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Neoliberal Feminism: The Only Approach

Abstract

Throughout its history, feminism has manifested in myriad ways; indeed, there are more than ten different categories of feminist thought, all of which seek to define the tenets and objectives of feminism as a movement. These groups include, but are not limited to: radical feminism, eco feminism, third wave feminism, postmodern feminism, liberal feminism, and psychoanalytic feminism. It is important to note that these divisions are not mutually exclusive - one can identify with multiple types of feminist thought at the same time. Given the variety of beliefs attached to the notion of feminism, academic scholarship on the subject is naturally diverse and sometimes contradictory. In fact, both ideological and strategic debates have always existed within the movement, though their content has changed as feminism has evolved and adapted to modern circumstances. Today, a vibrant discourse exists concerning the differences between liberal feminism and neo-liberal feminism. This modern perspective on feminism questions neo-liberal feminism's necessity as well as its potentially damaging implications. In addition, this conversation also inquires into the relationship between conservatism and feminism, and whether or not it is possible to be a conservative feminist. A case study in which 8 subjects of varying political affiliations were interviewed about these topics suggests support for neo-liberal feminism's market-based approach as well as an acceptance of a new category of feminist thought: conservative feminism

Keywords

Feminism, Neoliberal feminism, liberal feminism, postfeminism, conservatism

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Political Science | Political Theory

Comments

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POL 382

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Neoliberal Feminism : The Only Approach

I. Introduction

Throughout its history, feminism has manifested in myriad ways ; indeed, there are more than ten different categories of feminist thought, all of which seek to define the tenets and objectives of feminism as a movement. These groups include, but are not limited to : radical feminism, eco feminism, third wave feminism, postmodern feminism, liberal feminism, and psychoanalytic feminism. It is important to note that these divisions are not mutually exclusive - one can identify with multiple types of feminist thought at the same time. Given the variety of beliefs attached to the notion of feminism, academic scholarship on the subject is naturally diverse and sometimes contradictory. In fact, both ideological and strategic debates have always existed within the movement, though their content has changed as feminism has evolved and adapted to modern circumstances. Today, a vibrant discourse exists concerning the differences between liberal feminism and neo-liberal feminism. This modern perspective on feminism questions neo-liberal feminism's necessity as well as its potentially damaging implications. In addition, this conversation also inquires into the relationship between conservatism and feminism, and whether or not it is possible to be a conservative feminist. A case study in which 8 subjects of varying political affiliations were interviewed about these topics suggests support for

neo-liberal feminism's market-based approach as well as an acceptance of a new category of feminist thought : conservative feminism.

II. Literature Review

Neo-liberal feminism has primarily developed alongside the capitalist, market economy that is particularly prevalent in the United States. Given feminism's roots in collective action as well as its past history with both socialism and marxism, this has been regarded as a naturally suspicious pairing which has led to ample feminist critique on the matter. Johanna Kantola and Judith Squires's 2012 article "From state feminism to market feminism?" details the influence of capitalist economics on feminist movements around the world. In this article, the coined term "market feminism" is defined in the same way as neoliberal feminism ; that is, as "promoting gender equality by turning to the channels and mechanisms offered by the market" (390).

Though Kantola and Squire assume a less critical view of neoliberal feminism, they do note that it has altered "the political practices and policy priorities of women's policy agencies" (382).

Catherine Rottenberg's 2014 article "Happiness and the Liberal Imagination: How Superwoman Became Balanced," details more explicitly the ways in which neoliberal or market feminism has changed the practices of the liberal feminist movement for the worse. She explains that the difficulties of "superwomen" such as Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg and Princeton professor Anne-Marie Slaughter, both of whom espouse neoliberal feminist viewpoints, has led them to "reorient liberal feminist discursive away from the notions of freedom, equal rights and social justice" and towards work-life balance and "happiness" as top national and feminist objectives (147). In Rottenberg's view, neoliberal feminism is unnecessary and unproductive as Sandberg

and Slaughter's points apply only to upper-middle class white women in the Western world. In "The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism," another article Rottenberg penned in 2014, she also asserts that neoliberal feminism "hollows out the potential of mainstream liberal feminism to underscore the constitutive contradictions of liberal democracy" (418). In this way, Rottenberg believes neoliberal feminism reinforces the worst parts of the market economy and also actively weakens liberal feminism in the process.

Interestingly, Nanette Funk's 2013 article "Contra Fraser on Feminism and Neoliberalism" combats the idea that "contemporary feminism promotes neoliberalism" (179). Funk argues that modern claims concerning "the relationship between early 21st century neoliberal capitalism and feminism are frustratingly vague or overstated" as the entrenchment of neoliberalism began in the 1970s, yet U.S. feminism faced intense backlash throughout most of the 1990s and early 2000s (184). Funk's article demonstrates the ongoing nature of the debate over neoliberal feminism. Similarly, Michael L. Ferguson's 2010 article "Choice Feminism and the Fear of Politics" and R. Claire Snyder-Hall's 2010 article "Third-Wave Feminism and the Defense of 'Choice'" illustrate another debate within the modern feminist movement: the contentious role of choice. The former article criticizes the view of choice as a central tenet of feminism as it allows feminists to accept a wide range of beliefs, many of which contradict one another. Ferguson believes the promotion of "choice feminism" is a reaction to the negative legacy of many second wave feminists (247). The latter article, on the other hand, promotes the idea of choice as an acceptance of pluralism, one which is necessary for any productive movement. Unfortunately, much of this vibrant, internal dialogue has been erased or ignored, in part due to the pervasive nature of the Wave Metaphor. In her 2017 article "Finding a Place in

History: The Discursive Legacy of the Wave Metaphor and Contemporary Feminism,” Jo Reger finds, via a variety of interviews, that many self-identified feminists dislike the way feminism is taught and presented, à la the wave metaphor. These critics note that the wave metaphor flattens “the complexity of debates within the movement” (200). Indeed, just as the current era of feminism fails to fall under an agreed-upon wave, the debate on neoliberal and liberal feminism receives less attention than the issues central to the already established first and second waves.

As stated, internal debates concerning modern feminism ponder the idea of conservative feminism, and whether or not a conservative feminist can truly exist. Today’s scholarship has not reached a consensus on this issue ; however, recent literature suggests a softening towards the topic. In 2009, philosophy professor Amy R. Baehr published an article entitled “Conservatism, Feminism, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese,” which uses work from the late Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, an outspoken conservative historian at Emory University as well as a self-proclaimed feminist, to investigate potential alliances between conservatism and feminism. Baehr argues that as conservatism upholds “conventional social forms” such as “traditional marriage, motherhood, and sexual morality,” without acknowledging their inherent gender hierarchy, conservative thought does “not includes a core claim currently associated with feminist philosophy” (102). Although Fox-Genovese advocates for these social forms because she genuinely believes they protect women and are “conducive to their well-being,” Baehr concludes that her feminist reasoning does not render her conservative position “feminist” (104).

Ultimately, Baehr writes that feminism is “more than advocacy for women” ; instead, it requires an advocacy “grounded in the belief that conventional social forms involve gender hierarchy, and that they should be strongly criticized and transformed” (116). As

Fox-Genovese's perspective fails to include this transformative nature, she does not qualify as a feminist in Baehr's eyes. However, Baehr does note that while conservative feminism may not qualify as its own category of feminist thought, perspective's like Fox-Genovese's can inform and shape other feminisms, rendering them more or less conservative. As such, she concludes that one does "not have to call Fox Genovese's thinking 'feminist' to acknowledge that it is a serious form of advocacy on behalf of women, and that as such it can be fruitfully included in discussions about what is good for women" (117). Baehr's stance marks a noticeable shift from previous scholarship on the topic, which often presented conservatism as anathema to feminism. Although Baehr does not accept the idea of conservative feminism, she does account and allow for its influence in modern feminist thought, which indicates a softening towards the previously established conflict.

Baehr's claim that conservatism has influenced and continues to influence feminism in meaningful ways is evinced in two other research articles : Leslie A. Hahner and Scott J. Varda's 2012 article "Modesty and Feminisms: Conversations on Aesthetics and Resistance" and Deborah Whitehead's 2011 article "Feminism, Religion, and the Politics of History." In the former, Hahner and Varda discuss modesty as a function of feminism. Their discourse refers back to the previously mentioned "choice feminism" which suggests that a woman's free choice is the root of feminism as well as the root of every feminist objective. The authors suggest that although modesty is typically associated with conservative social circles, it serves as a source of empowerment for some women. Indeed, in the new millenium has seen a resurgence of modesty in "widespread international locales, including books, magazines, blogs, social-networking sites, films, and fashion merchandisers" (23). Some feminists have written this trend off as internalized

misogyny which “reprimands women’s sexuality” ; however, Hahner and Varda argue that modesty can be seen as a productive outgrowth of feminism that “equates empowerment with autonomous individual choice” (24). Through this ongoing dialogue, one can identify conservatism’s influence on modern feminist discourse.

The latter article takes a different approach, but nonetheless demonstrates conservative thought’s influence on modern feminist discourse. In “Feminism, Religion, and the Politics of History,” Whitehead analyzes the Susan B. Anthony List (SBAL), a pro-life conservative organization. Whitehead notes that Marjorie Dannefelser, the current president of SBAL, associates the pro-life movement with the suffragettes, as she claims that diary entries and old interviews conclusively demonstrate Susan B. Anthony’s pro-life convictions (5). Although certain historians have written op-eds to the contrary, Whitehead’s overarching point concerns Dannefelser’s association of the pro-life movement with “a ‘new feminism’ composed of...U.S. women who reject the radical feminism of the 1960s and use traditionally ‘feminist’ issues, such as abortion, to herald in a new era of women’s rights.” Although Dannefelser’s viewpoint is largely rejected by modern feminist thought because abortion rights are typically considered a central tenet of the movement, Whitehead uses this case to demonstrate “the degree to which many conservative women of faith have not felt represented by the U.S. feminist movement” (6). As such, many modern conservative women are not identifying as “anti-feminists” as Phyllis Schlafly did ; rather, they are trying to establish their own brand of feminism, one which includes conservative thought. Indeed, Mona Charen’s 2018 book, *Sex Matters : How Modern Feminism Lost Touch With Science, Love, and Common Sense*, critiques feminism from the conservative perspective, but does not conclude with a wholesale rejection of the movement. Instead, Charen

shares how she believes women would be better served by more conservative principles, such as the recognition of the distinct and complementary differences between men and women, and how these may render women better suited to function as the primary caregiver. Like Baehr suggested, conservatism may still not be considered compatible with feminism in the mainstream, but conservative arguments and organizations are continuing to influence the narrative, and some, such as SBAL and Mona Charen, are trying to actively merge the two together.

Recent scholarship does not suggest that conservatism is the largest threat to feminism. Instead, “post-feminism,” the idea that feminism is no longer necessary because equality has already been achieved and established, is the current force jeopardizing the feminist movement and its progress. Katherine Romack notes in her 2011 article “Women's Studies in the ‘Post-Feminist’ University” that women’s studies programs have been actively defunded or consolidated across the U.S. and Great Britain for the past several years (236). In addition, she remarks that the public response to such decisions has been largely “gleeful” as even some feminist scholars such as Christina Hoff Sommers and Camille Paglia suggest women’s studies and feminism are no longer as necessary or relevant as they were in the past (242). Similarly, in “Who Needs Feminism? Lessons from a Digital World,” Duke professor Rachel F. Seidman reveals that several students often ask her that very question. Even after creating the “Who Needs Feminism ? Project” which later became an online campaign, Seidman still notes that the project’s posters are often torn down, and the social media posts are usually trolled with profane and misogynistic commentary (554). Both Seidman and Romack’s articles demonstrate increasing disillusion with feminism, as well as how postfeminism manifests in public action

and undermines previous feminist progress. Lastly, Karen Wilkes's 2015 article, "Colluding with neo-liberalism: post-feminist subjectivities, whiteness and expressions of entitlement" decries representations of post-feminist women in popular culture. Wilkes suggests that the main characters on HBO's wildly popular show *Sex and the City*, who are "lucrative and aspirational," demonstrate post-feminism through their "unabashed consumption of designer goods" as well as their "all-white milieus" which are presented as desirable and neutral spaces for the "post-feminist girl" such as Carrie Bradshaw (20). Indeed, feminism or feminist ideas are not explicitly acknowledged in the show, a choice which reflects an implicit belief that they are no longer necessary or useful. These diverse examples demonstrate the inroads that "postfeminism" has made in modern discourse, as well as the difficulty that modern feminist scholars have in addressing it.

III. Case Study

As stated, a case study was conducted with eight different subjects, in order to gauge their perceptions on the issues broached in contemporary feminist literature. Of these eight subjects, four were men and four were women. All four men were between 21 and 22 years old, and all were undergraduate students at Gettysburg College. These subjects varied widely in terms of political affiliation : Interviewee #1 was a self-identified Conservative Republican, Interviewee #2 was a self-identified Libertarian Republican, Interviewee #3 was a Moderate with Republican leanings, and Interviewee #4 was a self-identified Progressive. Of the four women, three were between 21 and 22 years old, and those three were all also undergraduate students at Gettysburg College. The fourth subject was a 61 year old mother of four, who had previously

attended both undergraduate and graduate school. The four female subjects also varied widely in terms of political affiliation : Interview #5 was a self-identified progressive, Interviewee #6 was a Moderate Liberal, Interview #7 was a self-identified Libertarian, and Interviewee #8, the older subject, was a Conservative Republican. All subjects were posed the following ten questions :

1. How do you define feminism ? Are there certain beliefs one must assume to identify as a feminist ?
2. Do you identify as a feminist ?
3. Do you think it is possible to identify as a conservative and a feminist ?
4. What is your opinion regarding the gender pay gap ? The “motherhood penalty” ?
5. Would you like to get married in the future / Are you married ?
6. Would you like to have children ? / Do you have children ?
7. Do you worry about balancing your future professional and familial responsibilities ? Do you feel pressure to “breadwin” ?
8. Do you think caregiving is devalued or under-rewarded in our current society ? How do you think breadwinning and caregiving should be divided amongst couples, in an ideal world ?
9. We fail to achieve gender parity in both Congress as well as in top executive positions in Fortune 500 companies, Silicon Valley, etc. Why do you think this is?
10. What is the government’s role in promoting feminism / gender equality ?

Interestingly, the responses to these questions did not align on the basis of gender ; subjects of the same gender but different political affiliations disagreed more often than those of different genders but the same political affiliation. The first three questions prompted relatively

uniform answers among all eight interviewees. Feminism was either defined as “equality between men and women” or “a women’s advocacy movement...the promotion of women’s rights” (Appendixes B, C, E, F, H ; Appendixes A, D, G). Surprisingly, seven of the eight respondents identified as feminists ; however, interviewee #1, the conservative Republican, responded that he does “not identify with the modern conception of a feminist” (Appendix A). The two self-identified progressives, interviewees #4 and #5, identified as feminists without hesitation, although the other five affirmative responses admitted reluctance towards claiming this identity. For example, interviewee #6, the moderate liberal, responded “yes but...I would want to qualify my identification with the term,” largely due to the movement’s public perception (Appendix F). All eight respondents agreed that a conservative feminist can exist. Even more hesitant answers, such as that of interviewee #5, conceded “you can’t deny someone how they choose to label themselves” (Appendix E).

Unsurprisingly, questions four and ten, which concern the gender pay gap and the government’s role in promoting feminism, elicited the most partisan responses. All right leaning respondents either expressed doubt in the pay gap’s existence, or heavily qualified it as “far more complex than most people give it credit for...it exists but to a lesser degree than we are told” (Appendix G). The progressive or liberal interviewees, however, accepted the existence of the pay gap, with interviewee #6 noting “...That sucks, are you kidding ? But now I know to be more conscious of salary when I’m interviewing for jobs” (Appendix F). Regarding the government’s role in promoting feminism, all right leaning respondents emphatically suggested “[the promotion of gender equality] is not the government’s role or domain in any way shape or form” (Appendix A). The two progressive interviewees, on the other hand, supported the idea of the

government taking the lead “rhetoric-wise, [by] espous[ing] feminist viewpoints” as well as through the government officials’ policies towards their staffs (Appendixes D and E).

Of all the questions, only five, six, and seven suggested a gender-based breakdown among responses. For example, all four men expressed a desire to get married, as opposed to only two women. Interviewee #5 said marriage was “not a priority” and interviewee #6 “emphatically [does] not want to get married. Ever.” (Appendixes E and F). Three of the four men responded that they wanted children as well, with only interviewee #3 expressing hesitation. The same two female subjects answered this question in the negative, with interviewee #6 remarking “I don’t think I would enjoy parenthood, nor am I suited for it. Very few people are actually” (Appendix F). Interestingly, all interviewees were concerned about balancing work and family life, and equal numbers of men and women responded affirmatively when asked if they felt societal pressure to function as the breadwinner. Interviewee #5 noted “I feel pressure to reject the typical male breadwinner model and be the breadwinner myself,” due to her feminist beliefs (Appendix E).

Lastly, questions eight and nine were not clearly divided along either gender or political lines. Interviewee #1, interviewee #5, and interviewee #6 believed caregiving “is not undervalued” in our current society (Appendixes A, E, & F). The remaining respondents disagreed, suggesting that culturally, caregiving reaps few rewards and little praise. Interestingly, most respondents believed caregiving and breadwinning should be split 50/50 between couples in an ideal world. Even interviewee #8, who has been married for 39 years, suggested that 50/50 was the best setup ; however, she then noted that her own life followed a very traditional division of labor, as her husband is “100% the breadwinner” and she is “the primary caregiver”

(Appendix H). Interviewee #1, interviewee #3, and interviewee #7 expressed dissatisfaction with the 50/50 setup, as “people have different strengths and weaknesses...good parents...acknowledge those differences and organize their family setups accordingly” (Appendix A). Question nine sparked the most diverse array of answers, with interviewee #1 suggesting, “we should be measuring our success by how much freedom we give...not by forcing women into roles they don’t want” (Appendix A). Interviewee #4 noted that the United State's failure to achieve gender parity in executive positions is “more complicated than just measuring how many people are in Congress” (Appendix D). The remaining subjects attributed the U.S.’s lack of gender parity to a “lack of qualified candidates,” “gender expectations,” “systemic factors and cultural attitudes,” “lack of representation,” and “socialization,” (Appendixes B, C, E, F, G). As stated, none of these answers suggested political party or gender alignment.

IV. Connection to Literature

The case study demonstrated both convergences and divergences with existing feminist literature. All eight subjects agreed that there is no one belief or policy position one must assume to identify as a feminist ; therefore, they clearly advocate for “choice feminism.” R. Claire Snyder-Hall’s 2010 article “Third-Wave Feminism and the Defense of ‘Choice,’” rejects the claim that allowing choice within the movement leads to rampant contradictions. Instead, Snyder-Hall believes this range of pluralism is necessary to expand and perpetuate any rights-based movement. The views of the interviewees align with Snyder-Hall as they all expressed reluctance to define feminism in rigid terms. To them, “there is no one belief one must have to associate with the movement,” and feminism does not “mandate a particular set of beliefs for its adherents” (Appendix A ; Appendix B). In this way, the interviewees consider feminism a

pluralist movement, thereby highlighting the importance of diversity of thought, even if it comes at the expense of unity. Their broad characterization of the movement, and the acceptance of this scope, also implies that they believe feminism can have an array of different objectives and strategies, some of which may contradict. Although scholars like Michael L. Ferguson in her article “Choice Feminism and the Fear of Politics” bemoan such growing conflicts, the views of the interviewees may reflect the fact that seven of the eight subjects grew up immediately following Third-Wave feminism, which helped fracture the movement through its global expansion.

All interviewees endorsed the idea of a conservative feminist. This perspective aligns with their acceptance of “choice feminism” ; as a feminist, one can endorse a variety of positions and identities. Indeed, interviewee #5, a progressive female, noted conservative feminists might be “rare...[but] I don’t think you can say it can’t exist” (Appendix E). Interestingly, this response demonstrates a divergence from existing literature because, as of 2020, few feminist theorists accept the notion of a conservative feminist. In her 2009 article, “Conservatism, Feminism, and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese,” professor Amy R. Baehr posits that feminism demands an advocacy for women against gender hierarchy, which few conservatives are willing to recognize and even fewer are willing to change (116). However, from the interviewees’ perspectives, conservative feminists may not identify with all aspects of either feminism or conservatism, but that does not mandate exclusion from the group. Indeed, as interviewee #1 noted, “people are individuals and you can be conservative without identifying with every tenet of conservatism. Just like you can be a feminist without identifying with all aspects of the movement” (Appendix A). In this way, a new brand of feminism influenced by conservative values, as proposed by Mona Charen in *Sex*

Matters and the women of the Susan B. Anthony List, is gaining traction in modern culture. The interviewees' answers suggest that conservative arguments and organizations are continuing to influence the narrative around feminism, and in some contexts, may even be changing it altogether. It is important to note that the emergence of a conservative feminist would be a wholly new development as Phyllis Schlafly, a self-identified as anti-feminist, was conservative but wholly rejected the entire concept of feminism. Therefore, such a development would make the first time the two identities have been merged and advertised as such.

Despite the variety of political affiliations presented, most interviewees endorsed market-based approaches to feminist issues, rather than structural changes. Even the progressive interviewees, who suggested that the government does have a role to play in promoting feminism, did not advocate for particular policies. Instead, all interviewees stressed cultural solutions. For example, multiple respondents believed caregiving was only undervalued "on the cultural level"; as such, only a cultural shift in mindset, as opposed to a new policy or the dissolution of a current system, would change this estimation (Appendix C and D). Regarding the gender pay gap, interviewee #6 noted "that sucks," but she did not suggest a policy prescription for it. Instead, she revealed that she personally will "be more conscious of salary when I'm interviewing for jobs" (Appendix F). In this way, she plans to function within the market, not attempting to change any structures but instead looking inward and altering her own personal behavior. In this way, interviewee #6 endorses Sheryl Sandberg's "lean in" approach in her attempt to function as what Rottenberg called "a superwoman," in her 2014 article, "Happiness and the Liberal Imagination: How Superwoman Became Balanced." Similarly, although progressive interviewee #4 acknowledged the pay gap, he also remarked that women

have been “socialized to pursue the softer sciences and were discouraged from STEM” (Appendix D). This statement suggests the pay gap is due in part to women’s choices, which may also be encouraged by society. Therefore, if women *choose* to pursue STEM over psychology, they can surmount the pay gap. Though implicit, this response indicates a cultural change and a market approach based on women's choices, rather than a structural overhaul. In addition, the same respondent believes the motherhood penalty is “an unfortunate consequence of biology, but it could be solved by more compassionate employers” (Appendix D). Again, fostering more compassionate employers reflects a market-based approach, not a structural one.

V. Policy Recommendation & Conclusion

As this case study demonstrates, a market-based approach is the most constructive way to resolve modern feminist issues, such as the pay gap or the devaluation of caregiving. Although contemporary feminist discourse is not supportive of neoliberal feminism, with some scholars suggesting its capacity to derail liberal feminism and erase decades of progress, qualitative data reveals this approach is palatable to people from a wide variety of political persuasions. In a capitalist stronghold like the United States, any attempt to overhaul the current economic system in the name of equality over profit will be unsuccessful. The values of this country remain tightly tied to monetary terms, ensuring that most financially unsound policies will be ignored or poorly implemented. In addition, the politicians responsible for introducing them are unlikely to win re-election, another factor which cements the improbability of structural overhaul. As long as liberal feminists support outcomes which dramatically decrease profit and/or increase taxes, they will continue to struggle to make inroads in American politics. As such, the market-based

approach is immediately effective, albeit limited in relevance to a large subsection of the population.

It is also important to note that even among progressive Americans, there exists a powerful sense of personal responsibility and individualism. With this in mind, the notion that feminist issues can be solved through the market, a pre-established, profitable mechanism, is appealing to uniquely American sensibilities. The neoliberal approach coincides with the American Dream - the notion that one can start from the bottom of the ladder and climb his/her way up to success, wealth, and, in this case, equality. As evinced by the testimony from all eight subjects, if women's career choices change, the gender pay gap will close. Although certain respondents believe that such choices can be unfairly influenced by sexist societal beliefs, they also maintain the individual's ability to make different choices. Similarly, all interviewees support an individual's right to self-determination, even if that results in an ostensible oxymoron, such as a conservative feminist. Therefore, it is not necessary for the next President to outline a five point plan explaining how he will improve women's rights. As long as he promotes the notion of choice and encourages women to strive for what society may have suggested they aren't suited for, women will begin to earn as much as their male counterparts and assume more high level roles. In turn, representation will increase and cultural opinions regarding women's "proper" roles will begin to shift. These impacts will be seen far sooner than anything attempted by the structural approach, and it will allow Americans to maintain their capitalist, individualist ideals at the same time.

*VI. Appendixes**A. Interviewee #1 - Male subject, 21 years old, Conservative Republican*

1. Feminism is a women's advocacy movement which seeks to highlight and rectify issues central to women's existence. No, feminism is very far-reaching, there is no one belief one must have to associate with the movement.
2. I do not identify with the modern conception of a feminist.
3. Yes, I think one can identify as a conservative and a feminist, no question. People are individuals and you can be conservative without identifying with every tenet of conservatism. Just like you can be a feminist without identifying with all aspects of the movement.
4. The pay gap doesn't exist in the way we are told. It all comes down to different choices between men and women. As for the motherhood penalty, sure that exists but everything is a trade-off. It's a natural consequence of the free market.
5. Yes, I would like to get married.
6. Yeah, absolutely, having kids is such a huge source of meaning in your life.
7. Yes, of course. I think it's a good thing to worry about balancing all that. It shows that you're thinking ahead, and that you care. I certainly worry about it, and I know it'll be hard at times but that's also the nature of the beast. Hmm...I don't know if I feel pressure to breadwin. I guess so, but I also think men have biological traits that render them more likely to want to breadwin. I think masculinity is tied to being able to provide and I think that is a good, natural thing.
8. No, I don't think caregiving is undervalued or devalued. Not everything needs to be rewarded in finance terms to be valued. I think most people would express how crucial and difficult caregiving is. I don't think the ideal division is 50/50 - people have different strengths and weaknesses, and good parents and couples acknowledge those differences and organize their family setups accordingly.
9. Are we trying to achieve gender parity in this regard ? Most individual people aren't trying to achieve this. Most social justice / sociology academic groups are made up of women, they outline this as an objective, but they don't make any individual efforts towards that goal. If you

believe congress must look a certain way to be it's best, then you have some biases you need to confront. I don't think equality of outcome is what anyone should want. It eliminates all individuality and freedom. Swedes have ample latitude to make their own choices and gender still factors in - women still choose to stay home more so than men. It's human nature to some extent. We should be measuring our success as how much freedom we give...not in forcing women into roles they don't want.

10. None whatsoever. This is not the government's role or domain in any way shape or form.

B. Interviewee #2 - Male subject, 22 years old, Libertarian Republican

1. Feminism is the belief in equality between men and women. I don't think this mandates a particular set of beliefs for its adherents though.
2. I identify as a feminist, but it's not a major part of my identity in any way.
3. Sure, I guess a conservative feminist could exist but I don't really know how.
4. The pay gap exists but only slightly, most differences are due to men and women's different career pursuits. The motherhood penalty exists, but I don't know how to avoid it other than switching to part-time work or the majority of your pregnancy.
5. Yes, I want to get married.
6. Yes, 2 or 3 kids would be nice.
7. Yeah, I mean, I guess I worry about it but I'm single right now so it's not a huge concern. I don't think I feel pressure to breadwin because I grew up around families where the mom was the breadwinner.
8. I think caregiving may be undervalued but it doesn't make sense to pay mothers for caring for their children or for their aging parents. Maybe we reward this in the form of a tax credit ? I don't really know. In an ideal world, caregiving and breadwinning would be split 50/50.
9. Men are more competitive in general. Institutional barriers have mostly dissolved, numbers are increasing. It takes time. Few systematic barriers exist anymore. All major companies express female advancement as an objective. Lack of qualified candidates.
10. I don't really think the government has a role in this regard. As long as institutional barriers are down, which I believe they mostly are, then it's not up to the government, it's more cultural.

C. Interviewee #3 - Male subject, 21 years old, Right leaning Moderate

1. Feminism is the belief in equality between men and women. The movement doesn't correspond to any one belief, in my view.

2. I identify as a feminist on paper, but I would be hesitant to vocalize that support due to the movement's perception.
3. Yes, conservative feminists exist, they just underline different issues facing women than do liberal feminists.
4. I am skeptical as to the true existence of the pay gap, it seems like men and women just make different choices. I haven't heard of the motherhood penalty before but I think it makes sense. It might be unfortunate but what's the alternative ?
5. I think I want to get married. We'll see. But yeah, most likely. God only knows though...
6. I don't know at this point...I feel like I would be such a helicopter parent. I don't know if that will work out...To be determined !
7. Yeah, I think so. Again, these thoughts are abstract but it's hard to balance life and work. I see my own parents struggle with it. So I guess I worry about that. Regarding breadwinning, I don't know. I want to make a good living, but I'm a History major...I don't think I feel pressure from society or my family to specifically be the breadwinner though.
8. I think caregiving is undervalued on a cultural level. We should be more appreciative of all our parents do for us and for our loved ones. But the answer is cultural, I don't see how to reward or value caregiving properly otherwise. Hmmm I think breadwinning and caregiving might even out to 50/50 in an ideal world but that doesn't mean the parents both have the same income. It really depends on the couple, I don't think it's a good idea to give each parent the same proportion of duties, cause people have different strengths
9. A lot of it has to do with gender expectations. And stigma against stay at home dads - I could never say that I'm a stay at home dad without being embarrassed. Some women just might not want to be in the C-suite - people make different choices, especially those of different genders. I think biology plays a role.
10. Honestly, I would say the government has a limited role in promoting feminism. As long as women are legally equal, then I don't know what the government should be doing.

D. Interviewee #4 - Male subject, 22 years old, Progressive

1. Feminism is a movement about equity in general, not just equality between men and women. It's about advocating for human rights which are women's rights. No, you don't need to have certain policy positions to be a feminist, you just need to believe in equality.
2. Yes, I am a feminist.

3. Sure, a conservative feminist can exist. They aren't mutually exclusive terms. People exist with myriad identities and associations. I will say that conservative feminists might have views that liberal or progressive feminists disagree with, but it's a broad movement.
4. The pay gap exists and we should actively try and close it. Women have long been socialized to pursue the softer sciences and were historically discouraged from STEM studies. The motherhood penalty, on the other hand, sounds like an unfortunate consequence of biology, but it could be solved by more compassionate employers.
5. Yes, I definitely want to get married.
6. Yes, I want at least 3 kids.
7. Yes, I intend to go to law school and I know that those hours can be brutal, so I do worry about balancing my work and family life. But that's part of the journey, I guess. And yeah, I think I feel pressure to breadwin to some extent, but it's not overwhelming.
8. I would say caregiving is undervalued. We need to express more gratitude for men and women who assume these roles. Culturally, I think caregiving gets cast aside because so many people do it. But few actually do it well. I think, ideally, caregiving and breadwinning would even out to 50/50 over time.
9. I think it's more complicated than just measuring how many people are in Congress. We should just focus on encouraging the best applicant and candidate. We are doing a good job. It takes time. Women need to get over cultural attitudes, like being less likely to speak up. But things are changing. We are on the right track. To be successful as a woman or feminist, you can be a stay at home mom. Equal societies are more complicated than the numbers, in my opinion. I like to be positive.
10. I would say the government has to take the lead in demonstrating these values - that women are equal to men. I don't know about certain policy positions per se, but rhetoric-wise, the government should espouse feminist viewpoints.

E. Interviewee #5 - Female subject, 22 years old, Progressive

1. Feminism is the belief equality, regardless of one's sex, gender, orientation, age, etc. However, it primarily functions to promote women's issues. Other than believing in my preceding statement, no I can't think of any policy position one must have to be a feminist.
2. Yes.

3. I don't think you can say it can't exist. It's possible, but rare. Sure, conservative feminists can exist. You can't deny someone how they choose to label themselves.
4. The pay gap exists, but it depends on how you look at it. Men and women do make different career choices, but a lot of that is due to socialization. It's interesting though, my major is Physics and I never felt discouraged from STEM. If anything, I felt encouraged to pursue it because I'm a woman. But I know that's not true of women from different era's. The motherhood penalty ? I don't know, it sounds like we need to rethink how couples distribute childcare and housework.
5. Maybe I would like to get married but it's not a priority of mine whatsoever.
6. Kids might be fun. Again, not a priority though.
7. Yes, I worry about balancing work and family quite a bit actually. I feel pressure to reject the typical male breadwinner model and be the breadwinner myself, which is kind of weird.
8. I don't know if caregiving is undervalued. I think it's probably decently estimated in value. I would say the ideal composition between caregiving and breadwinning is 50/50.
9. There are a lot of reasons...like systemic factors, individual biases, cultural attitudes...also, this is a very very slow process.
10. In terms of actual policy, I don't really know, but government officials can enact feminist policy with their staffs - understanding that life happens and employees might need to run home to take care of their children.

F. Interviewee #6 - Female subject, 22 years old, Liberal / Moderate

1. Feminism is the belief in equality between the sexes. I don't think there is any one belief or policy position one must have to call herself/himself a feminist. I can't think of any belief or position one must have to be a feminist.
2. Yes, but the current idea of a feminist is kind of weird and I would want to qualify my identification with the term.
3. Probably ? I don't really know enough about conservatism to say.
4. Yeah the pay gap probably exists and that sucks, are you kidding ? But now I know to be more conscious of salary when I'm interviewing for jobs. I haven't heard of the motherhood penalty.
5. No, I emphatically do not want to get married. Ever.
6. No kids for me either, I don't think I would enjoy parenthood, nor am I suited for it. Very few people are actually.

7. Hm, I guess I worry about balancing that but not a lot. Oh yeah, I intend to be the breadwinner, that's what I want. I will be, I'm not gonna rely on anyone else.
8. No, caregiver might actually be overvalued. I guess 50/50 is ideal.
9. I think it's due to a lack of representation. Women can't see it, can't imagine it. They're inhibited by fear of failure, and we convince ourselves we won't get it. Men don't have this because they have evidence that it's possible for them.
10. I guess the government should be more outspoken on feminist issues, but I'm not sure.

G. Interviewee #7 - Female subject, 21 years old, Libertarian Republican

1. Feminism is a movement promoting women's rights and women's voices. It's very broad and there is no one position one has to have to be a feminist.
2. Yes, but I don't agree with all aspects of the modern movement.
3. Yes, I think so. She might face a lot of pushback from other, more traditional feminists, but I don't think it's an oxymoron at all.
4. The pay gap is far more complex than most people give it credit for. It exists but to a lesser degree than we are told. Socialization definitely plays a part, as do genuine personal preferences. In my opinion, the pay gap should not be a priority because how we are told to think about it does not align with how things really are. The original study the "78 cents on the dollar" is based on is so flawed. To me, it sounds like the motherhood penalty is just a trade-off women have to make given the fact that they are immediately more biologically responsible for the newborn, and tend to prefer staying home for longer than their partners.
5. Yes, I see marriage in my future.
6. Yes, I would like to have kids one day.
7. I know that work / family balance is a huge cause for concern for a lot of people, and I know that it will be hard, but I trust myself and my future decisions. And no, I have never felt pressure to breadwin.
8. I think caregiving is undervalued in some regions. I don't know if it is on a whole. Hmmm I do not know what the ideal composition is - probably 50/50 overall, but you also want to play to your preferences and strengths.
9. I think women don't feel encouraged to pursue these more demanding careers, and there is still a culture of an old boys club in these industries. Also, cultural and social pressures for women to feel that they should spend more time at home still exist. The idea that more demanding paths aren't for them also impedes our progress in this regard.

10. I don't see this as the government's domain.

H. Interviewee #8 - Female subject, 61 years old, Conservative Republican

1. Feminism started as a movement about equality between the sexes, but now it's more so about the promotion of women's rights, sometimes over those of men. I don't think you need to espouse a certain belief to identify as a feminist
2. Yes, but I don't think most feminists would consider me one of them.
3. Yes, I identify as a conservative feminist.
4. I don't believe in the pay gap, but the motherhood penalty exists. I didn't personally experience it though, because I never wanted to return to work after having my (4) children.
5. I've been married for 39 years !
6. I've had four children.
7. It's difficult but that's life ! No, I never felt pressure to breadwin.
8. Yes, as a caregiver of 30 years, I believe caregiving is undervalued. I guess 50/50 is the ideal division...although in my relationship my husband is 100% the breadwinner and I am the primary caregiver...so...maybe not ?
9. I don't know, honestly. People want different things. It's normal for women to want to stay at home more than men.
10. It's not the government's role. The government can't fix everything for us.

VII. *Works Cited*

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