

of intersubjective construction and power disparity” (p. 17). However, although “their choices are not independent of the gendered social and political contexts of their local and global worlds, women’s actions also cannot be seen as entirely outside the realm of their choice and agency” (p. 17). To deny that women’s violence involves (circumscribed) rational choice undermines the accordance of any agency to women and reserves (narrowly defined) rational-actor status for men. To debunk the discursive frames of mother/monster/whore that disable women’s *political* agency and *political* responsibility (as opposed to sensationalized and reductive personal responsibility or irresponsibility arising from flawed femininity), the authors provide riveting self-reports by politically violent women, derived from personal interviews that they or others conducted, trial transcripts, and manifestos left by female suicide bombers. What emerges is a far more complex picture, not only of these women and their motivations (which are similar to men’s, such as power, nationalism, physical survival, economic status, following orders, and so on), but also of the conflicts in which they are actors and the global politics that drive these conflicts.

As the authors conclude, gendered (apolitical) representations of violent women *are* international relations as they maintain global power structures that rest upon gender, race, and class distinctions and subordinations and feed dominant narratives about the intransigence of conflict when *even women* are perpetrators of violence, thereby foreclosing space for political solutions. Thus, it is imperative for feminist (and) international relations scholars and students to take “the violent women of international relations and the international relations of violent women” (pp. 223–24) very seriously.

***Multiculturalism Without Culture.*** By Anne Phillips. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 2007. 216 pp. \$29.95, cloth, \$19.95 paper.

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Suzanne Dovi  
University of Arizona

This is an important and insightful book that tackles an incredibly challenging problem, namely, how to balance the commitment of gender equality with the commitment of multiculturalism. Drawing on a wide range of resources, including feminist literature, anthropology, and

political and legal theory, the answer by Anne Phillips partially turns on how we understand culture. Phillips wants multiculturalism to dispense with essentialist understandings or “strong” notions of cultures and to place human agency at its center. Instead of understanding cultures as depriving minority women entirely of their agency, we need to recognize the diverse ways that minority women can embrace, struggle with, and reject their cultural practices, norms, and values. A defensible multiculturalism should, according to the author, be grounded on individual rights, not group rights. She does not wish to deny that people are cultural beings. Rather, her claim is that a defensible multiculturalism treats cultures more akin to current treatments of class and gender.

Phillips illustrates this point by discussing *Price v. Civil Service Commission* (1978). This case found that an age limit of 28 for applicants to an executive grade of the Civil Service did discriminate against women inasmuch as many women bring up children in their twenties and, therefore, start their careers later. This case demonstrates that the British courts can acknowledge constraints on women without denying their autonomy. Public authorities ought to recognize the relevance of culture without assuming that culture dictates all actions. The trick, according to Phillips, is for generalizations about gender and class to be based on specific evidence about a particular individual.

Unfortunately, Phillips never discusses whether there are any relevant differences in the ways that gender and culture enable and constrain individual choices. Nor does she provide any clues as to how public authorities should address these differences. For instance, she ignores how the United Nations Draft Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Groups recognizes collective rights, for example, the right to self-determination. Typically, no such rights are claimed on behalf of women. Do such differences matter? If so, how? Her book does not provide any answer. Moreover, Phillips’s recommendation that we should treat culture in a way akin to gender ignores the legal complexities and double binds that can arise from current legal understandings of gender. For instance, in the United States, black women are required to identify sex or race as the primary form of discrimination because racial discrimination requires a stricter level of scrutiny than gender discrimination does. By failing to specify how public and legal authorities should properly adjudicate different kinds of gendered claims, Phillips’s recommendation to treat culture like gender is not as instructive as it could be. Although she goes out of her way to

recognize the diversity among women in minority cultures, she does not provide any clues about whose interpretations of a cultural practice should be given weight for determining the influence of culture on an individual.

Despite these omissions, *Multiculturalism Without Culture* holds many instructive and invaluable lessons for feminists and political scientists concerning how they should view and criticize minority cultures. For instance, Phillips contends that public authorities should not assume that the coercion of some members of a minority culture means that all members of minority cultures are coerced. Western governments should not use the bad behavior of a few members of a minority culture to justify a ban on the entire group. For example, Phillips rejects the notion that the forced marriages of some women from minority cultures should be used to justify the practice of setting an age limit on all foreign marriages. She recommends that our public policies acknowledge both the coercive elements of culture, as well as the agency of individuals.

Phillips uses an impressive range of interesting and educational examples to illuminate her argument for a multiculturalism without culture. Sometimes, she criticizes public authorities for overestimating the power and control of cultures, thereby denying female members of minority cultures any agency. For instance, she denounces prohibitions against wearing the hijab, or headscarf covering the head and shoulders, for an identity photograph. Fears that some women are being coerced into wearing a headscarf should not blind us to the fact that some women choose what their religion recommends as modest dress. At other times, Phillips considers cases in which the coercive dimensions of cultural commitments are underestimated. For example, she criticizes those who endorse exit rights as sufficient for guaranteeing individual autonomy. According to the author, they make exit seem easier than it is. Instead of treating exit as a test of agency, we need to recognize the agency of, and support, those who choose to stay under, and negotiate, oppressive conditions. The right to stay must be “complemented” by the right to exit.

This is an impressive and timely book. Not only does Phillips want to overcome feminist anxieties about cultural imperialism — the imposition of one’s own cultural values and norms on another culture — that make it difficult to represent any belief or practice as oppressive to women, but she is also suspicious of feminists’ arguments for gender equality that can be co-opted by xenophobic groups as a way to demonize minority cultures. Such appropriations of feminist arguments are particularly

worrisome, given the current retreat from multiculturalism. Her alternative approach to multiculturalism is designed to address both of these concerns. *Multiculturalism Without Cultures* should appeal to those who study gender oppression, as well as those who wish to engage sensitively in cultural criticism. Phillips's treatment of this complex and important topic exemplifies the very best of feminist critical thinking.

***Gender, Politics and Democracy in Post-Socialist Europe.* By Yvonne Galligan, Sara Clavero, and Marina Calloni. Farmington Hills: MI. Barbara Budrich. 2007. 170 pp. \$24.90 cloth.**

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G. Claire Haeg

College of St Benedict and St John's University

The question of representation is central to the scholarship of gender, the examination of political institutions, and the study of democratic theory. In this book, Yvonne Galligan, Sara Clavero, and Marina Calloni straddle all three areas of scholarship by addressing the issue of women's representation in former socialist countries, at least those that have been admitted to the European Union. There has been a steady stream of scholarship on gender and politics in postcommunist states in democratic transition, but this book combines serious empirical research with a normative consideration of gender equality. It is an impressive cross-national survey of postsocialist states, utilizing an array of qualitative and quantitative data to build a convincing argument about the complex interplay of culture, institutions, and agency effects upon gender politics, yet with the stated intent of giving voice to politically engaged women in these countries.

Galligan, Clavero, and Calloni contend that although communist state institutions were founded on the presumption of women's emancipation, women failed to move toward equality, women's employment was often restricted to lower-paid occupations, and there was a significant pay gap. The authors argue that the reason for this was the disempowerment of both men and women in the public sphere, which meant that the private sphere was the one place that offered protection from regulation by the state. The private sphere was thus a positive force for both men and women, but it reinforced traditional gender roles and stereotypes. After the democratic transition, when Western feminists assumed that women would rally to fight for equal rights, women's equality was