**Insider and Outsider Perspectives: Strategies for Alleviating Women's
Oppression in a Global Context**

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Abstract

In countries all over the world, gender inequality is undermining women's ability to thrive. In response, many Western feminist theorists, such as Susan Okin and Martha Nussbaum, defend overarching "theories of justice" that are essentialist and universalist. This thesis challenges these theories and defends an "insider/outsider framework" that is characterized by a joint acknowledgement of the impact of relations of power (at local and global levels) on women who are in them and of the "epistemic privilege" that these locations give them. Taken together, the framework allows outsiders to gain access to accurate descriptions of women's oppression as it manifests itself in different contexts with different histories, practices, and relations of power. When theorizing is done accurately, it not only avoids the pitfalls of both universalism and relativism, but allows effective policies to follow. The efficacy of my theoretical framework is put to the test by applying it to a case study of a specific issue affecting women in a particular context—that of reproductive rights in Mexico.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

There is an urgent and dire need to alleviate the conditions of oppression that women endure in a global context. At both local and global levels, women bear the lopsided brunt of injustices when compared to men. In nations all over the world, women are still struggling to achieve equality in both the public and private domains of their lives. In developed countries, for example, empirical evidence shows that women are systematically disadvantaged in business, religious positions, academia, and the political sphere, and that they assume the majority of household labour.¹ The most powerful and richest of countries have innumerable social battles to overcome in the name of women—unequal pay, domestic violence, and economic exploitation being but a few.

In other nations the situation is still graver. International inequalities disproportionately burden women. Forty years of international development policies have increased rural poverty in a gender-disproportionate manner. Approximately 80 percent of the world's 18 million refugees² are women and girls who are at risk of endemic sexual violence.³ The United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) 2003 *Human Development Report*⁴ sadly reveals that there is no country that treats its women as well as it treats its men. The *Report* reveals that women, a majority of the world's population, receive only a small share of development opportunities. Gender inequality undermines women's ability to thrive because of their marked exclusion from the benefits of health, education, political liberty and participation, employment, and self-respect. While some progress is being made,⁵ statistics reveal that women face significant impediments to living well and too often are deprived of life itself. Among young women in developing countries, literacy is 60 percent, compared with 80 percent for

young men. Three-fifths of the 115 million children out of school are girls. Around the world, women account for more than 30 percent of parliamentarians in just seven countries. More women suffer from HIV/AIDS than do men. Every year about 500,000 women worldwide die from complications arising from pregnancy and childbirth. While women may produce the majority of food consumed in certain areas (Sub-Saharan Africa), dominant patriarchal values prevent them from owning land.⁶ These grim statistics expose the critical need for policy-makers and international players to intervene and make the improvement of women's quality of life a priority. My central thesis is that policy that effectively empowers and protects women in local and global contexts needs to be based on a solid feminist theoretical framework.

Just as inequalities have cut across borders, so too have feminist responses to unjust and oppressive practices. The fact that women's quality of life is in global peril has led to widespread disagreement among feminist theorists across borders. Throughout this body of literature, feminists have proposed a variety of theories leading to strategic policies for alleviating women's oppression in the context of the global scene. In an attempt to raise women's status at a global level, there has been a marked tendency for Western feminist theorists to develop what are known as "essentialist" or "universalist" theories of justice. Prime examples of such theories of justice are those championed by Martha Nussbaum and Susan Moller Okin.

A primary goal of this paper is to cast into doubt the effectiveness and appropriateness of overarching theories of justice such as those put forward by Nussbaum, Okin, and to some degree, Amartya Sen. In my critique of overarching theories of justice, I am most critical of Okin's theory for being deficient with respect to

providing information about women's lives, including histories, practices, and relations of power that affect them. I am less critical of Nussbaum's theory, and less critical again of Sen's theory. While Sen's theory is a huge improvement on both Okin's and Nussbaum's, largely because his approach allows for more context-specificity, there are still some limitations to his theory. Throughout the next pages I set out to show that universalist and essentialist theories of justice are impoverished on two major grounds. First, I argue that these theories make assumptions about the universal nature of oppression. Specifically, they show a lack a concern for how the details of women's lives and the conditions of their oppression can vary from culture to culture, and context to context. Moreover, these singular theories of justice fail to capture how women's lives in specific contexts are impacted by forces of power occurring at local and global levels.

Second, I maintain that this persistent failure to capture accurately women's perspectives on the conditions of their own oppression can have gravely imprecise or dangerous implications for policy. Overarching theories of justice often seek to address inequalities through generalized policy that is applied to all women or all people in a particular context. When this is done without attending to the details of oppression, discrimination, and multi-leveled inequalities, there will be instances where the quality of women's lives can be made even worse. For example, a generalized policy to improve women's access to paid work outside of the home may have a positive impact on some women, but a negative impact on others depending on the relationships, histories, and contexts that shape their lives in their particular locations. There is therefore a marked need for theory to "get oppression right" as it manifests itself differently in different

contexts, practices, histories, and so on. When theorizing is done accurately, effective policies will follow from it.

Because of such conspicuous failings, I suggest that we walk down a different path in formulating theory in a way that can mobilize for change and be effective. Instead of opting for an overarching theory of justice, I recommend that we instead adopt what I will refer to as a dynamic or expanded “insider/outsider framework.” I have chosen to call this conceptual foundation an “insider/outsider framework” to highlight some aspects (absent from overarching theories of justice) that are necessary for formulating accurate descriptions of injustices and how to address them. The two defining concepts or features of the framework are “epistemic privilege” and relations of power. Concerning the former concept, I maintain that the inclusion of the notion of epistemic privilege will contribute positively to accurately describing and understanding women’s injustices. Next, the space my framework carves for theorizing about relations of power acknowledges the impact that local and global forces can have on the perspectives and life prospects of women in different contexts. What I hope to show is that an analysis of existing types of power relations is vital to the project of feminist theorizing in a global context.

There are a few general advantages that are specifically derivable from the adoption of my insider/outsider framework. First, the insider/outsider framework is ideal for understanding the injustices of women in places different from our own. Defenders of overarching theories of justice are often guilty of assuming that they can easily judge the lives and experiences of women in cultures very different from their own. My approach will prove to be both realistic and sensitive to these complexities by making

women central players in both theory and practice. A second advantage of my insider/outsider framework is that it incorporates insights from a number of theorists. Having a multifaceted framework allows for flexibility and subtlety when it comes to examining the often difficult and complex situations in which disadvantaged women find themselves.

One final and critically important advantage of my framework is that it is proves to be culturally sensitive without falling prey to the problems of relativism. Simply put, the criticism against relativists is that their unwavering commitment to difference is often described as paralyzing when it comes to matters of policy-making. Nussbaum is but one thinker who raises the criticism that the relativist/anti-essentialist appeals to difference will prevent practical action and public policy decisions that will address the injustices that women face. My approach is distinctly non-relativist because standpoints or perspectives *alone* are not used as the standard to evaluate the moral permissibility of a practice. What is powerful about the insider/outsider framework is that it subjects the details of what women say about their experiences to critical evaluation in the context of an understanding of the network of relationships at personal, local, national, and global levels. Adequate feminist theorizing, therefore, cannot be just about listening and validating the perspectives and experiences as women report them. Instead, the framework I advocate promotes understanding and evaluating women's experiences as shaped by relations of power occurring at multiple levels. The insider/outsider framework embodies a recognition that women are disadvantaged in various ways and in different sorts of contexts by factors such as histories, cultural beliefs, exposure to colonialism, imperialism and so on. In defending my insider/outsider framework, I

advocate for theory that accurately captures the complexity of inequalities and oppression in a context-dependent way.

The final characteristic that distinguishes my approach from that of relativism is the way in which my framework proves to be powerfully instructive with respect to enhancing women's agency. Throughout this thesis I defend the emphasis that Sen places on agency for theorizing about women's inequalities, but diverge from his approach in some respects that will become clear in the final chapter of the thesis. When women's perspectives play a central role, they become agents who have a say in the political processes that impact on the quality of their lives. I maintain that only when theorizing is done in the above ways, can policies be devised in a way that actually addresses injustices in women's lives and from around the globe.

I ask the reader to keep the above advantages in mind while reading this paper. My project of developing an alternative framework to an overarching and unified theory of justice takes the following organizational structure. The chapter that follows is pivotal because it lays the groundwork for my theory. In this chapter I set out the theories of justice put forth by Nussbaum and Okin and then outline the limitations of both essentialist and universalist perspectives. I then look briefly at Sen's capabilities approach as different from Nussbaum's and as holding, in my view, more promise for the sort of project I am interested in pursuing. I will return to Sen's account of agency, in particular, in the final chapter.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to provide the groundwork for my developing theory. In it, I maintain that the question of *who* speaks turns out to matter (both empirically and morally) very much for the goals of my project. For the bulk of the chapter, I engage in

an in-depth discussion about insiders and outsiders as outlined by three theorists—David Crocker, Laurence Thomas, and Uma Narayan. As I progress through the work of these authors it becomes clear that the perspectives of insiders matter a great deal to the project of properly understanding and describing inequalities as they manifest themselves in different contexts. This discussion opens the floodgates to some important conceptual terrain. Discussions about notions of “epistemic privilege” and relations of power reveal just how complex and multifaceted the project of eliminating oppressive practices can truly be. This chapter casts more doubt upon the universalist and essentialist assumptions of overarching theories of justice.

Chapter 4 builds on the discovery in Chapter 3 that the voices of insiders are crucial to the project of eliminating injustices and oppression. The goal of Chapter 4 is to gather relevant insights from both feminist standpoint theory and postcolonial feminist theory for developing my insider/outsider framework. Analyses of the works of Alison Wylie, Patricia Collins, and Chandra Mohanty bring out just how influential local and global factors are to insiders (women). Taken together, these works put into sharp focus the significance of insiders’ standpoints as well as the extent to which such insiders may be impacted by global factors. At this point in the paper it becomes obvious that universalist and essentialist theories of justice are ill-equipped to deal with the multifaceted nature of women’s oppression as it manifests itself in different contexts.

It is in the fifth (and final theoretical) chapter that my insider/outsider framework is completed. This chapter is devoted to outlining and examining relational theory as defended by Christine Koggel. Koggel’s relational theory adds to my own insider/outsider framework in a few distinct ways. First, it is a powerful critique of the

individualist/liberal approaches provided by Nussbaum and Okin. Second, through Koggel's discussions about the impact of economic globalization, it also becomes clear that any adequate theory must recognize the power of various sorts of institutions in the global community. Third, my framework stands to benefit from Koggel's emphasis on the interconnectedness of kinds of inequalities.⁷ Examining the details of relational theory is important to my project because it serves as a bridge from the theoretical to the practical. At this point, my expanded insider/outsider framework is complete.

In the sixth and final chapter my expanded insider/outsider framework is tested by applying it to a particular issue affecting women—that of reproductive rights in the particular context of Mexico. It is in this chapter that the strength of my insider/outsider framework is truly revealed. The study “Does Contraception Benefit Women? Structure, Agency and Well-Being in Rural Mexico,”⁸ is used to illustrate the relevancy and interconnectedness of concepts such as agency, power relations, and epistemic privilege. In this chapter, I discuss relevant aspects of the authors study as well as build on features of their analysis of the women's lives in rural Chiapas. The authors preface the paper by arguing in favour of examining reproductive rights in this particular setting through an appeal to Sen's conception of agency and well-being. Throughout this last chapter, I build on Sen's concept of agency, but argue that women's well-being can be best improved through the use of my own insider/outsider framework. I take things farther than both Sen and the authors when I contend that we need an analysis of relationships of all kinds and at all levels in order to further policy as well as to make sense of the experiences of these women of Chiapas. Moreover, it will be an understanding of these relationships that will empower women to become active agents in charge of their own

lives. This study provides a supreme example of how women's experiences, lives, and choices as they occur within a small geographical location can vary tremendously. It becomes clear that without the details and analyses of relationships at the local, national, and international levels, women will forever remain removed from the political process and condemned to live the effects of ineffective policies. While I do not provide a full analysis of all the features and factors relevant to this case study, by appealing to my insider/outsider framework I illustrate that it is indeed possible to mobilize for change in a way that takes women's perspectives seriously.

CHAPTER 2: The Limitations of Universalist and Essentialist Theories of Justice

The primary aim of this chapter is to summarize and critique the universalist and essentialist theories of justice put forward by Nussbaum and Okin. These two thinkers serve as representatives of a body of literature that falls subject to some anti-essentialist criticisms. Specifically, universalist feminist theorists have faced charges of being insensitive to culture, smuggling in Western bias, and failing to take seriously enough women's locations, experiences, histories, and traditions. I have chosen to examine the works of Nussbaum and Okin specifically because certain aspects of their accounts show them to be unapologetic about being able to judge the lives of women in non-western contexts.

In the following pages I aim to demonstrate that the explicit universalism and essentialism in Nussbaum's and Okin's works provide grounds to reject these overarching theories of justice. The main question I explore in the following pages is whether having a singular theory of justice is the best way of addressing women's inequalities in a global context. In an attempt to answer this question, the chapter will take the following form. I first briefly describe Nussbaum's defence of universalism as what she takes to be a positive alternative to anti-essentialist approaches. Second, I summarize Nussbaum's capabilities approach and describe why in the end I take her approach to remain insensitive to the cultural differences of women. In the third section, I succinctly discuss Sen's version of a capabilities approach for two specific purposes: I describe why I take his approach to be more sensitive to contextual differences than Nussbaum's and I assess Sen's concept of agency as being a vital component of any theoretical framework designed to address women's injustices. Fourth, I outline Susan

Okin's theory of justice as being the most problematic and culturally insensitive approach yet. Lastly, I provide a short conclusion and summarize the shortcomings of these two theories of justice and explain how this is relevant for my insider/outsider framework.

1) Nussbaum's Critique of Anti-Essentialism

a) The Criticism

Before getting into the details of Nussbaum's universalist and essentialist theory, I want first to discuss the criticisms she makes of anti-essentialists. This criticism is relevant to my general goal of exploring how feminist theory can best inform policy to improve the quality of women's lives in a global context. Typical anti-essentialist criticisms often directed at theories such as Nussbaum's include that they are insensitive to culture, history, context and difference. In "Human Capabilities: Female Human Beings,"⁹ Nussbaum defends and describes an account of essentialism she describes as "the view that human life has certain central defining features."¹⁰ Part of Nussbaum's focus in defending her account is to address the increasingly large number of arguments targeted against essentialist accounts of human functioning such as hers.

Nussbaum appeals to the events that occurred at a philosophy conference with the hopes of undermining the arguments of "extreme relativist traditionalism". She recounts the conflict of ideas that arose at the conference when an Indian economist gave an "essentialist" talk arguing for freedom of choice as a basic human good. At this point, a radical economist piped in and argued that anthropologists have shown that non-Westerners are "not especially attached to freedom of choice." This latter economist then brings in a controversial example:

A new book on Japan has shown that Japanese males, when they get home from work, do not wish to choose what to eat for dinner, what to wear, and so on. They wish all these choices to be taken out of their hands by their wives.¹¹

Evidently, a heated discussion ensued from this exchange. In the end the radical economist defended his view that the speaker was guilty of bad essentialist thinking and neglecting the value of difference. By contrast, Nussbaum argues that this latter person's view in fact converges with oppression! She states that injustices towards women are too often couched by an appeal to "difference" and "under the banner of their radical and politically correct 'anti-essentialism' march ancient religious taboos, the luxury of pampered husband, ill health, ignorance, and death."¹² Nussbaum expands on this idea when she provocatively writes,

Customs, in short, are important causes of women's misery and death. It seems incumbent on anyone interested in justice, and aware of the information about women's status that studies such as the *Human Development Report* present, to ask about the relationship between culture and justice. It then seems incumbent on her to try to work out an account of the rational assessment of tradition that is neither do-gooder colonialism nor an uncritical validation of the *status quo*.¹³

b) Is the Anti-essentialist Critique Legitimate?

Nussbaum's criticism of the relativist is a powerful one. The relativist's unwavering commitment to difference carries with it a heavy price because these views can stand in the way of public policy decisions that will address women's oppression. Some relativists adopt the position because they view the theory as "demonstrably preferable to imperialist alternatives that recognize no limits."¹⁴ I do not see the issue of theorizing as being one of such extreme alternatives. I agree with Nussbaum that relativists get into serious trouble if theory can never translate into judgments about practices that are oppressive. We surely want to avoid a world (and feminist ethical theory) where everything is up for grabs and there are no norms to guide us in matters of evaluation.¹⁵

What I intend on showing in this paper, against Nussbaum, is that feminist theory can be at once non-relativist, sensitive to cultural, historical, and global factors and anti-essentialist. I will show that in order to improve women's lives in a global context, we need to do more than just listen to women and their perspectives. With the help of the insider/outsider framework I will develop, I will show that a singular theory of justice can never work in favour of *all* women in the ways that both Nussbaum and Okin propose. The alternative that I present will make women active agents of the political process. Moreover, the insider/outsider framework is active in so far as it does not use tradition or culture as an excuse for inaction.

2) Nussbaum's "Capabilities Approach"

2.1 An Essentialist and Universalist Response to Inequalities

According to Nussbaum, the way we ought to conceive of women's equality in developing (and non-developing countries) is with a conception of the human being and human functioning as the starting point. Nussbaum's Aristotelian proposal demands that we "focus on what is common to all, rather than on differences, and to see some capabilities and functions as more central, more at the core of human life, than others."¹⁶ In her view, if we begin with a theory that acknowledges our sameness and humanness we are in a position whereby we are granted permission to make judgments about injustices cross-culturally. Nussbaum's fleshed out approach is an attempt to identify a group of central and basic human functions and capabilities or a "network of points of affinity."¹⁷ Nussbaum therefore defends a theory of justice that has at its bedrock the view that a universal conception of the human being is available and can be used by development ethicists. Moreover, this theory of justice can then be used to measure and

judge the lives of people no matter where they are. It is because of this latter point that Nussbaum can be labeled a universalist.

2.2 A Two-Tiered Capabilities Approach

Nussbaum's essentialist and universalist motivations lead her to develop what she calls a two-tiered capabilities theory. The two lists she develops are an attempt to get to the bottom of certain fundamental questions. For example, what are the forms of activity that constitute the human form of life? For Nussbaum, "the capabilities are an interlocking set; they support one another, and an impediment to one impedes others."¹⁸

2.2.1. The Thick Vague Conception and some Corresponding Objections

a) The List and Thresholds

The following list is a working list that contains both the limits and capabilities of humanness. Nussbaum describes level one of the conception of the human being as "a ground-floor, or minimal conception of the good." If a person is missing any of the list's capabilities then that person's life, according to Nussbaum, would be "too lacking, too impoverished, to be human at all."¹⁹

1. Mortality
2. The Human Body
 - 2.1. Hunger and thirst: the need for food and drink
 - 2.2. Need for shelter
 - 2.3. Sexual Desire
 - 2.4. Mobility
3. Capacity for Pleasure and Pain
4. Cognitive Capability: Perceiving, Imagining, Thinking
5. Early Infant Development
6. Practical Reason
7. Affiliation With other Human Beings
8. Relatedness to Other Species and to Nature
9. Humor and Play
10. Separateness
11. Strong Separateness

Nussbaum's argument becomes more complex when she distinguishes between two distinct thresholds. The first one is theoretical or descriptive while the second is practical and prescriptive. Concerning the first, a person who functions below this lower-level threshold would be a life that is, functionally, sub-human. Nussbaum includes among the list of those who fail to be human those in permanent vegetative states, certain severely damaged infants, and those with no ability to relate to others.

2.2.2 Level 2 of the Thick Vague Conception: Basic Human Functional Capabilities

a) The List

Level two is the level of basic capabilities at which societies ought to aim for their citizens. Nussbaum advises that political leaders and writers of public policy should regard the features of this list as the necessary ingredients for all citizens to have a rich quality of life.

1. Being able to live to the end of complete human life
2. Being able to have good health
3. Being able to avoid pain and to have pleasurable experiences.
4. Being able to use the five senses; being able to imagine, to think, and to reason.
5. Being able to have attachments to things and persons outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence in general, to love, grieve, to feel longing and gratitude.
6. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's own life.
7. Being able to live for and with others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of familial and social interaction.
8. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plant and the world of nature.
9. Being able to laugh, to play, and to enjoy recreational activities.
10. Being able to live one's own life and nobody else's; being able to live one's own life in one's very own surroundings and context.

This list moves beyond the first level's requirements for human functioning and evolves into what is required for *good* human functioning. The obvious substantive leap Nussbaum makes from her first to her second list is a move from a descriptive list to a prescriptive list. There is a further shift between the two lists: the first is a list of

functionings; the second identifies capabilities that should be promoted by public policy. This prescriptive aspect of Nussbaum's theory has received some criticism. Are the lists really this powerful? Are all components of this list truly necessary for an individual to lead a good life?

One has good reason to question the legitimacy, power, and effectiveness of Nussbaum's lists when she moves from the descriptive to the prescriptive. She admits to the list's evaluative power when she writes that "the basic intuition from which the capabilities approach starts, in the political arena is that human capabilities exert a moral claim that they *should* be developed" (my emphasis).²⁰ Allow me to return briefly to the move that Nussbaum makes between levels and lists from the descriptive to the prescriptive. Can her list of human capabilities serve as all the empirical evidence necessary for determining matters of public policy?

Nussbaum's second threshold is practically problematic. It is not obvious to me that all the empirical evidence is in when she considers what constitutes *good* human functioning from location to location. More specifically, I argue that women's specific experiences and testimonies are absent from the moral compass of the capabilities approach she develops. This absence is worrisome for two reasons. A first problem is that if Nussbaum's theory of justice does not take seriously plural and local specifications she runs the risk of having her theory applied to everyone in the same way! This surely would not improve women's flourishing. The examples I use later will show that women in different contexts require different things. A second problem relates to the issue of power. It is dangerous not to include women's perspectives into the theoretical calculus also because, as it stands, the decision making power concerning policy lies

predominantly in the hands of the powerful. In the next section, I recount Nussbaum's response to anti-essentialist objections such as the ones I have just raised.

b) Nussbaum's Response to the Charge of Neglect of Historical and Cultural Difference

Nussbaum argues that the list contains not the *only* important functions, but simply a group of especially important ones that we have come to agree upon. In saying this, Nussbaum shows an awareness of the criticism often raised against her—that of neglecting historical and cultural differences. One can here pause to wonder how we can come to “agree upon” functions without the testimonies of the individuals. The charge at hand is that Nussbaum's list assumes that there is but one picture of a human being and what it needs to flourish. In her view, the capabilities approach makes room for both plural and local specification and defeats the objection. With respect to plural specification, Nussbaum writes that

using a determinate conception of the good at a high level of generality leaves a great deal of latitude for citizens to specify each of the components more concretely and with much variety, in accordance with local traditions or individual tastes.

We here see that for an essentialist and universalist theory, Nussbaum does a fairly good job of making room for *reasonable* pluralism.

As far as local specification is concerned, Nussbaum writes that good Aristotelian practical reasoning must respect and be sensitive to the “concrete context, and the characters of the agents and their social situation.”²¹ What needs to be added to the pluralism she describes is recognition that, for example, what may constitute a good method of improving literacy in one place may be completely ineffective somewhere else. Nussbaum supports the claim that her capabilities approach can incorporate local differences by discussing an example of female literacy in rural Bangladesh as described

in Marty Chen's book *A Quiet Revolution: Women in Transition in Rural Bangladesh*.²²

In this study, development workers adopted an Aristotelian approach and entered into dialogue with local women. While doing this, they clung to their belief that literacy is a basic good. In this case, women began to see that improved literacy could lead to positive changes in their lives and they also came to believe that literacy is a basic good. Nussbaum's detailed discussion of the case is meant to show that essentialism and women's locatedness need not be oppositional.

2.3. The Limitations of Nussbaum's Theory of Justice

a) The Problem with Having a List

Does human life have centrally defining features shared by all? By appealing to a list, Nussbaum leaves us no choice in the matter. Her argument that a life lacking in any one of the capabilities falls short of being a human life reveals her strong universalism. In her view, women from the Third World and First World alike are supposed to share in some kind of "humanness" that then allows for universalist policies. As the picture of oppressed women in different contexts continues to fill out through the next chapters, it becomes clear that women's experiences of oppression vary depending on their context. As I will show, Third World women would not *want* to share "humanness" with women from the First World if it means that they are said to require the same things in order to flourish. The lives, histories, and experiences that are so qualitatively different demand policies and prescriptions that are not universalist. Through her list, Nussbaum wants policy makers all over the world to incorporate elements of her list that may not be applicable in certain places—leading to the conclusion that her list is highly prescriptive and universalist.

To give substance to this criticism, allow me to here revisit Nussbaum's literacy example of Chen's study in Bangladesh. Nussbaum believes she has succeeded in showing that by "entering into dialogue with women," local differences are being taken into consideration. Furthermore, she regards this example as sufficient proof to support the claim that her capabilities approach (and her list more generally) do not fall victim to the anti-essentialist critique. I would like here to make two criticisms—one at the local level and the other at the global level. Concerning the former, I here suggest that Nussbaum's approach is not as considerate of these Bangladeshi women's lives, histories, and contexts as she thinks. Specifically, the issues surrounding literacy are much more complex than Nussbaum realizes. One may be led to wonder, for example, whether these development workers who sold literacy as a "basic good" were in fact using Western texts, and ideas to implement their own ideals. A global criticism can also be made of Nussbaum's list. Nowhere on Nussbaum's list is there recognition for the fact that these Bangladeshi women's lives and functionings (in the context of literacy) can be impacted by broader networks of power. For example, are the texts supplied by Chen's development agency interested in promoting Western values and beliefs? What might the relationship be between this specific development agency and its funders? As mentioned above, by clinging to Nussbaum's list when making recommendations for policy, Third World women may be subjected to policies that are infused with Western values. One specific Western value that Third World women may not identify with is liberal theory's emphasis on the individual as flourishing in isolation from the others and the state.

In Susan Wolf's "Commentary on Nussbaum's Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings,"²³ she makes this very type of criticism. In this short paper, Wolf argues

that items 10 and 11 on Nussbaum's list—"separateness" and "strong separateness"—are manifestations of her Western bias. Wolf maintains that the inclusion of separateness "appears to assume a superiority of individualism over communitarianism at a level of theory, that is, at least, controversial."²⁴ According to Nussbaum, the highly complex nature of separateness is fundamental to an individual's living a good human life. The emphasis she places on the individual is made especially apparent when she writes,

Because of separateness, each human life has, so to speak, its own peculiar context and surroundings—objects, places, a history, particular friendships, locations sexual ties—that are not exactly the same as those of anyone else, and in terms of which the person to some extent identifies oneself.²⁵

In the above passage Nussbaum seems to be arguing each person has a conception of herself that is separate, distinct, and unshared with others around her. This emphasis on the individual is a common trait of liberal theory whereby persons are viewed as thriving in isolation from others. More than this, however, Nussbaum's emphasis on separateness succeeds in divorcing individuals from the relationships they are engaged in at both personal and public levels.

The conclusion I will build on later in this paper is that very often people's identities and perspectives are formed both consciously and unconsciously by the relationships that affect them and occur at a number of levels including the local, national, and global ones. For now, I will extend Wolf's criticism of Nussbaum's list by contending that "separateness" and "strong separateness" are features that many non-Western people are not likely to value. Certain communities, for example, engage in communal decision making processes or collective negotiations and do not at all value this liberal Western feature of separateness. For instance, in the Pakistani mountain village of Shimshal, community members engage in distinct collective decision-making

bodies whereby most decisions about the village's well-being is achieved through verbal consensus.²⁶ Whether or not one agrees with the idea of a "shared humanness," things may become objectionable when prescriptive and universal policies are set out to be applied to the lives of disadvantaged groups living in entirely different contexts all over the globe. The Shimshali community is but one example that casts doubt on Nussbaum's ethnocentric individualism.

In "Feminist Encounters,"²⁷ Mohanty criticizes Western feminist Robin Morgan for describing women as a unified group un-implicated in history or contemporary imperialism. What is particularly bothersome to Mohanty is the way in which Morgan describes women's shared experience of struggle as personal and ahistorical. According to Mohanty, this approach presumes that all of women's injustices are located in the individual experience of woman. This point is made especially clear in the following passage where Mohanty writes,

If the assumption of the *sameness* of experience is what ties women (individual) to women (group), regardless of class, race, nation, and sexualities, the notion of experience is anchored firmly in the notion of the individual self, a determined and specifiable constituent of European modernity. However, this notion of the individual needs to be self-consciously historicized if as feminists we wish to go beyond the limited bourgeois ideology of individualism.²⁸

Mohanty's point is especially relevant to Wolf's and my own criticism of items 10 and 11 on Nussbaum's list. In addition to the points made that Nussbaum's list carries a Western bias through its individualism, Mohanty adds to the analysis the important suggestion that women's lives and experiences need to be understood as embedded within the real histories and contexts in which they occur.

In summary, my support of the Mohanty and Wolf criticisms provides a minimal requirement for Nussbaum to clarify the terms of "separateness", if it is to be described as

a component essential to our humanness. My own reference to the communal nature of certain aboriginal groups demonstrates that it may not always be evident that “separateness” applies to women in all contexts and locations. Items 10 and 11 on Nussbaum’s list were further cast into doubt by my claim that Nussbaum emphasis on the individual as isolated from others oversimplifies women’s identities and experiences. As mentioned above, I will address this sort of objection more substantially in Chapter 5 through relational theory and its critique of liberal theory’s reliance on individuals as flourishing in separation from others.

To conclude, I argue that Nussbaum fails to survive the anti-essentialist criticism of insensitivity to culture and context in part at least because of her very use of a list. While Nussbaum claims that her list is flexible and items can be replaced and added on an as-needed basis, to date her list has remained relatively the same. As it stands, its applicability to different cultures has already been called into question because of the lurking possibility that her list carries with it an implicit Western bias. An adequate theory of justice needs to escape the presumption that what is a good strategy for improving women’s quality of life in one society, may not be so for all societies. This objection is in part substantiated by my aforementioned discussion of traces of Western bias that likely permeate the Bangladesh literacy example.

3) Sen’s Capabilities Approach

Over the past twenty years, economist Amartya Sen has developed a different kind of capabilities approach. His version of the capabilities approach and his theory of development have most recently been defended at length in *Development as Freedom*.²⁹

My reason for wanting to draw the reader's attention to Sen's version of the capabilities approach is because I see it as an improvement on Nussbaum's approach. This section is only meant to introduce some of the key concepts in Sen's approach, and not to address larger implications of his theory. Through establishing a solid understanding of some key concepts, I will then be in a position to argue that Sen's account offers a more promising account of women's well-being (than Nussbaum's) that will help with aspects of my upcoming insider/outsider framework. Sen's concept of agency will be most useful to my approach, but it is not without flaws. While it is an improvement on Nussbaum's I believe that there are still certain lacks—specifically in relation to some of his generalized policy suggestions. I will return to these limitations in Chapter 6.

3.1. Key Concepts in Sen's Capability Approach

Many of the core principles arising in Sen's development approach have inspired and transformed the UNDP's *Human Development Reports*. An understanding of some of these key concepts will help us to see later whether his perspective falls prey to some of the same criticisms I made of Nussbaum.

a) A Brief Description of the Capabilities Approach

In *Development as Freedom*, Sen describes his view of “functionings,” as that which “reflects the various things a person may value doing or being.”³⁰ He proceeds to say that valued functionings can be activities that vary from the basic and elementary, such as being adequately nourished, to the very complex, such as being able to partake in community life and having self-respect. By contrast, he defines a person's “capability” as the “combinations of functions that are feasible for her to achieve.”³¹ More simply put,

it is the freedom to live the life one has reason to value. Sen gives an example to show the difference between functioning and capability:

An affluent person who fasts may have the same functioning achievement in terms of eating or nourishment as a destitute person who is forced to starve, but the first person does have a different “capability set” than the second (the first *can* choose to eat well and be well nourished in a way the second cannot).³²

For Sen this “capability set” described above therefore represents the freedom to achieve. We can already see that Sen’s approach is underspecified in comparison to Nussbaum’s even though they both appeal to functionings and capabilities. The framework that Sen provides can be seen as having both advantages and disadvantages for normative assessment—most particularly related to remedying women’s inequalities. I will return to the underspecified nature of Sen’s approach shortly; for now, we need to provide a more complete picture of his approach and how it can inform policy.

b) Freedoms and the Complexities of Inequalities

For Sen, one cannot begin to think about development processes without making freedom of individuals central. At the start of his book, Sen specifies that freedom plays two central roles for development—evaluation and effectiveness. Concerning the former, Sen points out that if we wish for the development process to improve then we need to ask whether the freedoms people have are being enhanced. In attending to these types of freedoms, Sen maintains that we will be closer to expanding people’s capabilities—whereby people can live valuable lives. The normative power of Sen’s theory is therefore contained in his evaluative reason for taking freedoms seriously.³³

In the Introduction to *Development as Freedom*, Sen appeals to a number of different types of freedom in order to show that inequalities are complex and interconnected phenomena. In the case of poverty, for example, Sen agrees that while

income can be connected to a deprivation of capabilities, such as how low income is very often responsible for the lack of adequate health and education, the picture of poverty is much more complex. Because of this, we are therefore in need of an evaluative system that reflects these complexities. Sen gives the example of disturbing phenomenon of “missing women” (resulting from higher age-specific mortality rates of women in some societies of South Asia, West Asia, North Africa, and China) to show that this is a case where deprivation of income will tell us little about gender inequality. This particular phenomenon “has to be analyzed with demographic, medical and social information.”³⁴ Sen broadens this idea by arguing that there are numerous influences that can impact on individual freedoms and that lives need to be reconceived in terms of a different “informational base.” This new evaluative system includes an analysis of deprivations including premature mortality, significant undernourishment, persistent morbidity, widespread illiteracy, and other failures.³⁵

Many of Sen’s chapters are dedicated to showing the empirical interconnectedness of these different types of freedoms (which are related to the types of activities people engage in). Some of these freedoms are absolute measures of one’s quality of life such as the freedom to live a long life and to avoid premature death. Ingrid Robeyns captures Sen’s capability approach nicely when she writes,

Sen’s capability approach postulates that when making normative evaluations, the focus should be on what people are able to be and to do, and not what they can consume, or on their incomes. The latter are only the means of well-being, whereas evaluations and judgments should focus on those things that matter intrinsically, that is, on a person’s capabilities.³⁶

We can see that Sen’s capability approach can be immensely useful for addressing concerns on the feminist agenda. Unlike Nussbaum, Sen is extremely aware of the myriad of factors that can influence women’s actual functionings. I would agree that a

framework that can make women's freedoms central is a helpful guide for policy. Sen's account rightly highlights the importance of the interconnectedness of inequalities. I want next to ask, why after all this time, has Sen continuously refused to provide a list of capabilities for his theory?

c) A List-less Approach?

Sen has systematically refused to quantify his capabilities approach with a list. His capability approach can therefore most suitably be viewed as a general framework, deliberately underspecified. In my criticism of Nussbaum, I argued that her list is not as specifiable in terms of context as she makes it out to be—especially concerning the ethnocentric individualism of items 10 and 11. In contrast, one advantage of Sen's failure to provide a list is that he has no essentialist starting point for his well-being approach. His approach thus does not commit him to Nussbaum's contention that we need to start with sameness and not difference in order to eliminate injustices in a global context. In spite of this first advantage, Sen has been criticized for his failure to provide a list. The generality of his capability framework has often been perceived as a disadvantage.³⁷ He advocates a capabilities-centered normative framework, but he does not state which *specifically* should be considered and/or given preference. One can, however, detect a sort of ranking system for evaluating individual lives. When considering an individual's well-being, Irene van Staveren and Des Gasper contend that Sen's capability approach implies the following conceptual prioritization: We need to look at capabilities (the set of life options available to a person) over functionings, functionings (how a person actually lives) over utility, and utility (feelings of satisfaction) over goods/commodities (placed last because people have different requirements).³⁸

Sen's list-less and flexible framework seems to work by providing some core principles to guide policy-makers by showing which inequalities matter most. Sen makes this possible by making the normative claim that we need to assess the relevant capabilities in each context of inequality. By asking what exactly people have reason to value in these particular contexts, his list-less approach provides significantly more guidance when it comes to evaluating the lives of people in specific places. This point situates Sen's normative approach as one that is based on the individual freedoms that members of a given society are capable of enjoying. In part because of this point, his capabilities approach contrasts dramatically with other traditional approaches that have at their heart an emphasis on instrumentalism, income, or liberty.³⁹ In taking this more open theoretical route, Sen achieves a kind of context-sensitivity that Nussbaum's approach seems incapable of achieving. In my view, this methodology is essential when thinking about gender inequalities in a global context.

Instead of imposing a set list, Sen's approach favours removing obstacles that impinge on people's functionings and capabilities. An advantage of Sen's capability approach lies in its broadness and flexibility. One can use it when considering policy locally or globally, empirically or philosophically. In the passage below, Robeyns describes how Sen's approach differs from that of Nussbaum's. Robeyns actually argues in favour of needing a definite list, but I think there are advantages she does not fully recognize in her description of Sen's underspecified approach.

Sen's capability approach, by contrast [to Nussbaum's], makes broader and less specified claims. Given the intrinsic underspecification of Sen's capability approach there cannot be one catch-all list. Instead, each application of the capability approach will require its own list. For Sen, a list of capabilities must be context dependent, where the context is both the geographical area to which it applies, and the sort of evaluation that is to be done. Applications of Sen's capability approach can be very diverse. They can be academic, activist, or policy-oriented. They can be abstract and philosophical, or applied and down to earth. They can be theoretical or empirical. They can concern social, political, economic, legal, psychological, or other dimensions of advantage, taken together or individually or in any combination.⁴⁰

Why does such flexibility need to be thought of as bad? It appears to me as though Sen's approach is more context sensitive because he is more sensitive to the diverse structures that perpetuate gender inequalities at both local and global levels. There is final feature of Sen's approach that I have saved for last—that of agency. In my view, his view of agency is what most starkly distinguishes his account from that of Nussbaum's.

d) Agency

The component of Sen's capabilities approach that is most important to my own insider/outsider framework is the emphasis he places on the role of agency. An appeal to agency is one way to emphasize how women's perspectives in their particular contexts are important. One of the crucial roles that enhanced freedom plays, in Sen's view, is that it "enhances the ability of people to help themselves and also to influence the world."⁴¹ This specific concern of the development process refers to what Sen calls the "agency aspect" of the individual. He specifies that the manner in which he uses the term agency is meant to reflect the idea of "someone who acts and brings about change, and whose achievements can be judged in terms of her own values and objectives, whether or not we assess them in terms of some external criteria as well."⁴²

To clarify this description, one can consider a person to be an active agent when she or he has the freedom to participate in economic, social, and political actions.

Conceiving of agency in these terms without any appeal to a set list provides the much

needed link between theory and practice. When people have the ability to identify what they and their community value, they can provide valuable information and insights to outsiders. For instance, in aboriginal policy, people's capability to reside on ancestral lands is significant because, owing to the links between their identity, psychological well-being, community and land, this is something that aboriginal people have special reason to value. As one might imagine, in other contexts and for other people this is likely not to matter. This is why it is important for Sen to have an approach that is powerful enough to reveal which inequalities matter and when. We see here from this description of agency that Sen's approach is yet another improvement on Nussbaum's because he conceives of people having "values and objectives" that are context dependent.

Not only does Sen speak generally about the importance of agency in the development process, but he also specifies more narrowly that women's freedom to exercise their agency should be essential to development policy. Sen devotes Chapter 8 to discussing "Women's Agency and Social Change." A significant part of the chapter relates to Sen's discussion of the "substantial intersection" of women's agency and their well-being.

Understanding the agency role is thus central to recognizing people as responsible persons: not only are we well or ill, but also we act or refuse to act, and can choose to act one way rather than another. And thus we—women *and* men—must take responsibility for doing things or not doing them. It makes a difference, and we have to take note of that difference....it can be exacting in its implications, both for social analysis and for practical reason and action.

This type of passage demonstrates that Sen's theory takes women to be varied and multidimensional agents who should not be painted with an essentialist brush. In his view, the most immediate reason for focusing on agency is that doing so can eliminate inequalities that negatively impact women's well-being. He refers to empirical evidence that shows that different aspects such as women's earning power, their working outside

of the home, their education, and their property rights all impact women's well-being. What all of these aspects share in common according to Sen, is that they positively contribute to women's voice and agency, adding force to women's agency through empowerment and independence.⁴³

One cannot help here but pose the question, is this a universal truth about women's well-being? While it is clear that there must be many cases where a women's work, education, and so on, contribute positively to her agency, is this the case for all women? Sen refers most frequently to the connection between women's agency and paid work outside of the home:

Working outside the home and earning an independent income tend to have a clear impact on enhancing the social standing of a woman in the household and the society. Her contribution to the prosperity of the family is then more visible, and she also has more voice, because of being less dependent on others.⁴⁴

I will here leave the reader with a critical question I shall come back to in the final chapter. What is the degree to which these aspects of women's lives *universally* impact women's agency in local and global contexts? I believe Sen is right when he states that when women's agency is influenced by aspects such as education and employment, but is this the whole story? Are there always positive correlations? These questions become especially relevant when considering whether policy can be applied universally across cultures and achieve equal improvements in the quality of women's lives.

Sen's emphasis on the "agency aspect" and the interconnectedness of different kinds of freedoms are two features that make his approach less universalist and essentialist than Nussbaum's. Agency, in particular, serves to protect Sen's framework from the inflexibility criticisms I have made against Nussbaum's approach. Sen's account of agency is a definite improvement on Nussbaum's but it is not without flaws. I

shall reserve criticism of Sen's view for my final chapter when my theoretical framework is firmly in place and I apply it to the specific issue of reproductive rights in Mexico.

In the next section, I return to issues of essentialism and universalism as I delineate their appearances in Susan Okin's theory of justice. More than any other theorist I have researched; her account makes vivid some of the limitations of a singular universalist and essentialist theory of justice. What will also prove useful in my evaluation of Okin's account is that she provides an account of insiders and outsiders that I take to be problematic. This will be the point of departure for developing my insider/outsider framework.

4) Susan Moller Okin's Theory of Justice

In "Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences,"⁴⁵ Okin puts some Western feminist ideas about justice and inequality to the test. Of specific interest to her is the goal of exploring how well theories of justice—developed by well-off women in Western countries—work when used to look at the very different situations of the poorest women in poor countries. In "Feminism, Women's Human Rights, and Cultural Differences,"⁴⁶ Okin further develops her account by rallying to have women's rights recognized as human rights. She suggests that existing theories of human rights are problematic because they have been constructed on a male model. In the next few sections I will provide an analysis of Okin's feminist theory of justice and then raise some important criticisms.

4.1 Some Essentialist Starting Points

For Okin, theories of justice and development ethics have been marked by a lack of attention to gender. She argues that we need to carve a place for issues of gender into a theory of justice for four major reasons. First, women's well-being matters largely because gender inequalities have had fatal consequences for millions of women. Second, equality of opportunity matters in part because of the greater poverty that afflicts female-headed households. An estimated one third of all the world's households are run by single women.⁴⁷ Also important, is the impact that the gendered division of labour has on girls and women. For example, women's opportunities [for full time work] is significantly limited by the fact that women "are almost invariably the primary caretakers."⁴⁸ Lastly the issue of just distribution within households matters.

Okin presents these four reasons as evidence for the need for an essentialist and universalist account of injustice for women. She sets out to prove that the situations of poor women in poor countries are not qualitatively *different* from women in rich countries, but rather are "similar but worse."⁴⁹ In each of these examples of inequalities, Okin sets out to show that there are no meaningful differences in women's experiences of oppression in different economic and cultural settings. Her example of the gendered division of labour provides the best evidence of Okin's essentialism. Okin argues that women in rich countries are overworked and considered to be less economically valuable than men. Moreover, these characteristics of the gendered division of labour operate "similarly but more so" within poor families in many poor countries. In poor countries, "adult women suffer—often more severely—many of the same effects of the division of

labour as do women in richer countries.”⁵⁰ Okin makes the assumption that women’s experiences of inequalities in both First and Third World nations are *equivalent*.

This is an example where Okin treats all women around the world as the same by pigeonholing all women as “overworked primary caretakers.” When speaking about the experiences of women of the Third World, she writes, “they are even worse schools of justice and more successful inculcators of the inequality of the sexes as natural and appropriate than are their **developed world equivalents**. (my emphasis).”⁵¹ It is hard to believe that women can share a universal experience of “the gendered division of labor” as Okin suggests.⁵² For example, a woman who sees child rearing as valuable work may not *want* to be available for full-time wage work. Why is Okin so set on equalizing women’s experiences of oppression cross-culturally? What might this all mean for her theory of justice?

It seems to me as though Okin encourages us to see sameness in order to facilitate the outlining of some universal principles of justice for her theory. My example of the mother who values child rearing over paid work sheds light on the need to take women’s perspectives and the contexts in which they are shaped into account when theorizing. It does not follow from the claim that if women do not share in Okin’s definition of the gendered division of labour that we will be “unable to come up with any principles at all.”⁵³ Nor is it necessarily the case that if women do not share in the views of those perpetuated by feminists in the West that they suffer from “false consciousness” as Okin also suggests. What I hope to build on here is the view that women’s perspectives (on labour and many of the things important to them) depend on a number of factors interplaying at local and global levels. We need not answer essentialism with relativism.

The fact that women do not have a shared perspective on something such as the division of labour simply underscores my point that we need a flexible and complex framework if we ever want to actually devise strategies to improve women's quality of life in particular contexts.

4.2 An Adapted Rawlsian Theory of Justice

The conclusion Okin comes to in her work on justice is that it is possible to consider issues of justice affecting women in other cultures if John Rawls's theory of justice is adapted to include women and the family. Rawls's theory is attractive to her because of the recognition that "if everyone were to speak only from his or her own point of view, it is unclear that we would come up with any principles at all."⁵⁴ In stating this, one should notice how Okin is denouncing the value of subjectivity in favour of the possibility of having universal principles that can dictate moral judgments cross culturally.

4.2.1. The Veil of Ignorance

Rawls's "veil of ignorance" is the proposed solution to the problem of making moral judgments about other people's lives. In presenting his account of "justice as fairness" in *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls defends principles of justice as those which "free and rational persons concerned to further their own interest would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association."⁵⁵ Rawls is interested in the choices rational *men* (heads of households) would make in the hypothetical situation he calls "the original position." What is unique about the original position is that individuals must choose principles of justice behind a "veil of ignorance." Under the veil, persons have no knowledge of what social position they occupy, his class,

fortune, natural assets and abilities, strengths, intelligence, and so on. For Rawls, the veil is important because it guarantees impartiality and fairness between persons when choosing principles of justice (despite the self-interestedness of the choosers). For example, the veil makes it so that a man could not unfairly advance a principal that protects the wealthy for he is ignorant of *who* is wealthy. Therefore, under Rawls's account, people will not be affected by their own conceptions of the good and can instead concentrate on advancing a general or collective good. Put simply, the veil levels the playing field so that people are only motivated by generic self-interest. They will not make a decision that compromises their own chance to plan a life for themselves which leads them to decide on a system that is as fair as possible for everyone.⁵⁶

In her earlier paper, Okin argues that we can indeed know what justice requires for all cultures if we revise Rawls's theory so as to include women and the family. She asserts that "the veil of ignorance" could have enormous utility for forcing people concerned with justice to consider the disadvantaged members of society. "The presence of the veil...would enable us to reconcile the requirement that a theory of justice be universalizable with the seemingly conflicting requirement that it take account of the multiple differences among human beings."⁵⁷ Okin presents her revised Rawlsian theory of justice as superior to anti-essentialist feminist suggestions. With the veil of ignorance in place as a tool, Okin's universalism becomes more and more explicit.

4.2.2. Overcoming the Anti-essentialist Critique when Thinking about Justice

Okin defends her view against accusations of essentialism by placing it against that of anti-essentialist, Ruth Anna Putnam. Putnam recommends that we reconcile matters of justice with dialogue. She suggests that "we listen to the voices of women of

color and women of a different class and that we appropriate what we hear.”⁵⁸ While Okin grants that listening and discussing are important features of a theory of justice, she maintains that they are not enough. I would have to agree with Okin on this point. Effective strategizing about alleviating women’s oppression and inequalities requires something more proactive than just listening. I am skeptical, however, that Okin’s account provides a *better* alternative since her approach is filled with pervasive essentialism. Another example of Okin’s essentialism pops up as she is defending her approach against Putnam’s anti-essentialist critique. For example, Okin contends that Putnam’s dialogical approach for addressing injustices is weak because it does not consider the fact 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.”⁵⁹ Perspectives, as I will show, are important but they need to be analyzed in specific contexts of oppressive relations.

4.3. The Problem of Universalism and the “Global Community”

As I have already mentioned, in Okin’s recent paper, she argues in favour of recognizing women’s rights as human rights. In developing her argument, Okin directly challenges the feminist anti-essentialist critique that has been raised against many Western feminist theorists. The criticism Okin takes particular issue with is the anti-essentialist argument that claims that many Western feminists are guilty of inaccurately generalizing about women’s experiences across cultures. Okin refers to Third World feminist Chandra Mohanty’s criticism of Robin Morgan’s anthology *Sisterhood is Global*. Mohanty is troubled about Morgan’s claim that women share in a “universal

sisterhood” across cultures. Okin believes that feminists (like Mohanty) have yet to adequately show that the differences are relevant to both policy and theory.

Okin tries to undermine the anti-essentialist position by showing that the universalist approach of “women’s rights as human rights” has proven to work. As an example, Okin points to the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1994. It was here that 240 participants from 110 NGOs united in common concern over women’s international rights. At a conference such as this, women from dramatically different parts of the world having very different experiences found that they had a lot in common with one another. In fact, what they found were cross-cultural trends including discrimination against women, patterns of gender-based violence, and sexual exploitation of women and girls.⁶⁰ Women were able to agree that patriarchy penetrates through all borders. While women’s problems were not identical from culture to culture or class to class, Okin recounts that they were nonetheless able to recognize some general truths. Three other universal features emerged. First, women are affected by laws and customs having to do with sexuality, marriage, and divorce. Second, women and girls are more likely to be sexually vulnerable. Third, their work tends to be valued considerably less highly than men’s work.⁶¹ According to Okin, the results of this type of conference show that women *can* talk across differences and come up with universal truths about women’s oppression.

I do not wish to cast doubt upon the claim that women from different countries can come together and would be able to find things they share in common. Women around the world do indeed face many of the same disadvantages and injustices. While women share things in common, there are also many ways in which women differ, such

as through their histories, cultures, and traditions. More importantly, even the injustices they share are shaped differently in different contexts and an understanding of this detail is necessary for devising effective policies. What may further be dangerous about subscribing to a global sisterhood type approach is that women come to be known for their victim status and not for their status as agents in control of their own social progress. Mohanty's main argument supporting this claim is embodied by her rejection of the assumption that women across cultures be characterized as a singular group on the basis of shared oppression. This focus on viewing women as a category of analysis prior to their immersion in specific contexts focuses on "finding a variety of cases of powerless groups of women to prove the general point that women as a group are powerless."⁶² Mohanty elaborates and addresses many of these questions about characterizing women as powerless in her paper, and I will return to them when I discuss her approach at length in Chapter 4.

4.4. The Role of 'Insiders' and 'Outsiders' in Okin's theory of Justice

The final aspect of Okin's approach that I would like to bring up is the role she sees "outsiders" playing within her theory of justice. It is important to recognize that Okin wants her theory of justice to bring women from First and Third World countries together in the name of eliminating global inequalities. She argues that thinking of women's rights as human rights "enables the international community to put these issues unambiguously on the table."⁶³ The next important question Okin addresses is *whose* voice we should listen to if we want to know what justice requires. I here pose the question, whose voices are being heard and valued at women's international conferences? There is a strong likelihood that Third World women's voices are being suppressed by

those with more power. Okin's Western bias and universalism here emerge when she argues that those who are oppressed very often do not know what they are entitled to.

we are not always enlightened about what is just by asking persons who seem to be suffering injustices what they want. Oppressed people have often internalized their oppression so well that they *have* no sense of what they are justly entitled to as human beings."⁶⁴

In Okin's view, when women suffer from deprivations they are often unaware of their oppression. She proceeds to argue (controversially) that what justice actually requires is "critical distance." For this reason Okin believes that those outside of a culture will often be the most helpful critics, understanding what is required for the achievement of social justice. She writes, "*Committed* outsiders can often be better analysts and critics of social injustice than those who live within the relevant culture."⁶⁵ I do not here wish to challenge the claim that the opinions of objective outsiders to a situation can often be of help. It does not follow from this recognition, however, that this is always or even usually the case.

The way in which Okin values outsiders is not surprising given her aforementioned support for the adapted Rawlsian original position and the veil of ignorance. Okin believes that from behind the veil, both the oppressors and the oppressed would have second thoughts about oppressive practices. In other words, the benefit would be that those in the original position would not lose their objectivity by being embedded within the social norms and cultures that perpetuate inequalities. The original position and the veil add to Okin's theory the benefits of critical distance. When put into practice, the benefits of the adapted Rawlsian theory would be evident, in Okin's view. What she claims her theory adds is protection from members of oppressed groups

who are likely to endorse an oppressive practice. “What man would endorse gross genital mutilation, not knowing *whose* genitals?”⁶⁶

Okin elaborates on the question of *whose* voices are important and relevant in the quest for social justice. She discusses insiders and outsiders in specific relation to deciphering what the role of feminists as social critics ought to be. How can one both have sufficient knowledge of the details of a specific context yet at the same time manage to uphold critical distance from it? Okin contends that some of the best feminist social critics have been “insider-outsider critics.” Put simply, “insider-outsider” critics are people from one culture who at some point have lived or experienced another culture. How are such insider-outsiders qualified? Okin’s idea is that these people may come from a privileged vantage point because they have their feet in both worlds and they might be in the best position to judge the morality of the society’s practices. As an example of these insider-outsider critics, Okin refers to Nahid Toubia, the Sudanese surgeon now living in the United States who has become the leader of the struggle for global action against female genital mutilation.

From Okin’s perspective, while insider-outsider critics may be particularly effective social critics, there is no clear cut set of criteria for what constitutes good feminist criticism. Okin alludes to cases where insiders and outsiders to culture have been either effective or ineffective in judging the practices of a specific culture. In her view, sometimes being located *inside* a culture makes a critic especially astute, while at other times a good critic of a culture can

take the anthropologist’s route—going from the outside to inside, where, if thorough and careful in one’s listening and learning, one can become very knowledgeable about a culture without either becoming co-opted by it or by it or losing the capacity to be critical of some aspects of it.⁶⁷

It is clear from this passage that Okin thinks that outsiders to oppression can in many cases offer a great deal to those “inside” a culture. At the very least, Okin is successful at showing that the concepts “inside” and “outside” are far from simple. The question of *whose* voice ought to be listened to is an extremely important one when developing a theory of justice. In the end, Okin does not identify specific criteria for judging a society’s practices. “The very concept of “inside” and “outside” is problematic. For example, is an upper-class, British-educated, city-dwelling woman in India “inside” or “outside” the culture that makes rural poverty in India even more damaging and limiting for women than for men?”⁶⁸ Even though there is some uncertainty when it comes to Okin’s view of insiders and outsiders, one thing is clear. Even in her most favourable characterization of insider-outsider critics, Okin does not see any specific advantage to being an insider when it comes to judging the moral status of a society’s social practices.

Throughout this paper, one of my goals is to show that when theorizing about women’s inequalities in a global context we indeed do need to attach specific value to insiders’ perspectives. Moreover, Okin’s claim that Third World women suffer qualitatively similar experiences of oppression (varying only in degree) as do women from First World countries, serves to support the enacting of universal policies that may not serve to improve the quality of many women’s lives. Simply put, I maintain that a theoretical starting point of sameness will never yield the most accurate political and policy developments. Furthermore, sameness will only prevent minority voices from coming forward when sitting around an international table. There is a strong need, therefore, for feminist approaches to include the perspectives of insiders and the unique

contributions they may have for policy-making. An insider/outsider framework will need to take these issues and problems into account.

5. Conclusion

The primary aim of this chapter has been to outline two main theories of justice proposed by Nussbaum and Okin. I have also devoted some time to describing what I take to be some of the most relevant and important features of Sen's capabilities approach. What I hope to have revealed is that thinking about overcoming gender inequalities in a global context is an extremely complex matter at both the theoretical and practical levels. While I hope to have shown that we do not want to abandon theory altogether, we are in need of a framework that accurately captures inequalities and oppression as they manifest themselves in specific contexts. I have described Nussbaum and Okin's overarching theories of justice as being ill equipped to deal with the complex and diverse nature of women's oppression. My accusation against Nussbaum's appeal to a list that may carry with it an ethnocentric focus on liberal individualism cast into doubt the flexibility and applicability of her approach to the lives of women from all contexts around the world. Okin's theory, in particular, seems to be the least informed about how women's experiences of inequalities vary from context to context, and are shaped by a number of different relationships occurring at different levels. In broad terms, theories of justice that are essentialist and universalist do not take seriously enough the differences, histories, and contexts that shape women's experiences of oppression as they occur in varying contexts. What dangerously follows from generalized theories of justice such as the ones described is that they yield universalized policies that they are too easily applied

to women from all locations around the world. While Sen improves on Nussbaum and Okin by offering an approach that affords greater sensitivity to the diverse nature of women's inequalities, I maintain that there is more to understand and include when theorizing about women's inequalities. I also argued that Sen's concept of agency will prove to be important for my own account.

I have chosen to analyze and assess the contributions of these thinkers because they do an excellent job of speaking to so many issues relevant to social justice. I agree at a fundamental level with Nussbaum that women's quality of life is in desperate need of improvement. Sen's approach opens our eyes to the fact that women's inequalities (and poverty more broadly) are about much more than just inequalities in wealth. I also agree with Okin's vision of uniting women across borders to share in their understanding of oppression. Women are globally discriminated against in both differing and similar ways. I also strongly identify with Nussbaum's and Okin's claims that culture and tradition have for too long valorized the oppressive practices that disproportionately burden women. It is because of this intersection of agreement that I wish to take my place in a long line of feminists who have been motivated by the same serious commitment to ameliorate women's inequalities on the global stage. In doing so, however, I claim there is a need to reject the tenets of essentialism and universalism in feminist theory.

I maintain that if we are ever to succeed in achieving the goal of alleviating oppression and mobilizing for change, then we ought to abandon the confines that a single overarching theory of justice provides and move towards adopting a revised goal: coming up with adequate theories of women's oppression as it manifests itself in different locations and under different circumstances as well as developing some key

strategies for combating oppression in particular locations. One strong reason for making this tactical switch is the fact that women in different locations seem to have drastically different experiences of oppression.

In the following chapter, I begin setting down the foundation for my insider/outsider framework by highlighting aspects absent in Okin's account. I suggest more broadly that this theoretical framework is a far better method for strategizing about alleviating gender inequalities in a global context than the one provided by Okin or Nussbaum. As I mentioned in the introduction, Chapter 3 is a detailed discussion of insiders and outsiders as outlined by three theorists—Crocker, Thomas, and Narayan. This upcoming chapter will reveal some rich concepts that I argue are central ingredients of a dynamic theoretical foundation including the important roles of epistemic privilege and relations of power. The normative power of these concepts cannot be overestimated. Once in place, this robust foundation will inform us about what we ought to do about oppression and injustice in specific contexts.

CHAPTER 3: The Insider/Outsider Framework: Who Speaks?

Now that I have called into question the utility and accuracy of two universalist theories of justice, I shall next turn to developing my alternative framework. In the previous chapter, Okin's discussion of "insider-outsider critics" drew attention to a vital question for feminists concerned with inequalities in a global context: who is in the best position to make evaluative judgments about a given society's practices? As it turned out, Okin's theory of justice does not carve a serious enough space for the voices of women who live with oppression. Picking up where Okin leaves off, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the role that insiders and outsiders ought to play when assessing injustices and strategizing about effective policies for alleviating such injustices in particular locations. The primary reason for looking at the different accounts of insiders and outsiders put forth by several philosophers is to illustrate how elements of power play out at both local and global levels. More generally, I want to show that when theorizing about alleviating women's injustices, we need to make such considerations central. In contrast with Okin, the theorists examined in this chapter reveal the increasing value of insiders' perspectives when it comes to matters of social justice.

With the above objectives in mind, I divide this chapter in the following way. I begin with a concise summary of Okin's view of insiders and outsiders. Her descriptions clearly illustrate how elements of power both at the local and global levels are absent from her theory of justice. Second, I discuss David Crocker's view of insiders and outsiders from his paper "Insiders and Outsiders in International Development."⁶⁹ While Crocker's approach is a drastic improvement on Okin's, I suggest that there is something missing from his account. In the third section of the chapter, I describe Laurence

Thomas's account from his paper "Moral Deference."⁷⁰ The main point of value in Thomas is the innovative way in which he attaches issues of insider/outsider to issues of epistemic privilege, and the way he brings out the importance of perspectives in relation to groups. Fourth, I introduce Uma Narayan's as an improved account of insiders and outsiders as she describes it in "Working Together across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice."⁷¹ Narayan takes things conceptually farther than Thomas by arguing that epistemic privilege is more than just deference to perspectives alone. Lastly, I conclude by summarizing the important features that need to be incorporated into my insider/outsider framework.

1. Susan Okin

In the previous chapter, I criticized how Okin categorizes women's experience of things such as paid work, education, and healthcare as "similar but *much* worse" in poor countries. For now, I devote this section to fleshing out a broader criticism that when we look at Okin's theory of insiders and outsiders it becomes clear that something gets missed when someone speaks on behalf of *all women*. The full criticism of Okin's approach will be provided in both Chapter 4 and in the final chapter.

1.1. Okin's Challenge Revisited

In both of Okin's papers that I discussed, she challenges anti-essentialists by defending her claim that women from all over the world share similar experiences of oppression. If Okin can survive the anti-essentialist critique, then she believes her theory of justice to be on a solid foundation. In her view, if women can unite through their

shared experiences of oppression then global discourse is indeed possible and women can join together in the fight to eliminate inequalities.

In addition to the benefits of international dialogue, Okin also advocates for a kind of critical distance when evaluating a society's practices. Recall how Okin writes,

Committed outsiders can often be better analysts and critics of social injustice than those who live within the relevant culture. This is why a concept such as the original position which aims to approximate an Archimedean point, is so valuable, at least in addition to some form of dialogue."⁷²

I take issue with Okin's above espoused view of insider and outsider critics as the chapter (and thesis more generally) develops. To start, Okin's idea of seeking out international dialogue seems to be incongruent with her above claim that "outsiders can often be better critics of social injustice than those who live within the relevant culture." What the above passage makes obvious is the fact that Okin grants very little, if any, epistemic power to "insiders." More specifically, Okin's theory of justice operates completely independently from the perspectives and experiences of women in particular contexts. As I noted in the previous chapter, Okin goes so far as to say that the disadvantaged and the oppressed cannot be trusted to know justice and injustice when they experience it.

It is important here to note that in my criticism of Okin's theory I am not arguing that oppressed women *always* or *automatically* know about justice and injustice by virtue of the fact that they are oppressed. What is problematic is how Okin's theory of justice fails to value the voices of oppressed women, who are insiders to that oppression. This failure is most apparent in the way she describes women's experiences of oppression as the same regardless of where they come from. The argument I am making is that even with some of the world's most oppressive practices (e.g. foot binding, clitoridectomy, or purdah), if someone speaks on behalf of these oppressed women some important

empirical aspects of these practices get missed. I will simply flag this point for now, and return to what exactly gets missed when I refer to the works of Narayan and Mohanty. Aside from the problems of Okin's universalism and essentialism that I have outlined, there is one final limitation of her theory of justice that I have not yet attended to. This criticism relates to the idea that absent from Okin's theory is any recognition of relations of power existing at different levels.

1.2. Relations of Power

We need not be paralyzed by the fact that there are differences between women, as Okin seems to suggest. Absent from Okin's theory of justice in both of her papers is a recognition of the role that power plays in women's judgments and dialogue. If women are going to be able to come together across borders and engage in dialogue as Okin intends, one needs to understand that power relations are likely to be at work even around an international table of women all concerned with fighting oppression. Discussions in even the best-intentioned and most open-minded environment possible are still bolstered by relationships of power. If we consider Okin's reference to the Vienna Conference, I would be curious to see how dialogue emerged in this context between women from First World and Third World countries. Were the experiences and perspectives of women from poorer countries given as much credence and consideration?

There is yet another level of power relations that goes unmentioned in Okin's works—that of global power relations. The type of global power relations I am alluding to relates to Okin's position as a Western feminist writer within a global academic community. What power relations are influencing Western feminist writers who are theorizing about and judging the experiences and moral practices of Third World

women? It would be naïve to ignore the fact that feminist scholarly practices are inscribed in relations of power. In “Under Western Eyes,” Chandra Mohanty astutely points out that “feminist scholarly practice is not the mere production of knowledge about a certain subject. It is a directly political and discursive practice in that it is purposeful and ideological...there can, of course, be no apolitical scholarship.”⁷³ It is undeniable that feminist scholarly writers are affected by the varying local and global conditions of their lives, just as all women are in the world. If links are going to be forged between women from different countries, then this effort needs to be done with sensitivity to historical and political contexts and accurate theorizing about them.

To conclude, the “critical distance” that Okin seems to favour prevents the “judger” from accessing any new empirical facts about contexts, histories, and practices that may not be part of her or his knowledge base. The impact of overarching power structures existing at local and global levels are important considerations that ought to be included in feminist theories concerned with strategies for alleviating oppression in a global context. In the next section I assess Crocker’s approach to insiders and outsiders in a way that provides contrast with Okin’s theory.

2. David Crocker

In “Insiders and Outsiders in International Development,” David Crocker importantly asks the question of *who* ought to engage in reflecting and evaluating a country’s practices, goals, and strategies? Crocker formulates an account of insiders and outsiders and recommends that development ethicists “cultivate a mixture of insiderness/outsiderness with respect to both their own and other societies.”⁷⁴

2.1. Distinguishing between Insiders and Outsiders

Crocker is an improvement on Okin because he takes the question of who speaks very seriously. As an international development ethicist, Crocker aims to construct a framework for analysis that responds adequately to global power imbalances. This theoretical goal stems largely from his view that, increasingly, members of the Third World hold little power on the global stage in the face of prevailing ethnocentrism. The ethnocentric development ethicist “is likely to judge Third World development in terms of his or her own societal norms and propose development goals and strategies to help ‘them’ become like ‘us.’”⁷⁵

Crocker attempts to escape the pitfalls of ethnocentrism by using a framework of insiders and outsiders. For Crocker, an insider is someone who is “counted, recognized, or accepted, by himself/herself and the other group members, as belonging to the group. One is so identified on the basis of such things as shared beliefs, desires, memories, and hopes.”⁷⁶ Conversely, “one is an outsider with respect to a group just in case he or she is not counted, recognized or accepted by himself/herself and/or the group members—as belonging to the group, due to lack of these shared beliefs, desires, memories, hopes, as so forth.”⁷⁷ Both of these terms refer to individuals in relation to groups and their being inside or outside of them.

Crocker argues that the criteria for one’s membership as an insider or outsider to a group depends jointly upon his or her own recognition as such as well as the recognition by the group members. He further contends that one’s status as an insider or an outsider is neither permanently fixed nor exclusive. In other words, Crocker takes the insider/outsider distinction to be about differences that exist on a continuum.⁷⁸ Crocker

often appeals to the example of citizenship to demonstrate this point. He asks us to consider, for example, Guatemalan refugee children who quickly can become insiders to the Mexican culture to which their parents remain outsiders. Moreover, Crocker writes that “one can be formally a member of a group and not (yet) be an insider, for example, a new player on the team, an adopted child, a spouse whose heart is elsewhere.”⁷⁹ These types of examples lead Crocker to conclude that each of us can justifiably belong to a myriad of groups—to some we are accepted and to others we are not. Regardless of where we are accepted, Crocker writes that we can nonetheless move between groups with a kind of ease and fluidity.

2.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of Insiders

2.2.1 Advantages

Crocker outlines three specific advantages that an insider-ethicist has when she evaluates her own community. First, the insider has the advantage of knowing what things mean to the community because she has in fact shared in the practices, vocabulary, memories, hopes and fears.⁸⁰ Because of this increase in information, the insider ethicist who, in a way, shares an identity with a group can be especially sensitive to context, values, and meanings. Because of this latter point, one can argue that the insider’s first hand experiences of unjust practices, for example, can grant this person a sort of epistemic privilege.

The second advantage for the insider-ethicist relates to her ability to appeal to “an understood and presumed set of moral assumptions.”⁸¹ This point is a simple, but valuable one. Crocker wishes to point out that the insider-ethicist’s moral judgments will

not only be interpreted correctly but also will be accessible and graspable to the community itself.

A third advantage the insider-ethicist retains is the right to criticize her community's path, practices, and values. Often times, outsider criticisms are met with much resistance by community members. Since insiders very often know the facts, values, and desires of group members the latter group is said to have a "prima facie right" to be critical.⁸²

2.2.2. Disadvantages

While there are definite advantages for insiders in development ethics, there are also disadvantages. First, in her attempt to ethically assess her community, an insider-ethicist might be too close to critically reveal the relevant features of her community. Imagine a person who has lived in her community her whole life but who is oblivious to many of the community's basic features.

A second problem the insider-ethicist might face is being impeded by the vocabulary and traditions of her own community. Progress and innovation often require a new way of thinking and she may not have the objectivity or distance to properly access new ideas. Crocker worries that the insider may give her or his community "comforting reassurances" instead of replacing old dogmatic group ideas with fresh ones.

The insider-ethicist yet may face a third limitation. While group membership indeed affords an individual the opportunity to be critical of her community, this objectivity may come with a downfall. Crocker points out that the insider may often be prevented from acting freely against her community members because of a strong sense of loyalty she or he may have to certain people. "To be an insider is to live in the midst of

loyalties, debts, favours, obligation, promises—things which one owes to others and which one is owed.⁸³ This very real problem leads Crocker to say that outsiders can often “get the job done better” because they can say what the group would find difficult to hear. Taken together, these three advantages point out that Crocker recognizes that critical distance is a lot more difficult than Okin makes it out to be.

2.3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Outsiders

2.3.1 Advantages

Crocker describes the positive contributions that an outsider-ethicist can make as a mirror image of insider-ethicist weaknesses, when she or he reflects on the strategies and goals of another group. The first and rather obvious advantage is that an outsider can reveal and identify things that an insider in the group might miss. This is because insiders are often so entrenched in the values and beliefs of the group as not to notice certain failings. A second advantage Crocker raises is that the outsider can bring innovative ideas, vocabulary, and experience to the “alien group’s development deliberations.”⁸⁴ A most interesting point Crocker makes, that I alluded to earlier, is the fact that the outsider can play a positive role by “saying some things that need saying.” In other words, the outsider has no loyalty to the group and so she or he has nothing personal on the line. According to Crocker, the outsider can here “enable a weak or repressed group to gain a voice in relation to a hegemonic and oppressive group.”⁸⁵ Interestingly, this is one of the only places in his discussion of insiders and outsiders where he speaks directly of the voices of the oppressed.

2.3.2. Disadvantages

Let us now consider the disadvantages that outsider-ethicists must face. For one, an outsider-ethicist could be limited by her or his own ignorance about what exactly goes on within a group. Crocker reminds readers of the fact that Western outsiders have too often been scorned when they have naively tried to implement First World development policies in the Third World. He writes, “outsiders often assume that ‘what is good for us is good for them.’ More specifically, outsider ethicists are often closed off from the facts, meaning and communal values relevant for progressive social change.”⁸⁶

Secondly, Crocker points out that an outsider can often assume that her or his ideas are better and more valuable than those of insiders. This is most significant when the outsider comes from a developed/powerful group. If ethicists inside and/or outside the group take the outsider-ethicist as *knowing more*, then there is a inequality between people engaging in international dialogue. Outsider-ethicists also seem to struggle to find balance themselves as they often vacillate between two extremes. On the one hand, outsider-ethicists from wealthy countries can be coercive and ethnocentric. On the other hand, this group can also be not bold enough. For instance, an outsider whose country used to be imperialist may refrain from making negative evaluations of a group’s norms and practices.⁸⁷ All of these possibilities, in my view, seem undeniably connected to power relations.

A final limitation Crocker makes us aware of is the potential danger that could arise if developing nations depend too heavily upon the help of outsiders. The results of depending too heavily on outsider advice and judgments could be that weaker groups (insiders) do not have the opportunity to build local institutions that depend on and are

supported by their own perspectives. These are the sorts of dangers possible in and perhaps even promoted by the Okin and Nussbaum accounts.

2.4. Cultivating a Mixture between Insiderness and Outsiderness

After evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of doing ethics as insiders or outsiders, Crocker concludes that ethicists ought to cultivate a mixture between insiderness and outsiderness when evaluating the practices, goals, and strategies of “alien” groups. Crocker believes that even within the same group we can be both insiders and outsiders: I may identify with some Canadian values but not others. Consider the life and experience of an immigrant. One can easily imagine an Indian woman who immigrates to Canada and spends much of her life straddling both worlds. She can open herself to the practices of her new homeland while at once “keeping alive” the insiderness of her homeland. In Crocker’s view, each ethicist must strive to achieve “optimal insider-outsider combinations.” More specifically, he suggests that each person is responsible for striking a moral balance between insiderness and outsiderness in a way that plays up the positive and reduces the negative features of each state. Crocker writes the following recipe for balanced moral reflection:

We should be sufficiently inside so as to immerse ourselves in the different form of life, to grasp some of what is going on, and to be accepted as dialogue partners... We should retain and take advantage of our outsiderness so as to be able to reflect an “alien” culture back to its insiders, call attention to the omnipresent obvious by contrasting it with our different experience, bring in new ideas, mediate between various factions, help the vulnerable gain a voice, and speak the truth made elusive by group loyalties. Yet we should not mislead ourselves or others by pretending to ascend to what is an impossible standpoint: a view of the inside from an ahistorical, transcendent, objective outside. No such “view from nowhere” exists.⁸⁸

This passage is an important one because it encapsulates the extent to which Crocker’s approach is both a departure from and vast improvement on that of Okin’s. Crocker’s and Okin’s approaches can fairly be compared because both share in some

similar goals. Okin's desire to have women's rights established as human rights on the global stage is driven, practically speaking, by her view that cross-cultural dialogue between women from rich and poor countries *can work*. Similarly, Crocker posits the view that we are in need of a "global ethic," and a world community.⁸⁹ In his attempt to move towards this transnational ethic, Crocker's insider/outsider distinction shows an awareness about the dangers of ethnocentrism, universalism, and relations of power that is completely lacking in Okin's theory of justice.

For one, let us look at his general proposal of distinguishing between insiders and outsiders to answer the question of *who* should engage in the moral evaluation of groups. Right away we see awareness that, historically speaking, the international community has ethnocentric tendencies. Crocker is particularly aware of the relations of power that exist between the First and Third World. It is not hard to recall that in neither Okin's general theory of justice nor her specific account of insider-outsider critics does she acknowledge these existing imbalances between rich and poor countries. In my view, there can be no hope for fair and trustworthy dialogue between those in developed and developing nations without both groups recognizing the force of relations of power between the rich and powerful First World and the poor and relatively powerless Third World.

2.5. What is Missing from Crocker's Account?

I hope that I have shown sufficiently that Crocker's view of insiders and outsiders is far more sophisticated and culturally sensitive than that of Okin's. In spite of these improvements, I would like to highlight some important points missing from his account. The first couple of criticisms relate most significantly to his claim that each ethicist

engaged in moral reflection is responsible for striking a balance between insiderness and outsiderhood. I see two problems with this suggestion.

First, Crocker might underestimate the difficulty of achieving such a balance between developing insider and outsider advantages. Practically speaking, it seems virtually impossible for an ethicist to adjudicate between the advantages and disadvantages in a morally accurate way. In other words, much more than Crocker's appeal to developing insiderness and outsiderhood is needed than what is illustrated below.

We must aspire to sufficient outsiderhood to be able to learn from other groups. They can teach us, through the "language of perspicuous contrast," of the limitations and defects in our ways of doing things, as well as suggest better ideas that we can choose to weave into our beliefs and actions.⁹⁰

I want to next draw attention to a deficiency in Crocker's view of what *being* an insider to a group means for his approach more generally. Crocker assumes that one's membership as an insider or outsider is a voluntary state. He sees outsiders and insiders as fluid categories—changeable through space and time. I think this is a mistake. Does an insider really *choose* her status as an insider in conditions of oppression and injustice? This voluntary status comes into question in Crocker's approach most significantly because of the *kinds* of groups that he continually makes reference to. In all of Crocker's examples, one can become an insider to groups ranging from players on a soccer team to the group of native Mexicans.⁹¹ It might be much easier to become an insider to a soccer team than it would for a black woman from a poor country to become an insider to the group of privileged white males from a rich country. The point I wish to take from this criticism is that while Crocker does acknowledge existing power differentials between

First and Third World countries, he fails to acknowledge other kinds of power relations at work that make insiders members of groups who are outside relations of power.

The credibility of Crocker's view of justice seems to be at stake if his definitions of insiders and outsiders fail to take into consideration the complex variations of group memberships and their shaping by relations of power. It is important for a theory to acknowledge that insiders to some groups are in fact outsiders to relations of power when those who are privileged and "inside" power construct them as outsiders. We can here see just how complex things are becoming, and how increasingly, theories such as Nussbaum's and Okin's prove to be incapable of supporting these degrees of complexity. Crocker's framework goes beyond Okin's, as I have argued, because he does criticize accounts that ignore the fact that ethicists are products of their own histories and subjective experiences in both local and global arenas. "We should not mislead ourselves or others by pretending to ascend to what is an impossible standpoint: a view of the inside from an ahistorical, transcendent, objective outside. No such 'view from nowhere' exists."⁹²

Crocker also defends a sort of unrefined version of epistemic privilege in his discussion of insider advantages—but only in relation to insiders who *know*. I maintain that in the end, Crocker's position does not go far enough. To conclude, even though this above quotation demonstrates that Crocker sees the value of history and experience, he seems not to realize that power relations are *built into* the lives of insiders and outsiders in a whole network of complex sorts of relations of power that shape who is considered an insider or an outsider. I would like to next draw attention to Narayan's account. Her

view of insiders and outsiders brings into sharp relief both relations of power and the epistemic privilege of the oppressed.

3. Uma Narayan

In her paper, “Working Together across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice,” Uma Narayan seeks to answer a practical question: what needs to be done in order for people to enter into dialogue with others who have very different life experiences of oppression? In this work, Narayan can be said to develop and complete Crocker’s unexamined assumption of epistemic privilege by arguing that oppressed women have immediate knowledge of what it is like to live everyday lives under oppression. This paper has many interesting components, but the strength and uniqueness of Narayan’s model of insiders and outsiders definitely stems from her specific defence of the concept of “epistemic privilege.”

3.1. Narayan and Epistemic Privilege

While Crocker seems to acknowledge epistemic privilege in his account of insiders who *know* the beliefs, desires, memories, and hopes of their groups, Narayan’s account of insiders and outsiders develops and complicates this account of *what* is known. Narayan describes epistemic privilege as amounting to “members of an oppressed group who have a more immediate, subtle and critical knowledge about the nature of their oppression than people who are non-members of the oppressed group.”⁹³ One can here see at least one key difference between her and Crocker’s account of epistemic privilege: what makes women epistemically privileged is what these women have knowledge *of*—namely their own oppression. From Narayan’s perspective, the oppressed have epistemic privilege

because of the first-hand knowledge, understanding, and experience they have living life under conditions of oppression. “They know first-hand the detailed and concrete ways in which oppression defines the spaces in which they live and how it affects their lives.”⁹⁴

In contrast, nowhere in Crocker’s approach is there any explicit recognition of what insiders may have privileged knowledge *about*, in the beliefs, memories, and hopes that they share.

It is crucial to point out that in Narayan’s defence of the epistemic privilege of the oppressed, she wants to avoid certain undesirable implications. First, the claim of epistemic privilege does not mean that the oppressed have better knowledge of the *causes* of their oppression. She makes this clear when she states, “the oppressed may not have a detailed causal/structural analysis for how their specific form of oppression originated, how it has been maintained, and of all the systemic purposes it serves.”⁹⁵ Narayan also wants to ensure that her view of epistemic privilege does not discount much of the valuable input of outsiders. For example, she states that many useful concepts and theories have been developed by people who are outsiders to oppression, for example, the term patriarchy. Second, Narayan wants to make certain that the claim of epistemic privilege is not misinterpreted as meaning that outsiders to oppressed groups can *never* come to understand the experiences of insiders. This could be used as a license to excuse outsiders from making efforts to alleviate injustices. Third, it does not follow from her claim that the oppressed have epistemic privilege that this knowledge is “incorrigible.” In other words, people can be mistaken about their own experiences because humans are fallible beings. This point seems to answer Okin’s worry about Third World women being poor social critics. When speaking about a group of insiders, Narayan contends

that “[o]ther members of the very same group may differ in the way they perceive or interpret certain incidents or even certain general types of incidents. It may well be the case that not all of them can be right, and at times, it may even be that all of them are wrong.”⁹⁶ I take this overall point—that the oppressed may not realize their oppression—as a vital recognition for any thinker who is sympathetic to the proposed definition of epistemic privilege. Okin would agree on this point. What will be vital to my own account is to place women’s experiences within a complex network of relationships at local, national, global, and personal levels in order to understand the specific inequalities and injustices that women are faced with.

I here agree with Narayan that good feminist theorists concerned with alleviating injustices would run into serious trouble if insiders were epistemically privileged in ways that outsiders did not have access to. In other words, concluding that outsiders can *never* understand at least *some* of the experiences insiders to oppression have would not be a very good idea because no policy would result. In her paper “The Project of Feminist Epistemology,” Narayan warns readers that taking such an extreme view of the contextual nature of knowledge would have false and absurd implications for theory.

In that case we would be committed to not just a perspectival view of knowledge but a relativistic one. Relativism as I am using it implies that a person could have knowledge of only the sorts of things she had experienced personally and that she would be totally unable to communicate any of the contents of her knowledge to someone who did not have the same sorts of experiences.⁹⁷

The kind of epistemic privilege that Narayan defends commits her, though not naively, to a contextual view of knowledge whereby it is more likely for an insider to oppression to have critical insights into the conditions of her life. Living and experiencing oppression first hand equips a person with certain subtle details that even the most sympathetic

outsiders may not tap into.⁹⁸ My own account will want theorists to understand these experiences within these contexts.

3.2. Narayan's Account of Insiders and Outsiders: Neither Voluntary Nor Fluid

Narayan defends the notion of epistemic privilege largely because she recognizes that groups are often shaped by their differences. She points out that even within a specific group of women, for example, there can be women from different classes, backgrounds, sexual preferences, cultures, and so on.⁹⁹ These differences motivate Narayan to instigate the project of “working together continuously across our differences.” She describes the goal of her paper as an attempt to understand why communicating across difference is so very difficult and is quite concerned with the history of unproductive dialogue between advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Narayan notes that such relationships have been particularly tense because “[t]hey are characterized by the presence of historically constituted relations of power, privilege and lack of understanding on the part of members of advantaged groups and reasonable grounds for mistrust on the part of members of disadvantaged groups.”¹⁰⁰ A passage such as this one demonstrates that Narayan makes relations of power central in a way that was not acknowledged sufficiently in Crocker's work.

One should therefore see Narayan's framework of insiders and outsiders as an effort to try to overcome “assumptions and attitudes born out of centuries of power and privilege.”¹⁰¹ Narayan defines a member of an oppressed group as an “insider,” and a non-member as an “outsider.” Specifically, she writes that “people are ‘insiders’ or ‘outsiders’ only with respect to specific forms of oppressive social structures—racism, sexism, compulsory heterosexuality, etc.”¹⁰² A scenario might follow from this in which

a person can be an “insider” with respect to one type of oppression but an “outsider” with respect to another form of oppression. A more general claim in her work is that all members of oppressed groups are outside relations of power. This type of relation involves those subjected to power whereby one has power over another.

The thesis of the epistemic privilege of the insider leads Narayan to ask, what ought to be the role of outsiders when dealing with matters of oppression? One thing is for certain. It is going to take more than mere good will to repair the attitudes that are born from hundreds of years of privilege and power as manifested in colonialism, imperialism, discriminatory practices, and oppression of all sorts. The major source behind Narayan’s claim that oppressed groups should “speak for themselves” relates directly to the relationship she describes as existing between epistemic privilege and the emotions.

To support her claim that insiders can understand and better represent their experiences than can outsiders, Narayan articulates some ways in which the epistemic privilege of the oppressed “has to do with knowledge that is at least partly constituted by the emotional responses of the oppressed to their oppression.”¹⁰³ Insiders’ knowledge is influenced by emotion whereas outsider knowledge is often detached and theorized in abstract ways. Narayan mentions three specific ways in which an insider’s knowledge is impacted by her first hand experiences of her oppression. First, because outsiders may never have been the victims of a sexist incident, for example, he or she may miss the complexities of insiders’ emotional responses to such oppression. As Narayan puts it, an outsider may “minimize the emotional costs of the oppression.” Second, an outsider may miss the “subtler manifestations of oppression.” For example, an insider is more likely to

pick out the cues or body language exhibited by an oppressor; for example, a professor who has subtle ways of expressing his prejudiced attitudes.¹⁰⁴ Because an insider to oppression has many lived experiences of oppression, both covert and overt, her emotional experiences should be viewed as trustworthy indicators. These emotional experiences could range from anything to subtle feelings of unease to outright anger.

Third, Narayan maintains that insiders are far more likely to make necessary connections and to see oppression in new contexts. What she means by this is that when insiders experience oppression first hand, they are more adept at pointing out the phenomenon when it occurs in other contexts or communities. Consider, for example, a man and self-proclaimed pro-feminist who volunteers at a women's shelter and whom one would take to be quite in tune with women's equity issues. One can imagine this same man who, by day, as he sits on the board of directors for a prestigious multinational corporation, fails to realize that inequalities exist right under his nose—the gross underrepresentation of women at the high and powerful level of a corporation. This example makes clear Narayan's point that insiders to oppression can more easily and vigilantly make connections between their past experiences and future exposures to oppression.

For all these reasons, Narayan recommends that “sympathetic outsiders” educate themselves about insiders' oppression and undertake what she calls “methodological humility.” “The ‘outsider’ must always sincerely conduct herself under the assumption that, as an outsider, she may be missing something, and that what appears to her to be a ‘mistake’ on the part of the insider may make more sense if she had a fuller understanding of the context.”¹⁰⁵ I think that Narayan's requirement for outsiders to undertake “methodological humility” is an excellent component of her account.

Narayan's model makes sure that the powerful outsider makes a sincere effort to take seriously the perspective of the insider.

Narayan's model forcefully depicts the advantaged and disadvantaged, outsiders and insiders, as products of their own history and context, where relations of power structure their experiences. What she beneficially shares in common with Crocker is the recognition that when groups and communities engage in dialogue, they do so under an umbrella of greater global power structures. However, Narayan is also very in tune with the need for an analysis of local perspectives. She thoughtfully reminds us that local histories of colonization matter when judging the practices of a given society and that these judgments can be made without falling into the traps of relativism. For these reasons, I take Narayan's perspective to be an improvement on Crocker's. Where Narayan gets things right is in the theoretical connection she makes between insiders and epistemic privilege. Through specific examples, Narayan shows just how important a role emotions can play in insider knowledge. To wit, insiders have knowledge of their oppression in a way that *cannot* be understood in the same way by outsiders. Importantly, Narayan also shows that one's status as an insider or outsider is not a matter of choice. In contrast to Crocker's account of groups, she recognizes that a woman has about as much control over her insiderness or outsidership as she has over her birthplace, her gender, and how much power society has afforded to her. In "Moral Deference," Thomas builds on some of the concepts Narayan introduces by revisiting such concepts as power imbalances, epistemic privilege, and the important role of emotions.

4. Laurence Thomas

In this section I contend that Thomas's approach is an especially interesting departure from both Okin's and Crocker's because of the pronounced emphasis he places on the subjective experiences of members of disadvantaged groups. Thomas adds new texture to the discussion of insiders and outsiders through his appeal to two specific concepts: First his view of "diminished social category groups," and second his built-in notion of epistemic privilege.

4.1. Moral Deference

Thomas moves away from the kind of theory that is abstract and universal when he defends his notion of moral deference. He argues that moral deference is owed to those who are victims of social injustice. Thomas further argues that there is no objective standpoint from which persons can fully understand the emotional and morally significant experiences of another. Early on in the paper, for example, Thomas states that it is morally abhorrent to assume that one can grasp the experiences of a Holocaust survivor. "There is not enough good will in the world to make it possible for persons (who are not Holocaust survivors) to put themselves imaginatively in the mind of a Holocaust survivor, to do so simply is an act of ratiocination."¹⁰⁶

Thomas applies the above logic—of not being able to put oneself in another's shoes—to other groups. For instance, no slave-owner could understand what it was like to be a slave, nor could a man ever truly ever understand the feelings of a woman rape victim. Thomas contends that a descriptive account will always fail to capture the subjective element of these people's experiences for two reasons. "Even if we had a complete description of the person's experiences, we would nonetheless not be the

subject of those experiences. Nor would we have the painful memory of being the subject of those experiences.”¹⁰⁷ I would like here to note the degree to which Thomas’s view already contrasts with that of Okin’s. When Okin defends the value of her account as one that includes (an adapted) original position she does so because, in her view, subjectivity can dangerously pollute the effectiveness of a theory of justice. Thomas’s account of moral deference outright rejects the view that there can exist an impartial and objective vantage point from which we can understand other people’s experiences. There is still more about Thomas’s perspective that needs to be reviewed.

According to Thomas, members of “diminished social category groups” are most likely to suffer “hostile misfortunes” which are emotionally painful experiences that emerge from their being members of these groups. Similar to Narayan, he argues that people from disadvantaged groups are emotionally configured by their misfortunes. In his view, people from certain groups (insiders to oppression) have no choice but to be molded and constituted by the experiences they have had as members of these “downwardly socially constituted groups.” This is again akin to an argument Narayan makes about how the concrete details of women’s lives are affected by “particular structures of power.”

Thomas elaborates that those who are “downwardly constituted socially” suffer a certain kind of vulnerability. He then poses the crucial question, what is the morally appropriate way for an outsider to respond to the experiences of someone belonging to a diminished social category group? He answers his own question by saying that to be morally responsible, we *need* to defer to the experiences of persons from diminished social categories because they speak from a vantage point and perspective that someone

from a privileged social category would not have access to.¹⁰⁸ One can see that this type of account recognizes the unique emotional experiences of the disadvantaged and oppressed in a way that parallels the claim of epistemic privilege of insiders raised by Narayan.

4.2. Emotions, Perspectives, and Experience

Especially interesting is the reasoning behind Thomas's support of moral deference. Thomas believes members of privileged social category groups ought to defer to insiders. Insiders have the experiences and are emotionally configured by them in a way that outsiders are not. For example, Thomas argues that whites and blacks in fact have very different emotional category configurations—"they will experience their respective pain in a radically different manner."¹⁰⁹ He illustrates this difference by contrasting the severity of the pain a white person would suffer as a result of being attacked by blacks versus the pain a black person endures as a result of being attacked by whites. Thomas contends that while the white person's suffering can be "brutal and emotionally crippling," it does not compare to the suffering of blacks. Thomas asserts that while both the white and the black have suffered an equal wrong from this attack, the black is forced to live with his pain in a way different from the white.

[for the white] the experience will not be a reminder that he is a second –class citizen. It will not make him vulnerable to that pain. He will not have the pain of being scarred by those who in fact have power over so very much of his life. By and large, the white will not really have to concern himself with having to trust blacks who have power over him, as with a little effort and creativity the white can avoid situations of this kind; whereas for the black, having to trust whites who have power over him is a real possibility. So, whereas some physical distance from blacks, coupled with time, might serve to heal the wounds of the white, this healing route is not a genuine possibility for a black.¹¹⁰

The fact that members of disadvantaged groups have different emotional category configurations than those of privileged groups leads Thomas to conclude that moral deference is owed to persons from diminished social category groups. For Thomas,

moral deference is imperative because the accuracy of an account of emotions, perspectives, and experiences *matter*, morally speaking. Because of the important role a person's emotions play, he thinks it rational to conclude that we ought to presume in favour of the insider's experiences.

4.3. Some Final Comments on Thomas

Thomas's account of insiders and outsiders is built on the idea that oppression is significant for the creation and perpetuation of groups. He also wants to allow for fluidity with respect to *how* groups are socially constituted. This description is very different from the types of fluid but unspecified groups that Crocker discusses. Recall how for Crocker, his view of insiders and outsiders had to do with *any* and *all* groups. His view that people ought to strive to become "optimal insider-outsider combinations" implies that he thinks it is possible for individuals to easily and fluidly move between groups. As I wrote in my criticism earlier in this chapter, viewing groups in this way ignores particular relations of power between groups. In contrast, Thomas states that one's membership in either group (of insiders or outsiders) is defined by whether one is in a diminished or privileged social category with respect to one's society. Thomas realistically shows that one's social category as, for example an individual woman in the larger group "women," is in fact defined by existing power structures of her community. Moral deference therefore becomes an attitude that has built into it recognition that power plays a role when we judge and when we engage in dialogue at the level of groups within a society.

While Thomas's view is not without flaws, his notion of moral deference stems from an important recognition: that outsiders cannot have access to some particular

emotional category configurations of insiders. In fact, Thomas states that part of the reasoning behind moral deference is that “it is wrong to discount the feelings and experiences of persons in diminished social category groups simply because their articulation of matters does not resonate with one’s imaginative take on their experiences.”¹¹¹ This view departs, to some extent, from Okin, Nussbaum, and Crocker who all make the unwarranted assumption that we can imagine, understand, and criticize the perspectives of any and all persons.

In conclusion, Thomas makes some valuable contributions to the discussion of insiders and outsiders. Most significantly, he has a greater appreciation of power relations in the form of oppression and their impact on groups. Also crucial is the way he grants a kind of epistemic privilege to members of oppressed groups by arguing that outsiders cannot have access to their particular emotional category configurations. In spite of these achievements, there are a couple of questions that go unanswered in Thomas’s work. First, does Thomas provide sound reasoning behind *why* we ought to defer morally? It seems to me that his justification should be more than just the sentiment he describes as “it is wrong to discount the experiences of persons from diminished social category groups.” Second, should we defer to any and all experiences of diminished social category groups?

5. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have appealed to the concepts of insiders and outsiders as conceptual tools useful for speaking about issues pertaining to social justice. The exercise of comparing and contrasting various philosophical accounts of insiders and

outsiders has proved to be a fruitful one. The progression of ideas brought forth by Crocker, Narayan, and Thomas clearly points out that the question of *who* speaks matters a great deal to the project of eliminating injustice. Most significantly, I see the concepts and terminology these thinkers bring to the table as insights for developing my own insider/outsider framework. Discussions about notions of “epistemic privilege” and relations of power reveal just how complex and multifaceted the project of eliminating oppressive practices can truly be.

This chapter casts more doubt upon the universalist and essentialist assumptions of overarching theories of justice. This is shown in part through my argument (to be filled out in the chapters that follow) that women—insiders to oppression—need to play central roles in policy because they have first hand knowledge about the conditions of their oppression. The detailed discussion of insiders/outsiders from this chapter makes clear the point that if universal policies are devised and implemented by outsiders, they are likely to be less informed and less effective when applied to women in different contexts. As discussed by Narayan and Thomas, outsiders who lack the first hand emotional experiences, knowledge, and perspectives more generally that insiders have may miss out on some of the crucial elements that contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities. This view contrasts starkly with Okin’s view that the best social critics are outsiders who adopt “critical distance”. Without a doubt, something gets missed when oppressed women’s voices and subjective experiences are not heard, valued, or given enough weight when devising policy at local and global levels. What is important to emphasize, however, is that in building my framework I am setting out to show (against essentialism and universalism) that these insider perspectives need to be understood and *analyzed* in

terms of many intervening local and global factors—and cannot simply be taken to be true at face value.

I want lastly turn to one overall question: what lessons can we draw from the works of these philosophers for the purposes of my own project of theorizing about eliminating inequalities in a global context? First, I contend that the relevance of power relations of all sorts needs to be added to Crocker's account. Second, I maintain that Narayan's relatively robust account of epistemic privilege can be considerably improved and made richer. I propose that this can be done by highlighting the significance and complexity of women's perspectives as they are influenced by local and global factors. Finally, one can learn a great deal through my analysis of Thomas. While Thomas has given some convincing and cogent arguments to support his view of moral deference, he seems to leave unanswered whether we should defer to any and all experiences. If we recall Narayan, she aptly warns against granting automatic epistemic privilege to insiders. Moreover, if we are to say that insiders ought to be granted epistemic privilege, it needs to be done in a way that avoids the problems of relativism.

Chapter 4 is devoted to further developing my insider/outsider framework in a way that heeds the above recommendations. The chapter itself is an in depth analysis of some of the works of both feminist standpoint theory and post colonial feminist theory. By using insights from both these kinds of feminist theory, my insider/outsider framework continues to sharpen as I take account of just how complex theorizing can become. To conclude, I suggest that we favour a model of insiders and outsiders that theorizes about women's experiences in the context of their lives so as to understand the specific injustices they suffer and to effectively challenge the relations of power that exist

both at local and global levels. In doing this, we as ethicists and feminists will be well equipped with the proper tools for alleviating oppressive practices in particular locations.

CHAPTER 4: Broadening the Insider/Outsider Framework: From Local to Global

It is now fair to say that I am well engaged in a search for effective policies for addressing injustices and that this might not be best obtained by supplying an overarching theory of justice. Universalist feminist theories of justice, as I have described them in my Chapter 1, have proved to be problematic at both the theoretical and practical level. Most glaringly, the Nussbaum and Okin theories of justice were not nearly attentive enough to the unique histories, perspectives, experiences, and cultures of women in specific contexts. Based on the criticisms made of both Nussbaum and Okin it further became clear that while we still need theory, we need a kind that is cognizant of power relations of all sorts that shape women's lives and their prospects for living well. To lend support to this claim, I dedicated the previous chapter to discussing insiders and outsiders. As anticipated, the question of *who speaks* turned out to matter (both empirically and morally) very much for the goals of my project.

My evolving discussion of insiders and outsiders opened the floodgates to some important conceptual terrain. The concepts that emerged as most relevant to my strategic goal of eliminating oppressive practices include “epistemic privilege” and relations of power. These notions have proven to be extremely complex and multifaceted. Because of this, I concluded the chapter by suggesting that we favour a model of insiders and outsiders that challenges the relations of power that exist at both local and global levels. There is still much work to be done.

With the above goals in mind, I use the next section of this thesis to further elaborate and develop my insider/outsider framework. My overarching goal is to give a unique account of the insider/outsider framework that will act as the groundwork to

enable women to mobilize for change and to advocate effective policies for alleviating oppression. As I have already mentioned, I envision a dynamic insider/outsider framework as one that is informed by the works of a number of thinkers. However, it has already become clear that each examined philosopher has deficiencies that press me to develop my own *expanded* insider/outsider framework. In the present chapter, I both borrow from and challenge the insights of two new theories—feminist standpoint theory and postcolonial feminist theory. As a preliminary note to the reader, my expanded insider/outsider framework will be completed in the chapter subsequent to this—Chapter 5—where I appeal to insights from Christine Koggel’s relational theory.

In Chapter 3, both Narayan and Thomas introduced the relevance of epistemic privilege. I suggested at the end of the previous chapter that there were some deficiencies and unanswered questions relating to epistemic privilege and relations of power. In this chapter, I pick up where Thomas left off and add some new elements to my framework of insiders and outsiders. First, I will summarize the insider/outsider framework developed thus far. The second section of this chapter is devoted to buttressing the concept of epistemic privilege by appealing to two feminist standpoint theorists, Alison Wylie and Patricia Hill Collins. Third, I gather some important insights from postcolonial feminist theorist Chandra Mohanty. Lastly I conclude and set the stage for the next chapter.

1. The Evolution of Insiders and Outsiders: A Summary

The problems associated with Okin’s universalism and essentialism led me to conclude that something gets missed when oppressed women’s voices are not heard, valued, or given enough weight in both local and global contexts. Throughout the last

chapter I described some insider/outsider views of different thinkers who respectively demonstrated an evolving recognition of the power relations that exist between varying groups. Crocker's approach proved to be an improvement on Okin's, but it fails to take into account the complex and diverse sorts of power relations that impact oppressed groups.

Narayan does a much better job than Crocker at outlining some of these very complex power relations that lie between insiders and outsiders to oppression. In fact, Narayan explicitly recognizes these relationships in the case she makes for the epistemic privilege of the oppressed. For her, what insiders to oppression are epistemically privileged *about* is their knowledge of the conditions of their oppression. Crocker misses this point entirely. Unlike Okin, Narayan rejects a framework of objectivity and contends that one's emotional experiences as a member of an oppressed group (insider) are valuable pieces of information that one needs in order to identify instances of injustice.

In Thomas's defence of moral deference he continues to broaden what we know thus far about both power relations and epistemic privilege. He does this by defending the view that we need to pay attention to "diminished social category groups" as a way of identifying and understanding injustices. The value Thomas places on the subjective experience of members of oppressed groups distinguishes his approach from Okin, Nussbaum and Crocker who all too easily assume that we can criticize and understand the perspectives of people who live in contexts and communities other than our own. One particular aspect of Thomas's view of moral deference that he leaves unanswered is whether members of privileged social category groups" should defer to *all* experiences of members of "diminished social category groups"—i.e. insiders.

This summary makes one thing clear: we are in need of a proper analysis of epistemic privilege. In other words, we need a way to theorize about what is important about the concept of epistemic privilege itself and what about it contributes to an account of effective policy. My forthcoming attention to both feminist standpoint theory and postcolonial feminist theory respond directly to some of the above specified challenges. Wylie, Collins, and Mohanty enrich my framework both by highlighting the importance of women's experiences and recognizing that such experiences are "politically located." Tracing their works will highlight the importance of women's perspectives in the places in which they are located as we move from the less to the more complex, from national to global.

2. Feminist Standpoint theory: an Examination of Alison Wylie and Patricia Hill Collins

Since one of the theoretical goals for my framework is to avoid the pitfalls of both essentialism and relativism, it would be wise to ask, what are the criteria for epistemic privilege? Put slightly differently, what is it about a person's location that makes a difference epistemically speaking? Feminist standpoint theorists have put forth what I take to be some of the most valuable insights in this area.

2.1. Alison Wylie

According to Wylie, a central and motivating insight of standpoint theory is an inversion thesis:

Those who are subject to structures of domination that systematically marginalize and oppress them may, in fact be epistemically privileged in some crucial respects. They know different things, or know some things better than those who are comparatively privileged (socially, politically), by virtue of what they typically experience and how they understand their experience.¹¹²

By appealing to this inversion thesis it becomes clear that standpoint theorists are engaged in an effort to counter the “partiality of authoritative knowledge” by privileging the voices of the oppressed and marginalized.

a) Building Blocks

In “Why Standpoint Matters,” Wylie makes a case for viewing standpoints as “making a contingent and subject-specific difference to what we can know (well).”¹¹³ In an effort to put her case on solid ground she prefaces her work by undermining a myth that is commonly associated with feminist standpoint theory:

Standpoint theory must not be aligned with a thesis of automatic epistemic privilege; standpoint theorist cannot claim that those who occupy particular standpoints (usually subdominant, oppressed, marginal standpoints) *automatically* know more, or know better, by virtue of their social, political location.¹¹⁴

Wylie’s cautioning against granting automatic epistemic privilege is relevant to the particular objection I made of Thomas—that deferring to insiders without providing an account of *why* and *how* is theoretically dangerous. Specifically, if a particular feminist theory does not specify the conditions of epistemic privilege then it may be endorsing a kind of relativism whereby any and all perspectives are taken to matter. Along with Okin, Narayan, and Wylie, I seek to defend an approach that does not authorize a thesis of automatic privilege.

Wylie describes standpoint theory as a project that is carried out “through the kind of social research that takes seriously the understanding of insiders—e.g., feminist research that starts from women’s experience and women’s lives.”¹¹⁵ One can see how Wylie builds on similar points made by Narayan when she directs our attention to the role that power relations play in generating standpoints. Wylie understands a starting point

for standpoint theorists as a commitment to a kind of *situated knowledge thesis* whereby one's location shapes what a person knows and understands:

What individuals experience and understand is shaped by their location in a hierarchically structured system of power relations: by the material conditions of their lives, by the relations of production and reproduction that structure their social interactions, and by the conceptual resources that they have to represent and interpret these relations.¹¹⁶

The *situated knowledge thesis* has often been questioned by skeptics, leaving standpoint theorists with the task of supplying some strong support for assigning greater objectivity to such standpoints. In a special series put forward in *Signs*¹¹⁷ Susan Hekman criticizes standpoint theorists Hartsock, Harding, Smith, and Collins for exactly this reason by claiming that no argument has been given to support the claim that members of oppressed, disadvantaged, and/or socially marginalized groups are the possessors of a unique epistemic capacity.

b) Answering the Normative Question: Are there Grounds for Privileging the Knowledge Produced by those who Occupy Particular Standpoints?

Wylie devotes the majority of her paper to outlining what a standpoint theorist is entitled to claim about epistemic privilege in a way that avoids essentialism and/or an automatic privilege thesis. She takes one specific advantage of standpoint theory to be the way in which it challenges traditional assumptions about the need for agents to be objective in the "neutral sense." For instance, in traditional accounts, the neutrality and objectivity of an epistemic agent are considered to be necessary or sufficient conditions for the knowledge claims they produce. Some such valued marks include, "requirements of internal coherence, inferential robustness, and consistency with well established collateral bodies of knowledge, explanatory power, and aesthetic virtues."¹¹⁸ As I have tried to show, many thinkers deeply committed to improving the lives of disadvantaged

groups argue in favour of such “critical distance” and objectivity when engaging in moral judgments. Crocker, for example, makes the normative claim that insiders should be more like outsiders when they evaluate the practices of a community.

Although Wylie admits that there will be times when critical distance and dispassionate neutrality could be advantageous, she argues against these types of approaches by maintaining that “considerable epistemic advantage may accrue to those who approach inquiry from an interested standpoint, even a standpoint of overtly political engagement.”¹¹⁹ In support of her view, Wylie refers to feminist contributions to the social sciences to show that such a standpoint may actually raise the standards of methodology and hypotheses and reveal innovative lines of inquiry.¹²⁰ This idea that one’s insiderness could be advantageous to social or political inquiry resonates nicely with Narayan’s take on why members of oppressed groups ought to be granted epistemic privilege. Recall Narayan’s example of the rape victim who endures a very complex set of emotional experiences as a result of the injustice, in a way that outsiders cannot.¹²¹ Wylie’s view of epistemic privilege builds on Narayan’s account that insider knowledge of oppression is subjective, emotion-based, and experiential.

c) Insider-Outsider Standpoints

Wylie sets up a framework to analyze epistemic privilege called the “insider-outsiders standpoint.” She defines an “insider-outsider” as a disadvantaged individual

who has no choice, given her social location, but to negotiate the world of the privileged, a knower who must understand accurately and in detail the tacit knowledge that constitutes a dominant normative world view at the same time as she is grounded in a community whose marginal status generates a fundamentally different understanding of how the world works.¹²²

Wylie’s above description of the “insider-outsider” is distinct from all the views we have seen thus far because she describes the standpoints of the disadvantaged as occupiers of

particular social locations that have the advantage of having a “foot in each world.” By recognizing how women’s lives are embedded in relations of power, her view contrasts starkly with Crocker’s. *How* and *what* the insider-outsider knows is the farthest thing from voluntary and fluid. Wylie is not the first thinker I have covered to discuss the potential value of “insider-outsider” critics. At one point in Okin’s work she discusses insider-outsiders, but in the end Okin comes to a far different conclusion than Wylie. “Being a critic so located is surely neither necessary nor sufficient for being an informed and effective feminist critic.”¹²³ By contrast, Wylie argues that insider-outsiders are *good knowers* precisely because they have no choice but to straddle two worlds—the dominant and the marginalized one.

2.2. Patricia Hill Collins

Patricia Collins adds new and relevant insights to the insider/outsider discussion in her two works “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought,”¹²⁴ and “Comment on Hekman’s “Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited”: Where’s the Power?”¹²⁵

a) Collins’s Answer to Hekman: The Complex Relationship between Relations of Power and Groups

To remind the reader, in the above section I described Wylie’s response to Hekman’s criticism that no argument has been given to support the claim that members of oppressed groups have a unique epistemic capacity. In Collins’s “Comment on Hekman” she accuses Hekman of missing the point of standpoint theory overall:

By decontextualizing standpoint theory from its initial moorings in a knowledge framework while simultaneously recontextualizing it in an apolitical discussion of feminist truth and method, Hekman essentially depoliticizes the potentially radical content of standpoint theory.”¹²⁶

As a standpoint theorist, Collins shares in common with Wylie the notion of standpoint as it relates to groups located within relations of power. Also like Wylie, Collins takes the notion of standpoint as referring to groups who have shared histories and shared locations in relation to power, and their being outside of it.

Where Collins makes a unique contribution to standpoint theory is through the way in which she views the reality of group-based experiences as transcending individual experience. For example, the stigmatization of African Americans as a racial group is a phenomenon existing throughout the past, present, and will probably continue into the future.¹²⁷ In Collins's view, what is evident in Hekman and many other feminist accounts is a gross underestimation of the power of groups as a category of analysis (by contrast to the individual). One can here recall how Collins's approach to analysis drastically differs from Nussbaum's liberal individualism. Collins, in contrast to Nussbaum, takes members of oppressed groups as complex beings whose experiences, lives, and identities cannot be viewed in isolation from a number of relationships.

Collins is particularly interested in the group of Black women intellectuals and devotes her paper "Learning from the Outsider Within" to discussing the significance of this group's "outsider within" status. She uses the term "outsiders within" to refer to black women's status as one that straddles the line between two distinct realities—the dominant and the marginalized. This view is akin to Wylie's view of insider-outsider standpoints as "straddling two worlds." Outsiders within occupy a special place because "they become different people, and their difference sensitizes them to patterns that may be more difficult for established sociological insiders to see."¹²⁸

Racial segregation between blacks and Whites in the U.S. is one particularly strong example Collins uses to support her claims about the specific advantages that may accrue to insiders to oppression. In her view, the fact that blacks and whites live in racially segregated neighbourhoods generates distinctive experiences for each group's schooling experiences, recreational activities, healthcare systems, and occupational opportunities. Furthermore, Collins points out that middle-class Blacks continue to have fewer opportunities as a product of such segregation and group discrimination.¹²⁹ This example exposes two issues of importance: one's identity as a member of a group can be affected by multiple factors and relationships and segregation, even when defended by Blacks, has an impact on the quality of life Blacks have in their communities.

Collins informs us further by stating that groups are not self-created—they stem from longstanding hierarchical power structures. “[f]actors such as race, gender, class, age, and sexuality are not descriptive categories of identity applied to individuals. Instead, these elements of social structure emerge as fundamental devices that foster inequality resulting in groups.”¹³⁰ Collins's example of racial segregation demonstrates the relational aspects of identities and perspectives. Members of groups—whether privileged or disadvantaged—have their lives shaped by the network of relationships they are in. I take this approach to viewing groups as more promising than Thomas's because it can explain aspects of fluidity and change to groups and structures in a way that Thomas's does not.

Collins rightly notes that the relationship between standpoint theory, power structures, and groups become infinitely more complex when we consider issues of gender in addition to those of race. Black and White women's lives are embedded within

already fractured racial communities. While they may share the same locations, Collins reminds readers that shared space does not necessarily mean that all women occupy similar positions of power.¹³¹ A better predictor of how much power a particular woman will enjoy is the particular network of relations she is in. For example, what schools or health care she has access to could likely shape her life prospects in a way that is different from her white neighbour. The important local insights that Collins leaves us with are that the individual experiences, opportunities, support, education, and/or health care (just to name a few) that each woman has access to provide her with a particular epistemic path. These are all features at the local level that reflect how relationships intersect in complex ways to shape the lives of different women differently.

3) Chandra Mohanty: From the Local to the Global

Mohanty's work is very useful at this point because she adds a missing variable needed for the project of theorizing about women's injustices. Specifically, Mohanty's approach forces us to look at women's experiences as being shaped jointly by both local and global factors. As this more complete and complex picture develops, it becomes evident that any theorist whose goal is to improve the lives of disadvantaged women must take seriously *both* local and global factors.

3.1. Some Theoretical Aims

Thus far, I have begun to show that the singular theories of justice that I have examined are neither capable nor powerful enough to incorporate the number of complex factors that surround women. However, more still needs to be added to the analysis in order to completely dismantle universalist and essentialist theories of justice. To start,

we need a proper analysis of the evolving concept of epistemic privilege and extend the boundaries of relations of power from local to global levels. By looking to the works of both Wylie and Collins I hope to have shown *what* is important about the epistemic privilege of oppressed groups. Through standpoint theory, we have begun to see how women's identities are influenced by an intricate network of relationships.

While standpoint theorists do a particularly good job of opening our eyes to the many local factors that impact on what women can know, they seem to pay less attention to global factors. As I see it, the expanded insider/outsider framework I am developing needs to rely on an analysis of factors that occur at local and global levels, and the interaction between the two. In the next section, I rely on the work of Mohanty to show us that women's standpoints are influenced by a number of complex and interactive local and global factors—most notably economic globalization. With this in hand, we will begin to see how this theorizing is effective for the goal of alleviating women's injustices in a global context.

3.2. Mohanty's Analytical Project

Mohanty can be seen as answering Okin's challenge that feminists have yet to show that differences, history, and context matter when it comes to examining women's experiences of oppression in varying contexts. Mohanty can be seen as challenging Okin's claim that women in poor countries suffer *similar but worse* experiences of oppression as do women from rich countries. Recall here Okin's provocative claim that feminists to date have yet to disprove the truth of her universalizing claims. In her view, it is not only possible to generalize about many aspects of inequality between the sexes, but also that "theories developed in Western contexts can clearly apply to women in very

different cultural contexts.”¹³² Okin’s unabashed universalism is exactly the type of Western feminist theory that Mohanty wants to call into question.

In “Under Western Eyes,” Mohanty takes up this challenge when she cogently argues that differences are both relevant and necessary for policy and practice. Mohanty’s analytical project is to challenge the production of “the ‘Third World woman’ as a singular, monolithic subject” as it is often construed in some (Western) feminist texts.¹³³ Too often, she argues, Western feminists “colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the Third World.”¹³⁴ Mohanty hopes to make feminists aware that “Third World woman” covers a vast range in terms of numbers of women and the countries they are from. It seems just as uninformed to assume that there is a “First World woman” as there is a “Third World woman.” This particular analytic category seems to demonstrate a lack of understanding about the experiences of women from Third World countries. In the language of my discussion thus far, Mohanty depicts outsiders as lacking knowledge of the concrete details of oppression that insiders *live*. At the beginning of her paper, Mohanty states matter-of-factly that the existing Western feminist scholarship of the Third World *must* be seen for what it is—situated within a large system of economic globalization. Mohanty poignantly reminds us that this overarching global power imbalance between First and Third World countries necessarily affects the lives of women all over the world.¹³⁵

Her theoretical project thus becomes an effort to uncover how “ethnocentric universalism” is produced. It may be helpful here to recall Crocker’s definition of ethnocentrism as entailing two things. First that Northern/Western ethnocentrists “employ their own cultural norms in evaluating foreign practices.”¹³⁶ In other words

there is a tendency to judge other cultures and/or countries by one's own "lights."

Crocker suggests secondly that ethnocentrics use their own standards and judge foreign practices as being *inferior* to those of the evaluator.

3.3. Some Specific Presuppositions in Western Feminist Texts.

The bulk of Mohanty's paper is devoted to outlining some specific ethnocentric presuppositions that she takes to be present in many Western feminist texts: their use of methodological universalisms, their use of "women" as a category of analysis prior to its manifestation in particular contexts, and the wrongful systematic portrayals of women as powerless victims. An analysis of these presuppositions shows that women's experiences do not exist in isolation and that the experiences of an oppressed woman are a function of both her local and global contexts.

a) Women as a Category of Analysis

The first assumption Mohanty describes as being especially prevalent within Western feminist discourse is the assumption that all women are a homogeneous group socially constituted prior to analysis. "Women as a category of analysis" is the assumption that women are bound together because of a kind of shared experience of their oppression—a sociological notion of "sameness."¹³⁷ When theorists engage in this type of portrayal, women are seen not as material subjects of their own histories, but rather as an already constituted and powerless group. What Mohanty takes to be problematic about this is that a proper understanding of oppressive practices against women requires a proper understanding of a particular country's colonial history as well as local and global forces of power. The overall problem Mohanty has with these types of analyses is that "Third World women" are viewed from the onset as an apolitical group

of powerless victims of an unchangeable socioeconomic system. It is clear that Mohanty's charge against the forming of a homogeneous group constituted prior to analysis can be directed against Okin. Her claim of women's "sameness" propagated through her "similar but worse" mantra, makes her a prime target for this criticism.

One obvious instance of Okin's cross-cultural generalization surfaces in her discussion of the international Women's Conference that took place in Vienna. Okin uses this conference to try to disprove the anti-universalizing complaints by arguing that women "achieved miracles" when they found they had a lot in common. She enthusiastically conveys how women came together across borders only to realize that they shared many of the same systemic problems including discrimination; patterns of gender-based violence, including domestic battery; and the sexual and economic exploitation of women and girls.¹³⁸ I do not think that either Mohanty or Narayan would take issue with these similar patterns of oppression. Where they indeed depart from Okin is in *how* such patterns are understood and analyzed. Something like gender-based violence, for example, will manifest itself differently depending on the location, the colonial history, and the interaction of local and global forces of power on women in specific contexts.

Just how convincing a case does Okin make for the attainability of a global sisterhood? I maintain, not a very good one. Just because some women have been able to come together across cultures and agree on certain commonalties, it does follow that this is always the case or that devising universal policies for removing injustices will be effective or possible. Unfortunately, many Northern/Western feminists have been rightly accused of using their own lives as the standard by which to judge Southern/Eastern

women's lives in relation to particular issues such as the gendered division of labour. By using their own (Western/Northern) experiences as the standard, they assume that women from other parts of the world share and experience inequalities in the *same* way. Allow me here to point out that when making this criticism I acknowledge that there are certain standards or "absolute measures" that *can* be used *generally* and cross-culturally to measure the quality of women's lives such as life expectancy, access to education, or political freedom. Sen is one thinker who does a good job of outlining such general measures that can be used to judge women's life prospects in varying contexts—many of which have been used for the UN's *Human Development Index*.

What I am opposed to is the specific assumption that women lives and the issues surrounding them can always be measured by such general standards that rely either explicitly or implicitly on conditions of sameness. Moreover, I question the assumption that we can assess women's lives and the injustices they face in isolation from their histories and relationships of power at multiple levels. How might some of these criticisms of global sisterhood manifest themselves in practice? I ask the reader to imagine the international women's conference such as the one held in Vienna. By viewing all women from First and Third World countries as an already constituted group that shares similar or the same experiences of oppression, elements that contribute to particular inequalities in a particular context may be ignored. Furthermore, this could be an instance where Third World women "go along with" the agenda of First World feminists and are thereby denied their agency. Buying into the idea of shared oppression then, could be theoretically and practically dangerous. For example, neglecting the impact of global forces on the lives of women in a specific context cannot only make

outsiders misinformed about the nature of women's suffering and oppression, but can also lead to ineffective policies that fail to make women central players in the process. I therefore align myself with Mohanty and maintain that a global sisterhood that has at its bedrock the concept of universal sameness or shared oppression is nothing more than an idyllic vision riddled with problems.

Mohanty puts it well when she states that "sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender; it must be forged in concrete historical and political practice and analysis."¹³⁹ She proceeds to show us that grouping women from all backgrounds, countries, and cultures is not only politically dangerous, but hopelessly inaccurate much of the time with respect to understanding oppression. Mohanty refers to the work of Perdita Huston to exemplify the practical dangers of ethnocentric universalism. Huston is a liberal feminist who writes about the effects of development policies on women in the Third World. In her work, Huston discusses the effect of the development process on individuals and families in Egypt, Kenya, Sudan, Tunisia, Sri Lanka, and Mexico. Through her study, she identifies the problems and needs of both rural and urban women from these different countries as coming down to problems in education and training, work and wages, access to health, political participation and legal rights.¹⁴⁰ Huston sees the solution to these problems as residing in improved development policies that emphasize training for women field-workers, encourage women's cooperatives, and use women trainees. What Mohanty takes to be problematic about this type of development solution is that Huston is treating all women as though they belong to this shared group prior to their entry or participation in the "development process," itself, one with a history of colonialism, imperialism and oppression at many levels. Huston is wrongly assuming

that women from Third World countries have “similar problems and needs.” However, “the interests of urban, middle-class, educated Egyptian housewives, to take only one instance, could surely not be seen as being the same as those of their uneducated, poor maids. Development policies do not affect both groups of women in the same way.”¹⁴¹ This example in itself speaks against Okin’s view by showing why differences matter when assessing women’s lives in varying contexts.

Mohanty demonstrates through appealing to this one example that cross cultural comparisons such as these are invidious and reductive by their very nature. This kind of reductive assessment of “women” as a group gravely oversimplifies the varying backgrounds, cultures, classes, ethnicities, histories and so on, that contribute to women’s identities. Mohanty forcefully argues that by homogenizing “women” as a group they become objects or victims instead of material subjects or agents of their own history. When this occurs, women are done a disservice and are rendered more powerless by the very people who are supposed to be *empowering* them through effective strategizing.

Mohanty looks to a number of specific texts/authors who use women as a category of analysis, whereby they are defined largely in terms of their “object status.” She addresses six specific texts where women are defined as: victims of male violence; universal dependents; victims of the colonial process; victims of the Arab familial system; victims of the Islamic code; and victims of the economic development process.¹⁴² For the purposes of my discussion I want to briefly outline her section on “women as universal dependents.” This is a specific instance where we can apply her critical analysis of Maria Cutrufelli directly to Okin.

Mohanty criticizes Cutrufelli who makes sweeping statements such as, “My analysis will start by stating that all African women are politically and economically dependent.”¹⁴³ Cutrufelli makes another overly broad statement about how prostitution is “the main if not the only source of work for African women.”¹⁴⁴ Here, it is obvious that Cutrufelli is categorizing Third World women (African women) by their victim status. If I may take Mohanty’s criticism farther here, I would say that not only are Third World Women being categorized by their victim status, but the relationship between “Women of Africa” and prostitution is far more complex than is made out by Cutrufelli. What is specifically missing is a proper analysis of how and why the local is influenced by other forces. With the hopes of building on Mohanty’s criticism I will briefly add some analysis about what is especially problematic about Cutrufelli’s description of all African women as prostitutes.

Cutrufelli is guilty of viewing these women as a category of analysis prior to analyzing and assessing their lives in their appropriate contexts. In failing to examine the contexts of these women’s lives, she may be guilty of missing out completely on how global elements of the sex trade shape the lives of women in specific contexts. For some insights into how global forces can impact our assessment of women’s lives in Third World countries, I will refer to the recent paper, “Globalization and the Sex Trade: Trafficking and the Commodification of Women and Children,”¹⁴⁵ by Richard Poulin. In the paper, Poulin argues that the industrialization of the sex trade has come to occupy a strategic and central position in the development of international capitalism. Poulin further describes how over the past thirty years, this worldwide process (both legal and illegal) generates profits that amount to billions of dollars. This paper is especially

relevant to Mohanty and my argument because Poulin outlines how the lives of women and children prostitutes are jointly impacted by local and global forces.

At the local level, the prostitution industries in less developed countries are big business whereby nations' economies are often dependent upon the revenues that are generated from sex industries such as dancing clubs, bars, massage parlors, and pornography producers. These specific sex industries can generate a significant amount of business for other levels of business including the hotel industry, airlines companies, and tourism. To show the degree to which the economies of less developed countries can be positively impacted by the sex industry, Poulin often refers to Thailand. The following example shows the dependency of the government on the prostitution industry for the country's economy. In the late 1980s, the Thai government promoted sexual tourism through their advertising campaign with the slogan, "the one fruit of Thailand more delicious than the durian [a local fruit], its young women."¹⁴⁶

What is made clear by a few of these points is that numerous local factors can impact women's lives, for example, in ways that can vary from country to country depending on differing laws and social mores of each place. In the case of Africa it is important to recognize that it is a huge continent with many countries with distinct histories of imperialism, different stages of development, and political unrest. This point is supported by Mohanty's objection against Cutrufli's use of the term "Women of Africa" which "Denies any historical specificity to the location of women as subordinate, powerful, marginal, central, or otherwise, vis-à-vis particular social and power networks. Women are taken as a unified "powerless" group prior to the analysis in question."¹⁴⁷

While it is undeniable that these local and national forces shape women's lives who are involved in prostitution, this is far from the whole story. Consistent with Mohanty, I maintain that we cannot assess local forces in isolation from global ones. In support of this point, Poulin suggests that the increasing industrialization of the sex trade is largely due to globalization and international capitalism. Particularly disturbing is how Poulin's research reveals that prostitution has become a development strategy for certain countries:

Under obligations of debt repayment, numerous Asian, Latin American, and African States were encouraged by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) to develop their tourism and entertainment industries. In each case, the development of these sectors inspired the development of the sex trade (Hechler). In certain cases, as in Nepal, women and children were put directly on regional or international markets (notably in India and in Hong-Kong) without the country experiencing a significant expansion of local prostitution. In other case, as in Thailand, local, regional, and international markets developed simultaneously (Barry).¹⁴⁸

The above example exposes the degree to which concentrations of capital influence the lives of women and children in the sex trade. In other words, it is fair to say that rich countries and their leaders who hold power on the global stage are in part responsible for the perpetuation and creation of prostitution as a global sex trade industry. One final point Poulin makes that is of relevance when speaking about globalization and development strategy is that any analysis of prostitution and trafficking in women and children needs to take into account "structural discrimination, uneven development, and hierarchical relationships between imperialist and dependent countries and between men and women."¹⁴⁹ What Poulin is here recommending is that if we want to have a proper analysis of women involved in prostitution, we need to understand the surrounding histories, and the influence of global business development and capitalist globalization.

By taking all this into consideration, one realizes that women are viewed as commodities or resources for the international community to tap into.

In sum, this particular example of the global sex trade shows the extent to which we need an analysis of women's lives in particular contexts as they are shaped by both local and global factors. The debt a government owes to an international institution, for example, could play a pivotal role in how we both assess women's particular suffering as well as how we come to understand "Women of Africa." Without incorporating an analysis of these factors and forces, feminists are likely to have a distorted picture of women as a group—for example, that they are too victimized or sexualized. This type of inclusive analysis is especially important for the purposes of creating fruitful and applicable policy. In support of Mohanty's approach, I hope that this example has shown the serious role that context plays in understanding and assessing women's inequalities. These conclusions become especially pivotal when it comes to strategizing about alleviating women's inequalities in a global context. As I will continue to emphasize, listening to women's perspectives is important, but it is not the solution when it comes addressing injustices. What outsiders need to understand is the network of relationships that impact these women's lives (who are insiders to oppression) in order to devise policy that does not reinforce their victim status.

To parallel this criticism made of Cutrufelli's "Women of Africa," I would like next to outline a specific instance in Okin's work where she is guilty of the same thing. Okin generalizes about the group "women of the Third World" when she describes her view of women's economic dependence in "Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences."¹⁵⁰ In this text, Okin refers to a UN report that reveals that women spend

more of their time working than do men in both developed and developing nations—much of which goes unpaid. According to Okin, although most poor women in poor countries work long hours each day, throughout the world they are often economically dependent on men. This too is “similar to but worse than” the situation of many women in richer countries. The problem with Okin’s argument is twofold. First, Okin unites women from both rich and poor countries on the basis of economic dependence on men. This move simply reinforces the idea that women occupy subordinate and powerless positions under men all over the globe. Furthermore, because Third World women are even more powerless in Okin’s account, they are rendered invisible as agents. Moreover, by making economically dependent women into “universal dependents,” Okin effectively denies the hundreds of possible reasons (potentially varying from culture to culture) that may explain a woman’s economic dependence or capture a culture where this is not so. Mohanty would have a definite problem with the analytic strategy Okin uses when she assumes in the above example that women are already constituted subjects prior to their entry into social relations. In the final chapter, I will show how issues of economic dependence need to be analyzed in specific contexts of local and global factors.

To appeal to another of Mohanty’s examples to illustrate the importance of location and context, consider her example of women portrayed as victims of male violence. In reference to one writer’s claim that physical violence against women is carried out “with astonishing consensus among men in the world,” Mohanty argues against the portrayals of women as the continuous victims of sexual oppression.¹⁵¹ Claiming that women are always victims and men always the perpetrators of violence can debilitate a society into being rigidly divided between two groups—the powerful and

the powerless. Mohanty concludes by stating, that “Male violence must be theorized and interpreted within specific societies in order both to understand it better and to organize effectively to change it.”¹⁵² I echo this point when saying that I believe that only when theorizing is done thoroughly, accurately, and inclusively, can effective policies be built. In this example, Mohanty already meets Okin’s challenge of showing that differences and context *matter* when it comes to judging the lives of women in foreign places. Moreover, uniting women through universal sameness only reinforces existing power differentials between men and women.

In the next section I point to the second example of how Okin’s use of “women” as a category of analysis prior to social relations is problematic—her discussion of the sexual division of labour. I reserve this example for the next section because it falls nicely under Mohanty’s second critique of Western feminist theorizing—the presupposition of methodological universalisms.

b) Methodological Universalisms

Western feminists use a number of different methods to describe woman of the Third world as victims of male domination and female exploitation. One example Mohanty appeals to relates to how concepts such as the sexual division of labour are often used “without their specification in local cultural and historical contexts.”¹⁵³ Okin is one such thinker who is guilty of making generalizations about the sexual division of labour. More importantly, if we examine her view we see a persistent lack of attention to the way in which women are shaped by local and global forces of power.

The gendered division of labor has serious and direct impact on the opportunities of girls and women, which crosses the lines of economic class. The opportunities of females are significantly affected by the structures and practices of family life, particularly by the fact that women are almost invariably primary caretakers, which has much impact on their availability for full-time wage work. It also results in their frequently being *overworked*, and renders them less likely than men to be considered economically valuable. This factor, too, operates “similarly but more so” within poor families in many poor countries. There too, adult women suffer—often more severely—many of the same effects of the division of labor as do women in richer countries. But in addition, their daughters are likely to be put to work for the household at a very young age, are much less likely to be educated and to attain literacy than are sons of the same households and, worst of all—less valued than their brothers—they have less chance of staying alive because they are more likely to be deprived of food or of health care.¹⁵⁴

In the above quotation we see that Okin treats the gendered division of labour from any number of contexts as qualitatively identical. Again, Mohanty would likely argue that Okin is guilty of treating women as a group prior to the process of analysis. A proper analysis of women’s involvement in the labour force necessarily involves a proper analysis of the forces of power that surround women’s employment opportunities. Mohanty would not object to Okin’s claim that women “are almost invariably the primary caretakers,” but rather that we need to evaluate the availability of full time work from context to context. As shown in the example of female prostitution, national policies that are created by poor countries very often reflect the agendas of global bodies to whom a debt is owed. In the case of labour, job creation needs to be assessed in terms of these types of power relations and the influence on a government by international bodies. A case is building against any feminist approach that does not analyze women’s inequalities as embedded within a network of local and global forces. More needs to be said about history and context in order to overcome Okin’s challenge about the relevance of differences when it comes to assessing women’s lives in a global context.

How is it possible, Mohanty asks, for Western feminists “to refer to ‘the’ sexual division of labour when the content of this division changes radically from one environment to the next and from one historical juncture to another?”¹⁵⁵ Mohanty is not

doubting that there may in fact be *a* sexual division of labour, what she is saying is that the division of labour can differ with respect to the context.

Often the mere existence of a sexual division of labor is taken to be proof of the oppression of women in various societies. This results from a confusion between and collapsing together of the descriptive and explanatory potential for the concept of the sexual division of labor. Superficially similar situations may have radically different, historically specific explanations and cannot be treated as identical.¹⁵⁶

What does it mean to say that context and history matter to a proper assessment of women's injustices? How can Mohanty answer Okin's challenge? To show the dangers of making universal descriptive claims about the sexual division of labour, Mohanty gives the example of the rise of female-headed households in America. Superficially, it may appear as though this increase is a sign of feminist progress if one assumes that more women are *choosing* to be single parents (with an increase in lesbian mothers). Mohanty deflates this myth by making an analogy to the increase of female-headed household in Latin America. Similar to the U.S., this increase was first seen as a rise in women's independence and agency. Upon further investigation, however, it became clear that this rise was most prominent in women from the poorest segment of the population whose choices are most economically strained.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, in the U.S. the level of poverty reached by working-class women has reached new levels, as the name "feminization of poverty" indicates. What this example shows is that we cannot understand the described rise as a universal indicator of women's agency or increased decision making power. Nor can we take this as a sign of women's increased impoverishment. Mohanty writes that "the meaning of and explanations for this rise obviously vary according to the sociohistorical context."¹⁵⁸

c) The Subjects of Power

Mohanty's third criticism is political in nature. Common to all the texts that Mohanty examines is the authorial strategy of grouping women together as though they have one coherent identity that stands outside of context, economics, class, histories, and so on. Mohanty argues that when women are categorized as an oppressed group in a homogenous way, they become locked into unified but powerless group positions.¹⁵⁹ While grouping women together could be an effective strategy for Western feminists, Mohanty explains that applying the concept of women as a group to Third World women is colonizing and inappropriate. Assimilating different women from different social classes and ethnic backgrounds effectively "robs them of their historical and political agency."¹⁶⁰

But the damage does not stop there. Mohanty contends that when women are depicted as a homogenized and oppressed group in feminist literature, an image of "the average Third World woman" is produced that is ethnocentric, universalistic, and paternalistic. "Third World difference", Mohanty argues, is produced through the infinite usages of such careless generalizations about women prior to their entry into social relations. Subsequently, Third World women automatically become defined as

Religious (read: not progressive), family-oriented (read: traditional), legally unsophisticated (read they are still not conscious of their lights), illiterate (read: ignorant), domestic (read backward), and sometimes revolutionary (read; their country is in a state of war; they must fight!).¹⁶¹

When Western feminist scholarship and analyses perpetuate such tendencies of "ethnocentric universality" they are in effect widening power imbalances between First and Third World countries.

3.4. Mohanty: A Final Remark

Mohanty's robust criticism of Western feminist discourse is an organized and methodological refutation of both essentialism and universalism. But she does more than this. Her well-documented line of argument can easily be applied to many other works all of whose authors are guilty of producing an image of "the average Third World woman." Mohanty's work teaches us that understanding women's experiences needs to be a joint project in understanding her life as embedded within social, political, and economic relationships that are in turn structured by relations of power at local and global levels.

Third-World women might very well be disadvantaged in ways similar to First World women. This one fact, however, does not give someone like Okin the license to make moral assessments of the lives of Third World women without taking details and contexts seriously. Mohanty successfully shows that differences in location, history, and environment *do matter* to the cause of eliminating injustices.

4) Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to broaden and fortify the insider/outsider discussion from Chapter 3 by adding some new insights from both feminist standpoint theory and postcolonial feminist theory. What Wylie, Collins, and Mohanty jointly demonstrate is that epistemic privilege and an understanding of relations of power are built into the multifaceted perspectives and experiences of members of oppressed groups (women).

Standpoint theorists Wylie and Collins have made some important contributions to the insider/outsider discussion. Of primary importance is the way in which each showed

how the standpoints of the oppressed and disadvantaged are emotionally configured in ways that relate directly to their social worlds and what they know about them. One can here notice the connections to Thomas who also believed that members of disadvantaged groups were epistemically privileged because of their emotional experiences. While Thomas argued that we ought to simply *defer* to the standpoints of members of oppressed groups, Wylie and Collins take things much farther by showing what is *valuable* about placing the standpoints of the oppressed in the contexts in which lives are shaped by these experiences.

Wylie and Collins successfully lend credibility to the claim of the epistemic privilege of the oppressed through emphasizing how women's standpoints are shaped by their social locations. While this is an important contribution it is not the whole picture. Mohanty's work shows us that what women know and experience is made much more complex when we take the broader context into consideration. She builds on some of the important conclusions that Narayan reaches in her approach: that oppressed women (insiders) are the only ones who truly know the details and concrete ways in which oppression affects their lives; and that both insiders and outsiders are products of their own material histories. These points bring us directly to the global scene.

Mohanty's work can be seen as a natural extension of Narayan's ideas because she forces her readers to recognize that women's lives are embedded within many levels of power. A proper feminist theory, therefore, needs to take seriously how women's perspectives are shaped by global factors such as colonialism, power relations, and ethnocentrism. Mohanty's critique of Western feminist discourse on Third World women was a fruitful one. Her dismantling of universalist and essentialist strategies employed,

either consciously or unconsciously by Western feminists, was both effective and thorough. She meets Okin's challenge by showing explicitly *why* differences, context, and social location matter when assessing women's oppression. Okin's *similar but worse* philosophy was directly countered by Mohanty's numerous examples showing the relevance of context. Throughout this chapter, I built on her analysis by showing the extent to which the local needs to be examined in terms of the global. This point was brought to bear most substantially through the examples of the global sex trade, the sexual division of labour, women's economic dependency, and gender-based violence.

As the formulation of my framework nears completion, it is becoming clearer that the framework itself is supporting a complex interaction of concepts and ideas about women's injustices. Such a framework will only be effective when applied to a particular situation if it has built into it a deep respect for difference, diversity, and history. Consideration for the concrete details of the lives of women in specific contexts will draw us closer to this desired end. An unfortunate fact about our world is that under the umbrella of hierarchical power relations, the perspectives of some groups are continuously being privileged over others. When theorists fail to portray women as embedded within a complex network of social relationships that shape their experiences of oppression and inequality, they do them a grave injustice. Another issue that emerges from the analysis in this chapter is that that we are in need of a theoretical framework that makes women central players in both policy making and political participation.

I hope I have given some credence to the claim that standpoints matter and that the detailed experiences of insiders matter. In Chapter 5, I put the final ingredients of my insider/outsider framework in place by discussing relational theory and perspectives more

generally. After these insights are gathered, I will have what I see as a complete insiders/outside framework. With this groundwork in place, I will have laid out some specific strategies for trying to alleviate oppressive practices against women by taking context and location into account. I will then be in a position to test the theoretical work by speaking directly to a particular practical issue affecting women—that of reproductive rights in Mexico.

CHAPTER 5: Insights from Relational Theory

It is becoming more and more evident that women's quality of life is being threatened by a complex network of features and conditions that unfairly burden them at both local and global levels. This is indeed a difficult predicament for feminists concerned with theorizing about and formulating policies for alleviating oppression. As my search for policies for alleviating injustices continues, I have left by the wayside any and all overarching theories of justice produced by universalist and essentialist feminist theorists. Because of the described failings, I opt for an insider/outsider framework in an effort to both understand and to act upon women's injustices in a global context.

This framework was introduced in Chapter 3 where a detailed discussion of insiders and outsiders revealed some complex and challenging conceptual questions. These challenges were the starting points that led me to dedicate the previous chapter to gathering the insights from feminist standpoint theory and postcolonial theory. It is undeniable that the innovative contributions that these theorists have made are invaluable to the insider/outsider framework that I want to defend and utilize. As it nears completion, the insider/outsider framework is proving to be a beneficial means of framing women's injustices and oppression.

There are a couple of reasons why I argue in favour of adopting this type of framework over that of a singular unifying theory of justice. One general benefit is that the insider/outsider approach incorporates the insights from a number of theorists, working on different aspects of problems with theorizing. Moreover, having a multifaceted framework allows for flexibility and subtlety when it comes to examining the often difficult and complex situations in which disadvantaged women find

themselves. Second, I see the insider/outsider framework I am developing as especially strong because it has the capacity to be both instructive and practical. In the following and final chapter, I shall put the complete insider/outsider framework to the test by applying it to a particular issue affecting women—that of reproductive rights in the particular context of Mexico. Only then will the potentiality of the expanded framework become truly apparent. For now, the task for this current chapter is to build upon the insider/outsider framework provided thus far by appealing to one final feminist account—relational theory.

In the following chapter I examine Christine Koggel's account of relational theory and its relation to my own project. Here is how I shall proceed. First, I summarize where I left off in the previous chapter by drawing conclusions from standpoint theory and postcolonial feminist theory. The second section is the most substantive of the chapter in that it contains a description and analysis of the key features of Koggel's relational theory. These features include: the role of perspectives, relationships, economic globalization, and the complex nature of inequalities. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by summarizing the insights I've gathered from Koggel's relational theory and how they can contribute to my own theoretical and practical goals.

1) The Expanded Insider/Outsider Framework: Power Relations and Epistemic Privilege

1.1. From Crocker to Thomas

In the previous chapter, I went into a detailed discussion of the evolution of the concepts of epistemic privilege and power relations and described how my

insider/outsider framework picks up where many philosophers leave off in the discussion of insiders and outsiders. As I borrowed certain insights and analyzed the works of a number of philosophers, their deficiencies invited me to press on and expose the whole picture. Through my evolving assessments of these works it became quite clear that we are in need of theory that has a framework powerful and complex enough to capture women's oppression as it presents itself in varying contexts.

To recap, Crocker's approach proved to neglect many different kinds of power relations, leading to my using Narayan and Thomas to fill in what Crocker left out. Both philosophers bring to the table detailed discussions about being a member of advantaged or disadvantaged groups and how insiders to oppression are emotionally configured by such experiences. Whether it is "methodological humility" or "moral deference" that is owed to insiders, both Narayan and Thomas contend that there is good reason to presume in favour of the insider as knowing about the conditions of oppression as well as how it feels to be oppressed. In spite of these important recognitions, I pointed out at the end of Chapter 3 that a couple of normative questions remained in relation to the epistemic privilege of insiders. For instance, is there good reasoning behind Thomas's claim that we ought *always* to defer to the experiences of insiders? Should we defer to all experiences of "diminished social category groups"? These questions revealed that we need a way of theorizing about the complex concept of epistemic privilege. Feminist standpoint theorists allowed me to provide some insight into these thorny matters by expanding on Thomas's theme of epistemic privilege.

1.2. Feminist Standpoint Theory and Postcolonial Feminist Theory

a) Feminist Standpoint Theory: Summary of Wylie and Collins

Both Wylie and Collins build upon epistemic privilege and power relations and address the potential problem of granting automatic epistemic privilege to the oppressed. They further show that one should not merely defer to the standpoints of the oppressed simply because they are oppressed. Rather, we need to ensure that we view members of oppressed groups as having standpoints that are socially located and influenced by a network of relationships, opportunities, and social practices. In other words, one needs to ensure that a proper analysis of these perspectives is accomplished.

b) Postcolonial Feminist Theory: Summary of Mohanty

In Chapter 4 I set up Mohanty to disprove Okin's challenge that Third World women suffer *similar but worse* experiences of oppression than do women from rich countries. Through her examples, Mohanty criticizes Western feminist theorists for their use of methodological universalisms, for using women as a category of analysis prior to its manifestation in particular locations, and for their wrongful systematic portrayals of women as a powerless group.

In my analysis, I portrayed Mohanty as rising to Okin's challenge by proving that differences *do* matter. Charged with this task, I used Mohanty's particular examples of the sexual division of labour, women's economic dependence, and gender-based violence. I added to these my own example of the global sex trade with the hopes of strengthening Mohanty's point that no easy generalizations can be made about "women of the Third World." Mohanty poignantly states that "it is only by understanding the contradictions inherent in women's location within various structures that effective

political action and challenges can be devised.”¹⁶² My example of the global sex trade lent support to this very point. By arguing against Cutrufelli’s universalist point that all women in Africa are prostitutes, I suggested that a proper analysis of women’s lives needs to take seriously the fact that their experiences of oppression are jointly impacted by local and global forces. Without considering the histories, international influences, economies, and debts effecting particular contexts feminists have and will continue to wrongfully portray the lives of these “women of Africa” (and other countries) as, for example, too victimized. An analysis of the meaning of prostitution, and how it is shaped by local, national, and global factors, is the only way in which effective policy can be forged.

Standpoint theorists help with analyzing women’s perspectives and the knowledge they have of their own oppression. In other words, they help us with answering *how* women are epistemically privileged. Part of what Mohanty shows us is that our analyses at local levels are further shaped by impending global forces. She therefore reminds us that the lives of women do not exist in isolation and therefore should not be examined and assessed in this abstract way and then universalized. The experiences of an oppressed woman are a function of a number of factors in her specific context, and understanding these injustices becomes far more complex once we take these forces into consideration. Furthermore, Mohanty’s account is important because of the way in which it reminds us of the impact of global economics. The impact of economic globalization, for example, is a force of power that resonates through all countries in the world—rich and poor alike. This appeal to the global highlights for readers that Third World lives and locations are necessarily shaped by such global factors

in specific contexts. Finally, Mohanty draws our attention to history and colonialism as two other factors that matter very much when evaluating the social, religious, or political practices of a specific context. Examining a practice or making judgments about injustices by standing outside of such history and context is a trap that universalists are constantly getting caught in.

Until this point, I have shown that what insiders to oppression know is influenced by a network of relationships and competing factors occurring at multiple levels. As it turns out, individuals are much more complex beings than they are given credit for in universalist theories such as Okin's and Nussbaum's. As Narayan, Mohanty and others have pointed out, something gets missed when essentialists like Okin portray women as interchangeable beings divorced from any material history, background, or social location. In the following section, I appeal to Koggel's relational theory as one that not only gives a more coherent account of individuals, but also carries with it some rich strategies for alleviating injustices.

2) Koggel's Relational Theory

In this section I use "Equality Analysis in a Global Context: A Relational Approach" and "A Feminist Perspective on Globalization"¹⁶³ to propose that Koggel's account adds to my developing framework in at least two ways. First, relational theory challenges the individualism at the heart of universalist theories of justice in accounts like those put forth by Nussbaum and Okin. Koggel's theory specifically helps to explain how we cannot help but be shaped by the contexts we are in. Relational theory, as she describes it, proves to be a rich source for paying attention to context, details, and the

lives of people shaped by a multitude of relationships. The theory further takes account of how such relationships occur at a number of levels—the personal, political, local and global. One of the major goals I have for this chapter is to use relational theory to fill in and provide the full objection to Nussbaum’s capabilities approach that I began in Chapter 2. The specific objection I am referring to is the point touched upon though my appeal to Susan Wolf—that Nussbaum’s list carries with it a profound reliance on individualism.

Aside from relational theory’s rich portrayal of individuals, Koggel’s theory adds to my developing framework in a second way—by providing practical strategies for fighting injustices. Koggel proposes that individuals who are shaped by relations of power hold perspectives on and have knowledge about structures that are not held by those in power. This kind of robust epistemic privilege of insiders takes us right into the policies that shape people’s lives and the types of opportunities they have. Koggel’s account shows that individuals are shaped by multileveled relationships that can either be politically oppressive or agency enhancing. Gathering insights from relational theory not only adds to my insider/outsider framework, but also provides the necessary bridge from theory to practice. The practical import of Koggel’s approach will largely be felt in Chapter 6 where I discuss the particular issue of reproductive rights in the specific context of Mexico.

With the hope of showing that relational theory adds texture and substance to the conceptual terrain I have been investigating, I structure the next pages in the following way. First I give a three-part overview of the theory in an attempt to expose its strengths. Second, I describe how relational theory has the power to show that inequalities stem

from both local and global factors. Lastly, I draw conclusions about why relational theory is important for my own insider/outsider framework.

2.1. An Overview of Relational Theory

a) Challenging the Individualism of Liberal Theory

In “Equality Analysis in a Global Context: A Relational Approach,” Koggel calls for a “reshaping of moral concepts” that are assumed in traditional liberal theory. One of the hallmarks of relational theory is the way in which it uses “relationships rather than individuals, as the focal point of analysis.”¹⁶⁴ Koggel argues that if we begin with the fact that human beings exist in relationships and not as stand-alone independent individuals, then inequalities that tend to be ignored in liberal theory become conspicuous. Koggel’s proposal to analyze relationships is pitted against the traditional liberal theorists who tend to paint individuals as independent, autonomous, and self-sufficient agents.¹⁶⁵ Nussbaum is one such theorist whose inclusion of “separateness” as a limit/capability that is essential to our humanness can be described as being ethnocentrically individualist. Individualism is a kind of ontological account of human beings as separate and needing protection from state interference. Other feminist thinkers have used the theory as a tool for re-conceptualizing feminist ideas and challenging traditional liberal ideas.¹⁶⁶ Relational theory challenges the liberal notion of individuals as interchangeable and able to stand apart from the particular locations that shape them. Okin is guilty of exactly this when she defends her essentialist view that *all* women share in qualitatively similar experiences of oppression across cultural borders. As Mohanty has so aptly put it, feminists like Okin treat women as categories of analysis prior to their appearances in particular locations.

Traditional liberal theorists often make the false assumption that we can put ourselves in the shoes of others and make judgments about women's experiences in the same way as we would judge our own.¹⁶⁷ When people are treated as abstract, ahistorical, and apolitical beings in feminist theory, it becomes very easy to judge the injustices and inequalities that any woman experiences in any particular location as the same all over. Treating women as a coherent group unaffected by location or history makes the job of judging injustices and inequalities in a global context much simpler by erasing those differences. Appealing to this kind of individualism has allowed feminists to formulate singular theories of justice that can easily be applied cross-culturally. I hope to have shown thus far that dealing with the global issue of women's inequalities is far more complex than this individualistic picture allows.

Koggel's relational theory directly challenges the liberal essentialist claim of sameness through her close attention to relationships and perspectives. Koggel re-conceptualizes our view of the individual as someone who cannot help but be shaped by a multitude of relationships occurring at a multitude of levels—the personal, political, local, and the global. A feminist perspectives approach as defended by Koggel “looks to the particular as a way of providing a more accurate and adequate account of how social and political structures shape and reshape systems of oppression and relationships of power.”¹⁶⁸ Factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, and class affect and determine the kinds of opportunities group members will have in life and all of these in turn are shaped by local and global forces.

Koggel's approach amplifies a concern introduced in Chapter 3 by Patricia Collins. Recall Collins's point about racial segregation of Black and White

neighborhoods in the U.S. She astutely points out that racial segregation necessarily impacts the types of schooling experiences, recreational activities, healthcare systems, and opportunities members from each group will have. This is because Blacks are insiders to oppression and are placed in relationships and contexts that further entrench that oppression. Collins's view in a way introduces the relational aspects of perspectives that Koggel is concerned about. Koggel would likely conclude from Collins's point that the network of relations that black and white members of segregated neighbourhoods are in would shape women differently. More specifically, she would argue that paying attention to relationships at both personal and public levels is important for understanding injustices and inequalities.

Koggel also addresses another problem I alerted the reader to concerning feminist theorists' ability to judge the lives and experiences of women in cultures very different from our own. Relational theory challenges the idea that we can easily step into the shoes of women in any and all contexts through what I take to be her version of epistemic privilege. In the following two sections (b and c), this point will be made more evident, but for now it may be helpful to state the following. Koggel challenges this assumption by arguing that individuals who are shaped by relations of power have perspectives on and knowledge about structures of power that are not had by those who are powerful. To put it in terms of my discussion thus far, Koggel can be described as suggesting that insiders have privileged standpoints that outsiders cannot understand in the same way because they have been shaped by a different network of relationships.

b) Relational Theory and its Connection to Perspectives

Koggel describes relational theory as categorized by a focus on relationships (and not individuals). By doing so, she maintains that one quickly becomes intimate with concepts like power and oppression and how these factors work to perpetuate inequalities.¹⁶⁹ Koggel states that there are two main features of a relational approach that distinguish it from other context-sensitive theories:

(1) [a relational approach] uncovers the governing norms and practices, ones that sustain inequalities of various sorts for those who are powerless and disadvantaged; and (2) reveals the importance of the perspectives of those adversely affected as resources for learning about various kinds of inequalities and the structures that sustain them.

In “Equality Analysis in a Global Context,” Koggel puts some of those insights to work by examining the issue of poverty. Allow me to begin here by looking at her emphasis on the local. Koggel maintains that if a theory is ever to lead to devising of policies for addressing poverty, it needs to incorporate perspectives where the details, contexts, and experiences of the poor are considered at a local level. “Ignoring the relevance of perspectives in information gathering risks the further entrenchment of assumptions, biases, and stereotypes that reflect the norms and practices of the dominant and powerful.”¹⁷⁰ Koggel applies the insights about perspectives and the details of the context they reveal as vital to a proper understanding of poverty and inequalities in wealth in our own contexts and in the contemporary global context.¹⁷¹

Now that I have exposed some of the general elements of relational theory we can see that it has a great deal to offer my insider/outsider framework. Relational theory’s strong connection to perspectives reveals a concerted theoretical effort to highlight the importance of attending to the network of relationships in people’s lives that impact what they have knowledge of. Koggel has revealed that we cannot help but be shaped by the

relationships we are in but things become much clearer when she applies the tenets of her theory to the specific issue of poverty. Through this example, we see the ways in which perspectives can be instructive tools for assessing inequalities and then seeing how policies should be designed to eliminate them. My own purpose for underscoring the importance of perspectives, details, and contexts is to show how these specifics are vital pieces that need to be considered by policy makers (often outsiders to oppression). This will become most clear in the next chapter when I discuss the example of reproductive rights in Mexico—a specific issue affecting women in a specific context.

c) Relational Theory as a Means of Elucidating the Issue of Poverty

In “A Feminist Perspective on Globalization,” Koggel argues that the perspectives of disadvantaged groups can be instructive in two ways:¹⁷² Perspectives can be powerful tools that “can provide valuable insights into *kinds* of inequality and structures that perpetuate them.”¹⁷³ Perspectives are therefore about the kinds of inequality and the dimensions of such inequality that matter to those who endure them—namely the oppressed. This point about perspectives and inequalities builds on two previous claims made: that insiders to oppression are epistemically privileged in terms of knowing the conditions of their oppression as well by virtue of the fact that they are emotionally configured by that oppression.

By using the issue of poverty, Koggel tries to unveil the strong influence of perspectives. Often times, advantaged groups portray poor people as being one dimensional figures lacking in agency. Koggel writes that perspectives can be helpful in these instances since the perspectives of the poor can reveal “who is likely to be poor, what poverty does to people, and why generalized policies that treat all people who are

poor as the same will not work.”¹⁷⁴ The second way perspectives can be helpful is in unsettling the perspective of the person(s) with power; relational theory has the capacity to challenge norms, standards, and traditional stereotypes and biases. Koggel writes that “when the perspectives assumed and reflected in norms, standards, and practices are those of the advantaged, various inequalities suffered by members of traditionally disadvantaged groups tend to be ignored.”¹⁷⁵ If we want to know about and understand poverty, then general statements cannot be made without attending to the particularities of people’s lives.

Perspectives are also relevant to policy. Koggel wants to show that forming generalizations about poor people is even more dangerous when generalized policies echo these stereotypes. The bottom line is that policy makers need to know about the details of poor people’s lives, from *their* perspectives. Koggel outlines a few examples to illustrate how urgent this need really is. One example depicts the situation of a single mother who is forced to accept the government’s general definition of work in order to apply for welfare:

To qualify for welfare, the single mother who needs to prove that she cannot “work,” when she considers child rearing to be valuable work, is forced to accept these norms about the meaning of work and to reject her own priorities and values regarding children. If the income she gets through welfare cannot cover the cost of childcare or job training, she often becomes trapped in a cycle of poverty: unable to get a job because she cannot afford childcare or without access to job training and thus dependent on the (often restricted) income from the state. Or under current welfare policies in the U.S., for example, the single mother who “can work” is forced to find any job even if the pay cannot cover the cost of childcare or if the only childcare she can afford is inferior to what she herself can provide or if she is forced to leave her children alone for parts of the day.¹⁷⁶

This is a clear case where knowing the details of the lives of various single mothers undermines the usual stereotypes made about the poor—that they are lazy, bad budgeters, take easy handouts, and so on. By now it is clear that poverty has many dimensions, including how poor persons regard themselves. In the case of the single woman stuck in

a cycle of poverty, she has problems that are not likely to be remedied solely by considerations about income. In short, perspectives help us to understand what kinds of inequalities people face, how these dimensions of inequality matter to those disadvantaged groups, and then how policies should be designed to eliminate them.

I would argue that relational theory and its attention to perspectives provides some promising suggestions for devising effective policies. Koggel's view about the significance of perspectives is in line with Narayan's philosophy that "oppressed groups should speak for themselves."¹⁷⁷ While Narayan's view of epistemic privilege leads her to defend "methodological humility", Koggel's account of perspectives may take things farther because relational theory is active in a way that Narayan's account is not. We come to realize through Koggel, that we are all in relationships in which we interact with others, we are shaped by them and at once have the power to reshape them. In other words, we are all agents with the power to understand and change conditions in our lives. Although Narayan does a good job of showing that insiders do *know* oppression better than outsiders, Koggel's account actually challenges the rigidly held traditional beliefs and correspondingly misdirected or off-the-mark policies.

We need the detail of contexts, perspectives, and lived experiences but it is not these alone that help us to strategize about what we ought to do to eliminate oppressive practices. Global factors are incredibly influential, and Koggel thinks that economic globalization impacts individual lived experiences in a way that is often not considered. In the next section I explore how Koggel's relational approach links inequalities that occur at a local level to overarching features of economic globalization. This is yet

another level of relationships—a global level. Relational theory is helping to show just how complicated the theorizing about injustices becomes.

2.2. Analyzing Inequalities: Merging Local with Global Forces

What makes relational theory powerful and unique is the way in which it has the power to show that inequalities and oppression stem from both local and global factors. I devoted much of the previous section to outlining and emphasizing how an approach that takes perspectives, contexts, and experiences seriously will provide insights into inequalities and the lives of those who endure them as well as challenge structures that perpetuate them. Koggel argues that a perspectives approach reveals how disadvantaged individuals and groups at the local level are necessarily shaped by larger features of economic globalization. The next few sections refer to different elements of Koggel's paper that emphasize these ideas: economic globalization, some specific complexities of inequalities, and lastly her use of Mohanty to provide an analysis of a specific example. The power and potential of shaping theory and policy will be shown when I turn to my example of reproductive rights in Mexico in the final chapter.

a) Economic Globalization

Economic globalization encompasses increased flows of technology, markets, and exchange of information all of which necessarily shape people's lives in both positive and negative ways.¹⁷⁸ Although it is undeniable that globalization has improved human well-being in some ways, Koggel alerts her audience to some of its negative effects. On the global stage, Koggel sees the negative effects of globalization as having "magnified relationships of power between countries that are rich and poor in ways that perpetuate inequalities in wealth and shape its effects on people."¹⁷⁹ Koggel writes that such

complexities need to be considered “piece by piece.” Increased globalization has occurred side by side with world wide increases in inequalities. The former has not necessarily been *the cause* of the latter, but it is safe to say that global corporations and capitalist corporations (on the whole) do not have as their interest the well-being of the worst off or the elimination of inequalities. There is much to be learned about the complex relationship between poverty, inequalities, and wealth.

Some grim facts about inequalities in wealth and income occurring around the globe include: the widening gap between rich and poor both within and across borders, the abysmal statistics of unemployment and underemployment and exploitation of workers (Third World), the growing number of refugees, and the world’s overall increase of poverty and starvation.¹⁸⁰ Koggel highlights these examples to support her developing view that the concept of equality means much more than just inequalities in wealth.¹⁸¹

b) The Complexities of Inequalities

Being an unequal member of society is not a static position that can be examined either on its own or in generalized terms. As Sen points out in his theory of development as freedom, poverty, oppression, and unfreedoms are interconnected pieces of our economic, political, and social worlds.¹⁸² Koggel is intent on showing that inequalities occurring at both global and local levels are shaped by a multitude of factors at any given time; for example, gender, race, ethnicity, and disability can be shaped and reshaped by local and global forces of power. The multifarious ways in which gender inequality can manifest itself in the lives of women in varying contexts speaks to the complex nature of equality and our assessment of it. In support of Koggel’s claim that women’s oppression

and suffering affects many dimensions of their lives, she makes reference to the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) whose report lists some effects of gender inequality:

It diverts resources from women's activities and often in favor of less productive investment in men; it obstructs social and economic participation and closes off numerous productive alternatives; and it reduces women's effectiveness by failing to support them in meeting their responsibilities, challenges and burdens.¹⁸³

The above passage highlights by example just how interconnected inequalities in opportunities can be. In Koggel's view, for a theory to do justice to the multifaceted nature of inequalities, local and global factors need to be considered separately and also in conjunction with each another as each impacts on the other to shape conditions in particular lives and contexts.

c) The Local must be Cognizant of the Global

In the context of analyzing poverty, some concerned thinkers have been struck by the need to take the complexities of inequalities into consideration. Koggel refers specifically to two works: that of Sen's *Development as Freedom* and the multivolume work put out by the World Bank, *Voices of the Poor*.¹⁸⁴ These two works are of interest to Koggel because in both authors have meritoriously set out to disentangle the complex nature of poverty and inequalities in the name of improving global conditions of well-being. Indeed a tall order. Of the two, the *Voices of the Poor* seems to do a better job of recognizing that perspectives are essential to improvements to policy-making. The President of the World Bank describes how listening to the *Voices of the Poor* is supposed to empower the poor and lead to policy changes that reflect their voices.¹⁸⁵ Sen's sensitivity to the relationship between perspectives and policy-making are made most vivid through his "agency aspect."

While both projects are innovative and commendable for what they do achieve, glaringly absent from both works is a recognition of the impact economic globalization can and does have on particular people living in poverty in particular locations. While Sen is sensitive to the fact that a poor person's opportunities are shaped by what resources she or he has access to, Koggel thinks he is less adept at showing how "all this can be utilized, shaped and reshaped by the overarching factors of economic globalization in the form of multinational corporations, global financial institutions, and world trade organizations."¹⁸⁶ In the case of *Voices of the Poor*, the editors play close attention to detail and context and give a rich account of perspectives that recognizes the influence of social and political institutions.¹⁸⁷ What is strikingly obvious upon looking at this work is how little attention is given to global institutions and the way in which they intersect and interact with "state and civil institutions in particular locations." The role of the World Bank itself in producing the study is one piece of the picture most obviously absent.

Allow us to here stop for a moment to think about the impact the World Bank people might have had on those living in poverty when the latter group infiltrated the lives of the poor for yet another study. Historically speaking, global institutions have succeeded in gathering data from those living in poverty by making promises to them about a better life. Citizens of the Third World often have good reason not to want to trust outsiders. The good intentions of the World Bank in *Voices of the Poor* are not in question; their methodologies are sensitive to the importance of perspectives. In a discussion at the start of the work about methodology, the authors recognize the

limitations relating to fieldwork, and the dangers of generalization. In Bangladesh, a fieldworker for the World Bank wrote the following in her notes:

We went to Aga Sadek Sweepers colony in Dhaka and were told that we needed to get the permission of the leaders of the youth club...One of us started a group of young men sketch mapping and the other talked to children about their problems...As the children were listing their problems, we were rudely interrupted by a Mr. Munna. He said that lots of people came and talked and promised things but never came back. We explained that we were not promising anything.¹⁸⁸

This is a case where an insider seems to have good reason for not trusting an outsider. Not in question is the fact that the Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA) process developed by the World Bank is a strong and sensitive way of engaging in a participatory research process. Part of its strength lies in the fact that poor people themselves are considered to be the primary stakeholders in the process. So the study seems to recognize the importance of listening to and vocalizing insiders' perspectives. Moreover, researchers doing fieldwork are not necessarily promising anything to anyone. It would; however, be a mistake to think that the relationship between this global power (those conducting Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs)) and those living in poverty is anything other than one of power. Relational theory invites us to pay attention to this specific relationship. I would like here to take things a step farther than Koggel does. Something that goes unnoticed is that the mere presence of the World Bank representatives in Bangladesh is evidence that global institutions are *in fact* shaping the lives of those living in poverty. This outside or global force undeniably shapes the lives of these Bangladeshi who would normally remain out of touch with the good will or Western ways of the researchers. Whether or not these outsiders positively or negatively impact the lives of the poor, the nevertheless do impact these lives. In recognizing this, a proper analysis of these poor people's lives and perspectives must include an

understanding of surrounding forces of power, as well as local histories and details. Anything that falls short of this type of analysis can lead to two extreme results in theorizing—the automatic privileging of all and any perspectives or the misleading universalist or essentialist approach to understanding inequalities and oppression.

Through reference to Mohanty, Koggel points out that attending to global institutions is an important feature of postcolonial feminist theory. The aspect of Mohanty's work that Koggel wants to highlight is that in all of her work and analyses of the local, Mohanty is "always cognizant of the various forces of power at the global level that impact on and shape women workplace experience and their lives and life prospects more generally."¹⁸⁹ Also of interest to Koggel is the way in which Mohanty sees all aspects of women's lives as operating in and being shaped by a network of relationships. So it would seem that the most effective type of policy for both Mohanty and Koggel is one in which there is attention paid to economic globalization as well as to specific relationships and perspectives at local levels. There is also a broader sense of the relationships between global and local that exists between multinational corporations, workers, and national policy makers.

Koggel uses examples of women's work in specific locations to show that the lives and situations of these women's lives can and are affected by a number of given factors. I want to draw attention to some general lessons we can learn from these kinds of examples. As theorists we need to make clear that women, as members of disadvantaged groups, are especially vulnerable to changes and fluctuations that can occur in anything from global markets to local government policies to discrimination in the workplace. What is important to keep in mind is that just because women may, for

example, be part of their community's labour force or have access to education does not necessarily mean that injustices and inequalities will be removed—either locally or globally. For example, when large global corporations depend on the labour of Third World countries they often tap into already disadvantaged groups—women—who are paid little and already responsible for the majority of household labour and childcare.¹⁹⁰ Because of these types of complexities, Koggel advocates an approach that sees the need for complex descriptions of the local which in turn reflect global issues.

As the Mexican study of reproductive rights fast approaches, Koggel's relational theory is proving to have many benefits. As I move from theory to practice, I will certainly make use of Koggel's theory as one that provides a rich account of individuals who are shaped by relations of power of various kinds. Whether it be at local, global, personal, or political levels, when we take insiders' perspectives seriously everyone benefits. Most importantly, the insider herself becomes an active agent in her political, personal, local, and/or global community.

3) Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn from the insights of relational theory as defended by Koggel. Relational theory brings us right into the contexts in which policy is being made and relationships are being shaped—sometimes for the good and sometimes for the bad. Different theorists had very different views about who can know the requirements for social justice. From Thomas to Crocker, and Wylie to Koggel, all approaches uncovered the relevance of issues of power and epistemic privilege.

The pitfalls of universalist theories were unmasked by postcolonial theory and Third World Feminism. Narayan and Mohanty brought into focus the desperate need for theories and governing bodies to take heed of history, colonialism, context, and the details of the lives of the oppressed. Understanding that insiders and outsiders are products of their material histories carried us quickly into explorations on the global scene. Mohanty's critique of Western feminism revealed that women of the Third World are shaped by an array of factors including history, the details of social location, and global economic factors. Her examples of the sexual division of labour, gender-based violence, and female economic dependence brought evidence to the table that women cannot be treated as a category of analysis outside of their particular locations, which are inevitably shaped by larger global factors. This proved to be the case as well when considering how women in different contexts have been affected by the conditions brought about by the global sex trade.

Standpoint theories further awakened us to the fact that women's lives are invariably shaped by what experiences and opportunities they have access to. Thomas, Narayan, and feminist standpoint theorists have each defended their own version of epistemic privilege for differing reasons. What they all have notably agreed upon is that persons from disadvantaged groups who live with oppression are emotionally configured by those experiences in a way that grants them unique perspectives on oppression. The accounts of insiders and outsiders that I have examined point out that members of disadvantaged groups are not infallible beings who will *always* hold the "right standpoint" simply by virtue of their group membership. In my view, accounts like Wylie's, Collins's and Narayan's are the most successful because they give strong

examples to support why presuming in favour of insiders is the best way to go both for theory and for practice. They seem all to agree that disadvantaged women are owed much more than moral deference. Standpoint theorists introduce to us the idea that women's standpoints are embedded within social relations of power. What oppressed women have epistemic privilege *about* is how their own experiences and life prospects have been shaped by the experiences, relationships, and opportunities they have had. What this shows is that women cannot choose their standpoints just as they cannot choose what colour they are at birth, what class they will be born into, whether they will be able-bodied, and so on.

This idea that insiders' standpoints reflect the networks of relationships they are embedded in led us nicely to Koggel's relational approach. Koggel's more robust conceptualization of human beings as constituted by their relationships provided a strong critique against universalist and essentialist theories of justice such as Nussbaum's (whose capabilities approach carries with it a kind of ethnocentric individualism). Through the example of poverty, we see just how critical a role perspectives play in relational theory and the incredible force it carries over to the realm of policy-making. Part of the appeal and strength of Koggel's relational approach is that it does not fit into the stringent molds of either a universal theory or relativism at the local level. Theories of justice such as the ones proposed by both Nussbaum and Okin are incapable of capturing the complex and multi-leveled nature of inequalities as they vary from context to context. Relational theory does a good job of informing us that women are affected by oppression and that their suffering can be felt in many areas of their lives. This idea of

the interconnectedness of different kinds of inequalities will be especially important to my upcoming analysis of the women of Chiapas Mexico.

In contrast with the inadequacies of relativism, Koggel also reminds us that we cannot rely solely on local factors—we need to be cognizant of the *ways* in which women at a local level in particular contexts may be seriously affected by global factors such as economic globalization. Through my appeal to accounts like *Voices of the Poor* put out by the World Bank, it became clear that even when concerned and sensitive feminists theorize about inequalities by incorporating contextual details and perspectives, they can miss out on larger global/economic factors that are relevant to policies for alleviating oppression. Relational theory escapes many of the described limitations, which means it can devote itself entirely to what is really important—understanding the complex nature of inequalities and devising corresponding strategies for eliminating oppression.

Taking perspectives seriously helps outsiders to understand *kinds* of inequalities that they would not normally have access to. As Koggel puts it, “perspectives of the disadvantaged are valuable vantage points for revealing inequalities.”¹⁹¹ Perspectives are therefore about the kinds of inequality and the dimensions of such inequality that matter to those who are disadvantaged. This point builds on my own description of insiders as being epistemically privileged about the conditions of their oppression. Perspectives can empower agents instead of disempowering them. It may be important to note that Koggel’s theory does not fall subject to the criticism Mohanty makes about feminist theory perpetuating women’s victim status as powerless beings. Taking women’s perspectives seriously actively challenges assumptions, biases, traditions, and stereotypes

that typically paralyze disadvantaged groups from escaping the traditional spaces they occupy in a given community.

Global institutions intersect with local institutions which in turn shape the quality of life a specific woman in a specific place will have. What I hope to draw from Koggel's theory as I come to describe the Mexican study is that in order to devise theory and policy we need to pay attention to how and when global factors compound already oppressive local forces. As I put my framework to work in the next chapter, what will turn out to be especially compelling is the way in which women—from a particular rural area of Mexico—are impacted by the influence of globalization and international economic corporations. It would certainly be a sad state of affairs if from this situation, theorists and policy makers perpetuated women's status as powerless victims. What I shall instead propose is that we need to think of innovative ways in which they can be empowered to be active agents in the political process.

If women's perspectives were truly heard and understood in the contexts of their lives, then policy makers would see that generalized policies often miss out on key bits of information critically important for devising effective policies. Recall here Koggel's example of the single woman who can easily be thrown into a cycle of poverty. Income level should not be the only relevant feature for determining someone's candidacy! Unfortunately it is usually the advantaged and powerful who set the policies for addressing injustices. Relationships of power silence the disadvantaged. The power of relational theory is that it will be sensitive to effective policies that place women at the centre.

It is possible that even after all my analysis is described some questions still linger in the background about the status of insiders and outsiders. There is a lot that is different about the views of development ethicists, postcolonial feminist theorists, Third World feminists, feminist standpoint theorists, and relational theorists. While I have highlighted many differences among these accounts throughout these many pages, I can deduce at least one commonality their joint accounts have proven: The standpoints of insiders are unique and valuable vantage points for understanding the depths and complexities of inequalities. But theorists need to understand how these standpoints are shaped by relations of power in many forms and at all levels of our social structures. Relations of power impact our families, our communities, our states, our religious institutions, our social institutions, and our international institutions and businesses. Women form one group that is most debilitated by these structures and so it is women's concerns that need to be addressed.

Relational theory has helped to enrich my insider/outsider framework by bringing new elements to the table. Unlike a universalist feminist theory of justice, the framework I have developed has the power to suggest specific strategies for eliminating oppression in specific locations. In the following chapter, I use the study about reproductive rights in Mexico as an illustration to show how things like perspectives, history, environment, and location are central issues when forming analyses and thinking about policies to improve the lives of women.

CHAPTER 6: Reproductive Rights in Mexico

The expanded insider/outsider framework I have developed throughout the first five chapters of this thesis has proven to be a revealing theoretical project. In my appeal to numerous accounts, I have identified and developed some specific strategies for eliminating oppressive practices. Furthermore, by attending to the ever-evolving concepts of power relations and epistemic privilege, I hope to have highlighted just how influential local and global factors are in the lives of women in various contexts. As promised, the major goal of this final chapter is to apply my developed insider/outsider framework to a specific issue. I have chosen the contentious issue of reproductive rights in the particular context of Mexico as the issue that will demonstrate the positive potential my expanded framework offers.

My expanded framework promises to be good at examining a specific kind of case relevant to a specific place. This seems to me to be an ideal way to forge some necessary connections between theory and practice. As I proceed to provide an assessment of women's lives in Chiapas Mexico, I seek to locate these women as embedded within a complex network of relationships. I set out to show that women's perspectives need to inspire policies and legislation in a way that takes notice of such relationships. This idea of empowering women in the political process by valuing their perspectives is very much in line with the idea of enhancing agency. Since my framework is now complete, I set about exploring how it can best provide guidance for policies addressing reproductive rights in Mexico. I would like to point out that I do not provide a complete analysis of the case study, but rather use it to illustrate the complexity

of the factors relevant to an analysis of women's oppression and of policies for alleviating it.

With the goal of eliminating poverty, the Mexican government instituted a restrictive national policy to reduce the number of children in the country. In 2003, a study conducted by Beutelspacher, Martelo, and Garcia entitled, "Does Contraception Benefit Women? Structure, Agency, and Well-being in Rural Mexico,"¹⁹² analyzes the impact of this policy on women in the state of Chiapas. Much of this study reveals that the promises made to women about how the family planning program would improve their lives and increase their agency did not actually translate positively in their lives. In this final chapter, I explore and expand on the findings of the authors of this study by applying my own insider/outsider framework to this case of reproductive rights.

In my move from theory to practice, this chapter takes the following form. In the first brief section, I tie up loose ends and inform the reader of what remains to be considered. In the second and most substantial section of this chapter I set out to accomplish two things: I outline the study itself along with the authors' goals, hypotheses, methodology and corresponding results and, most importantly, I give my own analysis of the most relevant aspects of the study. I here use my expanded insider/outsider framework to explain and support certain findings of the study, and then depart from the authors by arguing that the impact of global factors on the Chiapas women is a crucial point of analysis that has gone undetected by both the authors and Sen, whose work on agency they draw on. Inspired by relational theory, I make the recommendation that we need a broader analysis of relationships occurring at multiple levels in order to strategize effectively about policy-making. Lastly, I conclude the

chapter by arguing that my insider/outsider framework passes the test of application and describe some of the explicit benefits reaped. One particular strength of my expanded insider/outsider framework is that it withstands the specific universalist criticism set out by Nussbaum in Chapter 2. I am here referring to Nussbaum's criticism brought against anti-essentialists who accuse universalists of being insensitive to cultural differences. As we saw, Nussbaum's argued against such theorists by labeling them relativists who do a disservice to feminist theory by couching injustices in an appeal to differences and thereby failing to generate policies at all. I describe my framework as ideal because it avoids the pitfalls of relativism while at once remaining sensitive to cultural differences among women in differing contexts.

1. What Remains to be Considered?

While I have not *explicitly* discussed the concept of agency since the Chapter 2 section on Sen, it is important to note that my expanded insider/outsider framework puts agency upfront in its notions of epistemic privilege and relations of power. In Chapter 2, I indicated my support for Sen's view that expanding women's agency should be both central to the development process itself as well as essential to women's sense of well-being. I described Sen's capabilities approach as an improvement on Nussbaum's in part because of the central role that agency plays in his project. I also mentioned that I would reserve criticisms of Sen for this sixth and final chapter. There are a couple that I will allude to briefly here and elaborate on more substantively throughout this final chapter.

One criticism I will make of Sen relates to the link that he makes between agency and policy. Sen describes agency as a means through which to increase freedoms

(viewed as absolute measures) to have better health, access to education, and live longer lives. I agree, to an extent, with Sen's approach that what women say about their lives can be measured against factors such as life expectancy. To wit, it is better in his view to live a long life than a shortened one. In spite of my agreement in this particular case of life expectancy, I resist going all the way with Sen and adding to this list certain capabilities like education and work when it comes to generating policies that enhance or endorse these. Part of what I would like to call into question in this final chapter is this very point that women's agency is *always* improved through generalized policies. The Mexico case will add more evidence to the points made in the fourth and fifth chapters that, for example, enacting a generalized policy to improve all women's access to paid work may in fact impede instead of facilitate women's liberation or agency in varying contexts.

In the pages below, I make the shift from theory to practice. In doing this, I expose the power of my framework as retaining some of the advantages of Sen's approach (that it is agency enhancing) but take things farther than him and other thinkers by emphasizing the impact of global forces on the Chiapas women. This latter point exposes the need for a much broader analysis of relationships at all levels to understand these women's experiences and lives. Only when we take into account these multi-leveled and complex relationships can women become empowered to become active decision-makers in the political process in a way that will contribute to the formation of meaningful policies.

2. From Theory to Practice: An Analysis of Reproductive Rights in Mexico

Before getting into the details of the study conducted in rural Chiapas, it is crucial for the reader to have some insight into the evolution of Mexico's family planning program. From the 1970's to the 1990's the State promoted the use of contraceptives by propagating an array of slogans. These slogans evolved from "a small family lives better," and "have few children to give those more," to "family planning...it's a matter of choice." What the Mexican government's family planning programs all shared was the promise they made to women that by limiting the amount of children they have through contraception, women would be healthier, wealthier, and enjoy better sex as well as have more attractive job opportunities and better educated children.¹⁹³ More recently, family planning programs have intensified among rural and marginal populations in Mexico as a strategy to "fight poverty."¹⁹⁴ What one can deduce from these types of slogans is that the state conveyed the message to its citizens that abiding by the family planning programs would increase women's opportunities and even their agency.

The state-instituted policies for reducing the number of children most dramatically affected the state of Chiapas, which in the early-1990s had the highest poverty levels and fertility rates in Mexico as well as the lowest contraception rates. The implementation of the many programs increased the state's contraception prevalence rate in women ages 15-49 from 49.9 percent in 1992 to 53.5 percent in 1997. The most common method of contraception was the surgical sterilization of women or "salpingectomy." Among contraceptive users, Chiapas women rank first overall in Mexico with 55.7 percent of women being sterilized.¹⁹⁵

In the study described below, it is important to keep in mind that what the authors are interested in finding out is whether the policies instituted by the Mexican government in fact lived up to its promise of improving women's quality of life. This study is an excellent illustration for my own work because the authors are quite obviously concerned with how women were targeted, and how these intended beneficiaries viewed the policy and were affected by it. Already we see that women's perspectives and local factors are being considered in this study.

2.1. The Study

a) Conceptual Tools

Increasingly, women's reproductive rights have surfaced as an issue of concern at both national and international levels. The authors argue that Sen's concept of well-being is especially useful for examining women's decisions about contraceptive use. In *Development as Freedom*, Sen argues that "any practical attempt at enhancing the well-being of women cannot but draw on the agency of women themselves in bringing about such change."¹⁹⁶ The authors take Sen's concept of well-being as paying considerable attention to context because of his joint emphasis on both agency and freedom. I myself argued in Chapter 2 that Sen's approach was better than both Okin's and Nussbaum's because of the flexibility his well-being approach affords in terms of context. This defence stemmed largely from his refusal to provide a list and his attention to agency.

The authors' reliance on Sen's view of well-being as context sensitive in part stems from the important intersection of well-being with agency. I very much support Sen's proposal that we need to take an agent-oriented approach to alleviating injustices. His appeal to empirical evidence throughout the book shows that women's well-being is

affected by what he calls “agency aspects.” These include variables such as women’s earning power, their education, and property rights. Sen’s most forceful general claim relates to the impact that both paid work outside of the house and education can have on women’s well-being. “Working outside the home and earning an independent income tend to have a clear impact on enhancing the social standing of a woman in the household of the society.”¹⁹⁷

One cannot help but wonder whether Sen is correct in making this cross-cultural generalization. Is it the case *universally* that women’s voice and agency is increased when they have access to paid work and education? While Sen’s well-being approach pays considerable more attention to context than Nussbaum’s, I would like here to call into question whether his view of women’s well-being depends too heavily on whether they have access to paid work and education. I am suggesting that Sen may be ignoring the idea that the degree to which work and education impact positively on women’s agency may vary depending on context. Throughout this chapter I, therefore, argue in support of agency, but maintain that my insider/outsider framework can better inform us about whether it is enhanced or undermined.

In the Mexico study, the authors adopt a multi-faceted view of women’s well-being that draws on a few key elements of Sen’s capabilities approach:

The key elements in women’s well-being derive from both subjective and objective dimensions. These elements are: individual assessments mediated by gender identities and norms that give legitimacy to what is chosen, and the possibility of **choosing** functionings that enhance personal well-being (where gender conflict may arise). In this sense, the context in which women **make decisions** is fundamental to understanding their well-being cross culturally (My emphasis).¹⁹⁸

Based on the above synopsis of Sen’s view of well-being, the embedded notions of choice and decision making point out just how important agency is for Sen. Through an appeal to Sen’s account of well-being, the authors set out to find out how the family

planning programs established by the Mexican government are viewed by its “potential beneficiaries.” Of specific concern to them is whether these programs “really translate into women’s personal well-being.” I would like here to pause and point to the fact that the way in which the authors refer to women’s well-being as “personal,” might be an inaccurate and problematic interpretation of Sen’s account of well-being. For Sen, well-being is an objective sort of measure that relates to things like improved health, longevity, improved education, and so on. Sen’s account of well-being is thus not “personal” in the sense that what is relevant is *not* how women feel or what they say about their well-being. In their use of the term “personal well-being” the authors may be giving too much credence or weight to unanalyzed and unexamined perspectives. As I have argued, and will continue to argue, women’s perspectives need to be analyzed and assessed with respect to the many relationships women are engaged in and at a multitude of levels.

In the following sections, I outline the authors’ goals, hypotheses, methodologies, and results of their study. Where relevant, I indicate support for their detail-oriented approach as one that contrasts significantly with the claims of universalism. Furthermore, as I proceed through the study, I raise some red flags to indicate where certain points have gone unnoticed either by the authors or by Sen. These points of departure from the authors’ conclusions will serve as starting points for the upcoming second section of this chapter in which I provide my thorough analysis.

b) Goals, Hypotheses, and Methodology of the Study

For the purposes of the study, the authors collect data from six rural communities of Chiapas, Mexico. These communities are explored with the hopes of understanding the apparent benefits of having small families and to come to know the specific context, household, and community in which women make their reproductive decisions. The authors depended on a few methods for collecting data. They conducted interviews, used a structured questionnaire, and asked some open-ended questions with 300 women in the 30-49 age groups. In their research, the authors explored the plausibility of two hypotheses: (1) there is a significant relationship between women's educational levels and their assessment of paid work. (2) How women assess paid work influences the number of children they have as well as their contraceptive choices.¹⁹⁹

The authors discuss the characteristics of all six Chiapas communities. The criteria upon which respondents interviews were grouped relate to two specific community aspects: the dominant production system and the sexual division of labour. Some variables that were outlined and assessed in the study include each community's economic activity (agricultural productivity), family land ownership, sexual division of labour, and traditional attitudes towards paid work outside the home. Right away we see how the authors' approach departs significantly from Okin's universalist account of the sexual division of labour. Recall how Okin states that women in rich countries are overworked and considered to be less economically valuable than men and that these characteristics of the gendered division of labour operate "similarly but more so" within poor families in many poor countries.²⁰⁰ For Okin, factors such as production systems and land ownership are seen as unimportant. The authors' careful study of the detail

highlights how all the aforementioned variables that may affect women's lives are distinctly missing from Okin's account.

The authors divided the women from the six rural communities into four categories: "willingly home based," "unwillingly home based," "unwillingly employed," and "willingly employed."²⁰¹ In the second part of the study, these categories were eventually analyzed in relation to women's contraceptive choices with the hopes of understanding what criteria are relevant to an assessment of women's well-being.

The types of statistical variables used in the study reflect aspects of Sen's concept of well-being. Sen is known for wanting to promote both the specific activities that women engage in and for emphasizing the importance of women's self-assessment, for example, the way in which women view their own functionings.²⁰² It is important to note, however, that this is not the whole picture for Sen's view of well-being. For Sen too it is not solely about how women view themselves and their functionings for if it were, then women who view themselves as deserving less food than men, for example, would just be left as such. Less food impacts on one's health, education, mortality, and so on. Sen specifically points out that in societies in which women have fewer options than men, women may often settle for less. This is to a large extent why Sen argues that women's well-being must be based on capabilities and not on how they perceive their own needs.²⁰³ Consistent with this line of thought, I hope to demonstrate more strongly than Sen does that what women say and how they view their lives is extremely important for both understanding insider's oppression as well as building effective policy. I seek to do this in a way that does not *automatically* privilege women's perspectives.

c) Results

In a search for answers about women's well-being, the authors provide a statistical analysis of women's educational and employment opportunities by community location. While I do not want to get into the specific numbers and percentages the authors reveal in their study, I do want to highlight some general findings. In particular, I also take note of some discernible lacks in the authors' assessments.

The study shows that women from the six different communities have differing perspectives on a number of issues including (but not limited to) paid work and education. Most women from all six communities agreed that working outside the home is in conflict with their traditional role as mothers and caregivers. Predictably, women had different views on female employment depending on the *availability* of paid work. Also notable was how communities with high percentages of landless families also contained the largest percentage of "willingly employed" women. Another important result of the study showed that the more years of schooling a woman had, the more favourably she tended to assess paid work outside of the home.²⁰⁴ As one would assume, the "willingly home-based group" was the group with the least number of years of schooling whereas the "willingly employed" group had the highest proportion of women with "nine years or more of schooling."²⁰⁵ Women's marital status also proved to be a factor; an overwhelming majority of willingly home-based women were married, which contrasts significantly with the marital status of the women from the unwillingly employed category.

This "willing" and "unwilling" analysis is an especially interesting methodological inclusion on the part of the authors for a couple of reasons. First, it

shows they are interested in whether one's willingness to work or be educated is relevant to a proper assessment of well-being and agency in relation to their reproductive choices. Second, these divisions take seriously the fact that women assess their lives in the context of various factors such as educational opportunities, work opportunities, and the values they have regarding family and children. This latter point indicates the authors' probable theoretical alignment with a relational view of women's lives and experiences. Taking seriously the many local factors that may affect women's perceptions of themselves is also consonant with Mohanty's view that we cannot assess women as a category of analysis prior to their being shaped in their particular locations.

It is also noteworthy to recall how both Sen and Nussbaum endorse greater opportunities for work and education as a means to enhancing women's well-being and agency. Based on the findings of the study, it is not clear that women in those areas of Mexico who own and live off of land see these factors as necessarily agency-enhancing possibilities. Furthermore, it is questionable whether women from the "unwillingly-employed" category would actually view their lives as being improved by having jobs since this group contains women who perform paid work but assess it negatively; that is, as undesirable. In other words, these women participate in activities other than only housework and childcare, but do so unwillingly."²⁰⁶ This point may say something about the *kind* of work that is available to them and the conditions of that work.

The above results make it easy to see that women's education levels, employment situations, and marital status are all correlated. Resultantly, the authors argue that these patterns necessarily influence women's contraceptive choices. The results of the study show that the effects of the government's family planning program have had a significant

impact on women adopting contraception—85 percent of all women use contraceptive methods, the most prevalent of which is surgical sterilization.²⁰⁷ What might not be as clear is whether women were in fact *choosing* contraception. I will return to the question of choice and coercion in a subsequent section.

For now, what is especially interesting about the results of this part of the study is that some notable differences occur between the number of children borne by women from different categories (willingly employed, home-based, unwillingly-employed, and unwillingly home-based). The analysis shows that women in the willingly employed category have significantly fewer children than women from other categories.²⁰⁸ The authors' analysis yields some interesting findings about whether or not the number of children women have correlate to women's own perception of their well-being.

Our analysis demonstrates that women who positively assess paid work outside the home and actually perform such work (the willingly employed category), generally have fewer children than those who greatly value their role as mothers and wives (the willingly home-based category). This is true even for women who must work outside their homes without wanting to do so (the unwillingly employed). However, limiting the number of children does not necessarily translate into broader opportunities for paid work outside the home or improved personal well-being for the women. Rather, women's socio-economic situation and life conditions translate into different life expectations and prospects for paid work, which in turn shape their reproductive options.²⁰⁹

While the authors of the study are right to state that women's well-being is a complex state that is mitigated by a number of factors, they seem not to realize how these broader opportunities for paid work outside the home are often not in the control of women, but rather are in the control of Mexico's economy, work policies, and free trade agreements. The picture is made even *more* complex by virtue of the fact that Mexico's national policies are to a large extent shaped by the relationships the government has with the international financial institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and the World Bank. To provide some brief history, it is helpful to understand that Mexico's debt crisis of the 1980s forced the government to rely on loans from IFIs.²¹⁰ The degree to which these

IFIs have played a role in shaping policy as a condition of their loans is significant and is something I shall return to later. What is important to keep in mind for now is that the degree to which women are “willingly” or “unwillingly employed,” is necessarily shaped by global factors as well as local ones. For example, job creation within or outside the borders of Mexico can directly impact a woman’s willingness to seek out paid work. What my analysis of the above example shows is that we are in need of assessing a broader context of factors within which an understanding of women’s “willingness” or “unwillingness” is provided.

The last set of results that need to be analyzed is the relationship between women’s contraceptive choices and their “personal well-being.” By interviewing the 186 sterilized women, the authors were able to explore the extent to which women made free and informed decisions about their reproductive rights. Women from all communities said they opted for a salpingectomy either for economic or health-related reasons. The authors appeal to a nationwide study conducted by Juan Guillermo Figueroa in 1989 revealing that 26 percent of sterilized women “did not have any prior information about other contraceptive methods and the irrevocable aspect of the surgery.”²¹¹

The results of the study showed that in 35.6 percent of the cases, women had no say in the decision. Often, women were coerced by their husbands or by physicians. Many women were also left sad, upset, or frustrated by the fact that they could no longer have more children after sterilization.²¹² These are clear instances where not only agency aspects have been ignored, but also no positive impact on women’s well-being ensued from the surgery. The majority of women who were regretful that they could not have any more children were from the willingly home-based category. Their testimonies

speak to this idea that many women who “agreed” to have the surgery did not feel as though the quality of their lives were improved.

Not surprisingly, of the 47 women who did not participate in the contraceptive decision, 68.1 percent felt frustrated because they could not fulfill their desire to have more children after sterilization...in fact, 80.6 percent of all women who expressed their desire to have more children after the operation saw children as an important source of affection: “Children are very cute. We are sorry [for having had the salpingectomy] because our children are leaving us and we are left here alone” (Esperanza, 35 years old, five children born, four living). “My children are going to leave me soon, so if I had one who was 7 or 8 years old, he [or she] would stay with me a little longer” (Debustina, 49 years old, four children born, four living).²¹³

What the above passage shows is that many of the Chiapas women—most significantly those from the willingly home-based category—have their identities shaped by their children and families. Recall also that women from all six communities agreed that working outside the home is in conflict with their traditional role as mothers and caregivers. Both Sen and I would still want to ask here whether these traditional roles impact women negatively with respect to, for example, a lack of freedom and/or discrimination.

The results of the study show that the family planning program was likely not designed to reflect the value systems, identities, and reproductive choices of a significant number of women from rural Mexico. It is probable, therefore, that the implementation of the national policy reflected the interests and identities of outsiders. This example calls into question Okin’s universalist account of the gendered division of labour where she claims that Third World women have *similar but worse* experiences as women from First World countries. These specific Chiapas women force us to question the Western assumption often made that raising many children is a sign of oppression. The study here reveals how within a particular group of women (willingly home-based) from a particular rural area of Mexico, we see that their identities and values are shaped by relationships unique to their community and lifestyle and that these need to be analyzed before

devising policy. While it is important to question this assumption, one must also recognize that it is indeed still an oppressive gendered division of labour if the Chiapas women are expected to be in the home *and* are negatively impacted by this.

The final question the authors wanted answered in their study was whether women's lives had been improved in the ways promised to them by the Mexican government's family planning program. The results of this question can be illuminating if they serve to provide answers to the types of questions I posed above—are the “willingly home-based” category of women negatively impacted by staying home? The authors pose the direct question, had women's agency been ignored? Although 87 percent of women in the willingly employed and unwillingly employed categories decided to have the surgeries, many of them were uninformed decision makers. What is especially interesting is that “the impact on women's sense of well-being was different for each group.”²¹⁴ Women who were willingly employed felt as though the operation presented them with new opportunities. However, women from most categories who decided to have salpingectomies to stop further deterioration in their economic situations claimed that they remained trapped in a cycle of poverty. “I made the decision because the money was not enough...and then men drink and that makes it even more difficult” (Eustalina, 46 years old, for children born alive, four surviving).²¹⁵ This one testimony serves to remind us that women's well-being is impacted by a number of other factors and relationships including avoiding poverty and improving health. In summary, sterilization did not improve the quality of these women's lives (as promised). Similarly, when polled, an overwhelming majority of women said that the operation did not reduce

their work burden or increase their employment opportunities, except in the case of a few (seven percent) willingly employed women.

d) Some Conclusions

Using Sen's concept of well-being, the authors explored whether women were in fact able to make choices that positively affected their lives. The results proved that the assumption made on the part of the Mexican government that women's lives would be improved is in fact incorrect. The family planning program benefited some women—those willingly employed—but often negatively affected other women from different backgrounds. Overall, “personal well-being varied greatly between women of different socio-economic backgrounds.”²¹⁶ These facts taken together serve as evidence of my point that details *do* matter in a way that essentialists and universalists ignore. For example, many of the Chiapas women from the willingly home-based category may have lives that are positively impacted by the network of relationships they have with their families and children.

One particularly disturbing finding of the study revealed that the women from the willingly home-based category possessed the least amount of autonomy in the decision making process to undergo sterilization. These women, who were often coerced by health care professionals or their husbands to have the surgery, are the group most targeted by the family planning programs. One can conceive of these health care professionals and husbands alike as “outsiders” who judged the lives of these women as needing change and in doing so subverted their agency by taking their perspectives to be less worthy of consideration. The willingly home-based group, above all others, felt the most negative impact of the family planning program. The fact that women were coerced

against their better judgments works against any theory concerned about women's agency. In "Population: Delusion and Reality," Sen writes, "Central to reducing birth rates, then, is a close connection between women's well-being and their power to make their own decision and bring about the changes in the fertility pattern."²¹⁷

I think it is crucial to pose the question—why is the willingly home-based group being targeted? After all, the particular family planning program of the mid 1990s that the authors depict targeted the State of Chiapas because, "Chiapas had the highest poverty levels and fertility rates in Mexico as well as the lowest contraception rates."²¹⁸ The government sold this particular program as a way to alleviate poverty by "reducing family size." One possible relational answer to the question of why this group is being targeted is that they have more children and having more children impacts on national policies having to do with alleviating conditions of poverty. These national policies are often driven and determined by global factors such as policies implemented by global corporate bodies such as the World Bank. Here, outsiders (at the global level) make the unwarranted assumption that they understand what needs to be changed about women's lives and so do not ask for women's perspectives and how they are shaped by surrounding forces. This is one instance where one can clearly see how a woman's particular experience can only be understood through an analysis of relationships at local, national, and international levels. Indeed more details need to be given to make this criticism stick.

The authors conclude by stating that they have found no supported positive relationship between an increase in women's well-being and women's adoption of the contraceptive methods promoted by family planning programs. This is largely because

several factors could influence women's contraceptive decisions. Results of the study emphasized the idea that local education and paid work may be the best chance women have at improving their overall well-being.

Women with higher education levels are likely to assess paid work outside their homes in a positive way. And this positive assessment plus their actually having such work are likely to increase their power to decide whether or not to use contraception, which method, and the number of children to have.²¹⁹

Overall, the authors demonstrate that women's well-being is mitigated by a number of factors in their local lives including their education levels, how they view paid work, and whether or not they can access such work. In the end, it is obvious just how inextricable women's reproductive choices are from the other factors present in their lives. It would not be a far stretch to say that women were in fact promised a lifestyle and level of well-being that could never have been achieved single-handedly through the family planning program.

The authors demonstrate a rich attention to detail through carefully locating women as embedded within their respective communities and backgrounds. As sociologists, the authors perhaps did not see the need to theorize more than they did. There still remains some analysis to be done. The authors' emphasis on local factors deepens many of the points I have made in my own account. Postcolonial feminists, Third World feminists, feminist standpoint theorists, and relational theorists all illustrate the valuable and weighty role that context plays. One of the benefits of the detailed statistical analysis of the study at hand is that it showed just how factors such as land ownership, employment opportunities, and whether they live off land can have a differential impact on women who live within a specific region of Mexico.

Because the details of women's lives were neglected, it is not surprising that the government imposed generalized policy was not effective for a diverse group of women. These women were not treated as active agents in the process and their voices were not given the opportunity to be heard. Had they been asked, the government might have seen the many differences that separate the willingly employed, unwillingly employed, willingly home-based women, and unwillingly home-based women when it comes to their reproductive choices. As I have already begun to show, however, the Mexican government's own agency is being impeded by the global powers of international financial institutions—this predicament calls for an analysis of women's oppression in the context of a complex network of relationships.

In the next section I put forth a much broader analysis of these women's experiences than offered by the authors by arguing that we need the detail and analysis of relationships at local, national, and international levels. To support this view, I outline my analysis in the following section by first attending to some issues about agency, next by revisiting the problem of "sameness" and the importance of local forces, and then by describing the impact of global factors on these particular women of Chiapas.

2.2. My Analysis of Mexico's Reproductive Rights Policy: An Appeal to the Established Insider/Outsider Framework

In this section, I apply my expanded insider/outsider framework to the case of women's reproductive rights in the particular context of Mexico. I raise some specific criticisms of the family planning program with two purposes in mind. First it is necessary to point out where and why the Mexican government went wrong. Second, I want to make some specific policy suggestions.

a) Agency, Coercion, and Choice

By now it is obvious that well-being was not in fact improved for all Chiapas women by the reproductive “choices” made available to them by the state’s family planning program. Throughout this chapter I have made references to the important role than enhancing women’s agency plays in effective policymaking, but I have yet to discuss what *specifically* it is about agency that is pivotal to the larger goal of eliminating injustices. In this first section of analysis, I critique Mexico’s national policy resulting in restrictions to rather than enhancements of women’s agency and appeal to an especially interesting discussion about coercion and choice.

The aspect of the study that speaks most to the issue of agency relates to the authors’ investigation of the question, who made the salpingectomy decision? While the program achieved its goal of lowering fertility rates of the women of Chiapas, unfortunately this was done either by convincing or forcing women and their husbands to accept such methods.²²⁰ This is a specific instance where women’s perspectives and reflections on their own bodies were completely denied a voice. Equally deplorable was how the study revealed that women were given no information about contraceptive methods, the irrevocability of the surgery, and the nature of the procedure. Very few even signed a consent form (and those who did, did not read it).²²¹ In fact, throughout the whole process of sterilization, women’s opinions, feelings, and perspectives seemed to be ignored. Some testimonies gathered in the study support this claim:

The 47 women who were not involved in the decision believed that their husbands and/or the medical personnel had ignored their feelings: “in the clinic, we were forced. The female doctor told me to have the operation because I already had too many children. He [her husband] consented, but I did not want to” (Lilia, 36 years old, six children born alive, six surviving). “I did not want to, but when my husband was told that he had just had a baby-boy, he gave his consent...” (Margarita, 38 years old, three children born alive, three surviving). “My husband had already signed. I did not want to. Forty days after the birth of my son, he left me for another woman” (Guillermina, 35 years old, three children born alive, two surviving).²²²

There is no doubt that the family planning program in Chiapas consistently and systematically failed to take women's perspectives into account and thereby ignored their agency. I am interested in thinking about what happens to a woman, her community, and her country when she and all others around her have been denied their reproductive freedom and agency more generally? Moreover, what is it that is specifically wrong with the generalized policy like the one instituted in rural Mexico?

Taking perspective seriously means understanding women as being shaped by a network of relationships and opportunities. As I discussed earlier, women often feel powerless in the face of various inequalities that interconnect and filter through so many dimensions of their lives. This perpetuation of women's status as victim can occur in feminist theory as much as it occurs in real life. This point reminds us of the encounter staged between Mohanty and Okin in Chapter 4. Through the family planning program, the women of Chiapas were characterized as mere variables in an equation seeking to eliminate poverty through population control alone. As Koggel points out in her work, advantaged groups have a tendency to portray poor people as figures lacking in agency. The same seems to be the case for the women of Chiapas. Some of the testimonies I mentioned above point to just how insignificant women were made to feel in the sterilization process. It is both ironic and sad that the process was sold to them as being agency enhancing. The women of Chiapas would have truly benefited if they had played a role in the political process and in the process of receiving medical advice.

Enhancing women's agency is central to Sen's well-being approach. From his view, promoting women's agency can not only improve women's social power, but also challenge structures and policies that support gender inequalities.²²³ Also cited was how

Sen tends to isolate two major factors as responsible for restricting women's agency, and hence their well-being: paid work and education. Recall here Sen's general claim that "working outside the home and earning an independent income tend to have a clear impact on enhancing the social standing of women in the household and the society."²²⁴ While I do agree that a lack in opportunity for paid work and education can decrease women's agency, a critical point arises: In emphasizing paid work and education, Sen may be guilty of overlooking other forces that can impede women's agency—namely global factors. Koggel sheds light on this question when she writes that "measuring women's increased participation in the workplace does not give us the whole story about the effect on their well-being or agency."²²⁵

Koggel clarifies these issues through her reference to Elisabeth Fussell's study of the rise of the female maquiladora labour force in Tijuana Mexico. The point of Fussell's study is to show that women, already perceived as secondary wage earners, can be negatively affected by the agendas of multinational corporations. More specifically, Fussell states that there is deterioration rather than an increase in women's agency because "maquiladora employers attract a sector of the female labor force with low levels of human capital and a great need for stable employment which willingly accepts the low wages offered by the maquiladoras."²²⁶ This need would be created by a lack of options, opportunities, and alternatives for women. We see here how multinational corporations (who want to keep wages low) restrict job opportunities for a segment of the population that they perceive to be the most docile, less experienced, and the least likely to be resistant. Studies show that the working conditions in these factories where women are constantly monitored with respect to the number of breaks and communication with co-

workers cannot be interpreted as agency enhancing. This is a case where the quality of women's lives seem not be improved simply by having access to paid work. Through use of this example, Koggel casts doubt on the claim that participation in the workforce will necessarily be agency-enhancing or that if it is so in one domain (getting a wage) it may not be so in another domain (having a say about work conditions).

The lesson of particular importance I would like to carry over from Koggel is that Sen's account may not recognize all factors that could restrict women's agency. In reference to the study at hand, throughout the remainder of this chapter I would like to shed light on the idea that women's agency in the particular context of rural Mexico is being impeded by other factors occurring at the global level. Imagine for example, the World Bank providing funding to the Mexican government on the condition that they open up a specific factory near the state of Chiapas. The creation of such a factory would likely reflect the corporate values inherent within the World Bank's mandate of global economic development. Imagine further that women were targeted for recruitment to work in this factory. In the eyes of the World Bank, this process could secure for women a place in the workforce and allow them to become part of the economic development at both local and global levels. Based on the values of many women from this rural state, one can envision that forced participation in the workforce could impinge on their agency. For example, if women from the willingly home-based group, whose identities and values are shaped by their roles as mothers, were forced into the workforce their agency may in fact be reduced, particularly if work conditions were exploitive.

Failing to see women as autonomous decision makers in both theory and practice robs them of their agency and their material histories. One particularly unpardonable

way in which this occurred in the study of the Chiapas women was how women were coerced into their reproductive decisions. I would like to say more on this since issues of choice and decision making power lie at the heart of women's agency. Sen's discussion of coercion and reproductive choice in "Population: Delusion and Reality," provides us with some interesting starting points.²²⁷ He begins his piece by giving readers an overview of myths of overpopulation and how this impacts on policies in developing countries. I would like to use his argument to test the justifiability of the family planning program. Sen would likely categorize Mexico's family planning program as an alarmist "override" view since

The family's personal decisions are overridden by some agency outside the family—typically by the government of the country in question (whether or not it has been pressed to do so by outside agencies, such as international organizations and pressure groups).²²⁸

Sen warns readers against coercive methods such as the "one child policy" in China for "solving" the population problem by pointing to the grave social consequences that can ensue when compulsion is forced upon an unwilling population; for example, the fatal neglect of female children.²²⁹ Sen contrasts China's coercive policy with that of India's state of Kerala, Sri Lanka, South Korea, and Thailand to show that countries can successfully reduce birth rates through education. He concludes his paper by stating that there is little proof of the effectiveness of coercive political policies of forced birth control. His own broad recommendations for reducing fertility rates include increasing opportunities for female education and a greater participation of women in employment and in political action.²³⁰

While I strongly agree with Sen's criticisms of coercive policies of forced birth control, I must also admit that I am suspicious of his broad recommendations for

increasing women's access to education and paid work. On the face of it, who would disagree with policies of education and women's increased participation in the workforce? Increased education and paid work are very often effective ways for increasing women's agency; however, if the Chiapas study shows us anything it is a case where a generalized policy can have a differential impact on women who live within a very specific area. If Sen is in fact contending that a generalized policy of increased education and employment for women would necessarily decrease fertility rates, *in all locations*, I would have to say he is likely mistaken. As I see it, education and employment are not the only considerations with respect to enhancing women's agency. As we shall continue to see, women's well-being is influenced by a complex network of relationships occurring at multiple levels. In the next section, I highlight how the Chiapas case demonstrates the importance of taking women's perspectives and the shaping of them by local forces into consideration when forming policy. Doing this would have been an agency enhancing process.

b) The Influence of Local Factors: The Importance of taking Women's Perspectives Seriously

The assumption that one can judge accurately and completely another's person's experience of injustice or oppression has proven to be problematic. I hope to have demonstrated some of these problems throughout my discussion of insiders and outsiders in relation to epistemic privilege. With the family planning program in Mexico, we have a case where the government treats all Mexican women as the *same* by failing to consider their differing perspectives and life situations. When the state implemented the restrictive policy governing reproduction, they acted as outsiders either unconcerned

about or unaware of the details of insiders' lives. One possible reason for why a generalized policy was ineffective is because they were not treated as agents but as passive victims of a government policy.

Relational theory can provide some practical insights when it comes time to devise some effective strategies to alleviate injustices. What I argue here is that Mexican policy makers *needed* to take insiders' perspectives into account before implementing such a restrictive policy. The women of Chiapas are insiders when it comes to knowledge of the factors, inequalities, and conditions that structure their lives. Within each community, women from all categories of analysis (home-based, willingly employed, and so on) know better than anyone how their reproductive choices impact everything from their involvement in employment to how they are perceived by their community. It is *because* these women are epistemically privileged that their reflections and agency matters when it comes to devising policies intended to improve their well-being. Theory that shows us how their lives and choices are shaped from the outside reveals what can go wrong with policy.

The goal of the Mexican government was to design a policy to eliminate poverty and improve women's lives. The fact that the program achieved neither of these goals (to improve women's well-being and to help eliminate poverty) lends support to my claim (and that of Mohanty's) that women cannot be treated as a category of analysis prior to their being shaped by particular locations. Particular locations shape women's lives, and in turn women have the power to shape their locations. Unfortunately, this was not the government's perception when they implemented the program. The results of the study sadly showed that many women of Chiapas were powerless in other areas of their lives

aside from control over their reproductive rights. Often, women had little power over their decision making, their employment opportunities, and their levels of education. These factors too, are shaped by outside forces at both national and international levels. These findings underscore a point I made in the previous chapter that when women are oppressed, their suffering often affects many dimensions of their lives. The kinds of inequalities that women face are interconnected and quite complex.

Throughout this section I have concentrated on the idea that local factors need to be considered when addressing the multifaceted nature of women's well-being. The authors of the study concentrate primarily on local factors related to women's reproduction and on what the women themselves say. Within this discussion of the local, I alluded to the fact that many of these local factors need to be conceived of in terms of global factors. In the next section I want specifically to elucidate how these local factors affecting women's lives need to be conceived of as functioning under broader global relations of power.

c) The Influence of Global Factors: The Need for a Broader Analysis

I have argued consistently throughout this paper that the best types of feminist strategies for eliminating injustices are ones that recognize local and global factors. The case for reproductive rights will be no different. While the authors of the study do a good job of recognizing the importance of epistemic privilege and *some* relations of power, their analysis is restricted to the local level. I do not wish to underplay the significance of such local factors in understanding women's experiences. However, the experiences themselves can only reveal so much. In order to make sense of the Chiapas women's experiences, it is vital to understand how their lives have been impacted by global factors.

On the subject of increased globalization, Deepak Nayyar meaningfully writes, “globalization may have created opportunities for a few countries and some people in the developing world, but a very large proportion of both countries and people have remained untouched or have been marginalized by the same process.”²³¹ As I mentioned earlier on in this chapter, Mexico is one such developing country that has endured years of economic crises that began in 1982. Throughout the terms of three presidents, the Mexican government became wholly dependent on the loans by international financial institutions (IFIs)—the World Bank and the IMF.²³² When poor countries are involved in debt negotiations with multinational institutions who wield enormous power and wealth, it doesn’t take a stretch of the imagination to foresee that conditions are attached to these deals. Christy Climenhage discusses the pivotal role that the IMF and World Bank have played in Mexico’s development of domestic social policy.

As lenders of last resort, IFIs were crucial in providing financial backing to reform initiatives and it is not surprising that IFI recommendations for policy reform were negotiated and implemented as conditions of lending...**The economic crisis of 1982 meant that Mexico was much more constrained in its ability to formulate and implement autonomous policy decisions.** The degree to which international financial institutions have played a role in shaping policy is unclear, but it can not be disputed that their influence has grown in recent years (my emphasis).²³³

According to Climenhage, one particularly interesting way in which IFIs wielded influence over Mexican social policy was through direct attention to social policies that would alleviate poverty and complement neoliberal economic policies.²³⁴ For example, the World Bank is known as having as its primary goal the promotion of development and the alleviation of poverty and they have specific ways in which poverty-fighting programs should be implemented.²³⁵ One can see how in Mexico’s need for financial aid from IFIs, they are likely to abandon their own ideological policy goals and instead replace them with those of the lenders. For example, in the 1970s, the Mexican

government valued the traditional labour-business coalition, but as money grew tight their relations weakened because they were unable to pay previously favoured unions real wages. Climenhage makes this point when she writes,

Policymakers began to favor business and financial interest. This was partly due to influence from IFIs. By the end of the decade it became apparent that the lifting of fiscal constraints would not herald a return to the populism of the 1970s. Instead, it appears that the social pact that had previously balanced labor and business interests had been completely abandoned. Instead, the interests of the financial and business sectors, which coincide with the interests of the World Bank and IMF, have come to dominate policymaking in Mexico.²³⁶

By the fact that the World Bank openly states that it has specific ideas about how poverty-fighting programs should be implemented, one can speculate that dealing with the “overpopulation problem” is on the agenda. As Sen writes in “Population Control: Delusion and Reality,” international organizations are acting apocalyptically in the face of population growth through promoting coercive reproductive policies to lower fertility rates and they tend to see developing countries as particularly guilty. Furthermore, the fact that the IFIs have heavily influenced social policy in one area (the move away from strong labour coalitions) lends credibility to the idea that the family planning program was heavily influenced by conditions specified by IFIs in an effort to alleviate conditions of poverty. This claim is supported by the fact that the family planning program was advertised to citizens as “a strategy to fight poverty.” Another piece of the equation to ponder is that since women’s perspectives were not taken into account, this could reflect the real possibility that choice may not have been up to the government at all. One can only hope that this would be the case given the egregious forms of coercion that the state used to negate women’s ability to make autonomous reproductive choices and in effect to rob women of their agency.

These kinds of restrictions that impeded the Chiapas' women's reproductive choices and agency is not something that bodes well for feminists who, throughout the 1990s, have made women's sexual and reproductive rights a central concern.²³⁷ Authors Correa and Petchesky do a particularly good job re-conceptualizing reproductive rights as relational in their work "Reproductive and Sexual Rights: A Feminist Perspective."²³⁸ In appealing to their work, I maintain that they can offer insights on the matter of strategizing effectively about issues of reproduction. Because their view is relational, I argue it is of particular relevance to my expanded insider/outsider framework. The authors interestingly define reproductive and sexual rights as containing a built-in recognition for levels of power that impact on women's lives that include

Power to make informed decisions about one's own fertility, childbearing, child rearing, gynecologic health, and sexual activity; and resources to carry out such decisions safely and effectively. This terrain necessarily involves some core notion of "bodily integrity," or "control over one's body." However, it also involves one's relationships to one's children, sexual partners, family members, community, caregivers, and society at large; in other words, the body exists in a socially mediated universe.²³⁹

From this definition we see that Correa and Petchesky view women and their reproductive choices as embedded within social, economic, and political conditions in a way that contrasts with the dominant liberal view of women as "atoms completely separate from larger social contexts."²⁴⁰ Furthermore, their analysis seeks to show that the individual and the social dimensions of rights are inseparable as long as resources and power remain unequally distributed in most societies. As they move away from the type of individualism inherent in Okin's account of justice, they move towards providing an account of "reproductive rights as social rights."

Correa and Petchesky offer some suggestions for policy when they recommend the need to develop analytical frameworks that both "respect the integrity of women's

reproductive and sexual decisions, however constrained, while also condemning social, economic, and cultural conditions that may force women to ‘choose’ one course over another.”²⁴¹ What the authors here suggest is that certain *enabling conditions*, or social rights, *need* to be present in order for women to be able to make truly free decisions for themselves. They refer specifically to some material factors including reliable transportation, child care, and humane and accessible health services. They also refer to the need for cultural and political factors such as access to education, self-esteem, and the channels for decision-making.²⁴² The authors argue that these social rights need to be supported by both states and “mediating institutions.” What Correa and Petchesky offer that is in line with my own approach: when it comes to policy, there needs to be a balance between respecting perspectives and analyzing how women’s choices are constrained by outside forces. When certain conditions are in place, women can be active agents in improving the quality of their lives.

These frameworks of social rights can shed considerable light on the Chiapas study. For the reproductive decisions of the Chiapas women to have been “free” in any sense of the word, certain empowering conditions would have been necessary. If there ever is to be effective reproductive policy, specific protections need to be in place so that women are not coerced into making decisions that would not be favourable to their well-being. Moreover, we need to focus on well-being aspects as involving a complex array of factors such as access to health care, transportation, information, decision-making, and so on. As an example, recall how women from the willingly home-based group “chose” sterilization in an effort to improve their financial situations, when in reality it conflicted with their values and identities as mothers. One strategy for reproductive policy,

therefore, needs to be forging positive relationships between state and citizens.

Specifically, the state needs to be responsible for implementing enabling conditions that apply to the particular needs of women. This means that it is not just women's *valuing* of motherhood that we need to consider, but also making sure that they have proper resources such as health care, food, education and so on so that they are not oppressed by the choice to be mothers. As the Chiapas study showed, women's interests may vary tremendously from community to community and so it is vital that these local factors are taken into consideration—whether they are issues of transportation, access to education, or humane and informed health care professionals. These enabling conditions would remove barriers that restrict women's agency.

Given my argument about how global factors shape the lives of the Chiapas women, I further extend the responsibility of the implementation of these enabling conditions to international financial institutions. In other words, IFIs need to stop implementing conditions that may disable or prevent social policies and programs. One can see these recommendations as stemming naturally from my expanded insider/outsider framework. The practical strategies I am recommending not only bring women's perspectives and relations of power to the forefront, but also endorse the view that insiders to oppression have knowledge about the structures of power that are not held by outsiders.

I would like to draw attention to some final general policy recommendations that Correa and Petchesky include in their work. A first lesson to take from them is the danger of implementing universal policies across cultures without taking differences into consideration. They write, “[w]hile defending the universal application of sexual and

reproductive rights, we must also acknowledge that such rights often have different meanings, or different points of priority, in different social and cultural contexts.”²⁴³ In other words, while rights may be universal, policy for implementing them should not be. This point is reminiscent of my criticism of Sen—that while one might agree *generally* that women’s lives can be measured by standards such as life expectancy, education, work, and so on, when it comes to forming policy, women’s lives in the particular need to be examined in terms of numerous relationships and forces occurring at different levels. A second important enabling condition that they refer to is the need for women’s rights and health groups to have full participation in all decision making bodies and an accountability mechanism to ensure that this happens. This condition would be an extremely helpful practical way of advancing women’s agency at a global level.

In the context of globalization, it is inevitable that the local will be shaped by the global. In spite of this inevitability, I contend that policy makers such as those in the case of Mexico ought to do their best to minimize the degree to which global factors influence local policy in harmful or detrimental ways. As made obvious by the study in rural Mexico, women’s identities are complex and shaped differently when we acknowledge local and global factors. It is exactly for the reason *that they are complex* that I would have encouraged the Mexican government to take women’s regionally diverse perspectives into account before imposing a national policy (that in part reflects outsider value systems). However, I also suggest that an effective strategy to improve their well-being would have done more than “moral deference” or “methodological humility.” In other words, just listening to women’s experiences is not enough. What we need is a

properly broad and complete analysis of these experiences as constituted by women's local and global relationships.

Incorporating women's perspectives would have been a powerful tool for the government to understand the *kinds* of inequalities that women face as well as the structures that perpetuate them. Here we see that not only is it important for women's voices to be heard, but in hearing them, greater structural problems can be revealed. For example, the types of employment opportunities that a woman has access to may have nothing to do with her willingness or unwillingness to work but may be determined by the relationship between her government and the international community. There is thus a great deal of practical import to taking women's perspectives seriously. For example, through acknowledging perspectives, the Mexican government could come to understand which groups of women are likely to want to have children, which are not, and for what reasons and whether having children in and of itself disadvantages or needs to disadvantage women. At the same time they could learn a lot about the relationship between women from rural Mexico and economic and social structures like employment, agriculture, and education at the levels of national and international policy. We see here how perspectives could be the starting points that can challenge deeply entrenched stereotypical beliefs upheld by the government and by international bodies.

It may be helpful to provide an analogy by recalling the single mother in poverty example that Koggel appeals to in her discussion of the complexities of inequalities. In her example, the single mother is forced to accept the government's definition of work in order to apply for welfare when she in fact views child rearing as valuable work. Koggel argues that in this case, it would help policy makers to know the factors that contribute to

shaping a mother's life prospects, such as how she is likely to become trapped in a cycle of poverty, the problems of childcare, her values and beliefs. Similarly, it would help the Mexican government to know that several factors intervene in women's contraceptive choices such as how they assess paid work, access to actually getting such paid work, ownership of land, and education. The benefits of doing this type of empirical work would have been enormous. The government could have been made aware of the idea that *in most cases*,²⁴⁴ improvements to education and work could have positive results for reducing poverty. These types of improvements could lead to the achievement of women's well-being as well as enhancing their agency by increasing their decision making power about contraception and the number of children they decide to have.

To conclude this section, the Mexican government acted especially shamefully when their generalized policy smuggled in outsider values at national and global levels and applied them ineffectively to women (insiders). It was also made clear that this generalized policy did not fit well with at least some of rural Mexico's population where women's identities and values were shaped by family. An especially important point was that the Chiapas women's lives are undeniably influenced by global forces. For these reasons, and others, I stand by my defence of a broader context for analysis of relationships of all sorts at all levels and of an insider/outsider framework as the most efficient foundation on which to devise effective policy.

3. Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I have put my insider/outsider framework to the test by applying it to the issue of reproductive rights in Mexico. The study that examines the impact of the family planning program on the women of Chiapas yielded some very interesting results. By building on the analysis of the study, it became obvious that women's reproductive rights in this rural area were affected by a number of intervening factors including women's access to paid work, women's actually getting jobs, education, and land ownership. The authors point out that we cannot examine reproduction choices without looking to these other factors that affect women's well-being. In my assessment of the Mexican national policy, I provided some specific criticisms and strategies for policy with respect to reproductive issues.

The Mexican state enforced a coercive and restrictive reproduction policy that promised to enhance women's well-being, but in the end it did no such thing. The authors' methodological attention to the details and conditions affecting these women lives demonstrated their sensitivity to this. The study proved that even within the boundaries of rural Mexico there are dramatic lifestyle differences between women that shape their views of their own reproductive choices. I relied on my insider/outsider framework to show that individuals who are subject to oppression are complex beings whose lives are shaped by competing opportunities and experiences which in turn are inevitably shaped by relations of power. Moreover, these women reason about their lives in the context of a network of both private and public relationships. When women are treated as a category of analysis prior to their being in specific locations they are treated as passive recipients or victims and can feel powerless to change their lives.

Another unfortunate fact is that the family planning program did not reflect the value systems of at least some women of Chiapas. This could be a sign of global factors at work again. Finally, with the possible exception of the group of willingly employed women, the restrictive national policy did not grant greater agency to the majority of women as was promised. Furthermore, the Fussell study shows that even this group may not have agency improved in all domains. The results of the study led me to argue that effective policy is one that empowers women and makes them agents who in turn participate in and have a say with respect to policy. I maintain that many women who *feel* powerless actually may have a great deal to contribute to the policies that affect their lives.

The fact that most Chiapas women suffer from inequalities in many dimensions of their lives makes it likely that they feel overwhelmed and without power. I believe that policies such as the family planning program are in part responsible for the feeling of helplessness incurred by women. An especially problematic result of the study showed that many women were coerced into making reproductive choices without being well-informed. This aspect of coercion exposes the increasingly central role that women's agency should play as we move from theory to practice. When coercion and tactics of force are used to implement policy, the quality of women's lives is at stake. The picture is more complicated still.

What stood out from the results of the study was the fact that women's complex relationships at a local level are further shaped by the impact of global factors. Because of this, it was crucial that I defended the need for an analysis broader than the one provided by the authors. Through this broader analysis, I exposed the undeniable

influence of economic globalization on Mexico at the time of the implementation of the family planning program. Mexico's dependency on international financial institutions points to the strong likelihood that these institutions (the IMF and the World Bank) held power over the state's domestic policies.²⁴⁵

Throughout this chapter (and the thesis more generally) I have argued that women are epistemically privileged because they know best how relationships of power effect their every day lives. By examining some relevant results of the Mexican study in this final chapter, the impact of these global factors on the Chiapas women lent support to my most significant suggestion for policy makers: when strategizing about policy we need the detail and analysis of relationships at local, national, and international levels to make sense of women's experiences. Only if women's perspectives—embedded within relations of power at a multitude of levels—are taken into account will policies truly impact positively on women's well-being and sense of agency.

I ended my analysis of the Chiapas study by making some recommendations for reproductive rights policy by enlisting Correa and Petchesky relational view of reproductive and sexual rights. A couple of practical strategies for reproductive policy emerged here as consistent with my own plea for adopting a broader framework capable of incorporating relationships of all sorts at all levels. The most significant suggestion I made referred to the need for positive relationships to be formed between citizens, the state, and the international financial institutions. To start, the details of women's varying perspectives on their reproductive rights need to come to the forefront. Next, both national and international bodies need to remove the barriers to women's agency by helping to secure enabling conditions—these could be a number of social rights

extending from the material to the political (from childcare to education). While this thesis neither concentrates on reproductive rights as such nor provides a full analysis of them in the context of Mexico, I have used this particular issue to test my insider/outsider framework. I would argue that my expanded insider/outsider framework is flexible and broad enough so that it can be applied to any specific issue affecting women.

The Chiapas women are insiders when it comes to knowing what factors influence their reproductive choices. Because of this epistemic privilege, the perspectives of women in the case of rural Mexico could have revealed a great deal to the government. Specifically, these insiders have perspectives that could have informed the Mexican government of the kinds of inequalities that they face and the overall structures that support and perpetuate them. These types of perspectives could have led to the discovery of long-term solutions to injustices instead of quick fixes that negatively impacted women's well-being and agency.

There are a couple of messages to take from this study that speak to my broader conceptual discussions about insiders, outsiders, epistemic privilege and power relations. Even when policy makers are well-intentioned and truly concerned about improving women's lives, they are still outsiders when it comes to relations of powerlessness. Many have not experienced first hand the oppression and disadvantages that insiders have, and so they do not have access to certain *lived* knowledge. Policy makers are the wielders of power and historically members of disadvantaged groups have been left out of this process of policy at local, national, and international levels.

I will conclude this thesis by speaking to the general points about feminist theory set out at the beginning of this work. Given the need for improving women's quality of

life in both public and private domains, feminist philosophers in rich and poor countries alike have responded to the task by providing many different strategies for addressing injustices. The general theme of this thesis is to explore how to theorize about oppression when we take factors of ethnocentrism and globalization into account. Universalist theories of justice such as those proposed by Nussbaum and Okin have proved to be inadequate to the task of fighting women's oppression in the context of the global scene.

I believe I have succeeded at constructing an alternative framework to universalist theories of justice that is more context sensitive than the views put forth by Nussbaum and Okin. Aside from its context sensitivity, my framework has passed the difficult test of application. Moreover, my framework has the benefit of not falling subject to Nussbaum's critique raised against anti-essentialists. She directs her criticisms against relativists (and defenders of the local) who, in her view, have for too long served to dismantle the project of improving women's quality of life globally by excusing oppressive practices in specific contexts. My insider/outsider framework remains standing in the face of this criticism for a couple of reasons. First, my insider/outsider framework is in no way relativistic. I have shown that more needs to be done than just listening to women's perspectives when both theorizing about and addressing women's inequalities. What I have offered is a dynamic kind of analysis of women's experiences that locates them within relationships occurring at local, national, and international levels. Second, my expanded framework is agency enhancing in a way similar to relational theory. Like Sen, I support the goal of enhancing women's agency, but my expanded framework allows a more complex analysis of agency and how to truly enhance it in the lives of women situated in very different contexts and impacted by very different factors.

Women are shaped by their multi-leveled relationships and at once have the power to reshape them. Third, my analysis of the study in this chapter has revealed that my framework proves to be a powerful theoretical tool for strategizing about eliminating injustices in a specific context. Lastly, the expanded framework retains flexibility. It could carry with it equal promise if it were used to assess another issue affecting women in a particular location.

Endnotes

¹ Nussbaum, C. Martha and Glover, Jonathan. "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings." *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*. New York: Oxford University Press, (1995): 61-104.

² Dandekar, Natalie. "International Justice" *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy*. Edited by Alison M. Jaggar and Iris M. Young. Malden, Mass. Blackwell (1998): p. 550.

³ Zalewski, M. "Well, what is the Feminist Perspective in Bosnia?" *International Affairs*. 71: 2, (1995): 339-356.

⁴ *United Nations Development Program. Human Development Report 2003*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁵ For instance, the Report states that between 1990 and 2001 the ratio of literate female to male 15-24 year olds in countries with low development increased from 70-81 women per 100 men (though in countries with medium human development it increased only from 91-93) p. 86.

⁶ *United Nations Development Program. Human Development Report 2003*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁷ A point that parallels much of Sen's Capabilities Approach as described in much of his works: poverty is about so much more than just one's income.

⁸ Beutelspacher, Austreberta Nazar, Martelo, Emma Zapata, and Garcia, Veronica Vazquez. "Does Contraception Benefit Women? Structure, Agency, and Well-Being in Rural Mexico." *Feminist Economics Special Issue on the Ideas and Work of Amartya Sen*. Volume 9 no 2 (2003): 213-238.

⁹ "Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism." *Moral Issues in Global Perspective*. Edited by Christine M. Koggel. Ontario: Broadview Press, (1999): 124-146.

¹⁰ Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice," 126.

¹¹ This example is taken from the point made in S.A. Marglin, "Toward Decolonization"; his reference is to Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence* Tokyo: Kedansho, 1971.

¹² Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice, 125-126.

¹³ Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice, 126.

¹⁴ Lorraine Code is one such thinker who takes relativism to be a sort of antidote to affirmations of universal sameness. Code, Lorraine. "How to think Globally: Stretching the limits of imagination." In *Hypatia* 13(2): 73-85.

¹⁵ There is thus a longstanding worry that relativism could collapse into subjectivism.

¹⁶ Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," 63.

¹⁷ Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," 70.

¹⁸ *Women and Human Development, the Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹⁹ Nussbaum, *Women and Human Development*, 294.

²⁰ Nussbaum, "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings," 88.

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- ²¹ Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice," 136.
- ²² Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1993. See also Chen, "A Matter of Survival: Women's Right to Work in India and Bangladesh," in. " *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*. New York: Oxford University Press, (1995): 61-104.
- ²³ Wolf, Susan. Commentary on Nussbaum's "Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings" 105-115.
- ²⁴ Wolf, 110.
- ²⁵ Nussbaum, "Human Functioning and Social Justice," 134.
- ²⁶ Butz, David. "Consent in Community-Based Ethnographic Research: Lessons From a Pakistani Mountain Village." Talk given at the National Council on Ethics in Human Research *National Conference* on "Issues with Consent," March 2003.
- ²⁷ Mohanty, Chandra. "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience," Editors McCann, Carole R., Kim, Seung-Kyung. eds.. *Feminist Theory Reader, Local and Global Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 460-471, 2003.
- ²⁸ Mohanty, "Feminist Encounters," 465.
- ²⁹ Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.
- ³⁰ Sen, 75.
- ³¹ Sen, 75.
- ³² Sen, 75.
- ³³ Sen, 18.
- ³⁴ Sen, 20.
- ³⁵ Sen, 19-20.
- ³⁶ Robeyns, Ingrid. "Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities." *Feminist Economics, Special Issue on the Ideas and Work of Amartya Sen*. Volume 9 no 2 (2003): 61-92.
- ³⁷ Van Staveren, Irence and Gasper, Des. "Development as Freedom—Contributions and Shortcomings of Amartya Sen's Development Philosophy for Feminist Economics." *The Hague-The Netherlands: The Institute of Social Studies Working Paper Series*. No. 365, 2002. Ingrid Robeyns makes the argument that the underspecified character of Sen's approach renders the capability approach vulnerable to androcentric interpretations and applications.
- ³⁸ van Staveren, and Gasper. "Development as Freedom—Contributions and Shortcomings," 4.
- ³⁹ Sen, 18.
- ⁴⁰ Robeyns, Ingrid. "Sen's Capability Approach," 68.
- ⁴¹ Sen, 18.
- ⁴² Sen, 19.
- ⁴³ Sen, 191.
- ⁴⁴ Sen, 191.

⁴⁵ Okin, Susan Moller. "Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences," *Political Theory*, 22: 1, 1994.

⁴⁶ Okin, Susan Moller. "Feminism, Women's Human Rights, and Cultural Differences." *Hypatia*. vol. 13(2), (1998): 32-51.

⁴⁷ This estimation is contained within two specific works that Okin refers to. Chen, Martha Alter. *A Quiet Revolution: Women in transition in rural Bangladesh*. Cambridge MA: Schenkman. 1983. Jaquette, Jane S. . "Women and modernization theory: a decade of feminist criticism," *World Politics* 34: (1982) 267-284.

⁴⁸ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 12.

⁴⁹ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 11-21.

⁵⁰ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 12.

⁵¹ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 13.

⁵² This is akin to the argument I will get to later put forth by Chandra Mohanty in "Under Western Eyes" when she argues that there is no "global sisterhood."

⁵³ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 5.

⁵⁴ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 18.

⁵⁵ Rawls, 11.

⁵⁶ This gets at the equality principle: equality of distribution of basic rights and duties, and the difference principle: any inequalities must benefit the disadvantaged (more than anyone else).

⁵⁷ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 18.

⁵⁸ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 18.

⁵⁹ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 19.

⁶⁰ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 44.

⁶¹ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 12.

⁶² Mohanty, 23.

⁶³ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 38.

⁶⁴ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 19.

⁶⁵ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 19.

⁶⁶ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 20.

⁶⁷ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 47.

⁶⁸ Okin, "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 47.

⁶⁹ Crocker, David. "Moral Deference." *Moral Issues in Global Perspective*. Edited by Christine M. Koggel. Ontario: Broadview Press (1999): 180-193.

⁷⁰ Thomas, Laurence. "Moral Deference." *Moral Issues in Global Perspective*. Edited by Christine M. Koggel. Ontario: Broadview Press, 1999.

⁷¹ Narayan, Uma. "Working Together Across Difference: Some Considerations on Emotions and Political Practice." *Hypatia*. vol. 1, 2. 1998.

⁷² Okin, "Gender Inequality," 19.

⁷³ Mohanty, 19.

⁷⁴ Crocker, 147.

⁷⁵ Crocker, 148.

⁷⁶ Crocker, 150.

⁷⁷ Crocker, 150.

⁷⁸ Crocker, 150.

⁷⁹ Crocker, 150-151.

⁸⁰ Crocker, 153.

⁸¹ Crocker, 153.

⁸² Crocker, 153.

⁸³ Crocker, 155.

⁸⁴ Crocker, 156.

⁸⁵ Crocker, 156.

⁸⁶ Crocker, 154.

⁸⁷ Crocker, 155.

⁸⁸ Crocker, 157.

⁸⁹ Crocker, 158.

⁹⁰ Crocker, 157.

⁹¹ Crocker, 150-151.

⁹² Crocker, 157.

⁹³ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 35.

⁹⁴ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 36.

⁹⁵ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 36.

⁹⁶ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 37.

⁹⁷ Narayan, Uma. "The Project of Feminist Epistemology," Editors McCann, Carole R., Kim, Seung-Kyung, *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

⁹⁸ Narayan, "The Project of Feminist Epistemology," 314.

⁹⁹ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 34.

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- ¹⁰⁰ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 35.
- ¹⁰¹ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 35.
- ¹⁰² Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 35.
- ¹⁰³ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 38.
- ¹⁰⁴ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 39.
- ¹⁰⁵ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference," 38.
- ¹⁰⁶ Thomas, 181.
- ¹⁰⁷ Thomas 181.
- ¹⁰⁸ Thomas, 187.
- ¹⁰⁹ Thomas, 186.
- ¹¹⁰ Thomas, 186.
- ¹¹¹ Thomas-187-188.
- ¹¹² Wylie, Alison. "Why Standpoint Matters," *Science and Other Cultures: Issues in Philosophies of Science and Technology*. Edited by Robert Figueroa and Sandra Harding. New York: Routledge Publishing Company, 2003.
- ¹¹³ Wylie, Abstract.
- ¹¹⁴ Wylie, 3.
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- ¹¹⁸ Wylie, 8.
- ¹¹⁹ Wylie, 8.
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- ¹²¹ Narayan, "Working Together Across Difference", 39.
- ¹²² Wylie, 9.
- ¹²³ Okin, Susan. "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," 46.
- ¹²⁴ Collins, Patricia Hill. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought" in Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook, eds. *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1991.

¹²⁵ Collin, Patricia Hill. "Comment on Hekman's "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited": Where's the Power?" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. vol. 22, no. 2 (1997): 375-397

¹²⁶ Collins, "Comment on Hekman," 376.

¹²⁷ Collins, "Comment on Hekman," 377.

¹²⁸ Collins, "Comment on Hekman," 379.

¹²⁹ Collins, "Comment on Hekman," 376.

¹³⁰ Collins, "Comment on Hekman," 376.

¹³¹ Collins, "Comment on Hekman," 378.

¹³² Okin, "Gender Inequality and Cultural Differences," 24.

¹³³ Mohanty, 17.

¹³⁴ Mohanty, 19.

¹³⁵ Mohanty, 20.

¹³⁶ Crocker, 148.

¹³⁷ Mohanty, 22.

¹³⁸ Okin, Susan Moller. "Feminism, Women's Human Rights," and Cultural Differences,"

¹³⁹ Mohanty, 24.

¹⁴⁰ Mohanty, 30.

¹⁴¹ Mohanty, 30.

¹⁴² See Mohanty 24-33

¹⁴³ Mohanty, 25.

¹⁴⁴ Mohanty, 25.

¹⁴⁵ Poulin, Richard. "Globalization and the Sex Trade: Trafficking and the Commodification of Women and Children." http://sisyphe.org/article.php3?id_article=965 First publication in *Canadian Women Studies/Les Cahiers de la femme* Vol. 22 no. 3-4, December 2003: 38-43.

¹⁴⁶ Poulin, 2.

¹⁴⁷ Mohanty, 25-26

¹⁴⁸ Poulin, 2.

¹⁴⁹ Poulin, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 13-17.

¹⁵¹ Mohanty, 24.

¹⁵² Mohanty, 24.

¹⁵³ Mohanty, 34.

¹⁵⁴ Okin, "Gender Inequality," 12.

¹⁵⁵ Mohanty, 34.

¹⁵⁶ Mohanty, 35.

¹⁵⁷ Mohanty, 35.

¹⁵⁸ Mohanty, 35.

¹⁵⁹ Mohanty 39.

¹⁶⁰ Mohanty 39.

¹⁶¹ Mohanty, 40.

¹⁶² Mohanty, 33.

¹⁶³ Koggel, Christine M.. Equality Analysis in a Global Context: A Relational Approach." *Feminist Moral Philosophy*. Edited by Samantha Brennan. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*. Supplementary Volume, no. 28. 2003

¹⁶⁴ Koggel, "Equality Analysis in a Global Context," 248.

¹⁶⁵ Koggel, "Equality Analysis in a Global Context," 248.

¹⁶⁶ Koggel refers to the work done by Sue Campbell, Lorraine Code, Martha Minow, and Susan Sherwin.

¹⁶⁷ The assumption I am referring to is reminiscent of the problem of ethnocentrism that Crocker drew our attention to early on.

¹⁶⁸ Koggel, "Feminist Perspectives on Globalization," 9.

¹⁶⁹ Koggel, "Equality Analysis in a Global Context", 249.

¹⁷⁰ Koggel, "A Feminist Perspective on Globalization," 19.

¹⁷¹ Koggel, "Feminist Perspectives on Globalization." University of Western Ontario, 2003.

¹⁷² This argument is an elaboration on her more detailed argument in her book *Perspectives on Equality*.

¹⁷³ Koggel, "A Feminist Perspective on Globalization," 5.

¹⁷⁴ Koggel, "A Feminist Perspective on Globalization," 5.

¹⁷⁵ Koggel, "Equality Analysis in a Global Context," 260.

¹⁷⁶ Koggel, "A Feminist Perspective on Globalization," 7.

¹⁷⁷ Narayan, 38.

¹⁷⁸ Koggel, "Equality Analysis in a Global Context," 250-251.

¹⁷⁹ Koggel, "A Feminist Perspective on Globalization," 4.

¹⁸⁰ This was a summarization of Koggel's many references to recent national statistics reports, and measurements made by international and intergovernmental organizations.

¹⁸¹ Sen raises this very question when he describes poverty as “capability deprivation” at numerous points of Development as Freedom. One particularly poignant example he appeals to regards the fact that even though African American men have much higher incomes than men in China and Kerala, for example, the latter groups of men tend to outlive African Americans. Even in many Third World populations, African American men tend to be outlived. Sen suggests that “the broadening of the informational base from income to the basic capabilities enriches our understanding of inequality and poverty in quite radical ways.” p. 96.

¹⁸² Sen, 8.

¹⁸³ Koggel, “Equality Analysis in a Global Context, 254.

¹⁸⁴ Koggel, “A Feminist Perspective on Globalization,” 10-12.

¹⁸⁵ Koggel, “A Feminist Perspective on Globalization,” 11.

¹⁸⁶ Koggel, “A Feminist Perspective on Globalization,” 11.

¹⁸⁷ An example of how they pay attention to details is the type of open methods of interviews and discussion groups they use. These methods “allow for the emergence of issues and dimensions of poverty that are important to the community but not necessarily known to the researchers...PPAs take into account power asymmetries both within the household and within communities.” Page?

¹⁸⁸ Field notes, Neela Mukherjee, Bangladesh, 1996. World Bank. *Voices of the Poor: Can anyone hear us?* Edited by Deepa Narayan-Parker, Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2000.

¹⁸⁹ Koggel, “A Feminist Perspective on Globalization,” 13.

¹⁹⁰ Koggel, “A Feminist Perspective on Globalization,” 18.

¹⁹¹ Koggel, “Equality Analysis in a Global Context, 260.

¹⁹² Beutelspacher, Austreberta Nazar, Martelo, Emma Zapata, and Garcia, Veronica Vazquez, “Does Contraception Benefit Women? Structure, Agency, and Well-being in Rural Mexico,” from *Feminist Economics* 9 (2-3), 2003, 213-238.

¹⁹³ Secretaría de Salud, Servicios Estatales de Salud en Chiapas 1996. Programa Estatal de Salud Reproductiva 1996. Mexico.

¹⁹⁴ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 218.

¹⁹⁵ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 218.

¹⁹⁶ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 190.

¹⁹⁷ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 191.

¹⁹⁸ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 216.

¹⁹⁹ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 218.

²⁰⁰ Okin, “Gender Inequality,” 12.

²⁰¹ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 224.

²⁰² Sen, Amartya. “Well-Being, Agency and Freedom. The Dewy Lectures 1984.” *Journal of Philosophy* 82(4), (1985):169-221.

²⁰³ Sen, “Well-Being, Agency and Freedom,” 169-221.

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- ²⁰⁴ See figure on page 226 of “Contraception Policies in Rural Mexico.”
- ²⁰⁵ See table 5 on page 227.
- ²⁰⁶ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 224.
- ²⁰⁷ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 228.
- ²⁰⁸ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 229.
- ²⁰⁹ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 230.
- ²¹⁰ Climenhage, Christy. *Exploring International Influence: the Impact of the IMF and the World Bank on Mexican Social Policy, 1976-1994*. Master of Arts Thesis, Ottawa: Carleton University, 1995.
- ²¹¹ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 231.
- ²¹² Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 231
- ²¹³ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 232.
- ²¹⁴ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 232.
- ²¹⁵ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 232
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- ²¹⁷ Sen, Amartya. “Population: Delusion and Reality.” *Moral Issues in Global Perspective*. Edited by Christine M. Koggel. Ontario: Broadview Press, (1999): 469-485.
- ²¹⁸ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 218.
- ²¹⁹ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 234.
- ²²⁰ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 230.
- ²²¹ Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 231.
- ²²² Beutelspacher, Martelo and Garcia, 231.
- ²²³ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 202.
- ²²⁴ Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 191.
- ²²⁵ Koggel, “Globalization and Women’s Paid Work”, 169.
- ²²⁶ Koggel, “Globalization and Women’s Paid Work”, 169.
- ²²⁷ Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality,” 474.
- ²²⁸ Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality,” 472.
- ²²⁹ Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality,” 483
- ²³⁰ Sen, “Population: Delusion and Reality,” 483.
- ²³¹ Nayyar, Deepak. *Governing Globalization: Issues and Institution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

²³² Climenhage, "Exploring International Influences," 2.

²³³ Climenhage, "Exploring International Influences," 4.

²³⁴ Climenhage, "Exploring International Influences," 4.

²³⁵ *World Development Report on Poverty*, 1990.

²³⁶ Climenhage, "Exploring International Influences," 28.

²³⁷ Thoughts from the World Conference on Population and Development, 1994, and World Conference on Women, 1995.

²³⁸ Correa, Sonia, and Petchesky, Rosalind. "Reproductive and Sexual Rights: A Feminist Perspective," *Population Policies Reconsidered: Health, Empowerment, and Rights*. Edited by Gita Sen, Adrienne Germain, and Lincoln C. Chen. New York: Harvard University Press (1994): 107-123.

²³⁹ Correa, and Petchesky, 107.

²⁴⁰ Correa and Petchesky, 109.

²⁴¹ Correa and Petchesky, 112.

²⁴² Correa and Petchesky, 112.

²⁴³ Correa and Petchesky, 117.

²⁴⁴ Recall here the reference made to women from the willingly home-based category and how it is arguable as to whether their well-being would be improved with increased access to paid work and education.

²⁴⁵ For further evidence of the linkage see for example, Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes's paper "Female Consciousness or Feminist Consciousness?: Women's Consciousness Raising in Community-Based Struggles in Brazil," from *Feminist Theory Reader, Local and Global Perspectives*, edited by McCann, Carole R., Kim, Seung-Kyung, New York: Routledge, 2003, and Amartya Sen's "Population: Delusion and Reality." *Moral Issues in Global Perspective*. Edited by Christine M. Koggel. Ontario: Broadview Press, (1999): 469-485.

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