

**Feminism: Waves,
schools and main elements**

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Abstract.

Feminism is an important term and one of the newest beliefs to appear which tries to analyze the situation of women in society, show their obvious part in history and suggest the foundation for improvement and the development of women in parts of society. this paper sheds the lights on the main waves of feminism, schools and the main elements that help to enrich this movement.

Keywords: Feminism, waves, feminist thought.

المخلص

النسوية مصطلح مهم وأحد أحدث المعتقدات الناشئة التي تحاول تحليل حالة المرأة في المجتمع، وإظهار دورها الواضح في التاريخ واقتراح الأساس لتحسين المرأة وتنميتها أجزاء من المجتمع. تلقي هذه الورقة الضوء على الموجات الرئيسية للنسوية والمدارس والعناصر الرئيسية.

1.Feminisim

Feminism is an important term and one of the newest beliefs to appear which tries to analyze the situation of women in society, show their obvious part in history and suggest the foundation for improvement and the development of women in parts of society. Feminists have believed that there is a central power fight between women and men, similar to the struggles about race and class which is possibly radical. Actually, this is the most ancient power struggle, the minimum forms of struggle, the greatest essential forms in its suggestions for society. Mary Wollstonecraft is a main early feminist writer who has claimed that the legal rights should be the same for women and men on the areas of equal humanity, rationality and freedom and moral value. It is a wrong belief that women must be known by their sex which leads to be ignored educational, legal rights, economic and political. As soon as equality was 19 recognized there would be a positive revolution in the relation between women and men (Harrison

& Body, 2003: 295-296). Feminism is a new ideology consisting of three waves‘ : the first between 1830–1930 which dealt with political and legal rights. The second wave between 1960s and 1970s, is interested in important personal issues. The third wave is a reflection about what had been achieved and reached. The idea of feminism tries to deny and end the boundaries between public and private fields. The main sign of feminism is patriarchy which is the domination of men in all its forms. Feminist studies have a wide relation with many fields including literature, psychology, sociology, political sciences , legitimacy, educational sciences, geography, economics, , theology, medical sciences, administration, basic sciences, technology, etc (Nehere. 2016. 17)

1.1 Waves of Feminism

There are three waves of feminism, below is an account of each one of them.

1.1.1 First Wave of Feminism

This wave begins (1830–1930) and is similar to other nineteenth-century political campaigns, such as 'Catholic emancipation or anti-slavery', where women have been active. The first feminist philosophical opinions lead to political actions which dealt with divorce rights, equality in voting rights. Mill’s The Subjection of Women (1869) supported these rights because he is influenced by Harriet Taylor his wife, his argument that women and men should have same and equal rights in education, vote and work (Harrison & Body, 2003: 297-298).

1.1.2 Second Wave of Feminism

Second-wave of feminism aims to analyze why this happens and what to do with it. It is a new movement which happens between 1960s -1970s. This wave changed the interest from cultural to political, anthropological and psychological fields. Women needed a total change and freedom

socially and politically if they want to be liberated from men oppression during thousands of years. Feminists of this wave discussed about the presence of women on the areas of feminine moral dominance. Women are gifted with emotion, sympathy and unable to co-operate as a result to their main experience of motherhood while men were seen as competitive, tough and emotionally restricted (Harrison & Body, 2003. 298)

1.2 Schools of Feminism

There are four major schools of feminist thinking they will be presented below.

1.2.1 Liberal Feminism

This is the major movement of feminism and its name reflects the political context (Jaggar, 1983: 5). This type of feminism has controlled the first wave through the 19th and early 20th times with scholars like Taylor, Wollstonecraft, and Mill who made many contributions. This school focused on the total extension of legal and civil rights to women by statute. This type of feminism is basically liberalism that emphasizing on the position and importance of the person, especially equality of women. It stresses on main things like women must earn and have the same jobs as men. Today, liberal feminism is still regards a very significant part in the West. In modern and advanced societies most women have different and individual options and freedoms which are nowadays nearly useful (Harrison & Body, 2003. 303). Finally, the request for equal rights, which is the core of liberal feminism, has principally attracted the kind of women whose educational and social background prepare them to take advantage of wider educational and career opportunities (Heywood, 1992: 204).

1.2. 3 Conservative Feminism

03: 305).

1.2.4 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is a contemporary phenomenon generated by the liberation movements of women in 1969. This movement emphasizes the importance of feelings and person's relationship which is the characteristics of the 20th century (Jaggar, 1983: 83). This movement is the most interesting and recent method of feminism. Radical feminism is a very significant component in the second wave. It claims that the repression of women is an important item of nearly all countries in the past and present. Patriarchal oppression has and takes many shapes – cultural, economic, social, political and religious. It operates on the basis of a socially determined role for women, gender, which has nothing to do with true societal inequalities and everything to do with the corruption of women as a group by men. Critics of feminism believe that this is a return to the comfort of a romanticized form of the nature of woman that men like. This raises the essential and unanswered issues of whether women and men are truly different. Other critics claim that the broadest gap is between people who say that there are little essential differences between women and men, and those who classify deep spiritual and biological differences. Indeed within advanced societies feminism is criticized by colored women as being interested with freedom which fundamentally aids white women and give less attention for their brown and black sisters (Harrison & Body, 2003: 305-307)

1.3 Main Elements of Feminist Thought

There are some main elements that belong to feminism which can be clear in a number of areas.

1.3.1 Sex, Gender and Sexism

Sex can be defined as a biological fact and the main difference between male and female is female's ability to be pregnant and get children. Males have a physical and biological power and role to protect their families. It

is a social and cultural phenomenon which gave different things to women and a total device of obligatory

1.3.2 Public and Private Spheres of Life

The difference between the two spheres of life (public and private) was first challenge for feminists. Most of the political writers focus on and are concerned with the public field of government, economics , state, law, and supposed that the relation between women and men is fundamentally a private problem outside the space of politics. If women have to be totally equal and the same with men, there could want to be female liberation and freedom in both the public and private spheres of life. Perhaps men must take a greater part and responsibility in rearing children and give women greater parts in public sphere. So forth, there is agreement between feminists that such separations are not biological‘ or natural‘ in their origin but it is 'social' and can be changed and improved by political and social changes (ibid: 301) **1.3.4 Patriarchy**

The concept of ‘patriarchy‘ is used by feminists to describe the power relationships between women and men. Literally, this term may refer narrowly to the authority of the husband–father within the family and the subordination of his wife and his children. Some feminists employ patriarchy to describe the arrangement of the family and the dominance of the father, others prefer to use broader terms such as to describe gender relations in society at large. On the other hand, feminists believe that the control of the father within the family represents male supremacy in all other fields of life (Heywood, 1992:197) This can be regarded as the main reason for feminism. Both men and women have their roles in society based on gender but women forced by men to take the difficult parts. Unconsciously and consciously in all times and all cultures women have imprisoned in this unfair world. Patriarchy which has been ruled by men found in all fields of society, in private and public spheres, as well as

languages and intellectual discourses. The origin and main sources of oppression are men's greater violence and strength composed with terror of men of being raped and the patriarchal beliefs that dominate minds (Harrison & Body, 2003. 302). Finally, it can be said that Feminists do not have a simple or single analysis of

1.4 Conclusion

According to the feminists there is a central power fight between women and men, similar to the struggles about race and class which is possibly radical. Actually, this is the most ancient power struggle, the minimum forms of struggle, the greatest essential forms in its suggestions for society. There are three waves and four schools, each one appeared at a specific period and reason.

Sex, Gender and Sexism, Public and Private Spheres of Life and Patriarchy are the main elements of feminism.

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