

# Local Actors in Global Arenas: Discursive Strategies Against Transnational Feminism

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Muslim women activists are often assumed to be straddled between competing regimes of a “global” liberal and “local” conservative discourses. They are seen as deprived of any agency in contesting these dominant discourses. However, I depart from these established frameworks of seeing Muslim women positioned only within a “site of deprivation” (to borrow from bell hooks). This paper studies the counterstrategies deployed by Muslim women at the “global” level against “transnational feminism”. To this end, I employ a discourse-analytic method to study the exchanges of Malaysian Muslim activists in the global forums where NGOs congregate. I point to ways in which Muslim activists

maintain their difference from a homogenising Global Sisterhood in international forums in an attempt to actively reframe the debates surrounding a fictive “transnational solidarity”. And in so doing, they reconstitute alternative terms of participation in a network of Global Feminism. Inspired by bell hooks, the point is not to see these “space[s] of marginality” in global arenas where the “oppressed live apart from their oppressors as ‘pure’”, but to interrogate how the “otherness” of Muslim women is used to symbolical contest asymmetric power relations between the Northern and Southern feminisms.