

**On common manifestations of coloniality in the Dutch feminist movement and how these are experienced by feminist activists**

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## **Abstract**

This study aimed to explore common manifestations of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement and how these are experienced by feminist activists. A conceptual framework based on Quijano's "coloniality of power" was used to analyse literature and interview data. The literature review identified white feminism and orientalist perceptions as common manifestations of coloniality in global-minority feminist movements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to get an overview of feminist activists' experiences with coloniality in the Dutch feminist movement. The interviews revealed patterns in the experiences of feminists, which could be linked to manifestations of coloniality. These patterns are: 1) the denial of race, which is split up between 1.1) the denial of intersectionality and 1.2) the resistance to having conversations about race; 2) refusal and resistance to listen and learn from women of colour; 3) alienation; 4) lack of representation; 5) exploitation of labour; and 6) preference of masculinity. The participants also provided recommendations for making steps towards decolonising the Dutch feminist movement. The findings highlight similarities between global-minority and Dutch contexts, emphasizing the need to address coloniality within the movement. Although the results are not generalisable, they contribute to understanding and addressing coloniality in feminist activism.

Key terms: coloniality, colonialism, feminism, activism, Dutch feminist movement, white feminism, orientalism, race, gender, hierarchies

## Introduction

The way in which European history books refer to colonialism, suggest that it is a relic of the past. However, a closer examination reveals that its structures are deeply interwoven with contemporary society. Scholars, amongst which key thinker in the field of decolonial studies, Quijano, argue that colonialism established a hierarchy of power and domination which exceeds territorial colonisation and is deeply ingrained in the structures of present-day society. Quijano coined the term “coloniality of power”, which refers to the enduring and pervasive structures of power that were established during the colonial period and continue to shape social, political, and cultural systems in postcolonial societies. It encompasses the interplay of various forms of domination including racial, cultural, economic, and gender-based hierarchies, which were fundamental to the establishment and maintenance of colonial control (Loomba, 2015; Lugones, 2007; Oyěwùmí, 1997; Quijano, 2000). As these structures are still actively perpetuated in contemporary society, critical reflection on one’s positioning in these constructed hierarchies and their functioning is essential.

Feminist movements in the global-minority have been receiving increasing amounts of criticism about exclusionary behaviour and failing to investigate internal perpetuation of systems of oppression. As coloniality relates to many of these oppressive structures and is deeply embedded in contemporary society, critical reflection is necessary to investigate its manifestations in the feminist movements. This critical reflection is necessary to keep progressing towards more radical change by making steps towards decolonising the feminist movements. When systems of oppression, such as power hierarchies which were established during colonialism, are not challenged, any type of feminist reform will not “have a long-range impact” (hooks, 1984, p. 31). Therefore, it is vital for the future of feminist change, for involved individuals to critically reflect on themselves and their actions, to progress towards decolonising feminist action. As the ways in which coloniality is present in contemporary society highly depends on the colonial context, its manifestations should be examined locally. Therefore, the research question in this paper is: What are common manifestations of coloniality in the Dutch feminist movement and how are these experienced by feminist activists?

The main theoretical lens applied in this study is based on the theory of “coloniality of power” by Quijano (2000). The coloniality of power refers to the pervasive systems of oppression established during the colonial period, in this case focused on European colonialism. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which coloniality functions and is highly present in contemporary feminism, a general comprehension of the colonial power matrix is essential. Therefore, this paper will explore the foundation of coloniality by investigating racial and gender-based hierarchies imposed by European colonialism. Since coloniality cannot be understood as an isolated concept and

always has to be viewed in relation to other relevant structures, a conceptual framework will be provided instead of a singular theoretical framework.

This conceptual framework will be followed by a literature review on common manifestations of coloniality within feminist movements in the global-minority. As literature on these manifestations within the Dutch context is highly limited, the scope of the review has been broadened to discuss publications focused on the global-minority in general. Important to take into account is how colonial experiences and manifestations of coloniality are highly context dependent. Nevertheless, it is worth investigating coloniality in feminist movements across the global-minority as it has been found that the creation and imposition of power hierarchies and racist ideologies to justify and strengthen colonial control is a recurring pattern throughout similar contexts (Loomba, 2015). Lastly, the literature review will zoom in on a short overview of the Dutch context. The conceptual framework and the reviewed literature which engages with this framework are utilised as a lens through which the interview results are analysed.

An extensive methodology on the applied research methods will follow the literature review. It will start with the researcher's positionality as it is of great importance to take this into account when reading the paper as it shapes the researcher's frame of reference and influences the conveyance of information. The chapter will continue by laying out the process of collecting and analysing literature, followed by a description of the interview process and its preparations. After which the applied methods of data storage, categorisation, and analysis will be discussed.

The results section will, subsequently, be analysed using the proposed conceptual framework and building up on the existing literature as discussed in the literature review. The discussion will include a section on recommendations based on a combination of the information provided by participants, and the engagement of literature with the conceptual framework. Next, the limitations of the research will be discussed in order to be transparent to the reader about the generalisability and validity of the results.

Finally, the paper will be concluded by providing a concrete overview of the research process and answering the research question: what are common manifestations of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement and how are these experienced by feminist activists?

## Conceptual framework and definitions

This paper aims to investigate common manifestations of coloniality in the Dutch feminism movement and how these are experienced by feminist activists. To do this, the researcher applied a conceptual framework, surrounding Quijano's (2000) theory of the “coloniality of power”, also described simply as ‘coloniality’. The concept refers to the pervasive power hierarchies and related oppressive structures established by colonialism which continue to shape contemporary society (Quijano, 2000). The theory on coloniality is based on European colonialism in Latin America. However, the notion of coloniality could be examined in different contexts through careful and critical analysis.

In order to obtain an overview on the ways in which coloniality manifests itself in the Dutch feminist movement, coloniality itself needs to be utilised as a theoretical lens to investigate the existing literature and the interview results. As coloniality points at the current manifestations of the pervasive power structures which stem from the European colonial period, it is inherently intertwined with other related concepts, such as colonialism and colonial power hierarchies. Therefore, a conceptual framework needs to be utilised to create a more complete image of coloniality and its manifestations. Solely through exploring the different elements of the framework in itself, can the relationship with coloniality be recognised. As coloniality is inherently connected to the colonial power structures it refers to, the investigation of the relationship between these elements is crucial for the workability of the conceptual framework. In his theory on coloniality, Quijano lays out the inherent relationship between coloniality, colonialism, and the subsequent colonial power structures which were created and enabled colonialism and are the underpinning of coloniality.

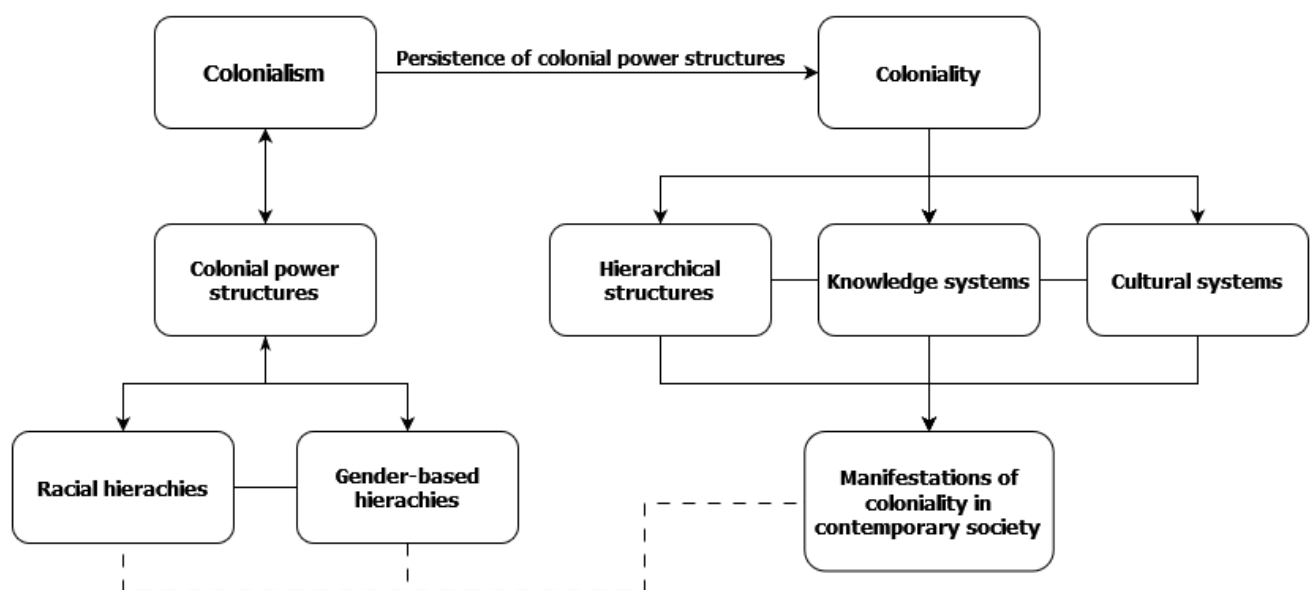


Figure 1. Conceptual framework constructed by the author, based on the theory of “coloniality of power” as created by Quijano (2000).

The framework above visualises the direct relationship between coloniality and colonialism made by Quijano (2000). The arrow pointing from colonialism to coloniality refers to the persistence of colonial power structures in contemporary society. However, underlying colonialism are the colonial power structures which both enable colonialism and are created by it. Due to the scope of this study, only two commonly highlighted power structures will be discussed: racial and gender-based hierarchies. The arrow between the block on colonial power structures and the described hierarchies also goes both ways for the same reason as the aforementioned relationship between colonialism and its power structures. A line is drawn in between racial and gender-based hierarchies to symbolise the continuous intersecting of the two. The dotted line refers to the indirect relationship between these hierarchies and the manifestations of coloniality. As manifestations of coloniality are often identified by recognising colonial power structures, a dotted line seemed appropriate for pointing out this connection. Nevertheless, the actual relation between these concept blocks is via the other concepts.

Coloniality, as constructed by Quijano (2000), has three main elements in which it tends to be present: hierarchical structures, knowledge systems, and cultural systems. This relationship explains the arrows between coloniality and these three concepts. As these structures are all influenced by coloniality, they are inherently intertwined and therefore connected with a line. Manifestations of coloniality in contemporary society can oftentimes be spotted by investigating these three elements. Therefore, the conceptual block of these manifestations is connected to the three elements as an outcome.

The conceptual model (figure 1), shows how colonial power structures, such as racial and gender-based hierarchies underlie the concept of coloniality. As touched upon earlier, a foundational understanding of the constructed hierarchies and other systems of oppression designed to justify and gain colonial control, is essential in understanding coloniality as it refers to the persistence of these structures in contemporary society. Subsequently, examining colonial power structures is vital in recognising manifestations of coloniality in current society, including the feminist movements. Therefore, before being able to fully analyse the theory on “coloniality of power”, a limited investigation of colonial power structures is necessary. This investigation is conducted using the theoretical lens provided by the conceptual framework and knowledge published on these structures by key thinkers Loomba (2015), Lugones (2007), and Oyěwùmí (1997).

The power structures employed to gain colonial control are extremely extensive and overlapping, as explained in the elaboration on the conceptual framework. As mentioned earlier, due to the scope of this paper, it is not possible to highlight each of these structures. Therefore, the conceptual framework will only include two of the seemingly most commonly discussed colonial power structures, which strongly intersect with each other and other systems of oppression built during colonialism: racial and

gender-based hierarchies. It is highly important to acknowledge that by only discussing two colonial power hierarchies, much valuable context to understand and employ coloniality as a theoretical lens is missing. This should be taken into account as a limitation to the research as it does not fit the scope of the research to include more colonial power structures.

Following a working definition on colonialism and brief insights on racial and gender-based hierarchies, the concept of coloniality will be further elaborated on. This explanation is provided subsequently to the examination of colonial power structures as it is impossible to view coloniality separately from colonialism and its underlying systems of oppression (see figure 1). In this section, more insight will be provided on the three elements of coloniality: hierarchical structures, knowledge systems, and cultural systems. The combination of knowledge on these various concepts, creates the conceptual framework utilised in this paper.

### ***Definition of colonialism***

Directly underlying the concept of coloniality is colonialism. As demonstrated in the conceptual framework (figure 1), a working definition of colonialism should be established to further explore the model. Scholars and other thinkers have provided a large base of definitions for the term colonialism. However, no clear consensus on a definition has been reached as it is often dependent on the context. Since this paper focuses mainly on the underlying structures of colonialism rather than the exact definition, the definition will only be brushed upon. In ‘An African Theology of Decolonization’, Dibinga Wa Said collects a variety of definitions of colonialism by African thinkers. Amílcar Cabral’s description seems to be encapsulating most of the discussed definitions. According to Said, Cabral describes white colonialism as “the most barbaric and inhuman process of ‘arresting, killing, massacring’ (Cabral, 1969). And he goes on to say, ‘Obviously violence and lies have been, and still are, the weapons of any colonialism’ (1969)” (1971). A more contemporary resource on matter is the book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* by Ania Loomba (2015). Loomba stresses the multifaceted and context-dependent nature of colonialism and, therefore, does not concretely define the concept. Nonetheless, the reader is provided with a more comprehensive description of colonialism by examining the creation and perpetuation of power hierarchies which are crucial to colonisation, including cultural, political, and economical domination. Important to note, is that the categories within these power hierarchies are constructs shaped by colonialism itself. Both race and gender have been constructed and were consequently shaped by the imposing of European norms and values on the local culture. Therefore, race and gender as conceptualised in (previously) colonised countries after the forced restructuring according to European standards, are colonial concepts in itself as they are built to enable colonial control (Lugones, 2007; Oyěwùmí, 1997; Miller, 2011).



### ***Racial hierarchies in colonialism***

Racial hierarchies are positioned underneath colonial power structures in the conceptual framework as it is one of the structures commonly pointed out in literature and focused on in this paper. As visualised by the conceptual framework, racial hierarchies are indirectly in relation to manifestations of coloniality. According to Loomba (2015) the construction of racial hierarchies is one of the key elements in obtaining and upholding colonial control. As demonstrated in the conceptual framework, the underlying power structures of colonialism, such as racial hierarchies, form the underpinning of coloniality. Therefore, racial hierarchies should be investigated to gain a better understanding of the functioning of coloniality.

Loomba states: “The construction of vast numbers of people as inferior, or ‘other’, was crucial for constructing a European ‘self’ and justifying colonialist practices” (2015, p. 112). A crucial part of colonial control is the subordination and exploitation of one group by another, and the subsequent justification of this subordination and exploitation by claiming that one group is intrinsically superior. Racial hierarchies were crucial in creating this claim on intrinsic superiority and, therefore, key in the justification of colonial domination. To justify racial hierarchies and exploitation, colonisers established racist ideologies which identified different groups of people as biologically most suited for particular tasks (Loomba, 2015; Rex, 1980). The following section from the book *La Réforme Intellectuelle et Morale*, published by Renan in 1871, shows a perfect example of this racist narrative and how it is presented as a universal truth, effectively justifying the subordination and exploitation of the people in colonised societies.

Nature has made a race of workers, the Chinese race, who have wonderful manual dexterity and almost no sense of honour; govern them with justice, levying from them, in return for the blessing of such a government, an ample allowance for the conquering race, and they will be satisfied; a race of tillers of the soil, the Negro ... ; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race. Reduce this noble race to working in the ergastulum<sup>1</sup> like Negroes and Chinese, and they rebel. ... But the life at which our workers rebel would make a Chinese or a fellah<sup>2</sup> happy, as they are not military creatures in the least. Let each one do what he is made for, and all will be well.

The last sentence, in particular, is striking in how it shows the justification of racial exploitation by referring to supposed biological and inherent traits based on the construction of race. Additionally, the wording of the sentence highlights the conviction that this racial categorisation is the natural order in

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<sup>1</sup> An ergastulum is usually a deep, roofed pit under the ground, used by Romans as a ‘factory’ in which enslaved people are forced to work, held in chains, and punished (Francese, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> A fellah refers to a farmer or agricultural labourer usually in the Middle East or Northern Africa (“Definition of Fellah,” n.d.).

which a society functions. However, the colonists actively forced this structure upon the people in colonised societies to gain control. This was often done through the deeply flawed pseudoscience, scientific racism (Barder, 2021). Similarly to the creation and perpetuation of racial hierarchies, other structures such as gender-based hierarchies have also been a key element in colonial systems.

### ***Gender-based hierarchies in colonialism***

Similarly to racial hierarchies, gender-based hierarchies are also considered a key element in the colonial power structures which underlie colonialism and thereby coloniality (Loomba, 2015). Therefore, it is positioned besides racial hierarchies in the conceptual framework. They are linked as these hierarchies continuously intersect with each other and other unmentioned colonial power structures. Elaborating on these gender-based hierarchies is crucial in understanding coloniality and its manifestations for the same reasons as explained for racial hierarchies.

In many historical accounts, both the coloniser and the colonised tend to be portrayed as male (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Colonial rule itself is often described as “a manly or husbandly or lordly prerogative” (Nandy, 1983). In line with this conception of colonial control, the process of colonisation is frequently referred to as “the taking away of the manhood of the colonized” (Oyěwùmí, 1997). However, the local population included women and people of all other genders, depending on the domestic conception of gender. Nevertheless, descriptions of colonial processes tend to centre the male experience, painting both the coloniser and the colonised as male and, thereby, erasing the female experience. The following passages from Fanon (1963) are typical for the representation of the local population in discourses on colonialism:

"The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession — all manner of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonized man is an envious man." (p. 39)

“Sometimes people wonder that the native rather than give his wife a dress, buys instead a transistor radio.” (p. 63)

Noticeable in these excerpts is the clear description of the “native” as male and the passive presence of women. In these passages, women are solely referred to as wives, thereby portraying them as a passive object of lust. Additionally, these excerpts show how the “native” is attributed with perceived inferior characteristics, such as envy. The frequent description of people in a colonised society solely as “natives” dehumanises the perception of them, which is in line with what Césaire calls the “thingification” of the colonised people (1955). This “thingification” is seen as necessary for the justification of the perceived inherent superiority of the colonists. The portrayal of the local

population as inferior by painting them as “barbaric”, “uncivilised”, and by attributing other perceived inferior characteristics as seen in the passages above, is key to this “thingification” and thereby the justification of colonisation (Césaire, 1955). The portrayal of the people in colonised societies as barbaric men, creates the space for the colonists to be presented as those who came to free the women from their oppressors and protect them from these so-called barbaric men (Loomba, 2015). This rhetoric strongly plays into the white saviour complex which is inherently intertwined with European imperialism and strongly intersects with the previously discussed construction of racial hierarchies (Murphy, 2023, para. 7).

The representation of the people in colonised societies as inferior and barbaric justified the imposing of European gender norms and hierarchies on the local culture. However, the colonists did not foist precolonial European gender structures on the local population. Lugones (2007) states that the colonists “imposed a new gender system that created very different arrangements for colonized males and females than for white bourgeois colonizers. Thus, it introduced many genders and gender itself as a colonial concept and mode of organization of relations of production, property relations, of cosmologies and ways of knowing” (p. 186). Therefore, gender as conceptualised through European standards in a colonial situation, is in itself a creation to serve the process of gaining colonial domination (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Subsequently, a hierarchy of four categories was created: “Beginning at the top, these were: men (European), women (European), native (African men), and Other (African women). Native women occupied the residual and unspecified category of the Other” (Oyěwùmí, 1997, p. 122). This hierarchy specifically refers to the colonial relations between Europeans and Africans. It is essential to recognise that colonial dynamics differ considerably depending on the context. However, it is still valuable to investigate specific cases of gender-based hierarchies as it has been found that the use of these power structures to justify and legitimise colonial control is a recurring pattern in many instances (Loomba, 2015).

The European gender structures imposed on the local population included the forced adoption of patriarchal hierarchies. These hierarchies involved promoting and enabling male authority and control whilst confining women to domestic roles. The exclusion of women from the newly established colonial public sphere, including decision making processes and the political arena, played a major part in the construction of these hierarchies (Oyěwùmí, 1997). This exclusion caused the erasure and marginalisation of large amounts of indigenous knowledge and cultural systems (Loomba, 2015). By creating new binary gender categories and drastically limiting the agency and autonomy of the women in colonised societies, the colonisers created a clear and controllable social order which perpetuated power imbalances in their favour (Oyěwùmí, 1997). In cases where such gendered power relations were already present, European colonists tended to build on these already skewed power dynamics (Loomba, 2015).

Furthermore, colonial discourse frequently sexualised and exoticised women in colonised societies, perpetuating stereotypes which painted them as sexually available and morally corrupt. These stereotypes largely interplay with the highly present racist ideologies created by the colonists through scientific racism, which formed the false scientific foundation of the notion of superiority and, subsequently, the justification of colonial control (Barder, 2021; Oyěwùmí, 1997). As stated earlier, these researches aimed at creating scientific underpinning for the notion of European superiority by finding ‘biological explanations’ for the colonised peoples’ inferiority. Likewise, stereotypes of women in colonised societies have been largely affected and confirmed through scientific racism, a deeply flawed pseudo-science. The attribution of, according to European norms, perceived negative characteristics such as promiscuity and hypersexuality to women in colonised societies, contributed to the reduction of women as instruments to colonial power (Loomba, 2015; Oyěwùmí, 1997). These stereotypes were used by colonists to further justify their colonial domination, by framing it as a necessary measure to regulate and protect the moral order (Loomba, 2015).

Overall, as the colonists enforced an entirely different social order upon the local population, which was based on the norms and values of the colonists' culture, the colonised people could not always comply with the colonial norms (Lugones, 2007). Subsequently, this was viewed by the colonists as a confirmation of the local population’s inferiority and again contributed to the colonists’ justification of their domination (Lugones, 2007).

### ***Coloniality***

The conceptual model revolves around the concept of coloniality. The following sections will elaborate further on the relationship between colonialism and coloniality as demonstrated in the conceptual model. The previously discussed knowledge on the various concepts on the left side of the model will be utilised to understand the right side on coloniality and the concepts following this block.

Contemporary society is built on the previously touched upon structures and many more unmentioned. These structures and the ideologies justifying them are deeply rooted in the construction of ‘self’, ‘other’, and the ways in which we relate to each other (Loomba, 2015). Hall (1994) discusses how colonial systems and categories of knowledge “had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as ‘Other’ ... this kind of knowledge is internal, not external”. This notion of internal knowledge highlights how colonial structures have a deep lasting effect on the individual and the collective. Accordingly, Loomba writes: “Colonialism was not an identical process in different parts of the world but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history” (2015, p. 20). Additionally, in *Black Skin*,

*White Masks*, Fanon (1967) states that people in colonised societies are not simply those whose labour has been appropriated but those “in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality” (p. 18). As the previously mentioned authors underline, colonial hierarchies and the subsequent subordination and exploitation leave deep scars and create the foundation of, amongst others, how one reflects on their perception of ‘self’, their constructed position in these power hierarchies, and how this relates to the ‘other’. This is where the term coloniality comes into play. This relationship between colonialism and coloniality is in line with the conceptual framework (figure 1).

### ***Three elements of coloniality***

As demonstrated by the conceptual framework (figure 1), coloniality refers to the pervasive power hierarchies and related structures established by colonialism which continue to shape contemporary society (Quijano, 2000). The concept of coloniality is based on European colonialism in Latin America. However, the notion of coloniality could be applied to different contexts through careful and critical analysis. Coloniality refers to the active legacy of colonial power structures in contemporary society. The concept has been expanded by a great variety of scholars, enriching the conceptualisation of the phenomenon. For instance, as discussed before, Lugones elaborates on Quijano’s theories on the coloniality of power, by exploring the coloniality of gender through investigating the imposing of European gender norms and hierarchies on the local population during colonisation (2007). Quijano pointed out that coloniality can particularly be detected in hierarchical structures, knowledge systems, and cultural systems. As such, these three elements are placed underneath the concept of coloniality in the conceptual model and directly flow into the block which visualises its manifestations.

The hierarchical structures pointed out by Quijano (2000) mainly refer to the construction of racial classification and differences. Other scholars, such as Lugones, elaborated on this theory by focusing on gender-based hierarchies (2007). Similarly, systems of knowledge are another instance of structures which are rooted in colonialism and succeeded this period. Quijano (2000) refers to the Eurocentric knowledge systems which assigned the production of knowledge solely to the colonists while actively erasing the knowledge structures of the local people. He states that "Europe’s hegemony over the new model of global power concentrated all forms of the control of subjectivity, culture, and especially knowledge and the production of knowledge under its hegemony” (2000, p. 540). Lastly, the presence of coloniality in cultural systems. In colonialism rooted cultural systems are structured around a hierarchical framework rooted in Eurocentric values. These systems not only reinforce Eurocentric economic and knowledge production models but also perpetuate the existing global neoliberal system of capital and labour (Quijano, 2000). The origins of such systems lie in the racist and patriarchal ideologies created and perpetuated during the colonial period. The cultural

systems shaped by colonialism presume that European cultures alone embody true ‘modernity’, which is viewed as superior according to European standards (Jaramillo & McLaren, 2008).

### ***Manifestations of coloniality***

In the conceptual framework, manifestations of coloniality are positioned underneath the previously discussed elements of coloniality as these manifestations are often identified within these three structures. Colonial power hierarchies, such as racial and gender-based hierarchies, are often recognised in these manifestations as they are the contemporary version of these structures.

Subsequently, manifestations of coloniality are present in all aspects of society, depending on the context. As colonists enforce their societal structures, norms, and values onto the people of the land they colonise, the local culture gets (temporarily) erased while cultural systems, designed to gain colonial control and derived from the norms and values of the global-minority, are forcibly adopted. Subsequently, the manifestations of coloniality in (previously) colonised countries versus those who colonise(d) vary. As this paper investigates coloniality in the Dutch feminism movement, the focus lies on expressions of coloniality within the global-minority. A great variety of scholars and thinkers have published extensive literature on the manifestations of coloniality within the global-majority. The reader is encouraged to read into these sources for a broader understanding of the dynamics and expressions of the concept.

In global-minority societies, expressions of coloniality can be found in a variety of aspects. Literature has pointed out some of these areas, mainly focusing on coloniality in institutions, academia, language, and the ways in which global-minority cultures construct the perceptions of global-majority cultures. Besides coloniality manifesting in these aspects of contemporary society, patterns of coloniality can also be found in feminist movements across the global-minority. The conceptual pathway laid out in the model (figure 1) will be used as a guideline in identifying the manifestations of coloniality in the Dutch feminist movement.

## **Literature review: Coloniality within contemporary feminist discourse in the global-minority**

Within feminist discourse in the global-minority, literature has identified that manifestations of coloniality can largely be categorised into two common patterns: white feminism and the orientalist representation and perception of women from the global-majority. Important to note is that this literature refers to a generalised mainstream form of feminist action. These manifestations of coloniality do not have to be shared amongst all parts of the collective feminist movement. The following sections will elaborate on how a combination of existing literature lays out the ways in which the identified patterns can be linked to coloniality. The conceptual framework has been applied to investigate the relations of these phenomena to colonial power structures, and subsequently coloniality. By doing so, the conceptual model is being expanded. This expansion is relevant as the interview results will be analysed through the conceptual framework, while also taking the following patterns into account. As described in the explanation of the conceptual framework, coloniality cannot be viewed as an isolated concept. Subsequently, the literature review will discuss a variety of ways in which the following manifestations of coloniality relate to the different elements of the conceptual framework. Approaching these identified manifestations from different sides of this framework is essential for the expansion of this model and to gain a more holistic view of the ways in which coloniality manifests itself in contemporary society. This holistic view is necessary for the analysing of the interview results. To make the obtained knowledge from the literature workable, the explored publications will be grouped under the two most commonly touched upon manifestations of coloniality in the global-minority. Similarly to how coloniality cannot be viewed as an isolated concept, its manifestations cannot be explored as such either. Therefore, instead of discussing each of the writings individually, the information will be combined to provide a more comprehensible conceptualisation of these common manifestations of coloniality. This grouping is necessary to be able to expand on the conceptual framework more concretely and to make it more practical to reflect on the literature while analysing the interviews. Subsequently, the conceptual framework might not always be as obviously present. Nevertheless, the structures laid out by this framework are always intertwined with the discussed literature.

The first commonly identified manifestation of coloniality within feminist movements in the global-minority is the prioritisation of white, middle/upper class, able bodied, cisgender, and heterosexual women's issues with a particular focus on white cisgender women. This is accompanied by the overrepresentation of white women in vocal positions within feminist action. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as white feminism. The second identified manifestation is the representation and perception of women from the global-majority as exotic, oppressed, and in need of rescue. The roots of both patterns clearly echo the pervasive power hierarchies and structures built by colonialists with the purpose of expanding and strengthening colonial control. As stated earlier, colonialism and

subsequently coloniality and its manifestations are highly context-dependent. Therefore, after elaborating on these two patterns, the paper will zoom in on the Dutch context.

### ***White feminism***

Building up on the previously discussed power hierarchies created during colonialism, literature has shown that white feminist patterns have much in common with these hierarchies. These power structures place white, middle/upper class, able bodied, cisgender, heterosexual women in a superior position to the women who do not share these characteristics. The internalisation of these power hierarchies causes feminist discourse to prioritise the issues of specifically white women. An important aspect within the white feminist approach is the assumption of ‘women’ as an already constituted and coherent group with identical interests and desires. Mohanty (1988) comments on the conceptualisation of ‘women’ as a universal group that “... the resultant homogenization of class, race, religious, and daily material practices of women in the third world can create a false sense of the commonality of oppressions, interests and struggles between and amongst women globally. Beyond sisterhood there is still racism, colonialism and imperialism!” (p. 77). The assumption that the female experience is universally shared actively erases the experiences of those who do not belong to the dominant group as the differences in realities are not acknowledged. The skewed power dynamic in the prioritisation of feminist issues can already be seen in the definition of the movement.

During the 1980s, the definition of feminism was an active point of discussion. At the time, the concept was generally defined as “the movement fighting for equal rights between men and women” (Biana, 2020). About 40 years later, feminism is still commonly defined as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary of Academic English, 2023). In response to these types of definitions, hooks (1984) stated that “...implicit in this simplistic definition of women’s liberation is a dismissal of race and class as factors that, in conjunction with sexism, determine the extent to which an individual will be discriminated against, exploited or oppressed” (p. 18). This dismissal of intersectionality, lies at the foundation of white feminism which echoes colonial power structures as linked in the conceptual framework. The portrayal of white women’s concerns as the universal agenda of feminist discourse, erases the struggles faced by women of colour.

The denial of a diversity of experiences and realities within this category of ‘women’ could cause more harm to those who are not recognised in the general perception of this group as the benefit of one group can be at the cost of another. For instance, in *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*, Crenshaw (1991, p. 1252-1253) writes about an example in which issues faced by women of colour were effectively being erased for the perceived benefit of the general feminist and anti-racist discourse. She talks about an instance in which she



attempted to obtain statistics on domestic violence interventions by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) per precinct. She was told that these statistics cannot be made available to her or the public as both domestic violence activists and representatives of affected minority communities opposed the publishing of these results. Domestic violence activists argued that the overrepresentation of domestic violence reports within minority communities might get selectively interpreted causing the issue to be seen as a “minority problem” which they feared would undermine the efforts to force the LAPD to address domestic violence as a pressing issue. The fact that a matter can be categorised as a “minority problem” and is consequently seen as not deserving of serious attention, again shows the pervasive presence of colonial power hierarchies, including the discussed racial and gender-based hierarchies and the intersection of them. Representatives of the minority communities also voiced their concern about the publishing of these statistics as the overrepresentation of domestic violence reports in majorly Black and Brown neighbourhoods could unjustly perpetuate stereotypes of people of colour being more aggressive and oppressive towards women than white people.

These stereotypes are based on racist ideologies which can be linked to the creation of racial hierarchies during the colonial period. These ideologies were built on scientific racism which gave false biological underpinning to the assumption of the colonists that the local population is “barbaric” and “primitive”. These racist ideologies and hierarchies are still highly prevalent today. The stereotype of “the angry Black man” is strongly linked with these colonial structures. Due to the previously named concerns, the statistics on domestic violence interventions could not be published. Crenshaw states that “this account sharply illustrates how women of color can be erased by the strategic silences of antiracism and feminism” (1991, p. 1253). This example shows how the prioritisation of white women’s issues can harm those who do not identify with or are not perceived as part of this group.

This paper focuses on this power imbalance within the feminist movement. Nonetheless, it is extremely important to acknowledge how those with intersecting identities can fall between the cracks if none of the overarching movements address their concerns. In this case, this phenomenon is illustrated by the example given by Crenshaw (1991) on the erasure of women of colour’s experiences with domestic violence. In response to this exclusionary form of feminism, hooks (1984) argues that “the foundation of a future feminist struggle must be solidly based on a recognition of the need to eradicate the underlying cultural basis and causes of sexism and other forms of group oppression. Without challenging and changing these philosophical structures, no feminist reforms will have a long-range impact” (p. 31).

Various scholars argue that exclusionary feminism, including white feminism, could not be considered feminism as the not challenging and recognising of the interlocking systems of oppression perpetuates

colonial power dynamics and happens at the cost of those who are considered lower in the hierarchies of power. Smith (1979) states that “Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women. Anything less than this is not feminism, but merely female selfaggrandizement” (p. 48). Similarly, Henry, Dicker and Piepmeier (2003) argue that “feminism is not simply about women’s issues but is a broad-based political movement that seeks freedom for all those who are oppressed” (p. 8). The concept of radical feminism, developed by hooks, is in line with these statements. She argues that “vision, not exclusion, is vital for a revolution – and this vision ensures that the global politics is transformed to hopefully eradicate the dynamics of domination” (Bianca, 2020, p. 5; hooks, 2000). In other words, in order for feminist action to be successful, the presence of power hierarchies and other systems of oppression should be acknowledged and challenged.

### ***Orientalist representation and perception of women from the global-majority***

Another common manifestation of coloniality in the feminist movements in the global-minority is the orientalist representation and perception of women from the global-majority. There is a strong tendency of global-minority (feminist) discourse to portray women from countries in the global-majority as “exotic”, “oppressed”, and “in need of rescue” (Mohanty, 1988; Amos & Parmar, 1984). This representation reinforces colonial power dynamics, cultural hierarchies, and undermines the agency and autonomy of women from the global-majority. The roots of this misrepresentation can be traced back to the power hierarchies established during the colonial period. Additionally, this portrayal is in part due to the denial of the diversity of experiences and realities within this notion of ‘women’.

Similarly to white feminism, the assumption of ‘women’ as a coherent group with identical interests and desires is one of the major points enabling this orientalist representation of women from the global-majority. This universally applied conceptualisation of the category ‘women’ denies any form of diversity within that group and thereby repudiates the variety in experiences with different manifestations of interlocking systems of oppression. Mohanty (1988) argues that the categorisation of ‘women’ as one coherent group is based on the assumption that “what binds women together is a sociological notion of the 'sameness' of their oppression” (p. 65). This conviction of ‘sameness’ prevents the conducting of critical reflections on the perpetuation of stereotypes and different forms of oppression within the feminist movements. Additionally, the construction of ‘self’ by women from the global-minority largely depends on the way in which they relate to the ‘other’, in this case being women from the global-majority (Mohanty, 1988). This mode of positioning oneself and the erasure of the experiences of women of colour could be linked to colonial power structures as described in the conceptual framework.

Furthermore, the orientalist perception and representation of women from the global-majority could also be linked to the colonialist perception of women in colonised societies. When investigating the characteristics of this orientalist representation a set of recurring themes becomes apparent. Mohanty (1988) analysed the representation of women from the global-majority in a variety of texts, relevant at the time of her research. Women from the global majority were variously described as “victims of male violence; victims of the colonial process; victims of the Arab familial system; victims of the economic development process; and victims of the economic basis of the Islamic code” (p. 66).<sup>3</sup> A clear pattern in this analysis is how in the representation of women from the global-majority their agency and autonomy is completely denied. The women are portrayed in an “object status”, meaning that they are only described in a mode of how they are affected by a situation rather than acknowledging them as active participants (Mohanty, 1988). This seems to be in line with the way women in colonised societies were described in historical accounts of the events. Moreover, the notion of societies in the global-majority being ‘backward’ and oppressive towards women is also in accordance with one of the narratives employed by colonists to justify their actions. As previously discussed, the colonists formulated a false narrative wherein women in colonised societies were portrayed as oppressed, dependent, and in need of rescue, and subsequently used this narrative to justify their actions as a mission to liberate the women from their oppressors. The persistence of this narrative in contemporary society is in line with the conceptual framework.

An example of how this narrative is still actively being perpetuated in the current feminist movements in the global-minority, is the notion that women in the global-majority fighting against an oppressive regime “do not have a voice”. There seems to be a tendency of white feminists in the global-minority to state that they are doing a particular action out of solidarity with, or to speak for those “who do not have a voice”. For instance, Cate Blanchett, an Australian actress, was praised for going barefoot at the Cannes Film Festival “in solidarity with women in Iran”, when presenting an award to the Iranian actress Zahra Amir Ebrahimi (Maitland, 2023). Before presenting the award, Blanchett explained that she was putting her shoes off in solidarity with the women in Iran, and that she was doing it for those “who do not have a voice” (Maitland, 2023). This statement suggests that the incredibly resilient women in Iran lack agency and autonomy and need other people to speak for them. This perception of women from the global-majority being dependent on other people to voice their issues, highly plays into the white saviour complex which is inherently intertwined with the colonial power structures as pointed out by the conceptual framework (Murphy, 2023). Consequently, white women from the global-minority tend to take the stage and speak for others who they perceive to “not have a voice”. This pattern relates back to the earlier discussed ‘white feminism’. While it is great that Blanchett uses her platform to redirect the spotlight, the idea that the women of Iran “do not have a voice” is a

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<sup>3</sup> As analysed from Hosken, 1981; Cutrufelli, 1983; Mincos, 1980; Lindsay, 1983; Jeffery, 1979.

glaring misconception. As many of the systems of oppression discussed are deeply woven into the current society, Blanchett was probably not aware of the suggestive statement she was making. Nevertheless, the possibility of ignorance does not take away from the importance of being critical of this statement and investigating the stereotypes and biases it perpetuates. As Amos and Parmar (1984) state, "Feminist theories which examine our cultural practices as "feudal residues" or label us "traditional", also portray us as politically immature women who need to be versed and schooled in the ethos of western feminism. They need to be continually challenged" (p. 7).

### ***Intersectionality***

Through careful and critical analysis of diverse literature, the emergence of white feminism and the orientalist representation and perception of women from the global-majority were identified as amongst the most common manifestations of coloniality in the global-minority. In line with this argument, it is important to note that these two are inherently intertwined due to their shared roots (Quijano, 2000). The conceptual framework (figure 1) points out how the manifestations of coloniality tend to share the same foundation in colonial power structures. Therefore, one can generally not be seen without the other. Despite this paper treating these two manifestations of coloniality as some of the most common, it does not imply that these are also the most pressing for every individual. Each person lives their unique reality based on the experiences they had and how one constructs the 'self', 'other', and the ways in which these are related. One's various intersecting identities create new realities in which the discussed manifestations of coloniality within the feminist movements in the global-minority might not be experienced as most pressing (Crenshaw, 1991). Important to acknowledge when investigating intersectionality is that the various identities one carries are not overlapping or additional to one another but rather intersecting and creating a unique dimension in itself (Crenshaw, 1991). Additionally, rather than the identities intersecting, it is the systems of oppression that interlock with each other and create different dimensions as these identities are shaped and constructed by these structures (Walby et al., 2012). Crenshaw (1991) pointed out that "the problem is not simply that both discourses fail women of color by not acknowledging the "additional" issue of race or of patriarchy but that the discourses are often inadequate even to the discrete tasks of articulating the full dimensions of racism and sexism" (p. 1252). This argument refers to how often the full dimensions of sexism and racism are not sufficiently investigated within feminist and anti-racist discourse. This lack of critical reflection within the movements causes for the experiences of those who are not represented to be erased.

### ***Dutch context***

The Dutch colonial rule was marked by highly oppressive practices, forced labour, economic exploitation, and the enslavement of people (Bashal & Kavak, n.d.). The Dutch imposed power hierarchies and colonial structures such as the ones discussed before, with the aim of gaining further

colonial control (Bashal & Kavak, n.d.; Loomba, 2015). They imposed their language, culture, and social systems upon the local populations, effectively oppressing and (temporarily) erasing local traditions and identities (Bashal & Kavak, n.d.).

The active legacy of Dutch colonialism is still highly present in contemporary society, both in the Netherlands and the former colonies (Wekker, 2016). Research on coloniality in the Netherlands is still relatively limited and largely focused on the relationship between the Netherlands and the countries formerly colonised by the Dutch. Little research can be found on the presence of coloniality within the societal and cultural structures within the Netherlands. Therefore, the results of this study are mainly compared with and built up on the conceptual framework and the generalised patterns of coloniality found in the feminist movements of the global-minority. Nonetheless, a couple of great thinkers have been pushing the discussion on coloniality in the Netherlands. One of these thinkers is Gloria Wekker who mainly gained attention through the publishing of her book *White Innocence* (2016).

Gloria Wekker (2016) discusses an important phenomenon which has hindered discussion on, amongst others, coloniality within the Netherlands. She critically examines how the Dutch 'self' is constructed in relation to the 'other' and the origins and expressions of the dominant narrative of 'white innocence' in the Netherlands. She explains how the notion of the Dutch society being exceptionally liberal, inclusive, and post-racial is deeply embedded in Dutch culture. Wekker argues that this conviction of exceptionality strongly relates to the denial of racism and the presence of coloniality and, therefore, prevents the critical examination of these structures and hinders change.

There are only a few situations in which feminist action in the Netherlands was publicly criticised and considered exclusionary. There are very limited sources available on this critique. Nevertheless, in an interview with *het Parool*, a newspaper from Amsterdam, Gloria Wekker shared one of her experiences in which she noticed the lack of acknowledgment of racial differences and racism in a Dutch group focused on 'feminist' action. She stated that "there was hesitation about whether the community should speak out against racism, and whether it should commit to the anti-racist struggle. Even during meetings, there was always thinking from the position of white women. Take the concept of "home," or "household": the white feminist considered it unsafe or obstructive. On the contrary, for a black woman, it was the only place where she was protected from racism. Everyday examples like these made black women feel unheard and isolated." (Borren, 2020, para. 2020). This example shows that the commitment to the anti-racist struggle was considered as something optional rather than essential, as many authors discussed earlier emphasised. The still relatively small pool of investigated examples of coloniality in the Dutch feminism movement, compared to the large amount of literature analysing manifestations of coloniality within feminist movement in the global-minority, raises the

question of how these patterns are experienced on a smaller scale by feminist activists in the Netherlands and how these relate to or deviate from the conceptual framework and discussed literature.

## **Methodology**

This qualitative research study aims to give more insight on the answer to the research question: What are common manifestations of coloniality in the Dutch feminism movement and how are these experienced by feminist activists? In order to answer this question, the researcher examined relevant literature to create a conceptual framework surrounding the “coloniality of power” by Quijano (2000). This framework was applied to identify manifestations of coloniality in relevant literature and the interview results. Through the use of this conceptual framework, patterns and surprising results on coloniality and related concepts were identified. Ultimately, a set of recommendations on steps towards decolonising the Dutch feminist movement was created which was based on the information provided by the interviewees combined with the explored literature. The following sections provide an insight into the methodology of this research process.

### ***Conceptual framework and literature review***

The literature has been found through recommendations on key literature in the field and by searching available studies on Google Scholar and in the University Library of the University of Groningen. Through analysing texts, new questions and topics would arise, which led to the discovery of different research to analyse. Additionally, new literature would be found by following the references in other texts. Specific focus was put on analysing the positionality of the author. In the selection of literature, the researcher had a preference for authors from the global-majority as coloniality in knowledge structures caused a default in highlighting publications from the global-minority. To make a minor step towards shifting this power balance, the author mainly used sources from authors from the global-majority. Nonetheless, many of them published under academic institutions from the global-minority. This power imbalance will unfortunately not be completely avoided as academic institutions and research in itself are built on colonial power structures related to knowledge systems (Loomba, 2015; Quijano, 2000). Through the examination of a variety of literature, the conceptual framework was constructed. This framework has been applied to analyse additional literature focusing on coloniality in feminist movements across the global-minority. Moreover, the framework was used as a guideline in the analysing of the interview results.

### ***Interview structure and practicalities***

The interviews were structured in a rather classical academic manner. Due to the requirements of the assignment, the author was limited in the decolonial research praxis she could explore. For instance, within the research requirements, there is no room for exploring methods of co-creation. Instead, researchers are required to hold on to rigid academic standards which perpetuate colonial power imbalances (Loomba, 2015). As the researcher has to comply with these set standards, the reader is

strongly encouraged to keep the researcher's positionality, which will be elaborated on later, and the colonality of academic research into account while reading this paper.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way as a certain degree of freedom is necessary to receive the most useful information from the participants. A semi-structured set up gives the space to deviate from the prepared questions, while also holding on to a similar structure and a set of foundational questions throughout the interviews, making it more practical to compare the answers than a fully unstructured interview. The researcher deviated from the prepared structure by asking follow-up questions, providing probes, and leaving out questions if the interviewee already answered it earlier.

The interview guide contains 26 questions (see Appendix A). However, as the researcher held on to a semi structured strategy, the interviews varied from the guide at times. The interviews took 60 to 90 minutes and were conducted via the online meeting platform Zoom and once via Google Meet due to technical difficulties with Zoom. A total of four interviews have been conducted, three of which in English and one in Dutch. Prior to the interview, the participants received an information sheet (see Appendix B) and consent form (see Appendix C). At the start of the interview, the interviewees were reminded of their right to opt out of any question or the entire interview without having to provide a reason. Additionally, the researcher asked for consent to record again and goes through a couple more practicalities, which have already been mentioned in the information sheet and consent form, to make sure the participant is well informed before commencing the interview. The participants were not provided with the questions beforehand to receive the most intuitive responses. Furthermore, the research has obtained full ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen. Any ethical concerns have been discussed with the thesis supervisor and addressed to the Ethics Committee.

### ***Interview participants***

The goal of the interviews is to collect information on feminist activists' lived experiences with colonality in the Dutch feminist movement, to build up on the conceptual framework (see figure 1) and answer the research question. As colonisation is a major part of our collective past and present, and decolonisation is an ongoing process which requires every individual's efforts, the researcher found it important to reflect this collaborative nature of decolonisation in the participant base of the interviews. Therefore, three women of colour from the global-majority and one white woman from the global-minority were interviewed, all currently living in the Netherlands. This division was primarily decided based on the availability of interviewees. Additionally, three out of four participants identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community and one out of four participants identify as genderqueer while the others described themselves as cisgender women. One out of four participants reported having a



religious affiliation and identifies as muslim. One out of four participants mentioned having a minor disability but does not consider it as such. She states that it is inconvenient at times for her personally but that she did not experience any discrimination because of it. The ages of the participants range from early 20s till late 40s. All of the participants express their activism through different channels and in different ways. Nevertheless, all of them have similar goals. The results and discussion section will elaborate further on these expressions of activism and the identities listed by participants.

The sole requirement for participation was that the interviewee identifies as a feminist and has been involved within the Dutch feminist movement. Participants were selected based on how well they meet the requirements. Interviewees were recruited through the researcher's network and that of their friends and family through spreading the call for participants via word of mouth and social media. Additionally, the researcher made use of the snowball effect for the participant recruitment. Due to time constraints and limited participants, a total of four interviews have been conducted. It is important to note that this study does not aim to provide a complete representation of feminists involved in the Dutch feminist movement but simply highlights the experiences of the respondents. Since the pool of participants is small, the results cannot be generalised. Nevertheless, the information provided by the respondents can still give insight into matters of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement as the sample size of the research does not take away from the validity of the participants' experiences. Not acknowledging these experiences simply because they are not generalisable could have a harmful effect on those whose experiences will, consequently, be erased. Additionally, the acceptance of results solely when they are generalisable can have serious structural implications on research as much valuable information embedded in people's experiences could be missed out on.

### ***Interview results analysis***

Following the interviews, all recordings were stored according to the GDPR guidelines of the University of Groningen. The interviews were not transcribed as the researcher did not see the need to provide the reader with transcriptions. By listening to the recordings of the interviews, the information was directly coded. Through the process of coding, all information that could possibly identify participants was anonymised. A thematic analysis was conducted on the interviews, meaning that the transcriptions were coded based on observed patterns, and remarkable differences and similarities. This thematic analysis was executed, using the conceptual framework as guideline in recognising and placing patterns of coloniality and relating concepts.

An important methodological choice has been made in the analysing of the interviews as the information provided by the participants of colour has been centred in the analysis. When asking about participants' lived experiences with coloniality, the participants are required to investigate in which ways they still experience manifestations of colonial power structures. This relationship has

been visualised in the conceptual framework (figure 1). As has been discussed in the explanation of this framework, these power hierarchies generally benefit white people by marginalising people of colour. Therefore, people of colour are most negatively impacted by the manifestations of coloniality. As such, their voices have been centred in the analysis of the interviews and building of the recommendation section. Nevertheless, as the process of decolonisation is a collective effort and coloniality is part of every individual's existence, a plurality of perspectives is necessary to get a more complete image. Therefore, one of the four participants was white. As mentioned earlier, this specific ratio was not as much a conscious decision as it was due to circumstances related to the availability of participants. All information was analysed while taking the participants' positionality into account.

### ***Positionality statement***

The author identifies as a queer, white, Dutch, cisgender woman who grew up in the Netherlands, as defined earlier. The researcher recognises that her positionality is inherently shaped by her social location and privileges within a colonial system built on power hierarchies which were constructed to benefit her as a white cisgender woman by 'othering' and marginalising people of colour. She acknowledges that, amongst others, her racial and gender identities grant her particular advantages and blind spots which influences and frames the way she interprets information and will continue to convey it. Throughout the entirety of this research, the author constantly reflected on her biases and actions and tried to bring more of her blind spots to light. Nevertheless, she is aware that there are still many ways in which she perpetuates colonial rhetoric. The author strives for constant reflexivity of her positionality throughout this research and beyond to, step by step, uncover and challenge these colonial patterns in her own behaviour and mind.

It is important to acknowledge that the researcher's positionality as a white, Dutch, cisgender woman, limits her understanding of the lived experiences of people of colour. Therefore, she is committed to critically engaging with a plurality of perspectives, literature, and narratives to challenge her reference frame and attempt to minimise potential bias in the interpretation of the results. By centring the voices of people from the global-majority in the literature review and analysis of results, she aims at shifting the dominant narrative away from the global-minority and minimising the influence of her own biases. Similarly, the recommendations section was built based on the information shared by the participants of colour and relevant literature published by scholars from the global-majority. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that also in this section, the researcher's positionality influences the way in which she interprets information. As the texts are shaped by her, this section, like the rest of the paper, can also be affected by her unconscious blind spots in recognising colonial rhetoric.

Furthermore, the researcher recognises the ethical responsibility associated with writing about coloniality, as it is a deeply complex topic which shapes every part of contemporary society and impacts many individuals. The researcher strived for approaching her topic and writing with integrity and care, aiming for sensitivity to the power dynamics inherent to the topic and the conducting of academic research. She is aware of the potential harm which could arise consequently to misrepresentation or appropriation. The researcher aims to avoid causing any unintentional harm through constant reflexivity and actively seeking feedback and dialogue with peers and supervisors. Nonetheless, due to the researchers positionality, this possibility cannot be excluded. If any harm arises from this research, the author will reflect extensively through introspection and dialogue and continue to find ways to challenge her biases and behaviour causing this harm.

Especially because of the researchers positionality, she found it important to write on the topic of coloniality in her home country. Coloniality shapes everyone's reality, although differently depending on one's constructed identities. Moreover, decolonisation is a collective process which requires every individual's commitment. As a Dutch white woman who is, consequently, granted many privileges from these pervasive colonial power structures, she believes it to be of great importance to continuously identify and challenge coloniality in contemporary Dutch society. As an intersectional feminist herself, the researcher cares deeply for the feminist struggle and wishes to make steps towards decolonising Dutch feminism to continue to make progress. Therefore, the researcher found it highly important to embark on the journey of researching and writing on coloniality in the Dutch feminist movement. She hopes that people will feel seen by the results of the research while others might feel encouraged to further critically reflect on their positionality and internalised colonial rhetoric. As mentioned before, while reading this paper, it stays essential to acknowledge the researchers positionality and the ways this influences how the information is presented.

## Results and Discussion

As described in the methodology section, the researcher conducted four interviews with feminist activists who are involved in the Dutch feminism movement (as defined by this paper, see Annex). The results of these interviews were analysed using the conceptual framework based on Quijano's coloniality of power, and the discussed literature which expanded on this. By investigating the relationship with the various elements of the conceptual framework, the researcher aims to highlight participants' experiences with coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement. The following parts will lay out commonly identified manifestations of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement as experienced by the participants. Followed by a set of recommendations which is composed by combining the information gathered from the interviews. Lastly, the limitations of the research will be discussed.

### Identified patterns of manifestations of coloniality

#### *Definitions and divide*

Before diving deeper into the participants' experiences with coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement, it is important to highlight an observed pattern in the way in which participants conceptualised this movement. At the start of each interview, the participants were asked to provide a definition for feminism. All four participants put particular focus on highlighting the importance of intersectionality in this definition. Three out of four participants stated that feminism is inherently intertwined with any other type of struggle against systems of oppression. They all emphasise how feminism without acknowledging the intersections with other structures, such as race and class, could not be considered feminism. The main reason given for this is that the feminist struggle is inherently the struggle against all systems of oppression as they are all rooted in colonial power structures which strongly intersect with each other. Additionally, the same three participants mention how gender cannot be viewed without race nor can race be viewed without gender as they are constructs sharing the same roots and are, therefore, inherently interlocked. All three interviewees providing these definitions consider themselves intersectional feminists. One out of four interviewees did not particularly mention the term intersectionality. However, she did describe it by stating that feminism is "not only the struggle for equality between men and women but also between women", as factors such as race are often forgotten in this equation. These definitions suggest that all participants have an intersectional view on feminism and consider it as a broader commitment to fighting and deconstructing all systems of oppression.

However, when discussing the Dutch feminist movement, all participants refer to it as "they" or "them". The tone and word choice of the interviewees clearly indicate an experienced distance from this movement. Through the continuation of the interviews, it becomes clear that the interviewees

make a distinction between the feminist groups they are involved in and the mainstream Dutch feminist movement. Some of the participants name this divide by referring to the mainstream Dutch feminist movement as liberal feminism, while defining the feminist realm they operate in as intersectional feminism. All participants report finding it hard to pin down what exactly the Dutch feminist movement entails but all of them make the instant connection to liberal feminism. Three out of four participants use the terms liberal feminism and the Dutch feminist movement interchangeably and state not considering liberal feminism as feminism according to their definition of the term. One out of four did not mention the concept of liberal feminism directly but described not feeling connected or represented by the movement as “they” are mainly there for the white Dutch woman and do not focus on the importance of including race in the equation. One of the participants mentioned that liberal feminism can be alienating to women of colour as it perpetuates white supremacist rhetorics. This feeling of alienation and isolation will be touched upon more extensively further down this section.

As the Dutch feminism movement was usually perceived by the participants as liberal feminism, the highlighted manifestations of coloniality are mostly related to the participants’ experiences with this stream of feminism. However, despite the majority of these experiences with coloniality manifesting within a liberal feminist sphere, it does not imply that these manifestations cannot exist in intersectional or other forms of feminist spaces.

### *Denial of race*

Some of the most referred to manifestations of coloniality experienced by feminist activists surround the denial of race by white people. All four participants reported having experienced or witnessed various forms of the negation of race within the Dutch feminist movement. These experiences could roughly be categorised under the denial of intersectionality and the resistance to conversations about race.

### Denial of intersectionality

All four participants reported having experienced a form of negation of intersectionality. One out of four mainly pointed at the lack of acknowledging and investigating the intersections with race while three noticed the complete refusal of race as a factor which shapes realities. The participants expressed identifying this denial of intersectionality mostly in the refusal to focus on causes which are not perceived to relate directly to issues faced by white cisgender women. One of the interviewees gave an example of a response she is often met with when raising an issue directly related to race: "Hey, that's not relevant. Maybe we should work on something that's more persistent, that's more important. Let's not divide the cause." This response shows that the inherent intersection with race is not acknowledged and even dismissed as unimportant and irrelevant. This pattern of the denial of

intersectionality can be linked to white feminism, which was highlighted in the literature review as a manifestation of coloniality within feminist movements in the global-minority. As discussed in the literature review, the assumption of women being a coherent group with identical interests lies at the foundation of white feminism. By denying intersectionality, white feminism erases the experiences of women of colour and maintains the constructed superior position of white cisgender women in pervasive colonial power hierarchies.

#### Resistance to conversations about race

Another way in which three out of four participants pointed at a recurring form of the denial of race is the perceived resistance from white people to having conversations about race. The participants mentioned experiencing resistance from white feminists in discussing intersections with race. This relates to the previous point of the negation of intersectionality. Furthermore, interviewees reported that they noticed white feminist activists being reluctant to investigate their whiteness. One participant pointed out how this reluctance often came with the assumption that white people are “race free” and, therefore, do not need to investigate how their whiteness grants them certain privileges and the ways in which it intersects with other parts of their identity. Another participant reported having had conversations with white feminist activists who were open to having discussions about race but when confronted with their own biases, they were not willing to challenge those. This resistance to having critical conversations surrounding race can again be connected to white feminism as the issues of white cisgender women are prioritised above all by denying diversity in experiences through denying the impact of race. Moreover, the maintenance of the colonial power hierarchies which underlies this type of feminism depend on people complying with colonial assumptions, as explained in the conceptual framework and literature review. The superior position of white people in these power hierarchies is dependent on the assumption that the ‘other’ is inferior. Through critical conversations on race, this assumption gets challenged as one is required to reflect on whiteness and the broader construct of race. Consequently, the superior position white people have in colonial power hierarchies is challenged as the foundation of these hierarchies gets questioned by critically reflecting on one’s constructed position in these power structures.

#### *Refusal and resistance to listen and learn from women of colour*

Building up to the previous manifestations of coloniality highlighted by the participants, the refusal and resistance to listen and learn from women of colour was also identified as a common struggle within the Dutch feminist movement. For instance, one participant explained how she experiences backlash directed at her for being a woman of colour challenging key liberal and white feminist assumptions about equality and superiority. She states that white men critiquing the same systems face much less resistance. Another participant explained how she often experiences people not taking her points seriously or being open to listen to her because of their assumptions based on her wearing a

hijab. She formulates that she feels like people view her as lacking agency and independence and they seem surprised when she expresses her thoughts. Similarly, another participant reports having observed many instances of white feminists not wanting to listen to the voices of Muslim women. These experiences and observations seem to be in line with the information one of the participants shared on her experiences with taking over the position as chair in meetings from an action group she was a part of. She explained how the usual chair, a white cisgender woman, was away for a while and could not fulfill the position as chair for that time being. As no one volunteered, the interviewee took up the responsibility and chaired the meetings of the action group for the time that the usual chair was gone. She reported that a significant amount of white women stopped attending the meetings as soon as she started chairing the meetings. When the usual chair came back, the white women who stopped attending came back. This experience was on top of a great amount of other experiences the participant had in this group, in which she was often painted as the angry woman of colour instead of her ideas being valued and taken seriously. These experiences play largely into white feminism as white women's issues are prioritised while the experiences of women of colour are dismissed. Moreover, these encounters are strongly in line with the manifestation of coloniality which is the orientalist perception and representation of women from the global-majority as discussed in the literature review. This orientalist perception refers to the colonial assumption that women from the global-majority are oppressed and lack agency. As one participant pointed out, many actions by liberal feminists are dependent on this colonial assumption as organisations receive resources for their actions. Therefore, to continue functioning in the way they do they are dependent on the upholding of the colonial assumption that women from the global-majority are not agentic as some of their actions are based on the comparison with this group. Moreover, these actions aiming at 'saving' women from the global-majority strongly perpetuates the white saviour complex which is inherently intertwined with European colonialism (Murphy, 2023, para. 7).

### *Alienation*

A common experience shared by the participants of colour was the feeling of alienation from the feminist movements. Various reasons were given for this experience. One participant mentioned the gaslighting practices of white feminists towards feminists of colour. The gaslighting of the experiences of women of colour is largely in line with the previously touched upon points and their connections to coloniality, in particular the refusal to listen and learn from women of colour. Another participant echoed this and stated that the perpetuation of colonial rhetoric by those who she fights for and admires hurts the most and makes her feel alienated from the movement. She particularly reports experiencing a strong form of alienation when putting her body and mind on the line for other feminist activists who then continue to perpetuate colonial rhetoric. She gives an example of how white feminist activists tend to create a skewed power dynamic between them. The participant states that she experienced this multiple times with people she has close relationships with and who she

knows equally respect her. Nevertheless, this power hierarchy is established in which the white feminist is at the top. The participant refers to this as a “main character versus side kick” dynamic. Another participant reported experiencing a form of alienation when feeling like the token person of colour in a group. The variety of reasons already refer to coloniality in themselves. For instance, the gaslighting of women of colour and the perpetuation of power hierarchies. Together they create an overarching feeling of alienation which can be linked to coloniality as it is reportedly largely caused by the perpetuation of colonial rhetoric and power dynamics by white feminists.

### *Lack of representation*

In the literature review, the examination of white feminism already established that white women are often granted the podium while women of colour are refused the stage. As the interviewees perceived the Dutch feminist movement equal to liberal feminism, which largely overlaps with white feminism, the reported lack of representation is not surprising. Two out of three participants of colour directly stated not feeling represented by the Dutch feminist movement. One of these participants pointed out how she perceives the Dutch feminist movement as an arm of Dutch racism and liberalism. She describes how white feminists often internalised orientalist perceptions which were subsequently directed to her. The other participant stated that she does not think that the mainstream Dutch feminist movement practices actual feminism as she does not believe that liberal feminism classifies as such. Therefore, she does not even attempt to look for representation within the Dutch feminist movement. The third participant of colour admitted not having thought about it much before and reported not being able to think of a moment in which she felt represented. After reflecting on this for a bit, the participant concluded that she does not feel represented by the Dutch feminist movement. The fourth participant, who is white, stated that she could feel represented by the movement but personally does not since her politics are not in line with what she perceives to be the liberal feminist politics of the movement. The overarching cause of not feeling represented seems to be the prioritisation of white women’s issues and the perpetuation of skewed power dynamics. The dismissal of issues mainly faced by women of colour can be connected to the previously discussed manifestation of coloniality: white feminism. Similarly, all of the participants were seemingly indifferent in their answer to the question whether or not they feel represented. A general theme across the answers of the interviewees seemed to be that they did not have any expectations on feeling represented. This is usually related to having accepted that the Dutch feminism movement is mainly there in favor of white women's issues. This indifference could imply the deeply ingrained colonial power structures which normalise that women of colour will not be considered a priority. This assumption is again in line with the notion of white feminism as discussed in earlier points and the literature review.



### *Exploitation of labour*

One of the participants mentions how she feels like her work is being exploited by white feminists. She provides an example on how she was active in a primarily white action group in which she proposed a couple of ideas. These ideas were not taken seriously by her fellow activists and she was painted as the crazy, radical, and angry woman of colour. Later on, her ideas ended up being used but credit was given to other, mostly white, people. She states having witnessed similar patterns in which the work of women of colour is being taken for granted, used and then not given the credit where it is due. These notions of the exploitation of women of colour seem to echo aspects of racial and gender-based hierarchies created and perpetuated by colonialism. As coloniality refers to the contemporary version of these pervasive colonial systems, this exploitation could be connected to manifestations of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement.

### *Preference of masculinity*

Another noteworthy identification of a possible form of coloniality is the preference of masculinity within feminist movements. While many of the other examples mostly refer to experiences with the mainstream Dutch feminist movement, this pattern reportedly also applies to more radical feminist spaces, as defined by the participant. One of the participants stated that she feels like masculinity is generally favoured over femininity in many feminist spaces. She noted how she tends to “dress down” and specifically chooses to wear clothes she perceives to be less feminine, when going to such spaces. She recognises this as a pattern across many feminist activist spaces, also amongst more radical groups. She points out how the leadership in these groups predominantly expresses in a perceived masculine manner while the voices of more feminine expressing people tend to be dismissed more easily. In particular the voices of feminine expressing people of colour tend to be dismissed most swiftly. This preference to masculinity, in particular white masculinity, could be linked to colonial power structures, amongst which racial and gender-based hierarchies. These hierarchies effectively erased women from the decision making processes and deprioritised their opinions. The preference to masculinity within feminist activism could be a manifestation of coloniality which refers to the persistence of these colonial power hierarchies in contemporary society (see figure 1).

All in all, it is important to acknowledge that all identified patterns which could be linked to manifestations of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement are inherently intertwined as these are all related to interlocking systems of oppression. Assuming that all the points above are manifestations of coloniality, they all share the same roots in colonial power hierarchies making them intertwined at the roots.

## Recommendations

Participants were asked to give recommendations on how to move towards decolonising the Dutch feminist movement. As decolonisation is an incredibly broad and complex topic in itself, it does not fit the scope of this research to elaborate much on this. Nevertheless, the researcher wants to leave the reader with a collection of thoughts from the interviewees on how to make steps towards collectively decolonising the feminist movement. Three out of four participants commented on this question.

One participant mentions that it is crucial in the decolonisation of the feminist movement, for white people to recognise their whiteness and the privileges it grants them. She states that whiteness is often seen as “race free” while it is not. White people often do not recognise their race. She speaks to her fellow white feminists when she states that “we need to hold ourselves accountable for the current situation we are in and take responsibility to change it.”

Another participant mentions how it is vital for the antiracist movement not to be seen as parallel to the feminist movement but that it has to be brought together. She states that the antiracist movement does not only fight for people of colour, but for everyone. She specifically mentions that the abolishment of Zwarte Piet is crucial and should be on the main agenda of the Dutch feminist movement.

Lastly, one of the participants puts particular focus on questioning the roots of one's feminism. She states that it is of particular importance to critically reflect on what politics drive one's feminism. She recommends white feminists to reflect on how they perceive their identity as white feminist and how much of the construction of that identity is dependent on the subjugation of women of colour and others who are systemically marginalised. She advises feminists to critically reflect on where the distribution of resources lies and which bodies are heard and included. She states that a shift is necessary in who takes the seat and who are the leading voices of the movement.

## Limitations

As with any research, this study comes with a set of limitations. First, the scope and depth of the research. As the scope of a bachelor thesis is limited, the researcher could only highlight parts of the theories on coloniality. Additionally, coloniality does not always have to be the sole explanation for a particular phenomenon. However, due to the scope and focus of this research, this paper could not further highlight that. In the explanation of the conceptual framework there is more elaboration on why, for instance, racial and gender-based hierarchies were selected from the many colonial power structures. Second, due to the small participant population the research results cannot be generalised. However, this does not take away from the validity of the experiences described by the participants. The methodology section contains further elaboration of this limitation. Third, the research

participants were all selected through the researchers network. Therefore, there is a bias in the type of participant that participated in the research. For instance, three out of four participants identify as intersectional feminists which is not representative for a large number of self-identified feminists. Nevertheless, every experience shared can still provide valuable insights. Fourth, the researcher's biases and positionality could have influenced the interpretation and conveyance of results. The positionality statement in the methods section elaborates further on this limitation. Lastly, the study was conducted within an academic context which requires the researcher to comply with standards which are rooted in colonial power structures relating to knowledge production. More elaboration on this limitation can also be found under methodology. As coloniality and decoloniality are extremely broad and complex topics, further research on any aspect which coloniality and decoloniality touch upon would be interesting. Seeing that contemporary Dutch society is just starting to discuss matters of decoloniality, the researcher would suggest further research in this field to explore any barriers or other relevant matters in the process of decolonising particular aspects of society. Furthermore, as coloniality is deeply embedded in the way humans are socialised, more research on how coloniality is internalised in the mind and in one's thought patterns would be interesting as it allows for a more fundamental understanding and approach to identifying coloniality.

## Conclusion

This bachelor thesis aimed to provide more insight on the common manifestations of coloniality in the Dutch feminist movement and how these are experienced by feminist activists within this context. A conceptual framework was created based on Quijano's "coloniality of power" which was applied as a theoretical lens in the investigation of existing literature and the results of the interviews. The literature review pointed at white feminism and the orientalist perception and representation of women from the global-majority as two of the most common manifestations of coloniality across feminist movements in the global-minority. These manifestations were expanded on by the analysing of the results.

The interviews with four feminist activists on their experiences with coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement pointed at similar experiences of instances which can be linked to coloniality as pointed out in the literature review. Using the conceptual framework on coloniality and the knowledge from the literature review, common patterns which could be perceived as manifestations of coloniality within the Dutch feminist movement were identified. These patterns are: 1) the denial of race, which is split up between the denial of intersectionality and the resistance to having conversations about race; 2) refusal and resistance to listen and learn from women of colour; 3) alienation; 4) lack of representation; 5) exploitation of labour; and 6) preference of masculinity. Important to note is that the participants reported feeling a strong alienation from the mainstream Dutch feminist discourse because of its reproduction of liberal feminist politics.

The participants continued to provide valuable insights on how to move towards decolonising the Dutch feminist movement. The recommendations touched upon investigating whiteness, the integration of antiracist causes, and critically reflecting upon the underlying politics driving one's feminism and one's positionality in this.

In conclusion, the results of the interviews have shown similarities between common manifestations of coloniality experienced by feminist activists in the Netherlands, and the manifestations laid out by literature focusing on the global-minority. On the broader scale of the global-minority, two of the most common manifestations are white feminism and the orientalist perception and representation of women from the global-majority. The interviews with feminist activists in the Netherlands showed that, on a smaller scale, the manifestations itself can differ as portrayed by the various categories in the discussion. However, almost all of them could be linked to the overarching manifestations of coloniality; white feminism and the orientalist perception and representation of women from the global-majority. In the instances where this was not the case, the smaller scale manifestation could generally still be connected to colonial power structures. As the results are not generalisable, these

claims are all not solid. Nevertheless, the researcher found it important to highlight the experiences of feminist activists with coloniality, regardless of its generalisability.

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## Annex

### *Definitions*

In the explanation of the conceptual framework, definitions for colonialism, colonality, and related concepts have been provided. However, this paper does not provide set definitions for other discussed terms such as feminism and activism as the researcher chose to leave this open for interpretation.

During the interviews, instead of providing a clear definition, participants were asked to define feminism for themselves and describe their forms of activism. No clear cut definitions were provided as the way in which participants perceive and conceptualise the Dutch feminist movement can contain interesting information on their relationship to this movement.

### *Feminism*

The descriptions of feminism as provided by the participants have been leading in the way that feminism is conceptualised in this study. As the definition of feminism has been debated for decades, a large array of interpretations exist. As such, the researcher does not comment on a final definition of the concept. However, many of the definitions share common characteristics. Combining these descriptions with those provided by the participants, the way feminism is conceptualised in this paper is roughly in line with hooks' definition. She states that feminism refers to "the movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (hooks, 2000, viii). Throughout her texts she reiterates how systems of oppression strongly intersect and interlock with each other, and that the fight "to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" is therefore in direct relation with all other fights against systems of oppression. This definition is roughly coherent with the conceptualisation of feminism throughout this study.

### *(Dutch) feminist movement*

In line with the aforementioned loose conceptualisation of feminism, this paper refers to the feminist movement as a collective of individuals and/or groups who aim "to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (hooks, 2000, viii). The feminist movement is an abstract term to refer to the collective of these groups and individuals as, usually, there is not one tangible group that makes up the 'feminist movement'. This paper also refers to the Dutch feminist movement. In this paper and context, the 'Dutch feminist movement' refers to all who are involved in feminist action, as defined earlier, and find themselves doing this in the Netherlands, regardless of what geographical area they originally moved from or what nationality they identify with. The Netherlands as defined in this paper only refers to the geographical nation located in Western-Europe. It does not include the 'public bodies' located in the Caribbean region: Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba. Nor does it refer to the entirety of the 'Kingdom of the Netherlands', which also includes Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten.

### *Global-majority and global-minority*

The terms global-majority and global-minority have been employed to refer to the socio geographical categories which are otherwise also referred to as 'western' and 'non-western'. The terms western and non-western put the focus on so-called western culture as the default. Terms such as global-majority and global-minority aim at shifting that power dynamic. According to Campbell-Stephens, who coined the terms, the global-majority "...refers to people who are Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities'. Globally, these groups currently represent approximately eighty per cent (80%) of the world's population making them the global majority..." (2020, p. 1). Thereby, the global-minority refers to those who are white and live with the privileges of being racialised as such. To this Campbell-Stephens says that,

Power structures, including the academy, tend to work in the interests of an elite minority. The elite, however, never define themselves as the minority that they are; they do not define themselves at all, they don't have to, they know who they are, and whom they have minoritised as outsiders. In this non-racialised space, the elite minority act with the confidence of a majority. These elites exist primarily, though not exclusively, through whiteness, and white ignorance, ignorance of race... (2020, p. 4).

Important to note is that "collective terms describing groups of people that share characteristics are fraught with difficulties, complexities and imperfections" (Campbell-Stephens, 2020, p. 4). Nevertheless, such terms are necessary to be able to speak on a global scale. To do so, this paper employs the terms global-majority and global-minority.

## **Appendix A**

### **Interview guide - coloniality in the Dutch feminism movement**

Before the interview starts, it will be made sure that the participants:

1. Know what they signed up for and what to expect
2. Have filled out the consent form
3. Feel comfortable (a private setting, or if wished for a specific setting or in presence of another person)
4. Ensure that any ethical issues are resolved

### **Introduction**

Prior to the interview, the researcher will introduce themselves and explain the context of the research.

### **Practicalities**

1. You are eligible to refuse any questions without any consequences or questions asked. We can also take a break or cancel the interview whenever needed.
2. Are you okay with the conversation being recorded? The recording will solely be used for transcribing the interview. Through this process the information will be completely anonymised, and will only be listened to by the researcher. After transcription, the recording will be deleted.
3. The results of the research will be used for my BA thesis. Therefore, the information from the interviews will be seen by anyone reading the paper. Both the results and transcription will be entirely anonymised.
4. In the interview there will often be reference to 'the movement'. This term is purposely left unspecified as it gives space to the interviewee to fill this in with their experiences with the Dutch feminist movement.
5. Do you have any more questions or concerns before starting the interview? Anything that needs clarification? Do not hesitate to halt the interview at any time and ask for whatever you need.
6. What is your expectation for the interview?

### **Introductory questions**

1. What is your age?
2. Where are you from? (probe: country, city)
3. For how long have you been living in the Netherlands?
4. Can you list the different identities you feel are part of you? (probes: gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, religion, etc.)

### Opening questions

5. How would you define 'feminism'?
6. Do you consider yourself a 'feminist'?
7. How would you define 'coloniality' in the context of social movements?
8. For how long have you been involved in the Dutch feminism movement?
  - a. In what cities/regions of the Netherlands?
  - b. Are you active as an individual or as part of a collective?
9. Can you describe in which ways you express your feminist activism? (probes: organising protests, social media, academics)

### Key questions

10. Have you been met with any type of resistance in your activism? How did this express itself and from whom did it come?
11. In your experience, do you feel represented by the Dutch feminist discourse? (probes: speeches at protests, prioritised causes, social media actions)
12. Do you feel like the issues that matter most to you are in line with the issues prioritised by the movement?
13. If present, what has been a recurring struggle for you within the Dutch feminism movement?
14. Do you feel like your contributions have been valued differently from others? (probes: identities e.g. race)
15. What colonial aspects have you identified in the Dutch feminist movement?
  - a. Can you describe how these are expressed?
  - b. Can you elaborate on the process of uncovering this?
16. Do you feel like your experiences with the Dutch feminism movement inflicted more harm than good upon you at times?
17. Have you found a fitting collective? Can you describe your journey in trying to find this?
18. What do you think are the main underlying issues of the Dutch feminism movement?
19. Do you think any of these are linked to colonial structures? (no probes, if no answer then the link with colonialism does not resonate but I can still identify patterns in previous answer)
20. If so, what do you think are crucial points in decolonising the Dutch feminism movement?
21. What do you think are crucial points in decolonising the Dutch feminism movement?
22. How would you say your different identities (although it's one identity) listed earlier in the interview play into your experiences with the Dutch feminism movement?

**Closing questions**

23. Do you feel hopeful about the movement?
24. Is there anything else you would like to add or share?
25. How have you experienced this interview? How do you feel now?
26. Do you know anyone who would be interested in doing a similar interview who I can reach out to?

## **Appendix B**

### **INFORMATION SHEET**

#### **Title of the study: Coloniality in the Dutch Feminism Movement**

Dear participant,

Thank you for your interest in participating in this research. This letter explains what the research entails and how the research will be conducted. Please take time to read the following information carefully. If any information is not clear kindly ask questions using the contact details of the researcher provided at the end of this letter.

#### **WHAT IS THIS STUDY ABOUT?**

- This studies aims at gaining a better understanding of coloniality experienced in the Dutch feminism movement, with a specific focus on
  - o the prioritisation of (cisgender straight) white women and, thereby, the erasure of in particular the experience of women of colour and the overrepresentation of white women's voices;
  - o and the orientalist representation and perception of non-western women as 'exotic', 'oppressed', and 'in need of help' by western feminist discourse.
- Ultimately the information from the literature and interviews will be bundled into a collection of recommendations on how to further decolonise the Dutch feminism movement.
- You have been asked to participate in an interview as you fit the participant description: a person who is or has been engaged with feminist activism within the Dutch feminist movement. For this studies, a total amount of 5 to 10 participants will be interviewed.
- This research is conducted in the context of a Bachelor thesis for the studies BSc Global Responsibility & Leadership at the University of Groningen, which is the researcher's final assignment necessary to complete the studies.

#### **WHAT DOES PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?**

- Participation in this study means that you will be interviewed about your experiences and thoughts on the research topic. The interview can both be conducted online or in person and will be done in English or in Dutch, dependent on your preference. At the beginning of the interview you will be reminded of the process, how your information will be stored and anonymised, and your right to withdraw from participation at any point. The questions will not be made available beforehand in order to hear your most intuitive response. The interview will take about 1 hour.
- As a participant, you are invited to read the draft of the research paper before it is submitted and the final paper will, of course, be made available to you after submission.

### **DO YOU HAVE TO PARTICIPATE?**

- Participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from the study at any point, without questions asked. You can refuse specific questions during the interview or withdraw your participation completely.
- Up until the point of submission, your participation can still be withdrawn. Also when your information has been processed in the paper. After submission, the researcher can always delete your information and contributions from the paper. However, since the paper will have been shared at that point, older versions of the research which still contain your contributions could still circulate.

### **ARE THERE ANY RISKS IN PARTICIPATING?**

- Taking part in this studies could involve the possibility of mental discomfort and possible triggering of previous events. You are completely free to refuse answering any question or withdraw your participation entirely.

### **ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS IN PARTICIPATING?**

- Participating in this studies does not involve any direct benefit for you as a participant.
- Your participation could contribute to further academic knowledge on coloniality in the Dutch feminism movement.

### **HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?**

- As previously mentioned, the information you provide will be used for a Bachelor thesis which will not be published officially but will be broadly shared with interested individuals. The paper will also be read by supervisors and those grading it. The results will be presented in front of an audience at Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen.
- Personal information collected about the participant that can identify you, will not be shared beyond the researcher.
- If the researcher intends to use a quotation from your interview, you will be contacted again for consent. You are fully entitled to refuse the use of this quotation.
- The recording will solely be used for transcribing the interview. Through this process the information will be completely anonymised, and will only be listened to by the researcher. After transcription, the recording will be deleted.
- The transcripts and consent forms will be stored according to the GDPR guidelines from the University of Groningen. Only the researcher will have access to the information.

### **WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?**

- The research results will be translated into a research paper which will be shared with all participants, supervisors, and interested individuals. The paper will not be officially published. However, it might circulate amongst those who want to read or use it.

### **ETHICAL APPROVAL**

- The researcher upholds herself to ethical standards that centre the safety and wellbeing of the participants.
- In case you feel like the researcher has not respected such ethical standards, please reach out to the researcher herself or her supervisor in case you do not feel comfortable discussing the concerns with the researcher.

### **CONSENT FORM**

- Kindly sign the consent form which you received from the researcher. Signing this means agreeing to participate in the studies. Nevertheless, you are still entitled to withdraw your participation at any time, as stated earlier.

### **WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?**

*Researcher and primary contact person:*

Rosalie Levenslicht – Student Global Responsibility and Leadership at University of Groningen, Leeuwarden

r.levenslicht@student.rug.nl or rosalie.levenslicht@gmail.com

+31 6 33 180 160

*Main supervisor (external):*

Peter Kruger – PhD candidate Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

peter.krugerj@gmail.com

*Internal supervisor:*

Sepideh Yousefzadeh – Associate Professor at Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen, Leeuwarden

s.yousefzadeh@rug.nl



**Consent Form**  
**Coloniality in the Dutch Feminism Movement**

*Please tick the appropriate boxes*

**Yes**   **No**

**Taking part in the study**

I have been properly informed on the research topic, goal of my participation, and the processing of my information. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason.

I understand that taking part in the study involves a recording of the interview and use of its data (if the participant desires, the results can be discussed before finishing the report to check if the information they provided the researcher with came across correctly).

**Risks associated with participating in the study**

I understand that taking part in the study involves the possibility of mental discomfort and possible triggering of previous events

**Use of the information in the study**

I understand that information I provide will be used for a Bachelor thesis which will not be published officially but broadly shared with interested individuals. The paper will also be read by supervisors and those grading it. The results will be presented in front of an audience at Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen.

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, will not be shared beyond the researcher.

I am aware that if the researcher intends to use a quotation from my interview, they will contact me again for consent. I am fully entitled to decline this proposal.

**Signatures**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of researcher*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*