Reframing the third world woman in western feminist discourse

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the Western feminist construction of the "Third World woman," a homogenized representation that often disregards the diversity and agency of women in developing countries. Western feminist narratives have traditionally portrayed women from the Global South as passive, oppressed, and in need of intervention, reinforcing hierarchical distinctions between the West and the rest of the world. Drawing from critical feminism, postcolonialism, and intersectionality, this study highlights the limitations of these generalized portrayals and calls for a more nuanced understanding of gender dynamics. The paper explores the role of Western media, academia, and development discourse in shaping these representations and critiques the universalist approach that assumes a singular category of women's oppression. The research further examines how colonial and patriarchal legacies have influenced gender perceptions in both Western and non-Western contexts. By engaging with alternative feminist perspectives, including postcolonial and intersectional analyses, the study advocates for an inclusive framework that recognizes the socio-historical, cultural, and economic contexts shaping women's experiences. Finally, the paper proposes pathways for reforming Western feminist discourse, emphasizing the need for contextualized analysis, intersectional understanding, and transnational feminist solidarity. It argues for dismantling ethnocentric biases and fostering collaborative feminist efforts that respect local agency and diversity rather than imposing Western-centric gender ideologies.

Keywords: *Western Feminism; Third World Women; Intersectionality; Postcolonial Critique; Gender Representation*

1. Introduction

Western cultures have long exhibited a keen interest in understanding and representing the cultures of the rest of the world. Yet, they often categorize people from non-Western societies as "others" (Said, 1979). This tendency is particularly evident in how Western narratives depict women from developing countries, often reducing them to a singular, homogenous category that lacks agency and complexity (Mohanty, 1988). The central focus of this research is to critically examine the Western representation of women in the Global South and the implications of these portrayals. Through this analysis, we explore the flaws and limitations of Western gender conceptions, which frequently fail to capture the diverse socio-cultural realities of non-Western societies (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

In this regard, the perspectives of renowned feminists, postcolonial theorists, and intersectional scholars will be examined to highlight the biases embedded in Western feminist discourse. Many scholars, such as Crenshaw (1989) and Lutz et al. (2011), emphasize that Western feminism often adopts a universalist approach to gender inequality, disregarding intersecting factors such as class, race, and cultural specificity. Additionally, Amadiume (1987) and Chun, Lipsitz, and Shin (2013) argue that Western feminist frameworks tend to impose rigid gender norms, ignoring the fluid and context-specific nature of gender roles in different societies. While

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discussing these issues, this paper does not attempt to generalize all Western feminisms or to treat all women from developing countries as a uniform group. Instead, it acknowledges the diversity of feminist thought and the distinct socio-cultural experiences of women across different regions (Mohanty, 2003).

Moreover, the terms used in this study—such as "Third World," "the West," and "Third World women"—reflect the complexities and historical significance of these concepts. Said's (2004) critique of Orientalism highlights how the West constructs knowledge about the Global South to maintain its own ideological and political dominance, a framework that extends to feminist discourse as well. Similarly, Escobar (1995) and Kapoor (2002) examine how development narratives perpetuate Western superiority by portraying the Global South as perpetually dependent and underdeveloped. Although these terms are widely referenced in academic literature, their usage here is intended to facilitate a critical discussion rather than to reinforce stereotypes or perpetuate outdated classifications.

By analyzing the ways in which Western feminism constructs and interprets gender identities in the developing world, this research aims to contribute to a more inclusive and contextually aware feminist discourse—one that moves beyond ethnocentric biases and embraces diverse voices and perspectives. As Jönsson, Jerneck, and Arvidson (2012) suggest, a more intersectional and historically informed feminist approach is needed to dismantle the simplistic binaries of "liberated Western women" versus "oppressed Third World women." This study advocates for a shift in feminist discourse that prioritizes local agency, cultural specificity, and transnational solidarity rather than imposing Western-centric gender ideologies.

2. Theoretical framework

This section examines the representations constructed in the West of developing countries, focusing on the portrayal of "Third World women." The discussion introduces key critiques of Western feminism for its generalized and often reductive representations of women in the Global South. By engaging with earlier research and scholarly debates, this section explores how Western feminist discourse has shaped and influenced the understanding of gender in developing regions. Additionally, the analysis highlights women's socio-political and cultural conditions in the Global South, emphasizing the complexities and variations that challenge monolithic Western perspectives. By drawing on insights from postcolonial, intersectional, and critical feminist scholarship, this section aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how gender identities and roles are constructed and perceived within different historical and cultural contexts.

2.1 Image of the Third-World Woman

Escobar (2011) highlights that the Western construction of the "Third World" is not an objective reality but a product of historical and ideological development practices. These representations have been shaped by Western critics and development discourses that categorize the Global South as underdeveloped and needing intervention. Over time, such portrayals have solidified an image of the "Third World" that aligns with Western perceptions rather than the lived realities of people in these regions. Said (1978) argues that this dichotomy reinforces a biased worldview where the West is perceived as rational, progressive, and orderly, while the "Third World" is depicted as primitive, irrational, and chaotic. This persistent stereotyping reflects a colonial legacy that continues to shape global power dynamics. Despite the formal end of colonial rule, these outdated representations remain embedded in Western culture, academia, and policy-making, sustaining the notion of the "other" and justifying interventionist approaches.

Kapoor (2002) further critiques the role of Western academia and media in constructing vulnerability narratives about the "Third World." Media outlets often present the Global South as unstable, impoverished, and dependent through selective framing and linguistic coding. In doing so, they reinforce the necessity of Western intervention through economic aid, political oversight, or cultural assimilation. For example, terms such as "Islamic fundamentalism" or "Third World crisis" are frequently used to depict entire regions as monolithic and backward (Said, 2004). These portrayals fail to account for the historical context of global inequalities, instead simplifying complex socio-political landscapes into digestible stereotypes that serve Western geopolitical interests.

From a feminist perspective, Mohanty (2003) critiques this Western bias in gender representation, which she describes as "Western feminist scholarship." She argues that much of Western feminist discourse is ethnocentric, failing to recognize the diversity and agency of women in the Global South. Instead, it presents them as a single, homogenous group defined by oppression and victimhood. This approach mirrors the broader colonial framework by positioning Western feminists as liberators and Third World women as subjects in need of rescue. Mohanty (1988) introduces the term "average Third World woman" to describe the homogenized, disempowered figure constructed by Western feminism. Such generalizations erase differences in class, ethnicity, history, and political agency, reducing the complex experiences of non-Western women to a singular narrative of subjugation.

Oyěwùmí (1997) reinforces this critique by arguing that Western feminism imposes universal gender categories that do not necessarily align with non-Western social structures. In many African societies, for example, gender roles are fluid and shaped by factors such as kinship and seniority rather than rigid biological determinism. However, Western feminist discourse often overlooks these distinctions, instead applying a Eurocentric model of gender hierarchy that assumes all societies function under the same patriarchal oppression. By ignoring these cultural variations, Western feminism risks reinforcing the very power imbalances it seeks to dismantle.

The persistent framing of Third World women as passive and oppressed has significant implications. It creates a binary opposition between "liberated" Western women and "oppressed" non-Western women, reinforcing a sense of Western superiority (Jönsson et al., 2012). In this narrative, Western women are portrayed as autonomous, educated, and in control of their bodies and decisions. In contrast, non-Western women are seen as bound by tradition, lacking agency, and in need of Western intervention. This contrast reinforces hierarchical dissimilarities, positioning Western feminism as the ideal model for gender equality while dismissing alternative feminist perspectives from the Global South.

Mohanty (1988, 2003) and intersectional scholars argue that such representations contribute to a form of modern colonization, where Western feminism dictates the terms of gender discourse based on its own cultural and political priorities. This approach ignores the intersectionality of gender with other factors, such as race, class, caste, and religion, which significantly shape women's experiences. Instead of recognizing the structural and historical contexts of inequality, Western feminism often presents Third World women as inherently oppressed, thereby maintaining a paternalistic relationship with the Global South.

Ultimately, the Western feminist portrayal of Third World women as a singular, oppressed category not only distorts reality but also undermines efforts toward genuine global feminist solidarity. The following section will examine the consequences of these portrayals, exploring how

they shape international policies, gender advocacy, and feminist movements in both Western and non-Western contexts. A more inclusive approach, rooted in intersectionality and decolonial thought, is necessary to challenge these reductive representations and recognize women's diverse and dynamic realities across different cultures.

3. Analysis

Western representations often depict women from developing countries as subordinate and oppressed, reinforcing a hierarchical narrative that places them in a position of vulnerability. This section critically examines these portrayals presented by Western feminist discourse and explores their broader implications. By engaging with perspectives from various scholars, this discussion highlights the limitations of Western feminism in addressing the complexities of gender in the Global South.

A critical analysis of Western feminism reveals recurring patterns in how it frames gender issues beyond its own cultural context. Many scholars argue that these portrayals are shaped by ethnocentric perspectives, where women in the Global South are viewed as passive victims in need of Western intervention. Such narratives fail to acknowledge the diverse socio-political and historical realities that define women's experiences in different regions.

Additionally, this section will explore proposed improvements within Western feminism, as suggested by researchers advocating for a more inclusive and intersectional approach. Emphasis will be placed on alternative feminist perspectives that challenge the dominant narrative and promote a more nuanced understanding of gender and agency in non-Western societies. Finally, the role of Western feminism in shaping global gender discourse will be examined, focusing on its influence in policy-making, advocacy, and feminist movements worldwide. The objective is to highlight the need for a shift in perspective that moves beyond generalized assumptions and fosters greater solidarity across diverse feminist movements.

3.1 Universal gender categories

Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that Western feminism constructs a universal gender category, applying a framework that does not necessarily reflect the realities of all societies. Western feminists often operate under the assumption that social structures are fundamentally shaped by biological determinism, where gender roles and power hierarchies are rooted in anatomical differences. This perspective assumes a universal system of gender inequality, failing to acknowledge alternative social structures outside the Western context.

Through an in-depth study of Yorùbá society in Southwestern Nigeria, Oyěwùmí (1997) challenges this biological determinism, highlighting that traditional Yorùbá society did not base its social hierarchy on gender distinctions. Instead, status and governance were determined primarily by seniority and relative age, rather than by fixed gender roles. In contrast to Western assumptions of patriarchal dominance, leadership roles in Yorùbá society were not exclusively tied to men or women but were fluid and situational. Gender was not the primary determinant of power and social ranking, which contradicts the universalist claims of Western feminist thought.

A similar perspective is provided by Amadiume (1987) in her study of Igbo society in Southeastern Nigeria. She notes that before Western colonial influence, gender roles were more flexible, and women actively participated in economic and political spheres. Unlike the rigid binary gender classifications imposed by Western frameworks, women in Igbo society historically performed roles that Western narratives would traditionally associate with men. However, with

the advent of colonialism and Western influence, these gender dynamics were altered, and a hierarchical system of subordination was introduced. Colonial structures imposed new gender norms, redefining women's roles and reinforcing patriarchal systems that were not previously dominant.

Both studies highlight the transformative impact of Western colonialism and feminist discourse on gender relations in non-Western societies. Rather than recognizing pre-existing social frameworks, Western scholars often reinterpret these societies through their own ideological lens, imposing rigid gender categories that may not align with historical realities. The Western portrayal of women as inherently subordinate is, therefore, not an objective truth but rather a construct shaped by colonial narratives and patriarchal reinterpretations of non-Western cultures.

Furthermore, Western academia has played a crucial role in solidifying these narratives. Many scholars, instead of investigating indigenous gender systems with cultural sensitivity, have relied on predefined theoretical categories that reinforce Eurocentric assumptions about gender oppression. This oversight has contributed to a distorted understanding of gender relations in the Global South and has further marginalized alternative feminist perspectives that challenge Western feminist hegemony.

Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that even African scholars have been influenced by these Western gender ideologies, often unconsciously adopting colonial perspectives when analyzing their own societies. The dominance of Western feminist thought in academic institutions and policy-making has ensured that these Eurocentric ideas continue to shape gender discourse worldwide. Mohanty (1988, 2003) similarly critiques Western feminism for its homogenizing tendencies, arguing that it fails to account for the socio-historical contexts that shape gender roles differently across cultures.

Ultimately, the concept of gender universalism, as promoted by Western feminism, does not reflect the diversity of gender experiences across societies. The assumption that all cultures conform to a singular patriarchal structure ignores the complexities of intersectionality, local traditions, and historical developments. Recognizing alternative gender frameworks—such as those found in Yorùbá and Igbo societies—is essential to decolonizing feminist discourse and fostering a more inclusive and contextually grounded understanding of gender relations worldwide.

3.2 Women as a coherent, oppressed unit

Western feminist discourse has often framed "Third World women" as a monolithic and oppressed group, overlooking the complexities of their identities shaped by social class, ethnicity, and cultural context. This reductionist perspective categorizes women from the Global South primarily through religious and familial status, reinforcing an essentialist narrative of victimhood (Mohanty, 1988, 2003; Oyěwùmí, 1997). Rather than acknowledging the diverse socio-economic and political realities that influence women's experiences, Western feminism tends to group them under a singular, oppressed identity, mirroring colonial-era classifications that generalize non-Western societies.

This binary distinction between powerful and powerless—with men occupying positions of authority and women depicted as subordinated—reinforces gender essentialism. Within this framework, women are not recognized as active agents within their own societies but as passive subjects needing intervention. The neglect of social status, class dynamics, and ethnic identity in

these portrayals contributes to an oversimplified understanding of gender oppression in the Global South. Women are not assessed based on their actual lived experiences but are instead defined by preconceived Western assumptions about gender roles and oppression.

The terminology used by Western feminists further reinforces these hierarchical distinctions. By labeling women from the Global South as "undeveloped" or "developing," the focus shifts exclusively to their gender identity while ignoring their historical, cultural, and political contexts. This narrative portrays them as illiterate, helpless, and bound by tradition, perpetuating stereotypes that deny their agency and resistance (Mohanty, 1988: 337). In response to this homogenization, Mohanty (2003: 19) introduces the term "Third World Difference", challenging the Western tendency to depict non-Western women as a reductive, ahistorical, and homogenous group. She argues that such simplistic categorizations not only erase the struggles and achievements of women in the Global South but also reinforce a global hierarchy where Western women are positioned as "liberated" and "modern" in contrast to their "oppressed" counterparts.

This binary construction of "liberated Western women" versus "subjugated Third World women" has significant consequences. By prioritizing gender oppression as a universal category, Western feminism disregards the intersectionality of race, class, caste, and culture in shaping women's experiences. Instead of fostering cross-cultural feminist solidarity, such portrayals create divisions between women, reinforcing Western superiority and limiting the recognition of diverse feminist movements in the Global South (Mohanty, 2003). Moreover, these representations fail to account for women's resilience, activism, and agency in non-Western societies. Women in the Global South have long engaged in grassroots movements, political activism, and socio-economic struggles, challenging oppression in ways that may not always align with Western feminist frameworks. Recognizing their agency and diversity requires moving beyond static and one-dimensional narratives, allowing for a more inclusive, contextually grounded approach to feminism that respects local struggles and perspectives rather than imposing Western ideals of liberation.

3.3 Methodological universalism

Western feminists have often employed specific methodologies to assert the universality of cultural and gender-based oppression across the world. However, rather than critically analyzing the structural and historical causes of women's marginalization, their focus tends to emphasize the "powerlessness" of women in certain societies (Mohanty, 1988, 2003). This selective approach results in a generalized portrayal of women in developing countries as uniformly oppressed without acknowledging the diverse socio-political and economic factors that shape gender relations in different contexts. Such methodological universalism reinforces Western superiority by portraying women in the Global South as victims in need of liberation rather than recognizing their agency, activism, and localized resistance strategies.

To illustrate this point, Mohanty (2003: 33f) critiques the Western feminist focus on the veil as a symbol of oppression. In Western feminist discourse, the veil is often framed as a barrier to women's empowerment, reinforcing the idea that women who wear it are inherently submissive or lacking autonomy. However, Mohanty argues that such interpretations oversimplify and misrepresent cultural practices, failing to consider the socio-historical and ideological meanings attached to veiling in different societies. For example, women in Saudi Arabia and Iran wear veils, but their experiences cannot be understood solely through the lens of Western feminism. Their

choices and cultural contexts must be examined holistically rather than through externally imposed frameworks that equate veiling with oppression (Mohanty, 2003).

Similarly, the rise of female-headed households in the U.S. and Latin America sometimes indicates women's independence or empowerment. However, applying this metric universally ignores the cultural, economic, and legal factors that shape women's roles in different societies (Mohanty, 2003: 35f). The assumption that Western models of gender equality—such as individualism and economic autonomy—should be the universal standard disregards alternative forms of agency and empowerment that exist outside the Western framework.

These examples highlight the dangers of imposing Western feminist perspectives onto diverse cultural settings. Feminist analysis must be context-specific, considering the social, historical, cultural, and ideological factors that shape gender dynamics in different regions. No framework or experience should be treated as universally applicable, as doing so erases the complexities and variations in women's struggles worldwide. A more inclusive and intersectional approach is needed, one that recognizes localized feminist movements, respects cultural diversity and challenges the dominance of Western-centric narratives in global gender discourse.

3.4 Perception of western superiority

Said (1978) and Escobar (2011) argue that representations of the Third World and the Western world are rarely neutral. Instead, these portrayals are actively shaped to highlight differences in a way that reinforces the dominance of the West. The West has successfully positioned itself as the standard of progress and modernity, often by emphasizing the perceived weaknesses of the Third World—depicting it as powerless, ignorant, underdeveloped, and in need of intervention. This constructed dichotomy is maintained through language and representation, dividing the world into "us" (the West) and "the others" (the rest of the world). Such classifications strengthen Western global influence, providing ideological justification for economic, political, and cultural intervention in the Global South.

This hierarchical worldview extends to gender discourse, where women are not treated as a diverse and intersectional category but instead as developed or underdeveloped based on their geographical and cultural backgrounds. The West uses these gendered representations strategically, reinforcing its own superiority by depicting non-Western women as subjugated and deprived of agency. Mohanty (1988, 2003) critiques this tendency in Western feminism, arguing that although individual Western feminists may hold different views, the broader feminist discourse has often functioned as an extension of Western dominance rather than a genuinely inclusive movement. The primary effect of these representations is to assert control over how non-Western women are perceived and engaged with, effectively dictating the terms of their empowerment.

Western discourse frequently characterizes women from the Global South using narrow and reductive categories, such as "the veiled woman" or "the obedient wife." These labels serve a dual purpose: they portray Third World women as passive and oppressed while simultaneously positioning Western women as liberated and independent. This contrast reinforces the notion that Western feminist ideals are the ultimate benchmark for women's rights, disregarding the diversity of feminist movements in non-Western contexts. The perception of Western superiority in gender discourse is thus deeply embedded in the practice of coding and categorizing non-Western women,

reinforcing the idea that they require guidance and intervention from the West to achieve empowerment.

The implications of these homogenized representations are far-reaching. They perpetuate stereotypes, marginalize non-Western feminist perspectives, and shape global policies that often fail to address the specific needs of women in the Global South. Over time, these biased portrayals have led to widespread misconceptions about the actual conditions of non-Western women, fueling Western feminist agendas that overlook local agency and activism.

To challenge this hegemonic narrative, there is a need to critically engage with non-Western feminist scholarship, acknowledging the multiple and context-specific ways in which women resist oppression and claim agency. The following sections will explore alternative feminist perspectives and propose more inclusive approaches that move beyond Western-centric frameworks, ensuring a genuinely transnational and intersectional understanding of gender struggles.

3.5 A call for changes within western feminism

3.5.1 Contextualization

Amadiume (1987) and Oyěwùmí (1997) argue that Western feminism should abandon the notion of a universal gender framework, as gender roles and identities vary significantly across different cultural, historical, and social contexts. Instead of applying a one-size-fits-all approach, feminist analyses should prioritize localized understandings of gender, ensuring that cultural, economic, and political factors unique to each society are considered. To avoid oversimplification, it is crucial to consider social elements like class, status, age, kinship structures, and historical traditions alongside gender dynamics.

Additionally, Mohanty (2003) emphasizes that feminist research must incorporate both micro and macro perspectives—analyzing local gender issues while considering the broader global economic and political systems that shape gender inequality. By acknowledging the interplay between local traditions and international power structures, feminist scholars can develop a more nuanced and intersectional approach that respects the lived realities of women across different societies. Such an approach allows for creating a more inclusive feminist discourse that is not solely dictated by Western ideological frameworks.

3.5.2 Challenging western norms

Amadiume (1987) and Oyěwùmí (1997) advocate for a critical reassessment of Western feminist methodologies, arguing that the assumptions embedded in feminist research must be questioned and contextualized. Feminist scholars are encouraged to reflect on the biases inherent in their research design, including the types of questions they ask, the data they collect, and how they interpret evidence. The parameters set by Western feminism often predetermine the nature of the conclusions drawn, reinforcing pre-existing stereotypes rather than engaging with diverse feminist perspectives. By challenging these limitations, feminist scholars can develop alternative frameworks that better capture the complexity of gender identities and power structures in different societies.

Mohanty (2003) further critiques the Western feminist tendency to portray developing countries through a narrow lens, arguing that much of the literature produced by Western scholars presents an incomplete or distorted image of the Global South. These portrayals often emerge from a lack of direct engagement with non-Western feminist movements and local perspectives. To

counteract this, it is essential to recognize the global dominance of Western scholarship and its influence on shaping knowledge production. Western feminist discourse must move beyond ethnocentric interpretations and actively engage with the perspectives of feminist scholars, activists, and grassroots movements in the Global South.

Ultimately, feminist thought must embrace diversity, intersectionality, and context-specific analysis rather than enforcing rigid Western-centric ideologies. By reassessing research methodologies, challenging dominant narratives, and fostering dialogue across cultures, feminism can evolve into a more inclusive and globally relevant movement representing women's voices from all backgrounds.

3.5.3 Intersectionality

Intersectionality acknowledges that an individual's identity is shaped by multiple intersecting factors, including gender, race, class, culture, sexuality, and historical background (Chun et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1989). This perspective rejects singular approaches to oppression, arguing that gender alone cannot fully explain the complexities of social inequalities. Feminist scholars emphasize that women's experiences vary significantly based on other intersecting identities, and thus, a more comprehensive analytical approach is required to understand oppression in different contexts.

Mohanty (2003) argues that women should not be viewed as a homogenous group, as this perspective erases individual agency and lived experiences. Instead of treating all women as facing the same forms of oppression, feminist research should account for differences based on geographical, socio-political, and cultural contexts. A universalist view overlooks the struggles unique to marginalized women, particularly those from non-Western, indigenous, or economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Lutz et al. (2011) and Chun et al. (2013) further stress that feminist research must move beyond merely studying "women" as a broad category and instead examine social, historical, and cultural structures that contribute to different forms of oppression. An intersectional approach recognizes that systems of power interact in complex ways, making it impossible to address gender inequality without also considering factors such as economic class, ethnicity, colonial histories, and social structures. The homogenization of women's struggles by Western feminism ignores the fact that gender oppression is experienced differently across cultures and societies.

Western feminism must, therefore, move away from a one-dimensional view of gender inequality and instead incorporate the voices of diverse feminist movements from across the world. By acknowledging the intersections of power and identity, feminism can become more inclusive, adaptable, and responsive to the challenges faced by women in different contexts.

3.5.4 Feminist solidarity

Mohanty (2003) calls for developing a new feminist framework that departs from the Western-dominated, colonial nature of mainstream feminism. This new feminism should be democratic, inclusive, and grounded in local realities rather than imposing Western ideals onto non-Western societies. She advocates rejecting the universal idea of women's subordination, proposing mobilization and organization based on collective resistance.

Feminist solidarity, according to Mohanty (ibid), should transcend national, cultural, and ideological differences, fostering a global movement where women engage in shared struggles

while respecting local contexts. Instead of focusing on divisions between women, feminism should prioritize collaboration, knowledge exchange, and mutual support. While differences in cultural and social experiences exist, they should not serve as barriers to building a unified feminist movement.

A genuinely inclusive and transformative feminism requires active engagement with diverse voices, particularly those historically marginalized by Western feminist discourse. By embracing intersectionality and feminist solidarity, the movement can develop more effective strategies for combating oppression, ensuring that all women's struggles—not just those fitting Western narratives—are acknowledged and addressed.

4. Conclusion

This paper has examined how Western feminism has historically portrayed women from developing countries as universally subordinated and oppressed, often neglecting their social, cultural, and ethnic identities. These representations tend to present non-Western women as a homogeneous and marginalized group, detached from the complex social structures and diverse feminist movements within their own societies. Such generalizations reinforce a Eurocentric perspective, failing to acknowledge the agency and resistance of women in the Global South.

To counter these simplistic narratives, it is essential to redefine gender frameworks in a way that moves beyond the ethnocentric perceptions embedded in Western feminism. Societies around the world do not necessarily construct gender in the same way, nor is gender the sole determining factor of women's identity and experiences. Intersectionality highlights that class, ethnicity, culture, and religion play equally significant roles in shaping gender identities and social positions. However, women from developing countries continue to be framed as a singular, oppressed entity, overlooking their diverse realities and struggles.

Recognizing women's contributions beyond the lens of Western feminism is crucial. Their challenges and achievements should be understood in relation to the broader socio-historical and political contexts that shape their lives. For instance, the practice of wearing the veil should not be universally interpreted as a symbol of sexual control or oppression but instead examined within the specific cultural and religious frameworks in which it exists. Researchers and feminists must move beyond surface-level assumptions and seek a deeper understanding of local gender dynamics, ensuring that their analyses do not reinforce Western superiority narratives.

The binary framework of Western women's perceived superiority and the assumed inferiority of non-Western women must be challenged. The existing knowledge systems that shape global perceptions of women in developing countries often misrepresent their lived realities, reinforcing stereotypes and increasing prejudices against them. The global feminist movement should be enriched by challenging dominant narratives and embracing diverse feminist perspectives to promote inclusivity.

Building a more equitable and representative global feminist discourse requires fostering unity and solidarity among women across different regions and cultures. Rather than emphasizing social and domestic roles based on traditional Western feminist models, the focus should be creating spaces for dialogue, mutual learning, and transnational collaboration. Acknowledging diverse feminist struggles and resisting homogenized portrayals, creating a more just and inclusive framework that respects all women's agency, history, and cultural diversity, regardless of geographical boundaries, is possible.

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