Justice, Gender, and the Politics of Multiculturalism

*Justice, Gender, and the Politics of Multiculturalism* explores the tensions that arise when culturally diverse democratic states pursue both justice for religious and cultural minorities and justice for women. Sarah Song provides a distinctive argument about the circumstances under which egalitarian justice requires special accommodations for cultural minorities while emphasizing the value of gender equality as an important limit on cultural accommodation. Drawing on detailed case studies of gendered cultural conflicts, including conflicts over the “cultural defense” in criminal law, aboriginal membership rules, and polygamy, Song offers a fresh perspective on multicultural politics by examining the role of intercultural interactions in shaping such conflicts. In particular, she demonstrates the different ways that majority institutions have reinforced gender inequality in minority communities and, in light of this, argues in favor of resolving gendered cultural dilemmas through intercultural democratic dialogue.

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As the twenty-first century begins, major new political challenges have arisen at the same time as some of the most enduring dilemmas of political association remain unresolved. The collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War reflect a victory for democratic and liberal values, yet in many of the Western countries that nurtured those values there are severe problems of urban decay, class and racial conflict, and failing political legitimacy. Enduring global injustice and inequality seem compounded by environmental problems, disease, the oppression of women, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities, and the relentless growth of the world’s population. In such circumstances, the need for creative thinking about the fundamentals of human political association is manifest. This new series in contemporary political theory is needed to foster such systematic normative reflection.

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For my parents
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