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Feminism: Failed or Functioning? A Study of Women's Views on the Movement

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Feminism: Failed or Functioning? A Study of Women's Views on the Movement

A Senior Honors Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Graduation in the Honors College

By
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Abstract

From The Women's March in January 2017 to the current Me Too movement, women's rights have appeared to come to the forefront of America. Discussion of abortion rights have reemerged, gender norms are questioned more and more, and sexual assault is becoming a visible, important topic. To some, this is seen as a revolution that has been necessary for decades. However, others may not see it this way for a variety of reasons. Feminism tends to be a very taboo word that carries baggage of all sorts. What may cause some women to label themselves as feminists, and what may cause others to turn away from it? Which elements of the feminist movement may be at play in this? Do women today perceive themselves as possessing a marginalized status, and do any small benefits that come along with being a woman connect to women's perception of having a marginalized status? Through interviewing twelve women at a public college in upstate New York, this study finds that many women do see the need for the movement and believe that women are still marginalized. However, they also largely believe that feminism continues to not include all identities, still privileging white, straight, middle-class women over other identities. Advantages of being a woman did not tend to play a role in a woman's support of the feminist movement.

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Introduction

Given recent events such as the rise of the #metoo and #timesup movements meant to battle sexual harassment and assault, discussions around President Trump's belittling words towards and about women, and the 2017 Women's March on Washington, there has been a resurgence of the word "feminism". The label "feminist" is worn by some as a badge of honor, believing that they are actively trying to advance women's rights, meanwhile others are still skeptical to identify as a feminists, as the word has often had negative connotations. It has often been associated with overwhelming boldness and anger, along with a hatred for men, rather than what it actually tries to accomplish, which is eliminating gender inequalities.

Moreover, there has been a good deal of questioning on whether or not gender inequity continue to exist in 2018. Some may believe that we no longer live in a society where gender matters: women can vote, own property, and hold employment positions, and thus they now exist equally to men. However, there are still several large, structural differences between men and women. For example, instances of domestic violence and sexual assault are still relevant problems for women. They are 17% more likely to be raped, and 22% more likely to be victims of other forms of sexual violence. Women are also 11% more likely to be stalked, and to encounter any severe physical violence by an intimate partner (National Center for Injury Prevention and Control 2011). Research has also shown that female murder victims are 28% more likely to have been killed by an intimate partner than male murder victims (Bridges, Tatum, and Kunselman 2008).

Women are also disproportionately unrepresented in government. Only 20% of seats in congress are currently occupied by women, while women of color represent 7% of its members (Center for American Women and Politics 2018). Additionally, women continue to suffer from

the gender pay gap in current-day society. As of 2015, women in general make 80 cents for every dollar a white man makes. When this is stratified by race, white women receive 76 cents for every dollar, black women 62 cents, and Hispanic women 54 cents (American Association of University Women 2017). Clearly, women continue to be held back in today's society in many aspects. What is it, then, that keeps some of them from identifying with the feminist movement? Have issues of gender become more covert over time, causing them to be invisible to women? Or are there small advantages to womanhood that somehow outweigh marginalization?

This study seeks to understand what makes some women follow the feminist movement, while others turn away from it. Specifically, the research attempts to answer the following research questions: "Do women today perceive themselves as possessing a marginalized status?" and "Do the perks that come along with being a woman connect to women's perception of having a marginalized status?" For the purposes of this study, "perk" will be defined as a small benefit or advantage women may sometimes receive just for being a woman. For example, women may receive free access to clubs, get out of parking tickets more easily, or get into an employment position simply because they are attractive, and not because of any actual power they possess. This research takes a closer look at women's perceptions and attitudes towards the feminist movement, in order to better understand its positives and negatives and make improvements within its course of action.

Literature Review

Personal-Group Discrimination Discrepancy

Oftentimes, women will turn away from feminism due to their inability to see how sexism affects them directly. This frequently stems from a woman's perception that she personally encounters very little discrimination, or none at all. Interestingly, even women that do

notice a power imbalance between men and women in society perceive only low levels of gender discrimination directed at themselves. This phenomenon is theorized as the “Personal-Group Discrimination Discrepancy” (Taylor et al., 1990), or “PGD”, and states that minorities are more likely to see discrimination directed at other members of their group than at themselves, personally. Logically, if there is discrimination across the group, then it must happen to the individuals within it. Most members should, therefore, have experienced unequal treatment due to their identity at one point or another within their lives. However, the theory has been confirmed by numerous social psychological studies (Lindsey et al. 2015; Operario and Fiske 2001; Taylor, Wright, and Ruggiero 1991).

Scholars have formulated several reasons for the existence of the PGD. Operario and Fiske (2001) believed that it may have to do with a need to protect one’s self-concept. If minorities (women, in this case) view themselves as victims, this could hurt their self-esteem by leading them to believe that they have no sense of security or agency to protect themselves from being hurt by others. Individuals may also not want to point out a particular “villain”, or have to rationalize to their peers why they did not take action against the discrimination (Taylor et al. 1991). To avoid this, women instead choose to gloss over any instances of personal discrimination, yet still simultaneously acknowledge the existence of women’s marginalization. Other literature has pointed out that seeing discrimination on a larger scale is simply easier than seeing it on a micro level (Lindsey et al. 2015; Taylor et al. 1991). This makes sense psychologically, and it is also only logical that adding together many instances would result in greater discrimination than only one person’s account.

In addition to these possible factors behind the PGD, it is worth discussing that women may simply be unsure of what qualifies as sexist discrimination. For example, victims of

domestic violence, when discussing reasons that they do not report their instances, sometimes cite that they did not believe that the incident was severe enough to report (Felson, Messner, and Hosken 2002; Spencer et al. 2017). This gives way to the idea that certain kinds of abuse and violence are acceptable, and therefore, women do not identify them as malicious “enough” to report. This mentality may extend to instances of sexism, in general. Women may believe that the act must be overt and hostile in order to actually be defined as sexism, which will be discussed in a later section. Because of this, actions or words by men that come off as covert and/or benevolent may not be perceived as truly sexist, leading women to believe that they personally do not receive discrimination due to their gender. Another reasoning offered by Taylor et al. (1991) is that, rather than individuals underestimating the personal discrimination they encounter, perhaps they exaggerate the level of discrimination their group actually receives. Under this assumption, individuals may be merely stating the kind of discrimination they think is happening in order to promote a need for social change in their group. This reasoning behind the PGD is touchy, as it indicates that minority groups may not actually be receiving discrimination at all, but rather the members of the group are painting a false tale in order to receive personal gain. This is, in fact, inconsistent with previous research that shows interpersonal or institutional discrimination remaining salient in several marginalized communities, and is therefore rarely viewed as a viable reasoning in the social psychology community.

Patience for Sexism

In addition to social psychological reasons, there may be other sociological reasons that come into play when choosing whether or not to identify as a feminist. According to Czopp and Monteith (2003), there are certain norms surrounding sexism that allow for more tolerance around sexist remarks and behaviors, relative to other discriminations such as racism. When

participants in their study were confronted with having a gender bias, they experienced less discomfort than when confronted with having a racial bias. It is therefore possible that coming off as sexist is simply not a great concern for individuals. A potential reason behind this is that people perceive women as stereotypically weak and incompetent, and therefore unable and unwilling to defend themselves, allowing individuals to act sexist without fear of being retaliated against.

The patience women have for sexism could also stem from the fact that certain acts of sexism do not come off as discrimination, but rather are viewed as compliments. One way in which this can happen is through men's usage of benevolent sexism, a form of sexism that stems from the idea that women are fragile and delicate, and in need of help from men. It can be argued that women accept assistance from men while, in return, giving up their ability to be treated like an equal in society. Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) called this a "patriarchal bargain", insinuating that in a patriarchal society, women must trade something of their own (in this sense, their ability to be equal) in order to receive something in return (compliments, help with tasks). Riemer, Chaudoir, and Earnshaw (2014) found that women are most likely to see comments as sexist if they are not benevolent, but are rather hostile (or contain an "intent to harm") and come from a boss or a stranger. Women were likely to see benevolent sexism and objectification as positive, and therefore these types of comments were not often perceived to be sexist. Similarly, Glick and Fiske (2001) found in their cross-cultural study that women everywhere will be more resistant to sexism that comes off as hostile rather than benevolent. Riemer et al. (2014) also found that a woman's boyfriend was always perceived to be less sexist than her boss or a stranger. According to this research, then, women may often receive objectification, hostile, or benevolent sexism

from their significant others and choose to write it off solely because of the person it is coming from.

These perceptions extend into a woman's motivation for collective action, as well. Becker and Wright (2011) found that women who are exposed to benevolent sexism, and from this, believe that there are advantages to being a woman, are less likely to engage in any collective action that would dismantle gender inequality. This could therefore play a factor in a woman's choice to join the feminist movement; if she perceives from her encounters with benevolent sexism that there truly are perks to being a woman, then she will not see a reason to identify with the movement. Exposure to this type of sexism, then, can inhibit a woman's ability to see the importance or personal relevance of the feminist movement, and therefore cause her to turn away from any action to eradicate gender inequality.

“Perks”

Aside from the patience that society tends to have for sexist remarks and attitudes, there are also certain perceived perks that women take on due to their gender identity which could impact their desire to join the feminist movement. For example, though there has recently been much attention directed towards sexual assault and rape, this attention tends to only focus on such violence when it is directed at women, leaving out men's voices and experiences. While women are more likely to be raped than men (National Institute of Justice 1998; Weiss 2010) and to be victims of sexual victimization in general (Weiss 2010), men are indeed still victims of these crimes. The reasoning behind their invisibility within conversations regarding sexual violence is most likely largely due to the fact that, since men are stereotypically viewed as strong, independent, and dominating, it is understood by society that they are incapable of being sexually violated by women.

Though both men and women experience sexual assault and rape, they differ when it comes to reporting their incidents to police, or other officials. Men are less likely to report (Weiss 2010), though choose to not do so for different reasons than women. Sable et al. (2006:159) found that men were more likely to cite the following barriers to reporting than women: “shame, guilt, or embarrassment”, “concerns about confidentiality”, and “fear of not being believed”. Women, on the other hand, tended to cite barriers such as a fear of retaliation from the assailant, financial dependence upon him/her, and an absence of resources in order to obtain help. These results indicate that men’s reasons to not report acts of sexual violence are largely psychological and revolve around protecting one’s sense of self-esteem, whereas women are more likely to come across structural barriers in attempting to report their incidents. There are also differences when it comes to the perpetrator’s gender. For example, sexual offenders who are women tend to be viewed more favorably than those who are men (Davies, Pollard, and Archie 2006).

While all people’s experiences with sexual abuse are important and deserve attention, it is also important to recognize the differences that women and men experience in their cases. If men are more likely to experience shame, embarrassment, or a fear of disbelief with their cases than are women, this could indicate that men are at risk of losing their sense of masculinity if they state that they were sexually dominated by someone, especially a woman. In this way, all sexual crimes, even those committed against men, fall under the umbrella of “patriarchy”, or a system in which men have all control over women (Open Education Sociology Dictionary). While a woman assaulting a man does not directly correspond with men’s rule over women, the fact that men feel as though admitting to being assaulted undermines their own sense of masculinity, and overall sense of ruling and dominance, shows that patriarchy is indeed in existence.

If it is seen as much more embarrassing for a man to be dominated by a woman than vice versa, this indicates that it is simply a norm for women to be subordinated, and therefore they should have no need to fear disbelief by authorities. Why *wouldn't* a man dominate a woman? It is implicitly understood that a man will be placed higher than a woman, and therefore should not ever be subjected to being harmed by her. In this way, although women and men alike can be subjected to sexual violence, patriarchy still determines to what extent their cases will be taken seriously.

Postfeminism

Implicit within each of these reasons to stray from feminism is the general idea that it is not needed. The concept of “postfeminism” (although arguably still not perfectly defined by women’s studies scholars) believes that the goals of feminism have been met by its previous waves, and therefore we now live in an egalitarian society. The concept can oftentimes even point to the idea that women are now the privileged gender in society instead of men. Under this assumption, there is no reason that women should not be able to achieve their goals in life, and if they do, it is no one’s fault but their own (Coppock, Haydon, and Richter 2014). This is similar to the idea of colorblindness in sociology, which states that we now live in a post-racial society in which all races are treated equally, thus if a person is not succeeding in life it cannot possibly be due to any type of racial discrimination. Overall, both postfeminism and colorblindness tend to only point towards personal, rather than structural, reasoning for a person’s choices and outcomes.

Rosalind Gill (2007) defined postfeminism as a “sensibility”, comprised of several interlocking themes. A few of these are “the shift from objectification to subjectification”, “an emphasis upon self-surveillance”, and “monitoring and self-discipline” (2007:147). Gill states

that postfeminism is practically the marrying of feminist and anti-feminist concepts; while women now have a greater sense of autonomy within their lives, they are still subject to scrutiny if they do not follow the guidelines of what is considered physically beautiful. Similarly, Erchull and Liss (2013) articulate the concept of perceiving female power through sexualizing one's self in contemporary society, finding that women are more likely to survey their bodies regularly if they believe that they can receive power through sex.

The researchers also found that seeing sex and sexiness as a form of power for women correlates with a woman's need to be liked by men, insinuating that these women continue to view themselves as objects rather than subjects. Additionally, the article found that benevolent sexism was related to associating sex with power. This could indicate that using sex as power makes women believe that there are perks within being a woman, and therefore make them want to stray from feminism. Lastly, Erchull and Liss (2013) point to the idea that women may be more likely to use sex as a tool when it is their only source of power at hand. Therefore, it could be more common to marginalized groups, such as black women, queer women, and those from lower socioeconomic statuses.

It can be argued that although postfeminism states that gender equality goals have been reached and women can now feel empowered through feeling like a sexual subject, we continue to live in a world in which women are sexually objectified, regularly put on display, and judged on their ability to conform to beauty standards. If it is still a norm for women to be far more objectified than men, it cannot be stated that we live in an egalitarian society. Nevertheless, those that believe we are living in a postfeminist time period are most likely not going to agree with current-day feminism, as they do not have a reason to believe that any further equality needs to be reached.

Present Study

The research presented in this paper seeks to further the scholarly conversation regarding factors involved in women's choice to identify as feminists or not. Through this qualitative study, I seek to question participants about topics such as whether or not they see necessity within the feminist movement, if their beliefs correspond with the PGD, and who in their life acts sexist towards them, if anyone. Through piecing together the aforementioned possible reasons that women may have to turn from sexism, I intend to better understand if women perceive gender inequality in the current day, and if not, what factors could contribute to this.

Methods

In order to look further into these research questions, I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with college women. The sample size consisted of 12 Brockport undergraduates, with a target number of 10 and maximum of 25. While a larger sample would have been able to provide a broader range of viewpoints on feminism, the goal was kept to a lower number of participants due to the short, eight-month time span of the Honors Senior Thesis project. This limitation prevents the results of this study from possessing much external validity. Though this research cannot be generalized to college women as a whole due to its small sample size, it can still allow the sociology and women's studies communities a look into possible explanations for the divisiveness among women on feminism's relevance and necessity.

Ideally, the sample size was meant to include equal proportions of all races and sexualities, so as to receive a thorough, intersectional understanding of all women's views on the movement. Additionally, this could uncover whether minority women have a different perspective on feminism than those from more dominant groups. Of the 12 women, 11 of them identified as white, with one identifying as white and Hispanic. In terms of sexuality, six

identified as heterosexual, four as bisexual, one as lesbian, and one as questioning. Again, due to the fact that the project was to be completed within one academic year, it was challenging to fully receive equal representation amongst different groups of women. Although the racial diversity did not reach the ideal level for the study, fortunately, the impact of diversity on women's perceptions was still able to be examined through the lens of sexuality.

Though the goals of feminism are meant to serve the needs of people of all genders, this research was kept to studying exclusively women for several reasons. First and foremost, identifying a specific population allows the study to be more focused, and therefore draw more accurate and precise conclusions in response to the research questions. In particular, however, this methodology was employed due to the fact that the feminist movement itself was founded by women, and it is mainly women who identify as feminists. Since they make up the vast majority of feminism, it is only fitting to identify their concerns about the movement, and how they feel their needs can be further addressed. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account that the study specifically sought out those who identified as a "woman" rather than the biologically-based term "female", so as to be inclusive of both cisgender and transgender women. In essence, this study was interested in eliminating any chance of "white-washing" when discussing women's issues, which has historically been seen as a salient aspect of the feminist movement.

This interviewing research was conducted in February 2018 in various public locations on the SUNY Brockport Main Campus, particularly the Seymour College Union and Drake Memorial Library. Participants were recruited primarily through emails to department heads and postings on Facebook. Prior to the beginning of each interview, the participant was handed a consent form to read over and sign, indicating that she allows the interviewer to publish her

answers, and is free from answering questions that makes her uncomfortable. The form also asked whether or not the participant agreed to be audio-recorded.

After returning this to the researcher, participants were given their own copy to keep as well. Each woman gave consent to being audio recorded, with the recordings taking place on an Olympus WS-500M digital voice recorder, and also an LG Stylo Plus 3 cellular phone. In addition to digital recordings, handwritten notes were taken for each session as well. Sessions varied in length from approximately five to 25 minutes, however the average length of one interview was 10 minutes. For confidentiality, each participant's real name was replaced with an identification number during data gathering and analysis, and pseudonyms are used for discussion of participants' specific responses throughout this research paper. The web application "oTranscribe" was used in order to transcribe the resulting data. All audio files were first converted to a ".wav" format on the website, then downloaded to the computer, and re-uploaded to oTranscribe. Here, the web application allowed for the audio recording to be slowed down on the same page as the transcription¹.

Each interview consisted of 14 questions in total². Most questions were open-ended, and those that required a yes-or-no response were oftentimes followed up with further explanation. One question that generated a great amount of response and insight into the participant's perspective on feminism was the third question, which asked for a general overview of her views on the feminist movement, including what it is doing well and what it needs to improve upon. Other questions that resulted in particularly rich data were questions four and five, which asked whether or not the movement has been helping racial minorities and queer women.

¹ Transcriptions provided in Appendix B.

² Interview guide provided in Appendix A.

Interview questions that did not work as well were questions 9 through 13, which asked more specifically about whether or not the woman had experienced discrimination and sexism, and by whom. Though these questions did receive direct responses, it was clear that some students were not sure exactly how to interpret the words “discrimination” or “sexism”, or that they thought the words carried too much weight for them to be able to identify with. Due to this, some answers may have been skewed. Nevertheless, these results show us to what extent undergraduate students understand what can be considered sexist in their daily lives, and if they separate themselves from the realm of discriminatory practices.

Results & Analysis

In the interviewing process, women were asked to discuss many topics related to feminism, gender inequality, and discrimination. Specifically, women were first asked about what they believe are some positive aspects of the movement, in which they brought up its ability to address gender inequality, include marginalized women, and focus on shifting the culture of the patriarchal society we live in. Conversely, women were also asked to address negatives of the movement, in which many brought up its lack of intersectionality, tendency to take on too much and become too bold, and its nonalignment with religious values.

Participants were additionally asked if the movement helps marginalized groups of women and, also, if women in general are marginalized. The latter relates to Czopp and Monteith’s (2003) and Coppock et al. (2014)’s research on perceived seriousness of gender inequality and relevance of the feminist movement. Women were then asked if they believe there are any perks of being a woman that make up for negative aspects. Lastly, interviewees were asked about how often they perceive discrimination against themselves and others in order to test

out Taylor et al.'s (1990) PGD theory, along with who they believe is discriminatory, in accordance with Riemer et al.'s (2014) research on benevolent and hostile sexism.

Addressing Gender Inequality

One of the first questions each woman was asked was what she believes that feminism is currently doing well. The most recurring answer to this question was that the movement takes on important issues that need to be addressed. Indeed, the respondents, overall, tended to believe that there were still instances of gender inequality in contemporary American society, which corresponds with the fact that 11 of the women answered that the movement was necessary. Interviewees believed that the movement could even help women on a psychological level, encouraging strength and motivation by joining a collective group of women who have experienced similar discriminatory encounters. One participant stated the following regarding the encouragement that the feminist movement brings: "I think it's really important as a woman to help women realize their own strength, and they don't necessarily have to put up with, kinda, the society's rules that have been put in place". This particular woman believes that society has spoken or unspoken regulations that can keep women from achieving their true potential. Through identifying with feminism, then, they can garner the strength to deviate from these norms in order to create gender parity.

Current Feminism: Inclusivity and Culture Shifting

Several women also stated that a positive of the feminist movement is its inclusivity. Participants believed that the movement is doing better with embedding intersectionality into its goals, or the concept that individuals are made up of numerous identities, which can multiply the oppressions they experience (Crenshaw 1991). Specifically, participants stated that the movement is beginning to include transgender people and people of color, whereas previous

waves of feminism did not try to incorporate such diverse groups of women. Additionally, interviewees stated that this wave of feminism focuses on social aspects related to inequality, rather than exclusively focusing on laws related to gender discrimination. A few believed that current-day feminism tries to change people's internal perceptions of women, and also our socialization process that leads us to believe gender inequality is a natural order. Specifically, one participant said the following:

Clearly, I mean feminism has been a thing, it's like now, you know, we can vote in the '20s, but it's like that was just the legality of it, um, the actual social aspects of it and the culture, it's, you know, there's still not equality there...I know that, like, you know, rape culture, things like that, that's a big issue and that may not be something that we could monetarily record or follow, but you know look at our president right now. Just the way our society treats women makes it necessary to have this movement.

This interviewee eluded to the idea that the current wave of feminism is different from those previously because it is more focused on changing the culture of inequality that we live in. It appears she believes that women are more concerned with how they are treated interpersonally and on a day-to-day basis, rather than with gender inequalities within major institutions.

Excluding Other Identities: White-Washing & Leaving out "Traditional Women"

Though participants were often able to discuss several positives within the feminist movement, they also identified many negatives within it, the most prominent being that it is still not fully intersectional. Indeed, while a few had stated that the movement was doing better with incorporating other identities, five of the participants remarked that it still is not as inclusive as it could be. They stated that transgender, non-straight, racially-diverse, gender queer, gender fluid, and disabled women all tend to be voices that are left out of the movement, and due to this,

contemporary feminism still comes off as a movement that centers only on women coming from more privileged identities. One Hispanic participant added that, while she believes that protests such as the women's march are a terrific way to draw attention to women's need for equality, those same women are not necessarily at other protests, such as those for "Black Lives Matter", indicating that the movement is oftentimes only centered around the singular issue of gender, eliminating discussions of other issues in society.

Additionally, one interviewee, a straight, white woman, stated that the movement tends to exclude women who choose to live more traditional, feminine lives. Though this comment pertained to exclusivity within the feminist movement like the others did, it particularly pointed towards a group of women that has historically been considered dominant rather than marginalized. Women who perform femininity by wearing makeup, having children, only showing soft emotions, etc. are often seen as "doing" their gender the correct way, meanwhile those who do not are seen as deviating from the norms surrounding women. Her answer could certainly correspond with the woman's identity; since she belonged to these particular categories of sexuality and race, it would make sense that the issues of dominant groups of women would be most salient to her. It appears, then, that this respondent believed that since feminism is concerned with eliminating gender norms, women that choose to follow them are being shunned from the movement. Thus, it is clear that marginalized and privileged women alike can feel excluded from the movement.

Conversely, it was also stated in an interview by a white, straight student, that "the feminist movement, as of late, has maybe spread itself a little too thin". This participant believed that, while she supported the movement, it tries to take on too much and satisfy too many needs. While she may have simply believed that the movement would function better if it were more

focused, it is also possible that, due to the student's race and sexuality, she did not particularly see the inclusion of all women as a necessary goal of the feminist movement. As a student apart of two dominant groups in society, she may not be able to see a need to bring the issues of marginalized groups to the forefront.

Over-Inclusive & Overbearing

Another commonly cited negative aspect of the feminist movement was that its members can sometimes come off too strong. One participant in particular stated that the movement can be “a little bit ‘in your face’”, and this causes men to turn away from it. Some believed that sometimes those that do come off so strongly, the “extremists” and “man-haters” of the group, are heard more than anyone else, causing the movement to be viewed in the wrong way. One interviewee, addressed under the pseudonym Layla, stated that sometimes it is simply too loud:

I do feel like some of the things that are happening within it aren't exactly giving feminists a good name, I guess? I think that sometimes there's like, the screaming feminist stereotype and sometimes that can be kinda true? And it kinda pushes away what they're standing for, and brings out more like, I don't know, you know what I mean? Like I guess I understand what it's trying to accomplish and I support that 100%, and there are a lot of issues that need to be addressed, but I guess the way that it goes about it can sometimes be problematic, in my view.

While this woman seems to believe that there is gender inequality to be resolved, she does not believe that the methods that feminism uses are the best way to go about addressing it, and that they instead end up being counterproductive by turning people away due to its intensity.

Feminism from a Religious Perspective

From a different perspective, one participant in particular discussed feminism within a religious context. The white, straight woman, Carrie, stated that she came from a very Christian background which states that men should, by natural order, always be ahead of women. Therefore, there is no need for a movement that supports the advancement of women. Specifically, Carrie stated that she found feminism to be “just a bunch of women trying to overpower men and take over the world”, trying to eliminate every man’s power completely. She did not believe that the movement was necessary, except in terms of turning attention towards the domestic and sexual abuse of women.

It is clear from Carrie’s statement that religion poses as a firm barrier in her identifying with the feminist movement. Since she interprets from the teachings of Christianity that women are innately secondary to men, the feminist movement, which directly advocates against that idea, is not logical to her. In fact, she believes that the movement is not even asking for equality to men, rather it is demanding for women to be placed *above* men in the gender hierarchy. From her responses, it appears that Carrie is basing her opinions of the movement off of what she perceives to be true, rather than what the movement does stand for. Current-day feminists advocate for gender parity in society, not the overpowering of men. Even so, this participant’s religious teachings do not even believe in gender equality, and thus this could be a large reasoning for those in religious communities to not partake in the movement. If it is engrained in their religious interpretations that gender parity is not natural, then they do not see a need for the feminist movement, and therefore will not choose to identify with it.

Helping Marginalized Women

Women were next asked about whether or not they believe that the feminist movement has helped marginalized women, specifically racial minorities and queer women. This allowed

participants a chance to dig deeper into the issue of intersectionality within the movement. When asked about racial minorities, almost every woman stated that the movement does not help them to the extent that it could. Three women stated that it does, with two of them qualifying the response by either stating that it just recently began to assist them, or that it could still be doing better. Since almost all participants are white, this could indicate that an exclusion of women of color from the feminist movement is evident even to those that do not directly experience it. For example, one white, straight interviewee answered the question adding in more detail as to how feminism leaves out the narratives of women of color:

That's a hard one. Not really, no. Maybe to some extent? But, not as much as it probably should be. I think it deals with problems that, like, the average white-middle class female deals with rather than issues that are dealt with for non-white, you know, single moms that are like waitressing at a café, if that makes sense. It's more geared to those that already have more privilege than others.

This participant appears to believe that the stereotypical image of the feminist movement consists of a woman who is white and middle-class, advocating only for issues that pertain to her, personally. Thus, feminism sometimes comes off as both racist and classist, only promoting equality to those women that possess more dominant racial and socioeconomic identities.

However, the question of whether or not feminism helped queer women had a larger range of responses. Although many still stated that it could be doing more for these women, participants were more likely to say that the movement advocated for queer women than racial minorities. This could be due to a few different reasons, one of which being each woman may have interpreted the word "queer" differently (transgender, non-heterosexual, non-feminine, etc.), causing each participant to think about the question differently. Additionally, the reasoning

could relate back to Czopp and Monteith's (2003) findings that sexism is not treated with as much seriousness as other discriminations, including racism. Provided that this is true, some individuals may believe that racial minorities *need* more help than queer women, and that feminists simply have not been advocating on behalf of non-white women to this extent.

Interestingly enough, women who classified their sexuality as lesbian, bisexual, or questioning were more likely than heterosexual women to say that feminism helps queer women. This is somewhat contradictive, as one may logically think that non-heterosexual women would be more likely to say that queer women are not being helped. Whereas straight women are not directly impacted by discrimination against queer women and therefore may be less likely to see the issues they face, queer women are directly impacted by these problems, and therefore may believe that more help is needed for them. Given these results, however, it is possible that the reasoning of Taylor et al. (1991) is at play here, and straight women overestimate the amount of help that queer women need from the feminist movement. Another possibility is that help for queer women in the feminist movement really has improved over time to the point in which they feel comfortable in the movement. However, this option cannot be entirely true seeing as still not every non-heterosexual woman believed that queer women were being helped. From these results, it is clear that further work is needed to include both non-white and non-heterosexual women into the movement in order to create a more inclusive environment, and properly advance all those who identify as a woman.

Are women marginalized?

The participants were also questioned specifically on where they believe women today stand in society. Specifically, they were asked about their beliefs regarding whether or not women today possess a marginalized status, if they believe there are any "perks" that come along

with identifying as this gender, and, if so, what role those perks play in compensating for any negative aspects of it. First, all but one of the interviewees stated that they believed the movement was necessary (the one interviewee who did not believe this was Carrie, the participant who believed the movement went against her religion's teachings). While most interviewees said that women do possess a marginalized status, there was one that said no, and one that was unclear about what the word meant. Both women were white, however one identified as a lesbian and the other was heterosexual. The former stated, "I think, like, there are inequalities between how men and women are treated, but I guess I wouldn't call it, like, marginalized." It is clear that this participant believed that the word "marginalized" has a lot of weight associated with it, and that women's inequality does not have enough gravity in order to classify women and girls as marginalized. Again, this goes back to Czopp and Monteith's (2003) study which had found that sexism is not always seen as a serious form of discrimination, relative to other oppressions.

The other participant had stated at the beginning of her interview that she was indeed a feminist and that there was a great necessity for the movement, however immediately said no when asked if women today are marginalized. When she was then told that the question was asking if she believed women were below men, she changed her answer and said, "Oh, 110% yes." Again, this participant appeared to believe that marginalization is a very serious term, and required a follow-up question to understand that it pertains to merely any instances of inequality in society. When Carrie was asked if she believes women are marginalized, she replied with, "I mean, me as a woman? *I* feel pretty equal." Carrie took a non-intersectional approach when answering this question, centering her response on herself and her own lived experiences. This is a perfect reflection of the idea that some women will not join the movement mainly because they

do not feel it pertains to them, meanwhile leaving out the marginalization that other women may face because of their gender and its possible intersections with identities such as race, class, and socioeconomic status.

What, if anything, makes up for marginalization?

Participants' thoughts on perks of being a woman were far more diversified. While all but one woman stated that there were some perks (the one woman who said no was a woman and gender studies major; this could potentially lead her to see only negative aspects of being a woman), there were varying thoughts as to what these perks entailed. One major theme was the idea that growing up as a woman allows you to not be confined to the expectations of masculinity. Indeed, three different interviewees mentioned that growing up as a woman means that you are not expected to follow the norms of masculinity. These participants believed that, whereas femininity allows women to be emotional, masculinity is very forceful and leads men to believe that, if they are to express any emotions aside from anger, their peers will respond by viewing them as less of a man. Therefore, the women appreciate their gender, as it permits them to express their emotions in an acceptable way. Two of the participants, one bisexual and one straight, said that these perks outweighed any disadvantages of being a woman, while the third, a lesbian, stated they did not.

Indeed, while these women painted this allowance of emotion as a perk, one could argue that this "positive" aspect still puts women at a disadvantage in society. While expressing one's emotions helps with mental health, it is still often viewed as a weakness in our culture, as it is normal and preferred to hide feelings such as anger and sadness. Therefore, since women feel that they can show emotion in public, they are sometimes stereotypically viewed as "too emotional", and therefore not equipped to handle certain employment positions or even day-to-

day tasks. So, while women expressing their emotions may improve their health, it could also decrease their societal status.

Another prominent theme among these participants when discussing perks was the concept of expressing sexuality, and being perceived as sexy. Indeed, some of the participants believed that, as a woman, you are able (and encouraged) to express yourself in a sexual way. One interviewee in particular, Katelin, a bisexual woman, discussed how utilizing one's sexuality can even be used for personal gain:

We can kinda use our sexuality to get things, in a way...I think it's fine if other women do it if they feel comfortable doing it. I've done it in terms of like, waitressing, like if it's an all-male table I'll be very friendly, but it may be like, a couple notches more friendly, but I think it's fine as long as the woman herself is comfortable with doing it, and that, like, she knows what she's doing, and it's not, like, to hurt somebody else.

Katelin believes that a perk of being a woman is that you can use your sexuality as a way to gain attention from men, and therefore obtain resources from them such as money. However, at the same time, she acknowledges that women should consent to and feel comfortable with trying to receive sexual attention from men. Katelin also stated that this perk did not outweigh the negatives of womanhood. Another interviewee stated that, as a woman, you are more likely to gain entry into a house party or receive free drinks at a bar, due to others perceiving you as sexy. However, she also stated that this did not necessarily count as a perk, as these things occur in order to benefit men by allowing them to be near women that they find desirable.

Lastly, a very common theme among participants when answering this question was that women receive the perk of benevolent sexism. Some interviewees mentioned that as women, they are not expected to pay for dinner if they are going out with a man, they are taken care of

first in times of emergency, and they are less likely to get arrested. A white, straight participant, Marissa, specifically said the following:

This will make me sound horrible. I guess that like, in general, women are in some ways put first...I think that like, women are protected first, in like time of disaster and need. There are definitely a lot more social, um, financial things out there for like, single moms rather than single dads, like if you're a single dad and the mom's not in the picture, you're kind of on your own, And in some ways I think that women probably get more pity, when things are going wrong in their family, and men are told to like, man up and deal with it...

Marissa, though she believes it is taboo to say, believes that women tend to be protected before men, in emergencies and also in times of financial hardship. She then ties this into the previous theme that women do not have to live up to the expectations of masculinity; since it is socially acceptable for women to express their emotions, they receive more pity from others when they do, whereas men are merely told to deal with the problem on their own.

One interviewee in particular was well aware that behaviors such as these are instances of benevolent sexism. Cassie, a white student who classified her sexuality as questioning, was a member of a club on campus that advocates for gender equality, and was therefore very in tune with the knowledge of women's studies:

There's definitely this idea of chivalry and benevolent sexism that do kinda contribute to, I guess womanhood, you know this idea of a man always has to hold a door open for a woman or pay for dinner, and I would call that a perk, but because it is still based on this idea that women can't do things for themselves...it's still based on a system of inequality, so these perks are kind of very false, and like, I strongly dislike them.

As someone with knowledge on the topic, Cassie was able to understand that, while women do receive these small advantages simply for being women, they do tend to stem from the idea that we live in a male-dominated society. Men do not hold open doors or pay for dinner because they believe women are above them, rather it is because they do not believe women can do it for themselves, or they are hoping to get something out of the interaction such as a romantic or sexual relationship. She does not like to partake in these perks either, as she appears to believe that they merely perpetuate this system of gender inequality.

Who Receives Sexist Discrimination?

Women were also asked how often they personally experience discrimination, and how often they see other women being discriminated against. Holistically, the Personal-Group Discrimination Discrepancy was not confirmed in this study, as only about half the women perceived more discrimination occurring towards their group than themselves. This proportion did not particularly shift by sexuality, either; four out of the six heterosexual women's responses reflected the PGD, while three of the six non-heterosexual respondents' answers corresponded with it. However, the specific responses of the women were indeed sociologically interesting. Primarily, it is important to point out that women gave more specific responses when asked if they personally have been discriminated against. Indeed, only a couple respondents were able to point out particular instances of discrimination against others, such as women being talked over, or the fact that women's college sports teams do not receive as much time in the gym as men's teams. One particular sexist action that women perceived against themselves and also other women was an instance of men interrupting them or talking over them. Perhaps this is so often noticed by women because it is a more overt form of sexism, which could not particularly be interpreted to be a benevolent act.

When women were only discussing discrimination against themselves, they brought up instances such as sexist jokes and feeling afraid when walking alone at night. Further, they brought up instances of benevolent sexism. One woman stated that when she is shoveling her driveway she is often asked by men if she needs help with it, while another, Cassie, discussed a story of holding the door open for a man:

I was holding a door open for a guy, and he refused to let me hold (it) open for him, he was my suitemate's boyfriend...I was just holding the door open for everyone, and he physically pushed me out of the way, so he didn't have to be the one walking in with me holding the door open. It was really awful and it kinda freaked me out because he's this big, hulking guy, he's a personal trainer, and I'm not the strongest person...and I was like, "I feel really powerless in this situation". And it's something little but it meant so much and it was like, really difficult to rationalize with it afterwards, and I couldn't verbalize why it bothered me so much.

What is interesting about Cassie's situation is that she is a feminist activist, holding membership with a gender equality club on campus, however she still did not fully understand why she felt the way she did about this situation. While she could tell that the situation made her feel uneasy, she could not quite label it as benevolent sexism until after she had given more thought to it. This demonstrates that even those who understand feminist theories and concepts can have trouble identifying discrimination in their day-to-day lives, especially when it is an instance of personal discrimination.

Cassie's experience ties into what a different interviewee, Layla, said about seeing discrimination in mundane situations:

You know it's kind of hard, because to some extent it's kind of like a normal thing. Like, it shouldn't be, but a lot of times when you experience discrimination like that you're so used to it you don't even think "I was discriminated", it's just like, you know? It kinda happens and you don't even think.

In her interview, Layla points out that discrimination against women (and, arguably, other marginalized identities) happens on a day-to-day basis, to the point that it is almost a routine. Discrimination is normalized and embedded into the fabric of our society, which often allows it to go unrecognized. Though Layla said that she supports the movement, this invisibility of discrimination could contribute to other women's inability to see sexism still existing in contemporary society, and therefore cause them to not need feminism.

Who is Sexist?

In addition to how often they see discrimination, women were also asked who is discriminatory to them. Specifically, they were asked how often they perceive discrimination from strangers, family members, and significant others. The purpose of this part of the interview was to analyze, as Riemer et al. (2014) found, if women are less likely to perceive sexism from those that are closer to them rather than strangers. The interviewing process found that, like the PGD test in interviews, only half of the women were more likely to perceive sexism from strangers than family members or significant others. This proportion stayed the same when considering sexuality, as well. However, when considering all responses, it was most common for women to experience sexism from strangers compared to the other options. Indeed, 11 out of the 12 respondents stated that they have experienced sexism by people that they do not know. Sexism by family members was second-most common, and sexism by significant others was least common. Therefore, while Riemer et al.'s (2014) results were not confirmed in this study

when looking case-by-case, the interviews did reflect similar results when examined on a holistic level.

Another interesting finding from this aspect of the interview was the participants' tendency to excuse sexist behaviors by those that they know. When discussing sexist remarks and actions by strangers, interviewees used words and phrases such as unfair and "creepy". However, when discussing sexism by family members and significant others, women often had excuses for the men, framed the instance in a benevolent manner, or indicated that it happened in the past and is no longer a problem. For instance, Layla mentioned that her current boyfriend used to make sexist remarks, but had a tone on the subject that indicated she excused this behavior:

I would say that when we first started dating he did it without thinking, like those subtle things that he doesn't really mean to say; it just comes out. Because that's like, how he was raised, and you know, just natural.

Layla justifies her boyfriend's behavior in a few ways. First, she states that it happened only in the past, not currently, and therefore the issue is no longer relevant. Additionally, she says that he did not even think about what he was doing; it just came naturally to him because of how his family raised him. Therefore, Layla waves off these actions. Other women also stated that their boyfriends and family members were once sexist and that these actions have since stopped, or that they were simply brought up to hold conservative attitudes towards women (one woman stated that "it's engrained in their minds").

Furthermore, when participants discussed family members or significant others acting sexist, they tended to describe these actions or behaviors as light-hearted. For instance, Cassie stated that her dad acts benevolently sexist towards her, though she also believed that this could

be attributed towards the fact that she is his child and therefore he is simply trying to protect her (although gender could certainly play a factor in that, as well). She also discussed instances of benevolent sexism she had with a past significant other:

(He was) being like, very benevolently sexist and like, insisting on paying for the meals and taking me places and things like that, and that was actually one of the reasons I was really uncomfortable with it... (he was) like, kinda trying to prove himself to me by being, like, very chivalrous...but again that's like, benevolent sexism, not like open, outright, hostile sexism...

While Cassie had experience with the term "benevolent sexism" and was able to apply it to this situation, she still appeared to underrate it because it was not hostile and bold.

Overall, it was clear that participants had a high propensity to justify sexism by those that they knew, as opposed to strangers. This is most likely due to the fact that women are close to family members and significant others, and do not want to give them the label "sexist", seeing them as better men than that. However, if women consistently brush aside sexist remarks and actions by certain men simply because they care about and trust them, progress towards women's equality cannot be achieved. The term "sexist" does not equate to a bucket that some people fall into and others do not, rather it is a more fluid term that applies to situations and actions. All men have a tendency to act in a sexist manner, considering the patriarchal society that we are raised in. Women's frequent unwillingness to call fathers, brothers, boyfriends and husbands discriminatory could be another factor causing women to not see a need for the feminist movement.

Conclusion

To reiterate, women in this study were asked several questions regarding their perceptions of the feminist movement, in addition to their own and others' experience with sexism in day-to-day life. Due to the small sample size of this study, broader claims cannot be made about women's perceptions and experiences, especially not from an intersectional lens due to the lack of non-white representation in the sample. However, this data can still be used in order to help identify answers to the research questions of "Do women today perceive themselves as possessing a marginalized status?" and "Do the perks that come along with being a woman connect to women's perception of having a marginalized status?" When tying this data into the research questions, it is, first and foremost, clear that women do perceive their group to have a marginalized status. Women notice that there is a need for greater gender equality, and feminism is a channel through which this is possible. Therefore, they believe the movement to be necessary. However, women also point out that there are areas in which it can improve, primarily its inclusion of marginalized identities within the category of women. Additionally, while many women are able to point out that there are perks that come along with womanhood, most would not say that these perks outweigh gender-based oppression. Therefore, perceiving perks of being a woman does not make one more susceptible to believing that gender equality exists today.

Conclusion

In sum, the current study contributes to existing literature pertaining to feminism by examining areas of improvement, perks of womanhood, and individual women's perceptions of discrimination, all within an intersectional lens. It is, however, worth noting that the small amount of diversity within the sample posed as a limitation in capturing intersectionality. The short time frame of this study made it difficult to receive a wide range of racially diverse and queer women, causing for 92% of the respondents to be white. It is also important to point out

that various identities of women were not represented in the sample, including disabled and transgender women, and also women from lower socioeconomic statuses. Future studies should consider researching women of these and other marginalized identities in order to obtain a broader array of women's opinions of feminism and sexist discrimination.

The study also showed that religion can play a large role in a woman's thoughts on feminism. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to perform further studies on the effects of religious identity on perceptions of discrimination, perhaps focusing on a variety of religions, as well. Additionally, this study only focused on the views of college students between the ages of 18 and 22, and therefore only younger women's perceptions are identified in this research (again, this was a result of the short time frame and small amount of resources for the study). Research on a wider range of ages is necessary in order to gain a broader understanding of women's perceptions of the feminist movement and discrimination in general.

Despite these limitations, the study makes observations about various components of the feminist movement and its necessity. When looking at the first research question, "Do women today perceive themselves as possessing a marginalized status?", it is clear that women may not call their status marginalized, but do see a subordinate status among women relative to men. They recognize that the feminist movement helps with instilling confidence into women, and that it provides a way to allow voices to be heard and issues to be addressed. But current-day feminists tend to believe that this era of the movement focuses not so much on obtaining legal rights for women, but instead looks at changing cultural norms surrounding gender. Many women tend to believe that they do have rights in this day and age; the problem lies in how they are treated day-to-day and interpersonally. This gender inequality, then, stems from the

socialization process in our society, and therefore we must alter how this takes place in order to change our perceptions and unconscious biases of women to allow them to be treated equally.

The present study also shows that, while most women today do see a need for feminism, they are also able to identify some problem with the movement. Most often, women point to the lack of intersectionality within it, stating that it is often only geared towards white, cisgender, middle-class women despite its attempts over the years to become more inclusive. It is clear, then, that further work is needed within feminism to ensure that all identities of women are being addressed in its work. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to gear channels such as marches and PSAs towards a broader range of identities, or even focus on one group of women at a time.

Additionally, the study shows that women see not only their group as a whole, but also themselves as individuals, as facing sexist discrimination. The PGD was not found to exist in the study. It is possible that, since the theory has not been researched in many years, perceptions have changed over time and individuals are now able to identify more personal discrimination, especially due to the reawakening of feminism that has taken place over the last couple years. However, it is important to note that this may not be the case for all subordinate groups in society, such as racial minorities. In the future, PGD testing should be brought back to sociological and social psychological research, in order to test whether or not individuals have become more aware of their own personal experiences with discrimination.

Another important conclusion to this study, though not associated with either research question, is that women have an unfortunate tendency to justify acts of sexism by those that they are close to, such as family members and significant others. This is problematic, not only because it creates an illusion in women's minds that only men outside of their social circle are discriminatory, but also because it can extend to other areas of life as well. If women do not

believe that their loved ones can be sexist, they also may not believe that they can be capable of acts such as domestic violence, sexual assault, and rape. This could cause women to believe that violent acts by their significant other are justified, or not substantial enough to bring attention to. Perhaps more education is needed in society regarding what discrimination constitutes as, so that individuals are better able to spot it. This could include varying areas of discrimination, such as racism, classism, and transphobia, in order to ensure that all populations receive the necessary education, and can thus identify problematic behavior by their peers.

The second research question, “Do the perks that come along with being a woman connect to women’s perception of having a marginalized status?” came to be a more nuanced subject. Indeed, though most women did not believe that perks of being a woman outweighed negative societal aspects of it, it is still important to note those perks that women identify. Most prominent among these were the lack of forced masculinity, the ability to express one’s sexuality (oftentimes for personal gain) and aspects of benevolent sexism, such as not having to pay for dates and being protected by men. Though the research question was refuted, these answers are still important to the discipline as they show that some perks do exist, and, though not seen in this sample, may have the potential to turn women away from feminism.

Overall, the study shows the complex array of opinions and perceptions that make up a woman’s views on the feminist movement. While most women understand the movement and its necessity, almost all qualified this in ways such as not seeing sexism in certain places, or identifying issues with its intended audience. From this research it is clear that the feminist movement has improvements it can make, and also that there are general improvements society needs to make regarding the understanding of discrimination, along with dominant and subordinate statuses. This research can assist the sociological community with bettering social

movements and education, in order to fully address the needs of marginalized individuals and create a more equitable society.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

1. Which race do you identify with?

2. Which sexual orientation do you identify with?

3. Please tell me your overall views on the feminist movement, including what you believe it is currently doing well and what it needs to improve on.

4. Do you feel that the movement is necessary?

5. Do you believe the movement has been helping racial minorities?

6. Do you believe the movement has been helping queer women?

7. Do you believe that women today possess a marginalized status?
 - a. (if no) Why do you believe this?

8. Do you believe that there are perks that come along with being a woman?
 - a. (if yes) Do you believe these perks outweigh any negative societal aspects of being a woman that the feminist movement stands against?

9. How often in the past three months have you felt discriminated against due to your marginalized status? (being a woman, a racial minority, sexual minority, etc.)?

10. How often in the past three months have you seen others that identify the same as you do, in terms of gender, race, or sexual orientation, discriminated against due to their marginalized status? (being a woman, a racial minority, sexual minority, etc.)?

11. How often have you experienced sexism directed at you by strangers? (very often, often, sometimes, never)

12. How often have you experienced sexism directed at you by family members? (very often, often, sometimes, never)

13. How often have you experienced sexism directed at you by your significant other? (very often, often, sometimes, never)

14. Do you have any final thoughts related to the feminist movement, how it functions for minority women, sexism today, etc.?

Appendix B: Transcriptions

ID #1

White, straight

Overall views:

“just a bunch of women trying to overpower men and take over the world”

Her religion says men should always be ahead of women

Trying to get rid of men’s power completely

Is the movement necessary?:

No. For some things, like abuse. But protests do not do anything, women should be talking instead

Do you believe the movement is helping racial minorities?

No. Mostly only see white women.

Helping queer women?

I don’t know.

Do women possess a marginalized status today?

“I mean, me as a woman?”

I feel pretty equal.

Women *should* always be a bit under men.

Are there perks of being a woman?

Yeah.

Do these perks outweigh things the feminist movement stands against?

Yes, should be proud that there are things that they can do that a man can’t, we have skills like sewing, compassion, taking care of the household that men may not have.

3 months have you felt discriminated against?

I haven’t.

3 months others been discriminated against?

I don't see it.

Sexism by strangers?

Rarely.

Sexism by family members?

Never.

Sexism by S/O?

Never.

Final thoughts?

No.

ID #2

White, Lesbian

Overall views: um, I think it's really important as like a woman to help women, um, realize, like, um their own strength and they don't necessarily have to put up with kinda the, society's rules that have kinda been put in place, and I think, like definitely, like the time's up movement they've done a lot to work on sexual harassment and basically making people know that like it's not, it's not ok and that like trying to let voices be heard, um, I think probably one of the areas it kinda lacks is like kinda trying to include all races and like you know trying to include transgender women, kinda making it like more open I guess. More like inclusive. So it's like, it almost seems like a white privileged woman thing when like, it really doesn't need to be.

Necessary: Yeah.

Racial minorities?: Um, yeah I think that it has, I think...um...we just need to do a better job of making sure everybody feels comfortable in it um, opening it up to everybody.

Queer women: Um, yeah I think so. Cause I think it also you know gives them a platform, um as well cause I think um you know I think it's hard for, you know, like LGBT women to kinda you know have a platform for themselves so I think like you know kinda making it a whole women's movement that kinda introduces a platform for other women to speak up

Women possess a marginalized status? Pause. Um, hm, I guess no, um, I mean I think, I think like we definitely there are inequalities between like how men and women are treated but I guess I wouldn't call it, like marginalized.

Perks of being a woman? (laughter) um, I mean I guess, um, you know there's certain like qualities that are forced on men that like women don't necessarily have to follow along with

like kinda like the whole forced masculinity things that men you know are kinda like, you know men grow up to think they're not allowed to cry or not allowed to like express their emotions, but I think besides that, there aren't any perks

Do these outweigh negative societal aspects? Um, sorry, can you repeat the question?

(Reword)

I would say no.

How often have you felt discriminated against in the past 3 months? Um...like how many times? (Yeah) I'd say maybe like 4 times.

3 months others discriminated against? Um, there's a LOT.

Sexism by strangers? Um, I'd say like sometimes.

Sexism by family members? I'd say never.

Sexism by a sig. other? Never.

Final thoughts? Um, I don't know I just think it's definitely really an important movement, I kinda think you know the media's really harsh about it and I think it's, I mean, I feel like it's really hard to understand the feminist movement if you don't like personally like identify with like, feel like it's necessary, like it's easy to be like "oh this isn't necessary" or you know people are just making a big deal out of things when really they're just standing up for like things that have been going on for a really long time.

ID #3

Caucasian, Bisexual

Overall views: Uh I think the feminist movement...sorry I'm very bad at answering questions, I feel like it's obviously a very, very important movement that we have and that is still needed today and probably will always be needed, I can't see a future where we don't need the feminist movement in some way shape or form, just because it is so inclusive of everybody, of the equality for everyone, at least it should be which I guess going into that would be one negative of it is those types of people that identify as feminists who really don't follow what it should be like the trad white feminist who doesn't include other races or people who are exclusive of different sexual orientations or uh, like trans women, and also like the ideas, I mean people that just aren't as inclusive as they should be I suppose. Um, I think that it is getting better though and I think a good thing about the feminist movement today is just how much it's grown and how many people who aren't afraid to identify as feminists anymore, I just remember when I was in middle school and high school people being meninists or not wanting to be feminists because of uh, thinking that it was like man hating and I feel like a lot more people *know* what it is today, or at least know kind of what it is than used to. So I think it's just grown even more.

Necessary?: Yes.

Helping racial minorities?: Pause. Yeah, not as much as it should but I think we're working towards that more.

Queer women?: Yeah.

Marginalized status: Pause. Yeah. I, in certain degrees, obviously not as much as when it first started but I think you'll still find aspects of that in places.

(Certain degrees?)

Um, like, um a big example now would be like wage gaps and things of those nature, just places where we're not as equal as we really should be, um, the wage gap is the biggest one that comes to mind.

Perks? I think women are just maybe the way we're raised we're more in touch and aware of our emotions and our sexualities, so I think a benefit would be like knowing yourself a bit better maybe. Being able to express yourself a little more, even if you're looked down on.

Outweigh some of the negative aspects? Hmm. I, I guess yeah because I'd say that something the feminist movement should look towards is making it so men can be like that too? So like if using emotions as an example, women are allowed to be uh, to show their emotions more, I think that's something men should also be able to do, so I guess that outweighs some negative aspects of being a woman.

3 months felt discriminated against?: Um, maybe like once from some kind of bad, like once from some kind of bad joke, that's a definite actually.

3 months others discriminated against? I feel like I am more closed off, so I don't see it that often, so I guess just like a couple times, but not a lot.

Sexism from strangers?: Um, multiple times. I'd say like, creepy comments at work type of thing, especially.

Sexism from family members?: Hmm, I'd definitely say sometimes, I have some very conservative-type family members.

Sexism from S.O.?: Um, (laughter) none. She's a girl.

Final thoughts?: Um, I guess not anything more than I've already said, that we're getting better, but I think inclusion, inclusion, inclusion can always be grown, expanded as we're realizing more minority groups and paying attention to more people.

ID #4

Caucasian, Hetero

Overall views: Doing well with quality, but causes male population to not feel as accepting, "a little bit in your face", "good for female motivation but causes men to run away from it"

Do you feel the movement is necessary: Yes

Do you believe the movement has been helping racial minorities? (pause) not as good as it could be

Helping queer women?

Kind of. I think there are some aspects that cause them to not be helped as much. Some people believe transgender people aren't women.

Do you women today possess a marginalized status?

(pause) yeah. There is a lack of women in high ranking positions, i.e. no woman president, so naturally women look at that as women having less status

Are there perks that come along with being a woman?

(pause) get to have our own kids, no masculinity problem...although there's other problems.

Do you believe these perks outweigh...

Yes, I like being able to have a kid, though I know that's opinionated. Being a woman is better than being a man because I can have kids...but that's because I like that aspect of having a kid.

How often have you felt discriminated in the past 3 months...

(Immediately) None.

How often in the past 3 months have you seen others discriminated against...

Does the news count? (yes) a few times.

Sexism by strangers?

Sometimes.

Sexism by family members?

Often.

Sexism by S/O?

Haven't had one.

Final thoughts?

A lot of times people want complete equality, but (some people say) what about military drafts? I don't agree with that, I don't see how that has to do with equality since women are different from men naturally. Not all aspects have to be equal, just a general overview.

ID #5

Caucasian, White; Straight

Overall views: Um, I guess first I'd say that I support the feminist movement in what it's trying to accomplish and what it stands for, however I do feel like some of the things that are happening within it aren't exactly giving feminists a good name, I guess? I think that sometimes there's like the screaming feminist stereotype and sometimes that can kinda be true? And it kinda pushes away what they're standing for and brings out more like, I don't know like (stammering) you know what I mean? Like I guess, I don't know, I understand what it's um trying to accomplish and I support that 100% and there are a lot of issues that really need to be addressed, but I guess just the way that it goes about it can sometimes be problematic, in my view.

Necessary: Yes, very much so. I think it was necessary 100 years ago. And it will probably be necessary in 100 years. I believe that there's a lot that needs to happen.

Racial minorities?: Pause. That's a hard one. Not really. No. Um, maybe to some extent? But, not as much as it probably should be. Um I think that it deals with more problems that like the average white middle class female deals with rather than issues that are dealt with for non-white you know single moms that are like waitressing at a cafe, if that kind makes sense. It's more geared to those that already have more privilege than others.

Queer women? Pause. Um, (pause) I'm thinking I promise (haha) Um...would you say that the feminist movement is separated from the LGBTQ Pride movement? Would you say that they're separate? Am I allowed to ask you that? (haha)

(overall, yes I'd say that they're separate, there's definitely some overlap, but like, um, I don't know I'm kinda just thinking about how women's marches and pride marches are you know separate things but those in the feminist movement do kinda stand for..?)

I guess I'd say no, I don't think that they *really* help queer women. I think that the movements do kinda like stand together in a way, but I don't think that it like explicitly helps them. I think the movements maybe help each other, if that makes sense (haha)

Marginalized status: Very much so, yes.

Perks: Yes (like what?) Um...I don't know this will make me sound horrible, I guess that like in general women are in some ways put first? Like, I guess growing up, I grew up very, like in a very strict Christian family, and like I don't know if that really has anything to do with it to be honest, that really shouldn't go with it at all, but um growing up like women always well, I guess that doesn't count, okay, I don't know what I'm saying. I guess, yes. To some extent. I think that like women are protected first, in like time of disaster and need. There are definitely a lot more social um, like financial things (haha) out there for like single moms rather than single dads, like if you're a single dad and the mom's like not in the picture,

you're kind of on your own. And in some ways I think that women probably get more pity, when things are going wrong in their family, and men are told to like man up and deal with it, so I guess like in that aspect, um, yeah. I don't know if that really helped you but.

Perks outweigh negative...?: (immediately) No.

3 months felt discriminated against?: Me personally? (pause) you know it's kind of hard because to some extent it's kind of like a normal thing, like it shouldn't be, but a lot of times when you experience discrimination like that you're so used to it you don't even think "I was discriminated", it's just like, you know? It kinda happens and you don't even think. But I guess, so how many times in the past 3 months, I should actually answer the question, uh, probably 5? That's kinda a guess. (haha)

3 months others discriminated against?: Um, more than 5, probably 10? It's not really like large things that happen, it's more like just little, um, like innuendos and hints of discrimination, within society I guess.

(like what?)

Um, just like little comments that people will say. Like oh, like, I don't know. Um, I guess one of the things that personally drives me crazy is when men assume that I'm not capable of doing something. Like I shovel my driveway every day, well like walkway or whatever, and like, people will come up and be like oh let me help you, cause I live on Main Street, and I don't want your help! You know like it's nice, but I don't want your help. Just things like that that's generally meant kindly, but, we're very capable (haha).

Sexism by strangers?: Um, sometimes.

Sexism by family members? Often.

Sexism by S.O.? Pause. Um, I would say that does that mean my boyfriend (haha)? I would say that when we first started dating he did it without thinking, like those subtle things that he doesn't really mean to say it just comes out. Cause that's like how he was raised, and you know just natural, and I kind of stood my ground and was like no no (haha) I am very capable, I am smart, I know what you just said. So I guess recently, almost never. He's kinda learned that you treat me with respect or you don't talk to me at all (haha)

(in the past, it's more often or?)

Um, sometimes. Wasn't often but there were definitely things that I don't think he even heard himself say, just like instinct. Um, even like oh, like he'd be like in the car and like someone would cut him off and he'd like make a comment about it if it was a woman and I'd be like (haha) really? Just like, stupid little things that he's learning.

Final thoughts?: Um...I guess, well, when I very first started talking to you tonight just that it's, a, a great movement, it's needed to happen for a really long time, um, I do think that there are better ways to go about it, there are some parts that are kinda like in your face, not really solving the problem but like (what would you say, like what aspects?) So there's those, vagina hats. I don't like those hats. You might love them, I don't wanna offend you.

(Why don't you like them?) I don't know... I just don't think that that really solves anything. I think the point of them is probably that it makes some people uncomfortable, and that's kinda the point of the whole movement is to bring out the fact that we are women and we have parts, and you know you shouldn't treat us any differently I guess, but like it just, I don't know. Maybe that it's more conservative? I don't know it just, I don't like them. I just don't. But, I am very happy that it's finally happening, um. (Long pause.) (Okay, anything else that's in your face?) Um...that's really the only thing that gets me. The rest of it I'm okay with, it's just that one I don't like, I don't know (haha). Um, I guess that's probably the main thing. Um, and just the way some women and I've known a few that I guess are like man-haters, and they assume that all men are like evil, and all of them want us to you know like stand in the kitchen and be quiet, and I don't think that's true, I think, I know that there are some men that think like that, I guess it's just like it's such a layered concept that you can't say that all people, all men are like that. Cause they aren't. And some of them, that are speaking for the majority, I guess. So there's just like a lot of assumptions, in every conflict that, making assumptions is bad (haha) I guess. (Anything else?) I don't know, I don't think so.

ID #6

White, bisexual

Um, I believe that it is being more inclusive in terms of Trans people and um people of color. I think it's a good movement to help bring light to equality to all of them. (Improve upon?) Um, I think it took a really long time for certain um, orientations to be accepted, uh especially I think there's still, within the outer realm of the feminist movement, I think there's still some people that don't totally feel like they wanna accept like gender queer, gender fluid, like fluidity I think a lot of people don't understand that still. So I think that's still being worked on being accepted.

Movement is necessary?

Absolutely.

Helping racial minorities?

I think in the third wave which is now, yes, but I think in the past 2 waves not so much.

Helping queer women?

Yes.

Women today possess a marginalized status?

Could you extrapolate on your question? (Are women today in a position that is below men?) Um, yeah I do, I still think they do, yeah.

Perks that come along with being a woman?

Yeah? It's uh, They're not like always great perks, it's like the whole like we can kinda use our sexuality to get things in a way, and then also like um be um I'm forgetting the term for it but like the inclusive act for when you hire people? Like that, it kinda has places for work, they have to hire women and people of color, so like there it's good. (When it comes to like using sexuality to get things, how do you feel about yourself doing that, about other women doing that?) I think it's fine if other women do it if they feel comfortable doing it. I've done it in terms of like waitressing, like if it's an all-male table I'll be very friendly, but it may be like a couple notches more friendly than I would be to a normal table, but I think it's fine as long as the woman herself is comfortable with doing it, and that like she knows what she's doing, and it's not like to hurt somebody else.

These perks outweigh negative societal aspects of being a woman?

No I don't think they outweigh them.

3 months discriminated against due to being a woman or being bisexual?

I don't...in terms of just counting little things, a lot. I don't think I could even count it.

3 months other women or bisexual people discriminated against?

A lot, probably, yeah, probably the same amount.

Sexism by strangers?

Sometimes.

Sexism by family members?

Sometimes.

Sexism by S/O?

Sometimes.

Final thoughts?

Mmm...no, I can't think of anything that is outstanding.

ID #7

White, Bisexual

Overall views: "I don't know every single thing that's going on, honestly mainly see, like, the women's march" Overall I identify as a feminist. Didn't used to. Parents were conservative. But all problems matter, even small ones: "no woman is free until all women are free" Sees why people dislike the word feminist. Talks about what needs to be talked about, not man-haters though. But, we hear the extremists more than anyone else; man-haters are not what mainstream feminists would identify with.

Is the movement necessary: **yes**

Helping racial minorities: yes, not to the degree it should be. Needs to be more focused on intersectional feminism, that's the new thing.

Helping queer women: Again yes but could do more.

Do you believe that women today possess a marginalized status?

In some ways yes, in others no. Institutionally, we used to not have the right to vote. It's not an institutional problem anymore; it's a cultural problem. Women won't enter STEM fields because there's stigma against them. Culture and perceptions are what's important, not laws.

Do you believe that there are perks that come along with being a woman?

The man will pay for dinner, but still not really a perk if you can't afford it in the first place because women make less money. Like affirmative action, it's not a perk if it's helping you be equal.

Do these perks outweigh any negative societal aspects...

I don't think so, because I think the negative consequences can be so bad that it doesn't outweigh it. Getting free drinks at the bar doesn't outweigh how many women are raped/murdered.

How often in the past 3 months have you felt discriminated against...

"Not really, which is good"

How often in the past 3 months have you seen others discriminated against?

"Not really, I don't really think I have."

Sexism by strangers? Sometimes.

Sexism by family members? Sometimes. It's engrained in their minds, an expected kind of thing

Sexism by your S/O? Like once

Final thoughts?

Like the direction, they can do more overall. People who aren't part of it already need to be more receptive to it. It's wrong to say "not all men"; there needs to be more support. The extremists need to be quieted.

ID #8

White, Straight

Overall views?

Um, I definitely think that the feminist movement is essential in just everyone's life, if they realize that it's impacting them or not, it is, something that I think the feminist movement definitely needs to improve on is being more inclusive of women who choose to live more traditional roles and be more feminine, um I think that it really needs to improve on that because while raising up a more small group of people, like the LGBTQ+ community, while that's very very important, they just need to be a little more accepting of people that choose not to be, like people who are more traditional and that's what makes them feel empowered. Like not bringing down feminine people.

Necessary?

Definitely, yeah. People who say that feminism isn't necessary obviously haven't spent a day being a girl. (haha). Yeah, it's necessary.

Helping racial minorities?

I think that it could do better. I think that it is helping, but I think there's more we could be doing.

Queer women?

Definitely, 100%. I mean only recently has it started really doing that, because in earlier waves of feminism it definitely hasn't, but I think we've come to be doing better.

Marginalized status?

No. (pause) (as in like women are below men) Oh. 110% yes. I mean it's not, I know a lot of people say it's not as bad, but like yes it is because again like, a lot of people who say that just haven't spent a day being female. So yes, definitely.

Perks?

Um...to be honest, no. I think that being a woman is definitely just harder, like all the time. I think that we have to fight harder for everything we have, like nothing is handed to us. So yeah.

3 months felt discriminated against?

Um, I can't really think of any specific examples, but I know that I have. Just like walking alone at night on campus back to my car, it's a lot scarier versus a guy who would be doing that, they wouldn't even really have that concern.

3 months seen others discriminated against?

Um, pretty often I'd say.

sexism by strangers?

Very often.

Sexism by family members?

By family members, never.

Sexism by s/o?

Um, in the past significant others, like a lot. That's why I'm not with them anymore (laughter).

Final thoughts?

I think that we just need to remember that we haven't, the battle's not over, and we need to just keep fighting.

ID #9

White/Hispanic, and Straight

Overall views:

Um, I think overall the feminist movement is doing, well, I think we need to do better with including marginalized women, so I think you know for example the march on Washington, like so many white women show up and that's really great, but where are they at like Black Lives Matter protests and things like that? And I don't think we can say that we're fighting for gender equality if we're also not fighting for racial equality and, um, you know all the different identities because if you're a woman of color you know even if we get rights for all women, or you know, it's probably going to be for the white women. So I think it could definitely improve in being more inclusive for all women, including trans women too, and some people have a problem with that because they still see, people might still see trans women as men but I think they are affected by it in some ways even more than um, you know being born as a female. Did that answer everything?

Is the movement necessary?

Absolutely. Um, clearly I mean feminism has been a thing, you know, it's like we you know now we can vote in the '20s but it's like that was just the legality of it, um the actual social aspects of it and the culture, it's you know there's still not equality there. And um, I think that people's perceptions, well I guess that's getting into perceptions. So yes I think it's absolutely necessary. I mean, even if in the sense of, you know like I don't know how much of the wage gap, you know how much of that is completely true? But I know that like, you know, rape culture, things like that, that's a big issue and that may not be something we

could monetarily record or follow, um, but you know look at our president right now. Just the way our society treats women makes it necessary to have this movement.

Has it been helping racial minorities?

Um, yeah I kinda talked about that. I think like we're getting better? You know from what it was in like the '20s and things like that but there's still so much further to go, I mean, what was it like 70% of white women voted for Trump? So, you know we're worried about what, you know we're worried about our own things with feminism, but then we're not worried about people, women of color.

Queer women?

Um, (pause) I mean I feel like in my own personal experience and observations I think maybe queer women are a little further ahead in like the social part of feminism than people of color. But, I still think that, yeah I think that they're probably a little better than people of color. But in terms of like straight versus queer, we're still not on the playing field. And I don't know if trans follows under queer, but definitely when it comes to trans women, they are probably more affected by it than, what is it, cisgender women.

(has it been helping trans women)

I think it's kind of left trans women out. I think individual feminists may be including them, but as a whole I think they're excluded.

Marginalized status?

Yeah, definitely. Like even, like I said, even if it's not on paper, even just the social aspects of it keep us at the bottom. Even just look at, you know, Hillary wasn't the best candidate, but how she was treated against someone like Donald Trump, just blatant, blaring sexism.

Are there perks that come along with being a woman?

I mean aside from like my own personal like, I love being a woman because blah blah blah, um I don't think there are any privileges that we have as women. I mean, well, maybe the one sense would be like I think women are favored more in like custody battles and things like that, that's probably the one place I see it. But even that, I think, is against women because it's, I think it's still saying oh men are out there working, women are the ones that have to take care of the children, so, if there's a divorce and there's a custody battle women should get the children because they're the ones that can take care of them, and men should be able to go on and keep working and do whatever. So I think even when there are like privileges that we have, they're still BECAUSE of sexism.

Do the perks outweigh...

Laughs, no. Like I don't see, I mean, I don't think it's necessarily a perk, and it's not even a perk I think it's more like what society is like, oh women should do it, because, women should get custody because, like I don't really know, I couldn't think of anybody or myself who'd be like yeah I would rather keep my children in custody just because I'm a woman,

but yeah I'll continue to get paid less than um, you know, I'll be questioned extensively if I ever report sexual assault. Like I don't think that one thing makes up for everything else.

3 months have you felt discriminated against due to being a woman?

Um...I don't think I've actually been discriminated against. I question some of the, you know, like maybe a man interrupts me you know or maybe my boyfriend isn't, maybe we're in an argument or something that's talking about feminism or something. But aside from that, I don't think anybody has ever actually done anything BECAUSE I'm a woman.

3 months also as women being discriminated against?

Mmmm...(long pause) Um, I'm trying to think, that I can think of off the top of my head, I don't think there are any cases.

Sexism by strangers?

Um...that I can like think of...like, maybe sometimes? But I wouldn't say often. I think it's just those little subtle things. Like little comments and things. But not actually like, nothing has ever been like blatant and in my face.

Sexism by family members?

Um, it's gotten better over the years. But my dad used to be like, cause he's old school, so he used to say just, just say sexist things. It's definitely gotten better though, so now...sometimes.

Sexism by S/O?

Mmmm...I'd say sometimes.

Final thoughts related to feminist movement...?

Um, the only thing, it's just interesting, like I wonder you know the different definitions that people have of sexism. Because, I feel like some people would be like, oh you know, sexism is when it's very blatant. But I think that, I think in the same way that all people are racist, I think it's kind of the same thing like all men are sexist. Not because they want to be or choose to be, but because they're in that position of power. They're part of the dominant group, and they benefit from sexism. Directly or indirectly. And, I don't know what you'd call it, I mean I know like people of color, when they discriminate against other people of color it's called colorism, so I don't know what you'd call it when women discriminate, or they're prejudiced against other women. And so many men bring that up, but it's like, I don't know, now I'm just getting on a whole different thing, this makes me so mad because I'm like if our whole society is sexist, I don't think we can help being sexist against each other either because that's just what we know. So like slut shaming, women slut shame so much, but it's like sexism is engrained in our society, and I think every single person is guilty of it in some way or another, just because it's entrenched in our culture.

ID # 10

White, Questioning

Overall views: Um.. I'm gonna start with improvement cause that's just the first thing that comes to my mind. The idea of intersectionality, and including women that aren't just white straight able bodied women, being able to acknowledge how being a woman intersects with other identities, that's something that we need to work on. All in all though I think we're doing a pretty good job of tackling like unconscious biases towards women, it's a lot harder than trying to push forth legislation that says like oh women deserve like equal pay or whatever but it's ,it's a lot more difficult to get those attitudes to actually change among society members, to like actually change the wage gap for example, like there are laws in place to make sure people are getting equal work for equal pay based on gender, but it's a lot of um people, women being socialized to enter fields that are lesser paid, um but it's also we're working on a lot of you know stem initiatives for women and things like that and getting people into more um, fields that aren't so, highly gendered and things like that, and then also valuing women who are in those highly gendered jobs and making sure that they're getting appropriate compensation and that their work is being valued. I think that's a really important key of what third wave feminism is supposed to be about and I think like recognizing that it's an issue and tackling it is a something that we're doing a great job of looking at, um but yeah wage gap and leadership gap and attacking unconscious biases and all of that

Movement is necessary: Definitely. Um, there's still very clear very obvious unequal treatment based on gender, um and if we you know stop fighting against that then nothing is gonna change. Um, yeah, no way this gonna be rendered obsolete in any nearby future, any day, you know, there's no foreseeable end to it

Racial minorities: Um, I believe that people are starting to be more aware of it, but it's not necessarily changing the behavior of the movement as a whole, like you see like, um, smaller groups being more aware of it and things like that and *trying* to bring in more diversity in terms of race, and talk about the intersectionality, but it's a *lot* trickier when we've got like this history of the white woman trying to get what she needs instead of bringing everyone who identifies as a woman into the fray, um and discussing that. So there's still that kind of idea of like feminism is for white women um, and people are trying to break down that image, it's really difficult again, to break it down, um, like I'm part of a club AAUW (what it stands for) and like one of our things is we're trying to get more women of color involved and bring in people that don't necessarily identify as woman either, but it's really hard to get people to realize that this isn't supposed to just be about white women, because we are still very white dominated (laughter) and it's hard to change that image.

Queer women: That one is trickier because it's not, like so much of an image, ya know like you're talking about racial minorities and things like that and bringing that intersectionality into it like black and white this is or isn't happening, um, but we don't talk about sexuality a lot, at least in the club that I'm in, and ya know forums online and things like that sometimes just struggle to talk about it and how um say lesbian women are treated differently, um, I

definitely believe they're there? But they may not feel ready to talk about it and bring it up to women who are straight, for example. So I think that, I don't think that uh like these women aren't there, I think that they're there but maybe not necessarily ready to be such a driving force in it maybe? I'm not sure if I'm describing it very well but it's like they're closeted in their own, their own spheres. cause it's still not a major issue I guess, or not a major issue, more like, (pause), not a face, surface value issue, if that makes any sense.

Possess a marginalized status: Yeah. Definitely. Um, what is it they always say? Women are like the largest minority, the majority minority I think that's the phrase? Um, we make up half of society, and because of how we're perceived in society we're treated so differently, and our perceived roles are treated differently and stuff like that and it's, so much of it now is unconscious and it's really hard to change that even with laws in place and even, there's still work we can do in legislation and things like that um bringing up sexual harassment charges is really difficult under a court of law, um, and and the majority of sexual harassment cases do involve women as victims, not all of them but the majority, so it's really difficult to say, you can't say women aren't treated differently because they're women in society. But again, it's just really hard to break down.

Perks?: There's definitely this idea of chivalry and benevolent sexism that do kinda contribute to um I guess womanhood, um, it's, it's, ya know this idea of a man always has to hold a door open for a woman or pay for the dinner, and I *would* call that a perk but b/c it is still based on this idea that women um can't do things for themselves, they don't have the money to pay for the food themselves, ya know things like that, it's still based on a system of inequality, so these perks are kind of very false and like, I strongly dislike them, I don't like to partake in them whenever I can you know, if you go on a date it's like, ya split the cost, you each pay for your own meal or whoever invited whomever first, that person pays you know so it's a little more equitable as opposed to oh the man always has to do it ya know?

Outweigh? I really don't think so because they're very small, minimal things um, and they aren't very systemic, like systemic sexism is all about, is largely about you know treatment in the workplace, like sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape, or you know wage gap, leadership gap, things like that, they're very widespread and they have stronger consequences I guess you can say? As opposed to the male always being the male like oh, hey maybe I save a little money in that aspect but on the whole women are less likely to earn as much. So it's like those, those those little perks definitely don't outweigh the disadvantages that women have.

3 months?: Um...I actually don't get out a lot (haha) I'll start with that, um, the closest that I've ever gotten was actually, you know thinking about the door open for someone? I was holding a door open for a guy, and he refused to let me hold the door open for him, he was my suitemate's bf, we were all going out to Denny's, I was just holding the door open for everyone, and he physically pushed me out of the way, so he didn't have to be the one walking in with me holding the door open, it was, it was really awful and it kinda freaked me out cause he's this big hulking guy, he's a personal trainer, and I'm not the strongest person, and he just like pushed me, and I was like I feel really powerless in this situation. And it's something little but it mean so much and it was like really difficult to like rationalize with it afterwards, and I couldn't verbalize why it bothered me so much. Um, that's probably

the closest that I've ever had really, Um but also I would like to say that it's like just because I don't personally experience it doesn't mean that I don't believe other people do in a more intimate manner, and, um largely that's who I fight for when I talk about being a feminist and taking feminist action, to fight for people who really do have drastically different treatment because they're women. Whether it because they're already in the workplace or they already get out more than I do (laughter)

3 months other people?: Um, I'm actually in a class right now called Psychology of Gender, and um our class is largely made up of women, I think we have like 8 guys and then like 30-40 women, I think it's like that, um and a lot like one of the first things we did was actually like a discussion board, like what do you think of the word feminist? And the guys, there were a couple who were like pretty indignant about this whole like gender equality doesn't really exist, they wouldn't go that far but they were like people are making a big deal out of it and are making a big deal about things that aren't really that big, and then when we brought it up in class and we're like oh yea there was some interesting stuff in the discussion board as like a very informal discussion like um the teacher brought it up, there was one guy who didn't let anyone talk, he would like interject, interrupt people a lot, actually something that I notice from a lot of guys is they don't notice when they're talking over women, and now that I think about it that has happened to me several times in the last couple of months, like having conversations with people and the guys like turn up their own volume, and start talking over you, don't let you talk. Um and I don't know how much of it is just like, there needs to be a little more assertive in their speech and things like that, but it's definitely annoying when you're trying to have a conversation, you're trying to make a point about your own opinions and they're not letting you share their opinions. So yeah, that's probably the biggest form. Well actually. I don't know if this counts, but I'm gonna talk about it anyways. So the club that I mentioned earlier, AAUW, we had elections in the fall for vice president because the VP was going on a study abroad, um I ran and then a guy ran. Now we are transitioning to gender equity movement to be a little more inclusive, and the guy who is running um his speech was basically, hey since you're transitioning to being a little more inclusive, it would be great if you could have a guy on the board! But I'd like to point out that this guy was lesser qualified, he had only been in the club for a couple of months, didn't participate a lot in the meetings, and didn't really help out at events our anything either, meanwhile I was running against him, um, I have been a part of the club for over 2 semesters, I help out at events whenever I can, you know I'm really active in the discussions and things like that, and I brought this up I was like you know I already have experience working in uh BSG club as an officer, I'm really involved in the club already and this is like my favorite thing to do is talk about these issues, um and somehow he still won? And I wouldn't exactly call that like an active sexist event but it was something that really bothered me because it's a guy using his tokenism because he's a guy in a female dominated club to try and get this leadership position that he wasn't particularly qualified for, or at least if he was qualified for he didn't talk about it at all, and it didn't come across as an impression of me, um, so it was really weird to me it's like, I thought I had it in the bag like I talked to a couple of other club members who are in my suite and they're like oh yeah! This is gonna be a great year and they're giving me advice about how to be a good club officer and stuff, and then, I didn't win. And it was really weird to have that happen, and again, I wouldn't actually call it like a directly sexist thing it's not like he was mean to me or a jerk or anything like that it was just a weird system and a weird situation that played out and to me felt...I don't wanna call it sexist...it felt unfair. I guess. Um, we were talking and it's like this was Deja vu for the 2016 election we've got an overqualified democratic female presidential

candidate and then we have reality TV star, like regardless of your opinions of them one of them is definitely more qualified for the job than the other, and yet the guy won, and there's so many things at play and you can't just call it sexism, but you definitely know there was an influence there. So yeah, I just really drew away from the original question I can't remember what it was (haha) (restate) and I brought it back to me, oops (haha). But yeah that big one about like men talking over women in discussions that are actually supposed to be centered on women? That was a huge thing in my psych of gender class.

So would you say like a few?

Like how many times it happened?

Yeah, there was like 1 guy, there were like 2 or 3 women talking and he'd be like "but this is my experience" and like doing that like 2 or 3 times in class and I was like, I appreciate that you have ideas and your ideas are valid I can't say that they aren't but you need to let everyone have a turn to speak and you can't just jump in like that especially when we're trying to talk about an issue that isn't the most relevant to you. You know? It's like, yeah, I was ya it's not terribly relevant to him.

Strangers: By strangers? Again, I don't get out a lot so really not a lot, um, it's yeah it's usually like people I'm familiar with that do stuff that's like hey, that's not particularly...I don't know not particularly fair, I guess, is how I would describe it

Family members?: Family members? Sigh. I'd say rarely, but I do sometimes get like this benevolent sexism from my dad who's like doesn't necessarily, doesn't wanna let me hold the door open for him, (haha) like he just wants to baby me so that may just be him being a bit of a father but that's the major thing. My grandmother has very interesting views on feminism, and I wouldn't call her sexist towards me but she's like, she's implied some things about me and my behaviors that made me uncomfortable I guess? Um, like she's assuming I'm gonna settle down and get married at some point. Even though, You know, she got married and had a divorce, much much later and now she's like independent and working on her own, I don't know I would have thought her work ethic would have inspired her to inspire other young girls specifically her granddaughters to be independent, especially because of her experience with marriage, and yet she still seems to hold this very conservative view of marriage, and like it's still essential, and you know a woman has a role in the home and the woman has to fulfill it. and again she doesn't like specifically tell me that I should be doing these things but she says you need to pay along with the system in order to get anywhere and it's like I'm not gonna get anywhere being a housewife ya know (haha) um and she didn't really get anywhere being a housewife either, so it's really weird seeing that, that kinda difference in the way that she has lived her life and the way that she tells us to live our lives. But yeah. Those two are the biggest ones.

SO?: I've only dated once, it didn't end badly, um and usually, it ended up him being like very benevolently sexist and like insisting on paying for the meals and taking me places and things like that, and that was actually one of the reasons I was really uncomfortable with it, and it was like first of all I'm not even sure I like guys, and second of all this guy's like being like overly personal and affectionate and like kinda trying to prove to himself to me by being like very chivalrous and it was, it made me uncomfortable. But again that's like benevolent sexism, not like open outright hostile sexism, um, and he was indignant when I suggested

going Dutch, like I was like let's just split the bill, or since you invited me sure maybe you can pay for it but I still feel uncomfortable with it, um, that was like the closest it ever got was this he didn't want to have, or, he didn't want to have to let me pay and it was like, uhhhhhh that's not how I like things to work (haha) and he got uncomfortable too and it was like huh this is a sign this isn't working (haha)

So sometimes then or?

Yeah? Sometimes would make sense because the one time that I dated it did happen.

Final thoughts?

Hm....I'm used to living in the suburbs which are suburbs of Rochester too which are pretty liberal, um coming here to school where a lot of kids are actually from rural towns was really eye opening for me, cause it's, not everyone has been exposed to this idea of feminist, feminism, this idea of *sexism* and like how it, it, it how it, how it permeates through society. Like a lot of people, if they learn about feminism it's like historically, like the suffragists were the ones women who wanted the right to vote and like that's about where it stops, um, and it never occurred to me that there are people up there that don't want to be called feminists because, there's a whole bunch of baggage with that label. And so, my roommate, or not my roommate, one of my suitemates this semester, when we come back from our club meetings, and we talk about things we talked about in these club meetings, she got really uncomfortable because she was never exposed to these ideas as a student in high school, or any younger than that, um, and it was really weird to me, it was like, I, it never would have occurred to me that someone else didn't have this exposure, they didn't have this understanding of how sexism works and how it looks to, these days, summand it was really weird and eye-opening I guess to see how other people view the feminist movement, the gender equality movement, um, and you know I try to take it upon myself like, oh well these are current issues, and she still struggled with this, um, especially because she's very, I wouldn't say she, she considers herself moderate, and she definitely wants to be the housewife, the child-rearer, and she's uncomfortable because she thinks that women is all about advancing women who um only want to to break gender roles, I guess, yeah that's the best way to put it. She's used to feminists being just women who want to break gender roles, or, um, radical women who are like we don't need men. Um, and so one of the interesting, like it had never occurred to me that being a feminist was controversial, um, and again like until I was part of this club, it, it, and when we brought it up it's like who considers themselves a feminist? And we talked about changing our club name to Gender Equity Movement to make it a little more inclusive, and to make it more open and inviting to people of all genders, um, and this is like exposure that I've never had before cause I'm like everyone's a feminist, unless you don't believe that women deserve to be equal, and being exposed to so many different viewpoints that weren't wrong, that just didn't align with mine, um, and I struggled with it I was like why wouldn't anyone be a feminist and, I guess what I'm trying to say is it's like, it always surprised me that being a feminist is controversial, and all the nuances that label has, and all the nuances that um the argument for gender equality have and all the ways that women who do want to advance gender equality still disagree. But yea, it's like really interesting having some great conversations with these people who don't agree with the things I agree with and it's probably the best thing I ever did was going

to college and joining a club like this and then taking a psych of gender class and then talking to people who have different viewpoints, and it's like, it's really interesting. So yeah.

ID #11

White, Hetero

I would identify myself as a feminist I think it's a strong organization of women who advocate for women on the behalf of women to create a system of equality not to overpower one sex or the other, it's just to get an equal footing and an equal standing in a society that has been historically unequal of the side of the male. Something that I think they're doing well is really getting a conversation started and really taking action, they don't just leave it at a conversation, I think a lot of feminists really do take that extra step and um they do get things going, like within the last 100 years you've seen an incredible switch from like a male dominated society to something that is in a lot of aspects almost equal, but I think the feminist movement as of late has maybe spread itself a little too thin. Um, it tries to, I just think that's something it can work on, is it just tries to focus on smaller topics, and like the whole a house divided can't stand, um we need more like of one like, big thing to tackle, and then, or one or two big things instead of like 17 little ones. So maybe that's something it can work on.

So you mean like, too many, like too many, there are too many issues?

I mean, they're all issues that need to be addressed, but since there are so many that need to be addressed, they can't be adequately addressed, just too many things to fight for, so I don't know, maybe just focusing on one or two major topics at a time can help like push the movement further, if that makes sense.

Yes, the movement is necessary.

Racial minorities: um..to an extent. I think racial minorities often get overlooked, because like females often get overlooked in a male dominated society, minorities often get overlooked in a white dominated society. So I think that to an extent all females benefit at some level but I don't think that minorities benefit as much as they need to, because they're typically the group that needs the most help and the most push, because they've been left behind so much, so I don't, I don't know, I think there's a, definitely a disconnect between feminism, of like the majority and the minorities

Queer: Pause. I'm not sure, I haven't really heard much on the behalf of queer women? Um I'm not sure if it's because it's a relatively new movement within the feminist society because 50 years ago they didn't have that opportunity, but I think, I don't know maybe I just haven't done enough research into how they're affected.

Marginalized status: pause. to an extent, yes.

Elaborate? Um...I think a lot of it has to do with your status and your race. Um, I've been like, so like I grew up in a small, lower-middle class to impoverished class society of 99%

white people, so I myself have not experienced too much to date about like um marginalization, because like, the men in my town are like grow up to like respect like their mothers and their sisters and it's a lot of like, manners but I graduated in a class of like 80 kids, so like coming here, I've honestly experienced more marginalization as a woman and I've seen more marginalization toward other women. And I've heard more experiences of marginalization from women by men by I've seen marginalization by race by gender by sexual orientation like I've never experienced it before and I think that's because of the circumstances I grew up in and I think it's definitely opened my eyes, I think, I didn't really, I always was involved in like bringing like strong women like uplifting other women and I've always really admired like the strong women who like can stand up for what they believe in, but in my town that wasn't a big problem because there wasn't anyone to really marginalize. So like coming here I've like experienced why there is still such a need for feminism.

Perks: Pause. I'm not...sure. The only real perks that I can think of stem from men benefiting as well. Like it sounds dumb but like women typically get into like house parties at college but that's at the benefit of the man. And women get free drinks at bars, but it's to the benefit of a man. The only real perks that I can think of typically involve the benefit of man. Outweigh negative aspects: Yes. I don't think that the perks that I've really listed really count as perks.

Oh so they don't outweigh them?

No.

Past 3 months: Cannot think back that far. I can think of 2 instances in the last, like, bit of my memory that I can think of being discriminated against personally. But I also can't really think back very far.

3 months, other women: Pause. A lot more. I don't think I could give you like a solid number.

Sexism by strangers: Often.

By family members: Pause What's the scale again?...Never. Um, I'd say in between often and never because I have some extended family that's a little out there.

S.O: Never.

Final thoughts:

Um, I think just being aware that minority women are typically the group that need the most help from this movement and that they're typically the group that's least remembered by not only this movement but by every movement. Um, I understand that I don't experience nearly as much sexism or objectification or marginalization b/c I'm white, and I sound like I'm tooting my own horn, but I'm intelligent so I can stand up for myself, but I know some coworkers, this is like the example that is popping into my mind, um but I can think of a couple of examples of coworkers that experience it like times 10 because they're not the same race and they don't have the same access to education that I do, and they can't stand up for themselves as well as I can, they also don't have as good as a support background, like they don't have as solid of a family or as strong of like a significant other and I think that's where most of my problem lies with the whole thing.

That there's not enough support for minority women? (Nodded her head)

ID # 12

White, Bisexual

I ID as a feminist, doing well with moving towards intersectionality, but I think white women need to be more conscious of the struggles of queer, women of color, and everything like that, we're still working towards being actually intersectional. People outside of the movement need to understand better what the movement is about. Like, it's not about women dominating men. (Lack of actual understanding about the movement)

The movement is absolutely necessary.

I don't think the movement has been helping racial minorities. Like I said, I think we're moving towards that, but in general, no I don't think it has been.

I think it's been helping queer women more than WOC, but again not enough.

Women today possess a marginalized status.

Yeah, there are perks that come along with being a woman. Less likely to be arrested, less, like, people think it's funny if a woman beats a man. But, very few.

No, I don't think these perks outweigh...

Past 3 months felt discriminated against: Um...I'm not too sure...I'm sure it's happened a few times, or at least if it wasn't a direct discrimination to me, a discrimination to women in general.

Past 3 months other women discriminated against: Um...a pretty decent amount actually. Like we're on the rugby team...I'm on the rugby team rather...and we don't get as much gym time as the men's team, they respect the men's team a lot more than women basically.

Past 3 months sexism by strangers: umm....sometimes

Past 3 months sexism by family members: Often.

Past 3 months by S.O.: Often.

Final thoughts: Um....no, just that we need to do better on being conscious of intersectionality, and on our privilege within the movement, if we have privilege