

Four Relations to Feminism

A feministic classification test

The following document provides an easy way to classify the four different possible attitudes one can have towards modern feminism. You can discover your own view of feminism simply by answering two questions!

There is just one thing to keep in mind to avoid confusion. Just as in most other texts, I am here referring to feminism in our modern society, which mainly deals with gender differences in power and income. I am *not* talking about the type of feminists that fight for women's rights in some developing countries where the situation is clearly different (e.g. Islamic theocracies).

Ready to take the test? Then please answer yes or no to the following questions. I think most people will find it easy to select yes or no, but if you actually find it hard you can read on and perhaps still see what I am trying to say with this test.

Question 1: Are the statistically measured differences in income and power between men and women clear evidence of discrimination against women?

Question 2: Is it absolutely necessary to strive to eliminate the statistically measured differences in income and power between men and women?

The results for the four possible outcomes are explained below. I think this test has a very simple and powerful way of explaining how different people view feminism today.

Question 1:

		Yes	No
Question 2:	Yes	The common uneducated view.	Feministic Marxism.
	No	The view that men are better.	My standpoint.

The four possible outcomes of the test.

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Yes, Yes: The common uneducated view

If you answered yes to both questions, you have a common standpoint. There is not much wrong with it really. If you believe women are discriminated in terms of power and income it makes sense to do something about it. It is perhaps harsh to call this view “uneducated”. The standpoint is common mainly because it is politically correct and we see it everywhere in media, although sometimes in more implicit form. I just mean it indicates you have not really thought very deeply about these things, which is most likely because you are not so interested in analyzing feminism in depth.

The problem here is very simple: Statistically measured gender differences are not evidence of discrimination. This is simply because correlations do not prove causality. Instead, when we look closer at *why* women earn less money and less often have the top jobs we see that it can be explained by voluntary choices. Men tend to prioritize high income and power. Of course, this does not mean there is not a single woman out there who has been wrongly treated.

Yes, No: The view that men are better

This is a very sad standpoint that essentially means that women should be oppressed. Even if you are wrong about discrimination explaining the statistical differences, you are of the opinion that discrimination against women is not a problem. I do not think this is very common in the developed world except among highly conservative people.

No, Yes: Feministic Marxism

At first I thought this standpoint was so strange that it could not possibly exist, but it really does. Let us look closer at what this view represents: You believe that there are natural explanations for the measured differences in income and power between men and women, on average. They are not the result of discrimination, but simply follow from individual persons making voluntary choices in life. However, the differences are *still* a problem!

For such a viewpoint to make sense, one must have very disturbed ideas about ethics which puts the gender in centrum instead of individual persons. One must define concepts such as justice and responsibility from two gender collectives, ignoring the wishes of individuals. In brief, this standpoint is nothing else than Marxism where class has been replaced with gender.

No, No: My standpoint

In my opinion the correct answer to both questions is no, first in a factual manner and then in a moral manner. Numbers do not prove discrimination and it is possible to have a very nice society even if there are gender gaps in some aspects of society as long as this is the result of men and women making slightly different choices in life on average. The empirical data available indicates that this is usually the case.

This whole discussion naturally relates to what we really mean with gender equality. We all agree that it is something desirable, but how should we define it? Initially, it was a matter of ensuring that men and women had equal possibilities and responsibilities. Unfortunately, this definition changed and now it is all about the numbers. (Actually, it appears that it is not enough even to reach the magic 50% female representation. The latest trend is that one should aim for 100%, i.e. complete female dominion.) Numbers are easier to measure than prejudice and attitudes, but that is not a reason to redefine the concept of gender equality. In the end it must be about whether or not men and women have the same chances in life. There is a free will.