

WHAT IS GENDER BIAS?

Gender: "Gender typically means "the behavioral, social and psychological aspects of being male and female." (Pryzgodna & Chrisler, 2000) It is a term used interchangeably with sex, which refers to the biological aspects of being male and female. This definition indicates that while gender is related to the sex that one has at birth, it transcends biology and involves psychological, societal and behavioral norms and patterns of behavior". (RISE definition)

Gender bias: "behavior that shows favoritism toward one gender over another. Most often, gender bias is the act of favoring men and/or boys over women and/or girls." ([Source](#))



WHAT ARE GENDER ROLES?

"**Gender roles** in society mean how we're expected to act, speak, dress, groom, and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating, and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong, aggressive, and bold." ([Source](#))

HOW DO GENDER ROLES MANIFEST IN SOCIETY?

Women are often disregarded as leaders in business, politics, sports, and much more. As such, societal norms often discourage or coerce them away from pursuing more lucrative and diverse career fields.

This is partly because women often hold lower-paying occupations and also due to the fact that the positions women hold are often devalued compared to those held by men. But the gap still exists when the data is controlled for those considerations. Even the 2% gap between men and women amounts to an average of \$80,000 less lifetime earnings, without considering the potential compound interest from investing those lost earnings.

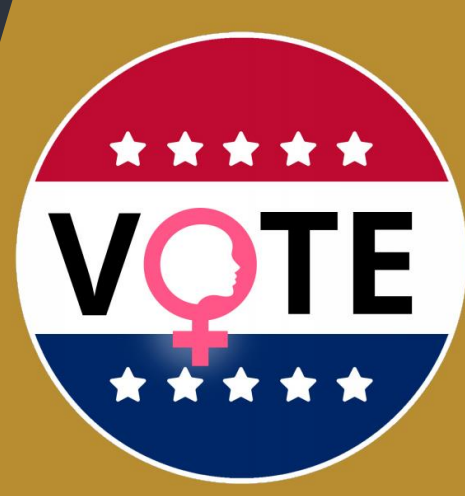
For women of color, this gap widens considerably. For a black female executive with the same qualifications as a white male executive, she can expect to earn \$0.93 for every \$1 the man makes. Women of color with the same qualifications as a white man are still 19% less likely to receive a raise from their employer.

One expected culprit to the gender pay gap is the "motherhood penalty". Women who have children often incur wage reductions when they return to work, as opposed to their male counterparts who may even receive pay boosts after having children. "41% of employed Americans perceived working moms to be less devoted to their work, and a third judged them for needing more flexible schedules." (Source [1](#), [2](#))



These perceptions come from gender roles. Women are "supposed" to be mothers and homemakers, so once they have children they are especially discouraged from working. Gender roles also contribute to the idea that women are unfit to lead because they are "too emotional", or do not possess the necessary character traits of their male counterparts.

Research shows that while the perceptions of women as capable leaders has gradually improved over time, there was still 13% of both men and women who believe that women are less suited for politics than men are. This percentage varies when you control for age, race and educational level illustrating that there are many underlying factors contributing to this perception. While women are generally perceived as far more capable in their ability to hold leadership positions in the political sphere, traditional notions of them being too emotional still persist leaving an unfair landscape for them to overcome. ([Source](#))



HOW DO GENDER ROLES MANIFEST IN SOCIETY?

In the sports world, the earnings gap between men and women is significant, with athletes, coaches and staff who are men nearly universally being paid more than their women counterparts by a significant margin. However, it is a common theme in the business world that athletes are considered better leaders, better team-players, and harder workers because of the values that sports instill.

Many of the most successful CEO's were athletes: "In all, Fortune estimates that 95 percent of its Fortune 500 CEOs played sports. While only 6 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are women, the proportion of women CEOs who were athletes is similar—90 percent of them played sports at some point, and 54 percent played sports at the university level." (Source [1](#), [2](#))



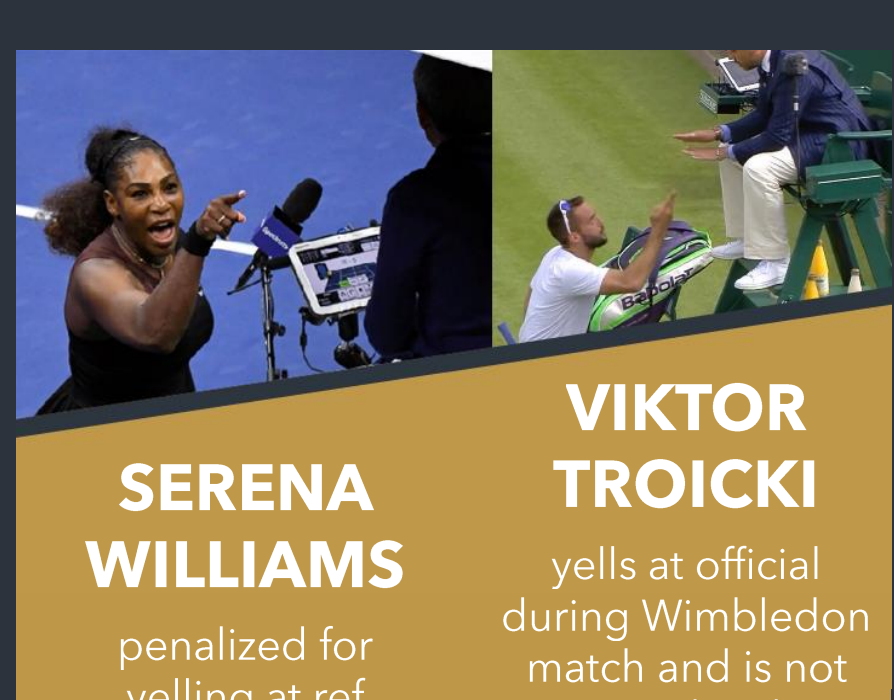
Sports instill valuable character traits that can make people successful in life, but they too are subject to gender bias.

Social gender norms discourage young girls from playing sports, and lead to female athletes being viewed as "less feminine" and less desirable. As such, "women in sexist society are physically handicapped". ([Source](#))

Even when women are athletes, they are held to different standards for the same behavior

"When a woman is emotional, she's 'hysterical' and she's penalized for it. When a man does the same, he's 'outspoken' and there are no repercussions."
-**BILLIE JEAN KING**

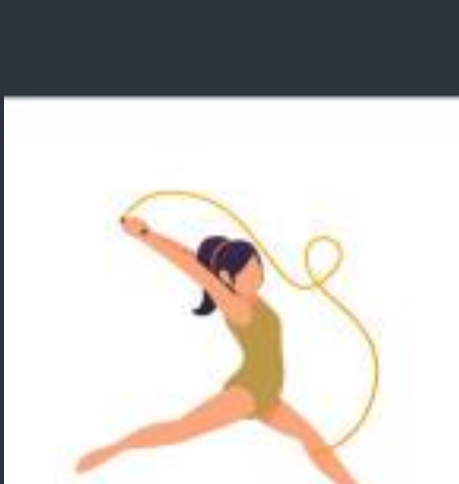
"According to Gibbs, female athletes are held to seemingly impossible standards of conduct – to smile constantly, to never express frustration after a loss or argue with a referee – because many viewers may be "already a little bit uncomfortable to see women in the aggressive positions they are as female athletes."



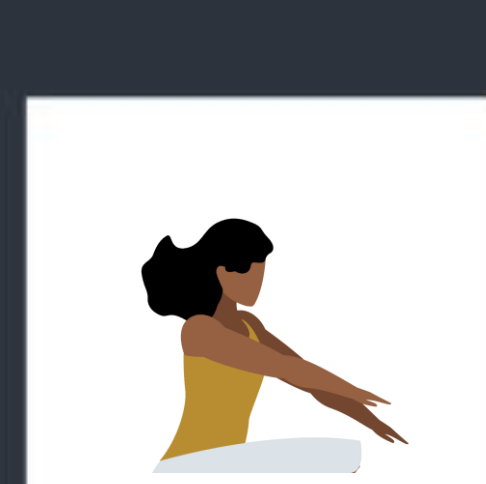
SERENA WILLIAMS
penalized for yelling at ref

VIKTOR TROICKI
yells at official during Wimbledon match and is not penalized

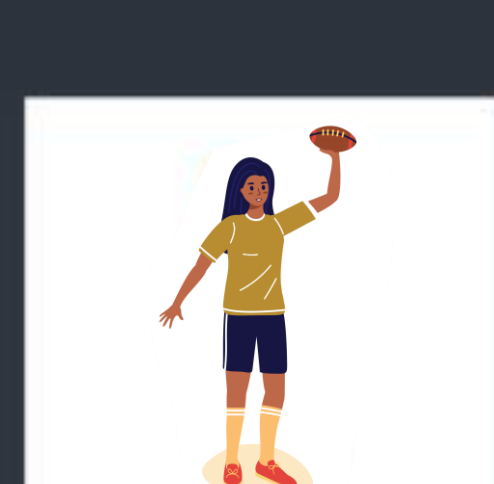
"A Black woman must not only perform her gender based on stereotypical gender norms, but to counter intersectional, oppressive images of Black women, like the 'angry Black woman'" says Carter. "She must perform 'happiness' or 'positivity' to counter implicit notions of Black threat. This performance is an attempt to comfort white fragility in sport, to appear nonthreatening, not 'angry' or 'unprofessional!'" ([Source](#))



Female athletes are supposed to only be positive, nurturing and supportive (think about the strict rules of conduct in women's sports such as gymnastics and ice skating)



Media tends to sexualize female athletes outside of their sports more often than men (especially women's volleyball, soccer, track and field, etc.,) and paint them as less athletic



For these reasons, women playing sports (especially less hyper-sexualized sports) are either "boring" or "undesirable" (e.g. women's basketball, ice hockey, swimming)



Women are less likely to play sports and therefore less likely to develop some of the positive character traits that are associated with athletics. Even the women who do develop this mindset, however, are still seen as more aggressive or emotional in the workplace.



The percentage of boys playing sports is higher than girls at every grade from 3-12, with nearly a third of boys being "highly involved" athletes playing 3 or more sports, and most girls playing only 1 or 2

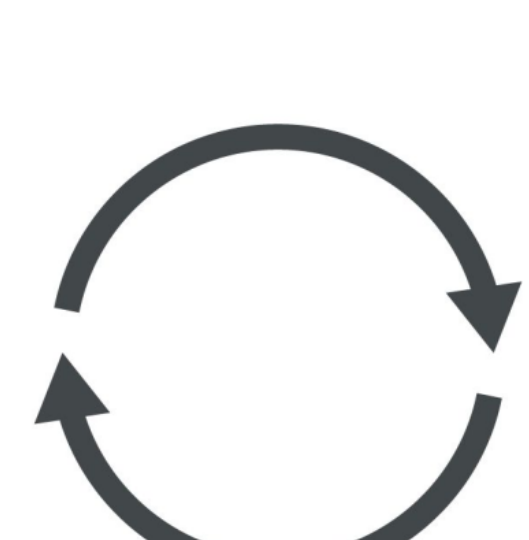


Girls age 8-12 are, on average, 19% less active than boys

Source [1](#), [2](#)

This creates a vicious two-way street that keeps women's sports in the background

- ▶ Not enough girls play sports for female sports to be treated as equals
- ▶ Women's sports in general aren't given equal enough importance/attention to inspire young girls to play sports
- ▶ Girls who don't play sports don't necessarily get to build their leadership qualities the same way as girls who play sports, but girls who play sports are shunned for displaying those qualities



Women's sports are only relevant when the team is successful ([Source](#))