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BACHILLERATO EN CIENCIAS

MONOGRAPH

**FEMINISM AS SOCIAL MOVEMENT ON THE 21ST CENTURY IN LATIN
AMERICA; CONTEXT, CONSEQUENCES AND IMPACT IN SOCIETY**

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SUMMARY

The following monograph work, is the history of feminism, it's evolution through time, where and when the first feminist ideas where founded, what type of feminism there are. It explains why feminism is still needed in the misogynistic culture, how Latin America still has chauvinistic thoughts, it helps to understand how, even though we have rights, there are some of them that are violated by countries, why religion is an excuse to denigrate women, and how feminism has made an impact in an Ecuadorian actress.

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INTRODUCTION

The following investigation has the purpose of evidencing feminism in its social context, through different statistics and information, presenting feminism as a good thing instead of the bad reputation it has gained in the past years.

In the first chapter it will be explained how feminism started and its evolution in history. How it has change laws in order to give women the rights they deserve. It gives a wide analysis of its origin. Also to give a clear idea of the true concept of feminism and help understand its essence.

The second chapter is a guide to place the feminist movement in the global context, what laws have feminism helped change, what countries are the more equal in the globe, where women have more parliamentary representation, but it also gives a map to what countries are very low on equal matters or don't have equality at all, such as it is evidence in Middle East countries.

The third chapter helps understand the direct consequences of feminism in daily life of women around the world, what are women doing in the name of feminism, it includes an investigation made by reliable sources of the Harvey Weinstein case, it includes the origin of the #MeToo movement.

CHAPTER I

FEMINISM

The purpose of this chapter is to try to give a clear idea about what feminism really is. To be able to understand its history and its evolution through time, getting to the place where is now, and its place nowadays, how it keeps improving woman's life. In addition, how have women been able to identify with it and not only how every day all around the world more women decide to call themselves feminists, but also how this ideal that as first were seen as the destruction of the social pyramid brought rights to the other half of the world population that weren't even allowed to work.

1.1 What is feminism?

Feminism is the political, economic and social ideology that women and men are equal. Even though the name feminist as itself wasn't adopted until several centuries later, there are a few sources that affirm that the Greek philosopher Plato, 24 centuries ago, argued for the political and sexual equality of women as an example Christine de Pizan, a French author was the first woman to denounce misogyny.

1.1.1 Definition

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, they define feminism as: “the political, economic and social equality of the sexes”, nevertheless we cannot adjust ourselves to just one definition, in other circumstances and for other people, feminism is defined as an unnecessary social movement that aims to the superiority of women instead of just the equality for them. In conclusion, feminism as a practical theory is the human believe that both men and women should and must be equal. Feminism is also known as the women’s movement or womanism but the most famous term is the feminist one.

1.1.2 Origin

The origin of feminism is really hard and difficult to trace mainly because feminism as a social movement has evolved throughout time and there is no main date nor place where you can define its creation. In addition, it is considering that fights for women’s rights started around the 18th century (1789 – 1790) with the French revolution and the ideal that, if men were fighting for their legal right to vote without the need of being part of any type of high class family or being part of the monarchy, why were women being excluded to just a place in the house by raising kids or cooking, therefore women join the fight for the right to vote and to decide who was going to rule them.

1.2 How has feminism evolved through time?

Putting feminism in a chronological way, feminism has been divided in 5 different eras or “waves” that have all been determined by important goal achievements. The first feminism known was called protofeminist.

Protofeminist has no initial era but rather to gather around all the feminist events before the 20th century and before it was called feminism, for example in the protofeminist there are statements or speeches from the Plato era where he discusses the role of woman on the ancient Greece and he believes that woman should be educated and should work along with man.

Also being part of the protofeminist wave, they have the early efforts in the middle age era to improve women's status during the early Islamic reforms, which allowed women to have more participation on marriage, divorce and inheritance, for everyone surprise, women's were not allowed to do this in the western culture until several years later.

There are even documents dating 1622 written by Marie de Gournay that have very solid feminist statements that were considered revolutionary at its time.

After the protofeminist wave it appears the first wave in feminism, dating from the 19th to the 20th century. This wave focused mainly in getting legal rights, being able to vote, female education rights and the abolition of gender double standards, also known as the suffragette movement, although this wave of feminism is very close-related with the abolitionist movement. The term "first wave" was accepted in March 1968 by Martha Lear. In the first wave feminism, women focused mainly on "de facto" inequalities. nowadays feminism is considering an all-inclusive movement even though at first feminism was only led by white middle-class women. However, feminism at the time was only considered an illustrated political ideology. During this period of time, women also got the right to custody their children during divorces. Even though many rights

were granted in this time period to women, there were still big gender gaps. As a matter of fact, women in Switzerland didn't gain the right to vote until 1971. Husbands still had a sense of ownership over their wives and in many European countries they had to pronounce a vote of obedience during the wedding. For example, it was not until 1965 women in France weren't allowed to work without their husbands signed permission, for instance marital rape did not exist because it was a man's right to access freely to his woman body. In Latin America women's rights revolution started in countries like Nicaragua, but even though there were riots all over Latin America, they didn't experience true progress neither legal nor ideological.

After the so called "first wave feminism", in around the 1960's – 1970's, feminism took strength and became one of the largest and most important movement in the United States (mainly). It appeared with two different origins and ideals but with the same ideological stream of equality. The first one was the equal rights tendency that derived directly from the World War II and lasted around 20 years. As said before, feminism is a global movement that spreads faster in the Western world rather than in the East, and it aims to more than just the right to vote and it became more amplified with how women were treated not just in the society but also in the domestic area and why they were isolated to just that scene and restricted them from participating in economic and political matters. As a result the more obvious difference between first and second wave feminism is that while the first one focused mainly in the suffragette

movement the second one aimed to a much broadened area such as sexuality, reproductive rights, birth control, illegal inequalities and the *de facto* inequalities.

The third wave feminism starts around the 1990's and a lot feminists consider it the present wave of feminism though many others think that there is a fourth that started around 2012. Third wave feminism is the result of the women born around 1960's – 1970's (generation X) and in difference of second wave feminism the third wave focuses on individualism and diversity and ought to redefine what a feminist is and what the feminist movement is about. For this reason, is in the third wave feminism that the expression or term intersectionality is introduced to the feminist vocabulary which refers to the believe that women have different layers of oppression and this at the same time has different factors that interfere with the equity that the movement aims such as race, social class and sexual orientation. Therefore, is in the third wave feminism that women start analyzing their privileges toward other women and the situations they live on their daily life basis. As said before is in this wave were women also start focusing on trying to abolish the gender roles stereotypes imposed by society through the years. As a conclusion of the third wave feminism is in this period of time where new feminist theories are brought to mind such as womanism (very co related with black feminism), transfeminism, lesbofeminism and postmodern feminism.

Lastly, fourth wave feminism which is thought to be brought to live in 2012 and in close relationship with beginning of social media. The main goal of fourth wave

feminism is the justice for women and the fight against sexual harassment, to show the rape culture we have grown into, the violence against women, the misogyny of social media and the analysis that in plain 21st century there is still the social thought that women are less than men. The most important thing in the fourth wave feminism is that is completely managed through the internet and most important through social media apps such like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, etc. The main issues in the fourth wave is focused on sexual harassment on the streets and in the work place, how little girls are harassed by their teachers or people inside their close family circle. It also has great strength in the internet because it helps spread information like girl and women being murder everywhere, in addition this wave has also brought the most sounded cases in the world like the Harvey Weinstein accusations or the sexual harassment committed by Bill Cosby it also brought the #MeToo movement that has taken a big strength by letting women tell their stories about how, when and where they were sexually harassed. Famous actresses and activists have joined the so called fourth wave feminism like Emma Watson, Jennifer Lawrence, Laura Btes, Meryl Streep, etc.

1.3 Feminism nowadays

As implied before, we are living in the middle of the fourth wave feminism that includes much wider topics, like the misogyny girls have to be put on every part of their lives. How female bodies are sexualized even when they are just babies. Social constructions and why women have to do things males are not obligated to (like shaving or having to wear high

heels to be considered someone serious). Feminism nowadays is still fighting for rights we don't have; like in Latin America the option to have good quality sexual education so we are able to decide over our own bodies. Nowadays feminism has stopped being just a social movement and it has become something much more political, even though feminism has many good things, like sorority (which is the female believe that other women are not competition but sisters to one another in this movement) it has also been quite the media spotlight if feminism is still needed in the actual times. In the present day introducing yourself as a feminist can bring you a lot of trouble because of the stigma that has been built around it.

CHAPTER 2

FEMINISM IN GLOBAL CONTEXT (LAWS, SURVEYS AND STATISTICS)

The following chapter is to evidence where feminism places itself all around the world, what laws around the world have helped to improve women's rights therefore to show what people believe to be women's rights and lastly which are the laws in Latin America that have been included in order to protect the articles that were written specifically for women. Especially, the necessity to evidence which countries have more equal governments in which both men and women have the same number of women and men, likewise how these governments bet for equality have helped the girls and women's that live in those countries. As well as the statistics of the less equal countries and the consequences on the daily life. This includes what constitutions has registered the equality and the impact of feminism in the world nowadays.

2.1 Laws all around the world that encourage women's rights.

Since the first-wave feminism, and the riots that the movement has caused for the fight of equal rights, governments have been obligated to reform their laws in order to preserve these rights that they had achieve. As an example according to Parashar (1992):

While the Constitution of India guarantees equality as a Fundamental Right, four decades after the improving the constitution religious laws, many women assure that discrimination against women still apply. Ostensibly supported by the constitutional right to freedom of conscience, guaranteed as a Fundamental Right . The Constitution fails to resolve whether the religious nature of these laws prevents a secular State from interfering with them, or ,whether the personal nature of these laws as distinct from territorial laws

makes them immune to State control. The ambiguity permits contradictory claims and permits the state to act inconsistently to essentially similar claims of different communities.

As mentioned in the article before, laws in India have been changed in order to preserve and obtain women's rights but it can also be noticed that while they have applied laws for gender equity they have also face religious thoughts of misogyny that can't be debated in order to preserve the liberty of speech and the liberty of believe. Not only India but several countries in the world have tried to introduce into their constitution or federal laws, the equity of the sexes, many have succeed and many more have failed, this happens mainly because of retrograde thinking. For this reason in the 2008 Montecristi Constitution in Ecuador it was reaffirmed that gender crimes like domestic violence, femicide and rape were going to be severely punished and they also proposed several actions to prevent this situations to occur. Not only Ecuador and India have had a bet in equality but countries like Iceland, that for nine years in a row "has held the top spot in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index has now closed more than 87% of gender gap".

2.1.1 Women's rights

According to C. Bunch (1990) " a significant number of the world's population are routinely subject to torture, starvation, mutilation, humiliation and even murder, just because

they are female” this means that women are being oppressed just because they are females, the conception of women’s rights is the entitlement claimed for both girls and women and that started around the 19th century with the suffragette movement during the French revolution. As said by H. Clinton in 1995 “Humans rights are women’s rights and women’s rights are human rights” it cannot be ignored that over and over again these supposed called rights have been violated by different organizations, governments, politicians, etc. For example, women weren’t allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia until June 24th, 2018 whereas men have been allowed to drive ever since cars were invented, not only this shows inequality but also the information that in Middle East countries, women are not to be held any charge in public office, this violation of women’s rights it’s not just evidence in Middle Eastern countries but also in the European Parliament, where last year (2017) the Polish representative, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, said in a very heated argument, “women should and must earn less because they are smaller, weaker and less intelligent than men”. All of these acts can be accountable as a violation of human rights, but because is inflicted to women only and just because they are female it has been called a violation to women’s rights as a human being. Quoting C. Adichie (2014) “the higher you go, the fewer women there are”.

2.1.2 Specific laws all around the world

As a result of the different movements and riots that took over the world in the beginning of the 21st century, different countries were forced to create and approve different

laws that ensured women were treated with equity. For this reason Mexico in the year 2006 emitted the general law for equality between men and women that had several articles like the next one; “to guarantee the equity of opportunities, through the adoption of politics, programs, projects and compensatory tools like affirmative actions”

Besides Mexico in 2006, Cabo Verde approved in 2011 a new law against gender based violence and with the help of the United Nations they trained police officers, judges, lawyers, etc to evidence where domestic violence had taken place and how to act against it.

In Central America, legal reformations were made in order to classify femicide as a criminal act.

2.2 Countries with more equal governments

According to the analysis made in the Georgetown Institute for women, peace and security of the 153 countries out of 194, there are five countries that lead in the equity of the sexes.

Iran has accomplished equity in financial inclusion with almost 9 out of 10 women having access to financial accounts, but even though they have great results in the financial side, Iran still has around 23 restrictions on women such as having to ask for permission in order to access a passport, not being able to choose where to live and they can't be assured equal payment for equal work.

Norway is the second most equal country in the world, women that live there having access to telephone service, financial services, healthcare and one of the lowest statistics on intimate partner violence.

In conclusion, it can be evidenced that the most equal governments can be found in the European continent with very few exclusions, as it is the case of Canada, that has achieved very high equality in education, and parliamentary representation.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

As evidenced in all the document, feminism has brought various consequences in women's life. It has given them the right to vote, to work and in the past years it has given them the opportunity to decide about over their own bodies. However, feminism has also brought changes in both men and women thoughts. It is the present generation that has set a precedent in which the aim for equality goes further. Now it is normal to see women marching on March 8, Women's Day, set by the United Nations in 1975, asking for rights they still don't have. Setting these records, it is necessary to know what are the social consequences that feminism has left behind?

3.1 Social effects of feminism in women

The most noticeable achievement is letting women vote, afterwards is letting women around the world get a good quality education, a thing it is still not achieve in middle east countries as evidenced by the example of Malala Yousafzai, who in 2012 was a victim of the Taliban, which tried to commit an assassination attempt against her because she was attending school. Later on, feminism brings to spotlight the reproductive rights that women must have. Another thing can be noticed as a social effect, the rise up of women against, what is to believe, a heteropatriarchal society.

Women all around the world are fighting back street harassment. But this is not the end, feminism in Latin America has brought to evidence the lack of talk about important matters

such as abortion. According to M. Montaña (2018) “ It is a necessity to make a secure space to talk about abortion. Right now, how many women are having illegal abortions” Feminism has opened a Pandora box to certain subjects that were left behind, like non-consensual incest that has as a result unwanted pregnancy. In England two thirds of registered rapes were committed by a close relative or a close family friend. In Philippines there were more than two thousand seventy cases of incest between 2011 and 2016, this is equal to more than one a day, 99% of the victims were girls. A study made in South Africa in 2016 determined that 30% of sexual abuse were committed by a family member.

Lévi-Strauss (1949) claims that “the only norm we share with many of the societies around the world is the decision of not mating with our own descendance. The regulation of our sexual behavior, differences human beings. The rules of coexistence beyond natural limits is what we call culture”.

3.2 Has feminism helped to bring down women’s murder in Latin America?

Femicide in Latin America is a very critical issue that feminism has tried to fight for several years, in many countries around the world, women are being killed, under preventable situations such as abusive relationship , just because they are women. The different statistics show that the root of the problem, rather than being just the society, is the way we believe a man should be and the stereotypes we build up around masculinity, like the expectation that a man is tough and should not cry or if a man likes dancing and arts instead of sports society will believe he has a different sexual orientation or will believe he is less masculine. Feminism has tried in many ways to make people conscious about this, marches

have made the problem visible but it has not brought down the numbers. For instance in 2017 according to CEDHU 121 women were killed in Ecuador, that is an average of one women killed every four days. Nevertheless this numbers may not reflect the reality of the situation, due to the reason that many families don't denounce the femicide or will solve it with an agreement as it is mention in the 2017 article posted by GK called "A murder solved with lands and cows" that evidences how little value a women's life has and how it can be exchange with cows and lands, INEC in the 2011 National Survey of family relationships and gender violence against women determined that around 76% of women that have suffered gender violence claimed that it was committed by their partners or ex-partners.

Just in 2014 there were 80 cases of femicide, in 2015 the numbers went up to a total of 105, in 2016, 136 women were killed by their close relatives or partners, 2017, 176 women died and by July of 2018, 51 femicides were registered.

In a wider spectre, according to the UN 66,000 women are killed annually, Honduras is the most dangerous country for a women, as stated by the BBC, 531 were killed in 2014, in Argentina a woman is killed every 30 hours, that is an equivalent of 275 women, Bolivia had 104 cases of femicide in 2015. Brazil has one of the highest ratings in the region with women being killed every six hours, with an average of 15 women killed daily.

Statistics evidence the increase of femicides yearly, feminism is failing its duty of decreasing femicides in Latin America.

The solution to this problem is applying harder laws to people who commit femicide and better gender equality laws, also, better education and less role stereotypes may help bring down the statistics of femicide.

3.3 Benefits and social advantages of feminism

Feminism has left many benefits and has improved the life of women around the world. It is time to discuss what it has been improved. First, there has been more and more women, brave enough to talk and evidence the different harassment situations they have been through, many men have decided to call themselves feminist, and realized the difference of power that men hold over women. In the latest years, women have been encourage to talk about topics, that 50 years ago were considered taboo, such as marital rape, domestic violence or the asking of sexual favors in order to escalate in professional positions. In 2017, the reporters, Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey did a powerful report were it was revealed the multiple sexual harassment and rape allegations against Harvey Weinstein, one of the most powerful producers and movie executives, in fact the Weinstein Company did several non disclosure agreements, pay off and threats toward anyone who spoke the truth about Harvey. “ Weinstein forced me to perform oral sex on him,I was scared he would crush me, I knew he had crushed many people before, that is why my story, in my case, it is 20 years old, there are cases that are older and will never be brought to justice” Argento A (2017).

CHAPTER IV

The purpose of this chapter is to collect information about the impact of feminism on one Ecuadorian women. Through this questions, it is evidenced how feminism changed women's life and how it will continue to change them.

Interviewed: Paola Olaya

She is an ecuadorian actress who has, in several times, spoken about women's rights and denounced the inequality women live daily.

Estefania Concha: How do you think your life has been influenced by feminism?

Paola: I think that in the way I started to see my work as an actress and how I started to notice inequality in things and attitudes I haven't seen before.

Estefania: Did you ever feel you were a victim of misogyny or male chauvinism?

Paola: As in a victim itself no, but I have felt the consequences of the stereotypes that are created around women, how we are not supposed to answer to our husbands or have our own life outside motherhood and marriage.

Estefania: What made you call yourself a feminist?

Paola: I don't have an exact moment or day that I woke up and decided I was going to call myself a feminist but it was a slow process of different attitudes I started to take and I needed to give a name to these feelings and thoughts I was having and that is when I discovered all of those were included in the definition of feminism.

Estefania: How do you deal with the negative connotation of the word feminist?

Paola: Not listening to what they say, having a strong personality is necessary to deal with the critics and the backlash you get, it makes it easier to try and think that maybe they don't know what feminism is and that is why they react that way.

Estefania: Have you ever fought with any family or friend because of feminism?

Paola: Yes, I fight with my mom all the time because of this, she still thinks that when a women gets rape it is the woman's fault and not the rapist, so it is hard to know that people so close to you still think so many conservative concepts.

Estefania: Do you think Ecuador is a male chauvinist country?

Paola: Yes, and this is not just Ecuador's problem that needs to be solved all over Latin America, it happens in Mexico, Honduras, Brazil. This can only be solved if we start raising kids in a different way.

Estefania: How do you think we could build a fairer world?

Paola: By educating kids, as I said before, education is the base of all advanced societies. If we start changing the way we talk to kids and start educating them to know that women are not objects and letting them know that women can say no to them, that is the only way to get a more fairer society.

Estefania: What would you tell to young girls that believe in equal rights but are scared of calling themselves feminists?

Paola: I would tell them to not be scared of the word feminist, to not be scared to accepting the word, I would tell them to embrace it and accept that is fight that is worth fighting.

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this monograph work, it is concluded that, since feminism made its way into women's life it has changed them. Now, women are more likely to speak in vulnerable situations such as rape or street harassment. It has also evidence to men all the privileges they have that women still don't. It brings to spotlight the need of feminism, specially in Middle East and Latin American countries, how, even though there has been an evolution in women's right there is still many problems that need to be solved. To conclude, it is not known when and where feminism was born, what it is known for sure is that, since it took force and voice it hasn't stopped growing, bringing solutions to problems women suffer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of this work, it is recommended that the sources and statistics that are going to be used in future investigations may be checked several times in order to get truthful facts that evidence the reality of women. It is also recommended to the Unidad Educativa Javier that starts teaching its students about the social problems women face everyday moreover a recommendation to the students is that they need to be sensitive towards this type of situations because it can happen anytime and anywhere and they need to know how to react , finally to the teachers, to be better informed about this issue that way they may help the situation that is presented to them, it can help save a life.

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