Male + Feminism
Why Men Have a Stake in Racial and Gender Equity
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Women’s and Gender Studies Capstone
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The following is part autobiographical of my personal journey at Georgetown University from 2010-2014, and part road map for a future that engages all males as active participants instead of the opposition or the enemy and aggressor, what I like to think as the missing piece of the formula that is a feminism that leads towards racial and gender equity.

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With eternal gratitude to Leona Fisher who inspired me to become a feminist.
I. INTRODUCTION:

As a soon-to-be graduate of the Georgetown College, I cannot help but reflect on my experience: me, a part of the first generation in my family to attend a university and of the small town of Avenal, California in the San Joaquin Central Valley. Both of these statuses brought an enormous amount of expectations to prove myself and make my community proud. Consequently, I was not afraid to challenge conventional norms by taking courses in Women’s and Gender Studies (WGST) and going so far as to concentrate on the subject. Now at the finish line, I find myself the only WGST male major, among a pool of 18 majors, minors, and certificates. Similarly, I assumed various leadership positions among minority--U.S. Latino, of course, but also African American, Asian American, and Pacific Islander--, cultural, political, and community service organizations, where I also noticed a lack of male active engagement, let alone leadership. To further widen the gap, the minority men I know who did not formally integrate into these campus activities have taken it upon themselves to create and join male-orientated groups such as fraternities.

Throughout my four years, I was disheartened to see, in cultural and artistic group settings, efforts to get men involved into board positions or as performers, and males not responding. Always the challenger, I made several attempts to get my own circle of male friends involved. This proved tricky, however, because many of them were preoccupied with integrating more into mainstream activities such as internships, jobs, research opportunities, or greater campus-wide organizations, such as student government. What ended up happening is at the end of my sophomore year is that I along with five other men founded a
Latino fraternity, from which has been a vehicle to get Latino males more involved, but is not a solution I would recommend to the grander problem of male involvement.

Activist and author, Jackson Katz, who has primarily advocated educating men about leadership in gender violence prevention and masculinity, has spoken out about patriarchy and support for minorities and feminism.\(^1\) In his TEDxFiDiWomen talk from November 2012, Katz gives an electrifying presentation titled *Violence against women—it’s a men’s issue*, performing a great job showcasing that issues of violence affect everyone and should not be designated solely as women’s or men’s issues - rather they are overwhelmingly society’s issues, humanity’s issues, and, human rights’ issues. In Katz’s experience, educating men about violence prevention and women’s issues is often misinterpreted as sensitivity training; he argues that in fact what he does and what men need is leadership training and education.

From a holistic perspective, with the ongoing problems of race relations, class inequalities, and gender differences, minorities face the brunt of all these issues from a historic standpoint. A college setting serves as a microcosm of societal issues in an academic setting, with the added benefit that we as students are surrounded by the tools of education and scholarship to better understand and break down the problems. These factors of race relations become especially important in a country en route to becoming a majority minority nation by 2050 according to Pew Research Center.\(^2\)

Why do males and minorities play a role of needing feminism? What I propose is


working within minority communities now to secure a brighter future for all, implementing that all stakeholders have equal representation. After all, the men and women who are in college today will be the leaders and figureheads who inspire the generations that follow and set the framework for the majority minority population. We are presented with a unique opportunity to leap ahead and set an agenda to start a new chapter for this nation with a society that naturally works together and implements racial and gender equity as opposed to fighting for it after the fact.

With all the current issues that minorities are facing and dealing with, now is the best time to incept feminist values into the conversations to create a future that ensures equity. Today’s generation would most benefit from implementing feminist values into their day to day lives and strive for a harmonious future between men and women. Feminism is currently the best tool to help our citizens - males included - resolve the inequality issues that plague our society, as it addresses the roots and not the symptoms of inequality. In present-day America, however, this has become an identification and movement with a great deal of stigma, which has plateaued its progress. In order for it to reach its full potency and aid social change, echoing the words of Jackson Katz, we need more men, “with the courage with the strength with the moral integrity to break our complete silence and challenge each other and stand with women not against them.” 3

II. The Problem

Lack of Education:

Reflecting upon my college career, the decision to become a Women’s and Gender Studies (WGST) major came as a result of two things; the lack of Chicano or Ethnic studies offered at Georgetown, and my discovery of feminism, encapsulating how I felt about the world in terms of women and equity for all, becoming my means to contend with modern disparity issues in our globalized society. My self-identification as a Chicano and involvement with U.S. Latino cultural groups on campus naturally drove me to explore issues of sex, class, and race. I envied the knowledge and critical thinking skills on everyday life issues that my English professor, Leona Fisher, showed in class and asked her how I could argue and think like her, to which she suggested I take a Women’s and Gender Studies course. To my surprise, the WGST program helped fill the void and offered a venue for exploring the race and class issues I felt I was lacking.

In that first WGST introductory class, I remember out of twenty-five students, there being about five or six other males, all but myself and another were student athletes. As I declared the major and began taking more courses, I would never see that many males in my WGST courses again. Second year, taking Feminist Theory I, I was the only male in a class of thirty. Other courses such as Gender and Economics would have one other male, and some of the more mainstream, Gender and Poverty classes would boast two or three more males who were majoring in Justice & Peace Studies.

As of 2014, the Women’s & Gender Studies department is comprised of twenty-four
female and two male majors, alongside twenty-one female and one male declaring minors. For the graduating Class of 2014, out of eighteen, I am the only major in WGST, and there are no male minors⁴.

I, and many more, are proof that men can be feminists. Men should identify as feminists because feminism is the tool that helped me navigate and come to terms with issues of my community and brought me closer to understanding other communities’ plights through its intersectionality of race, class, and gender. Unfortunately, there is a disconnect for men’s involvement or how they can forward feminist ideals. Perhaps more exposure and interactions to feminist scholarship and gender studies would improve men’s understanding of feminism and its benefits?

Participation in Women’s & Gender Study courses should be taken, not to gain tolerance - but for understanding. There are some who argue, however, that the terminology of feminism, and women’s studies sets out to exclude men. A pro-feminism corollary without this “loaded” terminology can be found in “men’s studies”, which are usually found within a greater gender studies program. Courses under this umbrella term examine “men’s identity and experience in the present, over time, across space”⁵ while at the same time supporting and advocating for feminism. However, this terminology and discipline also carries its own controversies. Certain male academics, such as Georgetown Professor Ricardo Ortiz and New York Times writer, Charles McGrath, criticize “men’s studies” because, according to them, there is another discipline that already exists for

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⁴ Y. Park (personal communication, April 17, 2014), See Appendices, Figure. 1
them: history.67

Feminism and women’s studies are rooted from a historical context where women did not have autonomy or even a voice in literature. Mary Wollstonecraft’s, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, released in 1792, is a groundbreaking work that in many respects began the open public discourse of gender inequality by women, introducing the need for educating men and women to shift social attitudes.

As a society, we are not yet ready to relinquish the idea of woman; there are still too many issues around the word surrounding the lack of female empowerment and representation. Women’s and gender courses teach that part of the battle for equity begins in language, which can easily be misinterpreted and erroneously make certain attributes seem constant and true. For example, in the English language, the words firemen, steward, barman, chairman, and actor, make those professions seem male exclusive and represent fields that are incompatible for women.8 Thus, we still need the term “woman,” and in the case of Georgetown, “women” is coupled with “gender studies” to be as inclusive and open as possible.

Gayatri Spivak argues for preserving the word “feminism” in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" explaining how the academy of feminism, women’s studies, and sexuality studies, give a new vision, to radical social transformation upending the notion of normativity and language patriarchy – making it clear that whether successful or not, is up to us.9

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9 Griffiths, Garreth, and Helen Tiffin. "Chapter 4: Can the Subaltern Speak?" *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. By Bill
Race and Class Issues at Georgetown: My Experience

As a Georgetown student of Chicano background, I've noticed in my four years a detrimental lack of male leadership among minorities, particularly U.S. Latinos in my experience. Of the 19 Latino organizations on campus that comprise a committee called The Board of Latin American Organizations (BLASO), currently six of them are led by males: two fraternities and four cultural groups. The cultural groups I have been a part of during my undergraduate career went from having a board of five males and six females, to two males and eight females. In the art of cultural representation and performance, I danced in Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Georgetown. For two years (freshman and sophomore) I was the only male member among ten, in a cultural tradition that highly values courtship and couple dances.

At Georgetown, for minority cultural groups, there exists a network umbrella organization, Student of Color Alliance (SOCA), sponsored by the Center for Multicultural Equity and

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10 BLASO worked as a secret Facebook group where contact information and events were posted and shared.
Access (CMEA), which works to “unite students of color through collaborative programming opportunities, advocacy, and financial support”\textsuperscript{11} SOCA consists of 19 recognized student cultural groups. From those 19, for the 2013-2014 school year, three of them, Chinese Student Alliance, Hilltop Tacos, and Vietnamese Student Association, were headed by male presidents or co-chairs, the rest were primarily led by female students.

On the flip side, in an at-large portrait of the campus, other organizations that have predominantly white membership still for the most part prevail with male leadership but with other groups, such as student government comprised of either more females or an equal split respectively. Yet, minorities are still underrepresented in this university. 

Georgetown’s student body government, Georgetown University Student Association (GUSA) for 2014-2015 elected a ticket led by a male, with a female as Vice President. Trevor and Omika appointed a staff of 14 males and 11 females, which include three male minorities and six female minorities, including the VP Omika herself.\textsuperscript{12} Within the cabinet, which is an applied position pending senate majority approval, the list of 18 members, ten are female and eight

\textsuperscript{11} See Diaspora Program in the Appendices, Figure 2
are male, but only one male and two female are of minority backgrounds. The GUSA Senate, body of student representatives across campus locations, proves even more interesting with an equally divided representation of 12 males and 12 females, there are only four diverse members, one being male.

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III. Feminism and What Is Male Feminism

Just like Chicano is a self-identifying political term for U.S. Latinos, knowing that, “The person is political,” feminism is non-restrictive to gender or race, and is an identity anyone assumes as a first step at taking a stand and committing a life-long conscious to a better society entailing equity.¹⁵

From my point of view, the feminist movement is currently the most progressive and correct method of living in order to move forward in the 21st century. The world needs to be all-inclusive, equal opportunity, and understand – not tolerate – the differences we all have as individuals.

Feminism and Male Feminism in Popular Culture:

Currently Feminism is gaining ground as something positive and in some senses, as hip. Yet it still has not hit the full mainstream or easily clicks as common sense to the rest of society as it does with those who take women’s and or gender courses.

The feminist movement is often exalted as an ongoing female action aimed at ending patriarchy and securing more rights and equal opportunity to a historically oppressed half of the population. The idea of men subscribing to this movement and identifying as feminist is a difficult and controversial notion. On the one hand, feminism has made great strides to explain the difference between men and women, while at the same time gaining better treatment and rights through those differences.

Before the word feminism even began to be circulated, John Stuart Mill was probably one of the first men to publicly support women’s right and their equality through his book *The Subjection of Women*. There exists no widespread men’s feminism or a website for men who identify as feminist. A Google search of “Male + Feminism” results in websites discussion boards posing the question if men can be feminists, testimonials of male feminists, photographic memes, the blog malefeminists.com - which has not been updated in months- and the top hit, and finally a Wikipedia entry titled “Men and Feminism”. The Wikipedia category of “Male Feminist” produces a list of 149 males which includes the likes of figures such as: Frederick Douglass, Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Michael Kimmel, John Legend, John Stuart Mill, Patrick Stewart, and Joss Whedon. The criteria for being on the list are “Men identified as feminists or viewed as significantly contributing to feminist theory, philosophy and women’s rights activism.” While not exhaustive, this list does serve as a place to start for any research - certainly guiding me to look for feminism from these individuals. As such, it is a shame it is the only effort to unite male feminism under a streamlined website.

Today the men who advocate for women’s rights and identify as feminist, are made out to be exceptions and people passionate about advocacy work. One example is the book *Feminist Ryan Gosling: Feminist Theory (as Imagined) from Your Favorite Sensitive Movie Dude* which features actor Ryan Gosling stating feminist theories and ideas to female feminist students by beginning each phrase with “Hey girl.” This serves to show how

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popular society seems to fantasize or imagine what a male feminist looks like (a sexy celebrity) and dictate what he says through pleasing imagery. This can either serve to make feminism seem cool and everyone should join, or it could give it the appearance of being something for the elite and inaccessible to the common people.

**Politics and Controversies with the Label**

Thinking of feminism as a political category and movement, one can understand the ability of a movement to bring like-minded individuals together to theorize, discuss, argue, and ultimately bring about political action of change for the better. Truth be told, not all feminists are female, and not all women are born feminists. Even at Georgetown, we have students who speak out against identifying with feminism because in the words of one student, “I don’t believe in feminism because I don’t believe in women’s rights” opting instead for a more general human rights approach, but overall lacking a clear understanding of the feminist movement, its plights and overarching goals to bring about equity for all, starting with women.19

There does not exist a large and ongoing anti-feminist movement that directly clashes with feminist values, instead in our society, feminism must contend with certain groups and discourses that invoke things such as “traditional values” that many feminists would argue are anti-feminist. Case and point, the events surrounding then-Georgetown Law student, Sandra Fluke, who was refused to testify by Republican members of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee on the importance of requiring insurance plans to cover birth control in February 2012. This led to an outcry of how

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women’s voices in this day and age can still be silenced, and unfortunately ignited hate-bashing towards Sandra Fluke, encompassed by conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh labeling Fluke as a “slut” and “prostitute.”

Understanding the historic and systematic nature of patriarchy and its dismantlement are the goals of feminism. In some ways, feminism is reaching its goal as an alternative way of thought to combat patriarchy by the simple notion that doing away with any old system way of thought is progressive. Today being a feminist means to be progressive, but being progressive does not always mean to be a feminist. There is a clear distinction and point of contention when a gender other than women identify as feminist, because at least for men, they have more trouble owning the label and identity, most likely because men have yet to contribute widespread information and knowledge to the discourse.

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Current Landscape and Perceptions:

For full size images of charts, please see Appendix included at the end, on page 32.

Chart A: Responses to the question, “Do you consider yourself a feminist, an anti-feminist, or neither?”

In a study conducted by the Huffington Post in conjunction with YouGov Poll: Few Identify As Feminists, But Most Believe In Equality Of Sexes; 20 percent of Americans -- including 23 percent of women and 16 percent of men, it was discovered that while 82% of Americans believe there should be “equality of the sexes”, only 23% of women and 16% of men identify as feminists. According to this study, education only played a small role in the identification as a feminist. This pool throughout teases an overall gender breakdown of the overall question, but many valuable statistics are found in the racial breakdown of the responses as well. Indeed, there were larger gaps when comparing the racial breakdown to

As can be seen in Chart D, the word “feminist” connotes slightly more positively among the Hispanic and Black population than among the White population. Additionally, there is an unusually higher number of Hispanics who identified as strong feminists (Chart A): in total, 28% identified as feminists, while 21% of Black respondents and 18% of White respondents identified as such. Black and Hispanic respondents also were more likely to believe that a majority of males were feminists than the white respondents did (Chart D). Already, minorities appear to have a stronger tendency to accept feminism going so far as to identify with the “feminist” identification, whereas the total population is more likely to identify with some rudimentary values but not the label itself. These perceptions hold valuable implications for the expected future of a majority minority population.

Unsurprisingly, male respondents as a whole were more likely to perceive the word “feminist” as negatively than females; in total, the word connoted negatively with 42% of males, 32% of females, 42% of white respondents, 18% of black respondents, and 29% of Hispanic respondents (Chart D).

As fellow feminist colleague, Melissa Riggio has pointed out, some perspective into the reasons why this may be has been voiced in theory from males. In the chapter of \textit{Sunrise with Seamonsters} titled “Being a Man”, novelist Paul Theroux describes masculinity as “an ill-fitting coat” and femininity as “an oppressive sense of nakedness.”\footnote{Theroux, Paul. "Being a Man." \textit{Sunrise with Seamonsters: Travels & Discoveries, 1964-1984}. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985. N. pag. Print.} Theroux explains he
has suffered from guilt about being a published author, throughout his career, even reaching a “depressive state” at one point. Upon examining the “About the Author” profiles of books, he noted that his male peers also feel the need to defend their masculinity in light of a harsh Western culture. Even the classic and much-lauded author, Ernest Hemingway, pursued what are traditionally viewed as masculine hobbies, such as alcohol and violence, and often called on themes of emasculation in his works. Thus, he surmises that women should not aspire for the status men hold in society, for it is just as imperfect. Furthermore, he continues by suggesting men fear feminism as it would coerce enough introspective reflection to realize they share a similar plight.24

Looking towards the contemporary work of Michael Kimmel, American sociologist, who specializes in gender studies and is considered a leading figure in the subfield of men’s studies, his work has centered around masculinity and male studies. In his piece, “Masculinity as Homophobia,” he argues that masculinity, just as femininity, is a concept that is not ahistorical: we can trace it; we can ask it’s central components and what purposes it serves. His piece aims to de-naturalize the concept of masculinity. Hence masculinity needs to be deconstructed.

Taking into account how masculinity has provided males with privilege, inversely it also has indoctrinated a fear of powerlessness among men. How can we make space to understanding masculine fear of loss of power, when it seems that’s the very fear that feminism as a movement wants to instill, screaming in capital letters, “YOU CAN LOSE POWER.”? Part of the solution may lie in perspective. Men perceive the goal as a

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24 Melissa L. ""His Slave or His Despot": Contemporary Compulsory Heteromasculinity through the Lens of Leopold Sacher-Masoch’s “Venus in Furs”". Thesis. WGST Program, Georgetown University, 2014. Print.
disempowerment, whereas in reality, it is not about disempowering individuals but about distributing power differently.

Kimmel points towards a way out, if masculinity studies has emerged from a feminist perspective, then we can use it to find a way out of fear. By understanding the historical emergence of masculinity, not as a gendered state of being but rather the manifestation; we can begin to understand the fear of loss of power. The more we think about the feeling, being powerlessness, the quicker we can let go of the idea of competition between sexes.2526

What Does Male Feminism Look Like?

How do we begin having men naturally and full-heartedly identify as feminists? Men and male patriarchy are seen (by some) as the bane of feminist existence, while some males view feminism as the bane of their existence. In order for feminism to succeed, men have to give up some powers; feminism needs men to relinquish a measure of privilege as a group. Male feminism is not about male bashing, but rather an opportunity to grow out of the confining circumstances and habits of patriarchy. Modern day efforts are aiming to deconstruct masculinity and help men realize the double-edged sword of their privilege. Jennifer Siebel Newsom’s upcoming documentary The Mask You Live In, will examine masculinity and overall hopes to “ultimately create a more balanced, equitable society for all.”27 Efforts like these support the idea that in order to liberate women, we need to

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27 Mustich, Emma. "'The Mask You Live In': Jennifer Siebel Newsom Documentary Will Examine Masculinity (VIDEO)."
liberate men as well; for that to happen, we must do away with the idea of serving men before women, instead serving and offering opportunities to both simultaneously in order to achieve the aims of feminism.

But does feminism need to prove there is something in it for men? While many men already do identify as feminists, one could argue they do not have a claim to a movement they neither started nor reap immediate benefits. Instead, it has been through their own foresight and education that they have come to see the benefit of uniting with the feminist movement. Hence, the reason why in the mainstream men (mistakenly) may assume feminism does not concern them; the average male may say he is not against feminism, but he may also be reluctant to make a stand as a feminist. In showing men what their stake is in feminism, such as a more equitable society for future generations, we justify male feminists and encourage others to put in the work of standing next to women. We also receive the benefits of liberation of performing according to gender roles.

Feminist and activist icon, Gloria Steinem, listed out the “Top 10 Ways the Men Benefit from Feminism” at a Gender Studies Lecture Series at University of Texas, Dallas in May 2010. At this lecture she speaks about needing a rebirth in balance between men and women, because “there’s a lot to do, but there’s so much more to gain.”
Borrowing from this icon’s work, this is her countdown list worthy of examination:

10. Through feminism, men are liberated from stereotypes, too.

9. Women’s skills are required to raise children. But, men have them too.

8. Men have been shortchanged by being told to marry someone who can cook rather than someone who can be a companion. “I’m sure that men who have been trained essentially to marry their housekeepers were lonely.”

7. The women’s movement can increase a man’s life by an average of four years. If men were to eliminate causes of death typically attributed to masculine roles, including deaths from violence, speeding and tension-related disease, their life expectancy would almost equal women’s.

6. Boys can remain close to their mothers.

5. If men aren’t hooked on dominance and hierarchy with other men, they are saved from the self-loathing that comes from the need for control.

4. Laughter can once again become commonplace, even in serious rituals. “In ancient cultures like Wilma’s, seriousness and laughter are not separate.”

3. Men can continue discovering talents, without being divorced from them.

2. Sex and race are intertwined. You can’t uproot one without the other. “There’s really no such thing as being a feminist without being an antiracist,” she said.

1. Eliminating the sexual caste system – the cult of femininity and masculinity – eliminates the root cause of almost all violence.28

What Male Feminism is Not:

Some of the negative stigma around the word “feminism” and the discipline itself is due to a misconception that a move towards empowering women will lead to a zero-sum battle of the sexes: one must always dominate while the other suffers. In a *Time* article “Is There Really a ‘Boy Crisis’?”, Judith Warner challenges the belief that the efforts to empower female students has caused the academic performance of male students to drop,

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which is termed as the “boy crisis”. In the comments section, there was no shortage of men who complained about the lack of male empowerment initiatives and scholarships, comparing them to those in place for female students. One participant with the username Ronnie Schreiber expressed his frustrations as, “Typical gender feminism: when women do worse than men, it’s men’s fault, when men do worse than women, it’s men’s fault.” In the Huffington Post and YouGov poll previously mentioned, one reader named BarryMayor commented not just once, but three times addressing his issues with feminism:

“If feminism were about equality, close to 100% of people would ID as feminists, but feminism is ANTI-equality and often pro-misandry.”

In response to a statement where a female commenter said she asks people who aren’t feminists what their problem is:

“One of many reasons: Feminism’s battles continue to be against boys getting equally educated, especially black boys and men. As evidence, less than 30% of black college graduates were male in 2011, and that figure is dropping by 3.5% per decade. This means that by 2035/40, less than 20% of black graduates will be male. Well before the end of the century, if nothing changes, ~0% of black graduates will be male.

Feminists’ celebrate this trend as a great accomplishment. Their only dissatisfaction is that they want more women in STEM, never mind that black males are disappearing from college campuses.”

In response to another woman’s comment that “True feminism does not serve women only”:

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“How has the feminist movement addressed the fact that over 70% of African American college graduates are female, and the fact that that figure is increasing by 3.5% per decade? That means that before the end of the century, ~0% of black graduates will be male.

Since true feminism does not serve females only, there is no doubt a HUGE movement to reverse that and achieve gender equality in education. Can you point me to how they are addressing that issue?”

Other participants chimed in with remarks about the effects of the patriarchy in power; the academic performance of boys has dropped due to the social restrictions of an imposed masculinity. Boys are expected to idolize sports, video games, and other such endeavors. Any boys who appear to care too much about academics or art (in particular activities believed to enhance learning and development such as theater, music, and fine arts) risks having others question his masculinity or even sexuality. In short, as one commenter pointed out, “...men are not socially allowed to act like women...Until recently it wasn't a huge problem since the roles of women were usually limited to homemaking and childrearing (although the perception that men can't do these things is also damaging to both men and women)...”.

Thus, in this situation, many self-identified feminists (male included) discussed that the issue did not seem to be an institutional lack of access, but rather a social restraint from securing this access. Encouragement such as male-only scholarships and male-empowerment presentations could treat the symptoms of this problem, but they would not eliminate the root: destructive social impositions. Instead, many suggest supporting behaviors that give “masculinity” a much-needed makeover. In truth, feminism does

address the issues these boys face by questioning and seeking to replace these norms with more constructive practices and, more importantly, perspectives.

Recently, President Obama announced the launch of *My Brother’s Keeper*, “a new initiative to help every boy and young man of color who is willing to do the hard work to get ahead” via partnerships with local businesses and foundations to create the proper support network they will need. At face value, this directly addresses BarryMayor’s concerns for the students of minority backgrounds, combatting the “boys’ crisis”. Since this is not a zero-sum game, feminism is not opposed to this initiative because it intends to bring benefits to boys; feminism is opposed to it because of its exclusive nature.

Interestingly, BarryMayor is not wrong to criticize the efforts made to empower female students, as often they are themselves exclusive, and historically, feminists have supported them, when feminism itself should have criticized these in the same manner. Perhaps this is due to the fact that feminism has naturally tended to its core base, females; its bias has lent it a blind eye to the ways female-only initiatives are exclusive. In this manner, we see why feminism needs a following composed of both female and male individuals. Otherwise, it cannot invite equity as it proposes.

On a personal note, within the fraternity I helped create, there is also a lack of understanding regarding feminism. In an effort to embrace women’s roles and support their empowerment, the Brothers of Phi Iota Alpha proposed dedicating a dinner celebrating female accomplishments within Georgetown University. When a female opinion

was sought, the results were not that of disgust but of confusion. One female student asked, “Why am I only celebrated one day of the year? What does that accomplish?” Professor Velez, of the English Department, further added that such an event runs the risk of highlighting the individuals for their gender as opposed to focusing on the accomplishments themselves. Feminism is not about lauding individuals, women in particular, for their gender, and celebrating once a year. Instead, it naturally recognizes the self worth of all individuals and their contributions. The fraternity members understood these points but remain at a crossroads as to how they can show their solidarity for their female peers and faculty.

Men in Violence Prevention and Male Leadership

A Google search of "Why men should be feminists," produces results with the second hit being a link to the previously mentioned Ted Talks by Jackson Katz: Violence against women—it's a men's issue. Interestingly enough, this search result link comes from a website for viral content, Upworthy.com, which titles the posting as "A TED Talk That Might Turn Every Man Who Watches It Into A Feminist? It's Pretty Fantastic." This video has been shared to me numerous times, and while I personally appreciate this presentation and its significance as a male and (more to the point) as a male feminist, I can’t really sponsor all its content as feminist or feminist converting. The presentation falls short by associating male feminist work as exclusively preventing violence towards women, the stronger message the video leaves.


35 *Due to time constraints, this work is missing female support groups at Georgetown such as United Feminist, GU Women of Color, and Women in Politics. Further research will explore how these groups currently interact with male support groups, and how to enhance for meaningful collaboration between them.

Some key points made:

1. Jackson Katz brings up the idea that gender violence is seen as women’s issues, but he argues that it also a men’s issue. The diction helps men neglect any women’s or gender issues by association for being synonymous with women. He compares this to how discussions of race lead to only thinking of race as black, latino, or asian, or sexual orientation leads to the categorization of gay.

2. Katz argues that when men make racial, sexual, or homophobic comments, and the public outcries by saying they need “sensitivity training,” he argues that actually these men need leadership training to counteract those and many other issues.

3. He is advocating for men to question patriarchy and to stand with women, and work together to build a better future.

While men being leaders in gender violence prevention is an important action, this is a classic example of how male feminist work is often limited into only talking about men’s feminism in terms of preventing violence. Why is it that the prevention of violence is mobilized as the entryway to feminism for men? Perhaps it reinforces the idea that women are in need of male protection? And in some senses, reinforces, rather than challenge the stereotypical gender roles of men. Somehow, by bringing up men, feminism, and violence, we are pigeonholed as only being capable of perpetuating or preventing it, instead of the other areas of work that needs to be done and benefits to be had, as pointed out in Gloria Steinem’s list.

Personally I support his notions of what men can and should be doing more of, such a questioning patriarchy and especially in the area of leadership by encompassing more action alongside women, but male feminism is not exclusive to the work of fighting violence against women. By bringing up race, in the example of when a white person hears another white person make a racist comment, Katz hopes that the other would speak up and say
something to the one making the racist comment. The leadership notion is pretty important and ties into the greater need of men getting more involved, especially minorities. Katz work, while not as progressive and somewhat limiting, can serve as a first step of introducing men to feminism. Jackson Katz encourages men to think critically about their gender privilege.

Similarly, sherights.com blogger and anthropologist, John A. McCarroll feels the same way about other efforts that mirror Jackson Katz's work. McCarroll cites how language is used to assert men's dominance over women, to emphasize the need to "protect" (spinning it as chivalry), and, in recent campaigns, to attempt to reconcile this image of a protector through flattery: labeling men as the ultimate wielders of power in the work to eliminate violence against women. While McCarroll is not against such programs, instead he feels they should go farther:

“There is certainly something to be said about using the language of the patriarchy to subvert the patriarchy, or of using privilege to end privilege, but it’s not clear that’s what’s being done. Rather, it looks as if men are given a privileged place in the feminist movement, one where they are praised for simply not being terrible and their much-vaunted power remains intact.”

He points out that currently we are asking men for minimal effort, setting the bar low. Instead, there is more that we as a society must do, as Jackson Katz rightfully challenges, “That going forward, men and women, working together, can begin the change and the transformation that will happen so that future generations won’t have the level of tragedy that we deal with on a daily basis.”

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IV. Roadmap Ahead

Why Do We Need Male Feminists?

The picture for how men and women will stand together, championing feminism and overcoming multiple adversity issues is still up in the air. The reason I focus on minority equity and empowerment is because it has been something I have focused on during my four years at Georgetown. The university setting provides a sample of race, sex, and class issues, foreshadowing their interactions and possible solutions in a future where minorities become the majority in the United States. It is important to have men who identify as feminist because we are the missing half to the modern-day issues feminism is able to tackle: from poverty, sexual violence, intolerances of varying degrees, and familial problems where men are unable to get paternity leave to help rear their very own children. These issues do not require only women to fight for them, or men to step aside and get out of the way; instead we must look out for each others’ interests in order to benefit mutually. The patriarchy must be abolished, not just for women’s sake, but for men as well, requiring all of us to actively take part and have a chance to actually “dismantle the master’s house.”
A possible roadmap for this may include the following steps:

1. Men AND women should be required to take Women’s & Gender Studies (or similar) courses; understand the feminist movement; and gain the tools to combat and understand societal problems such as race, class, and of course gender.

2. Bridge gaps across communities and disciplines by openly embracing each other. Feminism needs to reach out and expect more male involvement, and likewise men must recognize the vested interest they have in feminism and take a stand. We need each other not because one gender is more dominant than the other, but because together, we function so much better.

3. Offer men something more to work with, and challenge them to actively do their part to correct destructive norms and practices, including but not limited to: allowing initiatives that are exclusive by nature to pass uncriticized, imposing or supporting restrictive gender roles on family and friends, and buying into the zero-sum battle of the sexes. Above all, we must eliminate this fear of losing power, a narrow view of the potential outcomes of feminism. Efforts such as the documentary, *The Mask You Live In*, is a perfect example of much needed additional discourse.

4. Men will have to acknowledge, and share their privilege, recognizing their limitations but also those of women. In a society that intends to “dismantle” the patriarchy, constructive discussions must take place - with all the more reason if the parties involved question and keep each other accountable in a respectful and reasonable fashion.

5. Move past separatist attempts that pigeonhole us into stereotyped roles, exclusionary practices, or general uninvolve - not because all of these are inherently bad, but because they do not move towards equity. If the minority males at Georgetown, for instance, do not feel they have ample opportunity to obtain leadership positions in the current university environment or if they do not feel an aspect of a group is particularly suited for them, there are better solutions than withdrawal: at the very least, they can use the tools of feminism to question these practices, rally support through a newfound solidarity, and bring about the desired changes.
6. Encourage mutual respect and corrective behaviors when it is not upheld. Not everyone can avoid harmful language or habits all the time; in some instances, the perpetrators may not even know something is wrong. An individual, for example, may not realize the full impact of a sexist, racist, or inappropriate joke. Rather than heading straight for battle, there should be some attempt to educate the individual, and likewise, an attempt from said individual to correct the behavior. We cannot move forward if offensive actions are normalized nor if all mistakes immediately make the individuals social pariahs. Again we need to play an active role, not passive, in reshaping and correcting our reality.

Concluding Remarks

The Internet is a forum with the most activity to find efforts of male feminists and discourse on the matter. Most recognizable are images such as President Obama holding up a shirt that reads, “This is what a feminist looks like.” But for male feminism to catch on, the interactions need to move beyond the Internet and transform into action.

Moving forward, my hope is that this paper serves as part of a larger first step at examining men’s role in feminism and minorities’ power dynamics at empowerment. I hope this invites more study and critique at what men are doing for or against feminism, instead of simply honing in on the archaic nature of patriarchy. We need to look ahead at what society will look like once women secure a seat at the table, have a permanent voice, and what role men will play in that culture. And at the same time we cannot forget minorities and people of color who transcend the gender category and will hold the tools to further the feminist agenda towards a more absolute and equitable world. The caveat of course that simply by converting everyone to feminism will result in a utopian world - it will not - but taking as many of the above mentioned steps as possible today, to ensure more equity among our society in the future, is both a challenge and the best course of action we can all take.
Appendix

Huffington Post/YouGov Survey Data

The following are visual charts created from the data released by the Omnibus Poll conducted by the Huffington Post and YouGov conducted on April 11-12, 2013. In particular, this survey focused on perceptions about feminism based on the definition by the Merriam-Webster dictionary. The sample size was obtained from 1,000 adult interviews, and a 3.5% margin of error was identified.

Chart A: Responses to the question, “Do you consider yourself a feminist, an anti-feminist, or neither?”

![Question 1: Feminist or Anti-Feminist](image-url)
Chart B: Responses to the question, “Regardless of your own view, do you think that a majority of women consider themselves to be feminists?”

Question 2: Majority of Women Feminist or Anti-feminist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response in Survey</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Respondents (%)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- Total
- Male
- Female
- White
- Black
- Hispanic
Chart C: Responses to the question, “Regardless of your own view, do you think that a majority of men consider themselves to be feminists?”
Chart D: Responses to the question, “When you hear the word ‘feminist’, do you think of this as a completely positive, mostly positive, mostly negative, or a completely negative term?”

Question 4: "Feminist", a Positive or Negative Word
Chart E: Responses to the question, “Do you believe that men and women should be social, political and economic equals?”

Question 5: Opinion on Gender Equality

[Bar chart showing responses to the question across different categories: Total, Male, Female, White, Black, Hispanic.]
Leadership in Departments across Campus by Gender and Race

Chart F: SOCA Organization Leadership by Gender

Students of Color Alliance Organizations

- Male Leaders of Cultural Organizations: 16%
- Female Leaders of Cultural Organizations: 84%

Chart G: BLASO Organization Leadership by Gender

Board of Latin American Student Organizations

- Male Leaders of Latino Organizations: 32%
- Female Leaders of Cultural Organizations: 68%
Chart H: GUSA
Staff by Gender and Race

Chart I: GUSA
Cabinet by Gender and Race
Chart J: GUSA Staff by Gender and Race

Figure 1: Communication by Georgetown Professor You-me Park

Available today?

You-me Park <park.youme@gmail.com>  Thu, Apr 17, 2014 at 3:29 PM
To: "Antony V. López" <superlink64@gmail.com>

Hi Tony,
I thought you were coming between 2 and 4? I will be here until 4, so do drop by if you are around. Otherwise we can discuss things over email. In fact, I really would like to receive your draft before we meet. Do send it to me whatever you have written so far?
I left a message at the registrar, but I don't think they will be able to gather the data about male/female student ratio in our courses any time soon. In the meantime, I can at least give you the breakdown of our majors and minors. At the moment, we have 24 female students majoring in WGST compared to 2 male students. The numbers for minors are very incomplete (because they don't really "declare" it), but as far as I can see, we have 21 female students and 1 male student. I feel the pattern is well defined enough just in these numbers for you to make the kind of arguments you want to put forth in your paper.

Best,
You-me Park
[Quoted text hidden]
**Figure 2:** Diaspora Program Listing SOCA Organizations *Note one is missing (Hilltop Tacos)*

**Program and Nominees**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GU Bindass</td>
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<td>Welcome</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballet Folklorico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award for the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award for Outstanding Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tappin' Jacks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clayia Gonzales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hoya Break Squad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award for Outstanding Underclass Student</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award for Outstanding Administrator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital G's</td>
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<td>Dynam!</td>
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<td>Internmission</td>
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<tr>
<td>J-Net</td>
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<tr>
<td>Superfood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stefanie Palencia &amp; Olivia Holmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award for Outstanding Senior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award for Outstanding Program</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Terrence Davis Spirit Award**

**Outstanding Organization**

- Vivian Oyo
- Rimmo y Sabor
- Groove Theory

Special thanks to the Hoya Sasa Weekend Planning Committee

The Student of Color Alliance for 2013-2014

- Fush Abdulliah and Minjeng Kang, Co-Chairs
- Imane Soubiane, African Society of Georgetown
- Jillia Jiang, Asian American Students Association
- Karel Syjon, Buck Students Alliance
- Quails Hugh, Caribbean Culture Circle
- Lauren Hiller, Chinese Student Alliance
- Samson Chow, Club Filipino
- Queen Adeyusi, Dominican Republic Club
- Rocio Sanchez, GU Women of Color
- Annette Min, GUMAPS
- Emmanuel Walter, Japan Network
- Ileana de la Cruz, LASA
- Matt Chan, South Asian Society
- Denise Graham, MECKA
- LaDarius Torrey, NAACP
- Tim Yin, Taiwanese American Student Association
- Corinne Schmidt, Vietnamese Student Association
- Sonia Ojeda, The Fire This Time
- Andrew Vondall, Native American Student Council
- Christopher Velas, GU Hawaiian Club
- Alex Perez, Hilltop Thurs
Works Cited


Diaspora Program, March 27, 2014


Riggio, Melissa L. "‘His Slave or His Despot’: Contemporary Compulsory Heteromasculinity through the Lens of Leopold Sacher-Masoch’s “Venus in Furs”." Thesis. WGST Program, Georgetown University, 2014. Print.


Y. Park (personal communication, April 17, 2014),