

# **Perspectiva de la juventud actual en relación con la evolución del feminismo**

*The Perspective of Today's Young People in  
Regards to Feminism's Evolution*

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**RESUMEN:** este proyecto tiene como finalidad, describir una realidad que afecta a la mayoría de la población femenina y en ciertos aspectos también a la población masculina, la lucha por la igualdad. Reivindicar por movimientos como el feminismo. Este movimiento será analizado desde sus orígenes a la luz de las múltiples posturas que han surgido a través de los años. Además, se enfocará en la importancia y la forma en que este movimiento ha causado impacto “positivo” y “negativo” en la sociedad contemporánea y cómo estos han sido divulgados.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** evolución, fenómeno, ideología, discriminación, levantamiento.

**ABSTRACT:** the purpose of this project is to describe a reality that affects the majority of the female population and in certain aspects also the male population, the struggle for equality. Claim for movements like feminism. This movement will be analyzed from its origins in the light of the multiple positions that have emerged over the years. In addition, it will focus on the importance and the way in which this movement has caused “positive” and “negative” impacts on contemporary society and how these have been disseminated.

**KEY WORDS:** evolution, phenomenon, ideology, discrimination, uprising.

## INTRODUCTION

Behind the term feminism is a long history filled with struggles and efforts: initially by women, and over time, with the support of men as well. Knowledge of this topic allows people to understand why, even in the 21st century, the fight continues to obtain equal rights and put an end to the machismo that has always existed. However, with time, the meaning of feminism has been lost, creating confusion by leaving behind the beginnings of struggle that our female ancestors went through in order to achieve equality in certain aspects that we now enjoy.

In order to understand what defines feminism, we must understand its origins in the French Revolution, since in this struggle—in which both men and women participated—only men obtained a benefit. This resulted in women wanting to be taken into account, not only as objects, but as people with the same rights as males; this event is therefore considered the occurrence which allowed feminism to form part of a “revolution” of a group of women, and not just an idea that many had and longed for.

We will then analyze important events that marked advances for feminism in different times and places, as well as how this small struggle gained popularity and importance and changed the lives of women, opening up opportunities for them to enjoy their rights: mainly in the political, social, economic and educational areas, and in their sexuality.

In addition, these events seek to denounce the mistreatment suffered by women during various periods and in different ways at the hands of men and by other women. We will discuss major examples of women who decided to rebel against the traditional and take a step forward to demonstrate their skills and counteract the idea that being a woman is considered a disadvantage.

Feminism in modern times will be addressed, as will the influence of past struggles and how they gave women a free pass to a life, while not completely equal to that of men, nonetheless with certain advantages for enjoying rights as human beings.

At present, the struggle of feminism has been divided into two parts: the people who still struggle for the ideology of a free place and equality between all; and, on the other hand, those who fight for the superiority of women over men, in which the true concept of what is behind the

feminism movement has been lost. To better understand the different concepts, we will use examples and explain how this has nothing to do with feminism, but rather, with hembrism.

As a movement that is starting to gain popularity throughout the world, feminism has begun to create different types of currents that are based on the social, political and economic practices of the area in which these feminist groups appear; as such, their objectives have not always coincided. The first wave of feminism will be discussed and how it influenced the creation of other branches.

At the beginning of the second wave, currents so different from one another that they become polar opposites will be compared. In addition, we will discuss each current's major influences, its authors, and how their works were those which encouraged the enjoyment of feminism in different forms.

Finally, through a set of interviews with a group of people of different ages, feminism's current characterization is established, as well the relative knowledge existing on the subject.

Feminism's meaning is very important at present; therefore, it should be treated with great delicacy and precision so as to put an end to misunderstanding and misrepresentation. People must take into account what was and is the reason for this movement: firstly, to end the inequalities established in antiquity and, secondly, to fight for the recognition of women's abilities and rights, always in a struggle in reach of both women and men.

## **1. FEMINISM THROUGH HISTORY**

Feminism is a topic which, over time, has gained great acceptance by the majority of the population, but, in order to reach this point, it was necessary to pass through many battles. This was due to being a movement that was not socially accepted, and which caused controversy by trying to break with the typical stereotypes that women faced with changes to the prevailing ideology, religion, and due to the little support, that was provided.

This chapter seeks to provide an understanding of feminism's history, from its origins in the French Revolution, proceeding through

different stages to the present, and how it is experienced today; all this is with the aim of providing information on why this movement arose and what its achievements were throughout history.

### **1.1. French Revolution**

The feminist movement's origins date back to the time of the French Revolution. Prior to this event, there were already women who individually set forth the concept of women's equality; but for the existence of a true movement with the participation of not just an individual, but an entire group, it was necessary to wait for the French Revolution.

To begin with, it must be borne in mind that, since the beginning of the French Revolution women have been ignored or left out of historical events, just as happens in the historical narratives of how this famous revolution began. However, we must assume that women did participate, and have great relevance (Ocaña, 2003).

On October 5th, 1789 a woman interrupted the comings and goings in a Paris market: with the aid of a drum, she summoned the women who surrounded her. Soon, about seven thousand women had gathered. Armed with "pikes, clubs, muskets, knives and swords," they began the march towards Versailles to demand that the king solve the bread shortage in the capital and that Declaration of Rights of Men and Citizens be signed - they threatened to use a cannon to open the palace doors (a motif which is repeated in several engravings from the time).

The next day, with the collaboration of the National Guard, the march managed to get the king and his family out of Versailles to take them Paris, thus making it difficult for them to escape France and take refuge from the Revolution abroad (Barba, 2016).

With the aforementioned it is shown that it was the women who initiated this uprising and the men who followed it. It was a fight in which both men and women united to struggle for the same end, and as a final result, achieve the French Constitution; however, this document, ensuring the rights of human beings, denied women access to political, voting and speaking rights before the legislature, in other words, women lost their rights to equality compared to other individuals.

This caused Olimpia de Gouges, writer, French politician and feminist of her time, to write and publish the Declaration of Woman and Citizens in the year 1791. Due to her revolutionary spirit she was imprisoned without the right to defense or to be judged and on November 3, 1793 was guillotined by the French revolutionaries. This served as a complaint and a claim against the revolution for leaving women out of the ideology of “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité” (Ocaña, 2003).

Unfortunately, it was a time when men did not accept the idea of sharing equality and freedom with women, so this meant that women failed in the revolution to claim their rights. However, this was what began the movement and motivated women to continue with their demands.

## 1.2. Important Historical Data

In order to have a clearer idea of this movement’s entire struggle, from its creation following the French Revolution to the present, the most important historical dates will be explained and how the movement’s actions paid off.

**1848:** date recognized as the year in which the first feminist movement on the American continent was founded by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, who led a group of 90 men and women who sought equality and equal rights for women, mainly in the political and civic arenas. In the end they achieved approval of the document known as the “Declaration of Feelings” in the State of New York, and with this the beginning of the channeling of conscious feminist movements (Miyares, 1999).

**1893:** the feminist movement’s first triumph occurs. For the first time in history, women were able to enjoy the right to vote in national elections in the country of New Zealand. Following this, various other countries followed the example. In Europe, Finland became the first country on the continent to accept the female vote (Camino, 2017).

**1903:** on this date we have two important events for women: the first is the creation of the Social and Political Union of Women and the second is that Marie Curie, a leading female scientist, became the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.

The Social and Political Union of Women had as its purpose the protection of women within the British system, a group made up only of women and led by Emmeline Pankhurst and the followers, who called themselves the suffragettes. This union was aimed at enabling women in the United Kingdom to vote. At the beginning, their protests were peaceful, but over time and seeing a lack of results, they began to turn violent.

This caused an impact on society, as it was the first time that women resorted to such a system. In the end, the result was obtained in the year 1968, when women achieved the vote and the law began to be written to include women (Felis, 2015).

Another important event occurred this same year, when Marie Curie, a leading female scientist, became the first woman to win a Nobel prize twice. The first was in physics, in recognition of she and her husband's discovery of polonium and radium, thereby leading to the discovery of radioactivity; and the second was in chemistry, but this time alone (her husband was hit by a horse carriage and died). The recognition in this case was for explaining radium and its elements (Parra, 2012).

**1908:** an important date, since it brought about international women's day. Before explaining this date, we must have a broad knowledge of the events that transpired in previous years, and how they allowed for creation of this "celebration": In 1857, a march was held in order to demand a work day free from worker exploitation, specifically for the seamstresses at a textile company in New York. The best way to put an end to the abuse was to obtain a work schedule of just 10 hours; all this happened in the month of May. (Portugal, 2014).

In 1857, in the month of May, a group of shirt collar ironers, also from New York, started a strike for a raise in wages; unfortunately, upon not achieving the desired results, they were forced to stop and return to work three months later (Portugal, 2014).

On May 3, 1908, a celebration known as Women's Day was held in Chicago. Its primary aim was to demand women's rights in the workplace, the vote and the voice of women in politics, to raise awareness regarding the sexual harassment suffered by women in the

workplace and to include their vote in the war contract. As an extra, the increase of female unions in these times was recognized.

Different events in the nineteenth and twentieth century are what have led to commemorate and remember the anniversary as we know it. One of them dates back to March 8, 1857, when hundreds of women from a textile factory in New York went out to march against low wages, which were less than half what men perceived for the same task, it ended with the bloody figure of 120 women killed as a result of the brutality with which the police dispersed the march. That led to two years later, the workers founded the first women's union (Matte, 2018).

Since then, women's mobilizations have become more visible, especially after 1909, when Socialist Women in the United States commemorated National Women's Day for the first time on February 28. Finally, in 1910, May 8th was proclaimed as International Women's Day, with the aim of raising awareness and obtaining equal rights; however, it was not declared an official day by the United Nations (UN) until 1977 (Portugal, 2014).

### **1.3. Present Days**

Feminism will always be considered as a manifestation of great historical importance, primarily for women, but today it can be considered that there is still a strong degree of ignorance regarding its meaning--so much so that many people tend to confuse the term's intent. At present, there is an entanglement between the terms feminism and hembrism, since the former seeks equality between men and women, while the latter seeks women's superiority. Consequently, what real feminists seek is for women to defend their ideology, and for men to support and respect this movement (Montero, 2006).

In the 1980s, the independent feminist movement defined its objectives and strategies based on a discourse of its own, although not unitary.

Among the different analyzes, there is one that becomes stronger and has greater acceptance among women and is called the difference. This discourse understands that the struggle for the disappearance of social and economic inequalities is not enough.

At present, women have made great progress in achieving equal opportunities in many aspects, but there is still a need to overcome certain existing stereotypes and achieve the end of patriarchy. In the workplace, women still earn a lower salary than men, even when doing the same job. In many parts of the world, women cannot obtain certain jobs because they are female (with the same facilities as men), or do not receive the promotion they deserve because it is thought that they are not as capable of the same level of workplace commitment. According to the ILO: The road to equality at work is still long, “he added, citing the most recent data compiled in the region, in a statement released on the occasion of International Women’s Day, in which he states that information on Disparities in access to labor markets should be considered as “a call to action”.

Another current issue of relevance is the misuse of the word feminism: misused by some to obtain certain benefits for being female, or as a provocation for a struggle not truly necessary for women. For example, one of the most debated issues is the struggle created by certain authors, who point out the existence of sexist language which excludes women, and claim that this incites macho culture, but these arguments are not valid.

According to the Royal Spanish Academy (2018), “The explicit mention of the female is justified only when the opposition of the sexes is relevant within the context,” in other words, only when required. In the case of this struggle, there are two points of view: the first is that women wish to suppress the lesser valuation of the female gender and seek recognition of their positive features as well as their abilities, mainly in labor positions, for example as “president” or “boss” (in Spanish, with the feminine gender, “presidenta” and “jefa”, rather than the masculine/neutral “presidente” or “jefe”); but from the second point of view, this can go to an extreme when the aim is to eliminate the male generic use in contexts--in other words, that absolutely all masculine terms are also feminine, with the most famous example being “miembros” (“members” in English) to “miembras” (Cotreras, 2017).

It can be deduced that the loss of feminism’s meaning has a great deal to do with the extensive use of social networks, since many women use these mediums to express their “feminist” point of view and their complaints about men. These types of women have earned the name



of feminazis, who are people who have converted their ideology into fanaticism and are part of a true movement of hembrism.

Their speech therefore causes discriminatory and hateful attitudes toward men by criticizing every act they do or say; because, according to this type of women, their every act is against women. One of the most striking examples is that a man acts like a gentleman with a woman because this demonstrates women's weakness and the dependence that we have on men. This type of thinking is not typical of the feminist movement, and for this reason, there are many feminists who denounce this type of action and ask that such attitudes not be considered as representative of their struggle. The struggle of feminism has been on-going for many years and will continue into the future. It is now possible to enjoy the results of this, but certain points remain to be resolved. As the movement has gained acceptance, so has the number of participants willing to help to look for ideas to solve the problems affecting women's well-being and denounce injustices (Cotreras, 2017).

## **2. WAVES OF FEMINISM**

Throughout history, feminism has undergone changes, mainly because of the variable types of ideology existing, or because of women's different needs. The creation of these feminist currents seeks to obtain their result through different strategies. We will thus speak specifically about three main currents that are very important, and that can be compared because their differences are clear.

### **2.1. Enlightenment**

Also known as the first wave, its beginnings were from the French Revolution and as discussed before, in these times women sought to be recognized as free to receive their rights as citizens and also in the field of education, but not this was considered a movement because it was claimed individually rather than collectively. Mary Wollstonecraft is the representative of this current. Through her writings in 1792, the English author claimed independence for women, primarily before their husbands, and sought for women to have access to education since this would allow them to be considered equal to men (San José, 2017).

At this stage of history, such behavior was not well regarded by men. This led to a backlash against women, who were not allowed to exercise the rights they requested. New prohibitions were created in addition to the obligation they had to obey to their husbands in marriage contracts, and for this reason, the creation of the feminist movement by Wollstonecraft caused displeasure on the part of Napoleon, who established that women were not competent (Villatoro, 2018).

The Code of Napoleon, thereafter imitated throughout Europe, once again made marriage into an unequal contract. Article 321 demanded the wife's obedience to the husband and granted divorce only in the case that the husband brought his concubine into the conjugal home. (Nuria, 2008)

Neither did women have the right to make decisions regarding their bodies, since they were not their own. This is when abortion was banned--until present a subject of great controversy (Villatoro, 2018).

#### **a. Liberal**

The liberal movement has its origins at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The struggle at this time no longer only sought for women to obtain the vote, but also gave great importance to the workplace, in which women should have the same opportunities as men to hold power in the same positions (Ilabaca, 2017).

Women began to speak out about their experiences when excluded from society, the inequality they felt in work opportunities, and the oppression they experienced on a daily basis, which led to the creation of support groups. Over time these groups decided that the world should be aware of the inequalities they experienced in their daily lives. They did this through demonstrations and marches, in which they also requested consideration for important political and work positions, so as not to remain simply as housewives.

The liberals knew that there would be certain barriers to achieving their objectives, and that they would probably have to endure workplace exploitation in order to demonstrate their capacity to do the same work as men (Ilabaca, 2017).

The awakening of consciousness is the common discovery of a situation of oppression. It consists of a practice that shows social designs from a different perspective. It is the basic tool for transformation within this theory, since it allows a silenced group to manifest and enunciate social strategies and practices through which power--male power--oppresses society's other half. (Böhmer, M, 1993, p 185)

The liberal movement continues to be appreciated by present-day feminists, since their struggle is to seek workplace equality and a fair wage for women. It is known that in most countries women are not able to obtain important positions because of their sex or, such as happens in the entertainment world, the actors in general earn twice the salary of the actresses, even if both are in leading roles.

#### **b. Separatist**

This movement is the polar opposite of enlightenment feminism, since its main objective is to separate men and women and eliminate the value of a search for equality. The ideology held is that the male and female sexes are in no way similar, and that women should worry about and care for one other, leaving men aside. This movement reaches an extreme and aims to create certain places and spaces that are for women only, or in which only the female sex is benefited: for example, a company in which only women are hired or have certain preferences.

This movement adopts the idea that women can be superior to men and this is where the birth of the “feminists” occurs. These women think that everything negative that happens in the world is the fault of men, and as such, that women should be the ones who control everything (Sánchez, 2014).

This current has also been related to the term “lesbian feminism” because these women seek not to engage in any type of relationship with men, much less a romantic relationship.

We affirm that a lesbian is a woman whose sense of herself and her energies, including sexual ones, are focused on women: our society demands that women reserve their commitment to men. The lesbian, the woman who identifies with women. The lesbian has been recognized for her support and love for men instead of perpe-

tuating the system that works. If we have not committed ourselves to others, including sexual love, we deny ourselves the love and value traditionally given to men (Bunch, 1972).

Therefore, this movement is by women and only for women. It is thus necessary to clarify that women who follow lesbian feminism do not discriminate against heterosexual women; rather, they seek for them to give their support to the movement so that women can enjoy their sexuality freely and without prejudice.

A very remarkable author who is part of this movement is Rita Mae Brown. The history of this woman's struggle begins when Betty Friedan, a well-known feminist, gave her opinion in the National Women's Organization about being a lesbian. In her speech she gives the idea that lesbians are the bad example of what it is to be a feminist, because they are thought to be man-haters. It was at this moment that Rita decided to give her opinion in the work "The Woman-Identified Woman" in which she defended sexual diversity. Following this event, feminism underwent a radical change because its new objective was to support lesbians and their freedom to choose their partner (Mirales, 2016).

### **3. OUTLOOK OF CURRENT FEMINISM**

For this final chapter, we analyzed the results obtained in a set of interviews with 23 people between the ages of 16 and 50 about their views and opinions of feminism; each question will also be analyzed in order to explain its concept and resolve any doubts regarding the subject. The idea of this chapter was to understand what is truly currently occurring with the feminism movement, and how the confusion of the term "feminism" with "hembrism" has influenced people's decision regarding whether or not to support this struggle.

#### **3.1. Does machismo also oppress men?**

The results obtained allow us to establish that the majority of people think that machismo oppresses men, with a favorable result of 78.3% of the interviewees. The majority of the people surveyed were women, but there was also participation by men, of which 5/6 thought that machismo oppresses men, in general.

Machismo not only denies that women can carry out the same activities as men or affirms that women are less valued than men; it also seeks to express that men should not have feminine attitudes and that they should always be “macho.” Those who fully support machismo believe that there are social roles that must be respected, and that whoever rebels against these roles is in the wrong. Women holding attitudes that, according to stereotypes, only men should have, thus earn the name of “tomboy;” or, vice versa, men who act or do activities typically reserved for women are given nicknames like “pussy” and “fag” (Hernández, 2017).

The idea that men should only act like men is instilled in children when they are prevented from playing with dolls, when they are forbidden from crying because they show weakness, and above all, when they are told the famous phrase “be a man.” This, from childhood, marks the idea that acting like a woman is something negative and that to do so will lead to judgement, or in more extreme cases, exclusion. Machismo is therefore a historical trend that discriminates against both women and men, preventing advancements in social acceptance, and to the contrary, holding it back by saying that women will never be enough, and that the abuse they have suffered is justifiable, while forbidding men to open their minds and accept how they can be or how other people are, as well as always having the idea that the masculine is superior to the feminine (Hernández, 2017).

### **3.2. Do you know meaning of patriarchy?**

In addition, of the results obtained, only 21.7% of the interviewees do not know the meaning; but do they really know all the information about what this term is and how it originated?

The generation of feminists from the 60s to the 90s were those who fought the hardest against this system of oppression towards women, also known as the patriarchy.

This group of women was known for following the current of radical feminism, which was divided into: that of equality, whose theory is based on seeking the creation of a new social contract in order to obtain equality between men and women and, that of difference: in which the idea is to seek equality between men and women, but never

want to be like men; in this current, we seek to differentiate ourselves from men, but to obtain the same benefits (Fontenla, 2008).

Patriarchy is thus a term to disseminate men's superiority over women, both at home and in the public sphere. In the home, patriarchy was practiced, and in certain places continues until now, in which the only one who has the word is the father, and any opinion by the woman (wife) is not taken into account or is given less value.

Normally in these homes roles are created, in which the woman is in charge of everything in the home, between being a housewife and caring for the children, while the men go to work in order to maintain the household economy. Patriarchy has a strong influence in all areas in the home, from education, in which men are taught economics, politics, mathematics, etc., while women have to learn only subjects that are useful for better home management or are "feminine labors," such as sewing, cooking and caring for the husband (Bolen, s/a).

In the social field, women cannot express themselves openly because men might dislike this, or because their opinions have more weight than women's, and a woman is judged when trying to do "men's things" such as sports, discussing important issues, leading advances in science or simply wanting to build an object (Bolen, 2014).

In the economic sphere, since the man is the one who handles the family's accounts and who obtains the resources for the home, he thinks himself the owner of all the family participants because they depend on him. This allows the man believe that he has the power to make decisions regarding each one's life, which feeds his ego and his position of superiority over others (Bolen, 2014).

It is not at present possible to affirm that the patriarchy has been eliminated, but it has lost a great deal of power compared to past times. The struggle of women today is towards a total end to this custom of supremacy that, in itself, is what drives machismo in society.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

Feminism paved the way for women to obtain their freedom, and the rights that every human being should have in regard to their way of thinking and being. It is a struggle that will always aim for

equality and the never the superiority of one sex other another; and therefore, it seeks fairness and that everyone is given the respect that they deserve.

Being a feminist today is a complicated issue, as not everyone supports the movement, and rather, feel a certain degree of intolerance towards women and men with such views. With the results obtained, it can be seen that people do not really know the topic's meaning, since for them it is not something of current importance, but rather a subject that has already been overcome.

Feminists in our times are poorly viewed and stereotyped as people who blame the patriarchy for all their problems and primarily want to attract attention; those who know the subject know, however, that what they seek is to denounce the machismo that continues to exist to this day and the number of women who suffer from inferiority and harassment on the part of both men and women.

The story of how women have carried out this battle is an interesting topic, because it affects the reality of many women in the present day. It is seen that history puts women to one side, failing to give them credit for their participation in the majority of important events and for the influence they had on the men who have ruled the world. In explaining feminism's history, it is a question of people understanding that this movement seeks for women be considered free to enjoy their rights.

Women's acceptance in society has been increasingly notable, mainly in recent years. Where this process can be seen, however slowly, is in the Muslim culture, where women have never been able to consider themselves free to enjoy their rights and live repressed by men because of their beliefs or due to established norms that must be followed; in recent years, however, they have gradually gained approval as important members of society, rather than being considered as objects.

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