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# HUGE: Human, Gender and Environmental Security

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# Abstract

## Úrsula Oswald Spring: The Gender Dimension of Environmental and Human Security

- The paper analyses gender as a mode of identity and social relations, leading to specific gender insecurity during millennia. Its social representations generate a system of values and practices that increase social vulnerability. More frequent and intense disasters are a result of changing environmental conditions, where most victims were women. Conflicts over natural resources increase with population growth and environmental stress. Therefore, gender security is linked with human and environmental security concerns, gender equity, and human rights, thus creating a HUGE security concept that is more than the sum of its components.
- Theoretically HUGE combines social, physical, and ideological components of a deepened and widened security concept. It links the analysis of system and subsystem relations, and reviews the self-regulating capacity of the system. Politically it motivates governments, international institutions and social movements to include women in decision making bodies, reinforcing their rights, producing a wider gender mainstreaming in UN, business and government, and a full accountability for sexual gender-based violence. This requires complex strategies by governments, international organizations and society to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflicts. Socially HUGE promotes a decentralized, diverse, sustainable world with equity and dignity in daily life, to reduce negative outcomes during hazards and emergencies.
- **Keywords:** gender security, human security, environmental security, HUGE, social vulnerability, hazards, conflicts, social representations

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# 1. Why a HUGE Security?

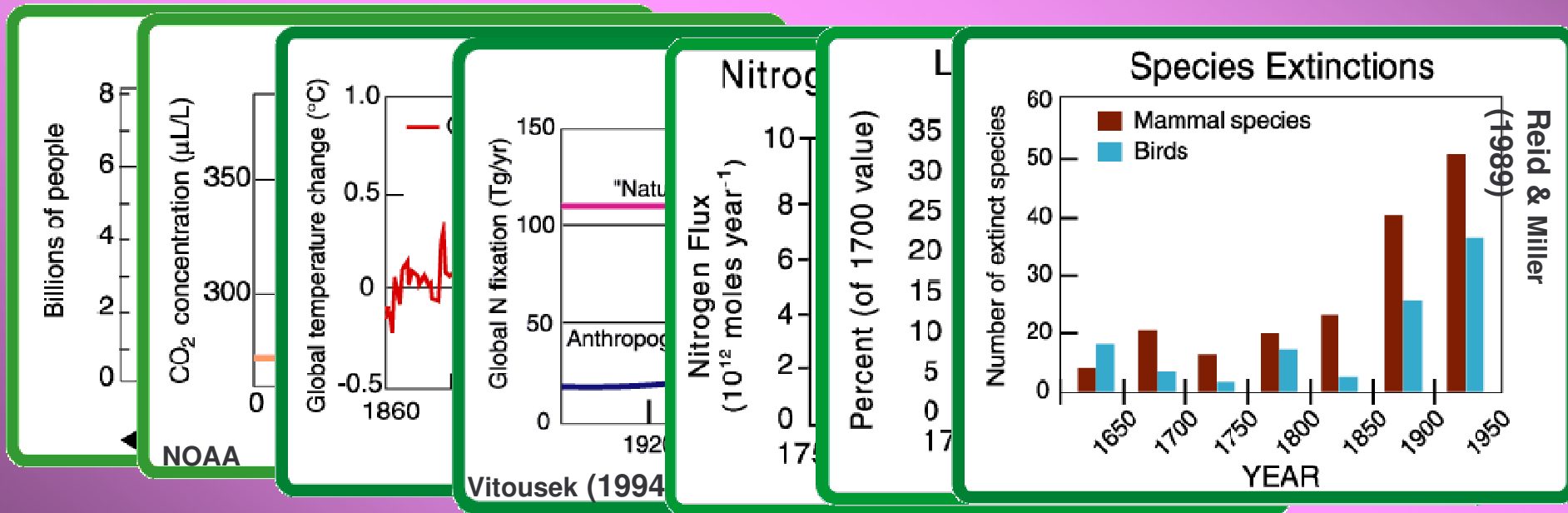
**Confronted with global environmental change, globalization, urbanization and a homogenizing culture, the traditional narrow military security concepts is insufficient to deal with the new dangers. Poverty and marginalization is increasing, resources are getting scarce and polluted, and profit interests of small elites are creating a risk society. Additionally, gender violence is still the most common aggression worldwide. To deal with these new challenges an integral concept of security is proposed: Human, Gender and Environmental Security: a HUGE security.**

## 2. Four Pillars of Human Security

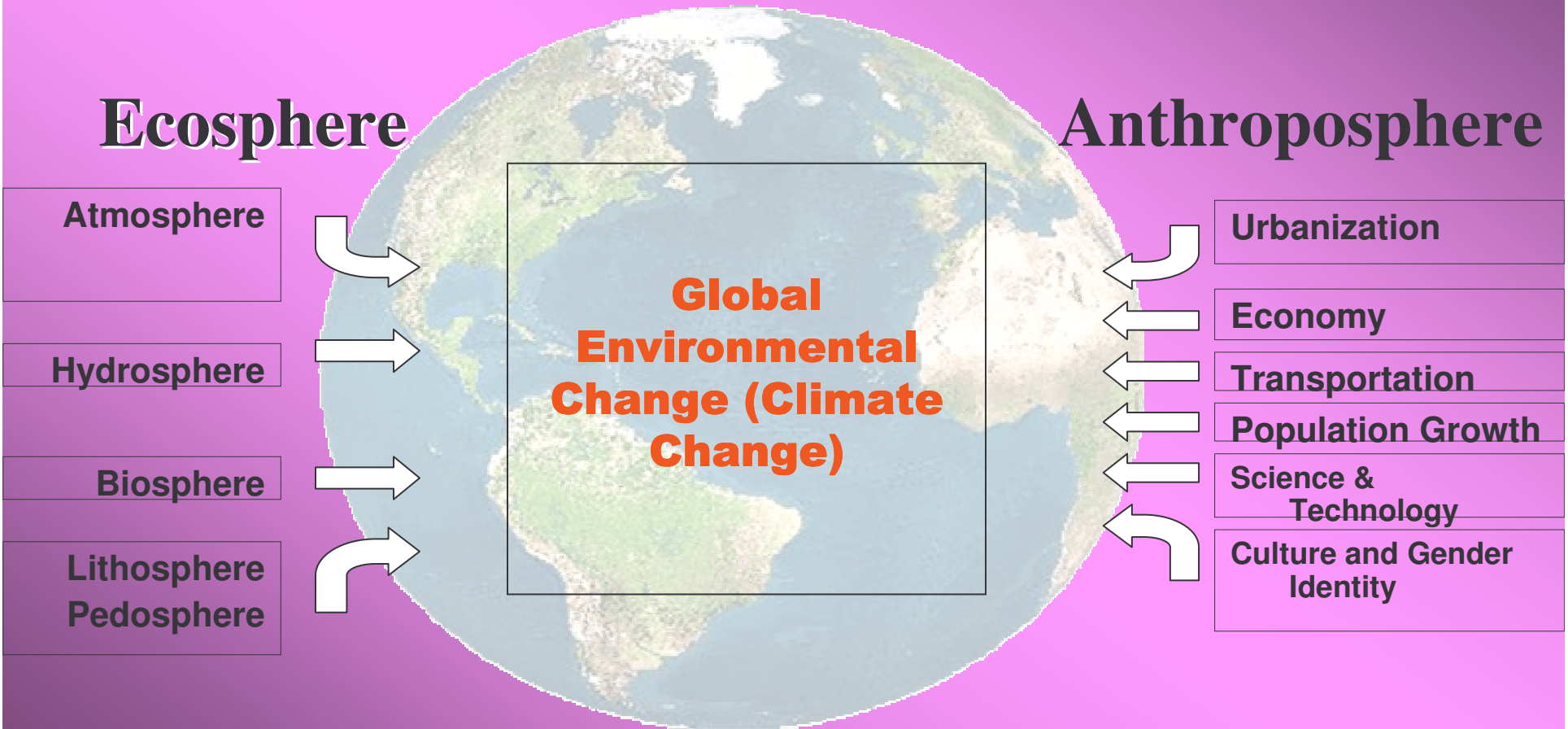
- **“Freedom from want” human development agenda: poverty** (stimulated by Asian economic crisis of 1990s) by reducing social vulnerability through poverty eradication programmes (UNDP 1994; CHS: Ogata/Sen: Human Security Now, 2003, Human Security Trust Fund, HSU of OCHA), **Japanese approach.**
- **“Freedom from fear”:** humanitarian agenda: **violence, con-flicts, weapons** (Canada, Norway, Human Security Network) (UNESCO, HSN), **Canadian approach:** Human Security Rep.(2005).
- **“Freedom to live in dignity”:** agenda: **rule of law, human rights, democratic governance** (Kofi Annan: *In Larger Freedom* (2005))
- **“Freedom from hazard impact”:** **environmental (GEC) & natural hazard agenda:** Bogardi/Brauch vision, goal: securitize: “environment” (GEC as pressure) and “natural hazards” as impact by reducing environmental & social vulnerability & enhancing coping capabilities of societies confronted with natural & human-induced hazards (Bogardi/Brauch 2005; Brauch 2005a/b).

# 3. ¿What is Global Environmental Change?

- It is more than climate change
- Includes natural **plus** human compounds
- It is a constellation of changes in multiple domains, such as:



# GEC and Enviornmental Security



# Biodiversity in Mesoamerica





# 4. Gender Security: Scientific Currents

- ***Feminist epistemologies:*** Feminist epistemologies have analysed the ways in which metaphors of masculinity operate in the construction of ideals of rationality and objectivity (Bordo 1990; Lloyd/Duveen 1992; Longino 1990, 1993, 2001; Sandra Harding (1986, 1988, 1991; Harding/Hintikka 1991).
- ***Feminist empiricism:*** criticizes the 'androgenic' mainstreaming in science, where the stereotypical masculine mental approach excludes emotions. Objectivity in scientific knowledge also in physics and biology (Harding 1986, 1988, 1991) has gender biases
- ***Postmodern perspectives:*** avoid in GS studies a bias of androcentrism, super-generalization or super-specialization, insensibility to gender analyses and issues, the normal elimination of sex and sexuality, double evaluation standards and payment for men and women in scientific achievements, sexist dichotomies, and a formalism limiting the unity of analysis
- ***Standpoint feminism:*** Women and other oppressed groups are better trained and sensitive to deconstruct the mechanisms of exclusion, domination, violence, and submission. With these epistemic privileges they can deepen their analysis and better understand discrimination.

# 5. Four Phases of Gender Security

- **Social representations:** are systems of ideas, values, and practices fulfilling a dual function: a) establishing a framework of order where the subjects are oriented in their material and social world where they live; and b) permitting the communication with a common code among the members of a collective, where all objects are named and the processes precisely classified. Social identity is: -*processual* resulting from and leading to permanent change (Taijfel, 1985); -*relational* due to its transformation linked to social interaction (Moscovici, 1976, 2000); -*multidimensional* operating inside & between individuals, groups, ideologies (Doise, 1986); -*systemic*: an open, dissipative and self-organizing system (Prigogine, 1992; Oswald, 2005); -*contextual* forging relationships in specific contexts; -*essential* due to the diversity and complexity of social interactions that are sustained and transformed by identity processes (Serrano, 2004, 2005).
- **Gift Economy:** Genevieve Vaughan (1997) deconstructed postmodern feminism, including women's free labour for child rearing and unpaid homework. The intentionality of giving, the caretaking is more important than the objectivity of an account, satisfying the constant social communicative needs, where reality is represented and reinterpreted without competitiveness, transforming *homo sa-plens* into a *homo donans*.
- **Ecofeminism:** the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature as interconnected. The dominant pa-triarchal system in late capitalism is affecting human, environmental, and gender securities with the same root causes. Control and commoditization of life and goods in favour of a small bourgeoisie are destroying the livelihood of billions of people, pushing them into extreme poverty
- **New social movements:** The social imaginary, once explored how to transform their legitimate demands – human rights, gender rights (Peters/Wolper 1995) welfare, food sovereignty, peace, environmental care and poverty relief. They questioned the hegemonic development agencies with their technological moder-nizing paradigms, using political power and economic pressure (IMF, WTO) to privatize public services at any costs of social conditions in developing countries and poor social sectors.

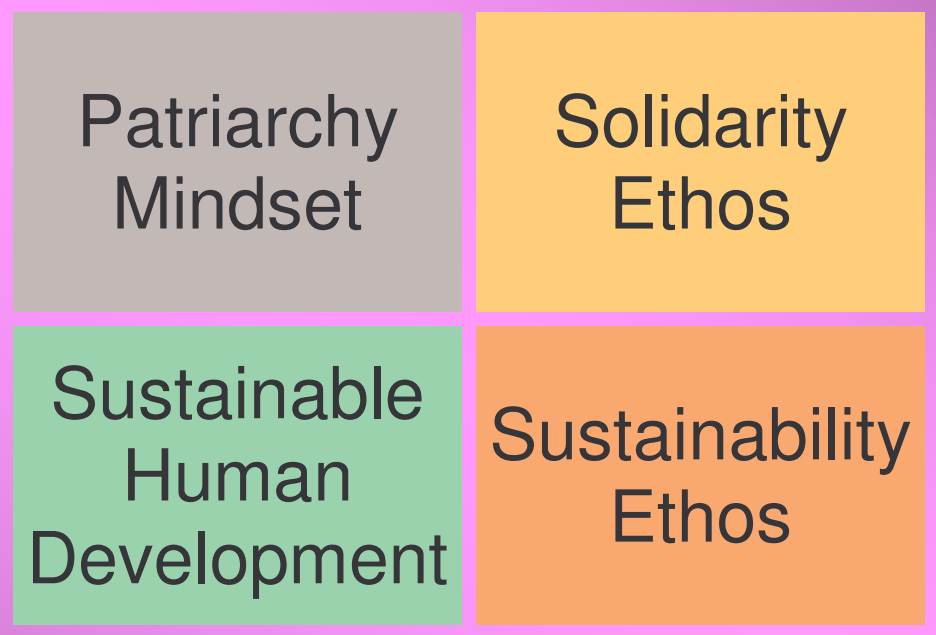
Gender Equity Indicator	Lowest Country	Worldwide Average	Highest Country	Countries Reporting	Year Reported
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	0.63	0.95	1.03	163	2001
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education	0.46	0.69	1.39	144	2001
Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education	0.15	1.13	3.36	116	2001
Ratio of literate women to literate men	0.42	0.93	1.09	123	2004
Women's share in salaried office employment (%)	6.1	40.26	55.9	136	2003
National parliament seats held by women (%)	0	14.43	49	182	2005
U.N. Gender Equity Index (combined male-female parity in economic, political, and resource decisions)	0.123	0.551	0.908	78	2003

Source: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), 2005

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww2005/tab4b.htm>

**Patriarchal Hegemony has a Negative Influence on Solidarity**  
 (i.e., as patriarchy increases, solidarity decreases)  
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 Sustainable Human Development? has a Negative Influence on Patriarchy (i.e., as human integral development increases, patriarchy decreases) ?  
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**Solidarity has a Positive Influence on Sustainability**  
 (i.e., as solidarity increases, sustainability increases)

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**Sustainability has a Positive Influence on Human Development**  
 (i.e., as sustainability increases, human development increases)

# Human, Gender and Environmental Security (HUGE)

<b>Level of expansion</b>	<b>Determination Which security?</b>	<b>Mode of expansion, Reference object Security of whom?</b>	<b>Values at risk Security of what?</b>	<b>Source(s) of threat Security from whom or what?</b>
<b>Without</b>	National security (political, military)	The State	Sovereignty, territorial integrity	Other States, terrorism, sub-state act., guerrilla
<b>Increased</b>	Societal security	Nations, social groups	National Unity, national identity	(States), Nations, Migrants, Alien cultures
<b>Radical</b>	Human security	Individuals (Humankind)	<b>Survival, livelihood, quality of life, cultural integrity, equality, solidarity</b>	<b>The State, nature, globalization, poverty, fundamentalism</b>
<b>Ultra-radical</b>	Environmental Security	Ecosystem, urban and agricultural system	<b>Sustainability, biodiversity, Anthropocene</b>	<b>Humankind, Nature, GEC</b>
<b>Trans-radical</b>	Gender security	<b>Gender relations, indigenous, youth, elders, minorities</b>	<b>Equity, identity, social relations and social representations, cultural diversity</b>	<b>Patriarchy, totalitarian institutions (élites, governments, culture, religions), intolerance</b>

# 5. Conclusion: HUGE

- **Human, Gender and Environmental Security (HUGE)** suggests a widened concept of security, which combines an ample gender concept, including children, elders, indigenous and other minorities with a human-centered focus on environmental security challenges, peace-building and gender equity.
- **'Gender security'** is considering also livelihood, food security, health care, public security, education and cultural diversity. The **HUGE** concept analyzes the patriarchal, violent and exclusive structures within the family and society questioning the existing processes of social representation-building and traditional role assignation between genders.
- It reorients the analysis of **'human security'** to equality and development processes, where social organizations, private investments in hand of ethic business, specific governmental policies, and legal reinforcements are stimulating the sociopolitical participation of women, young and elders.
- As a holist concept, **HUGE** includes **'environmental security'** concerns, where a healthy environment, integral management of natural resources, prevention and remediation practices & redistribution of scarce resources reduce vulnerability from hazard impacts. Hazard-prone countries are enabled to develop technical, economic and human support to reduce social vulnerability, to progress in internal organization, conflict resolution and to stimulate resilience-building, supporting rapidly and efficiently regions affected by social and natural disasters, counting also on external help.
- It allows especially vulnerable (women, exposed groups) to reinforce their own resilience-building through bottom-up internal organization, which is combined with top-down policies and institutions, capable to guarantee effective early warning and evacuation, disaster support and reconstruction in regions affected by social and natural disasters. Immediate and efficient aid in isolated regions could prevent long-term effects such as famine and violent conflicts.

- **As nonviolent conflict resolution is a central part of personal and social identity in a world where processes of unification and diversification are occurring faster than ever in the past, human beings have a basic necessity to simplify and to put order into complex realities through social comparison. The upcoming systems of values, ideas and practices creates simultaneously processes of living together with tolerance by offering persons and groups the possibility to get familiarized with the social and material world, on behalf contradictory messages and behaviours.**
- **At the international level HUGE links up free and equal access to market and dignified livelihood. Regional production reinforce self-sufficiency and trade without distortions. It revises world solidarity with the poorest countries, where financial aid, technological support and debt relief, but also grass-root interchange of experiences could strengthens the empowerment of the most vulnerable.**
- **A safe global world implies political and cultural diversity, able to promote a diverse livelihood for everybody, with open borders, participatory democracy and stable governance. Conflict prevention, nonviolent conflict resolution and peace-building processes in conflict-prone regions reinforces sustainable peace.**
- **In synthesis, HUGE studies social, environmental, human, cultural and identity concerns together with solidarity, resilience, peace-building and equity in contexts of increasing insecurity, dangers and fragility. Alternatives experimented by social movements and altermundism are revised and discussed in World Social Fora.**
- **In summary, the concept proposes the consolidation of a 'huge' solidarity process of sustainable and intra and intergenerational equality and development, reinforced by international and local collaboration and nonviolent conflict management.**



**Thanks for your attention**

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