

How might gender inequality dictate expectations for women that don't apply to men?

Gender inequalities often spring from expectations generated in childhood. This enculturation tends to reinforce a child's common tendencies, duties and responsibilities in the transition to adulthood.

Although experiencing a changing situation, it has been the general presumption in western societies that men do the heavy lifting and women do the backup work of keeping home, with lighter, often less technical duties being the norm. Women traditionally are often referred to as the "fairer sex" and as more second-rate people, as they are often the ones who don't work for money to do what men expect of them. Perhaps this is the prime reason there remains a pay gap, sometimes significant, in what males and females do when performing similar duties.

The entrenched belief that men are the ones to employ where their often greater physical strength is seen as a necessity compared to a woman is becoming eroded by advanced technologies such as automation and mechanical devices that only require a basic use of levers or computer knowledge. Similarly, in their traditional roles as caregivers, women are more often shoe-horned into employment that aligns with their traditional roles, such as nursing and teaching and with this clear distinction of roles (heavy lifter versus verbal and bed sheet handler), it could be opined that pay and other benefits are awarded on a directly proportional basis of physical, not mental strength. And yet, according to such as the Pew Research Centre, the irony is that women score higher in the characteristics of honesty, intelligence, compassion and innovation - those required of good leaders. Relatively recent examples include Germany's Angela Merkel and Britain's

Margaret Thatcher. The not-so-recent Boadicea, Nefertiti and Cleopatra are fascinating histories to read also, but perhaps their legacies were not founded on compassion so much.

Recognition in scientific discovery, to this writer, has also seen disappointment for women because of this entrenched gender-oriented non-recognition of females. The Nobel prize, the highest denied scientific award, exemplifies this. Of the relatively recently ignored have been Jocelyn Bell (Pulsars), Vera Rubin (dark matter), Chien-Shieng Wu (disproving the “law of conservation of parity”); Lise Meitner (nuclear fission). This could further appear to be reflected in so many recent studies that suggest that girls are more likely to direct their future occupational choices because they perceive particular occupations as inappropriate for their gender. Accordingly, girls tend to shift their occupational aspirations to gender-typical occupational expectations more strongly than boys (Hartung et al., 2005, cited in Aeschelmann et al., 2019).

Gender discrimination still prevails, but positive steps are being made to narrow the divide by increasing the spotlight on history’s missteps and creating a more equitable playing field for all.