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Introduction to *Cultural domination: philosophical perspectives*

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Some candidate cases

What is cultural domination? How should it be accounted for? What social phenomena instantiate it? These questions can implicate a wide array of issues—e.g., they range from questions about the conceptualization of domination, or of culture, or of the role of culture in domination, over questions about the nature of cultural transformation, to questions about the role of culture in the grounding of views of how the state should act, and to questions about the explanatory role of culture and social structure in understanding salient social phenomena. The contributors to this volume adopt different perspectives on the theme of cultural domination and advocate, or explore, different views on the topic. We preview their contributions in the section “The Chapters,” below. For now, we will provide the reader with a fix on the theme, or some of its contours.

It is useful to begin with candidate cases of cultural domination (for now, we use the notion ‘domination’ in a non-technical, intuitive sense). A first case involves the political suppression of a minority language in an attempt to build a culturally unified nation state:

Case 1: *Turkification*. For most of the 20th century, the Turkish state has taken measures against the use of the Kurdish language both in public and in the private sphere—measures that have often been associated with a project of Turkification (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012). The use of Kurdish ‘as a mother tongue’ was prohibited in Turkey in the 1980s. This placed many people in disadvantageous positions—e.g., in school, court procedures, or when in contact with government officials—and it affected (or aimed to affect) Kurdish cultural identity.

In cases like Case 1, we often can readily identify patterns of domination relations between individual agents—e.g., teachers and students, or legal officials and defendants—where power agents, as dominators, exercise their power to suppress or eliminate (expressions of) the culture of power subjects, or dominatees. If we describe Case 1 in such terms, we describe it as instantiating an agent-on-agent, interpersonal form of domination *of* culture. In this sense, Case 1 marks a candidate case of cultural domination—in one sense of ‘cultural domination.’

Many other candidate cases of cultural domination are less clear-cut. Consider:

Case 2: *Java colonization*. Java was a Dutch colony for most of the time from the mid-17th to the mid-20th century. The Dutch ruled from a distance through a system of indirect rule: they took over pre-existing local culture by making the local cultural elites do the ruling for them. When the Dutch colonized Java in the 17th century, they found a society with an extensive social hierarchy reinforced by elaborate cultural symbols and practices. At the top of the hierarchy were the *priyayi*, a group of nobles and aristocratic bureaucrats. Those below the *priyayi* had to crouch on the floor in all social interactions with them, use lower class

Javanese dialect, and wear clothes marking their inferior status; they were not allowed to use the prestigious ceremonial parasol of the ruling elite, and had to live in dwellings with architecture that marked their lower social position. The Dutch forced the elites to display the forms of cultural deference that they had over their inferiors: e.g., they had to crouch before the seated Dutch at any meetings, speak high Javanese, not Dutch, and wear traditional clothes. More generally, the Dutch ruled by coopting local cultural power relations, which lead to a substantial transfer of resources to them.

Case 2, we take it, can be described as involving patters of interpersonal domination: some agents, such as Dutch officials, dominated other agents, such as members of the local elites. But the elites retained their positions of relative power: the colonizers here used cultural power relations—which, we take it, in their own right instantiated a system of domination—as a *tool*, or *resource*: their use of local customs might have caused some changes in the local culture, but the colonizers aimed to exploit, *not* suppress or eliminate, that culture. The point: even granted that Case 2 involves interpersonal domination, it is not clear whether it involves domination *of* culture. Thus, does it involve another form of cultural domination altogether—say, perhaps some kind of domination *by* culture?

Further questions arise when we consider a third candidate case of cultural domination:

Case 3: *Sanskritization*. The caste system is a system of domination that is deeply entrenched in the Hindu social order. The system is not unchanging: caste groups of lower status are sometimes able to increase their social standing. Sanskritization (Srinivas 1956) is a mechanism of upward mobility in the caste hierarchy: it is a process in which lower caste communities adopt markers of the dominant Sanskritic culture associated with Brahmins and other higher castes. This can involve, e.g., changes in religious rituals to align them with Vedic orthodoxy, or changes in language and conceptual repertoire to incorporate vocabulary or concepts associated with Sanskrit traditions, or changes in norms governing marriage or food practices to imitate the norms of higher castes, and so forth. As Srinivas puts the point of such cultural transformations, “the best way of staking a claim to a higher position is to adopt the custom and way of life of a higher caste.” (ibid, 483). And, he observes, in the long run, this tends to move lower-status caste groups in the direction of Brahminic culture, by percolating this culture through intermediary caste groups.

Case 3 illustrates what seems to be an instance of cultural *dominance*: a high-status culture is being adopted at the cost of erasing lower-status cultural practices or traits. Does it also illustrate an instance of cultural *domination*? Many would agree that an encroachment of a dominant culture into the lives of marginalized groups involves a kind of domination—even if that culture is willingly adopted, as often seems to occur in processes of Sanskritization, which often are willingly initiated by lower caste communities. And while such processes can seem subversive of existing caste domination at least when they raise the status of certain groups, they at the same time contribute to the entrenchment of Sanskritic culture and caste hierarchy. Yet if we are inclined to see Sanskritization as domination, its apparently voluntary and partly subversive character would make it rather unlike other forms of domination. This raises deeper questions about how domination could be construed in such cases.

What of differences between Case 3 and the other cases? Unlike Case 1, Case 3 would instantiate a form of cultural domination in which (presumptive) dominatees apparently willingly adopt (or abandon) certain cultural traits. And, like Case 1, but unlike Case 2, Case 3 would involve a form of domination that aims to suppress or eliminate certain cultural traits. Thus, Case 3 and Case 1, but perhaps not Case 2, would instantiate distinct forms of domination of culture. One upshot: prior to further argument, there can be different (candidate) forms of cultural domination, and more than one way in which domination and culture interact. Of course, candidate forms of cultural domination might relevantly differ from the three cases just considered, and they might raise different issues from the ones that just surfaced, as aptly demonstrated by the diverse contributions to this volume.

Cultural domination talk: some varieties

The complexity of the theme at hand echoes in the many ways in which we might speak of cultural domination. To sample varieties of cultural domination talk, start with statements of domination relations (“Peter dominates Paul,” “The state dominates the citizens,” “Culture A dominates culture B,” and so on). They have a form such as,

$$R1 \quad \alpha \Delta \beta,$$

where ‘ α ’ is the grammatical power agent, ‘ β ’ the grammatical power subject, and where ‘ Δ ’ refers to a domination relation (thus, ‘ α ’ and ‘ β ’ refer to the dominator(s) and dominatee(s), respectively). It is contested what kind of things ‘ α ’ or ‘ β ’ can or should refer to—prominent candidates include individual human agents, groups of such agents, social or political institutions, or social structure, widely conceived. It is also contested what kind of relations ‘ Δ ’ can or should refer to—prominent candidates include relationships of uncontrolled control, of unjust or illegitimate power, of power asymmetries that involve a denial of salient rights, opportunities, or resources, or that deny important moral, political, or other statuses.

With this in mind: when *cultural* domination occurs, we conjecture, R1 instantiates in some way that relevantly implicates culture—‘relevantly,’ as seen from a given evaluative perspective. (Below, we make this somewhat more specific.) Expectably, then, talk of cultural domination can take many forms, and convey different things—a point we shall now unpack. One respect in which such talk can differ, of course, is grammatical: when cultural domination is said to occur, culture might be referred to as that what dominates, so be referred to as the grammatical power agent in a relation like R1, or it might be said to be what is dominated, so be referred to as a power subject in such a relation (or both: take claims like “Culture A dominates culture B”). (In passing: this raises issues about the role of culture, and of social structure more generally, in accounting for cultural domination—we touch on this in the next section.)

But cultural domination talk can differ also in other, substantive ways: the label ‘cultural domination’ can be used to refer to relevantly different phenomena, and to express relevantly different views of role of culture in domination relations. For instance, consider:

- (i) *Culture as a domination resource.* Domination might be said to be cultural where dominators relevantly utilize culture, or cultural things. E.g., they might draw on cultural norms in the justification narratives by which they legitimize

their power; they might exploit cultural status hierarchies to enlist culturally superior groups in the suppression of culturally inferior groups; or they might grant cultural rights, opportunities, or resources, only on the condition of subjection. E.g., consider Case 2, above: the case might be called a case of cultural domination in this sense in order to highlight that Dutch colonizers used cultural status hierarchies to back up their position as dominators.

- (ii) *Domination as entailed by culture.* Domination might be said to be cultural where cultural practices call for power configurations that, from the observer's perspective, involve domination. E.g., cultural status hierarchies might involve the social or economic domination by culturally superior groups of culturally inferior groups. E.g., consider Case 3, above: given a suitable understanding of domination, we might say that Hindu caste hierarchies are a system of cultural domination in this sense, and that Sanskritization, while it is partly subversive of this system, at the same time reproduces, or validates it.
- (iii) *Domination in the service of cultural dominance.* Domination might be said to be cultural where dominators pursue aims of cultural dominance. E.g., the political domination of a minority culture, e.g., by criminalizing its cultural practices, or by limiting access to its places of worship, might serve an aim to ensure the social dominance of a majority culture. Revert to Case 1: if the domination of Kurdish cultural forms aims to ensure the dominance of another culture, it might be said to involve cultural domination in this sense.
- (iv) *Cultural domination as cultural dominance.* Cultural domination might be said to occur where cultural dominance occurs—e.g., where a culture or cultural traits are dominant with respect to other cultures or cultural traits, in the sense that the dominant culture or cultural traits persist or spread. Revert to Case 3: Sanskritization might be said to involve cultural domination in the sense, despite its apparently voluntary and partly subversive character.
- (v) *Cultural domination as domination justified on partisan cultural grounds.* Domination might be said to be cultural where exercises of domination power are legitimized, or justified, on the basis of partisan cultural grounds that are relevantly rejected by relevant power subjects. Revert to Case 1: it might be said that Turkification, even if it is justifiable on the basis of salient cultural values, involves cultural domination in this sense if these values are relevantly rejected by the people coercively subjected to it.
- (vi) *Domination relations as cultural objects.* Domination might be said to be cultural where domination relations in their own right instantiate culture, or are cultural things. E.g., cultural norms might shape interactions between dominators and dominatees in a manner such that the corresponding domination relations in their own right become cultural objects, or gain cultural significance. Revert to Case 2: the case might be described as involving cultural domination in this sense insofar as the rule of the Dutch colonizers employed cultural forms that had cultural meaning and significance in that context.

This list is not exhaustive: domination might be said to be ‘cultural’ in some sense other than the ones listed. Nor is it discrete: nothing rules out that social phenomena might instantiate cultural domination in more than one of these senses. Thus, this list does not map the conceptual space of cultural domination, but draws out some contours of cultural domination talk that help to fix ideas. What form such talk *should* take—what social phenomena *should* be recognized as instances of cultural domination, or on what grounds this *should* be done—is a different matter, and one the contributors to this volume often disagree about. Accordingly, for each entry on the above list, potentially contested questions arise: what, at bottom, does the relevant domination relation consist in? Who or what, at bottom, should be construed as its power agent(s) or power subject(s)? What role does culture have vis-à-vis these things, and what role should it have in accounting for them?

This returns us to our conjecture that when cultural domination occurs, R1 instantiates in some way that relevantly implicates culture. We can now make this slightly more specific: where cultural domination occurs, culture, or cultural things, play a role in the individuation, description, explanation, evaluation, analysis, and so on, of domination relations, or associated domination phenomena, that, from a given evaluative perspective, is significant enough to warrant referring to these relations, or phenomena, not just as ones of domination, but of cultural domination. One upshot: if we disagree about what it takes for cultural things to play some such role, then we can disagree about what the label ‘cultural domination’ should refer to—even if we already agree about what domination is. And, as the contributions to this volume document, more than one view on the matter is on offer.

Before we preview the contributions to this volume, we attend to three matters that, we believe, will later assist the reader in putting things in context. We will touch on the role of social structure in (accounting for) cultural domination (in the next section), spotlight some issues related to phenomena of cultural transformation (in the section “Cultural domination, cultural transformation”), and add a brief observation on the history of views of cultural domination (in the section “Theorizing cultural domination: from legitimization to critical analysis”). Of course, the contributions to this volume ultimately speak for themselves: they adopt different perspectives, present their own, often different frameworks, and focus on different themes and issues.

Cultural domination and social structure

One issue that repeatedly surfaces in this volume is the role of social structure in (accounting for) cultural domination. What role that should be is contested. We wish to point out upfront, however, that even if we approach things with certain individualist leanings (see below), we still have reason not to dismiss out of hand that social structure can be relevant in accounting for cultural domination.

Start with ‘social structure’ and ‘culture.’ As to ‘social structure,’ the notion can have more than one meaning, but as it is generally used in this volume, it refers to non-individual, social entities, such as institutions, groups, organizations, and so on. Thus, by itself, a set of relations between individual agents will not constitute a social structure in this sense—or at least not when these relations are adequately described in terms that do not in their own right import social structural element (e.g., consider the difference between “Paul tells Peter what to do” and “Sergeant Paul tells Private Peter what to do”). At any rate: at least in clear cases, invoking social structure will involve recourse to social entities of the overall sort just referred to.

As to ‘culture,’ social structure can show up in important ways in how culture is conceived. We can distinguish between narrow and wide accounts of culture. Narrow accounts do not, or not explicitly, evoke social structure: instead, they evoke individual beliefs, values, cultural schemas, and so on. By contrast, wide accounts do evoke social structure: while they refer to beliefs, values, cultural schemas, and so on, they also evoke social entities such as institutions, organizations, political authority, and social practices—construed as paradigms of social structure. Many of the contributions in this volume seem to work with a wide, social-structure-involving view of culture: this would make them non-individualist in a sense familiar from debates in the philosophy of social science.

With this in mind: if we revert to R1, above, in conceptualizing cultural domination, it is natural to ask whether culture can play the part of power agent (α), or of power subject (β), or both, in a domination relationship (Δ). And—especially, but not only, on a wide view of culture—parallel questions spring to mind about social structure: we can ask whether social structure can play the relevant parts in a domination relationship. Does this mean that culture, or social structure, can be the power agent or power subject in relationships of (cultural) domination?

There is little agreement on the point. E.g., recent social and political philosophy has seen deep controversies about the role of social structure in social power relations, including domination relationships (Hayward 2018; Azmanova 2018; Lukes 2018 and 2021; McNay 2020; Forst 2018; Lovett 2010, 2022, and Chapter 6). Prominent views—especially views that draw on republican ideas of freedom or non-domination (Pettit 1997 and 2012)—often seem individualist in the sense that they construe domination interpersonally, as a relationship ultimately between human individuals (whether or not they also are individualist in the sense that just surfaced). Other views deny that an interpersonal reading of R1 accommodates all cases. E.g., for some, social structure can involve power relations that do not reduce to the agency of some individual human agent or group (Hayward 2018); others argue that social systems can instantiate forms of domination such that all human agents operating within these systems are power subjects (Azmanova 2018). Yet others claim that Western culture dominates non-Western culture in a manner best described as a kind of structural domination that does not require interpersonal domination relations (Galtung 1971).

However, especially relevant now: even approaches that are individualist in reading R1 always interpersonally—that analyze or explain all domination in terms of interpersonal power relations—still can, and often do, reserve a significant role for social structure in accounting for domination relations: e.g., as an important background condition of, or resource for, real-life domination (Forst 2018). Thus, even when social structure does not come in as a ground-level category in accounting for (cultural) domination, it can still play an important role in understanding real-live (cultural) domination.

A similar conclusion is suggested if we focus not on views of the nature of domination (or social power), but consider the *cultural* component of cultural domination. There is a strand in the empirical social science literature that aims to downplay or entirely eliminate social structure from accounts of culture—e.g., recall what we referred to as narrow views of culture, above (Van der Meer 2020). Such accounts of culture often emphasize individual learning and beliefs; and, as van Riel notes (Chapter 9), individual learning indeed is a plausible partial mechanism to explain cultural domination. But, it seems, such mechanisms will not

render social structure entirely irrelevant. Rather, they entail that the role of social structure will be limited, or not the whole story, in understanding real-life cultural domination.

Not least, the contributions to this volume, while they construe cultural domination in terms that accord with R1, sometimes disagree as to how the phenomenon maps onto R1's dyadic schema. One view that sometimes surfaces is that the requirements of domination entail that culture *cannot* take the place of 'α' or of 'β' in R1. Roughly, the idea is that, conceptually, domination is interpersonal, or a relationship between individual agents, but that culture or social structure are not individual agents. This, it seems, reflects an interpersonal interpretation of R1. We have in effect noted that even if we are attracted to this interpretation, we might still take it that social structure can be relevant in understanding (cultural) domination. We now add another observation that points in the same overall direction.

The two-fold claim that domination has the form of R1 and that R1 must be construed interpersonally is a conceptual claim. Arguing, let us assume that this claim accords with whatever common sense notion of domination is in play where we speak of political domination as something that impugns freedom. Yet, bluntly put, conceptual claims that are compelling in one context need not be compelling in another. As Kincaid argues (Chapter 4), at least from the perspective of a naturalist philosophy of social science, the idea that domination is interpersonal need not constrain *all* successful explanations. Science, including social science, is not strongly constrained by our common sense concepts—e.g., consider theoretical physics. Accordingly, social research can use the notion 'domination,' flesh it out as it deems best for the research at hand, and be empirically successful. E.g., domination might be understood as something that instantiates as social structure that causes lower income for relevant groups (see the examples provided in Kincaid's chapter). This might not accord with a common sense notion of domination, but as a claim in empirical social science, it can be coherent enough. (This raises the question whether the *same* concept of domination would be employed, or rather a different one: thus, can there be more than one concept of domination?)

The upshot: it is contested what role social structure *should* play in understanding (cultural) domination. But even if we share certain individualist leanings, we have reason not to dismiss its importance altogether. Even where an interpersonal interpretation is attached to R1, social structure can still play a relevant role in understanding (cultural) domination. (For chapters that consider the role of social structure in understanding (cultural) domination: see especially Kincaid (Chapter 4), Koch (Chapter 5), van Riel (Chapter 9), and Lovett (Chapter 6).)

Cultural domination, cultural transformation

A second issue we want to draw attention to concerns a difference between cases like Case 1, above, where cultural change is imposed on cultural agents politically, or 'from the outside,' and cases more like Case 3, where cultural change seems motivated from 'the inside,' or occurs on the basis of apparently voluntary choices of cultural agents. To simplify, compare two hypothetical scenarios:

- CA The government aims to create a homogeneous culture, and to this end imposes on the citizens laws that prohibit the use of a minority language in schools. As a result, the minority language eventually vanishes. (A version of Case 1.)

- CB Children from a minority culture grow up preferring to speak the language of the majority culture, because it is what they are most exposed to in movies, TV, and music, and they associate it with various aspirational images. As a result, the minority language eventually vanishes. (A close relative of Case 3.)

Both cases involve cultural change, or transformation. In CA, the change is a product of political imposition. But in CB, the change seems owed to the operation of *cultural* factors: it comes about because the children, as cultural agents, willingly adopt some cultural traits at the expense of other such traits. If so, then it would seem that cultural change in CB occurs *within* the domain of culture in a sense in which it does not in CA.

We take it that CB illustrates a case of cultural dominance. Now, as we registered earlier, cultural dominance is sometimes referred to as cultural domination. We also noted, of course, that it is a different matter whether it should be referred to as such. But suppose we agree that CB is a promising candidate case of one kind of cultural domination. One matter the theme of cultural domination would invite us to explore, then, is whether cultural domination can occur in some manner that is not imposed on culture from the outside—that does not reduce to, e.g., political or economic forms of domination—but that is cultural in the strong sense that it occurs ‘from within’ culture, or in the domain of the cultural, in a way illustrated better by CB than CA.

Amongst other things, this would ask us to consider what relationship there is between the cultural and other domains—e.g., the political, or the economic. It is not clear how such domains are best individuated or how they relate—and there is more than one possibility. E.g., maybe cultural norms, unlike political or economic norms, need not be tied to external sanctions, such as penalties, to ensure compliance. Or maybe culture is distinctively symbolic, so that strongly cultural forms of domination, if there are any, would have to be construed primarily in terms of the impact of cultural change on the symbolic representations of people—rather than on their political or economic relationships. Or maybe the cultural cannot be disentangled from the political or the economic, so that all forms of cultural domination also instantiate political or economic domination. And of course there are other possibilities.

Plainly, the task of accounting for the nature and boundaries of the cultural is a task not only for philosophers. Social scientists—in particular, anthropologists—have long debated how best to understand the concept of culture. E.g., one long-debated issue is how cultures can be individuated without using static or essentialized conceptions of culture that cannot properly accommodate cultural change. As Bashkow puts this desideratum, views of culture must not “inappropriately posit stable and bounded ‘islands’ of cultural distinctiveness in an ever-changing world of transnational cultural ‘flows’” (Bashkow 2004, 443). If that is so, then accounting for cultural transformation as cultural domination should guard against static views of culture. Moreover, assuming that not *all* cultural transformation involves cultural domination, we would need to distinguish cultural transformations that do involve cultural domination from ones that do not. What is needed here, then, are tools to individuate cultures, and to describe or evaluate cultural dynamics. But what tools should we adopt?

A related issue concerns the concept of culture—a matter that surfaced earlier already. It is contested whether this concept is an explanatory concept, and one that can feature in *causal* explanations at that. Anthropologists often reject that culture is causally efficacious, and

instead see it as something akin to a text to be interpreted. This bears on the analysis of cultural domination. Domination is often seen as manifesting causal patterns—e.g., patterns such that whatever plays the role of power agent in a domination relation causes domination-relevant changes in power subjects, their options, or their environment. Yet if we cross this with the view that culture cannot be causally efficacious, it would follow that culture cannot be the power agent in domination relations—which from the outset limits how we can conceptualize real-life cases of cultural domination. Of course, our hands would not from the outset be tied in this way if we construe culture as something that can be causally efficacious—although this would invite other objections. How, then, should we construe culture for the purposes of an account of cultural domination?

At any rate: as the above illustrates, the theme of cultural domination offers a site for a cross-pollination between philosophical views of the phenomenon and salient ideas in the social sciences. This need not be a one-way street. E.g., a philosophical account of the phenomenon might adopt a social scientific view of culture, such as the culture-as-text view referred to above, to then run with the consequences. The direction of influence might also go the other way: philosophical accounts of cultural domination that assume that culture is causally efficacious might inspire or support a social scientific model of the causal or explanatory role of culture. One aim of this volume, then, is to offer a site for such cross-pollination.

Theorizing cultural domination: From legitimization to critical analysis

Processes of cultural domination—construed in at least one of the senses listed earlier—have shaped human history. E.g., the Romanization of large parts of Europe, the spread of Confucianism and Legalism under Emperor Wu Di of Han, medieval Christianization, colonial practices, or the spread of Western culture during recent processes of globalization, involved cultural changes that often relevantly implicated forms of domination. But despite the tremendous historical impact of processes of cultural domination, efforts at a *critical* (rather than broadly affirmative) intellectual engagement of the phenomenon are relatively recent.

Early theorizing about cultural domination seems preoccupied with efforts to *legitimize* it—to justify that it may or should occur. For instance, religious narratives that legitimized forms of cultural domination played a key role for the Spanish conquistadores. For Hegel, in turn, colonialism and the imposition of cultural change was a prerequisite for the realization of freedom, construed as the self-determination of all human beings (Stone 2020). On his view, self-determination was to be realized only in a special, developmental state of society—a state that ‘oriental’ societies, unlike European societies, had not attained. Thus, ‘oriental’ societies, unlike their European counterparts, hindered the proper actualization of freedom.

Colonization and the imposition of cultural change hence appeared as a means to the end of actualizing some good, i.e., freedom as self-determination. Structurally similar, affirmative views were endorsed by some Saint-Simonists, who had an impact on conceptions of colonialism in 19th century France (Pilbeam 2013).

By contrast, recent debates have seen efforts at a *critical* engagement of cultural domination that are intellectually more sophisticated than earlier, more affirmative views. These efforts draw on a diverse array of traditions. For instance, some authors in the Marxist tradition critically engage cultural domination with a focus on its role in the maintenance of economic conditions or relations: e.g., Du Bois (1945) and Fanon (1961) do so in relation to the context of colonialism. Other authors in this tradition critically engage cultural domination by

conceptualizing it as hegemony: e.g., Horkheimer and Adorno (2002), Marcuse (1964), Bourdieu (1977), or Gramsci (1971), seminally focus on circumstances where a group's own culture is a principal obstacle to the liberation of its members. Yet again others in this tradition construe cultural domination as hegemony, but not as a total or inescapable kind of hegemony: e.g., the Birmingham school foregrounds the potential of (sub)cultures to (also) be a site for social resistance, criticism, or for challenging domination relations.

Other critical engagements of cultural domination—especially where it takes the form of a political imposition of (constraints on) cultural values, norms, or practices—form part of ongoing debates around ideas of multiculturalism, toleration, and conceptions of justice, including views of the importance of cultural rights, cultural opportunities, or cultural resources (Kymlicka 1996; McKinnon and Castiglione 2003; Forst 2003; McKinnon 2006; Ivison 2010; Sardoč 2022; for chapters that engage related themes: see Bachvarova and Moore (Chapter 1), Besch (Chapter 2), and Patton (Chapter 8)). In such debates, too, there often is little agreement as to how (cultural) domination is best construed. As has surfaced already, for instance, it is contested whether domination should be construed in interpersonal terms, or whether some forms of domination are best seen as structural. But across many theoretical divides, there is wide agreement that people should not be subjected to (cultural) domination, all other things equal—even though authors often disagree as to what exactly constitutes such subjection, or what exactly is objectionable about it.

Of course, there are many other important critical current perspectives on cultural domination—not just the ones just foregrounded. Accordingly, a diverse array of critical perspectives is represented in this volume. What we wish to give the reader on the way, then, is an appreciation of the complexity, and intellectual richness, of the theme in the current debate. The contributions to this volume enrich this debate from a variety of angles, by utilizing different and sometimes incompatible frameworks, and by arguing for different conclusions.

The chapters

With this we turn to a preview of the chapters collected in this volume. We preview them here in alphabetical order—an ordering we adopt to avoid more artificial groupings. Most of the chapters engage in conceptual efforts, or seek to illuminate how phenomena of cultural domination can or should be conceptualized. Many of the chapters pursue normative aims, or invite normative conclusions—although the chapters can differ greatly in their focus, method, or in the tools they use. Not least, many of the chapters explore candidate cases of cultural domination, or related phenomena, to illuminate what cultural domination is. Thus, we invite readers to explore in their own right the diversity of approaches represented in this volume, their similarities or differences, and how they can inform an understanding of cultural domination.

Bachvarova and Moore approach the concept of cultural domination from the vantage point of normative political theory, where the concept operates primarily to identify forms of injustice or illegitimacy in the political order. Their chapter focusses on two conceptions of domination—a social conception emerging from contemporary civic-republican thought, and an institutional conception emerging from the study of identity-based power in political regimes. The authors apply these conceptions to candidate examples of experiences of cultural domination, and identify different ways to interpret what exactly the object of cultural domination is, and who or what exactly it is that exercises domination. They

conclude that, depending on these interpretations, some conceptions of cultural domination illuminate who the agents of domination are, but obscure the structures that enable them, and vice versa. And they suggest that we should be mindful of this when designating forms of injustice as cultural domination and identifying their implications for political legitimacy.

Besch engages the theme of cultural domination with a focus on Rawls-type political liberalism. In political liberalism, political power that accords with certain values of liberal public culture can be legitimate even if some citizens respectably reject these values. Does this mean that political liberalism permits that such people be dominated? Would this involve cultural domination? Besch offers a reading of public justification in political liberalism that foregrounds differences in the discursive standing of ‘reasonable’ and ‘unreasonable’ people, and interprets these differences in domination-theoretic terms. His chapter suggests that political liberalism would subject the ‘unreasonable’—a mixed group that also includes people who respectably reject things Rawls deems ‘reasonably’ non-rejectable—to discursive and political forms of domination, and this in a manner that invites a charge of cultural domination.

Godman’s chapter argues that science can become a force for cultural dominance and thus is a topic ripe for scrutiny by philosophers of science and political philosophy alike. She reviews the case of the Nordic racial hygiene studies—a branch of physical anthropology in the northern Nordic region in the early 20th century. She argues that although it is highly likely that there were racist biases and ideological influences affecting these researchers, this is not why we primarily should find fault with them. We should instead focus on condemning them for their negligent epistemic conduct that resulted in the moral transgression of cultural reactivity where their theories of racial hierarchies crowded out local knowledge about the group and its value. As such scientists become a force for cultural domination

Kincaid’s chapter is divided into two parts. The first part outlines the philosophy of social science issues in studies of cultural domination and tries to provide a general framework for thinking about cultural domination. It looks at both just what cultural domination claims along with the larger philosophy of social science issues raised. The second section then applies the framework of the first section to some concrete empirical work that covers specific cases of cultural domination. It discusses a historical case of cultural domination in the colonialization of Java that really reflects general colonial strategies across colonizers and colonies. It also discusses more general and current social science explanations of cultural domination in racism.

Koch argues that domination without masters exists and that the suitable term for this form of domination is “structural domination.” Cultural domination is used as an example for the existence of structural domination. Afterwards the use of “structural domination” is discussed based on Carnap’s idea of explication. He concludes that using the term “structural domination” for domination without masters is not a topic change because it is in line with established word use and also that this concept is fruitful for debates on freedom in political philosophy.

Lovett addresses the role of culture in the conceptualization of cultural domination. His chapter considers a variety of ways in which we might think about cultural domination in the light of contemporary republican theory. The chapter argues that people can be dominated in their forms of cultural expression, and that culture can be an important instrument in

facilitating the domination of some people by others. However, the chapter argues against expanding the conception of domination to include cases where impersonal cultural formations systemically disadvantage the members of certain groups.

Menon's chapter aims to develop a causal model that isolates specifically “cultural” explanations of social behavior, as distinguished from explanations that appeal to other forms of physical or social constraint. This cultural causal model is then used as the basis for a characterization of a primarily cultural form of domination; that is, domination whose causal manifestation is visible entirely in the cultural sphere. This is done by identifying a causal signature characteristic of domination relations and describing the conditions under which that signature can be located in a cultural causal model. Since such a model excludes non-cultural explanatory factors, forms of domination visible within the model can be reasonably characterized as cultural.

Patton focuses on colonialism, especially settler colonialism, as a privileged case for the study of cultural domination. His chapter argues that colonialism, like many familiar forms of individual domination, relies on a background of cultural values and beliefs about the superiority of colonizers. The chapter then examines the liberal argument for minority culture rights and the cultural provisions of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in order to show that these reflect a long history of specific forms of domination of Indigenous cultures by those of the colonizing peoples. Finally, the chapter suggests that unlike the domination of individuals, cultural domination in the colonial context tends toward the elimination of the colonized cultures and thereby the existence of the colonized peoples as distinct peoples.

van Riel discusses the descriptive and critical value of conceptions of hegemony that emerged in the context of critical theory. Some conceptions of hegemony, in particular those that allow for hegemony to be realized in contexts where people are neither manipulated nor coerced into adopting a hegemonic view of culture, have come under attack. For instance, these conceptions are said to be misleading, to implicitly or explicitly rely on obscure notions of ‘real interests,’ or, relatedly, to be paternalistic. van Riel argues that these criticisms can be met, and that reasons to engage with problematic forms of power relations also provide reasons to engage with hegemony, where hegemony is construed as a close cousin of domination. A candidate explication of hegemony is provided, and its relation to what one may describe as “cultural domination”—where individuals are “dominated” by their own culture—is discussed.

Sullivan's chapter is situated in and extends the analyses of cultural domination provided by feminist philosophy and critical philosophy of race. The objectives of her chapter are two-fold: (1) to argue that cultural domination happens in and through effects on human physiology, thus challenging typical culture vs. biology dichotomies; and (2) to illustrate this claim through the example of male cultural domination of women, more specifically the effects of male cultural domination on women's telomeres. The chapter focuses primarily on the U.S. and Western Europe. The research method is one that she successfully used in *The Physiology of Sexist and Racist Oppression* (Oxford UP 2015), which combined theoretical analyses and empirical work using each to illuminate and criticize the other.

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