

Development Ethics, Gender Complementarianism, and Intrahousehold Inequality

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Development ethicists see reducing intrahousehold gender inequality as an important policy aim. However, it is unclear that a minimalist cross-cultural consensus can be formed around this goal. Inequality on its own may not bring women beneath a minimal welfare threshold. Further, adherents of complementarian metaphysical doctrines may view attempts to reduce intrahousehold inequality as attacks on their worldviews. Complicating the justificatory task is the fact that familiar arguments against intrahousehold inequality, including those from agency and self-esteem, depart from premises that complementarians reject—premises about the value of independence or the moral irrelevance of gender. I propose that development ethicists should offer complementarianism-compatible arguments against the norms and practices constitutive of intrahousehold inequality. I develop arguments against two intrahousehold inequality-supportive practices from complementarian premises. Specifically, I argue that patriarchal risk and gender schemas that devalue women's labor prevent men from discharging complementarian duties to promote women's welfare.

I and other development ethicists have tended to take for granted that reducing intrahousehold inequality is an important policy aim (Sen 1990; Agarwal 1997; Kabeer 1999; Nussbaum 2001; Iverson 2003; Kabeer 2011; Khader 2011). However, the moral appropriateness of this goal is rarely argued for. The lack of justification is a problem, both because it is unclear whether and how intrahousehold inequality causes deprivation, and because nonegalitarian gender ideologies often figure in moral and cultural worldviews to which people are deeply attached. Does questioning private-sphere inequality require a “full-blown [and culturally specific] articulation of a particular vision of gender roles” (Post 1999, 66)? If it does, arguing against intrahousehold inequality may mean violating certain key commitments of development ethics—commitments to focusing on severe and cross-culturally recognizable deprivations that afflict individual human beings. Compounding the justificatory problem is the tendency of existing arguments against intrahousehold inequality to depart from the controversial assumption that men's and women's lives have identical moral teloi (see Nussbaum 1995; Okin 1995; Verma 1995; Basu and Koolwal 2005).

In this article, I suggest an argumentative strategy for reducing intrahousehold inequality-supportive norms and practices (IISNPs). My strategy uses premises that a) link intrahousehold inequality to individual deprivation and b) can be endorsed by many who subscribe to doctrines about gender that I call “complementarian.” Complementarian doctrines affirm that women should specialize in household tasks and men should be household heads. They justify this

division of authority and labor morally and claim that men's headship benefits women and children. If our only arguments for reducing intrahousehold inequality suppose that gender is morally insignificant, or that women should be independent of men, we risk endorsing a comprehensive doctrine (which violates commitments to anti-imperialism and to focusing on the most morally urgent harms) and denying moral resources to women who accept complementarianism (which violates feminist commitments). Rather than abandoning the fight to reduce intrahousehold inequality, however, I argue that we should find complementarianism-compatible arguments that link intrahousehold inequality to women's deprivation. Drawing on activist strategies from rural South Asian women, I show that some intrahousehold inequality-supportive norms and practices can be construed as interfering with men's ability to discharge complementarian responsibilities to track and promote women's welfare.

I begin by explaining the tension between development ethicists' commitment to ecumenical moral minimalism and opposition to intrahousehold inequality. Second, I make the case that development ethicists should engage with reasonable complementarians. Third, I identify defects in three standard arguments that women's acceptance of complementarian roles necessarily causes deprivation. These arguments—from the status-related goods of agency, self-esteem, and political participation—assume that independence and the elimination of gender roles are goods, inadvertently yield the conclusion that intrahousehold inequality does not produce deprivation, or are empirically questionable. Finally, I argue that patriarchal risk^{<1>} and gender schemas that devalue women's labor interfere with men's complementarian duties to promote women's welfare.

INTRAHOUSEHOLD INEQUALITY AND THE PROJECT OF DEVELOPMENT ETHICS

Discussions of intrahousehold inequality arose to challenge the conventional view that household-level data offered clear insight into women's welfare (Iverson 2003). However, the class of practices and norms objected to under this rubric has broadened beyond unequal resource allocation within households. Discussions of intrahousehold inequality now include, but are not limited to, allocation of superior nutrition to males, disproportionate spending on men, women's dependency on male patronage for access to basic goods, men's seizure of women's earnings, male-dominated household decision-making, and cultural views that devalue women's labor. Two examples will illustrate the contours of such norms and practices in the real world. According to Hannah Papanek, cream is a male-coded food in Uttar Pradesh, because rich foods "hasten the onset of puberty in girls" (Papanek 1990, 171). Maria Mies argues that the view of feminized labor as nonlabor prevents women handicraft makers in Narasapur from being seen as productive household contributors (Mies 1982).

I share the intuition of many development ethicists (see Alkire 2007; Ahmed 2008; Sen 1990; Kabeer 1999; Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2001; Kabeer 2011) that such practices and norms harm women. But some people's intuitions are not a sufficient moral justification for policy. As David Crocker argues, development ethics is motivated by a political project—of building cross-cultural consensus on the urgency of ending severe^{<2>} deprivation (Crocker 2008, 41–43). Though the term *development ethics* sometimes includes philosophy about obligations to aid, following Peter Singer I use the term narrowly to mean theorizing about the normative goals of development interventions. The political project of development ethics demands prioritization of

deprivations with moral urgency and cross-cultural recognizability. The underlying commitments can be encapsulated as minimalism, individualism, and welfarism.

Development ethicists are welfarists, not in the utilitarian sense, but in the sense of taking the effects of practices on human beings to be what matters morally. Development ethics emerged largely as a critique of the fetishization of “modernization,” wealth, and industrialization in economics (Crocker 2008, 114–15). The view that those things are good only when they improve human lives evinces welfarism. Development ethicists also criticized aggregate development indicators that neglected the instrumentalization of some to enrich others. This strand of critique reveals a commitment to normative individualism: the notion of each person as an end.

Two distinct concerns generate a commitment to minimalism. One is the brute moral urgency of severe deprivations like starvation and tyranny. Another is opposition to imperialism. Concerns about intercultural respect urge against eliminating “bads” that only appear as such from some particular perspective (Escobar 1994). Focusing on severe deprivation promises intercultural respect, because worldviews seem to converge in condemning the very bad; starvation seems terrible to both Confucians and Christians. However, targeting the severest deprivation is not the only way to address concerns about imperialism. We may instead seek to ensure that development policies are justifiable to those they affect. This would mean striving for what Joshua Cohen calls “justificatory minimalism” (Cohen 2004).³ A substantively minimal doctrine addresses only extreme deprivation; a justificatorily minimal one addresses deprivations that can be understood as such from various worldviews. The range of justificatorily minimal “bads” may be larger than the range of substantively minimal ones.

We can conceive the demands of justificatory minimalism in two ways. First, it may require justifying development goals only ecumenically—in terms common to all reasonable worldviews. Alternatively, we may offer multiple justifications of the same goals—some of which are persuasive only within certain worldviews. On this second understanding, development ethicists need not offer a single justification of a development aim they hope is endorsable by all reasonable people. Instead, we can allow multiple, culturally specific justifications—as long as they converge on the acceptability of the aim. I will ultimately attempt to meet the demands of justificatory minimalism by combining these strategies. I will show that patriarchal risk and the devaluation of women’s labor undermine women’s access to welfare, noncontroversially defined. But I will elaborate this claim from a complementarian premise: namely, that men have duties to protect women.

I have often assumed in my own work that a critique of practices that bring individuals beneath a justificatorily minimally defined welfare threshold can yield a reason for questioning women’s acceptance of inegalitarian household norms (Khader 2011; 2012). But this assumption glosses over some important tensions. From within development ethics, it is difficult to object to practices for their promotion of nonexcellence, their inconsistency with culturally specific conceptions of the good, or their effects on relationships. Yet these concerns ground most existing objections to intrahousehold inequalities. One problem from the perspective of normative individualism is that intrahousehold inequalities are inequalities. For normative individualists, inequalities are bad to the extent that they harm individuals. Coupled with some level of substantive minimalism, normative individualism suggests that inegalitarian norms are objectionable primarily when combined with extreme scarcity. Norms dictating that women should eat last are most likely to cause malnutrition when there is not enough food to go around.

Then there is the problem of explaining the relationship between many norms and practices objected to as intrahousehold inequality and deprivation. Sexist food-distribution norms, at least

under extreme scarcity, clearly influence women's malnutrition. But what about norms and practices whose relationships with deprivation are more attenuated: the nonnegotiability of women's role as cooks (Sen 1990), customs where women face social death without male patronage (hereafter "patriarchal risk") (Kabeer 2011), the idea that men should be household heads (Alkire and Ibrahim 2007), the idea that women's labor contributions are lesser (Sen 1990), and others? The content of these norms and practices does not directly concern women's entitlement to material goods. It is conceptually possible for women to be subject to such norms and practices without being materially deprived—even under scarcity. Thus, the link between deprivation and norms dictating women's lesser entitlement to material goods seems stronger than the link between deprivation and IISNPs.

Exacerbating the worry about justifying reductions in IISNPs to nonegalitarians is the fact that many such norms and practices are the very same ones that adherents of nonegalitarian gender ideologies are likely to morally commend. Familiar arguments against IISNPs employ anticomplementarian premises: for instance, that gender is morally insignificant, that men and women should be marital equals, or that it is better to exit marriage than submit within it. Consider Mary Wollstonecraft's classic argument that patriarchal risk impedes women's virtue by incentivizing women's manipulation of men (Wollstonecraft 1996). Not only is unvirtuousness not a severe deprivation, some would argue that a woman who manipulates to get what she wants misunderstands the point of marriage. For instance, Saba Mahmood argues that some Muslim women see submission to husbands as a path to virtue (Mahmood 2005). Consider also Thomas Hill's famous "Deferential Wife." She acquiesces in her husband's desires because they are his. Hill objects that Wife ignores her right to "equal consideration within marriage" (Hill 1995). But it is unclear that complementarians accept such a right, and Hill himself grounds the right in a Kantian metaphysical doctrine. Similarly, Martha Nussbaum argues that women's specialization in household tasks creates financially inept mothers and emotionally unresponsive fathers (Nussbaum 1995, 103). But where Nussbaum sees a problem, some will see a summation of how things *should* be; emotional attachment is women's role and financial management men's.

Justificatory minimalism demands arguments for improving women's status that appeal to those who affirm different moral teloi for women and men. One subset of such views—the subset I address in this paper—are what I call "complementarian." Complementarians combine the following beliefs: a) that appropriate moral development for women cultivates capacities for child-rearing, domestic labor, and deference to men's household authority; b) that men's special intellectual and/or physical qualifications entitle them to exercise household authority; and c) that men's authority is justified because women's deference to and dependence on men serves moral ends including the promotion of women's and children's welfare. Complementarian doctrines do not simply include such beliefs about gender; they grant them a relatively foundational role. Complementarians morally evaluate states of affairs at least partly based on how well they allow people to fulfill their prescribed gender roles.

I call such doctrines "complementarian," because they aver a positive compatibility between men's and women's different roles, and because this is what many proponents call themselves, though some religious feminists reject the term as a sexist smokescreen (see Gallagher 2004). Complementarian doctrines vary in their non-gender-related tenets, as well as in how they justify and specify the content of gender roles. They also range across traditions. One political debate about women's status in Iran is over whether the verse in the Quran that states (in one translation) that "men are the protectors and maintainers of women because God has given one

more strength” means that women should specialize in motherhood and defer to men’s household authority (Hashim 1999, 11). Similarly, some evangelical Christians argue that Genesis stipulates that women are “helpers,” so men should make household decisions (Gallagher 2004, 228). Even complementarians in these religious traditions disagree about just how much power men should hold; for instance, some evangelicals concerned with women’s status argue that men’s “dominion should not be domination” (cited in Gallagher 2004, 227). Further, not all complementarianisms are religious. Though sociobiology does not generate normative claims, many defend complementarian roles in its terms, arguing that women who do not seek male protection and specialize in child-rearing wrongly reject their evolutionary hardwiring (Ryan and Jetha 2011).

REASONABLE COMPLEMENTARIANISMS

I will ultimately advocate seeking complementarianism-compatible strategies for linking IISNPs to women’s deprivation. But why bother engaging with those who see gender as morally significant enough to dictate submissive, family-focused lives for women? A feminist reason is that some complementarians are women, women who may accept deprivation if the alternative is abandoning deeply-held beliefs. As Amartya Sen and Hannah Papanek argue, much female deprivation persists because it is moralized (Papanek 1990; Sen 1990). As Teresa Tobin argues, women often understand their moral entitlements through comprehensive doctrines that liberal feminists will find unfamiliar, or even objectionable. Refusing to make space for arguments in their moral languages risks marginalizing their voices (Tobin 2007, 159).<4>

It may seem that development ethicists, rather than appealing to complementarian doctrines, should attempt reduce women’s adherence to them. But this seems incompatible with the respect for persons and cultures that minimalist individualist welfarism (rightly, in my view) prescribes. What John Rawls calls “the burdens of judgment” weigh against using political power to eradicate comprehensive worldviews (Rawls 1991). The obstacles to ascertaining truths about the best organization of human lives and societies caution against enforcing a single comprehensive worldview. Rawls’s point was about the use of power within states, but states are no longer the only instruments of coercive power that needs to be legitimated. Development initiatives often occur in the absence of democratic institutions and are often the only way the poor can access basic services. Further, the need to change women’s status does not constitute a warrant to change entire cultures. The need to change oppressive practices does not justify eradicating entire surrounding networks of beliefs (Parekh 1999; Khader 2011).

Still, toleration has normative limits—limits that doctrines denying women’s humanity transgress. Papanek describes one set of complementarian doctrines, doctrines of “imputed needs,” whose extreme forms may disregard women’s humanity. These ascribe different needs to different categories of people according to their social functions (Papanek 1990, 173). Women need less food, such justifications say, because self-sacrifice is a virtue for those whose sole purpose is to sustain others. The idea that women are mere means patently contradicts the individualist commitments of development ethics. It also flouts the growing international consensus on gender equality. One-hundred-eighty-seven states have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and women’s empowerment was a Millennium Development Goal. It thus seems correct to say, following Jack

Donnelly, that denying women's personhood is "less than morally reasonable in the contemporary world" (Donnelly 2013, 70).

Yet even if we can regard those who deny women's humanity as unreasonable, <5> advocacy of complementarian gender roles need not rest on such denials. Saying someone should serve a certain role does not require saying that her moral status derives from it. Perhaps the views that women are persons and that they should submit to men seem irreconcilable. Rhetorically appealing as this objection may be, it ignores the structure of the category of personhood. Personhood is a threshold property, that is, a property we recognize by meeting standards of minimally just treatment. It does not demand equal treatment above the threshold. Just as political personhood may demand a minimum wage but not income equality, complementarians can argue that women deserve the minimal level of welfare to which all persons are entitled without implying that they deserve exactly what men do. To the extent that complementarianisms assign men moral duties towards women, complementarianisms may even directly imply female personhood. Of course, whether a given complementarianism is reasonable depends on whether it sets the threshold for personhood high enough to meet human rights standards, not simply whether it calls women persons. But we can imagine complementarianisms compatible with human rights; they may dictate complementarian roles while still holding that women should be educated, own property, vote, and so on. This is not to deny that unequal gender roles above the threshold may practically result in subpersonal treatment of women (I will argue something like this in the last section). Rather, unequal gender roles need not logically imply women's nonpersonhood.

We can thus demarcate a subset of complementarianisms whose elimination is not morally warranted—those that treat women as deserving human rights. Still, feminists may object that reasoning with any complementarians adds to their power. Women who live among complementarians may want to change their communities' worldviews; should feminists not support them? My argument that development goals should be justifiable to complementarians does not categorically forbid appeal to noncomplementarian reasons. Different arguments persuade in different contexts, and, even where complementarianism predominates, people endorse it to varying degrees. Where increases in women's status have reduced adherence to complementarianism, my strategy does not recommend retrenching it. But the moral constraints on what development ethicists can advocate need not apply to people working to transform their own communities. What development ethicists need is assurance that reducing intrahousehold inequality does not mean attempting to end complementarianism.

IISNPs AS DEPRIVATIONS OF PSYCHIC AND STATUS-RELATED GOODS

An alternative to developing complementarianism-compatible arguments against IISNPs would be to argue that IISNPs directly cause severe individual deprivation—just not of goods like health and safety. Some psychic and relational capacities are uncontroversial goods, and we often hear that internalizing inferior roles damages people's senses of self. If IISNPs undermine women's access to psychic goods that even complementarians recognize, we have reason to oppose IISNPs, and perhaps even advance a more thoroughgoing critique of complementarianism. The psychic and status-related goods typically understood as integral to basic welfare are self-esteem, agency, and political participation. Without disputing the general value of these goods, I will suggest that one can possess them despite having internalized an

inferior role. Further, it is difficult to argue otherwise without recourse to noncomplementarian premises.

One argument that IISNPs cause psychic deprivation would state that they undermine women's agency. Agency is a buzzword in contemporary development ethics. Given the variety of usages in the development literature, it is useful to distinguish value-laden and value-neutral (or thin) conceptions of it. I see both types of conceptions in Sen's work and will treat each in turn. Sen's "Women's Agency and Social Change" contains the most influential discussion of agency to date (in Sen 1999). There he develops what I see as a value-laden conception. Rather than offering an explicit definition of agency, Sen contrasts agency with welfare. He argues that agency-enhancing interventions increase women's ability to initiate change, whereas welfare-enhancing ones need not. However, his examples suggest that the ability to initiate projects is insufficient for agency. Agency seems to require the initiation of projects aimed at gender equality. All of Sen's examples of increased agency, except for his description of child-rearing as an "agency role" (Sen 1999, 196), involve women adopting traditionally male-gendered tasks. Women become agents through increased awareness of alternatives to traditional family arrangements (192), economic productivity, land ownership, and political participation. Sen's account of agency in "Women's Agency and Social Change" is thus one on which agency requires taking an active role in reducing adherence to traditional gender roles.

If Sen intends a necessary connection between women's agency and traditionally male tasks, Sen's account is more than value-laden. It is laden with values that beg the question of justifying reductions in intrahousehold inequality. We want to justify reductions in IISNPs to people with diverse metaphysical doctrines, including complementarian ones. Asserting that reduced intrahousehold equality just is a part of agency will not do the justificatory work. Sen's value-laden understanding of agency builds value for economic independence and household decision-making authority (Sen 1999, 192) into agency, requirements that seem—without further argument, at least—hostile to complementarianism. On a value-laden conception of agency, saying that IISNPs reduce agency does not solve the problem of finding complementarianism-compatible arguments against them. It just repeats the problem.

Perhaps value-neutral accounts of agency can do better. Sen explicitly defines agency as the ability to pursue what one values or has reason to value (Sen 1999). Since the phrase "reason to value" looks like a placeholder for normative content, and since Sen seems to think that women have reason to value independence and household authority, I argued above that Sen's conception of agency was value-laden. However, Sen seems to think he is advancing a value-neutral conception. A value-neutral conception would define agency as the ability to pursue what one values, regardless of what that happens to be. Crocker schematizes Sen's intended value-neutral conception by saying that a person has agency when she "1) decides for herself (rather than someone or something else forcing the decision); 2) bases her decisions on reasons, such as the pursuit of goals; 3) performs or has a role in performing X; and 4) thereby brings about (or contributes to the bringing about of) change in the world" (Crocker 2008, 157). The fulfillment of any subsequent conditions depends on the first; a person does not have agency with regard to a goal that is not hers to begin with.

There are two ways the taking of a goal as one's own may add value to the goal. First, endorsing an objectively valuable goal may increase welfare more than would adopting it grudgingly. Theorists who take endorsement to enhance objective welfare, such as Raz (1988), Olsaretti (2005), and me (Khader 2011) hold this. Alternatively, taking a goal as one's own may acquire moral value just because it is an exercise of evaluative capacities. On the latter,

genuinely value-neutral view, endorsement may increase a person's welfare even if the goal itself is (or appears to others to be) harmful; it is the "own-ness" of the goal that matters. Sen seems to intend to advocate this latter view when he defends agency-promotion as a goal consistent with value-pluralism. Genuinely value-neutral conceptions of agency allow that the ability to take self-harming goals as one's own is a good.

Therein lies the problem with arguing that IISNPs cause deprivation of value-neutral agency. Women can take promulgating IISNPs as their own goals. As Jay Drydyk and I have independently argued (Khader 2011; Drydyk 2013; Khader 2014), women can achieve high levels of value-neutral agency without being empowered. Women can develop adaptive preferences to continue their subordination (Papanek 1990; Sen 1990; Nussbaum 2001; Khader 2011). Sometimes, women's reasons for self-subordination are prudential. Bina Agarwal argues that women accept lesser shares of food to retain their male relatives' favor, which is required for consistent access to basic welfare (Agarwal 1997). However, women adherents of complementarianism are likely to find higher-order normative reasons to embrace intrahousehold inequality. For instance, as Sen argues, women may accept lesser household shares because they valorize maternal self-sacrifice (Sen 1990). Though I have argued elsewhere that many women's internalization of such beliefs is partial (Khader 2012), some women really believe self-sacrifice is morally required. These women can exercise value-neutral agency by engaging in feminine self-deprivation. Rather than suggesting that IISNPs always cause agency deprivation, value-neutral accounts end up suggesting that accepting IISNPs can be a valuable agentic activity.

It may be objected either that self-subordination cannot be a person's own goal or that accepting intrahousehold inequality decreases women's ability to do other things they value. To the first objection, I reply that most theories of what it means to take a goal as one's own are procedural. A goal becomes one's own through certain reflective processes—not through the adoption of specific values. Some conceptions of autonomy, particularly those developed by feminist theorists, hold that a person cannot actually endorse subservience (Stoljar 2000; MacKenzie 2008). However, as I and other feminist autonomy theorists have argued, such conceptions of autonomy saturate autonomy with controversial views about the importance of independence from others (Christman 2004; Friedman 2006; Khader 2011). They are thus ill-suited to the task of persuading complementarians in the same ways that value-laden conceptions of agency are; they assume the worth of values that complementarians impugn. To the second objection (about women's ability to achieve other values), I point out that this claim depends heavily on context. Some social structures, often ones justified partly by complementarianism, make accepting inequality a welfare-maximizing strategy. Agarwal's claim about women needing the favor of men is a case in point.

Perhaps the uncontroversial good IISNPs abridge is self-esteem rather than agency. Self-esteem has a strong claim to being a justificatorily and substantively minimal value. As Rawls observes in defending the idea that (the social basis of) self-respect is a primary good, effectively pursuing virtually any life-plan requires that a person see herself as having value (Rawls 1971). Complementarian life-plans seem no less likely than other ones to require self-esteem. It may thus be possible to persuade complementarians that IISNPs are a problem by showing that they impede self-esteem.

Unfortunately, it is not obvious that accepting intrahousehold inequality means relinquishing the belief that one's self or projects have value. Some argue that taking submission to others as a central life goal means denying one's own status as a person (Hill 1995). Yet this argument presupposes that persons' morally important attributes cannot be expressed in servility, a

presupposition complementarians simply will not share. Alternatively, we may say that complementarianism itself, by preaching women's ill-suitedness for certain tasks, induces shame. But this ignores two facts. First, many complementarians deny that they see women as lesser. They suggest instead that women are different, or even, as I discuss in the next paragraph, morally superior. Second, even if we accept for the sake of argument that complementarianism sends subordinating messages, it is unclear that this must result in personal shame. Inferiority simply attaches to all women by birth.<8>

It may seem that living through intrahousehold inequality requires women to experience felt humiliation. Though it surely may, inegalitarian socialization can also inculcate what Papanek calls "compulsory emotions" and "compensatory beliefs." Patriarchy often characterizes submission as a discipline—a skill that can be perfected, and whose perfection is socially rewarded. Katherine Ewing argues that rural South Asian women survive the trauma of leaving their natal households partly by convincing themselves of the value of enduring pain (Ewing 1991). Similarly, Papanek shows that the belief that women are better at controlling their appetites sometimes justifies unequal food distribution (Papanek 1990). This suggests that women may actually gain self-esteem from enduring intrahousehold inequality.

A third argument that IISNPs deprive women of an uncontroversial good focuses on women's ability to participate as equals in public life. Susan Moller Okin argued that household inequality would spill over into political life (Okin 1991). Given the existing international consensus on women's right to equal participation in political life, private/public spillover might offer complementarians a reason to abandon IISNPs—even those that seem integral to complementarian gender roles. Empirical data cast doubt on the incompatibility of IISNPs with political participation. Recent women's empowerment literature testifies to the "mixed" results for women of development interventions (Alkire 2007). Interventions that reduce public-sphere inequality sometimes seem to retrench private sphere inequality and vice versa. Perhaps more important, data suggest that very high levels of female political participation are compatible with very sexist cultural contexts and high levels of intrahousehold inequality; consider the greater rates of female political representation in Bangladesh and Pakistan than in the United States (Interparliamentary Union 2014). Naila Kabeer's studies in rural Bangladesh describe women who publicly decry sexist practices, fight for legal change, and combat classist labor policies but remain ambivalent toward household gender roles. Even when these women do attempt to persuade men to change their household behavior, they focus on reminding men of their traditional roles as husbands and fathers (Kabeer 2011). Rather than denying any correlation between political participation and IISNPs, I mean to suggest that complementarians may reasonably seek pathways to women's political inclusion that do not demand household egalitarianism.

A COMPLEMENTARIAN OBJECTION TO TWO IISNPs

Complementarians may see moral value in norms and practices that development ethicists identify as IISNPs. Persuading complementarians to reduce their commitment to IISNPs seems to require asking them to change their entire worldviews—a project that seems justifiable only if required to protect women from extreme harm. But what if IISNPs can be objected to without completely rejecting complementarian roles? Such an argumentative strategy would justify a less conservative approach to combatting IISNPs than initially seemed compatible with the

minimalist individualist welfarism of development ethics. I now sketch this sort of strategy. I submit that two IISNPs, patriarchal risk and gender schemas that devalue women's labor, hinder men's discharging of complementarian duties. They prevent men from effectively tracking and promoting women's welfare. Making improvements in women's status compatible with any particular complementarian doctrine depends partly on the details of that doctrine, but complementarians' recognition of men's duties to promote women's welfare suggests that argumentative strategies emphasizing such duties may be broadly applicable. Rather than showing that all complementarians must oppose IISNPs (complementarianisms have different contents and figure differently within larger metaphysical doctrines), I turn to suggesting that complementarian views of gender can bolster arguments for decreasing the prevalence of IISNPs. Building a cross-cultural consensus on the need to improve women's household status may not require a complete dismantling of complementarian doctrines.

My strategy, rather than treating gender inequality as inherently objectionable, presents IISNPs as obstacles to identifying and fulfilling women's needs. Implicit in the complementarian idea that men's expertise in guardianship qualifies them to promote women's welfare is the idea that women's needs can be met well and less well. The idea that men should make household decisions does not imply that whatever men decide just is what is good for women. Instead, by characterizing men's obligations to women and children as duties that men can err in discharging, and by discussing the capacity to act in women's interests as a skill or qualification, complementarian doctrines characterize women's needs as analytically distinguishable from what men choose and desire. Reasonable complementarianisms not only regard women's welfare as valuable; they characterize men's ability to promote it as a skill.

Patriarchal risk and the devaluation of women's labor can impede men's fulfillment of complementarian duties to promote women's welfare. We can understand patriarchal risk as rendering women's access to welfare what Philip Pettit calls "favor-dependent" (Pettit 2001, 6). Under patriarchal risk, women's well-being depends on men's whims. If men are benevolent, women may achieve high levels of welfare—even its agency-related components (benevolent husbands may give their wives substantial amounts of latitude in household negotiation, political participation, and so on). However, not all male guardians are benevolent, and forces beyond women's control may change who the guardian is at any given time.

Pettit identifies two problems with favor-dependence, one of which can form the core of a complementarianism-compatible argument for reducing patriarchal risk. First, he suggests servility is intrinsically degrading. Pettit's arguments about the wrong of domination along this line begin from an intuitive claim about the badness of having to submit to or appease another (Pettit 2000, 87). Such arguments, like others from independence, are unlikely to appeal to complementarians. Pettit's second derivation of the problem with favor-dependence is that favor-dependence makes access to welfare precarious (85).

This second line of reasoning promises greater compatibility with complementarianism. Since complementarians care about the durability of women's welfare, they can oppose the ability of wayward guardians to vanish women's welfare at will. Still, a complementarianism-compatible argument from the durability of welfare must combine concerns about welfare precariousity with claims about what is empirically possible. There must be some realistic alternative social arrangements that would better secure women's welfare without violating complementarianism. Since complementarians believe men are especially qualified to make decisions that affect women and children, they may believe that women's welfare would be more precarious in women's own hands. The problem of unstable welfare caused by capricious men, though

unfortunate, will not seem to complementarians to be soluble by denying men's special entitlement to household headship. Complementarians need to be persuaded that men are more capricious under severe patriarchal risk than they otherwise would be.

A complementarianism-compatible argument for reducing patriarchal risk would combine a) a reason that patriarchal risk discourages male benevolence and b) an argument that reducing patriarchal risk does not abolish complementarian gender roles. We can find such an argument by pointing to the incentives created by patriarchal risk. Conditions where people have control over pools of goods and where their allocational authority cannot be challenged encourage self-interested action at the expense of others. Under very patriarchally risky conditions, men face few penalties for self-enriching acts that deprive women. Severe patriarchal risk, by definition, involves conditions where moral injunctions against depriving women go unenforced. The idea that unchecked power produces temptations to selfishness is both highly intuitive and consistent with the perceptions of some women living in patriarchally risky societies. Some respondents in M. Abdul Alim's study of gender attitudes in rural Bangladesh argue that men's entitlement to, and discretion over, dowry encourages them to treat women with impunity; one says, "giving dowry means that in broad daylight many things are robbed" (Alim 2009, 308).

Bargaining theories of household behavior also support the idea that unchecked power over resources is a temptation to selfishness. On such theories, an individual's perception of the resource share she deserves depends largely on her fallback position—the position she would occupy were she to exit the household (Sen 1990; Iverson 2003). Severe patriarchal risk makes men's fallback position quite advantageous (and women's extremely poor). The inequality of fallback positions likely both ups men's perception of entitlement and discourages women from opposing men's claims to superior entitlement.

A promising complementarianism-compatible argument for reducing patriarchal risk says that increased bargaining power and exit options for women, as well as legal penalties on men, discourage male abuse of otherwise legitimate power. Value for exit options need not rest on the complementarianism-incompatible view that women would be better off without relationships. Women's groups in patriarchally risky societies often leverage (newfound) threats of exit and public shame to call men to account for selfishness. Rather than actually desiring exit, these women activists use the threat of it to exhort men to fulfill their roles as protectors. Kabeer recounts the response of Bangladeshi women activists to a man who repudiates his wife in a fit of anger. The activists generally oppose divorce. But now that they (thanks to an NGO intervention) know that verbal divorce is not legal, they point out the illegality of his behavior to persuade him to take her back (Kabeer 2011, 520). In another incident, activists persuade a man's family to allow him to marry a woman he previously attempted to elope with. They argue that men who promise marriage must follow through—and that they ruin women's honor when they do not (521). In both cases, activists argue that women's utter dependence on men, coupled with (and embodied by) lack of regulation, encourages men to violate duties of protectorship.

A. O. Hirschman's work on exit and voice provides a framework for analyzing the effect of exit options and collective organizing to shame men. Hirschman states that voice in relationships atrophies under two types of conditions: where exit is very easy and where exit is virtually impossible (Hirschman 1970). Since easy exit undermines people's desires to remain in relationships, complementarians may oppose complete annihilation of patriarchal risk. On the other hand, however, some exit options for women may increase incentives for men to discharge complementarian duties. The existence of exit options prevents men from prioritizing their welfare over women's without penalty and allows women to use their voices to remind men of

complementarian responsibilities. Kabeer describes newfound exit possibilities as allowing Bangladeshi women to argue that, since they “had fulfilled their side of the contract by taking care of the family and upholding the family honor, men should not be allowed to default on their responsibilities to wives and children” (Kabeer 2011, 521). It may seem that complementarianism involves the view that men are not susceptible to temptation and that complementarians will thus deny a relationship between patriarchal risk and men’s bad behavior. However, complementarianism certainly does not require the view that men are infallible. To the extent that complementarianisms present fulfilling duties to women as a skill or moral task, they strongly suggest that fulfilling the task involves struggle and self-discipline rather than simply acting on natural inclinations.

Gender schemas that devalue women’s labor are a second set of IISNPs that can be understood to impede men’s performance of complementarian guardianship duties. Whereas patriarchal risk tempts men to ignore women’s needs, gender schemas interfere epistemically with men’s ability to identify them. Practices that make women’s labor invisible or obscure the demands of feminized labor undermine men’s (and women’s) abilities to know what women need. Practices that conceal women’s labor encourage men to be ignorant of women’s time use, of the difficulties and bodily demands of traditionally feminine roles. But knowledge about women’s time use and the bodily demands of their labor is undeniably relevant to basic welfare outcomes such as health and nutritional status. As has been widely documented, women’s household role correlates with poor health, safety, and nutritional outcomes, particularly in times of economic change (World Bank 2012). To be able to respond to women’s needs in arenas such as nutrition and health, men need to understand what women do.

Perhaps the idea of devaluing women’s labor rests on controversial metaphysical claims about the objective value of feminized labor. Thus, rather than embracing justificatory minimalism, the idea that men must perceive the “true” value of women’s labor trades one set of controversial metaphysical views (about gender inequality’s wrongness) for another (about the “true” equal value of men’s and women’s labor). We can make the idea of devaluation more precise, and less controversial, by drawing attention to its physical and time demands. Sen argues that ideologies that obscure the time demands of women’s labor distort the “informational base” about the relative needs of men and women in households (Sen 1990). Though Sen’s point is that changing the gender division of labor expands the informational base, exposing men to women’s daily tasks may effect a similar expansion. Rather than seeing cooking as morally important, men must be able to perceive the time involved in ensuring that a family is consistently fed. Rather than assigning new symbolic value to carrying water, men need a better sense of its physical demands and just how many times it must be performed. Men will struggle to respond to women’s nutritional needs, illnesses, exhaustion, and so forth if they don’t understand the impacts of gendered labor on welfare.

In addition to obscuring the physical and time demands of women’s work, gender schemas can make women appear not to be working at all. One common representation of feminized labor is as a privilege or luxury. This representation produces a distinct perception that undermines men’s guardianship: the perception of women as burdens (Cain, Khanam, and Nahar 1979; Sen 1990; Kabeer 1998). The sense of women’s household tasks as noncontributions, particularly (but not exclusively) in times of scarcity, generates resentment. Men who believe they work when women do not may experience their complementarian responsibility as unjust; they may deprive women because they now question the duties of guardianship altogether. One way to combat this abnegation is to increase men’s awareness of the concrete realities of women’s

lives—and the ways women sustain men. Men in Kabeer’s study say they became better husbands by better understanding women’s day-to-day work. One man reports that, before his participation in an NGO, “We really had no idea that women worked as hard as we did in running the family. Now I realize that our family is a result of our joint effort” (Kabeer 2011). He credits his knowledge that his wife labors with his decision to register land in her name.

DEVELOPMENT ETHICS AND INTRAHOUSEHOLD INEQUALITY: THE OUTLOOK

How can development ethicists argue for reductions in intrahousehold inequality without violating our commitment to focusing on severe deprivations that are cross-culturally recognizable? One way is to find arguments against IISNPs from premises that can be accepted by adherents of metaphysical doctrines that do not value thoroughgoing gender equality. Complementarian doctrines are one subset of such doctrines, and the strategies of women activists in South Asia suggest that reasons for eroding some IISNPs can be found within complementarian doctrines. Specifically, patriarchal risk and gender schemas that devalue women’s labor can be understood to impede men’s complementarian responsibility for tracking and promoting women’s welfare. These arguments from guardianship fall short of a complementarian argument against all, or even most, IISNPs. They also do not constitute an ecumenical argument against all gender inequality. However, given the difficulty of showing that intrahousehold inequality reduces self-esteem, agency, or political participation, such an argument does not seem forthcoming. Yet the possibility of opposing IISNPs from within nonegalitarian doctrines offers reason for optimism. The outlook for an international moral consensus on the need to improve women’s status is more hopeful than concerns about intercultural respect initially suggest.

NOTES

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1. Patriarchal risk obtains to the extent that women must depend on male family members to access goods. Women experience “social death” if they lose male patronage.

2. Amartya Sen argues against minimalism, but David Crocker sees Sen as conceptually committed to a welfare threshold (Crocker 2008).

3. Since some deny that individuals are the ultimate locus of moral worth, there is a potential tension between justificatory minimalism and normative individualism. Interestingly, most disagreements about cultural imperialism in development ethics are about what the contents of a good individual life are rather than individualism as such. See Brooke Ackerly’s (2003) critique of Martha Nussbaum for an example.

4. The importance of not marginalizing women’s voices can be seen as either rhetorical or moral, depending on one’s moral epistemology. See Jaggar and Tobin (2013) for a discussion of how the voices of the marginalized have methodological import for naturalized moral epistemologies.

5. The role of accepting women's personhood for establishing reasonableness in my analysis is analogous to the role of liberalism-compatibility in Rawls.

6. Similarly, Kabeer, in her theoretical essay on empowerment, defines empowerment as agency expansion, but her examples are primarily cases where women challenge men's authority (Kabeer 1999).

7. I have made this argument more extensively in Khader 2014.

8. Sandra Bartky argues that people may feel shame for belonging to groups marked as inferior, seeing themselves as "just a woman" or just a "n*****" (Bartky 1990, 30.). Though I agree that the belief that one is born into an inferior group may cause shame, the compensatory beliefs I describe in the next paragraph suggest that women may believe that their unequal status is evidence of their group's moral superiority rather than of its personal inefficacy. It is thus not clear that seeing the cause of subordination as in one's group rather than oneself causes shame; if the subordination is seen as virtuous, it may cause pride.

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