

# Sample research paper on feminism

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Political correctness is a growing concern in today's tender climate, so much so that it seems individuals cannot speak their mind or take a stance on anything for fear of being dubbed too radical or too lackadaisical about an issue. Equality between genders is not immune to this problem, but also a hot-button issue for political correctness. The word "feminist" is a trigger for some, a warning that allows people to understand you are either an enemy, or a friend. It is unfortunate that there is such a divide based on a simple word because feminism's true goal is only to bring equality among the genders, and put women and men on relatively equal footing when possible. It is a word, and a stance, that is supposed to protect women and men, not alienate them from one another. It is also a word that is supposed to allow women to come together, not alienate them from each other. However, because the word means so many things to so many different people, different stances have been taken that have caused the divide to deepen. Ranging from radical feminists to conservative, 2nd degree feminism, and every level in between, women use a gambit of tactics to achieve the same solution without realizing they must work together instead of against one another in order to accomplish anything.

One of the most well-known group of women in the United States, as well as the world, according to, "Radical Feminists: A Guide to an American Subculture," are feminists who take their views to a liberal extreme. The primary basis of radical feminism is that society is based on serving the patriarchy, a system with an underlying need for male supremacy. Essentially, women who opt for radical feminism believe that if they are acting in a way that society deems acceptable, they are probably acting in a

way that a man has deemed acceptable for the patriarch's primary cause i. e. keeping men in power and the further subjugation of women .

In an effort to counteract the assumed patriarchy and the forced servitude women unknowingly beseech themselves toward with their every movement, radical feminists take drastic measures. In a movement commonly known as " Taking It Back" radical feminists view things unworthy of high society not only as acceptable, but also as advancement . For example, the average woman would hear the word " prostitution" and what it entails, and immediately think it an unworthy, vile thing for a woman to partake in.

However, a radical feminist believes these thoughts to be an implant of the patriarchy, a device of control. They believe that if men control when a woman feels sexual or when she feels comfortable being sexual, he can control when he is sexual with her. Therefore, the radical feminist will find prostitution perfectly acceptable, and believe that by taking her sexuality into her own hands, and exposing her body at her own will she is somehow wrenching the power away from the patriarchy and back into the hands of women. Radical feminists have gone so far to rename prostitute as sex work, much to the chagrin of " 2nd degree" feminists and other women.

Conservative, or 2nd degree, feminists, vary greatly in comparison to radical feminists. " Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction," explains that the basis of feminism may have begun with more radical leanings, but conservative feminism is quickly gaining steam . Unlike radical feminists, 2nd degree feminists criticize the characteristic attributes of society that have been deemed unworthy. They are unimpressed with prostitution or women who are not college educated. They do not often believe that single

mothers will make adequate parents, exercising hypocrisy by expressing the need of a man in the child's life, and also being firmly pro-life . In some ways, 2nd degree feminists appear to be attempting to bridge the gap between the genders by acting as superior as men do, while radical feminists are firmly attempting to commit to their own agenda.

Unfortunately, the two groups never seem to agree, nor do they realize that with their powers combined, they could accomplish more than when they are divided. Feminism and the extreme viewpoints involved keeps radicals and 2nd degree feminists separated as a principle and a rule. Radical feminists criticize 2nd degree feminists and their lack of commitment to the cause, incessantly accusing them of being a part of the patriarchy's agenda . In defense of radical feminists, it is hard to separate conservative feminists and men at time, when both parties are generalizing about women, or exercising rights over women in general. However, radical feminists are guilty of the same crime by generalizing all conservative feminists for acting on behalf of male supremacy. Fundamentally, radical feminists believe that if you are not with them, you are against them. To disagree is to be a part of the patriarchy, and they do not stand for that. Therefore, further divisions are created, not only between feminist groups, but also between groups of women, and men and women in general.

Similarly, conservative feminists believe the radical feminist movement does not help gender equality, but rather degrades women. Again, it is easy to understand their assumptions when radical feminists sometimes make it seem like their movement is not about equality or even femininity, but about vulgarity and pornography. The right to display one's body in any form, at

any time, should be observed but to do so garishly and for the purpose so similar to what one is fighting against, 2nd degree feminists find it difficult to understand how radical feminists believe they are making an impact. Not only that, but they feel as though they are represented by these women and do not like it. In retaliation, they frequently make further divisions between themselves and radical feminists using public platforms .

The continuous division between feminists, as well as men and women, would not be so difficult to grip if either side of the feminists' movement used helpful tactics. Unfortunately, both sides use methods that they believe are either forthright or clever in order to further the movement. Most importantly, it appears that each side is no longer fighting for equality, but only to silence the other side . For instance, recently a video brought on from the radical feminist movement surfaced featuring very young girls screaming curse words at a camera. The video went viral almost instantly for several reasons. People find children cursing funny, but were also perplexed by what the video was supposed to accomplish. Similar to most of the tactics used by the radical feminist movement, the video was released for the usual reasons: shock value and to familiarize the public with a concept that is normally ostracized. Little girls had their hair and makeup done nicely; they were wearing nice dresses. Yet they continued screaming obscenities at the camera. The juxtaposition was assumedly comparable to the feminist ideals behind being a working woman who happens to be in the sex trade. It is possible to be an executive who works in the sex industry. Radical feminists believe this breaks down a barrier set up by the patriarchy, an observation made in the unlikeliest of places: “ Hermione Granger Saves the World:

Essays on the Feminist Heroine of Hogwarts .” It is difficult, though, for anybody whether they are a feminist or not, to understand how children screaming obscenities breaks down any patriarchal instigated barriers. It could be argued that the juxtaposition of fine clothing on a child coupled with the obscenities showed that the little girls would not be fed the same lines as generations past. Ethical concerns regarding the autonomy of minors must be called into question, however. If a child can accept a patriarchal message, they can accept a radical feminist message, as well.

Messages such as the aforementioned border dangerously on next to propaganda and do little for any cause other than to receive a high volume of views on YouTube. Once more, what both sides fail to realize is that if they simply combined their resources, and remembered what feminism was created for, the movement would stand a better chance at succeeding. Sara Ahmed points out in her article, “ Killing Joy: Feminism and the History of Happiness,” that the feminist movement may be a part of a greater collective conscious that has the capacity not only to bring or kill change, but also happiness. She expresses specifically that everybody has times of unrest or unhappiness, and proposes that perhaps women put too much pressure on feminism and their reasons behind their subjugation for their feelings .

The ideology being the proposal is sound for several reasons. For example, even if each feminist party were able to accomplish gender equality, it would only mean equality to a certain degree. Men and women are separated, and always will be unequal, due to certain biological factors . Women work better in teams, while men have greater upper body strength. Women have a

higher propensity for patience and compassion, while men are often quicker. In circumstances involving survival in the outdoors, statistically men would have a better chance at surviving based solely on their strength and body hair. Women have more body fat, which may be of service, but the fact remains that men and women will always be unequal in certain ways. Feminism was meant to create equality where it was possible, not everywhere in general. This means that in places of business, social circumstances, and other arenas, men and women should be treated equally. Women should be paid the same rates as men for the same amount of work, they should expect the same courtesies and respect as men, and they should feel as safe as men. Operating under Ahmed's assumption about the collective happiness and unhappiness, equality and the success of feminism will only fix so many things about what is inherently wrong with the world, but not everything about what may be inherently wrong with us. Though feminism and the fight for gender equality is important, even if the sides are divided, individuals may also want to begin taking account for how they feel without being a part of the movement in order to cultivate happiness within themselves.

In sum, feminism has become very complicated as time has gone on and groups have divided. Women have become more hostile toward one another and forgotten the true goal of feminism. Radical feminists and 2nd degree feminists rarely agree on anything and are now so deeply divided on key issues that feminism has turned away from a fight toward gender equality and toward a fight that pits women against one another. Radical feminists wish to take power back from the patriarchy while 2nd degree feminists wish

to assimilate, and neither party sees themselves assimilating with the other. They have forgotten that feminism was not only about equality, but also about the right for each woman to be herself. Whether this means that the woman is a radical feminist who enjoys shouting obscenities and working in the sex industry, or she is a conservative feminist who is prolife and considered power hungry, feminism should allow her to be that without reprimand. Even seeming neutral parties, who have the happiness of all at heart like Sara Ahmed, should be free to be themselves. It is tragic enough we live in a world where feminism and a battle for gender equality is needed at all; the genders should have been treated equal in arenas where such a thing was possible without such a device. The divide between the parties will only serve to make the movement's progress slower.

## References

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