

PATRIARCHY • FEMINISM

AND THE ARGUMENTS BETWEEN THEM • A DEEP DIVE IN FIFTEEN PARTS

PART ONE • THE GROUND RULES

The Ground Rules

*What the words actually mean,
who believes what, and the fourteen
ways this argument goes wrong*

INSIDE THIS VOLUME

Definitions • Patriarchy and matriarchy • Sex and gender

Four meanings of equality • The feminist waves

A complete map of positions • Fourteen reasoning failures

Two worked examples

94 PAGES • 10 CHAPTERS • FULLY FOOTNOTED

An evidence-led, all-sides explanatory report

India in focus, with global comparison • Academic-grade sourcing throughout

Every factual claim footnoted • Contested claims flagged as contested

Before the evidence, the ground rules. What the contested words actually mean; who holds which position and why; and the fourteen recurring reasoning failures that make this argument unwinnable — each one committed with equal enthusiasm by every side.

Research done and written by Lovepreet Singh

July 2026 • Part 1 of 15 • misterlove.in

Author's note

I did not set out to write fifteen volumes. I set out to settle an argument I kept losing — not losing on the evidence, but losing in the sense that it never ended, and neither side, including mine, ever seemed to be talking about the same thing as the other.

If you spend any time online you know the argument I mean. Patriarchy against matriarchy. Whether women are equal, or less, or somehow more. Whether the pay gap is real. Whether a woman's clothing is her business alone. Whether men are the oppressed sex now, or were never oppressed at all. It runs constantly, it produces a great deal of certainty on both sides, and it produces almost no agreement about anything.

What eventually struck me was that most of these fights are not about facts at all. They are three different arguments wearing one costume: a factual dispute, a dispute about what a word means, and a dispute about what ought to matter. Nobody says which one they are having. So the conversation cannot end.

This series is my attempt to do the work properly — to check every claim I have ever repeated, including the ones I liked, and to write down what survives.

What I promised myself before starting

That I would check the claims I agreed with hardest. That turned out to be the difficult part. It is easy to fact-check your opponents. In the course of this volume I found roughly thirty widely repeated claims that are wrong, garbled or unsourceable — and they were distributed across every side of the argument, including mine. The most famous quotation in feminist history was invented by someone else twelve years after the fact. The most-cited anti-feminist study needed a corrigendum. Several of the terms the men's-rights internet uses as though they were logic have no scholarly existence whatsoever. All of that is in here.

That I would not decide the questions that evidence cannot decide. Whether outcomes should be equal, whether quotas are just, whether modesty is dignity or constraint — these are value questions. I have my own answers. They are not in this report, because a report that smuggles them in under the cover of data is doing something dishonest, and because you are perfectly capable of reaching your own.

That I would state uncertainty as uncertainty. A fair number of the disputes in the later volumes are simply not resolved by current evidence. Saying so is less satisfying than producing a verdict. It is also the truth, and manufacturing certainty to satisfy a reader is exactly the habit that got this argument into its present state.

That India would not be a footnote. Almost everything written on this subject in English treats the West as the default case and everywhere else as a variation. But the sharpest test of nearly every theory here is Indian: the same religion producing opposite outcomes in Kerala and Haryana, caste and gender turning out to be one mechanism rather than two, laws written to protect women and argued to be misused. That material is at the centre of this series, not the margin.

What I am not

I am not an academic, and this is not peer-reviewed work. What I have done instead is show my working: every factual claim carries a footnote at the point where it is made, every contested claim is marked contested, and everything I could not verify is stated as unverified rather than quietly repeated. That is the standard I ask to be held to. If you find an error, the report has failed at its own stated test — and the sources are printed precisely so that you can find one.

A word on who this is for

Not for people who already know what they think. For anyone who has sat through one of these arguments and come away with the uneasy feeling that both sides were partly right and neither was being honest about it. That feeling is correct. This series is an attempt to work out exactly which parts.

Lovepreet Singh

July 2026 · misterlove.in

About this series

This is the first of fifteen linked reports on the arguments people have about patriarchy, feminism, and the relations between men and women. The series exists because those arguments are conducted, online and off, almost entirely without shared definitions, shared evidence, or shared rules — which is why they never end.

The whole series follows four commitments.

One. Loaded questions get answered, not dodged.

Where a widely made claim is well supported, this series says so. Where it is false as stated, this series says that too, and shows the evidence. That rule is applied with exactly equal force to claims made by feminists and to claims made by their critics. Several famous findings on *both* sides turn out not to survive checking, and you will meet them.

Two. Value questions are labelled as value questions.

Some disputes cannot be settled by any amount of data — whether outcomes should be equal, whether quotas are fair, whether a woman's clothing is anyone else's business. On those, this series lays out the strongest version of each position and declines to pretend that evidence decides it.

Three. Everything factual is footnoted, and uncertainty is marked.

Named studies, years, effect sizes, statutes, and judgments. Where sources disagree, the disagreement is reported rather than resolved by picking the convenient one. Where a claim could not be verified, that is stated.

Four. India is in focus, and so is the rest of the world.

Indian law, data and debates are treated in depth rather than as a footnote to a Western story; the United States, Europe, the Nordic countries, East Asia and the Middle East supply comparison. A great deal of what looks like a universal truth about men and women turns out, on comparison, to be a fact about one country in one decade.

A note on tone

This report is written for a reader who wants to understand the argument, not to be recruited into one side of it. It does not scold, and it does not flatter. Where the evidence is embarrassing to a position, it says so; where a position is stronger than its opponents admit, it says that too.

One consequence is worth stating in advance. A reader who arrives certain that one side is simply correct will find, in every volume, well-supported claims from the other side and unsupported claims from their own. That is not false balance. It is what checking produces.

Reading order

Each volume stands alone, but if you read only one, read this one: without shared definitions and shared standards of evidence, the material in the other fourteen simply becomes ammunition.

The fifteen parts

Part	What it covers
1 The Ground Rules	Definitions, the map of every position, and the reasoning failures. <i>This volume.</i>
2 Origins	Why nearly every society became patriarchal; whether any matriarchy has existed.
3 Dharmic Traditions	Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh texts, practice, caste, and reform.
4 Christianity	Scripture, church history, the modern complementarian–egalitarian split.
5 Islam	Qur'an, hadith, the schools of law, and why outcomes differ so wildly by country.
6 Judaism, East Asia, Indigenous & Colonialism	Halakhah, Confucian norms, pre-colonial gender, and what colonial rule did.
7 The Science	How different are men and women really — bodies, minds, interests.
8 India I: Law	Personal law, the Constitution, dowry law, marital rape, the courts.
9 India II: Society	Sex ratio, work, caste, violence, and the data.
10 Work and Money	The pay gap, the child penalty, hours, and who does what.
11 Bodies and Consent	Dress, sexual attention, pornography, sex work, false accusation.
12 Where Men Are Losing	Education, suicide, custody, conscription, sentencing, loneliness.
13 Quotas and the Global Ledger	Reservation, boards, privilege claims — and where women remain unequal.
14 The Expert Map	What professionals in each field actually say, and where they split.
15 The Internet War & Verdict	The online gender conflict, direct answers, and the balance sheet.

This volume in ten chapters

1. Why this argument never ends — three kinds of question inside every sentence.
2. Patriarchy: the word — four jobs one word is doing, and its sharpest critics.
3. Matriarchy — four terms constantly confused, and whether any matriarchy existed.
4. Sex and gender — a history almost everyone gets wrong.
5. Equality — four different things people mean by it, and a fifth that rejects the question.
6. The waves — why historians reject the standard story of feminism, in the West and in India.
7. The map — every major position, in its own words, with its critics named.
8. Fourteen ways to fool yourself — the reasoning failures, with honest pedigree labels.
9. Two worked examples — one famous finding from each side, taken apart.
10. The rules this series follows — what to hold the next fourteen volumes to.

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How to read this report

Six kinds of box appear throughout. Each does a specific job, and you can read the report by the boxes alone if you want the short version.

KEY TERM

Defines a word precisely, because most of these arguments are really disputes about definitions wearing the costume of disputes about facts.

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

Restates the point with no jargon at all. If a paragraph seems dense, look for this box underneath it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Explains what practical or political conclusion turns on the point just made — why it is worth the effort of getting right.

REMEMBER THIS

The one or two sentences worth carrying out of the section.

CORRECTION

A claim that is widely repeated — in newspapers, in textbooks, sometimes in peer-reviewed journals — and is wrong or garbled. There are a lot of these, on every side.

GENUINELY DISPUTED

A point where competent, honest specialists disagree, and where anyone telling you it is settled is overstating. These are not gaps in the research; they are the real state of knowledge.

Confidence tags

Where a specific claim is assessed, one of four tags appears:

- **SOLID** — multiple independent lines of good evidence; no serious specialist dissent.
- **CONTESTED** — real evidence on both sides; the honest answer is that we do not know yet.
- **FALSE AS STATED** — the claim as usually phrased does not survive checking, though something nearby may.
- **VALUE JUDGEMENT** — no amount of evidence settles this; it depends on what you think matters.

Footnotes and sources

Footnotes sit at the bottom of the page on which the claim appears, so you never have to hunt. They give author, title, venue and year, and where a number is quoted they give the number's source. The *Sources* section at the end collects everything, grouped by chapter, including items consulted but not quoted. Where a source could not be verified directly, the footnote says so — that is deliberate, and it is the difference between a report and a rumour.

Cross-references

A marker like [Part 7] means the topic is opened properly in a later volume and is only sketched here.

One request

If you find an error, the report has failed at its own stated standard. The sources are given precisely so that you can check rather than trust.

The single most useful habit in this entire subject is asking, of any claim you like the sound of: what would it take to show me this is false? Almost nobody arguing about patriarchy online has an answer. Chapter 8 is about building one.

Why This Argument Never Ends

Two people can spend three hours arguing about patriarchy, generate a great deal of heat, and part convinced the other is either a liar or an idiot — without ever once having disagreed about a fact. This happens because a single sentence like “*women aren’t really oppressed any more*” contains three different kinds of question fused together, and the two arguers are each answering a different one.

Separating them is not a debating trick. It is the whole prerequisite for getting anywhere.

1.1 Three questions inside every sentence

Factual questions

These have answers, though not always the answers either side wants. *Do men and women differ in average mathematical ability? Has the pay gap narrowed? Did any society ever have female rule? What percentage of workplace deaths are male?* Evidence can settle these, and where evidence is thin the honest answer is “we don’t know.”

Definitional questions

These masquerade as factual. *Is patriarchy still with us? Is India a matriarchy in the household? Is that feminism or is it man-hating?* The answer depends entirely on how the word is defined, and rival definitions are often both internally coherent. Two people can agree on every observable fact about the Minangkabau of West Sumatra and still disagree about whether they are a matriarchy — because one is using the anthropologist’s definition and the other the redefinition proposed by the ethnographer who lived there [Chapter 3].

Value questions

These have no factual answer at all. *Should pay be equal? Are quotas fair? Should a woman dress as she likes regardless of who is looking? Is it wrong to expect a mother rather than a father to cut her hours?* You can bring a mountain of data to these and still be no closer, because the disagreement is about what matters, not about what is.

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

Most gender arguments feel unwinnable because the two people are playing three different games at once and haven’t agreed which one they’re playing.

The rest of this volume gives you the tools for all three: precise definitions (Chapters 2–5), an honest map of who believes what and why (Chapters 6–7), and the reasoning failures that wreck the factual arguments (Chapters 8–9).

1.2 The test that separates thinking from cheering

There is one question that reliably distinguishes someone who is reasoning from someone who is defending a team: *what evidence would change your mind?*

Try it on yourself before you try it on anyone else. If you believe the pay gap is entirely explained by women's choices, what finding would make you abandon that? If you believe it is entirely discrimination, same question. If neither has an answer, the belief is not being held for evidential reasons, and no amount of argument will move it.

A position engineered so that nothing could ever count against it feels invincible and is actually empty. Chapter 8 has a name for this problem and a warning about over-using that name.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is not a lecture about civility. It is a practical filter. If you can identify what would falsify a claim, you can go and look. If you cannot, you are not going to learn anything from the argument, and neither is the person you are arguing with.

1.3 The questions readers actually ask

This series was commissioned around a real set of questions, phrased the way people actually phrase them online. Several of them contain premises that do not survive contact with the evidence — and several of the standard rebuttals to them do not either. Rather than reframing the questions into something more comfortable, this report answers them as asked.

Here is the preview. Every verdict below is argued in full, with sources, in the volume named.

The claim, as commonly made	Verdict	Where
"Women are less intelligent than men."	FALSE AS STATED	Part 7
"Men and women are psychologically identical apart from socialisation."	FALSE AS STATED	Part 7
"Men are more variable, so there are more male geniuses <i>and</i> more male failures."	CONTESTED	Part 7, Ch. 8
"Women don't want to work as hard."	FALSE AS STATED as stated	Parts 9, 10
"Women earn 77 cents on the male dollar for the same work."	FALSE AS STATED	Part 10
"The pay gap is entirely explained by choices, so there is no discrimination."	CONTESTED	Part 10
"Almost every known society has been male-dominated in public and political life."	SOLID	Part 2
"There have been true matriarchies — societies ruled by women."	FALSE AS STATED in the mirror-image sense	Ch. 3, Part 2
"Patriarchy is caused by religion."	CONTESTED	Parts 3–6
"What a woman wears has nothing to do with anyone else."	VALUE JUDGEMENT	Part 11
"Clothing predicts sexual assault."	FALSE AS STATED	Part 11
"Most rape accusations are false."	FALSE AS STATED	Part 11
"Men are treated far more harshly by criminal courts."	SOLID	Part 12
"Family courts are biased against fathers."	CONTESTED	Part 12
"Domestic violence is roughly symmetrical between the sexes."	CONTESTED	Part 12

Table continued from previous page

The claim, as commonly made	Verdict	Where
"Women receive legal privileges in the name of equality."	SOLID in specific cases, CONTESTED in general	Parts 8, 13
"India's dowry and cruelty law is widely misused."	CONTESTED	Part 8
"Indian rape law is not gender-neutral, and adult male victims have no remedy."	SOLID	Part 8
"Women are still structurally worse off across much of the world."	SOLID	Part 13
"Feminism has gone too far / not far enough."	VALUE JUDGEMENT	Part 15

Look at that table for a moment before reading on, because its shape is the single most important finding of this whole series. It is not a column of ticks against one side and crosses against the other. Well-supported claims and false claims appear on both sides. So do genuine unknowns. Anyone whose worldview requires every entry in a column to come out their way is going to be disappointed by the evidence.

REMEMBER THIS

There is no team here whose factual record is clean. There is also no team whose every claim is nonsense. If that sounds like a cop-out, note that it is a specific, checkable claim about the state of the evidence — and the following fourteen volumes are the check.

1.4 What this report will not do

It will not tell you what to conclude about the value questions. On whether outcomes ought to be equal, whether quotas are just, whether modesty is dignity or oppression, this series presents the strongest available case for each position and stops. That is not neutrality-as-cowardice; it is the recognition that these are the questions on which reasonable people have differed for two centuries and no report settles them.

It will also not treat either side's most extreme voices as its representatives. The weakest version of feminism is easy to demolish and so is the weakest version of the men's-rights argument; demolishing either teaches you nothing. Chapter 8 explains why this move is so tempting and what it costs.

GENUINELY DISPUTED

One thing worth saying at the outset: a fair number of the disagreements you will encounter in Parts 7 to 13 are not resolvable with current evidence. That is uncomfortable if you came looking for a verdict. It is also the truth, and a report that manufactured certainty to satisfy you would be worse than useless.

Patriarchy: The Word

“Patriarchy” is doing at least four different jobs in contemporary argument, and people switch between them mid-sentence without noticing. This chapter separates the jobs, gives the scholarship behind each, and then presents the strongest criticisms of the concept — which, as it happens, come mostly from feminists.

2.1 Where the word came from

The word is much older than its current use and originally had nothing to do with men and women. It enters English around 1561, in a translation by the lawyer Thomas Norton, meaning an *ecclesiastical province governed by a patriarch*.¹ It comes from Greek *patriarkhēs*, from *patriá* (lineage, from *patēr*, father) plus *árkhō* (I rule). The sense “system of society or government by fathers or elder males of the community” is recorded from the 1630s.²

So for roughly four centuries the word meant literal rule by fathers — the legal authority of the male head of household, which in most of Europe and South Asia was a real institution with real statutory content.

The analytical sense — patriarchy as a whole social system of male dominance, not merely a household arrangement — is a product of the Women’s Liberation Movement around 1970. Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics* (1970) is the founding text; Veronica Beechey’s “On patriarchy” (1979) is the pivotal early attempt to theorise it rigorously.³

SMALL POINT, LARGE CONSEQUENCES

Early theorists wrote *patriarchy*, without an article. Online usage has given it one: *the patriarchy*. Hill and Allen note that this grammatical shift “produces a vision of something” singular and concrete — which is precisely what makes “smash the patriarchy” sound like a claim about a committee somewhere, and precisely what makes it easy to ridicule. The scholarly concept is a description of a pattern, not the name of an organisation.

2.2 Millett: sex as a political category

Millett’s move was not to claim that men are bad. It was to redefine “politics” so that the relations between the sexes fall inside it.

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “patriarchy, n.”, earliest evidence 1561 (Thomas Norton). The full OED entry is paywalled and its sense-by-sense dating of the modern analytical sense could not be read directly.

² *Online Etymology Dictionary*, s.v. “patriarchy”: “1560s, ‘ecclesiastical province under a patriarch; church government by patriarchs’ ... Meaning ‘system of society or government by fathers or elder males of the community’ is recorded from 1630s.”

³ Rosemary Lucy Hill and Kim Allen, “‘Smash the patriarchy’: the changing meanings and work of ‘patriarchy’ online,” *Feminist Theory* 22, no. 2 (2021): 165–89, doi:10.1177/1464700120988643, tracing the lineage through Veronica Beechey, “On patriarchy,” *Feminist Review* 3, no. 1 (1979): 66–82.

“The term ‘politics’ shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another.”^a

^a Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Doubleday, 1970), ch. 2, “Theory of Sexual Politics.” Note that the Doubleday 1970 US first edition uses American spellings; the Abacus/Sphere London 1972 edition, from which many online transcriptions derive, uses British ones. Quote from the edition you cite.

With that definition in place, the argument follows: “The following sketch, which might be described as ‘notes toward a theory of patriarchy,’ will attempt to prove that **sex is a status category with political implications**.”⁴ And: “If one takes patriarchal government to be the institution whereby that half of the populace which is female is controlled by that half which is male, the principles of patriarchy appear to be two fold: male shall dominate female, elder male shall dominate younger.”⁵

Notice the second principle, which is almost always dropped when the passage is quoted: *elder male shall dominate younger*. Millett’s patriarchy subordinates most men as well. That is not a later concession by critics; it is in the founding text.

KEY TERM: PATRIARCHY (ANALYTICAL SENSE)

A social system in which men, as a group, hold disproportionate authority in public and political life, and in which that arrangement is reproduced through law, economy, culture, sexuality, family and violence rather than by anyone’s explicit decision. It is a claim about *structure* and *aggregate outcomes* — not a claim that every man has power or that any particular man intends it.

2.3 Walby: six structures, not one

The most careful attempt to make “patriarchy” analytically usable is Sylvia Walby’s. She argues for a model of patriarchy as six *partially interdependent* structures — the qualifier matters, because it is her defence against the charge that the concept is a monolith.⁶

Structure	What it refers to
Paid work	Occupational segregation, unequal pay, barriers to advancement.
Household production	Unpaid domestic and care labour, and who is expected to do it.
Culture	Representation, religion, media, education, ideals of masculinity and femininity.
Sexuality	Norms governing desire, the double standard, compulsory heterosexuality.
Violence	Male violence against women, and its treatment by institutions.
The state	Law, policy, taxation, welfare, citizenship, enforcement.

Walby’s substantive claim is that patriarchy adapts: it “has been vigorously adaptable to the changes in women’s position, and... some of women’s hard-won social gains have been transformed into new traps.”⁷ Her example is the movement from *private* patriarchy (a husband’s

⁴ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, ch. 2.

⁵ Millett, *Sexual Politics*, ch. 2. Millett also calls patriarchy a form of “interior colonisation” and invokes Weber’s *Herrschaft*.

⁶ Sylvia Walby, “Theorising Patriarchy,” *Sociology* 23, no. 2 (1989): 213–34, doi:10.1177/0038038589023002004; expanded as *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990).

⁷ Walby, “Theorising Patriarchy,” abstract. Her thesis of a shift from *private* to *public* patriarchy is set out in *Theorizing Patriarchy*.

authority in the household) to *public* patriarchy (segregated labour markets and state institutions) — in which women gain freedom from individual men and encounter constraint from impersonal systems instead.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is the load-bearing structure of the whole feminist case, and also its most vulnerable point. If patriarchy is six separate structures, then it can genuinely improve in some and not others — which is exactly what the data in Parts 10 to 13 show. It also means that “is there still patriarchy?” is a badly formed question. The answerable question is: *in which of the six, where, and by how much?*

2.4 Lerner: patriarchy as a historical creation

Gerda Lerner’s contribution was historical rather than analytical: to argue that male dominance is not a fact of nature but a datable development.

Oxford University Press’s own description of her book states the thesis plainly: Lerner “argues that male dominance over women is **not natural or biological, but the product of an historical development begun in the second millennium B.C. in the Ancient Near East.**”⁸ Her most-quoted line is: “Patriarchy is a historic creation formed by men and women in a process which took nearly 2500 years to its completion.”⁹

A WRINKLE IN THE DATING

OUP’s blurb says the process *began* in the second millennium BCE. Secondary summaries of Lerner’s argument routinely describe it as spanning roughly 3100–600 BCE — about 2,500 years, matching her own quoted figure. These are in tension. The safe statement is that Lerner locates patriarchy’s formation as a long process in Mesopotamia and the Ancient Near East, substantially complete by the mid-first millennium BCE, rather than as a single event.

The political point of the argument is simple: if patriarchy was made, it can be unmade. That is why the historical question in Part 2 carries so much weight for both sides — and why Steven Goldberg’s rival thesis, that patriarchy is an inevitable consequence of biology, was received as a direct attack [Chapter 3].

2.5 Johnson: the system, not the men

Allan Johnson’s *The Gender Knot* is the standard statement of a distinction that resolves an enormous amount of pointless conflict: patriarchy is a system people participate in, not a synonym for men.¹⁰ His vocabulary is “paths of least resistance”: in any system, some behaviours are easier than others, and people mostly take the easy path without endorsing where it leads. The publisher’s framing is that the book shows how “we all participate in an oppressive system we didn’t create,” and thereby “avoids the paralyzing trap of guilt, blame, anger, and defensive denial.”

⁸ Publisher’s description, Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Women and History, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; OUP paperback 1987, 368 pp.).

⁹ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, concluding chapter. This wording is consistent across many secondary sources; the primary page could not be verified directly and should be checked before being quoted in print elsewhere.

¹⁰ Allan G. Johnson, *The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997; 2nd edn. 2005; 3rd edn. 2014).

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

On this account, saying “patriarchy exists” is not saying “you personally are guilty.” It is more like saying “traffic is bad” — a description of what everyone’s individually reasonable behaviour adds up to.

Whether the concept is *used* that carefully in practice is a separate question, and a fair criticism. Online, “patriarchy” very often does function as an accusation against men in general. Both things are true: the scholarly concept is structural, and the popular usage frequently is not.

2.6 Kandiyoti: the patriarchal bargain

Deniz Kandiyoti’s 1988 paper is indispensable, for two reasons. First, because it is itself a criticism of loose usage. Second, because it explains something the crude model cannot: why women often enforce patriarchal norms on other women.

Her abstract states both moves at once:

*“This article argues that systematic comparative analyses of women’s strategies and coping mechanisms lead to a more culturally and temporally grounded understanding of patriarchal systems than the unqualified, abstract notion of patriarchy encountered in contemporary feminist theory. **Women strategize within a set of concrete constraints, which I identify as patriarchal bargains. Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct ‘rules of the game’ and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options...**”^a*

^a Deniz Kandiyoti, “Bargaining with Patriarchy,” *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (September 1988): 274–90, doi:10.1177/089124388002003004.

KEY TERM: PATRIARCHAL BARGAIN

The set of trade-offs a woman makes to secure the best available position *within* a patriarchal arrangement rather than against it — for instance, accepting seclusion in exchange for status and protection, or investing in sons to secure authority in old age as a mother-in-law. The concept explains, without anyone’s bad faith, why the women who most vigorously police younger women’s behaviour are often those whose own security depends on the system’s rules being upheld.

Kandiyoti also coins the term **classic patriarchy** for the pattern characteristic of “South and East Asia as well as the Muslim Middle East” — corporate, patrilineal, patrilocal households in which a young bride enters her husband’s family at the bottom of a female hierarchy and rises only by producing sons. She contrasts it with a sub-Saharan African pattern in which “the insecurities of polygyny are matched with areas of relative autonomy for women.”

WHY THIS MATTERS

For an Indian reader this is the single most useful concept in the chapter. It answers, without insulting anybody, the question people ask most often: if patriarchy is so bad for women, why do so many women defend it? The answer is that within a system whose rules you cannot change, the rational move is to play the rules well — and a mother-in-law who has spent thirty years earning authority under those rules has a genuine stake in them. Part 9 returns to this with the NFHS-5 data on attitudes to wife-beating, which is otherwise inexplicable.

2.7 Chakravarti: Brahmanical patriarchy

The most important Indian contribution to the theory is Uma Chakravarti's 1993 essay, which argues that in the Indian case gender subordination cannot be separated from caste — because caste purity depends on controlling women's sexuality.

Her own statement:

"Caste hierarchy and gender hierarchy are the organising principles of the brahmanical social order and despite their close interconnections neither scholars of the caste system nor feminist scholars have attempted to analyse the relationship between the two. I will explore here (very tentatively) the relationship between caste and gender, focusing on what is possibly the central factor for the subordination of the upper caste women: the need for effective sexual control over such women to maintain not only patrilineal succession (a requirement of all patriarchal societies) but also caste purity, the institution unique to Hindu society. The purity of women has a centrality in brahmanical patriarchy... because the purity of caste is contingent upon it."^a

^a Uma Chakravarti, "Conceptualising Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India: Gender, Caste, Class and State," *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 14 (3 April 1993): 579–85.

Chakravarti is scrupulous about two things her later citers often are not. She states explicitly that she is "not arguing for a monolithic development of patriarchy given the range of social formations," and she notes that "notions of the excessive sexuality of women were not unique to brahmanical literature and were widely prevalent in the Buddhist texts too."¹¹

REMEMBER THIS

The mechanism Chakravarti identifies is why honour killings, endogamy, caste panchayat sanctions and the policing of inter-caste marriage are not a separate topic from "women's issues" in India. They are the same mechanism seen from two angles. Parts 3, 8 and 9 develop this at length.

2.8 hooks and Connell: two refinements

bell hooks: interlocking systems

hooks's contribution was to insist that a single-axis account of male dominance fails. She used a compound phrase deliberately: "I often use the phrase 'imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy' to describe the interlocking political systems that are the foundation of our nation's politics."¹²

CORRECTION

It is frequently asserted that the full four-term phrase first appears in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (1984). That could not be verified. What is verifiable: the three-term "white supremacist capitalist patriarchy" is what appears in her 1980s work, and the four-term version is characteristic

¹¹ Chakravarti, "Conceptualising Brahmanical Patriarchy," prefatory notes.

¹² bell hooks, *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (New York: Atria Books, 2004). Earlier, in her filmed lecture *Cultural Criticism & Transformation* (Media Education Foundation, 1997), she said she used the phrase "because I wanted to have some language that would actually remind us continually of the interlocking systems of domination that define our reality."

of *Feminism Is for Everybody* (2000) and *The Will to Change* (2004). hooks herself credited the phrase “capitalist patriarchy” to Zillah Eisenstein.^a

^a Zillah Eisenstein, ed., *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).

R. W. Connell: hegemonic masculinity

Connell’s concept explains why most men do not recognise themselves in descriptions of male power. Hegemonic masculinity is, in the canonical 1995 formulation, “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”¹³

The 2005 reformulation with James Messerschmidt is clearer still, and it contains the crucial qualifier:

“Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men.”^a

^a R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (December 2005): 829–59. The first formulation was Tim Carrigan, R. W. Connell and John Lee, “Toward a new sociology of masculinity,” *Theory and Society* 14, no. 5 (1985): 551–604.

They add the category of **complicit masculinity**: “Men who received the benefits of patriarchy without enacting a strong version of masculine dominance.”

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

Hegemonic masculinity is not “how men behave.” It is the version of manhood that everyone is measured against, including the men who fail it — which is most men. That is why an ordinary man can simultaneously benefit from male status and feel crushed by masculine expectations, and why both feelings are accurate.

2.9 The strongest criticisms of the concept

Here is the finding that surprises most readers: the sharpest attacks on “patriarchy” as an analytical concept come from inside feminism and Marxist feminism, not from its external opponents.

Critic	Work	The charge
Veronica Beechey	“On patriarchy,” <i>Feminist Review</i> 3(1), 1979	Central to the movement, but no agreed historical cause; asks what work the term does beyond naming “feelings of oppression.”

¹³ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), widely cited at p. 77. Wording verified against multiple scholarly sources; page numbers differ between the 1995 and 2005 editions.

Table continued from previous page

Critic	Work	The charge
Sheila Rowbotham	1979, <i>Beyond the Fragments</i> debates	The universality of the concept smuggles biology back in.
Michèle Barrett	<i>Women's Oppression Today</i> (Verso, 1980); "Feminism's 'turn to culture'," 1990	Rejects both economic reductionism and idealism; later signals the shift away from structural "patriarchy" altogether.
Joan Acker	1989 onwards	Abandon "patriarchy" for <i>gender relations</i> ; ask how gender is involved in processes previously thought to have nothing to do with gender.
Anna Pollert	"Gender and Class Revisited; or, the Poverty of 'Patriarchy'," <i>Sociology</i> 30(4), 1996: 639–59	The sharpest: reductionism, circularity, and the collapse of explanation into description.
Catherine Hakim	<i>Key Issues in Women's Work</i> , 2nd edn. (Routledge Cavendish, 2004)	Compares patriarchy theory with three rivals including her own preference theory; concludes none fully explains women's subordination.

Pollert's opening is worth quoting in full, because it names the oddity precisely:

"On the face of it is curious that at a time when structures and causes seem to have been replaced by fragments and contingencies, the 'grand narrative' of 'patriarchy' seems to have survived. While other 'totalizing' projects such as Enlightenment progress, Weberian bureaucracy and Marxist analysis of capitalism have been repudiated, in feminist writings, 'patriarchy' marches on."^a

^a Anna Pollert, "Gender and Class Revisited; or, the Poverty of 'Patriarchy,'" *Sociology* 30, no. 4 (November 1996): 639–59, doi:10.1177/0038038596030004002.

Her substantive charge is that the concept "collapses explanation with description — a weakness which derives from the circular explanations of its constitution and reproduction," and that Walby's version in particular "loses the tension between agency and structure necessary to understand social process, and ends in a static form of systems theory." Her named target is Walby directly, so §2.3 and this section can be read against each other.

And the defence

Hill and Allen reply that the "monolithic and ahistorical" charge is itself overstated — "patriarchy was not theorised monolithically or ahistorically, as has been sometimes claimed" — and that the term's value lies in "the value of naming oppressive forces for identifying how we might effect change, even when those names are theorised in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways."

ON THE "UNFALSIFIABILITY" CHARGE

A common online criticism is that patriarchy theory is unfalsifiable: every outcome can be attributed to it, so nothing counts against it. This report could not locate a rigorous version of that charge from a named non-feminist scholar in the peer-reviewed literature. The nearest citable external critic is Hakim (2004), whose objection is comparative rather than logical. If you want to make the unfalsifiability argument, make it in your own name — do not attribute it to a scholar without checking, and read §8.11 first, because the charge is much harder to deploy well than it looks.

REMEMBER THIS

“Patriarchy” is a serious analytical concept with a serious internal critical literature. Both of the popular positions — that it explains everything, and that it is meaningless — are less defensible than the actual scholarly debate, which is about whether it explains *enough* to be worth the theoretical cost.

Matriarchy: The Word That May Have No Referent

“If patriarchy is so universal, was there ever a matriarchy?” is the single most frequently asked question in this whole subject, and it has a clean answer that satisfies nobody: it depends what you mean, and four different things are constantly being confused.

3.1 Four words, four different claims

Term	It is about	Precise meaning
Matriliny	Descent	Belonging, lineage membership and often inheritance are reckoned <i>through the female line</i> . Both sexes are members; only women transmit membership.
Matrilocality (uxorilocality)	Residence	Men move to live with their wives on marriage. (Patrilocality/virilocality is the reverse.)
Matrifocality	Household structure	The mother is the affective and structural centre of the household or kin group. Says nothing about political authority.
Matriarchy	Rule	Women hold general political authority over men — the mirror image of patriarchy.

The authoritative reference statement is Jessica Johnson’s peer-reviewed encyclopaedia entry:

“Matriliny is a way of reckoning descent and belonging through the female line... In matrilineal kinship... you are related to both male and female kin, but matrilineal kinship only continues through females. Fathers thus belong to different lineages from their children, and if they hold property or titles such as chieftaincies, their likely heirs are the children of their sisters.”^a

^a Jessica Johnson, “Matriliny,” in *The Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. Felix Stein (2016; rev. 2023), doi:10.29164/16matriliny — a facsimile of the peer-reviewed *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology* entry.

David Schneider’s formulation is the crispest: in a patrilineal system you are related to females “but not *through*” females; in matriliney it is the reverse.¹ The structurally crucial relationship in matrilineal systems is not husband–wife but **mother’s brother–sister’s son**.

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

Only the fourth word means “women in charge.” The other three describe how families are organised, and they are entirely compatible with men running everything outside the household. Most arguments about matriarchy are two people using two different words.

¹ David M. Schneider, in Schneider and Kathleen Gough, eds., *Matrilineal Kinship* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 3.

A FAMOUS CLAIM BY A FAMOUS ANTHROPOLOGIST, AND IT IS WRONG

Claude Lévi-Strauss asserted that “the number of matrilineal systems which are also matrilocal is extremely small. Behind the variations in type of descent, the permanence of patrilocal residence attests to the basic asymmetrical relationship between the sexes which is characteristic of human society.”^a Johnson’s encyclopaedia entry states flatly that “it is not in fact the case that matrilocality is rare among matrilineal groups, and nor has the idea of necessary and universal male authority stood the test of time.”

^a Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969 [1949]), 117.

Johnson also warns against treating matrilineal societies as a single type. Pauline Peters argues it is more useful to consider matriliney “as a set of characteristics rather than a totality or ‘system’”; Edmund Leach’s line is that for anthropologists the category “matrilineal societies” is about as useful as “blue butterflies” is to biologists.²

3.2 Where “matriarchy” came from — and it is not where you think**BACHOFEN NEVER USED THE WORD**

J. J. Bachofen, whose *Das Mutterrecht* (1861) is the origin of the whole matriarchy idea, wrote *Mutterrecht* (“mother right”) and *Gynaikokratie* (“gynecocracy”). The word “matriarchy” was inserted by the 1967 English translation, which substituted it where Bachofen had written “gynecocracy.”^a The English adjective “matriarchal” was coined by E. B. Tylor — who immediately cautioned that it does *not* mean “women govern the family,” and suggested that “on the whole, the terms ‘maternal’ and ‘paternal’ seem preferable.”^b

^a Documented in Peggy Reeves Sanday, “Matriarchy as a Sociocultural Form: An Old Debate in a New Light,” paper presented at the 16th Congress of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association, Melaka, Malaysia, 1–7 July 1998. See also Stella Georgoudi, “Creating a Myth of Matriarchy,” in *A History of Women: I. From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints*, ed. Pauline Schmitt Pantel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 449–63, at 451: the term was forged in the late nineteenth century by analogy with patriarchy.

^b E. B. Tylor, “The Matriarchal Family System,” *Nineteenth Century* 40 (1896): 81–96, at 90.

The idea belonged to a nineteenth-century theory of unilineal cultural evolution — promiscuity, then matriarchy, then patriarchy — developed by Lewis Henry Morgan, Bachofen and Friedrich Engels, and long since discarded.³ That matters for Chapter 7, because Engels’s entire account of women’s subordination rests on it [§7.2].

3.3 The disciplinary consensus, and who states it

“The consensus among modern anthropologists and sociologists is that while many cultures bestow power preferentially on one sex or the other, matriarchal societies in this original, evolutionary sense have never existed. However, some scholars continue to use the terms matriarchy and patriarchy in the general sense for descriptive, analytical, and pedagogical purposes.”^a

² Both quoted in Johnson, “Matriliney,” citing Peters (1997a: 137) and Leach (1961: 4).

³ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “matriarchy” (last revised by Elizabeth Prine Pauls; page updated 29 May 2026).

^a *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, s.v. “matriarchy.”

This is not a recent or a politically convenient conclusion. It has been stated repeatedly for over a century:

1896	E. B. Tylor coins “matriarchal” and warns it does not mean female government.
1924	W. H. R. Rivers: “these inappropriate terms are rapidly going out of use, owing to the general recognition of the fact that there is no question of rule by women in the great majority of states to which the name matriarchate has been applied.” ⁴
1961	David Schneider: “the generalized authority of women over men, imagined by Bachofen, was never observed in known matrilineal societies, but only recorded in legends and myths. Thus the whole notion of matriarchy fell rapidly into disuse in anthropological work.” ⁵
1974	Joan Bamberger surveys the evidence and finds no undisputed case (see below).
2026	Britannica records the consensus in the words quoted above.

FREQUENTLY MISATTRIBUTED

The claim “anthropologists have never documented a matriarchy” is often attributed to Steven Goldberg, whose 1973 book compiled anthropological testimony to that effect. The claim predates him by seventy-seven years. He was summarising an existing consensus, not establishing it.

3.4 Bamberger, and the argument people miss

Joan Bamberger’s chapter is the standard citation, and her actual thesis is more interesting than the headline.

Her evidentiary verdict: “Since the publication of *Das Mutterrecht* this ‘virgin territory’ has been explored by a horde of archaeologists and social anthropologists. **Their diligent searches... have not uncovered a single undisputed case of matriarchy.** Even the Iroquois, once a stronghold for ‘matriarchists,’ turn out to be matrilineal only... Yet in spite of the substantial power wielded by women, men were chosen consistently as political leaders.”⁶

But her subject is not really whether matriarchy existed. It is why so many societies tell *myths* that it did — and then lost it. Her answer: the myths justify male rule by presenting the alternative as a catastrophe. “The myth, in its reiteration that women did not know how to handle power when in possession of it, reaffirms dogmatically the inferiority of their present position.”⁷

TITLE CORRECTION, AND A NICE ILLUSTRATION

The volume is *Woman, Culture, and Society* — singular “Woman.” It is very widely miscited as “*Women, Culture, and Society*,” including in Peggy Sanday’s own bibliography and in numerous reference databases.

⁴ W. H. R. Rivers, *Social Organization* (New York: Knopf, 1924), 85.

⁵ Schneider, Preface to *Matrilineal Kinship*, viii.

⁶ Joan Bamberger, “The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society,” in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 263–80, at 266.

⁷ Bamberger, “The Myth of Matriarchy,” 279.

THE COUNTER-ARGUMENT TO BAMBERGER

Michael Allen argues the opposite: that such myths arise precisely *where women have real power*. “Such myths do not simply validate or give legitimacy to extreme forms of male hegemony, but rather... they provide a rationale for those relatively weakly articulated patriarchal social systems in which... the men precariously attempt to assert dominance over women who are in fact the possessors of substantial power.”^a Same myths, opposite inference. This is unresolved.

^a Michael Allen, “The ‘Hidden Power’ of Male Ritual: the North Vanuatu Evidence,” in *Myths of Matriarchy Reconsidered*, ed. Deborah Gewertz (Sydney: University of Sydney, Oceania Monographs, 1988), 74–97, at 80. In the same volume, Janet Hoskins proposes “diarchy” as a substitute term.

3.5 The redefiners — and why this is a definitional dispute

Two serious scholars use the word “matriarchy” affirmatively. Neither is claiming that women rule. Both say so explicitly. Understanding this dissolves most of the argument.

Peggy Reeves Sanday on the Minangkabau

Sanday lived among the Minangkabau of West Sumatra and titled her book *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy*.⁸ Her methodological paper explains the move with unusual precision:

“In the following I argue for a reconfiguration of the term matriarchy not as a construct based on the gendered division of political power, but one based on gendered divisions in the sociocultural and cosmological orders... I also exclude the concept of female rule, on the grounds that a more appropriate term exists... namely gynecocracy.”^a

^a Sanday, “Matriarchy as a Sociocultural Form.”

Her argument turns on Greek. The stem *archē* has two families of meaning: “beginning, origin, source of action, first principle” and “sovereignty, empire.” The conventional reading of “matriarchy” uses the second; she proposes the first. Hence her positive definition: female power “not over subjects... but female power (in their roles as mothers and senior women) to conjugate — to knit and regenerate social ties.” And, decisively: “Because this approach stresses the connection between the archetypal... and the social, rather than between power and politics, **it can not be interpreted as the female equivalent of patriarchy.**”

She also reports something important about the people themselves: the Minangkabau do use the Dutch term *matriarchaat* — but “when the Minangkabau use the term matriarchaat they refer to the **economic advantage women enjoy due to matrilineal descent and matrilineal residence, not female political domination.**”

Her charge against her own discipline is memorable: anthropologists overlooked the Minangkabau because “when they were seeking a matriarchal society in the modern world, **[they] were looking for a mirror-image of patriarchy.**”

⁸ Peggy Reeves Sanday, *Women at the Center: Life in a Modern Matriarchy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

Heide Göttner-Abendroth and “modern matriarchal studies”

Göttner-Abendroth makes the same etymological move more aggressively:

“We are not obliged to follow the current, male biased notion of the term ‘matriarchy’ as meaning ‘domination by the mothers’... The Greek word ‘arché’ has a double meaning. It means ‘beginning’ as well as ‘domination’. Therefore, we can translate ‘matriarchy’ accurately as ‘the mothers from the beginning’.”^a

^a Heide Göttner-Abendroth, “Matriarchal Society: Definition and Theory,” in *The Gift, A Feminist Analysis* (Rome: Athanor Books, 2004). Her main English synthesis is *Matriarchal Societies: Studies on Indigenous Cultures Across the Globe* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012; rev. 2013). She founded the International Academy HAGIA in 1986 and organised the first World Congress on Matriarchal Studies, Luxembourg, 2003.

She then defines matriarchal societies on four levels — economic (reciprocity, clan land, no private property), social (matrilineal and matrilineal clans, social fatherhood, horizontal kinship), political (consensus, delegates rather than decision-takers, no classes of domination), and cultural (rebirth belief, ancestress cult, Mother Earth, no dualist morality) — and states that “not one criterion can be left out, if the definition is to be valid.”

WHERE SHE AND THE DISCIPLINE GENUINELY CONFLICT

Göttner-Abendroth writes: “Anthropologists do not make a distinction between merely matrilineal, and clearly matriarchal societies. This continues to produce great confusion.” Mainstream anthropology would reject this: insisting on exactly that distinction is what Tylor (1896), Rivers (1924) and Schneider (1961) spent their paragraphs doing. She works outside the university system — she says so herself, having left in 1983 — and should be read as a dissenting redefiner, not as reporting disciplinary consensus.

REMEMBER THIS

Sanday and Britannica are not contradicting each other on any fact. Britannica denies matriarchy *in the mirror-image sense*; Sanday stipulates a different sense and says so. The entire dispute is definitional. Ask anyone who says “the Khasi/Mosuo/Minangkabau are a matriarchy” one question — do women hold general political authority over men? — and the argument resolves in a sentence.

The individual cases — the Mosuo of Yunnan, the Minangkabau, the Khasi and Garo of Meghalaya, the Iroquois — are examined one by one in Part 2. The short version is that each has genuinely striking female authority in specific domains, and in none of them do women hold the political and religious offices.

3.6 The universality claim — and its retraction

The most-quoted sentence in feminist anthropology is from Rosaldo and Lamphere’s 1974 introduction:

“It seems fair to say then, that all contemporary societies are to some extent male-dominated, and although the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly, sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human and social life.”^a

^a Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, introduction to *Woman, Culture, and Society* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 3.

BOTH AUTHORS LATER WITHDREW IT

Rosaldo retracted the universality claim in 1980; Lamphere revisited it in 1995.^a If you quote the 1974 sentence — and it is quoted constantly, by both sides — you are obliged to note that its authors changed their minds.

^a Michelle Z. Rosaldo, “The Use and Abuse of Anthropology: Reflections on Feminism and Cross-Cultural Understanding,” *Signs* 5, no. 3 (1980): 389–417; Louise Lamphere, “Feminist Anthropology: The Legacy of Elsie Clews Parsons,” in *Women Writing Culture*, ed. Ruth Behar and Deborah A. Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 85–103. The retraction is noted in Sanday, “Matriarchy as a Sociocultural Form.”

This is worth pausing on, because it is a model of how honest scholarship behaves and it cuts in an inconvenient direction for everyone. The universality claim is used by conservatives to argue patriarchy is natural and by feminists to argue oppression is total. Its own authors decided it was overstated.

3.7 Goldberg’s inevitability thesis, and the exchange it produced

Steven Goldberg’s *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (1973) argues that three things are universal — patriarchy (men dominating higher hierarchical positions), male attainment (high-status activities associated with male physiology), and male dominance (a cultural expectation of male leadership) — and that the cause is a psychophysiological “differentiation of dominance tendency” mediated by testosterone, which he presents as a necessary but not sufficient condition.⁹

The published exchange is a useful set-piece, because it shows what a real disciplinary argument looks like:

Respondent	Position
Eleanor Leacock <i>Am. Anthropologist</i> 76 (1974): 363–65	“To consign the grim brutalities of abused power... to what amounts to masculine ‘original sin’ not only denies the historical and ethnographic record... but seriously disarms all of us.”
Frank Livingstone <i>Am. Anthropologist</i> 76 (1974): 365–67	Calls the evolutionary model “absolutely backward”: behaviour determines genotype fitness, not the other way round.
Goldberg’s replies <i>AA</i> 77 (1975): 69–73	Followed by further replies from both; <i>Society</i> 23, no. 6 (1986) was devoted entirely to the book, with two essays by Goldberg and seven by critics.
Catherine Hakim <i>Key Issues in Women’s Work</i> (2004)	Sympathetic: calls it “the only theory that can explain some of the more inconvenient facts about women as well as men” (p. 6) — but concludes the thesis “has yet to be fully proven” (p. 208).

⁹ Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy: Why the Biological Difference Between Men and Women Always Produces Male Domination* (New York: William Morrow, 1973); restated as *Why Men Rule: A Theory of Male Dominance* (Chicago: Open Court, 1993).

A QUOTATION YOU WILL SEE EVERYWHERE — DO NOT USE IT

Goldberg reports that Margaret Mead agreed, in a review, that no non-patriarchal society had existed. That is his own account, and no independent record of such a review could be located. A widely circulated Mead quotation — “All the claims so glibly made about societies ruled by women are nonsense. We have no reason to believe that they ever existed” — appears in genuine-looking form all over the internet with no traceable source; it is variously attributed to a *Redbook* column and to *Some Personal Views*. **This report does not print it as a sourced quotation, and neither should anyone else without seeing the original.**

There is, however, a solid and more interesting Mead connection. Her claims about the Chambri (Tchambuli) in *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) were specifically re-examined by Deborah Gewertz (1981), who found “there were contexts in which Chambri women acted like men — Mead’s observations were to a degree accurate — but the contexts did not include Chambri women dominating Chambri men.”

3.8 Human universals, and a sourcing trap

Donald Brown’s *Human Universals* (1991) is the standard reference for traits found in all documented societies.¹⁰ The item everyone quotes is “**domination by men in the public political sphere.**”

THAT SENTENCE IS PROBABLY PINKER’S, NOT BROWN’S

The widely circulated wording comes from Steven Pinker’s condensation of Brown’s “Universal People” chapter in *The Language Instinct* (1994), pp. 413–15, reprinted and expanded as an appendix to *The Blank Slate* (2002). It could not be verified as Brown’s own verbatim sentence. Brown’s own later summary paper lists sex-linked universals differently — his own formulation is that “women everywhere predominate in child care and on average are younger than their mates.” **Cite Pinker paraphrasing Brown, or verify against Brown 1991, ch. 6.**

The full cluster as Pinker prints it: “Status and prestige, both assigned (by kinship, age, sex) and achieved. Some degree of economic inequality. Division of labor by sex and age. More childcare by women. More aggression and violence by men. Acknowledgment of differences between male and female natures. Domination by men in the public political sphere.”

Brown’s own methodological caution is the most useful thing in the debate, and it comes from him rather than from a critic:

“There are severe methodological limitations on what can be known about universals in general. No one can really know the conditions in all societies, so that any statement about universality is based on some sort of sampling. In most cases this sampling has not been rigorous.... Thus the confidence one can have in particular claims of universality is quite variable.”^a

^a Donald E. Brown, “Human Universals and Their Implications,” in *Being Humans: Anthropological Universality and Particularity in Transdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Neil Roughley (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000), 156–74.

¹⁰ Donald E. Brown, *Human Universals* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991); Brown’s own reference list gives both McGraw-Hill and Temple University Press.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Both sides want to win the historical argument because both think it settles the political one. If patriarchy is universal, conservatives argue, it is natural and resistance is futile. If a matriarchy existed, some feminists argue, patriarchy is contingent and can be dismantled. **Neither inference is valid** — the first is the appeal to nature and the second is its mirror image [§8.3]. Slavery was near-universal too. Universality is evidence about causes, not about what we ought to do.

REMEMBER THIS

Best current statement of the evidence, stated as precisely as it can honestly be stated: *no documented society has had general female political authority over men; many have had powerful female-centred kinship, property and ritual institutions; and the claim that this pattern is a biological necessity remains, in the words of its most sympathetic academic reviewer, “yet to be fully proven.”*

Sex and Gender: A History Almost Everyone Gets Wrong

The standard story runs: Simone de Beauvoir invented the distinction between sex and gender in 1949, second-wave feminists took it up, and Judith Butler radicalised it in 1990. Almost every element of that story is false. The distinction came out of 1950s clinical sexology, Beauvoir never formulated it, and Butler's central concept is routinely described as the opposite of what she wrote.

Getting the history right matters, because the sex–gender distinction is the pivot of the most bitter live argument in contemporary feminism, and both sides invoke a genealogy that does not hold up.

4.1 The real lineage

THE ORIGIN IS CLINICAL, NOT FEMINIST

The best recent scholarship states it directly: “Scholars have begun to genealogize the sex/gender distinction, pointing out that it **was not a second-wave feminist invention, but in fact has its roots in the clinical research of US sexologists**. However, the influence of trans individuals on the development of these clinicians’ thought tends to go unacknowledged.”^a

^a Emily Cousens, “Virginia Prince, Robert Stoller and the Trans Feminist Intellectual History of the Sex/Gender Distinction,” *History Workshop Journal* 99 (Spring 2025): 73–97, doi:10.1093/hwj/dbaf008.

The actual sequence:

1949	Simone de Beauvoir , <i>Le Deuxième Sexe</i> : “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” — the <i>insight</i> , in a vocabulary that had no word for gender.
1955	John Money with Joan and John Hampson coin “ gender role ” at Johns Hopkins, in papers on intersex conditions. The word “gender” is borrowed from philology (grammatical gender) for use in sexology.
1962–64	Virginia Prince , a trans pharmacologist, lectures to UCLA medical students under the title “Sex and Gender,” developing Money’s concept.
1964	Robert Stoller publishes “A Contribution to the Study of Gender Identity” — the coinage of “ gender identity .”
1968	Stoller’s <i>Sex and Gender</i> makes the distinction prominent in psychiatry.
1972	Ann Oakley , <i>Sex, Gender and Society</i> , carries it into British sociology and feminist theory.
1990	Judith Butler , <i>Gender Trouble</i> , argues gender is performative — which is not the same as chosen.

2022

ICD-11 takes effect: “gender identity disorder” is removed from the mental-disorders chapter and replaced by “gender incongruence” under sexual health.

Money, 1955

“Gender role” first appears in print in 1955, in a set of five papers written with Joan G. Hampson and John L. Hampson in the *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital*.¹ The conceptual move was to compare biological indicators of sex, the sex a child had been assigned at birth, and something they called gender role — and to propose that gender role tracked the sex the child was *reared* in.

MONEY’S LATER CAREER CASTS A LONG SHADOW

Money’s clinical practice — in particular the David Reimer case, where an infant boy was reassigned and reared as a girl after a botched circumcision, with catastrophic results — is now the standard cautionary tale against strong social-learning accounts of gender. It is examined properly in Part 7. The point here is narrower: the *vocabulary* is his, and it was coined in a clinical, not a feminist, setting.

Stoller, 1964–68

Stoller’s formulation was three-source: “The sense of core gender identity... is derived from three sources: **the anatomy and physiology of the genitalia; the attitudes of parents, siblings and peers toward the child’s gender role; and a biological force** that may more or less modify the attitudinal (environmental) forces.”² Note that even in the founding text biology is one of three inputs — not zero, and not everything.

AN UNACKNOWLEDGED SOURCE

Cousens documents that Virginia Prince, a trans pharmacologist, had been lecturing Stoller’s UCLA medical students under the title “Sex and Gender” for two years before March 1964, developing Money’s concept and applying it to her own life. Stoller wrote to her on 30 March 1964 asking for research support, then interviewed her twice a month for twenty-nine years until his death in 1991 — “one of the most detailed records of research interviews ever to be acquired.” **He never acknowledged the relationship in print.** Susan Stryker’s explanation: “because she was openly a transvestite, Prince could speak ‘only’ as a transvestite, and not as a medical expert whose professional knowledges and competencies were respected by her professional peers.”

Oakley, 1972

Ann Oakley made the distinction a general-purpose social-scientific tool. Her statement of it remains the clearest in the literature:

“‘Sex’ is a word that refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia, the related difference in procreative function. ‘Gender’ however is a matter of culture: it refers to the social classification into ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. The distinction

¹ John Money, “Hermaphroditism, gender and precocity in hyperadrenocorticism: psychologic findings,” *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 96, no. 6 (1955): 253–64, PMID 14378807; J. Money, J. G. Hampson and J. L. Hampson, “An examination of some basic sexual concepts: the evidence of human hermaphroditism,” *Bulletin of the Johns Hopkins Hospital* 97, no. 4 (1955): 301–19. A rival citation (vol. 97, pp. 284–300) circulates for the first paper; PubMed indexes it as above.

² Robert J. Stoller, *Sex and Gender: On the Development of Masculinity and Femininity* (New York: Science House, 1968). The term “gender identity” was first used publicly at a 1963 conference and set out in Stoller, “A Contribution to the Study of Gender Identity,” *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis* 45 (1964): 220–26.

between ‘male’ and ‘female’ on the one hand, and ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ on the other, makes it possible to clarify much of the argument about sex differences.”^a

^a Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender and Society*, Towards a New Society series (London: Temple Smith with New Society, 1972), Introduction.

Her programme is worth quoting too, because it is exactly the programme of Part 7 of this series: “The task is to **disentangle ‘sex’ from ‘gender’** in the many fields where the existence of natural differences between male and female has been proposed, aiming to replace dogmatism by insight, and attempting to separate value-judgments from statements of fact.”

4.2 Beauvoir, and the translation fight

The most quoted sentence in feminism opens Volume II of *Le Deuxième Sexe*:

On ne naît pas femme: on le devient.

Translator	Edition	Rendering
H. M. Parshley	Knopf, 1953 — <i>abridged</i>	“One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.”
Constance Borde & Sheila Malovany-Chevallier	Jonathan Cape 2009 / Knopf 2010 — <i>unabridged</i>	“One is not born, but rather becomes, woman.”

The grammatical fact underneath: French omits the indefinite article after *être* and *devenir*; English has no such rule. The translator must decide whether to insert “a,” and there is no neutral option.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The choice is not cosmetic. “Becomes *a* woman” reads as an account of joining a social category — and supports the **social-constructivist** reading of Beauvoir, and hence the sex/gender framework and Butler’s use of her. “Becomes woman” reads as an account of feminine existence as a mode of being — and supports the **existential-phenomenological** reading. One translator’s article-level decision has shaped how two generations read the book.^a

^a Bonnie Mann and Martina Ferrari, eds., “*On ne naît pas femme: on le devient*”: *The Life of a Sentence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). Megan M. Burke argues at p. 161 that dropping the article “fails to read Beauvoir as giving a phenomenological account of feminine existence”; Debra Bergoffen proposes at p. 143 that we “let the ‘a’ float between these English translations.”

Both translations have been attacked, which is rarely mentioned. Margaret Simons documented sexism in Parshley’s abridgement, “meticulously exposing the deletions from sections on women’s history in particular”; Toril Moi charged him with cuts, omissions and “philosophical incompetence.”³ But Moi was also the first academic to review the *new* translation, and

³ Margaret A. Simons, “The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir: Guess What’s Missing from *The Second Sex*,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 6, no. 5 (1983): 559–64; Toril Moi, “While We Wait: The English Translation of *The Second Sex*,” *Signs* 27, no. 4 (2002): 1005–35.

her verdict was harsher than anyone expected: it is an improvement “because it is unabridged and there is more consistency in the philosophical vocabulary,” but **“the obsessive literalism and countless errors make it no more reliable, and far less readable than Parshley.”** And: “Whenever I try to read Borde and Malovany-Chevallier’s translation like an ordinary reader, without constantly checking against the French, **I feel as if I were reading underwater.”**⁴

BEAUVOIR DID NOT FORMULATE THE SEX/GENDER DISTINCTION

This is the load-bearing correction of the chapter. Meryl Altman states it plainly: **“While Beauvoir’s work helped second-wave feminism see the difference between ‘natural’ sex and socially constructed gender, she herself never formulates the distinction in those terms.”**^a She could not have: she wrote in 1949, six years before Money coined “gender role,” in a conceptual vocabulary that had no such term. What she supplied was the insight that women are made rather than born. Later theorists retrofitted the sex/gender vocabulary onto it.

^a Meryl Altman, in Mann and Ferrari, *The Life of a Sentence*, 128. The editors and contributors note that Beauvoir does not explicitly offer a sex/gender distinction in *The Second Sex*.

4.3 Butler, and the misreading

Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* is the most cited and most misdescribed book in the field. The two central formulations:

“Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being.”

“There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results.”^a

^a Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990); 2nd edn. with new preface 1999. The first quotation is standardly cited at 1990 p. 33 / 1999 p. 45, the second at 1990 p. 25 / 1999 p. 34. Wording verified against multiple scholarly sources; the editions repaginate, so check the page against the edition cited. The related line “a kind of imitation for which there is no original” is from “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” (1991), not *Gender Trouble* — the two are frequently conflated.

PERFORMATIVITY IS NOT CHOICE

The popular reading — gender as a costume you select each morning — is one Butler explicitly identified and rejected. In her own words, describing “the bad reading”: *“I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other.”*^a

Her correction, in *Bodies That Matter*: **“performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act,’ but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names.”** And: the account of agency “cannot be conflated with voluntarism or individualism, much less with consumerism, and in no way presupposes a choosing subject.”^b *Gender Trouble* itself says the subject has only “a limited number of costumes from which to make a constrained choice of gender style.”

⁴ Toril Moi, “The Adulteress Wife,” *London Review of Books* 32, no. 3 (11 February 2010). Nancy Bauer made similar objections; Meryl Altman and Bonnie Mann defend the translators.

^a Judith Butler, interviewed by Peter Osborne and Lynne Segal, “Gender as Performance,” *Radical Philosophy* 67 (Summer 1994).

^b Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 1993), Introduction, 2.

KEY TERM: PERFORMATIVITY, NOT PERFORMANCE

Performance implies an actor who exists first and then acts. **Performativity** denies exactly that: the repeated acts are what constitute the actor. Butler’s claim is that gender is compulsory and citational — you are compelled to repeat existing forms — not that it is freely selected. Whether the claim is *true* is a separate argument; but attacking the costume-cupboard version is attacking something she wrote a book to disown.

4.4 Where institutions stand now

The World Health Organization’s current definitions:

*“Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are **socially constructed**... As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time.”*

*“Gender interacts with but is different from **sex**, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs... **Gender identity** refers to a person’s deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person’s physiology or designated sex at birth.”^a*

^a World Health Organization, “Gender and health” (Health Topics), who.int, read directly for this report. WHO’s supplementary guidance was updated on 15 October 2024: *Frequently asked questions on sexual and gender diversity, health and human rights: an introduction to key concepts*.

Three features of that wording repay attention, because they are choices rather than neutral reporting:

1. Sex is defined as a **three-category** term — “females, males *and* intersex persons.”
2. Gender is defined as **hierarchical**: WHO states that “gender is hierarchical and produces inequalities.” That is a substantive claim about power embedded inside a definition.
3. **Intersectionality** is named explicitly as WHO doctrine.

WHO also states, in the same document, that “harmful gender norms — especially those related to rigid notions of masculinity — can also affect boys and men’s health and wellbeing negatively,” and that about one in three women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.

THE MOST VOLATILE ITEM IN THIS VOLUME

Institutional definitions of sex and gender are under active revision in several jurisdictions as of 2025–26 — in medicine, in official statistics and in law. This report verified WHO’s wording directly and did not verify parallel definitions from the APA, AMA, Endocrine Society, or national statistical offices. Any claim about “the current institutional definition” should be treated as time-stamped and re-checked.

4.5 The live argument, stated fairly

Two positions are in open conflict. Both are held by serious people, including serious feminists. This report sets out each in its own terms and does not adjudicate between them.

Position	Self-description and key texts
Gender-critical also “sex realist,” or simply “radical feminist”	Sex is material, binary and immutable; <i>gender</i> is a set of imposed stereotypes that harm women and should be abolished rather than embraced as identity; single-sex spaces, sports categories and data categories should track sex. Janice Raymond, <i>The Transsexual Empire</i> (Beacon, 1979); Sheila Jeffreys, <i>Gender Hurts</i> (Routledge, 2014); Kathleen Stock, <i>Material Girls</i> (Fleet, 2021); Helen Joyce, <i>Trans</i> (Oneworld, 2021); Julie Bindel.
Trans-inclusive	Trans women are women; the axis of oppression is not only sex but the enforcement of a sex/gender system that punishes gender non-conformity; “transmisogyny” names a specific compound of sexism and transphobia. Julia Serano, <i>Whipping Girl</i> (Seal, 2007), which coins “transmisogyny”; Talia Mae Bettcher, “Evil Deceivers and Make-Believers,” <i>Hypatia</i> 22, no. 3 (2007): 43–65; Susan Stryker, <i>Transgender History</i> .

ON THE WORD “TERF”

The acronym’s earliest known use is a 2008 blog post by Viv Smythe (“tigtog”). Smythe has defended it as descriptive rather than a slur: it “came about simply to save typing a longer phrase out over and over again — a shorthand to describe one cohort of feminists who self-identify as radical and are unwilling to recognise trans women as sisters, unlike those of us who do.”^a Essentially everyone it is applied to rejects it as a slur used to license harassment.

This series uses “gender-critical” in its own voice, quotes “TERF” only when reporting others’ usage, and notes the dispute. The same courtesy runs in both directions: throughout these fifteen volumes, labels that people reject for themselves — including “manosphere,” “anti-feminist” and “tradwife” — are flagged as contested rather than applied silently.

^a Viv Smythe, “I’m credited with having coined the word ‘Terf’. Here’s how it happened,” *The Guardian*, 28 November 2018. The quotation is sourced to that article; the page itself could not be opened directly for this report.

Two rulings people cite — and what they actually held

FORSTATER V CGD EUROPE [2021] UKEAT 0105_20_1006

Held (Choudhury P, 10 June 2021): gender-critical belief is a *protected philosophical belief* under the Equality Act 2010, satisfying the fifth *Grainger* criterion — overturning in its entirety the 2019 tribunal ruling that the belief was “not worthy of respect in a democratic society.”

Did not hold: that Forstater had in fact been discriminated against (that went back to the tribunal, which later found in her favour), or that the belief licenses harassment — the appeal tribunal was explicit that *manifestation* of a protected belief can still be unlawful.^a

^a *Maya Forstater v CGD Europe and others* [2021] UKEAT 0105_20_1006, judgment PDF published on gov.uk; also BAILII.

FOR WOMEN SCOTLAND LTD V THE SCOTTISH MINISTERS [2025] UKSC 16

Held (unanimous, 16 April 2025): in the Equality Act 2010, “sex,” “man” and “woman” mean biological sex, and a full Gender Recognition Certificate does not change a person’s sex *for the purposes of that Act*; the Scottish Government’s guidance under the Gender Representation on Public Boards (Scotland) Act 2018 was accordingly wrong in law.

Did not hold: that trans people lose protection. The judgment states that trans people remain protected under the *gender reassignment* characteristic and may also claim under others. It is a statutory-interpretation ruling about one Act, not a general legal redefinition of who is a man or a woman for all purposes.^a

^a *For Women Scotland Ltd v The Scottish Ministers* [2025] UKSC 16, Supreme Court case page (UKSC 2024/0042) and judgment text.

REMEMBER THIS

Three things to carry forward. The sex/gender distinction is a 1950s clinical invention, not a feminist one. Beauvoir never made it. And Butler’s “performativity” means gender is compulsory repetition, not free choice — the version of her argument that is easiest to mock is one she publicly disowned in 1993. Anyone arguing this subject who gets these three wrong has not read the primary sources.

Equality: Four Different Things People Mean

Almost every argument about the pay gap, quotas, reservation, or “why aren’t there more women in engineering” is really a disagreement about what equality means. The participants usually do not know this, which is why they talk past each other for hours.

There are four serious positions, arranged along a spectrum from thin to thick, plus a fifth that rejects the spectrum. The Stanford Encyclopedia’s framing is the standard one: “Different conceptions of Equality of Opportunity can be roughly ordered along a **spectrum — from formal to substantive** — according to the range of factors that are deemed obstructions on relevant opportunities.”¹

5.1 Position 1: Formal equality of opportunity

The thinnest version: opportunities are equal when nothing legally or coercively bars anyone from them.

*“A particularly thin conception of Formal Equality of Opportunity might hold that persons enjoy equal opportunities simply when there is **no legal impediment or other coercive restriction** on access to the position or good. Laws against women serving in the military, for instance, would mean that women lacked the Equality of Opportunity to serve, as would formal exclusion from consideration in the application process, or women being coercively intimidated not to apply to serve.”^a*

^a SEP, “Equality of Opportunity,” §2.

KEY TERM: FORMAL EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

No law or coercion blocks anyone from a position. On this view, once the discriminatory statute is repealed, equality of opportunity has been achieved — whatever happens to outcomes afterwards.

Most of what we call first-wave feminism was a campaign for this and nothing more: the vote, property rights, university admission, entry to the professions. Chapter 6 has the timeline.

5.2 Position 2: Meritocratic equality of opportunity

A step thicker: positions must be allocated on *merit relevant to the job* — “careers open to talents.” Formal equality is satisfied if no rule bars you; meritocratic equality is violated if the selectors quietly prefer men of equal ability.

This is where most anti-discrimination law sits, and it is the position almost everyone claims to hold. It generates a specific empirical research programme: audit studies, blind assessment,

¹ “Equality of Opportunity,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, first published 3 August 2023. The entry’s author line was not captured for this report; obtain it from the entry’s “Author and Citation Info” link before citing it elsewhere.

structured interviewing. Part 10 examines what those studies actually find — in both directions, because some of the best-known ones find bias favouring women.

5.3 Position 3: Rawls's fair equality of opportunity

John Rawls argued that meritocracy is not enough, because the ability to compete is itself unequally distributed by circumstances of birth. His formulation:

"Those who have the same level of talent and ability and the same willingness to use these gifts should have the same prospects of success regardless of their social class of origin."^a

^a John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, ed. Erin Kelly (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), 44, as quoted in SEP, "Equality of Opportunity." SEP's transcription reads "the same level *or* talent," almost certainly a typographical error. The original discussion is *A Theory of Justice* (Harvard, 1971; rev. edn. 1999), §14, "Fair Equality of Opportunity and Pure Procedural Justice," at 1999 edn. pp. 53, 57, 62–63.

KEY TERM: FAIR EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY (FEO)

Two components. *First*, positions are formally open under "careers open to talents." *Second*, everyone with equal talent and equal willingness must have an equal *chance* to develop and deploy it — so background inequalities that shape who becomes qualified are themselves matters of justice.

Two things about Rawls are consistently misreported.

Rawls did not endorse equality of outcome.

Within his second principle, fair equality of opportunity has *lexical priority* over the difference principle. Inequalities of income and position are permitted; what is not permitted is that they arise from unequal chances to compete. He is a third-position thinker, not a fourth-position one, and quoting him in support of outcome equality is a misreading.

Rawls himself is inconsistent about the relevant category.

SEP notes: "Rawls frames FEO as opposing the unequal effects of 'social class' (Rawls 1999: 63). At other times, Rawls presents FEO as addressing differences in 'income class' (Rawls 1999: 270). He also uses the term 'sectors in society' (Rawls 1999: 63). **It is not clear whether Rawls intends these different terms to be equivalent.**" The forthright critique to read alongside is Richard Arneson's (1999).

WHY THIS MATTERS

FEO is the philosophical engine of nearly every "structural" argument you will meet in Parts 10 to 13. If you accept it, then the fact that Indian girls' school enrolment now broadly matches boys' while their labour-force participation does not is a justice problem *even in the total absence of any discriminating employer* — because something between school and work is unequally distributing the chance to compete. If you reject FEO in favour of position 1 or 2, the same fact is simply the aggregate of family choices, and no injustice at all. That is the whole disagreement, and no dataset resolves it.

5.4 Position 4: Equality of outcome

The thickest version: equality obtains when the distribution of the good itself is equal across groups — equal representation, equal aggregate pay, equal shares.

ALMOST NOBODY DEFENDS THIS IN ITS PURE FORM

Explicit defenders of strict outcome equality across all goods are rare in serious political philosophy. The position mostly appears either as the far end of the substantive spectrum or as a *diagnostic* — the claim that persistent unequal outcomes are evidence that opportunity was not in fact equal. That is a different and much more defensible claim, and it is usually the one actually meant. Section 8.4 examines precisely how much weight unequal outcomes can bear as evidence.

A sourcing note: this report could not find a crisp definition of “equality of outcome” inside *SEP*’s equal-opportunity entry, which treats it mainly as the contrast case. For a definition use *SEP*’s companion entry “Equality,” or David Miller, *Principles of Social Justice* (Harvard University Press, 1999), chs. 7–9.

5.5 The fifth option: capability

Amartya Sen’s move was to reject the question as posed. In his 1979 Tanner Lecture, titled simply “Equality of What?,” he argued that neither resources nor outcomes are the right thing to equalise — because people differ in their ability to convert resources into lives they value.²

KEY TERM: THE CAPABILITY APPROACH

What should be equalised is neither the starting gun nor the finishing line but the **set of achievable lives** — a person’s real freedom to do and be what they have reason to value. Sen: the inequalities we most care about “are not ultimately about income or primary goods or resources but about the **power or means to transform income** (or primary goods or resources) **into functionings** or living without deprivations.”

Martha Nussbaum’s variant specifies a *list* of central capabilities; Sen declines to, and that is the main internal disagreement within the approach.³ Nussbaum’s version is the one most used in feminist theory and in Indian development debates, and it reappears in Parts 9 and 13.

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

Sen’s point in one example. Give a man and a woman in a small town the same bicycle. If she cannot ride it without harassment and he can, they do not have the same opportunity even though they have the same resource. Equality of *stuff* is not equality of *freedom*.

5.6 The five side by side

² Amartya Sen, “Equality of What?,” Tanner Lecture on Human Values, Stanford University, 22 May 1979; published in *Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, ed. S. McMurrin (Cambridge University Press, 1980). Developed in *Commodities and Capabilities* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1985) and *Inequality Reexamined* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Note the two dates in circulation: the lecture was delivered in 1979 and published in 1980.

³ Martha Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 2000); *Creating Capabilities* (Harvard University Press, 2011).

Conception	Equality obtains when...	So an unequal outcome is...
Formal	No law or coercion blocks access.	Not an injustice at all, once the law is neutral.
Meritocratic	Selection tracks job-relevant merit.	An injustice only if the selectors were biased.
Fair (Rawls)	Equal talent plus equal willingness yields equal prospects, regardless of social origin.	An injustice if background conditions unequally distributed the chance to compete.
Outcome	The distribution itself is equal.	The injustice, by definition.
Capability (Sen)	People have equal real freedom to achieve valued lives.	Evidence to be investigated: whose conversion of resources into freedom was blocked, and by what?

REMEMBER THIS

Before arguing about any gap — pay, boards, engineering degrees, parliamentary seats — establish which of these five your interlocutor holds. If they hold the first and you hold the third, you are not disagreeing about the data. You are disagreeing about what would even count as a problem, and no data will move either of you.

5.7 The boxes-and-fence cartoon

You have seen the image: three children of different heights behind a fence, each given one box in the “equality” panel and boxes reallocated by need in the “equity” panel. It is probably the most influential piece of political graphic design of the last fifteen years, and its history is instructive.

Who made it

Craig Froehle, a business professor at the University of Cincinnati, on 19 December 2012 — in about half an hour in PowerPoint, for an argument on Google+. His own account:

“I was trying to clarify why, to me, ‘equal opportunity’ alone wasn’t a satisfactory goal and that we should somehow take into consideration equality of outcomes. I thought the easiest example of this concept is kids of different heights trying to see over a fence. So, I grabbed a public photo of Cincinnati’s Great American Ball Park, a stock photo of a crate, clip art of a fence, and then spent a half-hour or so in Powerpoint concocting an image that I then posted on Google+.”^a

^a Craig M. Froehle, “The Evolution of an Accidental Meme,” Medium.com, 2016. He later corrected himself: the stadium in the image is in fact Angel Stadium in Anaheim, not Cincinnati’s.

The famous redrawn version is by the Interaction Institute for Social Change, published 13 January 2016; the correct credit line is “Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire.” The “equality versus equity” wording was itself an adaptation — Froehle traces the earliest instance to 15 March 2013; other early derivatives used “justice” and “fairness.”

Three criticisms, all worth knowing

1. **The implicit-deficit objection.** “The problem with the picture is in its implicit bias that many do not see. If we believe, fundamentally, that all people regardless of race, class or creed are comparably able, there should be little difference between the individuals in this picture. **What should be drawn as dissimilar are not the individuals but rather the bottom boxes they are standing on in the first frame...** the picture’s sentiment implicitly reinforces the idea that minorities (or those otherwise unprivileged) have inferior abilities.” Froehle’s published reply is that people do in fact differ in abilities, and that height was meant to symbolise *any* advantage or disadvantage — temporary, long-term or permanent — but that “most of those differences are much more challenging to represent pictorially than kids of different heights.”
2. **The resource-inflation objection — and this one is Froehle’s own.** Many popular derivatives *add* boxes on the equity side rather than *reallocating* them. Froehle: “My only complaint about this otherwise charming rendition is that **the equity side has more boxes than the equality side, making it inherently more resource-intensive. That doesn’t seem like a fair criticism of equity, which is why I made sure to simply *reallocate* the boxes in my original rather than introducing *more*.**” If you ever reproduce or argue from this image, count the boxes: the two versions make opposite claims about cost.
3. **The fence objection.** Derivatives argue the real answer is to remove the barrier, not redistribute boxes — the “#the4thbox” extension developed by Maguire with IISC and the Center for Story-based Strategy. From the other direction, critics reply that the children could buy tickets, or that the image assumes everyone wants to watch baseball.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The cartoon deserves this much attention because it is doing philosophical work in millions of training slides and school lessons, and it does not distinguish positions 3 and 4 at all. Froehle’s own stated intention was to argue for *outcomes*; the image is now used overwhelmingly to argue for *fair opportunity*. That slippage is not a small thing. It is Chapter 8’s motte-and-bailey structure in pictorial form [§8.9].

The Waves, and Why Historians Dislike Them

Almost every popular account of feminism is organised into waves. It is a useful teaching shorthand and a bad historical framework, and the people who say so loudest are historians of feminism.

6.1 The naming order is backwards

THE SEQUENCE OF NAMING IS 2ND, THEN 1ST, THEN 3RD, THEN 4TH

The wave metaphor for feminism is standardly traced to a single magazine article: Martha Weinman Lear, “The Second Feminist Wave,” *The New York Times Magazine*, 10 March 1968.^a Lear was reporting on the “new” feminists of the 1960s, including the National Organization for Women, and connected them to the nineteenth-century suffrage movement.

“First wave” therefore did not exist during the movement it names. It was applied retrospectively, *by contrast*, after 1968. That single fact tells you the metaphor is journalistic and backward-looking rather than analytic.

^a Multiple independent scholarly and museum sources give this date consistently. The *New York Times* archive could not be accessed directly for this report, so the date should be verified against TimesMachine before being reproduced elsewhere. It is also safer to describe Lear’s article as the first documented use of the metaphor rather than asserting she “coined” it — priority claims of this kind are hard to establish absolutely.

6.2 A verified first-wave timeline

1792	Mary Wollstonecraft, <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> (London: J. Johnson).
1848	Seneca Falls Convention , 19–20 July, Wesleyan Chapel, Seneca Falls, New York. The <i>Declaration of Sentiments</i> : “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal.” Signed by 100 people — 68 women and 32 men — out of roughly 300 attendees. Frederick Douglass spoke on the second day in favour of the suffrage resolution, the ninth resolution and the only one not passed unanimously; his intervention is credited with carrying it, and he signed the Declaration. ¹
1851	Sojourner Truth speaks at the Woman’s Rights Convention, Akron, Ohio, 29 May — see the correction box below.
1869	J. S. Mill, <i>The Subjection of Women</i> (London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer). Wyoming Territory, 10 December: first US law explicitly granting women the vote.
1870 & 1882	UK Married Women’s Property Acts — royal assent 9 August 1870 and 18 August 1882.

¹ US National Archives; National Constitution Center; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Declaration of Sentiments.”

1881	Isle of Man: property-owning women win the vote in House of Keys elections.
1893	New Zealand , 19 September: Governor Lord Glasgow signs the Electoral Act. The first <i>self-governing country</i> in which <i>all</i> women could vote in parliamentary elections.
1918	UK Representation of the People Act , royal assent 6 February. Votes for women aged 30+ meeting a property qualification — approximately 8.4 million women enfranchised. The same Act gave the vote to all men over 21 with no property qualification.
1919–20	US 19th Amendment : passed by Congress 4 June 1919; ratified 18 August 1920 when Tennessee became the 36th state; certified 26 August 1920 by Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby.
1928	UK Equal Franchise Act , royal assent 2 July: the franchise equalised at 21.
1947–50	Indian independence and the Constitution: universal adult suffrage from the outset, with no separate campaign for women's enfranchisement of the Western kind.
2015	Saudi Arabia , 12 December: first election in which women could vote and stand — 979 women candidates, 130,637 registered women voters, for municipal councils with limited powers.

TWO PRECISION POINTS THAT ARE CONSTANTLY FUDGED

Ratification and certification are different events. The 19th Amendment was ratified on 18 August 1920 and certified on 26 August 1920 — which is why Women's Equality Day is 26 August. Colby signed the proclamation behind closed doors at 8 a.m. at his own house in Washington; no suffrage leaders were present and no photographers or film cameras recorded it. Both dates are correct, and they mean different things.

"First country" needs two qualifiers or it is false. New Zealand's own official history states the claim carefully: the first "*self-governing country* in the world in which *all* women had the right to vote in parliamentary elections." The precedents are real: Pitcairn 1838 (a British settlement, not a country), Wyoming Territory 1869 (a US territory), Isle of Man 1881 (a Crown Dependency, and property-qualified). Drop either qualifier and the claim collapses.

"AIN'T I A WOMAN?" — THE BIGGEST FALSE COMMONPLACE IN THE SUBJECT

Sojourner Truth almost certainly never said it.

Marius Robinson, present at the Akron convention and an associate of Truth's, printed his transcription in the *Anti-Slavery Bugle* on 21 June 1851. The phrase "Ain't I a woman?" does not appear. Robinson has her saying "**I am a woman's rights.**"

The famous version was written by **Frances Dana Barker Gage** and published in the *New York Independent* on 23 April 1863 — **twelve years after the fact**. Gage rendered Truth in an inconsistent Southern slave dialect reflecting her own then-surroundings in South Carolina. Truth grew up in Dutch-speaking Ulster County, New York; **Dutch was her first language**, and she would not have sounded like that.

The historian Nell Irvin Painter, who established the case, puts it bluntly: "The slogan is the invention of a white woman journalist writing 12 years after the fact. So it has no particular claim on being the correct way of understanding what Sojourner Truth had to say that day."^a

^a Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996); see also the Sojourner Truth Project, which prints both transcriptions side by side.

6.3 Second wave, third wave, fourth wave

Second wave (c. 1963–1980s)

Legal and reproductive rights, workplace access, the family, sexuality and violence. The key methodological innovation was consciousness-raising — treating personal experience as political data.

“THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL” — THE ATTRIBUTION IS GARBLED

The paper was written by **Carol Hanisch** in **February 1969**, under the title “Some Thoughts in Response to Dottie’s Thoughts on a Women’s Liberation Movement,” and printed in *Notes from the Second Year: Women’s Liberation* (1970). **Hanisch states that she did not give it the famous title:** it was supplied by the editors, Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt, after Kathie Sarachild brought the paper to their attention. Hanisch also stresses that “political” meant power relations in the broad sense, not electoral politics, and writes that both “the personal is political” and “the pro-woman line” have been “revised, ripped off, or stood on their head and used against their original, radical intent.”^a

^a Carol Hanisch, “The Personal Is Political,” with her 2006 introduction, available in full online at carolhanisch.org and widely mirrored.

Third wave (c. 1992–2008)

Rebecca Walker’s essay is the standard marker. It was written in direct response to the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings and Anita Hill’s testimony:

*“To me, the hearings were not about determining whether or not Clarence Thomas did in fact harass Anita Hill. They were about **checking and redefining the extent of women’s credibility and power...** While some may laud the whole spectacle for the consciousness it raised around sexual harassment, its very real outcome is more informative. **He was promoted. She was repudiated.**”*

“I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave.”^a

^a Rebecca Walker, “Becoming the Third Wave,” *Ms.*, January/February 1992, 39–41. She was 22 (“For the umpteenth time in my 22 years, I have been radicalized”). Commonly cited as vol. II, no. 4, though the volume and issue could not be verified against the physical magazine; the transcription verified for this report renders “postfeminism” as one unhyphenated word, but other reproductions give “post-feminism.”

The third wave’s distinctive content was intersectionality, sex-positivity, individual difference, and an explicit rejection of the second wave’s tendency to speak for all women.

Fourth wave (2005? 2008? 2012? 2017?)

THREE PEOPLE COINED THREE DIFFERENT THINGS WITH THE SAME PHRASE

This is not a case of contested priority. It is a case of a phrase being independently invented to name three unrelated phenomena.

- **Pythia Peay (2005)**, “Feminism’s Fourth Wave,” *Utne Reader* 128: 59–60. Her fourth wave is *spiritual and interfaith* — women “moving from private forms of spirituality toward a public expression which affirms women’s bonds across ethnic and religious boundaries, especially since 9/11.” Nothing to do with the internet.
- **Jennifer Baumgardner (2011)**, *F’em!* (Seal Press). Dates it to **2008**; describes fourth-wavers as

“tech-savvy and gender-sophisticated.” Note her essay’s title: “Is There a Fourth Wave? Does It Matter?” — she treats the existence question as open.

- **Kira Cochrane (2013)**, *All the Rebel Women: The Rise of the Fourth Wave of Feminism* (Guardian Books). Popularised the digital-activism sense that now dominates.

Three separate disputes are therefore tangled together: whether it exists at all (or is continuous with the third wave), what it is, and when it started. The most common sceptical position is that “fourth wave” names a change of *medium* — social media, hashtag activism, #MeToo — rather than a change of analysis or agenda, and so does not warrant a new label.

6.4 Four charges against the metaphor

The definitive critical volume is Nancy Hewitt’s *No Permanent Waves*, seventeen essays which “boldly enter the ongoing debates over the utility of the ‘wave’ metaphor.”² The essays question whether “waves surging and receding” can capture the complexities of feminism, and “argue for **new chronologies, more inclusive conceptualizations of feminist agendas and participants**, and fuller engagements with contestations around particular issues and practices.”

Charge	What it means
It writes people out	The model excludes “the experiences of women of color, men, young people, and others whose activist work falls under a broader definition of feminism.”
It implies false troughs	“Surging and receding” implies dormancy between waves, erasing continuous organising — especially by working-class women, women of colour, and labour and welfare-rights activists — in the supposedly quiet 1920s–1950s.
It imposes a wrong chronology	The periodisation is generated by the metaphor rather than by the evidence; Hewitt’s contributors argue for new chronologies.
It flattens internal conflict	A “wave” implies one unified movement, obscuring the fierce contestation <i>within</i> each period over race, class and sexuality — which Chapter 7 documents.

6.5 India’s periodisation — and how it fails in the same way

Indian feminist history has its own standard three-phase framework, and it is the organising structure of both standard histories.³

19th c.	Social reform era. The “women’s question” raised largely <i>by men</i> , as part of reform movements: Rammohun Roy on sati, Vidyasagar on widow remarriage, Jyotirao and Savitribai Phule on education, Dayanand Saraswati, later Periyar and Ambedkar.
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² Nancy A. Hewitt, ed., *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010). See also Kathleen Laughlin et al., “Is It Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor,” *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 76–135.

³ Radha Kumar, *The History of Doing: An Illustrated Account of Movements for Women’s Rights and Feminism in India, 1800–1990* (New Delhi: Kali for Women; London: Verso, 1993); Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India*, The New Cambridge History of India IV.2 (Cambridge University Press, 1996). Kumar is a movement history published by India’s first feminist press; Forbes is an academic monograph in a canonical series. No single scholar “proposed” the periodisation — it is the received framework of these standard histories, and should not be attributed to one person.

1900–47	Nationalist phase. Mass participation by women in the freedom struggle; the women's question increasingly raised by women themselves — but subordinated to nationalism, and largely dropping off the public agenda after Independence.
1974–75	The turning point. <i>Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India</i> (Government of India, Ministry of Education & Social Welfare, 1974), submitted 31 December 1974. Its most-cited finding was the declining sex ratio — constitutional equality on paper coexisting with worsening material indicators. UN International Women's Year followed in 1975. ⁴
post-1975	The autonomous women's movement — “autonomous” meaning independent of political parties. Catalysed by <i>Towards Equality</i> , the Emergency (1975–77), and the anti-rape agitation.

The case that produced the movement

The chain from a single judgment to a statute is one of the clearest in Indian legal history and worth setting out precisely, because Part 8 builds on it.

26 Mar 1972	Mathura, an orphaned tribal labourer described in the record as aged 14–16, is assaulted at the police station at Desai Ganj, Chandrapur district, Maharashtra, by the constable Ganpat and head constable Tukaram.
15 Sep 1978	Supreme Court reverses the Bombay High Court's conviction and restores the acquittal. <i>Tuka Ram and Anr v. State of Maharashtra</i> , (1979) 2 SCC 143; AIR 1979 SC 185. Bench: Jaswant Singh, Kailasam and Koshal JJ; judgment by Koshal J.
16 Sep 1979	The Open Letter to the Chief Justice of India — (1979) 4 SCC (Jour) 17 — addressed to CJI Y. V. Chandrachud and signed by Upendra Baxi, Vasudha Dhagamwar, Raghunath Kelkar and Lotika Sarkar .
1983	Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1983 : inserts ss. 376A–376D IPC creating aggravated custodial-rape offences; inserts s. 114A of the Indian Evidence Act , a rebuttable presumption against consent <i>in the aggravated categories only</i> ; inserts s. 228A IPC on victim anonymity; and provides for in-camera trial.

THE DATE ALMOST EVERYONE GETS WRONG

The Mathura judgment was delivered on **15 September 1978**. The 1979 in the citation is the *reporting* year. 1979 is separately the year of the Open Letter. Two different events, two different years, routinely merged into one.

A second precision point: s. 114A of the Evidence Act is a *rebuttable presumption limited to the aggravated categories* under s. 376(2). It is frequently described as a general reversal of the burden of proof in all rape cases. It is not.

The Open Letter's central legal argument is the origin of the modern Indian consent debate, and it is worth reading in the authors' own words:

⁴ Members included Phulrenu Guha, Maniben Kara, Savitri Shyam, Neera Dogra, Vikram Mahajan, Leela Dube, Sakina A. Hasan, Urmila Haksar, Lotika Sarkar and Vina Mazumdar. Note a real source conflict: some catalogue records list “S. Nurul Hasan, Chairman,” but Hasan was the *Minister to whom the report was submitted*; Guha's own parliamentary biographical record states she chaired the Committee 1972–75. Verify against the report's title page. Mazumdar and Sarkar went on to found the Centre for Women's Development Studies, Delhi.

“There is a clear difference in law, and common sense, between ‘submission’ and ‘consent’. Consent involves submission; but the converse is not necessarily true. Nor is absence of resistance necessarily indicative of consent... But where was the finding on the crucial element of consent?”

“Ganpat’s sexual habits give him the benefit of doubt of having ‘raped’ Mathura; her sexual habits make the Court disbelieve the story of the rape altogether! Why this double standard?”

“Must illiterate, labouring, politically mute Mathuras of India be continually condemned to their pre-constitutional Indian fate?”^a

^a Upendra Baxi, Vasudha Dhagamwar, Raghunath Kelkar and Lotika Sarkar, “An Open Letter to the Chief Justice of India,” (1979) 4 SCC (Jour) 17, dated Delhi, 16 September 1979. The letter’s own footnote records that Baxi, Kelkar and Sarkar taught at the University of Delhi and Dhagamwar at the University of Poona.

And the Indian periodisation is contested for the same reasons

The foundational critical intervention is Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid’s *Recasting Women*, which destabilises the first phase entirely.⁵ Their argument: “the collusion of colonial and nationalist patriarchies before Independence has had an enduring impact on the gendering of society, economy and politics in post-colonial India” — that reforms “actually re-imprisoned modern women into new cages of male desires.” Hence *recasting*: the reform era was not proto-feminist progress but the reconstitution of patriarchy in modern form.

Four distinct objections to the standard periodisation:

1. Whether phase one counts as feminism at all (Sangari and Vaid’s colonial/nationalist patriarchies thesis).
2. Whether “post-1975” erases **anti-caste and Dalit feminist genealogies** that do not fit the reform→nationalist→autonomous arc — notably Savitribai Phule, Tarabai Shinde and Ambedkar. This is the strongest contemporary objection.
3. Whether the 1947–1975 “gap” is real, or an artefact of looking only at metropolitan, English-language, party-independent organising.
4. Whether “autonomous” is the right descriptor, given the deep involvement of Left party-affiliated women’s organisations.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Objection 3 is structurally the *same* objection historians make to the Anglo-American wave metaphor — the false trough, produced by looking at the wrong archive. That is not a coincidence. Both periodisations were built from the records of educated, urban, published women, and both consequently show quiet decades that were not quiet. Whenever you meet a chronology of feminism that has a gap in it, the first question to ask is whose records were consulted.

REMEMBER THIS

Use the waves as a filing system if it helps, and never as an argument. “Second-wave feminism believed X” is almost always a sentence that would not survive contact with the archive of the period it names — and the same is true of “the Indian women’s movement began in 1975.”

⁵ Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, eds., *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

The Map: Every Major Position

This is the reference chapter. It sets out every significant position in the argument, in that position's own terms first, then its critics. Two rules are followed throughout: nobody is described only by their opponents' words, and where a label is one people reject for themselves, that is said.

The single most useful thing in this chapter is not any individual entry. It is the pattern that emerges: the fiercest conflicts in this whole subject are not between feminists and their opponents. They are *inside* each camp.

7.1 Feminist schools

7.1.1 Liberal feminism

Self-description

Women are equally rational agents entitled to the same civil, political, educational and economic liberties as men. Injustice is caused by legal barriers and socially produced constraints on autonomy, and is remediable within a liberal constitutional order. The Stanford Encyclopedia organises the school around personal autonomy, political autonomy, the family as a site of justice, and "deformed preferences" — the idea that preferences themselves can be shaped by an unjust gender system.¹

Key texts

Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792); J. S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (1869); Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (Norton, 1963); Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (Basic Books, 1989); Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (OUP, 1999).

DID HARRIET TAYLOR MILL CO-WRITE *THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN*?

Usually stated too confidently in both directions. The verified facts: Mill in his *Autobiography* credited the ideas jointly to Harriet Taylor Mill and, in parts, to his stepdaughter Helen Taylor; Harriet **died in November 1858**; Mill drafted the essay around 1860–61 and published it in 1869, so she cannot have written the published text; her own signed essay is "Enfranchisement of Women" (*Westminster Review*, 1851), and several arguments overlap; the settled scholarly view attributes the text to Mill; a 2025 computer-assisted stylometric study attributes the majority to Mill while finding traces consistent with Harriet and, less so, Helen.

The accurate formulation: it is Mill's text, written out of a long intellectual partnership he himself insisted was collaborative. "Co-authored by Harriet Taylor Mill" overstates the evidence; "Mill's alone" understates his own testimony.

¹ "Liberal Feminism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-liberal/.

Criticisms

bell hooks, in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (South End Press, 1984), ch. 1: Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* is "a one-dimensional perspective on women's reality," speaking for college-educated white middle- and upper-class housewives and ignoring women without men, without children, without homes, non-white and poor. Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (Longman, 1981), argues from inside that liberal feminism's own premises push beyond liberalism. Catharine MacKinnon's charge is that formal equality leaves substantive male dominance intact.

7.1.2 Radical feminism

Self-description

Patriarchy — men's systematic domination of women — is the primary, historically first and most fundamental axis of oppression, not a derivative of class or race. It is reproduced through sexuality, reproduction, the family and violence, and therefore requires the transformation of "personal" life, not just legal reform.

Key texts

Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (William Morrow, 1970); Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (Doubleday, 1970); Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology* (Beacon, 1978); Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (1981); Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (Harvard, 1989); Robin Morgan, ed., *Sisterhood Is Powerful* (1970). Redstockings was founded in New York in January 1969 by Ellen Willis and Shulamith Firestone; its manifesto of 7 July 1969 commits the group to the interests of "the poorest, most brutally exploited women."

Radical versus liberal — the precise distinction

	Liberal	Radical
Locus of injustice	Unjust laws and practices distributing opportunity.	The sex-class system itself, including sexuality, reproduction and the family — which liberalism treats as private.
Remedy	Reform inside liberal-democratic institutions.	Abolition or transformation of the structures; Firestone extends this even to biological reproduction.
The subject	An autonomous chooser whose choices may be deformed.	Consciousness itself is shaped by male-dominant sexuality, so "consent" and "choice" are suspect categories.
Method	Argument, litigation, legislation.	Consciousness-raising; personal experience treated as political data.

WHY THIS MATTERS

That third row is why the "it's my choice" argument in Part 11 divides feminists rather than uniting them against outsiders. To a liberal feminist, a woman's stated preference is close to authoritative. To a radical feminist, a preference formed inside a male-dominant sexual culture is precisely the thing under examination. This is not a disagreement about facts; it is a disagreement about whether choice under those conditions counts.

7.1.3 Marxist and socialist feminism

Self-description

Women's subordination is bound up with the mode of production — with the separation of waged “productive” from unwaged “reproductive” labour, and with the historical emergence of private property, inheritance and the monogamous family. Emancipation requires transforming the economic order, not only law or culture.

Engels, and the sentence everybody quotes

*“The overthrow of mother-right was **the world historical defeat of the female sex**. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude, she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children.”^a*

^a Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), ch. II, standard English translation.

TWO THINGS ABOUT THAT QUOTATION

First, it is routinely quoted stripped of its opening clause. The claim is specifically about the overthrow of *mother-right* (*Mutterrecht*) — a particular hypothesised transition — not a vague statement about history in general.

Second, its evidentiary base is Bachofen's *Mutterrecht* and Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society*: the matriarchy-then-patriarchy sequence that modern anthropology does not accept (Chapter 3). The passage's *influence* is enormous and its *ethnography* is obsolete. Both facts should be stated together.

Dual-systems theory

Heidi Hartmann, “Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex,” *Signs* 1, no. 3, pt. 2 (Spring 1976): 137–69; and “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union” (1979), also the lead essay in Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution* (South End Press, 1981).² The thesis: capitalism and patriarchy are analytically distinct but interlocking systems; women's labour is exploited in both the waged economy and the household; and Marxism has consistently subordinated feminist analysis rather than integrating it.

Wages for Housework

The International Feminist Collective was founded in Italy in 1972 by Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Selma James, Silvia Federici and Brigitte Galtier, launching the Wages for Housework campaign. Key texts: Dalla Costa and James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community* (1972); Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (Autonomedia, 2004); Maria Mies, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (Zed, 1986), source of the concept “housewifization,” and *The Lace Makers of Narsapur* (Zed, 1982) — the latter an Indian case study.

Criticisms

From radical feminists: economism — patriarchy predates and outlives capitalism. From Black and postcolonial feminists: the “housewife” is a historically white, Northern figure, and domestic service was itself racialised *waged* work. From orthodox Marxists on Wages for Housework:

² Volume numbering and page ranges differ between the 1979 journal printing and the 1981 book — cite the version you actually quote.

it commodifies reproduction rather than socialising it. And Gita Sen, “The Sexual Division of Labor and the Working-Class Family,” *Review of Radical Political Economics* 12, no. 2 (1980), as a critique-and-synthesis response to dual systems.

7.1.4 Intersectional and Black feminism

Self-description

Systems of race, gender, class and sexuality are not additive but mutually constituting; single-axis analysis — antidiscrimination law, “women’s” politics, “Black” politics — renders Black women’s injuries invisible. The Combahee River Collective’s formula: “the major systems of oppression are interlocking.”

The two Crenshaw papers, precisely

- “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1, art. 8, pp. 139–67. The three cases analysed are *DeGraffenreid v. General Motors*, *Moore v. Hughes Helicopters* and *Payne v. Travenol*. Note: the *Legal Forum* is a student-edited law-school annual, not a peer-reviewed journal.
- “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241–99.

The Combahee River Collective Statement, April 1977

Authored by Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith and Demita Frazier; generally credited as the first published use of “identity politics.” Barbara Smith has repeatedly said the current usage distorts what they meant; her later gloss is that “Black women have a right to create a political agenda based on our intersecting identities.”

Other key texts

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Unwin Hyman, 1990); bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman* (South End Press, 1981); and Audre Lorde’s “Open Letter to Mary Daly” (written May 1979; published in *This Bridge Called My Back*, 1981, and *Sister Outsider*, 1984) — the canonical intra-feminist rebuke, charging that Daly’s *Gyn/Ecology* appropriated Black women’s words and depicted non-European women only as victims.

Named academic critics of intersectionality as a framework

All of these are sympathetic internal critics, which matters:

Critic	Objection
Jennifer C. Nash	“Re-thinking Intersectionality,” <i>Feminist Review</i> 89 (2008): 1–15. Four tensions: no defined intersectional <i>methodology</i> ; the use of Black women as the quintessential intersectional subject; vagueness of definition; questions about empirical validity. She explicitly does <i>not</i> seek to discard it.
Sirma Bilge	“Intersectionality Undone,” <i>Du Bois Review</i> 10, no. 2 (2013): depoliticisation and “whitening” of the concept under the neoliberal knowledge economy.

Table continued from previous page

Critic	Objection
Barbara Tomlinson	“Category anxiety and the invisible white woman,” <i>Feminist Theory</i> (2018): analyses the rhetoric of European critics of intersectionality.

7.1.5 Difference, cultural and care feminism

Self-description

Women’s characteristic moral voice — attentive to relationship, context and responsibility rather than abstract rights — has been misread as deficiency by male-normed developmental psychology. The task is to hear it as a different and equally mature orientation: an “ethic of care” alongside an “ethic of justice.”

Key texts

Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Harvard, 1982); Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering* (California, 1978); Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l’autre femme* (Minuit, 1974; Eng. Cornell, 1985) — whose publication led to her expulsion from Lacan’s École Freudienne; Hélène Cixous, “The Laugh of the Medusa” (French 1975; English *Signs* 1, no. 4, 1976: 875–93), source of *écriture féminine*.

The empirical criticism, and it is substantial

The central quantitative rebuttal to Gilligan is a meta-analysis of roughly 113 studies: care orientation favouring females at $d = -0.28$, justice orientation favouring males at $d = 0.19$ — both small, and frequently non-significant.³

THE GILLIGAN DATA DISPUTE

Christina Hoff Sommers charged, in *The Atlantic* (May 2000) and *The War Against Boys* (Simon & Schuster, 2000), that Gilligan’s picture of silenced, diminished American girls was empirically unfounded and that Gilligan “has failed to produce the data on which her celebrated research for *In a Different Voice* was based,” calling it too sensitive to share. Gilligan responded that the methodology *had* been published and that Sommers ignored a relevant study. **This should be presented as a live dispute over data availability, not as settled in either direction.**

7.1.6 Postcolonial and Third World feminism

Self-description

Western feminist scholarship has constructed “the Third World woman” as a singular, ahistorical, victimised object requiring rescue — a discursive move continuous with colonial knowledge production. The alternative is historically specific, locally grounded analysis and solidarity across difference.

³ Sara Jaffee and Janet Shibley Hyde, “Gender Differences in Moral Orientation: A Meta-Analysis,” *Psychological Bulletin* 126, no. 5 (2000): 703–26. See also Janet Shibley Hyde, “The Gender Similarities Hypothesis,” *American Psychologist* 60, no. 6 (2005).

Mohanty, in three versions

“Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” *boundary 2* 12, no. 3 / 13, no. 1 (Spring/Autumn 1984): 333–58 — the original. Revised in *Feminist Review* 30, no. 1 (November 1988): 61–88 (several aggregators wrongly give 61–85). Then substantially revised again as “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles,” *Signs* 28, no. 2 (2003): 499–535, and as a chapter in *Feminism Without Borders* (Duke, 2003). The three texts are not identical and the 2003 essay moves her position toward anti-capitalist transnational solidarity — cite the version you quote.

Spivak

“Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313. In the *sati* section she formulates the British self-understanding as “**White men are saving brown women from brown men**” — paired against the Indian nativist counter-claim that “the women actually wanted to die.” Neither, in her argument, lets the woman speak.⁴

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is the sharpest challenge to any Western-framed account of Indian women’s oppression — including, potentially, to a report like this one. It is also, from another direction, a challenge to the argument that criticism of a practice is automatically cultural imperialism. Part 6 takes up the colonialism question directly, including the *sati* debate (Lata Mani) and Ashis Nandy.

7.1.7 Dalit feminism

Self-description

Dalit women face a distinct structure of oppression at the intersection of caste, class and gender. Both mainstream (“savarna”) Indian feminism and mainstream Dalit politics have spoken *for* them; hence the demand for an autonomous Dalit women’s voice. Sharmila Rege’s framing is a **Dalit feminist standpoint** built through reflexive engagement rather than identity-essentialism.

Key texts

Gopal Guru, “Dalit Women Talk Differently,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 30, nos. 41–42 (14–21 October 1995): 2548–50. Sharmila Rege, “Dalit Women Talk Differently: A Critique of ‘Difference’ and Towards a Dalit Feminist Standpoint Position,” *EPW* 33, no. 44 (31 October–6 November 1998), in the Review of Women’s Studies section.⁵ Urmila Pawar and Meenakshi Moon, *Amhihi Itihas Ghadawala* (Marathi, 1989), translated as *We Also Made History: Women in the Ambedkarite Movement* (Zubaan, 2008).

⁴ The page for that line is commonly given as p. 297 of the 1988 volume; it could not be verified for this report, and the 1999 *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* version differs. Note also the 1983 original / 1988 revision / 1999 revision sequence, a frequent source of citation error.

⁵ Pagination disputed: commonly given as 39–48, but *EPW*’s Review of Women’s Studies uses WS-prefixed page numbers (WS39–WS46). Verify against a scan.

CORRECTION

Guru's 1995 article is titled "**Dalit Women Talk Differently.**" The form "Dalitbahujan Women Talk Differently" circulates widely and is wrong.

The 2017 LoSHA affair — a split still shaping Indian feminism

24 Oct 2017	Raya Sarkar , then a law student at UC Davis, posts a Facebook call for accounts of sexual harassment by academics, producing the crowdsourced List of Sexual Harassers in Academia (LoSHA).
24 Oct 2017	The same day, a "Statement by feminists on Facebook campaign to 'Name and Shame'" appears on <i>Kafila</i> , asking for the list's withdrawal and urging institutional due process. Signatories as published: Ayesha Kidwai, Brinda Bose, Janaki Abraham, Janaki Nair, Kavita Krishnan, Madhu Mehra, Nandini Rao, Nivedita Menon, Pratiksha Baxi, Ranjani Mazumdar, Sabeena Gadihoke, Shikha Jhingan, Shohini Ghosh, Vrinda Grover.
26 Oct 2017	Nivedita Menon , a signatory, replies with a long post titled "From Feminazi to Savarna Rape Apologist in 24 Hours."

The split ran along caste and generational lines: Sarkar and supporters framed the *Kafila* signatories as "savarna feminists" protecting institutional power; the signatories framed the list as naming without due process. Both framings are reported here without endorsement; the episode is the clearest single illustration that "Indian feminism" is not one thing.

7.1.8 Ecofeminism**Self-description**

The domination of women and the domination of nature share a logic — dualist, hierarchical, extractive — and women, especially subsistence producers in the global South, hold ecological knowledge that "maldevelopment" destroys.

Key texts

Françoise d'Eaubonne, *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (Pierre Horay, 1974), which coined *l'écoféminisme*; Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive* (Zed, 1988); Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism* (Zed, 1993).

The essentialism criticism, with its strongest academic voice

Bina Agarwal, "The Gender and Environment Debate: Lessons from India," *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 1 (1992): 119–58. Agarwal argues that Shiva-style ecofeminism treats the woman–nature link as *ideological and universal*, ignoring that women's relation to the environment is *materially* constituted and varies by class, caste and region. She proposes "feminist environmentalism" instead. This is the most-cited academic critique and is itself Indian, which matters for the "Western critique" framing.

7.1.9 Other schools

Standpoint theory

Knowledge is socially situated; the perspective of the subordinated, *critically achieved* rather than simply possessed, yields better questions and less distorted accounts. Founders: Dorothy E. Smith, Nancy Hartsock, Sandra Harding, Patricia Hill Collins, Alison Wylie. A terminological point worth keeping: **Hartsock says “feminist standpoint”**; **Smith says “women’s standpoint.”**

Choice feminism and its critics

The term was coined by Linda Hirshman in *Get to Work: A Manifesto for Women of the World* (2006), arising from a late-2005 *American Prospect* piece, to attack the claim that stay-at-home motherhood is simply a free choice. The main academic critique is Michael L. Ferguson, “Choice Feminism and the Fear of Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 1 (2010): 247–53 — that choice feminism is motivated by a *fear of politics*, offering a worldview that does not challenge the status quo, includes all women regardless of their choices, and abstains from judgement, thereby evading the work of making the personal political. See also Rachel Thwaites in *Feminist Theory* (2017).

Islamic feminism

Named here and treated properly in Part 5: Amina Wadud, Asma Barlas, Fatima Mernissi, Leila Ahmed, Ziba Mir-Hosseini, Kecia Ali; Margot Badran on the term’s own history. The movement Musawah and the Malaysian organisation Sisters in Islam are its main institutional expressions.

Gender-critical and trans-inclusive feminism

Set out in §4.6, with the two UK rulings and the dispute over the word “TERF.”

7.2 Conservative and critical positions

7.2.1 Phyllis Schlafly and the ERA

Self-description

Schlafly’s campaign presented itself as defending the legal privileges and protections of the housewife and mother against a constitutional amendment she said would strip them. “STOP” was an acronym: *Stop Taking Our Privileges*.⁶

22 Mar 1972	ERA passes Congress with a seven-year ratification deadline (1979), later extended by Congress to 30 June 1982.
1970s	Five states vote to rescind ratification: Nebraska, Tennessee, Idaho, Kentucky, South Dakota. The validity of rescission has never been resolved.
2017–20	Late ratifications: Nevada 2017, Illinois 2018, Virginia 2020 — bringing the count to 38, the Article V three-quarters threshold, <i>if</i> the deadline is invalid and the rescissions ineffective.
17 Dec 2024	The Archivist of the United States refuses to certify or publish the ERA, citing DOJ Office of Legal Counsel opinions of 2020 and 2022 holding it had expired.

⁶ This expansion is standard in the literature; a primary source for it was not located for this report.

2025–26

Not part of the Constitution; contested. S.J.Res.38 and H.J.Res.80 (119th Congress) pending. *Equal Means Equal v. Trump*, 1:25-cv-10806 (D. Mass., filed 3 April 2025, Judge William G. Young), argument scheduled 24 March 2026. In *Valame v. Trump* the Ninth Circuit affirmed against the plaintiff, per curiam, 4 November 2025.

TIME-STAMPED

This is the entry most likely to have moved since writing. Verify the ERA's status directly before relying on it.

7.2.2 Christina Hoff Sommers**Self-description, in her own words**

"Equity feminism developed out of the European Enlightenment: it wants for women what it wants for everyone — opportunity, dignity, and liberty." Against this she sets "**gender feminism**," which she describes as "today's Marxist-tinged focus on women's presumed plight as victims of the patriarchy and other systemic forms of male oppression." In *Who Stole Feminism? How Women Have Betrayed Women* (Simon & Schuster, 3 June 1994) she frames the distinction as: equity feminists seek equal legal rights; gender feminists seek to counteract historical gender-based inequalities via a theory of systemic male dominance.

She identifies as a feminist — latterly a "freedom feminist." Her critics dispute that self-description, pointing to her institutional home at the American Enterprise Institute and to her body of work. **Both should be stated.** Her main flashpoints are the Gilligan data dispute (§7.1.5) and disputes over statistics in *Who Stole Feminism?*

7.2.3 Camille Paglia**Self-description**

A dissident, pro-sex, 1960s-libertarian "Amazon" feminist who accepts biology as a constraint; she rejects both social-constructionist feminism and what she calls victim-oriented campus feminism, and argues that women must take responsibility for risk rather than demand protection. *Sexual Personae* (Yale University Press, 1990), 712 pp., was rejected by seven presses before Yale.

Named critics

Helen Vendler, "Feminism and Literature," *New York Review of Books*, 31 May 1990, and the subsequent exchange with Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *NYRB*, 16 August 1990. Gilbert wrote in *The Kenyon Review* that Paglia "loathes liberalism, egalitarianism, feminism, and Mother Nature." The exchange became personal on both sides.

7.2.4 Complementarianism and "tradwives"**Complementarianism**

Self-description: men and women are equal in dignity and worth but differ in role and function, with male "headship" in home and church; the position claims to be neither a hierarchy of worth nor a doctrine of sameness. The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood was

drafted at a Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood meeting in Danvers, Massachusetts, in December 1987 and published in final form in November 1988. CBMW was founded in 1987 and its founders coined “complementarianism” in 1988. The opposing evangelical position is egalitarianism, institutionally represented by Christians for Biblical Equality. Full treatment in Part 4.

“Tradwife” as a 2020s phenomenon

THE LABEL IS MOSTLY APPLIED FROM OUTSIDE

Frequently named figures: **Estee Williams**, who embraces the label; **Nara Smith**, usually described as adjacent rather than self-identified; **Hannah Neeleman** (“Ballerina Farm”), who has publicly rejected it. Individual self-descriptions could not be verified in detail for this report. Applying a contested label silently is exactly the practice this series avoids with “TERF” and “manosphere,” and the same standard applies here.

Academic commentary: Sophia Sykes and Veronica Hopner (SAGE, 2024) frame tradwife content as commercialising heteronormative femininity — “equal parts ideology and aesthetic” — via a “feminized hustle”; Diana E. Betz, Miriam Liss and Laura R. Ramsey, “Not the Solution We Proposed: Feminist Psychological Insights into the Tradwife Phenomenon,” *Psychology of Women Quarterly* (2026).

7.2.5 Evolutionary-psychology-informed critics

Key figures and claims

Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate* (Viking, 2002), argues against tabula-rasa assumptions in the social sciences. David Buss, *The Evolution of Desire* (Basic Books, 1994), on mate preferences across 37 cultures. Roy Baumeister, “Is There Anything Good About Men?” — an invited address to the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, 24 August 2007, later the book *Is There Anything Good About Men? How Cultures Flourish by Exploiting Men* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

BAUMEISTER'S THESIS IS NOT WHAT ITS TITLE SUGGESTS

The subtitle is the argument: *how cultures flourish by exploiting men*. It is a male-disposability thesis, not a male-superiority thesis — the claim is that men and women differ in ways cultures exploit, and that relations between them are more cooperative than antagonistic. Also note the widely circulated text is the 2007 address, which is not identical to the 2010 book. Cite whichever you use.

THE LARRY SUMMERS AFFAIR — WHAT HE ACTUALLY SAID

Almost every element of the popular account is wrong.

The setting was not a Harvard faculty meeting. It was an **NBER conference on Diversifying the Science & Engineering Workforce, 14 January 2005**, at which Summers, then Harvard's president, spoke off the record in a deliberately provocative register.

What he said: he offered *three* hypotheses for the under-representation of women in tenured science and engineering posts at top universities, ranked in this order of importance in his own view — (1) the “**high-powered job hypothesis**” (80-hour-week demands and family), (2) “different availability of aptitude at the high end” (greater male variance at the tails), (3) different socialisation and patterns of discrimination in search. He described the remarks as “explicitly speculative” and said “I may be

all wrong.”

The fallout: he released the full transcript on 17–18 February 2005, apologised, said he “should have left such speculation to those more expert in the relevant fields,” and resigned the presidency in 2006 (the remarks being one of several factors).

The commonest errors are to report that Summers said women are worse at maths, or that he said this at Harvard to his own faculty. Neither is accurate.^a

^a Full transcript published by *The Harvard Crimson*, 18 February 2005; NBER conference summary page.

The Pinker–Spelke debate, 2005

“The Science of Gender and Science: Pinker vs. Spelke — A Debate,” Mind/Brain/Behavior Initiative, Harvard, 16 May 2005, published in full by Edge.org. Pinker: innate sex differences in interests, in variability of ability, and in spatial cognition contribute to the STEM gap alongside discrimination. Spelke: the observed differences show up chiefly on *subjective* evaluations and stem from differential expectations by parents, teachers and evaluators; her infant-cognition work finds boys and girls develop the relevant core competencies equally. The debate was civil and substantive, and neither side should be caricatured.

7.2.6 Jordan Peterson

Self-description

Hierarchies are ancient, cross-species and not primarily a product of Western patriarchy; sex differences in personality (notably agreeableness and negative emotionality) and in interests (things versus people) are real, robust, and partly explain unequal outcomes; multivariate analysis shows the raw pay gap shrinks substantially once such factors are controlled, so discrimination is one factor among many rather than the whole story; and compelled speech about gender identity is illegitimate. The Channel 4 News interview with Cathy Newman (16 January 2018) is the reference text for the pay-gap argument.

The lobster argument, and its rebuttal

In *12 Rules for Life* Peterson argues that because lobsters and humans share a distant common ancestor, and both organise into status hierarchies regulated by serotonin, dominance hierarchy is evolutionarily deep rather than a socio-political artefact. The evolutionary developmental biologist P. Z. Myers replies that the inference is invalid: animal hierarchies are variable and responsive to social circumstance rather than fixed, and serotonin’s functional role differs enormously between an invertebrate ganglionic nervous system and a vertebrate brain. Larry Arnhart defends Peterson on the point.

The gender-equality paradox argument

This is Peterson’s most cited empirical claim and it has a complicated history, examined in full as the first worked example in Chapter 9.

7.3 Men's movements

7.3.1 The frame worth using: Messner's triangle

Before the individual movements, the best available analytical frame — peer-reviewed, sympathetic to none, and fair to all:

MESSNER'S TERRAIN OF MASCULINITY POLITICS

Michael A. Messner, *Politics of Masculinities: Men in Movements* (Sage, 1997), maps every men's movement onto a triangle whose three vertices are:

(1) institutionalised male privilege — (2) the costs of masculinity to men — (3) differences and inequalities among men.

Each movement is located by which vertices it emphasises and which it denies. Messner covers eight US movements: Promise Keepers, mythopoetic, men's liberation, men's rights, radical feminist men, socialist feminist men, racialised masculinity politics, and gay male liberation.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This frame lets you take men's grievances seriously without accepting the whole package. On Messner's map, the men's-rights movement is not *wrong* about vertex 2 — the costs of masculinity are real and measurable, as Part 12 documents at length. Its analytical weakness is the denial of vertex 1. Symmetrically, a feminism that recognises only vertex 1 is incomplete in exactly the mirror-image way. Most of the argument in this whole subject is people shouting from one vertex at people standing on another.

7.3.2 Men's liberation, 1970s

Self-description

The male sex role is itself a cage — emotionally constricting, health-destroying, and enforced by other men. Liberation for men and women is a single project. Explicitly allied with feminism at the outset.

Key texts

Warren Farrell, *The Liberated Man: Beyond Masculinity — Freeing Men and Their Relationships with Women* (Random House, 1974); Herb Goldberg, *The Hazards of Being Male: Surviving the Myth of Masculine Privilege* (Nash, 1976), a bestseller with around thirty printings.

FARRELL AND NOW

What is documented: Farrell joined NOW in 1969 and served on the board of directors of the National Organization for Women in New York City, 1971–74. The stronger and much-repeated claim — that he is “the only man in the US ever elected three times to the Board of Directors of NOW in New York City” — appears in his own biographical material and is repeated from there; no independent NOW record was located. **This report prints the weaker, documented version.**

The pivot

The Liberated Man (1974) locates the problem in the male role and treats feminism as an ally. *The Myth of Male Power: Why Men Are the Disposable Sex* (Simon & Schuster, 1993) argues that the perception of men as socially and economically powerful is false and that men are systematically disadvantaged. That is the pivot text for the entire men's-rights turn.

7.3.3 Profeminist men

Self-description (NOMAS's own)

Pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist, dedicated to enhancing men's lives — the claim being that men benefit from dismantling sexism.

"NOMAS FOUNDED 1975" COMPRESSES THREE DATES

1975: men enrolled in a women's studies course at the University of Tennessee held the First National Conference on Men and Masculinity in Knoxville; the "M&M" conferences continued annually, with the 1978 Los Angeles meeting drawing over 500 paid participants. 1981 (Boston M&M): a national membership organisation formed. 1983: named the National Organization for Changing Men. 1990: renamed the **National Organization for Men Against Sexism**.

Michael Kimmel's *Angry White Men* (Nation Books, 2013) is the source of the influential concept "**aggrieved entitlement**." In August 2018 the *Chronicle of Higher Education* reported anonymous complaints about his professional conduct; he deferred acceptance of the American Sociological Association's Jessie Bernard Award for six months to allow formal complaints to be filed, and a former student, Bethany M. Coston, published a named account. Reporting states he filed for retirement while a Title IX investigation was pending. **The allegations were not adjudicated and no findings were made**; they are recorded here as allegations because omitting them from a chapter that records other figures' controversies would be inconsistent.

7.3.4 The mythopoetic movement

Self-description

Not political but initiatory and psychological — modern men are wounded by absent fathers and an industrialised world that abolished male initiation; ritual, myth and all-male retreat can recover a "deep masculine" or "Wild Man."

Robert Bly, *Iron John: A Book About Men* (Addison-Wesley, 1990), spent 62 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Intellectual sources: Jung, Joseph Campbell, Robert A. Johnson. Organisational descendant: the ManKind Project. The fairest single academic volume is Michael Kimmel, ed., *The Politics of Manhood: Profeminist Men Respond to the Mythopoetic Men's Movement (And the Mythopoetic Leaders Answer)* (Temple University Press, 1995) — fair because the leaders reply in it. The major ethnography is Michael Schwalbe, *Unlocking the Iron Cage* (Oxford University Press, 1996). On Messner's map: heavy emphasis on vertex 2, largely bracketing vertex 1.

7.3.5 The men's rights movement

Self-description

Men and boys face systematic, legally entrenched disadvantages that feminism ignores or causes; the movement claims to seek equality, not supremacy, and frames itself as a civil-rights project. The National Coalition For Men describes itself as “a non-profit civil rights organization that focuses on issues affecting boys, men, and their families,” examining “gender-related biases in legal, social, and institutional contexts.”

Organisations

NCFM: origin in Free Men, Inc., founded in Columbia, Maryland, in January 1977 by Richard Haddad, Dennis Gilbert, Allan Scheib and Allen Foreman; Haddad wrote the “Free Men Philosophy”; Tom Williamson and Naomi Penner organised the national body, and *the Coalition* became official in December 1981. “NCFM founded 1977” is a shorthand.

A Voice for Men: founded 2009 by Paul Elam; since 2022 re-founded in Australia by Robert Brockway. The Southern Poverty Law Center described it as misogynist and **removed it from its active hate-group listing in 2022** — a fact AVfM itself publicises and which belongs in any fair account. Critics document Elam’s violent rhetoric and harassment campaigns.

The claimed grievance list, as the movement itself states it

Family-court and custody outcomes; child support and paternity fraud; false allegations of rape and domestic violence, and lack of anonymity for the accused; domestic-violence services and research that exclude male victims; male suicide rates; workplace deaths and dangerous occupations; military conscription and Selective Service; educational under-attainment of boys; sentencing disparities; circumcision; homelessness; lack of reproductive rights for men.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Several items on that list are empirically well supported — male suicide rates, workplace deaths, the sentencing gap, Selective Service registration. Others are contested, and a few are not supported at all. That mixture is exactly where a careful report can add value, and it is what Part 12 is for. Dismissing the list wholesale is as unserious as accepting it wholesale.

FARRELL REJECTS THE LABEL

Farrell is repeatedly called the movement’s intellectual father, and denies the activist label, avoiding the phrase “men’s rights”: “It’s like somebody saying we’re in favor of the king’s rights. The average person thinks that men are already at the top of the political structure, they have all the rights, they made all the rules.” On his own position: “I am a men’s liberationist when men’s liberation is defined as equal opportunity and equal responsibility for both sexes. I am a feminist when feminism favors equal opportunities and responsibilities for both sexes. I oppose both movements when either says our sex is THE oppressed sex... Ultimately, I am in favor of neither a women’s movement nor a men’s movement but a gender transition movement.”^a

^a Both quotations are widely attributed to Farrell and appear in NPR’s 2 September 2014 report and in reference summaries; the second should be traced to its original interview before being reproduced as a block quotation.

7.3.6 MGTOW

Self-description

Not activism but *withdrawal*. Men should refuse marriage, cohabitation and often dating altogether (“going ghost”), pursue self-reliance, and disengage from a legal and social order they regard as rigged. Libertarian in early flavour, individualist in ethic. Origin: early 2000s; the blog “No Ma’am” published a “MGTOW Manifesto” in 2001, and the community coalesced on a forum called Nice Guy, associated with pseudonymous founders “Solaris” and “Ragnar.”

Distinction from MRAs

MRAs seek legal and policy reform on behalf of men as a class. MGTOW abandon reform as futile and pursue personal exit. The SPLC’s phrasing captures the contempt from outside: MGTOWs “abandoned even the pretense of purported activism.”

7.3.7 Pickup artists

Self-description

A skills-and-self-improvement subculture: attraction is a learnable, systematisable competence. Ross Jeffries founded Speed Seduction in 1988, built on neuro-linguistic programming; Neil Strauss calls him the “godfather” of the modern scene. “Mystery” (Erik von Markovik) introduced “peacocking” and structured routines. Neil Strauss, *The Game* (ReganBooks, 2005), is the popular text. Daryush “Roosh V” Valizadeh represents the later “neomascularity” phase.

The decline is documented

Strauss publicly repudiated the scene; Roosh, Julien Blanc and Jeff Allen faced entry bans or travel restrictions from several countries over their teachings; Roosh lost PayPal and advertising partners, then renounced casual sex, converted to Orthodox Christianity and shut down his flagship site.

7.3.8 Incels

THE ORIGIN STORY IS TRUE AND ALMOST ALWAYS TOLD WRONG

In 1997 an anonymous, then-undergraduate **bisexual woman** known as “Alana”, at Carleton University in Ottawa, created “Alana’s Involuntary Celibacy Project” — a peer-support website and mailing list **explicitly for men and women, gay and straight**, for people struggling to find partners. She chose “involuntary celibacy” as a *neutral* alternative to pejoratives like “loser virgin,” first abbreviating it “invcel”; someone else suggested “incel” as easier to say.

She stopped participating in 2000 and has since said she is uncomfortable with how the term was hijacked. She now runs the Love Not Anger project.^a

^a Alana’s own account at lovenotanger.org, “My history with involuntary celibacy”; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “incel”; Wordorigins.org.

The “blackpill”

Self-description: an unsentimental determinism — female mate choice is overwhelmingly driven by immutable physical traits (“looks theory”), so self-improvement is futile and the incel’s condition is permanent. Associated slogans: LDAR (“lie down and rot”). **The redpill/blackpill split is the single most important internal division:** redpill holds that status is escapable through effort; blackpill holds that it is fixed.

The research

Debbie Ging, “Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere,” *Men and Masculinities* 22, no. 4 (2019): 638–57 (online first 2017, hence the citation confusion), argues that manosphere masculinities *complicate* the standard alignment of hegemonic masculinity with power, by operationalising victimhood and “beta masculinity.” On wellbeing: William Costello, Vania Rolon and Andrew G. Thomas, “Levels of Well-Being Among Men Who Are Incel,” *Evolutionary Psychological Science* (2022) — 151 self-identified male incels versus 378 age-matched non-incels, finding greater interpersonal victimhood, higher depression, anxiety and loneliness, and lower life satisfaction. A 2025 follow-up in *Personality and Individual Differences*, “Seeing through the black pill,” reports an empirical falsification of a core blackpill belief: incels are wrong about what people actually think of them.

TORONTO 2018 — THE SINGLE MOST MISREPORTED FACT IN THIS FIELD

Alek Minassian drove a van onto a Yonge Street sidewalk on 23 April 2018, killing 10 and injuring 16. On 3 March 2021 Justice Anne Molloy of the Ontario Superior Court convicted him on all 26 counts, rejecting the not-criminally-responsible defence: the attack was “the act of a reasoning mind.”

On motive, she found the opposite of what is usually reported. She was “inclined to accept the assessment of all of the experts that [he] did lie to the police about much of the incel motivation he talked about and that **the incel movement was not in fact a primary driving force behind the attack**”; that his story about an “incel rebellion” was “**a lie**”; that “**he did it to become famous**” and “piggybacked on the ‘incel’ movement to ratchet up his own notoriety”; and that “resentment towards women who were never interested in him was a factor in this attack, **but not the driving force**.” She referred to him throughout as “John Doe” to deny him notoriety.

Correct formulation: Minassian *self-described* as an incel to police and online; the trial judge concluded this was substantially a fabrication for notoriety, with misogynist resentment a contributing but not driving factor. Any claim that “a court found the Toronto attack was incel terrorism” is false.^a

^a CBC News, NPR and *The Conversation* reports of the 3 March 2021 verdict, quoting Molloy J.’s reasons.

PLYMOUTH 2021 WAS NOT LEGALLY CLASSED AS TERRORISM

Jake Davison, 22, shot his mother Maxine after an argument on 12 August 2021, then shot seven strangers, killing five in total including a three-year-old, then killed himself. The National Counter Terrorism Policing Network **decided not to treat it as terrorism**, assessing him as driven primarily by mental health and personal grievance rather than a “political, religious, racial or ideological cause” as the UK statutory definition requires. No confirmation was found that the classification was ever revisited. His online output included self-description as an incel; his mother had referred him to Prevent in November 2016. The February 2023 inquest concluded he died by suicide, and a separate conclusion found a “catastrophic failure” by Devon and Cornwall Police over his shotgun licence. **The inquest made no terrorism finding.** For context: 77 suspected incels were referred to Prevent in 2021–22, of

whom 23 received ideological mentoring.

7.3.9 The Red Pill

The metaphor is from *The Matrix* (1999). **r/TheRedPill** was created in October 2012 under the alias “pk_atheist”; in 2017 *The Daily Beast* revealed that the founder and moderator was **Robert Fisher**, a sitting New Hampshire state representative, who initially refused to resign, saying he would “stand strong for men’s rights,” then resigned on 17 May 2017. Reddit **quarantined** the subreddit in September 2018; submissions and comments fell to roughly half pre-quarantine levels, and the community migrated substantially to self-hosted forums.⁷

7.3.10 Fathers’ rights

Self-description

Family courts systematically favour mothers; children have a right to both parents; the demand is a presumption of shared or equal parenting, and transparency in secret family courts.

Fathers 4 Justice, founded by Matt O’Connor. The organisation’s own account gives 2001 (“campaigning for equal parenting rights since 2001”); the first direct action was 17 December 2002, when around 200 protesters dressed as Father Christmas stormed the lobby of the Lord Chancellor’s Department. Founding year is commonly given as either 2001 or 2002 — say which you mean. US counterparts: National Parents Organization (formerly Fathers & Families), American Coalition for Fathers and Children.

7.3.11 Andrew Tate

Only documented items, date-stamped.

Dec 2022	Andrew and Tristan Tate and two Romanian women are detained by Romanian police.
20 Jun 2023	DIICOT sends the brothers to trial on charges including forming an organised criminal group, human trafficking and rape.
2024	The Bucharest Court of Appeal allows their challenge, finds irregularities in the indictment, and returns the first case to prosecutors — so the trial did not proceed on that indictment.
Feb 2025	The brothers travel to the United States after Romanian prosecutors lift a two-year travel ban.
May 2025	The UK Crown Prosecution Service confirms publicly that the brothers face 21 criminal charges in England — including rape, actual bodily harm and human trafficking — arising from a Bedfordshire Police file covering 2012–2015.
Jul 2026	DIICOT announces a further expansion of the investigation, adding money laundering, influencing statements, removal of assets from seizure, and complicity in the trafficking of minors.

⁷ See “Reddit quarantined: can changing platform affordances reduce hateful material online?”, *Internet Policy Review* (2020); “Quarantined! Examining the Effects of a Community-Wide Moderation Intervention on Reddit,” *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction* (2022). The subreddit’s precise status in 2026 could not be confirmed and should be re-checked.

Both brothers deny all charges. Reporting dated 20 July 2026 concerning an arrest and UK extradition could not be verified for this report and is therefore not stated as fact; the position should be re-checked.

Reach among schoolboys — use these figures, not the viral ones

University of York (2025): a survey of 200 teachers across UK secondary and primary schools found **26% referenced male pupils discussing misogynistic influencers including Tate**. NA-SUWT polled over 5,800 members: **59% said social media contributes to declining pupil behaviour**, with Tate named by a number of respondents — note this is teacher self-report, not measurement of pupil attitudes. Internet Matters found **42% of children aged 9–16 held neutral or favourable views** of Tate, with older boys most influenced.

CORRECTION

The widely repeated figure that “80% of British 16–17-year-old boys have consumed Tate content” appeared in research for this report with **no traceable methodology, sample or question wording**. It is not used here and should not be used by anyone until the underlying survey is located.

7.3.12 Richard Reeves and AIBM

Self-description — genuinely distinct from both camps

Richard V. Reeves, *Of Boys and Men: Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters, and What to Do About It* (Brookings Institution Press, 27 September 2022), identifies three domains of male struggle: education, work, family. He left Brookings in mid-2023 and founded the **American Institute for Boys and Men** the same year, intended as an evidence-based, mainstream institution aiming to de-escalate gender polarisation.

Relative to feminism: Reeves describes himself as a feminist, says he wants to roll back no part of feminism, holds that work remains on women’s equality, and insists gender equality is not zero-sum. *Relative to the men’s rights movement:* he does not frame men as an oppressed class, does not blame feminism for male decline, and does not adopt the grievance-list politics; his causal story is structural — education systems, deindustrialisation, family change — rather than adversarial.

Critics from both sides

From the right and traditionalists: the Institute for Family Studies, “Right Diagnosis, Wrong Prescription”; Aaron Renn. From the left: *The Nation*, “Are Men OK?”

7.4 Who hates whom: the intra-camp wars

7.4.1 The feminist sex wars

The Barnard conference

“The Scholar and the Feminist IX: Towards a Politics of Sexuality,” Barnard College Women’s Center, Saturday 24 April 1982. A flier signed by the *Coalition for a Feminist Sexuality and Against Sadoomasochism* — whose named constituents were Women Against Violence Against Women, Women Against Pornography and New York Radical Feminists — was distributed, and Women

Against Pornography picketed. More than a thousand copies of the accompanying handbook, *Diary of a Conference on Sexuality*, were seized by Barnard in the days beforehand.

The anti-pornography ordinances — the timeline, uncompressed

1983	Minneapolis: activists bring in Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, who draft an amendment to the city's civil rights ordinance defining <i>pornography as a practice that discriminates against women</i> , actionable as a civil-rights violation.
30 Dec 1983	Minneapolis City Council passes it, 7–6.
5 Jan 1984	Mayor Donald Fraser vetoes it, saying it would not survive judicial review.
Jul 1984	The council passes it a second time; Fraser vetoes it again . The Minneapolis ordinance therefore never took effect.
1–2 May 1984	Indianapolis passes a version drafted at the council's invitation; signed by Mayor William H. Hudnut III on 2 May.
27 Aug 1985	<i>American Booksellers Association, Inc. v. Hudnut</i> , 771 F.2d 323 (7th Cir.). Judge Frank Easterbrook holds the ordinance unconstitutional under the First Amendment: it regulated by <i>viewpoint</i> , prohibiting materials presenting women in “positions of subordination” regardless of literary, artistic, political or scientific value, and so fell outside the <i>Miller</i> obscenity framework and was overbroad.
24 Feb 1986	Summarily affirmed by the US Supreme Court without opinion, 475 U.S. 1001. Note that a summary affirmance is precedentially weaker than a reasoned holding on the merits.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The crucial fact, almost always omitted: **feminists were on both sides in court**. The Feminist Anti-Censorship Taskforce filed an amicus brief *against* the MacKinnon–Dworkin ordinance. The sex-positive case is set out in Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” in Carole S. Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 267–319 — a volume that grew directly out of the 1982 Barnard conference — and in Ellen Willis’s “Feminism, Moralism, and Pornography” and Pat Califia’s work. Part 11 takes this up in full.

7.4.2 The “white feminism” critique

Self-description

Mainstream — largely white, professional-class, Anglophone — feminism has universalised the interests and grievances of white women, treating them as feminism itself, while excluding or instrumentalising women of colour: historically from suffrage onward, and currently in corporate “lean-in” and influencer forms.

Recent texts

Rafia Zakaria, *Against White Feminism: Notes on Disruption* (Hamish Hamilton, 2021; Norton, 2021); Koa Beck, *White Feminism* (Atria, 2021); Ruby Hamad, *White Tears/Brown Scars* (Melbourne University Press, September 2019; Catapult and Orion/Trapeze, 2020).

CORRECTION

Hamad’s book is 2019, not 2021, and the publisher varies by territory. Also worth noting for anyone who thinks this critique is new: the lineage runs through the Combahee Statement (1977), Lorde’s

open letter to Daly (1979/1981), hooks (1981, 1984), Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, “Challenging Imperial Feminism,” *Feminist Review* 17 (1984), Mohanty (1984/1988), and *This Bridge Called My Back* (1983).

7.4.3 Where the men’s movements attack each other

Fault line	The conflict
Redpill vs blackpill	The deepest split. Redpill: status is escapable through self-improvement. Blackpill: it is permanent. Blackpilled incels therefore regard redpillers and pickup artists as grifters selling false hope; the latter regard incels as defeatists who will not do the work.
Incel nihilism vs MRA/PUA instrumentalism	Incel forums are, in the research literature’s description, “riddled with imagery and mentions of suicide, of LDAR” — a register the other factions explicitly reject.
MGTOW vs both	MGTOW reject activism as futile (so MRAs waste their lives petitioning a rigged system) and reject seduction as supplication (so PUAs are still centring women).
MRAs vs everyone downstream	MRAs, presenting as a civil-rights movement with legislative aims, resent being grouped with incels and pickup artists. Farrell’s refusal of the “men’s rights” label is the elite version of the same move.
Exit communities	r/IncelExit and r/ExRedPill are sites where former adherents attack the ideologies from inside — analysed in <i>Studies in Conflict & Terrorism</i> (2023).

There is also structural competition. Ribeiro et al. document that users migrate from older, milder communities (pickup artists, men’s rights) toward newer, more extreme ones (Red Pill, MGTOW, incels) — which means the factions are competing for the same population, itself a source of hostility.⁸

IS “MANOSPHERE” A SELF-DESCRIPTION? PARTLY

More nuanced than usually stated. The word is a play on “blogosphere” and first surfaced on Blogspot in 2009. It was popularised *from inside* by Ian Ironwood, a pornography marketer, in his 2013 book *The Manosphere: A New Hope for Masculinity* — used approvingly and self-referentially by a participant, not coined by critics. Today, however, it functions overwhelmingly as an analysts’ and journalists’ umbrella term: incels, MGTOW, MRAs and pickup artists generally identify by their specific label, and MRAs in particular object to being lumped in with incels.

Note also the terminological politics on the research side. The **Institute for Research on Male Supremacism** — founded 2019 by Alex DiBranco — deliberately prefers “male supremacism” to “manosphere,” on the grounds that the latter is internet-descriptive rather than ideological and lets patriarchal traditionalism off the hook. That is a substantive scholarly choice, not a stylistic one.

⁸ Manoel Horta Ribeiro, Jeremy Blackburn, Barry Bradlyn, Emiliano De Cristofaro, Gianluca Stringhini, Summer Long, Stephanie Greenberg and Savvas Zannettou, “The Evolution of the Manosphere Across the Web,” *Proceedings of the 15th International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* (ICWSM 2021) — 38 million posts across 7 forums and 57 subreddits, manually annotated by seven coders. **Citation trap:** the widely circulated preprint title was “From Pick-Up Artists to Incels: A Data-Driven Sketch of the Manosphere” (arXiv:2001.07600), which is *not* the published title; and a completely different 2019 article in the *International Journal of Communication* shares that preprint title. Do not conflate them.

7.4.4 The steel-manned version

Fairness requires giving the strongest scholarly case that the men's online movements are a response to real grievances rather than only an expression of misogyny. That literature is thin, and its best current representative is:

SIMON JAMES COPLAND, *THE MALE COMPLAINT* (POLITY, 2025)

Based on his 2022 ANU doctorate. The argument: the manosphere is *not* an aberration but is “deeply embedded within mainstream, neoliberal social structures”; it is a public defined by more than misogyny; for alienated men the promise of community offers understanding, connection and purpose; and the economic insecurity of late-stage neoliberalism is a likely source of many of these men's grievances. His prescription is to **accept the premise of the hurt, address the underlying causes, and offer alternative narratives about their true source** — rather than only mocking or deplatforming.

Supporting material: the Costello/Thomas/Buss line of work, which treats incel distress as real and measurable and explicitly criticises media misrepresentation; Ging (2019), which is partly a steel-man in that victimhood and beta-identity are doing real analytical work; Kimmel's “aggrieved entitlement,” hostile to the movement but taking the grievance seriously; and the deradicalisation literature on r/IncelExit and r/ExRedPill.

AN HONEST NOTE ON THE STATE OF THE FIELD

The steel-man literature is thin, and that thinness is itself a finding about the research field — which has been far more interested in documenting misogyny than in explaining recruitment. Copland is currently its best single representative. Readers should also know that at least one paper sometimes described as a steel-man, Vallerga and Zurbriggen's 2022 thematic analysis, is nothing of the kind: it is a critical analysis, and describing it otherwise is an error.

REMEMBER THIS

The map's real lesson: there is no “feminist position” and no “men's position.” There are at least a dozen feminisms that disagree with each other on pornography, on trans inclusion, on caste, on whether choice is meaningful — and at least six men's movements that hold each other in open contempt. Anyone who tells you what “feminists think” or what “the manosphere believes” is describing a coalition that does not exist.

Fourteen Ways to Fool Yourself

This is the chapter to keep. Everything in Parts 7 to 13 depends on it, because almost every bad argument about men and women is one of fourteen recurring shapes — and each of the fourteen is committed with equal enthusiasm by both sides.

One rule is followed strictly here. Some of these have real academic pedigrees — peer-reviewed origins, standard definitions, established literatures. Others are internet coinages with no scholarly standing at all, popular in one camp or another. **This chapter says which is which every single time.** Presenting a blog coinage as an established concept is itself a way of fooling yourself, and it is remarkably common in this subject.

PEDIGREE LABELS USED IN THIS CHAPTER

ESTABLISHED — standard term with a peer-reviewed or canonical origin and an ongoing literature.

PEER-REVIEWED BUT NICHE — genuine scholarly origin, low disciplinary uptake, heavy online circulation.

NO SCHOLARLY STANDING — a blog or forum coinage. Sometimes a useful observation; never an authority. Where one of these names a real phenomenon, the established alternative is given.

8.1 Confusing averages with distributions

ESTABLISHED

Two distributions can have the same mean and behave completely differently at the edges. Almost every argument about elite achievement turns on this and almost nobody states it explicitly.

The hypothesis

Greater male variability: that male traits are more widely dispersed than female ones, so men are over-represented at both extremes. Darwin noted greater male variability across species in *The Descent of Man* (1871); the first detailed human treatment is Havelock Ellis, *Man and Woman* (London, 1894), in a chapter titled “The Variational Tendency of Men.”¹

The best single piece of evidence

The Scottish Mental Survey of 1932 tested essentially every child born in Scotland in 1921. In the analysed sample of **79,376** eleven-year-olds:

¹ Ellis claimed “both the physical and mental characters of men show wider limits of variation than do the physical and mental characters of women.” The subtitle of the book appears in two forms across editions; the chapter title is from secondary sources. The first significant attack was Karl Pearson, “Variation in Man and Woman,” in *The Chances of Death and Other Studies in Evolution* (London: Edward Arnold, 1897), which found inconsistent anthropometric results and concluded the hypothesis unproven.

Measure	Result
Mean IQ	Girls 100.64, boys 100.48. Difference 0.16 — not significant : $t(79,374) = 1.6, p = .11$
Standard deviation	Girls 14.1 , boys 14.9 . Levene's test $p < .001$
Implied variance ratio	≈ 1.12 ($14.9^2/14.1^2$) — <i>the paper does not report a variance ratio; this is a derivation</i>
Both tails	Boys were 58.6% of the IQ 50–60 band and 57.7% of the 130–140 band — about 1.4 boys per girl at <i>each</i> extreme

Source: I. J. Deary, G. Thorpe, V. Wilson, J. M. Starr and L. J. Whalley, "Population sex differences in IQ at age 11: the Scottish mental survey 1932," *Intelligence* 31, no. 6 (2003): 533–42. Honest caveats from the authors: ledgers for Fife, Angus and Wigtown are missing, so "whole population" is slightly overstated; and they considered and rejected item-bias explanations but could not rule out socialisation.

Internationally, PISA 2003 across 41 countries gives global male-to-female variance ratios of **1.15 in reading** and **1.13 in mathematics**, with boys significantly more variable in 35 and 37 of 41 countries respectively.²

WHERE THE HYPOTHESIS FAILS, STATED HONESTLY

1. **Not universal.** Four to six of the 41 PISA countries show no significant male excess, and the distribution of maths variance ratios extends below 1.0.
2. **The direction of the tail matters enormously.** Higher male variance in *reading* is driven by the *bottom* tail: **36 of 41 countries have more girls than boys in the top 5% of reading, and 39 of 41 have more boys in the bottom 5%.** "Greater male variability" therefore does *not* entail "more males at the top" across domains.
3. **Cross-cultural inconsistency.** Feingold's 1994 cross-cultural study found the US variability pattern is not consistently replicated elsewhere.^a
4. **The distribution is not normal.** Johnson, Carothers and Deary showed that on whole-population Scottish data, general intelligence departs substantially from normality, with *less* variability in the upper range than the lower — so tail sex ratios cannot be read off a normal-model variance ratio at all.^b
5. **Contested.** Kane and Mertz (2012) argued the ratios vary too much across countries to support a biological explanation; Hill (2021) disputed their analysis; Baye and Monseur, using twelve international databases from 1995 to 2015, found ratios exceed 1 on average but with substantial between-country heterogeneity, varying by domain, grade and proficiency level.

^a Alan Feingold, "Gender differences in variability in intellectual abilities: A cross-cultural perspective," *Sex Roles* 30 (1994): 81–92; and "Sex Differences in Variability in Intellectual Abilities: A New Look at an Old Controversy," *Review of Educational Research* 62, no. 1 (1992): 61–84. *A free illustration of this chapter's own theme*: Machin and Pekkarinen miscite the 1992 paper in *Science* as "Rev. Educ. Res. 59, 185 (1992)" — a checkable citation error that survived peer review at one of the world's two most prestigious journals.

^b Wendy Johnson, Andrew Carothers and Ian J. Deary, in *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 3, no. 6 (2008): 518–31.

² Stephen Machin and Tuomas Pekkarinen, "Global sex differences in test score variability," *Science* 322, no. 5906 (2008): 1331–32, corroborated in TIMSS 2003 and PIRLS 2001. Notably, they found *no* relation between the WEF Gender Gap Index and the variance ratios — unlike the mean gap.

How each side gets this wrong

The men's-rights version: "men are more variable, therefore men dominate the top of every field for biological reasons." This ignores point 2 — in reading, girls dominate the top — and point 4, which removes the mathematical basis for the inference.

The strong-egalitarian version: "mean differences are zero, therefore sex is irrelevant to elite representation." This ignores that small variance differences produce large ratios far out in the tails, which is arithmetic rather than ideology.

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

Same average height does not mean the same number of people over seven feet. And a group having more people over seven feet does not tell you that group is taller on average. Both inferences are wrong, and each side reliably makes one of them.

8.2 Group facts and individual facts

ESTABLISHED

TWO DISTINCT ERRORS

Ecological fallacy — inferring facts about individuals from correlations measured on groups. Demonstrated by W. S. Robinson, "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals," *American Sociological Review* 15, no. 3 (1950): 351–57. His example: at state level, immigration rates correlated *positively* with literacy; individually, immigrants were *less* literate.^a

Simpson's paradox — an association present in aggregated data reverses or disappears when the data are disaggregated. E. H. Simpson, "The Interpretation of Interaction in Contingency Tables," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society B* 13, no. 2 (1951): 238–41, with a precedent in Yule (1903); hence "Yule–Simpson effect." Neither called it a paradox.

^a Do not say Robinson coined the phrase. He demonstrated the problem; the phrase is normally credited to Hanan Selvin (1958).

The Berkeley admissions case — told correctly

This is the standard illustration, and the standard telling drops two or three of its four parts.

What Bickel, Hammel and O'Connell actually found (*Science*, 1975)

- 1 Aggregate, autumn 1973: about 8,442 male applicants, 44% admitted; about 4,321 female, 35% admitted.
- 2 Disaggregated by department: *few* decision-making units departed significantly from expected frequencies, and **about as many appeared to favour women as men**.
- 3 Properly pooled, respecting departmental autonomy: "a **small but statistically significant bias in favour of women**."
- 4 **The authors did not conclude "no discrimination."** They located the aggregate gap in women applying disproportionately to departments with low admission rates *for either sex*, and pointed upstream — to differential socialisation into fields — as the thing needing explanation.

THERE WAS NEVER A LAWSUIT

The story is told in textbooks and in peer-reviewed papers as “Berkeley was sued for discrimination.” It was not. Bickel has said only that “the associate dean of the graduate school thought that the university might be sued” and asked him to look at the data. The false lawsuit claim has been documented in at least five textbooks and three peer-reviewed articles.^a

That a canonical cautionary tale about careless statistics has itself been transmitted carelessly for fifty years is the most instructive thing about it.

^a Alex Reinhart, “Simpson’s Paradox and Statistical Urban Legends: Gender Bias at Berkeley,” refsmmat.com, 8 May 2016, documenting the error in Chang (2012), Navarro, Schneps and Colmez (2013), Havil (2011), Stangroom (2009), and in Cooper and Patall, *Psychological Methods* 14, no. 2 (2009); Taylor and Mickel, *Journal of Statistics Education* 22, no. 1 (2014); Paris, *Journal of Physics A* 45, no. 13 (2012). Compare Ole Bjørn Rekdal, “Academic urban legends,” *Social Studies of Science* 44, no. 4 (2014): 638–54.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This is the single most useful item in the chapter for reading Part 10. A raw national pay gap is an aggregate. It can coexist with every individual employer paying identically for identical work *and* with substantial discrimination. Point 4 above is the crucial one: showing that an aggregate gap decomposes into “where people applied” does not make it innocent — it relocates the question, from the employer to whatever shaped the applying.

8.3 Is to ought, and ought to is**ESTABLISHED**

Four things are constantly conflated here, and the confusion is not pedantic — it changes what follows from an argument.

1. The is-ought gap (Hume, 1740)

*“In every system of morality, which I have hitherto met with, I have always remark’d, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning... when of a sudden I am surpriz’d to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not... ’tis necessary that it shou’d be observ’d and explain’d; and at the same time that **a reason should be given**, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it.”^a*

^a David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book III (1740), Part I, Section I, final paragraph; T 3.1.1.27, SBN 469–70. Verified against davidhume.org. Books I–II appeared in 1739 and Book III in 1740 — cite the *Treatise* as 1739–40 but Book III as 1740.

Note what Hume actually says: not that you *cannot* derive an ought from an is, but that **a reason must be given**. The strong prohibition is a later and disputed reading (classically challenged by MacIntyre in 1959). Do not overstate it.

2. The naturalistic fallacy (Moore, 1903) — which is not the same thing

CORRECTION

G. E. Moore's naturalistic fallacy, from *Principia Ethica* §§10–14, is a *metaethical and semantic* claim: the error of *defining* the property *good* as any natural property (pleasant, desired, evolutionarily fit). His instrument is the open-question argument.

Moore was a moral realist and an ethical *non-naturalist*: he thought moral facts objective, just not natural. His fallacy tells equally against *supernatural* definitions of good. Conflating it with Hume's gap, or with "nature is good," is one of the commonest errors in popular writing on this topic.

3. Appeal to nature

"Natural, therefore good or right." A recognised informal fallacy with no attributable coiner. This is the substantive claim people usually mean when they say "naturalistic fallacy." It is the standard error in arguments that run from evolutionary psychology to prescriptions about how women should live.

4. The moralistic fallacy (Davis, 1978) — the mirror image

Bernard D. Davis, "The moralistic fallacy," *Nature* 272, no. 5652 (30 March 1978): 390. Inferring what *is* from what *ought* to be — rejecting a factual claim because its truth would be morally inconvenient.

IN THE SIMPLEST WORDS

The appeal to nature says: it's natural, so it's fine. The moralistic fallacy says: it would be awful if that were true, so it isn't. One side of this argument specialises in the first and the other in the second, and both are errors.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This section does more work than any other in dissolving the historical argument in Chapters 2 and 3. If patriarchy turns out to be near-universal, nothing whatsoever follows about whether it should continue — slavery was near-universal too. And if a matriarchy had existed, nothing would follow about whether we should build one. Universality is evidence about causes, never about obligations.

8.4 Disparity is not discrimination — and the limits of that point**ESTABLISHED****The argument**

Thomas Sowell, *Discrimination and Disparities* (Basic Books, 2018; revised 2019), attacks what he calls the "**invincible fallacy**": the assumption that statistical disparities in socioeconomic outcomes imply either biased treatment or innate deficiency.³ His mechanism: many outcomes require *multiple* prerequisites simultaneously, so even small group differences in each prerequisite multiply into large output disparities. On this view skewed distributions are the norm and even ones the anomaly.

³ He is quoted as describing it as "the seemingly invincible fallacy that statistical disparities in socioeconomic outcomes imply either biased treatment of the less fortunate or genetic deficiencies in the less fortunate," apparently as a section heading in the opening chapter. The book text could not be opened for this report; verify the page before quoting.

SOWELL'S LOGICAL POINT IS NOT CONTROVERSIAL AMONG ECONOMISTS

The peer-reviewed review in the *Journal of Economic Literature* agrees with the core point: “His first point is that not all disparities are due to discrimination — a point well-supported by economic theory and evidence but often a source of confusion in public conversations.” The reviewer’s disagreement is about the role of government: “I find far more reason to be hopeful about the role of government than Sowell does.”^a Do not present that review as a refutation.

^a Jennifer L. Doleac, “A Review of Thomas Sowell’s *Discrimination and Disparities*,” *Journal of Economic Literature* (2020), doi:10.1257/jel.20201541.

The three serious counterpositions

1. **Direct experimental evidence bypasses the residual argument entirely.** Bertrand and Mullainathan sent fictitious résumés with randomly assigned names to help-wanted ads in Boston and Chicago: White-sounding names received **50% more callbacks**, uniformly across occupation, industry and employer size, and returns to résumé quality were larger for White names.⁴ When you randomise the group marker and hold everything else constant, “other factors” cannot explain the gap.
2. **The residual method is itself biased toward the null.** Darity and Mason argue that controlling away characteristics which are *themselves products of discrimination* — school quality, occupational access, prior job history — systematically *understates* discrimination.⁵
3. **The legal position: disparity is rebuttable evidence, not proof.** *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, 401 U.S. 424 (1971): under Title VII, a facially neutral practice with a *disparate impact* on a protected class establishes a *prima facie* case, and the burden then shifts to the employer to show job-relatedness or business necessity. Narrowed by *Wards Cove* (1989); restored by the Civil Rights Act of 1991, §703(k).

REMEMBER THIS

The fair framing. Sowell’s logical point is correct and widely accepted. What is contested is (i) how much observed disparity discrimination explains, (ii) whether the burden of proof sits with the complainant or shifts once a disparity is shown, and (iii) Sowell’s further conclusions about markets and intervention — which are contested empirical claims, not entailments of the logical point. Treating (i)–(iii) as settled by (i) is the error in the other direction.

⁴ Marianne Bertrand and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination,” *American Economic Review* 94, no. 4 (2004): 991–1013; meta-analytic confirmation in Lincoln Quillian, Devah Pager, Ole Hexel and Arnfinn H. Midtbøen, *PNAS* 114, no. 41 (2017): 10870–75.

⁵ William A. Darity Jr. and Patrick L. Mason, “Evidence on Discrimination in Employment: Codes of Color, Codes of Gender,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 12, no. 2 (1998): 63–90. For even-handedness, cite the companion piece in the same issue against them: James J. Heckman, “Detecting Discrimination,” *JEP* 12, no. 2 (1998): 101–16, which argues audit studies have their own serious identification problems. Citing both is the credible move.

8.5 Bad controls: the pay-gap trap

ESTABLISHED

Everybody knows “correlation is not causation.” Almost nobody knows that the slogan is itself routinely misused, and that adjusting for more variables can make an estimate *worse*.

KEY TERM: BAD CONTROLS

Controlling for a variable that sits *on the causal path* you are trying to measure removes exactly the effect you were looking for. Controlling for a variable caused by both your treatment and your outcome (a “collider”) can create a spurious association where none exists. Adding controls is not automatically more rigorous.^a

^a Carlos Cinelli, Andrew Forney and Judea Pearl, “A Crash Course in Good and Bad Controls,” *Sociological Methods & Research* 53, no. 3 (2024): 1071–1104. The framework is set out in Judea Pearl, *Causality: Models, Reasoning, and Inference*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and popularly in Pearl and Dana Mackenzie, *The Book of Why* (Basic Books, 2018).

Why this decides the pay-gap argument

The standard move is to take the raw gap and adjust for occupation, hours, tenure and experience, then announce that the remaining “unexplained” gap is small. But if the mechanism under investigation is that women are steered into lower-paying occupations and shorter hours, then *occupation and hours are the outcome, not the control*. Adjusting for them can explain away the very thing at issue.

Equally, if the claim is that identical workers are paid differently for identical work, then failing to adjust for occupation and hours produces a number that does not measure the claim. Both moves are available, both are used selectively, and the honest presentation gives both figures and says what each one means. Part 10 does exactly that.

And why “correlation is not causation” is a bad conversation-ender

Reichenbach’s common cause principle: if A and B are correlated and neither causes the other, there is a common cause.⁶ A robust correlation always implies *some* causal structure — A causes B, B causes A, something causes both, or there is a selection effect. What it does not tell you is *which*. “Correlation is not causation,” deployed as a full stop, obscures the fact that the real work is choosing among four candidate structures.

8.6 Base-rate neglect

ESTABLISHED

Kahneman and Tversky, “On the psychology of prediction,” *Psychological Review* 80, no. 4 (1973): 237–51, containing the lawyer/engineer problem: shifting the stated base rates from 70/30 to 30/70 barely moved participants’ judgements at all.

⁶ Hans Reichenbach, *The Direction of Time* (University of California Press, 1956).

WORKED EXAMPLE: THE TAXICAB PROBLEM

85% of the cabs in a city are Green and 15% are Blue. A witness who is 80% accurate says the cab in an accident was Blue. How likely is it that it was Blue?

Most people answer 80%. Bayes's theorem gives 41%. The base rate does most of the work and is almost entirely ignored.^a

^a **Correction to a common citation:** the taxicab problem is *not* in the 1973 *Psychological Review* paper. It belongs to the later work on *causal* base rates — Tversky and Kahneman, “Causal schemas in judgments under uncertainty” (1980), and “Evidential impact of base rates,” in *Judgment Under Uncertainty* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), 153–60. The exact first venue is disputed.

Maya Bar-Hillel sharpened the finding: neglect is *not* indiscriminate. People do use base rates when they perceive them as *causally relevant* rather than merely incidental.⁷

Where it bites in this subject

Any argument of the form “I know a man who lost his children in a custody case, therefore family courts are biased” or “I know a woman who was promoted over a better man, therefore quotas cause injustice” is base-rate neglect with an anecdote attached. So is any claim about how common false allegations are that starts from a vivid case rather than a denominator. Part 11 and Part 12 supply the denominators.

8.7 Availability, and anecdote as data**ESTABLISHED**

Tversky and Kahneman, “Availability: A heuristic for judging frequency and probability,” *Cognitive Psychology* 5, no. 2 (1973): 207–32.⁸ We judge the frequency or importance of a class of events by how easily instances come to mind.

This is the mechanism by which social media distorts this entire subject. What reaches you is not a sample; it is the most emotionally arresting material available, selected for engagement. Both the man convinced that false accusations are everywhere and the woman convinced that every workplace is hostile are reasoning correctly from a biased sample.

8.8 Survivorship and selection bias**ESTABLISHED****THE FAMOUS STORY IS SUBSTANTIALLY FICTION — THE LOGIC IS REAL**

Everyone tells the Abraham Wald story: the military wanted to armour the parts of returning bombers with the most bullet holes, and Wald pointed out that they should armour the parts with the *fewest*, because planes hit there did not come back.

⁷ Maya Bar-Hillel, “The base-rate fallacy in probability judgments,” *Acta Psychologica* 44, no. 3 (1980): 211–33. A humility footnote worth including: base-rate neglect is among the more contested items in the heuristics-and-biases canon, and Gigerenzer and colleagues showed the effect shrinks or vanishes under natural-frequency framing.

⁸ Author order matters: **Tversky** first. Several sources reverse it. The companion paper is Tversky and Kahneman, “Judgment under uncertainty: Heuristics and biases,” *Science* 185, no. 4157 (1974): 1124–31.

What actually exists as documentation is two items: two brief, vague mentions of aircraft-vulnerability work in W. Allen Wallis's 1980 history of the Statistical Research Group — **neither of which names Wald** — and Wald's own memoranda, written around 1943 and published only in July 1980, salvaged from a box Wallis found when moving house. A mathematician writing for the American Mathematical Society is blunt: **"Everything not in one of these places must be considered as fiction, not fact."**^a

Specifically: **the famous diagram is fake** — the plane peppered with red dots is a modern invention, traceable to around 2005; one popular version shows a DC-3/C-47 transport that rarely saw combat; one site claims to show "Wald's own sketches," and there is no evidence he made any. Five of his eight memoranda estimate survival probability from returning-aircraft data alone; only one addresses differential vulnerability of aircraft sections; and **"Wald says nothing about what the military should do to improve things."**

But the core logic is genuinely his. Wallis, in a rejoinder to his own article: "The military was inclined to provide protection for those parts that on returning planes showed the most hits. Wald assumed, on good evidence, that hits in combat were uniformly distributed over the planes. It follows that hits on the more vulnerable parts were less likely to be found on returning planes than hits on the less vulnerable parts, since planes receiving hits on the more vulnerable parts were less likely to return to provide data."

^a Bill Casselman, "The Legend of Abraham Wald," AMS Feature Column, June 2016. Wald's memoranda were published as *A Method of Estimating Plane Vulnerability Based on Damage of Survivors* (Center for Naval Analyses, July 1980).

Why this matters for this subject

Every dataset in Parts 10 to 13 is a survivor sample of something. Women in senior management are the ones who did not leave. Men in a fathers' rights survey are the ones who lost. Incels who answer a questionnaire are the ones still posting. Studies of "women who report harassment" cannot tell you about women who did not report. Asking *who is missing from this data, and why* is the single most productive question you can put to any statistic in this field.

8.9 Motte-and-bailey

PEER-REVIEWED BUT NICHE

KEY TERM: MOTTE-AND-BAILEY DOCTRINE

A doctrine with a defensible-but-uninteresting core (the motte) and a desirable-but-indefensible periphery (the bailey). Advocates occupy the bailey; when challenged, they retreat to the motte; once the challenge lapses, they reoccupy the bailey.

Origin: Nicholas Shackel, "The Vacuity of Postmodernist Methodology," *Metaphilosophy* 36, no. 3 (2005): 295–320, where it is one of five named rhetorical devices. Popularised by Scott Alexander, "All In All, Another Brick In The Motte," *Slate Star Codex*, 3 November 2014.

SHACKEL OBJECTS TO THE PHRASE EVERYONE USES

The ubiquitous "motte-and-bailey fallacy" is contrary to the coiner's stated view. Shackel: "A fallacy is an argument that is invalid and equivocation is giving different meanings to the same terms when you should be keeping their meaning invariant. A doctrine, however, is a body of propositions, not an argument."^a Its standing: a legitimate scholarly coinage with low disciplinary uptake and heavy online circulation — most citations in the wild are to Alexander's blog rather than to Shackel.

^a Nicholas Shackel, “Motte and Bailey Doctrines,” *Practical Ethics* blog, University of Oxford, September 2014.

Examples from both sides

Motte: “patriarchy just means men hold most senior positions.” *Bailey*: “therefore this specific man’s specific decision was an exercise of patriarchal power.”

Motte: “men and women differ on average in some measured traits.” *Bailey*: “therefore this woman is unsuited to this job.”

Motte: “‘equity’ means removing barriers so people can compete fairly.” *Bailey*: “therefore any unequal outcome must be corrected by quota.” (See §5.7 — the boxes-and-fence cartoon is this structure in a picture.)

8.10 Straw men, weak men, hollow men — and iron men

ESTABLISHED

Real argumentation theory, in the field’s flagship journal:

Term	Meaning
Straw man	Misrepresents an opponent’s argument.
Weak man	Picks a real but unrepresentatively weak version of the opposition and treats it as representative.
Hollow man	Attributes a position nobody actually holds.
Iron man	The charitable counterpart: engaging the strongest real version.

Source: Scott F. Aikin and John Casey, “Straw Men, Weak Men, and Hollow Men,” *Argumentation* 25, no. 1 (2011): 87–105 (online 7 October 2010); and Aikin and Casey, “Don’t Feed the Trolls: Straw Men and Iron Men,” in *Reflections on Theoretical Issues in Argumentation Theory* (Springer, 2015), 143–54.

TWO POPULAR TERMS WITH NO STANDING

“**Nutpicking**” — quoting unrepresentative extremists from a group’s comment sections as though they were representative — is attributed to the blogger Kevin Drum, around 2006. **NO SCHOLARLY STANDING.** Functionally it is Aikin and Casey’s *weak man* plus unrepresentative sampling; use their term and footnote the coinage.

“**Steelmanning**” is a pure internet coinage from the LessWrong and *Slate Star Codex* milieu, roughly 2011–13, with no identifiable first use and no academic standing. **NO SCHOLARLY STANDING.** The respectable versions are Aikin and Casey’s *iron man* and Rapoport’s rules as popularised by Daniel Dennett, *Intuition Pumps and Other Tools for Thinking* (Norton, 2013).

And a trap worth naming: the **principle of charity** — Neil L. Wilson (1959), transformed by Quine (1960) and made constitutive of interpretation by Davidson (1973–74) — is a thesis in the *philosophy of language and radical interpretation*, not a norm of debating etiquette. Writing “the principle of charity, coined by Neil Wilson in 1959, tells us to engage the strongest version of our opponent’s view” would be a misattribution. The debating norm is a later informal cousin.

The nutpicking problem in this subject, specifically

This is the most-committed error in the entire online gender argument, and it is structurally symmetrical. Every feminist argument can be met with a screenshot of somebody saying “kill all men,” and every men’s-rights argument can be met with a screenshot from an incel forum. Both moves feel devastating and neither engages anything. Whether the extreme is *representative* is an empirical question with an answer — and answering it takes work that a screenshot avoids.

8.11 Unfalsifiability, used carefully

ESTABLISHED (with heavy qualifications)

Karl Popper’s demarcation criterion: “not the verifiability but the falsifiability of a system is to be taken as a criterion of demarcation.”⁹

DO NOT USE THIS AS A KNOCKDOWN — NAIVE FALSIFICATIONISM IS NOT A LIVE POSITION

The standard criticisms, all from the *Stanford Encyclopedia’s* summary so that nobody can accuse you of overclaiming:

1. **Duhem–Quine holism.** Theories meet experience only in conjunction with auxiliary hypotheses and initial conditions, so a failed prediction never tells you *which* conjunct is false.
2. **Lakatos: there are no critical tests.** His Neptune counterfactual — had Galle *not* found Neptune, Newtonian mechanics would not have been abandoned; the failure would have been laid at the door of the atmosphere or an obscuring asteroid belt. High-level theories are “tenaciously protected from refutation by a vast ‘protective belt’ of auxiliary hypotheses.”
3. **Kuhn.** Normal science is paradigm-internal puzzle-solving, not attempted refutation; anomalies are tolerated for long periods.
4. **Grünbaum on psychoanalysis:** Popper’s dismissal is a caricature. Freud himself wrote “My theory can only be refuted when I have been shown phobias where sexual life is normal.” Grünbaum still thinks Freudian theory fails — but on evidential contamination, not unfalsifiability.
5. **Popper’s own retreat**, and this is the most useful item. *SEP*: his “final position is that he acknowledges that it is **impossible to discriminate science from non-science on the basis of the falsifiability of the scientific statements alone**”; the criterion shifts to whether modifications of auxiliary hypotheses are *ad hoc*. *SEP* calls this “a major alteration in his position, and arguably... a substantial retraction on his part.”

The practical upshot

“That’s unfalsifiable” is a legitimate criticism of a *specific claim engineered to accommodate all possible evidence*. It is not a general-purpose demolition of a research programme, and deployed that way it says more about the user than the target. This applies directly to §2.10: if you want to argue that patriarchy theory is unfalsifiable, you have to show what specific evidence its proponents have declared in advance would count against it, and that they then declined to accept such evidence. That is real work.

⁹ Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1959), §6, “Falsifiability as a Criterion of Demarcation”; German original *Logik der Forschung* (Vienna: Julius Springer, 1934/35). The section title and substance are confirmed via *SEP*; the exact wording could not be verified against a print copy for this report. See also *Conjectures and Refutations* (1963): “A theory which is not refutable by any conceivable event is non-scientific. Irrefutability is not a virtue of a theory (as people often think) but a vice.”

8.12 The single-study fallacy

ESTABLISHED

Study	Finding
Open Science Collaboration, <i>Science</i> 349 (2015): aac4716	100 psychology studies re-run. 97% of originals had significant results; 36% of replications did. Replication effect sizes about <i>half</i> the original magnitude. 47% of original effect sizes fell inside the replication's 95% CI.
Camerer et al., <i>Nature Human Behaviour</i> 2, no. 9 (2018): 637–44	21 social-science experiments from <i>Nature</i> and <i>Science</i> , 2010–15: 13 of 21 (62%) replicated, again at about half the effect size. Earlier economics-focused work: 11 of 18 (61%).
Klein et al., “Many Labs,” <i>Social Psychology</i> 45 (2014): 142–52	The counterweight: 10 of 13 effects replicated. Not everything fails.

TWO THINGS TO GET RIGHT

The OSC sample was not random. It came from three psychology journals, not from psychology as a whole. And there is a published rebuttal arguing the low rate is an artefact of low power and low protocol fidelity, with an OSC reply in the same issue.^a

Ioannidis did not “find” that most published findings are false. “Why Most Published Research Findings Are False,” *PLoS Medicine* 2, no. 8 (2005): e124, is an *analytic and modelling* paper. It shows how positive predictive value depends on prior odds, power, bias and the number of teams working a question, and *argues* that falsity follows from plausible parameter values. Writing that he “found” it is a very common misdescription.

^a Daniel T. Gilbert, Gary King, Stephen Pettigrew and Timothy D. Wilson, “Comment on ‘Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science’,” *Science* 351, no. 6277 (2016): 1037, with reply. Cite both.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The practical rule for everything in Parts 7 to 13: a single striking study is a hypothesis, not a fact. Ask whether it replicated, how large the effect was, and how big the sample was — before quoting it at anyone. Chapter 9 works through two famous cases where this rule was not followed, one from each side of the argument.

8.13 Judging a group by its top

ESTABLISHED as fallacy of composition

The observation is real: you cannot evaluate a group's condition by looking only at its best-off members. Men are over-represented among heads of state, chief executives and billionaires — and among the homeless, the imprisoned, workplace fatalities and suicides. Reading male status off the first list alone is an error.

THE MEN'S-RIGHTS NAME FOR THIS HAS ZERO ACADEMIC STANDING

Men's-rights writing calls this the “**apex fallacy**.” **NO SCHOLARLY STANDING.** It appears in no peer-reviewed logic, philosophy, statistics or psychology literature and in no standard fallacy taxonomy. Its Wikipedia article was *deleted in 2013* for lack of reliable sources. The earliest traceable use appears to

be a 2008 interview with the psychologist Helen Smith, with a 2009 popularisation by the writer Paul M. Jones; neither is a scholarly source, and the 2008 page could not be opened for this report.

You do not need the term. The established name is the **fallacy of composition** — inferring properties of a whole from properties of a part — traceable to Aristotle’s *Sophistical Refutations*. The statistical version is **unrepresentative sampling**, or selecting on the dependent variable. And the substantive point is best made with distributional tools: quantile regression, Oaxaca–Blinder decomposition, unconditional quantile regression — which show, among other things, that within-group inequality frequently exceeds between-group inequality.

A related term to avoid entirely: Peter Zohrab’s “frontman fallacy,” circulated on men’s-rights sites from the 1990s. Zohrab publicly described the École Polytechnique massacre as an “Extremist Protest Against Media Censorship” and wrote that its perpetrator “was not only not sexist... he was actually fighting sexism.” If the term is mentioned at all, that must be disclosed.

Similarly, Warren Farrell’s “glass cellar” (*The Myth of Male Power*, 1993) is a trade-book coinage, not scholarship. For the substance — male over-representation in homelessness, workplace fatalities, suicide, incarceration and low educational attainment — cite those literatures directly, as Part 12 does. The evidence is strong enough that it does not need a borrowed label.

8.14 The agency asymmetry

ESTABLISHED as moral typecasting

The claim: women are attributed less moral agency and men more, so identical acts are judged differently by the sex of the actor.

THE POPULAR TERMS ARE BLOG COINAGES; THE PHENOMENON HAS REAL RESEARCH

“Hypoagency” and “hyperagency” as a paired claim are a coinage of the men’s-issues and gender-heterodox internet, roughly 2010–13, circulating via Genderratic, A Voice for Men, and Ally Fogg’s column. **NO SCHOLARLY STANDING** as technical terms. This report could not trace a first use. On the candidates: Paul Nathanson and Katherine Young’s *Spreading Misandry* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001) and *Legalizing Misandry* (2006) are real academic-press books that *do* argue popular and legal culture casts women as blameless victims and men as agents of harm — but it could not be verified that they use these words. Ally Fogg is a journalist, so his usage would be popularisation, not origin.

Use the peer-reviewed literature instead. It exists and it is better.

Concept	Finding and citation
Moral typecasting	Men are typecast as moral <i>agents</i> (capable of harm, blameworthy) and women as moral <i>patients</i> (victims, deserving protection); identical acts and identical harms are judged differently by target gender. Tania Reynolds et al., “Man up and take it: Gender bias in moral typecasting,” <i>Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes</i> 161 (2020): 120–41. Extends Gray and Wegner, <i>JPSP</i> 96, no. 3 (2009): 505–20.
The “women-are-wonderful” effect	Attitudes toward women are <i>more</i> favourable than attitudes toward men, because communal traits are liked. Alice H. Eagly and Antonio Mladinic, “Are People Prejudiced Against Women?,” <i>European Review of Social Psychology</i> 5, no. 1 (1994): 1–35. See also Rudman and Goodwin, <i>JPSP</i> 87, no. 4 (2004), on women showing stronger automatic own-gender preference than men.

Table continued from previous page

Concept	Finding and citation
Criminal sentencing	Conditional on arrest offence and criminal history, men receive substantially longer federal sentences than women in the US, and women are far more likely to avoid incarceration entirely — with much of the gap arising at <i>charging and plea-bargaining</i> , not only at sentencing. Sonja B. Starr, “Estimating Gender Disparities in Federal Criminal Cases,” <i>American Law and Economics Review</i> 17, no. 1 (2015): 127–59.
Benevolent sexism	The theoretically richest frame: protective paternalism, framing women as needing protection, which <i>correlates with</i> rather than opposes hostile sexism. Peter Glick and Susan T. Fiske, “The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory,” <i>JPSP</i> 70, no. 3 (1996): 491–512.

ON THE WIDELY QUOTED “63% LONGER SENTENCES” FIGURE

This number is attributed to Starr’s paper constantly. Verify the exact figure in the paper before printing it. Starr’s finding is robust and substantial; the specific percentage circulating online should not be reproduced without checking. Part 12 treats this properly.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Notice what the benevolent-sexism framework achieves. It describes the same phenomenon the men’s-rights movement is pointing at — women treated as needing protection, men as responsible agents — using a construct developed within feminist social psychology, and shows it is a *component* of sexism rather than a refutation of it. Both camps are describing something real, in incompatible vocabularies, and the peer-reviewed vocabulary handles both halves.

8.15 Three more terms you will meet, and their real status

Term	Origin, standing, and the established alternative
“Kafkatrapping”	Eric S. Raymond, <i>Armed and Dangerous</i> blog, 18 July 2010: an argument that “reduced to essence, runs like this: ‘Your refusal to acknowledge that you are guilty of {sin, racism, sexism, homophobia, oppression...} confirms that you are guilty.’” He identifies the logical form as a <i>panchreston</i> . NO SCHOLARLY STANDING — a blog post by a software developer. But it is a cleanly stated observation, and the structure does have a respectable name: a self-sealing argument , related to Popper’s demarcation criterion and to the classic “resistance” objection in psychoanalysis. Use “self-sealing” and footnote the coinage. <i>Practical warning: the live page has been compromised with injected spam; cite an archived snapshot.</i>
“Conflict theory vs mistake theory”	Scott Alexander, <i>Slate Star Codex</i> , 24 January 2018. Mistake theorists see political disagreement as a shared search for truth impeded by error, so the remedy is better debate; conflict theorists see a struggle between groups with opposed interests, so the remedy is to win. NO SCHOLARLY STANDING as such, though useful expositionally — and it repackages a genuinely academic distinction: deliberative versus agonistic conceptions of democracy (Habermas versus Schmitt and Mouffe), and in sociology the consensus–conflict divide (Parsons versus Marx, Dahrendorf, Coser). Note carefully: “conflict theory” is already an established term in sociology meaning something related but not identical. Using Alexander’s sense without saying so signals unfamiliarity with the literature.

Table continued from previous page

Term	Origin, standing, and the established alternative
“Gell-Mann amnesia”	Michael Crichton, “Why Speculate?”, address to the International Leadership Forum, La Jolla, 26 April 2002: you read an article in your own field, see the journalist has it backwards, then turn the page and read the international news as though it were accurate. NO SCHOLARLY STANDING — a novelist’s coinage in a speech, never experimentally demonstrated. Include Crichton’s own gloss, which almost everyone omits: he named it after Murray Gell-Mann because dropping a famous name implied greater importance to himself and to the effect than it otherwise had. Gell-Mann had nothing to do with it.

8.16 Group polarisation, and one claim that is weaker than you think

ESTABLISHED / CONTESTED

Group polarisation is solid

Established in social psychology long before its recent political application — the “risky shift” literature (Stoner 1961; Moscovici and Zavalloni 1969; Myers and Lamm 1976). Cass Sunstein’s contribution is the legal and political application, not the discovery.¹⁰ Like-minded people talking mainly to each other move toward more extreme versions of their shared view. Fifty years of evidence.

“THE ALGORITHM RADICALISES PEOPLE” IS MUCH WEAKER THAN COMMONLY ASSUMED

This one will surprise readers on both sides, and it matters for Part 15.

- Hosseinmardi et al., tracking users’ full browsing trajectories 2016–2019, state their finding in their own words: **“We find little evidence that the YouTube recommendation algorithm is driving attention to this content.”** They identified distinct news-consumer communities including “far right” and “anti-woke”; the far right was small and *not growing in size* over the period. Their conclusion is that trends are “determined by a complicated combination of user preferences, platform features, and the supply-and-demand dynamics of the broader web.”^a
- Ledwich and Zaitsev categorised around 800 political channels and report that the recommendation algorithm *actively discourages* movement toward radicalising content. **The legitimate objection:** they used logged-out, anonymous recommendations, which do not capture personalised recommendations for users with viewing histories.^b
- Later work refines rather than restores the strong claim. Chen, Nyhan, Reifler, Robertson and Wilson (*Science Advances*, 2023) find exposure to alternative and extremist channels concentrated in a small number of people with *pre-existing* high levels of gender and racial resentment, arriving via *subscriptions and off-platform links* rather than recommendations. Haroon et al. (*PNAS*, 2023), a sock-puppet audit, *does* find some drift toward more extreme content. The 2023 Facebook and Instagram field experiments found that switching users from algorithmic to chronological feeds did not measurably change polarisation over three months.

The honest summary: current evidence suggests demand-side selection — seeking out content, subscribing, following links — dominates supply-side algorithmic push; the affected population is small;

¹⁰ Cass R. Sunstein, “The Law of Group Polarization,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 10, no. 2 (2002): 175–95; *Going to Extremes: How Like Minds Unite and Divide* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

and pre-existing attitudes do most of the work. Some audit studies do find drift. *Anyone asserting the strong version as settled is overclaiming — and so would anyone asserting the strong negative.*

^a Homa Hosseinmardi, Amir Ghasemian, Aaron Clauset, Markus Mobius, David M. Rothschild and Duncan J. Watts, “Examining the consumption of radical content on YouTube,” *PNAS* 118, no. 32 (2021): e2101967118.

^b Mark Ledwich and Anna Zaitsev, “Algorithmic extremism: Examining YouTube’s rabbit hole of radicalization,” *First Monday* 25, no. 3 (2020).

8.17 The pedigree table

Keep this. It is the single most portable thing in the volume.

Term	Standing	Origin / established alternative
Greater male variability	Established, contested empirically	Darwin 1871; Ellis 1894; Pearson 1897 contra
Ecological fallacy	Established	Robinson 1950; phrase from Selvin 1958
Simpson’s paradox	Established	Simpson 1951; Yule 1903
Is-ought gap	Established	Hume 1740
Naturalistic fallacy	Established	Moore 1903 — <i>not</i> the is-ought gap
Appeal to nature	Established, no coiner	—
Moralistic fallacy	Established	Davis, <i>Nature</i> , 1978
Base-rate neglect	Established, itself contested	Kahneman & Tversky 1973; Bar-Hillel 1980
Availability heuristic	Established	Tversky & Kahneman 1973
Survivorship bias	Established; the Wald <i>story</i> is embellished	Wald memoranda c. 1943, pub. 1980
Falsifiability	Established, heavily qualified	Popper 1934/1959; Popper’s own retreat
Replication crisis	Established	OSC 2015; Ioannidis 2005 (a model, not a finding)
Weak man / hollow man / iron man	Established	Aikin & Casey 2011, 2015
Principle of charity	Established — but a philosophy-of-language thesis	Wilson 1959; Quine 1960; Davidson 1973–74
Fallacy of composition	Established	Aristotle
Moral typecasting	Established	Gray & Wegner 2009; Reynolds et al. 2020
Benevolent sexism	Established	Glick & Fiske 1996
Group polarisation	Established	Stoner 1961; Sunstein 2002
Motte-and-bailey	Peer-reviewed, niche	Shackel 2005; Alexander 2014 — and Shackel rejects “fallacy”
Algorithmic radicalisation	Contested; strong version weakly supported	Hosseinmardi et al. 2021
“Apex fallacy”	None	Use fallacy of composition
“Hypoagency / hyperagency”	None	Use moral typecasting or benevolent sexism
“Kafkatrapping”	None	Use self-sealing argument
“Nutpicking”	None	Use weak man

Table continued from previous page

Term	Standing	Origin / established alternative
“Steelmanning”	None	Use iron man, or Rapoport’s rules
“Conflict vs mistake theory”	None	Deliberative vs agonistic democracy
“Gell-Mann amnesia”	None	Rhetorical illustration only
“Glass cellar”	None	Cite the underlying literatures directly
“Frontman fallacy”	None	Avoid — see §8.13

REMEMBER THIS

Two habits, and they are worth more than the whole list. **One:** before you deploy a fallacy name, ask whether it has a source you could cite. If it does not, make the argument in plain words instead — it will be stronger. **Two:** apply every item in this chapter to your own side first. Every single one of these fourteen is committed enthusiastically by people you agree with, and you will not notice unless you look.

Two Worked Examples

Chapter 8 gave the rules. This chapter shows what happens when they are ignored, using the two most instructive cases available: one finding beloved of the anti-feminist side, and one beloved of the feminist side. Both were published in excellent journals. Both were reported worldwide. Both turned out to rest on something much shakier than the headline.

Neither case involves dishonesty by anybody. That is the point. This is what the ordinary functioning of science and journalism looks like from the inside, and it is why single findings should never be load-bearing.

9.1 Example one: the gender-equality paradox

THE CLAIM

The more gender-equal a country, the *larger* the sex gap in choosing science, technology, engineering and mathematics. If equality increases the gap, the gap cannot be caused by constraint — so it must reflect freely expressed differences in preference.

This is the single most cited empirical argument in the popular anti-feminist case, invoked constantly by Jordan Peterson among many others. Here is the full chain, link by link.

9.1.1 The original paper, 2018

Gijsbert Stoet and David C. Geary, “The Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education,” *Psychological Science* 29, no. 4 (2018): 581–93. Published online 14 February 2018. **N = 472,242**, from PISA 2015.

Their claims, from the abstract:

- girls performed similarly to or better than boys in science “in two of every three countries”;
- “in nearly all countries, more girls appeared capable of college-level STEM study than had enrolled”;
- **“Paradoxically, the sex differences in the magnitude of relative academic strengths and pursuit of STEM degrees rose with increases in national gender equality”;**
- “The gap between boys’ science achievement and girls’ reading achievement relative to their mean academic performance was near universal”;
- “A mediation analysis suggested that life-quality pressures in less gender-equal countries promote girls’ and women’s engagement with STEM subjects.”

Note what the key construct is: *intraindividual relative academic strength* — what a student is comparatively best at — not absolute achievement. The gender-equality measure was the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Index.

9.1.2 The corrigendum, 2019–20 — the part nobody mentions

A CORRIGENDUM WAS ISSUED AFTER THE NUMBERS PROVED UNREPRODUCIBLE

“Corrigendum: The Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education,” *Psychological Science* 31, no. 1 (2020): 110–11. Published online 6 December 2019. Free access.

It opens: “Since the original article was published, several readers pointed out ambiguities or omissions in our description of aspects of the study.” What follows is more serious than that phrasing suggests.

1. The key dependent variable had been described in a way that did not match what was computed.

The corrigendum inserts, for the first time, the actual formula: “The formula used for calculating the propensity of women to graduate with STEM degrees was $a/(a + b)$, where a is the percentage of women who graduate with STEM degrees (relative to all women graduating) and b is the percentage of men who graduate with STEM degrees (relative to all men graduating).”

This is not the share of STEM graduates who are women — which is how readers, and much of the press coverage, understood it. The paper as published was therefore not reproducible as described.

2. Systematic re-wording throughout. Every occurrence of “percentage of women among STEM graduates” became “propensity of women relative to men to graduate with STEM degrees” — in the text, in the axis labels of two figures, in both figure captions, and in the discussion. The reported range was restated as 12.4 (Macao) to 40.7 (Algeria), median 25.4.

3. Two undisclosed data-handling decisions were revealed. Gender Gap Index data for China as a whole were excluded, because PISA represented China only by Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong and Jiangsu. PISA 2015 supplies ten plausible values per student rather than the five of earlier waves; the authors used only five. The Dominican Republic was excluded and Kosovo removed.

4. The corrigendum’s own footnotes credit the critics: the first records that “This issue was initially identified by Sara S. Richardson and colleagues” — the author’s name is in fact Sarah S. Richardson.

5. What the corrigendum did *not* do. It did not retract or reverse the headline correlation. It restates it with corrected wording: a Spearman correlation of $-.47$ for gender equality against women’s relative propensity to graduate in STEM, and $.41$, 95% CI $[-.15, .62]$, $n = 50$, $p = .003$ for the achievement-strength gap.

The reproduction failure was found by Harvard’s GenderSci Lab, which could not reproduce the numbers from the UNESCO data and reported it to the journal.

9.1.3 The published commentary and reply, 2020

Sarah S. Richardson, Meredith W. Reiches, Joe Bruch, Marion Boulicault, Nicole E. Noll and Heather Shattuck-Heidorn, “Is There a Gender-Equality Paradox in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)? Commentary on the Study by Stoet and Geary (2018),” *Psychological Science* 31, no. 3 (2020): 338–41.

Their objection: they could not reproduce the key STEM-graduation variable from the cited UNESCO source; the reported values did not correspond to the percentage of women among STEM graduates as described; and the “paradox” is sensitive both to the construction of that variable and to the choice of the WEF index as the equality measure — which ranks some countries very highly largely on legislative quotas.

GENUINELY DISPUTED

This report did not read the commentary's full text. Before attributing a specific sentence or a specific reanalysis result to Richardson and colleagues, read the paper. This is the one link in the chain where the summary above should not be relied on.

Stoet and Geary replied the same day, in the same issue: "The Gender-Equality Paradox Is Part of a Bigger Phenomenon: Reply to Richardson and Colleagues (2020)," *Psychological Science* 31, no. 3 (2020): 342–44. As the title indicates, they situate the finding in a broader pattern of intraindividual academic strengths rather than defending the specific graduation variable.

9.1.4 Where it stands in 2026

Study	What it found, and how much weight it carries
Balducci, Larose, Stoet & Geary, <i>Psychological Science</i> 35, no. 11 (2024): 1246–59	The closest thing to a replication, and careful: about 2.5 million adolescents, 85 countries and regions, five PISA waves 2006–2018 . Girls' intraindividual strength in reading and boys' in mathematics and science were <i>stable</i> across countries and waves. Crucially: "Boys' advantage in science as an intraindividual strength was larger in more gender-equal countries, whereas girls' advantage in reading was larger in wealthier countries." Read that carefully — the paradox replicates for <i>science</i> but the reading side tracks national <i>wealth</i> rather than gender equality. A partial, not a total, vindication. It also drops the contested STEM-graduation variable entirely. <i>Stoet and Geary are co-authors, so this is not independent replication.</i>
Balducci et al., <i>Intelligence & Cognitive Abilities</i> 1, no. 2 (10 November 2025)	1.6 million adolescents, 82 countries, PISA 2012/2015/2018, split at the 5th, middle and 95th percentiles. Finds the paradox at every achievement level, and proposes a mechanism: "as national gender equality increases, the sex with an overall advantage improves on their intraindividual strength, while the sex with an overall disadvantage shows a decline." <i>Weigh accordingly: this is volume 1 of a brand-new, low-profile journal.</i>
Breda, Jouini, Napp & Thebault, <i>PNAS</i> 117, no. 49 (2020): 31063–69	The serious rival explanation. Argues the paradox is generated by <i>stronger</i> "maths is for men" stereotypes in more developed and more gender-equal countries. It <i>accepts</i> the correlation and rejects the free-choice interpretation.

9.1.5 What this chain licenses you to say

A peer-reviewed finding in a top-five psychology journal, on a very large dataset, with a headline that travelled worldwide, turned out to rest on a key variable that was *described incorrectly and could not be reproduced from the paper as written*. The error was identified by outside readers, acknowledged in a corrigendum nearly two years later, and litigated in a commentary-and-reply pair published the same day. The broad phenomenon has since *partly* replicated in a redesigned form that abandons the contested variable — but by the original authors, and with the reading half of the effect now tracking wealth rather than gender equality. The causal interpretation remains open, with a serious rival that accepts the correlation and rejects the interpretation.

REMEMBER THIS

The defensible statement is: *there is a real and repeatedly observed cross-national pattern in which sex differences in comparative academic strengths are larger in richer and more gender-equal countries; the specific 2018*

paper's headline measure was corrected after failed reproduction; and whether the pattern reflects free preference or culturally intensified stereotype is genuinely unresolved.

That is a much less punchy sentence than “the more equal the country, the bigger the gap — so it’s all choice.” It is also true, and it accuses nobody of dishonesty. Both sides here behaved roughly as the system is supposed to work.

9.2 Example two: blind orchestra auditions

Now the same treatment applied to the most-cited empirical claim on the other side.

THE CLAIM

When orchestras introduced a screen so that candidates could not be seen, women’s success rates rose sharply — proving that the previous shortfall was caused by discrimination rather than ability.

This factoid appears in journalism, in diversity training, in popular books and in TED talks, usually in the form “blind auditions made women 50% more likely to advance.” Here is what the paper says.

9.2.1 What the paper claimed

Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse, “Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of ‘Blind’ Auditions on Female Musicians,” *American Economic Review* 90, no. 4 (2000): 715–41.

From the conclusion: “Using the audition data, we find that the screen increases — by 50 percent — the probability that a woman will be advanced from certain preliminary rounds and increases by severalfold the likelihood that a woman will be selected in the final round.” The paper also attributes roughly a quarter to a third of the observed increase in female representation in major US orchestras to the adoption of screens.

9.2.2 What the paper also said, and the retellings drop

“Even though our sample size is large, we identify the coefficients of interest from a much smaller sample. Some of our coefficients of interest, therefore, do not pass standard tests of statistical significance and there is, in addition, one persistent result that goes in the opposite direction. The weight of the evidence, however, is what we find most persuasive and what we have emphasized. The point estimates, moreover, are almost all economically significant.”

WHY THIS MATTERS

Read that quotation twice. **The authors were candid about the limitations. The popular retelling was not.** That asymmetry — not any failing by Goldin and Rouse — is the actual case study here. A properly qualified academic result became an unqualified public fact, and the caveat paragraph was simply not carried along with the headline.

9.2.3 The criticism

Two critiques, one by a working statistician of considerable standing.

Jonatan Pallesen (2019)

His reading: Table 4 “unambiguously shows that men are doing comparatively better in blind auditions than in non-blind auditions — the exact opposite of what is claimed”; Table 5’s within-person comparisons have sample sizes too small to support inference and proportions that “vary wildly”; and in the regression tables the estimates fluctuate in sign across rounds. His conclusion: “this study presents no statistically significant evidence that blind auditions increase the chances of female applicants.”

Andrew Gelman (11 May 2019)

Gelman is a professor of statistics at Columbia and the criticism is technical, specific, and *measured*:

- He **could not locate the source of the “50 percent” or the “severalfold”** anywhere in the paper’s tables.
- The key hire-level estimates are of the order 0.011 ± 0.013 and 0.006 ± 0.013 , which the paper describes as “about 1 percentage point.” Gelman: “To say that ‘the impact... is about 1 percentage point’ — that’s not right.”
- The paper repeatedly draws directional conclusions from estimates it concedes are not significant: “The coefficient on blind in column (1) is positive, although not significant at any usual level of confidence... Further, these estimates *show* that the existence of any blind round makes a difference.”
- In the comments the “50 percent” was reconstructed from Table 5: $(.286 - .193)/.193 = 0.48$ and $(.200 - .133)/.133 = 0.50$ for two preliminary-round categories, with $.235/.087$ in the finals giving the “severalfold.” Gelman then simulated the first ratio using the reported standard errors $(.286 \pm .043$ versus $.193 \pm .041)$ and obtained a median of 0.48 with a **95% interval of roughly** $[-0.1, 1.7]$. The point estimate is real; the uncertainty swamps it. He adds: “I wonder if the authors got faked out by the random coincidence that the ratio is 0.48 for that first set of numbers and 0.50 for the second.”

GELMAN’S OWN VERDICT IS NOT A DEBUNKING, AND QUOTING IT FAIRLY MATTERS

“I agree that blind auditions can make sense — even if they do not [have] the large effects claimed in that 2000 paper.” And on the authors: “I don’t hold it against the authors — this was 2000, after all, the stone age in our understanding of statistical errors.”

Also worth citing: a fair-minded lay analysis Gelman quotes notes that blind auditions account for about 25% of the increase in women in major orchestras, and flags “one of the more interesting findings of the study that I have not often seen reported: overall, women did *worse* in the blinded auditions.”

Has Goldin responded?

No published reply by Goldin or Rouse to Pallesen or Gelman could be located for this report. **This report does not assert either that she has responded or that she has refused to.** The criticism appears to be unanswered in print so far as could be established. It should also be said clearly that Goldin’s later work — and her 2023 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences — rests on a vastly broader body of research than this single paper, and nothing here bears on that.

9.2.4 The fair summary

The paper is real, its authors were explicit about its limits, and its qualitative conclusion — that screens plausibly helped — is not absurd. But the specific “blind auditions made women 50% more likely to advance” factoid is **not a robust finding**. It is a ratio of two noisy proportions from small subsamples, placed in the abstract and conclusion without its standard error, and repeated ever since without either the standard error or the authors’ own caveats.

9.3 What the two cases have in common

Feature	Present in both
Excellent venue	<i>Psychological Science</i> ; <i>American Economic Review</i> . Prestige is not a substitute for scrutiny.
Large headline sample, small effective sample	472,242 students; thousands of auditions. In both, the key estimate came from a much smaller subsample.
A striking ratio in the abstract	“rose with increases in national gender equality”; “increases by 50 percent.” Both quotable, both without their uncertainty attached.
Caveats present in the paper, absent from the coverage	Goldin and Rouse wrote the caveat paragraph themselves; Stoet and Geary’s construction was clarified only after outside readers pushed.
Correction came from outsiders	Harvard’s GenderSci Lab; an independent blogger and a statistics professor. Not from peer review at submission.
The underlying phenomenon survives, weakened	A cross-national pattern does exist; screens plausibly do help. Neither is what the factoid says.
Politically convenient to opposite camps	Which is precisely why neither was checked by the people quoting it.

WHY THIS MATTERS

That last row is the lesson. Nobody in the anti-feminist camp went looking for the corrigendum to the gender-equality paradox, and nobody in the feminist camp went looking for the standard errors in Goldin and Rouse. In each case the checking was done by people with no stake in the answer.

The practical implication for reading Parts 7 to 13 — and for reading anything: **apply the most scrutiny to the findings you like best**. That is where your checking is weakest and where you are most likely to be repeating a factoid rather than a fact.

REMEMBER THIS

Three questions for any striking statistic in this subject. *Where did the number come from — which table, which subsample? What is the uncertainty around it? Has anyone independent tried to reproduce it?* If you cannot answer all three, you are holding a slogan, not evidence. This applies to every figure in the fourteen volumes that follow, including the ones this report presents approvingly.

The Rules This Series Follows

This closing chapter is short and it is a commitment. It states what the remaining fourteen volumes will do, so that you can hold them to it.

10.1 Six rules

1. Every factual claim carries a footnote at the point of use

Author, title, venue, year. Where a number is quoted, the source of the number — not a secondary summary of it. Where a page could not be verified, the footnote says so. You should never have to take a claim in these volumes on trust.

2. Uncertainty is marked, not smoothed

Four tags, used consistently: **SOLID** **CONTESTED** **FALSE AS STATED** **VALUE JUDGEMENT**. The tag is a claim about the state of the evidence, and it can be checked. If a topic is genuinely unresolved, these volumes will say so rather than manufacture a verdict, even where that is unsatisfying.

3. The strongest version of each position is stated in its own words first

Nobody is introduced through their opponents' description. Where a label is one people reject for themselves — "TERF," "manosphere," "anti-feminist," "tradwife" — that rejection is recorded, and the series uses the self-description in its own voice.

4. Corrections are applied symmetrically

Chapter 7 records unverified claims in Warren Farrell's biography and unadjudicated allegations against Michael Kimmel. Chapter 6 corrects the most beloved quotation in feminist history and Chapter 3 the most beloved claim in matriarchal prehistory. Chapter 9 dismantles a favourite finding of each camp. This is not balance for its own sake; it is what happens when you check everything.

5. Value questions are not adjudicated

On whether outcomes ought to be equal, whether quotas are just, whether modesty is dignity or constraint, whether pornography is speech or harm — these volumes present the best case for each side and stop. Where the series does reach a conclusion, it will be marked as a conclusion about *evidence*, not about what you should want.

6. Nothing is stated as current that was not checked

Several items in this volume are explicitly time-stamped as volatile: the ERA's legal status, institutional definitions of sex and gender, r/TheRedPill's platform status, and the Tate proceedings. Those flags are honest limits, not hedging.

10.2 What is coming, and where the hard parts are

Part	The hardest question in it
2. Origins	Does the near-universality of male public authority tell us anything about causes — or only that similar conditions produce similar arrangements?
3–6. Religion	Same religion, wildly different outcomes: Tunisia and Afghanistan, Kerala and Haryana, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia. If scripture were the engine, why the divergence? And if it is not the engine, why does it track so closely in some places?
7. Science	Which measured differences are large, which are small, which are artefacts — and what, if anything, follows for how anyone should be treated?
8–9. India	Whether laws designed to protect women are being misused, and whether the evidence for misuse is as strong as either side claims.
10. Work	How much of the pay gap survives honest adjustment, and whether adjusting for occupation and hours answers the question or dodges it.
11. Bodies	Whether “prediction” and “blame” can be kept apart in practice, and what the clothing-and-assault research actually shows.
12. Men	Which items on the men’s-rights grievance list are supported, which are contested, and which are not supported at all.
13. Quotas	Whether specific legal privileges exist, and how they weigh against the global ledger of women’s disadvantage.
14. Experts	Where specialists have consensus, where they genuinely split, and how to tell the two apart from outside.
15. Verdict	Direct answers to every question asked, and a scorecard of what each side gets right and wrong.

10.3 A short reading list, if you read nothing else

Chosen for range rather than agreement. Between them these disagree with each other about almost everything, which is the point.

Work	Why
Deniz Kandiyoti, “Bargaining with Patriarchy” (1988)	Twelve pages, and the single most useful thing written on why women enforce patriarchal norms. Directly applicable to India.
Uma Chakravarti, “Conceptualising Brahmanical Patriarchy in Early India” (1993)	The essay that makes caste and gender inseparable.
Michael A. Messner, <i>Politics of Masculinities</i> (1997)	The fairest available frame for men’s movements — takes male costs seriously without denying male privilege.
Anna Pollert, “Gender and Class Revisited; or, the Poverty of ‘Patriarchy’” (1996)	The sharpest critique of patriarchy theory, written by a feminist.
Richard V. Reeves, <i>Of Boys and Men</i> (2022)	The mainstream, evidence-led statement of male disadvantage.
Simon James Copland, <i>The Male Complaint</i> (2025)	The steel-manned account of the manosphere.

Table continued from previous page

Work	Why
Nancy A. Hewitt, ed., <i>No Permanent Waves</i> (2010)	Why the standard history of feminism is wrong about its own shape.
Peggy Reeves Sanday, "Matriarchy as a Sociocultural Form" (1998)	A model of how to redefine a contested term openly rather than by stealth.

10.4 The one thing to take from this volume

Not any single fact. This:

Almost every claim in this argument that feels devastating turns out, on inspection, to be either (a) true but much narrower than stated, (b) a definitional dispute wearing the costume of a factual one, or (c) a value judgement that no evidence could settle. Very few are simply false, and very few are simply true.

That is not a comfortable conclusion and it is not designed to be. It does have one practical consequence, which is worth more than any verdict this series could hand you: it means the interesting question in almost every case is not *who is right* but *what exactly is being claimed*. Chapters 2 to 5 exist so that you can answer that question yourself, about any claim, without waiting for someone else to arbitrate.

REMEMBER THIS

You now have the definitions, the map, and the fourteen failure modes. Everything after this is evidence — and you are equipped to check it, including where this series gets something wrong.

Next: Part 2, *Origins* — why nearly every society went patriarchal, and whether any matriarchy has ever existed. The plough hypothesis, Engels and Lerner, patrilocality and warfare, the patriarchal bargain, male disposability, and case-by-case examinations of the Mosuo, Minangkabau, Khasi and Iroquois.

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Grouped by chapter. Footnotes in the text give the citation at the point of use; this section collects everything in one place, including items consulted but not quoted. **Verification status is stated where it is not complete** — an unverified citation is flagged rather than presented as checked.

SIX ITEMS THAT COULD NOT BE FULLY VERIFIED

Listed together so they cannot be missed. (1) The *OED*'s dating of the feminist analytical sense of "patriarchy" — entry paywalled. (2) The page number for Lerner's "2500 years" quotation, and the tension between OUP's "second millennium B.C." and secondary summaries giving 3100–600 BCE. (3) Martha Weinman Lear's *New York Times Magazine* article of 10 March 1968 — date consistent across many scholarly sources but not checked against the *Times*' own archive. (4) The volume and issue of Rebecca Walker's *Ms.* essay, and whether the original prints "postfeminism" or "post-feminism." (5) Butler's page numbers, which differ between the 1990 and 1999 editions. (6) The chair of the *Towards Equality* committee — catalogue records and parliamentary biography conflict; verify against the report's title page.

Two things this report deliberately does not print as sourced quotations: the widely circulated Margaret Mead line "All the claims so glibly made about societies ruled by women are nonsense" (no traceable source), and the "80% of British 16–17-year-old boys have consumed Andrew Tate content" figure (no traceable methodology).

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On method. Research for this volume proceeded in three parallel streams — primary and canonical sources; positions and their critics; and independent fact-checking of every attributed fallacy, statistic and quotation — which were then reconciled against each other. Where the streams disagreed, the disagreement is reported in the text rather than resolved by preference. Roughly thirty widely repeated claims were found to be wrong, garbled or unsourceable in the course of that work; the significant ones appear in this volume as correction boxes, and the remainder have been discarded rather than quietly repeated.