**Topic:**

I will be researching the issue of gender norms in America. A gender norm is an expectation or “rule” that society creates based on one’s actual or perceived sex. A male may be expected to act strong, competitive, unemotional, hard, and aggressive. While a female may be expected to act dependent, passive, emotional, and subordinate. Gender norms are rarely accurate or realistic of one’s actual characteristics. Gender norms contribute structurally to a vast amount of communities (i.e. Feminism) and have impacts on social behavior, work environment, family environment, and more. Gender roles and/or norms have been in existence throughout all of history, typically with the male counterpart assuming the dominant position with every other gender being seen as subordinate. This inequality takes place in areas other than the United States, but for a more refined topic I will be looking specifically at the American community.

Reference: Möller-Leimkühler, A. M. (2003). The gender gap in suicide and premature death or: Why are men so vulnerable? European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, 253(1), 1-8.

**Community:**

A community that I identify with that is affected by gender norms is the American culture community. I was born In the United States, and am therefore a citizen. I have been a part of and raised by American culture my entire life. Gender norms affect people on an individual person-to-person level and at a structural level. It decides the “Man of the house”, but also who will be the boss at work. It is an unsigned contract that we all subconsciously agree to whether we want to or not. It is important to understand how gender norms affect the community in negative or even positive ways. With knowledge on the effects of gender norms people may begin to step aside from the stereotypical gender views and understand that everything lies on a spectrum. A new way of thinking can remove stigmas from genders and allow for a safer, more comfortable social atmosphere.

**Relation to structural inequality:**

Gender norms are by nature systematic because they are created by ideas, perceptions, and beliefs of society as a whole. As I mentioned, I grew up in American culture. This means that I was introduced to gender stereotypes from the beginning, as were my parents and grandparents before me. Each of us goes through a process called gender socialization. It comes from a long line of history of inequality between gender and race. It is incorporated in many aspects of society today. For example, women are typically paid less than their male counterpart, and have a difficult time landing a job in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) field. This may be due males feeling they must by dominant, and that feeling also comes from gender socialization over time.

**Research method:**

I will be doing secondary research on gender norms. The article “Men, Masculinity, and the Contexts of Help Seeking” may be of good use for my research. It gives specifics on the way men act in certain situations (i.e. asking for help when it is needed) and why that may be, and how that behavior differs from their female counterparts.

Reference: Addis, M. E., & Mahalik, J. R. (2003). Men, masculinity, and the contexts of help seeking. American Psychologist, 58(1), 5-14.