



Women's Perception of Power, Men's Role, and the Barrier in the Feminist Struggle

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Abstract

In the feminist movement, many misconceptions may be weakening the movement. For example, women's perception of power is constantly being compared to men's capacities in previous centuries, possibly creating a feeling of resentment of earlier privileges. In contemporary times, it is undefined which is the barrier to feminism. This blockage has impeded the movement from flourishing and finally fulfilling its goals, considering it is an enduring movement. In addition, the role of men is still problematic and undetermined, as they may be regarded as part of the barrier to be defeated rather than a gender that will need to find a consensus for a healthy coexistence. Following these three problematics used as variables, the present investigation will follow a mixed approach and a correlational scope to interview 100 women from different regions to provide a possible association among the main variables. Then, the statistical software SPSS will be employed to propose an association between the yield of power, the existence of a barrier in the struggle, and how and to which extent men can help in feminism. As part of the research results, there was a correlation among the three variables, supported by the literature review, providing a discussion regarding women's perception of these critical subjects.

Keywords: feminism, man, power, role, social system

1. Introduction

The current era has improved in several aspects related to progress but simultaneously has caused a fracture in humanity as it was known. One of the most relevant and noticeable is the power of women, the gender that has historically been marginalized (Di Cesare, 2014, p. 1). Modernism has proven this conception wrong; that is also what Gilles Lipovetsky recalls in *The Ephemeral Era* and that we humans live in: “a narcissistic individualism” within the hierarchical times (Thomas, 1995, p. 115).

In particular, feminism has always been associated with a struggle to be heard and considered in decision-making. Nonetheless, it has other slopes. As Raina (2017, p. 3373) stated: “The history of every civilization shows that women have always been subordinated to a position where they have no means to re-claim their unique identity unless and until they re-visit the history, explore it and finally re-establish it through their own experiences and insights”. With the current opportunity to recreate and provide new identities where all sexes have their respective roles with the same dignity and mutual respect, femininity is celebrated more than a reason to be ashamed (Mann, 2020, p. 402). It is still uncertain if individuals can express femininity and sexuality freely; this is the first struggle: the limits of femininity, according to societies worldwide.

That is what philosopher and female activist Simone de Beauvoir wrote in 1949 in her book *The Second Sex* (quoted by Raina, 2017, p. 3374), where she expressed that: “femininity is not inherent, but a social construct developed through the long process of socialization”. Are we in this era where femininity is already socially constructed, developed, and accepted? It depends on whether it comes from the sex known as women; it is morally normal, but the concept is still associated with being a woman. It creates the roots of the struggle: the limitation of being to be accepted, or being accepted, limiting the Being.

Raina (2017, p. 3374) also retook de Beauvoir’s reasons to explain the inferiority of women, summarizing it in three main factors. First, women are educated to help men by all means possible; in this sense, women’s existence is reduced to the relationship they maintain with men (Zarrinjooee & Kalantarian, 2017, p. 66). The second is, once again, related to femininity, as women’s role in society had to be as ladies, docile, beautiful, and gentle. In current times, there are different positions on this affirmation.

For example, on the one hand, Ivie & Roebuck (1992, p. 179) expressed that since the 20th Century, something has changed, as: “sex-role behaviors have either being erased or blurred”. On the other hand, Motta et al. determined that: “most feminists would agree that contemporary society remains systematically shot through with oppression and exploitation in a multitude of different forms”. It means there is yet to be a consensus regarding this aspect. Finally, since the start of times, women have had fewer rights than men. Notwithstanding, it must be mentioned that women have rights in contemporary times. Dilli et al. (2019) summarize those as: “near-universal women's suffrage and the implementation of legislation in many countries to ensure gender-equal inheritance”.

Altogether, it has an effect: the pure concept of feminism. For Mahajan (2022, p. 11), it consists of a mass movement, which began by women intending to eradicate forms of feminist oppression by men. These types of pressure must still prevail in any patriarchal society, which is defined by Nash (2020, p. 43) as: “a system of relationships, beliefs, and values embedded in political, social, and economic systems that structure gender inequality between men and women”, and it will also be a concept intensely used further in this article.

Dilorom (2023, pp. 180-181) describes some characteristics of the movement; the main objectives and principles are quality, autonomy, inequality, intersectionality, criticism of patriarchy, and solidarity. For this, it may be necessary to strengthen actions and intensity. It also relates to men, as the same author (p. 182) mentions the category of *male feminists*. However, it is not generally considered that men can be feminists but feminist allies (Messner, 2016, p. 16).

As the relationship continues between the genders, it means women are still affiliated with fighting something that represses them. It is an absolute understatement that the struggle is not over. Another consideration arises as a consequence: Is power involved? The central conflict between men and women was power, translated into superiority, the use of force, and structural factors in the long term (Kaufman, 1994). However, it can be summarized as a search for power. In this power-seeking, once again, the idea of feminism arises. Feminism does need to gain power within societies. As Jagernath & Nupel (2022, p. 61) state, it is problematic, as there have been four waves of feminism. Simultaneously, these waves have created a difference, but the fact that there have been several attempts confirms that women have not faced the end of the clash. In this sense, there is still oppression, as power is not divided as it should be.

Thus, it is the moment to deepen the nature of the relationship, primarily to determine how men and women can coexist with mutual respect, eliminating social hierarchies and gender roles that separate individuals.

With these three main variables, this article will provide a literature review firstly regarding the concept of power understood through the text. Secondly, to determine what it means to talk about a barrier (also understood as "enemy" or "adversary") using these terms to comprehend what may oppress feminism and weaken the movement. In the third instance, there is a more profound idea of how and why men must participate as allies in feminist efforts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Yield of Power and its Relationship with Patriarchy

Power is a notion with multiple characteristics. However, the interpretation employed through this text is Amy Allen's (2022), who quotes Hanna Pitkin's roots of power. She established: "that power is a something –anything– which makes or renders somebody able to do, capable of doing something. Power is capacity, potential, ability, or wherewithal". Notwithstanding, Carli (1999, p. 9) proposes that perception of power is also an influential factor, where women could feel less power compared to men, maybe related to the culture of societies worldwide.

The cultural past can be related to the patriarchal societies found worldwide in previous decades. The concept of patriarchy was previously mentioned, and adding to that, Akgul (2017, p. 44) adds more to the concept, stating that it: "refers to power and control between an object and subject and subsumes, among others, the relationship between the father and the son; therefore, the ruler-subject binary." Relating it to feminism, Joan Acker (1989, p. 235) states that the pure concept of patriarchy is both essential and problematic for the pure development of feminism. Additionally, Motta et al. (2011, p. 2) mention that: "Feminism is in some instances a result of the power of patriarchy; all struggles for social change, not just women's movements".

It is also relevant to mention that men had also been oppressed into fitting and fulfilling expectations. Nevertheless, they have adapted to becoming whomever they pleased, leaving aside social norms altogether. Thanks to this adjustment: "the balance of power between the sexes has been subtly but powerfully altered" (Spar, 2020, p. 225). It means that during patriarchal societies, men had more privileges (Nash, 2020, p. 43; Kaufman, 1999); nevertheless, some of them, who identify as allies, are already trying to change this and make a difference. If there has been this adjustment for the betterment of the relationship, it is still questionable who, or what, is the impediment for feminism to reach its final objective.

2.2. The Barrier of Feminism

The barrier -that will also be called an "adversary" or "enemy"- is considering Melucci's (1996, pp. 29-30) concept, which refers to: "A movement is the mobilization of a collective actor (i) defined by specific solidarity, (ii) engaged in a conflict with an adversary for the appropriation and control of resources valued by both of them (...)". In this sense, the movement is the feminist one, united searching for a common goal, and there is, indeed, an adversary, where the relationship is struggling because of "control", which this paper refers to as "power".

There is a severe misconception about the "adversary" of feminism. Nonetheless, this paper expresses that men are not it; this is a sex that has been culturally impelled to fulfill a role within society, whether they wanted it or not. In addition, multiple terms will be employed referring to this "adversary", such as "enemy" or "nemesis", which all refer to the one barrier to feminist goals. The previous section mentioned a cultural past that created (or impelled) patriarchy; now, this notion will be deepened.

In this subject, the main proposal is that the social system has allowed patriarchal ways to continue. It is invisible but powerful in the way that: "Although oppression of women is not the point of patriarchy, a social system that is male-identified, male-controlled, male-centered will inevitably value masculinity and masculine traits over femininity and feminine traits" (Becker, 1999, pp. 24-25). In this way, an enemy or adversary must be defeated primarily on mentality. The focus of men as a wholesome of society is shifting, but the social system that has worked this way since the beginning of times is difficult to eradicate.

2.3. Men's Actions Can Make the Difference

As mentioned in the past section, nowadays, the conception of being a man is also different, as the mere understanding of masculinity has been adapted. For Itulua-Abumere (2013, p. 42), it is a modern term whose counterpart would be criticizable for whatever reason. The author states that: "an un-masculine person would behave differently: being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, and so forth" (Itulua-Abumere, 2013, p. 42).

Notwithstanding, if men are in their struggle, who created the fight amongst genders, sometimes inciting that power search stated beforehand? These are the social structures since historical times, for example, for women: "dowries, patrilineal living arrangements, and discriminatory inheritances" (Farré, 2012, p. 23). Moreover, with the strengthening of feminist power, the role of men has still been intensely criticized. One reason is that many women are not entirely sure of allowing men into this world, as: "Feminists, in particular, have been loath to let men into their fight, wary of ceding power, once again, in this most personal of struggles" (Spar, 2020, p. 224).

There is also another risk: that men need to have an interest in creating social consciousness. As Flood (2015, p. 17) said: "Men may respect the women in their lives, but not challenge the broader power structures in society which favour men", which is the counterpart of the quote by Nash presented in the first part of the theoretical framework: men do have their privileges, and these should be used to create social consciousness. Another aspect in which men could support the movement is less action, more feelings: empathy. It is defined by Freedberg (2007, p. 251) as an "active appreciation of another person's feeling experience", which is a value that every society should embrace for a better relationship based on core values. In this sense, a study conducted by Persson and Hostler (2021) measured men's empathy towards feminism, and as empathy arose, feelings of guilt and injustice lowered.

Another of these core values that should not be missing is respect, defined by (De Cremer & Mulder, 2007, p. 440) as the "*full recognition* of a person"; which is part of feminist goals. In addition, it is deeply relevant: "among group members thus signals that you as a person are an *equal* to others" (De Cremer & Mulder, 2007, p. 440), and as this investigation aims and retakes the importance of equality, the respect that comes within will also be emphasized.

Thus, the current investigation will try to provide specific ideas and solutions from women who have experienced and lived through the rise of feminism. The following section will refer to the methodology employed to answer the research question and fulfill the article's goal.

3. Methodology

The reach of this paper is correlational, as it has been thought from a mixed approach, firstly considering documental sources and previous empirical studies, following a qualitative investigation. Then, statistical software SPSS was employed to find an association, or lack thereof, among the three variables considered, incorporating a quantitative analysis. The variables presented were selected because even in current times, many misconceptions limit feminism; so, if societies do not understand what feminism is honestly about if individuals do not acknowledge subjects as power or barriers in the movement, feminism cannot be fully comprehended, nor accepted. Many people may not support feminism because they do not understand or analyze another point of view, which this paper efforts to provide: Many different interpretations to find what unites individuals, whichever gender they identify.

So, hoping that the feminist movement flourishes, these topics should be well-understood because progress in the matter cannot occur; there is a restraint of knowledge and, thus, acceptance. It is only human to accept what can be understood. Relating to one of the variables, as commented in the literature review, power is present in all relations. However, a balance is necessary so that dominance is not established amongst individuals who should not have a hierarchy, as all are equal in the world. Gender should not be a factor that decides who can impose power over another; history has proven in many senses that sex should not be a determinant factor of advantage or supremacy. Thus, to avoid an abuse of power that continues a cycle of superiority that has caused disparity within sexes for centuries, that is why this first variable was chosen. In the 21st Century, it is time to recognize how power has worked and, even further, how it is perceived.

Retaking the bibliography, the decision to study a barrier is because there have been four waves of the movement. Nevertheless, it is not over, not even close. So the question arises: What impedes feminism to achieve its goals? As it continues, some blockage must limit the movement's full potential to achieve its objectives. Women have a target and, during four

waves, have yet to be completely satisfied with the results. Consequently, the second variable proposes to get to the root of the idea that if a barrier exists, what is it?

Finally, a third variable was focused on: the expectations feminism has about men. Feminism is undeniably a struggle, and there is a chance women cannot do it alone, especially as, in the past years, men have started to identify themselves as allies. The word ally can be related to a quote adjudicated to Mahatma Gandhi, which was: "Be the change you wish to see in the world". Being these allies implies being part of the change or the action. If there are indeed allies, concrete activities and measures must be present. Thus, the relevance of this article is to observe and see if these operations are being held, which they are, and to what extent.

With these variables, Pearson's Chi-Square analysis was employed in the section focused on the correlations. Chi-square is a: "valuable analysis tool that provides considerable information about the nature of research data. It is a powerful statistic that enables researchers to test hypotheses about variables measured at the nominal level" (McHugh, 2013, p. 149). First, the null hypothesis will be considered: there is no relationship between the cession of power, the existence of a barrier, and men's actions in feminist efforts. On the contrary, the research hypothesis is: there is a relationship between the cession of power, the existence of a barrier, and men's actions in feminist efforts.

The selection of these variables as part of the hypothesis was previously explained in depth; nevertheless, it is pertinent to clarify that these are only three out of many misconceptions in the feminist movement that were discovered, and as their importance was detailed, they were picked to be the center of this article. Thus, the cession of power, the existence of a barrier in feminism, and men's actions were meticulously selected to provide possible explanations on these three subjects and the possibility of understanding another point of view to complement these perceptions. In addition, it was pertinent to create an instrument directed toward women to understand their position regarding who/what impedes the feminist struggle in contemporary times, how power is involved, and the role of men as allies, for reasons previously explained.

This instrument consisted of structured interviews, with eight questions in addition to five questions of descriptive background of those interviewed, which included age, sex they identified with, level of schooling, marital and employment status. The main questions of the instrument were: Do you consider yourself a feminist?; Are you aware of the feminist struggle?; What do you know about feminism?; With the appearance of feminism, do you think this changed your perception of men?; Do you think men have to yield part of their power to give it to women?; Who do you consider the "enemy" in the feminist struggle?; How do you think men could help the feminist efforts?; and, for you, what is the role of men in the feminist movement?

The data analysis method was through thematic coding, segmented into five categories that incorporated the most repeated answers of the interviewees. This type of codification has the particularity of: "(being) capable to detect and identify, e.g. factors or variables that influence any issue generated by the participants. Therefore, the participants' interpretations are significant in terms of giving the most appropriate explanations for their behaviours, actions and thoughts" (Alhojailan, 2012, pp. 40-41). In addition, these were selected because similarities arose when transcribing the interviews (through a compilation in a spreadsheet). Consequently, it was decided to follow the patterns in the replies and the categories connected amongst them.

The sample population was 100 participants with a 95% confidence level; even if the results cannot be generalized, they exceed the minimum to be considered reliable. The instrument

questions were created and tested with ten individuals not considered in the sample. Three of them were changed and reformulated after this pilotage, and accordingly, the changes were made; afterward, the selection of participants began.

They were selected through non-probabilistic volunteer subjects contacted through a feminist group who wished to contribute based on their personal experiences, backgrounds, and willingness to participate in this study. The selected are from several countries, including Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, the United States, China, and Spain. They were cordially invited to answer the interviews about their position on the feminist struggle with complete anonymity, respecting ethical principles.

4. Results and Discussion

This section will be divided into three segments. The first is the descriptive analysis of the participants, as it is an indispensable aspect to understand the context of those interviewed. The second part is focused on showing visually, through graph bars, the most relevant answers to three questions, as these were varied and valuable to explore each one. Finally, the third section is the correlational analysis to find a correlation between power, the "barrier", and how men can actually and actively help in feminism.

a. Descriptive analysis

As mentioned, the structured questions were based on thirteen questions that began with five questions regarding the descriptive analysis of the participants. This data consisted of age, gender, level of schooling, marital status, and employment status. It is pertinent to consider it as the background of those interviewed to consider how their realities can affect their view of the three variables considered and, thus, their responses. The information from the complete sample was collected and presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of the participants

		Interviewed [n=100]
Characteristic	Category	N
Age	16-18	8
	19-21	24
	22-24	26
	More than 25	42
Gender	Female	94
	Male	0
	Other	6
Level of Schooling	Primary	0
	Secondary	0
	Bachelor's Degree or equivalent	79
	Master's Degree or equivalent	11
	Doctoral Degree or equivalent	10
Marital status	Single	58

	Married	27
	Widowed	7
	Divorced/Separated	5
	Other	3
Employment status	Unemployed	14
	Employed	68
	Self-employed	17
	Other	1

Source: Data collected by the author

In this regard, the main discoveries were that those interviewed were over 25 years of age, identified with the gender "female", have a Bachelor's Degree or equivalent, are single, and are employed. On a second level, six interviewees identified with the gender "Other", which is consistent with this article's goals, as they also provided their visions of the variables with the entitlement to refer to themselves as their wish. The second age group found was from 22-24 years, with eleven of the interviewed having a Master's Degree, are married, and self-employed.

This last part may provide another view of the responses, as more individuals are self-employed than employed. That can also be related in terms of power, considering that in past centuries, it was unthinkable to refer to a sample of individuals who identified with the gender "Other", or were unable to work because of cultural impediments and ideas about only men working, much less being self-employed and having individuality. Mainly, these two aspects reference the contemporary times and the freedom it is spreading.

Overall, it was discovered that those who constituted the sample in this article have a higher education, are -at least- over 18 years old, making them adults in many regions of the world, and have variable marital and employment status, which may explain the answers that will be presented in the next section. The second part of the structured interview was focused mainly on the yield of power, the barrier to be broken in the feminist efforts, and how men can help in the feminist struggle. Through circle graphs, that information can be observed through section b to see how the answers were divided graphically.

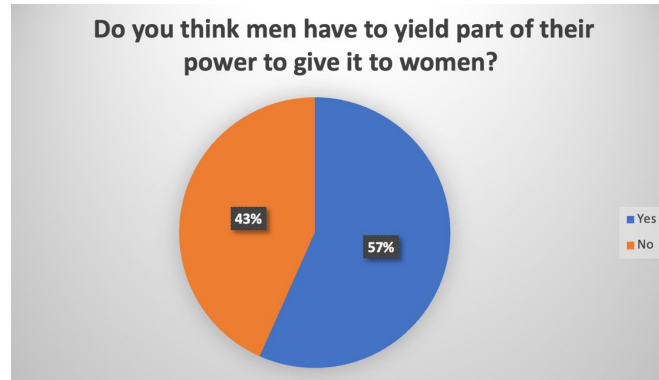
b. Graph description

Beginning with the section on the perception of power, the question related to the subject was: Do you think men have to yield part of their power to give it to women? The question meant surrendering some of their benefits (that the literature review found an association between having power and being privileged); but parting from the idea that men were the center of history and now have to consider another member of society with equal importance in different matters. As described in previous sections, the search for equality is one of feminism's goals; thus, the importance of their participation and their voices in society should be the same. That was inaccurate in past centuries; men accumulated power as leaders and decision-makers.

Now, the perception of yielding power can be different, as was discovered in the bibliography. It may have been the social system's functioning that compromised women's impression of having power or not, so it was essential to determine how the interviewed felt regarding such a delicate manner, for example, having feelings of inferiority, still, compared

to another gender. It could mean feminism's goals are not being accomplished, and it could prove the weakening of the movement. After establishing its importance, the answers can be observed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Consideration of power regarding the traditional genders



Source: Data collected by the author

Of the 100 women interviewed, their answers to this question were almost proportional. By observing the graph, this subject may need to be clarified, as 43% of the interviewees did not consider power a vital factor. In addition, this percentage may seem very high; however, for others, 57% of women considered there had to be, mandatorily, a cession of power from men to women to re-establish a balance between the two "traditional" genders. This balance is necessary for every society to be considered equally important. Thus, the fact that the majority of those interviewed considered a cession, or yielding, of power may confirm that power is a relevant factor that still needs to be well-distributed.

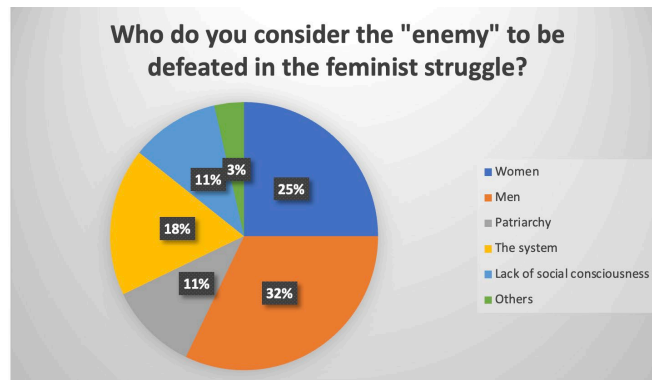
As part of the analysis created in the qualitative segment, the word: "dominance" was constantly mentioned during the interviewing process. It is potentially an even "stronger" word for power. Dominance establishes the superiority imposition of the power men potentially have, so it would seem more extreme because, in dominance, there must be something/someone dominated. If men had the power, women would be those dominated, moving away from feminism's postulates.

Following this thought, interviewee #56, of Mexican nationality, proposed that men do not yield the power but have gotten accustomed to women taking it away by force. It can relate to the interviewee's background, as the feminist movement in Mexico has employed a strategy of manifestations, for example, spraying historical buildings with graffiti, entering by coercion to federal buildings, and even starting fires inside the government's properties. In this sense, the interviewees interpreted power as a synonym for coercion, force, and intimidation. As detailed previously, that was different from the proposal in this paper, as it does not promote the usage of superiority or any extremist concepts but rather a consensus of a new balance that works for all involved in society.

In the second segment about an adversary (or barrier) in feminism, the question read: Whom do you consider the "enemy" to be defeated in the feminist struggle? The question proposes that there is something/someone that needs to be eradicated so that the feminist movement can accomplish its purpose. Once again, during the interview process, it was reassured that the words used, such as "enemy," which is on-quoted in Figure 2, refer to a barrier to be broken so the movement can finally succeed in all its purposes. This article emphasizes that it does not suggest one primary wrongdoer but wants to review perceptions and/or feelings regarding what is stopping feminism, and why the four waves were necessary, what is

missing in the movement to flourish in its totality. For this aim, the answers can be observed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The perception regarding the "enemy" or adversary in the feminist movement



Source: Data collected by the author

The dominant comments about the adversary in feminism are shown in the figure above. It is incredibly relevant to mention that most of the answers were: "men," with 32% of the answers, even if the responses were divided. A pertinent clarification is that "men" were considered in many interpretations: ignorant, violent, oppressors, or following a *macho* conception, not simply the gender but a characteristic of men that could harm women, once again based on particular experiences of the interviewed. It means men by themselves, only with the particularity of the sex, are not considered the adversary per se, but they must have a feature that transforms them into being viewed as such.

It can also relate to the misconception this paper proposes: within the sphere of "men" there is a problem: not all men are ignorant, violent, oppressors, or *machos*. It is an answer that reduces individuals to a gender, a fact that needs to be noticed and worked on being eradicated because it also creates polarization. Following this same line of understatement reduces gender as the enemy of the movement, and the theoretical framework proposes that men are more than that: they can be allies. Misconceptions as such are similar to the second most answered response: women.

Primarily, the reactions of voting women as "enemies" of the feminist movement are based on the fact that women birth men; they are responsible for providing their vision of the world and educating them. Further, the interviewed explained that they refer to women who do not understand nor support the struggle, as they have had privileges. It could mean their vision is compromised in a similar way that it happens to men: privileges do not allow them to observe the struggle or the pain. That creates a different perspective; as mentioned in previous sections, men have clear responsibilities concerning the other genders recognized worldwide, but so do women. This last retakes the paragraph above, as generalizations mean reducing individuals to any gender, and the consequences of doing so are hurtful. Contemporary times should allow people to be studied individually in their contexts. As the two main discoveries were "men" and "women", it can mean reducing people not by their circumstances but by their gender.

In the third instance, with 18%, the social system was considered the combatant. A pertinent clarification is that in Figure 2, the answer only says "the system"; nevertheless, it refers to the social system mentioned in the literature review. It can also be associated with the sociocultural scenario, considering that it had supported and even impulsed repressive

measures in past centuries, proven by the many women who viewed the same. With this answer, the barrier in feminism was not reduced to gender but to something, the patterned network of relationships that has installed, maybe, that sense of dominance mentioned before. It contributes to the theoretical framework with the idea that if the social system has not encouraged a division between the genders, at least it has allowed it. Based on this answer, this permission should no longer be accepted.

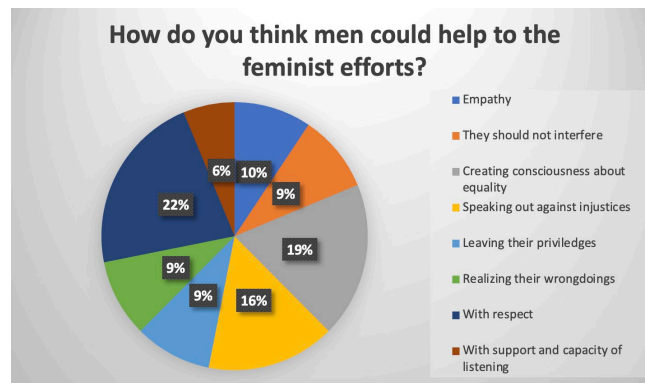
In conjunction with the past response, answers 4 and 5 were tied with 11% of the votes. One of these was the patriarchy: the patriarchal system previously defined in the theoretical framework, installed for centuries, and overvalued men have had negative consequences. For example, women were not considered in many areas, such as the political, economic, or social aspects, one of the reasons why feminism began to rise in the first place. The lack of social consciousness was the other answer that got the same percentage of responses.

Both of these responses refer to society; maybe something has to change in how society manages itself, as they may have allowed patriarchy to continue in previous centuries, but the lack of social consciousness is their responsibility. First, as an individual and then as a member of society, there needs to be an awareness of what they accept. The last response is not restricting individuals to their gender but all of society. This structure has permitted men to be considered superior, so if this case was accurate, it needed an introspective exercise to comprehend why things like that have been accepted in society.

In a lesser grade, being contemplated with the 3%, the rest of the replies were taken as "others" as they did not enter one of the classifications created. On the contrary, as the previous responses were generalizing and restrictive, the ones that entered the 3% were specific scenarios. For example, some of those were: "rapists" (that is not the same category as men), "hembrism" (not the same as women, but referring to radicalism), or "misinformation", which simply did not fit in the categories mentioned. Nevertheless, these types of answers are insightful and valuable to include, as they provide comprehension of the environment of the interviewed and what they have lived through to make those types of answers. This last is conceptualized as the counterpart of extreme feminism, which takes to the radical aspect and considers it deeply harmful.

Finally, after establishing that there is indeed a barrier to feminism, the role of the movement is to eradicate it. However, there is another consideration: men could also do something to support the women's movement and aim towards absolute equality, which should be one of society's goals, inspiring well-being for all. Then, the advocacy could not only be from women to women, but there is a chance men could help in some way and to some extent, which could be meaningful, so it is relevant to explore it. In this sense, a third consideration for the women was to listen to their ideas regarding how they think men can support the feminist efforts, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: The consideration of men's role in women's liberation



Source: Data collected by the author

The question was: How do you think men could help the feminist efforts? Which had a vast of options that could be summarized in Figure 3 presented above. The most repeated answer was respect; it is a value that should never be missing in any society, integrates the best part of individuals, and must prevail in the search for equality. All individuals must respect and value all for everyone's well-being. In the second instance, the women hoped for men to create consciousness about equality. It involves spreading the word, as well as the example, to everyone around. During the interviews, they emphasized creating consciousness around other men; this certainly involves action when their role should be complete allies, extending what the movement is truly about, not radicalism but comprehension and equality.

Moreover, empathy is found as a third instance to be considered, appealing to their feelings and their human emotions, which was previously defined. It is also a core value that individuals must have to be sensitive to such subjects. It also proposes not particularly an intervention (activity) but a comprehensive manner to understand why feminism is acting the way it is. For the 10% of women, the most essential aspect men could do is simply be understanding. It can be related to empathy, as they are not the movement's center but allow it to take its own route.

Then, with 9%, we found three more ideas: first, men should be able to leave aside their privileges after noticing them; the action would mean a cession of the entitlements they had different to women. This article mentions privileges because they are inseparable from patriarchy, superiority, and power. For the interviewed, it is necessary to stop this segmentation of those with privileges and those without, regardless of gender.

Also, 9% of women think men can help by witnessing their wrongdoings and examining their faults. For example, the women interviewed mentioned that all men had disrespected women at any point in their lives, and to some extent, this should not happen again. It must be considered that all are human and allowed to make mistakes; nevertheless, the thing asked for is to acknowledge this responsibility and to have accountability. After observing them, it would be "easier" to change it, but if individuals are unaware of their misconduct, that pattern cannot be changed.

Further, another 9% of the interviewed hoped that men should not interfere with the feminist movement or help in any way. It is a contradictory measure and clashes with the other responses because this would mean polarization and keeping away from the movement to the opposite sex. Previous responses mean women can gain their role in society from men. Finally, 6% voted that men could help only with support; this implies, without further action, just letting women be and act to their judgment.

The last part of this analysis consists of a correlational analysis in case it is possible to determine the existence -or not- of a relation amongst the variables considered. By doing so, the investigation of the variables would not be limited to a description of these. It would go further into the investigation and possibly find a relationship between them. That way, it can be learned and defined if these three variables are meaningful for women and if they fulfill their perceptions. In addition, this type of analysis is necessary to respond to the previously established hypothesis accurately. Otherwise, the relationship establishment could not have a satisfactory response only by being tested, and the software selected was SPSS to conduct such analysis.

c. Correlational analysis

Table 2: Pearson's chi-square of yielding of power and the existence of a barrier in feminism

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,693 ^a	1	,030		
Continuity Correction ^b	3,229	1	,072		
Likelihood Ratio	4,810	1	,028		
Fisher's Exact Test				,063	,035
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,537	1	,033		

Considering that the answers of yielding power from men to women had answers almost proportional, this variable had to be further studied, so it was selected alongside the existence of a barrier in feminism because it was an answer with many branches worthy of being studied. The method employed within SPSS was the non-parametric chi-square analysis, as its importance was defined in the methodology, and that will be the focus of all the correlations presented. Table 2 shows the asymptotic significance, whose value is 0.030, less than the significance typically used ($\alpha=0.05$) to explain a possible relationship. After getting that value, there is enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. With this, it confirms a relationship between these two variables.

The discussion of having found a possible association between these variables is broad, and it confirms that even if power may not seem like an important aspect (for that 43% that voted "no" in Figure 1), from getting this relation, it can be learned that it is indeed an essential factor. It creates a difference between the two traditional genders; even though some interviewees did not acknowledge or observe power, it was present. That is congruent with the postulates of this paper, as power is undeniably within societies; nevertheless, it must not be unequal.

Seeing that power is relevant, and there is a cession of the same, this fact can relate to the second variable: the barrier in feminism. It was previously found that a barrier did exist, and the proposal is that it is relevant to study it because it creates oppression and does not allow feminism's goals to be satisfied as a whole. Nevertheless, which, who, or what it is was not concretely defined.

From this association, it can be learned that power may change from one gender to another (in many ways: yielding, conceding, taking it by force, amongst others). One of these ways to express power could be helpful for the movement and fight together against the barrier. One problem is, as observed in Figure 2, that there are many responses about an adversary of the movement, and thus, it still needs to be clarified how power should be managed.

From an optimistic view, this correlation could mean that power is women's ally, in the sense that men have yielded power and women have it to explore their movement as they wish. Undeniably, the impediment of feminism should be more studied in depth; nevertheless, it is challenging to define only one adversary because, once again, every individual has personal experiences that forge them into what they believe, and that is what this study pursued: their perceptions, to understand their ideas and mentality, to have a contemplative exercise before sharing intimate feelings.

As the barrier in feminism still needs to be studied in depth and retaking Figure 2, there is a possibility that men could do something about it if there were indeed an association between the variables. For example, on the one hand, for 32% (Figure 2), men were the enemy to be defeated in order for feminism to reach its objective; on the other hand, this paper has also maintained the discussion regarding men's actions and how they could be (with the correct activities) allies of the movement. To examine it, a Chi-square analysis was conducted. The results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Pearson's chi-square of the barrier in feminism and whether men can help in feminist efforts

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15,067 ^a	7	,035
Likelihood Ratio	18,367	7	,010
Linear-by-Linear Association	2,439	1	,118

As the asymptotic significance was 0.035, which is also less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, proposing the existence of a correlation between the variables considered. One possible explanation was the acceptance that men can create a difference in the social system, and their input strengthen the feminist movement. They can help and be considered a "bridge" between feminism and its final goal.

Discovering this relation also opens the question of why men are considered the enemy in such a high percentage when they do have significant actions that could impulse the movement. Possibly, the women interviewed limit men to the gender as an opposite, rather than other members of society, restraining them into one category. It was a previous proposal about limiting individuals to something, which could be confirmed in this section.

Another question arises because if men are indeed allies, their actions matter, and yet they were considered "enemies" of the movement; on a realistic side, during contemporary times, can the discussion be reduced to genders? Could the significant impediment be just the sex one identifies with, even in modern times? On the bright side, people are becoming increasingly aware of their environment. If men can be supportive in many ways (some mentioned in Figure 3), there are alternatives to this issue.

Just as the title of the theoretical framework, men's actions CAN make a difference; they can, just like women, change the aspects that do not work as they should or what is harmful about society. That is why respect or social consciousness were deepened before: they required society to be insightful, perceptive, and clever and acknowledge how they could help. Together, men's actions with the feminist movement can forge something compelling,

something worth fighting for that could end the come-and-go of four waves of feminism and only create one strong feminist with its goals fully fulfilled.

Nevertheless, it is also relevant to retake that 9% of the interviewed (Figure 3) considered that men should not interfere in the movement; still, after having found the connection between the variables, the invitation would be to work on the idea that men are the enemy by itself. Instead, the particular cases during the discussion of Figure 2 would be best: any individual referring to their own experience and selecting some harmful characteristics, but not delimiting people by things they cannot control, like the gender they identify.

Finally, after discovering that men can aid the feminist movement, there is one subject to retake: Are they yielding power, or are women taking it by force, weakening their relationship to another fight for power? Considering that question, a Pearson Chi-Square test was employed to find a correlation between those variables and give a possible answer to the question above. Table 4 shows the results:

Table 4: Pearson's chi-square of perception of power and whether men can help in feminist efforts

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10,090 ^a	4	,039
Likelihood Ratio	12,106	4	,017
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,789	1	,181
N of Valid Cases	100		

In this case, the asymptotic significance was 0.039, which concludes that an association between these variables is found. A possible response to the concern expressed above is that no, the relationship between the importance of power and whether men's actions can be helpful for the movement is not weakening, which could also imply a cession, yielding, surrendering, transferring it, but in a helpful, positive, and/or non-confrontative way. The connection of the variables can propose that ceding power could be another technique by which men could help the feminist movement.

For example, men can be involved as allies, but as they are not the movement's primary focus, they do not impose power on the barrier; they stay put while women act powerfully. It could relate to the values established before, like empathy and/or respect, because there is an understanding that feminism is not a manly struggle; at the same time, it is something of interest: the search for equality should not have gender. So, men who yield power willingly may count on empathy to understand the movement or respect to acknowledge they have been privileged, and now it is time to change that. Overall, the relation between the variables can have positive outcomes; interpreting the perception of power and men's actions strengthens both genders.

As another discovery, it was verifiable that power is involved within the relationship between the two "traditional" genders to some extent, even though the measure of it is uncertain and should undeniably be studied further. Still, to determine something of this caliber may be an arduous task. Nonetheless, power was found in its two correlations (Table 2 and Table 4), even though graphically (Figure 1), it may have seemed incoherent data as their values were almost proportional. That is how power shifts depending on how it is being studied, finally confirming it was a variable worthy of study in this text.

5. Conclusion

As part of the last considerations, the hypothesis was tested with the results obtained. The null hypothesis was rejected in the three cases studied, thus accepting the research hypothesis: there is a relationship between the cession of power, the existence of a barrier, and men's actions in feminist efforts. It confirms what was mentioned in the literature review about the existence of an obstacle in feminism that is slowing down the movement's objective, but also a positive side, which is that there are many ways to help and impulse the movement against this barrier. One of them is men; this gender was found to be able to assist in the same.

Thus, both aspects are valid and may seem contradictory, as we discovered and provided many ways men could support feminism. Simultaneously, they are considered part of the barrier in the movement. The negative aspect is that there will be possibly more waves of feminism, as there are undeniably obstacles that weaken and slow the movement and its goal. Those perceptions are still high, which must be studied with time to reach a consensus. Nevertheless, together with women, there is a chance that men cooperate and fight the invisible but dangerous combatant.

With further investigation and the selection of other variables that are also relevant and different from the ones employed in this article, there is a chance that literature and the finding of correlations could end many misconceptions regarding feminism and men as "enemies" of the movement, at the same time of clarifying who/what is the actual barrier. Also, men's role should be acknowledged for those who identify themselves as being allies, as it was deeply confirmed that their actions do matter and are capable of making a difference.

Furthermore, using a correlation through Chi-Square analysis supported the hypothesis and the pursuit of the objective; even if the results are not generalizable, it proposes a real insight into women's perceptions and most intimate feelings. The reference made about an "enemy", "nemesis", or "adversary" was basically to cite a counterpart, which, for the majority of the interviewees, was supported by the theoretical framework, resulting in being the social system.

It is complicated to change as it carries the cultural background and social structures that have ruled for centuries in societies worldwide because it influenced how people were formed. Deconstructing societies in its entirety is a difficult task, but not impossible. Another idea about why the waves of feminism have been four: there is a whole background in all cultures that needs fixing, but first, it needs to be understood and accepted to be worthy of fighting for equality, and, thus, for the feminist movement.

Future lines of investigation should consider the relationship of feminism with other genders, as this study had the limitation of the sexes studied, even though the sample included individuals who identified with the gender "Other", but any response was "men". Further, men who consider themselves allies have a point of view that should also be listened to because now it was discovered that a high percentage of women consider men as "enemies"/"adversaries"/"rivals"/"antagonists", among other, may limit to which extent can men help in the movement. Men may feel rejected by the movement and do not wish to participate, yet they should, as their actions are substantive and may change the course of history. Based on the mixed approach and the interviewees' feelings, one of the most decisive conclusions of this article is that it is better to be united with any gender in every society and eliminate the barriers that divide and polarize all as a society.

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