

The Centrality of Intersectional Analysis in Understanding Development Ethics Problematics in the Post-Colonial South

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ABSTRACT

This paper elucidates and illuminates the notion of post colonialism and post-modernism as an epitome upon which discourse on development related issues in the post-colonial world is premised. Secondly, the paper situates the emergence post colonial critical perspectives generally using development in the South as a point of reference. The paper specifically focuses on feminist postcolonial critical perspectives on gender, race and class. Accordingly, the paper explicates the implications of intersectionality on the development discourse in the South and its multiplicative (not additive) effects on gender discrimination, women subordination and women agency with particular reference to the feminization of work and allocation of resources. The paper then looks at the indispensability of the intersectional methodology in the understanding of development related issues in the South before concluding accordingly. It ought to be born in mind that the paper envisages the North and South in terms of the Brandt commission (Klaus, 2002,p.5) demarcation or description but does not only look at the South in terms of territorial cartographies but also social ones(Robinson, 2002) as well in the sense that South race connections will greatly contribute to the marginalisation of Southerners or people of colour even if there are territorially situated in North for various reasons such as migration, slavery etc

Key Words: *Intersectional Analysis, Development Ethics, Post colonialism, South*

INTRODUCTION

The term 'intersectionality' itself was introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), when she discussed issues of black women's employment in the US. She was eventually invited to introduce the notion of intersectionality before a special session on the subject in Geneva during the preparatory session to the World Conference against Racism (WCAR) in September 2001 in Durban, South Africa (Yuval-Davis, 2016, p.193). Intersectionality is a tool for analysis, advocacy and policy development that addresses multiple discriminations and helps us understand how different sets of identities impact on access to rights and opportunities (AWID, 2004).

Post-colonial feminists have faulted western feminism for using gender as the only analytical category applicable to the analysis of women oppression and suppression. Post-colonial-feminists argue that women especially in the South experience an intersectionality of oppression in terms of gender, race, class, ethnicity etc. Chandra Mohanty credits postcolonial feminism for its critique of "Eurocentric" Feminism: a mode of feminist analysis, that homogenizes and systematizes the

experiences of different groups of women hence, erasing all marginal and resistant modes of experiences.(Mohanty, 1988).

Mohanty's argument demonstrates the foundation laid by Postcolonial Feminists to observe and respect differences, as opposed to overlooking them. It is an empowering call that Mohanty puts forth, that women of any culture ignore not only being universalized with western women, but also with being universalized within any group, especially groups that do not share societal and cultural views and values, or groups that do not share a similar history(Mohanty, 1988).

INTERSECTIONAL METHODOLOGY

An intersectional methodology to analyzing the disempowerment of marginalized women attempts to capture the consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of subordination. It addresses the manner in which racism; patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and the like (AWID, 2004). Moreover, intersectionality addresses the

way that specific acts and policies operate together to create further disempowerment. For instance, race, ethnicity, gender, or class, are often seen as separate spheres of experience which determine social, economic and political dynamics of oppression (Yuval-Davis, 2005).

While intersectionality differs from some more prominent gender and development as well as diversity approaches, it is not new. As a formal methodology, intersectionality has been used for well over a decade; it emerged out of attempts to understand experiences of women of colour in the United States. More recently it has been taken up by feminists in the global South. Most gender analysis frameworks used by development actors focus solely on gender relations (AWID, 2004).

While assertions that women are not a homogenous group are common, the implications of this observation seem to get quickly lost in the application. The tendency is to merely note that “poor women are especially impacted” and “racialized women have different experiences”(Yuval-Davis, 2016). As a result, certain experiences and issues are obscured or rendered invisible. Problems that are unique to particular groups of women or disproportionately affect some women may not receive appropriate or adequate redress (AWID, 2004).

Intersectionality is, a methodology for research, and springboard for a social justice action agenda. It starts from the premise that people live multiple, layered identities derived from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power (Raj, 2002). People are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege (e.g. a woman may be a respected medical professional yet suffer domestic violence in her home)(Crenshaw, 2002).

Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities. It takes account of historical, social and political contexts and also recognizes unique individual experiences resulting from the coming together of different types of identity. For example, the experience of a black woman in Cape Town is qualitatively different than that of a white or indigenous woman in that same location (Crenshaw, 2002,p.14).

Intersectional analysis posits that we should not understand the combining of identities as

additively increasing one’s burden but instead as producing substantively distinct experiences. In other words, the aim is not to show that one group is more victimized or privileged than another, but to reveal meaningful distinctions and similarities in order to overcome discriminations and put the conditions in place for all people to fully enjoy their human rights (Raj, 2002). As a consequence of their multiple identities, some women are pushed to the extreme margins and experience profound discriminations while others benefit from more privileged positions. Intersectional analysis helps us to visualize the convergence of different types of discrimination – as points of intersection or overlap (Riley, 2003).

RESULT

The Postcolonial Word: Situating the Destabilisation of Discourse

Post colonialism, like other post-isms, does not signal a closing off of that which it contains (colonialism), or even a rejection (which would not be possible in any case), but rather an opening of a field of inquiry and understanding following a period of relative closure (DeHay, 2004). Colonialism is an event which can be identified, given an historical definition, through its effects and characteristics as they reveal themselves in a given nation, among different cultural and social groupings (Young, 2003).

Indeed it is possible to see colonialism as a totalizing event which desires closure, to see the world as always already defined in terms of the relationship of the colonized to the colonizer, the margin to the center, etc. As Edward Said pointed out in *Orientalism*, the imperialist powers needed to create an other, an Orient, in order to define themselves as center. And the policies of colonialism, although they varied from one "center" to the next, systematically programmed colonized people to understand themselves as other, as marginalized, in relationship to this center (Hutcheon, 1989).

Therefore post colonialism does not mean ‘after colonialism’ or ‘after independence’ rather it refers to the ways of criticizing the gendered, racialised and classised material and discursive legacies of colonialism. The closest and perhaps most relevant comparison to post colonialism is postmodernism in that postmodernism has somewhat the same relationship to modernism as post colonialism does to colonialism (MacEwan, 2002, p.127)

The connection or even complicity between modernism and colonialism makes this comparison especially interesting and relevant: both are challenges to the Enlightenment narratives. "Modernism" was a period of unprecedented searching and yearning for what Lyotard has called "metanarratives" to replace the dethroned god of Western humanist thought. In some analyses, with the rise of capitalism and the increasing imperialism of the European powers, this yearning translated into the "modernist totalizing ideal of progress" (Hutcheon, 1989, p. 25). This ideal of progress comes as well out of the Enlightenment project, which privileged reason and rationality: mind and reason conquer superstition, control nature. Therefore Post colonialism as a critical postmodern discourse challenges a mono-perspectival view of discourses such as gender, development, literature, economics, poverty, employment, human rights etc. in favour of a multi-perspectival approach to all issues.

Post Coloniality and the Emergence of Critical Perspectives

The field of Postcolonial Studies has been gaining prominence since the 1970s. The formation of the colony through various mechanisms of control and the various stages in the development of anti-colonial nationalism interested many scholars in the field (Young, 2001, p.13). By extension, sometimes temporal considerations give way to spatial ones (i.e. in an interest in the post colony as a geographical space with a history prior or even external to the experience of colonization rather than in the postcolonial as a particular period) in that the cultural productions and social formations of the colony long before colonization are used to better understand the experience of colonization (Young, 2001, p.15).

Moreover, the "postcolonial" sometimes includes countries that have yet to achieve independence, or people in First World countries who are minorities, or even independent colonies that now contend with "neocolonial" forms of subjugation through expanding capitalism and globalization (Depika, 1996). In all of these senses, the "postcolonial," rather than indicating only a specific and materially historical event, seems to describe the second half of the twentieth-century in general as a period in the aftermath of the heyday of colonialism (Depika, 1996).

Even more generically, the "postcolonial" is used to signify a position against imperialism and Eurocentrism. Western ways of knowledge production and dissemination in the past and present then become objects of study for those seeking alternative means of expression. As the foregoing discussion suggests, the term thus yokes a diverse range of experiences, cultures, and problems; the resultant confusion is perhaps predictable (Caste, 2001).

The expansiveness of the "postcolonial" has given rise to lively debates. Even as some deplore its imprecision and lack of historical and material particularity, others argue that most former colonies are far from free of colonial influence or domination and so cannot be postcolonial in any genuine sense. In other words, the overhasty celebration of independence masks the march of neocolonialism in the guise of modernization and development in an age of increasing globalization and transnationalism; meanwhile, there are colonized countries that are still under foreign control (Hoogvelt, 2001).

The emphasis on colonizer/colonized relations, moreover, obscures the operation of internal oppression within the colonies. Still others berate the tendency in the Western academy to be more receptive to postcolonial literature and theory that is compatible with postmodern formulations of hybridity, syncretization, and pastiche while ignoring the critical realism of writers more interested in the specifics of social and racial oppression (Depika, 1996).

Despite the reservations and debates, research in Postcolonial Studies is growing because postcolonial critique allows for a wide-ranging investigation into power relations in various contexts. The formation of empire, the impact of colonization on postcolonial history, economy, science, and culture, the cultural productions of colonized societies, feminism and postcolonialism, agency for marginalized people, and the state of the postcolony in contemporary economic and cultural contexts are some broad topics in the field (Chrisman, 2003).

The following questions suggest some of the major issues in the field: How did the experience of colonization affect those who were colonized while also influencing the colonizers? How were colonial powers able to gain control over so large a portion of the non-Western world? What traces have been left by colonial education, science and technology in postcolonial societies? How do these traces affect decisions about development

and modernization in postcolonies? What were the forms of resistance against colonial control? How did colonial education and language influence the culture and identity of the colonized (Depika, 1996)?

How did Western science, technology, and medicine change existing knowledge systems? What are the emergent forms of postcolonial identity after the departure of the colonizers? To what extent has decolonization (a reconstruction free from colonial influence) been possible? Are Western formulations of post colonialism overemphasizing hybridity at the expense of material realities? Should decolonization proceed through an aggressive return to the pre-colonial past? Are new forms of imperialism replacing colonization and how? How do gender, race, and class function in colonial and postcolonial discourse? (Depika, 1996). This critical perspective is going to be the concern of this paper.

Post Colonial Feminism: The Intersectionality of Oppression

Feminist theories of the 1970s and 1980 were informed by conceptual repertoires drawn largely from 'modernist' theoretical and philosophical traditions of European Enlightenment such as liberalism and Marxism. The 'postmodernist' critique of these perspectives, including their claims to universal applicability, had precursors, within anticolonial, antiracist, and feminist critical practice (Avtar & Phoenixi, 2004).

Postmodern theoretical approaches found sporadic expression in Anglophone feminist works from the late 1970s. But, during the 1990s they became a significant influence, in particular their poststructuralist variant. During the 1980s, there was much controversy about the best way to theorise the relationship between the above dimensions. The main differences in feminist approaches tended to be understood broadly in terms of socialist, liberal and radical feminisms, with the question of racism forming a point of conflict across all three (Brah & Phoenixi, 2004).

One of the influential efforts to re-think the relationship between gender, class, race and other oppressions has come from the postcolonial feminists of colour and third world feminists examining the intersectionality of multiple oppressions and experiences of women in their day today life (Poter, 2004, p.17). The notion of the intersectional paradigm has been developed to analyze the ways in which race, class, gender,

sexuality and other axes of domination constitute systems of oppression manifested through a variety of institutions including schools, houses, government bodies. This paradigm starts from the perspective that people's lives can not be separated into discrete oppressions that can be understood in an additive way: rather multiple oppressions come together as powerful systems of domination (Poter, 2004, p.18).

Anne McClintock uses an intersectional analysis so as to explicate colonialism and post colonialism; she argues that 'race', gender and class are not distinct and isolated realms of experience. Instead, they come into existence in and through contradictory and conflictual relations to each other. Imperialism is not something that happened elsewhere -- a disagreeable fact of history external to Western identity. Rather, imperialism and the invention of race were fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity (McClintock, 1995, p. 4). The invention of race in the urban metropolises became central not only to the self-definition of the middle class but also to the policing of the "dangerous classes": the working class, the Irish, Jews, prostitutes, feminists, gays and lesbians, criminals, the militant crowd and so on. At the same time, the cult of domesticity was not simply a trivial and fleeting irrelevance, belonging properly in the private, "natural" realm of the family. (McClintock, 1995, p. 5).

It must be born in mind that colonial states and imperial cultures were consolidated through specific relations of ruling involving forms of knowledge and institutions of sexual, racial and sexual/caste regulation. One of the symptomatic aspects of imperialism was the ideological construction and consolidation of white masculinity as normative and corresponding racialisation and sexualisation of colonial peoples (Mohanty, 1997, p.15).

DISCUSSION

Critical Perspectives on Gender, Race and Class: Implications for the Development in the South

When one talks of development in the South (Africa, Asia, Latin America) certainly a number of issues come to mind: Poverty, inequitable access to inequitably paid labour and continuing non-recognition of unwaged work, discrimination of women in the provision of education and health, access to productive resources such as land and credit, corruption and

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cronyism, HIV-AIDS, structural adjustment policies, foreign debt burdens, unemployment, high maternal and child mortality (Rockquemore, 1999).

There is ultimately no contention that these development issues exist rather, the contention on these development problematics is occasioned by the tendency to understand them using Western/Northern theoretical/conceptual frameworks. For example in order to understand Universal female Subordination there has been a tendency in Western feminism to phallogocentrize this particular categorical framework. This schema has not only attempted to understand discrimination generally on the basis of a Western biologic, and solely in terms of the gender matrix (Rockquemore, 1999).

Critical perspectives on gender, race and class are epitomized on the argument that one cannot thoroughly understand development, poverty, feminization of employment and allocation of resources say in the South by reference to gender alone. Rather it is pertinent to fathom that these phenomena are reinforced by a number of factors such as: race, class, caste, age, sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity, which interact simultaneously and multiplicatively (race \times gender \times class) not additively (race+gender+class) and hence situate women differently on the oppression, discrimination and subordination terrain or trajectory (Higginbotham, 1992, p.253).

Higginbotham argues that like gender and class, race must be seen as a construction predicated upon the recognition of different and satisfying the simultaneous distinguishing and positioning of group's vis-à-vis one another. More than this, race is a highly contested representation of relations of power between social categories by which individuals are identified and identify themselves. She notes that in societies where racial demarcation is endemic to their social cultural fabric and heritage-to their laws and economy, to their institutionalized structures and discourses, and to their epistemologies and everyday customs-gender identity is inextricably linked and even determined by racial identity (Higginbotham, 1992, p.254).

Political and Structural Intersectionality

In *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color*, legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw, distinguishes structural

intersectionality, in which the location of women of color at the intersection of race and gender make experiences of rape, domestic violence and remedial reform qualitatively different from that of white women, and political intersectionality, in which antisexist and anti-racist rhetoric operate in tandem to marginalize the issue of violence against women (Crenshaw, 2001).

Philomena Essed develops intersectionality as a tool to identify intertwined gender, race, ethnic, gender, economic and educational factors in shaping specific expressions of everyday injustices. Intersectional analysis, and particularly Crenshaw's and Essed's work, has become influential as a policy framework in the arena of international women's rights (Essed, 1991). For example, various bodies and entities within the UN have to a certain extent recognized the intersectionality of discrimination in women's lives, that women do not experience discrimination and other forms of human rights violations solely on the grounds of gender, but also age, disability, health status, race, ethnicity, caste, class, national origin and sexual orientation (OHC, 2001).

Intersectional Discrimination and the Nexus of disempowerment in the South

An intersectional approach to analyzing the disempowerment of marginalized women attempts to capture the consequences of the interaction between two or more forms of subordination. It addresses the manner in which racism; patriarchy, class oppression and other discriminatory systems create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and the like. Moreover, intersectionality addresses the way that specific acts and policies operate together to create further disempowerment (WGWHR, 2004).

For instance, race, ethnicity, gender, or class, are often seen as separate spheres of experience which determine social, economic and political dynamics of oppression. But, in fact, the systems often overlap and cross over each other, creating complex intersections at which two, or three or more of these axes may meet. Indeed, racially subordinated women are often positioned in the space where racism or xenophobia, class and gender meet. They are consequently subject to injury by the heavy flow of traffic traveling along all these roads (WGWHR, 2004).

Gendered Classes and the Feminization of Employment

Brewer categorically asserts that the transformation of Black women's labor is tied to structural changes in the state and economy as well as to shifts in the racial/gender division of labor. Three major labour transformations in Black women's labor are key: (1) movement from domestic to industrial and clerical work, a process still complete and particularized by region and class, (2) integration into the international division of labour in low-paid service work which is largely incapable of providing a family wage, (3) the increasing impoverishment and fragmentation of Black women, children and families. These changes are matched by the pervasive peripherisation of from manufacturing work and the labour force. Theorizing race, class and gender in the context of these broad-based structural changes in black women's labour exemplifies a division of labour built on racial norms and values, as well as material arrangements embedded in a general division of labour (Brewer, 1993:p.19).

More recently, uneven economic growth and internationalization have involved black women in the complex circuitry of labour exchange of women nationally and globally. In short the capitalist firms do not have to depend upon black labour either male or female. Low wage, low cost labour can be found all over the world, especially in the South (Naila Kabeer, 2000). The world labour force is a cheap substitution of black labour in the USA. Yet this is further complicated by the feminization of much of the labour (low paid women with the USA and outside). Disproportionately numbers of Black women are at the bottom of this division of labour, rooted in social systems which get remade in the material context of social practices as well as the calculus of profit. Under this capitalist nexus Black women are the last to employ and the first to be fired (Brewer, 1993:p.19).

Gendered Racism and the Allocation of Resources.

Gendered racism shapes the allocation of resources along racially and ethnically ascribed understandings of masculinity and femininity as well as along gendered forms of race and ethnic discrimination. Women of color, ethnic minority women, are deemed most suitable for jobs in the lowest stratum of the labor market, an area already segmented unequally along gender lines. According to the different ideologies and histories in relation to specific ethnic groups women are sexualized in different ways (Essed, 2001).

European common sense considers African women generally as promiscuous, Asian women as passive and exotic, and women in Islamic cultures as super-exploited. Anti-Islam sentiments are manifest in the demonizing of Islamic cultures as super-sexists, while toning down the persistence of (sexual) violence, gender ceilings and other forms of exclusion in European cultures. The infusion of gender critique with racist images can place a strain on ethnic minority women in their struggles for emancipation on their own terms – internal gender critique can be externally abused in racist ways. Internal silence, on the other hand, reconfirms the perceived legitimacy of the subordination of women within their own cultures (Essed, 2001).

The South African Case

The gendered nature of rural development in South Africa is linked to cultural forces and limited economic opportunities that have contributed to the marginalization of rural women. Rural development also shapes and is shaped by the intersection of race, class, and gender identities (Oberhauser, 1998). For Example to fully understand the highly uneven distribution of land and income in this country, one must examine its history of colonialism and apartheid. Centuries of forced removals and relocation of Blacks have led to a situation where white-owned commercial farms control the vast majority of grazing and arable land (Wilson & Ramphela, 1989).

In contrast, one half to one third of the total Black population of 30 million live in rural areas, much of which is uncultivable and non-arable (Levin & Weiner, 1997). South Africa's highly skewed income distribution translates into the top 5 percent of the population consuming more than the bottom 85 percent (Bond, 1996). Approximately two thirds of the African population live in deep poverty, the majority of these in the former homelands, or batustans, set up by the apartheid government as dumping grounds for Blacks (Oberhauser, 1998).

The Vitality of the Intersection methodology to the Understanding of Development Related issues in the Post-Colonial South.

Intersectionality and the Global Neo-Liberal Economy

While the global economic integration of recent decades has produced immense wealth for some, these 'winners' are a privileged few. Embedded

in colonial histories and exacerbated by modern fundamentalist ideologies, new technologies and contemporary forms of discrimination, the policies and processes of neoliberal globalization are perpetuating racism, intolerance and discrimination against women. They are justifying the exclusion of those who have been left behind by the global economy and aggravating poverty, inequality and human rights violations (AWID, 2004).

Clearly, globalization and economic change are impacting on different people in different ways. While all women are in some ways subject to gender discrimination, other factors including race and skin colour, caste, age, ethnicity, language, ancestry, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic class, ability, culture, geographic location, and status as a migrant, indigenous person, refugee, internally displaced person, child, or a person living with HIV/AIDS, in a conflict zone or under foreign occupation, combine to determine one's social location. Intersectionality is an analytical tool for studying, understanding and responding to the ways in which gender intersects with other identities and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege. It is therefore an indispensable methodology for development and human rights work (AWID, 2004).

Intersectional Methodology as Tool for Unearthing Social Injustice in the South

While intersectionality differs from some more prominent gender and development and diversity approaches, it is not new. As a formal theoretical framework, intersectionality has been used for well over a decade; it emerged out of attempts to understand experiences of women of colour in the United States. More recently it has been taken up by feminists in the global South. Most gender analysis frameworks used by development actor's focus solely on gender relations (Schneider, 2003).

While assertions that women are not a homogenous group are common, the implications of this observation seem to get quickly lost in the application. The tendency is to merely note that "poor women are especially impacted" and "racialized women have different experiences". As a result, certain experiences and issues are obscured or rendered invisible. Problems that are unique to particular groups of women or disproportionately affect some women may not receive appropriate or adequate redress (Barter et al, 1999).

Intersectionality is a feminist theory, a methodology for research, and springboard for a social justice action agenda. It starts from the premise that people live multiple, layered identities derived from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power. People are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege (e.g. a woman may be a respected medical professional yet suffer domestic violence in her home) (Chrisman, 2003, Yuval-Davis, 2005).

Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities. It aims to address the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression and other systems of discrimination create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women (Hooks, 1981). It takes account of historical, social and political contexts and also recognizes unique individual experiences resulting from the coming together of different types of identity. For example, the experience of a black woman in Cape Town is qualitatively different than that of a white or indigenous woman in that same location (Collins, 1998, Yuval-Davis, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The notion of 'postcolonial' World is inseparable from the postcolonial and postmodern discourses that inform the multiplicity of post-colonial development related intricacies such as; gendered poverty, the feminization of employment and resource allocation. Accordingly postcolonial discourse categorically rejects the Eurocentric/Western or Northern tendency to phallogocentrize development issues using a monoperspectival lens. This ipso facto leads to the emergence of a post development imperative-which is certainly multiperspectival. Postcolonial feminism which has been the focus of this paper poses a scathing critique against Western feminism that is premised on the understanding of discrimination, oppression and subordination solely in terms of the gender trajectory. Postcolonial feminists and feminists of color using the Intersectionality framework prove beyond reasonable doubt that gender discrimination, oppression and subordination can only thoroughly be explicated by multiple and simultaneous factors such as gender, race and class that interact not only to compound but also situate persons on a plethora of terrains of oppression, discrimination and

subordination. In terms of employment and the allocation of resources, it is pertinent note that global capitalism-(a neo-colonialism) is premised on the profit accumulation zeal through the feminization, racialization and classisation of employment and resource allocation. This nexus a fortiori can only be thoroughly comprehended with an intersectionality methodology.

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