

This essay will discuss the history of the feminist movement within western society and the sociological theories relating to these issues, it will also take into consideration the inequality between men and women and the oppression of women within our society. It will also look at gender roles, the gender pay gap, employment stereotypes and opportunism, the emotional differences between men and women, the stereotype of a man's role within our society and then this essay will include a present tense of the conclusion of feminism.

First wave feminism was aimed at the equality gap between men and women, in the late nineteenth century. Women wanted to abolish the differences between both genders due to the horrendous oppression of the patriarchal world against people who were female. The patriarchal system means a world that is overall run and controlled by men and an example of this would be that men had control over women's reproduction rights, ruling workforce, and their education. **(Humm, M. 1992).**

The first wave was deemed a radical and thrilling part of history, the feminist movement looked at the fact that women were objects and often victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. In the book called *The Second Sex* (1949), it had a very strong view and it caused a debate on the individual, materialism, and politics. The first wave made history and it had a dramatic impact on Britain and the United States, it was represented by women of different ages and economical status such as, old, young, wealthy, and poor women. They gave a positive view of the feminist movement. It gave a positive social view in which included the old, the young and the wealthy feminists of that time period. **(Humm, M. 1992).**

When the first wave of feminism was introduced to the United Kingdom, the movement had the support of The Women's Social and Political Union (W.S.P.U.) and The Women's Guild **(Humm, M, 1992. p11)**. WSPU and The Women's Guild hoped and wanted women to be fully equal to their male counterparts in such places as, higher education, the workforce, within the household and their civil rights. This came into effect in (1928) within the equal entry into the affair act for professionals at higher education. A famous feminist Simone De Beauvoir was a writer, strong intellectual, existentialist philosopher. She was also a strong political activist, feminist and a social theorist. The skills Beauvoir (1908) had, stem from philosophy. It will emphasise an individual's sense of existence, freedom of their choices and their way of life, throughout a person's life, it will become apparent what life is, and what is required to live in

an unpredictable world. The person will attempt to make a conscious and rational decision for example, pursuing education to gain employment in a job that suits the current economical state. **(Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. 2000. p 96)**. It can be argued that the first feminist movement ended with her and then the second wave of feminism was introduced in the (1960s) **(Humm, M. 1992 p95)**.

The Second Wave of Feminism has evolved a number of different issues, in which are very political, the focus of second wave feminism refers to the rights that a woman has over her body, mainly the reproduction rights. Additionally, the movement had a radical campaign on the theories on the different gender stereotypes that play into the patriarchal society at the time. The basis of second wave feminism is from the political system of the reproduction rights, however, it shared some of their goals with the first wave feminist movement in which has political factors for example, legal, economic and educational right for women. However, the first and second wave of feminism will both share view of the oppression of women and its base route within a women's sexuality however, within the second wave feminism had an incredible influence in feminist art into the mainstream, such as the famous art piece called the dinner party **(Netflix, 2018)** which caused incredible controversial arguments towards this particular piece of art, the controversy it received was from the patriarchal society at the time. **(Humm, M. 1992)**. even more so within the United states in contrast, Humm (1992) stated that Freuds series encouraged the freedom within women's rights. This occurred between 1920s to 1930s, the famous theory that linked to the nuclear family, although, the famous feminist Dworkin (2013) had incredibly strong arguments against the nuclear family and anti-women systems were in place, a current example of this is pornographic images, videos, the media, religious groups and organisations that are strongly against a woman's choice to have an abortion. However, even certain parts of the feminist movement itself have conflicting aspects such as, the radical feminist movement which splintered off from the goal that they were thriving for in the first place. An example of one of point is relating to radical feminism, they believe that women who have a lesbian sexual orientation are true feminists. In contrast, to women who engage in a heterosexual relationship, who they believe can not be a true feminist due to their reliance on males. This is very controversial in itself towards the original feminist movement, the women's movement is equality for all, rather than domination of the opposite sex. **(Humm, M. 1992)**.

Third wave feminism was founded mid (1990s) by generation X is who were born (1960s – 1970s). It was during the time of media, culture, and economic change during the time which these issues were highlighted The Third wave feminists had strong criticism against the same way that second wave of feminism received, they felt that the second wave of feminism had unfinished work which meant that the aims for women were not met entirely **(Chris Bobel & Judith Lorber, 2010).**

The most recent wave of feminism is the fourth wave which roughly began in (2012). The fourth wave feminism aims to target sexual harassment, body shaming and rape culture for women in contemporary society rather than the previous generations of feminism. it aimed for true equality between men and women, fourth wave feminism targets to have superiority over the male sex rather than having true gender equality between both sexes **(Chris Bobel, Judith Lorber, 2010).**

The nuclear family is made up of a man which is the head of the household and or family, then a woman will be a housewife that will be reliant on the breadwinner. The man will provide her a with allowance (this is not for all cases, only some), food, shelter and an overall way of living in terms of costs and accommodation. Then often will have two children roughly a boy and girl that will follow the gender stereotypes that may restrict them in future life and career choices. In particular, in that era, men in contrast to their other counterpart will take on more danger led jobs such as. roofers, soldier and much more physical demanding roles that require them to not spend much time at home due to working long hours. As a result of working certain jobs and hours, it will have an effect on the man's body and his mental health for financial gain. **(Hartnett, O, Boden, G, Fuller, M. 1979).**

However, when it came to (1960s) there was an increase in the divorce rates that has published and the overall birth rate outside of the marriage has risen. The increase in divorce rates and births outside of marriage is due to the amount of lone parent families within western civilisation. This also has a link to women who were married with children who entered the workforce ideally working as secretaries or cleaners, this has a strong link to the glass ceiling theory **(Hartnett, O, Boden, G, Fuller, M. 1979).** The theory of the glass ceiling is when a woman has employment and aims to reach a high-power position, but they will never achieve the job role that they desire because they are female. It has been stated by many authors that

when women entered the workforce, it has a direct effect on the nuclear family. In the United Kingdom, western civilisation had reformed and since then the idea of the nuclear family has now been eliminated as the most common and desired family within society, for example, in (1990) the United Kingdom, the United States and the Caribbean, had discovered that 20% of households are more likely to have a women as the head of the household or in older terms the breadwinner, it has changed the family mould forever. **(Bryson, V. 1999) (Hartnett, O, Boden, G, Fuller, M. 1979)**

Discrimination is when a business, establishment or even a person will treat another human being, a group of people differently usually in a much more harsh and serious way because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age and their gender. A case example of this would be when a woman in the (1970) wanted to have more value in the workplace and have a better career, In which she was restricted by her career path by her male counterparts who placed her in a category of usually as a cleaner or secretary because at the time that was more of a female dominated position **(Cambridge dictionary, no date).**

Men are expected to work more physically demanding roles such as roofing, building, and oil rigging. The workers of these professions are more likely to have suicidal thoughts and are at risk of developing or worsening mental health conditions. However, women are now taking on more job roles that were previously dominated by men, such as, members of parliament (MP) Theresa May is in a high political position, she is the current prime minister in Britain. It also includes door staff, soldiers, pro athletes, and engineers. A current example of this would be that the construction project that planned and built the Trump Tower in New York was led by a woman. It is important to note that in society today, not all women want to take on a maternal role, in this day and age British women have a choice of what career they want, as they have rights over their bodies for example, abortion. **(Mary Ann Danowitz Sagaria, 2007) (The Guardian, 2017)**

The gender pay gap is disclosed as the key differences between the average hourly pay rate, which does not take into consideration the difference job roles to a job title for example, the amount of overtime required differs due to the hierarchy in the workforce, women and men are not viewed as equal when receiving payments from employment. Four percent of the gender pay gap clarifies that women will earn four percent less on the hour on average than their male counterparts (Office for National Statistics, 2018). However, referring to the four percent pay

gap, the Office for National Statistics states that the gap will govern that women earn four percent more than men on average (Office for National Statistics, 2018). Additionally, the gender pay gap decreased during the time of (2017 – 2018), the results of the pay gap was 8.6% for full-time employees, but the gap for individuals who are on zero-hour contracts or were employed part time was 17.9%. Although, figures have shown that women are taking on part time employment to manage to pay their bills, look after their children and engage in their personal life for example, working part time as a cleaner, common shift patterns are very early in the morning or late at night. However, a job as a cleaner may have lower wages, and contracted hours which results in lower wages for individuals with particular circumstances. **(Haralambos & Holborn, 2000. P116)**

Therefore, the gender pay gap has very strong arguments against it, in (1970) the Equal Pay Act (1970) was introduced, it was the first piece of legislation that was made regarding the pay gap in the United Kingdom. The law gave the right for men and women to have a right to equal pay for the same role, with the exact same hourly rate. **(legislation.gov.uk, no date)**

It is important to highlight, when the statistics are published, they do not take into consideration that individual pursue different life choices or circumstances for example, men or women who want to take on more family orientated roles or a job that may deemed dangerous.

Then, in (2010) the Equality Act came in force, it is the most recent reform of legalisation referring to gender. The act brings over one hundred and sixteen different parts of legislation into one overall act. This enables people to access information simply, and it is easier to understand. Additionally, the act will give a strong legal scaffolding, it aims to protect the right of the individual, it will strengthen, evolve and shape an equal society for everyone to receive equal opportunities no matter the circumstances. **(Equality and human Right commission, 2017) (Gov.uk, 2015)**

If we look at society, it is apparent that it is not completely equal to the opposite sex, in such scandals as the up-skirting scandal in which a vital piece of legislation, initially, it was blocked by certain members of parliament, in which represent the United Kingdom. thankfully, it is due to come into force this April in (2019) After an eighteen-month strong campaign, this piece of legislation is working against this negative behaviour about women. It will give the police the power to arrest people who commit this crime. **(BBC News, 2017)**

We can also see that female genital mutilation (FGM), is still being implemented across the world and within the United Kingdom. In society, we need stronger legislations and policy to stop this happening to young women. Additionally, for feminists of all branches of this movement to speak up about the horrendous acts that happens to women in certain places. Also, we need to educate men on how to treat women and exist co-operatively (NHS, 2016).

The Equality Act (2010) encourages individuals of both genders to achieve their dreams regardless of their gender. in (2013) Ronda Rousey became a household name in combat sports. (UFC, 2017) The main female athletes were being equally represented on the same platform as each other, rather than the sportswear women, who do not receive the same of level of representation and coverage in comparison to the male counterpart for example, in places as football, rugby and boxing. Additionally, some of the most famous athletes are women and they sell the most tickets. They are Chris Santos cyborg, Ronda Rosie, Amanda Nunez and Holly Home these are some household names who sell out stadiums and are usually headlining that are female. The main card Ultimate Fighting Championship. **(The Sun, 2017) (U.F.C, 2017)**

Bowlby's (1990) attachment theory is the study of the attachment that happens within our young Bowlby (1990) states that a child will attach itself to a parental figure in order to survive, he believed that mental health and behavioural problems have a direct link to a child's early hood development. He believes that children are biologically programmed to latch onto a parental figure. Children are born with a tendency to show characteristic behaviours it is also known as social releasers which will guarantee closeness and interaction with ideally the mother child will show how they need a parental figure to survive the characteristics that they will show is usually crawling, smiling, crying, laughing and communicating in verbal and non-verbal ways. **(EBSCO, 2016)**

Bowlby (1990) stated that the eternal separation and deprivation within a child's early stage of their life will have a negative effect on a child's emotional life, he also stated this particular stage as affectionless psychopathy. Bowlby (1990) stated that this condition will have a lack of the emotional development that will be Characterised by a lack of for others and will also include the lack of guilt and the lack to form a true meaningful and overall lasting relationship to another person. **(EBSCO, 2016)**

In comparison to the era when the women's movement was first introduced, to the 21st century, society has become more equal in today's world, such as, the pay gap being eliminated in Britain, women have control of their reproductive systems, they have the right vote, they have the right to work, they have rights within marriage, they have freedom of job roles and they have broken through the glass ceiling theory; the professional combat sport athletes such as Ronda Rousey who inspired a whole generation of combat athletes male and female. In previous generations, women lived in a patriarchal society, in today's society that is not the case. We have a female Prime Minister, Theresa May, Scotland also had a female leader of the Scotland National Party (SNP) throughout this essay, women have broken the glass ceiling and freed themselves from the shackles of their male oppressors. Referring to employment opportunities, a woman lives in a world where they would gain employment regardless of their gender, but because of their skills and talent that they bring to the table and the job role itself. As we can see that the feminist movement has exposed the sexual exploitation of women by men, such as the Harvey Weinstein cases, me-too movement and the case of Bill Cosby. To conclude, males and females are all people, humans make mistakes, one gender should not have the control and power in society, two wrongs do not make a right, all parts of society should be equal for men and women. All we can do is value, accept and learn from our past experiences and behaviour for a better future for all.

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