

# Good research paper about does feminism create equality

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Feminism is an ideological movement based on the targeted outcome of gender equality, but there is no one, clear definition or agreement on what or who it represents and as such it would be impossible for it to create equality. I will argue that because of that ongoing conversation, it creates the conditions necessary for equality.

Within Feminism, there are a number of different strands. It is usual to talk about three waves of Feminism, and all of these can be seen to link with other areas of social and political activism. For example, in the United States, awareness of women's lack of ability to act became very apparent as the movement to abolish slavery grew. In Britain, the rise of Socialism - a political philosophy dependent on equality - and of the Labour Party, drew similar parallels between the lack of women's rights, and those of the poorer class.

As Feminism gained some successes, the nature of the thinking changed. Progress in the areas of racial and class equality made disparities more evident. For example, it became apparent that the problems faced by black women in the predominantly white societies of the English speaking world were even greater than those faced by black men.

At the same time, other areas of inequality were exposed. It became apparent that people who were not sexually attracted only to the opposite sex, people who do not feel part of the binary gender system and people who felt that nature had wrongly assigned sex to them, were also denied equal rights. Since many of these were women, intersectionality became an important part of Feminism. Radical Feminism, on the other hand, advocated

a return to the roots of Feminism, emphasising that Feminism is about women, and the socially constructed concept of the feminine.

## **Women in Combat**

It is this socially constructed concept of the feminine which is challenged when we consider whether women in military service should be allowed to take part in combat. Virginia Woolf (1938) herself a pacifist, argued that fighting itself was determined by gender, because men are more inclined to go to war. She says that it's not clear whether this is because of something innate or whether it is because this is what women and men have come to expect. Her argument is that women are more inclined against fighting, but that in any case, women's role during wartime is equally important to that of the men who are at the front line. She says that as well as that, they have to fight on other levels because women have to fight against the patriarchy that is evident in both the structure of the state and of society. Woolf was writing at a time of conscription for many countries, which rarely included women. A compelling argument in times of conscription would have been that when a country goes to war, it does so to protect its ideals, its land and its people. It would have made sense to protect women of or below child-bearing age. But the nature of warfare has changed. Modern warfare does not generally involve large scale hand-to-hand combat. Combat is frequently done sitting in front of a computer screen, but patriarchal attitudes remain and become self-reinforcing.

Saskia Stachowitsch (2013) points out that women have been in combat positions for a long time. She says that excluding women from ground combat units allows women not to be considered as equals in the military

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and has led to both sexual harassment and abuse. She goes on to note that across cultures, the integration of women into the military has led to more civilized practices. She points out that before full combat integration, women were only placed in positions that it was difficult to fill with male personnel.

## **The Gender Pay Gap**

These same factors can be seen in economic terms. Women's pay remains a percentage of men's across the board. Arulampalam, Booth and Bryan (2007) showed that women's pay was lower than men's across the scale, but that it was increasingly so at the higher end. They show that gender-specific policies were important to pay, and that in most countries, the pay gap was more severe in the private than in the public sector, which is more regulated. It also pointed to the importance of the results of activism. Where there is more bargaining by unions, the gap is lower.

The World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Gender Gap Report, shows that although in some subindexes of the report, the gender gap is narrowing, in that of Economic Participation and Opportunity - of which one determinant is pay - this is happening more slowly. The report also shows that this gap is narrower in countries such as the Scandinavian ones and Iceland, where there is a political commitment to gender equality.

In questions of both combat and pay, it is only when legislation is put in place and enforced, that those barriers can be broken down and Feminism has created the means to do that.

## References

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