

Inequality Series Part 1: Gender Inequality

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Political equality refers to the state of each member or group in a society holding equal standing in terms of social, legal, and economic rights. While the concept itself is easy to understand, it is certainly proving to be difficult to uphold even in the countries with the most developed sense of human rights. That is why we decided to start a series that will focus on a different case of global inequality each month. Our first article will be about the never-ending fight for gender equality.

Gender inequality is no new concept, there is a low chance you have not witnessed or experienced it at least at some point in your lives. Sadly, it is ingrained in our lives in many societies, sometimes the severity or the form may shift but there is almost no doubt that it is there. While some may argue women and men are virtually the same in developed societies, that argument simply does not extend to transgender people and it is also factually incorrect. To give two simple examples from the US (as it is often the origin of these arguments) for both sides, approximately 1 in every 5 women has been a victim of sexual assault (1) and men get 63% longer sentences on average for crimes (2). As for transgender people, there is no question that they face discrimination, 63% reported that they have experienced a form of discrimination in their lives, these forms listed as job loss, eviction, physical and sexual assault, homelessness, denial of medical service, incarceration, and so on (3). As it stands, gender inequality is a broad subject that affects many aspects of our lives, and so we will briefly touch on the major issues in this article.

Women have been fighting for their equal standing in society for centuries now and while I wish I could say we have come a long way from being bought and sold (4) (5), sex trafficking is still alive and kicking with its estimated 4 million victims globally and a whopping 99% of those victims being women and girls (6). Not to mention that they are more likely to experience forced and early marriage, a form of modern slavery (7). Women are also still less likely to receive education, representing over 75% of the 796 million illiterate people in the world (8).

However, these are the big problems that can be measured and recorded, although granted there is still a terrifyingly long list of these as well, well over the space this article would allow. But there are more insidious shapes discrimination takes. The type of discrimination parents unintentionally instill in their children as they raise them, every subtle difference in encouragement when it comes to school subjects, when it comes to helping out with housework, when it comes to the way their children dress, or the aspirations they have. For every little boy that feels like he can conquer the world, there are likely dozens of girls being told that they cannot even throw a ball. When these children grow up, they function on these tiny boxes they have learned when they were still trying to make sense of the world and form their identities.

In some respects, men are victims of these boxes as well. The perceived weakness and softness of women result in the above-mentioned sentencing discrepancy, and men are less likely to receive custody of their children (9). Furthermore, the pressure to conform to the ideas of masculinity often causes emotional and mental health issues. Men are less likely to have support systems and actively

reach out for them, which is likely the cause of their higher rates of deaths by suicide, and the increased likeliness for developing unhealthy coping mechanisms such as drug abuse ([10](#)). Additionally, while it is difficult to find statistics for this, it is commonly discussed that men are less likely to come forth with experiences of sexual assault.

Transgender people are perhaps the least represented group when it comes to gender discrimination. Even the term transgender here, while listed as a third category, encompasses more than one group of people. Unfortunately, the shift in the understanding of gender is considerably recent, and so it is difficult to find detailed information on the different groups it holds. With that being said, transgender people live in poverty at high rates with a 29%, are less likely to vote due to fear of discrimination, more likely to face violence (with 54% reporting partner-violence and 47% reporting sexual assault), and 22% of them do not have medical coverage ([11](#)) (for more: [12](#)). They face discrimination at serious levels even in developed countries, and can downright face life risks in less developed ones.

As it stands, gender inequality is a persistent and prevalent global issue. While it is too broad to even begin to address everything in a short article, hopefully, this has been somewhat of an introduction to the dynamics and problems at play. For more detailed discussions of the specific problems regarding gender inequality, browsing through our bulletin and reading relevant articles could be useful.