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Cooking Nation

Gender Equality and Multiculturalism as Nation-Building Discourses

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ABSTRACT This article explores the discourses of multiculturalism and gender equality in relation to nation-building in Finland. The two discourses relate differently to the nation so that gender equality is seen as inherent to the nation while multiculturalism is seen as a challenge posed from outside. Nevertheless, the two discourses are dependent upon each other and cite each other. The material for the analysis is a document produced by an NGO-based multicultural women's project in Finland. The article can also be read as a contribution to the debate over the compatibility between gender equality and multiculturalism through an analysis of how gender equality – as an ideology and as a set of practices – is deeply embedded in the production of otherness in the Finnish context.

KEY WORDS gender ◆ gender equality ◆ multiculturalism ◆ nation-building ◆ postcolonial feminism ◆ race

INTRODUCTION

What does 'gender equality' mean in terms of national identity? What new meanings does it acquire in the context of multiculturalism? In the Finnish context, political scientist Anne-Maria Holli (2003: 19) argues that 'Lately, "gender equality" seems to have evolved into a concept the main purpose of which is to maintain the sense of "us" as a national community.' Feminist analyses about how the discourses and politics of gender equality have been embedded in nationalist discourses in Finland are among the starting points for this article. The focus here is on the interconnectedness between gender equality and multiculturalism in the constitution of the 'nation'. I also participate in the discussion on the relationship between

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multiculturalism and feminism. A strand of this discussion – for instance in the *EJWS* – emphasizes the question of the (non)compatibility of these two concepts (e.g. Fisher, 2004; Okin, 1999; Saharso, 2003). This question concerns whether 'multiculturalism' is a threat to 'gender equality' or feminism.[1] The contribution of my article to this discussion lies in the analysis of how gender equality – as an ideology and as a set of practices – is deeply embedded in the production of otherness in the Finnish context. This article thus explores the questions of multiculturalism and equality in the framework of postcolonial feminist theory.

Various scholars who have analysed the gender equality discourses in Finland have shown how 'advanced gender equality' is often described as something inherently *Finnish* (Holli, 2003; Holli et al., 2002; Koivunen, 2003; Lempiäinen, 2002). In the discourses on gender equality, the advanced status is seen to stem (at least partly) from the Finnish history, the agrarian and economically poor past when women and men were working side by side (Lempiäinen, 2002: 24). 'Gender equality' is thus a field in which 'we' as a nation are in the forefront, and it is seen as an export commodity, something to deliver to other parts of the world, including other European countries (Carbin and Holli, 2002; Raevaara and Saarikoski, 2002: 282). The perceived advancement of gender equality is not particular to Finland as such; gender equality is understood as nationally specific in various national contexts, for instance in Sweden (see Carbin and Holli, 2002) and France (Raevaara, 2005). Gail Lewis (2005) also notes how gender equality understood as 'more advanced gender system' has been considered as something 'European'. Anu Koivunen (2003) notes how the alliance between gender equality and nation has even been described as 'successful' in Finland. The emphasis on equality as something *everybody* gains from, not only women, and as 'good relations' between men and women, works to re-establish 'us' and 'our achievements' as a nation.

Multiculturalism is often understood as 'an element that comes from outside of Finnish society' (Clarke, 1999: 36). Multiculturalism, when considered desirable for the society, can be described in terms of colour, new ideas or openness[2] for the society, all of which imply something different from (dull) Finnishness. Whereas gender equality is seen as something 'we have', and it is part of 'ourselves', multiculturalism is something that 'we face' from outside. The notion of multiculturalism as a political challenge posed 'from outside' produces nationalist discourses through the idea of an originally homogeneous nation that is static and coherent (Hall, 2000; Wahlbeck, 2003). This article poses questions about how the discourses of gender equality and multiculturalism are part of nation-building. That these two discourses cite each other and rely on each other is visible for instance in the debates about the compatibility of gender equality and multiculturalism. How are the racialized and gendered power relations constitutive of the 'nation' in the context of multiculturalism?

A common way to narrate 'the Finnish context' in relation to multiculturalism is to outline the transformation of Finland from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. It was only during the late 1980s that immigration exceeded emigration. By the end of 2005, 'foreign nationals' amounted to 2.17 percent of the population and people with a first language other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami a mere 2.82 percent (Population Statistics 2005[3]). Of the total amount of 'foreign nationals' in Finland, most have migrated from Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Serbia-Montenegro and Somalia. Kurds from Iran, Iraq and Turkey also form a significant proportion of migrants. Fairly often this narrative of factual changes in migration patterns also includes an idea of 'Finland' being previously homogeneous or mono-cultural as a nation (e.g. Gordon et al., 2000: 197). In this narrative, multiculturalism is defined through 'the migrants'. The idea of nation as homogeneous until a certain date in its history is by no means unique to Finland. Stuart Hall, writing in the British context, argues that 'The national story assumes that Britain was a unified and homogeneous culture until the post-war migrations from the Caribbean and the Asian subcontinent' (Hall, 2000: 217). However, this is recently changing in Britain, where multiculturalism is in some instances seen as inherent to the nation (Fortier, 2005a).

The idea of homogeneity is sometimes contested through listing the 'old' minorities, the Sami, Roma, Tatars and the Finland-Swedish as part of the 'Finnish nation'. Essential for this discourse of nation is the assumption of the 'Finnish' subject with an unquestioned right to belong, even when the assumed historical homogeneity of the nation might be challenged (Fortier, 2005a: 573). It also shows that 'ethnicity' – and not, for instance, sexuality or class – is seen to form the significant 'difference' in the nation. This popular understanding of Finland as a homogeneous nation, as well as the fact that there has been little migration compared to most European countries, *and* the understanding of these two as interdependent, is crucial for making sense of the material in this article as well as Finnish discourses on multiculturalism at large.

In this article, I analyse discourses of multiculturalism and gender equality in an NGO-based and EU-funded (by the European Social Fund [ESF]) women's project in Finland. I call this project the 'Kitchen' in this article. I was involved in participatory ethnography between 2002 and 2004 in the field of multicultural women's politics[4] in Finland through participating in seminars and project work. While this article is part of the larger ethnographical work, the method applied in this text is critical discourse analysis (e.g. van Dijk, 2001). Close reading of one particular text through discourse analysis enables me to explore in detail the discursive acts (of power). The material for this article is a document that summarizes some of the findings of the project work. The formal aim of the Kitchen, that is, the purpose for which it was funded, is to produce *a model* that is to be

mainstreamed in the work of public and private sector institutions. The document analysed here is one version of this model, which has been produced during the project work and has been distributed in several versions and on various occasions. The document is not a final conclusion of the findings in the project, nor does it give an exhaustive picture of the work done in the project. Rather, it reflects the discourses on nation and otherness that are mobilized in the framework of multiculturalism in Finland.

The Kitchen was a three-year-long project that had a specific aim of enhancing possibilities for labour market participation for 'migrant women' in Finland. The Kitchen was an all-female project and (just) over half of the employees were 'migrant women', which has not been always the case in the Finnish context. There is also an outspoken claim for non-hierarchy, openness and participation by everybody, defined as 'the working principles of the project'. Female exclusivity, attachment to the women's movement and the claims for non-hierarchy make the Kitchen fairly unique in the Finnish context of EU-funded projects. The Kitchen is part of the proliferated EU-funding for short term projects run by NGOs, public sector institutions as well as private sector companies in the area of social policies. Funding has many effects on the work. The activities are scrutinized in an extremely detailed manner, at first by a local authority, and are then monitored nationally by a ministry. In this system it is ultimately the ministry that decides what kinds of activities are accepted as 'enhancing labour market participation', by allocating funding for these.

Hence, the text in focus is produced in the very specific context of EU policies and for a certain purpose, i.e. for the dissemination of the experiences gained in the project. Mainstreaming is a concept that has been introduced particularly through the EU. In the ESF programme that funds the Kitchen, mainstreaming is defined as:

> . . . the transfer of the results of an experiment to be implemented in other programmes and strategies. It refers to the dissemination of the [project's] experience[s] and good practices and their inclusion into strategies both within the Member States and at the Union level. Learning from projects should be organised locally, regionally and nationally. (Equal Programme, 2001: 58)

In the programme, there is even a requirement that the individual projects must be 'capable and willing to co-operate at national and transnational level' (Equal Programme, 2001: 59). These kinds of requirements have necessary implications for an NGO-based project. The fact that projects are required to cooperate on different levels has an influence on, for instance, what kind of utterances can be made in order not to endanger cooperation. The requirements for cooperation are part of the funding agreement and also influence the chances of future funding.

JOIN US FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOUP!

As a result of the three-year project work the Kitchen has designed a model, or a collection of 'best practices' in EU terms, for enhancing labour market participation of 'migrant women'. The way in which the figure of the 'migrant woman' appears in the Kitchen is interesting and worth examination (Lewis, 2006). The Kitchen addresses itself to 'all' migrant women in the city the project is based in. Most participants have migrated from the former Soviet Union and from Middle Eastern, African and Latin American countries. The women who attend the Kitchen occupy varying positions, in terms of their legal status in the country, as well as within the gendered and racialized Finnish imagination. Women's official status may range from those who are residents and re-migrants[5] to asylum seekers and women with refugee status. The general focus on 'migrant women' can both work strategically, offer an opportunity for understanding multiple belongings, but it can also add to an erasure of differences between the women and the particularities of their positioning in the Finnish society. One result of the generalization of 'the migrant woman' is imagining 'her' as a figure that can be subjected to debates about 'who she is' or 'what she is like'. Decontextualization can contribute to an erasure of specific histories, which again reinforces imagined homogeneities (Brah, 1996: 184–5). Yet, I am also using the term 'migrant woman' in this article for a range of reasons. One reason for using this category is because it is the term that is used in the material being analysed. Furthermore, simply not using the word does not serve to deconstruct the figure of the 'migrant woman'. Apart from these reasons, there is also a lack of a suitable vocabulary in this context. Terms like 'black' as used in the British context (that is, as a political concept rather than as a description; see Alexander, 2002) do not exist in Finland. For the purposes of this article, the term must stand, because the figure of the 'migrant woman' is central to both the gender equality discourse and the discourses of multiculturalism in Finland.

The model produced in the Kitchen is called 'Recipes for making a multicultural Finland soup'. This choice of words is interesting. On a general level, the title reflects the way in which 'multiculturalism' is often domesticated into *consuming* 'others' through food, music and other cultural products, both concretely and metaphorically (Ahmed, 2000; Hage, 1998; hooks, 1992). In an online dictionary (www.kielikone.fi) the Finnish word for 'recipe' (in figurative use) was translated as 'formula'. Thus, offering 'recipes for a multicultural Finland' suggests that the project can give exact directions for successful 'multiculturalism'; multiculturalism can be as easy as cooking a soup. Apparent simplicity is important to the framework of mainstreaming and 'best practices' (see later) as this book of recipes is supposed to appeal to city councils and

other authorities. In this kind of framework, where 'co-operative spirit' (Equal Programme, 2001: 59) is a requirement, there are fewer possibilities for generating troubling discourses that might, for instance, challenge assumptions about 'Finnishness' in the society. 'Soup' is also a metaphor for a messy and problematic situation. The tension between the easiness and the messiness is important. Easy as it might seem, it leaves a certain uncertainty of the result, what kind of soup are we actually cooking and for whom?

The messiness is already apparent in the term 'multiculturalism'. Homi Bhabha argues that multiculturalism is 'a portmanteau term for anything from minority discourse to postcolonial critique, from gay and lesbian studies to chicano/a fiction' and that it has become a 'floating signifier' (Bhabha, 1998; see also Hall, 2000). Stuart Hall (2000: 209) makes a distinction between 'the multicultural' and 'multiculturalism'. The 'multicultural' refers to the characteristics and problems of governance posed when different cultural communities live together, while 'multiculturalism' refers to the strategies and policies that govern differences or 'diversity'. Östen Wahlbeck (2003) also notes how in Finnish academic literature on multiculturalism, the term is seldom defined. I concentrate in this article on 'multiculturalism' as an object for analysis (how is 'multicultural Finland' imagined in the recipes) rather than as an analytical tool. Another important concept in this article is 'gender equality', which like 'multiculturalism' is often used without specific definition. These two are embedded in discourses of 'Finnishness' and the 'Finnish nation'. All this is served, through the recipes, to cook, eat and enjoy!

The EU framework and the 'best practices' have certain implications for how the multicultural is conceived. Sara Ahmed (2004) shows that when organizations acknowledge the appearance of racism within the institution, racism is often understood as a 'bad practice'. As 'bad practices' can always be replaced with 'good practices', racism and racialized structures are defined as surface or external elements, so that they are *not* something that *constitute* the organizations. The best practices, thus, frame multiculturalism as a set of practices that are better or worse. At the same time as this kind of approach fails to see how organizations are constituted through racialized and gendered structures and hierarchies (Ahmed, 2004), the focus on practices can imply a focus on *what is done* on an everyday basis, and not only on abstract 'ideologies' or 'values', which are widely circulated in reports and seminars on multiculturalism. As best practices and dissemination of the results of the project, the recipes can be read as texts that aim to define and establish the meanings of multiculturalism and equality in the Finnish context.

One of the versions of the recipes was introduced in the following way (my translation from Finnish):

> Dear Reader,
>
> We here at [the Kitchen] in [the city] have cooked a multicultural soup for everybody to taste. The cooks [*keittäjät*] are our immigrant mentors.[6] The main ingredients used are: paying attention to gender equality, finding one's own strengths and capacities, and grassroots wisdom. Spices are the colours that different cultures bring to the Finnish society and the salt in the bottom is support and help for each other.

First of all, I would like to pay attention to the division of labour. The word for 'cook' [*keittäjä*] used in this paragraph refers to the soup [*keitto*], literally 'somebody who cooks the soup'. But a 'cook' [*keittäjä*] is also somebody, often a woman, who works under the chef and particularly in mass kitchens (like school kitchens). The writer, who tells us the cooks are *our* immigrant mentors, apparently is not one herself. There is a tone of tutelage in the voice of the writer, in addressing the cooks as 'our' immigrant mentors. The notion of the 'cooks' being 'the immigrant mentors' (instead of the members of the Kitchen as a whole group) can be read as an appreciation of the work they do: it is upon their professionalism that we can rely on cooking multiculturalism. Second, it can also indicate that the change, that is, the creation of a multicultural society, is the responsibility of 'the migrant women'. And finally, it also confirms that multiculturalism is about 'otherness', marked through the 'migrant women', who are seen as the origin of difference that enables multiculturalism (see Fortier, 2005a). The eater of the soup is an all-inclusive 'everybody' in the spirit of 'mainstreaming'.

Despite the easy tone that the 'recipes' suggest, the ingredients are not at all 'easy'. Gender equality, and finding one's strengths and capacities and grassroots wisdom are all complicated, even vague, issues, which are made more appealing with reference to the 'spices' of diversity. As bell hooks (1992: 21) writes: 'The commodification of "Otherness" has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes a spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture.' One could argue that the vagueness itself is a way of producing the Finnish nation as defined as a space in which smooth, non-antagonistic cultural interaction is fostered. That 'spices' add *colour* also shows the way in which Finland and Finnishness are marked with whiteness.

The model consists of eight recipes. Some of these describe forms of organization developed in the Kitchen, such as 'the immigrant mentors', 'small group activity' and 'personal guidance and support'. Others describe the approach to work and the central conceptual tools used in the Kitchen, such as 'empowerment', 'gender sensitivity', 'cultural awareness', 'set up of place' and 'equality training'. Many of the recipes start with introductions to different concepts, such as 'culture', and their use

in the Kitchen. The outcomes of the different recipes are also described. It is interesting that multiculturalism is not mentioned or defined in the individual recipes. One could, therefore, think that the recipes together form the definition of 'multiculturalism'. For the purposes of this article, and to explore the questions I have posed about the alliance between the concepts of 'nation' and 'equality' in multiculturalism, I examine closely the recipe on equality training. I also focus on how the resulting 'soup' is described, which constitutes a description of what kind of nation is desirable.

GENDER EQUALITY AS PART OF BECOMING FINNISH

The aim of the recipe on 'Equality Training' is 'equality between all women and men living in Finland'. This statement locates equality between *women* and *men*, representing these as two different and coherently separate sexes without other differences than sexual difference. This is typical of the Finnish equality discourse in general (see Honkanen, 2003). It also suggests that the recipients of the equality training are 'all women and men in Finland'. This could of course indicate that Finland is *not* almost equal as training in it is needed. Equality is defined in the following way:

> Equality is valuing the person as him/herself and valuing and tolerating all his/her characteristics – masculinity, femininity, intelligence, education, origin of birth, etc. Still, it is very hard to change issues concerning equality, because the structures of the society – even [if] they would be for equality in principle – support the current practices.

Here, differences are reduced to *personal characteristics*, so that 'intelligence' and 'race' or 'masculinity' and 'femininity' are the *same*, or *equally different*. To think of differences as personal features individualizes the differences. The recipe suggests that an 'equal society' is a mix where no difference is to be dominant or more significant. Fortier (2005b) shows how 'multicultural Britain' is described as an equivalent mix of cultures in no relation of dominance to each other (see also Hage's [1998] discussion of the 'Australian stew'). Hence, asymmetrical power relations, or how these differences intersect, become difficult to analyse when conflated in the logic of the symmetry and the sameness of differences. Furthermore, equality is achieved through *valuing* and *tolerating* these features and valuing the person *as him/herself*. The person as him/herself is not seen to be constituted through sexual, racial and other differences, but seems to refer to lifestyle or other 'personal characteristics'. There is a tension between the equivalence of differences and valuing the other *as* other (see Fortier, 2005b). *Tolerance* always includes the power *not* to tolerate, and therefore disguises and reproduces power relations (e.g. Hage, 1998:

85–8). *Valuing* differences, again, reflects the way in which migrants are often marked through difference, as the spices that give extra flavour (Hage, 1998; hooks, 1992; Lewis, 2005).

Equality is also understood as a question of rights, so that equality as described in the recipe 'should make it possible for women and men to have the same rights and possibilities to *fulfil their hopes and personal resources and make individual choices, which are not restricted by gender but humanity*' (my emphasis). Two different issues emerge here. The first is that individuality is presented as an important component of equality, which links equality with the European/Nordic project of civilization (Razack, 2004). Second, 'equality' (as an ideal) is conceived of as a state of *non-power*. This has been prevalent even in feminist research on equality where a state of 'equality', that is non-hierarchical relations between men and women (or even 'people'), is the ideal to which 'we' fail to live up (Honkanen, 2003). When equality is understood as non-power, it also means that inequalities are, in a way, seen as bad practices (Ahmed, 2004), which can be replaced with good practices. Within a poststructuralist framework of understanding power as constitutive of subjects (e.g. Butler, 1990), Sara Ahmed (2000) argues that gendered and racialized power relations make 'us' possible, and that therefore 'we' cannot deconstruct them through our own actions. In the context of 'gender equality' this would mean that instead of fantasizing about a state of non-power, the different racialized and gendered positions would be taken seriously. Thus, to think of equality as non-power on the one hand, means a specific understanding of power (as repressive and as power over somebody), and on the other hand, also works to conceal the ways in which gendered and racialized subjects are constituted through power relations.

The aim of the equality training is, according to the recipe, 'to give such education to migrant women that can strengthen them in daring to influence their own issues and help them to recognize inequality'. Here, it is the 'migrant woman', who needs to be educated in equality. For her to 'recognize inequality' could refer to an awareness of how the gendered and racialized structures and discourses in Finnish society have an impact on the migrant women's position. However, if this is read both in the light of 'cultural awareness training' and how gender relations of 'collective cultures' are presented in the recipes,[7] it seems that the inequalities are found in the 'migrant family' or the gender order of 'migrant communities' rather than in Finnish society (see also Razack, 2004). In the quote that follows the results of the equality training are presented.

> Equality training helps to recognize the fact that the world is different for women and men – in Finland as well – and that they have to face a different world with different expectations and assumptions. When these assumptions are made visible we can enhance the well-being, equality and existence of diverse possibilities in life and choices. *The migrant person will*

> *also be integrated in Finnish society when he/she understands Finnish equality and historical and political views connected to it.* (my emphasis)

To point out that 'the world is different for women and men – in Finland as well' echoes the narrative of Finland as an 'almost equal country'. It also indicates that the writer of the recipes is aware that there is more to 'gender equality' than the national story of advancement. If one considers multiculturalism and gender equality as necessary ingredients for a nation-building project, the recipes could also be understood as *conditions for belonging to the nation*. Thus, understanding 'Finnish equality and historical and political views connected to it' is a necessary requirement for belonging.

Considering that the Kitchen is an NGO-run project, there is astonishingly little (or no) critique of Finland and its policies. This can be interpreted in several different ways. First, it is surely due to the context of mainstreaming and EU funding – and possibilities for future funding. Second, it can also be about the way in which the recipes wish to imagine Finland as 'multicultural'. In this sense, the texts can be read through the theory of *performativity* (Butler, 1990) and how the recipes, for instance, make claims about Finland as equal or democratic. Third, the reasons might lie in the way in which the Finnish welfare state has been seen as 'women-friendly' and the nation as 'almost equal'. If the state is seen as women's ally rather than enemy, there is no reason to criticize it (Bergman, 2002). Historically, much of the so-called autonomous Women's movement has worked in cooperation with state institutions and seldom in opposition to it (Bergman, 2002). Close relationships between the state and civil society are not exclusive to the women's movement in Finland, but rather something considered typical for Finnish society (Pulkkinen, 2000). After the economic depression in the 1990s there has been a quite radical deconstruction of the welfare state so that the 'women-friendliness' of the state has been more publicly questioned (Julkunen, 2002).

Thus, 'gender equality', as it is represented in the recipes, seems to be synonymous with a certain 'gender order', typical of Finland and other Nordic countries. Equality is therefore less about politics or anything that 'should be done'. Rather, it is a claim about something 'we are' (Holli, 2003: 19). Much of the 'equality training' is, in fact, about teaching a Finnish gender order. According to Gail Lewis (2005), a claim to a superior, more 'equal' gender order is constitutive of 'Europe' and its civilization. Hence, the belief in nearly achieved gender equality in the Finnish context is part of this constitution of 'Europe' as modern and civilized in relation to its others as backwards. Gloria Wekker (2004: 490) also points out how white Dutch women are represented as 'the epitome, the teleological endpoint of emancipation, the example for black, migrant and

refugee women, who apparently have a long way to go before they can measure up'. The discourse on gender equality could also be seen as a part of a manoeuvre to position 'Finland' as 'European'. The affirmations of equality can also be read as reiterative acts that firmly establish Finland's uncertain Europeanness to itself.

Apart from being a European story, the emphasis on gender equality is also particularly 'Nordic'. There are, of course, both similarities and differences to the 'Nordic countries', and here I refer to the *discursive* formation of the Nordic countries as nations where gender equality and social welfare are particularly developed and that such development is seen as evidencing their superior stage of evolution (see, for example, Carbin and Holli, 2002; Razack, 2004). The idea of Finland as an 'almost equal' or advanced nation, became prominent in the 1980s when the social policy measures improved to match those in the other Nordic countries (Julkunen, 2002). The notion of Finland as advanced and equal is particularly viable in reference to others. These 'others' could include anyone outside the Nordic countries, but references to 'collective cultures' in the recipes suggest that these 'others' are more likely to be outside the whole of (the discursively constructed) Europe than within it.

COOKING MULTICULTURAL NATION

The instructions in the recipes suggest that it will be 'the migrants' who are altered as an outcome of the recipes. At the same time, 'migrant women' are the 'cooks'; that is, they are those who are responsible for making the soup and therefore are the agents of change. Furthermore, 'migrant women' are the *objects* of knowledge in the recipes; in some instances there are detailed descriptions of 'their culture', apparently for the Finnish audience. This relates to what Anne-Marie Fortier (2005a: 14) describes as 'multicultural intimacy', which is fostered through ' "understanding" the other . . . being able to describe her, to "know" her, but where her identity is reduced to her lifestyle: her values, rituals, the food she eats'. That the change towards 'multiculturalism' is supposed to happen mainly through the individual migrants and their 'sense of themselves', leads focus away from racialized and gendered ideologies and structures that constitute the Finnish society and the project. Thus, in constructing multiculturalism, the 'migrant women' are both the ones to cross over and change, as well as the ones who are responsible for multiculturalism to emerge. This kind of focus implies both an individualistic understanding of power, as well as a voluntaristic one, which is common for neoliberal conceptions of nation and citizenship (Fortier, 2005a).

'The recipes for making a multicultural Finland soup' are richly invested in an idea of Finland as a 'good society', a society of democracy, gender

equality and individuality. The recipes' aim is to construct this society as multicultural through educating the 'migrant woman', and sometimes the 'migrant man', and particularly teaching them to unlearn the supposedly more patriarchal gender order in which they live. This resonates with Spivak's (1999: 291) notion of how 'Imperialism's (or globalization's) image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as the *object* of protection from her own kind.' The best way to protect migrant women seems to be through altering the 'migrant woman' to be like 'us'. To establish Finland as a 'good society' can be strategically important in the context of funding: it becomes important to work in good spirit and appeal to the Finnish institutions that control funding.

There are interesting tensions between crossing over, change and staying in place in multicultural women's politics. There is a clear expectation of change in the Kitchen; migrant women are those who are supposed to cross over 'cultural boundaries' and perhaps those who are seen capable of crossing over. At the same time, as Fortier (2005a) and Ahmed (2000) point out, in order for the nation to imagine itself as multicultural, the other must stay in place *as the other*. Hence, the tension between change and stasis is part of the messiness of the multicultural soup. The idea of cooking and recipes suggests an understanding of multiculturalism as 'richness', something that adds to the 'Finnish' but does not challenge it. 'Multiculturalism' and 'gender equality' cannot be understood as separate from each other; the discourses cite each other and rely upon each other. Rather than asking whether feminism and multiculturalism are compatible (a question which tends to invoke the thought of 'multiculturalism' – i.e. 'migrant cultures' – as a possible 'threat'), it would be important to examine closely these discourses in their different contexts, and to consider how they are invested in producing western and white subjects as 'equal' or 'more advanced'.

NOTES

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1. This discussion has particularly concerned the so-called group rights and whether one can criticize cultural practices (that are considered patriarchal) 'from outside'. I do not participate in the discussion of group rights as such, but through analysing discourses of multiculturalism and equality discuss how these are embedded in national and colonial discourses.
2. See posters from a project 'MoniQ', coordinated by the Ministry of Labour in Finland; at: www.mol.fi/mol/fi/03_tutkimus_ja_kehittaminen/05_hankkeet_ja_ projektit/21_moniq/index.jsp

3. At: www.tilastokeskus.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_vaesto_en.html
4. This article is part of a larger research project where I study the strategies and discourses on race/ethnicity and gender in 'multicultural women's politics' in Finland. By this phrase I refer to a loose network of both NGOs and authorities that work with questions of gender and race/ethnicity, often in the context of 'gender equality politics'.
5. 'Re-migrants' refer particularly to the so-called Finnish 'Ingrians', i.e. people with Finnish ancestors from the former Soviet Union. In 1990, legislation was enacted to enable Finnish 'Ingrians' to migrate to Finland.
6. 'Immigrant mentors' are the 'key actors' of the project. The idea is (roughly) that 'immigrant women' who have themselves migrated to Finland are the best supporters for other 'immigrant women' going through the same process. The other employees are non-migrants.
7. One of the recipes focuses on 'cultural awareness'. In this recipe, cultures are presented as being 'individually' or 'collectively' oriented where 'collective' cultures are more family based and the 'roles' of men and women more strictly defined. As a result of the cultural awareness training, 'the immigrant person is integrated in Finnish society. The former home country and its culture are seen as a valuable tradition, a basis for your own individuality.' The former culture is thus valuable as history, as past. As a mark of integration (of becoming like *us*) it will form the basis for the inmmigrant person's *individuality*, which is the successful departure from the supposed collectivity of the 'former culture'.

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