

## Scientific Study about Feminism in Iraqi Society

### دراسة علمية حول النسوية (نظرية المساواة بين الجنسين) في المجتمع العراقي

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### Summary

The term “feminism” includes a wide range of concepts like political ideologies , different activities, and social movements that have common aims in their philosophy to define, determine, and realize gender equality in so many fields like political, economic, individual, and social fields. Women’s justice and equality in all fields of life, as well as equal entry to resources that

are usually freely available to men, are the main targets of feminism concept. The long history of women’s oppression and methods for defeating the “anxiety of authorship” by producing their own literary canon are only two examples of the many matters covered by feminism ideology . In fact, the variation of psychosocial and cultural conceptions of feminity, feminism is in fact a genuine attempt to analyze,

realize , and elucidate. Anyway, by testing a few great tasks in the field of feminist literary theory, this paper aims to follow the theoretical origins of the movement and realize some basic assumptions and principles of feminism.

Moreover , women in Iraq are witnessing high rates of violence and inequality, and they still have inadequate entry to healthcare, education, and even so the labor market. Now, The nation is presently going through a transitional period. Plans are in place for recovery and restoration following **ISIS**<sup>(1)</sup>.

**Keywords :** Feminism, Gynocriticism, and Second Wave Feminism. Inequality

### **Abstract**

A number of resistance activities against the idea of patriarchy, social injustice, and capitalism's involvement in the oppression of women encouraged to the social movement known as feminism. Feminist theory started out as a disorganized and inconsistent system of opposition to phallogocentric <sup>(2)</sup> thought and behavior, but it has developed into a reputable field of study and critical analysis. The subject of how women's autonomous identities can be asserted and formed in both

the social and literary fields is within the purview of feminist literary theory, it also develops in parallel with male literary discourse. Thus , in order to define, develop, and complete social justice for women in all classes of society, we are pleased to welcome today a wide and diverse variety of feminist philosophers who employ poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, Marxist <sup>(3)</sup>, and postcolonial ways to reduce the centralization of masculine ideology.

The depict **“pro-feminism”** is most often used to describe men who actively aid feminism movement; it does not reveal that the supporter is a member of the feminist movement. Men's groups that sustain feminism engagement in anti-violence initiatives in educational and teaching foundations and with young men, providing a workshop on sexual harassment at work, calling to community education events, or going camping, and providing counseling to males who commit acts of violence against women, as well as participating in men's health activism.

**Keywords :** Feminism, Gynocriticism, and Second Wave Feminism.



الخطط جارية للتعافي وإعادة الإعمار

المخلص:  
يعبر مفهوم «النسوية» عن مجموعة واسعة من الحركات السياسية والأيديولوجيات والحركات الاجتماعية التي تشترك في هدف واحد يتمثل في تحديد وإنشاء وتحقيق المساواة السياسية والاقتصادية والشخصية والاجتماعية بين الجنسين. إن الفرضية الأساسية للنسوية هي السعي لتحقيق المساواة والعدالة للمرأة في كل مجال من مجالات الحياة وخلق الفرص للنساء للحصول على نفس الوصول إلى الموارد التي تكون متاحة مجاناً للرجال. منذ ذلك الحين، تغطي الحركة النسوية مجالات متنوعة من البحث، وتتعامل مع تاريخ اضطهاد المرأة والوسائل الممكنة للتغلب مثلًا على «القلق من التأليف» من خلال إنشاء قانون أدبي خاص بها. ومع ذلك، فإن هذه الدراسة هي محاولة لتوضيح بعض الافتراضات والمبادئ الأساسية لمبدأ النسوية حيث تتبع الأصل النظري للحركة من خلال استكشاف عدد قليل من الأعمال المحددة للاتجاه في مجال النظرية الأدبية النسوية. تعاني المرأة العراقية اليوم من عدم كفاية الفرص التعليمية والرعاية الصحية ومحدودية الوصول إلى سوق العمل، فضلًا عن ارتفاع مستويات العنف وعدم المساواة وان البلاد حاليًا في مرحلة انتقالية وان

في مرحلة ما بعد داعش .  
الكلمات المفتاحية (الدالة): النسوية، النقدية النسوية، النسوية الموجة الثانية .

### الخلاصة

كانت «النسوية» حركة اجتماعية، بدأت من خلال سلسلة من حركات المقاومة ضد مفهوم السلطة الأبوية، ولعبت حالة عدم المساواة الاجتماعية والرأسمالية دورًا بارزًا في اضطهاد المرأة منذ البداية حيث كان النظام الاجتماعي مفككًا وغير متماسك لمعارضته للتفكير والممارسة الفلوقراطية، لكن النظرية النسوية الآن أصبحت تمتلك مجالًا واسعًا للبحث والدراسة النقدية. إن نطاق النظرية الأدبية النسوية لا يشمل فقط نمطًا من إعادة المطالبة وتأسيس هوية المرأة المستقلة في المجالات الاجتماعية وكذلك في المجالات الأدبية، بل أيضًا تقدم بالتوازي مع الخطاب الأدبي المتمركز حول الذكور المؤيد للنسوية وهو دعم للنسوية دون الإشارة إلى أن العضو المؤيد للحركة النسوية وهو المصطلح الذي يستخدم غالبًا للإشارة إلى الرجال الذين يدعمون الحركة النسوية بصورة فاعلة. .

## Section (One)

### Introduction

It is possibly that The concept of feminism is used to depict social, cultural, political and economic activities aim to establishing equal rights between men and women. Feminism includes sociological theories in addition to philosophies related to cases of genders differences but taking in consideration a movement that deals with gender equality for women rights and interests. The two terms feminism and feminist did not get a widespread fame until 1970s.

#### 1.1 The Problem of this Study :

Because of political ,cultural or social factors women in Iraq faced so many unjust treating in all social spheres that led to many negative habits in the Iraqi society.

#### 1.2 Aims of this Study :

- 1- Knowing the importance of feminism .
- 2- Introducing the right ways for applying femi-

nism .

- 3- Tracing the theoretical origins of the feminist movement and define some fundamental assumptions and principles of feminism.

#### 1.3 Hypotheses of this Study :

- Feminism is a collection of ideas and opinions considering how society treats women simply for being women as opposed to how society deals with males simply for being men.
- Feminism can also indicate to a movement, which encompasses a variety of widely connected organizations to achieve women's rights and interests, as well as political and sociological theories and philosophies that address concerns of gender inequality.
- Feminism characterizes a society where women suffer from discrimination and disadvantage comparing with men.

So many variables affect



the position of women in Iraq at the beginning of the twenty-first century due to wars, religious disputes between sects over Islamic law, the Iraqi constitution, cultural customs, and contemporary secularism. Many wars and internal crises have left hundreds of thousands of Iraqi women widowed. Women's rights organizations fight to enhance the standing of women in the workplace, in the legal system, and in schools, also fighting harassment and intimidation, in many other areas of Iraqi society, as well as to stop harmful customs like honor killings and forced marriages. The term "feminism" has different meanings to different people according to their ideologies. According to Chaman Nahal,<sup>(4)</sup> feminism is "a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome" in his article "Feminism in English Fiction". Feminism aspires to a new culture and values progressing towards it; it entails activism, both individually and collectively, to bring about social and personal change in the direction of that more desired cultural norm. Dependency syndrome is present, whether it is with the spouse or the world as it must be.

#### 1.4 Questions of this Study:

This study aims to discuss the following:

- What are oppression, discrimination, or unfairness against Iraqi women?
- How do cultural factors result in the disadvantage women face?
- Which advantages will be achieved when women are treated equally with the men in society?

#### 1.5 Literature of this Study:

Feminist literature depicts characters or ideologies that try to change gender norms. It aims to examine, question, and argue for alerts against the classical antiquated gender principles through the historical, cultural, social and scientific backgrounds, articles and theories. Thus, feminist literature endeavors to change inequalities that

exist between genders through societal and political arenas.

## Section (Two)

### 2.1 Definition of Feminism

The feminism term was chosen by Alexander Dumas, a French writer, who was a republican and anti-Feminist to describe women who behaved likely in masculine way. The term became widely used in the mid-19th century when the Women's right movement appeared in the United States of America with the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 (Melanie ,2004:19) . Also, there are other definitions of feminism as following:

**A:** Feminism is a collection of ideas and opinions considering how society treats women simply for being women as opposed to how society deals with males simply for being men. This particular feminism is descriptive from an ethical point of view . Feminism operates under the preface that women are viewed less favorably than men and are at a disadvantage when compared to them.

**B:** Along with the principles and views, feminism also compromises versions of ideas, ethical terminology, and forms

or structures of culture that should be different.

**C:** Ideologies and viewpoints taking in consideration the importance , as well as a declaration of obligation to conduct and action which are included in feminism concept.

**D:** The word “**feminism**” can also indicate to a movement, which encompasses a variety of widely connected organizations and people committed to regarding systematic activity that includes effective behavior of movement participants and convincing the others outside this movement to be changed. towards this movement, this is from one side.

In the another side , feminism characterizes a society where women suffer from discrimination and disadvantage comparing with men ; it is also assumed that this kind of treatment is a cultural and social phenomenon

#### **A brief analysis :**

Depending on the points mentioned above, the inferiority view of women in society throughout history by males is clear, as a weak being who does not have the ability to bear the hardships of life and has weak feelings towards what is happening around her. This led to women launching the feminist revolution based



on what happened to them. Injustice and persecution by male society.

## 2.2 Historical Background

Historians have often applied the term to all efforts aimed at benefitting women from Mary Wollstonecraft's day to the present, (Cott, 1987:87). As part of their victory in the seventh century, the lamias<sup>(5)</sup> fought and ultimately vanquished the Persians. According to the (British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (2004:30) , (Noga,2012:62) author of the awakened: Women in Iraq, women's assistance was required at that time.

By the way , Amina bint Qais, "the youngest woman to lead a medical team in one of the early battles at the age of seventeen," The Arabs who controlled Mesopotamia after their factory called the region Iraq. It was usually for upper-class males to have women as sex slaves throughout the Abbasid era . Using the Abbasid harem is a good example, certain qiyas, or captive women, were well-known for their charm and wit. A large number of the prominent ladies of that era were enslaved girls who received training in poetry, dance, and music from an early age . Tawaddud is a slave girl who is

mentioned in (A story of One Thousand and One Nights). These women should pass the tests administered by the most outstanding authorities in the fields of astronomy, medicine, law, philosophy, music, history, chess, literature, theology, and Arabic grammar, it is said that Harun al-Rashid gave her great amount of money . In Abbasid society, it was known that free women to become well-known, in spite of the existence of many notable individuals. One of the most well-known female individuals in Baghdad in the twelfth century was the scholar Shuhda, who was referred to as "the Pride of Women".

In 1258, the Mongols invaded and control of Baghdad. In the following the Mongols' departure, the Persians engaged in a succession of conflicts that ended in 1553 with Suleiman the Ottoman capturing Baghdad and its surrounding areas and adding it to the Turkish empire. In that time women's status declined as Turks had inflexible rules concerning women, according to (Noga,2012:49) . But according to (Beatrice,2021:10) many women achieved political significance in the Turkic kingdoms that controlled Iraq, such the Timurid Empire, and women were granted a very

high and public status in Turkish and Mongol civilizations. Iraq entered a new phase under the British authority when the League of Nations granted Britain the Mandate to manage the nation in following the fall of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. In the 1920s there was a “major uprising where women took part” . Iraq became an independent nation in 1932 and joined the UN as one of its founding members in 1946. According to (Noga,2012:55) instability was dominating the area until 1968, when “the Ba’ath Party took control over the President Al Bakr and Iraq began to enjoy a period of stability. Majda al-Haidari, wife of Raouf al-Chadirchi, has occasionally been reported as the first woman to appear in a veiled fashion in Baghdad during the 1930s; nevertheless, Amina al-Rahal, a Communist, Husain al-Rahal’s sister has also been dubbed Baghdad’s first revealed role model. During the 1930s and 1940s, women attending college began to emerge unveiled, and by 1963, the majority of metropolitan women from the top and middle classes in Iraq were believed to be unveiled.

“Historically, Iraqi women and girls have enjoyed relatively more rights than many of their

counterparts in the Middle East. The Iraqi Provisional Constitution (drafted in 1970) formally guaranteed equal rights to women and other laws specifically ensured their right to vote, attend school, run for political office, and own property” , according to (H.R.W, 2003:X) <sup>(6)</sup>. Women were formally declared to be equal to males in Ba’athist Iraq (1968–2003), when urban women were typically covered up. The Iraqi Constitution was amended in 1970 to grant women equal rights, including the ability to vote and run for public office, obtain education and possess property In 1979, Saddam Hussein took over as president from Al Bakr. Following Saddam Hussein’s overthrow in 2003, women who were not wearing headscarves faced an increase in intimidation and harassment, and the hijab became widely worn in Iraq.

### 2.3 Feminist Legal Theories

According to (Brubeck, M. et al, 1997:38), numerous waves of feminist legal theory that can be loosely classified as theory occurred as the women’s movement resurrected in the 1960s and 1970s, spurred by the black rights struggle.

#### 2.3.1 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists generally



hold that social and legal barriers that prevent women from entering the public sphere of politics are to be blamed for the ordination of women. **(Isobel, 2020:103)** "Article 14 of Iraq's new constitution, approved in a nationwide referendum held on October 15, states that Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination because of sex." Additionally, they insist that liberals respect their own ideals of equality and universal human rights, as well as equal treatment for men and women, citing the intrinsic similarities between the sexes. Thus, these ideas advocate for gender-blind law, which states that there should be no limitations for aid based on a person's gender. Liberal feminists' insistence on equal treatment, while new and mainly out-of-date (as a philosophy, but not entirely as a legal tactic), has made substantial progress for women in the labor force since 1970 and helped them enter the fields of politics, education, and work.

### 2.3.2 Cultural Feminism

Liberal feminism's emphasis on women is reversed by cultural feminism, which includes relational and different voice feminism distinct from males. It makes the case that feminism must adapt institutions to reflect

and accept characteristics that they view as women nurturing virtues, such as compassion, empathy, patience, and concern, while also acknowledging that women are comparable to men, can function like men, and can conform to norms. **(Goldstein, 1982:18)** suggests that "In their practical part, their various systems were nothing more than an aggregate of measures intended to put an end to the class war and establish social peace". But the very fact that they did bemoan the class war and strive for social peace is evidence that they fully recognized the existence of that war.

This particular branch of feminism can be linked to Carol Gilligan's studies on young boys' and girls' moral development. **(Carol, 2003:21)** hypnotizes that men and women usually have different moral growth in her book "In a Different Voice".

### 2.3.3 Radical Feminism (Dominance Feminism)

Radical feminism views the problem of gender quality as one of male dominance over women, rather than one of difference and sameness, when MacKinnon challenges the Aristotelian principle

of equity—which treats likes alike unlike unlike—as well as liberal cultural feminism. She asserts that both standards—what she refers to as the “difference approach”—embrace maleness as the norm.

Postmodern feminists reject essentialism in all its forms and contest the idea that knowledge can be produced by categorical, abstract theories that are based on human nature assumptions and reason. The postmodern feminists also refuse the conventional understanding of a legal subject as an independent, rational, self-interested, and free-willed individual. Instead, they see the individual as being composed of a variety of institutional and ideological forces that overlap and sometimes even contradict one another. According to **(Cott,1987:65)** “Freedom for all forms of women’s active expression, elimination of all structural and psychological hand caps to women’s economic independence, an end to the double standard of sexual morality, release from constraining sexual stereotypes, and opportunity to shine in every civic and professional capacity.”

## 2.4 Feminism and Science

“Freud though living surrounded by women and otherwise seeing so much and so well, women’s relationships seemed increasingly mysterious, difficult to discern, and hard to describe.”

**(Carol,2003:11)**

According to Sandra Harding, social scientists and biologists have been motivated to critically examine the ways in which conventional research has described gender, sex, and the relationship between the social and natural worlds by the moral and social goals of the women’s movement. Traditional scientific language is criticized by some, like Ruth Hubbard and Evelyn Fox, for being stoically biased towards a predetermined worldview. “Human beings evolve both historically and genetically and the one is parasitic on the other, or perhaps they are merely symbiotic, **(Brubeck et al,1977:34)** .

One aim of feminist research is to examine how power disparities are generated or strengthened in scholarly as well as scientific settings. After delivering a controversial speech explaining why women might not be as prevalent in science and engineering, (Harvard president Lawrence



Hummer, 2005) appointed physicist Lisa Randall to a powerful position. Hummer said, "I just want to see a lot of movement come into the field so that nobody has to deal with these problems".

## 2.5 Relationship to Political Movement

The 20th century's most significant political movement and feminism interacted in a complicated way when the women in Iraq participated in the parliament members to legislate the laws and in government as ministers. (Sharifa, 2006:27) says "Many obstacles to Iraqi women's empowerment existed prior to March 2003. Iraqi women already had suffered in various ways from the Iran-Iraq war (1980, the 1991 Gulf War, and the years of economic boycott. "

## 2.6 Relationship to Socialism

Contemporary technological innovations such as social media now allow feminists in the fourth wave to take up the micropolitics of the third wave while situating their individual lived experiences within broader global discourses, We are living in an age of nostalgia, in which today's adults are starting to form their own families and traditions (Diana

,2019:40)

Some feminists have sided with socialism since the late 19th century, while others have attacked socialist biology for not caring enough for women's rights. August Belen, a pioneering member of the German Social Democratic Party, wrote his book *Die Frau und der Socialism's*, contrasting the fight for gender equality with the fight for social equality in general, the suffrage campaign in the United States and the labor party in Stuttgart in 1907 hosted a worldwide conference of socialist women. From a radical background, Betty Friedan rose to prominence.

## 2.7 Honour Crimes

Hospital records in Iraqi Kurdistan indicate that there are about 500 honor killings annually, however the actual number is probably far higher. It is estimated that there is one honor killing per day in Erbil alone. According to the UNAMI (a member of a Native American people, one of the Delaware group), there were at least 534 honor killings in the Kurdish Governorates between January and April of 2006.

## 2.8 Third Wave Feminism

"Third wave feminism is an iteration of the feminist movement. It is a movement



that began in the United States in the early 1990s and continued until the rise of the fourth wave in 2010.” <https://www.history.com/news/feminism-four-waves>

The third wave born in the 1960s and 1970s as the idea was claiming that gender equality had already been achieved, through the first two waves, and there was additional attempts to push for women’s rights were irrelevant and unnecessary, or perhaps had pushed the pendulum too far in women’s favor. This issue played out in critical debates over whether affirmative actions create gender equality or punishes white, middle-class males because of the biological history they have inherited. So third-wave feminism concentrates on raising knowledge on the ability to open one’s mind to the fact that male dominance and power can affect the women of our generation, whether feminism causes harm towards society or members of society, surely it creates more harm than good.

## 2.9 Results

Inequality between men and women in Iraq, its causes bad treatment towards women. The attribute of human is given to male and female, and due to the divine and man-made

laws, any man has rights and duties, whether male or female, because men and women possess the mind, which makes man the highest living being and the most valuable capital in existence, because he possesses a wonderful mature mastermind. There are physiological differences between men and women that cannot be changed. In the work of the human mind, its activity and its creativity, many women hold important positions or work that is no less than that of men. What is required of the Iraqi state is the equality of men and women in inheritance rights and other rights. As for the demand of the Prime Minister, Mr. Al-Kadhemi, to legislate a law that protects women from domestic violence, it constitutes injustice, blindness, and condemnation of men, considering them the oppressor, the oppressor of them, the negligence, and the cause of domestic violence, while it is society that bears responsibility, results, and actions. This is because society is the one that deprived women of many of their rights like, education, freedom, and equality. What is the important thing required of the government is to compensate women for what they have deprived and robbed of rights,



status, culture, intellectual awareness, work, and social activity, and to save them from ignorance and illiteracy, and not to make them prisoners of the home and its affairs, while women are half of society and possess the energies.

2.10 General Statistics of Women in Iraq	
<u>Maternal mortality</u> (per 100,000)	63 (2010)
<u>Women in parliament</u>	26.5% (2014)
Women over 25 with <u>secondary education</u>	22.0% (2010)
Women in labor force	16% (2014)
<u>Gender Inequality Index</u>	
Value	0.577 (2019)

“UNICEF – Iraq – Statistics , June 3, 2018.

### Section (Three)

#### 3-1 Conclusion

It is clear through this research that the process of feminism witnessed much progress in so many stages and waves. We can see that the beginning of feminism tasted started the French revolution and renaissance any voices appeared at that time calling to the quality between the two sexes.

The late of 19th century many people called to the participation of women in the voting and

work forces. Feminism got much support and help by most munities in all over the world especially in the first decades of the last century. Feminism is in advanced level and it is very humorous popular and accepted idea among people ; it will get more and more support and popularity cause of the modern media and propaganda.

It is obviously that this study has achieved the answers for the questions that introduced in the introduction of the first part by explaining the discrimination that the women suffered from .

### 3-2 Recommendations

It is recommended to focusing on and dealing with the topic of how women have played a major role in the administration of the state and the government after the fall of the previous regime, through participation in Parliament and the administration of the state as members to legislate and approve laws related to the country, and through participation in the management of many ministries, and this plays a major role in achieving democracy and justice for the Iraqi people now and in the future.

Margines:

1-is abbreviation of (Islamic State in Iraq and Sham).

2-Relating to a male, or the beliefs assumed by such,

who assumes authority over females due to his maleness.

(<http://www.hawaii.edu/pcss/biblio/articles/2000to2004/2002-sex-and-gender.html>).

3- Marxists are particularly concerned with the struggles of lower and middle class workers, with the conflict between social classes, and with economic inequality.

(*Marxist dictionary*, <https://www.vocabulary.com>.)

4-Chaman Nahal is an Indian writer about the politics ,society ,and economy.

(*International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences Vol-8, Issue-3; May-Jun, 2023*).

5-Is an ancient priestly clan having resided in the area now known as Nepal since antiquity and predating the spread of Buddhism. (<https://en.wikipedia.org>)

6- is abbreviation of (Human Rights Watch).



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# محور الدراسات باللغة الإنكليزية