



[The Hegemonic Myth](#)

In recent years we have seen a change in the way society views equality, specifically gender equality. This is often times a touchy subject. Many people argue that women and men are treated equally in America, feminism is a poison being shoved down the throats of adolescent boys and girls. It is something used by mainstream media to distract us from the real problems in the world like childhood hunger and the opioid epidemic. However, the negative effects of gender stereotyping are a lot worse than they may seem.

One major problem society faces is the hegemonic myth. This is the perception that men are the dominant sex, strong and independent, while women need to be protected. This myth has been around for thousands of years, and sadly it still exists today. As girls enter adolescence, silence and modesty are instilled as desirable values, as girls are pressed to behave in a “modest fashion.” These qualities are commonly associated with vulnerability. Messages such as “don’t sit like that,” “don’t wear that” and “boys will ruin your future” reinforce the gender division of power and promote sex segregation with the aim of preserving a girl’s sexuality. Boys are still perceived as a danger to girls because of their vulnerability, a bias with negative impacts for both genders.

Many researchers are beginning to think that parents are to blame for these social constructs. The reinforcement of gender norms and stereotypes are drilled into infants and toddlers, sometimes without the parents even realizing it. [One in five moms](#) of sons and daughters admit to letting their sons get away with more turning a blind eye to a behavior in boys for which they would reprimand girls. Mothers often times underestimate their daughters as well. In one study, mothers wrongly estimated how steep a slope their 11-month-olds could crawl down. Moms of boys got it right to within one degree but moms of girls underestimated what their daughters could do by nine degrees, despite the lack of motor skill differences in infant boys and girls. This also follows the hegemonic

myth. Boys are associated with strength and fearlessness, and it's almost expected of them to do well when it comes to physical activities. Girls are coddled from the time they are born, watched over and protected. These qualities that we push onto children have lasting negative impacts. It implies to girls that no one believes in them, that they won't amount to anything. It pressures boys and gives them unrealistic expectations.

We see the hegemonic myth being used during adolescence as well. According to the Washington Post, one of the most common fears or concerns of a teenaged daughter's parents is that their daughter will become pregnant while she is still in high school. Yet, on the same list, this fear ranked 9th when it came to teenage sons. Teenage girls get the reputation of being rebellious and irresponsible, so they are given stricter rules. The interesting thing is that according to statistics that rate drug use and even the proneness to get into car accidents, the most reckless among teenagers are males. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners says that most insurance companies charge about twice as much to insure a teenage boy than they do a teenage daughter because a teenage boy is twice as more likely to get into a car accident. Teenage boys are more prone to being involved in violent altercations with other people, to commit a serious crime and teenage boys are more prone to frequent alcohol use and to commit suicide than their female teenage counterparts. Additionally, according to the CDC, teenage boys also have a tendency to lose their virginity earlier than teenage girls and are less apt to be advocates of safe sex.

While many may think the United States has progressed, it still has a long way to go before there is complete gender equality. We still hold onto old social stigmas and gender stereotypes that have been proven wrong. These misconceptions have negative consequences as well, and as a collective society we should strive to change the way we look at gender and truly push for gender equality.