecting refugee women is that of human trafficking. Following the trafficking of weapons and drugs, the trafficking of human beings ranks as the third most profitable venture for global organized crime groups.<sup>75</sup> One such issue is currently going on in Poland, where, due to a lack of comprehensive protection and security measures in Poland, refugees from Ukraine, especially women and girls, are more vulnerable to gender-based violence, trafficking, and other forms of exploitation.<sup>76</sup> Although national authorities are taking the lead in combating human trafficking, more work has to be done to address the issue and reduce the dangers. In cooperation with partners, humanitarian organizations such as the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and others are increasing their ability to assist national initiatives.<sup>77</sup>

1. Weapons
2. Drugs
3. **Humans**



The Trafficking of Human Beings Ranks as the Third Most Profitable Venture for Global Crime Groups.

For refugees, sexual and reproductive health is a fundamental need and right. Due to their sometimes restricted access to sexual and reproductive health care and services, refugee women and girls are more likely to become pregnant unintentionally and experience pregnancy-related difficulties, illness, disability, and even death.<sup>78</sup> When traditional family and community structures collapse during the early phases of an emergency refugee scenario, there is little protection from gender-based and sexual abuse. Women and girls who are more likely to experience sexual violence and exploitation are also more likely to experience severe physical and psychological trauma, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortion complications, and high rates of STI infection, including HIV/AIDS.<sup>79</sup> As a way of attempting to guarantee reproductive health care for refugee women, significant strides have been made thanks to the cooperative efforts of the Reproductive Health for Refugees Consortium (RHRC) and the Inter-agency Working Group (IAWG) on Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations.<sup>80</sup> The World Health Organization (WHO) describes the fact that unregistered migrants may obtain late diagnoses that put them and their

<sup>74</sup> "Scaling Economic Opportunities for Refugee Women: Understanding and Overcoming Obstacles to Women's Economic Empowerment in Germany, Niger, and Kenya." *International Rescue Committee*.

<sup>75</sup> Demir, Jenna Shearer. "The Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation: A Gender-Based and Well-Founded Fear of Persecution." *The UN Refugee Agency*, [www.unhcr.org/media/trafficking-women-sexual-exploitation-gender-based-and-well-founded-fear-persecution-jenna](http://www.unhcr.org/media/trafficking-women-sexual-exploitation-gender-based-and-well-founded-fear-persecution-jenna). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>76</sup> Human Rights Watch. "Poland: Trafficking, Exploitation Risks for Refugees." *Human Rights Watch*, 19 Apr. 2022, [www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/29/poland-trafficking-exploitation-risks-refugees](http://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/29/poland-trafficking-exploitation-risks-refugees). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>77</sup> UNHCR. "Statement on Risks of Trafficking and Exploitation Facing Refugees from Ukraine Attributed to UNHCR's Assistant High Commissioner for Protection." *The UN Refugee Agency*, 12 Apr. 2022, [www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/statement-risks-trafficking-and-exploitation-facing-refugees-ukraine-attributed](http://www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/statement-risks-trafficking-and-exploitation-facing-refugees-ukraine-attributed). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>78</sup> "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights." *The Women's Refugee Commission*, [www.womensrefugeecommission.org/focus-areas/sexual-reproductive-health-rights](http://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/focus-areas/sexual-reproductive-health-rights). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>79</sup> "Displaced and Disregarded: Refugees and Their Reproductive Rights." *Center for Reproductive Rights*, Oct. 2001, [www.reproductiverights.org/sites/default/files/documents/pub\\_bp\\_displaced\\_refugees.pdf](http://www.reproductiverights.org/sites/default/files/documents/pub_bp_displaced_refugees.pdf). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>80</sup> Lee, Connie, et al. "Reproductive Health for Refugees." *The Lancet*, Dec. 2002, [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(02\)11803-4/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(02)11803-4/fulltext). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.



unborn children in danger of death if they lack access to reproductive health services, particularly antenatal care, or are unaware that they are available.<sup>81</sup>

During pregnancy, a mother and her child are more likely to experience health issues during and after delivery in a humanitarian crisis if they give birth without the assistance of a trained birth attendant, adequate sanitation, and high-quality emergency obstetric or neonatal services.<sup>82</sup> For instance, the United Nations refugee organization, UNHCR, pays for 75% of the expenditures associated with giving birth to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, as well as the care of their newborns. The remaining amount is due to the refugees. Fearing they would be taken advantage of, many hospitals either flatly refuse refugee patients or want a 25% upfront payment. Shortly after giving birth in a crowded hospital, Walaa and her spouse hurriedly called around to find Aseel, a neonatal incubator. Following five denials, a sixth hospital offered to take their case on the condition that they pay \$800 upon admission. Neighbors and relatives contributed to the cost.<sup>83</sup> This event is not an isolated incident, as refugees often face such financial barriers when trying to get their basic needs met. Including refugees necessitates comprehensive laws and policies covering various issues, from legal recognition to quality education and socioeconomic integration. Data is crucial in assisting governments in developing and implementing effective policies in all of these areas.<sup>84</sup>

Youth perceptions of refugees and migrants often differ from those of older societal cohorts, with younger people being more favorable to immigration than older people. The 2016 International Civic and Citizenship Education Study found that 81%-95% of youth in 24 education systems agreed that their countries should cooperate to provide shelter to refugees. However, structures are only sometimes in place to include and find employment commensurate with these skills. Investing in the education of migrants and refugees can boost development and economic growth in host countries and their countries of origin. Policies to increase the number of refugees attending tertiary education indicate a recognition of the future-directed inclusion of refugees in national economies.<sup>85</sup>

In 2016 the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study found that 81% - 95% of youth in 24 education systems agreed that their countries should cooperate to provide shelter to refugees.



Through trauma-informed responses, issues of local language challenges and the necessity to create confidence to accept and understand early warnings are not unique to displaced or traumatized communities. These are applicable

<sup>81</sup> World Health Organization. "Tool 8: Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Gender-Based Violence." *World Health Organization*, [www.who.int/tools/refugee-and-migrant-health-toolkit/module-2/tool-8](http://www.who.int/tools/refugee-and-migrant-health-toolkit/module-2/tool-8). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>82</sup> Kinsella, Caroline. "Respectful Care for Women and Newborns in Crisis Settings: A Human Right." *Health and Human Rights Journal*, Harvard College, 19 June 2021, [www.hhrjournal.org/2021/06/respectful-care-for-women-and-newborns-in-crisis-settings-a-human-right/](http://www.hhrjournal.org/2021/06/respectful-care-for-women-and-newborns-in-crisis-settings-a-human-right/). Accessed 13 Dec. 2023.

<sup>83</sup> Karas, Tania. "For Refugees in Lebanon, Giving Birth Comes at a High Price." *The New Humanitarian*, 17 July 2017, [deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/refugees/articles/2017/07/07/for-refugees-in-lebanon-giving-birth-comes-at-a-high-price](http://deeply.thenewhumanitarian.org/refugees/articles/2017/07/07/for-refugees-in-lebanon-giving-birth-comes-at-a-high-price). Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.

<sup>84</sup> UNESCO, and UNHCR. "Paving Pathways for Refugee Inclusion." *UNESCO*, [www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/data/refugees](http://www.unesco.org/en/emergencies/education/data/refugees). Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.

<sup>85</sup> Argusti, Gabriella, et al. "Supporting the Inclusion of Refugees: Policies, Theories and Actions." *Taylor and Francis Online*, Publication Cover International Journal of Inclusive Education ed., Informa Business, [www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603116.2019.1678804?scroll=top&needAccess=true](http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13603116.2019.1678804?scroll=top&needAccess=true). Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.

in any setting, but displaced populations frequently demand more awareness and resources for translation and communication. Furthermore, options for creating trust among substituted groups with high trauma rates may differ from those for host communities.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Easton-Calabria, Evan. "Trauma-Informed Anticipatory Action: Considerations for Refugees and Other Displaced Populations." *Academic Alliance for Anticipatory Action*, Tufts, [fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trauma-Informed-AA-final2022-9-29.pdf](https://fic.tufts.edu/wp-content/uploads/Trauma-Informed-AA-final2022-9-29.pdf).

## GENDER & SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISPARITIES

Omorinmola Akinwande

Throughout the world, socioeconomic inequalities are present between people based on their gender. UN Women estimates that globally, women earn 23% less than their male counterparts.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, the organization states women are more likely to face discrimination in the labor market, encounter bias in specific industries, and have limited opportunities to further their careers. A lack of equality in education, healthcare, and finance, and cultural factors causes these disparities. These factors include unequal representation of



women in societal positions and gender stereotypes about acceptable norms for men and women.<sup>88</sup> However, the scope and definition of gender-related socioeconomic inequalities are not agreed upon. It can be argued that the gender pay gap, particularly in Western industrialized economies, is flawed because men and women have equal economic opportunities. Others believe that socioeconomic gender disparities are still prevalent and that they would take decades to overcome.<sup>89</sup>

During the 20th century, female labor force engagement increased significantly, particularly in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) states and other early industrialized nations such as Japan and Russia. The gender pay gap has also decreased during this time. For example, in 1970, the gender pay gap in the United Kingdom (UK) stood at 50%, but in 2016, it lowered to around 17%. OECD gender pay gaps are calculated by subtracting the median income of men and women relative to the income of men. Around the world, progress has additionally been made to provide women with equal rights to property. In 1970, over 50 countries restricted female rights to distributing, owning, inheriting, and discarding land. Fifty-one years later, only 14 countries have limited women's property rights.<sup>90</sup>

Women face more barriers than men when joining the labor market. This is shown through labour participation statistics, which indicate that men participate more than women by 25%. These barriers are encountered the most acutely in the Gulf states and Northern African countries. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), marriage limits the ability of women to seek paid employment. The organization notes that in upper and middle-income countries, women with a spouse participate in paid labor less and seek paid labor less. Furthermore, unpaid domestic labor, such as childcare and

<sup>87</sup> "Equal pay for work of equal value | UN Women – Headquarters." <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>88</sup> "Gender inequality persists in the world of culture, underlines a new ...." 22 Oct. 2014, <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/gender-inequality-persists-world-culture-underlines-new-report>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>89</sup> "Women and Girls – Closing the Gender Gap | United Nations." [https://www.un.org/en/un75/women\\_girls\\_closing\\_gender\\_gap](https://www.un.org/en/un75/women_girls_closing_gender_gap). Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>90</sup> "Economic Inequality by Gender - Our World in Data." <https://ourworldindata.org/economic-inequality-by-gender>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2023.

20% of men believe women should not have a paid job outside their homes



cooking, which women participate in overwhelmingly more than men, prohibits certain women from entering the workplace. Other challenges include the lack of accessible transport and care for children and family members. Social norms also pressure women not to engage in the workforce. The ILO-Gallup poll indicates that as of 2016, 20% of men and 14% of women believe women should not have a paid job outside their houses.<sup>91</sup>

Data from LinkedIn, an employment-oriented social network platform, indicates that women represent 42% of the global workforce. At the same time, the ILO reported that women represented 40% of the labor force in 2021. In the healthcare and services sector, women dominate the field, representing 65%. However, women are scarcely represented in the petroleum and mining industries (22.7%) and the infrastructure sector (22.3%). Additionally, LinkedIn statistics show a significant gap between male and female representation in senior managerial positions, defined as directors, vice presidents, and C-suite. Women comprise only 32% of senior leadership and are underrepresented in the leadership of all sectors surveyed in the data. Despite this, since 2016, female representation in the highest levels of organizations has increased. Some fields where this occurs include technology, information, media, and the state sector. Women increased their representation in these sectors by 2.4% and 2%, respectively.<sup>92</sup>

As previously mentioned, gender stereotypes detrimentally affect the economic chances of women in certain societies. For example, in Vietnam, girls are discouraged from venturing into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) courses because they are viewed as too complex and only suitable for boys. This data is further reinforced by Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs policy, which bars women from working in seventy-seven professions. Due to these policies and cultural norms, women only account for 19% of scientific leaders working on vital national programs.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, in Uzbekistan, respondents to a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



research study indicated that coding and science are more appropriate for men and that women are more suited to education and medicine. The respondents also revealed that women should spend more time with the family and look after children, whereas men should make all important decisions. As a result of these

<sup>91</sup> "The gender gap in employment: What's holding women back? - ILO." <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/barriers-women>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2023.

<sup>92</sup> "Global Gender Gap Report 2023 - The World Economic Forum." 20 Jun. 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-gender-gap-report-2023/in-full/gender-gaps-in-the-workforce/>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

<sup>93</sup> "Vietnam: Breaking gender stereotypes that hinder women's ...." 20 Oct. 2015, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/vietnam-breaking-gender-stereotypes-hinder-women-s-empowerment>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

engrained cultural perceptions, only 38% of businesses are owned by women in Uzbekistan, and there is a 38% difference between the average monthly wage of men and women.<sup>94</sup>

It has been argued that in countries where the law enforces equal pay, the gender pay gap is non-existent. Instead, women are more likely to be employed in lower-income work. In the United States, which mandated equal pay in the Equal Pay Act of 1963, women represent two-thirds of workers earning less than \$30,000 per annum and only a third of workers having jobs paying over \$100,000 per annum.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, according to 2021 data in the UK, a country that barred pay discrimination in the Equal Pay Act of 1970 and subsequently the Equality Act of 2010, 99% of vehicle technicians, mechanics, and electricians were male, whereas 98% percent of nursery nurses and assistants were female. The average weekly working time is 49 hours for vehicle technicians, mechanics, and electricians, compared to 31 hours per week for nursery workers. Vehicle technicians, mechanics, and electricians earned £10,428 per annum more<sup>96</sup> than nursery nurses and assistants.<sup>97</sup>

Gender-based socioeconomic inequities will continue to be an issue requiring much attention and action. It is a topic that evokes significant debate and controversy. Still, the research is overwhelmingly clear: more work must be done to ensure gender equality and scale gender-related socioeconomic inequalities.

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<sup>94</sup> "Negative Impact of Gender Stereotypes and Patriarchal Attitudes on ...."

<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2023-03/Gender%20Stereotypes%20final%20%284%29.pdf>. Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

<sup>95</sup> "5 Fast Facts: The Gender Wage Gap | U.S. Department of Labor Blog." 14 Mar. 2023, <http://blog.dol.gov/2023/03/14/5-fast-facts-the-gender-wage-gap>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2023.

<sup>96</sup> "Vehicle technicians, mechanics and electricians - Career Smart."

<https://careersmart.org.uk/occupations/vehicle-technicians-mechanics-and-electricians>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2023.

<sup>97</sup> "Nursery nurses and assistants - Careersmart." <https://careersmart.org.uk/occupations/nursery-nurses-and-assistants>. Accessed 23 Dec. 2023.

# GENDER INEQUALITY IN SPORTS

Awujoola Akinwande

Gender inequalities in sports are widespread, impacting athletes across continents. According to YouGov polling, majorities in most countries polled perceived inequalities regarding the pay in women’s sports compared to men’s sports. In addition, the report also stated that 36 percent of respondents do not follow any women’s sports, the most followed women’s soccer, at only 22 percent of respondents.<sup>98</sup> Several reasons include a lack of investment from governing bodies, sponsorships, media coverage, equitable salaries, social and cultural perceptions of femininity and masculinity, and ongoing debates on the science behind the sexes.

One organization dedicated to reducing gender disparities in sports is the International Olympic Committee (IOC). In its latest *Gender Equality & Inclusion Report*, published in 2021, the IOC noted that it had made progress in several target areas, such as ensuring that people, regardless of their gender, can have equal opportunities in participating in the Olympics—also ensuring that uniforms no longer have ‘unjustifiable differences.’ In the past, however, the IOC’s rules have created disparities, many of which are still being faced by women and gender minorities today. For example, the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896 included no women. Four years later, the second modern Olympics held in Paris, France, had only 2 percent female participation. It was not until London 2012 that women were allowed to participate in all Olympic sporting events. Finally, in the 2020 Tokyo Summer Olympics, women accounted for 48 percent of all Olympians—a record.<sup>99</sup>

However, several sports governing bodies are not taking the IOC's steps to reduce gender inequalities in sports. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

<sup>98</sup> "WOMEN IN SPORT REPORT 2021 - YouGov PLC."

[https://commercial.yougov.com/rs/464-VHH-988/images/YouGov-Women-in-sport-wp.pdf?mkt\\_tok=NDY0LVZISC05ODgAAAF93EV62auaI03iS1YuvUb28glddiQTziT6CIDdltvO35EFIDVkJ-PHTM25UWUNhMvNeJHe9G-K-ZVwxIbdJQpfBMggNR6crqwTgiWUGpGVYkz8](https://commercial.yougov.com/rs/464-VHH-988/images/YouGov-Women-in-sport-wp.pdf?mkt_tok=NDY0LVZISC05ODgAAAF93EV62auaI03iS1YuvUb28glddiQTziT6CIDdltvO35EFIDVkJ-PHTM25UWUNhMvNeJHe9G-K-ZVwxIbdJQpfBMggNR6crqwTgiWUGpGVYkz8). Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>99</sup> "Gender equality & inclusion report 2021 - Olympics.com."

<https://stillmed.olympics.com/media/Documents/Beyond-the-Games/Gender-Equality-in-Sport/2021-IOC-Gender-Equality-Inclusion-Report.pdf>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

**GENDER INEQUALITIES IN SPORTS**

**LACK OF SPONSORSHIPS**  
Despite a record of 381 deals worth USD 136.96 million in 2021, female athletes still struggle to receive the same number of sponsorships as men, due to a lack of visibility.  
Source: Britannica

**LACK OF BROADCASTING**  
In June 2023, only a month before the FIFA Women’s World Cup, FIFA threatened to prohibit access to the games in Europe’s five major soccer-playing countries. In addition, a lack of media attention to women’s soccer can be seen in other sports, such as basketball, tennis and boxing.  
Source: Johann Cruyff Institute

**SOCIAL & CULTURAL PERCEPTIONS**  
Studies in countries such as Brazil, Nigeria, and Qatar have shown that cultural attitudes towards women in sports are significant contributors to the ongoing gender discrimination in sports.

**EXCLUSION OF TRANSGENDER ATHLETES**  
Several organizations, such as World Athletics, World Aquatics and British Rowing have banned or restricted access for transgender athletes to compete.  
Source: Planned Parenthood

**ORGANIZATIONS AGAINST GENDER INEQUALITIES IN SPORTS**  
The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is one of the few organizations committed to ending gender inequalities in sports. The first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896 had no female participation. However, in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, 48% of participants were women.  
Source: International Olympic Committee

(UNODC)'s first-ever *Global Report on Corruption in Sport*, published in 2021, in which section five is titled *Gender and Corruption in Sport*, notes that the Sydney Scoreboard, which collects information regarding the participation of women in national sports governing authorities, has found that women remain underrepresented in these authorities. This statistic is despite UN research affirming that diversity in boardrooms leads to tremendous success in achieving specific goals. According to research from the Australian-New Zealand *Sport Management Review* and Dutch researchers writing for the international *Sex Roles* journal, there is a high prevalence of perceptions that include an apparent lack of women being qualified to lead in the sports industry and that women may not have 'the time' to serve on executive boards in the sports industry.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, developing countries are even further behind in stemming gender inequalities in sports. As described in a policy brief from the Peterson Institute of International Economics (PIIE), Asad Ziar, the then-CEO of the Afghanistan Rugby Federation, explained that the reason why the country, at the time of the brief's publication, had no national women's rugby team, was mainly a result of a lack of adequate facilities in addition to stigmas held by one of the world's most conservative nations. Nonetheless, Barbara Kotschwar, the author of the brief and research fellow with the PIIE, wrote that "sports can serve as an effective and relatively low-cost vehicle for boosting countries' gender equity performance."<sup>101</sup>

Sponsorships for non-male athletes continue to be a pressing issue. Despite a record of 381 deals worth US\$136.96 million in 2021<sup>102</sup>, The Sports Financial Literacy Academy (SFLA) still mentions that female athletes still struggle to receive the same number of sponsorships as men because they are less visible. According to the SFLA, in the United States, for example, 40 percent of athletes are women, yet they only receive 2 to 4 percent of media coverage. In addition, women and men are assessed using different standards when looking for sponsorship deals. While men are assessed for fame and athletic ability, women are usually evaluated on appearance. The SFLA further notes that in advertisements, women's torsos and cleavage are "consistently exposed," while men's center bodies are always covered.

An example of the contentious issue of funding for women's sports can be seen before the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. In June 2023, only a month before the tournament, news broke out about a possible "blackout" of the game in Europe's five biggest soccer-playing countries (England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain) after FIFA received broadcasting offers its president, Gianni Infantino, described as "slap in the face" to female soccer players. Italy's offer was one of the lowest: the country's state broadcaster, Rai, is believed to have made an initial offer of €300,000 (US\$320,000), in comparison to the US\$160 million it paid for rights to broadcast the male World Cup in Qatar the previous year. Similarly, in England, the two largest broadcasters, the BBC and ITV, are believed to have made an initial joint offer of 9 million (approx. US\$11,000,000), or 8% of what they had paid for the

<sup>100</sup> "Gender and corruption in sport - UNODC."

[https://www.unodc.org/res/safeguardingsport/grcs/section-5\\_html/SPORTS\\_CORRUPTION\\_2021\\_S5.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/res/safeguardingsport/grcs/section-5_html/SPORTS_CORRUPTION_2021_S5.pdf). Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>101</sup> "Women, Sports, and Development: Does It Pay to Let Girls Play?." 8 Mar. 2014,

<https://www.piie.com/sites/default/files/publications/pb/pb14-8.pdf>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>102</sup> "The rise of women's sport: An unparalleled sponsorship opportunity." 14 Aug. 2023,

<https://www.infront.sport/blog/sports-sponsorship/the-rise-of-womens-sport-an-unparalleled-sponsorship-opportunity>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.<sup>103</sup> It must be noted that a lack of media attention to women's soccer can also be seen in other sports, such as basketball,<sup>104</sup> tennis,<sup>105</sup> and even boxing.<sup>106</sup>

Social and cultural perceptions of what is feminine and what is masculine, in many countries, have played the leading role in preventing women from playing sports. According to Global Sport Matters, young African women face challenges when playing sports because of harassment and the lack of parental permission. Parents often do not allow their daughters to play sports for fear of them being assaulted. Others simply believe that sports are not a priority to girls, while they allow their sons to play on pitches or in the street, carefree.<sup>107</sup> Studies in countries such as Brazil<sup>108</sup>, Nigeria<sup>109</sup>, and Qatar<sup>110</sup> have shown that cultural attitudes towards women in sports (and in the case of Brazil, soccer, especially) are significant contributors to the ongoing gender discrimination in sports.

The exclusion of transgender athletes has become an ongoing debate, mainly in the United States and elsewhere. Progress on this issue has been minimal. In March 2023, World Athletics, the international governing body for all track and field events, announced that it had banned "male-to-female transgender athletes who have been through male puberty from female World Rankings," although this decision is set to be reevaluated next year.<sup>111</sup> This announcement followed a 2022 decision by World Aquatics to ban transgender athletes from participating in the gender they identify with, but instead, must participate in an "open" category.<sup>112</sup> Britain's national rowing governing body has also taken a similar stance.<sup>113</sup>

Legal cases such as the one surrounding Caster Semenya, a South African middle-distance runner, who was banned from participating in international athletics competitions because of World Athletics regulations that barred women with higher levels of testosterone because of Differences in Sex Development (DSD). These regulations (passed in 2019) were passed to end the practice of sex testing, which Human Rights Watch has deemed as "humiliating, degrading and discriminatory." Nonetheless, Human Rights Watch claims that the new regulations still abuse the rights of women. Semenya went to the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS) in April 2019 but lost. She then appealed to the Swiss Federal Tribunal, the country's apex court, which later dismissed her case, arguing that the court does not have the power to strike down international sports regulations that may violate Swiss policy. Importantly, though,

<sup>103</sup> "There are no winners in the Women's World Cup broadcast fiasco ...." 8 Jun. 2023,

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2023/jun/08/womens-world-cup-broadcast-rights-fifa-bbc-sky-itv>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>104</sup> "NBA vs WNBA: Revenue, Salaries, Attendance, Ratings - WSN.com." <https://www.wsn.com/nba/nba-vs-wnba/>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>105</sup> "Gender Media Coverage in Tennis - Signal AI." 7 Jul. 2019, <https://www.signal-ai.com/blog/gender-media-coverage-in-tennis>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>106</sup> "I was told this was impossible': the long fight to get women's boxing ...." 8 Nov. 2018,

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2018/nov/08/womens-boxing-television-deals>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>107</sup> "Women's Sports In Africa: The Debacle Facing It And How It Can Be ...." 28 Jan. 2021,

<https://globalsportmatters.com/culture/2021/01/28/women-sports-in-africa-the-debacle-facing-it-and-how-it-can-be-improved/>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>108</sup> "Femininities and Masculinities in Brazilian Women's Football." 3 Jul. 2015,

<https://vc.bridgew.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1814&context=jiws>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>109</sup> "Socio-cultural determinants of female students' participation ... - ERIC." 16 May. 2021, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1299463.pdf>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>110</sup> "Out of Bounds: Cultural Barriers to Female Sports Participation in ...." 10 Sept. 2012,

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09523367.2012.721595>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>111</sup> "World Athletics Has Banned Trans Women From Track and Field ...." 24 Mar. 2023,

<https://www.them.us/story/world-athletics-ban-trans-women>. Accessed 11 Dec. 2023.

<sup>112</sup> "World Aquatics launches open category for transgender athletes at ...." 17 Aug. 2023,

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/17/sport/world-aquatics-transgender-athletes-swimming-spt-intl/index.html>. Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.

<sup>113</sup> "British Rowing bans transgender athletes in women's races." 3 Aug. 2023,

<https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/british-rowing-bans-transgender-athletes-womens-races-rcna98050>. Accessed 14 Dec. 2023.



what was considered a victory to Human Rights Watch was that the court did note that World Athletics had violated Semenya's rights.<sup>114</sup> This ruling means that, unfortunately, women with DSD will have to wait for these regulations to be reviewed and amended.

In closing, there continues to be a gap between male and non-male athletes and sports and the money, respect, and opportunities they receive. While evidence shows that bridging this divide is beneficial and specific organizations have made substantial strides, current inequalities will only continue unless cultural stigmas, scientific barriers, and restrictions on sponsorships and financing mechanisms are removed.

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<sup>114</sup> "Caster Semenya Won Her Case, But Not the Right to Compete." 18 Jul. 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/18/caster-semenya-won-her-case-not-right-compete>. Accessed 15 Dec. 2023.

## GENDER INEQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

Dora Dulge

Over the years, women have made incredible progress in climbing the political ladder and fighting for their rights, seeking representation as political leaders and in different industries as CEOs, managers, and directors. In 1848, the first woman's rights convention was held in Seneca Falls, New York, setting the stage for the women's suffrage movement and sparking the first steps to reforming women's rights and broadening societal roles. It was followed by the establishment of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote, and soon after, 129 out of 198 countries extended voting rights to women. The Voting Rights Act set the base for advancing the power and representation of women in political and economic fields.<sup>115</sup> However, leadership has been primarily controlled and



appointed to men for centuries, with a meager representation of women. Currently, 13 out of 193 United Nations member states have a female head of government, corresponding to less than 6.7%. Despite the efforts made for gender equality by companies and organizations, UN Women estimates that achieving gender equality in the highest tiers of power may not be realized for another 130 years, based on the current trends and data.<sup>116</sup>

Gender inequality's role in determining the transfer of power can take various forms that can be observed in different settings. In companies, it can be shaped as succession and promotion practices, whereas in political leadership, it can be observed in representation and decision-making power. Global studies, such as those by McKinsey and Catalyst, consistently highlight the underrepresentation of women in executive roles.<sup>117</sup> McKinsey's annual report on women in the workplace describes that for the ninth consecutive year, women face the most substantial obstacle to promotion to the managerial position. Specifically, for every 100 men promoted from entry-level to manager, only 87 women received promotions. From a political perspective, UN Women describes that only six countries have 50 percent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses.<sup>118</sup> Weaved into the gender gap is intersectionality, a significant challenge to the just and fair practice of power transfer. Factors such as race, ethnicity, and other dimensions of identity intersecting with gender create significant opportunity, pay, and representation disparities. McKinsey reports that the threshold for intersectionality persists even higher, with women of color receiving 73 promotions to management positions for every 100 men, down from 82 promotions for women of color last year. This statistic emphasizes the ongoing challenge of the gender gap, significantly

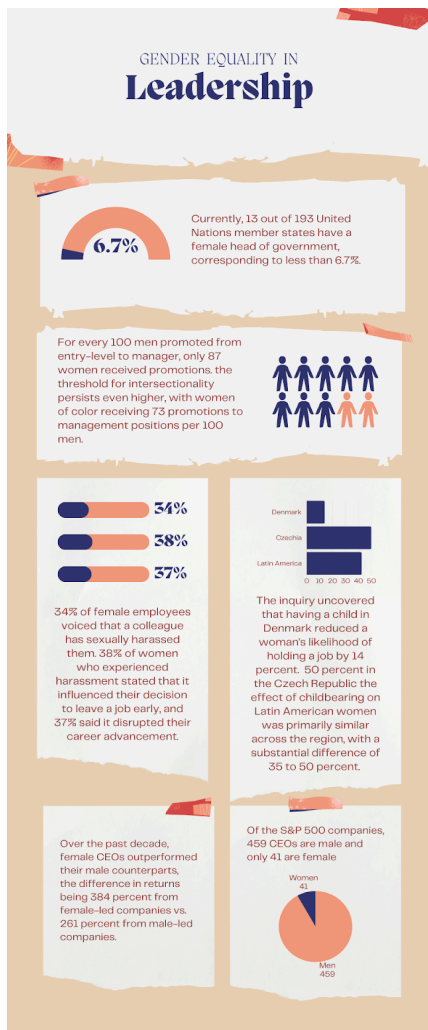
<sup>115</sup> Schaeffer, Katherine. "Key Facts about Women's Suffrage around the World, a Century after U.S. Ratified 19th Amendment." *Pew Research Center*, Pew Research Center, 5 Oct. 2020.

<sup>116</sup> UN WOMEN. "Facts and Figures: Women's Leadership and Political Participation." *UN Women – Headquarters*, 7 Mar. 2023, [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures)

<sup>117</sup> Krishnan, Mekala, et al. "Ten Things to Know about Gender Equality." *McKinsey & Company*, McKinsey & Company, 21 Sept. 2020, [www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/ten-things-to-know-about-gender-equality](http://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/ten-things-to-know-about-gender-equality).

<sup>118</sup> UN WOMEN. "Facts and Figures: Women's Leadership and Political Participation." *UN Women – Headquarters*, 7 Mar. 2023, [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures)

heightened for women of color, underscoring the imperative to address these compounded challenges within the broader context of gender inequality.<sup>119</sup>



Gender inequality in leadership is a multifaceted issue characterized by various intersecting obstacles, among which sexual assault stands out as a particularly significant challenge. The #MeToo<sup>120</sup> movement has been instrumental in highlighting the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment in workplaces and institutions. The movement has highlighted the deeply-rooted and persistent obstacles hindering women's progress. Due to the ignorance of men in power, these obstacles continue to persist, posing significant challenges to achieving gender equality and cohesive progress. It is important to take action to create a safer and more equitable environment for women in workplaces and institutions.<sup>121</sup> A study noted in Harvard Business Review states that 34% of female employees voiced that a colleague has sexually harassed them.<sup>122</sup> An additional report from AAUW, "Limiting Our Livelihoods," documents the effects of harassment. In AAUW's survey, 38% of women who experienced harassment stated that it influenced their decision to leave a job early, and 37% said it disrupted their career advancement. In the efforts to avoid their harasser, women can be subject to missing out on opportunities like quality mentorship and training, critical factors in helping women rise into leadership positions.<sup>123</sup> Both factors require a healthy and safe environment, with appropriate colleague-to-colleague communication and interaction. Harassment and assault work against the ability to foster an inclusive and safe workplace culture and environment for women to advance.

According to the United States Department of Labor, women make up nearly half of the workforce, and 85% of working women become mothers during their careers. Childbearing is another multifaceted challenge women face during their careers. While the concept should not be perceived as a challenge, workplace culture can cause it to be. Due to unsupportive policies, stereotypes, and structural barriers, childbearing has become an excuse to justify discrimination against women in upward mobility. The National Bureau of Economics disclosed that high-scoring women experience a net 8 percent reduction in pay during the first five years after giving birth. This setback reaches 24 percent a decade after birth. The Bureau's research focuses on gender gaps in employment, displaying the impact of the birth of a first child on the gap in employment

<sup>119</sup> Field, Emily, et al. "Women in the Workplace 2023." *McKinsey & Company*, McKinsey & Company, 5 Oct. 2023, [www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace](http://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/women-in-the-workplace).

<sup>120</sup> metoo. "Get to Know Us: History & Inception." *Me Too. Movement*, 16 July 2020, [metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/](http://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/).

<sup>121</sup> Adler, Kayla. "What #MeToo Changed in Hollywood—and What It Didn't - Elle." *What #MeToo Changed in Hollywood—and What It Didn't*, 2022, [www.elle.com/culture/a41539940/hollywood-five-years-after-harvey-weinstein-metoo](http://www.elle.com/culture/a41539940/hollywood-five-years-after-harvey-weinstein-metoo).

<sup>122</sup> Jain-Link, Pooja. "Ending Harassment at Work Requires an Intersectional Approach." *Harvard Business Review*, 23 Apr. 2019, [hbr.org/2019/04/ending-harassment-at-work-requires-an-intersectional-approach](http://hbr.org/2019/04/ending-harassment-at-work-requires-an-intersectional-approach).

<sup>123</sup> AAUW. "Workplace Sexual Harassment." *AAUW*, 27 Oct. 2021, [www.aauw.org/issues/equity/workplace-harassment](http://www.aauw.org/issues/equity/workplace-harassment).

rates between genders. The inquiry uncovered that having a child in Denmark reduced a woman's likelihood of holding a job by 14 percent, and the effects recorded to stay small in other Scandinavian countries. The impact was much more prominent in most central European countries; for instance, 50 percent in the Czech Republic. Compared on a global scale, the effect of childbearing on Latin American women was primarily similar across the region, with a substantial difference of 35 to 50 percent that endured well beyond the afterbirth.<sup>124</sup>

Moreover, mothers were to be six times less likely than childless women and 3.35 times less likely than childless men to be recommended for hire. The case was discovered to be similar in advancement and promotions. Childless women were 8.2 times more likely to be recommended for promotion than mothers.<sup>125</sup>

**52% of female respondents said a significant reason more women are not in top business leadership positions is that women are held to higher standards and have to do more to prove themselves.**

When statistics reflect many inequalities in opportunities and advancement between men and women, common justifications and excuses ranging from family responsibilities to skillset education are made. These justifications are finely layered with gender stereotypes and biases that have been a part of the workplace for decades. Gender stereotyping refers to the practice of ascribing specific attributes, characteristics, or roles to an individual woman or man by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men.<sup>126</sup> A survey conducted by Zety reveals that 71% of survey takers believed gender stereotypes were still alive in the workplace.<sup>127</sup>

Additionally, In the Pew Research Center's study on women in leadership, 52% of female respondents said a significant reason more women are not in top business leadership positions is that women are held to higher standards and have to do more to prove themselves. Failing to recognize second-generation bias can lead us to rely on stereotypes to justify and neglect collective inequalities between women and men.<sup>128</sup>

However, a glimmer of hope emerges from recent research by S&P Global, offering a contrasting perspective on female leadership. The study, "Leadership in Turbulent Times: Women CEOs During Covid-19," found that women CEOs exhibited a different leadership style than men during the Covid-19 crisis, leaning toward empathy, adaptability, accountability, and diversity, making them better leaders during those volatile years.<sup>129</sup> Another report by the Personal Finance Club highlights the success of female CEOs. The report unveils that over the past decade, female CEOs outperformed their male counterparts, the difference in returns being 384 percent from female-led companies vs. 261 percent from

<sup>124</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research. "Global Evidence on Childbearing and Women's Employment." *NBER*, 12 Dec. 2023, [www.nber.org/digest/202312/global-evidence-childbearing-and-womens-employment](http://www.nber.org/digest/202312/global-evidence-childbearing-and-womens-employment).

<sup>125</sup> Correll, Shelley. "Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?" *Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?* | *Gender Action Portal*, [gap.hks.harvard.edu/getting-job-there-motherhood-penalty#:~:text=Mothers%20were%206%20times%20less,for%20a%20promotion%20than%20mothers](http://gap.hks.harvard.edu/getting-job-there-motherhood-penalty#:~:text=Mothers%20were%206%20times%20less,for%20a%20promotion%20than%20mothers). Accessed 2 Jan. 2024.

<sup>126</sup> Tremmel, Manuela, and Ingrid Wahl. "Gender Stereotypes in Leadership: Analyzing the Content and Evaluation of Stereotypes about Typical, Male, and Female Leaders." *Frontiers*, Frontiers, 9 Jan. 2023, [www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1034258/full#ref14](http://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1034258/full#ref14).

<sup>127</sup> Jacques Buffett, CPRW. "Gender Gap at Work: 2022 Study." *Zety*, 24 Aug. 2023, [zety.com/blog/gender-gap-at-work](https://zety.com/blog/gender-gap-at-work).

<sup>128</sup> "Chapter 3: Obstacles to Female Leadership." *Pew Research Center's Social & Demographic Trends Project*, Pew Research Center, 14 Jan. 2015, [www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/01/14/chapter-3-obstacles-to-female-leadership/](http://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2015/01/14/chapter-3-obstacles-to-female-leadership/).

<sup>129</sup> Burke, Rose Marie. "Leadership in Turbulent Times: Women CEOs during COVID-19." *Leadership In Turbulent Times: Women CEOs During COVID-19* | *S&P Global*, Alexandra Dimitrijevic, 25 May 2021, [www.spglobal.com/en/research-insights/featured/special-editorial/women-ceos-covid](http://www.spglobal.com/en/research-insights/featured/special-editorial/women-ceos-covid).

male-led companies. Although of the S&P 500 companies, 459 CEOs are male and only 41 are female, the female CEOs' performances defy biased expectations.<sup>130</sup>

Gender equality in leadership is crucial to fostering a global environment where everyone has equal opportunities to advance their careers and take roles as leaders and CEOs. Invisible barriers like sexual assault, childbearing, and stereotypes must be addressed to overcome this disparity. The rise of women leaders starts with the improvement of the roots within workplace culture, the empowerment of young girls, and the respect for equality between all women and men at all levels of society.

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<sup>130</sup> Marie Leech. "You Are More Likely to Have a CEO Named David than You Are to Have a Woman at the Helm, New Report Finds." *Bizjournals.Com*, 28 Apr. 2023, [www.bizjournals.com/bizwomen/news/latest-news/2023/04/you-are-more-likely-to-have-a-ceo-named-david-than.html?page=all#:~:text=Of%20the%20S%26P%20500%20companies,entire%20time%2C%20the%20report%20noted](http://www.bizjournals.com/bizwomen/news/latest-news/2023/04/you-are-more-likely-to-have-a-ceo-named-david-than.html?page=all#:~:text=Of%20the%20S%26P%20500%20companies,entire%20time%2C%20the%20report%20noted).

## GENDER EXPRESSION

Sophia Wong

As the global community examines ways to bridge gender inequalities, a global redevelopment of how people see and interact with gender is underway. Some of the most significant changes can be seen in the attitude and legislation surrounding non-conformative gender expression and non-heterosexual relations. Globally, gender expression—defined as “how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender, including behavior and outward appearance such as dress hair, make-up, body language and voice”<sup>131</sup>—is a diverse and complex facet of identity, all too often shaped by a cultural or even legal demand to conform to a standard determined by sex at birth. This article examines the complex legal, cultural, and media factors driving discrimination against non-conformity in gender expression and the equalization of the rights of all to safely and proudly voice their gender identity.

Currently, 65 countries criminalize same-sex relations, whether they be public or only suspected, and 14 countries ban the gender expression of transgender people. These laws often target such things as “cross-dressing,” “impersonation,” “unnaturalness” or “immorality.” Other laws target transgender expression as “public order offenses” or by limiting the accessibility of gender-affirming care, allowing for the increasingly widespread prosecution of gender nonconformity. Punishments enacted by these laws vary greatly, including fines as in Morocco, two years to life imprisonment as in Myanmar, and even the death penalty in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan. Additionally, some countries, including Indonesia, discriminatorily enforce a higher age of consent for lesbian and gay people than for heterosexual people.<sup>132</sup>

**65 COUNTRIES CRIMINALIZE SAME-SEX RELATIONS**

**14 COUNTRIES BAN THE GENDER EXPRESSION OF TRANSGENDER PEOPLE**

**41 COUNTRIES CURRENTLY CENSOR NON-GENDER STEREOTYPICAL AND NON-HETEROSEXUAL LIFE REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA, TV, LITERATURE, AND SCHOOL TEACHINGS**

Many countries suppress non-conformity in gender expression and same-sex relations in ways beyond laws. Some countries that criminalize gender nonconformity or homosexuality either do not consistently enforce such laws or outlaw gay marriage after already prohibiting same-sex relationships.<sup>133</sup> Instead, such laws are used to encourage and legitimize anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments, as well as to cultivate moral fear or hate of LGBTQ+ people. Such can be seen in Nigeria’s 2013 Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act, which came into force despite the preexisting criminalization of same-sex relations inherited from colonial rule.<sup>134</sup> <sup>135</sup> An increase followed the implementation of the law in January 2014 in the formation of gatherings or mobs to commit violence against suspected LGBTQ+ people, mainly under the flag of “doing the president’s work.”<sup>136</sup> Similar events in Senegal, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates are seen to massively restrict the gender expression of LGBTQ+ people, who are pushed to conform to

<sup>131</sup> "Gender Identity and Gender Expression." *Ontario Human Rights Commission*, [www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/3-gender-identity-and-gender-expression](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-because-gender-identity-and-gender-expression/3-gender-identity-and-gender-expression). Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

<sup>132</sup> "Map of Countries That Criminalize LGBT People." Human Dignity Trust, 2023, [www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/](http://www.humandignitytrust.org/lgbt-the-law/map-of-criminalisation/). Accessed 25 Dec. 2023.

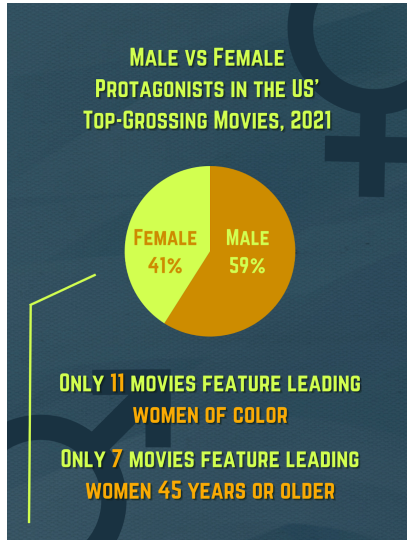
<sup>133</sup> Love, Hate and the Law: Decriminalizing Homosexuality. Amnesty International, July 2008.

<sup>134</sup> "'Tell Me Where I Can Be Safe': The Impact of Nigeria's Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act." Human Rights Watch, 20 Oct. 2016, [www.hrw.org/report/2016/10/20/tell-me-where-i-can-be-safe/impact-nigerias-same-sex-marriage-prohibition-act](http://www.hrw.org/report/2016/10/20/tell-me-where-i-can-be-safe/impact-nigerias-same-sex-marriage-prohibition-act). Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

<sup>135</sup> Love, Hate and the Law: Decriminalizing Homosexuality. Amnesty International, July 2008.

<sup>136</sup> "'Tell Me Where I Can Be Safe': The Impact of Nigeria's Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act." Human Rights Watch, 20 Oct. 2016, [www.hrw.org/report/2016/10/20/tell-me-where-i-can-be-safe/impact-nigerias-same-sex-marriage-prohibition-act](http://www.hrw.org/report/2016/10/20/tell-me-where-i-can-be-safe/impact-nigerias-same-sex-marriage-prohibition-act). Accessed 27 Dec. 2023.

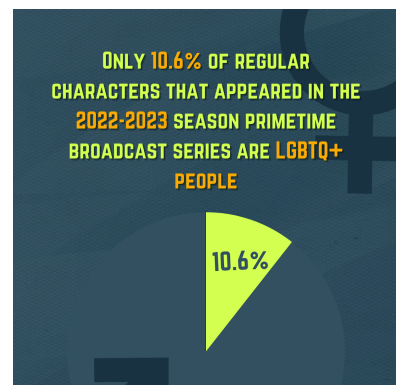
stereotypical gender roles to avoid violence from their peers and persecution from their states.<sup>137 138</sup> It is thus essential to recognize the massively oppressive and restrictive effect such criminalization laws have on the lives and freedoms of individuals, both in terms of their ability to express their gender as they see fit and to feel safe doing so in their home country.



Media representation also affects freedom of gender expression by altering the perception of LGBTQ+ people. This principle includes the promotion of stereotypical methods of gender expression and gendered lifestyle roles. As of 2021, the top-grossing movies in the United States, which has historically been a leader in movie making, saw 41% of plots driven mainly by female protagonists, though only 11 of them featured leading women of color and only 7 featured a woman 45 years or older.<sup>139</sup> Additionally, female protagonists were most likely to appear in dramas, accounting for 36% of all movies produced with female leads. This statistic is followed by horror movies, which feature only 21% of female leads, and documentaries, which only feature 4% of women. This fact showcases the common theme associating feminine gender expression with a desire for life or self-searching goals, as well as discourages feminine gender expression as one that allows for feminine people to be reliable

experts or sources of information. At the same time, male characters were more likely to have work-related goals than female characters, driving the stereotype that male-oriented gender expression is absent of emotion or personal-life-related goals.<sup>140</sup> Stereotypes are also rooted in advertising, which still often targets goods based on gender even though the use of stereotypes to market products has been proven ineffectual in connecting to audiences' actual needs.<sup>141</sup> The constant promotion of gendered life roles serves to prevent people from feeling that they have options in life or hinder their motivation to seek a path of self-development outside of their prescribed gender norm.

For LGBTQ+ populations, the media poses both a problem of stereotypes and censorship. While the representation of LGBTQ+ people in the media has improved dramatically over time, currently residing at 10.6% of regular characters that appeared in the 2022-2023 season primetime broadcast series, it is also essential to consider the way that LGBTQ+ people are being presented.<sup>142</sup> Often, LGBTQ+ representation comes only in the context of tragedies or only from



<sup>137</sup> Ioanes, Ellen. "Russia's Absurd Claim That the LGBTQ Community Is Extremist, Explained." Vox, 5 Dec. 2023, www.vox.com/world-politics/2023/12/5/23988527/russia-anti-lgbtq-ruling-extremist-putin. Accessed 28 Dec. 2023.

<sup>138</sup> Love, Hate and the Law: Decriminalizing Homosexuality. Amnesty International, July 2008.

<sup>139</sup> "2021 Statistics." Women and Hollywood, 2022,

womenandhollywood.com/resources/statistics/2021-statistics/#:~:text=Males%20comprised%2066%25%20of%20major,had%2010%20or%20more%20females.Accessed 29 Dec. 2023.

<sup>140</sup> Lauzen, Martha M., Dr. It's a Man's (Celluloid) World: Portrayals of Female Characters in the Top Grossing U.S. Films of 2020. 2021. SDSU: The Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film, womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2020\_Its\_a\_Mans\_World\_Report\_v2.pdf. Accessed 29 Dec. 2023.

<sup>141</sup> The Push for Change: Examining LGBTQ+ Representation in Media and Advertising. June 2023. Nielsen,

www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/06/June-LGBTQ-Report-2023.pdf. Accessed 29 Dec. 2023.

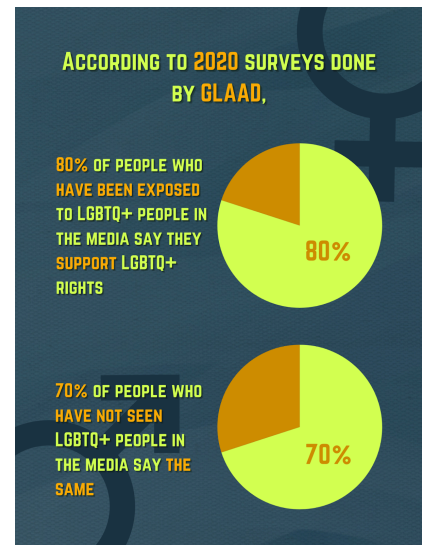
<sup>142</sup> "Where We Are on TV Report 2022-2023." GLAAD, 2023, glaad.org/whereweareontv22. Accessed 29 Dec. 2023.

characters who seem constantly happy or confident. These extremes serve to create an expectation of either tragedy or perfect ease in the lives of people who do not conform to gender stereotypical, heterosexual life, completely ignoring the combination of struggle and victory that makes up the life experience of everyone regardless of gender or sexual orientation. On the other hand, 41 countries currently exhibit censorship laws, including those that limit the representation of LGBTQ+ people in



media and television, literature, and school teachings.<sup>143</sup> Such censorship serves to harm efforts to normalize or establish empathy for LGBTQ+ people, allowing for the continuation of anti-LGBTQ+ sentiments. In China, where homosexuality and gender transitions are legal but receive no lawful protection from discrimination, a state-enforced ban on all LGBT-themed media may help explain why only 27.7% of surveyed individuals accept LGBTQ+ people as neighbors.<sup>144</sup> As such, censorship and lack of nuanced representation in media serve as significant factors in the struggle for acceptance and normalization of LGBTQ or gender non-conformative people.

The media can also be a key instrument in promoting the legalization and acceptance of non-traditional gender constructs. 2020 surveys done by GLAAD show that 80% of people who have been exposed to LGBTQ+ people in the media say they are supportive of LGBTQ+ rights, whereas only 70% of people who have not seen LGBTQ+ people in the media say the same.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the appearance of LGBTQ+ people in the media serves to both normalize the existence of LGBTQ+ people and establish empathy for their struggles against discrimination. Social media can also help spread awareness of discrimination against LGBTQ+ people and also provide a resource through which people who do not conform to the gender binary can find other people with similar experiences, legitimizing their own experiences and giving encouragement for their exploration of identity. As with many different social movements, social media also facilitates the organization of LGBTQ+ and gender expression rights campaigns.<sup>146</sup> Thus, the media can be seen as both a factor of oppression of freedom of gender expression and a tool by which LGBTQ-positive and inclusive messages can be spread and shared.



Small changes in policy and practice in individual institutions can also help promote diversity and inclusivity of gender expression. Schools can work to normalize and establish empathy for LGBTQ+ equality struggles by including practices such as the identification of pronouns, the inclusion of a diverse range of characters in libraries, and the prohibition of gender or sexuality-based bullying. Schools can

<sup>143</sup> "Censorship of LGBT Issues." Equaldex, Nov. 2023, [www.equaldex.com/issue/censorship?sa=D&scrllybrkr=eee3665c](http://www.equaldex.com/issue/censorship?sa=D&scrllybrkr=eee3665c). Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

<sup>144</sup> "LGBT Rights in China." Equaldex, 2013, [www.equaldex.com/region/china](http://www.equaldex.com/region/china). Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

<sup>145</sup> "Procter & Gamble and GLAAD Study: Exposure to LGBTQ Representation in Media and Advertising Leads to Greater Acceptance of the LGBTQ Community." GLAAD, 24 May 2023, [glaad.org/releases/procter-gamble-and-glaad-study-exposure-lgbtq-representation-media-and-advertising-leads](http://glaad.org/releases/procter-gamble-and-glaad-study-exposure-lgbtq-representation-media-and-advertising-leads). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

<sup>146</sup> Hill, Harry. "The Success of LGBTQ Activism through Social Media." Giving Compass, 14 June 2019, [givingcompass.org/article/the-success-of-lgbtq-activism-through-social-media](http://givingcompass.org/article/the-success-of-lgbtq-activism-through-social-media). Accessed 31 Dec. 2023.

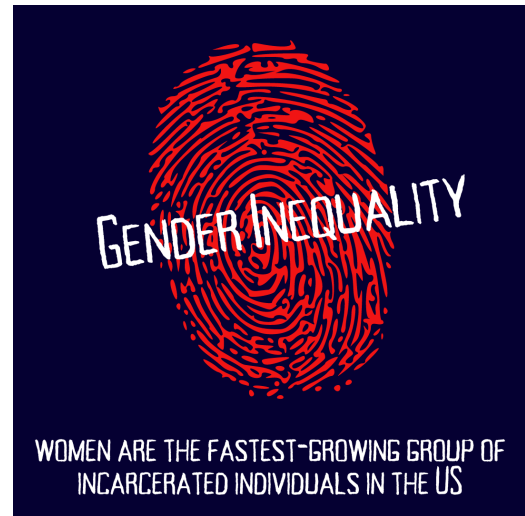


also provide courses that critically examine the roots of biases, stereotypes, and systemic hatred—as has been done in this article regarding the legal and media influences on freedom of gender expression—to allow students to question discrimination or misrepresentation on their own and develop ways of promoting inclusion and equality that suit their communities.

## RACE & GENDER EQUALITY

Siana Black

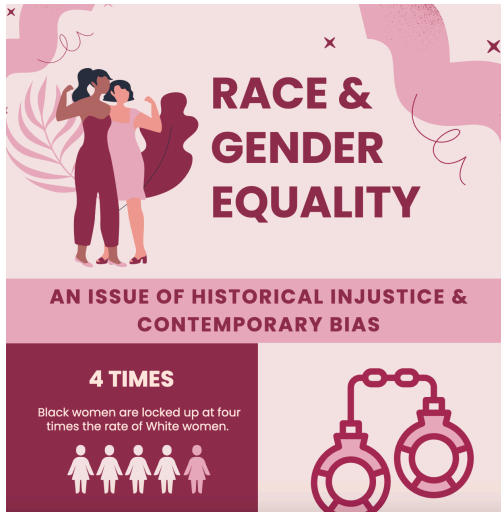
In the starlit canvas of American ideals, the scales of justice, meant to symbolize impartiality, often tilt precariously when race and gender intertwine within the criminal justice system. Women, particularly women of color, face a complex web of biases and systemic inequalities that distort the pursuit of fair and equitable outcomes. In fact, for women of color, navigating the criminal justice system feels less like a march toward fairness and more like a tightrope walk over the Grand Canyon of bias. Racial and gender disparities have intricately interwoven themselves, shaping the uneven pathway of justice for women of color in America. It is this intersectionality that has shaped their experiences within the criminal justice system, influencing everything from simple profiling to the sting of suspicion during a traffic stop, arrest rates, and the weight of unjust sentencing outcomes.



To fully understand the current state of race and gender equality in the US criminal justice system, one must delve into its historical roots. From the era of slavery to the post-Civil Rights Movement, marginalized communities and people of color have faced systemic biases that extend into the realm of law enforcement, judicial processes, and corrections. The legacy of slavery and Jim Crow laws, which enforced racial segregation and discrimination, further contributed to racial disparities in the criminal justice system and led to over-policing and over-incarceration of Black individuals. In addition to racial disparities, gender-based inequities within the criminal justice system are evident. Women, particularly women of color, face unique challenges ranging from biased arrests to inadequate support for victims of gender-based violence. The "pipeline to prison" phenomenon, which describes the trajectory of marginalized individuals from childhood trauma to involvement in the criminal justice system, disproportionately affects women, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage.

Women of color have been negatively affected by the criminal justice system. This imbalance stems from the historical perception of women as subordinates. It has translated into biased legal practices, which have only served to marginalize women in the criminal justice system further. Gender inequality also has deep historical roots in the United States. For centuries, women were largely excluded from the public sphere, regarded as only having domestic roles, and denied equal rights under the law. This exclusion meant women's voices were often silenced and their concerns not heard. Until the late 18th century, the US rarely incarcerated women, primarily punishing them for "moral" crimes like adultery or witchcraft in harsh, overcrowded prisons. However, the 19th century saw a rise in female incarceration spurred by the penitentiary system, stricter laws against "victimless crimes" like prostitution, and rapid urbanization.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Boen, Courtney, et al. "Early life patterns of criminal legal system involvement: Inequalities by race/ethnicity, gender, and parental education." *Demographic Research*, 14 Jan. 2022, [www.demographic-research.org/articles/volume/46/5/](http://www.demographic-research.org/articles/volume/46/5/).



This trend continued in the twentieth century, fueled by the War on Drugs, which disproportionately impacted women, especially women of color, with harsh sentences for drug offenses. These historical imprints underscore the importance of understanding the intersectionality of race and gender in addressing contemporary disparities. They also placed women of color in a situation where their unique experiences and perspectives were not considered.

Despite the progress made in dismantling overt forms of discrimination, race and gender disparities continue to permeate the criminal justice system. Policing biases are one of the most common forms of race and gender inequality. The practice of targeting individuals for police scrutiny based

on their race and ethnicity remains a pervasive issue. The over-policing of minority communities contributes to racially skewed arrest rates. Additionally, people of color are more likely to be stopped by police, searched, and arrested than their white counterparts, even when engaging in similar behavior. Black women are incarcerated at more than twice the rate of white women. This statistic means that for every 100 white women behind bars, over 240 Black women are facing the same reality. Latina women are incarcerated at nearly twice the rate of white women, highlighting another dimension of this systemic imbalance. According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), women are now the fastest-growing group of incarcerated individuals in the United States.<sup>148</sup> In 2010, more than 200,000 women were behind bars, most of them women of color. Latina women are incarcerated at nearly twice the rate of white women, and Black women are locked up at four times the rate of White women.<sup>149</sup>



Racial and gender disparities also extend to pre-trial detention and sentencing decisions, further highlighting the systemic biases within the judiciary and a system tilted against women of color. Women of color are also more likely to be denied bail than men. This fact means they spend more time incarcerated before trial, often facing significant disruptions to their lives and families. In 2021, nearly two-thirds of women in jail were awaiting trial rather than serving sentences.<sup>150</sup> This statistic underscores the widespread use of pre-trial detention, often for non-violent offenses, raising concerns about its necessity and fairness. Additionally, pre-trial detention can have devastating consequences for women, particularly in terms of lost employment, childcare disruptions, and strained family relationships.

<sup>148</sup> Howard, Tyrone C., Ph.D. "The Counter Narrative." *SlideShare*, 11 Apr. 2017, [www.slideshare.net/GaryClarke14/uclabmi-counter-narrative-report](http://www.slideshare.net/GaryClarke14/uclabmi-counter-narrative-report).

<sup>149</sup> Guerino, Paul, et al. "Prisoners in 2010." *Bureau of Justice Statistics*, U.S. Department of Justice, Dec. 2011, [bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p10.pdf](http://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/p10.pdf).

<sup>150</sup> Mass Incarceration: Punishing the Families." *University of Chicago Illinois*, 15 Jan. 2020, [socialwork.uic.edu/news-stories/mass-incarceration-punishing-the-families/](http://socialwork.uic.edu/news-stories/mass-incarceration-punishing-the-families/).

Women, as a whole, comprise the fastest-growing demographic in US prisons. Their population has skyrocketed over sixfold since 1970, prompting crucial questions about the factors driving this trend. It can be argued that law enforcement officers, judges, and other actors within the system may unconsciously hold preconceived notions that influence their decision-making processes. Studies have shown that these biases can result in discriminatory practices, from the initial contact between law enforcement and individuals to courtroom proceedings. For example, once ensnared in the system, women, particularly Black and Brown women (Hispanic), are more likely to be denied bail, often due to financial constraints or limited social support networks. This pre-trial detention, even for minor offenses, has cascading consequences, disrupting employment, childcare, and family ties and subjecting women to potentially harsh conditions within overcrowded jails. Additionally, sentencing decisions may be influenced by implicit biases, leading to the disproportionate punishment of individuals from marginalized groups.

Race and gender equality are also pronounced in rehabilitation and reintegration exercises, as the challenges that women of color face do not end at the prison gates. Reintegration into society is fraught with difficulties, with limited access to housing, employment, adequate healthcare, and support services, further complicating reintegration into society. With fewer resources, women face additional challenges in overcoming the obstacles they may encounter upon release. The stigma associated with incarceration not only reinforces the inequality but also further complicates their journey, making it harder to secure stable housing and meaningful employment. Women also face higher rates of poverty and homelessness than men upon release from prison. This truth significantly hinders their ability to rebuild their lives and successfully reintegrate into society. These hurdles are often amplified for women of color who face additional layers of discrimination based on race and ethnicity.

Recognizing and addressing race and gender equality biases is crucial for achieving a more equitable criminal justice system. Reforming law enforcement practices is a critical step in doing this. Community policing, which emphasizes collaboration between law enforcement and the communities they serve, can help build trust and reduce the likelihood of biased policing and discriminatory practices. Implementing implicit bias training for law

enforcement officers is essential to raising awareness and promoting fair and impartial decision-making. Furthermore, reevaluating and revising policies such as stop-and-frisk can help mitigate the negative impact on minority communities. Emphasizing de-escalation techniques and alternatives to arrest can also contribute to a more equitable approach to law enforcement. By incorporating community input and fostering transparency, law enforcement agencies can work towards dismantling systemic biases.

Judicial reforms are imperative for addressing sentencing disparities based on race and gender. Sentencing guidelines should be reviewed to ensure they are fair and do not disproportionately impact specific demographics. Giving judges cultural competency training can help them better understand the diverse



backgrounds of individuals appearing before them, fostering more informed and impartial decision-making. Fairer bail systems and alternatives to incarceration can lessen the pre-trial detention burden on women. Additionally, reforming sentencing guidelines, particularly for non-violent offenses, and focusing on rehabilitation instead of punishment can create a more equitable justice system. Efforts to eliminate mandatory minimum sentences and promote rehabilitative approaches can also contribute to a more just system. Investing in alternative dispute resolution programs and diversionary measures for non-violent offenses can prevent the unnecessary incarceration of individuals, particularly those from marginalized communities. By promoting fairness and individualized justice, the judiciary can play a pivotal role in dismantling systemic inequities.

Recognizing and addressing women's unique challenges within the criminal justice system is essential for achieving gender equality. This practice involves reforming policies related to the arrest and incarceration of women, particularly mothers. Providing trauma-informed care and support for women who have experienced gender-based violence or abuse is crucial for breaking the cycle of victimization and involvement in the criminal justice system. Moreover, investing in programs that address the underlying issues leading to women's involvement in the criminal justice system, such as poverty and lack of access to education, can be transformative.<sup>151</sup>

Race and gender equality within the US criminal justice system remains an ongoing struggle, deeply rooted in historical injustices and perpetuated by contemporary biases. While progress has been made in recognizing these disparities, pursuing justice is an uneven pathway. Addressing these entrenched inequalities requires a multifaceted approach encompassing law enforcement reform, judicial restructuring, and targeted interventions for marginalized communities. Ultimately, by acknowledging the impact of implicit bias, implementing comprehensive reforms, promoting fair and impartial practices, and prioritizing rehabilitation over retribution, we can move towards a system that upholds equity and fairness for all, regardless of race or gender.

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<sup>151</sup> McNamara, Robert Hartmann, and Ronald G. Burns. *Multiculturalism, Crime, and Criminal Justice*. Oxford University Press, 2017.

## AFTERWORD

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Gender inequality is a pervasive issue that demands our attention and deserves our passion in fighting against it. The problem stems from different groups of communities and societies with similar trends that tie people down due to their gender. Accountability for gender inequality is insufficient, despite the problem being a global issue affecting all human beings.

The UNIS-UN Executive Committee has invited experts to speak on the prevailing issue of gender inequality, addressing the gender dependent disparities, as well as the significance behind making a change. The conference additionally focuses on other subtopics of gender inequality such as gender disparities in sports, mental health, and the feminist movement.

Our intentions with making this working paper is to broaden your understanding and views on gender inequality in our modern day, where we can recognize the progress we have made, and address the steps needed to be taken in order to help stop this issue. We hope that this paper gives you additional resources in order to formulate your own opinions and conclusions on gender equality, as well as building solutions for the future.



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