

A Third World Feminist Defense of Multiculturalism*

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I. Introduction

Is multiculturalism bad for women? Susan Okin answers this provocative question with an unqualified "Yes." Yet Okin is not alone in her rejection of multiculturalism. Many influential Western feminists have expressed concerns that multiculturalism, while strengthening the power of racial ethnic¹ minority cultural groups vis-à-vis the majority, worsens the position of the most vulnerable members of such groups, especially women. Some worry that the emphasis on culture goes counter to efforts to alleviate socio-economic inequality suffered by members of these groups. Others are concerned that multiculturalism is predicated on a highly essentialized conception of cultural identity. Still others point out that granting multicultural privileges to minority cultural groups will only perpetuate patriarchal cultures that subjugate their women.²

As well-intentioned as these feminist critics of multiculturalism may be, what strikes and concerns me is their consistent inattention to the voices of racial ethnic women, who are directly affected by multiculturalism.³ While some racial ethnic feminists have raised concerns about multiculturalism,⁴ many others argue for the importance of sustaining their own "illiberal" cultures. If we heed the voices of these women, then the assessment of multiculturalism would be less unequivocally negative, more ambivalent and complex, and even affirming and positive. In this paper, I shall construct a Third World feminist defense of multiculturalism by paying attention to the voices of racial ethnic women.

I shall proceed in the following order: First, in order to avoid possible confusions, I shall give a brief account of what I mean by multiculturalism. Secondly, the aforementioned three feminist critiques of multiculturalism will be critically examined. Thirdly, I shall consider a paradoxical phenomenon of racial ethnic women vehemently defending their own non-liberal cultures against outside critiques, and suggest two reasons to explain it by resorting to the voices of racial ethnic women themselves. Next, I shall attempt to answer one of the thorniest questions in

multiculturalism, namely, how to deal with sexism within non-liberal cultures. Finally, I shall conclude by considering Ayelet Shachar's "paradox of multicultural vulnerability."

II. A Conception of Multiculturalism

In this paper, I will focus on the socio-political sense of multiculturalism, encompassing both the socio-political movements initiated by racial ethnic minorities and publicly instituted and implemented policies in the liberal state that advocate granting of various "group-differentiated" rights to minority groups to help sustain their cultures.⁵ I shall follow Will Kymlicka's multicultural scheme in laying this out because it captures an important sense in which culture matters for racial ethnic minority groups while providing a detailed and practicable policy framework.⁶

According to this scheme, two patterns of cultural diversity of "national minorities" and "immigrant" ethnic groups can be discerned. National minorities are peoples who have a territorial base, share a societal culture,⁷ and have a sense of common "national" identity, but for various reasons find themselves incorporated into a majority culture, often against their will. Typically they aspire to maintain the survival of their distinct culture through various forms of self-government. Immigrants, on the other hand, are people who "voluntarily"⁸ come to the West and in general do not wish to establish a separate and self-governing nation. While they may want greater recognition of their cultural identity, they are not in principle opposed to integrating into the society at large.

Group-differentiated rights appropriate for each group differ accordingly. National minorities may justifiably enjoy powerful self-government rights to be able to form an independent political unit with a separate societal culture, entitled to exclude the central government from reclaiming such rights. Immigrants, on the other hand, should be granted "polyethnic rights" which will enable immigrant ethnic groups to "express their cultural particularity and pride" while facilitating their full participation in the larger economic and political contexts. The primary purpose of these rights is to aid members of these groups to become full members of the larger society by providing them with fairer terms of inclusion.⁹

Why are such multicultural accommodations necessary? Because exercising agency in a meaningful way requires that we tap into our own culture. We are "strong evaluators" who make choices based not only on our desires and inclinations but also on "hyper" goods, such as fundamental moral values or ideals, which function as the criteria by which we make second-order justifications concerning important value judgments.¹⁰ Hyper goods, however, are culturally specific and ineluctably tied to a particular form of life, bound with the vernacular language, history, and narratives of a particular locality,¹¹ sustained by indigenous institutions and practices. The particular culture as inscribed in our hyper goods defines who we are and becomes constitutive of our identity.¹² As such, it will be difficult to shed our cultural identity, especially as adults, even when we are placed, for one reason or another, in a different societal culture.

This, however, is the predicament faced by the members of minority groups residing in the West and elsewhere. Adult members of minority groups are deprived of their own societal cultures. Yet they do not have easy access to the liberal culture of the host country because the "complexity and the density of [the host culture's] details defy explicit learning or comprehensive articulation."¹³ Further, pervasive cultural imperialism,¹⁴ which unfavorably positions racial ethnic minority cultures as "inferior" or "uncivilized" in an alien web of cultural meanings, undoubtedly exacerbated by the discursive "racial formation,"¹⁵ deeply affects racial ethnics' sense of self-respect¹⁶ and complicates their integration into the larger society.¹⁷ It is precisely in order to mitigate these difficulties faced by racial ethnics in the West that multiculturalism is necessary; in the case of national minorities, in particular, a convincing case for self-government can be made because their incorporation into the dominant society was achieved through coercive and often violent means, and they strongly desire to maintain their cultural autonomy.

III. Feminist Critiques of Multiculturalism

Why do feminists object to multiculturalism? In this section, I shall examine three influential feminist critiques of multiculturalism, with a special focus on the third.

1) Undermining socio-economic parity

One worry raised by Nancy Fraser is that multiculturalism's overemphasis on culture will vitiate efforts to promote socio-economic equity between members of minority groups and the dominant group. By treating difference as pertaining "exclusively" to culture, questions of difference are seen as unrelated to material inequality, exploitation, and economic marginalization. In short, multiculturalism "ignores social politics of redistribution."¹⁸ To remedy this shortcoming, multiculturalism must be complemented by a radically egalitarian politics of redistribution. Yet this combination will not work, according to Fraser, because these two remedies counteract each other; while redistribution aimed at redressing economic injustice is "transformative" and tends to undermine existing group differentiation, recognition aimed at remedying cultural injustice is "affirmative" and tends to promote existing group differentiation. Hence, these two remedies simply do not mix together. Fraser calls this tension the "recognition-redistribution dilemma."¹⁹

The only practicable economic redistributive system compatible with multiculturalism, claims Fraser, is the "liberal welfare state." Yet this system leaves untouched the underlying structure that generates social inequity and provides only temporary remedies, requiring "surface reallocations again and again." This will result in deepening the racial divide by underlining the stereotype that people of color are "deficient and insatiable, [] always needing more and more." Fraser asserts that adding multiculturalism would make things worse. To the dominant majority who are influenced by these stereotypes, the politics of affirming racial ethnic difference will seem like an "affront," thereby eliciting resentment against multicultural measures and triggering "intense backlash misrecognition."²⁰

Fraser's claim that multiculturalism is not compatible with a transformative politico-economic remedy that calls for the restructuring of the underlying economic structure is unconvincing. As Iris Young has rightly maintained, the demand for proper recognition of culture and identity does not preclude the demand for economic parity. The contradiction arises owing to Fraser's rigid dualistic system of affirmative and transformative remedies, which she takes to cancel each other out. By superimposing her dichotomous and exclusive theoretical categories on a more complex reality, Fraser

finds contradiction "where none exists."²¹ Culture and politico-economy are in principle two different levels of social reality: In the case of recognition, the group-differentiation promoted is among cultural groups, while in the case of redistribution, the group-differentiation undermined is among class or economic groups. Although in actuality there is considerable overlap between degraded cultural groups and economically disenfranchised groups, these two categories are by no means coextensive.²² As such, pursuing both agendas does not involve the contradiction conjured up by Fraser.

2) "Identity" as inevitably essentialist

Another feminist concern is that multiculturalism, like all other "identity" politics,²³ presupposes a highly essentialized conception of cultural identity; it is predicated on the "uncritical" valorization of reified and monolithic cultural identities.²⁴ However, there is no unified and natural identity, but only "permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints." We are all "chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism; in short, we are cyborgs."²⁵ Identities pertaining to gender, class, race, and culture are all "regulatory fictions" that have been consciously and subconsciously instituted and reinforced by the privileged and oppressed groups alike to serve the interests and the power relations of the status quo. They are all "fabrications" without any ontological basis, "manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means."²⁶

Identity politics is not only predicated on a false premise that an identity, be it gender, race, class or culture, can provide an essence on which a unified political front can be formed, but, more importantly, it is "exclusionary."²⁷ As has happened in the case of mainstream feminist theories centered around the essentialist notion of "women," those who do not fit into the mold of white, middle-class, North American, and Christian woman were excluded entirely or, if they were nominally included, alienated. Therefore, a prerequisite of a new politics is for people to "deconstruct" established identities and to be "weaned from their attachment to current cultural constructions of their interests and identities."²⁸ Political unity is to be based not on identity or "blood," but on coalitions

and affinities formed out of "choice." Political oppositions to various kinds of oppression are necessary, but they should be "coalitional" movements.²⁹

This brand of feminist critique of multiculturalism is paradoxical at best. While the feminist call for deconstruction of identities has been prompted by the critiques of mainstream feminism by racial ethnic feminists,³⁰ deconstruction is ultimately contradictory to the political stances taken by feminists of color. Racial ethnic feminists tend to organize their political movements primarily around "identity." Indeed, the starting point of their political struggles is that they are differently situated from white women. Due to their radically different "social locations" consisting not only of gender and class but also of race and culture, racial ethnic women experience oppression that is peculiar to people whose bodies are racialized and ethnicized by the society at large.³¹ Their bodies, or "flesh," as Cherrie Moraga calls them, are concrete sites of oppression, exploitation, misrecognition, and disrespect, prompting them to theorize from their "flesh and blood experiences."³²

Why such a paradox? Moya provides an incisive diagnosis: these "postmodern" feminists hastily jump from the justifiable claim that our social location does not *determine* our identity to the conclusion that therefore there is *no* causal relation between the two. No identity is fixed and immutable, and we are capable of choosing from multiple identities feasible in our particular social location. However, social location is causally *relevant* to our experiences and will influence the formation of our identity, which in turn will play a critical role in organizing subsequent experiences.³³

To those whose reality consists of oppression and discrimination owing to their ascriptive traits such as "race," ethnicity, or culture, one of the most effective ways to resist oppression is to demand the recognition and revaluation of the misrecognized aspects of their social location. In contrast, the politics of deconstruction which calls for dismantling different identities will lack material efficacy. Dissolving differences between women, and indeed between all people, will paradoxically result in a universalization that reduces all of us to fragmented, marginalized and liminal postmodern "mosaics." As a consequence, the distinction between the "oppressed" and the "oppressor" gets blurred as well.³⁴ The deconstructive strategies that call for the erasure of misrecognized aspects of our identity, instead of dealing with the

misrecognition directly, will only temporarily cover up the tensions which will reemerge later in different, and perhaps more explosive, modes.

3) Perpetuating the subjugation of racial ethnic women

A third, and perhaps the most influential and therefore damaging, feminist critique of multiculturalism is that granting multicultural rights to minority cultural groups will only perpetuate the patriarchal cultures that subjugate their women. Okin (1998, 1999, 2002) provides scathing criticisms of multiculturalism especially in relation to *immigrant* minority cultures, while Ayelet Shachar's "paradox of multicultural vulnerability" has been widely acknowledged as a serious problem in conferring self-government rights to *national minorities*.³⁵ In this section, I shall focus primarily on Okin's position, since Shachar is *not* arguing against multiculturalism per se. However, since Shachar's paradox of multicultural vulnerability does raise important concerns about multiculturalism pertaining to national minorities, I shall come back to it in the conclusion.

Okin believes that the liberal Western culture, although not perfect, "had departed far further from [its patriarchal past] than others," and therefore provides a superior feminist alternative to these minority cultures. If this is so, multiculturalism, even of liberal strands, goes counter to the feminist aspiration to ensure that women are not disadvantaged by their sex and that their human dignity be equally recognized as men.³⁶ On the one hand, granting such patriarchal cultures various multicultural privileges in the *public* realm will only aggravate the misery of their women. Okin illustrates her point by discussing recent successful cases of "cultural defense" where an immigrant defendant's criminal conduct, usually perpetrated against women and children, is exonerated by resorting to his or her cultural practices.³⁷ On the other hand, even if we grant multicultural privileges only to cultural minority groups that govern themselves in accordance with liberal principles in the public sphere, as Kymlicka suggests,³⁸ women of such cultures will still be negatively affected. Gender oppression occurring in the *private* sphere will continue unmitigated, and it is at home where a great portion of insidious culture-based gender construction occurs through patriarchal

indoctrinations. By supporting the survival of patriarchal cultures, multiculturalism prolongs the suffering of women in such cultures.

Therefore, Okin argues, one cannot equate the flourishing of a culture with the flourishing of its female members. In fact, the survival of some cultures clearly works against the well-being of their female members, especially in the context of the liberal West which offers a far better feminist alternative than such cultures. If so, women may be "much better off, from a liberal point of view, if the culture into which they were born were either gradually to become *extinct* or, preferably, to be encouraged and supported to *substantially alter* itself so as to reinforce the equality, rather than the inequality, of women."³⁹

This critique seems more convincing than others partly because it is bolstered by concrete examples of how racial ethnic women are actually disadvantaged by various multicultural accommodations in the *public* sphere. When examined in proper context, however, Okin's examples cannot invalidate multiculturalism itself. Adopting "cultural defenses" as a multicultural policy for adjudicating *immigrant* criminal cases is predicated on an implausible conception of multiculturalism. It not only gives the dominant society the authority and power to determine the contours of a minority culture, but the picture of the minority culture that emerges as a result of admitting certain problematic and contested practices as "cultural" is a monolithic and essentialized conception of minority culture that may not be acceptable to all members. As a result, the weakest and most vulnerable members are unfairly placed at risk.⁴⁰

The parallel practice in the dominant U.S. society would be to allow the "badgered man" or the "testosterone" excuses⁴¹ as legitimate grounds for acquitting a man who has perpetrated a violent crime against others by arguing that violent male behavior, whether due to stressful events in his life or his hormones, is representative of the American culture. As is illustrated by the absurdity of this parallel case, the conception of multiculturalism underlying cultural defenses is an untenable one. How best to accommodate immigrant groups in the dominant society and whether this requires adopting some culturally sensitive defenses in the court system is a debatable matter.⁴² However, what is clear is that cultural defenses as they are currently practiced

cannot be taken to indicate flaws of multiculturalism itself, as they rest on an indefensible conception of multiculturalism.

Okin's claim that multiculturalism exacerbates racial ethnic immigrant women's suffering in the *private* sphere is also problematic.⁴³ Okin's adamant assertion that racial ethnic immigrant women in general are more subjugated at their homes than their Western counterparts to the extent that their agency is severely curtailed⁴⁴ is more of a supposition in need of corroboration than an empirical statement. I find three problems in the manner in which Okin tries to support this claim. First, Okin often resorts to the perceived horrors of the often sensationalized customs such as clitoridectomy, "marriage by capture," polygamy, and forced child-marriage.⁴⁵ While such customs may be practiced by a small segment of certain immigrant groups, and rarely in such extreme forms, they are by no means as prevalent in immigrant communities as Okin insists.⁴⁶ Rather, the sensationalized coverage of such incidents by the mainstream media indicates the rarity of such occurrences even in the relevant communities; they are better understood as pathological cases much like incidents of wife battery or rape in the dominant society.

Secondly, Okin subscribes to a sweeping generalization concerning Third World non-liberal cultures that the aim of many of their customs is to "control women and render them, especially sexually and reproductively, servile to men's desires and interests."⁴⁷ The meaning of such cultural practices, however, must be examined in their cultural and historical context. If put in context, certain customs that may seem to an outsider as inveterately patriarchal may harbor subtle and complex implications, some of which may even be women-friendly. Leila Ahmed's discussion of "harem," a seemingly paradigmatic example of patriarchal oppression, provides an excellent case in point. Ahmed claims that harem is more accurately defined as "a system whereby the female relatives of a man...share much of their time and their living space [that] enables women to have frequent and easy access to other women in their community, vertically, across class lines, as well as horizontally." She suggests that it may well have been women themselves who have developed such a model of "strict segregation" in the first place, and that segregation between the sexes in contemporary Muslim countries is not necessarily a bad thing. In their separate world, women are allowed to

be free in their associations with other women which may in fact empower them in company of other women.⁴⁸

Thirdly, Okin, instead of providing concrete evidence of how racial ethnic *immigrant* women's socialization in the private sphere leaves their agency virtually paralyzed, often relies on the analyses of monotheistic religious texts or founding myths of *European* cultures or on recounting of the experiences of U.S. students, whether male or female, at fundamentalist Christian and Catholic schools whose life options are indeed seriously curtailed by their strict institutionalized religious upbringing.⁴⁹ When she does cite from a relevant work by Laurie Olsen on immigrant female students at a California public school,⁵⁰ statements of immigrant girls concerning their attachments to their family and culture—common and natural human sentiments in any cultural context—are put out of context and misinterpreted as illustrating an agential paralysis that prevents them from using the right of exit from their cultural community.⁵¹ Undeniably, many immigrant girls are faced with very difficult situations. However, tinges of tentativeness and indecisiveness detectable in their statements are concomitants of deliberations in all dilemmatic situations. Far from demonstrating their lack of agency, they exemplify these girls' well-developed sensitivity to aspects of their circumstances, including their attachment to their culture and family, which must be taken into consideration in order to make a fully considered decision.⁵²

Okin's good intentions notwithstanding, I believe Okin's oversights and misinterpretations as discussed above can be traced to her uncritical adoption of two gravely problematic assumptions. The first is that racial ethnic women are thoroughly subjugated by their culture. For example, in Okin's account of racial ethnic women's multicultural predicament, racial ethnic women, although they are the ones most directly affected by multiculturalism, are mostly silent,⁵³ except when their sporadic statements seem to confirm her own position. This is a significant omission because, as I shall show in the rest of this paper, taking their voices into account would prove the inadequacy of a position like Okin's. One explanation for this strange oblivion in an otherwise perceptive feminist theorist may be constructed by examining Okin's earlier article written in 1994. There, she strongly intimates that Third World women and, by

extension, racial ethnic women of minority cultures in the West, are thoroughly subjugated by their own patriarchal cultures and unable to speak for themselves. Okin states that "Oppressed people have often internalized their oppression so well that they have no sense of what they are justly entitled to as human beings." They "rationalize the cruelties," such as clitoridectomy, as necessary to "successful female development," and also "perpetuate the cruelties" by transmitting them to their own daughters. They are also "relatively cheerful" about their constrained state when "small mercies" are occasionally provided. In this way, they are suffering from "false-consciousness," and "*committed* outsiders can often be better analysts and critics of social injustice than those who live within the relevant culture."⁵⁴

In this analysis, racial ethnic women are reduced to mere puppets of patriarchal ideology whose agency is seriously flawed or constrained, unable even to recognize the injustice of their situation; they are helpless victims of their own tradition in need of "rescue" by "enlightened" outsiders.⁵⁵ Hence, Okin feels no qualms about making the judgment *on behalf of* these women, regardless of what they say, that their culture may be better "extinct" or "substantially altered" (read: liberalized in the image of the dominant culture) from a feminist perspective and that multiculturalism is "bad" for these women.⁵⁶ Yet, this assumption is extremely problematic not only because of its breathtaking condescension, but also because this condescending portrayal of racial ethnic women is in most cases not supported by evidence, as we have seen, but rather predicated on an uncritical subscription to pervasive stereotypes of an "average" racial ethnic woman of Third World origin as a victim of her culture.⁵⁷ Although I am not denying that there may be extreme and pathological cases where this may be true—which can also be said of women of the dominant liberal culture—the general claim that all or most racial ethnic women are so subjugated is simply not corroborated.

Secondly and relatedly, Okin subscribes to a highly essentialized view of minority cultures as static and backward looking, as opposed to vibrantly changing and forward looking Western culture.⁵⁸ Third World cultures are seen as inveterately patriarchal beyond salvation because they are composites of misogynist practices and customs that are ahistorically frozen in time, closed to modifications or change toward gender equality. Therefore, they may better be "extinct" or "substantially altered" much

like "primitive" indigenous cultures that were exterminated or eclipsed by the progression of history in which the West triumphed. So, while many Western feminists criticize multiculturalism for presupposing an essentialist conception of minority cultures, it is in fact these feminists themselves who fall into the trap of essentialism.⁵⁹

In general, the universalist stance, whether liberal or socialist, of mainstream feminist theorists is morally suspicious because it in fact replicates the Colonial Gaze that regards Third World cultures as stagnant, backward, and oppressive and Third World people as childlike, gullible, and lacking in agency.⁶⁰ The universalism that masks its specific and parochial genealogy privileges the cultural, social, and "racial" position of the theorists themselves and illegitimately imposes a "historically reductive" and monolithic notion of gender inequality on women with qualitatively different experiences.⁶¹ The presumption that these universalist feminists are "already aware of the most important problems faced by women outside the West, or that they are experts on how those problems should be solved" effectively writes off the voices and experiences of those who do not fit the stereotype.⁶²

By raising these concerns, however, I am not implying that Western feminists should never participate in discourses that concern racial ethnic women. Provided that they are invited by the insiders of minority cultures to participate, are sufficiently informed about, or better yet, immersed in the culture, respect the views of the insiders, and take caution not to dominate the discourse, they may "reveal things that an insider misses" or "inject new and sometimes needed ideas" into the discourse.⁶³ In the absence of such conditions, however, Western feminists must adopt a "double vision" of seeing themselves through others' eyes.⁶⁴ They must be willing to listen and empathize with the other's view, especially when dealing with issues that concern the Other. In this spirit, I shall turn to the views and experiences of the racial ethnic women themselves concerning their culture, with the aim of assessing multiculturalism from their own perspective.

IV. A Quandary concerning Racial Ethnic Women

If Okin is right that liberalism is well ahead of non-liberal minority cultures in gender equality and racial ethnic women are thoroughly subjugated by their cultures,

then, logic demands, racial ethnic women would feel little affinity to the culture that victimizes them; their connection to their patriarchal culture should be tenuous at best, ready to burst at the seams if the occasion arises; they should consider the passing of such a culture a welcoming event, being its most oppressed members. If so, they, to the extent that they can form their own opinions, would be in complete agreement with Okin that multiculturalism is indeed bad for them and therefore should be abandoned.

Paradoxically, however, instead of ardently wishing for the demise of their non-liberal culture and welcoming the "liberating" influence of liberalism from the larger society, many racial ethnic women are ambivalent about living in the West at best, and at worst unequivocally hostile toward outside critics of their patriarchal culture, whether feminist or non-feminist. If we leave aside the morally problematic claim that racial ethnic women are suffering from false consciousness, and take their claim seriously, this phenomenon poses a puzzle. The motive of the privileged members of a minority group (i.e., upper and middle class males) resisting external critiques can be attributed to their desire to maintain the status quo that privileges them.⁶⁵ However, it is difficult to make sense of the oppressed members defending their culture that constrains them against even well-intentioned criticisms by feminists. In what follows, I shall focus on how some racial ethnic feminists/women respond to external *feminist* criticisms of their culture.

The opposition is most vehemently put forth by some national minority women theorists/activists—I hesitate to use the term "feminists," due to their spirited rejection of Western feminism—who advocate indigenous rights and self-government. These racial ethnic women theorists/activists forcefully renounce criticisms of Western feminists and staunchly advocate their own culture, even in cases where they are clearly suffering from pervasive intra-cultural sexism.⁶⁶ These racial ethnic women make it clear that as people suffering from virulent forms of colonialism "culture is a larger reality [for them] than 'women's rights.'" As members of national minorities, their aim is to pursue "self-determination within [their] own cultural definitions and through [their] own cultural ways."⁶⁷ For these indigenous racial ethnic women theorists/activists, women's liberation, understood in a most inclusive sense, is possible only when the revival of their culture has been achieved.

Many racial ethnic feminists of other long-standing oppressed minority groups, particularly African American and Chicana, also reject mainstream feminist "solutions" to gender inequality. Faced with simultaneous multiple oppressions of gender, race, class, and culture, their experiences concerning family, patriarchy, reproduction, and sexuality, which have been identified by mainstream white feminists as sources of gender oppression, are decidedly different from white women's.⁶⁸ Mainstream white feminists, however, are often completely oblivious to this difference, as they see *all* women as victims of a common enemy, patriarchy, and uncritically universalize the experiences of white middle-class women to encompass experiences of racial ethnic women.⁶⁹ As a result, they not only silence but also misrepresent racial ethnic women's experiences. Some racial ethnic women even argue that white feminists are complicit in perpetuating European racist and imperialistic assumptions in their feminisms.⁷⁰

An intriguing phenomenon, I believe, concerns racial ethnic *immigrant* women who recently moved to the West. These women stand at the crossroads of their non-liberal and Western liberal cultures, presented with the situation where the contrast of these two cultures is the starkest. On the one hand, most of them have not been the direct victims of colonization or forced subjugation by the liberal society to which they have moved, making them less susceptible to distrust and misgivings toward the dominant culture, harbored by racial ethnic women of long standing oppressed groups in the West. On the other hand, due to their thorough immersion in their own culture, they have had a full taste of its patriarchal oppression. Hence, they are placed in a strategic position to make a relatively reliable comparative assessment of the two cultures in terms of gender equity.⁷¹ I shall primarily focus on these women's experiences and voices in the rest of this section, not only because Okin's main focus is on immigrant women but also because their strategic location may serve as a litmus test for assessing the correctness of Okin's claims.

Do racial ethnic immigrant women, as Okin would have us believe, wish to convert to liberalism and have their patriarchal culture, especially as manifested in the family institution,⁷² become extinct? Not at all. When immigrant women move to the West, their position vis-à-vis their men somewhat improves. As their men lose their

previous status as the sole breadwinner and the women themselves enter the labor market, their negotiating power vis-à-vis their men increases.⁷³ However, despite such "benefits" of moving to a liberal Western society, and, more importantly, despite the fact that their own cultural values and family institutions continue to constrain their lives in significant ways, many immigrant racial ethnic women are "deeply ambivalent about changes in family life, particularly those that would signify crucial departures from the traditional family system." Rather than exiting or trying to restructure their family in liberal ways, these women value the traditional family structure for its "ethic of collectivism and cooperation" to counteract individualism and materialism of the dominant culture of the U.S.⁷⁴

Why do these women uphold and defend their cultural values and family institution despite the fact that these continue to disadvantage and disenfranchise them? Why not wholeheartedly convert to liberalism, as Okin recommends, which seemingly promises a greater degree of gender equality? Two kinds of reasons may be identified when the voices of racial ethnic immigrant women are heard and their perspectives are taken seriously. First, their culture has an *intrinsic* value for them because it plays a crucial role in their identity formation, as I have explained in section II. As strong evaluators who make value judgments in accordance with culturally embedded hyper goods, their culture is essential to their identity. While it is possible for people not to be conscious of their cultural identity in the absence of an encounter with the "Other,"⁷⁵ racial ethnics residing in the West are placed in a situation where they are *forced* to recognize the cultural dimension of their identity in their experiences of racism and cultural imperialism.⁷⁶ In this situation, one way racial ethnics can maintain a modicum of self-respect⁷⁷ is by rejecting the distorted interpretation of their culture by the dominant society and reclaiming their despised cultural values as virtues. Against the deprecation of their culture by the dominant society, many racial ethnic immigrants view their cultural values and institutions as "a source of cultural pride and self-esteem" and see the contrast as "an essential and defining ingredient of their ethnic identity in the U.S."⁷⁸

Secondly, culture has a *strategic* value for racial ethnic women because its values and institutions function as a protective bulwark against various kinds of

oppressions they face in the dominant society. Despite the fact that racial ethnic women experience oppression due to their patriarchal family, "gender is only a part of a larger pattern of unequal social relations." Like other racial ethnic women, immigrant women experience "multiple jeopardy" that includes not only sexism within but also racism, cultural imperialism, and economic exploitation from without.⁷⁹ Although racial ethnic immigrant women gain relative empowerment vis-à-vis their men due to men's loss of status and earning power⁸⁰ as well as their own increased labor market participation, most racial ethnic immigrant women experience the migration to the West as detrimental rather than beneficial, since such benefits are not sufficient to offset the disadvantages racial ethnic women experience as a result of the migration.⁸¹ Under the conditions of racism, insecure political and legal status in the host country, and economic hardships, the family functions as "a bastion of resistance to race and class oppression" by providing a network of loyalty, support, and even economic security in a hostile environment, despite its patriarchal structure.⁸²

V. How to Deal with Gender Inequality within Minority Cultures?

Given some racial ethnic women's support of their own cultural values and institutions, I believe one cannot draw a facile conclusion that multiculturalism is categorically bad for racial ethnic women. Indeed, racial ethnic women may very well be supportive of multiculturalism that will enable them to maintain the survival, and even flourishing, of their culture in a challenging and hostile world. However, even if one grants that racial ethnic immigrant women are fully justified in valuing their own non-liberal culture, a nagging question remains: What should be done about rampant sexism in these cultures? It is undeniable that patriarchal elements within these cultures pose serious threats to the well-being of racial ethnic women.⁸³ Then, aren't the aforementioned feminists' concerns about multiculturalism ultimately justified?

The concern is real, but the solution is *not* to abandon multiculturalism. The solution is rather for the insiders of these cultures to *democratize* their decision procedures and to arrive at a substantively representative and collective consensus on multicultural issues that incorporates feedback from all members, including female members.⁸⁴ Outsiders, whether laypeople or policy makers, may have a role to play in

this process by supporting the racial ethnics' efforts to attain multicultural rights and by instituting and implementing multicultural policies that are reflective of their collective consensus.⁸⁵ The primary task, then, is the *democratization* of minority cultures.⁸⁶ The record of many identity groups, I submit, has not been stellar in this regard, and undoubtedly patriarchal oppression continues to constrain their female members.

However, it would be presumptuous to assume that minority cultures are incapable of progressing toward the goal of democratization. It is a difficult and slow process, just as it has been and still is in the liberal West. However, every culture contains the seeds of change within itself. Every culture is "shifting and emergent"⁸⁷ not only due to interactions with other cultures, but also due to the internal dialectic that takes place as insiders engage in cultural dialogues amongst themselves concerning the meaning of their cultural hyper goods, institutions, and practices. A culture does not have an unadulterated, monolithic, or unchanging essence carved in stone; it is rather a cluster of multiple plexuses,⁸⁸ many of which are hybrids of various cultural influences, with many layers and dimensions.⁸⁹ This multiplicity provides insiders with resources to reinterpret their cultural values and reorganize their cultural institutions and practices.

Racial ethnic women of minority cultures are indeed engaged in this process of reinterpreting their cultural values, challenging the status quo, and negotiating with their male counterparts.⁹⁰ Nazli Kibria's sociological study of a Vietnamese American immigrant community superbly exemplifies such negotiations taking place among *immigrants*. Due to the fact that migration to a new environment creates more uncertainty as new constraints as well as new opportunities open up, contestations and negotiations within racial ethnic immigrant families are likely to be more intense and dynamic than in other families. At the center of such contestations is the gender relation, involving issues of equitable sharing of resources and responsibilities among family members with the view to enhancing the well-being of the family.

According to this study, women were quick to seize the opportunity to wield more influence in the affairs of their family and community, made possible by their greater negotiating power. They actively worked to create configurations or realignment of their cultural institutions that are conducive to their interest. For

example, women attempted to support other women struggling against spouse abuse by *reinterpreting* the traditional family ideology to work for women's own advantage. It was not their aim to throw away their cultural values and convert to liberalism, but rather to preserve their traditional value system by modifying its patriarchal aspects through "manipulations" and "selective mobilization" of traditional values.⁹¹

An example of this in the case of *national minorities* can be found in the effort of the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) that opposed the move of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN)—the largest native organization, representing status Indians across Canada—to gain complete self-government by not being subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms through the adoption of the 1992 Charlottetown Accord. On the surface, this case may seem to go counter to my claim that racial ethnic women support multiculturalism, because the effort of the native leaders to gain complete self-government was frustrated by women's opposition. However, a deeper examination will prove that this is an instance that wonderfully exemplifies women's efforts to redefine their cultural values and to reconfigure their political structure. As such, it is a paradigm example of internal democracy at work.

In order to see this, it is important to bear in mind that the NWAC was *not* opposed to self-government of the Aboriginal people itself. On the contrary, they made it clear that they were for both gender equality *and* cultural rights. They also acknowledged that the roots of gender discrimination within the native cultures lie not with their traditional values but rather with the imposition of Western patriarchy by the dominant liberal society, which the male leaders then blithely put to use, routinely forfeiting women's rights by applying such imported patriarchal mechanisms. In this situation, women could not trust their tribal leaders to guarantee their protection from further abuses in the event of gaining complete group autonomy. Hence, they *first* requested this guarantee from the tribal leaders, the refusal of which led native women to insist on retaining the Charter that would guarantee the protection of their individual rights. While women's reform efforts were not accepted in 1992, this incident demonstrated to the patriarchal tribal leaders that women were a power to reckon with and has opened the door for further negotiations in the future among the insiders.⁹²

In this example, racial ethnic women were *not* rejecting multiculturalism, but rather embracing a kind of multiculturalism that would achieve both the protection of women *as well as* their cultural integrity. Instead of accepting the top-down conception of group autonomy imposed by patriarchal male leaders, racial ethnic women were proposing a different, bottom-up conception of group autonomy that is not only more in tune with their own traditional values, untainted by patriarchal Western impositions, but also more in line with gender equality.

One might object, however, that the fact that native women were adamant in keeping "imported" values of individual human rights indicates that they were less keen about keeping their cultural values and leaning toward liberalization of their non-liberal culture. Yet, there is no reason to believe that adopting foreign ideas necessarily implies rejecting one's culture. If some imported ideas aid in the actualization of valued cultural hyper goods, as in this particular case, insiders may legitimately utilize them. As mentioned previously, cultures evolve not only as a result of internal dynamics but also of cross-cultural interactions. No concept is the prerogative of the culture in which it originated. As unlikely as it is, even the replacement of traditional hyper goods with imported hyper goods would be legitimate *as long as* the insiders voluntarily adopt them as a result of extensive and peaceful dialogues amongst themselves.⁹³ Democracy is a process that does not have a predetermined endpoint.

These ongoing negotiations between racial ethnic women and men, and the ability of these women to reinterpret their cultural values and implement changes in their community clearly illustrate the potential for democratizing their patriarchal culture and mitigating patriarchal oppression through an *internal* dialectic. As cultural insiders, these women are in a much better position to bring about the necessary changes from within by manipulating and working through a multifaceted and multilayered valuational system in which they are thoroughly ensconced. Contrary to what mainstream feminists seem to think, they do *not* essentialize their own culture. On the contrary, they can construct multiple interpretations of their culture, adopt and transform foreign ideas and values in culturally sensitive ways, and formulate hybrid valuational constructs that are conducive to gender equality,⁹⁴ precisely because they

are thoroughly immersed in their cultural matrix and are able to discern subtleties of the complex web of cultural meanings behind various customs.⁹⁵ Indeed, as we have seen, it is Western feminists lacking this immersion who are prone to essentialize minority cultures.

Democracy, then, is primarily the task of insiders and is an achievement that must come about through inner dialectic. Non-interventionist outside promptings for democracy may prod the process, but it cannot be imposed from the outside; indeed democracy from without is a contradiction in terms. In this process, racial ethnic women must be the primary agents in bringing about this change through contestations and negotiations with male co-members on what their culture means to them. Then, the answer to how to resolve sexism within minority cultures is clear when looked at from racial ethnic women's perspective:

[It is] up to us to challenge, accept, or reform, depending on our various perspectives, on our own terms and in our own culturally specific ways.⁹⁶

VI. Conclusion

One may point out that my confidence in the internal dynamic in racial ethnic minority cultures does not do justice to the difficulties faced by women in such cultures, especially in cases where the multicultural right of comprehensive self-government is granted. To many mainstream feminists, Shachar's "paradox of multicultural accommodation" probably illustrates the worst-case scenario of granting such strong multicultural rights. In cases where the liberal state grants cultural minority groups "total self-governance powers" over matters of family law so that they may preserve their collective identities, women, because they are typically considered as guardians of such collective identities, will be disproportionately constrained and disadvantaged by such a policy, being subject, in effect, to "state-sanctioned violations of their basic rights."⁹⁷ Hence, while Shachar is more sensitive to the needs of cultural minorities to retain their culture than Okin and does not advocate abolishing multiculturalism, she believes that certain restrictions on the self-government of minority cultures are justifiable for the sake of women.⁹⁸

The primary assumption of Shachar is that the liberal state will inevitably intervene in the internal affairs of national minority groups (2000, p. 81). Hence the question is not *whether*, but rather, *how* the state should intervene, when, on whose behalf, and according to what criteria. Further, in cases where "a multicultural accommodation policy ... does not hear the voices of those insiders who might, ironically, be damaged by the very policy that purports to assist them," the state has a positive obligation to intervene.⁹⁹ Given this assumption, Shachar's solution—the intersectionist 'joint-governance' approach—is to grant the full legal authority to the group's family law in matters of demarcating membership boundaries, but for the liberal state to retain its full jurisdiction over distribution of rights, duties, and power between men and women of these groups. Hence, matters pertaining to "marital status definitions" are still regulated by the minority culture's family law, but divorce, child custody, alimony, property division will be under the state's jurisdiction.¹⁰⁰

As I see it, the first problem with Shachar's solution is that it is arbitrary and unstable. Given her assumption that the state should intervene in matters that disadvantage the vulnerable members of the minority group, it is not clear where to draw the line. Her suggestion is that the state should leave intact the demarcating function of the family law with respect to membership boundaries. However, should this be so even in cases where the family law decision is clearly unjust and detrimental to the vulnerable members? In the Martinez case she considers as her litmus test,¹⁰¹ it is obviously unfair that the Pueblo tribal status law grants tribal membership only to children of male Pueblos with a non-tribal spouse but not to children of female Pueblos with a non-tribal spouse. If the protection of the vulnerable members is a justifiable cause for state intervention, why should the state not intervene in this case? The distinction she draws between demarcating and distributing functions of family law to mark the threshold is ultimately arbitrary and possibly inconsistent with her assumption that the state has an obligation to intervene to protect the vulnerable.

This leads to a more fundamental second problem pertaining to the assumption itself. This assumption that the state's intervention is justifiable in some cases goes against the very spirit of instituting and implementing multiculturalism for national minorities.¹⁰² One of the most compelling reasons for granting self-government rights

to national minorities is that they had been subjected to unjust and arbitrary interventions by the dominant society in the past. Instituting multiculturalism for national minorities is partly for the state to admit, rather belatedly, that it has committed egregious wrongs against them and to try to correct them by giving back the "sovereign power" of the national minorities that "never belonged to the central government."¹⁰³ Then, the aim should be to restrain the central government's intervention as much as possible and to treat national minorities much like foreign sovereign nations. To impose liberal principles on non-liberal national minorities would be "a form of aggression or paternalistic colonialism." If certain national minorities decide to reject liberalism in favor of their non-liberal culture, then there is no choice for the liberal majority but to "learn to live with this, just as they must live with illiberal laws in other countries."¹⁰⁴

The paradox of multicultural accommodation is a serious concern. Yet, given the legitimacy of self-government for national minorities, the danger of this paradox must be weighed against the necessity of endowing national minorities with strong group autonomy. In this framework, the best way to resolve the paradox is by exerting constant efforts, both within and outside, to mitigate the disadvantages to racial ethnic women incurred by multicultural policies. From the inside, racial ethnic women must demand the democratization of their internal decision procedures and reforms of their patriarchal tribal or family laws, and, in case all fails, the guaranteed right of exit;¹⁰⁵ from the outside, civil and non-interventionist support, requested by racial ethnic women's groups, for the democratization of their community must continue. Yet, through it all, the most important axiom to bear in mind is that it is the racial ethnic women themselves who must initiate such processes, and outsiders, however well-intentioned, must humbly accept their supporting role.

A Third World Feminist Defense of Multiculturalism

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Abstract

Many influential Western feminists of diverse backgrounds have expressed concerns that multiculturalism, while strengthening the power of racial ethnic minority cultural groups vis-à-vis the majority, worsens the position of the most vulnerable

members of such groups, especially women. Socialist feminists, postmodern feminists, and liberal feminists have offered different reasons for their opposition to multiculturalism. Yet, despite their good intentions, these feminists have been consistently dismissive of the voices of racial ethnic women, many of whom argue for the importance of sustaining their own "illiberal" cultures within the Western context. I offer a Third World feminist defense of multiculturalism by paying attention to these women whose varying assessments of multiculturalism are less unequivocally negative, more ambivalent and complex, and even affirming and positive.

Abstract: philosopher's index

99 words

Many influential Western feminists of diverse backgrounds have expressed concerns that multiculturalism, while strengthening the power of racial ethnic minorities vis-à-vis the majority, worsens the position of its most vulnerable members, women. Despite their good intentions, these feminists have been consistently dismissive of the voices of racial ethnic women, many of whom argue for the importance of sustaining their own "illiberal" cultures within the Western context. I offer a Third World feminist defense of multiculturalism by paying attention to these women whose varying assessments of multiculturalism are less unequivocally negative, more ambivalent and complex, and even affirming and positive.

To the copywriter of STP:

Dear Margaret,

Thank you for a job well-done on the proofs. Here is the requested information and some additional corrections pertaining to the endnotes (please let me know ASAP if you cannot accommodate them). I shall fax some additional corrections in the text itself on Monday:

Thanks,
R.Herr

Endnotes:

1. Zinn & Dill: pp. 3-12
Kibria: pp. 247-261

5. curriculum → curricula

10. The full title of Taylor's book is: *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers 1*.

17. Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, pp. 25-26.

31. Moya, pp. 125-150.

33. Young: sorry I couldn't find the article.

35. Please eliminate "Actually," from the endnote. (3rd line); I don't believe it is necessary to provide pg. # in the 3rd line from the bottom.

41. May, pp. 8-27

43. Please eliminate this endnote. Please make sure that you use the full reference of Spinner-Halev in endnote 49.

46. the homeland + their homeland → their native countries

48. Honig, pp. 35-40

49. Al-Hibri, pp. 41-46

55. Parekh, pp. 69-75

58. Bhabha, pp. 79-84.

67. Nzegwu, pp. 286-301

68. Lorde, pp. 110-113

Zinn, pp. 303-314

Dill, pp. 149-170

75. Sorry. I cannot find Hall's paper either.

76. Parekh, p. 118

* I would like to thank Paul Benson, Marilyn Fischer, Jeff Spinner-Halev, and a referee of the *Social Theory and Practice* for helpful comments on previous versions of this paper.

¹ Following many feminist sociologists, I shall use the term "racial ethnic" to refer to members of racialized and ethnicized minority cultural groups ("minority groups," for short) within the liberal West. Within the U.S. context, these groups include Native Americans, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans. I shall use this term interchangeably with "people of color." See, Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Difference and Domination," in Zinn and Dill (eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), n. 1, pp.11-12; Nazli Kibria, "Migration and Vietnamese American Women: remaking Ethnicity," in *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, n.1, p.259.

² The first worry is expressed by Nancy Fraser in "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Postsocialist' Age," in *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997). The second concern is raised by Fraser "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy," in *Justice Interruptus*; Donna Haraway in "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980's," in Linda Nicholson (ed.), *Feminism/Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Judith Butler in "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory, and Psychoanalytic Discourse," in *Feminism/Postmodernism*. The third is Susan Okin's critique found in "Feminism and Multiculturalism: Some Tensions," *Ethics* 108 (1998): 661-684; *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); and "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?: Group Rights, Gender, and Realistic Rights of Exit," *Ethics* 112 (2002): 205-230. A related

position can be found in Ayelet Shachar's "Group Identity and Women's Rights in Family Law: The Perils of Multicultural Accommodation," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 6 (1998): 285-305; "The Paradox of Multicultural Vulnerability: Individual Rights, Identity Groups, and the State," in Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes (eds.), *Multicultural Questions* (New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999); and "On Citizenship and Multicultural Vulnerability," *Political Theory* 28 (2000): 64-89.

³ Similar concerns have been raised about Western feminist anthropologists ignoring the voices of Third World women by Aihwa Ong in "Colonialism and Modernity: Feminist Re-presentations of Women in Non-Western Societies," *Inscriptions* 3 (1988): 79-93.

⁴ For examples, see Lisa Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity: Making Asian American Difference," *Diaspora* 1(1991): 24-44; Maria Lugones, "Hispaneando y Lesbiando: On Sarah Hoagland's *Lesbian Ethics*," *Hypatia* 5 (1990): 138-46.

⁵ Okin takes this socio-political sense of multiculturalism as distinct from multiculturalism in the context of education ("Feminism and Multiculturalism," pp. 661-62). However, as Will Kymlicka makes clear in his examples of polyethnic rights, these two senses are not wholly unrelated. For example, the "polyethnic" right of minority cultures to demand that their history be included in the school curriculum pertains to both political and educational realms. See "The Theory and Practice of Immigrant Multiculturalism," *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (N.Y., N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.164-65.

⁶ This is not to say that Kymlicka's account is without problems. For example, Iris Young criticizes Kymlicka's dichotomous categorization of cultural diversity in the West as arbitrary, as it ignores other important sources of cultural diversity such as the forced migration of a large population of Africans as slaves. See, Young, "A Multicultural Continuum: A Critique of Will Kymlicka's Ethnic-Nation Dichotomy," *Constellations* 4 (1997): 48-53). While this critique is valid, I am inclined to support Kymlicka's claim that by focusing on the two more "successful" cases of multicultural accommodations, one might be able to devise better ways of accommodating other racialized cultural groups such as African Americans. See, Kymlicka, "Do We Need a Liberal Theory of Minority Rights? Reply to Carens, Young, Parekh and Forst," *Constellations* 4 (1997):72-87, pp. 78-80.

⁷ The "societal" culture refers to a comprehensive way of life that "provides its members with a meaningful way of life across the full range of human activities, including social, educational, religious, recreational, and economic life, encompassing both public and private spheres." Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1995), pp. 76. See also *ibid.*, p. 89; Avishai Margalit and Joseph Raz, "National self-determination," *Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1990): 447-449, pp. 444, 449; Joseph Raz, "Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective," *Ethics in the Public Domain: Essays in the Morality of Law and Politics* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 176-77.

⁸ Young also criticizes Kymlicka's assumption that immigrants' migration to the West is "voluntary" ("A Multicultural Continuum," p.50). Even excluding the case of refugees, some groups of immigrants are often forced to leave their home countries due to dire economic circumstances. The staggering global economic injustice which drives poverty stricken people to seek a better life in the West is an urgent issue that must be addressed, and wealthy Western nations, given the colonial past and neo-colonial present, must bear heavier responsibility to alleviate this problem. Yet, this is a separate issue from multiculturalism, and, as Kymlicka points out, the best way to accommodate economic refugees would be to treat them on a par with voluntary immigrants and facilitate their integration into the larger society (*Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 98-100).

⁹ On national minorities, see Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 30, 79-80, 100-101; "Minority Nationalism and Multination Federalism," *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (N.Y., N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 95. On immigrants, see *Multicultural Citizenship*, p. 31; "The Theory and Practice of Immigrant Multiculturalism," pp. 160, 161. For examples of polyethnic policies, see Kymlicka 2001a, p. 164-65, and 1995, p. 31.

¹⁰ In Charles Taylor's words, they are goods that are "incomparably more important than others but provide the standpoint from which these must be weighed, judged, decided about." See, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.63. See also *ibid.*, pp. 27-28, 42, 43, 44, 63; "What is Human Agency," *Philosophical Papers* 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 23-26.

¹¹ In the contemporary context, this locality will be a nation in most cases. However, in many sub-Saharan African nations, a societal culture is not a national culture but a tribal culture. Part of the reason is that national boundaries of most of these nations were drawn arbitrarily by European imperialists to serve their self-interest. Other societal cultures that do not coincide with national boundaries include Kymlicka's national minority cultures.

¹² While this account follows the communitarian line of thinking, liberals have also stressed that the flourishing of a culture is a necessary "precondition" for the agency of the members. See,

Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp.76, 83, 89; Raz, "Multiculturalism," pp.176, 177, 178; Margalit and Raz, "National self-determination," p. 449.

¹³ Raz, "Multiculturalism," p.177.

¹⁴ As Young rightly points out, racial ethnics suffer from other forms of socio-politico-economic subjugation such as exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and violence. Yet I shall focus here on racism and cultural imperialism. See Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1990), chapter 2. For more on cultural imperialism, see *ibid.*, pp. 58-60, 148.

¹⁵ See Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), p.55; David Goldberg, "The Social formation of Racist discourse," *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 296-97.

¹⁶ See Margalit and Raz, "National self-determination," p. 449; Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p. 89; Taylor, "Politics of Recognition," in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism and the 'Politics of Recognition'* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 36; Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflict*, trans. Joel Anderson (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997), pp. 95, 135, chapters 6 and 8. Isaiah Berlin calls this state of mind "wounded pride." See, "The bent twig," *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 252.

¹⁷ As Honneth and Taylor, echoing Hegel, have rightly argued, our identity formation and its healthy maintenance is an intersubjective process, requiring positive feedback from those with whom we encounter. If we do not receive proper recognition, or suffer from misrecognition, from those with whom we interact, then our sense of self suffers from maladies that are analogous to physical illnesses (see, Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, p. 135).

¹⁸ Fraser, "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy," pp. 181, 185, 186; see also, "From Redistribution to Recognition?" pp. 13-14.

¹⁹ Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition?" pp. 16, 23, 28.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31.

²¹ Young, "Unruly Categories: A Critique of Nancy Fraser's Dual Systems Theory," *New Left Review* (March/April, 1997), pp. 151, 158; see also pp. 152, 153, 154, 157.

²² What Fraser calls the "pure" form of cultural group such as gays and lesbians ("From Redistribution to Recognition?" p. 18) might be an obvious example that illustrates the conceptual distinctness of the two groups. Another example is Asian Americans who have

achieved relative economic parity with the white majority but still suffer from misrecognition and/or non-recognition.

²³ Feminists who raise this issue are concerned with identity politics in general and not specifically with multiculturalism. Although the extension of identity politics is wider than multiculturalism that primarily involves racial ethnic cultural groups, the concerns these feminists express, I believe, are applicable to multiculturalism.

²⁴ Fraser, "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy," p. 185.

²⁵ Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," pp. 196, 191, 220; see also p. 197.

²⁶ Butler, "Gender Trouble," pp. 339, 336, 338.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 339.

²⁸ See Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition?" pp. 24-25, 31. However, Fraser seems to waver on her stance toward "deconstruction." In one article, Fraser claims that she is not advocating the "deconstructive version of antiessentialism," which, by regarding all identities as "equally fictional, equally repressive, and equally exclusionary," practically precludes "any possibility of distinguishing emancipatory and oppressive identity claims, benign and pernicious differences" (Fraser, "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy," pp. 183, 184). In another article, however, Fraser advocates a version of "deconstruction" without clearly distinguishing her position from the deconstructive version of antiessentialism she criticizes (Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition?" pp. 24-5).

²⁹ Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs," pp. 196, 197, 198.

³⁰ Haraway, for example, takes racial ethnic women as exemplary "cyborgs," the paradigmatic subjects in the postmodern world (*ibid.*, p.216), but emphasizes that there is no "essential criterion for identifying who is a woman of color" (*ibid.*, p. 197). For an account of the influence of racial ethnic feminists' thinking on mainstream feminism in general, see Cheryl Johnson-Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts," in C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo and L. Torres (eds.), *Third World Feminism and the Politics of Feminism* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991). Johnson-Odim points out that it is in major part "the involvement of Third World women, both within and outside the U.S., that has accounted for the broadening definitions of feminism to incorporate race and class analysis" (p. 316).

³¹ Paula Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity: Cherrie Moraga and Chicana Feminism," M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (eds.), *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 127.

³² Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (eds.), *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983), p. 23, see also pp. xviii, xxiv.

³³ Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity," pp. 135, 137-38; see also Young, "Deferring Group Representation," *Nomos XXIX: Ethnicity and Group Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p. 365.

³⁴ Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity," p. 134, see also p. 126; interestingly enough, Fraser raises the same concern with the "deconstructive version of antiessentialism" ("Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy," pp. 183-84).

³⁵ See Ayelet Shachar, "The Paradox of Multicultural Vulnerability: Individual Rights, Identity Groups, and the State," in Christian Joppke and Steven Lukes (eds.), *Multicultural Questions* (New York City, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 87. Actually, Shachar's main focus in discussing this paradox and from which she primarily draws her insights are "religiously defined *nomoi* groups," especially Israeli Jews. See, "On Citizenship and Multicultural Vulnerability," *Political Theory* 28 (2000): 64-89, p. 70; "Group Identity and Women's Rights in Family Law: The Perils of Multicultural Accommodation," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 6 (1998): 285-305, p. 291. Yet, she applies her musings about such religious groups to the situation of racial ethnic national minorities, as is clear from her discussion of the Martinez case in "Group Identity and Women's Rights in Family Law." In my discussion of this paradox, I shall leave out the case of religious groups because my focus is on racial ethnic cultural groups who have been oppressed by the liberal society in varying degrees.

³⁶ Okin, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* pp. 16-17; "Feminism and Multiculturalism," p. 661. Okin reaffirms this conviction in even stronger terms in "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" pp. 229-30.

³⁷ See Okin, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* pp. 18-19. Examples are a Japanese American mother who killed her children as a result of attempting children-mother suicide, a Chinese American man who killed his wife for infidelity, and a Hmong man who abducted and raped a Laotian American woman, all of whom were acquitted or received reduced charges by using cultural defense.

³⁸ See Kymlicka, *Contemporary Political Philosophy* (N.Y., N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.339, 338, 343; *Multicultural Citizenship*, p.153.

³⁹ Okin, "Feminism and Multiculturalism," p. 680; *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* pp. 22-3, emphases mine. See also, "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" pp. 229-30.

⁴⁰ For a related critique, see Seyla Benhabib, *Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 90.

⁴¹ See, Larry May, "Anger, Desire, and Moral Responsibility," in *Masculinity and Morality* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁴² Indeed, Kymlicka's list of polyethnic rights does not include "cultural defenses." See, "The Theory and Practice of Immigrant Multiculturalism," pp. 164-65.

⁴³ Jeff Spinner-Halev attributes to Okin the view that multiculturalism is bad because "minority rights [are] used to discriminate against girls and women [of minority cultures.]" See, his "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," *Ethics* 112 (2001): 84-113, p. 89. If this were what Okin was saying, it is indeed irrelevant to multiculturalism as such, because it is a critique of liberalism in general that distinguishes between public/private spheres. Yet, I believe Spinner-Halev is misrepresenting Okin's argument here, which is rather that multiculturalism is bad for women of minority cultures because it *prolongs* patriarchal cultures that would otherwise be liberalized sooner had it not been for multicultural privileges. As such, her critique *is* relevant to multiculturalism.

⁴⁴ In her "Feminism and Multiculturalism," p. 678, Okin says that in patriarchal minority cultures "the healthy development of girls is endangered." Also on p. 683, she states that "Serious constraints, rather than personal freedom or the capacity to make meaningful choices about their lives, make up a major part of *their* cultural heritage" (emphasis in the original). In her *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* p. 22, she says that such adverse socialization of girls "not only severely constrains their choices but also seriously threatens their well-being and even their lives."

⁴⁵ For places where Okin professes to provide examples of gender oppression occurring at home, see "Feminism and Multiculturalism," pp.680-83; *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women*, p. 14-15; "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" pp. 216-220.

⁴⁶ This is not to deny that some immigrant minority cultures do adhere to the customs of their homeland culture such as arranged marriages. The anxiety caused by such a custom in immigrant girls is discussed in depth in Lauri Olsen's *Made in America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools* (New York: New Press, 1997), chapter 6. However, such customs are not practiced in immigrant communities in as rigorous a manner as in the homeland (p. 134), and, while some girls are forced to adhere to such a custom, most immigrant parents do not enforce it as strictly as they would in their homeland, as they realize that "[making it in America] is closely tied to developing their daughters' earning power and schooling" (p. 140).

⁴⁷ Okin, *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* P. 16.

⁴⁸ See, Leila Ahmed, "Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem," *Feminist Studies* 8 (1982): 521-534, pp. 524, 528-9. Other "misogynist" customs that are defended by Third World feminists for similar reasons include "arranged marriages" (Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," p. 15; Carby, "White Woman Listen!, p. 114). See also, Bonnie Honig, "My Culture Made Me Do It," in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?*

⁴⁹ See Okin's *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Pp. 13-14, for her analyses of religious texts or myths. A similar criticism of this first disjunct can be found in Azizah al-Hibri's "Is Western Patriarchal Feminism Good for Third World/Minority Women?" in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* P. 42. For her critique of fundamentalist religious upbringing, see Okin, "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" p. 218. A similar objection to Okin is raised by Spinner-Halev, "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," p. 90.

⁵⁰ Olsen, *Made in America: Immigrant Students in Our Public Schools* (New York: New Press, 1997).

⁵¹ Okin, "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" p. 229. See also "Feminism and Multiculturalism," pp. 682-683.

⁵² In fact, in her perspicacious book, *Made in America*, Olsen illustrates immigrant girls actively engaged in deliberations about what kind of life they would choose, while under pressure from various constraining factors at the crossroads of cultures (see, pp. 122, 123, 125, 135, 138). They are fully exposed to the dominant liberal way of life at the school and through mass media (see, pp. 125, 127, 142-43), about which they are ambivalent, sometimes admiring the liberal culture and at other times distancing themselves from it (see for example, pp. 124, 141). In the process, some immigrant girls did choose to exit, while most did not (see, pp. 141, 147-48). They were in no way sheltered from "any alternatives but enculturation into strict gender roles," unlike some of their peers at U.S. religious schools (Okin, "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" p. 217). Spinner-Halev makes a similar point in "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," pp. 89-90.

⁵³ This problem can also be found in both postmodern feminists' and Fraser's socialist feminist positions; indeed, many racial ethnic feminists point out that this is an endemic problem in Western feminism. See Hazel Carby, "White Woman Listen! Black Feminism and the Boundaries of Sisterhood," in R. Hennessy and C. Ingraham (eds.) *Materialist Feminisms* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 114, 115, 119; Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," *Feminist Review* (1984): 3-19, pp. 6-7, 9, 11; Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under

Western Eyes," in C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo and L. Torres (eds.), *Third World Feminism and the Politics of Feminism* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 72; Jane Flax, "Race/Gender and the Ethics of Difference: A Reply to Okin's 'Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences,'" *Political Theory* 23 (1995): 500-510, pp. 502, 504.

⁵⁴ Okin, "Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences," *Political Theory* 22 (1994): 5-24, pp. 5, 19. This assumption is subtly replicated in her "Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" when she claims that the right to exit is "unthinkable" for racial ethnic immigrant girls (pp. 222, 229).

⁵⁵ For a similar critique of such condescension, see Bhikhu Parekh's "A Varied Moral World" in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* P. 73.

⁵⁶ Perhaps this is just as well, since Okin, as a universalist, has already decided that all women, regardless of their racial, class, national, and cultural origin, suffer from the universal and uniform ill of gender inequality and that the only solution is to apply liberal feminism as has been laid out in her influential book, *Justice, Gender and Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1989). According to this book, since this sexist reality has often been obscured by the public/private dichotomy, the way to solve this ill is to turn our attention to the household itself and uncover how women's labor within the household has been neglected and devalued. This injustice within households, Okin contends, is similar across the West and the Third World, except that Third World women's situation is "similar but *much* worse" ("Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences," pp. 11, 13, 14, 17).

⁵⁷ Mohanty provides a stark portrayal of a stereotypical Third World woman, presupposed by many Western feminists: She leads "an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and her being 'third world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc.)." See, "Under Western Eyes," p. 56. I think this captures the stereotype of racial ethnic women of Third World origin residing in the West as well.

⁵⁸ Fraser also subscribes to this view when she criticizes multiculturalism as "balkanizing" cultures and setting them apart, predicated on the notion of difference as "given positivities" (Fraser, "Multiculturalism, Antiessentialism, and Radical Democracy," p. 185). For a similar critique of such tendencies, see Homi Bhabha, "Liberalism's Sacred Cow," in *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* Pp. 81-2.

⁵⁹ A similar observation is made by Benhabib as she reflects on the standard Western way of viewing minority cultures (*Claims of Culture*, pp. 90, 101, 104).

⁶⁰ "Haole [white people] who are feminist, or Marxist, continue to display an appalling imperialism grounded in a fundamental, unquestioned racism that views Native history, culture, and ways of life as inferior to white Western history, culture, and ways of life. This attitude of assumed superiority is like the air white people breathe." Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993), p. 266. See also, *ibid.*, p. 149, p. 273; Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism*. (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 48-9.

⁶¹ Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes," p. 64. see also Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, p. 164 ff.; Linda Archibald and Mary Crnkovich, "Intimate Outsiders: Feminist Research in a Cross-Cultural Environment," in Sandra Burt and Lorraine Code (eds.), *Changing Methods* (Petersborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 1995), p. 107.

⁶² Alison Jaggar, "Globalizing Feminist Ethics," *Hypatia* 13 (1998): 7-31, pp. 20-21.

⁶³ David Crocker, "Insiders and Outsiders in International Development," *Ethics & International Affairs* 5 (1991):149-73, p. 165.

⁶⁴ Flax, "Race/Gender and the Ethics of Difference," p. 507; see also Archibald and Crnkovich, "Intimate Outsiders," pp. 116-17, 123.

⁶⁵ See for examples, Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 38-39, 41-44.

⁶⁶ The starkest example is the angry response of Australian aboriginal women to a white feminist anthropologist's research finding, "co-authored" with an aboriginal woman that revealed the rampant intra-racial rape among Aborigines of Australia. See, Diane Bell and Topsy Nelson, "Speaking about Rape is Everyone's Business." *Women's Studies International Forum* 12 (1989): 403-16.

⁶⁷ Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, pp. 265-6. The unequivocal championing of nationalism in some cases is backed by the belief that their pre-colonial culture had already attained gender equality, or something quite close to it, before the contamination by sexist colonial impositions. In the case of Native Americans in the U.S., see Annette Jaimes with Theresa Halsey, "American Indian women: At the center of indigenous resistance," Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (eds.), *Dangerous liaisons: Gender, nation, and postcolonial perspectives* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 301-9; for similar assertions in the case of Africa, see Carby, "White Woman Listen!" pp. 121-22, and Nkiru Nzegwu, "Recovering Igbo Traditions: A Case for Indigenous Women's Organizations in Development," in C. Koggel (ed.), *Moral Issues in Global Perspective* (Petersborough, Canada: Broadview Press, 1999); German feminist Maria Mies provides a similar account in pre-colonial Burma in her "Colonization and

Housewifization," in R.Hennessy and C. Ingraham (eds.) *Materialist Feminisms* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 177-8. For other examples of non-Western cultures which were or are less patriarchal than the West, see also Carby, "White Woman Listen!" pp. 124-128; Johnson-Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts," p. 321.

⁶⁸ On multiple oppressions of racial ethnic women, see Carby, "White Woman Listen!" p. 111; Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," in Zillah Eisenstein (ed.), *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979), pp. 362, 366-67; see also Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984). For accounts of differences between experiences of white women and racial ethnic women, see Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," pp. 8-15; Carby, "White Woman Listen!" pp. 112-116; Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1991), chapters 3 and 6; Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), chapter 12; Angela Harris, "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory," *Stanford Law Review* 42 (1990): 11-17, pp.15-6; Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, "Family, Economy, and the State: A Legacy of Struggle for Chinese American Women," in Silvia Pedraza and Ruben G. Rumbaut (eds.), *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), p. 113. For example, in the case of the family institution, although white women were undoubtedly constrained by it, the maintenance of the institution was actively supported by the authorities and the community. In the case of racial ethnic women, on the other hand, they were often "denied the protections and buffering of a patriarchal family" and had to devise ways to sustain their family's survival through innovation and hard work. Maxine Baca Zinn, "Feminist Rethinking from Racial-Ethnic Families," in Zinn and Dill (eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 307; see also Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Fictive Kin, Paper Sons, and Compadrazgo: Women of Color and the Struggle for Family Survival," in *Women of Color in U.S. Society*, pp. 149-50. Hence, the family, rather than being a site of gender oppression, is often considered as "a site of political and cultural resistance to racism." Carby, "White Woman Listen!" p. 112; see also Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, p. 44.

⁶⁹ See Harris, "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory," pp.15-16; see also Johnson-Odim, "Common Themes, Different Contexts"; Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," p.4.

⁷⁰ See Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," pp. 5-7.

⁷¹ My account of immigrant women will rest primarily on studies of a relatively small group of immigrant women, specifically East and Southeast Asian. I concede that their experiences may not be generalizable to other immigrant women of different cultural heritage and immigration experiences. However, I believe they provide sufficient counterevidence against Okin's universalist claims.

⁷² I shall focus on the family because as immigrants move to a new environment the family is the main site in which patriarchy of their old culture most strongly persists.

⁷³ See Chow, "Family, Economy, and the State," p. 122; Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men: Labor, Laws, and Love* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), pp. 8, 10.

⁷⁴ Nazli Kibria, *Family Tightrope: The Changing Lives of Vietnamese Americans* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 8, 9; see also, pp. 137, 170-71; Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, p. 77.

⁷⁵ Cultural identity, like other aspects of identity in general, is not "the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity," but emerges only via contrast and exclusion. See, Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" in S. Hall and P du Gay (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 4.

⁷⁶ See Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, pp. 12, 87; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, p. 68; see also Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, p. 148 ff. Although adults also suffer from cultural imperialism, it is pre-adolescent children who suffer the most because their identities have not yet fully formed. Many young members, familiar only with the culture of their adopted countries and exposed to stereotypical vilifications of their native cultures, internalize cultural imperialism and suffer from chronic low self-esteem. For examples, see Bhikhu Parekh, "Balancing unity and diversity in multicultural societies," in Dan Avnon and Avner de-Shalit (eds.), *Liberalism and its Practice* (London: Routledge, 1994); Nellie Wong, "When I Was Growing Up," in Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (eds.), *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (New York: Kitchen Table, 1983); Cherrie Moraga, "La Guera," in *This Bridge Called my Back*; Chrystos, "I Walk in the History of My People," in *This Bridge Called my Back*.

⁷⁷ Another way is to fully assimilate to the dominant culture, as many Eastern and Southern European immigrants to the U.S. have done at the turn of the Century. However, for those who exhibit "entropy-resistant" traits such as distinct "racial" features in the case of racial ethnics, assimilation with the discriminatory Other is usually not an option. See, Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p.64.

⁷⁸ On this in general, see, Berlin, "The bent twig," pp. 245-47; Taylor, "Nationalism and modernity," in Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (eds.), *The morality of nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 44-46. In the case of racial ethnic immigrants, see Kibria, *Family Tighrope*, pp. 109, 170; cf. pp. 9, 170.

⁷⁹ Kibria, "Migration and Vietnamese American Women: remaking Ethnicity," in Zinn and Dill (eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), p. 249; see also Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, p. 108.

⁸⁰ Asian men, as they move to the West, not only lose their capacity to function as a breadwinner, the role they took for granted in their home countries, but are also exposed to pernicious racial stereotypes that deprive them of their "manhood." This goes back to the early years of Chinese migration around the turn of the Century when the only kind of occupation that Chinese men could find was domestic servitude or laundry business (Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, pp. 35, 36). Such racist debasement of Asian men makes it hard for Asian women to address male privilege in their immigrant communities (ibid., p. 115). Collins reports a similar tendency of Black women to persevere in gender oppression by Black men in the "love and trouble" tradition (Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, p. 184). For an account of racism that leads to the disempowerment of African American men, see Carby, "White Woman Listen!" pp. 113, 115; on stereotyping men of color, especially Black men, as potential rapists of white women, see Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," p. 14; Davis, *Women, Race and Class*, chapter 11.

⁸¹ For example, economic resources of the family dwindle as men's earning power diminishes. While women's participation in the labor market increases, their job opportunities, due to their "race" and foreignness, are confined to the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder such as clerical, service, operative, factory or sweatshop jobs that are exploitative. See for example, Esther Ngan-Ling Chow, "Asian American Women at Work," in Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (eds.), *Women of Color in U.S. Society* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), pp. 209-12. "These women's participation in even lower-paid wage work [is] a *survival strategy*, a necessity, and *not* a choice." K. Sacks and N. Scheper-Hughes, "Introduction," *Women's Studies* 13 (1987):175-182, pp. 178-180, as quoted in Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, p.11. Also migration often brings about losses of "traditional sources of support and power in the domestic sphere," such as the power and authority they used to have over children in their home country (Kibria, *Family Tighrope*, p.19).

⁸² Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, p. 77. For similar accounts, see also Kibria, *Family Tightrope*, p. 19; Glenn Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Racial Ethnic Women's Labor: The Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender Oppression," in Rae Lesser Blumberg (ed.), *Gender, Family, and Economy: The Triple Overlap* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991), pp. 194-95; Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Issei, Nissei, War Bride* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p. 193. "Women's support of this system reflected the power that it accorded them as mothers as well as its centrality to the collectivist household economy. The collectivist household economy, which women (and men) saw as central to their ability to survive and to achieve potential socioeconomic mobility, was organized around and legitimated by the traditional family system [such as the emphasis on] men's and children's familial obligations" (Kibria, *Family Tightrope*, p. 137).

⁸³ Many forms of identity politics are also often predicated on a narrow construction of their identity and excluded or ostracized those who did not fit into that narrow conception. See Lowe, "Heterogeneity, Hybridity, Multiplicity," pp. 30-32; Lugones, "Hispaneando y Lesbiando"; see also Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," p. 369. Some studies report that the excluded members find the ostracism from their own group more painful than the discrimination from without. See, Mary Water, "Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?" in Silvia Pedraza and Ruben G. Rumbaut (eds.) *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), p. 451; Olsen, *Made in America*, p. 52.

⁸⁴ One possible objection to my conviction that non-liberal cultures can achieve their own brand of democracy is that some cultures are so deeply invested in hierarchical and non-democratic forms of legitimacy that democracy may not be a realistic option for them. I think this objection raises a very crucial question, which I cannot discuss here in depth that it deserves. However, I believe one can meaningfully talk about democracy even with respect to non-liberal cultures as a process by which cultural insiders give or withdraw consent, free from coercion or deception, to a political, social, economic, and cultural system that affects their daily life.

For example, some cultures—the "Confucianist" cultures of East Asia spring to mind—do not advocate an individualistic society which operates with the aim of promoting freedom of individuals to pursue their personal goods. The kind of ideal society envisioned by Confucianism is a harmonious society in which every person acts as expected of her role in a variety of human relations. Although this may sound hopelessly conservative and patriarchal, it is not necessarily so. Indeed, the ideal—or the hyper good—of "harmony" in itself is a worthy ideal. Admittedly,

there will be disagreements about what such roles entail, and depending on what kind of interpretation is endorsed, the societal "harmony" may be more or less hierarchical or egalitarian. Democracy consists in the very process of contestations and negotiations among the insiders **concerning** what kind of interpretation should be adopted, and I believe that, as a result of democratic processes, many East Asian countries are moving in the direction of more egalitarian interpretations of their cultural values. For an interesting account of Confucianist democracy that does not presuppose the notion of "liberal rights," see David Hall and Roger Ames, *The Democracy of the Dead* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999).

⁸⁵ I do not hereby deny that we are all simultaneously "insider-outsiders" to the groups to which we belong. Sometimes, as David Crocker aptly points out, we have to assume an outsider's perspective to be able to criticize our own community, and outsiders can legitimately participate in this process, *if* they are sufficiently immersed in the other culture. See, David Crocker, "Insiders and Outsiders in International Development," *Ethics & International Affairs* 5 (1991):149-73.

⁸⁶ Spinner-Halev also endorses internal democracy within national minority cultures ("Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," p. 109). While I find his endorsement of strong multiculturalism and internal democracy laudable, I find it difficult to see how he can endorse this as a committed liberal. For example, in his *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Liberal State* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994) and in some parts of "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," he clearly endorses the liberalization of immigrant cultures and the full integration of immigrant cultural minorities into the liberal society at large. When it comes to national minorities, however, he opposes liberal imposition on them on two grounds: justice and efficacy (*ibid.*, pp. 94-98). To begin with the second, Spinner-Halev rightly argues that it is simply not effective for the dominant liberal society to demand oppressed national minorities to convert to liberalism in protecting the individual rights of their members. Still, if liberal values such as autonomy are indeed fundamental values deserving of protection, it goes against the grain of liberalism to allow national minority communities to impose internal restrictions on their members' freedom of choice in their autonomous enclaves, regardless of how justified national minorities may be in their reluctance to adopt liberalism. Internal restriction on individuals' autonomy is simply "unjust" from the liberal standpoint (see Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, p. 168). This point then directly relates to Spinner-Halev's first reason for advocating group autonomy. He is right that the oppression of national minorities by the dominant liberal society is "unjust," but given the

liberal supposition that it is also clearly unjust for the group to impose restrictions on individual members, there has to be at least a recognition of, if not an effort to resolve, this dilemma between the two kinds of injustice in order for a liberal to advocate strong multiculturalism, and *a fortiori* internal democracy of non-liberal cultures. Spinner-Halev provides neither in "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State."

⁸⁷ Kibria, *Family Tighrope*, p. 22.

⁸⁸ Each plexus is constituted of hyper goods at the core, sometimes buttressed by cultural institutions, and surrounded by various cultural practices at the periphery. Let me illustrate this metaphor by taking the case of East Asia. In its long history, many dynasties endorsing different sets of hyper goods—specifically Confucianism and Buddhism—arose and declined. In China's Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-907), for example, cultural institutions and social practices were organized around the Buddhist hyper goods, while the Song dynasty's (A.D. 960-1279) main principle of social organization was Confucianist. Despite this transition, the Buddhist cultural plexus consisting of Buddhist institutions (i.e., temples) and practices continued to wield considerable influence in ordinary people's life style, coexisting with a more official Confucianist cultural plexus.

⁸⁹ Despite the hybrid nature of most human cultures, the specific mode of "hybridity" will vary with the locality depending on its indigenous traditions and manners of interactions with other cultures, and it is this particular mixture that members identify as their own culture and that pervades all aspects of the individual's life.

⁹⁰ Third World women have always been negotiating their status with their men in their own national contexts. For Third World women's role in their nationalist movements and their relation with their male counterparts, see Kumary Jayawardena, *Feminism and nationalism in the Third World* (London: Zed Books Ltd., 1986); Ranjoo Seodu Herr, "The Possibility of Nationalist Feminism," *Hypatia* 18 (2003): 135-160. Women in national minority and other long-standing oppressed groups have been engaged in such a process as well. See for example, Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, p. 264; Combahee river collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," p. 365. In immigrant communities in the West, too, such a process has never ceased to take place. For historic examples, see Chow, "Family, Economy, and the State," p.119, 120, 122, and Evelyn Nakano Glenn and Rhacel Salazar Parrenas, "The Other Issei: Japanese Immigrant Women in the Pre-World War II Period," in Silvia Pedraza and Ruben G. Rumbaut (eds.) *Origins and Destinies: Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in America* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1996), p. 137.

⁹¹ Kibria, *Family Tighrope*, pp. 100-104, 133 ff; see also her "Migration and Vietnamese American Women," p. 257 ff. Although the Confucian ideology traditionally prohibits a woman from leaving her husband, these women supported the separation of the abused woman from her husband by saying that her husband was not a good father in the traditional sense because he did not take care of his family. This does not cohere well with the traditional Confucian emphasis on "family unity and solidarity." In the case of the abusive husband, however, they created "an interpretation of the situation in which [the] husband... was responsible for the breakup because of his lack of commitment to the collective welfare of his family" (*Family Tighrope*, p. 135). Based on this reinterpretation of their cultural values, these women were able to convince their husbands and other males in the community to pressure the abusive husband, and eventually he was forced to leave the community.

⁹² Monique Deveaux, "Conflicting Equalities? Cultural Group Rights and Sex Equality," *Political Studies* 48 (2000): 522-539, pp. 532, 533; 523, 527-9.

⁹³ Even in such rare cases, the imported hyper goods would have gone through such a rigorous process of adaptation that they would be transformed considerably from the original in their interpretations and implementations.

⁹⁴ Sometimes, these women may be empowered by forming "closed communities," an exclusive space in which they are allowed to have a healthy and open debate about their predicament in an atmosphere of security and emotional support. Not all closed communities are legitimate. For example, a closed community by privileged members to protect and promote their own self-interest is not justifiable. However, closed communities formed by the disenfranchised in order to ensure "discursive autonomy for themselves" may not only be justifiable, but even called for in order to bring about a more just society. This space will protect racial ethnic women not only from their patriarchal male counterparts, but also from the scrutiny of Western feminists, who often discount racial ethnic women's perspectives, as we have seen (Jaggar, "Globalizing Feminist Ethics," pp. 10, 11). For similar accounts on closed communities, see Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Justice Interruptus; Young Justice and the Politics of Difference*, pp. 167-68. Fraser calls such closed communities, "subaltern counterpublics."

Good examples of such a closed community of racial ethnic women are the Combahee River collective ("A Black Feminist Statement," p. 364) and the Labrador workshop of Canadian Inuit women (Archibald and Crnkovich, "Intimate Outsiders" p. 119). In the Vietnamese American case mentioned here too, women, perhaps inadvertently, formed such a closed community in the

form of informal gossip and exchange network of female kin and friends. It was in these gatherings that women were able to discuss male abuse and other problems in the example discussed (Kibria, *Family Tighrope*, pp. 133-37). See also, Espiritu, *Asian American Women and Men*, p. 115; Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, pp. 95, 184.

⁹⁵ Third World women can provide a feminist interpretation of their "misogynist" customs by giving a contextual and historical analysis. The aforementioned Leila Ahmed's discussion of "harem" in "Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem" is an excellent example. For defenses of other "misogynist" customs by Third World feminists for similar reasons, see Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," p. 15; Carby, "White Woman Listen!, p. 114. Also, some Muslim feminists argue that the source of liberation for Muslim women lies within the Islam tradition itself, and provide alternative feminist-friendly interpretations consistent with Qur'an. See, Basharat Tayyab, "Islam," in Jaggar and Iris Young (eds.), *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1998), pp. 237, 244; see also, Azizah Al-Hibri, "Islamic Law," in *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, pp. 544, 545, 548; Ahmed, "Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem," pp. 523, 525).

⁹⁶ Amos and Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminism," p. 15; see also Combahee River collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," p.365.

⁹⁷ Shachar, "The Paradox of Multicultural Vulnerability," pp. 92, 95; see also, "Group Identity and Women's Rights in Family Law," section II; "On Citizenship and Multicultural Vulnerability," sections IV and V.

⁹⁸ As Kymlicka points out, such instances are less frequent than usually thought (*Multicultural Citizenship*, pp. 41-44); see also Spinner-Halev, "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," p.105.

⁹⁹ Shachar, "The Paradox of Multicultural Vulnerability," p. 100.

¹⁰⁰ Shachar, "Group Identity and Women's Rights in Family Law," pp. 300-301.

¹⁰¹ Details of this case is mentioned in *ibid.*, pp. 208, 302-3.

¹⁰² This problem arises because Shachar's focus is on Israeli Jews who are not oppressed minorities in Israel and yet she generalizes her analysis of this particular type of minorities to other cultural minorities in various Western contexts whose experiences vis-à-vis the majority are clearly different. A similar point is raised by Spinner-Halev ("Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," p. 93).

¹⁰³ Kymlicka, "Minority Nationalism and Multination Federalism," p. 95.

¹⁰⁴ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, pp.167-68.

¹⁰⁵ Shachar's point that women of minority cultures that enjoy considerable group autonomy are often the least likely to exercise this right because of their disempowered position is a valid one ("The Paradox of Multicultural Vulnerability," p. 100; "On Citizenship and Multicultural Vulnerability," p. 80), although, in disagreement with Okin ("Mistresses of Their Own Destiny?" p. 216 ff.), I believe immigrant women and girls are better situated to exercise this right due to their exposure and the proximity to the dominant liberal culture. Obviously, this is a very difficult choice, and while I believe this option must be open, it is not to be easily recommended nor exercised. It is an option to be used only in extreme situations. The better alternative, undoubtedly, would be reforms of the internal structure of the minority culture that disadvantages women, and in this, I am in complete agreement with Shachar. What I disagree with Shachar is that such reforms are not something that should be imposed from the outside, however benevolent the liberal state may be. Not only are such reforms likely to fail because of backlash (see Spinner-Halev, "Feminism, Multiculturalism, Oppression, and the State," pp. 95-96) but also because the state, as long as it does not incorporate the views of the insiders, is likely to fail in grasping the culturally specific direction such reforms must take.